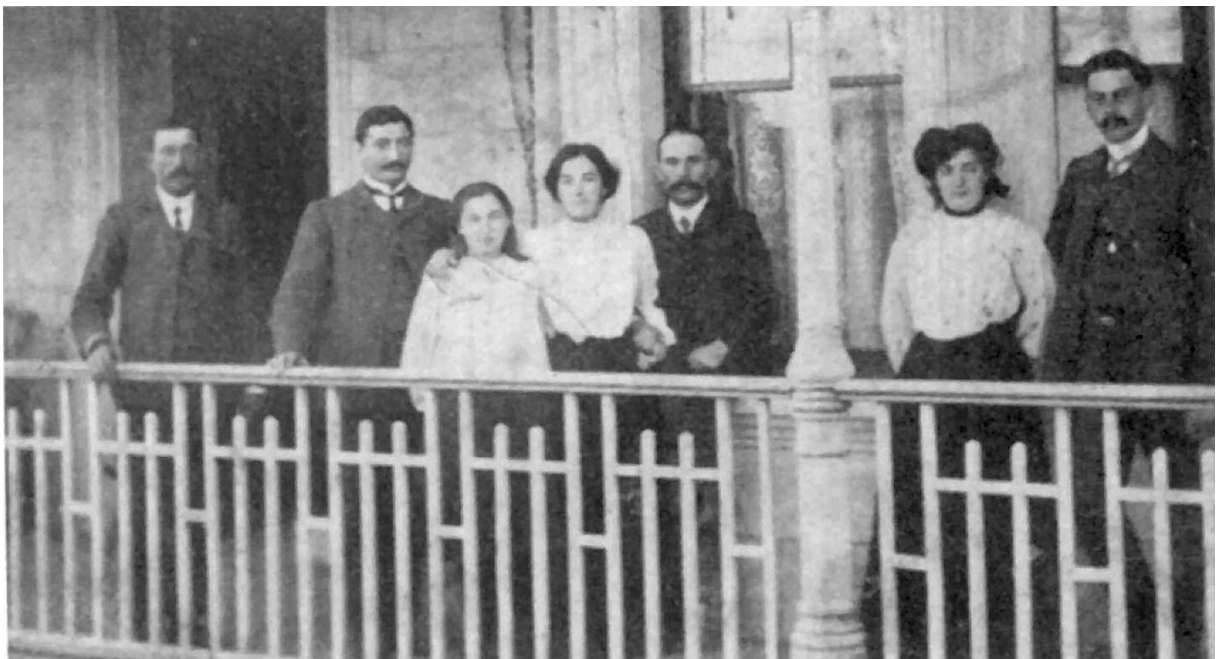


# The Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa

## Retrospective visit to Matjesfontein and Tierhoek & The Jewish Influence in Calvinia

24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October 2008



On the front stoep of Carmel Villa between 1905 & 1910. Left to Right I Norrie, Herman Weinreich, Ethel Sher, Sara Helfet, Leon Helfet, Mary Sher and unknown. Courtesy of the *Buurman*

## Directions and Timetable

### Friday

#### How to get to Nieuwoudtville

From the junction of the N1 and N7 it will take about 4 ½ hours to reach Nieuwoudtville. Please do not forget that to reach the N7 you need to take Century City exit and the N7 slip-road runs alongside the N1 for some distance. If you would like to make a tea/coffee stop then Kardosie at the top right hand side of the Piekenierskloof Pass is recommended – this will take 30 minutes so add it to your journey time. You carry on the N7 passing Clanwilliam until you reach Vanrhynsdorp when you turn off on to the R27 in the direction of Nieuwoudtville and Calvinia. After Vanrhynsdorp you will cross the Knersvlakte and then ascend the Vanrhyns Pass onto the Bokkeveld escarpment. A few kilometres from the top of the pass you will reach the crossroads where you turn right into Nieuwoudtville. The rendezvous is on the left hand side of the road just before the petrol station. This is a good place to fill your tanks and use the lavatory. Be there before 13:00 hours.

#### Groenrivier

From here we will make our way to the old farm werf of Groenrivier. It was on part of this farm that Nieuwoudtville was founded.

See map 1 for directions. We will depart from the rendezvous point at 13:00 hours to the werf where we can enjoy our picnic lunch amongst the ruins. After lunch at 13:45 Nigel Amschwand will tell you what he knows about the farm.



## Matjesfontein

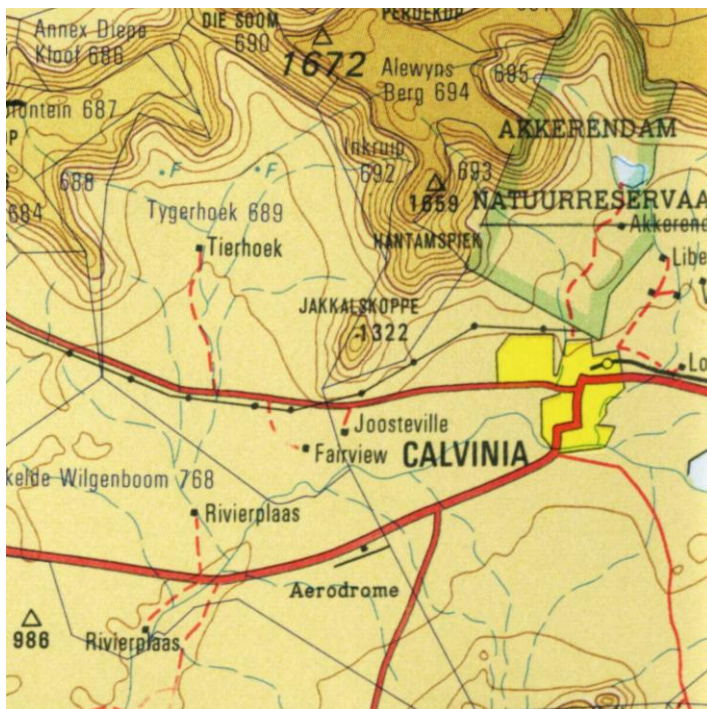
At 14:45 we will depart Groenrivier in convoy and drive the 14 km south to Matjesfontein. After leaving the town you will pass through the farm Oorlogskloof and then go over the bridge crossing the river of the same name. Matjesfontein is the next farm complex on the right hand side. Take the second gate into the farm yard but do not park near or behind the house so that unobstructed photographs can be taken. Willem and Mariette van Wyk will show you around their restored home. You are welcome to cross into the adjoining properties to the north and south. The former belonging to Willem Strydom the sculptor and the latter which contains an interesting ruin, to Jan van Wyk who farms the adjacent land. Be careful if you approach the group of buildings immediately to the west of Willem van Wyk's boundary fence as there is a big nest of African Bees living in the kraal wall.

## De Lande

At 18:00 we will travel over to De Lande (5 minute drive) where we will be staying the night. At 19:00 dinner will be served in the main house. Bring your own drinks.

