

THE HISTORY OF ADELAIDE

While London lay in the first shimmers of dawn on June 20, 1837, the "good old King," William IV, breathed his last (as his head rested on Queen Adelaide's shoulder) in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. History has recorded that Queen Adelaide's attention to her afflicted consort "had been unremitting; for twelve days she did not take off her clothes, but was constantly in the sick chamber, engaged in kind offices and administering consolation".

"Nelson, Adelaide, Wellington, these have been the *great* mournings of England in this century. Yes, Goodness, Duty, Sacrifice — these are the qualities that England honours", wrote Frederick Robertson to a friend in 1852, two years after the Queen's death.

In far away Cape of Good Hope, Captain Alexander Boswell Armstrong formed a large camp in February, 1834, along a bend on the Koonap River with the magnificent peaks of the 8000 ft. high Great Winterberg range as its background, which he called Fort Adelaide in honour of the gracious Queen, Adelaide.

An Irishman by birth, Capt. Armstrong arrived in the Cape Colony as a young boy of 10 years old with his 1820 Settler parents in Parker's Irish Party. Most of his useful life he spent on the Frontier where he gave unstinted service as a military man, and then served the public as the magistrate of Oudtshoorn before he was transferred to Bathurst, serving in the same capacity.

The reason for the erection of Fort Adelaide had its roots in the unsatisfactory results of the Kat River experiment up to the end of 1833. A commencement with the new Settlement at the Kat River for Hottentots was made in 1829 when the first contingent of Hottentots took possession of some of the land there. These, for the most part, consisted of the better class of people of Theopolis, Bethelsdorp, and discharged soldiers of the Cape Hottentots Corps. The principle of the organisation was that of the "British Settlement in Albany, namely, the formation of locations under heads of parties". The head of such a party had to be a Hottentot capable of controlling his own people; and no magistrate was to be appointed. It was indeed a bold experiment which entertained great fears and doubts as to its success amongst the Colonists. Soon these fears obtained definite shape as many of the idlest and worst class of Hottentot vagrants filtrated into the Settlement; and the annoying 50th Ordinance ruled that they could not be arrested for vagrancy or compelled to work.

Furthermore, it was found that these Hottentots were soon joined by Natives, thus introducing an element of grave danger.

The Colonists began to experience the frequent depredations of Tyali's (brother of Sandile, Maqomo, and Anta: the four sons of Gaika) tribe, living in the Mancazana Valley, not far from the Kat River Settlement. It became, therefore, necessary to erect a military post in that vicinity, with an officer in command who would have the general superintendence

of the Settlement. This post became known as Eland's Post (where the present town of Seymour has since arisen) with Capt. A. B. Armstrong of the Cape Mounted Rifles in command. Colonel Thomas F. Wade, who administered the Government of the Cape during the interregnum from August, 1833, until Sir Benjamin D'Urban arrived in January, 1834, also appointed Capt. Armstrong in the last month of 1833, as Justice of the Peace for Albany and Somerset. This appointment, as well as the establishment of Eland's Post, contributed largely to the peace and welfare of the Settlement as Capt. Armstrong had seen years of service on the Frontier, and he was of a firm yet kind and considerable disposition.

As the numerous depredations of which Tyali's people (and said to have been abetted by him) were guilty, continued, it was decided in September, 1833, to root him out. In clearing the Ceded Territory of Tyali it was discovered that his brother Maqomo had completely re-established himself in it. As far as Maqomo himself was concerned, there was no ground for complaint. But, situated so near to Tyali, Maqomo's people joined them in their forays, and the authorities found it essential to expel them also. Maqomo was embittered.

A quiet ferment followed in Kaffirland. Maqomo and Tyali were brooding over their expulsion, and their chafing was fanned when Eno ("the greatest scoundrel in Kaffirland") reproved Tyali for his submission to the troops in such a tame manner, while promising him in the meantime assistance to regain the Mancazana.

The traders in Kaffirland were the first to report the signs of a coming storm and the hostile attitude of the Natives towards them when they showed tendencies of robbing with violence their wagons and shanties which answered for shops. In 1834 Mr. Purcell's store, situated on the Kei Heights in Hints's country, was attacked and Mr. Purcell murdered. Four days later when another trader, Mr. Newth, was badly wounded, the traders and farmers petitioned the Governor to give them military protection. Once again Capt. Armstrong of the C.M.R. was ordered to the scene of unrest, and a start was made with the building of Fort Adelaide in February, 1834. It was a timely act. Ten months later the 6th Kaffir War flared up throughout Kaffirland.

