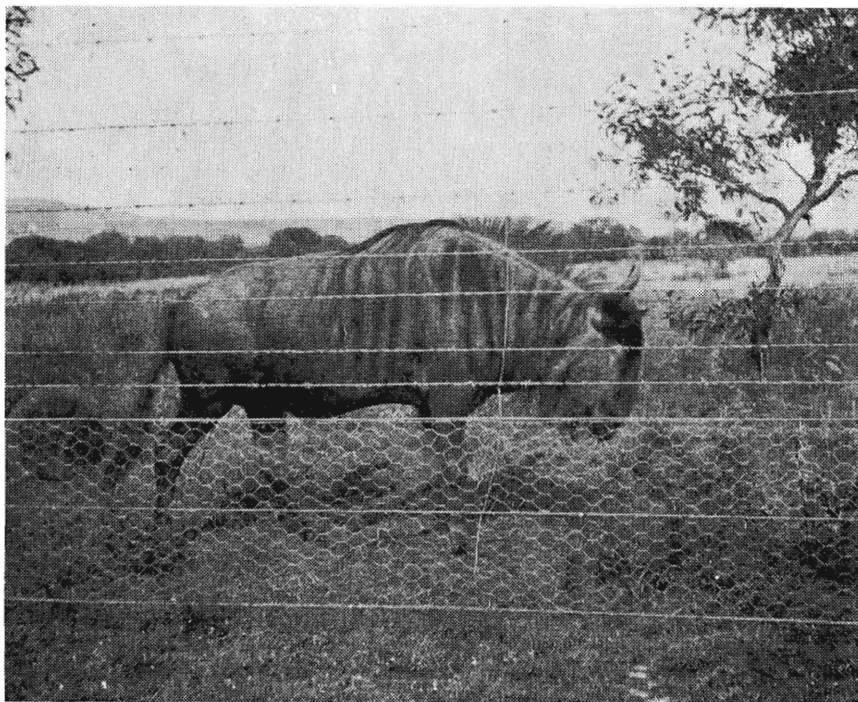
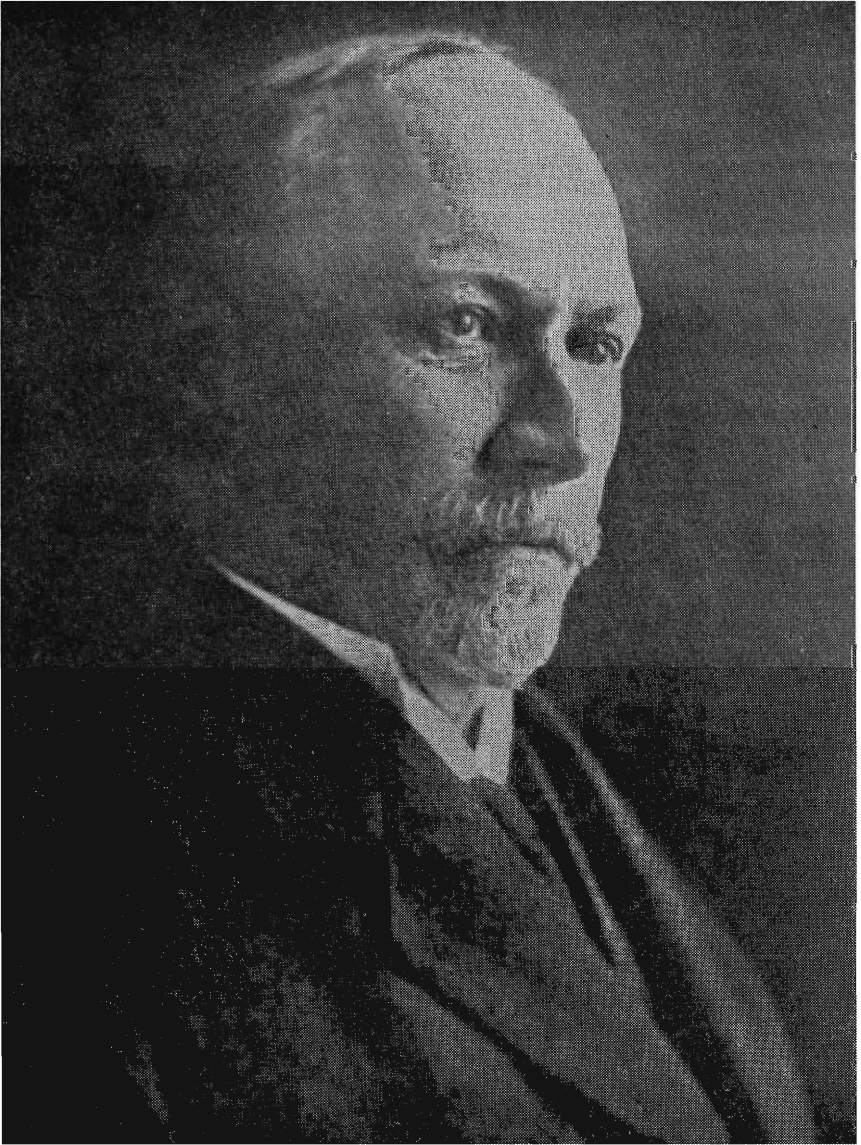


