

NEWSLETTER

Volume 2017 No 2

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EDITORIAL



The theme of this Quarter's Newsletter is the Anglo-Boer War. Do you remember the Des and Dawn Lindberg song from the 1970s, I think they lifted it from a song written about the American Civil War, where two brothers fought and died, fighting on opposite sides of the conflict? Des and Dawn re-wrote the words to fit in to the Boer-Brit sides of the Boer War. This concept of families divided during the conflict continues as we research our family history. I am sure that many of you will find ancestors serving on both sides. So, in this Newsletter I have to present more than just the British sources of families in the Boer War but also sources of Boer families and also the consequences of British action on the families of Boers as they were imprisoned in concentration camps where so many died from starvation and disease. Many other soldiers from Britain and other Commonwealth countries, having experienced this wonderful land of South Africa, decided to either stay on or return at the first opportunity. So, if you are wondering why you ancestor came to this country in the early 1900s, check whether they didn't perhaps serve as a soldier in the Anglo-Boer War.

Articles included in this Newsletter consist of a search for a Boer War grave, two articles dealing with sieges – that of Mafekeng (or Mafeking as it was known then) and Kimberley and one dealing with the “absent-minded beggar” (that should pique your curiosity!). [There is an article dealing with the Standerton Concentration Camp which maybe gives us an insight into the Boer side and what they suffered at the hands of the British.] A few suggested websites for you to explore for Boer War names and regiments. Finally, an amusing (for us maybe not for the person involved) baptism record I chanced upon in the Baptism Register of All Saints, Beaconsfield, Kimberley.

THE ABSENT-MINDED BEGGAR

by David Slingsby

Amongst a mass of papers, documents etc I inherited I found a small brown box in which was a shining steel silver coloured medal. Inside the box there is pasted *“The Absent-Minded Beggar” Medal, registered No 352632 - Struck by (blacked out) White Metal 1¾ inch, Price 1/- (1 Shilling) of which amount 2d (2 pence) will be given to the proprietors of the Daily Mail for the Kipling Poem War Fund.*

What was this about? During the Anglo – Boer War the Daily Mail offered the by this time now famous Rudyard Kipling £10,000 to represent the paper in South Africa as a war correspondent. Kipling however felt he could not undertake such a task. His immediate effort was to pen the “The Absent Minded Beggar” which was published in the Daily Mail of 31 October 1899, the object to raise funds for the Soldiers Families Fund.

The Newspaper's initial reaction was not enthusiastic, and Sir Arthur Sullivan, when approached to set them to music, claimed he found it difficult to do anything with such 'uninspiring' material. But when Sullivan conducted the finished song in London's packed Alhambra Theatre on the night of 13 November, the audience went wild. Everyone joined in the chorus, and within a few days "The Absent Minded Beggar" was the only tune to be heard in England. [Editor: If you want to hear, its on the internet <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTGTsI7W6yU>] Lille Langtry contributed £100-00 to the fund for the privilege of singing the song on stage, and Lady Tree, wife of the well-known actor-manager, recited the verses daily for 14 weeks at the Palace theatre and raised £70,000 for the fund.

The song was sung and played in music halls, the words were printed on every kind of paper and on silk, satin and linen, and the famous Caton Woodville illustrated of a wounded Tommy appeared on tobacco jars, ash trays, cigarette packs, pillow cases, plates, card holders, knives, mugs, jugs and every conceivable china, brass or metal objects.

In time, as with any other craze, the public tired of the verses. Kipling himself admitted he could cheerfully have killed the man who wrote them – and for a long time would not include the words among his collected Boer war verses.

The poem-with additional contributions from the owners of the Daily Mail – earned well over £340,000 "The Absent-minded Beggar" fund was utilised for anything from clothing wounded men to caring for their parrots; from building a model hospital with 300 beds to supplying thousands of tins of cocoa, bottles of wine and cases of soap. Free meals, transport, walking sticks and deck chairs were among the items supplies to wounded soldiers. The fund even paid foe fifteen marriage licences – after inducing the men to marry in the first place.

Ref : Kipling's South Africa – Renee Durbach



OBVERSE

The Queen God bless her
*The medal commemorates the
 magnificent response to Britain's sons
 to the Empire's call to arms.
 Transvaal War
 1899-1900
 Daily Mail Kipling's Poem*



Caton Woodville lampoons his own creation in 1900, during the disillusionment of the war. But the verses had brought in showers of gold and silver when sung by Lady Tree at the Palace Theatre



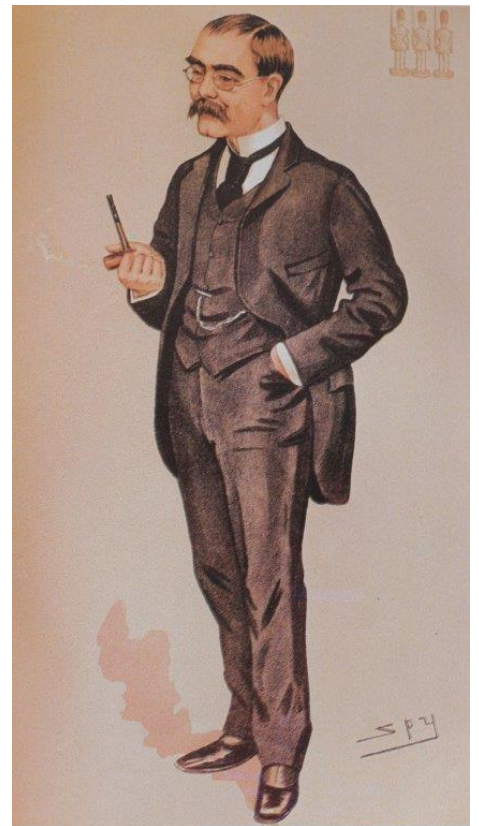
The Bandaged Tommy of "The Absent Minded Beggar" cropped up on countless objects that have become collector's items among Boer war memorabilia, like this paper knife and card case.



When you've shouted "Rule Britannia": when you've sung "God Save the Queen"
When you've finished killing Kruger with your mouth:
Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine
For a gentleman in khaki ordered South?
He's an absent-minded beggar and his weaknesses are great:
But we and Paul must take him as we find him:
He is out on active service wiping something off a slate:
And he's left a lot of little things behind him!
Duke's son – cook's son – son of a hundred kings,
(Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay!)
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after the things?)
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay – pay – pay!
There are girls he married secret, asking no permission to,

For he knew he wouldn't get it if he did.
There is gas and coal and vittles, and the house-rent falling due,
And it's rather more than likely there's a kid.
There are girls he walked with casual, they'll be sorry now he's gone,
For an absent-minded beggar they will find him,
But it ain't the time for sermons with the winter coming on:
We must help the girl that Tommy's left behind him!
Cook's son – Duke's son – son of a belted Earl,
Son of a Lambeth publican – it's all the same to-day!
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after the girl?)
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay – pay – pay!

