

JAMES HENRY BARBER a Shrewd Businessman.

James Henry Barber (JHB) was born on the twenty-third of February in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and forty-three somewhere in Colombo Ceylon, at a time when his mother, Charlotte Frederica (nee Appleton), was separated from his father Charles Arnoldus Barber. His mother died 11 days later on the sixth of March and following this event his father took him into his care and remarried two years later to Harriet Swan on the thirty-first of March. He was baptised on the twenty-fifth of May in the same year as his birth at the Dutch Reformed Church, Wolvendaal Colombo.

He passed out at Gray's Inn, London and became a Proctor. In 1869 he was working at the District Courts of Ceylon at Kegalla and later in Kandy commanding an extensive practice as a contemporary of the late Mr. Harry Creasy. He also became an Advocate and sometimes Judge he at one time was in partnership with Eastlake, an English Proctor. His first marriage was to Catherine Toussaint in 1870 at St Paul's Church, Kandy. After the birth of their first child, Catharine Florence Maria Barber (Flo), Catherine passed away and James married again on 13/12/1873 at St Paul's Kandy to Catherine's sister Anne Elizabeth Toussaint (1853-1934). Of this marriage he had 6 sons (William Edward, Cyril Charles, James (Jim), Cecil Blackstone (Ces), Christopher Percival (Percy) and Louis Walter) and 2 daughters (Alice Maud and Elsie Charlobelle). It has been stated that Anne was hypnotised into marrying by JHB whom attained the nickname 'Yakka (The Devil) Barber'. Although this seems far-fetched, there is some grounds to his ability to hypnotise people and was referred to by different independent sources that he helped get rid of headaches by hypnotising people.

Being a man of considerable ability, extraordinary foresight and great energy he realised the potential of planting and turned his efforts away from the legal profession. He first acquired 'Blackstone' Tea Estate in Nawalpitiya in a partnership initially with John William vander Straaten. Blackstone generally received top prices at the time of 7s in the London Market and he also invented a tea roller that served the industry for many years. He next turned his attention to cocoa and planted up 'The Grove', Ukuwella that became one of the finest cacao plantations four miles from Matale in Ceylon. 'The Grove' spread over 300 Acres, 50 planted with Para rubber



also some pepper. The cocoa won 5 gold medals one being at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition at London in 1886. The estate also received silver medals and other prizes. In 1902 a Chocolate & Cocoa Manufacturing Factory was built on the estate, which was the first in the East. JHB employed the help of a Swiss chocolate expert and produced Barbers "Ne Plus Ultra Cocoa" which obtained a gold medal at the St Louis Exhibition 1904. His son Cyril Charles became Supervisor of field works and the factory, and later taking over the property. Among his other properties and estates was 'Appleton House' in Colombo, 'Mc Carthy House' in Kandy and 'Levelle Estate' a plantation of 30 acres at Dumbera. With his respected legal and planting knowledge he was elected Chairman of the Matale Planters Association being the first Ceylonese to hold such a position.

Figure 1 Barber's Chocolate Factory

JHB was an intimate friend of the late Mr. John Ferguson and wrote freely to the 'Ceylon Observer', both in a lighter vein as well as on matters connected with planting and politics. His contributions dealing with the labour question and taxation brought him to the attention of the then Governor, Sir Arthur Havelock, who sought his advice. He was to be appointed Burgher representative in the Legislative Council which when found out by others, was opposed in favour of another candidate. This was probably largely due to the fact that the Barber's considered themselves English and not Burgher, as such this put them out of favour with the Burgher circles.

One of JHB's other involvements was the drafting up of the prospectus for Kingswood College, Kandy in 1891. His sons became among the first students of the College and also later his son William Edward became at one stage Chairman of the College. Anne his wife presented trophies to the students of the College on various occasions. Of his other skills he shone on the social side his hospitality was generous and many a time held private orchestral concerts, at which he played his flute or cornet, proving a great attraction to his friends. He also played flute on the 13/1/1912 on board the I.M.S. 'Konigin Luise' a piece called 'Des Illusions' (Krantz) and also noted on the program as the Chairman. Of his character remembered as being a tall and arresting personality, utterly devoid of fear, rigid in discipline, a stern man of business, but withal, kind of heart. His advice was always sound, his judgment mature and his literary store rich. It was characteristic of the mentality of the man that he once said: "It is neither Christian nor Pagan philosophy to expect any return for what good a man does." Prior to leaving Ceylon JHB was paralleled with other great men of the time like Sir Samuel Grenier, Louis Nell, Sir James van Langenberg, Dr William Gregory van Dort, and Frederick Dornhorst ("Lion of the Ceylon bar") to name but a few. His reason for leaving Ceylon at the height of such a promising career was more of a personal nature and a new love in his life, May Lizzie Scott (1881-1943). About 1900 he married May in the side Chapel of St Paul's Cathedral in London. It was purported to some that May contracted Malaria and hence the reason for them leaving Ceylon. It would be more likely that due to a rift and embarrassment of the family that JHB decided it was best to move on while leaving his properties in charge to some of his sons. Some of his sons took the side of their mother and this would be reflected later on in JHB's will.

