

them. A large sum of money was sent from the inhabitants of Johannesburg and the Rev. Grellier personally superintended the distribution of one meal a day of mealie meal porridge to over a hundred starving women and children who flocked to the town for relief. It was a shocking sight to see some of these poor wretches, especially the children and very old people.

The poor white burghers were helped by the Government to some extent, but no one in the whole Republic was so chary of personally giving aid to these poor people as Paul Kruger. No distress of any kind, ever appealed sufficiently to him to make him disburse his much loved hoard, even when that dreadful dynamite explosion³³⁾ took place when his poorest burghers were the principal sufferers he was with difficulty induced to give a small sum while the Uitlanders gave their thousands spontaneously.

The war against the Chief Magoeba,³⁴⁾ who had been giving the Government some trouble, caused some little excitement in Pietersburg, as the burghers, volunteers and many of the native allies had to pass through that little town, making it feel almost important.

The Boers had a tough struggle with this chief but settled the matter effectually at last by accepting the assistance of two thousand Swazies, a fine body of warriors, who having an old grudge against Magoeba, gladly offered to help annihilate him.

It was a rare sight to see this large Impi of Swazies in all their war paint, shields and assegais marching through the outskirts of the town on their way to the front. The next time they were heard of, they had brought the Chief Magoeba's head to the General, he having told them to bring the chief dead or alive. A photograph of this ghastly object was afterwards to be seen at the Pietersburg Photographers. A gruesome sight but no doubt a mild one compared to the original which was put down at the door of the General's tent by the triumphant warriors.

I shall never forget the sight of the poor native prisoners, men, women and children in such a pitiable state of starvation after the siege they had endured as they were marched through to Pretoria, driven on by mounted burghers, whose anxiety to get back to their homes made them forgetful of the suffering of the poor creatures they were driving before them at so cruel a pace. Many fell behind and perished from cold and exposure. Such deplorable sufferings are often the unavoidable appendages of war.

Chapter XVIII

Premature death and the last transaction of our lamented and honoured friend

And now in my closing pages I will relate Devenish's last transaction with the Transvaal Government which was interrupted in the midst by his sad and untimely death.

Some four years before, he bought a farm from a non-resident, now living in the Cape, who had held it for nearly twenty years and paid taxes to the Transvaal Government all that time. It was situated in the Spelonken District of Zoutpansberg close to the Chief Magato's mountain. These farms having been considered unhealthy, years ago, were deserted by the Boers and as time went on Magato quietly encroached and ultimately laid claim to all the country

around his stronghold for many miles, which had previously been occupied and was still owned by private people as well as the Government.

These farms are now considered very valuable both for minerals and agricultural purposes and it so happened that the farm in question fell into the territory thus claimed by Magato³⁴ and his people.

Some time after the purchase of said farm, Devenish went to have a look at it and have it surveyed and found it a most promising property indeed. He also noticed that the natives looked at him as if he had no business there, but did not actually interfere with him. He later on went with the Field cornet of the district to lay formal claim to it, with the result that the natives ordered them off in a most threatening manner, a hint they thought best to take. On returning to Pietersburg, he appealed to the Landdrost court for the right to occupy his own land.

The court gave judgement in his favour, and the sheriff was sent to the natives with a writ of ejection, unless they quietly submitted to his occupation. On the sheriff's arrival he was met by the Head Induna of the kraal to whom he handed the writ. This document was contemptuously torn up in his presence and the Chief told him that if he did not instantly take himself off, his person would be treated in the same manner. He further emphasised his threat by ordering a score of armed warriors to escort them with all speed off the farm.

The sheriff returned to Pietersburg most indignant at his treatment but very thankful to have got away with a whole skin.

Devenish then took proceedings against the Government in the High Court of Pretoria suing for possession of his property for which he had paid taxes for some years. He was fighting the battles for several companies and private persons who held property in the same way and could not get possession. The Government was bound to protect their interests and could not allow the Chief to go on defying its authority.

The final trial of this case was to have been held on the 1st June 1898 and it would have been interesting to see how the Government would have got out of the matter. Many witnesses were summoned by Devenish to prove his claim, but alas he was taken seriously ill and died unexpectedly on the 3rd May 1898 and the case had to be postponed.³⁵⁾

The Government afterwards consented to pay all costs already incurred if the case was withdrawn and promised that the Chief Magato should be dealt with and made to give up the property.

The Chief was growing more insolent towards the Government and afterwards even refused to pay any taxes at all which was the last straw that brought about his ruin.

In the latter part of 1898 the Government made war against him and drove him out of his stronghold after a stubborn resistance on his part.

Chapter XIX

Death again blasts the already bereaved family

Since writing the foregoing chapter a new and crushing blow has fallen suddenly on the widow and children of our

lamented friend whose life history I have given in the previous pages.

Their eldest son Lennox, a promising young fellow of twenty-two, died of typhoid after only a few days illness at Wellington on the 13th December 1899 where he was farming temporarily with the two sons of Dr. Smuts of Rondebosch, Cape Town. He had only recently completed his course at the Agricultural College, Elsenburg, where he had gained the highest certificates.

He was waiting for this dreadful war to be over to proceed to Pietersburg and the Northern Border of the Transvaal to carry on farming on the farms his late father had acquired for that purpose.

Only eighteen months before his father was carried off by the same disease, an illness of only eight days.

I will not dwell on this doubly sad grief and loss at a time when scarcely a home in all England and South Africa is not mourning for some dear and valuable life. Sorrow is uppermost on every side and we, who now mourn our dear ones, can but pray and strive for victory over our grief and its inevitable and consequent changes, as our brave soldiers are fighting and enduring untold hardships, for victory and the supremacy of the dear old Flag which means equal rights to all once more in South Africa.

