

ADENDORFF, G. 1984. Wild Company. Books of Africa, Muizenberg This information was derived from information supplied by his family and from the book of memoirs, written by Gus

Gus 'Bidzane' Adendorff: (1922 – 1982) Gus Adendorff was born on the 6th of January 1922. His father was a prominent farmer in the Levubu area. His childhood years were spent on the farm and he completed his secondary education at Grey College in Bloemfontein. Gus was a keen conservationist and commenced duty as a junior ranger in the 1st of May 1950. He was known among his staff as "Bidzane", a Swahili word referring to the zebra skin band around his hat that he was never without.

Gus was a "naturalist" ranger who had a great empathy with the animals he was appointed to protect, preferring to allow nature to run its course rather than interfere with the rifle. It was well recognized that he had an intense love of nature, and he avidly recorded his observations through photography and sound recordings in an era when this technology was not well developed. Through his keen interest in all forms of wildlife, he gradually became a formidable amateur botanist, ornithologist and zoologist. He had a particular interest in lions and made many recordings of their calls and came to understand them as few had before him. He also had an intense interest in the history of the KNP and in 1959 he accompanied an expedition, led by Dr. Punt, to search for relics of the van Rensburg Trek who had been massacred along the Limpopo River in Mozambique in 1836.

Growing up on a farm in the Soutpansberg district, Gus became fluent in both Tshivenda and Tsonga (Shangaan) which also proved to be very useful in later years. He was the interpreter during the above-mentioned expedition due to his proficiency in these indigenous languages.

As a junior ranger, Gus commenced his duties under Ranger Harry Kirkman (see "Muliluane") in Skukuza in 1950 but after one month was transferred to Shingwedzi. He was fortunate enough to meet and serve with many of the pioneer rangers of the Park, amongst others, Col. Stevenson-Hamilton, Lt. Col. Rowland-Jones and Henry Wolhuter. At the latter end of 1951 he was transferred to Shangani. He was promoted to District Ranger at Punda Maria towards the end of 1954. At the end of 1958 he was transferred to Satara. After five years there he was transferred to Pretoriuskop. In 1966 he was then transferred to Letaba. In 1973 he made his last career move in the KNP when he was transferred to Punda Maria where he had been stationed 15 years earlier.

As a keen amateur ornithologist and botanist, this, the Northern section was to be Gus' favourite section. He retired after 27 years in service to the Kruger National Park as a District Ranger on the 31st of March 1977 to a property outside Louis Trichardt where he wrote a book on his experiences as a ranger of the KNP. This book is entitled "Wild Company" and includes a record, "The African Night" recorded by Gus. He was also a very enthusiastic photographer

addo elephant
agulhas
augrabies falls
bontebok
golden gate highland
karoo
kgalagadi transfrontier
knysna lake area
kruger
mapungubwe
marakele
mountain zebra
namaqua
table mountain
tankwa-karoo
tsitsikamma
|ai-|ais/richtersveld
vaalbos
west coast
wilderness



and the photographs in this book are from his personal collection. The book was published in 1984. Sadly, Gus passed away on the 3rd of November 1982, and therefore never got to see his book published. Gus had a wonderful sense of humour and was much loved by all who knew him.

He married Patricia Futter in 1956 in Bloemfontein and to them were born five children, Susan, Michael, Irene John and Eugenie. All their children inherited their father's love for nature. John is currently employed as a conservation manager in the Addo Elephant National Park where he has been for the past 16 years.

Letter to Dr Ian Whyte from Pat Adendorff

Dr. Ian Whyte,

12 March 2007

On behalf of Gus' family I would like to express our heart felt gratitude for the manner in which Gus is being honoured in recognition of his service and dedication to this world famous National Park, the KNP, which he loved dearly. We know that he would have been extremely proud and honoured to have one of "his beloved elephants" named after him.

Please feel free to use or exclude any of the information supplied herewith. Thank you.

Kind regards, Pat and family

Extract from the Letaba Elephant Hall

'Bidzane' was the recent winner of the 2006 Emerging Tuskers competition, the photo taken by entrant Ms Arks Smith identified a new emerging tusker that was not known to the Kruger Park Management. This bull elephant who frequents the area north of the Letaba Restcamp bares a striking resemblance to another tusker 'Timaka' and it was the small difference of a 'hole' in the ear that identified a new tusker.

'Bidzane' shares his name with a well know section ranger of the Kruger National Park, Gus Adendorff. Gus commenced his duties in the Kruger National Park as a junior ranger in 1950, where he earned from his staff the name 'Bidzane'. This is a Swahili word that refers to the zebra skin band that featured around the hat Gus was known to always wear. Gus proceeded through the ranks and finished his distinguished career as District Ranger of the then Northern Region on the 31st March 1977.

Sadly he passed away on the 3rd November 1982. Gus's son John followed in his footsteps and is currently a section ranger in the Addo Elephant National Park.

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