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A SERIES OF EARLY MORNING TALKS BROADCAST BY THE S A B C - 1972.  
"SOME PERSONALITIES OF EARLY JOHANNESBURG"

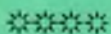
**MEN  
OF  
THEIR  
TIMES**

## Foreword

The Johannesburg Historical Society is pleased to present this publication, the second of a series coinciding with Johannesburg's Birthday (Johannesburg is 87). This publication is based on a series of early morning radio talks on the English programme in September/October 1972, entitled "Men of Their Times". A great deal of research has been undertaken by members of the Executive Committee of this Society in preparing these talks especially the aspects of Historical importance in the beginnings and development of early Johannesburg. In this respect it is unique and important because it brings together from many sources, into one publication, the many facets of the early romantic growth of Johannesburg associated with so many colourful personalities.

The Society is extremely grateful to those who have contributed to this publication which will undoubtedly be most welcome especially to all our members.

A word of thanks is also due to Mr W. Osburn for his part in achieving this publication.



**TALK ON LEANDER STARR JAMESON  
PREPARED BY LUDI LOCHNER FOR JOHANNESBURG  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.**

*5 Minutes exactly.*

Everyone knows about the Jameson Raid – but who was the Jameson who gave his name to this infamous expedition?

Leander Starr Jameson was born on 9th February, 1853, the youngest of 11 children born to the wife of an Edinburgh lawyer turned poet.

Though small of stature, Jameson nevertheless excelled at school sports showing early promise of the indomitable spirit that was to characterise his life. After leaving school, he embarked upon a career in medicine and soon distinguished himself by becoming, successively, Resident Surgeon, Resident Physician and Resident Medical Officer in charge of University College Hospital, London.

But without financial assistance, Jameson could not continue his studies and so, in 1878, at the age of 25, he set out for Kimberley to earn some money.

It was here that Jameson met and came under the influence of Cecil John Rhodes. He quit his medical practice to assist in the accomplishment of Rhodes' dream – an Africa united, from Cape to Cairo, under the British flag. But that meant forcing the Boer Republics into a union with the Cape and Natal. It was Rhodes' plan to bring this about by enclaving the Republics through opening up the territory now known as Rhodesia. Jameson accepted the challenge and set out on many arduous overland trips to this territory with the purpose of sweetening Lobengula, King of the mighty Matabeles and opening up a white settlement.

In 1890, Jameson was appointed Managing Director of Rhodes' British South African Charter Company, the concession holder for the area. In this capacity, he served Rhodes faithfully and soon became known to Lobengula as "The Mouth of the Man who made the great Hole". But his friendship with Lobengula did not endure for long and in 1893, Jameson was forced to take action against Lobengula, leading eventually to the crushing of the mighty Matabele. It speaks highly of the courage and determination of this man that he should have taken on the Matabele army with a force of only 260 souls.

But ahead was still the unfulfilled dream of Rhodes – a united Southern Africa under the British flag.

In the Transvaal, there was mounting unrest and growing dissatisfaction over the Kruger administration. A plan was fostered whereby Johannesburg would rise and invite Jameson, conveniently positioned on the border with 1500 men, to save the women and children from alleged attack by the Republican forces.

But at the last moment the Reform Committee faltered and Jameson, no doubt inspired beyond prudence by his successful campaign against the Matabele, jumped the border, and contrary to instructions, headed for Johannesburg with a party of 560 raiders.

The outcome of this raid, which bears his name, is history. Jameson was forced to surrender at Doornkop,

some miles from Krugersdorp, and was taken to Pretoria Prison, from where he was sent to England to stand trial at Bar in the High Court. Jameson was found guilty of the offense that he did unlawfully prepare and set out on a military expedition to proceed against the dominions of a friendly state. He was sentenced to fifteen months imprisonment, with hard labour.

One would have imagined this frail person, crippled by the ravages of fever and other tropical diseases and now subjected to the cruel system of hard labour at Wormwood Scrubbs and Holloway Prison, to have broken down.

But such was the spirit of Jameson, that when the South African War broke out in 1899, he was back in one of the hot spots of Southern Africa, attending upon the needs of the wounded besieged at Ladysmith.

On 25th June, 1900, he was elected unopposed to represent Kimberley in the Cape Parliament. In the meantime, the repercussions of Jameson's raid had caused Rhodes to resign as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. The British South African Charter Company also called for his resignation as Chairman and Rhodes died, a short while afterwards, a broken man.

In February, 1904, Jameson swept the Progressive Party into Parliament and took over where Rhodes had left off. It is ironic that Jameson should have become Prime Minister of the Cape Colony — a position from which Rhodes had been forced to resign, 8 years previously, because of his participation in the Jameson Raid.

Four years later, the Progressive Party was toppled from power and shortly afterwards Jameson resigned as Leader of the Opposition to devote his energies to the company Rhodes had established. He became Chairman of the British South African Charter Company in 1913.

Leander Starr Jameson died on 26th November, 1917 and lies interred in the Matoppos, beside his friend and chief, Cecil John Rhodes.

Jameson was a self-assured man, a man of tremendous drive and determination, of extraordinary charm and persuasion, loved by friend and foe alike, always acting true to the family motto — *Sine Metu* -- without fear.

LUDI LOCHNER

26th July 1972.

## CAPTAIN CARL VON BRANDIS by P.J. Edginton

A man who could efficiently carry out his duties as a senior Government official, keep order in an unruly community with tact and humour and yet hold the affection of the inhabitants of a rough mining town must have been a remarkable character. Such indeed was Captain Carl von Brandis, the first official Mining Commissioner of the Witwatersrand and, shortly thereafter, the first magistrate of Johannesburg.

Born in Germany in 1827 of a military family he saw service in Austro-Hungary and Italy. In 1857 he came to the Cape with the German Legion (a British Regiment) to assist in the Kaffir Wars. It was here that he met and married Jane Margaret Hohne, who bore him four children and who was a devoted wife and helpmeet throughout his varied career. By 1859 he was serving the Government of the Orange Free State, and nine years later he followed President Pretorius to Pretoria. He officiated as Landdrost in various towns, and then went to the State Attorney's office in Pretoria. When gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, President Kruger sent Von Brandis, then aged 59, as Mining Commissioner to the area. In this capacity he read the first Government Proclamation of the Goldfields on 20th September 1886. Soon after this he was promoted to the post of Special Landdrost of Johannesburg, with duties comprising all matters connected with government, mining and public health throughout the goldfields. With this former assistant, now the Mining Commissioner, Jan Eloff, he soon created order out of the tangle of mijnpachten and diggers' claims.

