

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF EAST AFRICA

# HABARI 2020

NUUSBRIEF VAN DIE OOS-AFRIKA VRIENDEKOMITEE

**Pyrethrum tillage on the Plateau**

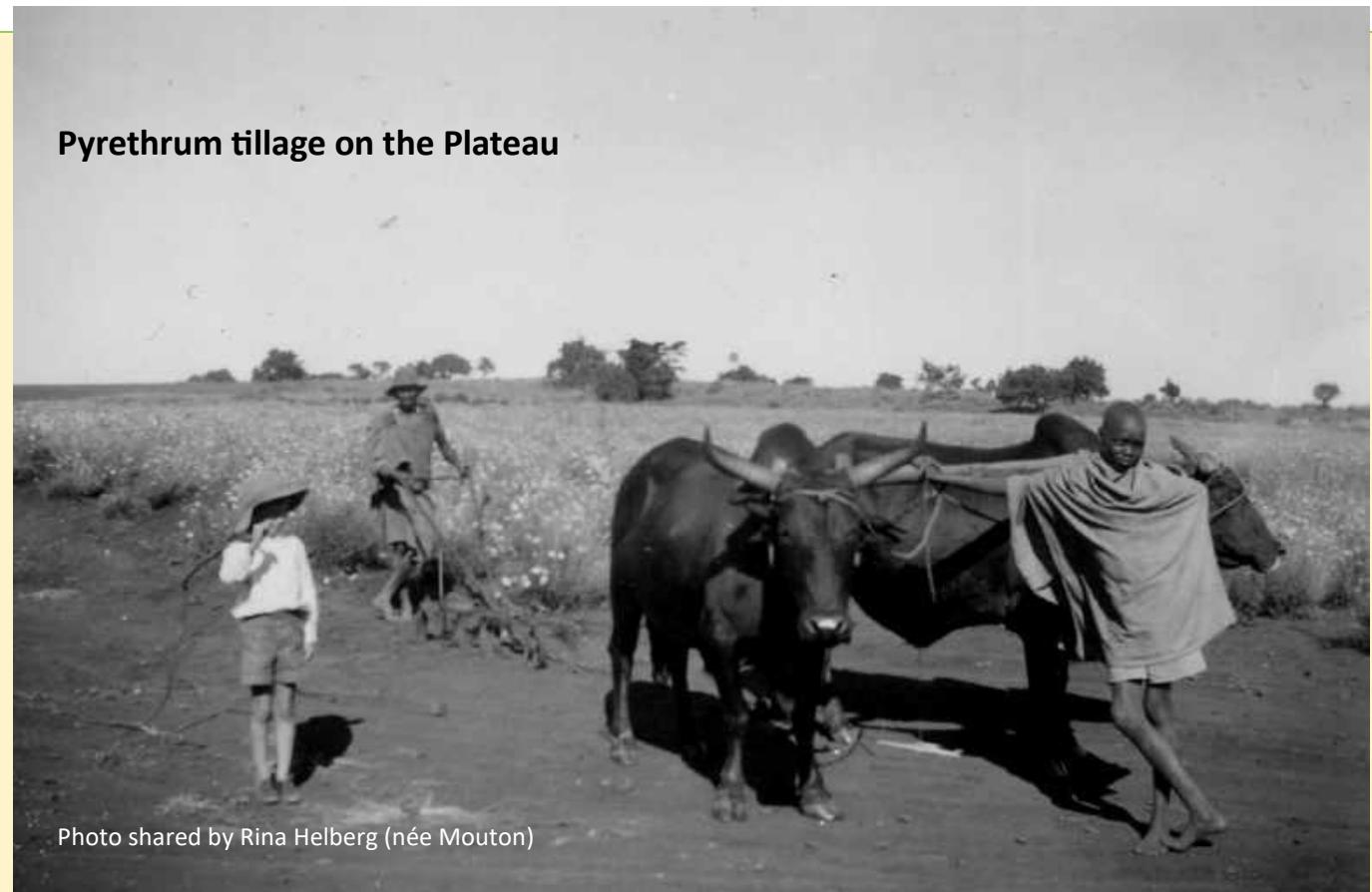


Photo shared by Rina Helberg (née Mouton)

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**EDITOR'S LETTER /  
REDAKTEURSBRIEF**

Baie dankie aan almal wat artikels en foto's gestuur het. Stuur gerus nog meer, ons plaas graag soveel as wat ons kan.

*Thanks to everyone who has sent articles and photographs. Please keep sending. We gladly use all everything we get.*

Donations are always welcome and helpful. U kan in die volgende rekening deponeer: Oos-Afrika Vriendekomitee / Friends of East Africa Committee Acc no/Rek no 080602405 Absa Hercules. Die takkode vir alle Absa takke is die selfde 632 005 is the code for all Absa branches.

**Kenya Get-together**

No get-together in 2020. COVID 19.

We will keep you posted about developments in, and plans for, 2021.

**Kenia Saamtrek**

Geen saamtrek vir 2020 nie. COVID 19. Ons sal u op hoogte hou van verwikkelinge in, en planne vir, 2021

Please send us your e-mail address! We have decided to desist from using any postal service, and are now totally reliant on emails.

Most people have emails or, if not, have families who have e-mails. If you prefer the Habari in hard copy, it is easy enough to download the file from an email to print it.

**30 May 2020. Bruce Rooken-Smith writes:**

I am assisting Christine Nicholls to update the website - europeansineastafrica.co.uk - and she is completely stymied by the attached list of 19 Engelbrechts [see below] who served in the Kenya Regiment.

Numbers up to 3574 are WWII, and thereafter Kenya Emergency and post-emergency

If you know of anyone who can compile an Engelbrecht family tree please would you ask him/her to draw-up one and including it, with the list below, in an email to rookenjb@mweb.co.za

6356 ENGELBRECHT

6518 ENGLEBRECHT Andries Jacobus

4695 ENGELBRECHT Carolius Laurens

7272 ENGELBRECHT Carolus Louwrens Fairey

6732 ENGELBRECHT Christoffel Frank

163 ENGELBRECHT Frank Christopher

3955 ENGELBRECHT Gerard Christian Leslie

6458 ENGELBRECHT G.J. du P

7349 ENGELBRECHT Jacobus Cornelius Smit

2076 ENGELBRECHT Jacobus Johannes

3673 ENGELBRECHT Jacobus Paul

3971 ENGELBRECHT Jacobus Pieter

1025 ENGELBRECHT Johannes Jacobus

3464 ENGELBRECHT John James

6495 ENGELBRECHT L

3335 ENGLEBRECHT Merwe Petrus

4464 ENGELBRECHT Stanley Hermanus Lowrens

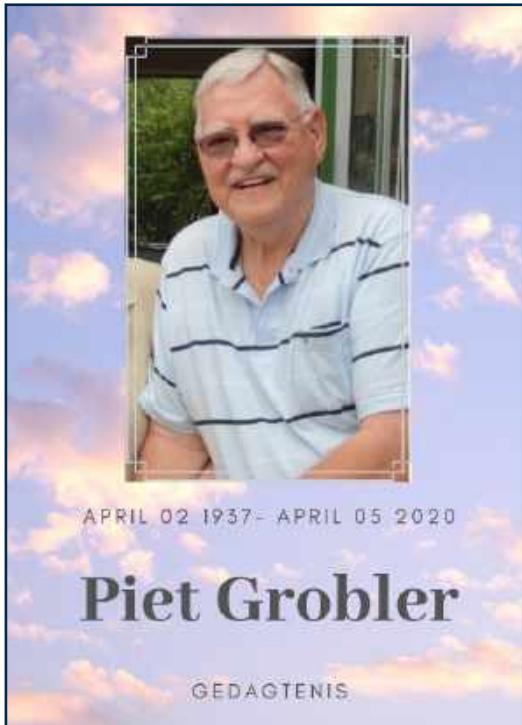
3538 ENGELBRECHT Stephanus Petrus

6025 ENGELBRECHT Willie Gerhardes

KENYA

REGIMENT

ENGELBRECHTS



A photograph of Piet Grobler, an elderly man with white hair and glasses, wearing a light blue striped polo shirt. The photo is set against a background of a sunset or sunrise sky.

APRIL 02 1937 - APRIL 05 2020

## Piet Grobler

GEDAGTENIS



Ds Piet Grobler se eerste gemeente was die NG Kerk Vergenoeg in Eldoret. Hy en sy vrou, tannie Bets (gebore Theron), was in Eldoret in die tyd wat Kenia onafhanklik geword het. Hulle eerste seun, Piet, is in die Vergenoeg pastorie gebore.

Ds Piet het na twee jaar 'n beroep gekry na Daspoort in Pretoria, en daarna, tot by sy aftrede, bedien hy die gemeentes Dalunie, Warmbad-wes, Kloofsig, Monumentpark-Wes, en Clarens.

Vandat die Oos-Afrika saamtrekke begin het by die Fontreine in Pretoria, was ds Piet by die saamtrekke en die OA Vriendekomitee betrokke. Hy het tot op die laaste, toe hy al baie siek was en in Huis Herfsblaar gewoon het, met oud-Kenianers kontak gehou. Hy was ook 'n sterk stem in die oprigting en konstitusie van Huis Vergeneg, 'n ander tehuis in Pretoria nie ver van Huis Herfsblaar nie. Huis Vergenoeg is vernoem na die gemeente in Eldoret. Dis gebou met die geld wat verkry is uit die verkoop van die kerkeiendom in Eldoret, en vir baie jare is daar, volgens ooreenkoms, voorkeur gegee aan oud-lidmate uit Vergenoeg gemeente as hulle verblyf en versorging vir hulle oudag gesoek het.

Sonder ds Piet Grobler sou die gemeentes waar hy bedien het, en die Oos-Afrika saamtrekke, baie armer gewees het aan herinneringe en die blydskap van saamwees.

Ds Piet was 'n sterk, ondernemende gelowige wat soos min 'n slag met mense gehad het. Sending was 'n passie by hom, en organisasie en pastoraat twee van sy groot gawes.

Ds Piet is op Goeie Vrydag, 1937, gebore, en sy roudiens was op Goeie Vrydag, 2020.

### IN MEMORIAM

- Tannie **Alida Steenkamp** van Marble Hall, eggenote van oom Ben Steenkamp, is oorlede in Oktober 2019.
- Mev **Amy van Rensburg** is op 87 oorlede na 'n beroerte. Sy was die eggenote van wyle ds Kosie van Rensbug. Slegs hy is in Kenia gebore. Hy was leraar van die Hervormde Kerk, Pietermaritsburg.
- Mev **Petro Olivier**, eggenote van wyle ds Phil Olivier vroeër predikant van Vergenoeg, Kenia, is oorlede in die versorgingseenheid in Swellendam, 28 Augustus 2020.
- **Dave Lichtenstein**, previously from Eldoret, died in May this year, in Australia.
- **Petrie Cloete** (gebore Bosman, vroeër van Kitale), is in Junie 2020 oorlede aan 'n hartaanval.

## KAN IEMAND HEP MET IN-LIGTING?

Frikkie Coetzee van Okahandja sal hulp baie waardeer. Sy e-pos is [fgc@iway.na](mailto:fgc@iway.na) OF ('n betroubaarder adres) ...  
[okahandjahengelklub@gmail.com](mailto:okahandjahengelklub@gmail.com)

*Frikkie skryf:*

## EK SOEK INLIGTING OOR DIE EKSTEENS TYDENS HUL

### VERBLYF IN KENIA.

*Hier volg agtergrond:*

My ma, Aletta ('Alta') Coetzee, is nou al 82. Sy is gebore in Eldoret op 20 Januarie 1938. Haar volle geboortename was Aletta Sophia EKSTEEN. Sy was die derde van vier kinders. Haar broer se naam was Johannes Paulus EKSTEEN (Jan Pale was sy bynaam) en hy is gebore 14 Junie 1933. Haar ouer suster was Paulina (Polly) Sophia EKSTEEN, gebore 30 Oktober 1934. Haar jonger suster was Johanna Helena EKSTEEN, gebore 28 November 1940.

