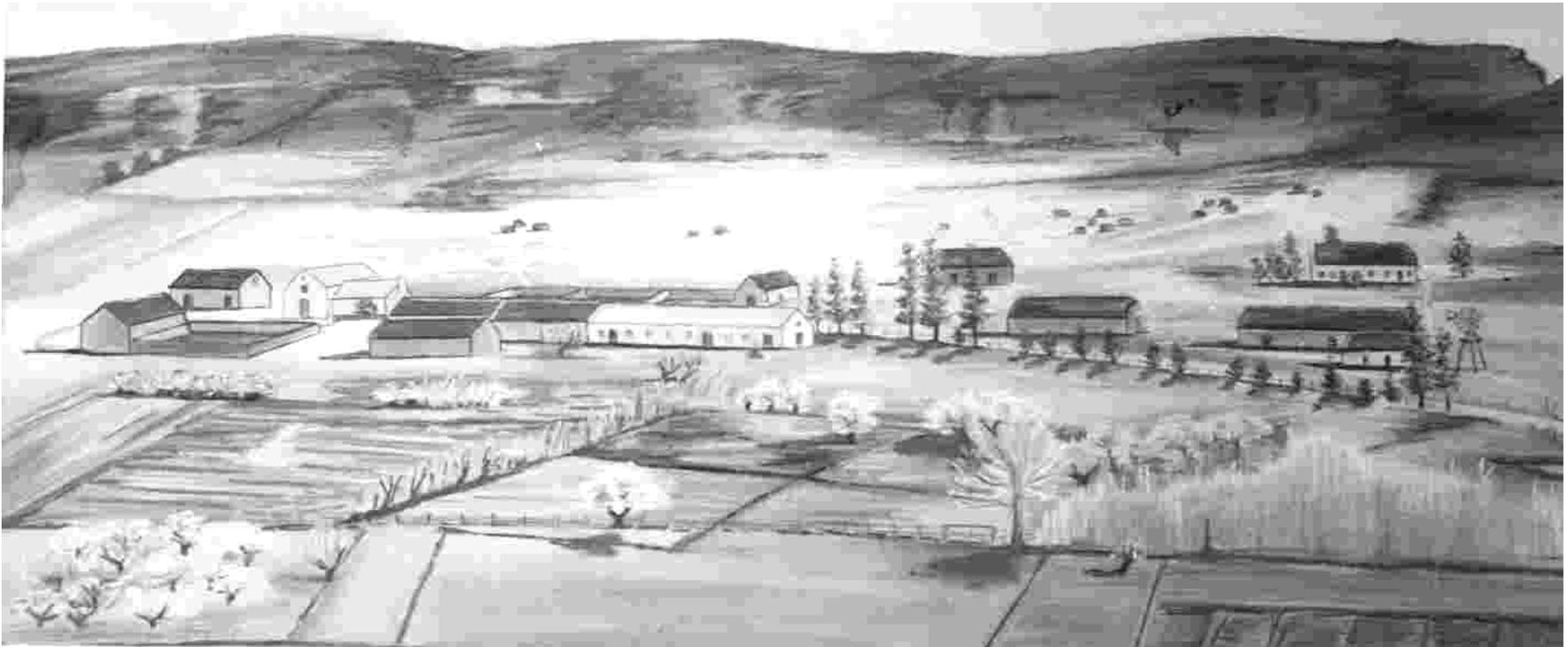


ISSN: 1562-5257

# VASSA Journal



Number 4 December 2000



# VASSA Journal

## Number 4 December 2000

Editor: Antonia Malan

---

### Contents

Lokenburg: Its early history, pioneer owners and buildings: <i>André Pretorius</i>	page 2
Illustrations of Lokenburg:	
1. Survey diagram of Lokenburg, 1820.	7
2. Plan of the Lokenburg <i>werf</i> , after Hans Fransen.	9
3. Ruin of a stone dwelling (building no.15)	10
4. Front façade of the main homestead (building no.1).	11
5. Kitchen 'tail' of main homestead.	11
6. Thatched cottage abutting main homestead (building no.2).	12/13
7. ┌-plan double storey house (building no.7) and outbuilding (no.9).	14
8. Wall construction of double storey house.	15
9. Thatched cottage (building no.13).	16
10. T-plan Cape Dutch-style homestead (building no.14).	17
11. Painting of Lokenburg by Gertrude Laurence, 1935.	18
12. Parallel outbuildings (building nos.4 and 5).	19
13. Thatched outbuilding (building no.3).	
Some thoughts concerning the positioning of early Cape homesteads: <i>Keith Loynes</i>	21
Surgery to buildings: <i>Jonathan Driver-Jowitt</i>	23
The leper colony at Hemel-en-Aarde near Hermanus: Postscript to the Society's visit in 1998: <i>John Annandale</i>	26
<i>Cover illustration:</i> Painting of Lokenburg by Gertrude Laurence, 1935.	

# Lokenburg

## Its early history, pioneer owners and buildings

*André Pretorius*

Forty kilometres south of Nieuwoudtville, 70 km south west of Calvinia and approximately 100 km (via Pakhuis Pass) to the north east of Clanwilliam, in the Uye Vallei, lies the farm Lokenburg, through which the Brakrivier flows.

Despite being off the early trade, hunting and exploration routes to the North Western Cape hinterland, by the early 1700s the odd *trekboer* had already ventured into this remote part of the Onder Bokkeveld– so-called because of the large number of springbok that once migrated to graze here (Forbes 1965: 133 and map no.17). The Bokkeveld lies to the east of the Bokkeveld mountains and extends from Tulbagh in the south to Nieuwoudtville in the north. It is sub-divided into the Koue (cold), Onder (lower), Oude (old) and Warm Bokkeveld (Paper 1987: 55). The Onder-Bokkeveld, in which Lokenburg is located, is the region to the west of present day Calvinia.