## Saturday

Breakfast is at 8:00 and we will depart promptly at 9:30 for Calvinia. The route is back through the village of Nieuwoudtville. Then turning right onto the R27 and when reaching Calvinia follow the main road around the right hand bend passing the Hantamhuis (our dinner venue) to the next turning left, signposted Calvinia Wes. Travel up this road to the T junction where you have to turn left again and after 7.3 km the Tierhoek entrance is on the right. See map 2. Note: After entering Calvinia, crossing the Oorlogskloof River again and passing the petrol station you will cross Water Street. To the left down Water Street is the Dorphuis where we will be staying the night. Do not go there yet.



Tierhoek. Arriving at about 10:45.

Here the owner Francois van der Merwe will show us around the house that is being restored and tell the history of the farm.

Calvinia

At 12:30 we will leave again for Calvinia to enjoy our picnic lunch at the Dorphuis. You can book into your rooms and eat either in the dining room or the courtyard.

Jewish Calvinia – short tour by Linda Helfet.

At 14:30 we will walk along Water Street (easterly) to the Blou Nartje Restaurant, the original meeting place of the Jewish congregation before the Synagogue was built. After visiting the interior of this building we will walk to what was the Synagogue (approx 15:15), now the Calvinia Museum. This building will be opened specially for us to look at both as a place of worship and the interesting exhibits. From here we will stroll back towards our accommodation and look around Carmel Villa (approx 16:30). This was Linda Helfet's grandfather's house.

Karoo Boekehuis

This house is next door but one to your overnight accommodation.

You are now free to wander around on your own or put your feet up.

Dinner

The evening meal will be served at the Hantamhuis in Loop Street at 19:00 hours and is licensed.

Sunday

Breakfast will be from 8:30 onwards at the Hantamhuis and you must vacate the accommodation by 10:00.

The Route Home

There are four main ways to drive back to Cape Town.

1] By the R27 and N7 (probably the way you came) this is the all tar route for those of you who dislike driving on gravel roads.

2] Along the R27 towards Nieuwoudtville but taking the left turn down the R364 to Clanwilliam. This is a gravel road that will take you over three scenic mountain passes. First you come to the Botterkloof Pass, keep to second gear on the way down as it is steep. Before this pass and after the cross roads (left to Soutpan and right to Nieuwoudtville) look out on the left for remains of some Boer War fortifications. At the bottom of the pass you are back into the Western Cape even though the border between the Western and Northern Cape generally runs along the Doring River in this area. The reason for this deviation was that before the pass was built access from the north was almost impossible.

From the bottom of the Botterkloof Pass you will head towards the Doring River and cross it on a concrete bridge. This bridge replaced an earlier one surveyed by Thomas Bain (who supervised all three of the passes you will travel) that was washed away in the 1920's. From the river you will start gradually climbing until you reach the foot of Klipfonteinrand. I have

never met another vehicle on either this pass or Botterkloof, but you may, so drive slowly. If it is lunch time a good picnic spot is reached by after turning at the top of the pass heading (on the left fork) towards the Bidouw valley and Wupperthal for about 500 m, pulling off the road to the left and sitting on the edge of the mountain admiring the view of the valley you have just traversed. For the truly adventurous there is a jeep track after Wupperthal that will connect with a road leading to Op-de-Berg and Ceres – ask me about it if you wish to take this route.

If you are not stopping (or continuing after your picnic) then take right turning towards Clanwilliam. Within a short distance of the above junction you will see on your left the Englishman's Grave. This is the last resting place of Graham Vinicombe Winchester Clowes a late casualty of the Boer War. Worth a stop. Further down the valley you will see the entrance of Bushman's Kloof Wilderness Reserve, luxury accommodation, game viewing and outstanding Rock Art. At the bottom of the valley you reach Traveller's Rest, basic accommodation and more outstanding Rock Art. From here the road is usually badly corrugated until you reach the bottom of the Pakhuis Pass where there is a section of tar road before reverting to gravel for the remainder of the road to Clanwilliam. Just after the tar ends, Louis Leipoldt's grave is on your right. You eventually end up in Clanwilliam and join the N7 for the remainder of your journey.

3] Just after exiting Calvinia on the way to Nieuwoudtville you can turn left on the R355 to Ceres. If you go this way, please make sure that your jack and spare wheel are in working order as you have a 5% chance of having a puncture going down the Bloukrans Pass. This route will take you down into the Tankwa and Ceres Karoo's. You will pass by the turning to Elandsvlei, just after the bridge over the Tankwa River. For details of Elandsvlei see Fransen and Cook. Eventually after driving with the Elandsberg, Cedarberg and Swartruggens away to your right you will join the road from Sutherland and just after this drive through Karoo Poort (interesting early buildings in the Poort) before joining the tar road to Ceres. Note: This is the longest road in South Africa between petrol stations.

4] Go out of Calvinia towards Williston and follow the signs to Middlepos (ask at the hotel to see the Boer War graves) then to Sutherland where you could stay overnight or carry on to the Matjesfontein on the N1 for an overnight stop. This is a long journey and an extra stop on the Sunday night is suggested. The place to stay in Sutherland is the Skitterland Guest House at 15 Piet Retief Street. Phone 023 571 1115 or 072 853 0113 and ask for Ilse Steenkamp

## Groenrivier

The first white settler to farm at Groenrivier was Nicolaas Loubser who registered the place in 1742<sup>1</sup>. His son, Nicolaas Hendrik, was a wealthy farmer and a hospitable host to Carl Peter Thunberg, Francis Masson and Robert Jacob Gordon amongst others. Gordon mentions Groenrivier as being the farm of “Losper” when he travelled past on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1779.

### The van Reenen Family

The first van Reenen at the Cape was Jacob who arrived in 1721. By 1725 he was a burgher and was married to an orphan, Johanna Siekermans who bore him six children. He was married again in 1757 to Maria Elizabeth Louw and had three more children. He died a rich man with an estate of 180 000 guilders in 1764.

His eldest child was also called Jacob and was born in 1727. It could have been either of them who registered at least six farms in the Roggeveld in the 1750's. The second Jacob was a member of the *Burgerraad* and lived at Welgelegen in Rondebosch. Some of the sons of the second Jacob also registered farms in the Bokkeveld. Gysbertus was granted Vaderlandserietvalli and Avontuur in 1784 and Sebastiaan Valentyn was granted Klipperivier, Grassberg and Groenrivier around the same time. They were absentee owners.

Gysbertus and Sebastiaan's elder brother, Johannes Gysbertus, was one of the largest stock farmers in the Cape, raising cattle and sheep on his and his brothers' farms, buying from other stock farmers and selling to the Dutch East India Company. In 1789 he was awarded the Government monopoly<sup>2</sup> by tendering the lowest price for supplying meat and live sheep to the garrison and visiting Company ships. He was allowed to sell on the open market at a higher, but still regulated, price and at a free price to foreign ships. Although a monopoly, this was a risky business, as a small increase in the price he had to pay would destroy his profit. At times he was not able to honour his *slagters briefjes* (promissory notes) when the stock farmers came to Cape Town to exchange them for cash. Instead the farmers either had to wait some months for cash or had to exchange the *briefjes* for goods at the local stores. Van Reenen's friends, coincidentally, owned some of these stores.

