

Newsletter 22

By Horst Kleinschmidt.

The “Dear Kitty” letter and other trials in the life of Marie Kleinschmidt May 2014

On 11 September 1864, in Otjimbingue, Namibia, Marie Kleinschmidt, the oldest of the eight children of missionary Franz-Heinrich and Hanna Kleinschmidt, wrote a moving and dramatic letter to her younger sister Catherine (Kitty) who was at school in Germany. No schools yet existed in Namibia. Marie had returned from schooling abroad herself seven months earlier. She had just turned twenty-one, when she wrote this letter a week after her father was buried. The letter contains drama fit for a Hollywood wild-west movie: fleeing on foot by night and day from a ruthless armed band, avoiding flying bullets. The letter ends with missionary Kleinschmidt dying (seemingly of a heart attack) in the arms of his friend, missionary Carl-Hugo Hahn.

The letter is written in the Kurrent¹ script used in Germany at the time. Hardly any German today can read Kurrent or its later adapted version Sütterlin and thus the letter was virtually inaccessible until Pastor Walter Moritz transcribed it into Roman script and I then translated it into English. I want to express my thanks to Pastor Moritz for making the letter accessible through his publication, *Jonker Afrikaner und Missionar Kleinschmidt*².

Marie was born in Windhoek (26.2.1843) during the time when her father first hoped to establish a mission among the very people who had now chased him to his death. Why did this happen? The letter has to be placed in the wider context of social and economic changes taking place in pre-colonial Namibia. Let me give you the broad strokes here and fill in details at the end of the Newsletter. Rehoboth, a short journey south of Windhoek, was the home of the Swartboois, a section of the Nama people. Kleinschmidt was missionary here for nearly twenty years (1845 – 1864). Jonker Afrikaner and his people came from the Cape, settled in Windhoek from where they asserted power over the local Nama (also called Damara in Namibia) and Herero people. Jonker’s people were an amalgam of peoples including Nama (elsewhere called Khoi or Khoen-khoen), runaway slaves and Europeans. Their dominance was asserted through warfare and raids on the locals’ livestock. Those Jonker subjugated had to pay tribute to him in the form of cattle and goats. Jonker’s people

¹ Wikipedia: **Kurrent** is an old form of German language handwriting based on late medieval cursive writing, also known as *Kurrentschrift* or *Alte Deutsche Schrift* ("old German script"). Over the history of its use into the first part of the 20th century, many individual letters acquired variant forms.

Sütterlin is a modern script based on *Kurrentschrift* that is characterized by simplified letters and vertical strokes. It was developed in 1911 and taught in German schools as primary script from 1935 until 1941. Then it was replaced with "normal German font", which is sometimes referred to (correctly but confusingly) as "Latin font"

² Heft 18: *Jonker Afrikaner und Missionar Kleinschmidt – Tagebuch, Briefe, Berichte 1839 – 1864 von Walter Moritz* (ISBN 99916-68-24-1), 2006.

had three important tactical advantages: horses, guns and the bible, as I explain later. The Afrikaners were semi-literate, they spoke a variant of Dutch (their Afrikaans of today is considered one of four dialects of the Afrikaans language) and they were trained in the commando system. The Dutch farmers in the Cape first formed commandos to retrieve stolen livestock or to raid the livestock of Khoi and San people. A commando is a small group of horsemen whose tactical advantage was the speed with which they could operate and the use of guns, where others had few or none. Jonkers and other such groups of people, although not white colonists, were sometimes paid to form commando-style raiding parties on behalf of the colonists. Jonkers people were thus well equipped and experienced when they asserted power in Central Namibia. (White farmer commandos at the Cape often became weekend outing parties of men and their sons, to shoot and kill San and Khoi people, a matter little acknowledged in our history to this day).

Jonker's people, who called themselves Afrikaners must not to be confused with the white Afrikaners of today.

Marie's letter was written in great haste, in time for a courier to take it, presumably overland first to Cape Town, and then by ship to Europe. Despite the circumstances and pressure, Marie shows formidable emotional strength and maturity. The translation is unabridged and without stylistic correction. I have also not changed her spelling of place names but have added words in brackets [] where clarification was necessary.

Marie married missionary Christian Baumann³ with whom she had eight children. Her husband died at the young age of 46. Her children became the victim of German colonial racism. The reason? Zara Schmelen, Marie's grandmother was Khoi and thus her mother Hanna Kleinschmidt was 'half black'. This was the reason why our once prominent family, in the age of racism, lost their esteem and standing. There are other examples how family members fell from grace but in this Newsletter I trace the story of Marie's son Ludwig Baumann who was 'declassified' as a 'throw-back', a "degenerate member of the family" having a "lower disposition", because Marie was one-quarter black. I have added a note on the fall of Ludwig Baumann and his cousin Mathilde Kleinschmidt (my great aunt). Marie died in Gütersloh, Germany in 1926.

