

THE COAT OF ARMS  
OF THE GIE FAMILY

In Europe during the middle ages a Coat of Arms was of considerable importance.

In England it was the sole prerogative of the King to grant Arms.

In France the old aristocratic families all had their coats of arms. When however the revolution broke out the anti-aristocratic feeling was so strong that not only did the revolutionaries abolish all coats of arms in France but they destroyed them wherever they were found - on church monuments, on tomb stones, hatchments, etc., (See Dr. Pama "Vintage Cape Town").

In the Netherlands anyone could draw a coat of arms for himself and his family. The Dutch took a great pride in their arms. This is understandable as the majority of their citizens were merchants who had to seal their contracts as signatures were seldom used. Almost every family of middle class standing had a Coat of Arms.

The love of coats of arms so evident in the Dutch life even today, was equally evident in Dutch colonial life. The whole of the Dutch East India Company was heraldry conscious, especially in the higher echelons, and if any of the more important servants of the company who settled in one of the colonies had no coat of arms he would certainly adopt one.

At funerals the servants of the deceased carried his coat of arms in the procession and later hung it in his church .... Others had their coat of arms sculptured on their tombs and tombstones.

In the Cape there are many examples of this and it is not surprising that many of the old Dutch families of the Cape had their own coat of Arms.

Even after the second British occupation of the Cape in 1806 many families still took pride in their Coats of Arms. However the importance of the Coat of Arms tended to dwindle.

It was however saved from near oblivion by Charles Bell.

### THE BELL KRYNAUW COLLECTION

Charles Bell started collecting coats of Arms in 1861 with a view to publishing a book on Cape Heraldry. Although not complete, it was of tremendous value at a time when most of the available material was fast disappearing.

In 1859 Charles Bell married Gertruda Johanna Krynauw who was the sister of Daniel Drynauw. Daniel Krynauw who was in the Surveyor General's Office and who later became Surveyor General assisted Charles Bell by making drawings of all the Coats of Arms.

On the occasion of his marriage Charles Bell had a large bronze tray made. In the centre of this tray was engraved the arms of the Bell family together with the arms of the related families of Krynauw, Gie and Davidson. The Gie connection was through the marriage of Helena Gertruda Wilhelmina Gie, born in 1816, to M. Krynauw.

The central part of the tray was surrounded by the arms of a number of other related families which were engraved on the border of the tray. The tray is now in the Johannesburg Africana Museum. (Photo annexed).

Charles Bell bequeathed his collection of Coats of Arms to his brother in law Daniel Krynauw who in turn bequeathed them to his daughter who was married to Mr. Denholm Walker, the City organist and also for many years the organist of the Grote Kerk in Adderley Street, Cape Town.

In the collection were two large Coats of Arms carved in wood, one of the Krynauw family and one of the Gie family. These were presented by Mrs. Walker to the Koopmans de Wet Museum in Strand Street. The Gie Coat of Arms is now prominently displayed. (Photo annexed).

The remainder of the collection known as the "Krynauw Papers" were given to the South African Public Library, Cape Town by Mrs. Walker. Among these we find the following :-

" Gie Familie. Fransche Protestant van Frankrijk  
Arriv. met wapen. "

According to Debrett a 'Coat of Arms' is comprised of six distinct parts, known as the shield, the crest, the wreath, the helmet, the mantling or lambrequin and the motto. These parts, we find, are subject to certain stereotyped rules. Colour, position, size, all come under these rules.

Annexed is the Coat of Arms which has been accepted by many members of the family as the Coat of Arms of the Gie family. It is not known from where it came. It was originally drawn up by the late Michael Henry Gie (Harry) (born 24th January 1861. Died 21st July 1822) It is thought that he probably copied it from some document in the possession of the Krynauw family.

From all these records it is evident that the main feature in the Gie Coat of Arms is the 'weir' or 'fence' or 'hare' in French.

In Clarke's "Introduction to Heraldry" published in 1813 it is stated that 'wearie', weir or dam is made of stakes or ossier Twigs interwoven as a fence against water. He adds some authorities term this as a "hare" which is the French for a fence. The old French spelling of "Hare" was "Haye".

In the standard work on French Heraldry known as "Dictionnaire des Figuires Herolddigus" by T. de Renesse (volume 6 page 634) the following names appear under the title 'HAYE' :-

de la Haye  
Guizelle de la Haye  
de la Haye Marlaquet  
de Haye

There is a photograph of the de la Haye Coat of Arms (No. 4 P.L. XXXIV) which is similar to the Coat of Arms of the Gie family.

In Dr. C. Pama's "Heraldry of South African families" the following appears in page 43.

"Gie weir argent (fig. 55)

Johann Conrad Gie, B. canton Zurich  
(Switzerland) 22nd March 1727, S.O. Andreas  
Gy and Anna Margaretha Liquren,  
both members of Huguenot families,  
Arr. 28th January 1751 bringing with  
him his Seal with the above arms of Gy  
which he changed to Gie. Bell also  
says that the Gy arms were originally  
the same as De la Haye and that both  
names were pronounced in the same way.  
Andreas Gy changed the arms and took  
the weir of the Lake of Lucerne as his  
device. In the Koopmans de Wet House,

It thus seems Cape Town, also hangs a woodcut of the above arms which once belonged to Bell. family was a family of high standing in the business community.

Figure 55.

55 Gij now Gie

The next question is the source from which the Coat of Arms came. Was it the Coat of Arms of the family while still in France or was it drawn up by the Guy family while in Zurich or was it only drawn up by the first settler at the Cape after his arrival at the Cape?

" Argent is defined in Nuttalls Dictionary as The white colour representing silver, the symbol of purity and gentleness in Coats of Arms. "

WHAT CONCLUSION CAN BE DRAWN FROM THESE FACTS ?

