

Maart 2009

Dagsê al die belangstellendes in die geskiedenis van ou Pretoria,

Verlede maand se stuk oor die "te Buffels" het groot belangstelling uitgelok. Hier is uittreksels uit twee van die briewe wat ek gekry het.

Van Hennie Heymans

Baie dankie vir hierdie interessante "polisie-gerigte" nuusbrief.

Elsie Roelofse het ook my aandag op die aanwending van buffels deur die polisie gevestig. Dit is bekend dat Duitsers in SWA, die Engelse, en Xhosas in die Oos-Kaap ook op osse gery het en hulle as pakkdiere gebruik het. Die osse is ook, soos perde, beslaan. Ek het al by geleentheid van die hoefysters wat op osse gebruik was, gesien.

Of die polisie buffels gebruik het - dit weet ek glad nie! Ek betwyfel dit omdat buffels van die gevaarlikste diere is. In elk geval ek sal my oë oophou vir buffels in polisie diens. Prof GN vd Bergh het 'n boek oor die polisie diens van die ZAR geskryf en ek kan nie onthou dat buffels gebruik was nie. Miskien was hierdie polisie voor die vestiging van die ZARPS. (Ek weet die ou SAW het "Buffels" op die Grens gebruik.)

Tot in die 1930's is donkies deur die SAP en sy voorgangers in streke aangewend waar perdesiekte volop was.

Een van die siektes wat die Boere meeste gebruik het om militêre- en kommandodienste te vermy was - glo dit as jy wil – aambeie. Dan kon hulle nie perd ry nie!

Om Zulu's as polisie te gebruik was 'n tradisie wat tot vandag voortduur. Ek het foto's van 1906 waar die Zulu Polisie te ou Pretoria Sentraal diens doen in hul tradisionele Zulu drag. Van die verslae wat ek gelees het dui daarop dat hulle ten alle tye dapper krygers gewees het.

Groete, Hennie

Van Professor Fransjohan Pretorius

As mens tyd gehad het, sou 'n nagaan van veldposte waarskynlik aandui dat daar 'n plekkie genaamd Buffels was. Anders gooi jy die mooi storie omver van die ou oom wat gesê het "te" is nie 'n goeie ding nie. Die enigste "te" wat reg is, is te perd en tevrede. As jou suggestie reg is, dan kom te buffels nog by!

Hartlike groete, Fransjohan Pretorius

Van Elsie Roelofse

Elsie het vir my foto's gestuur wat onlangs op 'n plaas in die Waterberge geneem is van mense wat op 'n buffel ry. Ek kan die foto's vir belangstellendes aanstuur.

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Ek het nou genoeg geskryf oor oorlog, konflik, kanonne en sulke goed. Hierdie maand se brief is spesiaal vir die dames.

## Huwelik van Sara Susanna Preller en Charles A. Celliers

In September 1880 verskyn die volgende berig in De Volksstem. Celliers, C.A. Getroud op 22 September met Sara Susannah Preller, oudste dogter van C.F. Preller [V 1880-09-25].

Ek het 'n beskrywing van die huwelik in twee ou Pretorianas opgespoor [Pr 005 p15] [Pr 006 p10]. Hier volg die oorspronklike Engelse beskrywing van die gebeure.

### Heloise Greenlees [a] remembers a Fashionable Wedding in Occupied Pretoria.

It was a glorious spring day in 1880, and the little village of Pretoria was arrayed in beauty. The fruit trees in the gardens were in their full glory; little pink roses on the hedges were holding up their heads to the sun, and smilingly opened their petals as if to say, "Hail Smiling Morn". The willow trees with their graceful fresh green flowing robes, next the gurgling stream, swayed with joy; the birds, too, seemed to know something different was happening on this day, for they chirped with greater effulgence than usual. As Pope says:

Hear how the birds on every blooming spray,  
With joyous music make the dawning day.

