

# **Townshend Vignette Postcards of British Bechuanaland**

Keith Brodovcky

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO BRITISH BECHUANALAND**

The town of Vryburg (Vrijburg in Dutch), originally named Endvogelfontein, founded in 1882 and declared the capital of the Republic of Stellaland, under the leadership of elected President, GJ van Niekerk.

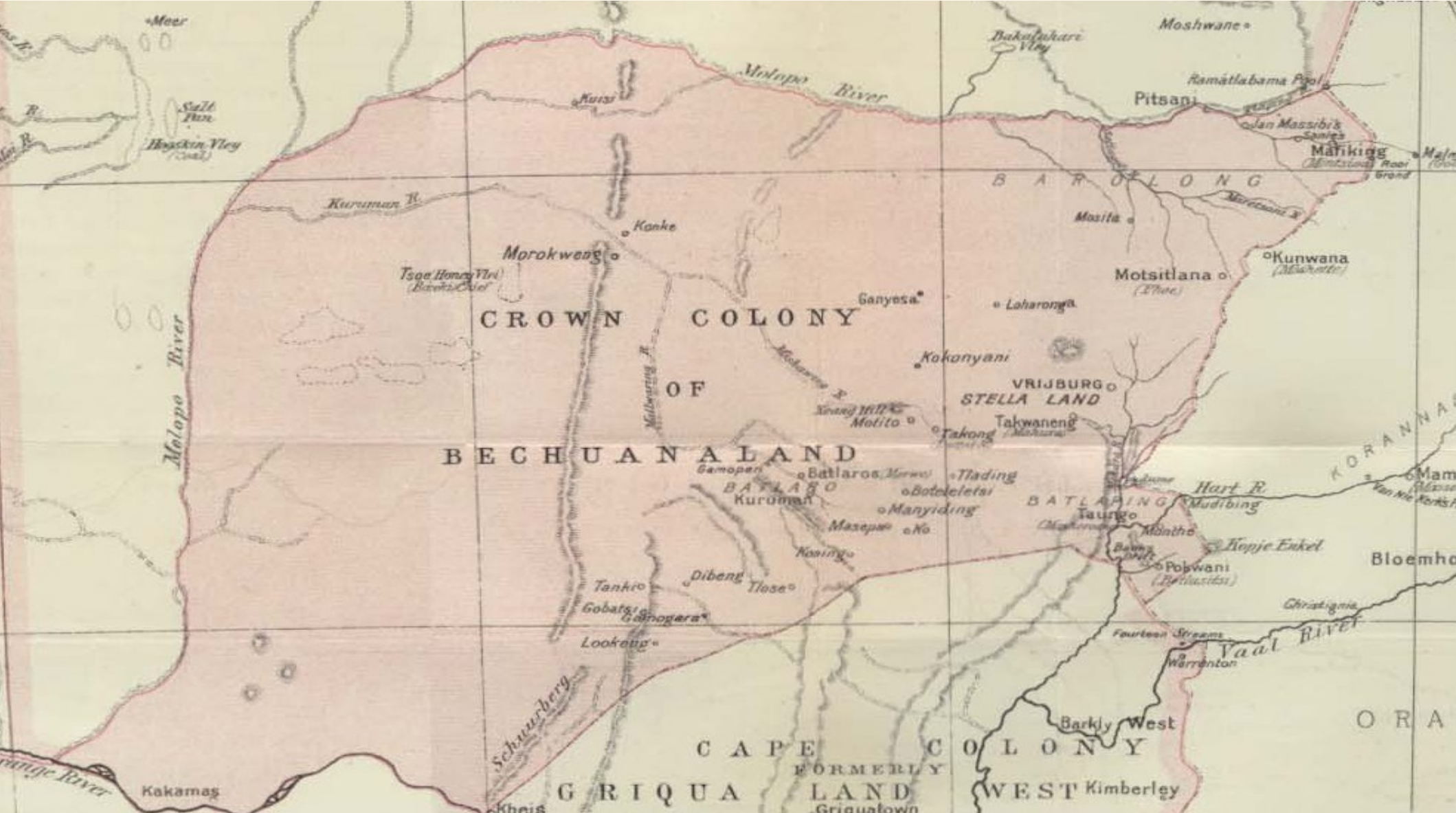
In 1883 the State of Goshen and the Stellaland Republic merged to form the United States of Stellaland.

At the behest of the British Government, Sir Charles Warren, with a force of 4,000 men, was despatched to capture the 2 Boer Republics. On 7 February 1885 Vryburg was occupied, and by 8 April 1885 Warren reported that the republics had collapsed and were under British control.

On 30 September 1885, Stellaland, Goshen and other territories to the south of the Molopo and Nossob rivers (excluding Griqualand West) were constituted as the Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland.

British Bechuanaland was annexed to the Cape Colony on 16 November 1895.

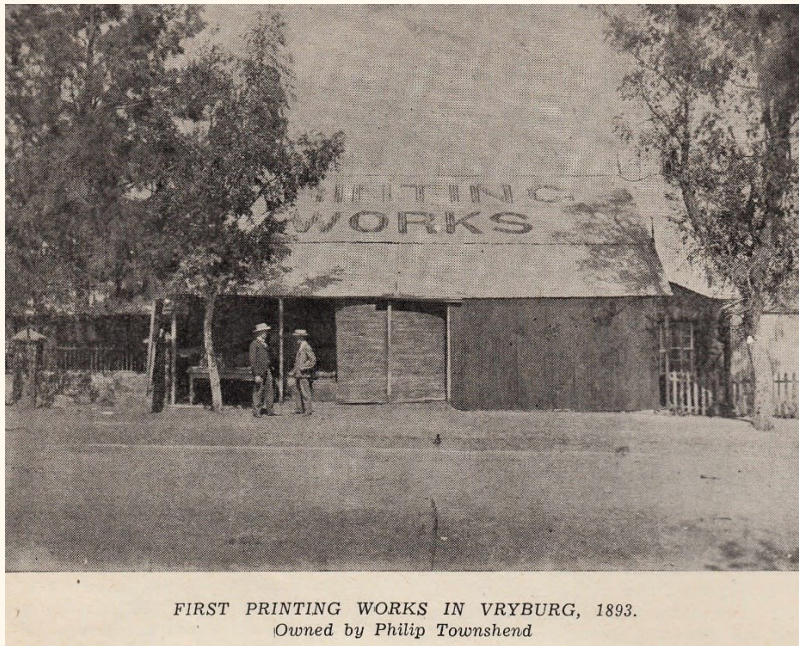
**CROWN COLONY OF BRITISH BECHUANALAND: 30 SEPTEMBER 1885 - 16 NOVEMBER 1895**



## TOWNSHEND & SON, VRYBURG.



W.W. Townshend



FIRST PRINTING WORKS IN VRYBURG, 1893.  
Owned by Philip Townshend

In 1885, Walter Waters Townshend and his son, Philip Townshend, arrived in Vryburg, British Bechuanaland, and set up the Colony's first permanent printing works. During the period 1885-1888, the firm functioned primarily as a contractor to the colonial administration responsible for official forms, legislative proclamations and government notices. On 1 June 1888 the first issue of the **Bechuanaland News and Vryburg Advertiser**, was published. The Bechuanaland News served both Vryburg and Mafeking.

In 1898, the printing business, encompassing the Bechuanaland News, was sold to A.J. McNally who in turn sold the business to Christian Zinn in 1901.

