

CENTENARY OF THE CAPE ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION

The first Astronomical Society in
South Africa

SPECTACULAR CELESTIAL EVENT

Halley's Comet 1910



*FIFTH AVE. AND BROADWAY GARY, IND. MAY 20TH 1910
SHOWING HALLEY'S COMET.*

Halley's Comet 1910



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

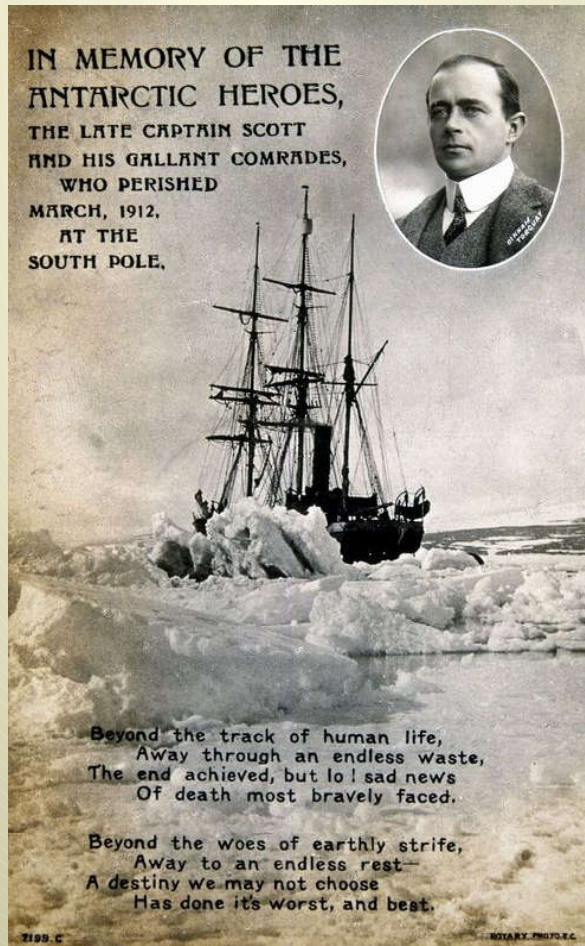
Events of the time

Robert Peary Reached
the North Pole in
1909



Events of the time

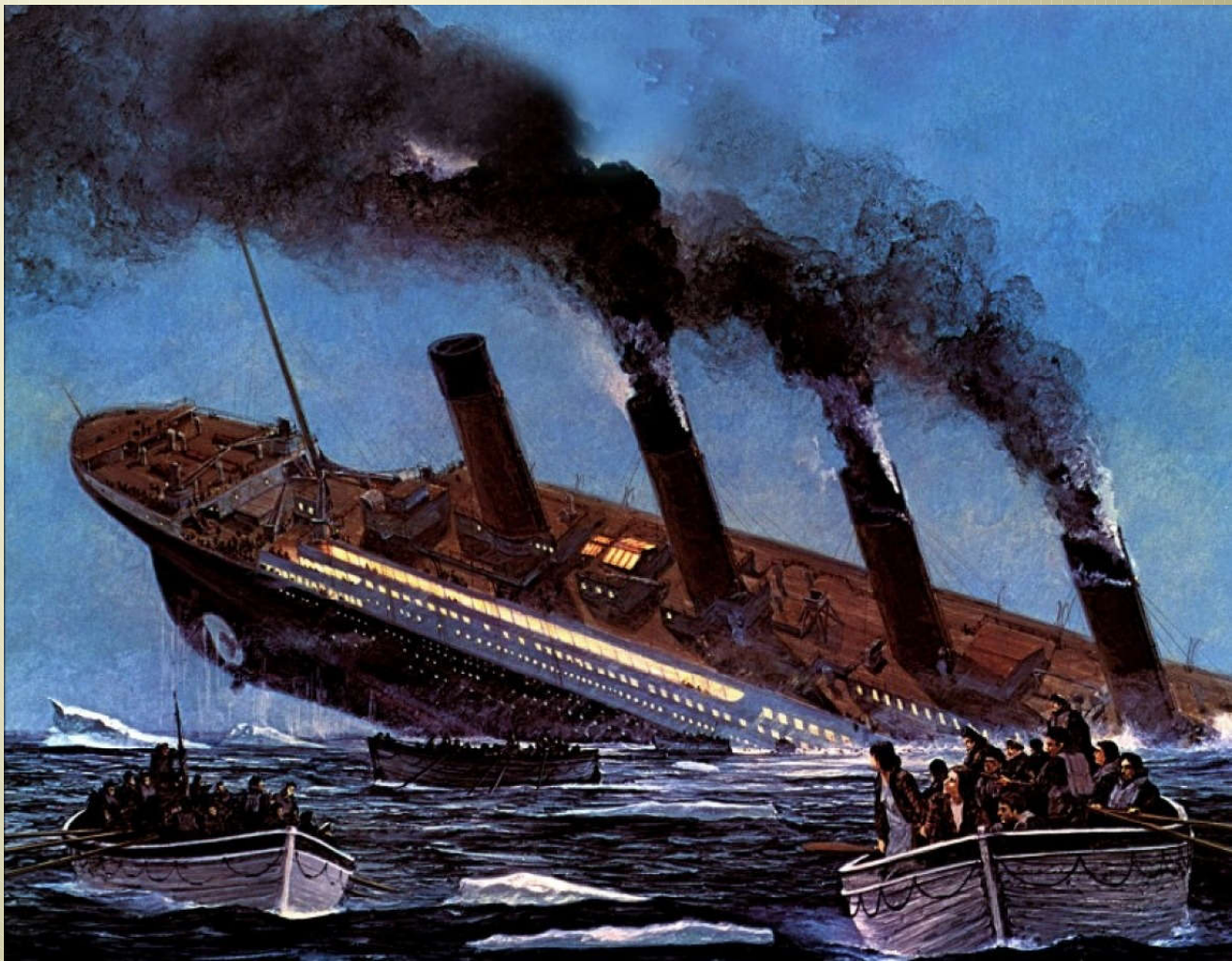
Scott was anchored in Cape Town in June 1910 in his attempt to reach the Pole first, but was beaten to the goal by Roald Amundsen in December



