

Recollections

by

Carol Williamson

Introduction

Carol Williamson (nee Molteno) (1901-1989) wrote these recollections of her life by hand when she was already in her mid eighties. It was a big task because the text comes to some 40,000 words. It gives us fascinating glimpses of life in the first half of the last century – both at the Cape and in Europe.



**Carol Williamson (nee Molteno) –
photographed a few years before she wrote
down her Recollections**

She wrote the recollections for her two sons and daughter, and their children. In doing so, she was joining the small band of our relatives, mainly women, who have taken the trouble to give us some account of their lives, as well as vignettes of members of the family and descriptions of places that have been important in the history of the Moltenos over the past century and a half. John Charles Molteno's daughter, Caroline, wrote her reminiscences of growing up on the Karoo in the 1850s. Percy Molteno's sister in law, Maria Wiseley, who was a daughter of Sir Donald Currie, the shipping magnate, kept a diary of her father's tour around South Africa in 1887. Lil Sandeman, Wallace Molteno's wife, described her stay at the Cape in 1905 and how she and Wallace fell in love. Vivien Molteno (nee Birse) recounted her life as a little girl in pre-revolutionary Moscow and then living in Finland in the inter-war period and right through the Second World War (1939-45). Carol Williamson's own mother, Lucy Molteno (nee Mitchell), wrote of her life as a prospector in some of the wildest and most isolated parts of South Africa just south of the Orange River in Namaqualand. And Cynthia Payne, a granddaughter of John Charles Molteno's daughter, Maria, wrote in wonderful detail about growing

up on a farm in East Griqualand in the early 1920s.

All these diaries, reminiscences and autobiographical fragments are now available for the first time on this Molteno family history website for people to read and enjoy. I am most grateful to Carol's daughter, Margaret Gibbs, for letting me have a copy of her mother's recollections, and giving permission for them to be made available here. And, of course, for many of the photographs that are reproduced in them.

Carol and her family

Carol was born as the Boer War still raged in 1901. Her father, Charlie Molteno (1860-1924), was John Charles Molteno's eldest son. John became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony when Charlie was twelve years old. But within a very few years, he commandeered his son's services as his personal secretary. The result was that Charlie, almost alone of the ten boys, got no chance to go to university. But he did follow his father into politics and was an M.P. in the Cape Parliament for a number of years. Following Sir John's death in 1886 – Charlie was still only 26 at the time – he had to take responsibility for both the family farms on the Karoo and winding up his father's affairs, which were complicated because there was his widow, Lady Minnie Molteno, and 14 surviving offspring, to provide for. When eleven years later in 1897, Charlie married a young American,



Carol Molteno (left) and her sisters and brothers – Virginia, John, Peter and Lucy, Cape Town, c. 1915

Carol's mother Lucy Mitchell, her upbringing in the sophisticated atmosphere of a long established East Coast family and Charlie's parliamentary duties in Cape Town led them to make their home there, not the Karoo. So Carol's earliest memories are of her home, Sandown House, that her parents had built in Rondebosch. As a result of repeated visits, she also remembers in some detail her relatives on both sides of her family – in America and at the Cape.

Lucy Lindley Mitchell (1874-1969), Carol's mother, figures quite prominently in these recollections. Her American family already had a South African connection. Lucy's mother was the daughter of an American missionary, Daniel Lindley. He had come to South Africa in the mid 19th century and founded the Inanda Mission in Zululand a generation before the Zulu Kingdom was finally conquered and incorporated into the colony of Natal. Charlie Molteno met Lucy because her mother, following her husband's death, decided to take her daughters on a world tour. This included spending time in South Africa where Mrs Mitchell's father had lived most of his adult life.

Carol was the second of Charlie and Lucy's children. The eldest was Lucy, who had been born in 1899, the year the Boer War broke out between Britain and the Boer Republics. Carol was born two years later. She was followed four years later by her brother John Molteno (1905-1971), then Peter (1907-2000) (christened Christopher Jarvis) in 1907, and finally the youngest, Virginia, in 1911.

Carol devotes several pages to her Aunt Betty Molteno whom she greatly admired. Betty knew the four eldest children very well because at various points she and her partner Alice Greene actually looked after them for a couple of years. Betty thought a lot of her favourite niece. Towards the end of her life she wrote of Carol who was by now a young woman:

"She is of the 20th century, and in the current of the Woman's Emancipation Movement. She wants to work with the weapons ... of her day, and has through her own volition and decision equipped herself with the M.A. of the Cape University."
(Betty Molteno's *Journal*, 9 November 1925)

Betty herself was of a generation where, back in the late 1860s, her parents never thought of sending her to university. And Betty went on movingly to write:

"It is she who has been the backbone for the family, and has supported Daddy [Charlie] with heart, soul and spirit. How he relied upon her wisdom and innate selflessness of soul! I shall never forget the light in his eyes as he saw her coming along on her bicycle and how he gripped her hand as she sprang to the ground to meet him."

Carol clearly had considerable qualities of spirit. And, like her sister Virginia, she was also very able. In the Cape Matric exams at the end of her secondary schooling, she apparently came out top. Physically, she was both competent and adventurous. She loved horses and was a good rider. She even recounts how she took responsibility for breaking in a horse when staying with her Murray cousins in East Griqualand. And she loved climbing and describes leading parties of young soldiers up Table Mountain during the Second World War.

She had a great sense of responsibility, as Aunt Betty saw. Alone of the five children, she took primary responsibility for her mother during Lucy's four decades of widowhood and in her extreme old age (Lucy died at the age of 95). Carol also had a deep love of the South African countryside which gave her great joy. Indeed she, alone of the three sisters, lived her whole life in South Africa. And she passed on to her children an abiding passion for the wild places of her country.

What is interesting about Carol's *Recollections*

Carol's love of nature and the outdoor life was nourished by her spending a lot of time in two places which have been very special in the life of the Molteno family.



Miller's Point – the old house above the beach, early 1900s

The first was Miller's Point. This is situated on the Cape Peninsula, which forms one arm of False Bay, some 25 miles south of Cape Town's city centre. The property had been bought by Carol's Uncle Percy Molteno before she was born. Following his marriage in 1889 to Bessie Currie, one of Sir Donald daughters, he lived most of his life in Britain. But he

retained close links with the Cape. In addition to an intensive correspondence with several of his brothers and sisters, in particular Charlie, James and Caroline, he and Bessie also visited the Cape at frequent intervals. He bought Miller's Point for use by his family when staying there. It was a simple one-storied house on a dirt track a few miles beyond the Royal Navy base of Simonstown. The property was in a very isolated and beautiful spot. Behind the house rose the steep slopes, thick with bush, of the line of mountains which forms the backbone of the Peninsula. If one looked out from the front *stoep* of the house in the opposite direction, there lay the wide expanse of False Bay, with the tiny beach of Miller's Point almost hidden below. This was a private beach. Difficult to believe in this day and age, but such it was. And only our family had the right to be there. Percy, of course, who was endlessly generous and kind to so many of his relatives, allowed them to use it as a holiday home. Three generations of Moltenos, Murrays, Bissets and other relations delighted in spending time there. I still remember as a little boy in the early 1950s Cousin Islay, Jervis Molteno's wife, with her soft comfortable face, dispensing tea on the *stoep* and handing out delicious chocolate-coated biscuits, each wrapped in silver foil, which had come all the way, I believe, from Fortnum and Mason in Piccadilly. As for Carol, she knew Miller's Point well as a child. And for a time after her marriage, she and Arthur actually lived there; every morning Arthur would stride the few miles along the rough coast track into Simonstown and catch the suburban train to work. Carol loved Miller's Point, and we can all delight in her memories of it here.

Another location so special in the history of the family, and indeed right up to the present day, is Elgin. From the early 1900s several of Sir John Charles Molteno's offspring bought properties there. Surrounded by mountains, it nestles in an upland valley on the far side of the Hottentots Holland some 40 miles from Cape Town. Percy Molteno, the most affluent member of the family as a result



The valley of Elgin in 1905, a few years before farmers started to grow deciduous fruit on a large scale

of his marriage, was the first. In January 1903, he bought the little farm (about 60 hectares) of Oak Lodge on the banks of the Palmiet River for £705, and promptly handed it over to his sister, Caroline and her husband, Dr Charles Murray, who eventually retired there. A few months later, Frank Molteno followed suit and bought Evergreen (which today goes by the name of Applegarth), a farm just outside the tiny village of Grabouw. Then, later in the same year, Ted and Harry Molteno, who were determined to go farming together, also decided to buy their first farm in the valley. Again, it was Percy who footed the bill, lending his two young half-brothers the necessary money.

At this time the valley was still open veld, covered with the distinctive fynbos of the Cape coast. But very soon, and after initial efforts to raise pigs and grow potatoes, and primarily because of the pioneering efforts of Ted and Harry and their niece Kathleen Murray on her parents' farm at Oak Lodge, Elgin became the prime apple and deciduous fruit-growing area of the country. Carol knew and loved Elgin all her life. Her brother, John, worked there for his uncles, Ted and Harry, for much of his life. And following her divorce, Ted and Harry gave Carol the use of a little cottage on the farm at Kromvlei. For a time, she and the children lived there the year round. And when schooling required them to live most of the time in Cape Town, the cottage remained theirs, and they would spend every holiday there. Carol gives us a lovely picture in her *Recollections* of what it was like to live in Elgin in the 1930s and 40s, and all the things her family used to do together.

Carol also provides descriptions of some individual members of the family, most notably her Aunt Betty. Betty (1851-1927) was the eldest child of John Charles and Maria Molteno. She was also, of all their children, the most radical in lifestyle and politically. She never married, but instead formed a lifelong partnership with Alice Greene, the aunt of the English novelist, Grahame Greene. She formed friendships with, and supported politically, several pioneering leaders in South Africa including Mohandas Gandhi, the African journalist and writer Sol Plaatje, and the Rev. John Dube who became the first President of the African National Congress. Betty also supported the East End working class painter and poet, Isaac Rosenberg, who became one of the First World War's most renowned poets despite his early death in the trenches. Carol clearly loved and greatly admired her courageous and eccentric aunt and she gives us some valuable glimpses of this remarkable woman.

The *Recollections* have a wider value too. One sees, for example, the importance a hundred years ago of the wider family as the centre point of a person's social circle. In this, of course, the Molteno and Murray families reflected their times. Carol describes how on a Sunday afternoon her father would take her and her sister Lucy in a pony trap on an endless round of little visits to this or that aunt, uncle or cousin where 'everywhere we were received with hugs and many kisses and little murmurings of affection'.



Carol Molteno, 1925

Carol also loved travel. And she made a number of memorable trips round Europe in the early 1920s, 1930s and 1950s. She provides a fascinating sense of what it was like to travel in Italy and Spain in the age before mass tourism, as she explored these countries in pursuit of her intense interest in the history of European art from the Renaissance onwards.

Each of us reading her *Recollections* will be attracted to some particular aspect of Carol's writing. What we have in our hands are the crystal-clear memories of an 85 year old who, although she lived in very different times from our own, is connected to us by family and place.

A young woman wanting to be a farmer

Turning to the details of Carol's life, one can look at a person and see with hindsight one or two turning points that clearly had a definitive impact on what subsequently happened to them. For Carol, the first such event took place towards the end of her schooling in 1920. She decided she wanted to study Agriculture. Interestingly, she was

of a generation where, for the first time, it was possible for women to train in Agriculture. Two of her cousins were already farming. Kathleen Murray, a first cousin of hers, had paved the way. Born in 1892, and nine years older than Carol, she was living with her parents in Elgin just before the First World War. Although without formal agricultural training, she decided to turn their place into a working farm – something she succeeded in doing spectacularly in the 1920s. At almost exactly the same time, Margaret Molteno, another cousin of Kathleen and Carol's, and only seven years older than Carol, got a place to study Agriculture at Cambridge. At first, she was not allowed to attend actual lectures. The professors argued that the presence of a woman would distract the attention of their male students – not to speak, perhaps, of their own attention! But Margaret persevered and got her degree. She was then appointed a government potato inspector during the First World War. In 1921 she married Kathleen's elder brother, Lenox Murray, who was farming in Kenya. Margaret and Lenox settled in South Africa and started farming at Tulbagh, quite close to Elgin, until they left the country in early 1924.

Carol's father promised to buy her a farm in Ceres if she got an Agricultural degree. And her American family arranged for her to get into Vassar College in the States. But Vassar required her to pass the London Matric exam first. So she buckled down to cram for this instead of the Cape Matric. But the Cape Province Education Department then messed up processing her exam entry and omitted to send it off to London. And so ended Carol's possibility of training to be a farmer. 'What if' questions are always impossible to answer, but just imagine if Carol had gone to the States, taken an Agricultural degree at Vassar and!

The farming tradition in the Molteno family

It's interesting to reflect on the fact that the Molteno family which for generations had been based in the great city of Milan, and then in London once George Anthony Molteno arrived there in the late 18th century, subsequently spawned in South Africa a large number of farmers. Neither Anthony, nor any of his English sons and grandsons, became landowners in England. This was only to be expected. Immigrants moving to a country with a long established land-owning aristocracy are not easily accepted into ranks of the land-owning classes. I remember Margaret Murray telling me how she and Lenox never felt fully accepted by the local gentry after they had bought Painswick Lodge in 1924 – this despite her father having been a Member of Parliament for years and her grandfather, Sir Donald Currie, a big figure in the Liberal Party in Gladstone's time.

At the Cape, of course, a completely different situation obtained. There was no long established landowning aristocracy. The indigenous peoples had already been pushed aside by immigrants from Europe long before John Charles Molteno, Anthony's grandson, arrived in Cape Town in 1831. Land was cheap, particularly in the more arid areas like the Karoo and on the Eastern Frontier. Most Boer farmers did not focus on exporting to markets overseas, and had little knowledge of modern breeding and farming techniques. For people like the Moltenos and Murrays, with a little capital, a business sense, intelligence and much energy, and an awareness of market opportunities beyond South Africa – wool and fruit in particular – farming at the Cape offered huge opportunities. No wonder that seven of John Charles Molteno's ten sons became farmers. Charlie and his much younger brother Wallace started farming in their twenties, both on the Karoo. Their half-brothers, Ted and Harry, began farming at Elgin in 1903. Percy, although married and settled in England from the late 1880s, also bought land as soon as he could afford to. For over 40 years he was the proud owner of Parklands Farm outside Gomshall and Shere in Surrey, although his career as a manager

of the Union Castle Line and Liberal Member of Parliament precluded him from actually running the farm himself. Several of his other brothers and sisters acquired farms later in life, including Frank Molteno, who had been a land surveyor in his professional life, and Dr Victor Molteno. Indeed only Barkly, who made his career in the Royal Navy, and James, who was a lawyer and politician all his working life, did not buy farms.



Women workers preparing wool on Gordon Murray's farm, Greenfields, East Griqualand, early 1900s

In

the next generation, many more Moltenos and Murrays became farmers. Of Caroline and Dr Charles Murray's eight offspring, Jarvis and Lenox went farming in Kenya, Gordon in East Griqualand, and Kathleen at her parents' home in Elgin. Caroline's sister, Maria, who had married Tom Anderson, a Cape Town businessman, had two of her three children become farmers – Harold Anderson at Norval's Pont on the Orange River and Effie, who married Elliot Stanford and became a busy farmer's wife at Inungi in East Griqualand. Charlie's son, John Molteno, joined his Uncles Ted and Harry as their general manager for many years, and was given by them a small farm, Kromvlei, of his own. And as we have just seen, his sister Carol herself had wanted to be a farmer, but wasn't able to as a result of the bureaucratic mix-up. Percy's daughter, Margaret, farmed Painswick Lodge in Gloucestershire with her husband, Lenox. And since he was often away building up his farm, Marania, in Kenya, she had to take active responsibility for farming Painswick. Percy's son, Jervis, inherited Glen Lyon in the Highlands from his grandfather, Sir Donald Currie. Although Jervis cannot be described as an active hands-on farmer himself, he was intensely interested in the land as a landowner. As for Frank Molteno's offspring, his daughter married former Royal Navy Commander Gordon Thomas and he and Brenda made a great success of the family farm in Elgin following the end of the First World War in 1918. And Victor's son, John Tennant Molteno, went farming at Victoria West in the Karoo where, at Rocklands, his son and grandson have farmed the same land ever since.

There are still Molteno and Murray descendants, in the opening decades of the 21st century, who are farming in Gloucestershire, on the slopes of Mount Kenya and in many parts of South Africa, including the Karoo, Elgin, the Eastern Cape, the Outeniqua mountains and Kwazulu-Natal.

The generation Carol belonged to

Carol belonged to a generation of European women who lived through huge changes. They won the right to vote after the First World War (1914-18) in both Britain and South Africa, although that did not change the personal dynamics and division of roles between men and women in the home all that much. Many more middle class women were now able to go on to higher education. And many of them, including Carol who got a job teaching history at Rustenburg Girls School for a short time, began to earn their own living, as of course working class women had always had to do. But for many decades the range of professions women could easily enter remained narrow, and the worlds of big business, the law, the armed forces, and the Church remained largely closed to them. Life in the first half of the 20th century was also very difficult for men and women generally, and full of suffering and loss. This was the result of the two world wars that swept up so many families, including our own, as well as of the Great Depression – Carol gives us some sense of how modest were the material circumstances of even middle class families in the early 1930s.

Divorce

Another huge change in society was that divorce became much more common from the 1930s on. For a husband and wife to separate in this way still required the public humiliation of proof of infidelity. And divorce remained socially frowned upon. But for the first time in our family's history, divorce was resorted to instead of enduring the alternative of an unhappy marriage, as had happened, for example, in the previous generation with James and Clare Molteno. The number of Molteno cousins going through the sadness, and often bitterness, of separation reads like a rollcall. Nesta Molteno was divorced by her husband, John Syme, who then married her first cousin, Joan Molteno. My father, Donald, who was terribly unhappy with his wife, Veronica, got divorced, and very soon married my mother, Molly Goldsmith. I remember my mother telling me how she felt almost ostracised by her Molteno in-laws. Carol's brother, John Molteno, divorced his wife. And their sister, Virginia, got divorced from both of her husbands. And after the end of the Second World War, Viola, Barkly Molteno's daughter, was divorced from her husband, Peter Macmillan.

As you can read in these *Recollections*, Carol fell in love with a young lawyer, Arthur Williamson, just back from the First World War. They got engaged secretly when Carol was not quite twenty. Her parents thought she was too young and sent her to 'cool off' in the remote district of East Griqualand where several members of the family were farming. But she and Arthur became students at the University of Cape Town. And for over four years this provided the opportunity for them to see each other every day and do things together. Having finished their degrees, they at last got married in December 1925. Carol describes this time as 'the happiest years of my life'. They did not mind the fact that Arthur was a struggling young barrister in an economically depressed time. They lived in one rented or borrowed house after another. They cycled around Cape Town because they could not afford a car. They both loved the Cape, the mountains and the sea. And they had three children.

Then came the events that led to their divorce. Carol alludes to them very briefly. Years later, her sister Virginia related how Carol had told her what really happened. Carol was suffering from severe post-natal depression and had taken a long convalescent trip to Europe in order to get better. She and Arthur recruited a German governess from South West Africa (today's Namibia) to look after their three very small children. The governess became pregnant by Arthur. She was from a strict Christian family and felt they would be terribly shocked if she had a child out of wedlock. She could not face telling them. So when Arthur concluded he had to marry Erna, Carol felt she could not stand in the way.

The price she paid, as is the case with many divorces, was a heavy one. Quite apart from the heartache and memories of their happy years before, Carol was suddenly a single parent with three very young children. Arthur played little or no role in their growing up because, following the divorce in the mid 1930s, he moved from the Cape to the Johannesburg Bar a thousand miles away, and pursued his career as a barrister there.

All her life Carol was quite hard up. The divorce, of course, was not the only reason. The 1930s were years of the Great Depression, and then came the Second World War. And her father had not died a wealthy man.

Carol must also have been lonely, despite her circle of friends. Being principled, however, and having endured a divorce that she herself had not wanted, she refused years later when she met an Englishman who wanted to marry her, to contemplate it because he was already married.

What has been done to this text

Finally, I should make clear what I have done with Carol's text. She wrote the whole thing out in long hand. A typist was then employed – this is back in the 1980s – who in the process made a number of spelling mistakes, particularly of proper names. These I have corrected. I have also done the usual copyeditor's work on a text (including occasional reordering of words and other stylistic changes). I have divided up the text, which is quite long, into chapters and inserted subheadings. Carol refers throughout to a large number of family members and friends whom she assumes will be familiar to her immediate family reading it. Where possible, I have explained in footnotes who all these people were, and occasionally also explained particular words or events that the reader today is unlikely to be acquainted with. The only substantial change to Carol's text has been a reordering of the material right at the end. For some reason, she goes back in time and talks again about her home at Kromvlei in the 1930s. I have moved this section forward to where it more properly belongs. For the rest, I have scrupulously respected Carol's text. The photographs, of course, have been added by me.

Robert Molteno

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**Lucy Molteno with her eldest daughter, Lucy,
and John and Carol, 1905**

1. My Childhood

Visiting our American relations, 1905

When I was four and a half years old, we went to England and then on to America to see our grandmother, Mother's two sisters and her half-brother, Uncle Clarence, and his big family.¹ Lucy was seven and John only a few months old.² Our Scottish nurse, known as Aunt Bessie, had come to look after us. So that we could have fresh milk on the ship, it was arranged through Uncle Percy,³ a director of the Union Castle Line, that we should take one of our cows with us. On our return we brought back another cow from Uncle Percy's small model farm and weekend home in Surrey, Parklands. Having stayed in his lovely house in London, 10 Palace Court, and weekends at Parklands, we voyaged on to New York. Our grandmother, Sarah Mitchell, had an island in the Adirondacks where we soon joined her for the summer. Paths with duckboards joined the various wooden bedroom bungalows to the living-room, and the dining-room was filled with antlers and

¹ Carol's grandmother, Sarah Lindley Mitchell (daughter of Daniel Lindley, an American missionary to the Zulus from the late 1840s); Carol's aunts – Nan Mitchell and Mrs Carol Phelps Stokes; and her half-uncle, Clarence Mitchell. For more details about Carol's American family, see her mother Lucy Molteno's own recollections, *What a Strange Thing is Memory* (also on this website).

² Carol was the second eldest child. Her older sister was Lucy and John her younger brother. The last two children, Peter and Virginia, had not yet been born by the time of this trip in 1905.

³ Percy Molteno, Carol's father Charlie Molteno's brother, who had married and was living in Britain. Percy and Bessie Molteno's London home was 10 Palace Court, which was a few yards north of Kensington Gardens. They also had a farm called Parklands; this was just south of London and overlooked the little Surrey village of Shere. Their third home, Glen Lyon, Bessie inherited from her father, the Victorian shipping magnate, Sir Donald Currie.

other shooting trophies. We were a large party of many relations and friends. The men organized a



Carol Molteno, sitting in a birch canoe next to the jetty on the lake in the Adirondacks, 1906

shooting expedition to the north. Lucy and I spent much of our time playing in a canoe moored next to the jetty, or fielding tennis balls for the grown-ups. I vividly remember picnics by boat to various small islands covered with birch and maple trees which were just beginning to turn scarlet, and visiting a nearby island home where at its jetty I watched with shudders a huge fat water snake circling underneath.

An excitement one day was to have a party of Red Indian men arrive in

their canoes on their way to sell handicrafts they had made out of birch bark: tiny canoes, waste-paper baskets, carvings, and sweet-smelling fine soft pine needles to stuff cushions with and possibly mattresses as well. We brought back some of these to Sandown⁴ and our toy canoes were a joy, inspiring us to make miniature ones out of banana skins and matches.

Because of a shortage of beds in our bungalow I had to sleep in a cot that was far too short for me, so that my legs ached with cramp. We had to watch that John, who was crawling by now, didn't fall off the duckboard path into the uneven scrub and stones below. The nursery bungalow was some distance from the grown-ups and, as we had all our meals there, we seemed to live apart but were invited to join the picnics. When playing in our moored canoe we watched the postman's daily arrival in his boat.

Meeting Rudyard Kipling

Travelling back from England to Cape Town was Rudyard Kipling and his family, a son and a daughter. As he looked after them after lunch every day, just as Mother looked after us to give Nurse a rest, we got to know each other and played together. On my fifth birthday while we were still at sea, Kipling wrote a poem for me, but as I didn't appreciate his doing so the poem got lost. We saw the children afterwards at the Woolsack⁵ which Rhodes lent to Kipling for his yearly visits.

⁴ Their family home in Rondebosch, Cape Town.

⁵ A beautiful house in Rondebosch belonging to Cecil Rhodes who had made his fortune from diamonds in Kimberley, and subsequently the gold fields on the Reef. Rhodes had restored the house and lent it as a retreat for visiting writers.



Lucy & Carol Molteno (with Rudyard Kipling to left of Lucy), at children's party on the boat to Cape Town, 1906

When back from our long overseas visit, Lucy was nearly eight and I was five – old enough to begin lessons. Mother employed a charming young woman, Miss Kay, who had large brown eyes and masses of shining hair. For two hours every morning she taught us, until she left to be married to a farmer in Rhodesia. After their baby's birth (later Barbara Newton), her young husband died of blackwater fever, which was rife in those days before DDT and mosquito eradication.

When I was still five years old Uncle James⁶ gave us a Welsh pony, Lady Bang, with a pony cart, side-saddle and harness, all of which he had imported from England for his own children. Aunt Clare had not long after taken her four children to London and never came back.⁷ Uncle James had been Speaker of the Houses of Parliament and would have been High Commissioner for South Africa had he not had a coronary, due it was said to his drinking too much with his cronies. He was extremely popular throughout the country but after his illness he never drank again. From then on, he led a quiet life at Elgin writing his book *The Dominion of Afrikanerdom*, as well as a lively history of the political life in

⁶ James Molteno, M.P., Speaker of the Cape Parliament at this time.

⁷ Clare Holland Pryor was James Molteno's wife. It was an unhappy marriage and she and James lived apart, in England and the Cape respectively, most of the time. Their four children grew up mainly in Britain and made their lives there, except for Monica Molteno who married an American, John Glascock Mays, and emigrated to the States.

which he had taken part.⁸ This was when he had retired, but before that, after Aunt Clare had left, he spent much of his free time at weekends with us. He was devoted to children and wanted always to have a child sitting on his knee or close to him.

Travelling by Cape cart

When Miss Kay left, Lucy and I went to Milburn House, a private girl's school, situated where the present Claremont Civic Centre was later built. For a year we drove to school daily in the pony cart, with Henry the coachman supervising our holding the reins in turn. I was devoted to our horses and dogs and



Carol Molteno having fun with her elder sister, Lucy, c. 1906

⁸ This account of Sir James Molteno's life is not entirely accurate. He was still Speaker of the Cape Parliament at the time of his giving Lady Bang and the pony cart to his brother, Charlie's, children. I am not sure he was popular throughout South Africa, although he was remembered and admired by many in the Cape Colony. It is interesting to hear this recollection that he might have been appointed as South African High Commissioner in London after he ceased to be Speaker of the Union Parliament. Finally, he actually wrote two volumes of autobiographical reminiscences. *The Dominion of Afrikanerdom* is available on-line. See the Books and Writings section of this website.

longed to drive the cart every time. I bribed Lucy into letting me drive to school for a whole term by offering her all my Christmas chocolates. When Mother couldn't spare Henry to fetch us in the afternoon, we went by train to Rondebosch Fountain and from there walked the one and a half miles to Sandown House. Henry drove Mother in the perfectly sprung Cape cart⁹ that had been used by Rhodes, who had had it built by Cooper's, the well-known carriage builders. Henry wore a livery we thought very grand. His blue broadcloth coat was made to measure by a tailor and had large silver buttons. A cockaded black top hat, black leather top boots and smart gauntlet gloves were the final touch of elegance.

Mother sometimes took us with her when she drove out to tea or to leave cards. I remember one call to Mrs Koopmans de Wet and her unmarried sister in their lovely house in Strand Street. We had the strangest tea I had ever seen – quite bitter. Mrs Koopmans de Wet was one of the leading women of the



Charlie Molteno, Carol's father, with his eldest son, John, 1906

Cape and, had she been a man, could have been a Member of Parliament or even Prime Minister. During the sittings of Parliament she invited the Cabinet to lunch on frequent occasions but never included their wives. She was au fait with all that went on and expressed her views, to which attention was given. After her death, Dr Fred Purcell, then Curator of the Museum, was the leading spirit in getting her house declared a national monument. It was furnished with old Cape Dutch furniture which was already difficult to find. I remember his telling Mother when we were lunching at Bergvliet¹⁰ that he had not been able to collect as good pieces as he had some years earlier for his own museum. At the entrance to the Koopmans de Wet House is a plaque dedicated to Fred Purcell.

