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Dear friends,

Summer Holiday is not in my list of words associated with the end of the year and the festive season.

We rarely went where the sun was shining and the sea was blue. Not everybody went on a summer holiday, not everybody discarded their troubles for a week or two. No, we did not go on a summer holiday nor did we do the things that we always wanted to do. Yes, we rarely went on the summer holiday that made our dreams come true.

Instead, most of the families in our street (and all our friends from high school) packed in tents and gas stoves for a temporary move to Kogel Bay (just around the corner). We also commuted between Wellington and Kraaifontein visiting our extended family on days when my mom had a short respite from Karl Bremer Hospital. She was a nurse, of course, and devoted long hours to ease the pain and suffering of others.

When I was very little, about four or five, we also embarked on the rare massive exodus to sun, sea and sand. In our case it was Lamberts Bay, Mossel Bay or Waenhuiskrans where we joined the ablution block crowd and sacrificed our privacy for two weeks of swimming furiously, eating periwinkles cooked in seawater and

going out onto the *bakkies* just because we could. My father's long time pals in Lamberts Bay, Uncle Willem and Uncle Joubert, would see to it that snoek, *harders* and crayfish were aplenty, and although we were never allowed the luxury of crayfish tails, we extracted that white succulent meat from spindly crayfish legs as if born to it. My Titte presided over the cooking of these creatures and would often call us to listen to their wailing whilst cooking in a church bazaar pot.

And just like that, our camping experience magnified into the most wonderful time of the year, never mind the *Gollywog* hair brought on by spending so much time in the sea. I later discovered that the *Gollywog* was a black doll with frizzy hair and clown lips, but instead of being offended, I applauded my Dad's ingenuity as even our dog Toby barked at me upon our return home. Our family regarded it as sacrilege to spend Christmas or New Year's Day at a camping site and we always departed in time for the Christmas morning church service in Wellington. I suppose the extravagant Christmas lunch to follow was also taken into consideration.

The tent with the hole in it, and the smell of gas, was later replaced with

short pre-Christmas trips to *Soverby*, the farm of my grandmother's roots. No, her family were never farm owners, but the family home with a kraal out on the *koppies* and a dam, had been in our family for generations and said to have belong to the first Swart (as in the surname) girl who defied her family to marry a person of colour. Notwithstanding the visits to *Soverby*, the constant longing for family, and a home rarely seen, became too much for my grandmother to endure and the yearning eventually culminated in a nine-hour long trip to Keimoes in my grandparents' Volkswagen Variant.

My grandfather had a small herd of goats and a little flock of sheep on *Soverby*. They flourished and thrived during the year under the watchful eye of Oom Demas, blissfully unaware of their fate at the Wellington Christmas dinner table. On the farm, we would help ourselves to mounds of lentils and raisins, on the stalk, as we as the *Gekomdes* were treated like royalty. Sometimes a wedding, and sadly, a funeral, was thrown in the mix. It was during such occasions that Aunt Christine convinced my grandmother that only motorcar oil would cure my dry scalp. Needless to say Psoriasis was an unknown ailment then and their good intentions and efforts ruined my entire holiday.

Sometimes my grandmother was blessed with a live chicken in a small coop. Chicken and I would eye each other warily on the return trip home. The boot was normally filled with goat and sheep. Back home, the plums would be blushing, ready for picking as soon as we returned.

Some days the whole family: aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces and grandparents, would pack picnic lunches and travel to Strandfontein or St. James' Beach. My grandmother would don her crimplene bathing costume and swimming cap, a la Grace Kelly, and my grandfather and his Jack Russel would enthusiastically run along the beach; they were so alike – he and his dog. At the end of the day we were exhausted, especially my little brother who acted as chaperone for my sister and I, standing at attention with the beach towel as soon as we exited the water. As teenage girls, our behaviour bordered on the bizarre!

Christmas Eve and New Years Day were the the highlight of our summer holiday. I delighted in the kinship and affinity of family. Unconsciously my love for the past, shaped by earlier Albertus and de Vries generations, was nurtured there and then as ritual and tradition reassured the younger me. The evolution

of our summer holiday pleased me greatly by then.

I hope you too find, just as I still do, joy, peace and blessings in your summer holiday.

KENDREW

Long Forgotten?

In the early 1920s a Mr. Schlesenger, a land developer and film magnate, bought farmland (veldt) from Mr. Reg Holmes and other adjoining farmland, and *The African Irrigated Land Company* was formed with Mr. Schlesenger as chairman.

The Van Ryneveld Pass Dam, with built-canals, was constructed and irrigation water became available at Kendrew. The portion (with the best water supply) was administrated by *The African Irrigated Land Company* - known as the "Company". The remaining ground was divided into plots for sale.

A brochure was compiled (somewhat misleading) depicting orange groves at

Wellwood and lush lucerne lands at *Voetpad*, advertising the plots for sale at Kendrew. These brochures were distributed in Great Britain in the 1920s where ex-servicemen of the 1914- 1918 war were finding it difficult to settle down or find employment. Thus with ex-servicemen gratuities available, many came to buy a plot at Kendrew – to seek a fortune in a colony.