In November 1895, British Bechuanaland was annexed to the Cape Colony and Townshend & Son's contract with the colonial administration ended.

## P. TOWNSHEND & Co, VRYBURG.

In 1888, P. Townshend & Co. were awarded a contract to print surcharges on British Bechuanaland postage & revenue stamps and overprint "British Bechuanaland" on Cape of Good Hope postage stamps.

The early issues of the Bechuanaland Protectorate utilised British Bechuanaland postage & revenue stamps, which were overprinted "Protectorate" and in some cases surcharged, by P. Townshend & Co., who also surcharged and overprinted "Bechuanaland Protectorate" on Cape of Good Hope postage stamps.



# TOWNSHEND & SON, MAFEKING.

By 1899, Arthur Walter Townshend together with his father Walter Waters and his brother Philip, had established a printing works in Mafeking. It appears that the Townshend's and their respective families were in Mafeking for the duration of the siege.

On 20 May 1899, the first issue of the ***Mafeking Mail and Protectorate Guardian*** was published. The final regular issue, number 22, was published on 14 October 1899, coinciding with the first day of the siege of Mafeking. After a brief "Special Siege Edition" on 21 October, the paper transitioned into a condensed format on 1 November, under the name ***The Mafeking Mail Special Siege Slips***. The siege slips were famously subtitled "Issued Daily, Shells Permitting". G.N.H. Whales served as editor and manager of the Special Siege Slips.

During the siege, Townshend & Son, Mafeking were also responsible for surcharging various Cape of Good Hope, British Bechuanaland and Bechuanaland Protectorate stamps with the words "Mafeking Besieged". Townshend & Son were responsible for the perforations and gumming of the photographic sheets of the locally produced Bicycle & Goodyear "blue" stamps.



## TOWNSHEND & SON, VRYBURG POSTCARDS

The Runner Post No. 12 of September 1988 illustrated eleven unused Townshend's vignette postcards. This was followed, some 24 years on, by Brian Fenemore's coverage in the Runner Post Issue No. 82, winter 2011/12, pages 2054 through 2059. A total of 17 postcards were listed and illustrated except for "After Heavy Rains: Vryburg, 1903" which was illustrated in the Runner Post No.12 page 211.

I can now confirm 19 Townshend cards, of which 18 are shown. The elusive "After Heavy Rains: Vryburg, 1903" is not.

When and where the postcards were printed is discussed later.

### Vryburg and Surrounds

1. Market Street Vryburg, 1895.
2. The Trees in Market Street, Vryburg 1900.
3. Vryburg Town Guard: 1900.
4. Memento of War: Burgher Camp, Vryburg.
5. Soldiers' Graves, Vryburg Cemetery.
6. The Hospital, Vryburg.
7. A Glimpse of Vryburg from the South.
8. A Native Wedding: Vryburg Location.
9. Old Post Office Vryburg. *not illustrated in Runner Post No.82*
10. Tiger Kloof, Vryburg: A Picnic Party. *not illustrated in Runner Post No.82*
11. Groot Chwaing Salt Pan: Near Vryburg.
12. After Heavy Rains: Vryburg 1903. **"Not shown"**
13. Vryburg: The Willows

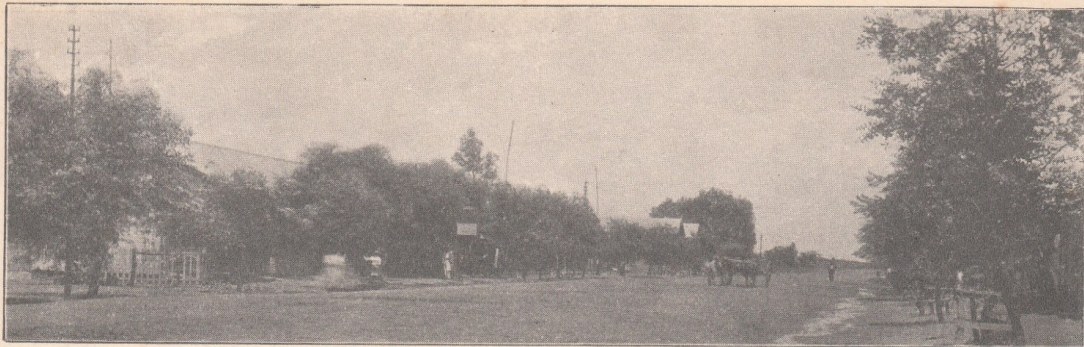
### Kuruman

14. The Garden Walk, Kuruman.
15. A Cape Policeman's Home: Kuruman.

### General

16. Native Huts: A Bechuanaland Snapshot.
17. Crossing the Vaal River.
18. Crossing a "Drift", South Africa.
19. View of the Crocodile River, South Africa.

## MARKET STREET, VRYBURG, 1895.



MARKET STREET, VRYBURG, 1895.

Kind regards to all  
Lustan Sibberd

TOWNSHEND & SON, VRYBURG.

## THE TREES IN MARKET STREET, VRYBURG, 1900.



THE TREES IN MARKET STREET, VRYBURG, 1900.

Doornbult 31/3/1905.  
Dist. Vryburg.  
Kind regards to all. Since obtaining  
"adipose tissue". Bob.

TOWNSHEND & SON, VRYBURG.

Officially named Vryburg on 15 November 1882. By 1884, the town consisted of about 20 houses. The Cape Colony Directory of 1901, describes Vryburg as "A town and railway station on C.G.R., 774 miles from Cape Town, having a Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate. Bank: Standard. P.O., T.O. and M.O.O. Hotels and Churches, Town Hall and Public Library. Population: White 1,500; Black 2,000. The town is the northern terminus of the C.G.R., and the southern terminus of the Rhodesian Railway, which is leased by the C.G.R."

## VRYBURG TOWN GUARD: 1900.



Vryburg was occupied by the Boers during the initial stages of the Boer War. The Boers, supported by some of the local inhabitants, easily took the town with minimal resistance due to weak British military presence. Vryburg, along with the surrounding Stellaland area, was annexed and incorporated into the Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek. In May 1900, British forces recaptured Vryburg and remained in control for the duration of the war. The photograph used for the postcard, was in all likelihood taken after May 1900 and there is a possibility that Philip Townshend is in the photograph.

## VRYBURG VOLUNTEERS AND VRYBURG TOWN GUARD

Members of the Vryburg Volunteers participated in earlier conflicts like the Bechuanaland Campaign of 1896-1897, and were eligible for the **Cape of Good Hope General Service Medal (CGHGS)** with a "Bechuanaland" clasp.

Members of the Vryburg Town Guard served during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). They were eligible for the **Queen's South Africa Medal (QSAM)**, typically with a "Cape Colony" clasp. Approximately 191 QSA medals were awarded to members of the Vryburg Town Guard.