There are families by the thousands, far too proud to beg or speak:
And they'll put their sticks and bedding up the spout,
And they'll live on half o' nothing paid 'em punctual once a week,
'Cause the man that earned the wage is ordered out.
He's an absent-minded beggar, but he heard his country's call,
And his reg'ment didn't need to send to find him;
He chucked his job and joined it – so the task before us all
Is to help the home that Tommy's left behind him!
Duke's job – cook's job – gardener, baronet, groom -
Mews or palace or paper-shop – there's someone gone away!
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after the room?)



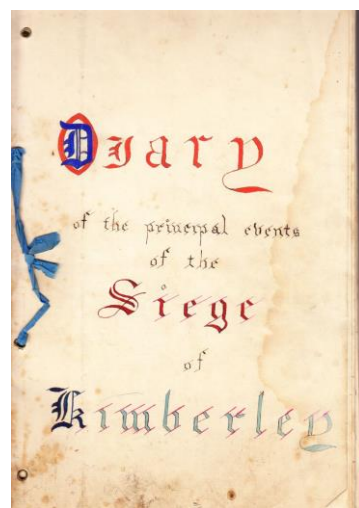
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay – pay – pay!

Let us manage so as later we can look him in the face,
And tell him what he'd very much prefer:
That, while he saved the Empire his employer saved his place,
And his mates (that's you and me) looked out for her.
He's an absent-minded beggar, and he may forget it all,
But we do not want his kiddies to remind him
That we sent 'em to the workhouse while their daddy hammered Paul,
So we'll help the homes that Tommy's left behind him!
Cook's home – Duke's home – home of a millionaire –
Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay!
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and what have you got to spare?)
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay – pay – pay!

ENTRY FROM A GRANDFATHER'S DIARY

Derek Pratt and Alfred Weeks Wearn

Whenever we were asked to bring family heirlooms to CTFHS or school, I brought my grandfather's Boer War Diary. I also always jokingly said that he became an accountant and he wrote like one – boring, factual evidence with no expression of his own feelings. My grandfather, Alfred Weeks WEARN was born in Kennington, London on 2 December 1882. His parents, Alfred Robert Wearn and Louisa Sarah Wearn born Weeks, originally came from Portsmouth but Robert Wearn (as he was known) moved to London as an apprentice Printer/Compositor. According to family history, he had tuberculosis and was recommended to go to a dry climate. Nothing gets much drier than Kimberley and it was to this town in Griqualand West that the family came to in December 1892 and it was here four months later that Robert Wearn died leaving a widow and a ten-year-old son.



Young Alfred grew up in Kimberley attending the St Cyprian's Grammar School and was sent to complete the final two years of schooling at St Andrew's College, Grahamstown. On his return, he began to work for the Griqualand West Board of Executors finally reaching the position of Secretary to the Board in the 1930s before taking early retirement and moving to Cape Town in the 1940s. He was 18 years old during the Boer siege of Kimberley. I'm not sure if he was already dating my grandmother – I doubt it, as they only married in 1908. My grandmother was Margaret Mabel May KENNETT, know all her life as May. The second youngest of seven, she had two older brother who served in different local regiments in Kimberley during the siege.

PROCLAMATION No. 18.

WHEREAS It is necessary in certain respects to amend the laws regulating the supply of Foodstuffs and Necessaries and to enact further regulations,
NOW, THEREFORE
I, ROBERT GEORGE KEKEWICH, Lieutenant-Colonel Commanding Griqualand West and Bechuanaland, do hereby proclaim and make known:—

1. Section 1 of Proclamation No. 12 as amended by Proclamation No. 16 shall be and hereby is repealed, and instead thereof the following shall stand and be the substance of Proclamation No. 18:

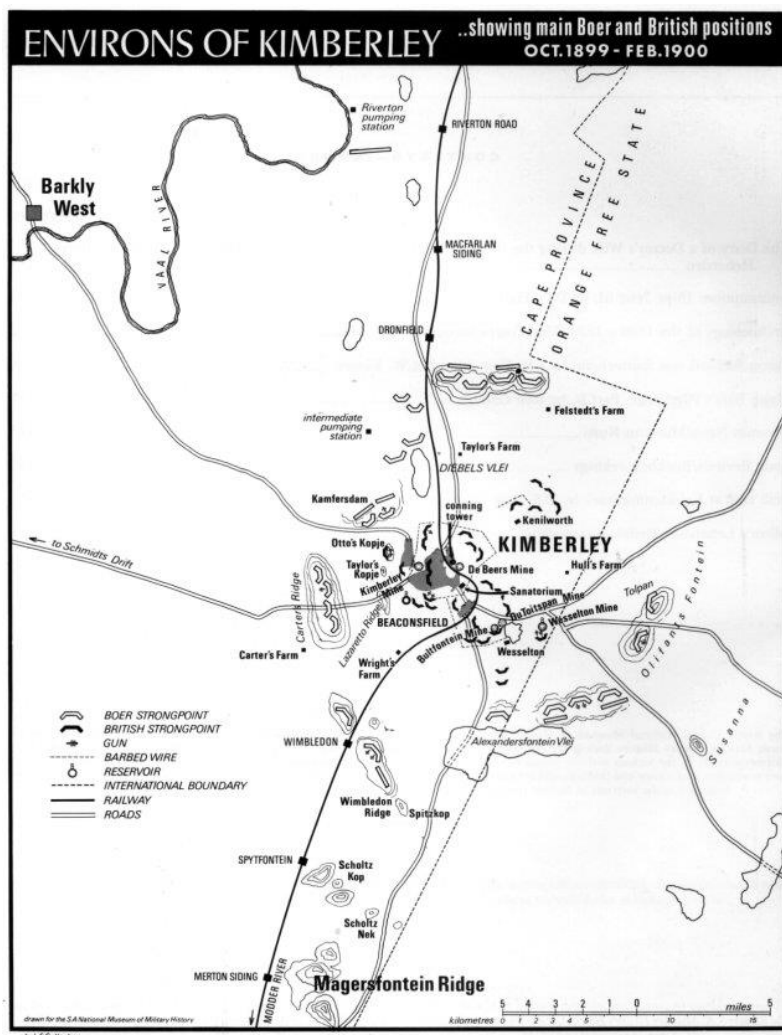
On and after Monday, the 29th day of January, 1900, and until further notice, the allowances to consumers per head per day shall be as follows:—

(A.) EUROPEANS AND COLOURED COLONIALS:—	
{ BOER MEAL	6 ozs.
{ FLOUR	2 "
{ or BREAD	10 1/2 "
{ MEALIE MEAL	2 "
{ SAMP	1 "
{ SUGAR	2 "
{ COFFEE	0 1/2 "
{ or TEA	0 1/2 "
(B.) ASIATICS:—	
{ BOER MEAL	6 ozs.
{ FLOUR	2 "
{ or BREAD	10 1/2 "
{ RICE	1 "
{ SUGAR	2 "
{ COFFEE	0 1/2 "
{ or TEA	0 1/2 "
(C.) NATIVES:—	
{ MEALIE MEAL	5 ozs.
{ KAFIR CORN MEAL	4 "
{ SAMP	1 "
{ SUGAR	2 "
{ COFFEE	0 1/2 "
{ or TEA	0 1/2 "

2. Every person at present obtaining or who shall hereafter apply for any food supplies under any food supply permit or at any food supply depot or store shall:—

(a.) Make, sign and deliver from time to time all such declarations, returns or statements as shall be required by any person employed in connection with the issuing of any food supply permits or with any food supply depot.

