

1.5.2.2 Spookseloop originates northwest of Erasmuskloof extension 3; has reference to the Erasmus residence that stood vacant for many years and was used by vagrants. The flickering of candlelight at night in this "weird"-looking old castle led to the name. The first Afrikaans film "Die Spookhuis" starring Al Debbo and Frederik Burgers was filmed in this house.

1.5.2.3 Kasteelloop originates on Erasmuskloof extension 4 and is named after the Erasmus mansion known as Erasmus Castle and also at one time referred to as "Die Spookhuis".

The gable of the house bears the date 1903. The homestead was built for J.J.P. Erasmus, the architect was Mom(n)bello and the contractor was Van der Ben(n).

The property is now owned by Armscor who restored the Castle to its former glory.

1.5.2.4 Ladybird Creek recalls the beetles found in the area. Ladybird beetles are a large family with over 2000 species; these beetles are well known to everyone, usually not more than 0,50 cm long; they are brightly coloured in yellow and red with black spots on the wing covers. They feed on aphids, mealy bugs and scale insects.

1.5.3 Waterkloof Ridge Spruit originates in that township. Waterkloof farm was originally owned by the Erasmus family, portion of the farm was acquired by Sir Julius Jeppe's company who had surveyor Leibrand lay out Waterkloof township in 1903.

Waterkloof Ridge township overlooking Waterkloof was laid out in 1941.

1.6 Tweefonteinspruit, an artery of the Moreletaspruit, originates on the farm of the same name in the vicinity of Olympus and Shere Agricultural Holdings.

1.6.1 Dead Man's Stream, the park in the area is called "Dead Man's Pool"; is a subsidiary of the Tweefonteinspruit. In Church Street cemetery is a grave with the following words: "James William MacIntosh, drowned whilst swimming in Strydom's spruit, 18 January 1886, aged 30 years".

Strydom Spruit was the earlier name in this area for the Moreleta Spruit.

1.6.2 Old Farm Stream, a water course, the name has reference to a street of the same name in close vicinity, which in turn could have had reference to one of the farms here owned by the Struben family.

1.6.3 Kerberos-loop rises in Garsfontein Extension 10 and flows below Atterbury Road to join Tweefonteinspruit on Valley Farm.

Its source in Garsfontein is surrounded by streets named after dog species. Kerberos derives from Greek mythology, he was the three-headed dog of Hades, the watch dog,

guardian of the entrance to the infernal region (the nether world of Pluto).

1.6.4 Hera-se-loop rises on Garsfontein and flows across Olympus Agricultural Holdings on the farm Tweefontein.

Street in Olympus bears name from Greek mythology. Hera was queen of gods on Mount Olympus, wife of Zeus; she was the goddess of womanhood and marriage, called by Homer the "White-armed goddess and the ox-eyed queen."

1.7 Constantia Park Spruit rises on the corner of Coert Steynberg and Dvorak Streets in Constantia Park. It flows across Garsfontein where it joins the Moreletaspruit.

The name of the township recalls a Dutch period estate in the Cape Province granted to Simon van der Stel, the Governor in 1679-1699.

1.8 Philadelphia-spruit rises on the farm Rietfontein, then flows through Pretoriuspark to join the Moreletaspruit on Garsfontein.

The original intention was to call this township Pres. Pretorius Park after the founder of Pretoria (Philadelphia) in 1855, who named it after his illustrious father, General Andries (W.J.) Pretorius.

Pretoria Philadelphia = Pretorius brotherhood.

1.8.1 Ageron-loop rises near the northern side of Pretoria East cemetery and flows to meet Philadelphiaspruit on Garsfontein.

Derived from Greek mythology. "Acheron" = river of woe, one of five to cross to reach the underworld (Hades/Tartarus), place of punishment.

1.8.2 Asphodel-loop, a short water course north of the Pretoria East cemetery, it joins Nether Creek.

A plant of the lily family known as Kings-spear. In Greek mythology the asphodel was a symbol of death among the ancient Greeks who believed that the meadows of Hades, the underworld, were covered with pale blossoms. Homer speaks of the shades of heroes congregated in the asphodel meadow of Hades.

1.8.2.1 Nether Creek rises near Asphodel-loop in close vicinity of the Pretoria East cemetery; it joins Philadelphia-spruit in Garsfontein.

The dry river course was to have been named Hades or Onderwêreldloop, but the name was softened by calling it Nether (-world), the region below having reference to the cemetery.

1.8.3 Welbekendspruit rises near Fluweelgrasloop on the farm Rietfontein and it joins Philadelphiaspruit on Pretoriuspark.

So called because it flows below Welbekend Road when in turn was called after village further east which was first known as Onbekend (unknown). The name was changed by the postal authorities because letters addressed to the

original name "Onbekend" were returned to the "dead letter office". Onbekend = unknown; Welbekend = well-known.

1.8.3.1 Fluweelgrasloop, a very short water course which flows into Welbekendspruit.

Named after a grass specie, "*Brachiaria serrato*".

1.8.4 Elisiese loop, northwestern border of the Pretoria East cemetery.

Name derived from Roman and Greek mythology - on death, the good were transported to the Elysian Fields - Fortunate Isles.

1.9 Rademeyerspruit rises on the northern border of Elarduspark and flows across Garsfontein and Moreletapark where the original homestead of the Rademeyer family still exists.

The Rademeyers owned the farm Garsfontein in the 1850s.

1.9.1 Bloubosloop, a short water course rising on erf 961 Moreletapark and flows into Garsfontein where it joins the Moreletaspruit.

"*Diospyros lycioides*", this species belongs to the ebony family and is found in dry areas; a many stemmed shrub or a small tree with blackish bark; the flowers are cream to white, and bell-shaped.

