

## HISTORY OF THE STANDARD BANK GROUP\*

The City of Port Elizabeth on the coast of the foot of the African continent was founded in 1799 when Fort Frederick was built by the British on a site overlooking Algoa Bay. Little more than twenty years later, the British Government, wrestling with a depression and the problem of absorbing soldiers returning from the Napoleonic Wars, seized on the idea of settling people in the Cape; so it was that in 1820 some 4000 people landed in Algoa Bay and were guided inland to their allocated farms.

Gradually the City grew into the Colony's main commercial centre. In 1857 a group of local businessmen decided to try and form a local bank financed by local capital. They could not and so John Paterson, the moving spirit behind the venture, sailed to London in July 1859 to attract overseas investors. Three years later the *Cape Argus* was able to report on 13 December 1862 '.....Mr. John Paterson's "Standard" is fairly hoisted. The Standard Bank starts with a capital of one million sterling and a clerk, cashier and manager will soon be here.....'

The diamond rush to Kimberley began in 1870, the Bank's equipment having to travel by oxwagon from Port Elizabeth which took a leisurely, if dusty, six weeks to arrive. The only mishap was in fording the Vaal River when the safe slid off the ferry but 'floated like a cork to the opposite shore'.

Gold was first found at Barberton in the eastern Transvaal in 1884 and the Standard was quickly there. John Milligan, the manager, soon found that brass filings and gold dust, and lead ingots gilded with gold, were commonplace, although "claims" salted with gold dust fired from a shotgun were more difficult to detect. All this experience was to be invaluable when gold was discovered in quantity on the Witwatersrand, where the skyscraper city of Johannesburg now stands. The Standard Bank was first on the scene and after a number of early moves settled into elegant premises in Commissioner Street in 1908, which, although refurbished inside, has the same façade today and is a national monument.

The Standard Bank had by now embarked on a course of expansion and acquisition and by the 1890s had nearly 100 branches which included Jan Smuts, Anthony Trollope, Cecil Rhodes and Winston Churchill among their many customers, and many prominent South Africans.

It was not long after the pioneer column reached Salisbury in 1890, that the Standard Bank opened its first branch in what is now Zimbabwe, and this international expansion was before long, to include Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Zaire, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, as well as Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Namibia.

The first world war was to bring drought and depression to South Africa, but the Standard was able to support the farming sector in its desperate fight for survival and later to play its part in the return to economic stability and assist the fledgling Reserve Bank founded in 1920, to find its feet.

They were difficult years between the wars and as in other countries, the outbreak of World War II at once imposed a new and distinctive pattern

\* Met dank aan die Afdeling Openbare Betrekkinge van die Standard Bank Beleggingskorporasie Beperk te Johannesburg.

on the economy of the whole of Southern Africa, as well as a reorientation for Standard Bank itself. Because imports were diminishing fewer advances were required, but the continuous heavy war expenditure was reflected in soaring deposits, for which there were now far fewer lending outlets. As advances dropped deposits rose, interest rates sagged, thus cutting still deeper into the Bank's earning capacity. The alternative outlet for surplus resources was investment in Government loans, on which interest rates were kept artificially low, which clearly they wanted to tie up for as long a term as possible. The Standard Bank survived.

Meanwhile South Africa's industrial sector was developing. Overseas trade began to expand and huge new gold deposits were found in the Orange Free State. All this activity put a great strain on the board of directors who received a torrent of detailed proposals cabled to them in London requiring urgent attention. So authority was decentralised and in South Africa's case in particular it was accepted that the Bank's organisation should move towards local control with added responsibility for Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique.

By 1962, the local board of the Bank had acquired considerable autonomy and had a network of over 800 branches and agencies; with the acquisition of several companies from 1964 to 1969, notably in the fields of merchant and general banking. It was a natural development that a Group holding company, Standard Bank Investment Corporation (Stanbic), should be formed which today covers all aspects of banking with companies specialising in commercial, merchant and general banking, factoring, trust business, hire purchase, leasing, mutual funds, and bond investments. Assets stand at over R16 billion and there are now over 1000 branches and agencies in South Africa which we administer employing about 22 000 people. Stanbic has about a 30 per cent share of the domestic market.

