

## Mapping South Africa in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Cartography of James Centlivres Chase

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### Introduction

James Centlivres Chase was the second civilian inhabitant of the Cape Colony to compile a relatively accurate map from primary source material and to have it published overseas.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding this achievement, his name was omitted from both Schire's<sup>2</sup> and Tooley's<sup>3</sup> surveys of printed maps of southern Africa and today he is remembered and revered not for his maps, but for his historical works *The Natal Papers*<sup>4</sup> and *The Cape of Good Hope and Eastern Province of Algoa Bay*.<sup>5</sup> However, to do justice to his memory, it is important to note that Chase also reported extensively on the geography and exploration of southern Africa and that his maps of 1830 and 1843 greatly contributed to the cartographical presentation of the subcontinent.

The only person who has so far acknowledged Chase's contribution to South African cartography was the late Professor P.R. Kirby of Rhodes University, South Africa. In 1968 Kirby wrote an article describing how information on a manuscript map of 1830 by

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1. The first cartographer to have achieved this was the land surveyor J.C.B. Knobel, who in 1820 surveyed the area bordering on the Great Fish River where the 1820 British Settlers were to be given land. His map was published in London in 1822. See J.C.B. Knobel, *The District of Albany* (W. Faden, London, 1822), size 62 x 84 cm.
2. D. Schire, *The Cape of Good Hope 1782-1842 from De la Rochette to Arrowsmith*, Map Collectors' Series 17 (Map Collectors' Circle, London, 1965).
3. R.V. Tooley, *Collectors' Guide to Maps of the African Continent and Southern Africa* (Carta Press, London, 1969).
4. J.C. Chase, *The Natal Papers* (Godlonton, Grahamstown, 1843).
5. J.C. Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay* – edited by Joseph C. Christophers (Pelham Richardson, London, 1843).

Chase had been used by the Colonial Office and made accessible to the British cartographer John Arrowsmith and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK) without Chase's consent.<sup>6</sup> Whilst fully acknowledging Kirby's contribution, this article attempts to give a more complete account of Chase's contribution to South African cartography by reviewing not only his map of 1831, but his entire cartographical oeuvre.

#### **Dearth of reliable maps prior to 1834**

When Britain assumed control at the Cape in 1795, the British authorities were ignorant of the extensive surveys and mapping that had been undertaken under Dutch rule since 1652. They considered the country unmapped and were eager to obtain reliable maps.<sup>7</sup> The existing maps at their disposal were small-scale maps which mainly covered the Cape of Good Hope and its immediate surroundings, with a few sketch maps of the Eastern Frontier and of the area beyond the northern border of the Colony. Explorers, travellers, hunters, missionaries, military and civilian surveyors and professional map makers in Britain and Europe all contributed to this varied collection which was of little use for purposes of governance. In 1836 the Surveyor-General of the Cape wrote that it was impossible to ascertain the real shape and size of the Colony "because no survey having ever been made whereby either could be obtained ... that which we see in maps is but a compilation of the notes of travellers".<sup>8</sup>

#### **Chase's involvement with trade exploration, 1819 to 1831**

John Centlivres Chase (see Figure 1) arrived in Algoa Bay (presently Port Elizabeth) on 10 April 1820 as a member of a party of British Settlers and was given land near the mouth of the Great Fish River on which to farm.<sup>9</sup> In July 1823 he moved to Graaff-Reinet. It seems as if Chase did not see his future in farming, because in June 1825 he and a

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6. P.R. Kirby, "John Centlivres Chase, Geographer and Cartographer", *Africana Notes and News*, 18, 4, 1968.

7. J. Barrow, *An auto-biographical memoir of Sir John Barrow* (John Murray, London, 1847), p 141. According to Barrow, the then Governor of the Cape, Lord Macartney, told him in 1897 that "We are shamefully ignorant ... of the geography of the country; we have no map that embraces one-tenth part of the colony ...".

8. C.C. Michell, "On the Roads and Kloofs in the Cape Colony", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 6, 1836, p 168.

