

this has been re-worked / starting  
8/8/91

PWD architectural department 1902-20 with particular reference to the career of J S Cleland until 1920.

PLAN OF CHAPTERS:

Public Works Dept in SA <sup>brief</sup> - survey of history

1. Early Life 1879-1902 : education and pupilage in Britain
2. Emigration and experience 1902-1908 : Office of Black & Fagg, C.T.
3. Private practice, competitions and PWD 1908-1912 : Period of change for most architects in SA owing to depression post ABW. Cleland was retrenched from Black's office (?) and entered partnership with JC Tully & S Waters in CT in 1908; competitions were entered by partnership; won several and went to supervise GPO, Pta for PWD and offered temp employment while still in partnership.
4. PWD career 1912-1920. PWD work more demanding; still not permanent which was a characteristic stage of a career in PWD, viz. others. C's demanded permanent employment; rose fast in ranks to post of Chief Architect in Sept 1920.

cat. Raisonné

QUESTIONS ARISING on thesis as a whole:

"The ZAR architects gave the 2<sup>nd</sup> empire mode a typically Dutch flavour by alternating between red brick and white sandstone or plaster work on the facades." (vdWaal 1987:57)

Tutorial advice:

Prof Engel suggested that we know very little of the training of the architects who came to South Africa from Britain c1902. He suggested that this be the focus of this thesis. It would entail a study visit overseas in order to cover certain aspects of Cleland's early career. This should be proposed through sources investigated such as local libraries and archives in Britain (RAU Jan 1989).

G-M van der Waal suggests that I should put the book first but I am losing confidence in the book being published and want to finish Cleland. (Mar 1989).

Engel (17 Mar 1989) says get down to it and get it over. Take study leave, have better time management and do three hours every day.

Questions which arise in the course of mapping out chapter 1

Chap 1

1879-1902 : What was Walsall like in 1895 when JSC was first indentured with H Lavender? What was Lavender's office like? J Perry was also there in 1895, look at early Perry; What was Lavender's work like? Check offices JSC joined post 1899: Kinnear Tarte : St Albans H Scaping : Grimsby ? Mr Godderidge : Tamworth ;

FORWARD and author's notes:

Sources of information on John Stockwin Cleland's early career (to 1920) are mainly restricted to his personal papers, which were kindly lent to the HSRC by Cleland's youngest son, David Cleland, in 1986, and to information in the RIBA Archives in London. The RIBA was able to supply copies of Cleland's Licentiate membership documents (1911) and of his Fellowship membership documents (1925). In this paper the two latter documents are referred to as LRIBA nomination papers (LRIBA nom papers) and FRIBA nomination papers (FRIBA nom papers).

Furthermore the form sent by the RIBA on the decease of a member to next of kin (and referred to here as RIBA biog file) was completed, probably by his wife (cf hand writing not recognisable as hers for lack of examples nor anyone else's i.e. F W Mullins who had previously supplied information on Cleland for publication, on the occasion of Cleland's retiring from the post of Chief Architect of the Public Works Department (henceforward referred to here as the PWD). These two sources have provided the most solid documentary evidence. Mrs Joan Agnew (Cleland's only surviving daughter) has generously supplied photographs, invaluable family information which is so often evanescent, and time and encouragement. Ex-colleagues from the PWD, such as Reginald Abbott, J S Burg, Maurice Cowen supplied office details, giving life to room 104, Union Buildings, and insight into how the Department worked and socialised. David Cleland (Cleland's only surviving son) provided the backbone of the structure, Cleland's papers, which had been stored in Cleland's house in Dunbarton Road, Pretoria, since his death in 1950. The under-

standing of the historical importance of these papers was implicit in having retained such moth and dust collectors for nearly forty years. Such patience is rare and whole-heartedly appreciated.

THESIS:

Chapter 1.

JOHN STOCKWIN CLELAND (1879-1950)

Background, education and training. 1879-1899.

His father was John Cleland, a pioneer of the boot and shoe industry in Walsall. The name Cleland is of Scottish origin and John Cleland Snr had been born in Scotland (c1848). He came to Walsall from Darvel in Ayrshire in 1860. He set up in Walsall as a Boot Factor (the title Factor has a distinctly Scottish ring to it). He was successful and, having married Mary Cleland in \* produced a family, some of whom later joined him in business (the two elder sons Alec and James (Jim) and the business became known as John Cleland & Sons.