Events of the time



Events of the time



South Africa

1910: Union of South
Africa

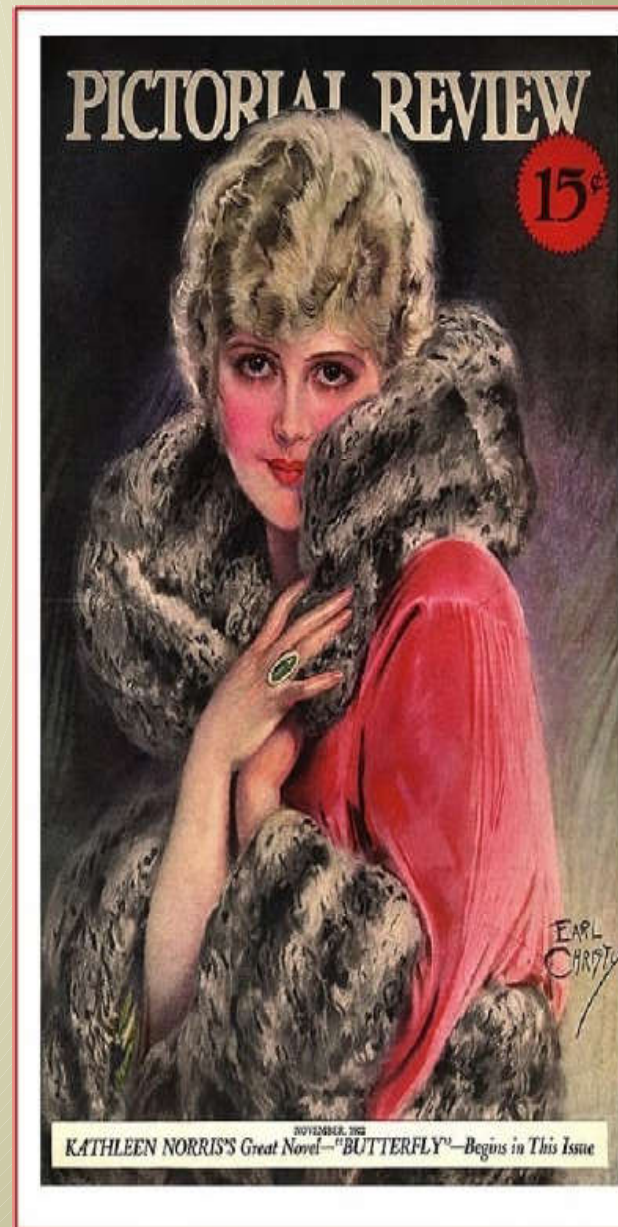
1912: African National
Congress

1914: National Party



Emancipation of Women

In 1912, in Cape Town, female property owners were given the right to vote in Municipal matters.



CAPE ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION

Cape Times