My father making tea

At home Daddy always made the tea. Hot water was put into a meths-heated silver kettle, which tilted to pour the hot water exactly as it came to the boil on to the tea leaves in a heated earthenware tea pot. The tea had to infuse for a timed three minutes before being poured. Lucy and I were not allowed tea or coffee before we were sixteen years old, nor might we drink water

⁹ A two-wheeler that could carry four people.

¹⁰ Bergvliet House was the Purcell family home. An old house with its own vineyards and farmland, It was situated between Plumstead and Retreat on the Constantiaberg side of the suburban railway line. The house was still standing in the 1940s. But most of the area, including the Malay smallholdings I remember as a boy at the top of Ladies Mile where they grew the most beautiful Iceland poppies was built over following the Second World War, and the Malay community expelled under the Group Areas Act in the late 1950s or early 60s.

at meals. The strict rules by which Lucy and I were brought up were relaxed later for the boys and Virginia.

When we drove to Cape Town to shop, the horses were outspanned on the [Grand] Parade for a rest. When Major Miller flew the first aeroplane to South Africa, the public were allowed to see it fly at Green



Betty Molteno, Carol's beloved aunt

Point and a great crowd was there to see it take off.¹¹ We were all disappointed because it never left the ground until a few days later, and so with no eager audience watching. Another first was the opening of a bioscope at Green Point. A black and white silent film, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, was the first to be shown. I had a splitting headache from keenly watching the jerking film which took two whole hours to finish.

Being educated by Aunt Betty Molteno

After a year we left Milburn House to be put under the educational care of Aunt Betty and Miss Alice Greene, her life-long friend, who had a Girton College¹² teaching degree. When Aunt Betty was at Cambridge University she was asked to be headmistress of the Collegiate Girls' School in Port Elizabeth.¹³ Aunt Betty was an outstanding personality, fifty years ahead of her time. She was a great friend of Olive Schreiner¹⁴ and later lived near her in London. She was

¹¹ Carol has rather telescoped dates here! She was grown up by the time the first powered flight from Britain to South Africa took place. Major Miller, however, was one of a small band of South African pilots who flew planes during the First World War in the German South West Africa campaign in 1915, and subsequently in France.

¹² Girton was the first college at Cambridge University created in 1869 specifically to admit women. It took almost a century more before the other colleges opened their doors to female students.

¹³ This is not quite correct. Betty met Miss Hall and was invited by her to join the staff of her girls school in Graaff Reinet. When Miss Hall moved to Port Elizabeth to become Headmistress there, Betty went with her, and in turn became Head following Miss Hall's death a few years later.

¹⁴ Olive Schreiner was an early South African novelist, feminist writer and political opponent of Britain waging war against the Boer Republics. Olive, Lucy and Betty Molteno were close, lifelong friends.

always befriending people who needed help or whose causes she thought worthy. After leaving Port Elizabeth she travelled around the country speaking on Gandhi's platform in support of his cause.¹⁵ She also helped down-and-out writers and artists who years later made their names. A pastel she commissioned to be done of Gandhi is the only likeness of him at that early period of his life in South Africa. When May Murray-Parker¹⁶ inherited the portrait she gave it to the Gandhi Museum in India where it now hangs. A very good pastel of Aunt Betty is in the Cape Town National Gallery; it is stored in the vaults and is by the same artist.

For two and a half years Miss Greene taught us and Aunt Betty harangued us to use our minds and emotions and inspired us with ideas about life, art and literature.¹⁷ She read us poetry and discussed subjects. Daddy thought it would be a great chance for Lucy and me to be under the influence of them both. We were indeed fortunate to have our minds broadened and to mix with intelligent people who very often don't trouble to talk intimately with children of our ages. I think we learnt a great deal by having those years in their society. Up till then we had been too sheltered and restricted in whom we played with and what books we might read.

Seeing Gandhi at Claremont House

Aunt Betty and Miss Greene first rented Ivy Dene Cottage and then took charge of Uncle Frank's Claremont House,¹⁸ which had been the Molteno family home. We lived with them in this large rambling place. The most vivid event I remember was a garden party Betty gave to welcome Mr and Mrs Gandhi who were on a visit from India. She told us that no notice of their arrival had been taken and she felt that leading people here should meet him and he should be made welcome. The Gandhis stayed on late with us and my aunt said that night that we would be proud one day to have met him as he would become a world figure. At that time, he was not yet recognized as such. I can still see a thin diminutive husband and wife, robed in white cotton wraps, standing at the front door with Aunt Betty to greet the various leaders in politics she had invited and felt ought to meet him.

Life in the care of Aunt Betty

Daddy and Mother decided to go to Europe for six months for Mother to be treated for her digestion by a famous Dr Combe in Switzerland. Aunt Betty took charge of Sandown¹⁹ while they were away. It was a

¹⁵ Mohandas Gandhi lived in South Africa for over 20 years. He became a leader of the Indian community there and forged his *satyagraha* campaigning strategy of non-violent resistance during its struggle. In the early 1900s Betty Molteno became an ardent supporter of this struggle against racial discrimination. For a period of time, she actually had a cottage next door to Gandhi's Phoenix Settlement outside Durban. The full story of her support for him has still to be written.

¹⁶ May was a niece of Betty's and closest to her, of all the family, in outlook and political vision.

¹⁷ What a lovely contrast between Alice doing the more conventional teaching of subjects, and Betty 'haranguing' her nieces, Lucy and Carol.

¹⁸ Frank Molteno was one of Betty's many brothers – seven in all, as well as three half-brothers.

¹⁹ Sandown was Charlie and Lucy Molteno's home in Rondebosch, Cape Town. It had five acres of grounds. Carol's sister, Virginia, told me that there was a large rose garden where her father used to pick her mother a rose every morning. And beyond the grounds, Virginia said, 'it was just wattles and natives'! After Charlie Molteno's death in 1924, the house was demolished and the land sub-divided into plots and sold off.

revolution in our way of living. We had been accustomed at home to appetising meals with such delicacies as imported Japanese salmon, which the cook made up into fried fish cakes for breakfast, and ice-cream churned by hand for half an hour for Sunday lunch, and rich iced chocolate cake for tea. All luxuries were now banned and we were to live simply with Spartan training. We were all unhappy and cried a lot when alone. Old Nurse barricaded the nursery door and wouldn't let 'that woman' in.

On one occasion Peter²⁰ fell from a tree and a nail from a plank went into his ankle. I lifted him off the plank and pulled out the nail, but the wound went septic. Nurse wouldn't let Aunt Betty see, so no doctor was called.

The servants ate the delicacies unseen by Aunt Betty and we children felt hungry, hating to live on oranges and fresh raw food. For Aunt Betty believed in eating only what was in season and, if possible, raw.

A well-known African clergyman from the Eastern Cape came to supper one evening. But no food appeared. After a long wait, Lucy and I were sent to the kitchen where we found the two white maids doubled up with muffled laughter. They refused to wait on a black man sitting on Master's armchair in the dining room. So Lucy and I waited at table.²¹



Alice Greene (top left), Betty Molteno, and Betty's niece, Lucy Molteno (Carol's elder sister), Miller's Point, 1912

I think Aunt Betty at times vented her feelings on Lucy and me. We had never been punished in our lives, except a slap from old Nurse. We were very obedient, always doing what we were told without a murmur. But we felt ashamed of Aunt Betty in public and pretended we didn't know her when she insisted on travelling second or third class on the train, while we went first. She in turn thought we were class

conscious and colour conscious, and that children should never relay orders to a servant. We were

²⁰ Peter, the fourth of Charlie and Lucy's children, was only a little boy at this time.

²¹ Such were the realities of South Africa in the early 1900s. Like many well-off white South Africans, Charlie and Lucy employed both white and black servants. But white servants, despite the realities of their position, still felt superior to all black South Africans, regardless of their class or education.

scolded in an hour-long lecture when she heard one of us tell a servant to do something. Children should never give an order to a grown-up. And if it were a message, it must be couched in the most diplomatic language, repeating 'would he (or she) be so kind as to help'.... The fact was Aunt Betty didn't approve of there being servants. And when we went with her to the house at Miller's Point for the summer months, we had to help with the domestic work after school lessons.

Aunt Betty's unconventional ways and looks embarrassed us, I am ashamed to confess. Mother and all the women I knew dressed well, had manicured nails, and elegant coiffured hair, whereas Aunt Betty and Miss Greene wore sandals and, if they went to stay with anyone, put on one dress on top of the other in order to save carrying more than just a string bag. They twisted their hair in a stringy knot, jabbed in with a comb, so it was always falling down. And their hands were roughened with carpentry and gardening and their flat shoes were never cleaned.

Later they took a house at Gordon's Bay above Aunt Minnie's.²² But we were there for a short time only as they were intending to go to England soon. This was not long before the outbreak of the 1914-18 War. It was then that I went to Rustenburg, mid-year in standard six, and Lucy went to Wynberg Girls' High as a boarder.

Riding on the Cape Flats

I loved the sports at school and later rode to games in the afternoons, or if [there were] none that day I would go riding with Eileen Stanford.²³ She had her parents' lovely horses to ride which she shared with her older sisters; they won many prizes at shows. My school-days obsession with horses passed when ours were stolen from the field one Sunday and never traced. It was still safe in those days for a young girl to ride everywhere on her own. I learnt to find my way unerringly and never got lost along the many sand tracks leading to the vegetable farms of the German peasant settlers or to groups of Coloured people's shacks that spread beyond the boundaries of Crawford and later Athlone.²⁴

Pinelands²⁵ was then a forest of pine trees planted by the Forestry Department. Our grandfather²⁶ had appointed Joseph Storr Lister as Conservator of the Forestry Department and he it was who planted the Port Jackson wattle to bind the shifting sand of the Flats. He became a very great friend of Daddy's. When we returned from America, Daddy took Lucy and me most Sunday mornings to visit the Lister family who rented a large house on the corner of Sandown and Milner Roads. Nell, being the youngest and not more than a few years older than us, we saw most of, and as Mother liked her very much she

²² Gordon's Bay lies at the foot of the Hottentots Holland Mountains at the eastern end of False Bay. Aunt Minnie was the youngest child of Sir John Molteno (Carol's grandfather) and his last wife, also called Minnie. Minnie and her mother's house had a beautiful view, situated at the corner where the coast turns south towards Hangklip.

²³ Was Eileen Stanford related to Elliot Stanford, husband of Effie Anderson whose mother was Maria Molteno? If so, Eileen and Carol Molteno were distant cousins by marriage.

²⁴ The Cape Flats were almost uninhabited a century ago. But as Cape Town's Coloured population grew, so the poorest of them built shacks further and further away from the mountain. These informal settlements of 'pondokkies' (interestingly, a Malay word, not forgotten by the descendants of the Cape's original Javanese immigrants) grew into larger and larger slums. As for farming, the apparently barren sand of the Cape Flats can blossom with the application of water and compost, as Cape Town's market gardeners showed.

²⁵ Since the 1930s, a comfortable garden suburb of Cape Town.

²⁶ Sir John Molteno, first Prime Minister of the Cape (1872-78).

often stayed with us. With her photographic memory she could tell me seventy-five years later where in the Sandown house every piece of furniture stood. We would leave notes for each other under a stone at the entrance in Sandown Road to our short road named Peter Abbotsleigh Road by the Lloyds.

More memories of Aunt Betty

There were many visitors and relations who came to our home about whom I would like to recall my impressions. First and foremost, as I have already said, were Aunt Betty and Miss Greene. Aunt Betty was an outstanding personality – highly regarded by all who knew her and appreciated her gifts as a leading intellectual of her time, and a person who had great emotional driving force. She saw in her imagination the women of the future who should have high-minded ideals and prepare to be leaders in the world. She was in sympathy with the suffragettes and knew many of them well. Olive Schreiner, Emily Hobhouse, Anna Purcell and many others were her great friends.²⁷ Aunt Betty corresponded with African leaders²⁸ and would seek out any unusual member of the Coloured community. She followed



M. K.Gandhi (seated, wearing sandals, 4th from left), South Africa, 1912 (this is at the time Betty Molteno worked supporting his campaigns)

²⁷ All three women actively opposed the Boer War and were involved in efforts to relieve the suffering of the Boer women and children that the British forces herded into concentration camps. Anna Purcell was Dr Fred Purcell's wife and mother of Dr Walter Purcell. The Purcells were related to the family of Carol Molteno's husband, Arthur Williamson, on his mother's side. Carol's daughter, Margaret Williamson, grew up knowing Walter Purcell's daughters who were her cousins.

²⁸ They included Sol Plaatje, the leading African journalist from Kimberley, and Rev. John Dube of Natal, who became the first President of the African National Congress in 1912.

Gandhi round the country speaking on his platform in the cause of freedom of movement and other rights for Indians. Tradesmen and artisans became her friends. She asked a Coloured carpenter to come to Sandown on Saturday mornings and teach us carpentry, although he soon told her that our small hands were too weak to use tools effectively. An unknown artist, Mabel Cook, was commissioned to do a crayon portrait of Lucy and myself. It hangs in the spare room. The First World War poet from the English proletariat, Isaac Rosenberg, was an invalid here at the Cape for a time, and Aunt Betty befriended and helped him financially.²⁹ Mrs Louisa Bolus was an admiring pupil of Betty's at the school where Betty had been headmistress in Port Elizabeth. She it was who gave Lucy and me Botany lessons and she remained a friend of mine until she died in her home off Talana Road, near me. Her husband, Frank Bolus, was something of an invalid, and many Saturday afternoons Mrs Bolus invited me to tea to give him companionship, when he would speak much about his beloved wild birds of which he wrote. Dr. Louis Leipoldt, the Afrikaans poet, often called in to talk. One Sunday morning Dr Leipoldt took Betty and us girls to Milnerton for breakfast morning tea to watch birds.

Aunt Betty urged us to compose poems just as her Collegiate pupils sometimes had to do when replying to an invitation for the school to visit a ship in the bay or some such outing. I had no capacity nor the imagination to write poetry, but Lucy did. So when staying with Aunt Betty at Miller's Point we all took part in producing a play on a natural stage amongst the granite boulders and trees near the house. And we sang madrigals, each of us taking parts while drying the dishes after meals. John cleaned the steel knives for his part as a six-year-old.³⁰

Aunt Betty was an inspired orator and would recite speeches from Shakespeare's plays if she had no special cause at the moment to talk about. I remember Daddy saying to Mother, 'Here is a letter again pleading for financial support for some lame duck. She is always finding such people and spending her money on them.' How she found them we never knew as she did not bring them to the house.

She gave us long talks on the facts of life and how we should regard men: what we should expect from them in marriage – a Victorian idealism held by so-called decent women in those pre-1914 days. There was much sentimentalism mixed up with it, but though Aunt Betty was emotional, she was down to earth as well and certainly not prudish. One did not undress in front of other women in those days (not quite 'nice' to do so) and once Lucy was most upset when she found the tom cat had been watching her have a bath. Lucy always dressed inside the built-in cupboard in our shared bedroom and told me to turn my back. I dared sometimes to tease her, but not often.

When Aunt Betty and Miss Greene sailed for England, they never returned.³¹ Miss Greene lived with her sister in Cambridge and in Helen Greene's cottage in Cornwall until she died of cancer in 1920. Her family thought she had lived too irregular and hard a life. When Aunt Betty died, she was buried next to

²⁹ The story of Betty Molteno and Isaac Rosenberg is told in Jean Moorcroft Wilson, *Isaac Rosenberg: The Making of a Great War Poet: A New Life*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2007.

³⁰ This fixes the date of Carol, Lucy and John's stay with Betty and Alice at Miller's Point as the summer of 1911.

³¹ This was in 1916. Betty Molteno was then 65 years old. It is a little sad to think that she never saw again the country she had lived almost her whole life in. Perhaps her decision not to live in South Africa anymore reflected her own deep sadness that the intensification of white racism and rise of a xenophobic Afrikaner nationalism were pushing the country in directions she totally rejected.

Alice Greene. Meanwhile she lived alone as a frugal vegetarian in some room in London. She lived near Mrs Solomon, widow of the famous Saul Solomon,³² and saw a lot of Olive Schreiner as well.

The four years of the War hung like a dark cloud over my adolescence while at Rustenburg School. Mother spurred us to visit regularly, on Sunday afternoons, the military hospitals. Chaperoned by Virginia's Norland nurse,³³ we carried baskets of roses from Mother's lovely rose garden. Nurse would talk to one officer in particular, Major Dempsey, with whom she sat every time, while Lucy and I trailed shyly through the wards trying to converse with every sick man willing to talk. Mother told us it was our duty and the least we could do to show concern.

My first and only dance while I was at school was the Rondebosch Boys' High School Matric Dance, which was energetic and fun. Otherwise there were only fundraising entertainments for the War at which we sang and acted. Doreen and Jocelyn de Villiers³⁴ were our best friends and one or other of them often spent days or stayed overnight with us. We organized paperchases on our bicycles and horses.³⁵ We acted in a play written and produced by Helen Stanford (now Relly), and took part in school plays at the Town Hall. Picnics at the sea arranged by the de Villiers were frequent.

My brother, Peter Molteno

When I was sixteen I joined Johnny Brooke's Confirmation Class. We took John and Peter to Sunday morning church at St Thomas's.³⁶ One Sunday Peter³⁷ let loose his pet squirrel which raced along the tops of the pews during prayers. I had to catch it and take it to the Bells' house nearby, but felt very embarrassed and angry with Peter. He was a bewitching imp with deep blue eyes and a mop of curls. He always carried his catapult or bow and arrows, and later an airgun. Once, he and a friend were playing with John's revolver, which they had stolen in pieces from John's bedroom drawer and put together in the woods at the bottom of the garden. His friend by mistake shot Peter through the chest. The bullet passed between his heart and lungs and lodged in his armpit. Peter came into the hall wearing a white pullover with blood spurting from his chest, and sank into a chair. We were all horrified. Mother sent Lucy to fetch Mrs Lloyd next door and she took charge. Daddy was away up country inspecting farms for the Land Bank and Mother had no knowledge of what to do. The bullet was extracted some days later in Rondebosch Cottage Hospital by Dr. de Villiers.

³² Saul Solomon was almost exactly the same age as Betty's father, John Molteno. Like John, Saul was an immigrant (in his case from the island of St Helena) and a prominent Member of the Cape Parliament. The two men, both liberal and secularist in outlook, worked together to win responsible government for the Cape and became friends. His wife, Georgina, was a suffragette, which was one of several causes that drew her and Betty together. Their daughter, Daisy Solomon, was also a suffragette and a friend of the Moltenos.

³³ Virginia, the youngest of the five children, was born in 1911. As a little girl, she was looked after by a nanny trained at the renowned Norland College in England.

³⁴ Jocelyn de Villiers married Dr Walter Purcell, son of Fred Purcell, who created the Koopmans de Wet House Museum. See above.

³⁵ I remember as a boy in the 1950s my mother, Molly Molteno, laying a paperchase trail on horseback, and the rest of us on our ponies following the trail through the Port Jackson woods near our home at Little Princess Vlei on the Cape Flats.

³⁶ St Thomas's was the Anglican church in Rondebosch. It was the parish church for several of the Moltenos, notably Carol's Uncle Frank Molteno who was a devout Christian and very active in the St Thomas's congregation.

³⁷ Peter Molteno was nine years old at the time (1916).

Uncle Ted and Uncle Clifford Molteno

Uncle Ted³⁸ used to visit us now and again and when he spent the night I had to sleep in the drawing room on the sofa when everyone else had gone to bed. Occasionally Uncle Clifford appeared. He stood as a Member of Parliament for Simonstown but failed to get any votes. He wrote poetry and later ran a newspaper of his own, which soon bankrupted him.

Family life

When we were young Daddy often took us out to tea on Sundays to the homes of various elderly relations in Kenilworth and Claremont. Aunt Annie Bisset, Willie Blenkins and Aunt Emmie Jarvis always had wonderful teas – *konfyts* of watermelon, figs or gherkins and cakes of every kind loading the table. The Lindleys' home, Aunt Caroline's, Uncle Victor's, Uncle Frank's and others like Jim Bisset's were visited in turn, and everywhere we were received with hugs and many kisses and little murmurings of affection.³⁹

If we stayed at home, interesting guests were always invited to lunch or tea. Very often I would be asked to catch a horse in the ten-acre field. It belonged to Dr Murray. But we used it to inspan the dogcart to fetch the guests at the station and later take them back. Cousin Beth⁴⁰ came very often and was very stimulating when she discussed the books she had been reading. I thought her most intelligent. She had a university degree from America and ran a kindergarten in her home in Pine Road, Claremont. Lucy and I had gone there before Miss Kay came to us. She was staying with us at Miller's Point when she heard Allan had run away from boarding school with Jack Beattie to enlist, although only sixteen. He had to get her signature to enable him to enlist as a minor but he managed to persuade her to sign.

Miller's Point

In those days the narrow road along the coast beyond Simonstown ended before Castle Rock and from there on became a fishermen's path. The path dipped in and out of each ravine, down which ran streams fringed with maidenhair fern and the occasional blue disa.⁴¹ The path formed the road from Red Hill to Cape Point and along that route in the marshy flats one could pick large bunches of flame lilies, now almost extinct. Few people had cars at that time. The Admiral and his wife once rode out to visit us but found the road blocked by a landslide after rain. The milkcart couldn't get through for some days.

³⁸ Ted and Clifford Molteno, their younger brother Harry, and their sister Minnie were Sir John Molteno's youngest children, and so were Carol's uncles and aunt. Their mother was also called Minnie. The uncles lived in Elgin, some 45 miles from Cape Town, where they were building up a huge deciduous fruit growing enterprise. Minnie lived with her mother on the other side of the Hottentots Holland Mountains in the little village of Gordon's Bay.

³⁹ These were all members of the extended family of Jarvises, Moltenos, Bissets, and Murrays. The Lindleys were related to Carol through her grandmother, Mrs Sarah Lindley Mitchell, whose brother Bryant Lindley lived at the Cape. See *How the Molteno and other families are related* elsewhere on this website. Caroline (wife of Dr Murray), Dr Victor Molteno and Frank Molteno were Charlie Molteno (Carol's father)'s sister and brothers.

⁴⁰ Beth Lindley was Carol's great uncle Bryant Lindley's daughter.

⁴¹ A spectacularly beautiful Cape orchid.

The caretaker, Mr Carter, had a herd of cows and financed his family by supplying milk and vegetables to the Navy at Simonstown and the people in the big house. He told Mother on one occasion that he had asparagus and she ordered some from him. When the tough shoots were served at table, I recognized at once that they were wild plants which looked like asparagus and grew everywhere over the sandy hill at the far beach.

Miller's Point was for most of the Molteno and Bisset families a dream house in the loveliest place in the world. Every little pool and granite rock was known to us. And in the bush above the front beach we tunneled passages leading to imaginary houses to creep through. We picked the small red berries on the prickly large bushes. From these 'Bessie berries'⁴² we made little pots of jam. John and I climbed the mountain above the house and were once chased down by a pack of baboons rolling large boulders towards us. Sometimes the baboons came right down and climbed over the steep banks above the back passage which led from the main house to the terrace and the three-roomed cottage at the end. The



Miller's Point -- Lucy, John and Carol Molteno bathing, 1912

choicest bedroom was in the cottage on the roof of the garage. It had a wide window overlooking the front beach and the bay. Years later, I lived for periods of time at Miller's Point both when married and after our divorce, and I moved into this room for its inspiring view. I remember lying in bed on a moonlit night gazing over the path of light and imagining the poet Sappho, on the island of Lesbos, as she

⁴² Bessie is in fact the Afrikaans word for berry! Carol, a third generation Molteno, was perhaps growing up in a much more exclusively English-speaking environment than the previous generations.

described a similar scene. Ancient history came to life and I could have been with her as the centuries floated away. The nostalgic beauty of the shimmering silver moonbeams was an almost emotional ache.

There were clipped umbrella-shaped pitosporum shrubs on the grass terrace and under their shade I used to rest after lunch and read. *The Perennial Philosophy* of Aldous Huxley and his letters come to mind.

Uncle James Molteno at Miller's Point



**Sir James Molteno in old age, at Elgin,
1927**

Uncle James often stayed with us at a time when I was not yet married. He had many anecdotes about the past at Millers Point. He had organized parties of people to go on day-long picnic walks to Miller's Point. He would make up a list of couples who he thought were interested in each other. And in his notebook which listed the guests, he marked off those who subsequently became engaged. And then he would think about future couples who should get to know each other and wrote down the eventual result. He showed me a hollow on the top of a huge granite boulder where the grass had grown and which made an ideal place high above the sea for a couple to watch the sunset or the moon rising over the water.

When we kept our horses there before cars came into use, I occasionally swam Dixie out bareback into the far beach bay. In those days the shells were plentiful, and the over-night tide would wash up one or two delicate shell-pink cowries for the 'early bird' children to collect. At eleven o'clock Mother would come down to the beach where we had been playing with a little basket of brown ginger biscuits made by the only grocer in Simonstown, called Whites, and a slab of chocolate. Our bathe would be before lunch. Once, when Aunt Nan from America⁴³ was staying with us, John, only a few years old at the time, licked and swallowed one of her paints while she was

sketching. Uncle Clifford, who was sitting on the beach with us, got up and seized him by the feet, dunked his head in the sea, and swung him round and round until all the paint had been vomited up.

⁴³ Anna 'Nan' Mitchell was Carol's aunt, one of her mother Lucy's two younger sisters.

One stormy day we watched Shackleton's ship leaving Simonstown for the Antarctic. During the 1914-18 War we could only reach Miller's Point by getting permits to enter the prohibited area beyond Glencairn, where soldiers guarded the gate through the high fence, sealing it off.

Most winter school holidays our whole household moved to Miller's Point for the drier air. Some of us drove all the way from Rondebosch in a hired wagon with a team of mules, carrying our baggage and food supplies. At midday the animals would be outspanned at Fish Hoek, the outspan now a national monument garden.⁴⁴ Mother and Daddy would drive separately in the Cape cart.



**A Molteno family outing by cart along some part of the False Bay coast
(probably not the trips to Miller's Point Carol describes)**

⁴⁴ It was quite a long trek, nearly 20 miles, and Fish Hoek was about half way.

Nelspoort and the other family farms on the Karoo

One winter we spent at Nelspoort, the family farm.⁴⁵ Another year we went to Kamferskraal as Uncle Wallace and his family had gone overseas. A third year we spent at Bleak House as Mr Jackson and his family were away.⁴⁶ Daddy owned this farm with Mr Jackson, who ran it. We watched the ostriches being plucked for their magnificent tail feathers and a few wing feathers, the male being black and white and the female brownish. Sometimes I was told to keep watch on the ostrich chicks while they fed on a



Bleakhouse, one of the farms that made up John Charles Molteno's original estate at Nelspoort, c. 1900

patch of young lucerne in the garden. The orange trees behind the house were irrigated by furrows from the dam. Daddy took us riding in the frosty mornings when my nose and gloveless hands almost froze. In the evenings he read aloud to us by lamplight from Walter Scott's novels or *The Newcomers*. Our only visitors were the scab inspector to check the livestock, the police on their weekly round to the farms as

⁴⁵ Nelspoort is where Carol's grandfather, John Charles Molteno, had started in the 1840s to build up several big sheep farms. After his death in 1886, Charlie Molteno took responsibility for them. Shortly after the Boer War ended in 1902, his younger brother, Wallace, took over Kamferskraal and eventually the main Nelspoort farm itself.

⁴⁶ Bleak House was adjacent to Kamferskraal. The Jacksons were cousins of the Moltenos; John Charles Molteno's mother, Caroline Bower, had had a sister who married a Jackson and several of their sons came out to the Cape and settled on the Karoo at the invitation of John.

there were no phones in those days, or perhaps an itinerant wool buyer or pedlar. All of them had to be invited to a meal, which didn't please Mother, but Daddy insisted, saying it would be an insult not to do so. I remember the delicious bacon-larded springbok saddles or legs and stews.⁴⁷ The wild turkey or *pauw* had by then become rare and was soon to be protected. Vegetables were very scarce and we usually had only pumpkin and sweet potatoes. Mother brought a lot of dried fruit with us.

The Rosebank Show



A Country Show at the Cape (possibly the Rosebank Agricultural Show), 1910

The Rosebank Agricultural Show was an exciting affair. Mule wagon drivers would race at top speed round the ring, watched by packed crowds on the pavilions or pressing up to the fence behind which the farm animals were stabled. Under the roof-sheds was endless mouth-watering kitchen produce – cakes, konfyts, vegetables and fruits. Plots for townships and new seaside villages were also on sale. I remember wishing I had £50 to buy the best front plot in Kleinmond. Eileen Stanford and I rode in the under-sixteen section. She won First Prize and I Second Prize. We all learnt to ride on Lady Bang, the Welsh pony Uncle James had given us, and we used to go for long rides with Daddy and Mother. Later I

⁴⁷ Wild springbok will still plentiful, not to say a pest, in those days; and so a crucial source of meat.

rode Marmion, bought from the Strubens for Mother, then Dixie who had belonged to Mr du Plessis. When I was sixteen Daddy gave me a half-Arab gelding whom I called Caliph. Evelyn Winterton's father had bred him. He was the manager of a farm near Beaufort West. Evelyn spent six months with us studying at the art school that Lucy later attended.

