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These notes were compiled from rough notes made by my Father ALBERT JAMES ALEXANDER, who died at Johannesburg, June 1921, aged 85 years. My Mother died a year later aged 86. Both are buried at the Brixton Cemetery.

My Father was the third son of Frederick Augustus Alexander (born 1806 - died 1863), Captain of militia on the Island of St. Helena, while Napoleon was a prisoner on the Island. His military Commission, together with a large silver medal, especially struck by the French Government to commemorate the removal of the last remains of Napoleon from the Island, and presented to the Officers immediately concerned therein, are in my possession and must pass to my eldest son Raymond Albert Alexander, now of Pretoria.

The Alexander family herein referred to, are as follows;

Henry, Eliza, Frederick, Albert, Bertha, Thomas, John, Louisa, John Charles, Charles, Arthur and Alice - eight Boys and four Girls.

They were the children of Frederick Augustus and Louisa (born Broadway) his wife, who died and was buried at Potchefstroom 24th January, 1887, aged 84 years. Henry and Frederick left St. Helena July, 1853 for Cape Town.

Records of St. Helena show that these families originally came through the East India Company's employ as Yeomen or Planters, arriving on the Island about 1674. (See St Helena Records, 2nd Edition, by Hudson Janich, Esq., C.M.G., covering the period 1657-1834, printed and published by B.Grant.) Abstracts from these records are hereby appended.*

* In the year 1674 the Ship William and Thomas arrived with 37 names, including Richard Alexander, Henry Francis Mathew Pouncey. (Note; I assume Francis-Plain, St Helena, was probably named after this man)

"In 1709 John Alexander {clerk of the Council} was dismissed by Governor Roberts and his Brother Richard Alexander sent for and taxed with scandal by saying the Governor would ruin them all - ordered to go off the Island by the next outward-bound ship."

(Note; I can find no further trace of Richard after this, but John remains.)

A note in Council records: 'This harsh treatment of Edwards and Hoskinson occasioned subsequent trouble.'**

John Alexander was apparently reinstated in the Councils of the Island by Governor Boucher, who succeeded Roberts.

A Census taken in 1716 of inhabitants was as follows;

55 men,

70 women,

23 Youths and

23 Maidens.

* I can find no records with these papers. I can only assume that they were lost at some time Clive Alexander

** I have no idea who these two are. Clive Alexander

These do not include Soldiers or Blacks.

John Alexander and Jonathan Doveton are mentioned amongst the principal inhabitants.

In 1754 reference is made to one Capt. Alexander.

In 1776 reference is made to one George Alexander being fined 40/- for beating one of his slaves.”

(Note: This takes us practically to the date of Frederick Augustus Alexander’s birth at Coffee Grove in 1806.)

Note; These Extracts, in my opinion, establish a reasonable record of how the Alexanders were employees of the East India Company and drew pensions which were paid to the widows and Orphans of the Employees of the Company, first by the British Government and later by the South African Government - my Grandmother and also my Mother’s sister Aunt Carrie (Caroline Pritchard) being recipients of pensions up to the time of their deaths in Potchefstroom and Natal, respectively.

My Father ALBERT JAMES ALEXANDER, the third Son and fourth offspring of Frederick Augustus Alexander and Louisa (his wife) was born on the Island on the 4th February, 1838, and married Mary Pritchard, also of St. Helena, and a Daughter of Stephen Fraser Pritchard on the 18th February, 1862. Soon after his marriage, his Father died.

The elder portion of the family were or had already migrated to the Cape and Australia.

Albert, after building his own house and home at the Bay House, was forced by the circumstances of that period to leave his home and take charge of his Father’s Estate and affairs at their old home at Coffee Grove, where I was born on the 27th January, 1865.

The offspring from this Union are as follows:

Florence (who died at Kimberley 16th April, 1878),

Fraser Frederick,

Percy Torbet

Mabel Caroline

Albert William

(all born at St. Helena),

Ethel and Lilly (the last two born in South Africa.)

My Father left the Island on the 29th January, 1872 and was followed by my Mother and four children on the 4th October, 1872, arriving at the New Rush (which is now Kimberly) on the 21st November, 1872, after a seven days' journey from Cape Town, costing £107:10:0, for transport by the Inland Transport Company.

The early days of the Diamond Fields were evidently not fancied as a suitable place of residence, so my Father secured a large tent and we trekked to the banks of the Vaal River, where he engaged in farming on Hayward’s Farm from 1872 to 1875, erecting a steam pumping plant, probably one of the first steam engines to work in these parts (1874). A really severe hail storm completed the ruination of this early farming venture.

He left the Farm on 20th February, 1875, and I can well remember assisting to build our new home in the West End of Kimberley, which consisted of two rooms roofed with braak, a clay of a salty nature which seemed to keep both sun and rain out - if properly constructed.

After a few years of debris washing, etc. my Father started work on the Bultfontein Diamond Mine, working on tribute from 1877 to 1881, when apparently the call of the veldt again prevailed and we migrated to a Farm in the Barkley West District, where I learned to ride and shoot and enjoyed an open-air life on our Farm Donderboschfontein from 1881 to 1885, when we trekked to Marico, arriving on our hired farm near Zeerust on 29th September, 1885.

The above notes and dates are taken from my Father's records, which end here.

As I am 20 years old now and quite able to fend for myself, I shall endeavour to write a few more facts, which must suffice.

After organising a gang of Reapers we soon earned sufficient wheat to carry us through until the next grain season.