It seems that in the late 1780's the van Reenens transferred their stock farms to the Eastern Cape, probably due to the better pasturage available there.

### The Boks

In 1787 Christiaan Bok registered the farm as "te mogen leggen en wijden op de plaats genamt De Groenrivier in de Hotwegfontein gelegen over de Doorn Rivier Zynde de velarten plaats aan de Burger Sebastian van Reenen"<sup>3</sup>. Christiaan Bok arrived in the Cape in 1686 as a Company soldier. The name of his first wife is unknown but in 1713 he married Anna Groothenning from Bengal. The first Christiaan was a farmer and an innkeeper in Rondebosch. His son Michiel, by his first wife, named his first son as tradition dictated after

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<sup>1</sup> CA RLR 10/2 P 457 22-9-1742

<sup>2</sup> The contract was for six years to the person or persons who bid the lowest price per pound. The contract included free usage of the cattle posts at Groenrivier (now Mamre) and other farms to fatten the stock after trekking to the Cape

<sup>3</sup> CA RLR 35/2 P347 27-Sep-1787. The words “in de Hotwegfontein” have been inserted above the line, perhaps as a further description of the farm. The document also mentions “de Plaats genamt de Drie Fontyn gelegen agter de Doorn Rivier”

his father and it was this Christiaan that started farming in the frontier region of the Northern Cape.

He married Maria Cornelia Ryk from Swellengrebelfontein in 1762. The first farm that has been discovered that was registered to him was Uitkomst below the Tafelberg in the Roggeveld<sup>4</sup> in 1761. Later he was at Welbedagt<sup>5</sup> in the Agter-Hantam region.

Christiaan registered many farms in the Hantam and Bokkeveld areas and three of these were bequeathed to his children in his will<sup>6</sup> i.e.

*“...te Michiel Nicolaas Bok de plaats genamt de Groen Rivier geleegen op t’ Bokkeveld over de Olifants en Doorn Riviers en tien duyzend gilden, en te Maria Johanna Bok de plaats genamt de Vondeling en drie duyzend gilden, en te Elizabeth Cornelia Bok de Diep Cloof geleegen de Hantam over de Olifants en Doorn Riviers en ein duyzend gilden*

Michiel Nicolaas Bok was married to Johanna Sophia Steenkamp, the sister of Jan Harmse of Bokkefontein, and Groenrivier seems to have passed into the hands of their daughter Jannetjie Sophia Bok, because the first perpetual quitrent grant was given to her husband Jeremias (or Heremias) Cornelis Nieuwoudt.

### **The Nieuwoudts**

Jeremias (or Heremias) Cornelis was the fourth generation of Nieuwoudts in the Cape. The first was Isaac who arrived in 1716 and was a soldier and surgeon, and was made a burgher in 1723. The following year he married Joanna (Jannetjie) van Wyk the daughter of Willem van Wyk and Catharina (Trijnten) Hillebrandt His grandson Jeremias Cornelis Nieuwoudt farmed in the Olifants River at Kleinfontein and Windhoek (after which the capital of Namibia is named) and two of his sons, Jeremias Cornelis and Issak Albert, married the sisters Johanna (Jannetjie) Sophia and Elizabeth Jacoba Bok in 1808 and 1817 respectively. Johanna died in 1840 at Groenrivier having produced seven children.

Jeremias’s next wife was Sophia Maria Jacoba van der Merwe whom he married in 1841. His will with Sophia<sup>7</sup> revokes all previous wills and codicils except the special clause in the joint will with his first wife (Jannetjie Sophia Bok). This clause bequeathed the four farms in the Onder-Bokkeveld; Groenrivier, Buffelsvalley, Arends Kraal and Uitkomst, and the farm in the district of Olifantsriviermond, Heerenlogement, to their four sons for the amount of Rds 800 or £60 under the following conditions: -

- i. That if any of the sons wished to relinquish his share in the above farms, he could do so on payment of an amount of *f* 10, 000, but the share could only be offered to his three co-owner brothers.

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<sup>4</sup> CA RLR 16/2 P 395 5-10-1761

<sup>5</sup> CA RLR 22 P47

<sup>6</sup> CA NCD 2/2 Ref 62 11-2-1794

<sup>7</sup> CA MOOC 7/1/151 Ref 50. 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1642

ii. That if one or more of the sons were to die, the amount of *f* 10 000 was to be paid into the deceased Estate for the benefit of the heirs.

iii. That before the division of the Remainder of the Estate was made the amount of *f* 10 000 was to be paid to each of the three daughters (or their lawful descendants) born of the Testator's marriage to Jannetjie Sophia Bock.

The four sons were Michiel Nicolas, Heremias Cornelis, Gert Christiaan Jacobus and Izak Aldert; the three daughters were Jannetjie Sophia, Jacoba Margaretha and Hendrina Maria. In this same will, Jeremias nominated as his heirs; his wife Jacoba, his seven children with his previous wife, plus any future children. Jacoba on the other hand nominated, Jeremias, the four children from her previous marriage to Izak Jacobus van der Merwe and any future children. Jacoba bore him one son named Johannes Petrus Stephanus, and sadly died 6 months later in November 1842.

The inventory taken after this wife's death<sup>8</sup> totalled possessions to the value of £2795 -14s – 0d. This is equivalent to about Rds 37 276, a 16% increase in 2 years!

In the terms of the above will, her half of the estate was shared between her four daughters by Izak Johannes van der Merwe and her son by Jeremias, Johannes Petrus Stephanus. They each received £ 220 - 12s – 2d.

His last marriage was to Maria Magdalena van Zyl who outlived him by five years, dying in 1864. They had no children.

### **Promotion**

In 1815 was made Veldcornet of the Onder-Bokkeveld. He reported to the Landdrost who acted as the Chief of Police, Magistrate and Commander of the Militia. The position was an honorary one (that could not be refused) and he was compensated by not having to pay rent for his farm and received a free copy of the weekly Gazette.