“A meeting of those interested in amateur astronomy, with a view to the formation of a local Astronomical Association was held in the rooms of the Cape Town Photographic Society, Old Town Hall, this evening.”

Source: Cape Times, Thursday, October 3 1912

Placed by D. Gordon Mills

Old Town House



1st Meeting held on 3 October 1912

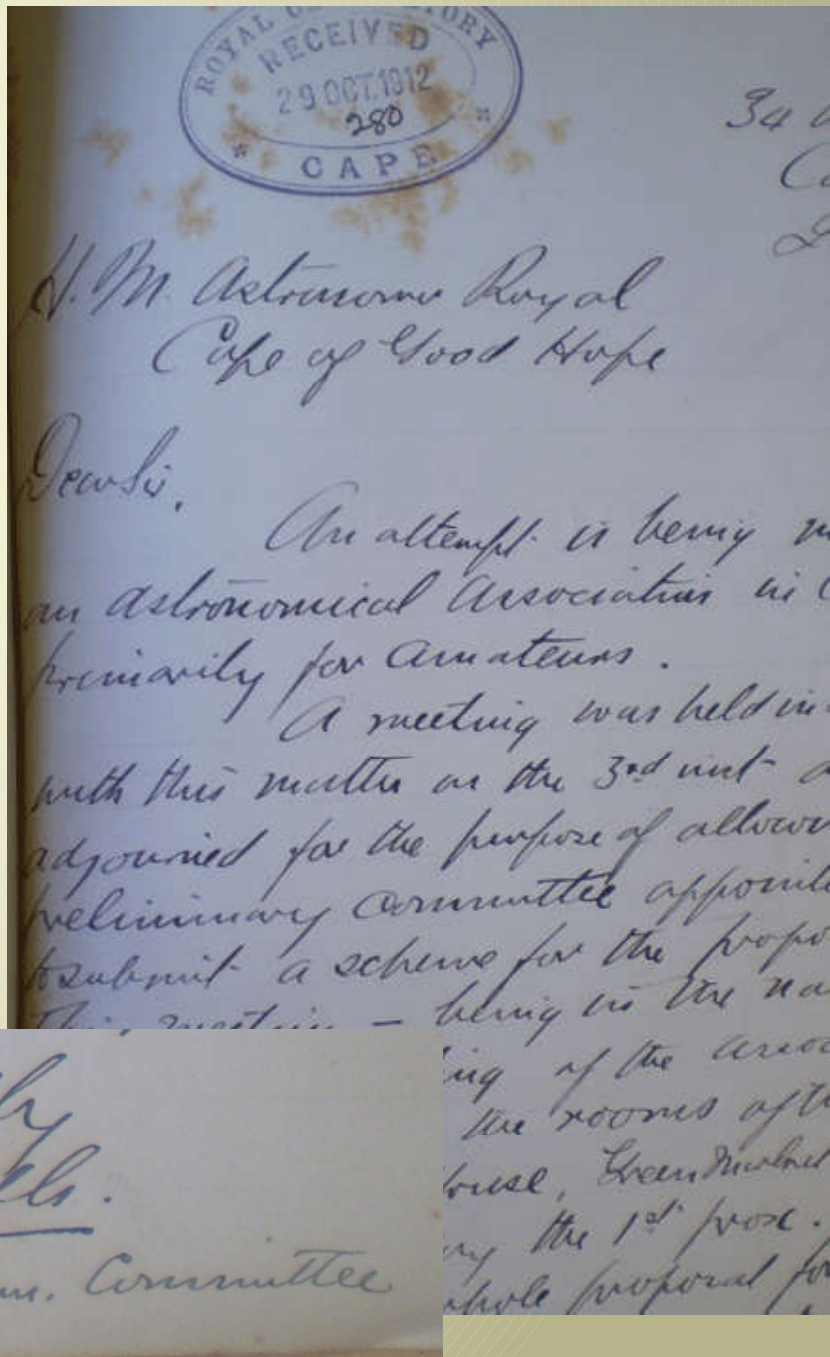
List of attendees:

- Ladies
 - A Glossop
 - Ellen Smith
 - Messrs J W Copenhagen
- Men
 - S A Davies
 - R T King
 - A W Long
 - Andrew Milne
 - D Gordon Mills
 - William Reed
 - H W Schonegevel
 - J F Skjellerup
 - E J Steer
 - John Williams

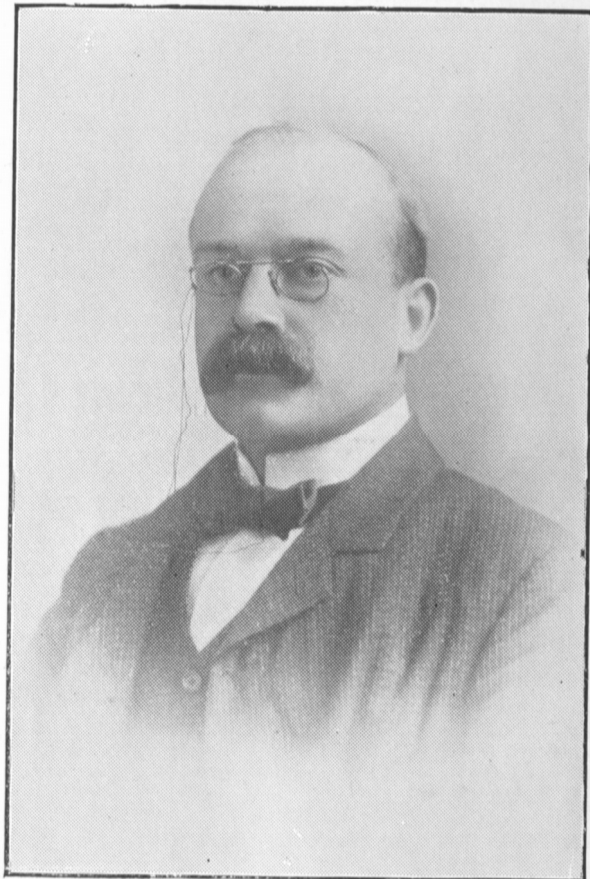
Professional and Amateur Astronomers

A feature of Astronomical Societies in South Africa has always been that there is close co-operation between Professional and Amateur Astronomers.

The meeting was adjourned in order to invite the staff of the Royal Observatory to join.



Honorary President: S. S. Hough



S. S. HOUGH.

1912 Oct

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter
inst. relative to the formation of an Astronomical
Association in Cape Town, and will endeavour to attend
the meeting on Friday evening next.

The proposed Association would in my opinion
fulfil a useful purpose and I shall be pleased to give
my support as far as is practicable.

As regards the question of becoming
President of the Association I am sensible of the
responsibility conveyed and will give the proposal my
consideration. I will give you a receipt of more information regarding the
object and aims of the Society.

Yours sincerely,

S. S. Hough

H. M. Astronomer

D. Gordon Mills, Esq.,
34 Wald St.,
Cape Town.

Foundation Meeting 8 November 1912

The roll of foundation members and the positions elected:

- Hon. President: Mr. S.S. Hough - His Majesty's Astronomer.
- President: Dr. J.K.E. Halm.
- Vice-Presidents: Dr. S.J. Lunt and Senator A.W. R.
- Secretary and treasurer: Mr. J.F. Skjellerup.
- Committee: Mr. S.A. Davies, A.W. Long, D. Gordon and W. Reid.
- **Miss** A. Glossop, H. Long and E. Smith; **Mr.** W.H. R.T. King, A. Milne, A. Pilling, E.J. Steer, S. Sangster, H.W. Schonegevel and J. Williams.