John Paterson would not comprehend the sort of banking technology which exists today, where transactions are completed in fractions of a second by over 3 500 computer terminals throughout our branch network. Automatic banking facilities are rapidly being installed and optical scanning equipment now helps process the millions of vouchers originated by our 400 000 Standard Bank cardholders.

But it is not only in the style and method of banking that the industry has changed since the Standard Bank's formation over 120 years ago. In those days you were lucky to get a job and probably luckier to keep it. Banks like other major companies in South Africa today have come to realise that, in a country where more skilled workers are needed, you have to do something yourself to put matters right.

The Group has an intensive training programme to which all staff from the most junior entrant to the most experienced manager are exposed, supplemented by various in-house training programmes. We have a Management College situated outside Johannesburg, where managers further their education and development. What is more unusual perhaps is our Career and Secretarial Schools where promising young employees with matriculation are given full time courses in communication, numeracy, economics and banking and in se-

# De Standard Bank van ~~Pretoria~~ Zuid Africa Beprekt. PRETORIA

Deposita kwitantie voor £40,000  
Deposit Receipt for 19<sup>de</sup> Mei 1899



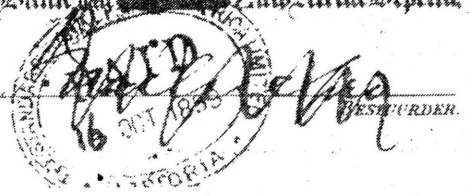
NIET OVERDRAGBAAR.  
NOT TRANSFERABLE

Ontvangen van Jhr. H. d. Stephanus Kruger  
Receivend voor Paulus Kruger, Staats Pres. der Z.A.R.  
de Som van Veertig duizend pond

the Sum of als een Deposita voor een jaar terugbetaalbaar alhier  
as a Deposit for repayable here

met Rente 4 per Cent per jaar. Kennisgeving van  
with Interest 4 per cent per annum. Notice of withdrawal  
veertig dagen terug Onsching te worden gegeven.  
altes betoehand te te geven.

No. 1000 Voorge Standard Bank van ~~Pretoria~~ Zuid Africa Beprekt  
Lid. Paulus Kruger  
Led. Paulus Kruger



PRESIDENT KRUGER SE VASTE DEPOSITO  
Die kwitansie uitgereik deur die Standard Bank  
se Pretoriase takkantoor ter erkenning van depo-  
sito van £40 000 wat deur president Kruger op  
19 Mei 1899 inbetaal is.  
Foto Standard Bank

cretarial skills. This venture is financed entirely from Group funds and is administered by a full-time staff.

Because of Stanbic's size and relative importance in the financial community, the Group feels it cannot ignore its social responsibility as well. For a number of years we have supported a whole range of educational, sporting and cultural activities, and each year a substantial amount is set aside for donation and sponsorship, according to a philosophy of enlightened self-interest.

If the seventies were a time of acquisition and expansion of services, then in the eighties Stanbic's talents are being refined to provide an even more efficient customer service and a continuing, significant contribution to the development of the Standard Bank Group as a whole.



John Paterson, 1822-1880, founder of the Standard Bank of South Africa

From: Pamela Elliott and E.L.H. Croft, *One Titan at a time*, Howard Timmins, Cape Town, 1860

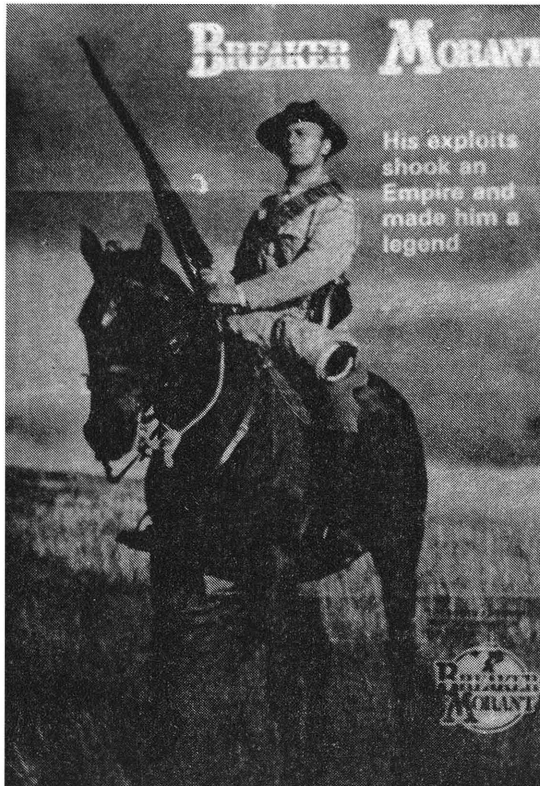
#### Note of the editor of *Pretoriana*

I refer to the following works regarding to Standard Bank of South Africa and its history:

