PIERCE, David Towers – dead by July 1859.

1850.05.27 Arrived at Port Natal on the *Herald*, a 600 ton barque, Capt. Virtue. Lost with all hands on return trip. He was a blacksmith. (*NW* 31.01.50). No sign of arrival of wife and child in EI 73. (SO’BS)

1851.03.21 Letter awaiting him at the Pmb. (Pietermaritzburg) post office. (*NW* 21.03.51)

1853.03. Were Mrs Spawl [*sic*] and child who left on the *Sir Robert Peel* for Cape Town any connection.? They travelled steerage. (EI 73). Mrs Sprawl [*sic*] and infant according to other sources. (*NI & NW* lists)

1855.08.19 He was a blacksmith of Durban when son David George baptized. (R. St P. Dbn)

1856.06.27 A blacksmith of Smith St, Dbn, renter. (*NM* 27.06.56)

1856.06.00 David Towers Pierce signed a petition of Durban inhabitants. (CSO 2245 No. D406)

1857.06.21 A blacksmith of *Mt. Pleasant*, Isipingo, when dau. Mary Ann bap. at Isipingo.

(R. St P. Dbn)

1857.10.30 Pierce, David, of Isipingo, blacksmith, nominated for emigration John Sporle, of Kirton near Ipswich, Suffolk, aged 25, labourer, and Agnes, 25 and David 2. (EI Vol.1, pge 24). This family did not come to Natal. (EI 73, Akitt lists)

1857.11.00 Living in Isipingo, a blacksmith. (G.H. land & immigration papers)

1858.12.12 Still a blacksmith of Isipingo when dau. Mary Hannah bap. at Isipingo. (R. St P. Dbn)

1859.07.00 Widow Eliza, 34, dau. of John Sporle m. James Moore, 34, gardener, son of James Henry Moore. (R. Wes. Dbn)

1859.07.25 At Dbn by Revd G. Blencowe, Wes. Minister, Mr James Moore m. to Miss [*sic*] Elizabeth Pearce [*sic*]. Both of Dbn. (*NM* 04.08.59)

1859.07.25 Mrs Elizabeth Pearse [*sic*] at Dbn m. James Moore, both of Dbn. Married by Revd Blencowe. (*NS* 30.07.59)

1862.04.15 John Pierce, a minor, assisted by his mother Elizabeth Moore, was bound to Joseph de Kock as an errand boy for five years – also to make himself generally useful by rendering such domestic services as may be required. (RSC IV/2/68 No.475)

What is immediately above is important, as it is recorded in a book by Zita de Kock *Die de Kocks van Heilbron* that “Die de Kocks het toe vier kinders gehad en moes reeds ‘n kindjie aan die dood afgee. Hulle het egter ‘n weeskind, wat by hulle waens aangekom en hom as hulle eie grootgemaak. Hy was John Pierce, ‘n 9-jarige seuntjie van wie hulle veel plesier en liefde en later ook hulp ontvang het”. (Supplied by J.M.A. Pierce)

[Roughly translated this reads as – The de Kocks at this time had four children, a child already having been given up to death. They had, however, an orphan who had come to their wagons and whom they had brought up as their own. He was John Pierce, a 9 year old boy from whom they received much pleasure and love and later help. (BMS)]

This incident is given as happening when Basotho’s attacked Boer wagons. How the two stories fit together is not known. (S’OBS)

On a piece of paper there are important dates relating to the Pierce family. There is speculation that the unassigned date 10.04.1822 could be the birth date of David Towers Pierce. (G. Pierce)

CHILDREN

**John Sporle** (1849.05.00, London – 04.02.1919, Heilbron)

1849.05.00 John Sporle born. Calculated date from date of death and age at death given on Death Notice. (Details of Death Notice supplied by G. Pierce)

1850*c*. Born, London. (CSO 2286).

1862.04.15 Bound to Joseph de Kock. (See above). John Sporle was the son [*sic*] of Mr F. [*sic*] Moore, a tent-maker in Pmb. He was nine years old when he came into the de Kock house and helped Joseph de Kock with book-keeping and journeying with merchandise to the farm where Heilbron was later established. The de Kocks received much pleasure and love from him. Everyone who knew him had respect and love for him. He was co-founder of Heilbron with his brother [-in-law] Joseph de Kock. (J.M.A. Pierce)

1870*c*. Before Heilbron was established the young, energetic John Pierce was already trading from farm to farm with his goods. (Transcript of cutting from *Heilbron Herald* 11.12.1981 received from G. Pierce)

1872 He started a small shop in President St, Heilbron. (Ibid)

1873 After Heilbron was laid out in 1873 [*sic*] he moved to other premises where the firm remained until 1981. (Ib.)

1874 Town of Heilbron in northern Orange Free State (now Free State) laid out. (Rosenthal p. 222)

1876.07.14 John Sporle Pierce, 26, b. London, and Phillipina Johanna de Kock, 24, b. Pmb. applied in Pmb. for licence to marry without banns being called. (CSO 2286). He m. Joseph de Kock’s younger sister Phillipina. (Info from Riemland Museum, Heilbron, via Mark Watts)

1899 – 1902 During the Anglo Boer War, as a burgher, he was expected to fight, but was allowed to send a substitute and sent Mr J.J. Lombard as his mercenary. Lombard was later sent to Diatalawa prison camp in Ceylon. John Pierce sent him £5 a month and with Lombard’s salary bought stock for him and cared for it. When Lombard returned he was able to take about 200 grown animals to his farm in the Cape Colony.