9. M.J. McGinn, "J.C. Chase – 1820 Settler and Servant of the Colony." M.A. dissertation, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1975.

fellow-settler James Collis journeyed north to trade with the indigenous tribes beyond the present-day Gariep River. On returning to Graaff-Reinet, he ran a series of articles in the *South African Commercial Advertiser* promoting the trading possibilities in these areas.<sup>10</sup> Although there is evidence that the editor, John Fairbairn, urged Chase to publish these articles in a more permanent form,<sup>11</sup> there is no proof that it ever appeared in book form. Notwithstanding this, Chase was an ardent and prolific writer and throughout his life he regularly contributed to the local press. He was also aware of the fact that the existing maps of the Cape Colony were inadequate for administrative use and that the Colonial Office was in need of reliable topographical information on southern Africa.



**Figure 1: James Centlivres Chase (1795-1877) as a young man.  
(Photo: Albany Museum, Grahamstown).**

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10. *South African Commercial Advertiser*, 12 October 1825-23 November 1825.
  11. M.D. Nash, "J.C. Chase's Forgotten Journal", *Africana Notes and News*, 24, 1981, p 200.

Ever since his arrival in southern Africa, Chase took a lively interest in exploration and began collecting whatever information he could find on the various expeditions into the interior. He became the agent for two travellers, Doctor Alexander Cowie and Benjamin Green, who set off from Albany in the Eastern Cape on a trading expedition to Delagoa Bay in 1828, but died of malaria on their return journey in 1829. An employee of their expedition carried their papers to the pioneer settler Henry Fynn at Port Natal, who then sent them to Chase as agent of the deceased men.<sup>12</sup> Chase corresponded with Fynn and published various reports in the local press concerning Cowie and Green's fate.<sup>13</sup> In 1830 Chase also managed to obtain the manuscript journal of Robert Scoon and William McLuckie who in 1829 were the first white men to trek into what was later known as the Transvaal. His paper describing Scoon and McLuckie's journey was published in the *South African Quarterly Journal* of July-September 1830. Chase also obtained the journal which the traveller and geologist Andrew Geddes Bain kept during his journey with John Biddulph to Litabaruba in Bechuanaland (now Botswana) in 1826.<sup>14</sup> Biddulph was Chase's brother-in-law which added to the fact that Chase corresponded with Bain and read extracts from Bain's journal at a meeting of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution in Cape Town in 1830. Chase was also well acquainted with the trader David Hume, who in 1829 accompanied the Wesleyan missionary Archbell on his trip to the kraal of the Matabele chief Mzilikazi, in the north-east of the area later called the Transvaal.

#### **Map of South-Eastern Africa of 1830**

In 1829 Chase moved to Cape Town where he started to use the information he had collected to compile a map of south-eastern Africa. This map was intended to accompany his article on the exploration of the interior of southern Africa since 1801, which was published in 1834. The map was probably completed by the end of 1830 because on 24 February 1831 Chase wrote to the Colonial Secretary in London about his work, enclosing a copy of his map.<sup>15</sup> From his letter it is clear that he was aware of the British Government's need for a reliable map of the

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12. Kirby, "John Centlivres Chase", p 138.

13. *South African Commercial Advertiser*, 12 September 1829; 19 September 1829; 25 November 1829; *South African Quarterly Journal*, January-March 1830; *Graham's Town Journal*, 1, 8, 15 and 22 June 1832.

14. Also see M.H. Lister (ed), *Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1949).

15. British National Archives, London (previously Public Records Office, hereafter BNA): CO 48/142.

Cape Colony and that he knew that arrangements had been made by the Colonial Office for the in-house compilation of a map of southern Africa. In his letter, Chase took pains to explain the “original and authentic”<sup>16</sup> sources he had used to compile his map which “filled up at least 100 000 square miles hitherto a perfect blank in the maps of Africa”.<sup>17</sup> His letter was received by the Colonial Office in London on 25 June 1831.

Chase’s manuscript map of 1830 has not survived, but in his letter of 24 February 1831, he mentioned that Bain and Biddulph’s journey northwards enabled him to “carry on a line of positions [on his map] to within a few miles of the Tropic of Capricorn”.<sup>18</sup> He also referred to the journeys of Cowie and Green, Scoon and McLuckie, as well as Archbell and Hume, implying that his 1830 map depicted the routes these travellers had followed. The questions which now arise, are: “What happened to this map after it had been received by the Colonial Office?” and “What role did it play in the history of cartography of southern Africa?”

