

**A World of Their Own:
Community, Power, and Resilience at an American School for South African Women,
1869 to Recent Times**

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This is an early draft of the introduction to my dissertation; please do not quote

In January 1929, the American missionary Margaret Walbridge was working to bring light to Zulu women. More specifically, she was struggling to electrify the campus of Inanda Seminary, the Natal girls' boarding high school where she was entering her seventh year as principal. She had recently established that Inanda could tap into Durban's power supply, if it could first overcome the financial constraints facing its parent mission, the Boston-based Congregationalist American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. So Walbridge sent a fundraising pamphlet directly to prospective donors in South Africa and the United States.¹ While she and her staff filled its interior pages with images of the campus' high-ceilinged modern buildings, they reserved the pamphlet's cover for a more visceral demonstration of the school's modernizing project.²

There we first confront a woman "untouched by Christian influence," with one hand on her hip and the other holding a shield; poised and apparently confident in her hat and beads, she fixes her gaze on the photographer with striking assertion. "But for Christian mission schools," a caption claims, "all Zulu women would be like this." To her side stands one "Violet Makanya"—known more frequently in her time and since as Sibusisiwe Violet Makhanya, an accomplished community leader whose deft navigation of and rebellion against the strictures of American and South African philanthropic capital have been amply chronicled, although her depiction here as Inanda's model pupil has never been noted.³ Attired in a housedress, squinting at the camera, this alumna of the Class of 1910 and Inanda teacher from 1915 to 1923 had become a pioneering "Christian leader and social worker" through the "unique influence of Inanda Seminary."

This influence, it emerges, lay in the scale and scope of the school's operation. Founded in 1869, it "has educated in the past and is educating today more Zulu girls than any other school in South Africa," with a "present enrollment over two hundred." Before the pamphlet discloses of what this education consists, it notes that Inanda has received royal sanction, as "the only girls' school which has ever been honored by a visit from the Zulu king." Apparently with the approval of Solomon ka Dinuzulu, who paid the school what Walbridge called a "pop call" in February 1926, the school "trains African girls to become: homemakers, dressmakers, cooks, teachers, home missionaries, and missionaries to other

¹ See Images 1 and 2: "Inanda Seminary, Natal, South Africa," c. 1929, in American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions: African Missions Records, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (henceforth referenced as ABC), Box 15.4, Volume 48.

² This conversion narrative would have been familiar to its core Christian audience. On the circulation of these images in the American context, see Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of US Imperialism* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 94-176.

³ On Makhanya, see Kenneth King, *Pan-Africanism and Education: A Study of Race Philanthropy and Education in the Southern States of America and in East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 227-228; Richard Hunt Davis, Jr., "Producing the 'Good African': South Carolina's Penn School as a Guide for African Education in South Africa," in Agrippah T. Mugomba and Mougou Nyaggah, eds., *Independence without Freedom: The Political Economy of Colonial Education in Southern Africa* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1980), 95-103; Shula Marks, *Not Either an Experimental Doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 30-42; Umehani Khan, "A Critical Study of the Life of Sibusisiwe Makanya and Her Work as Educator and Social Worker in the Umbumbulu District of Natal, 1894-1971" (unpublished masters thesis, University of Natal, 1995); and Robert Vinson and Robert Edgar, "Zulus, African Americans and the African Diaspora," in Benedict Carton, John Laband, and Jabulani Sithole, eds., *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 240-249: 246.

African tribes.”⁴ In its dizzying moves between derogation of Zulu culture and intimation of royal benediction, between its boasts about Makhanya’s social work and suggestion that many graduates would pursue not domestic reform but rather domestic service, the pamphlet exudes what the historian Shula Marks has called the “ambiguities of dependence” — the impossible positions through which people like Walbridge and Makhanya made institutions like Inanda possible within Natal’s contradictory sociopolitical spaces.⁵

Over the course of Walbridge’s fundraising campaign, the ambiguities of her relationship with her model pupil would unravel. In February and March of 1929, Walbridge left Inanda to tour black schools in the American South on a trip funded by the Phelps-Stokes Fund of New York and intended to improve Inanda Seminary’s domestic and agricultural pedagogy (and, with any luck, to raise funds for the electrification scheme). In the course of her travels she met twice with Makhanya, who was wrapping up her own three-year tour of the United States. Makhanya’s tour had also begun as a Phelps-Stokes trip, in this case to train her and fellow teacher Amelia Njongwana in “Jeanes teaching,” a project of domestic and agricultural “home demonstration” pioneered at Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute and peer institutions across the American South. In a series of insubordinations familiar to many South African historians, Makhanya fled the South Carolina industrial school to which her patrons had initially sent her to pursue more intensive training first at Tuskegee, then at Cleveland’s Schaufler Training School, and ultimately at Teachers College, Columbia University. Upon her move to Schaufler in 1928, Makhanya broke off her financial ties to Phelps-Stokes, paying her way to New York through a speaking tour across the Midwest and Northeast in which she donned Zulu clothing and lectured on Zulu culture — invoking a stylized version of the “untouched” woman that her image on the fundraising appeal would soon counterpose.⁶ Makhanya’s confident bearing in a portrait from her American tour, in fact, conjures to mind the very poise of the “untouched” woman, an uncanny self-assuredness that the American Board’s Ernest Riggs uneasily appreciated when he received the pamphlet from Walbridge in February 1929. “Will you permit a criticism which perhaps is not valid but which struck both Mrs. Riggs and myself as we looked at the two pictures of Miss Makanya and the heathen woman,” Riggs remarked. “The impression made upon Mrs. Riggs was that the heathen woman was a much finer looking specimen with a much more romantic and fitting garb than Miss Makanya! I am sure that if people could see the women in their filthy environment and enjoy the fragrance of the castor oil and other things which go to the making up of the toilet, this impression would be dissipated. In the photograph, however, the unpleasant sides are smoothed over and the impression of this heathen woman is of a very fine and happy specimen of humanity in her natural environment.”⁷

⁴ See Margaret Walbridge, Inanda Seminary, to Caroline Knickerbacker Walbridge, Topeka, Kansas, 14 February 1926, in Caroline Walbridge, ed., *Thokozile* (Topeka, KS: Mainline Printing, 1978), 73.

⁵ Inanda Seminary’s long history bears out Marks’ claim that “ambiguity has been the price of survival in a contradictory world.” See Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 14.

⁶ See Image 3: Sibusisiwe Makhanya in New York, c. 1928, Sibusisiwe Makhanya Papers (SMP), Killie Campbell Africana Library (KCAL), University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. Reproduced in Marks, *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, between pp. 54-55.

⁷ Ernest Riggs, Boston, to Walbridge, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, AL, 5 February 1929, ABC 15.4, Vol. 41.

