



Fig. 1: JL Lieb: A map of the Griqua territory and part of the Bechuana country of South Africa, 1830 (M029)

**THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE KIMBERLEY
AFRICANA LIBRARY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
KIMBERLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY**

by

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FOREWORD

This thesis deals with a subject which is vast. It is one which embraces more than 100 years of the history of two exceptional institutions in Kimberley, the origins of which correspond with the genesis of industrial South Africa. The study traces the development of the Kimberley Public Library, the mother institution, within the context of its environment – geographic, economic, political and social and assesses its contribution towards the development of the library movement in South Africa. Fébé van Niekerk in her thesis on the History of the Kimberley Public Library 1870 – 1902 dealt in detail with the early years of the Library but the history of the following century had yet to be researched and sequentially recorded. This thesis aims to extend the record to cover the period after 1902 until the present.

The study has emerged from a long association with the Kimberley Public Library and several of those personalities intimately associated with the institution. In June 1962 the then Director of the William Humphreys Art Gallery, Dora Fock asked me to guide schoolchildren on a tour of the exhibition of the Kimberley Public Library's exhibition of Rare Books and Africana being held in the Art Gallery. I knew little about the Art Gallery and even less about rare books and Africana but these facts did not diminish her insistence that my ignorance was of little consequence and that I would surely have a broader understanding of the contents of the exhibition than did the schoolchildren! This was to be my introduction to the wonderful worlds of museums, art, the Kimberley Public Library and its rare books and Africana. Within a week I was appointed to the staff of the Art Gallery where I was to spend the next 39 years of my working life.

Olive McIntyre, a former City Librarian and a member of the Art Gallery Council spent a great deal of her time at the Art Gallery. During her frequent visits to the Gallery she spent many hours sharing with me her knowledge of the rare books and Africana in the Kimberley Public Library. These discussions aroused in me an enduring interest in the Library and its collections. My father, Fred Staples who as Chief Magistrate served the Kimberley Public Library as Trustee in an *ex officio* capacity, also kindled in me an interest in the history of Kimberley and this institution. He was an inveterate lover of things historical and in the 1950's compiled a chronological history of Kimberley from the District Records which,

although subsequently updated by his successors, still forms the basis of a standard work of reference for researchers at the Africana Library.

The opportunity for research for this thesis was made possible by the Head Librarian of the Kimberley Africana Library, Kokkie Duminy who on my retirement from the William Humphreys Art Gallery allowed me to join their ranks as a voluntary worker. She encouraged me to embark on this thesis and gave me free access to all the records required for my research. Furthermore she was always generous with advice and assistance and in the final stages of my study helped me with the layout of the photographs. I am sincerely grateful to her and to the staff of the Africana Library, particularly to Shirley James who succeeded Mrs Duminy as Head Librarian in September 2008, for their help and encouragement

My sincere thanks are due to Professor Thomas van der Walt of the Department of Information Science at UNISA who supervised this work: for his patience, guidance and helpful suggestions and not least for his encouragement on the many occasions when I felt that I had bitten off more than I could chew. My thanks are also due to Mrs Marlene Burger, also of this Department who was particularly helpful in as far as the vexed problem of reference techniques were concerned.

However, this study would not have been possible without the constant support and encouragement given me by my husband, Clive and my sons, Bryan and Leigh. When my spirits and resolve flagged, it was they who persuaded me to persevere. It is to them this work is dedicated.

This study covering much of the history of the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library must also serve as a humble tribute to the Hon Mr Justice Perceval Maitland Laurence, the first chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee who laid the foundation upon which these institutions were able to develop and flourish. I believe he was the personification of all that was good and noble about the British character. He was an honourable man, dedicated to the Library cause, generous in spirit and keen to share with others his infinite knowledge and love of literature. He was imbued with a determination to make 'his' Library succeed in an environment hardly conducive to intellectual pursuits and which could, at that time, be described as one of the most geographically and culturally

isolated outposts of the British Empire. To his inspired use of the English language can be attributed the comprehensive record of the early years of the Library – the addresses he delivered annually during his 18 years as chairman of the Library Committee are, as they are recorded in the Library’s reports, superb pieces of English prose.

My gratitude is also due to many others who have been asked for information and advice not least the Chairman of the Africana Library Trust, the Hon Mr Justice S A Majiedt whom I called upon on several occasions to verify my interpretation of a number of legal points to which I have referred in the study.

The research and writing of this thesis has been an inspiration and although I am relieved that it has reached finality, I shall miss the infinite pleasure I derived from scouring for information through the records held in the treasure house which is the Kimberley Africana Library.

Rosemary Holloway

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SUMMARY

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE KIMBERLEY AFRICANA LIBRARY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KIMBERLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

by

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The study investigates the establishment and development of the Kimberley Africana Library and its mother institution, the Kimberley Public Library within the broader social, economical and political environment in which they took place. The history of these institutions is inextricable until 1984 when the public and Africana sections of the Library were separated and the Kimberley Africana Library was opened to the public in 1986. It was the exceptional collections of Africana and rare books which distinguished the Kimberley Public Library and the main factor which bound the history of these two institutions.

The Kimberley Public Library and its progeny the Kimberley Africana Library are the products of a new industrialised era which came about after the discovery of diamonds in South Africa. They emanated from an environment which produced the new wealth of the country, an almost uncharted region which was relatively new to the established British colonies.

In order to place the origins of and motivation for the establishment of the Kimberley Public Library and the Kimberley Africana Library in perspective, it is necessary in this study also to include an overview of the development of the diamond mining industry in Kimberley. This development, peculiar as it was to Kimberley, gave rise to the type of social and cultural milieu in which the Public Library was founded by the immigrants to this area. Also included in the study is a brief survey of the development of the library movement in South Africa and the role played by the Kimberley Public Library in the growth of this movement and in the expansion of public library services to the people of the country.

The history of the Kimberley Public/Africana Library which covers a period of more than a century is divided into three distinct periods, namely that which deals with the institution as a Subscription Library from 1882 until 1960 and, from 1961 as a free library under the jurisdiction of the Kimberley Municipality and affiliated to the Cape Provincial Library Service. The third period concerns the dichotomisation of the Kimberley Public Library and the establishment of the Kimberley Africana Library in 1986 to house the Library's renowned collection of Africana and rare books. This section also deals with the period after 1994 when the Kimberley Libraries functioned under the new political dispensation in South Africa.

Emphasis is laid on the formation, nature and scope of the Africana Collection which was the *raison d'être* for the establishment of the Kimberley Africana Library and the most significant of the items in the collection are broadly described.

The study concludes with an assessment of the challenges the Kimberley Africana Library faces and suggests ways and means of resolving these. An Appendix entitled *The Founders and the Builders* is added in order to elaborate on the exceptional contributions of several prominent Committee members and Librarians who controlled and managed these institutions from their inception in 1882 until 2008.

KEY TERMS

Kimberley Africana Library

Kimberley Public Library

Diamond Fields of South Africa: River diggings and Dry diggings

De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd

Library movement in South Africa

Carnegie Commission on Libraries of 1928

Interdepartmental Commission on Libraries in the Union of South Africa

Subscription libraries

Free libraries

Friends of the Kimberley Africana Library

Africana Library Trust

ABBREVIATIONS

ALT	Africana Library Trust, a Trust registered in 2005, the aim of which is to raise funds for the Africana Library and create such conditions at the Library as are conducive to the preservation of the collection
CL	<i>Cape Librarian</i>
CPLS	Cape Provincial Library Service See KPB
DB	De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited
DFA	<i>Diamond Fields Advertiser</i> commenced publication in 1878
IDC	Interdepartmental Committee on Libraries in the Union of South Africa (1937)
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associatons
KPB	Kaapse Provinsiale Biblioteekdienste see CPLS
KAL	Kimberley Africana Library
KALF	Kimberley Africana Library Friends, an auxiliary organization the aim of which is to raise funds for the Africana Library and assist the staff of the library where possible
KBC	Kimberley Borough Council
KCC	Kimberley City Council
KLF	Kimberley Library Forum
KPL	Kimberley Public Library
KPLAC	Kimberley Public Library Advisory Committee
KPLC	Kimberley Public Library Committee
MEC	Member of the Provincial Executive Committee
NCPLS	Northern Cape Provincial Library Service
PG	<i>Provincial Gazette</i>
PK	<i>Provinsiale Koerant</i>
PN	Provincial Notice
SAILIS	South African Institute for Library and Information Science
<i>S.Afr.J.Libr.Inf.Sc.</i>	<i>South African Journal for Library and Information Science</i>
SAL	<i>South African Librarian</i>
SALA	South African Library Association

SPCC	Sol Plaatje City Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHAG	William Humphreys Art Gallery

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE KIMBERLEY AFRICANA LIBRARY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KIMBERLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

1.1 Introduction

The Kimberley Africana Library had its genesis in the Kimberley Public Library. For more than a century from 1882 until 1984 the Public Library existed as a public Subscription Library and a collector of Africana and rare books. It was these collections which to a large extent gave the Public Library its stature and which were to bind the history of these two institutions – the common denominator in fact. The provision of more suitable and commodious accommodation for these valuable and irreplaceable collections was also one of the primary motives behind the division of the institution into two separate entities namely the Kimberley Public Library which operated in a new building as a free public library and the Kimberley Africana Library which remained in the original building and from 1986 functioned as a research library. Both libraries continued to operate in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance of 1955 and under the jurisdiction of local government, presently the greater Sol Plaatje Municipality which includes the City of Kimberley.

The history of the Kimberley Public Library and the Kimberley Africana Library are therefore inextricable. While the latter did indeed become an institution in its own right and physically independent of the Public Library in 1984, the proverbial umbilical cord was never entirely severed. The Africana Library remains dependent upon the Public Library and its management and on the Sol Plaatje Municipal structure for financial support primarily in regard to the salaries and benefits of the establishment and the maintenance of the building. In respect of all personnel and administrative matters, the Public Library has retained authority over the Africana Library.

Notwithstanding its eminence as a research library, the Africana Library shares the inadequate municipal library budget with several other branches of the Public Library in the greater city. When the decision was taken to divide the Public Library and its

Africana Collection into two separate entities, it would seem that little thought was given to the unique requirements and necessary funding of a research library housing a collection of irreplaceable rare books and Africana – books, maps, photographs, manuscripts, newspapers and other ephemera relating to South Africa and in particular to Kimberley, Griqualand West, the Northern Cape, the Diamond Fields, mining, as well as an outstanding collection of literary works in English, French and German.

1.2 Background to the study

The discovery in 1866 of the first diamond on a farm ‘De Kalk’ near the border town of Hopetown on the Orange River in the Cape Colony heralded the onset of an economic and industrial revolution in southern Africa. Prior to this momentous event, the Cape Colony, dependant as it was economically on wool and wine exports (Robertson 1974: 51-52 & De Kiewiet 1975: 89), found itself in the financial doldrums; Natal was equally impoverished and the two Boer Republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, survived on what was little more than a subsistence economy.

It was the discovery of diamonds that first introduced South Africa to industry and to the modern problems of capital and labour (De Kiewiet 1975: 89) as the lure of these precious stones inspired immigration in large numbers to the Diamond Fields, initially to the river diggings on the banks of the Vaal River, followed soon afterwards by a rush to the so-called dry diggings. The rush intensified when diamonds were discovered on Colesberg Kopje in 1871. In time, and after the amalgamation of the mines and the formation of De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited in 1888, the mining camps made way for the relatively well-established town of Kimberley named after the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Kimberley.

The cosmopolitan population arrived by any means possible, but primarily by ox wagon. Many of these aspirant diggers pegged their claims in anticipation of making a quick fortune and gave little thought to a permanent life in what was an arid and inhospitable region of the country, one which suffered not only the vagaries of an extreme climate but one also prone to natural plagues such as dust storms and flies

and all of this exacerbated, particularly on the dry diggings, by an acute shortage of water. These foreigners were joined by local Africans who came in large numbers in the hope of making sufficient money to take back to their tribal lands. These residents of the Diamond Fields lived apart in their traditional groupings and did not engage in the social life which characterised that of the white community.

However, the appeal of diamonds triumphed over the inconveniences and trivialities and only one year after the rush to the Diamond Fields, Kimberley was the most heavily populated settlement in South Africa (De Kiewiet 1975: 89). Despite the very real hardships to which the population was subjected and the initial transient nature of the settlements, the white community evolved in a matter of a few years to one which boasted two churches, a hospital, a theatre and 'as many grogships as the rest of South Africa put together' (De Kiewiet 1975: 89). As the town progressed, so too did the quality of their homes, the business premises, the public facilities, such as the Theatre and the Public Library. In 1890 alone, 144 buildings including a new fire station were constructed (Roberts 1976: 271).

It is necessary in a study of the history of an institution such as the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library to describe the circumstances, the environment and the community which inspired those men with the initiative and foresight to establish a library, an institution which would benefit those in the community who felt culturally isolated and who needed to assuage their desire for intellectual stimulation. This community, this group of people who descended upon the diggings was by no means homogeneous, nor were they bound by a common culture, language, loyalty or intellect. They included whites of European descent, most of whom came from the British Isles, the British colonies including the Cape, Natal and Australasia, the Boer Republics, America as well as from Europe. It was from this group of whites that the skills and the capital required to work the diggings and, in time, the mines emanated and who established the secondary businesses and industries generated by the mines and the thriving community that worked them.

Numerically, however, the tribal Africans who came from the neighbouring tribal lands and filled the enormous demand for labour were in the majority by far. Whilst the contribution of the African population on the Diamond Fields to the development

of the diamond mines was incalculable, no record exists of their playing a role in the establishment or the development of the cultural institutions such as the Public Library which were usually the province of those inhabitants who were of European descent.

Whereas many of the whites on arrival on the Diamond Fields did not anticipate a lengthy stay, there were indeed those whose enterprises were successful and who remained and contributed substantially towards the development of Kimberley. On the other hand, with few or no skills to offer, the African tribesmen, from various tribes, who came to sell their labour on the Diamond Fields, had little or no intention of remaining there permanently. Having earned as much money as they considered adequate to meet their immediate requirements, they returned to their tribal lands as soon as their contracts expired. Conversely there were those whose residence on the Diamond Fields was of a more permanent nature namely the Coloureds and Indians who were employed in sectors other than mining. In addition there were several hundred Africans who had been educated at mission schools mostly in the Eastern Cape and were sought after by the Post Office for employment as telegraph messengers or who worked as clerks, teachers and interpreters. However, there is no record of these residents having taken an interest in the cultural development of the town. Nevertheless, it is clear that this group which included the renowned author and journalist, Sol Plaatje, enjoyed cultural activities which were more familiar to them than those enjoyed by the white population. (Rall 2003: 36).

And so it was the more cohesive white population, cosmopolitan though it was, that brought stability to Kimberley and who were responsible for developing the cultural institutions and the infrastructure in the town and who brought law and order to the settlement.

The Kimberley Public Library founded in 1882 was one of the manifestations of this stability and was a product of the collective need of a society which, within a period of less than two decades, transformed itself from a rough community of peripatetic diggers and miners, living in makeshift dwellings, into a stable society, one which aspired to the trappings of Western civilization despite their geographic and cultural isolation. By 1882, Kimberley had a well established white population which apart

from those involved in the town's primary industry namely mining, also included businessmen, lawyers, judges, doctors, ministers of religion and men and women with the intellectual capacity, competence and resourcefulness required to establish a cultural institution such as a public library and nurture it to maturity. It was these men and those that followed them who had the foresight to bring together one of the most significant collections of Africana and rare books in South Africa.

Although such events as the incorporation of the Crown Colony of Griqualand West into the Cape Colony in 1880, the arrival in Kimberley of the railway from the Cape and Port Elizabeth in 1885 and the amalgamation of the mines and the formation of De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited in 1888 contributed significantly to the stability of and brought immense benefits to Kimberley, they also, to a greater or lesser extent, had their negative effects on the town, the chief of which was the unemployment which resulted from the amalgamation of the mines. On the other hand, De Beers' support of new developments in the town was infinite. Roberts quotes a visitor to the town who accurately observed that

the whole community revolves on one axis, and is centred so to speak, in one authority. 'De Beers' is the moving spirit, the generous employer, and the universal benefactor (Roberts 1976: 263).

Although the Company has been blamed for many of the ills which have befallen the city, De Beers has, in fact, continued their generous support for many worthy developmental projects as well as charitable and cultural organisations and institutions in Kimberley to the present day but have generally done so discreetly and with little of the fanfare which tends to characterise corporate benevolence today.

The very nature of the diamond industry has rendered it, as well as the City of Kimberley, extremely vulnerable to negative political, economic and social factors. Recurrent depressions in the 19th and 20th centuries, the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, the Anglo-Boer War from 1899 until 1900 and of particular importance in this regard, the Siege of Kimberley which lasted from 15 October 1899 to 14 February 1900, in addition to the subsequent world wars and the Spanish Influenza epidemic, have all taken their toll of the city and its population.

Kimberley was also acutely affected by changes in government as well as by her own political prejudices. Midway during the 20th century for example, the rise to power of the National Party in 1948 had a profound effect on Kimberley not least because the mining fraternity was generally known to support the political opposition.

The annals of the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library in the 20th century were punctuated by several momentous changes in status. Notwithstanding Kimberley's fluctuating fortunes, the Kimberley Public Library remained a Subscription Library until 1960 when the Kimberley Public Library Committee (KPLC) and the Subscribers agreed to affiliate to the Cape Provincial Library Service which step required all the assets of the Library to be transferred to the Kimberley City Council (KCC). This move allowed the institution to become a free library in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Service Ordinance, No 4 of 1955. Displaying great foresight, the Public Library Committee entered into an agreement with the Kimberley City Council the terms of which ensured that the institution's valuable collections particularly of Africana and rare books would be preserved for the citizens of Kimberley and for posterity, despite its change in status.

Notwithstanding its perennial struggle to make ends meet, the Kimberley Public Library and particularly its Africana Collection, grew from strength to strength, to the extent that in due course the City Council and the Council's Library Committee resolved to alleviate the congestion at the institution by building a new public library and upgrading and modifying the old building, now 100 years old, to accommodate and preserve the Africana and Special collections.

This milestone marked the birth of the Kimberley Africana Library and the present study focuses on the development of this institution until 2008 and includes the formation of the Friends of the Africana Library (KALF) and with the concurrence of the De Beers Trustees, the transfer by the City Council of the Africana Library's collections to the Africana Library Trust (ALT). With the Africana Library and its collections facing an uncertain future, the Trust was created in 2005 to take possession of the collections of the Africana Library on behalf of the citizens of Kimberley and in terms of the Deed of Donation in Trust between the Sol Plaatje City Council and the Africana Library Trust (2005), to provide funding to the institution to

assist in the preservation of the collections, expansion of the research facilities and its running expenses.

Since its formation, the Trust has endeavoured to raise the necessary funds to enable the institution to fulfil its functions as a research library and to secure the collection against the whims of an unsympathetic and impoverished City Council and to ensure the preservation of this valuable and irreplaceable part of the documentary heritage of Kimberley and indeed that of South Africa.

The formation of the Kimberley Africana Library Friends predates the formation of the Africana Library Trust by five years and since the establishment of this body, it has made a substantial contribution to the Library's progress.

1.3 The aim, purpose and value of the study

Government funded institutions, at all levels, are expected today to justify their existence and allocations by means of quantifiable data. Notwithstanding the Africana Library's ability to provide adequate verification of its long-standing record of service to the public, it remains under-resourced in every respect and is obliged to rely on aid from voluntary organisations and volunteer workers in order to fulfill its mission.

It would seem from media reports that government at all levels lack the knowledge and the will to provide adequately for heritage institutions in general so that it becomes incumbent upon those concerned about the future of these institutions, in this case the Kimberley Africana Library, to record its history for the information of policy makers as well as for the general public so that they may be made aware of the significance of preserving the country's irreplaceable documentary heritage.

The aim of this study is therefore primarily to describe those events which took place during the development of the Kimberley Public Library that led eventually to the establishment of the Kimberley Africana Library. Such an analysis could ultimately explain the reason for the inadequate financial provision made for a research library with its unique requirements when in 1986 the Africana Library was launched into a

state of nominal independence, to cover the unique requirements of such an institution.

Over the years, the Kimberley Public Library received many donations of books and works of art. In order to illustrate the argument that neither the Kimberley Public Library nor its successor, the Kimberley Africana Library were equipped to act as custodians of valuable collections of fine art, it is necessary to mention the donation by the Archdeacon G M Lawson of an exceptional collection of Old Master Prints and Drawings and books to the Kimberley Public Library in 1939. Although the Kimberley Public Library was assumed at that time to be an appropriate guardian of works of art on paper, this was not the case nor does the Africana Library qualify as such. The institution is simply not in a position to provide the care and attention required for the preservation of such a collection. This study will examine briefly the nature of the Lawson Collection of fine art and attempt to justify the transfer of ownership of the works in 1991 to the William Humphreys Art Gallery, an institution admirably suited to the housing of such a collection (See 7.2.2.6).

The study will also attempt to gauge whether the efforts being made by the Kimberley Africana Library Friends and the Africana Library Trust to generate funds are sufficient to meet the needs of the institution. The latter body is about to establish a paper conservation, bookbinding and training centre, the need for which has been amply demonstrated by the keen response to paper conservation and bookbinding workshops already presented in the Africana Library by the Africana Library Trust.

In order to place these events in perspective, this research was done within the context of the broader social, economical and political environment in which the development of the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library took place, bearing in mind the fact that for almost eighty years during which the Kimberley Public Library functioned as a Subscription Library, Africans and other residents of colour had little or no access to the facilities of the Public Library both because of internal library policy and after 1948, as a consequence of the government's policy of racial segregation.

A brief survey has also been made of the library movement in South Africa during the 20th century in order to place the development of the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library and their contribution to this movement into perspective.

The Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library boasts a unique and interesting history yet that which has been recorded in some detail, deals only with 30 of its 120 year existence, this despite the fact that Kimberley is one of the earliest cities in South Africa and that the Kimberley Public Library played a significant role in the history of libraries in South Africa. The unpublished dissertation by a former City Librarian, Fébe van Niekerk (1990) The history of the Kimberley Public Library 1887 – 1902 only partially fills the gap that exists in the historiography of South African libraries. An unpublished and abbreviated history of the Library was also written by the longest serving City Librarian, Olive McIntyre. This history primarily records the salient features of her period in office at the Kimberley Public Library namely from 1943 until 1963, and includes useful information but is of limited scope.

The history of the Kimberley Public Library followed by that of the Kimberley Africana Library also represents an important aspect of the social, cultural and intellectual life of Kimberley from the beginning of the 20th century to the present time and its role in this aspect of Kimberley's history needs to be recorded and represents an adjunct to the unpublished dissertation by Vida le Roux Allen (1990) The social and cultural life of the White community of Kimberley 1888-1899.

The aim of this study is also to record for posterity the very substantial contributions to the development of the Library as well as to the cultural life of Kimberley of many committed and enthusiastic men and women who served the Kimberley Public Library and the Africana Library either as librarians or as members of the Kimberley Public Library Committee, a body which ceased to exist in 1960.

1.4 Delimitation

A comprehensive history of libraries on the Diamond Fields prior to 1902 will not be included in this study other than as a brief overview as this period has been adequately dealt with by Van Niekerk (1900) in her unpublished dissertation which

concluded with the termination of the Anglo-Boer War and the relative stabilisation of the Diamond Fields to which has already been referred.

As it is manifestly impossible in a study of the development of the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library, one which covers a period of 100 years, to deal comprehensively with every aspect of the history of these institutions, this paper focuses on the following aspects

- the history of the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library within the social, political and economic milieu of Kimberley and South Africa, and attempts to give perspective to the role played by the Public Library in the context of the development of the library movement in South Africa;
- the salient events which took place during the three phases of the development of the Kimberley Public Library namely 1882-1960 when the institution functioned as a Subscription Library; 1961-1984 when as a Municipal entity it operated as a free Public Library in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Service Ordinance, No 4 of 1955; 1984-2008 when the dichotomisation of the Kimberley Public Library took place and the Africana Library theoretically functioned independently as a research library but as a branch of the Kimberley Public Libraries. This period includes the functioning of the Africana Library under the new democratic political dispensation after 1994. However, in the absence of legislation promulgated by the Northern Cape Provincial Department responsible for libraries, all libraries in the province still function ostensibly in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance No 4 of 1955;
- Apart from a description of the fluctuating fortunes to which the Kimberley Public Library has been subjected over the past century it also outlines the problems its progeny, the Kimberley Africana Library faces today in the first decade of the 21st century.

- The study will evaluate the support given to the Kimberley Public Library by De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited particularly during the period in which the Library functioned as a Subscription Library.

1.5 Explanation of relevant concepts

Africana Library

A library which houses material pertaining to southern Africa. The collections usually include books, manuscripts, maps, archaeological and geological texts, language documentation, photographs and newspapers. In the case of the Kimberley Africana Library, the institution specialises in records relating to Kimberley, the Northern Cape, its original inhabitants, plants and animals of the region, the development of diamond mining and the history of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. (See 7.1.)

Public library

Public libraries provide a service to the general public and make at least some of their books available for borrowing so that readers may use them at home over a period of days or weeks. Typically, libraries issue library cards to community members wishing to borrow books. These libraries are usually supported by a local or government authority.

Subscription library

Subscription libraries are similar in aim and function to the Free Public Library but are funded by members who pay an annual subscription and such institutions are not supported entirely by a local or other government authority. Coetzee (1975) defines the public Subscription Libraries as

co-operative undertakings which were primarily and sometimes exclusively financed by subscription and the assets the property of a group of subscribers. The management was elected by subscribers and was responsible for all aspects of administration (Coetzee 1975: 3).

Research library

The purpose of research libraries is to support scholarly research and they therefore maintain permanent collections and attempt to provide access to all material. Their function also includes amongst others document delivery and bibliographical services. Important also is their function to preserve their collections in the traditionally accepted manner and by means of digitization.

Diamond Fields

The term 'Diamond Fields' refers to that region in the Northern Cape in South Africa where diamonds were discovered in 1866. The area included the 'river diggings' along the Vaal River at Klipdrift (now Barkly West) and across the river on the opposite bank at Pniel. The term also refers to the 'dry diggings' which included the diggings at Dutoitspan, Bultfontein, (Beaconsfield) and De Beers, Wesselton and New Rush (Kimberley).

1.6 Methodology and outline of the study

Having established the theme of the thesis, namely the history of the Kimberley Africana Library and its collections and their origin in the Kimberley Public Library, the historical research method was considered the most appropriate means of research and the required steps were taken to assemble the necessary evidence to meet the requirements of the subject as well as that of acknowledged historical research methodology.

With relatively few exceptions the source material for this study was available at the Kimberley Africana Library.

Four categories of information were required to meet the research design namely

- ❖ literature on the social, economic and political history of South Africa and in particular of the Diamond Fields;
- ❖ literature on the development of the library movement in South Africa and the role played in this movement by the Kimberley Africana Library's mother

institution, the Kimberley Public Library. Such literature included professional library journals and reports;

- ❖ primary source material regarding the establishment and development of these institutions which are largely to be found in the Minutes, Annual Reports, correspondence and manuscripts in the collection and secondary source material such as newspaper reports;
- ❖ for the chapter on the Africana and Rare Book Collection of the Africana Library, Library Minutes, correspondence, sale and exhibition catalogues were consulted.

This source material was subjected initially to external and then to internal criticism. As most of the primary source material was to be found in the collections of the Kimberley Africana Library, the provenance was traceable, the validity indisputable and the condition good and it was possible to consult them for the purpose of this study.

In as far as the published literature consulted is concerned, the reliability of these secondary sources had to be assessed, in some cases, after a comparison with similar literature by other authors and researchers and where possible, by comparing the information with that of primary sources in the Library's manuscript collection. As many sources as possible, both primary and secondary, were consulted in order to give as full a view of the history of the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library as the evidence would allow.

The source material, particularly the primary sources such as the Minutes of the Institution and the Annual Reports were also subjected to internal criticism and were found to be authentic records, written by librarians and chairmen of successive Library Committees, all of whom were intimately involved in the functioning of the Kimberley Public Library so that the validity of these sources were beyond question.

As has been mentioned, the study has traced the history of the Kimberley Public Library and the Kimberley Africana Library by the examination of pertinent published literature and to a large extent of primary sources such as those held by the Africana Library. These include the meticulously kept Minutes of the Kimberley

Public Library Committee and their Annual Reports from 1882 to 1960 when the Kimberley Public Library ceased its function as a Subscription Library and thereafter operated as a free Public Library under the jurisdiction of the Cape Provincial Library Service and its management by the Kimberley City Council and a Library Advisory Committee. Subsequently, primary sources of comparable quality became less freely available.

Once these steps had been taken, the information was noted and then evaluated for relevance to the subject and finally synthesized.

Reference techniques used were in accordance with the Harvard Method. A detailed list of sources consulted or bibliography is given at the end of the study.

The title of this dissertation lends itself to what could be a tedious record of facts and figures. To obviate such a temptation, only certain aspects of the history of the two institutions have been selected for study and every effort has been made to eliminate irrelevant detail and abstain from digression. The title also aims to clarify the nature of the relationship between the two institutions.

Included amongst the primary sources consulted are the relevant legislation, legal documents and non-current records of the Kimberley City Council and Municipality particularly in order to determine the basis on which ownership of the Africana and Special Collections was transferred in 1960 to the Kimberley City Council and then again in 2005 when ownership of the collections was transferred to the Africana Library Trust.

Similar sources were consulted to determine the circumstances prevailing when in 1984 it was resolved to separate the Kimberley Public Library from its Africana and rare book collections, in order to establish the Africana Library as a nominally independent entity. The Mayor's Minutes have also been a useful source of information.

For the background to the establishment of the Kimberley Public Library and to the period covering the first half of the 20th century, the copious literature on the early

days on the Diamond Fields, particularly Brian Roberts' *Kimberley – Turbulent City* (1976) as the most comprehensive and accurate history of the city, was consulted. Amongst other primary source material consulted for the early period was the collection of written reminiscences of pioneers of the Diamond Fields brought together by one of their number, George Beet. Additional sources consulted were the early newspapers, particularly the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* which, at that time, reported events in considerable detail and with commendable accuracy. However, in more recent times newspapers, and the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* is no exception, reflect the decline in the standard of journalism when detail and accuracy are apparently sacrificed in favour of sensationalism and profit.

In certain instances, it was necessary to interview individuals for certain required information. Where possible this was done personally and in one instance, telephonically.

Where possible and feasible, the dissertation is illustrated by photographs from the Africana Library's collection.

An overview of the social, economic and political milieu in South Africa during the 20th century and those events which had some bearing on the Kimberley Public Library are dealt with in Chapter 2.

The Kimberley Public Library played an important role in the growth of the library movement in South Africa during the 20th century and available literature in this regard has been consulted. Chapter 3 gives attention to the development of this movement in the broader South African context.

Each of the three phases of the history of the Kimberley Public Library and Africana Library encompass important events and have been dealt with in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Information for these chapters was derived mainly from primary sources such as Kimberley Public Library Minutes, Annual Reports and correspondence, legal documents, legislation and secondary sources such as newspaper reports.

The collections of the Kimberley Africana Library require special attention. The Africana and Special Collections and their preservation as the *raison d'être* for the

establishment of the Kimberley Africana Library, have been dealt with in Chapter 7. The information for this chapter was sought from the Minutes of the Kimberley Public Library Committee meetings, Annual Reports, articles on the subject by previous librarians, sale catalogues, exhibition catalogues and newspaper reviews.

Several important donations were made to the Kimberley Public Library amongst which the G M Lawson Collection of Old Master Prints and Drawings and books must undoubtedly rank as one of the most important. These donations demonstrate the fact that the Public Library was considered at that time, 1939, as a safe repository for the preservation of cultural material. Today however, the Africana Library lacks the finances and facilities to preserve satisfactorily a fine art collection. The fate of the Lawson Collection has been dealt with in some detail in Chapter 7 using Africana Library source material as well as material in the possession of the William Humphreys Art Gallery, where the Lawson Collection is presently housed (See 7.2.2.6).

Chapter 7 also deals with the Africana Library's capacity to preserve its collections. The necessary information regarding the present capability of the institution to preserve its collections was obtained from a questionnaire completed fairly recently by the Head Librarian of the Africana Library. This questionnaire includes information regarding the Africana Library's management, buildings, environmental control, equipment, finance, establishment and qualifications and staff training.

Finally Chapter 8 gives an overview of the development of the Kimberley Public Library and the Africana Library. It attempts to establish the significance of the Kimberley Africana Library as a research library in South Africa today; to assess the future of the Africana Library as a municipal entity and to suggest solutions to the Africana Library's financial and administrative predicament.

As the outstanding members of the Kimberley Public Library Committee and successive Librarians employed by the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library whose contributions to the institution were exceptional deserve more than a mere mention, more detailed information on these men and women is given in an Appendix. The Minutes of the Public Library Committee and their Annual Reports,

newspapers and other source material in the Africana Library has provided most of the information required for this addendum.

CHAPTER 2

THE KIMBERLEY PUBLIC/AFRICANA LIBRARY WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction

No institution is established or develops in isolation. Its stature and very being are invariably influenced by external factors and its essential character is formed by and adapted to its environment. In the case of the Kimberley Public Library (KPL) until 1984, after which this study focuses primarily on its progeny namely the Kimberley Africana Library (KAL), the institution arose within that part of the country which spawned it – the rich Diamond Fields of South Africa – and within that unique community that came together on the Diamond Fields from every corner of the world to search for the wealth that diamonds could afford them.

In time, the Library which was established approximately a decade after the discovery of the first diamond on Colesberg Kopje in 1871, was to become directly and indirectly exposed to and influenced by national and international economic and political factors as well as to the constant ebb and flow of residents who came to work in the mining industry or in the secondary industries and supporting business created by the mines. Success eluded many of them who then felt obliged to leave for greener pastures. However, many of these individuals injected the city with new life and were responsible for the continual cultural renewal and other developments which characterised the city throughout the century. The land, the people and their political and economic environment form the subject of this chapter.

2.2 The land and the people

In his reminiscences, George Beet, one of the early pioneers of the Diamond Fields and sub-manager of *The Diamond News* describes the Diamond Fields of South Africa as an area comprising 12 000 square miles, with the Orange River forming the southern boundary of the diamondiferous diggings. In lyrical terms, Beet goes on also to describe its tributary, the Vaal River as

a magnificent stream of water which forms a junction with the Orange. Trees fringe the banks all along. These trees consist of the weeping willow, yellow wood and karee bosch, the former preponderating and overhang the River's margin giving it a most picturesque appearance ... Coming from the South the intending diamond digger had to follow a rather [poor] road which however at last brought him into a view of the noble Vaal River (KAL MS23 Beet: 1).

Probably the most concise and accurate description of the landscape that greeted the first of the diamond seekers is that by Brian Roberts (1976) –

Lying at the geographical heart of what was to become the Republic of South Africa, it was as spacious an area as one could imagine. Nothing, not even the coming together of those two great rivers - the Orange and the Vaal – seemed able to disturb the tranquillity of its appearance. Only on the banks of these slow and muddy rivers was there a fringing of green, for the rest, the plains stretched away almost unbroken to the heat-hazed horizon. The earth was grey, stoney, cindery, carpeted in long silvery grass and dotted with thousands upon thousands of umbrella-shaped thorn trees ... The skies were dramatic: sometimes untrammelled blue, sometimes piled with great clouds, sometimes a-fire with sunsets. When it rained, the normally dry watercourses become raging torrents; when it blew, the dust was choking; when, as happened for most days of the year, the sun shone, it was like an oven. In more ways than one it could be described as a no-man's land; lying between the Great Karoo in the south, the undulating grasslands to the north-east and the Kalahari desert to the north-west (Roberts 1976: 3).

Predating both these descriptions of this region is a map in the collection of the Kimberley Africana Library entitled *A Map of the Griqua Territory and part of the Bechuana Country of South Africa* drawn by the Cape Government Surveyor, JL Lieb in 1830 which gives rudimentary but noteworthy information about the topographic features of South Africa beyond the borders of the Cape Colony with annotations

regarding the inhabitants, vegetation and fauna of the region. The map indicates that the country was sparsely inhabited and is annotated with remarks such as 'Flat country covered with grass little water' and further to the north-west beyond Old Lattakoo 'Extensive plain sprinkled with the Camel Thorn or Mimosa and covered with sour grass no springs abounding with Game' (Lieb 1830: M029) (See frontispiece Fig 1).

The region to the east of the confluence of the Orange and Vaal (Yellow) Rivers, Lieb (1830) states, is 'inhabited only by wild bushmen' and to the north-east of this, Lieb records the areas being 'inhabited by various Bechuana Tribes'. He makes no mention of the Korannas and Hottentots who were known to inhabit this area. However, it is likely that he would not have had the ethnographical knowledge necessary to distinguish between the Bushmen, the Korannas, the Hottentots and the Griquas who roamed the area at that time.

Lieb gives a detailed sketch of the Griqua territory and marks the principal Griqua settlements in this area, such as Griquatown, Campbell and New and Old Lattakoo to the north. The Griquas or Grigriqua as they were known originally, were a people of mixed race, who with their chief Adam Kok, trekked across the Orange River in the late 18th century (Arnot 1875: 1).

Because of their relationship with the more sophisticated inhabitants of the Cape, the Griquas had a technical advantage over the indigenous inhabitants of the region in that they were horsemen adept in the use of guns and wagons. By nature, these people were nomadic and it was this unsettled miscellany that the missionaries of the London Missionary Society renamed Griquas and endeavoured to discipline and transform into a peaceful and stable society (Halford 1949: 42-47).

The history of the Griquas and their land is extremely complex and is in any event irrelevant to this study. Suffice it to say that the area on which the diggers converged after the discovery of diamonds was acknowledged Griqua territory although prior to 1869, it did not constitute the focus of the international dispute which surfaced once its riches were revealed to the world. Several letters by James Wykeham, a general agent based in Hopetown at that time refer to "Waterboer's territory" – Waterboer, the Griqua captain also being a client of his (KAL Wykeham 1867: (5)69).

Although the accuracy and scale of Lieb's map is questionable, the information regarding the vegetation, fauna and inhabitants is interesting and generally corresponds with that given by other travellers to the region during the first half of the 19th century. However, it fails to mention the extreme climate, the droughts, the shortage of water and plagues such as locusts to which the country was prone nor to the frequency of other natural calamities.

To add to the hotchpotch of people indigenous to the region were the Boers, the stock farmers of Dutch, French or German descent who had trekked from the Cape Colony in the south and settled to the east and north-east of Griqua territory.

In his unpublished reminiscences, George Beet presents a description of the landscape as given him by one of his fellow pioneers as they travelled towards the Diamond Fields, probably during the summer rainy season:

Ask any of the pioneers, those men who left their homes in the Colony and Natal to face adventure, hardship and inconveniences, inseparable from such an undertaking. They came with their ox and mule wagons in the early seventies and one and all will inform you, that at all events, when they came – the veldt was one area of rich pasturage. They will tell you moreover of grass in plenty, of the good shooting they enjoyed, even on the very spot where Kimberley now stands and will laugh to scorn the mere suggestion of 'barren tracts' and 'desolate wastes' as applied to that part now known to the world as the 'South African Diamond Fields' (KAL MS23 Beet).

The discovery of diamonds in 1866 (Robertson 1974: 103) brought about a dramatic change in the demography of this region. Although the eminent journalist of that period and a pioneer of the Diamond Fields RW Murray (1979) in his *The Diamond-field Keepsake for 1873* mentions the presence on the diggings of Korannas and Hottentots, it would appear that few of the indigenous inhabitants of the area played a significant role in the recovery of diamonds *per se* (Murray 1979: 36). However, the Griquas' claims to the land caused considerable tensions in the region which involved

the governments of the British Cape Colony as well as the two Boer Republics namely the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

The first river finds, initially along the Orange River between Hopetown and present day Douglas and later on the banks of the Vaal River, known as the river diggings, situated in the vicinity of Klipdrift (now Barkly West), Pniel and Hebron (now Windsorton), were treated with a certain degree of scepticism and as a result the migration to the Diamond Fields began hesitantly. However, within a relatively short time, in the years 1870 – 1871, the banks of the Vaal River teemed with a cosmopolitan multitude all of whom had been lured there by the possibility of making a quick fortune. After a while, the less successful diggers turned their attention to the dry diggings at Dutoitspan and Bultfontein which appeared to offer greater rewards. However, the real rush occurred in 1871 when diamonds were discovered at Colesberg Kopje. These fortune hunters included whites from the nearby British Colonies of the Cape and Natal, from the Boer Republics, from Australasia, from Great Britain and Europe as well as African tribesmen from the nearby tribal lands notably the Batswana and Basotho.

Descriptions of those who descended upon the diggings in search of diamonds are manifold and emanate from a variety of sources. Murray (1979) gives an immediate and vivid description of the people working on the Colesberg Kopje diggings –

the confusion of tongues could not be greater. There is here every type of man under Heaven. There is the military man, who has dropped his uniform for the digger's cut, the navvy, the scholar, the gentleman, the man once about town, the young Africander who once only rode the high horse, the young Englishman who never worked with anything heavier than a billiard cue before he came to the place, the doctor, the divine, the lawyer, the lamp-lighter. Here they are all thrown together, all reduced to one level, all working alike with barrow, pickaxe and crowbar (Murray 1979: 16).



*Fig 2: Diggers on the
Diamond Fields: c1872*

George Beet alludes to the fact that many of the diggers were indeed literate and enjoyed reading their mail and newspapers from 'home' (KAL MS23 Beet).

Another of the pioneers of the Diamond Fields, GBR Atwell records that

Men from every quarter, including a good sprinkling of men of culture, had donned diggers' costume and gone to work with pick and shovel for all they were worth side by side with aborigines toiling from early morn till dewy eve in their search for precious stones (KAL MS23 Atwell).

Within a year after the rush to the dry diggings began, the settlement, known initially as New Rush was renamed Kimberley after Lord Kimberley, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was, with the exception of Cape Town, the most populous settlement in southern Africa. In 1871 the total population, whites and Africans totalled 50 000 (De Kiewiet 1975:89). Two churches, a hospital and a theatre, were among those manifestations of the settlement's transformation from a mining camp to a town.



Fig 3 New Rush (Kimberley), 1871



Fig 4 The Kimberley Mine, c1872

Many of those who arrived to dig for diamonds in the early days were mere fortune hunters who had little intention of making Kimberley their permanent home. After the amalgamation of the mines in 1888, a step which heralded greater stability in the diamond industry and symbolised the more permanent nature of the settlement, there were many remarkable men who despite the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, did elect to remain in Kimberley and it was they who contributed substantially to the development of the town as well as to its industry and commerce. Many of these men were, in fact, to help shape the destiny of South Africa.

Generally the presence of the individual African on the Diamond Fields was transitory. In time the African labourers who came to the Diamond Fields to fill the immense need for cheap unskilled labour were housed in mine compounds, content on the expiry of their contracts and the accumulation of a sum of money adequate to meet

their needs, to return to their kraals (Rall 2003: 24-25). In the Annual Report of 1904 of the De Beers Company, the Chairman observed that

the native labour market [was] peculiar owing to the fact that as soon as the rains came a large percentage of the natives wish to return home to plough their lands. Again when the crops are ready to be gathered, the men are anxious to return home to assist, not only in the reaping of crops but in the beer drinking festivities which follow a successful harvest (De Beers Annual Report 1904).

However, the unskilled workers on the Diamond Fields were not only to be found amongst the Africans from the tribal lands. Large numbers of the unskilled emigrants to the diggings were so-called 'poor whites'. This was a term applied to those of European descent who had received a minimum of education and who had previously gained their livelihood chiefly on the land. They were those of the white rural population who had suffered economic and social retrogression as a result of their isolation in rural areas at the turn of the century or at a later stage, to the trials and tribulations suffered by the population of the Boer Republics during the Anglo-Boer War during the period 1899 – 1902. It was these whites who moved to the alluvial diggings to try their luck and once there, were obliged to compete with unskilled Africans for work (Grosskopff 1932: v-vi). In the Carnegie Commission Report, Grosskopff (1932: 143-151) also points out that in the early 20th century, the majority of the diggers had come from the farming population and that when the Lichtenberg diggings opened in 1926, many diggers moved there from Griqualand West. In the Kimberley Mayor's Minutes for the year 1904 reference is made to the heavy burden imposed on the town by the impoverished white individuals who had 'drifted into Kimberley from other towns from the north who had no claim on the Diamond Fields' and who had been given free rail tickets to Kimberley by the Colonial Government but no such concession to leave the town were they to be unsuccessful in their search for work (KBC Mayor's Minutes, 31.12.1904). Census reports for 1918, 1921 and 1934 reflect the drain of the white population from the rural areas as extensive and continuous. In fact during the period 1904 – 1931 the rural white population dropped from 47% to 39%. De Kiewiet attributes this trend to several causes not least to drought, the destructive policies of the British military during the Anglo-Boer War and

the outbreak of the First World War, inefficiency and bankruptcy (De Kiewiet 1941: 196).

On the other hand, there was in addition a more permanent section of 'non-whites' comprising Africans, Coloureds and Indians living in Kimberley. Many of these residents of the town found employment as traders, domestic servants or were employed by De Beers, the Municipalities of Kimberley and Beaconsfield or by the Kimberley Post Office. Amongst the population of approximately 20 000 were several hundred Africans who had been educated at mission schools in the Eastern Cape such as Lovedale and Healdtown or in Basutoland and who served the community as ministers of religion, clerks, teachers, interpreters, messengers and police constables. It was with this group of African intelligentsia that Solomon T Plaatje, the renowned author, journalist and politician shared common interests and was happy to associate himself with their societies and activities such as the South African Improvement Society. Music, choral and dramatic societies were particularly popular amongst this group. It is interesting to note that the Kimberley Post Office became known as an organisation which was inclined to employ Africans in preference to whites as telegraph messengers as they were cheaper to employ, had a better standard of education than those whites who were likely to seek employment in the Post Office and were loyal and capable. It was for such a position that Plaatje applied and was appointed in 1894 (Rall 2003: 28).

However, the enforcement of law and order and the founding of the symbols of urban stability such as the establishment of a Town Council, the High Court of Griqualand, churches, schools and the Kimberley Public Library which took place in 1882, were brought about by the better informed, resourceful members of the white community which by that time included businessmen, ministers of religion and other professional people – individuals of financial means who had brought with them a culture of reading and a love of literature. These included an illustrious and public-spirited group of men, several of whom were, in time, to be knighted and awarded honours for their services to the Queen and the Empire (Beet 1931: 158).

Although the population of early Kimberley grew by leaps and bounds, only a small percentage of that community were either interested in or prepared to forego their

efforts to extract diamonds from the soil in order to support a library. As reflected in the Minutes and Annual Reports of the Kimberley Public Library Committee, the number of Subscribers to the Public Library relative to the population of Kimberley was infinitesimal notwithstanding the fact that the Reading Room at the Library was open to all residents who wished to avail themselves of this facility. Although it was not the official policy of the founders or of the management of the Library to exclude any section of the white community from membership of the new Subscription Library, the nature of the Library Committee's policies epitomised exclusivity. Nothing could conceal the fact that the Library was established by an intellectual elite for an erudite, relatively privileged section of the white community and that these were almost invariably of British descent and English speaking. This was so despite the fact that several of the prominent and wealthy citizens of Kimberley were 'foreigners' in the sense that they were German, French or Italian speaking and that books were acquired in these languages for their benefit. In this context, it should also be borne in mind that many of the residents of Kimberley spoke Dutch or Afrikaans and were unacquainted with the English language. At a later stage books in the Dutch language were also acquired and at an even later stage in Afrikaans.

To all intents and purposes, the African and white sections of the residents of Kimberley lived in separate cultural spheres as it would seem that Africans were not considered potential subscribers to the Public Library and there is no record of them making use of the Library's Reading Room. However the Library's elitist policy was exemplified by the Library Committee's ruling that the membership of Africans was not considered in the interests of the Library (KAL Minutes, 14.06.1911).

The fact that the existence of Kimberley was based on the mining industry which required diverse skills always played a significant role in the composition of the population of the town. South Africa had few skilled workers least of all those suited to employment in industry or mining on which the diamond mining industry could draw. The only means therefore by which this deficiency could be remedied was by the importation of white skilled labour from abroad, primarily from Britain. By 1887 when the new Kimberley Public Library building was opened, the Chairman of the Library Committee, Mr Justice PM Laurence in his address expressed the wish that the people of the Colony would in time

discover that Kimberley is not such a dreadful place or the inhabitants of Kimberley such abandoned characters some of them still appear to imagine and that the people of Kimberley will more and more regard the Diamond Fields as forming an integral part of the Colony and not look down on their fellow colonists as a set of ungrateful beings who have never sufficiently realised and appreciated and acknowledged the benefits which the vaunted wealth and intelligence of Kimberley has conferred upon the Colony (*DFA* 25.07.1887).

During the first decades of the 20th century Lord Milner's policy of anglicisation kept Kimberley predominantly English in most spheres of civic and cultural activity and there was little doubt where the loyalties of the dominant section of the community lay. They were indeed loyal subjects of the British Crown and Great Britain remained 'home' to many who for the most part were not South African by birth. It was this English speaking section that had the initiative and the propensity to establish cultural institutions to meet their needs in a town divorced from the hub of cultural activity in the country. Neither the Afrikaans speaking community nor the Africans played a major role in the essentially British milieu which prevailed in the town until well into the 20th century when the English-speaking element had declined numerically and the Afrikaans-speaking and African residents took a significantly more active but mutually exclusive role in civic and cultural affairs.

Throughout the 20th century significant changes occurred in the composition of the population. As the century evolved, several factors influenced the nature of the inhabitants of the city: the original loyal British citizens retired and moved away, the economy of the city diversified and, as happened throughout South Africa, ever more whites and Africans left the rural areas to settle in the towns. In due course, people from many cultural backgrounds and with various levels of skill and education came to Kimberley to settle or as 'birds of passage' were employed by the civil service (the nature of which had changed significantly after 1948), the railways and other commercial sectors.

After the pessimism which followed World War II, the late 1950/60's saw a new spirit of optimism evolve among several of the decision makers in the city and as a result,

the face of Kimberley changed substantially as it geared up to face the challenges of development in a new era. There was an upsurge of building activity, property values increased between 1942 and 1967 when the municipal valuation of buildings in Kimberley rose from R6.5 million to R75 million and between 1960 and 1969 the total population of the Kimberley Magisterial District increased from 86 295 to 125 200. 2 545 economic houses were built for Africans between 1960 and 1964 (Roberts 1978: 99). This urban housing programme, in effect, acknowledged Africans as permanent members of the urban community.

The advent of the 'new' South Africa in 1994 brought about major changes in the focus of the city. Kimberley was made the capital and seat of government of the new Northern Cape Province and with this new status, came a major influx of politicians and civil servants at every level of government. As a result of the government's policy of transformation and affirmative action, these posts were primarily filled by Africans, particularly so in the key posts. The approach of these relatively new citizens to Kimberley, to community service – voluntary or otherwise – and cultural matters differs vastly from that held by community leaders in the past.

Today the overwhelming majority of the population of Kimberley is African, followed in number by the Coloured population. The whites and the Asians comprise but a small percentage of the population of Kimberley. All population groups are represented within the business sector and the professions.

2.3 Politics and the economy

Although this study focuses on the period 1903 to 2008, it is essential that a synopsis be given of the political and economic issues which preceded this period and which in many cases gave rise to those which were uppermost in the minds of politicians, economists and the man-in-the-street throughout the 20th century and beyond.

Generally the political questions which were of concern to the inhabitants of the Diamond Fields were also those relevant to South Africa in general. The international 'scramble for Africa' in the latter part of the 19th century and the British claim to supremacy in South Africa were to a large extent responsible for the hostility which

prevailed between the two South African British colonies and the Boer Republics in the late 19th century and well into the 20th century. This animosity formed the basis of much of the conflict and tensions which ensued.

It was the discovery of diamonds in the region beyond the northern borders of the Cape Colony that aroused new interest in this territory and aroused latent imperial aspirations in Britain. It is doubtful whether the motives frequently expounded for territorial expansion such as the welfare of the indigenous inhabitants or that of British subjects as were professed by the British government were always altruistic. Of relevance to this study however is the fact that Britain's supremacy in South Africa was undisputed internationally and explains to a large extent why the dominant inhabitants of Kimberley and the Diamond Fields were British nationals or colonials of British descent. In the final analysis, this fact had a direct bearing on the Kimberley Public Library, its establishment, its management and the nature of its collections.

2.3.1 Kimberley and the growth of the South African economy

It was Kimberley and its diamond mining industry that led South Africa into a new industrial era with all its ramifications. In 1868, prior to his appointment as Lieutenant Governor of the Crown Colony of Griqualand West, the then Cape Colonial Secretary, Richard Southey is said to have prophesied as he laid on the table of the Cape House of Assembly the first diamond discovered in South Africa: 'Gentlemen, this is the rock upon which the future success of South Africa will be built' (Beet [S.a.]: 7 & Andrews 1962: 5). Robertson (1974: 191-192) refutes this statement but the fact remains that the future economic success of South Africa was indeed built on diamonds. Kimberley and the Diamond Fields became the catalyst which sparked the growth of industry in South Africa. Not only was it the capital derived from the Diamond Fields that fuelled the establishment of the gold mines in the Transvaal but Kimberley was also the cradle from which emerged the experience, the skills and the technology required to recover the gold on the Witwatersrand. This is borne out by the fact that year after year, at the Annual General Meetings, the Chairmen of the Kimberley Public Library Committee bemoaned the loss to Kimberley 'of its most liberal and intelligent and public-spirited among the residents

of former years' to the new fields of enterprise in the Transvaal' (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 13.10.1892).

The Diamond Fields, particularly as they advanced through their various stages of transformation – from individual diggings to mining companies and finally to the amalgamated mines, attracted skilled people and capital primarily from Great Britain. These stages of progress galvanised the Cape Government in 1885 to extend the railways from the Cape and Port Elizabeth in order to supply the Diamond Fields with amongst the other necessities of life, the impressive and technically advanced equipment which rendered the picks and shovels of old redundant while this important development simultaneously opened up and improved communication within the country. It was also on the Diamond Fields that Africans and those of European descent came together for the first time in pursuit of a common purpose namely to find diamonds and to make money; but it was also here that the die was cast for future competition between white and black Africans as well as for the discrimination in the sphere of labour which was to become a perennial political hot potato which bedevilled South Africa's politics and labour relations until the last decade of the 20th century.

Kimberley's political and economic history has always been inextricably linked to that of diamonds – their discovery, their recovery and the diamond trade. The diamond industry which produces a luxury commodity has always been vulnerable to the vagaries of the South African and international economy, political events and unfavourable climatic conditions. Economic booms and depressions, times of war and times of peace, disease and other natural catastrophes have all affected the industry on which the prosperity of Kimberley has relied. During an economic upswing, the town and its people revelled in its affluence and the munificence of the De Beers Company. When the level of production or sale of diamonds was retarded for whatever reason, Kimberley was obliged to tighten its belt and suffer with the Company. This state of affairs has continued to the present day.

On a more mundane level and in the broader South African context, the discovery of diamonds and the opening of mines provided those in the impoverished rural areas with markets undreamed of and for those who owned wagons and draught animals, a

good deal of work. Transport riding became a profitable means of survival for many poor farmers (Grosskopf 1932: 113) until the completion of the railway from the Cape and Port Elizabeth in 1885 severely curtailed and in many cases, terminated this source of income and frequently reduced these transport riders to penury. In this regard Grosskopf quotes from the Annual Report of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce for 1885 which records that the completion of the railway had thrown large numbers of people out of employment (Grosskopf 1932: 143).

2.3.2 Kimberley and local politics

In the beginning, politics of whatever nature were far removed from the thoughts of the multitude of diggers who descended upon the Diamond Fields: they were there for one purpose only and that was to make their fortunes as quickly as possible. In a relatively small area with a population of 50 000, the inhabitants lived in makeshift homes and there was not a vestige of permanence to the settlement or of the services normally provided by a local authority. Affairs of a local nature were not considered the constitutional concern of the Lieutenant-Governor of the British Crown Colony of Griqualand West which had been proclaimed in 1873. As a result, unbridled chaos reigned until in due course it became obvious to the inhabitants who had to endure the inconvenience of bad roads and unsanitary conditions that the affairs of the town needed to be effectively managed by an elected body of citizens. A public meeting was duly held in May 1876 'to consider the advisability of moving in the matter of a Municipality for Kimberley' (Roberts 1978:3) at which meeting the decision to form a Municipality received unanimous public support. In due course, the Griqualand West Legislative Assembly approved the appeal of the residents of Kimberley to establish a Municipality and relevant ordinance – Ordinance No 7 of 1877 – was duly published on 27 June 1877 (Roberts 1978: 4).