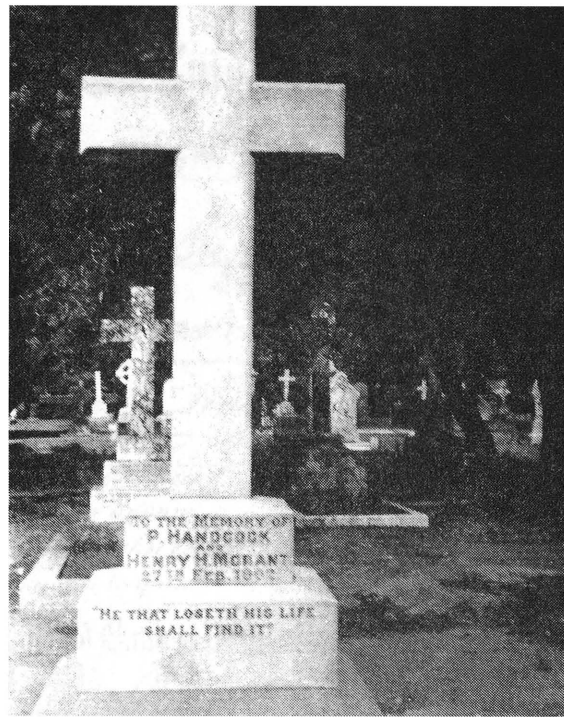
J. Henry and H.A. Siepmann, *The first hundred years of the Standard Bank*; Oxford University Press, London and New York 1963, also available in Afrikaans with the title: *Die eerste honderd jaar van die Standard Bank*, gegrond op ongepubliseerde dokumente, gekeur, saamgestel en aangebied deur J.A. Henry en geredigeer deur H.A. Siepmann, Oxford University Press, Londen en Nieu York, 1963, 365 pp.

John Henry, Some pioneering problems of the Standard Bank, in *Africana Notes and News*, volume 6, no. 1, March 1964, p. 115-128.

Elbie Immelman, Early history of the Victoria West branch of the Standard Bank of South Africa, in *Contree*, Nr. 11, Pretoria, January 1982, p.25-27.



Poster of the Australian film “Breaker Morant”, shown at Pretoria 1981, showing Henry Morant in the saddle.  
Photo C. de Jong



Cross of white marble upon the grave of Morant and Hancock in the old cemetery in Church Street West, Pretoria. The inscription reads: To the memory of / P. Hancock / and / Henry Morant / 27th Febr. 1902 / He that loseth his life / shall find it.

These words are quoted from Matthew 10 verse 39; the complete text reads: “Whosoever loses his life for my (Jesus’) sake shall gain it”. A few lines higher we read. “A man’s worst enemies will be the members of his own family” - just Morant’s and Hancock’s experience.

The marble cross replaces the original cross of iron.

Photo C. de Jong 1981

## PROF. A. DAVEY ON THE BUSHVELDT CARBINEERS

Introduction by C. de Jong

Transvaal north of Pietersburg was a lawless, savage frontier area during the 19th century. White law and order were established there later than in other regions of South Africa. The last wars against black tribes were fought there in the 90s. The area was a continuous source of concern for officials and tradesmen at Pretoria. Blacks clashed there with Blacks, Voortrekkers with Blacks and during the Boer War (1900-1902) British with Boers. Slave traders from Mozambique and big game hunters operated freely, applied their own laws and bred mischief. The scenery is beautiful, but even today local names refer to the bloody turmoil of the past: Moorddrift, Strydpoort, die Groot Spelonke (the big caves), Makapan's Cave, Duivelskloof and Mara (bitterness).

