Royal tourists, colonial subjects and the making of a British world, 1860–1911

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CHAPTER THREE

Building new Jerusalems: global Britishness and settler cultures in South Africa and New Zealand

Prince Alfred performed the crowning achievement of his visit to South Africa in 1860 when he tipped a truck of stone into Table Bay, ceremonially beginning the construction of a great modernisation project, the Cape Town breakwater. Around the same time, his older brother the Prince of Wales was inaugurating the Victoria Bridge over the St. Lawrence River in Canada. For British subjects at home and in the empire, both projects represented the progress and development of an expanding British world. Cape Town newspaper writers and colonial officials celebrated this day as one of the most important in all the history of South Africa. It was a historic day, they would suggest, a day when the Cape Colony began to transform from a backwater of the British Empire to an important depot of commerce and trade.

Despite these celebrations, the settler societies of British South Africa were deeply divided over the project, between colonial politicians and merchants in the Western Cape, who would most benefit from the improvement project, and the settlers of the Eastern Cape, who were painfully far away from the harbour at Cape Town. In the midst of a royal visit, the settler newspapers of the Eastern Cape protested the injustice of being bullied into funding a harbour for Cape Town that would not benefit them from the general revenue of the colony. Part of the reason Governor George Grey sought to bring Alfred to South Africa, in a royal tour modelled on his brother’s planned visit to Canada, was to force the legislature’s hand on the issue of the breakwater. This struggle revived the spectre of Cape separatism and reflects the importance of Britishness and imperial citizenship in the language of politics and protest.

During Alfred’s visit to Canterbury, New Zealand, in 1869, local newspapers constructed a mythology of the settlement that centred on its faithful reproduction of British society. Edward Gibbon Wakefield’s
Canterbury association imagined the settlement, founded in 1850 as an Anglican colony, as a faithful if idealised reproduction of British society, where everyone knew their place in society. According to the provincial superintendent William Rolleston, ‘nowhere’ in his mother’s empire would Alfred find British institutions ‘more firmly implanted’ than in Canterbury. Without even a foundation stone for the prince to lay, the provincial capital Christchurch could not compete with the splendour and wealth of Australian cities, yet its settlement ‘resemble[d] England more than any other portion of the colony’. In other words, they claimed that the duke would feel most at home and most welcome in Canterbury as the most authentic ‘little Britain’ in the empire.

Despite the rhetorical appeals to inclusion and democracy by colonial elites in New Zealand and elsewhere in the empire during royal visits, Alfred’s visit to the province of Canterbury shared another characteristic of metropolitan society – it was a ‘class act’. As elsewhere, events were planned by provincial elites, who limited and controlled attendance by charging an entrance fee and discouraging contact between the prince and lower class publics. The Canterbury Popular Entertainment and Amusements Committee established the entrance fee to the public festival at sixpence, and proposals to invite local Maori or to distribute free tickets to the poor were soundly defeated. These measures did not prevent a massive crowd pressing at the entrances to be let in, nearly causing ‘a disturbance’. A local settler, writing under the populist pseudonym ‘Vox Populi’ (‘voice of the people’), complained that seats in the gallery of the Provincial Council, ‘public property’, were being sold for ‘half-a-guinea each’. Elites’ ability to control the symbolic space of the royal visit was openly and loudly contested by another British political tradition: radical and public protest.

In the empire, the narrative of the royal tour was taken up and remade by the colonial press and by social elites as a means of developing local mythologies of order and belonging. They, and the colonial subjects who challenged and contested their elite-constructed mythologies, interpreted the royal tour through a lens of Britishness and imperial citizenship, through which they demanded British liberty as their endowed rights as citizen-subjects. In this context, what it meant to be a Natalian Briton or a Auckland Briton, or to be a New Zealander or a British South African, was shaped and informed by class cooperation and conflict, social status and identity, ethnic and cultural heritage, local politics, and cultural and economic contact with a larger world.

As John Darwin has argued, empires have been ‘the default mode of political organisation throughout most of history’. Historians of the nineteenth century often fetishise the nation-state as an
inevitable endpoint, but this was not how those who lived in the nineteenth-century British Empire imagined their places in the world. In the context of the royal tour, this chapter advocates for the dynamism of Britishness and imperial citizenship among the settler populations of South Africa and New Zealand. It proposes that settler communities across the southern British world – or, specifically, the colonial press and the social elites of those communities – imagined unique mythologies of belonging that connected the social, political, and cultural worlds of the local with a much larger imperial one. For the settlers of the British world, the imperial connection – and the regional and class lenses through which it was interpreted – dominated notions of belonging. Settlers of virtually all classes, regions, and ethnic heritages took pride in the British traditions of political progress and liberty and co-ownership in a global empire to claim the rights and responsibilities of a British-imperial citizenship. It was from the political, cultural, and intellectual milieu of an imperial culture that the sinews of colonial nationalism began to emerge by the turn of the twentieth century.

While the royal tours garnered little attention in Britain, they became defining moments in local mythologies of imperial community in the empire.11 Alfred, who visited the Cape twice during the 1860s, became memorialised as South Africa’s prince, a tradition that appealed to both local and imperial narratives of belonging. To this day, long after South Africa declared itself a republic, the waterfront in Cape Town is named for Prince Alfred and his mother. For many years, a portrait of the sailor prince hung in the Alfred Room of the South African Library and Museum that he inaugurated during his 1860 visit.12 In the Western Cape, a Dutch farmer named Johannes Cornelis Goosen christened the town he founded Prince Alfred’s Hamlet. These examples reflect the ways that royal visitors were appropriated into local mythologies of imperial identity and citizenship.

The royal tours also demonstrate that imperial and national identities were mutually dependent rather than exclusive. The nationalist histories of the settlement colonies tend to frame the national stories of New Zealand or Australia or South Africa as one of inevitable independence and nationhood, colonial children grown into able-minded adults capable of self-rule. There is also a tendency to craft unique mythologies that separate child from mother: a social democracy of New Zealand or republicanism and white rule in South Africa. The role of Britishness and empire in these national stories, long underplayed, has recently been revisited by scholars of the British diaspora. Britishness and the ‘imperial connection’ were profoundly important to many nineteenth-century colonial subjects, including those who
ROYAL TOURISTS

were not ethnically British or who had touched the soil of the British Isles. This chapter, then, proposes to understand how a diverse array of colonial subjects of European descent understood their sense of political, cultural, and social belonging in local and imperial contexts on the occasion of royal tours.

The history of the British diaspora and the mythology of Britishness has only recently been seriously considered by scholars. While the Cambridge History of the British Empire, a magnum opus of a traditional approach to empire, dedicated entire volumes to the colonies of settlement, the emergence of new schools of imperial history in the aftermath of the First World War – post-colonial theory, Marxist-inspired social history, and the New Imperial History – did not consider the white dominions as worthy sites of analysis in their own right. Historians of empire, however, have recently turned their attention to the British colonies of settlement, in a project aimed at reassessing the role of Britishness and imperial identities in the political, cultural, and social worlds of colonial settlers.13 For these scholars, the colonial societies of the ‘British world’ were neither mere extensions of metropolitan society nor foreordained nation-states but transnational cultural spaces that were informed both by local circumstances and contingencies and by a political, cultural, social, and historical relationship with Britain and the British diaspora. In this context, British national identity must not be understood as a set of ideas and beliefs packed in a suitcase and carried to ‘Greater Britain’ but a competing collection of identities made in and of the imperial experience.14 Britishness was a ‘composite, rather than exclusive, form of identity’, which was appropriated and adapted, made and remade by British and non-British colonial subjects around the world.15

In more traditional historical narratives, historians located proto-nationalist and nationalist narratives and mythologies in nineteenth-century settler societies, where Australians, New Zealanders, and South Africans awoke from the slumber of empire to become aware of their uniqueness as citizens of nation-states.16 However, as recent scholarship has demonstrated, imperial identities and notions of citizenship remained for some time ascendant, even among many ‘other’ settlers (e.g. Dutch-speaking Boers or South Asian immigrants); the Scots, Welsh, and Irish of the ‘Celtic fringe’ who had historically complex relationships with an English ‘core’ at home; and non-white respectables who appealed to their rights as loyal subjects and imperial citizens. At the same time, within colonial states and the larger diasporic community, competing communities of empire, in Dunedin and Otago, Cape Town and Natal, articulated unique discourses of Britishness and citizenship that claimed more perfect
understandings of Britishness and challenged other cores and even the mother country as ‘better Britains’. It is historically important, in this context, to consider and compare the cultural spaces between the values and beliefs of urban settlers in government cities such as Cape Town and Wellington and the miners of Otago or the frontier ranchers of the Eastern Cape.

For settlers, the royal tours and the associated mythology of Queen Victoria inspired a notion of imperial citizenship that demanded both local autonomy (responsible government) and expanded connections to a broader empire, especially the markets and financial resources of the metropole. Settler political discourses, as we shall see, both complained of the metropolitan government’s reluctant imperialist drive and challenged imperial meddling in local affairs (sometimes within the same breath). Despite disagreements with the ‘home’ government, and often because of them, unique visions of Britishness and imperial citizenship thrived in the political and cultural discourses of the late nineteenth-century British world. The ascendance of imperial identities was nurtured by a sense of ethnic and historical heritage and, in particular, by the development of a transnational imperial monarchy as a symbol of that heritage.

Over time, the languages of nationalism and whiteness came to culturally overwhelm discourses of imperial citizenship, even if they were deeply imbricated in its language and history. Imperial identities were undermined by the conceptual dissonance between local manifestations of Britishness and the action (or inaction) of the metropolitan government. Settler discourses also took on a more overtly racial tone, with discourses of whiteness coming to more effectively counteract local and ethnic differences at the expense of non-white ‘others’ and, to a lesser degree, the imperial connection. In the emerging post-colonial world, local attachment to Britain and the empire evolved, or dissipated, in dramatically different but often comparable ways across the British world.

Yet, as the examination of the royal tours over time will demonstrate, imperial identities remained vitally important to local politics and mythologies during the second half of the nineteenth century. With the decline of provincialism and localism, the competition and rivalries which bolstered imperial identities over national ones were slowly undone by technological change and political contingencies. While these changes reflect the slow evolution of colonial identities toward the languages of nationalism, settler responses to the royal tours demonstrate the cultural vitality of imperial citizenship as a discourse and the historical problem of a post-imperial world as a foregone conclusion in the nineteenth-century colonies of settlement.
Colonial print cultures

The British diaspora brought not only British people to sites of settlement around the world but also British institutions, ideas, and things – the common law, football or rugby, and the English language. The printed word served as the means by which the British reified knowledge of local customs and peoples, made colonies of laws and legislation, and imagined new narratives of community. Colonial settlers brought with them distinctly British notions of civil society, of which the newspaper was a core institution. In print, settler editors and writers espoused narratives of belonging and identity, that is, imagined communities. These communities were rarely singular in nature (e.g. national or proto-national) but multiple and overlapping. One could be Natalian, South African, and a citizen-subject of the British Empire without internal conflict.

Print culture spread almost as rapidly as people into sites of settlement. The emergence of a local newspaper was considered evidence that the community was of cultural or political significance, on the map, as it were. So important was the press to the New Zealand Company that the New Zealand Gazette was published in London in 1839 before its printing press was transported to Wellington, where it was ‘set up on a beach’, and the first edition published New Zealand in 1840. The Nelson Examiner was published two months after settlement, the Otago News nine months after arrival, and the Lyttelton Times (Canterbury) ‘immediately after the landing’. As the collections of the British Library and the National Library of New Zealand demonstrate, nineteenth-century New Zealand had a remarkably rich print culture, particularly for a colony that had been founded to all intents and purposes less than thirty years before the first royal visit.