Jan, Alta, Polly en Johanna se pa was Faan (Stephanus Abraham)

Die plaas op Kitale



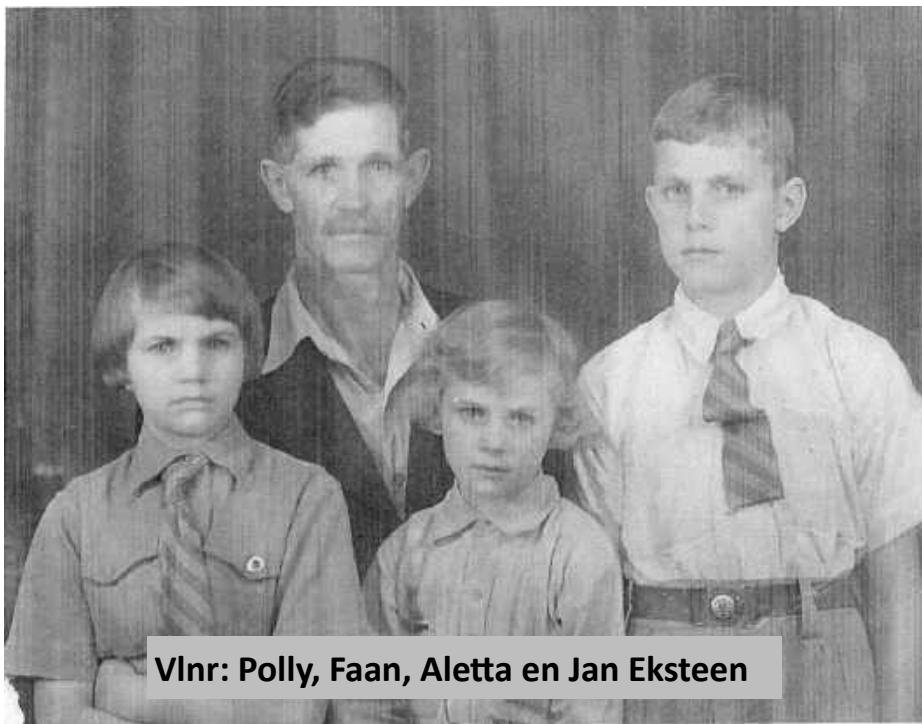
EKSTEEN, gebore 4 Maart 1894 te Zeerust, Transvaal, en oorlede 20 Julie 1966 te Pretoria, en hulle ma was Johanna Helena VAN VUUREN. (Skynbaar kon Johanna kwaai raak. Sy het eenkeer 'n klein Enslin in 'n streepsak in die dak opgehang omdat hy so baie geskree het.)

Faan het 'n plaas in Kitale-omgewing gehad. Eldoret was hulle hoofdorp. Polly trou met Henning van Wyk.

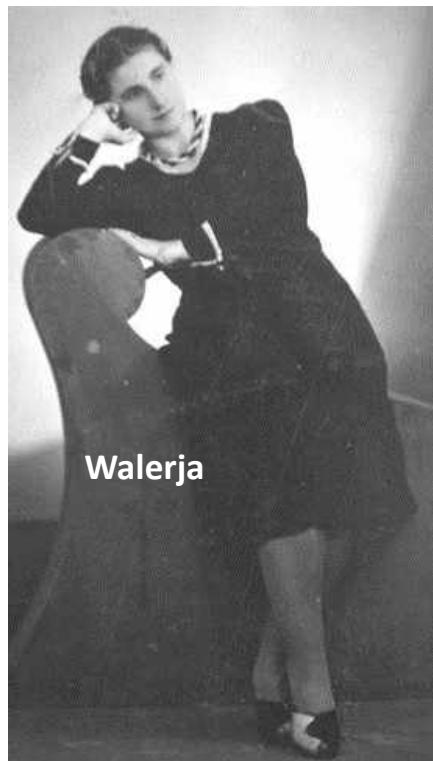
Die Mau Mau rebellie breek in 1952 uit, maar Aletta onthou net van Engelse wat aangeval is. Rondom agtuur die aand, as dit eetyd is en die werf stil is, word die aanvalle geloods. Aletta on-

thou berigte van 'n plaasaanval. Die man gaan kyk hoekom die honde so raas en hy word met pangas aangeval. Hy vorder terug tot by huis en sy vrou maak deur oop. Hulle maak ouers én kind dood. Die vrou is verwagtend en hulle sny haar oop en haal die ongebore baba uit. Die dooies se liggeme was erg vermink.

Vanweë die uitbreek van die Mau Mau rebellie, verhuis die ander Eksteens in November 1952 per vliegtuig na die Transvaal. Dinge in die Transvaal werk egter nie goed uit nie en die gesin verdeel. Kort daarna is Faan, Jan en Aletta



Vlnr: Polly, Faan, Aletta en Jan Eksteen



Walerja



**Faan Eksteen op die plaas**

terug in Eldoret, en die twee Johannas bly in Suid-Afrika agter. (Faan se eerste vrou, Johanna, trou later met een De Meyer.) In Kenia trou Faan weer, met

Walerja ('Valeria'). Sy is eertyds van die Poolse vlugtelingegekamp by Eldoret. Op Eldoret besit Walerja 'n kafee, en wanneer Aletta ongeveer 14 jaar is, begin sy daar help. Ongelukkig sterf Walerja onder operasie. Sy word op Eldoret begrawe.

Aletta gaan skool in Eldoret High en bly in die koshuis. Sy onthou dat die skoolhoof, Mr Walter, om een of ander rede nie vir haar "Aletta" gesê het nie maar "Sophia". Sy onthou ook toe hulle by die seunskoshuis bye wil uitbrand, maar toe brand die koshuis af. Aletta gaan skool op Eldoret tot standerd 5. Vanaf standerd 6 moet hulle Nairobi



**Faan se 1ste vrou, Johanna de Meyer, 1987, op die plaas Witputz in Suidwes.**

toe, maar later is hulle na Thomson's Valle waar die Afrikaanse Van Riebeeckskool pas klaar gebou was.

Na skool werk Aletta as verpleegster in Eldoret. Die chirurg daar was Dr Peake. (Vir hom moes hulle "meneer" sê, want hy

## **BY HAAR STIEFMA, WALERJA, HET ALETTA OOK DIE VOLGENDE GELEER:**

**Pannekoek** word gemaak met een eier per koppie meel, plus vanielje-essens en water.

Vleispannekoek word geëet saam met groentesop waaruit al die groentestukkies gesif is.

**Rolkoek** word gemaak met 5 van alles: meel, suiker, bakpoeier, eiers. Meng en bak.

**Kerriedis:** Op 'n groot bord, saam met kerrievleis wat in blokkies gesny is, blatjang, piesang, klapper en fyngerasperde wortels.

**Koffie plaasvervanger:** Soos met koffie, brand jy patats en koring.

**Botter** op Eldoret het verkoop vir 2 en 6 'n pond. Daardie dae is botter uitgebraai omdat daar nie koelkaste was nie. Die Indiërs het beter pryse betaal vir uitgebraide bottervet, wat ook langer hou as botter. As die vet af-

gegooi is, bly gebraaide "melk" agter wat hulle dan met bietjie sout eet.

**'n Bees en vark** is altyd saam geslag. Die bees moes eers 'n dag voor die slagting op kraal staan en net water kry.

**Uitgebraaide vet** kry geen sout in.

**Vleisbolletjies:** Maak vleisbolletjies gaar en bewaar hulle in lae uitgebraaide varkvet in koeler.

**Vleissnitte** word in diep pekelwater gelê. Voor jy diie snitte gaarmaak – lê hulle eers een nag in vars water, en lê hulle die volgende oggen d weér in vars water voor jy hulle kook. Voeg dan ander kruie by en kook hulle – weer vars water.

Walerja het ook pampoenpitte gekook, en dan moes die kinders dit eet vir lintwurms. Dit was 'n slymerige besigheid, en die kinders het verkies om sommer 'n hele klomp rou pitte te eet.



**Oorblyfsel van Jan se voertuig waarmee hy voor 'n trein was ...**



**Jan en Polly**

## NELLIE WESSELS' FIRST ADVENTURE TO MANGALISA. 1948

As a young bride, I stuck to my husband Hennie Wessels' side through very difficult times. If I now think back, I realize how many dangers we went through; I can only say thank you Father God, for helping us through all of them.

It was a wonderful but difficult adventure that very few women would go through, coming to think of it, with two babies to raise in the wilds of Tanganyika.

**"Love, just try and sleep. If the lions roar, they are full, they won't come to us."**

The first night I slept in the wild was when we moved to Tanganyika from Kenya. That was a night-

mare for me. With our two groundsheets and two blankets to protect us from the snakes, scorpions, spiders and other creepy crawlies.

At sunset the zebras stamped past, and left us covered in a cloud of dust. That night, the lions were very close, and it sounded as if my eardrums would bust the roaring was so near. I kept on waking up. We had no rifle yet. Hennie, who was so exhausted after trying to keep the truck that was not roadworthy on a virtually non-existent road, would say, "Love, just try and sleep. If the lions roar, they are full, they won't come to us." Of course, it didn't make any sense to me.

Hennie's brother Piet had a place at Hadaru. They had three rondavels without doors or windows — only curtains. We stayed there for a few months; we had no money as it

was just after the war and everything was still rationed. Hennie had been released from the army just before our wedding on 31 December 1947.

Piet, Hennie's brother, lent Hennie his .404 rifle. A few times they went out together after elephants in an effort to raise some money, but they found no big tuskers. Hennie then started going alone, accompanied by a black man who carried their drinking water and blanket, and who helped to carry the tusks if they shot an elephant. They slept in the veld amongst the predators — no tent or sleeping bag.

Luckily Hennie shot his first very big elephant. The tusks weighed 126 lbs and 129 lbs. After a few months he found another big one with tusks 139 and 136 lbs., which was a record. At that time ivory was selling at one British pound for a pound of ivory, which was a lot of money. It was possible at



that time to buy a license for two elephants a year.

Eventually we had a bit of money and could move away. We needed a tent or tarpaulin urgently, but could not find one to buy anywhere, so we sewed together our two army groundsheets to serve as a tent.

## **On the road again to Morogoro, and in the middle of nowhere, we had a breakdown.**

We moved on to Morogoro with an ancient Chev lorry which we managed to buy with the trade-in truck that was giving a lot of trouble. By that time, I was six months pregnant with my first baby, way out in the bush between nothing and nowhere. It was the rainy season and, boy, did it rain. The lorry had no glass; only canvas in the door panels. We ran into a severe cloud-burst. The water started coming through the floor boards. My breath was almost swept away by the severe down beat of the rain and wind. That day I really thought my last day had come. We were shivering, half frozen and soaking wet, but once again our Lord took care of us. Everything was soaked to the core, truck, blankets, clothes, suitcase, food, everything.

When the rain ceased after about an hour, a black man out of nowhere came running to see the lorry. As it was so far into the bush, he hadn't seen one before. As we spoke Swahili, we explained to him we wanted to prospect for mica. He said he had a half-completed hut nearby; he took us there. He had some dry wood and he made a fire for us. We were frozen and drenched, and God had sent the

man to save our lives. We opened some tinned food to eat, and stayed there for some days to dry our wet blankets and clothes.