Just what Walbridge made of these criticisms remains unclear, as does the question of when (or if) Makhanya agreed to appear as Inanda's model pupil. But by the time of Walbridge's return to Inanda, she and Makhanya had clearly fallen out. During their final meeting in the States, Walbridge told Riggs, "She told me definitely that she would not be 'tied down' when she returned to Africa, apparently meaning to school routine and under someone like myself. She offered to come to Inanda for several weeks each year to help instruct those in the Jeanes teachers course. Her American training does not seem to have especially prepared her for this, however. Miss Makanya will probably do better work if independent. If any attempt is made to force her to come to Inanda harm may be done. Miss Makanya's attitude and spirit are such that it would be difficult to work with her. It is questionable if she would inspire African Jeanes teachers with the spirit of service so in evidence among American Jeanes teachers. I greatly fear her own unrest would be contagious." She concluded that Makhanya and her colleague Amelia Njongwana "play off one individual, or group, against another to further their own desires."⁸

Makhanya's Jeanes training may not have worked to the ends Walbridge had envisioned, but upon her return Makhanya continued teaching at her own Umbumbulu Community Centre, in her birthplace south of Durban. Her prowess with agricultural training there was such that in 1938 Inanda domestic science teacher Agnes Wood concluded that in gardening, "the women here can't come up to Miss Makanya's women all at once. And Miss Makanya, by the way, is probably one reason the Carnegie grant for me won't go through; my work is too much like hers."⁹ The Carnegie Corporation of New York grant to which Wood was referring would have funded a Jeanes teaching scheme at Inanda Seminary. Such a plan never in fact came to fruition, while Makhanya remained a leader in community work.¹⁰ And as Marks puts it, "Because of her emphasis on 'welfare' rather than 'politics,' Sibusisiwe remained a shining example for whites of what an African woman could achieve within the limits of the segregationist and patriarchal social system, through 'adaptation.'"¹¹

But Inanda missionaries' vision of Makhanya dimmed in the early 1950s, when she opened a beer hall in Umbumbulu to sell home-brewed Zulu beer to the community. Excommunicated by her pastor at Umbumbulu, Makhanya broke with the teetotaling American Board in 1951; she spent the next few years combating their censure and working to salvage her relationships with her other American supporters—at least one of whom, Makhanya complained in 1954, was "informed by one of the American Board Missionaries that I no longer require this money."¹² Exasperated by the Board's censure, Makhanya explained to philanthropist Philip C. Jones that "the Beer Hall here was put up with the consent of the Native Commissioner and the Chief to put an end to all the illicit brewing of the deadly concoctions of the neighbourhood. This native beer is of great food value and is recommended by the doctors of all the hospitals, and the small profits that accrue are used for the benefit of the community." Beyond this stamp of approval from political and medical authorities, Makhanya pointed out, "It is my very nature to make experiments for the good of

⁸ Walbridge, Boston, to Riggs, Boston, 4 April 1929, ABC 15.4, Vol. 41.

⁹ Agnes Wood, Inanda Seminary, to Mabel Emerson, Boston, 13 September 1938, ABC 15.4, Vol. 41. On Makhanya's work at Umbumbulu, see Khan, 79-111.

¹⁰ See Davis, "Producing the 'Good African,'" 99.

¹¹ Marks, *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, 37

¹² Sibusisiwe Makhanya, Umbumbulu, to Dr. Philip C. Jones, New York, 8 March 1954.

my people, and the results of my undertaking have proved very good, and with the result that a great deal of the illicit poisonous brewing has been eliminated. Although I was brought up in American Board Schools, I do think that the psychological aspect should be taken into consideration, and here is an instance of unjust treatment."¹⁵ By decade's end, Makhanya joined the universalist Bahà'i faith.¹⁴

By 1972, when former teacher Agnes Wood published the school's history, Makhanya's reputation at Inanda Seminary appears to have been partially rehabilitated. An image of Makhanya (in a Western dress) standing attentively over a group of herd boy students (in Zulu dress) bears the caption, "Miss Violet Sibusisiwe Makhanya, Pioneer Social Worker and Teacher."¹⁵ Yet given both her early involvement with Inanda Seminary and the extent of her later accomplishments as a community leader, Makhanya figures remarkably rarely elsewhere in the text. We learn that "Violet" was one of several "good certified African teachers on the staff" in the 1910s; that she helped students "do some sewing for the soldiers" during the First World War; and that in 1923 she left Inanda to serve as Organizing Secretary of the Purity League, a group that as Wood explains endeavored "to combat the results of the breakdown of tribal conditions and restraints and to develop the highest moral sanctions."¹⁶ But after 1923, she disappears altogether from Wood's narrative of "how Zulu girls were trained to become bringers of light and learning, of Christianity and civilisation to their people," as the prominent white liberal and former "native" parliamentary representative Edgar H. Brookes lauded her account.¹⁷

The deeply ambivalent relationship of Inanda Seminary's model pupil to her alma mater belies the fundraising pamphlet's confident narrative of missionary-directed modernization and poses vital questions about the connections between the lives of individuals and the histories of institutions. On one hand, Makhanya's story testifies to the major role of mission schooling in facilitating connections among women of different racial, class, and national positions, and in opening new opportunities for women's participation in new sorts of gendered public spaces. In many ways, after all, Makhanya was a careful student of the American missionaries' vision of social transformation that sought to change the world by first transforming families and communities. But as Walbridge's scathing complaint about Makhanya playing her supporters in South Africa and the United States off one another conveys, she was also a quick study in the politics of mission philanthropy. By working a vast and deep network of people variously invested in the education of black South Africans, Makhanya made space for her pragmatically "traditional" and "modern" vision of community uplift in a world structured by multiple relationships of patronage. And despite Walbridge's scorn for Makhanya's manipulation of the vagaries of philanthropic power, Inanda's American missionaries were no strangers to her game. For at the same time that the pamphlet's ambiguous model pupil testifies to the tenuous control that the American

¹⁵ Makhanya, Umbumbulu, to Jones, New York, 8 March 1954.

¹⁴ See Khan, 134-138.

¹⁵ See Image 4. In Agnes Wood, *"Shine Where You Are": A Centenary History of Inanda Seminary, 1869-1969* (Alice, South Africa: Lovedale Mission Press, 1972), plate 37, opposite p. 145.

¹⁶ See Wood, 73, 76, 81, and 85. On the Purity League, see Khan, 33-34; and Shula Marks, "Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity: Natal and the Politics of Zulu Ethnic Consciousness," in Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 227-228.

¹⁷ Edgar H. Brookes, "Foreword," in Wood, v.

missionaries could claim over their African alumnae, the ambiguous terms of its appeal speak to the school's tenuous position within the American Board Mission and the broader American-South African philanthropic universe, where black women's schooling had long occupied a multiply contradictory place. Ultimately, both Makhanya and Walbridge were supplicant matrons in a world of patrons, although the resources they could command varied dramatically across lines of race, class, nationality, and language.

As the first boarding school expressly for black South African women, as the only Protestant boarding high school serving black women after the Bantu Education Act of 1953, and as the alma mater of generations of teachers, health workers, political activists, and community leaders, Inanda Seminary has long been at the crux of educational visions in which African women have figured simultaneously as agents of change and forces for stability. To advance their own goals and to maintain their school, Inanda students and staff have appealed to a range of patrons—from parents to teachers, from chiefs to colonial administrators, from American philanthropists to apartheid bureaucrats—and have done so within the confines of frequently overlapping, occasionally intertwined, and sometimes mutually unintelligible discourses about the stakes and terms of women's education. This study explores how the seemingly impossible balances Inanda women have struck have continually reshaped the bounds of the possible in their lives, and what their struggles suggest about the power and limits of schooling in projects of social transformation, social reproduction, and social control.

Inanda Seminary and the History of South African Schooling

Historiographic attention to Inanda Seminary has been incommensurate with the school's prominence in the region now known as KwaZulu-Natal and with the prominence of its alumnae in South Africa and beyond. The only extensive studies that exist are Wood's 1972 account—published by a small mission press and now out of print—an essay, an unpublished honors thesis, and an unpublished doctoral dissertation. Wood's account, which has been a key source for the subsequent studies, enumerates the school's development over its first hundred years, as missionaries have recorded it in their archives at Harvard University and as she recalls it unfolding over her thirty-five year tenure as a staff member.¹⁸ Above all, as Senator Brookes' foreword puts it, "The record compiled by Miss Wood is a commemoration of the service of faithful women," American missionaries laboring against the disadvantages of their gendered marginality within the mission and their outsider status in South Africa to transform Zulu society.¹⁹ Wood's account of this service is at turns heroic and prosaic, recounting the struggles of Edwards to retain students who had run away from their "heathen" homes in as much detail as she does the continual efforts of the school to secure sufficient funds and supplies from Boston. Throughout, Wood recognizes the school's unlikely achievements, but she never fully situates missionary women's struggles and successes within their complex broader contexts and only fleetingly and selectively considers African women's experiences; Wood's work is also unapologetically triumphalist, papering over struggles (like Makhanya's) that complicate her story of progress.