Southern Africa had a longer and equally rich history of print culture. In Cape Town, the government published the Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser in English and Dutch starting in 1800, five years after the British had claimed the Cape. The first privately published newspapers in Cape Town were the South African Commercial Advertiser (1824–69) and South African Chronicle (1824–26), followed by the Cape Argus (1857–present) and the Cape Times (1876–present), among others. Print culture spread to the British ‘cores’ outside of Cape Town with the movement of people: the Graham’s Town Journal (1831–present), the Natal Mercury (1852–present), and the King William’s Town Gazette (1856–75). From the earliest days of British settlement, newspapers were an important part of settler communities and how settlers imagined themselves.
Of course, there are limits and problems in using colonial newspapers to understand settler cultures. Newspapers often served as mouthpieces for social elites whose interests may or may not have represented the larger community. Moreover, their audience tended to be town-dwelling and educated.22 As Alan Lester argues, colonial newspapers served ‘the free, the propertied, and the “respectable”’.23 Even if British settler populations of the late nineteenth century were surprisingly literate, and the influence of a single newspaper copy might have been multiplied an unknown number of times through word of mouth, life in a nineteenth-century British colony was not always conducive to daily newspaper reading. Distances were great, and many settlers did work that severely limited their leisure time, regardless of literacy. And even when settlers did read, it is extremely difficult to gauge how they interpreted and responded to what they read.

Despite these limits, it is clear that newspapers were important sites of political and cultural discourse in colonial civil societies. Relative freedom of the press allowed for fierce debates about local and imperial politics. The Cape Argus declared, in 1856, that it ‘emanated from no party, will connect itself with no section of the community, and its first great care will be to secure free expression for the opinions of all, with a view to reconcile rather than stir up party differences’.24 On the whole, British settler communities considered criticising the local or imperial government, particularly on grounds of British traditions and history, to be patriotic. Questioning the bonds of empire or the Queen was considered out of bounds by most, a discursive boundary motivated by genuine devotion, fear of being labelled disloyal, or some combination of both. More importantly in the context of this study, local mythologies of belonging were made and disseminated through the medium of print. They were the means of establishing a local story of what it meant to be British, a Capetonian, a New Zealander, a loyal citizen-subject of the Queen, or any other number of identities.

By decentring the empire and understanding British identity from the perspective of settler communities, we can better understand Britishness and imperial citizenship as a transnational political and cultural discourse. British national identity must be similarly understood, as forged in and of the imperial experience. This observation importantly reflects on the ways in which, as Sir John Seeley contended during the late nineteenth century, British history has been a story of expansion and of the dissemination of British ideas, institutions, and people across a global ‘Greater Britain’.25 In the second half of the nineteenth century, Britishness became a transnational identity that became as important to the neo-Britons of the empire
as it was to the old Britons at home, if not more so. It came to transcend other identities in a way that it never had before and never would again.

**Britishness and citizenship**

Local mythologies of Britishness and imperial identity developed in colonial cores throughout the empire. Even if people talked about South Africa, Australia, or New Zealand, there was little obvious at the time about these geographical entities’ futures as unified states. The federation of Australia took over twenty years to negotiate. As late as 1901 the *Otago Witness* predicted that the Duke of York’s visit would ‘quicken the growing desire’ of New Zealanders to join the Australian Commonwealth. Several movements to federate South Africa into a single British-controlled polity were stillborn; only British victory in the South African War (1899–1902) gave way to the Union of South Africa (1910).

On the other hand, these cores frequently pulled away from one another and sometimes from the metropole, often appealing to a more genuine Britishness against a perceived injustice or incredulity. During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, politicians in Graham’s Town, Uitenhage, and Port Elizabeth sought to form a new British colony in the Eastern Cape, separate from the government at Cape Town. English-speaking frontier ranchers in South Africa perhaps had more in common with their *trekboer* neighbours than with the merchants and officials of the capital, just as the miners of the New Zealand boomtown of Dunedin looked toward Auckland or Wellington on the North Island with suspicion and even scorn. Even colonial officials recognised the differences in local cultures. During the 1901 tour, the Earl of Ranfurly, Governor of New Zealand (1897–1904), complained to Joseph Chamberlain that ‘the old provincial centres are unfortunately extremely jealous, the one of the other’. From these competing cores came emerging colonial cultures and visions of British-imperial citizenship.

While the development of whiteness as the dominant social and political discourse of the British world lies somewhat outside of the limits of this study, understanding the ways in which race and ‘otherness’ informed definitions of Britishness and citizenship during the royal tours helps us understand the fluidity and heterogeneity of imperial culture. Over time, whiteness became increasingly central to definitions of citizenship in the settler communities, transcending ethnic and local rivalries at the expense of non-white peoples. In the context of the royal tours, this transformation manifested itself in the
incorporation of Maori or African places and people into a mythology of white settlement – what Vivian Bickford-Smith has called ‘local colour’. While Britishness and imperial citizenship remained politically and culturally robust by the royal tour of 1901, for instance, they were waning not waxing, demonstrating the long-term effects of responsible government, the decline of provincialism and localism, the emergence of national networks of transportation and communication, and the development of national political cultures. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, these processes were just getting underway.

As British colonies of settlement, South Africa and New Zealand offer fertile conceptual terrain for comparison. Yet, in many ways, they were vastly different places. The Cape of Good Hope had been settled by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1652, only to be taken over by the British at the turn of the nineteenth century as a consequence of the French Wars. European settlement of New Zealand was of much more recent vintage, with systematic colonisation as a territorial extension of New South Wales beginning only in 1840 by the British New Zealand Company. British emigration to New Zealand was comparatively robust, and settlers of British origin were the largest European ethnic group by far. In southern Africa, the British encountered a large population of European settlers whose kin had arrived from the Netherlands, France, or Germany generations earlier, and immigration schemes aimed at peopling Africa with British people, as we shall see, never effectively took root. The Cape Colony was positioned on one of history’s greatest maritime trade routes, while New Zealand sat almost literally at the edge of the earth. If New Zealanders imagine their society to be progressive, peaceful, and democratic, South Africa is best known for racial unrest and apartheid. While the British South African colonies and New Zealand were both granted what amounted to home rule during the second half of the nineteenth century, New Zealanders overwhelmingly embraced the ‘imperial connection’ into the twentieth century. The relationship between metropole and colony in the South African context was far more complicated, and hostile. The differences appear stark.

At the same time, these two colonies of settlement share much in common. Both South Africa and New Zealand experienced mineral revolutions during the nineteenth century, whose rushes lured new immigrants and resulted in makeshift boomtowns that became important urban centres. In 1861, a Tasmanian miner named Gabriel Read discovered gold in Otago, starting a rush that temporarily swelled Dunedin into New Zealand’s largest city. In southern Africa, the discovery of gold (1867) and diamonds (1884) unleashed social and
economic revolution that would for ever transform a backwater of the British Empire into a global depot of wealth and make Johannesburg, in the Boer republic of Transvaal, a metropolis. Gold-rush New Zealand attracted thousands of settlers and sojourners from the Pacific Rim, including a considerable population of Chinese immigrants. In South Africa, settler mining magnates acquired cheap, ‘unskilled’ labourers through agreements with local chiefs, native labour bureaus, as well as the importation of South Asian ‘coolies’.

In southern Africa, local peoples experienced dispossession and destruction on a vast scale. Since the arrival of the Dutch in 1652, the Khoisan-speaking people of the Western and Northern Cape suffered under the biological, military, and cultural plague of European contact, particularly as the balances of power began to weigh heavily on the side of Europeans. A 1713 smallpox epidemic completed the processes by which these people had largely been destroyed by disease, were incorporated in the European labour pool, or fled beyond the Dutch pale. Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho, and Zulu peoples confronted expanding European settlement, resulting in religious conversion, warfare, trade, epidemics, dispossession and resettlement, and physical and political control. For the Xhosa, in particular, who engaged in a century of land wars with white settlers, the consequences were horrific. The British never recognised these original South Africans as a people, as they had with the Maori in the double-dealing Treaty of Waitangi, so the diverse political traditions of the subcontinent never established a single, symbolic treaty with the British Empire. The double language of the British in their relations with local people – simultaneously claiming liberal rule and respect for local politics while dispossessing local peoples through military and legal force – nevertheless bore a remarkable resemblance to what happened in New Zealand.

In measure of Britishness, too, the two might be more comparable than first examinations suggest. While New Zealand’s reputation as the ‘Britain of the South’ creates little question of its heritage, the presence of a large Dutch-speaking settler population and a comparatively small number of British settlers has resulted in less historical attention to the Britishness of South Africa. Even Charles Dilke and J. R. Seeley, two of the nineteenth century’s greatest imperial theorists, ‘were sceptical of South Africa’s potential as a British colony of settlement’. Yet New Zealand’s population was not homogeneous. It had growing communities of German and Chinese settlers, for instance. Moreover, by 1901, Scottish and Irish settlers accounted for about half of the immigrant population born in the British Isles. South Africa had important enclaves of British settlement in Cape Town, Natal, and
the Eastern Cape. The British government made several attempts to supplement these numbers, most notably settling 4,000 British immigrants in 1820, and even had a plan to transport British convicts to the Cape in 1850.35

Despite extensive marketing, which often described distant Britains as lands of milk and honey, the creole British settlers of the colonies of settlement could never overcome the stigma that they were provincial cousins of the ‘real’ Britishers at ‘home’. They could never become ‘English English’, to use Benedict Anderson’s turn of phrase, and only in rare cases served the empire outside of their provinces in Natal or Otago or in colonial capitals at Cape Town or Wellington.36 In Britain, humanitarians fiercely criticised their abuse of local peoples as radical politicians condemned the costs of colonial defence and frontier wars instigated by land-hungry settlers. In the eyes of many at home, creoles were second-rate Britishers, provincial carbon copies of the original. The British historian and imperial thinker J. A. Froude, for instance, described the Liberal Cape politician John X. Merriman as one of those ‘Cape politicians [who] strut about with their constitution as a schoolboy newly promoted to a tail coat’.37 While some scholars have stressed the romanticisation of colonial Britishness – as perfected in the open spaces and less depressing environments of the southern hemisphere – the sense that creole Britons were inauthentic informed the metropolitan attitudes and policies about the colonies of settlement.

Thus, fighting for the empire during the South African War or the Great War or expressing loyalty to Queen and country in rhetoric and action could heighten the already natural tendency to imagine and construct über-British societies on the edges of the world. Settlers competed with the motherland and other cores to make ‘better Britains’ and to be more perfect Britishers – whether by building a prosperous commercial entrepôt at the Cape of Good Hope or by imagining a more democratic – even classless – society in New Zealand. These distant Britains also possessed their own imperialist drives, looking to possess and dispossess in a manner that was often, to colonial officials, distasteful at best, crisis-inducing at worst. The failure of Britishness and imperial citizenship as a binding and long-term identity in the colonies of settlement has its origins in this cultural, social, and geographic chasm between Britain and neo-Britains overseas.

The royal tours presented unique moments for settlers to express identification with both a British world and with locality or province. In 1860, Prince Alfred was baptised ‘our’ South African prince by the colonial press, symbolising a nascent imperial-national identity. An Australian colonist wrote a ‘seditious proposal published and suppressed on the eve of the Prince’s [1868] visit’, advocating a federation
ROYAL TOURISTS

of the Australian colonies under the kingship of Alfred. The South African Commercial Advertiser similarly advocated ‘each of the royal children [be] made viceroy of the important colonies, such as India, Australia, Canada, and the Cape’. While colonial administrators at home and abroad imagined the royal visits as a form of imperial propaganda, local social elites in the empire used the visits as an opportunity to promote class cohesion, to protect and enhance their own status, and to develop local mythologies of identity as tools of social control. As Saul Dubow has noted in the case of the Cape Colony, there was no conservative gentry – outside of colonial officials – in the colonies of settlement to ‘pour scorn on the jumped-up middle classes’. While most immigrants to New Zealand had social roots in the rural working classes of Britain, the colony’s emigration schemes attracted a surprising number of university-educated doctors, lawyers, and clergy.

This altered social order meant that colonial elites, the ‘town fathers’ of Cape Town or Auckland, embraced a belief in Whiggish constitutionalism and improvement that was not unlike the beliefs articulated by the ruling classes at home, and they were more likely to be involved in commercial enterprises that depended on the development of colonial infrastructure and imperial networks of trade. Local organising committees were dominated by town fathers, who used the royal visits to their own ends. The colonial press, typically owned or influenced by local elites, used the royal tours to project a facade of social cohesion and harmony. In 1860, for instance, the Graham’s Town Journal celebrated that ‘high and low, rich and poor have combined in showing honour to the son of our Queen, and in doing justice to that spirit of genuine attachment to the Crown which is the boast of British subjects all the world over’. Loyalty to the Great Queen and her empire was not only used by colonial administrators to nurture an imperial culture but also by local social elites to justify and promote class cohesion and social order.

