

### **The Bamber family**

**William Bamber** was born in Bethnal Green, London in 1844, and baptized at St. Mathews, Bethnal Green. He was the son of John Bamber and Louisa Gilbert.

At the time of the 1851 census, the family was living at No 7 Princes Street, Spitalfields London and, in the 1861 census, they were recorded living at 39 Herbert St, Shoreditch, St Leonard. William emigrated to Natal, traveling on the ship *Maritzburg*, 536 tons, arriving in Port Natal on 5 July 1863, having left London on 4 April 1863.

On 6 July 1867, he married Bessie Burchmore, daughter of Thomas Burchmore and Mary Walton, in St Peter's Cathedral, Pietermaritzburg.

William Bamber was appointed Assistant Town Clerk and Collector of Rates, Pietermaritzburg in October 1868 and, in July 1869, he received the appointment of Field Cornet for the Township of Pietermaritzburg. He was still Assistant Town Clerk in 1876.

By 1884 the Bambers were living at New Hanover, however by 1887 they were in Ladysmith, when their son John Walton Bamber was born. William Bamber was a bookkeeper of Ladysmith in February 1890, when Bessie was opening a boarding house in Murchison St.

They were in Ladysmith during the Boer War and were present during the siege of the town. Together with other civilians, they opted to move to the neutral "Intombi" tented camp, which was set up by agreement between the Boer's and the British, as a safe place where civilians and wounded soldiers could be sent. Bessie was a volunteer nurse in the hospital there and was often accompanied by her sons Cyril and John Walton (Jack) who would comfort the sick and wounded by talking to them and keeping them company.

Shortly after the Relief, the Bamber's left Ladysmith and moved to Pietermaritzburg. William and Bessie Bamber died within a few days of each other in 1927, and are buried in the Commercial Road cemetery.

William Bamber's sister, Emily Harriet Bamber, followed her brother to South Africa where she married George Charles Wheeler, and died in Pietermaritzburg in 1929.

John Walton (Jack) Bamber, was born in Ladysmith and he and his brother Cyril helped his mother who was a volunteer nurse in the Hospital at Intombi camp during the siege. Accounts say that he was popular with the sick and wounded and cheered them up by talking to them and keeping them company, but after a while refused to accompany his mother anymore because "all I like die". After the Relief the family moved to Pietermaritzburg where Jack matriculated at Maritzburg College. He joined the Natal Government Service as a Clerk in the Treasury Department. He saw active service in the Bambatha Rebellion of 1906 and was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Natal Militia. In 1912 he decided to attend Theological College to study for Holy Orders and, in 1914 when War was declared, he was a student at St Augustine's College, Canterbury. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant with the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and was killed in action near Fricourt, France, on July 1, 1916, the first day of the battle of the Somme. He is buried in the Gordon Dump Cemetery, Ovillers-La Boisselle, France. Jack Bamber is commemorated by a plaque in St Saviours Cathedral, Pietermaritzburg, in the list of the fallen in All Saint's Church in Ladysmith, and by a plaque in All Saints in Maidenhead, England, where he worshipped during his military training during the first world war.

### **The Burchmore family**

Thomas Burchmore was born in Flamstead, Herts., England on April 26, 1818 and was the son of George Burchmore and Ann Norton, of Roe End Farm. Thomas married Mary Walton in Caddington, Bedfordshire on May 23, 1841, his profession at the time was listed as "Grocer", residence Market Street. Mary's father was a carpenter.

Thomas and Mary Burchmore emigrated to South Africa as Byrne Settlers together with their three children, Mary Anne, Thomas Walton and Bessie. Mary was pregnant and would give birth to Louisa at sea. They sailed from London on the *Minerva* on April 26, 1850, anchoring in the roadstead at Port Natal on July 3, near the *Conquering Hero*, herself newly arrived from Glasgow on June 28.

Several passengers were disembarked immediately but family lore has it that the Burchmores remained on board. At about 11:30 pm on July 4, the *Minerva* lost her main anchor and was driven onto the bluff. All the passengers were saved, but most of their possessions were lost.

Newly arrived on the *Conquering Hero* was the young Alexander Jamieson Macpherson whose son Frederick was destined to marry Bessie's daughter Bessie Helen. Also on the *Minerva* was the young Mary Ann Richards, the future wife of Alexander Macpherson. All would end up in Ladysmith.

Thomas Burchmore's allotments were at Byrne but he did not settle on this land. By the end of 1852, Burchmore was employed as a constable in Pietermaritzburg, living at 1 Greyling Street and in June 1853, was still a constable. In 1855, he was a founder member of the Natal Carbineers but by May 1856 he was a butcher in Pietermaritzburg.

By March 1858 he was insolvent, though he continued working as a butcher during his insolvency and afterwards. The 1863 *Natal Almanac* carries his advertisement as a butcher still at 5 Longmarket Street and in July 1866 he was still a butcher in Pietermaritzburg.