¹⁸ Later in her life, Wood recorded her experiences at Inanda in an unpublished memoir, "My Thirty-Six Years in Africa, 1929-1965" (written at the Mayflower Home, Grinnell, Iowa, 1984). Professor Cherif Keita of Carleton College, Minnesota, has kindly shared this manuscript with me.

¹⁹ Edgar Brookes, "Foreword," in Wood, v.

But by situating Wood's account within scholarship on South African women's schooling, beside Inanda's archives at Killie Campbell Africana Library, and in light of her nuanced understanding of the Inanda area's history,²⁰ the historian Heather Hughes has put the official history to analytic use. In a brief but incisive essay in Cheryl Walker's canonical 1990 anthology, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, Hughes narrates Inanda Seminary's ascendancy as an "elite" institution attracting an increasingly national student base from the 1910s onward. Hughes emphasizes that from 1912, when it dropped its lower level classes to resemble more closely a modern secondary school, to the early 1980s, when some black students began to attend historically white private schools, Inanda Seminary was "the premier boarding school for African girls in South Africa."²¹ Hughes notes elsewhere how, in its increasingly "elite" profile, the campus became an increasingly distinct space from the impoverished settlement growing up around it, a bastion in a peri-rural area rapidly becoming part of metropolitan Durban.²² Thus Hughes shows how Inanda's ambiguities emerged not only its missionaries' struggles to forge a radically new sort of educational community in Natal, but also in that community's relationship with its surrounding mission reserve, township, and nation—sites of contestation that Wood minimizes in her focused attention on the school as a beacon in the wilderness. Due to the brevity of Hughes' attention to Inanda Seminary, however, her work only begins to fill the conspicuous silences surrounding the lives of students and teachers.²³ A contemporaneous University of Natal honors thesis by Lyndsay MacDougall on the school's experiences under Bantu Education draws upon the Inanda Seminary papers at Killie Campbell and a set of interviews with alumnae and current students in 1990 to address a period that Hughes' essay does not detail, but MacDougall's work is limited in its evidentiary base and brief.²⁴

In a 1998 Teachers College thesis, Inanda alumna Lynette Hlongwane brings more voices to bear. Her interviews with eighteen alumnae (from the 1930s through the 1980s), three students, eight former teachers, former principal Lavinia Scott (who died shortly after Hlongwane conducted her research), and the two African male heads of school (who served in the 1970s and 1990s) provide insight into the meanings of schooling for some of Inanda's more than 15,000 alumnae.²⁵ Like Wood and Hughes, on whose work she draws, Hlongwane is basically interested in tracing Inanda's ascendance as an institution. But as an educational scholar rather than a missionary or historian, Hlongwane endeavors to provide "documentation of the school's contributions to the education of African women in South Africa," with a view toward applying her findings "to engender justice and equity in African

²⁰ See Heather Hughes, "Politics and Society in Inanda, Natal: The Qadi under Chief Mqhawe, c. 1840-1906" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of London, 1995). Pp. 225-254 focus on Inanda Seminary.

²¹ Hughes, "'A Lighthouse for African Womanhood': Inanda Seminary, 1869-1945," in Cheryl Walker, ed., *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 197-220.

²² See Hughes, "Imijondolo," in Omar Badsha, *Imijondolo: A Photographic Essay on Forced Removals in South Africa* (Durban: Afrapix, 1985), 6.

²³ Hughes' consideration of an 1884 student essay on the colonization of Natal and the 1892 statement of Susiwe Bhengu, a student who fled to Inanda to escape an arranged marriage, comprise important interjections into the institutional story Hughes tells. See Hughes, "'A Lighthouse for African Womanhood,'" 208-211.

²⁴ See Lyndsay Louise MacDougall, "Inanda Seminary, 1950-1980: Educating a Nation" (unpublished honors thesis, University of Natal, 1990).

²⁵ Lynette Hlongwane, "The Role of Inanda Seminary in the Education of African Girls in South Africa: A Report of Graduates' Views" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1998).

girls' education and lives as women."²⁶ She undertakes little archival research, drawing largely upon her interviews and the work of Wood and Hughes to make the broad point that the contradictions shaping Inanda's history—which she identifies as its “colonizing” role as a missionary institution, its endurance as a liberal institution through Bantu Education, and its prominence despite “the perception of Inanda Seminary as an insignificant African girls school” from multiple quarters—“result in a constant tension between positive and negative elements in the education provided.”²⁷ Hlongwane concludes that Inanda made tremendous contributions to the lives of its pupils, pioneering a new sort of educational community that endured “to give the best education possible within the confines and restraints of apartheid masters.”²⁸ After apartheid, she suggests, “The major question for the South African government is: How will it improve African women's education in modes that multiply the Inanda Seminary product?”²⁹

Despite these contributions, the school has received passing if any notice in most accounts of African schooling before, during, or since Bantu Education. Norman Etherington touches upon the school's early history in his work on missions in Natal, Shula Marks notes the school's importance in training the first generation of African nurses, and Paul Rich and Robert Morrell note the school's survival under Bantu Education.³⁰ But these references are limited and diffuse.

Inanda's omission from much educational history is unsurprising, as the school fits uneasily within the narrative of the rise, fall, and nationalist resistance of a mission-educated elite. For within a body of scholarship so otherwise unwieldy that a leading historian in the field has recently bemoaned the absence of a “comprehensive core of literature” on key questions of politics, policies, and power,³¹ accounts of schooling in South Africa agree that the Bantu Education Act of 1953 decisively marked the end of an era, highlighting the limits of elite politics in the face of an encroaching state and pointing toward the inexorable radicalization of black protest. Thus the closed mission boarding school has served as a defining metonym not only in missionary and liberal accounts, but also in revisionist (frequently Marxist) analyses and in post-revisionist ethnographic accounts considering the cultural grounds on which people negotiated missionary “hegemony.”³² The final chapter of

²⁶ Hlongwane, i; 444

²⁷ See Hlongwane, 17-34.

²⁸ Hlongwane, 466

²⁹ Hlongwane, 466

³⁰ See Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants, and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1855-1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland, and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 133-134; Etherington, “Gender Issues in Southeast African Missions, 1835-1885,” in Henry Bredekamp and Robert Ross, eds., *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), 135-152: 142-145 and 149-150; Marks, *Divided Sisterhood: Race, Class, and Gender in the South African Nursing Profession* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), 89; Paul B. Rich, “Albert Luthuli and the American Board Mission in South Africa,” in Bredekamp and Ross, 189-209: 205; and Robert Morrell, “Considering the Case for Single-Sex Schools for Girls in South Africa,” *McGill Journal of Education* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 221-244.

³¹ Peter Kallaway, “Introduction,” in Kallaway, ed., *The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948-1994: The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Opened* (New York: P. Lang, 2002), 7. While the volume to which that assessment provided a dismal introduction has proven an essential corrective, Kallaway's point remains broadly true.

