

The *Morgenster* Morkels

Pt. 3. William, P.A., Dan and Ralph Morkel

The first son of the *Morgenster* Morkels, was 5th generation Daniel Johannes MORKEL 1803 – 1894 (e1), married to Maria Adriana VAN DER BYL. When his father Willem died in 1876, he inherited *Morgenster*. He sold it to his brother-in-law Alexander VAN DER BYL in 1885, and the family moved to Transvaal. Daniel and Maria with their six sons and five daughters trekked to Transvaal by mule wagon and settled in Pretoria (1, p19)

- a1 Philip MORKEL 1677 – 1735 x Catharina PASMEN 1691 - 1764
- b3 Willem MORKEL 1718 – 1788 xx Helena Catharina MALAN 1759 - 1825
- c6 Daniel Johannes MORKEL 1764 – 1825 xxx Sophia Alida BRINK 1768 - 1824
- d9 Willem MORKEL 1803 - 1876 x Isabella Margaretha ZEEDERBERG 1809 - 1886
- e1 **Daniel Johannes MORKEL 1832 – 1894 x 1863 Maria Adriana VAN DER BYL**
 - f1 [Willem MORKEL](#) 1864 – 1926 x Marguerite Alexandra VAN BREDA
 - f2 Elizabeth Wilhelmina MORKEL 1866 – 1933 x Dirk SCHUURMAN xx Thomas RENTON
 - f3 [Paul Andries MORKEL](#) 1868 – ? x Jeanette Schulz
 - f4 [Daniel Johannes MORKEL](#) 1869 – 1903 Unmarried
 - f5 Tobias Johannes Herold MORKEL 1871 – 1871 (died 13 days old)
 - f6 Tobias Johannes Herold MORKEL 1872 - ? Unmarried
 - f7 [Roelof Abraham Zeederberg \(Ralph\) MORKEL](#) 1873 - 1926 x Grace GILLITT
 - f8 Sibella Margaretha MORKEL 1875 – ? x Lionel Clifford BROWN
 - xx Johannes Hendricus Brand REITZ
 - f9 Andries Christoffel van der Byl MORKEL 1878 Died young
 - f10 Maria Adriana MORKEL 1881 – ? x Charles William RORICH
 - f11 Alexander van der Byl MORKEL 1882 - ? x Ethel HARVEY
 - f12 Catharina Louisa MORKEL 1883 - 1950 x James Allison BATTY

Those featured in this story are marked in blue.

Our story is about William (f1), P.A. (f3), Dan (f4) and Ralph (f7). William, civil servant and keen sportsman was the father of international cricketer Denys MORKEL and his brother, first class cricketer Raymond MORKEL. Paul Andrew (P.A.) and his brother Dan, were active in Nyasaland and Mashonaland. P.A. formed and led the “fighting Chamber of Commerce” in Blantyre and later moved to Middelburg Transvaal where he was prominent in community affairs. In our story “Africa with Lions” we tell how Dan saved Ernest Brockman from the jaws of a man-eater lion. We start with a short paragraph about their seventh son, Luitenant Colonel Ralph MORKEL, who was a cousin of Sgt Ralph MORKEL, featured in Part 4 of the *Morgenster* Morkels.

Lt. Col. Ralph (Roelof Abraham Zeederberg) MORKEL 1873 – 1926, of Krugersdorp, Transvaal, married to Grace GILLITT

Lt. Colonel Ralph MORKEL the well-known railway cartage contractor, was on holiday with his wife at Somerset Strand, when he died suddenly aged about 60. He and his family were among the best known of the elder residents of Krugersdorp, and much sympathy was extended to his widow, son and daughter. In the great War, Luit. Col. Morkel served as a Transport Officer in South-West Africa (Namibia) and East-African campaigns. (From his obituary, 1, p25)

William MORKEL 1864 – 1926 x Marguerite Alexandra VAN BREDA

(Extracts from his Obituary 1, p26)

There passed away on Friday, a keen sportsman of the old school, who set traditions loyally carried on in the next generation. This was William Morkel, of *Windsor Farm*, Diep River, a keen cricketer and footballer, and the father of still more prominent cricketing sons.

William Morkel was born at Somerset West 62 years ago, had a long record as a civil servant when he retired in 1923 to take up his abode on his farm at Princess Vlei. He was in the Public Works Department all his life, attaining to the position of Chief Clerk at the time of his retirement. He was a keen cricketer. He had played regularly in his younger days, and he continued to play occasionally, until quite lately. He never failed to give an excellent account of himself when he did.