Inauguration Meeting 13 December 1912

- The meeting was presided over by the Hon. President, S.S. Hough.
- Inaugural lecture delivered by Dr. J.K. Halm on Spectroscopy, which was illustrated by lantern slides.
- There were forty two people present

The Cape Astronomical Association.

Rules

I. Name The title and name of this Association shall be "The Cape Astronomical Association."

II. Object. The objects of the Association are to encourage the study of the science of Astronomy and to disseminate current astronomical information among its members.

The following shall be recognized as some of the means by which the Association may carry out its objects:-

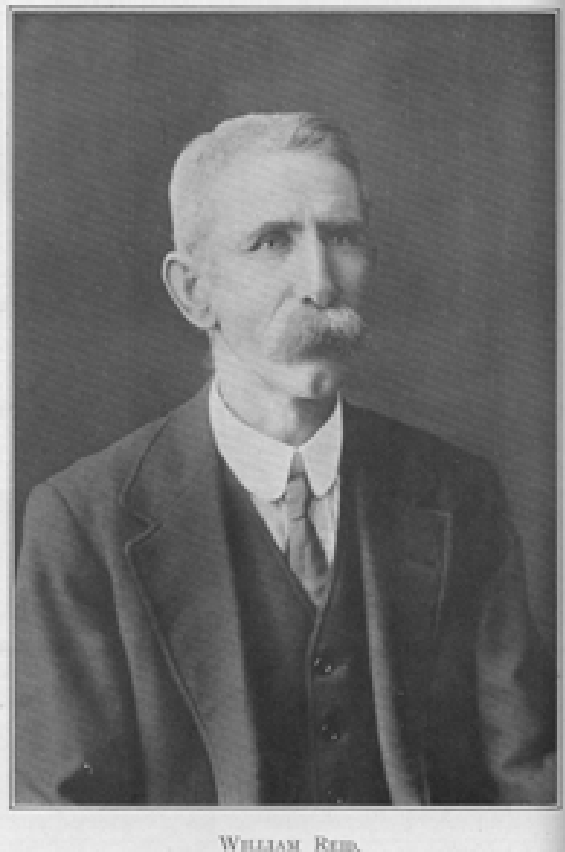
- (a) The holding of monthly or other periodic meetings of its members, and the reading of papers at such meetings.
- (b) The promotion and organization of lectures and the formation of observing sections.
- (c) Affording members not possessing astronomical telescopes the opportunity of practical observation.

III. Officers

Observing Sections

COMET SECTION

(METEOR)



VARIABLE STAR SECTION



Figure 1. Frank Skjellerup (1875–1952) as a young man (Orchiston Collection).

INTERRUPTION

The Great War: 1914 - 1918

- The War temporarily brought the activities of the CAA to a halt.

Source: Photos of the Great War
<http://www.gwpda.org/photos/coppermine/displayimage.php?pos=-28>



ANYTHING TO WIN.



NO Cross is sacred to the Hun.



ARE WE DOWNHEARTED ?

To-day's steel collection is for the King George's Fund for Sailors

CONTINUATION

Reconvening the Association

Sometime in 1916 a meeting was called in order to get the society back on its feet. There is very little background about this. We do know:

- The first meeting was at the YMCA Hall in Longwood, which later to become offices of Eastern Telegraph Company
- We know that Mr. Alfred Bull was involved.

At a Special Meeting in August 1916 it was decided to hold the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June each year. We know that this meeting held at the "Cape Town Gallery Club Room", Burmester's Building in Adderley Street.

The First Publications

Publications were known as "CIRCULARS"

A total of eight circulars were published

- Four of the circulars contained interesting talk that were presented to the Association.
- Four of the circulars were reports of the AGM's.

CIRCULAR No. 2.