He died at his home in Walsall in about 1912. An obituary on him with a photograph appeared in the local press. He had been a devout low churchman and a man both respectable and respected in local society.

John Stockwin Cleland was born in Walsall 23 February 1879. He was the third child of a family of eight children, one of five sons. . He was educated between 1888 and 1895 at two schools: Bishop Vesey's School, Sutton Coldfield and at St Mary's Grammar School, in Walsall. (So far I have no idea why he was sent to Sutton Coldfield nor any idea what sort of school it was)\*.

Queen Mary's Grammar School took pupils up to matriculation level. It is likely that Bishop Vesey's catered for pre high school age. In 1879 the year of Cleland's birth, and by 1890, the year he probably began at Grammar School, secondary education was not compulsory and Grammar School was attended by those whose parents set some store by education. It was non-fee paying but at the same time while at school, pupils brought home no income and thus Grammar School was generally attended by the less needy.

If Cleland attended Queen Mary's Grammar School from 1890-95 (the year in which he was articled) he was educated under Mr Aldis, headmaster of the school from 1881 until 1897, by which time Cleland had left the school. Aldis was described by his pupils as "strong" and "austere" and "the embodiment of dignity" (Queen Mary's Grammar School:329 author?). He was a Gladstonian liberal who advocated his school to be "open to all boys, where the sons of pitman, mechanic, tradesman and squire may sit on the same bench..Our school should be a republic of letters in which every boy is a scholar and therefore a gentleman.." (op cit ibid). Something of this "liberal" spirit probably rubbed off on Cleland.

In 1895 John Cleland was articled to the Walsall architect Henry Edward Lavender (1855-1935) on 25th Sep 1894 for four years. His indenture papers (fn.HSRC archive) were signed and countersigned by John Cleland Snr, H E Lavender and John S Cleland. It was witnessed by John Perry who later himself emigrated to South Africa and built up a well known practice (f. details on Perry). The indenture document, written on parchment, was standard procedure for intending architects in the nineteenth century in Britain.

In Cleland's document of Indentures, Lavender promised to "instruct his said Apprentice in the Art of Architecture & Surveying which he useth by the best means that he can shall teach and Instruct or cause to be taught and instructed...for the sum of 100..". Just how these skills were taught to apprentices varied from office to office. Dickens's account of Mr Pecksniff is an often quoted example of a mid nineteenth century training. \*

Lavender, who had himself been trained in "Mr Chamberlain's office" in Walsall, seems to have established a steady practice that town. He had begun practice on his own account in Walsall in 1876, three years before JSC was born. At one point (n.d.) he was in partnership as J & HE Lavender in Wolverhampton and he had the not too common status of being a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). It was with J Lavender, incidentally, that John Perry (witness to John Cleland's Indenture papers) appears to have worked before he himself left for South Africa.

At some point (n.d.), one of H.E. Lavender's sons, Edward Price Lavender, entered partnership and the practice became known as Lavender & Son (n.d.). On H.E. Lavender's death (1935) the firm continued as H.E. Lavender, Son & Close in Walsall.

Lavender was responsible for a number of municipal works including Walsall Workhouse, North Walsall Schools, Park Pavilion, WH Smith & Sons bldg, "public buildings, ecclesiastical works and many factories and schools" (Lavender's obituary, RIBA Jnl Jul 1935:1009). What sort of training did an architect receive c1895? What then could be said to be the average experience of those British architects who came to South Africa around 1900? Why did Cleland choose architecture?

The decision to enter a profession rather than a trade was probably fraught with risk. There were a great number of architects in Britain at the time. Summerson (1961:10\*) says that the census for 1900 listed 10,000; of these about 1100 were members of the RIBA. It was however a time of prosperity and optimism. Queen Victoria was, after all, still on the throne.

Cleland appears to have shown some talent at and inclination to draw. It is likely that, if not from his own desire to become an architect, Cleland was encouraged to do something useful with his artistic ability. Architecture was amongst the professions supposed to be able to make use of these talents.