References

- 1) The author, Mrs. Eliza Francis Devenish née Short, does not mention Mr. Van Niekerk's christian names. According to another source his name was Guillaume - French for William.
- 2) The Damaraland trekker or Thirstland trekker who sold his farm at Bronkhorstspuit to Guillaume van Niekerk, was Johannes ("Hans") van der Merwe, father of Gert van der Merwe. Gert was leader of the first group of Thirstland trekkers who left their farms in 1874.
- 3) Mrs. Devenish often writes England and English where we should expect Great Britain and British.
- 4) Hendrik Carel Vos Leibbrand was born in Cape Town in 1837 and died there in 1911. He studied theology in the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands and got there liberal theological ideas. He was a parson of the Dutch Reformed Church at Victoria West from which village G. van Niekerk hailed, in 1860-77. He resigned as a parson and became keeper of the Parliament archives in Cape Town. He was a hardworking and deserving archivist. See "Dictionary of South African Biography", volume 2, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Pretoria, 1972, p.385-387.
- 5) Tommy Atkins was the nickname of the British soldier, a volunteer in the 19th century.
- 6) Samuel Melville is mentioned as Surveyor General of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek at Pretoria on p.47 of the "Transvaal Book Almanac and Directory for 1877", compiled by Fred. Jeppe, Pietermaritzburg, 1877.
- 7) Blue Backs was the nickname of the paper money issued by the Transvaal treasury since the presidency of M.W.

- Pretorius. Due to overissue the paper money soon depreciated with 30% or more.
- 8) These dwarfs were perhaps Bushmen or San of whom a few had survived in remote places of Transvaal in the 19th century.
 - 9) This mediation by Paul Kruger between British, Boers and Zulus in 1878 is not confirmed by historians.
 - 10) The Boer assistance of the British in the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879 was largely restricted to Pieter Uys and his family in the district of Utrecht, Transvaal. Pieter's father, the Voortrekker leader, Pieter Lafras Uys, was killed by Zulus in 1838 and the family of Uys had a grudge against the Zulus.
 - 11) The British army which invaded Zululand at the start of the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879, suffered a crushing defeat in the battle at Isandhlwana on 22 January 1879.
 - 12) This is probably Cornelis Johannes Gerhardus Erasmus, born in Natal in 1842, died on his farm Hondsrivier close to Bronkhorstspuit on 7 or 8 January 1909. He was a man of importance in the region of Pretoria as a Boer officer and as a member of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk. See H.M. Rex, chapter "Geschiedenis van Bronkhorstspuit" in the book "Die Nederduitsch Hervormde Gemeente Bronkhorstspuit, 1889-1989", Krugersdorp 1989. His portrait photo is on p.74 of this work.
 - 13) Lord Randolph Churchill, 1849-95, was the father of Sir Winston Churchill. Randolph visited Southern Africa with a rather large and luxurious convoy of followers and wagons. He passed Transvaal on his way to Rhodesia in 1891. He criticized many people and circumstances in South Africa, especially the Transvalers, although they did all their best to accommodate him. Therefore an able, unknown cartoonist at Pretoria drew a cartoon which shows president Kruger who kicks Churchill with a bow out of Transvaal. See Brian Roberts, "Churchills in Africa", Hamisch-Hamilton, London 1970, p.52 and picture opposite p.50.
 - 14) This was the farmer CJG Erasmus, a member of the prominent Erasmus family in the region of Pretoria. See reference 12.
 - 15) This is Frans Joubert, commander of the Transvaal forces in the fight at Bronkhorstspuit on 20 December 1880.
 - 16) This is Commandant Solomon Theodorus Prinsloo, referred to in the chapter "Die Prinsloos van Bronkhorstspuit" in H.M. Rex en andere, in "Die Nederduitsch Hervormde Gemeente Bronkhorstspuit 1879-1969", Krugersdorp 1969, p.285 seq. His portrait is on p.284. His farm was Vlakfontein.
 - 17) Colonel W. Bellairs was the commander of the British garrison at Pretoria when this town was besieged by the Transvalers in 1880/81. He surrendered and left the town with his troops when the armistice had been signed in March 1881.

- 18) This is perhaps a reference to John Farrell Junior, son of John Farrell Senior. The lastmentioned was an inhabitant of Pretoria. John ("Jan") Farrell Junior settled on the farm Wilgekraal in the district of Lydenburg. The story goes that he assisted the British garrison at Lydenburg when it was besieged by the Transvalers in 1880/81. He was captured by the besiegers and shot as a traitor. He was then 27 years old and married. Mrs Devenish calls his kind "a loyal and defenceless British subject", but I wonder. Information regarding his death is very scarce.
- 19) Mrs Devenish refers to the second Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902, which raged while she was writing the memoirs of her marriage with Anthony Lennox Devenish.
- 20) The Afrikaner Bond was the political organization of the Afrikaners in the Cape Colony, founded in 1882 and soon led by the politician Jan Hendrik Hofmeyer. It had also members in the Boer republics. It was supported by Cecil Rhodes as a politician and it cooperated with him until the Jameson Raid into Transvaal in 1895/96. It was an influential political party in the Cape Colony.
- 21) The Reverend S. . du Toit was a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, founded by Ds. Dirk Postma, and a member of the Afrikaner Bond and leader of the first movement for propagation of Afrikaans as a language. He became the superintendent of school education in Transvaal when Paul Kruger was State President of Transvaal and had to resign in 1890. He returned to the Cape Colony and became a grudger against Kruger and a supporter of Cecil Rhodes. See "Dictionary of South African Biography", volume one, HSRC, Pretoria, 1968, p.279-281.
- 22) The village of Schweizer-Reneke in Western Transvaal was first named Mamusa and then renamed after Captain Schweizer of the Transvaal State Artillery and Gert Reneke, who both fell in the campaign against Chief Massouw in 1885. Source: C. Beelaerts van Blokland, "Eenige aardrijkskundige en historische gegewens betreffende Zuid-Afrika", Zeist 1941, p.29.
- 23) Mrs. Devenish does not clarify whether the human bones in the veld dated from the Difaqane or the Great Migrations of black tribes in the first half of the 19th century, when the Matabele under Chief Msilkaats killed many blacks in Transvaal, or from the recent campaign of Transvaler Boers against black tribes in Bechuanaland.
- 24) Thomas Hugo became the first managing director of the "Nationale Bank van de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek" when it was founded in 1890 to serve inter alia the financial needs of the Transvaal treasury.
- 25) He was Commandant Adrianus Johannes Gerardus de la Rey, nicknamed Klein Adriaan, 1846-1938, elder brother of General Jacobus Herculaaas de la Rey. Mrs Devenish ~~finds it strange~~ that the General who triumphed over the British during the war in 1899-1902, is Jacobus H. de la Rey, nicknamed Oom Koos. Adriaan and other farmers from Western Transvaal founded the small republic of Stellaland in 1883. The death of Bethel, called murder by Mrs.