1.9.2 Suurbessieloop originates in Moreletapark and after a very short length joins the Moreletaspruit.

Suurbessie, the Wild Apricot, a woody plant and sometimes a climber: the flowers are white with a reddish-purple tinge and have a delightful scent; the fruits have the colour of an apricot.

1.9.3 Sekelbosloop rises near the Garsfontein dumping ground and joins the Moreletaspruit.

Sekel-bush (*Dichrostachys cinerea*), shrubs or small trees with decorative spikes of flowers, which are bi-coloured, one half being pink and the other yellowish green.

1.10 Naaldekokerloop from Moreletapark, after being joined by Deurmekaarbosloop it runs into Moreletaspruit.

Dragonfly Creek: predacious insects, having biting mouth-parts, large compound eyes, and very short antennae.

1.10.1 Deurmekaarbosloop rises in Moreletapark and after a short run joins the Naaldekokerspruit.

Ehretia rigida - Kraalbos, Stamperhout, Cape lilac, often found round native kraals, hence the common name, which may, however, allude to the globose fruit, looking like a bead (kraal); deurmekaar refers to the disorderly arrangements of its branches and stamperhout reflects the use of the hard wood for making stampers or pestles for crushing maize or corn.

1.11 Wildepeerloop, a very short water course in Garsfontein; it joins the Moreletaspruit.

"Dombeya", Wild Pear/Plum, Blombos, Dikbas; a tree or shrub remarkable for its show of flowers before the leaves which resemble pear-blossoms.

2. Koedoespruit rises in Lynnwood, then flows across the University Experimental Farm to join the Hartbeesspruit on the border of Kilner Park.

The rivulet takes its name from Koedoesberg on the Lynnwood property.

2.1 Cussonia-loop starts on Scientia, the site of the Council for Scientific Research (CSIR); it flows past the University township or Perseuor and confluences with Koedoespruit before flowing into Hartbeesspruit.

Bears the name of the street between the Experimental Farm and the Botanical Gardens.

Cussonia, the botanical name for the Kiepersol or cabbage tree found in the Lowveld and Bushveld.

2.1.1 Burkea-loop rises on the University Experimental Farm and joins Cussonia-loop on the same farm.

Burkea africana: Wild seringer, Red seringa, Rhodesian ash. The popular name of this tree is based on its resemblance to the Indian seringa; a deciduous tree with small flowers produced in tassels near the tips of branches.

(A) Vlakfonteinspruit rises in Mamelodi township and flows into Pienaars River.

Resuscitating the name of the Black township area before being christened Mamelodi.

(B) Hatherleyspruit rises on the farm of the same name, owned and named by Robert Cottle-Green in 1878 after (Down) Hatherley, near Cheltenham, England.

Hatherley became the site of the "Eerste Fabrieken" (First Factories) established by A. Nellmapius and opened by Pres. Kruger in 1883.

(C) Willowspruit rises on Willow Glen Agricultural Holdings, it flows northwards through Willow Park/Manor, the proposed Nellmapius township, to join the Pienaars River south of Mamelodi.

The Willows property was owned by the Struben family.

A willow is a tree that thrives in moist ground and is most common on the banks of streams. The drooping habit of the weeping willow renders it an attractive tree, it is a native of China.

1. Stalmeesterloop rises in Die Wilgers and flows through Equestria township before joining Willowspruit.

Stalmeester, Equerry-Master, a mounted officer of the household of monarchs and princes, originally in charge of horses.

French écurie = stable.

Michael Erasmus and Cecilia Moodie, wife of Thomas Moodie, leader of the "Moodie Trek" to the new Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and founded Melsetter there in 1892.

After the death of her husband and children of fever she joined her sister who married into the Erasmus family, owners of the farms Doornkloof en Rietvallei, where she died.

1.3 Renosterloop rises in the Van Riebeeck Nature Reserve close to the road (R50) that borders the reserve and flows into Rietvlei Dam.

Rhinoceros were introduced to the reserve some years ago and have already produced offspring.

1.4 Bokkie-se-loop - bucks water: rises on the agricultural holdings on the northern border of Van Riebeeck Nature Reserve and flows into Rietvlei Dam.

1.5 Suidoewerloop - South bank stream - rises south of Rietvlei Dam into which it flows.

1.6 Pretmansloop in the Van Riebeeck Nature Reserve; the stream is called after the registered name of the Nooitgedacht ponies bred in the reserve. Pretoria (Pret-) and Moolman (-man) after the present Director of Parks and Recreation.

2. Brünehildestroom rises north of Broadway North in Valhalla through which it flows to join the Six Mile spruit.

As the name of the township and street names are derived from Norse mythology, this rivulet is also from that source.

Brünehilde, a Valkyrie (maiden who conducts souls of slain heroes to Valhalla) whom Odin punishes for disobedience by placing her inside a ring of fire, there in a charmed sleep to await the hero destined to wake her.

2.1 Odin-se-water rises in Valhalla West and winds its way into the Brünehilde stream at Broadway South.

Odin was the chief god of Norse mythology who lived in Valhalla.

2.2 Walkure-se-loop rises near the old Johannesburg Road in Valhalla and joins the Brünehilde stream in the circle in the middle of the town.

Valkyries, the hand-maidens of Odin, in Norse mythology, who rode through the air to choose those in battle who are worthy of being slain and led them to Valhalla.

Valkyrie = chooser of the slain.

3. Claudia-se-loop starts near Stephanus Schoeman Street and Quagga Road (R55) along which it flows to join the Six Mile Spruit.

The name derives from Claudius (township), named after Claudius de Vries, a former mayor of Pretoria.

3.1 Bakenveldloop rises on Zwartkop farm and there joins the Claudia stream.

Baken = landmark, describes the area of grassfields and rolling hills.

4. Lekkerhoekiespruit (lovely corner), rises on the farm of the same name and flows to join the Six Mile Spruit.

5. Mooiplaatsspruit rises on the farm of the same name; it flows southwards along the boundary of Erasmia township to join Six Mile Spruit.

Pretoria, December 1991



Skildery deur 'n onbekende gemaak van die ontmoeting van die Staatspresidente S.J.P. Kruger (regs) en F.W. Reitz (links) by die opening van die spoorbrug oor die Vaalrivier op 21 Mei 1892. Die tydelike skraagbrug of bokbrug is agter die Staatspresidente goed sigbaar. Die skildery hang in 1992 in die eetkamer van Samuel Marks se huis (tans huismuseum) op Zwartkoppies oos van Pretoria.

*Foto Nasionale Kultuurhistoriese Museum
Met dank aan Mevrou Nerina Walters*

VEREENIGING AND THE VAAL RIVER BRIDGE

by Eric Conradie

In 1992 the City of Vereeniging is one hundred years old. The year also marks the centenary of one of the most important events in the railway history of the colonies and republics at the close of the nineteenth century: The ceremonial opening of a railway bridge over the Vaal River on 21 May 1892. This event effectively terminated President Paul Kruger's dream of the Transvaal as a state totally independent of the British Colonies.¹⁾ It was the beginning of a new era in which eventually the ideals of other nineteenth-century South African statesmen were to prevail; - the idea that South Africa was a geographical, political and economic whole and that the future of the Southern African region lay in unity.

The significance of 21 May 1892 can only be appreciated by fully understanding the politics that dominated South Africa in the last 25 years of the previous century. Three major events - the effects of which have only begun to diminish in recent times - put South Africa on a path strewn with strife, tension and bloodshed. The annexation of the diamond fields by Governor Henry Barkly on 27 October 1871, the seizure of the Transvaal by Theophilus Shepstone on 12 April 1877 and the subsequent War of Independence in 1880/81 gave birth to a vibrant Afrikaner nationalism which divided the country into two camps: a colonial south and a republican north.

The overriding factor in the Transvaal (the stronger partner of the two republics) since the decisive Battle of Amajuba on 27 February 1881, was summed up in one word: independence. But this also meant isolation from the Cape and Natal.¹⁾ Crucial to the maintenance of the Transvaal's independence was its ability to communicate with Europe through a safe harbour on the east coast.

The Transvaal's endeavours to obtain such a harbour were consistently thwarted by the British and this further fuelled the Republic's struggle for independence. Ultimately, and through a long series of negotiations with the Portuguese, the port of Delagoa Bay in Mozambique became the Transvaal's safe harbour.

Because a railway to connect Pretoria with Delagoa Bay and the outside world was of such crucial importance in the entire political process of the 1890s, a brief look at its origin and growth is appropriate.

As far back as 1872 G.P. Moodie approached the Transvaal government for a concession for the construction of a line to Delagoa Bay, but nothing came of this scheme. Two years later a commission was appointed with similar aims and President Thomas Burgers was authorised to negotiate with the Portuguese government and to endeavour to find the capital in Europe. In this he was partially successful and on 10 August 1876 the Lebombo Railway Co was founded. The company was short-lived and it came to an end in April 1877 when Great Britain annexed

the Transvaal.

When the Transvaal regained its independence in 1881, the railway scheme was revived. In 1883 Major Joachim Machado surveyed the entire line from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria. When the Transvaal deputation, consisting of Kruger, Smit and Du Toit, visited Europe in the same year, a concession for the construction of the line was granted to a Netherlands concern. The necessary capital could, however, not be found and as a result the concession was transferred to two banks in Berlin and the Netherlands. Thus came into being the Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg Maatschappij - NZASM - on 21 June 1887. In the same year the first engineers from Holland arrived in the Transvaal to commence work on the Transvaal's lifeline to the sea. The surveying and construction staff paid a deadly price in the malaria-infested Lowveld. Although not literally true, it has often been said that there was a coffin beneath every sleeper.

On 1 July 1891 the first section of line, between the border of Mozambique and Komatipoort, was opened. Almost a year later, on 20 June 1892, the railway reached Nelspruit. In the meantime the NZASM had also acquired a concession to construct a light railway between Johannesburg and the East Rand, mainly to transport coal from the newly discovered fields there. On 17 March 1890 the first public train service in the Transvaal was inaugurated between Braamfontein and Boksburg. This railway, popularly known as the "Rand Tram", proved to be an instant success.

In contrast to the slow progress of railway construction in the Transvaal, the railways of the Cape Colony advanced rapidly inland towards the Republic. In 1887, the year in which the NZASM was founded, the railway system of the Cape already comprised 1600 miles. In 1892, when the NZASM line reached Nelspruit, the lines from the Cape had passed Bloemfontein after joining up at Rossmead, Noupoort and De Aar. On the western side of the Transvaal the "Cape to Cairo" line was approaching Mafeking (now Mafikeng) and on the south-eastern side, the Natal main line had reached Charlestown.

It was no secret that whichever line reached Johannesburg first would capture the lucrative trade of the Golden Rand. Naturally the Transvaal gave preference to its own Delagoa Bay railway and in these years the railway politics centred around the question of how to keep the lines from the Cape and Natal at bay until the completion of the Delagoa Bay railway. Unfortunately for President Kruger and his republic a serious financial crisis developed in the years 1891-92. This brought work on the NZASM's lines to a virtual standstill. The Cape government, ever on the lookout for a way to win the race to the Rand, recognised the Transvaal's predicament and rushed in, so to speak, to grab a golden opportunity.

In December 1891 the Cape Minister of Crown Lands and Public Works, James Sivewright, visited Pretoria and offered financial assistance to the Transvaal for the completion of the railway between Pretoria and Vereeniging.