According to a note in the RIBA Archives (Biographical Files), written by his wife (?) after his death, Cleland "showed early artistic ability and received many prizes for drawing and design". Cleland never mentioned these prizes and there is as yet no record of any such, nor is there any evidence that he did not, given this statement. He was always a modest man and not interested in himself. Fortunately some evidence of his work survives from the pre-South African era of his career. An early sketch book of his, pre 1902, shows some skill and, as most of the subject matter describes buildings, the sketches reveal the type of thing which caught his eye and became an object of study for a time. The sketches are not unlike the type made for instance c1900 by Reginald Blomfield (elaborate?) and display some of the drawing habits of the time (illustrate) which can be seen in the architectural periodicals of the day. Among the sketches in the surviving book is "A mountain church". It is in pencil and describes the building in a clear manner, with an almost greedy appreciation of decorative details. It is possible that this sketch is of an imaginary building for a competition, such subjects were constantly coming up in "The Building News". Also in this sketch book are a number of sketches (n.d.) of heraldic subjects. Heraldry seems to have been of interest to JSC all his life. It was incidentally in his department that the flag of the Union of South Africa was drawn up (1926/27).



According to Cleland's Fellowship papers for the RIBA (1925), he spent three and a half years as an apprentice with Lavender, remaining a further year as assistant; in 1899 he spent nine months with Mr Scaping of Grimsby (of whom the RIBA has no record) but whom, according to Cunningham (\*\*\*\*\*), won the competition for Cleesthorpe Town Hall in 18??.

He then spent six to nine months (1899-1900) with one Kinnear Tarte, of whom there is no record in the RIBA either. While with Tarte Cleland recalled that he was involved with him in St Alban's he was involved with the design of a museum for Capt Selous for his house in Surrey in which the hunter was going to house his big-game trophies. This appears to have remained firmly in Cleland's memory, he referred to this episode everytime he had to write an account of his career. It was the only building which he consistently recalled working on before he won the Post Office competition in Pretoria (1909).

1900 : Six/nine months Kinnear Tarte, St Alban's. With KT he executed a museum at the house of Capt Selous in which his big game trophies were to be housed. JG Millais's "Life of FC Selous, DSO" (Longman's. 1919:205) says that Selous added to and improved his house at Worplesdon, Surrey in 1899, adding a separate museum which was at that time "the largest private museum in England" (op.cit). (I have written to Worplesdon PO). RIBA have no records of Tarte.

Before leaving England he worked for yet another (architect?, the RIBA nomination papers have no record of him), Mr Godderidge of Tamworth for two years (1900-1902).

## CHAPTER TWO

Emigration, Black & Fagg, Cape Town: 1902-1908

Questions arising in chap 2

What encouraged JSC to emigrate? What sort of life did J S Cleland leave in England and what encouraged him to come to South Africa? How and why did he enter Black's office? What did he do there?

At the moment almost nothing is known of any buildings on which Cleland worked before coming to South Africa in 1902.

The real reasons which brought Cleland to South Africa were known only to him. Other reasons which can be only guessed at were probably the same as those which usually prompt emigration, particularly around 1902.

From work carried out on the HSRC project "Architects in South Africa" it was found that the majority of architects (& surveyors) who left to work in South Africa in the mid to late nineteenth century, were not members of the RIBA. This is substantiated by Census Records (quote Natal and the Free State) which noted the number who declared their profession as "Architect" and who were not listed in the RIBA Kalenders for the relevant years.

The RIBA Kalenders, although like all annual registers and directories, cannot be relied upon for 100% accuracy, must however be relied upon as the only record of architects in South Africa who had RIBA membership. South African directories during and after the Anglo-Boer War are less reliable than others but, listing architects under professions and trades, remain the only record of the profession until the start of the Cape Institute of Architects (19\*\*) and the Natal Institute of Architects (1903\*).

In 1890-91 for example, there were thirteen members of the RIBA listed in South Africa. These were G.M. Alexander (Cape Town); F.L. Canning (Johannesburg); G.A.H. Dickson (Johannesburg); J Gradon (Johannesburg); H. Greaves (Cape Town); A. Halder (Pietermaritzburg); E.B.J. Knox (Johannesburg); E.A. Mayo (Durban); G. Ransome (Cape Town); A.H. Reid (Johannesburg); S. Stent (Kimberley); J.C. Tully (Johannesburg) and W.S. Wilson (W. Street-Wilson) (Durban).

