



2. THE FALSE START KHONA I ZINGARI

1887—1888

The vocabulary usual to the description of organised human habitation is totally inappropriate to the mining camp called Johannesburg which immediately appeared on the bleak treeless highveld of the Witwatersrand.

There were no streets. There were not even roads. When the tracks worn by endless heavily-laden ox-wagons, carts and coaches developed ruts and potholes too deep to negotiate, drivers simply took another course and extended the area of devastation. The dust was prodigious and in the summer of its founding, Johannesburg, in its undrained state, also became a morass of mud. At night, there was no lighting whatever. There were no houses. At first men lived in their carts or wagons and those who came by coach begged shelter or rented minimal space in lean-tos made of canvas or reeds and later mud. When sheets of corrugated iron were brought from the coast and soft bricks were made from the local dagga, the habitations that resulted were devoid of all creature comfort. Space in them was rented for huge sums and, as the winter of 1887 approached, their primitiveness filled the anxious young men with repulsion.

There were no women. The inevitable "Cockney Liz", "Montana Nell" and others came to preside over the bars and brothels that formed almost the only public institutions but it was many months before a handful of decent women came to make their homes on the Rand. The population consisted almost exclusively of spirited young bachelors and grass-widowers and there was nothing to divert them except talk and drink.

There were no newspapers. In a very short while, Johannesburg could claim no less than six alleged newspapers but they were published only bi-weekly and contained stale news except for local fights and scandals. Each consisted only of a single sheet folded in half and consisting of four small ill-printed pages devoted largely to the advertisement of sales of stands and materials brought by ox-wagon and of fancifully-named and often felonious mining propositions.

There were no railways to transport anything quickly and both ox- and mule-wagons took weeks to bring goods from the railheads at Kimberley and Pietermaritzburg. Express coaches driving stages of ten or twelve miles before changing horses maintained a

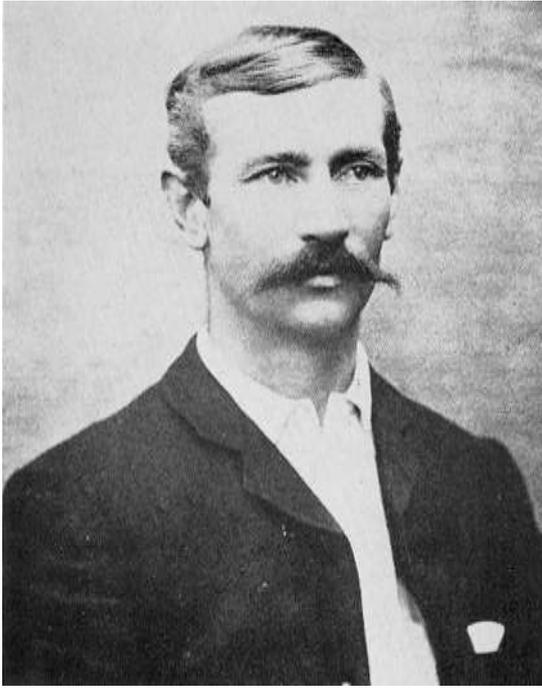
speedier mail service but there was no Post Office and men rifled through piles of letters at an appointed place to see if any might be addressed to them.

Even among young careless adventurers with a superabundance of energy, the discomfort was extreme but it had one saving grace – they all knew each other and addressed each other as brothers. While the community remained small, they constituted one big bonhomous club. The viciousness of gambling soon appeared – with cards, with horses, fights, dogs, rats, shares, anything – but on the whole, “the sporting spirit of the English public schools reigned over the camp,” according to W. P. Taylor, who was there at the beginning.

The need for diversion, particularly in bitter winter weather, gripped the young men with a power comparable to hunger and thirst after intense deprivation. For months, there was only one way to meet it. “If the weather was fine”, wrote Charles Bain, who arrived late in 1887, “you stood in the streets and filled your pipe and talked to some of the others or walked about the streets until you felt like getting into bed. If the weather was bad or cold, you made presto for the nearest Bar where there was warmth and light and shelter. At Mrs Chiappini’s (an eating house), dinner finished at 8 o’clock and Mrs C. locked the door and no one was admitted after that. Anyone who hadn’t finished his dinner was of course let out but no more came in. So that, having eaten, it was the Street for everybody. At nearly every street corner, there was a Bar and on the bitter cold winter nights, one made for them as being the only shelter available. It was impossible to go to bed as very few of us fellows had decent rooms. Some were of mud bricks, some wood and iron unlined, and others like myself had to be satisfied with a wattle and daub shack about six feet square. That is what I had at first. It was bitterly cold and it leaked and all there was in it was a bed and an iron washstand. Can you imagine a young fellow going to that night after night at 8 o’clock and reading by the light of a candle? No, we didn’t do that. What we did was to hurry into the first Bar that was handy.”