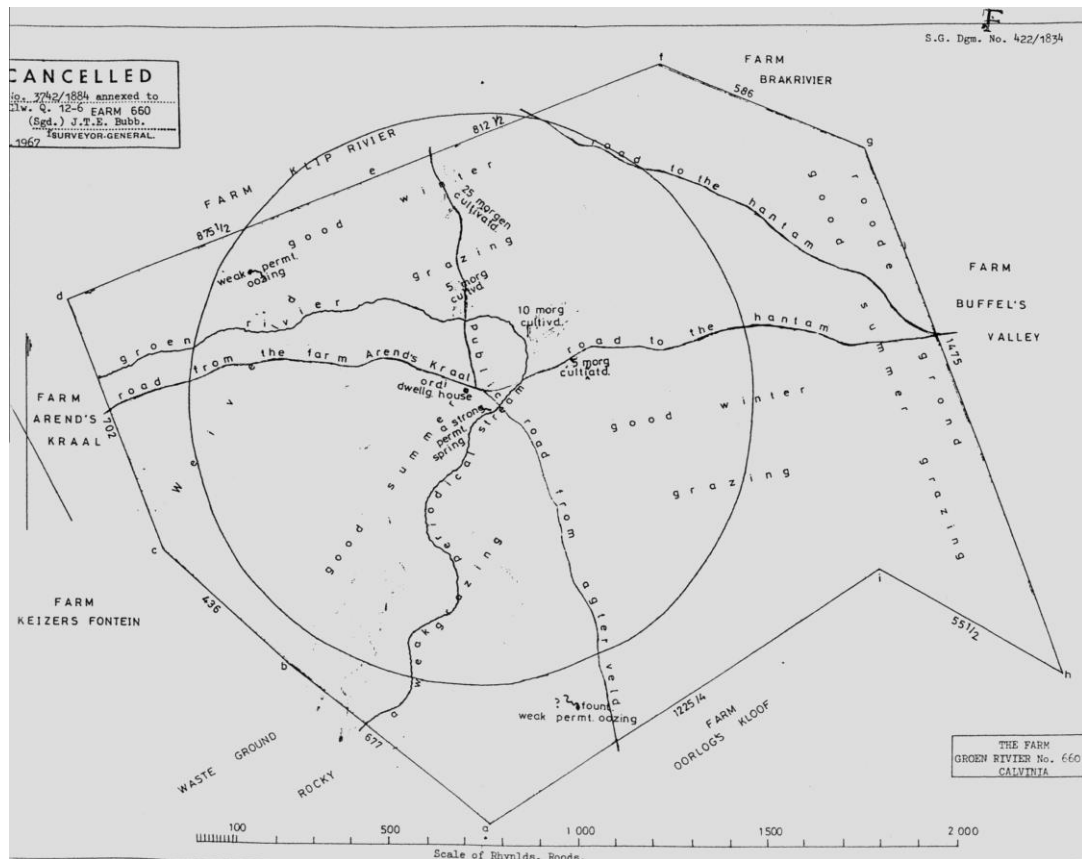
### **Perpetual Quitrent Grant**

In 1834 the farm comprising the loan place of 2838 morgen plus 2268 morgen of Government ground was granted in perpetual quitrent to Jeremias Cornelis Nieuwoudt.

As can be seen from the farm diagram, Groenrivier was in a strategic location. It was on the border between the northern and southern parts of the Bokkeveld. It was also at the crossroads where the main routes from the north; where the route from the Cape via the Helsepad and the road from the Agter-Veld came from; joined the road from the south, the other route from the Cape; and the road to the east, to the Hantam.

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<sup>8</sup> CA MOOC 13/1/112 Ref 55 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1844



## Farm Shares

Jeremias died in March 1859 and the farm was divided in three equal shares and given to his sons Michiel Nicolaas, Heremias Cornelis and Isaac Albert Nieuwoudt. His other son Gerrit Christiaan Jacobus whose mother was Jannetje Sophia Bok, had died in 1847 so his heirs would have inherited the *f* 10 000.

Groenrivier stayed in the Nieuwoudt family until 1886 when it was formally partitioned. Lot 1 with an area of 2024 morgen and 581 sq. roods went to Isaac Aldert Nieuwoudt (Jeremias's son) and Lot 2 of 3032 morgen and 150 sq. roods was granted to the sons of Michiel Nicolaas i.e. George Sebastian, Heremias Cornelis, Gerrit Christiaan Jacobus and Isaac Aldert and to the estate of their uncle Heremias.

The remainder of the farm (after the deduction of Lots 1 and 2), had an area of only 36 morgen and 552 sq. roods and in 1886 this was shared between: -

Isaac Aldert	$\frac{1}{3}$
George Sebastian	$\frac{2}{15}$ (he had purchased his deceased brothers share)
Heremias Cornelis	$\frac{1}{15}$
Gerrit Christiaan Jacobus	$\frac{1}{15}$
Isaac Aldert	$\frac{1}{15}$
The estate of Jeremias Cornelis	$\frac{1}{3}$

This remainder, which contains the houses and farm buildings and also the main water source for the farm is called a *vierkant*. Typically in this area, even after the larger farm is formally partitioned it remains in joint ownership. The shares in the *vierkant* become more and more diluted with succeeding generations leaving shares to their children so that today one part owner is Ian Campbell McGregor who owns a  $\frac{1}{48}$  and a  $\frac{1}{80}$  share.

## **McGregors**

It was in 1886 that a  $\frac{1}{30}$  share (a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of George Sebastian's portion) was sold to Alexander McGregor, this in was transferred in 1890 to his brother James McGregor.

Meanwhile around 1897 the Nieuwoudt brothers has sold Lot 2 to the Dutch Reformed Church to form the town of Nieuwoudtville and in 1908 James McGregor had purchased Lot 1 and this still remains in the McGregor family.