Of these, all except A Halder (who had trained in Germany and become a Fellow of the RIBA in 1888), had trained in Britain.

Between 1896 and 1901, the numbers of architects with RIBA membership practising in South Africa remained much the same, about twenty four.

By 1906 there were twenty one members of the RIBA practising in South Africa.

It is interesting, though not perhaps relevant, to note the popularity of South Africa(viz. RIBA architects) besides other countries where notes on RIBA membership were kept. In 1901/2 there were:

22 in Africa

29 in Asia

32 in Australia

7 in Canada

8 in New Zealand.

(Africa included Egypt, the Sudan, the East African countries, the Rhodesias and South Africa).

By 1904/5 the membership was dispersed as following:

48 in Africa

33 in Asia

29 in Australia

11 in Canada

10 in New Zealand.

What brough JSC to SA? From the detail above, Africa clearly appealed the RIBA members so why should it not have appealed to those who were not members? On the assumption that it did, it was the most popular place in which architects wanted to work.

In notes about his move Cleland says one thing consistently, that he came to Cape Town to work for William Black. On at least three occasions

(list) he says that he was "brought" to Cape Town by William Black "on a two year contract". It is thus possible that he was recruited by Black personally during Black's tour in Europe and America early 1902 when Black was enjoying a trip to America at the invitation of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York. He had won (1902) the competition for their new building in Cape Town. Perhaps Black placed an advertisement for assistance although so far none has been found. How do architects today hear of work overseas? Cleland anyway came to South Africa in 1902 and stayed in Black's office for at least six years.

In 1902 (exact date not yet established, John Stockwin Cleland came to live in South Africa, one of "205,910 people who emigrated from Britain to the USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and other British possessions" (Streak 1969:41). The date is a significant one in South African history; the Anglo Boer War ended in that year with the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging and the British were facing various options open to them on the conclusion of this war. The option adopted was that of placating the Boer leading to the formation of the Closer Union Societies throughout the country. The effect of this was a general alerting of sentiments towards South Africanisation but not before Milner's policy of anglicisation had been put into effect in areas of government such as the PWD. The post ABW period should have held out hopes for development which would have included architects and builders. Instead South Africa became known for being a difficult country in which to settle and Streak points out (op.cit: ) that in 1903 there were fewer immigrants to South Africa, many choosing Canada. This was to be the pattern.

With what did Cleland leave Britain for SA in terms of professional qualifications?

He was twenty three, unmarried and an architect who had completed the necessary articles of training and had taken the relevant exams (which were?\*). He had also had several years of varied experience in various provincial and country offices. His brother-in-law was an architect, one James Swan, in Birmingham (if before C left for SA why didn't he work for him?). Various illustrations of Swan's work, dating from the turn of the century, were cut out of the architectural periodicals in which they appeared and were kept by Cleland. Possibly sent to him by family? Or perhaps collected by Cleland himself. They are among his papers. Two volumes of The Building News (Jan-Jun 1898, Jul-Dec 1898) have also survived among his papers. On the fly leaf he has written in his large, flowing handwriting " J S Cleland, Walsall and Cape Town. 1902". Did he have a sense of humour?

That he did not choose to remain in England could mean anything. It seems usually to have meant that not much money was available to the emigrant at "home", coupled to a desire to adventure on his own. At the back of many minds, perhaps, but this is speculation, is a desire to return a nabob to one's native land and to live out one's days surrounded by the mystique of one who has seen strange sights in far away places. I think many know after a short time that they will never return to base.

Wm Black, CT for three years and where he remained "some six years" (FRIBA nom papers 1925).

5) By the time he was a young man Cleland was well built, about 5'9 with blue eyes, brown hair and aquiline features. An early photograph of him taken in Cape Town in 1902 shows him pipe smoking, formally dressed and with a reserved expression. He had a distinctive high forehead and a firm mouth. In photographs his glance is level and rather piercing.

Other documents for 1902 are random.

Dec 1902 Permit to travel to and reside in Kroonstad, OFS. JSC gives his occupation as "student" and his last address as Kendal House, 3 Anchor Bay, proceeding to Kroonstad. The purpose of this visit has not yet been established. Could have been business or pleasure.