“All the Bars, at least the best and in fact most of them, had paraffin lamps hanging from the ceilings—two or three big ones that gave out light and heat and smell. And they also had two or three circular black paraffin heating stoves which gave out a fine heat and smelt also. It was like entering a haven of rest to go into one of these places out of the bitter night and it was cold, much colder than it is now in Johannesburg (all the pioneers affirmed this) because it was a bare windswept ridge in those days with no houses or buildings or trees to break the wind and no roads or streets. We just had to stumble along in the dark from one Bar to another because there were no lights and the only illumination was that from the Bars.”

“Well, we would enter and approach the Presiding Divinity. All Bars had women barmaids in those days and we would order our drinks which were always the same as far as I and my friends and acquaintances were concerned. Square Face Gin, which had many recommendations. It was cheap—6d a tot, it was warming, and it was a very healthy spirit to mix with the very doubtful water that was all that was available in those days. There was of course no water laid on and this water was brought up in carts and wagons in barrels from Natal Spruit, the Fordsburg dip and from out towards Sans Souci near what is now the Show Ground. Ordinary folk paid 6d a bucket and every one of us had a bucket in our bedrooms. Sometimes there was water in it, sometimes there wasn’t, and if there wasn’t and there were no water carts about, we used to pinch it where we could and sometimes get caught and get a black eye in the process.”



Charles Llewellyn Andersson – Johannesburg Pioneer The founding Father – William P. Taylor

"Having got our drinks, we would stand about chatting to each other and smoking and enjoying the warmth and shelter and sometimes having a few words with the barmaid. As a rule she was too busy to have more than a cheery word or two but she kept her eye on everybody and after about half an hour when our drinks were finished, she would eye us pretty steadily and although I never heard anything said, she made it pretty plain that the Proprietor didn't keep all those lamps burning for fellows out of the street who didn't spend anything. So of course we ordered another round of drinks. When these had been slowly consumed, another half hour had passed and the barmaid would begin to eye us again so we would say goodnight and go out into the night and the cold again. It was then only about nine o'clock and we would wander about for a while. Sometimes if we were with someone who had a decent room, we would go there for a game of cards. Otherwise we would get fed up with the darkness and the cold and wander into another Bar where we would put in another hour and then go to bed ..."

"The Devil found work for idle hands but the sporting spirit prevailed over his machinations and the young men indulged their hunger for diversion in a dozen different ways quite foreign to his intentions. They played football and cricket in scratch teams wherever they could find a suitable space and C. L. Andersson, an early arrival from the Cape, moved ceaselessly among them trying to organise appropriate groups and a proper venue for games and athletic sports. Only 36 miles away or four hours by coach, such amenities existed in Pretoria and mining camp sportsmen longed to pit their strength and skill against the established clubs both there and at the more distant Potchefstroom."

"The musicians and gymnasts were similarly not idle and little groups met to form bands and societies. Very early in its history, Johannesburg could boast an orchestra organised by Francis Crane and sometimes conducted by an experienced musician, Dan de Vries. The first violin was Charles Bain's brother who had preceded him to the Rand, and the second violins included Ernest Lezard, son of the Pretoria auctioneer. There was also an amateur brass band which attracted the attention of the energetic Bain. He made enquiries and 'in the end, came upon a man named Smith. He was a carpenter and had his shop in Bree Street just off von Brandis Square. He admitted (sic) he was running a Brass Band but said it was pretty poor. I offered my services as first Cornet and was accepted with great gusto after had informed him that I had played in the Beaufort West Band for four years and conducted it for two. I had brought my cornet up with me. There were about a dozen of us

altogether. Smith's two sons played and George Caffyn played the baritone and Gustav Sonn the euphonium. We got on quite well and had some pleasant and entertaining evenings. Smith was an earnest and enthusiastic conductor but not very good. My band in Beaufort was a good deal better ..."