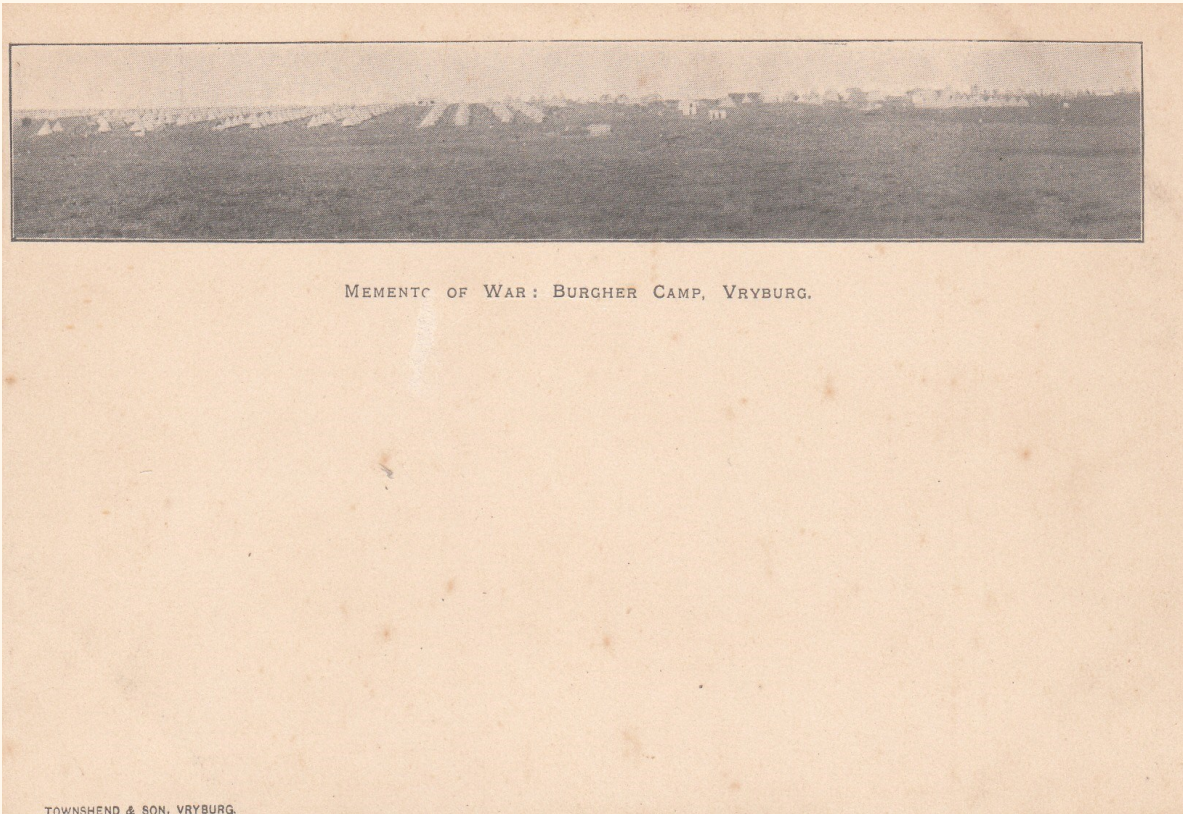
### PHILIP TOWNSHEND'S MEDALS

Philip Townshend held the rank of Sargeant-Major in the Vryburg Volunteers and was awarded the **CGHGS** with Bechuanaland clasp

As a member of the Vryburg Town Guard, with the rank of Captain, he was awarded the **QSAM**.

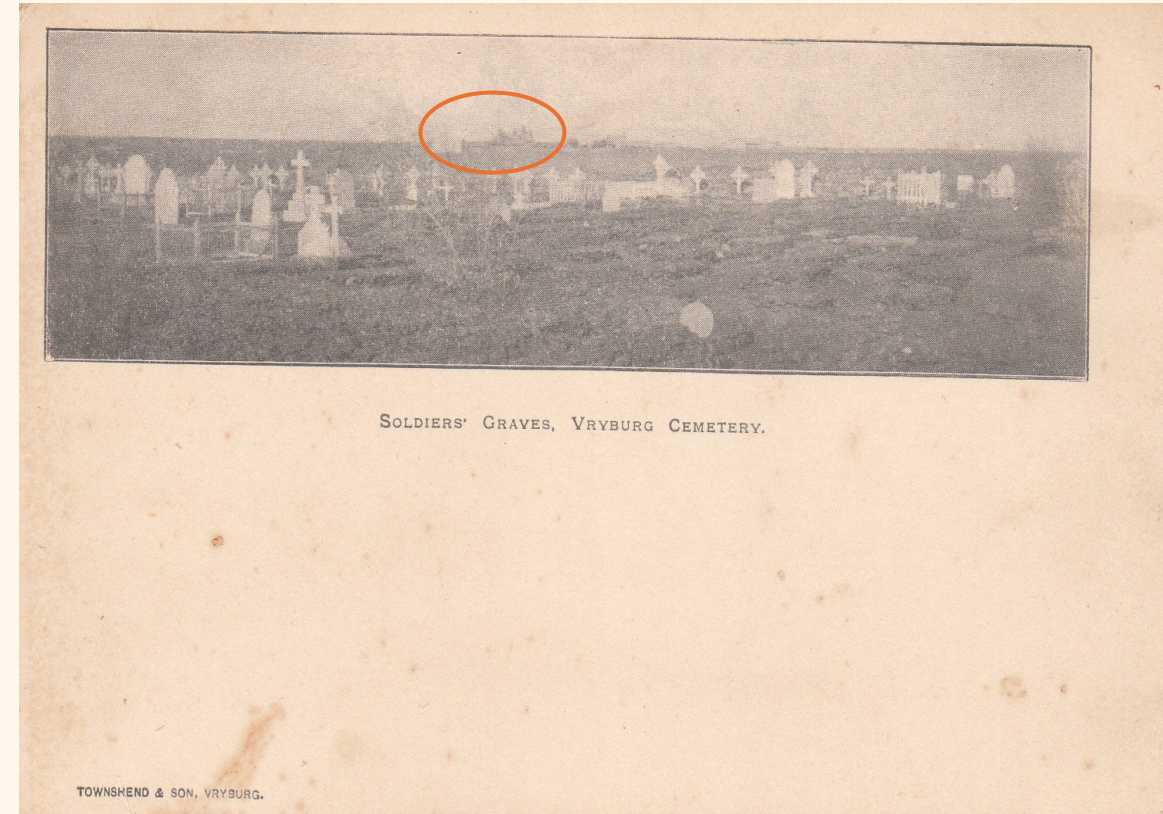


## MOMENTO OF WAR: BURGHER CAMP, VRYBURG.



When the camp was established is unclear. The first reference to its existence appeared in April 1901. At the time it housed 100 whites, 40 “undesirables” and 1061 blacks.

## SOLDIERS' GRAVES, VRYBURG CEMETERY.



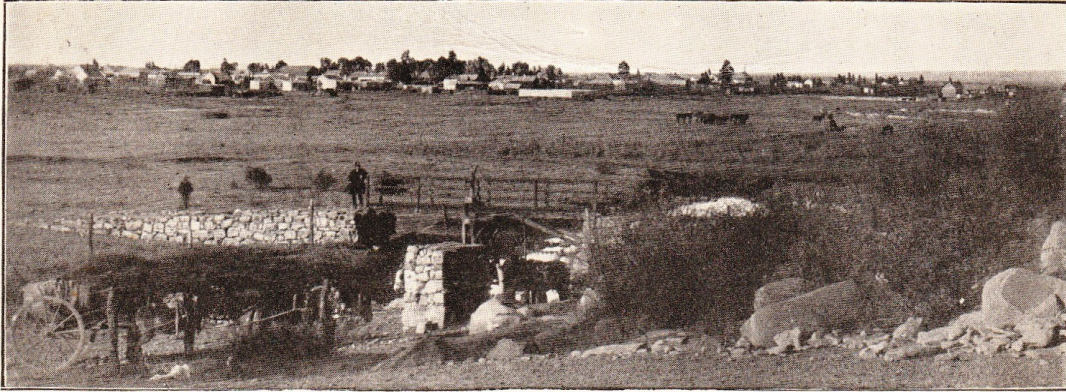
As military action in and around Vryburg during the Boer War was very limited, it is likely that most of the soldiers, who are buried in the cemetery, died due to disease. The hospital can be seen on the horizon, circled in red.