a wood and iron building which had been an Officers' Mess at Middelburg, from the Defence Department. He had it dismantled and transported to Irene where it was re-erected as his farmhouse, and the billiard room became his famous library; the house became known as "Doornkloof", and the General lived there until he died on 11th September, 1950. He always preferred to stay there rather than in the Prime Minister's official residence in Pretoria. Many famous statesmen, politicians, scientists and even a number of reigning monarchs visited him there. At about the same time as he was building his house at Irene he was busily engaged in the negotiations which led to the creation of the Union of South Africa out of four separate countries, the beginnings of the building of our South African nation.

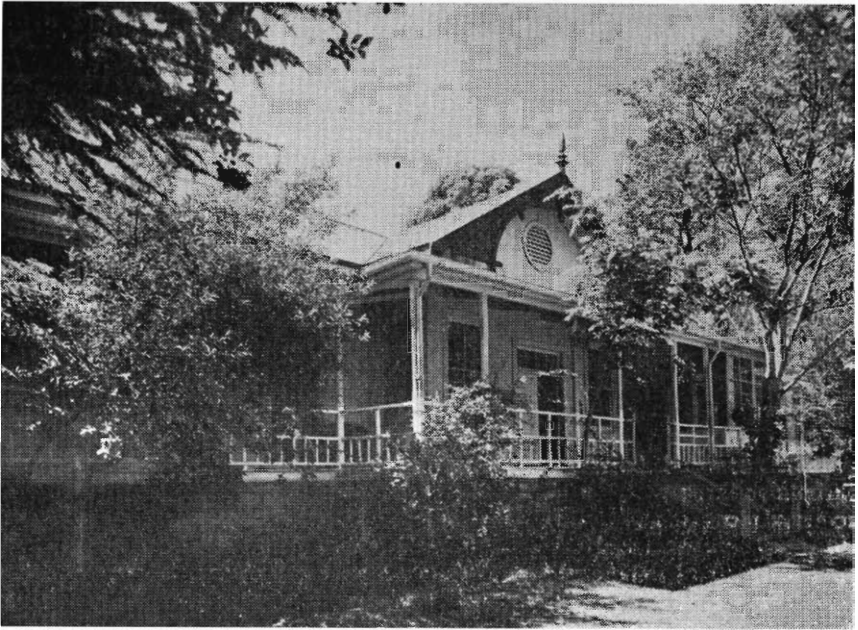
The General will be remembered not only as a great statesman, but also as a great botanist; he used to go on many and long expeditions throughout Africa in search of grasses which would be of value to South Africa's agriculture. He worked with Dr. I. B. Pole-Evans, himself a famous botanist who lived in Irene for many years next to the old school.



The Wildebeest which attacked J. A. van der Byl.



GEN. J. C. SMUTS.