Springbok hunting

I spent one winter holiday with Evelyn when we went springbok hunting for four days at a hunting lodge some miles away from the farm. Her parents drove there in a Cape cart. Evelyn and I rode on our horses and had to round up a herd of springbok near to where her father was waiting. It meant a lot of hard riding. We had to race across the route along which the buck leapt in single file. Evelyn was a good shot, but I was shaken when she cut the throat of a wounded springbok she had hit. Our diet for the first evening meal was liver of springbok, the second day stewed ribs, and so on, each meal consisting entirely of meat. Lunch in the veld was slices of fried sweet potato, bread and coffee.

Evelyn had an unhappy life. When she was engaged to a man in Beaufort West, she thought (wrongly) that I had sent her an anonymous letter enlightening her about his previous life of ill repute. She published an article in the Beaufort West newspaper, of which she was the editor, expressing her feelings as to the wickedness of anonymous letters. But later she asked me to be bridesmaid at her marriage to an older widower. I wasn't able to accept as Deneys⁴⁸ was then a baby. But on their honeymoon at St James Hotel, Arthur and I had dinner with them. We both took a strong dislike to her husband. He demonstrated his powers of hypnotism to us, or rather, told anecdotes about them. In a fit of depression following flu, Evelyn later hanged herself in their garden. Her parents and brothers, to whom she had previously left her money, found she had changed her will just before her death, leaving it all to her husband. Her family was sure he had hypnotized her into committing suicide. His previous wives had died. I was much upset by her suicide, as she had written to me begging me to come and stay with her, but I couldn't leave home at the time.

Camping on the Palmiet River

My first camp when still a Rustenburg schoolgirl was with the de Villiers family and Audrey Curry's Girl Guide troop, assisted by Rev. Johnny Brooke. We camped under the Melkbos trees at Onrust River. Johnny and Audrey became engaged during the camp. One day Jocelyn de Villiers and I hired three horses and invited Johnny to ride with us to see Hermanus. It was farm land at that time with just a group of dilapidated cottages, around which a few chickens and mongrels scavenged among the rubbish. Some fishing boats were drawn up at the old harbour (which is now a national monument). We weren't tempted to stop.

⁴⁸ Carol and Arthur Williamson's eldest child. Deneys Molteno Williamson was born in 1927.



Marjorie Lindley (in bonnet), Carol's cousin who subsequently married Harry Blackburn, at a country show in the Cape, 1910

The next camp was organized by Marjorie Blackburn⁴⁹ at Kleinmond River mouth next to the lagoon. Uncle Ted arranged for a cow to be walked down the river all the way from Elgin, while Marjorie and Harry had a wagon and mules take tents and supplies of food the twenty-five miles from Eikenhof along the farm road to Bot River lagoon. Uncle Ted and Uncle Harry gave Lucy and me a lift in their car, which they left under a shady tree at the last farm at Bot River. Everyone then walked along a footpath to the coast and along to the mouth of the Palmiet River. Today it is an organized campsite. We were put in a tent with Aunt Minnie.⁵⁰ She showed us where to bathe in the early mornings before getting dressed in a secluded upper part of the river. Uncle Ted and the Blackburns had brought their Canadian canoes in which we had races and much fun. Each one held about three people, all good swimmers, who tried to upset each other's canoe. Meals were cooked for us and fresh supplies brought every few days and the men caught fish as well. In the evenings we walked on the sands or lay on the wooded sandhills under the Melkbos trees listening to those in the party who were good storytellers. It was an idyllic holiday.

⁴⁹ The Blackburns played an important part in Carol's life. Marjorie was Bryant and Nenie Lindley's daughter, and so a first cousin of Carol's mother, Lucy Molteno. Marjorie married Harry Blackburn in 1925 and they farmed at Eikenhof in the Elgin Valley. They also had a holiday house at Kleinmond on the coast. Tragically, their only daughter, Elizabeth (called Winkie) was a Down's Syndrome child and they had no son. Eventually Eikenhof was bought out by their manager, Douglas Moody. In the latter years of Carol's life, Marjorie and her sister Inanda generously let Carol live in their house in Cape Town before Carol finally in old age went to live with her son, Deneys Williamson and his wife Sannie.

⁵⁰ The daughter of Lady Sobella (also called Minnie) Molteno, who had been Sir John Molteno's last wife. Lady Molteno had been widowed when Sir John died in 1886, and she had had to bring up her four young children, Ted, Harry, Clifford and Minnie, on her own.



The coast past Cape Hangklip which Carol grew to know so well as a result of her camping trips (modern-day photo; relative in photo unidentified)

2. University and Falling in Love

An agriculture degree at Vassar in the States?

When I was in Junior Matric, an epidemic of measles caused Rustenburg School to close. I had a temperature of 105 for four days. Dr de Villiers wanted to perform a tracheotomy but, with Virginia's Norland nurse in charge of me, I passed over the crisis. Both of us were isolated from contact with anyone else with a sheet soaked in disinfectant hung over our doors. Six weeks later I was allowed out. All my hair fell out and my head was shaved by a barber twice after a crop of curls slowly replaced my long straight hair. I wore a brown gauze scarf to try and hide my blue shiny scalp. Back at school I was allowed to attend lessons until 12.30 each day and then went home. I missed Botany altogether and had private lessons for English with an excellent coach, a Miss Watermeyer. As I had been entered for Vassar College in America to do a degree in Agriculture, it was necessary to pass the London Matric in lieu of an entrance exam. I wanted to farm and Daddy said he would buy a farm for me above Ceres where I could grow birches. In early 1920 I went to Balmer's Tutorial College to prepare for the London Matric, which I was to write in August. Three weeks before the exam, the Education Department found that our



**Aunt Anna Purcell,
Walter's mother**

entrance applications had been pigeon-holed and never been sent. By then it was too late to send them off. Doreen de Villiers suggested I should instead swot at once for the South African Matric, for which its exams were starting three weeks later. I had to get coaching in Botany, the extra subject needed, and in the English set books. It meant cramming every hour of the day, and living on Bovril and toast during the exams to cope with my sick headaches and tension. Anyhow, I passed first class and got in mid-year to the University of Cape Town. I did Zoology, and Greek and Music just to enjoy being there.

My engagement to Arthur

On such chance happenings does the course of one's life hinge. Shortly before all this, I had become engaged unofficially to Arthur.⁵¹ By attending the University I was able to see him every day. He and Walter Purcell, both soldiers back from the War, had begun their degrees in Law and Medicine respectively the previous March. As Arthur's home was in Johannesburg and his mother had died before he returned from the War, Aunt Anna⁵² invited him to live with them in Bergvliet House. My friend, Jocelyn de Villiers, and Walter were getting engaged and her sister Doreen about to do so, also, to Will Cloete at Klapmuts. The six of us were together in all our free time. Life became extremely

busy and full of excitement and hard work. At the end of 1920 Arthur and I told Daddy and Mother that we wanted to be engaged, but they thought I was too young and hadn't met enough men. We had to wait and I was sent to East Griqualand for the summer vacation.

⁵¹ Arthur Williamson who became Carol's husband a few years later.

⁵² Anna Purcell, Walter's mother.

Visiting relatives in East Griqualand

Gordon Murray⁵³ met me at Franklin, the terminus of the small railway line from Pietermaritzburg. After a night at the Franklin Hotel, he drove me in his Cape cart the thirty odd miles to his farm near Cedarville. Mary, his daughter, was then ten years old and Elizabeth a little younger. Gordon could not speak Xhosa⁵⁴ and depended on Mary to give his instructions to the Africans. When out walking we passed their huts, and their children ran away screaming and terrified. Gordon said their mothers had told them that, if they were not good, the white people would catch and eat them!



Mary Murray, Gordon and Evelyn's elder daughter, sitting on sacks of mielies on the farm in East Griqualand, a few years before Carol Molteno stayed with them

Gordon asked me to train a young stallion and during the first week of my long visit I rode a hundred miles. Audrey Leary, being my age, was invited to stay on the farm and we rode everywhere together, even when we were going to visit the Stanfords⁵⁵ at Inungi for the second half of the holiday.⁵⁶ On one

⁵³ Gordon Murray, another of Carol's numerous first cousins. His mother was Caroline Murray, Charlie Molteno's sister.

⁵⁴ Xhosa was the language of the Eastern Cape. Gordon, however, had grown up several hundred miles away in Cape Town in the Western Cape.

⁵⁵ The Stanford children were yet another bunch of Carol's cousins. Their mother, Effie, was the daughter of Maria Molteno, a sister of Charlie Molteno, who had married Tom Anderson. Effie had married Elliot Stanford in 1914.

⁵⁶ Growing up and farm life at Inungi in the early 1920s are wonderfully described by one of Elliot and Effie Stanford's daughters, Cynthia Payne (nee Stanford). Her recollections are also reproduced on this website.

occasion we rode to an all-night dance some twenty miles away with neighbours who drove there as they had babies to take with them. We returned very sleepy the next day and I fell into bed and slept round the clock. Polo matches were exciting and the standard of polo playing on a par with the other clubs in Natal. Arthur Stanford, recently returned from the War, managed the lower half of Inungi while his brother Elliot ran the dairy cows on the upper half of the farm. Audrey was a young sister of Eily, Arthur's wife. They lived in a huge thatched rondavel, the rooms separated by partitions. We danced one night on the big verandah when couples came over from other farms.



Effie Stanford (nee Anderson) and Marjorie Blackburn (nee Lindley) (riding sidesaddle), cousins of Carol on her father and her mother's sides of the family respectively, c. 1925

While at Gordon's, I spent a day and night on the Moncham's farm in order to watch the process of cheese making, which was supervised by a lady who lived with the Moncham family. Their cheese was considered one of the best in South Africa.

Farm life

Farmers lived very simply in those days, without electricity, and few, if any, had sewerage. We lived on freshly ground mealie-meal or kaffir-corn porridge. The midday meal only included a vegetable occasionally, as the frost killed most of the green vegetables. For supper it was home-baked bread, cheese or eggs, and their own cured bacon. Tea was always on the table. And up to fifteen cups a day were drunk by farmers. But no liquor. Bridge was played on every occasion when four people were present. On Sundays farmers and their families would gather at the tennis courts. The wives set out the cold luncheons in the clubhouse while the energetic ones played tennis and the others bridge all day.

I spent a few days with May Douring, the married sister of Ada, Gertrude and Dora Southey.⁵⁷ Her husband Arthur had just begun to farm his own farm which had a very simple little house. Their first baby absorbed all May's time and Arthur never rested from work as it was a hard pioneering life with few amenities. There were no bridges across the rivers and a punt or boat would carry carts across while the horses had to swim.

On my return journey to the Cape I travelled to Franklin all day in a very uncomfortable public mule cart, along with two nuns. There we spent the night in the one small hotel and the next day travelled in the local train to Maritzburg, where I spent another night before catching the train to Cape Town. At Nouwpoort Arthur joined me from his train from the Transvaal and we travelled the rest of the way together. He had spent the university vac in the company of a friend from his school days, trekking with a wagon load of oranges which they sold in the dorps where there was no fruit because they were far away from the fertile Lowveld. The two of them only covered their costs, but it was a healthy outdoor life.

'The happiest days in my life'

Arthur and I were allowed to announce our engagement some time later. Arthur gave me a ring with a single diamond. It was stolen while I was living at Kromvlei after our divorce. My opal brooch, a birthday present from him, was also stolen. Those four and a half years of college life, when we were engaged and saw each other every day, and swotted for exams in the public library, were the happiest days in my life. We went every Thursday evening to listen to the City Hall orchestra and often at lunch-time, too, when the organ was played. The conductor at that time was Lesley Howard. He was greatly missed when he left. His collection of antique South African furniture was sold and for £16 we bought the lovely orange- or yellow-wood gate-legged table from Clanwilliam district. We sold our stinkwood table, as its shape was not as pleasing.

Varsity balls in the City Hall were a great excitement. We had engagement cards, each with a little pencil attached with which to fill in a partner's name. Aunt Nan had sent me from Paris some lovely evening dresses for the occasion of my coming-out ball at Government House and the dances to follow. My special outfit for that occasion was an exquisite dress of palest pink tulle. It had spangles sewn on and orange blossom nestled into my waist. The hats, blouses frilly with real lace and Swiss straw hats for every day wear were very flattering. The ball itself was very dull and formal. Bored ADCs did duty as

⁵⁷ The Southeys were close family friends of the Molteno and Murray clan. Sir John Molteno had traded with a Southey in the Eastern Cape as early as the 1840s. Gordon Murray's wife, Evelyn, was a Southey; so there was an actual genealogical link between the families. Maurice Southey emigrated to Kenya before the First World War along with Gordon's brothers, Jarvis and Lenox Murray. And following Maurice's death, Jarvis married his widow, Rosamund Eustace, in 1919.

dancing partners. I watched in admiration the beauties of the Cape, especially the three Pargiter girls, the loveliest women I had ever seen.

Daddy came to watch me being capped on Degree Day in the University Building in Queen Victoria Street. Aunt Bessie and Uncle Percy have given the University this building. When it was later sold to the government without the donors being told, he took it badly and said to me that he wouldn't give the University any more money.

My father's death, 1924

In January Daddy became ill and needed a prostate operation which kept being delayed because of a



Charlie (John Charles) Molteno – portrait

bronchial cold he had. The operation eventually took place, but before he was well, due to the two doctors' negligence. And he died of pneumonia in Tamboers Kloof Nursing Home. I remember our waiting in Kriel's taxi most of that night while Mother stayed with him. Uncle Ted came to Sandown to be with Mother for the funeral and was the greatest comfort to her. He suggested that the sculptor Kottler should make a bronze death mask of Daddy. It looked too sad and severe and Mother couldn't bear to see it. The bust is now at Foxwold under Peter and Margaret's care.⁵⁸ Lucy took over the housekeeping and Mother threw herself into futile work – taking on the Presidency of the Cape Town Branch of the National Council of Women. Her great friend Daisy Arbuthnot was the national President and Mother spent her evenings on the phone discussing NCW matters with her. The telephone had only recently been installed.

I was now offered a bursary to do an M.A. in History under Professor Eric Walker, who was then writing his *History of South Africa*. He and Mrs Walker often entertained the handful of M.A. students at Rooidak, their home in Baker Road, Kenilworth.

What happened to Sandown House

⁵⁸ Peter was the youngest of Charlie and Lucy Molteno's children. He married Margaret 'Margie' Judd in 1937. Foxwold was her family home in the Stellenbosch district.

Uncle Frank was Daddy's executor until he was killed in the Salt River train disaster two years later. He advised Mother to sell Sandown and buy a smaller house near Rondebosch station. But Mother couldn't bear to leave Sandown. It was only sold some while later after having been let, fully furnished, for several years to the Governor's aide-de-camp, Mr Birch-Reynardson, and his charming family, while they lived in South Africa. There was a severe financial depression after 1929, but Mother refused to cut up the land. The house had been designed and built by Sir Herbert Baker.⁵⁹ It had cost £6 000, but we only got £5,000 for it when it was sold during the Great Depression. The buyer immediately cut up the five acres and sold off the plots, making a big profit. His son went to Bishops⁶⁰ but getting into trouble at school, he feared a caning and shot himself – such a tragedy.

Varsity camps

Varsity camps were organized by Doreen and Jocelyn de Villiers every holiday. A short one was held at Bergvliet when Jocelyn and Walter Purcell got engaged. We boated on the blue lily-covered lake, played tennis and had meals out of doors on trestle tables. For two Christmas holidays the de Villiers were invited by the Rev. Bull, the Principal of Bishops, to bring friends and join his party of Rhodesian boarders for whom it was too far and too expensive to go home.

On the second of these camps, at Rooiels,⁶¹ Walter, Arthur, Marischal Murray, Isobel Godlonton and a number of other friends joined us. My brother John set a record, taking only four hours to walk from Gordon's Bay to our camp at Rooiels, in the course of which he wore out a pair of stout boots on the loose rocks of the barely defined fisherman's track. Our food was stored in the cave up the river bank and we had a few tents if it rained. The days were filled with fishing, bathing, expeditions and even a fancy dress party one evening. The future General Poole and Hanspeter Stromsoe⁶² were among the young men who were there.

For one camp I went in a fisherman's boat from Gordon's Bay with the supplies and some of the party. But a Southeaster blew up. I felt so ghastly, I actually prayed to die during the storm. And I had to be carried ashore from some rocks onto a sand dune where I lay for a few hours and only some neat brandy could revive me. I didn't recover for days.

⁵⁹ The famous South African architect. He had designed Cecil Rhodes' home, Groote Schuur, which in the 20th Century became the official residence in Cape Town of South African Prime Ministers (and later Presidents).

⁶⁰ The Diocesan College where all the Molteno and Murray boys were educated was known colloquially as Bishops. Founded in 1849 as a school for the sons of Anglican clergymen, it evolved over the generations into one of South Africa's most prestigious, and expensive, educational institutions modelled on the English public school.

⁶¹ Another of the tiny holiday places on the coast past Cape Agulhas but near enough to be reached quite easily from Cape Town.

⁶² Research would need to be done, but I suspect that Hanspeter Stromsoe is related to, and may even be the father of, Veronica Stromsoe who married Donald Molteno in 1934. The family came from Norway. Veronica's mother, Mrs Aagot Stromsoe, adapted Norwegian fish recipes to the types of fish found off the South African coast. She wrote a regular newspaper column with these recipes and they were eventually published as a book, *Aagot Stromsoe's Fish Book* (Howard Timmins, Cape Town, 1962).

While at university, every Saturday or Sunday we organized a climb on Table Mountain or the mountain above Kalk Bay or a picnic. One depressing October weekend – it was my birthday – we camped on a farm above Lourensford at Somerset West, while it poured torrentially the whole time. We had to carry all the camping equipment as no-one had cars, and we returned by train soaking wet. We also had several camps at Cape Point. On the first occasion Frank Williamson, Arthur's younger brother, who lived with Avril Joey and Peter Smuts in Kreupelbos House, brought Moslow to help carry our baggage. On another occasion, we rented two rooms in a farmhouse that is now a restaurant at Buffel's Bay. These expeditions enriched our lives immeasurably and gave me a deep appreciation of outdoor life and a love of nature, which has perhaps been the greatest influence and joy in my life.

Having got my History M.A. I took a post at Rustenburg Girls' High School to teach history throughout the senior school. But at the end of the first term I went to England with Aunt Bessie and Uncle Percy



Table Mountain (showing Skeleton Gorge) where Arthur Williamson and Carol Molteno organized regular regular climbs in the 1920s

who had been spending the summer at Miller's Point.⁶³ Uncle Percy had invited me to spend a year at his expense rounding off my education by travelling and seeing art galleries in Europe and attending cultural lectures. It was the most generous invitation and a great excitement.

⁶³ Percy and Bessie Molteno, although living in Britain, used to visit the Cape frequent throughout their lives.

3. My Year Overseas – 1924-25

Kathleen⁶⁴ was invited to be with us for the English summer and I did everything with her until I accepted an invitation from Aunt Carol⁶⁵ for myself and my brother John, then at Cambridge, to spend August with her and her family at their holiday home in the States. This was a house overlooking a lake on an estate in Lenox, Massachusetts that belonged to the millionaire father of her husband, Uncle Anson.

Staying in London at 10 Palace Court



Kathleen Murray, by the time of this trip to Europe, had given up bee-keeping and started fruit farming successfully

Uncle Percy and his household were going to move to Glen Lyon⁶⁶ in Scotland for August. On our arrival at their London home, 10 Palace Court, a couple of months before their departure, Kathleen and I were given two bedrooms and a bathroom on the floor above Aunt Bessie's suite. Kathleen used the bathroom for a long time so I used to rush to be in time for breakfast. I left my damp towel thrown over my bedroom towel rack and the bed unmade. Little did I expect Aunt Bessie, who had a lame leg, to climb up to our top floor to inspect my bedroom, and then for me to get a proper scolding when she joined the breakfast table! Never have I ever left a used towel unfolded in a hostess's house again!

Palace Court was a treasure house of beautiful furniture, pictures and books. Aunt Bessie had inherited a third of her father's large collection of Turner paintings and Uncle Percy had bought some of the Italian and English furniture owned by earlier generations

⁶⁴ Kathleen Murray, a first cousin of Carol's and nine years older than her. She was already establishing herself as a successful fruit farmer on her parents' property in Elgin by the time she spent time with Carol in London and Europe in 1925.

⁶⁵ Carol's mother's younger sister. Carol Mitchell had married Anson Phelps Stokes and lived in the United States.

⁶⁶ Glen Lyon was the estate Bessie Molteno had inherited from her father, the Victorian shipping magnate, Sir Donald Currie.

of the Molteno family when he could trace them. The Moltenos, who had left Milan as political emigrants,⁶⁷ started an engraver's and art dealer's shop in Bond St, like Agnews. Uncle Percy had some of these engravings and a painting by Gainsborough of Molteno children.



Parklands in Surrey – Carol's elder sister, Lucy Molteno in the garden, 1925

Uncle Percy and Aunt Bessie, who were very hospitable, had made Palace Court a centre for all the family. Ernest Anderson,⁶⁸ then a doctor in the Life Guards, would come to a meal. Aunt Betty, who had a room in London,⁶⁹ often came to supper and ate scrambled eggs while we ate salmon or grouse sent down from Scotland, and fresh strawberries and cream, and salads and vegetables, all from Uncle Percy's farm, Parklands, just south of London. Marischal Murray was in London at this time researching the steamships that called at the Cape for his book.⁷⁰ He came and took me to the Wembley Exhibition and, on another day, to a play.

⁶⁷ This must have been something Carol had been told by a member of the family. I have come across no evidence that Percy's greatgrandfather, George Anthony Molteno, left Milan and settled in London for political reasons. His printselling business was located from 1784 at various addresses in Pall Mall, just west of Trafalgar Square.

⁶⁸ Ernest Anderson was the eldest son of Percy Molteno's sister, Maria, who had married a Cape Town businessman, Thomas Anderson. Ernest was therefore another of Carol's many first cousins, although nearly twenty years older than her. He joined a Guards regiment as a medical officer shortly before the First World War. throughout that terrible conflict, he served on the Western Front in France. Although he retired in the 1930s, he rejoined the Colours and served in the Second World War (1939-45) as well. He finally retired with the rank of Colonel after 1945 and went to live with his cousins, Ted and Harry Molteno, on their farm in Elgin.

⁶⁹ Betty Molteno, as Carol has already mentioned, had moved to London roundabout 1916 and lived there until her death in 1927.

⁷⁰ Marischal Murray was a good friend of Carol and Arthur Williamson's. He was best man at their wedding in December 1925 after Carol's return from Europe. He had a flat at Bantry Bay just beyond Cape Town, but often

While we were in London, Kathleen and I visited Dame Florence Simpson and her husband for a weekend and were taken to see Oxford and have lunch at the Mitre Hotel. Another time Kathleen and I attended a very highbrow presentation of doctorates and speeches in the Senate House and were entertained afterwards by the Master of one of the colleges. A day in Cambridge to see the colleges there gave me a chance to get in touch with John and arrange with him our forthcoming visit to America during the long summer vacation. I booked cheap tourist passages to New York for £38 return.

June and July were filled with sightseeing, including the Chelsea Flower Show and an evening at the opera. Mrs Selous, Uncle Percy's ward,⁷¹ had insisted he must book for the opera and she came up to London to go with us. I had previously introduced Uncle Percy to Marischal at the Cape when he had brought Mrs Selous in his Rolls Royce⁷² for an evening picnic near Bakoven. She and Marischal made friends at once and remained so for the rest of their lives. Mrs Selous often used to have him to stay in her lovely home near Parklands. She was the widow of the hunter, Sir Frederick Selous. She had two sons, one a district commissioner in Somaliland.⁷³

While in London I was also entertained by Mother's friends. One of them, Miss Lutley, had been a guest in the Governor's home in Cape Town because her brother was his aide-de-camp. She invited me to their Queen Anne mansion in Worcestershire for a weekend. All the furniture was Chippendale, the china Worcestershire, and the furnishings priceless. She and her brother were very poor but lived like country aristocrats. He bred pheasants for the shooting season in order to pay their expenses. I found Miss Lutley blue with cold and she hadn't a warm coat because she couldn't afford one. I suggested she should sell something. She was horrified and said they were leaving it all to the nation when she and her unmarried brother died! She then added that upstarts and foreigners like Uncle Percy should never be allowed to be Members of Parliament.⁷⁴ Only the real aristocrats of England should govern. We went to the little church on the estate on the Sunday and sat in the pew just behind Major Lutley while the village people had their seats far behind. The Lutley's widowed sister, Lady St John, lived in the Dower House near the estate gates. I was shown a twelfth-century wooden building still intact but no longer safe to use. That weekend, I slept in a huge four poster bed and had my first and only attack of asthma, due I think to the bed coverings feeling damp and the curtains musty because the room was seldom used or cleaned. For the next few weeks I suffered from severe hay fever till the voyage to America cured it. Uncle Percy suffered from acute hay fever, too, every spring. For temporary relief we both went to Southsea and walked on the pier to breathe the clean air while spending a dull drab weekend in its seafront hotel.

spent time in Mexico. He was artistic and terribly interested in ships. He wrote several books, including *Ships and South Africa: A maritime chronicle of the Cape, with particular reference to mail and passenger liners, from the early days of steam down to the present* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933); and, many years later, his *Union-Castle Chronicle, 1853-1953*. He shared Carol's interest in art and, following her divorce, often used to drive up to Elgin and stay with her and the children at Kromvlei.

⁷¹ Lady Selous was the widow of Sir Frederick Selous, the famous African big game hunter, explorer and army officer, who had been killed in 1917 during the British campaign to defeat the German forces in German East Africa (today's Tanzania). Lady Selous, who was only 43 at the time of her husband's death, lived near Parklands, Percy and Bessie Molteno's farm in Surrey. She became a lifelong friend of theirs, and used to go skiing with Percy, something Bessie was not able to do because of a childhood accident that had severely crippled her leg.

⁷² Percy must have been in the habit of taking his Rolls Royce, and its chauffeur-cum-mechanic, with him when he stayed at the Cape!

⁷³ The other son had been killed, like his father, during the First World War.

⁷⁴ Percy Molteno was a Liberal M.P. from 1906 to 1918.



Carol's mother, Lucy Molteno (centre), and her elder sister, Lucy (left) staying with Lord and Lady Aberdeen, 1925

Aunt Betty took me to visit Mrs Solomon, widow of the brilliant Saul Solomon.⁷⁵ She wrote a poem in my honour and sent it to me, which I thought was charming of her. One evening Aunt Betty took me to a seance in a huge hall packed with people. The medium picked on us sitting at the back. She described Daddy standing behind us. Then Annie Besant spoke on Theosophy and the centre she had started in India. Anthroposophy interested Aunt Betty and we went to a series of lectures on it. It seemed to be a revival of Mithraism or Egyptian Zoroastrian Sun worship. Esoteric cults were much in the limelight at that time as a result of the terrible number of deaths during the Great War, as well as the popularity of spiritualism.

Ireland

I had an invitation from Mrs Lenox-Conyngham, a cousin of Daisy Arbuthnot, to visit her home, Springhill, near Monymore in County Derry in Ulster. I took a night passage on the boat to Belfast and from the docks went to the train in an Irish two-wheeler where one sat facing backwards. Springhill was a lovely estate, full of trees, lawns and bluebells. It became a national monument later on. It had been the headquarters where arms were hidden at the time of Carson.⁷⁶ Major Lenox-Conyngham was a staunch militarist. His son was involved in the linen industry. Mrs Lenox-Conyngham was a charming,

⁷⁵ See Note 31 above.

⁷⁶ Sir Edward Carson was a famous London barrister, Unionist politician and opponent of Home Rule in Ireland. He founded the first Protestant paramilitary group, the Ulster Volunteers.

graceful, bejeweled woman who wrote poetry and saw fairies dancing in a ring among the bluebells. Her family were in politics and well connected. The political Lyttletons were related, and entertained John in London.

Back in London I explored the main shops with Kathleen who was buying herself an outfit. I had £100 to last my year abroad. So I frugally bought a few dresses for America as I had arrived in London with nothing. I also bought a Liberty rug as an evening wrap and it lasted many years, ending up as a small piece called 'my Nuggie' without which one of the younger generation wouldn't go to bed. Kathleen was a marvelous guide as she knew London well and just where to go.

Visiting my American relations

When John's summer vac began we left for New York in the S.S. Minnesota, first crossing to France to pick up more passengers. There was a band that played during meals and marvelous food with canteloupe and Californian grapefruit for breakfast. We were a mixed shipload of tourists and immigrants. Aunt Mildred,⁷⁷ who came on board when we arrived to meet us, was horrified to be told we could not leave the boat till the next day. However she pulled strings – Uncle Clarence being legal advisor to Pierpont Morgan - and a few hours later we were told to go ashore at once, even though our luggage had already been taken to Ellis Island.⁷⁸ John had a bottle of whisky in his pocket for a passenger on board, smuggling it in as there was Prohibition in America. We were hustled through Customs, though a coal-black inspector thought my Cutex set contained drugs.