While local elites gave particular meanings to the royal tours through the settler press, for many settlers, imperial rituals offered an opportunity to let loose, ‘to dance until midnight and drink till morning’. The ‘Hermit of Adderley-Street’ reported, during Alfred’s 1860 tour of South Africa, that he had not thought of sleeping for three nights. In New Zealand, the Timaru Herald reported that ‘business of all kinds being suspended, and the citizens joining with the country residence … seem to have had but one thought, that of giving pleasure and doing honour to the Royal visitor’. This is not to say that colonial subjects did not express their loyalty or identify with a British colonial empire but that they did so in a way that was informed by
personal beliefs and experience, social class and profession, and locality. Local people vehemently protested when their employers refused to close their stores and workshops to celebrate the royal visitor or when events were closed to the general public or charged admission. Through this participation and activism, settlers challenged elite control of civic culture and demanded the rights and responsibilities of British citizenship. At the same time, the celebration was also an opportunity to drink and party in the streets, to contest social mores and hierarchy, and to have fun.

For their part, colonial administrators, social elites, and the press incorporated local peoples into the ritual practices of the royal tour and the mythology of settlement as ‘local colour’. While the literature on the national myths of New Zealand and, in particular, South Africa, has focused on the emergence of whiteness as the dominant cultural discourse of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial world, the symbolism of non-white subjects, from the imagery of a Maori canoe to the ‘war dances’ of Zulu or Sotho peoples, was vital to the construction of local, imperial, and ultimately national origins stories. The royal tours created an opportunity to highlight the loyalty and submission of former enemies. They were used to nurture an ideology and mythology of empire that suppressed a history of violence, projected the illusion of consent, and legitimise the idea of white rule over ‘native peoples’.

Although tour planners developed and perfected the rituals of the royal tour over time, public celebrations in the British colonies, whether the visit of a governor or prince, the Queen’s birthday, royal jubilees, or Bonfire Night, shared a set of ritual practices that culturally distinguished empire feast days, as it were, from every other day. There were illuminations, addresses, bonfires, fireworks, balls, parades, triumphal arches, military drills, and native performances. Emblazoned across the pages of local newspapers were phrases such as ‘Prince Alfred’s Edition’ and ‘God Save the Queen!’ Addresses to and from visiting dignitaries were frequently lampooned for their triteness and repetitiveness. Local settler performances sought both to reproduce British practices – proving that they were just as good as or better than metropolitan Britons – and to appeal to local origin stories, of the settlement of 1820 in the Eastern Cape or the making of a more democratic ‘Britain of the South’ in New Zealand. They also reflected rivalries within colonies – the geographical, cultural, and political space between urban Cape Town and the rural Eastern Cape, for instance – and between colonies – illustrated by the image of New Zealand as a younger, but better, version of Australia. While the ritual practices were shared across the space of empire, settler responses to the royal tour reflect the complexities of imperial culture.
and the ways in which the imperial and the local informed settler mythologies and worldviews.

The narratives of the royal visit were contested and remade across the social, political, and cultural terrains of New Zealand and British South Africa. Across the chasm of class and status, settlers may have expressed loyalty to the Queen, but opposition to the powers that be in the Cape or Wellington. Or they may have used the opportunity of the royal tour to dance, and celebrate, and drink. The point is not to unravel and expose every possible remaking of Britishness and citizenship in the context of the royal tour, but to show how fluid and malleable these discourses were across the imperial networks of the British world. What this chapter aims to prove is that colonial subjects read their attachment to Britain and the empire through multivalent geographical, social, and political lenses in a way that has been underappreciated by the extant literature on the colonies of settlement.

**South Africa (1860)**

Historians had long understood the story of settlers in South Africa during the long nineteenth century as an enduring struggle between the British and descendants of Dutch settlers whose families became ‘Afrikaners’. The narrative of this mythology, itself the backbone of the South African national story, begins with the Great Trek of Boer settlers out of the British pale during the 1830s and into the interior of southern Africa and concludes with two Anglo-Boer Wars (1880–81, 1899–1902) and the emergence of a white-dominated Union of South Africa. Recent historiography, however, has destabilised, if not toppled, these assumptions by reassessing the role of Africans in ‘white’ conflict (e.g. the South African War) and the complex, and conflicting, political and cultural discourses of settler societies that defy the notion of shared interests among colonial settlers or between settlers and the metropolitan government.\(^{48}\)

In the context of this study, the languages of Britishness and imperial citizenship were made and remade by the diverse settler populations of southern Africa to imagine their communities (local and imperial), to claim British rights and responsibilities, and to protest against unfairness and injustice. As the examination of the breakwater controversy and other settler petitions for imperial justice demonstrate, settler discourses on colonial politics were informed by unique visions of what it meant to be a citizen-subject of a larger British world. Political and cultural battles were often fought in the rhetoric of Britishness and imperial loyalty, even by many non-British people. During royal tours, settler communities appealed to their intense loyalty and adherence
to British traditions and principles, as ‘better Britons’. They used the forum of the royal tour to protest or advocate causes and to imagine what it meant to be a ‘Natalian Briton’ or ‘British Kaffrarian’, rather than simply to be South African.

Cape Town

Cape Town has long held a unique status in the history of southern Africa and in the popular memory of modern Capetonians as a progressive and cosmopolitan urban space, where an ethnically diverse population socially and culturally intermingled, before the Afrikaner-inspired politics of whiteness and apartheid forcibly displaced this tradition. Capetonians and historians have contrasted the so-called Cape liberal tradition with the racially driven political and social exclusion of the Boer republics and even the Eastern Cape, understanding the Western Cape as a forward-looking, enlightened place in the dark seas of South African history. As Vivian Bickford-Smith and other scholars of South Africa have been apt to note, however, this brand of exceptionalism is not backed by the historical evidence.

In the context of imperial politics, Cape Town was an imperial core in southern Africa to both the subaltern classes of the city and to many peoples of the Eastern Cape, the Boer republics, and beyond. As the home of the British government in the Cape Colony, it represented to many settlers the politics of an irresolute Colonial Office that was often influenced by humanitarian activists and reluctant to support costly expansionist efforts. It was also the home of a small but influential cadre of progressive politicians, ‘friends of the native’, and was the South African source of the limited non-racial franchise and legislation regarding the control and treatment of labourers. On the other hand, Government House at Cape Town also served as the residence for colonial governors such as Benjamin D’Urban, Harry Smith, and George Grey, who were responsible for some of the most egregious acts of warfare and dispossession in the history of the British Empire. Cape Town was ruled by an elite that was propertied, white, and English-speaking, who sought to control and define discourses on citizenship and status.

For Capetonians and other British subjects in southern Africa, Cape Town came to symbolise many different things, both the enlightenment of colonial rule and its worst excesses. By the last decades of the century, they had come to advocate, in the face of rapid economic and social change, segregationist policies in the guise of urban progress. The ruling classes of Cape Town tended to represent their town as an emblem of civilisation in southern Africa and a hub for all communication and commerce on the subcontinent. One leading Cape ‘liberal’
was Saul Solomon, who published the Cape Argus. His narrative of the royal visit, *The Progress of His Royal Highness Prince Alfred Ernest Albert through the Cape Colony, British Kaffraria, the Orange Free State, and Port Natal, in the Year 1860*, framed the tour’s importance in the material and political progress of southern Africa since the advent of British rule. Solomon, along with other politicians and newspaper editors in Cape Town, tended to represent British South Africa as an organic whole, with Cape Town as its heart. They spoke in the language of respectability and progress:

Before [the British, the Cape] was a military settlement: a port of call…. Since then it has advanced at a rate as rapid as was consistent with the due consolidation of each advancing improvement effected. From the original Colony no fewer than four extensive offshoots – British Kaffraria, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal Republic – have sprung into vigorous and lusty life…. Regularly-constituted courts of law and trial by jury on the English model soon succeeded. The curse of slavery was removed…. And in the fulness [sic] of time came the boon of the Free Constitution granted by Her Majesty nine years ago, under which the Cape possesses now the amplest privileges of constitutional self-government. And among the fruits of this new and liberal system the Colonists have been emboldened to venture upon undertakings for advancing the material prosperity of the county…. The first of these was the railway from Cape Town to Wellington, now approaching completion; while the most recent of them, the Breakwater, with the other great harbour improvements in Table Bay, has given occasion to the gratifying visit.\(^{51}\)

The breakwater, in this context, represented a key historical moment in the progress of not just the Cape but all of South Africa.

The Scotsman John Fairbairn, editor and sole proprietor [by 1860] of the Cape’s first independent newspaper, the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, was a prominent member of the Cape elite, espousing a worldview centred on free trade, self-help, and a notion of Britishness that embraced respectability.\(^{52}\) He had helped establish a free press at the Cape, after a long struggle with Governor Charles Somerset, in 1828.\(^{53}\) Fairbairn supported the campaign of Dr John Philip, who would later be his father-in-law, for ‘Hottentot emancipation’ and criticised ‘British settler and government expansionism on the colony’s eastern frontier’ in the *Commercial Advertiser*, inspiring the ire of white settlers on the frontier and in Cape Town.\(^{54}\) The conservative *Zuid-Afrikaan*, in Cape Town, and the *Graham’s Town Journal* were founded, in part, in response to Fairbairn’s politics and power. In the language of Britishness, he opposed a metropolitan scheme to import convicts to the Cape in 1849 and advocated an elected assembly.\(^{55}\)
age Fairbairn grew conservative and became ‘more and more pessimistic about the efficacy of the British mission’ or the ability of the British government to control land-hungry British settlers.56

Prince Alfred’s visit in 1860 came near the end of Fairbairn’s life, by which time he had come to question British progress in southern Africa. He would die in 1864. The coverage of the tour in the Commercial Advertiser hardly reflected this intellectual evolution in its focus on British civilisation at the Cape but did demonstrate Fairbairn’s reconciliation with Dutch-speaking Afrikaners. More important, perhaps, was the fact that the Commercial Advertiser sought to transcend, or overlook, regional identities and to celebrate the organic unity of British South Africa. It was Cape Town, its institutions and symbols of progress, its editors argued, that stood at the political, cultural, and economic centre of the subcontinent. In this context, the political discourses surrounding the visit – in particular, by naming the new breakwater after Alfred – transformed the controversy over the improvement from one about sectionalism and class into an issue of loyalty and disloyalty. This elite-constructed Capetonian imperialism, which borrowed from the languages of Britishness and imperial citizenship, was appropriated and turned on its head by frontier settlers, Cape Town labourers, and people of colour, as we shall see.

Cape Town was celebrated as a superbly British community, from its works of progress to its loyal citizenry. The Commercial Advertiser wanted Capetonians to remind Alfred of ‘the good stuff which makes Englishmen the most loyal as well as the most earnest of their kind’ to such a degree that he would forget that he had ever left Britain!57 It was duly noted that, as Alfred commenced the construction of a breakwater at Table Bay and other works of progress in the colony, his older brother was ceremonially opening the Victoria Bridge in Canada.58 This moment demonstrated the spread of British civilisation and progress across a vast global space, from the British Isles across the world and from Cape Town across southern Africa. In appealing to Britishness, the social elites of Cape Town imagined a community that reinforced and justified their own place in Cape society and that of Cape Town in South Africa and the British Empire.

According to the Advertiser, the royal tour also transcended the everyday boundaries of class and ethnicity. In this context, the property of Cape Town, through the newspaper, used the visit to reinforce their social control of society with the language of loyalty. While some scholars have argued that the politics of whiteness came to transcend the divisions of language, ethnicity, and class, the cultural discourses of the 1860 tour were, arguably, more inclusive, even if non-whites had a markedly subordinate status in the imagined community of
loyalism. The *Commercial Advertiser* urged: ‘Let no foolish national-
ities stand in the way of a general rejoicing. No one need be ashamed
to own himself a subject of the British crown, and one good subject is
as good as another, whatever may be his origin, creed, or calling’.59 The
address to Alfred from the representatives of the Municipality of Cape
Town similarly framed progress in the Cape in terms of a loyalism that
transcended ethnicity.60

It was also important for the propertied in the Cape that their import-
ance to the empire be recognised. In particular, they hoped that the
son would return to his mother, the Great Queen, with reports of the
Cape’s progress and wealth.61 According to the *Advertiser*, Britons at
home were all but completely ignorant of South Africa, imagining that
‘lion hunts are as common just outside of Cape Town as fox-hunting is
in Leicestershire; that naked Kaffirs and Hottentots eat raw meat in our
streets; and that the environs of our city are not very unlike the Desert
of Zahara’.62 The trip would make ‘19,999,990 of 20,000,000’ British
people more knowledgeable about South Africa.63 The editors argued
that the Cape had been long neglected, a black sheep in an imperial
system that favoured ‘purer’ British colonies such as Australia and
New Zealand.64 It was because of the Cape’s diverse population and
lack of British institutions that the metropole had disregarded her, but
it was now time for the colony to be recognised as a thoroughly British
place, home of progress and trade and of efforts to colonise the region
with British people.65 Capetonians then, they argued, must put forward
an ‘honest and hearty welcome’ ‘as evidence of our love and loyalty as
the most magnificent preparations of wealthier lands’.66 In competi-
tion with other colonies, the Cape needed to prove itself to be a little,
and better, Britain to the mother country.