The serenity of this isolated oasis, tucked away behind the Bokkeveld mountains, was rudely shattered in 1992 when it was chosen as the ideal setting for filming “Die Manakwalanders”, an Artes Award winning Afrikaan TV series which, when re-screened in 1998, had lost none of its appeal (*Die Burger* 1998). Currently the house at Lokenburg that featured in the film provides holiday accommodation for city dwellers wishing to relax, ‘far from the madding crowd’

### Owners and early history

The earliest known recorded reference to farming in the Lokenburg region dates from 27 November 1744. Claas Visagie, most probably Nicolaas (b1c5<sup>1</sup>), grandson of the *stamvader* Pieter, was then allowed “om voor den

---

<sup>1</sup> Genealogists use letters for generations and numbers for sequence of birth, thus b1c5 is the fifth child of the first child of the original colonist or *stamvader/moeder* (generation ‘a’).

tyd van een geheel jaar met syn vee te mogen gaan leggen en wij in de Ooije Valley digt aan de Booke Veld grensend Lookeburg”<sup>2</sup>. Visagie annually renewed this right to graze his livestock until May 1763.<sup>3</sup>

Servaas van Breda (blc3), grandson of the *stamvader* Pieter, was the next Dutch colonist to apply for grazing rights in this secluded part of the Bokkeveld. While in the service of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) he had attained the rank of Burgher-Lieutenant and in 1774 was allowed access to a vast area in “het Ooge van die Bokkeveld”<sup>4</sup>. The *Ooge* (eyes) could be a reference to the numerous fountains on Lokenburg. Nine years later, 16 April 1783, his grazing rights were more accurately defined and among other farms he was allowed to “sy vee’t mog legge en wijd aan de plaats gend. Lokenburg gets in Ooije Valle digtbij’t Bockeveld”.

Early *trekboere*<sup>5</sup> moving to remote areas such as the Bokkeveld could apply for grazing rights to large tracts of land because the indigenous population was small and largely nomadic, also because of its inaccessibility. Simply put, the availability of land so far from the settlement at the Cape exceeded demand. This scarcity of inhabitants is confirmed in the journals of the noted German medic, botanist and explorer, Henry Lichtenstein, who accompanied Commissioner General J.A. de Mist on his journey to the North Western Cape (Lichtenstein 1928). In 1803 they reached the “Uie Vally” where Lichtenstein records that “the country here is thinly inhabited; in the last twenty hours we had scarcely seen a house and our host [Jacobus Adrianus Louw of Lokenburg] himself said that there be not above four neighbours within reach of half a day’s journey on horseback”.

When it became more difficult to barter cattle from the indigenous pastoralists (known as *Hottentots*) in order to supply its ships, the Dutch East India Company encouraged European farmers at the Cape to increase their herds. Grazing permits were consequently freely granted to these un-surveyed “leggen en wijden plaatse”. After 1700 loan farms gradually

---

<sup>2</sup> RLR 11/1 pp.69-70.

<sup>3</sup> Much of the information on Lokenburg and its owners is based on correspondence and numerous telephone discussions over a period of three years with Elmien Lock [née Nel], wife of the present owner. I would like to acknowledge the tremendous amount of research she has achieved. Also, I am much indebted to Margaret Cairns (32 Thornhill Road, Rondebosch) who gave me general assistance with research and read the manuscript.

<sup>4</sup> 50 000 morgen according to the calculations of Elmien Lock of Lokenburg.

<sup>5</sup> Semi-nomadic farmers.

evolved out of the grazing right system, which gave farmers the right to an un-surveyed piece of land, subject to the payment of a nominal annual rent. Under this system two or more loan farms, sometimes situated miles apart and even in different districts, were often owned by the same colonist. Many farms were consequently underdeveloped and uninhabited, serving merely as grazing for livestock that was under the supervision of a friend, neighbour, or trusted servant.

This abundance of land and beneficial system of land tenure probably explains why neither Claas Visagie (1744) nor Servaas van Breda (1774) apparently bothered to take up residence in the isolated Bokkeveld. Although Jacobus (Jacob) Adrianus (Adriaan) Louw (b5c3d3) obtained grazing rights to “Lokenburg zynde de verlate plaats van Lt Servaas van Breda” on 12 November 1784<sup>6</sup>, he and his four children only moved from their Roggeveld (Calvinia) loan place to Lokenburg in 1786. Jacobus was the son of Jacobus Louw (b5c3) and great-great-grandchild of the *stamvader* Jan Pietersz. Jan was one of the earliest Europeans to settle at the Cape having arrived in 1658, when official documents merely refer to him as Jan Pieters (zoon). Two years later he was recorded as Broertjie, sometimes also appearing as Broertjen and Broertie. The first time a surname was coupled to his name was in 1689 when he is designated as Jan Pieterz Louw. His descendants can truly claim to possess a surname that was “made in South Africa”! (Heese/Lombard 1999: 245; Louw & Malan 1984).

From an entry in the journal of the Swedish botanist Carl Thunberg, dated 20 November 1774, we know that Jacobus A. Louw was residing on the farm Knegtsbank (Thunberg 1986: 298). It lies in the Onder-Roggeveld near the hamlet of Middelpoos, which is more than 100 km east of Lokenburg. In that same year Jacobus had married his cousin Maria Louw. By the time Henry Lichtenstein and General de Mist visited Lokenburg in October/November 1803, seventeen years after Jacobus and Maria made this their new home, the Louws had made good progress and he could record that “the owner of Lokenberg is the richest man in the district”. The extent of his wealth is evidenced by the fact that on his death seven years later his wife obtained the usufruct to properties recorded in the *opgaaf* (census) of 1811 as the Roggeveld farms Stinkkuil, Hartebeesfontein, Knegtsbank and Tweefontein. In the Onder-Bokkeveld there was

---

<sup>6</sup> RLR 33 p.14.

Lokenburg, Keizerfontein, Koedemoefontein and, in partnership with Pieter van Zyl, she also farmed Mensieskraal, which is adjacent to Lokenberg.

Lichtenstein also mentions that the Lower Bokkeveld is suited to horned cattle and horses but that the region's principal wealth consists of sheep and that "the farmers have begun to introduce here the Spanish breed of sheep for the sake of wool". This breed had been established at the Cape in 1789 by Colonel Robert Jacob Gordon, Commander of the garrison, and in time the Calvinia (Hantam) District was to become one of South Africa's premier merino wool producing areas.