On the road again to Morogoro, and in the middle of nowhere, we had a breakdown. What now? Hennie opened the engine at the roadside. It was a big -end that was broken. When night came, we had to take the groundsheets to cover the engine. Remember that it was the rainy season, and that meant plenty of rain. We slept under the lorry, with no protection from the wet ground or rain. Before we had left Hadaru, Hennie had also given back to his brother Piet the rifle he had borrowed from him. We had no firearms of our own. While sleeping under the lorry, the Tanganyika railway buses would stop and say, "Bwana (sir), the lions are going to eat you." The lions were right next to the lorry. Eventually I was so exhausted from not sleeping I couldn't care if they caught me. This went on for a few nights. We managed to get a lift to Morogoro, where no spares at all were available. Hennie bought an old part one from a broken truck that was a different model, but it did not fit. After filing and hammering, he got the lorry going — the engine was off-balance, but we carried on slowly to

Morogoro.

## **I was so exhausted from not sleeping I couldn't care if the lions caught me.**

There an Indian shop owner gave us shelter. He let us sleep on the counter of his shop, under his new, dry blankets. We were able to buy a tarpaulin 18x18ft, food, petrol and blankets from him.

I can't remember where we got a spare part from, but Hennie somehow got the lorry to run, so that we could carry on to Morogoro.

What a start for a newly married couple! I was worn out, my nerves were frayed and baby was too much to bear, but we had to carry on. We went through a village, Vermero, that had the sweetest and biggest mangoes I have ever tasted.

We moved on, prospecting as we went, and then got to Kibakwe Mission, way out in the bush. There I was able to see a nurse who examined me for the first time during my pregnancy. We stayed there a night or two and moved on again, prospecting for Oran (Mica). We landed up at a dense bush place the blacks called Masa, just below Manga-Lisa Hill. The closest we could get to clean water was a spring about one and a half miles from us. There we camped under a big baobab tree. This was our new home. The tarpaulin we nailed to the one side of the tree to act as a wall and we also made a few bricks to go round. That was now our new home. There were thousands of mosquitoes; luckily we had bought mosquito nets. Hennie nailed a few planks together for us for a bed. For a mattress we used bags we

had sewn together and stuffed with dry grass.

My baby was now nearly due so I had to go to Dar-es-Salaam by train. The truck was in a shambles so we put it on the train. To save money we sat in

the truck all the way to Dar-es-Salaam. There Hennie sold that truck, took the train back, and walked several miles from where he got off the train, back to the mine I stayed in the hotel till I had to go to hospital. The hospital had a beautiful view over the sea. On a beautiful sunny day, the 9th of March 1949, baby Helen arrived at 4

o'clock in the afternoon with a big white ship lying in the bay. **If the water was not out of a calabash they refused to drink it because they said it stank**

Hennie climbed Manga-Lisa Hill every second day to prospect. It was very steep — about 9 miles up and down. Hennie took the train back to Dar-es-Salaam, hoping that the baby had been born in the time he was away. There he bought another truck. Now, with baby Helen, I went home to Manga-Lisa in the truck.

Helen was the first white child that the black people in that area had ever seen, so they started beating their drums to send their messages to their country men and women. For weeks on end, they came to kiss her feet and touch her blond hair. They said she was some kind of a goddess and they were very happy to see and

touch her. They always asked for water to drink after seeing her, but if the water was not out of a calabash they refused to drink it because they said it stank (na nuka).

There was black man, about 35 years old, who had gone blind but

**for the blacks kids to attend in the morning and played the gramophone while working.**

To be close to the mica



Image source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/35/4e/84/354e849de0ee637f52b970d2b6443d4c.jpg>

could remember his way around the footpaths and young baobab trees. He made his ropes from their bark and also made a thing they call a 'muzega', a kind of basket which they tie to a flexible pole with a 25-gallon tin in each basket. With this load they have a special way of walking so that the load sways rhythmically. He used to carry our water for us, and even though he was blind, he did not fall over anything.

When Hennie found the mica pegmatite on Manga-Lisa, he developed the mine. He walked and climbed up and down Manga-Lisa hill until he decided to build a road. Later the road was mapped as "Wessels Road". It was very steep and only a van with extra-low gear could get to the top.

The nearest shop was Gulwe station. 150 miles from us.

### We started a small school

mine, we built a so-called house on Manga-Lisa that we in Afrikaans call wortel-en-dop ("wattle-and-daub"). Young trees are used to make up the wall and the roof, and these are then plastered with mud and a mud roof with grass growing on it. We started a small school for the blacks kids to attend in the morning and played the gramophone while working. Each day, till noon, a man from Nyasaland taught them to read and write. They then came to cut the mica. At the end of the day, each one's mica was weighed and the one with the most cut mica got a lump of hard brown sugar, which they called 'sugari nguro', as a bonus. We also ate it as it has a very nice flavour and it replaced

sweets. The kids were very excited when they got money.

I had my own gun .22 Hornet. I shot my meat for the pot and for biltong when Hennie was away prospecting etc. I used to bake our bread outside under a kariah (iron basin). Very few people know the secret of this method.

There were plenty of bushbuck, and which they call 'kanga'.

There was a crater on Manga-Lisa. Very difficult to see, as it had dense bush and trees around and inside. The buffalo had one small path that gave them access to the crater where they went down to graze. Once a black man was hunting there. He had an old blunderbuss rifle and wounded a buffalo which had him up a tree for hours. Lucky the youngster that was with him managed to escape. Out of breath he reached Hennie and asked him to shoot the buffalo. Buffalo are very dangerous even if not wounded, and due to the dense bush Hennie could not see the buffalo charging him, but the man in the tree shouted when he saw what was happening. Luckily Hennie shot the animal at a very short distance from him.

The blacks poisoned each other by putting poison in each other's beer. I hated it when they had their funerals. They cried and moaned and rolled over the grave for about two weeks. That got me down.

Ruaha River

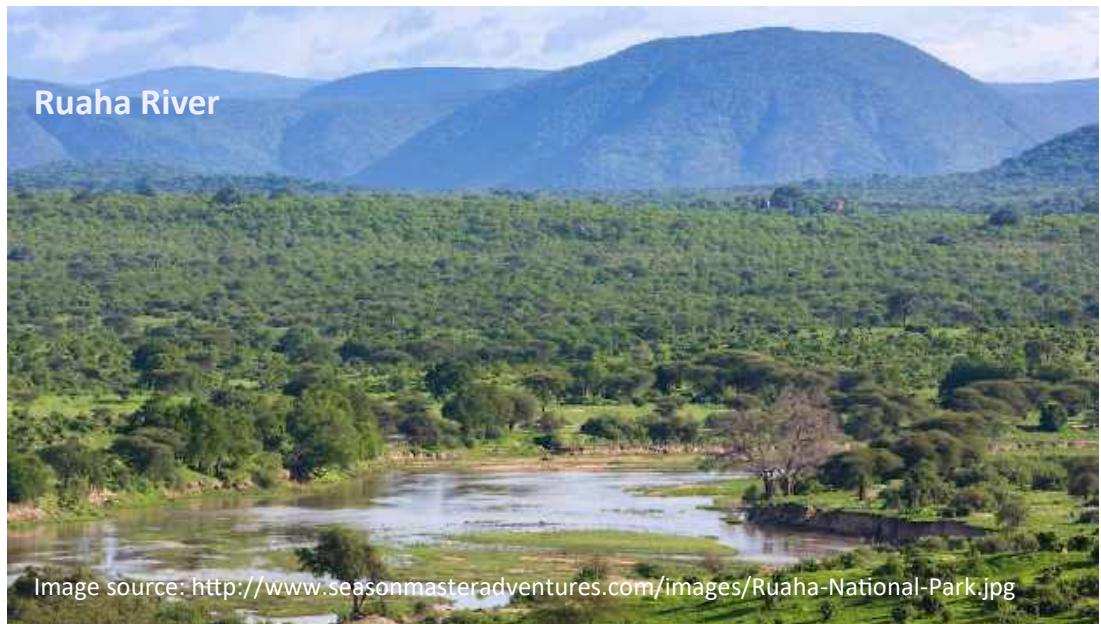


Image source: <http://www.seasonmasteradventures.com/images/Ruaha-National-Park.jpg>

Hennie found a pegmatite and it looked OK. He opened it and found only one very large book of mica, but no more.

On Manga-Lisa there was a type of tiny flea — I think some kind of sand flea called a jigger. They crawl into your toes, make a little sack inside, and lay eggs in it. Some people can't feel them when they crawl in, but I have very sensitive toes so as soon as they started, I feel the terrible itch and had to call Herbert the cook, to come and remove it with a needle. They seem to cling to the flesh at that stage, it is very sore and difficult to get out. The next stage is much easier to remove, but the sack must not be broken, otherwise, the eggs hatch in your flesh. We use paraffin to disinfect our toes.

We bought salt by the bag and at the mine exchanged it for eggs, chickens, mealie meal (posho). There were no shops close by to buy salt or anything. We always had to have two to three months' supply of every-

thing as the rivers came down when it rained, leaving us stranded.

**We always had to have two to three months' supply of everything as the rivers came down when it rained, leaving us stranded.**

The chief on Manga-Lisa was a woman called Meteme Zina. She planted mountain rice and also gave us some.

Last but not least Manga-Lisa is a beautiful place, with a beautiful view. We could see the great Ruha River below for miles. We were the very first Europeans that lived on Manga-Lisa. 

Tanzanian guineafowl



Image source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/0f/30/9b/0f309bfa9096e91a477be7614406e21e.jpg>

**M**EDISYNE UIT TUIN  
EN VELD  
(HUISGENOOT; 16 SEP-  
TEMBER 1977) –  
**SJ STEYN**

Na aanleiding van die berigte oor die geneeskundige eienskappe van plante en vrugte, wil ek graag van ons ondervindinge in Kenia vertel.

Ons het in 1908 in Kenia gevestig, waar toestande toe nog baie primitief was. Daar was feitlik geen dokters nie en malaria en swartwaterkoors was algemeen. Ons kon darem kinatablette by die naaste polisiepos kry, maar dit was baie ver van ons.

**Die kinatablette was nie van goeie gehalte nie en die gebruik daarvan het dikwels maagkwale veroorsaak.**

Die kinatablette was nie van goeie gehalte nie en die gebruik daarvan het dikwels maagkwale veroorsaak. Een van ons vriende se toestand het so verswak dat die Indiërdokter wat hom behan-

del het, nikks meer vir hom kon doen nie.

Toé die vriend se beeswagter verneem hoe erenstig sy werkgewer se toestand is, het hy aangebied om hom te "dokter". Hy is met 'n mandjie daar weg en het met 'n groot voorraad papajas terug gekom. Hy het die pasiënt aangesê om die papatas te kerf en dit met pitte en al te eet. Drie weke lank moes hy net papajas eet – geen ander kos nie. Die man was na drie weke heeltemal gesond, het nooit weer maag moeilikheid gehad nie en leef vandag nog.

My dogtertjie van 2½ jaar het by geleentheid baie siek geword. Haar mond en keel was vol wit seertjies en sy kon nikks eet of drink nie. Ons was verplig om haar na die naaste Indiërdokter te neem. Hy het medisyne gegee en ons aangeraai om gou met haar by die huis te kom sodat sy die medisyne kon drink.

Op pad huistoe het sy 'n mango gevra. Ons het een gekoop, dit afgeskil en aan haar gegee. Sy het dit geëet en aan die slaap geraak. Toe ons tuiskom, was haar mond gesond en kon sy 'n groot bord kos eet.

Van ons vriende wat op 'n afgeleë plaas in Kenia gewoon het, se kinders het baie siek geword. Daar het blasies op hul vel gekom en die ouers het vermoed dat dit waterpakkies is. Hulle was baie koorsig en na groot gesukkel het hulle 'n Indiërdokter sover gekry om plaas toe te kom. Sy bevindings was dat die kinders pokke het en dat die siekte in 'n gevaaerlike stadium is. Twee van die kinders het kort daarna gesterf en die gesin is onder kwarantyn geplaas.