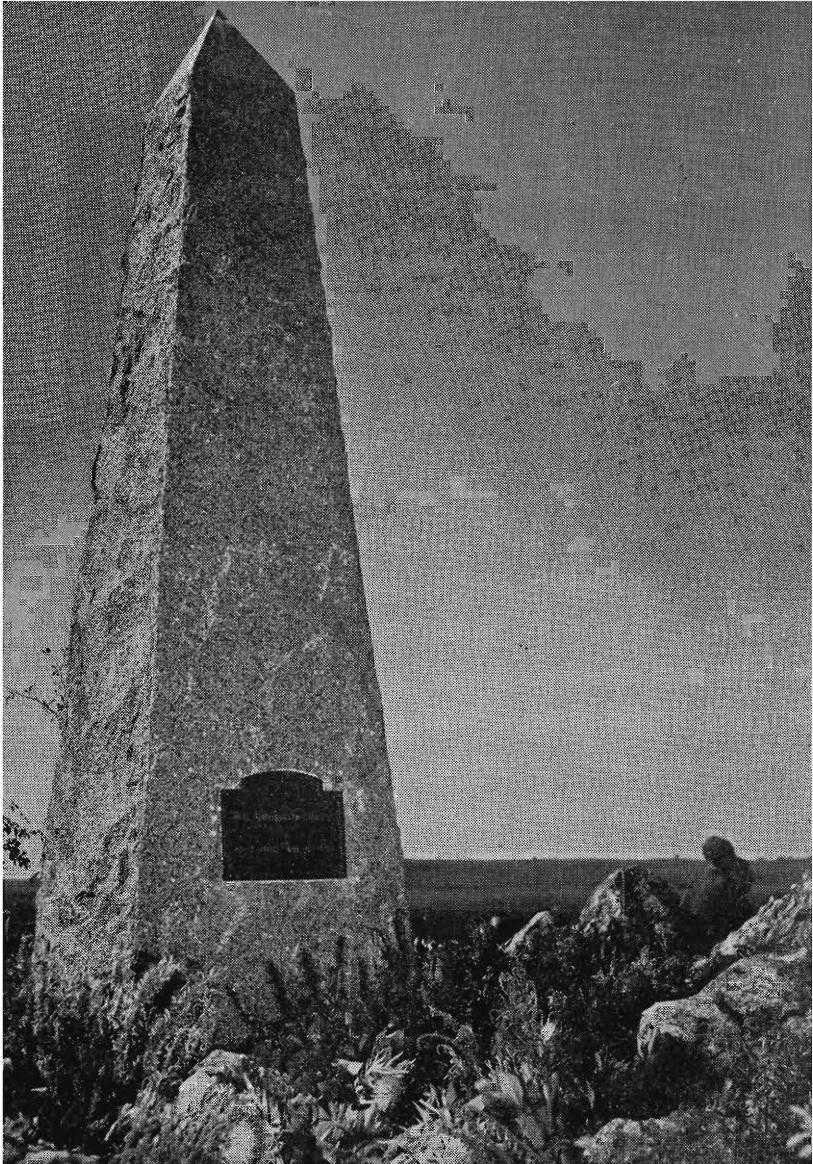
The Smuts House, Doornkloof, Irene.

Photo: South African Railways.

At one time there was an experimental plot on Mr. van der Byl's farm where the grasses which were brought back from these expeditions were grown, and it was here that the now famous Kikuyu grass which covers so many rugby fields, and which is such a good pasture, was first established. The well-known *Digitaria Smutsii*, which is a grass indigenous to Irene, was discovered by the General and named after him.

On General Smuts' farm Doornkloof is a magnificent avenue of plane trees; they were planted by Ouma Smuts' brother, Jan Krige, and the General's son-in-law, Colonel Weyers, in 1917 and 1918. Colonel Weyers still farms on Doornkloof where there is a large herd of Blesbuck. Buck from this herd were supplied by Colonel Weyers in 1938 to the Pretoria Municipality for the van Riebeeck Nature Reserve at Rietvlei, where there is now a large herd and from these two herds many other herds throughout the Highveld have been propagated and now flourish.

At the Irene Post Office are a number of glazed tiles depicting South African scenes and personalities, and also a large panel representing the 1938 Voortrekker celebrations which took place on the hills to the North



of Irene where the Voortrekker Monument now stands. Among these tiles are three depicting Irene's illustrious forefathers: A. H. Nellmapius, who named Irene; J. A. van der Byl, who founded Irene Township, and J. C. Smuts who caused the name Irene to be known throughout the world.

THE GOLF COURSE

IN 1912 J. A. van der Byl established a nine-hole golf course South of Irene village. For a number of years the Club House was the small thatched building which still stands at the bottom end of King Street; its thatched walls have been removed. After the first world war the course was extended to eighteen holes and, the Forestry Department having left, the forester's cottage was converted into the Club House which is used to this day although the old building has been extended.