I hope that through my historical vignettes I make the past more accessible and interesting. If you want to comment or bring to my attention any errors of fact or interpretation, please write back to me. I gladly accept advice and criticism.

Kitty (Catherine was the third of the Kleinschmidt children, born in Rehoboth⁴ in 1847.

³ Missionary Christian Baumann, born 31.5.1842 in Friedenstal, Bessarabia. He came to Namibia in 1864, initially attached to the mission trading company. When the company faltered and closed down he first became a mission helper and then missionary. Amongst other places he worked at the Waterberg mission. Baumann died of an accidentally self-inflicted bullet wound on 14.5.1888. (See Edward Tabler, *Pioneers of SWA and Ngamiland (1788 -1880)*, published by Balkema, Cape Town in 1973 9ISBN 0 86961 021 X).

⁴ The Swartboois had called their place !Annis but missionary Kleinschmidt renamed it Rehoboth.



Missionary Bjørklund, whom Kitty married, with four of their children. Kitty died in Helsinki, Finland in 1917.

Otyimbingue, 11th September 1864.

Dear and beloved Kitty!

With a heavier heart than ever before, I sit down to write to you my beloved: because as you may already know, the Lord, who commands over life and death, has taken our dearly beloved father from this wretched world to himself in the beautiful heavens. We have lost very much, yes very much through the loss of his blessed passing; because, as the uncle (reference to missionary Hugo Hahn who was affectionately known as 'uncle', but is no relation) said at the grave: "There exists no more considerate a man and no more considerate a father than he was."

Oh, the Lord has dealt us a hard, a very hard blow; and only he has the power to heal this wound. Only He can console our poor hearts and ease our bitter loss.

Yes, we have lost our beloved intercessionist, because he confessed all and everything in prayer before the Lord (and) now he lifts his voice to praise him, who redeemed him. Why should we still wail for the dear one, the dear blessed deceased father? He has been delivered of and from all distress and the cross. We were only granted 7 months to live with father [she had returned from Germany 7 months earlier from her education] and I thank the Lord that he gifted us this time; because it allowed us to really get to know the dear beloved father. I had nearly become estranged after 10 years of separation. He was always so caring, affectionate and considerate toward us, such that we often were embarrassed and said to him: "Oh, father, you are too good!"

Then he usually only smiled: If we expressed any wish and he could fulfil it, immediately he was willing to oblige.

I can only tell you in brief about these recent events, because the letters have to be sent off this noon already and I have not yet completed one of them.

As you probably already know, the Rehobothers [they are Damara, part of the Nama] wanted to change the place at which they resided to move closer to the Damars (Damara's) because they felt so isolated in the midst of the enemy. [The enemy being Jonker Afrikaner and his people]

After the last war that the Damara conducted with our Rehobothers against the Afrikaners, it [was] finally agreed. On the 25 July the whole station finally moved; it was a very interesting spectacle.

In front were the oxen, cows, sheep, goats etc. then followed the pack oxen on to whom all manner of things were loaded: The sticks with which to make houses, mats, skins, leather

sacks that contained many different things, bamboo rods, gourds, pots, and in the end on top of all of this would sit some 4-5 year old children or an old woman or man. The woman would then possibly still have a child on her back. For several oxen this was no sweet burden as they tried to dislodge their cargo by taking mighty leaps, which often they succeeded in. After the pack oxen came the horse or oxen riders, men and women, who were followed by 25 ox wagons. It really was an interesting procession.

We went along by foot and uncle Vollmer [also a missionary] and missionary Knauer, who had arrived several days earlier, accompanied us. The journey was very slow; we covered the journey that normally takes 4 days in 4 weeks. You can imagine our impatience. Elisabeth [Marie's immediate younger sister] and I repeatedly pleaded with father, that we should not wait for the people [congregation] and that we should hurry ahead, but it was difficult for the beloved father to leave behind his congregation, virtually as though he had a premonition, that his stay with them would be short indeed.

On the 16th August we got to the river Kuiseb, which flows halfway on the way to Otyimbingue [the distance from Rehoboth to Otyimbingue is probably 120 km as the crow flies, through substantially hilly terrain. Even today the journey takes you over demanding gravel road mountain passes]. Throughout the journey we had already received worrying reports about our enemies [the Afrikaners], who wanted to catch up with us, but we did not want to believe this. The day before we reached the river some men had gone out to hunt and they told us on their return that they had seen horsemen and behind those, it seemed to them, was a large Kommando; again we did not really want to believe this. Towards the evening spies were once again sent out, but they had not seen anything. When we reached the river on Monday, a man who had previously lived in Rehoboth but had left [there] told our Kapitein [Captain or community leader] that we were [should be] getting toward the Damara because our enemies were strongly armed and following us. This time, as in the past, nobody really wanted to believe that the enemy was getting close.

Elisabeth was terribly scared, but father always knew to console us.

On the 17th we traveled on, but stayed on in the same river [bed]. After we out-spanned several hours later, a young Afrikaner and his wife [people who had come to Namibia with Jonker] had gone missing. They had lived in our Werft [compound] and his father was with the Afrikaners. We became very suspicious and immediately thought that he might have been called during the night, and this turned out to be true later on.