Thus was born a political awareness in Kimberley as the candidates for the proposed town council vied with each other for voters' favours. After a fairly disorderly and suspect local election, the first Council meeting was held in the Magistrate's Office on 27 December 1877 (Roberts 1978: 10). In spite of much scepticism concerning the viability of such a body and dire prognostications regarding the capability of this impoverished Council to improve local conditions, the town did indeed benefit

enormously and a great deal was achieved despite trying circumstances, not least as a result of the efforts of the generally capable and dedicated group who served the town on this body.

Some 35 years after the inauguration of the Kimberley Borough Council, the two adjacent municipalities of Kimberley and Beaconsfield (previously Du Toitspan) amalgamated. This was done in terms of the Cape Municipal Ordinance No 10 of 1912 and the Kimberley Municipality Ordinance No 4 of 1913 (KCC Mayor's Minutes, 1912: 14). The question of the elevation of Kimberley to the status of a Cathedral City came about under the auspices of the English Church (KCC Mayor's Minutes, 1911: 9) with the first Bishop of the new Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman enthroned in the Cathedral Church of St Cyprian the Martyr on 30 June 1912 (KCC Mayor's Minutes, 1912: 6).

However, the political focus on the Diamond Fields was two-fold and not confined merely to domestic politics. The political issues which were dominant in South Africa at the time were in fact manifold so that this study will deal only with those which directly affected Kimberley and the Diamond Fields.

2.3.3 British hegemony in South Africa and territorial claims

One of the primary political issues in the early days concerned the ownership of the territory on which diamonds had been discovered. This ill-defined and disputed territory which was claimed by amongst others the Griqua Chief Nicolaas Waterboer as well as by the two Boer Republics, namely the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, became a political football and this matter was only settled eventually when the British proclaimed it the Crown Colony of Griqualand West in 1873 with the Hon Mr Richard Southey appointed Lieutenant-Governor. Although Britain considered this to be the solution to the underlying problems which beset the diggings, the inhabitants were of the opinion that they had been deceived by the British High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape, Sir Henry Barkly in 1872. During a visit to the Diamond Fields, the Governor, in his attempt to placate the diggers, had undertaken to address and remedy the many grievances they had lodged not least those in regard to land claims, the manner in which contracts were awarded and the fact that guns and

gunpowder were being supplied to Africans. A major bone of contention was the fact that representation in the Legislature was such that, to all intents and purposes, the Colony was controlled by the British Government and its proxies in the Cape Legislature. Furthermore the Governor's promises had not been honoured to the satisfaction of the inhabitants of Griqualand West (Matthews 1887: 278-279).

It is not possible to extricate South Africa's political and economic history nor can the course of history at this time be divorced from the vacillating policies of the British Government in South Africa. In this regard Dr JW Matthews, initially a member of the Griqualand West Legislature and after the Colony's incorporation into the Cape Colony, a representative of Griqualand West to that Legislature, and also an erstwhile member of the Kimberley Public Library Committee, refers particularly to the lot of the Diamond Fields under the British flag at that time describing British undertakings to the inhabitants of the Diamond Fields as 'pie crust promises'. He states that

Every new 'hand' that has been intrusted [sic] with the reins of government started on his career by reversing the policy of his predecessors and making promises, which, if he ever meant to keep, he revoked shamelessly and recklessly, either to gratify his own caprice for party purposes, or under the 'instructions' of the imperial nominee whose seat is fixed in Cape Town, and who puppet-like moves according to 'wire' (Matthews 1887: 261).

Amongst other things, the Governor had promised that the Constitution of the Crown Colony would be based on a model similar to and as liberal as that of Natal but this did not materialise as the enfranchisement and representation of voters was not in accordance with that guarantee (KAL MS23 Beet). The franchise in Natal at that time required very high electoral qualifications which made it extremely difficult for Africans to exercise their right to vote. The composition of the Council was heavily loaded in favour of the government. Initially all went reasonably well but Matthews writes that 'Leagues were formed and meetings held where sedition was loudly and plainly talked' (Matthews 1887: 283). Letters were sent to the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly on 9 April 1875 stating that serious dissatisfaction existed on the Diamond Fields as a consequence of the acts of the Griqualand West government.

Another example of Britain's indecisive foreign policy in South Africa was the restoration of the Transvaal's independence in 1881 which not only led to further tension between Boer and those of British descent but also led to the collapse of credit and confidence generally and, as was to become the norm, the diamond market was one of the first sectors to suffer (De Kiewiet 1941: 108). The protracted depression which followed drastically impeded the economy and this was exacerbated by another of the severe droughts to which the country was prone, causing considerable distress at every level of the economy. However, the discovery of gold in the Transvaal injected new life into the ailing economy of the southern African region and the last two decades of the 19th century were manifestly prosperous – only to be brought to an abrupt end at the outbreak of war between Britain and the two Boer Republics in October 1899.

The gold mining industry provided an enormous boost to the southern African economy but it brought with it several disadvantages which, in time, had a negative effect on Kimberley's growth, its people and its economy. Not only did the rise in this industry encourage the relocation of capital and skills from the Diamond Fields to the Gold Fields and the loss to Kimberley of numerous of its most enterprising and wealthy men but the influx of foreign, primarily British, fortune seekers to the Gold Fields sowed the seeds of discontent amongst the largely Dutch inhabitants of the Transvaal Republic who were wedded to their traditional values and lifestyle and found those of the foreigner unacceptable. They also objected to the exploitation of their land. The largely orchestrated demands of the newcomers for the franchise created tensions between the Republics and the 'Uitlanders' which became the fertile soil in which the seeds of war were to germinate. Eventually these tensions culminated in the Anglo-Boer War – with its disastrous consequences for the entire southern African region. Although Kimberley was situated in the Cape Colony which was not one of the main arenas of the war, its inhabitants and economy suffered greatly as a result of the conflict.

2.3.4 From mining camp to a town

It was not surprising that the Kimberley Public Library was established in 1882 as this generally was a momentous year in respect of Kimberley's development. Amongst

other civic, industrial and social milestones, 1882 saw Kimberley being supplied with water pumped to the town from the Vaal River. It was the year in which the town became the first in the southern hemisphere to install electric street lighting and it was during that year that the all-important fire brigade was restructured to cope more effectively with the frequent devastating fires to which the town was prone, and, from the social aspect, the famous Kimberley Club for gentlemen was founded. In the mining sphere, 1882 marked the introduction of new and sophisticated methods of underground mining which 'called for the skills far above the level of competence of the average digger and for the large amounts of capital which even partnerships were unable to provide' (De Kiewiet 1975: 94) and so the idea of the amalgamation of the mines was born.

2.3.5 The illicit trade in diamonds

The repercussions of the illicit trade in diamonds, a practice which had manifested itself on the Diamond Fields from the very beginning, were of both an economic and political nature. The fact that in the early days on the Diamond Fields Africans had the right to become claimholders presented the diggers with a decided problem. This status accorded the Africans by the liberal and flexible British Constitution was considered a major contributory factor to the cursed practice of illicit diamond buying or as it was and, still is known, 'IDB'. Furthermore, the diggers had to cope with that class of whites referred to as Kopje Wallopers. These were diamond buyers whose sense of morality was open to question as their business transactions included the purchase of whatever licit or illicit diamonds came their way. In every respect IDB was advantageous only to the perpetrator of this unholy practice while causing great economic loss to the honest *bona fide* diggers. Although IDB was common amongst both Africans and whites, it was generally the African labourer who had immediate access to the stones during the sorting process. Notwithstanding copious legislation and the introduction of countless measures to halt this illicit trade in diamonds, the practice continued throughout the 20th century and while the personae may have changed, IDB is as prevalent today as it was when the first diamonds were discovered on the Diamond Fields. The fact that in the majority of cases Africans were found to be the source of the diamonds sold during illicit transactions gave rise to a call for stricter legislation to be promulgated in order to eradicate this scourge. Naturally the

various means adopted to curb IDB became a source of considerable political dispute particularly when no distinction was made between whites and Africans in the implementation of these measures (Roberts 1976: 201-205).

It was the stripping and searching of individuals, particularly in respect of white employees, amongst other measures which were introduced by the mining companies to defeat those involved in IDB that led to the mass strike called by workers of all the mines in October 1883 which lasted for more than a week. During the negotiations which followed, the mine owners stated categorically that it had never been the intention that white miners should strip. The success of the strike was of only short duration and before this industrial crisis was finally resolved, Kimberley and the industry were faced with another severe crisis, that of a smallpox epidemic (Roberts 1976: 216-217).

Smouldering dissatisfaction amongst the diggers in respect of many of the recently promulgated ordinances led eventually to the Black Flag Rebellion of April 1875. This political upheaval was directly responsible for Lieutenant-Governor Southey being recalled and the termination of his governorship of Griqualand West while heralding the beginning of the end for the Crown Colony of Griqualand West. The British Government had no wish to continue carrying the burden of such a small and turbulent Crown Colony so that in June 1877, at its instigation, a bill was brought before the Cape House of Assembly the object of which was the annexation of Griqualand West by the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. Despite this legislation being vehemently opposed in Griqualand West itself, the final act of incorporation was accomplished on 15 October 1880 (Matthews 1887: 312-318).

2.3.6 International economic and political events to affect Kimberley

The first of many national and international events to severely injure the diamond mining industry was the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) and more particularly the three months from 14 October 1899 until 15 February 1900 during which Kimberley with its 40 000 inhabitants was besieged by the Boers – the combatant forces of the Transvaal and Orange Free State Republics. Circumstances in the town were such as to necessitate the closing of the mines leaving a large proportion of the labour force

out of work and in need of liberal humanitarian support. In an attempt to save the limited food resources within the town, 11 106 African miners housed in the De Beers compounds at the time were surreptitiously evacuated from the compounds and instructed by De Beers to leave the city and return home (Fynn 1951: 6-20) an instruction which caused considerable embarrassment to the military and sorely tried the already strained relationship between the Office Commanding the military garrison stationed in the town, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Kekewich and the Chairman of De Beers, Cecil John Rhodes.

Despite the dissension that surfaced between these two men, the assistance given to the military and to the citizens of Kimberley by De Beers was immeasurable. Unprepared as the town was militarily prior to the declaration of war it was De Beers who were responsible for strengthening the defences of the town. It is indeed doubtful whether Kimberley would have withstood the siege without the intercession of De Beers. The resourcefulness and generosity of its Chairman and many of its directors and officials made life in the besieged town a great deal safer and more tolerable for the inhabitants.

A fine example of the ingenuity displayed at this time was the manufacture of 'Long Cecil' – a 4.1" bore gun which was designed by De Beers' American-born engineer, George Labram with the help of available books and manuals on munitions and which was made within a period of 24 days in the De Beers Workshops and appropriately named after the Chairman of the Company. The first shell fired by 'Long Cecil' had engraved on it 'With CJR's Comps'. Roberts quotes a 'hardened war correspondent' as having remarked in this regard

Of all the things I have personally seen and read in the annals of war, the most remarkable is the making of this gun in a mining workshop in the centre of Africa (Roberts 1976: 328).

When the cost to Britain of her campaign in South Africa – a campaign which the British assumed would be of short duration and over by Christmas 1899 – was calculated at the end of the war almost two years later, De Beers was called upon to bear the lion's share of the costs incurred in the defence of Kimberley; this as well as

having contributed substantially, in cash and in kind, to the cost of the war as a whole. Some idea of De Beers' contribution to the British war effort can be gleaned from the Company's War Account for the financial year 1903. This reflects an amount of £75 477.16.3 which was claimed by De Beers from the Imperial Government in respect of expenditure incurred in connection with the Siege. Of this amount the Company was compensated to the extent of £30 000 only. The total losses incurred by the Company in connection with the war as a whole amounted to £272 904.1.2. However, it is recorded that these payments had been made willingly 'for the town, the country and the Empire' (De Beers Annual Report, 1903).



Fig 5: 'Long Cecil' manufactured in the De Beers Workshops, 1900

One constructive result of this devastating conflict was the unification of the two Boer Republics with the two British Colonies which became the Union of South Africa and which entitled it to membership of the Commonwealth with the concomitant financial and trade links (Andrews 1962: 6).

Two periods of severe economic depression followed the cessation of hostilities after the two wars in which South Africa became involved in the first quarter of the 20th century. These conflicts had a disastrous effect on Kimberley and the diamond mining industry.

The decade after the Anglo-Boer War saw South Africa facing a severe depression which lasted until shortly before the outbreak of the First World War to which South Africa, as a constituent of the British Empire contributed substantially. Once again,

the Directors of De Beers decided to stop production until the end of the war due to the diminished demand for diamonds. Every effort was made to accommodate those of their employees who would suffer the harsh consequences of the closing of the mines to the extent that even the families of those who had joined the armed forces were assisted financially but, said the Chairman

We have to recognise that we are in a Company producing a luxury which naturally does not find a sale in circumstances like those we have to face today (De Beers Annual Report Chairman's address, 1914).

At the termination of hostilities in 1918 Kimberley had suffered the loss of many able men. De Beers alone lost 104 employees killed or died and 145 wounded or taken prisoner (Chilvers 1939: 333). Furthermore the country was faced with another season of drought and grave unemployment followed in the urban and rural areas. Relief work was almost incessant. In the hope of gaining employment in towns, many of the unemployed flocked to the towns and nowhere were the social and economic ills caused by these circumstances more manifest than in mining towns such as Kimberley. The effects on the economy of Kimberley were similar during each of these periods of depression. On each occasion the mines shut down and unemployment was rampant.

A severe economic depression followed the War and the gold crisis of 1919. South Africa had incurred huge war debts, commodity prices had risen, so too had wages, railway rates and taxes. This unfortunate situation was compounded by drought and a plague of locusts (De Kiewiet 1975: 169). The problem of unemployment became critical and 'poor whites' from the rural areas increased the number of unemployed in the towns. Year after year, the Kimberley Mayor's Minutes of this period attest to the problem of unemployed whites and Coloureds which faced the Town Council and for which solutions had to be found.

And then came the visitation of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic in 1918 which resulted in the deaths of almost 5 000 inhabitants of Kimberley. Described by the Mayor as the worst catastrophe ever to strike the city, this disease was indeed no respecter of persons! (KCC Mayor's Minutes, 1918)

The consequences of the Great Depression from 1929 to 1932 caused an economic crisis of immense proportions, the effects of which were devastating and protracted and as could be anticipated, once again resulted in the collapse of the diamond trade. The effect of the international financial collapse on Kimberley's economy and its inhabitants were painful in the extreme. The mines were closed, workers retrenched and De Beers divested itself of many of its secondary assets such as the Hotels Belgravia and Alexandersfontein which had been run for the benefit of Kimberley.

This economic calamity was exacerbated in 1931 when the British took their pound off the gold standard; capital was withdrawn from South Africa which in turn threatened the stability of the local currency. It was only after the Union Government abandoned the gold standard that money flowed back into the country. It was the mining industry that benefited most as capital was ploughed into the mines and stimulated the economy (De Kiewiet 1975: 172-176).

In 1939 there was a call to arms once more as the European conflagration that was World War II engulfed the world and once again, these international events had negative implications for Kimberley. But during the war in 1943 a group of men with considerable foresight and optimism in Kimberley and the Northern Cape formed the Northern Cape and Adjoining Areas Regional Development Association

to co-ordinate interests of all non-political public bodies in the area and present the rich resources of the Northern Cape to the Union and overseas in order to influence fresh capital development and to achieve recognition by Parliament, Provincial Councils and in commercial circles... (KPL MS373 Northern Cape ... , Constitution)

After the war South Africa experienced a period of prosperity and in keeping with this post-war growth of the economy, Kimberley, like the legendary Phoenix, arose from the ashes after an resourceful group of men, several of whom had been the driving force behind the formation of the Northern Cape venture embarked on a plan of rejuvenation and development for Kimberley itself (Roberts 1978: 93-94).

For more than a century, the backbone of Kimberley's economy has been its diamond mines. Although diamonds have been discovered elsewhere in the country and in Southern and Central Africa and the Kimberley Mines have virtually reached the end of the productive lives, the De Beers Company has undertaken to retain its Head Office in Kimberley and has invested approximately R800 million in the city on a technologically advanced treatment plant for the recovery of diamonds from the old tailing heaps.

During the course of more than a century the De Beers Company achieved a great deal and other than during periods of economic depression, has provided employment at various levels for all sections of the community. It has made substantial profits, has paid handsome dividends and has made generous contributions to countless altruistic causes, not least to the Kimberley Public Library and in latter years, to the Kimberley Africana Library.

Issues regarding race relations have woven a thread throughout South Africa's volatile history. These have penetrated every sphere of South African society: social, political, industrial, agricultural and commercial and became more manifest once the economy transformed from one which was based purely on agriculture to that of mining and its associated industries. Kimberley was indeed the cradle from which grew the strained relationship between Africans and whites particularly in the industrial sphere. This phenomenon was apparent even in the late 19th century and each government in the 20th century wrestled to find solutions to the vexed problem created by the diverse cultures and the disproportionate racial equation. Throughout the century, all South African governments, to some extent or another, were committed to the maintenance of white leadership and the protection of whites so that legislation became increasingly racially discriminatory, nowhere more so than in the sphere of labour.

It was a combination of these fluctuating economic and political factors as well as the social structure which they inspired which had a direct impact on the development of the Kimberley Public Library, on its support base and its financial status. Notwithstanding the fact that the Library's Public Room was open to all the town's residents (KPL Annual Report, 1902) these facilities did not appear to be in great demand by the African residents of Kimberley. The Kimberley Public Library

Committee Minutes do indeed record applications for membership of the Public Library by Africans and Coloureds but acceptance of these applications for membership were not considered to be in the interests of the Library and these were consequently turned down, the attention of the applicants being drawn to the fact that they were certainly entitled to the use of the Public Room (KPL Minutes, 14.06.1911).

Despite the trials and tribulations to which Kimberley was subjected, the facts and figures recorded in the Minutes of the Library Committee and in the Annual Reports generally bear only veiled testimony to the problems suffered by the diamond industry and the influence these had on the inhabitants of the town and, in turn, on the finances and management of the Library. The De Beers Company seldom reduced its grant to the Library, but invariably bad times meant that the grants from the Colonial Government and the Borough Council were drastically reduced or withheld. The distress and anxiety which was widespread amongst the inhabitants of the town during the Siege of Kimberley are seldom referred to in terms other than a mention made euphemistically to the fact that the Library had closed early and to the 'adverse influences of the times on the finances of the institution ... ' and after the town had been relieved, that the Library had not suffered any appreciable damage during the period (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 19.04.1900). The Chairman's addresses at the Annual General Meetings of the Subscribers of the Kimberley Public Library are, in fact, a source of considerably more information than is recorded in the Minutes.

2.3.7 Conclusion

The Kimberley Public Library was bound to be affected by those factors which influenced the weal and woe of Kimberley itself. The diamond industry on which the town/city is based and founded as it was in the late 1860's in an isolated region of the sub-continent, attracted to it various classes of individual with the level of skills required for the successful and profitable production of diamonds and the commerce and industries which this inspired. While the town has a proud record as an educational centre, the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand deprived the city of an important institution for tertiary education, namely the School of Mines which opened in 1896 but was moved to Johannesburg in 1904, later to develop into the University of the Witwatersrand (Roberts 1976: 305). While the Kimberley Public Library

existed primarily as a Subscription Library and made several of its facilities accessible to all the residents of Kimberley, it was almost entirely dependent on public support. Without a substantial intellectual and literary minded public which a university might have encouraged, the Library was destined to struggle to survive.

CHAPTER 3

THE KIMBERLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1. Introduction

This chapter deals primarily with those aspects of the development of the library movement in South Africa which immediately affected the Kimberley Public Library and with those organisations with which the institution was directly engaged. This, for the most part, concerns library developments in the Cape Colony until 1910, and after the formation of the Union of South Africa, the Cape Province until 1996 when the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) conferred on the Northern Cape provincial status.

It was inevitable that the library movement in South Africa would have its genesis in the Cape Colony and that for at least the first century public libraries would show the greatest development in that region of South Africa. The Colony had a European population and an infrastructure established many years before initially by the Dutch and then by the British. As a consequence of its colonial past, its institutions were based on the cultural and administrative norms of Europe and Britain. However, it would be incorrect to assume that the South African library movement, far removed from the European cultural hub, lagged far behind that of Britain. On the contrary, as pointed out by Mr Justice PM Laurence (1891: vi) Judge President of Griqualand West and Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library (See Appendix, Laurence: 283) when, in his introduction to the Catalogue of this institution, he stated that

Considering that at the Cape there is no general Library Act, that municipal corporations are for the most part poor, and handicapped by the limited means at their disposal in carrying out the primary objects of their existence, that in the Colony there have, until recently, been very few men of wealth ... the fact that at the Cape there should exist no less

than 64 public libraries as against 169 in the whole of the United Kingdom, suggests a comparison of which the Colony need have no reason to be ashamed (Laurence 1891: vi).

In 1899 Mr Justice Laurence observed while on circuit that there were few towns or villages in South Africa that did not boast a library. He remarked that this was a remarkable phenomenon bearing in mind that in the western part of the colony, the majority of the inhabitants were of Dutch descent and whose knowledge of English was limited and whose interests generally did not include literature (Laurence 1899: 261-263).

Friis (1962) confirms this observation by quoting from an article by P E Lewin¹ in which he points out that

the public library system in South Africa blossomed to its fruition whilst you in England were blindly groping in the dark. Within a short period there was scarcely a town or village that did not possess its own public library (Friis 1962: 73)

and also notes Anthony Trollope as having remarked that

a colonial town felt ashamed if it did not have its garden, its hospital, its public library and its two or three churches, even in its early days (Friis 1962: 73).

As the population migrated from Cape Town and its immediate environs and the borders of the Cape Colony expanded to the north and east, Britain attempted to control the turbulent borders of the Cape and maintain her authority over the dissident citizens she claimed as her own and also over those whom she and the colonists

¹ Lewin, PE. The Empire and the Public Library: The relations between libraries of the Empire *The Library Assistant* No 134 March 1909

considered invaders, by establishing military posts. These were later to develop into settlements or towns with permanent populations and facilities for their comfort. In 1818 for example, the population of Graaff-Reinet at 8514 was greater than that of Cape Town which was 7460, a fact which justified the establishment of the first public Subscription Library in this town in 1822 (Friis 1962: 70).

3.2 The development of public libraries in South Africa

Mr Justice Laurence (1897) in his article on public libraries in South Africa written for the British Journal *The Library* and published also in his *Collectanea* (1899: 256-270) refers extensively to the degree to which public libraries had developed in South Africa, particularly in the Cape Colony.

Friis observes that at the commencement of South Africa's library history, 'a surprisingly enlightened conception of the functions of the public library' is found and that throughout the 19th century 'there was a succession of determined efforts to achieve, in spite of geographic isolation, a high cultural, intellectual and educational level' (Friis 1962: 68).

The concept of a library for the use of the South African public is referred to for the first time when in 1761, a German settler at the Cape, Joachim Nicholas von Dessin following an example which was fairly common in his native Germany, bequeathed his vast and representative collection of books, comprising approximately 4 500 volumes to the Dutch Reformed Church in Cape Town 'to serve as a foundation of a public library for the advantage of the community'. (Translation) This bequest included a sum of £200 to be used for the expansion of the collection (Friis 1962: 69-70).

Friis (1962) divides the history of the South African library movement into three distinct periods namely 1818 – 1874; 1874 –1928 and 1928 – 1955. Subsequent

events would indicate that at least another two divisions would be appropriate, namely 1955 – 1994 and 1994 to the present day.

3.2.1 The First Period: 1818 -1874

The first period commenced in 1818 when the Governor of the Cape Colony, Lord Charles Somerset proclaimed the first free public library in the Colony and in fact, in the world, on 20 March of that year; this many years before the promulgation of the free library laws of Great Britain and America (Stirling 1950: 13). The library, which was established ‘as a foundation of a system which shall place the means of knowledge within the reach of youth’ (Friis 1962:70) became known as the South African Public Library. Funds for this institution were derived from ‘a gauging charge of one Rix Dollar on each casket of wine passing through the Cape Town market’ (Report of the IDC 1937: 1-2) and deposited in an account controlled by a panel of eminent *ex officio* officials.

Negotiations with the custodians of the Von Dessin Collection, the Dutch Reformed Church followed soon afterwards, the outcome of which was that this valuable collection was handed over to the South African Public Library on permanent loan in 1820. The wine tax which provided ample funding for the library lasted until 1825 when this source of revenue was suspended during a time of economic adversity in the Colony and government support for the institution finally terminated in 1827. In order to survive the South African Public Library became a Subscription Library in 1829 thus setting the pattern for future library practice in the Cape Colony. This means of funding the institution applied until 1954 when it became a State-aided Institution in terms of the State Aided Institutions Act No 23 of 1931 (Friis 1962: 103).

As the colony’s settlements and towns multiplied in the 19th century, so too did Subscription Libraries proliferate, opening in Swellendam in 1838, in George in 1840, in Grahamstown in 1842, in Graaff-Reinet in 1847 and Port Elizabeth in 1848.

In Kimberley, a town which had come into being many years later in 1871, the literary needs of the inhabitants had been provided for by a succession of proprietary libraries, often attached to trading stores and followed by a short-lived library that operated as a limited liability company (Van Niekerk 1990: 76-91). Eventually the Kimberley Public Library, also a Subscription Library, was established towards the end of the century in 1882, once the town's inhabitants had accepted as Mr Justice Laurence stated, that

The old days of speculation and excitement and rapid fortunes and scarcely less rapid disasters have passed away and are not likely to return; and what we must do is to endeavour, as we can, to increase the amenities and resources of Kimberley by enlarging the scope of an institution like this and generally by doing what lies in our power to make it an agreeable place of residence more or less permanent for those who remain and expect to remain here in the future (KPL Minutes of Special Meeting, 30.11.1894).

3.2.1.1 The Molteno Regulations of 1874

The greatest impetus given to the library movement in the Cape Colony at that time can undoubtedly be attributed to the Colonial Secretary, JC Molteno who, in 1874, issued what became known as the Molteno Regulations. These provided for government grants to libraries in the Cape Colony on the £ for £ principle. In effect, this meant that a library would receive a grant based on the total amount of subscriptions and donations it received during the course of a year up to a maximum, with certain exceptions, of £100 per annum. In time this sum was increased to £150 per annum. These regulations provided great encouragement to the inhabitants of the smaller towns to establish libraries and the success of this scheme was manifested by the number of libraries established during the 50 year period from 1870 until 1920 and which totalled 148 (Friis 1962: 69). These regulations remained in force until 1955 when the Ordinance of 1949 dealing with the Cape Provincial Library Service was gradually implemented (Stirling 1950: 14).

Also of importance was the conceptual change in the nature of the Colonial government grant. The legislation which dealt with these government grants specified that the use of public funds to support Subscription Libraries, which by their very nature, were institutions which had not in the past catered for the vast majority of the population of these towns, would in future also benefit the general public in that they too would have access to the library without charge whenever it was open. In addition the libraries which received this grant would have to accept a certain degree of government control. This control was extended on 1 January 1922 when a rule, based on the concept of libraries being both educational and recreational institutions, was introduced which obliged library committees to spend a quarter of their annual grant on books which were of 'an educative and non-ephemeral nature' (Report of the IDC 1937: 3).

It is not surprising therefore that the success of the Molteno Regulations would encourage their adoption by the governments of the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and Natal after Union in 1910. It should also be noted that the Cape Province Ordinance No 10 of 1912 authorised municipalities to make grants to libraries. However the total amount disbursed in grants to libraries and other public institutions was not permitted to exceed 1½% of the municipal revenue, nor were municipalities permitted to establish libraries. In practice this meant that libraries were invariably at the losing end of the disbursement of these grants (Jones 1941).

That the Molteno Regulations provided a strong incentive for small towns to establish libraries, there is no doubt. In 1874 prior to the proclamation of the regulations, there were thirty-six public libraries in the Cape Colony, of which two did not survive. In 1884, ten years after the Molteno Regulations were implemented this number had increased to 53 and by 1894 to 89 (Friis 1962: 76).

The small town of Adelaide in the Eastern Cape is an appropriate illustration of the burgeoning effect of the Molteno Regulations. The town was obviously one of the beneficiaries of these regulations, its library having been established in 1878. In the 1894 Report of Libraries, this library claims to have had 1606 volumes, 30

subscribers and 10 visitors daily (Friis 1962: 76). However it would seem that by early in the 20th century, during the Anglo-Boer War period, the number of visitors to this facility had decreased, so too had its circulation. Nonetheless, in her diary written in approximately 1901, a young girl, Iris Vaughan, aged about 11, whose father was the Magistrate of Adelaide, gives an interesting description of this public library, a facility which clearly gave her a great deal of pleasure

I found a librery [sic] it is the most wonderfulest [sic] thing I have yet found heaps of books in a small room near Mr Lees hut. The key is always on the window ledge anyone takes it and goes in. But no one only me and old Mr. Goldi ever goes there. There are heaps of books and magasins [sic] all lying mixed up together. There is an exercise book. You write your name and the books when you take them out. Old Mr. Goldi is a very kind man. He cant [sic] climb up in the shelves to get the ones he wants. So I get them for him. He tells me what to read and we talk about them, and I write his in the book for him and he pats me on the head and gives me a tickey (Vaughan 2002: 63).

3.2.2. The Second Period: 1874 - 1928

Bearing in mind that the Molteno Regulations, and after 1910 their equivalent legislation in the other three provinces, remained in place until 1955 and notwithstanding their significant contribution to the development of a library service in the country, the library system in the Union of South Africa nonetheless had its shortcomings. During a Presidential address to Section 7 of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science read on 1 July 1941, the President of the South African Library Association, S B Asher referred to the advantages and to the deficiencies of the government grants as encouraged by the Molteno Regulations as follows:

The acceptance of a Government grant of funds entails these libraries the obligation of permitting non-subscribers to read books and periodicals in the library premises. The prominence, however, given to the subscription qualification for membership, the general ignorance of a legal right to the use of the libraries, the scanty or non-existent accommodation provided for the public, and above all the general feeling that non-subscribers are intruders and recipients of a benefaction from a semi-private body, combine to deprive this right of any practical value in all but the largest libraries (Asher 1941: 111).

At this time the Kimberley Public Library was one of the seven Subscription Libraries to which a Special Grant was allocated by vote in Parliament. In spite of the fact that the other six public libraries in the Colony had had a headstart on the Kimberley Public Library, its assets according to official reports published in 1894 of £6001 exceeded those of the Cape Colony's principal public library, namely the South African Public Library with assets valued at £4064. The Kimberley Public Library, with its astute administrators, had no liabilities, although its revenue from subscriptions for that period was lower than that of the South African Public Library (Friis 1962: 76).

3.2.2.1 The Carnegie Commission of 1928

Commendable as were these early attempts to establish public libraries in the Cape Colony, by the first decades of the 20th century the Union of South Africa lagged well behind the library services which had in the interim developed in Great Britain and the United States of America, lacking as they did a coordinated and practical national library system which could provide more adequately for the country's diverse population. In 1928, at the time the Carnegie Commission arrived in South Africa, there were in existence 211 institutions which were considered public libraries in the towns and villages in the Union, 200 of which were Subscription Libraries (Asher 1941: 111).

The two problem areas in South Africa identified by the President and Secretary of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, FP Keppel and James Bertram during discussions with university personnel and senior civil servants during a tour of Commonwealth countries, including South Africa, in 1927 were the thoroughly unsatisfactory state of the social and academic libraries in South Africa, as well as the increasing impoverishment of an exceptionally high percentage of the white population (Coetzee 1975: 1). These meetings culminated in two missions to the country sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation the aim of which were to investigate these matters and make recommendations with a view to providing the necessary funds for their implementation.

The mission relevant to this study was the Carnegie Library Commission which was led by two eminent and experienced international librarians, namely an American, Milton J Ferguson, State Librarian of California and the second, a Scot, SA Pitt, the head of the Public Library in Glasgow.

During their tour of South Africa, these gentlemen assessed the current library situation in the country and identified several fundamental problems which required attention before South Africa could claim to have an effective and efficient library system. The problems with which the Commission concerned itself were the need for free libraries, a rural library service, a library service for the blind, library services for non-Europeans, inter-library loans, a school library service, children's libraries, but as Stirling (1941: 145) states, the Library Conference held as a culmination of the Commission's investigation, could not have had such satisfactory results had there been nothing on which to build. He added that 'all these and more were to be found in some form or another somewhere in the Union' and that

It is a fact, not so widely known as it should be that South Africa was a pioneer in the free, tax-supported library movement (Stirling 1941: 145).

Another development to which those involved in the promotion of public libraries aspired was the extension of library services to the rural areas. Considerable attention

was paid to this matter by the Carnegie Commission and by delegates to the Bloemfontein Library Conference which followed. It is significant that in this regard, the Kimberley Public Library was at the forefront of such developments and as Kritzinger states in his historical survey of the more important libraries in the Union of South Africa, the Kimberley Public Library, from as early as 1884, lent books to several small towns in the area 'thus beginning what must surely be one of the earliest rural library services in the country' (Kritzinger 1948: 97). Confirmation of this statement is amply recorded in the Minutes and Annual Reports of the Kimberley Public Library over a period of many years. In fact, not only did this institution lend books to several surrounding towns, it is also recorded that the Chairman of the Library Committee, Mr Justice Laurence, with his infinite knowledge of literature and libraries, was equally generous with advice to smaller towns aspiring to the establishment of a library for their communities. On one occasion he personally donated and sought donations from others to supplement the funds collected for a library by the residents of Barkly West and with the total amount of £50 at his disposal, bought their first collection of books (KPL Annual Report, 1889 & KPL AGM Chairman's address, 10.10.1889).

The visit of the Carnegie Library Commission to the Kimberley Public Library was referred to in the address of the Chairman, JJ Collins to the Annual General Meeting of Subscribers held on 16 March 1928.

The interest of the Carnegie Corporation of New York in the working conditions of South African libraries was brought to the notice of your committee during the recent visit to Kimberley of the Corporation's representatives, Mr S A Pitt of the Glasgow Library System and Mr M J Ferguson, State Librarian of California. At a specially convened meeting, these gentlemen gave an account of the wonderful development of library facilities in the rural districts of Great Britain and America in the past few years (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 16.03.1928).

The Chairman went on to say that the gentlemen had also dealt with the advantages

resulting from proper co-ordination and co-operation of library resources and their application to the establishment of a Free Library System in this country (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 16.03.1928).

At the Annual General Meeting of Kimberley Public Library's Subscribers held on 18 April the following year the Chairman, JJ Collins once again referred to the Carnegie representatives saying that they had been

impressed with our accommodation and equipment, the ground space yet available for any necessary extension and our accessibility to a wide surrounding area. It is to be hoped they realised the comparative ease with which this institution could be adapted to fill an important part in the big scheme, the merits of which they had travelled so far to urge on South Africa (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 18.04.1929).

In all probability it was as a result of the geographic isolation of Kimberley and the vast distances which existed between the Kimberley Public Library and the other major library in the country, namely the South African Public Library in Cape Town, that the Kimberley Library was the first such institution in the country to broach what was in 1928 to be one of the cardinal issues to claim the attention of the Carnegie Commission, namely the subject of improving what would be mutually advantageous communication between libraries in the country by the formation of a 'Union of Public Libraries in South Africa'. It is recorded in the Kimberley Public Library's Annual Report for the year ending 30 September 1890 that

some correspondence has passed between this Committee and the Committee of the South African Public Library with a view to the establishment of such an Association for mutual assistance and interchange of views (KPL Annual Report, 1890).

This idea had arisen during the previous year when it was

resolved that in the opinion of this Committee it is desirable that a South African Library Association should be formed as soon as practicable and that the Chairman be requested to take such preliminary steps as may seem expedient for the attainment of this object (KPL Minutes, 05.12.1889).

This step was followed by a visit to Cape Town by the Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee, Mr Justice Laurence during which he had

communicated with the Librarian and some members of the Committee of the South African Library with reference to the proposed Library Association and read a copy letter on the subject which he has addressed to the Librarian (KPL Minutes, 06.02.1890).

A response dated 5 March 1890 was received from the Librarian (KPL Minutes, 06.02.1890), the contents of which were not recorded in the Minutes. In view of the fact that nothing came of the Kimberley Public Library Committee's proposal, it is fair to assume that the idea did not find sufficient favour with their colleagues in Cape Town. Several unsuccessful attempts were indeed made in 1905, 1906 and 1918 to launch a Library Association but these were shortlived (Stirling 1950: 146).

A period of forty years was to pass before the Kimberley Public Library Committee's proposal to form a South African Library Association was realised, the impetus for which undoubtedly derived from the Library Conference held in Bloemfontein in 1928 under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation's Library Commission to South Africa.

3.2.2.2 The 1928 Bloemfontein Library Conference

The climax to the Carnegie Commission's tour of South African libraries was the Library Conference held in Bloemfontein in 1928, a conference which undoubtedly marked a watershed in the development of libraries in South Africa.

Bearing in mind the desire expressed by the Kimberley Public Library Committee and its Librarian in its Minutes and Annual Reports on many occasions for closer co-operation with similar institutions in South Africa and the previously mentioned suggestion made by the Chairman to the Librarian of the South African Public Library to establish a Library Association in South Africa as far back as 1890, it was appropriate that amongst the delegates present at the Bloemfontein Conference, were three from the Kimberley Public Library namely the Chairman of the Library Committee, his Deputy and J Ross, the Librarian (Coetzee 1975: 140). In fact, SA Pellisier in his Presidential address to the South African Library Association in 1965 which focused on the development of the library movement in South Africa also referred to the role played by the Kimberley Public Library in this regard

[die] eerste konferensie van bibliotekarisse en belangstellendes in biblioteke is op 5 April 1904 onder beskerming van die 'South African Association for the Advancement of Science' in Johannesburg gehou ... Sy Edele Regter Laurence lewer toe reeds in sy openingsrede 'n pleidooi vir die afskaffing van die subskripsiestelsel en hy stel in vooruitsig 'n biblioteekvereniging met 'n eie joernaal (Pellisier 1965: 36).

Subsequent to the Bloemfontein Conference, the Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee, JJ Collins reported that the Library Conference held in Bloemfontein under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York had been attended by librarians and those interested in the development of the library movement in South Africa and that the object of the conference was

to study the question and endeavour to formulate a national library scheme which would benefit the whole of our widely scattered population (KPL Annual Report, 1928).

The Chairman went on to say that the Conference generally

favoured the organisation of a free library service and the formation of a co-ordinated service which would bring books in the national scheme within the reach of every citizen (KPL Annual Report, 1928).

The Chairman continued his report saying that the financial aspect of the proposed library scheme had been carefully considered and mentioned that at that time ‘

the total annual expenditure on the public library service in South Africa was about £90 000 while the cost of the proposed national scheme when fully developed was estimated at £120 000’ (KPL Annual Report, 1928).

The Chairman said that the Conference had registered a unanimous conviction that

an extension among the people of the practice of reading for study or recreation and the recognition by the Union Government of greater library facilities as an extension of the educational service of the State, was a great necessity (KPL Annual Report, 1929).

In several respects the Commission found the library system prevailing in South Africa at that time to be similar to the forerunners of municipal public libraries in the more fully developed English speaking countries such as the United States of America, Canada and the British Isles but they identified several aspects of the South African library system which, in spite of the 211 libraries which existed in the country in 1928, were peculiar to this country namely –

- The sparsity of the white population;
- the relatively large numbers of natives and non-Europeans;
- the lack, until 1910, of central government for the territories concerned;
- the limited means of transport and communication (Coetzee 1975: 29).

Other matters which it was found compounded the problems experienced by the library movement in South Africa which received attention at the Conference were that very little had been done to provide reading material for the rural population, for juveniles or for non-Europeans. An additional handicap to an acceptable library service was the shortage of qualified librarians. Training facilities for the profession were virtually non-existent in the country so that the majority of qualified librarians were recruited from abroad.

The Conference concluded its deliberations by passing several resolutions of which the most important in regard to this study related to –

1. the formation of a free and co-ordinated library service throughout the country;
2. the recognition by the Union Government of library facilities as an extension of the educational services founded by the State;
3. school services for European children;
4. general library services for non-Europeans;
5. formation of a Library Association;
6. the appointment of a National Library Board to regulate and control the National Library System;
7. the professional training for library service.

Generally, the findings of the Commission were endorsed by the delegates to the 1928 Library Conference which was attended by approximately 78 delegates of whom only 10 were librarians. Other interest groups present included representatives of the government and universities, publishers, agricultural organizations and scientists as

representatives of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science and representatives of non-white groups including the distinguished African author and resident of Kimberley, Mr Solomon T Plaatje (Coetzee 1975: 10). Although in the minority, there were indeed a few fervently motivated individuals among them who were to play a leading role in the future Library Association, not least Ross, the Librarian of the Kimberley Public Library (*DFA* 22.05.1947).



Fig 6: Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje

3.2.3 The Third Period: 1928 – 1955

3.2.3.1 Results of the Bloemfontein Conference

3.2.3.1.1 Formation of the South African Library Association (SALA) in 1930

Bertram L Dyer, Librarian at the Kimberley Public Library from 1900 until 1908 (See Appendix, Dyer: 293) must have felt the isolation of his profession in South Africa keenly so that in the absence of an association of South African librarians

membership of the English Association was to him the only alternative. In a paper read to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science Dyer bewails the fact that

South Africa has no Library Association, no Library Journal – but I trust that each year an opportunity will be found at the meetings of this Association to have a meeting of those interested in the library development of this Sub-Continent. America believes in conferences of co-workers in libraries, and so does England, and if the isolation of the South African libraries makes it impossible in any other way I trust the annual meetings of this Society may serve to draw together the workers in the different library fields for exchange of ideas and comparison of work (Dyer 1903: 11).

A period of almost thirty years was to lapse before the South African Library Association was formed. It was the collective realisation of the delegates to this conference that without a well-structured Library Association, the library movement in South Africa would remain static and inefficient and its manifold deficiencies unresolved. The formation of the South African Library Association in 1930 was indeed the most significant product of the Bloemfontein Conference as its formation as a professional body was the key required to remedy the other fundamental deficiencies in the South African public library system, the introduction of a free library system, in both the urban and rural areas, the training of staff and the extension of library services to meet the needs of non-Europeans.

Some years after the formation of the South African Library Association the President, RF Kennedy in his address to the Association's annual conference reiterated the Library Association's mission and appealed to his audience

To lift people from the curse of ignorance, the last and the most formidable enemy of mankind; and you ladies and gentlemen, you librarians, with the keys of the things of the mind in your keeping, are

the most important section of the general staff of this great crusade (Kennedy 1943: 110).

As distances between the libraries were great, the Carnegie Commission was of the opinion that the library movement would derive considerable benefit from the creation of a Library Association which could facilitate, on a regular basis, communication between libraries and librarians as well as forming a pressure group to negotiate with the government for recognition of the library movement. The Conference appointed a committee to draft a constitution for a South African Library Association on the lines of the Library Associations of Great Britain and Ireland.

The launch in 1933 of the quarterly journal of the Association, *South African Libraries* was a further development the significance of which was essential for the promotion of communication between the country's libraries. This was another of the innovations for which Dyer had pleaded in 1904 (Dyer 1904: 415-428).

A matter which was obviously of vital importance to subscribers to the various Subscription Libraries was the assurances given by the protagonists of the free library system that the assets of existing libraries and subscribers' privileges would in no way be affected by the proposed reforms. It is interesting to note that when finally the Kimberley Public Library Committee and the Subscribers to the Kimberley Public Library did decide in 1960 to join the Cape Provincial Library Service paving the way for the free library system, that it was obvious from the Agreement reached with the Kimberley City Council, that a great deal of thought had been given to this aspect of the transfer and that the assets of the institution were transferred to the Municipality under certain conditions supported by an effective monitoring mechanism which would endure in perpetuity (KCC/KPL Agreement, 1960/61). It was these assets the most important of which were the collection of rare books and Africana which today form the invaluable holdings of the Kimberley Africana Library.

3.2.3.1.2 The establishment of free libraries

Although not put into practice throughout the country until well into the 20th century, South Africa was, as has been mentioned, at the forefront of the free tax-supported library movement when the South African Public Library in Cape Town was established in 1818 and maintained by means of tax – this well before the library laws of America and Britain were promulgated.

The concept of tax-supported libraries became a perennial topic for discussion so that it was to be expected that it was one which was uppermost in the minds of the delegates to the Bloemfontein Conference. The need to establish in South Africa a system of free libraries to replace the Subscription Libraries which constituted the majority of libraries in the country and which were by their very nature, exclusive institutions which catered for an élite section of the white community with one that would give access to library facilities to a broader community became one of the primary subjects for debate in library circles. However restrictive and undesirable the system of Subscription Libraries might have appeared, their development had been inevitable bearing in mind that that section of the population supporting these institutions, because of its European background, was generally better educated, and more familiar with the culture of libraries. Furthermore, as a general rule, they were in a position to pay the subscriptions. In effect, this meant that library facilities were out of bounds to the vast majority of the population of the country.

The idea of extending the facilities of a Subscription Library to a wider circle of ratepayers than those who could afford the subscriptions was not a new one. In 1894 the Kimberley Public Library Committee put forward a suggestion to the Kimberley Municipality that if they were to make a municipal grant of £250 per annum to the Kimberley Public Library, the institution would be in a position financially to offer its facilities and privileges free to all ratepayers (KPL Annual Report, 1894). The Kimberley Borough Council did not accept the offer and the Library Committee was in no position to create a free library without the financial support of the local authority. The honour of establishing the first free library in the country fell to

Harrismith in the Orange Free State whose Town Council agreed to maintain a free library in 1908 (Stirling 1941: 145).

The Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee, Mr Justice Laurence (1897) expressed the desirability of introducing free tax-supported libraries when in an article written for the British Library journal *The Library* he once again advocated such a system to replace the existing Subscription Libraries –

At Kimberley the Committee have long been of opinion that such a system is not the best, is only, in fact a sort of temporary compromise, and have at length succeeded in placing the institution under their control in a sufficiently strong financial position to justify the offer, in consideration of a slight increase in the municipal grant, of an extension of the privilege of borrowing books, without subscription or fee, on the same system as at home, to every ratepayer (Laurence 1897: 266).

While in many respects Kimberley was well ahead of the times, it was to be approximately sixty years before the local authority in Kimberley was persuaded to accept responsibility for a free tax-supported library for the city.

But what precisely was meant by a ‘free’ library? SI Malan (1948) in his article on a free library service defines a ‘free’ library as follows -

‘n Vrye openbare biblioteek is ‘n inrigting bevattende ‘n versameling van boeke, tydskrifte en ander gedrukte materiaal hoofsaaklik wat aan alle munisipale belastingbetalers en hulle afhanklikes onder sekere voorwaardes uitgeleen word (Malan 1948: 80).

Malan added that the actual difference between a Subscription Library and a free library was therefore primarily a matter of funding. In the case of the Subscription Library funding for the purchase of library material derived primarily from the

subscribers while in the case of 'free' libraries funding was allocated to libraries from municipal rates and taxes (Malan 1948: 80).

Amongst the other results emanating from the Bloemfontein Conference were that several libraries, mainly in the Transvaal became free; that the Union Government consented in 1933 to the State Library in Pretoria becoming a Central Library and a free local library after having been granted a gift of \$125 000 by the Carnegie Corporation and a significantly increased grant from the Pretoria City Council (Stirling 1941: 148).

In Stirling's opinion, the Johannesburg Public Library had made the most remarkable progress having established branch libraries for Europeans and non-Europeans, a bookmobile service for suburban and outlying readers; a school library service; lectures to teachers and their libraries were free with no charges whatsoever payable.

It is interesting to note that public libraries at that time - as is the case today - fell under the jurisdiction of the four Provincial Councils in terms of the *Financial Relations Act* of 1913 which delegated responsibility for libraries, with the exception of the two State Libraries, to the provinces. The Kimberley Public Library Chairman JJ Collins described this provincial authority as 'stepmotherly care' which he said appeared to be the opinion of the conference which had had a very decided opinion that 'libraries should be withdrawn from this unsympathetic control' (KPL AGM Chairman's Address, 18.04.1929). The Chairman concluded his report to the Subscribers on the Bloemfontein Conference with a certain degree of scepticism saying that

The scheme is a great and noble one, but the difficulties peculiar to this country will be hard to overcome. Much time, thought and discussion will be necessary to ripen it to maturity and it yet remains to be proved whether or not it is only the dream of a few incorrigible idealists (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 18.04.1929).

Stirling states in his article on the Conference that

One immediate and direct result of the Conference was the endeavour to practice library co-operation on an ever-increasing scale (Stirling 1941: 148)

Although a great deal was inspired and accomplished by the Carnegie Commission and the Bloemfontein Conference, the matter concerning the establishment of free libraries remained unresolved for most libraries for some years to come.

While free tax-supported libraries were considered the ideal in the aftermath of the Bloemfontein Conference, questions were raised many decades later by local authorities as to whether they could indeed be held responsible for the costs involved in maintaining free public libraries.

Ondanks openbare biblioteke se verbintnisse tot die konsep van gratis dienslewering is daar in die jongste tyd al hoe meer tekens wat daarop dui dat dit nodig is om die geldigheid en toepaslikheid van die standpunte en oortuigings wat die konsep van gratis openbare biblioteekdienste in Suid-Afrika onderlê.

Dit blyk onder andere dat veral die toenemende ekonomiese eise wat in onlangse jare aan plaaslike besture gestel word, meebring dat sommige plaaslike bestuurslede die onvoorwaardelike voortsetting van algehele gratis openbare biblioteekdienste begin bevraagteken en selfs verwerp (*S.Afr.J.Libr.Inf.Sc.* 1985: Editorial : 41-48).

3.2.3.1.3 Training of librarians

The other significant development emanating from the Bloemfontein Conference was the recognition of the need to train librarians locally. The initiative to implement this

proposal emanated from The Library Association which presented a correspondence course in librarianship holding the first of these examinations in August 1934. This vital step paved the way for the appointment of qualified librarians to take charge of the libraries in the country (Stirling 1941: 148). It was generally felt that no library could function optimally without a well-qualified librarian at the helm – a person with professional status who was in a position academically to serve the public and was conversant with local conditions. There is no doubt that the Kimberley Public Library's enviable status and fine collection acquired in the early stages of its existence was attributable to the fact that it had at its disposal the services of two well trained librarians with wide experience. The need to train librarians was appreciated by the Library Committee and Librarian from Kimberley and the Library Association was given their full support in its endeavour to establish the necessary training facilities.

That the munificence of the Carnegie Corporation of New York was responsible for giving the library movement in South Africa an enormous boost, there is no doubt. Apart from a contribution of approximately £100 000 for use by South African libraries, a debt of gratitude was also due to the Corporation for making possible the Library Conference in Bloemfontein in 1928; the formation of the South African Library Association; study tours by South African librarians to the United States; the establishment of a Central Library as well as the launch of non-European library services and many other generous gestures (Stirling 1941: 150).

Although South African libraries were beset by many problems, that which proved to be the greatest handicap to the prompt implementation of the fundamental steps identified at the conference as those required to develop an integrated and efficient library service in South Africa was undoubtedly the lack of political will and an appreciation by politicians of the innumerable benefits such a library service would bring to the country and its people. This was manifest at many levels not least on 9 September 1941 during the Senate Debate on the Report of the Interdepartmental Committee of 1937, when it was pointed out that

the Carnegie Commission were prepared to spend another £26 000 at least to carry out the recommendations which were placed before the House. “Unfortunately we delayed and dallied and we lost the opportunity” (Jones 1941: 50).

3.2.3.2 The Interdepartmental Committee on the Libraries in the Union of South Africa (IDC)

Nine years after the Bloemfontein Library Conference of 1928, few of the recommendations, other than the formation of the South African Library Association had been satisfactorily implemented and the enthusiasm and euphoria inspired by the Carnegie-sponsored Bloemfontein Conference which was the culmination of the Commission’s work in South Africa, appears to have lost momentum.

Limited progress had been made in the sphere of the establishment of free libraries and rural library services, objectives which had claimed most attention at the Carnegie-sponsored Bloemfontein Conference in 1928. By 1941 when the Interdepartmental Committee’s Report was debated in Parliament, attention was drawn to the fact that only approximately 4% of the white population had access to libraries. Little had in fact changed since 1928. The Committee Report states that at that time, 1937, the Transvaal had made more progress than any of the other provinces with seven free libraries. In the Cape there was one, in Natal two and in the Orange Free State one (*SAL* 1941: 46).

It was to the credit of the Minister of the Interior (the Hon Mr Jan Hofmeyr) that the Interdepartmental Committee on Libraries of the Union of South Africa was appointed by him in 1936 to enquire into and report upon the general organisation of libraries in the Union, more particularly with reference to –

- (a) the services at present rendered to the public;
- (b) the control and financial provision for libraries;
- (c) library personnel and the training of staff

and to make recommendations as to the steps to be taken to effect an improvement in respect of (a), (b) and (c) and for the better utilization of libraries as an educational agency (IDC Report, 1937: 2).

The Committee was chaired by RB Young and comprised one representative from each of the four provinces and a Secretary and was destined to give renewed momentum to the library movement in South Africa. It is important to note that to a large extent, the Committee placed the onus for the improvement of the library position in the country squarely on the shoulders of government, although the Committee did criticise the 'general adherence throughout the country to the Subscription System' (IDC Report 1937: 10).

The report states that

After full consideration of the evidence before it, the Committee is convinced that no marked improvement can be effected, nor continuous progress ensured unless a radical change is made in the library policy of the country; and, further, that to bring this about *a strong lead must be given by the Government, and the active co-operation of the municipal and other local authorities secured.* Whole-hearted and efficient assistance from the now organised librarian profession of the Union in bringing into effect any measure of library reform on modern lines may be confidently relied upon (IDC Report 1937: 10).

The conclusions reached by the Interdepartmental Committee on Libraries pointed to a repetition of the problems that had faced the library movement in the country for decades. Briefly, the recommendations of the Committee focused primarily on:

- the fact that as the Subscription System was still adhered to which severely limited the number of people who had access to libraries;

- the introduction of a free library service, funded equally by both Union Government and the Provinces, and available to every citizen, urban and rural was essential;
- the responsibility of municipalities to provide the free urban libraries;
- the importance of encouraging the youth to read and to achieve this, a library service for juveniles was essential;
- the Union Government having to accept responsibility for library services for the blind, which at that time depended largely on funding from the private sector;
- the Provincial Administrations having to be encouraged to provide library services for natives;
- the Cape Province having to provide library services for the large Coloured population of the province;
- the status and training of librarians; Library legislation for Natal and the Orange Free State;
- and the establishment of a National Library Board to advise the Government on matters concerning libraries (IDC Report 1937: 10-25).

The most satisfactory aspect of the Report, according to Stirling (1941: 150) was that the Committee had recommended that the financial responsibility for rural libraries should be borne equally by the Union Government and the provinces. Stirling goes on to state that the least satisfactory feature of the Report was the Committee's failure to include any recommendation in regard to 'modern library legislation for South Africa'. In his article, Stirling adds the opinion of one of South Africa's most eminent jurists to the effect that

In the absence of Union Library Legislation, the South African Library position must remain chaotic (Stirling 1941: 150).

While both the Bloemfontein Conference and the Interdepartmental Committee stressed the urgent need for a National Library Board to control and regulate the national library system, it was not until 2001 that the National Council for Library and

Information Sciences Act No 6 of 2001 was promulgated. This Act however makes no provision for a repeal or amendment of any previous legislation to deal with a National Library Council.

A comparative study of the two reports namely that on the Bloemfontein Conference (1928) and that of the Interdepartmental Committee (1937) indicate that to a large extent the latter was based on the findings of the Carnegie Commission – findings which had not been resolved or implemented. Friis (1962) states however, that

The most important achievement of this Committee was the fact that it very clearly stated that ‘to remedy this state of affairs a strong lead must be given by the Government of the country and the active co-operation of municipal and other local authorities secured’ (Friis 1962: 89).

3.2.3.2.1 Consultative Committee discussion of the IDC Report

Prior to the Parliamentary Debate, the Report was discussed at a meeting of the Consultative Committee in 1938 which comprised representatives of the four Provincial Administrations and several Union Ministers. This meeting decided to leave the matter in abeyance until ‘the question of subsidies to the provinces had been settled’ but as the Government was not inclined to ‘review the financial position of the provinces’ at that time, the issues impeding the development of the library movement in South Africa remained unresolved, despite representations submitted by the South African Library Association and other relevant bodies. In 1939 the Consultative Committee resolved that each of the Provinces implement those of the recommendations of the Committee which did not place too great a financial burden upon them, and the remainder of the recommendations would be dealt with at a later date (Friis 1962: 90).