WESTERN PROVINCE RUGBY TEAM – GRAHAMSTOWN: 1885

Back row: E. Gunning, J. C. Steyn, D. Butler, Colin Watson

2nd row: Louis Vincent, J. A. Gibbs, W. A. Morkel, M. Versfeld, W Whiteley, C. H. Vincent, P. Melch, B Melville, G. Elliot

On chairs: C. W. P. Douglas de Fenzi, G. Elliot, Claude Sampson

ON floor: C. Versfeld, C. L. Anderson, John Versfeld, A. Phillip

In less than a year, the mining camp developed phenomenally. Thousands thronged to it and though little gold was produced, great business was done by stockbrokers and speculators while other opportunists made prolific hay. It was confidently believed that unlike the others, the new goldfields would produce more than its maiden flash in the pan and the great Kimberley entrepreneurs—Rhodes, Beit, Robinson, Neumann and others—began to establish their interests on the Rand. Those who did not themselves come to found a new empire in gold, sent promising young men to act for them.

Alfred Beit, convinced of great possibilities, sent a sound and respected diamond mine manager, Hermann Eckstein, to manage his interests in partnership with the young J. B. Taylor who had served him so well in timeously extricating him from the Barberton debacle. Conditions in the camp, now enormously extended, were still barbarously primitive and for lack of a house, Eckstein lived in the "Mess" run by Mrs. Caldecott of Kimberley who put up several other homeless bachelors. Both Eckstein and Taylor resolved to build themselves solid brick houses as soon as materials became available. J. B's elder brother, W. P. had already come to the same decision and all three duly built bungalows on the dusty track named Noord Street marking the northern boundary of the settlement.

By 1887, many Kimberley men had flocked to the Rand and some rudiments of organisation had begun to impose order on the chaotic scene. Carl von Brandis had been appointed *Landdrost* and Jan Eloff Mining Commissioner. There was also a Diggers' Committee to help administer the camp. Clerk to the Mining Commissioner and also

secretary to the Diggers' Committee was C. C. Pietersen of the Government administration in Pretoria and, true to his last, he bestirred himself in the interests of sport.

There were already cricket and football clubs in Pretoria and at the urgent instigation of W. P. Taylor, C. L. Andersson, D. J. Pullinger and other sportsmen in Johannesburg, the mining camp already boasted a Wanderers Cricket Club and a Wanderers Rugby Football Club as well as its Orchestral Society and Brass Band. There was a strong move headed by W. P. Taylor, perhaps the oldest of the young men, towards coordination. Toward the middle of 1887, he propounded his views to a few like-minded friends who found themselves together in Pretoria. They were Charlie Pieterse, Abe Bailey, Mark Lowinsky (a Kimberley jeweller and speculator), Dr Schulz and Len Roman (also from Kimberley).

W. P. Taylor envisaged a supra-Club or consortium of clubs which would cover every field of sport – not only the popular cricket, football and athletics but the more esoteric polo and golf. There were practitioners of every form in Johannesburg but even when they organised themselves into groups and teams with fanciful names borrowed from elsewhere like Nondescripts, Stray Klips, Wasps, Wanderers, Ramblers, Pirates (the celebrated Pirates Rugby Club in Kimberley derived its name from a local performance of "The Pirates of Penzance" and the numerous Wanderers teams in Cape Town, Johannesburg and elsewhere from the nature of their members), etc., they were separately too feeble to ensure progress or to maintain their own playing fields, let alone to secure so desirable an amenity as a Club House. The mere consolidation of clubs under one aegis would serve no purpose unless the parent body was in a position to offer all facilities, particularly in respect of grounds. Because he was employed by the Transvaal Government and *persona grata* with its President, Pietersen was deputed to call on Paul Kruger to ascertain his attitude to the proposal.

Always accessible to his burghers, Kruger beamed upon the young man, then only twenty-four, and intimated that if his idea could be backed by a petition signed by a large number of interested persons, an appropriately large piece of ground would be granted them. At that time, the relations between the Government and the huge influx of *uitlanders* were extremely cordial and everyone got on very well with the small band of hardworking officials who were trying to instil order into the endlessly expanding mining camp. Kruger was convinced that like Lydenburg, Barberton and the other gold boom towns, Johannesburg would one day evaporate but in the meantime, the Treasury benefited pleasantly and everything would be done to maintain that gratifying state.