**Graham’s Town**

In Graham’s Town (Grahamstown today), the settler press used the
opportunity of the royal tour to celebrate British civilisation in the
Eastern Cape and to lambast the political dominance of Cape Town
over the rest of southern Africa. The editors also used the opportuni-
ity of the royal tour to describe the competition between colonial towns
to demonstrate their loyalty, that Graham’s Town and King William’s
Town would ‘do their upmost to exceed each other in fervent expres-
sions of enthusiasm, by producing everything which is in their power
to exalt themselves above the Table Mountain merchants and farm-
ers of the West’.67 Despite any grievances between east and west, they
could agree on the majesty of the British monarchy and their loyalty
to Queen Victoria. The Cape frontier most significantly represented
the vanquishing of uncivilised savages and the spread of British civilisation and progress, of industrious farmers and merchants building neo-Britains in the rugged frontier of southern Africa. The debates over the breakwater, specifically, and the perceived imbalance of political power between the west and east, offered a radically different interpretation from that of the press of the Western Cape.

Founded as a military outpost on the Xhosa frontier in 1812, Graham’s Town was situated northeast of Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, some 900 kilometres from Cape Town. As part of a government settlement scheme, funded by a £50,000 grant from parliament, 4,000 British (mostly Scottish) settlers arrived in Albany to farm the land with free labour and consolidate the frontier in 1820. Many of these 1820 settlers, as they were called, abandoned farming and moved into towns, including Graham’s Town. The mythology of 1820, which was celebrated with its own ritual ceremonies, and life in a frontier town far away from the colonial capital at Cape Town nurtured unique local narratives of belonging. According to Saul Solomon, Graham’s Town ‘pride[d] itself, and not quite unreasonably, [as] the most thoroughly English town in Southern Africa’. Yet, as Clifton Crais has argued, settlers who came to build ‘England in the miniature’, complete with a ‘manor house on the hill’, required ‘growing markets, plentiful land, docile labourers and a cooperative colonial state’. These needs created a matrix of interconnected social, cultural, and political conflicts – between white masters and servants, institutionalised in the immigration scheme itself, between European settlers and local peoples, and with Cape Town and the imperial government.

In the pages of the *Graham’s Town Journal* (later, simply *The Journal*), political and cultural discourses appropriated the languages of Britishness and imperial citizenship, particularly through the mythology of 1820, to justify a particular political and social order in the Eastern Cape, which transcended ethnicity and class, legitimised and empowered social elites, and justified the subjugation of local peoples. The *Journal*, founded in 1831, was edited by an 1820 settler named Robert Godlonton. A former London printer, Godlonton defended the Eastern settlers against liberal-humanitarian claims that they were acting in a very un-British way in their relations with the Xhosa and petitioned for greater imperial security and control against local peoples. Godlonton’s paper possessed a near-monopoly in Albany, and its distribution reached as far as Britain and North America. Godlonton’s politics and mythology of Britishness were deeply entrenched in the ‘collective biography of the settlement’, particularly conflict with local peoples. His paper was founded in opposition to the ‘liberal’ papers in Cape Town and with the distinct interests of the Eastern Cape in
mind. While alternative political and cultural narratives existed, Godlonton’s mythology, as expressed in the *Graham’s Town Journal*, was the most widely disseminated and read.

In the pages of the *Journal*, the symbolic meaning of the visit was glossed from the memories and legacy of the 1820 settlers. The *Journal* argued that this frontier ethos ought to be reflected in welcoming Alfred. While the settlers at Cape Town could afford a much more elaborate display of loyalty, the paper argued, Graham’s Town could ‘gratify the Prince to a much greater extent’ with a greeting befitting the colonial frontier: a welcome ceremony featuring between 800 and 1,000 ‘rough and ready’ commandants, police, and the Cape Corps – accompanied by local ‘Fingoes and Kaffirs’ performing in ‘war’ dances. At the Healdtown Institution, Alfred paid special attention (according to the *Journal*) to paintings of

the landing and the … encampment of the first party of British Settlers. This event took place rather more than 40 years ago. At that time there was no fixed property of any value in Port Elizabeth or Graham’s Town; there was no trade carried on with the mother country; no wool sent home in exchange for British manufactures; the land was peopled by barbarians, who revelled in heathenish customs and rights…. But England sent forth from her shores the pioneers of civilisation … as he visits town after town, and native locations under the care of Christian ministers, [he] will see how well England has done her duty – how well British ideas and habits are spreading amongst the population, and how deeply rooted is the love of loyalty in the hearts of those who were sent by their government forty years ago to establish a new colony.

Absent from this mythology was the Western Cape or a larger South Africa. It was framed by the relationship between the hearty, rugged settlers of Albany and the spread of British civilisation. To the Graham’s Town settlers, Prince Alfred’s most celebrated act, the inauguration of the Table Bay breakwater, was the end result of a contentious dispute over the fairness of the Eastern Cape helping fund an improvement project for Cape Town. In the end, they felt bullied by the Western Cape-dominated government, Cape merchants, and Sir George Grey. According to the *Journal*, Capetonians at a public meeting about the plan in July ‘would have us believe that Capetown is the whole colony’. According to Godlonton, Graham’s Town would have ‘no interest in, and will receive no benefit from, the proposed harbour works’, yet principled Eastern opposition to the plan was portrayed by the Cape press as ‘factious’ and disloyal. The farmers of Albany who used Algoa Bay in Port Elizabeth, a mere 100 kilometres from Graham’s Town, saw the need for the construction of a breakwater there as much
if not more than at Cape Town. Moreover, the far more useful bill to construct a railway between Graham’s Town and Port Elizabeth had already been ‘thrown overboard’, as an expendable ‘Eastern measure’.80

Opposition to the breakwater was framed in the language of British constitutional traditions. In the pages of the Journal, the settler community appealed to British ideas about fair play and the importance of representative government. The Eastern Cape legislators were not completely opposed to the project, they indicated, but wanted it to be reasonable and well planned (not ‘unlimited’ in its use of the colony’s general revenue).81 Moreover, the Journal appealed, responsible government and a legislature for the Cape Colony were without meaning to the Eastern Cape if their opposition was futile and their long and expensive travels to Cape Town a ‘farce’.82 As British subjects, they perceived a right to protest and to have a legitimate voice, rather than it being silenced by the commercial and government elites of Cape Town.

During the royal tour, the Journal also revived the idea of Eastern Cape separatism – that is, the Eastern Cape as an independent Crown Colony, liberated from the corruption of the Western Cape – as a possibility. Albany had been home, in the 1820s, of ‘radicals’ who sought larger land grants, greater control of labour, public offices, and official patronage, ‘to replicate the privileges and patronage of English rural society’ in conflict with the policies of the British governor, Charles Somerset.83 The politics of separatism, while admittedly unorganised and often fleeting, were not the monopoly of Dutch-speaking trekboers nor had their embers been doused by the 1860s, as Le Cordeur suggested. Even if pursued as an option, however, separatism, the Journal claimed, would most certainly be sabotaged by Western Cape legislators, ‘so long as it is advantageous to the Cape people to remain as a united colony – so long as money can be borrowed upon the credit for improvement of the West’.84 Careful in his use of language, Godlonton never explicitly advocated separation, but only hinted at it. He did foresee neighbouring British Kaffraria’s possible future as a semi-independent colony, rather the personal fiefdom of the Cape governor, as prosperous and successful.85 In expressing loyalty to the Queen and articulating a unique vision of imperial citizenship, the settlers of Graham’s Town found Prince Alfred’s breakwater to be a very unfair and therefore un-British project.

The dominant narrative of the traditional historiography, of Britons and Boers, whites and blacks, conceals a more complex and fluid collection of identities. Within communities, social strife was reflected in rhetorical struggles over the definitions of loyalty, Britishness, and imperial citizenship. Moreover, the settlers of the Eastern Cape, Kaffraria, and Natal had much in common with the trekboers who had
Royal Tourists

fled British control of the Cape. They often imagined their communities as profoundly connected in the British Empire, yet often firmly disconnected from and hostile to Cape Town. As the discussion of the South African War and the royal tour of 1901 will demonstrate, these discourses moved slowly away from identification with the empire and toward a greater recognition of a white settler identity – even if these processes remained decidedly incomplete by the turn of the century.

New Zealand (1869–71)

In 1869, Prince Alfred, by then Duke of Edinburgh, visited New Zealand in the midst of a brutal war of colonial conquest between local settlers and the Maori. He was originally scheduled to visit the colony during his 1868 tour of Australasia, but this itinerary was cut short by an Irish Fenian assassin’s bullet. (In response, New Zealanders expressed an outpouring of sympathy for the Queen and her son and asked that the duke return when he had recovered.) When he did return to the islands in 1869, the North Island was threatened by the attacks of a guerrilla fighter and religious leader named Te Kooti (see Chapter 2), who had led a daring escape from his imprisonment on the Chatham Islands. This ‘little war’ was as much a civil war as a colonial conflict; pro-British ‘Queenite’ Maori fought on the colonial side of the conflict, and Te Kooti was ultimately given refuge by the Maori king.86 This context of warfare and violence informed the meaning of Alfred’s visit, which became a forum for criticisms of the imperial government. Te Kooti’s campaign against the colony also destabilised the illusion of Maori consent that the visit was designed to nurture, heightening the obsessive pursuit of the Maori leader on the part of the government.

The war affected not only the mood of the visit but also the itinerary. The New Zealand press complained that the Duke of Edinburgh’s delayed visit had been drawn back, ‘so shortened that the chief towns only of the provinces will be honoured with a visit’.87 This limited engagement denied people in the countryside or in smaller cities the opportunity to express their loyalty without travelling long distances to witness the visit. The Otago Daily Times also expressed concern over the very timing of the royal tour:

It is much to be regretted that the visit of His Royal Highness to New Zealand should have occurred at so inopportune a time. Not only does he find the colony harassed by the difficulties of a savage war, but he comes among a people so much occupied with the disasters that have befallen them that public rejoicings become a mockery. With the recollection of so many massacres still before us, it is not in human nature that we
should give way to joyous demonstrations in the spirit of a Roman populace at the approach of Carnival. Every member of our community is in mourning…. If his tour through the Islands should afford slight material for another descriptive volume in the shape of triumphal arches and public banquets, [Alfred] will not fail to remember the circumstances in which the colony is placed.88

Thus, the New Zealand settler press used the visit to express their discontent with the imperial government and to make demands as British citizens. The Wellington Independent claimed that, despite their unwavering loyalty to the Queen, ‘the people of New Zealand have very great reason to resent … the Imperial Government’.89 The Otago Times similarly complained that the relationship between New Zealand and the mother country was strained over the ‘refusal’ of support from the imperial government and that this separation would inform the festivities.90 Some editors went as far as to suggest that the duke had been coached by his imperial advisers to avoid explicit references to New Zealand’s suffering.