After the second British occupation of the Cape in 1806 the loan farm system was gradually phased out. In 1813 Governor Sir John Cradock decreed that henceforth land would only be allocated in perpetual quitrent, or in freehold, and existing farmers were encouraged to register their loan farms. Before a deed of tenure could be issued, however, the property had first to be surveyed which proved to be a major obstacle as the few available surveyors could not cope with the flood of applications.

Eventually, in February 1820, J. Schutte surveyed Lokenburg (Fig.1 – see centre pages). Strangely, though, the formal grant by Governor Sir Lowry Cole was only finalised twelve years later (20 February 1832) when the farm was registered in the name of Louw's son-in-law, Andries Oberholster. A possible explanation is that Jacobus A. Louw had passed away before the 1820 survey. Schutte therefore noted on his surveyor's diagram that Louw's widow held the farm "in Erfpacht versocht". Only after her death did her son-in-law officially inherit Lokenburg and the grant was formalised subject to an annual rental of four pounds ten shillings sterling.

As with most early diagrams, Schutte's survey of 1820<sup>7</sup> provides a wealth of information. Its most striking feature is the outline of a circular loan farm of 3 000 morgen surrounded by 4971 morgen of "Governments ground", together forming a property totalling 7971 morgen. In staking out a loan place the procedure was often first to establish a central beacon, usually a spring, and then from this point to walk, or ride on horseback, for about an hour in different directions. The result was a circular farm. Schutte's diagram also shows the spring, rivers and cultivated lands on Lokenburg and from his notations it is evident that much of the property

---

<sup>7</sup> Lokenburg, S.Diag. no.339 relating to Title Deed Wor.Q.5-66 of 20 February 1832.

consisted of poor grazing - “schraal weiland”. This is the reason why, to be viable, farms in arid regions had to cover a vast area. Two main roads are also shown. First the “weg van de Kaap” which reached the farm via Clanwilliam, crossing the Pakhuis pass and through the *Moedverlore vlakte*. Second, the “weg naar die Hantam” region, where the village of Hantam came into being during the 1840s. In 1851 it was renamed Calvinia after the Protestant religious reformer, John Calvin.

On the 24 July 1835 Andries Oberholster, not having a male heir, sold off a portion of Lokenburg to his brother-in-law Schalk Willem van der Merwe, who had already (c1829) taken up residence on the farm of his deceased father-in-law. W. von Meyer, the German author of *Reisen in Zudafrika*, called in at Lokenburg in 1841 and described Schalk’s farm as one of the most attractive he had visited. In later years two of Schalk’s sons and a grandson farmed the property. The present owners are Willie and Elmien Lock. Elmien is a direct descendant of Schalk Willem. Their portion of Lokenburg, which now covers 6000 morgen, has been in the family for more than two hundred years.

The name given to the valley in the Lower Bokkeveld in which Lokenburg lies - the “Ooije Valley” on Visagie’s grant of 1744, “Ooyen Valley” of Servaas van Breda in 1783, “Oei Valley” on the map John Barrow drew

---

*Legend for Fig.2:*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. T-plan main homestead with corrugated iron roof.</li> <li>2. Abutting ┘ shaped thatched cottage with hearth.</li> <li>3. Thatched three-roomed outbuilding - slag-en-tuiekamer.</li> <li>4. Thatched outbuilding - two-roomed cottage with hearth at one end plus a wine cellar and tuiekamer.</li> <li>5. Thatched out-building with horse mills and wagon shed.</li> <li>6. Flat roof store.</li> <li>7. Double storey with corrugated iron roof.</li> <li>8. Rectangular single storey dwelling with corrugated iron roof.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Thatched stable and smous’s buitekamer.</li> <li>10. Stone walled kraal.</li> <li>11. Thatched waenhuis and stal plus flat roof buitekamer.</li> <li>12. Two stables and wagon shed, thatched.</li> <li>13. Thatched two-room stone cottage with hearth.</li> <li>14. Restored thatched and gabled house.</li> <li>15. Ruin of stone cottage - possibly the oldest dwelling, late 18<sup>th</sup> C.</li> <li>16. Demolished out-building.</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