By April 1870 he was in Ladysmith and applied, to the Resident magistrate, for permission to erect a gallows for the slaughter of oxen in Ladysmith's Townlands near the river. Permission was granted, provided "no nuisance" was created and no blood or offal was deposited into the river. He was employed as a clerk, afterwards working as a law agent and conveyancer and in July 1874 he was appointed to act as Officer for the Sale of Gunpowder, Ladysmith. From 1877 to 1878 he lived for a while in Harrismith, but by the time of the Anglo-Zulu War he was back in Natal and, in January 1879, was commissioned as Quartermaster of Carbutt's Border Rangers. By 1888 he was one of three trustees of the Ladysmith Building, Investment and Loan Society. He appears in the 1888 *Natal Almanac* as a butcher of Ladysmith and by 1882 was the proprietor of the Crown Hotel.

On November 11, 1873, after the death in England of his sister-in-law Anne, the Court ordered her seven children be placed in the guardianship of their cousin Charles Norton Burchmore. It was stated that Thomas (who would rightfully have been next of kin) had not been heard from for seven years. So he apparently lost contact with his family in England, although this must have been re-established, because in 1883 his nephew, John Coulson Burchmore one of the seven children alluded to, emigrated to Natal and stayed with his cousin Helen in Ladysmith. It is also known that Bessie Burchmore visited the old family home in Flamstead in 1913 together with her husband William Bamber and her daughter Norah.

Thomas Burchmore made his will on 14 August 1890 and died 6 days later.

Thomas Burchmore's wife was Mary Walton who may have been related to the Rev. James Walton who also emigrated on the *Minerva* and two of the Walton sons, J.C. and J.W. also lived in Ladysmith. Thomas's son, Thomas Walton, was in Ladysmith as early as July 1870, in which month he witnessed the will of J.C. Walton

Mary Ann Burchmore married William Glendinning Cox and after his death she moved to Ladysmith, where in October 1888 she was making a living as a boarding house keeper.

John Coulson Burchmore was Thomas Burchmore's nephew, the son of his younger brother, John Norton Burchmore. He emigrated to Natal in 1883 where he stayed with his cousin

Helen (Nell) Clark (born Cox) in Ladysmith. He was married to Ida Fanny Tandy at All Saints Church, Ladysmith, by Archdeacon Barker, and then moved to Johannesburg, where he became an Auctioneer

### **The MacPHERSON family**

John Macpherson travelled to Natal as a Byrne settler with four of his children, but without his wife Christian Hamilton who had perhaps passed away. They arrived at Port Natal in July 1850, aboard the *Conquering Hero* from Glasgow. The *Conquering Hero* was moored in the roadstead off Port Natal on the night that the *Minerva* was wrecked on the bluff, carrying Mary Ann Richards, the future wife of young Alexander Macpherson.

John was a teacher of violin and dancing and appears in several Edinburgh Directories between 1831 until he left for Natal and was a member of the Society of Dancers in London. By December 1958 he had a dancing academy at 8 Church St Pietermaritzburg and John and his sons were known to play at dances.

In 1857-58 John stood surety for the fare of his son William Watson McPherson who had not traveled to Natal with the family – it is possible he is the William McPherson who died in the Harrismith district on 30 June 1876 aged 36.

It was John's 3rd child, Alexander Jamieson Macpherson, who would move to Ladysmith and establish a large family there.

Alexander Jamieson Macpherson, born in Edinburgh, was the third child and second son of John Macpherson, who travelled to Natal with his father at the age of 13, on the *Conquering Hero*. On arrival in Natal, the family was established in Pietermaritzburg. It is not known when he moved to Ladysmith but he was there in August 1862 when he married Mary Ann "Polly" Richards and in the Natal Almanac for 1881 he is a Storekeeper in Ladysmith.

According to his granddaughter Dulcie, "he was a gentleman of sorts and started the first gentleman's club in Ladysmith. Shortly after his marriage he bought a 3000 acre farm at Matiwane, just outside Ladysmith, for a bottle of brandy where his son Frederick was born."

Frederick Macpherson was born in Ladysmith and in January 1891 he married 18 year old Bessie Helen Bamber and lived at Lower Murchison St, Ladysmith where, when the Klip River flooded the house would flood. With his share of his inheritance from his father he bought a wagon and oxen and became a transport rider. His cattle died of rinderpest and they had some hard times when he could not find work. Eventually he found work on the railways as a clerk and became a Foreman. He died of Cancer in Ladysmith.

Henry Macpherson married Aletta Bernhardina Rudolph. All four of their children were baptized in Ladysmith. In the 1899 Natal Almanac, an H. Macpherson is listed in Ladysmith, occupation "Carrier"

Alexander Macpherson was a Cable Layer when he retired but in the 1903 Natal Almanac an A. Macpherson is listed as a clerk in the Magistrates Office in Ladysmith and in the 1906 Natal Almanac, as an Interpreter, which was quite often a dual employment.

Frederick Jamieson Macpherson was born in Ladysmith in 1893 and became a fitter and turner on the Railways. During WW1 he saw service in Palestine with the South African Field Artillery He moved to Vryheid where he married Daisy Clemitson in 1922 and they had two children.

Dulcie Macpherson and husband Hugh Thompson Rose-Innes farmed at "Four Winds" at Besters for many years.