³² For missionary accounts, see Wood, as well as Arthur Christofersen, *Adventuring with God: The Story of the American Board Mission in South Africa*, ed. Richard Sales (Durban: Robinson, 1967); and Steve de Gruchy, ed., *Changing Frontiers: The Mission Story of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa* (Gaborone, Botswana:

revisionist Norman Etherington's work, "The Economic Decline of the *Kholwa*," begins with the closure of Adams, the American Board's flagship coeducational school:

The site of Adams College is only a few miles from the bustling centre of modern Durban. It is no longer called Adams College. In accordance with the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the buildings and grounds were acquired by the government from the American missionary society which had been educating Africans there for more than a century. Under government supervision most traces of the missionary past have been obliterated. The house of the missionary pioneer Newton Adams has been demolished and the names of buildings and streets which commemorated black and white founders of Christianity in Natal have been changed. The staff of the college has been racially segregated. Only a graveyard, separate from the college grounds by a tall barbed wire fence, remains more or less unchanged. Amidst a jumble of unkempt, crumbling gravestones, Newton Adams of New York sleeps beside Mbulasi, the first Zulu Christian. Not far from the high fence a long row of missionary tombs keeps a solitary, sightless watch over what, under other circumstances, might have become a South African national monument.³³

As though in homage to Etherington, the Comaroffs' seminal historical ethnography says the following of Tiger Kloof:

It had been the crowning achievement of the London Missionary Society in one of its finest hours; a "Native Institution" founded in 1904, it was to train teachers and craftsmen, upstanding members of a black petite bourgeoisie. This elite had been meant to take a prominent place in the multiracial Christian commonwealth of missionary fantasy. As we drove through its fine gates—lofty, desolate portals giving clear evidence of dashed ideals—we were enveloped in a world of nineteenth-century proportion and order, a settlement whose solid stone features had been mocked and desecrated by a capricious but powerful hand. Tiger Kloof had been a testimony to civilization in the veld, a model of European enlightenment whose firm foundations and noble clock tower declared the lasting improvement it would make in the destiny of those it served. The school had been closed by the South African government in 1956.³⁴

The closed mission school is a potent metonym for the possibilities apartheid foreclosed and a site from which to imagine a South Africa that might have been. The mission school that stayed open, however, implores us to reconsider the South Africa that was, and is; to revisit a messier landscape upon which generations have negotiated the spaces between complicity and resistance; to retrace some of the unlikely spaces where people survived.

An American School for South African Women and Histories of Transnational Connection

This landscape of struggle extends beyond the bounds of Inanda's campus and beyond South Africa's borders. Not for nothing has "Shine Where You Are" been the school's motto from the early twentieth century down to the present. Summoning both expansion and containment, at one level this multivalent injunction conjures the accommodation of Booker T. Washington's call to black Americans to cast down their buckets in the Jim Crow South, but at another it envisions a transformative role for Inanda graduates wherever in the world they might be. In short, it suggests the power and limits of schooling at an American mission

Pula Press, 1999). For liberal accounts, see Muriel Horrell, *A Decade of Bantu Education* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1964), and Horrell, *Bantu Education to 1968* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968). For revisionist accounts, see Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants, and Politics*; Hughes, "A Lighthouse for African Womanhood"; and Pam Christie, *The Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985). For the key post-revisionist cultural account, see Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

³³ Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants, and Politics*, 176

³⁴ Comaroff and Comaroff, 32-33

school in the South African countryside, in an appropriately transnational idiom. Indeed, Inanda Seminary occupies a critical and underexplored place in the long history of educational borrowing, political exchanges, and philanthropic investments between South Africa and the United States. As an elite women's school originally premised on Massachusetts' Mount Holyoke Seminary, as a central site of pedagogical and philanthropic interventions on African-American industrial models from the late nineteenth century through the 1930s, as a rallying point for African nationalist and American liberal resistance to Bantu Education in the 1950s and 1960s, and as a site for interracial and international contacts during the school's difficult 1970s, Inanda's first century was one of thick South African-American ties. In the 1980s and 1990s, these ties strained and grew more diffuse, as American mission involvement—under the auspices of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) from the late 1960s—declined amidst the political turmoil roiling Inanda township, Inanda Seminary, and the UCCSA. The school's recent resurgence upon the initiatives of a concerned network of alumnae and with an infusion of South African governmental and philanthropic funding, as well as UCCSA support, embodies the most recent stage in a history of struggles at intertwined local, national, and transnational levels.

Tracing how these struggles have mattered in the lives of Inanda women, this study contributes a gendered, locally rooted, and temporally deep analysis to a growing body of historiography on connections between South Africa and the United States. Over the past three decades, scholarship on the evolution of these racialized states has ranged from comparative analyses of the meanings of segregation, white supremacy, and black resistance in both places³⁵ to more empirically sophisticated work on the “intertwined” histories of their black subjects, as James Campbell has contributed with his *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (1995).³⁶ While Campbell relates the experiences of interlinked religious communities on both sides of the Atlantic, other scholars have traced American imprints upon black South African cultural and political life.³⁷

Working within and between these models of comparative and transnational scholarship, a handful of historians have doggedly traced the educational connections between Americans and South Africans. A considerable cohort of scholars has examined the manifold connections between the (overwhelmingly white and male) transatlantic class of “race relations experts” who shared insights into black education in the interwar years, in deep-

³⁵ See George M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); John W. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); and Fredrickson, *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³⁶ James T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), vii. On these approaches, see Frederick Cooper, “Race, Ideology, and the Perils of Comparative History,” *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 4 (October 1996): 1122-1138.

³⁷ See Tim Couzens, “Moralizing Leisure Time: The Transatlantic Connection and Black Johannesburg, 1918-1936,” in Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture, and Consciousness, 1870-1950* (New York: Longman, 1982); Robert Edgar, “African Educational Protest in South Africa: The American School Movement in the Transkei in the 1920s,” in Peter Kallaway, ed., *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), 184-191; and Rob Nixon, *Homeland, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

pocketed American venues like the Phelps-Stokes Fund and at Makhanya's alma mater, Teachers College of Columbia University.³⁸ A smaller and more diffuse body of literature addresses the involvement of American missionary women—white and black—in South African life.³⁹ But on whole, research on American-South African educational collaborations foregrounds race and class while setting aside the profoundly gendered dimensions of these exchanges. It also evinces a disjuncture between projects that consider mission schooling and those that focus on the apartheid years, leaving our understanding of the meanings of transnational connections *across* these periods disjointed. By rooting South African and American women's connections at an influential institution over a stretch of time, and by situating these connections within their cultural and political contexts, this study considers a crucial site in the making of race, nation, and state power through modern schooling. In this endeavor, I take up Ann Laura Stoler's call to "imagine nineteenth-century history as made up not of nation-building projects alone but of compounded colonialisms and as shaped by multinational philanthropies, missionary movements, discourses of social welfare and reform, and traffics in people (women in particular) that ran across state-archived paper trails," and ask how these projects have unfolded down to the near present.⁴⁰

Sources, Methods, and Project Outline

While Wood draws (selectively) upon the American Board archives at Harvard University and upon her own collections and recollections, Hughes analyzes the Inanda Seminary papers at Killie Campbell and the American Board papers in Pietermaritzburg, and Hlongwane considers only a small sample of the Inanda Seminary papers at Killie Campbell, my work comes out of a larger archival base. It not only considers the vast collections of Inanda Seminary materials at Harvard and Killie Campbell in greater depth than previous accounts. It also draws upon the papers of Lavinia Scott, Inanda's principal from 1937 through 1969, which are located at Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois), and upon a hitherto unexplored collection of meeting minutes and correspondence from the 1950s through the 1980s which reside at the school archive on Inanda Seminary's campus. My account is also rooted in the open-ended interviews that I am currently conducting with as many Inanda alumnae and former staff as I can manage. My rationale for pursuing this deluge of sources is to some extent a common one: I am a compulsive historian, eager to track down every bit of ephemera. But as my opening discussion should have made clear, matters of representation are particularly fraught in charting the history of an institution whose

³⁸ See King, *Pan-Africanism and Education*; Davis, "Producing the Good African"; Davis, "Charles T. Loram and the American Model for African Education in South Africa," in Kallaway, ed., *Apartheid and Education*, 108-126; Brahm David Fleisch, "The Teachers College Club: American Educational Discourse and the Origins of Bantu Education in South Africa, 1914-1951" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1995); and James Campbell, "Models and Metaphors: Industrial Education in the United States and South Africa," in Ran Greenstein, ed., *Comparative Perspectives on South Africa* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 90-134.