The last phase of this troubled period coincided with the actions of the British Bushveldt Carbineers, soon nicknamed "the Bushveldt Buccaneers". In the course of 1900 the "guerrilla" (i.e. small war, better: creeping war) succeeded the regular war. British troops penetrated late into the Northern Transvaal and occupied Pietersburg only on 5 April 1901. The Boers, led by the able and determined Assistent Commandant-General C.F. Beyers, resisted fiercely. The Boer corps of Jack Hindon blew up and looted many trains between Pretoria and Pietersburg. The British called this "uncivilized warfare" and complained of many "Boer atrocities" - of which I have found few examples apart from derailing and looting trains.

In January 1901 the British Military Command at Pretoria, headed by Kitchener, established several irregular corps, one of which, named the Bushveldt Carbineers (BVCs), was to subdue the Boers in the Northern Transvaal. The BVCs were joined mostly by tough adventurers and rough riders from many British countries. Among them were several Australians, because they, like people from the Americas, were attuned to the climate and wild country of Transvaal and excellent horsemen - much better than regular British troops. Several BVCs were promoted from the ranks to officer and lacked the discipline and knowledge of military law of regular army officers.

Some of the most significant of them were the Englishmen Captain P.F. Hunt and Lieutenant H. Picton and the Australians H. Morant, P. Handcock and C.R. Witton, all freshly commissioned lieutenants. The most interesting character is Henry Marrant or Morant, a mystery man. Apparently he was born of humble parents at Bridgewater, England, on 19 January 1865. He received some education, for he knew English poetry and his charming and jovial manners made him popular. In 1883, 18 years of age, he emigrated to Australia. He joined the "brigalow brigade", i.e. he became a cattle and sheep driver in the "brugalow" (the Australian veld), a superb horseman, a breaker-in of horses, a horse polo player and more: a poet. He published verses under the penname of "the Breaker", most in the *Sydney Bulletin*. Some people have called his popular "bushveld ballads" doggerel verses, but to me they are fresh like the morning dew on the brigalow.



Cross upon the communal grave of Henry Morant, “the Breaker”, and Peter Handcock in the old cemetery, Church Street West, Pretoria  
 Photo Tom Andrews



Tombstone of black marble upon the grave of the Reverend Daniel Heese at the mission station of Makapanspoort close to Potgietersrus. The inscription on the pedestal reads:  
 Hier ruhet in Gott / der Missionär / Daniel Heese /  
 24 Febr. 1867 / 23 Aug. 1901

The inscription on the cross reads: Wir wissen aber, dasz denen die Gott lieben, alle / Dinge zum Besten dienen / Röm(erbrief) 6, 28  
 Photo Robert C. de Jong, 1985

Morant's Australian years 1883-1900 passed herding flocks, rollicking and rhyming. The war in South Africa came to him as a godsend, for he could escape his creditors and he enlisted immediately. He arrived in South Africa in January 1900, participated in the campaign of Fieldmarshall Roberts to Pretoria, excelled in horsecraft and veldcraft as many Australians did, was demobilized in July and went on holiday in England. There he probably painted the town red and became friends with P.F. Hunt. When he was broke again, the new BVC corps offered another golden opportunity. He and Hunt enlisted immediately. In April 1901 they were back in South Africa.

The BVCs were divided into several squadrons. It was only Capt. Robertson's squadron at Ford Edward close to Pietersburg that was unruly, intemperate and thievish. Hunt and Morant instilled some discipline into the troop and then turned at the Boer fighters. As in the case of other creeping wars local warfare had degenerated into indiscriminate, savage killing. Later on, BVC officers maintained that Headquarters had given oral order that no prisoners of war should be brought in - like USA officers in Vietnam alleged as unfoundedly in the 60s.

The shooting of surrendered Boers was stepped up after Hunt's friend, Lt. Best, was killed in the blowing-up of a train, and by Morant after his friend Hunt and a BVC sergeant fell in a sharp fight with a small group of Boers under Field Cornet W.K. Viljoen. So far Morant had behaved correctly, but when he heard of Hunt's death and mutilation (probably not by Boers as Morant assumed, but by Blacks) he went berserk and ran amuck. Within six weeks he and other BVCs shot at least 22 surrendered Boers - among them women and children - and an unknown number of Blacks. Morant was assisted by Lt. Peter Handcock, a former Australian railway worker and horse ferrier.

