

# BOEKBESPREKINGS/BOOK REVIEWS

D. CHILD. *A merchant family in early Natal. Diaries and letters of Joseph and Marianne Churchill, 1850 to 1880. (With a narrative of pioneering travels to Potchefstroom and the Soutpansberg).* A.A. Balkema: Cape Town and Rotterdam, 1979. 198 pp. R15.00 (GST excluded)

In November 1850 a young English immigrant, Joseph Fleetwood Churchill, landed in Durban, so founding the South African branch of the Churchill family. Coming to South Africa for health reasons at the age of twenty-three, he joined Alfred Winter Evans in a trading partnership, and four years after his arrival persuaded his youngest sister, Marianne Julia Churchill, to join him in Natal. She kept house for him until 1857 when he married Emma Gillespie. Emma's brother Hugh Gillespie, a leading Durban businessman, later married Marianne.

Joseph kept a journal and Marianne a diary and both were conscientious letter-writers, mainly to their brother William and sister Isabella in England. These documents unfold the wide range of activities in which the Churchills were engaged, especially in Natal. Moreover, they contain useful information on social life in Victorian Durban, and describe the economic problems and practical hardships of a merchant and importer dependent upon wagon transport.

Among the highlights of this book are the detailed accounts Joseph Churchill gives of his travels to Mooi River Dorp (Potchefstroom), Pretoria, and the Soutpansberg in the 1850s. To the historian and those interested in the pioneering days of the undeveloped Transvaal, Churchill's vivid description of this region and its inhabitants will be of considerable importance. Marianne Churchill's contemporary water-colours and drawings, of which some twenty have been used as illustrations in the book, add to the aesthetic character and historical merit of the publication. They consist of houses, landscapes, farmyards, street scenes, and shops in the Transvaal and Natal. Also included is a copy she made of a water-colour which is believed to be the earliest painting of Pretoria.

Deeply interested in South African history, Daphne Child has selected and edited the diaries and letters in a competent way. Notes to verify people or to serve as a background for historical events are integrated with the text, either by means of square brackets or in italics. This, however, sometimes creates confusion (e.g. p.43) and interrupts the narrative. The book has an introduction, an index, and a list of illustrations but lacks a bibliography or any reference to sources used by the editor in compiling the footnotes. Nevertheless these remarks in no way detract from the historical value and importance of this book, for the diaries and letters of Joseph and Marianne Churchill are indeed a welcome contribution to the literature on local and regional history in South Africa.

C.C. ELOFF  
Human Science Research Council

A. GORDON-BROWN. *The Settlers' press: seventy years of printing in Grahamstown (1830-1900) covering the publication of books, pamphlets, directories, almanacs and newspapers with historical notes, anecdotes and contemporary illustrations.* A.A. Balkema: Cape Town and Rotterdam, 1979. 150 pp. R15.00 (GST excluded)

The pioneer press is probably one of the least researched fields in South African history. In the past, studies concerning this vital industry have been focussed on the newspapers and periodicals it has published, without concentration on any other publications which might have rolled off the presses. In many instances a local newspaper was often a mere secondary product of an industrious printing press. Pamphlets, handbills, almanacs, directories, and even the publishing of voluminous books were its major occupation.

In *The Settlers' press* the accomplished author and authority on Africana, Alfred Gordon-Brown, sets out to sketch a comprehensive picture of the printing industry in Grahamstown in the nineteenth century. The work is predominantly intended to give a thorough bibliography of what was printed in Grahamstown since the first printing shop opened in 1830. As an avid collector of Africana the author is in a good position to list certain items which might otherwise have escaped the usual compiler of bibliographies. For example, the details of a poem "The Caffer War", written by Alexander Cowie, are given and the author points out that no copy of it has thus far been traced. It is doubtful whether the poem was ever published (pp.15-16). There are also interesting facts about the *Kariega News*, a weekly newspaper edited, printed, and published by two enterprising schoolboys on a farm outside Grahamstown in the 1870s (p.66 and pp.108-9).

The bibliographical section of the work features an alphabetical list of authors and publications under various headings. Apart from prints of front pages of publications there are also several contemporary illustrations depicting old Grahamstown. The first part of the work is devoted to a historical review of the local printing industry and interesting personages such as printers and authors.