³⁹ See Deborah Gaitskell, "Housewives, Maids or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903-1939," *The Journal of African History* 24, no. 2 (1983): 241-256; Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, esp. 93-95; Amanda Porterfield, "The Impact of Early New England Missionaries on Women's Roles in Zulu Culture," *Church History* 66, no. 1 (March 1997): 67-80; and Iris Berger, "An African-American 'Mother of the Nation': Madie Hall Xuma in South Africa, 1940-1963," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, no. 3 (September 2001): 547-566.

⁴⁰ Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," in Stoler, ed., *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 55.

survival hinged on its image with a range of patrons in South Africa and the United States, and in tracing the life histories of women who have positioned themselves as representative leaders of their race. Marshalling the widest possible range of representations and considering them in dialogue with one another enables me not only to engage the representational strategies through which Inanda Seminary has developed, but also to transcend them to reconstruct the lived experiences of model students like Makhanya.

My account of Inanda's past unfolds chronologically, with my story grounded at the school but frequently moving outward to follow Inanda women and to chart the broader philanthropic, pedagogical, and political contexts in which they lived. Summaries of my planned dissertation chapters follow; they are more detailed here than they will be in the final version of this introduction, in order to provide more background for our discussion.

Chapter One

"If the Mothers Make the Men...": Women's Schooling and Domestic Transformations

The first chapter explores the school's emergence, from its 1869 founding through the first decade of the twentieth century, as a new sort of peri-domestic community of women in Natal. As Hughes has observed, Inanda Seminary was "nothing short of revolutionary" within its educational landscape; it predated and inspired boarding institutions for white women.⁴¹ The American Board initially intended for Inanda to supply appropriately refined Christian wives for the men training as preachers and teachers at Amanzimtoti Seminary, which they had founded to the south of Durban in 1853, and at the men's boarding high school that they opened at Amanzimtoti in 1866.⁴² A women's school was thus essential to the Americans' project of self-replicating, generational Christian transformations—beginning at the family level and moving irresistibly outward.⁴³ But women's schooling was also, from its inception, women's work—a familial project rendered in a familial idiom, at once fundamental and marginal within male-dominated American Board power structures. As missionary Henry Bridgman appealed to Boston in June 1864, "In what one way could the 'King's Daughters' in the American churches, make themselves, and their, to be pitied, Zulu Sisters, still more glorious, than by imparting from their Abundance, (and poverty too, it may be) Funds and Teachers, to found a Seminary among the degraded Zulus, after the Pattern of that showed us in the Mount. I mean of course, the one at the Mount Holyoke. Let us have at least 'a reflection' of that goodly Pattern, that the lower half (for in Heathen lands I believe women are the worse half) of these sin-ridden, sin degraded Zulus, passing and expanding under its influence, may be enabled."⁴⁴ With the decision of the new Woman's Board of Missions to appoint a middle-aged, childless widow from Ohio as its first principal, Inanda became the unique province of unmarried "King's Daughters" laboring to uplift their benighted "Zulu Sisters" in an institution modeled on Massachusetts' elite Mount Holyoke

⁴¹ Hughes, "A Lighthouse for African Womanhood," 198

⁴² This high school would later be known as Adams College, admitting women and including a teachers' training college from 1909.

⁴³ See Daniel Lindley, Alden Grant, Henry Bridgman, et al., Durban, to Rufus Anderson, Secretary, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston, 23 May 1864, ABC 15.4, Vol. 6: "The usefulness of our native teachers & other assistants of various kinds will be helped or hindered by the standing & character of their wives. For the training of girls who may become the trainers of others & examples to them, we need a school of a different character from any we now have."

⁴⁴ H.M. Bridgman, Ifumi Mission Station, to Anderson, Boston, 22 June 1864, ABC 15.4, Vol. 6.

Seminary.⁴⁵ Within a mission hitherto so committed to sending married couples as models of domestic virtue that male appointees sometimes scrambled to find brides before accepting their posts,⁴⁶ this was an unusual move, made in the interests of sisterhood and economy.

Here I consider the new modes of domesticity conceived at this homosocial “home for African girls,” comparing its experiences with those of women’s boarding schools on a Mount Holyoke model elsewhere in South Africa and the world. Like its American counterpart, Inanda was a leading site for women’s schooling in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unlike Mount Holyoke, of course, Inanda was situated on a mission reserve in rural Natal, and its foundational project of social transformation was inextricably wrapped up in a colonizing project in which its American missionaries were adjacent, sometimes ambivalent, and ultimately crucial participants.⁴⁷ The school’s early mandate was also rooted in its missionaries’ sense of Zulu women as racialized subjects, a sense that came out of their previous work with American communities of color. Founding principal Mary Edwards was a Quaker who had previously taught Sunday school to slaves and freedpeople, and many of her staff had cut their teeth in Reconstruction schoolhouses. Over its first three decades, Inanda focused on providing similarly rudimentary instruction to young women from the mission reserve community—lessons in the domestic arts, literacy, Christianity. Etherington observes that the Americans’ heady vision had “scaled down as the mission adjusted its goals to suit the demands of colonial Natal.”⁴⁸ This chapter specifies what precisely that meant for the African and American women involved, and how these processes aligned with and departed from those that women encountered under colonial regimes elsewhere.

Chapter Two

“Now We Your Daughters Are Scattered All Over the Country”: Inanda Women and Social Change

Chapter Two explains how, from its founding through the first decade of the twentieth century, Inanda women forged a working consensus around African women’s role in Christian transformation as proceeding from the family and home outward to their communities, nation, and the world, and it charts how alumnae’s projects unfolded. It considers in particular the life histories of four women. The first of these is Mary Edwards, who was head of school until 1892, at which point her colleague Fidelia Phelps (a Mount Holyoke alumna) took over from the aging Edwards, who would remain a fixture on campus until her death in 1927. Although canonized in Wood’s account and “redoubtable”⁴⁹ and

⁴⁵ On Mount Holyoke, founded in 1837, see Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁴⁶ Etherington notes wryly that this marked “a strange start for a mission that would concentrate so much effort at stamping out ‘forced marriages’ among the Zulu.” See Etherington, “Gender Issues in Southeast African Missions, 1835-1885,” 138.

⁴⁷ For one thing, the American Board’s Daniel Lindley and Newton Adams participated in the 1846 Locations Commission, by which Natal’s administrators set aside reserves for mission evangelism. These included the 11,500 acres of land on which Inanda mission reserve was situated, where Lindley settled in 1847. See Hughes, “A Lighthouse for African Womanhood,” 200.

⁴⁸ Etherington, “Gender Issues,” 145. To wit, the students took in laundry from neighboring settlers in the late 1880s through the early twentieth century, in a scheme that received a government grant and in some years generated more income than school fees. See Hughes, “A Lighthouse for African Womanhood,” 213.

⁴⁹ Hughes, “A Lighthouse for African Womanhood,” 205

“indomitable”⁵⁰ in Hughes’ estimation, Edwards in fact struggled profoundly to navigate chiefly, parental, missionary, and colonial authority — as well as the missionary infighting endemic to life on a remote community of women — and to do so on an austere budget. She never mastered isiZulu. Her early letters are rife with attempts to quit an isolated and isolating post.⁵¹ Edwards’ school nonetheless became an important community for both *amakholwa* (Christian, lit. “believers”) daughters and runaways from “heathen” homes who went on to teach and forge prominent Christian families. Edwards’ protégée Dalitha Hawes, daughter of the American Board pastor Benjamin Hawes, was no older than nine when she came to the school in 1869 as a special boarder on account of a physical disability that precluded her from walking to a day school; she remained at Inanda as a student and then as Edwards’ assistant until 1885, after which she worked as a teacher on her father’s farm.⁵² Another Dalitha — Dalitha Isaac — graduated from Inanda in 1881, then taught at the school before traveling to Mozambique and later Southern Rhodesia to evangelize.⁵³ And Inanda graduate and teacher Nokutela Mdimba married future African National Congress founder John Dube in 1894 and with him opened the Ohlange Institute, an industrial school on the model of Tuskegee, near Inanda in 1901.⁵⁴ This chapter delineates how Inanda women came to be “scattered all over the country,” as Nokutela Dube put it in 1911, over the first four decades of Inanda’s operation, and what impact their schooling made in their life strategies.⁵⁵

Chapter Three

“Holding Their Heads Up”: Matrons, Patrons, and the Education of New African Women

The third chapter departs in 1912, when Inanda stopped offering classes below Standard Four and solidified its status as an elite secondary school. Ironically, Inanda was beginning to resemble an African Mount Holyoke at a moment in which Africans were facing increasingly dismal political horizons and as racially “adapted” curriculum began to spread across the Union and British colonial Africa. Inspired by Tuskegee’s industrial and domestic curriculum, the popularity of “adapted” schooling may have stemmed from its constitutive contradictions. It was foremost a transnational discourse that centered on local sites, on the homes and communities of people of color from the American South to South Africa. In South Africa, it was a transformational discourse fixated on the conservation of some carefully

⁵⁰ Hughes, “Doubly Elite: Exploring the Life of John Langalibalele Dube,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, no. 3 (September 2001): 445-458. Page 453.

