

The  
**PIONEER**

Volume 3

Journal of

The Rhodesia Pioneers'  
and Early Settlers' Society



# THE PIONEER

Volume 3

Early Days in  
Rhodesia

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## *Preface*

**M**OST OF THE STORIES in this volume have been taken from tape-recordings and records written by sons and daughters of pioneers, while some were originally written by the pioneers concerned.

Two points should therefore be borne in mind. First, the sons and daughters were speaking from their memories of what their parents had told them a long time ago. Secondly, one contributor is now over 100 years old, and other stories were recorded or written by men and women whose ages range from 70 to 91. While the recollections of these venerable people are astonishingly clear, it must not be forgotten that they were recalling events which happened many years ago.

It would, however, have been quite impossible in the time available to have verified all the facts and statements in these stories, even where verification was possible. Inevitably, there are also some gaps and loose ends.

Information correcting inaccurate statements and filling in gaps or tying up loose ends is therefore invited and will be most welcome. It should be addressed to the Secretary of the Society, P.O. Box 100, Bulawayo.

The first two volumes of *The Pioneer* were concerned with the two provinces of Matabeleland and Mashonaland respectively, and this publication was intended primarily to relate to the Midlands and Victoria provinces. However, I have not confined myself to geographical boundaries.

If it should be asked why there is no chapter about Major and Mrs. Boggie, the answer is that Jeannie Boggie's books have already recorded most, if not quite all, of what is known about them.

My grateful thanks are due to all contributors, also to Patricia Hyde and Angela Hurrell for the work they have done, to the Director and staff of the National Archives of Rhodesia for their every-ready assistance and to Constance Parry who edited the material. She was presented with a bundle of rough hewn timber which she skilfully shaped, smoothed and polished.

I hope that readers will enjoy this volume as much as I enjoyed collecting the timber.

November, 1974.

Dick Fuller



MAJOR WILLIAM HURRELL

*Photo: The Hurrell family*

# The Eventful Life of William Hurrell

**Soldier, miner, farmer  
and mayor**

*From an account by Angela and  
Geoffrey Hurrell*

THE hills and valleys around Fort Victoria have seemed a land of promise to many. Ancient gold-seekers came that way, and Matabele warriors seeking Mashona cattle for their king's herds. The white farmers, miners and adventurers who rode through Providential Pass also gazed at it with delight, and on their heels came others to settle on the land.

Those pioneer men and women strove to create homes under conditions which they soon found almost unbearable. The local Africans were frightened of them and few were willing to work anyway. In the summer of 1892/93 particularly heavy rains set in, the rivers became swollen and the tracks impassable.

With the rains, of course, came that dreaded scourge, malaria. A situation that was almost desperate developed on a farm named Arkesden, which lay 25 miles out of Fort Victoria, not far from the modern Birchenough Bridge road. In the makeshift little home set close to a small kopje a 35-year-old man lay dangerously ill with blackwater. His name was William Hurrell.

A message had been sent to the doctor in Fort Victoria, and his wife, Florence, waited anxiously, knowing that between them and the little settlement lay flooded rivers and miles of useless tracks. Meanwhile she tended her sick husband and lively baby daughter Gay, prepared food and kept an eye on the labourers, mainly servants who had come with them from South Africa.

The doctor arrived at last, having made his way over and through the rivers, and forged his own path through the muddy ground. He found his patient, tough pioneer that he was, well on the way to recovery.

This illness, which so often ended fatally, was just another episode in William Hurrell's crowded life. Before he ever came to Rhodesia, he had fought in two wars, prospected for gold in the Transvaal, visited India, and considered hop-farming in England.

In Rhodesia he played a notable part in the Matabele War and rebellion and served in the Boer War. He was a pall-bearer at Rhodes' funeral, and he served the town of Gwelo as a leading citizen and repeatedly as mayor for a quarter of a century.

The story of this outstanding pioneer and his courageous wife, Florence, has been told by two members of their family, Angela and Geoffrey Hurrell.



MRS. FLORENCE HURRELL

*Photo: The Hurrell family*

**B**ORN in Arkesden, Essex, on September 4, 1857, William Hurrell attended North Collegiate School and in 1877 he left England for South Africa. In May 1878 he joined the Frontier Light Horse, and was with that regiment until July 17, 1879, during which time he fought in the Gaika and Zulu wars. He was present at Zlobanue, Kambulu and Mundi, and also fought against Sekukuni. He was awarded the Zulu War medal and clasps. He was serving with Sir Evelyn Wood when the Prince Imperial, son of Empress Eugenie, was killed on May 1, 1878.

After leaving the Frontier Light Horse, William went to Pilgrim's Rest, and with five others pegged Hottentots Reef in 1881. Samples of the reef were sent to London and the six tried to float a company, but the reef gave out. It was from Pilgrim's Rest that he, with five companions, made a trip to what is now the Kruger Park. Only three returned, the others having died of malaria.

During 1881 William was near Barberton mining gold in partnership with Allan Wilson of Shangani Patrol fame. Wilson had joined the Cape Mounted Rifles in 1878 and after being promoted to sergeant he left in 1881 to join the Basuto Mounted Rifles. He was a captain when he left them to go to Barberton. A visiting card belonging to William had the following written on it:

(1882-3) Alluvial Claim Willys (Song) Creek

Allan Wilson

Hurrell

Barnes

Barretts Berlin

Duivels Kantoor

Transvaal

One wonders where and when William and Wilson first met, for they were friends, associates and comrades-in-arms for some 11 years. After parting at Barberton they met again in Rhodesia. Wilson had meanwhile joined the Bechuanaland Trading Company, and, while working for them, came to Rhodesia in 1890.

At Barberton, William and another man were invited to Christmas dinner with a mutual friend, but on arrival they saw him waiting on his verandah with a shotgun across his knees.

Guessing that he was already unfit to receive his guests, they dodged round a hill and walked in at the back door, stole the Christmas turkey from the kitchen and made off with it.

Once in Barberton William was very hard up, and he used to recall that he built a small stone church there with his own hands for a rewarding sum.

When he was 33, William returned to England via India (where he had a look at some gold propositions). At home he met again Florence Annie Dearsley, whom he had known when she was a little girl, and married her on January 10, 1890, in St. Saviour's Church, St. George's Square, London. He then thought he would like to go hop farming, but could not stand the English climate, for he suffered from asthma all his life. He longed for the sun, and Florence agreed to rough it in South Africa. Within six months they were in Cape Town, and after a short stay went to Durban.

Fort Victoria  
14 July 1893.

my dear Will, It seems ages since I heard from you but I heard very often about you from Frank Leck and Laquan. I thought I should have been able to have from you a look up on this but my time has been so occupied in looking after the cotchairs and prospecting round generally that I have had little to spare for writing. Has not dear you before Xmas and had I known you were so near me I would have from you a look up. Well old chap, how goes the world with you, well I hope I mean of course as well as it can do in this land of flies, bile and fever. The last I hear you have entertained several times but not to a finish. It seems old chap, there is no getting away from this prospect and how wonderfully we do stick in our thick countries

well knowing that we will be for it soon or later. You know old chap I am no doleful correspondent as a rule and I ought to have commenced at once with the sad news I have to tell you of. I don't suppose you have heard of the news of my brother Bob's death at Barberton on the 5th June. Also John Reglar on the same day. You have four poor old chap and leave me alone in a country that at one time held four of us. Well Will I am not going to afflict you with my condolences. Please convey my sincerest respects to Mrs. Hurrell who I hope is well also the baby and wishing you a good old time in the future and always remember Will I am as much at your service today as you were at mine in the old days of medical help. &c

Wishing you all the comforts of the season. etc. etc. Yours sincerely always,  
Allan Wilson

A letter written by Major Allan Wilson to William Hurrell. The two men were friends, business associates and comrades-in-arms for 11 years, although it is not known how and where they first met. They were partners in a gold mining venture near Barberton in 1881, and met again in Rhodesia. In the meantime Allan Wilson had joined the Bechuanaland Trading Company, and came to this country in 1890 while working for them.

Photostat: The Hurrell family

By that time the great goldfields of the Witwatersrand were at the height of a boom, so they decided to go there. They bought wagons at Pinetown where the railway ended, and trekked the rest of the way. Florence used to describe the Johannesburg of those days as a collection of shacks which looked as if they had been built of playing cards.

WHEN William reached Johannesburg he applied for a settler's farm in Rhodesia, but Rhodes would not allow any women into the country at that time. In May 1892, however, William and Florence left Johannesburg with their first baby, Grace (Gay, who became Mrs. Wiley) and set off for Rhodesia and the unknown.

No one is sure of the route they took, as they were not attached to any column, but presumably they came by way of Base Camp, Camp Cecil on the northern bank of the Limpopo River, Macloutsie, Tuli River, the Lundi escarpment, Providential Pass and on to Fort Victoria. Somewhere along the trail they were joined by a man who got lost after leaving Tuli and was found two days later by a search party only 300 yards off the track. He was completely out of his mind, but fortunately recovered after a few days. The poor fellow had been walking up and down a footpath, afraid to leave a stream that he had found.

The family travelled with one wagon (a half-tent) and a Scotch cart, and oxen, two horses, six dogs (two pointers, two fox terriers, a black retriever and a bull terrier), and two cows which calved on the way with the result that the calves had to be carried on the wagon. They took twelve months' supplies with them, plus chickens in crates slung under the wagon. Like all good pioneer chickens, these quickly learnt to scramble for the crates at the first crack of the driver's whip.

Their furniture included a table and a couple of deck chairs, a bedstead and a cot for the baby, plus a canary, which sang all the way to Rhodesia in its cage suspended from the hood of the wagon. There was also a Broadwood piano and a stove, and these proved to be a bone of contention between William and Florence all the way. Many a time William threatened to dump both piano and stove on to the side of the track, and it seems a great pity that, after all the struggle to get it to Rhodesia, no one can trace that piano now.

It was a wedding gift and had been specially built to withstand tropical conditions.

After six months the family arrived in Fort Victoria in October, 1892, and went on to a settler's farm some 25 miles from town. They named it Arkesden in honour of William's birthplace, and set up home next to that small kopje still known as Hurrell's Kop.

In "With Wilson in Matabeleland", Captain Donovan described the town in 1892 as follows: ". . . red-brick houses roofed with tin, alternatively with wattle-and-daub huts, roofed with grass. The tall tower of brick which forms so prominent a feature . . . is not the ubiquitous sign-manual of an active town council — a water tower. It is a look-out from whose summit the sentry may descry the approach of Matabele bent on the destruction of Mashona, or perhaps the trees planted and tended with such care by Mr. Vigors . . . Woe betide the creature — human or otherwise — who shall injure those little trees. On him will descend the wrath of the Mining Commissioner".

ALL too soon, the Hurrells' thoughts of creating a home had to be abandoned. They were well pleased with the area, with its many big rivers and good rainy seasons. They lived under buck-sail to begin with. Then came William's attack of blackwater, and after his recovery, one of their few Mashona servants was killed in front of them by a Matabele in the makeshift kitchen of their home. The killer was one of an impi taking their usual toll of the unfortunate Mashona in the bleeding of their spears.

When the people of Fort Victoria were called into the laager the Mining Commissioner, Mr. Vigors, sent for the little family, and an old Fort Victoria resident told a dramatic story of their moonlight race from the farm into the laager, where the nuns, convinced the three had been killed, were already praying for them. Florence was described as riding on one horse with her long hair streaming out behind her, while the rider of the other horse galloped behind with the baby. In fact they left the farm with a wagon because William refused to abandon all his grain, and although they had to leave the wagon to follow more leisurely, it eventually came in safe and sound.

Life in the laager involved a duty for every woman, girl and boy as well as the men. Major Burnham's son, aged 7, carried a bandolier of Martini-Henry ammunition, and his task, in the event of an attack, was to hand out shells to the men at the loopholes in the fort. Youngsters too small to carry a rifle were to act as messengers and to carry water.



Nov. 18, 1893—THE PENNY ILLUSTRATED PAPER—336



A WAR COURIER'S RIDE IN SOUTH AFRICA : HOW HORSEMAN HURRELL BROUGHT THE NEWS OF MAJOR FORBES'S VICTORY TO FORT VICTORIA.

This sketch, which appeared in a publication called The Penny Illustrated Paper on November 18, 1893, depicts William Hurrell "bringing the news of Major Forbes' victory to Fort Victoria". The victory had been won near the banks of the Shangani river, after a battle fought during the early morning of October 25, 1893.

*Photo: National Archives*

The settlers had a few small pieces of artillery captured from the Portuguese in the town of Massikessi, one of which was a Hotchkiss 1½-pounder. A clever Holland gunsmith made shells, and bullets the size of buckshot were moulded in a mixture of tallow and resin.

When the Matabele War began in earnest, Dr. Jameson accompanied the Forbes Column to Matabeleland, and when Rhodes arrived at Fort Victoria, he wanted to get in touch with the Doctor. Lieut. Hurrell, as he had become, volunteered to make contact, and rode 150 miles through country reported to be occupied by Matabele. Rhodes objected to William going because he was married, but later relented. Captain Donovan wrote: ". . . I consider this to be one of the pluckiest actions of the campaign, as they could not tell where we might be, or even whether we still existed. Lieut. Hurrell calculated whereabouts we ought to be if everything had gone satisfactorily, and rode until he struck our spoor near the scene of the recent conflict on the Shangani. He then saw that we had come into contact with the enemy, but as our tracks showed that we had still proceeded westward, he judged very correctly that, as our American friends would say, we were still O.K. He told us he had heard the explosion of some of the rockets during the preceding night, when yet some 25 miles away. The rockets had been fired to assist Captain Williams to find the laager (after his horse had bolted with him amongst the Matabele. Nothing was ever heard of his fate).

"Hurrell and his companion both carried copies of the despatch so that in the event of anything happening to one of them, the other would be able to deliver his copy. A native had also been given a copy with the promise of a reward . . . but his courage must have failed him as he never returned. Lieut. Hurrell was given fresh horses and a Cape boy, John Selous, who had served the famous hunter for many years, and returned to Fort Victoria. That night when they were sleeping John woke and said, 'Boss, we must get on, they are after us'. Natives could be seen in the distance carrying firebrands, tracing the spoor of the horses, so they lost no time in mounting their horses and galloping away, returning safely to Fort Victoria".

Rumours of the Shangani disaster drifted to the town, but not until the scouts Burnham and Ingram arrived and confirmed the news did the settlers believe it. Florence was asked by the Commissioner to break the news of her husband's death to Mrs. Greenfield.

In 1894 the Hurrells decided to leave Arkesden, where they had suffered heavy losses and had so much fever, and move to Gwelo. William went there first to look around. The town was being pegged by Jameson and the Hon. Percy Brown, and it was originally intended that it should be called Jamesontown. Major Burnham claims to have driven the first peg together with his friend Ingram. William assisted in the survey.

**M**EANWHILE Florence and Gay were left on their own on the lonely farm for six weeks. To while away the hours, Florence used to sit at her piano and play. She was very conscious of the many pairs of eyes that stared through the uncurtained windows at the white woman who made music come out of a box. One day two prospectors arrived, having walked 100 miles to see her. They had heard about her and the piano from the natives.

According to "Impressions of South Africa", by James Bryce, Gwelo in 1894-95 "was a cheerful little place, though it stood in rather bleak country, with a wooded ridge to the south. In October 1895 there were about 15 houses, with materials for building more on the ground. Comparing it with many similar 'new cities' . . . in West America, I was struck with the absence of the most conspicuous features of those cities, the saloons and bars. There is of course a free use of alcohol, but there is no shooting, crimes of violence are extremely rare, and the tracks are safe".

The Hurrells actually moved to Gwelo in January 1895 and built a place of pole and daga huts. Florence (believed to have been the first white woman there), said that when they arrived they became coach agents for Zeederberg, and had to erect stables for mules and accommodation for passengers.

The latter arrived at all times of the day and night, especially in wet weather, and meals had to be provided for them. This was the beginning of the Horse Shoe Hotel, which stood on the spot where the Midlands Hotel is today. The place was sold to Tom Meikle, who had assured William that he would not build a hotel in Gwelo as long as the Horse Shoe was in existence, but would like the first option when William wanted to retire. The Horse Shoe was advertised in the Northern Optimist dated April 26, 1894.

The Northern Optimist, which preceded the Gwelo Times, only ran to 16 cyclostyled numbers from January to May, 1895, and it is interesting to note that there were then four hotels in

Gwelo: the Horse Shoe, the Victoria, run by Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Mitchell, who had been in Fort Victoria, the Gwelo Hotel (Leo Lenmann) and the Rolling Stone (P. E. Weston).

The Hurrells' first son Dave, was born on April 17, 1895, and according to the Northern Optimist No. 15, he was the first baby born in Gwelo. In later years there was always controversy as another man also claimed this distinction. However, Cecil Rhodes used to give a farm of 3 000 acres to the first boy born in each of the main centres in Rhodesia, and as a farm was given to Dave, he was presumably the first boy born in Gwelo.

William used to shoot in the Hunters Road area and for his son's farm chose half the land called Swartrand (Black Reef) and named it Foxton. In 1915 he bought the other half and re-named it Harston. These were the names of Hurrell homes in Cambridgeshire.

When Dave became of age he occupied Foxton, and William and Florence lived at Harston after they retired from business. Dave's son Basil and his wife now live at Foxton and Geoffrey, William's second son, farms at Harston.

After the rebellion broke out, William took command of the Gwelo laager until the arrival of Captain Gibbs with a small relief force and vital arms and ammunition from Salisbury. Later Colonel Beal, accompanied by Rhodes, arrived with a much larger force and badly needed supplies. Rhodes not only insisted on accompanying the Gwelo men on patrols, but insisted on riding in front.

William had sent a messenger to the Crescendo Mine to warn the manager and staff to come at once. The mine was about 28 miles out on the present lower Gwelo road and at the base of the hill on which Fort Ingwenya stood. The old Hunters Road, cut by Thomas Baines, runs around the foot of the hill. The men on the mine ignored the warning, and all save two were murdered one night. These two reached Gwelo via Que Que, having worn out the soles of their boots. A patrol later buried the bodies of the victims on the Crescendo claims.

On April 17 Dave Hurrell celebrated his first birthday in the laager. Five hundred men drank his health in an extra "dop" call. He was hoisted on Captain Gibbs' shoulder and was rather scared at all the cheering.

**T**HERE was no Union Jack in camp, so the women collected red, white and blue material to make a flag, which Florence hoisted on April 18.

Life became monotonous, gambling being the men's chief pastime, although when the evening fires were lit Florence's piano would be pushed into the open space amid the wagons. It was usually played by the district surgeon, while several violins were led by a nephew of Selous.

After the rebellion Rhodes settled out of hand many claims for damage, either from war or rinderpest. Unfortunately, much of the money handed out was drunk away, but Rhodes knew he suffered many fraudulent demands and once, standing in the square in Gwelo, the Founder suddenly flung up his arm to point at a man who happened to be a blacksmith, exclaiming: "You, what have you lost, my man?" "Nothing at all Sir." "What? Nothing? First honest man I've met in weeks. Write him a cheque for £50," exclaimed Rhodes.

At the end of the disturbances the Hurrells' went to England, leaving by post cart for Bulawayo with an escort of 50 men under Captain Southey. The driver disobeyed orders and early one morning drove on to the next outspan, where William ordered him to stop and await the escort. Florence took Gay and Dave for a short walk down the road, and soon spotted two Matabele in full war dress. They ran back and told William. He, with Captain Harry Ware and another man rushed after the warriors, who fled, dropping their blankets, assegais, shields and headdresses.

The three white men pursued them for some miles. When the escort arrived they found a little further along the road the tracks of a large impi which had crossed ahead of the coach. The two who fled must have been scouts.

Florence carried a pencilled note signed by Rhodes (and still preserved) saying that she and any other ladies running short of food were to help themselves to his own private supplies.

After the family's return to Gwelo another son, Rhodes Dearsley, was born on August 19, 1897. Cecil Rhodes, who was at a banquet at the Horse Shoe Hotel at the time, inquired about Florence and asked to be godfather. He presented the baby with a christening cup which is still a family possession. Baby Rhodes, however, died aged eight months.

When the Boer War broke out, William joined Kitchener's Fighting Scouts under Colonel Colenbrander and Florence and the children went to the Cape. Florence travelled by coach from Gwelo to Bulawayo, and was involved in a train collision near Lobatsi. No one was seriously injured, but the two engines landed one on top of the other and all the trucks were badly smashed, only the two carriages at the back remaining intact.

The passengers sheltered in these while the line was being cleared. From Mafeking they travelled in an armoured train.

Later the family went on to England, where Stewart was born. While they were in England Rhodes died, and Florence attended the memorial service in St. Paul's Cathedral. She described it as most impressive, with the massed military bands playing. William was a pall-bearer at the funeral in the Matopos, held at approximately the same time as the service in England.

The Hurrells returned to Gwelo on June 1, 1902, and the next year Marjorie was born, the twins Geoffrey and Phyllis following in 1905. Additions were made to the Horse Shoe and in 1914 Gwelo was proclaimed a municipality. Mr. H. A. Bradley became the first mayor. On August 19, 1914, the town's lights were switched on.

William and Mr. Bradley were alternate mayors for the first few years and William was said to be responsible for the first public swimming pool in Rhodesia, and opened it in Gwelo in 1921.

The Gwelo Bowling green was opened by Florence on February 22, 1925 and the Gwelo cotton ginnery opened in 1924. William was mayor again when the Prince of Wales visited the town in 1925, and in the same year he was made a justice of the peace. In 1927, when the hotel was sold to Tom Meikle, the family retired to Harston farm.

# Victoria Under Arms

*Incidents that led to the  
occupation of Matabeleland  
reported by one who was there*

THE MATABELE WAR of 1893 was the first great turning-point in Rhodesia's history after the arrival of the 1890 Column. In recent years some writers have made great play with the circumstances that led up to it, in an effort to discredit Rhodes, Jameson and the Pioneers. Even at that time, Rhodes' enemies proclaimed loudly that the Chartered Company had forced the war on the Matabele, and had intended to do so from the beginning.

Then and now, little account seems to have been taken of the opinions of the people most closely involved, the Mashona victims of the Matabele raiders, and the white farmers, miners, and townfolk of Fort Victoria.

A special issue of the Mashonaland Times, "containing full particulars of the Latest Matabele Raid" was published in "Victoria" on Thursday, July 20, 1893. This reflected very clearly indeed the fear and anger of the local people, as will be seen from the extracts reproduced below by permission of the Director, National Archives.

Under the heading Topic of the Week came the editorial comment: Eight months ago we stated what is now proved true namely that the Matabele would daily become more and more impertinent, with the result that during the last week they have taken some hundreds of cattle from the white man, first, in many instances, killing the Makalanga herds that were in charge.

The presence of such a large body of natives as has recently been in the vicinity naturally causes alarm, while the loss of Makalanga servants, who promptly leave at the first prospect of trouble, means, at the least, mines shut down and business at a standstill . . . .

(Under the heading "Victoria Under Arms" the paper continues):

From the time when the B.S.A. Co's force first entered Mashonaland, Matabele scares have been of frequent occurrence. Within the last ten days, Victoria has been in a state which to a

stranger would appear to imply that there was something more in the air than the usual rumour.

On Sunday the 9th inst. there appeared in the neighbourhood of Victoria an impi of Matabele, the numbers of which are variously reported at anything between three and six thousand. To commence the story at the beginning, about a month ago, a small party of Matabele made a raid on Bara's kraal, situated about 14 to 15 miles to the North West. Captain Lendy, R.M. of the district, immediately left with a party of police, and interviewed the marauders, who then informed him that it was Lo Bengula's intention to send a large impi to thoroughly wipe out the Makalangas, whom the King accuses of crossing the Matabeleland border, about 25 miles West of Victoria, and stealing cattle from outlying Matabele posts.

Captain Lendy gave the leader of this party a letter to Lo Bengula, and on the 8th. inst. received a reply, forwarded from Bulawayo by runners to Palapye, and thence by telegraph, stating that although a strong party was to be despatched to finish these Makalangas, the induna in charge had strict instructions not in any way to molest the white man or to touch his property.

## Wholesale Destruction

On Saturday farmers in the neighbourhood saw the Makalangas running in all directions driving their cattle to the mountains. On Sunday afternoon Victoria was disturbed from its accustomed sleepy condition by the arrival of natives seeking protection from their enemies, the Matabele.

In the vicinity within a mile of camp might be seen small wandering parties on the watch for the fleeing Makalanga, while in the distance the rising smoke proclaimed that the raiders had adopted their usual course of wholesale destruction, burning kraals, crops, and all else that came in their way. But a few minutes had elapsed before the R.M. with a party of police had interviewed the parties near the camp. One and all told the same tale, that their induna would come in next morning with a letter from the King which would explain all.

Under the circumstances, it seemed that something more than mere explanation was wanted. Taking into consideration the proximity of the Matabele and their large number, as learnt from the reports of the fugitives, Captain Lendy wisely determined to have everything in readiness in case of attack.

Gatling and Maxim guns were mounted and everything that could be, was done. Messrs. Forestall, Dunstable, Brooks and

many others reported loss of cattle. Volunteers in readiness all night.

MONDAY: Kraals burning all round during night. Captain Lendy with 26 men ride out to Matabele about nine miles away. Fell in with a party of some hundreds. Leaders stated that their "boss" induna had gone into Camp with letter. On return Lendy saw induna, who produced letter from Lo Bengula, requesting R.M. to give up Makalangas who had stolen cattle. Lendy said would do so after proper trial. Induna left promising to send back white men's cattle.

Fugitive Makalangas clearing through camp, a good number found assegaied around camp.

TUESDAY: Patrols and guards all day and night. Kraals still burning, Burghers held meeting and elected officers.

(The next few days passed anxiously while everybody waited for the Administrator, Dr. Jameson. The following Monday he and Lieut. Napier arrived).

Sergeant Chalk left with escort to inform Matabele that the great White Chief ordered their indunas to come to an indaba.

(The Paper then continues):

TUESDAY: The Administrator's action successful. Matabele indunas arrive. Dr. Jameson asks no questions. Simply tells them to clear within an hour, or he will make them. One induna remarkably impertinent. Two hours later mounted party under Lendy ride after Matabele, fall in with about 150 of the enemy, who promptly clear, 30 being killed including the impertinent induna, no white man killed or wounded.

WEDNESDAY: Mounted troop report Matabeles cleared from neighbourhood.

THE COMPANY'S POLICY: Dr. Jameson informs us that, although no details of the Company's intended action can yet be published, he is now in communication with Lo Bengula and that the strongest measures will be taken to make Lo Bengula understand that these impis must now cease to come over our border. Great satisfaction is felt at Dr. Jameson's action.

PUBLIC MEETING: A public meeting of the inhabitants of Victoria and district was held on Saturday the 15th, instant in the Market Square.

### **Call for Protection**

Mr. E. A. Slater, speaking from a wagon, said that the meeting had been called to ask Dr. Jameson what protection farmers, prospectors, traders and others might expect from the Company.

The speaker said that had not Captain Lendy acted as he had, we might all have been killed in a moment. He trusted that on the arrival of Dr. Jameson, all would support Captain Lendy. They should ask for proper protection and see that they got it. He asked anyone there who had lost their cattle to come to the Committee which would be formed and prove their loss. They must not be afraid to speak up. He also referred to the fact of certain Makalangas being killed under our very eyes.

Mr. J. Stoddart was called for to speak on behalf of the mining industry. On rising he said it was impossible for them to lose their time at this, the dry season of the year.

He maintained that the volunteers should be equipped, that the Company should see that their cattle were returned, and that the standing police force should be greatly increased.

Mr. Dunsterville . . . said that he believed the Company under their Charter were obliged to keep up an efficient police force. He asked where they were. If this present state of affairs was allowed to blow over, where would they get food for their boys, or where would they get their boys to work the mines. The fact of the Matabele passing through the camp was simply a challenge to the white man. They dared not do it unless they had permission from Lo Bengula. Dr. Jameson must settle the Matabele question at once, now and forever.

# The Camel Corps Tragedy

## And the Glenlivet story

Extracts from Harry Harper's Papers

THE ROLE of the ox during the white man's trek to the North will never be forgotten in Southern Africa. Docile and steadfast, the great beasts moved quietly along the trails, needing only sufficient water, often days apart, to drink, and grass gleaned from the veld. Often they worked till they fell dead in the yoke. They, and other animals which served the pioneers, the horses, mules and donkeys, are commemorated on a panel in the Boggie memorial clock tower in Gwelo, and by hoof prints set in concrete at Mangwe Pass.

Only a cruel stroke of fate prevented another animal, the camel, from playing an important part in Rhodesia's history. The pathetically short story of the Rhodesian corps of camels was recalled by the late Mr. Harry Harper in papers he wrote in 1965-66, at the age of 92. His widow, Evelyn Harper, kindly gave permission for extracts from these papers to be published.

The camels, wrote Mr. Harper, were brought into Rhodesia when a severe outbreak of East Coast Fever in 1902 halted all ox transport. This was only six years after the terrible rinderpest epidemic had ravaged the country. The Fort Victoria district, which was heavily populated with cattle, had been particularly hard hit, and when the new emergency arose the Commandant of the B.S.A. Police, Colonel Flint, remembered his experience with camels in the Indian Army, and suggested that some should be imported.

The B.S.A. Company agreed, and a corps of camels was purchased, and brought up to Fort Victoria by Indians who stayed on to care for them.

Fort Victoria was already linked with Selukwe by 90 miles of sandy road, and the camels were extensively used on this route. There came a fateful day, however, when the animals drank from a cyanide dam near Selukwe, and all, but one perished. Colonel Flint returned sadly to Fort Victoria on the survivor, which was his riding camel, and had been tied up at the time of the tragedy. So the use of camels in Rhodesia came to a dreadful end, and the Company suffered a great financial loss.

## THE CAMEL CORPS TRAGEDY

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Harry Harper, who was born in Queenstown, South Africa, in 1874, joined the pioneer firm of Julius Weil of Mafeking at the age of 22, and after a short and successful term managing one of their smaller branches in Bechuanaland, was transferred to the larger branch in Salisbury in 1897.

This firm, which played a considerable part in the commercial life of Rhodesia in the early days, was one of those which kept the Company's forces supplied during the Matabele rebellion, and it held similar contracts during the Boer War. After that, it closed all its branches throughout the territory.

Harry next joined Deary and Company, spending a few months at head office in Salisbury before being sent to manage the Fort Victoria branch in 1902. The little town enjoyed a lucrative trade with Selukwe, and gold miners bought their grain and cattle in Fort Victoria.

So the East Coast Fever, which cleared all ox transport off the roads, was a staggering blow to the town. Selukwe was hit too, but the emergency forced the authorities to build a railway from Gwelo to Selukwe to bring in supplies.

**Mounted Troop:** Harry recalled that before the rebellion broke out, the local authorities at Fort Victoria feared native reaction against the whites, who were being blamed for the rinderpest. So they pressed for the formation of a branch of the S.R. Volunteers, which was the first line of defence in the Colony. This was done, due mainly to the enthusiasm and military knowledge of the Commanding Officer, Captain Heyman, an ex-British Army Officer with Indian Army service.

After the Adjutant of the Company's forces had inspected the local branch, a mounted troop was formed, as so many of the men already owned horses. Those who had none were given a grant of £40 to buy mounts. This meant that a more mobile force was available to go to the relief of any outside settlements. The mounted troop enlivened Fort Victoria noticeably. They applied for a gymkhana ground and were granted 115 acres on which the Fort Victoria Sports Club was soon established. Henry Harper became the Club's first secretary, and was president in 1921. He was also honorary foundation member No. 1.

Fort Victoria's first games of cricket were played on the market square, site of the present civic centre. The verandah of Meikles store, then abandoned, was the pavilion.

After the rebellion, sport and soldiering failed to satisfy the more adventurous types, some of whom turned to prospecting, and the life of the area thus entered a new phase. The Umkondo Copper Mine, source of a very high grade of ore, was pegged

in 1902. Walter Goddard found alluvial gold in Fern Spruit, about 10 miles west of Zimbabwe, but his claim was soon worked out and other prospecting was unrewarding.

The first two gold mines registered in Rhodesia, according to Harry Harper, were the Dickens and Cota Paxi. Both were equipped with batteries, but proved unpayable, and closed down after a few months. The equipment was later sold to mines in the Belingwe area.

In 1904 gold was discovered at Felixburg by the well-known Posselts, brothers and cousins. These finds remained in production, and quite extensive development was undertaken in recent years.

One of the most exciting finds ever known in Rhodesia was made by George Nolan, that renowned prospector of Victoria Province, who first discovered tin near Bikita. When this was developed, a fantastic wealth of lithium ore was revealed.

Yet the early prospectors who sought the legendary riches of Ophir around Zimbabwe soon became disappointed and frustrated, so, in Harry Harper's view, as the story of the region unfolded, there came the realization that whatever mineral riches lay undiscovered, the true wealth remained the soil itself, which yielded such abundance of food if treated with compassion.

In the early days the gold mine on Cota Paxi mountain was managed by a Mr. Kenyon, and at Christmas, 1902, Harry and two friends spent a few days in the deserted manager's cottage. The mine had long since closed down, although the battery and mill were still in position.

**Magnificent Scenery:** The scenery from the mountain, particularly down the valley towards the Tokwe River, was magnificent. The country was alive with game, particularly Sable Antelope. The so-called roads, however, were so overgrown that not even a cyclist could get through, and one had to walk the 12 miles from town.

Cota Paxi, which overlooks Providential Pass, is a landmark in the district, and the stone plinth commemorating the Pioneer Column's historic passage through the pass stands near the base of the hill, the first town of Fort Victoria was laid out almost in its shadow.

Lovely Glenlivet became Harry's home in 1914. He spent Christmas, 1904, with Mr. M. H. Nolan at Marthodale farm, and they climbed to the top of the Nyoni mountain range, which was then a home for baboons and wild pigs. He was so impressed by the grandeur of the valleys below that 10 years later he took over Glenlivet, which embraced the foothills of the range.

There he built his home and established 30 acres of forest and a Pelton wheel sawmill. Water was led from the top of the hill behind the house. The normal seasonal rainfall of 40 inches provided a permanent supply, and water for the wheel came from a fountain which provided 3 500 gallons an hour. He built a 7 500 gallon reservoir for the exhaust water, and used it to irrigate his orchards.

Harry was often asked why his lovely home was called Glenlivet, and he used to respond with this little story:

"In 1914 Mr. Gilfillan, a Government surveyor, and I climbed to the top of Nyoni Mountain and sat overlooking the beautiful valley of the Mtilikwe River and its green, semi-tropical surroundings. Beautiful birds darted about, baboons jabbered and wild pig snorted and grunted.

"Mr. Gilfillan turned to me and said: 'I see this view as a duplicate of the valley of the river Spey by Glenlivet in my own Banffshire in the Highlands of Scotland. The great Andrew Usher built his whisky still beside this river and Glenlivet mountain, so this lovely picture brings back nostalgic memories of the home of my youth.'

"I asked him if it was a vision of the whisky still that gave him nostalgia and he retorted: 'Don't interrupt. This is leading to the creation of a new Glenlivet here. I am going to immortalize your farm with that great name. This beauty is a duplicate of the Banffshire Highlands, and I promise you that if you build a still here and produce the glorious whisky of old Andrew's recipe, sons of Bonnie Scotland will invade you, and your Glenlivet will be the most famous spot in Rhodesia.'"

# ENDURING WORKS OF ALBERT HILL

From a recording by Sydney Hill

One day in 1894, a wagon drawn by donkeys crept along the rough track which was the main road linking Bulawayo with Mangwe Pass and the South. Although the exact date is not known, it was probably shortly after the settlement had been moved from its original site to the permanent one, with the Market Square as the focal point of the growing concentration of huts, shacks and shanties, and an occasional brick structure like the Maxim Hotel.

The driver of the donkey wagon chose a spot a little to the south-west of the Market Square, the heavy vehicle creaked to a halt and another long trek was over.

Albert Hill and his family had arrived, and their camp was just opposite the site on which the Palace Hotel rose later.

Albert Hill was a builder and the son of a builder. He was born in 1866 at Erith in Kent, where his father had built the Anglican Church. Hill senior and his family of two sons and seven daughters emigrated in 1869 to Cape Town, opened a monumental works there, and bought the New Brighton Hotel.

Albert left home at the age of 12 and started as a builder's labourer pushing a wheelbarrow, and by the tender age of 15 he was a foreman bricklayer. He met his future wife, Caroline Letitia Ives, at the Millward goldfields near Knysna — and not many people remember that there were goldfields in that area.

Caroline was of 1820 settlers' stock, and came from Beaufort West. After their marriage she and Albert went to Kimberley, and then Johannesburg, where Albert put in some of the first boilers on the Langlaagte Estate, and the first bricks in the Johannesburg hospital. Then came the trek to Bulawayo, during which their baby daughter Emma learned to walk. Emma was one of the first, if not the first white child to come to Bulawayo with her parents.

When the settlement was proclaimed a township, a man called Whittaker, who was "a sort of inspector" ordered Albert to move out to Sauerstown, but that sturdy soul flatly refused to do so.

Albert's son, Sydney Hill, has recorded that his father set up as a builder in Bulawayo, and in 1896 built one of the first houses

## ENDURING WORKS OF ALBERT HILL

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in the suburbs. It stood at the corner of Fourth Street and Avon Road, right opposite the site of the future railway siding known as Suburbs Halt.

During the rebellion, he served under the, famous pioneer F. C. Selous, and Sydney recalls that his father often remarked what a wonderful shot that great hunter was, capable, declared Albert, of hitting a man's head at 600 yards.

One of the worst duties Albert had to perform during those months was going out with the patrol sent to bury the Cunningham family after they had been murdered near Fort Rixon.

In 1902, when Albert was building a house for Judge Vintcent, news came of the death of Cecil Rhodes. At once Albert was asked to stop work on the house and go out to the Matopos with a man called Dicky Fisher, to cut the grave for Rhodes out of the solid granite of his chosen resting-place.

A photograph owned by Sydney showed Albert standing in the partially cut grave together with Dicky Fisher, who was wearing a straw basher. Albert always wore a big hat, and invariably had his sleeves rolled halfway up his forearms. The shear-legs seen in the photograph were used by Albert to lower the heavy lead-lined oak coffin into the grave, and place the covering granite slab in position.

The grave had to be chiselled out by hand, as the use of explosives was forbidden for fear that the surrounding rock and boulders would be damaged, although Albert felt certain he could have done most of the work with explosives without doing much damage.

The Hill family moved from one house to another in Bulawayo as the town grew. On the day the rebellion broke out Edith was born in a cottage which still stands at the corner of Abercorn Street and 12th Avenue, a few hundred yards from the spot where Albert first parked his donkey wagon.

Edith was followed by Dick, and then by Sydney in 1900. Sydney was born in the smallest of three cottages which used to stand in Main Street right opposite the present Railway Co-op. Stores. Another girl, Ivy, arrived in a bigger cottage, and finally two more boys were born while the family was away from Rhodesia. They were Bert (East London) and finally Jack, born in Exeter, Devon, in 1909.

Albert constructed many well-known buildings, not only in Bulawayo, but in other Rhodesian towns too, and many of them are still standing.

His assignments included the Prince's Flats and the first Cecil Hotel in Bulawayo; all Tom Meikle's Stores; Meikles Hotel



in Salisbury, the Cecil, Umtali; Que Que Hotel, Fort Victoria Hotel, the Midlands Hotel, Prince's Cinema and the Midlands garage in Gwelo; the first Gwanda Hotel and the Belingwe Hotel.

He installed Rhodesia's first spring floor in Prince's Hall in Salisbury for the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1925. The job had to be done in a hurry, and within three weeks of putting the first pegs in the ground he was laying the roof.

The roof of the Midlands garage had the widest span of any building in Rhodesia, and was supported entirely with wooden principals. The architect declared it would fall in, but Albert retorted that if he lived to see that happen he would put up a new one free.

Albert Hill died in 1936, but the places he built were monuments to a grand old pioneer.

## BORN IN A BULLOCK WAGON

*Thomas Tilbury's arrival at  
Mangwe and his later  
memories*

"I WAS BORN in a bullock wagon in Mangwe Pass on September 8, 1894, and so Mangwe is part of my name", wrote Mr. Thomas John Mangwe Tilbury at the age of 79. "My parents trekked in the wagon to Bulawayo, and settled there after a long, tiring journey on the old transport road, so I am the son of a pioneer, and a pioneer in my own right. We were all in the Bulawayo laager during the rebellion.

"My mother was a good singer, and she entertained the people by singing at concerts in the laager".

Mrs. Tilbury was noted for her kindness, which is still remembered by Rhodesians who were here in the early days. She also became a successful business woman in Salisbury, where she had several restaurants. Her son could not remember their names, but said one was opposite the Grand Hotel, and one in the Salisbury Board of Executors building.

She and her husband, John, were young when they came to Rhodesia. "I think Dad was 22. Conditions here were hard; they were cruel. No one had any money, yet we had everything we wanted".

John Tilbury, who came from Wales, arriving in South Africa in 1892, worked as a carpenter in Bulawayo, and also built the hotel at Francistown. In Salisbury he had the Hatfield Hotel in Pioneer Street, and later he became a very successful smallworker.

Like other children of the pioneers, Thomas Tilbury had no birth certificate, but he was baptized in St. John's Church, Bulawayo, and his baptismal certificate is No. 1.

While Thomas was a child, he watched a police patrol going out mounted on camels, and a mule-drawn train operating in the main street of Umtali. He also saw the first train that came to Salisbury.

"When I was a boy I was friendly with some of the men of the Pioneer Column. Ted Stone, Rory of the Hills and others

were nice friendly fellows, and I was always interested in the stories they told me about the very early days. I remember a little bit of a song they used to sing (presumably on the 1893 march to Matabeleland). It went like this:

Go boys go,  
We're off to Bulawayo.  
There's lots of gold, so we've been told,  
On the banks of the Umsingwane.

Rory of the Hills ("I don't know his real name") was quite a "roughneck", and a friend of Ted Story and Tex Long.

Thomas went to school in Salisbury for a while, and remembered a master called Mr. Blew. Then he was sent to Plumtree about 1906, when it was a mixed school, and the names Illman and Hazelhurst stuck in his memory. The school had wood and iron dormitories and some brick classrooms at that time. Hammond was the headmaster, and according to Thomas he was a hard man, but very fair. Terry Watson was another master. Hammond had already introduced his well-known brand of punishment known as impositions, which meant that boys who had erred had to "scoffle" the playing fields on Saturday mornings.

The cadet corps had been formed and was armed with Martini Henry rifles.

**Working at 15:** Thomas was only at Plumtree for about two years, and was working by the age of 15. He started on the Eileen Allanah mine at Gatooma, a very rich gold mine on the Eiffel Flats near the Cam and Motor. He was in charge of a gang of labourers, and after holding various other jobs, went mining on his own, picking up knowledge and skill as he went along.

One of the mines he worked was the Rosherville, outside Gatooma, but he lost money there, and also at the Mass Mine. He was not successful until he went to the Beacon Hill Mine near Gobo siding on the Gwelo-Umvuma railway line. There he made money for the first time, and then moved to the Athens Mine at Umvuma. The Athens Mine was worked by the Tilburys for about 30 years.

It was a gold mine, but the Tilburys also produced copper, silver and asbestos. The Temeraire asbestos mine at Mashaba was Thomas's own property, but he sold it. Later it became one of Rhodesia's biggest mines. It was pegged by "Boop" Tilbury, in the name of his brother Thomas, and they worked it in partnership.

At one time John and Thomas were miners at Wankie No. 1 Colliery when it was already in full production. The management decided to open up No. 2 Colliery (scene of the terrible disaster) and called for tenders from among the miners. John was awarded the contract, which involved sinking the first incline shaft, and a vertical ventilation shaft.

As they had no mechanical lift, they got a team of oxen to pull the trucks up on a long cable running over a roller. The oxen got so accustomed to the job that when the whistle blew they stood still, wherever they happened to be. Unfortunately the Tilburys' price for the job was too low, and they made nothing out of it.

Before Thomas left Rhodesia at the age of 20 to fight in World War I, he had a small mining property of his own, called the Mangwe, outside Gatooma, and there he obtained his first output of gold. "It's a great thrill getting one's first bit of gold", he commented.

Thomas was in the King's Royal Rifle Corps, Rhodesian Platoon, and among those with him were Henderson ("he became a big shot in the tobacco world") and his half-section Aleck Findlay. Thomas had the grim task of cutting Findlay's leg off in a shellhole after he'd been hit by their own artillery. "I only had my pocket knife to do it with. He was a farmer from Mazabuka, and he survived the war".

Thomas was wounded during the Battle of the Somme and given honourable discharge. Although he had been a very good shot, after being under fire himself and wounded, he refused to do any more shooting.

He returned to Rhodesia penniless, and found it hard to get a job at first. In due course, after doing some contracting at Wankie, he managed to save enough to start mining on his own again.

**Historic Meeting Place:** Among the historic spots in Rhodesia known to Thomas Tilbury was the meeting place of Allan Wilson's column from Fort Victoria and Forbes' column from Salisbury.

"There used to be two footpaths, one from the direction of Fort Victoria, and the other from the direction of Charter and Salisbury. In fact I have the lid of a bully beef tin I found there."

In Major P. W. Forbes' account of the Matabele War in "The Downfall of Lobengula" by W. A. Wills and L. T. Collingridge, Forbes states that it had been agreed that he and Major Allan Wilson should meet at Iron Mine Hill, or Sigala as the natives called it. An alternative name is believed to be Maware.

As the crow flies, this is about five miles South-East of Lalapanzi station. Forbes laagered close under the hill, but as the nearest water was too far away he moved the next day to a better site about two miles away, but did not record the direction.

Wilson's column arrived the next morning, October 16, 1893, at 8 a.m. The previous day Captain J. A. L. Campbell had been severely wounded in the hip during a skirmish, and Dr. Jameson had to amputate the leg. He died and was buried at the Laager site by Bishop Knight-Bruce on October 16.

Mayor R. Davie of the School of Infantry and the compiler of this magazine, were taken to the grave by Mr. Brian Hayes, who was then in charge of the Lalapanzi Police Station. The actual laager site is at the head of a large open vlei with a stream which still had water in it in October 1973. It is on Woodlands farm, almost due west of Iron Mine Hill.

Major Davie considered there was ample room for a laager to accommodate both columns, and he thought the earthworks on the turn-off to Dalmainy farm, about six miles from the meeting point, had been a warning outpost, as it was similar to a number of other such posts near various forts. Another post was found on the highest point of Iron Mine Hill, and it is possible there are still others around.

The inscription on Captain Campbell's tombstone reads:

In Loving Memory  
John Lamont Campbell  
Late Captain R.A.  
Killed in action October 1893  
Erected by his father Colonel Campbell  
Of Southern Argyllshire

In August 1974, members of the Matabeleland Branch of the Rhodesia Pioneers' and Early Settlers' Society, and members of the Rhodesiana Society paid a visit to the Iron Mine Hill area.

## A CUP OF TEA SAVED SALISBURY

### *Experiences of Benjamin Bland, Transport Rider*

"HANG on a minute while I close up the office, and come along to the house for a cup of tea", said Jack Nesbitt, Native Commissioner at Umtali, to a visitor named Benjamin Bland one afternoon in 1896.

So Bland waited while the "Big Boss" put away papers and found his hat and keys (for, no doubt, even in those casual early days there had to be some security in the Native Commissioner's Office). It was a fateful delay, for in those few moments a wire came through from Salisbury saying, "All loaded wagons are to proceed to their destination".

This was vital news for Bland, a transport rider with many teams of oxen immobilised by quarantine orders due to the rinderpest outbreak. As he gulped the tea, quickly poured for him at the house by Mrs. Nesbitt, Bland told the Native Commissioner he was going to move his oxen further away from the danger area, which at that time centred around the main road to Salisbury.

Then away he rushed on a 10-mile walk to his nearest cattle camp to start his oxen off towards the distant hills. There they remained safe and healthy till the day came for them to make a heroic trek, through country swarming with rebels, hauling vital food supplies that saved Salisbury from starvation.

In the weeks that followed the arrival of the telegram, other transport men lost every ox save a few that salted, and when the rebellion broke out they had to abandon their wagons as well.

So if Bland had not waited for that cup of tea, and heard about the telegram, his oxen would have died too, and there would have been none left to take the food wagons to Salisbury.

When he was in his late seventies, Benjamin Bland wrote the following story of his experiences as a transport rider. It reveals very clearly the resourcefulness and perseverance of the men who kept those vital wagon wheels turning.

I CAME TO RHODESIA as conductor of a portion of Mr. (later Brigadier-General, Sir) Duncan McKenzie's 20 ox wagons, arriving in Salisbury in July 1894. After offloading, Mr. McKenzie thought he would do a trip to Chimoio, then the terminus of the

narrow gauge railway from Beira, before he returned to Natal, but later he decided to stay and ride transport between Salisbury and Chimoio.

It must be remembered that for the first 10 years Rhodesia depended on ox transport for its supplies. The cost was from £60 to £70 for a four-ton wagon load, and it took five to six weeks to trek to the railhead and back. Riders also had to contend with the wet season of at least three months, when all transport had to be hung up. There were no made roads, and the tracks were impassable after only a little rain, so merchants had to import enough goods to last over the wet season.

Many of the merchants were beginners with no capital. They could not import more than they could pay for, because the terms were cash on delivery. If anyone could not pay the transporter, he had to sell his goods for what he could get.

Although there were hundreds of wagons, the riders could not keep up with Salisbury's growing demands, and tempting prices were offered for Christmas goods lying at the railhead. I once took the risk of doing a late trip, but because of swollen rivers and almost impassable roads the stuff did not reach Salisbury until the middle of January.

Passenger traffic was no less difficult, even after Symmington's coaches were in full swing, with relays of mules every 12 miles. The demand for seats was so great that would-be passengers often had to wait weeks for a doubtful chance. As a result, many people jumped at a passage by transport wagon. On one trip, besides other passengers, I had two honeymoon couples, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Rorke and Mr. and Mrs. Ailif Tarr, also Mr. and Mrs. Erasmus. The last couple, with their baby, were to have a narrow escape from death at the hands of the rebels during the rebellion.

The Odzi was always a difficult river to cross. The old wagon drift was a bank of loose sand, so heavy that it took two teams to pull a wagon across it, and even towards the end of the wet season the water was so deep that only the top of the wagon was above water.

As a result of transport problems such as these, when rinderpest broke out in 1896, Salisbury had almost run out of stores of every kind, for the merchants had only imported enough to carry them over the wet season.

Umtali was not so dependent on the wagons, for at that time there were hundreds of Portuguese native carriers plying between Chimoio and the town. They took four days to complete the journey of 75 miles.

These men could carry on during the wet season, but when the rebellion broke out they were afraid to come as far as Umtali, so that mode of transport was also cut off.

I spent the 1896 wet season camped under the kopjes close to the present Umtali railway station, and was getting ready to go to Chimoio to load when the first wagons from Salisbury arrived at my camp, and I was told that a dreadful cattle disease had broken out in Bulawayo, and transport riders were rushing to get away from it.

Three days later the police came and stopped all movements of cattle. Two lots of wagons were outspanned alongside my camp, and I asked the police to allow me to move my oxen further away from the main road, but they refused. One of my kraals of five teams was in quarantine less than a mile from the main road, and some of the oxen from Salisbury were already sick. The B.S.A. Company's policy of shooting all infected herds at that time led to the killing of a number of cattle that would have been salted.

About three weeks later I had some business with Mr. Jack Nesbitt, and that was when he invited me to go to his home and have tea with him and his wife. The wire from Salisbury came while I was waiting for him to close up the office. I asked him if it meant that quarantine was off and he said it would seem so. I told him I was going to move my oxen further away, and after that hurried cup of tea I left at about 4.30 for my nearest cattle camp. Umtali was then about six miles on the Salisbury side of Christmas Pass.

I started the oxen off south-east towards the hills, and by sunrise next morning I had them on Cloudlands, Mr. Lionel Cripps' farm.

After splitting them up into small lots, I sent them in different directions further away. I stayed with them for about 10 days, during which time none showed any signs of sickness, and when I returned to Umtali, I was promptly run in for breaking quarantine.

Two weeks later I returned to the oxen, and as all were still healthy, I felt pretty sure they had escaped the disease.

**B**ACK in Umtali a week afterwards, I heard the Mashonas had risen, and all outsiders were called into the town. As I was the only one with a horse, I placed it at the disposal of Mrs. Markham, whose husband had started making bricks in readiness for the new town of Umtali. On our way in we picked up Bob Fisher, Gass Burnett and several others.

News of the rising was very vague, and we did not know whether we might be attacked before we reached Umtali, so we armed ourselves as best we could and kept a sharp look-out, but nothing had happened, and we got in safely.

About the last wire to come through before the line was cut stated that Salisbury had barely a month's supply of food left. After that we did not know what was happening in other parts, or the extent of the rising. Colonel van Niekerk was in Umtali, and he did what he could for the defence of the place, forming us into companies and putting us through our paces.

A week or so later, when I was pretty confident my oxen had escaped the rinderpest, I offered to try and get some loads through to Salisbury, provided I had an escort, but it was felt that the strong escort needed for a 150-mile trip through hostile country would need more men than Umtali could spare.

Although Chief Umtasa had not actually risen, his intentions were doubtful, so we decided to wait for Colonel Alderson, who was known to be coming via Beira. When he arrived, I was allowed to take four wagons to Chimoio and load them for Salisbury, and Colonel Alderson commandeered the rest of the oxen.

So had I not waited for that cup of tea, my oxen would not been moved to safety, and my employer would have lost nearly 300 trek animals. Colonel Alderson would have been stuck in Umtali for want of transport, and Salisbury's food situation would have been very much worse.

The life of an ox was only three weeks during the rinderpest epidemic, so everything depended on how quickly I could do the trip. It was arranged by wire with Chimoio that my loads should be weighed and put ready for my arrival. I was there at crack of dawn on the third day from Umtali, and by 10 o'clock I was on my way back.

At Umtali I picked up my escort of 25 mounted infantry under Lieutenant French (the Captain French who was killed at Mafeking in the Boer War, and to whom some Boer commandant had erected a cross inscribed "to the memory of a brave man").

We followed the road taken by Colonel Alderson on his way to Makoni's stronghold, which was the main transport road at that time over Devil's Pass, past Lion's Kop to Headlands. I heard in Umtali that he had reached his objective.

Because of the rebellion, and because so much depended on my reaching Salisbury before the oxen started dying, I could not follow the custom of trekking at night, and resting and grazing the oxen during the day.

The rebels had allowed Colonel Alderson, with a force of 500 men travelling in daylight, to pass unopposed, but that did not mean they would let a small force of 25 through at night.

From Devil's Pass we were in the thick of hostile natives hidden in the granite hills. For long stretches there was no more than the width of a wagon between the kopjes, so the rebels could have approached under cover right up to the edge of the road from both sides, stabbed some oxen and held us up. My mounted escort would not have stood much chance, but as nothing happened there was nothing to make a song about.

I can only put the rebels' failure to attack us down to the fact that they had not got over their fear of the Matabele raiders of the recent past.

We approached Makoni's stronghold at night, and were much relieved when we got out of the kopjes to see camp fires ahead. They belonged to Major Watt's patrol, which had come from Salisbury to mend the telegraph wires, cut in many places. Major Watt told us that Colonel Alderson had pushed on to Headlands to find a suitable permanent camping place before his oxen sickened. They had already been on the road 10 days.

We reached the Colonel at dawn next morning and heard that Captain Randolph Nesbitt was on his way with a patrol of 50 men to take over from Lieutenant French. We met him that same evening.

His men had had a hard time. Only the officers and scouts had horses, and without transport the men had to carry their kit and rations, and do their patrols on foot. Their boots were worn and out of shape, and some of them were so footsore that I could not keep up my fast pace.

We arrived at the Makabusi outspan, where the brickfields stood in recent times, on the twelfth day from Chimoio, having covered a distance of 225 miles. Usually the journey took 23 to 26 days.

Next morning we moved into town, and I think the whole of Salisbury was there to see the relief wagons draw up at the old jail, which was the laager. These were the first supplies of any kind to arrive in Salisbury since the end of the wet season, seven months previously, and I was thus the first white man to reach the capital from Umtali after the rebellion broke out.

HAVING delivered my loads, I had no further use for the oxen, and as they had no more than a week of life left, I told the butchers to kill them for meat as required. The animals were

still fat, and even after they became sick were fit for human consumption.

However, the butchers had not slaughtered more than a dozen when the rest were commandeered by the military to take a small contingent and supplies to Charter. I don't think a single beast reached there, and I would rather have seen people who had not tasted fresh meat for over five months get the benefit of them.

Not only the transport oxen were wiped out by the rinderpest. Slaughter stock, the few breeding herds that had been started, and all the native cattle also died. Native sheep and goats were not affected, but these were few, so there was no fresh meat of any kind. Native fowls were not much larger than partridges, and eggs were also unobtainable after the rebellion began.

At that time Rhodesia was dependent on native grain, mostly rapoko, so this too became unobtainable. The few farmers who had tried to make a start were murdered, and those who escaped had to leave their crops unreaped.

The four teams which I rushed through to Salisbury were the last of the transport oxen, and as far as one could see my loads were the last supplies that could be expected from the railhead for the foreseeable future. The people of Salisbury were stranded without means of getting out, save on foot to Chimoio, so I don't think it can be doubted that this was the most critical period of Rhodesia's history.

After I had been in the town about a month, I did get a chance of a lift to Umtali. Six teams of mules were scraped together, and a Mr. McLaughlan went to Umtali for much-needed supplies for Colonel Alderson's camp. These were the first wagons to leave Salisbury for Umtali, and several Umtali families stranded in the capital since before the rebellion seized the opportunity to return home. They included Mrs. Tom Hulley, Miss Coleman (later Mrs. Roberts) and Mrs. Chris Humans.

The wagons were escorted by about 30 or 40 volunteers, although we knew that by then all was quiet between Salisbury and Umtali. When we reached Colonel Alderson's camp at Headlands, I found that 22 of the 200-odd oxen he had commandeered from me had salted. These, with some other salted ones I had bought, made up two teams. I took them to Umtali, where Mr. H. M. Taberer, Chief Native Commissioner and Transport Officer at that time, gave me a written guarantee that these oxen would not be commandeered again, provided I carted only Government supplies.

As far as we knew then, these two teams were all Salisbury could depend on for transport; but about this time Colonel Beal,

who had been operating in Matabeleland, was on his way to Salisbury with Mr. L. N. Papenfus as his transport officer.

Though rinderpest had also swept through Matabeleland, the Matabele owned large herds, and while only a small percentage salted, by the time Mr. Papenfus reached Salisbury he had collected enough of them to make up 10 teams. They were all sorts and sizes — bulls, cows, two-year-old heifers, anything in fact that could carry a yoke. So when I reached Umtali with my two loads from Chimoio I found Mr. Papenfus loading his 10 wagons for Salisbury.

For company's sake we travelled together, and reached Salisbury in the middle of October 1896, bringing to 16 the loads that had entered the town from the time transport was hung up by the wet season in December.

By January 1897 mules imported from the Argentine began arriving, but as no cure or vaccine against horse sickness had yet been found, a large number died before they were of any use.

With 15 wagons doing regular trips, the food situation in Salisbury became easier, and as it was a moderate wet season, with few wagons operating, we were able to carry on right through till autumn.

When parts of the country were free of rinderpest, Sir Duncan Mckenzie wanted to ship another batch of oxen to Beira, but then the disease reached Natal, and all movements of cattle were stopped.

So there was nothing for it but to import mules, and though these did a trip in less time, they could take little more than half an ox wagonload, and besides, mules had to be fed. Yellow maize had to be imported from the Argentine at a cost of £11 for a 200 lb bag, in transport alone, by the time it reached Salisbury.

The railway was being pushed on hard, but it did not reach Macequece till January 1898. This shortened the haulage distance by 50 miles, but it was about mid-1899 before the line reached Salisbury and opened for goods traffic.

*Benjamin Adam Bland was born at George, Cape Province, in 1869. He died in 1948. He married Mary Campbell Cunningham, who became known to many as Aunt Mary, and was the grandmother of Colin Bland, the Rhodesian cricketer who was rated the world's best fielder. She died in 1970, aged 93. Benjamin and Mary settled at Thornville Farm, Shangani, in 1905 and had four sons — Patrick Cunningham, Lindsay Browning, Brownlee Walker and Joseph Arthur. Joseph was killed in action in World War II, laying mines in the Baltic while serving in the R.A.F.*

# THE TOWN THAT FOUGHT TWO REBELLIONS

## Martha Oosthuysen Remembers

LIFE in the laagers during the Matabele and Mashona rebellions was an unforgettable experience for those who endured it. The people of Enkeldoorn suffered the hardships inseparable from such an existence twice over, for no sooner had the Matabele threat receded than the Mashonas turned savagely on the lonely white farmers, miners and storekeepers, in districts which had remained apparently peaceful.

Mrs. Martha Magtiretha Oosthuysen, (nee Botha), an 1895 pioneer, told the story of her family's trek to Rhodesia, and some of their experiences during the rebellions, when she was in her 87th year. She spoke in Afrikaans, which was translated by her son J. H. Oosthuysen. By that time, of all her family who came to this country, only her brother Adam Botha of Que Que and her sister Leina Nel of Gwelo, were still living.

MY FATHER'S NAME was Johannes Hendricks Luidewick Botha and my mother's Christian names were Leina Elizabeth. I had two sisters and five brothers.

My parents decided to trek to Rhodesia because the farm on which we were living, Botha's Hoek in Natal, was not paying. There were several other families with us, and among the names I remember are Strydom, Joubert, van der Merwe and Potgieter. There was also an English family, but I do not remember their name.

I was nine when we set out in the winter of 1895. The eight wagons, with many cattle and fowls, trekked along the Crocodile river and crossed it at Tuli.\* We did not go to Bulawayo, but took the old hunter's road and rested at Mtabazikamambo, north-east of Inyati, and on October 6, 1895, my mother's birthday, we took up a farm called Rhodesdale, about 40 miles from what is now Que Que.

We did not have much trouble on the trek from lions and leopards attacking our cattle. We had to make kraals with thorn bushes, and lit big fires around the camp. We could hear the

\*Tuli is on the Shashi river.

## THE TOWN THAT FOUGHT TWO REBELLIONS

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lions roaring around us, but they would not come close to the firelight.

In 1896 we lost a lot of cattle from the farm, and the Jouberts and one of my brothers went out in a wagon to search for them. They went as far as Enkeldoorn, where they found the people had made a laager because of the Matabele rebellion, but we had not heard anything about it. So the Jouberts came back to fetch us and we all trekked to Enkeldoorn and the laager.

When my brother went after the oxen, his wife was left alone with her two small children. One night the lions came, but the good farm dogs cornered one against the thorn fence of the kraal. My sister-in-law went out alone and shot it with a Martini rifle. Although the women did not go out hunting with the men, they all knew how to use a gun, and they used to practise a lot.

My mother's brother was one of the many people murdered on scattered farms when the rebellion broke out.

I remember the Salisbury Column arriving at Enkeldoorn on its way down to Matabeleland. Rhodes came with it, and I met him and often spoke to him. The people liked him very much and used to call him "Oom Rhodes". He was a very good man, very fond of children, and he brought boxes of sweets for us.

In the laager there was a safe place with sandbags around it for the women and children. We young ones were always very pleased when we heard Rhodes was coming to visit this part, because he used to climb up on the sandbags and dish out the sweets to us. He was a brave man too, and used to go out with patrols. At Enkeldoorn he always chose the Afrikaans burghers to go out with him rather than the soldiers of the Column.

THERE wasn't very much fighting around the Enkeldoorn laager, but we ran short of food and the men had to go out and raid kraals in order to get more. Nearby was a big kopje called Chigara where there was a large kraal, Chigara being the local chief. The natives had hollowed out a cave in the kopje and put their food in there, including their goats. That was where they used to take refuge when the Matabele came on their raids.

It was decided that this kraal would have to be captured, and the burghers set out at dawn one morning and surrounded it. Gideon Swarts was wounded in the shoulder by the Mashonas' rifle fire, but he was the only one hurt.

Except for the very old women and the children, who were left in the kraal, all the natives retreated into the cave on the

kopje. The burghers tried to negotiate with Chigara and messengers were sent in to talk to him, but none of them ever came out again. They were either held captive or killed, so it was decided that drastic action had to be taken.

Dynamite by the Scotchcart load was laid around the rocks and in the entrance to the cave. When it was detonated the whole top of the kopje collapsed, forming a hollow. No one inside the cave survived.

(According to Mr. N. D. Sinclair, District Commissioner, the Range, Charter District, 31 were reported killed. Rhodes accompanied this expedition, which was led by Commandant Thomas Ignatius Ferreira, but he was restrained by the Commandant from taking an active part in the attack. Ferreira said to him: "You are not allowed to go into the fight because, if anything happens to you, my name will stink as much as yours is famous." Apparently Rhodes gave the wounded Swarts a cheque and a bottle of whisky. Chigara kraal was situated on kopjes approximately eight miles south-east of Enkeldoorn near the Sebakwe river. The site is on the present farm Chigarra).

We lived in the laager for nearly two years before dispersing back to our farms. At one stage during the Matabele rebellion the doctors ordered us out because the laager was too crowded and unhealthy and people were dying. We left in groups, but then the Mashonas rebelled, and that was when many were murdered on the farms.

Sometimes when the men were ploughing the women would spot rebels coming and run out with guns to the men, stopping to fire at the attackers, and holding them off until the men could join in. The fresh trouble meant we had to go back to the laager.

When we left it for good we returned to Rhodesdale, but ran out of money. So we left the farm and moved into Gwelo. Here my father did transport riding, taking supplies to outlying traders and the mines, such as the Shamrock, the Tita, the Leopard and the Veracity. We went back to the farm a few times, but had to resort to transport riding to make more money. Finally Father sold the farm, and I have lived in or near Gwelo ever since.

We used to live south-west of Gwelo Kopje, in the area known as the Watershed: There were only two stores in Gwelo when we arrived, the Tuli Trading Company and Hallam's. No streets had been marked out and the wagons could go anywhere. There were no brick buildings, only tin shanties.

Once when some of our transport wagons got stuck in the mud, Father managed to get our tented one on to firm ground and went back with the oxen to pull the others out. It was night, and

I saw the horse which was tied to the back of the wagon was getting frightened. I managed to persuade the piccanin to get the lamp from under the wagon, lit it and lifted it up to hang from the roof at the back of the wagon. As I did so some lions jumped away. Their spoor showed they had been only five yards from the horse.

My husband Andries Marthinus Oosthuysen also did transport riding. He and his brother bought Derby farm about 12 miles from Gwelo, and I stayed there alone with my children whenever Andries was away. Afterwards he bought out his brother, who set up shops in Gwelo.

I knew John Austen of Que Que, and I also knew French Marie, who cured his horse after it had been mauled by a lion at Lion Spruit.





"Official" opening of the village well, Enkeldoorn. Only three names are recorded: Boyce Cumming, Hart Barry and E. Schultz (centre wearing the "mayoral" hat).

*Photo: National Archives*

## "MAYOR" SCHULTZ OF ENKELDOORN

### **They declared a holiday and opened their well**

*Recollections of Eugene jnr. and Marie Schultz*

THERE was a lively scene in the small village of Enkeldoorn one day when it was young. Strangely garbed figures strutted about, and frequent bursts of merriment were heard.

The activity centred round the new well which supplied the community with water, and the group which took the centre of the stage looked very odd indeed. All wore "civic" garb of some sort, and Napoleonic paper hats. There was Eugene Schultz with "mayor" written across his headgear. Another bore the title "Town Clerk" and a third "Enkeldoorn Municipality". The rest sported strange hieroglyphics that could be interpreted according to one's taste.

With zest and acclaim these "city fathers", who were in fact the leaders of the community, went through the ceremony of declaring the well open.

There were some genuine grounds for the prevailing air of dare-devilry, because in a lighthearted way the whole thing was an act of defiance of the Administration in Salisbury. The people of Enkeldoorn felt the opening of their well really should be a special occasion, and Eugene Schultz had asked the Administrator, Sir William Milton, for a public holiday. His request was refused or ignored, despite frantic telegrams from Enkeldoorn. However, the village showed its well-known independent spirit, took a public holiday and opened the well.

Eugene and his wife Diana played a leading part in the life of the new little town, and their children, Eugene the younger and Marie, have recorded with humour and affection some glimpses of those early days.

If Eugene's brother had not written to him from Bulawayo in 1893 telling him not to come to Rhodesia till advised to do so, the former would have been an 1893 pioneer. His son always felt it was rather a pity Eugene missed the honour.

However, he came up in 1896 with the McCabes, and possibly the Moorcrofts. The latter ended their trek at Charter, the McCabes farmed near Gwelo, and Eugene settled at Enkeldoorn, where he remained for the rest of his life.

His wife, the former Diana Tiddy, was on the nursing staff of the Australian contingent which came out to the Cape during the Boer War. In 1902, she joined the staff of the Memorial Hospital in Bulawayo, and was later transferred to Enkeldoorn, where she and Eugene were married.

When Diana came to Enkeldoorn there were already two nurses there, but she was responsible for establishing the first maternity home in the village.

Eugene used to drive her by cart and horses to outlying farms to nurse sick people, and many a time he had to carry her across flooded rivers.

She had quite a time "managing" the Rev. Arthur Shearly Cripps.

On one occasion, when he was summoned to Salisbury to meet the Bishop of the Diocese, Diana decided he could not possibly go to the capital in his khaki trousers and threadbare black alpaca jacket, so she bought him a pair of grey flannels and a sports coat. Before trying to get the old man into them, she insisted that he bathed and had his hair cut.

He climbed reluctantly into the new trousers, but would not part with his black jacket, arguing about it until he became quite angry. He did not see why he should dress up just to see the Bishop, and he had his own way, setting off for Salisbury in his old black alpaca.

**Coaching Days:** Two sons, Caleb and Eugene junior, were born to the Schultzes in Enkeldoorn, in 1902 and 1904 respectively. Young Eugene's vivid childhood memories include the old Zeederberg coaching days, when the coach used to approach Enkeldoorn from Umvuma, and the driver would start blowing his bugle from near the police camp, continuing on into town. The old coach outspan was on the left hand side of the road in the first little hollow, going from Enkeldoorn to Salisbury, just before the site of the present sale pens.

There was always great excitement when the coach arrived and the children used to run down to see it as soon as they heard the bugle.

Another red-letter day brought a camel to Enkeldoorn. It was one of the string used by the B.S.A. Police for a while, and its progress through the village delighted the Africans and children.

Young Rhodesians had some good times in those early years. Among Eugene junior's childhood friends was Dick Berry, who lived with his uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Boyce Cumming. Sometimes that grand old man Mr. Cumming, who was the local cattle inspector, sent Dick down to Umvuma by ox wagon to

fetch supplies, and Eugene went with him. The boys were only eight or nine at the time, and they went with a very reliable African driver. It would take about two days to get to Umvuma, and as the two boys lay on top of the uncovered wagon during the cool evening and pre-dawn hours, gazing up at the starlit sky and hearing, now and then, the calm quiet voice of the driver, they absorbed unforgettable memories.

Cricket was popular in the village and Eugene junior recalls that in the team were Mr. Atherstone, who later became surveyor general; Willie Brooks, one of Rhodesia's first tennis players whose name is commemorated by the Brooks Trophy; Mr. Walls (an accountant); J. P. L. de Smidt, magistrate and father of Harold de Smidt who until his recent retirement was Director of State Lotteries; Captain (later Major) Brereton of the B.S.A. Police, whose youngest daughter is Nancy Brereton of Gwelo, and Mr. P. O. Brocklehurst of Belvoir Spinney ranch, formerly called Kaap Plaas.

Brocklehurst and Walter Gilpin were great friends and fine horsemen. Eugene remembers them galloping up the only street of Enkeldoorn and pulling up in front of the Schultze's house with terrific Australian coo-ees.

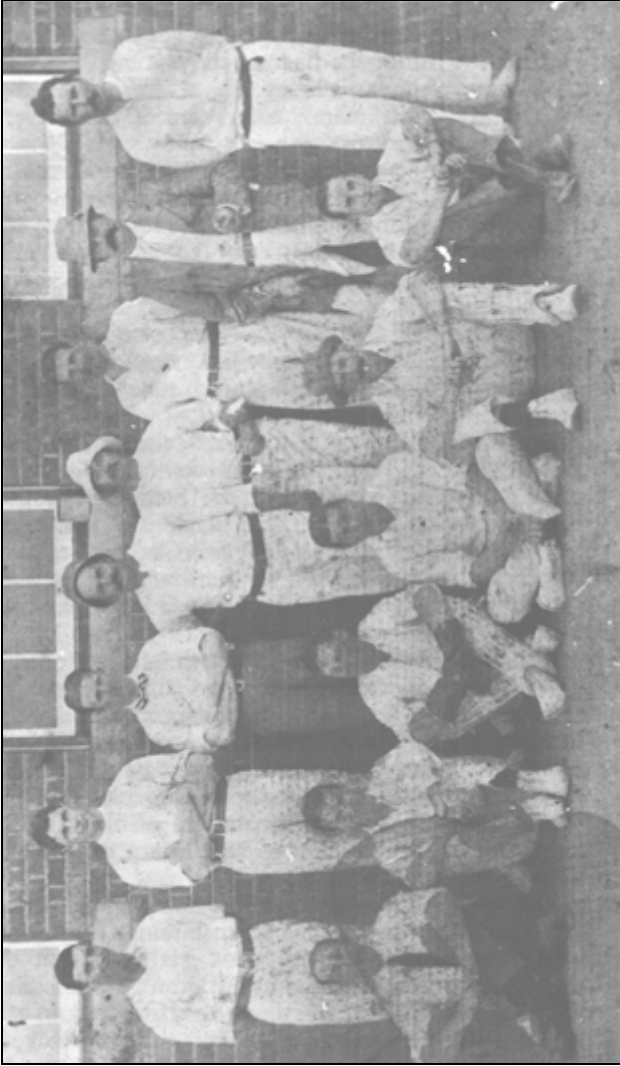
Also in the XI were Mr. Simmonds who became Chief Native Commissioner and whose son R. G. S. Simmonds is now an M.P.; W. W. Humphreys, headmaster of Enkeldoorn School, and a Mr. Douglas of the Police.

The Schultz family always remembered with glee that very unofficial opening of the town well, which stood almost opposite and slightly west of Henry Cook's house in modern Enkeldoorn.

Even coming home for the school holidays sometimes became an adventure, like that memorable homecoming in December 1922. Both Eugenes left home on December 23 to pick up the younger boys at Umvuma railway station, and set off on the 35-mile return journey, normally a matter of two hours, in an old pedal model Ford.

**River In Flood:** When they reached the Sebakwe river, it was in flood. They spent the night in the car, sustaining themselves with the only food they had, a loaf of bread and a packet of sweets. The mosquitos were terrible and sleep almost impossible.

Dawn showed the river still in flood, so they decided to go back to Umvuma to get some food, only to find the way barred by the flooded Little Sebakwe. Eventually it went down enough to allow them through, so they had a meal in Umvuma, bought some food and returned to the big river to sit out the rest of the day on its banks.



Enkeldoorn Cricket Club, 1913.

Standing: Ross, Atherstone, Simmonds, Humphreys, de Smidt, Brocklehurst, Schultz, Vernon.  
Seated: Walls, Burton, Douglas, Brooks, Brereton, Chambers.

*Photo: National Archives*

Also held up there was Mr. Willoughby, founder of the Mtao forest and the Mashona breed of cattle. He suggested that the Schultzes go back with him to Mtao for the night, and then make for Enkeldoorn via Felixburg, crossing the Sebakwe river well upstream. This they did.

All through Christmas Day the Schultzes battled on, getting bogged down again and again. Once the old car went in so deep it was resting on its chassis, but luckily a wagon full of Africans appeared, picked up the vehicle bodily and set it down on firmer ground.

Suddenly there was a frightful crack and a grinding noise like pebbles rattling in a drum. However, the valiant Tin Lizzie kept going, although at intervals there were more vicious cracks, and more pebbles seemed to be rattling around.

Then a front spring broke, fortunately near a prospector camped by the side of the road. He had a small donkey cart and a spare spring blade for it, which he gave to Eugene, who tied it to the car's spring with wet riems, and this somehow kept the contraption suspended for the rest of the way.

The travellers spent Christmas night with a farmer, and at long last they arrived home on the afternoon of Boxing Day. That night they ate the Christmas dinner which Diana had prepared, not knowing whether they were alive or washed down the Sebakwe. As Eugene junior so often said afterwards, the old Lizzies were certainly great cars.

# BLACK EAGLE OF THE MALUNGWANE

## *Fana's Tribute to his father Leo Robinson*

*Shortly before his death on April 26, 1973, A. H. (Fana) Robinson recorded a tribute to his father, the well-known native commissioner Leo G. Robinson, and died before there was a chance to check or expand the material. Fana was always known by his nickname, which he said was short for Umfaan (small boy). Curiously, while he was called Umfaan, his sister Leone was known as Umtwana, the young one, hence the pair became Fana and Tana. Fana was well-known in mining circles, and founded the Midlands branch of the Rhodesia Pioneers' and Early Settlers' Society, of which he became an honorary vice-president.*

ONE day in 1896 a tired, but determined traveller arrived at the home of Hans Lee, one of the family of renowned pre-pioneer hunters who lived near the Rhodesian border and Mangwe Pass. He was surely footsore, for he had walked from the railhead at Mafeking, but after a spell of rest and refreshment he continued indefatigably on his way till he reached Fort Umlukulu, not far from Balla Balla. No doubt the name Umlukulu, which signifies a small bush with little black edible berries, appealed to a man who had walked so many miles, inevitably enduring days of hunger and thirst. He must often have been tempted to supplement the few rations he carried with fruits of the veld.

The man was Leo G. Robinson, and the following account of his career has been compiled from the rather scanty recording made by his son Fana.

My father was born in Durban in 1892. He left there by train for Mafeking, and then walked on to Rhodesia. After serving through the rebellion as a member of the B.S.A. Police, he joined the Native Department and rose from the rank of chief clerk in the Chief Native Commissioner's Office in Bulawayo, to native commissioner and assistant magistrate. He served at Mzingwane, Bulawayo, Insiza (Fort Rixon), Gwelo and Nyamandhlovu. I believe he was also stationed at a place near Essexvale called Makukupeni with Mr. H. M. G. Jackson. He built the pole and daga offices, storerooms and houses at Mzingwane.

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When he was at Fort Rixon, Father had a lot to do with A. A. (Mziki) Campbell, and like him was a very fluent linguist. I don't think I have known anyone who could talk Sindebele as well as Father could. The Ndebele fairly worshipped him. They gave him several nicknames, which was significant, because in those days anyone who had no native nickname was of very little account in African eyes.

One name they gave him was that of the black eagle which used to fly up and down the Malungwane hills like a sentinel patrolling his beat. He was also known as the king of the Malungwane hills, which stretch from beyond Essexvale to Balla Balla, and as "the beater out" because of his pursuit of natives who had acquired muzzle-loading guns. They commemorated one well-known incident with a title which meant, "He followed Malandana who had a shotgun".

**Lucky Pot-Shot:** Malandana was one of the rebels responsible for murdering the Cunningham family in the Fort Rixon area. He shot Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham with his muzzle-loader, and their three children were picked up by their feet and their heads hammered against a wall.

Patrick Fletcher, who lived at Zimbeli near Bembezi, found the murdered family. He reported the news to Bulawayo, and word was sent to Father, who immediately set out from Makukupeni into the Malungwane hills. A very loyal African with him gave Father the tip that Malandana was in a kraal on the other side of the hills. Father approached the place towards evening, armed with a shotgun and accompanied by the loyal follower who suddenly shouted, "There he goes!" Father dashed after the murderer and shot him dead with a lucky pot-shot. I have his muzzle-loader today, and attached to it is a powder horn, made of cow's horn, a thing very seldom seen on muzzle-loaders. It also has a ramrod with a welded U-piece which enabled the rod to be used as a rest, for these guns are very heavy.