On the whole *The Settlers' press* is a thorough piece of work which may in years to come be a standard reference work for local historians, researchers of South African printing history, and collectors of Africana. There are however certain shortcomings. The index at the end of the book is not complete, and should the work survive a second print the publisher might consider adding all the page numbers to references. In the second place one would expect the author to have given a more comprehensive description of the printing presses used to produce the publications. A "wooden press" and the "years (of) steam power and modern machinery" are given only scant attention. Despite these shortcomings Mr Gordon-Brown's book is to be recommended as it contains a wealth of information and facts of particular interest to the local historian and bibliophile.

JOHANN W.N. TEMPELHOFF  
Human Sciences Research Council

F.A. VAN JAARSVELD. *Westerse historiografie en geskiedenisfilosofie.* HAUM: Pretoria en Kaapstad, 1980. 165 pp. R10.00 (AVB uitgesluit)

Prof. F.A. van Jaarsveld, tans hoof van die Departement Geskiedenis aan die Universiteit van Pretoria, is reeds vir meer as twee dekades gemoeid met historiografie en geskiedenisfilosofie, onderwerpe waaroor hy gereeld doseer en referate lewer, en waaroor hy reeds uitgebreid geskrywe het. *Westerse historiografie en geskiedenisfilosofie* is hoofsaaklik 'n samevatting in boekvorm van sy referate en voorlesings aan nagraadse studente. Wat hierdie werk van besondere betekenis maak, is dat dit tot dusver die enigste werk oor westerse geskiedskrywing en geskiedenisfilosofie is wat in Afrikaans verskyn het.

In ses temas word 'n oorsig gegee van die ontwikkelingsgang van historiese geleerdheid en ingegaan op die vordering wat die geskiedwetenskap gemaak het binne die raamwerk van die veranderende samelewings- en institusionele verbande waarin dit bedryf is. Die eerste tema handel oor hermeneutiese historisme, oftewel die klassieke wetenskaplike geskiedskrywing soos dit in veral die Leopold von Ranke-skool sy beslag gekry het. In die volgende tema word die verskillende strominge in die negentiende- en twintigste-eeuse geskiedskrywing onder die loep geneem, onder meer die reaksie teen die Verligtingshistoriografie van die Franse Rewolusie, die Liberalisme wat 'n voortsetting van die Verligtingshistoriografie was, die Realistiek as reaksie teen die Romanitiese stroming in die geskiedskrywing, kultuur- en geestes (intellektuele of ideë-)geskiedenis, asook die herlewing van die Ranke-tradisie na die Tweede Wêreldoorlog. In sy derde tema bespreek Van Jaarsveld die aanslae op die metodologiese en filosofiese grondslae van Von Ranke se 'tradisionele' wetenskaplike geskiedenis, onder meer deur die Positiviste, die New History-beweging en die aanhangers van die nomologiese benadering tot die geskiedenis, in die besonder die Franse Annalesskool.

Die vierde tema is vir streekhistorici veral van besondere belang want hierin word die opkoms en bestendiging bespreek van die Annalesskool as die leidende historiese rigting in Europese historiografie en die rol wat Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, Fernand Braudel, C.E. Labrousse, Pierre Goubert en E. le Roy Ladurie daarin gespeel het. Die skrywer toon nie net aan dat die Annalesskool 'n nuwe dimensie aan geskiedskrywing gegee het deur hulle metode en geskiedenisbenadering nie, maar wys ook op wesenlike gebreke.

Die Duitse geskiedskrywing in die jare 1945-1977 kom vervolgens aan die beurt. Die verskillende faktore word bespreek wat verantwoordelik was vir die breuk met die tradisionele Duitse geskiedskrywing wat geleidelik tot 'n reoriëntasie na 1961 waarin die Duitse verlede herwaardeer is en as gevolg van die Fischer-kontroversie groter aandag aan voorheen verwaarloosde sosio-ekonomiese temas gegee is.

Die laaste tema waarin 'n oorsig gegee word van die pogings om tot 'n "universeel-historiese daarstelling" te kom, sluit af met die probleem in verband met die moontlikheid van 'n wêreldgeskiedenis, 'n probleem wat volgens Van Jaarsveld "haas onoplosbaar is".

Die ernstige student van die geskiedenis sal hierdie boek wat in vele opsigte 'n stuk baanbrekerswerk is, uiters nuttig vind. Afgesien van behoorlike bronneverwysings deurgaans is 'n uitstekende literatuurlys, wat van die vroegste tot mees onlangse werke oor hierdie onderwerp insluit, opgeneem.

A.G. OBERHOLSTER  
Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing