

THE FORMAT-A REMINDER

"The War Reporter: The Anglo-Boer War through the eyes of the Burghers" by JEH Grobler (2004) is probably one of my most prized historical books. It was gifted to my husband by our daughter, many Christmas's ago. The above book is written in the form of newspaper articles through the eyes of the Boer Burghers. This very book turned out to be my inspiration for the perfect format to this newsletter!

I have thus "borrowed" Grobler's newspaper concept, repurposed it to suit the topic of this Newsletter, into my very own newspaper, called the "The War Herald".

All the information in my newspaper articles are fact based and are numbered and referenced at the bottom of the newspaper, and in the bibliography at the end.

All the reporters are fictional characters, but the facts they report on, are true and fact based. I am the editor of "The War Herald" and have added editor's notes on some of the pages; depicting my own opinion and take on certain events / matters.

This style has allowed my imagination and creativity to run free and given me carte blanche to use the first person address and present tense and to also use modern day technology to illustrate my story, which of course did not exist yet back in those days!

All Boer newspapers were banned by marshal law and only British established journalism was allowed during the period of the ABW, but my newspaper has Boers as reporters, using direct interviews, telephonic interviews from within SA and to Bermuda and even smuggled letters from Bermuda, as sources. Although I have stuck to the facts as far as possible, I may have embroidered on telling the story; to keep it interesting and add depth to the story.

I have also added advertisements of proudly South African products and other relevant notices. Some of these advertised products only came into use long after the end of the Boer War, but have been added purely to catch the eye!

In my fictional newspaper; none of the technological facts or practicalities matter or are relevant, as the story itself is the central theme. It was the late NP Van Wyk Louw, a famous South African writer and poet, who maintained there should always be a balance between facts and the aesthetics in writing. I cannot agree more with this view!

In telling the Boers' story, some Afrikaans & high Dutch words will crop up. In some instances, I have used Afrikaans phrases and poems too. Sometimes I simply could not find the right English word or felt Afrikaans / Dutch just sounded better within a certain context. Please consult the footnotes, to clarify words or phrases you do not understand.

I have stumbled upon a few interesting, but less known stories re Bermuda during the ABW, which will also be shared in my newspaper. Again, for interest sake. Chronology of certain historical events are honoured in my Newspaper.

War always remains the backdrop against which I tell this story & also interpret the subtle nuances of human behaviour.

- Frances Curlewis Joubert -



NEWSPAPER COLLECTIONS OF :

“TWO SOUTH AFRICAN CURLEWIS MEN ON BERMUDA DURING ABW & THE AFTERMATH

VOLUME 4

THIS ISSUE

Editor’s Note:

Many diaries were written by Boers during their internment on various places, like Bemuda, Ceylon & St Helena for example. Diaries or notes kept, by POW’s, bring a unique flavor to those trying times during the ABW and enhance the readers insight into different experiences: The intense longing and concern for family, friends and your homeland. Trying to cope with the harsh realities of the present– weather conditions, & other environmental factors, such as the landscape, dealing with insects, dietary- & clothing restrictions, restriction of movement and finding ways to remain busy, positive and resilient. Clinging onto the fellowship and shared experiences of the Boers who are in this with you, by faithfully practicing your Christian religion, doing sport, creating beautiful artwork and waiting for news on the War back home. And then there is the monotony of internment to deal with a the long wait to fo home! In the very words of Rocco: “Vaarwel Bermuda. Moge ik U nimmer meer zien, Dat die dag spoedig aanbreke is het vurig verlangen van al die gevangenis alhier en van Mij.”¹

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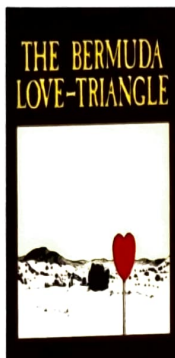
Free Boer Association Press

"The War Herald"

1899-1902 "TOT DIE BITTER END..."