3.2.3.2.2 Parliamentary debate on IDC Report: 1941

On 25 April 1941, the Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Libraries of the Union of South Africa (1937) was debated at length in Parliament when the attention of the Government was drawn to the multiple deficiencies in the existing library system and the recommendations of the Committee with a view to the development of a national library policy and the organisation of nationwide library facilities (*SAL Report on the IDC ... 1941: 45-50*).

At the conclusion of the debate, it was proposed that

- those Administrations which had not already done so assume responsibility for libraries in their provinces in accordance with the *Financial Relations Act* No 10 of 1913;
- a Library Advisory Committee be appointed in each province to advise the Administration on library developments;
- the Provinces develop a free rural library service;
- the Provinces develop a non-European library service;
- the two National Libraries be placed in a position to fulfil their respective functions;
- and that books be transported free of charge.

In his evaluation of the Report, Friis (1962) states that

While the report cannot be described as a scientific evaluation of libraries then existing, it must be accepted as a good descriptive survey. At that time library services were so inferior that a detailed scientific investigation was neither necessary nor, perhaps, even possible. The Committee's judgements were largely subjective but they did serve to point out the more glaring deficiencies (Friis 1962: 89).

3.2.3.2.3 Post-IDC developments in the library movement in South Africa

In the decades following the Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Libraries, the South African Library Association was preoccupied with several topics that are repeatedly referred to in the papers read at the conferences of the Library Association and its provincial branch associations - topics in fact which dated from the late 19th century when these proposals were put forward by the Kimberley Public Library.

It is of significance that all references to the extension of library services to the rural communities at every level of debate appear to have referred exclusively to library services for the European rural community and not to library services for Africans and other non-Europeans. The latter appears to have been considered a completely different matter and dealt with as such. However, during the Annual Conference of the Library Association in 1943, the following motion was accepted

That the SALA take action to promote the development of the library movement among Africans and other non-Europeans by appointing a small committee ...

At the same time it was pointed out that the Library Association had not done much to help the Natives and that everyone was affected by the cultural development of the African people (Speight 1943: 96).

3.2.3.2.4 Nature of holdings in South African libraries

In regard to the quality of the literature held by libraries in the country, S B Asher in his Presidential address to Section F of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science in 1941, quoted a statement made by the State Library in Pretoria to an educational conference held in Durban to the effect

that the average South African library might be described as a mere subsidized book club run on sweated labour for the circulation of ephemeral fiction

and also

that the real function of a library as our most important educational institution remained unrealized and unfulfilled (Asher 1941).

It is apparent from the Kimberley Public Library's Annual Report submitted to the Subscribers at their Annual General Meeting on 31 December 1942 that this accusation was hardly applicable to the Kimberley Public Library. The report indicated that the Library Committee was well aware of the fact that it had a responsibility to provide the public with books which were of educational value and reference is also made to 'a growing demand for technical and reference books and that a number of new volumes have been added to the Library's stock'. The report states that of the total of £491 spent on books during the year under review, £232 had been spent on books of a non-ephemeral nature (KPL Annual Report, 1942).

At the suggestion of the Minister of Finance, a Fact Finding Committee was appointed to investigate the financial commitments and general administration of the provinces. In due course, the Corbett Commission was appointed and reported its findings in 1944. Within the next seven years, each of the provinces established Provincial Library Services which finally brought the long-awaited national scheme to fruition (Friis 1962: 91).

3.2.4 The establishment of the Cape Branch of the South African Library Association

Eight years after the formation of the South African Library Association, the handful of qualified librarians in and around Cape Town decided to form a branch of the

Library Association to promote library interests throughout the Cape Province. Subsequently a public meeting was called in June of that year to discuss ways and means by which the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Committee on Libraries could be implemented. Although the Foundation Members were limited in number, the enthusiasm and dedication of those at the forefront of the movement made up for the numerical deficiency. However in the course of time, membership grew substantially notwithstanding the logistical problems such as distance, transport and not long after the establishment of the Branch, the limitations placed on movement by World War II.

Varley (1943) gave a detailed list of these logistical problems in his Presidential address on *Cape Libraries Today and Tomorrow* delivered at the 4th Triennial Conference of Library Association held in Johannesburg on 26 January 1943 when he pointed out that the Cape Province had logistical problems which handicapped their work, problems which were not experienced in other provinces. The Cape, he said, was not a province but a country; a country with well-defined natural boundaries; enormous in size being one and a half times bigger than the other three provinces put together, bigger than England and France combined with the largest town 800 miles from its furthest boundary. As far as the population and the wealth of the province was concerned, Varley stated that these were not evenly distributed and that the population of the Cape was only very slightly larger than that of the Transvaal and that for every square mile in the Cape there were two Europeans to nine non-Europeans compared with seven Europeans in the Transvaal to twenty-two non-Europeans. These two factors, i.e. low density and great distances between the many small towns and villages, a situation aggravated by a poor rail and road system, increased the cost of administration.

The handicaps to which Varley referred were indeed akin to the problems experienced by the Kimberley Public Library which was situated almost almost 650 miles (1000 km) from the focus of library activity in the Cape Province.

Varley went on to say that

the social and geographic background was important because national library policy depends largely on the proper appreciation of the differences that exist in the various provinces (Varley 1943).

To a great extent and as would be expected, the focal point of the Cape Branch and its activities was Cape Town and its environs. The South African Public Library was the hub from which emanated the administration of the association with due support from the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch. Worthy initiatives such as the Society for Book Distribution were administered by the South African Public Library.

Presumably by virtue of its geographical position the Cape Branch also controlled the Books for Troops and Ships, a nation-wide project which started in 1940 and which ceased operations in 1945. Many tens of thousands of books and magazines were collected for distribution to the men and women of the armed forces. According to numerous records of the Kimberley Public Library of that time, the Library having been selected as one of several collection points established for this purpose was well supported by the people in the town and its environs who appear to have done their share in contributing reading matter for the troops and seamen as they had also done for the troops station in South West Africa during World War I (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 1915).

In 1949, the *Financial Relationship Act* was promulgated in the Union Parliament enabling Provincial Administrations to provide financial support for public libraries. This too was the year in which the President of the Library Association reminded his colleagues that 'so much needed to be done to convince Government authorities and the public alike of the basic nature of our work' (Varley 1949: 16) and that the formulation of an agreed philosophy on South African librarianship was necessary if this was ever to be accomplished. He suggested the following statement of aims for public libraries -

That the public library is pre-eminently a means for promoting the whole development of the individual in society, through the best use of the recorded word in all its forms; and that such a public library should be democratically controlled, mainly supported by public funds and open free to all users (Varley 1949: 16).

The President of the Library Association went on to say that the South African library movement could not ignore the fact that it was being 'swept willy-nilly into the mainstream of library development in the western world and must sooner or later face its implications' (Varley 1949: 17). The South African Library Association had in fact become a member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) which had at that time been acknowledged by UNESCO as the world association of members of the library profession.

Insignificant as the event might appear, the transfer of library affairs from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Education was indeed tacit recognition by Government of the role of libraries in the field of education in South Africa (Varley 1949: 17).

Although the South African Library Association continued to direct library affairs and communicate on behalf of the library movement with government and international bodies, the Cape Branch became increasingly active and because geographically Kimberley lay within the orbit of the Cape Branch, it was inevitable that the Kimberley Public Library would become affiliated to the Cape Branch and, where distances would permit, engage itself more keenly in the activities of the Cape Branch of the Library Association. As two of the leading libraries in the Cape Province it is not surprising therefore to see that Douglas Varley, Librarian of the South African Public Library and Olive McIntyre, Librarian of the Kimberley Public Library were appointed the representatives of the Cape Branch at the South African Library Association's Triennial Conference in 1942 (SAL Annual Report, 1944: 54).

It was during this period that the Cape Branch continued relentlessly to nudge the Provincial authorities into acknowledging their responsibility in regard to the establishment and maintenance of public libraries. The Cape Provincial Advisory Library Committee was a body appointed by the Province, the existence of which was essential for the Treasury to be allowed to give financial support to public libraries in rural areas. This defectively structured body existed from 1940 until 1949 when it was succeeded by a Provincial Library Board. The Cape Branch of the Library Association contributed substantially to the report of the survey the Advisory Library Committee had undertaken of libraries in the Cape Province, correlating the data and making informed recommendations particularly in regard to the establishment of

a free library service throughout the Cape Province, a mobile bookstock, the appointment of a Provincial Library Organiser and the need for more trained librarians if any of the schemes for library reform were to be brought into operation successfully (Immelman 1963: 38).

This report suffered a fate similar to that of many other official reports in that it was published several years after it had been compiled in 1944, by which time much of the data contained in it had become outdated (Immelman 1963: 37).

In December 1943, the Cape Branch of the Library Association in co-operation with the Society for Book Distribution and the Trustees of the South African Public Library arranged a large public meeting in Cape Town 'to initiate a drive for better libraries in South Africa' (Immelman 1963:38). To this gathering a representative array of influential members of the public were invited: 'Cabinet ministers, political leaders of all parties, town councillors, provincial councillors and others representing a large number of public organizations' (Immelman 1963: 38) all of which had been primed with selected extracts from the 1944 Report which had yet to be published. Immelman (1963: 38) describes this well organised meeting as one of the most important ever arranged by the Cape Branch or the Society for Book Distribution. Although this gathering did not result in a major change of heart in regard to public libraries by the Provincial authorities, an influential Continuation Committee was

appointed to continue the campaign. A Provincial Library Organiser was appointed, while conversely the Advisory Library Committee became increasingly redundant.

In due course, it became evident that library legislation was essential if a provincial library service was to come into operation. Members of the Continuation Committee and two members of the Cape Branch Committee finally drafted the necessary legislation, notwithstanding the fact that essential provisions submitted by the professional librarians were omitted from the legislation. This Provincial Library Ordinance (No 10 of 1949) the purpose of which was

to make provision for the establishment of a free library service for the province and for matters incidental thereto

was eventually passed in 1949 (Friis 1962: 283).

In 1949, the Cape Branch suggested to the public libraries of Port Elizabeth, East London and Kimberley that they become free libraries in terms of this Ordinance, but none of them was prepared at that stage to abandon its existing status. However, in 1957 those of the Subscription Libraries that remained were informed that the Province would no longer contribute to their funds unless they were members of the Provincial Library Service (KPL Annual Report, 1957).

The remainder of the decade Immelman (1963: 39) describes as a very difficult period in respect of library affairs.

3.2.5 The Fourth Period: 1955 - 1994

3.2.5.1 The Cape Provincial Library Service Ordinance No 4 of 1955

The fourth period between 1955 and 1994 is rather more difficult to define or describe. It started with the promulgation of the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance

No 4 of 1955 and, in so far as the Kimberley Public Library was concerned, this legislation heralded the beginning of the Library's radical change of status in 1960/61. The Annual Report of the Kimberley Public Library for the year ended 31 December 1955 records

An event of great importance to libraries in the Cape Province is the passing of the Cape Library Ordinance of 1955. Briefly it aims to provide eventually a free library service to all parts of the Province (KPL Annual Report, 1955).

The Annual Report of the Kimberley Public Library for 1957 records the visit of the Cape Provincial Library Organiser. During this visit a meeting of members of the City Council and the Library Board was held and the Library Organiser was asked to make a survey of Kimberley's library requirements. However, by the end of that year, the result of the survey had not been received nor had the Kimberley City Council decided whether or not to establish a free library for the city (KPL Annual Report, 1957).

Although the Kimberley Public Library continued to function as a Subscription Library for some time after 1955, it became increasingly apparent that it would not survive without additional funding. During the course of Kimberley City Council's protracted deliberations as to whether or not it would join the Provincial Library Service coupled with the problems presented by inadequate funding, the Library Committee had great difficulty 'in trying to provide an adequate library service for the people of Kimberley' (KPL Annual Report, 1957). Shortage of funds as well as the prevailing uncertainty in regard to the future of the Kimberley Public Library also precluded long term decisions in regard to the maintenance of the building.

Eventually in 1959, the Kimberley City Council decided to finance a free library service for the city in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance No 4 of 1955. The introduction of the free library system at provincial level would have the most

far-reaching effect on the future of the Kimberley Public Library. The Library's Annual Report of 1959 states that

The decision taken by the City Council to finance a Free Library service for the City marked an important stage in Kimberley's library development. When implemented, this will bring Kimberley into line with the larger cities and towns in South Africa, many of which have enjoyed the benefits of Free Libraries for a number of years (KPL Annual Report, 1959).

The decision by the Kimberley City Council to affiliate to the Cape Provincial Library Service could not have been postponed any longer as the Library Committee wrestled with the financial problems experienced by the Kimberley Public Library. The Annual Report for 1959 confirms this by informing Subscribers that

It had long been realized that unless substantial additional revenue could be obtained, the Library would have to curtail its services to the subscribers and to the public. The policy of the Provincial Administration of withdrawing financial assistance from all libraries other than those under Provincial or Municipal control would in the next two or three years, further aggravate the position (KPL Annual Report, 1959).

The Kimberley Public Library's Annual Report of 1959 also assured Subscribers that the Committee and the Library's legal adviser had given careful consideration to matters concerning the transfer of the assets of the Kimberley Public Library, particularly the Africana and Special Collections, to the City Council. These, the Committee had insisted would remain the property of the citizens of Kimberley and indeed the Memorandum of Agreement which dealt with the transfer included clauses to this effect, with the necessary monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the Kimberley City Council complied with these terms and conditions (KCC/KPL Agreement, 1960/61).

On 1 January 1961, the Kimberley Public Library opened its doors to the public as a free library under the jurisdiction of the Kimberley City Council and the Kimberley Public Library Committee which had managed the affairs of the Library for a period of 78 years relinquished the management of the Library to the Kimberley City Council-appointed Library Advisory Committee.

It is interesting to note that the Cape Provincial Library Service Ordinance No 4 of 1955 made provision for the proclamation by the Administrator of an area of a local authority with more than 25 000 Europeans to be an Urban Library Area should he be of the opinion that the local authority had the capacity to maintain a free library service. However, the Kimberley City Librarian pointed out in his Annual Report of 1971 that notwithstanding the fact that Kimberley had a European population in excess of the prescribed 25 000, it was not feasible to have Kimberley proclaimed an Urban Library Area primarily because of the absence of a sufficient number of professionally trained librarians required to maintain a large library and also because no bookshops existed of the caliber required to handle the book requirements of such an institution (KPL Annual Report, 1971).

3.2.5.2 National Conference of Library Authorities of 1962

Immelman (1963: 53) describes the National Library Conference of Library Authorities of November 1962 as the culmination of the work of the South African Library Association's Action Committee which had been constituted in 1959.

In the editorial column of the April 1962 edition of the *Cape Librarian*, the Editor drew attention to the forthcoming National Conference of Library Authorities referring to the conference as certainly 'the most important of its kind ever to be convened in South Africa'. The aim of this conference he informed his readers was the

improvement of library services for the whole country and this is to be brought about by closer library co-operation and by organizing library material for its most effective use (*CL* 1962: Editorial).

The conference was given official status as it was held under the patronage of the Hon the Minister of Education, Arts and Science and the invitations to attend were issued to the authorities of all major libraries and to a large number of learned societies throughout the country by the Secretary of that government department (*SAL* 1963:81). The Kimberley Public Library was represented at this conference by the Chairman of the Library Committee, Councillor EO Davis and the City Librarian, JA Scott.

The National Conference was held on 5-6 November 1962 at the University of Pretoria and the report which appeared in *South African Libraries* states that there was

a clear indication of the desire on the part of participating library authorities to contribute their share to the building up of a strong national library service for the Republic of South Africa (*SAL* 1963: 81).

One of the salient features of the Conference was the concern expressed regarding the quality and extent of the study and research material in South African libraries and it was therefore resolved that a Committee for the National Bookstock be appointed to make a thorough investigation, in consultation with learned societies, research workers and the Research Committee who would “define the fields of knowledge in which extensive subject collections should be built up” (*SAL* 1963: 82). It was resolved that the Committee, which should be approved by Government, should consist of the Chairmen of the Advisory Committees in the eight designated Library Regions, one representative each of the Central Government, the National Council for Social Research, the Council for Scientific Research, the University Principals Committee, the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, South African Libraries, the English Academy of Southern Africa, the Department of Agricultural Technical Services and one each from the two national libraries (Programme for future development ... 1963: 82-83)

The Conference also expressed the opinion

that it is essential to establish a body to supervise the implementation of its resolutions, to facilitate mutual consultation between library authorities and to promote co-operation between the bodies concerned (*SAL 1963: 89*).

Another significant aspect of library development which characterised the 1962 Conference was that for the first time the preservation of technologically advanced recorded material such as cinematographic and phonographic material was included in the planning of future library development (*SAL 1963: 106*).

Also of importance was the principle recognised and accepted by the Conference that public libraries were the joint responsibility of the State, the Provincial Administration and the local authorities (*SAL 1963:100*).

In 1963 the Annual conference of the South African Library Association was held in Kimberley for the first time and the City Librarian referred in her Annual Report of that year to the fact that John Ross, Librarian of the Kimberley Public Library from 1909 until 1942 had played a

prominent part in the first national conference of library authorities held in Bloemfontein in 1928 and was also one of the moving spirits behind the formation of the South African Library Association (*KPL Annual Report 1963*).

3.2.5.3 The development of the information system in South Africa

Coupled with the expansion of the information system in South Africa, the library movement and not least the Kimberley Public Library was faced also with the

challenges presented by the advent of the era of the computer and other technological advances and their employment in South African libraries. The East London Public Library was the first public library to make use of computers for 'a major and solely library function' which occurred simultaneously with the opening of the city's new library in 1970 (Van Deventer 1981: 62).

By the 1970's libraries in South Africa and throughout the world were considered integral and indispensable to the service having to be provided to a society which hungered after information. This information phenomenon was also marked by the South African Library Association which, on its 50th anniversary, saw fit to change the name of the association to that of the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS) as a means of signifying the broader and more inclusive purpose of the association. During his address to the conference on this occasion, the President proceeded to remind his audience of the contribution the South African Library Association had made to the national information system in the country, stating that in point of fact 'the transfer of knowledge via the record has always been an important *raison d'être* of libraries' (Viljoen 1981: 87). He went on to point out that the concept of a national information system (NATIS), a concept initiated in 1974 by the Intergovernmental Conference on the Planning of National Documentation, Library and Archives Infrastructures could be described as

the totality of activities, persons and bodies concerned with the creation, collection, selection, arrangement, storage, retrieval, processing, provision and use of information in various spheres of life (Viljoen 1981: 87).

In the final issue of *South African Libraries*, the Editor makes mention of the fact that at the 50th conference of the South African Library Association, national dignitaries including the State President, had paid tribute to the library and information profession and that it seemed that

at last we no longer have to plead cap in hand with the authorities to recognize the value and necessity of providing and using information (SAL 1981, Editorial: 131)

because the State acknowledged that the country needed information but that the profession needed to deliver those services which they had undertaken when pleading for recognition.

The first issue of SAILIS' journal *The South African Journal for Librarianship and Information Science (SAfr.JLib.Inf.Sc.)* appeared in July 1981 and the Editor, RB Zaaiman availed himself of the opportunity to remind members of the goal set by Charles T Loram in the first issue of the *South African Libraries* –

Among the many functions which this journal can perform, one seems to be of outstanding importance. The elevation of the librarians of South Africa to the status of a profession with adequate educational and technical qualifications and with all else that is implied in membership of a learned profession could perhaps do more for the advancement of the library movement than anything else (Zaaiman 1981: 3).

But all was by no means well in this field of endeavour. In his article *Die funksies van die openbare biblioteek in die samelewing*, B Fouché states that there were opposing views as to whether or not it was necessary to debate the aims and functions of public libraries but he felt that the negative opinion did indeed require urgent attention

daar is nie 'n duidelike begrip van die doelstellings en funksies van die openbare biblioteek by bibliotekarisse aanwesig nie; dat die biblioteekgemeenskap gevolglik nie daarin slaag om 'n duidelike begrip van die doelstellings en funksies aan bibliotekowerhede en gebruikers oor te dra nie; dat die openbare biblioteekwese as gevolg van hierdie

koersloosheid nie daarin slaag om in kompetisie met ander openbare dienste voldoende fondse te bekom om doeltreffend te funksioneer nie; en dat die toekoms van die openbare biblioteek in die weegskaal is (Fouché 1981: 4).

This lack of understanding on the part of the authorities and the competition for funds to which Fouché refers was amply demonstrated by the trials and tribulations suffered by the Kimberley Public Library. Many years of negotiations with the Provincial Administration elapsed during which the Kimberley Public Library was obliged to serve the public as a free library in a library building which was totally inadequate. The new Kimberley Public Library building finally materialised in 1984.

It was at that time, during the construction of the new building for the Kimberley Public Library, that it was decided that its valuable collection of Africana and rare books should remain in the old building and function independently as the Kimberley Africana Library to operate as a separate research institution but remain as a branch of the Kimberley Public Library system. Although the Municipality had provided for the upgrading of the old building to the extent of R200 000, these funds were quite inadequate and could provide for nothing more than the bare necessities (KPL Annual Report, 1984/85). Although the Kimberley Africana Library was to function independently as a research library, little consideration appears to have been given to the fact that substantial differences exist between the functions of a public library and one which focuses on research. The failure to make this distinction at the time of the dichotomisation of the two libraries has had severe consequences in regard to the Africana Library's ability to function optimally as a research library and to preserve its collections.

The 1980's saw the beginning of a period of transition in the political and social structures of South Africa, structures which had taken root in the country in 1652 when the earliest Europeans settled in the country. Gradually, those in power came to realise that the non-white component of the population of the country required a share of the country's resources in order to improve their quality of life by 'developing

knowledge, talent and initiative' (Shillingshaw 1986: 40). In an address to SAILIS in September 1986 Shillingshaw drew attention to the potential role of public libraries in this process of development and outlined the problems confronting these institutions in achieving this aim. One of the central problems he identified was that

Among public administrators and policy makers, the library does not yet appear to be generally regarded as an instrument for development. Even in the field of formal and non-formal education, the public library is not regarded as a significant factor (Shillingshaw 1986:40).

Shillingshaw (1986) pointed out that to a significant extent, it was the fault of the public libraries that they did not receive the official recognition they needed and that it was indeed up to them to find ways and means of serving communities other than those who were affluent, educated and leisured. Only by adapting to prevailing sentiment and policy could public libraries be accorded the position in society they desired. He advised public libraries to make every effort to become an integral part of the educational system and not attempt to 'become a splinter system trying to operate by itself' (Shillingshaw 1986: 40).

A year later, in 1987, the Minister of National Education, FW de Klerk, during a speech made at the State Library in Pretoria pointed out that the country had more than 1 700 service points, all of which contained a vast body of knowledge. He went on to urge the library movement to use these resources wisely to

stimulate the process of development, and in doing so we would do well to focus on those parts of the population and the economy where the need for development is greatest.

Creating an informed community by providing information to a broader base of the community is a better investment than wealth in the hands of a few individuals (De Klerk 1987: (iii)).

3.2.6 The Fifth Period: 1994 – 2008

3.2.6.1 Public libraries in the ‘new’ South Africa

The year 1994 marked the beginning of a political, social and economic revolution in South Africa, the consequences of which have affected every facet of life in the country. Political domination by the minority white population came to an end after a period of almost 350 years and the legally-enforced racial divisions of the past were abandoned. A new and mutually acceptable Constitution was adopted for the country, which amongst other provisions extended the second tier level of government from four to nine provinces. The Transvaal and the Cape Provinces were those which were most affected by the new constitutional arrangement, the old Transvaal being divided into four provinces and the Cape Province into three.

In accordance with the new provincial demarcation, the assets of the Cape Provincial Library Service were divided amongst the three new provinces namely the Western Cape with the capital in Cape Town, the Eastern Cape with the capital in Bisho and the Northern Cape with its capital in Kimberley.

The new *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* was adopted in 1996. In terms of Schedule 5 Part A of the *Constitution*, libraries, museums and archives (other than national libraries, museums and archives) were classified as functional areas of exclusive provincial competence. However, in terms of Section 156(4) of the Constitution

The national government and provincial governments must assign to a municipality by agreement and subject to any conditions the administration of a matter listed in Part A of Section 5 which necessarily relates to local government, if

- (a) that matter would most effectively be administered locally
 - (b) the municipality has the capacity to administer it
- (South Africa 1996, Section 156(4)).

Obviously, the intention of this constitutional stipulation is to provide for, amongst other matters, the continuation of the partnership between provinces and municipalities that existed prior to 1994 also in as far as public library services were concerned. However, whether most municipalities do indeed have the capacity to administer public libraries effectively is debatable. The past decade has proved conclusively that the cost to the relatively limited number of ratepayers of the top echelons of municipal management and administrative structures coupled with the social and political priorities of the local government as well as their general incompetence as reflected in successive qualified reports of the Auditor-General and reports in the media, has severely eroded municipal revenue. This, combined with the apparent relegation of services such as free public libraries to the foot of the roll of municipal priorities, has exacerbated the problem. This also means that the conditions of service of library personnel leave a great deal to be desired. Consequently this has had a negative effect on the retention of qualified personnel and the recruitment of suitable new staff to the ranks. Under such circumstances, it is to be expected and, as will be indicated, that the development of library services in Kimberley - the public libraries as well as its research component, the Africana Library, would be severely inhibited.

3.2.6.2 The Northern Cape Province

The Northern Cape, as a 'new' province came into being at a distinct disadvantage. It had no established administrative infrastructure or a university which could provide the necessary skills and expertise upon which a new provincial library service could be built. The Northern Cape simply does not have sufficient expertise and capacity to operate optimally and this deficiency is evident in virtually every department and level of government not least in the library service.

Legislation dealing with libraries, museums and archives in the Northern Cape has yet to be promulgated. More than a decade after the adoption of the new *Constitution* in 1996 these institutions operate in a legislative vacuum, ostensibly functioning in terms

of the old Cape Provincial Ordinances which dealt with these matters. In practice, however, this situation appears to give the relevant Department licence to operate as it sees fit. The Kimberley Public Library and its branch libraries including the Kimberley Africana Library have therefore suffered the consequences of this neglect on the part of disinterested politicians and incompetent officials.

While the public library system in the Northern Cape flounders valiantly through the political mire, a situation exacerbated by a paucity of well-qualified staff, every effort is made by the libraries themselves to become accessible and acceptable to every member of the public. However, the membership of the Kimberley Public Library as well as most of its branches has suffered a steady decline. One of the reasons propounded by the public for this state of affairs is because the centrally situated Kimberley Public Library has become little more than a vast study and recreation hall for scholars whose conditions for study at home leave much to be desired. Little use is apparently made by scholars of the reference material available in the Library.

Conversely, the Kimberley Africana Library, despite its inadequate means, has developed into a dynamic institution which, within the scope of its extremely limited resources serves as an invaluable national and international research facility. This is mainly attributable to its small qualified and dedicated personnel and the Library's two auxiliary bodies, the Friends of the Africana Library and the Africana Library Trust which, between them, provide a vast proportion of the institution's required revenue and expertise.

Although the development and empowerment of the country's human resources as well as the provision of facilities to every member of the public are goals which the authorities enjoy proclaiming from political platforms and are indeed aims which have been promoted by LIASA, little recognition or tangible support has been given to the propensity or ability of public libraries to act as invaluable instruments for the development of communities and as indispensable tools for formal, informal and non-formal education. On a note similar to that expressed by Shillingshaw in 1986, the

President of LIASA, Robert Moropa pointed out at the Association's conference in 2003 that

Libraries in South Africa are strategically positioned to participate in the development of an educated and engaged citizenry. They have the potential to offer access not only to current information, but also to repositories and archives of indigenous knowledge and systems and educational resources. The former recreational role of libraries is fast being challenged by the educational needs and demands of users (Moropa 2003: 3).

3.2.6.3 The Transitional Executive Committee

In 1998 LIASA appointed a Transitional Executive Committee, the terms of reference of which were to commission the Provincial Support Groups in the nine provinces to conduct investigations into the provision of library services in each of the provinces. The final report of the Transitional Executive Committee regarding a Library and Information Science renaissance in South Africa recommended several strategies which included the development of skills in advocacy, fundraising, an improvement in the holdings of books and databases, networking, marketing and the development of skills of members and potential members particularly of those classified as 'historically disadvantaged' (LIASA Conference Report and Minutes of Executive Committee, 1998).

In stark contrast to those individuals associated with the Kimberley Public Library who played such vital roles in the development of the library service in South Africa in the past, the present regional branch of its successor, the South African Institute for Library and Information Science is all but defunct. In a personal interview with the chairman of the Northern Cape Branch of LIASA, Ingrid Henrici in 2007, the researcher was informed that although it was possible for membership of the Northern Cape provincial branch to exceed 60, the membership at that time totalled a mere 11 (Henrici 2007).

3.3 Conclusion

A century after the Kimberley Public Library Committee expressed its opinion concerning the formation of a Library Association, the need for co-operation between public libraries, the need to improve the status of librarians which concept included the training of staff and other matters affecting public libraries – matters which were also addressed at the Carnegie-sponsored Bloemfontein Conference in 1928 as well as in the Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Libraries of 1937 - most of these issues have been resolved to some extent. This is particularly so in those provinces with infrastructures established during the previous political dispensation namely the Western Province, Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal and the Free State. Alas, this is not the case in the Northern Cape.

Libraries and librarians have yet to be accorded the status they deserve. Until such time as the authorities recognise the potential of these and other heritage institutions such as museums to contribute to the overall development and education of the country's people by actively encouraging the potential excellence to which they aspire, they will continue to flounder in conditions which are not conducive to the achievement of their stated objectives. In addition, this state of affairs negatively affects the ability of public and other government funded libraries to attract appropriate staff to the greatly depleted profession. The indiscriminate implementation of affirmative action has contributed to the decline in the status of the library profession.

In addition to the problems which beset the profession, the late 20th and early 21st centuries have brought with them new demands not least those associated with the constant advances in technology. This phenomenon is accompanied by its own challenges to the administration of libraries such as that of keeping abreast of advanced technology. This in turn entails the constant upgrading of equipment and the training of staff. In the case of the Kimberley Africana Library and other similar institutions which house books and other documentary records, the preservation of the collections and the concomitant curatorial work generally presents other major

problems in respect of funding: funding for equipment, conservation material and the training of staff.

Only an educated society can ensure a successful democracy. South Africa's infant democracy is frail so that at this point, more than at any other stage of the country's history, it is incumbent upon government to provide every facility with the capacity to contribute to the development and education of South African society – of which a large percentage is illiterate and unaware of the political process – with the necessary means to achieve that objective. However, it would seem that the first step which needs to be taken in this educational campaign is for LIASA and libraries themselves to improve and engage their skills in regard to advocacy (lobbying) to convince government of their worth. Secondly, these skills should be used to persuade the public of their merit as institutions for formal, non-formal and informal education and most importantly, to create a pressure group strong enough to bring about change in the mindset of the government. While society lacks the influence to compel government to accord these institutions their financial due, libraries and librarians will remain devoid of the dynamism that inspired the movement in the early years of development.

In the case of the Northern Cape, the achievement of such targets will remain almost impossible while a large percentage of those officials which make up the top structure of the administration of the Provincial Library Service lack the qualifications and the experience to make the best use of the available resources.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KIMBERLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY AS A SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY 1882 – 1960

4.1 Introduction

The founding years of the Kimberley Public Library were dealt with very competently by Fébé van Niekerk (1990) in her unpublished dissertation The history of the Kimberley Public Library 1870 – 1902. However, it is necessary in a study which deals with a history of the institution and its progeny, the Kimberley Africana Library, from 1903 to 2008 to outline briefly the stage of its history which had been reached by the turn of the century, in order to pave the way for the record of the activities and events of importance to these institutions which ensued in the 20th century. Although the latter years of this early period of Kimberley's history were characterised by fluctuating economic fortunes, conditions of war and a siege of the town which lasted for four months, these circumstances seemingly had only a slight effect on the Kimberley Public Library and its activities. Of far greater consequence was the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand and the economic depression which followed the cessation of hostilities in 1902 and which was felt throughout the country.

The Kimberley Public Library started as a Subscription Library in 1882 after several failed attempts to establish a library in Kimberley. However, astute management and financial stringency saw the Public Library through several periods of crisis while the institution went from strength to strength.

By 1903, when the focus of this study commences, the Peace of Vereeniging which marked the end of hostilities in the Anglo-Boer War had been signed and peace had been restored to southern Africa. The Kimberley Public Library continued to carry on its business and pursue its objectives much as it had done during the Siege of Kimberley and the war so that the Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 1903 could record that 'the progress of the institution during the year has been most

satisfactory' (KPL Annual Report, 1903). The Library and its Subscribers were by this time well-installed in the relatively new building and being managed by a shrewd and competent Committee. However, the economic depression that gripped the entire country had a negative effect on the revenue of the Kimberley Public Library in that this brought with it retrenchments in government and municipal grants as well as those of the Library's primary and indispensable benefactor, De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd.

4.2 The development of the Library building, grounds and facilities

Having commenced operations in 1882 in a building which they shared with the Municipality and which drastically limited the ability of the Library to serve the public, the Library Committee, with the Hon Mr Justice PM Laurence (See Appendix Laurence: 283) at the helm, set about collecting from the public the necessary funds for the purpose of erecting 'a large and commodious public library' on a site in Dutoitspan acquired previously at an auction for £600 (KPL Minutes, 01.10.1885). £6000 was collected; a remarkable achievement bearing in mind the economic depression prevailing on the Diamond Fields at the time.



Fig 7: The first building occupied by the Kimberley Public Library in New Main Street, 1882

David Yuill (1984) in his unpublished dissertation on the architecture of Kimberley from 1871 to 1914 describes the new library building as having

both American and Second Empire style influences and yet, despite this, early photographs showing the Library with its contrasting horizontally banded brickwork suggest that it would not have been totally out of place in a mid-Victorian English industrial landscape (Yuill 1984: 73).



Fig 8: The 'new' Kimberley Public Library building in Dutoitspan Road, 1887

Yuill (1984: 73) goes on to explain the reason for the use of material which had previously not been utilised in this part of the world as follows -

the arrival of the railway in Kimberley in 1885 made available many materials including cast iron, that had hitherto been used only on a very small scale. "New" types of building such as the Library were thus inevitable.

The interior of the building reveals Kimberley's first use of McFarlane's cast iron in the construction of the gallery. The Mansard roof over the main library space is covered with Welsh slate, another material that had no place in the pre-Railway era. Joinery work displays stenciled decoration of which few other examples survive in Kimberley and the

various colours of facebrick work externally were produced in the Kimberley Public Works Department brickyards (Yuill 1984: 73).



Fig 9: The cast iron spiral staircase and balcony in the main reading room

Although Yuill refers to the Library building as being ‘one of the assembled buildings of the Cape Colonial Public Works Department’ (Yuill 1984: 73) it was, in fact, not a government building. This impression probably arose as a result of the fact that R E Wright, the District Inspector of Works of the Public Works Department in Kimberley was appointed a member of the Library Committee’s Building Subcommittee and was authorised by the Civil Commissioner, an *ex officio* Trustee of the Kimberley Public Library, to render his services as architect for this project (KPL Minutes, 06.05.1886). At a meeting of the Kimberley Public Library Committee held on 6 May 1886, Wright produced a rough sketch prepared by a member of his staff J R Elton, of the proposed new Library. Wright is given due recognition for the role he played during the construction of the Library when the Chairman, Mr Justice Laurence said during his address to Subscribers that

it would be a great omission not to make a special acknowledgement of the very valuable services they had received from Mr Wright. It was one thing to be authorised to do certain work, but it was quite another to carry out that work *con amore* and the energy and zeal which had been displayed by Mr Wright in his capacity as architect could not be too warmly recognized (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 07.10.1886).

Another factor which might have added to the mistaken belief that it was a government building is that the Library Committee applied to Parliament for a donation of 100 000 bricks from the Government brickfields in Kimberley to be used for the construction of the Library. This application was granted (KPL Minutes, 07.10.1886). During construction, however, this quantity of bricks was found to be inadequate and an additional 50 000 bricks were supplied for which the Library Committee paid and for which they were reimbursed at a later stage (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 07.10.1886).

The tender for the new Kimberley Public Library building was awarded jointly to Messrs Westlake and Coles and Messrs Smith and Bull. The entire cost of the building had been defrayed by public donations, the building itself having cost £5533.15s 11d. The new Library building was officially opened on 23 July 1887.



Fig 10: Dutoitspan Road with the new Public Library building in the right foreground, 1888

Ten years later, the Subscribers were informed that

much consideration had been given to the question of providing additional accommodation for books, which will involve an extension of the Library premises (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 31.12.1897).

It was reported that more land had been acquired for this purpose and that the Library's garden, of which everyone was extremely proud, had in no way been affected by the extensions. Building operations were completed in March 1899. This additional accommodation, designed by the famous Kimberley architect, DW Greatbatch, increased the facilities and advantages for Subscribers particularly for students and those engaged in research. It was anticipated that the new accommodation would provide for an additional 50 000 to 60 000 volumes and would meet the needs of the Library for the next 25 years (KPL Minutes, 31.12.1897).

The funds for these extensions were provided by the 'Compounds Profits Fund' the allocation of which were at the sole discretion of Cecil John Rhodes. This fund comprised profits derived from the controversial trading stores run by De Beers in their residential compounds for African miners. Among other projects financed from these funds was the then famous Kimberley Sanitorium, (later to be renamed the Hotel Belgrave) which was also built on Rhodes' initiative. Other sources of funding for the extensions were £1000 from the Colonial Government and donations from old friends in London, presumably those who had made money in Kimberley and then returned to Britain. To the disappointment of the Public Library Committee, very little was donated by the local public (KPL Annual Report, 31.12.1897).

In 1901 the Committee acquired yet another stand in Woodley Street which gave the Library almost equal footage in this street as in Dutoitspan Road and which provided ample ground for any future extensions. Each of the two stands on Woodley Street had cottages on them which, on being let, provided the Library with a reasonable return on the capital invested in these properties. Even greater and more unusual returns were to be derived from these properties at a later stage. In 1909 the Library Committee decided to demolish the dilapidated cottages on the two stands. It was decided to wash the debris and a fair number of diamonds were recovered providing

very welcome 'extra-budgetary' funds for the Library (KPL Annual Reports, 1909 & 1928).

By 1903, the Library Committee once again gave serious consideration to the extension of the building but not specifically for the use of the Library itself. On this occasion the proposed additional accommodation was intended for 'the extension of the work of the Library' by establishing a Museum for Kimberley and its environs (KPL Annual Report, 1903). The appeal to the public for funds did not go unheeded but before the project came to fruition an offer was made to the Kimberley Municipality by the widow of a previous mayor of Kimberley to provide the funds necessary to establish a museum as a memorial to her husband, the late Alexander McGregor. All funds collected by the Kimberley Public Library Committee for this purpose were duly handed to the museum's Board of Trustees once the museum had been established (KPL Annual Report, 1907).

Fairly early in the life of the Library building, it became necessary for the Library Committee to spend funds on its maintenance. In 1904/05 the Annual Report records that earlier that year, the porch and entrance way to the Library which was part of the original building had shown serious cracks and had been condemned by the architect and the Borough Engineers. For this reason it had been demolished and rebuilt while other repairs to the original building had also been required. Two years later, the roof of the main hall of the Library developed leakages and was found to have sunk some inches. This problem was remedied by the erection in the main hall of pillars that would support the roof. The Chairman reported that after these structural changes, the Library buildings were 'in a sound condition and adapted to the modern requirements of the town' (KPL Annual Report, 1905/06). At that stage, the rooms within the Library had also been re-arranged and a ladies' reading room provided and comfortably furnished. The Annual Report a few years later records that

a comprehensive scheme for the renovation and repair of the furniture and fittings and of the interior of the Library building generally had been carried out and the various improvements effected added greatly to the comfort and convenience of the subscribers (KPL Annual Report, 1910).

This work cost £300 and included certain structural alterations which ‘added to the beauty and the convenience of the building’ (KPL Annual Report, 1910).

At various times, the Library’s verdant grounds were selected as the ideal site for memorials to outstanding citizens of Kimberley. In 1912 the Alfred Beit Memorial Committee approached the Library Committee requesting permission to lease a small portion of the Library grounds for the purpose of erecting a bronze bust by Henry Pegram RA of the late Alfred Beit, a great philanthropist and one of Kimberley’s most generous benefactors (KPL Annual Report, 1912). Fourteen years later, a similar request was received from the Klisser Memorial Committee and this organisation was granted a site in front of the Library building for a bronze bust of the late Bernard Klisser by the renowned South African sculptor, Anton van Wouw. Klisser is also described as having been a ‘good citizen and noble benefactor of Kimberley’ (KPL Annual Report, 1926).



Fig 11: The Public Library garden, c1912

Yuill refers to the fact that the original exterior with its ‘contrasting horizontally banded brickwork’ (Yuill 1984: 73) was obliterated by plaster at some early stage. Although there is no specific mention in the Minutes of the Kimberley Public Library of this work being done, a photograph taken at the official opening of the newly built

second floor is inscribed on the reverse to the effect that the exterior wall of the Library was plastered in 1927 during additions and other alterations to the building.

Despite a great strain on the Library's accommodation during the period covering the First World War (1914 – 1918) no significant extensions or alterations to the building took place at that time although a special need was expressed for accommodation for juvenile subscribers and scholars who wished to study. However, there were simply no funds available at that time to undertake such alterations (KPL Annual Report, 1918).

Notwithstanding the interruption caused by the war on the delivery of new books, the bookstock increased to the extent that the bookshelves became congested and the Committee was obliged to expand the shelving in the 'Gallery' and the Africana section. In fact, this remarkable increase in bookstock, pamphlets, etc over a period of 10 years, required, in the opinion of the Library Committee, the implementation of 'a comprehensive scheme involving a complete reconstruction and extension of the Library building' (KPL Annual Report, 1918) ample ground being available for all possible needs for the next fifty years. Funds for a new building for the Library were sought from the Administrator of the Cape Province and here began what was to become an almost traditional 'passing of the buck'. The Province claimed that the building of a new library was the responsibility of the Municipality, while the Municipality, in turn, claimed that it was in no position financially to provide the £20000 required for this purpose (KPL Annual Report, 1920).

There is no doubt that the ever-expanding Kimberley Public Library was in dire need of additional accommodation and serious consideration was given to the idea of erecting a War Memorial which would be combined with a Library and that such a Memorial would be erected on the site of the existing Library building. Despite the fact that this idea met with the 'full approval of the various committees concerned' (KPL Annual Report, 1920), the idea was never pursued or brought to fruition.

The following year, 1921, the Committee's Annual Report again referred to the serious shortage of accommodation. The Chairman in his address to the Subscribers stated that

The time is rapidly approaching if expansion continues, as we hope it will, when it will be utterly impossible to carry on with the space at our disposal. One wonders that of the numbers of men who have laid the foundations of or have amassed fortunes in Kimberley not one has thought of expressing his indebtedness to the city and the land by the gift of a sum of money to build and equip a library worthy of our splendid collection of books and adequate to the needs of the community. We have a memorial Museum why not a memorial Library? (KPL Annual Report, 1921)

At various times, starting in 1898, the Committee considered the installation of electricity. Finally this much improved form of lighting was installed in the principal rooms of the building in 1924 (KPL Annual Report, 1924).

At this time numerous unspecified structural repairs were carried out and with the assistance of their inimitable benefactor, the De Beers Company, the Library lawn was completely renovated. The Library garden was considered an oasis in the centre of the town and any work done to improve it was heartily endorsed by an appreciative Kimberley public.

At last, in 1926, the De Beers Company again came to the rescue of the Library when they donated

a special amount of £3500 for the enlargement of the Library premises to accommodate the every-increasing number of books and readers (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 1926).

In 1927, the Chairman, JJ Collins reported at the Annual General Meeting that the building operations were in progress and were to be completed in June of that year. He went on to pay tribute to De Beers saying that the institution had frequently benefited from the generosity of the De Beers Company and that it was largely as a result of their special donations given from time to time that the Library had been in a position to bring together one of the finest collections of Africana in the world. But, he said these gifts, prized as they were, were

thrown completely in the shade by this recent instance of the company's bounty which promised such a splendid addition to the comfort and convenience of subscribers (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 11.03.1927).

The additions to the Library, which took approximately eight months to complete, were officially opened in September 1927. The new accommodation provided the Library with

a fine compact building with large, well-lighted rooms. There was ample space for the display of the fifty odd thousand volumes and room for the many varied types of readers. It was safe to say that the Kimberley Public Library had ... all those attractive features which had often called forth from visitors to Kimberley the remark that the town was unique in possessing the qualifications not alone of a first-class library but also of a comfortable social club (KPL Annual Report, 1927).

Of note was the fact that the Library's electric lighting system which was provided for in the recent building contract was completed in conformity with the City Council's regulations.



Fig 12: The official opening of extensions and alterations to the Kimberley Public Library and the unveiling of the Bernard Klisser Memorial, September 1927

The disastrous fire which had destroyed so much of the business section of Jones Street and Dutoitspan Road including the Theatre Royal in 1930, also prompted the Library Committee to

reconsider the whole question of fire risks applying to the Library buildings and their content (KPL Annual Report, 1930)

In a building such as the Library where wood was used extensively in the construction of the original building - for the ceilings, the bookshelves, the cupboards as well as for other furniture and furnishings the fire hazard was ever present. Indeed no insurance payment could possibly have compensated adequately for the loss not only of the building but also of its irreplaceable contents.

In 1935 the Chairman expressed the need for a children's library and for a strongroom in which the Library's treasures could be secured against theft and fire (KPL Annual Report, 1935).

In 1937, in its jubilee year, considerable renovations and repairs were undertaken on the Library building while the garden was described as 'one of the beauty spots of the city' (KPL Annual Report, 1937). In 1940, thanks were again expressed to De Beers for erecting an additional flagstaff in the Library grounds which allowed the Library Committee to display both official flags simultaneously 'as the occasion requires' (KPL Annual Report, 1940). From this remark one must deduce that it was the nature of the occasion which had previously determined the use of either the South African flag or the Union Jack.

It was not until 1948, after the end of World War II that the Library building received attention once again. On this occasion repairs were carried out to the outside walls of the building and the lighting indoors improved by the installation of what was described as 'the very efficient fluorescent lighting' (KPL Annual Report, 1948).

For almost ten years thereafter, the building appears to have been somewhat neglected. In 1958 mention is made of the fact that repairs to the exterior of the building and renovations to the interior had been undertaken. The explanation given

for this neglect of the maintenance of the building was that 'under existing conditions, there are no funds available for repairs' (KPL Annual Report, 1958). The lack of maintenance work could also be attributed to the indecisiveness of the Kimberley City Council. After several years, the City Fathers were still deliberating whether or not to affiliate to the Cape Provincial Library Service. This resulted in a great deal of uncertainty regarding the future of the Kimberley Public Library.

Finally in 1959, the City Council decided that they would indeed finance a free library service. This momentous step involved the dissolution of the Kimberley Public Library Committee and the transfer of the Kimberley Public Library's assets, including the Library building to the Kimberley City Council. No longer would the Library building belong to the Subscribers. In terms of the Cape Provincial Library Service Ordinance No 4 of 1955 and the Library Committee's Agreement with the Kimberley City Council (KCC/KPL Agreement 1960/61), the local authority would, in future, be responsible for its maintenance.

4.3. The Management and staff

4.3.1 The Kimberley Public Library Committee

At the first Annual General Meeting of the Kimberley Public Library held in 1883, the Subscribers adopted a set of rules and by-laws drawn up by the Chairman, Mr Justice Laurence. These, in essence, endured and were adopted in similar form at the 43rd Annual General Meeting of the Subscribers of the Kimberley Public Library on 12 March 1926 as well as at a Special General Meeting of Subscribers held on 23 July 1926 (KPL Minutes AGM, 12.03.1926 & Special General Meeting, 23.07.1926). These rules and by-laws specified the procedure for the appointment of the Library Committee and the manner in which it would be constituted and should function.

Rule 20 specified the duties of the Trustees as follows -

There shall be two Trustees of the Library in whom the property, investments and other assets of the Library shall be vested, and such

Trustees shall apply and dispose of the same for the benefit of the Library in such a manner as the Committee shall from time to time order and direct and all contracts on behalf of the Library shall be entered into with the Trustees and they shall be authorised by the Committee (to) sue for and recover all moneys, debts and property whatsoever due or belonging to the Library and shall upon being authorised as aforesaid defend all actions and all other proceedings against the Library (KPL 1926).

According to Rule 22,

the Trustees would be appointed annually by the Committee of which they shall be members, *ex officio*, the appointment being offered in the first instance to the Civil Commissioner and the Mayor of Kimberley ... (KPL 1926).

In later years, the title of the Civil Commissioner was changed to Resident Magistrate and as the bench was enlarged, to Chief Magistrate.

Also in terms of Rule 22, the Library Committee would comprise fourteen members of whom two would be the Trustees and twelve would be elected from and by Subscribers at the Library's Annual General Meeting. Provision was also made for additional members:

in every year in which the Kimberley City Council, or any other public body, company or institution shall contribute a sum of not less than £200 to the funds of the Library, the said Council or other body shall be entitled to appoint one its members, being a subscriber to the Library (in addition to the Mayor in his capacity as Trustee) to be an additional member of the Council, and for every further annual amount contributed of £100, or part thereof, shall be entitled to appoint a further member as aforesaid (KPL 1926).

Of the organisations entitled by this rule to representation on the Library Committee, it was only De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd which, as a consequence of their infinite generosity to the Library was consistently entitled to two such representatives. Needless to say, the presence of these two influential gentlemen on the Committee paid dividends as they inevitably had the ear of the Directors of the Company and were able to exact a great deal of assistance for the Library, both in cash and in kind, from the Company's vast resources. On occasions, such as in 1923, when the grant-in-aid of the local authority exceeded their customary paltry contribution, they too qualified for a representative (in addition to the Mayor) in terms of this rule (KPL Annual Report, 1923).

Rule 23 outlined the procedure for the election of members of the Library Committee. This entailed the nomination of eligible Subscribers ten days prior to the Annual General Meeting. One third of the twelve elected members then holding office were required to retire but would be eligible for re-election. In terms of Rule 24, these vacancies would be filled by the choice of Subscribers at an Annual General Meeting.

At the Annual General Meeting of Subscribers held on 30 March 1933, the Chairman, in response to criticism levelled at the Library Committee, described the composition and activities of the Committee as follows –

The Committee represents various interests and opinions in the town, the meetings are well attended and discussions on matters of organisation, control and development are exhaustively discussed in the presence and with the assistance of the Librarian. When necessary, the opinion of other members of the staff is obtained. The Committee is not in the least an autocratic or domineering one (KPL Annual Report 1933).

The Kimberley Library Committees over the six decades covered by this chapter were all men of standing in the community. Apart from the two Trustees, namely the Mayor of Kimberley and the Civil Commission/Chief Magistrate who served in an *ex officio* capacity on the committee and those who represented donors such as De Beers and the Kimberley Municipality, the men elected to the Library Committee were nominated from the body of Subscribers at each Annual General Meeting. Generally

these men were public-spirited, well-educated men such as judges, advocates, lawyers, doctors, men of religion, those in the teaching profession and/or those who held political office in the Cape Legislative Assembly. It was not until the Annual General Meeting held on 11 August 1911 that a woman was elected to the Committee for the first time. These citizens gave voluntarily of their time and expertise to further the Library's cause.

In terms of Rule 24 committee members were disqualified from the Committee if they had

- absented themselves from the meetings of the Committee for four consecutive meetings without leave of absence granted by the Committee
- ceased to reside within seven miles of Kimberley
- ceased to subscribe to the Library
- became insolvent (KPL 1926).

The Committee was given the power to fill any vacancy which might have occurred by death or resignation or other reasons for the remainder of the year.

Rule 25 stipulated that the Library Committee should meet at least once a month and

at the first meeting after their election should appoint a Chairman, a Deputy-Chairman (who in the absence of the Chairman shall act as such) and a Treasurer for the current year (KPL 1926).

It was also at this first meeting after their election that the members would be appointed to serve on the various sub-committees – the Book Committee, the Finance Committee, the House and Garden Committee and when circumstances required it, a Building Committee. In the latter case, an architect was usually co-opted to assist and advise the members. Rule 21 stated that the Chairman of the General Committee would serve as an *ex officio* member of all the sub-committees (KPL 1926).

In as far as it affected the stature and the objective of the Library, the Book sub-committee was undoubtedly the most important of these sub-committees. Those

chosen to serve on it were clearly expected to be well-read, an attribute which would enable them to select reading material which would meet the needs of the institution's diverse public.

Although the Librarian played a major role in the acquisition of new books and the withdrawal of redundant books, the Minutes of the Kimberley Public Library record that in the final analysis, it was the members of the Books Committee who took the ultimate decisions. It was they who 'shopped around' to find books, magazines and periodicals at the best prices. As was recorded in numerous Minutes of the Book Committee, it was they who decided which books should, because of their poor condition, be withdrawn from the shelves and by what means they should be disposed of. It was this Committee that also decided on the care of the books and the binding and rebinding of books and periodicals (KPL Books Committee Minutes).

Rule 26 specified that the Chairman, or his Deputy, would preside over each meeting of the Committee and that he would have a casting vote in addition to his own as a member of the committee. In the absence of both these gentlemen, an acting Chairman was to be appointed to preside over the meeting from amongst their number (KPL 1926: Rule 26).

'Proper' Minutes were to be kept of the proceedings at each meeting of the Committee and the Minutes of the preceding meeting were to be read and confirmed (KPL 1926: Rule 27).

Should circumstances require a Special General Meeting of Subscribers, the Committee could call such a meeting as often as was necessary (KPL 1926: Rule 30).

As the Kimberley Public Library was a Subscription Library, the Committee was autonomous and accountable only to the Subscribers and to those organisations which contributed towards the funds of the institution. However, as the Kimberley Public Library did receive an annual grant-in-aid from the Cape Government and after 1910 from the Union Government, the Chairman at the Annual General Meeting held in 1910 drew the attention of the Subscribers to the fact that annual grants from this source would in future be subject to greater scrutiny by the new Union Government

who would have to be consulted in the appointment of librarians. Government officials would also in future be sent on periodic inspection of the libraries (DFA 13.08.1910). However neither the Library's Minutes nor the Annual Reports record any such inspections.

There is no doubt that from the inception of the institution it was the ability and expertise of the men elected to the chair of the Kimberley Public Library who were largely responsible for the development and extraordinary progress of the Library. The chairmen of the Library during the period upon which this chapter is based were

M Cornwall, JP (1901 – 1905)

Dr AH Watkins (1905 – 1907)

Dr W Stoney (1907-1909)

Advocate SB Kitchin, BA LLB (1909 –1911)

The Rev D Wark, MA DD (1911 – 1927)

JJ Collins (1927 - 1943)

Lt Col HF Lardner-Burke, DSO, MC, VD (1943 – 1951)

JH Power, FRS, FRZ (1951 – 1956)

HB James (1957 – 1958)

HE Seccull (1959 – 1960)

The chairman whose name cannot be excluded from a list of those who served the Kimberley Public Library nobly was the Hon Mr Justice Laurence (See Appendix, Laurence: 283) who resigned in 1901 having held the chair since 1883 and who continued to serve on the Library Committee until 1905. His resignation from the Library Committee was referred to by his successor Moses Cornwall as

a severe loss which the Library has sustained in the removal from Kimberley of the Hon PM Laurence LLD, Judge President of the High Court of Griqualand, to preside over the War Losses Commission at Cape Town. For many years the Judge President was Chairman of the Kimberley Library, taking the keenest interest in its development; while to his wide and extensive learning is due the excellent selection of books in the library (KPL Annual Report, 1904/05).

Such was the calibre of the founding fathers of the Kimberley Public Library and many who served thereafter.

4.3.2 The personnel

By-laws 17 and 18 of the Kimberley Public Library stipulate that the Library staff should operate under the direction and control of the Librarian whose function was

to observe and cause to be observed all Rules, By-laws and Regulations of the Library and shall report to the Committee at its next meeting any infringement thereof. He shall see that the affairs of the Library are conducted in accordance with the existing system and methods and that all instructions of the Committee are duly and properly carried out (KPL 1926).

Rule 28 also specified that the Librarian was responsible for keeping proper accounts of all receipts, payments and banking (KPL 1926).

