



The Cape Almanac

THERE IS NO FUTURE WITHOUT A PAST

March 2004

Going, going....GONE by *Heather MacAlister*

CONTENTS

- Going, going...Gone
- Up Coming events
- Get Well
- Regulars
- Then & Now
- Help Wanted
- Old Hat
- Hot off the Press
- New Members

SPECIALIST ARTICLES

Old School, New Museum	3
Extraordinary Man	4
Wreck of the Meermin	6
Lost Cemetery records	7
WW2 Pilot	8
Your Society in England	9
Government Gazette	10

Another year has come and gone and an era in our lives drawn to a close but as this new year of 2004 unfolds I begin to think of the new and advanced methods of finding out more about our ancestral past.

With the invention of the Internet and access to information being made possible by the touch of a button without even moving out of our homes, the world is literally at our fingertips.

Gone are the days when we used to traipse around cemeteries looking for our elusive ancestors and the hours spent visiting archives and libraries.

We can now search the archives on line and buy CD's with cemetery transcriptions and estate references on them. But is this what we really want ?

When I started tracing my family tree about 15 years ago there was an adrenalin rush when I physically touched the pages of my great grandfather's death notice or will.

Now we can no longer photocopy or scan them and one of these days we will not even be able to see them at all because the condition of some of these documents is so frail that they are vanishing before our eyes.

We have to make a concerted effort to preserve and capture these precious and valuable documents before they are gone forever.

A prime example of this is the horrific condition of the St. George's Cathedral Church Registers housed at the Cape Town Archives. Recently I noticed that every time I turned certain pages, another piece broke off and someone's name was lost for ever. I closed the book and felt guilty that I had touched the pages yet again. And this is just one example.

What are we going to do ? What is the answer ? We need to identify projects so that threatened documents can be digitally captured. The solution lies with us. If you have any suggestions please contact us (see back page for details). Remember... there is no Future without a Past.

Up Coming Events

24th April — “Anglo Boer War” with guest speaker Tony Gordon from the Military History Society

22 May—”Stories of the Cape” with Gabriel Athiros

19 June – “Memories by Design” introduction to Scrap Booking

17 July – Dan Sleigh “Old Cape Families”

21 August - “Irish Settlers at the Cape” with author Graham Dickason

24 September – Heritage Day at the Castle

16 October – “Feed Back for Beginners and Open Day”

20 November – Oral History Recording

2 December—Xmas Party



Donations and Contributions

Donations and contributions of books, unpublished material, unwanted Family Bibles, photographs, journals, birthday books and autograph books are welcomed by the Society for the preservation of Cape Family History

Did you know that you can find divorce cases in the Cape Archives up until 1975 ?

Get well soon

Paul Cheifitz, Ivy Trott and Dawn Raimondo



New Museum

Wynberg Boys High School has recently acquired a private collection of Anglo-Boer War material from ex-pupil Ryno Greenwall . This wonderful bequest will soon be available for public viewing at the school museum in Lover's Walk, Wynberg.





Old School and New Museum

by Sigi Howes

February's visit to the Museum of Education and Conservation was a wonderful afternoon and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended. Sigi Howes' the curator, who is also a society member, took us through the old school and told us its history.

The Centre for Conservation Education in Wynberg, Cape Town (which incorporates the Education Museum) was started in 1989. Under the auspices of the Western Cape Education Department, the Centre teaches environmental education to primary and secondary school groups. But the school, in whose building and spirit the Centre operates, is much older than that and is, in fact, the oldest existing school in Wynberg.

The school came about in 1836 as the result of one woman's vision: Lady D'Urban, wife of the British Governor of the Cape. She started the School of Industry for Girls, to prepare them for entry into domestic service. The first venue was Glebe Cottage in Wynberg, which was also the birthplace of Wynberg Boys' High School. Under the guidance of the postmistress, the girls were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, needlework and housewifery.

