

## **The Tale of Henry Hartley of Thorndale**

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Henry was born in Mansfield England in 1815 and was only four years old when he came to the Cape Colony with his family, in the Carlton party of settlers. He grew up in Bathurst with his large family of brothers and sisters, attending the village school run by the Rev. Boardman.

Those early days of the settlement were full of hardships and tribulations but these conditions bred a generation of hardy young men. Life was earnest and dangerous and in this hard school Henry grew to manhood, well equipped for the life of adventure, travel and big game hunting that he elected to pursue.

Henry left the Cape Colony in about 1841 after his father's death and at the age of 25 traveled north to the Transvaal Republic. He settled in a fertile-valley in the Magaliesburg. Here he established his farm, Thorndale. This was 47 miles southwest of Pretoria. He was heartily welcomed there by the Boers and was one of the first Englishmen to be domiciled in the Boer republic. He soon received his full rights as a burger of the state.

On his farm, in addition to the usual crop-and-stock husbandry, Henry initiated the cultivation of tobacco which later became famous throughout South Africa as the "Magaliesburg Tobacco" and which was the solace of many thousands of British soldiers during the Anglo-Boer war.

Henry became, in time, one of the most celebrated hunters in South Africa. His record of 1200 elephant has never been beaten and it certainly never will be now.

These years from 1849 to 1874 were (long succession of journeys) filled with excitement and danger. At any time Hartley was to be found either in the Transvaal or Matabeleland traveling by ox wagons and trading or hunting. He had acquired a sound knowledge of drugs and was a clever amateur surgeon. He frequently treated the Matabeles for accidents and disease and was responsible for numerous recoveries and cures. He was thus revered as a great white medicine man amongst the Matabele.

On Hartley's last hunting trip he was walking through the bush with his horse behind him, when a rhino suddenly charged. Henry fired and mortally wounded the rhino when it was only a few paces from him. The rhino overtook him and tossed him into the air. He came down on the rhino's back. Unfortunately, the beast, in its death throes rolled over onto him and collapsed dead, pinning him down. Henry's horse, Bokkie, was an old friend and calling now to Bokkie, he commanded the horse to lie down in such a way that he could get hold of the stirrup. Bokkie then pulled him from under the rhino. Henry was seriously injured and never quite recovered and at the age of 60, on the 8th of February 1876 he died and was buried on his farm Thorndale.

The Hartley name however lives on. Henry Charles Hartley senior, the great grandson of Henry Hartley, now resides at Rainhill Farm with his wife and extended family of sons and daughters. Hartley's, the name of the restaurant on Rainhill Farm is indeed a fitting tribute to the first legendary Henry Hartley.

On 23 Feb 1838 when Henry was 23, he married **Emma Whitcombe Kidson** in Bathurst, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Born on 17 Jun 1818 in Norsley Down, London, England. Emma Whitcombe died in Cradock, Eastern Cape, South Africa, on 13 Dec 1853; she was 35.

They had the following children:

1. Sarah Ann (1839-)
2. Mary Elizabeth (1842-1893)
3. Frederick Henry (1844-)
4. Thomas John (1846-)
5. William (1853-1870)