For some time living and working conditions were extremely primitive. His office and home was initially a tent at about the corner of present day Market and Sauer Streets. This is where a whirlwind scattered and irretrievably lost a number of documents. Then followed a wood and iron shed. By now Mrs von Brandis and the family had come over from Pretoria. They lived in uncomfortable circumstances until the Landdrost's first residence was erected at the corner of Kerk and Smal streets, adjoining the present von Brandis Gardens. Later the family moved to a house at the corner of Twist and Pietersen streets in Hospital Hill.

Although he had held the office of landdrost in a number of towns it is said that Von Brandis's knowledge of law was not extensive, but that his equity was enormous. He had a common sense approach to all problems. On one occasion he ordered the two litigants to go outside and physically fight it out. He had a particular aversion to imprisoning persons for debt. If an indigent woman could not pay her fine he invariably paid it himself. Yet such was his prestige that everyone accepted his decisions. Incorruptible, fairminded, an abstainer and a non-smoker (although he did take snuff) he possessed great personal charm which smoothed many difficulties, and which age did not diminish. A typical example was on the occasion of Paul Kruger's official visit to Johannesburg in 1890. His Honour's speech had upset the Uitlanders and that evening a crowd collected outside Von Brandis's house, where Kruger was staying, and created a disturbance. The mob became menacing and the President's escort were fingering their pistols when Von Brandis came out. He pointed out that the President was his guest, and furthermore that his wife would be furious with him for the damage that the crowd was doing to her garden. He asked them to be good boys and go home, which they promptly did.

Von Brandis realised that after proclaiming the new Goldfields it was incumbent upon him to keep order in the turbulent mining camp and to foster its growth into a proper town. It should be remembered that,

on the one hand, he had to persuade his conservative superiors in Pretoria and, on the other, he had to preserve happy relations with the Johannesburgers. Two of his notable early achievements, both in 1887 were the formation of the Sanitary Board and the establishment of the Johannesburg General Hospital.

The Landdrost was a well-known figure in Johannesburg in his flat-topped hat, morning coat, light trousers and with his characteristic limp. He was a central personage at many public functions, such as the opening of the Globe Theatre in 1888 and the Standard in 1891. He also chaired many sporting bodies and was an original trustee of the Wanderers Club. Von Brandis continued in office throughout the War of 1899–1902 during which he was impartially neutral. The British Government appointed him local Registrar of Births and Deaths. In 1903, at the age of 76, he died at his home in Twist and Pietersen streets and is buried in Braamfontein Cemetery.

There are a number of memorials to Johannesburg's first magistrate. They include Von Brandis square, Von Brandis Gardens (which contains the Chamber of Mines fifteen foot statue to him) the Parliamentary and Municipal ward of Von Brandis, four streets named after him (in the city, in Albertville, Paarlshoop and Turffontein) a mural inside the Magistrates Courts and his grave in Braamfontein. But more than all these things Captain Carl von Brandis lives in the affectionate memory of the people for this great Father of Johannesburg.

**COL. IGNATIUS PHILIP FERREIRA, C.M.G., D.S.O. by Pamela Solarsh**

Col. Ignatius Philip Ferreira, C.M.G., D.S.O., a South African of Portuguese descent, was the distinguished soldier who assumed leadership of Ferreira's camp which preceded the establishment of Johannesburg.

Born in 1840 in Grahamstown, he died in 1921 at Kranspoort. His 81-year life-span is perpetuated by a portrait in oil, painted in Lisbon, by the Portuguese artist, Abel Manca, from photographs lent by the Johannesburg Public Library. The portrait was presented to the city of Johannesburg for its 70th Anniversary by the Municipality of Lourenco Marques in neighbouring Portuguese East Africa.

At a special meeting of the City Council of Johannesburg on 12th October 1956, the then Mayor, Leslie V. Hurd, J.P., received the portrait from Col. Pedro Da Cunha Menezes Pinto Cardoso, Mayor of Lourenco Marques, as a token of friendship to celebrate Johannesburg's 70th Anniversary.

Col. Ferreira was the great grandson of Ignatius Ferreira, a member of an ancient Portuguese family from Lisbon, shipwrecked off the Cape Coast in the first quarter of the 18th century.

Ignatius married a Huguenot and founded the distinguished Ferreira family.

In the portrait the artist portrayed as realistically as possible, the great character of Col. Ferreira. The portrait is five foot high and three and a half feet wide. It shows Col. Ferreira seated beside a table. His black beard and commanding presence — a big handsome soldier — were items quoted to the artist Manca to help him to create his painting.

Col. Ferreira, a Rand Pioneer, was involved in every possible adventure in South Africa. He was a prominent campaigner against the Zulu King, Cetewayo, helped Sir Gordon Spriggs against the Basotho and lead a spectacular life as farmer, soldier and prospector.

Ferreira's Camp was established on the very site where President Kruger's proclamation of the Witwatersrand Goldfields, signed on the 8th September 1886, was read to the diggers. The camp developed into Ferreira's Town, out of which sprang Johannesburg.

He had trekked to Johannesburg from the Bushveld and his camp grew round his wagon. Sadly enough it became one of Johannesburg's worst slums and is today the present Selby.

The "Transvaal Leader" of the 21st September 1906 described Col. Ferreira as a man of middle stature, broad and deep-chested, sturdy under-limbs and altogether well-knitted together, the personification "impersonation" of great physical power. He bore himself as a soldier should.

His training in the old Cape Mounted Police under Sir Walter Currie had so set him up as to make him every inch such a one as the Natives would fear and his white colleagues respect. He was always ready for action and never feared work any more than he did war.

Another publication emphasised that it was no wonder that the able leader of men ruled Ferreira's Camp, enforcing the principles of law and order through sheer force of character. He had no official standing, but President Kruger who knew him well, nominated him to be responsible for the camp.

Ferreira became a notable character among the picturesque figures of the early days. A tale is told that just as he was roaring at a crowd "I am Col. Ferreira – commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George" the horses pulling the wagon on which he was standing gave a lurch and he disappeared from view!

The first Christmas Service in Johannesburg was held at Col. Ferreira's house on Christmas day 1886. Altogether he played a leading part in the life of the diggings. He was one of the first horse racing enthusiasts and was among those who guaranteed the finances of Johannesburg's first official race meeting in June 1887 – the inaugural meeting of the Johannesburg Turf Club.

Financial misfortune later struck this brave lovable man. A streak of bad luck pursued him. He lost the fortune he had made and also his share in a rich gold mine named after him. In September 1896, when Johannesburg had shed her mining camp atmosphere, Col. Ferreira organised an expedition which pegged at night 382 claims belonging to several companies, embracing an area from which gold of many millions has since been produced.

Unfortunately the venture failed because the claims had not lapsed and pegging had not been recognised – ground could be pegged if the owner failed to pay his monthly licence.