Lady D'Urban was well liked and, after her death in 1843, the community raised money for a memorial tablet (now in St George's Cathedral) and a

new building for the school. In 1845 the school moved to its new premises in Aliwal Road. From its inception, the School of Industry placed no restrictions on race. However, by 1893, School Inspector Brady noted in his annual report that Coloured children were being refused admission. This possibly had to do with the gradual reclassification of the school from Private, first to Mission and finally to Public School.

In 1909 the school was made co-educational and its name changed to Aliwal Road Primary School (ARPS). It served the Wynberg community well for 80 years and was known as a school that could achieve success with learners where other schools had failed. Progressive for its day, corporal punishment was shunned and the result was a happy school where the element of fear was almost non-existent. Every year the Centre is visited by between 5 and 15 past pupils of ARPS, all keen to relive their school-days with us. The school was closed in 1988 due to dwindling numbers.



Extraordinary Man

Walter Middelman is a remarkable man. Not only has he managed to trace his own family tree back to 1412 but he has also documented his mother's Koehler line back to 1622. Not bad for someone who considers himself to be more a bibliophile than a genealogist and definitely not bad for someone who is a sprightly 94 this year!

Walter was born on 7th February 1910 in Berlin, Germany. His father, although without matric or formal tertiary education, became a successful businessman eventually heading a large Leipzig property firm. It is from him that Walter inherited his love of books. He was always reading, says Walter, and was a self-educated man who in his younger years worked in both Belgium and England, mastering languages that would prove useful throughout his life.

Walter's mother (Koehler) was descended from a long line of doctors and Protestant clergy in the state of Hessen, Germany and because of the tradition of record keeping in the family, much of their history has been well preserved.

Also on his mother's side were the Weintrauds, originally country people who in 1595 took to weaving their own wool from which a major industry in Offenbach/Main was to develop. Into that family came Reuben Fulda (taking his name from the German town) whose line went back to the persecution of the Jews in Spain. The family's forefathers came via Portugal to settle in Hamburg, Germany just as many other Sephardic families had done. This migration is well documented.

Walter married Erika Ruth Hinrichsen who was born in Berlin in 1908 and they eventually settled in Cape Town. She too had left Germany where, due to her Jewish ancestry, she was denied the right to pursue her chosen occupation. Here at the Cape however she dis-

covered the wonderful world of Cape flora, later to be named Fynbos, and started what nobody else had done before; a small Protea and Erica nursery. Together Walter and Ruth pioneered an entirely new industry, exporting dried ornamental Fynbos material and becoming a major employer of people in areas otherwise considered useless for agriculture. The farm "Honingklip", near Bot Rivier, still exists today and is run by Walter's son, Robert.

Walter now lives in Rondebosch surrounded by some 6000 books many of them extremely rare. A vast portion of his library is Africana, including an extensive section on the history and description of Cape Flora. It is probably the most comprehensive private collection of its kind in existence. He hopes to organise an exhibition one day. As he puts it: "I feel they would love to be seen...."

Now *that* is something to look forward to.



www.honingklip.com

Public Facilities and Digital Cameras.

Are you aware of the laws if any of the use of digital camera's in places like archives and libraries ?

Do you know if there has been a motion passed in parliament with regards to the use of electronic equipment ?

If you can answer any of the above questions please write to :The Editor of the Cape Almanac.

New Members

Peter Gundry from Harare researching Bayly, Farquhar, Fryer, Bowe, Foster & Shawe.

Tony Edwards from Newlands researching Edwards, Hosking and Orr.

Cynthia Wynstanley from Kenilworth researching Kirchner and Wintle.

Dr. Mynie Wilms from Kenilworth researching Wilms.

Danie De Villiers from Tygervalley researching De Villiers, Van der Merwe, Hesse, Hagen, Bergh, Brink, Joubert, Marais and Rossouw.

John Campbell from East London researching 101 surnames - must be related to the Disneys !!

Reg Nobel from Gardens researching Rodam and Fillmore.

Neva Aitken from Plumstead researching Easton and Irish.

Margaret Harrison from New Zealand.

J.P. Du Plessis from Newlands researching Du Plessis.