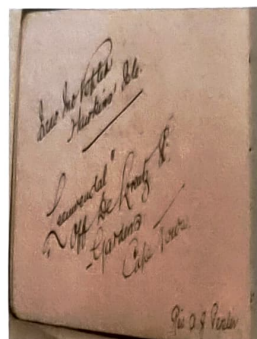


LOVE DURING A TIME OF WAR...¹

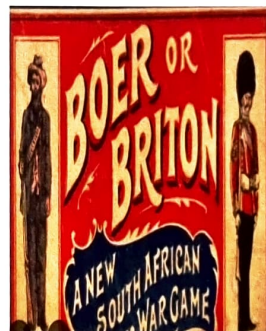


Nellie Visser reports from Pretoria for the Boers interned on Bermuda: 30 August 1902
An emotional letter from Isaac John Peplar, (POW Number 26148) found its way to my desk, all the way from Bermuda! Peplar explains that he misses home which is Leeuwarden, in the Cape of Good Hope for him! It was his

rebellling that got him into hot water with the English and now he finds himself on Hawkins Island. In his heart-wrenching letter, he tells me about his Lora, a young girl, born on the island, who stole his heart and how destiny brought them together! Boer officers confined on Bermuda were frequently permitted to go into Hamilton where the local Bermudians treated them with great hospitality. According to Peplar, he considered himself lucky that Lora Getrude Pascal befriended him, as she was a very pretty girl and she had made friends with a number of the prisoners. Their friendship grew and he hoped to take their friendship to a romantic level, but her parents, Gus & Eliza Pascal, the owners of "The American House Hotel" were having none of this! He declared his love to her in a letter on 12 August 1902, but he has not received any reply and he feels love cannot be a one-sided affair! He also knows her parents do not approve of him or any other Boer prisoner for that matter as a suitor for their daughter and they will never allow him to speak to their daughter alone. The dent made in his heart, by Lora's unrequited love he said, may never be healed.¹



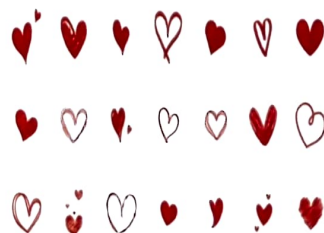
Inscription in Lora's Autograph by Isaac Peplar.



Left: Isaac Peplar & fellow prisoners on Hawkins Island. Right: Isaac, Lora & female chaperone.



Peplar's Collection & Gifts to Lora.



ISAAC JOHN PEPLAR & LORA PASCAL

LORA GETRUDE PASCAL WAS BORN ON BERMUDA ISLAND IN FEBRUARY, 1886. HER PARENTS, GUS & ELIZA PASCAL, RAN AND OWNED "THE AMERICAN HOUSE HOTEL" ON THE CORNER OF QUEEN AND CHURCH STREET IN HAMILTON, BERMUDA.

DURING JUNE 1901 AND FEBRUARY 1902, 4619 BOER PRISONERS OF WAR WERE SENT TO BERMUDA ON SEVERAL SHIPS. ISAAC FELL IN LOVE WITH LORA, BUT HIS LOVE WAS NEVER ANSWERED. HE HAD EVEN LEFT HIS ADDRESS IN HER AUTOGRAPH ALBUM. PEPLAR RETURNED TO SOUTH AFRICA AFTER THE WAR WITHOUT HIS WAR TIME SWEETHEART AND BECAME A SCHOOL HEAD MASTER. HE MARRIED MARGERET LE ROUX ON THE 14TH OF DECEMBER 1908 AND THE COUPLE HAD ONE CHILD. HIS LIFE WAS HOWEVER SHORT LIVED AS HE DROWNED ON THE 8TH OF FEBRUARY 1910 WHILST ATTEMPTING TO CROSS THE SWOLLEN MOOI RIVER NEAR MACLEAR, IN THE EASTERN CAPE, ON HORSEBACK.

IN OCTOBER 1936 LORA ENQUIRED THROUGH AN ARTICLE IN A SOUTH AFRICAN NEWSPAPER RE THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE BOERS THAT HAD SIGNED HER AUTOGRAPH. LORA CONTINUED TO COMMUNICATE WITH ALL HER BOER FRIENDS IN SOUTH AFRICA THROUGH LETTERS AND METICULOUSLY NUMBERED AND DATED ALL LETTERS. SHE MUST HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF ISAAC PEPLAR. THE WONDERFUL COLLECTION OF ISAAC'S LETTERS AND SOUVENIRS TO LORA WERE HANDED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION AND ARE CURRENTLY ON LOAN BY LORA'S GRANDDAUGHTERS TO THE BERMUDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM.