CAPE ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION

Report of Annual Meeting, June 12,

The Annual Meeting of the Association was held in the rooms of the Owl Club on Wednesday, June 12th, 1901, at 8 p.m., the President, Dr. J. Lunt, F.I.C., being in the chair.

THE NEW STAR.

The President, in making reference to the new star in the constellation Aquila, said: "Before proceeding to our business, I should like to refer to the important discovery of a nova in Aquila made by one of our members, Mr. V. Watson, of Beaufort West. It is fitting, I think, that we send Mr. Watson a telegram from this Association in Annual Meeting conveying to him our heartiest congratulations on his discovery. Mr. Watson's name will go down to posterity as the discoverer of a nova in South Africa at any rate, to detect this nova which subsequently developed into one of the brightest stars in the sky, and one of the most brilliant novae of recent times.

"His name will be linked with that of Dr. Anderson, of Edinburgh, another amateur who discovered the nova in Auriga and Perseus.

"Mr. Watson realised the importance of his discovery, and he was not content to write a letter to his local paper. He telegraphed the information both to the Royal Observatory and the University Observatory, and enabled them to make spectroscopic observations of the condition of the star at a stage which might otherwise have been lost but for his prompt notification.

"The star has attracted attention in other lands, and let us hope that Mr. Watson's discovery may be of great value to the professional astronomer and to science in general. It is an illustration of the important aid the amateur can give to the continued existence of the Cape Astronomical Association. It required any justification, a discovery such as this by one of our members supplies it."

Spanish Flu: Influenza

- 6 000 people died in Cape Town in two weeks - September 1918.
- During this time the Comet section made no observations because Reid was quite ill.
- Hon. President Hough's wife died as a result of the epidemic.

The Management of the

CREAMERY TEA ROOMS, ADDERLEY STREET

Desire to inform the General Public that this Establishment is now an

ENTIRELY BRITISH CONCERN

Patrons can rely on the Catering being of a high order, only the Best Materials being Supplied.

INFLUENZA.

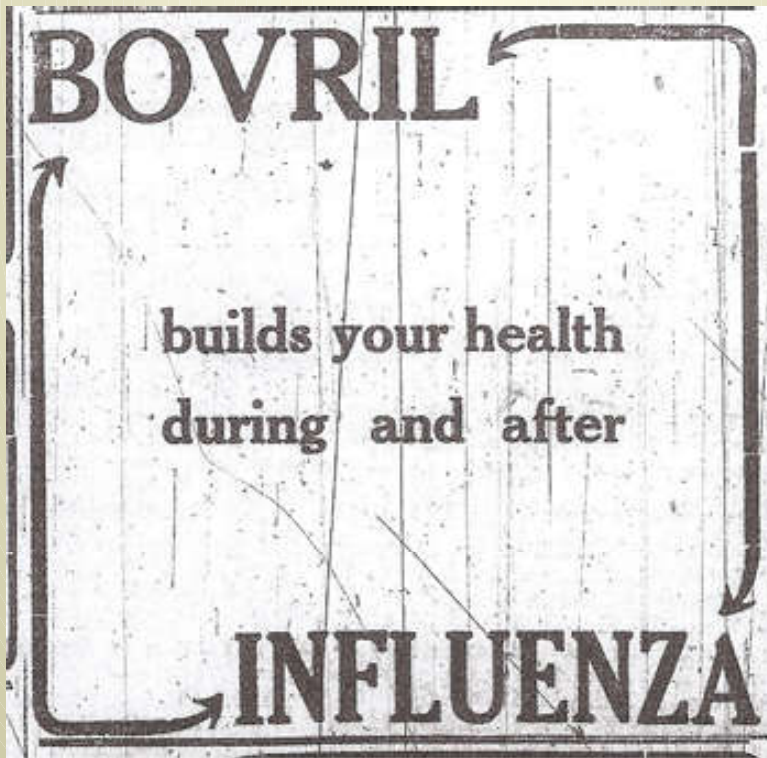
Be on your Guard.