### **Hebert’s map**

Although no official decision in this regard could be traced, it is plausible that by 1829 the lack of reliable maps of large parts of the Empire compelled the Colonial Office to introduce some in-house cartographic activity to cater for this need. The British cartographer employed to compile an official map of the southern part of Africa apparently was a certain Mister L. Hebert who worked as cartographer and lithographer for the British Government at the time.<sup>19</sup> Today evidence of Hebert’s activity with regards to southern Africa exists in the form of a large, detailed manuscript map in the British National Archives (BNA), which bears the inscription “Drawn at the Colonial Department by L. Hebert, Senior 1830”<sup>20</sup> (see Figure 2).

The date 1830 indicated on the map is questionable as the map shows, in red, the route along which the explorers Cowie and Green travelled from Grahamstown to Delagoa Bay in 1829 – information which only reached the Cape Colony in June 1831.<sup>21</sup> What probably happened was that the map was considered a key map which was adapted

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16. BNA: CO 48/142.

17. BNA: CO 48/142.

18. BNA: CO 48/142.

19. Personal communication from Doctor Ian Mumford (retired Principal Map Research Officer, Ministry of Defense, UK), 10 November 2004.

20. BNA: CO Cape of Good Hope 12.

21. Kirby, “John Centlivres Chase”, p 133.

by Hebert on an ongoing basis as more information on the interior of southern Africa became available to the Colonial Office. On studying the map, questions such as: “From where did Hebert derive his information?” and “What sources were used?” come to mind.

The source material for Hebert’s map consisted of published maps and a variety of unpublished cartographical material. Notable amongst the travellers’ and explorers’ cartographic records of the early nineteenth century are the maps by Barrow (1801),<sup>22</sup> Lichtenstein (1803-1806),<sup>23</sup>



**Figure 2: Hebert’s map.**  
(British National Archives: CO Cape of Good Hope 12).

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22. J. Barrow, “General chart of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope” – engraved by S.J. Neele, in J. Barrow, *Travels into the interior of Southern Africa ...* (Cadell and Davies, London, 1805), size 46 x 69 cm.
  23. M.H.C. Lichtenstein, “Karte des europaeischen Gebiets am Vorgebirge der Guten Hoffnung”, in M.H.C. Lichtenstein, *Reisen im Südlichen Afrika in den Jahren 1803-1806* (Carl Salfeld, Berlin, 1811), size 45,5 x 60 cm.

Burchell (1822)<sup>24</sup> and Thompson (1827)<sup>25</sup>. Missionaries who included maps in the published narratives of their travels and work in this area were Campbell (1815 and 1822)<sup>26</sup>, Latrobe (1818)<sup>27</sup> and Kay (1832)<sup>28</sup>. Of the professional cartographers active in Britain during this period, Aaron Arrowsmith (1802, 1805, 1815, 1817)<sup>29</sup>, John Cary (1808)<sup>30</sup>, Pinkerton (1809)<sup>31</sup>, Thomson (1815)<sup>32</sup>, Lizars (1818)<sup>33</sup> and Sidney Hall (1828)<sup>34</sup> produced maps of the Cape Colony. Aaron Arrowsmith's maps closely resemble Barrow's map. The maps of Cary, Pinkerton, Thomson and Lizars were small-scale atlas maps based on the information provided by Barrow, Lichtenstein and Campbell, whereas Sydney Hall obviously made use of Burchell's map (which he engraved) when compiling his own.

