

CTFHS NEWSLETTER

Cape Town Family History Society

DECEMBER 2009 Vol 4 No 3

EDITORIAL

One of the portfolios on the **CTFHS** committee is one entitled Project Convenor. I have occupied this post for nearly two years now.

On being elected I inherited the project of collecting information on church records and where they are stored. Our Society's webpage states: *We are currently researching Cape Churches. Please help us – download the survey form and ask your local church to complete the information asked for. Then fax the form back to 021 762 1080. As soon as we have sufficient information to publish we will advise all via the website.*

Some data had already been collected before my election but in the two years that I've served, no church's information has ever been passed on to me.

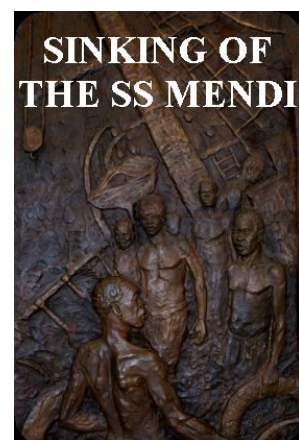
To me this presents two questions. The first is "**Does the problem with our chosen project?**" Perhaps it is too difficult or complex for members to do – relying on their local minister or his/her secretary to do the collating of data. Or perhaps it is that our members are not religious – therefore do not have contact with ministers. **Or is it just that we couldn't be bothered?** If that is the case then do we need to have a project?

Perhaps we need to find out from our members what sort of project they would **like** us to run and also what sort of project they would **be willing** to participate in fully?

Responses to dpratt@mweb.co.za

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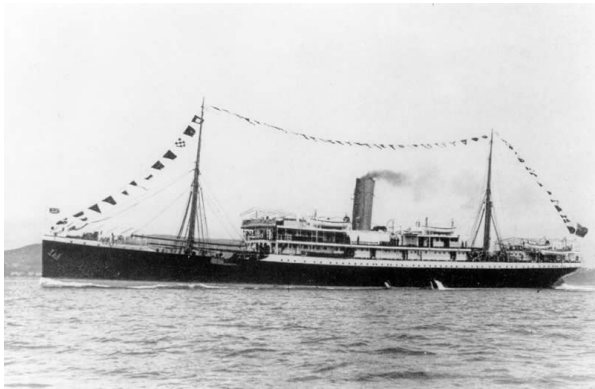


THE SS MENDI – The sinking of the troopship

Black people of South Africa have a proud and illustrious heritage, which identifies

with the whole South African society. They have equally played a very important role in the defence of this country dating back to the First World War. The story of the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC), particularly the sinking of the Mendi troopship, is one of the most fascinating stories ever related in South Africa's military history.

On January 16, 1917 the Mendi troopship sailed from Cape Town en route to La Havre in France carrying the last contingent of the SANLC comprising 805 black private, 5 white officers and 17 non-commissioned officers as well as 33 crewmembers. On the morning of 21 February 1917, another ship, the SS Darro (10 000 tons) travelling at full speed and emitting no warning signals, rammed the SS Mendi (4 230 tons), which sank in 20 minutes.



SS. Mendi

No steps were taken by the SS Darro to lower boats or rescue the survivors. She stood off and floated nearby while lifeboats from the SS Mendi's escorting destroyer, HMS Brisk, rowed among the survivors, trying to rescue them.

There are many stories of bravery about the men's bravery as the ship went down. One of them is that of the Reverend Isaac Wauchope Dyobha, who cried words of encouragement to the dying men. "Be quite and calm my countrymen, for what is taking place now is what you came here to do. We are all going to die, and that is what we came for. Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Zulu, say here and now that you are all my brothers... Xhosas, Swazis, Pondos, Basotho and all others, let us die like warriors. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war cries my brothers, for though they made us leave our assegais back in the kraals, our voices are left with our bodies..." (The Reverend Isaac Wauchope Dyobha)

The men sang and stamped the death dance together as the SS Mendi sank, taking with her all still on board and many who leapt into the icy waters (607 black troops along with 9 of their fellow white countrymen and all 33 crewmembers). Of note is that, regardless of clan or tribe, these men faced death together as South Africans.