They came from all walks of life. Some came from Port Elizabeth, where they had disembarked, by train to Graaff-Reinet and *en route* saw Kendrew on a hot, windy August day- saw the tumble weed (rolbosse) careering past and thick clouds of dust, and promptly took the return train back to Port Elizabeth.



Kendrew 1895/6 taken by E H Short (North)
(a CGR Photograph)

Many came and stayed a while but because of the dry seasons and depression, left and settled elsewhere in South Africa. A few stayed and remained

many years at Kendrew and some died there.

Mr Schlesenger had a hotel built (really as hostel, for accommodation of the settlers, as they were called) while their houses were being built on the plots which they had bought.

The ground was cultivated and crops and fruit trees planted. The “company” also planted fruit trees and in the 1930s there was a dried fruit factory at Kendrew and truck loads of fruit-peaches and apricots were sent by train to Port Elizabeth to the Jam and Canning Factories.

A seven-teacher Primary school was established for the children of the settlers and the personnel of the “company”. They included the Manager, and Accountant, a Secretary, a Horticulturist and Managers of the fruit, sheep and Agricultural Sections. Mr Clem Cawood, Mr Oswald Cawood and Mr David Stern were the most well known. There was also a Piggery.

It was in the pig food imported from New Mexico, that the very noxious weed “Satansbos” was introduced to Kendrew. Unbeknown to the people of Kendrew in the 1930s the pretty blue

flowers admired by them have become a curse beyond measure.

While the houses were being build and the fruit trees were not in production as yet, there was a time of boredom. Bridge and card games became the antidote. Bridge drives were held and went on from 10am - 2am.

Some of the settlers had been stationed in India and “tiffin time “was introduced. The passenger train between Port Elizabeth and Graaff-Reinet stopped at Kendrew about midday.

It was said that Kendrew station was crowded on a Monday and the dinning saloon was packed as the Bar was open. A few times the dinning saloon was secretly unhitched to cause a delay and a longer “tiffin time”.

Mr Schlesenger had the Kendrew country clubhouse built in the late 1920s. The clubhouse was built of zinc-as were most of the company buildings – even the walls. There was a bar, fully licensed, a library; a lounge, a dance hall and caretaker/ barmans cottage.

Tennis courts and a dam for swimming were constructed and later also a golf course. For a short while there was even

a cricket field. Tennis, cricket and golf teams played for Kendrew.



*Another photograph taken by H S Short 1895/96 of
Kendrew Station (South)
(a CGR Photograph)*

The Kendrew club dances were well attended. Kendrew became quite a “Place” and Kendrew club became out of bounds for many Graaff-Reinet girls.

Somehow those on the surrounding farms seemed on the outside looking in during the early days of Kendrew. Then, as the fruit trees became productive and the 1933 depression was being felt, the parties became less. Those settlers who were also not able to accept the conditions of the Karoo and the hard work, left to settle elsewhere.

To name some of the settlers - Mr and Mrs White - Mackey, Major and Mrs McQueen and Mr and Mrs McQueen Senior. Mr and Mrs Williams, Mr and Mrs Oldham, Olphert, Commander and Mrs Rae, Mr and Mrs Jeff Anderson -

who, when he left Kendrew, went to Port Elizabeth and started Anderson’s Nurseries. Mr and Mrs Wright, Mr and Mrs Twigg who suffered a great tragedy when their small daughter was crushed to death by a garage door. Also Mr and Mrs Galloway and Capt. and Mrs Day and many others.

Mr and Mrs McArthur went to Port Elizabeth where Mr Mc Arthur became a mayor of Port Elizabeth. McArthur swimming pool at Humewood is named after him. Mrs McArthur gave dancing lessons to the children at Kendrew during the depression. Hazel Short and her brother Arthur, Robert van den Berg and his sister Wendy, Allan Ramsay, Jock Olivier and myself were some of the pupils. We did not learn much but the McArthur’s needed the money. Mr and Mrs Greig who had a tea plantation in Ceylon (Sri Lanka now) had the most impressive house built at Kendrew. Their youngest daughter married Victor Van den Berg.

Mr and Mrs Jack Coutts put Kendrew on the map with their succulent plant nursery and became one of the favourite families at Kendrew.

Mr and Mrs Ramsay came from Scotland and had four sons (all clever) that

attended the Union High School. Bill, the eldest went to Edinburgh University and became professor of Chemistry there.

James studied Forestry in Scotland and went to Ghana (the then Gold Coast) Andrew, studied Engineering at Edinburgh University, joined the Royal Engineers in the 1939 - 45 war and was killed in North Africa. Allan, the youngest studied Aeronautical Engineering. Bill is the only one still alive, living in Scotland.

Mrs Ramsay, surely the most hard working woman Kendrew has ever known, had apricot and peach orchards that produced prize fruit. Their home is now called Koningrus.