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24. W.J. Burchell, "A Map of the Extratropical Part of Southern Africa" – engraved by Sidney Hall, in W.J. Burchell, *Travels in the interior of Southern Africa I* (Longman, Hurst, Tees, Orme, Brown and Green, London, 1822), size 82,5 x 70 cm.
  25. G. Thompson, "A map of Southern Africa compiled and corrected from the latest surveys", in G. Thompson, *Travels and adventures in Southern Africa* (Henry Colburn, London, 1827), size 28 x 41 cm.
  26. J. Campbell, "South Africa", in J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa ...* (Black, Parry & Co, London, 1815), size 25,5 x 40,5 cm; J. Campbell, "South Africa", in J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa ... I* (F. Westley, London, 1822), size 31 x 44,5 cm.
  27. C.I. Latrobe, "The Southern Division of the Cape of Good Hope Colony ...", in C.I. Latrobe, *Journal of a visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816* (L.B. Seeley, London, 1818), size 22,5 x 54 cm.
  28. S. Kay, "A Map of South Africa 1832", in S. Kay, *Travels and Research in Kaffraria ...* (Harper, New York, 1832), size 20 x 26 cm.
  29. A. Arrowsmith, *Colony of the Cape of Good Hope* (Cadell and Davies, Longman and Rees, London, 1802), size 25 x 20 cm; A. Arrowsmith, *Chart of the Cape of Good Hope* (A. Arrowsmith, London, 1805), 4 sheets, each 71 x 61 cm; A. Arrowsmith, *South Africa, delineated from various documents* (A. Arrowsmith, London, 1815), size 94 x 81 cm; A. Arrowsmith, "Cape of Good Hope", in A. Arrowsmith, *A New and General Atlas* (A. Constable, Edinburgh, 1817), size 25 x 20,5 cm.
  30. J. Cary, "Cape of Good Hope", in J. Cary, *Cary's New Universal Atlas* (John Cary, London, 1808), size 28,5 x 23 cm.
  31. J. Pinkerton, "Southern Africa" – drawn by L. Hebert, in J. Pinkerton, *Pinkerton's Modern Atlas* (Cadell and Davies, Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, London, 1809), size 69,5 x 49,5 cm.
  32. J. Thomson and Company, "South Africa", in J. Thomson and Company, *Thomson's New General Atlas* (J. Thomson & Company, Edinburgh, 1815), size 51,5 x 27 cm.
  33. W. and D. Lizars, "Colony of the Cape of Good Hope", in W. and D. Lizars, *Miller's Imperial Atlas* (W. and D. Lizars, Edinburgh, 1818), size 27,5 x 22 cm.
  34. S. Hall, *Southern Africa* (Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, London, 1828), size 41 x 52 cm.

The unpublished cartographical material used by Hebert comprised military survey data and manuscript maps derived from the contingent of Royal Engineers stationed at the Cape, and the topographical material collected by early travellers and explorers who did not produce maps, but nevertheless made important observations. Examples of such travellers are Chase and Collis (1825); Bain and Biddulph (1826); Scoon and McLuckie (1829); Cowie and Green (1829); and Archbell and Hume (1829). The well-known naturalist Andrew Smith's third journey, also known as the "Great Expedition", was organised by the Cape of Good Hope Association for Exploring Central Africa, for which Chase served as Secretary. The journey lasted from August 1834 until January 1836 and had as one of its objectives to afford geographers "the means of filling up the immense chasm which ... exists in all Maps of Southern Africa".<sup>35</sup>

Hebert's map was without doubt the best cartographical portrayal of southern Africa of its time and it is lamentable that with the exception of Muller<sup>36</sup> who superficially mentions its existence, no historian working on the history of nineteenth-century South Africa has made use of it. Even Bergh and Visagie<sup>37</sup> who, in their commendable cartographic guide for research on the Eastern Frontier zone during the period 1660 to 1980, use both the Arrowsmith and the SDUK maps as references, seem to be either ignorant of the existence of Hebert's map, or underestimate its importance.

### Map of the "South African Peninsula" of 1833

In 1834 Chase published his "Sketch of the Progress and present State of Geographical Discovery in the African Continent, made from the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope" in five installments in the *South African Quarterly Journal*.<sup>38</sup> In the last installment he referred to a map he had compiled which was not published together with the text, but which he presumably used when he addressed the members of the South African

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35. Cape Archives Repository, Cape Town (hereafter CAR): CO 165, Letter number 58, Andrew Smith – Somerset, 29 June 1822.
  36. C.F.J. Muller, *Die oorsprong van die Groot Trek* (Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 1974), pp 224-245.
  37. J.S. Bergh and J.C. Visagie, *The Eastern Cape Frontier Zone 1660-1980* (Butterworth, Durban, 1985).
  38. J.C. Chase, "A sketch of the progress and present state of geographical discovery in the African continent, made from the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope", *South African Quarterly Journal*, 2, 1-3, January-March 1834 & 3, 1-2, April-June 1834.