Other heart wrenching tales of valour are told of those trying to survive in the freezing water. It is said that the cries of the men dying of hypothermia echoed in the misty dawn: "Ho, 'so and so', child of my mother, are you dead that you do not hear my voice?" and "Ho, to me, men of 'so and so', that we may all die together?" Joseph Tshite, a schoolmaster from near Pretoria, encouraged those around him with hymns and prayers until he died. A white sergeant was supported by two black compatriots, who swam with him and found place for him on a raft. Among the black Africans lost were some prominent men such as the Pondoland chiefs Henry Bokleni, Dokoda Richard Ndamase, Mxonywa Bangani, Mongameli and the Reverend Isaac Wauchope Dyobha.

On receiving the news (on 9 March 1917) of the disaster, all the members of the South African House of Assembly, under the then Prime Minister Louis Botha and a celebrated Boer War hero, rose in their seats as a token of respect to their fellow South Africans who had gone down with SS Mendi. Lore has it that the black tribes in South Africa were aware of the disaster before they were officially advised by the government.

The survivors were to continue with their military service in France. One of the highlights was when some of them met the King and Queen of England at Rouen in July 1917. One of them, Koos Matli (of the Bahaduba tribe) recalled: "One day we were all called together and we went to another ship. On the deck we met King George V and Queen Mary. The King addressed us personally and thanked us for the services we had rendered. He told us that we were going home within a few days, and when we reached home we must tell our Chiefs and fathers how he had thanked us."

Like so many other military disasters, the story of the SS Mendi is a story of supreme courage in the face of death and valour

shown between brothers toward each other in dire circumstances. The courage displayed by these men has remained a legend in South African military history. The commemoration of the SS Mendi is held on the third Sunday of February every year.

Sources:

1. SA Legion - Atteridgeville Branch and Navy News)
2. SS Mendi links on the Internet-
3. The South African Military History Society *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Krygshistoriese Vereeniging Military History Journal - Vol 10 No 1* "The Sinking of the SS Mendi, 21st February 1917
4. PRETORIA NEWS Online Edition - IOL Friday 13th August
5. SOUTH AFRICA Homage to Mendi disaster men March 15, 2004 .

"Twenty Minutes to Supper!"

What can be achieved on the Internet in 20 minutes

As many of you will know, I'm researching all those buried in the 'purchased' graves at St Paul's in Rondebosch. Some have vast hosts of ancestors and descendents who are easily found on the internet. Others seem have "no memorial" as the good book of Ecclesiasticus says. Searching in the Cape Archives, and on internet sites such as ancestryplus.com; ancestry24.com; freebmd; rootsweb.com produces nothing. But I want to describe an extraordinary series of events that happened in my research last month.

"Supper will be ready in 20 minutes," called my wife, Karen, from the kitchen. "Blast," I thought, "not enough time to do any family research on the 'net but here is a baby, **George Arthur Etheridge** died on 17 December 1860 aged 9 months. Let's see what I can find."

Firstly, if he was buried at St Paul's Rondebosch aged 9 months perhaps he was baptised here too. Sure enough, *Etheridge, George Arthur baptised 1st April 1860 born 12 March 1860 son of Henry Whitbread and Ann Hall ETHERIDGE of Rondebosch*. Under occupation it stated "H.E.I.C" which I realised was the **Honourable East India Company**. This meant that Mr Etheridge was most probably at the Cape of Good Hope on furlough from India.

My next stop was a site called "FIBIS" (**Families in British India Society** www.search.fibis.org/frontis/bin/index.php)



The Families in British India Society Website

where, because of his interesting first names - Henry Whitbeard - I found entries for him including one saying that he was on pension from the Indian Navy in 1863 - it also listed all his dependents, his wife and all the children including the deceased George Arthur ETHERIDGE. There were two entries - I suspect because **Anne Hall Elizabeth** his first wife died and he married again. This entry had the following details:

Entry from Indian Navy Family Pensions on FIBIS

IOR Ref: **L/AG/23/18/3 f.49**

First name(s) **Henry Whitehead** [sic]

Last name **Etheridge**

Rank **Commander**

Date of First Marriage: **27 Aug 1853**

Place of First Marriage: **Stratford, Bow**

Name of First Wife: **Anne H.E. James**

Death of First Wife: **died 14 Dec 1881**

Date of Second Marriage: **8 Sep 1888**

Place of Second Marriage: **St. Luke's**

Paddington

Name of Second Wife: **Mary Ann Squires.**

Child 1: **Annie Isabel Etheridge**, female, born 20 Jul 1857, Kurrachee [Karachi]