There are many beautiful trees on the golf course and many of them are indigenous, for example the White Stinkwood, Acacia Caffra, Vaderlandswilg, Soetdoring and Blinkblaar or Buffalo Thorn; others have their origin in the Forestry Nursery, particularly the Planes, Deodars and Ashes; and some were planted by J. A. van der Byl, such as the Oaks, Poplars and Weeping Willows. Nellmapius' manager in the early days lived in a cottage in the trees near where the fifteenth green now is, so this is one of the oldest houses in Irene; it was rebuilt by John Henry van der Byl in 1950.

Also on the golf course which spreads over some seventy morgen is the Hennops River which is famed for its beauty. Two tributaries, one from Olifantsfontein and one from Rietvlei, unite at the point where the railway bridge crosses the river close to the site of the original Erasmus homestead. A fountain near the eighth green contributes a small flow of clear water springing out of a fissure in the dolomite. This dolomitic rock formation occurs over most of the farm Doornkloof and although it is very hard and thousands of feet thick it is rather like a sponge because it contains a lot of water in the fissures which are caused by the limestone being dissolved by the action of the water; the water held in the rock bubbles out at certain points thus forming springs; such a spring is at the pump house near the fourteenth green and of course the two most famous springs in this area are at the Fountains on the Irene side of Pretoria and they are probably the main reason why Pretoria was founded where it is. This dolomite, in addition to being used in the manufacture of building lime, is used in making agricultural lime and is also used for metallurgical purposes, for



SMUTS MONOLITH.

Relatively few people have seen the monolith on Koppie Smuts at Doornkloof, Irene. It was at the base of the monument that one of the General's sons scattered his ashes and since then the bronze plaque shown in the photograph, has been affixed.

It reads: Jan Christiaan Smuts. 24-5-1870—11-9-50.

Photo: The Pretoria News.



H. W. GERTGES SNR.

example the African Metals Corporation mines a high quality metallurgical dolomite out of its quarry between Irene and Lyttelton.

WORLD WAR I.

WHEN the First World War broke out Irene was still a small hamlet with not many inhabitants, but several of them, including General Smuts and A. H. van der Byl, went on active service in German West and German East Africa. The South African Air Force was formed not long after the war and from that day Irene has always been closely associated with the Air Force and the Airways from its inception as many of the personnel of both live in Irene which is close to Zwartkops and Waterkloof Air Stations and to Grand Central and Wonderboom Airfields and to Jan Smuts Airport. An early tragedy occurred in 1922 when Captain Lawrence van der Byl was killed in a flying accident at Irene.

BETWEEN THE WARS AND WORLD WAR II.

IRENE grew slowly and steadily during the period between the two world wars. The depression years of 1929-1933 were alleviated to some extent by the construction of the large Rietvlei Dam near Irene on the Eastern boundary of the farm Doornkloof; the dam was built to supply Pretoria with domestic water as the springs and boreholes in Pretoria were insufficient for the growing population. In building the dam a whole hillside of rock nearby was quarried to build the wall and in the course of quarrying deep caves in the rock were opened up and some Bushman pots were found. It was not long before another scheme to add to Pretoria's water-supply was embarked upon; this was from the springs at Sterkfontein near Olifantsfontein and further deprived the Hennops River of its sources of supply, so that nowadays there is not very much water flowing normally in the river. Irene during these times was supplied with water from the spring on the golf course. Pretoria again needed more water so during the second world war the first pipe to Pretoria of the Rand Water Board bringing water all the way from the Vaal River was laid; this pipe brought water to Lyttelton and enabled it to develop into the large community it now is, and the same pipe supplies Irene with water.

Another big Rand Water Board pipe has recently been laid to Pretoria over the farm Doornkloof and yet another will soon follow.

In 1938 Mr. H. W. Gertges (Snr.) settled in Irene and soon became famous. He and his family have done a great deal towards making Irene known throughout the country and even beyond our borders.

In July 1943 J. A. van der Byl died at Irene and is buried in the private cemetery below the Irene Homes. Mrs. van der Byl was recorded in 1926 as being the first who grew tulips and other bulbs in South Africa.

During the war many Irene people were either in the forces or assisted