From its inception, the Kimberley Public Library staff was small and poorly remunerated. Their hours were long and they worked over the weekends, including Sundays. Not until the appointment of Bertram L Dyer (See Appendix, Dyer: 293) in 1900 were any of them trained librarians. In fact, Dyer was the first trained librarian to be appointed to any public library in South Africa (KPL Annual Report, 1900) and the Library Committee considered itself extremely fortunate to have gained the services of one with the considerable library experience which he had acquired in England. Dyer was indeed an extremely competent librarian but lacked an equivalent degree of administrative ability and integrity. Over a period of almost seven years, he misappropriated an amount of approximately £2500 of the Library's funds (*Kimberley Star Kimberley Public Library ...* , 26.05.1909). After these serious irregularities in the accounts of the library had been discovered, the career of this fine librarian came to an end when Dyer took his own life (KPL Annual Report, 1909).

Dyer was succeeded as Librarian by John Ross in April 1909. Also a trained Librarian, Ross held this position with great distinction until 1942 when he retired.

He played a major role in the development of the Kimberley Public Library and indeed in that of the library movement in South Africa (*SAL* 1946: 15). More information on his life and contribution to the Kimberley Public Library are given in the Appendix (Ross: 296).

Prior to his retirement, Ross suffered from ill health and during that period Olive McIntyre (See Appendix, McIntyre: 300) was appointed Acting Librarian, duties which she carried out with immense competence and dedication so that on Ross' retirement, the Library Committee did not hesitate to appoint her as Ross' successor. She held this post until 1963.

4.3.3 Negotiations regarding transfer of Kimberley Public Library to Cape Provincial Library Service: 1956-1960

In 1955 the Cape Province passed the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance. This event was to prove of great significance for the future of libraries in the Cape Province and not least for the Kimberley Public Library.

In essence, the Ordinance provided for a free Library service to all parts of the Province provided the larger local authorities were prepared to assist the libraries concerned financially. At that time the Kimberley Public Library received a Municipal grant of £1000 (KPL Annual Report, 1955).

The Kimberley Public Library's Annual Report for 1955 records that the Director of Library Services for the Cape Province had been asked

to make a survey of the area and provide an estimate of the area and an estimate of the probable cost of a free library service for Kimberley (KPL Annual Report, 1955).

Little progress in this regard appears to have been made during 1956 as the Kimberley City Council debated whether or not they were financially in a position to meet the obligations required of them were they to join the Cape Provincial Library Service. As has been mentioned previously (See 3.2.5.1) the Provincial Library Organiser addressed a meeting of the City Council and Library Board on 1 March 1957. During

the course of this meeting, the Library Organiser undertook to make a survey of Kimberley's library requirements. The Annual Report of the Library of that year states that the promised report of the survey had not been received nor had the City Council reached a decision regarding the establishment of a free library service for Kimberley (KPL Annual Report, 1957).

This state of affairs was a source of great concern to the Library Committee as they had been informed that the current year was the last in which the Library would be eligible for a full grant-in-aid from the Provincial Administration unless steps were taken towards joining the Provincial Free Library Service (KPL Annual Report, 1957).

The uncertainty regarding the City Council's plans for the Library's future combined with the difficult financial position in which the Library Committee was obliged to function at that time made the provision of a satisfactory library service for the people of Kimberley extremely difficult. With the cost of a new novel exceeding that of a quarterly subscription to the Library for three books at a time i.e. 9/-, it was obvious that without a major injection of revenue, the Kimberley Public Library would be obliged to curtail its services to the Subscribers and the public.

The decision taken by the Kimberley City Council in 1959 to finance a free library service for the city marked a turning point in the development of the Kimberley Public Library and brought this institution in line with the larger cities and towns in South Africa, many of which had 'enjoyed the benefits of free libraries for a number of years' (KPL Annual Report, 1959). These developments were conveyed to the Subscribers and the public in the Library's Annual Report for 1959 and the Subscribers were also informed that every precaution would be taken to safeguard the assets of the institution.

The issues involved were fully appreciated by your Committee and the conditions of transfer submitted to the Council were given the most careful consideration in consultation with the Library's legal adviser. These conditions ensure that the present assets of the Kimberley Public Library, particularly the Africana and Reference Collections will remain,

through the Kimberley City Council, the property of the citizens of Kimberley (KPL Annual Report, 1959).

A Special General Meeting of the Subscribers was called for 12 November of that year and once again the Subscribers were fully informed of the position after which, it was unanimously agreed that the Committee be authorised to negotiate an agreement with the City Council (KPL Minutes of Special General Meeting, 12.11.1959).

A Deed of Agreement was drawn up which, provided it was acceptable to the Provincial authorities, would be signed by the Trustees of the Kimberley Public Library and the City Council.

The Memorandum of Agreement was duly signed by the Trustees on behalf of the Kimberley Public Library on 23 December 1960 and the Mayor and Town Clerk on behalf of the Kimberley City Council on 20 January 1961. In terms of this Agreement, the Library agreed to cede and transfer to the Municipality its properties in Dutoitspan Road and Woodley Street with the existing buildings. The Library also agreed to cede, assign, transfer and donate to the Municipality the total contents of the Library which included furniture, fittings and equipment, books, all Africana, manuscripts, documents, publications, pictures, works of art. Special provisions were included in the Agreement to safeguard the future of the collections, particularly the valuable and irreplaceable Africana and Special Collections which, it was stipulated, should not be removed from the present Library building. Furthermore, these collections were to be kept apart from the Library material to be provided in terms of the Provincial Library Scheme. Wisely, the Library Committee included in the Agreement a further stipulation (Clause 8) which provided for a monitoring mechanism which would ensure that future City Councils could not act irresponsibly in respect of the Library's valuable collections -

Whereas it is recognized that upon this Agreement coming into operation, the Kimberley Public Library as presently constituted, shall be dissolved and wound up with a consequent loss of office of its Committee and its Trustees; and whereas it is necessary and desirable that an appointment be made of certain persons who shall be vested with

the necessary power and authority to carry out and enforce stipulations, reservations and conditions which have been imposed by the Library in terms of this Agreement; now, therefore, it is hereby stipulated that the General Manager and the Secretary for the time being of De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd. shall for the purpose of this Agreement, be appointed as the Trustees of the Library and shall be vested with the power at all times of enforcing the due and proper fulfillment by the Municipality of the reservations, stipulations and conditions made by the Library in its favour in terms of this Agreement. It is further recorded that the aforesaid two trustees shall at all times be vested with the power for and on behalf of the Library, to sue and be sued in respect of any matters arising out of this Agreement (KCC/KPL Agreement 1960/61).

Although the change to the free library system would officially become effective from the beginning of 1961, the City Council assumed financial responsibility for the running of the Library from 1 January 1959. The Kimberley Public Library would no longer operate as an independent institution according to its own rules and regulations. In future it would be governed in terms of those of the Kimberley Municipality and the Ordinances of the Cape Provincial Government.

4.4. Subscribers

4.4.1 Nature of Subscribers

It is inevitable that as circumstances change in a city over a period of many decades a commensurate change in the nature of its inhabitants would take place. At the turn of the century and for some decades thereafter, the economy of Kimberley was based primarily on the diamond mines and ancillary commercial activities. Although the needs of the mines and more particularly those of the company which controlled them, De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd determined the nature of the population of the city to a large extent, changes in emphasis did take place. It was generally known in the city that in the late 1950's the South African Railways had expanded its activities in Kimberley to the extent that it employed a workforce at least equivalent to that of De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd.

Another factor which had a profound effect on the nature and number of Subscribers to the Kimberley Public Library and, in fact impeded the development of the city to a large extent, was that no university had been established in Kimberley. The South African School of Mines was established in Kimberley in 1896 as a direct result of the amalgamation of the mines as a training school for mining engineers but in 1904 it was transferred to Johannesburg, merged with the Transvaal Technical Institute and eventually developed into the University of the Witwatersrand (Roberts 1976: 304-5). The Northern Cape Technical College, established in 1952, was the only tertiary institution in the northern region of the Cape Province but this did not provide the intellectual stimulus which would normally emanate from a university.

At the turn of the century, Kimberley had become a town and no longer a mere settlement the inhabitants of which comprised individuals frantic to make their fortunes from diamonds and then to seek greener pastures elsewhere. The amalgamation of the mines had brought with it stability and respectability, characteristics the settlement had lacked in the early days when the inhabitants had comprised in the main those connected with the diamond industry namely diggers, claim holders and diamond buyers. Towards the end of the century, the town's inhabitants included professional men, doctors, lawyers, accountants, clergymen and those who kept the public informed namely the journalists.

Vida Allen's (1990) account of the social and cultural pursuits of the white community of Kimberley gives a graphic description of the cultural activities in which a section of the residents of the Diamond Fields were engaged immediately prior to the turn of the century and the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War. She states

Kimberley, though young compared with other centres in South Africa, boasted a white community, thirsty for knowledge and mental upliftment – a community who wanted more than just general pastimes, sporting activities, the theatre and music. They also wanted to educate themselves and so they formed various debating and literary societies, established reading rooms and erected a subscription library. As Max O'Rell remarked in 1894 after his visit to Kimberley, "Kimberley is inhabited by intelligent people who read and study" (Allen 1990: 145).

Inspired by a similar exhibition held in Australia a few years previously and enthusiastically supported by De Beers and local business, the South African and International Exhibition held in Kimberley in 1892 was a great stimulus to the cultural life of the town and Roberts' remarks on the fact that

among the many shifts of emphasis noticeable during the Exhibition was the growing importance of Kimberley's merchant class (Roberts 1976: 282-293).

The Kimberley Public Library's Annual Report for the period 1905/06 records a list of the Subscribers to the Library divided into the three membership classifications, depending upon the annual subscription paid. The Life Subscribers list for example included the names of prominent men such as D J Haarhoff, MLA, Lt-Col David Harris, VD, CMG, MLA, Dr LS Jameson, MLA, the Hon Mr Justice PM Laurence, the Hon Mr Justice Hopley, Sir Julius Wernher and several other men of status (KPL Annual Report, 1905/06).

As the century progressed, the composition of Kimberley's population changed substantially and the proportion of English- to Afrikaans-speaking inhabitants levelled. By the 1960's the number of Afrikaans-speaking residents exceeded that of the English-speakers. This was due mainly to the change in the composition of civil servants after 1948 and an increase in Afrikaans-speaking employees of banks and other semi-statal and national enterprises.

The African and Coloured populations also expanded significantly but this had little impact on the nature of the Subscribers of the Kimberley Public Library itself as separate libraries for these communities were established in their respective residential areas over a period. Of significance, is the fact that by 1960, when the Kimberley Public Library ceased functioning as a Subscription Library, the Annual Report was published in both English and Afrikaans.

4.4.2 Membership

Membership of the Kimberley Public Library tended to fluctuate and was frequently an indication of the economic situation prevailing in the country and in particular, in Kimberley itself. The diamond industry was one of the most vulnerable to outside influences such as conflict and economic depressions when inevitably the demand for diamonds decreased, the mines closed and its employees left unemployed.

The proportion of subscribers to the total population of Kimberley was a perennial source of concern to members of the Library Committee and prompted many a plan to increase the ratio of subscribers to residents. This included the amendment of the Library rules to provide for the addition of special classes of membership with lower subscriptions. It was hoped that in this manner the Library would attract those whose financial resources were limited and who could not afford the privileges of first class membership. At the Annual General Meeting held on 4 March 1914 the Chairman bemoaned the fact that membership of the Library comprised

only 500 persons in a community of this size is to be regretted, both for the sake of the Library itself and for the sake of the City of Kimberley (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 04.03.1914).

At the Annual General Meeting held on 13 August 1908, it was mentioned that the number of Subscribers had fallen from 530 to 414 over a six-year period. The loss, it was said, was

entirely from those residing in towns for there has been a steady growth of subscribers in the country districts as far north as Taungs and as far south as Belmont (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 13.08.1908).

The phenomenal growth in the number of country members to which the Chairman referred was undoubtedly attributable to the fact that the Cape Government Railways had acquiesced in a request to apply half rates to parcels of a literary nature (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 13.08.1908).

South Africa's involvement in World War I had a significant effect on Kimberley. Not only did the mines close for the duration of the war with the concomitant adverse economic consequences but in as far as it concerned the Kimberley Public Library, membership and revenue from subscriptions did drop to some extent after the outbreak of war. This was attributed to the 'absence from town of many subscribers on active service' (KPL Annual Report, 1915). However, this situation improved considerably during 1915 as a result of the great influx of Defence Force troops (KPL Minutes, Librarian's report, 13.01.1915). On the other hand the Annual Report for the following year records that 'a considerable number of our younger supporters are still absent on military service' (KPL Annual Report, 1916). It was also recorded that 'the times we live in have stimulated reading greatly' (KPL AGM Minutes, 08.03.1916) so much so that the Report for the year 1916 sees fit to congratulate

subscribers on a remarkable recovery and general progress of the institution since the opening stages of the war. Although a considerable number of our younger supporters are still absent on military service, the year's membership shows an increase of 64 ... (KPL Annual Report, 1916).

At the Annual General Meeting of Subscribers held in 1925, a prominent member of the Library Committee commented on the general standard of culture and taste in reading which he considered was lower than that prevailing 20 years ago (KPL AGM Minutes, 20.02.1925). A year later, in 1926, the Library statistics revealed that Subscribers were spending more of their leisure time reading despite so much time being taken by 'the bioscope and the increased use of the motor car for joyriding' (KPL Annual Report, 1926). And as the economic woes of Kimberley intensified during the years of the world-wide depression, it became evident that

in times of business slackness, it is noticeable that book reading is indulged in to a greater extent than in prosperous times (KPL Annual Report, 1930).

In his address delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Library held on 30 March 1937, the Chairman, JJ Collins lamented the fact that the year under review

had shown a falling off in the number of Subscribers and suggested that the reason for this phenomenon was that

the nature of a large proportion of the reading matter supplied today is pandering to a widely spreading corrupt taste and the distribution of this class of matter is speeded up by the “tickey” lending libraries.(KPL AGM Chairman’s address, 30.03.1937).

4.4.3 Membership: Coloured and African members of the Kimberley community

That racial segregation and prejudice characterised South African society at least as far back as the beginning of the 20th century was evident from the attitude of the Library Committee to members of the public who were not of European descent. As early as 1901 the question arose as to whether the Kimberley Public Library should accept Coloured or African members of the community as Subscribers. Enquiries in this regard were made to the Durban Public Library to ascertain whether or not they had accepted non-white subscribers to which the response had been that the question had not yet arisen. On the other hand the Library Committee did acknowledge, somewhat reluctantly, that they could not have their bread buttered on both sides and that

the acceptance of Parliamentary and municipal grants makes it impossible to refuse the advantages of the Public Room to any section of the Community (KPL Minutes, 14.11.1901).

But, in spite of this obligation and the need for additional subscribers, members of the Library Committee did not see their way clear to accepting Coloureds or Africans as members of the Library. The Minutes of the Library Committee record that as early as 1911 a certain Mr Mosuang applied for admission as a Library Subscriber but that the Committee resolved unanimously

that in the interests of the Library the admission of Coloured people as subscribers is not desirable and that the present application not be entertained (KPL Minutes, 14.06.1911).

Again in 1916, the Library Committee discussed a letter received from a native teacher, Mr Ntsiki of the Lyndhurst Road School wishing to know whether natives were permitted to become Subscribers to the Library and if so, kindly to inform him of the amount of the subscription.

After discussion, the Secretary was directed to state in reply that as the resources of this institution do not permit of provision being made for the admission of natives, the Committee regret their inability to entertain such applications (KPL Minutes, 08.11.1916).

To his credit, the Deputy Chairman, OJS Satchel concluded the Annual Report of 1920 by drawing the attention of the Subscribers to

the pressing necessity for providing in some way reading facilities for the coloured and native communities ... and that it was their bounden duty to see that all classes of the community could join in that common boon of mankind – the perusal of books (KPL Annual Report, 1920).

The Library Committee faced an awkward situation in 1924 when it was revealed that a teacher from Bloemfontein, Geddes Nolutshungu had 'solicited admission as a subscriber in his own name'. The Secretary informed the meeting that this teacher had previously, with the Chairman's consent, been permitted to take out books during 1922 while he was stationed at the Tiger Kloof Institution provided that the subscription was entered in the name of the Principal of the Institution. After consideration of the circumstances, the Library Committee decided to refuse the application (KPL Minutes, 14.03.1924 & 11.04.1924).

The debate on this matter continued for many years and the Library Minutes of 25 February 1937 record the receipt of a letter from the Cape Coloured Welfare Association enquiring

whether the “colour bar” existed at the Library and whether Coloured people were acceptable as subscribers. After a short discussion it was decided to inform this Association that any well-conducted person was at liberty to use the public room at the Library, free of charge, during the usual hours, but there was no accommodation for Coloured subscribers in the private rooms of the institution (KPL Minutes, 25.02.1937).

A second appeal by this Association to accept people of colour as subscribers was made to the Library Committee but this request was refused (KPL Minutes, 11.03.1937).

At a meeting held on 8 April 1937, the Library Committee again responded negatively to a request from the African Peoples’ Organisation to supply 50 volumes per fortnight to approximately 200 Coloured senior students by maintaining that

the Library was not in a position to supply school libraries and hostels (KPL Minutes, 08.04.1937).

That these reasonable requests were not treated with greater sympathy did not further the cause of the Library as it is fair to assume that any member of either the Coloured or African communities who wished to and could afford to become a member of the Kimberley Public Library, would not have been an encumbrance to the white Subscribers. One has only to call to mind the contribution made by the celebrated Solomon Plaatje to the literary heritage of South Africa to realise how short-sighted was the view of the Library Committee in this regard. Plaatje spent several years of his life in Kimberley during which time he and others among the African intelligentsia played a significant role in the cultural life of their people. But more than that, Plaatje was considered one of the outstanding pioneers in the field of African journalism in South Africa and indeed the doyen of the African political journalists. Indeed he owned and edited two newspapers in Kimberley and was the author of several books (Rall 2003: 93). Plaatje with his penchant for literature would undoubtedly have enjoyed the privilege of membership of the Kimberley Public Library. Indeed the Library Committee had the opportunity not only to encourage

other communities to read but by doing so could also have improved the financial position of the Library. It is also interesting to note that the predominantly English-speaking Kimberley Public Library membership and Committee took these decisions independently, without the force of legislation to justify their stance.

Although the Kimberley Public Library continued to function as a Subscription Library and the Library Committee was answerable to no one other than the Subscribers, the Annual Report of 1957 reflects a consideration for the literary needs of other cultural groups in the community. Several hundred books were presented to the library in the Bantu Social Centre in the African township of Galeshewe and the Library Committee was instrumental in obtaining a number of useful books for this library from the British Council (KPL Annual Report, 1957).

4.4.4 Membership: other communities

Probably not practiced as blatantly, but the prejudice evinced by the Library Committee was not confined to the African and Coloured inhabitants of Kimberley. By far the greater percentage of the white population of Kimberley during the period covered by this chapter were English speaking, many of whom were British born and even after a lengthy period in South Africa, still referred to Britain as 'home'. This apparent sense of exclusivity amongst English-speaking South Africans was undoubtedly exacerbated by the anti-Boer propaganda generated during the Anglo-Boer War at the turn of the century and which continued in Kimberley for decades thereafter. Although by no means barred from membership of the Kimberley Public Library, it is possible that large numbers of the Afrikaans-speaking community would not have felt welcome in this environment, nor, for that matter, were books available for them in Afrikaans until much later as only books in High Dutch were purchased for the Library. This could also explain the absence of the names of Afrikaans-speaking residents from the lists of Subscribers published with the Annual Reports from time to time although the eminent Ds JD Kestell (frequently spelt 'Castel' in the Minutes) did serve on the first Library Committee (KPL Minutes, 1882/83).

There is no doubt that until the late 1960's Kimberley was to all intents and purposes controlled not only by the English-speaking men in De Beers Consolidated Mines,

Ltd but also by their English-speaking counterparts in the Kimberley City Council. The Minutes of the Kimberleyse Afrikaanse Kultuurraad of 1968 record

In die Jaarverslag van die Kultuurraad moet melding gemaak word dat die vorige maand se stadsraad van Kimberley se vergadering die eerste in die negentigjarige bestaan van die stad is wat in Afrikaans geskied het (KAL MS771 Afrikaanse Kultuurraad notule, 27.02.1968).

The Annual Report of the Kultuurraad for the following year followed up the report on this milestone with yet another

In verband met munisipale aangeleenthede is dit aangenaam om te kan rapporteer dat gedurende September/Okttober 1968 geskiedenis in Kimberley gemaak is om vyf Afrikaners tot die Stadsraad verkies te kry en is die Sekretaris (mnr Jan van Zyl) van die Kultuurraad by dié geleentheid tot burgemeester van Kimberley verkies (KAL MS771 Jaarverslag van die Afrikaanse Kultuurraad, 10.03.1969).

It is indeed a fallacy to believe that racial discrimination manifested itself only after 1948. The British, who could justifiably boast many admirable qualities with the prestige of the Empire behind them, did tend to believe in their superiority among the nations of the world. In regard to racial discrimination, it is also interesting in this context to note that the largest meeting ever to have been held in Kimberley was the public protest against the importation of Chinese labour into the Transvaal (Mayor's Minute, 1903).

Those therefore who criticised the Subscription Public Libraries on the grounds that they were 'elitist' and largely served the interests of a limited number of the population certainly had grounds for such an indictment.

There is, however, a need to guard against making judgments on the past based on contemporary social standards and values. The fact remains that racial discrimination and prejudice did exist in that period during which the Kimberley Public Library Committee and the Subscribers controlled the Library and this undoubtedly affected

the ability and potential of the Library to increase its membership as well as to realise the potential it undoubtedly had to play a more substantial role in the education and upliftment of the population of Kimberley in its entirety.

4.5 Role of the Kimberley Public Library in the community

4.5.1 Extension of facilities to the general public

Although this study covers the period following the turn of the century, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that from the very beginning, the Kimberley Public Library Committee advocated the principle of a free library system and, within the parameters of their budget, made every effort to extend the benefits of the Kimberley Public Library to a broader spectrum of Kimberley's ratepayers. As has already been mentioned the Minutes of a meeting of the Library Committee as far back as 1894, record a discussion on 'the feasibility of increasing the usefulness of the library to the general public'. This, the meeting agreed, could be done

if Council would agree to contribute a sum not less than £250 per annum to the funds of the Library, all ratepayers shall be entitled to borrow books from the Library without payment of any subscription or fee, subject to such regulation as may from time to time be framed by the Committee (KPL Minutes, 13.09.1894).

On 30 November of that year, the Chairman suggested that steps be taken to enlarge

the scope of the institution and generally by doing what is in our power to make Kimberley an agreeable place of residence for those who remain here and expect to remain here in the future (KPL Minutes, 30.11.1894).

In fact, the Chairman of the Library Committee, Mr Justice Laurence aimed to make the Kimberley Public Library

the first library in South Africa ... to become a genuine public library in the full sense of the word so that every ratepayer might have a full share in its privileges (KPL Minutes, 25.06.1896).

As the Kimberley Borough Council rejected the Library Committee's offer, the Chairman, in his address to Subscribers in 1897, reiterated his desire to convert the Kimberley Public Library from a Subscription Library to a free public library suggesting that 'ratepayers should put pressure on the Municipality to make this contribution ...' (KPL Minutes of special meeting, 25.06.1896)

The idea of establishing a free library service for all ratepayers did not perish with the Borough Council's rejection of the Library Committee's suggested means of doing so. By 1903, the Chairman, Moses Cornwall in his address to Subscribers announced that the Committee had decided after much consideration 'to place the privileges of the Library' within the reach of the public at the reduced subscription of £1, pointing out that this decision had been confirmed by the Subscribers in June 1902. He went on to report that this step had resulted in an increase in membership to the unprecedented number of 528 by 31 December 1902 (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 12.02.1903).

Despite the efforts of the Library Committee to convert from a Subscription Library to a free library for all ratepayers, without the co-operation of the Borough Council and later the Kimberley City Council, the achievement of this goal was not financially feasible. During the first half of the 20th century, the Kimberley Public Library functioned as a combination of a free library on the one hand and a Subscription Library on the other. It was not until 1955 when the Cape Provincial Library Act was promulgated that the spectre of a conversion of the Kimberley Public Library to a free library became apparent. Eventually this came about in 1960 after protracted negotiations.

4.5.2 In good times and in bad

As has been mentioned previously, Kimberley was susceptible to the vicissitudes of a mining town, particularly so in the case of one which was based on a luxury item such as diamonds. It was inevitable that as the economy fluctuated between prosperity and

depression, the town would face good times and bad. In 1899 the economic ills of the town were exacerbated by the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War and the subsequent siege of the town for a period of four months. The manner in which the Library dealt with the circumstances created by this conflict was to set the pattern for its role in the community for decades to come. The Library would in future adapt to prevailing circumstances and provide a service to the community as best it could. While its literary function remained paramount, the library acknowledged its responsibility to communities other than those in Kimberley itself as well as its other cultural obligations.

Notwithstanding the harmful effect of the blockade of Kimberley on every facet of the lives of its inhabitants, not least the bombardment of the town and the rationing of food, the Minutes recorded by the Library Committee during this period epitomise the British propensity for understatement. Despite the trials and tribulations experienced by the residents, the first vague mention of the fact that the town was to all intents and purposes under martial law is recorded in the Minutes of the meeting of the Library Committee held only five days after the town was besieged when the Committee agreed to continue 'Mr Robinson's salary of £4 pm notwithstanding his absence as Town Guard' (KPL Minutes, 19.10.1899). However, the Annual Report of 1899 did state that other than the skylight which had been slightly damaged, the building had not suffered to any great extent from the bombardment of the town. Other than the closure of the Library on Sundays and in the evenings as well as the absence of newspapers and periodicals, the Subscribers and members of the garrison suffered little inconvenience as far as the Library was concerned (KPL Minutes, 19.10.1899). However, the institution did find itself without its Chairman, Mr Justice Laurence, at this difficult time. When the war broke out, the Judge was elsewhere on circuit and was unable to return to Kimberley until after the town had been relieved (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 19.04.1900).

As a means of serving the Imperial cause, concessions were made to accommodate the military which had been charged with the defence of the town when the Library Committee resolved that

the Librarian inform Col Kekewich that all privileges of first class subscribers are extended to himself and officers under his command without fee or deposit (KPL Minutes, 19.10.1899).

After the relief of Kimberley and until the end of the war in 1902, privileges were also extended to the Imperial Forces stationed in or passing through Kimberley who, it was resolved would

be allowed free all privileges of Subscribers except that of borrowing books and that they be allowed to borrow books at half the ordinary rates of subscription (KPL Minutes, 08.03.1900).



Fig 13: The Siege of Kimberley. The Grand Hotel bedroom in which George Labram of 'Long Cecil' fame was fatally wounded, 1900



Fig 14: Siege of Kimberley. Queue in the Market Square for meat rations, 1900

The Kimberley Public Library not only gave an outstanding service to the community in which it was situated but also to the Cape Colony. In the course of his address to the Annual General Meeting of Subscribers held in 1911, the Chairman, SB Kitchin drew his audience's attention to the fact that the

Kimberley Public Library had played an important part by its influence upon the history of the Diamond Fields and he might say of South Africa generally. All who were here in the early days must look back to the dedication of the plot of land upon which they were at present standing for the purpose of a library, as a most important step in the direction of true citizenship in Kimberley (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 11.08.1911).

By 1911, the Kimberley Public Library was, in the opinion of the locally published *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, more than just a library for the residents of Kimberley when the newspaper extolled the enviable qualities of the Library remarking on the

altogether exceptional nature of the facilities offered ... These facilities ... are now actually greater than in any other similar institution in South Africa ... Take note of the comfortable rooms and "appointments", affording in many respects the conveniences, not merely of a Library but of a first-class Club. Then let them glance at the bookshelves and note how the supply of literature, by careful selection and addition, is kept constantly up-to-date (*DFA* 12.08.1911).

However important a role the Kimberley Public Library played in good times, the library also had to cope with the bad years which seemed always to be lurking in the months and years ahead. During the period of crisis prior to the outbreak of World War I, the Library Committee considered it appropriate at the time to

throw open to the public one of the subscribers' rooms ... and to order two copies of each of the Rand papers and to request the Manager of the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* to supply free copies of the *DFA* for the

benefit of the unemployed visiting the Library ... (KPL Minutes, 12.08.1914).

1914 and the years of international conflict which followed saw yet another set of unfavorable conditions and Kimberley was affected probably more adversely than any other town in the Union. As had often occurred during difficult times in the past, those members of the community who were not away on active service, apparently found solace in reading and also in the facilities provided by the Public Library. These facilities were made available for free use by all officers during their stay in the camp. This was a particularly welcome concession on the part of the Library Committee and obviously one of which the military stationed in the town were pleased to take advantage -

the public room [was] taxed to the utmost in the evenings by the military for whom extra supplies of illustrated papers were provided (KPL Annual Report, 1914).

The Chairman in an address to Subscribers in 1915 referred to the use the military was making of the Library saying that he thought

this was a tribute to the usefulness and popularity of the Library and emphasised it as showing the great value and public benefit of institutions of this kind (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 24.03.1915).

Not only did the Kimberley Public Library provide reading matter for the military stationed in the town but, as has been mentioned previously, old books were sent for the use of the soldiers' institutes in South West Africa (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 1915) and the following year – 1916, the Chairman remarked that the Library had recovered remarkably well from the rigours of war and had made progress

since the opening stages of the war although a considerable number of our younger members were still absent on military service (KPL:Annual Report 1916).

The war brought with it its tragedies and, with the community, the Library Committee and the Subscribers mourned the the death on active service of one of their number, Capt EC Lardner-Burke who, amongst other notable attributes

had done a great deal to encourage reading and the study of good literature in the community (KPL Annual Report, 1916).

By 1921 it would seem that Kimberley and the Library had recovered from the rigours of the war years and was once again focusing on its basic function which was to encourage the community to read. The Annual Report for that year draws the attention of the community to the fact that the Library Committee

would like it to be as widely known as possible that the front room of this building is FREE to all readers at all times when the Library is open (KPL Annual Report, 1921).

The Annual Report of 1924 records that the number of Subscribers had reached 1 260 and it was the opinion of the Chairman that the

Public Library of Kimberley never stood higher in the estimation of the citizens and its ministrations to the intellectual needs of its supporters have never been more appreciated (KPL Annual Report, 1924).

As is often the case in cultural organisations, insufficient attention is paid to the marketing of their contents and facilities. This oversight leaves the vast majority of the public which they claim to serve ignorant of the potential benefits of such institutions. The Library Committee acknowledged this omission on their part and at the Annual General Meeting held in 1928 the Chairman undertook to publicise the Library on a regular basis in the future (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 1928).

By 1939, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Library was considered one of the best libraries in the country. The *Diamond Fields Advertiser* reported that it was a splendidly managed and most up-to-date institution

and for many fills in pleasantly hours of leisure and lightens and brightens perhaps an otherwise dull existence. Not only is the Kimberley Public Library an institution as such, but it frequently serves the purpose of a general inquiry bureau where few of the many questions put to the staff go unanswered ... (DFA, 30.03.1939).

As the war progressed, the Annual Reports for 1939 and 1944 record that greater use had been made of the Library than ever before with a record number of Subscribers, a fact which was attributable to a large extent to the use made of the institution by the military. This observation is substantiated by the fact that there was a slight drop in the number of Subscribers when 21 Air School closed at the end of December 1944 as considerable numbers of the Royal Air Force and South African Air Force had joined the Library during their sojourn in Kimberley (KPL Annual Report, 1944). However the Library's Annual Report for 1945 records that in fact new members from amongst the townspeople had taken the place of the military subscribers (KPL Annual Report, 1945).

It was also recorded that during the war a preference for books dealing with military and political biography and other social questions had been apparent (KPL Annual Report, 1939). Contrary to what might have been expected during a period of international conflict, the supply of new books and periodicals from overseas had initially not been unduly affected by the war conditions (KPL Annual Report, 1940). However, by 1943 'the supply of new books had become irregular and increasingly difficult to obtain' (KPL Annual Report, 1943).

As has been mentioned in a previous chapter (See 3.2.4), the Kimberley Public Library in collaboration with libraries in other large centres was one of the main collection and distribution points in the area for literature for the *Books for Troops* scheme which had been initiated by the South African Public Library in Cape Town during the war. These were then distributed to various military units in the area, namely the Air Force, the Engineers and the Cape Corps and boxes of books and papers were dispatched to various units guarding the internment camp at Andalusia. Numerous parcels of books were also sent to the troops guarding the railway bridges

north and south of Kimberley (KPL Annual Report, 1940). The Library's involvement in and work for the *Books for Troops* scheme continued until October 1945 when the activities of the organisation ceased (KPL Annual Report, 1945).

TABLE. 1

**COMPARATIVE TABLE SHOWING GROWTH OF THE SUBSCRIPTION
LIBRARY AT 10-YEAR INTERVALS
1903 - 1959**

	1903	1913	1923	1933	1943	1953	1959
No of subscribers	582	560	1 238	959	1 385	1 489	1 676
Subscriptions received	£957	£752	£1 292	£1 141	£1 387	£1 461	-
Grants and donations	£500	£1495	£580	£677	£997	£1 538	£1 926
Book stock	28 462	38 859	49293	58 996	69 672	76 103	78 309
Volumes purchased/Amount spent on books	-	1 561	1 587	£329	£442	£818	£773
Volumes withdrawn	-	30	517	835	-	-	-
Circulation	43 821	37 798	92 472	88 388	103 232	88 035	-

* No data is available for the periods which have been left blank

The Library Committee always deemed the educational role of the Library of great importance so that in their selection of books provision was made not only for those who required literature of a recreational nature but also for those who required a good

reference library. In their Annual Reports of 1948 and 1949 the Committee emphasised the importance of the educational role of the Library in the community stating that it was 'becoming more and more a centre for study and reference work' (KPL Annual Reports, 1948 & 1949).

In time greater attention was also paid to the needs of juveniles. Although not spacially ideal, children were given a special room and additional copies of some of the best illustrated journals as well as children's periodicals were placed on the table for their use (KPL Annual Report, 1945). The importance the community attached to the Library Committee's policy of encouraging children to use the Library was amply demonstrated by its generous response to a campaign to raise funds for the improvement of the children's room. Despite the unfavourable economic circumstances prevailing at that time, £545 was raised for this purpose and

in addition certain firms did the necessary renovations at cut prices and in some cases free of charge (KPL Annual Reports, 1952 & 1953).

The Library became the hub of cultural activity in the city from its very early days. In the Library's Annual Report of 1903, it was recorded that a room had been set aside for the Chess Club and that it was

anxious to assist any movement having as its object the cultivation and love of reading and the extension of useful knowledge (KPL Annual Report 1903).

Another of the cultural organisations to take advantage of its facilities was the Kimberley Athenaeum which was established in 1903. Although this scholarly club ceased to function after only three years, it was resuscitated in 1911 (KPL Minutes, 26.04.1911).

In the course of time, the Play-Reading Society, the Music Club and the Arts and Crafts Society established their headquarters in the Library (KPL Annual Report, 1950). In the absence of an art gallery, the Library was also used to store and display works of art – several paintings were presented to the Library and in 1939 the

Venerable Archdeacon George Mervyn Lawson presented a valuable collection of Old Master Prints and Drawings to the institution (KPL Annual Report, 1939) (See 7.2.2.6). In 1951 the late Dr Max Greenberg bequeathed to the City of Kimberley a fine collection of paintings by renowned South African artists. These were temporarily displayed in the Library and eventually transferred to the William Humphreys Art Gallery which opened its doors to the public in December 1952.

Probably as a consequence of the calibre of the men who served on the Library Committee from the inception of the institution, several important projects which were of great importance to the town were initiated by the Library Committee. In 1903, for example the Committee gave consideration to the extension of the work of the Library by the addition of a Museum. It was not the Committee's intention to encroach on the Library's funds for this project: rather an appeal would be made to the public for the necessary funds. Although this project was overtaken by a generous offer to the town by Margaret McGregor to build a museum in memory of her late husband, the initiative to establish such an institution had indeed come from the Library Committee and the funds collected for this purpose were donated to the museum's Board of Trustees which opened its doors to the public in September 1907. As a gesture of acknowledgement of the role played by the Kimberley Public Library in the establishment of the Alexander McGregor Memorial Museum, the Kimberley Public Library Committee was, in terms of the museum's constitution, entitled to two seats on the Museum Board of Trustees (KPL Annual Report, 1907) (See 4.2).

At this time, 1907, the Library Committee also proposed the establishment of an art school in Kimberley and CE Nind, one of the De Beers' representatives on the Library Committee was appointed to represent the Library on the Art School Committee (KPL Minutes 10.10.1907). Unfortunately nothing came of this proposed venture.

Once the Kimberley Public Library ceased in 1961 to operate as a Subscription Library and the functions of the Library Committee concluded, it would seem that the role of the Kimberley Public Library in the community changed. No longer were the rules and regulations of the institution formulated by men and women who were citizens of Kimberley. The Kimberley Public Library was now subject to official

procedures prepared by public servants in Cape Town and consequently its role in the community became more detached. However, its new status as a free library conferred upon it the capacity to reach out to a broader spectrum of the inhabitants of Kimberley and enabled the institution to establish depots and branches which served all residents of Kimberley.

4.6 Bookstock

4.6.1 Nature of collections

The initial bookstock of the Kimberley Public Library comprised books which had belonged to an earlier library, a joint stock company which had ceased to function shortly before the establishment of the Kimberley Public Library in 1882. These books were bought at the auction sale of the assets of the Library's predecessor which had operated unsuccessfully as a joint-stock company (Roberts 1976: 194-195 & KPL Minutes, 28.11.1882 & *Diamond News*, 28.11.1882) (See 4.6.2).

By 1891, the Chairman of the Library Committee, Mr Justice Laurence had compiled a catalogue of the holdings of the Kimberley Public Library and in 1900, the Library Committee budgeted an amount of £300 for the printing of a new catalogue (KPL Minutes, 12.04.1900).

Shortly after the new Kimberley Public Library building was opened in July 1887, the bookstock of the Library totalled 5 022 volumes. By 1892 the number of volumes held by the library had risen to 15 539, a figure exceeded in South Africa only by libraries in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth (KPL Minutes, 13.10.1892), institutions which had been established many years before the Public Library in Kimberley. The pace at which the Committee of the new Library expanded the bookstock can be measured by the fact that in 1902, after a period of only 15 years since its inception, the number of volumes housed in the Library had increased by 21 529. The majority of these had been purchased and a relatively small number of volumes donated to the institution. Roughly 65% of the bookstock was non-fiction and 35% fiction (Van Niekerk 1990:151). Damaged books were withdrawn from circulation from time to time and, with a selection of redundant periodicals and newspapers, were distributed

to various worthy causes both in the town and the surrounding area (Van Niekerk 1990: 153).

As early as 1889 the Minutes of the Kimberley Public Library make the first mention of the need to collect books relating to South Africa and the Chairman, Mr Justice Laurence arranged to purchase books of this nature from Mr Fairbridge in Cape Town (KPL Minutes, 05.12.1889) (See 4.6.2).

The following year in 1890 the Chairman expressed the view that Kimberley's isolated geographic position required the Public Library to bring together a large and comprehensive reference library, this step possibly also inspired by a comment which appeared some years previously in the *Daily Independent* of 16 December 1886 that the

Kimberley public prided itself on being the most intelligent and cultured community in South Africa (Van Niekerk 1990: 111).

The Colonial Government increased its grant to the Library in 1890 and specified that this additional funding was for the purchase of standard books of reference. This government generosity met with the gratitude of the Library Committee and the Chairman, Mr Justice Laurence remarked in the Annual Report of that year as follows

Situating as we are so many miles from any of the large Colonial Libraries, the necessity for a large and well-arranged Reference Library is sufficiently obvious and the munificent gift of the Government will enable the Committee to make further valuable additions to this class of books (KPL Annual Report, 1890).

Earlier that year, the Chairman reported to the Committee that he had bought a number of books on South Africa in Cape Town for £15 (KPL Minutes, 06.02.1890). These modest purchases were the Kimberley Public Library's first steps towards bringing together one of the finest collection of Africana in South Africa. As the Africana collection of the Kimberley Public Library was to become the *raison d'être*

for the establishment of the Kimberley Africana Library in 1986, this subject is dealt with separately and in greater detail in chapter 7.

At an early stage, the Library Committee recognised the importance of collecting material relating to Kimberley and its history. Appeals were made to the public on a regular basis not to discard pamphlets, photographs and other ephemera but to donate these to the Library (KPL Annual Reports, 1901 & 1903). These donations formed the basis of a large and excellent collection of historic photographs and pamphlets which reflect the social and industrial history of the town and its vicinity. In due course, the collection policy was broadened to include maps of Africa, South Africa and particularly Griqualand West.

While the Librarian of the Kimberley Public Library, Dyer had as far back as 1903 expressed the opinion that as Afrikaans was here to stay and that it was incumbent upon libraries to

seek to preserve its every printed specimen than to import ... High Dutch which few can read (Dyer 1903: 33)

it would seem that the Library Committee only acknowledged the growing demand for books in Afrikaans in 1927 when in the Annual Report of that year the Committee expressed its intention 'to systematically build up a representative collection of books in this medium' (KPL Annual Report, 1927). The report goes on to state that

The recent acquisition of a number of popular South African writers' books has had the effect of increasing our circulation of Afrikaans literature by over 300% (KPL Annual Report, 1927).

The various categories of books purchased by the Library Committee are reflected in Table 2. These could be classified as both recreational and educational and could undoubtedly satisfy the literary preferences of a wide spectrum of the population of Kimberley. A detailed analysis of the circulation of the volumes in the Library's collection is discontinued after 1933, but the table does reflect the total circulation and

the number of volumes in the Library's bookstock until 1960/61 when the Kimberley Public Library became a free library.

The stock of books increased at a steady rate and from time to time, as funds permitted, the Library Committee was compelled to acquire additional shelves and book cases to alleviate 'the congestion of present shelf space in certain sections [which was] causing serious inconvenience' (KPL Annual Report, 1915) (See Table 2). The question of finding the means required for the provision of additional shelf space was indeed a serious one. The Library's Annual Report for 1919 records that within a period of 10 years the bookstock had increased from 33 000 volumes to over 46 000 volumes. This figure excluded a large quantity of unbound and unlisted pamphlets. It was obvious that only 'the complete reconstruction and extension of the Library buildings' could remedy the problem created by this remarkable expansion of the bookstock in the Kimberley Public Library (KPL Annual Report, 1919). The space to accommodate the expanding bookstock became a perennial problem and reference is made regularly to the shortage of accommodation.

The problem presented by inadequate accommodation was alleviated when in 1926 De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited donated a sum sufficient to enlarge the Library premises to accommodate the ever-increasing number of books and readers (KPL Annual Report, 1926). The following year, on completion of the construction of the additional accommodation, the Chairman, JJ Collins was able to announce that

there was ample space for the display of the fifty odd thousand volumes... (KPL AGM, Chairman's address, 16.03.1927).

4.6.2 Sources

As mentioned previously the initial bookstock of the Kimberley Public Library was that of the "old" library which had been auctioned with the furniture on 25 November 1882 (See 4.6.1). A member of the new Committee, G Wolff was delegated to represent the Library at this sale and it was decided 'that it be left to his discretion to purchase them or otherwise, on behalf of the Committee' (KPL Minutes of Special meeting of Public Committee, 22.11.1882). At the following meeting

Wolff reported that he had purchased the Books and Furniture with shelving for £75 (KPL Minutes, 28.11.1882).

The Committee was assisted in its selection of books by opening a Recommendation Book for the names of books which Subscribers wished to have purchased (KPL Minutes, 12.01.1883). This system of subscriber participation in the selection of books was maintained throughout the Library's period as a Subscription Library.

The Minutes of the Kimberley Public Library reveal that the Library Committee purchased books, periodicals and newspapers from various sources, both in South Africa and in Britain. The main supplier in Kimberley from an early stage in the Library's history was Messrs Handel House, a local firm of booksellers who were instructed to order books and periodicals on behalf of the Library (KPL Minutes, 08.06.1923). From time to time various firms, both in Kimberley and in Cape Town were invited to present quotations which would be considered by the Library's Book Committee.

In Cape Town firms of booksellers such as Messrs Juta Limited and T Maskew Miller were regular suppliers of books and for the supply of Africana, Messrs [CA] Fairbridge and WR Morrison were the Library's main suppliers. Official publications such as Government Gazettes were supplied by the relevant government departments. In several instances books were purchased directly from the organisation which published them such as the Van Riebeeck Society (KPL Minutes, 08.06.1923). Firms such as Messrs BH Blackwell & Co in Oxford, Cedric Chivers in Bath, Quatritch and EG Allen & Son in London, England were called upon regularly to execute orders placed by the Kimberley Public Library Committee.

The practice of authorising the Chairman, Mr Justice Laurence to purchase books to a predetermined value during his periodic visits to Cape Town and Britain commenced soon after the inception of the Library (KPL Minutes, 11.10.1883) and continued for many years thereafter (See 4.6.1).

That the Books Committee were discerning in their selection of books is amply substantiated by the means they chose of dealing with the purchase of books particularly when they were of the opinion that the books they were being offered by

the booksellers were not up to the literary standard to which the Kimberley Public Library aspired. The Minutes of a meeting of the Books Committee held in 1923 record-

In the part of the report dealing with new and unknown authors, the sub-committee was of the opinion that the present method of selection was not satisfactory. It threw an undue burden on those members of the Books Committee who undertook the task of scrutiny, and many of the new novels submitted by the booksellers were of a very poor type. Further that some of the better class novels now appearing were not reaching the Library through the ordinary channels, and that in order to keep in touch with these it was advisable that a few members of the Books Committee should undertake to follow the reviews in those papers and periodicals of standing which specialised in good literary criticism ... (KPL Minutes of Books Committee meeting, 03.08.1923).

Many literary works, works of art as well and other items were donated to the Library and to name all of them in a study of this nature is not feasible. However, donors whose names appear with great regularity are those of the first Chairman of the Library Committee, Mr Justice Laurence whose contributions to the bookstock of the Kimberley Public Library in its early stages were immense.

The Minutes of the Library also record gifts of scientific books presented to the institution by the Trustees of the British Museum. Presentations of books from this source continued for many years (KPL Minutes, 29.05.1890 & 17.06.1909 & 13.01.1910).

During her term of office as Director of the McGregor Museum and thereafter, the donations made to the Library by Maria Wilman greatly enhanced the stature of the institution's Africana Collection. The name of the Venerable Archdeacon GM Lawson's generous gift in 1939 of a large collection of Old Master Prints and Drawings as well as a substantial number of books on art and the classics presented to the Library on numerous occasions cannot be excluded from a list of the Library's benefactors (KPL Annual Report, 1939) (See 7.2.2.6).

4.6.3 Care of the collections

The scientifically based techniques and practices implemented to preserve collections of books and archival material today were unknown until relatively recently. Provided the collections were safely housed and appropriate steps taken to obviate their being damaged by delinquent or irresponsible subscribers, the management and staff of such institutions, including the Kimberley Public Library, implemented only rudimentary measures to safeguard their collections. Generally they were unaware of the deleterious effect of fluctuating temperatures, humidity, dust and pests so that little attention was given to matters as vital as environmental and pest control and meticulous housekeeping. A complaint to the Library Committee from a Subscriber in 1924 to the effect that he had found vermin, thought to be a 'bug', in the books he had taken out elicited no more response than that the Committee 'would await further complaints before taking action' (KPL Minutes, 09.05.1924). Today, appropriate measures are taken immediately to clear the institution of any such infestation.

A report submitted to the Library Committee in 1923 indicated that there was indeed concern about the preservation of the Map Collection which comprised four large modern wall maps and ninety-six others suitable for storing flat in a map cabinet. However, the report stated that these were likely to be damaged in handling and that they should be mounted on linen (KPL Minutes, 10.08.1923).

Later that year the Library Committee was deeply concerned about the potentially harmful methods employed in their attempt to obviate the theft of illustrations from art books. Advice was sought from the public libraries in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg and eventually the method of embossing applied by the British Museum in London was considered the least detrimental to the book (KPL Minutes of the Books Committee, 02.11.1923 & 07.02.1924).

The Library Committee paid considerable attention to those items which required binding which included the comprehensive newspaper collection. Of particular relevance were those newspapers which were distributed in Kimberley and the environs. Quotations were invited from South African firms of bookbinders as well as from those abroad. On occasions, it was found that the cost of having books bound

in England was cheaper than having this work done in South Africa (KPL Annual Report, 1901). In such cases, this work was done by the bookbinders Messrs B Riley & Co., Huddersfield in England (KPL Minutes of Books Committee meeting, 17.06.1909).

These omissions in regard to conservation methods were not limited to the 'early' days only: they persist today in many institutions, including the Kimberley Africana Library, due to the lack of training and/or the resources required to remedy the problems and instal the equipment required to adequately preserve the collections. For example it is only in recent years, with the financial assistance of one of the Africana Library's auxiliary organisations, the Friends of the Africana Library, that the fire alarm system in the Library was upgraded. The impoverished Sol Plaatje Municipality as the funding body simply does not have the funds to upgrade the equipment to the required standard nor is there evidence that the local authority is unduly concerned about such matters.

Overwhelming evidence of the unintentional neglect of collections was also the reason for the Council of the William Humphreys Art Gallery in Kimberley making representation to the Municipality's Library Committee in 1990 for the transfer to the Art Gallery of the valuable collection of Old Master Prints and Drawings donated to the Library by the Venerable Archdeacon GM Lawson. Although the Library Committee had every intention of dealing appropriately with the preservation and arrangement of these works of art (KPL Annual Report, 1939), by 1985 steps had yet to be taken to carry out the Archdeacon's instructions in this regard. The Library Advisory Committee parted with this collection reluctantly but did eventually acknowledge that the Art Gallery with the necessary means, environment and expertise to preserve these works of art for posterity, was indeed the appropriate place in which to house the collection (See 7.2.2.6).

TABLE 2
BOOKSTOCK AND CIRCULATION

†Circulation of Categories of books	1903	1911-12	1929	1933	1943	1953	1959	1960-61
English fiction	30 209	30 208	84 735	76 331	-	-	-	-
Travels	700	503	568	968	-	-	-	-
Biography	728	687	1 310	2 327	-	-	-	-
History	1 159	757	927	1 158	-	-	-	-
Poetry & drama	695	318	543	560	-	-	-	-
Sociology			1 053	884	-	-	-	-
Politics, economics, philosophy & jurisprudence	259	352	-	-	-	-	-	-
Science & natural history	710	402	543	370	-	-	-	-
Theology	87	92	120	200	-	-	-	-
Ancient classics	54	17	83	60	-	-	-	-
Fine arts	304	42	93	109	-	-	-	-
Afrikaans			473	399	--	-	-	-
Foreign languages	782	181			-	-	-	-
South Africa	1 181	545	874	738	-	-	-	-
Sports/miscellaneous	422	264	750	546	-	-	-	-
*Reference	367	181	496	411	-	-	-	-
Juvenile	-	1 242	5 706	3 327	-	-	-	-
Circulation	43 821	37 356	98 273	88 388	103 232	88 035	86 054	‡238 702
Total no of volumes in Library	28 462	36 104	54 161	58 996	69 672	76 103	78 309	#-

Notes on Table 2

† Statistics which reflect the classification of volumes issued are only included in the Annual Reports up to 1933 hence the blank spaces left in the table.

‡ The substantial increase in the circulation figure for 1960 reflects the change in the Kimberley Public Library's status from a Subscription Library to a Free Library.

No figures are recorded in the Annual Report for 1960/61 in respect of the number of volumes in the library. However, attention is drawn to the fact that in preparation for the change over to a free library, the bookstock had been re-organised and many worn and dilapidated volumes withdrawn.

4.7. Finance

The Kimberley Public Library suffered a devastating blow, both to its finances and to the confidence of the Library Committee and the Subscribers in respect of their judgment of character when the Librarian who, during his years in office (1901 – 1908), had inspired so much trust and confidence had been found to have misappropriated funds to the extent of approximately £2500 over a period of approximately seven years (See Appendix, Dyer: 293). This unfortunate occurrence, however, did effect greater financial vigilance on the part of the Committee and several committee members, notable amongst whom was Captain JD Tyson who with the co-operation of Dyer's successor, John Ross kept a tight rein on the Library's financial affairs and set the pattern for the competent financial management of the Library in future years.

The Kimberley Public Library was dependent for its revenue from five main sources, namely

- Subscriptions
- grants-in-aid from
 - i. De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd,
 - ii. the Cape Colonial Government until 1910 and thereafter from the Cape Provincial Administration,
 - iii. the Kimberley Borough Council and after 1912, the Kimberley City Council
 - iv. the Divisional Council
- Interest on investments
- Various donations.

Economic and political factors over which the Library Committee had no control lay at the root of the Library's fluctuating fortunes. The local economy, based as it was on the diamond mining industry, greatly affected the financial situation of the Library and its ability to deliver a service to its Subscribers and to some extent, to the general public as the Kimberley Public Library in fact 'practiced a combination of a Free Library on one side and a Subscription Library on the other' (KPL Minutes, 30.11.1894).

The diamond mines were the pivot around which Kimberley revolved. When the demand for diamonds was high, Kimberley flourished. However, when the mines suffered the consequences of adverse economic conditions, the level of unemployment in Kimberley increased commensurately, commercial activity slowed down and the Library's income from subscriptions tended to drop either because Subscribers who were unable to afford the subscription resigned, or because they would 'demote' themselves to a lower and cheaper category of membership. The Annual Report of 1908, similar in content to those of several years in the annals of the institution as a Subscription Library, reported that the depression and retrenchment prevailing on the Diamond Fields were reflected in the affairs of the Library and that the number of Subscribers had fallen from 530 to 414 (KPL Annual Report, 1908). These unfavorable conditions persisted during the following year which, it was reported, also limited the Library's expenditure on books (KPL Annual Report, 1909).

At such times, the situation was exacerbated by the inability of the Library's three main sources of grants-in-aid to provide the financial assistance upon which the Library Committee depended, although it was on rare occasions only that De Beers suspended its annual grant to the Kimberley Public Library. In any event, the government grant of £300 to the Kimberley Library was infinitely less than that allocated to Cape Town (£1050), Pretoria (£1300), Johannesburg (£1300) and even Port Elizabeth received a larger grant of £400 (KPL Annual Report, 1913). However by 1919, both the Provincial and Municipal grants were increased but were to be subject to regular fluctuations in later years.

Almost from its inception, the Kimberley Public Library functioned on the proverbial shoestring. During its history as a Subscription Library, the institution was hard pressed to keep its head above water financially and it is unlikely that it would have acquired its elevated status had it not been for its chief benefactor, De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited. Each year, the Library's Annual Reports pay tribute to De Beers and its liberal financial support of the Library as well as to the fact that 'when the Government failed them, De Beers remained staunch to them' (KPL Annual Report, 1909). Not only was the Library able to rely on an annual grant from this mining company, but they could, with a reasonable degree of confidence appeal to individual directors of the company for financial assistance on such occasions for

instance when the Library needed to pay off an overdraft or when the institution's funds precluded the purchase of rare and valuable books considered vital for the enhancement of the Africana Collection. Throughout the history of the Library, De Beers has lent liberal support to this institution in cash and in kind.

The Annual Report of 1921 refers to the 'prolonged set-back to the diamond mining industry' and the effect this had had on the membership returns of the Kimberley Library. Because of these difficult circumstances, it was pointed out that it was impossible to have expected the usual Christmas cash donation from the Directors of the De Beers Company. These factors had combined to negatively effect the Library not least in regard to the purchase of books for certain sections of the Library and had resulted in the institution closing the financial year with a debit balance of £362. But more alarming still was the fact that the Committee had been obliged to take the Library's investment at the Standard Bank into revenue to meet the extra cost of running the institution (KPL Annual Report, 1921). Having to reconcile the Library's budget from year to year indeed required every fragment of the Committee's collective financial expertise as the grants from the Provincial Administration and the Municipality particularly tended to fluctuate from year to year.

The donations received from time to time were welcome windfalls, but none of them qualified as an endowment. On more than one occasion, members of the public and the committee mentioned the fact that Kimberley had provided many individuals with great wealth and that it was regrettable that not even a fraction of this money had been invested in the city. At the Annual General Meeting of the Library held on 20 February 1925, the Acting Chairman, OJS Satchel

greatly deplored the small financial endowment of the Library and said that bearing in mind the vast wealth drawn from Kimberley in the last 50 years, its was anomalous that the institutions of the town were not among the wealthiest in the world (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 20.02.1925).