From these turbulent years Adelaide takes its origin. Out of the ruins of Fort Adelaide there grew the town of Adelaide on the Koonap River.

Early records show that the Koonap River area was most suitable for sheep and cattle farming, and when the Glen Lynden parish was established in 1829 it was found that about 2,000 people occupied the Scottish Settlement on the Baviaan's River and the big area of the Koonap.

Until 1838 the Koonap River farmers regularly met for religious services amongst the ruins of Fort Adelaide. On the 11th of April, 1838, the laying of the corner stone of Adelaide's first church was performed by Capt. A. B. Armstrong, Resident Justice of the Peace for Fort Beaufort. On this occasion the Rev. Alexander at Glen Lynden from 1833 to 1856,

and the Rev. George Morgan of Somerset East officiated. A section of this church still exists today and forms part of the diningroom of the Piet Retief Technical High School at Adelaide.

At this time, too, it was thought and said that a township in the vicinity of the church should be laid out. A plan which only materialised after the arrival in Adelaide of the Rev. G. W. Stegmann in 1858 as minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. An immediate start was made with the building of a new church and parsonage after which, the church council conducted the laying out of the township as well as the selling of plots for which almost £11,500 was realised. (It was not before 1855 that the Cape Parliament finally decided that the 7,000 morgen of ground it had given in 1830 to Glen Lynden, the Koonap and Mancazana for church purposes was to be finally declared church property.)

In the booklet, *Adelaide Almost a Century, 1861 to 1958* and compiled by Mr. W. de S. Hendrikz, it is stated that on the 19th September, 1859, a meeting of the owners of houses in Adelaide was held with the object of adopting municipal regulations so as to declare Adelaide a municipality. Differences between the house owners and the church council arose, however, which delayed this scheme by two years. It was only after the church council abandoned its right to the property on which this "rapidly rising village" grew that a committee was formed in March, 1861, with instructions to draw up rules regarding a municipality. The members of this committee were Dr. Brown, Messrs. P. P. Wright, Lee, Orchard and C. Pohl. The Municipality of Adelaide was born on the 10th of April, 1861, when at a public meeting 69 municipal regulations were unanimously adopted, and it was agreed that five Commissioners and four Ward Masters be elected.

A visitor to Adelaide in 1861 expressed amazement at the growth of the village. Two years ago, he said, there were only a few houses and a church, while now between 100 — 200 houses were occupied and many nearly ready for occupation. The visitor went on to say that should this flourishing condition continue, Adelaide would become a bigger place than Fort Beaufort, while Bedford was already dwarfed by the new village. It may be added that the rivalry between Bedford (older than Adelaide by 7 years) and Adelaide in the race as to which village would grow the biggest in the shortest time drew forth amusing, if not sharp, correspondence in the press between the champions of the two villages.

Building operations continued uninterrupted, and nobody thought of leaving Adelaide after the Dutch Reformed Church was completed. In March, 1862, the Anglican Church was opened by the Bishop of Grahamstown, Dr. Henry Cotterill; and the Presbyterian Church was nearing completion. At the time the members of the Presbyterian Church were awaiting the arrival from Scotland of their minister the Rev. Peter Davidson whose little boy of 5 years old was murdered in the Mancazana in the 'seventies. The story is still told of how Mr. Davidson went into the witness box to plead for the life of the Native who was brought to trial 15 years later for this murder, and that Mr. Davidson got the death

sentence commuted to that of life imprisonment.

A building for a school was also completed, and the first school was conducted by the Rev. Aldred in 1864. Mr. Aldred became the Rector of the Anglican Church in Adelaide from 1867 to 1881.

Just before it was decided at a meeting of ratepayers in March, 1862, to have a Town Hall built as "Adelaide is determined to keep pace with the times" news reached the town that the man who must be regarded as the founder of Adelaide, Capt. A. B. Armstrong, had died in King William's Town while on a visit there to his son, Colonel John Armstrong.

Fort Armstrong, near the Amatola Range with Gaika's Kop, the Kat Berg, and the Eland's Berg in the distance, serves as an honourable landmark in that its tower surrounded with the ruins of old buildings, perpetuates the name of the brave founder of Adelaide.

It is especially encouraging that in the programme for a week of celebrations to mark the centenary of Adelaide which started on October 8, 1961, provision was made for Capt. Armstrong's role during the formative years of Adelaide and the years thereafter, and that his name will receive its rightful place in the list of names to be honoured and remembered in the history of Adelaide.

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