John Pierce was an elder of the DRC’s Mother Church in Heilbron and was also the donor of the wall round the church and yearly, at his cost, had it painted.

Before his father’s death, John Sporle’s son Jack took over the management of the business and engaged his cousin Philip de Kock and Walter Wright (presumably Walter Dolland Wright, son-in-law of John Sporle’s brother David George) as partners. (Transcript from *Heilbron Herald* dated 11.12.1981 received from G. Pierce)

1919.02.04 A retired merchant, he d. aged 69 years 9 months at his residence in Heilbron. He was m. out of community of property to [Phillipina] Johanna (born de Kock). They had three sons and two daughters. The death notice was filled in by his son S.M. Pierce. (Details of Death Notice supplied by G. Pierce).

1920.00.00 Widow Phillipina d. in Heilbron. (J.M.A Pierce). Phillipina Johanna de Kock was b. on 21.03.49 and bap. in Pmb. on 07.04.50. She was the dau. of Arend Josias de Kock (b. 30.09.09. d. 02.09.92) and Sabella Brink Munnik. (Cilliers p. 135)

1981.12.04 On Tuesday the auctioneer’s bell rang the end of the 109 year old business of John Pierce & Co. in Heilbron. The business was set up a year before Heilbron was officially established. The final auction to take place on Thursday 17.12.1981. (Transcript from *Heilbron Herald* 04.12.1981 received from G. Pierce). John Pierce & Co., the oldest business in Heilbron, closes its doors after 109 years. (Transcript from *Heilbron Herald* 11.12.1981 received from G. Pierce)

1981.12.11 At the time of closure John Pierce & Co. was managed by Willie, Johan, Philip and Abe de Kock, the sons of Johan de Kock, who had succeeded his father Philip de Kock. The sale took two days. All the old photographs and historical items, including the largest display case, were to go to the Museum. Three of the most historic counters were donated to the show hall. (Ibid)

**David George** (04.04.1855, Dbn –1897.06.16)

1855.04.04 Born in Dbn. (R.St P. Dbn)

1855.08.19 Bap. (R. St P. Dbn)

1880.07.05 Aged 25, transport rider, Heilbron, m. Martha Johanna Roslee, 19, in the Dutch Reformed Church, Heilbron. After their marriage they lived on the farm *Fairview* near Heilbron. (G. Pierce)

1881.07.05 m. Martha Johanna Roslee (15.09.60 – 21.07.1952) at Heilbron. (Mrs J.M.A Pierce)

1897.06.16 Died at Heilbron, leaving wife and seven children. (G. Pierce)

1952.07.21 MarthaJohanna Pierce d. at Heilbron aged 91 years 10 months and 5 days. Dau. of Cornelius Roslee, deceased, and Maria van Zyl, deceased, of Riversdale. Roslee was a forestry worker and sawyer of Knysna, who later moved to the OFS where he traded, then went to Kroonstad from where he did transport riding. (G. Pierce)

**Mary Ann** (07.02.57 – )

1857.02.07 Born. (R. St P. Dbn)

1857.06.21 Bap. at Isipingo. (R. St P. Dbn)

**Mary Hannah** (17.08.58 – )

1858.08.17 Born. (R. St P. Dbn)

1858.12.12 Bap. at Isipingo. (R. St P. Dbn)

NOTES

Pierce, Mr G. It is not known how he fits into the family.

Pierce, Mrs J.M.A. Her husband was a great-grandson of David George Pierce.

Watts, Mark. A descendant of Jeremiah Alfred Watts who m. Joseph de Kock’s sister Alida G. Maria de Kock (1829 – 1901)

ATTACHED

1. Copy of licence for John Sporle Pierce and Phillipina Johanna de Kock to marry without Banns being called. Dated 14.07.1876. Filed 18.07.1876. (Supplied by J.M.A. Pierce)
2. Pierce family tree, two pages. (Compiled by J.M.A. Pierce)

SOURCES

**Books and Directories**

Cilliers, B. *Genealogieë van Afrikaner Families in Natal*. The author, 1985.

De Kock, Sita. *Die de Kocks van Heilbron* (no publication details known)

Rosenthal, Eric. Comp. Encyclopaedia of southern Africa. Warne & Co., London: 1961.

**Church Registers**

R. St P. Dbn – St Paul’s Anglican Church, Durban. Baptismal Register

R. Wes. Dbn – Wesleyan Church, Durban. Marriage Register

**Newspapers**

*Heilbron Herald*

*NI – Natal Independent*

*NM* – *Natal Mercury*

*NS* – *Natal Star*

*NW* – *Natal Witness*

**Official Documents**

CSO – Colonial Secretary’s Office

EI – European Immigration Papers

GH – Government House land and immigration papers

RSC – Registrar of the Supreme Court

**Personal Communication**

BMS – Brian Mitchell Spencer

Pierce, Mr G. (last communicated with in 1994)

Pierce, Mrs J.M.A. (last communicated with in 1993)

SO’BS – Shelagh O’Byrne Spencer

Watts, Mark. (last communicated with 2004)

**Upublished theses, essays etc**

Akitt, H. *Government assisted immigration to Natal, 1857-1862*. Thesis, MA (Natal), 1953.

1 576 words