

PIETERMARITZBURG 1838-1988

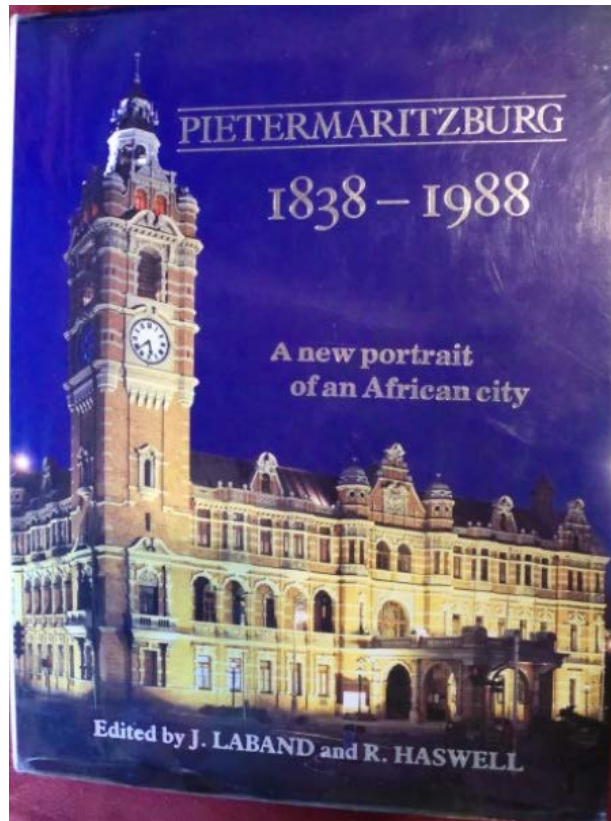
A new portrait of an African city

– Edited by J. Laband and R. Haswell –

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(286 pages)



In 1838, the *Voortrekker* laid out their town within a beautiful circle of hills. Then the British came. They established a garrison at Fort Napier in 1843 and turned the Voortrekker *dorp* into a little colonial city, which was the administrative and legal capital of the Colony of Natal, and economic pivot of the Natal Midlands. With the *Union of South Africa* in 1910, Pietermaritzburg lost the status of a colonial capital and, under the shadow of the nearby port of Durban, sank into provincial stagnation. Only in the recent decades has it revived to become an industrial growth-point and a budding centre of tourism.

Yet Pietermaritzburg is not just a city of whites, heirs of the Voortrekker and British whose architectural heritage still graces its streets. **The area has known continuous human habitation since the Stone Age.** After the Khoisan came Nguni-speaking agriculturalists who were here when the Trekker arrived. Their descendants live in the environs of the City, and are an integral part of its life and work. It is also the home of 'coloured' and Indian communities ... and

who have made their vital contribution to the City's growth and prosperity.
Pietermaritzburg belongs to all these people.

The editors of this book – an historian and a geographer – set out to present a portrait of Pietermaritzburg, which not only depicts its face but also explores *beneath the surface* and reveals the character and personality of the City. Some seventy writers – all experts on specific aspects of Pietermaritzburg – have contributed a text of extraordinary variety and richness. With nearly four hundred illustrations, it offers a fresh look at the past, a wide-ranging survey of the present and a hopeful vision of the future.

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