Vice- Admiral Sir Charles Pollard was the epitome of a gentleman. It was said that he was asked to marry Lady Pollard and to take her out of England to prevent a scandal involving one of the Royal princes of that time. Lady Pollard left Kendrew during the time of depression and was last seen driving a taxi in Cape Town. Sir Charles Pollard remained at Kendrew and during the War became very ill and lived for several months with my parents until his death, a gentleman to the very end.

Mr and Mrs Billy Wartze, maybe had the most original reason for coming to Kendrew. Mr Wartze was a Prussian and a graduate in Geology from London University. He and his brother became steel magnates in Moscow before the Revolution. Mrs Wartze was the daughter of a British Diplomat in Moscow where they met and were married.

During the Communist Revolution Mr Wartze and his brother were arrested and sent to Siberia Where Mr Wartze became very ill. Because they were influential and also Prussians, they were sent back to Moscow, where the Commissioner of police who was a friend of theirs, helped them to escape to Berlin, Where they had relatives.

Meanwhile Mrs Wartze's parents on their return to Great Britain came across the brochure advertising plots for sale at Kendrew. This brochure was given to Reinet House but was unfortunately destroyed in the fire at the Reinet House. Mrs Wartze's parents suggested to the Wartzes that they join them and come to Kendrew. All the plans were made, but Mrs Wartze died at Kendrew, as did Mr Wartze several years later, the last of the settlers at Kendrew.

I can remember the day Princess Alice and her husband, the Duke of Connaught came to Kendrew to a garden party on the Club House Lawn. Even the children (I was one) were presented to them. Mrs Wartze taught us how to address them and the girls were taught how to curtsy.

In 1946 the then reigning King George and Queen Elizabeth (queen mother) on their visit to South Africa, traveling on the Royal Train, stayed overnight on a specially constructed side line, named Koningsrus at 7am on a hot February morning, drought stricken too. Many Kendrew people gathered at the side line and met the King and Queen and the Princesses, Elizabeth (now the Queen) and Princess Margaret. The only available flowers at short notice at Kendrew were cockscomb and a bunch of these was presented to the Queen. The Royal Family were as always gracious and interested.

Miss Anna van Bok was the postmistress at Kendrew for many years. During the 1939 - 1945 war, with petrol rationing making it difficult to collect one's post daily, Miss van Eck always telephoned the families, with menfolk serving overseas, if there was a letter from a

loved one, so that the post could be called for. Miss van Eck died as postmistress. One day, having worked until 5pm and being taken to hospital, died at 11pm the same day, from pneumonia.

Mr and Mrs Parker started the General Dealer Store, where one could buy from a pin to a suitcase, etc. The van Vuuren family took over from Mr Parker, and the van Vuuren family, are still owners of the same shop where we are still able to purchase a large variety of goods. Sad to say Kendrew was built on sand and no provision was made for a church to be built. It was only in the latter years of the company, they persuaded the company to provide an unused building to be used as a church by all denominations. Rev Lovely came to hold services for the Church of the Province, on his motorbike, once a month and sometimes there would be only one person at church- but he always came.

In 1950 the *African Irrigated Land Company* was sold to the Big Four: Mr Harold Charles, Mr Bob Murray, Mr Max Kroon and Mr Johnny van Rensburg, and Kendrew Estates came into being.

A few years later the roof of the building used as a church, blew away in a storm. Rev Archie Byrne and Mr Harold Charles were instrumental in providing another building to be used as a church. Mr and Mrs Eddie Willows were the stalwarts of the church at Kendrew.

Meanwhile the company had been sold and only a few settlers remained and slowly but surely Kendrew was becoming farm property again. Due to droughts, the depression, the war years and above all lack of water, only the farmers remained.

In the early 1980s the school building was obtained and converted into a church by Mr Brian Charles and other farmers. The club house has been demolished and the club is no more. The Railway Station is again a siding, the Post Office is a shop, but the church is cared for and the Kendrew people meet there at least once a month for church service and a cup of tea or coffee. The fruit trees have died and the Dried Fruit Factory is only a memory. The Company and the settlers came and went. The ground is still there and the farmers are still there, and above all there are young

farmers at Kendrew with splendid and capable young wives.

- ❖ From the Archives of The Graaff-Reinet Museum:
Author unknown
- ❖ Further reading: Karoospace.co.za

Organised Community Farming:

The Kendrew Estates are about 120,000 acres in area, of which approximately one-sixth is rated as irrigable under the Van Rhyneveld's Pass Dam scheme. The estates extend for thirty-five miles across the Karoo from the boundary of Graaff-Reinet and represent one of the largest projects in South Africa for converting semi-arid land into fertile territory under intensive cultivation. The nucleus of a farming community has been established.

Extensive lucern fields have been planted as well as hundreds of acres of orchards. Pig breeding for the bacon factory, poultry keeping and dairying are other promising avenues, and a considerable range of minor crops are being tried, several of them with good prospects of success for the settler.

One of the principal objectives of the estates is the mass production and preparation of fruit, especially for drying and canning.