Child 2: **George Arthur Etheridge**, male, born 12 Mar 1860, Cape of Good Hope

Child 3: **Edith Marian Etheridge**, female, Born 5 Mar 1861, At Sea, died 13 Dec 1930

Child 4: **Frederick Ernest Etheridge**, male, born 9 Feb 1862, Bombay

Child 5: **Charles Etheridge**, male, born 11 Jun 1863, Bombay

Child 6: **Constance Alice Etheridge**, female, born 28 Nov 1864, Egremont, Cheshire, died 15 Dec 1875

Child 7: **Florence Ada Etheridge**, female, born 3 Jul 1866, Egremont, Cheshire

Child 8: **Walter John Hall Etheridge**, male, born 16 Nov 1867, Peckham

Child 9: **Edward Ernest Etheridge**, male, born 10 Mar 1869, Peckham, died 10 Oct 1875

Child 10: **Alfred Septimus Etheridge**, male, born 5 Oct 1870, Reading

Child 11: **Evelyn Maud Etheridge**, female, born 24 Jan 1872, Reading.

Notes: Commander Etheridge died 21 May 1903. Mrs Mary Etheridge, born 16 Mar 1837, died 14 Dec 1881. Annie Etheridge married 4 Jul 1899. Florence Etheridge married 26 Mar 1897. Evelyn Etheridge married 18 Aug 1896.

So this gave me all the siblings of George Arthur ETHERIDGE as well as a few marriage dates of the daughters which makes searching for their marriages on FreeBMD so much easier. I then "googled" 'Henry Whitbeard Etheridge' and came across this email on GenForum:

I am seeking information about any descendants of THOMAS ETHERIDGE who was my great great grandfather and lived in the area of St Leonards in the Borough of Shoreditch, London during the 1830's.

Thomas Etheridge married **Mary Turner** and they had 14 children (8 sons and 6 daughters).

Information I have on his descendants are as follows:

1. **Robert Etheridge** had a son, Robert Etheridge Jnr.

2. **Edward Masterman Etheridge** married Charlotte Bartlett Bowman at Geelong, Victoria Australia on 25 April 1860 and they had 4 children-Ada, Hilda, Ethel and Percy Edward Etheridge (my grandfather).

3. **Donald Oliver Etheridge** died without issue.

4. **Thomas Saver Etheridge** had 2 (maybe 3) daughters, Lilian and Haidee Isobel and 2 sons, Frederick Rowton Etheridge and Arthur Etheridge.

5. **Major-General Alfred Thomas Etheridge** C.S.I., had a son, Cecil De Courcy Etheridge who was also in the military rising to the rank of Lt.Colonel and receiving the D.S.O. in 1902 for the South African War of 1900-1902 and a C.B.E. in World War 1, 1914-1918. Cecil De Courcy Etheridge died in 1940 aged 84. Alfred Thomas Etheridge also apparently had a daughter who in turn had a daughter, Shirley Goach who became a Lt.Commander in the British Royal Navy.



The Companion of the Star of India (CSI)

6. **John Etheridge** married a Haggard (christian name unknown) and had 2 daughters, Florence and Eveline and 3 sons, Herbert, Reginald and Ernest.

a. Florence lived in Sydenham, London in the 1930's and the beginning of the 1940's. (She corresponded with my father Arthur Edward Etheridge during this time).

b. Eveline married Harry H.W. Sparkham.

c. Herbert Etheridge died in July 1940 and had a son who was killed in World War 1 and that son had a son called Harry H.R. Etheridge.

d. Reginald Etheridge died in 1924 (?) and had a son, Hugh Dunsdale Etheridge who was killed in France in World War 1.

7. **Walter Joseph Etheridge** (nothing further known).

8. **Henry Whitbread Etheridge** (nothing further known).

Thanks

Warwick Etheridge.

Warwick Etheridge also had information on one daughter Isobel but nothing on the remaining five daughters.

At this point Karen called from the kitchen, "Supper's ready!" So in twenty minutes I had uncovered three generations of **ETHERIDGE**s without leaving my seat next to the computer.

Isn't the Internet just marvellous for genealogical research!

Postscript

I've now worked further on the ETHERIDGE family and have grown to feel as though I know them personally. I've managed to contact Warwick but because his GenForum request was sent in 2002 his email had changed but Facebook came to the rescue!