The Gold fever was just then starting, and from the East came news of Gold being found in the Barberton Area, whilst from the West came news that a certain Abraham Kleinmans, with whom I had left a flock of sheep, had cleared out and was making for New Scotland. In chasing him across the Free State, where I came up with him near Vredefort, I learned of Gold being found on the Vaal River. I verified the occurrence of same, and, selling my sheep and banking the money at Potchefstroom, I returned home and soon after made arrangements to go Gold digging. My Father and I travelled in a small spring wagon and oxen and made for. Paardekraal (Krugersdorp) (probably July or August 1886, see Rand Daily Mail 22/9/1906). On arrival we learned that Uncle Fred had gone to Kimberley to raise money for the development of what is now the Rand. After spending a week or two at the camp of the Potchefstroom Syndicate and assisting to open up and crush 25 tons of main reef at Struben's Hill, Witpoortjie (a 5-stamp mill driven by water power), my Father and I decided to go home for Xmas (1886), and make all arrangements on the Farm. While there, Mr. A.E.Pellatt, who was farming on the Malmani, came along with a piece of quartz and asked if I could tell him what this yellow metal was in the rock. Gold of course. Large pieces of the rock forming the foundation of old Joseph Fritz's dwelling house and Kraal was revealed on investigation next day near Ottoshoop and the Drift. This was the first gold found on the Malmani.

We lost no time in getting back to the Witwatersrand, where we found the Fields had been proclaimed, and in my humble opinion all or most of the best ground had been taken up, so I made tracks for Venterskroon, on the banks of the Vaal River, there I spent 1887-1889, three of the best years of my life, prospecting for the Main Reef, or a reef at least as good. I still think the banket beds of the Witwatersrand will be found to extend over this area.

Our family had moved to Potchefstroom during October, 1887, where my Grandmother died about a year later.

I failed to make good during the boom days, 1888-1889 and after a few months on the Rietfontein High Veldt I decided to settle down on the Rand and learn what there was to learn of mining for Gold on the Rand.

Securing a job on the May Consolidated in 1891, I soon worked my way up until in 1892-1893 the McArthur Forest started their cyanide process. They erected a plant near Germiston station (where the Premier Milling Plant now is) and I was detailed by the Manager of the May Consolidated G.M.Co., to mine the first rock required for treatment, being not less than 13 dwts* per ton.

This was my introduction to the Cyanide Process, which I have persistently studied since then.

Leaving the May Consolidated in 1893, I became Cyanide Manager of the New Heriot G.M.Co., in 1894-1895.

On the 16th December, 1895, I married Mary, (born Gooch) at Pretoria. Ella was born on 9th December, 1896 at the New Heriot, and on March 30th, I was promoted to take charge of The Ferreira Deep Cyanide Plant, which was about to start work with Tube Mills as an improved method of crushing the ore. I introduced large lumps of Reef into the tube mills in place of importing pebbles from the Coast of France and Italy.

* A pennyweight (abbreviated dwt) is a unit of mass that is equal to 24 grains, $\frac{1}{20}$ of a troy ounce, $\frac{1}{240}$ of a troy pound, approximately 0.054857 avoirdupois ounce and exactly 1.55517384 grammes. (Inserted by Clive Alexander 2012)

Raymond was born on the 29th July, 1899 on the Ferreira Deep, and Baptised in the small Church of England, City and Suburban Township

Clifford Harry was born 20th February 1904 on the Ferreira Deep G.M.Co Johannesburg

The Boer War was brewing and Mary had to take Ella and Raymond away to Durban, where I joined them at the outbreak of hostilities in October, 1899.

After a couple of months with my family in Durban, I was asked by Col. Bottomley to join the 2nd I.L.H.* , and accepted the post of 1st Lieutenant and Transport Officer, serving from the end of December, 1899 to 20th January, 1902, being appointed Chief of Transport and Brevet Captain rank at Piet Retief in March, 1901, which position I resigned in January, 1902, in order to take over my job at the Ferreira Deep.

The Boers had worked the line but experienced difficulty in the extraction from the Cyanide process, and I found roughly 2,000 ozs. of Gold in the Solutions when I returned.

(See Testimonials from the New Heriot G.M.Co., dated 11th April, 1899 and also from the Ferreira Deep G.M.Co., 1899-1906.) **

I left the Ferreira Deep to take over the Cyanide Management of the Crown Deep G.M.Co., where I was appointed Chief Reduction Officer about 1907-1908, and when this Company was amalgamated into the Group now known as the Crown Mines in June, 1909, I was appointed Chief Reduction Officer controlling a Crushing Plant and Gold Recovery Works - probably the largest in the World - crushing 157000 tons per month and employing a white Staff of over 200.

(See Testimonials covering 1909-1911). **

In March, 1911 I severed my connection with the Corner House.

After looking round Rhodesia I decided to settle in Benoni early in 1912_ where I joined Mr. F. A. Alexander*** , and founded the Contracting Firm of Alexander & Company**** , Dump Contractors, Waste Rock and Slimes Dams, including in my activities the construction of a Storm water Conservation Dam, known as the "Alexander Dam", immediately below the President Dam on the Geduld Proprietary Mines, Ltd.

* I.L.H. Imperial Light Horse

** These testimonials have unfortunately not survived. The search continues.

*** His cousin, Frederick Augustus, son of Thomas Francois.

**** Today known as Fraser F. Alexander, Johannesburg.