



**Newsletter of the Johannesburg
Branch of the
Genealogical Society of
South Africa**

October 2016

Next Meeting 15th October

Randjes Estate,
Randjeslaagte Road
(Opposite Balfour Park Shopping Centre)

2-30pm

**Stan Close
"Researching my
Jewish Roots"**

**Members FREE
Visitors R20**

Someday you'll be an Ancestor too!

SUGGESTED PROGRAM FOR 2016

November 19th: Xmas party – “Strange but True”, Margaret Gundry

No meeting in December

This month's meeting

Our speaker this month is Stan Close who will be telling us about his visit last year to Belarus in search of his Jewish Roots. This promises to be a very interesting meeting and has raised my interest me so much that when I realised how little I knew about the Jews in South Africa, I visited The Jewish Museum in Cape Town. As it happened they were celebrating “175 years of Jewish Life in South Africa”. More about that later.

Here is Stan's story:

“I was born in Bulawayo in (then) Rhodesia, attended primary school in Bulawayo and Ndola, and senior school in Johannesburg. I served 12 years as a SA Naval Officer, 12 years with Eskom as a business performance management specialist, and since 1989 have owned and operated a business which assesses, trains and coaches entrepreneurs. This company has helped some 2500 small businesses to start up and grow in South Africa and in four other African countries.

Background : Stanley John Close married Edith Close (yes – maiden name Close) on 12 December 1970 in Graaff Reinet. The fact that the couple shared the same surname begged the obvious question whether the two Close families were related in any way. And so Stan's genealogical research began. Back in the seventies this was not easy as the internet wasn't around, most other family members were luke warm on the subject, and all charts and family trees had to be done by hand. Stan's research dribbled along until 2015, when some new information on the Jewish side of the family came to hand, and he decided to revive his research work, on the Jewish line as well as the two Close lines.

The Jewish line : Stan's grandfather, Alan Robert Close, married a young Jewish lady, Lilian Sylvia Rosenberg in (then) Salisbury on 23 July 1919. Lily was the daughter of a Russian Jewish couple, Coppel and Mathilda (née Mechanik) Rosenberg, who had emigrated from two small villages in then Russia, now Belarus, to settle in Bulawayo, Rhodesia. This part of the research concerns the origins of the Jewish family in Belarus, the passage of the Rosenbergs from Belarus to Bulawayo, their lives in Bulawayo, and follow up on Rosenberg descendants in South Africa, England and the USA.

In August 2015, together with a local genealogist/ guide, Stan and his cousin Paul Tomlinson (Paul's mother was my grandmother Lily Rosenberg's sister) visited Vilnius in Lithuania and the towns of Vashiliski, Zheludok and Scuchin in Belarus – where our Jewish family originated - to uncover as much information as possible regarding the original Jewish family (ies) who had lived there, and also to expose ourselves first hand to the typical way of life in these small Belarusian villages.

The two Close lines : Modern genealogical research technology, with help from Margaret Gundry from GSSA Johannesburg and the LDS in Parktown, has enabled Stan to trace these two lines back to - **Stan's line :** ± 1600 from Minchinhampton, Stroud, Gloucester and **Edith's line :** ± 1730 from Masham near Ripon, Yorkshire. The two lines were not related – until now.”

“The Goldene Medina”

Celebrating 175 years of Jewish Life in South Africa.

(An exhibition at the Jewish Museum, Cape Town.)

The Dutch East India Company only recognised the Dutch Reformed Church but by 1804 religious tolerance was established and so when the British took over the Cape in 1806 Jewish settlers began arriving in increasing numbers. These settlers were mainly merchants from England and Germany but also included adventurers in search of economic opportunities.

In 1841 the Jewish community held their first service.

With the discovery of diamonds in the 1860's and gold in 1886 many migrated northwards.



Feinberg & Goldberg – Diamond Buyers



Re-created

In 1881, following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II there was a large exodus of Jews from Eastern Europe. Between 1881 and 1910 approximately 40,000 Jews, mainly from Lithuania, arrived at the Cape. Many were attracted by the reports of fortunes to be made on the diamond and gold fields



Wander through the re-created *shetl*, depicting the life immigrants left behind.