Toward the evening some people were sent back to the place we had left in the morning, to look for several calves and when they returned at 12 midnight they told [us] that a large Kommando had arrived at the place that was thus two hours away from us.

We three, father, Elisabeth and I had sat up late that evening. We had no idea, but as soon as we had gone to lie down, we heard the Kapitein shouting throughout the compound. We immediately rose and then heard what the two men had to say. Our good father still did not want to believe it and said that the men had surely not seen correctly, and maybe they had seen a herd of stock; but we could not really calm down, got dressed and went to sit by the fire; father always said: "Children please go and lie down and sleep a little, if there really is any danger, I will wake you". Our response was that no one could sleep now; later sleepiness overtook us and we might have slept for one hour.

Our men immediately made themselves ready for battle and wanted to attack the enemy that night. [By 'our men' she refers Rehobothers who themselves were armed and able to counter the attack] They were already on the way there when some of them thought that the enemy might have dispersed to surround us and if all the men were to leave the

women and children would be alone and therefore it would be better to wait for the enemy and that the women and children should flee on to the mountains, and so the men returned. In the morning at 5am came the message, we should flee because the enemy was getting closer (there were about 800 people comprising the enemy and our Rehobothers were not more than 200)

Frieda, Willy and Ludwig [Marie's younger siblings] were still fast asleep when they were woken and some Damara women took them on their backs. We only took along some bread and milk because we believed to be able to return to our wagon. So we got on our way and many women who none-the-less went down (?), were captured by the enemy.

Father, mother and I went one last time back to the wagon to collect some items. It was very awful as we went through the compound like that because no-one was around anymore, only here and there some of the servants [Rehoboth society had its own class structure], because the men had gone to the mountains. The herds were still all there. When we were at the wagons the Kapitein called down from the mountain that we should hurry because the enemy was already very close by and when they were only 10 minutes away, they did begin their shooting. We fled into the mountains [in Namibian parlance hills are to this day described as mountains] without knowing where we were going. After we were on our way, for about half an hour, we sat down in a gorge and in the river [dry river bed] we could hear the terrible sound of guns. After we had been sitting there for a bit, we heard the people talk and ask where the women had disappeared to; we believed nothing other than that they were delivered to our enemies. I had prepared myself already for my death because I could only imagine that they would kill us with their weapons, but thanks be to the Lord, the voices were the voices of our people who were looking for us to get to the men because they feared the enemy would dispatch people to look for us. They were especially concerned about the beloved father because the enemy had said they would not rest until they caught father, the old Kapitein, [of the Swartboois] and his son Petrus.

So we returned with those people to the place where the men were shooting. We constantly had to go uphill and then again downhill. It was only hills and valleys. When we got to the top of the mountain, we had to crouch because the enemy who were on the hills on the opposite side [of the] river would be able to see us.

We really found ourselves in a terrible situation; we again sat down in a gorge near to where the men were, but then we had to lie down flat on the ground because the bullets of the enemy were flying over us. Oh, it was a terrible situation! On top of that the sun was terribly hot, such that when we walked I often threw myself under a bush, just to get a little shade.

We hardly thought we were safe when word went out: the enemy is here! Now we had to get away from here again. Like this it went from the morning at 5am until midday 1 o'clock when the enemy put fire to the fields [meant is the savannah-like grassland] where we were. To make matters worse the grass was so very high and parched from the heat that it ignited in no time. And to add to this, wind came from an unfavourable direction such that the fire came toward us with terrible force. We were fleeing not only our enemies but also the fire to get away from our misfortune. We had no choice other than to leave this area altogether because we had heard that the enemy had also set fire to all our wagons. What was to keep us here any longer?

Mother said she would not stay there any longer and that she would walk to Otyimbingue. Father did not want to leave his congregation behind but we implored him so that lastly he submitted because of us. Had he been alone he would not have left his congregation. But now a new difficulty arose. Who could show us the way to Otyimbingue? We were once

again helpless but the loyal Lord had already provided ready assistance for us, because some 6 Damaras who found themselves with us, one was our wagon leader – and who had been in the battle that morning, and now also wanted to go home to Otyimbingue [she describes Otyimbingue as ‘home’ presumably because they had, with their congregation left Rehoboth forever and Otyimbingue was to become their new home. For the majority of the Swartboois this was not to be and they trekked for a long time before they finally settled at Fransfontein, their ‘home’ to this day] - and thus we suddenly had help at hand. We were some 15 or 16 who started the journey on foot. So that midday at 1pm we left and we had not told our people [the broader Rehoboth community] anything about this because we feared that our enemies would get news of this and follow us. On our way we passed a herd of sheep of which we took along five, because we had nothing else with us other than a little bread and some coffee and we had to walk for long yet. When we had walked for about 4 hours we sat down to rest a little and to eat something, because we had not eaten anything all day. Now guess how our food was cooked? First we made a big fire and then tossed smooth stones into it that had first been cleaned a little and then meat was cut into fairly thin slices and placed between two stones and fried without salt or any spices and yet we enjoyed it very much. The beloved father wanted to spend the night there to sleep, but mother wanted to know nothing of it because she considered that the enemy would surely pursue us because they especially had their eye on our father.