While Father was at Nyamandhlovu there was some trouble between him and the stock inspector concerning the movement of cattle over the East Coast Fever fence, which was erected in 1912. It was a special eight-strand heavy duty fence, parts of which still stand today. The incident was reported to Sir William Milton, who wanted to transfer Father to Mtoko. Father refused to go, and was allowed to resign. He started farming on Spitzkop, which he renamed Ntabenende.

Father married three times. His first wife was Mabel Lloyd, and she was the mother of the late Sir Victor Robinson, who

became attorney-general of Southern Rhodesia, and of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

After her death he married Miss Petti Hime, a daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Albert Hime, the first premier of Natal. Her three children were: Kath Robinson, who died in 1917; Leone Robinson, who became Mrs. Castle, and Addison Hime Robinson, known as Fana.

The third wife was a widow, Mrs. Stacey (nee Heeks). They had one son, Douglas, who took over the farm Ntabenende.

Father was a great cricketer, and did a lot to establish the game in Rhodesia. He was mentioned in Wisden's, and several other books about cricket. Before coming to South Africa he played in the same team as W. G. Grace in England, and his widow has presented a photograph of this team, which included him, to the Midlands Museum. He played for both Natal and Rhodesia, and regularly for Matabeleland until 1914. Sir William Milton, who was also fond of the game, gave him special permission to go from Nyamandhlovu to Bulawayo by train on Saturday mornings to play at the Queen's ground.

Travelling was still an adventure in those days. When the Matabeleland team went to Salisbury to play Mashonaland (then captained by Beck) they went by Zeederberg's coach, changing coaches frequently. Once they were held up for a day by the flooded Umniati, and on the way back the same river held them up for a whole week.

Father died in September, 1945, and was buried at Ntabenende. At least 2 000 Africans formed a sea of black faces at his funeral. His first wife, Mabel, was buried at Mzingwane, and Chief Sigola promised her grave should be kept in perfect condition as long as he lived. Before he died, he told his heir, Simon Sigola, who became a Senator, that he, his sons and his sons' children, should look after that grave, in memory of my father.

## Anna Hazelhurst's Ride

### Some stories remembered by her daughter Nell Stenslunde

THERE is a timeless magic about each new day in the bushveld. The night has gone, with all its attendant terrors, and the rough tracks and footpaths that wind through the shining grass are bright and friendly-looking again.

There was brightness, too, in the eyes of a young girl dawdling happily along such a path on a beautiful horse with a long, pale gold mane and tail, one day in 1892. Suddenly her eager look changed to alarm as the horse snorted and reared, almost throwing her from the saddle. "Steady, Champagne, steady boy," she cried, but whatever it was that had frightened him, had deafened him to the familiar voice, and he bolted.

Luckily he chose the right direction, and soon the fleeing horse and his shaken rider overtook a cavalcade of wagons, wagonettes, Cape carts, and horses, oxen and mules.

The girl, obviously an excellent horsewoman, quickly got Champagne under control again, but the incident was not yet over, for she had to confront a worried and angry elder sister and brother-in-law at the wagons.

"Something frightened Champagne and he bolted", she told them, and flushed at her sister's sharp retort, "It was probably a lion. Anything could have happened to you".

Her brother-in-law said sternly, "You know it is strictly against my orders to lag behind like that, Anna. If it happens again I shall take Champagne away, and you will ride in a wagonette from then on."

Poor Anna was very unpopular in camp that day. She never forgot that little adventure, nor others which occurred on the journey, and during her life as a Rhodesian pioneer. Her story, well remembered by her daughter Nell Stenslunde, vividly reflects the gaiety and spirit of her character.

"FROM the time I was a little girl until the day my mother died — when I was married with children of my own — I was enthralled

by the many stories she told me of her youth," said Nell. "Her name was Anna Albasini, and she was the youngest daughter of Jawawa (the native version of Joao) Albasini, a man well-known in the North-Eastern Transvaal. She married James Hazelhurst, Big Jim to all his friends, and I was their youngest child.

"Mrs. C. H. (Doel) Zeederberg was my aunt, and in due course James joined the Zeederberg interests in Rhodesia. One of the many stories I remember concerns that journey from Pietersburg to, I think, Fort Victoria, when Mother was about 18."

The party consisted of Doel Zeederberg and his wife Henny (formerly Hendrika Maria Albasini, another daughter of Joao), a Mr. and Mrs. Moschke (believed to be relations of Count Zeppelin) and some others. Doel had planned the trek for the benefit of the coach service which made his name so well known throughout Rhodesia and the Transvaal. His purpose was to arrange for relays of mules to be left at relief stations along the coach route from Pietersburg to Fort Victoria.

When Anna was invited to join the party, her mother was very reluctant to allow her to undertake such a trip, but was finally persuaded to do so.

Anna was an excellent horsewoman, and so Doel gave her the horse called Champagne to ride on the journey. She must have loved the beautiful animal very dearly because, even when she was an old woman, her eyes would soften whenever she spoke of him.

In due course they all set out on what could have been a very dangerous adventure. The country along the route was very wild, the mood of the natives uncertain, and the way long and rough. Anna was very excited, and everyone was in good spirits when they left Pietersburg.

At first the trail was reasonably good, but as they trekked North it became steadily rougher, harder and wilder. In accordance with the usual trek routine, the party stopped during the heat of the day to rest the animals, went on when it grew cooler, and finally camped for the night. The women slept in the wagonettes and the men under the vehicles and around the camp fires. The principal danger was always centred on the lions which prowled around the camp at night, seeking an opportunity to seize one of the animals.

One night the camp was disturbed by hyenas gnawing at the reims which were used to secure some of the stock. Suddenly the lions attacked, stampeding the oxen, horses and mules into the bush. The men seized their rifles and kept firing shots to scare off the predators, and then they had the dangerous task of

plunging into the thick bush in the dark, carrying hurricane lanterns, to try to recover the scattered animals.

This sort of thing happened several times, and once Anna and Henny were left sitting up in their wagonette, armed with a rifle, and with only a feeble candle to light the tented interior.

They were far too frightened to sleep, and as they sat trembling an ear-splitting roar resounded outside, the canvas flaps burst open, the candle went out, the rifle went off and a body landed heavily beside them on the bed.

When the pandemonium subsided the terrified sisters realised the intruder was not the lion, but one of the driver's young sons. His nerve had snapped, and he had leapt into the wagonette for sanctuary. He was allowed to stay until his father returned.

"Mother never forgot that heart-stopping moment, although she was able to laugh about it later", said Nell. "I am sure the piccanin never forgot it either.

"Yes, lions were a ceaseless problem, and the mules and oxen attracted them like magnets. When the party arrived at one of the stations, they found all the mules barricaded into the stable, and the stable staff perched on the roof, hungry, thirsty and terrified. A path of pug marks circling the building showed where the lions had prowled round and round. The roof could not have been very high, but fortunately for the refugees up there the lions must have lacked initiative, or perhaps they were sufficiently well fed to be selective about their meals."

ONE night when the travellers had made camp, lighted the fires and settled down for supper, they were startled to see thousands of tiny bright lights converging swiftly and silently on them from all sides. To their horror, the ground was suddenly alive with spiders, all racing towards, and into, the camp fires.

The women screamed and scrambled into the wagonettes (Anna declared afterwards she could not remember touching the ground) and they flatly refused to come down again. This meant the men had to do the best they could about cooking the food, and wait upon the women as well.

To cap that uncomfortable night, a dreadful smell was wafted into camp from somewhere in the bush, and next morning someone discovered the source of this. Apparently a python had squeezed its way through a hole in an old drum, which had contained fat of some sort used by previous travellers. The snake could not get out again, and had died in its prison.

The strangest of all Anna's experiences also occurred at night, when the party was camped on a particularly wild section

of the route. This time they were startled by the unmistakable sound of a violin, beautifully played. They all listened in amazement to the music floating over the quiet bush until it gradually died away into the night.

As they had not expected to find other travellers near this spot, the men went off early next morning to investigate. All they found was the remains of a derelict store, with no sign of any human being.

They were told later that the man who had once lived in that remote place used to play his violin to ease his isolation and loneliness. He had died there of malaria some time before.

"Mother said that hearing such music in the blackness of the African night was a most eerie experience, and the memory never failed to make her feel uneasy."

There was excitement for Anna in riding out each new day, but alas, the journey ended sadly for her. Champagne developed horsesickness and died before they reached Fort Victoria.

"I know that this quite spoilt her high adventure. Even after many years, whenever she spoke of him, her old eyes would become very bright and she would describe his looks, his long pale gold mane and tail, and how he died. She never forgot him."

So in Nell's mind there lived a picture of the young Anna and Champagne, winding their happy way through the African bush into the country that was to become home.

## MAJAQABA

### A Voice From The Days Of Lobengula

*An old Matabele looks  
back over a century in  
an interview with the  
Compiler*

TIME has stilled nearly all the voices from the days of Lobengula. One of the last to speak, and with astonishing clarity for a man of such great age, was that of Majaqaba Mukangwani Ncube at Senkwasi kraal in the Zhombe Tribal Trust Land of the Que Que district.

When he was interviewed by the compiler of this magazine on March 7, 1973, Majaqaba declared that he was 103 years old, and there was good ground for accepting this claim. He was born a subject of Chaminuka, and when, on Lobengula's instructions, this chief was captured and later killed and his kraal destroyed, by the Mbizo regiment, Majaqaba was also captured. According to F. C. Selous, this event took place in 1883.

"In order to establish his age at the time of the raid," wrote the compiler, "I had all the youngsters in the kraal lined up and Majaqaba pointed out one of them as being the age he was when captured. The lad had a birth certificate showing he was born in 1960, which made him 13 years old. This indicated that Majaqaba was born about 1870, which supported his claim to be 103 in 1973.

"He was remarkably well preserved, perfectly lucid and still appeared to enjoy life. After looking at me for a moment when I was introduced he said: 'You are like your father. He was also a short man'. I had no idea he knew my father, and in fact had only heard of Majaqaba's existence a few weeks before the interview.

"My very able interpreters during the day-long interview were Willie Matamba, Senior Community Advisor in the Que Que district, and District Assistant Jack Nqwele Sibindi of the Gwelo district.

"The latter is the son of Sihlahla, who used to live near Shangani and who died recently at the reputed age of 107. Jack knew me as a small boy.

"Majqaba's story appeared in Nada, No. 39, in 1962 and again in The Outpost for August, 1968, in a paraphrased version, but I did not know this when I talked to him. However, this account contains some new stories. Various relatives who were present at the interview remarked afterwards that the old man recounted experiences which they had never heard before."

AS A CHILD, said Majqaba, I lived near a mountain called Ntungwidza, near Domboshawa, under Chief Chaminuka. My shoga (surname) is Ncube.

Chaminuka was an nganga (witchdoctor and herbalist) and also a very powerful monodoro (rain-maker). This is a story about him and another monodoro named Njukwa, with whom he quarrelled because they were both rain-makers.

The wife of Chaminuka was a witch and Njukwa said to him, "Divorce this wife, she is a witch". They reported each other separately to Lobengula, and he passed the judgment that they should both be killed, and sent his Mbizo impi to carry out the sentence.

All Chaminuka's people were killed by the impi and I, the only survivor amongst the youths, was captured. I was about 13 years old, and I do not know why I was spared. All the men and women were killed, but the young girls were taken away as slaves. I was also a slave, and was made to herd cattle.

The Matabele killed Chief Chaminuka near the place now called Somabula, but because of his supernatural powers no man had the courage to stab him. Chaminuka said that only a young boy could kill him, so one was given a spear and told to stab the Chief. When he had done so, Chaminuka was seized and thrown into the water of the Vungu river. Thus Chaminuka was drowned in the Vungu river and Njukwa was drowned in the Ngwegwesi river, and it was said that drums could be heard being beaten afterwards in the pool where Njukwa was drowned.

This was about 10 years before the Europeans came to Matabeleland.

We, the captives, were taken to Mbizo kraal on the Umgusa river on the northern side of Gubuluwayo.

I was a young boy when we reached Gubuluwayo. We were naked and we used to wrestle. Once I was wrestling with Njube who was a son of Lobengula. The King said: "Who dares to wrestle with the son of a king?" and a bystander said: "That is also a son of a king — a son of Chaminuka". Lobengula threatened to have me killed, but Chief Magwegwe cried: "O King, this is

but a child, he doesn't know anything!" And Lobengula allowed me to live.

We went on wrestling and I threw Njube to the ground. Then Lobengula swore by the Madlozi that I must be killed, but again Magwegwe pleaded: "O King, this is a young boy who does not know of any witchcraft."

We wrestled a third time, and this time Njube threw me, so all the people laughed and made fun of it. They said: "Today Chaminuka is dead!"

After that Njube and I became lasting friends, and I could eat all the best meat from the King's kraal.

I was allowed to go hunting with Njube, using dogs to get buck. When we killed a buck we had to give it to the king.

We had no clothes in those days and there were no blankets. We used animal skins for sleeping. There was lots of rain in those days. The Umgusa and Matsheumhlope always had water in them, even in the dry season. The Matsheumhlope was called the Emusizini then, because there were many very black people, black as charcoal, there.

Chief Somfula, a cripple, used to rear izintshe (ostriches) along the Emusizini river. They all belonged to the King, and were not to be killed, nor was it permitted to take feathers from those particular birds. The King liked to look at them, and Chief Somfula kept them fed. He was a Swazi by tribe.

Lobengula was given wives by King Gasa Nxumalo of the Shangaans. Lobengula killed one of the best cattle and prepared a fine shield from its skin and made a fine headdress of ostrich feathers. He gave 100 of his best cattle to King Gasa as lobolo for the four wives. The shield and headdress were smeared with medicine and men drove the cattle ahead, with two people following behind carrying the shield and the headdress.

When these two things were given to King Gasa he put on the headdress and took hold of the shield, and fell down dead. As soon as they saw the king fall the bearers ran away, and all the cattle were turned back and returned to Lobengula.

The Shangaans were too afraid of Lobengula to seek revenge. The cattle were given to Majiva Ndimande, a commoner, to be looked after.

At Mbizo we were young boys playing. Some women from Ngwegwesi arrived. Four entered the king's place, and others stayed outside.

The four who had entered said: "O King, we have come to dance for you."



Lobengula's mother-in-law, Madhlohlo, was one of the four and she said to him: "Why do you not stop eating in front of your mother-in-law?" and she spat on the ground. So the King ordered the mbovane (young warriors) to kill her, which they did. They hit her with sjamboks and even set the dogs on her, and the king directed the mbovane where to hit her. When she was dead the other women dragged her body away and left it in the bush beside the path to be eaten by vultures. For people who were killed by the king were not allowed to be buried. The father of Madhlohlo was Lohave.

**The King's Executioners:** This is a story about Seyengezi Mtombene, who was a soldier in the Mbizo impi. His wife was the daughter of Mututu, and while she was carrying a child on her back she was killed, together with her husband, on a main road. They were killed by amaxusa, the king's executioners, but the child was left alive. It cried all night, and when it fell asleep the vultures started to eat it before it died.

A man called Mabagane Mtobene was killed because he was suspected of being a wizard, together with his wife Ntabomvu. They were slain with big knobkerries.

Chief Lotshe was sent to England by the King to see Queen Victoria; he was to be the eyes of the King. When he came back he advised Lobengula to pay allegiance to the great white people. The other chief who went to England said: "No, Lotshe is deceiving you. You should fight the Europeans".\* Lobengula had them both killed, but before he died Lotshe said: "You may kill me, but you will die also because Death will not die with me. Death will remain with you". Then Lotshe was killed.

When the white men came in all their strength Lobengula remembered what Lotshe had said and cried: "If I had listened to his words I would have survived!"

Lotshe had many followers at Madabene, in the Induba impi. Lobengula sent the Mbizo impi to kill Lotshe's people, but they escaped.

The Mbizo impi was involved in the fighting at the battle of Imbembezi. The fiercest fighting, in which the Europeans used machineguns, was at a kraal called Gudade, just where Heany Junction station is today, on the Koce river.

I and the families of the Mbizo warriors followed after the retreating Lobengula down to Nkai, and when the king was seen

\*The other chief, Babayan, was not in fact killed. He later received a pension from Rhodes for eight years. Lotshe was executed.

no more the people returned and settled on the Nsezi river, which is a tributary of the Umzingwane. There was peace for a while, and then the fighting started again. The reason was that some of the Matabele became policemen for the Europeans, and these men treated the people very badly. At this time all the cattle and the buck in the veld died from a disease called ndalimani (rinderpest).

Many people died of starvation and also of smallpox. There were huge swarms of locusts which ate all the crops. There was nothing to feed the people.

A rain-maker called Mbabane lived in a cave of red rocks, called Bale, in the Majojeni hills — we did not call them Matopo. People could hear him speak through the mopani trees.

The people sometimes referred to Mlimo as Lutshi (a needle) because dust rose where he had danced on a rock. He was also referred to as Lutshi because he served all the people together, or brought them all together.

Alas! Lutshi does not live any more in the Majojeni hills. He was a wonderful being. He used to say he could see people fighting far away before we knew about it.

When Rhodes was talking to the Matabele chiefs and some wanted to go on fighting, Lutshi advised against it. He said: "Why do you want to kill these people? The women are beautiful and the men are handsome. They are fine people. They are the children of my sister."

I liked Rhodes. He was courteous and did not like quarrelling. He used to pay his servants well, and would give \$2 for a day's work. He liked black men. I knew him in Gubuluwayo. I used to heat his bathwater and prepare his bath, in a tin tub. This was when he came to meet the Matabele chiefs in the Majojeni hills, and I was working for the white men.

I worked for them for many years, and it began like this: One day I was looking for umqokolo (wild plums) to eat, and a European, Mr. MacMillan, found me and took me with him. He was cook to Captain Tomlinson, who was the head of the police in Gubuluwayo, and he taught me to cook. Captain Tomlinson became my father, and when Mr. MacMillan left I became cook for the Captain. There were only tin huts in Gubuluwayo then and some Jews' stores.

Once there was trouble in the Hartley district at Mashamombe, and I went there with Captain Tomlinson. Another time some European policemen were sent to the Heany Junction area to

shoot game for food and they took me with them. The meat was for police camps, as there were still hardly any cattle.

Then Mr. Mlobiseni,\* who was native commissioner at Umzingwane, took me to be a guard at the prison there, and later I was transferred to Essexvale Prison, where I stayed 10 years, until the flu epidemic came (1918).

**Snake In The Sky:** In 1914 I saw a very wonderful snake. It was black and was in the clouds just when the rain was about to fall. Mrs. Silingno Kwanazi told me to take a blanket and cover myself so as not to see the snake. Its head was above the clouds and its tail writhed about below them. Suddenly it disappeared and we continued ploughing. Then it rained very hard.

Another time, when I was escorting prisoners from Gubuluwayo to Essexvale, we all saw a huge yellow snake which disappeared into the sky, and heavy rain fell. All the prisoners hid under an nkuni tree, but I was not afraid. I stood my ground.†

A native commissioner called Mehlokazulu (a person who sees everything — Mr. Richardson) selected me to go tax collecting around the farms, and gave me a fine double-barrelled shotgun. Later I was put in charge of Fort Rixon Prison. I stayed there 10 years, and I became sergeant-major and wore a Sam Browne belt.

Around Fort Rixon many people possessed muzzle-loading guns illegally, and the Police chased them and captured them in the Mtshingwe area. This was done by Native Constable Mtatu, nicknamed Gundabaro (immune to witchcraft). He caught 100 people.

The guns were confiscated and I had to burn them. We dug a big trench and filled it with firewood. I and some of the Police were allowed to keep a muzzle-loader as a memento. I was asked to swop my shotgun for one of these, but I refused.

Before I left Essexvale the Government wanted me to accept an appointment as chief at Mbagwe near Mpoengs in the Bulalima-Mangwe district. I did not accept.

When I retired from Fort Rixon I started my first home near the Bushtick Mine. I was now a rich man. I had 700 sheep, 100

\*Leo G. Robinson.

†A meteorological officer commented: Majaqaba obviously saw a funnel cloud or tornado. The yellow "snake" was probably yellow dust being carried up from the ground to the cloud.