Moreover we have the statement of Dr. Pama on page 43 of his

1. It has been suggested that the crown on the top of the helmet indicated that the family was of noble origin.

Dr. Pama however points out that a crown on the top of the helmet may in some cases be an indication of rank or nobility but not necessarily so. Moreover he points out that the closed helmet was usually used by non-noble families and the open helmet by noble families.

Even although Dr. de Dianous states that a crown at the top of the arms indicates nobility, Andre Guy, the Huguenot who fled from Nimes to Zurich was a weaver. While in those days weaving was recognised as a highly skilled technical occupation, it is most improbable that a member of a noble family would be a weaver.

It thus seems clear that there is no justification for the claim that the family was of noble origin. On the other hand it also seems clear that the family was a family of high standing in the business community.

2. The next question is the source from which the Coat of Arms came. Was it the Coat of Arms of the family while still in France or was it drawn up by the Guy family while in Zurich or was it only drawn up by the first settler at the Cape after his arrival at the Cape in 1751 ?

The feature in the Coat of Arms is French - the weir or fence of a type quite unknown in South Africa. It is inconceivable that if the early members of the family in South Africa decided to have a coat of arms they would have had this type of weir included in the design.

Moreover we have the statement of Dr. Pama in page 43 of his "Heraldry of South African Families," namely :-

" Johan Coenrad Gie ..... arrived 28th January 1751 bringing with him his seal and the above arms of Gy which he changed to GIE."

and the record in the "Krynauw Papers" namely :-

" Gie Familie. Fransche Protestant van Frankrijk.  
Arriv. met wapen."

It can therefore be said almost with certainty that the family Coat of Arms was not drawn up after the family settled at the Cape.

While it cannot be said with certainty whether the Coat of Arms was first adopted by the family while in France or while in Zurich it is highly probable that it was the arms of the French family. Its very

nature is French with its "haie" or weir.

As stated above great importance was placed on a Coat of Arms in the middle ages, particularly by the merchants. Andre Guy who fled from France was a skilled craftsman, a weaver in silk and it is highly probable while in Nimes he would have a Coat of Arms and would bring with him his Coat of Arms when fleeing to a new country to prove his status. And so too the emigrant from Zurich to the Cape who realised the importance of a Coat of Arms would naturally bring it with him when he left for the Cape.

In conclusion it can be stated with some certainty therefore that there was a family in Nimes named de la Haye who had a Coat of Arms and that a member of that family fled to Zurich taking with him the family Arms. The name was then changed to Guy and later a member of this family emigrated to the Cape in 1751 who brought with him the family Coat of Arms.



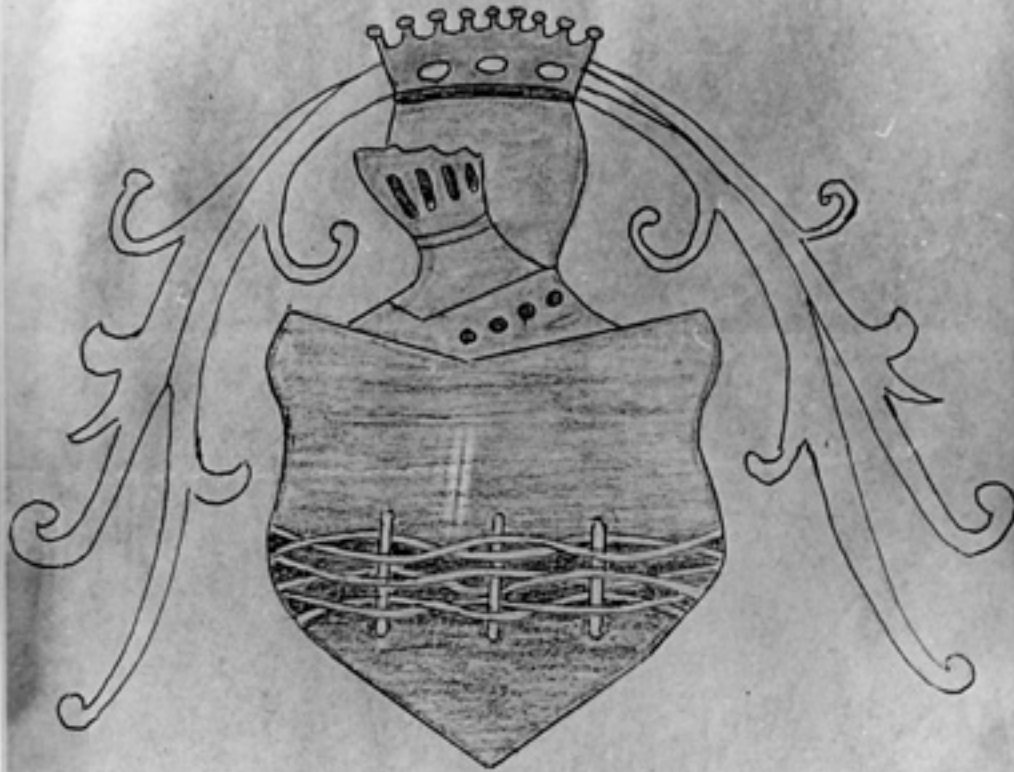
THE BELL SILVER TRAY IN  
THE AFRICANA MUSEUM  
JOHANNESBURG





THE COAT OF ARMS IN WOOD  
IN THE KOOPMANS DE WET MUSEUM  
CAPE TOWN

THE WOODEN COPY OF THE COAT OF ARMS OF  
THE DE WET FAMILY



COAT OF ARMS  
GUIZELLE DE LA HAYE

THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED COAT OF ARMS OF  
THE GIE FAMILY