Like the responses to the royal tour in southern Africa, this contestation across social, political, and geographic divisions was framed in the language of Britishness and imperial citizenship. The newspaper editors appealed to British citizenship in their case against the colonial metropole, celebrating their loyalty to the monarchy and to the empire while noting their disaffection, caused by imperial bungling and hesitance in the struggle against the Maori. After a long dispute with the colonists, the imperial government had withdrawn all imperial troops from the islands, with the exception of one contingent, in 1865–66.91 Many members of the settler community, as the newspapers argued, were disappointed with the metropolitan government’s decision to financially and militarily abandon the colony in the midst of a ‘rebellion’. Imperial policy not only failed to ‘protect the lives of British subjects from cannibals’ but ‘seriously compromise[d] the credit of the mother country’.92 The settler press imagined a friendly relationship with the Maori that had been sabotaged by imperial ‘mis-management’ and the ‘impolitic actions of Imperial officers stationed in the colony’, sparking a powder keg of unending wars.93 The visit was defined as a new beginning, when New Zealand was finally remembered by the mother country. Learning of New Zealand’s ‘sacrifices and hardships’, Alfred would return to his mother with their pleas for imperial justice.94

The settler press also used the opportunity of the royal tour to exalt egalitarianism and a notable lack of social strife as a unique ‘national characteristic’ of New Zealand Britons.95 Building a new Britain in a
more temperate land (‘The English climate kills excessive cheerfulness’), New Zealanders were more free-spirited and playful.96 This notion of New Zealand as a particularly democratic and equal society remains central to the mythology of the post-imperial nation. In the 1860s, however, the emergence of this national narrative was framed within British traditions and imperial culture, particularly the idea of a ‘better Britain’. New Zealand’s leader writers emphasised that, despite the extreme distance between their colony and the motherland, ‘sterling, true-hearted and loyal Englishmen are to be found in this distant dependency of the British Empire’.97 New Zealand was an egalitarian ‘far off Britain of the south’.98

New Zealanders, they claimed, lacked the puritanical sternness and intolerance of Britain and America, balancing ‘the equality of social conditions that prevails in the United States’ with ‘the English ideas and prejudices we have brought with us from the old country’.99 The Lyttelton Times gloated that even the working classes ‘lived in plenty’ and could afford an occasional luxury, representing an equality of opportunity that did not exist ‘home’ in Britain or in the United States.100 The Wellington Times proposed the best welcome for the prince would involve settlers of all classes and standings, from ‘our leading merchants and traders’ down to ‘our mechanics and labourers’.101 In Christchurch, local men paraded with trade or fraternal organisations: the fire brigade (‘Ready, always ready!’), the Ancient Order of Foresters, butchers (‘The Roast Beef of Old England’), engineers and iron workers, the Independent Order of Oddfellows of the Manchester Union, ‘Lancashire and Cheshire men’, and a group of Maori, a dose of ‘local colour’, dressed in blue coats and scarlet sashes and carrying the British flag.102 While the notion of a democratic planning process and popular participation in events is not completely unfounded, it glossed over the political and social fault lines revealed by the occasion of the royal visit.103

Local critics of these processes challenged the royal tour as an elitist production constructed by the colonial government and social elites to exclude the working public. Settler publics in New Zealand’s major towns protested at Alfred’s limited and controlled interactions with the people of New Zealand; attempts by local elites to charge entrance fees to see the prince or to limit entry to ‘respectable’ colonists; and the use of public buildings and spaces for private events. New Zealand’s poverty in relation to the Australian colonies was also a constant point of contestation. The fact that New Zealanders could not and should not pay for a grand welcome in the style of the Australian visit and in the face of communal and individual poverty was repeated again and again in editorials and letters.104 As in South Africa and elsewhere
in the empire, the propaganda of the royal tour and the mythology of New Zealand as a democratic Britain of the South, disseminated by social elites and the colonial press, were frequently contested, in counter-discourses that appealed to imperial citizenship and British liberty.

While the sense of cultural and political difference across geographic spaces was less pronounced in New Zealand than in South Africa, provincialism played an important role in how colonial subjects interpreted the royal tour. In the days before ‘Vogelism’, the public works schemes of Colonial Treasurer Julius Vogel during the 1870s that developed networks of infrastructure and communication that connected the provinces together, the settlements of New Zealand were separated by geography and the divergence of local interests. An extension of Vogelism was the abolishment in 1876 of the New Zealand’s ‘quasi-federal system’, which had nurtured sectional conflict between the Provincial Councils and the General Assembly and led to occasional campaigns for separatism.

There were, undoubtedly, tensions and feelings of resentment between different regions and towns, not to mention conflict among people and groups of different social or political standings within these communities: between the more developed South Island and the more recently settled North Island; between town and frontier; and between centres of political and cultural importance, such as Auckland or Wellington, and provincial settlements. Henry Armstrong, a member of the Southland Provincial Council, complained that proper emigration could never be promoted until the Maori were neutralised and ‘provincial jealousies and selfishness die out, and our provincial politicians work together for the common good of the whole colony’. These conceptions of cultural and political difference across the geographical spaces of New Zealand profoundly informed notions of empire, Britishness, and citizenship on the occasion of the royal tour.

**Auckland**

In the North Island, Auckland had served as the capital of the colony from 1841 until 1865. Auckland was made the booms of the 1860s, promoted by immigrant schemes, the presence of imperial troops during the Waikato War, and the Thames gold rush in 1868. It was a planned settlement and administrative hub that served as a launching point for both the wars of the 1850s and 60s and the expansion of settlement into the hinterland. It was a port town dominated by a mercantile elite who sought to project an image of the settlement as a commercial and progressive place of economic growth and civic
ROYAL TOURISTS

improvement. In 1869, this mythology was immediately threatened, as local social elites understood the situation, by Te Kooti’s raids on North Island settlements and the neglect of the imperial government.

Auckland had recently lost its status as the colonial capital to Wellington – the decision to move made by a commission appointed by the governor, Sir George Grey. The mood was further darkened by conflict with the Maori and a commonly articulated belief that the imperial government was not sufficiently providing for the colonists’ defence. Thus, the editors made significant efforts to contrast Auckland with the new capital at Wellington while using the opportunity of the royal tour to criticise a neglectful imperial government. The *Daily Southern Cross* compared the excess and waste of Wellington’s royal welcome to Auckland’s more sombre and efficient plans to welcome Alfred.109 While New Zealanders were loyal to their Queen and their homeland, given the circumstances, they were in no mood to expend precious funds on triumphal arches and welcome dinners. Other writers lampooned the local celebration of Aucklanders as the most loyal citizen-subjects of Queen Victoria in all the empire, positing that Aucklanders were ‘as loyal as the average subjects of the empire, and neither less nor more’.110 This was not merely a jesting comment about the most common trope of the royal tour, that ‘we’ are the Queen’s most loyal subjects; it also reflected a tinge of anger in the coverage of the visit, directed at an imperial government that was neglecting to fulfil its obligations to its colonial children.

The welcome for Alfred was bungled when the prince’s ship *Galatea* arrived days ahead of schedule with little notice. Local organising committees were shocked by this development and scrambled to complete the construction of stages and triumphal arches as far as possible in a very short period. Workers were ‘engaged from midnight’, preparing the decorations so that they would be ready in time.111 The *Daily Southern Cross* lamented that ‘his Royal Highness may be deprived of some of the special treats he had in store for him if he had waited another day’112 This frustration reflects the careful choreography of the visits, the performances of which were carefully planned by colonial officials and town elders in advance, and the lack of coordination and communication between imperial, colonial, and local officials. The example of Auckland in 1869 offers no historical drama but does show how relatively mundane controversies and problems – debates about loyalty and addresses or the early arrival of a visiting dignitary – became important topics of discussion in civic culture, reflecting on the exaggerated significance attached to the visits at the local level.
Wellington

Located on the southern end of the North Island, Wellington was founded as the first organised settlement in New Zealand, in 1840, with the settlement of several hundred settlers at the mouth of the Hutt River called Britannia. When this was flooded and destroyed the New Zealand Company moved the settlement to Lambton Harbour, the site of modern Wellington. It rapidly became a trade centre that survived through trade with the Maori and benefited from local production of wool. It became the colonial capital in 1865, moved to reflect the developments of new settlements and the discovery of gold on the South Island. By 1867, it had a population of only 7,460 residents. Wellington was a fledging urban centre that was only starting to benefit from the attraction of capital and business brought on by its establishment as the capital. The mythology of Wellington came to focus on its role as the ‘Empire City’, as the first British settlement in New Zealand and the capital of a British Empire in the Pacific.\textsuperscript{113}

In 1869, the settler press contrasted the people of the Empire City with their brethren in Australia, the older and more celebrated colony of the region. Waiting for Alfred to arrive, the \textit{Wellington Independent}, for instance, compared the character of youthful New Zealand with that of its older cousin Australia, arguing that New Zealand’s continued provincialism was inhibiting progress.\textsuperscript{114} The Australian colony of Victoria, they noted, possessed networks of railroads and communications that New Zealand lacked in the days before Vogelism. This infrastructure integrated the provinces and connected them to other major population centres on the continent, creating an environment that promoted ‘nation over province’. Moreover, Victoria had a ‘real capital’ – ‘Marvelous Melbourne’ – where ‘the bulk of wealth and business is centred’.\textsuperscript{115} New Zealand, on the other hand, was ‘made up of a number of distinct provinces, each with its capital town on the seaboard’.\textsuperscript{116} The \textit{Independent} imagined New Zealand to be a collection of outward-looking cores rather than a united whole (and they were quite right).

In this emerging mythology, Wellington would become New Zealand’s Melbourne, a political and economic centre, which would lead the colony into a future of prosperity and progress. At the same time, because of the motherland’s neglect, New Zealand was not developed enough to compete with Australia. In this context, Wellington, as the capital, could not compete with Australia or even ‘give His Royal Highness such a welcome as would do justice to the whole of the colony’.\textsuperscript{117} Thus the \textit{Independent} asserted that the people of Wellington should forsake the ‘scores of triumphal arches’, which the prince had
seen in every other colony, to offer more austere but authentic expressions of loyalty to Queen and Empire. The royal tour was framed by local elites as an opportunity for Wellington to live up to local values and its unique destiny as the (British) Empire City of New Zealand.

The visit did elicit a language of contestation, but it was one articulated by the ‘haves’ rather than the ‘have-nots’ of Wellington’s social order. The Wellington papers complained that Governor George Bowen was conspiring to ‘not allow the Duke to mix with the general public more than can be possibly helped’, denying the duke opportunities to inspire loyalty among his mother’s subjects and the general public the opportunity to express their loyalty. The requests of loyal friendly societies to meet with the duke, for instance, were answered at the last possible moment, giving little opportunity for members to organise and assemble in time. Upon witnessing crowds gathered the meet the prince, Bowen failed to stop the carriages so that Alfred might spend a few moments interacting with his mother’s subjects. In the language of social control, the editors of the Evening Standard asserted: ‘where Kings, Queens, and Princes are concerned, these people are easily pleased, and it is therefore a greater pity to lose any opportunity of pleasing the people during a visit like the present’. As far as they were concerned, the governor had missed crucial opportunities not only for binding New Zealand closer to Britain but also, and perhaps more importantly, for securing the obedience of the lower classes. In Wellington, Alfred’s visit served local ends, to contribute to the mythology of the Empire City and its people as well as an imagined method of social control.

South Africa and New Zealand (1901)

The South African War was a transitional moment in the history of the British Empire. The imperial war effort represented both the strengths of the British Empire, when young men from across the empire came to serve Queen and Empire, and its darkest moment, the near-defeat of the greatest empire the world had ever known by some ‘farmers’, the use of brutal tactics and concentration camps under Kitchener, and the emergence of discontent in the colonies of settlement over the lack of imperial gratitude for their contributions and sacrifices.

In a way, the stories of South Africa and New Zealand after this moment, during the first half of the twentieth century, could hardly be more different. The settlement of the South African War and the Union of South Africa in 1910 reconciled the white populations of the subcontinent, setting in motion the decline and end of British influence in southern Africa: the Maritz (Boer) Rebellion in 1914 and controversy
over South Africa’s participation in the British war effort during both World Wars; the Statute of Westminster in 1934; and the declaration of a republic in 1961. The national story of New Zealand, on the other hand, remained intertwined with a British one even after the establishment of dominion status in 1907. It was forged in the blood of ANZAC troops during the First World War, it is often claimed, and only quietly drifted away from British influence though remaining proud of its British roots.