The Value of Insolvency Files

Lois Hartley

The MOIB series at the Cape Archives contain the inventories and liquidation accounts relating to Insolvent Estates and can contain very useful information for the family historian.

I recently learnt a whole lot more about Pieter Fredrick DÜSING, about whom I knew very little. The file gave me a much clearer idea of his lifestyle and occupation. I discovered that he owned four houses, stores and vacant erven in Cape Town as well as slaves, furniture and other property at the time he was declared insolvent. MOIB2/360/5

A full inventory was prepared of all his property and a valuation made. He owned a dwelling house and premises situated next to each other in Strand Street, a bakery fronting on Bree Street, a dwelling house of two stories and a store house of three stories in Bree Street as well as vacant land on the corner of Bree and Waterkant Streets. There was also a dwelling house in Waterkant Street. The properties were sold at auction on the 30th June 1830 to Mr. J A BURN, Mr. J JURGENS, Mr. H ROSS, Mr. G LOUW and Messrs. G W PRINCE, D G MULLER, and G LEUWENER.

He was a baker by trade and also owned a tavern and it was interesting to see all the implements that were employed by bakers at the time. Most of the slaves were engaged in the bakery trade or in delivery. Salomon (from Bengal), Jaoquim (from Mozambique, also referred to as Tenkke) and Andries (born at the Cape) were bakers, David (born at the Cape) was a coachman and wagon-driver, and Carolus (from Mozambique) a labourer. There were also two women, Lena and Marisse, with their children Jannetje and Zachia. Marisse was a seamstress and Lena was a nursery maid. The slaves were sold in two lots to Johann PFIEFER and to Gerrit Hendrik MERFER in 1826 and 1829 respectively.

The inventory of household furniture is described room by room and seems to indicate that the family was quite well off. I was puzzled though that there seemed so few beds for what was quite a large family. There was a bed and a cot in the kitchen, though!

Included in the inventory was a half-share in a piece of burial ground, probably in the

Somerset Road Cemetery as I have identified a number of members of the family buried there including his father-in-law Joseph VIORONI.

He was owed Rd16391 by various people, mostly for flour and bread supplied. He seems to have borrowed money to finance building operations but was unable to repay the loans. Two of his major creditors were Widow C VAN DER POEL and Widow VERMAAK. It would be interesting to know whether the widows themselves made the loans or whether they were inherited from their husbands.

The inventories were prepared by George Andreas Hendrik TEUBES and Leonard Fredrikus ANHUYSER and certified by them and W W BURTON, Master of the Supreme Court.

The whole process took from 1826 to 1830 and must have been very painful for the family. Düsing's wife died shortly afterwards, leaving him with several minor children.

An interesting aside to this is that his great grandson, Robert Owen BASSON, married Johanna Elisabeth Antoinette TEUBES, the great granddaughter of G A H TEUBES in Pretoria 60 years later.

LAST QUARTER'S MEETINGS

19th September 2009

This was once again our annual heritage day meeting where members and others were encouraged to bring items to display and share with others.



Derek Pratt indicating his great-uncle in the Pirates rugby team from Kimberley

There was a huge variety of artefacts, family trees, pictures, medals, books etc to get conversations going and a large crowd of members (55) and visitors (21) many of whom just saw the crowds and walked in.

17th October 2009



Our October guest speaker, Joy Well-Beloved, kept us entertained us with an overview of

'The History of Photography',
followed by a brief introduction to
'Restoring old Photographs in the Digital Age'.

Photography is the result of several technical discoveries being brought together from 500-400BC, with the pinhole camera through to the first digital camera built by Steven Sassman, an engineer at Eastman Kodak as a technical exercise in 1975. Joy concluded this overview with an amazing video showing the impact of a .22 calibre bullet shot into a half-inch thick plate glass, taken at 125,000 frames per second.

Next, Joy did a step-by-step lesson on how one can restore old and torn photographs using photo programs that one can buy to do this. Similar programs can be found as free downloads on the Internet. The end result was quite amazing as none of the damage of the original photograph was visible.

Thank you Joy, for an entertaining afternoon.

21st November 2009

In November our Chairperson, David Slingsby, was our speaker. David's grandfather had served in both the German South West Africa and the German East Africa campaigns. Because of this David had researched the role of the SA military in these campaigns and shared some of his research with us.