Until the late 19th Century Cape Town was the port of arrival and the centre of Jewish life but the Anglo-German character of the community changed with the arrival of immigrants from Eastern Europe in the 1880's.

By 1880 there were an estimated 40,000 Jews in South Africa. A wave of immigration from Eastern Europe increased the population enormously. The wave of immigration continued until 1930 and according to statistics for 1936 there were the 90,645 Jews in South Africa, comprising 4.5% of the total white population. 39,067 of these lived in Johannesburg, 16,285 in Cape Town and there rest spread around the country.

Today the Jewish population of South Africa is approximately 70,000. Johannesburg has the largest population (in excess of 50,000) while Cape Town has approximately 16,000.

On the 10th July 1887 a certain Emanuel Mendelssohn called a meeting to discuss the possibility of establishing a Hebrew congregation in Johannesburg. 88 men attended the meeting and the Witwatersrand Hebrew Congregation was formed.

In 1902 the Immigration Restriction Act was implemented against Indians, Chinese and Lithuanian Jews. It was a requirement of the act that the immigrant had to be able to read and write a European language. It was only after much lobbying that Yiddish (spoken by most of the immigrant Jews) was reclassified as a European language.



The Old Synagogue, Cape Town, now the Jewish Museum. It was built in 1863.

Some Jewish firsts.

The first Jewish wedding – 1844 (Michael Benjamin and Amelia Marcus)

The first circumcision – 1847 (The infant son of R J Joseph)

The first Torah scroll to arrive in South Africa – 1848

The appointment of the first minister – 1849 (the Reverend Isaac Pulver)

Consecration of the first synagogue – 1840

Pulver left the community after only two years - he gave three reasons

He could not get Kosher meat

He could not bring up his children in a place where so little regard was paid to religion

And he could not make his income cover his expenses.

His successor, the Reverend Joel Rabinowitz, only arrived at the end of the 1850's.

From: The Jews in South Africa by R Mendelsohn and M Shain

How strange that cdbooks-r-us should be advertising this book this month!



Touching Circles, Touching Hands

Touching Circles, Touching Hands is the product of more than 3 decades' work for authors Joan Sutton and Mike Kantey. Subtitled "A family chronicle of the 20th century in South Africa" the two volumes *Touching Circles* and *Touching Hands* track the history of some so-called Jodeboere from the early 18th century to the late 1980's. Starting with the arrival of Johann Christian Grundling in 1745, the narrative moves swiftly to the arrival of the Russian émigré Peter Woolf who fought with De la Rey. Attention is also given to Idel Schwartz and his wife "Red Sonia" and their children from Minsk, together with Solomon Nathan Kanterowitz from Lithuania

The activities of the Kantey family in the early twentieth century is also described, culminating in their return to the Cape following the coming-to-power of the National Party in 1948.

The story continues in *Touching Hands*, and tracks the family's continuing involvement in the economic and turbulent political arenas of the 1950's to the late 1980's.

More information is available on the www.cdbooks-r-us.com website, where orders can be placed too.

The books costs R135 (Aus\$15, US\$11, Can\$15, €10, £8 NZ\$16) and payment can be made either via bank deposit/transfer in South Africa or via PayPal for those resident outside of South Africa. Details will be provided on the order confirmation note.

Any questions can be directed to me at colin@cdbooks-r-us.com

Regards

Colin (cdbooks-r-us)

Use Google Books to Get Free Copies of Pages of Family History Library Books

November 4, 2013 By [Nathan Murphy](#)



Earlier this year, FamilySearch announced a [free lookup service](#) for genealogy books and microfilm available at the renowned Family History Library in Salt Lake City. The response was overwhelming, 1000s of people contacted us to take advantage of this free service. Another way to utilize this service is to start with limited preview Google Books and get us to scan the entire page and email it to you for free.

Here's the [online photoduplication request form](#).

Let's walk through the process.

First, start on Google Books: <http://books.google.com/>

Has anyone tried it?