All Doctors, Nurses, and those who come in contact with Influenza Patients, should apply to the inside of the nostrils, night and morning,

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Tell the
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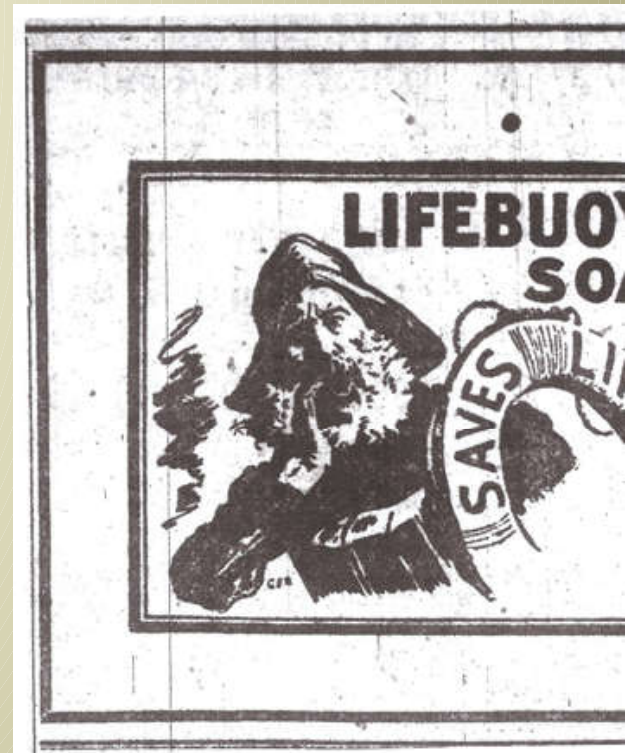


BOVRIL

builds your health
during and after

INFLUENZA

A vintage advertisement for Bovril. The word "BOVRIL" is at the top in a large, bold, serif font. Below it, the text "builds your health during and after" is centered in a smaller, bold, serif font. At the bottom, the word "INFLUENZA" is written in a large, bold, serif font. The entire advertisement is enclosed in a decorative border with arrowheads pointing towards the corners.



LIFEBUOY
SOAP

SAVES LIVES

A vintage advertisement for Lifebuoy Soap. It features a central illustration of a man in a dark coat and hat, looking towards the right. A large, white lifebuoy is positioned in front of him, with the words "SAVES LIVES" written on it in a curved path. Above the illustration, the words "LIFEBUOY SOAP" are written in a bold, sans-serif font. The entire advertisement is enclosed in a simple rectangular border.

Discoveries by the members the CAA

- 8 June 1918: Nova star discovered by Watson of Beaufort West. Co-discovered by Dr Anderson of Edinburgh.
- 11 June 1918: Comet discovered by Skjellerup
- 18 Dec 1919: Comet discovered by Skjellerup
- 11 Dec 1920: Comet discovered by Skjellerup
- 13 March 1921: Comet discovered by Reid.

Johannesburg Astronomical Association

A second astronomical association was formed

- In 1917 Theodore MacKenzie, moved to Johannesburg.
- With the goodwill of the CAA he started a similar Association.

Johannesburg Astronomical Association

The founding meeting of the Johannesburg Astronomical Association (JAA) was held on 28 February 1918 with R.T.A. Innes, Union Astronomer as President.



Amalgamation

- A letter was drafted by the CAA and at a meeting of the JAA on 22 July 1922 suggesting that the two Associations merge into a new Society.
- 12 July 1922: Special Meeting - vote proposal to amalgamate with Johannesburg Astronomical Association and form ASSA (according to Schonegevel)
- 1 July 1922 is given as the date that ASSA was established (according to Long)

Astronomical Society of South Africa

- President: Mr. S.S. Hough - His Majesty's Astronomer.
- Vice-Presidents: Dr. J.K.E. Halm; Sena A.W. Roberts and Mr. W.B. Jackson
- Secretary: Mr. T. MacKenzie
- Treasurer: Mr. J.F. Skjellerup
- Members of Council: Mr. W. Watson; Long; W. Reid; H.W. Schonegevel, H. Wood and W. M. Worsell

More information

ASSA Historical Website

<http://assa.saao.ac.za/html/his-arch-page.html>