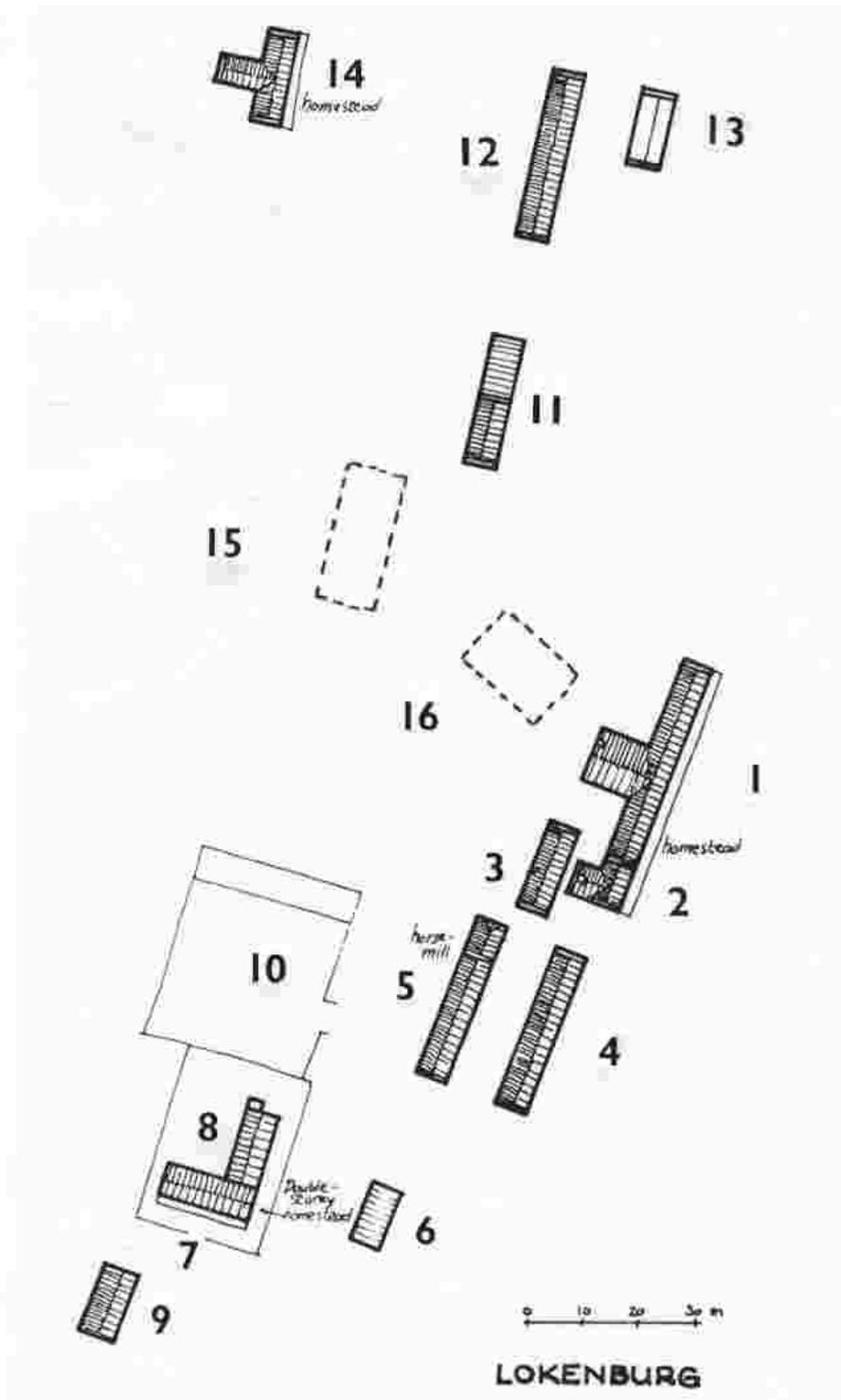


Figure 2. The Lokenburg werf in c1970, after Hans Fransen (Fransen & Cook 1980:413) (legend opposite page)

after his visit in 1798, and the “Uye” or “Bulb Valley” mentioned by Henry Lichtenstein in 1803 - is presumably because of the prevalence of iris and ixia bulbs. To this day they make a colourful display in spring. According to Lichtenstein, these “the Hottentots eat and are very fond of”. Their nutritional value is questioned by the locals, however, who have observed that only buck and porcupines dig up the bulbs for food. The botanist Professor Rodney O. Moffett, in answer to a query from Mrs Lock in January 2000, mentioned that the region has many other plants designated “uie”, for example *brandui*, *slangkopui* and *wildeui*.

As yet the origin of the name Lokenburg has not been satisfactorily resolved. Some would have it that Jacobus A. Louw, its first permanent resident in 1786, named the farm and that it derives from Louwenburg, a hillock near Casper Ter Maere in South Limburg (Netherlands) where the Louw *stamvader* was born in 1628. This is unlikely because Claas Visagie’s grant of 1747 was for ground “grensend Lookeburg” and in 1783 Lieutenant Servaas van Breda was allowed to graze his stock “aan de plaats gend. Lokeburg”. The name for the vicinity/farm had therefore been in use long before the Louws took up residence.

### **The buildings at Lokenburg**

In the first half of the eighteenth century livestock were already being grazed in the Uie/Bulb Valley of the Onder-Bokkeveld. After the lease (*weilisensie*) was made to Visagie (1744) and van Breda (1774-1783), an abode, however humble or impermanent, was probably erected on Lokenburg even before Jacobus A. Louw took up permanent residence in 1786, not to mention kraals for the mustering of sheep and cattle. In all probability, therefore, some very early structures from the 1700s may have been incorporated into present day buildings on this vast *werf*.

Thanks to Henry Lichtenstein’s journal entry of October 1803 we know that although Jacobus Adrianus Louw was the “wealthiest man” in the area, his home “did not bear any appearance of great wealth but that was more owing to the frugal habits of the colonists living on the borders, than to a want to the means of making a great show, or to penuriousness of disposition” (Lichtenstein 1928: 102-107). Note that this late eighteenth century dwelling is not described as small or impoverished, but rather as a humble home for a man of Jacobus’s means.



*Figure 3. Ruin of a stone dwelling (building no.15), which may have been the home of Lokenburg's first resident owner, Jacobus Adrianus Louw (1786).*

From the remaining foundations of building no.15 (Fig.3), attributed to being Louw's house, the earliest permanent dwelling on the *werf* would appear to have been a five roomed structure built of stone, with a *voorhuis*, three bedrooms in a row (not inter leading) and a kitchen with indoor hearth and attached outside *bakoond*. Two of the bedrooms were demolished and up until 1978 the three remaining rooms were still partially covered. Although now a ruin, it deserves to be preserved.

Dr Hans Fransen, the authority on vernacular architecture and co-author of *The Old Buildings of the Cape*, visited Lokenburg in 1970 and described the farm complex as a "veritable little village" (Fig.2) having eleven structures of which three were homesteads (Fransen & Cook 1980: 413).

At the time of Fransen's visit the main house (building no.1) had no fewer than seventeen rooms of which fifteen were inter-leading. There was also a *stoepkamer* and *buite vertrek* bathroom making up the 44 metre long façade. At one time a brother and sister, children of Schalk van der Merwe, shared it with their respective families, hence the ample accommodation and two kitchens. It is T-shaped with the 'tail' housing the kitchen being double the customary width and beneath one low-pitched roof.

A paved *stoep* once ran the entire length of the main house. The gable at its right end was altered and given a cap in 1975. Earlier, in about 1970, five of the front rooms on the left were turned into a double garage with direct access to the house. With personal security now a top priority, especially on isolated farms, this alteration is desirable. Regrettably, though, it has spoiled the façade of a unique historic homestead.



*Figure 4. The 44 metre long front façade of the T-shaped main homestead, built c1874 (building no.1), with enclosed verandah and new double garage on the left, plus an adjoining thatched cottage on the extreme left (building no.2) with stable door and shuttered window (see Fig.6).*

Fransen's diagram (Fig.2) shows a very short back wing on the extreme left of the building (building no.2), which at the time of his visit housed a kitchen with hearth. This kitchen was demolished in 1970. This previously self-contained 'appendage', with its stable door and shuttered window, was until recently the only section of the main house still to have a thatch roof. One is tempted to think that is a very early cottage, which was extended in stages to the right to eventually become part of the main

homestead. This was largely the work of Petrus Jacobus (Koos) Boltman (c1874) who also built the double storey house.