So, after the meal we had to set off again, to walk through the night – it really was a blessing that the moon was shining otherwise I would not have known how we would have fared, because it went constantly uphill and then downhill. Mountains so high that when we stood in front of them we did not know how we would get to the top and when we descended it was so steep that we had to slide down and in all of this we knew of no way or path because there was no way – we just went in the direction we thought would lead us to Otyimbingue.

You cannot possibly imagine, dear Kitty, you have to experience it yourself to understand. The Lord did sustain us however in a wonderful way otherwise I cannot imagine how we endured, because for 4 days and 3 nights we walked in this way, and during this we allowed ourselves little rest. I have no time to explain to you how we fared during these days because I need to hastily come to the end. Only the first night you should have seen us, the moon was shining clearly to light our way. In front went one of the men with his musket, then us children, then father and mother, then the people who were with us and at the back a man with a musket and very last the sheep. Nobody was allowed to speak loudly and we only whispered softly; we even had to place our footsteps softly and even the sheep seemed to understand what all this was about because they did not make a single sound.

This precaution was not in vain as we heard later that Jan Jonker [son of Jonker senior] had followed us with some folk on foot to kill our dear father. He is said later to have lost our track and turned back. We walked virtually the whole night until the morning at about 3 o’clock when we rested a little, boiled some coffee and we children still lay down for a bit to get some sleep. But the dear mother never closed an eye on the whole way.

Once we had rested a little it started all over again. At night it was rather cold. Luckily we had the woollen blankets, which we children were carrying when we fled. And one of the Damara’s had, without our knowledge, on the morning of our fleeing, collected father’s blanket from the wagon. Elizabeth had her own coat and so did I but during the running to and fro it had become a hinderance to me and I had placed it under a bush hoping to collect it again; it probably burnt with everything else. So we had roughly enough blankets to protect us reasonably well against the cold. And yet it was so very hot during the day that one could hardly stand it. On top of that our shoes were torn, and if the [Damara’s] had not sewn them together again we would have had to walk barefoot. Our feet also were covered in blisters, most severely my own feet – I could hardly walk.

Worst off was our good father. He had not been well ever since we had left Rehoboth and now this terrible exertion of his old and weak body (He was 52). But we never, never heard him complain; if he lamented at all it was about his poor congregation and us. He continued to try encouraging us and cheer us up. He felt throughout the journey that he would never recover, because he often said to mother that this would probably be his last illness.

On the 21st in the evening we arrived here [Otjimbingue]. Uncle (she refers to missionary Hugo Hahn, not a relation) was not at home. He had, when he had heard that we had left Rehoboth, travelled to meet us. Aunt knew of nothing until [in the afternoon] a Bergdamara [a distinctive group amongst the Damara] came to tell them that we were fleeing and could not carry on, that we were ill and whether they should send a wagon. Nobody had sent this Damara to tell [her] of this and aunt [Emma Sarah Hahn, wife of Carl-Hugo] did not know whether she should believe him or not, because people here tell so many lies [my sense is she means rumours] that you can hardly believe anything. But she [Mrs Hahn] immediately ordered a wagon and oxen to meet us but did not know which path to choose. Whilst they were still thinking about what best to do we arrived ourselves. It was a sad reception because we would never have thought to arrive in Otyimbingue like this. Elizabeth and I had already hatched so many good ideas how we might surprise uncle and aunt – and how different it all turned out to be! I have decided not to make any plans from now on.

The dear father still got up the next morning, went into the garden and still had a look at the cornfields [mealie fields]. Then it was finished with him, that midday he had to lie down, but we did not remotely believe that this would become his death bed although he had repeatedly said so to mother and also determined [decided] a number of matters. For the rest he said very little because his pains were growing stronger every day. Four days after our arrival three of our Rehoboth men arrived; they had no idea what had become of us, until they heard from some shepherds that we had fled. They then traced our tracks. They told that the wagons had not been ready, only the two worst ones, the other 20 wagons had been taken [by the enemy]. Only fathers 3 wagons remained standing because they had no [additional] oxen to pull them. But they [the Afrikaners] took everything out of them: tables, chairs, beds were smashed to pieces; the books lie strewn along the riverbed. They probably took our clothes, because yesterday Krapohl [another Rhenish missionary] told [us] that they encountered Bergdamara who were wearing white dresses and shirts. They were still wondering: "From where would they have received these German things?" Later they were told that these were our things. Like this we then lost everything, our animals are also all gone; we had no more than that which he were wearing.