So Stan – is this one of your ancestors?

In 1884 two foul deeds took place on the road from Barberton to Pretoria.

Firstly a man named P H Markley was found murdered and mutilated with all his belongings stolen.

Shortly afterwards the body of a commercial traveller named Robert Close was found lying dead in his tent near Bergendal. Close had been representing a firm of Durban grocers in the Kaap Valley and was travelling back to Pretoria carrying over £1,000.

The man who discovered the body, a transport rider named Gert Coetzee, handed over £300 saying it was all he had found on the body. Like Markley the body of Close had been hideously mutilated.

A Cape detective was employed to investigate the murder and after three years the transport rider and two other men were arrested. Both Markley and Close had been passengers of Coetzee at some stage and a box belonging to Close was found in Coetzee's house. But no conclusive evidence was ever found and the three were eventually released.

The place where the crimes were committed was reputed to be haunted and no transport riders would pass there in the night!

From "Lost trails of the Transvaal, T V Bulpin

From the LDS

Natal and Free State civil deaths are also available!

- 1) Natal -1923 and earlier: <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/721369...>
 - 2) Natal - 1923 and later: <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/695346...>
 - 3) Orange Free State: <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/694784...>
 - 4) Namibia and others: <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C91L-K9YM-Z...>
- Looking for info on the Boer war? Go to <http://www.wmbr.org.za/view.asp...>
Here is the one for the Transvaal <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/2630283...>

How to use Family search and NAAIRS to access records.

First search on NAAIRS for the Estate file you want, and make a note of which Archive it is held in, the year and reference number.

Example to find REFERENCE 9793/1924 in the NAB archives.

Then go to the that list of Probates on the Facebook link and find the Archive you want, then the year and finally the reference number (it will require you to visually search through the final collection of probates on FamilySearch).

Keep in mind that some Archives (such as Pretoria) seem to organise their Estates by the date they were *filed*, not the date given on NAAIRS; so if you can't find the reference you are looking for, look at a later year for the same reference number. Natal <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/results...>
Find the year in the list of Natal records. In this case, 1924. Then, look for which *block* of reference numbers would contain the reference number you want, 9793.

In this case, you want the collection named "No. 9494-9804 1924".

Then it is just a matter of looking through those files until you find the Estate numbered 9793.

Fortunately, they are all sequentially numbered, and the numbers are usually on the Death Notice or on a Cover Page in the top left or top right corner. Don't forget to use the arrows in the top left to see the rest of the Estate file. Other links https://www.facebook.com/notes/south-african-genealogy/naairs-references-that-may-be-online-other-online-films/10153678363892902?__mref=message_bubble

"If the dead cannot survive in the memory of the living
They have passed away as if they have never been."

A Reunion in Cape Town

While in Cape Town during September I took the opportunity of meeting up with Paul Alexander. We had met on line via the St Helena Association face book page – and here's the connection....



Seated -F W Alexander (Pauls Great Grand uncle).
On the right – E B Walton (My husband's grandfather).
On the back of the photograph: "Deadwood, St Helena, 1901."



George and Paul

They both served as censors on St Helena during the Anglo Boer War.
(At the back: Dr Price and Lt. Gordon)

After we met on line I bought Paul's book – Taming the African Veldt, the Alexanders of St Helena and South Africa 1515 -2011.

Paul's ancestor sailed in the "William and Thomas", part of the squadron commanded by Sir Richard Munden, responsible for the recapture of St Helena from The Dutch in 1673. This Richard Alexander is listed as one of the men left behind on the island to start a new life as planters.

A real "Stamvader"!

Those censors were not popular!!

Op een daarvan word deur die krygsgevangenes menige borse blik gewerp. Dit is ook nie te verwonder nie, want as jy daar inloer, sien jy op die grond stapels koerante lê en op die tafel 'n groot aantal briewe. Twee persone is ywerig besig om in die briewe rond te snuffel. Hulle is die twee sensors, **F. W. Alexander en E. Walton**. Eersgenoemde is deur die burgers Runderpes gedoop. Die sensors het hulle daarop toegelê om dit vir die burgers so lastig moontlik te maak. Daar is beweer dat hulle geen kwaad daarin gesien het om baie van die briewe te vernietig nie.