Given good average seasons this should present little difficulty as the natural resources, soil, and climate, are suitable; and the organisation available also adds to the probable success of the plan.

GRAAFF-REINETSE SPROKIE

Deur Anette Theron

(Hoër Volksskool, Klas van 1965.
Al reeds tot Hoër Diens geroep)

Lank lank gelde voor kerk of rede
Het die Sondagsrivier
'n silwerhoef oor sy skouer gegooi
En gelowig gewens vir jou

Toe het jy gekom
Iewers tussen Bruintjieshoogte
Ouberg en Spandau
En die ongeluksgröef
Met die sonskyn en jare beproef

Jy't jou gerug teen Sneeu­berg
En geflank teen Tandjiesberg
En in die suide hou Kei skuil
Agter die swart Ruggens, Kamdeboo
En Kiewietstkuil

Met Klipkerk en Markplein
Tuintjies en museumdeur
Gelapte wingerd
En weerspannige kleure

Het jy soos Graaff
Gepronk en gepou
En beenderegetrou, Ook Stockenström en Scheepers onthou

Die Sondagsrivier wou jou jou salige soom
Maar het omdat jy van gelate en verlore skatte
Bly droom - Jou met valleie van verlatenheid verloën



Sketches by Don Adair: 1978
The Drostdy and Reinet House

The Early Years of Aberdeen

Submitted by Johannes Haarhoff

Search the internet for “history of Aberdeen South Africa” and you will mostly find only a few sparse scraps of information. You will learn that the town was established on the farm Brakkefontein of Jan Vorster; following a decision by the Dutch Reformed Church on 10 September 1855 to establish a new congregation; that there was sufficient development to warrant a village management board in 1858; that it was named after the birthplace in Scotland of Graaff-Reinet’s Reverend Andrew Murray; and little more.¹ It is therefore refreshing to find a more vivid, colourful account in the London-based magazine *South Africa* which brings more of Aberdeen’s early days and inhabitants to life. That article, written and published around 1922, came from the pen of Jan Carel Staal (JCS) Haarhoff (1844-1925), a colourful character in his own right and well-known resident of Graaff-Reinet, who recorded his memories of Aberdeen at

the age of 78 years.² Most of what follows, is excerpted in italics from the original, with very minor spelling corrections.³

From Graaff-Reinet to Aberdeen in 1857

About 65 years ago [in 1857], Mr Jan Vorster, of Brakfontein, in the Camdeboo, distant about 36 miles from Graaff-Reinet, decided to have a township laid out on the said farm. The farm was so named owing to the taste of its water. The idea was well received by the surrounding farmers. Mr Vorster had a portion of the farm surveyed for a dorps, and then announced in the Graaff-Reinet Herald and the Midland Province Banner (the papers of Essex and Forsyth respectively), that erven would be sold by public auction at Brakfontein, the site of the proposed township, at a certain date; and that the name of the town would be Aberdeen.

The announcement drew a considerable crowd of people to the sale. Everyone possessed money in those days, while land was cheap.

² See *Stoepstories* at http://www.graaffreinet.co.za/article/stoep_stories_no_5/8 for a brief resume of his life.

³ A brief summary of the same piece was published in the *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser* of 19 November 1953.

¹ For example <http://www.sahistory.org.za/places/aberdeen>

Politics and racial strife were unknown, nor was the land then overrun with foreigners and stock and land speculators – English and Dutch were one happy and contented family – quite contented to quietly pursue the even tenor of their respective ways. Mr SJ Meintjes (Fanie) of Graaff-Reinet, was the appointed “knight of the hammer” and the late Mr CA Nesor was his clerk. At that period I was a little over 13 years old. My father DJ Haarhoff, Org Waldeck, Charles Crawford, Ernst Steinhöbel, George F Enslin, and Frikkie Botha formed a party to proceed to the sale, which was to be a red letter day in the annals of the famous Cambeboo. My father and the others named were all “voordorpers” and inseparable comrades.⁴

A springless or “stampent” perdewa and a team of six horses were chartered to convey the party of jolly boys to Brakfontein. A well-known coloured driver named Damon was secured to handle the ribbons, and a boy named Salomon to crack the whip over the heads of the plunging, spanking team. I was not in very robust

⁴ JCS's father was Daniël Johannes Haarhoff (born in 1818), a carpenter and wagon maker with his residence facing Market Square in Graaff-Reinet.

health at the time, so my dear old dad asked Mr Edward Nathan, my boss, to let me accompany the party to the sale, and to remain away about a week or so.⁵ As he thought the outing would do me good. “By all means, Mr Haarhoff; take John along with you” said my employer, who was a very fine man. We set off with a rare splash – it was quite a sight to see the way Damon handled the reins, from North Street down Church Square and Church Street through the first drift on the main road leading to Adendorp.⁶ Salomon flourished the whip and made it emit pistol-shot cracks, when the whole of the Voor Straat denizens with mouths agape and eye-brows raised in wonderment are looking on. We passed Middel Erf (now Adendorp) in a flash, and in due season passed through Moordenaar’s River and afterwards Zwart River. The latter farm at that time belonged to the well-known Blom family. Subsequently it passed into the hands of the late Mr JS Parkes, who disposed of it to Mr John Biggs, the present owner. It is said Mr Biggs named it Brooklyn after Brooklyn near New York, which city he visited

⁵ JCS signed up as salesman at the age of 13 at the store of Nathan & Roselt on Market Square, Graaff-Reinet.