Alfred Wearn wrote his *Diary of the principal events of the siege of Kimberley* and although very factual, it perhaps presents a pro-British but less jingoistic viewpoint than some. It has many cuttings from *the Diamond Field Advertiser* (the DFA), usually those dealing with rations but my grandfather did include a long editorial which appeared on 10 February 1900 criticising the delay Lord Roberts was taking in relieving Kimberley. This was on the day of the burial of Mr George Lambram who had designed and manufactured the gun, *Long Cecil* in the De beer's workshops. He was killed by a Boer shell hitting his hotel room. The editorial criticised the censorship of news (such as the bombardment of Kimberley with a six-inch gun) which the editor believed was causing the delay in the relief efforts. Thomas Pakenham blames Rhodes for interfering in the defence of Kimberley and the criticism of the army's slow progress and as Rhodes owned the DFA it is not surprising that this editorial appeared. My grandfather wrote: "The following leader was published in the Advertiser, after which it was suppressed by the Military".



I'm going to give an extract from my grandfather's Diary which deals with the Battle of Magerfontein. What makes it interesting is, using the diary, we can see the event from the inhabitants of Kimberley's point of view. But first let me give you Wikipedia's description of the battle: -

The Battle of Magerfontein was fought on 11 December 1899, at Magerfontein near Kimberley on the borders of the Cape Colony and the independent republic of the Orange Free State. British forces under Lieutenant General Lord Methuen were advancing north along the railway line from the Cape in order to relieve the Siege of Kimberley, but their path was blocked at Magerfontein by a Boer force that was entrenched in the surrounding hills. The British had already fought a series of battles with the Boers, most recently at Modder River, where the advance was temporarily halted.

Lord Methuen failed to perform adequate reconnaissance in preparation for the impending battle, and was unaware that Boer Veggeneeraal (Combat General) De la Rey had entrenched his forces at the foot of the hills rather than the forward slopes as was the accepted practice. This allowed the

Boers to survive the initial British artillery bombardment; when the British troops failed to deploy from a compact formation during their advance, the defenders were able to inflict heavy casualties. The Highland Brigade suffered the worst casualties, while on the Boer side, the Scandinavian Corps was destroyed. The Boers attained a tactical victory and succeeded in holding the British in their advance on Kimberley.

Following their defeat, the British delayed at the Modder River for another two months while reinforcements were brought forward. General Lord Roberts was appointed Commander in Chief of the British forces in South Africa and moved to take personal command of this front. He subsequently lifted the Siege of Kimberley and forced Cronje to surrender at the Battle of Paardeberg.

From Alfred Weeks Wearn's Diary:

December 10th

This Sunday afternoon, sounds of firing, the like of which few people in Kimberley had heard before, came from the direction of Magerfontein. This was our Relief Column attacking the enemies [sic] position at that place.

December 11th

Long before daybreak the citizens of Kimberley awoke to hear one of the greatest bombardments ever known in the history of British warfare. Lord Methuen with his Relief Column had reached Magerfontein, and his artillery six batteries of six guns each, together with the Naval contingent were engaged in shelling the Boer trenches with Lyddite¹. Naturally enough Men, Women, and children immediately hastened to the nearest boundary in that direction, or to any spot where a view of a considerable stretch of country could be obtained. Just after sunrise when firing was at its

¹ Lyddite is a high explosive containing picric acid, used chiefly by the British during World War I.



An observation point on the top of De Beer's Minehead

highest, a balloon ascended and was plainly visible from any local outlooks. It descended just previous to nine O'clock, and the firing ceased soon after. As to the particulars of this tremendous fusillade, or to the result thereof we were left entirely in the dark

December 15th

Still no news from Magersfontein, not even a signal, at least so far as civilians know. Still awaiting for Relief which is almost in sight.

The Enemy made several attempts to shell Wesselton, but their attention was given in retaliating to our guns. After a long and indecisive duel both sides retired for the day.

December 20th

A Successful reconnaissance was carried out by the mounted troops under Lieut-Col Peakman, in the direction of Oliphantesfontein. Oliphantesfontein [is] a small farm south of Kimberley, at this time the main laager of the Boer Forces surrounding Kimberley, also headquarters of General Wessels, where prisoners captured from Kimberley were tried. Tea, Coffee, and all other foodstuffs were taken over by the Military in case of a prolonged siege.

December 22nd

Another successful reconnaissance, this time in the direction of Carter's Farm. Excepting this nothing of particular importance happened.

December 23rd

We were, for the first time, enlightened as to the welfare of the Relief column, and it cannot be said that the news gave joy to anyone. We learned with bitter sorrow, the result of the battle of Magersfontein, to which but a few days ago, we had listened with so much satisfaction. Little did we think, while listening to the tremendous roar of cannon, on the morning of the 11th, that the Highland Brigade, had met with such disaster. Doubtless the Military Authorities were fully aware of this almost as soon as it was over, but perhaps it is just as well they refrained from publishing it for at least a few days. The greatest difficulty was being experienced by despatch riders at this time owing to the bright moonlight nights, and it is indeed wonderful, how the bearer of this news managed to evade the wily Boer scouts and to work his way into town.

Seeing what had befallen our Relief, we now looked seriously into the matter of a long siege. it had been tiresome and monotonous hitherto when food was by no means scanty, and we could hardly believe that the worst had not yet come. The Military too, began to wake up, and immediately annexed practically all the stores in town, thus making it impossible to buy food even at the highest prices. With these thoughts in our minds we began to prepare for that joyous season called Christmas, but it is as well to add that preparations were of a very half-hearted and feeble nature.

December 25th

Christmas Day, under the circumstances, passed off very quietly. The men in Camp were ordered to stand to arms at 3a.m. in expectation of an attack, but the enemy did not molest us so the day was spent in rest and quietness.

The following message was received from Cape Town, per native runner from Belmont.

From C.S.O.
Cape Town

To C.S.O.
Kimberley

Following received from Military Secretary, Government House. convey to Colonel Kekewich and all garrison and inhabitants of Kimberley, His Excellency's best wishes for good luck on Christmas Day and in the coming New Year.