**Hy is veld in en het terug gekom met blare, dorings en rooi bessies.**

'n Ou inboorling het aangebied om die kinders te "dokter". Hy is veld in en het terug gekom met blare, dorings en rooi bessies. Met die dorings het hy die blasies oop gesteek, blare daarop gesit en die kinders die fyngemaakte bessies laat sluk. Drie weke lank het hy met die behandeling voortgegaan. Die kinders het volkomme herstel en was na die drie weke op die been. Hulle leef vandag nog. ✎

**Early wheat farming on the Plateau**

Photo shared by Rina Helberg (née Mouton)



## FANIE KRUGER — THE LAST BOER IN KENYA

[DARREN TAYLOR - FARMER'S WEEKLY]

**26 DECEMBER 2003]**

The last Afrikaner farmer in Kenya, Fanie Kruger, tells Darren Taylor about how he came to farm in one of East Africa's most fertile regions, why and how 1,000 Afrikaners abandoned their promised land, and the price he has had to pay to keep his piece of black Africa.

The evening is cool; the atmosphere in the Africa Gospel Church anything but. Inside the red brick building with the blue roof, scores of men, women and children with beads of sweat glistening on their electric faces rock to the beat of praise songs. Breasts bounce, eyes roll, feet stamp, hands clap.

Then, as the music begins to fade, Sarah Kirui, the pastor's wife, turns to face the happy, heaving throng. It's the signal for the congregation to unplug, to become silent. Slowly, almost disappointed, they sink into the old wooden pews.

"Tonight is very special!" Kirui shouts. Dwarfed by the giant silver organ pipes shining high above her, she continues, "tonight we have a kaburu here!" Excited voices tinged with genuine surprise ring out immediately, "Welcome, kaburu! Welcome! It's good to have you here, kaburu!" Here, in Eldoret, in Kenya's western highlands, if you're white and South African, you must be a kaburu - an Afrikaner, a Boer.

Soon the raucous music reignites, the big, deep, black voices belt out burning harmonies in Swahili and the local Nandi dialect. The Afrikaners who settled here in the early 1900s must be turning in their graves...

What was once Eldoret's Dutch Reformed Church – right – is today infused with unrestrained abandon. The staidness, the formality, the strict liturgy that characterised Boer worship has been replaced by ecstasy: gyrating hips, unbridled joy, hands waving high in the musty air, only to smash together suddenly in an explosion of soulful rhythm. "My grandmother has told me about the Dutch people who once lived here; she says they were very tough, strong people," Kirui explains after the service. "They made houses by burning clay to make bricks. They made soap from the animal fat and shoes out of the animal skins."

**The kaburu built Eldoret. In the 1930s, Eldoret could've been any dorpie on the platteland.**

The kaburu built Eldoret. In the 1930s, Eldoret could've been any dorpie on the platteland. The Boer settlers played jukskei in the dusty streets, they baked koeksusters and melktert, and they held kerkbasaars. But, of course, their main business was farming - wheat, maize and cattle.

"They taught us how to farm, they even gave me my own farm!" recalls Joseph Tirop, a local mzee – a Swahili term for elder, indicating great respect.

"I remember how the kaburu built Eldoret when I was a small boy. It was clean; the roads were good, although a bit sandy. But it was much better than now.

"Now there is crime and I am sad because am sure the kaburu are not happy, looking down from God's sky upon all this dirt."

Tirop speaks from the sanc-



tuary of the beautiful garden he now tends for, what he refers to as 'a rich man'. But beyond the garden's walls, the town the Boers built all those years ago has become a filthy, chaotic place, a twist of steaming streets packed with beggars, prostitutes and con artists.

Today Eldoret is just another town in Africa where the rural poor migrate in search of a crust of bread. Here, many will soon forget about the norms and values, honour and integrity of tribal traditions. Here, like snakes slipping out of their skins, the people become corrupters, backstabbers, thieves, whores, cheats. Gone will be the respect for the unity of the tribe and in its place, survival at all costs, every man for himself.

### **In the 1950s, more than a thousand Boers lived in Eldoret. Now, a solitary descendant of the original Afrikaner settlers remains. His name is Fanie Kruger.**

In the 1950s, more than a thousand Boers lived in Eldoret. Now, a solitary descendant of the original Afrikaner settlers remains. His name is Fanie Kruger.

The man with the big land near the hill. To walk through the streets and ask about this man elicits responses such as:

"Aaahhh, Fun Kroogaaah! Yes, I know him. He has beeeggg shamba!" It seems as if everyone knows -or wants to know - "Fun Kroogaaah". Left: Fanie

with a warden from the Kenya Wildlife Service at Soy. Fanie is dedicated to saving the last few Rothschild giraffe in the world. This subspecies is being wiped out by small-scale farmers in Western Kenya, who say that the animals destroy their crops.

He is the last of the Dutch people," says Gladys Chepwogen. "You will know him because he is very big and strong; Fun Kroogah is very rich and I have seen him at the meeting," says Daniel Kipsabit. A small crowd gathers, each person wanting to display his or her intimate, unique knowledge of "the Dutchman" or "the rich man" or "the man with the big land near the big hill" - as he is known.

Fanie Kruger farms wheat, maize and barley - very successfully - and cattle and pigs - not so successfully - at Sergioit, a nondescript hill about 40km north of Eldoret, in Kenya's Rift Valley. His 2,000ha is on the Uasin Gishu Plateau, at an altitude of almost 2,100m above sea level - one of the most fertile corners of East Africa.

The Afrikaner exodus from Kenya. Fanie's maternal ancestors, the Du Plooy's of Middelburg in Eastern Transvaal, arrived here in 1906 and were part of the first of four waves of Afrikaners to move up to Kenya. The legend about these Boers goes like this: bands of indefatigable Afrikaner trekkers were too proud to live under the British yoke after the Boer War, so they climbed into their ox wagons and journeyed northwards, where they'd heard of a promised land teeming with game.

Braving what they thought to be savage tribes, wild animals and dis-

ease, the courageous pioneers conquered the African hinterland.

"What a load of rubbish," says Fanie, a mischievous grin creasing his weathered face. "The original Boers in Kenya were 'joiners'. They cooperated with the British in the Boer War. So they ran away to escape the revenge of their own people in the Transvaal. That's how they came to be here." This burly, suntanned farmer is a debunker of myths. A man with little time for romance. "I mean hell, man, the Queen Mother even came to visit the old Boers here in the 1950s! She wouldn't have paid a polite social visit to her enemies now, would she?"

### **Fanie Kruger dismisses what he calls "historical Afrikaner fallacies"**

Fanie Kruger, the Boer antihero, is on a roll. He dismisses what he calls "historical Afrikaner fallacies" with relish - albeit with a slight Afrikaans accent... "It's also nonsense that the Boers trekked in wagons all the way to Kenya. They actually came by ship from Lourenco Marques to Mombasa. From there, they caught the train to Nairobi, and then on to Londiani, which is about 64km from Sergioit. So, if they did any travelling by wagon, it was no more than that."

Fanie's paternal grandfather, Stephanus Petrus Kruger, arrived here in 1924 from Dullstroom, in the Eastern Transvaal and in 1956, Fanie's father Jan Erns Kruger took possession of the farm. Shortly after Fanie's birth in Eldo-

ret, blind panic swept through what was known as the "White Highlands" of Kenya. Word had filtered through to the Afrikaners of the slaughter and rape of white nuns in the Belgian Congo and in Kenya itself. The Mau Mau were rising up against the British colonial-rulers, murdering 32 white settlers.

## **When Kenya gained independence in 1963, the first thing Fanie's father did was apply for citizenship.**

How the Afrikaner exodus began. "They thought the blacks were going to butcher them all in their beds," reckons Fanie, taking up the story. "My dad was actually one of the first to leave Kenya. He moved, with a tractor and all his implements, in a truck down to Pretoria in July 1960. And you know, that is the worst time of the year down south; everything is frozen and the land is dull and barren, terrible. So then the old man offloads everything, takes a look at the brown land around him, and jumps in the truck and for four days drives back to Kenya. He arrived back here on a Saturday night, and the next morning he woke up and took a walk through the lands. July here is the most beautiful time of the year: sunny, with occasional

showers. My father looked at all the crops, green, and the land was alive with all sorts of nature. There and then he made up his mind. I remember he said, "Nee, ons gaan nie. Ons bly". He never even returned to collect his stuff in South Africa. He just left it there.

For the Kruger family, the Afrikaner abandonment of the land in Kenya's western highlands proved to be a blessing in disguise. "I'm happy to admit that the exodus helped us make a success here," says Fanie. "Land was going for nothing, people panicking and wanting to leave at all costs. Same with the machinery - people were just giving it away!"

When Kenya gained independence in 1963, the first thing Fanie's father did was apply for citizenship. "He decided to toss the coin and see where it landed. He was willing to take his chances," recalls Fanie. President Jomo Kenyatta had vowed to allow whites who were 'dedicated to building a free and prosperous Kenya' to remain in the country. But by this time, most of the Afrikaners who'd originally settled in Eldoret were back in South Africa. Meanwhile, Fanie's father got down to working the land he loved. But despite Jan Erns Kruger's stubborn refusal to join the exodus and his faith in the New Kenya, life on the farm was not without risk.

"I remember shortly after independence, six guys came onto the farm. They were taunting my old man, spinning a spear and then pointing it at him," says Fanie. "He stood with his pistol in his pocket, aimed at these blokes. I was a small kid, about six. I picked up a stick and started dancing with these guys. It destroyed them, completely. They left. I was just a stupid kid; I thought they'd come to do a war dance for us. Meantime, it was a real war dance! Hey, my father laughed afterwards..."

Paying the price. Fanie studied in South Africa, leaving the country as a young man in 1975 to take the farm over from his dying father. He was fiercely determined to

succeed as one of the few remaining white farmers in Kenya. But his determination did not blind him to reality.

"I learned from my Dad. He always said to me, 'If we want to keep our land, we must not step out of line; we must respect the black man and he will respect us'. "Both of us always said, 'If they take our land, so be it; we will accept it.' And this is still my attitude today."

To survive in Kenya, Fanie was forced to compromise and over the years, he forged alliances with the ruling Kenya African National Union (Kanu). "I decided: 'Better the devil you know, than the devil you don't know,'" he says.

## **He and his fellow farmers blocked Eldoret with trucks, tractors, bakkies and combine harvesters**

Fanie gave - and still gives - at least half a million Kenyan shillings every year ( R65,000) - at harambees, gatherings where influential community members donate money to worthy causes, such as the building of clinics and schools. But, during the Kanu regime, the money often disappeared into the politicians' back pockets. Today, Fanie remains unrepentant of his links with Kanu, a party that, under the leadership of President Daniel arap Moi, tortured and murdered its opponents and plundered Kenya's economy.

"If I didn't support Kanu, I

would have lost everything! And I love my land. So I had to compromise, and I am not ashamed of that. I have survived. All the other Boers are gone. Now it's just me here."

But in 1997, Fanie felt compelled to rebel against the Kanu government. He and his fellow farmers blocked Eldoret with trucks, tractors, bakkies and combine harvesters to protest against cheap imports and low prices. For three days, Eldoret - the hub of Kenya's agriculture, Kanu's heartland and the powerbase of Moi's Kalenjin tribe - came to a standstill. Moi was deeply embarrassed - and furious.

"The aftermath was horrific," says Fanie. "The authorities blamed me for the blockade and tried to end me. You'd be speeding along the road and suddenly a massive sand lorry pulls out in front of you! A couple of times, I nearly came short." But Fanie believes his good relations with the local community and the fact that he's the region's principal employer saved him from destruction. "I think if anything had happened to me, it would've created quite a stir. I believe the powers that be realised this and backed off."