When SA entered the war on the side of the British, they were asked to occupy the ports of Swakopmund and Luderitz and destroy the wireless stations that were keeping Berlin in touch with the German navy cruisers in the South Atlantic.

The invasion of SWA was aggravated by the Maritz rebellion among Afrikaners in SA and the shooting of Gen. de la Rey. However,

because of the size of the SA invasion force the German troops and their Afrikaner supports could merely delay the inevitable.

After the Battle of the Falkland islands, the naval threat was removed and so invasion via the ports of German SWA was undertaken with the prime minister, General Louis Botha taking the command of some 67 000 troops. By 9th July 1915 the Germans were defeated. Only 256 SA troops died in this campaign [including a distant nephew of the editor – Private John KENNETT who is buried in the CWG Commission cemetery in Windhoek]



Colonial Troops in East Africa

The East African campaign, unfortunately, was not as successful. David told us about the attempt to find and sink the German light cruiser SMS Königsberg and also the invasion from the interior along the rift valley. David gave a vivid description (with archival photographs) of the hardship the troops suffered. For example in February 1916 there were 1 135 troops of the 9th SA Infantry by October only 116 were fit to fighting and hardly any enemy action had taken place.



German and Askari Troops in German East Africa

The German troops together with the indigenous Askari troops fought a guerrilla war against the British and were not defeated. They surrendered 2 weeks after the 11 November 1918 armistices.

NEW MEMBERS

The following join the CTFHS during this quarter:

Onia, Angela

E-mail Address: theonias@hotmail.com
Family interests: Harrison

Khan, Felicity

E-mail Address: felicitykhan@hotmail.com
Family interests: Awaiting info from her.

Botha, Tertia

E-mail Address: tertiab3@gmail.com
Family interests: Beukes, de Clercq – de Klercq, Joubert, Fouche. DNA

Brownlee, Carole

E-mail Address: mccb@telkomsa.net
Family interests: Dorrington, Hulley, Scholtz, Ross

Latilla-Campbell, Martha

E-mail Address: margelc@mweb.co.za
Family interests: Van Heerden, Ferreira, Haasbroek, Campbell

Miller, Annette

Family interests: Miller, Spargo, Rens, Röntgen

Hutton, Elizabeth(Libby)

No email address given
Family interests: Divine, Orpen, Hutton

Aproskie, Maureen

E-mail Address:
aureen.aproskie@btinternet.com
Family interests: Arkley, White

Stirton, Charles Howard

E-mail Address: chstirton@tiscali.co.uk
Family interests: Markus, Inglesby, Stigant, Stirton
Local address:c/o Botany Dept UCT Private Bag Rondebosch Cape

Keen, Owen Griffiths

E-mail Address: owen.keen@tiscali.co.uk
Family interests:
Dalton of CT(Born USA)c 1800 married John Marin born London Publican Woodstock CT 1830.Work Published Book on life of Capt CSG Keen contains Morris family of George available as DVD. Almost complete FT c 1670 –1960 Westbrook family of Isle of Wight who came to Natal on Lady Bruce on the Byrne scheme.

Morris Family of PembrokeWales c 1800 JH Morris chemist of George (grandfather) Liverton of Barstaple Devon complete tree 1650 – date
Keen of Gloucestershire complete tree c 1650 to date
Radford of Kenton,Devon complete tree c 1700 to 1900

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hi Derek
Congratulations on your first newsletter! Very well done, and very interesting.

I think there is a place for newsletters. Websites are for members and non-members, and if they appear top-heavy on member issues, they will appear to be too parochial to other users. Newsletters serve as a record of and forum for member issues. Good try at getting out of the editorship, but no cigar!
Kind regards,
Merry Dewar

Hi,
Just wanted to say how great I thought the newsletter was. It's nice to keep up to date with all that is going on, and to hear what others have been up to.
Liz Paddock.

Hi Derek
After reading your Editorial I would like to say that I vote that a newsletter is not necessary seeing that the Society has a website. A newsletter doubles up on the workload and the time to despatch it via email, especially with the number of members growing so rapidly! Do the members with no email addresses get a hardcopy posted to them? If so, then presenting the newsletter on the website will save postage costs as well. The cost of posting an 8-page document is more than the standard rate of postage. Just my 2-cents worth!
The newsletter (your first) looks very professional!

Regards
Sandra

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Cape Town Family History Society Website:
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