⁶ The Berrangé Bridge over the Sundays River had not yet been built at the time.

about 30 years ago [which would be about 1892]. Anyhow, he has made a very fine farm of his cherished Brooklyn-on-the-Zwart; all honour to him! We next got to Kootje Pienaar's farm Watervlei.

We required water and knowing of a well at the homestead, Damon was ordered to drive to the hospitable oom Kootje's house. Of course, he was rejoiced to see his old dorp maters; the inevitable koffie and lekker beskuit were served out by his spouse, pipes were lighted, and the news of the day related to the kindly farm-folk. "Vatje water?" "Of course, as much as you can carry away", replied oom Kootje. Windlass and bucket soon gave us plenty of water. After we said goodbye, I was placed at the back of the wagon to hold on to the anker⁷ or casket, to prevent it from rolling off on to the road, but as ill luck would have it, as Damon, just to show off a bit, made one of his famous "kaapse draaie", I was neatly projected out of the wagon on to the dusty road, and the cask followed me; luckily, I wasn't much hurt. We continued to Poortje, about halfway to Aberdeen. Here we

outspanned, and after having refreshed the inner man, proceeded to Brakfontein.

Auctioning off the First Erven

In front of Mr Vorster's house at Brakfontein was a wide furrow. Nearby was an old church building with a thatched roof, built in the form of a cross, and with four gables. It was there for the convenience of the farmers in the neighbourhood. Service was frequently held, and quarterly a minister came across from Graaff-Reinet or Beaufort West (Reverend Andrew Murray, or Reverend Fraser) to hold Nachtmaal. Today the Public Offices cover the spot where the old church stood.

The auctioneer's rostrum - a "veerwagen" - was drawn to one of the four corners of the kerk, and quickly the large and jovial crowd foregathered at the spot; the men and women of those days were quaintly garbed, greatly in contrast with the dress of nowadays. Many of the men wore wide klapbroeken, Dormehl top-hats, black cravats, mutton-chop whiskers or fringe beards, smoked boer tobacco in fine soap-stone pipes with silver caps, many took roossnuif from

⁷ Probably refers to a casket holding 1 anchor, equivalent to 8 gallons or about 36 litres.

old-time, much cherished snuff boxes, all the way from Holland or France, and all, save the predikant, the magistraat, the afslager,, and the “Engelsen”, wore veldskoene, neatly made and comfortable – the men vying with each other in making veldshoes. At that fine period there were five or six tanneries in Graaff-Reinet, six bootmakers, a hat factory, a dozen wagon-makers and smithys, painters and wagon-trimmers galore.

After mounting the impromptu rostrum, pointing out the locality where the surveyed erven lay, and reading out the stereotyped conditions of sale, couched in Hoog Hollandsch, the bidding started; it was not overly brisk, not that money was scarce, but few cared to buy erven in a new dorp. In those days almost everybody possessed land – a farm could be bought for a few hundred pounds, while there were heaps of Crowns Lands to be had almost merely for the asking. The sale lasted four days – all the erven were sold. My father bought four erven, which he sold again at considerable profit in after years.

In the evening, after every day’s sale, all foregathered at a long tent stocked with sweets, sardines, salmon, cheese,

clothing, etc. The tent or shop belonged to Mr SE Wimble, of Graaff-Reinet, who obtained permission from Vorster to start the “show”. The tent was on Church Square, and was in charge of Mr Christian van Coller, who did a roaring business there. There were numbers of tents, tent wagons, and carts to be seen all over the werf and farther afield. The appetizing odour of griddling boerwors, sasaatjes, and karbonaatjes and that of freshly brewed coffee was delicious to inhale when breakfast and supper were being prepared in the camp. We all had keen appetites, so did full justice to the tasty food.

The auctioneer applied and got permission every evening to have the use of the church-building for an hour or two for dancing! The young fellow soon collected a number of the visiting girls and danced to their heart’s content to the wailing strains of fiddle and concertina. The auctioneer, noticing how the young folk were enjoying themselves, would shout out from one of the doors, “Drink up, julle kêrels!” There was a quantity of liquor, who had it I did not know, and soon some of the young sparks got very squiffy, and a few hopelessly drunk;

one chap especially was always “jolly” as the condition was termed.

The First few Years...