Colonel Kekewich replied as follows

From C.S.O.
Kimberley

To C.S.O.
Cape Town

Kindly inform Military Secretary, Government House myself, garrison and inhabitants Kimberley and Beaconsfield thank His Excellency for the kind greetings for Christmas and the New Year. We also wish respectfully to offer His Excellency our very best wishes for Christmas and New year.

Regarding food, Kimberley fared rather badly. Those fortunate enough to possess a handful or two of flour converted it into that well know dish called "Christmas Pudding" but these were few and far between. The local bakers were prohibited from baking or selling any fancy breads of any description. Flour could not be purchased at any cost, neither could one obtain, by any means, more than his usual ration of bread, which consisted of 14 ounces. With these drawbacks, everybody made the best of Christmas, and considering the troublesome time everything passed off fairly well.

Grandfather Alf Wearn had to wait until 15th February 1900 before General French's cavalry galloped from Bloemfontein to relieve Kimberley.



Lt Colonel Robert
George
Kekewich

It seems to be the fashion in South Africa today to attack Cecil John Rhodes and blame him for everything that is going wrong. Having read Thomas Pakenham's *The Boer War* and *The South African War* edited by Peter Warwick (both in the Society's library) I'm starting to agree with them. Rhodes kept on interfering in Colonel Kekewich's defence of Kimberley making demands on him to attack the Boers more and once Kimberley was relieved he made sure that Kekewich was removed. Reading about Rhodes's behaviour during the siege, reminded me of President Trump's behaviour today. Kekewich served in the British Army right into the First World War. Suffering from depression he committed suicide at the age of 60 in November 1914.

My grandfather? Well, he lived into his seventies, retiring to Sea Point where he died when I was six. He smoked a pipe – using Springbok Tobacco that came in a cloth bag. Granny sewed them together to make "lappies"! I inherited the desk he was given when he retired with a silver oval expressing the Griqualand West Board of Executors' appreciation for grandfather's dedicated service. When I retired and downsized I left the mahogany desk in the St Paul's Rectory but removed the plaque and placed on a teak teapot stand that had belonged to my grandmother.

SEARCHING FOR LT-COLONEL WILLIAM MCCARTHY-O'LEARY'S GRAVE

Paddy O'Leary

While researching our mother's Irish family, my siblings and I came across numerous references to the McCarthy-O'Learys, a prominent family in the town where my mother grew up. In spite of sharing the O'Leary surname, we are not related to the McCarthy-O'Learys (if there was a connection, it has been lost in the mists of time).

What caught my attention was the statement in some of the articles we read that there was no photograph of the grave of Lt-Colonel William McCarthy-O'Leary who died during the Anglo Boer War of 1899 – 1902. He died on 27 February 1900 (Majuba Day) while leading his regiment (1st South Lancashires) in a charge up Pieter's Hill in the Battle of Tugela Heights near Colenso in Kwazulu Natal. I knew the statement wasn't correct, as I had seen a reference to a photograph when I was searching the South African Archives for my father's South African O'Leary relatives. Of course, I couldn't resist taking up the search for the photograph! The photograph was in the Pietermaritzburg repository in the "Album of the Anglo-Boer War 1899 – 1902". The repository very kindly emailed me a scan of the relevant page. Lt-Colonel William McCarthy-O'Leary's grave is in the middle of the little group of graves.



The Pietermaritzburg repository was not able to provide me with a copy of the photograph and suggested that I contact the Cape Town repository. I was very pleased to discover that Cape Town had the negative and I could get a copy of the photograph. (I do not know why only the negatives are held in Cape Town.) As you will see, there is a lot of information on the photograph, including the photographers who came from Belfast. The service numbers of the men are recorded, but there is no service number for the commanding officer.

Unfortunately, there were no GPS co-ordinates back then and I cannot say exactly where on Pieter's Hill the graves were.

The next part of the quest was to try to find a modern photograph of the graves. I wasn't able to find one that looked like the photograph above, but I did find a photograph on the internet of a modern memorial to Lt-Colonel William McCarthy-O'Leary and his men, including the men who were buried with him on Pieter's Hill. This memorial is not on Pieter's Hill, though. It is on the next hill – Railway Hill. We can pinpoint the location as the photographer recorded the co-ordinates on his website.



tugela-heights-war-mem-railway-hill-1st-south-lancashire-prince-of-wales-volunteers-
s28-40-482-e29-50-3

While I was asking the photographer, Hugh Bland, for permission to use his photograph, I sent him the original photograph of the graves and asked if he had come across the McCarthy-O'Leary grave. He certainly had; he pointed me to the collection of photographs he had taken on Hart's Hill, the hill west of Railway Hill. There was a photograph of Lt-Colonel McCarthy-O'Leary's grave (on the right), together with co-ordinates!



tugela-heights-harts-hill-1st-batt-and-1st-south-lancashire-lt-col-o-leary-and-6-others-graves-6-
s-28-41-056-e29-50-610-elev

No wonder I hadn't been able to find a modern photograph of the grave! I wasn't looking for it on Hart's Hill, because I knew that Lt-Colonel William McCarthy-O'Leary had been buried on Pieter's Hill, further east.

Why had the grave been moved? I found the answer in the Military History Journal, Vol 15 No 4, December 2011. Capt. Charles Ross of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission gives details of the Anglo-Boer War renovation project. Many of the war cemeteries were too small to be maintained and some were consolidated with other, larger cemeteries. While Lt-Colonel William McCarthy-O'Leary's grave was not mentioned in this article, I feel sure that his grave was moved as part of this project. I do not know what became of the graves of the men who were buried with Lt-Colonel McCarthy-O'Leary in 1900. The Anglo-Boer War graves are cared for by the Commonwealth Graves Commission and Amafa / Heritage Kwazulu Natal, the provincial resources authority.

Not only can we correct the statement that there is no photograph of Lt-Colonel William McCarthy-O'Leary's grave, we can add to the tally of memorials. It was thought that there were two, one in Warrington in England, home of the 1st South Lancashire Regiment, and one in Cork city in Ireland. We know now that there is a third memorial - on a hilltop in Kwazulu Natal!

Will all this be of interest to the people who still live in Lt-Colonel William McCarthy-O'Leary's home town, even though there are no McCarthy-O'Learys left in Millstreet? I believe so. My cousin (my mother's nephew) still lives in the town and is very keen on recording the history of Millstreet, Co Cork. He has an interest in the McCarthy-O'Leary family and I am looking forward to seeing what he makes of all this information.

