

Nieteenstaande al die politieke moeilikhede was die lewe in Pretoria in dié dae gesellig en rustig. Motorkarre was nog onbekend en die enigste vervoermiddels in die stad was op of agter 'n perd in 'n spider of cab. Die inwoners het, om so te sê, mekaar nog almal geken. Maar ontwikkeling is onvermydelik en dis net die aangename herinnering wat die oudag van 'n mens veraangenaam.

L. R. MIDDELBERG.

PRETORIA FIFTY YEARS AGO

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In this issue Mr. Beanes concludes his interesting series on Pretoria half a century ago. On behalf of our readers the editor would like to thank Mr. Beanes for the willingness with which he complied with our request to write these articles. He has set the example for others to follow so that the rising generation in Pretoria may realise that wherever they may walk in our city, the past is alive in the present and that the future growth of our city will be impregnated by the spirit of a heritage of which all Pretorians feel justly proud.

Bioscopes also started about that time. The first that I can remember was in one of the shops in van Erkom's Building, Pretorius Street. Carl Reck had a combined skating rink and bioscope, another was in the old church at the corner of Market and Minnaar Streets. About the time of Union, a really stylish bioscope opened under the name of the Vaudette Theatre. It was on the upper floor of the Masonic Hall which now houses the State Library.

There were no building Society Buildings such as are now springing up. In those days what buildings societies there were were housed in estate agents' and accountants offices as a side line.

Indians did a lot of hawking in those days. Vegetables and fruit were brought round in a large basket generally carried on the head, while others would arrive with kitchen utensils, brushware, etc., but I think the women-folk enjoyed the silk and piece goods trader who arrived at the front door and displayed his wares on the stoep. What a joy if two or three women happened to be at home.

Electric light in houses was not general and many had to rely on paraffin lamps and what a messy job it was filling the lamps, trimming the wicks and cleaning the glasses, but it was all part of the week's work.

The larger stores had a special counter for their farmer customers who could always be distinguished from the town folk.

A little store in Church Street somewhere near West Street had a very large gum tree standing in front. The owner was determined to have it removed and employed a Native to cut it down. Neither the owner nor the Native knew anything about the felling of trees, so it fell across the road and as there were no underground cables in those days, all the overhead telegraph and telephone wires were cut and the poles strained for a considerable distance on either side. Johannesburg and the whole of the south was cut off so telegraph traffic suffered considerable delay. The account from the G.P.O. for repairing the damage frightened the storekeeper into the bankruptcy court.

A Mr. Oliff, who had the western brickfields, was so proud of the type of brick made from our shale, that he frequently paid 8s. to send a specimen brick to his brick-making friends in England to show "that a brick could be made in Pretoria that could not be split with a brick-layer's trowel."

The town councillors were a friendly crowd and when anything special was on on Church Square, such as a King's Birthday Parade or a military tattoo, wooden stands would be erected on the four sides of the Square so that citizens could view the sight while seated.

On Saturday, 9th January, 1909, occurred the famous flood. It had been raining for two days but at about 9 a.m. on the Saturday it began to rain heavier than usual and by noon about three inches had fallen. This was more than the Apies could cope with, it became turbulent and overflowed its banks. The bridge at Esselen Street was for trams only and the new steel bridge in Schoeman Street could not be used for vehicular traffic because there was no road beyond Edward Street, so traffic for Sunnyside used a drift in Skinner Street where the footbridge is now. At the side of the drift, near Hof's nursery, was a large willow tree which the surging water loosened and finally washed downstream until it became jammed at the Schoeman Street bridge and increased the flood water above, so that not only the houses on the east side of du Toit Street were flooded, but also the houses backing on the river in President Street, where a mother and two children were drowned in trying to escape. Had they remained on a table inside the house they could have been rescued through the roof as the fire brigade had already crossed Victoria Bridge and the firemen were climbing on to the roof. The railway ran special trains from the Reef so that people could see the damage and I think more came over then than come over now for the Jacaranda Festival. The storm straightened the river and did away with many pools. I was most impressed by the holes from which electric light poles had been washed, they were just as they had been when first dug and before the poles were planted.

And here is something that will surprise many; all the building material for the Union Buildings was taken up East Avenue.

Between the time when the first railway linked Pretoria and Johannesburg in the nineties and the advent of the motor car about 15 years later, the old coach road between the two towns was little used as the distance was too great for a horse and trap and too hilly for cyclists who preferred the road alongside the railway as far as Kaalfontein or Kempton Park, where a branch road led to Johannesburg. Although the distance was greater one probably saved time and energy by avoiding the steep gradients of the "high" road.



(Photo: Transvaal Book Store)

LION BRIDGE ABOUT FIFTY YEARS AGO

In those days Harmony Street was a cul de sac owing to the railway embankment being across the road, so that all traffic for the Fountains and beyond had to climb up Main Street and cross the Delagoa Bay bridge before joining the main road. The footpath from du Preez's Hoek to the Fountains known as Lovers' Walk was also blocked by a railway fence, and these two obstructions were not removed until after Union. Sir Johannes van Boeschoten was chiefly responsible for the removal of these obstructions to our right of way.

From 1902 to 1914 the railway went to Robert's Heights from Lyttelton Junction. The line belong to the Imperial Army and the rails were lifted in 1914 and taken to France where they were relaid. The line crossed the Johannesburg Road at the Municipal boundary. Parts of the track are still visible and in 1940 a part of the old track was brought into use when

the railway was constructed from Lyttelton to the Air Depot west of Kloof Zicht.

During the last 50 years Pretoria has changed enormously—chiefly through circumstances—what will it be like in 50 years hence?

Many young people to-day will give a lot of pleasure in 2005 when Pretoria celebrates its 150th anniversary, if they are able to produce a few good photographs of Pretoria as it appears in this year of grace. Snaps $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x $3\frac{1}{4}$ " are quite big enough, but take plenty of them, and **preserve the negatives**. There is plenty of scope; churches, schools, government buildings, municipal buildings, business premises, private residences and sports grounds. One could make a start with Fountain Lodge at the corner of Paul Kruger and Skinner Streets as that is probably the oldest house in Pretoria. Then there is the old Turkish Baths in Trevenna, which, I have been told, was a farm house before Trevenna was laid out. Kruger House is not likely to be demolished but will Ulundi House survive?

Pretoria has grown a lot since the turn of the century and is growing very rapidly just now, and it is not difficult to see that the character of the place is changing too. The next generation will find it difficult to understand why it was known as a sleepy hollow in the olden days. The days when the housewife put her bags and basket into the bus and asked: "We've five minutes, haven't we? I'll be quick—I just want to get a pound of butter from the grocer." The five minutes up, driver and passengers would strain to see whether the good lady with her pound of butter was in sight, driver would give a gentle toot, she would come running, flushed but triumphant. "Thank you SO much conductor," a smile for the whole bus, passengers relieved that she had caught the bus and also that they wouldn't be very late in leaving, sat back in their seats and off they went. Those days have gone, but Pretoria still has its charm—I hope it will still be there when my grandchildren are as old as I am.

C. J. BEANES.

DIE KRONIEKE VAN WALLMANNSTHAL

T. S. VAN ROOYEN

I.

Sowat sewentien myl noord van Pretoria op die Warmbadpad staan daar 'n wegwysers met die woord „Wallmannsthal" daarop aangebring. As die nuuskierige daarop regs van die hoofpad afdraai in die rigting soos aangedui deur die wegwysers, bevind hy hom op 'n stowwerige pad wat deur die hartjie van 'n Ndebelegebied gaan. Aan weerskante van die pad