It was additionally desirable to curb lawlessness and hooliganism by providing a place where the young men could harmlessly let off steam in sport and athletics. Accordingly he was willing to countenance the administration of the "Johannesburg Promenade Park" at the northern end of the town (as the site came to be called after the Minister of Mines, General Christian Joubert, had recommended it) which was being used by the oldest sporting body, the Wanderers Cricket Club, and in December 1887, it was duly granted for the purpose. All subsequent negotiations were made in the name of the Wanderers Cricket Club, Pietersen conducting them by letter as its secretary. There was as yet no corporate body to assume control.

Pietersen returned to the enthusiastic coterie in Johannesburg and announced the glad news at a meeting over which W. P. Taylor presided. Taylor's house and that of his brother J. B. and J. B.'s partner Hermann Eckstein, stood on the same side of Noord Street confronting a low kopje on which, differing from the surrounding bare and treeless veld, a few green bushes flourished. If there were any pleasant aspect in Johannesburg, this was it and all three, knowing that it was proposed to extend the town to the north, exerted themselves to preserve their view. Intervening was the ground Pietersen had proposed to the President—a bare stretch already being used by the Wanderers Cricket Club, the Wanderers Rugby Club and any scratch teams that wanted to play a game.



The Presiding Genius - Hermann Eckstein and Mrs Eckstein who distributed the prizes

By now, Hermann Eckstein was well on his way to becoming the leading personality in Johannesburg. With Wernher and Beit behind him and the shrewd bilingual J. B. Taylor at his side, he had established "The Corner House" with its unassailable reputation for integrity and sound business dealing. A deeply respected and impressive figure, speaking with a guttural German accent, Eckstein was in no sense a sportsman. He played no games whatever and took no interest in the Turf or the chase but he was amply provided with the wit to realise that if the gold mining industry were successfully to be established, it would depend on a stable community with outlet for its surplus energies. Like Kruger, he believed that 'the good diggers would look after the bad diggers'. He accordingly took the liveliest interest in the proposed scheme from its very inception, recorded Pietersen twenty years later, and most of the meetings were held in his house under W. P. Taylor's chairmanship.

They were conversational gatherings attended by ladies. W. P. Taylor was a sportsman through and through and himself participated in the games which he sought to encourage. J. B. Taylor *par contre* was a non-participating sportsman and all his life was interested only in hunting, the systematic shooting of game birds and animals in the United Kingdom, and in fishing. Towards the end of his days, he devoted attention to the preservation of wild life and natural resources; but at no time in his long life was he a member of a sporting team. To the others—Pietersen, Bailey, and later Ewan Currey, a surveyor, Walter Hudson, a lawyer, and J. H. Stonestreet, who roomed with C. L. Andersson, and H. A. Rogers—team games were the essence of sport.

The lively little coterie met often in Hermann Eckstein's house to plan their campaign. Flying as high as possible on the suggestion of Phyllis, one of the Taylors' sisters who later became Mrs Godfray Lys, they decided to call the supra-Club I Zingari (properly Gli Zingari - The Gypsies in Italian) after the prestigious private cricket club founded in England in 1845 by the Ponsonby brothers, Lord Beresford and others. Membership of it was by invitation only. With its rigorous rules and entrenched code, the name of I Zingari was synonymous with the highest ideals of sportsmanship. Its colours were black, red and gold signifying darkness, through fire into light. I Zingari Johannesburg adopted them as its own and elected the following committee:

President: Hermann Eckstein

Vice Presidents: Alfred Beit and L. Nelmapius

Members: W. P. Taylor (chairman), J. B. Taylor, Mark Lowinsky, W. E. Hudson and Ewan Currey

Honorary Secretary: C. C. Pietersen

Money was to be raised by issuing £5 debentures giving owners free access to the ground which Kruger had promised. To obtain it, Pietersen organised the petition. It was easy. Everyone who was anybody came to the Mining Commissioner's office and he buttonholed every caller.

Early in 1888, the following document signed by hundreds of the inhabitants under the leadership of the Landdrost Captain von Brandis, was submitted by Hermann Eckstein and L. Nelmapius of Pretoria to:

'The Honourable the State President and the worthy members of the Legislative Assembly of the South African Republic, Pretoria.