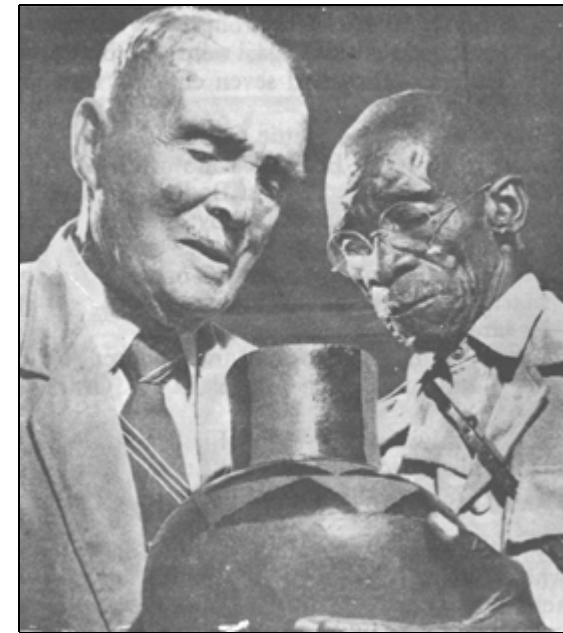
cattle and 50 goats. I also had \$400 in notes. At that time you could buy a beast for \$6 and a sheep for \$1.

My kraal was on ground which became a farming area and I moved to Mnyezani in the Fort Rixon district, then again to the Que Que district, to land which became Mr. Cunningham's farm Malamba, on which there was a pool called Dungamanze. Lobengula used to camp there, a day's journey from Ntabanshlope in the Lower Gwelo Tribal Trust Land.

(For the same reason Majaqaba moved successively to Sigudwe, Mtshape near the Matopos, Somalala in Zhombe T.T.L., Que Que district, and Mhakazi hill near Zhombe river in Chief Gwesela's area).

I was on sandveld at Mhakazi and there were many spring hares, so I moved to this good red soil here at Senkwasi, which is the name of that little stream nearby.

I have finished.



Shortly before Col. Tomlinson died, Majaqaba presented him with an earthenware jar.

*Photo: Courtesy Outpost*



CHUBBY ON HER 90th  
BIRTHDAY

*Photo: Mrs. Florence Talbot*

## Childhood Memories of a Long Trek

*Chubby tells the story  
of the Bain family*

WALTER CARDEN BAIN and his wife Sarah Lucy, who trekked to Rhodesia in 1894, were descendants of South Africa's 1820 Settlers. They had seven children (one son and six daughters) whose names were:

Walter Herman (married Hettie Cooper).  
Alice Leonora (married Ben Alick Howard).  
Violet Constance (married Ernest Bodle).  
Florence Marion (known as Chubby, married William Henry Talbot).  
Ruby Elizabeth (married Frederick York).  
Daisy Maria (married Frank Robins).  
Ada Margaret (married Herbert Attwell).  
Chubby and William Talbot had five children: Edna Marion, Robert William Francis, Ardene Ralph, Lucy Grace and Leslie Stephen.

The Bain family lived first in Ficksburg, then moved to Basutoland and finally to Rhodesia. Chubby, who was 90 years old on June 12, 1973, tells the story of their trek.

WE left my father's trading station in Basutoland in the winter of 1894, when I was 11. There were three big wagons in our convoy, each with a span of 18 oxen, a Cape cart drawn by two beautiful white horses, and about 15 loose head of stock. We suffered heavy losses on the way up to Matabeleland, and Father had to sell one of his wagons because he could not muster enough oxen to pull it.

Why did we come to Rhodesia? Well, my father had a wagon conductor named Jo King, who used to take our grain from Basutoland to Johannesburg in huge wagons drawn by those spans of 18 oxen — and what oxen they were! Jo left us and went to Rhodesia. He came back with pamphlets full of Cecil Rhodes' promises of what he would do for settlers, and told us what a wonderful country Rhodesia was. You could almost pick up gold in the streets of Bulawayo, according to Jo.

So off we trekked, and eventually reached the Crocodile river, now called the Limpopo. While we were outspanned beside it we picked up a little Hottentot. It was the day we found the doll.

We children were playing at well-digging in the deep leaf mould under some trees, when suddenly my stick touched something hard. I reached down and pulled the object out. It was a little china doll with arms and legs that moved. What a treasure to find in the veld, deep in leaf mould! I suppose some other little girl must have played there and forgotten it in her hurry when she was called for the inspanning.



"IT'S MINE, IT'S MINE!"

*Sketch by Mary Mercer*

When the others saw it they all shouted: "It's mine!" So to stop the argument we rushed off to let Father decide.

"Which one found it?" he asked, and when the others admitted I had he said: "Well, if she found it, it's hers."

That was how I got my doll. I called it Annie, and kept it right up till I was married. Then I gave it to my youngest sister, and I don't know where it is today.

As for the Hottentot: We had gone down to the river and on our way back we heard a noise above us. We looked up, and there in the very top of a big tree we saw a little Hottentot boy. So we called Father again, and he spoke to the little fellow first in English, then in Basutu and various other native languages, asking him to come with us as a voorloper, or leader of the oxen. At last he tried Afrikaans, and the lad replied "ja, Baas."

Father then chased my sisters and me away because the Hottentot would not come down from the tree while we were there. I think he had a hole in his trousers and had climbed the tree to get away from us. His name was Gert and he was an ugly little devil; but he came all the way to Bulawayo with us, and stayed on for some years.

We would start our days on trek at 4 a.m. and travel slowly till about eight. At 4 p.m. we would move on again for another four hours. Our driver was a Fingo named Moses and he was marvellous, and as honest as you could make them. He could clap his long whip with the voorslag at the end with a sound like a gunshot, and when he clapped it three times the herd boys who took the cattle out to graze would bring them in and the oxen would be inspanned. We also had three Basuto servants named Pohyani, Makiti and Kleinboy.

Our livestock included fowls and ducks, and at first we would have to go and round them up before inspanning; but after a while they came in by themselves at the clap of the whip, and scrambled up the ladder father had made for them.

For food we had buck the men shot, and we made biltong. Father also fished. He was a keen fisherman and he caught so many we used to give them to other people we met, for we got so tired of fish we couldn't face it. We preferred the biltong.

The family slept in the wagon, except for my brother Walter, who made his bed underneath it, and there was a tarpaulin all round it, held down with heavy stones. Moses slept across the opening, and a big fire was kept going all night between the wagons. Walter's bed used to be thrown on top of us girls every morning — how I used to grouse about it.

I CAN'T REMEMBER where we crossed the Limpopo, but we crossed the Shashi on the old roadway. An Afrikaans family joined up with us, but I can't remember their name. They included two boys and a big girl, and through them I learned a little Afrikaans. They had only one span of oxen, but in the end they were helping us.

To help us cross the Shashi, the men tried putting three spans of 18 oxen each on a wagon, but this did not work as the beasts pulled all ways at once. So they made do with one span which they could control.

The river was bone dry, and the men had to dig for water for the cattle. My father made us children get into the wagon for the crossing because there was a big clump of reeds nearby where a lion might be hidden. When our wagon was driven into the river bed it went down into the sand up to the wheel hubs, and even the 18 oxen couldn't pull it out. So Father jacked it up with "domkrags" and they pushed logs under the wheels. It took plenty of logs to get us across the river, but thanks to them we managed it quite easily.

Our wagon went first, and we outspanned on the other side for supper. All the natives who could be spared from helping the other wagons across were set to chopping down bushes to make a big kraal right next to us, because that was a very wild spot.

The cattle were hustled into the kraal and we made a roaring fire and set up our big tripod from which we hung the great 18-inch kettle we used for coffee. Father told Walter and Moses to stay with us, and help my mother, and the rest of us sat with rugs wrapped round our shoulders, waiting for our supper. Mother said we could have bread and jam, or sweet rusks soaked in the coffee.

As we sat waiting for the coffee, we heard a rushing sound, and something leapt out of the kraal, right through us and over the fire. The tripod went flying, and the fire was doused with all the water from the kettle.

Walter and Moses dashed after the creature, and Mother rushed us girls into the wagon tent. She threw us in one on top of the other before she scrambled up herself, convinced the thing was a lion. In fact it was one of the oxen, and Moses never stopped laughing for a week. Every now and then he would look at Mother and say: "My, but you showed a mother's love! You got all those children in the tent before yourself." Yes



"SHE THREW US INTO THE WAGON ONE ON TOP OF THE OTHER."

*Sketch by Mary Mercer*

Mother was brave, and very pretty too. She was in her forties at the time.

Beyond the Shashi the country was so wild and the trees so thick that sometimes we had to outspan in the road, and use our night lights. These were stick torches topped with big wads of tightly packed tarred waste. They were dipped in oil and fixed to the disselboom, and they burned all night.

At the next river we filled up the barrels slung under the wagon, because we had been told that ahead there would be no water for about three days.

When we had used all our water, the old Afrikaans man helped us. He still had some in a barrel, and although it was very low he gave us a teaspoonful every now and then. The poor oxen had their tongues hanging out with thirst. Eventually we came to two holes filled with lovely clear water, but it was salty. Even the oxen just sniffed at it and walked away. So on we toiled till we reached another little river with water holes in it, and plenty of water under a couple of feet of sand.

We young ones were digging away there, when suddenly I unearthed a human scalp with very long black hair on it. We all looked at each other, and one of the Afrikaans boys said: "It might be a spook." So off we hared, dragging the little ones with us. We told Father about it, and he and Moses took a shovel down, but they wouldn't tell us whether they found anything. Somebody must have been drowned and washed down there. After that we dug for water upstream, and filled up everything we could with water.

As we pushed on, Father began losing cattle fast. They were dying by the dozen of gall-sickness, although we didn't know what was the trouble. Every couple of miles there would be a shout of "whoa!" and another ox would drop and Father would have to cut its throat. Poor Father, he had to cut so many throats, although if there was water near, he left the animals alive.

THERE was a Jew who had a store beside a little river and Father left three or four sick beasts, which later recovered, with him.

That Jew was honest. He took the trouble to come up to Bulawayo to pay Father not only for the cattle, but for the calves they had borne too. Father did not want any payment, but the man insisted on him taking something.

Our trek continued through Mangwe Pass, and when we reached Bulawayo we met two young fellows who owned stands on the very edge of the town, and they let us camp on their ground until we could get fixed up somewhere else. Rhodes wouldn't do anything for us, in spite of all the pamphlets said, because we had not come up via Salisbury.

One day two policemen arrived and ordered Father out of town. They told him to move right back to the Khami, because we were not supposed to bring cattle into Bulawayo. Father refused to budge, and the two stand-owners came and backed him up, and that was that.

At last Father was granted two garden plots on the Matsheumshlope, below the Salisbury road crossing, provided he grew vegetables for sale. He planted many trees, and Mother put in shrubs which she had brought with her as seedlings, tending them with painstaking care during the trek.

Then came the first alarm of the rebellion. Rumours were going round, and Father and Walter rode into town to find out what was happening. Some of us were watching an ox die of rinderpest when Walter came tearing back, and we were told: "Put on your hats at once and get into town. Go to Mr. Herbert's

place." Mr. Herbert had some newly built rooms, and he said we could stay there as long as necessary.

We snatched up some ducklings which Mother treasured, and took them with us in a basket. We stopped at various houses, including Mrs. Davidson's, and collected her and little Amy, then went on into town.

That night there was a false alarm. Old Sam Lewis was sent to tell us to go into the Bulawayo Club in Main Street, because the rebels were supposed to be within three miles of us. We had all gone to bed except for Walter, who was in the Army together with a nice boy named Owen Davies. There were children with whooping cough everywhere, and some drunken women. I remember two old women sitting at the door, wearing hats with ostrich feathers hanging down to their waists, both of them red-eyed with crying and drink. Eventually we got into a room looking right on to the street.



BOTH OF THEM RED-EYED WITH CRYING AND ALL  
THOSE DRINKS.

*Sketch by Mary Mercer*

That night a donkey wagon came past with a little vaatjie of water on it, and as we were terribly thirsty the driver let us have a drink, straight out of the spout. He said he had come in from Khami and had not seen any sign of preparations for a rebel attack. He had passed a few Matabele, but they simply ignored him.

Later we went into the laager and spent two nights inside the old Market Square building. We slept head to foot, closely packed, and I got a boy's feet over the top of my head. I don't think he had bathed for months, and he had ragged trousers too. I had to keep pushing his horrible feet away.

At dawn we dashed back to our wagon, which was part of the inner laager, our other one being in the outside ring, with sandbags on it. There was a big space between the rings in which we used to play. After that second night we all slept in the inner wagon, in the tent. The little German piano which Father had brought up with us in a special packing case was there too.

Many of the children in the laager had whooping cough, and babies were dying of it. We helped one poor exhausted woman with a very sick baby, and not one of our family got whooping cough, though we all caught bad colds.

At the top of the Market Square building was a row of windows, and the Police looked in through these at intervals to see that all was well. One woman used to come in every night, walk straight to a certain corner fully dressed, bonnet and all, and make her bed. Then she would pull her old kappie over her face and go to sleep. The night I was tormented by those beastly feet we saw the Police come in, walk straight up to this woman, and tear the kappie off her head; and "she" was a man.

One night in the laager Father said: "Come on girls, give me some of your old songs". So my sister Alice sat down at the piano and we all sang.

The next night we were asked to sing again as it cheered the men up wonderfully.

Rhodes was among us then, but he did not come and listen to our sing-songs. I had a lot of time for him though, he seemed such a kind man in many ways. Once he presented some prizes and I got one for singing. He took my hand, hung on to it, and stared into my face. Then he said, "good girl", and put my hand down. I was 12 then, I turned 13 in the laager.

AFTER the rebellion we went back to our plots and settled down to school at the Convent. I remember Sister Canisia and



CHUBBY ON HER WEDDING DAY

*Photo: Mrs. Florence Talbot*

Sister Bridget. The wonderful nuns ran the Memorial Hospital as well as the school, and when there was a move to bring nurses in, the doctors said, "Nothing of the kind. The nuns have served right through the rebellion, and they've saved many a life through the care they have taken of the patients". I remember Dr. Strong and Dr. Levy. Dr. Vigne came up later.

When we had been in Rhodesia some time our driver Moses wanted to go home and fetch his wife and children, who were on my uncle's farm on the Caledon river in the Cape. He insisted on walking down all by himself, although Father tried to dissuade him. He left his little vaatjie and other things with Mother, and set off. Months later Father wrote to ask if he had arrived, but Uncle said he had never seen him.

Poor Gert the Hottentot too. He also set off home, but was picked up dead beside the railway near Mafeking.

Eventually we left the plots and moved to a farm which Father had bought. It was named Hopedale, and was on the Umgusa river. Afterwards people called Smith took it over. We lived in rondavels until the house was built, and I got married from the rondavels.

My husband, William Talbot, had been in the Imperial Light Horse during the Boer War. After that he returned to England, then went to Australia. From there he came to Bulawayo, and met me in a cart in the street one day. He said it was love at first sight.

After we were married he started mining. First he worked as bookkeeper at the Shabi, near what is now Shabani. Between there and Selukwe it was absolute wilderness. We had to cut a road from Shabi Mine to Selukwe.

Once my husband was washed away in the Shabi river with his whole turn-out. He had got "rain-fast" between the Lundi and the Shabi. Maphero, an African of the same wonderful type as Moses, was with him.

After about a week their food began to run out, and my husband had only one bullet left. The river had gone down quite a bit, so he decided to try and cross, but when they reached the middle, over went the Cape cart with all our belongings in it.

The two men got into the river on the downstream side, and managed to push the cart towards the bank. They persuaded the front mules to pull, and out came the cart. It was a wreck, but they could use it.

Further on they met a party of road-cutters, and asked for food. The road men gave them a great pot of mealie meal

porridge and a huge bowl of wild honey. My husband said he'd never tasted anything like it in his life.

Once my baby, Edna, fell ill, and the mine manager told me to get her into Selukwe as soon as possible. So we packed up the cart, took all the food we could, and set off. During our first night's camp the mules, which were all tied up near the cart, started to kick and snort and pull on their ropes, sure signs that there was a lion near; as it happened it was right next to the cart.

It did not attack, and the driver and leader got in amongst the mules to soothe them. Just then a terrific storm broke, and out went the fire. So my husband had to take the gun and go with the servants to look for wood, and there I was, left alone in the cart, trying to keep Edna dry under two raincoats. I was only 22, and I wondered what I should do if anything happened to the men, leaving me stranded there with a sick child. I prayed hard, and they came back safely, but in the morning my husband had to lift me out of the cart as cramp had made my legs useless. They got me walking again, and the sun was shining, and after breakfast we set off for Selukwe. It was beautiful to see the trees covered with silver raindrops, which showered down on us as we went under them.

Suddenly Maphero said, "Look up at that hill", and there were two pretty, little lion cubs sitting on the top. It was their mother that had come down after our mules, I suppose.

My husband and I both had the wanderlust and we went all over the place; to the Guinea Fowl Mine near Gwelo, where the Hurrell family were very kind to us; to the Champion Mine at Gwanda, the Main Reef Mine, Bulawayo (on what is now the Harry Allen golf course) and the Woolly Dog on the Commonage.

When I got tired of whatever house I was living in, I would take a walk around town and look at others, for houses were easy to get in those days. I would see one I fancied, go in and make enquiries. If it was to let I would take it, and a few days later I'd shift again. So one morning my husband said, "Now, my girl, where have I got to go home to to-night? What street? What avenue?"

## JOHN AND JOE, DAM-BUILDERS

### Travels and Trials of the Watson family, Recorded by Emily Andrews

THE HILLSIDE DAMS and B.A.C. sports ground are among the best loved recreation centres in modern Bulawayo, yet the names of the men who helped to make them are now remembered only by their descendants and a few others.

The first Hillside dam was built by John Watson and his friend Joe Guiney, and they also prepared the B.A.C. grounds for sports to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII. There were no buildings on the ground at that time.

Thanks to John's second daughter Emily Elsie, who became Andrews, the Watson family's early life in Bulawayo has now been recorded.

John Watson and his wife Annie (nee Hamman) were both born in South Africa. The Watsons were Scottish folk, but Annie's ancestors fled from France during the French Revolution, and apparently went on to South Africa from Ireland.

Emily herself was born in Johannesburg on June 16, 1888, and was one of the four Watson children who trekked to Bulawayo. The family left Johannesburg in 1894 and got as far as Mafeking, where they lost all their cattle. The following year John began conducting transport wagons to Bulawayo, and on his second trip up he met an old friend, Joe Guiney, taking his own wagons and donkeys south to reload. John asked him to bring Annie and the children back to Bulawayo with him, and Joe did so.

The Matabele rebellion was still on, but the family trekked through the Mangwe Pass, which the rebels had left open for white people leaving the country. It was probably about mid-year when they arrived in Bulawayo, as Emily recalled that Cecil Rhodes went to the Indaba (presumably the first of the series) after they came.

It was a big disappointment to find that John Watson was not in the little town, and the agent for whom he worked could only tell Annie that he might be back in 10 days or so. It could not have been pleasant for a mother and four children to find themselves on their own in a strange pioneer town still geared to



fight a rebellion, but fortunately Joe Guiney came to their rescue again and suggested they should go with him to the farm Claremont on the Tuli road, off what is today the Old Essexvale road, about 12 miles from Bulawayo. The farm became the modern Claremont Estate.

There the Watsons and Guineys settled in tents of bucksails and poles, and waited for John to return. There were plenty of lions in the surrounding bush, and Joe Guiney built the donkey kraal right next to his hut because of them. The lions were not deterred by the presence of humans, and one night soon after everybody had settled down, five of them got into the kraal and killed six donkeys.

There were some pigs among the Guiney's collection of livestock, and one old boar was the bane of their lives.

Kitchens and stoves were non-existent; all cooking was done over an open fire outside, and bread was cooked in a bakepot. Annie used to put the dough in the bakepot and stand it in the sun to rise before baking, and it was the children's job to see that the old boar did not come snuffling round, push the lid off the pot and grab the dough, a crime which he committed at least once. One day he actually shoved the lid off while the bread was baking, seized the half-raw dough and dashed away with it. No wonder he was unpopular.