## THE HOSPITAL, VRYBURG.



The hospital's origins can be traced back to a small facility established in 1893. The hospital served Vryburg until 1947 when a new 67 bed hospital was opened.

## A GLIMPSE OF VRYBURG FROM THE SOUTH.



A GLIMPSE OF VRYBURG, FROM THE SOUTH.

3074/05.

Peace all well. Will write next week. Have no snap-shots to send as camera gone wrong. Love to all L.

TOWNSHEND & SON, VRYBURG.

In the foreground stone ramps can be seen which were to facilitate the loading and unloading of livestock and other goods.

## A NATIVE WEDDING: VRYBURG LOCATION.



A NATIVE WEDDING: VRYBURG LOCATION.

Dear Grandma,  
I am very naughty at times. and pull up the beans in Daddy's garden. but I am good sometimes and went to church this morning with Rhoda and Ray ~~and~~ and Shady and barn too. Ray is very naughty. and Rhoda too <sup>at</sup> sometimes. but Daddy loves us all the same. The wind is blowing very hard today. and I think it will rain soon. Auntie is very well. and loves me a lot. she went to see Dennis last week. with love to you and Auntie Cor. I am your <sup>loving</sup> girl Betty.

TOWNSHEND & SON, VRYBURG.

The number of "brides" in white dresses with veils suggest a multiple wedding ceremony.

**OLD POST OFFICE, VRYBURG.  
ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH BY W. KLISSER**



**OLD POST OFFICE, VRYBURG.**



The use of the term "Old" Post Office in the description on the postcard, suggests that at the time of the printing of the postcard, there was a "new" post office.

**OLD POST OFFICE, VRYBURG.  
ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH BY W. KLISSER**



POST OFFICE: P.O.  
MONEY ORDER OFFICE: M.O.O.  
SAVINGS BANK OFFICE

## "NEW" POST OFFICE



Is this the "new" post office? Note no "afdak" on the building on the left. Postcards, depicting Vryburg scenes, photographed by T.D.Ravenscroft, are known dated 1905.

## TIGER KLOOF, VRYBURG: A PICNIC PARTY.



The picnic spot depicted in the postcard is in the kloof near the Tiger Kloof siding. There are close to 100 men, women and children in the photo.

Apparently the name originates from the Dutch "Tiers Kloof" (Tigers Gorge). Dutch settlers used "tier" to refer to any large wild cat, only later differentiating between lions, leopards and cheetahs.

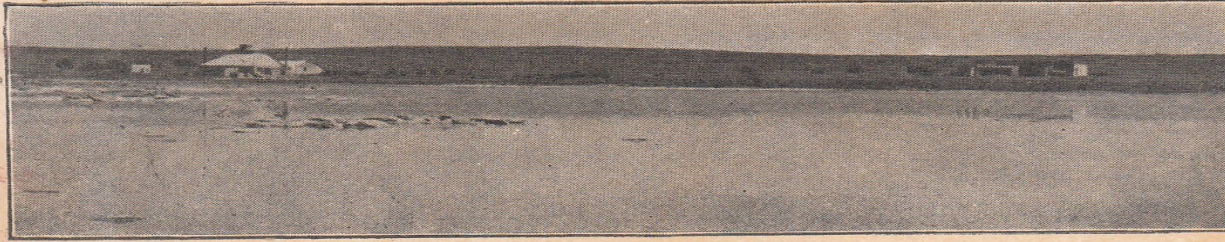
In the Cape Colony Directory of 1901, Tiger Kloof Siding is listed as a siding on the C.G.R., 7 miles south of Vryburg.

When the Moffat Institute at Kuruman, founded by the London Missionary Society, closed, it was re-established as the Tiger Kloof Institute in 1905 at Tiger Kloof Siding.

The London Missionary Society left the school in 1956 in protest against the Bantu Education Act. Tiger Kloof continued to function as a public school until its closure in 1963.

In October 1995 Tiger Kloof school was re-opened. Currently, the Tiger Kloof Combined Institution, catering for learners from pre-primary to grade 12, has 800 students.

## GROOT CHWAING SALT PAN: NEAR VRYBURG.



GROOT CHWAING SALT PAN: NEAR VRYBURG.