Headquarters became alarmed after the BVC murder of an important witness of their murders of prisoners. He was the missionary Carl August Daniel Heese, shot on the fateful 23 August 1901 by Handcock on Morant's command. Heese was of German birth and though he was a British citizen, steps by the German government might be taken - which did not happen, however. Half a dozen BVC officers were arrested and court-martialled at Pietersburg and the BVC was disbanded immediately in October 1901. Some officers went scotfree in a remarkable way, others were reprimanded, some dismissed. Officially courts-martial were held in open court, but somehow particulars reached the British and Australian press a month after the death sentences.

Of the four main culprits Morant and Handcock were exonerated from Heese's death with a false alibi of Handcock, but sentenced to death on other charges of murder. Lt. G.R. Witton, another Australian, had his death sentence commuted to lifelong hard labour in Britain and Lt. H. Picton from England was cashiered.

Among the 22 or so victims of the BVC were six Dutch immigrants, of whom three teachers. Their names are inscribed on the two tables on churches in Pretoria and Bloemfontein which record Dutchman who died owing to



the War 1899-1902. I hope to publish in a later article on them.

Morant and Handcock were brought from Pietersburg to the jail in Pretoria, heard their death sentence there and were shot in the jail in the early morning of 27 February 1902 and buried in one grave in the cemetery in Church Street West.

When news of the executions was published, a storm of protest arose in Australia, because the only executed BVCs were both Australians. Morant and Handcock were said to be innocent and became to many national heroes and martyrs. After his release Witton published a book on the BVCs entitled *Scapegoats of Empire* (1907) and a cartoon showed in 1902 Kitchener dressed like a Hebrew Highpriest who kicks a scapegoat - the BVCs - into the desert. Several other Australian books have appeared, i.a. of Frank Renar, Cutlack, Margaret Carnegie & Frank Shields (1979) - the best one - and recently Kit Denton. But full Australian objectivity is lacking, also in Matt Carroll's excellent film *Breaker Morant*, in which Edward Woodward plays the role of the Breaker. Most Australians assume without reasons that Kitchener gave oral order to shoot prisoners, was hostile to Australians and left Pretoria to escape requests for reprieve.

On the South African side I mention here the article by Dr. C.A.R. Schulenburg, "Die Bushveldt Carbineers", 'n Grep uit die Anglo-Boere-oorlog", in *Historia*, jaargang 26 no. 1, Mei 1981, and the coming documented study to be published by the Van Riebeeck Society at Cape Town, edited by Prof. Arthur Davey. The board of our historical society is pleased to publish here his article on the BVCs at Pretoria.

### Good-bye of the Breaker

On the night before his execution Morant wrote his last, bitterly ironic poem, of which the verses follow here.

Butchered to make a Dutchman's holiday

In Prison cell I sadly sit - A d-d crestfallen chappy!

And own to you I feel a bit - A little bit unhappy!

It really ain't the place nor time To reel off rhyming action -

But yet we'll write a final rhyme While waiting cru-ci-fixion!

No matter what 'end' they decide - Quicklime? or 'biling ile'\* sir!

We'll do our best when crucified To finish off in style, sir!

But we bequeath a parting tip For sound advice as such men

Who come across in transport ship To polish off the Dutchmen!

If you encounter any Boers You really must not loot 'em,

And if you wish to leave these shores For pity's sake *do'nt shoot 'em!*

The Breaker

\* cockney for "boiling oil", poured by defenders of besieged fortresses upon soldiers who stormed the walls during the Middle Ages.

Of the many Australians who bemoaned the Breaker in poetry I quote here from the elegy published by the Rev. Gordon Tidy under the name of "Mousquetaire" in the *Sydney Bulletin*:

A sorry life of drink and debt  
That finished with the shrift\*  
Men give the murderers, and yet  
Was his the singer's gift;  
A scrap of song 'gainst a world of wrong!  
I know! - But here's a tear  
For the Crime heart, the Rhyme-heart  
That ceased its beating here.

\* confession, penance