Fanie's neighbour, Nicholas Biwott, is a man regarded as Moi's enforcer during the Kanu years; the

Kalenjin people have nicknamed Biwott karnet, which means steel. To this day Biwott is implicated in scandal, corruption and political assassinations. Yet he remains one of Kenya's richest men and the owner of vast tracts of land - even though Mwai Kibaki's National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) is now in power.

"Biwott could have taken my land anytime," admits Fanie, "I honestly have no idea why he did not. I've met him a number of times, on a social level. He has always been pleasant. But," laughs Fanie, uncomfortably, like a schoolboy caught with his fingers in the pie, "Biwott has caused a few problems for me. Like the time the Kanu strongman landed his helicopter in front of Fanie's home.

"It was an emergency, his wife needed the loo", explains the farmer.

"But this really embarrassed me. The whole district saw this and said, 'Ah, Kruger is Biwott's big friend!' Fanie has suffered for the perception that he's a Kanu man.

"Soon after NARC came to power, I got a call saying, 'Sorry, you're no longer a member of the AFC [Agricultural Finance Corporation] board.' In the past, I got calls from Kanu guys saying, 'Congratulations, we've elected you as our member on the AFC board,' and I had not even stood for election! But how could I refuse the position? If I had, the Kanu guys would've taken it as a big insult and I would have lost everything. So I played the game."

Fanie emerges as the ultimate pragmatist, a white farmer willing to do anything to hold onto his piece of black Africa. "I am a supporter of AGIP, which is Any Government in Power," he says, without a hint of irony and only a slight sense of hu-

mour. "Farmers in Africa who believe they can do well these days without becoming involved in politics, well, they are living in a dream world."

We have to be politically aware, we have to make sure that the politicians are friends of agriculture. For this to be achieved, we have to be willing to pay the price."

Life is short here... but what a life!

Some mornings Fanie Kruger wakes up and says to himself, "To hell with it! Just what the hell am I doing here?" The compromises he's had to make, all the political game-play, the constant manoeuvring, the threats, Kenya's lack of infrastructure, "the sickening decimation" of wildlife around him, the "ignorant, do-gooder" non-governmental organisations dumping cheap wheat onto the market, sending his prices crashing - all of this, and more, has worn Fanie down.

### **Surely a point is reached when love withers, when the emotion the big farmer tries hard to hide, is out- weighed by practicalities?**

Why, then, does he stay? With all his talk of deep love for the country's western highlands, with its so-called best climate in the world, surely a point is reached when love withers, when the emotion the big farmer tries hard to hide, is outweighed by practicalities? "Maybe you're right," Fanie sighs suddenly weary. "But you know I can't leave the community. I also feel I have an obligation to Kenya. I mean, it's been hard in this country but life has also been good, and the government could've kicked me out anytime! They didn't. I am grateful."

In 2001, for the first time since he'd

left South Africa in 1975, Fanie returned to South Africa with his wife, Carol, his 15-year-old daughter, Crystal and his 13-year-old son, Jannie. "To be honest, I had written the place off" he exclaims. "But we loved it, really. A different country to what I remembered; everyone seemed to be getting along. I am sure there are places where racism still exists, but we didn't see any."

Fanie spits a hasty "Never!" in reply to a question of whether he'll ever consider farming in South Africa. But he says he wouldn't mind retiring in the Eastern Cape, specifically Grahamstown, "Man, I liked that place! So quiet, and near to Port Elizabeth, where you have these fantastic beaches." But, try as he might, Fanie can't pull himself away from Kenya. Not just yet, at least.

In the end it is fatalism, so common to the African psyche, that pervades his attitudes and seems to nourish his ability to endure. "I've always run this farm as if it's a year-to-year thing. You never know if you're gonna be here the next morning, let alone the next year. This is Africa; let's be honest. Life is short here. But what a life! Man, it must be boring farming in Europe, with all the rules and regulations."

Fanie's view on Zimbabwe. Fanie occasionally thinks about his fellow farmers down south. He's keen on coming forwards when venturing opinions, especially about the situation in Zimbabwe.

"What Mugabe has done to the white farmers is the most criminal thing on earth. That one single thing - telling the white farmers to get lost - has killed the country's complete economy. "But," says Fanie, "I don't think there was enough give on the side of the Zim farmers; they closed

themselves off from the black community; they didn't help black farmers. Most of them were selfish. Now, their bubble has burst - as harsh as that sounds." Fanie's views are based on a number of meetings with Zimbabwean farmers before all the trouble started in Zimbabwe.

At the Royal Show in England a few years ago, he met a large group of farmers from Zimbabwe. "They had this attitude that they were the mighty Zimbabweans and that nobody else knew anything. They really looked down on the African farmers, like they were rubbish. I found them very arrogant and extremely narrow minded - surely the effect of such attitudes can be seen in what's happening in Zim today?" Fanie challenges. "White farmers in Africa have made a big mistake by thinking that we're indispensable and that the 'savages' can't live without us. The African - white or black - is a survivor. But just think how much easier this survival will be if we all pull together," he says.

Fanie readily admits that what he calls the death of agriculture in Zimbabwe may well lead to a new life for Kenya's farmers. At the moment he's negotiating with 'big international companies' to consider large-scale tobacco and cotton farming in East Africa. "All these big guys have told us that they're finished with Zimbabwe. Pioneer Seeds has told me, 'that's the end; we'll never move back into Zimbabwe.' So, because of the farm takeovers, agriculture in Zimbabwe will never recover

fully. You will never get the multinationals to go back again, because by the time the country has sorted itself out, events will have overtaken circumstances. When the big companies go and establish themselves in other countries, they're not going to move back to Zimbabwe - that would be impractical; they'd lose too much money."

Fanie is hesitant to comment on the murders of white farmers in South Africa. "That would be arrogant of me; I am not a South African farmer, I am a Kenyan farmer, but I believe that a lot of these killings are revenge attacks - some blacks are taking revenge on whites for what happened in the past." Fanie's also sure that if most white farmers had chosen to stay in Kenya after it became independent, as his father did, they would have experienced a similar situation there. "But most of the whites chose to go, leaving the prime land to the blacks so there was less anger towards the whites here," he says.

"But where do the white farmers in South Africa go? They are mostly Afrikaners; they are white Africans; they have no ties to other countries. They are stuck. So they have to face the music."

**No matter how much he tries to gainsay it, Fanie Kruger is an Afrikaner *bittereinder*.**

Although there hasn't been a murder of a white farmer in Kenya since the days of the Mau Mau, Fanie's not taking any chances - an electric fence hum-

ming with evil energy surrounds his land and huge green reinforced steel gates seal the various entrances to his farm. Each guard-post is manned by a uniformed askari or security guard and bands of dour, alert men armed with clubs patrol his fields. This is how Fanie keeps theft to a minimum. "My philosophy on this farm is: why tempt fate?" Fanie whispers. "If somebody comes onto my land when it's dark, the first thing he's gonna know is the view straight down the barrel of my gun, just to get the message across."

A *bittereinder*? Maybe it's not quite appropriate to brand Fanie Kruger as the last Afrikaner farmer in Kenya. "I am one hundred percent Kenyan," he insists, time and again. He speaks Afri-

kaans with a heavy English accent, but his children can't speak a word of the language. South Africa, he maintains, is just a place where he studied 20 odd years ago, "I feel disconnected from the place," he says. Although he enjoys "the odd stuk boerewors," he has little regard for his Afrikaner heritage, even dismissing his trekker forebears as 'joiners' or traitors.

One would therefore be hesitant to describe this man as a *bittereinder*, a man who will hold out in the face of all odds in the best of Afrikaner tradition. Yet Fanie Kruger exudes all that's associated with the Boers of old - fortitude, resistance, stubbornness, the love of Africa and its soil. Fanie admits that he's had to

bend in a land where few white farmers remain, to do what it takes to "survive" - this is his favourite word.

Fanie will always be "the kaburu who did not run", according to mzee Joseph Tirop. Fanie remains "the last of the Dutch people," according to the congregation of the Africa Gospel Church at the end of the bleak, crumbling road near Eldoret town centre.

No matter how much he tries to gainsay it, Fanie Kruger is an Afrikaner *bittereinder*. "I am still here," he says, yet again, standing solid in the sun in his yellow-brown maize field, like his grandfather and father did before him, alone at the foot of the hill. His promised land. 



Image source: [https://wwwkiptoo.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/cropped-15697912\\_1478196208866823\\_6873417365750053123\\_n.jpg](https://wwwkiptoo.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/cropped-15697912_1478196208866823_6873417365750053123_n.jpg)

## **Wheat seeding on the Plateau**

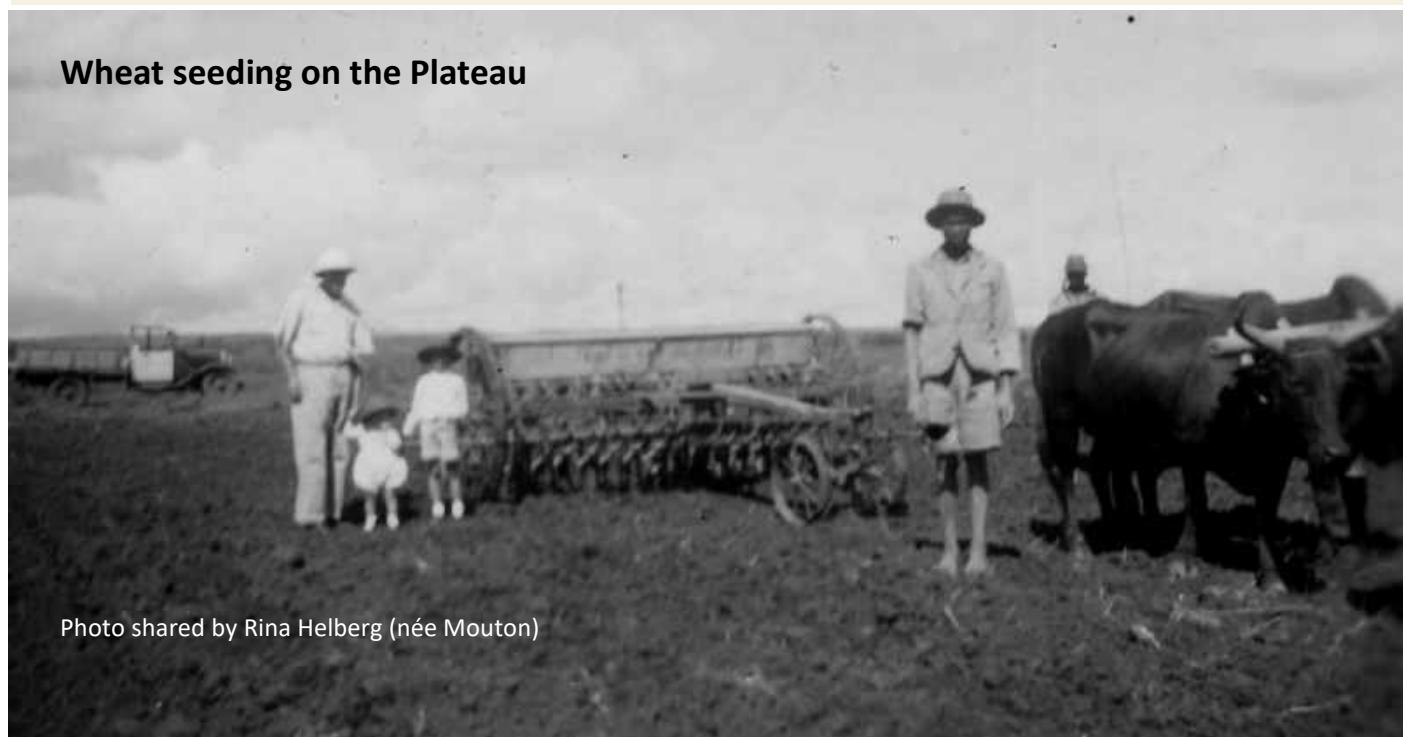


Photo shared by Rina Helberg (née Mouton)

## VINGERHOED EN DIE ONTSTAAN VAN DIE KERKIE OP DIE PLAAS *ENIG* VAN DIE MOUTONS

In 1916 het 'n tienjarige Elgeyo seun op die plaas kom werk, bynaam Vingerhoed vanwee sy klein tengerige postuur en moeilike stamnaam.