## **Farm Buildings**

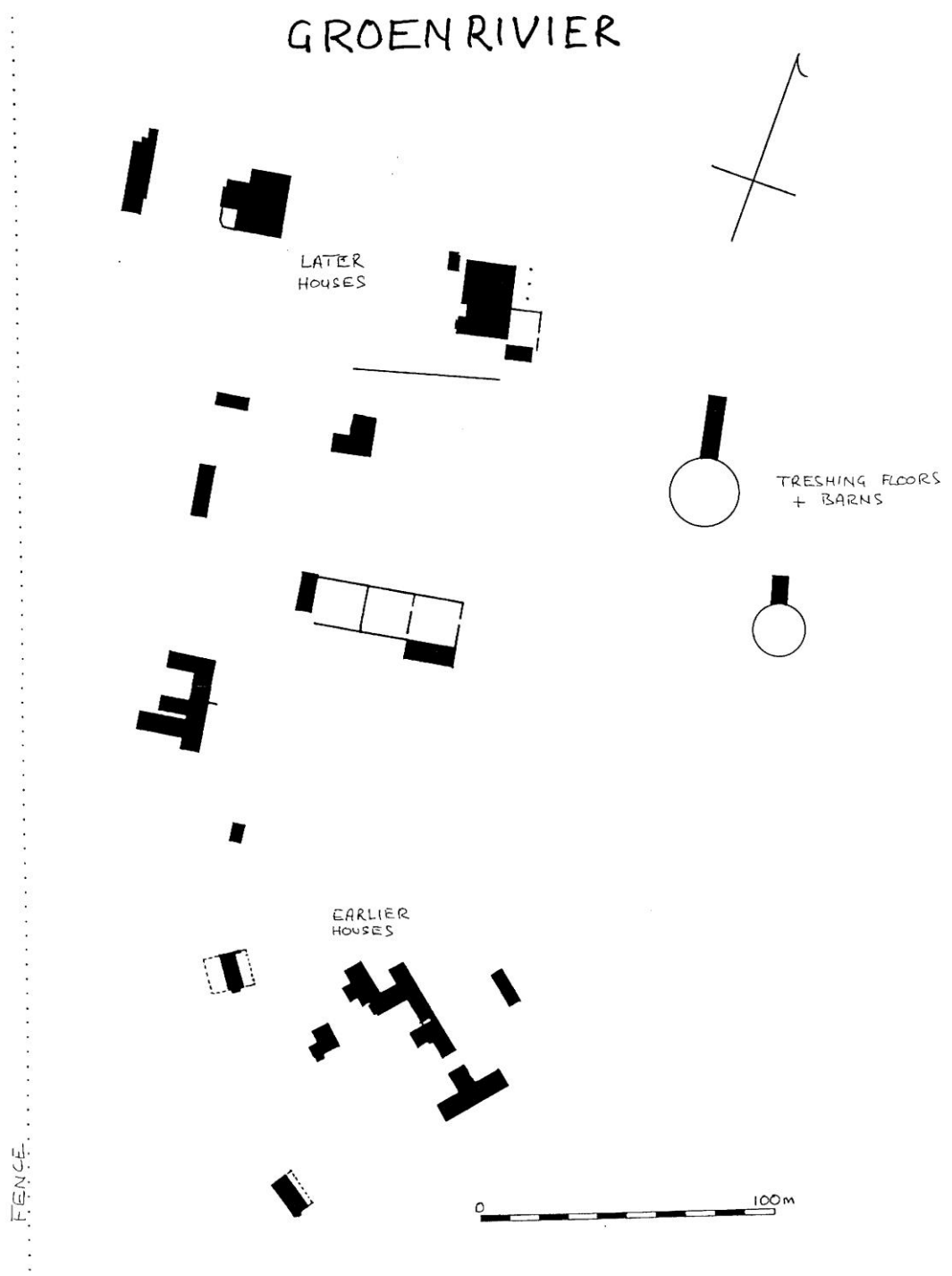
The *vierkant* is dotted with at least 18 identifiable structures. These include two relatively modern houses (built by the McGregors), two threshing floors with adjoining barns and five clusters of older dwellings.

Some of these are simple two room structures with an adjacent kitchen, such as the small stone house at the south of the site. This has an inscribed stone with H C N 1897 in its front wall. This would be Heremias Cornelis Nieuwoudt who owned a  $\frac{1}{20}$  share.

Just to the north of this is a rambling structure comprising two joined T plan houses with a four roomed house added to the front left. It is thought that this was originally a long house with a central living room with bedrooms to either side. An outside kitchen was most probably used. At some stage a *buitekamer* was added to the end and an *agterkamer* with wall cupboards and a kitchen behind added to make it into a T plan. The original house could predate the quitrent grant, but it has been so altered that any definite dating is conjectural. The *buitekamer* and kitchen tail are most likely from the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

To the left of the front of this house is another two-roomed dwelling, which was later, extended by another two rooms to join it to the main building. This was done before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the interior of at least one of these rooms and rooms in the main house have been decorated with wall paintings, known to have been done around the turn of the century. It was probably at this time that the outside walls were rendered with pebbledash and false quoining was added to the corners. The interior of the house was altered to provide a hall. At the rear of the main house another T plan house was added, which was accessible from the kitchen of the main house.

What is probably the oldest existing structure on the *vierkant* is the ruin of an extensive dwelling of TT plan with a rearward extension at one end. This is thought to be the home of the original Heremias Cornelis Nieuwoudt.



**Plan of the Vierkant**

## Matjesfontein

This farm complex was the study by VASSA in 1999 resulting in the publication of a booklet detailing the building and the history of the inhabitants. Since that time the oldest dwelling on the werf (building 8 in the booklet) which was inhabited by sheep at the time of the survey has been sensitively restored and is now the home of Willem and Mariette van Wyk.

The home of Willem Strydom (building 1 in the booklet) has had its English style thatching replaced with a more traditional, roof removing a later front gable in the process and the steel frame windows in the east façade have been removed and new casements fitted in their place.

## Tierhoek<sup>9</sup>

The farm De Tijgerhoek / Tygerhoek / Tierhoek was so named due to the occurrence of leopards there (Clw. Q1.41, later no. 689 Cal.). The Dutch must have confused the tiger of the East with African leopards! They still occasionally visit the farm and as recently as 2005 several sheep were killed by a leopard. Tierhoek lies 12 km northwest of Calvinia, just off the Calvinia-Loeriesfontein road, and it is hemmed in on three sides by the Hantam mountains. Hantam is a San word, probably derived from an edible root (*Leyntame*) found in the region.

It is on record that on 27 September 1749 Nicolas Rudolph Ryk was granted permission to graze his livestock on De Tygerhoek “on the other side of the Oliphant’s and Doorn River” (RLR 12/2 p.247). The licence was renewed in 1755. At the time the Hantam region was on the outer boundary of the Cape settlement so the locality of farms was rather vague, for example merely referring to a river or mountain range.

Ryk relinquished his grazing rights in 1760 (RLR 6/1) and the permit passed on to Hendrik Korff (RLR 16 p.8). He was probably the *stamvader* from Lippstadt who arrived at the Cape in 1748 and became a burgher ten years later. Korff died in 1765 and on 8 January 1766 Gerrit Munnik grazed at Tierhoek (RLR 19/1, p.168) to be followed by Schalk Willem Burger(t) in 1776 (RLR 24, p.97) and Albert Hendrik van Zyl in 1777 (RLR 25, p.92). It is doubtful that Ryk, Korff or Munnik ever actually resided on the property; instead they merely enjoyed grazing rights there.

On 10 October 1757 Governor Ryk Tylbagh granted Abraham van Wyk (Gerritsoon) the right to graze at *Tygervalleij gelegen agter Hantamsberg* (SG 15, p.125). This right he relinquished on 13 December 1774. Some are of the opinion that this was the farm now known as Tierhoek. It is more likely that Abraham van Wyk’s Tygervalleij was a property to the north of the Hantam mountain (Fig. 1). This is in light of the fact that the description of Tygervalleij was *gelegen agter Hantamsberg*, and time and again specific mention is made to Tierhoek having had numerous owners between 1749 and 1777.

Towards the end of the 1700s Carel Aaron van der Merwe apparently took up residence on Tierhoek. Although another van der Merwe, David, obtained grazing rights earlier to

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<sup>9</sup> This is an abridged version of the posthumous article that appeared in the VASSA Journal after Andre Pretorius’s death

Stinkfontein in the Nieuwoudtville district, Carel is considered the *stamvader* of this large Hantam clan as he was the first van der Merwe to live permanently in the Hantam region.

### **Family ownership**

As Tierhoek has been associated with the van der Merwe clan for decades, their family tree is traced as it relates to this farm.