Col. Ferreira was a great nature and animal lover.

He died at Kranspoort in a haven of natural beauty on the 13th May, 1921, but his association with Johannesburg will always be remembered and the portrait today hanging above the doors of the lending library in the Johannesburg Public Library, will be a constant reminder of his contribution to the city of Johannesburg.



## **SENATOR SAMUEL MARKS** by Fanny Stern, May 1972.

Talk for the Johannesburg Historical Society to be broadcast by the South African Broadcasting Corporation, September 1972.

Many stories are told of Senator Samuel Marks, popularly known as Sammy. His greatness does not lie in his humour or sound common sense, but in his abundant energy and passion for work that resulted in his being one of the earliest industrialists in South Africa. He was short and rugged in appearance, had no formal education, spoke imperfect English, and corresponded with his partner in Yiddish.

Sammy Marks was born in Neustad, Lithuania in 1843, and absorbed the learning and way of life of a small east European Jewish community. Conditions were not favourable and at the age of 16 he emigrated to Sheffield, in England, where relatives helped him become a petty merchant, and later start a knife finishing workshop. Attracted by stories of a more adventurous life, he arrived in South Africa in 1868 at the age of 25. Helped by Cape Town's Jewish community, he acquired a horse and cart and became a smous, peddling cheap jewellery in the Western Cape.

With the news of the first diamond discoveries, Marks and his brother-in-law, Isaac Lewis, went to Kimberley with digger's requirements, and soon were able to open a large wooden store. They then began to buy diamonds for resale in Cape Town. Later they gave up their shop to work their own diamond claims. Sammy Marks followed his dictum: "If you want to do a thing proper you must do it yourself"; he was the first to go down his mine and the last to leave it.

When mining by individuals was no longer allowed, Lewis and Marks purchased farms along the northern bank of the Vaal. The staple fuel of the diggings was wood. Lewis and Marks mined coal which they sent to Kimberley; Gen. de la Rey was their transport rider. The town of Vereeniging grew up round the colliery.

The next enterprise came with the Barberton gold rush of 1885. Lewis and Marks controlled the Sheba Mining Company, a major business venture. They differed from other Rand mining groups in that they branched out in many different directions.

Marks foresaw a tremendous consumer's market for manufactured goods and initiated several new industries. At Eerste Fabrieken on the farm Hatherley, East of Pretoria, there was a glass factory, a tannery and boot factory, fruit and meat preserving plants, a brewery and distillery, a brick and tile works. Marks started plantations at Maccauvlei; he planted barley (an ingredient in distilling); grapefruit; maize; fruit orchards (for jam making) and also encouraged farmers to plant fruit trees; he developed mule and horse ranches. He carried out experiments in scientific agriculture and helped develop cold storage facilities. He participated in the manufacture of dynamite, and the production of iron and steel. Realising the necessity of railway transport, Marks urged the two Republican governments to complete the rail link across the Vaal, and was present at the historic occasion.

Marks, because of his Biblical knowledge and financial status, was on friendly terms with Kruger and Rhodes and entertained them. Marks offered the Transvaal Republic £10 000 for a statue of Kruger. Executed by Anton von Wouw, the statue now stands in the Church Square, Pretoria.

Always a man of peace, Marks tried to avert the war between the British and the Boers. In England he pointed out the difficulties that would be encountered if she went to war.

At the time of Union, Marks was a member of the South African Party and was nominated a member of the new Senate. He rarely spoke in Parliament but had a strong influence in the lobbies.

A religious man, Marks contributed generously to charities in the place of his birth and in South Africa. He helped in the Jewish field for example with contributions towards the synagogues, the site of the present law courts where treason trials are held, in Pretoria and Vereeniging, and established the Miriam Marks Hebrew School in Pretoria.

Marks died in Johannesburg on the 18th February, 1920, at the age of 76, a millionaire, an industrialist, a patriot and a humanitarian.

**LASCOMBE SEARELLE** by Fred Ziegler.

Lascombe Searelle was a man well-suited to the "temperament" of the Johannesburg of the 1880's. Bustling, energetic, immensely versatile, he was full of plans for the future, interested in almost anything that was new and exciting, from prospecting for gold in the Klondyke to writing prose and poetry. The only thing he never succeeded in was settling down to a peaceful, domestic routine.

Born Isaac Israel, in London, educated in New Zealand, he ran away from home to go to sea, and until his death in England, 47 years later, he roamed three continents without finding a permanent home in any one. His life as Lascombe Searelle was a series of fortunes, and misfortunes. The only constant thread right through it, was his deep love for opera and the theatre.

Long before he had attained his majority, young Isaac changed his name to the more glamorous Lascombe Searelle – Lascombe after a small town in Southern Australia and Searelle an imperfect anagram of Israel. At this stage he was already engaged in various theatrical ventures in Australia.

Shortly after his 21st birthday he sailed for London to supervise the production of a comic opera, which he had written some years previously. We do not know much about the success of this work, but a second opera, "Estrella" ran for 200 performances in London at the Gaiety and later at the Novelty Theatre. It was a great achievement at a time, when such long runs were almost unheard of. This success prompted him to take it to New York. There fate intervened when the sets and costumes were completely destroyed by fire and the production never went on.

After the New York disaster he returned to Australia, where he worked on a number of new operas, writing the librettos as well as the music. He started his own opera company and produced and conducted his own works as well as popular Italian operas.

Following the call of adventure, that was such an integrated part of his character, Searelle, now married to the contralto Blanche Fenton, with their two children and a full opera company, left Australia for South Africa in 1887, a year after the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand. For eight months they presented a series of successful operas in Cape Town, then moved on, visiting all the major centres of the Cape Colony and Natal.

By late 1888 he had earned enough money to move to Johannesburg. By coach and oxcart the entire Searelle Opera Company, singers and musicians as well as a complete theatre of corrugated iron, wooden planks and beams were transported from Durban. The journey was not without incidents. One of the most amusing was recounted by Hedley Chilvers in his book "Out of the Crucible". Chilvers describes a stop at a farmhouse, where the tired company asked for an evening meal and a bed. "The nineteen year old prima donna, Miss Amy Fenton, Searelle's sister-in-law, was terribly fatigued and requested a place to sleep. The well-aproned vrow who was busying herself with her guests replied: 'Ja. You can sleep in Paul Kruger's bed. But if the President comes in tonight – and he's travelling somewhere about the country – you'll have to get up and sleep somewhere else.' "

Eventually the company arrived in the mining town and immediately set about building their theatre. Structural material lay about the intersection of Commissioner and Eloff Streets for days, obstructing

the traffic. The towns' people gazed in astonishment at the progress their first theatre was making. Early the next year Johannesburgers experienced their first taste of culture. Again Hedley Chilvers writes, "The season opened, Searelle conducted 'Maritana' and 'The Bohemian Girl', as well as the Savoy Operas."