In 1902 he left for South Africa to work for William Black, architect, Cape Town. In his FRIBA papers he says he "obtained position with the late Mr Black..on 2 years contract. Served with Mr Black approximately seven years."

In an account he wrote on his retirement from Public Service 1938/9 he noted ".. was brought to South Africa in 1902 by the late Mr William Black, the well known Architect, Cape Town, on a three years contract and spent some six years in his office". How did he chose Black's office? Or did Black chose him? "obtained a position" sounds different from being "brought out".

In 1902 Black became a Fellow of the RIBA and he visited America for a large job he was carrying out in Cape Town. No evidence yet exists to show that Black visited England on this trip, but he may have done so

and recruited potential staff. (Did people do that then?, don't see why not). The fact remains that Cleland left for Cape Town in 1902. He does not mention at any time which jobs he worked on in this office. Works carried out by Black & Fagg during the period included Claridge's Hotel, Stal Plein (1903)\*; Bain's bldgs (n.d.); the Cape of Good Hope Savings Bank (before 1908); the "Flat Iron" bldg (before 1909); Robertson Town Hall (date?); Victoria West Town Hall (date?); Cape of Good Hope Seminary (date?); R C Convent, Rondebosch (date?); Potchefstroom Town Hall (1907-09). The building which sent Black over seas in 1902 was the Mutual Life Insurance Co, New York, in Longmarket/ St George's St (now Nedbank) (1902-05). Perhaps it was on this trip that he recruited draughtsmen, or perhaps in relation to the job itself. One of the only documents among Cleland's personal papers that is dated Dec 1902 is a permit allowing him to travel and reside in Kroonstad and which describes him as "student". There is no known reason why C travelled to Kroonstad. Why was he described as a student when he had completed his articles and was presumably then employed as an architect/draughtsman by Black? Had he travelled there to supervise something for Black? Was he job hunting? There may of course have been private reasons for this visit for instance he may have been courting. He married in 1903.

C1903 he married Emmerentia Johanna Blignaut in Cape Town (perhaps his reason for visiting Kroonstad?). In 1904 his parents gave him the money, according to his daughter, Joan Agnew, to build his own house. Previous to this the couple had stay with friends in Wynberg, CT, Emmie Coulton's house. The Cleland house, which Joan remembers as square with a tiled roof and of which Prof Radford told me he has a photograph, was called



Corra Lynne and was in High Level Rd, Sea Point. Possible that the photo of a house found in family photo graphs (see\*) could have been Corra Lynne. It is said to have been demolished (Radford but J A does not think so). Their eldest child, a daughter Mary Andrietta was born c1904 followed by their son John Morton Blignaut, born in 1906? who was followed by Dorothy Joan in Sep 1908. Joan remembers being called the "Sunlight Soap" baby which she recalls may have had something to do with where she was born which she feels was a cottage hospital run by the Salvation Army (check). She remembers being told that about this time her father was out of a job. It was the height of the depression which began c1906 and lasted on and off until 1908, if not longer. Rumoured visit to Potchefstroom, if so to supervise B & F's Potch Town Hall (1907-10) which the firm had won in competition. In 1908 Cleland appears to have left Black's office or to have been made redundant; his personal papers are reticent about personal misfortunes and otherwise. Joan Agnew noted how infrequently he talked about himself. In later years when referring to his work he would always say "the department is doing this or that" (Joan Agnew, pers comm).

In 1904 Married Emmerentia Johanna Blignaut in Cape Town. His parents gave him the money to build their house "Corra Lynne", High Level Rd, Sea Point, CT. Eldest daughter, Mary, was born.

17 Sep 1908 Daughter Joan was born; Joan remembers that about this time JSC had no job. She was born in the Old Salvation Army Hospital, CT. For years she was called the Sunlight Soap baby. Slump time in SA.

About 1907/8 Cleland seems to have visited Potchefstroom. There is no evidence for this besides rumour (which I can't find again). If he did visit Potch it was in connection with the supervision of Potch Town Hall which Black & Fagg had won in competition in 1907. Judging by details of the designs of Potch Town Hall, Pretoria Post Office and Natal University College (1909/10) in all of which Cleland had been closely involved the same hand (Cleland's?) was behind all three. Of this more anon. In 1908 Cleland entered some more or less formal association (partnership?) with John Collingwood Tully and Spencer Waters. \*