Joe Ellis from Goodwood researching Ellis, Jordaan, MacDonald, Henning, Herbst, Moody and Harding.

Patricia O'Dea from Three Anchor Bay.

Valerie Wilkinson from Claremont researching Harris.

Everard Van Wulven researching Combrink.

William Bremer from Rondebosch researching Bremer, Hocking, Chappell and Thomas.

Jaco Van Der Merwe from Bellville researching v.d. Merwe, Dempers, Van Breda, De Klerk, Theron and Marais.

Beryl Dennis from Claremont researching Lloyd and Tourell.

Renate Wilms researching Wilms, Vorster, Roos, Kirsten and Kromm.



We welcome you all and wish you every success with your research!!!

Wreck of the *Meermin*

by Jaco Boshoff

The *Meermin* was a three mast 'Hoeker' built in 1759 in Amsterdam. In 1766 she was on a slaving voyage to Madagascar. She left Madagascar on 20 January 1766 with 140 slaves. A few days into the voyage the slaves seized an opportune moment and revolted, taking over the ship and killing half the crew. The slaves could not sail the ship and after some days of floating around they came to an agreement with the sailors that they would sail the ship back to Madagascar and in return the slaves would not kill them.

During the day they sailed towards Madagascar, but at night set course for the Cape until eventually they reached Cape Agulhas (the Struisbaai area). The slaves sent two boats ashore to ascertain whether it was in fact Madagascar. They landed and were captured by local farmers, leaving the ship anchored offshore without means of reaching the shore. One of the Dutch sailors was sent ashore with this group to help them steer the boats. He informed the farmers of the situation aboard the ship. They put together a commando to try and win back the ship.

The ship was at anchor for 7 or 8 days. The people on board the ship then constructed a small craft in which some of the slaves went ashore. They found a black sheep herder who ran away on seeing them. This convinced them that it was indeed Madagascar. They returned to the ship with the news. During this time the captain of the ship wrote two notes which he sealed in bottles and tossed overboard. In this he asked the farmers to help them and to light

three signal fires, as this was one of the instructions that the slaves had given the first group that went ashore to confirm if they were at Madagascar.

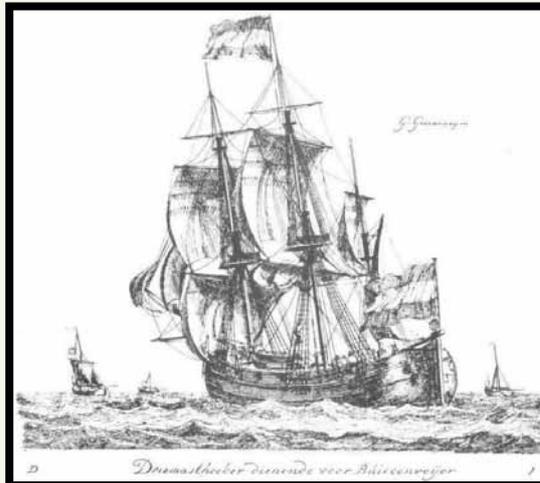
After hearing the news and seeing the signal fires the slave leader and some of the slaves went ashore. As soon as they landed, they were accosted by the farmers who shot and killed the leader and some of the people with him. When the slaves on the ship saw this they started fighting with the sailors again. The captain ordered his men to chop the anchor cable. This caused the ship to drift towards the shore and run aground.

The slaves were convinced that their situation was now hopeless and surrendered.

The ship ran aground in the Mouth of the Zoetendals river valley. According to the master shipwright, sent over from Cape Town to inspect the damage, the ship was lying in soft sand in the surf

zone with a sandbank building up on the stern side of the vessel. He also noted extensive structural damage to the ship. One of the reports mentions that the ship was lying in the river mouth.

After the slaves were recaptured as many as possible of the goods still on board the vessel were salvaged, as it was approachable at low tide. After a few days however, the weather worsened and this was discontinued. The more serviceable items were sent overland to Cape Town. The rest was auctioned off on the beach.



SAVING THE DEAD !!