"Searelle's Shanty" as his Theatre Royal was popularly called, became the house of many shows, operas as well as variety. A true mecca of the Johannesburg cultural scene.

At the height of his Johannesburg success, Searelle bought the Queens Theatre in Kimberley and repeated his triumphs there. But he loved Johannesburg. When his opera company dissolved, he engaged in other ventures. He became Johannesburg's first impresario in 1891, arranging for the renowned actress Genevieve Ward, and others to perform in his theatre. The photographer Arthur Elliot who became Searelle's scene painter in Johannesburg, and who described him as a generous employer and a versatile artist. Five years later Searelle formed a drama company of his own, and once more repeated his successes by playing to full houses.

But the involvement in theatre did not absorb the full energy of this astonishing man. Between seasons he travelled widely throughout Southern Africa, Mozambique and Rhodesia, describing his travels as he went.

In 1889 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in recognition of his services as an informant on Southern Africa. His interest in mining had never ceased after his experiences in the Klondyke. He tried prospecting for tin in Swaziland and he bought a 4000 acre coal farm. Unfortunately both ventures failed completely.

The outbreak of the Boer War put an end to his theatrical activities. He offered his services to the newspapers as a war correspondent, but was not accepted. Sometime during the war he left South Africa.

There is no record of his ever having returned, nor do we know whether he acquired any wealth here, for, the rest of his life seems to have consisted of a series of bad luck with occasional recoveries.

He travelled between England and the United States, but never again reached the heights of success that had been his in Johannesburg. In 1905 he took an operatic company to America with his latest opera 'Bobadil'. L. Harrman tells us that it was ill-fated. Unpaid, the company was stranded. Searelle's principals defected with his money and left him penniless. Eventually he was imprisoned for a week and on his release his landlady refused to allow him into his lodgings to get his luggage. Homeless, he was forced to spend his nights sleeping on a bench on Boston Common and finally earned a few cents hawking old clothes from door to door.

He tried to augment his meagre income by writing articles and poems for various New York newspapers, one of these caught the eye of the popular American poetess Ella Wheeler Wilcox, who sought him out. Their acquaintance led to collaboration in producing a religious opera MIZPAH, which was presented in San Francisco in 1906.

Even the success of this opera could not do much to improve Searelle's declining health, as he was suffering from cancer. In spite of his ill-health he returned to London, determined to present MIZPAH there, hoping to regain some of his former glory. But his illness was stronger than his will to live. He died on the 18th November, 1907 at the age of 47.

## **PORTRAIT OF A MINING MAGNATE: Sir George Albu (1857–1935).**

A familiar sight to the many motorists who, every morning, wind their way into town via Oxford Road, is the home of Northwards situated on the Parktown ridge. It is one of the few historic and stately homes of Old Johannesburg which survive, a reminder of the more gracious days when Parktown was the 'millionaire's suburb'. This home, designed by Herbert Baker for John Dale Lace, was purchased in 1912 after a disastrous fire, by George Albu a prominent mining magnate. It was to be his home for 23 years as well as a meeting place of gold and diamond millionaires and pioneers in education, sport and social development on the Witwatersrand.

What do we know of the man who bought this home and who contributed so much to the life of our city?

Our story begins in the Germany of the 1870's; a Germany recently united after the Franco-Prussian war; a Germany already beginning to feel the impact of an industrial revolution and whose merchant firms would soon be pressing for the acquisition of a colonial empire in Africa and the Pacific; a Germany that was soon to embark on a policy of *weltpolitik* and naval expansion which was to make Berlin one of the most important European capitals.

It was in one such merchant firm in Berlin that a young, well-educated lad, 18½ years of age, occupied a somewhat junior position. His name: George Albu, the eldest son of Simon and Fanny Albu, a Berlin family of long standing. He was not at all satisfied with his job, for he was torn between the security of a merchant career in Berlin and the call of adventure abroad with all its uncertainties. The cause of his dilemma: some letters he had received from his younger brother Leopold; letters full of glowing accounts of the Cape Colony and more particularly of the diamond fields discovered there.

The call of adventure won the day and George Albu, bidding his parents farewell, made his way to Southampton. There he embarked on a Union Castle steamer, *The Roman*, and after an uneventful voyage arrived at the Cape in May, 1876.

Having little or no money to speak of, George Albu looked around for work and managed to get a job with *Stuttafords* the drapers. He worked for a few months until he had enough money to pay his fare to the diamond fields. When he eventually set off as a passenger on a transport waggon, the journey took him 28 days! !

At long last, having crossed rivers, streams, mountains and the hot, dry plains of the Karoo, he arrived at Kimberley, the centre of the dry diggings. There was hardly a tree or a blade of grass to be seen; the dust, heat and flies made life uncomfortable. But these discomforts were of small moment compared to the mining that was going on and the fortunes that were being made and lost.

It was in this mining world that George Albu and his brother became immersed. He established himself as a diamond broker and evaluator, and having mastered the trade, he set himself up as a diamond merchant and as an exporter for a British firm. The Albu brothers prospered and they extended their operations and acquired a number of claims in neighbouring mines. By 1881, George Albu was on the board of the

Eldorado Diamond Mining Company. The experience he gained during his early days at Kimberley proved invaluable training for his later work on the Rand, both in practical mining and general administrative knowledge.

Albu remained in Kimberley for some 13 years and it was only after the great De Beers amalgamation led by Rhodes, that he, like the other Kimberley pioneers realised that there was no scope for the small mines on the diggings. Their company absorbed by De Beers, George Albu and his brother turned their attention to the newly opened Witwatersrand goldfields. They secured substantial mining interests on the Rand and in 1891 decided to settle in the newly laid out town of Johannesburg.

He spent the rest of his life in Johannesburg. He saw it change from a small mining camp with an apparently insecure future, into a town of some size and permanence which reflected confidence in the mining industry and the wealth of the community. He saw the mining practices change from the primitive open cuttings to the more scientific, mechanised and deep-level mines of today. In all this change he had a significant say for, unlike at Kimberley, he was not squeezed out. He became one of the influential Big Ten mining companies on the Rand.

Once on the Rand he soon made his mark by his business ability, sound judgement and understanding of mining problems. Shortly after his arrival he took over the Meyer and Charlton mine which, established in 1888, had run into difficulties and whose shares had dropped to a few shillings. Albu became its chairman and managing director and by sheer hard work he put the mine on a sound footing. By the time it ceased production in 1932 the mine had produced gold to the value of £11,640,000 and paid its shareholders a dividend of 2163% or roughly 60% p.a.