Sources:

http://www.justdone.co.za/roh/main.php?page=View_Person&PersonNumber=22290

and

<http://www.millstreet.ie/blog/2015/10/02/lieutenant-colonel-william-macCarthy-oleary-coomlogane-house#more-87021>

<http://www.kznpr.co.za/colenso-battle-of-tugela-heights-12-to-28-february-1900> (many thanks to Hugh Bland for permission to use his photographs)

The South African Military History Society's website (Military History Journal, Vol 15 No 4, December 2011

<http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol154cr.html>)

Dr A D Bensusan; 19th Century Photographers in South Africa, Africana Society, 1 Jan 1963

Maurice Linehan in Millstreet, County Cork, Ireland – correspondence

South African National Archives, Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg repositories - photograph C2973 in A752: Album of the Anglo-Boer War 1899 – 1902

Thomas Pakenham; The Boer War, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1979, p 348 (map) and pp 361 – 363

Cape Town, 22 February, 2017

DO YOU HAVE RELATIVES WHO FOUGHT IN THE ANGLO-BOER WAR?

Firstly, we must remember that many South Africans call this the Second Boer War as the Anglo-Transvaal War of 1880-81 viewed as the first. But many of you might not know much about the war, if so this could be a brief introduction:

<http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/first-anglo-boer-war>

If, on the other hand you are searching for soldiers of both sides this is by far the best site I've used:

<https://www.angloboerwar.com/>

It does take some manipulation to find what you are looking for but among the things I've found have been numerous Nominal Rolls for SA based regiments, those awarded medals such as the Queen's South African Medal (QSA) as well as brief biographies of Generals etc. All round a very useful site.

I haven't used this site for AWB records even though I subscribe to findmypast.com

<http://search.findmypast.com/search-world-records/anglo-boer-war-records-1899-1902>

After the fighting, the Boer commandos were supported by the local population in Transvaal and OFS and so the British sent the old men, the wives and the children to concentration camps, burning the farms they left behind to ensure the Commandoes could not get sustenance.

This site tells of some of the horrific treatment the British handed out in the camps

https://www.unbannedbiblepublications.com/index_files/Page4210.htm

If you are looking for ancestors who might have lived in the Camps try:

<https://www.geni.com/projects/Anglo-Boere-Oorlog-Boer-War-1899-1902-British-Concentration-Camps/854>

Or this wonderful (if I can use this word in reference to these camps) site for lists of names and their outcomes.

<http://www2.lib.uct.ac.za/mss/bccd/>

This site was set up by Elizabeth Van Heynigen, who came and spoke to our society about it a few years ago.

In 1999 Judy Milne shared on RootsWeb the following information. I presume it is still valid:

The LDS Church has done some quite extensive filming of Boer War records. The list of microfilm you can view is obtainable at any LDS Family History Centre. *[I presume using Search Catalog on familysearch ie will tell you if they have digitised these records for viewing on line]*

Ask for the Family History Library Catalogue.

These records are catalogued under South Africa/Military Records.

Examples of what's available:

- **Lists of British prisoners of war, 1899-1900.**
- **Graves of British soldiers killed in the Boer War, 1899 - 1902**
- **Lists of prisoners of war in South Africa, 1899-1902.** Published lists of Afrikaner prisoners of war, arranged alphabetically and chronologically, with full name, home address, marital status, regiment location, age; date and place of capture, internment, death, relocation; notes on parole, rank, or release during the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902). Besides South Africa, many P.O.W.s were relocated to the island of St. Helena, India, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and elsewhere in the British Empire.
- **Details of Boer prisoners of war, lists of prisoners** who were in the various camps in India, Ceylon, St. Helena and Portugal, lists of prisoners who were released, paroled or who took the oath of allegiance.
- **Archives of the officer charged with gathering information concerning deaths among the Republican fighting forces and the civilian population 1899-1902.** After the Boer War there were many inquiries concerning deaths during the war. Mr. P.L.A. Goldman was appointed in 1906 to make a survey of casualties among the Republican fighting forces and the civilian population. The task occupied him until 1913. The registers he compiled include deaths of burghers on commando and of persons in all the concentration camps. Where possible, the name of the deceased, his age, address and the cause, date and place of death were supplied.
- **Archives of the Intelligence Officer, Pretoria (IOP), 1900-1901.** Shortly after the British forces occupied Pretoria in June 1900, an Intelligence Officer was appointed to assist the Military Governor in combating espionage and conspiracies against the British regime in the Transvaal. The Intelligence Office gathered miscellaneous information about the inhabitants of the country and particularly about persons under suspicion.
- **Register of Boer prisoners of war 1901**
- **Lists of rebels (persons found guilty of treason)**

STOP PRESS!!!!!!

Even as I was compiling this Newsletter, familysearch.org were adding digital images to their website. These appeared on 5 June 2017

Boer war

8.1. Prisoners of war, rebels, etc:

<https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/87346?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

8.2. Prisoners of war: <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/185392?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

8.3. Prisoners of war, deportation etc:

<https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/185421?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

8.4. Comando lists: <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/185424?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

8.5. Relief and compensation archives, 1904-1905 :

<https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/543604?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

8.6. Deaths of civilians, also deaths in concentration camps:

<https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/161652?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

8.7. Graves of British soldiers killed in Boer War:

<https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/185267?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

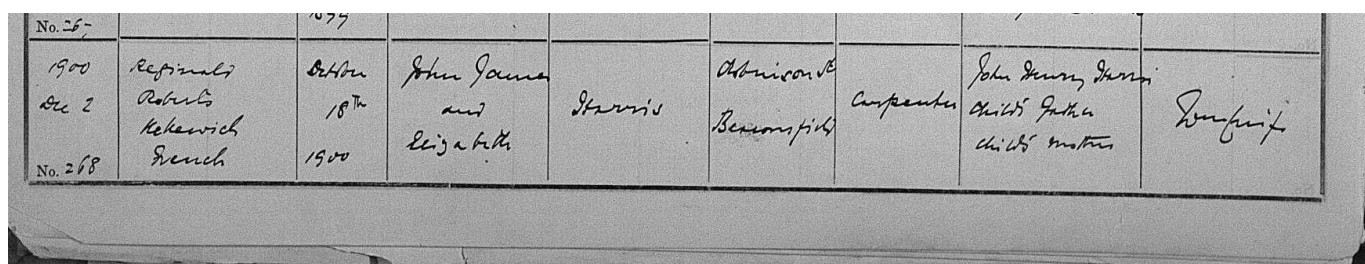
8.8. Hollanderskorps: <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/78621?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

I don't think these are index. That means you have look at each image and see if your ancestor is on it. That should keep you out of mischief for a time!

THE RESULTS OF BOER WAR –

In Beaconsfield, in Kimberley, a carpenter, John James Harris and his wife Elizabeth had a son born 18 October 1900, presumably conceived in February 1900, perhaps even on the night Kimberley was relieved, because these loving and caring parents called their son, REGINALD ROBERTS KEKEWICH FRENCH HARRIS. Three of those Christians names being the surnames of the Commander-in-Chief at the time of the relief of Kimberley, the Colonel in charge of the Kimberley Garrison during the siege and the Cavalry General who with his troops gallop across country from Bloemfontein to relieve Kimberley. Reginald Roberts Kekewich French HARRIS died in Kimberley in 1944.