The transatlantic liner, S.S. Minnesota (20,700 tons, and nine decks), pictured here in 1910

A yellow cab – we were told it was the only safe kind of taxi to take – took us to a magnificent apartment in 5th Avenue where only millionaires could afford the rent. Miss Clavinia Stokes, to whom it belonged, allowed relatives to use it when visiting New York. There were two Swedish maids in attendance. Aunt Carol⁷⁹ arrived before supper and took us to dinner at her Women's Colony Club. The temperature was well over a hundred, and stifling in the heatwave. Next morning, before our train left for Lenox, Aunt Carol insisted on buying me a dress at the summer sales.

⁷⁷ Mildred was Clarence Mitchell's wife; Clarence being Lucy Molteno's half-brother.

⁷⁸ Ellis Island was the facility in New York where all would-be immigrants were screened before being admitted to the United States.

⁷⁹ Aunt Carol was Lucy Molteno's sister.

Aunt Carol and Uncle Anson had a charming timbered house overlooking the lake. Our cousins, Anson, Newton and Olivia, were about five years younger than Lucy, me and John. They had horses and most days we rode in the wooded hills or boated on the lake. We collected wild blueberries which we had for breakfast with cream. Aunt Carol's two Swedish maids gave us delicious meals with all the dainty extras like curls of cream cheeses hidden in each crisp little lettuce heart on our side plates.



Anson Phelps Stokes and his wife Carol (younger sister of Lucy Molteno (nee Mitchell), and their sons, Karlsbad, Germany, 1925

down the East Coast on his yacht. And we spent one night on Long Island as guests of Uncle Anson's parents in their luxury home. They took us in the evening for a cruise by moonlight on their yacht which we all enjoyed. I talked at length to one of the unmarried girls present who was working in a settlement in New York's slums.

Aunt Carol was an excellent talker, well-read on every subject, and also the perfect hostess. She told me that before a lunch party she would read up on the particular interest of the special guest invited. Her clothes were lovely and she enjoyed entertaining, picnics, riding and everything people did. She was extremely good-looking and was welcomed everywhere. She took us to see the mansions of neighbouring friends. One was a copy of Versailles, another a castle from England brought brick by brick and reassembled. We went to a Spanish palace set in the hills with no other house in sight, where a fancy dress dance was being given. I wore a Japanese outfit brought from Japan, wig and all. John went as a titled Arab sheik and no-one would believe he didn't have a title in real life.

The wealth in post-war America was unbelievable – an incredible contrast to England where the post-war financial depression, and the poverty and unemployment of returning soldiers, were appalling. Uncle Percy's Rolls Royce was stoned when I was being driven through the poorer part of London to visit a cousin in hospital.

At the fancy-dress dance several of the young men said they would have a party for me. Uncle Anson told me the next day that this is the usual way a visitor to America is welcomed, but it is only a pleasantry and not meant to be actually done. Weddy Stokes, a rich cousin of the Stokes family, invited John to accompany him on a cruise

I also spent a few days with Uncle Clarence and Aunt Mildred in their beautiful home in a luxury suburban area some distance from New York. We travelled into Manhattan on the businessmen's fast train in a luxury coach furnished with easy chairs and every convenience, including a black waiter and a bootblack, all paid for by a club of wealthy commuters. We returned the same way, taking precedence over the queues of less privileged people pouring forth at 5 p.m. from Wall Street where Uncle Clarence had his lawyer's office. He said that, unless the exact times of leaving work were regulated, office workers would be standing twenty-six deep in the narrow streets below the skyscrapers....



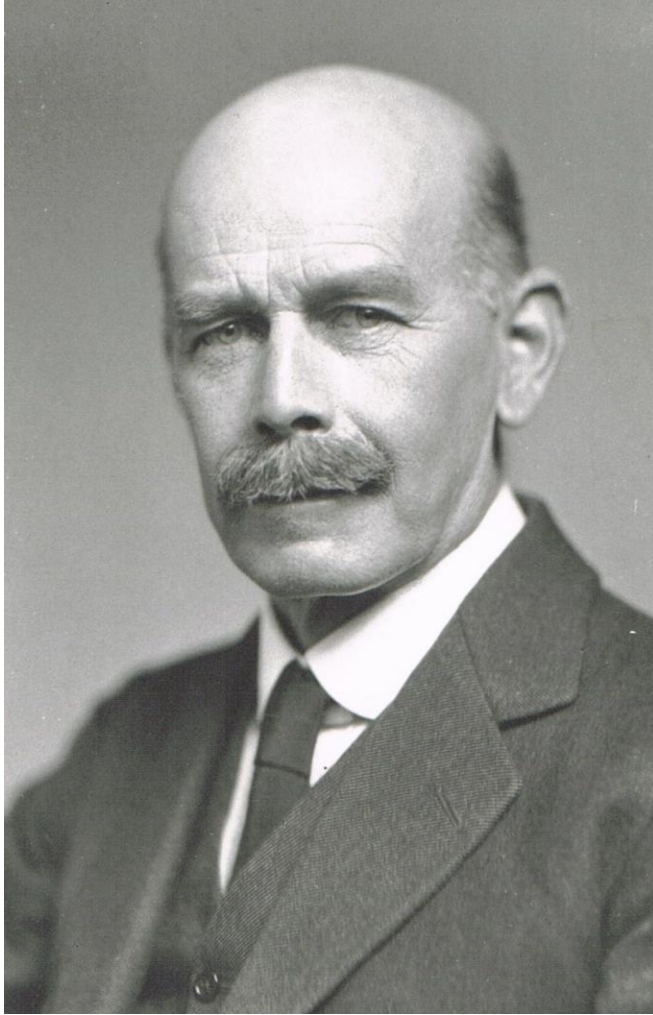
Captain Barkly Molteno, 1916 (by the time he and Percy Molteno took Carol and Kathleen to Switzerland in 1925, he had retired from the Royal Navy)

John and I went by train to Washington D.C. for four days of sightseeing on our own. A visit to General Washington's home impressed me. But the summer heat was exhausting and the city packed with tourists. I returned to London alone on the S.S. Minnesota as Uncle Percy had written and invited me to join him and Uncle Barkly⁸⁰ and Kathleen in Switzerland for September.

The Swiss Alps

Kathleen helped me buy a Fair Isle sweater and mountain boots suitable for climbing in the Alps. The overnight train seemed to me an endless journey twisting and turning, tunneling through precipitous mountains and crossing deep gorges. Breakfast consisted of rolls and coffee with cherry jam and honey, and with us seated at a large window on the cleanest train imaginable, the train being electrically powered as Swiss waterfalls generate a lot of electricity which in those days wasn't plentiful elsewhere. Being in a funicular train we reached the highest point a train could take us to below the Matterhorn. An excellent hotel was our base for several weeks. A guide led us to the Eggishorn and to a glacier under which we climbed. Each day the hotel gave us a picnic lunch of Gruyere cheese and hardboiled eggs, which was most acceptable as we sat on the ice which covered the mountains at that altitude. The warmth of the brilliant sunlight kept us from freezing. The precipitous snow-clad mountains and the peaks rising above us were an exhilarating sight.

⁸⁰ Admiral Barkly Molteno, R.N., was, apart from Percy, the only other one of the ten Molteno brothers to leave the Cape and settle in England.



Percy Molteno, Carol's uncle, who was financing her year in Europe

When the September weather turned wintry, we set off to descend on foot, though Kathleen and I were provided with one horse between us, to reach Lake Maggiore that night. A guide led us from the snow and ice down to the summer pastures where the farmers bring their cream-coloured cows, and on down deep winding stony paths thirty miles to the lakes of Northern Italy.

A taste of Italy

Covered in dust and with knees shaky from exhaustion, the four of us arrived at dusk, only to be looked on askance by the major domo of the magnificent Hotel Regina. Uncle Percy's advance booking had miscarried and the only rooms available were the Royal Suite overlooking the lake and a tiny backroom for Uncle Percy and Uncle Barkly to share. We had the Royal Suite at vast expense. The bedspreads and curtains were edged with real handmade lace and the expensive furniture was enameled olive green. The bathroom seemed to be all marble and with every luxury. Our suitcases had been sent on ahead and arrived in time for us to change into evening dresses for a sumptuous dinner. Every evening we had a bottle of delicious Asti Spumanti. And each day we took a launch across the lake to one or other old villa, monastery or church that

was historic or beautiful.

A week later we took the train south stopping for a night at Bellagio from where we visited Isola Bella, an enchanting villa and garden on the lake shore. We didn't have time to visit the village of Molteno⁸¹ as Uncle Percy wanted to show us Milan and Venice, before he and Uncle Barkly had to return to London. In Milan, after seeing the Cathedral, he took us to the famous old library⁸² where we read in dog-Latin in the Golden Book of Milan an account of the members of the Molteno family and other leading families

⁸¹ The village of Molteno was only a few miles away. Over the years many South African Moltenos have made a kind of pilgrimage to see where their ancestors originated, and the village priest has kept a shoe box to this day containing their postcards dating back to the 1880s thanking him for his kindness.

⁸² The Biblioteca Ambrosiana where, many years before, Percy Molteno had commissioned an Italian researcher to delve into the history of the Molteno family.

of Milan. After some battle or other, the Molteno family had been given the royal eagle as our crest.⁸³ Zoe, John's wife, inherited a picture of it and a golden brooch copy. In one of the old churches we saw the names of some of the Molteno family who were buried under the stone floor. Anthony, Caroline and Charles were their Christian names – names that are still in use in the family today.

Venice was a dream city of opalescent lights floating on the water. The first evening when we walked to the Grand Piazza in front of the Doge's Palace a naval band from a visiting American warship was playing. Lights in the ancient lanterns and also probably from hidden spotlights combined to produce an enchanting scene I shall never forget. The music and the lapping of the water against the ancient stone walls completed the fairy atmosphere. We went in gondolas to visit the various picture galleries, churches and public buildings made famous by the many painters of the school of Venetian Art. The eastern influence of Byzantium was reflected in the mosaics, mosques and domed churches. The marble palaces reflected in the water along the Grand Canal have been an inspiration to writers and artists throughout the centuries. In spite of our only drinking and cleaning our teeth in Vichy water, Uncle Percy picked up some germ and had to return to England with Uncle Barkly while Kathleen and I made our journey back by train more slowly via Sienna and Geneva.

I left Kathleen in Paris while I went to visit M. Coué⁸⁴ whom Uncle Percy admired and wanted me to hear. M. Coué was away but his assistant lectured daily instead. His audience were chiefly German students who seemed to be suffering great anxiety over passing exams. I stayed at a house taking in guests where I enjoyed delicious meals cooked to perfection. The vegetables, chestnut puddings and stuffings were the best I have ever eaten.

I have forgotten to mention my weekend alone in Sienna as Kathleen was away paying a visit to a friend living nearby. The hotel receptionist wanted me to share a taxi with some man to visit a monastery in the mountains, but I feared to have some philandering bottom-pinching Italian inflicted on me for the day. I bought an old copper and brass water carrier from a shop selling secondhand odds and ends, as it was the same as the jug carried to my bedroom by a peasant girl on her shoulder, which had delighted me. These jugs date back to antiquity. Sienese paintings are a distinctive school and the golden halos and exquisite embroideries most decorative.

In Geneva Kathleen had more friends to see but we did sightseeing together. She bought some handmade copper pans and cake moulds. She also bought a vivid blue lapis lazuli necklace I coveted but could not afford (and which years later she gave to my daughter Margaret in her will). She also posted Mademoiselle Genequand⁸⁵ some special little cakes as she knew it would be a treat for her to receive them. Kathleen knew what was most worthwhile to look for and buy in each town and country. In Venice she ordered the lovely earthenware garden jars she has on her terrace. And the glass goblets in her home are from a factory in Venice. Uncle Percy had given me £30 as a Christmas present, which I spent on a cabin trunk, a Jones sewing machine, a Liberty plush rug to use as an evening cloak, as well as an amber necklace which is now most valuable and which I gave to Catherine. Pook loved the rug and

⁸³ The story of how a Holy Roman Emperor allowed a Molteno to use the imperial eagle in his family crest is told by Dr R.F.M. Immelman in his account of the Molteno family, which can be read on this website.

⁸⁴ A famous French psycho-therapist and healer who developed a method based on optimistic auto-suggestion.

⁸⁵ Mde.Genequand was Swiss, a friend of Kathleen's and later of Ted and Harry Molteno, on whose farm she lived for many years in a charming thatched cottage. Petite, elegant and French-speaking, every Sunday morning she would hold a get together for the Cunninghams, Ted and Harry, and Carol where tea was served in little elegant cups and they all spoke French with one another.

slept with it as his 'nuggie' for years, followed by my grandson, Peter Gibbs, when very young, until it eventually became a rag.

Paris

After my visit to M. Coué in Alsace, I returned to Paris where Mrs. Thomas had booked a room for me in a hotel on the Left Bank for a fortnight. I had known her in Cape Town when she was caretaker of the Old Town House Michaelis Gallery in Greenmarket Square. Her daughter Marie lived with her and was difficult and a problem. Mrs. Thomas was very knowledgeable about art and had given lectures on the history of art while in Cape Town. Lucy and I had gone to these weekly. Mrs. Thomas took me in Paris to an exhibition and sale of modern art which I didn't fully appreciate, nor did many people as it was so unlike any art we knew. Most of the pictures were in the *pointilliste* style, all dots of sunlight, which I didn't like. There was one Cezanne which cost £24. Mrs. Thomas said it would be valuable one day but I couldn't afford to buy it and his blocklike shapes of buildings didn't appeal to me.

London

Back in London I found Uncle Percy and Aunt Bessie had left on another visit to South Africa and I was to stay alone in Palace Court for the winter, to be educated in art. I attended lectures every morning in the various national galleries, and every afternoon a course on the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum. Aunt Anna had rented a house in Hampstead where Ouma, Walter and Aunt Anna's Nurse Smerdon were with her.⁸⁶ Aunt Anna had had a stroke on the train while returning from a trip on the Continent and had been found by Walter in a hospital to which she had been taken. Ouma had come to England to take charge and Nurse Smerdon was a wonderful and charming nurse who remained with Aunt Anna until she died. While in London, Aunt Anna went to plays as often as she could, usually two matinées a week, and I was often invited. Walter took me to a small theatre in Golders Green when George Bernard Shaw's *Don Juan* was first acted in full – six hours with a break for supper. It was thrilling and we were carried away by the breadth of his conception and eloquence.

One Sunday morning I walked with Walter and a fellow medical student to Petticoat Lane where the costers shouted their wares. On display there were also bottled jars of warts and corns that had been removed by some wonder aid or rather unpleasant process. Piles of old clothes lay on tables. And magic keys that could open any lock. And unusual foods. It was a sight not to be missed. And now and again real treasures turned up that could be bought cheaply.

10 Palace Court where I was staying was full of beautiful objects. The most valuable were the pictures, a collection of Turners given to Aunt Bessie by her father, Sir Donald Currie.⁸⁷ The house also had modern devices, including an electric hoist to bring the dishes up from the kitchen in the basement and lower the empty ones.

⁸⁶ Anna Purcell, 'Ouma' her mother, and Dr Walter Purcell her son.

⁸⁷ Sir Donald built up a significant collection of Turner's paintings. For the next four generations, they stood his descendants in good stead as they were gradually sold off to pay, inter alia, for the boys' public school fees.

Parklands was Uncle Percy's country house and farm in Surrey where he spent every week-end and from which he brought back in his Rolls Royce home-grown vegetables, fruit, dairy produce, poultry and flowers to last the week in London.

Ernest Anderson



Col. Ernest Anderson, in the full dress uniform of Horse Guards regiment, after the 1914-18 War

Ernest Anderson, a doctor in the Life Guards as I mentioned earlier, often came for a meal and was always an excellent and amusing talker. An Egyptian friend of his, Prince Youssef, used to invite him for his holidays to fish, hunt or accompany the Prince on his launch up the Nile. Another friend, who was a Turk, started a fashionable shop in Paris for designing and making women's dresses. Effie, Ernest's sister, Mother and various other members of the family ordered their clothes for best occasions from this shop as Ernest had put money into it. I remember Mother wearing a succession of these lovely clothes, and especially an exquisite soft mauve satin housedress for when she was pregnant. The curious lining and real lace edging of the many tiny tucks on the lovely material made these party dresses into works of art. Ernest told us how he had been asked by the King to join the Life Guards and how in practice this meant a command. The interview had taken place when Ernest had returned from the war in Albania and Bulgaria with great credit for his work.⁸⁸ His magnificent uniform was very costly, as well as the regimental expenses, so that he could not afford to marry. Only those with private means could do so.

⁸⁸ Ernest tells this story himself. See under 'Royalty' in the *List of Stories* section of this website.

Seeing Aunt Betty again

Aunt Betty came frequently for a meal. In spite of the way she dressed, she looked like an aristocrat with her handsome well-cut hawk-like features and blazing eyes. In London she wore felt carpet slippers and her shapeless clothing was unironed. She had the gift of eloquence, usually in the cause of the under-dog or for the uplift of the labouring class or black people or Jews or poor artists. Aunt Betty would take a beggar on the streets into a Lyons shop for a cup of tea and find out about his life.⁸⁹ Uncle Percy would not give to beggars on principle but would donate a quarter of a million pounds to an Institute at Cambridge for tropical diseases⁹⁰ or for a hospital or university. He himself wore his boots till the tops cracked from age and wear. On the other hand, his car was a Rolls Royce driven by a Rolls Royce-trained chauffeur. His watch won a prize in Geneva for the best watch in Europe. He sent it annually to its Swiss watchmaker to be cleaned and it never lost more than a minute in a year.

Meeting up with Margaret and Lenox Murray

Margaret and Lenox⁹¹ had just returned from farming at Tulbagh, a valley which she had found unbearably hot. Arthur and I had once spent a week-end with them there and ridden up to the high pass behind their house. Early in the Boer War General Smuts had ridden with his troops to the top of this pass and looked down on the valley, but had not gone further.⁹² Margaret and Lenox were now buying Painswick⁹³ and doing extensive repair work and alterations in the house as it had previously been a monastery for a time. George was a baby then.⁹⁴ Islay and Jervis⁹⁵ had a house in one of the Southern counties with their young children. Jervis spent much of his time playing golf or fishing. He wanted to have a garage business and had not wanted to go to Cambridge as Margaret had done, where she had worked for an agricultural diploma.

⁸⁹ Betty Molteno was well into her 70s by this time. She died two years after Lucy saw her in London.

⁹⁰ Percy and Bessie Molteno both endowed the new Molteno Institute for Research in Parasitology at Cambridge University. Throughout his life he gave generously to many different charitable causes. And in his will in 1937 he left a legacy of £500 to the University of Fort Hare where many famous Black South Africans, including Nelson Mandela, were educated.

⁹¹ Margaret, Percy and Bessie Molteno's daughter, and Lenox, Caroline and Dr Murray's son, were both first cousins of Carol. Margaret was only seven years older than Carol.

⁹² General Smuts' 'invasion' of the Cape scared the living daylights out of the British forces and forced them to recognise what a serious war they had on their hands.

⁹³ Painswick Lodge in the Cotswolds was bought by Margaret and Lenox in 1924 with the help of her parents. Margaret and Lenox carried on Percy and Bessie's tradition of keeping open house for members of the extended family. And after Percy's death in 1937, Painswick became the main centre of gravity for Moltenos visiting England. My father, Donald Molteno, stayed there when he was a student at Cambridge at the end of the 1920s. And Margaret invited him and me to stay with her again at Christmas 1965, which turned out to be little more than a year before her death. The Lodge remains in the hands of the family to this day.

⁹⁴ George Murray, Margaret and Lenox's elder son, was born in this year Carol spent in Europe. Their first-born, Iona, had been born two years previously.

⁹⁵ Jervis Molteno was Margaret's elder brother. He had also married a cousin, Islay Bisset. Islay left Cape Town after their wedding and she and Jervis made their home first in Surrey, and following his mother, Bessie's, death, at Glen Lyon in Scotland which Jervis inherited from her.



Painswick Lodge – sketch taken from its letterhead

A flying visit to Paris

Shortly before I returned to South Africa in March 1925, Aunt Anna and her household moved back to Cape Town. My friend, Jocelyn de Villiers, had a job in Brussels with the Belgian diplomat, M. Stadler, for whom she had worked previously in Cape Town. Walter Purcell had to go to Paris for fourteen days to attend clinics for his medical course and it was suggested that I fly to Paris and meet them. Jocelyn and I went sightseeing each morning and if Walter was free he would meet us for lunch, after which Jocelyn and I returned to our cheap little hotel on the Left Bank for a rest until Walter was able to take us out to dinner at whichever restaurant he had selected in his guide book on the best indigenous French cooking. We liked best, and returned a number of times, to a small upstairs flat where a husband and wife cooked and served us most beautifully tiny tender vegetables and some delicacy of meat or fish. My favourite dish from the short menu was *rognons* (kidneys).

One day Walter took us by train and bus to *Chez Robinson Crusoe* on the outskirts of Paris. This was a country pub where a peasant wedding was being hilariously feted under the trees. We climbed ladders up one of the biggest trees to reach a table and chairs on the third level where we were served a simple meal by a waiter who nimbly ran up and down the three ladders with a tray balanced on his arm. We looked down with much amusement on the wedding guests, who were slightly tipsy and rocking in their chairs with laughter as they toasted the buxom couple.

Walter knew all the unusual places to visit. One evening he took us to three different types of nightclub. The first was a basement fitted out with skeletons in the dimly lighted corners, and coffins on which we drank small glasses of some sickly liqueur. A performance was held after we'd had rounds of country soup and we watched while lights manipulated by mirrors showed a country housewife sitting on the stage appearing to be naked, though actually she was clothed and unaware of the cause of the laughter.

We then went to a country-kitchen type nightclub where rows of shining old copper pans hung from the mantelpiece. We had more drinks and soup. Lastly we went to a sophisticated late nightclub which left us feeling contaminated and determined never again to visit such a place. It was called Heaven and Hell and was very expensive, even in our back seats. In the centre was the show which consisted of a succession of prostitutes who bathed in a foam bath. Walter said they were brought from the North of England because they were prettier and more luscious than French girls and were in the early stages of pregnancy to be operated on later when less attractive.⁹⁶ At this stage, however, they were most curvaceous and seductive. Around the centre piece it was mainly Arab sheiks in fez and flowing robes who sat enjoying the naked girls. In the early hours of the morning we walked back to our hotel feeling tarnished.

Another evening we took Princess Guederoitz, a friend of Aunt Nan's, to dinner at a Russian restaurant. She had escaped from Russia on the last train with her husband and son after the Revolution.⁹⁷ They had lived for some time on the sale of the few jewels she could sew up in her clothing at the risk of being killed by the guards on the train who were searching all White Russians who were fleeing. She had run the risk of death rather than arrive as a pauper. She then learnt typing and got a poorly paid job in a bank where she worked overtime every day to make herself acceptable as an older woman. Her husband, Prince Guederoitz, played his violin in cafés and his son got a job in a club. Princess Guederoitz would not eat any of the dinner and only wanted tea and bread and butter as she could not digest heavier food, having lived so long doing without it.

Walter also took us to the old part of Paris, now a working-class factory area. There we saw the famous old houses of the aristocracy which were now being used as warehouses. For lunch we went into a local eating house for workers where greasy soup was served in battered tin plates, still dirty from the last customer. I felt sick after a mouthful and could not face eating or drinking anything.

⁹⁶ Carol seems to be implying that these young girls had come to France to get an abortion (abortions were illegal in England), and were presumably working in the nightclub to earn the necessary money.

⁹⁷ After the First World War, Nan Mitchell (Lucy Molteno's sister), spent some time living in Constantinople and helping Russian aristocrats fleeing after the defeat of the White Russian forces in the Civil War.

4. Arthur and I get married

On my return to South Africa, and the family in Rondebosch, time passed very quickly before Arthur and I were married on 17th December 1925 in St. Saviour's Church by the Rev. Bull, with the reception afterwards at Sandown. Uncle Barkly, then the Admiral at Simonstown (I think),⁹⁸ gave me away. Lucy and Ethel were my bridesmaids and Marischal Murray was Arthur's best man. Nicolette Bairnsfather decorated the church with the most beautiful flowers and foliage from Alphen, while Lucy Bean gave me



Arthur Williamson, the year he and Carol Molteno were married, 1925

a bouquet of her St. Joseph lilies. We hired a car and, after a night at Hout Bay Hotel, motored up the Garden Route with camping equipment for about ten days. Faery Knowe, then an idyllic spot on the river near Knysna, was the first guest house we stayed in after camping in the hills near George. The Garden Route in 1925 was still the old gravel track through the forests. The better all-weather road ran high up in the Little Karoo via Oudtshoorn. Uneducated Poor Whites lived as wood-cutters in the forests around Knysna and furniture making flourished.

A tea garden with pretty china and good hot scones was a treat en route, there being very few places where one could eat. We bought the chic china biscuit container, which is now in my dining room, while we were having tea and the lady told us she had brought it from Holland. At Storms River we found Marjorie and Bobby van der Riet stuck in the river. We had been to their wedding the day before ours. Marjorie had been in the same class as me at Rustenburg School. And Bobby had trained as a barrister with Arthur, but was going to practise in Grahamstown. After helping them push their car out the water, we decided to turn back. After several lean meals while camping, we were now hungry and had heard Mrs Reed's farmhouse provided meals where there was nothing else for travellers who had to cross a river below her farm. We had an excellently cooked mutton stew with seven different vegetables. Then, with a last stop in Albertinia, we returned to Cape Town by 1st January, 1926.

⁹⁸ Not correct. Barkly Molteno had retired from the Royal Navy shortly before, and was presumably taking the opportunity to visit the country where he had grown up.

Married life in Cape Town

We rented Graeme Duncan's house,⁹⁹ Wendelbury, in Talana Road, Claremont, for a year and engaged an excellent maid, Steenie, who promptly gave notice when Deneys was born. She told us it was her custom because when a baby came there was more work and she could not get the day off every Sunday.

We bought bicycles so as to get about easily. The house was sparsely furnished. So we spent some of our wedding-present money on the furniture we needed. We bought a stinkwood gate-leg table which we later exchanged for the orange yellowwood table that I lent Deneys when we left 18 Park Mansions years later. In my bottom drawer I had kept a set of hand-embroidered linen table mats in an old Russian design of peacocks and roses in blue and black. Aunt Nan had asked her White Russian refugees to make the set for me with the money I had sent her with my first month's salary of £16 while teaching history at Rustenburg Senior School. She had packed them with a brass lamp made from a candlestick from a mosque in Constantinople, and a lovely old floor rug in muted blue colours. She put it all in a carved Syrian cedarwood chest, a bride's *kis*, as a wedding present from her which eventually came in a small cargo boat from the Turkish coast.

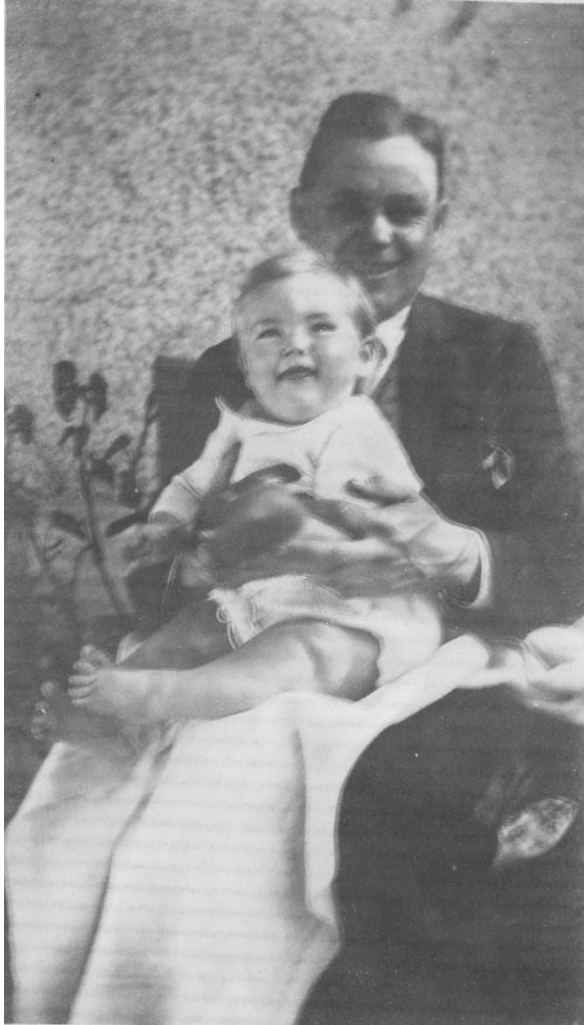
I got pregnant very quickly. The baby was nearly due when a friend from my school days, Irmild Aghé, came to tea on Saturday 8th October. We walked leisurely to Kirstenbosch¹⁰⁰ and back. Nurse had come that morning to prepare a sterilized bed, towels, etc. by baking them at a low temperature in the oven. So all was ready although the baby was not expected for another two weeks. Anyhow, on returning from the walk, the waters broke and Nurse Mule and Petronella van Heerden came very soon. Early next morning Deneys was born and Arthur bicycled to Clonave in Indian Road, Kenilworth to tell his father, Jean¹⁰¹ and the family that it was a boy and all was well. Deneys was born in a caul and the cord was twisted round his neck so that his head was lopsided for some weeks and one tear duct had not yet opened. Ouma had knitted three pure wool vests for him. I had been going to the Buxton House nearby to learn the correct way to bath a baby. Nurse Mule gave me sound advice and I nursed him entirely myself for ten months. Truby King¹⁰² was then in vogue and a strict cycle of feeds every four hours had to be followed.