THE PEPLAR COLLECTION COMPRISING OF PERSONAL EFFECTS SUCH AS HIS BIBLE GIVEN TO HIM BY HIS FATHER, PHOTOGRAPHS, A CIGARETTE CASE AND TOBACCO HOLDER ARE IN THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF AP BIRMINGHAM IN BERMUDA.

THE WAR MUSEUM IN BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE STATE, SOUTH AFRICA HAS A FEW PERSONAL EFFECTS OF PEPLAR DONATED BY A FAMILY MEMBER.²

1. "Vaarwel Bermuda. Moge ik U nimmer meer sien. Dat die dag spoedig aanbreeke is het vurig verlangen van al die gevangenis alhier en van Mij."

Goodbye Bermuda, may I never see you again. It is the intense longing of every soldier here and myself that the day will soon come to leave."

2. Compiled by Vicki Hennis, Collections Manager War Museum, Bloemfontein. Date unknown.

3. Cederberg (Afrikaans): Social gathering, visiting, conversing, enjoying time with friends.

4. Dit klink na een zeer aangename tijd door: It sounds like a very pleasant time there.

5. Photographs courtesy of the private collection of Ian Curlewis, Australia.

Marie Van Niekerk reports on Sport on Bermuda . 28 December 1901

Bermuda

The Boer Recreation Society was established in July 1901 to ensure that the prisoners of war were kept busy and get enough exercise. The prisoners of war helped to built tennis courts on different islands. Second hand tennis rackets, nets and balls were provided. The recreation society had three sub committees, one for cricket, one for tennis and one for football. The committee, consisting of Gordon Fraser (chairman), Rocco de Villiers (secretary), J Botes, P Kamann, D de Lange, H van Jaarsveld and C Theron, were responsible to draw up a con-

stitution and manage the grounds and equipment. Tennis was played on Darrells-, Tuckers-, Burt's-, Hawkins- & Morgan's 'Islands. According to Gordon Fraser, who wrote a letter to Maria Outerbridge, Burt's had a reasonable good tennis court with 48 members. Miss Outerbridge was a Bermudian socialite who was very sympathetic towards the Boers and helped in any way she could. Rocco de Villiers, Gordon Fraser, S Hepburn and J Curlewis travelled to Darrell's on 24 December to participate in a tennis tournament. The tournament was unfortunately cancelled because of rain and the gentlemen instead spent the day with fellow

Boers and were entertained by a concert, singing and "gekuery."³

"Dit klink na een zeer aangename tijd door!"⁴ It is heart-warming to hear that JC Curlewis is still the "happy chappy" from Bloemfontein-days & is involving himself in sport to stay active and positive!



Die tennisbaan op Morgans-eiland. (Foto: Uit die „dagboek” van Rocco de Villiers)



Top Photo: Infirmary for the ill.
Bottom Photo: RG posing on the far right at the Ginger Beer tTnt. (Photographer JC Curlewis)⁵



THE BEAUTIFUL BERMUDA
(PHOTOGRAPHER RG CURLEWIS)⁵



Boere-offisiere en -amptenare wat op Morgans-eiland as krygsgevangenes aangehou is. Agter v.l.n.r.: Persoon onbekend, kap. Singleton, Gordon Fraser, adj. P. J. du Plessis, persoon onbekend en lt. Kruger; middel: J. Molloy (met kaalgeskeerde gesig), veldk. J. van Biljon, kmdt. O. A. Davel, kap. Halle (agter Davel), P. Hauptfleisch, A. de Villiers en A. Dieperink; voor: kmdt. D. van Deventer, J. C. Curlewis, persoon onbekend, Rocco de Villiers, lt. Leffer en persoon onbekend. (Foto: Oorlogsmuseum, Bloemfontein).