Some time afterward, as I was suffering from St Vitus dance, Dr Maasdorp ordered me away, to have a change in the country.⁸ Father sent me to Mr Boshoff, a friend of his at Aberdeen, who had just completed a cottage – it was about the first one finished in the new township. In the centre of the dorp was a long dam, always full, and I had to go to it every morning early and lie down in the water until my body was blue with cold. Buildings were going up all round. The first shop was erected by SA Wimble, and is now known as Logie’s store. Jan du Toit, one of his senior clerks, came over from Graaff-Reinet to manage the business when it was opened. His cottage was next door. Later Mr Wimble had a fine shop built on the corner of Market Square, Aberdeen; Mr George Eynon was appointed manager. After some years’ faithful service, Eynon died. Mr Ben Solomon, Wimble’s brother-in-law, then came over from Bedford to take

over management of the store. Wimble next had a produce store built on the opposite corner. The building was subsequently converted into a dwelling-house by Mr E Steinhöbel, who is still in Aberdeen.

Next a fine store was built by Mr Joel Myers, who came from England to be a clerk to Mr DC Schultz, who had a premise next to my residence in Graaff-Reinet.⁹ Mr Myers started business in Aberdeen; his store was on the lower right hand corner of Market Square, in the direction of the river. He was a successful business man; married old Mr M Adendorff’s only daughter; she had 12 brothers! Her father used to farm at De Rust, close to Aberdeen; the farm subsequently became the property of Mr Jac L Meintjes, who renamed it Corndale, it is a very fine farm. Myers settled in Kimberley in the early seventies, where he opened a store, did very well; got his brother out from England, and set him up in business at Klipdrift, now known as Barkly West. Some time afterward, Joel Myers disposed of his Aberdeen business to Fasia & Fettig, and settled in London, where he

⁸ St Vitus Dance is an old term for Sydenham’s chorea, a disorder characterized by rapid, uncoordinated jerking movements primarily affecting the face, hands and feet.

⁹ JCS lived at Brighton Keep in Somerset Street, Graaff-Reinet. He had the house built after his retirement at the youthful age of 39.

became engaged in the bentwood furniture trade.¹⁰

I may state that a gang of Malays arrived in Aberdeen from Cape Town; they were skilled mechanics. Buildings now went up rapidly. The first builder to arrive was Robert de Rock, he was what was known as a white Malay, and was well to do. He bought ground and at once started building a big hotel for himself; soon a second hotel was built next to de Rock's, which, after some time, changed hands with old Mr John Spence, Tom's father, becoming the owner. He got Mr Edmonds, his brother-in-law, from Wales to take control of the hotel. Mr Spence went to Klipplaat, where he started business.

The Dutch Reformed Church and Parsonage was built in 1860, the church was inaugurated by Reverend Andrew Murray of Graaff-Reinet. It was built by the Malays and a number of the dwelling-houses as well. The town went ahead quickly, but during the last few years it has suffered severely from the effect of recurrent droughts and slump in trade generally.

A Thriving Town

It was to many marvelous to see how quickly Aberdeen grew within its first seven years. Among other well-known mechanics were: Abel and Shepman, John Cadle, Daniels, John Fleetwood, F Blossman and others. MJ Adendorff junior was Town Clerk and market master, P Heugh was Justice of the Peace, Mr A Berrange held periodical court monthly in the Library, and stayed with Mr JD Mare, opposite the big dam when in town, with whom I also boarded. There were three law agents – Brown, JD Mare and Jan de Villiers, but no attorneys.

There was one tailor, who on Sundays cut hair for the gents of the dorp. The first medico who settled there was a Dr Dieperink, then Dr Arnold cast his lines in the village. He was attached to the German Legion. Some years afterwards he removed to Graaff-Reinet, where he died. He was a clever man.

Gert van Rensburg was poundmaster, Jan Auret and M Heugh were Justices of the Peace. They performed excellent work. There was no bank; a court-house and schools were established in due course; HC Blundell started an

¹⁰ Myers is today known primarily for introducing more scientific methods regarding ostrich farming. See https://archive.org/stream/jewinsouthafrica00hert/jewinsouthafrica00hert_djvu.txt

English school. We had an old soldier about the dorp, he had money, and used to liquor a lot. The old boy generally attended auction sales. When an article was knocked down to him, and his name demanded, he would reply "Malcolm Sellers is my name, England is my home, Grahamstown is my dwelling place, and brandy my damnation". The leading farmers were the Rabies, Aurets, Du Plessis, Van den Bergs, Vorsters, Pienaars, Jouberts, Oberholzers, Fouchés and Terblanches. Angora and ostriches were at that time quite unknown.

Religious Matters

Reverend Thos Menzies Gray, a Scotchman, was the first Dutch Reformed minister of the village. He came straight from Melrose, about 20 miles from Edinburgh, where I visited him at his family home.¹¹ The old gentleman was in Scotland on a visit, and were to return to the Cape in a month's time. Mr Gray introduced me to his friends as an "opregte Afrikander". I met a young fellow-countryman here, named Frans van der Merwe, he was a grandson of old

Mr Schalk van der Merwe of Uitkyk, Aberdeen; he was studying at Stellenbosch to become a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. He, however, changed his mind, for instead of following up the profession of minister after becoming ordained, he became Minister of Mines under the Kruger Government! On his arrival at Aberdeen, he preached only one sermon, and that ended his career as cleric. He died a few years ago.