*Figure 5. Back view of the main homestead showing the 'tail' with kitchen, which still has its reed ceiling and an indoor hearth. The house has cedar wood doors throughout and also four built-in cupboards of the same material.*



*Figure 6. Thatched cottage (building no.2) with stable door and shuttered window that abuts the main dwelling. The cottage retains its reed ceiling but sacrificed the kitchen and hearth in 1970. In February 2000 the roof collapsed and it has now, regrettably, been replaced with corrugated iron. In the background is an outbuilding housing slag- and tuiekamers (building no.3).*

The second house on the farm is a ┘-plan (building nos.7 and 8). It faces southeast and stands well away from the many other buildings on the Lokenburg werf. It has a single storey 'tail', being the original three-roomed dwelling to which a double storey, with pitched roof and verandah, was later added. A low, whitewashed stone wall encloses the front garden and also one side of the joined houses.



*Figure 7. Building no. 9 (barn) and 7 (house).*



*Figure 7(a). A stable and buitekamer (building no.9) placed diagonally in front of the double storey farm house (no.7) retain their reed ceilings. The buitekamer was a regular feature in the platteland and provided accommodation for travellers and itinerant traders (smous), usually Jews.*



*Figure 7(b): L-shaped double-storey house (building no.7) with corrugated iron roof, verandah and stone walf wall (c1874). Imported Oregon pine was used throughout. “The Manakwalanders” was filmed here.*

The original section of this house, the ‘tail’ (building no.8), was probably built by or for Schalk Willem van der Merwe, who hailed from the farm Welbedacht in the Agter-Hantam, Calvinia. He had married Jacobus A. Louw’s daughter, Anna (b5c3d3e6), in 1812. After living for a time at Downes in the Roggeveld, in 1829 they relocated to this modest rectangular three-roomed house, with thatched roof and reed ceilings. It partially burned down in about 1873, after which Schalk’s son, Francois, had the double-storey wing added. This became the front façade and changed the configuration of the homestead to its present L-shaped plan. The builder was Koos Boltman, who gave both old and new structures the benefit of a corrugated iron roof.

Fransen describes the double storey’s interior as “a gem of Georgian or early Victorian taste”. It has doors with four panels, an elaborate wooden staircase, two rectangular wall cupboards and a marbled Adam-style fireplace. Koos Boltman employed the itinerant Dutch fresco painter and carpenter, Anthonie Frederik Buss, and the house’s dados are credited to this talented man. His work can also be seen in the main house and at Kromrivier in the Cedarberg.

Re-plastering of the double-storey house in February and March 2000 revealed that the lower storey is built entirely of dressed stone and the upper of red bricks, whereas all the other bricks used on the property are of

*blouklei*. Elmien Lock writes that, except for those built entirely of stone, the walls of Lokenburg's many buildings consists of a raised foundation of stone dressed with *blouklei*, and followed by layers of sun dried *blouklei* bricks. The *blouklei* was prepared in a *kleigat* where it was mixed with straw and 'kneaded' to the right consistency by horses or mules. *Blouklei* was also used to plaster stone structures, though in time the elements have stripped it off. The walls were plastered with mixture of sand and lime, which in time has disintegrated. Elmien Lock recalls her mother describing how limestone was burned and mixed with sand to form the plaster.



*Figure 8. When re-plastering the double storey house in February and March 2000 it was discovered that the walls of the lower section were of dressed stone.*

Lokenburg must have been one of the first farms in the North West to boast corrugated iron as this superior roofing material had only been patented in England in the mid 1850s and it would have been quite some time before this innovation reached the Cape *platteland*. Being fire resistant, corrugated iron gradually replaced thatch, leading to a loss of countless gables, which were often either demolished or clipped in order to accommodate a roof with a lower pitch.

Except for the main homestead, the double storeyed house and one outbuilding, all the outbuildings still have thatched roofs. According to the owner four types of thatch were used before the advent of corrugated iron. Rye (*rog*) was by far the most popular and long lasting, consequently some was specially grown for this purpose. *Springbokriet*, which grows on the Bokkeveld plateau, is the best local thatch, although it seldom grows much more than half a metre in length. *Zonkwariet* grows in sandy *veld* and reaches a length of more than a metre. It currently features on most outbuildings but is unfortunately 'coarse' and therefore snaps easily. It is better suited for constructing a *hardebiesieshuis*. *Fluitjiesriet* grows near water and being relatively thick is not a sought-after roofing material. Sometimes, however, it is used as a base layer over which the thatch is placed.

Termites erode the waterproofing ability of thatch as they eat and/or use it for their nests, while starlings systematically strip it for nest building too; hence the popularity of corrugated iron, which does not require constant upkeep.



*Figure 9. A rectangular thatched two-roomed un-plastered stone cottage with internal hearth (building no.13). There is evidence of a foundation to its right - a buitekamer or a stable?*

To the right of and quite some distance behind the other buildings stands Lokenburg's third homestead (building no.14). It is a T-plan with a thatch roof and replica Cape Dutch-style gables. These 'improvements', made in

1956, have unfortunately altered most of the datable features of the house. After sub-division in 1911 this part of Lokenburg became the property of George Laurence.<sup>8</sup> In 1939 his brother William purchased the property and after his death in 1978 it was acquired by A. Smit, who sold it in turn to the present absentee landlord, D.C. Esterhuizen, in 1990.



