

## CANE, CHRISTIAN

3.10.1907

File 62, nbk. 87, pp. 8-13.

Also present: Matshikiyana Gumede

- 8 Christian Cane, alias Lavuta. I was born in Dingane's reign. My father was John Cane. I am aged about 68 or 69.
- Ezintongeni<sup>1</sup> - this is a grove or bush at Nyenyezi on the south bank of the Umzimkulu, where Arab houses now are. This bush arose in the days of Nandi's *ihlambo*.<sup>2</sup> All the Zulu army carried *fighting sticks* and brought them to the south of the Umzimkulu and put them in a heap, Tshaka placing the first there. The heap became a very large one indeed. The bush then grew up and is now called Ezintongeni and is still existing. This happened when Tshaka *attacked the Mpondo*. Tshaka had ordered that all were to *cut sticks for his mother's ihlambo*. They were then all green. They were not stuck in the ground but simply laid there. This was done to cast away the death. These sticks represented the throwing away done when any king died. A hunt was sometimes called and even though one buck was killed the purification was held to have taken place. This *evil omen* was to be *cast* in the amaMpondo country, not in Tshaka's, i.e. *on the enemy, in order to put a spell on them*. The evil omen was cast on to the enemy so that they might be overcome. The *ihlambo* was performed whilst they were still going towards the Ponds.
- 9

*The battle of the game-pits*. This is Dingane's *fight* with the Boers. The Boers dug holes. This occurred on the old drift that crossed the Umtshezi<sup>3</sup> river on the way to Ladysmith. The *pits* were holes the Boers had dug for the purpose of entrapping the Zulus and getting them to fall in them should they attack the Boers. The Zulu *impi* fell into the trap. They were caught in the way that bucks are caught.

- I live at Sikisiki in Pondoland. Mashingana, a son of Mbuyazi (H.F. Fynn), has a book in Zulu, full of Zulu history, also Dingana's *izibongo*. I do not know the author. This book belonged to my sister Nanise [Norman Nembula says 'Nancy'], now living beyond Mabedhlana.<sup>4</sup> She never bore children. She used to look after the children of the Basuto race. She is the oldest, *the first-born*, in our family. She used to interpret for the missionaries at the old Inanda school. She knows English well. She is living with her husband Ndamane ka Mkelo [Damane ka Mkele, per Norman Nembula], a Basuto. Nanise had a box full of books.
- 10

My father's kraal was at Sinyameni. This was near the Botanic Gardens. The cattle grazed at kwa Malinde.<sup>5</sup> I could point out the

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site.

.... <Linguistic note omitted - eds.>

My father was killed at Ndondakusuka.<sup>6</sup> He went with Biggar who, having just arrived from England, wanted to get cattle, as all the others had them.

- 11 My father came from the Cape. He was a Scotchman. Bazley (Mahalavu) knew him well. My father had a son called John Cane, who was a European. This brother of mine came up driving waggons when Captain Smith came to Port Natal. I do not remember what my father was like. I hear he was tall.

I remember that Ndongeni accompanied Dick King for part of his journey to the Cape. Cato saw them across the bay. I was at Congella when the fighting between Boers and British took place.

I have a half-brother (a half-caste), Charlie Cane, now living near Phoenix. He is the same age as myself. He has a kraal and three wives. He knows English very little. My mother and Charlie's mother are both dead.

My father had a square house on top of the Berea. After his death Wohlo<sup>7</sup> went into his house and burnt all his papers. He did this to destroy evidence as to the inheritance. Wohlo (Ogle) was a builder. My father was a fighter.

.... <Praises of John Cane omitted - eds.>

- 12 I was born at Mbizane, whilst my mother was out on a hunting expedition after buffaloes. She, although pregnant, went to do the cooking. As soon as my father was killed, my mother ran off and took refuge with me among the Tuli under Mnini.<sup>8</sup> I entered the service of an Africander, Stadler. He died; then his wife married Vech [Vig?].

I remember the incidents of the conflict of English and Boers in 1843<sup>9</sup>, but I ran away when the fighting began. (At the time of) hostilities I was in Lodewyk Vech's employ at Congella. I *tended the ducks*, looked after the fowls, worked in the house, etc.

We fled on the very night of the fight. Vech did not fight; he was an Africander (Cape Boer). He ran away with his womenfolk.

- 13 I heard Boers talking of Dick King having escaped to the Cape. It was stated he had got away with a native, who afterwards turned out to be Ndongeni. I heard Mr Sesfelt talking about this. This talking took place when Cato, Beningfield etc. had been arrested and put in the stocks. I saw them actually in the stocks. I was told they had been put in the stocks because of King and his native having escaped to the Cape to give the alarm and get help.

Charlie Cane is 'own brother' to Nanise. Nanise grew up under Rev. Lindley.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Literally, 'the place of the fighting sticks'.

<sup>2</sup>The final purification ceremony held after the period of mourning.

<sup>3</sup>Or Bushmans river. See also Lugg, *Historic Natal and Zululand*, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup>Mabedlana ('small breasts') is the name of two hills near Nhlazatshe in Zululand, and also of two hills near Ixopo in

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southern Natal.

<sup>5</sup>The Greyville flats.

<sup>6</sup>A battle fought in 1838 between the Zulu and a force led by Port Natal traders; not to be confused with a battle fought at the same place in 1856 between the forces of Cetshwayo and Mbulazi.

<sup>7</sup>Henry Ogle.

<sup>8</sup>For a brief biography of Chief Mmini see Lugg, Historic Natal and Zululand, pp. 13-14.

<sup>9</sup>1842?