The van der Merwe *stamvader* Willem (Schalksoon) hailed from Broeck, Oud-Beyerland, in the Netherlands, where he was born in 1634. Aged 17, he left for the Cape on board the *Dordrecht* in 1660 and was appointed *kneg* to the Company's *baastuinier* Hendrik Boom. In 1663 he worked for the VOC at De Schuur (now Groote Schuur) and when his contract expired on 12 January 1666 he acquired the farm Valkenburg on the Liesbeeck River from Willem van Deventer. He lived there with his wife, Elsje Cloete, until 1682. She was the daughter of Jacob Cloete, who is said to have arrived in the Cape with Jan van Riebeeck in 1652.

Schalk (b2), the *stamvader*'s eldest son, was born at Valkenburg (on the Liesbeeck River) on 14 July 1673. In 1692 he obtained an *erfbrief* to De Hoop (Paarl), a property that had been granted to his father by Governor Simon van der Stel. It was here that his wife, Anna, frightened off three elephants who rubbed themselves against an outbuilding, *met 'n logge geweer geskiet omdat sy bang was hulle sou haar huis omstoot*. It is hard for us to picture elephants in the Paarl Valley until we remember that Franschhoek was originally called Olifantshoek. Schalk was a *heemraad* for Stellenbosch and later Drakenstein. When he died in 1740, he was survived by 11 of his brood of 17 children.

Isak van der Merwe (c11), Schalk's eleventh child, was born on 14 May 1711. In 1742 he married his cousin, Cecilia Janse van Rensburg. They farmed in the Ceres district (Koue Bokkeveld) on Modderfontein (-vallei) which had been rented to him by the Company in 1743. Freehold rights to the topmost part of the farm (Bo-plaas) were granted in 1813. This farm is still owned by Isak's descendants and has the distinction of the tenth generation of van der Merwes living on it.

Schalk Willelm van der Merwe (d2), Isaks eldest son, was baptised in 1735. He farmed at Vier-en-Twintig-Rivieren (near Porterville) and was a Cornet of the First Company of Burgher Dragoons of Stellenbosch. At that time this district encompassed the entire hinterland. His second marriage on 15 July 1759 was to Johanna Adriana Smit, who was the mother of Carel Aaron, who became the first van der Merwe to farm Tierhoek, Calvinia.

Carel Aaron van der Merwe (e8) was Schalk's eighth child and was born at Vier-en-Twintig-Rivieren in November 1771 and baptized in Tulbagh. On 21 January 1792 he married his cousin, Elsie Johanna van Heerden. At some time towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century he presumably settled in the Hantam. We conclude that this must have been on Tierhoek, as the noted German doctor, botanist and explorer, Henry Lichtenstein (1928), visited a property in the Hantam in November 1803.

He commented:

The next place at which we stopped was at the foot of a little hill, the south end of which is called the Tyger-point. [In the original German text he refers to the farm as Tiger-Ecke, i.e. tiger corner, not point (AP).] We met with a very friendly reception here in the house of a colonist, by name Van der Merwe: we had a great deal of conversation with him upon the diseases to which the cattle of the country are subject, and judged him, from the nature of his remarks, to be a sensible man. In the neighbourhood of the house we found a rich harvest of rare plants and insects.

A pass between two little hills which unites two plains with each other, without any difficulties or unevenness of ground in the passage, is called by the colonists a poort (a door). Such a poort is formed by the Tyger-point and the hill opposite. We passed through this poort in the afternoon, and learnt from our conductors that two years before, the pass was for some time infested by the Bosjemans They used to conceal themselves among the blocks of sandstone rock, which are nearly the colour of their skins, whence they shot their poisoned arrows at the travelers who were passing through, without a possibility of their being seen by them. We remarked, as we proceeded farther on, traces of a vast assemblage of ostriches, which must recently have passed that way. In summer these birds are fond of inhabiting the heights, but in winter they descend into the plains.

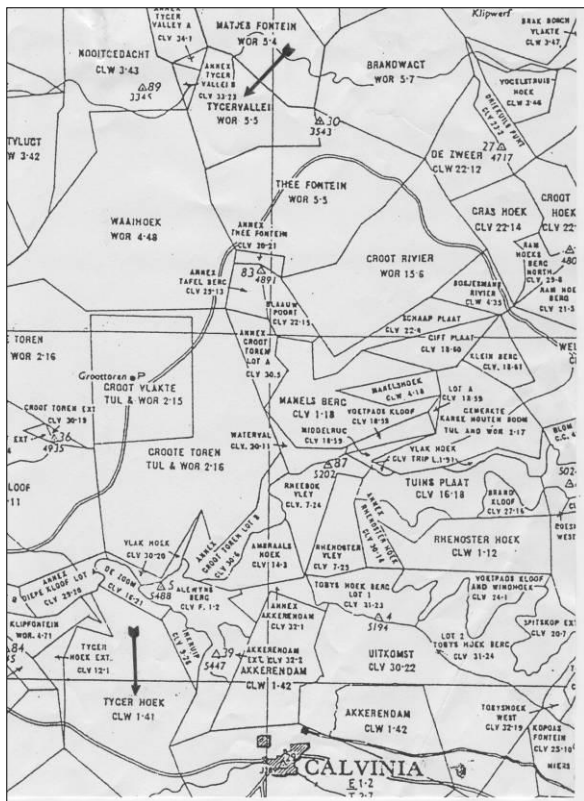


Figure 1. Tygerhoek lies just northwest of Calvinia. In 1749 Nicolaas Ryk became the first European to be granted grazing rights there by the VOC. Later this property became synonymous with the Van der Merwe clan. To the north, beyond the Hantams mountain, lies Tygervallei, a farm granted to Abraham van Wyk in 1757. It has often been confused with Tygerhoek.

Further proof of Carel's residence there is the fact that it was the birthplace of some of his children, including Jacobus Alwyn (f5, 1804-1870). In 1824, George Thompson, the British merchant and traveller, called on Carel when he was living at Welbedacht, a few kilometres northeast of Tierhoek (Forbes 1968). This is where Carel died in 1850.

There was then a break in the van der Merwer ownership, as Willem Petrus Burger senior acquired the farm in about 1820. Willem Petrus Burger junior obtained the registration of a perpetual quitrent to Tierhoek (farm no. 689) on 30 November 1837. The farm had already been surveyed on 15 May 1823 on behalf of his mother, the widow of W.P. Burger senior (see diagram Fig. 2). We can safely assume that Burger senior was living there before this date (1823) and that the farm was surveyed for his widow in order to comply with Governor Cradock's decree of 1813. This stated that land was henceforth to be allocated in perpetual quitrent or freehold, and that farmers were encouraged to have their loan places surveyed.