**Fire and Sickness:** John returned to Bulawayo after a week or two, and quickly set about building huts for his family to live in. Then came a near-disaster. One day some visitors arrived from Bulawayo, and everybody took a walk down the valley. Somebody must have thrown a match or cigarette end down, and set alight the thick, high grass. The wind was blowing towards the huts, and as the fire sped in that direction, there was a frantic race to save them. At one stage the party had to run through the flames, but somehow the huts were saved.

John farmed at Claremont for two years, and during that time another son was born, but died of fever and convulsions at the age of nine months. Annie, herself desperately ill, laid the baby's body out in the wagon box which stood in front of the bed, and John and Emily took it into Bulawayo for burial.

While they were away Annie became so ill that Joe Guiney had a messenger standing by to take a letter to John telling him to bring back a coffin for her. Her head ached so badly that the Guineys cut off all her beautiful long hair, hoping to ease the pain.

Fortunately no coffin was needed, but no sooner had John returned home than he too went down with fever, together with his

young son Will. Somehow Annie found strength to don a dressing-gown and sit in a basket chair beside John's bed to tend him, while nine-year-old Emily acted as cook and housekeeper. Fortunately a cousin of Annie's, a transport rider named Ben King, arrived, saw the state of affairs, packed the family and their furniture straight into the wagons and took them into Bulawayo.

John and Will went into the hospital run by the Dominican sisters, and the others lived in the wagon, under the wing of the Kings, who had a small house in 15th Avenue. When John recovered he put up a frame and canvas house between 15th Avenue and the ground where the railway line was later laid.

Afterwards the family moved into a house with two rooms and a kitchen, behind the old Dutch Reformed Church, and finally they got a house with two bedrooms, a dining-room and kitchen, on the corner of Grey Street and 9th Avenue.

It was during this period that John and Joe built the first Hillside dam and prepared the B.A.C. ground for the King Edward VII coronation sports.

**Move To Midlands:** The next move made by John and Joe and their families was to the Surprise Mine, near the Guineafowl Mine on the Selukwe road, where the two men built dams and reservoirs, and made charcoal for the miners. Then they shifted to Que Que and built a dam for one of the mines there.

Meanwhile Emily had been sent to school at the Convent in Bulawayo, and one of her most exciting memories concerned a journey home by coach at Christmas in 1901. She travelled with two of the Guiney boys, apparently on top of the mailbags, and during the night the coach got bogged down in the mud. It was unloaded and Emily, the only female passenger, was told to lie down on the bags and go to sleep while the men dug the coach out.

Beyond Gwelo the party travelled in a four-wheeled trap with two horses, and spent the night at a hotel 12 miles from the town. At the next coaching station they were told that lions had been around the stables the previous night, trying to get at the mules, so they were glad to move on from there to the Que Que river, which was running bank to bank.

A skip had been rigged to take the passengers across, but the two Guiney boys refused to allow Emily to cross that way, and got an African to carry her over on his shoulders, although the water was shoulder-high. Then the Guineys and the African driver struggled across with the horses and trap, and all arrived home soaked and sorry-looking.

After the holidays the Watsons took Emily back to the Convent by ox wagon, then returned to Selukwe, where John and Joe built more dams.

About 1903/4 the partnership broke up. Joe Guiney went back to Bulawayo, and John worked on the Dunraven Mine outside Selukwe, run by Mr. P. D. Crewe. There another daughter, Monica (Mrs. Gibb) was born. Finally, John worked on the Wanderer Mine.

Emily passed her first year's teaching examination, but decided she did not wish to teach, and left school. The nearest school at home was run by the Methodist Minister, the Rev. Herbert Baker, in Selukwe, five miles from the Wanderer, and despite her decision, Emily was persuaded to teach some of the children who were too young to cycle to Selukwe. Her class consisted of Willie and George Treloar, Lesley Ellworthy, Bob Hardman, two Viljoens, her sister Lily (Mrs. Warwick) and another sister Mary (Mrs. Meredith).

Then tragedy struck the family. John met with an accident on the Mine, and died as a result of it on September 28, 1906. Annie and the children left Rhodesia at the end of that year, and went to live in South Africa.

Some years later, when her sons were trained apprentices, they returned with her, and Emily too came back with her husband in 1918.

Annie Watson died on November 24, 1949, and some of her descendants are now fifth generation Rhodesians.

## *He Beat a Lion With a Sjambok*

*Incidents from the life  
of John Austen recorded  
by his daughters Myrtle,  
Rose and Ivy*

**H**UNGRY and tense, two lions crouched beside a little stream beyond the Kwe Kwe River. Prey of some sort was approaching, not a buck or antelope, certainly not a zebra, although the hoofbeats on the sandy track they were watching rather resembled that tasty animal's tread. No, this was something much bigger, and very strange-looking indeed.

In fact, it was a horse with a man on its back, relaxed and unaware of danger as he rode towards the little pioneer town of Gwelo. Whether he spotted the lions before they attacked is not recorded; but one lion landed on the haunches of the horse, and then retreated under a hail of blows on the face from a sjambok. Its mate's attack failed too and the prey escaped, but not unscathed, for there was a dangerous wound on the horse's rump where the huge cat's fangs had torn a chunk of flesh away.

With great difficulty the rider, whose name was John Austen, managed to keep the weakening animal going till they reached Gwelo, although he was convinced he would have to shoot it in the end. However, there was a woman in Gwelo who was known as French Marie, and she said she could heal it. So John left it in her care and she did indeed succeed in saving it.

The determination that foiled the lions' attack and kept the horse going was typical of the man who became one of Rhodesia's most successful pioneers. Fortunately three of his daughters made a recording of his interesting career, and this chapter has been compiled from that source.

The daughters who made this valuable record were Myrtle Jenkinson, Rose Field and Ivy van Reenen, the only survivors of John's 12 children.

JOHAN GABRIEL OSTERLUND, who became John Austen, was born on the island of Langeron off Vasa in the Gulf of Bothnia, Finland, on February 24, 1861. All the family records are in a very old church in nearby Gamblavasa.



ONE LION LANDED ON THE HAUNCHES OF THE HORSE

*Reproduced by courtesy of  
the Austen family*

Johan was born with a birthmark on his lip. His grand-father had just died, and as it was February and the ground in Finland was frozen to a depth of three feet, burial was impossible, so the body was kept in the attic. His grandmother took baby Johan up to the attic and put the dead man's finger on the child's lip, hoping this would remove the birthmark. Of course nothing happened, and that is why Johan always wore a heavy moustache.

In 1876, at the age of fifteen the lad went to sea. He came back eight months later and worked in the fields during the summer, then sailed again in a Russo-Finnish vessel for the United States, where he visited Pennsylvania. His next ship was English, and when he got aboard he found all his clothes had been stolen from his sea-chest, and the thief had left a plug of tobacco in their place.

This time Johan voyaged to Glasgow, then to the West Indies, and back to Glasgow. He learned to speak English and passed the examination for his second mate's ticket. Finally he sailed for South Africa, and on the way the captain told him he should have an English name, and gave him the surname Austen.

The ship called at East London, where all the crew went on strike. John Austen, as he now called himself, and two others took a boat ashore and started to walk inland with the idea of going to the Kimberley diamond fields. They had their clothes and 12 pence between them.

John got to Queenstown, where a man named Tom Turner gave him two shillings for food and a bed. He used to say that this was the only money he had never paid back. Turner introduced him to a man named Jameson, who gave him work on his farm for 18 months, at the end of which he had £13 and a horse. This was the last time he ever worked for anyone.

Jameson stood security for a scotch cart, John got the trek gear and oxen, and started as a cartage contractor. When he married he had £200, a bed, bedding and food for one year, two cows and two horses. His bride wanted a pig, so he bought one for her, but it got mangy.

John was 19 when he married and his bride, Lilly Prudence Nolan, was 17. She was born in Hong Kong where her father was serving in the 19th Foot Regiment. Her mother died before the regiment left Hong Kong on transfer to Queenstown, so Lilly was looked after there by a family named Smith, and when the regiment left for England the Smiths adopted her.

John proposed to her at a circus which had come to Queenstown (she loved circuses for ever after) and bought her a sunshade

which she treasured for many years. Abe Bailey (later Sir) was also fond of Lilly at the time, and John made an effigy of him in the market square and burnt it. Years later he used to sing a song about this to tease Lilly.

The young couple lived on Jameson's farm, and Lilly walked under some mulberry trees every morning to fetch the milk.

She detested squashing the fallen mulberries and used to pick her way carefully through them, but not very successfully apparently, because her first son was born with a mulberry birth-mark on the sole of his foot.

John prospered in Queenstown and soon owned a butcher's shop and a boarding house at Baileyton.

**Move To Rhodesia:** In 1894, however, he decided to go to Rhodesia, leaving his wife and family in Queenstown until he had established himself. He travelled up with Fotheringham, the father of Mrs. Fitzgerald of Selukwe. He started his first enterprise in Gwelo. It was a general dealer's shop known as Austen and Fotheringham, and he also launched out in a butchery, in partnership with Dr. Aiden Campbell's father.

Then he moved on to Que Que, where he finally put down his roots, to the lasting benefit of the town.

He started trading in 2nd Avenue, where Fitzgerald and Desfontaine are today. His sign was only recently painted out, but "Established 1894" was left visible. He bought land and farmed near Que Que, and had other farms in the Gwelo and Selukwe areas. He had interests in gold mines too, among them the Royalist, the Murray, the Primrose and the B.F. He had bracelets made from his own gold, with a gold chain, and gave one to each of his four daughters on her eighteenth birthday.

He bought the whole of the block on 2nd Avenue bounded by 2nd and 4th Streets and on this he had, besides his store, his own house plus houses for his staff, a blacksmith's shop, a grinding mill, stables for horses and mules (used for pulling the goods trolley from the station) and a cattle kraal and dairy.

His cows provided the only milk supply Que Que had at first, and his children used to sell the milk to his customers from the dairy. In one corner of the block he built the Masonic Lodge which has now been turned into the Temple Flats. A haystack which provided feed for horses and mules caught fire one night and made a terrific blaze, but the animals were saved. The family formed a chain handling buckets of water from the huge tanks in the yard, and put the fire out.

Even all these business interests were not enough to keep John busy, so he used to cart wood to the old Globe and Phoenix Mine, and had an interest in Starkie's Hotel — which also caught fire. The children were living in huts nearby at the time, and friends called Beesley took them out to the Globe and Phoenix, as their father was afraid the huts might burn too.

John visited England periodically to buy goods for the store and to recruit staff who included Mr. Blackburn, an English, grocer, and John Markham. He brought out from Scotland Miss Jinnie Carruthers who married Jimmy Harris. Young Peter Matkovitch, the golfer, is their grandson. Jimmy Harris discovered the lime works, which are now the steelworks at Risco, and John Austen, Mr. Hogg and Mr. Haddon bought the property from him for about £10 000.

In those days picnics were popular family treats, and the young Austens rode out to them on mule trolleys padded with mattresses. They usually went to some river to fish and bathe, for no one worried about bilharzia then.

One New Year they went out in a big covered ox wagon, together with Dr. Davey and his wife and children, and at midnight John fired shots from his gun and served champagne. These two families often went out on hunting trips together in wagons, driving milk cows with them to the camp.

At one spot there was a big mopani tree, full of holes in which squirrels lived. The men used to put the straw covers from whisky bottles over their hands and catch the squirrels for pets.

Inevitably, John Austen was drawn into politics. At one election campaign in Gwelo, he and Major Boggie were rivals. They both got the same number of votes and the issue was decided by tossing a coin. Major Boggie won. The Austens had worked very hard to get their man in, but were rather relieved at the result. Actually, if one of the five children who were eligible to vote had done so, he would have won.

**First Mayor:** Que Que started off under the control of a sanitary board, and John was on that from 1912. He became the first chairman of the Town Management Board in 1929, and he served Que Que until 1935. He was the town's first mayor in 1934-35. The first Town House was a wood and iron shanty where the Little Theatre now stands.

John was very good to the farmers and miners of the district, giving credit at his store to help them. During the 1914-18 war

he paid the fare of several young men who wanted to go overseas to fight. He was awarded the M.B.E. in 1934.

Not long before World War II John was forced to move to Newlands at the Cape for health reasons. When Finland was fighting on the side of the Allies he sent a donation of £250 to his former homeland and he was very upset when the Finns, vanquished by the Russians, came in against the Allies, for he had a great love for England.

John died in 1942 and left part of his fortune to the British Government to help with the construction of a destroyer for the Royal Navy.

The bequest is believed to have totalled about £75 000 and he wished the ship to have a name associated with Que Que, such as H.M.S. Sebakwe. For some reason, the end result was that a fast fleet replenishment vessel was commissioned with the name H.M.S. Bulawayo. She was reputed to be the first of her kind to fly the White Ensign. Her Commander, Captain Short, was presented with an oil painting of the ship at Rhodesia House. The Rhodesian High Commissioner, Mr. K. M. Goodenough, made the presentation, and two of John's granddaughters watched the ceremony.

Each of his eight surviving children (four sons and four daughters) inherited a 6 000-acre farm from this remarkable pioneer, who showed his mettle in those far-off days by his determined counter-attack with his sjambok on the lions. The scene of that encounter was marked with a signpost bearing the name Lion Spruit. It stood beside the main Que Que-Gwelo road where it crosses the stream, but for some reason it has been removed.

## GWELO

### "A Typical Pioneer Town"

(The following extracts are reprinted from Rhodesia, Vol. No. 1, Nov./May 1897-98, by courtesy of the National Archives):

**N**EXT in importance of Rhodesian towns — after dealing with Bulawayo and Salisbury — comes Gwelo. This town is situated in Matabeleland, about 100 miles north-east of Bulawayo and about 200 miles south-west of Salisbury..... You leave Bulawayo by mail coach, traverse miles of uplands, all more or less covered with scattered bush. Belts of mopani and sugar bush alternate, the latter a sure sign of the country being free from malaria.

As the coach traverses the ridges of the watershed, occasional glimpses of luxuriant valleys open out on either side, and the distant view is bounded with a mass of strong peaks, some parts only too well known by the troops engaged in quelling the late revolt.

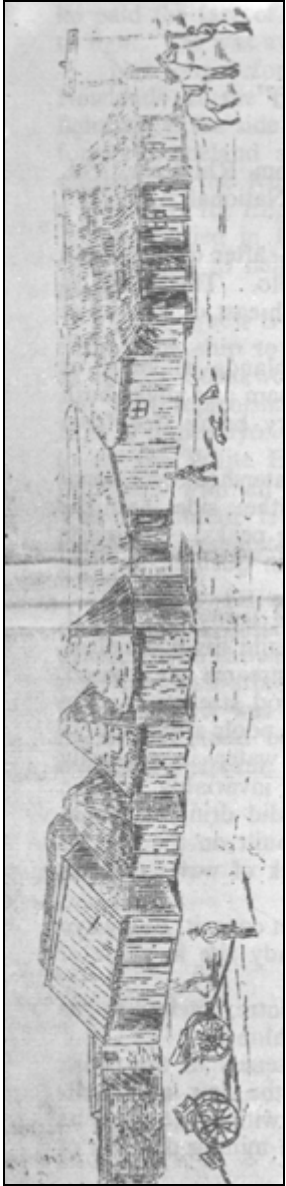
Stretches of excellent farming and grazing lands are passed, only awaiting the pioneer farmer to till, and build his homestead. Between Bulawayo and Gwelo few running streams are passed. Below in the valleys, however, are several good streams, and in those water courses not running in winter, large pools are common.

A spruit runs near the township, but water is generally obtained by means of wells — 20 to 40 feet invariably being a sufficient depth to strike any amount of splendid drinking water. Some visitors wonder at the town not being built on the rise, as being a more likely and healthier site, but lack of water close at hand would prove a great drawback.

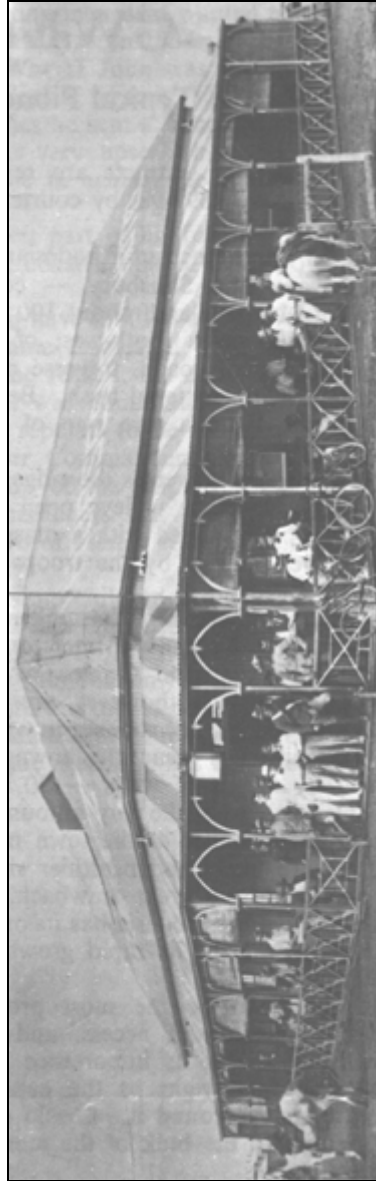
Each town in Rhodesia has its own little pet conceit. Bulawayo points with pride to its rapid growth and steady rise in value of its town property.

It claims to be the most prominent centre, owing to its favourable position of access, and proved salubrity.

Salisbury bases its importance on its closeness to the coast, its acknowledged right as the capital, and the fair and well-watered country around it. Gwelo expatiates with pride upon its close vicinity to the bulk of the most valuable mining districts of Rhodesia.



A sketch of the first Horseshoe Hotel in Gwelo as it was before 1896. During the rebellion, all buildings near the laager were deliberately burnt down in order to destroy cover that might be used by any attacking force.  
*Reproduction: The Hurrell family*



The Horseshoe Hotel, Gwelo, after the rebellion. The name on the roof now appears as one word.  
*Reproduction: The Hurrell family*

At the present time Gwelo is not impressive in size, nor is it over populated. As with other places in Rhodesia, it is still in its chrysalis state. Just as it was starting to flourish, the rinderpest broke out, followed by the rising, which put a period to its further progress; and, for some considerable time, necessitated an abandonment of all buildings except those immediately surrounding the Government Offices, which were formed into a laager.

Outside of this laager, after the termination of the war, very little remained. The modest little buildings became destroyed from neglect, and were found uninhabitable. From this ruin, New Gwelo, like Phoenix from the ashes, sprang up and more ambitious and enduring buildings were started.

Lack of building material still bars the way to rapid progress. Bricks and stone are to be had in abundance; but the transport of wood and iron for roofing, and casements and doors for the structures, is still forbidding in price, when obtainable at all. Now the railway is completed to Bulawayo, doubtless these difficulties will be overcome, and the place will go ahead fast.

**Phantom Hotel:** The first appearance of Gwelo a few months ago under these conditions was bewildering. The traveller arrived by coach, apparently pulling up in the veld, and was told that he was at the hotel. Naturally he was not aware of that circumstance, for the structure had yet to be built. He briefly observed a long, low building which was eventually to become the stable. The dining and billiard rooms, and other accommodations, were there in embryo, that is, the foundations were laid, but no superstructure. One of the passengers in the coach at the time facetiously enquired of a couple standing by how far it was to Gwelo. This raised a laugh among them, though he saw nothing to smile at, having heard of Gwelo being a rising town.

Upon a more careful survey, other buildings were seen, but so scattered and distant from one another, that no idea of a township was conveyed. Crossing a large open space of ground which was taken for the market square, but subsequently turned out to be the principal street, the passengers arrived at another hotel, guided there by the proprietor of the phantom one.

Here accommodation was found; a roomy bar and large dining room with kitchen was already completed. A row of six bedrooms of fair size, but without roof, door or windows, was also built in skeleton, and a comfortable billiard room (?) with foundation laid and walls then going up.

All these buildings, completed and projected, were made from good sound brick and stone. The passengers, perforce,

found themselves occupying a low canvas hut with huge rents in the sides, and an airy roof.

Among the passengers that arrived by the coach mentioned, was one party who had heard of Gwelo and its prospects, and journeyed there with a view to investing capital in some business or undertaking. His first impression, it need hardly be stated, was not pleasing. He stayed, however, to see it out, and eventually his opinion completely changed. He left by the next coach the happy possessor of a building still in course of erection, and journeyed back to Bulawayo to order a thousand pounds worth of goods.