The old Bloemfontein government "gang" together on Morgan Island, Bermuda. JC Curlewis is second in the front row.⁶

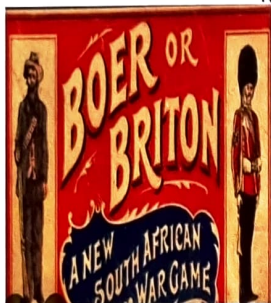
6. Christiaan de Wet Annale 3: Dagboek van Rocco de Villiers. (Versorg deur M.C.E Van Schoor. Oktober 1975. Uitgegee deur die Suid Afrikaanse Akademie, Bloemfontein. Gedruk deur die Nasionale Boekdrukkery Elsiesrivier, Kaap Provinsie. Pages: Pg adjacent to 45 66, page adjacent to page 65,66.70, adjacent page to 113., 75-76,83-84, 84-88
7. Translation of the poem "Winter Nag" by Eugene Marais to English by John Irons 29 October 2012. johnirons.blogspot.com
8. Joiners & Hands -Uppers: Joiners- Boers that joined British soldiers to fight, spy etc against / on their own people & Hands- Uppers -those Boers who put down their weapons and immediately took an oath of allegiance with the Brits.
9. Bitter Einders- The Boers fighting till the bitter end without fail.
10. Grobler, J.E.H. 2004. The War Reporter: The Anglo-Boer War through the eyes of the Burgers. Johnathan Ball Publishers, Johannesburg & Cape Town.Pgs: 141 & 148 & pg 120 (Curlewis teacher)
11. Maroela Media Article 28 Januarie 2024. Tragedie en komedie van ons krygsgevangenis. Written by Petronel Fourie.
12. Vierkleur: Refers to the 4 coloured flag of the Republiek of South Africa. Before 1902. The colours were green, red, white & blue.

Adriaan Thiele reports on "Boer Law & Order matters on Bermuda," September 1901

The gentleman, Commandant DJ van Deventer, was unanimously elected by the Boers as their camp commandant on Morgan Island as he is widely respected, loved and understands the great task ahead of him.

My friend, RG Curlew, whom I interviewed in Pretoria before he was interned and sent to Bermuda, was appointed as Magistrate, while the Alderman comprised of O.A. Davel, S.W. van der

Merwe, H.W. Ras & A.F. Naude on Morgan Island. This allowance of self-governance of the Boers by the Brits is seen as a huge allowance and victory for the Boers, as all minor transgressions may now be dealt with internally.⁵



Kmdt. Dirk J. van Deventer en 'n mede-krygsgevangene voor hul tent op Morganeiland. (Foto: Uit die „dagboek“ van Rocco de Villiers).

The elected camp Commandant of Morgan's Island, Commandant Dirk J van Deventer.⁶



Rocco de Villiers (voor op die grond) saam met ander krygsgevangenes op Morganeiland. Tweede van regs agter staan Joubert Reitz en regs van hom Gordon Fraser. (Foto's: aldie uit die „dagboek“ van Rocco de Villiers).

RG Curlew is second to the left in the back row, standing⁶

The Visage reporting from Bermuda, 17 December 1901: Maj Elkington who is the Brit in charge of Morgan- & Tucker's Islands, asked the Boer leadership why the Boers hate the English so much and if they could put their answers in writing for him? Of course, he promised them that the information would not be used against them, but that he needs to gain insight to be able to assist with the reconciliation between Brit & Boer post war. The Camp Commandant's letter in response is attached.⁶

I have heard from a reliable source that Commandant van Deventer and a few other members will be sent to other islands, to break up the bonds formed on Morgan Island between the Boers.⁶



Top Photo: Law & Order on Morgan Island. Back Row, 3rd from left: RG Curlewis⁵
Bottom Photo: Boer Generaals & Leadership on Morgan Island.⁵

To Maj Elkington
Tucker Island

Morgan Island
Bermuda
14 Dec 1901

Sir,

With reference to your request to Mr Brain, that we should give our opinions on certain matters in connection with the war, I beg to state that as far as I am personally concerned that we-as prisoners of War- ought not to be requested to give vent to our feelings on these matters, as, not being aware for what purpose these opinions and information thereby acquired, are wanted, we might be acting contrary to the wishes of our Governments. Taking this into consideration, and being further of the opinion that in our position as prisoners of War, it is unfair to solicit any opinions of a political nature from us; holding the view that the continuance of the war etc, rests with the parties still fighting in the field; and moreover it being a well known fact that nothing else can or will satisfy the Republicans but that their independence, absolute and impaired be acknowledged, which is the unanimous opinion of all right-minded burghers, who have no doubt that they will ultimately see this realized in full; I cannot see why these questions should be put to prisoners of War, & therefore beg to refer you, for any information you may require, to the chiefs of our burghers, who are struggling in the field for the maintenance of our independence.