⁵¹ On Edwards’ experiences, see Debra L. Duke, “From True Woman to New Woman: Mary Kelly Edwards, Single Woman Missionary to Natal, South Africa, 1868-1927” (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 2004).

⁵² See Wood, 30-35. Sometimes this name is spelled “Talitha,” “Dalita,” or “Dalida.”

⁵³ See Wood, 172-173. Norman Etherington confuses the two Dalithas in his “Gender Issues in Southeast African Missions,” claiming that it was Hawes who accompanied an American Board couple named the Richardses to Mozambique in 1884 and who became embroiled in a sexual scandal with Mr. Richards there. In fact, Dalitha Isaac accompanied the Richardses, as Wood notes and as the archives amply demonstrate. That this confusion accompanies one of the very few references historians have made to the experiences of African women at Inanda Seminary in the late nineteenth century speaks volumes about the limitations in the extant literature. See Etherington, “Gender Issues,” 149-150; and Dalitha Isaac, Inanda, to Francis W. Bates, Adams Mission Station, 6 January 1890, ABC 15.4, Vol. 15.

⁵⁴ On Nokutela Mdimba Dube, see Heather Hughes, “Doubly Elite,” 455-456. Hughes also draws upon Nokutela Dube, “The Story of My Life,” KCAL.

⁵⁵ Nokutela Mdimba Dube, “Expression of Love and Gratitude to Mother Edwards, from Some of Her African Daughters,” July 1911. Quoted in Wood, 70.

selected local traditions, on the vernacular languages and cultural practices through which white paternalists might slow the inexorable fusion of European and African civilizations. And everywhere, adapted education was a gendered discourse about white men guiding black men, whose practical success hinged on the labors of black and white women.

As the Phelps-Stokes Commission concluded in 1925, after visiting Inanda and peer institutions across the continent, “The woman not only presides in the dwelling, directs or controls the beginnings of life, but also holds the vital forces that make or unmake the social group.”⁵⁶ Given her centrality, the Commission warned, “Tragic results will follow if the education of the African woman does not develop on parallel lines and simultaneously with that of her husband. Together they must advance to the full development of civilized life in all its phases. The influence of ignorant and uncivilized wives and mothers upon semi-educated men and boys can do nothing but hamper and delay the development of civilization.”⁵⁷ So far, the Commission’s rhetoric sounded remarkably similar to that of the missionaries who had pressed for an African Mount Holyoke six decades before. Yet on the matter of “Education and the Traditional Position of Women,” the Phelps-Stokes Fund’s new generation of philanthropists included a new cautionary note: “Those who educate African women must know the influences which have shaped them in the past and what are the ancient governing factors to be replaced by new and better controls. Here no study of women by women only will suffice. The new order was built on men and women linked together; the new order must be so established too. The interpretation of African society so essential to true educational work will only be found when men and women educators seek it together to meet their common need.”⁵⁸ In their roles as interpreters of traditional African gendered orders as well as guardians of Africans’ modern uplift, the all-male Commission encouraged American and European mission women’s guidance of their African counterparts, particularly in all-female boarding schools like Inanda. But at the same time, the Commission worried that excessively empowering curricula might upset the gendered order undergirding the rural home communities to which educated women were ideally to return. To maintain a gendered order amenable to white agents of the state and capital, as well as to the African patriarchs on whom their power hinged, the Commission advocated a close connection between women’s schooling and their subsequent service as “home missionaries.” They also posited a model pupil: “One Native woman in Natal has resigned her position as a teacher, and on her own initiative has undertaken the systemic visitation of Native homes so that she may encourage the women and girls to higher levels of home life and stimulate them to a better understanding of the beautiful and the good. Aided only by financial help from a missionary she is doubtless the forerunner of many other Native women who will bring life more abundant to Native women throughout Africa.”⁵⁹ That woman was almost certainly Sibusisiwe Makhanya.

This chapter examines how Makhanya’s balancing acts—which historians have more thoroughly explored than those of any other woman ever affiliated with Inanda—mirrored, challenged, and reshaped those that other Inanda women maintained in the interwar years.

⁵⁶ Thomas Jesse Jones, ed., *Education in East Africa: A Study of East, Central and South Africa by the Second African Education Commission under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, in Cooperation with the International Education Board* (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1925), 340.

⁵⁷ Jones, ed., 341

⁵⁸ Jones, ed., 347

⁵⁹ Jones, ed., 351

Alumnae like Nokukhanya Bhengu Luthuli, who attended Inanda in the late 1910s on a laborious work-study arrangement, also deployed their educations to ends that adapted educationalists may not have envisioned. After her schooling at Inanda, where she “learnt not to look down on any work,” Bhengu secured Makhanya’s old teaching post at the high school at Amanzimtoti (by then known as Adams College) when the latter left for the United States in 1927. At Adams, Bhengu met her husband Albert Luthuli, future ANC president and Nobel Laureate.⁶⁰ She would go on to be a powerful matriarch, community leader and ANC stalwart. During the interwar years, women like Luthuli were *amaRespectables*—literally, “respectable people,” a moniker used a bit mockingly by those outside the mission fold.⁶¹ They positioned themselves as “representative” leaders of their race, as what Campbell has called a “‘bridge’ between white and black worlds.”⁶² And they claimed what historian Lynn Thomas (borrowing from the African Americanist scholar Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham) has termed “racial respectability.” Turning missionaries’ emphases on domestic reform into political claims, Inanda women saw their respectability as a means by which to grasp “positive recognition in contexts powerfully structured by racism, contexts in which respectability was framed through racial categories, and appearances were of the gravest importance.”⁶³

Speaking in 1939 on behalf of the more than 4,000 women who had attended Inanda since its founding, African Methodist Episcopal evangelist and preacher’s wife Ntombi Tantsi pointed to the sites and stakes of racial respectability in the world beyond Inanda. “Wherever I go I find ex-students of Inanda Seminary holding their heads up in spite of the terrible environments that tend to hold them down,” she proclaimed at the school’s anniversary celebration. “There is a transcendent power in example. We reform others when we walk uprightly.” Encouraging her fellow alumnae to form business clubs, Tantsi urged, “Teach the children to save their pennies in order that they may help them to pay their college fees. Let the women have a vision and ambition, and then inject it into their children. The race is looking to you, women; if you fail then the whole black race will perish.”⁶⁴ By the time of Tantsi’s address, many of her peers were calling themselves New Africans and daring to imagine, as writer and political activist Herbert Dhlomo put it in 1945, “a social order where every South African will be free to express himself and his personality fully, live and breathe freely, and have a part in shaping the destiny of his country; a social order in which race, colour and creed will be a badge neither of privilege nor of discrimination.”⁶⁵ Two years later, Dhlomo hailed Inanda in a praise poem; he felt a deep attachment to the school, as his former teacher Bertha Mkhize, herself a leading ANC activist, was an alumna.⁶⁶ Though the vision of South Africa that Dhlomo harbored in 1947 would recede with the onset of apartheid the next year and Bantu Education soon after, the school to which he paid homage would endure.