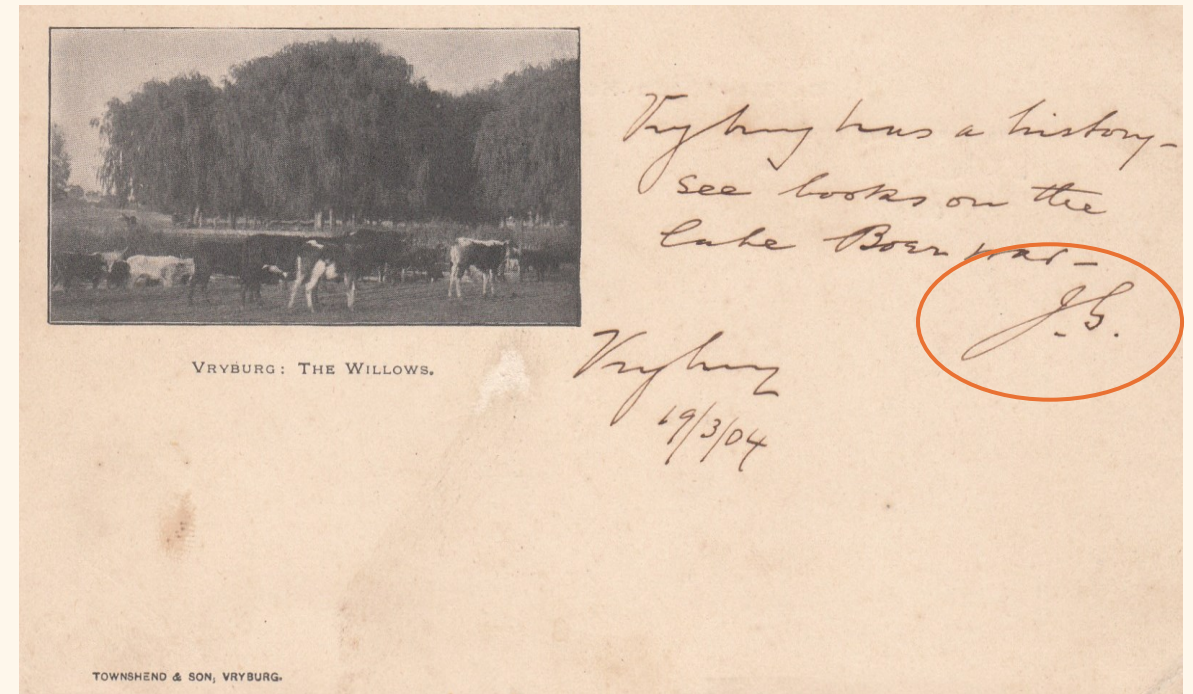
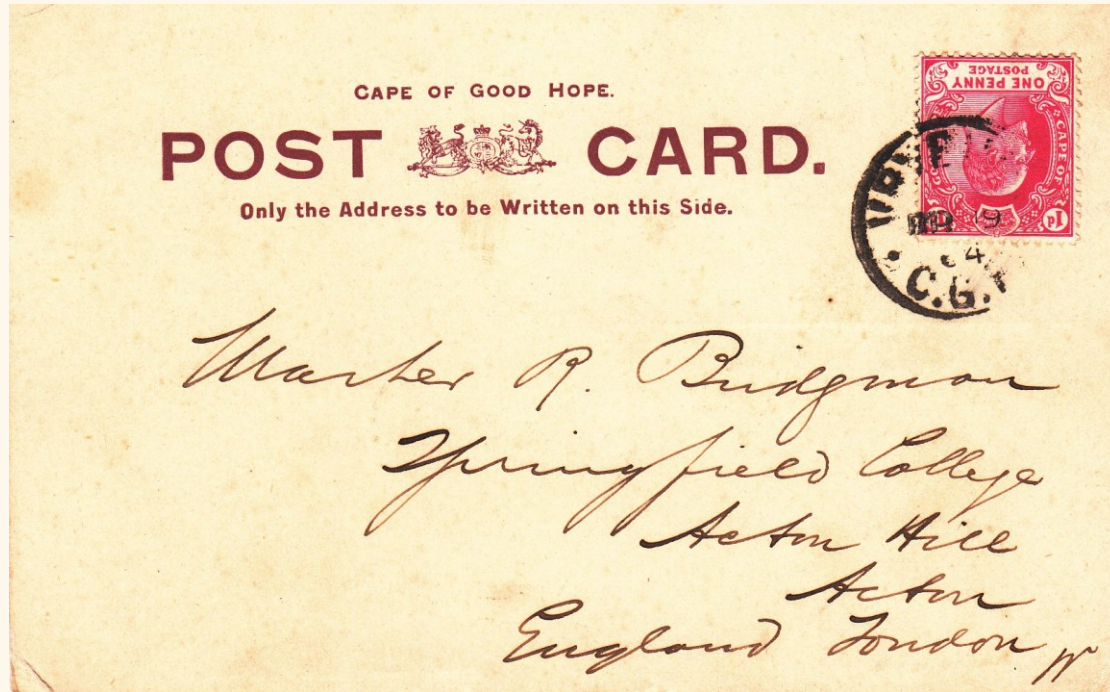
*The Compliments - of the  
Season to you all.  
With love  
G. E. V.*

TOWNSHEND & SON, VRYBURG

The name "Groot Chwaing" is derived from the Dutch "Groot" for large or big and "Chwaing" from Setswana. In Setswana the word for salt is letswai. When forming a locative - that is, a word that indicates a place - speakers add a suffix (often -ng) to the noun. This process yields letswaing (often rendered as Tswaing), which can be understood as "place of salt" or "salt pan".

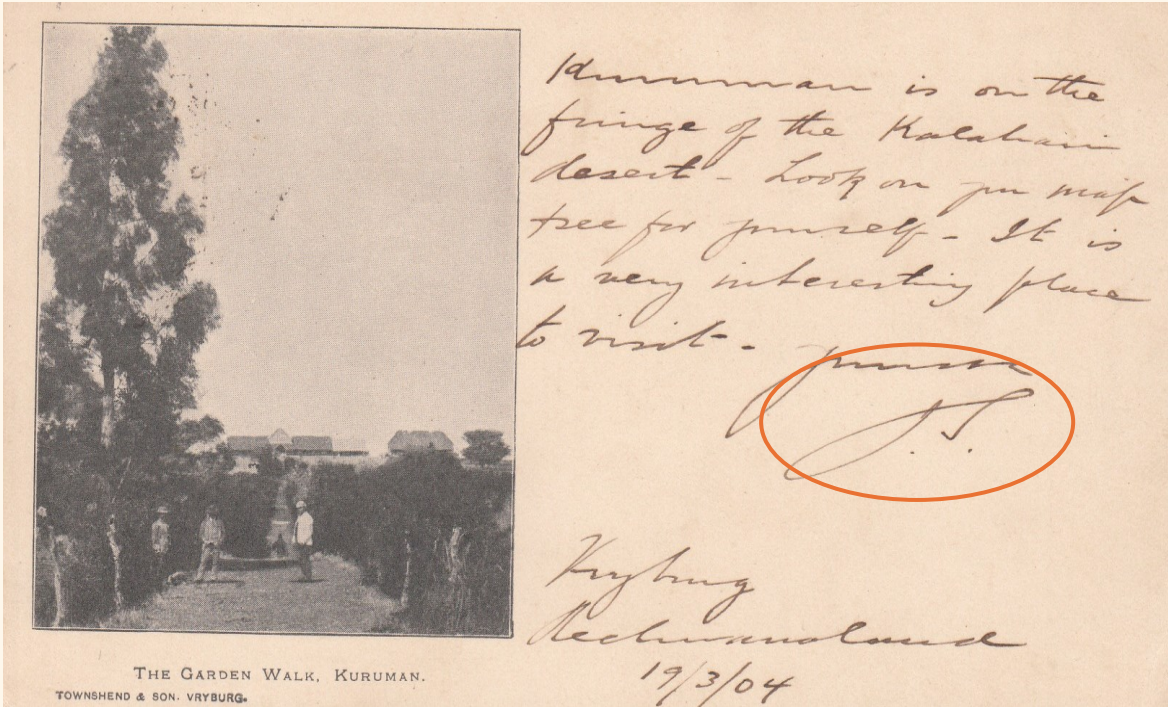
The Cape Colony Directory of 1901 described Groot Chwaing "as a hamlet and P.O., 30 miles north northeast of Vryburg". Groot Chwaing was renamed Kreilspan in 1912, reverted to Groot Chwaing in 1913 and renamed Stella in 1927, its present-day name.

## VRYBURG: THE WILLOWS.



"Vryburg; The Willows" and the 2 postcards, "The Garden Walk, Kuruman" and "A Cape Policemen's Home, Kuruman", which appear on the next slide, are all addressed to "Master R Bridgman, Springfield College, Acton Hill, Acton, London, England". All three postcards are from "JS" and dated 19/3/04. JS are the initials of Joe Symons, who was the postmaster of Macloustie for 9 months in 1892, and subsequently postmaster of Vryburg.

## THE GARDEN WALK, KURUMAN.



## A CAPE POLICEMEN'S HOME.



Kuruman was at first a mission station of the London Missionary Society founded by Robert Moffat in 1821. In 1841, David Livingstone, arrived for his first position as a missionary. It became an area of white settlement and the town was founded in 1885 and incorporated as a municipality in 1916. The town is chiefly known for a local spring "Eye of Kuruman". The Cape Colony Directory of 1901 describes Kuruman as: "A town and mission station on the Kuruman River 98 miles S.W. of Vryburg Station. Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate. P.O., T.O. and M.O.O. Hotel and churches. Population: White 50, Black 500."

## NATIVE HUTS: A BECHUANALAND SNAPSHOT.



NATIVE HUTS: A BECHUANALAND SNAPSHOT.

TOWNSHEND & SON, VRYBURG.