That was how this spring day broke. The excitement that had been seething in the village for weeks, in anticipation of Sarie Preller's marriage to Charl Celliers, uncle of the famous Afrikaans poet, Jan F.E. Celliers, which was to take place on this day.

The little chainstitch machines in many homes were silent after having whirred day after day for weeks, sewing the bridesmaids' and flower girls' frocks, and with a sigh of relief mothers put them into their covers and laid them aside.

Apart from sewing bridesmaids' frocks, it was a case of all hands to the pump, for as there were no caterers, friends came forward to offer their help to Mrs. Preller. Some roasted chickens, ducks, and geese, others baked sponge cakes, the real kind made with twelve eggs, and koeksisters. Then there were the milk tarts, and ordinary jam tarts; these my mother made, as she excelled at pastry making.

Pioneers have a spirit of sincerity towards one another which is fascinating for they know not the meaning of the word selfishness nor unkindness.

As well might the mountain streamlets say  
They have nothing to give to the sea because  
they are not rivers,  
Give what you have, to some  
It may be better than you dare to think.

That is it! Give what you have. That was just what the kind friends of Mrs. Preller did, they gave her all their sincere friendship and love. The result was that Mrs. Preller was relieved from a great deal of worry on the day of the wedding.

Sarie, the bride [b] was Mr. and Mrs. Prellers' eldest daughter, a very pretty brunette, tall and graceful. Her parents were highly respected and liked.

Mr. Preller [c] was a lawyer; he had a strong personality, clever and genial with a keen sense of humour. He was the uncle of the late Dr. Gustav Preller.

Mrs. Preller was handsome, dignified and poised, with a kind heart which endeared her to all. So no wonder Harmony was a favourite meeting place for old and young. Apart from the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Preller, Harmony was also a beautiful spot, and attracted the village people.

Charl Celliers [d], whom Sarie was to marry, was an alert, nice looking young man. He came from Wellington, Cape Province and was a direct descendant of the Voortrekker of that name. He was considered very eligible. Sarie was, according to the Talk over coffee cups, making a brilliant marriage. Charl was later to become manager of the Transvaal Board of Executors. Those days getting married to a man with an income of £400 per annum was looked upon as a very good match, so whether Charl thought Sarie was making a "brilliant" marriage I can't say – really not any of my business either.

Our home was only one of many where there was a certain amount of hustle on that day, for my sister was to be a bridesmaid and I a flower girl, so in order to be sure that everything was in order with our frocks, in case of any readjustments to be made, we started dressing in plenty of time with the usual result that we were ready far too early and time dragged. We dared not sit down in case of our frocks creasing, especially as they had been so well pressed by our old Ayah Sara, who would not allow anyone else to press "die nonnies se rokkies". We spent our time while waiting to be fetched, going from one room to another, and pacing up and down the long passage much to my father's amusement, who with a twinkle in his eye told us to stand and read a book, which he well knew we could not do as we were too excited, for it must be remembered this was to be no ordinary wedding. Everything was going to be just a little different to the weddings we were used to.

Soon 10:30 a.m. struck and we were fetched to go to the church, and whew! were we tired!! But our tiredness soon wore off when we met the other bridesmaids in the Konsistorie Kamer of the little church on the Square. The ceremony was to take place in the little cruciform thatched church on Church Square at 11 a.m.

There was a wave of excitement hanging around the Konsistorie Kamer and suddenly one of the flower girls said, "Oh! Here she comes" – dead silence – and there stood the lovely bride in a beautiful dress of white satin, made in many narrow gores going into sharp points into the waist, the skirt trimmed with blonde lace and seed pearls. The long train was caught up at the back to form a bustle effect. Her veil covered her face and hung down to her knees. No bride ever entered the church on her wedding day with her face uncovered. Soon the twelve bridesmaids and six flower girls were told to fall into line and follow the bride and bridegroom into the Church. There was a strange silence in the church when this long procession entered, for were the bridesmaids not dressed in the latest Polonaise style of bodice? Their skirts were of deep cream Indian Muslin, a soft clinging material. The Polonaise was carried out in soft old gold material. The Polonaise was actually a tight fitting bodice fastening down the back with small buttons. From the waist in front there was a sort of pinafore which was draped in deep folds from right to front, sweeping to the back from where it was caught up into the waist to form a bustle effect and hanging down in a sweep to the knees, making what they called a waterfall. This polonaise was the very latest from Paris, and I think

