

= Jan Willem Spruyt =

Jan Willem Spruyt (4 July 1826 in Uithoorn , Netherlands ? 8 September 1908 in Inanda , Natal) , also known as Jan Willem Spruijt and Jan Willem Landskroon Spruijt (birthname) , was a South African civil servant , lawyer and statesman of Dutch descent . Spruyt was government secretary (1856 ? 1862) and several times acting state president of the Orange Free State , and state secretary of the South African Republic (1866 ? 1869) .

Spruyt grew up in the Netherlands , studied law , but did not complete his studies , and worked as a schoolteacher , before coming to South Africa . Here he practised as law agent in private practice in both Boer republics . Soon after his arrival he was also quickly enrolled in the administration of the Orange Free State , and attained a powerful position as government secretary . In this capacity he stood in for state president M.W. Pretorius several times in the period 1860 ? 1862 . In the third quarter of the nineteenth century several many Afrikaner politicians and government officials served in both Boer republics . So did Spruyt , who finished his career as state secretary of the South African Republic .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life and migration = = =

Spruyt was the son of Jacobus Spuyt (1796 ? 1839) , a Dutch medical doctor , and Antje Landskroon . Both the Spruyt and Landskroon families stood in a tradition of medical practice , and three of the four brothers Spruyt had were doctors in the Netherlands . Spruyt himself trained as a lawyer at Leiden University , but probably did not finish his studies . He went on to work as a schoolteacher in the village of Oosterwolde in the north of the Netherlands . It was here that professor U.G. Lauts recruited him for South Africa in 1851 . Lauts was one of a group of Dutchmen , interested in the development of good education in the new Boer settlements in South Africa . As such , Spruyt was one of the many Dutch immigrants that settled in the new Boer republics around the middle of the nineteenth century .

Arriving in Delagoa Bay on a ship with J.A. Smellekamp as supercarga ? he later became a well @-@ known figure in South Africa ? and his two travel companions and fellow migrants , Hendrik van der Linden and W.P.J. Poen , he travelled across the Lebombo Mountains in an ox @-@ cart into the Transvaal . In March 1852 Spruyt was appointed schoolteacher in the town of Rustenburg . Because of disputes among the Dutchmen in the Transvaal , more specifically between Rev. Dirk van der Hoff and J.A. Smellekamp , who had now also settled there , Spruyt moved to the Orange Free State , where he established himself in Bloemfontein .

= = = Civil servant in the Orange Free State = = =

In Bloemfontein Spruyt worked as clerk of the Landdrost (1854 ? 1855) , and in that capacity he acted as secretary of the Volksraad on two occasions (September 1854 and February 1855) , also filling in as Government Secretary . On the strength of his capacities Spruyt was appointed clerk to the State President in September 1855 . Soon after , during the illness of Government Secretary Groenendaal , Spruyt again took up that position . In October 1856 he was appointed to the vacancy and succeeded J. Groenendaal as Government Secretary of the Orange Free State . Spruyt was regarded by his colleagues as an accurate civil servant , but as a lesser politician and statesman , reason that he was not appointed Acting State President when State President Boshoff went on leave in 1858 . However , Boshoff trusted Spruyt fully , and he allowed him to represent the presidency in meetings of the Volksraad on several occasions in 1861 and 1862 .

Later Spruyt acted as State President during the absences of President Pretorius from Bloemfontein . Although general opinion had it that Spruyt was a man of lesser qualities , on his resignation he was praised by State President Pretorius as very loyal and accurate in his work .

As civil servant , Spruyt made an impact on the nascent state apparatus of the Orange Free State . He designed the coat of arms of the state , and laid the foundation of the model state the Orange Free State was to become in later years . Having worked in secretarial functions for the State President himself (as clerk) , but also as a servant of parliament , the government , and the State , Spruyt left a clear mark on the early administration and its organisation . Spruyt was also sensitive to good labour relations within the state apparatus , and propagated a rise in the officials ' salaries . In this he did not succeed , however , and eventually the matter of the salaries instigated his own resignation . Spruyt felt that his salary was insufficient to live on with a family , and tendered his resignation .

= = = Law agent , publisher , state secretary = = =

After his resignation he established himself as law agent (wetsagent) in Bloemfontein , and acted as publisher of the Dutch language weekly paper De Tijd . Staatkundig Nieuws- en Advertentieblad voor den Oranje @-@ Vrijstaat (The Times . Political Newspaper and Advertiser for the Orange Free State) , started by H.A.L. Hamelberg as a competitor to the English language newspaper The Friend .

In 1865 Spruyt was declared insolvent , and he subsequently moved back to the Transvaal . Here the government of the South African Republic appointed him State Secretary in November 1866 on the advice of State President Pretorius . This appointment lasted till 1869 .

In 1870 Spruyt returned to the Orange Free State and to private law practice . He established himself in Ladybrand , a territory conquered by the Orange Free State in the last Basotho War of 1867 . His insolvency kept following him , however , and as late as 1871 some of his possessions , including a building complex in Rustenburg , were publicly sold for a minute sum of money .

Efforts to regain a public position in the Orange Free State failed , and in 1888 Spruyt once more returned to the South African Republic . He was allowed to work as law agent in the lower courts , and ? being well @-@ known and popular ? set up a successful law practice . Until the end of his life he kept a healthy interest in the affairs of the state , especially in land cases .

In the last period of his life Spruyt lived in Troyeville , Johannesburg . He died while on a visit to Natal , aged 82 .

= = = Family = = =

Spruyt married in Bloemfontein on 31 December 1856 with Elizabeth Emma Hanger (1826 ? 1918) , originating from Peddie in the Cape Colony . The couple had five sons and five daughters , Emma , William , Gerard , Victor , Henrietta , George , Rudolf , Alicia , Elizabeth and Catherine .

= = = Literature = = =

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