One of the most generous cash donations was an amount of £500 received from the Library's former chairman Sir Perceval Laurence (Mr Justice Laurence) who in 1925

donated this sum for the purchase of books of reference and good editions of standard books. 904 books were purchased with this donation (KPL Annual Report, 1925).

Another windfall of a different nature similar to that which had taken place some years previously occurred in 1928 when the second cottage in Woodley Street was demolished and once again the debris washed for diamonds. This exercise yielded 731 carats and the Library's share of the proceeds from the sale of these diamonds amounted to £232.10s 0d which, with the sum of £50 received for the cottage materials was credited to the Building Account (KPL Annual Report 1928) (See 4.2).

The world-wide economic depression of the early 1930's was keenly felt by the Library. -

In common with most public institutions throughout the country, the Kimberley Library has been driven somewhat out of its normal course by the prevailing economic head winds and progress retarded in consequence ... In spite of the paucity of funds at our command, the general efficiency of the establishment has been well maintained (KPL Annual Report, 1931).

The financial crisis continued into the following year. Although 1932 was the Library's Jubilee year, no funds were available to celebrate the establishment's 50th anniversary. In fact the year had been

fraught with difficulties and problems of more than ordinary magnitude and not a few of these still remain to be overcome. In the framing of our estimates in the early part of 1932, every conceivable reduction was allowed for on both sides of the account and the most unpleasant duty of all was the limitation that had to be set on the purchase of new books ... Thanks to a special donation of £100 made by the directors of De Beers Company in December, the institution succeeded in emerging rather creditably at the close of the financial year (KPL Annual Report, 1932).

Although the war years from 1939 to 1945 brought their frustrations and shortages and caused some degree of inconvenience particularly in regard to the delivery of books, the Library's finances were not unduly affected. Grants were paid and because of the presence in Kimberley of military and air force personnel, greater use was made of the Library, which meant more revenue from subscriptions (KPL Annual Report, 1944). However, the Library's finances were by no means healthy so that by the time the Cape Provincial Administration passed its Cape Library Ordinance in 1955 expectations were high that the Kimberley Public Library would benefit from its provisions. This Ordinance provided for a free library service to all parts of the Cape Province, but the implementation of this legislation was dependent upon the co-operation and financial assistance of the larger municipalities. In the case of the Kimberley Public Library, a decision on the part of the Kimberley Municipality to finance the Library was crucial for the institution to benefit from the provincial legislation.

This decision was finally taken in 1959 when the Kimberley City Council agreed to finance a free library for the City. The Annual Report of that year states that

It had long been realised that unless substantial additional revenue could be obtained, the Library would have to curtail its services to the subscribers and to the public (KPL Annual Report, 1959).

Although the free library system only became effective from the beginning of 1961, the Kimberley City Council assumed financial responsibility for the continued running of the Library with effect from 1 January 1959 (KPL Annual Report 1959).

4.8. Conclusion

The introduction of the free library system in Kimberley heralded the beginning of an entirely new chapter in the annals of the Kimberley Public Library. No longer would the institution and its management be subject to the wishes of the Subscribers but it would henceforth be administered in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance No 4 of 1955. After a period of almost eighty years, the Library Committee which had performed such sterling work was dissolved and replaced by a Library Advisory

Committee. One of the Library Committee's distinguishing features was the resourcefulness demonstrated by successive committees and particularly the great foresight these men and women displayed in bringing together the Library's enviable collection of rare books and Africana. These collections were to be the foundation for the future Kimberley Africana Library.

Although the Kimberley Public Library was in a more favourable position financially and commensurately better able to provide a public service, there is no doubt that the Library's period as a Subscription Library was indeed its 'golden age'.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KIMBERLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY AS A FREE LIBRARY UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE KIMBERLEY MUNICIPALITY AND AFFILIATED TO THE CAPE PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICE: 1960 – 1984

5.1 Introduction

The Annual Report for the period immediately preceding the Kimberley Public Library's conversion to the Cape Provincial Library Service's free library system in 1961 describes this event as 'momentous' and indeed it did herald a major transformation of the Kimberley Public Library (KPL Annual Report, 1960/1961). Almost every facet of the Library underwent vast changes: the management, the personnel, the administration and finances, the members, the library material - all but the building changed almost beyond recognition.

In terms of the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance No 4 of 1955, the Kimberley Public Library would retain a substantial degree of autonomy. It would not become a Provincial Library but would remain a library which belonged to the local community under the control of a local committee which would be responsible for the selection of library material and for the administration and management of the Library. The only difference would be that as the Kimberley Public Library would in future be a member of the Provincial Library Service, it would be affiliated to a larger system and by this means would share in the advantages such a system offered (KPB 1975: 2).

5.2 Building, grounds and garden

Although the Kimberley Municipality renovated the interior of the Library building prior to the transfer of the Library to the Kimberley City Council in 1960, the critical shortage of space remained a seemingly insurmountable problem. Notwithstanding the fact that everything possible had been done to accommodate the additional

bookstock and the new users, the space provided by this old library building was totally inadequate.

By 1962 it had become abundantly clear that the old Public Library building was thoroughly unsatisfactory for use in the Library's new form, particularly as it comprised a series of small rooms and the Reading, Reference and Children's rooms were too small to deal with the increased use to which they were subjected. Expansion under existing circumstances was impossible. Space was at such a premium that material which was used infrequently was stored in the City Hall, but in due course this option too was exhausted (KPL Annual Report, 1962). The fact that the shelves were overcrowded meant that several staff members were obliged constantly to keep the bookstock in order instead of being productively occupied elsewhere. Service to the public deteriorated and working conditions became intolerable. An added drawback was the fact that the Library, cramped as it was for space, was unable either to store appropriately or to display items from its enviable Africana and Reference Collections (KPL Annual Report, 1964). In addition, the environmental conditions in the building were inconsistent with the standard conditions required for the storage of valuable items of Africana and other special collections, particularly in Kimberley which was subject to extreme temperatures and a low relative humidity (KPL Annual Report, 1964).

This untenable situation gave rise that year to consideration being given to the construction of a new building for the Kimberley Public Library. Preliminary plans were drawn up for a new building on the existing site. However, this idea was abandoned in favour of a building erected on a new site which could provide adequate parking facilities. The building which it was estimated would cost R200 000 was to be financed from funds put on a loan programme. This major work and the required funding were approved at a meeting of ratepayers held in January 1964. A site on the perimeter of the Civic Centre was earmarked for the new Library and the intention was that building operations would commence before the end of 1965. However these optimistic predictions were frustrated by Government building restrictions announced in December 1964 and exacerbated by an acute shortage of municipal architectural staff (KPL Annual Report, 1966).

The Kimberley Public Library's unenviable circumstances continued from one year to the next and the Annual Report for 1964 states that 'working conditions and facilities for borrowers become less and less congenial' (KPL Annual Report, 1964). The Library's justifiable grievances in regard to the lack of space and facilities became a perennial refrain in the Annual Reports for decades to come.

Despite the fact that detailed planning for a new library continued, and the hope expressed that

this building will not be too long delayed for the existing building, besides being totally inadequate, is rapidly deteriorating and the amount which has to be spent on essential maintenance increases daily (KPL Annual Report, 1966).

The year 1967 was earmarked as the date of commencement of the construction of the new Library but due to the unfavourable financial conditions prevailing throughout the country at the time, the construction was postponed once again.

The situation was alleviated to some extent in 1970 when premises were hired for the establishment of a Children's Library in Woodley Street. This Library was designed to accommodate 10 000 children's books.

The management of the Kimberley Public Library was confident that the long-awaited new building would materialise in due course particularly as the project had the support of the Provincial Director of Library Services (CPLS Director to City Librarian, Scott 14.12.1973). Planning for the new building continued unabated and the Annual Report of the City Librarian for 1973/74 states that it was possible that the results of this planning would be visible 'in the not too distant future' (KPL Annual Report, 1973/74). However, the following year, 1975, the City Council was

forced to adopt a policy of stringent curtailment of expenses, therefore there will be no new buildings in the foreseeable future (KPL Annual Report, 1975)

and notwithstanding much consideration given to ways and means of easing the congestion at the Kimberley Public Library, any effort made in this regard was about as effective as moving the chairs on the *Titanic*. Offers to alleviate the congestion and resolve the crisis emanated from several sources: the General Manager of De Beers offered the use of Kimberley House in Dutoitspan Road and the Director of the McGregor Museum offered the use of the vacant museum building adjacent to the Library as possible solutions to the problem. The Historical Society, for its part, approached Mr Orpen, the architect of the new East London Municipal Library for his opinion on the feasibility or otherwise of incorporating the vacant museum building with the existing building. Orpen, however, did not consider this a wise option (KPL Annual Report, 1975).

Some relief was forthcoming in 1976 when the Kimberley City Council agreed to spend an amount in excess of R12 000 on long overdue renovations to the building. On the one hand, this gesture was welcomed but on the other, it was to all intents and purposes tacit confirmation that no alternative or additional accommodation would be made available to the Kimberley Public Library for some years to come (KPL Annual Report, 1976).

The following year, 1977, saw the 90th anniversary of the inauguration of the Kimberley Public Library building. At that time, in 1887, the Library had a membership of 289 and a circulation of 5 660. In 1977 membership stood at 6 789 with a circulation of 211 828. Viewed from this perspective there could be no doubt that it was manifestly impossible for the staff to deliver a quality service under such outmoded and congested conditions (KPL Annual Report, 1977). Under these circumstances, it was hardly surprising that many members of the Library elected instead to go to the Hadison Park Library depot or the Beaconsfield Public Library where they found the environment more congenial.

Despite the poor financial climate throughout the country, the ever optimistic Library Committee continued the planning for the new building and supported the view that the City Librarian and the City Architect should proceed with the planning for the proposed new Library. In 1979, the City Librarian reported that the 'green light' had been given for the drawing up of a building programme and the firm of local

architects, Messrs Goldblatt, Yuill and Partners was commissioned to design a building in accordance with the specifications laid down in such a building programme (KPL Annual Report, 1979).

It is possible that the delay in the commencement of the construction of this building was also due to differences of opinion expressed within the City Council and amongst the public regarding the city's priorities in respect of the Library and other proposed building projects. As the Mayor of Kimberley, Councillor JW Wilmans explained in his valedictory address delivered on 31 August 1980, the Kimberley City Council was faced with the dilemma of having to find funds not only for new developments but also for the maintenance and replacement of much of Kimberley's old and obsolete infrastructure which ought to have received attention years ago. He went on to say that

One of the main questions asked [by the public] why the Kimberley City Council wishes to proceed with so-called luxury projects such as a new library, sports stadium and other non-essential services when there existed such a huge backlog in respect of basic essential services (KCC Mayor's Valedictory address, 31.08.1980).

That the Kimberley City Council and the Kimberley Municipality were sympathetic to the plight of the Kimberley Public Library there is no doubt. The following year, the Mayor, Councillor LJ Botha stated in his mayoral address that the anticipated Provincial subsidy for the new Library had not been forthcoming and that this had been a great disappointment after the 'many years of frustration and protracted negotiation' experienced in regard to the building of the new Library (KCC Mayoral address, 31.08:1981).

The Town Clerk, A Pienaar in his report for the same period stated in respect of the new Library

Hierdie jaar het die behoefte aan beter biblioteekdienste in die middestad indringende aandag geniet. 'n Aantreklike en funksionele biblioteek is deur die argiteksfirma Goldblatt, Yuill en vennote beplan maar as

gevolg van finansiële las wat hierdie bou onderneming sou meebring – ondanks ‘n milde subsidie van R350 000 wat aan ons beloof is deur die Direkteur van Biblioteekdienste – is besluit om die gebou in fases op te rig (KCC Town Clerk’s report, 31.08.1981).

But in fact, the building project was not built in phases but rather left in abeyance once more, much to the disappointment of the Mayor, Councillor LJ Botha who stated in his valedictory address of 1982 that

Vir my persoonlik sou dit werklik een van die hoogtepunte in my termyn gewees het as hierdie lofwaardige projek gefinaliseer was. Ter elfde ure moes ons die bittere teleurstelling ondervind dat ons nie met die bou van ons biblioteek kon voortgaan nie omdat ons nie die verwagte subsidie kon bekom nie. Ek is egter nog oortuig daarvan dat die Provinsiale Administrasie wel die nodige en noodsaaklike samewerking gaan gee ... (KCC Mayor’s valedictory address, 1982).

However, a glimmer of hope appeared on the otherwise sombre horizon when the architect, David Yuill and the City Librarian were delegated to visit a few of the recently built libraries in the Transvaal. This gave the project renewed impetus which resulted in another plan being drawn up in collaboration with the City Architect. This plan was duly approved by the Provincial Director of Library Services who indicated that a provincial subsidy of 35% of the building costs might be forthcoming provided that the provincial budget for the following year allowed for expenditure on this project.

In the interim, an *ad hoc* committee under the chairmanship of the Mayor of Kimberley was appointed to assess the needs of the Library and establish possible alternatives to the construction of a new library. This committee came to the conclusion that there was simply no alternative but to construct a new library building. New plans were drawn up but facilities such as the activities hall and committee room which were considered inconsequential were omitted. Although this plan was approved by the Director of Library Services, it was vetoed by the Provincial Executive Committee (KPL Annual Report, 1982).

In 1982, the Provincial Executive Committee again refused to authorise financial assistance for the construction of a new library building. However, this rejection inspired a City Council decision to apply for a loan authority for an amount of R1 100 000 from the Administration and to instruct the architects to continue work on the plans (KPL Annual Report, 1982).

In order to cut costs as much as possible, it was decided to make use of a space frame and in November 1982, a tender for an amount of R57 827 was received for the construction of a steel frame. At the same time, a further appeal was made to the Provincial Administration for a subsidy of R200 000, which was eventually approved and received in December of that year and the construction of the long-awaited library building began (KPL Annual Report, 1982). The erection of the space frame and the brick walls were completed early in 1983.

In her Annual Report for 1983, the City Librarian observed that that year had marked

the end of more than a century of the Kimberley Public Library history ... Since its opening in 1887, the building has undergone various extensions to accommodate the rapidly expanding collection and its users, but by 1960 when the Library was taken over by the Provincial Library Services, it had become extremely congested and a new venue became a matter of paramount importance. As a result of financial commitments, however, it has taken more than twenty years of negotiation and cogitation for the undertaking to get off the ground (KPL Annual Report, 1983).

It was at this stage that the idea of establishing the Kimberley Africana Library was conceived. It was decided to create two libraries: the old building would become a research library and house the Africana and Special Collections and the new library would be used solely as a public circulating library. The records do not suggest that the stipulation contained in Clause 3(a) of the Agreement between the City Council and the Kimberley Public Library Committee which states the 'Special Africana Collection' and the 'Special Collection'

shall not, except with the approval of the Trustees designated in Clause 8 ... be removed from the present Kimberley Library premises ... except purely for temporary purposes (KCC/KPL Agreement, 1960/61)

was a determining factor in the Kimberley Municipality's decision to convert the old Library building into a research library housing these specific collections.

The decision to create two libraries entailed the division of the Kimberley Public Library's bookstock into two sections namely that which would be transferred to the new building and the Africana and Special Collections which, as research collections, would remain in the old library building. The implementation of this plan entailed a major reorganisation of the bookstock and a concomitant adjustment of the records.

The Kimberley Public Library duly took occupation of its new building during the first week in March 1984, notwithstanding the fact that the building had not reached completion. In the process almost 50 000 books were transferred to the Library's new premises (KPL Annual Report, 1984). The patience and hard work of numerous City Librarians and other interested parties was finally rewarded when the Kimberley Public Library in its new guise was officially opened by the Administrator of the Cape, Gene Louw on 21 March 1984.

Important as the opening of the new Public Library was, the equally notable event for the library service in Kimberley during the 1985/86 financial year was the parting of the way for the Kimberley Public Library and its Africana and Special Collections and the creation of the new Kimberley Africana Library which was launched as a research library on 30 May 1980.

5.3 Management

In contrast to the Library Ordinance of 1949, the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance of 1955 made provision for public library facilities to become the joint responsibility of the Provincial Administration and the local authority, each with its own responsibilities. Those of the local authority included

- (a) the provision of appropriate accommodation and other equipment as approved by the Administrator within five years after affiliation;
 - (b) the remuneration of local library personnel according to fixed salary scales as well as the payment of other administrative expenditure;
 - (c) adherence to the prescribed number of library hours per week;
 - (d) adherence to the Regulations of the Provincial Library Service.
- (KPB 1975: 2)

The Provincial Library Service undertook, in turn, to provide

- (a) the local library with reading and audio-visual material, art prints as well as the necessary audio-visual equipment;
- (b) specialist information in respect of the organisation and administration of the library;
- (c) the training of municipal library staff;
- (d) the reorganisation of the library, the preparation, cataloguing and classification of the bookstock once the library affiliated to the Provincial Library Service (KPB 1975: 2).

5.3.1 Kimberley Public Library Advisory Committee

Major changes in the administration of the Kimberley Public Library were inevitable once the 'old' Kimberley Public Library Committee had agreed to the affiliation of the Library to the Cape Provincial Library Service and to transfer the assets of the Library to the Kimberley City Council in terms of the Agreement signed by the two parties on 23 December 1960 and 20 January 1961 respectively. Elected by the Library Subscribers ever since the inception of the Library in 1882 the Library's management committees had directed policy and forged the way for the Kimberley Public Library for a period of almost eighty years. This long established body now gave way to the management of the Library by a Library Advisory Committee which functioned under the jurisdiction of the local authority and the Provincial Library Service in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance of 1955.

In the first instance, the new library dispensation in Kimberley demanded adherence to the provisions of the Provincial Library Ordinance. In as far as the management of the Kimberley Public Library was concerned, Section 26(a) and (b) of the Cape Provincial Library Regulations made in terms of the Library Ordinance made quite clear the need to establish a Library Advisory Committee –

The local authority or authorities which co-operate in the provision of library facilities under the service shall appoint an advisory committee consisting of from five to seven members for a period of three years in respect of every public library under its or their control. Two of the members shall be councillors of such local authority or authorities, and one of the members shall be the librarian who shall also act as secretary to the Committee. Each committee shall elect its own chairman, who shall not act as such for longer than two consecutive periods of three years each (CPLS Regulations 26(a) 1969 & KCC Town Clerk to De Beers General Manager, 09.10.1973).

The Kimberley City Council was also under obligation to constitute the Library Committee according to the Agreement drawn up between the Kimberley Public Library Committee and the Kimberley City Council and signed by both parties. Clause 8 of this Agreement specifically provided for the General Manager and Secretary of De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd to serve as Trustees of the Kimberley Public Library. In these two nominated De Beers representatives was vested the necessary power and authority at all times to carry out and enforce the

due and proper fulfilment by the Municipality reservations, stipulations and conditions which were imposed by the Library in terms of the Agreement (KPL/KCC Agreement, 1960/61).

However, no mention is made of this stipulation in the Agreement when a new Library Committee met on 8 December 1960 and it was decided that

while provision is made in the Provincial Regulations for the co-option of two members of the existing Library Committee and one member of

the Beaconsfield Library Committee to the Council's Library Committee, it is felt that there is no need for this to be done at this stage (KCC Report of meeting of Library Committee, 08.12.1960).

Although the Agreement between the former Kimberley Public Library Committee and the Kimberley City Council was yet to be signed by the latter party when this decision was taken, it is difficult to accept that the City Councillors were unaware of the contents of the Agreement which legally compelled the City Council to include the two De Beers representatives in the Library Committee. Without representation on this Committee, it was manifestly impossible for the De Beers Trustees to monitor decisions taken by the Kimberley City Council in regard to the Kimberley Public Library's own collections as was specified in the Agreement.

The names of these De Beers representatives do appear as members of the Library Committee in the Annual Report for one financial year namely that of 1960/61. Be that as it may, the City Council's initial Library committee did not comply with the stipulations of the Provincial Regulations regarding the composition of the Library Committee comprising as it did the Mayor of Kimberley, four City Councillors and the Town Clerk.

Thereafter, from 1961/62 until 1968/69 the names of the De Beers Trustees are excluded from the lists given in the Annual Reports of those charged with the management of the Library. No reason is given for the Kimberley City Council's non-compliance with the stipulations of the Provincial Library Service or the Agreement between the Kimberley Public Library Committee and the City Council in respect of the composition of the Library Committee. According to the Annual Reports, it would seem that the committee responsible for the Library was in fact the City Council's General Purposes Committee which comprised the Mayor of Kimberley in an *ex officio* capacity and several City Councillors. It is also difficult to understand why the De Beers representatives did not insist upon inclusion in this body (KPL Annual Reports, 1961/62 – 1968/69).

The Annual Reports for the financial years 1969/70 until 1971/72 make no mention whatsoever of a committee responsible for the management of the Library. The name

of only one City Councillor is mentioned in the City Librarian's acknowledgements (KPL Annual Reports, 1969/70 – 1971/72). Correspondence between the Librarian and the Town Clerk would indicate that the Library Committee had become defunct and that communication between the Librarian and the City Council/Town Clerk was direct and without the benefit of an intermediary of any kind. During a telephonic interview with the City Librarian, JA Hoare (né Scott) of that period (1960 – 1967) in February 2008, she stated that she as the City Librarian, had attended Council meetings in person when Library matters appeared on the Agenda (Hoare 2008).

Twelve years after the transfer of the Kimberley Public Library to the Kimberley City Council, on 5 October 1973, a meeting was called by the City Council to discuss the management of the Municipal libraries. This meeting was attended by the Mayor, Councillor LHG Shuttleworth, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor JP Smit, the Deputy Director of Cape Provincial Library Services, the Regional Librarian, the former City Librarian, JA Hoare, Advocate W Witepski, the City Librarian and the Assistant Town Clerk.

It was agreed at this meeting to recommend to the City Council

Dat ingevolge die regulasies soos onder die Ordinansie op die Biblioteekdiens Nr 4/1955 afgekondig, 'n Biblioteek Adviserende Komitee bestaande uit nie minder dan vyf en nie meer dan nege lede nie – onmiddellik in die lewe geroep word om van tyd tot tyd aanbevelings aan die Raad voor te lê met betrekking tot biblioteekaangeleenthede en beheer van die munisipale biblioteke (KCC Minutes of Special Meeting, 05.10.1973).

This matter was put to the City Council at an Ordinary Council Meeting held on 8 October 1973 and it was resolved to accept the recommendation in accordance with Ordinance No 4 of 1955, the Amendment to the Ordinance No 8 of 1965 and the Regulations as provided in Provincial Notice No 543 of 1955 (Sections 26(a) and (b)). This committee would be an advisory body with no executive authority (KCC Minutes of Ordinary Council meeting, 08.10.1973). In a letter to a prospective member of this newly constituted Library Committee, the Town Clerk mentioned that

the Council is anxious that the Library Advisory Committee commence functioning as soon as possible (Town Clerk to JA Hoare, 09.10.1973).

No explanation can be found in the available records for the urgency with which the City Council treated the creation of the Library Committee when the establishment of such a body had been left in abeyance by the City Council for twelve years. However, it is fair to suggest that the attention of the Kimberley City Council had been drawn to the fact that the absence of a Kimberley Public Library Advisory Committee (KPLAC) was in contravention of the Provincial Library Ordinance and Regulations. This would also explain the presence at the meeting held on 5 October 1973 of one of Kimberley's most respected advocates at that time, Willem Witepski.

Once established, the Library Committee functioned in terms of a constitution based on a draft constitution set down in *Handboek vir Openbare Biblioteke* published by the Cape Provincial Library Service (KPB 1975: 5) and apparently amended by the Kimberley City Council to meet local circumstances -

Die Stadsraad is die enigste verantwoordelike en beherende liggaam van die openbare biblioteek. Ooreenkomstig Ordonnansie nr 4 van 1955, die wysigingsordonnansie nr 8 van 1965 en die regulasies soos voorsien in Provinsiale Kennisgewing nr 543/55 artikel 26(a) en (b) word 'n biblioteekkomitee in die lewe geroep deur die Stadsraad (KPB 1975:5)

In accordance with the Regulations relating to the free Provincial Library Service, the following regulations were applicable to public libraries

Plaaslike owerhede in beheer van geregistreerde openbare biblioteke moet hul eie regulasies in samewerking met die Direkteur binne twee jaar na aansluiting by die diens opstel en aan die Administrateur voor vir goedkeuring en afkondiging in die Provinsiale Koerant (PK 543/1955, 16.09.1955).

For the benefit and guidance of the local authorities, standard regulations had been compiled by the Provincial Administration. These appeared in Provincial Gazette 260/1969 of 21 March 1969 as amended in terms of PG 1044/1970 of 11 December 1970 (KPB 1975: 3).

5.3.2 Constitution of the Kimberley Public Library Advisory Committee

The salient features of the Constitution by which the Kimberley City Council expected the Library Advisory Committee to function corresponded in essence with the Draft Constitution laid down by the Cape Provincial Library Service. In essence these were

1. that the purpose of the Committee was to advise the City Council on matters pertaining to the Library but that they had no executive authority unless such authority was specifically granted to the committee by the City Council;
2. that the Library Committee would consist of five to seven members appointed for a three-year term of office by the City Council as follows:
 - 2 members should be City Councillors
 - 4 members should be appointed from the public [In practice these would include the two De Beers Trustees]
 - 1 member from the Divisional Council
 - The City Librarian who would also act as Secretary to the Committee;
3. The Chairman and vice-Chairman would be elected by the Committee;
4. The Chairman would not hold office as chairman for longer than two consecutive periods of three years each,;
5. The Committee would meet at least four times per annum and four full members would form a quorum;
6. Proper Minutes were to be kept of each meeting and these, with an Annual Report, were to be distributed to the City Council,

the Divisional Council, the Regional Librarian and members of the Committee;

7. The Regional or Senior Librarian and/or the Town Clerk could attend any meeting of the Committee in an advisory capacity;
8. The Library Committee would be directly responsible to the City Council. All decisions or recommendations were to be submitted to the City Council for approval unless the Committee was given executive authority in a specific matter;
9. The Library Committee would advise the City Council on the following matters:
 - (a) the library building;
 - (b) the drawing up and amendment of library rules;
 - (c) the extension of library activities;
 - (d) the determination of library hours;
 - (e) the appointment or dismissal of library staff and other matters concerning library personnel;
 - (f) any other matter pertaining to the library and its work(KPB 1975: 3).

The first meeting of the newly appointed Library Advisory Committee was held on 7 November 1973 at 5.15 pm in the Chinese Room at the Public Library under the Chairmanship of a previous Mayor of Kimberley, LHG Shuttleworth and comprised seven members of which three were City Councillors (KPLAC Minutes 07.11.1973). The De Beers representatives, D Borchers (General Manager) and AS Hall (Secretary) were included in the Committee and served with another member of the public as well as the City Librarian. The latter served in an *ex officio* capacity and also acted as Secretary to the Committee. From the 1978/79 financial year onwards, two of the Librarians in charge of the branch libraries were also invited to join the Committee (KPLAC Annual Reports, 1978 - 2004).

No mention is made in the records of the intervening period regarding the need to include the De Beers representatives in the affairs of the Library.

The Committee met every three months and dealt with the Librarian's Report as well as other library related matters and made recommendations to the City Council in regard to the Kimberley Public Libraries which included the Beaconsfield Library and the Library for Coloureds (KPL Annual Reports, 1960/61 & 1984/85 & KPL Report on meeting of Library Advisory Committee, 07.11.1973).

It was not long after the transfer to the Municipality and the affiliation to the Cape Provincial Library Service that the burdens imposed on public funded institutions by red tape and regulations drafted elsewhere were felt. In a letter of complaint to the Town Clerk, the Senior Librarian referred to interference by the Director of the Provincial Library Service and pressure apparently being brought to bear from this quarter on other libraries in the Cape. The Senior Librarian was of the opinion that the Provincial authorities

work very much by the rules and regulations, most of which are entirely divorced from the practicalities of running a library and have little or no reference to local conditions. In regard to the latter, the insistence by the Provincial Library authorities that the Kimberley libraries should start play readings, film evenings, etc seems entirely nonsensical due to the fact that such societies already exist here (KPL Letter from Senior Librarian to Town Clerk, 14.04.1961).

The Senior Librarian went on to express the opinion that the local authority should have complete control over the internal administration of its libraries and believed that

the provision of a satisfactory library service, of which the books are only one aspect, is the sole concern of the local authority, who has to bear the cost (KPL K4 Letter from Senior Librarian to Town Clerk, 14.04.1961).

Official procedure in regard to segregated libraries in accordance with national and provincial library legislation, municipal by-laws, the statutory Diamantveld Bantu Affairs Administration Board, as well as the newly established Library Advisory

Committee collectively was a source of considerable confusion to the City Librarian. This bewilderment is amply illustrated in a written request to the Chief Director of the Bantu Affairs Administration Board in which the City Librarian requested guidance as to whom he should report in respect of the Bantu Library in Galeshewe. He wished also to know whether the Library Advisory Committee was expected to report to this statutory body to which the Administration Board responded to the effect that they would appreciate being kept informed of library developments in the city (KAL K4 Letter from City Librarian to Chief Director, Diamantveld Bantu Affairs Administration Board, 28.11.1973).

At a meeting of the Library Advisory Committee held on 19 January 1975, it was decided to co-opt additional members to the Committee.

Volgens die konstitusie word 5 – 7 lede bepaal vir 'n Biblioteekkomitee, maar dit het hoofsaaklik betrekking op kleiner gemeenskappe. Die wenslikheid van twee addisionele lede om die lesende publiek te verteenwoordig word bespreek en 'n lys van name word deur die Bibliotekaresse aan die komitee voorgelê. Dit word besluit om mev. Adams en Kooij te ko-opteer sou hulle gewillig wees (KPLAC Minutes, 29.01.1975).

By their acceptance of this invitation, these two ladies became the first members of the reading public to be represented on the Committee.

During 1981 the organisation of the Kimberley Municipality was restructured and a Department of Administration created. This Department comprised five sections of which the Kimberley Libraries became one. This restructured administration held several advantages for the Library which, in the opinion of the City Librarian was beneficial because

a feeling of solidarity was achieved which was a boost to morale. The streamlining of procedures contributed to the smooth running of the Library (KPL Minutes, 1981).

Furthermore, the communication between the city's libraries and the City Council improved as the Director of Administration who was entitled to attend meetings of the Library Advisory Committee and, in this capacity, became a mediator between the Library Committee and the Kimberley City Council.

Generally the management of the Library, within the limits imposed on it by its lack of resources, was efficient and effective and achieved the objectives for which the Kimberley Public Library was established.

5.3.3 Personnel

The Provincial Library Service acknowledged the need for good librarians on the staff of a public library if the institution was to achieve its goals. Librarians, it was pointed out, were the indispensable link between the library material and the public and therefore those who held these posts required the temperament, education, training and experience in order to successfully select and organise the material in the Library. Qualified librarians were required so that the community they served could derive the greatest benefit from the library (KPB 1975: 1.2-1.3).

In 1960 when the Library converted to a free library, the establishment of the institution comprised the Librarian, a Deputy Librarian and five library assistants. Previously this establishment with the voluntary assistance of members of the elected committee and from time to time also the help of members of the public who were well disposed towards the institution, had previously to rely on their own resources. Under the new dispensation, the Kimberley Public Library had access to the human and other resources of the Municipality as well as to those of the Regional Office of the Cape Provincial Library Service in Kimberley. It was, in fact, the combined

resources of all these institutions which the Library now had at its disposal which facilitated the challenging but smooth change over from the old system to the new.

The absence of qualified librarians at the Kimberley Public Library had presented a problem from the very early days of the Library. In an effort to overcome this difficulty every encouragement was given to staff to acquire or improve their library qualifications. The City Librarian in her Annual Report in 1962 pointed out that it was particularly important that the staff should qualify as the 'dearth of available qualified librarians continues to be most depressing' (KPL Annual Report, 1962).

By 1963 the size of the establishment at the Kimberley Public Library had grown to seventeen, but the staff problems continued. A shortage as well as a high turnover of staff, exacerbated by unacceptable working conditions and facilities, continued to plague the Library throughout the next decade. In 1971 the City Librarian stated in his report

'n Kenmerk van die afgelope tien jaar was dat Kimberley dit moeilik vind om opgeleide bibliotekarisse te bekom en voorts om hulle dienste te behou. Werksomstandighede en lewensgeleenthede in ander stede is veel aantrekliker as hier te plaatse (KPL Annual Report, 1971).

The most significant loss to the establishment at that time was undoubtedly the retirement of Olive McIntyre in 1963. This indomitable and erudite lady had served the Library for a period of forty-six years and as Librarian since 1943 when she succeeded John Ross in that capacity. McIntyre was in fact one of the first to realise that the Library could not continue indefinitely as a Subscription Library and that it would require nothing less than a paradigm shift in the organisation of the local library service if the Library was to survive. The invaluable contribution made to the Kimberley Public Library by McIntyre will be dealt with in greater detail in the Appendix (See McIntyre: 301).

McIntyre was succeeded as Librarian of the Kimberley Public Library by Judy Scott. After the transfer of the Kimberley and Beaconsfield Libraries to the administration of the Kimberley Municipality, Scott was appointed to the newly

created post of City Librarian to administer all the libraries in the city under municipal control. Scott (later to become Mrs Maurice Hoare) served in this position until 1967. She was succeeded by PJ van der Walt (1967 - 1971) whose contribution to the Kimberley Public Library was also considerable. M Donaldson held the post from 1971 until 1974 when Febé van Niekerk was appointed to the post. She assumed duty on 4 March 1974 and held this post until 31 December 1992 when she retired. Her post was filled by FH van Dyk who was appointed to the post in February 1992.

Muriel Macey was appointed to the staff of the Library in a part-time capacity in June 1970. With thirteen years of experience in cataloguing and library administration in both public and special libraries, she had the attributes required to continue the cataloguing of the Africana Collection, a process which had ground to a halt for two years as no member of the staff had the necessary expertise to carry out this work during that period. Macey undertook this work with the enthusiasm and dedication which characterised her many years of service to the Kimberley Public Library which ended in 1986 when she resigned her post.

In 1970 the Municipal Department of Organisation and Method created a Personnel Section after which all Library staff matters were dealt with on a more co-ordinated basis.

While in many respects the Provincial Library Service was responsible for a major boost to the library service in Kimberley, the absence of in-service training which the provincial authorities were expected to provide was not forthcoming on the regular basis which had been anticipated (KPL Annual Report, 1972).

The position regarding qualified staff continued to restrict the quality of service the Library was able to provide and year after year, City Librarians cited similar complaints regarding the staffing position at the Kimberley Public Library

Our main problem in Kimberley is the lack of qualified staff. We cannot hope to attract applicants from large centres by means of advertisement and it is purely by chance that qualified librarians take up residence in Kimberley (KPL Annual Report, 1974).

Students were used extensively during university vacations, often in order to replace permanent staff members on leave. Other measures taken to relieve the ever-increasing work load brought about by the establishment of an increased number of library service depots were the appointment of four part-time (afternoons only) staff members in two full-time posts.

Because the dearth of qualified staff remained a constant problem, every available means was employed to improve the qualifications of the existing staff members. These included staff meetings which were held on a regular basis, monthly film shows designed to improve personnel/customer relations, workshops on reference work and Municipal and Provincial Library Service training courses. The City Librarian and senior staff were also permitted to attend library and bibliophile conferences from time to time.

In 1981 a merit system for the staff was implemented which contributed significantly to the improved functioning of the Library as this led to a reassessment of individual productivity and became an incentive for a general improvement of standards of performance (KPL Annual Report, 1981: 1)

5.4 Users of the Kimberley Public Library's free library service

5.4.1 Nature of the membership

It was inevitable that the Library's conversion from a Subscription Library to a free library system would have a significant influence on the collective nature of those using the Library. Whereas the Subscription Library required its members to pay for the privileges they received, the free library system was open to any ratepayer or permanent resident of the City of Kimberley provided that the applicant for membership completed a registration form, undertook to obey the rules of the service and pay compensation for the loss of or damage to material for which he/she was responsible. In the case of minors, the registration form had to be countersigned by a parent or guardian. On registration therefore any individual was entitled to all the benefits and privileges the Library offered free of charge. No longer could it be described as a library for the use of the city's elite only.

An entirely new reading public developed many of whom had to be instructed on the most beneficial manner in which to use the Library and its facilities. The Library was also obliged to satisfy the diverse needs of readers and to make every effort to expand its educational role (KPL Annual Report, 1962).

Membership was also available to *bona fide* students, any visitor to the City and non-residents such as persons living on nearby farms in which case a deposit was required of the borrower.

5.4.2 Membership

Membership almost tripled once the Kimberley Public Library switched from a Subscription to a free library system, increasing from 1 716 in December 1960 to 5 837 in December 1961 (KPL Annual Report, 1961). However, the number of actual library users seldom corresponded with the official membership reflected in the Annual Reports of the Kimberley Libraries.

Table 3 reflects the membership of the Kimberley Public Library for the period 1959 – 1985 with statistics given at approximately ten year intervals.

The Library Committee divided the Library users into four categories

- (a) Those users who lived in the Kimberley municipal area
- (b) Country members who were paid for by the Divisional Council
- (c) Visitors from other Cape municipal areas
- (d) Members from the Orange Free State

After the initial boost given to the Kimberley Public Library as a consequence of its affiliation to the Provincial Library Service, it was noted in the Annual Report of 1963 that a certain degree of retrogression had occurred. This negative trend was attributed to the numerous staff changes during the year, the marked decline in the number and type of books received from the Provincial Library Service as well as the severe overcrowding of the library shelves so that it was difficult to display the books to advantage. It was also reported that many of the original members were no longer

active users and there was a tendency among initial members to leave Kimberley without cancelling their membership. Another problem experienced from time to time concerned the fact that an inadequate number of books in Afrikaans was allocated to the Library which, in turn, affected the number of Afrikaans-speaking members who used the Public Library (KPL Annual Report, 1963).

The 1976 re-registration of members, an exercise which took place approximately every three years, reflected another downward trend with the membership comparing unfavourably with that of the previous year. As happened in many spheres of social life in South Africa at that time, it is fair to suggest that the advent of television in South Africa in 1975 had a great deal to do with subsequent reading patterns. Circulation dropped by 43 116 which represented 10% of the circulation figure for the previous year (KPL Annual Report, 1976).

However, in time as the city developed, membership of the libraries for whites increased. This was due primarily to the new service points established and the diverse services provided by the Public Library. The library depot at the Hadison Park Shopping Centre was a particularly successful venture and, after ten years, reflected a remarkable increase in membership notwithstanding the fact that it was open for only twenty-two hours per week, with 47 052 books having been issued during 1979. The bookstock at this depot had increased from 4 000 in January 1979 to 6 000 in December of that year; membership from 98 in January to 680 in December and monthly circulation from 1 539 to 3 917. This experiment in decentralisation had proved immensely successful although it did result in the reduction of the membership of the Kimberley Public Library itself (KPL Annual Report, 1979). However, the Africana and Special Collections ensured that the Kimberley Public Library in Dutoitspan Road remained the focal point for all research.

5.4.2.1 Membership: African, Coloured and Indian members of the community

In accordance with existing national legislation the Kimberley Public Library remained an institution for the use of whites only. Prior to the official opening of the

institution as a free library, the matter of the use of this institution by non-Europeans was discussed at a meeting of the Library Committee which recommended that

As no ruling has yet been given by the Provincial authorities regarding library services to the Indian and Chinese communities, these sections of the community [should] be allowed to avail themselves of the free library services to be provided at the Kimberley Public Library and the Beaconsfield Branch (KCC Report on meeting of the Library Committee, 08.12.1960).

At this meeting the Town Clerk reported that plans were in progress for a Coloured Library to be built in the Floors Township and the Committee therefore recommended

that until separate library services to Coloureds and the Bantu are provided, non-European students and teachers be allowed to use the facilities provided at the Kimberley Public Library and the Beaconsfield Branch (KCC Report on meeting of the Library Committee, 08.12.1960).

Four months later, the Library Committee reported that although Coloured teachers and others studying for degrees were permitted the use of the facilities provided by the Kimberley and Beaconsfield libraries, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst the Coloured community debarred as they were from making use of the existing free library service. The use of a church hall or a similar building in the Floors Township was suggested as a temporary measure but it was agreed that this would not be a satisfactory solution due to the decentralised distribution of the Coloured community in Kimberley. It was eventually decided to recommend a travelling library to serve the Coloured community prior to the building of their new central library (KCC Report on meeting of Library Committee, 07.04.1961). No further mention is made of this scheme which would indicate that this idea was neither accepted nor implemented.

The following month the Senior Librarian informed the Library Committee that Library facilities for the Africans were apparently no longer under the control of the

Cape Provincial Library Service and that consequently it would not be necessary for the Council to provide the facilities as stipulated in the Report of the Provincial Library Service. The meeting then decided to recommend to the City Council that an African be appointed to take charge of the Library at the Bantu Social Centre in Galeshewe and that the Senior Librarian assist in the establishment of a more adequate library for the African community. It was also recommended that the Senior Librarian be allocated R480 per annum for the purchase of appropriate magazines, newspapers and magazine racks for this facility for Africans (KCC Report on meeting of Library Committee, 07.05.1961).

In view of Government policy statements made in 1965, the Senior Librarian in a letter to the Town Clerk requested that a ruling be given in regard to 'non-European' members of the Kimberley Public Library. She stated that at that time the Library had a membership which included 102 Coloureds, 19 Indians, 34 Chinese and 2 Bantu (African) adults as well as 33 Chinese, 2 Japanese, 1 Coloured and 1 Indian under the age of 21. She went on to state that many of these members were studying for degrees and that it would be disastrous for them were they suddenly to be deprived of the Library's facilities, particularly as there had never been complaints in this regard from other library users (KPL Letter from Senior Librarian to Town Clerk, 10.04.1965).

Despite the fact that the Library in Galeshewe did not fall under the jurisdiction of the City Council and the Kimberley Public Library, channels of communication were created when the City Librarian was co-opted to serve on the Black Library Committee which was established by the Diamantveld Bantu Administration Board. In addition, the Public Library staff carried out the stocktaking when this Library was moved from the Community Centre in Galeshewe to the RC Elliot Hall in 1980 and gave other assistance on numerous occasions (KPL Annual Report, 1980).

The staff of the Judy Scott Library and the Roodepan Library for the Coloured community as well as those of the Library for the Black community in Galeshewe did sterling work among these communities. The contribution of the Kimberley Public Library and its staff to the success and progress of these institutions cannot be overestimated.

It was not until the advent of the new political dispensation in the early 1990's that the Kimberley Public Library unreservedly opened its doors to all members of the Kimberley public whereas in the case of its research component, the Kimberley Africana Library had been open to all *bona fide* researchers from all sections of the community from its start in 1986.

5.5 Role of the Kimberley Public Library in the community

By its very nature a free public library must play a greater role in the life of the public it serves than does a Subscription Library. Within the limits of its resources, the Kimberley Public Library did indeed play a central role in the life of the community. However, the institution was severely handicapped in four vital respects. In the first instance, the physical limitations of the premises occupied by the Library placed enormous restrictions on the capacity of the staff to serve the public. Secondly, the Kimberley Public Library was reliant on the limited budget allocated to it by the Kimberley Municipality. Thirdly, the shortage of qualified staff and the rapid turnover within the establishment represented a perennial problem at the Library. There was at that time - and this has continued to the present day - a perception, false as it has proved to be on many occasions, that Kimberley was not a place in which to pursue a career in any sphere. Fourthly, the Library's ability to serve the community of Kimberley in its entirety was, to a large extent, limited by the constraints placed on it by national ideologically-based legislation.

However, despite these constraints with which it had to cope, the staff of the Kimberley Public Library made every effort to provide a broad service to the public.

5.5.1 Library service for adults

The growth of Kimberley presented the Kimberley Public Library with many challenges with which it had not previously been faced. New suburbs were established and the institution was hard-pressed to serve the residents of these suburbs with the impediments with which it had to deal. In 1968 the Provincial Library Service offered the Kimberley City Council a travelling library for the provision of a weekly library service to the residents of the new suburbs. This, it was thought,

would alleviate the pressure on the Kimberley Public Library as well as make the library services more accessible to those living in the suburbs. This offer was declined by the City Council because of the additional financial commitments this would require from the city's treasury (KPL Annual Report, 1968).

The gradual decentralisation of Kimberley's library services which took place over a period of some years did reduce the pressure on the Library itself and provided easier access to library facilities for those members living in the suburbs.

5.5.2 Children's library

As had been the case in the past, great emphasis was placed on extension activities for children. These activities took the form primarily of film shows, story hours and various competitions. Particularly helpful were the activities arranged for children during school holidays which, in addition to their educational value, obviated boredom among the children and, no doubt, preserved the sanity of parents.

In 1970 the Children's Library was moved to rented premises in Woodley Street, thus alleviating the pressure on the Kimberley Public Library. This proved to be a valuable facility until it was closed officially on 19 November 1983 for stocktaking prior to the move of this section of the Library to the new premises in the Civic Centre (KPL Annual Report, 1983) (See 5.2).

5.5.3 Exhibitions and displays

Congested though the space at the Kimberley Public Library was, every effort was made to mount interesting exhibitions. Not only was the institution regarded, on occasions, as a good venue for the overflow from the William Humphreys Art Gallery, but small displays of its own fine collections were mounted from time to time.

However, the institution simply did not have the capacity and equipment to mount to advantage exhibitions of such important material as its outstanding collection of Africana and other rare books. To overcome this problem and to give the residents of

Kimberley an insight into the treasures held by their Library, exhibitions of this nature were mounted in the William Humphreys Art Gallery, the first of which was held in June 1962 and opened by Harry Oppenheimer. This exhibition was well received and with an accompanying descriptive catalogue compiled by Olive McIntyre, was not only recreational but also of educational value (McIntyre 1962).

With the fine facilities and excellent security available at the William Humphreys Art Gallery, the Library felt justified on another occasion, to lend material to the Kimberley Branch of the Union of Jewish Women for an exhibition of Bibles mounted in the Art Gallery in 1966 (KPL Annual Report 1966).

So too was a selection from the exceptional Lawson Collection of Old Master Prints and Drawings exhibited in the William Humphreys Art Gallery in 1985. It was this exhibition and the fact that the Art Gallery did have such excellent facilities for the display and preservation of a fine art collection of this calibre that eventually persuaded the Kimberley City Council and the Library Committee to agree to transfer the unique and valuable collection of Old Master Prints and Drawings to the Art Gallery to ensure their preservation for posterity (KPL City Librarian to WHAG Council, 10.09.1991). This collection will be dealt with in greater detail further on in this study (See 7.2.2.6).

Kimberley celebrated its centenary in July 1971 and the Library participated enthusiastically in the activities arranged to coincide with this historical event. Various exhibitions of relevance to the centenary were mounted, the most important of which was a comprehensive exhibition of photographs from the Library's vast photographic collection which was mounted to commemorate this important landmark in the history of the city and South Africa.

TABLE 3

**COMPARATIVE GROWTH AFTER CONVERSION TO THE FREE LIBRARY
SYSTEM IN 1961:
1959 – 1985**

	1959	1961	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985
Membership	1 676	5 837	8 739	6 675	12 480*	8 678	10 496
Circulation	86 054	238 702	249 435	258 067	-	431 567	297 195
KPL Bookstock	78 309	-	81 960	93 819	52 088	49 829	34 414**
CPLS Bookstock	-	-	32 024	-	79 539	86 059	94 314**
Audio-visual material	-	-	5 912	8 614	4 119	4 642	4 154**

*The figure for the following year, 1980, shows a dramatic decrease in membership which is attributed to the re-registration of members which took place every three years.

** These figures represent the total bookstock and audio-visual material in the Kimberley and Beaconsfield Public Libraries.

*** Blank spaces denote the fact that that no statistics were available for inclusion in the table.

5.5.4 Library services to residents of Homes for the Aged and other institutions

1971 also saw the Kimberley Public Library extending its services to several homes for elderly citizens namely Ons Huis and Resthaven as well as to the Helen Bishop Cripple Care Home. A depot was established at the Kimberley Prison which, although the service was limited in extent, proved to be of benefit to the inmates. This was followed by a further extension of the service to include among other institutions, crèches, clinics, Yonder Home for the Mentally Handicapped, the Hostel for Railway workers and white patients at the Kimberley Hospital. In the latter instance the Library was assisted by the Voluntary Aid Organisation whose members volunteered to distribute the books. In 1978 this service was extended to patients in the Coloured section of the Kimberley Hospital. In due course, regular services were also extended to additional homes for the elderly namely Nazareth House and Lancaster Lodge as well as to the Elizabeth Conradie School for the Physically Handicapped (KPL Annual Reports, 1971-1978).

5.5.5 Service to schools, scholars and students

Apart from the facilities available to children at the Kimberley Public Library, the institution also played a significant role at the city's educational institutions. In 1971 the Library commenced a variety of services to schools. In the first instance the Library assisted several schools in the reorganisation of their libraries and classification of their bookstock. In consultation with teachers, the Library staff also selected and made available literature which scholars required to complete their school projects. This service proved to be of great benefit to both scholars and teaching staff. Scholars came to the Library in large numbers to take advantage of this service, although the healthy relationship between the Library and scholars soured somewhat when, in several instances, scholars saw fit to illustrate their projects with pictures cut from library books (KPL Annual Report, 1974). With the co-operation of the education authorities this reprehensible practice was eventually reduced to a minimum.

In addition to its excellent reference collection which was available to students at tertiary level, the Library made use of the Inter-library Loan System to secure the

necessary literature for those students engaged in specialised fields of study such as law and geology. This service was also available for those serving prison sentences (KPL Annual Report 1976).

5.5.6 The Kimberley Public Library as a venue for local cultural activities

After the transfer of the Children's Library to the Woodley Street premises, the area previously used by the young readers was renovated and turned into an auditorium which became a useful facility at that time. This additional amenity enabled the Library to present in the Centenary Year among other activities a Documentary Film Festival in collaboration with the Film Society. Two symposia on Old Kimberley arranged by the Historical Society of Kimberley and the Northern Cape were also presented in this auditorium and the Kimberley Play Reading Society presented two evenings of 'Readings from early Kimberley diaries' (KPL Annual Report, 1971). This facility was in frequent use in the years that followed.

For many years the Chinese Room on the second floor of the Library served as a meeting place for various local cultural organisations such as the Film Society, the Play Reading Society and the Kimberley Society of Arts. However, the risk involved in allowing members of the public to use this venue after hours raised questions regarding the fire hazard represented by this practice. Needless to say the safety of the old building and the vulnerable collections were of paramount concern. In 1980 'it was decided to terminate the use of the Chinese Room by outside bodies after closing hours' (KPL Annual Report, 1980).

5.5.7 The Kimberley Public Library as a tourist attraction

The Kimberley Public Library's collection of Africana particularly the early Setswana publications - with the Moffat Press on which they were printed - was used extensively as research material and attracted to the Library interested visitors from all corners of the world.

It is astonishing that the Kimberley Public Library with the meagre resources it had at its disposal went to such great lengths to extend the services of the institution to the

community. That they were able to play such a significant role in the cultural, educational and recreational life of the city is indeed a tribute to the dedication and enthusiasm of those who held the post of City Librarian and the staff of the Library over a period of almost a quarter of a century.

5.6 Library material

Shortly before opening as a free library, the Kimberley Public Library received 16 422 volumes from the Cape Provincial Library Service. With such an abundance of additional books, it was fortunate that the provincial staff members were at hand to assist the Library staff in the inevitable sorting and reorganisation of the entire bookstock. Once the Library became affiliated to the Provincial Library Service, the institution was provided with more than just books. In 1960 and for several decades thereafter, the Provincial Library Service provided the Library with a wide variety of gramophone records, art prints, periodicals, newspapers and films.

The object of the Provincial Library Service was to assist the Library in their task of building up a comprehensive collection of books and these were selected with the diverse nature of the reading public in mind. The actual and potential demand for books was divided into three categories and the selection process was based on specific criteria:

- Reference books in respect of all areas of study
- Educational books for the personal edification of users
- Recreational books which comprised most of the bookstock

(KPB 1975: 6.1)

In September 1962, the Library commenced the issue of 16mm films which were received from the Provincial Library Service. These were lent to societies free of charge. The Annual Report of that year reported that 431 films had been issued and had been seen by approximately 6 000 people; gramophone records were issued for the first time in August of that year when 243 persons applied to use this facility – in total 1 235 records were issued. Framed art prints were also issued for the first time

in August. These could be borrowed for a period of three months at a time, but the demand for these prints was not as great as had been anticipated (KPL Annual Report, 1962).

A shortage of Afrikaans literature during the Library's first decade as a free library caused some concern as this deficiency in the book allocation was considered to be one of the reasons for the decrease in circulation (KPL Annual Report, 1972).

Throughout this period the lack of space handicapped the function of the Library. Shelves were overloaded despite the weeding of books in various categories. Once books were withdrawn, their storage compounded the problem of space particularly as the Regional Office of the Provincial Library Service itself was beset with a similar problem. The storage of audio-visual material and art prints became equally problematic. It was hoped that the new Provincial Building which was under construction in the Civic Centre at that time would include accommodation for the Provincial Library and that this would to some extent resolve the problems associated with storage (KPL Annual Report, 1972).

The Africana Collection of the Library was expanded whenever rare and special items were offered for sale and funds became available to purchase them. Manuscripts, photographs, pamphlets, brochures and other ephemera particularly those which related to Kimberley and the Diamond Fields were avidly collected and the community was encouraged to donate such items to the Library rather than dispose of them. As this collection of Africana was indeed the *raison d'être* for the establishment of the Library's progeny, the Kimberley Africana Library, it will constitute the subject of another more detailed chapter (Chapter 7).

As was the case in similar institutions, the Kimberley Public Library seldom escaped the effects of national and international political and economic turmoil. The devaluation of the South African Rand in 1975 was responsible for the increased cost of British and American books which in turn resulted in the reduction of the allocation of stock to libraries by the Provincial Library Service. The Kimberley Library received one third fewer books than it had done in the previous year and the stock of records and art prints were reduced by half (KPL Annual Report, 1975).

A poor reflection on the integrity of the membership of the Kimberley Public Library was the persistent and considerable loss of books by theft and in spite of the stricter measures implemented to contain this unfortunate trend, the Municipality was frequently obliged to pay substantial sums to the Provincial Library Service in compensation for these losses (KPL Annual Report, 1974).

Before the move to the new Library building in 1984, the provincial library material was drastically weeded. Old and redundant items were returned to the Provincial Library and older literature was reclassified to conform to current usage (KPL Annual Report, 1983). This process included the separation of the Africana and Special Collections which would remain in the old library building to form the very solid foundation of the holdings of the future Kimberley Africana Library. Also left to remain in the Dutoitspan Road building were volumes of the classics of primarily English literature which were housed in the front room which was restored to its 19th century glory.

5.7 Finance

Prior to the official transfer of the Kimberley Public Library to the Kimberley Municipality in 1961, the Council assumed full responsibility for the continued running of the Library with effect from 1 January 1959. This entailed a contribution of £818 in addition to their customary annual grant to the Library of £750 (KPL Annual Report, 1959).

Shortly after the transfer of the Library to the jurisdiction of the Municipality, the Library Committee recommended to the City Council that

Clrs Eden and Smit be authorized to investigate the Kimberley Public Library's accounts, and that the Council should take over all movable and immovable assets and act as liquidators; the title deeds of fixed property and investments belonging to the Kimberley Public Library to be transferred to the Council; also that the Council pay the deficit of £2 690.12.1 (R5 381.28) on the year's working for 1960 as agreed (KCC Report on meeting of Library Committee, 07.04.1961).

Once the Kimberley Public Library had become incorporated into the Town Clerk's Department of the Municipality, it became financially dependent on the local authority. As was mentioned in the City Librarian's report in 1982

It is the responsibility of the local authority to provide satisfactory library facilities for all sections of the community and it is to the credit of the Kimberley City Council that the library service, which is an enormous financial liability, received constant attention throughout the year (KPL Annual Report, 1982).

The abridged Statements of Income and Expenditure for the combined Kimberley Libraries which fell under the jurisdiction of the Kimberley Municipality reflect a substantial deficit each year. While the local authority bore the lion's share of the expenditure incurred by the libraries which included staff salaries and benefits, administrative expenditure, bookbinding and maintenance of the buildings, the income generated by the Libraries themselves was minimal and included such trivial items as fines, sales of periodicals and newspapers and fees for photocopies. Purchases of items for the Africana Collection were covered by the Special Book Fund which comprised the old Kimberley Public Library Committee's investments which had been transferred to the Kimberley City Council with the other Library assets in terms of the 1960/1961 Agreement. This fund was augmented by annual allocations from the Carter and Keough Trust Funds (KPL Annual Reports, 1951- 2008).