I am, Sir

Yours obediently

Signed DJ van Deventer, Commandant Morgan's Island.⁶

POLITICS ON MORGAN ISLAND

Gert Meyer reporting from Pretoria, 12 March 1902: after receiving a secret phone call from Bermuda:

On the 10th of March 1902 the following members were told to gather their belongings as they would be leaving Morgan's Island to go to Burt's: Commandant Davel, JC Curlewis, Gordon Fraser, Stolz, Kruger, Hauptfleisch, AM N de Villiers (oldest brother of Rocco) & Rocco de Villiers. Rocco told me that they all expected this move as the English were driving politics very hard at Morgan's Island and they (Boers) were weary and just needed some peace and quiet. The tugboat could not leave the shallow waters and so the group were stuck on

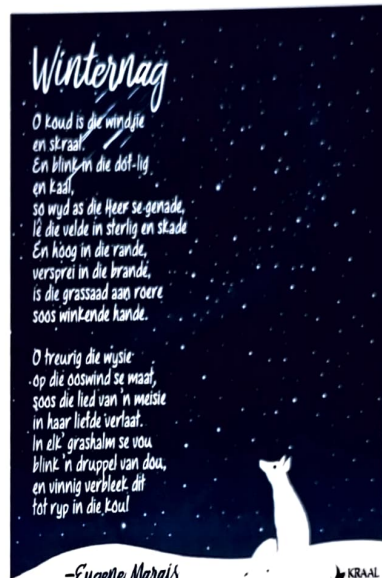
Davel Island for hours before they were eventually taken to Burt's Island. There the gentlemen were met by Joubert Reitz & E von Khaynach and other familiar faces. They were also met by the sight of rocks and a barren land. Very bleak indeed! They became acutely aware that negotiations for peace were underway between the Boer Leaders and the Brits and they all were holding thumbs that the outcome would be good. We here in South Africa hope for the same!

Hennie Schutte reporting from the Capital, Pretoria on 1 May 1902:

The end of the war is insight! An agreement between Boers & Brits will be reached within days, rather than weeks. There are both positive- & negative factors at play. The positive factors are that peace will bring an end to destruction and loss of life, the British do not demand an unconditional surrender and thus the Boers have wiggle room for negotiation. Furthermore, the British accept only the Republican deputies as representatives

of those still fighting. The "joiners and hands uppers"⁸ are so to speak, stabbed in the back by the Brits and will have no say in further negotiations for peace, nor the determination of the future of The Republic of Zuid Africa at all!

This means that the "Bitter Einders"⁹ did not fight in vain and their great sacrifices will help determine the future. On the flip-side of the coin, is the hard price the Republic will need to pay: the loss of their independence. The Bitter Enders have their work cut out for them at Vereeniging for sure!¹⁰



Winter Nag- Eugene Marais⁷



Krygsgevangenes in Bermuda. (Foto: Verskaf)



Boerekrygsgevangenes stap oor die brug na Long-eiland in Bermuda. (Foto: Verskaf)

Prisoners of War on Bermuda & crossing the bridge to Long Island.¹¹

WINTER NIGHT- EUGENE MARAIS 7

(ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY JOHN IRONS)

So cold now is the wind and spare,
And bleak in the dim light
And bare,
As wide as God's mercy is
Boundless,
Scorched veldt lies starlit
And soundless.
And on the high lands
Through burnt soil lone
Strands of seed-grass are stirring
Like beckoning hands.
So sad now the song is
On the east wind full-borne,
Like a girl's song of longing
When love is forlorn.
In the fold of each blade
A clear dewdrop is made
That swiftly the cold turns
To rime as it fades!

The Peace of Vereeniging 31 May 1902

Editor's Note: The Peace of Vereeniging came as a great shock to the POW's. They all had to sign allegiance to the British Crown before they could be repatriated to South Africa. The return to their homeland was not easy, as the country was in a state of destruction. A long road to recovery and rebuilding the country, lay ahead.