On the 25th January I made one of my frequent visits to the Cape Metropolitan Council Offices in Wale street where the cemetery records are held for Maitland, Pinelands Jewish, Plumstead, Hout Bay, Blackheath etc. cemeteries and asked the lady who was helping me if and when they were ever going to data capture all their precious records. I was horrified when she told me that the CMC will be de-centralizing and the cemetery records will no longer be housed in one place but will be sent to the various civic amenities offices. We all know what state these are in and this is going to be disastrous for the future of these records.

The Pinelands Cemetery records will end up going to Gugulethu—this must not happen!!

We all need to make it known that these records are the only ones that exist and something needs to be done now before it is too late. There are over one hundred thousand people buried in these cemeteries.



DESPERATELY SEEKING

I am desperate to find a Thomas Miller born around 1800 in England. His father was William Miller and his mother was Elizabeth. In 1820 William and Elizabeth Miller immigrated to South Africa with their younger children Elizabeth later married to Charles Talbot, Mary Ann, who married an Atkins and John. William Miller was the founder of the Baptist Church in Grahamstown.

Thomas Miller, Williams's older son later joined his parents in South Africa, I think with his family, but as stated in William Millers will of 1856 had returned to England.

Justine Walmsley

justine@justine11.fsnet.co.uk



Adopt a Church

We are looking for volunteers to identify churches older than 1920 in the areas in which they live so that we can collect information on them. The aim is to build up a database of registers of baptisms, marriages and burials as well as to ascertain whether there are cemeteries attached to the churches themselves or located nearby. By doing this we hope to identify churches and graveyards that have been overlooked in the past.

If you wish to adopt a church or churches in your area please contact us directly (details on back page)

Walter Thomas Nagel SAAF Pilot - World War 2

by Sharon Warr



Walter Thomas Nagel was born on 14th March 1917 in Port Elizabeth to John and Ivy Nagel (née Rodwell). After the family settled in Cape Town, Walter and younger brother Val graduated from Cape Town High School; Walter going on to become a dental mechanic. In 1933, at the age of 16, he joined the Medical Corp and in 1934 the Cape Town Highlanders where he attained the rank of Sergeant. It is therefore not surprising that in June 1942, when General Smuts sent out a plea for 7000 men to enlist, Walter was officially the first to sign up.

His attestation papers show that he was 25 years old and that he was posted to 75 Air School in Lyttleton, Nigel on 15th July 1942 as a pupil pilot. He trained on Tiger Moths, Hornet Moths, Miles Master II's and Airspeed Oxfords. After receiving his wings in March 1944 he was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant.

Then came his first real combat posting. On the 20th April 1944 he flew to Takoradi, Gold Coast (Ghana) in West Africa to join 26 Squadron. This was a unit consisting of Wellington bombers used for patrolling the Atlantic for submarines. For this purpose the aircraft had been modified to carry depth charges and the new RADAR system.



The sorties must have been fairly boring most of the time. The crews flew for up to 7 hours, often seeing nothing but sea and sky. On the 3rd October 1944, however, Walter's crew was scrambled to go to the assistance of a Sunderland flying boat that had sent out a distress signal. A little excitement at last. Little did they know that this would be their last flight.

No one knows what happened but towards evening another aircraft spotted burning wreckage on the surface of the sea miles from where the crew of the originally missing Sunderland were eventually picked up by a hospital ship. The Wellington and its crew were officially posted 'missing'. After a few hours the posting was reclassified to 'presumed dead'. Subsequent searches found no trace of the missing Wellington or its crew.

Walter Nagel paid the ultimate price for his country and his name is immortalised on the Malta Memorial on the Island of Malta. It bears the inscription "***Over these and neighbouring lands and seas, the airmen whose names are recorded here fell in raid or sortie and have no known grave.***" Walter's fellow crew members were Captain H.A.Dietrich, Lts H.P Oosthuizen and J.H du Toit and WO II N.H.Atwell and F.W.Aylett.

