

GARVIE

THE GARVIE GENEALOGICAL NEWSLETTER

Rev.C.G.Garvie ThB
46 Woodlawn Crescent
4051 ROSEHILL
SOUTH AFRICA
Tel.(031) 83-5129

No.17

Dear Friends,

In the course of researching the Garvie tracks through Kenya I struck up a correspondence with Errol Trzebinski, authoress of The Kenya Pioneers and The Lives of Beryl Markham. For those interested in Kenya I strongly commend her books.

On the back of the envelope of a recent letter from Errol, almost as a kind of after thought, she wrote:

PS. Jung says:- believed that "the dark continent of Africa and its aboriginal people attracted Europeans because....it provoked what was forgotten in their primitive selves."

By "primitive", Carl Jung didn't mean "backward" but "our fundamental essence". After all central and southern Africa, we are told, was the cradle of the first humans. It is in Africa that we find our roots as nowhere else. Here we find ourselves, find our forgotten selves. Is this why we are here?

As South Africa moves into a new era may we all journey into the New South Africa with the same sense of adventure and hope that brought Laurance and Joan Garvie to these sunny shores.

Sad news is that Joan Cole-Edwardes passed away during 1993 ~~December~~ ^{October} 2003 of 93. In this letter we pay tribute to her memory. Our sincere condolences go to her loved ones.

May this Christmas bring peace and goodwill to us all.

COLIN GEORGE GARVIE

JOAN COLE-EDWARDES

* 14-01-1900 to John and Lily Garvie in Durban.
x 14-04-1920 married Joseph Neville Cole-Edwardes.
+ 21-04-1993 in Durban.

At the age of 88 Joan recalled her own story. Without hesitation she quite spontaneously stated the philosophical and theological context of her life: "Much of what I can remember is what my parents told me. To be honest, I must say that the lives of my grandparents, parents and my own life and family has been a humble one. We were not really interested in the past, that is behind us, tomorrow is still to come. So we lived each present day accepting whatever God has willed for us. No doubt

disappointing Him sometimes. We are all sinners and no matter what race or creed, we are all His children, rich and poor. He loves us all." Having made this abundantly clear she related her memories.

"I was born in 1900 to John and Lily Garvie. I believe my father and mother had already been in British East Africa since 1896 (*Editor: Research has not been able to confirm this early date*). Lily, my mother, returned to Durban for my birth. That happened in a house opposite the Albert Park on the corner of the Esplanade and Park Street.

"When my mother returned to Kenya with me after my birth we they landed at Kilindini which was the port at that time. We were taken from the ship to port in rowing boats. I was then about two years old. Kilindini is about the worst place I can remember.

"Mombassa was a hot, uninteresting place. There were no cars or trams in those days. The wealthy had "gharries" with tramlines to each house. The natives, dressed in white and a red fez, pushed them. "We didn't stay long in Mombassa. Owing to the heat we moved to Nairobi.

"We travelled to Nairobi by train. All our journeys in British East Africa were along the rail routes. We didn't travel much inland, except to our farm of course.

"Nairobi was a small town with a suburb called Parklands. May, my older sister, took part in operas and Mom was a concert pianist. Dad used to play the violin. That was how they first met in Bloemfontein! Margaret, my other sister, was born in Nairobi.

"I remember seeing the funeral of an Indian man in Nairobi. The funeral procession passed down Government Road. The corpse was arranged sitting on a trolley, his body bound in banana leaves but his faced was exposed. The trolley was drawn

by men only and they chanted as they passed on their way to the crematorium or bier. Women funerals were for women only. My inquisitive brothers, Laurance and Jim, went to see the burning. They had nightmares that night!

"We spent a year at school in Nairobi with May. Sometimes we would ride in the "gharries" from school. This was great fun.

"There must have been great privations for my parents but I can't recall any. We were young, free and happy! We had no food problems. Clothing had to be obtained from Nairobi. Mom was a very clever seamstress. Often Mom would call me in to help her do a job which I loved doing.

"I remember how, at first, the natives used to come and gape at us - "the White People". Mother used to send them away. I have always liked dolls. I had one that if you pulled a string it said "Ma-Ma". On one of these occasions I happened to come out with my doll. I thought I would show her off by pulling the string and they would hear it "talk". I don't know what they thought it was - maybe a "god". I only know that Mom said, "All we saw was black bottoms!" After that, we had no trouble. Mom had just to have me show my doll!

"We played a lot with home-made toys. We had a small cart drawn by two goats "Billy and Daisy". We had hoped for a young zebra but that was too wild!

"As far as schooling was concerned Nairobi was our nearest. Charles and I spent a year with May who was teaching in the Government School. Otherwise we didn't have any schooling until we returned to South Africa at the age of ten!