our mothers were extremely clever to have made them for it was quite a complicated business to drape that pinafore, for they were really very professional looking when completed. How Sarie Preller got hold of this latest Parisian idea, I would not know, for illustrated papers of any description were almost unknown, with only our oxwagon for transport from the coast.

On their heads the bridesmaids wore a small mop-pillbox affair in Indian muslin and soft old gold satin ribbon, and a red rose rakishly placed on the left side.

The flower girls wore book muslin – forerunners of present day organdie – frocks, tied with bright maroon moire ribbon sashes, about 12 inches wide, of a quality such as is not known these days. On their heads they wore small wreaths of flowers.

The ceremony was performed by the late Rev. Dr. Bosman, who was a cousin of the bride's mother. After the bride and bridegroom had signed the register the bridesmaids and flowergirls stepped back from the aisle to make a passageway for the bridal couple to pass by; then we formed into line once more and followed the newly wed couple, and so out of the little church, and on to Church Square, which was crowded with a truly mixed humanity, for apart from the storekeepers, business people, all the old "ayahs and outas" of the friends of the Preller family were there also, and they added a little splash of humour to the solemn affair with their quaint and witty remarks. I heard old Ayah Sabine, who was our neighbour's wash woman say, "Aah foeitog! Hoe pragtig lyk Miss Sarie vandag." "Waarom sê jy 'Aah foeitog'? Sy kry mos 'n goeie man," "Nie ou Simon nie" – came the retort from Sabine. I suppose old Sabine was thinking of her own blighted married life – for she had tears running down her cheeks when she made that remark.

Cheers from the crowd greeted the bridal couple as they stepped into the smart navy blue Surrey, a sort of face to face vehicle, something like the later Victorias but much lower, and no driver's seat, and a canvas canopy edged with a fringe to keep the sun off the occupants. So in this case, the bride and bridegroom faced the driver, a Cape Coloured man in a smart navy blue suit. As they moved off, once more cheers went up from the crowd, and above the cheers were heard "Arrie! Hy hou sy lyf pen vandag!!" from the old Cooks boy of Arcadia to the driver. I suppose he meant to convey that the driver was fancying himself. The crowd roared with laughter and more shouts to the driver came, but were lost as the little procession was lining up to follow the bride. I remember three or four flower girls went off in an American Spider. The bridesmaids had driven off before us, so I am not sure what sort of transport they had. And every kind of vehicle that a horse could pull was in use that day and business certainly was at a standstill from the look of things on the Square.

After what seemed quite a long time we reached Harmony [e], where the bride and bridegroom walked to a huge tree, which we children named the Wild Apricot, for it bore little yellow fruit which had a skin like the apricot. We used to eat this fruit and how we are alive to tell the tale I don't know. I have never seen another tree of this kind. It was a lovely tree with a wide spread, and I sometimes wonder whether it may perhaps still be in existence, in the lower part of the Normal College.

Under this tree congratulations were offered to the couple, and after congratulations the guests were invited to go into a marquee, which was a

new innovation, and was lent to Mrs. Preller by one of the military regiments, or rather by an officer of the 94<sup>th</sup> Regiment, who happened to be a great friend of the family. The marquee was pitched on the green grass next to the stream of water which separated the homestead from the fruit garden, which stretched down to what is today Van Boeschoten Avenue, and under the shade of the large celtis trees (witstinkhout) and mimosas, and the willows, it was indeed a cool shady spot.