There resided a missionary and chemist, Mr JH Schumann, a Hollander; he married a Miss Bisschoff, and subsequently settled down in Cradock. Then Mr Auke Compaan took up his residence in the rising dorp. He was a friend of Schumann, to whom he expressed a wish to study for ministry. It is said Schumann coached him, and after a year of so, Mr Compaan proceeded to Somerset East to pass his exam. In due season he become a full-fledged missionary. He married Mrs Schuman's sister¹², took up his abode in Graaff-Reinet, and was appointed missionary to the Dutch Reformed Mission Church for coloured people, worked strenuously for his

¹¹ JCS made an extensive tour of Europe of six months during 1880.

¹² Other sources refer to his wife as Louisa Barendina Boshoff rather than Bischoff. See

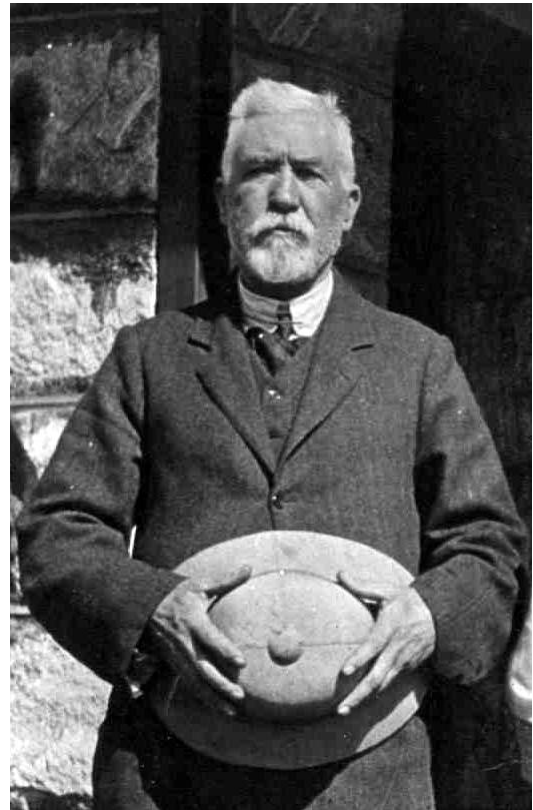
congregation for over 50 years, and then retired. The old gentleman is still hale and hearty, and often helps the missionaries, locally and elsewhere, when asked to; is bright and nimble as of yore, despite his 85 years. He is a good narrator, well read, a rare humorist, a logical debater, and of kindly disposition. He has had considerable journalistic experience.

Later Years

Here ended JCS's account of his Aberdeen memories. He also left us with some other accounts dealing with a year-long overland trading trip to Walvis Bay in 1866 at a youthful 22 years old, a trip to Johannesburg in 1886 shortly after the discovery of gold, and general descriptions of his own life. He lived in Graaff-Reinet all his life, except for seven years between 1868 and 1875, when he ran his own general dealership in Richmond. On his return to Graaff-Reinet, he bought the drapery business of Mr Luscombe, selling it five years later to retire at the youthful age of 38 years.

He travelled extensively and stated later: "I can with confidence say that I do not know of anyone who has travelled more in South Africa than I have." He was present when the second Rand

Agricultural Show in Johannesburg was opened by President Paul Kruger in March 1895 and, in 1922, stated he could not remember missing a single one since! He was distinguished in his later years as always riding through town on his bicycle and wearing a pith helmet.

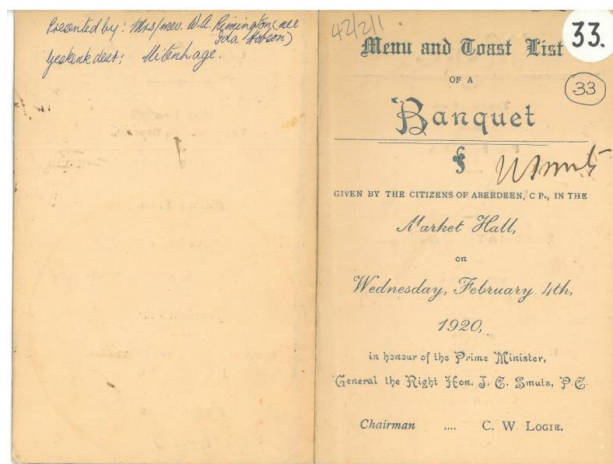
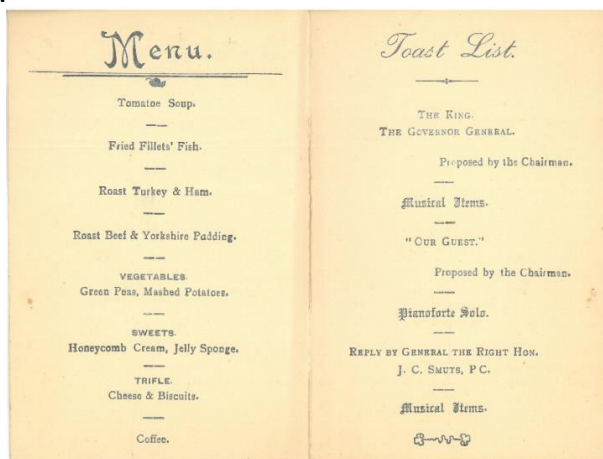


Jan Carel Staal Haarhoff, probably around 1900, pith helmet in hand.