In his younger days he played for the Claremont Cricket Club, and was great at bowling. A little later, when he was living at Bellville, he was Captain and the life of the local Cricket Club for years. He was also a prominent member of the Villagers Football Club (Rugby Union); he was one of their cup team in 1884, and continued to play with them until 1887, when he went to Transvaal. When he returned to the Cape in 1892, he again played for his old club, and was a member of the Villager cup teams in 1893 and 1894. He represented the Western Province in the third tournament at Newlands in 1894, when the W.P. were victors.



Denys Morkel (2)

Mr. Morkel played in cricket match, Bellville against Western Province, only a few years ago when he was 55 years of age, when he took eight wickets for 24 runs. As lately as last year, when the villagers Club celebrated its Jubilee, he took part in the Old Crock's match against Hamiltons. He was over 60 but he played throughout the game, and showed as good form as many of the far younger men. Mr. Morkel's sons have all distinguished themselves on the playing fields and they owe their inspiration and their training to their father. He was particularly proud of Denis. He sat through three whole day's play during the recent Currie cup match, where Denis did so well and he fondly recalled the days he bowled to "the little chap in the yard at Bellville when he was only six, and he shaped very well".

See our Story "Cricket Morkels" for an account of Denijs (Denys) Paul Beck MORKEL (1906 – 1980) and his brother Raymond Kenneth Bellville MORKEL (1908 – 1953). Denys played first class cricket from 1924 to 1938, primarily as a bowler. A year after his father's death, he played for South Africa against England in 1927-28 and again in 1929. Denys settled in England and ran a flourishing motor trading business in Nottingham. Raymond was a left-handed bowler and batsman and played first class cricket from 1926 to 1940 (3).

Mr. Morkel was a quiet, retiring man, who had many old staunch friends in both sections of the community. Though well over military age he went through the recent German East campaign (World War I, 1914 - 1918) and declined a commission as he wished to be with the young men. His was a most kindly nature, and the intimate affection between himself and his boys showed him to have been an ideal father.

Mr. Morkel was married to a Miss van Breda whom he lost in 1917. Of his sons, the eldest (William Algernon Kingsmill Morkel) is now Assistant Director of Animal husbandry at Headquarters (Pretoria); another son Frank (Frank James Sievewright Morkel), is at the Potchefstroom Agricultural College in charge of the stock. Denis, the younger son, was living with him at Windsor Farm, Princess Vlei (the obituary would have been written before Denys departed for the UK).

Paul Andrew MORKEL M.B.E. 1868 - ? married to Grace GILLITT

The following extracts are from "The Witbank News" of 17 June 1949, probably shortly before his death. (1, p29 – 33).

When P.A. was at school in Somerset West, his uncle Mr. Laurence van der Byl wanted him to accompany him in his column to Rhodesia. His parents thought he was too young but three years later his family trekked to Transvaal by mule wagon.

Paul Andrew was a great lover of animals. He was for a time associated with the Geo. Hayes Co., the great coaching company, operating with 8,000 horses and mules between Christiana and Barberton.

On the Rand he was a prominent sportsman, winning four prizes riding and wrestling on horses without saddles. His final contestant was Sir Abe Bailey. They were both the same age, 22 years and very fit and well mounted. After a hectic struggle, Paul was declared the winner. P.A. Morkel's life is crowded with exciting and varied experiences. In 1890 he was commandeered in Pretoria under the *Vierkleur* (flag of the Transvaal Boer Republic) for the Malloch war. This was carried out in true military fashion. He tells of how the recruiting officer, son of President Kruger, approached him and, without argument, issued his orders: "Report within three days to your Commandant, Melt Marais, with horse, saddle, bridle and rations for three days. After that it will be *mieliepap* (maize porridge).

The Fighting Chamber of Commerce, Blantyre

In January 1892 P.A. arrived in Blantyre, British Central Africa.. A Chamber of Commerce was formed, and he busied himself to make every member a good shot and good horseman - they were destined to become a "Fighting Chamber". Morkel and his men were sent to fight against chief Matopo "who is on a warpath and had just come in from the north and murdering everything in his path". The patrol was successful and most of the casualties were due to Malaria. They were called upon several times to quell tribal fighting. These tribal quarrels were the salvation of the first white pioneers; had the Natives united from the start, they would have wiped them all out. P.A. Morkel told of one of their gravest dangers - the Matabele: and of the most ghastly tragedies in the history of Rhodesia. In the Matabele war of 1893, the Shangani patrol, under Major Allan Wilson was isolated and suddenly attacked by an overwhelming number of the King Lobengula's bodyguard. Only one man escaped. Major Forbes, who was also hard pressed, and was rescued in time by the arrival of a relief column, could send him no help.