"It was a happy free life. We were too young to think of dangers. We were with each other as a family. Nandi was for

me the prettiest place on earth then came Nakuru.

"One day, Mom had asked Jim, my brother, to get a buck for food and warned him not to go down on the Lowland. I went with him. We rode donkeys. But we went too low down and I got malaria. It was so bad that it was decided that I had to be sent to the Nairobi Hospital. Jim Garvie and Otto Heuer made a stretcher for me to be carried to the Kibogori Station. The natives would not carry me so Jim and Otto did. We left home at the crack of dawn - "on safari" - Mom on a donkey, with her youngest son, Stuart, seated in front of her. At dusk we camped until the rise of the moon then on to the station an hour before the train arrived which would take me to Nairobi.

"I'm amazed to hear of the many malaria deaths today. Only now do I realize how God looked after us through all those dangers - not only disease but savages and wild animals too. Wonderfully strong was the faith of my dear parents!

"With my malaria Uncle George and his family, I think, had enough and so sold their ground and decided to return to South Africa. Mom and Dad must also have been anxious about our schooling. So it was arranged for Charles and I to return to South Africa with Uncle George and Aunt Rose in 1910.

We stayed with our grandparents, Laurance and Johanna Garvie in Kensington, until my parents returned almost two years later. During this time Gertie was nursemaid for cousin Reggie and I for cousin Arthur, the sons of uncle George.

"Meanwhile when I was fourteen, a certain Neville Cole- Edwardes had joined the forces in 1914 for four years. In 1915/16 he contracted blackwater fever and was one of five that survived in his regiment. He was invalided home.

"At Robert's Heights were two friends of the family who were in training. They happened to meet Neville and brought him home with them for a weekend. That was how Neville and I met.

"Neville returned to rejoin his regiment. We corresponded for a good few years. On his return Neville moved into a hotel near our home and asked my father for my hand. This greatly impressed my father! He called us together and gave us his blessing. So we were engaged."

Joan was only nineteen and intended a long engagement to prepare for the future. But her father was planning another branch of John Orrs to open in Lourenco Marques, Mocambique. So and not very reluctantly, Neville and Joan married earlier than planned on the 14th April 1920.

The young couple lived in a flat in Bree Street, Johannesburg until they were able to find a house. They then moved into 5 David Street, Jeppes Extension where eighteen months later Rod was born.

Neville Cole-Edwardes was in business with Alexander Bros. Solicitors. Eric Rosenthal, the popular South African author, served his articles with them. "Eric was those days a tall, thin lad," says Joan. "He had a black-white boater or cheesecutter, never on his head when walking, but always under his left arm. After Eric qualified, he lived in Fish Hoek where we always visited him. Eric became very interested in our life in British East Africa and decided to write a book about it. He contacted my Dad, John Garvie, who was living in Durban and got the whole history from him. All Eric wanted was a few incidentals and was told I could help. At that time my husband had just passed away and I was no longer able to visit Eric. About 1968 Eric told Rod, my son, that he could not find Dad's papers anymore. Rod made a few more enquiries but always the same answer.

After my husband's death in 1971 Rod again contacted Eric who said the papers were lost, so that was that. We heard no more. Then Eric's death, so that was the end of that chapter. May be one day they might be found. Amazing, Eric was so keen!"

Joan moved to Durban where she spent many years as Church Organist. Like Johanna her grandmother, Johanna Alice Cole-Edwardes, born Garvie, was no ordinary person but a very remarkable woman.

JOAN'S LAST CHRISTMAS WISH

It was my privilege to visit Joan and share many precious moments with her. One such occasion was unforgettable and haunts me to this day. It was Christmas Eve 1992. I was with a small group of Christmas Carollers from Durban North Methodist. We had specially requested to visit and sing to Joan which we did.

Joan was delighted by the surprise gesture. After a short prayer Joan took my hand and asked whether the story about the Garvies in Kenya had been completed. There was a deep longing in her eyes. She had contributed so much. Sadly I had to confess that the story remained incomplete. Vital information seem to elude us. Then she extracted a promise that I would do so before too long.

During several visits more Joan repeated her request. I promised I was working hard at it but our information was still very sketchy. Nearly five years of research has been devoted to this project and still essential documents and photographs are missing.

Can we now honour our promise to Joan and make her life's dream come true? Can you help in any way? Do you plan a trip to Kenya soon? May I appeal to all those

who can in anyway recall or furnish us with Garvie memorabilia to please forward copies to me as soon as possible.

- Colin Garvie

THAT INEVITABLE YEAR END REMINDER!

In order to keep our records accurate please drop us a line relating any family news or address changes. Births, Marriages and Deaths are important. A copy of such certificates would be invaluable. A fax clearly addressed to Rev. Colin Garvie will reach him at (031) 217674.