Devenish, on p.33 is an episode of the squabbles between blacks and Transvalers. Adriaan de la Rey became adjudant-officer of his brother the General in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. See on Adriaan de la Rey "Dictionary of South African Biography", volume 3, HSRC, Pretoria 1972, p.206.

In 1884 there was trouble in Goshen, one of the two dwarf republics, recently founded by farmers from Transvaal. Montsiwa, chief of a Bamangwato tribe in Bechuanaland, had attacked settlers at Rooigrond in Goshen and was defeated. Dr. J.F. van Oordt B.A. records in his biography "Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek" (Hollandsch-Afrikaansche Uitgevers-Maatschappij, Amsterdam and Cape Town, 1898, p.434): "Montsiwa had attacked the Rooigronders in August 1884. His allies were a great number of (Chief) Gatzibi's people and also Englishmen, among them a certain Bethell, a man of a reputed family in England, but married to a daughter of Montsiwa in Kaffer manner. But Montsiwa had been defeated by the Rooigronders and volunteers (from Transvaal) and he was completely powerless to defend himself. Many of his followers and people of Gatzibi had fallen. Also Bethell was dead. People in England later made a hero of Bethell, but took care that his little son, born by his black spouse, did not share in his heritage" (translation from Dutch by C. de Jong).

- 26) Pietersburg was founded by Commandant-General Piet J. Joubert in 1886; promising mineral prospects of the village, inter alia gold discoveries in the Murchison Range have been largely disappointed. The miners' village Leydsdorp in the vicinity was founded in the same years and named after State Secretary W.J. Leyds. After some decades it became a ghost town, it was deserted.
- 27) Mrs. Devenish' opinion that President Paul Kruger was always averse to railways is nonsense. He was on the contrary an advocate of railway construction and exploitation, although on account and risk of private persons; he granted a concession to Dutch railway experts for the Eastern line between the Mozambique border and Pretoria and favoured the Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij (NZASM) which built that railway between 1890 and 95. Regarding Mrs. Devenish's remark on p.13 that Paul Kruger could not speak and understand English, other sources disagree. Piet Meiring, "Die Bosveld en sy mense", Perskor-Uitgewery, Johannesburg-Kaapstad 1980, p.108, states that President Kruger during his visit to the new town of Barberton speeched to the inhabitants in tolerable English. - Regarding Mrs. Devenish's remark on p.39 that President Kruger payed nothing to his host during his visits to Pietersburg for his expenses, Meiring loc. cit. p.110, states that President Kruger gave his host at Barberton, David MacKay Wilson, 7 sovereigns for his expenses, recorded by Wilson.
- 28) Carl Hanau was born at Freiberg in Germany in 1855 and died in London in 1930. He was a pioneer of the exploit-

ation of the Great Gold Reef and became a mining magnate of the Witwatersrand, but he went bankrupt in Transvaal, returned to Europe and died in poverty. See "Dictionary of South African Biography", volume 3, HSRC, Pretoria, 1979, p.37. He did not obtain the concession of the railway from Pretoria to Pietersburg, when this line was not coveted by the NZASM. The line was opened in 1899, a few months before the War.

- 29) Louis Changuion, "Pietersburg, die eerste eeu, 1886-1986", Pretoria, 1986, p.47, writes on schools at Pietersburg (translated from Afrikaans): "Another problem of school education in Zoutpansberg (the district of Pietersburg) was the scarcity of well qualified school teachers. . . The (only State) school had in the nineties only 3 pupils in Standard 4 which also was the highest standard in 1893. The language of instruction in this small school at Pietersburg was (High) Dutch. The parson of the Dutch Reformed Church (NG Kerk), ds. M.P.A. Coetzee, however, was of the opinion that because half the inhabitants of Pietersburg was English speaking the school should be double medium (bilingual). However, he could not get the cooperation of the school committee under chairmanship of M. Jorissen (a son of judge E.J.P. Jorissen at Pretoria). With the support of English and Dutch speaking parents he (Ds. Coetzee) founded a double medium school in 1895 and applied to the (State) Department of Education for recognition and subsidy. Dr. N. Mansvelt who had become superintendent of Education in 1891, declined however and reprimanded Ds. Coetzee. The Reverend proposed in 1897 an amalgamation of his school with the existing school which was subsidized by the State. Mansvelt rejected also this proposal because the policy was separation of English and Dutch medium schools. Ds. Coetzee continued with his school which gained many adherents at Pietersburg." So Mr. and Mrs. Devenish had good reason to be dissatisfied with school education at Pietersburg.
- 30) During the rising of the Matabele against the British Chartered Company of Cecil Rhodes in Rhodesia in 1896 a patrol of the company troops, led by Major Wilson, was surrounded by Matabele warriors and killed after heroic resistance. This was the famous Last Stand of the Shangani patrol.
- 31) Changuion, "Pietersburg 1886-1986", loc. cit., p.37-38, gives particulars of Devenish as a land surveyor in Zoutpansberg. Together with Johann Rissik he surveyed a large terrain where the new village of Pietersburg was laid out. Changuion states on p.39 (in translation): "The landsurveyor (A.L. Devenish) liked the new village where he had such a large part in the laying-out thereof, so much that he decided to settle there. He built a house at the corners of Maré, Grobler and Market Streets and became a prominent and active member of the community." His wife and children joined him there.
- 32) Commandant-General Piet J. Joubert died at Pretoria on 27 March 1900. His friend Mrs. Devenish does not mention