He interested himself in the most varied ventures on the goldfields and his firm gradually acquired various properties and extended its activities. It was in 1895 that the firm G. & L. Albu with the co-operation of influential continental banks formed itself into the General Mining and Finance Corporation. This group soon became a power on the Rand. It was the transactions of this group that provided George Albu with a fortune and which enabled him to purchase Northwards in 1912.

Albu's keen interest in mining and metallurgy enabled his group to promote several improvements in the gold-mining industry. His mines were the first to reopen after the Anglo-Boer War; they were the first to use tub mills; to erect a concentrating plant; to sink a 400ft shaft on the Rand at Cinderella Deep to explore and test the deep-levels and to conduct blasting experiments in the mines he controlled.

All this activity meant that "no one was less of a figurehead on a board of directors. He (Albu) had a firm grasp of the whole complex process of mining, his thoroughness and personality enabling his mines to produce the results they did to inspire the confidence of investors over many years." *S.A. Dictionary of National Biography*.

George Albu, on the whole, avoided all political activity, concentrating his energies on the gold industry. He gradually became its recognised leader and spokesman when the interests of the mines were affected. It was fitting that he was made a baronet in 1912 for his services to mining.

In contrast to the many other magnates who made their fortunes in S.A. and subsequently left the country, Sir George stayed on and generously and unostentatiously supported many social institutions. He died in Johannesburg on 7th December, 1935 aged 78 years - the doyen of the Rand gold-mining industry.

E. Viglieno,  
Lecturer in History,  
College of Education.



## SIR PERCY FITZPATRICK by Elanor Lochner

The eighteen eighties in South Africa was a period of great adventure and excitement. People from all over the world were flocking to the goldfields of the Transvaal in search of riches. Amongst the crowds of adventurers who made the long and arduous journey to the goldfields was a young man born James Peter Fitzpatrick, a bank clerk and the son of a judge from Cape Town. Early in life he took a dislike to the name given to him on his baptism and decided that Percy should be his new name.

When he left Cape Town in June 1884, Percy Fitzpatrick left behind him his widowed mother and seven brothers and sisters. His aim was two-fold: to escape the humdrum life in the Standard bank in Cape Town and to make his fortune on the goldfields. Travelling round the coast to Durban by sea, he then set off on the long trek by ox wagon to the Eastern Transvaal where attention was focussed for the time being on Pilgrims Rest. On arrival there Fitzpatrick found that the gold resources were running dry and the number of prospectors was diminishing daily. There were no jobs to be had and little gold to be found, and those in the small mining settlement were living a hand to mouth existence. Finally after a few odd jobs Fitzpatrick had to admit defeat and leave the village. He moved on to Lydenburg where he secured a job as an assistant in a store.

It was his friendship with Hugh Lanion Hall which led to his transport riding career and an exciting period of his life later to be recorded in his book "Jock of the Bushveld". Encouraged by Hall Fitzpatrick borrowed some money and equipped himself with oxen and wagons and began his journeys between Lourenco Marques and the gold fields in the Eastern Transvaal. It was a hazardous and enthralling life, filled with colour and adventure the details of which are familiar to all who know and love the story of Jock.

Fitzpatrick's career as a transport rider came to an abrupt end when his team of oxen contracted sleeping sickness whilst taking a little known short cut to Barberton. In that village he obtained a job as a clerk and met and married Lillian Cubitt, his devoted wife always known to him affectionately as "Mate". The boom on the goldfields collapsed, and Fitzpatrick was forced to send his wife back to Cape Town, whilst he looked for some new employment. His transport riding experience landed him the job of organising the expedition which was to show Lord Randolph Churchill the territory of Mashonaland. Fitzpatrick's experience while travelling with this "circus" as he called it, were recorded in his first publication "Through Mashonaland with Pick and Pen."

From Rhodesia it was back to the goldfields to a job with Herman Eckstein which led to his becoming secretary to the new company of Rand Mines Ltd. Fitzpatrick later became manager of the Braamfontein company which was floated to deal in property in the developing residential areas of Johannesburg, such as Parktown and Westcliff.

Together with other prominent members of the mining community Fitzpatrick became a member of the Reform Committee and held the position of Honorary Secretary. His activities at this time were recorded in detail in his book "The Transvaal from Within" published in 1899 and a best seller overnight. Along with other members of the Reform Committee Fitzpatrick was imprisoned in Pretoria following the Jameson Raid. He wrote to the commandant of police offering to give himself up and arranged to be at the Rand Club at a particular time to be arrested. When his offer was ignored he went over to Pretoria and surrendered to the authorities. He spent a month in jail, and was released after a payment of a R2,000 fine.

After spending the war years in Great Britain, from where he was instrumental in the formation of the Imperial Light Horse regiment, Fitzpatrick returned to Johannesburg. He was again involved in many activities being president of the Chamber of Mines and an unofficial member of the Transvaal Legislative Council. He became a fully elected member of the Legislative Council in 1907 and later a member of the first Union Parliament representing Pretoria East.

Fitzpatrick had a life long interest in farming, and owned for some years a farm called "Buckland Downs" near Harrismith in the Orange Free State. Just before the First World War he acquired land in the Sundays River Valley and began to study citrus farming. Financial difficulties hampered his scheme for settlement of ex-servicemen and the Sundays River Settlements scheme was bought by the State in 1923.

Sir Percy Fitzpatrick continued to live on his farm Amanzi cared for by his daughter Cicely, having out-lived his wife and three sons. He is buried overlooking the Sundays River Valley at a site known as the Outlook, now an historical monument.

## **BARNEY BARNATO** by I. Norwich

In the mid-nineties when the Kaffir Share boom had reached its feverish climax Barney Barnato was probably the richest and without doubt the most powerful financier in South Africa. His property and mine holdings had a market value of over £20 million and it was estimated that in the Summer months of 1895 he earned a five pound note for every minute of his working day.

Who was this flamboyant character who showed such sparks of financial genius. He was Barnett Isaacs in the heart of London's poor East End Jewish quarter at a corner of Middlesex Street long known as "Petticoat Lane" on the 5th July 1852, a year to the day before Cecil Rhodes' birth.

Barney's brother Harry and sister Kate were raised in a slum area. Their father owned a shop and they had their schooling in the Jews Free School in nearby Bell Lane. Barney's arithmetic was exceptionally good, and he left school soon after the age of 13.

Their father was essentially a practical pious individual who closed his shop on the Sabbath but frequently during the week he rigged up a ring in his backyard where he taught his sons the rudiments of boxing.