But what is the loss of these earthly goods? Was there not a far bigger loss before us of which we suspected nothing at the time? The men also told us that some 30 women and children had burnt to death by the large fire that drove us from there. Most died of their wounds. 7 men died and five were wounded. The brothers in Barmen [Germany] may know some of them. Of the wounded ones they would know Jacob the teacher, the son of the old Lazarus. He has probably died by now because of his extensive wounds. (His brother Johannes, who was also a teacher, a very nice and dear man, he was fathers right hand, he was killed in the recent wars in June). Sane is also wounded, the others the boys will hardly know, also our Johannes' best friend, Gideon Richter was killed. His last words were: "Lord, I thank you!"

Also many women and children were taken prisoner. These reports shocked our beloved Papa much, because whenever he spoke about the Rehobothers he was shedding tears, his

heart was broken from the pain suffered by our poor people: "Everything has been taken from these poor people. And at the very end the Lord even takes away their good shepherd. The Lord takes dark ways with our poor congregation".

Eight days later, the other Monday, to our great joy, uncle Hahn arrived. On his deathbed father had cared little for earthly matters, he solely worried about mother and us. He had to endure much pain in his lower abdomen, yet one never heard a complaint from his mouth. Once when Elizabeth and I were with him, he said to us: "the first trial you have withstood and accomplished it well, I hope you will withstand the coming ones also". His voice continued to get weaker.

Friday, the 2nd of September we were called to father's bed, he had convulsions in his chest. When we arrived he lay in the arms of the dear uncle with his tired head on uncle's beloved chest. He recovered little by little when uncle told him we were present and [then] he seemed to have forgotten it. Because he said nothing further because he said "It is good". His beloved face already showed the paleness of death and his hands and his feet had already become cold. Uncle did not at first want to believe it because he kept saying: "The Lord cannot release him yet from his work"; even on this last morning he begged the Lord with great fervour, to return the father to good health soon. But the Lord had other ideas about us. He did not want to leave the dear father any longer on this pitiful earth and to release him from all distress and pain. Around 10 o'clock father had another chest convulsion, after which he received Holy Communion with mother. When uncle eventually prayed and said Amen, he [father] said with a clear voice: "Amen, Amen!" Those were his last clear words. He seemed unconcerned about earthly matters; instead his heart was solely fixed on the Heavenly. It would have been midday around half past eleven when he gently and blessedly passed away in uncles arms, such that uncle himself does not know the moment when actually he died. He had already laid him down accordingly. So he remained lying and uncle closed his eyes and after he gave him the farewell kiss, he blessed him.

Oh the beloved Papa was no longer with us. In his face could be seen a soft, painful trait, but yet he looked so blissful; my heart bleeds when I think of this loss. The Lord alone can heal this deep wound that he cut into us.

On the 3rd September his remains were committed to the earth. There were many people present, all the Englishmen who live here in the vicinity, also 6 Rehobothers who arrived half an hour before fathers death for whom it was very difficult because I think there is hardly a congregation who loved their missionary as much as they loved father. They also said that they hoped soon to get another missionary, but nobody would ever be able to replace their teacher and father. I believe this too, with his patience he served them for 18 years in good and in bad times, as the Lord will know.

Uncle spoke [about] the words: "The Lord gave and the Lord took; the name of the Lord be praised". During his last words his voice nearly failed him, it became very difficult, and he also said at the grave that he had lost his dearest friend, the missionaries had lost their most loyal servant. We have the dear blessed fathers grave near by, such that we can visit him every evening. May the Lord give us the grace, and the dear blessed father the joy, that we will find him again up there in front of the Lambs' Throne.

Now we live here with the dear uncle and aunt, who are very kind and loving towards us; the dear and blessed father wished this so very much, that mother and we should always stay with the uncle.

Uncle wrote to Jan Jonker that he should send us back all the things that they robbed us of but I hardly think this will happen. If only they would return the Communion instruments,

which you will remember, the people of Blasheim gave father as a gift – he was so pleased with these Communion instruments. They had never been used yet.

These godless people [the Afrikaners] will now drink their honey (honey beer) from these. They will get their just punishment for all the vulgar acts they have done, when their measure of godlessness is full.

Now I have to end, my dear Kitty. May the Lord strengthen you and our dear brothers when you receive these mournful tidings and may it make a worthy impression on you all. Greet all in Germany who remember me. I would have loved to write to some other friends but I cannot go on. If you are still with the dear Pastor Philipps, then greet them heartily, or are you in Barmen, greet the beloved house-parents or if in Kaiserswerth, greet the dear Pastor Fliedner and Pastor Stricker, also the dear Mr Ranke and the dear Sisters Friederike and Lina and the young girls who remember me. I would have loved to have written to the Kaiserswerthers before but have not had a chance, but hope to do so soon.

Our dear mother as much as the uncle and aunt, Frida, Willy and Ludwig send their regards, special regards to you from your deeply in mourning, sister.

Marie.

*May the Lord console you, he will not forget us orphans.
(Please excuse my terrible handwriting; I was in a great hurry)*



Marie Bauman in later life

THE DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF MARIE'S SON.