Literary and Scientific Institution on the same topic. We would never have known what this map looked like if it were not for Kirby who, in 1968, located a manuscript map of 1833 by Chase in a private collection in Port Elizabeth<sup>39</sup> (see Figure 3). The map covered the whole of southern Africa from the equator southwards, was pasted on cloth so that it could be folded and was titled “Outline of the South African Peninsula sketched to show the progress of Discovery made in the Interior”. Both the date and contents of the map suggested that it was compiled to illustrate Chase’s geographical studies of the subcontinent and to show to the members of the Literary and Scientific Institution and the Cape of Good Hope Association for Exploring Southern Africa which areas of the subcontinent were as yet unknown.



**Figure 3: Chase’s map of the “South African Peninsula” of 1833.  
(MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg).**

39. Kirby, “James Centlivres Chase”, pp 155-156; M. Karp, “A drawer full of history”, *Africana Notes and News*, March 1968, pp 38-39. In 1968 the then Africana Museum in Johannesburg borrowed the original manuscript map from Mister Karp to have it copied. The photographic negative made during this process is currently in the MuseumAfrica in Johannesburg. The original manuscript map could not be traced.

To indicate the “enormous tract of Terra Incognita”<sup>40</sup> in southern Africa, Chase blackened it out. Since the Cape Colony was relatively well known, Chase did not think it necessary to insert more than the principal place-names in this area. He did, however, make a point of indicating the routes of the travellers already mentioned, namely Campbell, Burchell, Bain and Biddulph, Cowie and Green, Scoon and McLuckie, as well as Archbell and Hume.

#### **Chase and the Arrowsmith and SDUK maps of 1834**

The first edition of John Arrowsmith’s map of the Cape of Good Hope (see Figure 4) was published on 15 February 1834, with the map of South Africa of the SDUK (see Figure 5) appearing six weeks later. An annotation on Arrowsmith’s map mentions that it was “with permission copied from the original manuscript drawing in the Colonial Office by Mr L. Hebert, Snr.”. Likewise, the SDUK map indicates that it was “Compiled from M.S. maps in the Colonial Office”, as well as from information furnished by “Captain Owen’s Survey”. Given the contents and provenance of Hebert’s map in the British National Archives, it is fair to conclude that the map Arrowsmith refers to as the “map compiled by Mr Hebert”, is in fact the same map. That Arrowsmith’s map is



**Figure 4: John Arrowsmith’s map of the *Cape of Good Hope*, 1834. (National Library of South Africa, Cape: KHC.AZ 1834 Arrowsmith).**

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40. J.C. Chase, “A sketch of the progress and present state....”, *South African Quarterly Journal*, April-June 1834, p 227.

indeed a copy of the BNA map, becomes obvious when comparing these two maps. Not only are most of the place-names and the delineation of rivers and trails the same on both maps, but many notations and inscriptions on Hebert's map also occur verbatim on Arrowsmith's map. Likewise, the many similarities between Hebert's map and the SDUK map suggest that the phrase "MS maps compiled in the Colonial Office" which appears on the latter map also refers to among others, Hebert's map.

We do not know when Chase saw Arrowsmith's map for the first time, but we do know that when the SDUK's map came to his attention, he bitterly complained to the South African Literary and Scientific Institution which, in its Report for 1833-1834, noted that on the map of southern Africa by the SDUK "nearly the whole of the important territory east and north of the eastern colonial boundary is drawn *without acknowledgement* [author's italics] from ... a sketch composed by Mr. Chase ... and from documents in his possession".<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 5: South Africa by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK), 1834.  
(National Library of South Africa, Cape: KHC.AZ 1834 SDUK).**

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41. "Annual Report of the Council of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution for 1833", *South African Quarterly Journal*, July-September 1834, p 298.