⁶⁰ Nokukhanya Luthuli, quoted in Peter Rule with Marilyn Aitken and Jenny van Dyk, *Nokukhanya, Mother of Light* (Braamfontein, South Africa: The Grail, 1993), 31.

⁶¹ See Lynn M. Thomas, “The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930s South Africa,” *Journal of African History* 47 (2006): 461-490. Page 466.

⁶² Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 288

⁶³ Thomas, 467

⁶⁴ “Address Given at Inanda Seminary, 70th Anniversary Celebrations, May 6th, 1939, by Mrs. N. Tantsi of Pretoria: An African Woman,” Lavinia Scott Papers (LSP), Melville Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, Box 4, Folder 15.

⁶⁵ In Tim Couzens, *The New African: A Study in the Life and Work of H.I.E. Dhlomo* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), 33.

⁶⁶ See Couzens, 63.

Chapter Four

“I Think It Quite Likely That We Will Be Ignored”: Missionaries, Bureaucrats, and Bantu Education

Bantu Education, as elaborated by the Eiselen Commission of Enquiry into Native Education of 1949-1951, called for state authority over school administration and curriculum, as well as for a dramatic increase in the number of Africans attending school. As a separating and a leveling force, Bantu Education would deal with both aspects of “the native problem”: The affronts of the African educated elite on the one hand, and those of the masses on the other.⁶⁷ Destroying the network of mission boarding high schools was the essential prerequisite in apartheid bureaucrats’ ambitions to replace the missionaries’ vision of schooling as an instrument of social transformation and control with their own. Under the provisions of the 1953 act, numerous schools were closed for violating racial zoning laws. If they evaded closure under those terms, schools had to pursue one of three courses: They could pass control to the Department of Bantu Education, close their doors to avoid state takeover, or petition the Department to operate as a private school without the government aid which had hitherto helped keep them afloat.

The American Board fought to maintain control over Inanda and Adams, applying in 1953 to operate these schools without a state subsidy. In this request, the Board missionaries were ambiguously positioned. On the one hand, few missionaries were as vocal about the socially transformative potential of mission schooling as those of the American Board, who exerted nearly as much influence in liberal white South African politics as American Board-educated Africans did in the ANC. Inanda and Adams prided themselves on their interracial staffs, even if teatimes were segregated and salaries unequal. In liberal icon Alan Paton’s words, “Adams was the home of inter-racial conferences and gatherings, and its school arrangements were made, not to exemplify apartheid, but to the glory of God. Therefore it became in the eyes of the Government an ‘unnational’ school, an alien institution; and therefore it had to go.”⁶⁸ Indeed, the Department of Bantu Education denied the Americans’ request to maintain Adams, their coeducational boarding high school and teacher’s training center; in 1956, the mission sold the campus to the government, with the request that the new government institution there no longer bear Adams’ name. But in 1957, the state approved Inanda’s request, and in 1958 the school began to operate as an unaided private institution, the only Protestant secondary school in the country.⁶⁹ To understand how this was possible, this chapter examines the other side of American missionaries’ prominence in South African politics—their access to educational circles. Inanda’s principal, Lavinia Scott, leveraged her strong relationships with policymakers to petition for her school. And her contacts most likely worked to her advantage where those of her counterpart at Adams did not because of the school’s gendered marginality. As Lavinia Scott anticipated in 1954, “We are in a safer position than Adams, also, because we have only girls. The Gov’t prefers separate education of the sexes, and also it is not likely to be so concerned about the teaching of girls as of boys. I think it quite likely that we will be ignored, or at least permitted to go on, for some time.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ On these points, see Jonathan Hyslop’s outstanding *The Classroom Struggle: Policy and Resistance in South Africa, 1940-1990* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1999).

⁶⁸ Alan Paton, Foreword, in George C. Grant, “The Liquidation of Adams College,” n.d., p. 4, KCAL.

⁶⁹ See Wood, 123-129

⁷⁰ Lavinia Scott, Inanda, to John Reuling, Boston, 15 July 1954, Inanda Seminary Papers (ISP), File 6, KCAL.

Drawing upon a greater range of archival documents than previous accounts, this chapter reconstructs Inanda's strategies during the 1950s within apartheid policymakers' broader agendas of education for social control. It provides a gendered reading of the transition between the mission schools' period of educational domination and the apartheid years.

Chapter Five

"The World of Inanda is Not Your World": Sustaining a Women's Community

Supported by the Board at great cost after its state subsidy elapsed in 1958, Inanda Seminary offered its pupils an English-medium education that supplemented government syllabi with spiritual and emotional guidance, and occasionally with subversive political discussions in the classroom.⁷¹ This chapter reconstructs the difference that Inanda's status as an American mission school made under apartheid, and it explores how these differences figured in the lives of Inanda pupils and teachers from the late 1950s through the late 1980s. Over the course of the 1960s, the school dismantled its practices of institutional apartheid, and in 1974 Mr. Dumi Zondi became the school's first African principal. But the school was hardly a paradise during Bantu Education, and matters of governance and finance only became more difficult after historically white schools opened their doors to African students in the late 1970s, attracting girls who would have otherwise attended Inanda. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, students faced scarcities of the barest sorts—in their access to water, in their diets—while non-missionary staff received no insurance benefits and no pensions until the mid-1980s.⁷² While many alumnae continued to go on to form families and launch careers in teaching, nursing, or other fields, a number of them pursued these paths in exile. ANC leaders including Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang (known as Edmie Mali while an Inanda student), Baleka Mbete, and Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge attended Inanda in the late 1950s and 1960s, while all of Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi's daughters attended the school in the 1970s. Buthelezi also served on the school's governing council in the early 1970s; commended the American Mobil Oil Corporation on its support for a new student center instead of sanctions in 1972; and presided over a grant from the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture in the early 1980s, which incensed Inanda's American supporting mission, the United Church Board for World Ministries.⁷³

Plainly Inanda's "independence" under Bantu Education by no means isolated the school from the currents of its time. As secretarial student Sikose Mji wrote in a June 1976 poem in the school newspaper,

⁷¹ The appropriateness of these was a continual matter of intra-staff contestation; see "Emergency Staff Meeting Concerning the Principal's Report about Her Visit to Pretoria to Investigate the Validity of the 1981 Matric Results," 18 February 1982, Inanda Seminary School Archives (ISSA). On politics in the classroom and classroom politics elsewhere under apartheid, see Daniel Hammett, "Constructing Ambiguous Identities: Negotiating Race, Respect and Social Change in 'Coloured' Schools in Cape Town, South Africa" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2007); Alan Wieder, "A Mother and Her Daughters: Jewish Teachers and the Fight against Apartheid," *Teachers College Record* 109, no. 5 (May 2007): 1235-1260; Weider, *Voices from Cape Town Classrooms: Oral Histories of Teachers Who Fought Apartheid* (Cape Town: Peter Lang, 2003); and Shirley Mahlase, *The Careers of Women Teachers under Apartheid* (Harare: SAPES, 1997).

⁷² On the problem of staff benefits, see M.A.S. Corke, "Inanda Seminary: Report to the Governing Council on Suggested Management Procedures to be Adopted at the School," 18 August 1981, ISSA.

⁷³ Interview with Dumi Zondi, Inanda Seminary, 14 October 2008; and "Student Centre an Enlightened Gift—Buthelezi," *Natal Mercury* (27 September 1972). Clipping in ISSA.

Living in a world of their own
you'd think they're the happiest in the world
not knowing that they suffer
suffer during their holidays...