I found this delightful entry in the All Saints Beaconsfield Baptismal Register purely by chance. I was looking for an Elizabeth HARRIS and went to check if Reginald mom was the Elizabeth I was looking for. It wasn't but what a delight to find a poor baby saddled with all these names of Generals.



Reginald Harris bravely bore these Christian names until his death in Kimberley in 1944. MOK 1/1/1094 Ref 3789

DESCRIPTION

HARRIS, REGINALD ROBERTS KEKEWICH FRENCH. ESTATE PAPERS.

STARTING 19440000

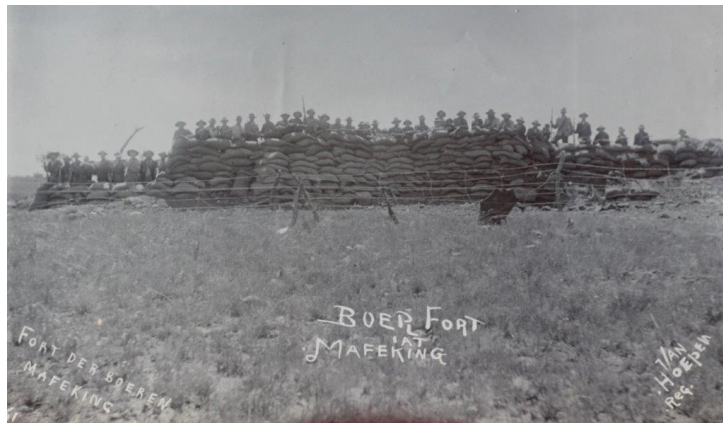
MAFEKING (Cape Colony border) 30 April – May 1900

David Slingsby

In family papers, I found a number of photographs. They had been collected (and some taken) by a Standard Bank employee, one Percy Rainer who worked with my Great Great Grandfather, J.W. Harsant, who at one time was the Assistant General Manager of the Standard Bank. How these documents came into our family or were given to Harsant remains a mystery. Two of these photographs had scenes of the siege of Mafeking. Not being particularly knowledgeable of this event, I turned to Thomas Pakenham's – *The Boer War* which I have summarized as below from Chapter 22 "The White Man's War". I was particularly struck by the inhuman approach displayed by the forces involved.

"It is understood that your armed Bastards, Fingos and Baralongs against us – in this you have committed an enormous act of wickedness...reconsider the matter, even if it cost you the loss of Mafeking ... disarm your blacks and thereby act the part of a white man in a white man's war" - **General Piet Cronje's message to Col. Baden-Powell 29 October 1899.**

Colonel Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell (B-P.) would not have been human if he had survived the six and half months locked up at Mafeking, without feeling the strain, his messages displayed the 'stiff upper lip' of a typical Englishman of his time.



B-P's, secret instructions were to raid the Transvaal, the moment war broke out. It was to draw the Boer forces away from Kimberley and the Cape. The strategy working well, drawing off General Cronje and 7700 burghers. Once this force arrived Cronje went south of Mafeking leaving Gen. Snyman with 1500 burgers to the North. To keep a proper field of fire, Mafeking needed a perimeter of some 5 to 6 miles. The British forces consisted of some 20 officers and 680 men of mostly protectorate troops and police, another 300 able bodied men in the town could be included, armed with two muzzle-loading 7 pounders – set against Cronje's 9 modern field guns and a Long Tom. The Mafeking garrison looked like a paper tiger.

B-P. survived the first two months mostly by subterfuge – dummy raids against Cronje, he improvised dummy forts, guns and armoured train to draw enemy fire. Like Kimberley, Mafeking

improved heavy artillery. The counterpart of 'Long Cecil' was 'Wolf'. The gun was a piece of 4-inch steel pipe, part of a threshing machine, and a breech cast in the railway yards. Still more heart warming was the way a gun called 'Lord Nelson', a brass ship's cannon dated 1770, rose to the occasion. Other 'specialities' included grenades made from potted meat tins.

Beyond the neat lines of bungalows lay the other Mafeking; a picturesque native town sprawling along the Molopo River, within the 'Stadt' lived seven to eight thousand Africans; five thousand regular inhabitants Baralongs; the rest various African refugees, Fingos whose villages had been burnt by the Boers, and Shangaans expelled from the Rand Gold mines, their savings taken by the Boer authorities.

Now B-P knew how to handle the indigenous peoples, you had to be firm but fair. By hanging some for stealing food, and flogging others, he persuaded them to play a part in defending the town. Some dug trenches, others acted as scouts, spies, runners and herding cattle. He also armed three hundred Africans. Christened the 'Black Watch', they were set to guard part of the perimeter. He likewise had little time for the local civilians and found himself at loggerheads with the local doctor, Hayes, likewise the press corps who in his view reported inaccurately upon the situation.

On “Black Boxing Day” B-P made a serious tactical error by trying to attack the Boer Fort some 300 three thousand yards north of the town. After charging the fort and being repulsed some twenty four lay dead amongst them three officers.

By January food was running short, B-P estimated food would last for the white garrison until the end of January, supplies for the Africans, meaning their staple diet of mealies, were not expected to last beyond December. That the white garrison was relatively well off was a lucky chance as the firm of Weil had recently stockpiled thousands of tons of supplies. B-P had snapped this food was nearly exhausted by end January – yet how was it possible, at least the white garrison were still fat and well by the end of April?

The answer was hidden for seventy-eight years in B-P’s confidential staff diary of the siege. The whites took part of the rations of the black garrison. And some blacks were accordingly given the choice of starving to death or running the gauntlet of the Boer guns. The policy was made chillingly clear in his diary. The entry for 14 November shows the number of whites to be 1,074 men, 229 women, and 405 children, and the natives to be ‘7500 all told’. He next listed the main food stocks-excluding the horse’s rations – by weight, and calculated that he required 1,340 daily rations for whites and 7000 for natives. His last figure shows that he therefore had white rations for 134 days, but only 15 days worth for the natives.

This was very serious B-P therefore, rationed all the meal and flour in the town – private, official or commercial – and forbade Africans to buy bread. This led to severe hoarding of grain and food with many running black markets.



Inside Mafeking, Baden-Powell’s officers sentence to death a starving African (extreme left) for stealing a goat (from Thomas Pakenham’s *The Boer War*)

Early in April, B-P adopted the final and most drastic solution for survival. He decided to try to reduce the native garrison by a further two thousand, by forcing the Baralongs to abandon their homes and go to Kanya.