The undersigned inhabitants of Johannesburg, Witwatersrand Goldfields, do respectfully make known-

That owing to the phenomenal expansion of the Town of Johannesburg, no suitable ground will in future be available for athletic pursuits and for the various branches of bodily games such as cricket, football, tennis, athletics, gymnastics and other games,

That our petition for such a piece of ground and for the free and uninterrupted use thereof will receive the approval of you Honourable Gentlemen,

That after careful investigation, your Petitioners are of opinion that the most suitable portion of ground for the aforesaid purpose is situate on the Government grazing veld situate immediately behind the block of Government stands Nos. 21 and 26,

Your Petitioners with all due respect to you Honourable Gentlemen request that you transfer the aforesaid ground to an extent of 400 yards by 300 yards to Captain Carl von Brandis, Jan Eloff and Hermann Eckstein as Trustees,

That your Petitioners undertake, in the event of your granting this, our petition

1. to enclose the whole portion of the ground aforesaid and to plant the same with trees and shrubs,

2. to build a large pavilion thereon,
3. to prepare and put the ground in such order as may be necessary for the playing thereon of cricket and football,
4. to sink wells for the purpose of obtaining water,
5. to erect excellent tennis courts,
6. to construct an excellent athletic track on the said ground.

That the improvements will cost not less than £2,000 sterling and that upon completion of the sports ground, it will not only be a decoration for the town but also a blessing to the inhabitants thereof,

That for the upkeep of the ground, your Petitioners will appoint a committee who will make the necessary rules and regulations for the effective observance of the aforesaid objects,

Your Petitioners humbly pray that it may please you Honourable Gentlemen to grant their prayer and thereby bring about the culmination of a long-felt want,

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray for the glory and welfare of Country and People."

J. B. Taylor, writing in 1939 when his memory was playing him tricks, alleged that he accompanied the deputation to present the Petition (which is very likely as he was *persona grata* with the President and the Volksraad) and that it included Llewellyn Andersson and Jacob Swart which it most certainly did not (Swart was still in Kimberley). His tale is diverting and doubtless in substance true but it did not in fact record the founding of the supra-Club I Zingari Johannesburg:

"It was quite a journey to Pretoria in those days of horses and carts but eventually we arrived at Paul Kruger's house. After the deputation had been introduced, the object of our mission was explained to the President and much stress was laid on the need of the Johannesburg public for a playing-ground in order to divert their mind from politics.

"A sketch of the site was produced and when the President saw the size of the ground required, he demurred, saying that the loss of revenue to the State if such a large area were devoted to a playground instead of being sold as town plots would be considerable. Finally however the President said, 'This is a matter for the Minister of Mines and Mining Commissioner to decide. You had better go and see them.'

"We then got up and thanked the President, shook hands all round and set off to find Joubert.

"Christian Joubert, Kruger's Minister of Mines, was a grey bearded old Boer. He was a cousin of Frans Joubert who had forced the surrender of Colonel Anstruther's column at Bronkhorstspuit in 1881.

"After we had discussed the whole matter with the Minister and thought we had convinced him, he raised a lot of difficulties.

"I shall have to go to the Rand', he said, to see what you want and how do you expect me to get there? I have no cart and horses and unless I can inspect the ground and satisfy myself you what your demands are reasonable, I cannot give my consent.'

"Obviously it was a question of cart and horses, I therefore said; 'Would it help you, General if we provided the cart and horses? We in Johannesburg feel strongly the need of seeing more of our Minister of Mines because there are so many important problems to be solved on the spot in a new township like Johannesburg where there is always the possibility of the interests of the town and the mines clashing.'

"After some moments of deep thought, old Joubert looked up. 'Yes', he said, 'that would probably be a solution.'

"I immediately seized the opportunity and replied; 'Would it suit the Minister to receive the cart and horses on Thursday next and would the Minister drive over to Johannesburg on Friday?'

“Ja, Ja,” said the old man and after much hand-shaking, we parted feeling pretty certain that our requests would be granted.

“On the appointed Thursday, a beautiful new Cape cart with glittering harness and a pair of milk-white horses appeared before the Minister’s front door in Pretoria and on the next day, he drove over to Johannesburg.