Chase was so perturbed by the publication of the SDUK map that he sent a memorandum dated 7 November 1834 to the Colonial Secretary in London, accusing the Colonial Office of the plagiarism of his map without his approval and of transmitting the information to “third parties”, something which was never contemplated by him and for which he had never received any remuneration.<sup>42</sup> To support his claim, he enclosed a copy of the SDUK map on which he had demarcated with a purple line the contested area which had been plagiarized from the map of 1830<sup>43</sup> (see Figure 6). He stressed the fact that he had never sent any other copies of his map out of the country and that he had refused to sell his map to Arrowsmith when the latter had offered to purchase it. As evidence of his claim he referred to Scoon and McLuckie’s route to Delagoa Bay in 1829 which also appears on the SDUK map and mentioned that the documents of these two travellers had never been in any hands but his own. He concluded by asking for compensation from the British Government. It is not clear whether Chase saw Arrowsmith’s map shortly after it had been published. It is, however, highly probable that it did come to his attention quite soon and that he noticed that like the SDUK map, Arrowsmith’s also showed Cowie and Green’s route to Delagoa Bay and even indicated “Cowie’s tomb 1829” south-west of Delagoa Bay.



**Figure 6: The area on the SDUK map of 1834 which allegedly had been plagiarized from Chase’s map of 1830, as marked by him. (MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg).**

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42. BNA: CO 48/157.

43. BNA: MPG 1775.

Chase had to wait two years for a reply from Lord Glenelg, the then Secretary for the Colonies. In a letter dated 5 September 1836, the Colonial Office acknowledged that Chase's map "was placed in the hands of the Geographer of this Office, who was employed at the time in compiling a *Map of Southern Africa* [author's italics]",<sup>44</sup> but stressed that Chase submitted his map voluntarily with the request that it should be used as "a contribution towards the construction of another Map".<sup>45</sup> To conclude, Glenelg disclaimed all responsibility for the use of the map by third parties.

### Verification of Chase's claim

The acknowledgement by the Colonial Office that Chase's map was referred to "the Geographer of this Office", implies that Hebert was in a position to make ample use of Chase's map when compiling his own map. The area on the map which Chase considered plagiarized, concerned south-east Africa as mapped by him in 1830 and involved the Cape Colony north-east of the Keiskamma River, the area now known as KwaZulu-Natal, the present north-eastern Free State, the northern part of the present North-West Province and southern Botswana.

Chase had a thorough knowledge of the topography of the present-day KwaZulu-Natal and in his "Sketch of the Progress ..." of 1834 he gave a detailed description of the "Terra de Natal".<sup>46</sup> Apart from the information yielded by the journal of Cowie and Green, Chase also corresponded with the pioneer settler Henry Fynn and prior to the publication of his "Sketch of the Progress ..." he had access to Fynn's unpublished manuscript entitled "Ten Years' Residence at Port Natal".<sup>47</sup> In 1830 Chase probably was the first to use the names "Port Natal", "Farewell Fort", "Fynn's Kraal" and "Dingaan's Kraal" on a map and to show the route Cowie and Green followed in 1829. The same names and information also appear on Hebert's map from where they were copied by Arrowsmith and the SDUK.

Chase was well acquainted with the contents of A.G. Bain's journal covering the latter's trip to the present Botswana in 1826 and must have been the first cartographer to depict Bain and Biddulph's route

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44. CAR: GH 1/23, number 1651, pp 21-29.

45. CAR: GH 1/23, number 1651, pp 21-29.

46. J.C. Chase, "A sketch of the progress and state...", *South African Quarterly Journal*, April-June 1834, pp 202-206.

47. A. Steedman, *Wanderings and Adventures in the Interior of Southern Africa II* (Longman, London, 1835), p 174.

north of Lake Chue which was the northernmost point reached by Burchell in 1812. Places such as Litabaruba (the most northern point Bain and Biddulph visited), Melita, Siloqualie and the Lorolani River, were all taken from Bain's journal.<sup>48</sup> Before 1830, when a part of this journal was printed in the *South African Quarterly Journal*, the exact location of these places had not been known to anybody but Bain, Biddulph and Chase. Hebert copied some of this information from Chase, but omitted the extreme northern section of Bain and Biddulph's journey, as his map did not cover the area north of 25° S. Chase's 1830 map, however, depicted Bain's entire route as far north as Litabaruba (approximately 24° 21' S) – information which appears on both the Arrowsmith and the SDUK maps.