- that he was the Commander-in-Chief of the Transvaal army which inflicted heavy defeats on the British army.
- 33) On 18 February 1896 a trainload of dynamite exploded on the station of the NZASM at Vrededorp in Johannesburg. This caused great loss of life, numerous wounded and mutilated men and enormous loss of property.
- 34) Mrs Devenish writes here Magato but she should mention the Bavenda Chief Mpofo, mentioned by her on the following pages as a rebellious, provoking Chief. Magato died in 1895 and was succeeded by Mpefu. Against him and the Bavenda the last native war was fought in 1898 by Transvaler burghers, led by General P.J. Joubert, and by auxiliary black troops.
- 35) The name of A.L. Devenish is kept in Devenish Street on Lucasrand in Pretoria and in Pietersburg between the parallel streets Rissik and Jorissen.



KMDT. SALMON PRINSLOO

Commandant Salomon Theodoor Prinsloo - Mrs.E.Devenish complains bitterly of his behaviour vis-a-vis her husband and his family during the Anglo-Boer War 1880-1881.
 Source of S.T.Prinsloo's portrait is: H.M.Rex en andere, "Die Nederduitsch Hervormde Gemeente Bronkhorstspuit 1869-1969", N.H.W. Pers, Krugersdorp 1969

**HULDIGING VAN ONS AFGETREDE VOORSITTER
DR N.A. COETZEE**

Op die jongste jaarvergadering van lede van ons Vereniging op 25 Maart 1995 het Dr. N.A. Coetzee as voorsitter afgetree en is hy opgevolg deur mnr. "Lappe" Laubscher. Op 11 Augustus 1995 het omstreeks 40 lede van ons Vereniging, familieledede en vriende vir 'n sjampanje-ontbyt saamgekom om Dr. Coetzee te huldig vir die groot werk wat hy vir ons Vereniging verrig het. Die ondervoorsitter, mnr. W.J. Punt, het 'n toespraak gelewer en 'n erediploma aan Dr. Coetzee oorhandig. Die nuwe voorsitter was ook aanwesig.

Dr. Nico Coetzee is gebore, te Platrand by Standerton op 11 September 1911. Sy vader was daar onderwyser. Hy het gestudeer aan die universiteite van Kaapstad, Pretoria en Suid-Afrika. Sy studievakke was handelwetenskappe, met name ekonomie, ekonomiese geskiedenis, boekhou en handelsrekenen, en opvoedkunde, met name die Hoër Onderwysdiploma.

Hy is 1937 getroud met Anna du Plessis. Hulle het twee dogters gekry.

Een van sy eerste poste was in die Hoërskool te Rustenburg in 1935-45. Een van sy kollegas was daar Jan Ploeger, ywerige navorser en historikus en lewenslange vriend van hom.

Dr. Coetzee het uitblink as onderwyser, onderwysorganisasie, navorser, genealoog, publisist en kultuurman. Hy het in die Stadsaal te Pretoria op 10 Junie 1992 die onderskeiding "Uitblinker in voortreflikheid", bestem vir Pretorianers met groot verdienste, ontvang. By dié geleentheid is die hierna volgende "commendatio" voorgelees:

Toekenning van "Uitblinker in voortreflikheid" aan Pretorianers wat besonder presteer het.

Dr. N.A. Coetzee - Gemeenskapsdiens

Studeer in die onderwys aan die Universiteit van Kaapstad en verder aan die UP en Unisa.

Begin sy loopbaan as onderwyser en vorder mettertyd tot Registrateur, Pretoriase Kollege vir Gevorderde Tegnieese Onderwys - later Pretoria Technikon.

Was vir twee lang periodes - bykans drie dekades - Voorsitter van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria, o.m. ook Raadslid van die Nasionale Kultuurhistoriese en Opelugmuseum en skrywer van tientalle kultuurhistoriese boeke en artikels in verskillende boeke en tydskrifte.

Verskaf op versoek van die RGN die biografieë van 18 persone vir die S.A. Biografiese Woordeboek. Lewer ook bydraes vir die Ensiklopedie van Suider-Afrika en tydskrifte soos Familia, Historia, Africana Nuus. Redakteur van verskeie tydskrifte, o.m. van Pretoriana en 'n boek oor Boeresport - 'n lys van 97 speletjies, volledig beskryf in 400 bladsye.

Verskeie genealogiese boeke is deur Dr. Coetzee gepubliseer, o.a. die Coetzeestamouers en nageslagte (1679 - 1979) asook dié van die Du Plessis- en Heystek-families.