Various attempts to relive Mafeking proved fruitless, more attempts to run food to the town, and more Africans out, both ran into trouble. On several occasions the Boers caught and shot some of the Africans who tried to drive cattle into the town. The most savage incident however involved the Baralong women. On the night of 7 April, seven hundred of them were persuaded to attempt a mass exodus. Only ten got away; the rest returned having been stripped and flogged by the Boers.

The finale to the siege was more dashing and melodramatic than even B-P could have hoped. Early morning on the 12 May Sarel Eloff, commandant of the Johannesburg Commando knew Mahon’s relief column was a few days ride away from the south. Eloff’s plan set one once the moon was up, he sent Snyman to make a feint against the eastern lines of the trenches,

meantime he would break into the Stadt with 700 men, guided by friendly tribesmen and a turncoat British trooper called Hay.

The Stadt in terms of military and even human terms was B-P’s blind spot. The first phase succeeded brilliantly, Snyman launched the feint, and Eloff’s small force, assisted by Hay, slipped unobserved into the Stadt. To signal Snyman and to strike terror into the Baralongs, they set fire to the huts. The fire sent a useful screen of smoke and sparks, and a mob of panic stricken natives, flying ahead of them. However, it also warned B-P.

As the Boer forces stormed through the Stadt, the armed Baralongs stood aside and reformed behind the Boers. In the fighting that followed did not last too long. Eloff eventually surrendered with 60 men killed or wounded and 108 prisoners taken. The garrison suffered twelve dead and eight wounded mostly Africans.

The relief column reached Mafeking some five days later on the 17 May almost an anticlimax after 217 days under siege.

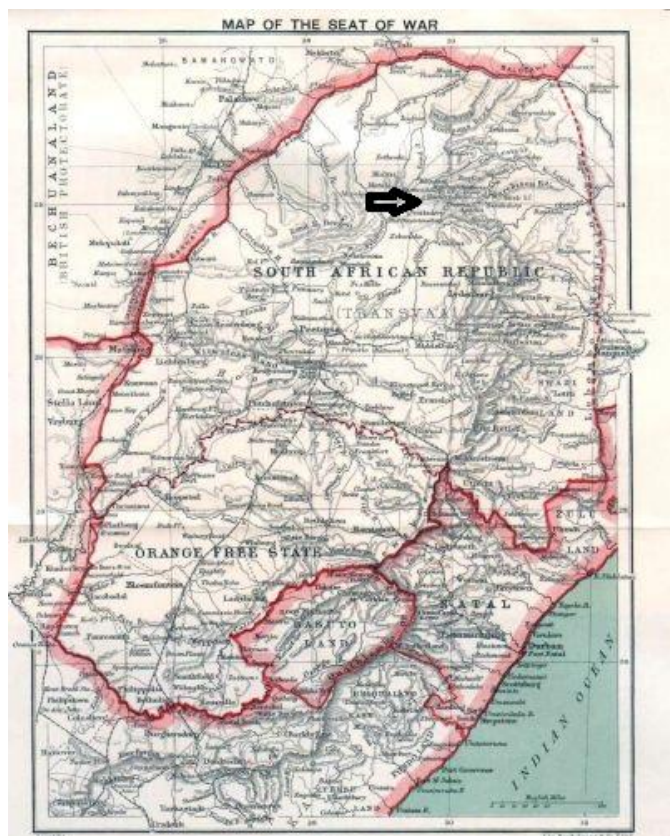
In Britain Mafeking meant. In every sense, relief, hysterical, euphoric relief. Relief from the nightmare of national humiliation, from the series of confused disasters that had characterized the first part of the war.

But myth and counter-myth were already beginning to overlay the siege, as the sand began to drift over the graves of 354 Africans officially recorded as having died of shell and shot, and of countless others who died of hunger or disease.

In Britain £29,000 was raised to put Mafeking back on its feet. None of this went to the thousands of Africans whose farms had been looted, towns burnt. And families expelled or died of starvation.

Pietersburg British Concentration Camp

I have been researching a family who had been born in Pietersburg and at some point, moved to Bulawayo. Wondering if they had spent time in British Concentration Camps during the AWB, I checked out the BCC Database website and found a fascinating history of the Pietersburg Camp. It perhaps demonstrates the complexity of society in the Transvaal and how it could not be simply divided between Boer-supporters and British-supporters. Here is a condensed version of what the website had to say about the Camp.



A map of the South African Republic and the Orange Free State at the time of the Boer War. The arrow points to Pieterburg

Pietersburg was the northernmost camp in the Transvaal system, isolated and difficult to service. The town was only occupied by the British on 8 April 1901 and, initially, the people of this region were housed in Irene camp. It was decided to establish a camp in such a remote area in May 1901. This was still, in some respects, frontier territory, vulnerable to attacks from local African societies who remained unsubdued by the Boers. While there were some established farmers, much of the wealth of the area was derived from lumber and mining. Slave trading (the capture and sale of black children as apprentices to Boer farmers) still occurred occasionally. Many of the families were subsistence farmers at best and the presence of the Buys clan of Mara was an indication of the 'in-between' status of some of the people. These were the descendants of a Cape colonial renegade, Coenrad Buys, who had married into local black families. His descendants, however, did not identify with black society and refused to be classed with black camp inmates. Instead, they maintained a separate identity, living largely in their own wagons but rationed by the camp authorities. The head of the family was 'a big burly negro, who rules his camp with great discretion', the Ladies Committee noted in November 1901. Pietersburg was close to malaria country and the health of the region was notoriously poor so it was inevitable that the mortality in Pietersburg camp should be high.

Given the hostilities that had marked Boer relations with the local black societies over many years, the white families felt particularly vulnerable when war broke out. One of the greatest fears that loomed over the women was the threat of armed blacks. There seems little doubt that farms in the Zoutpansberg were sometimes cleared by black allies of the British. Inevitably, accounts of these 'atrocities' crept into the women's testimonies. The men of the Bushveldt Carbineers were also active in bringing in the women and children. Lieutenant George Witton's distasteful and untruthful account of the Breaker Morant affair illustrates vividly the calibre of the men engaged in this work:

'During these trips I came into contact with many of the "Boers of the Veldt," or the Dopper class. I would often take a cup of coffee with them, and as many of them could speak a little English, they would pour out all their troubles to me. The women folk were eager to learn all about the refugee camp, asking would they be provided with food and clothing, and would the "Englischer" give them schoens for the kinder?' This is the class of people that predominates in South Africa, and in my opinion there must be generations of purging, educating, and civilising before they will be capable of taking part in national life. They appear habitually to shun water, and never undress; as they go to bed, so they get up again – dirty, untidy, and unwashed.