5.8 Conclusion

The second phase in the Kimberley Public Library's history in which the institution changed from a Subscription to a free library was a period in which the institution underwent a complete metamorphosis. The transformation which took place in 1960 was extensive and affected every facet of the Library's operations. After 1960 little remained of the old Public Library which had had its origins in the early days of the Diamond Fields other than the building, the Library having developed with the city into one of considerable note in South Africa.

In assessing the extent to which the transfer of the Library to the local authority achieved the anticipated objectives, it is necessary to weigh these up against the results achieved during the first two decades after the hand over to the Kimberley City Council in 1960.

The financial position of the Kimberley Public Library prior to 1960 was to say the least precarious. However, the decisions taken at that time by the Library Committee to ensure the future of the institution and its collections were not taken lightly and focused on three major issues namely

1. the inability of the Kimberley Public Library to serve the Subscribers and the public without substantial additional revenue;
2. the fact that the Kimberley Public Library's financial instability would be exacerbated by the withdrawal within the following two to three years of the Cape Provincial Administration's financial assistance from all libraries other than those under the jurisdiction of the Province or a municipality;
3. the need to safeguard the Kimberley Public Library's assets particularly the Africana and Special Collections to ensure that these would remain, through the Kimberley City Council, the property of the citizens of Kimberley in perpetuity.

That the Library as a Subscription Library had outgrown its original mandate, there is no doubt. The Library's affiliation to the Cape Provincial Library Service and consequent transfer to the jurisdiction of the Kimberley City Council was essentially the correct route to have followed. Kimberley had developed into a modern city which required modern library facilities - facilities which were accessible to all its residents. It had become clear that no Subscription Library, regardless of how liberal and generous its management and Subscribers proved to be in extending the privileges of membership to those who could not afford to pay, could ever have provided the library service of the standard required in a city which claimed to be progressive. As was pointed out by the Mayor of Kimberley, Councillor JW Wilmans in his mayoral address in 1981, the Kimberley City Council was under a moral obligation to provide more than basic services to the community. The Kimberley City Council also had to

accept responsibility for the overall wellbeing of the community not only in the economic but also in the cultural and physical spheres. This, he said, was necessary for the balanced development of the community (KCC Mayor's Minute, 31.08.1981).

The standards maintained by the Provincial Library Service and the calibre of those who administered the library service, both provincially and regionally, must be given credit for the successful transformation and organisation of the Kimberley Public Library. With greater resources available, the Library, as a free library, was in an infinitely better position to provide a service to a broader spectrum of the community, although the size and nature of the establishment remained a problem. However, in its endeavour to provide a service for all the residents of Kimberley, the Library was severely restricted by racially-based national legislation.

When the construction of the new Kimberley Public Library building became a reality, the City Council's decision to retain the historic old building and renovate it to house the unique collection of Africana and other rare books was indeed commendable. Generally, the City Council did adhere to the spirit of their Agreement with the old Kimberley Public Library Committee in that the Africana Collection was not neglected and that it continued to expand. However, as the years passed, Clause 8 of the Agreement whereby the General Manager and the Secretary of De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd were appointed Trustees to ensure adherence to the Agreement appeared to be ignored from time to time. This could be attributed to the fact that new incumbents were appointed to these posts in De Beers, the City Council and the Municipality and that they were not informed of these obligations. By the time the Library moved to its new premises and the Africana Library came into being, it is gratifying to note that the Library Advisory Committee was functional and included the two De Beers Trustees.



Fig 15: The 'new' Kimberley Public Library opened in 1984

It has long been to the detriment of the Kimberley Africana Library that when the idea of separating the Public Library from its Africana Collection was conceived, insufficient consideration was given to the requirements of a research library as the Africana Library simply became a branch of Kimberley's public library service. This meant that it was generally funded and staffed on a basis similar to that of a public lending library. This oversight has plagued the institution ever since.

CHAPTER 6
THE BIRTH OF THE KIMBERLEY AFRICANA LIBRARY AND ITS
DEVELOPMENT
1986 – 2008

I have always looked to this library as a place to which, living as we do amid surroundings not altogether helpful or stimulating to the intellectual life, we may from time to time resort for refreshment and recreation; where we may find profitable employment for our leisure hours, where we may turn aside from the fashions and follies of the day; the prejudices and passions of the hour and enter into the rich inheritance bequeathed to us by the poets and philosophers, the saints and the sages of the past; where we may form tastes and cultivate interests; where studies may be pursued and thoughts aroused, which may make one little moment of existence a little less poor and imperfect than it otherwise would have been (Laurence 1900).

6.1 Introduction

These words expressed by Mr Justice PM Laurence at the Annual General Meeting of Subscribers of the Kimberley Public Library in 1900, testifies to the noble objectives which he, as Chairman and distinguished bibliophile as well as the Library Committee entertained for the Library at that time. It was he who initiated the Library's policy to bring together a collection of rare books as well as books on Africa and other relevant documentary material. It is fair therefore to suggest that the division of the Kimberley Public Library into two separate institutions, serving different purposes and clientele would have met with the approval of those who appreciated the distinction between reading matter for readers who wished to use the Library facilities purely for the purpose of recreation and those who saw the Library and its contents as a source of inspiration and intellectual upliftment. The fact that the Africana and Special Collections as well as the fine collection of standard literary works in the best tradition of the English language, (many of which were donated to the Library by Mr

Justice Laurence himself), were to remain in the building erected in his time and as a consequence of his concerted efforts, would almost certainly have found favour with this great man and the men who supported him.

Although the Kimberley Africana Library severed the proverbial umbilical cord when the Kimberley Public Library moved to its new premises in the Civic Centre in 1984, it remained an integral part of the Kimberley Public Libraries.

It was inevitable that prior to the separation of the two institutions a great deal of preparatory work would be required before the Africana Library could open its doors to the public. This included the division of the bookstock and the compilation of revised inventories.

6.2 Building

The decision to retain the old Dutoitspan Road building, one of the oldest public buildings in Kimberley, as a home for the 'gems' of the Kimberley Public Library's collection was one taken by the Kimberley City Council with great and commendable sensitivity and with due regard for the need to preserve the city's heritage – both the documentary and the architectural. That the City Fathers also decided to commission an architect of the calibre of David Yuill to compile a report on the state of the building and make recommendations regarding the alterations and renovations which were necessary for it to fulfil its new function as a repository for the Library's famed collections was also an inspired decision, for no one was better qualified than he to carry out such an assignment (Yuill 2003 & KPL Annual Report, 1985/86).

However, the degree to which the building could be adapted to that of a functional research library and a repository for collections of irreplaceable books and documents was restricted by the limited funds available for this purpose. Indeed these were meagre when assessed in terms of the condition of the century-old structure and the requirements of a building which was to serve such a specialised purpose. Under the circumstances, it was only possible to attend to those areas which were considered critical such as the repair of the roof, replastering of walls, the enlargement of the strongroom, the improvement of the toilet facilities, the installation of air-

conditioning units and fire detection and security systems in certain areas of the building. Funds for this project were forthcoming from the City Council and in due course a 50% subsidy was contributed to the cost by the Cape Provincial Library Service which amounted to R200 000 and allowed the projected renovations to proceed (KPL Annual Report, 1983).

The Kimberley Africana Library was officially opened by the Mayor of Kimberley, Councillor DA Liebenberg on 30 May 1986. On this occasion, it was also appropriate that Muriel Macey who, with distinction, had headed the Africana Section of the Kimberley Public Library for a period of fourteen years should have been invited to unveil the plaque in the room designated to commemorate John Ross, the Librarian who it was generally acknowledged had done more than any of his predecessors to build up the enviable collections of Africana in this Library (KPL Annual Report, 1985/86).

Appropriately, the original Africana Library building was declared a National Monument on 16 February 1990. This declaration was welcomed as it ensured the preservation of one of Kimberley's most notable historical buildings.

Notwithstanding the improvement in the conditions within the Library, these could by no means be considered ideal. Basic facilities which were required in order to function optimally as a repository for valuable books and documents were absent and have remained so. In 1996, a small room was equipped as a facility in which simple conservation work could be carried out on those items in the collections which required basic treatment. During that year the strongroom which housed the most valuable and important items in the collection was renovated, a cement floor laid and a fireproof door installed (KPL Annual Report, 1996/97). However space remained a perennial problem, a problem which was exacerbated by the expanding collections and increased use of the Library by researchers.

After 1994, the Kimberley City Council (Sol Plaatje City Council) was tasked with new priorities and new challenges and the extension and upgrading of the Africana Library did not appear to be one of them. Various ways and means were considered

to counteract this shortage of space – some radical in nature, others unrealistic and a few nothing other than flights of fancy.

What was required was a new strongroom which could, under more environmentally appropriate conditions accommodate a substantial section of the Africana Collection, manuscripts, maps and photographs. The first of the fundraising projects aimed at raising the estimated R500 000 required for the construction of a new strongroom was launched in 2003 by the Friends of the Africana Library (KALF) (KALF Minutes, 05.02.2003). However well intended, this project had little chance of raising the necessary funds in the foreseeable future. Its merits, however, lie in the fact that it brought to the fore the desperate need for another facility to accommodate the growing collections, a facility which would as nearly as possible conform to the specifications required for the preservation of collections of the nature of those held by the Africana Library. Such a strongroom needed to be secure and environmentally conducive to the storage and preservation of the paper-based collections.

It was at that time that De Beers came to the rescue as it had done on so many occasions since the inception of the Kimberley Public Library with a munificent offer, which was gratefully accepted, to provide the funds required to construct the required strongroom. These funds were forthcoming from the De Beers Chairman's Fund and the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Fund which each donated R250 000 towards the new strongroom (KPL Annual Report, 2004/05).



Fig 16: The new strongroom opened in 2004

The building was designed by Henk van de Wall of the architectural firm Messrs Goldblatt, Yuill and Partners and the tender for the construction of the new building was awarded to Keith Brown. Work on the new building which was situated on the Woodley Street side of the Library began in 2002. On 27 July 2004 the new strongroom for the Africana Library was officially opened jointly by the General Manager of De Beers, David Noko and the Executive Mayor of the Sol Plaatje Municipality, Alderman Patrick Lenyibi (KPL Annual Report, 2004/05).

In time, De Beers added to their initial generous gift by providing funds for an air-conditioning plant for the new storeroom.

At that time The Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust also offered to bear the cost of the publication *Kimberley drawn in time* by Judith Horner which was to have been borne by the Friends. This generous donation allowed the Friends to utilise the funds earmarked for the publication of the book to finance the paving of the area surrounding the new strongroom and erect six parking bays. In addition, the Friends bore the cost of upgrading the garden in this area: garden furniture and plants were bought to enhance the appearance of this section of the Library grounds (KALF Minutes, 07.07.2004).

Limited financial resources are likely to impede further extensions to the Africana Library building in the near future although the design of the strongroom does make provision for a second floor should this be required.

6.3 Management

6.3.1 Library Advisory Committee

This section of the study reverts once more to the history of the Kimberley Public Library since the events which took place during the period 1984 to 2007 were equally relevant to the Africana Library and the Public Library under whose jurisdiction the research library continued to function. As the Minutes of the meetings of the Library Advisory Committee are frequently little more than abridged accounts

of the proceedings of these meetings, it is often difficult to follow the essence of these records and the sequence of events.

After the partition of the Public Library and the Africana Library in 1984, the Kimberley Library Advisory Committee continued ostensibly to function in terms of Section 17 of the Cape Provincial Library Services Regulations of 1980. The Committee also remained bound by the Kimberley Public Library Committee Agreement with the Kimberley City Council of 1960/61 which stipulated that the General Manager and Secretary of De Beers were to act as Trustees and virtually to hold a watching brief on behalf of the now defunct Committee of the Subscription Library (KCC/KPL Agreement, 1960/61). Their function as monitors of the terms of the Agreement was of particular importance in as far as the collections of the Africana Library were concerned. In 1985 the Library Advisory Committee decided that

if neither the General Manager nor the Secretary could act on the Library Committee in their capacity as Trustees, an alternative De Beers representative should be nominated by the General Manager (KPLAC Minutes, 23.10.1985).

1994 was a watershed year for South Africa, heralding the advent of the 'new' South Africa and the transformation of every aspect of South African society – political, economic and social. Nine provinces replaced the four which had existed since the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. The Cape Province was divided into three, the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Cape with a concomitant division of the assets of the old Cape Provincial Library Service.

In terms of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* 1996 Schedule 5 Part A, libraries (other than national libraries) are listed amongst those 'Functional areas of exclusive Provincial Legislative Competence'. The provinces were therefore under a constitutional obligation to administer libraries and draft legislation to deal with matters relating to those libraries which fell under provincial jurisdiction. The Kimberley (now Sol Plaatje) Municipality's partnership with the Provincial Library Services in regard to libraries continued presumably in terms of Section 156 (4) of the Constitution of 1996 which states that a provincial government

must assign, by agreement and subject to any conditions the administration of a matter listed in Part A of Schedule 5 which necessarily relates to local government, if

(a) that matter would most effectively be administered locally

(b) the municipality has the capacity to administer it

(South Africa. *Constitution* 1996, Section 156(4)).

Provincial library ties with Cape Town were severed on 1 July 1994 (KPLAC Minutes, 03.08.1994: 6). However, because the newly established Northern Cape Library Service lacked a viable infrastructure and establishment, the Library Advisory Committee was informed during a briefing on the developments which were in progress in the Provincial Library Service that the

Northern Cape will receive a guaranteed agency service from the Western Cape for the next two years (KPLAC Minutes, 02.11.1994).

Shortly after the Northern Cape Library Service was created, the Director of Library Services of the Western Cape visited Kimberley

to discuss the future of Library Services in the Northern Cape with Ms T Joemat, the [Provincial] Minister of Education and Culture (KPLAC Quarterly Report, July-September 1994: 1.2).

The Minutes of the Library Advisory Committee later in that year illustrate the nature of the transformation which had taken place in South Africa's political dispensation in that a far broader representation of the community was reflected in the composition of the Committee. Furthermore, the Head of each library which formed a part of the Kimberley Public Libraries, including the Africana Library, was included in this body. Equally conspicuous and ominous, however, were the regular changes which took place in the composition of the Committee and for which, in most cases, no reasons were given (KPL Annual Reports, 1999/2000 & 2002/03 & 2004/05). This state of affairs was not at all conducive to an informed Committee - one which was

sufficiently conversant with library matters and could take decisions beneficial to the Kimberley Public Library service.

At this time a Kimberley Library Forum was established holding its first meeting on 4 July 1995 (KLF Minutes, 04.07.1995). No reason is given in the available records for the creation of this body or the objectives which might have justified its formation.

Although the public libraries bore the brunt of the drastic changes and the political bickering which took place in the library services at the time, the Africana Library too felt the effects of budgeting problems once the Western Cape Provincial Library Service terminated its services to the Northern Cape Provincial Library Service on 31 March 1995. The effect of this was disastrous as the Northern Cape Library Service was unable to purchase stock on the 1995 budget. The Minutes of the Kimberley Library Forum state that

At present the Northern Cape Provincial Library Service has no infrastructure to purchase, accession or distribute books to Northern Cape regions. The Western Province Provincial Library Service was prepared to provide agency services to the Northern Cape Provincial Library Service at cost plus 28% for administrative purposes. These arrangements had to be negotiated between the MECs but reached a stalemate due to the political differences between the provincial MECs. Until the differences are resolved, the Library service in the Northern Cape will continue to deteriorate (KLF Minutes, 04.07.1995).

In order to obviate the collapse of the library services in Kimberley and the Northern Cape, the Kimberley Library Forum decided to appoint a representative delegation to meet the responsible Provincial Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) and bring to her attention the crisis facing the library services in the province. Furthermore the Kimberley Library Advisory Committee should, it was agreed, be informed of this indefensible state of affairs. So serious did the Forum consider this matter, that threats were made of mass action if 'no positive and immediate response was received from the MEC' (KLF Minutes, 04.07.1995). No record exists of the outcome of the proposed meeting with the MEC.

That there was initially an intention to draft library legislation for the Northern Cape Province is obvious. Meetings were held with officials of the Northern Cape Provincial Library Service to discuss amongst other matters 'the formulation of a new library ordinance for Northern Cape Libraries' (KPL Annual Report, 1997/98). Although the Quarterly Report of April-June 1998 compiled by the City Librarian for the information of the Library Advisory Committee states that the proposed Library Ordinance for the Northern Cape had been sent to him for comment and that the Minutes of the Library Advisory Committee in 1999 record that this Ordinance had been sent to the MEC for Education and Culture, it would seem that this draft legislation faded into obscurity and was never promulgated (KPLAC Minutes, 10.02.1999). This is borne out by the fact that the Minutes of the Library Advisory Committee record that a Constitution adopted by the Library Advisory Committee of Kimberley in terms of Section 17 of the regulations governing the Provincial Library Service (P.N. No. 689, 12.09.1980) was based on the old Cape Provincial Library Ordinance of 1980 (KPLAC Minutes, 07.05.1997).

In time responsibility for libraries was transferred from the Department of Education and Culture to the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture but this Department has also failed to draft legislation to deal with the libraries in the province so that these institutions continue ostensibly to function in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance of 1980.

By June 1999 the Library Advisory Committee comprised 17 members: five representatives of the Sol Plaatje Municipality, municipal officials and those of the seven branch libraries including the Kimberley Africana Library (KPLAC Minutes, 1999).

In later years, the Minutes of the Library Advisory Committee became increasingly uninspiring and uninformative. There is, however, evidence to suggest that the relationship between the Kimberley Public Libraries and the Provincial Library had become less cordial. The monthly meetings which had taken place between these two parties ceased and it was reported that the 'Regional Librarian would visit each library every second month according to a predetermined route' (KPLAC Minutes, 23.08.2000). Another indication of the unhealthy state of affairs which afflicted the

Kimberley libraries is that the Sol Plaatje City Council had to be reminded of their obligation towards the Kimberley libraries and that in terms of existing legislation four City Councillors needed to be appointed to serve on the Library Committee (KPLAC Minutes, 26.06.2001).

Meanwhile the Library Advisory Committee became yet another politicised body. An interview with the current City Librarian revealed that one of the main reasons for the eventual dissolution of the Library Advisory Committee in approximately October 2004 was the difficulty encountered in finding suitable and interested individuals willing to serve on this committee in an honorary capacity. Since the dissolution of the Library Advisory Committee, the City Librarian has reported directly to the Executive Director: Social and Community Development Services of the Sol Plaatje Municipality and holds weekly meetings with the Head Librarians of the branch libraries and members of their staff (Van Dyk 2007).

6.3.2 Personnel

The number of personnel allocated to the newly established Africana Research Library in 1986 was inadequate with little consideration having been given to the fundamental functions of an institution of this nature. In line with similar research libraries elsewhere these functions would focus primarily on research and the preservation of the collections. Clearly, the permanent professional staff which comprised a Head Librarian and a Senior Librarian was expected to serve the public, undertake research as well as carry out such conservation work as their qualifications and time would permit and perform the abundance of administrative work commensurate with an institution of this nature. It was, and remains, manifestly impossible for an establishment of this size to deal satisfactorily with a workload of such immense proportions.

The librarian who had headed the Africana Section of the Kimberley Public Library for many years, Muriel Macey, resigned shortly before the opening of the Kimberley Africana Library (See Appendix Macey: 306). Her post was filled by Lesley Brits who had been the Senior Librarian in this Department for some years. Brits held the post of Head Librarian of the Africana Library until 31 December 1989. On the 1

January 1990, C (Kokkie) Duminy was appointed to succeed her (KPL Annual Report, 1989/90), a post she held until August 2008 when she retired (See Appendix, Duminy: 308).

One of the most eminent of the past Kimberley Public Library librarians, Olive McIntyre died in July 1990. Having worked with the Africana Collection for almost a half a century, she had an incomparable knowledge of the collections in the Africana Library and her death marked the end of a distinguished era in the history of the Kimberley Library (See Appendix, McIntyre: 301).

Fébe van Niekerk who was appointed City Librarian in 1974 and who was a driving force during the protracted negotiations for a new Public Library for Kimberley and the retention of the old Library building for use as an Africana research library retired on 1 January 1992 (KPL Annual Report, 1991/92) (See Appendix, Van Niekerk: 307). Fritz van Dyk has held this post since then.

Opportunities were afforded the staff from time to time to attend conferences, seminars and workshops. Of particular importance to the Africana Library were the workshops on the conservation and preservation of library material and bookbinding which members of the staff attended from time to time. These training courses were arranged by several organisations and usually presented by the well-known Paper Conservator, Johann Maree of the University of Cape Town Libraries Conservation Unit (KPL Annual Report, 1986/87). In-service training on diverse subjects including aspects of administration was also presented by the Kimberley Municipality from time to time (KPL Annual Report, 1987/88).

Although these training courses undoubtedly enhanced the theoretical and practical knowledge of the staff, it happened frequently that they were unable to implement these newly acquired skills due to inadequate funds for the purchase of the necessary materials or equipment.

It was not until 2007 that it was possible to convince Municipal authorities of the need for a conservator to deal with the vast number of items in the Africana Library's collections which required treatment. A part-time member of the staff who had

received training in this sphere of expertise, was eventually appointed to a permanent position as a semi-skilled conservator. She had been employed by the Municipality as a shift worker since 1997 and having attended numerous conservation workshops had shown remarkable aptitude for such basic conservation work (KPL Annual Report, 2006/07).

The interesting nature of the Africana Library and its collections has encouraged members of the public to volunteer their services to the institution. They perform many of the essential and time-consuming tasks for which the permanent staff members do not have the time. One of the first members of the public to volunteer her services was Anne Watt who spent a great deal of her time assisting the Library staff while also serving on the Library Advisory Committee. Although at one stage it was considered in the interests of the Africana Library that she be appointed a Library Assistant in a part-time capacity and was remunerated accordingly, she accepted the pittance reluctantly and contributed this to the funds of a charitable organisation with which she was involved. After her death on 17 March 2001 the Reading Room was named after her in recognition of her dedicated service to the Kimberley Africana Library (KALF Minutes, 01.08.2001).

6.4 Role of the Africana Library as a research facility and tourist attraction

The superb Africana and rare book collections of the Kimberley Public Library had secured for the institution an enviable reputation as one of the most valuable research facilities in the country so that when the Africana Library was established as an entity apart from the Public Library, its merit as a research library was never in question. The difference after 1986 lay in the fact that the research material was now more accessible and the environment for researchers generally more conducive to research work.

The facilities at the Africana Library were in constant use by local researchers and those from abroad. Shortly after the opening of the Library between 400 and 500 research enquiries were received either by correspondence or by visitors seeking information (KPL Annual Report, 1987/88).

At that time, most of these were of an historical or genealogical nature, but the volume and nature of the research done and undertaken depended to a large extent on current issues or the commemoration of historical events, although genealogical research has remained the most common. By the late 1990's with the centenary of the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War being commemorated in 1999, much of the research done and undertaken at the Library concerned various aspects of the war. A recurrent sphere of research after 1994 was that pertaining to land claims and its redistribution. From time to time television crews also make demands on the staff and show particular interest in the library's vast historic photographic collection.

By the late 1980's the desperate need for computer facilities for the indexing and retrieval of information became increasingly obvious as the volume of research dealt with by the staff of the Library escalated. However the funds required to purchase the necessary hardware and software were simply not available at that time (KPL Annual Report, 1987/88). Fortunately, a year later it is recorded that the Library staff were hard at work computerising existing records

The acquisition of a Personal Computer and purchase of the necessary software (Inmagic Library Programme) has opened up new avenues for more accurate documentation of records and faster retrieval of information (KPL Annual Report, 1988/89).

A further aid to the Library's function as a research library was the compilation by C Duminy of *An index to Kimberley citizens in South Africa* (January 1892 - December 1902) (SADEX) which includes information on all the residents of Kimberley mentioned in the periodical, *South Africa (1892 - 1902)* published in Britain. This work became a basic source for all genealogical research (KPL Annual Report 1990/91). The Africana Library also makes extensive use of the national registers – *Guide to Manuscripts in the Kimberley Africana Library, Kimberley* (NAREM) and *List of Photographic Collection in the Kimberley Africana Library* (NAREF) published by the National Archives and Record Service in Pretoria. These publications are updated from time to time.

A great deal has been done to index the various newspapers which were established on the Diamond Fields as far back as 1870. Today, the two newspapers distributed locally namely the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* and *Volksblad* are indexed daily. Nevertheless, the indexing of the backlog of some 50 years is likely to take some years to complete. With the small staff stretched to its limit and the indexing procedure being a time-consuming exercise, little time is available for the staff to capture this vital information on its data base.

Several items which provided very valuable research information are donated to the institution from time to time. These substantial donations include registers of diamonds found on the Diamond Fields, a computer printout of the cemetery records from the Kimberley Municipality, the marriage and christening records belonging to various religious denominations both in Kimberley and surrounding towns such as Barkly West, the registers of deaths during the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of 1918 from the Kimberley Board of Health and the records of various local sporting clubs, schools and other cultural organisations. In addition records kept by eminent persons on the Diamond Fields have been deposited at the Africana Library from time to time. The Paton and Halliwell Papers for example provide a fund of information of life on the river diggings as well as on other political, social, agricultural and commercial activity in Barkly West and district in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Paton Papers include matters relating to George Paton's work as a Justice of the Peace for Griqualand West from 1867, his involvement in colonial politics, the Griqualand West Land Question, the Anglo-Boer War amongst a variety of other matters with which he was concerned (KAL MS257). Thomas William Halliwall was primarily a digger on the Vaal River who was concerned with the politics of the Vaal River Diggers' Union, matters concerning labour and wages, education, the Anglo-Boer War and community health matters with particular emphasis on the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918 (KAL MS259).

In co-operation with a local historian, S Lunderstedt, photographs were taken of all the headstones in the oldest of Kimberley's cemeteries, the Pioneer Cemetery. This was a particularly useful exercise as the original cemetery register had been destroyed by fire (KPL Annual Report, 2000/01).

The Africana Library has also become an archival repository for the Sol Plaatje (Kimberley) City Council, the non-current municipal files having been transferred to the institution from the Gardner Williams Hall in Beaconsfield where they had been stored for many years (KPL Annual Report, 1995/96). The indexing of these copious records has been undertaken but will take many years to complete.

Shortly after taking office, the newly appointed City Council inspired by the new political dispensation decided, with little sentiment for history or tradition, to dispense with all the photographic portraits of previous mayors of the city as well as past group photographs of City Councillors of Kimberley and Galeshewe. These were unceremoniously removed from the Council Chambers and transferred to the Africana Library (KPL Annual Report, 1997/98).

Apart from its prominence as a research library, the Africana Library has become one of the foremost tourist attractions in the city. The reputation of this institution as the custodian of a superb collection of rare books and Africana draws a considerable number of visitors from within the country and from abroad and its distinctive architecture fascinates tourists interested in matters architectural.

The collaborative relationship which always existed between the Africana Library and local heritage institutions has continued and this cordial relationship has been beneficial to all parties particularly in regard to the promotion of informal education and tourism.

The Africana Library building itself inspires considerable interest not only as a fine example of the architecture of Kimberley's early public buildings but it has been used as the venue for several historic events in the past. In 1986 for example the Africana Library was the venue for a ceremony to commemorate the Charter Meeting of the South African Museums Association held in the Kimberley Public Library 50 years previously. On this occasion an address was handed to the Mayor of Kimberley by one of the few surviving founder members of the Association, Dr M Courtney-Latimer (KPL Annual Report, 1985/86).



*Fig 17: Dr M Courtney-Latimer (second from the left) with His Worship the Mayor of Kimberley, Clr D Liebenberg and members of the South African Museums Association at the Jubilee Conference, 1986
(Photo: SAMANTIX)*

6.5 Collections

Initially the Kimberley Public Library adopted a fairly catholic acquisitions policy in as far as Africana was concerned. It was inevitable therefore that in the course of time the Africana Library would be obliged to redefine its policy in this regard and formulate one which was consistent with the available funding and space. Such a policy was defined and adopted shortly after the Africana Library was established when it was resolved to confine acquisitions broadly to those items of specific significance to the Northern Cape, the Diamond Fields and to Kimberley in particular as well as those relating to the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) (KPL Annual Report, 1987/88). The collections of the Africana Library are of a diverse nature, the highlights of which are its books, manuscripts, maps, photographs and newspapers. These will be described in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Fortunately, the 'gems' of the collection were purchased at a time when the demand for Africana and other rare volumes was not as great as it was to become in later years and the prices therefore not as exorbitant. In addition to this fact was the substantial increase in the cost of printing which had a commensurate impact on the price of books. By the time the Africana Library was established, the demand for these items

had increased dramatically and the Library was obliged to focus instead on the books printed contemporaneously.

In their 1960/61 Agreement with the Kimberley City Council the Committee of the 'old' Kimberley Public Library had specified that the investments which they had transferred to the City Council should be reinvested and used exclusively for the expansion of the collections when the Library became a free library (KCC/KPL Agreement, 1960/61). This Special Africana Fund was augmented annually by the Carter and Keough Trust Funds, bequests administered by Syfrets Trust Ltd and allocated to several heritage institutions in Kimberley. Although this Special Fund was limited it did, to some extent, provide for the expansion of the collection.

In addition to those items purchased by the Africana Library, the Provincial Library Service did acquire several books on South Africa for allocation to the Public Library which were considered appropriate for inclusion in the Africana Library collection.

From time to time donations of fine publications were made to the Africana Library. These included those volumes published for the Brenthurst Collection and donated to the institution by Harry Oppenheimer. To these could be added the innumerable books donated to the Library by appreciative authors who had done much of their research in the Africana Library and who had derived great benefit from the assistance given to them by members of the Library's staff and the volunteer workers who assist the staff with research.

Once the Kimberley Public Library moved to its new building in 1984 and more space became available for the Africana and Special Collections, it was possible to implement more effective 'good housekeeping' practices which are considered the first line of defence for the preservation of paper-based collections. These 'good housekeeping' or preventive practices are employed as far as possible notwithstanding the fact that the Library building does not lend itself to the implementation of the level of environmental control appropriate for the collections. While the Africana Library does have to deal with extremes of temperature and dust, the dry climate of Kimberley is beneficial to the collections limiting the prevalence of pests, mould, etc.

The expertise acquired by staff members in regard to such techniques as bookbinding and paper restoration have been put to good use but the absence of an in-house highly skilled book conservator, inadequate conservation facilities and materials combine to limit the extent of the conservation work undertaken at the Library. It was not until 2004 when the new storage accommodation, which included a small conservation room, was built that it was possible to attend to volumes which required rebinding and treat items such as torn documents and maps, encapsulate manuscripts and maps and greater attention could be paid to the preservation and indexing of the photographic collection. The permanent staff members are assisted in their conservation task by volunteer workers who have organised the manuscript collection, indexed newspapers and other documentary material and undertaken some of the more menial tasks such as dusting books and encapsulating documents.

The creation of a post for a semi-skilled conservator has had a marked and extremely beneficial effect on the ability of the Library to preserve its collections.

6.6 Finance

As the Africana Library is a branch of the Kimberley Public Libraries it is allocated funds by the Sol Plaatje Municipality. This allocation provides for staff remuneration and benefits as well as for the basic maintenance of the building but no provision is made for the special needs of the Africana Library. The total budget for the Kimberley Public Library and its nine branches for the 2006/07 financial year was R4 839 000 with amounts of R4 224 800 voted for salaries, R26 100 for maintenance, R7 500 for equipment and R580 000 for general expenses. These figures illustrate the degree to which the Kimberley libraries including the Africana Library are underfunded (KPL Annual Report, 2006/07).

Whereas prior to 1994, the Provincial Library Service provided for not much more than the books and audio-visual material for the public libraries, the Northern Cape Provincial Library Service has made funds available to the Public Library for various projects undertaken by its branches. These funds are then distributed to the branch libraries and, in the case of the Africana Library, have covered the cost of projects as diverse as security fencing, conservation material and staff training.

As has been mentioned, the Africana Library has also benefited annually from the Carter and Keough Trust Funds. In the past these donations were credited to the Special Africana Fund until 2007 when this fund was transferred to the Africana Library Trust (ALT Minutes, 30.08.2006).

Although limited, additional income is generated from the fees charged for research undertaken by members of the staff and volunteers and photocopies made for researchers.

6.6.1 Auxiliary bodies

6.6.1.1 Kimberley Africana Library Friends (KALF)

That the Africana Library's funding body, the local authority, was not in a position to adequately fund a research library was apparent from the meagre financial allocations to the Kimberley Public Libraries. Without additional funding the expansion and appropriate preservation of its collections were simply not possible. The Kimberley Public Library had established a 'Friends of the Kimberley Public Library' association in January 1989, the object of which was primarily to raise funds for all the branches of the Public Library and assist the libraries in their activities (KPL Annual Report, 1989/90). Although the efforts of its members were commendable and the funds raised much appreciated, the money allocated from this source to the Africana Library fell far short of its needs. It was therefore decided to establish a second Friends Association, one which would focus its efforts specifically on the needs of the Africana Library. The Kimberley Africana Library Friends or KALF was established on 13 July 2000 with 49 paid-up members (KALF Minutes, 13.07.2000). The purpose of this association was to support the staff of the Library and raise funds for the purchase of equipment, conservation material and other items required for the satisfactory functioning of a research library (KPLAC Quarterly Report: July-September 2000 & KALF, 2000 Constitution).

One of the main sources of revenue of these Friends' associations was the publication of books based primarily on previously unpublished material in the Africana Library. The first book in the series, *The Knights of the Shovel*, published under the auspices of

the Kimberley Public Library Friends was based on the manuscripts of various pioneers of the Diamond Fields and brought together by George Beet, himself a pioneer of the Diamond Fields. This book was launched on 19 June 1996 (KPL Annual Report, 1995/96). This sought after publication was followed by *Images of Kimberley* which comprised an annotated album from the postcard collection of Richard Oliver which was launched on 13 May 1998 (KPL Annual Report, 1997/98: 12). The publication was awarded a Gold Medal at the National Philatelic Conference in 1999 (KPL Minutes, 03.11.1999). To coincide with the commemoration of the centenary of the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1999, the Africana Library published *The Summer of 1899 – The Siege of Kimberley*. This publication was launched on 25 August 1999 (KPL Annual Report, 1999/2000).

Once the Friends of the Africana Library had seceded from the Kimberley Public Library Friends, the tradition established by that body continued and the publication of several books followed. The funds raised by this means could now be used solely for the benefit of the Africana Library (KPL Annual Report, 2000/01). A publication entitled *Daubs* was launched on 28 November 2000. This comprised extracts from the unpublished booklets of a similar name 'Daubs' which included the artistic contributions of members of the Art Section of the now defunct Kimberley Athenaeum (1915-1917). The book *Petticoat Pioneers* by Maureen Rall launched on 8 August 2002 followed and dealt with the history of women who had lived and left their mark on the Diamond Fields in the early days (KALF Annual Report, 2002).

On 6 October 2004 the sixth of the Friends' Kimberley Africana Library Series was launched. *Kimberley Drawn in Time* comprised sketches of Kimberley's architecture at various stages of the city's history by Judith Horner (KALF Annual Report, 2004/05). The cost of this publication was borne by the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust (KALF Minutes, 07.07.2004) (See 6.2).

The launch of the most recent publication *50 Years on the Diamond Fields 1870 – 1920* was arranged to coincide with the 120th anniversary of the opening of the Library building on 23 July 1887. This book compiled by the Head Librarian of the Africana Library, C Duminy with text by RJL Sabatini comprises a selection of photographs

taken on the Diamond Fields between 1870 and 1920 from the Library's extensive collection of historic photographs (Duminy & Sabatini 2007).

The Africana Library Friends do sterling work. Without the funds generated by this organisation, the Library would be hard-pressed to function to even the minimum standards required of such an institution.

6.6.1.2 Africana Library Trust

Because the Africana Library is in need of infinitely greater financial resources than the Friends Association is in a position to provide, other more substantial sources of revenue are required in order to expand the collections, secure their safety and preserve them for posterity. As it was obvious that the local authority was unable to fund the institution adequately, the future of the Library's exceptional collections, particularly the Special Collection i.e. the non-Africana collection, became a source of considerable unease among the staff as well as a matter of deep concern for members of the public. With the concurrence of the De Beers Trustees and the Sol Plaatje Municipality, steps were taken to create a Trust the primary purpose of which would be to take possession of the collections and generate funds to secure the future of the Africana Library and all its collections.

In 2005 the Africana Library Trust (ALT) was registered with the Master of the High Court in Kimberley. In terms of the Agreement into which the Trust entered with the Sol Plaatje Municipality the Trust would, on payment of a donation of R100 take possession of the Africana Library material and provide funding to assist in the preservation of this material, the expansion of research facilities and its running expenses and

- promote, foster and advance the interests of the Africana Library (SPL/ALT Deed of Donation in Trust, 2005: 5:5.2)
- establish and maintain the trust fund and assets within the area of jurisdiction of Sol Plaatje Municipality and [to] receive donations to be devoted exclusively towards

defraying any expenditure directly incurred in achieving the objects set out in clause 5 ... (SPL/ALT Deed of Donation in Trust, 2005: 6:6.1).

In terms of Clause 17 of the Deed of Donation in Trust the Board of Trustees comprises a minimum of twelve Trustees consisting of six *ex officio* members who represent the Sol Plaatje Municipality, De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited, the Northern Cape Provincial Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, the McGregor Museum, the City Librarian of the Sol Plaatje Municipality and the Head Librarian of the Kimberley Africana Library who also serves as Secretary to the Trust meetings. A further six Trustees all of whom represent a specific field of expertise required to further the interests of the Library make up the full complement of the Board of Trustees (SPL/ALT Deed of Donation in Trust, 2005: 17). In the absence of the Library Advisory Committee the formation of this Trust has also presented an opportunity for De Beers to be officially involved in the affairs of the Africana Library and its collections once again.

The first meeting of the Trust was held on 12 October 2005 under the chairmanship of the Hon Mr Justice SA Majiedt (ALT Minutes, 12.10.2005).

One of the goals identified by the Trust as being of primary importance is that of the preservation of the collections. To this end, the Trust at the time of writing (2009) is considering the feasibility of establishing a paper conservation, bookbinding and training centre in Kimberley. No such facility exists in South Africa and Kimberley has been identified as an ideal area, both geographically and climatically, in which to establish an institution of this kind (ALT Minutes, 27.02.2008). Considerable interest in this project has been shown by De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited to the extent that they have offered premises within the new Big Hole Precinct to house the proposed conservation, bookbinding and training facility (ALT Minutes, 23.07.2007). It is felt that the establishment of a resource which focuses on the preservation of paper based items within this precinct, which in itself represents the very essence of conservation, would blend well with the general theme of the Big Hole Precinct. Considerable offers of assistance for this project have also been received from official and unofficial sources in The Netherlands.

It is anticipated that should this facility materialise the revenue which would accrue from the provision of these services to the country would furnish the Trust with the funding required by the Africana Library.

6.7 Conclusion

That the separation of the Kimberley Public Library and the Africana Library was mutually beneficial to both institutions there is no doubt. However, the fact that the latter's function as a library established for the purpose of research was not acknowledged at the time and therefore endowed with the benefits which ought to have accrued to an institution of this nature has undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on its development. Greater resources both human and financial were required for the institution to have prospered as it ought to have done.

The new political dispensation which unfolded after 1994 has had a decided effect on the library service in Kimberley. The new enlarged local authority has new priorities. The City Councillors are generally inexperienced in library matters and this has impeded the city's library service. The last Annual Report of the Kimberley Public Libraries to record the existence of a Library Advisory Committee was that for 2004/05. The reason given for the abolition of this body was that it became politicised in that the appointments made to the Committee were of political nature and not, as was intended, because of expertise held in the spheres required by the libraries. Politicians were simply not interested in the affairs of the Kimberley Public Library and its branches and attendance at the quarterly meetings sporadic (Van Dyk 2007).

On the other hand the Northern Cape Provincial Library Service has been more generous in regard to the funding of libraries than was its predecessor and the Kimberley Public Library and its branches have benefited substantially from this provincial largesse.

However, it is to the auxiliary bodies, the Friends and the Trust that the Africana Library will have to look for financial security in the face of a disinterested bureaucracy. Of particular promise is the establishment of the Trust's proposed conservation, bookbinding and training centre which should, as a joint venture

between public and private enterprises, generate ample funds to provide the funds required by the Africana Library while rendering a service desperately needed in South Africa.

CHAPTER 7

THE COLLECTIONS: THEIR SOURCE, SCOPE AND PRESERVATION

7.1 Introduction

The definition of the term 'Africana' varies considerably in its interpretation and scope. For the purpose of this study which relates to the collections of the Kimberley Africana Library the term 'Africana' as defined by FR Bradlow will be applied.

Africana is a term applied to books, pictures, printed matter, *objets d'art* and furniture pertaining to Africa, and in South Africa, particularly to Southern Africa. The primary requisite of any object of Africana is that it must have some association with southern Africa (Bradlow 1975: 3).

Bradlow states that prior to 1939, the term was used to embrace material from any part of Africa but that

since the emergence of the new states on the African continent, it has increasingly been used to apply only to Southern African material (Bradlow 1975: 3).

When it was decided in the late 19th century to bring together a collection of books on Africa for the Kimberley Public Library, it would seem that the broader definition of the term Africana was applied by the early Library Committees. So for example we find in the collection *D'Escription de l'Egypte ou recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont ete en Egypt pendant l'expedition de l'armes Francaise 1820-1824*. This is a second edition of a collaborative work in 37 volumes of the scientific description of ancient and modern Egypt as well as its natural history by approximately 160 civilian scholars, scientists, artists and technicians who accompanied Napoleon's army to Egypt in 1798 until 1801.

Bradlow states that the earliest use of the word 'Africana' was in 1908 when

the firm of Davis and Sons in Durban issued a catalogue entitled
Africana : a list of work (sic) dealing with South Africa (Bradlow
1975: 3)

However, Muriel Macey who was in charge of the Africana Collections at the Kimberley Public Library from 1972 until 1986 and others claim that Bertram Dyer, Librarian of the Kimberley Library from 1902 until 1908 was credited with the first use of the word 'Africana' in print (Macey 1980: 1).

The bringing together of the Africana Library's collections of rare books and Africana did not happen by chance: it was a deliberate and determined effort on the part of the Library Committee and the Librarians of the Kimberley Public Library particularly by those of the Subscription Library, over a period of some eighty years to collect rare books of quality, maps, photographs, documents, pamphlets and other ephemera of historical importance where these related to South Africa (KPL Minutes, 05.12.1889). This policy was pursued after 1986 when the Kimberley Africana Library was established but with rather less fervour than before, not least because rare books had by that time become extremely expensive and, as often as not, beyond the means of the institution. However, every effort was made to expand the collection by the acquisition of relevant contemporary publications and where possible to fill the gaps which existed.

It is manifestly impossible to give a comprehensive account or list of a collection as vast as that held by the Africana Library. This chapter will therefore outline the means by which this collection was brought together and give examples of items which appropriately represent each of the most important categories within the collection. However, it is difficult to place items in specific categories as the contents of books do tend to overlap from time to time.

7.2 The origin of the collections

7.2.1 The collections and their sources

The first suggestion that books on South Africa or Africana should be included in the collection is recorded in the Minutes of a Kimberley Public Library Committee meeting held on 5 December 1889 when the Chairman, Mr Justice Laurence expressed such an opinion and stated that he had arranged to have books 'relating to South Africa' purchased from the dealer in and collector of Africana, Mr [CA] Fairbridge in Cape Town at a cost not exceeding £20 (KPL Minutes, 05.12.1889). Shortly afterwards, the Chairman himself bought 'a number of works on South Africa' for £15 while in Cape Town (KPL Minutes, 06.02.1890).

Some divergence of opinion exists as to which item of Africana was the first in the Kimberley Public Library collections. According to Macey, the first Governor of Griqualand West, Lt-Governor Richard Southey donated books on Africa to one of the Kimberley Public Library's predecessors namely the Griqualand West Public Library which opened in 1873 but which closed not long afterwards as did several other attempts to establish a library for the shifting population of diggers. The bookstock brought together by earlier libraries was often offered for sale and bought by those which came after them so that it is fair to accept that it was by this means that Lt Governor Southey's donation reached the Public Library to form the nucleus of this institution's Africana Collection. The books referred to included William Burchell's *Travels into the Interior of southern Africa*, Wilmot's *History of the Cape Colony* and Lanyard's *Birds of South Africa* (Macey 1980).

Apart from Macey's account, the Minutes of a meeting of the Library Committee held on 3 May 1888 record

the presentation by Mr E Mathers of his work on *The Gold Fields of South Africa*; by Dr [JW] Mathews of his book *Incwadi Yama* and by the Colonial Government Mr [R] Trimens' work *Butterflies of South Africa* (KPL Minutes, 03.05.1888).

On the other hand, Olive McIntyre maintains in her paper on the Kimberley Public Library and its Africana Collection read at the 20th annual conference of the South African Library Association held in Kimberley in 1965 that the first of the important donations to the Library was *Chronicles of the Cape Commanders* by the celebrated South African historian George McCall Theal and that this presentation provided the impetus for regular additions, by purchase or donation, to the Kimberley Public Library (McIntyre 1965: 70). She also mentions in her paper that the Committee resolved

that a list of all the books on South Africa in this Library be made, and forwarded to Mr Fairbridge, and that he be asked to purchase at the sale any other books on South Africa as he may consider valuable or interesting (McIntyre 1965: 75)

The Library's Annual Report of 1890 records that

A substantial addition has also been made to the collection of works on South Africa mainly owing to the kindness of Mr Fairbridge of Cape Town, some dating as far back as the last century (KPL Annual Report, 1890).

However it was not until the early years of the 20th century that the collection of books as well as ephemera began in earnest. As the years passed, the acquisitions policy formulated by the Library's Book Committee regarding special collections focused on books relating to southern Africa and to a lesser extent on rare books pertaining to European countries. Nevertheless, the unique non-Africana books which were acquired were of great significance and elevated the overall status of the collection immensely.

McIntyre was also of the opinion that the copy of *Mendelssohn's South African Bibliography* presented to the Library by the author in 1910 was not only 'a valuable addition to the Africana Collection' but that it 'provided a great incentive [to the Committee] besides being a valuable library tool'. She recalls that

Years later when Mr Ross was compiling his own important “List of the Rare Africana in the Kimberley Library”, he would draw my attention to certain items in his compilation, to which he would then add the note – “Not in Mendelssohn” (McIntyre 1965: 76).

Regrettably, this list of rare Africana compiled by Ross has disappeared.

It is an interesting fact that the former Chairman and member of the Library Committee, Mr Justice Laurence provided the incentive for Mendelssohn’s great work. In the Preface to his Bibliography, Mendelssohn states that some years after he had commenced his own collection, he attended the first conference of South African librarians in 1904 when an address was read on behalf of Mr Justice Laurence on which occasion the Judge remarked

Has not the time arrived for a well-considered effort to produce as nearly as may be, an exhaustive catalogue of works relating to South Africa?
(Mendelssohn 1910 (1): ix)

Mendelssohn (1910) goes on to state that

The plan for such a work had already been evolving in my thoughts and I forthwith decided to attempt the task (Mendelssohn 1910 (1): ix).

According to the Library Minutes, many of the valuable items in the Africana Collection were selected from the catalogues of European booksellers and those of WR Morrison, the well-known Africana dealer and collector, who ‘undoubtedly gave the Kimberley Library the first offer on many scarce items’ (McIntyre 1965: 76). It was to Morrison that the Library Committee entrusted the responsibility of purchasing items they had marked in the Catalogue for the Koopmans de Wet sale in 1913. From this source a number of rare South African books were acquired for the sum of £15. It was also to Morrison that the Library owed a debt of gratitude for the offer of the very rare and historically valuable Sluysken Manuscript, a description of which will be given further on in this chapter (See 7.2.2.2).

As far as the collection of ephemera is concerned, it was at a very early stage in the Library's history that the importance of collecting items such as letters, diaries and pamphlets was recognised and the public asked to donate them to the Library. The Chairman appealed to the public for

everything printed which has any bearing on local history, politics or affairs should be carefully preserved in the local library (KPL Annual Report, 1896).

In the Library's Annual Report five years after the initial appeal it is reported that

A commencement has been made of a collection of photographs bearing on local history and the Committee will be glad to accept photographs or any printed matter bearing on local history, politics or affairs for they feel that everything of this kind should be carefully preserved by the Library (KPL Annual Report, 1901).

Ross also acknowledged the importance of such ephemera and used the press to urge the public not to dispose of such items and other apparently insignificant material but to donate such material to the Kimberley Public Library (McIntyre 1965: 76).

The fact that a concerted effort was made by the Committee to organise the maps in the collection and endeavour to expand this collection is borne out in the Library Committee Minutes of a meeting held on 29 May 1902 when

The Librarian was instructed to draw up ... a list of maps in the Library and recent maps of South Africa published by Richards, Juta, etc. (KPL Minutes, 29.05.1902),

to write to De Beers regarding maps of Kimberley (KPL Minutes, 03.07.1902) and to

procure a copy of maps of Kimberley and of such other maps as show parts of Griqualand West at a cost not exceeding 2 gns (KPL Minutes, 23.10.1902).

In 1913, the Library commenced negotiations with the London Missionary Society for the acquisition of the Kuruman Mission printing press which was the first printing press to be used in South Africa north of the Orange River. This was the printing press which had been used to print a significant quantity of the work published in Setswana by the Rev Robert Moffat at his Mission. The negotiations to transfer ownership of this printing press were initiated by a member of the Library Committee, Dr JE McKenzie, a representative of De Beers on the Library Committee and the son of the missionary, the Rev John McKenzie of Kuruman. It was he and the Librarian, Ross who journeyed to Kuruman to view this piece of machinery and while there to secure for the Library

before it was too late, as many examples as possible of the books and periodicals in the Sechuana language (KPL Annual Report, 1913).

This journey paid dividends and an extensive range of rare Kuruman Mission Press publications which included lesson books, catechisms, hymn books were presented to the Library by the Revs JS Moffat, JT Brown and Dr J Eddie McKenzie (KPL Annual Report, 1913). In due course, after several years of negotiation, the printing press itself was donated to the Library by the London Missionary Society and this was eventually transported to Kimberley by ox-wagon by the well-known firm, Messrs Hill and Paddon in 1918.

Representations made to the Rev John Moffat by Dr McKenzie also resulted in the donation of an additional collection of important books and pamphlets which emanated from the Kuruman Mission. These included the cherished and unique copy of Robert Moffat's translation of the Bible into Setswana printed in Kuruman in 1853 and revised in the margins in his own handwriting (Moffat 1853) (See 7.2.2.1.4).

The Library was fortunate in having many benefactors and the Africana Collection includes many valuable volumes and items presented to the institution, not least those donated by the first Director of the McGregor Museum, Maria Wilman who held that post from 1908 until 1946. She frequently presented important items of Africana and bequeathed all her own books to the Library. These included

many important scientific works on South Africa, mainly on African languages, social customs and Bushman and Bantu art. She also presented her own definitive work *The Rock Engravings of Griqualand West and Bechuanaland* (McIntyre 1965: 78).

McIntyre, with her intimate knowledge of the Library and of those personalities associated with it over a period of more than four decades, goes on to relate several interesting accounts concerning the origin of other important items in the Africana Collection. She mentions for example that another of Wilman's generous gifts was a copy of *Specimens of the Flora of South Africa by a Lady* by Anabella Elizabeth Roupell (1849) which she had asked the Librarian to order on her behalf as she wished to present a copy to the Library

This was at the beginning of the 2nd World War. The book was ordered, but after some time, we learned that the ship by which it was travelling had been torpedoed off the West African Coast. That was that, we thought! However, about eight months later, we were informed that the cargo had been salvaged, and that this rare and beautiful folio was on its way to Kimberley (McIntyre 1965: 79)

and

Mr Ross was quick off the mark when it came to ordering anything very rare. Knowing that he could get money from either Miss Wilman or Mr Hirschhorn if the Committee turned sticky, he often ordered the book first and told the Committee afterwards! The classic example of this technique was when he despatched a cable for *Almanak voor de Kaap de Goede Hoop* 1804 within minutes of having spotted it in Martrinus Nijhoff's catalogue. Years afterwards, Mr Ribbink of the Library of Parliament told me that his cable had arrived half an hour later than Mr Ross' (he had consulted his Chairman!) (McIntyre 1965: 79)

Today the Africana Collection includes books, manuscripts, photographs, maps, architectural plans, newspapers, pamphlets and a vast collection of valuable

ephemera. In recent years the policy of the Africana Library has been primarily to collect such items as refer to the Northern Cape, to Kimberley and its environs, the Diamond Fields, diamond mining and mining in general as well as literature and other ephemera relating to the Anglo-Boer War.

The team responsible for bringing together this extraordinary collection was indeed a formidable one. Each successive Committee of the Kimberley Public Library from its inception comprised well-educated, intelligent men with foresight, notably Mr Justice Laurence who held the chair for from 1883 until 1901 (See Appendix, Laurence: 283), and its Librarians, Bertram L Dyer and John Ross who held the posts from 1902 until 1908 and from 1909 until 1942 respectively (See Appendix, Dyer: 293 & Ross: 296). These gentlemen had a profound influence on the Library, its acquisitions policy and indeed on library development in South Africa. They had the insight, the knowledge and the enthusiasm to purchase works at a time when they were affordable and in not such great demand. Ross, particularly, played an extremely important role in the acquisition of the Library's Africana Collection.

To their advantage, these gentlemen, particularly Ross, were well-acquainted with collectors and dealers in South Africa and abroad. CA Fairbridge and WR Morrison are names frequently mentioned in the records as those who were always ready to assist the Library Committee in its quest for rare books of quality. Indeed Ross appears to have had a soulmate in William Morrison and there exists amongst the Africana Library records considerable evidence in their correspondence of their close relationship and their common interest in Africana (Brits 1992: 45-53). These contacts were of particular significance and exceedingly helpful when the geographic and cultural isolation of Kimberley are taken into account.

In 1912, a collection comprising in excess of 2 000 rare books and pamphlets relating to South Africa was offered to the Library Committee at a cost of £235 by Morrison. Once again EC Lardner-Burke was at the forefront of the negotiations in regard to the sale of the collection which he described to the Committee as being

rich in early pamphlets and books dealing with the country [and] that a large number of these publications were not to be found in any other

collection and that he was of the opinion that the price asked was a reasonable one (KPL Minutes, 21.11.1912)

This was indeed a remarkable collection which consisted of 2150 items relating to or printed in South Africa: 276 bound books; 1474 unbound pamphlets, a substantial number of which relate to the public discourse which took place prior to Union in 1910 and to that associated with the Rt Rev John William Colenso (1814-1883) Bishop of Natal and the controversy which his Broad Church opinions unleashed within the Church of England particularly in Natal during the latter half of the 19th century; 250 English magazines and reviews or sections of these containing items of South African interest; 125 Blue Books on South African affairs; 20 old African maps; a large collection of illustrations of the Zulu and Boer Wars of 1878 and 1881 from the British magazines *The Graphic* and the *London News* and four albums of valuable manuscripts (KPL Report of the Librarian regarding Mr WR Morrison's collection of South African books, pamphlets, manuscripts, etc.: 1912).

Two-thirds of the cost of the collection, to be precise £156.13.4 was generously borne by De Beers and the remainder, £78.6.8 by the Public Library (KPL Minutes, 21.11.1912).

The Annual Report submitted to the Subscribers at the Annual General Meeting held on 4 March 1914 records that

At a sale of the Koopmans-De Wet library in March last, our Cape Town agent was successful in securing at very modest prices a considerable number of excessively rare books for our African collection (KPL Annual Report, 1913 & *Koopmans-DeWet Sale Catalogue*, 1913).

The Library benefitted immensely from this sale. Not only did it acquire a selection of extremely important and rare items of Africana, but their 'Cape Town agent', Morrison had purchased these at prices well below their true value. This had come about because of an agreement he had reached with other collectors and dealers whereby they had agreed that each one would 'stand off' from those items required by another party (Morrison's letter to Ross, 28.03.1913). Names such as 'Whitely',

'Jardine', 'Friedman' and 'SAPL' written in the margin of the Library's copy of the sale catalogue would suggest that the agreement could have been between Morrison and these gentlemen and the Librarian of the South African Public Library (*Koopmans-De Wet Sale Catalogue*, 1913).