⁹⁹ Graeme Duncan was a fellow barrister of Arthur's and became very eminent. He led the legal team my father, Donald Molteno, was a member of in a series of constitutional cases in the 1950s. These challenged the legality of the Nationalist Government's attempts (ultimately successful) to take the vote away from the Coloured population of the Cape.

¹⁰⁰ The famous Botanical Gardens on the slopes of Table Mountain.

¹⁰¹ Jean was Arthur's stepmother.

¹⁰² Dr Truby King was an early 20th century authority on baby care. He wrote an influential manual, *Feeding and Care of Baby*. In it he advocated hygiene, breastfeeding and a strict cycle of regular feeding, sleeping and bowel movements.



Arthur Williamson, with his eldest son, Deneys, Cape Town, 1928

When the year was up, we moved to Craig in Rowan Avenue at the back of Sir Hugh and Lady Levick's house. They had bought it for their son but as he was away for a year they most generously lent it to us.... Arthur's father then advised us to buy Kinitty in Alexandra Road, which was being offered for sale for £1,350. I bought it with some of my capital from Daddy's estate and we spent another £500 having it painted and three huge pine trees cut down as they blocked the sunlight at the front of the house. Katja Bogaard, a charming Dutch woman, asked if she could rent a room and have food with us. She worked in town running Miss Vuliamy's Czechoslovakian shop that sold the jewellery, clothing and embroideries that Miss Vuliamy had bought from refugees at the time of the First World War. She met all our friends and joined our camps at Elgin with the Blackburns and Uncle Ted and Uncle Harry.

Aunt Betty had died by this time and I had been left £90 from her estate. With this we bought an excellent second-hand Austin 12. It was a three-seater with a Dickey seat behind. In this we could go to Elgin for week-ends and picnics. Pook was born at Kinitty the following year (1929). This was while my youngest sister, Virginia, was living with us and going to Wynberg Girls High as Mother had given up Sandown and gone to England with Peter and Lucy. After passing Matric at the end of the year she also left for England and went to Cheltenham Ladies College to prepare for getting into Girton College, Cambridge. Nell Lister and Rob Richards were married

the day after Pook was born but I did get to their pre-marriage party at Mrs Lister's Kenilworth home.

Arthur and I had a very happy and full life living at Kinitty. Kottler, the sculptor, and an Afrikaans newspaper editor lived opposite in Lady de Villiers' gate cottage. Friends and relations lived all around. Deneys cut his first tooth when he was six months old. This was during a week-end we were spending with Uncle Ted and Uncle Harry. The two indentured boys Uncle Ted had taken into his house to fatten them up knew nothing about cooking. They grilled the stewing steak and stewed the fillet for hours, and the eggs for breakfast were as hard as rocks. Later I found a good cook to replace them as Uncle Ted suffered from indigestion.

Harry and Marjorie Blackburn bought Eikenhof farm. And when they came to Elgin to see about the farm, we went with them to see the beginning of their new house with the foundations laid. Mr Pearse became their first manager and when their house was built, Winkie had lessons with his two children, the three of them taught by Winkie's succession of governesses.



Harry and Marjorie Blackburn with her parents, Bryant and Nenie Lindley, her brother Bobs, and Miss Mathe (German governess), Cape, 1930

By the time Margaret¹⁰³ was a few months old (early 1932), the Great Depression was at its worst. We decided to let Kinitty fully furnished to the Editor of the *Argus* and his family while we moved to Miller's Point for the nine months of the year when it was vacant.¹⁰⁴ Kenah Murray,¹⁰⁵ who looked after it for Uncle Percy, let us have it for £8 a month. Carter was the caretaker. Arthur would drive to Simonstown every day to catch the train to Cape Town. And on his return any of us needing a lift would come back with him. Otherwise we had to walk from Froggy Pond, where the bus route terminated. I was getting ghastly sick headaches in the months after Margaret's birth, and they kept me in bed two days every week. Virginia and Peter's summer vacation at Cambridge was coming up and Mother was meaning to return to England to see them. She suggested that I should go in her place and that she would get Erna's sister from South West Africa to share the work of looking after the children while I was overseas. It promised to be a health holiday for me and, in fact, I slept almost all the time once on board the ship and I got over my attacks.¹⁰⁶ But hearing a baby cry one night, I nearly leapt out of my bunk and then sank back with relief when awake enough to realize it was not my child.

In Europe with Virginia and Peter – 1932

Virginia and I booked a trip to go by boat up the Rhine to Heidelberg where we arranged to meet Peter at no particular spot. He had planned to go to Norway first, spend a week with us in the Black Forest, and bicycle back via Holland. Before we left, four men grabbed Virginia's purse while she was in a bank in London and dashed out, dodging the doorkeeper and attendants. She then suffered another theft

¹⁰³ Carol and Arthur Williamson's third child.

¹⁰⁴ During the summer months, Miller's Point was presumably much in demand by various members of the family, including of course Percy and Bessie Molteno on their visits to the Cape.

¹⁰⁵ Dr Kenah Murray, another of Carol's cousins. Kenah was Dr and Caroline Murray's eldest son.

¹⁰⁶ It seems clear that Carol was suffering from post-natal depression at this time.

when she bought a Leica camera in Germany. It was stolen from right beside her while she was travelling back to London in the train after paying customs duty on it at Dover.

In Germany, we climbed up to some of the castles on the Rhine. We saw the Cathedral in Cologne and fireworks over the river in Heidelberg. We drank beer with students in the many small eating houses. During some perfect summer days in a Black Forest farmhouse near Titisee, I got Peter to hide himself in a lake near the farm while I took his one shirt, shorts and socks and washed and dried them in the sun. At Munich we went to an opera together; we had to hide Peter between us so that the ushers could not see he was not dressed in a suit and tie, as demanded. Virginia and I then went on to Salzburg where unfortunately the music festival had ended. But we enjoyed exploring this lovely old town with its cathedral on the acropolis.



Virginia Molteno, Carol's youngest sister, early 1930s

Virginia was very attractive and drew a following of young men, some of whom were always ready to dart forward and carry her bag in order to have the opportunity to chat. Hitler's Brown Shirts were being talked about as the most popular of the different groups, distinguished by their shirts. I remember an evening in the famous Hofbrauhaus in Munich with some young Americans. We watched a table of typical beer-drinking older men, who in a single gulp poured one mug full after another into their tub-shaped paunches. The one girl with them suddenly slipped, dead drunk, under the table. Another evening we went to a festival in some huge barrack-like shed where 10,000 German men sang patriotic songs, lifting the roof with thunderous reverberations – an awe-inspiring experience.¹⁰⁷ We sat at one of the small tables and ate little roast chickens and bread rolls which were being carried around in baskets. Germany was full of unemployed people and students living only on bread.

When Virginia and I went on to Berchtesgarden, we stayed in a beautifully furnished country chalet for

2/6d per night, including breakfast. The sheets were lace-edged linen and the china of the best. The German mark was almost valueless at this time, and one felt ashamed to be benefitting by the low prices of everything. Just as I was leaving England to return to South Africa, the pound was also

¹⁰⁷ Carol and Virginia were in Germany, only months before Hitler and the Nazis came to power.

devalued.¹⁰⁸ But South Africa remained on the Gold Standard for some time until forced off by being unable to export....

¹⁰⁸ Carol appears slightly muddled here. Britain devalued the pound in September 1931; South Africa only devalued a year later. But it seems very clear that it was late 1932 that Carol returned to Cape Town.

5. Separation and Divorce

On my return to Miller's Point, Margaret, being seven or eight months old, did not know me and it was some days before I could hold and kiss her. Mother returned to England for the English summer the next year, but left again when winter came, as she could not bear the cold. One winter she joined Aunt Carol and her family in Nice, and another she and Lucy spent in Constantinople with Aunt Nan and her great friend, Alma Ruggles. They toured Greece for a month in a taxi. The roads were hair-raising in those days and not suitable for cars.



Aunt Nan Mitchell, with her elder sister Lucy Molteno (seated), and her niece, also Lucy Molteno (Carol's elder sister), Constantinople, early 1930s

I have many touching memories of Miller's Point from my childhood days, and from the several years we lived there later both before and after Arthur left me. Maisie, Frank's wife,¹⁰⁹ spent six months as our guest at Miller's Point after my visit to England. She thought she was pregnant at the same time that Frank told her he was having a baby with a hospital nurse. At the end of the six months a specialist, at her doctor's suggestion, found she was not pregnant. So she divorced Frank and took a job again as a secretary in Lourenco Marques. Some years later she married a bank manager and had a son under

¹⁰⁹ Frank Williamson was Arthur's brother. Maisie was Frank's wife.

happier circumstances. Paddy Cartwright¹¹⁰ spent a summer with us and he loved the place so much he and Nancy hoped they could retire there one day as caretaker.

One year the Blackburns let us live in Eikenhof – if we paid the two maids during their visit overseas. Arthur came for week-ends. During this time Arthur lived at Clonave as his father had just died and Ethel, having married Tom Price, was living on an asbestos mine in Southern Rhodesia. In the winter, measles spread through the Eikenhof farm and our three children were very ill with it. Various friends from Cape Town came and spent week-ends with us there. I remember Magda Sauer and Karin, who was quite an artist though very young, and who drew Uncle Ted's dogs in a letter to him.

Uncle Ted persuaded Arthur to tell me that Erna¹¹¹ was pregnant and that he wanted to marry her in order to legitimize Ewald. I was completely shattered. But it did explain his avoidance of me since my visit to England two and a half years before¹¹² and about which Uncle Ted and I had spoken as I thought he would have a breakdown.... Arthur continued to live with Jean and Monty¹¹³ until Clonave was sold. Aunt Anna had rented a garage shed at the bottom of Mains Avenue, Kenilworth, for Monty to do her modeling and wood-carving after her training in art. She did this until her marriage and new life in Kenya.

The move to Kromvlei

After Arthur left me I moved back to Miller's Point and engaged a series of nursery governesses to help me coach Deneys for the entrance exam for Bishops. Mother returned from England to be with me. And when Miller's Point was let for the summer, we moved to Kromvlei, which Uncles Ted and Harry offered to put in order and let me live in. Kathleen gave me rose bushes which grew well in the heavy soil. Later I bought a cow and then a lovely horse called Welcome. He was a bay gelding with good paces and a fast walk which I bought during a four-day expedition in my Ford V8. Later Eleanor Floyd who was interested in looking for a horse for her mother's riding school bought him from me when my children's schooling necessitated our living in the Peninsula.¹¹⁴ I remember she brought a man with her for safety when camping at night. This man made his living by sketching farmhouses, using a ruler for the straight lines, and selling them to the owners while getting free board and lodging. Eleanor and I toured the Boland, visiting shows at Robertson and Riviersonderend. I bought Caliph from her [words missing] Barrie who farmed near the Tradoux Pass. He was railed to me after being shown locally where he won First Prize. Later Mrs. Floyd lent me her pony, Punch, for the children to learn to ride, and took him back when she needed him again. On one occasion, Molly Molteno rode up to Elgin spending a night en route with a friend at Somerset West and she stayed a few days. Peggy Harding railed her horse to Elgin and came with her two small boys for a week's visit. And the Purcell children came most holidays.

¹¹⁰ South African writer and newspaperman who became Editor of *The Cape Times*.

¹¹¹ Erna Templin, with whom Carol's husband, Arthur, was having an affair. Their son was Ewald Williamson.

¹¹² This makes the date of Carol and Arthur's separation as late 1933 or early 1934.

¹¹³ Arthur Williamson had three sisters – Ethel, Kathy and Monty (Monica) -- as well as a brother, Frank.

¹¹⁴ Roundabout 1935 since Deneys was born in 1927.



Harry Blackburn & Marjorie Lindley's wedding, Alice Stanford (left), Effie Stanford (sitting), Inanda Lindley, Gwen – the Cape, 1925

Harry and Marjorie Blackburn

One Sunday we rode up to Eikenhof for lunch with the Blackburns. Deneys was on Punch and I was riding Welcome. Taking the horses to the edge of Uncle Ted's dam above the road to Viljoen's Pass, Punch rolled over with Deneys on his back. We arrived at Eikenhof with him soaked and muddy, and he had to bath and dress in Winkie's larger size girl's clothes, to his great embarrassment as Winkie kept laughing at him. He and Pook used to join in the dancing classes that Baxter gave weekly on the lawn at Eikenhof for Winkie and her friends. Winkie rode on a leading rein when her father rode around the farm, if Marjorie did not go. During the Christmas holidays Marjorie organized children's visits to their place on the coast, 'On the

Rocks', for bathing and picnics. I used to be invited quite often. Harry would come for week-ends and often bring visitors. Marjorie was an expert organizer of supplies and brought two of the maids so that we did not have to cook or do the chores. We were very spoilt. I introduced her and Harry to Will and Monica Cloete, who were then living on several acres of ground near Kleinmond and growing their own food and cultivating rare wild flowers. They would often come for a meal at the week-end. Sometimes I stayed on alone with Marjorie and we did many long walks and climbs with swims every day....

I was very unhappy and lonely while my divorce was going through and longed to have the courage to stop the divorce, but it seemed to be fated.

At Kromvlei Pookie had a bronchial attack lasting weeks during our first winter there. I took him and Deneys for some weeks to Meltonwold, a guest farm near Victoria West.¹¹⁵ I drove us up in a Ford V8

¹¹⁵ This was a guest farm on the Karoo. Being high, it was well-known for its dry bracing air in the winter, a contrast to the damp, rainy weather of Elgin.

that Mother had bought when we settled at Kromvlei. We were held up for a week-end at Three Sisters when some part broke. A kind farmer and his wife, the Jacksons, let us stay with them and he sent for the part to Beaufort West and fitted it. I found out that Mr Jackson had been brought to South Africa to manage a farm for my grandfather because he was some kind of relation and had TB threatening.¹¹⁶ He said the Karoo farms had many people who had come there in the past to cure them of TB.¹¹⁷ On the return journey via Barrydale, we got stuck again, this time in a hotel for three or four days due to torrential rain making the river impassable. As we had left our coats behind by mistake, the three of us had to remain in our large double bed the whole time. We were eventually dragged through the river by oxen the first day anything could get across.

Another winter when Deneys had started at Bishop's Prep as a boarder together with his friends, the Gordon twins, I motored Pook and Margaret to Cradock where we stayed at Halesowen Guest Farm run by the Hilton-Barbours. The area was rich in fossils and there were golden eagles nesting not far away. An English ornithologist had flown out to watch and photograph the eaglets hatch, and publish an account of it.

On another occasion the Carswell Smiths invited us to be paying guests with them as he was manager of the Tarka 1820 Settlers Training Scheme. Fifteen to twenty young English lads lived in the hostel next to the manager's house. We were lent horses and I rode on an elderly but sturdy riding horse almost every day up into the mountains from where I could see far away the peak on which Olive Schreiner was buried. Whooping cough swept through the farm and the three of us developed it severely. When Margaret became dehydrated I sent for a doctor sixteen miles away, and a Mrs Cawood who knew Alice came to nurse us. At the end of the winter I took Margaret back to the Cape and left Pookie with Alice. He rode daily to a farm school not far away where the young teacher was a delightful girl.¹¹⁸

Meanwhile Mother rented The Ley at St. James and furnished it. Peter, who was trying to start a factory with friends at Muizenberg to extract shark liver oil, was glad to live with Mother. I joined her with Margaret who was still getting attacks of asthma very frequently. Mother suggested that I should take her to see a professor in the Medical School at Wits¹¹⁹ and be tested by him for allergies as he had helped Walter (Purcell) with his daughter, Anna-Marie. I did so and he took skin tests and put Margaret on a diet. She was not allowed any wheat, milk, cheese or eggs. As the climate was warmer in Pretoria, I arranged to stay in a residential hotel in Sunnyside where I could steam the pot of vegetables she had every day for lunch. Oats porridge for breakfast and rye bread for supper were also allowed.

While there I got to know Lucy Boyes and her Hollander friend; they built a house together. Flo Lister, then teaching in Pretoria, introduced me. Later when the residential hotel had servant difficulties and I could not use the kitchen, I moved to an Afrikaans boarding house. The widow who ran it let me cook. She boarded five Air Force men from Voortrekker Hoogte.¹²⁰ One of them told me how a few days before war was declared in 1939, sand had been poured into the engines of the planes and not one of

¹¹⁶ Carol has not got this quite right. It would have been Mr Jackson's grandfather who had been invited by John Charles Molteno to emigrate to the Cape and help manage his farms at Nelspoort. The original Jackson was a first cousin of John Molteno's, their mothers (Bower by surname) being sisters.

¹¹⁷ For many years, the village of Nelspoort was the site of a TB Sanatorium.

¹¹⁸ Carol adds in a note: 'The dry Karoo air did Pook so much good, he stayed on for two years.'

¹¹⁹ Witwatersrand University was a 1,000 miles away in Johannesburg.

¹²⁰ The main South African Air Force base.

them could leave the ground. This airman, who was of English descent, told me he had been questioned in secret as to whether he would fight if South Africa joined the British in the war.¹²¹

The Sunday Britain declared war I had been invited to take Margaret to lunch with Sheila and John Kilpin¹²² in Benoni. On our return journey I heard [Afrikaner] youths singing German songs and shouting *Heil Hitler* on the bus from the station.

Sometime after our return to Cape Town by train, we visited Basutoland as I had never been there. While staying at the hotel in Maseru we were invited by a couple who had a car to visit the mission at Morija where I knew Mademoiselle Mercier, a friend of Mademoiselle Genequand. She was in charge of the hostel food. While having tea with her, there was a cloudburst and thunderstorm which forced us to spend a very chilling night, without bedding or heat or food, in chairs in Mademoiselle Mercier's outdoor, and very bare, room.

Ever since my return from Europe on the same ship as Jessie English, I had kept in touch with her. Margaret's strict diet seemed to be preventing her asthma attacks. Jessie was also on a strict vegetarian diet of steamed vegetables. And having just rented a small house at Somerset Strand, she agreed to take us both as paying guests. She had been a teacher, but had been very ill, and was only cured by a Naturopath in England. She offered to teach Margaret. When Aunt Anna¹²³ invited me to accompany her and Nurse Smerdon on a car visit to Rhodesia for a month or more, Jessie volunteered to take charge of Margaret.

Visiting the Zimbabwe Ruins

We were to drive up leisurely and stay with Margaretha and Palmer on their farm at Norton as Margaretha was expecting her first baby in a couple of months' time. We spent a few days in Kimberley where Aunt Anna's friend, who was head of the Museum, took me to see all the places of interest. We also spent a night in the very pleasant Nuanetsi Guest House from which, at breakfast on the rondavel stoep, we watched hippos wallowing in the river below. Next morning as we drove through Nuanetsi Ranch two zebra bounded across the road in front of us. Aunt Anna told her driver to stop and within a minute or two a pair of lions slouched on to the road following their prey and stopped to look at us within a few feet of the car. We shut the open windows and did not move. The lions were sleek and completely indifferent to our presence, as if nothing could be of any danger to them. After swishing their tails and pausing a few minutes, they crossed into the thick bush. The next stop was at Beit Bridge where we managed to cross just before the Customs office closed.

¹²¹ When Britain declared war on Nazi Germany in September 1939, the South African Government split. Afrikaner nationalists under the leadership of General J. B. M. Hertzog, a former Boer War general and Prime Minister of the country, refused to support Britain in this Second World War; and some of them had active pro-Nazi sympathies. General Smuts became Prime Minister instead, supported by a narrow parliamentary majority which included my father, Donald Molteno, who was a so-called Native Representative elected by African voters for one of only three seats in the South African Parliament.

¹²² The Kilpins were cousins of Carol's. John Kilpin had married Sheila Stanford in 1937. Sheila was a daughter of Elliot and Effie Stanford, Effie being a granddaughter – like Carol – of Sir John Charles Molteno.

¹²³ Mrs Anna Purcell. See Footnote 26 above.

We reached the Zimbabwe Hotel before dark and I had a short time to explore the Ruins which had a sinister atmosphere. I walked along the path skirting the dry-walled stones of the towering phallic-shaped temples and then up a steep path to the acropolis beyond. I had attended Miss Eaton-Thompson's lecture in Cape Town which she had given on her return from examining the Ruins and I remembered that she believed they had been built by Africans between 1,300 and 1,600 years before. Summers, the archaeologist in the Bulawayo Museum, agreed with her, I believe, but Gayre St. Gayre in his book was sure that they were built by Assyrians from Southern Arabia. To support his theory he showed plans of similar temples dating back to the period of the Queen of Sheba who was thought to have obtained her gold from Zimbabwean mines. A book written by a member of the spiritualist society in Bulawayo described the findings of a psychic séance held there. It seemed that much fighting had taken place when African slaves had revolted and the slave owners had left.

When we arrived on Margaretha and Palmer's farm I had to sleep on a *rusbank*¹²⁴ in the lounge-dining room. And when Nurse Smerdon was busy all day with Aunt Anna and also doing a great deal of laundry for her, I was asked to be night nurse. I had nowhere to sleep in the day-time and now could not sleep at night. After getting no sleep for three nights and days, I felt I could not carry on as I was in a nervously rundown condition after my recent divorce. My digestion, due to nervous tension, had also gone to pieces. I suggested that they get a night nurse from Salisbury.

I had an invitation to stay with a friend, Barbara Millard, married to Gervase Hughes, and I decided to go and stay with them. They had a cattle farm and game ranch. Giraffe Farm, as it was called, was some distance away near Que Que. I was to have gone to them on arrival as Margaretha had no bedroom for me. Tom Price now offered to motor me there. So after a night with him and Ethel in Salisbury he very kindly took me. On reaching them I found Barbara and Gervase wanted to go to a wedding but could not take their children. I offered at once to take charge of their little girl of about six and their three-year old son for the week-end. Barbara had learnt pottery with Bernard Leach in Cornwall and then had taught pottery at Rhodes University until her marriage. She had made all the utensils in her home, from the bedroom basins and jugs to tableware of every kind.

The cement-floored bungalow was cool and prevented white ants. The house was really three large thatched rondavels joined together. On the stained black floors lay the skins of animals Gervase had shot. Our daily meat was kudu shot on the farm. It tasted like beef. The vegetables were all home grown.

On their return Barbara suggested I join her, Jock Sturrock and his girl friend, Judy, for a visit to the Victoria Falls.¹²⁵ As Jock's car held only three comfortably, I followed the next day by train. I spent the night in Bulawayo in his bed where he lodged, at his suggestion, to save expense. There was a cheap week-end excursion over Founders' Day – £8 for the fare and a week-end at the luxurious Victoria Falls Hotel. Staying there was a marvelous experience. The others camped and we all walked together in the day. The food in the hotel was so delicious and the weather so hot that my poor digestion suffered badly. The views were awe-inspiring. The Falls are really one of the Wonders of the World and watching the stupendous force of energy hurtling that mass of water over the rock's edge and the cloud of spray with its rainbow colours rising to a great height above, one is hypnotized or, rather, transported out of this world. Wagner's Ride of Valkyries can give one a similar sensation.

¹²⁴ A wooden settle with a leather-thonged back and seat.

¹²⁵ Known today by its original name, *Musi-aa-Tunya*, 'the smoke that thunders'.

When we returned to the farm Barbara took me on some interesting rides to some small mines. But her horse was troublesome. About a year later he threw her and kicked her head, killing her. What a tragedy for Gervase and the little children!....

After two weeks on the farm, a letter arrived to say that Aunt Anna had been told by the doctor to leave Rhodesia at once because of the altitude, which was affecting her blood pressure. I returned by train and felt very bad that I had not been there to help on her return car journey. I stayed with Ethel in Salisbury until I could get a train booking. Back at Somerset West, I found Margaret flourishing. Jessie, as I mentioned, was a strict nature-cure vegetarian. While in charge of Margaret she had gradually put her on to milk and wheat.

Mont-aux-Sources – top of the Drakensberg

When Mother rented The Ley at St. James, I spent six months there after Deneys had gone to Bishops and I no longer needed a governess. Pookie and Margaret went to Miss Kemp's little kindergarten school in Kalk Bay in the mornings and we spent the afternoons on St. James beach.¹²⁶ Then they began to get bronchial asthma every few weeks and one or other was always ill. I cannot remember when Mrs Cornforth came to look after them and I was able to accept an invitation from Nell and Rob¹²⁷ to visit them in Durban for a holiday, travelling up by sea. I rented a room and board in their residential hotel, costing £8 per month. Rob's brother from Johannesburg came to visit them and we drove up to a trout fishery and holiday guesthouse for a long week-end. Nell and I had picnics and went yachting with friends during the week-time while Rob was at work. We later drove up to spend a week-end with Katie Randles and her husband on their Mooi River farm and then a night in Alice with friends, from where Nell and I drove on alone to the Zunkels' Drakensberg Hotel in the foothills from where a footpath goes up on to the main mountain.

I left Nell to rest and joined an expedition of hotel visitors who were going to spend a night in the mountain club hut at Mount-aux-Sources.¹²⁸ An African guide was in charge and we all rode on Basuto ponies, valley after valley, and eventually up the last cliff face along a knife-edge track. Where it went no further, there was a rickety wire up which we each of us hauled ourselves in turn for the last 500 feet of sheer rock. The altitude made us breathless and most of us were mountain-sick. The night was unpleasant as we were packed into the hut shivering in the thin clothes we had brought for the hot climate down at the hotel. At last we felt strong enough to walk to see the view at the sheer edge of the escarpment. And we were fully rewarded by the magnificence and grandeur of the sight.

Back again in St. James, I looked for a house in Rondebosch so that we could all be together with Margaret going to Micklefield Junior School and Deneys now a day scholar at Bishops. Because of the War, houses and flats were very difficult to find. But I managed to rent a cottage at the entrance to the Marsh Memorial Homes in Milner Road for six months. Mother had by this time given up The Ley and,

¹²⁶ Kalk Bay and neighbouring St. James had been a very special part of the Cape Peninsula for the Molteno family ever since John Charles Molteno had bought a cottage there in the 19th century. Several branches of the family had holiday homes there. And three generations spent seaside summer holidays and learned to swim there.

¹²⁷ Carol's old friend, Nell Lister, and her husband, Rob Richards.

¹²⁸ This famous vantage point is near the highest point of the Drakensberg ('The Dragon's Back Mountains'), which are the highest in South Africa, reaching nearly 11,000 feet. The Orange River starts its long journey across Southern Africa near this spectacular escarpment.

after some months with us at Kromvlei over the summer, she had returned to prospecting and digging for sheelite¹²⁹ north of Steinkopf over the winter. A retired so-called mining engineer drove her around in the area in her Dodge delivery truck from May to August each year.¹³⁰

It was then that I was able to get occupation of 18 Park Mansions facing Rouwkoop Road in Rondebosch.¹³¹ Mother helped me move. She slept in the lounge and kept her belongings in the box room opposite the bathroom. I remember with a smile how Mother asked what she could do and I replied : 'Please sweep the floor.' Her answer was: 'I have never swept before and doubt I know how to hold the broom!'

Pook was prepared at Micklefield for the entrance exam to Bishop's Junior School. Margaret remained at Micklefield, which she loved, and then went on to the Senior School at Wynberg Girls High because Miss Hawkins was headmistress – and an outstanding one. The school was free.

¹²⁹ Sheelite is a crystalline material that can be fashioned to imitate diamonds. By this time, the early 1940s, Carol's mother, Lucy, was deeply immersed in her new vocation – prospecting for minerals in the wild expanses of Namaqualand in the Northern Cape. She has written about how she came to be so interested in this; see *How I became a Woman Prospector* on this website; also Peter Gibbs' account of accompanying her as her driver in his *Prospecting with Mrs Lucy Molteno – Namaqualand and Namibia*, also on this website.

¹³⁰ The winter months when the desert heat was less oppressive.