Although the British colonies in New Zealand and southern Africa developed into modern nation-states over the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century in profoundly different ways, the language of Britishness and ideas about British traditions of liberty and citizenship continued to inform political and cultural discourses of New Zealand and among English-speaking South Africans into the twentieth century. This may not be a surprising claim in the context of New Zealand, but it is an undervalued truth about the history of South Africa. The story of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York’s world tour of 1901 reflects both the changes and continuities in imperial culture, of colonies that had largely overcome their sectional divisions evident in the 1860s and had developed more self-confident and independent national identities. At the same time, while non-imperial identities were clearly on the move, Britishness and imperial citizenship continued to shape how people in the empire imagined themselves and their communities.

In the aftermath of Queen Victoria’s death in January 1901, the idea of her as an imperial mother, uniting the global offspring of Great Britain, became particularly meaningful to the cosmology of imperial citizenship. New Zealand celebrated its unique place in this history as the first colony founded during the reign of Queen Victoria. This mythology was localised further when combined with the notion that New Zealand was a particularly egalitarian and democratic society. Appealing to a concept that might be termed imperial democracy, the Lyttelton Times proposed that the British monarch was, in fact, the elected ‘President of the Commonwealth’, chosen ‘as though we had a quinquennial election’. The Evening Post (Wellington) explained that the coexistence of monarchy and democracy, nation and empire was no paradox:

The youthful colonial democracy, untrammeled as it is by the long-drawn traditions of the past, is suddenly brought to a vivid realisation of the historical associations which centre round a throne, and because that throne is now the symbol of ordered liberty, no less than national unity, it feels stirring within it the inherited sentiment of loyalty which for the Briton suggests no servility, and leads to no loss of self-respect.
ROYAL TOURISTS

In celebration of the Great Queen’s reign, the duke laid the foundation stones for statues of the late Queen, paid for by local subscriptions, in an act that was repeated across the empire.\(^\text{127}\)

Public discourse in New Zealand also focused on competition with newly federated Australia and New Zealand’s place in the Australasian British Empire. On the eve of the royal visit, the *Otago Witness* argued that the royal tour could ‘hardly fail to quicken the growing desire to join the Commonwealth’.\(^\text{128}\) Despite this expressed desire to join the Australian Commonwealth, there was constant discussion, as there had been during the earlier tours, of how New Zealand could compete with their richer and older Australian cousins. There was wide consensus in the settler press, however, that New Zealand could not compete with the spectacle of the Australian visit, nor could the provincial cities of the islands do more than repeat the performances of Auckland; yet Dunedin or Canterbury, local papers argued, were more genuine in their loyalty and patriotism than Marvelous Melbourne or even Auckland.\(^\text{129}\) In this context, the *Otago Daily Times* of Dunedin opposed the government’s plan to put on a military show to compete with, even ‘go one better’ than, New Zealand’s ‘more powerful neighbours’, New South Wales and Victoria.\(^\text{130}\) These sentiments reflect a complexity about New Zealand’s emerging national identity, which became decreasingly provincial in character but reflected multiple allegiances: with a colony-nation of New Zealand, with an Australasian British world, and with Home and the British Empire.

In this context, the complicated politics of the South African War figured importantly during the New Zealand royal tour, particularly the importance of New Zealand’s service to the imperial war cause. Ten contingents and some 6,500 New Zealanders soldiers journeyed to South Africa to serve the war effort, paid for by settler donations.\(^\text{131}\) Contrasted to the cultural discomfort of metropolitan Britons with standing armies, colonial cultures were comparatively militarised spaces, a characteristic than was amplified by conflict in South Africa. Military parades and inspections dominated the itinerary, with New Zealand volunteers travelling hundreds of kilometres to attend these functions. The most anticipated moment came when the Duke of Cornwall and York pinned medals for valour and service on New Zealand’s imperial troops, which one paper suggested would prevent the volunteers from ever removing their uniforms again.

In pro-war discourses, protest against the war was dismissed, loyalty and service to the empire against Afrikaner despotism celebrated.\(^\text{132}\) Moreover, most of the papers affirmed the imperial solidarity that the war had stirred, symbolised in the ‘blood, mingling in a common stream on the South African field, of Imperial soldier and imperial
trooper’. New Zealand could be counted on to give a hand when the mother country and the empire were threatened.

At the same time, some elements of the settler press condemned the neglect of the imperial soldier, the young New Zealander fighting for the empire in southern Africa, while the papers were filled with accounts of the royal visit. There were, of course, the medals awarded by the Duke of Cornwall, but the tour planners had apparently forgotten about the war effort abroad. The editors of the Lyttelton Times complained that imperial and colonial officials were neglecting their boys in South Africa. Parents awaited news of the fate of their sons.

Lord Kitchener’s plea for supplies ‘is utterly ignored, and the men are left to get through a particularly severe winter with none of the assistance that was considered so necessary twelve months ago’. This was a failure of both the government and the public, the Times argued, and did not reflect opposition to the war but a general apathy. While veterans and empire were celebrated, it was claimed, those who were suffering and dying on the frontlines of an imperial war were forgotten.

Moreover, the colonial press frequently complained about how New Zealand’s volunteer brigades, many of whom had seen war service and who were important players in the performance of the royal tour, were treated poorly and unfairly by the tour planners. The volunteers who attended the festivities in Wellington, for instance, complained that their sleeping quarters were a ‘veritable mudhole’ and their meals were ‘underdone and scanty’. For the troop review at Christchurch, volunteers had to take nine days’ leave from their jobs, travel in open trucks in blistering heat to the city, and sleep in uncomfortable and inadequate living conditions. This concern over the treatment of the volunteers reflected the specific grievance about the relationship between a colony-nation and its motherland.

More than on previous tours, the Maori represented ‘local colour’ during the visit and were firmly appropriated by the emerging national mythology of New Zealand. The age of Maori wars behind them, tour planners incorporated, and the colonial press celebrated, Maori people and customs a part of the story of New Zealand. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, the appropriation of local peoples into imperial culture sought simultaneously to prove the benefits of British civilisation on vanquished peoples and to contrast the heights of British progress (the future) with quaint but no longer dangerous cultures of superstition and barbarism (the past). Moreover, their presence propagated an illusion of consent and what James Belich calls the ‘myth of empire’, that white settlement and conquest was New Zealand’s destiny.
There were also more subtle expressions of this mythology: welcome signs welcoming the prince in both English and Maori; ‘Haeremai’, or ‘Welcome’, painted on the Harbour Board Arch; Maori children singing ‘God Save the King’.\textsuperscript{142}

This narrative sounds remarkably similar to that of southern Africa, but this discourse was different. It reflected a settler mythology of racial harmony and even cooperation, symbolised in the Treaty of Waitangi. The \textit{Otago Daily Times} described ‘Natives, the descendants of a race that proved the worthy foemen in bygone days’ who ‘mingled freely with pioneer colonists and their native-born children’.\textsuperscript{143} Symbolically, expressions of loyalty to the British monarchy, in addresses or performance, proved most important in this mythology – as if the Maori were admitting their errors and willingly giving in to the greater and better power. The \textit{Otago Daily Times} even suggested that ‘there are no more loyal Britishers in all the Empire’ than the Maori.\textsuperscript{144} Despite their convergences, the histories of ‘white–native’ relations in New Zealand and South Africa had much in common – warfare, dispossession, tribalisation, alcoholism, and poverty – and ended up variations of conquest, segregation, and control.

The settler press also argued that imperial loyalism and national pride transcended the social and political chasms of local politics. In the presence of royalty, ‘even an anarchist might permit himself to cheer’.\textsuperscript{145} In Otago, the \textit{Otago Daily Times} celebrated the crowds who assembled as representing a cross-section of colonial society: ‘the miner and the farmer had thrown down their implements, the teacher closed his school and the business man his store … from remote corners of Otago’ to pay their respects.\textsuperscript{146} In a related vein, Premier John Seddon planned the erection of special stands for elderly pensioners, ‘the men who have made the colony with their toil’, and reflected on the specialness of New Zealand within the empire: while other colonies were busy preparing arches and designing pageantry, New Zealanders were caring for their founding settlers in old age.\textsuperscript{147} While the \textit{Otago Witness} complained that such representations of New Zealand as a ‘working man’s paradise’ duped new workers into settling in New Zealand, only to find the same conditions they would find anywhere else in the empire, they also articulated a vision for what the royal tour ought to represent to the democratic social order of New Zealand:

Here is a splendid opportunity for drawing a contrast between New Zealand and all the other colonies of the Empire. They spent their ingenuity upon arches and designs of various kinds. We can show a spectacle that will be as pathetic, as significant of the progress we have been making…. There are our pensioners, the men who have made the colony with their toil, and now we provide for their old age.\textsuperscript{148}
The myth of democracy and social harmony was contested and challenged across New Zealand, but the idea became central to the apparatus of an emerging nationalism, which focused on these unique attributes of New Zealand’s national character. These traits simultaneously served to underline New Zealand’s peculiarity as an egalitarian society and to trace the colony-nation’s roots in the British diaspora.

The limits of this social harmony, even in the elite settler press, demonstrate the instabilities of the constructed narrative. Two authors (‘Tea and Sugar’ and ‘A Member of the MUIOOF’) complained that the Employers’ Association of Canterbury had decided to open their shops on the Saturday of the royal visit, denying members of the ‘various friendly societies of this city’ and others the chance to participate in the festivities.149 In Wellington, the New Zealand Lance criticised the ‘bungling’ and elitism demonstrated by the local planning committees in their welcome to the duke and duchess. The process, dominated by local elites, was characterised by a series of ‘squabbles, bickerings, and cross-purposes’, what the Lance called ‘too many cooks spoiling the broth’.150 The local committee had committed more money to the festivities than they had in their coffers and proceeded with a ‘dictatorial spirit’ that was unworthy of a democratic community.151 The Lance argued that putting up arches was contrary to the egalitarian spirit of New Zealand and that citizens should be encouraged, instead, to decorate their homes and businesses to their own liking.152 And the editors were enraged when they learned of plans to rope off the streets and erect barricades, which they argued might be a necessary practice in Russia or Germany but not among ‘free and loyal’ ‘Anglo-Saxon peoples’.153

The narrative of democracy and egalitarianism both produced and challenged the mythology of New Zealand as a nation. The Observer of Auckland challenged the boundaries of acceptable discourse when it encouraged the citizen-subjects of the city to demonstrate restraint and self-respect, representing not only a fierce criticism of excessive celebration of the visit but also an emerging understanding of what it meant to be a New Zealander:

‘Please don’t!’ Imagine a horde of Dervishes wildly dancing round you, eager to shake a hand that has only just recovered from the previous town’s manipulatory efforts; imagine the frightful fawning and sickening sycophancy a democratic community has subjected this lady and gentleman to, who have done nothing to merit the horror of it all. And Auckland is prepared to do the thing on the same servile scale as the ridiculous multitude of the Commonwealth. It is good to be loyal … but is it worth while destroying in Royal eyes the qualities that have individualised us?154
The editors continued:

In this matter the reputation of the Auckland people is at stake.... To those favoured individuals who are permitted to wear the bell-topper of distinction or the frockcoat of fealty, we humbly ask that they desist from kissing the royal hand, even if the Royal hand is in so helpless a state as to be of no assistance as a defence. New Zealand is an example to all the world [in its own imagination] of progress.... The Duke's name is not Baal, and he doesn't want to be worshipped.... [I]n coming to New Zealand's fortunately first and fairest city, the recollection we would like him to carry away is that Auckland's citizens had not established a reputation made in a day for fawning, sycophancy, or ill-manners.155

This commentary reflects the complex and conflicted nature of national identity in New Zealand. Many themes were the same in 1901 as they were in 1869: the role of social class in discourses and counter-discourses of belonging, a mythology of democracy and egalitarianism, and the legacy of the British diaspora in the traditions and mythologies of the colony-nation. There were also differences.

The end of the land wars and the spread of the European population had neutralised a large proportion of the Maori population, who became more than ‘local colour’. They emerged as principal actors in a story of New Zealand, from which the brutal and violent past was largely excised. In the context of declining provincialism and the development of infrastructure and technologies that resulted in a better-connected New Zealand, there also emerged a more independent and self-confident national identity and politics that was based in both the uniqueness of New Zealand and its relationship with a British homeland.156 While New Zealand and South Africa had much in common, a significant divergence can be detected during the era of the South African War, of a New Zealand that would retain a certain political, economic, and cultural closeness with the motherland and a South Africa that began to more aggressively push away.157 At the same time, while New Zealand grew increasingly reliant on British trade and capital, the goldfields and diamond mines of southern Africa were thoroughly saturated in British capital. Moreover, the traditions and mythologies of Britishness and empire continued to inform political and cultural discourses for both British settlers and ‘colonial others’ in both places well into the twentieth century.