Barney's great asset was his winning manner and his cheerfulness flavoured with typical Jewish Cockney wit. He always confessed to an ambition to become a dramatic actor. His physique was small in stature but astonishingly strong. He loved visiting the Music Halls, but preferred the melodrama never missing the chance of seeing his idol Henry Irving.

One evening in 1871 their cousin David Harris later to become famous as Sir David Harris walked into the Isaac household announcing that he was going to South Africa to seek his fortune in the diamond discovery at Kimberley. He promised to report progress.

In 1867 diamonds were discovered in Kimberley – cousin Harris wrote home enthusiastically about the fortunes to be made. Barney grew restless and scraped sufficient passage money in 1873 with his brother-in-law Joel contributing a silver chain and having learnt that luxury items were in short supply in Kimberley persuaded Barney to take 40 boxes of cigars to sell on a fifty-fifty basis. His brother Harry preceded him and he left on his 21st birthday. After a short stay in Cape Town he paid £5 for an oxwagon to take him to the Diamond Fields, a journey of 600 miles, which took two months.

At that period Stock Exchanges had recovered and diamond prices were rising, but Barnato did not know a diamond from a glasseye as David Harris bluntly informed him when Barney offered his services. He resorted to aselling cigars, clowning and juggling and he also became a booth boxer with a travelling Circus.

Barney teamed up with Louis Cohen of Liverpool together they set up a trestle table complete with scales, pliers and magnifying glass, the bare essentials for diamond trading.

They lived in the most primitive conditions, powdered daily with red dust from head to foot, with Barney making his daily rounds of "Kopje Walloping" the purchasing of the rough stones from the sorting tables of the diamond miners.

Thus began the Barnato Empire; the Barnato brothers joined forces making a steady fortune dealing, working claims and employing experts. Barney however continued to support the local Dramatic Society, where he met an attractive young actress Fanny Bees who he married in 1877.

Cecil Rhodes at this period was by no means idle in Kimberley also amassing a fortune. Rhodes and Barnato soon became keen competitors until the famous De Beers Corporation was formed with each appointed Life Governors.

With news of a Gold Rush on the Rand, Barnato visited Johannesburg in 1888 involving himself in many large financial and property deals.

Barnato's fortune varied with the times. He became a legend in Johannesburg as the founder of the J.C.I. and the Barnato Bank. He always remained cheerful, but with the collapse of his Bank he revealed certain personality changes, developing a marked fear of losing his money with bankruptcy and disgrace. He gradually became more social with harder drinking.

There was really no justification for this because De Beers continued to flourish and the whole outlook of the Rand Mining had improved. His Doctors advised Barney to go on a sea trip to England. He sailed with his wife and nephew Solly Joel on the crack mail Steamer "The Scot". During the course of the trip however he became morose showing signs of immense concern about the Stock Market and his "enemies" in London.

On Sunday 13th June 1897 Barney Barnato suddenly fell overboard. Efforts by a Ships Officer W.T. Clifford, who dived in after him, failed to save him, but with difficulty helped to retrieve his body which was eventually buried in the Jewish Willesden Cemetery in London.

## HANS SAUER by I. Bronstein

In the formidable galaxy of early Johannesburg personalities, Hans Sauer must stand out as one of the most spectacular.

His South African biographical classic "Ex Africa" is essential reading for anyone remotely interested in the Golden City's beginnings, for nowhere better than in his two chapters, "Gold on the Rand" and "The Making of Johannesburg", does one capture the exhilarating, brash, brave atmosphere of those early years.

Johannes Sauer was born on the 11th June, 1857, in Smithfield, Orange Free State, where his father was landdrost, but when a small boy, the family settled permanently in Aliwal North.

In 1876, he registered as a medical student at Edinburgh University and for a while was "clinical clerk" to Sir Joseph Lister, discoverer of antiseptics. On qualifying as a doctor in 1881, he returned to South Africa and soon made for the diamond fields, where he dramatically took charge of the quarantine station on the Modder River, thus saving Kimberley from a threatened smallpox epidemic.

A later epidemic in which Dr. Sauer played a prominent role was the one in which Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, backed up by other Kimberley medical men, refused to diagnose smallpox, believing that such an admission would ruin mining interests. Soon he and Jameson were at loggerheads, and one of the most incredible battles in South African medical annals ensued tarnishing Dr. Jameson's reputation permanently.

Always alive to the possibility of the existence of auriferous reefs, Sauer was one of the first Kimberley men to arrive on the Rand. He amusingly recounts how he and J.B. Robinson met on the coach, both pretending to be en route for Pretoria, and then, when each discovered the other's destination, agreeing to journey together to the goldfields.

He subsequently moved to the Rand as Rhodes' representative, and the magnate's very first interests on the Rand were secured by him. The numerous stories of chances missed and chances seized by many famous mining personalities, reads like a fairy tale. An amusing statement Gardner Williams, the eminent American mining engineer, was never able to live down, was the reply he gave to Hans Sauer on being asked his opinion of the Rand fields: "Dr. Sauer, if I rode over these reefs in America, I would not get off my horse to look at them. In my opinion, they are not worth hell room".

In 1886, Sauer accepted the position of District Surgeon of the Witwatersrand.

Not only was he District Surgeon, he was also on the Diggers Committee, and later Chairman of the Sanitary Board. As Chief Consulting Surgeon at the Johannesburg Hospital, he was instrumental in instituting the hospital tax on native labour, payable by employers. This tax, together with direct grants from the Government, put finances of the hospital on a sound footing.

The original hospital, almost opposite Heights Hotel in Commissioner Street, served also as the goal. It was made of mud and wooden poles, and here Sauer successfully amputated the gangrenous arm of a native, with the versatile Colonel Ferreira administering the chloroform.

Hans Sauer must be one of the only doctors in the world who has actually suggested to the authorities, a reduction in his fees. Apart from a fixed salary, he was entitled to charge £10.10.0 for every post mortem, and was also paid to attend floggings – his function being to assess the fitness of the individual.

However, when Dr. Leyds attempted to follow Sauer's suggestion, an angry Volksraad declined, the feeling being that for such disagreeable work, he should be paid accordingly!

Apart from medicine, he was still doing business on the side and his wealth rapidly increasing. One of his most successful business ventures was to provide financial help to an English miner, Harrison, for the working of a coal deposit at Boksburg, one of the earliest on the Rand.

A founder and second chairman of the Rand Club, Sauer is described in the history of that institution as a "big jovial man who favoured picturesque clothes". Rhodes called him "the genial ruffian".