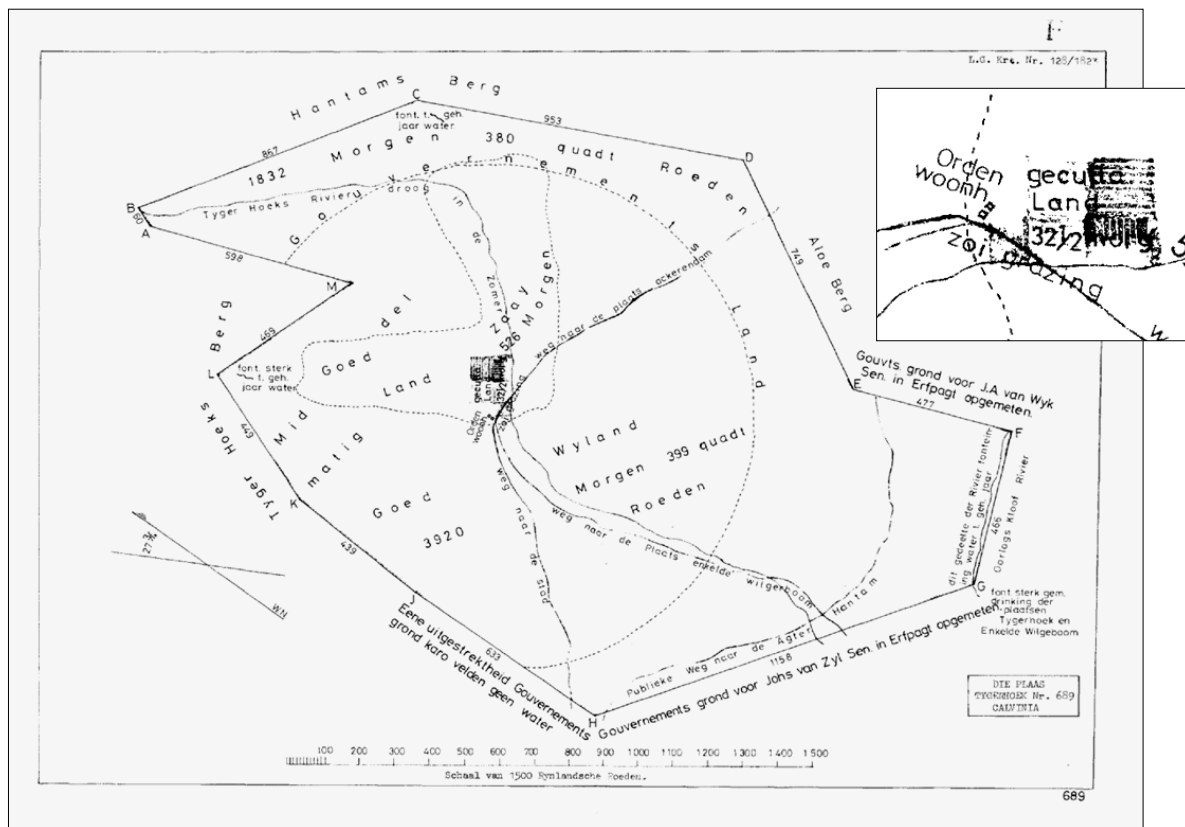


Figure 2. In 1823 Tygerhoek was surveyed for the widow of Willem Petrus Burger, who appears to have acquired the farm in about 1820. Only much later was it granted to his son in perpetual quitrent in 1837. Note that the early diagram (SG dgm 128/1823) shows two buildings (insert), probably the pioneer stone and clay cottage and the later gabled T-plan house.

On 19 January 1847 a historic meeting took place in the *voorhuis* of Veldcornet Burger's farm when a special church commission, under ds J.C. le R. Moorrees, established the Colony's 33<sup>rd</sup> Dutch Reformed Church parish. They named it Hantam. In the same year a village named Hantam was laid out on a portion of the farm Hoogekraal. When the settlement was formally established in 1851 the name was changed to Calvinia in honour of the religious reformer, John Calvin.

On 30 September 1875 the grandson (presumed) of the first Willem Petrus Burger to own Tierhoek, took transfer of the property. He sold a half share to Francois Johannes van der Merwe in 1882 and the other half in 1887. The farm thus returned to the van der Merwe clan.

On 10 September 1841 Francois Johannes van der Merwe (g9), *Fransie Brandwag*, was born. He married the 17 year old Margaretha W. van Wyk on 28 January 1867, and became one of the most prosperous farmers in the Hantam, owning many properties including Tierhoek, Brandwag, Welbedacht, Diepdrif, Klipwerf, Langkloof, etc. Fransie was a respected member of the community and also a member of the old Cape Parliament when John X. Merriman was Prime Minister. He died on 16 May 1915 and was buried on Tierhoek.

Carel Aaron van der Merwe (h7), *Kareltjie Tierhoek*, was born on 6 June 1882. On 3 August 1915 he married Jacoba Catharine (Katie) Strauss, and died on 26 May 1943. Carel, against his father's wishes, at the age of 19 joined the Boer Commando of General Manie Maritz, only to be taken prisoner near Halfmanshof (Porterville) on 16 October 1901. Being a Cape Rebel, he was sentenced to death. His father, a man of influence, managed to have the sentence commuted to banishment to St. Helena for five years. As prisoner number 29062, he returned to the Cape in January 1903 and in March the Cape Rebels were granted amnesty.

After the war he matriculated at Stellenbosch, and later went on to represent the Nationalist Party as Provincial Council member for Calvinia. He inherited Tierhoek after his father's death in 1915. Francois Johannes (i1), *Fanie*, was born on 26 September 1919. He inherited Tierhoek in 1943 but only took transfer in 1960. Fanie represented the Nationalist Party in the Provincial Council for Beaufort West.

Dirk van der Merwe, *Dirk Diepdrif*, bought Tierhoek from Fanie in 1966 and in turn his son, Francois, sold it in 1994 to the present owner, Francois Johannes. He is a great-great-grandson of Francois Johannes (g9) (1841-1915), who is buried on Tierhoek.

**Table 1. Summary of grazing rights to De Tygerhoek (Cape Archives))**

1749	Nicolaas Rudolph Ryk	RLR 12
1750	Hendrik Korff	RLR 16
1766	Gerrit Munnik	RLR 19
1776	Schalk Willem Burger(t)	RLR 24
1777	Albert Hendrik van Zyl	RLR 25

**Table 2. Ownership of Tygerhoek (Deeds Office)**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Extent</i>	<i>Transferor</i>	<i>In favour of</i>
30 Nov 1837	4446 mo	Grant	Willem Petrus Burger
30 Sept 1875	Whole	Estate W.P. Burger	Willem Petrus Burger jr
31 Oct 1882	½ share	W.P. Burger jr	Francois Johannes van der Merwe (Fransie Brandwag)
10 Oct 1887	½ share	W.P. Burger jr	Francois Johannes van der Merwe (Fransie Brandwag)
14 Sept 1916	Whole	Estate F.J. van der Merwe	Carel Aaron van der Merwe (Kareltjie Tierhoek)
19 May 1960	Whole	Estate C.A. van der Merwe	Francois Johannes van der Merwe (born 26 Sept 1919)
4 July 1966	Whole	F.J. van der Merwe	Dirk Jacobus van Schalkwyk van der Merwe (born 20 June 1909)
22 Dec 1994	Whole	Estate D.J. van S. van der Merwe	Francois Johannes van der Merwe (born 8 May 1941)
4 June 1999	Whole	F.J. van der Merwe	Tierhoek Trust (family trust of F.J. van der Merwe born 5 Sept 1957)

### **Tierhoek homesteads**

Little is known about the early houses on Tierhoek. Having been farmed since the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century one can assume that an abode, however humble, was erected by a pioneer occupant. The ruins on the *werf* may attest to this.