Letterkundige kinderverhale uit sy pen oor meer as vier dekades het gesorg vir opbouende kinder- en jeugliteratuur.

As lid van talle vakverenigings, o.a. die Suid-Afrikaanse Vereniging vir die Bevordering van die Wetenskap, Genealogiese Vereniging van Suider-Afrika, National Geographic Society (VSA), die Skrywerskring van S.A. ens., dien Dr Coetzee steeds die gemeenskap.

-o-

As toepaslike uitbreiding van Dr. Coetzee se lys van besondere verdienstes volg die teks van Mnr. W.J. Punt se toespraak op 11 Augustus 1995.

HULDIGING VIR DR N.A. COETZEE:
11 AUGUSTUS 1995

Aftrede as voorsitter van: Genootskap Oud-Pretoria/Old Pretoria Society

Dr Nico Coetzee is 'n huishoudelike naam binne die kringe van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria, ek hoef hom nie aan u voor te stel nie, maar wil tog iets oor hom en sy loopbane met u deel. There can't be many members of the Old Pretoria Society who can remember a time when he was not a member.

The Old Pretoria Society was established in 1948 as the first local history society in S.A. Dr Coetzee joined the society as a member in about 1959, 36 years ago! He soon became a member of the Committee where he has served as secretary, as editor of Pretoriana, as vice-chairman and twice as chairman, first from about 1960 - 1964 and again from 1979 to 1995.

Nico Coetzee is 'n onderwysman van beroep. Hy was verbonde aan die Rustenburgse Hoërskool vanaf 1935 tot 1945, toe wyle Frank (Pa) le Roux hom werf om by Afrikaans Hoër Seunskool aan te sluit waar hy vanaf 1945 tot 1959 diens doen. Ek was self vanaf 1947 - 1951 op AHS, maar het nie by Dr. Coetzee klas gehad nie, hoewel ek wel 'n keer in mev Coetzee se klas daar gesit het.

Tydens Nico Coetzee se werktyd in Rustenburg, was hy die stigter van aandklasse vir handelstudente daar. Dit lei tot wat vandag die Rustenburgse Hoër Handelsskool is.

Na sy AHS-loopbaan sluit hy aan by die Pretoriase Tegnieese Kollege (die Technikon vandag) waar hy dosent word in onderwysopleiding vir tegniese, handels-, huishoudkunde- en kunsrigtings en daarna tot sy aftrede 10 jaar as registrateur.

His extra-curricular teaching career included a stint as secretary of the High School Teachers' Association from 1945 - 1977. During that time he was

also the editor of *Onderwysblad vir Middelbare Onderwys*.

He served as vice-chairman and chairman of the NZASM-Gedenkhuis in Rissik Street. I took over from him as chairman of that local history society in 1982.

Nico Coetzee was actively involved in starting the Old Pretoria Society's commemorative plaques programme. On the 16th December 1966 he unveiled the plaque at the Raadsaal while the late Herman le Roux unveiled the plaque at the Palace of Justice.

Ons ken almal die herboude Kaya Rosa by die Universiteit van Pretoria. Die gedenkplaat is aangebring deur die Genootskap op inisiatief van Dr. Coetzee toe die huis nog in Skinnerstraat gestaan het. Die plaat is daar deur hom onthul op 21 Oktober 1968.

Dan moet ek wys op nog een van Dr. Coetzee se vele talente, dit is as genealoog. Uit sy navorsing en pen het verskyn drie baie verdienstelike boeke wat handel oor die Coetzee-, Du Plessis- en Heystek-families.

Ten slotte: Ons sien uit na die verskyning van Dr. N.A. Coetzee se volgende boek wat handel oor die geskiedenis van Rustenburg 1840 - 1940.



Dr.N.A.Coetzee en Mevrou Anna Coetzee-du Plessis met geskenke by die afskeid en huldiging van Dr.Coetzee as voorsitter van die genootskap Oud-Pretoria op 11 Augustus 1995

AOSTA, ANOTHER PRETORIA

by C. de Jong

In September 1993 I visited the Valley of Aosta, la Vallée d'Aoste, in the northwestern corner of Italy. There I found another Pretoria in the city of Aosta. It was founded in 25 or 23 BC by command of Octavianus, who had adopted the title of Augustus. He was the first Roman emperor. The new town was named after him Augusta Praetoria Salassorum, that means the august place of the senior magistrate of the Salassians. The long name was abbreviated to Augusta, in the Middle Ages transformed to Aosta. The Praetor under the Roman republic was senior magistrate and deputy consul, so the highest official but one. European academics of the 16th to 18th centuries liked to latinize their family names. A Dutch-Reformed pastor at Ouddorp in the province of Holland adopted the stately Latin name Pretorius. His son Johannes arrived in 1666 in the Cape Colony and became the ancestor of the Pretorius family in South Africa. Our city has been named after one of its most illustrious members.¹

The person in the gown on the coat of arms of the city of Pretoria represents a Roman praetor and refers to the origin of the founder's name. He holds a key in his left hand; this is the key which gives access to the city of Pretoria.

Salassorum refers to the local Celtic tribe the Salassians. The Celts hailed from Asia Minor where the Biblical town of Galata reminds us of them. The Celts were a people of warriors - some tell us that Celt means "warrior". Between the 10th and 5th centuries BC they spread over the Balkan peninsula, Central and Western Europe. They pillaged the Greek oracle temple of Delphi and also Rome before this city rose to greatness. They occupied the Po Valley, which the Romans called Gallia Cisalpina, i.e. Gaul (France) on this side of the Alps. Gallia (Gaul), Galicia and Wales (French: Pays de Galles) bear the name of the Celts.