We younger girls and boys had our tables set out under the shade of trees a little lower down the stream on green grass. We seated ourselves down to a good feed, for what, with all the excitement from early morning, we were quite ready for something to eat.

After a little while we heard much merriment come from the marquee, so this was too much for us and we ran to peep in, oh what a sight it was! The long table set out with all the delicious looking food, and pure white flowers, and every guest comfortably seated. Champagne? Oh Yes! And not South African either. I suppose, old Mr. Yzermann [f], a Hollander, who was fond of delicacies and food generally must have ordered it for Mr. Preller. We were fascinated at the sight, and wished we were grown up to stay in that marquee and listen to all the fun and merriment. Judge Kotze was proposing the health of the bride and the bridegroom, so we stayed on to see what would happen next, when the whole crowd burst into singing "Die apie se bruilof" I think, for I just remember them singing "Ons dans laat dit so gons, die onderveldse kotiljons", the lines I knew of that long song. I peeped in again after the singing and saw our officer in tartan trousers, rather narrow, with a navy blue tunic. I thought he looked funny.

These British Army men were at this wedding as this was of course during the first British occupation (1877-1881) and just a few months before the War of Independence.

When the toast of the bridesmaids and flower girls had to be proposed we were asked to come into the marquee and were we pleased. Mr. Johann Rissik proposed the toast, and as usual said all the flattering things about us. Mr. Rissik later became the first Administrator of the Transvaal. After the toast another song was sung, but I am not sure what it was.

Just about 2:30 one of the soldiers from the military band struck up "God Save the Queen" and every one rose, for the Administrator Colonel Lanyon, later Sir Owen, arrived and with him Rider Haggard, who had been Sir Theophilus Shepstone's Secretary. Every one was surprised to see him back in Pretoria, as he left for England in August 1879. However, I suppose the call of South Africa was too strong for him. Why "God Save the Queen" should have been played for Colonel Lanyon I did not know. I suppose our young bandsmen were over-enthusiastic.

We younger ones, tired of listening to toasts, got the bright idea of going paddling in the river, which we did. The river is the same murky stream which we all see when driving down Van Boeschoten Avenue. Those days it was crystal clear, with maidenhair ferns growing on the banks, and it was a favourite bathing spot. It was shady and cool and safe, for it was just at the foot of the fruit and vegetable gardens. We paddled to our hearts' content, and when we returned we found the grownups playing dumb characters, and here

we enjoyed ourselves trying to guess what the miming all meant, and what play they conveyed.

Soon the sun was waning and our mothers wanted to return to their homes, but Mr. Preller persuaded them to let us remain for the dance in the evening, promising that we'd go off to our Kermis Beds in the big outside room, not later than 11 o'clock. Now I may add, though young, we were no mean dancers, and we danced the polka, mazurka, schottische, and the "Vas Trap" and "Sif" with any amount of zest: the quadrille also with its many figures was no stranger to us! We stayed and had supper under the trees, and then danced until 11 p.m., when the bride and bridegroom went off in their little "perdewa" drawn by four horses, and so to us, young flower girls, came to an end a most unforgettable day. The older people I do believe danced through the night.

As I said a wedding those days was an all day affair, and the next day all the friends were back at Harmony to help Mrs. Preller clear up and get her home back to normal.

During the siege of 1880-81, just a few months after Sarie and Charl got married, Mr. Preller was appointed Mayor, thus becoming the first Mayor of Pretoria [g]. Mr. Preller had two brothers, Robert and Charl, and one was the father of Dr. Gustav Preller. He also had a stepbrother Maurits.

Sarie and Charl had three children [h]: Sybil who married Colonel Anderson; he was attached to Sir Patric Duncan's staff when he was Governor-General. Mrs Anderson and her husband are deceased. The son, Mr. Cyril Celliers, for years in the Agricultural Department, still lives in Pretoria. Mrs. Currie, the second daughter, lives in England.