On 12th March 1913, an appeal was heard in the High Court in Windhoek. It confirmed the lower courts ruling in Swakopmund. Maria's son, an engineer, was declared a 'Native'. Ludwig Baumann, 34 years of age, had been accused of 'misappropriation' in the court in Swakopmund. In a trial that attracted considerable attention he was, despite having had 'German' nationality until then, to lose all rights of citizenship, rights to land and the vote in what was considered German South West African territory. The 'not one drop of blood' theory was increasingly harming the Kleinschmidt dynasty of Namibia. The 'German' court now told him to fight his case in the 'Native court' (also run by the colonial administration). From prominent Namibian family the Kleinschmidt's were sinking to becoming second-class citizens. Ludwig was 1/8th Nama. At the stroke of a pen some Kleinschmidt were now labelled 'coloured' (*Mischling*) whilst others employed various forms of deception or kept their 'heads below the parapet' to avoid being classified downward. From around 1900 the debate about people of mixed race was rapidly shifting. For a while the Registry offices refused to marry white men to black or mixed-race women, telling them that they should 'go to the missionaries to get married', but eventually the missionaries were prohibited from conducting such marriages also.

In 1903 already Hans Tecklenburg, a high-ranking colonial official had proposed that 'coloureds' should be considered, in legal terms, 'native'. Until the Ludwig Baumann case, German colonial officials had made exceptions with 'certain coloureds', often out of consideration for the Schmelen-Kleinschmidt offspring. But the Colonial administration, the German Reformed church responsible for German congregations and the mission church, in the first decade of the 20th century, raised ever more doubt and strictures on racial mixing. These laws did not apply in Germany as yet and the colonial officials and local clergy operated in defiance of the legal advice they received from Germany. It was only after 1933, when the Nazi's took over, that this racism was enacted in Germany.



The Baumann parents, Marie and Christian, with four children. It is not known who Ludwig Baumann is on this photo.

Months after the Baumann ruling a cousin of Ludwig Baumann, Mathilde Kleinschmidt, sister to my grandfather, wanted to get married to the German trader, Fritz Ewald. The civil court in Karibib, mindful of what happened to Ludwig Baumann, ruled that this marriage would be illegal. Fritz and Mathilde, in this case successfully, appealed to the higher court in Windhoek. Mathilde passed the 'test' to be considered, exceptional and 'white' due to the pleadings of the Pastor to the German community of Karibib. Although Mathilde benefitted from his evidence, the substance of what the pastor submitted was outrageous. Pastor Heyse's statement involved a review of all Kleinschmidts. At first he expresses outrage that Mathilde should suffer such 'injuria'. "She always lived as a white (person)" said Heyse and argued that those who 'lived like whites' should be accepted as Germans. He justifies his argument: if the degree of 'black' blood is relatively small, and the person 'looks' white the Governor should instruct all officials to not reclassify such persons. Appearance and what 'whites' said about such people should become the yardstick he argued. Heyse gave a positive verdict about most Kleinschmidts, but about Mathilde's uncle Ludwig Kleinschmidt (not Ludwig Baumann) he claimed: "he is not of the stature of the rest of the family. He provided invaluable services to the Goerneur Leutwein as interpreter. But he has lived with a native for many years, in a quasi marriage relationship". And when he comes to Ludwig Bauman he describes him as "a degenerate member" of the family of a "lower disposition".

On the grounds of race our family was thus divided, creating have's on the one side and have-nots on the other. The consequences have their reach right into the present day – an unhealed wound the Schmelen-Kleinschmidt-Bam family has to face up to when we all gather, for the first time, in Komaggas in September 2014.



Mathilde Ewald, born Kleinschmidt, around 1906

MORE ON THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF THE 'DEAR KITTY' LETTER:

When my niece Lissie Beksinska read the 'Dear Kitty' letter several years ago she asked me why Jonker Afrikaner and his people wanted to harm or even kill her great, great, great, great grandfather Franz Heinrich Kleinschmidt together with his family and congregation. My answer was along the following lines: Jonker Afrikaner wanted power over the other people in the region. He came to the region and wanted to rule it. He wanted to build a country that could withstand the encroachment of Cape colonial rule. German colonial rule was not yet on the horizon. He also required cattle to pay for the goods bought from travelling Cape traders, such as horses, carts, clothing, pots, pans, coffee, tea, brandy and much else. There was no formal currency in Namibia then, necessitating a crude form of barter trade. Jonker Afrikaner (or any other leaders who had herds of cattle) paid for their commodities with livestock. The sheer numbers of cattle traded caused the 'cattle sellers' to get into debt when they ran out of cattle or were unwilling to pay with what they had left. This form of trade, in value terms, was probably heavily skewed in favour of the cunning commodity pedlars and this trade soon led to playing different cattle-owning groups off against each other. Those indebted to traders once they ran out of cattle, resorted to raiding the cattle of others. This, together with the hegemonic ambitions of the newcomer, Jonker Afrikaner, led to the outbreak of a series of wars between local groups the basis of which was to raid cattle from others in order to pay the debt they owed the traders. If economics played a part in this, it is astounding that the missionaries according to their letters and reports failed to identify this as a source of conflict. To them the sale of alcohol and guns by the traders was a source of evil although various missionaries became accessories to this trade themselves.