The Sivewright Agreements

Confident in the knowledge that the Transvaal would eventually have its own lifeline to the sea at Delagoa Bay, and faced with the realities of the time, President Kruger and the NZASM management knew that the completion of the link between Vereeniging and Germiston would finally give the Cape the foothold which it so desperately desired.

On 10 December 1891 three agreements between the CGR²⁾ and NZASM (popularly known as the Sivewright Agreements) were signed. The most important part of these agreements stipulated that the Cape government would advance £300 000 to the NZASM in exchange for an undertaking by the NZASM that the latter would construct the Pretoria-Vereeniging line with the greatest possible speed and the Cape, once the line was completed, would receive running powers over it. With these assurances in place the completion of the line was only a matter of time.

The final stage

The urgency with which the Cape government viewed the final link-up of its lines with the Transvaal can be gauged by the speed with which railway construction took place after the signing of the Sivewright Agreements. Barely two months later, the line was opened to Kroonstad (20 February 1892) and on 7 May 1892 the head of the rail was on the bank of the Vaal River at Viljoensdrif. Considering the fact that platelaying had begun in May 1891 at the Bloemfontein end, the entire line of 212 miles (341 km) took only 16 months to complete. This magnificent achievement was possible only because the men worked around the clock. As far as can be established this was the first time that construction gangs had worked at night by floodlight. The lighting plant consisted of an open truck with a stationary steam engine, generator and lamps borrowed from Cape Town harbour. The plant was fitted out at the Salt River workshops.

Vaal River Bridge

The siting of the Vaal River Bridge and its opening on 21 May 1892 is a story all of its own. During the late 1880s - the golden days of transport riding - the greatest obstacle was the crossing of the Vaal at Viljoensdrif. Wagons loaded with heavy machinery often sank axle-deep into the mud. Confusion reigned as goods were unloaded and carried to drier parts while auxiliary ox teams strained to release bogged-down wagons from the river banks.

On 8 January 1890 a joint Orange Free State/Transvaal committee met at the Lewis and Marks coal mines in Vereeniging to investigate the most suitable site for a bridge over the Vaal. Two days later they recommended a site close to the mine because of the convergence of the various roads to the Reef. The building of a second bridge where the Vaal and Klip rivers meet was also recommended, ultimately with an eye to a junction for a railway to Natal.

The location of the Vaal River Bridge was approved by the Transvaal and Orange Free State governments and in May 1891 a formal bridge convention was entered into. It was agreed that the bridge was to be built by the Transvaal and the costs shared equally by the two governments. Maintenance costs after completion were also to be shared. Interestingly, it was also agreed that, should the bridge be destroyed in time of war by either party, that party would be responsible for its repair. Could it be possible that the two signatories foresaw the Anglo-Boer War and the resulting destruction of bridges as far back as 1891?

Work on the bridge commenced on 21 July 1891.

The design called for a bridge of six thirty-five metre spans. The steelwork was manufactured in Germany and shipped to Port Elizabeth and East London from where it was sent to the river by rail.

Unfortunately this functional but pleasing steel-and-masonry bridge was not completed in time to feature in the ceremonies marking the inauguration of the rail service into the Transvaal.

The Cape Government Railways had become increasingly impatient to clear the accumulating freight and to end the general traffic chaos at Viljoensdrif (cargo was still being transported by ox wagon to the Witwatersrand) and decided that they could not wait any longer for completion of the steel bridge. It was decided, instead, to erect at their own cost a temporary low-level wooden trestle bridge over the Vaal. This bridge was constructed in the record time of five weeks by A. van Eelde, an engineer previously in the employ of the NZASM.

Although the depth of the river was considerable the even surface of the bed and its shingly formation made it ideal for a trestle bridge. The trestles were built on shore and floated to their positions where they were weighed down with the rails and the stringers firmly fixed. The task was completed just in time for the opening ceremony.

The inauguration of the rail link

President Kruger arrived at Vereeniging on Friday, 20 May 1892 as the guest of Sammy Marks, co-owner of the coal mines. Although the President was accompanied by a detachment of the State Artillery there were no cannons present for a proper salute. Sammy Marks came to the rescue with an ingenious plan to explode bottles of dynamite at appropriate intervals! From one of the mine chimneys a Transvaal flag flew but the pole for the Union Jack was unadorned because no flag could be found. Similarly the Orange Free State flag was absent because the delegates forgot to bring one with them!

The official inauguration of the rail link was set for the next day, Saturday, 21 May. Everything was planned for President Reitz of the OFS to cross the bridge with an engine and special coach about midday.

Prior to this the construction gangs had worked furiously to put the finishing touches to the line. It was here that the

very first railway accident in the Transvaal occurred. Because of the height of the trestle bridge was only 12 feet above low water, a very heavy grade, as well as a deep cutting on a sharp curve, were necessary for the northern approach. The construction engineer, Harry Elliot, calculated the load for a 1:40 grade but it soon became apparent that the engine sent over for test purposes could not negotiate the grade, which turned out to be 1:30. The driver was ordered to wait in the cutting while a second engine was summoned from the south bank. Owing to a misunderstanding of the signals the train in the cutting started back and before the alarm could be given the two engines collided on the bridge.

When the error in the grading was discovered, the gangs went to work at an even greater pace to ease the gradient.

Meanwhile President Reitz alighted from his coach and walked over the bridge to the Transvaal side, where he was heartily welcomed by President Kruger and his party. At 15:00 the first train from the south to enter the Transvaal crossed the Vaal River. After the ceremony at the bridge Sammy Marks entertained the two presidents at the coal mine.

The bridge in later years

The temporary bridge over the Vaal lasted until 5 November 1892, when a magnificent new steel bridge was opened. On 15 September 1892 the first train from Cape Town entered the Golden City on completion of the Vereeniging-Germiston section.