“We were on the look-out for him and received him with grateful thanks. We took him at once to the site that we required and he made the necessary inspection, asking many questions.

“When he had looked at the plan and satisfied himself that it corresponded with the land that we wanted, he seemed to think that it was incumbent on him to say a few words. He therefore addressed the members of the deputation and much to our amusement and satisfaction, he told us how necessary it was for the health of the youth of the town that there should be a recreation ground. He concluded by telling us that the piece of land for which we had asked would be reserved for that purpose and that the grant would be made to a properly constituted body at a ‘peppercorn’ rent.”

Joubert had in November 1887 recommended a Promenade Park subsequently called Kruger’s Park for the inhabitants of Johannesburg but now the proposal was somewhat varied. On the 2nd May 1888, the Executive Council of the South African Republic, dealing with the Order Minute R.2987/88 containing a petition from the inhabitants of Johannesburg for a plot of ground at Braamfontein and Randjeslaagte (the area had not yet been incorporated into the township of Johannesburg) in extent 300 x 400 yards, for recreation “RESOLVED to comply with the request and to lease the said plot of ground for ninety nine years at an annual rent of £50 for the said purpose, and to instruct the Mining Commissioner to survey the said plot of ground, not nearer to the town than the distance taken up by a block of stands or, in other words, that the ground shall not be situated nearer to the surveyed town than the width of one block of stands.”

The Mining Commissioner Eloff duly instructed Charlie Pietersen, assisted by Ewan Currey, to peg off the required land for the proposed Johannesburg Promenade and Athletic Park requested by the inhabitants. Currey also gratuitously surveyed it. “The land pegged off by us,” Peterson recorded in 1908, “extended to the corner of Rissik and Loveday Streets, from there to the north-east corner of the Union Ground (including the whole of what are now the Railway Station and Noord Street), from the corner of the Union Ground to the north east corner of Joubert Park, Wilhelm (King George) Street and the stands to the west of the ground and Keizer (Wanderers) Street were included in the original grant. Joubert Park was selected as the polo and football ground and it was here that these games were first played.”

The fact that no official document was uttered to confer the ground on the Zingari Club to which it was granted, was common practice. Confirmation of such agreements was not made until the applicant had shown signs of fulfilling undertakings in the matter. Once the conditions of lease had been fulfilled, it was customary to confer title.

The coterie which had formed the Zingari Club and obtained the huge area of land for its activities, now felt itself inadequate to the further development of its grand concept. It consisted indeed of only a few enthusiastic young men heartened by the support of powerful personalities in Eckstein and the two Taylors. A wider membership and the support of the existing individual groups and “clubs” was needed before the public could fairly be asked to purchase the debenture shares intended to finance development.

It was winter and Johannesburg, not yet two years old, was in a hubbub. Wild speculation was beginning to give way to cold confrontation with facts, particularly the brutal statistic that very little gold had been produced. Typically the Zingari proponents convened a meeting in Sam Heights Bodega Bar in Commissioner Street and in addition to all those interested, invited the Wanderers Cricket Club captained by Spranger Harrison (after whom Harrison Street is named) and the Rand Wanderers Rugby Football Club captained by D. J. Pullinger, then only 24 years old.

“What a fine three-quarter he made!”, exclaimed his colleague Jacob Swart many years later, “He was introduced to me as a new recruit for the Kimberley Club of which I was

captain for the third time. He was one of those few men who always stood well away from their halfbacks or other three quarters, never cramped them and, when the ball came towards him, never waited for the ball to come to him but met it halfway, thus being on the move and able to get away at once. It was a pleasure to play half-back to him for you knew he was always there, ready and in the right place. He was one of the first persons to migrate to the Rand somewhere in July 1886 and for a young man of 22 made good at once. He later became vice captain of the Wanderers Cricket Club with myself as captain."

The Football "Club", founded in the competitive urge of the times, was playing its first season in that very winter of 1888. Its members also participated in charity matches in aid of a Hospital and, in recording the history of the recently-formed Rand Club, L. E. Neame described such a match. "The members of the Rand Club made up most of the teams in which figured Dr Tommy Froude, Dr George Murray, Dr Leigh Hunt, Charles A. O. Bain, Mr E. P. Solomon, Mr B. M. Woollan, Mr Llewellyn Anderson, Mr Fred Liddle and other prominent pioneers of the goldfields. All Johannesburg surrounded the playing field and the game must have been strenuous for E. P. Solomon, who was apt to be choleric and explosive, wanted to have an interval in which to fight Dr Leigh Hunt who had struck him accidentally."