Traders vastly outnumbered missionaries. Marie mentions 'Englishmen' who attended her father's funeral. These were (mostly) Cape traders who had established commodity depots at Otjimbingue. Others had based themselves in Windhoek, Omaruru and Walfish Bay. Hugo Hahn, in his diaries counts no less than fifty traders being in Otjimbingue at one time. Colonial farmers had not yet settled here save for a small number in the south of the country.

WHERE DID THE AFRIKANERS COME FROM, AND WHO WERE THEY?

Jonker and his people hailed from the Winterberge, a short two-day wagon-ride northeast from Cape Town. When he attacked the Rehoboth settlement he and his people had moved to a place 1,500 kilometres north and not less than six months distance by wagon from his ancestral home.

For the first hundred years of the Dutch colony (the Dutch arrived in 1652), the Winterberg Mountains, snow-capped in winter and abutting the fertile Tulbagh valley, remained their home. But gradually settlers had appropriated local peoples' traditional water sources and grazing land for their own livestock.

Interaction with the colony had however already left its mark on traditional Nama Khoi and San people. The movement of whites into the interior, further away from Cape Town, notably in what became the northwestern Cape Colony, resulted in numbers of births from white farmers and Khoi or San women. This created a new ethnic group – referred to as 'Basters'. By 1800 there were sufficient numbers of 'Basters', speaking a variant of Dutch, that historians identify them as a distinct group from that point on.

Whilst the 'Basters' enjoyed a superior status to the Khoi, San and slaves and found it easier to find employment on white farms, they were still considered second-class citizens.

KLEINSCHMIDT'S FAILED MISSION TO THE AFRIKANERS.

Before missionaries arrived in Namibia, the English naval officer, Alexander went to explore the land that Europeans knew little about until then. At the time the Afrikaners and other similar groups, through pressure from colonists and colonial government rulings had already crossed the Orange River and settled in the sparsely settled 'Great Namaqualand'. On his return from Windhoek back to Cape Town Alexander told missionary Schmelen at Komaggas that the Afrikaners in Windhoek (several months distance by ox wagon) were asking for a missionary. The Afrikaner were baptised people from the Cape but they also saw missionaries as another kind of asset: Missionaries provided education for their children, became the scribes of edicts and letters when negotiating with friend or foe, and most importantly, if you had a missionary at your place you could be sure that traders would follow. This provided the means to obtain a variety of desired provisions. If, as in the case of Jonker, you wanted political power you would oppose missionaries settling amongst other groups, other than your own.

Franz-Heinrich and Hanna Kleinschmidt were thus despatched by Hinrich Schmelen, to meet the request conveyed by Alexander. After many months of trekking by ox wagon they reached Windhoek in 1842 where missionary Johannes Bam, also Rhenish, had preceded Kleinschmidt's arrival. A short while later missionary Carl-Hugo Hahn, and his wife, Emma Sarah Hahn, joined them.

Having waited for a long time, Jonker Afrikaner had also extended invitations to the Wesleyan (Methodist) mission.

True to European jealousy in the religious sphere, the Rhenish missionaries and the Methodist missionary Heddy could not see eye to eye or find a basis to co-operate at the same place. A protracted dispute arose between them in which they accused Jonker of being the source of the dispute because he had made his invitation 'to more than one group'; a somewhat disingenuous accusation since he was probably not concerned with which church it was that got established amongst his people, nor realised that churches and missions throughout failed to operate from one place or co-operate with one another.

In the end Kleinschmidt and Hahn agreed to leave Windhoek to the Wesleyan mission, but controversially decided to start a new mission at the nearby Herero stronghold at Okahandja. Initially they settled at the place they called Groß Barmen (Barmen was the place in Germany where they were trained as missionaries), but later Hahn moved to settle permanently at Otjimbingue, where he established the Herero mission. Kleinschmidt started a Nama mission, seventy kilometres south of Windhoek, at //Anis, the place he renamed Rehoboth. (Kleinschmidt also re-named the Swakop River the Rhein and the adjacent thorn and bush landscape the Schwarzwald. Mercifully this naming of places did not survive)

The people Jonker wanted power over were now, by having mission stations attached to their places, provided with additional 'strength'. The people amongst whom Kleinschmidt and Hahn had settled were Jonker's targets and through this they became targets themselves.

It is thus that Kleinschmidt became an adversary to Jonker.

WHO ARE THE SWARTBOOIS?