In 1894 the Pioneers worked on the African Trans-continental Telegraph line from Cape to Cairo - the great scheme of Cecil John Rhodes. As their work increased, so their difficulties mounted. The Mashonas discovered what a rich harvest the Matabele reaped. They started a rebellion and murdered a pioneer, McCallum; P.A. Morkel's younger brother, Dan, was with him and escaped death. When Mr. Morkel was constructing his line from Katunga on Lower Shire across the Shire Highlands to Fort Johnston, he felt the bitterness of the rebellion - only 48 hours after McCullum's death. The whole night he and a companion, Grant, were surrounded by 500 Mashonas. Again the "Fighting Chamber" was in the field supplying reinforcements.

In 1894 P.A. Morkel went South on business and met his future wife, Jeanette Schulz. They were married on 20 February 1895 and returned to Blantyre. Their stay was joy mingled with hardship. The statesmen in Britain could see no future for the country, and to them the pioneers were a band of pirates. Without a police or defence force, the "Fighting Chamber" of Commerce did their duty.

On the even of one of the greatest and bloodiest battles north of the Zambesi, Mr. Morkel received a cable: "guns must get to Mpseni" (300 miles north of Blantyre). Ten thousand Natives had gathered from all parts of Africa. Without guns Major Forbes could do nothing. There had already been heavy losses after two rebellions; many trek oxen had died from hippo fly, and there were no roads through the dense jungle of North Eastern Rhodesia. A prayer of relief went up when one fine morning with two British officers, Captain Gough and Luitenant Godfrey arrived with regiments of Ghurkas and Sikhs all the way from India. These brave soldiers received little credit for their great service to Africa. The pioneers alone knew what it meant to them; this battle crushed slave trading, gun running and cannibalism. The country now had hopes of linking itself to the civilised world.

When the Chamber found respite from fighting, P.A. Morkel was not idle. He was an active coffee grower and a sportsman. With Major Forbes he formed the Blantyre

Sports Club and owned some of the finest horses. He is in possession of numerous valuable trophies.

Back to South Africa

Afterwards, in 1899, the family trekked south for a change. It was a very trying journey, and on arrival in Durban, Mrs. Morkel was laid aside with blackwater fever, and was forbidden by her medical adviser to return to Blantyre. Sir William Manning, His Majesty's Commissioner and Consul-General, wrote in September 1900:

"I have great pleasure in bearing testimony to the excellent work done by you as a businessman in this country. I consider it entirely due to your exertions that the transport of this country has been practically revolutionised during the past few years".

On his return to the Transvaal in the late 1890's he settled in Middelburg, Trnasvaal with his wife and family, two sons and a daughter, Mr. C.F. Morkel, Mr. D.J. van der Byl Morkel and miss Iris Morkel (Mrs. P.F. Kincaid).

P.A. Morkel was mayor of Middelburg from 1916 to 1918 and served on several community organisations. On the outbreak of World War II, Mr. Morkel was once again in harness as chairman of the Defence Liaison Committee and chairman of the Anti-Waste Committee. Recently he was instrumental in resuscitating the S.P.C.A., and in recognition of his services and his love for animals, he was made a life member of the society. During World War I that he gained the M.B.E. (Member of the British Empire).

Daniel Johannes (Dan) MORKEL (1869 – 1903).

The amazing story of how Dan MORKEL saved Ernest Brockman from a man-eater lion is told in "Africa With Lions, Pt 1). I repeat part of the story as told by Dan and his sister-in-law, Jeanette Schulz, wife of Dan's brother, P.A. Morkel. I have added sketches from a magazine account (4) by Ernest Brockman. See the full version in "Africa with Lions".

From a newspaper extract. (1, p 27)

The death of Mr Dan Morkel, which we chronicled yesterday, calls to mind that his life as a pioneer has been full of thrilling adventure and hairbreadth escapes. One of the most thrilling adventures he himself described.