*Figure 10. Lokenburg's third homestead (building no.14). A T-plan with Cape Dutch style gable added during 'restoration' in 1956. The voorkamer, two bedrooms, dining room and passage all had reed ceilings, which were replaced with new beams and fresh reeds in 1956. The thatch is springbokriet, which is superior to zonkwariet. This is where the Laurences lived from 1911 until 1978.*

We are fortunate to have two independently drawn layouts of Lokenburg's buildings. The earliest is a panoramic watercolour (Fig.11) painted in September 1935 by Gertrude Laurence. Her father, George, was a mining engineer, who at the time held a one-third share in the farm. He obtained it on retiring in 1911 due to ill health, and is reputed to have been the first farmer in the region to enclose his property with jackal-proof fencing. The Laurences remained involved with Lokenburg from 1911 to 1978. After George's death in 1939 his younger brother William, who for a time

---

<sup>8</sup> Jean Lombard, of Valencia, Daljosafat, Paarl - a cousin of Gertrude Laurence – provided information about the Laurences's sojourn on a portion of Lokenburg.

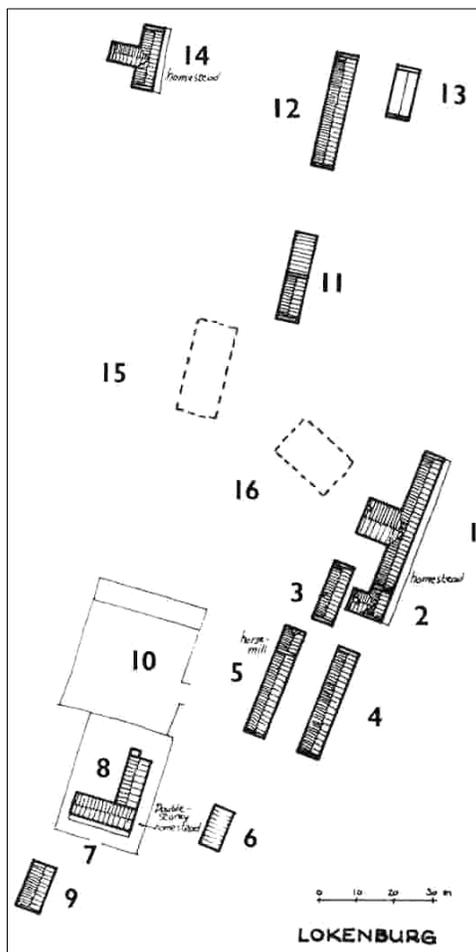


Figure 11. *Painting of Lokenburg by Gertrude Laurence, 1935. Except for the ruin (building no.15), the demolished out-building (no.16) and large kraal adjacent to the horse stable (no.6), there has been little change between 1935 and 1970 (insert).*

practiced as an attorney at Calvinia, took over his brother's share of 3000 morgen at ten shillings a morgen.

The second drawing is the plan of the *werf* drawn by Hans Fransen during a visit in 1970 (Fig.11, insert). In the intervening thirty-five years little change has taken place except for the demolition of the stable and kraal opposite the double storey house in 1960. These have now been replaced by a shed (building no.6) and an outbuilding (no.16). Note the orchards and lands, also the labourers's huts below the mountain range in the background. These were built of poplar tree laths, bulrush and *zonkwariet*.

As recently as 1996 a long outbuilding (building no.4), which once housed a wine cellar, saddle room (*tuiekamer*), and a two room dwelling with hearth (*binne oond*), had to be razed to the ground after heavy rains that caused some of the clay/raw brick walls to collapse. Behind and parallel to this outbuilding stands one of equal dimensions (building no.5). It once boasted two horse drawn corn mills and a wagon shed. Currently it is used as a store.



*Figure 12. Parallel outbuildings (nos.4 and 5) of clay and raw bricks, photographed by the writer Karel Schoeman in June 1986. Building no.4, which also housed a two-roomed cottage with outside hearth, was demolished in 1996 after heavy rain caused walls to collapse.*

Another interesting and very old rectangular three-roomed structure (building no.3) stands just behind and to the left of the main house. Like most of the other buildings it is also constructed of stone, clay and raw bricks with a roof of local thatch. The room to the left now serves as a butchery (*slagkamer*) and that on the right is a saddle room. The vacant room in-between is ‘painted’ with local red clay and could once have been an extra outside bedroom.



*Figure 13. Rectangular outbuilding thatched with zonkwariet (building no.3), having cedar wood doors and reed ceilings in the two rooms on the left. Roof construction has a steep pitch to facilitate drainage of the thatch.*

As with the buildings on other early farms, many of those on Lokenburg’s vast *werf* (“a veritable village”) are truly vernacular. Being off the beaten track, they were built by the farmer and his own labourers using whatever material was readily available and which was often no more than clay, rubble, stones, raw bricks and inferior thatch. Consequently time and the elements relentlessly continue to take their toll. Lokenburg has paid the price, with corrugated iron slowly replacing local thatch and old walls collapsing. The on-going and inevitable repairs are costly and thorough restoration is uneconomical, so the character of this historic *werf* will continue to change. This article is a modest and belated attempt to record

for posterity the history and past and current appearance of a self contained pioneer farm *werf* in the Onder-Bokkeveld.

## References

- Bylae tot *Die Burger*, 15 December 1998, bl.4 (Resensie: “Die Manakwalanders”).
- Forbes, Vernon. 1965. *Pioneer Travellers in South Africa*. Cape Town: A.A. Balkema.
- Fransen, Hans & Mary Cook. 1980. *The Old Buildings of the Cape*. Cape Town: A.A. Balkema.
- Heese/Lombard. 1999. *South African Genealogies*. Stellenbosch: Gisa.
- Lichtenstein Henry. 1928. *Travels in Southern Africa, 1803-1806*. Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society Series 1, no.10.
- Louw, Jannie & Lalie Malan. 1984. *The Louws of Louwvliet*. Cape Town: A.A. Balkema.
- Raper, P.E. 1987. *Dictionary of South African place names*. Johannesburg: Lowry Publishers.
- Thunberg, Carl P. 1986. *Travels of the Cape of Good Hope 1772/1775*. Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society Series 2, no.17.
- National Archives, Roeland Street, Cape Town:
- Barrow, John. *General chart of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1797/8*.
- RLR 11/1, 27 November 1744, pp.69-70; RLR 30, 16 April 1783, p.29; RLR 33, p.14.
- Deeds Office, Cape Town:
- Lokenburg, Farm No.815, Calvinia; S.Diag.no.339/1820, relating to Title Deed No. Wor.Q.5-66, 20/2/1832.