There were too many casualties of War. A whole generation of Boer males, -females and -children lost in a very costly war. This loss, pain and hurt would echo, morph & become entrenched into the psyche of many Boer generations to come & would also shape the history of the country.

For many of the POW's, life as they once had known it, no longer existed and they had to start from scratch. They had to negotiate a new landscape for themselves, a new way of living and of being. While some people were up to task and creatively found their way around and even excelled; this was however not possible for all.

Many families and individuals fell on hard times and battled to find their way. The War had also created a rift in some families due to ideological—& personal differences and this too echoed into next generations; with estrangement separating families / individuals from parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers and sisters.

Their spirits were maybe too broken and some slipped into utter despair & misery.

The heavy psychological joke carried on through generations would take a toll on many Boer families across several generations where poverty, substance abuse, general lack of productive functioning, or even worse, an inability to forge meaningful interpersonal relationships, would be in the order of the day and the youth to follow would have to work jolly hard to improve their lives and some did just that!

Today we honor the past; our own bloodlines & ancestors with a greater sense of clarity, knowledge & wisdom; understanding the effect of environmental factors & historical time periods on human behavior, in grasping human fragility with more empathy, embracing the flaws of people, but also cherishing their inherent goodness, strengths & admirable traits.

We however need to consciously sever all ties with generational burdens that may hamper us & accept the lessons learnt as motivation to do better because we know so much better now!

—Frances Curlewis Joubert—

Farewell to the Vierkleur^{10 & 12}

Poem by FW Reitz, Vereeniging 31 May 1902:

No longer may our Standard wave
and flaunt its colours to the sky,

Who on the field of Glory lie.

Oh! Happier far were they who fell

Ere yet its tints begin to fade

Tan we, who loved its passing well,

Yet in dust have seen it laid

For it there bides no glad-to-morrow

And this Farewell must be our last,

Stained with a Nation's tears of sorrow

We consecrate it to the Past.

To those who bore our flag on high

And dared the haughty foe to face

And who, when death was drawing nigh

Clung to it with a last embrace.

Forever be their story told

As long as there are men at all,

Until the very heavens grow old

And Earth shall totter to her fall!



A Dying Man's Last Wishes- JC Curlewis (Written by Frances Curlewis Joubert September 2020)

As I near death's door; I find myself all alone. A broken man without a wife or children to hold my hand in comfort, to pray for and with me. My own family are probably ashamed of the things I have done and of the man I have become.

I am filled with regrets. My life took many twists and turns for sure. I made terrible mistakes and often made the worst possible decisions which had a rippling effect on how my life played out. I let down too many people along the way; broke the trust they put in me. My shame, guilt and self pity consumed me daily and I took comfort in the dulling effects of alcohol which just fuelled my isolation from my loved ones even more!

Dearest Mother, Father, brothers, sisters, friends and my fellow countrymen; I have become a black sheep, an outcast, the family pariah. A petty thief and criminal in the eyes of the Law.

I had a lot going for me; I had a good upbringing and education. I stood bravely together with my fellow Free State comrades during the Boer War. My internment on Bermuda was challenging, but coming back to South Africa posed an even greater challenge to me. What an anticlimax to return to a country now marred by war. A whole generation of Boer families wiped out just like that! Times were tight and work was scarce. It was the survival of the fittest. I fought for survival, but lost my moral compass along the way. I blame no one but myself in the end.

I beg you to remember the young man I once was with so many dreams to forge a life for myself, to make a difference where ever I went. To do good; be a good person. I beg for your understanding and forgiveness, but in the end my salvation lies in forgiving myself first and praying to God to bring me the eternal peace I crave and hunger for. JC

JAMES FREDERICK CURLEWIS PASSES AWAY

Marie Van Niekerk reports from Johannesburg, on 5 December 1929:

I have just learnt about the death of James Frederick Curlewis on the 2nd of December 1929, shortly after his 53rd birthday in November & received this heart-wrenching letter which he wrote when he became ill. He was battling with his health for some time and retired early as an underground miner at the Johannesburg Goldmines and died in the Boksburg Government Hospital. His last address was 85 Comet Street, Boksburg. Who was James?