Saam met Vingerhoed het die twaalfjarige Abie Mouton gespeel, gejag en ook harde plaaswerk verrig. In 1925 is Vingerhoed na 'n meer welvarende plaas, vanweë sy troukoorsverpligte.

Daar het herhaalde Malaria-aanvalle hom so laat uitteer en verswak, dat hy wou terugkeer, waar Abie hom toe self per motor gaan haal het.

Nieteenstaande Abie se gebede, boererate en beskikbare medisyne, het sy toestand byna krities versleg. Met hul jeugtyd se gesprekke het Vingerhoed reeds kennis gehad v d Almag van God en was bereid om saam met Abie om Sy hulp te vra.

So het die twee agter doringbossies gekniel en Abie het in Swahili vir hom gebid. Hy het geleidelik sterker geword en was na twee maande omtrent gesond.

Vanaf hierdie tyd het hy pad saam met die Here geloop, is op 5 Julie 1953 gedoop met Christen naam Josefu en was een vd eersre lidmate vd Bwana Loubser Sendingkerk.

Die oggend in Februarie 1962 voor die Moutons se vertrek na SA, het Chebore, een van die ander Christene op die plaas, asook Vingerhoed, op sy aandrang knielend saam met ons, voorgegaan in Swahili en gevra die Here moet saam met ons gaan. Van sy woorde was nog dat hy oupa Mouton belowe het om na Abie om te sien, wat hy gedoen het, maar nou vra hy die Here (Mungu) moet hom verder oppas.

Hy het 'n deel vd plaas met die familie begraafplaas omring deur sederbome gekry en volgens hom so bewaar in eerbied aan hulle wat die Here na hulle gebring het. ✎

Bush clearing on the Plateau



Photo shared by Rina Helberg (née Mouton)

## DR HENNIE PIETERSE

Deur Pieter Pieterse. 3 Sep 2019

**M**y pa, Hendrik Pieterse, het op Stellenbosch studeer. Hy het hier twee grade klaarge- maak, wat 5 jaar moes vat het hy in 3 jaar voltooi. Van sy vakke was Duits, waarmee hy toe vir die eerste keer kontak gemaak het. Min of meer in 1925 het hy sy studies voltooi. Hy het in Maart 1926 in Ngare Nanyuki begin skoolhou en per boot en trein gereis om daar the kom. Die reis was so ongeveer 30 dae.

Ek en Oubaas Malan (oud adjunk-minister van Landbou) het een dag saam met my Pa gekuier toe Pa vertel het hoe hy in Tanganika geland het.

Hy wou eers gaan skoolhou het in Argentinië onder die Afrikaners daar. By die Argentynse ambassade het hy egter glad nie tuis gevoel nie, maar kon ook nie werklik sê wat hom pla nie. Hy het hom omgedraai en by die Engelse ambassade 'n aansoek ingedien. Dit was suksesvol en so het hy in Tanganjika beland. Die wêreld sou 'n baie anderste plek gewees het as ons drie kinders 'n Spaanse aksent gehad het! Wat ook wonderlik uitgewerk het, is dat meer as 90 jaar later, daar nog dinge is waar my Pa se invloed deurskemer. Die Habari is een so 'n voorbeeld.

My pa sou nou 113 jaar oud gewees het as hy nog met ons was. 

## RONDOM KILIMINJARO

Deur Dr Hennie Pieterse.

**K**ilima is die Swahili woord vir berg en die mooi, by-passende oerwoord "njoro", later njaro, was die Masai benaming vir "gees". Die samestelling Kiliminjaro beteken gevvolglik "gees van die berg". Dit glo en vertel die Masai met wie ek deur die jare heen in verbinding was. Alle swart stamme in Oos-Afrika ken die word *Kiliminjaro* of hulle nou ook die berg gesien het al dan nie. Almal oor die wye wêreld wat naastenby iets weet, ken ook die beroemde naam.



**My pa, Hennie Pieterse,  
op Kilimanjaro se krater 5**

Vra my wie die Swahili volk werklik is en waar Swahililand presies afgebaken word, dan bly ek liever die antwoord skuldig behalwe om aan te dui dat 'n smal strook langs die kus van Oos Afrika hoofsaaklik aan hulle toegesê word. Maar die

wonder van hulle taal, tee-noor hulle smal strokies kusgebied, bestaan daarin dat dit oor die ganse Oos-Afrika en selfs baie verder versprei het, veral deur die Arabiere wat vir eeue as veroweraars hul langs die kus gevestig het en vandaar tot diep die binneiland in ivoor- en slawehandel bedrywe het. Oos-Afrika word bewoon deur 'n verskeidenheid groot stamme elkeen met sy eie taal en afsonderlike woongebied. Maar naas sy eie stamaal ken elke swartmens in die reël ook die musikale, algemene omgangstaal, Swahili. Dit is verbasend dat 'n mens ook Swahili hoor tot ver ander kant die grense van Oos-Afrika en selfs op afgeleë eilande. "Verdwaalde" enkelinge praat dit tot in Kaapstad.

Wat meer is, duisende witmense in Suid-Afrika ken Swahili goed of minder goed en kan buite ons grense oor die weg kom daarmee. 'n Goeie kenner van die Swahili persoon ontdek hom soms waar hy hom die minste verwag. As ek onseker voel, sê ek sommer so in die lug: "Rafiki, mi-mi na penda wewe." (Vriend, ek het jou lief/hou van jou) Tref dit, borrel die swarte dadelik van die vreugde en spraaksamheid. In London en Parys het ek met my



geradbraakte Swahili die mooi taal gepraat dat dit bars.

Nou, soos reeds gesê, die woord "Kilimanjaro" beteken "gees van die berg." Met 'n mooier en waardiger naam kon die hoogste berg in Afrika seker nooit vereer geword het nie. Baie mense het my al gevra: "Waarom bestyg jy herhaaldelik sulke hoë berge? Wat besiel bergklimmers om hulleself, koue en hoogte ten spyt, daar "doer" bo die wolke só te laat martel?" Sonder om bygelowig te wees, is my antwoord altyd: "Njarro roep my." En dan volg my wedervraag: "Waarom slaan die psalmis sy oë op na die berge? En waarom kom sy hulp van God uit die hoogte?" Ek kan maar net bely: Die ware bergklimmer word besiel met 'n

dryfkrug wat nie aards is nie. Die drang is nou net eenmaal in hom.

In die gryse verlede het Kiliminjaro twee magtige, aktiewe kraters gehad, en hulle was eens veel hoër as vandag, maar hulle interessante verlede kan nie nou hier ingepas word nie. Die twee kraterkruine, tans morsdood, heet Kibo en Mawenzi. Die Wadjagga, een van die landbouerstamme aan

die laer hange en voet van die kolossale berg, het natuurlik destyds nie sneeu geken of in die tropie daarvoor 'n woord besit nie. Hulle het toe maar die ewigsneeubedekte koepelkruin in sy helder "grysheid" vraend betrags en hom kortweg "wit" genoem. In hulle taal is wit "kibo". En so het Kibo sy naam

gekry. Mawenzi, die tweede kruin, wat veel hoër as Kibo was toe hulle nog aktief vuurwolke en sonhete lawa uitgeblaas het, het homself met gloeiende woede vernietig en ontplof en is vandag 'n oorblyfsel van 'n rotsagtige stuk kraterwal betreklik laer as Kibo. Omdat Mawenzi sy sneeublad na sneeustorms nie kon behou nie, weens sy donker, loodregte wande, het die Wadjagga hom, in teenstelling met wit, sommer net swart genoem. In hulle taal is swart "mawenzi" en so het die angs-wekkende, naakte stuk kraterwal sy naam Mawenzi gekry.

Die Masai was deur die eue genadelose heersers van die vlaktes en het die plaaslike swart stamme om Kilimanjaro en Meru teen die hange van hierdie twee hoë berge in die bosse vasgepen. Die stryd-

**Peters hut 1927**



lustige Masai moeranis het die "veragte" landbouers met die skerpste van hulle gevreesde assegaaie uit die vlaktes geweer en verwilder. Dit geld vir alle indringers van waar ookal. Ten einde hulle manlikheid te toon, het die Masai moeranis bloedige strooptogte uitgevoer teen al wat leef en adem heef, insluitende die eerste Europeane, sowel as die Masai se ewe bloed-dorstige viand, die leeu-troppe wat hulle nie deur die tweebene laat intimideer het nie.

Dis insiggewend om te ondek hoe baie fonteine, spruite en selfs riviere, hoog teen die landbousoom van die oerwoud, vandag nog met beskrywende Masai name vereer word, al is die Masai, veral sedert die koms van die Europeërs en hulle regerings, sowat 'n eeu gelede beperk tot die veeteeltvlaktes. Daar was tog tye, hoofsaaklik gedurende verwoestende droogtes, dat die Masai, ter wille van hulle verswakte veetroppe, die

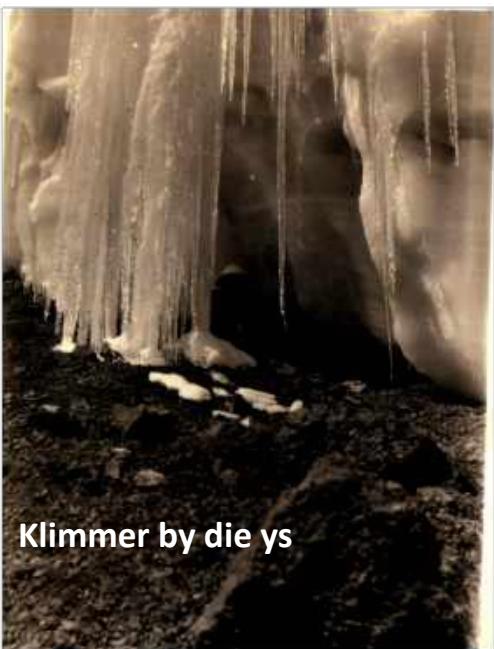
bergbewoners se gebiede keer op keer opnuut binnegedring het ten einde hulle reg op hulle oeroue suipings te handhaaf. Kom die reëns dan weer en die vlaktes word opnuut groen, trek die Masai, wat geen landbouer of arbeider is of ooit wil word nie, terug na sy geliefde vlaktes om as beweeglike nomade met sy vee agter water en groen weiding aan te verskuiwe, nes die wild dit doen. Vir sy gerief in sy hutte of daarbuite prakseer hy geen katel of bank of tafel nie. Hy maak geen rak of stoel nie. Hy koop ook geen meubels hoegenaamd nie, want hy begeer dit nie. Sy transportgeriewe strek nie verder as sy vrou se kop of haar sterk nek en skouers nie. Wat te veel en te swaar word vir die vroue om te vervoer, word op donkies gelaai waarvan elke kraal meer as genoeg besit. Toe ek hulle nog besoek het, het hulle geen motors, motorfietse of selfs gewone fietse besit nie. Wel het hulle begin gebruik maak van ander man se transportbusse en dit volgepak dat die Afrikaanse spreekwoord gebore is, "so vol soos 'n Masai bus maar altyd nog plek vir een".