The Native huts as shown in the postcard, would have been common throughout Bechuanaland at that time.

## CROSSING THE VAAL RIVER.



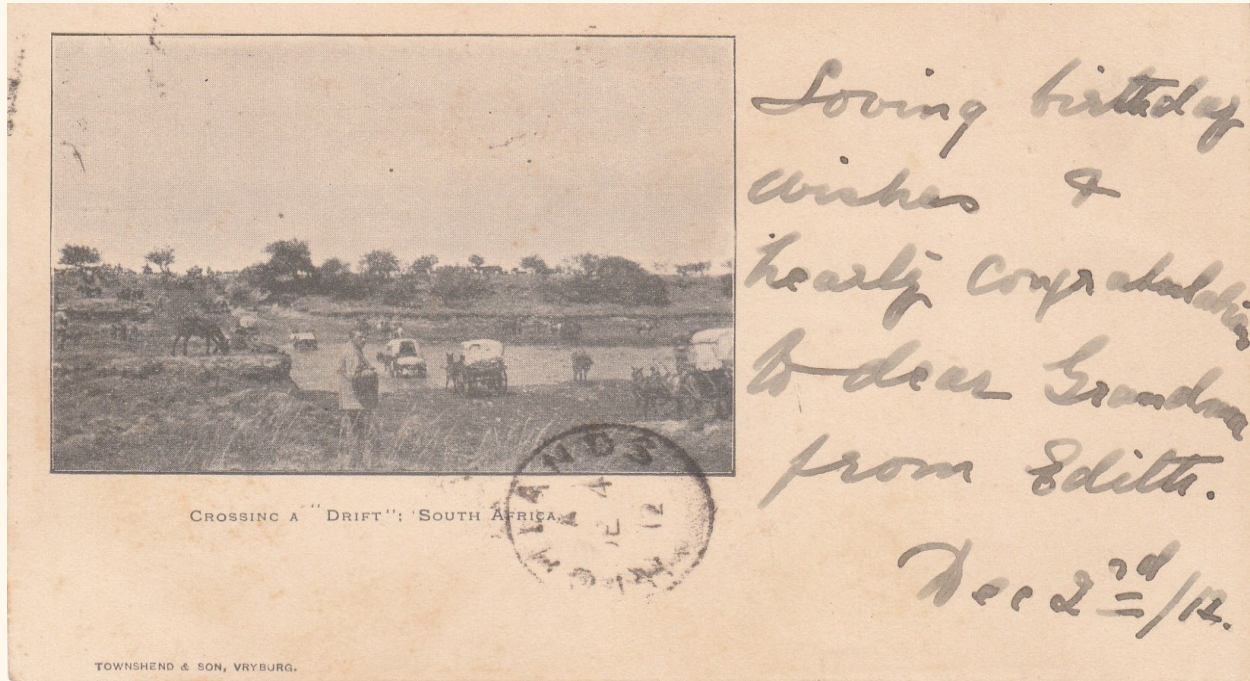
CROSSING THE VAAL RIVER.

TOWNSHEND & SON, VRYBURG.

*Cloudy & calm here  
I hope the sun is ~  
shining, where my  
Sons and their  
mother are today!  
Daddy*

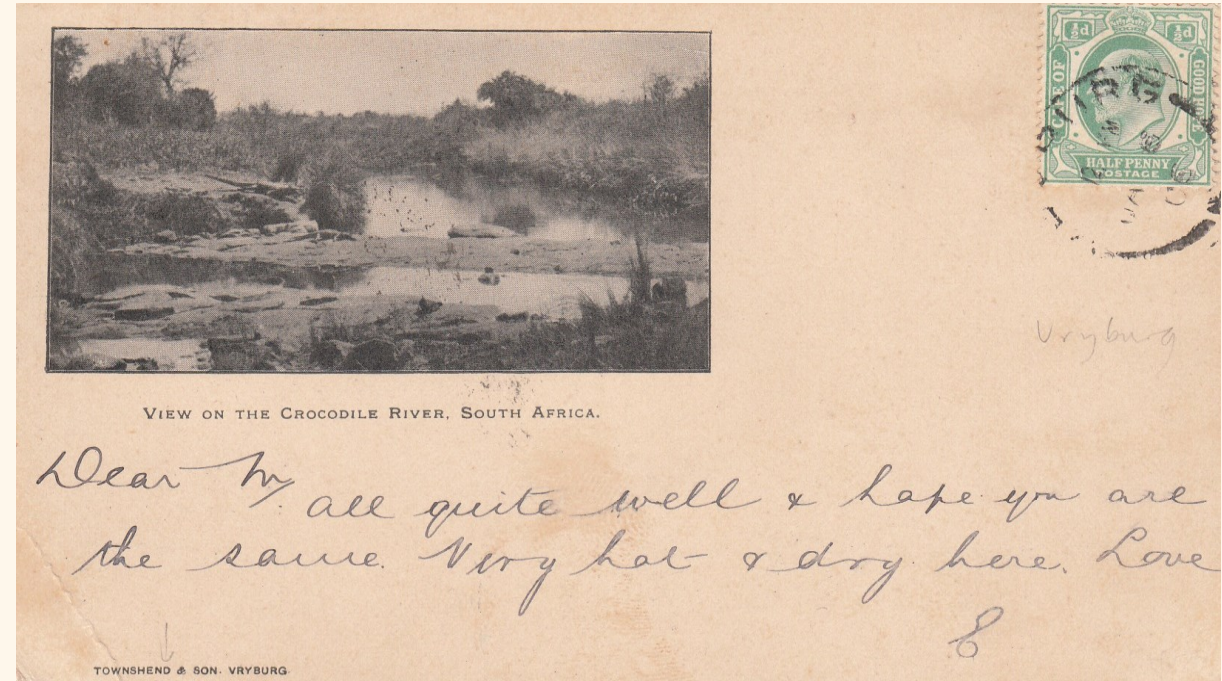
“Crossing the Vaal River” is most likely from the Warrenton / Fourteen Streams area. The railway bridge over the Vaal River at Fourteen Streams was severely damaged during the initial stages of the Boer War.

## CROSSING A "DRIFT": SOUTH AFRICA.



Loving birthday  
wishes &  
heartly congratulations  
to dear Grandma  
from Edith.  
Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>/12.