As probably foreseen by the signatories of the Bridge Convention in 1891, the Vaal River Bridge was damaged by the Boer forces on 26 May 1900 so as to hamper the advance of the British army. The bridge, after its repair by the engineers of the Imperial Military Railways, did duty for the next 55 years.

President Kruger's association with British South African politics was concluded on 9 December 1904 when his last remains crossed the Vaal in a special funeral train.

The new bridge over the Vaal

As a result of the expansion and industrialisation which took place at Welkom, Vanderbijlpark and Sasolburg after World War II the Railway Administration decided in the early 1950s to double the Orange Free State/Transvaal main line. This programme included a new bridge over the Vaal, a new station and marshalling yard at Vereeniging and the doubling of the links to Midway and Union.

On 5 July 1955 the new bridge was opened for traffic at a cost of £250 000 (R500 000). This bridge is about 7 m above water level and consists of three 150-foot spans with three 30-foot semi-circular arch-flanking spans at each end. The steel spans were coupled on the Transvaal side and pushed over the piers with a system of rollers designed by the Chief Civil Engineer's department. Although the "end launch" system had been used previously, the method used for this bridge was a considerable improvement. Total control over the movement of

EARLY DAYS

by Mrs D. Maguire

Some notes of interest taken from a booklet written by Charles Norbur, one time St. Alban's Cathedral organist.

Charles Norburn's mother Ellen was the first music teacher in Pretoria and founded with others the Pretoria College of Music in 1898.

Henry Newbould taught Charles for twenty years. He was the organist at the Methodist Church in Andries Street. Charles joined St. Alban's Cathedral choir in 1902. His two brothers were already there. He was then ten years old. The Cathedral became Garrison Church, as the Boer war had just ended. Because there were so many soldiers attending it was enlarged and this part was called St George's Chapel. Charles sang in the choir at the enthronement of William Marlborough Carter D.D., Bishop of Pretoria in 1902, and Charles also sang at the Bishop's wedding in 1909.

In 1902 all the boys of the choir were pupils of the Diocesan College School. The headmaster was Canon Henry Birkly Sitwell M.A.D.D. He was Canon and Chancellor from 1896 -1905.

The Diocesan School was situated at the rear of the Cathedral, now Harmony Club. It was really a choir school. Practice was every day and as compensation the boys got a half holiday on Saints Day. Charles was terrified when he first joined the choir as both the Headmaster and choir master were Canons!

At Canon Fisher's funeral later all the choir boys, wearing full robes and mortar boards walked in front of the hearse from the Cathedral to the Church Street Cemetery.

The next minister was Rev. W. Gore-Brown, 1903-1912. During his time the choir used to sing evensong in Gregorian music each evening of the week. Three pence per service was paid to the boys.

The organists at that time were Mr Hugo, Mr Lee, Mr Ricketts, Mr Saintsbury, Mr. Rowe and Walker Everett, his predecessor.

The choir boys used the grounds of the Cathedral for cricket practice and while playing one day the organist ran out crying fire. The wooden ceiling above the altar was in flames. Great excitement for the boys. Charles remembers being shocked that the firemen did not remove their brass helmets in the church.

The College closed in 1908 and was taken over by the Government. The school then moved to Hamilton School; that was completed in 1899 and it was known as the Staats Meisjies Skool. During the war the building was used as a hospital.

After a visit to the UK with his parents in 1908 on his return he took over playing the organ twice a week at Evensong. He was 16 years old.

In 1913 he was appointed organist at Christ Church in Arcadia where he remained for thirteen years.

In 1926 Dean Gordon invited Charles to become the Ca-



A letter from A. van Eelde, who designed and constructed this bridge, to Mr R.C. Wallace, Chief Civil Engineer of the SAR.

Amsterdam, 11th August 1926
Leidsche Kade 105

My dear Wallace

Enclosed please find a reproduction of the antiquated photo you noticed at my apartment; the one you said might serve for your Railway Magazine.

The temporary bridge shown on the photo, was my first work as a consulting engineer after I left the ZASM. The Cape Government's minister of Public Works, at the time, Sir James Sivewright, asked me to design and construct it departmentally, allowing eight weeks for the construction.

Five weeks after his telegram, containing approval of the designs reached me, the bridge was ready for traffic.

I was thirty years old then, and remember being rather proud of the performance. Now that I am twice that age and five years more, I smile at my youthful enthusiasm; but still it is not an unhappy smile.

Goodbye old friend, remember me respectfully to your sister.

Many kind regards

Yours sincerely
A. van Eelde

Heropvoering op 21 Mei 1992 van die amptelike opening van die Vaalrivierspoorbrug op 21 Mei 1892, 100 jaar gelede. Midde op die brug wissel die Administrateurs van die Vrystaat en Transvaal soenieurs uit. Van links na regs die here W.J. Kuys, Streeksbestuurder van Spoornet in die Vrystaat - Danie Hough, Administrateur van Transvaal - Dr. Louis van der Watt, Administrateur van die Oranje-Vrystaat - J.C. van der Merwe, Streeksbestuurder van Spoornet te Johannesburg.

Foto: Transnetmuseum, Johannesburg

Afskrif van 'n brief van Ir. A. van Eelde te Amsterdam, in 1926 aan 'n vriend by die spoorweë in Suid-Afrika gestuur, saam met die ou foto uit 1892 wat op bladsy 44 gereproduseer is. Die oorspronklike brief is gereproduseer in die brosjure "The Vaal River Bridge and Vereeniging 1892-1992", bladsy een.