The Celtic tribe of the Salassians² settled in the attractive Alpine Valley of Aosta. It is largely broad, flat and fertile. The climate is dry and sunny and the rainfall of 600 mm per year suffices for grains and grapes to ripen. It is also of old a valley of transit: from France the minor Saint Bernhard Pass and from Switzerland the Great Saint Bernhard Pass lead to Aosta. Both passes adjoin the giant Mont Blanc. Via the Minor Saint Bernhard Pass the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte and according to some also of Hannibal invaded Italy. Now two tunnels of respectively 11 and 6 km give access to the Valley.

Scientists during the Renaissance explained the name of the Salassians by deriving it from Salacia,

the spouse of the seagod Neptune. Later scientists derived the name from Celtic or Germanic "saal", i.e. hall, also improbable. We do not know the origin of the Celtic name. It lives on in the village of Salusola in the Valley.

The Salassians controlled the traffic through their valley and levied tolls from passing merchants and from convoys. As a result they clashed with the government in Rome who wished free passage for trade and military convoys. The Salassians defeated a Roman army, commanded by Appius Claudius, in 143 BC, but this general assembled another army and he defeated and subjected them some years later. They surrendered, but part of them waged a persistent guerrilla and sometimes pillaged merchants and convoys. When the civil wars in Rome were over, the new man in power, Octavianus, who called himself the Emperor Augustus, sent Terentius Varron with an army to end the turbulence of the Salassians. When Varron could not terminate their guerrilla warfare, he resorted to treachery, as the Romans had done previously against the rebellious leader of the Iberians, Sertorius, and the rebellious leader of the Lusitanians (the Portuguese), Vitriacus. Varron lulled the Salassian leaders with a pretended peace treaty and thereafter arrested them. Some of them were burnt alive, as the Celts used to do with their human sacrifices, i.e. Roman prisoners, some were sold as slaves. This was the end of the Salassian resistance.

Varron had laid out his camp in a strategic spot. In 25 or 23 BC the Emperor ordered the founding of a town in this place, which was called Augusta Praetoria Salassorum. The original Roman army camp was a quadrangle which is still visible within the townwall. This is partly intact and was during the Middle Ages fortified with towers such as Tour des Seigneurs de Quart, Tour de Fromage and Tour de Branafan.

Geography and political status

The Valley of Aosta is surrounded by mountains. It stretches from Mont Blanc in the West to Monte Rosa near the border of Piedmont in the east and from the Graies Alps on the border of Switzerland in the north to the mountains of the Gran Paradiso on the border of Piedmont in the south. The valley is not isolated, for several passes give access to neighbouring provinces and countries.

The town of Aosta lies 640 metres above sea-level. The centre of the Valley, where Aosta lies, has a rainfall of on the average 500 mm annually, which is moderate, and increases to 2000 mm at high altitudes. The climate of the centre is rather dry and sunny, so that the vine matures well and the region produces good wines. The pleasant climate and

the magnificent surrounding mountains make the Valley very attractive to tourists.

In 1945, just after World War II, the Valley obtained a special charter which granted administrative autonomy, just as Southern Tyrol and Sicily obtained. In the Valley the French and Italian languages have the same status, as French has always been in general use. But there are complaints that French is losing ground because of the influx of Italians from the South and of limited school education in French. The local dialect is a mixture of Italian and French.

The triumphal arch of Augustus

Together with the walling-in of the town the Emperor ordered the construction of a Triumphal Arch to commemorate the Roman victory over the Salassians. It is the landmark of Aosta. From the east the road leads in a straight line from the ancient Ponte Romano - now a dry bridge because the river Buthier has changed its course - to the Triumphal Arch, from there over the Rue d'Anselme to the Porta Pretoria and along the Rue Pretoria³ to the Place de Chanoux in the city centre. The Arch is 11,5 metre high, lost its statues and ornaments during the barbarian invasions but is otherwise intact and a fine monument. It was restored in 1912.

The Porta Pretoria

This is the eastern gate in the town wall; the western gate, the Porta Decumana has been demolished. The Porta Pretoria is intact. It consists of two parallel curtains (cortinas), one on the east and one on the west side, each with a wide arch in the middle for the passing of carts and wagons, and with one wide arch in the middle for the passing of carts and wagons, and with two narrower arches for pedestrians. Adjoining the western curtain north of the Porta stands a tall square tower, constructed during the 12th century and after the owners in the Middle Ages named "la Torre dei Signori di Quart" (a Tour des Seigneurs de Quart, the Tower of the lords of Quart). In medieval Italy towerbuilding was a favourite activity of aristocrats to obtain a stronghold in time of trouble and social prestige.

Tour de Fromage

From the Porta Pretoria and the adjacent Torre dei signori di Quart the Roman townwall stretches northward past the Torre di Formaggio (Tour de Fromage) and the Roman theatre. This square and solid tower adjoins the townwall and was constructed during an uncertain century of the Middle Ages. It belonged for a long time to the Casei family. This surname also means cheese. Therefore the tower was called collo-

quially "la Torre di 'Formaggio", i.e. cheesetower, though it had nothing to do with cheese. It has recently been restored and serves now as a museum of contemporary pictorial art.

The Roman Theatre

After the Triumphal Arch and the Porta Pretoria the Roman Theatre is the most impressive Roman building in Aosta. It consists of a rectangular façade with four tiers of arches, 22 metres high, and a semi-circular amphitheatre which is now entirely excavated. The façade was in 1993 enveloped in scaffolds for restoration, a sad, but reassuring sight. The Romans liked their "panem et circenses" (bread and games) as much as modern man his rugby, soccer and cricket and gave a high priority to the construction of an open-air amphitheatre in their cities. The citizens of the fresh town of Aosta soon had a theatre constructed for their games and plays.

