

### **23. Reflections – 200 Years of the Family’s History**

**NB: I have a lot of notes/thoughts on these themes.**

#### **Themes in this chapter:**

Overall, the family has lived through 2 ½ centuries of huge social change.

Also, what happens to a family when it gets very big and migration disperses family members.

I want to reflect on, and pull threads together on the following themes – *probably in the following order*:

**Migration:** the different factors that propel it. In the case of our family, several drivers – poverty and/or looking for opportunities to better oneself in a country with less ossified class structures. Also political shadows, even persecution (the South African case). What else? And bring it up to date with the acceleration of migration in our current globalized world (so Moltenos settling in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, China, and I suspect many other places).

**Indigenisation:** I have note on this (England, Hawaii, Scotland, South Africa): Important point to make. Relate this to **Crossing Cultures** (see below).

**Crossing Cultures:** Particularly important in the history of our family because of growing up in South Africa. Explore the obstacles to marrying outside one’s own group (original Moltenos baptised within the RC tradition with fellow Italians acting as witnesses). Several factors act as propellants or constraints. So **shortage of women of one’s own ethnicity** propels marriage outside one’s group – so Frank Molteno marries a Hawaiian (there being very few women from Europe in Hawaii in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> C); and Hercules Jarvis marries a Dutch lady (there being very few British women at the Cape in the 1820s & 30s); and the first Jackson marries a De Jager. **The rise and fall of racism** is another factor. English racism towards people of colour still at a fairly low ebb in India in 1<sup>st</sup> half of 19<sup>th</sup> century (so many English East India Company officials married Indian women or had them as companions; dressed in local clothes; ate Indian food; valued and enjoyed Urdu poetry; learned Indian languages). By late 19<sup>th</sup> century, European racism in the ascendancy – intellectuals writing bogus-scientific books about the superiority of white ‘blood’ or culture over everyone else (Gobineau, Herbert Spencer? Etc). My view of the basic causes of this are: accelerating economic gap between England/Western Europe in late 19<sup>th</sup> C compared to India, China, and Africa; the growing technological/scientific gap; and in military terms the invention of the machine gun etc – all this made a huge expansion of empire in Africa easy; consolidated Britain’s hold on India and SE Asia etc. So John Molteno c. 1840 marries Maria Hewitson (of mixed descent – GET DETAILS FROM STEVEN MOLTENO), and no fuss. But by later 19<sup>th</sup> century, his children would not have dreamed of doing likewise. Then came the legal enforcement in South Africa of prohibitions on marriage across ethnic boundaries – reinforced by population registration, group areas, segregation in every sphere, and this made it impossible. And **sanctions against transgressors** -- e.g. Ernest Anderson shipped overseas in 1898. Frank and Pearl Molteno in the very early 1980s have to defy the law, and Frank moves into a ‘Coloured’ group area. **Another form of racism was anti-Semitism** – alive and kicking

in English-speaking South Africans. So first Moltenos to marry Jewish wives or husbands are Selina Molteno, and a generation later, Julian Molteno. Once old racisms seep away, and in South Africa apartheid dismantled, there is a smallscale explosion of cross-ethnic boundary marriages.

And bring this up to date by mentioning how ethnic diversification of Moltenos accelerated in the wake of the dismantling of South Africa's apartheid system.

**Earning a living/Class: Urbanization and growth of the professions.** Originally, the family in London was in business. When JCM moved to the Cape, he combined business and farming. And many of his descendants went into farming primarily. But with some prosperity and access to higher education, and with the **development of new professions and occupations** (partly because of new technologies, especially recently IT) – more and more members of the family entered a wider and wider range of professional occupations. **But still a remarkable no. of farmers in the family even today in both UK, South Africa and Kenya** – David Murray at Painswick; Jervis Molteno until his death at Glen Lyon (though more of a hunting and shooting estate than a farm). George Murray in Kenya to this day. And in Elgin, Patrick Murray; the Pare shareholders in Fruitways; Edward Molteno (although now doing little farming of Kathleen Murray's *Palmiet River* farm). And John Molteno's son at Rocklands in the Karoo. And John Stanford at Rheenendal. But in today's world, urbanization has become the overwhelming reality for most members of the family.