James was the oldest child and son of 8 children to Walter Henry II Curlewis & Johanna Jacoba Minnaar and born on 27 November 1876. Some literature refers to him as a young school teacher from the Cape, but I got to know him as the Adjutant of Commandant Davel of the Free State Government in Bloemfontein. At age 24 he was interned at Bermuda together with his Free State colleagues and also met up with his second cousin, Robert Gray Curlewis aboard the SS Montrose and they were both on Morgan's Island together. James's father, Walter Henry was RG's father's, also James Frederick, uncle. He was fondly known way back in the day to the journalists and his fellow Free State Colleagues as "JC". After the ABW he apparently no longer had a high government post, but instead worked as a government clerk & storekeeper at The Lunatic Asylum in Bloemfontein.

In 1909 a petition for bankruptcy was filled against him and he was criminally charged with embezzlement & theft of state funds and was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment on the 4th of September 1911. It seems as if a lot of his ex colleagues reached out to help him and this may have assisted with a much lighter sentence handed down, but he was stuck with a criminal record for life and this may have affected the course of his life greatly.

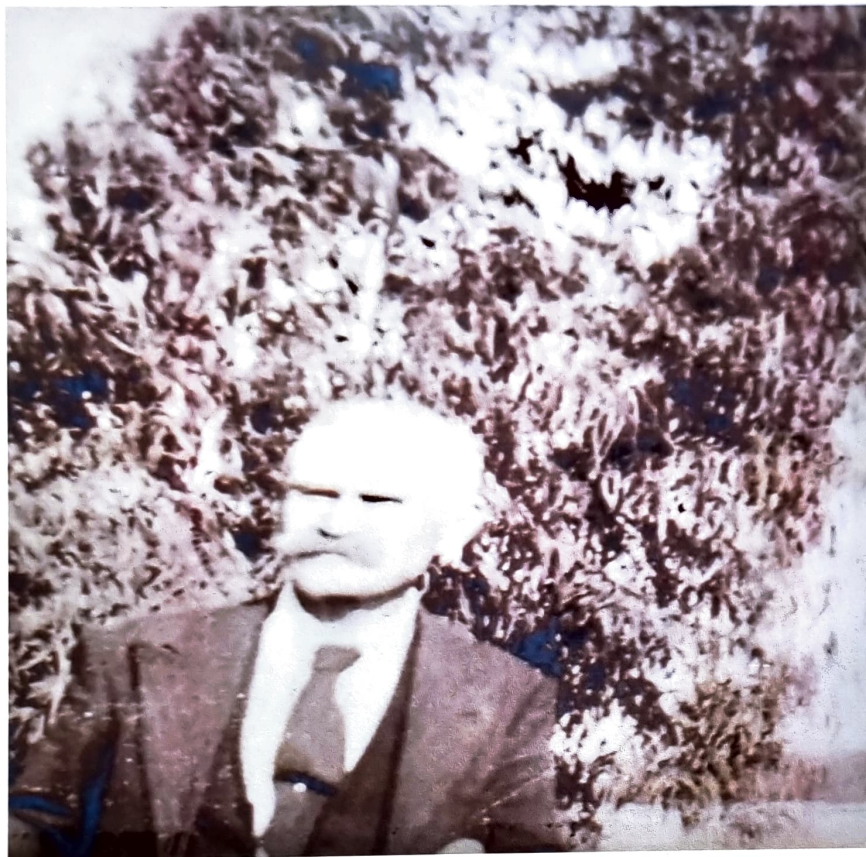
JC never married. I will always remember the young, energetic man who loved tennis and

was loyal to the ZAR. Rest gently JC! You are remembered!