... Outside Inanda is the real world
a world that challenges the African girl
a world that challenges humanity
a world outside Inanda Seminary

So permanently you're faced with reality
permanently you have to fight
and permanently you are faced with
a challenge
a challenge of building another Inanda Seminary
but this time outside Inanda
for the world of Inanda is not your world.⁷⁴

Drawing upon my interviews and on hitherto unexplored documents from Inanda Seminary's campus archive, this chapter demonstrates how a school originally envisioned as a site at which to protect and nurture African girls so that they might transform their worlds became another sort of transformative home under apartheid.

Conclusion

Finally, I discuss the school's struggles in the 1990s and resurgence following alumnae activism, noting the challenges and constraints upon an old school in the "New South Africa." I then consider what the history of African women's schooling suggests about the role of transnational connections and comparisons in shaping both racialized regimes and their unexpected spaces for resistance.

⁷⁴ Sikose Mji, Secretarial College, "The World of Inanda Seminary," in "Who's Who in the Zoo: Inanda Seminary Newspaper," June 1976, ISSA. The working title of my dissertation also comes from a line in this poem.

INANDA SEMINARY

NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

*Founded by Mrs. Mary K. Edwards
March 1, 1869*

UNTOUCHED BY
CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE



BUT FOR CHRISTIAN MISSION
SCHOOLS ALL ZULU WOMEN
WOULD BE LIKE THIS

INANDA SEMINARY
GRADUATE



MISS VIOLET MAKANYA
CHRISTIAN LEADER AND SOCIAL
WORKER. INANDA GIRLS ARE
HOME MISSIONARIES

UNIQUE INFLUENCE OF INANDA SEMINARY

1. Has educated in the past and is educating today more Zulu girls than any other school in South Africa. Present enrollment over two hundred.
2. Is the only girls' school which has ever been honored by a visit from the Zulu king.
3. Trains African girls to become: homemakers, dressmakers, cooks, teachers, home missionaries, and missionaries to other African tribes.

Image 1

Cover of "Inanda Electric Light Leaflet," 1929. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions: African Missions Records, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.



PHILIPS HALL
Cost of electric lighting, fixtures, wiring, labor, share of power line, \$2,150.00



LUCY LINDLEY AND EDWARDS HALLS
Cost of electric lighting, fixtures, wiring, labor, share of power line
Lucy Lindley Hall \$750.00
Edwards Hall 500.00



STANWOOD COTTAGE, TEACHERS' HOUSE
Cost of electric lighting, fixtures, wiring, labor, share of power line, \$550.00

INANDA SEMINARY MOTHER EDWARDS' SCHOOL NEEDS ELECTRIC LIGHTS

*These Inanda Seminary Buildings at present
are inadequately lighted with 120
kerosene lamps and lanterns*

Out-of-Date! Unsatisfactory! Dangerous!

- \$1.00 will purchase bulbs.
- 5.00 will purchase a fixture.
- 10.00 will wire a small room.
- 25.00 will light a teacher's room.
- 50.00 will light a small classroom.

HELP INANDA SEMINARY LIGHT UP!

Not included in illustrations:

Laundry lights	\$375.00
Campus walks	250.00
Storerooms and out-buildings	625.00

THE PLAN

To connect with the power plant of the large coast city of Durban. This city now furnishes light and power to a big sugar cane mill seven miles from Inanda. A power line must be constructed for this distance. Some materials are more expensive in South Africa than here. The total cost of the power line, wiring buildings, fixtures and labor is estimated as \$7,500.00.

HELP INANDA SEMINARY LIGHT UP!



EDWARDS INDUSTRIAL HALL
Cost of electric lighting, fixtures, wiring, labor, share of power line, \$1,100.00



HOSPITAL
Cost of electric lighting, fixtures, wiring, labor, share of power line, \$300.00



MISSION HOUSE, TEACHERS' AND VISITORS' ROOMS
Cost of electric lighting, fixtures, wiring, labor, share of power line, \$150.00

Image 2

Inside of "Inanda Electric Light Leaflet," 1929. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions: African Missions Records, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

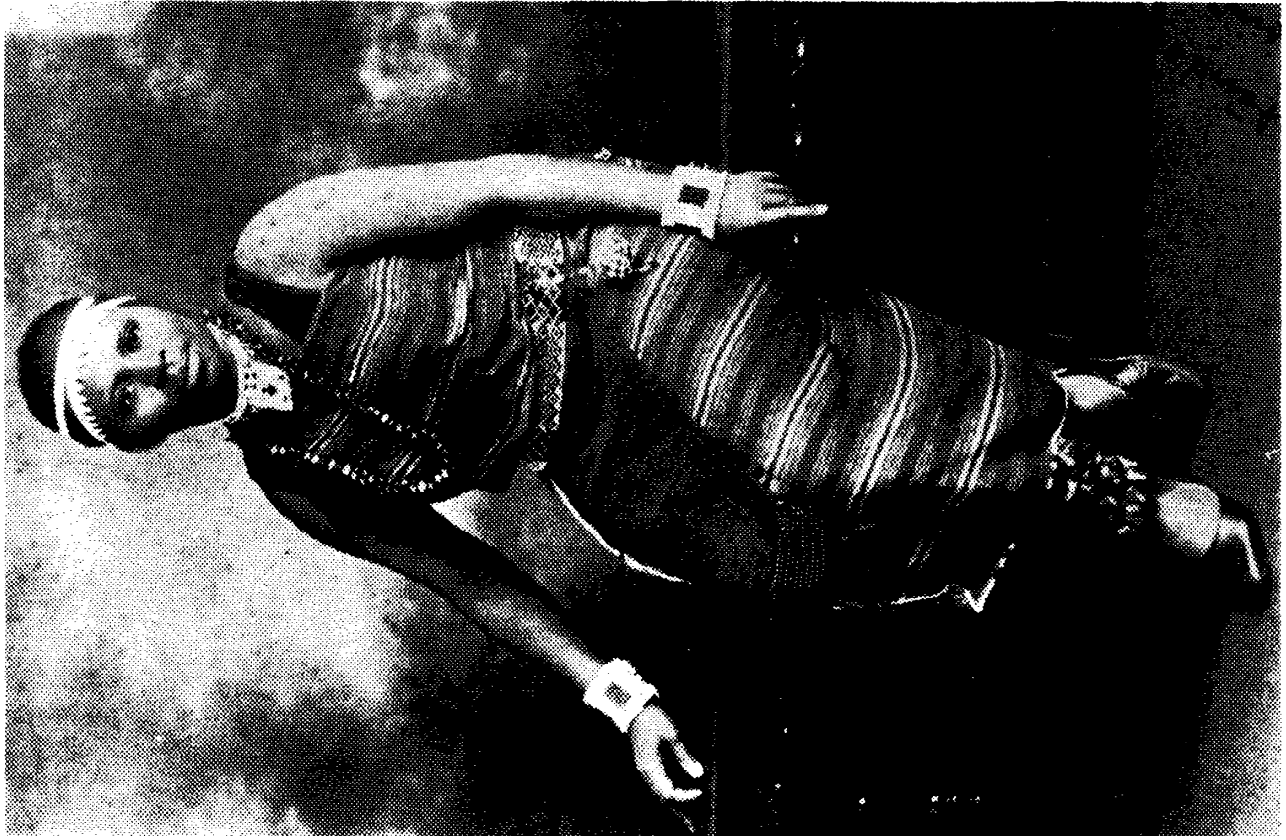


Image 3

Sibusisiwe Makhanya in New York, c. 1928, Sibusisiwe Makhanya Papers (SMP), Killie Campbell Africana Library (KCAL), University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. Reproduced in Marks, *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, between pp. 54-55.



Image 4

“Miss Violet Sibusisiwe Makhanya, Pioneer Social Worker and Teacher.” In Agnes Wood, *“Shine Where You Are”: A Centenary History of Inanda Seminary, 1869-1969* (Alice, South Africa: Lovedale Mission Press, 1972), plate 37, opposite p. 145.