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#### **[a] Heloise Greenlees [Meintjes] [1870 – 1958]**

Sy was die dogter van Jacobus J. Meintjes, die eerste registrateur van aktes van Pretoria. Hulle het gewoon op die noord-oostelike hoek van Andries- en Pretoriusstraat. Volgens oorlewering was daar oorkant die straat 'n pan en het haar pa en sy vriende op die stoep gesit en eende skiet [Pr 30 p1].

Sy was eers 'n leerling van die Prospect Seminary en het in Desember 1880 by die jaarlikse prysuitdeling 'n prys gewen [V 1880-12-18]. In 1882 was sy in die 2de klas van die Wesleyan Skool. Hier kry sy twee pryse, onder andere een vir getroue skoolbywoning [V 1882-12-23].

Heloise was getroud met advokaat Mathew Robin Greenlees. In 1899 word sy gekies as onderburgemeesteres van Pretoria [And-03 p30].





**Heloise Greenlees** [Pr-30 p1]

**[b] Sarie [Sara Susanna] Preller**

Van haar weet ons nie veel nie. Erf 613 in Skinnerstraat is op 27 Maart 1889 op haar naam geregistreer. Dit is natuurlik die geskiedkundige erf waar Kya Rosa later deur Leo Weinthal gebou is en waar die Universiteit van Pretoria begin het [Pr-58 p7].

Die erf wat gedeeltelik agter aan hierdie een gegrens het [Erf 564 in Schoemanstraat] is op 6 Julie 1880 in haar man, Charles Andries Celliers, se naam getranspoteer. Dit is die erf waarop Kya Lami gebou is wat later die eerste manskoshuis van die Universiteit van Pretoria geword het [Pr-58 p8].

Sarie is begrawe in die Hollandse deel van die ou Begraafplaas in Kerkstraat. Datums is ongelukkig nie bekend nie [And-03 p58].

**[c] Mnr. Preller**

J.C. Preller, die vader van die bruid, was 'n baie belangrike man. In 1864 het hy o.a. waargeneem as staatsprokureur en ook as weesheer. Hy het ook vir 'n tyd die pos van Posmeester van Pretoria bekleed. Hy was ook aangestel as vrederegter, en later word hy verkies as lid van die Volksraad en ook as Burgemeester van Pretoria.

In 1871 kry hy 'n lisensie om te praktiseer as prokureur, notaris, vertaler en afslaer. Hy was ook sekretaris van die "Pretoria Literary and Debating Society", komiteelid van die Transvaal Klub, lid van die Vrywilligerskorps, offisier van die Vrymesselaars en lid van die bestuur van die "Pretoria Turf Klub". Hy dien ook op die komitee wat die beplanning doen vir die Burgerspark Botaniese Tuin en die begraafplaas. Ek wonder waar het hy tyd gekry om alles in te pas.

Lank gelede was dit hoofsaaklik diere, plaasimplemente, meubels en sulke dinge wat op veilings verkoop was. Preller was die eerste een wat 'n aandverkoop gehou het van boeke, prente, glasware, ens [V 1871-05-30].

In 1876 word in die koerant berig dat hy sy hande lelik verbrand het. Sy bedgordyne het aan die brand geraak en hy het die vuur met sy hande probeer blus [V 1876 02-02].

#### **[d] Charl Celliers [oorlede 1894]**

Die bruidegom se volle name was Charles Andreas Celliers. Volgens Atkinson [Atk-01 p69] was hy 'n sekretaris van beroep, eers van die regsfirma Preller en De Villiers. Later word hy sekretaris van die Transvaalse Executeurskamer en Voogdy Maatskappy [V 1878-05-16]. Heelwat later word hy ook genoem as sekretaris van die Zuid-Afrikaanse Elektrisiteits Maatskappy. Toe die Pretoria Musical & Dramatic Society begin word hy ook daar as sekretaris benoem.