¹³¹ Carol rented this flat, 18 Park Mansions, next door to Rondebosch Boys High School, in 1941. She was based there for many years, letting it to raise a little money during the school vacations when she and the children would go and live in the house Ted Molteno made available to her at Kromvlei in Elgin. Carol relates that, later on, she was going to give the flat up, but her mother took it over for a few years. Then a time came when her cousins, Inanda Lindley and her sister Marjorie Blackburn, left her the right to live in a house they owned in Claremont. Carol stayed in that house until, in extreme old age, she moved in with her son Deneys and Sannie in the early 1980s. Marjorie also gave Carol the Mini which she used for many years to move around in.

6. Life at Kromvlei

When we moved to Park Mansions for all three children to go to school, our holidays were spent at Kromvlei. Mother would join us for the Christmas holidays. I have memories of wonderfully happy times there. When friends came to stay they slept outside, except in winter. Deneys and I monopolized the front stoep for our beds. Margaret and her friends were in the open-ended garage and Pook and his friends either in his room or up the pine-sheltered avenue where guinea-fowl slept and owls hooted at night. We carried water for the house from a spring on the hillside a hundred yards away. A barrel had been sunk into the tiny spring to catch the water oozing from under the maidenhair fern. Frogs kept plopping into it and that cleared it of any insects. Coveys of guinea fowl or pheasant would rise up in a whirr of wings at one's approach along the narrow path between the fruit trees.

We bathed before lunch in the large dam on the Krom Rivier. When we first lived there Pook used to



The dam at Kromvlei – Carol (seated) with her daughter, Margaret, c. 1950

canoe up the river to fetch a can of fresh milk from the Green's farm. But for our summer holiday one year I hired a cow which Pook milked, having learnt at Tarka how to do it. When Uncle Ted and Uncle Harry bought Mr de Wet's herd of Jersey cows at the time he came to be their manager, we were sent a can of milk on the work lorry each morning from the main farm. There was also a time I bought a Guernsey cow of my own. It was in milk and I had it tested for TB. This was because of the tragedy of Eric Blackburn's little son who had died of TB contracted from milk from Uncle Harry's beautiful Jersey herd which had not been tested.

Peter told me that a medical survey of the Groenewald area had shown that all the children there lost their teeth by the age of twenty due to

lack of lime in the soil. So I arranged to have butter and eggs railed each week from Bonnievale. They came from Alf Storm, who was struggling to make ends meet during the Depression. The Ruffels shared the supply with me.



Carol looking after her cow at Kromvlei

Being allowed to use all the manure I wanted, I grew vegetables. Mules were kept in the large stable below the dam and there was room and fodder for my lovely riding horse, Caliph, and for Punch, Mrs Floyd's old pony that she lent to us for several years. Often on Sundays Deneys rode with me to lunch with Harry and Marjorie Blackburn at Eikenhof after we'd all had morning tea at Mademoiselle Genequand's delightful Sunday morning 'At Homes'. Her thatched fairytale cottage had a mud floor which was starched and polished. On it lay her old Persian rugs and priceless French antique furniture inherited from her father in Geneva.

One of the happiest days we enjoyed was when, with the children's guests, we walked over the unfenced veld all the way down to the lower reaches of the Palmiet River towards its mouth some twelve miles away. There were no farms beyond a certain point. Few people had managed to battle



**The children canoeing on an open stretch of the Palmiet River, Elgin
(date unknown)**

through the dense bush and thick Palmiet rushes near the river. We could have got through if at the beginning we had climbed the steep hillsides above the river before the ravine fell too sharply away. But we walked instead that day along the river's winding sand-banked course to near the rocky part where it cut through the steep hills to turn sharply to the left to the sea, miles below at Kleinmond. The long reaches of the clear sand-bottomed course of the river were ideal for floating down. At one point I lay under high bush for protection from the midsummer heat and watched the many birds and listened to the sounds of the breeze, the river flowing, the deafening cicadas and crackle of shrivelling leaves. My only job was to boil a billycan and make club sandwiches for our lunch and then for supper. Later in the summer twilight we struggled back up precipitous slopes through Forest Department lands and the neighbours' orchards. In those days no one minded our climbing through their fences; there weren't many of them. We eventually got back to Kromvlei by moonlight, clean and cool after bathing most of the long hot day.

When the wild blackberries were ready for picking, we used to spend hours collecting them and also mulberries and prune plums which grew in the neglected orchard at Krom River. We would climb the mulberry trees in our bathing suits and then swim in the dam to wash off the stains which green mulberries had not quite cleaned off. We picked fruit all summer and I made jams and canned the yellow peaches to last us all winter as a change from apples every day. And in the autumn and spring, baskets of Boletus mushrooms sprouted among the pine trees. I remember Dora Guelke and her



Carol at work in the veld at her cottage, Gecko, at Sandbaai near Hermanus, in the 1960s

husband assuring us they were safe to eat and, after a weekend with us, taking away with them baskets of them.

Our daily bathes in one or other big dam were pure delight. Occasionally we saw brilliant blue kingfishers, or some rare large bird, or the back of a *rooibok* disappearing into the dense bush. One March when I was alone at Kromvlei, I lived out of doors, sleeping on the front stoep, and for food climbing the fig trees and drinking the milk sent down to me from the Jersey herd at the main farm. Late every afternoon I picked luscious muscatel grapes¹³² that grew on the next farm for my supper. The owner let me pay for a lug box of grapes; instead of taking it, I was simply allowed to pick a few bunches every day, selecting the tastiest, each bunch with its own slightly distinctive flavour. Never have I tasted better.

In those days before the open veld had been divided up and sold off to make small farms, the hillsides had many wild flowers. In the damp hollows of the Forest Department areas the rare golden bell heath grew in abundance. White 'painted ladies', brown 'Afrikanders', blue disas and ericas could be found in the open fertile areas. And one day when Uncle Percy was staying in Elgin he and Uncle Ted went off on an expedition and found a protea, then still unidentified, if known at all. They picked it and a painting was made of it while the actual specimen was taken to Kirstenbosch.

¹³² These grapes were almost certainly *hanepoot*, quite simply the most delicious table grape in the world.



Carol and Arthur's three children – Margaret, Deneys, and Pook, at Miller's Point, 1934 (shortly before they moved to Kromvlei in Elgin)

A series of governesses lived with us for short periods. I engaged them from the Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women which was based in Cape Town at the Settlers' Club. The mecca for all these women was Rhodesia, where they hoped to find eligible young men. A good salary in those days was £5 per month. But only the last one I hired was a good teacher and she prepared Deneys for Bishop's entrance exam. When Deneys passed, I no longer needed a governess. And then it was I began taking Pook and Margaret to the Karoo. Deneys left to be a boarder. His great friends, Ian and Anthony Gordon, went with him and were mothered by Miss Woolley, the matron whose sitting room was a refuge for new young boarders. When I moved to Rondebosch, however, he much preferred to be a day boy. He hated going back as a boarder for the first half of his Matric year, as Arthur insisted he should. When I braved his housemaster, Mr Kidd, mid-year and would not let him finish the year as a boarder because of his health, he remarked acidly: 'I suppose you will feed him on carrot juice!' Deneys in fact had twenty-eight boils and a dangerous carbuncle on his neck,¹³³ as well as a high temperature. Dr. Henry cured him with a 5-day fast (water only), and then gradually allowed him fruit, salads and then milk. Dobie's Itch, athlete's foot and boils kept recurring. Due to shortages because of the War and rising prices, food at the school was shocking. I caught Deneys' streptococcal infection, and had a carbuncle which kept me in bed for some weeks.

¹³³ Bishops in those days fed its boarders atrociously. Whether this was the economics of a private school saving money, or the product of a philosophy that believed in 'toughening' young boys up, I do not know!

Every Sunday I organized mountain climbs for all of us, usually for the wives of evacuee and their children. When convoys called at Cape Town to take on food, de-louse the ships, and make necessary repairs, batches of the men were taken up Table Mountain by volunteers who knew the mountain well. I was a member of SAWAS and volunteered to lead parties up easy routes. On one occasion I shall never forget I was asked to take 150 men. Lucy Bean came to my rescue and arranged for buses to fetch them from the docks and ferry them to the cableway station where Lucy and I each led seventy of them up different easy routes, while Marischal Murray took eight or ten officers up a rock climb. A Sunday climb meant missing church parade, hence our popularity. The men had been given each a chunk of white bread, cheese and an orange....

While we were at Kromvlei we had visits from a number of people, as well as friends of the children. The Douglas Henrys and their two little girls arrived for a week-end on Pat's powerful motor-bike and side-car. Pat wore the usual heavily garbed motor cyclist's clothes while his tiny daughter clung to the pillion, completely naked except for large goggles and with her golden hair flying behind her. His wife, Dorothea, sat in the side-car with the older girl. Dorothea was a doctor. She taught us the benefits of mud baths in the shallow, reed-protected side of the dam where we could be unseen, smothered in thick mud, then baking hard in the sun and finally slithering into the deep cold water to melt the mud and emerge clean and greatly refreshed. After dark Pat, armed with a powerful torch in his helmet, went exploring the wild part of the farm to see the night creatures.

Huge yellow cobras lived in the creepers festooning the house. After seeing one lying along the outside a bedroom window, my uncles organized men to remove all the creepers and kill the snakes while we purposely went out for the day.

One of the alarming experiences we had at Kromvlei was on the last day of a Christmas vacation. An African had come to do the housework for the holidays. He was going back to Rondebosch Boys' School, the matron of which had recommended him. Deneys was helping me pack up before leaving to motor back to Johannesburg when he missed his revolver which he had checked on that morning hidden in his cupboard. Only the African could have stolen it. But the man denied doing so vehemently. Deneys warned him that if he gave it back he would not call the police. Then he told the man to unpack his suitcase in front of him. When he got to his pillow, he threw it at Deneys, who immediately felt the weight of the revolver in the middle of it. A struggle then ensued. The African was a huge athletic man and the furniture was overthrown. I dashed to my bedroom to unpack my revolver but decided I would rather be shot than shoot him if he overpowered Deneys. I thought I must instead at all costs quieten the thoroughly aroused man. When Deneys won the struggle for the revolver, the African came to my room and offered me his wages if I would stop the police from coming. I told him this would be illegal and that I would never think of accepting a bribe. Instead I told him to cook some meat for his lunch. When the police arrived half an hour later, he was busy cooking and eating, and was now quite calm. The magistrate took the case after 2 p.m. the same day in order to enable Deneys to leave for Johannesburg, Deneys pleaded for a lenient sentence, which the man got – a month's imprisonment. When he came out of prison, he called on me at Park Mansions to ask for a reference. And when I asked him why he had stolen the revolver and then lied about it, he replied that his African Sect bishop (self-appointed) had told his congregation to steal all the arms they could.¹³⁴ I had previously read a tract of this sect which had very laudable objectives - no drinking, no smoking, etc.

¹³⁴ One wonders whether this was a harbinger of the increasing desperation more and more Black South Africans felt as the discrimination and racism directed at them intensified during the 20th Century.

Another frightening incident took place a few years later in 1948 when Margaret, then seventeen years old, and I had gone for a walk on a public holiday. On the road between Kromvlei and the Green's farm we passed their African location.¹³⁵ Unknown to us, a lorry-load of blanket-wearing barefoot men had arrived the day before from the Transkei to pick the apple crop. They had been drinking liquor that day. When Margaret and I were back on our farm road through the orchards leading to our house, a mile away over the hill, I suddenly looked round to see one of the men with a raised knobkierrie a few yards behind and looking very menacing. I quickly told Margaret to run ahead as fast as possible for help. When she stopped further on to see what was happening to me, I yelled to her not to wait. With the greatest effort and my heart straining I managed to keep two yards ahead of the man. I went on running until Margaret and Pook, armed with a .22, came in sight and the man dropped behind. Back at the cottage I collapsed on my bed. We phoned for help and within quarter of an hour my uncles, various white employees and the police arrived in numerous cars. I was taken to the location to identify the man, but as the thirty of them looked much alike I hesitated to select one of them. Mr Green was warned he should have told us about their arrival.

Note by the Editor, Robert Molteno

Here Carol ends what, up to this point, has been a roughly chronological and autobiographical account of her life. Instead, after a short section containing some more memories of her American relations on her mother's side of the family, she confines herself largely to telling the story of two trips she made to Italy in 1951 and Spain in 1955. Both accounts are interesting because she was seeing these countries at a time when their people were still recovering from war (the Second World War and the Spanish Civil War) and were desperately poor. Carol was also travelling just before the age of mass tourism in Europe. For the rest, she also writes about her mother's fascination over many years with prospecting in Namaqualand. It was virtually unheard of for a woman in South Africa to become a prospector. Carol tells the story of the times she spent accompanying her mother to this most remote part of part of the Northern Cape.

¹³⁵ As Elgin's white fruit farmers expanded their operations, their need for farm labour grew. From the 1940s on, they found it cheaper to bring African migrant workers down from the Transkei for the picking season than to expand the number of permanent skilled Coloured workers they employed. These migrant labourers were housed in often very poor conditions in what were called locations.

7. Further Recollections

My American Relations



Sarah Lindley Mitchell, Carol's grandmother, on a visit from America to Cape Town

When I was young our American relations were fused in my mind into a lovely memory of a grandmother and aunts who were always travelling to interesting places from which they sent us wonderful and exciting gifts and letters. Our Grandmother, Sarah Lindley, born at Inanda Mission in Zululand, is a shadowy figure who visited us once at Sandown before she died in 1912. Her husband, our grandfather Clarence Mitchell, had been a barrister in Charleston but had injured his back in a riding accident and was an invalid for many years before he died. Mother, as a girl, was his constant companion and read aloud to him. When he died, my grandmother sold their house and set out with her three daughters for two years to travel to the East. On their way to India they stayed with her brother, Uncle Bryant Lindley, and his wife Aunt Nenie, and their three daughters (Inanda, Elsie and Marjorie) and young son, Bobs.

Uncle Bryant was head of an American insurance company in the Cape and acted as American Consul during the Boer War. With the Rev. Bender he was asked by the Governor to take charge of organizing the evacuation of Johannesburg and of the food supplies for the women and children in the Boer and British concentration camps.¹³⁶ He said they had the same rations but these were inadequate due to railway inadequacies and British army inefficiency. In Rykie van Reenen's book of Emily Hobhouse's letters in South Africa, one can get an idea of the appalling conditions.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ There were no Boer concentration camps. But most English-speaking Whites in the South African Republic did leave hurriedly, often crowding on to what trains were available, as war loomed in late 1899. Carol may be eliding this situation with the concentration camps for Boer women and children that the British Army set up later during the War.

¹³⁷ Rykie van Reenan, *Emily Hobhouse: Boer War letters*, Cape Town & Pretoria, Human & Rousseau, 1984. Emily Hobhouse exposed the appalling conditions in the concentration camps run by the British Army in South Africa. On one visit to the Cape, the authorities decided to throw her out. Betty Molteno and her sister Caroline Murray were very active in trying to block her deportation and supporting her through this traumatic experience. The story of what happened will be put on this website.



**Bryant Lindley, Carol's great uncle,
with his wife, Nenie, 1910**

While in Cape Town, my grandmother and her daughters stayed in Barkly House,¹³⁸ which Uncle Bryant had rented and then bought from Sir John Charles Molteno. They got to know the Molteno family as a result. And when a trek to Natal was organized to see the Mission Station at Inanda, my father went on horseback with the American cousins, while the older generation travelled in a wagon and cart. Because my grandmother had known President Paul Kruger¹³⁹ when he was a boy, she went by train with her daughters to Pretoria to see the Krugers. Daniel Lindley,¹⁴⁰ my greatgrandfather, had confirmed Paul Kruger and knew him well. Many years later Daniel Lindley retired from Inanda Mission and returned to America where, an old man by then, he lived with his daughter, Sarah, and her family. When he died, the Zulu people insisted on paying for his tombstone in America, as they wrote that he was their 'father'.

When they got to India after their time in South Africa, my grandmother and her daughters stayed as guests of the American diplomatic corps. They rode up to the borders of Tibet. In China they rode to the Great Wall (this was just before the Boxer Rebellion). They spent the last six months of their travels in Rome. When they returned to America, in about 1897, my father visited them and very soon my mother's marriage was arranged. Their first home was Tressilian in Greenfield Road, Kenilworth, which they rented from Uncle Tom Anderson,¹⁴¹ who was travelling overseas. Lucy was born there in 1899.

Meanwhile Daddy bought five acres off Sandown Road in Rondebosch. They asked Herbert (later Sir Herbert) Baker to design and build a large house and big stable. The stable became a separate house when Mother sold Sandown some years after Daddy's death and the land was cut up into plots and the main house pulled down. The Floyds next door and Sir Thomas Muir who lived below our garden were our only neighbours for many years. I have already described our childhood at Sandown.

¹³⁸ Mrs Mitchell and her daughters visited the Cape in 1895. This was nine years after Sir John Molteno had died. Barkly House had originally been part of his Claremont House estate.

¹³⁹ President of the South African Republic, against which Britain a few years after Sarah Lindley's visit went to war in the Boer War of 1899-1902.

¹⁴⁰ One of the first American missionaries in Southern Africa. There is more detail about him in Lucy Molteno's memoirs, *What a Strange Thing is Memory*, also on this website.

¹⁴¹ Tom Anderson had married Maria Molteno, Charlie's sister.

1918 – The great flu epidemic

In 1918 the world-wide flu and bubonic plague epidemic reached South Africa where it was said to have killed a quarter or a fifth of the population. I had just spent a school holiday at Elgin staying with Aunt Caroline's family in their cottage beside the Palmiet River.¹⁴² It was the original farmhouse and very primitive. The toilet was a hut near the river and for a daily bath we used a pool in the river. The small windows of the cottage had solid shutters so there was no ventilation if they were closed at night. Aunt Caroline was an excellent cook and made scones in a tiny paraffin-heated oven. In spite of all the inconveniences – no fridge of course – she kept open house for any relations wanting to visit.¹⁴³ But the first morning of our holiday she said everyone must work on the farm and pointed to a sack of almonds to be shelled. But first Dr Murray claimed us to help him cut off the tails of the sheep dog's newborn puppies....

I traveled home to Cape Town alone from Elgin that day. Everyone on the train was sickening and feeling ill. Actually it turned out to be the last train to leave Elgin for weeks. There were no porters on the suburban stations, so boy scouts were helping. Back home I was the first member of the family to succumb to the flu. But I was able to get up after a week and nurse members of the household as each one got ill. Only Aunty, Daddy, John and the cowman did not. The three maids, Joan Cloete (who had come to look after Virginia when her nurse, Miss Moxham, returned to America), the coachman, Peter, Virginia and Mother all got flu (Lucy had gone to America with Miss Moxham and so was not in South Africa at this time). Joan became unconscious and had a very high temperature for many days. All the shops closed for several weeks. But we had poultry and milk at Sandown and I managed to feed the household. I got so exhausted by all the work of nursing six people at the same time and cooking for everyone that late at night after the last round I had to crawl on all fours up the stairs. No doctor was able to come. But we were warned on the radio¹⁴⁴ not to take too many aspirins and later it was said that more people had died from too many aspirins than from the epidemic. Every day carts would go round collecting corpses for communal burial. Orphanages appealed for helpers, I remember. At Elgin the uncles (Ted and Harry Molteno) took the place of doctors and organized caring for as many people as possible....

¹⁴² Percy Molteno had helped his sister, Caroline and her husband Dr Charles Murray, buy this property in Elgin. It was their daughter, Kathleen Murray, Carol's cousin, who turned it into a profitable fruit farm in the early years of the 20th century.

¹⁴³ Keeping open house was a very strong tradition in the Molteno and Murray families. And in those days, relatives and friends did not just come for a night or two, but would often stay weeks, if not longer.

¹⁴⁴ This sounds surprising since broadcasting only started in South Africa in the 1920s.

8. 1951 – Margaret and I take a trip to Europe

After Margaret passed Matric at Wynberg Girls High School she went in 1949 to the University of Cape Town (UCT) where Deneys and Pook were already studying. At the end of her second year Patrick Murray¹⁴⁵ invited her and Deneys to drive with him in his father's Chevrolet Safari truck to stay with his family on their farm, Marania, in Kenya.¹⁴⁶ As a result of the injections required for going to Kenya Deneys developed glandular fever, and by the time they left he had not recovered. In Rhodesia they had to spend several days while he was treated in Dr Mostert's hospital near the Zimbabwe Ruins. Once they arrived in Kenya, however, he soon recovered and set off with Pat to climb Nelion on Mount Kenya¹⁴⁷ before all the family went on safari to the north of the country to see the game. Pat was doing a varsity research paper on ticks. A tick fell off a rhino and, it being of an unknown species, he called it after Margaret! On the way back from Kenya they did the three-day climb up Kilimanjaro, the last 500 yards up the scree being killing.

On their return Margaret boarded with a friend from varsity in her parents' home. I stayed at Elgin, looking after Douglas and Val Moodie's¹⁴⁸ children while they were on holiday and then alone at Kromvlei for March. Meanwhile, Margaret was going through months of not sleeping and I feared she might have a breakdown. So I planned to take her overseas for eight months, leaving in June.

Margaret and I travelled on a boat from Australia with a number of good-hearted young Australian men who drank a lot and were visiting Britain to have a good time. In London we first stayed with Virginia and her daughters, Carol and Celia, and an *au pair* girl.¹⁴⁹ The children ran wild as Virginia was out all day working for the London County Council Children's Psychiatric Therapy Centre, and Virginia had just divorced Fred. Margaret and I went to Oxford for a two-week Summer School course for teachers and I stayed with Esmé Cramer-Roberts while Margaret was in the women's residence.... Esmé was extremely kind and I had a most interesting visit. Margaret also went to several plays at Stratford-on-Avon as part of the course.

¹⁴⁵ Patrick Murray, another of Carol's cousins, but once removed! Patrick had been born in 1927 and was the youngest son of Lenox and Margaret Murray who farmed partly at Painswick in the Cotswolds and partly at Marania, their farm on the slopes of Mount Kenya. Patrick was doing a degree at UCT.

¹⁴⁶ Deneys and Margaret Williamson's overland trip to Kenya was in 1950-51.

¹⁴⁷ Nelion is only ten metres lower than the main summit of Mount Kenya which is 5,199 metres. Both require serious mountaineering skills and courage.

¹⁴⁸ Douglas Moodie was Harry Blackburn's farm manager at Eikenhof. When the Blackburns died, they had no surviving child to inherit and run the farm, so Douglas bought it.

¹⁴⁹ Virginia, the youngest of Carol's sisters, had married Fred Laws in 1940. She was by this time a single parent and her daughters about nine and six years old.

Painswick Lodge

Margaret and Lenox invited us to spend August at Painswick Lodge with them while Capps, their beloved maid, was on holiday. I was to do the cooking and Margaret help on the farm. It rained and was cold. So most mornings when Margaret Murray and I were not doing the food shopping, I kept warm in Capps' sitting room and watched television. The Aga cooker kept the kitchen beautifully warm and the stove



Painswick Lodge in the snow one heavy winter in the Cotswolds

was a treat to cook on, after the paraffin stoves at Kromvlei and having to carry water to the house there. Margaret showed me Stroud and the countryside, and the crafts and lovely church in Painswick. I helped my Margaret dig out docks and fully appreciated Shakespeare's character cursing an 'enemy by wishing docks on his land'. Everything was beautiful at Painswick, from the Arab mares to the hand-made furniture and Turner paintings.¹⁵⁰

Rapallo

After a couple of weeks back in London in a room off the Bayswater Road, we set off for Paris and Italy on a three month trip. Our first night in Paris we stayed in the YWCA but moved to a better room for the next two nights and nearer the Opera House, where we were thrilled by what we saw. We went twice to

¹⁵⁰ Margaret Murray was the first member of the family to breed Arab horses. This became quite a vocation in the family. Her daughter, Iona Bowring, bred them. And her daughter in law, Caroline, who married Pat, became a particularly well-known breeder from the 1950s on. As for the hand-made furniture, this had been made by the superb craftsman, Edward Barnsley. Interestingly, Pat and Caroline's younger son, David Murray, himself became a highly skilled maker of exquisite wooden furniture, including great dining room tables and chairs that could seat twelve people.

the Museum of Modern Art, much more exciting than the Louvre, which I had seen before. We took the express to Italy and got off at Rapallo, a fashionable seaside resort. Along the shore was a promenade lined with pine trees and palms under which sour figs and beds of flowers were growing. Gay gardens and trees, clipped into umbrella shapes, surrounded the square. Tall houses with wrought-iron balconies had big French windows with shutters. The buildings were cream, pink and yellow. At the back the hills were covered with olive trees where here and there flat-roofed villas showed. Horse-drawn carriages plied up and down the foreshore with couples taking the air. The streets were cobbled and only the width of a cart. One had to squeeze into the doorways of the shops when one happened to come along. The shops were full of gay basketware and leather goods. Then there would be a greengrocer's overflowing with luscious autumn fruits and cheeses of all kinds. Next to it might be a pottery shop with traditional and also modern designs and shapes. There seemed to be a few big shops, but each small one had its owner-cum-salesman.

Porto Venere and La Spezia

From there we moved on to the Italian fishing village of Porto Venere. This was a very ancient harbour nine miles by bus from La Spezia, to which we had come by train. La Spezia was a naval base and had been heavily bombarded during the War. Numbers of rusting ships lay off the coast amid tangled wire and blasted buildings. The hillsides, like Rapallo, were covered with olive trees and umbrella pines. The picturesque pink houses, roofed with red half-bottle shaped tiles, were queer in shape and dilapidated. Aloes, fig trees, vines, plumbago and magenta bougainvillea surrounded them. At the far point we reached a ruined castle up the hill, and below two ancient churches. Opposite lay the island of Palmaria, the colour of Signal Hill, tunnelled all through with fortifications. From a grotto near the point Byron had swum across the Gulf of Spezia to Lerice where Shelley lived for some time. The grotto is still named after Byron.

The sea was very salty and we could float with our heads well above the water. There were no sandy beaches, only slate-coloured pebbly stones. From every kind of craft, people, sunburned to copper colour, fished all day in the calm, exquisitely blue water. We found out that many men were free to boat and fish because the greater part of the population could only get jobs for six months of the year. Factories, government works etc. closed down for months at a time. Even post offices and services closed at least one full day during the week in order to economize. Italians live as simply as it is possible to live. The hardship of universal unemployment for the greater part of the year is probably bearable because the workless sit out of doors in the sun or shade. Italy was then tottering on the edge of collapse and only America's economic aid¹⁵¹ prevented the country from falling to the Communists.

Florence

We arrived in Florence in a brand-new train at a marvelous new station, designed on modern efficient lines. A CIT office had an English-speaking official who told us of a *pension* at a price we could afford. He gave us a map and directions how to get there. The first impression of Florence is that time has slipped back to the days of Dante and the Medicis as one twists in and out of the narrow cobbled streets between massive houses. These have huge iron doors, most of them dating to the 12th century. In the oldest streets the top storeys overhang to form a virtual tunnel.

We climbed some dark dusty stone stairs to the floor above a warehouse and took a room which had its own lavatory and washbasin. The man of all works welcomed us every time we came in by gaily wringing our hands and jumping up and down. His own accommodation was a bed in the dining room. Hankies

¹⁵¹ Carol is referring to the Marshall Aid plan.

and socks were being washed in a pot on the kitchen stove next to the dirty dishes from the last meal. But since we fed ourselves with fresh food for the day, bought in the market nearby early every morning, hygiene was not essential. We had a tiny solid meths stove for heating drinks or boiling eggs.

Men slept everywhere in passages and couples in the rooms. From our window we looked into twenty or more families' rooms. And from each window hung the family washing on a line strung from a hook on one shutter to the other. We got accustomed to the noise of chattering, laughter, radios, appalling rows, and the clashing of dishes from 6 in the morning until 11 at night. Our electric light was too dim for reading, but that is a usual Italian economy. There was no plug for the handbasin, the waste pipe got blocked every day and the water was always cold. We carried Vim, toilet paper and towels with us. We joined the British library and read up about everything we were planning to see. We never once had a restaurant meal nor had a bath for the whole time. We were told there would not be enough water in Italy should people bath often.

The streets of Florence were packed with people. Cars and bicycles had right of way. Booths and street vendors were everywhere. And the shops were full of lovely things for the tourist trade. Nowhere are more treasures of art, sculpture and architecture packed into a smaller area than in Florence. The Uffizi Gallery, Michelangelo's sculptures, the glorious Duomo with Giotto's campanile beside it, and the palaces of the Medici, Strozzi and Pitti families, and the frescoed churches in the piazzas are never to be forgotten. The massive blocks of stone of which the palaces are built are square and bulge out one-and-a-half feet from where the blocks fit together. The walls are yards thick with doors no army could have battered down. They were really fortresses. Inside would be a courtyard on to which the windows open. But on the outside walls up to the 3rd or 4th floor there are only slits through which to shoot.