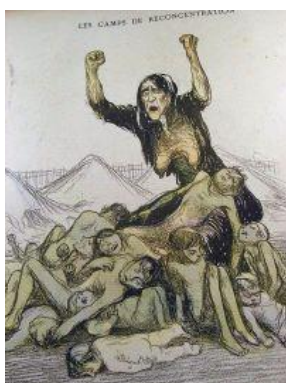
When J.E. Tucker arrived as superintendent in May 1901, he found that there were about 1,000 people housed in the town or living in wagons. By the end of that month there were over 2,000 people, all of whom were living in the camp by August 1901, when Dr Kendal Franks visited the camp. Many had come from the lowveld and were ill with fever. While there was plenty of water, it had to be brought by wagon to the camp, and there was surprisingly little fuel; coal had to be trucked in. The people were often confused by this disruption in their lives. Tucker complained that 'it is very difficult to find out from the burghers whom they surrendered to and when. They are also quite ignorant as to the numbers of their farms. Very few women can tell on whose commando their husband was or is'.

Unfortunately, as families returned from Irene and Pretoria, they brought measles with them and the death rate began to soar in a society already debilitated by malaria. While in the lowveld, eight had died of malaria, one was brought into the camp dead, and three more died shortly after their arrival. Several others were so frail that the MO doubted that they could recover. The measles was a particularly bad type, Dr Franks explained, with many of the children developing double pneumonia as the rash disappeared. Unfortunately the mothers, believing that the worst was then over, allowed the children into the cold winds and dust storms, which sprang up in July, contributing to the relapse of their offspring.

Mortality reached its peak in July 1901, when the death rate was well above the camp average. Measles returned briefly in November with new arrivals but, by this time, most of the camp inmates had acquired an immunity to the disease and it disappeared fairly quickly. Malaria also returned in the summer, together with an outbreak of whooping cough which claimed a number of lives. Diarrhoea plagued the younger children, largely because of the pork they bought in the village, the MO believed. Two of the camp staff, including the headmaster (who later died), went down with typhoid but, the MO considered, they had both contracted it in the town, where they had been living. The camp water was much safer. This was not necessarily how the frightened camp inmates saw these deaths.



One of the reasons why the camp officials found the management of the Boer women so difficult was that the camps were profoundly disempowering for the women, who were accustomed running their own homes. When he had difficulty keeping the women's latrines clean, superintendent Tucker shrewdly appointed two 'austere old Dutch women, who had in other ways been very troublesome in the camp' to look after the latrines, to good effect, for the women no longer caused trouble and the other women kept the place clean.



A French Newspaper cartoon showing the anger of Boer mothers.

It is always difficult to judge the spending power of the Boers and many were, undoubtedly, destitute. But others brought money with them into camp and more could usually be earned in the camp or town. Dr Franks commented that, although the people seemed so poor, they spent freely at Poynton's store, which took over £2,000 in the first six weeks of its existence. Nor did the Boers buy necessities (as he thought). Instead, they spent their money on sweets, large amounts of raisins and preserved ginger, and various forms of tinned fish.

Despite the ill health, difficulties with the people and the problems of supply, Pietersburg camp was unproblematic for most of 1901. The camp was well supplied with medical staff, routines ran smoothly and health improved rapidly once the measles epidemic had declined. Food was relatively good and, in August 1901 the camp began to grow its own vegetables. Nevertheless, scurvy threatened during the winter months.

The visit of the Ladies Committee was delayed by Boer incursions in the region and they reached the camp only in the middle of November 1901. They found a clean, orderly camp of almost 4,000 people and they had few criticisms of any substance. Although there was some scurvy, vegetables could be bought in the store and the school children were issued with lime juice. The school ran well and outside occupations included sewing and singing classes, and a number of workshops with carpentry, bootmaking, brickmaking, a tannery and a blacksmith's shop. A number of people had constructed ovens of various kinds and one man made horn ornaments, polishing them 'beautifully'. Another brewed ginger beer. This was one of the best managed camps they had visited, the Ladies concluded and, by this time, their experience was considerable, so they were well able to judge.

The general satisfaction with the camp may, perhaps, be measured by the number of men who volunteered for the British forces for, in September, fifty joined the Intelligence Department and there continued to be a trickle of men who followed in the following months. By January 1902 140 men had joined the British forces.

Although most of Pietersburg town had been evacuated, the camp was an attraction to the Boers for, unusually, the camp inmates had been able to keep the stock they had brought with them. In December 1901 there were 1,700 cattle, 800 sheep and 630 donkeys grazing nearby. This may have been one reason for Commandant Beyers' attack on the camp on 23 January 1902. The superintendent and storekeeper were held captive for a couple of hours and 141 men and 10 boys were commandeered. There had been several desertions in the months before the attack but Tucker believed that at least some of these recruits had been taken against their will, for several trickled back in the days that followed. Kitchener had a different view, considering that some of the camp inmates had been complicit in the attack and, in retaliation, decided abruptly to move the entire population to Natal. This was awkward for the camp authorities, for there was nowhere that could readily absorb nearly 3,000 people. However, Lord Milner said airily to the Governor of Natal, as this was a 'penal measure', all they needed was a healthy site. 'We are not obliged to trouble about their comfort'. Privately, the Colonial Office in Britain was appalled by Milner's attitude and decided that this correspondence should remain confidential. Eventually the Natal camp authorities fixed on Colenso. Superintendent Tucker was sent down from Pietersburg to supervise this removal into the open veld and the transfer started in mid-February 1902.

Although the majority of the Boers were moved down to Natal, several small camps remained in existence. The Buys clan remained where they were, and a tiny National Scouts camp of seventeen people was also established. As a result of the change, the Buys people received much greater attention in the reports. A school had been established by April 1901, run by Commandant Buys himself, who read and wrote English fairly well. As a result, although the Education Department was not concerned with black education (as the Buys clan was categorised), the inspector agreed to supply the children with slates and books. The women had been able to get work in the town as washerwomen so they were able to supplement their rations. As soon as peace was declared, the families returned to Mara and their camp was closed as early as June 1902.

Between 2 July and 10 August 1902 the Pietersburg people trickled back from Natal, along with superintendent Tucker, who had remained with them throughout. Rinderpest had killed much of the livestock, delaying repatriation, for there were few animals to pull the wagons of the returning families. Tucker found the people 'disorderly and impudent' when they first returned and mixed with the surrendering commandos. Fortunately, he noted, this spirit soon subsided, although he had some difficulty in persuading the men to carry out the normal sanitary duties. As the prisoners of war returned the families were gradually repatriated and, by the end of December 1902, there were just under 200 people left. The camp closed in January 1903.

Source: <http://www2.lib.uct.ac.za/mss/bccd/Histories/Pietersburg/>

Do you recognise these flags? If so you might have ancestors who lived in Rhodesia (in its many manifestations). Do you have hints and helps that could assist other former Rhodesians (or Zimbabweans, or Zambians or Malawians) to trace their families. Do send me these hints and if you have interesting stories of your Rhodesian ancestors email me at info@thefamilyhistorian.co.za for inclusion in the September Newsletter.