The routes followed by Scoon and McLuckie, and the Wesleyan missionary James Archbell were treated in much the same way. Until 1830 when Chase published extracts from Scoon and McLuckie's journal, the location and the names of places such as Maquassa (Makwassie), Groote Fountain and Sea Cow Fountain along the route they had followed, were only accessible to him. These place-names, which were published by Chase in 1830, all appear in the correct sequence on Hebert's, Arrowsmith's and the SDUK maps. Indeed, all the routes of explorers marked as such on the maps of Hebert, Arrowsmith and the SDUK occur in the contested area which Chase claimed was copied from his map of 1830.

### **Map of the Eastern Frontier of 1836**

Chase's interest in public affairs was not restricted to matters geographical and during his stay in Cape Town he became known as a defender of the "frontier" viewpoint on such controversial topics as vagrancy, the emancipation of slaves and the Government's frontier policy.<sup>49</sup> His political sympathies lay with the white pioneer farmers and during the frontier war of 1834-1835, he advocated that frontier affairs were inaccurately reported in Britain and that the British government was biased in favour of the Xhosa tribes. In an effort to rectify this situation, Chase compiled a new map with detailed statistics on the demography and economy of the country printed in the margin<sup>50</sup> (see Figure 7). The

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48. M.H. Lister (ed), *Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1949), pp 12-71.

49. McGinn, "J.C. Chase", p 33.

50. J.C. Chase, *Map of the Eastern Frontier of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope* (Arrowsmith, London, 1834), size 50 x 58 cm.

map was published by Arrowsmith in London on 30 October 1836. The title of the map is a clear indication of Chase's political stance and unlike his previous maps which depict the areas in southern Africa already explored, the 1836 map was aimed at informing the reader about the geopolitical and demographic situation prevailing on the Eastern Frontier immediately after the Sixth Frontier War of 1834-1835. It was also the first published map of south-eastern Africa to be compiled by a civilian of the Colony and was definitely the first comprehensive map of the Eastern Frontier to be published. A second edition was issued on 2 July 1838. The fact that the manuscript of this map must have been completed and sent off to Britain soon after Chase had dispatched his memorandum to the Colonial Office in 1834, suggests that he had forgiven Arrowsmith for the latter's alleged plagiarism of his map of 1830.



**Figure 7: Chase's map of the Eastern Frontier of 1836.**  
(Royal Geographical Society: mr South Africa D.102).

### **Map of South Africa of 1843**

Chase was a prolific writer on all matters geographical and was determined "to dispel the mist of ignorance"<sup>51</sup> which he thought had settled on Britain with regard to the Cape Colony. In 1843 he published

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51. Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay*, p v.

*The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay*, a general description of the history and geography of the Colony. The book which was edited by Joseph S. Christophers, a British agent for emigration to the Colony, also contained a reference map (see Figure 8) which bore Christophers' name as compiler, albeit from "the drawings of J.C. Chase".<sup>52</sup> It is, however, difficult to see what Christophers' role with regard to this document was, as the map is clearly an updated edition of the SDUK map of 1834. In the introduction to the book, Chase makes mention of the fact that his map of 1830 was pirated by Arrowsmith and the SDUK, and implies that the 1843 map, excluding the new additions that had been made to it, closely resembles his original map of 1830. As for Christophers' hand in the map, an editor's note at the end of the introduction admits that "Indeed the Map must be considered that of Mr Chase".<sup>53</sup>



**Figure 8: Chase's map of South Africa of 1843.**  
(Published in J.C. Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa*. Pelham Richardson, London, 1843, p vii).

Except for some new additions, Chase's map in his book is an exact copy of the SDUK map of 1834 without the inset maps of the Cape, George and Grahamstown. The additions mainly occur in the area

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52. J.C. Chase, "Cape of Good Hope with the Eastern Province of Albany and Natal", in Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay*, size 37 x 47 cm.
53. Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay*, p vii.



occupied by the emigrant Boers between the present Gariep and Vaal Rivers, and in the interior of Natal. As such, the map paved the way for important maps which were to follow, such as James Wyld's map of South Africa of 1844<sup>54</sup>, Arrowsmith's map of the area beyond the Orange River (now called the Gariep) of 1851,<sup>55</sup> and Henry Hall's map of South Africa of 1857.<sup>56</sup>

### Conclusion

J.C. Chase was a pioneer colonial cartographer whose work during the 1830s and 1840s influenced all subsequent maps of the southern African continent. What makes his cartographical endeavours all the more exceptional, is that he started from scratch; apart from the maps of Barrow (1801) and Burchell (1822), he had no base map to work from. The topographical information he painstakingly collected and the maps he compiled was groundbreaking cartographical work in an otherwise unmapped southern Africa.