Page 26 – Boere op St Helena, by H de Graaf 22 May 1900

*It's not to be expected because if you look in there you will see piles of newspapers on the ground, and on the table a large number of letters. Two people are industriously shuffling the letters around. They are the two censors, **F W Alexander and E Walton**. The former has been nicknamed "Rinderpest" by the burgers. The censors have tried to make it as difficult as possible for the burgers. It is said that they see nothing wrong with just destroying letters.*

Ons het steeds moeilikhede met ons korrespondensie ondervind. Baie van ons briewe is verskeur, ook dié van ons familie uit Suid-Afrika. Mondeling is belowe om navraag te doen, maar geen verbetering het ingetree nie. Ons het later verneem dat die sensors honderde briewe vernietig het. Die koeverte en seëls het hulle egter bewaar om dit as kampkuriositeite te verkoop.

Page 103- Boere op St Helena, by H de Graaf 22 May 1900

We have constantly had trouble with our correspondence. Many of our letters are torn up, also those from our families in South Africa. Verbal promises are made about an enquiry but there has been no improvement. We heard later that the censors had destroyed hundreds of letters. They save the envelopes and stamps to sell as curiosities.

And if you are in Cape Town over the weekend.....

CAPE TOWN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Saturday 15 October 2016 at St John's Church, Wynberg. 14.15 for 14:30pm

This month's meeting will take the form of an Interactive Journey through a Family History. This will be a look at the basics of how to do a family history but as we journey and each problem arises, you, the audience will be asked to make suggestions of the way forward. So, we will learn from each other. Your "tour guide" on this journey will be Derek Pratt. The approach promises to be fun and interesting to all.

For further information contact David 021 715 5104 davidslingsby@telkomsa.net
or Ann on 021 782 7277 annsmythe@gmail.com

Visitors **R20.00** per person.

Map and website: www.family-history.co.za

Entrance for paid up CTFHS members is free
Non members pay R20.00 per person including tea & eats.

...no generation can exist for the present alone. It is conditioned by the past as much as it conditions the future...we will be failing our duties as trustees for future generations if we deny them a record of our history.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip

My ancestors live with me and it's important that I treat them like they're living elders
Bongani Masondo. City Press 3/3/2013

L D S Family History Library

OPEN 9 AM- 4 PM TUESDAY TO FRIDAY
SATURDAY 6.30 AM – 1.00 PM.

Note – CLOSED ON SUNDAYS & MONDAYS

Note change in Hours

Traditional Naming Patterns for First Names

In Afrikaans families children were often named according to European tradition. This tradition was also strong in Ireland and Scotland (less so in England) and across to Eastern Europe, including the Netherlands and Germany. It seems to be most common from about the mid 1700's to the first part of the 20th Century.

The first Son was named after the Father's father

The second Son was named after the Mother's father

The third Son was named after the Father

The fourth Son was named after the Father's eldest brother

The fifth Son was named after the Mother's eldest brother

The first Daughter was named after the Mother's mother

The second Daughter was named after the Father's mother

The third Daughter was named after the Mother

The fourth Daughter was named after the Mother's eldest sister

The fifth Daughter was named after the Father's eldest sister

Subsequent children were named following the same pattern, being named after the next eldest sibling of the father and mother.

This system can be very useful genealogically. If there is a break in the pattern or the names appear to be out of order it could indicate that a child has died young. The names were not usually used more than once (see note below), but the system can result in children having the same name, e.g. if the child is the third child, and the father is the first child of a father who was the first child!

Note - if a child died, the name was usually used again, particularly in Afrikaans families and commonly in English families. It was not the name of the dead child that was being re-used but the name of the grandfather or grandmother, etc, that was being given again. The system is by no means invariable, even amongst Afrikaner families.

From Doreen Piner (probably off the Internet!)

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Contributions to newsletter will be gratefully received!

Or – should you wish to be removed from the mailing list...

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