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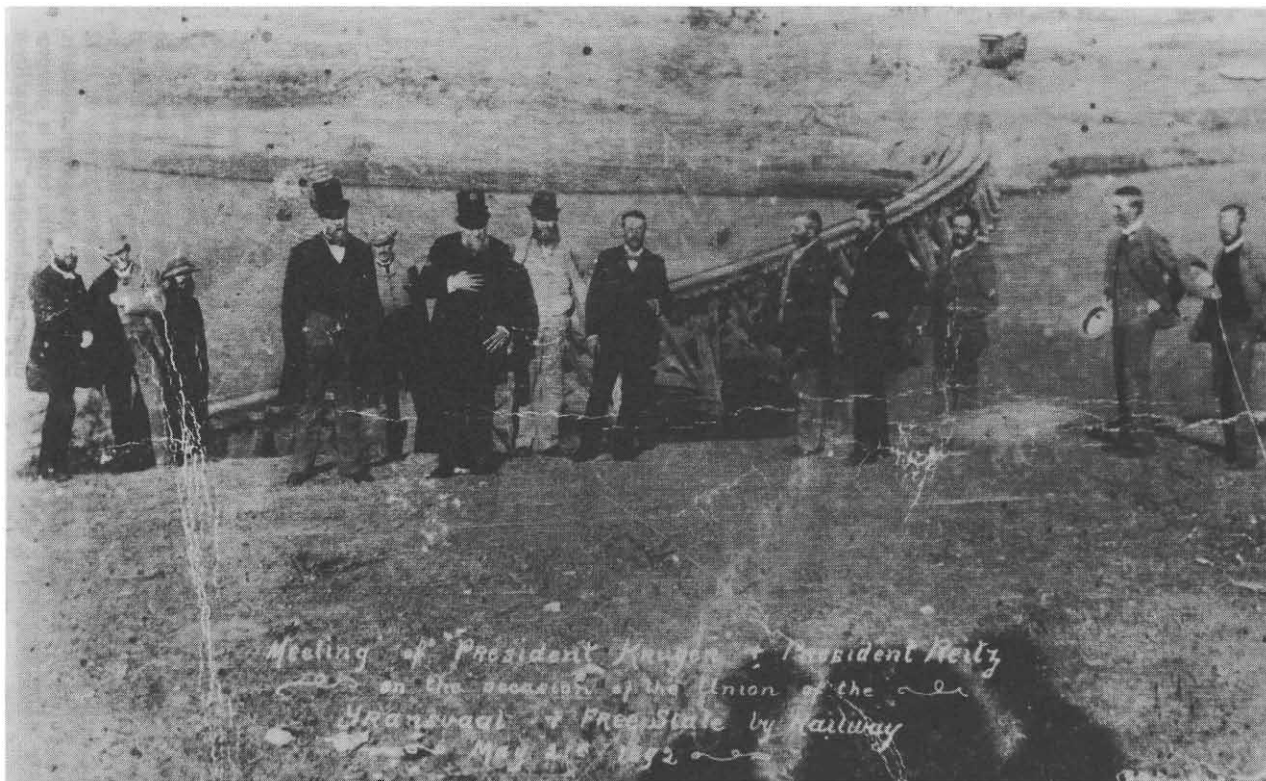


Foto van die opening van die Vaarivierspoorbrug op 21 Mei 1892, afkomstig van die Nederlander Ir. A. van Eelde, ontwerper van die tydelike spoorbrug – 'n skraagbrug of bokbrug – wat op die foto duidelik sigbaar is. Die 4 persone links is van links na regs die Staatspresidente F.W. Reitz en S.J.P. Kruger, generaal Nicolaas Smit, spoorwegcommissaris (vertegenwoordiger van die ZAR-regering by die NZASM) en Samuel Marks.

Foto: Staatsargief Pretoria

LEWENSKETS VAN MEVROU C. DE RIDDER

Mevrou Cecile de Ridder, gebore Punt, geld as pionierster van die volkspelebeweging in Suid-Afrika. Op die leeftyd van 91-92 jaar het sy die herinneringe aan haar lewe en die volkspele laat herleef en vertel aan mnr. R. Searle. Hy het haar lewensherinneringe opgeteken en die hierna volgende lewenskets geskryf.

Die grootmoeder van mevrou De Ridder wat met Willem Juriaan Ruwers getrou het, was van Frans-Switserse geboorte. Haar naam was Laure Robert-Nicoud en sy was gebore in die stad La Chaux de Fonds in die Switserse Jura. Miskien was sy een van die Franse en Frans-Switserse dames wat as goewernante na ander lande gegaan het om daar kinders Frans en goeie maniere te leer. Sy het met haar kinders altyd Frans gepraat. Haar dogters, onder wie mevrou Cecile Henriette Punt, gebore Ruwers, en haar kleindogters, Cecile en Cobie Punt, het blykbaar veel van haar Frans-Switserse stammoeder geërf, met name esprit, charme en savoir vivre. Dit is enkele van mevrou De Ridder se opvallende karaktertrekke. Trouens, ook Cecile se grootvader Ruwers was Frans magtig en was 'n aantreklike, baie sjarmante verskyning.

Aan die skets vooraf gaan 'n beskouing van mevrou De Ridder self oor die onderskeid tussen volkspele en volksdanse.

Die redaksie van "Pretoriana" is verheug oor die geleentheid om haar lewenskets nog tydens haar lewe te publiseer.

Mnr. Willem J. Punt, ons ondervoorsitter en neef van mevrou De Ridder, het 'n aantekening met 5 foto's, getitel "Mevrou Cecile de Ridder - 'Tannie Volkspele' - 90 jaar jonk!", gepubliseer in "Pretoriana no. 100, April 1992, p.75-80.

Ons vestig die aandag op die voorname van mnr. Richard Searle, skrywer van mevrou De Ridder se lewensverhaal, om 'n afsonderlike brosjure te laat verskyn met 'n uitgebreide biografie van mevrou De Ridder, haar bydrae aan die Volkspelebeweging en besonderhede oor die beweging. Ons mag die verskyning omstreeks 1994 tegemoet sien.¹⁾

IS DIT "VOLKSPELE" OF "VOLKSDANSE"?

deur Mevrou Cecile de Ridder

Volkspele is beslis nie volksdanse nie soos diegene sal sien wat dieper op die saak ingaan.