The first known permanent structure was a stone and clay dwelling sited between the gabled house, now being restored, and the present gabled homestead which was built in the 1950s. It is immediately outside and slightly to the left of the gate of the perimeter fence around the 1950s home. The stone foundation can still be seen but the building is beyond restoration.

A second, two-roomed, house was later built nearby. It is on the banks of the ‘Tijgerhoeks’ River and was constructed of stone, clay and sun-dried bricks. The clay was obtained from the nearby *spruit*. It had clay floors and a pitched *dekriet* roof. The reed ceiling served as a *brandsolder* and rested on poplar beams. A painting made in 1954 by Vera Volschenk, the artist from Riversdale, shows a *bakoond* on the left that was since demolished (Fig. 3). The cottage has now been restored without reconstructing the external oven and serves as an office (Fig. 4).

In the early 1800s a third house was built (Fig. 5), to which a kitchen was added to complete the ‘T’. At some time a *hol-bol* gable was added in the Prince Albert style with a connecting

string course across its face. Was this the work of Veldkornet W.P. Burger? On 30 November 1837 he obtained the registration of a perpetual quitrent grant by Lieutenant-General Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Governor of the Cape. Burger had in all probability been living on Tierhoek all his life and the property had already been surveyed for his widowed mother in 1823.

To the right, annexed to the house and probably built much later, is a flat-roofed *stoepkamer* consisting of two rooms. At the back, and to the left of the main house but not adjoining it, is a long flat-roofed outbuilding. It served as a shed. The reed ceiling and *brandsolder* indicate that a pitched roof existed at some stage.

In 1949 the house and contents were gutted by fire. At that time it was the most northerly sited authentic gabled house in the Hantam (Fig. 6). The windows and doors were mostly cedar wood and four door frames survived the fire. They have been repaired, and together with a cedar wood window sill and two cedar wood door lintels, feature in the restored house. Remnants of the roof beams encased in the walls survived the fire and were uncovered during restoration. As they had been squared, it is safe to assume that the ceilings of the main house were also of cedar wood planks. In the kitchen the remains of ceiling beams were of rough poplar and it is therefore likely that this part of the house had a reed ceiling.

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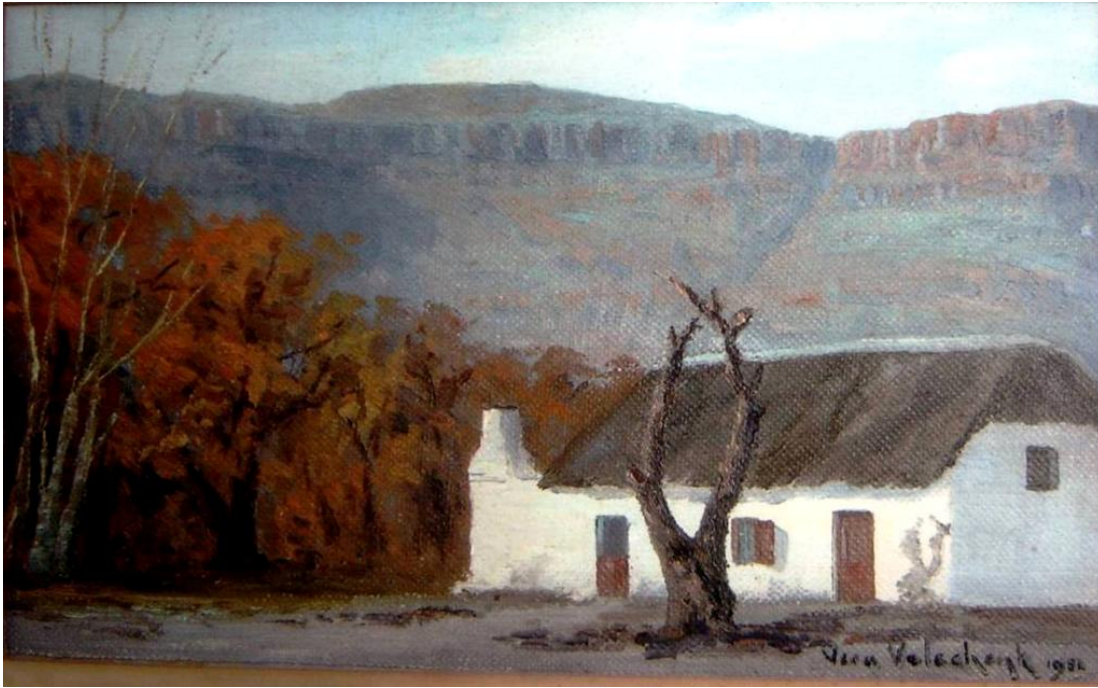
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**Figure 3. Vera Volschenk's painting of Tierhoek's second dwelling, 1954. A two-roomed thatched cottage with attached bakoond, since demolished. Note the wolfend gable.**



**Figure 4 The thatched two-roomed cottage was restored in 2004 but without the hearth and chimney stack projecting from the kitchen end. (AP 2006)**



**Figure 5.** In the early 1800s a third (T-plan) house was built. The doors, windows, ceilings, beams, etc. were of cedar wood. The gable, in the Prince Albert style, was probably added later. The stoepkamer was also a later addition. It was completely gutted by fire in 1949. Note the door next to the front entrance. According to Jacoba de Villiers (born van der Merwe), Carel and Katie van der Merwe feature in this photograph taken in about 1937.



**Figure 6.** After the disastrous fire of 1949, leading to the collapse of the gable, the house was given a corrugated iron roof. The fourth house can be seen in the background to the left. (AP 1999)

## **Karoo Boekhuis**

This house, thought to have been built around 1860 was probably constructed in the English style with a hall leading to the rooms either side and through into what is now the dining-room. Behind the dining room is the original kitchen. Various extra rooms have been added over the years.



**69 Water Street – The Karoo Boekhuis – described as number 67 in Fransen and Cook**

This house was restored to provide a home for the Karoo Boekhuis Trust and was opened in 1993 by Dr. Anton Rupert (photograph albums showing the restoration and the opening are in the library).

The objects of the Trust are to:-

- Collect and preserve books about the Karoo or by authors who have a connection with the Karoo.
- Make these books and other material available to authors and researchers and offer them lodging in order to promote their writing and research.
- To promote writing and reading in the Karoo.