Louis Cohen had a great deal to say about him, not always kindly, but much of it humorous. "Dr. Hans Sauer, an Africander to his heelings and his feelings, was a jovial-visaged medical man, who would at a price, cure you of anything bar poverty. His diagnosis, apart perhaps from mines, was always correct to a tick; if you had pneumonia or measles, you bet you would die of pneumonia or measles and there'd be no bones about it . . .". He writes of litigation in which Sauer was involved, and it is true that our doctor did spend much of his earlier life involved in one legal case or another.

In 1890, his name permanently commemorated in Sauer Street, he resigned his position as District Surgeon and left for London to study law.

He again became firmly involved in Cecil Rhodes' financial activities in 1893, and it is in Rhodesia that he is best known as a pioneer. In the Matabele Rebellion of 1896, he accompanied Rhodes and a handful of others, unarmed, into the Matopos to make peace with the insurgent leaders, an incident famous in Rhodesian history.

With Sauer's desire always to be where there was action, it was no accident that he was in Johannesburg at the time of the Jameson raid. As a member of the Reform Committee, he was imprisoned in Pretoria, eventually being fined £2000.0.0. for his participation.

After 1900, he and his wife, a sister of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, made their home in England. He died on the 28th August, 1939 at the age of 83.

Hans Sauer was certainly one of Johannesburg's most versatile pioneers. A keen shooting man, he was repelled by insensate killing of game and was largely responsible for the first Game Protection Act which his brother, J.W. Sauer, pushed through the Cape Assembly in 1884. An excellent chef, a gourmet, a financial wizard, doctor, lawyer, and lover of life and people, he can certainly have few equals in vitality and interest.

## W. H. AURET PRITCHARD—Land Surveyor by J.B. Wentzel

Land Surveyor, Farmer, Digger and Evangelist – William Henry Auret Pritchard – 1861 to 1947 – was truly one of Johannesburg's architects and founder fathers. He is rightly remembered as the man who laid out the city centre.

He was born and grew up in Beaufort West from where he went to school at "Bishops" that is the Diocesan College, Rondebosch, which in those days had a survey class in which he qualified in 1881.

He spent the next five years eeking out a living farming with his brother at Harrismith and surveying in Fraserburg, Vryburg and finally in Kimberley, which in 1886 was buzzing with rumours about the gold discoveries on the Witwatersrand.

One day in Kimberley he happened to see a demonstration of gold panning by a digger called Alexander. He was so impressed that he determined to try his luck as a digger and less than a month later we find him sharing a wattle and daub hut in Ferreira's Camp with two men and a mule!

He soon recovered from his gold fever because he realised that on the Rand there would be no easy pickings for a lone and impecunious digger. Wisely he turned again to his profession and his services were soon in demand.

Almost his first job was to survey the village of Paarlshoop on the portion of Langlaagte belonging to Gerhardus Oosthuizen on which George Harrison or George Walker or both of them had discovered the Main Reef outcrop a few months before. Many years later he was photographed pointing down into the workings on the Discoverer's Claim awarded to George Walker and from his remarks at that time it is apparent that he regarded Walker rather than Harrison as the discoverer.

There was some controversy about where a village to house the diggers who were living in Ferreira's Camp and the Natal Camp should be sited. At one time it was seriously suggested that the new camp should be set up either on Paarlshoop or somewhere to the south of the farm Langlaagte. However, even though the farm Randjeslagte which was Government ground had been proclaimed with four other gold farms on 15th September 1886, it was decided to concentrate the diggers there and six hundred stands in two distinct parallel blocks were surveyed and laid out by the Government Surveyor, Jos. E. De Villiers.

In December what was referred to as a "preferent right of occupation" of these stands for five and later for 99 years was sold by public auction for sums varying between 1/- and £280, but the centre portion, that is the part bounded by the present day Diagonal, Bree End and Pritchard Streets, because it was pegged out in thirty six mining claims held by the Randjeslagte Syndicate, was excluded for the time being.

Notwithstanding, the Executive decided against payment of compensation which ultimately amounted to some £19,000 to cancel these claims. Pritchard as a private Land Surveyor tendered for the task of surveying and laying out stands in this centre area and his tender was accepted.

He must have experienced many difficulties in carrying out his task because it soon became apparent that De Villiers had somehow failed accurately to align the streets in the northern sector with those in the south so that the only thing for him to do was to extend say Eloff Street directly in the line of the part of Eloff Street that existed in the southern section and to put a kink in the road where it joined the northern sector at Bree Street. This kink can be noticed even today. It was almost as if there was a fault in the jig-saw puzzle.

Another complication was that parts of the area that he was surveying during February and March 1887 were still occupied by hopeful diggers sinking pits and trenches to explore the two subsidiary reefs that are said to traverse the area.

In the last years of his life Pritchard made some rather enthusiastic claims about the area saying for example that a rich reef ran under the Law Courts and that there had been a mine there. He also claimed that there were very rich reefs buried three or four thousand feet under the main shopping centre of Johannesburg, but of course the area is far north of the Main Reef and it is noteworthy that at a dinner given in his honour in 1934 he was only prepared to say that whilst he was surveying diggers were still active in the area and that the "West Government Reef" which apparently passes under a corner of the old Post Office "might if it were fully mined have proved payable because the same reef was later found to be payable in parts on the West Rand".

Sometimes Pritchard was criticised for making the stands too small and the roads too narrow, but he always explained that not only had he fit to in with the existing surveyed areas, but that both he, and De Villiers before him, believed and were told that they were laying out a temporary miners camp. No doubt this is the reason for his insisting upon being paid in cash and not in land for his services – a decision which he afterwards bitterly regretted.

Throughout his long and active life – he was still working in his 80's – he was a very religious man and an active evangelist. He was personally friendly with President Kruger who granted him some land on which to establish a home for hoboies which was run by a Father Kelly and known as "Kelly's Home", the name by which generations of soldiers have known Army Detention Barracks, though there is of course no connection between them.

His name will go down to posterity as the man who surveyed and laid out part of the centre of the biggest city in Southern Africa and who gave his name to one of its principal thoroughfares.



## THE STRUBEN BROTHERS – PIONEERS OF THE GOLDFIELDS

by J.B. Wentzel

The original Captain Struben, whose sons were to find fame for the part they played in the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, was a German in the Dutch Navy who, before he could marry his English wife, agreed to become a British subject to satisfy the wishes of his prospective father-in-law.

He settled with his wife in Natal on the banks of the Tugela where his eldest son, Henry, known as Harry, was born, and some 14 years later, in 1851 his youngest son, Fred, first saw the light of day.

In 1854, after the death of his first wife, Captain Struben moved to the newly established village of Pretoria where, for a while, he and his family lived with Martinus Wessels Pretorius. It was probably because of his friendship with the Trekker leader that at this time Captain Struben was asked to become the first President of the Free State Republic, an honour that he reluctantly declined.