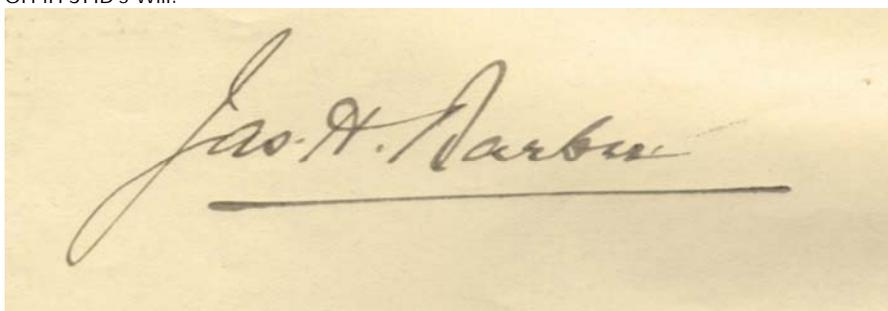
A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James H. Barber". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly aged paper. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Figure 2 James Henry Barber's Signature from his will

By his third wife, May, he had a further a son, Reginald Appleton, whom died on board the SS 'Scharnhorst' in the red sea 6/5/1909 and 2 daughters Violet Winifred (Wyn) and Constance Grace (con).

On leaving Ceylon his travels appear to be endless with an itinerary gained for May Lizzie's Travel and Diary notes: Left from London, England 29/4/1901 to Fremantle, Western Australia and arrived 5/6/1901. Departed from Fremantle in 28/8/1901 to Sydney on the SS "Weemar" arriving 8/9/1901. Lived in Manly till 23/1/1902 and moved up to the Blue Mountains staying till 6/2/1902, back to Sydney and staying at the Grand Central Hotel for 2 days leaving 8/2/1902 for Adelaide 15/2/1902. Staying for 3

weeks with a Mrs. Thomson then taking a furnished house of Mrs. Davies till 19/4/1902 leaving and arriving in Ceylon 5/5/1902. Left from Ceylon 1/8/1902 to Adelaide arriving 17/8/1902, and later taking a house in Wellington Rd till 2/1903 and off to Tasmania on the "Poluna" to Launceston 3/1903 and stayed at the Hotel Metropole moving onto Lockwood. JHB went to Swansea, England for a week while May went to Hobart and met the Governor Sir Arthur Havelock and Lady Havelock's mother Mrs. Norrs whom JHB already knew. On returning to Launceston then went to stay with Mr. Littlechild at 'Hillcrest' St Helens, Tasmania. Left St Helens due to small pox outbreak and were quarantined at Queens Cliff for 12hrs before arriving in Melbourne staying at Hindays Hotel and proceeding to Adelaide 3/7/1903 where May went onto to buy a house in Knoxville. JHB again went to Ceylon leaving 1/8/1903 and arrived 17/8/1903. Ceylon 3/2/1904 to Adelaide 20/2/1904, on his return the leased out the house in Knoxville to Richard's the Dairyman for 5 years from the 22/2/1904 and moved to 1st Avenue in East Adelaide. Leaving for Tasmania 5/1904 on the "Loonjana" to Lockwoods and on to Mr. Littlechild's again. Made acquaintance with Lord Littleton and his wife (they later rented his house 'Fair Lea' at St Helens). Their daughter Winifred contracted Bronchitis and they moved to Davenport 21/2/1905 from there to Sydney on the "Wakatipu" 23/2/1905. Sydney 28/2/1905 to New Zealand on the "Mauka" 4/3/1905 back to Sydney on the "Victoria" 3/1906 from there to Brisbane on the "Marloo" 3/1906 then moving to Tweed Heads following a short stay proceeding to Toowoomba 5/7/1907 then Dalby 9/1907 returning back Sydney on the "Orontes" 11/1907 and then to North Manly. Again leaving Sydney 17/3/1908 to South Hampton, England on the "Suevie" 15/5/1908 back to St Helens, Tasmania 1909. Left St Helens Abt. 1912 for Adelaide and brought around 1918 the 'Tower House' in Downing St, Brighton where it appears they finally settled. Within these many trips were numerous other trips to England and Ceylon including 23/4/1906 where he attended his daughter's (Elsie Charlobelle Barber) wedding at St Paul's Kandy to Fredrick John de Saram (Jnr.).

The involvement in St Helens, Tasmania led to some very successful Apple Orchards growing the varieties of New Yorks, Jonathans and Cox's Orange Pippins.

JHB passed away at 'Tower House' on the 19/6/1925 and the cause of death being Bronchitis & Heart Failure. His keen love of horticulture was reflected by a collection of over 100 roses at the property which was later sold in 1935 as there was insufficient funds to maintain the property. The Bluestone 'Tower House' still exists today although it has been stripped of its wrought iron and land.



Figure 3 The 'Tower House' Brighton, South Australia

A horse drawn carriage took JHB from 'Tower House' to the rear of St Jude's Anglican Church in Brighton Cemetery, Adelaide. His tombstone and later that of his wife May can be found lying innocently, yet for two small tombstones they hide such a colourful and enormous life that touched so many people and continents. To the descendant families of JHB, one knowing of his life in Ceylon while the other of his life in Australia. Finally the two halves have been brought together to represent a complete life of the person called James Henry Barber.