Writing to a friend from the African Transcontinental Telegraph Camp, Mitsidjie, Mr Morkel says: -

"on September 5, between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning, I heard there was a lion in the camp. I jumped out and took my gun with me. A few minutes elapsed before I could make out where the lion was. I called out to Brockman whose hut was about 40 yards from mine, but got no reply. I then thought Brockman was outside trying to shoot the lion, as he was very anxious to shoot one. On walking up to his hut I met his Native boy shivering and calling out: *Nkango! Nkango!* (Lion. Lion). I called out to my boys (300) in the camp to bring fire. They came out of their *Msasas* (huts) but could not move. After I had discovered that the lion was inside the hut with Brockman I fired several shots through the roof to frighten



"Morkel levelled his rifle and fired" (4)

him out, but he stuck inside roaring all the time. It was pitch dark. I expected the lion to jump out any moment.

All this time there was not a sound from Brockman, and I could not make out what he was doing, and it was too dangerous to fire into the hut for fear of hitting Brockman. All of a sudden Brockman shouted

to me: "For God's sake save my life. He has got hold of me". I rushed to the door of the hut with a torchlight of grass in the one hand and my gun in the other. I kicked the door open, stepped a few yards back, and threw the light to see where to fire. The lion then rushed out dragging Brockman along. I fired, and hit the lion just below the eye, which dropped him, and Brockman dropped at the same time. Brockman then jumped up, ran 10 yards and fell. The lion was making a tremendous noise in his death agony. The boys then shouted "*Nkango atawa*" (the lion is running away). I called out for a light but they all shouted "*Kjopa ambira*" (we are very frightened). I wanted to give the lion another shot, but my cartridge stuck, so I rushed up to him and hit him across the nose, which settled him. I broke my gun in two.



"He dealt him a terrific blow on the head" (4)

was not a pleasant time. I have since heard from Brockman (in a letter written by a mission lady) that he cannot thank me enough for saving his life, and I also received a letter from Capt. Daly, a representative of the U.S.A. Company and the A.T.I. Company, congratulating me on saving Brockman's life".

It will be remembered that Mr. Dan Morkel was of Major Forbes' party, who were supposed to have been murdered on the telegraph line between Tete and Salisbury, and where he showed considerable pluck in going back and burying the remains of Captain McCullum, who was so fearfully mutilated by the Mashonas. For his intrepid deed he was highly commended by Major Forbes, and it was his intention to accompany Major Forbes to Cairo with the line and get the handsome bonus of £5,000 offered by the right Hon. Cecil Rhodes.

Comment by Mrs. P.A. Morkel (Jeanette Schulz):

At the time this adventure with the lion occurred, my husband and myself were living at Blantyre, Nyasaland (*now Malawi*). It was just after the late Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897, when all Nyasaland had gathered together in Blantyre to celebrate, that Mr. Brockman and my brother-in-law, Dan, bid us goodbye and left for their long trek into the wilds. With them were their native boys carrying the material for the Transcontinental telegraph line.

When I next saw Mr. Brockman passing through Blantyre on his way to England, just shortly after he left the Mission hospital, he was and looked a wreck. It was a miracle

After all this I wanted to send for Dr. Croft to Domira Bay, five miles away, and it took me a considerable time to get Native boys to go away from the camp in the dark. Brockman was bleeding dreadfully all the time, and all I could do was to put him in a warm bath, which relieved the pain. I can assure you that it



Skull of the Lion.

Photo: Jean Wetselaar (5)

he ever recovered from this dreadful mauling. Two of his fingers had been chewed off, the flesh down his one thigh had been torn down, he limped and his nerves were shattered. He told me that at night he could not sleep alone in a room, the eyes of the lion like coals of fire and his foul breath as he grabbed hold of him and pulled him from the bed, still haunted him.

Mr. Brockman lived in England for a while but later returned to Salisbury, S. Rhodesia (he died not so long ago in Cape Town). Dan died in 1903, at Fort Jameson, N. Rhodesia, where he was buried - (he was a brother of my husband.) The above incident is a copy of a newspaper cutting still in my possession.

**Compiled by
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Sources and Notes:

- (1) P.W. Morkel, 1961. The Morkels. Family History and Family Tree. Published privately.
- (2) Denys MORTEL <http://www.espnricinfo.com/southafrica/content/player/46246.html>
- (3) Raymond Kenneth Bellville MORTEL
<http://cricketarchive.com/Archive/Players/14/14155/14155.html>
- (4) The Wide World Magazine. An illustrated Monthly of True Narrative. Vol I. April to September 1898. London. George Newnes Ltd. Southhampton St., Strand. p 225 – 233 (June 1898 edition).
- (5) Jennifer Morkel and Jacqueline Wetselaar. Emails November 2010 and March 2011.