The price paid by Morrison for this selection of very rare and important books was a mere £19.6.6 (KPL Minutes, 16.04.1913 & Morrison's letter to Ross, 28.03.1913).

Amongst the scarce items of 17th and 18th century Africana acquired from the Koopmans De Wet sale were the 21 volumes of *Historische Beschryving der Reizen of nieuwe en volkooime verzameling van de aller waardigste en zeldzaamste zee- en landtogten ...* (1747 - 1767) printed by Pieter de Hondt in s'Gravenhagen which deals with early Portuguese voyages which

are fully described together with the later Dutch voyages, the establishment and operations of the Dutch East Indies Company and the various French and English expeditions ... In addition to the numerous references to the Cape in many of the voyages there is a full account of the settlement illustrated with maps and copperplates (*Koopmans De Wet Sale Catalogue*, 1913: 1272).

Morrison's article on the sale which appeared in the *Cape Times* of 29 March 1913 regarding this item states that

Many of the Africana items were really of great rarity and by no means approached their value; this is particularly the case in connection with early local printing and manuscripts of local interest. *Historische beschryving ...* a fairly rare collection of early voyages in 21 volumes ... 1746-7 was a pick-up at 20/- (*Cape Times* 29.03.1913).

Morrison went on to state that *Copie van alle de Stukken, Brieven, Resolutien en verdere Papieren tot het werk van de Caap relatief* (c1785) in two volumes was also extremely rare as only a few copies were known to exist and he mentions that this item

was secured for the Kimberley Library, together with many other rarities and it is a matter for congratulation that these scarce publications are going to public institutions where they will be available to the public for all time (*Cape Times* 29.03.1913).

In 1917, Morrison offered the Library yet another rich collection of South African publications. On this occasion, the Committee was informed of this offer when the Chairman stated that the list of items on offer included

a number of the very earliest productions of the South African press and that the prices asked were reasonable. It was resolved that the several items marked on the list be ordered (KPL Minutes, 14.03.1917).

The contribution of De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd to the Kimberley Library's magnificent collection cannot be over-estimated. Apart from their annual grant to the institution, the Directors of De Beers were indeed always ready to assist financially when noteworthy items were offered for sale and the Library itself had not the means to purchase the items on offer.

There is no doubt that CA Fairbridge and John Noble's *Catalogue of books relating to South Africa* published in 1886 and the two volumes of Sidney Mendelssohn's *South African Bibliography* published in 1910 provided excellent guidance to those responsible for the selection and acquisition of the Africana for the collection. That the Mendelssohn bibliography was keenly awaited as a guiding tool in their mission to build up a fine collection of Africana is confirmed by the Chairman of the Library Committee, SB Kitchin when at the Annual General Meeting of Subscribers in 1910, he is reported by the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* to have stated that the Library's own South African collection was a very valuable one

and that they were awaiting the publication of Mr Sydney Mendelssohn's Bibliography of South African Literature, which would enable them to catalogue their South African collection much more ably than at present. As Mr Mendelssohn was an old Kimberley resident who had always

shown an interest in the Library, he had every hope that he would present a copy of the book to the Library (*DFA* 13.08.1910).

The Chairman's hopes were fulfilled as Mendelssohn did indeed present the Library with a copy of his Bibliography duly inscribed by the author.

Messrs T Maskew Miller, Juta and Co in Cape Town and several dealers in England, such as Messrs Quatritch and Allen and Son were also called upon from time to time to supply the Library with important books as they became available.

Notable assistance was given to the Books Committee of the Library by the Librarian of the South African Public Library, ACG Lloyd who had been asked to inform the Committee when books of note became available. In the Annual Report of 1912 Lloyd is thanked

for valuable suggestions for the inclusion of many new important publications (*KPL Annual Report*, 1912).

The collection was not confined to books and pamphlets: much store was also set by the inclusion of official publications. Concern was therefore expressed by the Library's Book Committee at a meeting held on 27 February 1913 when they were informed that the privilege of free copies of Government Votes and Proceedings, Hansard Reports, Acts and the annual volumes of statistics and other official documents had been withdrawn. However, with friends in high places such as Dr AH Watkins MLA (also a former member of the Library Committee), the privilege was soon reinstated with the blessing of the Minister of the Interior (*KPL Minutes*, 27.02.1913 & 16.04.1913).

Olive McIntyre, as a 'disciple' of her predecessor, Ross, contributed a great deal to the expansion of the Africana Collection. Indeed, it was her astonishing fund of knowledge in regard to the Library and its collections which distinguished her term of office and provided successive Library Committees with the expertise required to manage and expand the Library and its collections. After her retirement she continued to assist the Library in a voluntary capacity (See Appendix, McIntyre: 300).

In latter years, many important items were presented and bequeathed to the Library. Not least were those presented by Harry Oppenheimer whose gifts such as *The Brenthurst Baines* by The Hon Mr Justice Marius Diemont and his wife, Joy published by the Brenthurst Press enhanced the collection significantly. The Brenthurst Library has continued to present a copy of each of the Brenthurst Press' excellent publications to the Africana Library. Many gifts were, and are, also received from authors who present the Library with copies of the products of their research done in the Library.

Today, the Head Librarian of the Africana Library relies for information regarding items for sale on dealers' catalogues, publishers' brochures and newspapers in order to fill gaps and expand the collection. However, this can be done only within budgetary limits.

7.2.2 Scope of the collections

The Africana Library holds enviable collections which include items of exceptional rarity, both European and African: the classics of Africana which include many rare and beautiful books on South Africa, its inhabitants, flora and fauna; the accounts of missionaries relating to their activities as well as products of mission presses written in indigenous languages; maps, photographs, pamphlets and other ephemeral items.

Presently the Library which is considered to be one of the finest research libraries in South Africa houses thousands of items which reflect the region's past and the role Kimberley and the diamond mining industry have played in the development of South Africa and indeed of Africa. The Library specialises in records of Kimberley and the Northern Cape: its original inhabitants, the flora and fauna of the region, the development of the diamond mining industry and the history of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902 including the Siege of Kimberley which lasted from 14 October 1899 until 15 February 1900.

7.2.2.1 Books

7.2.2.1.1 Early European printing

Although the Africana Library is known particularly for its exceptional Africana Collection, the Special Collection cannot be ignored as it includes outstanding examples of books which illustrate the early stages of printing in Europe and its development throughout the centuries. This collection is, therefore, integral to those of the Library as a whole and represents the foundation upon which the later South African printing industry developed. The Special Collection includes several items of incunabula such as

- St Thomas Aquinas' *De Veritate* printed by Koelhoff in Cologne Germany in 1475.
- Magnus Albertus, Bishop of Ratisbon's, *Theologie compendium veritatis* printed in 1476 in Gothic type with the initials hand-painted in red.
- Sir Michael Scott's *Physiogomia* printed in Venice in 1477 by Iacobus Lunensis di Fivizano in its original vellum binding.
- H Schedel's *Libri Cronicarum (The Nüremberg Chronicle)* printed in Nüremberg, Germany by the famous German printer Anton Koberger in 1493. This is the first printed chronicle of the world's history from the creation to the 15th century and is illustrated throughout with engravings and woodcuts (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962 & KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008).

Other items in the Special Collection include books printed in Europe in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries such as

- Lucas Apuleius' *De Asino Aureo libelli XI* printed in Florence, Italy in 1512 by Philippus de Giunta. This is a rare copy and is one of the first books in which the fleur-de-lys appears.
- Georgius Agricola's *De re metallica* printed in 1561 in Basle. This is the first printed book on mining, machinery and engineering and is printed in Roman type as opposed to the earlier Gothic type.

- Samuel Purchas' *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (five volumes) printed by William Stansby in London in 1625 and describes all the voyages and travels of the known world at that time.
- O Dapper's *Asia, of naukeurige beschrijving van het Rijk des Grooten Mogols, en een groot gedeelte van Indiën ...* printed in Amsterdam by Jakob van Meurs in 1672. This work includes stories of travel with copperplate illustrations.
- Sir George Staunton's *Authentic account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* printed in London in 1798 in three volumes which include two volumes with a folio volume of magnificent plates. This is a fine example of printing by W Bulmer.
- P L Schlater and Thomas Oldfield's *The book of Antelopes* printed in London in 1894-5 in four volumes
(KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962 & KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008).

7.2.2.1.2 The first Cape printed works (1800 – 1837)

Morrison describes South Africa as the birthplace of printing in the Southern hemisphere and Cape Town as the cradle of South African printing,

the earliest productions from its presses being, from a bibliographical point of view, the incunabula of the Southern hemisphere (Morrison 1913: 2).

A singular item which represents early printing in South Africa printed by the Government Printer in Cape Town in 1801 was the booklet *Troostelijk gesprek tusschen den Heere Jesus en de moedeloose ziel*. This was the second book of an unofficial nature to be printed at the Cape and is the only extant copy (KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008: 34). In a lecture delivered in 1913 to the Kimberley Athenaeum by Morrison on the origin of printing in South Africa, he said of this publication

The importance of such a bibliographical treasure cannot be over-estimated for it ranks as highly as a Gutenberg specimen does to European printing (Morrison 1913: 2).

The collection comprises numerous items printed by the Government Printer at the Cape during the first British occupation of the Cape from 1795 until 1803. These include the *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser Prospectus/Kaapsche Courant en Afrikaansche Berigten*. This was the first unofficial publication to be printed in South Africa on 1 August 1800 and its contents was limited to proclamations, notices, advertisements, shipping movements with a small section devoted to news from overseas.

This category of Africana was greatly enhanced by the pamphlets included in the Morrison Collection which the Library acquired in 1912 and in his report on the subject the Librarian, Ross described them as follows:

They (676 items) cover a multitude of subjects and range in date from the beginning of printing in this country up to about twenty years ago. Only a small number are mentioned in *Mendelssohn's South African Bibliography*, many are quite unknown to collectors generally or to the British Museum authorities.

The balance of the pamphlet collection (778 items) being of more recent date, are more common, but the majority being already out of print or limited in number originally, are likely to become as scarce as many of the others in the near future and are therefore well worth preserving (Report by Librarian regarding Mr WR Morrison's Collection of South African books, pamphlets, manuscripts, etc., 1912).

A particularly noteworthy item in the collection is the *African Kalendar for MDCCCII under sanction of Government* (1802) compiled by HH Smith of Cape Town and printed on the Government Press. This publication contains interesting information such as the names of government officials, army officers and details regarding stamp duties. It goes on to give the phases of the moon, eclipses, and such like information (KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008: 35).

Another publication of note is a fine set of the scarce Dutch edition of Thomas Pringle's *South African Journal* which was printed under the direction of A Faure and

bore the title *Zuid-Afrikaansche Tijdschrift*. In the October 1829 edition a crude portrait of Van Riebeeck appears which Morrison considered of great interest in that he believed it probably to be the earliest woodcut illustration ever produced in South Africa (Morrison 1913: 3).

7.2.2.1.3 Early travellers and explorers in the region

Ian Colvin (1979: 11) describes the Cape of Good Hope as the 'fulcrum of political motive for four centuries' and mentions that the first voyage round the Cape took place about the time that printing was invented and that this inspired a great deal of the literature which today is referred to as 'Africana'. He points out that this development 'was soon recognised by all Europe as a turning point in the world's strategy' and goes on to say that

At the end of the 16th century we see a neck and neck race between Amsterdam and London for authentic news of the route (Colvin 1979: 11).

Information regarding South Africa prior to the settlement at the Cape in 1652 is largely derived from accounts of European travellers, explorers and mariners, many of whom were shipwrecked along the coast or who came ashore while travelling to the East (Bradlow 1975: 5).

The Africana Library boasts an excellent collection of rare books in this category of which it is possible to mention only a few in a limited study such as this. The oldest book acknowledged as Africana in the Library is that by Joannes Leo Africanus, *Ioannis Leonis Africani, De totivs Africae description, Libri.IX* printed in 1556 in Antwerp. This work has been translated into many languages (KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008: 23).

A book written in 1531 by Sebastian Franck, a German popular writer and mystical theologian *Dat wereltboek, spiegel ende Beeltnisse des gheleelen Aertbodems, in vier boecken (te wetenim Asiam, Africam, Europam ende Americam) gealtelt ende afgedeylt* published in 1562-1563 is another rarity purchased from the Koopmans De

Wet sale in 1913. The section on Africa comprises 27 pages and is 'a very rare edition not in the Library of the British Museum and unknown to Brunet'. This book is bound up with another by Franck written in 1534 *Chronica, zytboeck en geschiet bibel van aenbegin tot MDXXXIII* (Koopmans-De Wet Sale Catalogue 1913: 1426b) & *Cape Times* 29.03.1913) which although not Africana is a very rare item.

Another item of Africana which falls within this category is JH van Linschoten's *Navigatio Itinerariu ...* a book printed in 1599 and used extensively by navigators on the sea route to the East in consequence of which only a few unspoiled copies are extant. Although little reference is made in this work to the Cape, it was used frequently as a guide by exploratory parties sent inland by Jan van Riebeeck and his successors (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 49).

Included in the collection is A Bogaert's *Historische reizen door d'oostersche deelen van Asia, mitsgaders hetgeen aan Kaap de Goede Hoop in den jaare 1707 is voorgevallen tot aan het opontbod des Goeweneurs Willem Adriaan van der Stel*. This publication includes a 150 page account which deals with the agitation against Governor WA van der Stel in 1706.

Peter Kolb's illustrated *Caput Bonae Spei hodiernum* printed in Nüremberg in Germany in 1719 is of the original edition. This work formed the basis of most publications on South Africa for more than half a century (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 46).

The Africana Library has a wide ranging collection of books depicting the inhabitants, the flora and the fauna of South Africa written by the numerous travellers, naturalists, and botanists who landed or spent time at the Cape. This category includes one of the earliest works dedicated to Cape plants namely Joannis Burmanni's *Rariorum Africanarum plantarum* with original drawings by the well-known artist Hendrik Claudius. This fine work was published in Amsterdam in 1738 (KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008: 30).

The collection includes the work of the well-known and flamboyant Frenchman Francois Le Vaillant, *Travels from the Cape of Good Hope, into the interior parts of*

Africa, including anecdotes with elegant plates descriptive of the country and inhabitants, this being the 1790 translation of the book from French into English. His work *Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux D'Afrique* (1796-1808) also forms a part of the collection (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 47).

It was during the period of the second British occupation of the Cape from 1806, the duration of which lasted for more than a century that copious works which greatly increased the geographic and historical knowledge of the Cape, and its interior, as well as its flora and fauna were written and published and of which the Africana Library has many examples in its collection.

No collection of Africana would be complete without a copy of S Daniell's *African scenery and animals*. This classic of Africana was published in two parts in 1804-1805 in London and contains 30 magnificent colour plates depicting the country, its people and its animals (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 44)

Another important volume in the collection is the first history of South Africa *Geschiedenis van de Kaap de Goede Hoop* which was written by J Suasso de Lima and printed in South Africa in 1825 by W Bridekirk, Junior at the Chronicle Office in Cape Town (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 16).

Also in the Africana Library collection is one of the best known publications printed during this period namely William J Burchell's *Travels in the interior of Southern Africa with an entirely new map, and numerous engravings* (1822-1824) which was printed in two volumes in London. Because Burchell was recognised as a keen observer and a competent writer and draughtsman, these volumes are acknowledged as the most accurate and valuable account of South Africa published in the first quarter of the 19th century (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 38).

The copy of W Cornwallis Harris' *Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa* (1840) is another of the prized possessions of the Africana Library.

An extremely rare item in the collection is a book on farming, considered to be the first on this subject printed in South Africa written by WS van Ryneveld in 1804.

Aanmerkingen over de verbetering van het vee aan de Kaap de Goede Hoop, inzonderheid over die conversie der Kaapsche in Spaansche of wolgeevende schapen was printed in Cape Town at the Government Press by the printer A Richtert (KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008: 37).

7.2.2.1.4 Missionary activity and the birth of printing in indigenous languages

The Africana Library is known for its significant collection of early printed works in a number of the country's indigenous languages. Of particular importance are those in Setswana which are represented in the Library primarily by the products of the renowned missionary, the Rev Robert Moffat who laboured at Kuruman for 50 years and whose translated religious and educational publications were printed on the Kuruman Mission Press. These publications comprise spelling books, catechisms, the Scriptures, hymn books, tracts and miscellaneous publications such as *Pilgrim's Progress Part 1* by John Bunyan (*Loeto los Mokereseti lo lo coan hatsin yenu ... The journey of a Christian from this world to the world which is to come* (Bradlow 1987: 26-34).

As mentioned previously, the most important of these is Moffat's *Bibelo ea Boitsepho, ... Kholagano e Kholugolu mo puon ea Secuana* (Bible in Setswana) with notes in the margins written in his own hand (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962). The press itself, presented to Moffat by Dr John Philip of the London Missionary Society in 1830 and on which so much of Moffat's work in the Setswana language was printed was presented to the Kimberley Public Library by the London Missionary Society on perpetual loan in 1916 (KPL Annual Report, 1916) and was housed in the Library until 1995 when, after protracted negotiations with the Kimberley City Council and the Kimberley Library Advisory Committee, it was returned to the Mission at the request of the Kuruman Moffat Mission Trust.

Missionaries representing various British and European missionary societies played a major role in the development of printing and the broadening of knowledge of South Africa. Although these men of the cloth were frequently involved in considerable controversy which usually emanated from their condemnatory attitude towards and extreme prejudice against the farmers on the Cape frontier in respect of their treatment

of their Bushmen and Hottentot slaves, the bibliographical legacy of the missionaries remains of great consequence to the country. However, the reliability of their accounts of events was often questioned as these tended on occasion to be punctuated by gross exaggerations. Statements were made which were biased, devoid of truth and often based on sheer rumour. This study does not, however, presume to pass judgment on the veracity of the accounts of the missionaries.

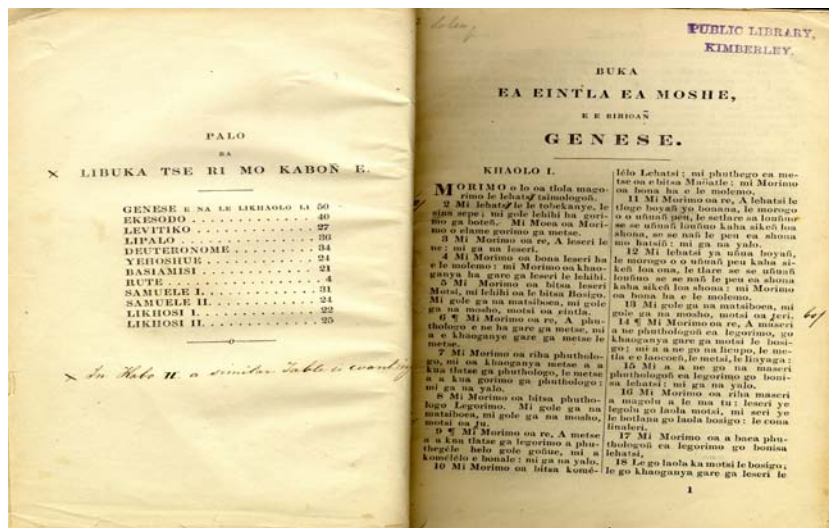


Fig 18: The Rev Robert Moffat's own copy of his *Bibelo ea Boitsepho ...* (Bible in Setswana)

One of the first missionaries to record his travels was the Rev John Campbell, a Scot who travelled extensively in South Africa on behalf of the London Missionary Society from Pella in the west to Grahamstown in the east. He was a prodigious writer and produced numerous accounts of his travels and ministration to the indigenous people of the country. The first of his many books is also to be found in the Africana Library's collection. *Travels in South Africa undertaken at the request of the Missionary Society* includes many early maps and was printed in London in 1815. This was followed by the narrative of his second journey which was printed in 1822, and is also to be found in the Library's collection (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 42).

Generally the publications of the missionaries concerned the inhabitants which they hoped to evangelise. From the missions themselves emanated a wealth of publications primarily of a religious and educational nature and written in an indigenous language.

The literary legacy of the missionaries of which the Africana Library has many examples, is all the more remarkable bearing in mind that those evangelists who served in South Africa arrived in the country without any knowledge of the people they were to evangelise or their language.

An important work in this category is that of JH Schmelen *Annoe Kayn Hoeaati Haka Kanniti. Nama-Kowapna Gowauhiihati* printed in Cape Town in 1831 by W Bridekirk. The work comprises the Four Gospels of the New Testament translated into the Nama-Hottentot language in the form used by these people prior to their having regular contact with Europeans (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 18).

Similarly, the mission press at Newtondale established by the Wesleyan Mission in 1844, produced as its first product a Sesotho catechism *Likatikisemi Tsa Ba Reiloeng Ba-Wesley Methodist*. This prized item in the collection was intended for use in schools (KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008: 51).

The mission press at the Wesleyan Mission at King Williamstown is represented in the collection by amongst others, a hymn book in isiXhosa *Incwadi Yamaculo, Okuvunywa Ezikolweni Zabakristu* printed in 1851 (KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008: 56).

Although not of a religious nature but printed on a mission press is Bishop JW Colenso's translation of Horace's *Odes* (1879) into isiZulu. Ten copies were printed at the Ekukanyeni Native Press near Pietermaritzburg in 1879 and distributed to family and friends. However, this is the only extant copy and is one of the gems of the collection (KAL Exhibition Catalogue 2008: 64).

Of a more educational nature is WHI Bleek's *A comparative grammar of South African languages Part I. Phonology* and *Part II The Concord* printed in London in 1862 and 1869 respectively. This work was never completed. Of equal importance is

a catalogue compiled by Bleek of the Library of His Excellency Sir George Grey's namely *Vol 1 Part 1 Philology* printed in 1848 but, in the opinion of Colvin, never worthily completed (Colvin 1979).

Tsumi-Goam – the Superior being of the Khoi-Khoi by Theophilus Hahn, an erstwhile custodian of the Grey Collection in Cape Town, is an important work on the folklore and religious customs of the Hottentots and Bushmen (Special supplement to the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* 12.03.1914).

Colvin lists numerous eminent recorders of the past and rightly says of them 'They all bring their tributes, large and small, to the treasure-house of history' (Colvin 1979).

7.2.2.1.5 The discovery of diamonds and the history of the Diamond Fields and Kimberley

With roots deeply embedded in the Diamond Fields, the Africana Library and its collection are, as would be expected, rich in the literature which relate to the discovery of diamonds, the history of the Diamond Fields, Kimberley and diamond mining.

The first book in the collection which deals with the discovery of diamonds in South Africa was a work by E Héritte, *The Diamond and other precious stones* published in Cape Town in 1867. The author was the French Consul in South Africa and was consulted by the Colonial Secretary Richard Southey in regard to the verification of the first diamond to be found at 'De Kalk' near Hopetown in 1866 (Robertson 1974: 40-41 & KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 66).

Another one of the early books dealing with the Diamond Fields is that by JL Babe *The South African Diamond Fields* which was published in New York in 1872. This is the only known copy. The author, an American, invented the machine which became indispensable in the washing of diamonds during the recovery process. This item of equipment, known as 'The Baby' is still in common use on the river diggings by the smaller mining enterprises (Roberts 1976: 25 & KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 59).

A very early publication dealing with Kimberley was *The Diamond-Field Keepsake for 1873*. Of interest is the fact that this book was printed by RW Murray at De Beers New Rush, the name of the mining settlement prior to it being renamed Kimberley (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 65).

Another of the books which gives a brief history of the Diamond Fields by one of the pioneers of the Diamond Fields is that by George Beet *The Grand Old Days of the Diamond Fields* [S.a] The material for this book which was published in Cape Town was gathered by Beet from numerous pioneers of the Diamond Fields and is currently housed in the Africana Library (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 60).

A book of great interest is one by Sir Charles Warren of the Royal Engineers, *On the Veldt in the Seventies* which was printed in London in 1902. Sir Charles represented Britain in the demarcation of the boundary between Griqualand West and the Orange Free State, a process which was finalised in 1877 (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 81).

The publication of Louis Cohen's *Reminiscences of Kimberley* (1911) caused something of a stir because of the libellous statements which it contained. This is an account of life on the Diamond Fields in the early days. McIntyre states that

The author was sued for libel and all copies of the book still unsold were destroyed (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 63).

An interesting anecdote regarding this publication related to the researcher by McIntyre some years prior to her death in 1990 was that JB Robinson who was the injured party and who had brought this case of libel against Louis Cohen telegraphed the Librarian, Ross in Kimberley requesting that he destroy the Library's copy of this book whereupon he undertook to compensate the Library accordingly when next he passed through Kimberley by train on his way to Johannesburg. Ross duly destroyed the Library's copy, met the train on which Robinson was travelling to collect the promised compensation and assured him that the Library's copy had been destroyed as he had requested. Ross then promptly went to the local booksellers, Handel House

and bought another copy before their stock of the book was destroyed (McIntyre 1979).

In 1902 Gardner F Williams, the first General Manager of De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited published a book which contains one of the most authentic accounts of the early history of Kimberley *The Diamond Mines of South Africa*. Another interesting and more recent publication is that by Hedley A Chilvers *The Story of De Beers* (1939) which gives an in-depth account of the development of this mining giant from its beginning until 1939.

The name of Cecil John Rhodes was synonymous with that of Kimberley and the diamond mining industry. Numerous biographies on this central figure in the history of Kimberley, of South Africa and also of the Anglo-Boer War exist and most of these are included in the Africana Library's collection.

Illicit diamond buying or 'IDB' as it has become known is an ill which has plagued the diamond industry since the discovery of the first diamond in South Africa. Despite every endeavour by the authorities to eliminate this problem, the illegal practice of 'IDB' remains as widespread as ever. As far back as 1885 the Board for the Protection of the Mining Interests of Griqualand West published an account of the establishment of the Diamond Detective Department whose purpose it was to combat the scourge of 'IDB'. This publication in the Library, *Our Diamond Industry* was printed in Kimberley (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 74).

Kimberley boasted several exceptional personalities who were not directly connected with the mining industry. One of these was Sister Henrietta Stockdale who played a dominant role in the establishment of the Kimberley Hospital and was responsible for the registration of nurses in the country which became compulsory by law in 1891. Lady Loch and Miss Stockdale recorded Sister Henrietta's historic efforts in a book entitled *Sister Henrietta. Bloemfontein and Kimberley, 1874-1911*. This book was published in London in 1914 (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 72).

Another noteworthy publication in the collection unrelated to mining is that of one of the pioneers of scientific research in the Northern Cape namely Maria Wilman, the

Director of the McGregor Museum, who published *The rock engravings of Griqualand West and Bechuanaland*. This work was published in Cambridge in 1933.

In as far as its budget has allowed, the Africana Library has kept abreast of the publications dealing with Kimberley, diamonds and diamond mining, the Northern Cape and the numerous publications relating to the Anglo-Boer War which have appeared in the past decade.

7.2.2.1.6 The Anglo-Boer War and the Siege of Kimberley

The Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) inspired copious literature on various aspects of the conflict. A profusion of contemporaneous pro-British literature in this genre exists, infinitely less Dutch and an almost total absence of material on the African participation in the war. It was not until much later, during the 20th century, that publications in Afrikaans on various facets of the Anglo-Boer War were published and not until the last two decades of that century that the results of research into the role played by Africans in this conflict were published.

The literature on the Anglo-Boer War and the Siege of Kimberley (14 October 1899 until 15 February 1900) in the Africana Library collection comprises a vast number of publications, numerous periodicals, reports, newspapers and unpublished material including an infinite number of items of ephemera. It is perhaps the diaries and letters which are the most important of the items in the collection of ephemera.

A publication of great significance relating to the Siege of Kimberley was the diary of Carl Meyer, a German missionary in the service of the Berlin Missionary Society on the Diamond Fields for 25 years, who recorded his experiences under the title *Der Schreckenstage von Kimberley*. The manuscript for this publication was sent to Germany by sea and then fortuitously salvaged from a mailbag in the sunken mail boat *Mexican* and delivered to Berlin in 1900 in a poor but legible condition. Fébé van Niekerk in her introduction to the translated edition of the diary published by the Kimberley Africana Library under the auspices of the Friends of the Kimberley Public Library in 1999 under the title *Days of Horror during the Siege of Kimberley 1899-*

1900 (KPL Annual Report, 1999/2000) states that only six printed copies of Carl Meyer's manuscript existed at that time one of which was presented to the Kimberley Africana Library by the German Lutheran Church. Van Niekerk goes on to point out that

The importance of this diary, the only one written in German, lies in the unbiased recording of conditions and events during, and directly after the siege. In the eyes of Carl Meyer there was no 'enemy' except the war itself. He championed the cause of anybody who was unfairly treated, irrespective of nationality, race or colour ... Throughout the siege, Carl Meyer, a very energetic and conscientious man, spent his days traversing the town on his bicycle in the extreme heat, doing mission work amongst the coloured community ... His diary records in detail the hardships endured by the people of Kimberley: the ordeal of being completely cut off from the world; the scarcity of food and the near starvation diet that led to many deaths from scurvy, especially amongst the black and coloured population ... (Van Niekerk 1999: 6).

The centenary of the war in 1999-2002 inspired a number of publications on this subject, the research for which in many instances was done at the Africana Library, indeed a rich source of information on this epic conflict (KPL Annual Report, 2000/01).

7.2.2.2 Manuscripts

Unpublished manuscripts form an integral part of the Africana Library collection and these are listed in the *National Register of Manuscripts* (NAREM) published by the National Archives and Record Service of South Africa making this information accessible to researchers.

One of the earliest items in the manuscript collection is a letter of instruction dated 24 December 1654 from the Here Sewentien in Holland to Jan van Riebeeck the Commander of the Cape of Good Hope (MS71) (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 57).

Colvin, referring to the Archives of the Cape

from the time of Van Riebeeck for a period of 150 years, throw the liveliest light upon the great world struggle for the trade of the East. Every change in the European situation is marked as upon a seismograph at this distant point and we feel their startled exclamations, their sleepless precautions – as well as from the sound of guns and echo of sea battles in the records – that the struggle must have been a thing actually of life and death to the officers of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape of Good Hope (Colvin 1979).

And so it was in one of these very battles that the Dutch who had governed the Cape since 1652 were expelled from the Cape by the British in 1795. This major event is described in detail in the 300 page manuscript by Abraham Josias Sluysken, the Commissioner-General of the Cape of Good Hope from 1793-1795, who in this report gives a graphic account of events following the arrival of the British fleet under Admiral Sir George Elphinstone and the capitulation of the Cape to the British forces on 10 June 1795. The report is written in Dutch and signed *AJ Sluysken* (MS277) (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 55). In 1897 this report appeared in print with the title *Verbaal gehouden by den ondergetekenden commissaris van het Gouvernement van Caap de Goeie Hoop deur Abraham Josias Sluysken zeedert het arrivement der Engelsche vloot, onder den admiral sir George Keith Elphinstone, den 10 Juny 1795 en de oorgaave van die kolonie aan de wapenen van Groot Brittannien, den 16 September daar aanvolgende* (Nel 1972: 667-9).

The main portion of the document reveals that it was written by the Commissioner-General's private secretaries under his personal supervision and the closing pages are entirely in the Commissioner-General's own handwriting (*Cape Times* Morrison ... 29.03.1913). This, justifiably, is considered one of the most important manuscripts in the Library's collection.

Of interest is the fact that the Sluysken manuscript was included in the Koopmans-De Wet Sale Catalogue but is not listed in Morrison's letter to Ross of 28 March 1913 with the other purchases as having been bought at the sale for the Kimberley Public

Library, nor is there an annotation in the margin to indicate by whom it was purchased. This item was offered for sale to the Library by Morrison a short while after the sale, so that it is fair to assume that either he or another collector or dealer bought it at the sale and decided shortly afterwards to dispose of it.

The purchase of this manuscript is another illustration of De Beers' infinite generosity. In this instance the Company made a special donation of £45 for this item as well as for 'a unique copy of the earliest known book printed in South Africa' namely *Almanak voor de Kaap de Goede Hoop* (1804) (KPL Annual Report, 1913).

A rare item in the manuscript collection pertaining to this early period in the history of the Cape of Good Hope is the *Statuten van Batavia* (1762). This manuscript, in two volumes, has a beautifully written title page with the Dutch East India Company's monogram and the Arms of Batavia. It is in its original full leather binding with gold tooled backs (MS64) (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 56).

Another manuscript of extreme importance presented to the Library in 1919 by De Beers is that of Sir John Barrow's famous *Travels into the interior of South Africa in the years 1797 and 1798* in his own hand (MS276). This work was published in two volumes in 1801 and 1804. The second edition which appeared in 1806 was illustrated with coloured engravings by S Daniell (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 53). These manuscripts came from the collection of Lord Macartney (1764-1848), Governor of the Cape from 1796 until 1798 to whom Barrow acted as Secretary. The collection also includes a letter dated 12 April 1800 from Lord Macartney, in England, to John Barrow at the Cape concerning the printing and publication of this book (MS43).

The Africana Library also holds in manuscript the official report by Lieutenant John RM Chard VC to Colonel Glynn, Commander of the 3rd Column dated 25 January 1879 on the defence of Rorke's Drift. Chard was in charge of the 24th Regiment when it was attacked by the Zulus on 22 January 1879 (MS57).

Some of the more interesting manuscripts include letters from David Livingstone (1813-1875) (MS42), Robert Moffat (1795-1883) (1842) (MS200) and Olive

Schreiner (1855-1920) (1896) (MS247 & MS252). Included in the collection and of particular relevance to the Diamond Fields is the signed affidavit dated 9 August 1932 dictated by Erasmus Stephanus Jacobs (1851-1933) in which he describes his discovery of the first diamond near Hopetown in 1866 (MS21) (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 67).

Other items in the collection of manuscripts are original accounts of life in the region and more especially on the Diamond Fields. These include letters, diaries and other accounts such as those collected by an erstwhile Town Clerk of Kimberley, George Beet (1853-1935) from pioneers of the Diamond Fields (MS23). This collection also comprises personal accounts relating to the Anglo-Boer War and especially to the Siege of Kimberley.

Today the collection of manuscripts embraces a broad collection of items including papers which belonged to pioneers of the Diamond Fields such as George Paton (1830-1914) (MS257) and Thomas William Halliwell (1888-1969) (MS259), the records of local commercial enterprises, sporting and cultural organisations and records kept by such eminent and public-spirited citizens such as RC Elliott (MS27/172) LHG Shuttleworth (MS 579), JA van Zyl (MS771) as well as diaries such as those kept by WH Wayland from 1891 until 1929 which give a graphic description of farming activity in the Belmont District during that period (MS437).

7.2.2.3 Maps

The Library's collection of maps, sea charts and town plans comprises approximately 700 items which date from the 17th century to the present time. For the purpose of this study, these have been arbitrarily divided into the following categories

1. The entire continent of Africa
2. The African sub-continent
3. The Cape of Good Hope and maps drawn during the Colonial period
4. Griqualand West and the later Northern Cape
5. Kimberley, Beaconsfield as well as general plans of these towns.

Included in this category is a comprehensive collection of architectural plans of several of Kimberley's public buildings and familiar residences

6. Mining: mining areas, position of the various diamond mines in Griqualand West, distribution of kimberlite pipes in Beaconfield and its mining area, depositing floors, ownerships and claims
7. Military maps of the Anglo-Boer War and of other military operations in South Africa

Professor E Liebenberg, Emeritus Professor of Geography at UNISA and Chairman of the International Cartographic Association ICA Working Group on the History of Colonial Cartography in the 19th and early 20th centuries visited the Africana Library in 2004 and examined the collection. Her remarks in a letter to the Head Librarian after her visit give an indication of the esteem in which she held the collection:

As you know, I am presently working on a book on historical maps of South Africa. Although the book will cover the entire period from the 15th century to approximately 1910, the maps of the interior of the country compiled by travellers, missionaries and surveyors during the 19th century form an important part of my study.

I was very excited to discover that your Library possesses copies of the maps of Friederick Jeppe of 1877, 1889, and 1899 as well as the map of the Cape Colony of 1895 of the Surveyor-General (Cape). These maps are relatively rare and are important historical documents. I also found a few noteworthy 17th century maps of Griqualand West (Liebenberg 14.11.2004).

Regrettably, seven of the Library's important and valuable 17th and 18th century maps were removed from the Library without permission in 2000 and not returned (Duminy 2000).

Among the early maps of Africa, southern Africa and the Cape of Good Hope are the following

- Claudius Ptolemy (lived during the first part of the 2nd century of our era) *Africa XVII Nova Tabula* (M0484) (Norwich 1983: 14)
- Willem Janszoon J Bleau (1571-1638) *Aethiopia inferior vel Exterior* (1635) (M0617)
- John Speed (1552-1629) *Africae, described, the manner of their habits and buildinge* (1626) (M0486)
- John Senex (d.1740) *Africa, corrected from the observations of the Royal Society of London and Paris*. This map is dedicated by 'his most obedient and most humble servant to Sir Isaac Newton, President of the Royal Society and Master of her Majestie's Mints' (c.1711) (M0488)
- Peter Kolb(e) (1675-1725) *le Pays des Hottentots aux Environs du Cap de Bonne Esperance* (M0478)

An example of a sea chart in the collection is that by Jacques Nicolas Bellin (1703-1772) *Carte de la Costa Orientale d'Afrique* (1740) (M0477).

Many of these maps are of considerable ethnological interest and importance as they include illustrations and comments on the appearance, dress and customs of the indigenous population who occupied the Cape of Good Hope and its hinterland at the time. The maps indicate that these southern African regions were occupied by Hottentots, several Khoi tribes and 'Cafres' further north along the east coast (See Fig 1 Frontispiece, JL Lieb 1830, M029). Several of the maps indicate the ancient land of Monomotapa further to the north.

The British dominated African exploration and map-making in the 19th century much as had the Portuguese in the 16th century, the Dutch in the 17th century and the French in the 18th century (Norwich 1980: 32).

It was during the 19th century that regional maps which were the products of travellers and missionaries such as William Burchell (1781-1863), Sir John Barrow (1764-1848) and the Rev John Campbell (1766-1840) became available. An example of a regional map in the Africana Library collection is Burchell's *Map of the extratropical part of Southern Africa* (1822) (M0481).

The Library has a vast collection of maps relating to Griqualand West. These are of great significance and considerable use is made of them by researchers not least because land disputes were endemic to this region more particularly so after the discovery of diamonds. Included in this collection are

- JL Lieb *Map of Griqua territory and part of the Bechuana Country in South Africa* (1830) (M29) (See Fig 1:Frontispiece)
- Griqualand West *Lands proposed for ex Chief Nicholas Waterboer* (02.10.1877) (M1)
- Saul Solomon *Albania, Waterboer's territory* June 1869 (M3)
- Charles Warren (Lt.Col) (1840-1927) *Map of Griqualand West and adjoining districts* August 1879 (M15). Warren was responsible for a number of maps drawn at this time.
- J Murray *General plan of the Diamond Fields, Griqualand West South Africa* (1886) (M0326)

The Africana Library has a wealth of maps drawn during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902. These include numerous maps drawn by the military during the Siege of Kimberley.

- Belmont – *Situation prior to the capture of Gun Hill, 23.11.1899* (M19)
- A Snel Slag by *Magersfontein op 11 Desember 1899* (1899) (M0086)
- Burnet Adams *Mafeking October 1899 to May 1900* (1900) (M0090)
- WAJ O'Meara *Relief of Kimberley : Illustrating movements 10th – 14th February 1900* (1900) (M0106)
- CS Goldman *Route map showing the advance of General French's Division and position* (1902) (M0470)

The collection includes numerous maps of Kimberley, Beaconsfield and suburbs, many of which emanate from the Kimberley Municipal offices. Several of the maps belonging to this category relate to the city's mining operations and have been donated to the Library by De Beers.

The collection of maps pertaining to the mines is infinite in its variety and cover the period from the commencement of diamond mining to the present day. Among the maps included in the collection are

- JM Gilfillan *Diagram of Bultfontein farm* (1878) (M0110)
- W Newdigate *General plan of the diamond mines owned by De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd with their accompanying floors* (1901) (M0257)
- WK Tucker *Plan of Kimberley Diamond Mine* (1875) (M267)
- WK Tucker *Plan of Kimberley mining areas* (1886) (M0265)
- WK Tucker *Plan of ownerships in Kimberley Mine* (1882) (M0326)
- AS Woolley *Plan showing the position of the various Diamond Mines in Griqualand West* (1896) (M0275)
- PA Wagner *Map of principal Kimberlite occurrences and detrital diamondiferous deposits* (1914) (M0311)

Of historical interest is a later map of the Union of South Africa drawn by the Government Surveyor-General in 1916 showing the principal movements of the rebel forces at that time of turmoil in South Africa (M0727).

Contemporary maps derive from many sources amongst which are those from the Surveyor-General's Office, the Trigonometrical Survey Office, and various government departments as well as those included in manuscript collections such as that of the Northern Cape and Adjoining Areas Development Association (MS373).

7.2.2.4 Newspapers

The first newspaper printed on the Diamond Fields was *The Diamond News* which was published on 15 October 1870 at Pniel, a short distance from Kimberley and situated on the banks of the Vaal River. The first volume of *The Diamond News* dated 1870-1872 was acquired for the Library in 1918, also from Morrison, for the sum of £5. In addition to this valuable item, the Library possesses most of the newspapers published in Kimberley (KPL Exhibition Catalogue 1962: 85 & McIntyre 1965: 78).

The newspaper collection includes one which predates the discovery of diamonds and the early newspapers published on the Diamond Fields, namely the July 1837 issue of

Umshumayeli Wendaba, which was the first newspaper printed in an indigenous language.

Included in the collection are several bound copies of South Africa's first newspaper the *Kaapsche Courant and Cape Town Gazette* which date from 1805 as well as the first volume of the *Grahamstown Journal* of 1831-32 (KPL Annual Report, 1920).

Presently the Library subscribes to the two newspapers printed in Johannesburg and Bloemfontein respectively and distributed locally; namely the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* and *Volksblad*. These are indexed daily. The collections of the old newspapers have been systematically indexed but because of the shortage of staff, an enormous backlog exists particularly in regard to the indexing of the early newspapers.

Most of the local newspapers are available to researchers on microfilm.

7.2.2.5 Photographs

The Africana Library's photographic collection of approximately 26 000 photographs comprises pictorial records of the early diamond discoveries and the advances in mining and of the personalities associated with diamonds and the development of Kimberley, Griqualand West and the later Northern Cape. Included in the collection are a vast number of photographs taken during the Anglo-Boer War and the Siege of Kimberley.

From the very early years, the public was encouraged to donate photographs to the Library by means of appeals made at its Annual General Meetings and in the press. These requests were generally taken to heart by members of the public and in 1921 for example the City Council and Mrs George Tapscott presented interesting collections of photographs of early Kimberley and its environs to the Library. Also during that year, AH Long of Middlebrook's Studio presented 'a fine enlargement of a rare photograph showing the arrival of the first train at Kimberley in November 1885' (KPL Annual Report, 1921). The latter was indeed an important acquisition as the extension of the railway to Kimberley in 1885 was a particularly noteworthy event having had a far-reaching influence on every sphere of the development of Kimberley.

In 2007 the Friends of the Africana Library published a book *50 Years on the Diamond Fields 1870-1920* comprising a selection of 92 photographs from the Africana Library's vast collection.

More recent photographs include those donated to the Library by the press and members of the public from time to time.



Fig 19: The arrival of the first train in Kimberley from the Cape and Port Elizabeth, 1885

7.2.2.6 Works of art

Over a period of many years, the Library has acquired, usually by donation, several works of art in a variety of media. Amongst the more important of these works are the album of lithographic prints of landscapes in South Africa by Thomas Bowler (1813-1869) and an album of prints by William Hogarth (1697-1764) *A Rake's Progress* as well as the extremely important Lawson Collection of Old Master Prints and Drawings.

Although this latter collection cannot be classified as Africana, these works were brought together in Griqualand West in circumstances which can only be described as extraordinary and presented to the Kimberley Public Library by the Venerable

Archdeacon George Mervyn Lawson (1865-1945) in December 1939. This collection which comprises 129 Old Master Prints and Drawings was brought together by Archdeacon Lawson over a period of many years by means of mail while he, as missionary priest, ministered on horseback and later in a Cape cart to the Anglican community throughout the vast area known as Griqualand West. His unpretentious home was situated on a portion of a farm, Huis-ten-bosch, near Papkuil in the Northern Cape.

The Bishop of Kimberley and Kuruman, the Rt Rev Wilfred Gore-Brown wrote about Lawson's perigrinations in Griqualand West in the Diocesan Magazine in 1916 as follows

Archdeacon Lawson knows and is respected by everyone in the country. He travels 1040 miles every two months, on horseback, staying at farms on the road; everywhere taking services and administering the Sacraments (Gore-Brown 1916).



Fig 20: Archdeacon the Rev George Mervyn Lawson on horseback in his parish

This valuable collection was offered to the Library Committee in a letter from Archdeacon Lawson to Ross

I am sending a small suitcase containing 127 [sic] Old Master studies including a few modern ones. These I shall feel honoured if they may be accepted by the Kimberley Library ...

It may interest you to know roughly the value of these drawings. I have given as much as five pounds for one or two, but the average price was from two to three pounds and some of the less important ones, not more than 15/- to £1 (Lawson 1939).

The letter goes on to give instructions on the marking, mounting and storage of the works. The offer was accepted after a special meeting of a sub-committee appointed to discuss the gift held on 18 December 1939 (KPL Minutes, 18.12.1939).

In approximately 1986, the then Head of the Africana Collection at the Library, Muriel Macey offered a selection of these prints and drawings to the Director of the William Humphreys Art Gallery for exhibition in the Art Gallery. The collection was examined and several of the works which were considered to be in a reasonable condition were selected for the exhibition.

It was apparent that the Africana Library even in its upgraded and restored state was in no position to carry out Archdeacon Lawson's instructions, which in themselves, were outdated in as far as the preservation of works of art on paper were concerned. The Library had neither the staff qualified to do such work nor did it have the facilities to store or exhibit a collection of such an exceptional calibre. The state of the collection was such that it was obvious that if it were to be preserved for posterity, the prints and drawings would have to be transferred to an institution with the skills and facilities to do so.

The expertise of several authorities in the specialist field of Old Master prints and drawings was called upon to assess the collection. These included Johann Maree of the Preservation Unit of the University of Cape Town Libraries, Joe Dolby of the South African National Gallery in Cape Town, Stephan Welz of Stephan Welz & Co (in association with Sotheby's) and Nicholas Turner, the Deputy Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum and considered to be one of the world's authorities

on the subject of Old Master drawings. The consensus was that the collection was indeed extremely valuable and that it should be transferred from the Africana Library to the William Humphreys Art Gallery which had the infrastructure and capacity to conserve these works under conditions accepted internationally as necessary for the preservation of works of art on paper (WHAG GM Lawson correspondence, 1987 – 1995).

In due course, after protracted negotiations, the Kimberley City Council and the Kimberley Public Library Advisory Committee with the concurrence of De Beers as the Trustees of the Library's collections agreed that the Lawson Collection should be transferred to the Art Gallery. In a letter dated 10 September 1991, Fébé van Niekerk, the City Librarian, writing on behalf of the Kimberley Municipality informed the Art Gallery Council that the Kimberley City Council had agreed to the donation of the Lawson Collection to the Art Gallery, the only stipulation being that the collection should never be allowed to leave Kimberley (KPL Letter from City Librarian to WHAG Council, 10.09.1991).

Once the collection was delivered to the Art Gallery an immediate start was made, with the assistance of Maree, on the restoration and mounting of the prints and drawings. Arrangements were made for Turner - by that time Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the J Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, California in the United States of America - to visit Kimberley to examine the collection and give advice as to its restoration, mounting, exhibition and storage. By the time the visit took place in September 1995 under the auspices of the national Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, a great deal of the work had already been completed and to his satisfaction.

Subsequently, Turner wrote an article which appeared in the Summer 1996 edition of the *International Review* published by the Drawing Society in *Drawing* 18(1) which justifies the transfer by the Kimberley Africana Library of this unique and valuable collection to the William Humphreys Art Gallery, an institution which had the capacity to provide the care it so obviously deserved.

In terms of overall quality and importance, the Lawson collection of Old Master prints and drawings is amongst the finest of such groups of material in South Africa, and in my opinion, is as significant as that in the National Gallery of South Africa, Cape Town ... The interest of the Lawson Collection is unquestionably enhanced by its formation against great logistical odds (sent to the veld, by post, by London dealers); by the sense of appreciation, if not passion, of its former owner who evidently regarded as a privilege the possession of works by some of the great masters of the past; and, finally, by its eclipse, for almost fifty years, during which time many of the pieces came to assume a far greater historical (and financial) value than they possessed when first donated.

In international terms there are some 30 or 40 drawings of importance, and they have an added interest to specialists in being unpublished. The best drawings are by the Italian seventeenth century artists, including the good groups by Stefano della Bella (1610-1664) and Guercino (1591-1666). There are fine drawings by artists from other schools, notably sheets by Van Dyck, Sebastian Bourdon, John Hamilton Mortimer and others. By these same 'international' terms, the collection as a whole might be compared in content to such smaller, local collections as, say, the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, England; the County Museum of Art, Los Angeles in the States; or the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide in Australia (Turner 1996).

7.2.3 Preservation of the collections

The inclusion of the account on the Lawson Collection and its transfer to the William Humphreys Art Gallery serves to substantiate the view that the Kimberley Africana Library (and its predecessor as custodian of the collection, the Kimberley Public Library) has, since its inception, been sorely under-resourced and that when its establishment as a separate entity was mooted very little thought was given to the needs of a research institute which was intended to house, preserve and from time to time exhibit, extremely valuable and irreplaceable collections of paper-based heritage material.

A major impediment to the optimal functioning of the Africana Library is the fact that when the separation of the libraries took place in 1984, the Africana Library was not equipped as a research library in accordance with international standards. It was merely launched as one of the Kimberley Public Library's branch libraries and dealt with accordingly. The consequence of this error of judgment is that the development of the Library has been severely impeded as a result of inadequate funding for an institution with special needs, a paucity of qualified staff; the paltry remuneration paid to the staff with qualifications of a specialist nature and a workload far in excess of that expected of librarians in a public library.

It is accepted that budgetary restrictions were a restraining factor - the extent of which provided only for the most basic restoration and upgrading of the building. The combined contributions towards this project of the Kimberley Municipality and the Cape Provincial Library Service were sufficient only for the relatively minor repairs and maintenance of the building.

An air-conditioning plant was installed but only selectively, primarily for the convenience and comfort of staff and researchers whereas an institution of this nature required a plant which would control both temperature and relative humidity at constant levels throughout the building and more particularly in those areas which house the oldest, the most vulnerable and valuable of the items in the collection. Fortunately the dry climate in Kimberley does not encourage mould and insect infestation and the thickness of the walls of the Library does help to keep the temperature reasonably constant. However, the windows in the building offset these advantages to a great extent and allow for a constant filtering of dust into the building.

Security in a building housing such valuable and irreplaceable collections ought to have been of a high standard and been given priority. However, during the process of upgrading the building which took place in 1984-1986, the burglar alarm and smoke detector systems were indeed installed to guard against the destruction of the collections by theft or fire. However these were not of the standard required for an institution such as the Africana Library. The latter system was of an inferior quality, the sensors being sparsely placed and insufficient in number to serve as an appropriate early warning system in case of fire. This system has been replaced recently with

funds made available by the Friends of the Africana Library, the Africana Library Trust and a private sponsor.

With an establishment of two qualified staff members whose job descriptions include research, service to the public and in particular to researchers, and general office administration, it is manifestly impossible to monitor the researchers constantly. It was only after several valuable items from the map collection were stolen that a closed circuit television was installed for this purpose. However, this serves as a deterrent to those with criminal intentions rather than as an instrument for effective security as the staff simply do not have the time to monitor the system constantly.

After representation to the Municipality for several years, it was not until 2007 that the Head of the Africana Library was informed that the part-time member of staff with basic skills in paper conservation had been appointed to a permanent position on the Africana Library's establishment.

Staff members have attended various workshops and study tours in recent years sponsored mainly by the Friends of the Africana Library and the Northern Cape Provincial Library Service. On these occasions they have been made aware of the conditions required for the preservation of the collections; study tours to the Netherlands have been particularly informative. Such exposure to institutions more liberally financed than the Africana Library has been of considerable benefit to the institution and its staff, although, once again, due to the lack of funds little of what they have seen and learned can be implemented.

7.3. Conclusion

The Africana Library has benefited immeasurably from the funds generated by the Friends of the Library. However, the institution requires vast sums of money and the Friends are not equipped to generate funding on such a scale. Motivated by similar goals, the Africana Library Trust was therefore registered with the Master of the High Court in August 2005 to raise funds for the preservation of the collections and other core functions which the Sol Plaatje (Kimberley) Municipality is unable to provide.

It is on these auxiliary bodies that the Africana Library will have to rely if it is to survive and develop – if it is not merely to become a static monument to the noble aspirations of its founders.

Viewing the formation of the collection and its expansion over the years, one must conclude that had it not been for the Kimberley Public Library's dedicated and enthusiastic Committee and personnel supported by the immense generosity of De Beers, the collections which have brought fame to this institution might never have been brought together and the Kimberley Africana Library never established.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 An overview

This study has revealed that during the first decade following the discovery of diamonds at New Rush, in due course to become the town of Kimberley, the establishment of a library rather than 'reading rooms' was not a priority in the minds of the cosmopolitan multitude which made up the residents of the shanty town which had risen in the hitherto uninhabited veld and which surrounded the recently discovered Diamond Fields.

The attention of these materialistically inspired diggers focussed essentially on finding as many diamonds as good fortune might decree. Generally the new arrivals to this isolated area were of hardy stock. Indeed they needed to be - having, like the Israelites of old, to contend with plagues of biblical proportions and this without the fundamental necessities of life such as adequate housing and sanitation. These trials were aggravated by extreme temperatures as well as a severe shortage of water. This study has shown that many did not succeed and were not prepared to persevere. However, those of European descent who had the necessary skills and who did survive and flourish financially, followed by those individuals engaged in occupations other than mining, made conscious efforts to simulate the social conditions they felt were required to create for themselves a socially and culturally acceptable environment.

The strong elements of British culture which manifested themselves on the Diamond Fields were as a direct result of the discovery of diamonds in a region over which Great Britain claimed hegemony. Although the multitude which converged on the Diamond Fields to seek their fortunes emanated from across the world, it was those of British descent who for almost a century placed their indelible stamp on the early settlement, the town and eventually the city. It was these individuals who encouraged and nurtured whatever activity they considered necessary to emulate the social and cultural conditions to which they had been accustomed in either Britain, the British

Colonies in southern Africa or those elsewhere in the world where British or at least Western culture predominated. Those who had also joined the rush to the Diamond Fields such as the citizens of the Boer Republics and the Africans from the tribal lands were by and large left to their own devices.

It was remarkable and indeed fortunate that only eleven years after the founding of Kimberley the town had developed to the extent that it could count amongst its residents those who had the intellect and the interest to take the lead in the establishment of a public library. Despite many a period of adversity, these men persevered and established a flourishing public library – an institution which, in a relatively short time, secured for itself an enviable reputation. This institution, the Kimberley Public Library, was the forerunner and the initiator of the Kimberley Africana Library.

By 1882, when the Kimberley Public Library was founded, the settlement had graduated with all the necessary trappings to the status of a town. Such public institutions as were established, including the Public Library were dependent for their existence on funding from its members. At the time there was simply no alternative to a library maintained by the subscription of members. It was the Subscribers who undertook to pay their dues for the privilege of having a well-stocked facility which would satisfy their literary needs. And so the die was cast and the Kimberley Public Library continued in this form for almost 80 years while it brought together its famed collection of rare books and Africana. It was the accommodation of this collection almost a century after its establishment which was to lead to the establishment of the Kimberley Africana Library in 1986.

Subscriptions were indeed the common and main source of revenue for all the public libraries in the Cape Colony at that time. Despite the fact that for a short while in its early days, it had been funded from a percentage of the Wine Tax, the Cape Colony's foremost library, namely the South African Public Library in Cape Town was as dependent for its revenue on the subscriptions paid by its members as any other such institution in the Colony and it was not until the Molteno Regulations of 1874 which provided for a modest government grant to public libraries in the Cape Colony that subscription revenue was augmented from public funds. This financial assistance

alone was insufficient to maintain a public library but it did oblige the recipients, including the Kimberley Public Library to make at least some concessions to members of the public other than to those who subscribed to the Library.