Die Masai is in die reel bruin, en sy velkleur word versterk met die rooi-erige klei waarmee hy sy liggaam smeer en verfraai. Jeugdige Masai skoonhede besit 'n besondere aan-

## Die tas waar almal moes teken, 1927



valigheid sowel as 'n vroulike bou en frisheid wat onwillekerig herinner aan die terugvoer na die vorstelik skoonhede van 'n Farao of Egiptiese priesterlike bloed of adelgeslag. Trouens, die Masai glo vas dat hulle voorvaders deur Egipte suidwaarts beweeg het. Moontlik het hulle ook as veeboere in 'n Egiptiese land "Goosen" vertoeuf, weg van die Nyl se landbouers af, wat deur hulle verag is. Dis vandag nog die geval. Deur die vergange, gryse eue het die nomadiese Masai stil en sorg-loos met sy veetroppe suid-



Klimmer by die ys



**Op 'n saal van die berg**

waarts beweeg totdat hy in die ideale, droë vlaktes van Oos-Afrika tot stilstand gekom en wyd daaroor versprei het. Ek sê ideale, droë vlaktes, want die besondere gebied het hom sy identiteit help behou. In teenstelling met ander volke wat gekom en verdwyn het, het die Masai sy voorvaderlike godsdiens, kultuur, tradisies en karakter ongeskonde bewaar.

Sover ek kan oordeel, leef en bestaan die Masai in sy geslotenheid buite die invloedsfeer van beskawings waaraan hy geen trek het nie. Wat meer is, Masailand is syne en geen ander ras kan daar 'n bestaan voer nie. Hy word dus nie bedreig nie! Die drang om fisies verder te vlug ter wille van selfbehoud bestaan dus nie in die Masai se geval nie. Kennelik sorg Engaï vir hom.

In die oë van die Masai is Njaro 'n goeie gees wat Kilimanjaro vereer met sy heilsame maar onsienlike teenwoordigheid. Desondanks inspireer Njaro die Masai nie om hom daarbo te kom besoek nie. Ek ken nie een enkele Masai wat ooit, soos ek, die hoë berg bestyg het nie. So

'n vreemde begeerte sou ongetwyfeld met sy tradisies bots. Hy soek nie na Njaro nie, maar hy soek na God in die hoogte. Trouens, God het aan hulle voorvaders ook op hoë berge verskyn. Dit glo hulle vas. Ook hulle slaan, soos koning Dawid, hulle oë op na die berge. Dan dink hulle ernstig aan God of Mungo of Lengaï. Uit heilige eerbied, net soos die Hebreër, neem hulle ook nooit die allerheiligste naam van God op hulle lippe nie. Of hulle 'n besondere naam vir God het, weet ek nie, want hulle mag die naam mos nie uitspreek nie. Hulle gebruik egter God se naam oorvloedig in ander volke se taal sonder enige gewetenswroeging. Gedurende die Duitse bewind het hulle die word Gott geken. Onder die Engelse was die word God onder hulle gangbaar. In Swahili woord "Mungo" (God) tydig en ontydig deur hulle aangewend. Dit geld natuurlik

alleen as die Masai met Duitsers of Engelse moet kommunikeer ten opsigte van die toevallige gebruik van die Here se naam in Duits of Engels. In sy eie volkstaal besig hy die woord "Lengaï" met vrymoedigheid wanneer ek en hy na God verwys. Daarvoor het die Masai 'n goeie verskoning, want Lengaï beteken eintlik die "Ander Een". Deur van Lengaï — die "Ander Een" — te praat, omseil die Masai dus behendig die godsnaam. By die Masai is dit altyd die "Ander Een en ek". Hierin lê 'n geweldige diep sielkundige en filosofiese waarheid verborge. Per slot van rekening wentel elke mens se lewe en godsdiens om sy eie eensame self en die Ander Een alleen, of hy dit wil erken of nie. Dat ek die verhewe misterie in die eerste instansie by die Masai moes aanvoel, het my diepe bepeinsing besorg. Of die Masai dit presies so besef, is



**Gereed vir bergklim**

te betwyfel, maar sy geloof is in ieder geval intiem en waarlik erg kinderlik. Dit kom eintlik na vore ten tye van krisis en groot gemeenskaplike nood wanneer die vroue – fontein van die aardse lewe – gans begeestig dinge sê en doen op dramatiese en luide, seremoniële wyse. Dit huil en skree en skop stof, en grond en as bedek die hoof.

Die Masai glo in die teken van die besnydenis wat, eienaardig genoeg, die Masai vrou insluit voor haar moontlike huwelik. Ek is by die oudstes buite en wag op die teken van die moeder van so 'n dogter om ons binne te nooi om die geleentheid feestelik te vier met houers bier. Dis 'n dag na die besnydenis. Ons kruip by die lae ingang van die betrokke hut van die Masai gesin in en elkeen word mildelik met bier gestook. Almal is saam met die ouers jolig. Ek ken die

### Bismarck hut



volvasse dogter wat daar toegedek op en onder velle lê. Sy glimlag met inspanning. Ek is altyd bevrees bloedvergiftiging en die dood kan toeslaan, en lê my hand op haar voorkop as seëngebaar. Haar liggaam brand soos vuur en sy moet baie siek voel. Ek maak of ek nie beangs is nie en drink my bier met 'n skietgebed tot die Ander Een om genade.

Dis droog en die reën bly weg. Ons oudstes gaan buite sit en bier drink. Spoedig gesels ons oor die vee wat begin verswak en ly. Die beeste wat die Masai so lief het, is sy lewe. In die begin het Lengaï beeste aan die Masai gegee om op te pas. Hy is God se veewagter. Hy pas die diere goed op, maar Lengaï moet sorg vir water, reën en gras. Daarsonder volg die dood. Daarom is gras en reën vir die Masai ook Lengaï. Dit mag nie vir 'n Christen snaaks klink nie. By ons is God dan onder meer Lig

en Lewe. By die Masai is Lengaï 'n persoon wat oral kan sien en hoor wat gebeur. 'n Paar dae na die bierdrinkery is Lekoenga, my ryk buurman, by ons in die tent. Ons skuil teen die reën wat soos emmersvol water uit die hemel neerstort. Die vlakte is daar so gelyk soos 'n speel en die water kan, gelukkig vir die weiveld, nie wegloei nie. Die bodem is bedek met polle-polle voedingsryke gras. Later is die polle toe onder die water en dit giet nog steeds. Nog later stoot die water by die tent in; en ons huis se dak is nog nie op nie. Ons hardloop deur die enkeldiep water om skuiling te soek in die kombi. Maar ons is so opgewonde dat ons luid en aanhouwend jubel en praat oor die gietende storm. Lekoenga sit egter dikbek met 'n strak gesig en sê nie 'n dooie woord nie. Dis eienaardig, maar ons vermoed glad geen onraad nie. Skielik spreek hy ons sterk aan en sê ons moet

Die eerste groep klimmers



Draers in die 1930s



basta so jubel en blymoedig gesels, want netnou hoor en sien Lengaï dat ons uitgelate bly is en begin hy dink ons is tevrede. Dan laat hy die reën ophou. Ons gesigte het toe ook plotseling stuurs geraak. So het ons Lengaï mooitjies om die bos gelei en hy het vir dae en dae laat reën en reën. Toe ons later by Le-koenga se kraal aandoen, lag hy van oor tot oor en prys die Here. Hy het ook bevel gegee dat al die vroue en kinders, sowel as al sy klomp skoonouers en besoekers, moet feesvier en dans. Die droogte was verby. Melk en bier en vet skaapvleis was volop, en beesbloed ook. Die Masai se beeste word gereeld bloedgelaat. Bloed vorm 'n deel van sy voedsel.

Die enigste aktiewe vulkaan wat ek in Oos-Afrika bestyg het, ontbrand so elke een of twee dekades. Honderde kilometer daarvandaan kan 'n mens snags die bloedrooi flitse soos swaarweerblitse die hemel sien inklief uit die kokende vul-

kaankrater met sy gloeiende stroom lawa wat na die nabyleeë sodameer toe vloeи, heel angswakkend en dreigend. Dan stuur die Masai lewende slagoffers teen die berg uit ten einde Lengaï oor hulle volksondes tot versoening en bedaring te beweeg.

Weerlose vroue en kinders met belaaide donkies strompel dan die berg uit, waar gras hoog groei en daar geen lewe is nie. Want daar is geen water, buiten kristalhelder springfonteintjies wat so brak is soos die Dooie See en totaal onbruikbaar. Ek onthou nog die skok toe ek vol vreugde kniel om my dors te les en terugsteier weens die soutstding wat ek ooit in my ganse lewe geproe het. Die safari-soenoffers keer nooit weer terug nie. Waar normaalweg nooit eens 'n voëltjie te sien is nie, kan nikis lewe sonder water nie. Die soenoffers sterf weens dors, uit-

putting en ontwatering voordat een van hulle ooit die gloeiende kraterwal bereik. Die lug word ook verstikkend as gevolg van die rook en as wat uit die vurige vulkaanwolke aarde toe stuif. Trouens, die Masai verskuif onmiddelik met alles wat hy besit kilometers verder van die berg af, want die vulkaanas gaan lê dik oor die weivelde wat baie later, na afspoeling deur swaar reënbuie, opnuut bewei kan word waar dit nie reeds deur brande verwoes is nie. Die vee bewei buitendien die geweldige hoë en stokkerige gras teen die ongemaklike steil berg nooit nie. Omdat die realistiese Masai Lengai se kastydende hand in die klein maar magtige, vingeralleen berg duidelik gewaar, noem hy hom Oldonyo Lengaï of die berg van God. Die Masai ken die Swahili woord "kilima" goed, maar in sy eie gebied praat hy van 'n berg met sy eie word — Oldonyo. Die Masai is taalbewus, talvas en baie trots, soos die dapper Batawe van die Laaglande gedurende ons eerste eeu van die Christelike jaartelling.

Die Masai glo met trots net in sy eiendomlike besit. Hy vermeng met geen ander nasie of kultuur nie. Hy beoefen die besnydenis maar nie op babas of jong kinders nie. Hy het sy minderheid "Fariseërs" wat in ons taal in die opstanding glo en sy

meerderheid "Sadduseërs wat nie daarin deel of glo nie. Maar anders as by die Hebreër is dit nie die adel nie, maar die plebs, wat die Sadduseërs is.

In die ou tyd het die Masai tydens plaaslike vyandighede met buurstamme alle manlike vyande uitgewis, maar die mooiste en welgeskape vroumense as buit geroof, en tuis ten huwelik uitgegee na hulle as hubare en rasegte Masai's ingelyf is. Gewone ondertrouery was uit die bose.

Nog die Duitse nog die Engelse beskawing of hulle vroomste sendelinge kon die Masai se leefwyse verander. Die Masai is verbasend lief vir alle soorte medisyne – pille, salwe en drinkgoed – en enige sendeling se gratis vooraad is altyd meer as welkom, maar vir sy geestelike medisyne het hulle geen tyd of oor gehad nie. Ek het geen Masai geken wat Christen of Mohammedaan geword het nie.

Die Masai het 'n hoë IK en ek het van een gehoor wat, seker van staatsweë opgelei, na 'n Britse universiteit gestuur is en met 'n meestergraad teruggekeer het huis toe. Daar het hy dadelik sy Europese mondering onmiddellik verruil vir die leefstyl waarmee hy grootgeword het. Wyle dr R. Reuch, my lewenslange vriend, wat as Lutherse sendeling onder andere ook onder die Wameru

gearbei het, het soms met sy vragmotor, belaai met medisyne, Masaikrale tot diep in Masailand gaan besoek om hulle, sonder sigbare sukses, te bearbei. Die medisyne was maar sy gebruiklike lokaas om kontak te vorm. Voor al die Masai's wat altyd by so 'n geleentheid spraaksam saamdrom, daag die MA geleerde dr Reuch tromp op uit en sê brutal – dis nou onder oorsese invloed: "Ek gee jou God net drie minute tyd om my hier plat te slaan, anders bestaan hy nie en trap jy hier weg."