### Abstract

By 1830, almost two hundred years after Europeans had settled at the Cape of Good Hope for the first time, South Africa was still inadequately mapped. Apart from the route maps of early travellers such as Barrow (1805), Campbell (1815 and 1822), Burchell (1822) and Thompson (1827), no reliable overview map existed of the Cape Colony, nor of Natal, nor the area to the north of the Orange River. The first civilian inhabitant of the Colony who tried to improve this situation, was the 1820 British Settler James Centlivres Chase, who collected as much information as possible relative to exploration in Africa and in 1830 compiled the first overview map of the eastern part of South Africa. This article discusses the dearth of reliable maps before the 1830s; Chase's reports on the various expeditions into the interior by which new topographical information had become available; his efforts to contribute to the Colonial Office's "official map" of South Africa; his influence on the well-known maps of John Arrowsmith and the SDUK of 1834; and the cartographic significance of the maps he published in 1836 and 1843.

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54. J. Wyld, *South Africa by Jas. Wyld. Geographer to the Queen and H.T.H. Prince Albert, Charing Cross East, London* (J. Wyld, London, 1844), size 52 x 81 cm.
  55. J. Arrowsmith, "Sketch map of the Sovereignty beyond the Orange River, and a supplementary map of South Africa", in J.J. Freeman, *A Tour in South Africa* (John Snow, London, 1851), size 45 x 57 cm.
  56. H. Hall, *South Africa* (engraved and printed by J.A. Crew, Cape Town, 1857), size 82 x 70 cm.

## Opsomming

### **Die Kartering van Suid-Afrika in die Middel-Negentiende Eeu: Die Kartografie van James Centlivres Chase**

Teen 1830, byna tweehonderd jaar nadat Europeërs hulle die eerste keer aan die Kaap die Goeie Hoop gevestig het, was Suid-Afrika nog besonder gebrekkig gekarteer. Met die uitsondering van die roetekaarte van vroeë reisigers soos Barrow (1805), Campbell (1815 en 1822), Burchell (1822) en Thompson (1827), het geen betroubare oorsigkaart van die Kaapkolonie, Natal, of die area noord van die Oranjerivier bestaan nie. Die eerste burgerlike inwoner van die Kolonie wat hierdie onbevredigende situasie probeer verbeter het, was die 1820-Britse Setlaar James Centlivres Chase. Hy het soveel inligting as moontlik met betrekking tot die verkenning van Afrika ingesamel en in 1830 die eerste oorsigkaart van die oostelike deel van Suid-Afrika saamgestel. Hierdie artikel bespreek die nypende tekort aan betroubare kaarte voor die 1830's; Chase se verslae oor die verskillende ekspedisies na die binneland waardeur nuwe topografiese inligting beskikbaar geword het; sy pogings om by te dra tot die Britse Ministerie van Kolonies se "amptelike kaart" van Suid-Afrika; sy invloed op die uiters bekende kaarte van John Arrowsmith en die SDUK van 1834; en die kartografiese betekenis van die kaarte wat hy onderskeidelik in 1836 en 1843 gepubliseer het.

#### **Key words**

Africa; Arrowsmith; Cape Colony; cartography; Colonial Office; discovery; Eastern Frontier; exploration; geography; James Centlivres Chase; map; plagiarism; Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK); South Africa; surveying; topographical information; traveller.

#### **Slutelwoorde**

Afrika; Arrowsmith; Britse Ministerie van Kolonies; geografie; James Centlivres Chase; Kaapkolonie; kaart; kartografie; landmeting; ontdekking; ontdekkingsreise; ontdekkingsreisiger; Oosgrens; plagiaat; *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* (SDUK); Suid-Afrika; topografiese inligting.