The South African leg of the world tour was nearly cancelled because of an epidemic of bubonic plague in Cape Town.158 In response, the editors of the *Graham's Town Journal* asserted that ‘Capetown is not the Colony, and that a railway trip throughout the other ports and the chief inland towns would give their Royal Highnesses a better
idea of the country, and bring them in touch with most of the loyal population’. This public relations nightmare, as the Colonial Office understood the situation, led to a hurried exchange of letters between London and the Cape. The visit was important as pro-empire propaganda in the midst of the South African War. Upon hearing of the possibility that HMS Ophir, with royal passengers on board, would coal at Simonstown and depart without a visit, W. F. Hely-Hutchinson, the governor at the Cape, encouraged the Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain of the great political importance of the visit, that the ‘[Afrikaner] Bond’ was quite fearful ‘that the visit may weaken their position’. The British High Commissioner Alfred Milner also apparently worried that ‘the disloyal section of the people would make great capital out of its abandonment’. Thus, after expert opinion asserted that the health of the royal visitors would not be at risk, the duke and duchess travelled across South Africa, from Natal to Pietermaritzburg and on to Cape Town in the middle of a colonial war.

In the history of colonial South Africa, the South African War represents the end of an era of Anglo-Boer hostility and aggression, and the emergence of a white unity and dominance that these antagonisms had staved off. It also marked the symbolic end of the ‘imperial factor’ in South African history, the beginnings of a united and independent nation-state that came to be dominated by Afrikaans-speaking settlers and would not take its cues from London. On the other hand, British political and cultural traditions profoundly informed the body politic of post-Union South Africa. The example of Jan Christian Smuts, the grand old man of early twentieth-century South African politics and two-time prime minister (1919–24, 1939–48), is instructive in this regard. While he was an Afrikaner who had fought on the Boer side during the South African War, he ended up leading the suppression of the Maritz Rebellion during the Great War and serving as a British field marshal during the Second World War. In Parliament Square, he is immortalised in bronze as an imperial hero and Commonwealth statesman. For the English-speaking populations of South Africa, particularly those who lived in the cultural bastions of Britishness, in Cape Town, Natal, and the Eastern Cape, and those ethnic and racial ‘others’ with whom the language of British liberty and citizenship resonated, Britishness and imperial citizenship remained vibrant political and cultural discourses. Thus, the way that ‘British’ settlers imagined the 1901 royal tour reflected the decline of regional identities and the continued relevance of Britishness and the ‘imperial factor’.

The war and the recent death of Queen Victoria amplified the use of her mythology as a symbol of British liberty and progress, as the patriot Queen. In this mythology, she represented all that was good about
the British cause in the war and the continued relevance of Britain and the empire to South Africa. The tour was a sombre affair, with its principal actors and their colonial observers to mourn the Queen and the war dead. Tour organisers instructed men and women to wear dark or black clothing and discouraged shouting and cheering. Yet Victoria also represented the triumph of British rule in southern Africa in this discourse, the ‘freedom and progress’ brought on by her rule.163 Her subjects, ‘the only Queen most of them had ever known’, universally respected and loved her regardless of race or ethnicity.164 The Natal Mercury claimed that she had ‘discerned true Colonial and Imperial policy long before many of her most eminent statesmen’ and that her rule had convinced republicans across Britain and the empire to renounce their beliefs and embrace constitutional monarchy.165 This was a rosy picture that glossed over a history of violence, warfare, and dispossession, but it projected a powerful myth about what it meant to be a British citizen-subject in southern Africa.

In a related vein, the inauguration of the federal parliament of Australia represented a future possibility for South Africa in these discourses of imperial identity, with the colony rising from the ashes of war to achieve status as the third ‘great federation’ of the British Empire.166 The progress of the Australian visit was carefully reported by the English-speaking press of South Africa and came to represent what the country might become, a federation that ‘will only be too readily granted to South Africa when the bitterness of war has passed, and Boer and Briton agree to pursue the ideal that has made the great Commonwealth in the South viz., “one people, one destiny”’.167 However, the editors of the Cape Argus argued that it ‘rests with the Boers and Afrikanders to decide when the era of self-government will be inaugurated’.168 The Natal Mercury prophesied the possible benefits of the royal tour, that it would cause the Boers to ‘better understand what British rule is, and what advantages it offers to all who are willing to accept it’.169 While there was considerable foresight in this vision, of a rapprochement between the British colonies and the Boer republics, it was wrong in predicting which side would come to dominate a federated South African state. The leader writers of the British South African press did not have the benefit of retrospect, of knowing that the country would become an Afrikaner-dominated state, so there is little fairness in dismissing their compelling appeals to Queen and Empire as inconsequential.

In fact, the English-language press portrayed the rebellious Dutch-speaking population as a defeated people. The Natal Mercury asserted that the Afrikaner cause was effectively crushed during the First Anglo-Boer War: ‘As they failed, the future South Africa will be an
all-British South Africa.” The *Cape Argus* argued that the Boers had failed to effectively climb the civilisational ladder and now the British subject-citizens of South Africa had passed them to possess a political and cultural monopoly on progress and civilisation:

When the Cape Colony passed into the Empire it was peopled by settlers a century behind the times. They had left Europe and its civilisation in the 17th century and ever since then they had lived outside and beyond the reach of current progress…. All labour … was performed by the aborigines…. There was little or no education…. Their isolation at the Cape … made their ignorance hereditary…. Such were the subjects Great Britain acquired in the beginning of the last century. They were the antithesis of Englishmen in habits both of life and of thought. 

One popularly conceived way of countering the influence of the Afrikaners in the post-war state was to promote British immigration, but multiple immigration schemes, the editors of the *Graham’s Town Journal* contested, had been sabotaged and cancelled by successive colonial governments, which feared angering the Boers. After the war, this had been Alfred Milner’s project in the Transvaal. Post-war South Africa was foreseen to be a very British place.

The colonial press of South Africa also highlighted the importance of empire and imperial citizenship to a post-war South African political and social order. To them, the war effort and the royal tour exemplified the ‘solidarity of the empire’ and the ‘liberties of the people’. With the outpouring of loyalty to the duke and duchess by the people of the South African colonies, the editors of the *Natal Mercury* suggested that:

[T]he idea that the Colonies were like fruit growing on the parent stem, readying to drop whenever ripe, was dispelled, and the simile of a great oak throwing out its mighty branches never to fall or rot away while the roots of the parent tree held the ground, was found to be more appropriate.

Rather than drifting away from empire, these English-speaking leader writers argued that an emerging national identity was ‘perfectly compatible with attachment to the broader ideal of empire’. The *Cape Argus* even appealed to the democracy and equality of New Zealand society as proof, arguing that New Zealand was more of a republic under Queen Victoria than the Boer republics were in their hostility to empire. Here, New Zealand became a model of what South Africa ought to become!

The British colonial press also constructed a mythology of the war that emphasised an imperial identity over or in concert with a national
one. The *Natal Mercury* celebrated the imperial war effort in celebratory language:

No call to arms was needed, no request of help had to be made. At the first note of danger, Britain’s sturdy sons in the ‘seven seas’ shouldered their rifles, read and willing to do or die for Queen and Empire. Form north to south, from east and west they flocked around the grand old flag, and gave the world the most convincing spectacle it had ever seen of the firm foundation of the British Empire, and of the whole-souled devotion of the Colonies to the Crown…. Colonial and Home-born have fought and died side by side for the common cause of Empire, and their blood has consecrated the great ideal of Imperial unity.  

In this context, the duke’s tribute to those who had suffered and died in the siege of Ladysmith, where he could not visit for security reasons, contributed to a mythology of imperial identity forged in the war effort. Alongside the World Wars, the South African War was a formative moment in the making of imperial and national identities in the colonies of settlement, processes that were more pronounced in the warzone, where the languages of Britishness and imperial citizenship justified the war and served as a vision for the future.

While it is completely reasonable for scholars to underscore the development of a national identity in the South African War and its aftermath, this narrative suppresses a counter-narrative that was not unfounded in its prophecies. It may have been wishful thinking on the part of the British settler community to assume that a minority of the English-speaking population would dominate the majority Afrikaner population in a federated state, yet the risks of imperial withdrawal and Afrikaner domination were well understood:

South Africa is necessary to the preservation of the Empire…. England can never again think to shirk the responsibility of the defence of this country; nor can she afford to permit legislation or administration here that is not heartily Imperialist…. The situation is not like that in, say New Zealand, where the loyalty of the whole population is undoubted, and where the stability of the Empire does not hang upon the retention of that very valuable dependency. Here, however, it is a very dangerous fooling to lose Imperial control over local government, and to place power in the hands of a faction who do not disguise their intention for using it against the Empire.  

This understanding of South Africa’s future and the importance of Britishness was darker and more cynical than those discourses that focused on the almost natural progress of British liberty in South Africa, but it reflected the same fundamental principle: that the imperial connection was crucial to the South African body politic and could
be abandoned neither by English-speaking South Africans nor the imperial government. This understanding was reflected later in pleas to the imperial government and the monarchy to refuse approval of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

While the royal tour was celebrated for bringing together the late Queen’s subjects, their loyalty, ethnic, racial, and geographical divisions profoundly informed perceptions of the visit. The Natal Mercury worried that the government-appointed planning commission suffered from a bad case of ‘officialdom’ and neglected the needs and wants of the public. There were other protests – over where duke and duchess would visit and how long they would spend in each locale; over the appropriateness of a royal visit during a war; and over the suspension of the constitution and the institution of martial law. In Graham’s Town on the Eastern Cape, the Natal Mercury worried about the prospect of a royal tour in the middle of a bloody conflict, that time and resources were being unnecessarily used and that celebration was inappropriate in these sombre times. They argued that the communities of South Africa ‘have been depleted of their best men, are impoverished through the war and many of them are still under Martial law’. They argued that while Cape Town had profited richly from the war, even that city could not offer a proper welcome to royal visitors. South Africa was a ‘sad sister in the great colonial family’ and not prepared for guests.

Moreover, the spectre of Cape separatism and Eastern Cape provincialism survived the progress of the war, even if it posed little threat to the political order of a British-dominated South Africa. On the Eastern Cape, the Graham’s Town Journal invested its politics in the language of British loyalism, particularly against the imperial and settler interests in Cape Town that failed to push forward completely against ‘the chronic and bitter conspiracy of Africanderism’. They condemned the editors of the Cape Argus, who, they argued, observed their suffering with a spirit of apathy and condescension:

Nothing is more charming than the calm, untroubled attitude of the Cape Argus in regard to the present war. It shows no sign of weariness or discouragement, and indeed expresses decided satisfaction at the slowly sure, and surely slow progress of the campaign.... The Argus man’s calm is unruffled, and he is sure that the highest military authorities also, do not care a tinker’s anathema what the opinion of the plundered and imperiled population ... may be.... [Imperial military planners have] forced [themselves] generally upon the loyal inhabitants of the Midland and Northern districts of this Colony.... Capetown ... cares remarkably little about the sufferings of the rest of the Colony.

As in an earlier age, the editors of the Journal remained hostile to the Western Cape, now seen as a hotbed of disloyalty and irresolution in
a time of war. They condemned ‘a Bond ministry of weaklings and traitors’, ‘the disastrous session of Parliament last year, which very greatly encouraged disloyalty and rebellion’, a lack of ‘foresight and resolution … [in] calling out the available force and volunteers of the Colony, and planting them on the south bank of the Orange’, and the ‘failure to prevent the seditious from holding meetings and publishing falsehoods’. 

In particular, these editors challenged the extension of martial law to all of South Africa while the ‘focus of treason’, the Cape Town settler press, was left to ‘belch forth its lies and sedition’. The suspension of the constitution and the proposed imposition of martial law was condemned by many politicians and journalists as contrary to a British tradition of liberty. In response, the editors of the *Graham’s Town Journal* argued that the current system was ‘dangerous and unworkable’ and that most of the population was neither ‘so loyal or so politically intelligent’ as to be trusted with the privilege of responsible government. These echoes of Cape separatism were not anti-imperialist but were, in fact, couched in a language of Britishness and loyalism. These protests had much in common with the language of contestation used by their enemies, the Boers, of the imperialism and meddling of the imperial government and Cape Town.

