Lunatic asylums in the colonies in the nineteenth century mirrored those of ‘home’, in Britain. But in a European settler context, the administration and policies of the asylums, and the treatment of their patients, took on many different nuances.

There was a complex interface between lunacy legislation, colonial government, families and communities, and the ways in which these elements affected individuals’ experiences of treatment before and after committal to a lunatic asylum. This book breaks new ground in tracing the route of people thought to be ‘of unsound mind’ from their homes and families to eventual committal to a lunatic asylum in the Cape Colony in the late nineteenth century.

A major theme which links each chapter is the movement of the insane in search of care: in and out of jails, asylums and families; in and out of the colony by land or sea; and their journeys by ship, cart, train or horse.

RECOMMENDED FOR
Medical historians; historians of British colonialism, the history of the family and Jewish history; psychiatrists and psychologists.
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