### **Dr Reuch was 'n dapper klein mannetjie maar is uit die veld geslaan deur die reus van 'n Masai.**

Maar voordat Reuch nog kon antwoord, spring die Wameru ouerling vorentoe en skel: "Ek sal nie nog wag vir God se engele om jou plat te moker nie. Ek sal sommer die ou sakie self hier afhandel." Met een kragtige vuishou moker hy die MA plat en pootuit. "Glo julle nou in God?" roep hy uit. Die Masai's kraai soos hulle lag en spot. "Gooi hom vir die 'shatani', " skree die mokerhouslaner, en die Masai's sleep hom weg.

Die Masai sal sy lewe gee vir 'n knippie snuif. Maar geen tabak-

blaar het nog ooit sterk genoeg snuif gelewer wat 'n Masaineus of kies bevredig het nie. Ek het moeg geword vir die gesanik om sterker snuif en toe 'n fynge- maalde, gedroogde knippie rissies en fyn peper by die snuif gevoeg. Ek het die mengsel eers self beproef en dit was soos vuur in my neus. Opreg, soos 'n Langenhoven se prokureur, hou ek my wonderskstrak vir my kritiese Masaineuse om te snuif. 'n Niesepidemie bars los en die oë water dat die vlieë padgee. Ek staan krom soos ek ook maksimumskote nies en na asem soek. Masailand is in beroering, want al wat leef en adem heef proes en nies dat die berge antwoord gee. Het ek die dosis veels te sterk gemeng? Ek begin die woordryke reaksies vrees. Maar met huilende fonteinoë en trane wat oor die wange stroom, kom die eerstes wat asem skep na my toe en lag begeestig. Die snuif is "kali" (sterk). Maar hulle wil meer hê. Ek moet baie van hierdie geweldige sterk snuif bring. Ek belowe dat dit sal geskied, maar dis "ulaya" (oorsese) snuif. En baie volmane moet op- en ondergaan voordat ons 'n nuwe voorraad kan verwag. Hoe dit sy, vir die eerste maal in my lewe het ek waarlik vergenoegde Masais gesien.

Die Masai skinder nie van ander Masais nie en die polisie en speurders staan altyd magteloos



**'n Gids op Kilimanjaro**

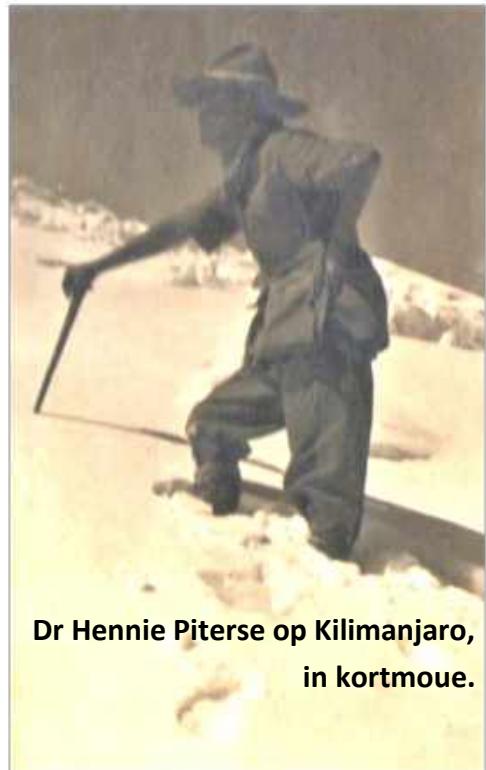
voor geslote lippe. Hy praat net as jy hom met die voldonge waarheid konfronteer en hy dit ook so insien. Tog vertel Willie de Beer my die vrouens skinder soms van mekaar, seker maar uit jaloesie. Maar waaroor kan een Masaidame nou oor 'n ander skinder? Hulle strooise is almal eenders. Al die gebreide velle lyk dieselfde. Almal sit op die grond en eet met die hand. En hulle is almal ook ander mans se slaapge-sellinne. Dis iets heel natuurliks by die nasie, veral as die mans ander kraale besoek of besoek ontvang. Die mans stap ure en dae ver om gewigtige sakebesoeke af te lê en word met oop arms ontvang. Wat nie as immoreel gereken word nie, sal ook nie oor geskinder word nie. Ek sê toe vir Willie: "Kyk man, ek kan aan nik op dees aarde dink waарoor 'n Masaivrou kan kwaadsteek nie." Nou woon hulle in die

blakende hitte van die tropiese son sonder moderne koelkaste, en hulle bewaar hulle kosbare koeimelk in groot, lang kalbasse. Die vars melk word spoedig dik en suur. Dis natuurlik en almal daar hou van melk of vars of suur, maar ou melk gee later aan die kalbas 'n reuk af en die kalbasse moet gedurig gereinig word. As 'n slagoffer haar kom kry, lê die storie die wêreld vol dat haar kalbasse stink. Dis 'n doodsonde en ook gruwelike laster. Jou goeie naam, jou hoë reputasie, is meteen daarmee heen. En wat meer is — die skinderbek en napraters is oombliklik morsdood. As die verontwaardigde oudstes begin soek na die skinderbekke, weet die sondaresse skielik van geen sout of water nie. Ja die duiwel loop met sagte tred ook in Masai kraale rond en dra geen kraakskoene nie. Hoe dit sy, die shatini of duiwel is bomenslik subtel: Wie sou nou ooit gedink het aan stink kalbashouers? Nouja, die ganse kraal se goeie reputasie was by baie kraale ook op die spel, en toe die oudstes, manne en vroue, begin ondersoek instel, het al wat leef en adem heef al hulle kalbasse na die naaste water kilometres daarvandaan geneem en die groot spoel-en-skropproses het begin. Die leë, droë kalbashouers is deeglik met die skerp rook van brandende plante, alleen aan die Masai bekend, van

binne en buite behandel. Kyk, 'n Masai vrou is baie verdraagsaam, maar van onnetheid moet niemand haar beskuldig nie, want dan is daar pêre. ✎



**'n Duitse meisie wat ook geklim het.**



**Dr Hennie Piterse op Kilimanjaro, in kortmoue.**

## KENYA: WE WERE MEANT TO BE BORN

By Rina De Klerk-Weyer. 2020

**M**y father, Hennie Willemse, and my mother, Marthina Booyens, got married in Eldoret, Kenya, on the 12th of December 1953. This is their story.

**It all started when my maternal grandfather, Willie Booyens, decided to move with his family to Kenia.**

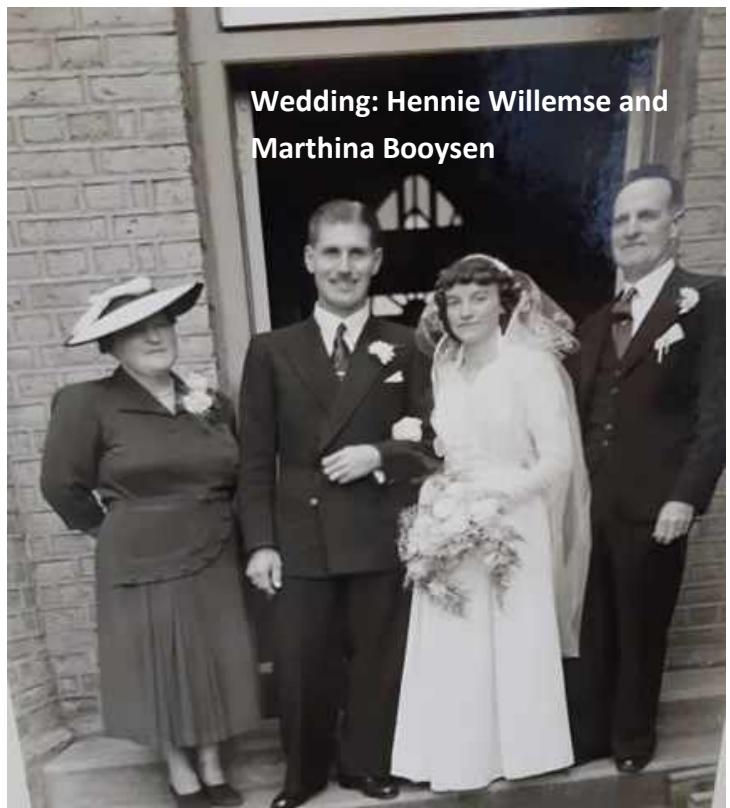
My mother and father knew each other since primary school, and my dad always said that he knew she was ‘the one’. When her father moved to Kenya, taking his family with him, my father decided that he missed her too much. He followed her to Kenya. They got married in December and in January he was called to serve in the army against the Mau Mau. In that time that he had an experience that had a deep impact on him, and he often told us the story. It was the practice in the army, in order to trap the Mau Mau, to send soldiers from one side of a wooded area to chase them out. Another section of soldiers waited on the other side, to serve as “stops” when they rushed out. (I know this practice seems hard to comprehend; we need to see it in terms of the specific time and circumstances).

**Once, when my father and other soldiers went into the forest, the soldiers waiting on the other side heard a noise. They started shooting.**

Once, when my father and other soldiers went into the forest, the soldiers waiting on the other side heard a noise. They started shooting. My father ducked behind a tree, and that tree that saved his



The Booyens family



life. He sent up a flare to tell the stops to cease firing. Later they found many bullet holes on the opposite side of the tree. Hence my initial statement: We were meant to be born.

Therefore Kenya will always have a special place in the my parents' four daughters hearts. Just before my dad died in 2016, one of the most precious things he shared was how thankful he was that God had saved him that day in Kenya. 



Mau Mau weapons



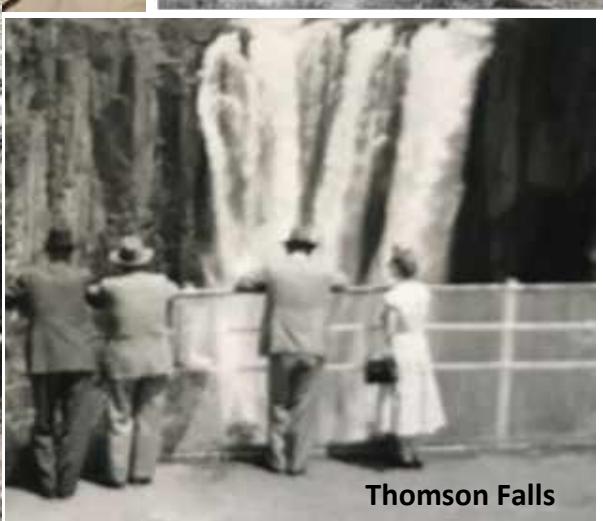
Moustaches!



At the Equator



Some of the soldiers



Thomson Falls

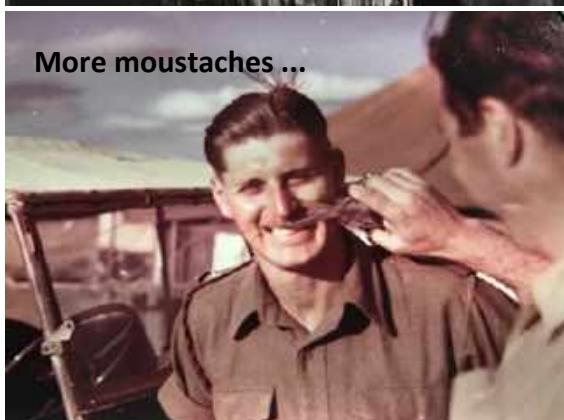
Stuck in the mud ...



Soldiers'  
Camp canteen



School function at Van Riebeeckskool, Thomson Falls



More moustaches ...

## KENIA GET-TOGETHER 2019 KENYA SAAMTREK