Instead, assisted by his son, Harry, he soon built up substantial interests in land and transport while Fred went to school in Pretoria and later in Pinetown.

It is recorded that in 1865 when Fred was only fourteen, with his brothers Harry and Ted and two wagons, he walked the 400 miles back to Pretoria, acting as voorleier because all but one of their native servants had deserted them. Fred was a delicate boy and he suffered much as a result of this journey, so much so that he never went back to school but spent the ensuing years actively assisting in the transport business and from time to time trying his luck as a digger and prospector, nearly always in the company of his brother Ted. They spent some months on the diamond diggings at Vooruitzicht and in the middle 70's they were at Pilgrims Rest, but although he learned a lot from these experiences about the geology of the Transvaal and became bitten by the gold bug, he was not very successful; so much so that he returned to the transport business and at this period his career closely paralleled that of Percy Fitzpatrick. Indeed, he, or more likely his brother Ted, could have been a model for one of the characters in "Jock of the Bushveld".

In the early 80's Louw Geldenhuis who then owned the farm Wilgespruit north of Roodepoort, while visiting the Barberton area, was struck by the similarity between the quartz reefs there and the outcrops that he had seen on his farm. Louw Geldenhuis persuaded Fred and Harry to come to the Witwatersrand and explore these outcrops.

Whilst Harry, enthusiastically assisted his brother, financing him and buying the adjoining farm Sterkfontein on which Fred and his assistants began their exploration, he was not very actively engaged in the actual prospecting and mining, but he acted rather as his brother's agent with the authorities.

The operations on Sterkfontein were soon abandoned and in February 1884 the Strubens moved to the eastern part of the farm Wilgespruit which they named Cliffendale. They found gold in a number of places and particularly in a reef which they called the Confidence Reef where the initial values were promising. Harry exhibited samples of the ore and of the gold that they had extracted, to the President and a committee of the Volksraad, but although in September 1884 they had installed a five stamp battery which could crush 16 tons a day, after their first success the Confidence Reef and all their other diggings on this farm proved disappointing and uneconomic.

It is perhaps ironical that George Harrison and his friend George Walker should both have assisted the Strubens and that Fred should have been instrumental in sending George Harrison a few miles away to the widow Oosthuizen at Langlaagte where in February 1886 George Harrison alone or with George Walker, stumbled upon the Main Reef which had so long alluded the grasp of the Struben brothers. If Fred and Harry did not literally discover the Main Reef, their pioneering work was instrumental in its being found.

After the discovery of the Main Reef the brothers played a substantial part in its exploration and the development of the gold mining industry on the Witwatersrand. During 1886 and most of 1887 their battery continued to operate to assist the diggers particularly on Langlaagte and Roodepoort, but they stopped their own mining activities on Wilgespruit itself.

The ruins of the Strubens' small stone cottage, some foundations and cement bases for machinery at their stamp mill, and the pits, the trenches and the adits which are mute evidence of their exploration and prospecting particularly of "The Confidence Reef" are soon to be engulfed by township development. However, it is good to be able to report that efforts to preserve the ruins of the cottage and to include the main Confidence Reef diggings in a substantial park area promise to be successful.

## IN APPRECIATION OF ANTON VAN WOUW by Rowan Prins

No one can be but fascinated and amazed when viewing the examples of miniature bronzes of Bushmen hunting and Bantu at work and asleep, in the Johannesburg Art Gallery. The achievement of accuracy and realism in so small a scale is remarkable.

To marvel again at Anton van Wouw's genius for realism, but in a different scale, go to Pretoria's Church Square. Look first at the greater than life size veldskoene of the Voortrekkers around the plinth of the Kruger monument. Observe the twist on the riempiers as they pass through the eyelets. Lift your eyes to the strong horny hands that resolutely grip the voorlaaiers, and then up to the faces – the weathered bronze out of which the eyes with cavity pupils seem to come alive and gaze across the square. All tell that this "uitlander" who fashioned them identified himself with the cause of these burghers and the frockcoated top hatted President who towers above, the very epitome of stoicism.

In the foreword to the book "Twentieth Century South African Art" Professor Heather Martiensen said "with no indigenous stimulus the story of sculpture in South Africa begins with the settler artists, first among them Anton van Wouw who came to this country in 1890 as a man of thirty, trained in the conservation traditions of the Rotterdam Academy. He is perhaps more a realist than an academic sculptor, his searching eye and patient hand recorded faithfully both type and individuals. He is an isolated figure for almost a whole generation."

In 1938 a little book by Dr Morris J. Cohen "Anton van Wouw – sculptor of South Africa" was published. He said "Anton van Wouw is a man of great charm and simplicity. Indeed his simplicity is his charm. There is a frankness in his eye and when he speaks his face lights up good humouredly. He never makes sketches or drawings of what he is to produce."

J.H. Hofmeyer in a foreword to the book said "I am afraid that we have not yet in South Africa adequately appreciated the significance of a common artistic heritage as a bond of national unity. Work such as that done by van Wouw is the proud possession of all who count themselves as South Africans – it is for the enrichment of us all. Rightly conceived this work is a valuable contribution towards the attainment of South Africa's ideal of national unity."

Van Wouw was born in Driebergen, Holland in 1862 and came to Pretoria in 1890 where he worked for a gunsmith and taught drawing and painting after hours. With Frans Oerder he was commissioned to paint mural landscapes for the reception hall when the Lourenco Marques–Pretoria railway was opened in 1899. In this year he received the commission for the Paul Kruger statue.

He is not remembered as a painter, as Esme Berman puts it "because of his dedication to the recreation of reality in the most faithful terms, such an approach when applied to painting tends to invite tromp-l'oeil procedures."

Van Wouw's drawings were more spontaneous and convincing. His cartoons and caricatures for the Pretoria press reflect the acuteness of his eye and the sureness of his hand. Johannesburg has some claim to him because he moved to Johannesburg in 1940. He died four years later. He married twice, his first wife was a sister of Jan Cilliers and the second a sister-in-law to President Reitz. He was awarded the medal of honour for sculpture by the South African Akademie in 1940.

Many Johannesburgers do not realise that the bas relief frieze above the portion of the railway station is by van Wouw. It was to have been cast in bronze – but the railway administration was short of funds – so it was done in cement. In 1947 for the Royal visit the frieze was sprayed with bronze.

Other works by van Wouw are General Lukin, President Kemp, President Reitz, full-figure bronze of Botha in the uniform of the British Army, Onze Jan, Hertzog, uniformed Koos de la Rey, Andrew Murray and Gordon Leigh.

**PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS:—**

“Johannesburg is 85” — out of Print.

L. & E. Lochner: “A Case for the Preservation of the Rissik Street Post Office” — R1.00.

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