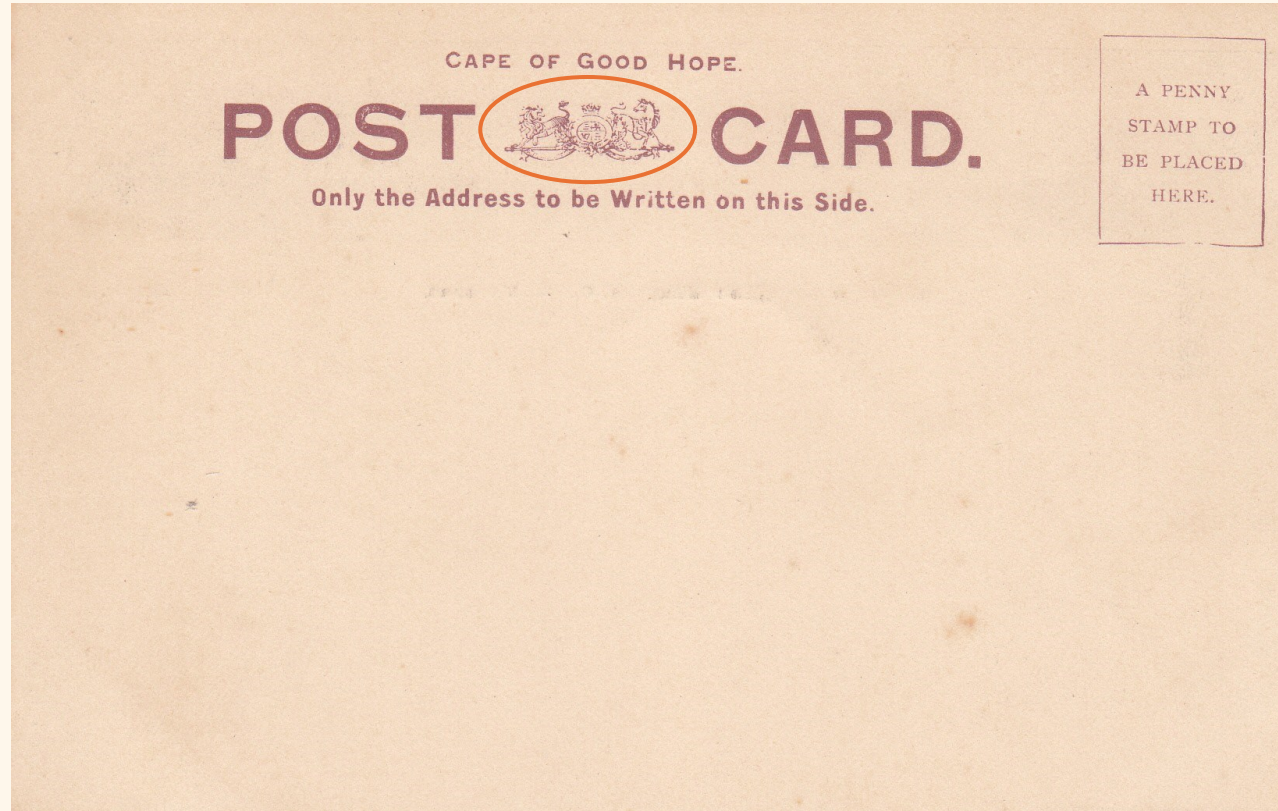
## VIEW OF THE CROCODILE RIVER, SOUTH AFRICA.



Dear M, all quite well & hope you are  
the same. Very hot & dry here. Love  
E

Both postcards refer to scenes in "South Africa"

## REVERSE OF THE TOWNSHEND POSTCARDS



All the Townshend postcards, both unused and used, seen have undivided backs and the same printing on the reverse. It is not known who or what the "Coat of Arms" circled in red, represents.

## **WHEN & WHERE WERE THE TOWNSHEND POSTCARDS PRINTED**

A number of the postcards reflect dates applicable to the photograph: 1895 - Market Street; 1900 - Trees in Market Street; 1900 - Town Guard; 1903 - After Heavy Rains.

The earliest known used postcard is dated 20 Oct (19)03 (Vryburg Town Guard). There are several used postcards dated 1904 and 1905. The latest known used postcard is dated 22 Jun 1927.

Based on the dated photograph postcards and the earliest recorded usage, the postcards were most likely printed in the latter half of 1903.

In 1898 Townshend sold the printing business to A.J. McNelly. The question then arises, did the Townshend family retain printing operations in Vryburg after this date or were the postcards produced overseas or in Mafeking where the family had set up printing operations. It is known that the Townshend family were active in Vryburg up until at least 1903, Walter Waters Townshend served as mayor of Vryburg 1901-1903, and in Mafeking until much later.

HET NOORDEN, ZATERDAG, 5 NOVEMBER 1910.

**W. KLISSER**  
**AFNEMER,**

is tans bereid om portretten te nemen van enig grootte. Vergrotings en kopiëeren tegen

**ZEER BILLIKE PRIJZEN**

Schrijft om Prijslijst of bezoek zijn Studio aan :: ::

**Victoria=Straat, Vrijburg**

W. KLISSER, Afnemer (photographer), advertisement offering photographic services.

**ZOUT! ZOUT! ZOUT!!**

Aan Boeren van Bechuanaland bieden wij tans Zout aan tegen de volgende prijzen:

<b>FIJN GEKOOKT ZOUT</b>	...	per zak	<b>5/6</b>
<b>BESTE GROF ZOUT</b>	...	"	<b>5/6</b>
<b>GOEDE " No. 2</b>	...	"	<b>5/-</b>
<b>VEE ZOUT No. 3</b>	...	"	<b>3/6</b>
<b>VEE ZOUT No. 4</b>	...	"	<b>2/6</b>

Deze prijzen zijn voor kontant. Een afslag van 6d. per zak zal gegeven worden indien eigen zakken verschaft worden. Niemand behoeft bang te wezen dat hij niet geholpen zal worden; wij hebben een grote voorraad op handen.

**A. W. & A. E. FINCHAM,**  
**GROOTCHWAING, Distrikt VRYBURG.**

**Agenten te Vrijburg, BOSHOFF & WINTER.**

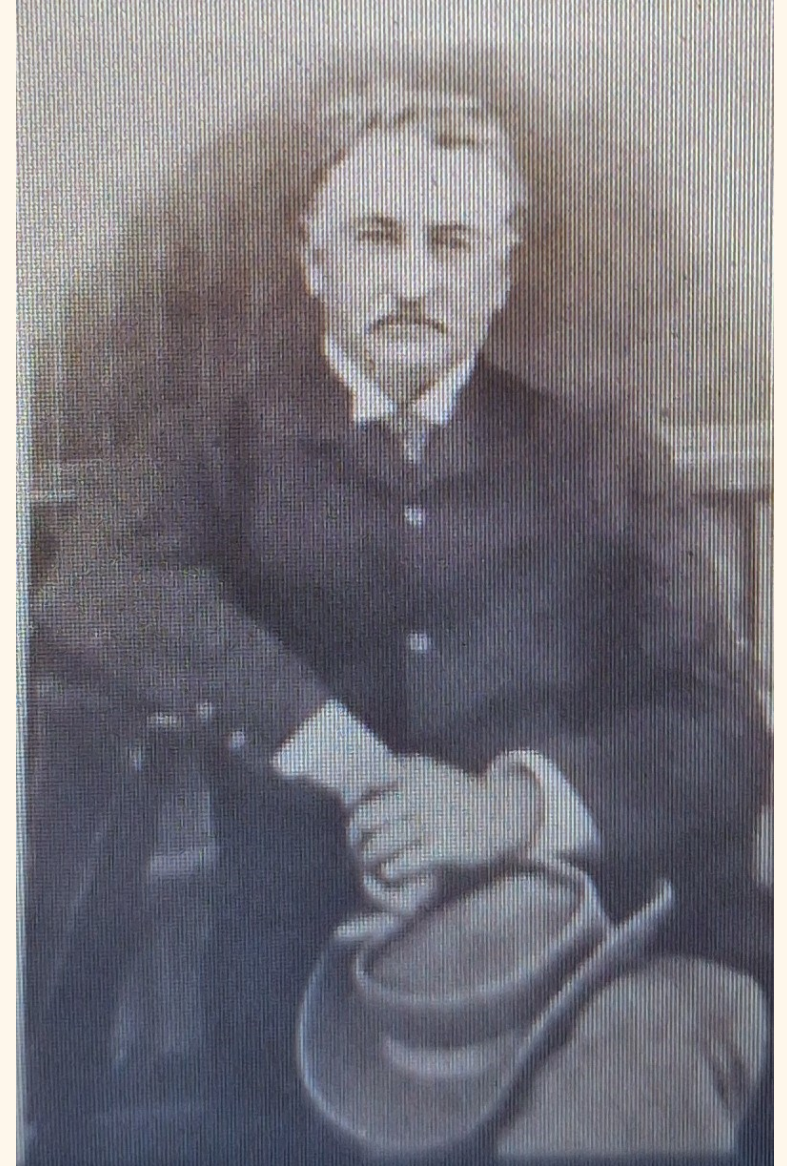
A.W. & A.E. FINCHAM, advertisement offering salt for sale from the Groot Chwaing salt pans.