The Hôtel de Ville (Town Hall) ⁴

From the Porta Pretoria the Rue Pretoria or Via Pretoria leads straightly to the Place de Chanoux in the centre of the town. There we arrive at the stately Hotel de Ville or City Hall, built in neoclassical style and completed in 1839. It arose on the site of a Franciscan monastery which had been badly damaged by French soldiers during the French Revolution 1789-1799, and therefore was demolished. The main entrance is flanked on the right hand by a statue of the seagod Neptune with trident, on the left hand by a statue of his spouse, the goddess Salacia. Their presence here far from the sea should be explained by the derivation by Renaissance scholars of the name Salassians of the local Celtic tribe from the name Salacia. Needless to say there is no relation between the names Salassians and Salacia.

In front of the Town Hall there is a monument dedicated to the soldiers of Val d'Aosta, who served Italy and lost their lives in two World Wars. The monument was designed by Pietro Canonica.

The diptych of the Emperor Honorius ⁵

There are several Medieval and early-modern churches in Aosta, each with treasures of art. The main church is "la Catedrale dell' Assunta", the Cathedral of the Ascension. It has one precious object which should be mentioned here. This is a diptych of silver with two figures of the Emperor Honorius (395-423). His father Theodosius was the last great Roman emperor. He divided the empire in the East realm and the West realm and left them to his sons Arcadius and Honorius respectively. Honorius was a man without talents and character. During his unfortunate reign

the barbarians burst through the frontiers and flooded his empire while he most of his years resided at Ravenna instead of Rome, because Ravenna was surrounded by protecting marshes. But even a strong monarch would have been powerless to stop the barbarians. His able general and domineering minister, the Vandal Stilicho, vanquished the invading Visigoths under king Alaric at Verona in 403. It was a Phyrriic victory, but Honorius used it for a triumphal entry into Rome in 406. The diptych bears the date of 406 and it is presumed that Honorius ordered it be made in commemoration of his triumphal entry. It is unknown why and when it was brought from Rome or Ravenna to Aosta.

Honorius had Stilicho, his son and wife murdered in 408. Alaric and the Visigoths returned and they pillaged Rome mercilessly in 410 and captured the Emperor's sister Galla Placidia, to avenge Stilicho. Honorius was impotent, had no offspring and died young at Ravenna.

Saint Anselm ⁶

Aosta has been the cradle of at least one man of international reputation, also well known in England. He is Saint Anselm, 1033-1109. He joined the Benedictine Order and became a monk in the abbey of Bec in Normandy in 1060, where he was made abbot in 1078. Normandy was part of the Kingdom of England. So it is explicable that king William II the Red (1087-1100), eldest son of William the Conqueror, appointed Anselm archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. If the king had thought Anselm to be a meek subject, he was mistaken. As early as 1094 they had their first heavy clash, then and later regarding financial contributions by the Church to the Throne. Anselm went into voluntary exile abroad. William's successor, Henry I, his brother, concluded a compromise with Anselm in 1105 and Anselm returned as archbishop to England in 1107. He died in 1109 and was declared a saint in 1404.

He was one of the greatest theologians of his time and one of the founders of Medieval scholasticism. In Aosta the Casa di Sant' Anselmo on the Via Sant' Anselmo which leads from the Arch of Augustus to the Porta Pretoria, retains the memory of this illustrious son of the town. A building on the Via C. Ollietti in Aosta lodges the Academia di Sant' Anselmo - this is the archaeological service of the valley, founded in 1855 -, the archives and the scientific library of the valley.

Protestantism in the Vallée d'Aoste

The Vallée d'Aoste and the adjacent province of Piedmont are originally the living place of the Waldenses, in French the Vaudois. They were the

adherents of the merchant Pierre Waldo, in Latin called Petrus Waldus, of Lyons in France. Around 1170 he gave away his possessions, became a preacher and founded one of the sects in Southern France. The Waldenses spread to Northern Italy during the late Middle Ages. They and other sects were relentlessly persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church and secular authorities, inter alia the Duke of Savoy who was also ruler of Aosta and Piedmont.

In the 16th century the Waldenses joined the Calvinists in France and Switzerland and adopted the dogmas and formularies of the Reformation.⁷ When persecution by the Dukes of Savoy flared up in the 17th century, the Lord Protector of England, Oliver Cromwell, intervened and brought some relief to the Protestants in the Duchy. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France in 1685 caused the flight of many Protestants (Huguenots) from that country. Protestants in the Duchy of Savoy, also in Aosta and Piedmont, joined this exodus.⁸ Most Italian Protestants fled to Geneva and other places in Switzerland and went on to Germany, the Netherlands and Great Britain. From these countries several migrated to European colonies overseas, inter alia the Cape Colony. Professor Marcel Boucher traced the places from where Huguenot immigrants in the Cape Colony hailed and found that several came from Piedmont, but he did not find people from Aosta.*¹ This does not exclude Protestants from the Valley of Aosta.⁹ During the 18th century religious tolerance also spread to France and Italy, though sometimes persecution of Protestants and other non-Catholics flared up. Influenced by the French Revolution in 1789-1799 governments introduced complete religious tolerance. Thereafter the Huguenots in France and the Waldenses in Italy could live in peace and confess their religion publicly. There are several Protestant congregations in Piedmont and the Valley. The parson in the town of Aosta lives close to the "Croix de la Ville" which was once a symbol that Calvin and his followers had been driven out of the Valley.

Calvin in Aosta?

There is a story that John Calvin, the famous or notorious Reformer, visited Aosta in 1536. Several biographers of Calvin considered this visit as a historical fact, others deny it emphatically. This visit would have taken place in the uncertain episode of Calvin's life from 1534 to 1541 when he led a vagrant existence. He had several pseudonyms, i.a.