As a rule, merely a half dozen citizens are seen about the streets, but a visit to the stores will find them all busy. There is one trade that always thrives in these small centres — and the larger ones — namely, the bar trade. Though rarely seeing a staggering man, yet he is considered a poor citizen that does not get through his six to 15 tots a day. Each tot, at the period of writing, cost 1s. 6d., which, with the general addition of mineral waters, meant a goodly sum spent daily.

As with most old and generous imbibers, Gweloites are a fine social lot, and a hardy, tanned, strong and healthy crowd. It is wonderful what a man accustomed to it can swallow in the way of spirits in these climes, not only without absolute harm, but with wonderful benefit.

The weak and the too reckless in spirit imbibing soon succumb; but this class of men rarely reach as far as a place like Gwelo. The men met here rarely get properly drunk, and some of them get through a large amount of liquor during the day, with as much effect as if it were mother's milk.

The habitual drunk (he may only take three tots and become helpless, if unused or weak constitutioned) is a lost one in the colony, and the very men who advise him to knock it off are probably the hardest drinkers themselves.

The causes of this evil are many and widespread. No bargain is struck without the "come and have a liquor" phrase concluding the transaction.

**Flourishing Business:** After a better acquaintance with Gwelo, it is found that everybody seems to have done, and to be doing, well. A local stock exchange and stand syndicate, with no building erected, already had its shares standing at 100 per cent. premium. The stores (about half a dozen) the bars (about three), the lawyers, the agents, the butchers and the bakers were all doing a flourishing business.

A newspaper had recently been started, the proprietors consisting of the printer-compositor and the editor-reporter. In their two persons they represented the whole staff.

From what source is this apparent prosperity derived? With living averaging about £30 per man per month, stands ranging from £100 to £1 000 and businesses paying as established; all this with only a sparsely-occupied bit of veld in view, and no stable industry established — where does it all come from?

Few places have been settled with the brilliant prospects, or say possibilities, of little Gwelo. It is the centre of a wide-reaching gold belt, thousands of claims being pegged and exploited by numerous wealthy syndicates, and there is fine agricultural and native country around it, with a promise of native trade and agricultural produce in the immediate future. A railway is approaching it from two sides, and it lies nearly midway between the two principal towns in Rhodesia.



"The finest fort of all". Fort Gibbs, which stands on Makalaka Kop in the Gwelo area.

*Photo by George Williamson*



A close-up view of the stonework which is an outstanding feature of Fort Gibbs.

*Photo by George Williamson*

## The Finest Fort of Them All

*From a talk by Colonel A. S. Hickman*

OF ALL THE FORTS in Rhodesia, the finest in design and build is said to be Fort Gibbs, which is situated just inside Mr. N. T. Hein's farm Wojele, between Gwelo and Umvuma. It can be reached by travelling about 33 km along the main road from Gwelo to Umvuma, ignoring the Linslade Quarry sign and continuing on to one on the right which reads "Linslade Farm, A. J. Edington".

The fort, which is about eight km from the main road, is still in a remarkable state of preservation and is situated in beautiful country through which the great dyke runs. It is well worth a visit.

On June 27, 1971, members of the Rhodesia Pioneers' and Early Settlers' Society, the Rhodesiana Society and the Natural Resources Society gathered there to hear a talk given by Colonel A. S. Hickman. In order to make the visit possible, Mr. Edington had constructed an access road and Mr. Hein had opened his boundary fence. A gate now gives easy access to the fort.

The following version of Colonel Hickman's talk had been adapted from a tape recording made by Mrs. (Dr.) M. L. Williamson.

I WANT to start with a very brief outline of the causes of the Matabele rising and then go on to Fort Gibbs, its role in the rising, and the part which Gwelo played during those disturbances.

In 1896, Gwelo was one of the most remote portions of Matabeleland, which, together with the rest of Rhodesia, had been almost denuded of a permanent defence force at that time due to the Jameson Raid. The Raid took place in December and early January 1895/6, and after the battle at Doornkop nearly 500 Rhodesian regular service men were in the hands of the Boers. They were ultimately deported overseas or sent further south.



Against that, practically every man in Rhodesia carried his own gun, and in terms of the B.S.A. Company's laws, they were all liable for service either as burghers or volunteers. There were the Rhodesia Horse volunteers, and others, who could be called upon to carry out burgher duty if necessary, and of course a number of these men were in Gwelo at the time.

The rising was not entirely due to the fact that all the regular forces were away, but their absence was a factor. Other causes were a severe drought, the appearance of swarms of locusts, and to crown all, the rinderpest which broke out in February, 1896.

Of course the Matabele witchdoctors quickly pointed out that all these disasters were due to the presence of the white men.

In addition, the Native Police, who had been recruited from the amajaha, the young men of the Matabele impis after the 1893 war, had become very arrogant and truculent in their dealings with their own people and their conduct was greatly resented.

A lot of the leading Matabele, who had not been defeated in battle, had been plotting to drive out the white men, and the Jameson Raid was an absolute gift to them. I blame the British Government of the day for a good deal of the Matabele attitude, because at the end of the Matabele war Britain gave orders that the tribesmen should be treated sympathetically, and that no great insistence should be placed on the surrender of arms.

So the Matabele fighting men looked upon their defeat as no more than a surrender of arms, and when the B.S.A. Company withheld the final call for guns and assegais, it was regarded by the warriors as a sign of weakness.

Thus many factors combined to indicate a favourable time for a rising. I would rather call it a rising than a rebellion, because the Matabele had not been totally subdued. Many of Lobengula's impis had never been defeated in battle. Those that had, understood the position. I also want to mention that during this rising many tribes which were not Matabele took no part in it at all and were quite friendly to the Europeans. In fact they were so friendly that many of them had assisted in the work connected with European settlement.

The rising began on March 20, 1896, at a kraal in the Essexvale area, where an African policeman on patrol was set upon and murdered. Whether he was one of the truculent ones I do not know. This murder was premature, because the rising had been planned to start at the time of the new moon on March 28, and the incident gave the clue that trouble could be expected.

So the Matabele were not yet fully prepared, and the Europeans, although not prepared either, were effectively warned. THE first European murder took place at the Nelly Reef Mine at Fort Rixon on March 23, and this is how it happened.

Just before six o'clock in the evening Mr. Thomas Maddox, the manager of the mine, and two Cornish miners called Hosking and Hocking, were smoking their pipes outside their quarters, when along came 15 Africans, who said they had been sent by the local Native Commissioner to ask for work.

Mr. Maddox said, "Right, show me his letter," and with that they whacked him on the head and killed him. One of the Cornishmen was also injured, and the third ran to his hut, snatched up his revolver, and started firing at the Matabele, driving them back. Meanwhile the wounded miner had also managed to reach the hut, and there the two of them were trapped. They endured considerable fire until they managed to make their escape to Cumming's store near the Nelly Reef Mine.

This was a rallying point for all the people of the district, I think about 30 or 40 of them, and they remained under siege by the Matabele until they were relieved by a patrol from Bulawayo led by the Hon. Maurice Gifford.

At Inyati the Native Commissioner and local police were also set upon, and after a very brave defence, all were killed. Their remains were not found until some months afterwards.

These two episodes probably marked the start of the rising, but throughout the whole of Matabeleland people were murdered, mostly prospectors, miners and storekeepers, and farmers living in isolated places.

The Matabele plan of campaign was that all Europeans should be murdered wherever they could be found and attacked in remote places, without warning if possible. Not only Europeans were marked out for killing. Other intended victims were to be the few Asians then in the country, the Coloured people, and the Zambezi, as they called the alien Africans. Curiously enough, an American negro was killed in the defence of Cumming's store.

Having murdered all the Europeans in the outlying places, the Matabele intended to sweep over and destroy Bulawayo and any other settlements that had been able to hold out. So it was a carefully planned plot.

As far as Gwelo was concerned, I find that at least 70 people, outlying farmers, miners and so on were killed. A large number of them were in the area of Mavene, and I believe Fort Ngwenya was established there because it was the main centre for the

rising. Apparently Mavene is a shortened version of the Matabele word for thorns. I think it is about 20 miles the other side of Gwelo, but I do not know exactly where.

News of the rising reached Salisbury about March 25, two days after the first European murder, and within two hours the men of the Rhodesia Horse had been organized. They set out for Gwelo under the command of Captain J. A. C. Gibbs, an Imperial Army Officer of the West Riding Regiment.

They left Salisbury with two maxim guns, .303 calibre, 20 000 rounds of ammunition, and 50 rifles, probably Lee Metfords. They arrived in Gwelo on March 29 and found the place in a state of turmoil. Refugees were coming in for shelter and a laager was being formed. Everything was at sixes and sevens when Gibbs arrived.

He is said to have found 350 men, 27 women and 22 children, based on a rough wagon laager practically across the road from what is now the Police Station. As the only Imperial Officer present, Gibbs immediately took command and re-organized the whole defence of Gwelo, making a very good show indeed of it.

MANY of the private houses which had thatched roofs, and the hotels, were burnt down completely in order that the rebels should not be able to approach the laager under shelter. So the little settlement was virtually devastated. To add to the general ordeal, the rinderpest was raging. Most of the transport oxen around the town had died, and those still alive were killed in order to make very large quantities of biltong. All the dead, rotting carcasses were left just outside the laager. Imagine it!

Gibbs organized the defence force by enlisting 284 of the men for the Gwelo Volunteers. In addition, there were 52 burghers and 180 friendly Africans. The whole district was patrolled by these people till the rising ended in October, 1896.

Having established Gwelo's defence system, Gibbs decided to erect a fort on Makalaka Kop. There had already been skirmishing in this area when 150 men of the Rhodesia Horse, under Colonel Beal, had marched down to the relief of Bulawayo.

Cecil Rhodes accompanied this patrol and the skirmish which took place was reported in detail by one of the men who took part in it.\* The Matabele were driven off and the relief column came into Gwelo and halted there en route to Bulawayo.

\*Pp 325 to 329 "On the South African Frontier" by William Harvey Brown.

Here is an interesting find, which was handed to me yesterday by Mr. Edington. It is a Martini Henry cartridge case which was dropped near this fort. It was found not far from Mr. Edington's homestead, in what used to be some piggeries. It could very well be a cartridge case discarded by one of the rebels, because, as I told you, I think the European column was armed with Lee Metford .303 rifles. Quite a lot of Matabele, on the other hand, were armed with Martini Henry rifles.

It was one of the terms of the Rudd Concession, you remember, that 1 000 Martini Henrys should be handed over to Lobengula. So during the Matabele war of 1893 and subsequently many of them were armed with these guns.

Actually, this was quite a notorious place, because the rebels had their lands around here. So Captain Gibbs decided that he would build a fort in a position which would cramp their style, and would also overlook their grain lands, which apparently lay just to my left. It was a very fertile valley, and a lot of corn and stuff was grown here.

Gibbs felt that if he sat up on Makalaka Kopje he would have the valley under observation, and he would also overlook the road that ran from Salisbury via Lalapanzi to Gwelo, and then on to Bulawayo. Thus the fort would serve a very valuable double purpose. As it happened, it was never attacked.

GIBBS came out here in May, 1896, with 66 of his troops and 120 others. I presume the "others" were those not involved with the Rhodesia Horse or Gwelo Volunteers. In one week he prepared the ground and put up the outside walls of the fort. I am quite certain he had stonemasons among his men because the work they did is quite outstanding. Some of the walling is fairly rough, but the apron in front is beautifully done with dressed stone, and one of the men, Trooper Nicholson, engraved on a flat stone the words "Fort Gibbs, 1896".

This fort, which was established on June 14, 1896, is an historic monument, and I know that it is the finest in design and build of any of its kind in Rhodesia. There must be 50 or 60 forts throughout the country and this is the best of the whole lot.

My attention was first drawn to it by the member-in-charge of police at Lalapanzi. He reported the existence of the fort, and also that near it lay the grave of a sergeant of the B.S.A. Police, Sergeant Maxwell who died of malaria on June 20, 1897. That and a sketch plan was the first information we had, and it

was enormously interesting, but I did not get a chance to come out to see it until some years later.

There was at one time a rumour that the fort had been built within a day with stones from one of the Zimbabwe type ruins. This is not true. There were obviously a lot of exfoliated rocks around here, but the men certainly did not build it in a day, and there is no evidence that they stripped down an old ruin in order to obtain the material.

The outer walls of the fort were built in one week, and according to the reports, work on a brick and iron-roofed store within the walls began on June 1, 1896.

A fortnight later the fort was completed. On one side were quarters for the men of the garrison, and these also were supposed to have been built of brick; but I challenge this, because I have never seen any trace of brick about here. So I think this building must have been either of corrugated iron entirely, or pole and daga roofed with iron.

After these two structures were put up inside, a flag was hoisted and there was a celebration. I think the flag was stuck up on the apron at the front of the fort. A cattle kraal and a pole and daga hut for an Officers' Mess, a hospital and a place for the telegraphist were built outside the walls, which were fortified with sandbags.

Although the fort was never attacked, on June 6, one of the Coloured scouts killed three of the enemy in the vicinity.

On June 25, Captain Gibbs left, and went on to Shangani, where he built a circular fort. Shangani was another centre where a considerable number of murders took place. A local garrison took over here and at the end of 1896 the last of them packed up.

By October 8, 1896, the population of Gwelo was down to 60, but that was the end of the rising, and the return of Major Thorold, who was then in command, and his men, from Fort Gibbs, signalled better times.

## "TREES . . . PLANT TREES"

### The man who remembered Rhodes' maxim



PETER FALK, AGED 80  
*Photo: Mrs. Hilda Klimczak*

### Recollections of Peter Falk, given by Hilda Klimczak

**T**REES, trees — plant trees. Help Nature in her efforts," urged Cecil Rhodes. Trees were his "hobby in Matabeleland", and they were in his mind up to the day before he died.

One pioneer well-known in Gwelo often used to repeat those words "plant trees". His name was Peter Falk, and he lived up to Rhodes' maxim so determinedly that his nursery garden, covering four stands, became a jungle, to the delight of his customers. He also introduced several new plants into Rhodesia, including the thunbergia creeper, and many succulents too.

Peter Falk knew and loved trees and plants all his life. He was born on March 27, 1870, at Leutershausen, Weinheim, Baden Baden, Germany, and studied horticulture at Heidelberg University. He graduated with the F.H.R.S. degree, and at the age of 20, fired with a longing for adventure, he emigrated to South Africa, arriving in Cape Town in November, 1891.

He worked for a tailor in Vryheid for a while, and in 1892, he set off for Rhodesia by Zeederberg coach. Tom Meikle was a fellow-passenger.

Peter took with him on the coach a human skull he had found en route. He regarded it as a mascot, but the Coloured drivers were superstitious, and blamed the skull when the mules shied at a flooded river. He was made to carry it over himself on foot. Later the skull, set up on a pole, "watched" his garden boys working and also acted as a scarecrow.



PETER FALK'S STORE IN GWELO, 1896

*Photo by courtesy of Hilda Klimczak*

## "TREES . . . PLANT TREES"

From June to October, 1892, Peter managed a trading store for the B.S.A. Company at Tuli. There was a surprising variety of goods and foodstuffs in those early stores, and his records show that he supplied salmon and caviar to the Police mess. A favourite purchase by Africans was a black tin trunk, a blanket and comb for one golden sovereign.

While at Tuli he contracted a severe bout of malaria, and was lying helplessly ill when a boarding house keeper named Mrs. Kriek came to his aid and nursed him. In an effort to sweat the fever out of him, Mrs. Kriek used all his clothing, plus 14 new shirts from the store. He recovered, and went back to Germany to recuperate.

Peter was very green in those early Tuli days, and his attempt to get a regular supply of milk caused much amusement. He was told that the Africans supplied fresh milk at 3d. a whisky bottle, and he duly asked his servant to arrange for a supply. He found the milk which was delivered rather peculiar, but thinking it must be goat's milk he determined to get used to it. Gradually the supply became less and less until one day the piccanin announced that there would be no more as his mother had stopped feeding the baby.

Peter was a keen philatelist, and this interest led him to his future wife, Agnes Beyreuther, who was overseer in the famous Leipzig Philatelic Bureau, Senf's. They were married in Umtali in 1906, and spent the next two years at the Clifton Mine, Belingwe, and the Etna Mine, Hartley, establishing stores for the Anglo-African Trading Company.

He also traded in the Que Que area, and when he had to bank the takings for the Company he would walk to Gwelo behind an African carrying a shoe-box full of golden sovereigns. The carrier often remarked on the weight of the box, but had no idea what it contained.

**Settled For Good:** About 1908, Peter settled for good in Gwelo, where he became well-known as a nursery gardener and philatelist. He built Gwelo's first brick house, (part of which is still standing) and rented it to Major W. Hurrell of the Horseshoe Hotel at £11 a month. Other tenants included F. T. Elliott, Mrs. Coates-Palgrave, Sir Drummond Dunbar and Moses Welensky.

During the Matabele rebellion he volunteered to serve under Raaff and Colonel Schermbrucker, and in that year he was one of the burghers who defended Gwelo's laager. He brought cases of bully beef and bags of Boer meal from his nearby store to use

in constructing fortifications around the wagons. His well at one stage supplied the only drinking water available, as the Gwelo River was not only out of bounds, but polluted with carcasses of cattle which had died of rinderpest.

(Mrs. Jeannie Boggie attempted to have this well recognised as a national monument, but was informed that as it was still supplying water, it could not be called a 'relic').

Peter was not, his daughter Mrs. Hilda Klimczak said emphatically, one of early Gwelo's fast-spending, racing set; nor did he spend his life in the bars, like so many. He lived a humble and quiet life among his flowers and stamps, and although German, remained liked and respected during World War 1.

During the early 'twenties most of Gwelo's business people were known not by their Christian names, but by their professions, like Tanky Gordon the plumber, Butcher Campbell, Detective Anderson, and Carpenter Jenkins.

Dodger Gray was a unique character, so called because he could never be found in the capacity required at a particular time. He had 14 jobs to attend to, including sanitary inspector, market master and pound master. He was the local undertaker too, and often he would call upon Peter to ride along with him to the cemetery to represent the village at the funeral of some old miner or pauper who had no mourners.

Agnes became friendly with the nuns of the Dominican Convent, who were also German, and there were many occasions when Mrs. Boggie would ride up on horseback and call over the fence for Peter, whisk out her notebook, and jot down information he gave her for her books about the Pioneers.

Agnes died in 1932 in Gwelo, and Peter followed her on Occupation Day, 1950, when he was to have taken part in the town's celebration of Rhodesia's diamond jubilee. He was 80.

Wedding Bills

Paid by Peter Falk

THE wedding bills paid by pioneer fathers and bridegrooms would draw exclamations of envy from their counterparts today. The following sample shows the expenses incurred by Peter Falk of Gwelo when he married Agnes Beyreuther in Bulawayo in September, 1906. The items listed were taken from his cash book:

	£	s.	d.
Breakfast at Belingwe Hotel .....		3	—
Coach ticket to Filabusi .....	4	—	—
Railway ticket to Bulawayo .....		8	9
Bulawayo Hotel: overnight .....	1	15	—
Bath 10/-, Wedding Ring 45/-, Suit 55/- .....	5	10	—
Ties 6/-, Studs and Links 5/-, Shirt 7/6 .....		18	6
Ticket to Umtali .....	3	18	6
Expenses on Railway 22/6, Apples 3/6 .....	1	6	—
Prepaid Telegram 6/6, Gloves 4/6 .....		11	—
Repairs to Portmanteau 3/6, Hat 7/6 .....		11	—
Special Licence £5, Cart to Courthouse 25/- .....	6	5	—
Champagne 21/-, Photo 2/6 .....	1	3	6
Lunch at Marandellas 3/-, Drinks 17/- .....	1	—	—
Salisbury Railway Expenses, 2 Boxes .....		14	6
Two tickets from Umtali to Bulawayo .....	7	17	—
Rickshaws at Salisbury and Umtali .....		6	—
Two tickets to Filabusi at 8/9 .....		17	6
Two Coach tickets to Belingwe .....	8	—	—
Special Coach to Clifton Mine .....	2	—	—
New tweed suit (complete) .....	2	4	—
Total	£49	9	3