During the period in which the Kimberley Public Library operated as a Subscription Library, successive Library Committees laboured nobly to reconcile the Library's revenue with the demands made by the Subscribers for the maintenance of the standards they expected in return for their subscriptions. The Library Committees too had set high standards for the Library they managed and were determined to provide a facility which would in no way be inferior to similar institutions in the Colony. Successive Library Committees were also deeply conscious of their civic responsibilities and in as far as their budgets would allow, did all they could to spread the privileges of a library as widely as possible. Advice and assistance was freely given to those communities in the area wishing to establish libraries of their own. They advocated a free library system but with only a minimum of pecuniary assistance from the local authority and a modest grant-in-aid from the Colonial Government and after 1910, the Cape Provincial Administration, this ideal was simply not possible.

As a consequence of the limited revenue provided by a relatively small proportion of the residents of the town and notwithstanding the fact that the finances of the Library were well-managed and controlled, the Library Committees were obliged to rely increasingly on the generosity of the Directors of De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd. The liberal support given to the institution by this Company endured throughout the period in which the Library functioned as a Subscription Library and continued thereafter, albeit with slightly less frequency. The fact that today the Kimberley Africana Library boasts a collection of Africana and rare books of extraordinary quality bears testimony to the Company's munificence. In more recent times, the strongroom financed by the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Fund and the De Beers Chairman's Fund in 2004, which houses a large percentage of the collection is further evidence of the continued support of De Beers and its Directors. It is doubtful whether the Kimberley Public Library would have reached the heights it did or even survived without the support of the De Beers Company

This study has revealed that as the years passed and circumstances changed, the Library Committees found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet: the price of books had increased significantly, membership was limited, the cost of maintaining and expanding the building was prohibitive and because of the restricted means available for the remuneration of staff, the Committee was unable to attract to the institution the qualified staff it required. Indeed, if the Library was to keep open its doors and serve the public, clearly the only means of doing so was to relinquish control of the institution to the Kimberley Municipality in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Act No 4 of 1955 and convert from a Subscription to a Free Library.

Many aspects of the Library were improved by this paradigm shift made eventually in 1960: the Library became accessible to all registered members of the public free of charge, the bookstock including books of an educational nature expanded and as a result of the Agreement reached with the Kimberley City Council in 1960/1961, the Library Committee felt that the future of Kimberley's valuable collection of Africana and rare books was assured and that the establishment would be increased to a size commensurate with the additional services which the Library would be expected to render to the public.

However, even at this stage of its development, the Kimberley Public Library was not accessible to all residents of Kimberley. Racial prejudices had been sanctioned by national legislation and residents other than those classified as white were denied access to the Library except in certain exceptional circumstances. In due course, branch libraries were established for the exclusive use of members of these communities in their own areas. Not until the post-1994 era was the Kimberley Public Library and its branches in white suburbs open to all residents in Kimberley. The Kimberley Africana Library was the exception to this rule and was, from its inception in 1986 accessible to all *bona fide* researchers.

The initial euphoria and relief which this change of status brought about was short-lived. Neither the Provincial Library authorities nor the Kimberley Municipality had access to infinite resources. Because of the existing congestion within the Public Library which impeded the operation of the institution in regard to the bookstock and

research collections, as well as the discomfort experienced by the now far larger reading public, the construction of a new and spacious public library appeared to be the only means of resolving these problems. It was to take two decades before this need was fulfilled and a new public library built. Local and provincial politics combined with economic limitations all contributed to the bureaucratic vacillation which impeded the planning and building of this facility.

Finding qualified personnel for the Library became a perennial problem. While the Kimberley Public Library functioned primarily as a public lending library with the research facility as a relative sideline, it managed up to a point, but by 1984 when the Kimberley Public Library and the Kimberley Africana Library were separated into two entities, the lack of experienced staff was felt more keenly by the Africana Library which now functioned exclusively as a research library and a repository for the collections of Africana and rare books which required staff qualified to deal with these specialised functions.

It was at this point that the authorities who had decided to sever these two sections of the Kimberley Public Library bungled the otherwise laudable decision to split the lending and the research libraries. At this crucial point little or no thought appears to have been given to the unique functions and needs of a research library or of a repository for valuable books and other documentary heritage material. The Minutes of the Library Advisory Committee preceding this event fail to reflect any discussion or debate that deal with the status of the Africana Library and its potential requirements. Apparently the split was considered merely a division of the two facets namely the public lending and the research libraries to allow more space for the functioning of each of these entities.

In fact all that took place was that the building was restored in order to create a repository which would secure the Africana and rare book collections against hazards such as fire and water, to create a new tourist attraction for the city and a memorial to John Ross, a former Librarian who, to a great extent, was responsible for bringing together a large part of the collection of Africana and rare books (See Appendix, Ross: 296). No mention is made of the Africana Library having been modified to meet the standards required of a research library or for the long-term preservation of

its collections. The actual objectives of the Municipality with regard to the renovations of the old Library building are made clear by CB Nolte, the Municipal Director of Administration at the time, who stated in the Mayor's Minute of 4 September 1986

The City Council successfully converted the dilapidated century-old building in Dutoitspan Road into a safe and functional depository of the valuable Africana material acquired and preserved by the Kimberley Public Library through the years ...

In restoring this building a new tourist attraction was also created. On view to the public is a reconstructed section typifying the 'gentleman's library' of the nineteenth century. Furthermore the Ross Room, housing the Moffat press and many of its products, is freely accessible. This room is dedicated to the memory of an early librarian, Mr John Ross ... (KCC Minutes, Nolte, 04.09.1986).

David Yuill, the architect appointed to design and supervise the construction of a new public library and the renovation of the old building maintained during an interview on this subject that funding was indeed inadequate but that his brief had been simply

- to relieve the congestion which had plagued the Kimberley Public Library for so many years by the construction of a new facility in the Civic Centre;
- to restore the old building in order to safeguard the valuable collections of Africana and rare books which were to remain in the building. The renovations were to include a fire detection system and ensure that the roof was waterproof;
- to restore the front room of the building to its original design (Yuill 2008).

Asked whether the fact that the building in Dutoitspan Road was a century old was a factor which precluded the introduction to the building of essential equipment required

for a library housing valuable and irreplaceable collections such as environmental control, Yuill replied to the effect that such modifications had not been included in his brief and had therefore never been considered. He added that the manner in which the funds allocated for the renovation of the old library building were spent had been determined by Muriel Macey who was in charge of the Africana Collection at the time (Yuill 2008).

It would seem therefore that although the research aspect of the proposed Africana Library was indeed taken into account, little attention was paid either to the enduring safety and preservation of the collections or the staff requirements of such an institution. But the aura of the main reading room of the Africana Library with its elaborate cast iron circular steps and balcony should nevertheless be seen as a fitting memorial to those intrepid men and women who devoted a great deal of their time and energy to the institution, elevating it to the proud status it achieved in the history of South African libraries.

It is necessary at this point to define the word 'safety' when used in the context of irreplaceable paper-based heritage material. The word 'safe' can imply that the building is waterproof and that an efficient fire detection system exists and these precautionary measures are indeed essential. However, as Kimberley is prone to extremes of temperature and excessively dry climatic conditions, ways and means ought to have been sought to control the environment within the Africana Library building to standards which are appropriate for such collections. A constant temperature and relative humidity throughout the building are *sine qua non* for such institutions. At a later stage i.e. after 1986, air-conditioning was installed in two rooms but this appears to have been undertaken for the convenience and comfort of the staff and those individuals using the facility for research purposes. The strongroom housing the particularly valuable items in the collection such as the Incunabula is still without environmental control and the air-conditioning plant in the recently constructed strongroom does not operate continuously presumably because of the high cost of electricity and because of a limited supply of electricity to the building. This system is also not capable of controlling the relative humidity. Although the original building has the advantage of very thick walls, these advantages are offset by numerous large windows which not only have a negative effect on the

temperature within the library but also allow a great deal of dust to penetrate the building.

When the Africana Library opened its doors to the public as a specialist library and for many years thereafter, the establishment comprised only a Head Librarian, one Assistant Librarian and a cleaner. It is obvious that no analysis was undertaken of the work expected of the staff of such an institution: administration, research, the indexing of publications to facilitate the retrieval of information (the backlog in this respect was and continues to be enormous), public relations, the care of the collections including the regular cleaning and dusting of the collections as well as basic restoration of those items in the collection which require treatment, the organisation of manuscripts hitherto filed in thoroughly inappropriate acidic files and envelopes, the sorting and filing of photographs and ephemera. The list in fact is endless. The remuneration paid by the Municipality to the qualified staff members is little short of scandalous and falls far short of the remuneration attached to posts of an equivalent nature in state and provincial departments or in the private sector.

Another serious error of judgment was having the newly established Africana Library classed as a mere branch of the Kimberley Public Libraries. This meant that the research library which by its very nature has special needs was given very little acknowledgement of its status or of its reputation as a research library. The curatorial responsibility pertaining to the care of the irreplaceable collection of books and other archival material which are housed in the Kimberley Africana Library differs vastly from and cannot be compared with those applicable to a public lending library. The collections of the Africana Library comprise a substantial percentage of South Africa's documentary heritage and the institution should be treated and funded accordingly. As a branch of the Kimberley Public Libraries, the Africana Library is obliged to share with the other branch libraries the paltry budget allocated to this municipal function.

8.2 Measures adopted to relieve the personnel and financial positions of the Kimberley Africana Library

8.2.1 Voluntary workers

The excessive workload carried by the permanent staff is relieved to some extent by voluntary workers who assist in research work, the organisation of the collections, especially in regard to the manuscript collection and with what could be referred to as the 'donkey work' such as keeping the collections free of dust.

8.2.2 Funding

The inadequate funding of the institution by the Sol Plaatje Municipality is augmented by the efforts of the Africana Library Trust and the Friends of the Africana Library. Despite the latter association's meagre resources, the Friends have since its inception in 2000 contributed the substantial sum of approximately R641 000 towards the needs of the Library by means of various fundraising projects (KALF Minutes, 11.02.2009). The Africana Library Trust on the other hand has been in operation for a mere four years and has found the raising of significant funding difficult in the existing economic climate. Access to adequate funding remains the greatest obstacle to the progress and development of the Africana Library and the long-term preservation of the collections. The Trust is of the opinion that the establishment of the Paper Conservation, Bookbinding and Training Centre will, apart from the service it will provide to the country, generate funding for the Africana Library.

8.3 *Quo vadis?* Kimberley Africana Library

If the Africana Library and its collections are to endure for posterity, a long term solution will have to be found to place the institution on a sound financial basis. There is little chance that the impoverished local authority under whose jurisdiction the Africana Library falls at present will ever have the financial capacity to bear the entire cost of funding adequately an institution of this nature.

While the ideal solution would be to have the Africana Library's status formally recognised as a national asset, as a research library of note and a repository for a large

and important percentage of South Africa's documentary heritage and funded accordingly by the national Department of Arts and Culture, many legal obstacles preclude a simplistic solution to the present untenable situation.

As a funding body, the Northern Cape Province does not offer an alternative. In the first instance, the provincial Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, under whose jurisdiction libraries fall, has neither the funds nor the expertise to manage an institution of the nature of a research library. Nor at present does this Department have a legal basis to deal with an institution such as the Africana Library. As has been mentioned, in the 13 years since the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996* conferred on the Provinces the competence to legislate for libraries, archives and museums (other than national libraries, archives and museums) (Schedule 5 Part A), the relevant department has failed to promulgate legislation for these institutions which ostensibly continue to operate in terms of the relevant Ordinances of the old Cape Province.

Secondly, assuming the Northern Cape Provincial Administration to be the legal successor to the Cape Provincial Administration, the Agreement signed between the Kimberley City Council and the Kimberley Public Library Committee dated 23 December 1960 and 20 January 1961 respectively states specifically that the collections belong to the citizens of Kimberley and that

the aforesaid assets shall at no time pass to the Cape Provincial Administration or any other body whatsoever or fall under the control or administration of the said Cape Provincial Administration ... except with the approval of the Trustees designated in Clause 8 hereof ... (KCC/KPL Agreement 1960/61).

The declaration of the Kimberley Africana Library as a Declared Cultural Institution in terms of the *Cultural Institutions Act* of 1998 as amended is also not an option as this course would present numerous insurmountable obstacles. These include the following -

1. With the concurrence of the De Beers Trustees as designated in Clause 8 of the Kimberley City Council/Kimberley Public Library Committee Agreement of 1960/1961, the Sol Plaatje City Council transferred ownership of the collections and assets of the Africana Library to the Africana Library Trust, which was registered in 2005 with the Master of the High Court. This does not include the building which houses the collections. The Trust, with two exceptions comprises citizens of Kimberley and includes members with the expertise required by an institution of the nature of the Africana Library. The Trust Agreement makes provision for the representation on the Trust of representatives of bodies such as the Sol Plaatje Municipality, the Frances Baard Municipality, the Provincial Department of Arts and Culture as well as the aforementioned De Beers Trustees all of which have a vested interest in the institution. Members of the Trust serve in an honorary capacity.
2. In terms of Section 5(a) of the *Cultural Institutions Act*, the Minister appoints a Council of a Declared Cultural Institution, the function of which is to manage and control the institution and bear responsibility for the collections (Section 8). In terms of Section 7 of the Act the Minister also appoints the Chairman of the Council. Neither the De Beers Trustees nor the Africana Library Trust are likely to relinquish responsibility for and ownership of the collections to a Council appointed by the Minister – or his officials – notwithstanding the national Department of Arts and Culture’s claim to conduct a democratic and transparent process in respect of the appointment of Council members. There is no guarantee that such a Council would either comprise individuals of either the calibre or the expertise required by a research library or that these appointments would not instead be based on political affiliations, nor would they necessarily be citizens of Kimberley. However, this Department could well consider an annual grant to the Kimberley Africana Library.
3. Were the Kimberley Africana Library to become a Declared Cultural Institution it would also be subject to the exacting provisions of the *Public Finance Management Act* of 1999.

8.4 Recommendations

1. The management of the Africana Library's collections and their preservation are the *raison d'être* of the Africana Library Trust. On the premise that the Kimberley Africana Library will remain a municipal entity, it is recommended that the Trust endeavour to enter into an agreement with the Sol Plaatje City Council whereby the following matters concerning the Kimberley Africana Library are resolved:

- the severance of the Kimberley Africana Library from the Kimberley Public Library with as little delay as possible
- that the Kimberley Africana Library submit its own budget to the Sol Plaatje Municipality each year
- that such a budget provide for an expanded and more realistic establishment and remuneration commensurate with that of the staff of equivalent posts in the state and provincial departments
- that the Kimberley Africana Library submit its own Quarterly and Annual Report to the Sol Plaatje Municipality
- that the Sol Plaatje Municipality undertake to support all efforts by the Kimberley Africana Library to attract funding from elsewhere
- that the name of the institution be altered to make clear its research function and the scope of its collections. The name suggested is the **Kimberley Africana Research Library and Archives.**

Regarding the status of the Africana Library Trust the following recommendations were submitted for consideration by the City Manager and the City Council

- That the Kimberley Africana Library remain an institution under the jurisdiction of the Sol Plaatje Municipality
- That the Africana Library Trust be afforded the status similar to that of a Board of Trustees and as such to have greater control in the management of

the Africana Library and a voice in those decisions taken by the Municipality and the City Council which directly effect the Africana Library's functions and its collections and that these decisions not be left to the sole discretion of municipal officials

- That the Trust be given the authority to veto decisions taken by the Municipality and the City Council which it considers might be prejudicial to the collections for which it is responsible
- That negotiations take place between the Trust and the City Manager to facilitate the implementation of the abovementioned recommendations

2. That apart from the funding received from the Sol Plaatje Municipality and the Northern Cape Provincial Library, the Africana Library Trust should endeavour to derive additional funding from the following sources:

- i. the profits of the national Paper Conservation, Bookbinding and Training Centre which will be situated at the Big Hole Precinct and managed by the Trust;
- ii. sponsorships obtained from the private sector;
- iii. an annual grant-in-aid from the national Department of Arts and Culture.
- iv. allocations from the National Lottery

3. The Friends of the Kimberley Africana Library should continue to raise funds in order to support the lesser yet essential activities of the Library.

Although the Kimberley Africana Library makes every effort to uphold the standards and values of those early advocates of literacy and literary excellence who endeavoured to establish these qualities as the hallmark of the Kimberley Public Library, little has changed since Mr Justice Laurence remarked in 1904 that

We have rather to contend with apathy and indifference, with an environment too much absorbed in the struggle for material well-being, and too much inclined to put off to a more convenient season the pursuit of the intellectual life (Laurence 1904)

so that the libraries in Kimberley are still compelled to suffer the grievous consequences of the disinterest and the injudicious expenditure of the bureaucracy and also of the public.

The Kimberley Africana Library is essentially a product of the halcyon days of Kimberley when the founders of the Kimberley Public Library and their supporters in the De Beers Company, inspired as they were by the dawn of a new era in the history of South Africa, appreciated the importance to the country of collecting literature relating to Africa and particularly to South Africa. It was the calibre of those individuals who plotted this course and the quality of the collection they brought together that secured for the Kimberley Public Library the eminence it has in the story of the development of libraries in South Africa. However, in the final analysis it is the enduring quality of the Africana and rare book collection and the dedication of those who have managed it which have elevated its progeny, the Kimberley Africana Library to a level superior to that of its mother institution which, deprived of its former distinguishing feature, currently exists as just another public library.

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APPENDIX

THE FOUNDERS AND THE BUILDERS

1. Introduction

In its formative years, Kimberley had the facility to attract to it not only those whose chief attributes were muscle, fortitude and the inexorable expectation of making a fortune on the Diamond Fields but also men of exceptional character, intellect, business acumen, competence and energy. It is to this latter class of men that the Kimberley Public Library owed its formation, its survival and growth in circumstances which were not always conducive to pursuits of an intellectual nature. The individuals which made up this class were in turn succeeded by many men and women of similar character and competence, all of whom ensured and contributed to the continued existence and phenomenal development of the institution, its progeny and the celebrated collections which were brought together with such enthusiasm.

As will have become clear from the previous chapters, the Kimberley Public Library would in all probability have followed the route of its predecessors and its existence been of short duration had it not been for the succession of individuals of exceptional ability and calibre who held the reins of the institution from its inception and throughout its history. There were those who had particular talents and qualifications in the fields of law and management, libraries and bibliography, literature and language and others with more than a little common sense. The one quality which they shared was their interest in and dedication to the institution which they served with unsurpassed commitment.

The development of Kimberley Public Library and subsequently, the Kimberley Africana Library is attributable to many factors and to many individuals, all of whom have left an indelible stamp on the Africana Library. As these personalities contributed significantly to the development of this Library as well as to the cultural and community life of the city and/or the development of libraries in South Africa, this Appendix aims to elaborate on the work of two early Committee members whose work placed the Kimberley Public Library on the proverbial map, namely The Hon

Mr Justice PM Laurence and his successor, Moses Cornwall. In addition, supplementary information is provided on the most prominent of the librarians who served the institution namely Bertram Dyer and John Ross, Olive McIntyre, Judy Scott (Hoare), Fébé van Niekerk and C Duminy. Of the staff, Muriel Macey as the first Head of the Africana Department at the Kimberley Public Library deserves mention as it was she who commenced in earnest the organisation of the Africana Collection.

2. The Hon Mr Justice Perceval Maitland Laurence (1854 - 1930)
First Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee (1883 – 1901)



Fig 21: The Hon Mr Justice PM Laurence

Although Mr Justice PM Laurence vacated the Chair at the Kimberley Public Library in 1901, he continued to serve on the Committee for some years thereafter until his appointment to a new post which entailed his departure from Kimberley, hence his inclusion in this study. Moreover, the Judge's interest in the Library remained undiminished after he left South Africa in 1913 as was manifested from time to time

in offers to purchase books for the Library in England and the gift of £500 offered to the Library Committee

for the purchase of books of reference and good editions of standard books (KPL Annual Report, 1925)

with which gift 904 books were bought.

At the Annual General Meeting of Subscribers to the Kimberley Public Library held on 27 March 1930, after Mr Justice Laurence's death, the Chairman of the Library Committee, JJ Collins paid tribute to the memory of the man who filled the office as Chairman of the Library Committee with honour and distinction for so many years. Collins went on to say that in Kimberley's heyday when the town was supplying brains and money to Johannesburg, Kimberley had a Three-Judge Court and that three very distinguished men had sat on the bench.

Amongst the men who counted was Judge Laurence. He did not command a following through a faculty for capturing the affection of his admirers, but his wide range of knowledge, his literary talent, and his control of the niceties of the English language made his addresses at all times a feast of reason and raised him to a high pinnacle of respect.

I can remember attending annual meetings of this institution held in the public room when every chair would be occupied by the notable people of the town and even standing room out to the porch was availed of by people eager to hear one of those delightful and erudite speeches from the chairman.

I think he devoted all his spare time to this Library, and it is largely due to his work in building up from the literary foundations, with skill, zeal and discrimination, the magnificent collection of books which surrounds us, that we possess today a Library which in many respects is second to none in South Africa. We have a right to be grateful that he lived in our midst ... (DFA 28.03.1930).

The Honourable Mr Justice Perceval Maitland Laurence, Judge President of the High Court of Griqualand West from 1887 until 1907 and Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee from 1883 until 1901, was born in Walesby, Lincolnshire in England on 20 April 1854.

He was educated privately and became a senior scholar of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in 1872 gaining the degree of LL.M. in 1879 and LL.D in 1884. He was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1878 and having been warned that his health would be jeopardized if he remained in London he came to South Africa and was admitted to the Bar of the Cape Supreme Court in 1880. After a short time in Cape Town he came to Kimberley where he practiced as a barrister for a year and at the age of 28, he was appointed a puisne judge in the High Court of Griqualand West in 1882. In 1888 Mr Justice Laurence was appointed Judge President of the High Court of Griqualand West. Subsequently he acted as ordinary Judge of Appeal in 1911 and Acting Judge President of the Natal Division in 1912. He retired on pension in 1913 after which he returned to England (Kennedy 1976: 500).

Mr Justice Laurence served on numerous commissions but it was his appointment to the War Losses Inquiry Commission (1905-1907) which drew him away from Kimberley and his direct involvement with the Kimberley Public Library. After his departure from Kimberley, he returned to the city only once on which occasion he unveiled the bust of Alfred Beit which had been erected in the Library Garden (KPL Annual Report, 1912).

Mr Justice Laurence was elected to the chair of the Kimberley Public Library in 1883 shortly after its establishment and held this office with distinction until 1901. During his term of office as chairman he played an enormous role in building up the library's basic stock and procuring money for this purpose. His book selection in its first few years of existence was such that it set the standard for all future purchases.

As illustrated in an address given by Mr Justice Laurence at the Annual General Meeting of the Public Library Subscribers on 10 October 1889, he went to great lengths to promote a love of literature, encouraging the establishment of branch libraries in Kimberley and new ones in the surrounding districts. He concluded his

address by urging Subscribers to read and by doing so to derive from this activity the innumerable benefits that literature bestows on mankind –

Let us remember that while riches may vanish, friendships may wither, and communities decay, those who have once acquired a love of literature, those who have learnt to use the key of the Temple of Knowledge, have laid up for themselves in store an imperishable possession, a perennial source of solace and delight; they are free of the great company of the immortals, of those imperial spirits, of every age and race, who rule the present from the past and of whom, on all this world of men inherits, the seal is set (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 10.10.1889).

The Minutes of the Kimberley Public Library reveal that his interest in libraries was not confined to the institution of which he was chairman. He demonstrated a genuine commitment to the growth and development of libraries in the region by giving advice and assistance to small towns in regard to the establishment of libraries and the acquisition of books. He also encouraged the Kimberley Library to lend books to surrounding towns such as Barkly West and those as far afield as Potchefstroom. Mr Justice Laurence referred to this diffusion of the benefits of the Kimberley Library into other quarters as 'radiating influence' (KPL AGM Chairman's address, 10.10.1889).

He wrote several books and a selection of his essays, addresses and reviews are contained in *Collectanea* published by McMillan and Co. in London in 1899. Two of the chapters included in this volume, concern libraries: his Chairman's address at the opening of the new Kimberley Public Library Building in 1887 and one entitled *The Public Libraries of South Africa* which had appeared in the British publication *The Library* in 1887. This was a particularly significant article which drew attention to the remarkable advances made by the library movement in South Africa and gave a succinct account of conditions on the Diamond Fields at the time of the founding of the library in Kimberley.

It is a common experience that literary and intellectual interests are plants of slow growth in mining centres ... The men who gathered at the “dry diggings” from all quarters of the world, when diamonds were discovered on the farm Bultfontein and at the “New Rush” or Colesberg Kopje, afterwards to become famous as the town of Kimberley, were of a type very different from the leisured students of Mr Dessin’s books or Sir George Grey’s collection in the metropolis of the country (Laurence 1899: 264).

In 1903 he published a second collection of articles mostly from the *South African Law Journal* under the title *On circuit in Kafirland and other sketches and studies*. His final literary work was *The life of John Xavier Merriman* which was published in London shortly after his death in 1930.

It was largely due to his indefatigable efforts and persuasive manner that the necessary funds were raised for the construction of the Kimberley Public Library building which was officially opened on 23 July 1887. As Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee, he also devoted himself to the book selection so that by 1900 the Library boasted a very fine book stock, particularly in the classics and pure literature. Many of these volumes were presented to the Library by Mr Justice Laurence himself. He made a study of the rules of cataloguing which existed at that time and then compiled the *Catalogue of the Kimberley Public Library* which was printed and published in London in 1891. Kennedy considered this to be ‘a very good catalogue: infinitely better than any previously produced for a South African library’ (Kennedy 1976: 501).

In the broader library context, he became one of the most important early pioneers of the public library movement in South Africa. Mr Justice Laurence was unable to accept an invitation to preside at the first conference of South African librarians held in Johannesburg under the auspices of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science in 1904 but wrote the inaugural address. In his address he advocated the establishment of a South African Library Association. However he conceded that this might be difficult bearing in mind the ‘formidable barriers to such intercourse, such as great distances’ but suggested that a library journal published quarterly could be

a means of bringing the various libraries and their representatives into closer contact with one another, to facilitate co-operation and diminish that feeling of isolation which under present conditions must often prove discouraging (Laurence 1904: 527).

He went on to call for the appointment of qualified librarians, free libraries subsidised by municipalities, better book selection and 'the compilation of a catalogue of all works published in or relating to South Africa'. It was this latter appeal which inspired the Africana collector Sidney Mendelssohn to write his celebrated *Bibliography of South African Literature* (Mendelssohn 1910: (ix)).

Almost three decades were to pass before the South African Library Association and its library journal became a reality. To all intents and purposes its objectives were precisely those spelled out by Mr Justice Laurence in 1904.

Referring to libraries in general, Mr Justice Laurence concluded his address to the first conference of South African librarians with

They should enable every man and every woman, in their hours of leisure, to continue the education of which they acquired the rudiments in their youth; they should help keep us, not only in touch with all the intellectual activities of the infant century in which we live but also in spiritual communion with the great masters and thinkers of the past, and even amid the prosaic environment and work-a-day surroundings of our public libraries, we should endeavour to cultivate something of the atmosphere of that Temple of Peace in which the illustrious statesman whose life we have of late been reading, was wont to seek refreshment and repose, and all his cares and toils and responsibilities, ever remembering, as he did, that while the things which are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal (Laurence 1904: 536).

Mr Justice Laurence was created a Knight Bachelor in 1908 and Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG) in 1911. The news of Sir Perceval

Laurence's imminent departure from South Africa in 1913 was conveyed to the Acting Mayor of Kimberley by Ernest Oppenheimer and the following telegram was despatched to him

On behalf of the City Council and inhabitants of Kimberley I wish you farewell and Godspeed on leaving South Africa and desire to assure you that your memory will always be held in high esteem for the invaluable services rendered during your long residence and distinguished career on the Diamond Fields (KCC K4: Acting Mayor of Kimberley to Sir PM Laurence 1913).

Above all else 'he will be remembered as a pioneer of the public library in South Africa, perhaps the greatest pioneer of them all' (Kennedy 1976: 500). The *Diamond Fields Advertiser* in its edition of 5 February 1906 refers as follows to Mr Justice Laurence

... to whose fostering care the present unique position of the Library among similar institutions in this country is so largely due (*DFA* 05.02.1906: 7)

Sir Perceval Laurence died in Wimbledon, London on 28 February 1930.

A framed photograph of Sir Perceval (Mr Justice Laurence) whose judicial presence continues to be felt throughout the Africana Library hangs at the entrance to the main reading room which during the renovations of 1985/86 was restored to its original 19th century state with walls of glassed shelves holding row upon row of the classics of European literature, many of which were donated to the Kimberley Public Library by Mr Justice Laurence himself.

3. **Moses Cornwall (1841 – 1906)**
Committee member from 1882 and Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee from 1901 – 1905.



Fig 22: Moses Cornwall

Moses Cornwall was a man of great public spirit and energy and at a very early age began to take an active part in local public life. His name appears prominently in many of the early records of the growing township of Kimberley and he was connected with practically every phase of local development. Although not as erudite as his predecessor, he was indeed a fitting successor to Mr Justice Laurence as Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee.

Cornwall was born in 1841 and joined in the search for diamonds arriving at Pniel on the Diamond Fields in 1870. He then went into business in Dutoitspan and later in Kimberley where he became the agent for the Union Steamship Company after which he represented the Union Castle Company in Kimberley. He also carried out business of both a commercial and public nature (*DFA 05.02.1906: 7*).

In his obituary *The Diamond Fields Advertiser* described him as

warmhearted to a degree, of ready sympathies and an enthusiastic temperament; he was indefatigable in his exertions for any cause he had espoused. He was fearless and straightforward in the expression of his views and of sterling integrity ... and throughout his long period of local residence and public service has deservedly enjoyed the greatest possible public esteem (*DFA* 05.02.1906: 7)

One of the first official positions held by Cornwall was that of Deputy Sheriff, the office to which he was appointed in 1882 shortly after the Annexation of Griqualand West to the Cape Colony. He served in this position until his death. In addition, he served both as Messenger of the Special Court under the Diamond Trade Act until legislation dissolved this tribunal and Field Cornet for the Kimberley District.

In 1884 Cornwall was returned to the House of Assembly as one of the members for Kimberley and served his constituents in Parliament until 1888

bringing to the discharge of his legislative duties the same zeal and public spirit which he displayed in all departments of life (*DFA* 05.02.1906: 7).

He was heavily involved in municipal affairs and served on the Borough Council and as Mayor of Kimberley for three terms. It was during this time that improvement schemes of lasting benefit to the town were carried out. These included the provision of a public water supply and electric lighting in the town, the first town in the British Colony to be lit by electricity. During his second term as mayor, Cornwall initiated the amalgamation of the two existing hospitals – one a government institution and the other a private hospital for paying patients – added to which Government agreed to make a substantial grant in order to increase the accommodation available.

That he was committed to matters educational is borne out by the fact that Cornwall was the first person to make an attempt to establish an interdenominational public school in Kimberley.

Cornwall was at the forefront of the drive to establish a Public Library in Kimberley and was one of the original members of the Committee when the Library was established in 1882. His interest in this institution never wavered and he took a keen and active interest in its development being elected in 1901 to the Chair vacated by Mr Justice Laurence (*DFA 05.02.1906: 7*).

Indeed not a day passed save when he was away from Kimberley without finding him in the library at some time or other, displaying his constant interest in everything connected with its welfare (*DFA 05.02.1906: 7*).

It was during his term as Chairman of the Kimberley Public Library Committee that he put forward the idea of expanding the function of the Library to include a museum. This project was well on course and substantial funds had been collected for this purpose when the widow of an ex-Mayor of Kimberley, Margaret McGregor offered to donate the funds for the establishment of what was to be the Alexander McGregor Memorial Museum. Unfortunately, Cornwall did not live to see this noble project come to fruition. The museum was opened in 1907.

As an indication of the esteem in which he was held he was presented on his 50th birthday on 6 July 1891 with an address in which reference was made to the fact that

for the past 20 years he had laboured zealously and conscientiously for the public good and as a representative of the division of the Legislative Assembly; as a representative of the Municipal Council, Divisional Council, Hospital Board, Library Committee and as Mayor had shown constant and enduring integrity, honesty of purpose and solicitude for the welfare of these fields and had earned the genuine esteem and regard of the community (*DFA 05.02.1906: 7*).

Cornwall died on 3 February 1906. A letter of thanks to the Committee for the appreciation and sympathy expressed on the death of her husband was addressed by his widow, Margaret to the Librarian, Bertram Dyer reads

I know the Library was a source of great pleasure to my husband and some of his happiest hours have been spent there (Margaret Cornwall to Dyer 1906).

4. Bertram Laslett Dyer (1868 – 1908)
Librarian at the Kimberley Public Library (1900 – 1908)



Fig 23: Bertram Laslett Dyer

It is unfortunate that Bertram Dyer should be remembered as the Kimberley Librarian whose acts of moral weakness overshadowed his immense contribution to the development of the Kimberley Public Library and indeed to that of the library movement in South Africa.

Dyer was born in Dimbleton near Evesham in England in 1868. He was educated at Whitechapel Foundation School and at Kings College after which he held a post as junior clerk at the War Office (Lunderstedt 2001).

The Committee of the Kimberley Public Library considered themselves extremely fortunate in having secured for the Library the services of a librarian ‘who has

considerable experience of similar work in England' (KPL Annual Report 1900). Dyer was the first trained librarian to be employed by the Kimberley Public Library and also the first to be appointed in South Africa.

Dyer proved to be a hard worker and an enthusiastic pioneer of the library movement in South Africa. He advocated professionalism in librarianship, criticised the Subscription Library system as being discriminatory and was an active campaigner for a system which would allow free access of library facilities for all inhabitants of the town. Dyer also proposed the system of travelling libraries to serve the less populated areas of the Cape Colony but this scheme was only to come into operation about half a century later (Van Niekerk 1990: 163).

As a trained librarian, Dyer was able to determine the priorities in respect of the requirements of the Library. At an early stage, he weeded out the redundant and damaged stock, restored old and valuable leather bound books, introduced a card charging system for libraries and classified the bookstock. He introduced the Dewey system to the complete scientific section of the Library in 1903. This was the first library in South Africa to use this system of book classification.

Of immense importance to the Library was Dyer's knowledge of literature on Africa and South Africa as well as the support he gave the Committee in their quest to bring together a collection of books on South Africa. Although opinions differ on this matter, Dyer is reputed to have been the first person to use the term 'Africana' in the written form. In regard to South African literature he was of the opinion that as Afrikaans had become an established language indigenous to the country the Library should acquire and preserve books written in this language in preference to the importation of books written in High Dutch which few could read (Dyer 1903: 33).

He enjoyed writing and more particularly writing articles for periodicals on the subject of libraries and related matters for the Cape Town weekly *The New Era* (Lunderstedt 2001) and others such as *Books for Country Readers* (*Kimberley Star* 14.04.1906).

Another manifestation of Dyer's interest in the library movement was his promotion of inter-library co-operation, organising library conferences to achieve this ideal. He

was the organiser and secretary to the first South African conference for librarians held in Johannesburg in 1904 under the auspices of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, an organisation of which he was a founder member. At its first conference in 1904, Dyer read a paper entitled *The Public Library Systems of Great Britain, America and South Africa*. At the Association's 1906 conference held in Kimberley he read another paper entitled *Libraries for scantily populated districts* (Dyer 1907).

It was of great concern to Dyer and the Library Committee that the Postmaster-General had not allowed postage concessions for library books sent to country readers as this cost was greater than the Library subscription. He expressed this concern in a letter to the Editor of the *Kimberley Star* of 14 April 1906 pointing out this problem and stating that at least the Cape Government Railways had recently inserted an important section in Clause 94 of their latest traffic-book that 'printed books of a literary nature are charged at half parcels rates over the Cape Government Railways' (*Kimberley Star* Dyer 14.04.1906).

Dyer was respected by his colleagues throughout South Africa and at a time when racial prejudice was commonplace, he maintained that the acceptance of Parliamentary and Municipal grants obliged the Library to allow the advantages of the Public Room to any section of the community.

Dyer's career as a librarian of considerable note came to a tragic end. After the discovery of defalcations in regard to the funds of the Kimberley Public Library the Committee's investigation revealed that an amount of £2757. 5s. 7d. had been misappropriated by Dyer over a period of seven years. He was immediately suspended from office pending an audit investigation. A few days later, on 3 December 1908, he committed suicide (*DFA Dyer inquest ... 19.12.1908*).

Frederick Rogers, a well-known author and lecturer at the time wrote a tribute to Dyer which appeared in the *Kimberley Star* of 23 January 1909. The following is an extract from his tribute

The news of his loss came to some of us like a blow ... we now mourn the loss of a valuable life nobly used while he had it. Entirely unselfish, full of fine idealism, but full too of practical affairs and of men, and those who knew him best are the poorer for his departure (*Kimberley Star* Rogers ... 23.01.1909 (12)).

5. John Gow Ross (1869 – 1947)
Librarian at the Kimberley Public Library (1909 – 1942)



Fig 24: John Gow Ross

John Ross was described in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* of 22 May 1947 as the doyen of South African librarians. This indeed was an accurate description of a man who had served not only the Kimberley Public Library but the library movement of South Africa with great distinction (*DFA Ross* ... :22.05.1947: 5)

Ross was born in Perth in Scotland in 1869 and educated in Edinburgh. At an early age he showed a predilection for books and reading so that it was not surprising that his career would follow a direction which involved literature. His first situation was that of apprentice to a Mr Grant, bookseller and publisher in Edinburgh where he worked for six years. In his letter of application for the post of Librarian of the Kimberley Public Library addressed to the Chairman of the Library Committee, Ross gives a comprehensive account of his experience and training

This early insight into the pecuniary side of literary values has proved most valuable to me in after life (Ross 11.03.1909).

Ross continues in his letter of application to give details of his training saying

Becoming ambitious, however, of taking up library work as a future calling, I secured a position as assistant in a proprietary lending library ... assuring a thorough grounding in library routine and system, particularly in the work of classifying and cataloguing, together with a good general knowledge of modern and old time literature (Ross 11.03.1909).

He goes on to inform the Library Committee that

I have made a special study of the various systems of library classification at present in vogue in Europe and America and have adopted a modified form of the Melvil Dewey decimal system for use in the Lending Library together with a card-charging system for book issues. My labours in the preparation of a card-catalogue, arranged in cabinets for general reference were completed about three years ago and a printed edition of the general catalogue was published subsequently in London under my supervision (Ross 11.03.1909).

Ross continues his letter to the Chairman stating that

As a subscriber to the principal English and American Library Journals and similar publications, I am kept professionally *au courant* with all modern developments and progressive ideas in the literary world (Ross 11.03.1909).

Towards the end of 1895, Ross was persuaded to come to South Africa where he was given control of the bookshop belonging to P Davies & Sons in Pietermaritzburg. Four years later he was appointed Librarian at the Natal Society's Public Library in

Pietermaritzburg where he remained until his appointment in April 1909 to the post of Librarian at the Kimberley Public Library. He held this position until his retirement in September 1942.

As Librarian at the Kimberley Public Library, he revised the policy for the purchase of academic books and with the consent and encouragement of the Committee concentrated on the collection of Africana and rare books. His knowledge of books and particularly Africana was acknowledged and respected by his Committee and colleagues throughout South Africa.

It was his interest in printing which inspired him to seek early examples of printing one of which was the *Libri Cronicurum* or *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493 by H Schedel, printed by the famous German printer Anton Koberger. This covered the history of the world at that time and is illustrated by over 2000 woodcuts. It was Ross' foresight which inspired him to add manuscripts to the collection long before the collection of local manuscripts became fashionable and so the Library acquired among many other important manuscripts that of Governor Sluysken's handwritten account of the first British occupation of the Cape in 1795.

Ross' proclivity for collecting antiquarian items for the Library included maps and other forms of illustrated material including engravings, lithographs and items which represented the development of colour reproduction. One of his main pursuits was the acquisition for the Library of items printed at the Cape prior to 1850. It was his special relationship with the collector and dealer, WR Morrison which proved to be instrumental in adding to the Library's collections some of its finest items (*The Outspan* Posted in 1654 ... 16.06.1939(81) & KAL A920: Ross JG).

Equally important to Ross were items relating to Kimberley and diamonds. He made repeated appeals to the public to donate to the Library such ephemera as they might possess rather than dispose of these items, pointing out to the public that an institution such as the Kimberley Public Library would safeguard the future of their treasures.

As was mentioned in Ross' obituary in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* of 22 May 1947

Of a retiring disposition, Mr Ross took little part in public life, but his never-failing courtesy and charm of manner will be long remembered by all who knew him (*DFA 22.05.1947*).

It was without doubt these attributes as well as the esteem in which he was held as an authority on Africana and rare books without equal in South Africa which allowed him to extract money from various sources, not least from the Directors of De Beers for acquisitions for which the Library's budget did not allow.

John Ross' contribution to the development of libraries in South Africa was recognised in 1941 when he was made the first Honorary Fellow of the South African Library Association – the only honour of its kind bestowed in the Union (*DFA 22.05.1947*). After a long period of ill-health, he retired from the Kimberley Public Library in September 1942 and died in 1947.



Fig 25: Past and Present Librarians: 1986
Front: Muriel Macey, Olive McIntyre, Fébé van Niekerk
Back: Dux van der Walt, Thinus Donaldson

**6. Olive Grant Vigne McIntyre (1899-1990)
Librarian at the Kimberley Public Library (1943-1963)**

Olive McIntyre's roots were deeply embedded in Kimberley. She was born shortly before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War on the farm Rietpan outside Kimberley which belonged to her grandfather, George Hull who had come to the Diamond Fields from Tiger Hoek near Caledon in 1869.

Initially McIntyre received no formal education having been taught by governesses on the farm. At a later stage she was sent as a weekly boarder to St Michaels and All Angels Anglican School for Girls in Kimberley (*DFA Olive McIntyre ... 16.07.1990*).

In October 1917, at the age of 18 years, she left Rietpan and came to live in Kimberley where she started work as a junior assistant at the Kimberley Public Library. John Ross, then Librarian became her mentor introducing her to the world of libraries and sharing with her his infinite knowledge of books, Africana and library procedures. With the experience she had gained, and having acted Librarian during Ross' long illness during the latter part of his tenure as Librarian, McIntyre was an eminently appropriate choice as successor to Ross when he retired in 1942. She assumed duty as Head Librarian in 1943 and held this position until her retirement in 1963. Inspired by Ross, she actively promoted the collection and preservation of the Library's Africana collection.

At an early stage, McIntyre recognised the need for and advantages of a Free Library Service, one which served a far broader section of the community than did a Subscription Library. After 1955, she and the Committee realised that this would mean affiliation to the Cape Provincial Library Service and reliance on the Kimberley Municipality for funding. This paradigm shift in the management and clientele of the Kimberley Public Library was necessary if the Library was to survive. It was McIntyre who was at the helm when the Subscription Library which had survived in that form since 1882 converted to a Free Library in 1961 in terms of the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance No 4 of 1955 and the Kimberley Public Library became a Municipal entity.

McIntyre's cultural interests were manifold but literature, art, music, history and play reading were probably those which engaged most of her attention. She herself was very musical and played the piano and cello. At a relatively early age, she obtained a distinction in music when she passed the Cape University Intermediate Examination with the highest marks in the country. As members of the Kimberley Athenaeum, she and her equally talented and musical sister frequently gave recitals (*Now and Then McIntyre ...* March 2004).

Her artistic talents were fostered by William Timlin with whom she studied the visual arts. McIntyre's paintings which frequently depicted the Northern Cape veld were extremely popular and adorn many a home in Kimberley and elsewhere. As Chairman of the Kimberley Society of Arts from 1962 until 1986, she continued painting and exhibiting her work on the Society's exhibition held annually at the William Humphreys Art Gallery until ill-health brought her artistic career to an end. Her works were inevitably of the first to sport red sale stickers at these exhibitions.

When the William Humphreys Art Gallery opened in 1952, McIntyre was invited by the founder, William Humphreys, to serve on the Board of Trustees. She also held a watching brief on the Board on behalf of the Cape Provincial Administration who for some years after the Art Gallery opened contributed an annual grant to the institution's funds. At a later stage she represented the Subscribers on the Art Gallery Council. She served the Art Gallery with distinction until she retired in 1989.

However, it was with the Kimberley Public Library that McIntyre's name was synonymous and the many years she spent in Kimberley and worked at the Public Library, combined with her phenomenal memory, made of her an unequalled source of information. Her contribution to the cultural life of Kimberley was exceptional and was recognised in 1953 when she was awarded the Queen's Coronation Medal by the Council for Education, Arts and Science. She also received the Merit Award from the Kimberley City Council in recognition of her services to Kimberley during the preceding eight decades. In 1990 shortly before her death, the Directorate of Cultural Affairs bestowed on her the Culture Prestige Award. At the age of 91 years, McIntyre was elected President of the Historical Society of Kimberley and the Northern Cape, a

society of which she was a founder member (*DFA McIntyre ... 16.07.1990 & Now and Then McIntyre ... March 2004*).

7. Judy A S Scott (Hoare) (1932-)
City Librarian (1961 – 1967)



Fig 26: Judy A S Scott (Hoare)

As in the case of her predecessor, Olive McIntyre, Judy Scott had her roots deeply entrenched in Kimberley having been born in the city and educated initially at the Convent High School after which she attended Wynberg Girls' High School when her parents moved to Cape Town. She matriculated in 1949 and then enrolled at Rhodes University in Grahamstown where she took a BA degree majoring in English and Geography. It was during her time at Rhodes that she decided to become a librarian mainly because she was 'an ardent user of libraries and books' (Scott 1965). From Grahamstown she proceeded to the University of Cape Town where she received a Diploma in Librarianship. Returning to Kimberley, she was employed by De Beers to re-organise their technical library and catalogue their vast collection of historical photographs. In addition she wrote brochures on the historical development and working of the diamond mines and, amongst other tasks entrusted to her, she acted as a tour guide to important visitors visiting the mines.

In 1958 Scott was appointed Reference Librarian at the Queen Victoria Memorial Library in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe), a post she held for ten months before returning to Kimberley to take up the post of Assistant Librarian in Kimberley. It was during this period that she was responsible for the re-organisation of much of the book stock prior to the opening of the Free Library and prepared the Kimberley Public Library for the major transition from a Subscription to a Free Library. When the transition took place in January 1961, she was appointed to the post of City Librarian. During her term of office she was particularly active in the creation of the Library for Coloureds. Her important contribution to the establishment of this new facility was recognised when the library was named the Judy Scott Library. She also did a great deal of the spade work for the establishment of the Library for Blacks in Galeshewe. However, in time the administration of this institution became divorced from the Kimberley Public Library when it was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Bantu Administration Board (See 5.4.2.1).

Although Judy Scott's ambition was

to see the Kimberley Public Library housed in a new building where it will be possible to provide a proper reference service, to display our Africana treasures and allow reading room users to sit in greater quiet and comfort than they at present are able to do. There are a dozen ways in which the library service in Kimberley can be improved given the facilities and the staff. However, I strongly feel that the historical atmosphere of the present library should not be lost and that the new building should have some of its atmosphere (Scott 1965)

she was opposed to the idea of separating the Africana and the public sections

as it would limit accessibility to the public. Researchers and historians were well aware of the collections' value, but the Kimberley public's knowledge of it would dwindle (DFA 06.02.1982).

She is reported to have said

A library has a soul too and to split the two sections would give the lending section of it the character of a supermarket (*DFA* 06.02.1982).

Scott regarded junior libraries as being of vital importance in a public library and felt that children should be encouraged to read 'and feel at home in a library ... that they should regard the library as a kind of a club' (Scott 1965).

That Scott was held in high esteem by her colleagues and the public is evinced in an article in *The Cape Librarian* of August 1967 when she resigned from the Kimberley Public Library to marry Maurice Hoare in 1967.

Of her ability as an Executive there can be no doubt, the prodigious energy that goes into completely reorganising the Library from a Subscription to a Free Library Service ... the foresight that goes into establishing Coloured and Bantu libraries; the deft and tactful handling of staff and a Committee many years her senior; an awareness of the value of books such as Africana, etc based as much on instinct as training; the capable management of a Conference which places Kimberley Library "on the map"; ... a feeling for Kimberley and "Kimberleyana"; an interest in extra mural activities which involves serving on many committees ... (*The Cape Librarian* Judy Scott ... 1967(31)).

After her marriage, Judy Scott (Hoare) continued her association with the Kimberley Public Library working with numerous authors of historical books on Kimberley and its people. These authors included Anthony Hocking, Brian Roberts and Philip Bawcombe. She also served on the Library Advisory Committee from 1974 until 1985 where her experience as City Librarian was of great benefit to the Committee (KPL Annual Reports 1974-1985).

8. Muriel Macey (1926 – 2004)

Africana Librarian at the Kimberley Public Library (1972 – 1986)

Muriel Macey was born in Johannesburg in 1926. She completed her schooling at Turfontein High School.

Her career in libraries started quite by chance after a visit to the Johannesburg Public Library. So impressed was she by this institution that notwithstanding the fact that she had no library qualifications, she applied to the Library for a job and was employed as an assistant in the Reference Department. She held this post for four years before taking up a position as Librarian at the Industrial Development Corporation.

In this position Macey spent much of her time doing research work in subjects which included cotton, wood and acetylene by-products. This experience stood her in good stead particularly in respect of the retrieval and documentation of information. It was her husband, Lionel's transfer to Kimberley which severed her 13-year period of service to the Industrial Development Corporation and which opened new avenues of research for her when she joined the staff of the Kimberley Public Library in 1972 to fill the newly-created post of part-time Africana Library Assistant.

The scope for research in this post was infinite and Macey filled this with such zeal and commitment that it was not long before she was offered a full-time post as Africana Librarian. The creation of this post and her subsequent appointment in this position was fortuitous for both the Kimberley Public Library and for the Africana Collection as this section became virtually an autonomous department of the Library and it was at this time that the foundation was laid for the establishment of the Africana Library.

Bearing in mind that at that time the Kimberley Public Library had no computers at its disposal, Macey recorded the product of many years of research on thousands of handwritten index cards. She herself was a mine of information.

Unfortunately, the termination of Macey's service to the Africana Department of the Kimberley Public Library and the opening of the refurbished building which housed the Africana Library on 30 May 1986 were events which occurred simultaneously and her departure from Kimberley and the Kimberley Public Library created a void which has been difficult to fill (DFA 13.10.2004).

**9. Fébé van Niekerk (1929 -)
City Librarian (1974 – 1991)**

Fébé van Niekerk was born in Burghersdorp in 1929 and educated at the Queenstown Girls' High School. After graduating at the University of Stellenbosch, she worked initially at the Orange Free State Provincial Library and then became the Head of the Transvaal Museum Library before coming to Kimberley. She was awarded the Intermediate Library Diploma by the South African Library Association after which she received an Honours degree in Library Science from the University of Pretoria.

She was appointed City Librarian in Kimberley in 1974 and during her term of office, extended significantly the library service in the city by the establishment of depots and branch libraries in two Kimberley suburbs. For making such services available to the infirm and underprivileged and her attempts to remove racial barriers in the libraries under her control, she was awarded a Merit Award from the Rotary Club of Kimberley in 1986.

Van Niekerk was also responsible for the restoration of the Beaconsfield Library and Africana Library and having them declared National Monuments.

She was known for her drive and perseverance, characteristics which inspired her staff and others with whom she worked. One of her primary objectives was the construction of a new public library and the many disappointments she experienced in this regard in no way diminished her determination to realise this ideal. The new Kimberley Public Library for which Van Niekerk had worked tirelessly was duly opened on 21 March 1984 by the Administrator of the Cape, Gene Louw. Fittingly, the Activities Hall which was added at a later stage was named after her as a tribute to her untiring efforts to have a new Public Library built.

Van Niekerk did not confine her activities and interests to the Kimberley Public Library but was also deeply involved in the library movement in South Africa. In 1983 she served on the Executive Committee of the South African Library and Information Science Institute and in 1993 she was elected a member of the Cape Provincial Library Advisory Board for a term of three years (*Kaapse Bibliotekaris* Van Niekerk ... 1993: 5).

When she reached the pensionable age of 60 years, she applied to the local authority to extend her service for an additional two years. This request was granted (KCC Minutes 06.11.1989). It was during this extended period of service that she read for her Masters degree on The History of the Kimberley Public Library 1870 – 1902 which she received with distinction from the University of the Orange Free State.

Van Niekerk served on the Board of Trustees of the McGregor Museum for a number of years and served as vice-Chairman for some time. She was also a member of the Committee of the Kimberley Branch of the Municipal Employees Association.

After the establishment of the Africana Library, Van Niekerk was elected Chairman of the Committee of the Friends of the Africana Library. She retired in 1991 but has retained her interest in the Kimberley libraries and continues to serve on the Committee of the Friends of the Africana Library.

**10. Cornelia ‘Kokkie’ Duminy (1943 -)
Head Librarian, Africana Library (1994 – 2008)**

Born in 1943 in Driebergen, Holland Kokkie Duminy immigrated to South Africa with her parents in 1957 her father having been appointed to a post of music teacher in Umtata in the then Transkei. After some years the family moved to Vryburg in the Northern Cape. It was at the Vryburg High School that she matriculated after which she spent 3 years at the University of Pretoria. It was only once she had moved to George that she became involved in library work.

She married in 1966 and she and her husband settled in Ficksburg for several years.



Fig27: Cornelia 'Kokkie' Duminy

In 1975 Duminy and her family moved to Kimberley and it was here, in 1980 that she joined the staff of the Kimberley Public Library and was sufficiently inspired by library work to register for a Library Diploma which she was awarded in 1986. In 1990 she was promoted to Senior Assistant at the Kimberley Africana Library and in 1994 promoted to Head Librarian of this prestigious institution.

Among her many achievements in this capacity, the role Duminy played in indexing vast quantities of information is the most apparent. Soon after her appointment to the Africana Library she accomplished a notable feat by indexing the contents of the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* covering the period from 1914 until 1954. In addition to this achievement, she then proceeded to index the articles pertaining to Kimberley from the periodical *South Africa* for the period 1872 until 1962 (SADEX). This information captured on the Library's data base has been of inestimable value to countless researchers over a period of many years. During her term of office as Head Librarian she continued to have the locally distributed newspapers *Diamond Fields Advertiser* and *Volksblad* indexed daily.

Another of Duminy's noteworthy achievements was the salvage of vast numbers of municipal files which were destined for destruction. These invaluable sources of local information have now been indexed and housed in the Africana Library (Duminy 2008).

During her term of office, the Africana Library's enormous collection of photographs has been indexed and recorded in the *List of Photographs in the Kimberley Africana Library*, (NAREF) published by the National Archives and Records Service (Duminy 2008).

It was on Duminy's initiative that a separate auxiliary body was formed to lend assistance to the Africana Library. Under the auspices originally of the Friends of the Kimberley Public Library she published books from manuscript material in the Africana Library. Seven such books have been published, the first being *Knights of the Shovel*. Other publications include *Images of Kimberley*, *Summer of 1899*, *Daubs*, *Petticoat Pioneers*, *Kimberley Drawn in Time* and the most recent *50 Years on the Diamond Fields 1870 – 1920*. All of these have been of a particularly high standard and have found a ready market while substantially augmenting the funds available for the work of the Africana Library.

Notwithstanding the fact that the old building was devoted entirely to the Africana Library and its collections, the institution found itself in dire straits by 2002. Not only were the funds available for the conventional functioning of a research library limited but the space available for the collections had become extremely restricted. What was required was an additional large strongroom but the funds for such an extension to the old building were simply not available from the Library's funding body, the Sol Plaatje Municipality. It was Duminy's approach to De Beers which was once again to manifest the Company's generosity to the Library over a period of more than a century and that brought about the construction of the new strongroom which was taken into use in 2004.

Duminy became well known and respected throughout the country for the manner in which she managed the institution and her meticulous research having done amongst other research work, approximately 1 000 family researches. In the process she generated a great deal of goodwill for the Africana Library.

Duminy retired as Head Librarian in August 2008 but has continued working at the Kimberley Africana Library in a part-time capacity, not least as Project Manager for

the Africana Library Trust's proposed Paper Conservation, Bookbinding and Training Centre.

11. Conclusion

The personalities of the people who have worked in a library as well as those who have controlled its destiny influence the character of the institution (McIntyre 1964).

It is indeed a fact that the personalities mentioned in this Appendix and other notable librarians such as Dux van der Walt, Librarian from 1967 – 1972: each in turn, assisted in moulding the character of the Kimberley Public Library/Africana Library and the collections. This is particularly true in the case of the Kimberley Africana Library where the contribution of these personalities remain indelibly engraved on the entire fabric of the institution.