Despite the *Graham’s Town Journal*’s pronounced hostility toward Cape Town and its inhabitants, British South Africa had largely overcome the dominance of provincial identities to establish a more national British identity, developed through the emergence of responsible government and the development of railways and telegraph wires and forged in war. The Treaty of Vereeniging (1902) and the Union of South Africa (1910) created the political and cultural conditions for a reconciliation between the hostile colonial populations of southern Africa. Of course, the reconstruction scheme of Sir Alfred Milner and his Kindergarten after the war sought to ‘Anglicise’ South Africa through British immigration, education, and modernisation, but he failed to overcome Boer political and cultural dominance. While these developments also cultivated the end of the so-called imperial connection and an emerging national identity, the end of empire and British influence in South Africa was not a foregone conclusion. British traditions and mythologies of belonging, that ‘forgotten nationalism’, continued to shape South African political culture, and an attachment to empire remained a cultural force well into the twentieth century. Moreover, as the next chapter demonstrates, these discourses were not limited to settlers of English or British ancestry but to diverse populations who cast their lot with the British monarchy and the British Empire.
Conclusion

Over time, the provincialism and localism of these British cores, in Otago and Natal, the Eastern Cape and Wellington, were transcended by new political orders, responsible government, and new networks of communication and transportation, all of which encouraged the development of national mythologies of belonging over local and imperial ones. Despite these changes, which posed significant challenges to the ‘imperial factor’ in colonial societies, Britishness and imperial citizenship continued to inform the political and cultural lives of twentieth-century South Africans and New Zealanders. While the two colony-nations diverged in obvious and well-known ways, they also continued to share the political and cultural traditions of Britishness and an imperial culture.

While New Zealand is a more obvious example of this phenomenon than the far more complicated case of South Africa, Vivian Bickford-Smith has rightly characterised Britishness as South Africa’s ‘forgotten nationalism’. British flags, for instance, were flown at city halls in Natal and the Eastern Cape until the 1990s! Even if British-imperial identities might have been more diffuse in southern Africa, the modern national identities of both South Africa and New Zealand emerged out of the political and cultural milieu of British imperial culture. In the long term, the former came to dominate the latter, but this was – as this chapter suggests – a process rather than a foregone conclusion.

While these trends might be examined usefully in another – or perhaps larger – context, the multivalent ways in which colonial subjects responded to and made sense of the royal tours offer particularly fertile terrain for assessing loyalism, Britishness, and citizenship in the settler empire. Even as colonial officials and local elites in sought to use royal visits to promote colonial loyalty to Queen and Empire and social solidarity, the various counter-discourses that were produced by colonial subjects – of provincialism, class conflict, and disagreements between metropole and colony – clearly exhibit the geographical, political, and social fault lines that characterised nineteenth-century settler societies. While more firmly local and national identities displaced imperial ones over time, as a result of responsible government, the decline of provincialism, and technological change, these new identities were not constructed on the ashes of a British-imperial culture but on the social, political, and cultural foundation that colonial subjects had built during the nineteenth century.
ROYAL TOURISTS

Notes

1 While southern Africa stood at the verge of the mineral revolutions that would transform its political economy forever, the Cape experienced its own economic boom, the result of surging wool production and (as James Belich points out) importation. James Belich, Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939 [Oxford, 2009], 374–7.

2 Nigel Worden, E. Van Heyningen, and Vivian Bickford-Smith, Cape Town: The Making of a City [Cape Town, 1998], 166; Saul Solomon, The Progress of His Royal Highness Prince Alfred Ernest Albert through the Cape Colony, British Kaffiria, the Orange Free State, and Port Natal, in the Year 1860 [Cape Town, 1861], xi.


4 Star, 14 April 1869.

5 Lyttelton Times, 22 April 1869.

6 Star, 17 April 1869.

7 Star, 23 April 1869.

8 Star, 21 April 1869.


15 Saul Dubow, ‘How British Was the British World? The Case of South Africa’, JICH 37, no. 1 [2009], 7.


20 Tye, ‘New Zealand’, 208.

21 Many of the National Library of New Zealand’s newspapers have been digitised as part of the Papers Past project: http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz. See also David Hastings, Extra! Extra! How the People Made the News [Auckland, 2013].

22 Tye, ‘New Zealand’, 209.

BUILDING NEW JERUSALEMS

24 Paging through History: 150 Years with the 'Cape Argus' [Cape Town, 2007], 7.
26 Otago Witness, 20 March 1901.
31 Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘Providing Local Colour? “Cape Coloureds” and Cape Town’s Identity from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Near Present’, American Historical Association, 8 January 2010.
32 Philippa Mein Smith, A Concise History of New Zealand [Cambridge, 2005], 78–82.
34 Dubow, ‘How British Was the British World?’, 4.
35 Worden et al., Cape Town, 176.
36 Anderson, Imagined Communities, 92–3. Jan Smuts is perhaps the best-known example of colonials transcending the political and cultural space of the periphery.
38 A Colonist, A Proposal for the Confederation of the Australian Colonies, with Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, as King of Australia [Sydney, 1867].
39 South Africa Commercial Advertiser, 1 August 1860.
40 Dubow, ‘How British Was the British World?’, 6.
42 Graham’s Town Journal, 15 August 1860.
43 South African Commercial Advertiser, 4 August 1860.
44 South African Commercial Advertiser, 28 July 1860
45 Timaru Herald, 28 April 1869.
46 Evening Post, 17 April 1869. These understandings of the royal tour did not go unchallenged. For instance, the Evening Post of Wellington satirised the celebration of ‘loyal Maori’, who they claimed had been bribed with promises of alcohol and food.
47 A similar argument is made in the context of American history in Philip Deloria, Playing Indian [New Haven, 1999].
49 For a discussion of this tradition, see Vivian Bickford-Smith, Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town [Cambridge, 1995], 1–2. For an example,
ROYAL TOURISTS


50 The South African Commercial Advertiser condescendingly noted that the ‘great unwashed of our town will live for some months to come, if on nothing else, at least on the gorgeous memories of that blessed period [the royal tour], which for them has secured so many cheap out door exhibitions’, 1 August 1860.


52 Worden et al., Cape Town, 132.

53 Saul Dubow argues that this achievement, along with the work of missionary John Phillip to improve the conditions and treatment of Khoisan people, the anti-slavery movement, and agitation for representative government, are the founding myths of Cape liberalism. Dubow, A Commonwealth of Knowledge, 27.

54 Stanley Trapido, ‘John Fairbairn (1794–1864)’, Oxford DNB.

55 Trapido, ‘John Fairbairn’.

56 Trapido, ‘John Fairbairn’.


58 Solomon, Progress of His Royal Highness, 113.


61 South African Commercial Advertiser, 8 August 1860.


63 South African Commercial Advertiser, 8 September 1860.

64 South African Commercial Advertiser, 28 July 1860.

65 South African Commercial Advertiser, 28 July 1860.


67 South African Commercial Advertiser, 1 August 1860.

68 Francis Fleming, Kaffraria, and Its Inhabitants (London, 1853), 16.

69 Frank Riet, The Settler Celebrations of 1870: Compiled from Contemporary Accounts (Grahamstown, 1970).

70 Solomon, Progress of His Royal Highness, 37.


72 Lester, Imperial Networks, 61–2.

73 Lester, Imperial Networks, 61–2.

74 Lester, Imperial Networks, 48.


76 Graham’s Town Journal, 17 July 1860.

77 Graham’s Town Journal, 15 August 1860.

78 Graham’s Town Journal, 10 July 1860.

79 Graham’s Town Journal, 10 July 1860.

80 Graham’s Town Journal, 31 July 1860.

81 Graham’s Town Journal, 21 July 1860.

82 Graham’s Town Journal, 24 July 1860, 31 July 1860.


84 Graham’s Town Journal, 10 July 1860.

85 Graham’s Town Journal, 24 July 1860.

86 Dalziel, ‘Southern Islands’, 587.

87 Timaru Herald, 10 April 1869.

88 Otago Daily Times, 19 April 1869.
At a March meeting organised to discuss the royal welcome, no fewer than 700 people attended. *Star*, 10 March 1869.

See Raewyn Dalziel, *Julius Vogel, Business Politician* [Auckland, 1986].


Evening Post, 5 May 1869.


*Daily Southern Cross*, 15 April 1869.

*Daily Southern Cross*, 7 May 1869.

*Daily Southern Cross*, 10 May 1869.

*Daily Southern Cross*, 10 May 1869.

Ironically, Wellington had been settled in defiance of the British government, and its settlers resited the rule of Auckland-based governors for a time after 1840.

Wellington Independent, 13 April 1869.

Wellington Independent, 13 April 1869.

Wellington Independent, 13 April 1869.

Wellington Independent, 13 April 1869.

Evening Standard, 14 April 1869.

Evening Standard, 17 April 1869.

Evening Standard, 17 April 1869.

Evening Standard, 17 April 1869.


*Otago Daily Times*, 12 June 1901.

*Lyttelton Times*, 11 June 1901; *Otago Witness*, 12 June 1901.

*Evening Post*, 8 June 1901.

*Otago Witness*, 3 July 1901.

*Otago Witness*, 20 March 1901.

*Otago Witness*, 19 June 1901.

*Otago Daily Times*, 31 May 1901.


*Otago Daily Times*, 14 June 1901.

*Otago Daily Times*, 31 May 1901, 14 June 1901.

*Otago Witness*, 12 June 1901.

*Lyttelton Times*, 11 June 1901.

*Lyttelton Times*, 11 June 1901.

*Lyttelton Times*, 11 June 1901.

*Lyttelton Times*, 11 June 1901.
ROYAL TOURISTS

139 Bruce Herald, 25 June 1901.
140 Otago Witness, 29 May 1901.
142 Otago Witness, 12 June 1901.
143 Otago Witness, 12 June 1901.
144 Otago Daily Times, 15 June 1901.
145 Lyttelton Times, 11 June 1901.
146 Otago Daily Times, 26 June 1901.
147 Otago Witness, 12 June 1901.
148 Otago Witness, 12 June 1901.
149 Lyttelton Times, 17 June 1901.
150 New Zealand Lance, 8 June 1901.
151 New Zealand Lance, 15 June 1901.
152 New Zealand Lance, 8 June 1901.
153 New Zealand Lance, 15 June 1901.
154 Observer, 15 June 1901.
155 Observer, 15 June 1901.
156 The emergence of national political parties is perhaps the best indicator of this change. The Liberal Party as a national party was able to transcend and dominate New Zealand politics in a way that provincial parties or stitched-together regional and national alliances never could.
157 Dalziel, ‘Southern Islands’, 592.
159 Graham’s Town Journal, 13 June 1901.
163 Cape Argus, 24 May 1901.
164 Natal Mercury, 19 July 1901.
165 Natal Mercury, 15 August 1901.
166 Natal Mercury, 13 August 1901.
167 Natal Mercury, 13 August 1901.
168 Cape Argus, 29 June 1901.
169 Natal Mercury, 13 August 1901.
170 Natal Mercury, 3 August 1901.
171 Cape Argus, 16 April 1901.
172 Graham’s Town Journal, 28 July 1901.
173 Natal Mercury, 15 August 1901.
174 Natal Mercury, 15 August 1901.
175 Cape Argus, 10 May 1901.
176 Cape Argus, 10 May 1901.
177 Natal Mercury, 15 August 1901.
178 Natal Mercury, 16 August 1901
179 Graham’s Town Journal, 27 August 1901.
180 Natal Mercury, 12 June 1901.
181 Graham’s Town Journal, 3 August 1901.
182 Graham’s Town Journal, 16 May 1901.
183 Graham’s Town Journal, 18 May 1901.
184 Graham’s Town Journal, 18 May 1901.
185 Graham’s Town Journal, 7 March 1901.
186 Graham’s Town Journal, 28 May 1901.
187 Graham’s Town Journal, 7 March 1901.
188 Graham’s Town Journal, 7 March 1901.

[ 122 ]
In particular, they were angered at the lack of outrage on the part of the Cape Town papers when the northern towns of Colesburg and Aliwal were invaded.

Bickford-Smith, ‘Writing about Englishness’.
Lambert, ‘“An Unknown People”’, 604.