*) M. Boucher, "French speakers in the Cape in the first hundred years of Dutch East India Company rule, the European background", University of South Africa, Pretoria 1981.

Charles d'Espeville, in those years. One story tells that he visited under an adopted name the Duchess Renée de Ferrara in Northern Italy in 1536. She sympathized with the Reformation and received several Protestants, among them Calvin, so it is maintained. Her husband, the Duke, remained Roman-Catholic, but he left his spouse free in her religion. The Pope complained to the Emperor Charles V, who admonished his sister Renée to send away the Protestant guests. Renée had to obey and Calvin had to leave her court after a few weeks. Returning to Switzerland he travelled through the Valley of Aosta. The story tells that he preached there but had to leave in a hurry because of religious persecution in the Valley.

A few years later, in 1541, a monument was erected at Aosta to commemorate the flight of Calvin and implicitly the expulsion of the Protestants, then called "luterani" (Lutherans) from the Valley by the united clerical and secular authorities. The monument is called "la Croix de Ville" or "la Croce di Città". It was more or less completely renovated in 1741 and restored in 1841, again 100 years later. The Latin inscription is still readable and runs:

Hanc Calvini fuga
erexit
Anno MDXLI
religionis constantiae
reparavit
Anno MDCCXLI
civium pietas
renovavit et adornavit
Anno MDCCCXLI

That means freely translated:

This (monument) was erected
because of Calvin's flight in the year 1541.
The steadfastness of the religion
has repaired it in the year 1741.
The piety of the citizens
has renovated and adorned it in the year 1841.

Calvin has never referred to his supposed visit to Aosta.¹⁰

B.J. van der Walt (Bennie van der Walt), Van Noyon na Genève, Reisindrukke van 'n Calvynpelgrim, uitgegee deur Calvyn-Jubileumboekefonds, Noordbrug Potchefstroom 1980, states on p.29-30 - 'In dieselfde jaar 1536 vertoef hy (Calvyn) 'n tyd lank onder die skuilnaam Charles d'Espeville in Ferrara in die noordoostelike hoek van Italië, nie ver van die groot Gardameer nie. Hier geniet hy die beskerming van die hervormingsgesinde hertogin Renée de France. Onder andere het Clément Marot, die bekende Franse digter, wat later die Psalms in Frans sou berym, ook hier vertoef. Dit het egter hier in die land waar die pous regeer, gou vir Calvyn te warm geword en hy vlug oor Aosta in die heel noordwestelike hoek van Italië terug noorde toe. In die omgewing sou hy ook vir die evangeliege-

sindes gepreek het. Daar bestaan ook die verhaal dat hy ternouernood aan gevangeneeming deur die Roomse inkwisisie ontsnap het. 'n Monument in Aosta herinner nog steeds aan sy vlug deur hierdie plek. Die datum 14 Mei 1541 op die monument is egter foutief, want toe was Calvyn in Straatsburg. Die korrekte tyd van sy verblyf hier in die Noorde van Italië was waarskynlik Mei of April 1536.

The Duke of Aosta

Aosta is remembered in South Africa because the Duke of Aosta commanded the Italian army in Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) in World War II, when this Italian territory was conquered by South African and British-Indian troops. The origin of the title of Duke of Aosta is the following. When Savoy was annexed by France, the dukes of Savoy called themselves Duke of Sardinia and later King of Sardinia. King Charles Albert of Sardinia granted the title of duke of Aosta to his grandson, Amadeo (1845-1890). He was the second son of Victor Emmanuel II (1820-1878), who became the first king of United Italy in 1861. Amadeo was King of Spain in 1870-1873.

His eldest son, Emmanuel Philibert (1869-1931) was the second Duke of Aosta and a general in the Italian army during World War II in Udine. His elder son, Amadeo Umberto (1898-1942), was the third Duke of Aosta and cousin of King Victor Emmanuel III. When fascist Italy entered World War II in 1940, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the Italian army in Abyssinia. A South African-British-Indian army invaded Abyssinia and Amadeo and his army evacuated the capital Addis Abeba in April 1941. He capitulated with 18 000 soldiers on 16 May 1941. He was sent as a prisoner of war to Kenya, where he died at Nairobi in 1941. His younger brother, Ainone, born in 1900, inherited the title of Duke of Aosta. There is no special tie between the Dukes and the Valley of Aosta.¹¹

The surrender of the Duke of Aosta and his army was the first victory of the Allied forces in World War II which brought a series of defeats to the Allies. The South African army shared in this victory and thousands of soldiers of the Italian army came as prisoners of war to South Africa.¹²

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There is another member of the ducal family of Aosta who is of some interest to South Africans. She is Helen of France, Duchess of Aosta and spouse of Emmanuel Filiberto (1869-1937), second duke of Aosta. Their eldest son was Amadeo Umberto (1889-1942), the hero of the battle of Amba Alagi, the last battle in Abyssinia in 1941, mentioned above. Helen of France visited many countries in 1907-1914, most of them in Africa. In 1909-1910 she was in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, Lourenço Marques and Beira; from there she travelled inland through Mozambique and South and North Rhodesia as far as the Victoria Falls, and proceeded to the Belgian Congo. She described her travels in her book "Viaggi in Africa" (Travels in Africa, published by Treves, Milano 1913.¹¹)

References

- 1) Some Latinists derive the name Augusta Praetoria from the "praetoriani" (pretorians), a special Roman army corps under the direct command of the emperor. They refer to the historians Dio Cassius and Strabo; one of these states that Augustus settled 8000 praetoriani in the new town of his name in 24 BC; see "Paulys Real-Encyclo-