Muizenberg Then & Now



Muizenberg Station circa 1917



Muizenberg Station 2004

As early as the 1600's the Khoi people lived in what is known today as Muizenberg. Soon after the Dutch arrived they used the area for cattle farming because of its rich and fertile soil.

Het Posthuys the oldest building in Muizenberg and still in tact today was built in 1670 a couple of hundred yards away from the present day station.

In 1743 it became one of the first military outposts under the command of Serg. Wynand Muys and was named Fort Muys.

Cecil John Rhodes made his home in Muizenberg. When he died in on 26th March 1902 his coffin was placed on a train from Muizenberg Station where it left on its journey to his final resting place in the Matopos mountains in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia)

Army Deserters

Report of two deserters from the 6th Regiment of Foot dated at Cape Town, this 12th day of February 1850.

James Murray, 30 years old 5 ft 7³/₄ inches high, fair complexion, brown hair, hazel eyes, deserted 9th February 1850, enlisted at Leeds, county Yorkshire 24 February 1841, by trade a labourer; was dressed in regimental jacket, forage cap and white trousers.

William Fleetwood, 27yrs and 8 months old, 5 ft 8 inches high, fair complexion, brown hair, grey eyes, deserted 9 February 1850, Cape Town; enlisted 22 June 1840 in Leeds, county Yorkshire; by trade a brass moulder, was dressed in regimental jacket, forage cap and white trousers. J. Michel, Lt. Col. Commanding 6th Regiment. (*Government Gazette 1851*)

Your Society & England

The May issue of the British publication "Your Family Tree" will include a four page spread on "Researching your South African Ancestors"

This wonderful opportunity was given to Sharon and myself to inform readers how to search for their South African ancestors.

Featured also is our very own "Cape Town Family History Society" and our and even a glimpse of "The Cape Almanac"

We would like to thank the editor of YFT Garrick Webster for giving us the opportunity of a life time. Be sure to book your copy at your local news agent as this is going to be a bumper issue that will be sold out fast.

**Your
FamilyTree**
THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR GENEALOGY

A Word of Thanks



Rev. Derek Pratt has decided to step down from his position as chairman of the Society. Derek is one of the founder members and we say a huge thanks for all the support he has given and for being that rock of strength for the committee.



Old Hat

- Subscriptions for all members are now due. Members not paid up by the end of April will lose their member.
- Overseas members are reminded about their 5 FREE DEATH NOTICES. If you snooze you lose - you cannot carry them over from one year to the next. A buddy system is being drafted where local members are paired up with an overseas member to help them if needed.
- A roster is presently being drawn up and members will be asked to assist by bringing a small plate of biscuits or snacks to the meetings. Kindly contact Joan Fitzmaurice at joan-fitz@mweb.co.za or Tel: 794 43 43. If anybody would like to volunteer ahead of time, that would be splendid.



Hot off the Press

The Genealogical Institute of South Africa or GISA as it is better known, has just launched SA Genealogies Volume 10 which covers surnames ROO to SCHN – the cost R370.00 inclusive of p& p in South Africa.

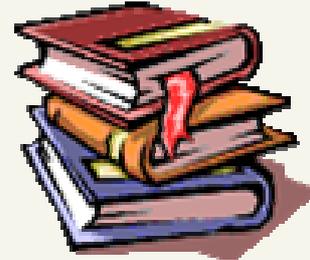
Address:

GISA

P. O. Box 3033

Matieland

7602



Are you at a loss for searching for that missing relative ? Try using the Government Gazettes housed in the National Archives. These weekly newspapers are underutilised but provide extremely rich resources of information. Listed in these weekly publications are : Public notices of land ownership, notice of deceased estates, unclaimed letters, lost and orphaned children, lost and stray animals, army deserters, christenings, marriages & deaths, immigrants, shipping intelligence and passengers, freed slaves, personal advertisements, wanted people and much, much more - these publications started before 1820.



The Cape Town Family History Society

9 Mistral Close, Lakeside, 7945

Tel / Fax : +27- 21- 7888188

Email: society@genealogy.co.za

www.genealogy.co.za/society/socweb.html