Die oorsprong van volksdanse lê by die vertolking van lande- like bedrywighede, by oes- en lentefeeste en soms by oorlog-, swaard- en jagdanse - soms selfs by religieuse (kerk) danse. By ons volkspele is dit totaal anders.

Dit het jare gelede ontstaan uit 'n behoefte by die jongmense tydens gepaste ontspanning, onder baie moeilike omstandighede.

Op eensame, ver verlate plase was dit slegs met 'n enkele keer, soos met Nuwejaars- en familiefeeste, dat 'n groep jongmense bymekaar kon kom. Dit was vanselfsprekend in die buitelug in die vorm van pieknieks en met sang en spel.

Later, op die Groot Trek, wanneer die waens tydelik tot

INHOUDSOPGAWE VAN DIE LEWENSKETS VAN MEV C DE RIDDER

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stilstand gekom het, het hulle om die kampvuur kon ontspan en 'n bietjie van hulle lewenslus uitleef in die vorm van hulle kinderlike liedjies en speletjies.

Dr. Pellissier, bekend as die "vader" van ons volkspele, het self aan my vertel dat hy die grondslag van ons volkspele by ons eie piekniekspeletjies gevind het. Hy het dit self volkspele genoem. Myns insiens is dit die regte en 'n gelukkige benaming. Sou hy dit volksdanse genoem het, dan sou dit by ons konserwatiewe Calvinistiese Afrikanervolk nie inslag gevind het nie.

Dit is wel so dat in volkspele daar enkele danspassies en walsstappies soos huppel en wals is, maar beslis nie op dieselfde manier as by kabaret-, verhoog- en moderne balsaaldanse, ensovoorts nie. By sommige volksdanse is daar selfs akrobatiese toertjies tussenin.

Na die Eerste Wêreldoorlog het stedelike vermaak baie toegeneem. Bioskope, swembaddens, en sportgeriewe was vir almal beskikbaar en so het belangstelling in pieknieks verflou.

In 1938 toe volksdrag en volksang tydens die besielende Eufeës by die Voortrekkermonument so 'n groot rol gespeel het, het ons haas onbekende volkspelebeweging weer aandag gekry. Laers is gestig. Kursusse en byeenkomste is gereël. Gereëlde oefening binnenshuis het gehelp om die passies en bewegings af te rond en te verfyn. Stadig maar seker het die eenvoudige piekniekspele ontwikkel en het die klem van kinderlike speletjies na dié van vertolking van hofmakery verskuif met begeleiding van ons eie volks- en liefdesliedjies en het so volkspele gebly. Die oorspronklike gees van eenvoud, karakter en frisse jeug en ons eie mooi volksdrag het egter behoue gebly en moet behoue bly in ons eie sang en spele.

Mnr. J.H. Broekman skryf die volgende in sy artikel in die "Nederlandse Post", Kaapstad, Julie 1958, p.9, oor ons toer in Nederland in 1953:

"De Zuidafrikaanse volkspelelen zijn naar mijn mening geen volksdansen. De combinatie van Boerenmuziek, zang en volkspelelen biedt de gelegenheid tot uiting van wat er omgaat in elk individu, in elke groep, in het hele volk. Men denke daar niet gering over. Vergelijk de viering van volksfeest hier op een Koninginne- dag. Maar men denke dan allereerst de alcohol weg, het onnodig lawaai van de pretmakers, de broeddronkenheid van onbeschaafde feestgangers en wat blijft er dan, dat het noemen waard is? De Zuidafrikaanse volkspelelen zijn stijlvol: ze kunnen eenvoudigen en elite gelijkelijk boeien door zelfwerkzaamheid, door tucht en ingetogenheid, waardoor geen grenzen van welvoegelijkheid overschreden worden. Het is een beweging met hoge volksopvoedkundige waarde."

Verwysing

- 1) 'n Historiese oorsig van die Afrikaner Volkspelebeweging 1941-1991 is onlangs gepubliseer deur mnr. A.C. van Vollenhoven in sy artikel "Die Afrikaanse volksang- en volkspelebeweging 50 jaar 1941-1991" in "Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir kultuurgeskiedenis", jaargang ("volume") 6 no. 1, Januarie 1992, p.46-54, geïllustreer, met samevatting in Engels.

Mei 1900 het hy geweier om die eed van getrouheid aan Engeland af te lê en is hy uit sy pos ontslaan. Dit is onseker wat van die gesin gedurende die oorlog geword het, maar dit is wel seker dat hy ná die oorlog by die Transvaalse Administrasie te Pretoria werksaam was. Oupa en ouma Ruwers het tot hul dood in Pretoria gewoon. Oupa Ruwers was alombekend en beminde en wel in so 'n mate dat advokaat J.G. Strydom tydens sy ampstermyn as Eerste Minister op 'n keer aan Cecile de Ridder gesê het dat hy oubaas Ruwers nog goed kon onthou as die baie deftige oubaas wat altyd in 'n wit pak geklee was en altyd 'n wit sonhelm op sy kop gedra het. Wat hom die meeste getref het, was die wyse waarop die oubaas penregop gestap en almal met 'n sjarmante buiginkie begroet het.

Vader Jacobus Johannes (Jac.) Punt

Jacobus Johannes (Jac.) Punt was die vader van Cecile.

Die voorsate van Jac. Punt kan teruggevoer word tot by Claes Put, 'n kleremaker, gebore ongeveer 1620 in Gelderland, en op 28 Julie 1647 getroud met Catharina Cornelisdogter van den Laeck.