Brighton Keep in Somerset Street opposite Edenhof, probably taken in the late 1800's. JCS Haarhoff poses in the center on the ground floor, close to his beloved bicycle

When JCS recorded his memories in 1922, he observed that Aberdeen, "... during the last few years, has suffered severely from the effect of recurrent droughts and slump in trade generally." This may be partly true, but at the same time Aberdeen still hosted a vibrant community. This is evidenced by a visit paid to the town by General Jan Smuts on 4 February 1920 in Market Hall, only five months after he became Prime Minister. The visit was concluded with a banquet – the toast list and menu are reproduced below.¹³



HUIS VAN STORMS, STRYD EN SMARTE

'n Verhaal deur Hermi Baartman

Die nuwe pastorie met sy nuwe-Victoriaanse boustyl, is C. 1902 reg langs die Oude Pastorie, (nou Reinethuis) opgerig. Graaff-Reinet se NG Kerk was geseënd met 'n bloeiende Sondagskool, ACVV, Afrikaanse Sendingbond wat die armes versorg en na almal se geesteswelstand omgesien het. Tot 800 mense het 'n erediens bygewoon in die Grootkerk, totdat politiek sy vuil kop uitgesteek en vrugbare grond gevind het om op te gedy. Die stryd om Afrikaans as taal te vestig, het in alle erns begin.

In 1921 het die gemeente ds. J F Naudé, ds. Beyers Naudé se vader, beroep, om die gemeente saam te bind. Sy intreepreek in Afrikaans was egter die vonk in die kruitvat. Een van die Murray kinders het uit die kerk gestap en later verklaar: *"To think he is going to use Kitchen Dutch in my father's church. I'd rather send my children to a Roman Catholic Church than to let them listen to his Kitchen Dutch."*

Met die rou emosie en ontbering van die Anglo-Boereoorlog nog pas in die geheue, die gemeenskap verdeeld tussen dié wat gesimpatiseer het met die Boere-Republieke en dié met Imperialistiese

¹³ The toast list and menu was made available by the Graaff-Reinet Museum.

sentimente, was daar geen weners in die verbete kerkstryd in Graaff-Reinet nie.

Selfs die orreliste het tot die stryd toegetree. Mej Amy Murray is summier afgedank. Toe die nuwe orrelis noodgedwonge haar suster, Catherine moes vra om waar te neem, het sy, na 'n Afrikaanse diens, al die stoppers uitgetrek en met uitbundige, moedswillige oorgawe, *God save the Queen* gespeel.

Aan die wonde toegedien in die kerkstryd in Graaff-Reinet was daar geen salf te smeer nie. Na die Naudé familie se vakansie by die Strand, met elf mense in die motor het eers 'n kind siek geword, toe Mev Naudé en moes die gesin die nag almal in een kamer in Willowmore deurbring en die Nagmaal misloop. Toe hulle eers laat die Sondagmiddag in Graaff-Reinet opdaag, was die vet in die vuur. Onthou, werk en reis op Sondag was onaanvaarbaar.

Die arm-blanke dogters van die "Poor-house" (nou die kantore van die Provinsiale Verkeersdepartement) het as huishulpe in die pastorie gewerk. Klagtes dat hulle mishandel word, is gelê en Mev Naudé is deur die hof skuldig bevind van aanranding.

Die einde van hierdie taal- en kerkstryd was dat 'n wegbreekgroep in 1927 die Nuwekerk gestig het. Vandag pryk daar

twee NG kerke 'n klipgooi van mekaar in Caledonstraat. Volgens geskryfte was die hele breekspul te danke aan onversoerbare en onwrikbare persoonlikhede.

Die NG Grootkerk en Nuwe Kerk het intussen aangedui dat daar na uitgebreide samesprekings op eenwording besluit is, wat in Januarie 2018 in werking sal tree. Sterkte!

WORDS TO PONDER.....



GIVE
BELIEVE
SPARKLE
BE JOYFUL
SING CAROLS
PARTY, PARTY
DECK THE HALLS
BE MERRY & BRIGHT
KISS UNDER MISTLETOE
BE WITH YOUR LOVED ONES
INDULGE IN HOLIDAY TREATS
DREAM OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS
MISS THOSE WHO ARE FAR AWAY
CREATE MEMORIES FOR YEARS TO COME
HUG YOUR LOVED ONES A LITTLE TIGHTER
REFLECT ON THE YEAR THAT IS BEHIND US