Rehoboth is seventy kilometres south of Windhoek in a fertile valley, with hot springs, and was the home of the Swartboois. The Swartboois were not displaced from or fleeing the Cape colony. They were Nama's (or Khoi) but had lived in this part of Namibia for as long as they can remember. Charles Otto Uirab's research traces his family's lineage amongst the Swartboois back to around 1700.

Long after the Swartboois had left Rehoboth, and after the Afrikaners defeat, a group from the Cape, calling themselves the 'Basters' settled in Rehoboth, where they live to this day. They had left the Cape for similar reasons the Afrikaners and others felt they had to leave.

In my next Newsletter I intend to provide information about the Swartboois and the way in which the Uirabs and the Kleinschmidts are related.

WHY DID THE AFRIKANERS MOVE NORTH?

Mission inspector Campbell, Hinrich Schmelen's boss from the London Mission Society, reports on his conversations with locals in 1812. One man at Silver Fontein told him, 'that he remembered the time when the boers were all within five days' journey of Cape Town, and the country was full of 'Hottentot' (Nama) kraals, but they have gradually been driven up the country to make room for the white people⁵.

Jonker and his people, when they felt compelled to move away from the reaches of Cape rule, were typical of other similar groups of people. By the time they moved they constituted an amalgam of Khoi, San, run-away slave and fugitive whites (often felons wanted in the colony), united in their alienation from the colony. Disdain for a perceived under class, with white race purity as the measure, was in the making.

These people, united in their hostility to colonial encroachment, were driven ever northward and beyond the shifting and expanding colonial border. Eventually they crossed from Little Namaqualand (the Northern Cape) into Great Namaqualand (Southern and Central Namibia). Jonker and his people settled in what is today known as Klein Windhoek. The name Windhoek derives from Winterhoek where his people hailed from. The modern capital Windhoek, a stone's throw from the Afrikaner settlement, had not yet been

⁵ Campbell, J., *Travels in South Africa* – originally printed in 1815.

invented. There were many good springs on the hill where the Afrikaners settled – a place that approximates the residence of the German Embassy of Namibia and its neighbourhood today.

Jonker's people had moved north slowly. The push to evade colonial rule was gradual. Existing just beyond the colonial border had become a way of making a living; the colony required cattle and the as yet unassimilated Khoi and San had cattle. The 'outlaws' such as the Afrikaners, found it lucrative to raid the livestock of others and become the middlemen to trade animals to the colony. Disputes with colonial farmers who had engaged Jonker's people to operate a commando system, to either return stolen cattle to colonial farmers or to simply raid 'for gain', lead to disputes, and in the case of Jager Afrikaner, Jonker's father, had lead to an alleged murder. He was accused of killing the white farmer for whom he raided. According to the Afrikaners the farmer had made inappropriate advances to Jagers wife. The border was a rough place.

On their long trek north, Jonkers people had tried settling on the Gariep (Orange) River, then Warmbad, then a place known as Jerusalem, then Tsebris, then Niais. Windhoek seemed, at the time, far enough away from colonial land and juridical pursuit.

When the missionaries arrived from the Cape, groups such as the Afrikaners had already entered and settled in Great Namaqualand. These groups were familiar with the Kommando system. They had either been victim of Boer Kommando's who came to their kraals to take back stolen livestock or later to raid irrespective of whether stock had been stolen with little or no regard to who the guilty party was. Others were employed by Boer farmers to constitute Kommandos and raid on the farmer's behalf. When they entered Namibia they brought with them three strategically important means of assertion: they had horses (those they met rode oxen), they had guns and they came with their bibles, having been baptised in the colony.

In order to derive benefit once they entered Southern Namibia, they engaged the trade they knew best: to raid, rob and inflict violence on those they found. There is evidence that they described the Nama they first occupied in Namibia as their 'slaves'. But by the end of the 19th century they had inter-married and it was difficult to draw distinctions between the occupiers and occupied.

The domination by Afrikaners and later other such groups from the Cape was to make the locals pay regular tributes in the form of cattle. In the process a section of Herero society was impoverished. But after 1865 (the year of Kleinschmidt's death) the tables turned. The Afrikaner group was defeated by the Herero, inspired and armed by the Swede Andersson. Herero now became owners of horses and guns and through the Andersson inspired training (and his private 'Cape Corpse') became Kommando raiders themselves. The buying or barter power shifted from the Afrikaners to the Herero. Andersson claimed he armed 2000 Herero, not from altruism as some writings claim, but to make the Herero pay their debt to him. TraderGreen was his enforcer in the field. He led people in battle. In Otjimbingue Andersson built a defensive structure – the Pulver Turm – a landmark to this day.

This is the story of a wild west in Central Namibia. A country as yet without colonial occupation or rule where traders, arms dealers, big-game hunters, intruders such as the Afrikaners – and missionaries made local populations obey their rules, cultural norms and standards. Justice was thus not a concept such as the colonial authority in the Cape imposed, unequal as it was. Justice was a shifting and malleable concept to suit those with

power from their perspective, instance by instance. German colonial rule replaced all this in 1884 to assert its own unequal justice.