## CECIL JOHN RHODES

Photograph attributed to W. Klisser, Vryburg

Rt. Hon. Cecil John Rhodes - seated with legs crossed, wide brimmed hat on knee, right elbow leaning on back of chair, full face (recorded in the SA Library Cape Town)

There is a second photograph of Cecil John Rhodes attributable to W. Klisser - "CJ Rhodes sitting on chair" recorded in the Kimberley Africana Library.



## CONCLUSION

### Unanswered questions

- 1) Are the 19 postcards recorded to date the “full” set?
- 2) Were all the postcards produced in the same period?
- 3) Who was/were the photographer(s), post office postcard excluded?
- 4) When were the postcards produced? If the postcards were produced in one period, the earliest known dates on used postcards suggest last quarter of 1903. This would also tie in with the postcard titled “After the Heavy Rains, Vryburg 1903.” Historical records indicate that that the floods took place around 23-24 January 1903.

### Recorded dates for used postcards:

“Vryburg Town Guard, 1900”: 20 Oct 03 (The earliest recorded used card).

Numerous cards dated 1904 including the 3 Symonds postcards shown dated 19/03/04.

“A Glimpse of Vryburg from the South”: 30/4/05

“A Native Wedding: Vryburg Location”: 10 SEP 1905

There are postcards recorded dated 1906, as well as some dated as late as 1912 and 1914.

The latest recorded used postcard is “A Glimpse of Vryburg from the South” bearing Union of South African stamps dated 22 Jun 1927.

In the 1901 Cape Colony Directory, the abbreviations **PO**, **TO**, and **MOO** refer to the different statuses and services available at various postal locations.

- **PO** stands for **Post Office**.
- **TO** stands for **Telegraph Office** (or is an abbreviation for an office with Telegraph services, such as STO for Sub Post Office with Telegraph).
- **MOO** stands for **Money Order Office**, indicating a Post Office where money orders could be sent and received.

## Timeline of the Second Boer War

11<sup>th</sup> October 1899: Ultimatum expired and war officially began.

12<sup>th</sup> October 1899: First action took place at Kraaipan, siding about 50km south of Mafeking.

13<sup>th</sup> October 1899: Siege of Mafeking commenced and lasted till 17<sup>th</sup> May 1900 (217 days).

14<sup>th</sup> October 1899: Siege of Kimberley commenced and lasted till 15<sup>th</sup> February 1900 (124 days).

15<sup>th</sup> October 1899: Cape Police at Vryburg evacuated the town.

16<sup>th</sup> October 1899: Boers entered Vryburg, hoisted the Transvaal flag, declaring the area part of the Boer Republics.

# Townshend Family History

Walter Waters (WW) Townshend was born in England on July 29, 1834 and although he died in England June 27, 1912, he is buried in Cape Town.

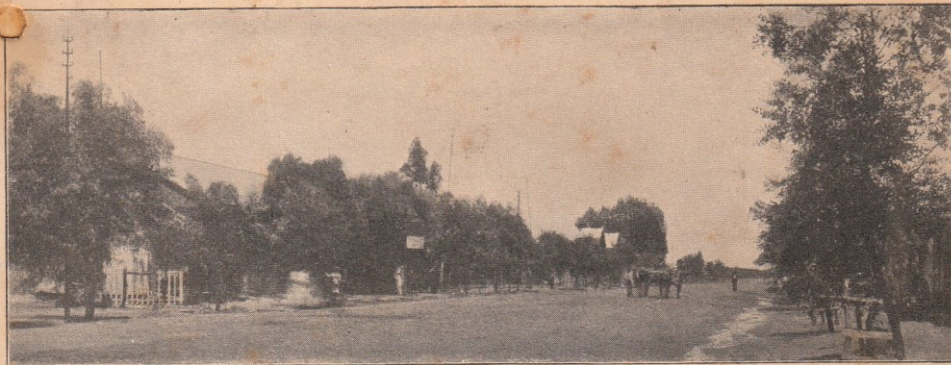
He was married to Sarah Burton and they had 6 children:

- Arthur Walter Townshend: Born 1859. Printer - 1<sup>st</sup> Chairman of the Associated Master Printers of the Cape in March 1911.
- Frank Townshend: Born 1863. Printer/compositor
- George Burton Townshend: Born 1864. Listed as carpenter in 1881 UK census.
- Alice Mary Townshend: Born 1862. Listed as printer/compositor in 1881 UK census.
- Philip Townshend: Born December 1, 1866 (Uckfield, Sussex England. Died August 21, 1951
- Jessia Maria Townshend: Born 1869

Walter Waters Townshend: Founder of the family's printing dynasty in South Africa. He arrived in South Africa around 1880 after serving an apprenticeship as a compositor in London.

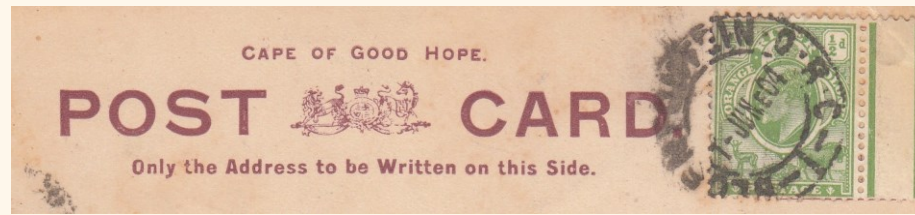
He served in the Vryburg Town Guard and received the Queens South African Medal and served as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mayor of Vryburg: 1901-1903.

Philip Townshend: According to a marriage announcement in the *Grahamstown Journal from February 1899*, the following was published:” Married at Vryburg on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1899, by the Rev. R Olver, Philip, youngest son of W.W. Townshend Esq. of Vryburg, to Mary McKenzie, daughter of Thomas Ferguson Esq. of Port Elizabeth”. They had at least 6 sons and 2 daughters.



MARKET STREET VRYBURG, 1895.

Geep yhu twod noy etrow yzal senob? Evah uog tog  
ruog sdnah yrev lluf, ro si ti ylna senigel. Woh  
si elh revef pu ereht? Yna. ealpe tnacar rof em? Ji ten  
eraelp anes a heir newodiu rep eriw, ro rep desaerg  
gninethgil. I epok noy lliw eb elba ot daer siht, fi  
os ew nac syawla etrow suht. Genesse fo out spil  
writer



MARKET STREET VRYBURG, 1895.  
*by etisw unal ser*

MARKET STREET, VRYBURG, 1895.

THE TREES IN MARKET STREET, VRYBURG, 1900.