**The surprising absence of businessmen.** Running a business is where George Anthony Molteno started. Of course, there are some in the family; and even a handful in the financial sector (Charles Molteno in Joburg; Timothy Molteno in Alan Gray in CT). And Jack Truter became an entrepreneurial builder in Tanzania; and Steven and Ying-Ying Molteno opened language schools in China. But the professions – the law, medicine, IT – remain the dominant ways of earning a living. IS THIS CORRECT? Think about it.

**Gender – women's independence and earning a living:** again the family reflects wider changes in society. Originally, the women did not earn their own living (in late 18th and early 19th centuries). Also, if outside the working class, almost no opportunities for women to earn their own living. One exception was teaching/tutoring. So Caroline Molteno, when widowed, starts a school. Catherine Molteno, unmarried and hard up, becomes a tutor to a Portuguese family in Lisbon. Betty Molteno, at roughly the same time, becomes a teacher, and eventually owns and runs her own school. But women got less formal education than their brothers – So John Molteno sent none of his 4 daughters to university (Betty in the end insisted on barging off to Cambridge for a short while), whereas he valued the newly available university education for his sons, almost all of whom went to Cambridge – Percy, James, Victor, Ted, Harry, Clifford.

**The Arts & Musicality:** Longstanding dimension in first 2 or 3 generations. **Art:** Anthony Molteno and James Anthony Molteno. [Also a later 19th Century painter, Francis Moltino (probably NOT a Molteno?)] In later generations, Cynthia Stanford; Joan Molteno. Also by marriage – Rosalind Molteno in late 20th and early 21st C. **Musicality:** Fred Molteno's children. Incidences in further generations – e.g. Gillian Molteno. But one cannot suggest any kind of continuity of tradition, let alone genetics!

**Religious Affiliation and Devoutness:** ie Religion. Less interesting to me. But important in the first 2 generations of the family. But **several other tendencies – Free thinking** (John Charles Molteno leaned strongly in this direction, esp. later in life, possibly under Saul Solomon’s influence?); **esoteric beliefs** - Betty Molteno towards end of her life; Monica Mays (nee Molteno) in California; **secularism**, among many or most Molteno descendants in mid/late 20<sup>th</sup> Century; **adherence to religious traditions other than Christianity** – e.g. **Islam** (via marriage); **Buddhism** (in its West European form); **Judaism** (via marriage).

**Intra-family relations:** marriage and divorce. Divorce not respectable. So Clare and James often seem to have separated, but never divorced. Divorce in SA gets going in the 1930s, but still with stigma attached.

**Illnesses:** Family members today interested in this. But one must not make the mistake of generalising across all branches of the Molteno family. So it may be that in any large family across 5 or 6 generations, one will find these patterns. Certainly there is a cluster of:

- **Allergies/asthma/eczema** in some parts of the family. e.g. **Effie Anderson; Percy Molteno.**
- **Tendency to forms of depression.** But whether the incidence of either of these things is higher in our family than in the population at large, I have no way of knowing. Also, dangerous to generalize about depression – comes in many forms and shapes. Wallace Molteno; his son Donald Molteno; Donald’s son Patrick.
- **Extraordinarily little cancer:** is this genetic? Or simply that incidence of cancer has risen in last half of 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- **Very little incidence of heart disease:** exceptions exist – John Tennant Molteno; Joan Syme (nee Molteno). But not common.
- **Alcoholism:** Like everything else, clustered in one or two branches of the family. e.g. Harold Anderson’s descendants (possibility of *foetal alcohol syndrome*); Donald Molteno.

**Naming of offspring:** As with many families, particular Forenames cascade down the generations. Two are most common:

- **John Charles Molteno:** point out tradition of eldest son of eldest son since Sir JCM. Now in its 5<sup>th</sup> generation. (Broken today by ‘Jeb’ Molteno). (For details see *Charles Molteno* in FAMILY TODAY Boxfile. (This is John ‘Charles’ Molteno, Carol Macfarlane’s brother, in Jhb.
- **Caroline:** This is an equally powerful tradition, stemming back to John Molteno’s wife, **Caroline Bower.**

**A sense of belonging to a distinctive family and a family tradition that stands for something:** Remarkable how strong this sense of family identity has survived down the generations and in virtually every branch of Anthony Molteno’s descendants in England, Australia, South Africa... The danger of course, is romanticism. But ....