Jac. Punt is die sewende nageslag van hierdie egpaar. Sommige van die vyfde nageslag het die van Put na Punt verander.

Jacobus Johannes (Jac.) Punt is op 3 Februarie 1870 te Amsterdam gebore. Sy vader was Johannes Punt, 'n lettersetter van Amsterdam, en sy moeder was Hendrika Laurentina Amalia ter Brugge. Uit die huwelik is ses kinders gebore, waarvan Jac. die jongste was.

Op 16-jarige leeftyd het Jac. as kadet in militêre diens getree en op 22-jarige leeftyd was hy reeds 'n tweede luitenant by die beroemde 7de Regiment Infanterie van Amsterdam. Maar in dieselfde jaar, 1892, besluit hy om sy broer Egbert wat reeds by die NZASM werksaam was, na Transvaal te volg. Vroeg in 1893 arriveer hy in Kaapstad met die stoomboot die 'Tartar' en reis per trein deur Bloemfontein tot by Elandsfontein (die latere Germiston) waar hy in diens van die NZASM as goedereklerk tree. Binne drie jaar vorder hy tot die pos van aflos-assistent-stationschef waarna hy by talle van die groter stasies diens gedoen het.

Nog 'n broer van Jac. Punt, nl. Johannes Pieter Punt, het by die NZASM kom werk.

Jac. Punt word in 1898, as assistent-stasiemeester van Elandsfontein gestel. Op daardie tydstip was daar 'n aantal goudmyne in die omgewing van die plaas Elandsfontein in bedryf dog die myn van August Simmer en John Jack was by verre die grootste, aangesien dit een van die eerste myne op die Rand was. Daar was 'n aantal woongebiede deur die myne aangelê, maar daar het nog geen dorp bestaan nie. Dit was eers na die Anglo-Boere-oorlog dat Germiston, wat na die geboorteplek van John Jack in Skotland, nl. Jermistown, vernoem is, as 'n dorp geproklameer sou word. Die NZASM, as 'n pioniermaatskappy, moes ook self na al die benodigdhede van sy werknemers omsien en het net suid van die spoorwegaanleg 'n aansienlike woongebied met insluiting van mediese en ontspan-

ningsgeriewe aangê.

Dit was in 1898 dat Jac. Punt die negentienjarige beeldskone Cecile Ruwers in Pretoria aan huis van sy broer Egbert Punt ontmoet het. Jac. het geen gras onder sy voete laat groei nie en is op 20 April 1899 met Cecile getroud en het in een van die NZASM-huise by die stasie gaan woon.

By die uitbreek van die Anglo-Boere-oorlog 11 Oktober 1899 was Elandsfontein stasie die heel belangrikste spoorweg-sentrum in die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek en heel waarskynlik in Suid-Afrika. Net voor die uitbreek van die oorlog is Jac. Punt as stasiemeester daarvan aangestel, vanwaar al die treinverkeer vir die vervoer van die Boeremagte sowel as die oorlogsmateriaal en -voorrade na die Natalse front gereël moes word. Met die Boere-offensief in Natal moes die NZASM die spoorverkeer tot sover as Modderspruitstasie (tans Pepworthstasie) sowat 15 kilometer duskant Ladysmith hanteer.

Bo en behalwe sy normale pligte as stasiemeester van Elandsfontein moes Jac. Punt ook persoonlik toesig hou oor die bedryf van sekere spesiale militêre treine, wat hy dan ook persoonlik moes vergesel. Dit was juis tydens so 'n operasie dat hy met die legendariese generaal C.R. de Wet ontmoet het. Generaal de Wet gee 'n uitvoerige beskrywing hiervan in sy boek "De stryd tussen Boer en Brit", en wel soos volg:

"Zoals ik gezegd heb was ik slechts waarnemende commandant. Maar op de morgen van den 9den December ontving ik een telegram van Staatspresident Steyn mij vragende in de hoedanigheid van vechtgeneraal naar den Westergrens te gaan.

"Ik moest mij van het Heilbronsche commando losscheuren; de 9de December blijft voor my een van de onvergetelijke dagen van mijn leven. Den volgenden morgen kwam ik met mijn staf te Elandslaagte-Station aan, om per spoor naar Bloemfontein te reizen. Zonder het minste oponthoud werd ik in een specialen trein, die mijn Regering van het Transvaalse Gouvernement gekregen had, vervoerd. Geen ogenblik ging verloren. Als de conducteur mij telkens vroeg of ik niet ergens bij een station wilde vertoeven was mijn antwoord steeds: 'Neen, vooruit, als 't je blieft.' Wij arriveerden te Viljoensdrift en daar was het spelletje van den specialen trein op 'n eind. Ik moest er zes uren lang wachten, en kon eerst in den nacht met den gewonen passagierstrein voort; en dit niettegenstaande de orders door de Regeering gegeven dat ik snel vervoerd moet worden."

Jac. Punt se seun Willem roep hierdie gebeurtenis weer in herinnering in sy werkstuk "Die verhaal van 'n Hollandse immigrant: met 'n episode wat op 14 Oktober 1914 plaasgevind het, en wel soos volg:

"Aan die begin van 1914 voor die rebellie, loop my pa en ek in Pretoriusstraat en stap voor die Transvaal Hotel verby. Op die trappies van die hotel staan drie mans en praat. Toe hulle my pa sien, stap een man vinnig vorentoe en met uitgestrekte hand sê hy aan my vader: 'Dag chef, baie bly om jou weer te sien.' My pa was klaarblyklik verras en antwoord: 'Dankie generaal de Wet.' Generaal vra my pa hoe dit gaan en sê daarna: 'Ek onthou hoe jy my kommando veilig op die trein gelaai het.' Die generaal kyk toe na my en my vader sê: 'Dit