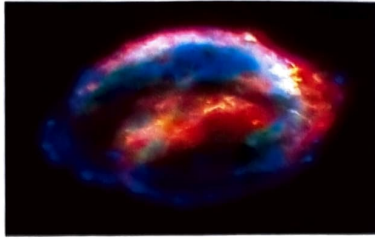
**JAMES CURLEWIS (JC) ON BERMUDA
(PHOTOGRAPHER & COUSIN, RG CUR-
LEWIS)⁵**

RG CURLEWIS PASSES AWAY AT AGE 74 YEARS & 10 MONTHS



Adriaan Thiele reports on 15 May 1948: Robert Gray Curlewis, a well known solicitor in the Boksburg area for many years as well as a passionate farmer, has passed away. Today. I was still a green journalist when I came to know him during the ABW. He was as English as they come, but felt a great affinity towards the Boers and irritated the Brits so much that they eventually sent him to Bermuda. He was known to be a mischievous person who liked to goof around, but knew when to be serious and about his profession, he was always serious. On Morgan's Island, Bermuda, he fulfilled the duties of a Magistrate and kept himself busy during idle moments with crafting beautiful objects from wood. He was married thrice and had 6 children-2 boys & 4 girls. The offspring from the RG bloodline is bountiful with quite a few named after him. He left a letter for family which I will place. His legacy lives on. Rest in Peace RG!

Supernova



Dearest Family,

If I look back on my life, I can see why some people would call me a "supernova"- an explosive star far up in the galaxy!

I never did anything by half measures. When I believed in something, I went in guns a-blazing! You have to respect a man who passionately lives by his choices; whether you agree with those choices or not!

I suppose you can call me a complicated and complex man. A man of

many contradictions too; intelligent yet sometimes making rash and foolish choices. Some would call me a gentleman and others I guess would throw the "B" bomb word right at me! Each of these terms I equally deserved, I suppose. Along the way, I hurt some people, but I would also like to think that I helped a lot of people and made good friends along the way too.

I grew up in a strict Christian home, but still chose to embrace my uniqueness and individuality. That made me stand out like a sore finger in my family and community at a time when conformity and being conservative was key; when thinking out of the box was certainly not the norm. I was the rebellious, strong willed child. The hot headed adult following my head and heart's passions. This regrettably did cause a deep rift between myself, my family and my siblings which was never quite repaired.

I will eternally be grateful to my brother, Jack, for encouraging me to pursue Law. I loved the Law and the profession with all my heart & soul and hope that I served the people well. I pride myself in the hard work and effort I put into building my successful career. If I look at the long line of my bloodline following the Law as their career; it makes me immensely proud. I did something right here!

My personal- and family life was complicated and I did not always give all my children and grandchildren from my different marriages, the attention, love and care they each needed & rightfully deserved. Yet, they have all shown remarkable resilience and I am grateful for the wonderful support systems that guided them along their way in my glaring absence.

My role and participation in the Anglo Boer War and internment on Bermuda, left an indelible mark on my psyche as I'm sure it did on many of the POW's. I don't think any of us can say that we came back from the war unscathed. This I say, not as an excuse, but rather with the hope that you will not judge me too harshly. I was only human; a man of flesh and blood. I made many mistakes, especially on a personal level, but, I wish to be remembered for much more than just my faults.

Learn from my mistakes and instruct the generations to come to value and cherish family. Where there are different personalities; there is bound to be conflict. Do not allow unresolved conflict to cause a permanent rift in a family. Be humble and apologize if you make a mistake. Do not ever let an inflated ego stand between you and the people that truly matter in your life.

History cannot be rewritten or photo-shopped; nor should it be. We may learn so much from the past and it may become a helpful instruction in your current life. Remember my life story and journey, but do not carry the remnants of my mistakes from one generation to the next and the next... Do not allow it to become your yoke. Let it go. Break the cycle of generational guilt, shame and sadness. Heal.

Embrace your authentic self: being strong willed, driven, somewhat stubborn, charismatic, intelligent, a born leader, with a rebellious streak on the side; my blood courses strongly through your veins. It is written in your DNA. Being different is not necessarily all bad; it's all about how you channel and harness these remarkable Curlewis - and RG traits. Let this become the legacy you leave behind for the generations to follow.

Dare to be a supernova. Shine brightly in your own way, but never dim the light of others in the process. Share your brightness and become a beacon of light and hope to others.

It was Frank Sinatra who poignantly said in his song, "My Way":

"For what is a man, what has he got If not himself then he has not

To say all the things he truly feels

And not the words of one who kneels

The record shows, I took the blows

But I did it my way"

All my love,

Robert Gray Curlewis

(Written by-FCJ- 12 SEPTEMBER 2020)

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