## Some thoughts concerning the positioning of early Cape homesteads

*Keith Loynes*

In the course of a Vernacular Architecture Society weekend excursion to farms along the Langebergen in the Swellendam district (24-25 October 1998) and with an ensuing address by Gwen Fagan on the philosophy attached to the baroque Dutch Gardens still fresh in our memory, there seemed to be clear evidence that the freeburgher house builders at the Cape subscribed to philosophical and cultural determinants when deciding on the layout of their homesteads. They did so in preference to physical elements such as climatic conditions, views and orientation to other physical features.

On this particular excursion, at the farm *Combuys* at Oudewerf on Bosjemanspad, Ambrose Lloyd pointed out that the farmer, seated at the head of his family, would be able to look out, across the laden dinner table, through the *voorhuis* and front door, over the vineyards and orchards that comprised his farm and wealth and defined his status. He indicated that there was a well known painting depicting such a scene. (Could anyone shed light on the title, artist and date?)

The orientation of the house and its construction made definite reference to the relationship between landowner and his estate. The orientation of the T in a north, south (main axis) and east, west direction with the *eetkamer* almost located at the intercept, would seem to confirm this. The produce of the estate being served on the table of the landowner at this intersection with the coordinate axes appears to be deliberately contrived.

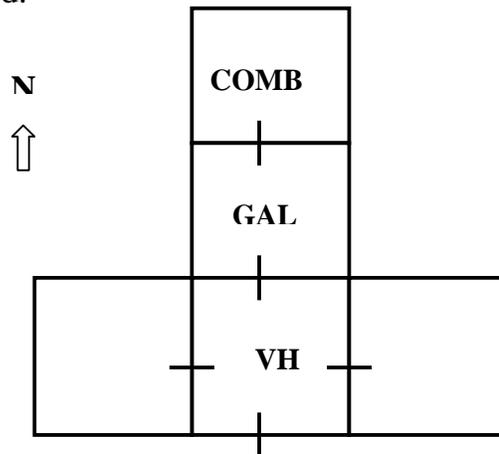
It seems that the reason that many of these old homesteads were constructed facing south was therefore not merely an oversight, ignoring the reality of their location in the southern hemisphere, but linked to complex traditions, customs and philosophies which are being neglected in our understanding of these buildings. It appears that there was such a strong general acceptance and common practice of these beliefs by the Dutch (and their colonial subjects) in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries that they incorporated designated rooms of the homestead in farm names so as to indicate their geographic locations.

I believe that we have evidence of this in the following example. The quitrent grants to Hermanus Steyn D'Oude in the mid-eighteenth century, named "*De Combuys aan de Congo*" and "*Aan't Voorhuys Gelegen aan de Breede Rivier*", in fact indicate direction as well as location. Assuming that it was commonly accepted that a homestead comprised a *voorhuis* fronting south and a *combuys* in the northern end of the tail of a T-shaped homestead (the *galdery/eetkamer* was generally located between the two), then it makes sense that, in relation to the Drostdy in the District of Swellendam, the farm 'De Combuys aan de Congo' lay in a northerly direction and 'Aan't Voorhuys Gelegen aan de Breede Rivier' lay in a southerly direction.

Consider the three other T-shaped houses visited on this excursion. Bosjemansdrift, Bosjemanspad and Avontuur (Stormsvlei) all comply with the general rule that they should face south and their kitchens should terminate the north end of the T axis. The direction of sunlight, views (excepting the cultivated lands), prevailing winds and other considerations do not seem to feature in the orientation of the homesteads. They are secondary to the philosophical considerations.

If this deduction is accurate, then we have evidence as to why so many old Cape homesteads seem to comply with fairly rigid principles concerning orientation and floor plan. We must deduce that tradition/philosophy dictated that homesteads generally faced south. The front door gave access to a *voorhuis*. The *voorhuis* gave access to the *galdery/combuys*, thus forming the long axis of the T. Bedrooms flanked this axis, forming the transverse section of the T, or H or any other floor plan in this period.



# Surgery to buildings

*Jonathan Driver-Jowitt*

Curious ethers seem to link architecture with medicine. Professor Thornton-White, as head of the University of Cape Town's School of Architecture, said the highest inter-faculty transfer of undergraduate students was between medicine and architecture. It might be that both disciplines seek to combine science with craft – certainly both are vested in art.

A less nebulous relationship exists between restorative architecture and surgery. Both use the best of the past as their parameter for a reconstruction, the domain of which will be in the future and in functionality. Both involve compromises, the trade-offs between the expedient and the sustainable. Both search for absolutes but recognise that the price of perfection is prohibitive.

In restorative architecture, the client, like the patient, is often lost for a direction. He knows he wants a 'restoration' and, often naïvely, sees restoration as a unity – a return to a pinnacle of past, a space moment which was the point of glory of the building. Initially, this seems to the aspirant restorer to be a destination easily conceived as a single 'state of perfection'.

However, as restorative planning is explored, this belief in a single 'state of perfection' begins to dilute. When was the apogee of glory? How long did it last? More likely there were ebbs and flows of success or grandeur or decadence. There were times when contemporary style was matched perfectly, only to succumb to forced restyling under the pressure of later *môdes*.

The realisation begins to creep in that buildings are functional units, and they are dynamic. Buildings must be ever ready to accede to new functional demands, to open up or close off, to rise from or descend into the soil. Buildings must respond, as the flux of human activity plays on structure, when people use a dwelling as an instrument for solace, or creativeness, or as a defence, or an outspoken statement.

But the control of a building is not a master-slave relationship. The restorative owner must grant concessions to the building, allow the building

to call the options at times; the owner must sometimes compromise his initial perceptions of what he feels he needs.

The amateur who wishes to restore soon becomes perplexed; lost in all the variables, befuddled by a variety of advices, and frequently the apparent conflict of expert opinion. Local regulation or preservatory acts force restraints. The restorer will realise that an ignorance of the social history through which the building survived will restrict early intentions and finance becomes a progressive handicap.

Complementary (and complimentary) additions need the skills of sympathy and relationship, not mimicry – in essence the distinction between an empathy with the building and mockery.