Uit die aard van sy werk moes hy seker ook goed kon spel en in 1876 [V 1876-12-16] behaal hy 'n tweede plek in 'n Engelse "Spelling Bee".

#### **[e] Harmonie**

Die eienaar van die Harmonie Landgoed was Johan Carel Preller. Die moontlikheid bestaan dat die naam te doen het met sy beleggings in die Harmonie Goudmyne. Die landgoed het later die eiendom van die Van Warmelo-gesin geword. Johanna Brandt, 'n dogter van die Van Warmelo's, het tydens die Driejarige Oorlog 'n spioenasieorganisasie daarvandaan bedryf [And-01 p51].

#### **[f] Yzermann**

Die persoon wat hier genoem word is J.H.W. Ezerman. In 1877 verskyn sy eerste advertensie in die koerant [V 1877-04-04]. Hy adverteer dat hy 'n voorraad drank uit Europa ontvang het en dat dit te koop aangebied word op sy perseel in Pretoriusstraat. Die volgende jaar is hy nog steeds in Pretoriusstraat maar nou deel hy 'n perseel met die bouer Marinus Franken en het 'n nuwe voorraad Hollandse jenewer ontvang [V 1878-01-15].

Onder die Engelse bewind was almal in Pretoria verplig om diens te doen. In 1881 [V 1881-05-21] word berig dat Ezerman, M. Franken en T.N. de Villiers verlof kry om huistoe te gaan, maar word toe daar gearresteer. Ezerman was siek in die bed toe hy gearresteer word en word toe met bed en al na die tronk gebring.

Dit is nie seker of dit dieselfde Ezerman is nie maar in 1889 [V 1889-03-14] adverteer W. Ezerman dat hy "verduursame lewensmiddele" van Nederland verkoop. [Ek wonder of dit 'n ander naam vir drank is?]

#### **[g] "Eerste" Burgemeester**

Na die anneksasie van Transvaal deur Sir Theophilus Shepstone in 1877 is stappe gedoen om 'n munisipaliteit in Pretoria daar te stel, maar die eerste munisipale verkiesing kon eers in 1881 gehou word. Mnr. J.C. Preller is toe as burgemeester gekies. Hy is dus Pretoria se eerste verkose burgemeester. Voordat hy egter sy amp kon aanvaar, is die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog [1880-1881] beëindig en het Pretoria tot die republikeinse stelsel teruggekeer [Eng-01 p84].



## [h] Kinders

Volgens De Volksstem is die eerste dogter van Charl en Sarie Celliers gebore op Sondag 19 September 1881 [V 1881-10-08] en 'n tweede dogter op 6 Desember 1882 [V 1882-12-09]. Ongelukkig word die kinders se name nie genoem nie.

## Bronneverwysings

- And-01 Andrews, Tom ea. **Straat- en Plekname van Ou-Pretoria.** J.L. van Schaik. 1989.
- And-03 Andrews, Tom. **God's Acre. Church Street Cemetery.** 1994.
- Atk-01 Atkinson, A.K.W. **Old Ivory and Roses.** Wallach's Printing & Publishing Co. 1969.
- Eng-01 Engelbrecht, S.P. [Dr.] **Eeufees-Album: Pretoria se eerste eeu in Beeld.** J.L. van Schaik Beperk. Pretoria. 1952.
- Pr-005 Greenlees, Heloise. **Fashionable Wedding in Occupied Pretoria.** Pretoriana Deel 2 Nommer 2 [Desember]. 1952.
- Pr-006 Greenlees, Heloise. **The Reception after the Wedding.** Pretoriana Deel 2 Nommer 3 [April]. 1953.
- Pr-030 Punt, Dr. W. **Heloise Greenlees. In Memoriam.** Pretoriana Nommer 30 [Augustus]. 1959.

V = De Volksstem

Groete tot volgende maand,  
Rosa Swanepoel