We went up in a trolley bus through the hills covered with vines, olives and cypresses to Fiesole where the Roman amphitheatre overlooked an enchanting valley of rolling country planted with olives. Past the remains of an old Etruscan wall and ruined Roman temple we walked along a country road to a villa where we had been invited to lunch with an Italian family. The pink- and ochre-colored farm houses with their yellow and grey lichen-covered tiles gave colour to the scene. The haystacks looked like dumbbells as they had a tree pole in the centre. Milk-white oxen pulled clumsy archaic-looking carts along the rutted gravel road. The contrast between the silver olive trees and the dark cypresses was faithfully portrayed in the Italian Renaissance pictures and frescoes.

Assisi

On the way to Rome we spent several nights in Assisi. Its narrow streets twist along the side of a steep hill. The houses lean against each other at every angle. The earth and stone are pink, bathing the town in a rose-colored sunset light. Vines are trellised along the walls. Terraced gardens spread down the slope. Wrought-iron lamps hang from the corners of the old houses. Peasants lead donkeys carrying panniers of charcoal hung on wooden saddles. The street water taps where the poor fetch their water are over marble basins on carved pedestals. In the market square are the remains of the Roman Temple of Minerva. The columns and architecture of its front now form the porch of a church. In the crypt of the lower church of San Francesco the bones of St. Francis and his four fellow saints and followers are buried. This church and the one on top of it are filled with frescoes done by Giotto and his school. He never overcrowded his composition. His figures are alive with movement and spiritual feeling. So great an impression did he make on us that we made a special trip to Padua on our way to Venice to see his Scrovegni Chapel frescoes. San Damiano, the tiny church in the olive groves below Assisi, was restored by St. Francis with the help of his band of followers who gradually joined him. We went through the tiny rooms and cells where they lived. They were simple and primitive and one felt that the spirit which had

inspired his life was on a far higher plane and more genuine than all the splendour of St. Peter's. The Italians felt this too, but their love of huge buildings and outward show is a natural characteristic handed down from the days of the Roman emperors. In a childlike way they are impressed by size and show of wealth.

Arriving in Rome

Rome Station has been built since the War, a dream of glass and marble and with every modern convenience, even to a bench on which to sit in the ticket queue. The first thing one sees as one walks out of the front entrance into a huge piazza is a carefully preserved section of the wall that Servus Tullus built round the city over 2,500 years ago. It is a striking contrast and typical of the mixture of ancient and modern in every part of the city. Many old temples have been converted into churches and other old ruins preserved by keeping them as one wall of a house. The top floor of Marcellus' theatre is converted into tenements while bits of sculpture and broken pillars are haphazardly incorporated into walls. Acres of ruined palaces form the city parks and ruins like the Colosseum are still used for open air concerts and events today.

St. Peter's

I suppose most tourists visit St. Peter's first. Its approach is most impressive with a large piazza in front. A covered colonnade of four rows of pillars with over 100 saints perched along the top of it form a semi-circle of two arms reaching out from St. Peter's. In the middle of the piazza is an obelisk from Egypt set up by Caligula about 1,900 years ago. The magnificence of the cathedral inside is quite dazzling. Imagine looking up a nave twice the length of a hockey field (212 yards). Four colossal arches on each side uphold the nave. And each arch has a suitably colossal figure of a pope or saint in a niche. The doves are the size of turkeys and the statues giants. Under the great dome is a canopy over the tomb of St. Peter which is in a little square room down below into which one can look and which is strewn with lira notes. Ropes of gold and miles of heavy red velvet curtains hang from the walls for any celebration. Later we went to the beatification of a saint. St. Peter's was lit up like a theatre with a myriad chandeliers. Exquisite music played as the Pope was borne in on a litter surrounded by his Swiss Guard and cardinals, all wearing the most resplendent robes. All Rome was there and the monks and nuns fell on their knees for his blessing, while a suppressed roar went up from the ordinary people 'Papa, Papa'. To me the loveliest object in St. Peter's is Michelangelo's *Pieta*, the dead Christ lying across the lap of Mary seated. The Vatican Museums are approached from another entrance into the Vatican City. They are unbelievably enormous and contain the largest collection of antiquities in existence. The Vatican palace, of which the museums form the chief portion, has 1,400 rooms and miles of passages. There are ten museums, the Egyptian Library, the Picture Gallery, the Borgia apartments, Sculpture, etc., but one wanders freely from one into the other without any clear division.

The Sistine Chapel is the most famous bit of the Vatican. It is always full of people bending their heads backwards to look up at the ceiling of the chapel. This is entirely covered by Michelangelo's famous frescoes which he took four years to paint, lying on his back. There are nine chief scenes ranging from the Creation to the drunkenness of Noah. They run the whole length of the ceiling, and then there are many more prophets and sibyls and biblical characters in the arches and lunettes. On the wall behind the altar is his *The Last Judgement*, much deteriorated with cracks but still a magnificent sight. There are also frescoes by Botticelli, Pintoricchio and others, on the walls.

The churches of Rome, of which there are over 500, are most interesting and date from Roman times. One of the best preserved old Roman temples, the Parthenon, was consecrated later for Christian worship and so preserved. It is a circular building with a great dome which has an open hole in the top,

the only source of light. The floor slopes slightly to the sides so the rain can drain away. The Romans dedicated the temple to the seven planetary deities. They believed in direct contact with heaven; hence the hole in the dome. Inside it now are the tombs of Raphael and various kings of Italy.

The Colosseum is, I suppose, the ultimate symbol of the majesty of the Eternal City and the grandeur of the Roman Empire. Pictures give one no idea of its size, which is like a hill. Nearby is the Arch of Constantine and, beyond, the Imperial Forum and the Palatine Hill where the empty shells and ruins of the great palaces of the Emperors are to be found. The Colosseum is at its most impressive at night and we were fortunate not to be too late to go there for the last three orchestral concerts held there. As the sunlight faded, a man with a flaming torch scrambled like an acrobat along the rough walls and lit hundreds of the old Roman lamps until three tiers of orange/red lights flamed and smoked in the breeze. Archways all around pierce the walls which are covered with the mellow red-brick Roman tiles. And higher up are blocks of marble or white stone. It seemed strange to be sitting in that ancient arena where so much had happened in the past. The strains of Verdi's music and the big wooden cross were purifying a place which in pagan times had witnessed such cruelty. Historians are in fact not certain that the early Christians were slaughtered here for public entertainment, but certainly thousands of wild animals fought and were killed here. We also saw on the Palatine Hill where the animals were housed – poor brutes!

One of the chief squares in Rome is the Piazza Venezia where Mussolini addressed the people from a balcony high up, and where the Victor Emmanuel Monument stands. We climbed up to have a view of the seven hills of Rome and the Tiber behind. The Monument is in the pompous florid late Victorian style. It is built of white marble which gleams dazzlingly and is ornamented with gilt and bronze – a real iced cake of a building! It is, however, a wonderful lookout from which to identify the Roman Forum, the various temples, public baths, market places and triumphal arches.

The Via Sacra is perhaps the heart of ancient Rome. It was lined on both sides by the most sacred temples in Caesar's time. At the two ends of the road are the lovely marble archways of Titus and Hadrian. These were partially restored by one of the popes. Most of the preservation of ancient Rome was in the past paid for by the popes. But Mussolini also spent large sums on this work. He did a lot to rouse the people of Italy to value and preserve its antiquities. And the immense amount of good he achieved could never have been done in a democratic way in a country like Italy, where there is very little public spirit. No one ever keeps to a queue or a rule. Italians are individualists and not a disciplined people. Many motorists defy traffic control signals and if the police tried to stop and fine offenders on the spot, a traffic snarl-up would ensue, hooting would start and no one would be able to hear a thing.

To return to the Roman Forum, one could spend an unlimited amount of time going through each ruin, seeing where the sacrifices were made, where the vestal virgins lived, etc. Next to Hadrian's Arch is a tiny round brick building called the Umbilica from which all measurements were made in ancient Rome, as it was the centre point of the city. Roman bricks are beautifully made. They are like flat tiles, but a bit larger, and as well made as our fireplace *klompie* bricks. On the Palatine Hill, which rises next to the Forum, are the ruins of the imperial palaces. They cover acres. Especially well preserved on the side of the Hill are the underground dens where the thousands of wild animals were kept for the fighting in the arena.

The Appian Way

One of the most interesting days we spent was exploring the ancient Appian Way. This was one of the chief roads out into the country and along which are the tombs of important Roman people. No one was

allowed to be buried inside the city. A bus took us to the tomb of Calixtus. Four Russian Orthodox priests, who were on our bus, were evidently figures of much interest as photographers tried to waylay them and their pictures appeared in the newspapers. They all had long hair, looked emaciated and were travel-worn, but they had great dignity and objected to any interviews, refusing to be photographed or speak even when poked by a cheeky onlooker.

A guide led the English-speaking tourists down a long tunnel into the galleries and corridors of the Catacombs. We all carried candle torches and were able to see the frescoes and carvings on the marble tombs of the wealthier citizens. The poor were put in niches in the walls while the better off lay in family vaults or even in a marble sarcophagus. The reason for these secret burial places was that the Romans insisted on the burying of corpses for hygienic reasons. During the persecutions Christians held services here. We saw all the early Christian symbols like the fish, swastika, etc. It was a relief, however, to get out in the open air again, and not surrounded by the numberless skeletons neatly lining the walls and breathing what was probably most insanitary air!

From there we left the bus and walked along a cobbled road with high earth walls on either side. Figs, vines and cypresses grew behind the walls. Everywhere we saw pieces of ancient marble carvings that had been used in farm buildings, churches and houses. It was quite fantastic. The tombs of various saints were marked. And there was an enormous circular marble tomb with carvings and next to it a ruined fort. This was the tomb of Martella, the wife of Crassus. For five miles at one point, the Appian Way was lined with rows of tombs of ancient popes and famous men, mixed up with farms, hospitals, lovely private homes, schools, etc. Across the farmland in the distance one saw the enormous ruins of a viaduct, stretching for miles and leading to the Palatine Hill in order to provide water for the emperors' palaces. The viaduct had huge brick foundations like a high railway bridge and is truly a gigantic creation. All around Rome there is also the ancient wall through which there are Porta, the gates of the ancient city.

Ostia Antica

We spent another lovely day at Ostia Antica, the ancient port of Rome, which had to be abandoned because of malaria. It is half an hour by train from the city.... The first thing we did was walk to the Castle. This perfectly preserved small Renaissance Castle was built as a defensive position on the last bend of the Tiber. Its moat, round towers, and wall six yards thick and with holes for pouring down boiling lead and throwing stones are all there complete. After exploring it, we entered directly into the Via Della Tomba down which we walked on the same rutted stones over which the ancient Romans had stepped. Like the Appian Way, it was also flanked by tombs and cypress trees. Here was a complete Roman town where no one had lived since it had been abandoned. Most fascinating to me were the temples of the well preserved Bar with a fresco on the wall depicting vegetables and marble counters for the shop. The mosaic pavements were exquisitely done. The designs for the public baths were of all kinds of sea animals. Firs and cypresses have, of course, grown up amongst the ruins and the ground is covered with button daisies and blue and yellow salvia. Bees hum everywhere and lizards dart from every wall. All the temples were originally covered with marble, but through the centuries people have removed it. The other buildings are of Roman red brick. The blocks of ancient flats are three to four storeys high. Laws were passed to prevent them being built any higher. We saw little niches for the *lares*, i.e. the household gods, just like those one sees today for the Virgin Mary. Indeed every day for five weeks we saw something new, so I could go on for hours.

Naples

Leaving some of our luggage in Rome in the convent *pension*, we made a ten-day trip to Naples, Pompeii and Capri – a very different experience. The further south one goes in Italy the dirtier it is and the poorer the people, also darker in skin. Naples is the shabbiest, dirtiest, most dilapidated town you can imagine. The streets are cobbled or stone-paved and covered with greasy mud. Garbage lies on all the back streets where one buys food. The houses in the poorer parts are semi-ruined hovels; one could see how Naples was badly bombed in the War. People sleep everywhere, in passages opening onto the street, in small shops, in nooks in the ancient walls. Every few yards is a fruit stall hung with grapes, pomegranates and red apples. You are pestered by people trying to sell you something – roasted chestnuts, postcards, trinkets, or a tie pulled out of an upside-down umbrella full of them, and if it begins to rain, then a real umbrella. Italians are born salesmen. On the trains there is a constant going to and fro as several of the passengers try to sell packets of sweets or biscuits. They are always using their wits to see how to do you a small favour so as to get a tip, and then look very angry if no tip is forthcoming. Immediately you sit down anywhere out of doors, a man appears and offers you a flower, or whatever he can think of, and then waits persistently for the tip. Any person better dressed than themselves is a possible source of cash. One just cannot get rid of them and they are always hanging around.¹⁵²

Naples possesses a wonderful National Museum – one of the finest. Here are collections of the exquisite mosaics, sculptures and wall paintings from Pompeii. Commanding the entrance to the harbour of Naples lies Castel Nuovo. This grey stone castellated castle with a moat and drawbridge and lovely marble triumphal arch in the Gothic style was built by the Spanish. The country on the way to Pompeii is rich farming land. You see expanses of apple trees and orange trees, vines, and vegetables, all planted together. And every now and then a tall shabby farmhouse in bright pink with a flat roof, iron balcony for each window and an outside staircase. A pole sticks out from the wall below the upstairs window and on it hangs the family washing. The roads are narrow and muddy with high mud walls on either side. Orchards are usually walled with high stone walls to prevent stealing. What looked to us like mosques glinted occasionally in the distance with their green and yellow mosaic domes in the Byzantine style, but they were of course Catholic churches. The peasants market their crops in enormous two-wheeled long carts, twice as long as any cart we see in South Africa. And the tiny donkeys, mules or horses pulling them are lashed along at breakneck speed. Heavy harnesses with silvery looking mountings rise in a peak on top of the animal's shoulders, and with a red bobbly pompom hanging from the top. Sometimes the day's forage is fastened in a bundle on the shaft near the horse's head so it can snatch a bite when hungry. Shabbiness, dirt, flies, garbage and flaking pink limewash from the buildings is one's general impression. And a background that is of lovely mountains covered in chestnut trees and the blue Mediterranean below....

Pompeii

We spent three days exploring Pompeii. The choicest houses are kept locked and have to be opened by a custodian. One man is in charge of each block or *insula*. He tries to herd people in so as to get a tip. At one point I turned to see Margaret whacking one of them with her umbrella. The streets are straight and about one-and-a-half feet below the level of the narrow sidewalks. They are paved with large flattish grey boulders like river stones. At intervals three boulders, the height of the pavements, are placed to act as stepping stones for those wishing to cross the street. The cart ruts in the paving stones are sometimes worn as deep as nine inches. The town was walled with a *porta*¹⁵³ on each side and a few

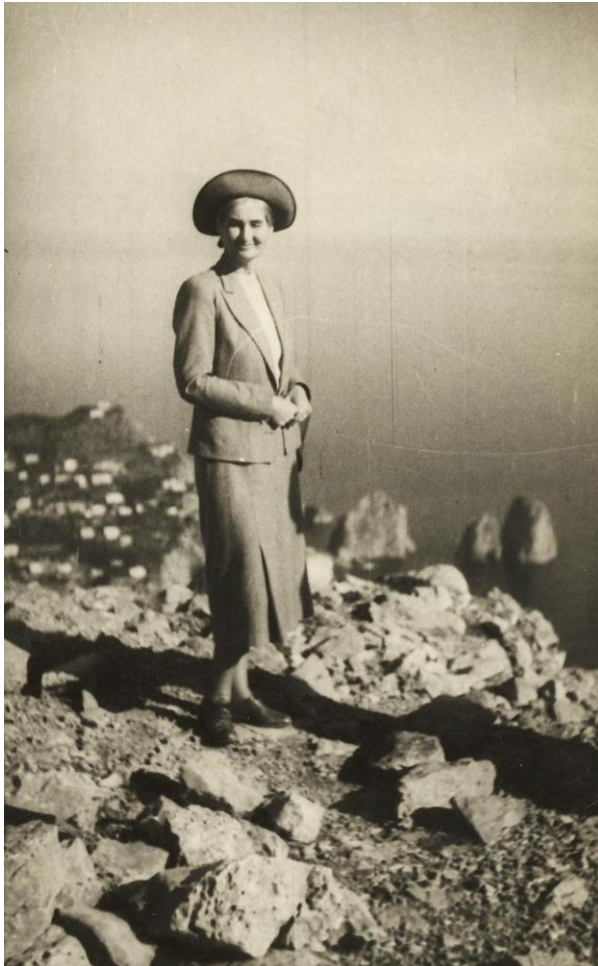
¹⁵² This sounds so like Western tourists' experiences in India today, and in both situations, the product of poverty rather than some innate cultural characteristic.

¹⁵³ City gate.

more where the country roads entered the town. The north road outside the town is lined with tombs of various kinds and also country villas. There is an amphitheatre and a large *palaestra*¹⁵⁴ opposite, two theatres, three buildings for public baths – cold, warm and hot steam baths with massage in three sets of rooms. Countless shops, bars, dyers, bakeries, etc.

The private houses of the wealthy had elaborately painted walls with mosaic floors, marble fountains and statues. In the museum and still lying in some of the houses there are the actual bodies of some of those caught in the eruption, their remains hardened like pumice stone and looking as if they were caked in dried mud. In the house of the Vetti some of the frescoes were obscene and kept behind a locked shutter. The keeper showed them only to men, who of course tipped him. The Villa dei Misteri outside the town walls is in an excellent state of preservation. It is a spacious country home with mosaics on the floors and frescoes on the walls. In the mistress's room are frescoes of 'extremely significant Dionysian rites', but unintelligible to us except that they seemed to do with sexual perversions.

Excavations are still being done on a big scale. The town was buried in soft ash floating down in clouds from Vesuvius and soft as sawdust, easy therefore to dig out and cart away.



Carol Williamson on the island of Capri, 1951

We stayed in a village *albergo* or inn which few tourists would dare to risk, and it was an experience hard to forget. Bombing during the War had cracked the wall of our room which sagged and creaked all night. The plumbing did not work. And three weddings had taken place there that very day, so that the rooms were a shambles. All the same, the harried waiters who did everything were as gracious and friendly as could be. But the dirt and the smells finally drove us to leave next day for Capri on a 3rd class open boat which was carrying peasants with their produce.

The island of Capri

Capri is an enchanted island, so beautiful that one ought to go there for a honeymoon. The island lives from the tourist trade and provides everything the tourist wants. It is basically a mountain with a precipitous coastline. The bathing beaches are small and only reached by steep paths zigzagging down the cliffs on which centuries-old aloes, umbrella pines and spineless prickly pears grow. The sea is unbelievably blue, the beaches covered in small round white stones, not sand. Italy seems to have no wind and her soil is fertile right to the edge of the sea, so that her coastline, where not rocky, is like a garden.

¹⁵⁴ Gymnasium where athletes trained.

There are many lovely villas belonging to celebrities from all over the world. Gracie Field's villa has an artificial swimming pool and a restaurant – all rather expensive. Mussolini's daughter who had just got married again has a villa there. And there is a range of accommodation to be had for the many visitors – ranging from luxurious hotels down to cheaper *pensione*.

We went in a bus on a hair-raising drive of sharp bends winding up a cliff face to Ana Capri, which is the village on the high plateau of the island. Axel Munthe's villa, San Michele, hangs on the precipice above. It is a charming house furnished in the Swedish style but full of art treasures picked out of the sea below – ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman statues and bas-reliefs. Munthe left his house to the Swedish Government which has kept it as a museum. An Italian family shows tourists over it and the money made goes to the poor of Capri.

The architecture of the old houses and the monastery is a mixture of Saracenic, with a domed roof to catch water, and the Roman arch. Very Eastern looking. All the streets and houses have painted tiles for name plates which are made in a little pottery factory, the untidiest most Heath Robinson-looking affair one could see. It has a wood-fired brick kiln squeezed between the ramshackle lavatory (no door!) and the back *stoep* where the wife cooked.

We got caught in Ana Capri for the day because the road was closed after we arrived so that gangs of men could roll down the cliffs rocks which the autumn rains had loosened. Every day we heard this crashing of rocks down the mountain side beyond San Michele. Emperor Tiberius had ten villas in the island. We visited one of these ruins which had a magnificent situation high on a headland, a bit like the lighthouse at Cape Point. We climbed up through terraces of olive trees, vines and figs to reach this wonderful spot.

Our leaving Capri was typical of Italian casual unpunctuality. We were told the ship for Sorrento left at 10 a.m. So we went at 9.30 a.m. and were sold tickets at 10 a.m. only to be told the ship had already left at 9.20 a.m., but that another one would leave at 3. So back we went to our *pension*, as it was drizzling, and wasted the whole morning. Down again at 2.30 p.m. We found the ship had arrived, but had decided not to go to Sorrento at all that day because the weather looked stormy. In disgust we caught a different boat back to Naples to get back to Rome by train again. So we never saw that famous stretch of coast with its lovely Saracenic buildings. And as for the trains, they are seldom exactly on time. And as they are always packed to capacity, you must go at least half an hour before it is due, even if one knows it'll leave a quarter of an hour late.

Italians are always curious and want to know all about any strangers – where we have come from, our ages, marital status, income – only to remark, then, that we must be 'capitalists' because we have come such a long way! They love to talk and be friendly and do small kindnesses, and of course want to correspond. I think at the back of their minds is the hope that, through an overseas acquaintance, a possible chance to emigrate might come their way, as emigration is their only hope of a better future. Their national characteristics have produced an industrious and artistic people with no repressions. That spontaneous ease of expression and quickness to see an effect are most noticeable....

More time in Rome

A student took us around 'University City' in Rome. It is like a little walled town on its own and has about 20,000 students. Oddly, there are only two official student hostels, not as big as those of our own University of Cape Town. All the buildings are modern. The whole University had been designed and

built just before the War on Mussolini's orders. It was not quite finished by the time we saw it. But it is very grandly built. Another unfinished of his projects!

A second project of his was a huge sports club with fields, tennis courts, amphitheatre, arenas, swimming pools, fencing clubs, etc. The colossal amphitheatre was surrounded by big roughly hewn figures representing the different provinces of Italy. The project is now being continued in preparation for the 1960 Olympic Games. The statues, many of which were destroyed after the War, numbered nearly seventy and were made of white marble or stone. The entrance had a mosaic pavement in black and white depicting the different sports, and with the words *Il Duce* repeated everywhere, over and over again, along with the Fascist insignia. The club house is like a large hotel and contains enormous mosaic-paved indoor swimming baths.... Mussolini planned everything on a grand scale.

There were other great unfinished white marble and stone buildings that we saw outside Rome on the way to Ostia. These were intended for a grand exhibition but were all abandoned. People have pillaged the marble, grass grows over the steps, and ivy up the walls. It seems a pity to see them wasted when Italy is desperately short of houses.

We went to the South African Legation in Pavioli, a suburb of Rome which is practically entirely post-war modern-looking buildings. Italians build semi-circular blocks of flats on semi-circular roads. And a huge church is always built nearby so that there can be no excuse for not attending Mass. It is unthinkable for an Italian to change his religion, Catholicism being the state religion. Yet when I asked an Italian librarian about accommodation in Rome, as I had been given the addresses of various convents, she replied: 'Oh no, you wouldn't like a convent at all; they are too cramping and strict. I wouldn't advise you to think of one.' She went on to say: 'The Church governs most charities which in your country would be non-religious. All young girls, if sent to study music or whatever it may be after their schooling, stay in convents, which chaperone the girls most strictly, so much so that it leads to deceit on their part. Girls amongst the aristocracy of Italy are usually chaperoned. The average better-class girl does not take up some job as with us but, like Victorian girls, they wait to get married and perhaps learn music and languages.'

We spent a day exploring the poorer areas of Rome where the lovely old palaces are situated, like the Palazzo Farnese. Market stalls in the streets under awnings were providing the inhabitants with all their food. Women were selling eels that looked like sea snakes, shellfish of every kind, and the queerest fish all bewhiskered which they cleaned and then threw away the resulting offal in the street. Few Italians seem naturally clean or tidy. But they are extremely clever at improvising most attractive-looking stalls with just a few leaves spread in a pattern and their fish tastefully laid out. They always get an effect with some original idea – a pomegranate hanging in the middle of the stall, or ferns, or some novelty. For example, we saw them peel off the old stalks of a cabbage and cut it in the shape of a flower or lay it invitingly open. And next to the stall there might often be a lovely marble fountain spurting water. All the fountains work and are a great feature of Rome. Often Roman sarcophagi are used as basins for the fountains. And everywhere the beautiful carved marble of ancient days is put to some modern use or beauty.

The Ethnographical Museum in Rome is one of the best in Europe and contains an immense quantity of material including from our own Bushmen and Native tribes. I was shaken by the gory, but fascinating, exhibits of human heads (I think from Java). Each of them had been shrunk to the size of a cricket ball with the thick hair hanging down, looking life-like, and the skin hardly wrinkled. In one of them, the jaws were holding between stained teeth a string by which the head was dangled.

On our last night in Rome a census was taken and the questions gave us much amusement. One was: 'Are you marriageable or celibate?'

Sienna

On our homeward journey we returned to Florence via Sienna. Here in Sienna one is back in the Middle Ages. The station bus enters this ancient walled town along the few streets where wheeled traffic can pass, albeit hardly. The palaces, as in Florence, are family forts, grim and forbidding. Not much sunlight reaches the winding streets and their small dark shops. We stayed in a convent which put a ten-bed dormitory at our disposal. The flooding of the Po had already begun and the November weather was bitter and the rain torrential. The nuns had no contact with us. When we rang at the big outside door, an aged porter pulled open a peep-hole to see who was there and only then unfastened the latch. We were expected to wash in cold water in a tiny basin in the lavatory ante-room. The whole placed depressed us, as if we were back in a strict boarding school. But it was cheap. And there were no tips or government tax to pay.

The Town Hall was a palazzo of mellow brick standing at the bottom of the half-moon market area where the famous horse races take place. The city is famous for its medieval and early Renaissance paintings and frescoes which are known as the Siennese School. Simone Martini's *Marriage of the Virgins* and his *Warrior Riding off to War* are both in the Town Hall.

The black and white marble Cathedral staggers one when you first see it. The effect is like seeing zebras! Its lovely marble carvings and colourful stone mosaic flooring were done by the finest artists and craftsmen. St. Catherine is the patron saint of Sienna and one is shown over her house, and sacred relics. The Art Gallery houses a magnificent collection of Siennese primitives showing the Byzantine influence which lasted much longer than in Florence, where the Renaissance, starting with Giotto, broke free at an earlier date. The Byzantine artist worked by rule, his only freedom being that of his use of colour. There was no light and shade, no third dimension, no action, only contemplation. Hence the gold backgrounds which expressed the all-pervading sheen of Heaven. The artist of the Middle Ages disregarded Nature. His model was an abstract one, given him by tradition and the authority of the Church. He could, of course, be inspired by whatever mystical emotions he might personally experience. The creative process of the classical artist of the Renaissance, by contrast, was the exact opposite. He starts by observing Nature in terms of structure and perspective and then allows his creative imagination full play. The scientific analysis of optical experience which began in Florence in the first part of the 15th century influenced the whole aspect of painting until about 1900 when the revival of abstract art began.

Padua and Verona

So thrilled were we by Giotto's frescoes that we stopped off at Padua to see the Scrovegni Chapel where the frescoes date from the best period of his work.¹⁵⁵ Padua built the first university in Italy in 1222. These smaller towns of Northern Italy are well worth visiting. Verona was on our route to Austria, and after a night there we decided to make a week-end trip to Venice, even though it was bitterly cold, so as to compare the Venetian School of Painting. Verona has a Roman Coliseum in the middle of the town and the most picturesque ancient market place. Dante lived here for many years in a small house lent to him by the Alighieri family. They ruled Verona and built a fine palace for themselves next to some amazing marble tombs. Juliet's tomb on the outskirts of the town is visited by everyone and is greatly venerated. I already described Venice when staying there with Uncle Percy. The week-end that Margaret

¹⁵⁵ Giotto's work that Carol fell so greatly in love with actually dates back to 1305 in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua.

and I were there was spent entirely indoors because of the heavy rain. St. Marks has more the atmosphere of an Eastern mosque, until one realizes that Christianity was Eastern in its origins and has remained so that part of the world. The marble floor of St. Marks, mellowed by the centuries, is wavy and undulates in all directions in the shadowed candlelight.

Innsbruck

We did not stop in Milan but went straight on to Innsbruck where I got a room in a cheap hotel and Margaret went to a clean Youth Hostel where she joined some young tourists who were going to Switzerland for the week-end. The only food in the shops was ersatz sausages and frost-bitten cabbages.¹⁵⁶ French, British, American and Russian troops occupied Austria in turn every few weeks and the place was grim. I had some mountain boots made for Deneys while there and he long wished South Africa would allow an Austrian shoemaker to come and settle, so excellent was the craftsmanship.

We went on to spend a few days with Katja Bogardt and her husband in Haarlem, where he had a family oil-importing business. They were kindness itself and took us every evening to a superb new restaurant, driven there in his luxury car. We spent a day in Amsterdam to see the Rijksmuseum before crossing the Channel by the night boat back to England.