There were similar clubs in Pretoria and Potchefstroom and the young men of Johannesburg were not to be outdone, particularly as they included fine players from all parts of the country. They had met in the offices of the lawyers van Boeschoten and Lorentz and had agreed to form a club. Dispute arose over its name. 'The Nuggets' was voted down but "The Rand Wanderers" was considered appropriate as they were indeed all wanderers. Llewellyn Andersson was duly appointed secretary of the Rand Wanderers Rugby Football Club with instructions to obtain maroon jerseys for the players. He wrote to his friend Billy Simkins in Cape Town and in due course, took delivery of the gold, scarlet and black colours of the Hamiltons Football Club to which they had both belonged and which, failing maroon or anything similar, Billy Simkins had been forced to send. The Wanderers Rugby Club then entered into battle with Pretoria and Potchefstroom and were joined in the same year by another Johannesburg team, the Pirates (copying the Kimberley Club and including Louis Melville, Henri Bettelheim who was known as the Pirate King for his membership of the Diamond Fields Club, Gustav Imroth, Max Langermann and other Kimberley pioneers). In 1889, the Transvaal Rugby Union was formed and W. P. Taylor was elected president, presenting a cup for competition between the Transvaal teams.

At the meeting at the Bodega Bar during the winter of 1888, only the Wanderers footballers joined the enthusiasts and, with W. P. Taylor in the chair, they freely expressed their views. With Pullinger was C. L. Andersson who had long been going about the township promoting the idea of a supra-Club (which subsequently caused a large number of men to allege that it had been started in their pioneering fathers' houses).

'One evening', wrote C. A. O. Bain of the middle of 1888, 'I had Louis Melville who was a nephew by marriage of my wife to dinner and after dinner, Harry Smith (an attorney, footballer, cricketer and gymnast) whom we had met in Beaufort West, turned up. Then later Llewellyn Andersson came with a friend whose name I can't remember and as usual with a lot of young chaps, we talked Sport. When someone said, "Why not form a Sporting Club", the idea was acclaimed. I said if you fellows will form a Club, I will form a Musical Section of it and we will have Sunday Evening Concerts as they do in Kimberley. Finally this was agreed to and Andersson set about organising the Wanderers Club . . ."

The Intermediary – Charles C. Pieteron



The State President, his Honour, J. S. P. Kruger,
who gave the ground



Andersson, Harry Smith, David Pullinger and other “young chaps” duly imposed their views on the gathering at the Bodega Bar. They did not want to be I Zingari Club, they said. They wanted to be the Wanderers Club because all of them constantly wandered about looking for gold and other things. After discussion, the non-footballers concurred but they refused to agree to the proposed colours of all-black with a red Maltese cross (also worn by the Gardens Football Club in Cape Town). In the end, it was agreed that the colours be red, yellow and black. C. L. Andersson was elected honorary secretary of the Wanderers Club, all of whose members had to be active players or performers, admission otherwise being available only to debenture holders.

Pietersen, true pioneer of a Johannesburg and later a national institution, now handed over all books, records and correspondence to the 27 year-old Andersson. I Zingari had died and the Wanderers Club had been born. It was very nearly stillborn.

Propelled by initial enthusiasm, the young men drafted rules and, although it was midwinter, proposed a Lawn Tennis Club, a Polo Club and, with the promise of financial assistance from Barney Barnato and Solly Joel, a Swimming Club with its own bath. They proposed proceeding with the collection of money to prepare the playing fields, build stands, plant trees and fence the whole area. Nothing happened and, failing a responsible body to implement its undertakings, the Government made no move to confirm the lease of land to either I Zingari or the new Wanderers Club.

Predictably Johannesburg slid into a suffocating slump and when not playing football, the young men toiled to keep body and soul together. All through the winter of 1888, the "Wanderers Club", despite the interest and support of the overburdened Eckstein and the two Taylors, failed to exist even in name. Until the tide took a turn and a new wave of young men flocked to Johannesburg, it was a dead letter.