Back in London – seeing Virginia again

Iona¹⁵⁷ had lent us her flat in London near Hyde Park as she was skiing in Switzerland. While there we were invited to tea in Robert Moody's flat to celebrate his marriage to Virginia.¹⁵⁸ They bought a very nice house in Hampstead where they lived until they divorced some years later. Their first baby, a son, died of heart failure a short time after his birth. Olivia, who followed, was a lovely baby and is a clever and delightful young woman to-day. Celia¹⁵⁹ visited us in South Africa when she had finished school. She married soon after her return home. Her sister, Carol, reminds me of Aunt Betty in her liberal views and simple living – one bed, one table, one chair, nothing more, living in a tiny flat on the top floor of a London house shared with others, each owning one floor. The flat was given to her by a boyfriend who later left.

Resuming my life in Cape Town

On our return to South Africa by sea, we shared the cheapest cabin on a one-class ship. Margaret went back to Varsity for one year to finish her B.A. degree. I then joined her and Deneys in a two-roomed flat in Hillbrow in Johannesburg for a short time. Deneys and a school friend from Bishops slept in the lounge. Deneys was soon to be married to Sannie in her parents' home in Bloemfontein.¹⁶⁰ Mrs Edeling arranged for Mother and myself to go by train the day before the wedding and stay with friends of the Edelings while Deneys drove down in his Chevrolet Safari car. Ouma Faure¹⁶¹ had left him £600 with

¹⁵⁶ This was Austria, and both it and Germany had several years after their defeat in 1945 where the population suffered the most severe deprivation.

¹⁵⁷ Iona was Lenox and Margaret Murray's eldest child. She was 29 years old at this time, and had not yet met her future husband, John Bowring (they married in 1956). Iona loved the Cape where she found her aunt, Kathleen Murray, a great support.

¹⁵⁸ Robert Moody was Virginia Molteno's second husband.

¹⁵⁹ Celia was Olivia's elder half-sister, as was Carol; their father was Fred Laws, Virginia Molteno's first husband.

¹⁶⁰ Carol's eldest son, Deneys Williamson, got married to Susannah Maria 'Sannie' Edeling at Bloemfontein in 1953.

¹⁶¹ A relative of Deneys on his father, Arthur Williamson's, side of the family.

which he had bought the car from Lenox Murray. Margaret meanwhile had been taking a course in typing in Johannesburg and had got to know Jill Currie....

Some months later Margaret and Jill sailed for London. They shared a room in a house belonging to a relation of Robert Moody's. Jill trained in pottery while Margaret tried to support herself by typing. She became engaged to John-Mike [Gibbs]. In mid-summer, after his parents had moved from the Deanery in Cape Town to Chester Cathedral, the wedding took place as a joint celebration of the Gibbs' homecoming.¹⁶² It was held in the village church of Chesterton near Oxford and the tea afterwards in the Purvis' home, she being John-Mike's father's sister. Their little daughter was the flower girl and Jill Margaret's only bridesmaid. Margaret made her own wedding dress on the Featherweight Singer sewing machine I had given her as a wedding present. Kathleen took her to buy linen which lasted many years. At the wedding Kathleen took my place because I was prevented from arriving in time by Mother's accident while returning in her truck from Namaqualand.¹⁶³ Kathleen lent Margaret her pearl necklace which she then gave her twenty-five years later. For their honeymoon Margaret and John-Mike stayed in a guesthouse on the Island of Raasay where Leo and Nell Marquard¹⁶⁴ happened to be holidaying. From there they went to Kew where they had rented the upper floor of the Rectory on the main road opposite Kew Gardens. A year later Mary Gibbs and I sailed on the same ship for England.

¹⁶² John Mike Gibbs' father had been Dean of St George's Cathedral, Cape Town. John Mike and Margaret Williamson got married a year after Deney's in 1954.

¹⁶³ Carol's mother, Lucy Molteno, turned 80 this year, 1954, and was still undertaking the arduous prospecting trips which she had done, often annually, for over 20 years.

¹⁶⁴ Leo and Nell Marquard were prominent liberal Cape Town intellectuals. Leo was an author of several important political books on South Africa and ran Oxford University Press in South Africa. Nell lectured at the University of Stellenbosch.

9. Spain, 1955 – On my own!

While waiting for Michael¹⁶⁵ to be born, I decided to visit Spain, just taking a rucksack and a light suitcase.

Burgos

After getting to Paris I caught a night train to Burgos where I spent a few days sight-seeing and recovering from food poisoning after eating a meal in a restaurant. The pink limestone of an old monastery near Burgos and the wrought iron everywhere stand out in my memory. The magnificent cathedral filled with treasures was overwhelming. Every space was covered with tapestries, pictures, sculptures and memorials. The wrought-iron grilles and gates enclosing glittering shrines were marvels of workmanship. The ruined castle commanding the crest of a hill above the buildings added to the mediaeval look of the town which is unspoilt by any industry being there.

Avila

My next stop was the walled city of Avila where I spent a couple of nights. The towering stone walls built around the place, on one side high above the river, were pierced at one end by huge arched iron gateways and at the other by a tiny postern gate through which donkeys brought milk pails and panniers of food from nearby farms for the market each day. My visit was not many years after the end of the Civil War, signs of which one saw everywhere, from bullet- and machine-gun holes in walls to an armed soldier in every compartment of every train and on all stations.¹⁶⁶

Madrid

I reached Madrid late and could only get a tiny closet with no window and completely filled by a double bed. I realized it was probably a brothel. Madrid was full of people because of an important bull fight next day and the opening of the Chamber of Deputies by Franco. Next morning I left my place early and luckily found a room where American tourists were renting accommodation. I did not know till later that morning that my bedroom window overlooked the Chamber of Deputies building where Franco was to be escorted by North African troops on their pure-bred Arab horses. Those soldiers riding grey horses were dressed in blue sari-like cloaks and wore decorated silver helmets. The bay horses were ridden by soldiers wearing the appropriate colour cloaks and helmets, while the white horses had black-cloaked horsemen. It was a thrilling sight to see these superb lithe horsemen manoeuvre in the square below.

I found the British Council where Spanish people were taught English and given books and information on the English way of life and culture. Here I was able to ask questions in English. I bought a kilometric ticket for £8 and with it went by train to the South via Valencia, Jerith (?), Seville, Cadiz, and on by bus to Malaga, Torremolinos, Granada, Rondo, and then by train again from Granada to Madrid and on to Vigo to catch a boat back to London. At that time Spain had not yet recovered from the effects of the savagery of the Civil War and the extreme poverty and lawlessness.

I spent a day at Escorial and went through the area, shown by guides, where the kings are buried and have their sumptuous tombs and chapels. The buildings are immense and comprise a quadrangle of

¹⁶⁵ Margaret and John-Mike Gibbs' first child.

¹⁶⁶ Carol's visit to Spain in 1955 was actually some 16 years after General Franco's victory in the Civil War. Her observations show how great was the physical damage done in that conflict and, Spain being one of the poorest countries in Europe, its Government's acute lack of resources to finance reconstruction at all speedily.

storeyed buildings a kilometer long, I think. One got the impression that the kings had been really devout Catholics and some of them monk-like characters.

Segovia, Toledo and other cities

Some of the highlights of my fascinating visit were a day in Segovia and two nights in Toledo, which I shall never forget. The Cathedral and El Greco's home and paintings are the first places to visit. Toledo had suffered great damage in the Civil War. Burgos had been Franco's headquarters and Madrid that of the peasants. Segovia is a walled town lying between the two arms of a river with a castle, a cathedral and a viaduct built by the Romans striding across the countryside bringing water from a distance. I particularly wanted to see an exhibition of ceramics made by a famous living craftsman and thought to be the best being produced nowadays. They were very expensive and I was not very thrilled. The exhibition was in a lovely old building, however, formerly a church but now the potter's workshop. The walls were held up by huge buttresses.

I had a five-day entrance ticket to the Prado¹⁶⁷ and went back again and again to see and absorb the beauty of its treasures. *Las Meninas (The Maids of Honour)* is perhaps the most famous of the many portraits by Velasquez which is housed there. Goya's pictures are there, too, to startle one with the intensity of the horror of war. His home was in Madrid. *El Greco* is best seen in Toledo. His elongated-looking gaunt men are of a distinctive type. I loved Goya's *Maia* in the two portraits of her lying on a couch, one naked and the other dressed; she was the beautiful seductive *contessa* with whom he had had an illicit affair. Downstairs, on their own, were the visions of the Devil torturing in hell those who had committed sexual sins and the forbidden imaginings of the sex-starved monks. Very few of Hieronymus Bosch's paintings can be seen outside Holland and the Prado. I also spent some hours in Valencia visiting the mosque built by the Moors, now a church. Its slender alabaster columns, all in straight lines supporting the roof, which is low, give an enclosed feeling, but they are very beautiful.

No one in the town could speak a word of English so I decided to go on to Jerith, where by chance there was a gala. The young women all rode their horses side-saddle and were wearing long sweeping riding skirts and jackets of a hundred years ago. Or they were being driven in open carriages bedecked with flowers and rosettes while the young men also wore old-fashioned clothes. It was a festive scene and I followed on foot to the *bodegas* which were open to be viewed. Jerith gave its name to sherry and names one knew as wine merchants were emblazoned on the iron gates of each *bodega*.

I ended the day in a small hotel in Seville where I thankfully fell into bed supperless. The old part of the town fascinated me. A door or gate would open in a wall and, if one was lucky and could see inside, there was a courtyard around which a staircase circled leading to the upper storey which was deliberately secluded in the past for the Moorish women. The cathedral and the Alcazar next to it were the centre of the town. Alongside them the pavement cafés filled up in the late afternoon when girls in groups and young men in separate groups promenaded in order to view each other, as was done in many Spanish towns.

Cadiz

I went to Cadiz which is a promontory of white sand and stone covered with houses of the poor. At its end a few trees grow in gardens belonging to various foreign consuls. It is a bleak, sun-baked, impoverished place. The bus drive next day along the coast to Malaga was the highlight of my visit. We passed miles of salt pans to Algeciras, where everyone lunched, and then on past mud-walled,

¹⁶⁷ The Prado is actually in Madrid.

whitewashed Arab houses in walled villages, up through centuries-old forests of huge gnarled olive trees and down to the coast at Malaga. After a night in a small hotel and a promenade above the sea I climbed up to the fort behind the town. I took what I thought was a short cut on the way down in spite of having seen notices on the roadside saying 'Beware of Brigands. The short cut led me into an alarming area where dangerous-looking people were living literally in holes in the worst slum devastation I had ever seen. The looks they gave me terrified me though I pretended to walk on boldly. Back at the hotel I caught the first bus to Torremolinos, some six miles back along the coast, and found a clean new motel where I spent two nights in comfort. Marischal Murray had advised me to go there. There was a delightful-looking old house which was being used as a residential hotel above the beach. But it looked expensive and I could only afford accommodation without food and fed myself on bread, fruit and cheese. Neither the beach nor the sea looked clean as it seemed that the tides never really scoured the sand. In later years Torremolinos became the mecca of foreign hippies and teenage tourists.

A bus took me up the pass to Granada where I spent a week revelling in the beauty of the Alhambra, the Generalife Gardens and the atmosphere of tranquility – such a contrast to the town below with its narrow streets very noisy till the early hours of the morning. The Gipsy area was full of home weaving for the tourists to buy and flamenco dancers who performed in their caves or cafés when tourists came. As these shows were at night, however, and expensive, I did not go.

Rondo

I caught a bus to Rondo for a day. It has the oldest bullring in Spain. One enters the amphitheatre through battered red-painted doors leading to seats in wooden boxes very close to the ring. I was shown through the museum houses on the precipitous bank of the river which cuts through the town and which one crosses by a bridge hundreds of feet above the river. Another day I went by mountain train to the last station in the perpetual snow below the peaks of the mountain range above Granada.

Back in Madrid I decided to return to England by sea to avoid the exhausting night train to Paris while sitting up in a packed compartment. So I went by train to Vigo, the seaport for South America. As I had to wait for a ship going via London on its way to South America, I had a week-end which I was able to spend in Santiago de Compostella. The town is famous for its Cathedral. Pilgrims used to walk or ride there from all over Europe along the Pilgrim Way. The gigantic *Botafumeiro* was being swung that morning and the Cathedral was packed. It took six to eight men to pull the ropes which swing the incense-burning cauldron, which weighs a ton, from one side to the other of the vault. It is said that one year the cauldron had broken loose from its ropes and swung right through the highest window. The stone floors of the Cathedral were cold and hard without kneelers and after many prayers I lent forward instead of kneeling again. A nun sitting in the pew behind jabbed my back with the point of her umbrella and I promptly fell on to my knees! The whole town was paved with stone or marble slabs. The smell of blocked drains was most unpleasant and the hotel lavatory unusable. The countryside in this northwestern part of Spain is unlike other parts. I noticed a woman and a donkey yoked together to a plough. Corn was stored in stone-built, coffin-like structures standing on high granite plinths to prevent rats climbing up. And all the fence posts were granite slabs, tall and narrow.

My cabin on the little ship had only just enough room to climb into one of the four bunks, a bare deal floor and no amenities. But the food was good, being both English and the salads of Spain. We all ate together at one long table without a cloth. First class was no doubt better equipped. When we arrived four days later at Tilbury, there was a strike going on and it took me many hours to reach the City and then on to Kew where Margaret and John Mike were living.

Falling ill in London

Michael was born a week or so later and I took charge of him at night to let Margaret recover. After a week-end with the Purvises, I returned alone to the flat and it was then that I had a breakdown. Virginia's husband, Robert Moody, arranged for me to be admitted to the psychiatric ward of The London Hospital where I had ten shock treatments. The wonderful anxiety-free awakening from the anaesthetic was an experience I shall always remember indelibly. My mind had the quality of the happy child without a care in the world. But it did not last for very long. The shock treatment itself became an anxiety. So after ten of them, they were stopped and I went back to stay with Margaret. Deneys soon arrived from South Africa to take me back. Iona lent him her car and we went for a long drive somewhere. That evening I had a heart attack. And when the heart specialist arrived, he found I had not been given the pills I should have had and I was ordered to stay in bed for four days. For many months after I felt the anxieties had only been papered over, my memory suffered and my ability to concentrate was impaired. I am convinced my menopausal breakdown was a glandular and chemical disturbance. The suicidal compulsion could not be rationalized and mentally coped with, and shock treatment is a catharsis.

When Deneys returned to his work he received the first big case he had ever been given. I shall always owe Sannie a deep debt of gratitude for urging him to fetch me at a time when they had no money and the Craighall Park cottage had not yet been renovated and they were living in the greatest discomfort.

On the move in Cape Town

On my return to South Africa (in 1955) I helped Mother to move from Park Mansions to Cumbury Court Flats where Aunt Nan joined us.¹⁶⁸ [Some years later] my brother Peter and Margaret suggested we rent Lane House from them while they went to live in Santiago, Chile.¹⁶⁹ Vicky stayed with us for a year to do her Matric and when she left, Edward¹⁷⁰ boarded with us. We had moved to Lane House with Aunt Nan. I drove her and her niece, Mildred Brock, on a number of sight-seeing trips in my Mini car, given to me by Marjorie Blackburn. Peter and his family visited us a number of times while they were living in Chile and left Martin with us when he began his University life. After seven years they came home and Mother and I moved to Dennekamp. When we had been there for about four months my cousin, Inanda, died, leaving me the life use of her and Marjorie's house in Zion Road. It took three or four months to have the place completely renovated before we could give notice. We then had to get an ambulance and move Mother in on a stretcher. This happened in June 1969 and Mother died on the day Lucy and Bernard arrived.¹⁷¹ Lucy and I were beside Mother as she died, after a short coma.

¹⁶⁸ It appears that Lucy Molteno's sister, Nan Mitchell, who had never married, came (from the States?) and lived with Lucy for some years in Cape Town.

¹⁶⁹ Carol's younger brother, Peter Molteno, was a biologist. In the late 1950s, or possibly or a little later, he got a job with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Chile. This is how he and his wife came to suggest Carol move into their house in Cape Town. And why their younger children, Vicky (born in 1946) and Martin (born in 1950) lived with Carol at their Cape Town home for periods of time.

¹⁷⁰ Edward was Carol's nephew, the son of John Molteno.

¹⁷¹ Lucy, Carol's eldest sister, had rushed out to the Cape to say farewell to her mother. Her husband was Dr Bernard Armitage, a psychiatrist.

10. Accompanying My Mother Prospecting in Namaqualand

Mother had always been interested in stones, and when she returned to South Africa at the time of Arthur leaving me, she developed two new interests – Geology and the Stock Exchange. Each winter she went to Johannesburg for the dry air and occupied herself by studying stones and having lessons with a Geology Lecturer so as to be able to identify rocks, should she go prospecting. Her second great interest was investing in listed shares on the Stock Exchange and going to sit in brokers' offices to watch and invest.

When she was able to begin prospecting she looked around for a reliable driver and organizer of the men. Through Mrs van Breda, whose home we visited, Zoetendahl's Vlei, near Bredasdorp, she engaged the manager's son, Henry. He was a very reliable farmer but not needed in the winter, and was delighted with the prospect of seeing Namaqualand. Mother bought a Chevrolet covered truck and a loose car seat for me to sit comfortably amongst the luggage in the back.¹⁷² Leslie Harding, whom Mother enlisted to help in solving her problems, got Mother to sign an agreement with a Levantine Jewish businessman in Cape Town who owned a farm on the South African side of the Orange River. A few farm owners there had permits to enable them to prospect for diamonds on their own farms. The businessman did not want to pay a prospector. So he agreed to have Mother prospect for him on a shared basis. He arranged to meet us in Springbok and lead the way over the veld – which had no roads and no people living there – some hundred miles to his farm on the Orange River. Mother had to apply in Springbok for a diamond-digger's licence for herself and for Henry van Breda. Henry's licence was received some weeks later, but Mother's never came. We heard afterwards that the police had been suspicious. Even after making enquiries as to the reliability of the Molteno family, they thought it too unusual for an elderly woman to be a prospector; she must have some ulterior motive. Illicit diamond-buying (IDB) was a criminal offence, even though people living in the area felt it to be very unjust.

We camped in a wild gorge next to a water-hole. The following day our farmer hired a donkey cart with big motorcar wheels, two donkeys and a driver to take the four of us down a rocky pathless ravine to the dry bed of the Orange River. We were shown the stretch along the river where we could dig when the permits came. I had made some rough maps of the route from Springbok as the last 100 miles were across wild rocky country with no roads and only a few grotesque Euphorbias looking as if they were standing upside down. Bushmen used to use their sap as one of the ingredients of the poison for their arrows. Paterson noted this during his journey through Namaqualand in 1778. They mixed Euphorbia Virosa juice with a particular species of caterpillar associated with another plant. After drying the mixture, they painted their arrow tips with this most effectual of all their poisons. Indeed so poisonous is the Euphorbia even on its own that, if its branches fall into water drunk by wild animals, they seldom get a thousand yards from the water before they fall and die. Other species of Euphorbia, however, are valuable fodder and extremely drought resistant. The *Olifants Melkbos* of Namaqualand, a shrub with a large succulent root and small crown, was cut in great quantities during droughts as fodder and it is probably the most valuable indigenous plant in Namaqualand, which has been noted for its curious flora adapted to surviving with very little rain for years on end.

Our camping equipment included a Primus stove to boil water, ghee I had prepared at home in place of butter, a half lamb for Henry in a sack kept cool in the shade of the car, and cheese, eggs and vegetables for Mother and myself. I baked pumpkin, onions and potatoes in a black iron 'Kaffir pot' lined with

¹⁷² Carol is somewhat glossing over what bumping around in the back of an old bakkie on rough tracks must have been like! Her mother and Mr van Breda presumably took up the whole of the front seat.

cabbage leaves and buried in a bed of hot ash. Mother slept on a stretcher in the tent and I slept in the open, but on a stretcher because of the scorpions.

We waited some weeks for the licence to arrive. When it didn't, Mother decided to leave and explore for minerals elsewhere. The Levantine returned to Cape Town. Henry meanwhile had made friends with a young white lad whose father looked after the owner's farm. Henry told us the lad would not believe the earth was round. Water was drawn up from a deep well in a bucket suspended from a pole on a long rope. A donkey walked in a circle round and round the well to bring up the bucket.

After leaving we explored Pofadder area and visited the Pella Mission where the Catholic priest in charge offered us drinks and from whom we bought fresh dates. Nuns from France, dressed in black serge habits, cared for the little half-caste children, orphans and others. The nuns were helped by the Coloured families living on the outskirts of the oasis. A ring of date palms produced luscious dates dripping, when over-ripe, with succulent juice, and which were packed in 5-lb. boxes to send away for sale. We also visited several desolate farms. On one of them the owner said he had lived alone since his wife had died; he never saw anyone except his Coloured workmen and he said he had begun to feel he was God as there was no white person around to bring him down.

Mother rarely returned to Springbok as her Namaqualand prospector thought the Steinkopf area the most likely for Sheelite or Tantalite.¹⁷³ On the few occasions she needed to go there to get money or see the Government mining inspector, we spent a night at the Springbok hotel and met the people of the town who congregated in it for drinks and gossip. One was Major Leipoldt, a widowed brother of the poet, Dr. Louis Leipoldt. He had been in Intelligence during the 1914-18 War, when he roamed through the wilds of South West Africa with a camel and a field-gun on its back. When we met him, he was living with his daughter-in-law in a drab little house. He was an interesting rough diamond with a quantity of maps, plans and ideas. He came to breakfast with us when invited, and being an ardent prospector himself, was delighted to talk endlessly to Mother about how he would like to get a group of honest, affluent men to combine and spend money on prospecting Namaqualand properly. Pockets of every kind of mineral had been found there, but not as yet in a large enough yield in one place, except for copper, to warrant a mine.

Later Mother got to know another prospector, Mr Weidner, who had searched for years and had just found a rich deposit of Tantalite filling a valley just across the Orange River in South West Africa. Mother stayed a number of times with him and his wife in their large house on the mine. The workings were rich enough to provide an income for him and his family for several generations. We used to entertain him and his wife on their visits to Cape Town and Kathleen gave him the plans for her swimming pool at Elgin and details of how to build it. He built a copy of the pool at the mine, even though he had to pipe water two miles to reach it. After Mother's death, he wrote a tribute to her.¹⁷⁴

On one occasion in Springbok we were invited to visit the home of the School Principal to see his garden filled with specimens of all the interesting and unique indigenous plants of Namaqualand. I wished I had known more Botany.

¹⁷³ Sheelite crystals can, if free of flaws, be shaped into gemstones. Tantalite contains tantalum which is useful in strengthening alloys, including surgical steel instruments.

¹⁷⁴ Mr P. Weidner's tribute to Lucy Molteno was published in a newspaper and is reproduced on this website at the end of my Introduction to Lucy Molteno's *How I Became a Woman Prospector*.

Mother began her trips to Namaqualand when we lived at Kromvlei. Even when the Second World War began she was allowed petrol to continue prospecting, as Sheelite was much needed in England for hardening steel used in building aeroplanes. She worked claims beyond Steinkopf in the War, except during the heat of summer when she would rejoin me at Elgin or stay at the Alexandra Club until it closed. I joined her a number of times for a few weeks, getting a chance lift to and from Springbok. On one occasion she phoned me at 18 Park Mansions to say her driver, du Plessis, had got drunk after they had visited Steinkopf to get water for the camp. He had threatened her on the way back to the camp sixteen miles northeast of Steinkopf. She had had to get out in the open veld. She managed to reach the road between Steinkopf and the Orange River, a lonely and very bad stretch, and been picked up when it was almost dark. She had arrived at the store in Steinkopf in a state of collapse. After brandy and hot tea, she had phoned the police in Springbok to stop du Plessis, as he would have to go through it if he wanted to go South. Next day she got a lift to Springbok. She also phoned me to come and rescue her as the men on the diggings had water for only one more day. I advertised and was lucky to engage a returned soldier, an elderly married man who had been a transport driver. We left that night on the twice-weekly train and then got a bus from the railhead the rest of the way to Springbok where we met Mother. The police had caught du Plessis and were holding him. Mother, not wanting to wait around for a prosecution, let him go scotfree and never got back the money he had earlier borrowed from her. The dour, tired Afrikaner driver I had engaged remained with her for some years, and later his wife joined him to share his tent, and I railed up another bed.

One winter while I was spending a month with Mother in Namaqualand, we visited Jack Dendy on his claim. He had found a seam of emeralds which he was extracting from the soft schist with darning needles! Mother later found a small seam of her own which gave her a great thrill.

I remember one occasion when we drove to Stinkwater to collect a drum of water from a water-hole. Some Trek Boers had arrived in donkey wagons. One old *takhaar*¹⁷⁵ spat into the well as he climbed down to it with a bucket! I had taken a large basin with us. And I had a proper wash in it for the first time for weeks and hoped no one would notice me half hidden by my towel. Water cost more than petrol by the time we had fetched it.

On another occasion we drove to see the Orange River. And when a farmer showed us where his land reached, I foolishly asked him why there were so many piles of stones around holes in the dry river bed. He made no reply. And I realized later that he had been panning for diamonds. It was a criminal offence to pick up a diamond even on one's own land unless one had a special permit. And permits were hard to get. Many were the stories of illicit diamonds being hidden in car tyres, petrol tanks and so on. Workers were X-rayed or dosed with emetics and kept days under close supervision before being allowed to leave the fenced areas at the mouth of the Orange River. I was always anxious about Mother getting into trouble if her workers took advantage of her gullibility and stole diamonds illegally. Few Namaqualanders thought the IDB law was fair; rather they saw it as there only to protect the big mining companies. And morally they felt they could not be stealing if they took what lay on their own land. When the nice Jewish store-keeper and his wife at Steinkopf were tried for illicit diamond buying, the rumour spread that Amy Mollison¹⁷⁶ had landed her plane at Steinkopf and stayed with them to carry away a packet of diamonds. Small places live on gossip of all kinds. Swart Jonker – another example – was a white farmer on the Orange River. But he was shunned by his neighbours, and we were warned to

¹⁷⁵ *Takhaar* – a backveld Boer.

¹⁷⁶ Amy Mollison was better known by her maiden name, Amy Johnson. She was a pioneering English long distance aviator in the 1930s. In July 1932 she broke the record for flying solo from London to Cape Town.

have nothing to do with him, because it was rumored he had black women and a half-caste son. Mother had wanted to employ him for to do cartage for her, but the outraged scowls of her workers made it out of the question.

Every three or four years it had rained even in this part of Namaqualand. A sight I shall never forget was to see, after good rain, the profusion of flowers. They formed a mosaic of colour waving in the breeze across the miles of undulating hills beyond Steinkopf. And the grass would spring up knee high. And since most of Namaqualand was Government-owned, trekboers¹⁷⁷ were free to bring their herds to graze. These trekboers had only a few belongings in their donkey carts or wagons and, with their wives to cook, lived in the open, camping. Farmers told us of the desperate poverty in bad years. At Kamieskroon one year, the Namaquas had to survive on *dassies*¹⁷⁸ and any other veld animals or lizards they could catch in the hills. In the Great Depression donkeys were sold for 1/6d. Someone suggested using them for a soap factory. Poor Whites earned 2/6d. a day road-making with pick and shovel and this just kept them from starving.

Mother had two accidents which landed her in hospital both times. The first time her driver at the time, the elderly Mr Livingstone, drove too near the edge of the road and the car turned over and rolled down a slope. Mother's shoulder was broken, but her heavy fur coat saved her neck. The second time she was staying in the Springbok Hotel when a wardrobe fell on top of her and her spine was damaged. This happened just as I was about to leave for Margaret's wedding in England, and I had to cancel the trip in order to look after Mother. From then on she was a semi-invalid and had to have a nurse.

Before Peter Gibbs left South Africa, Mother arranged with him to motor her in her Dodge truck to South West Africa and up to the Kunene River separating South West from Angola. They had a very interesting trip¹⁷⁹ and in the far North they spent several nights in the truck because of the lions which prowled around it. They stayed en route with Mr and Mrs Weidner in Tantalite Valley. Mother decided not to prospect in South West because of the difficulties official regulations put in the way of prospecting....

On another occasion Edward Molteno, my brother John's son, drove her up to re-peg her claims. When Mother could no longer go prospecting, she gave Edward her claims and her implements stored in a room in Steinkopf. But he was too busy at University to work them, and so they lapsed.

Carol Williamson

March 1986

¹⁷⁷ Poverty-stricken, itinerant Afrikaner farmers who owned little or no land of their own.

¹⁷⁸ *Dassies* are a very common South African rodent that live among rocky outcrops.

¹⁷⁹ Peter Gibbs wrote up an account of this trip, *Prospecting with Mrs Lucy Molteno – Namaqualand and Namibia*. It can be seen in the Diaries and Reminiscences section of this website.