To help the restorer's novice, these perplexions could be reduced to three choices:

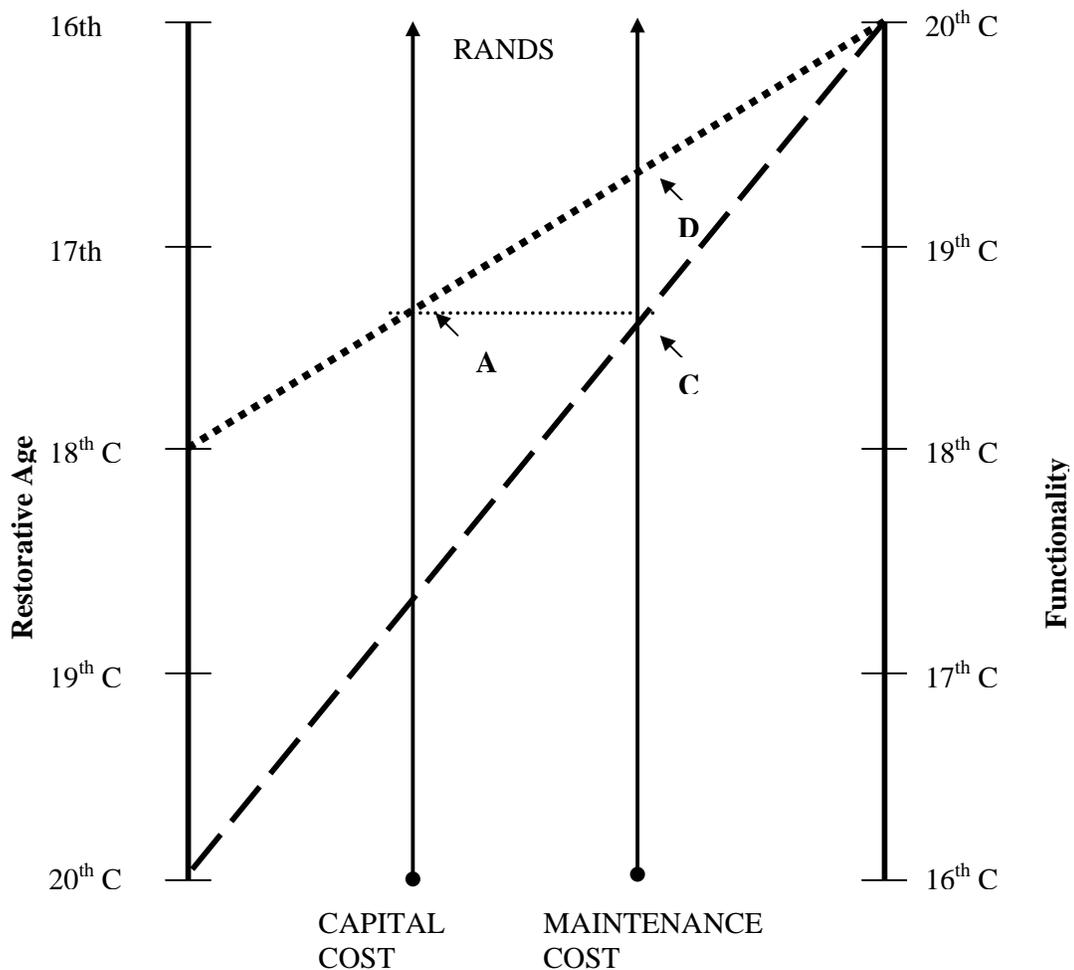
1. Choose an historic era. Restoration need not be the period of the birth of the building, indeed it could be restored as it was in its maturity.
2. Choose the function to which the building is to be put today, and tomorrow.
3. Choose a cost. But remember, cost is best seen as a ratio, a comparison of input: benefit, and there are two facets even to this:
  - a. *Capital cost: function.* A building restored to the early seventeenth century, with every detail reconstructed, will force on its inhabitants a different way of living to that usual in the year 2001. To blend the functional qualities of the year 2001 with an authentic restoration of a much earlier era is more expensive (cost: function ratio is higher). If the restoration is to a more recent era, even if costs are the same, greater functionality would be expected, and the cost: function ratio is lower – it costs less to get more of today's function.
  - b. *Maintenance cost: function.* Authentically maintaining a recreation from distant history will usually be considerably more expensive than maintaining a modern building. There will also be the disadvantages of the unavailability of specialised craftsmen when maintenance becomes due, with difficulty (and delays) in obtaining 'replacement parts'.

This is graphically represented in the illustration below. It is hoped that this graph will aid a choice of 'restorative date' by the owner, by selecting the point of intersection of the chosen variables.

As an illustration, restoration to the eighteenth century, but with twentieth century function, will intersect the 'cost' line at A. The increased (annual) maintenance costs will be C-D.

Ultimately, a building must be pleasing to the eye, when looked at time and time again. It must be satisfying to show to others. It must be comforting in its protection and it must be gratifying in its usage. There is no greater burden, nor greater expense, than a building un-enjoyed, whilst there is no greater pleasure, nor better economics, than a building well enjoyed.

That is a successful restoration.



# **The leper colony at Hemel-en-Aarde near Hermanus: postscript to the Society's visit in 1998**

*Notes based on correspondence and research by John Annandale and archival documentation courtesy of the National Archives and the Moravian Mission Museum, Genadendal, and various academics*

## **Background**

Leprosy was first reported in South Africa in 1756 in the district of Stellenbosch. A Commission was appointed and as a result of its recommendations the Council of Policy passed a resolution on 17 August 1756 that lepers should not be allowed to mix with healthy people. Though 'Hottentots' afflicted with leprosy were thereafter put under quarantine, and supported with funds raised in Swellendam, it was only in the early 1800s that the continuing problem of leprosy was again brought to the notice of the authorities.

Lord Charles Henry Somerset, Governor of the Cape, gave the matter his serious attention and, in the *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser* of Saturday 22 February 1817, published the results of his deliberations. The Landdrost of Swellendam was instructed to establish a 'healthy and airy spot' for the 'confinement' of 'Hottentots, Bastaards, Freeblacks and Slaves' stricken with leprosy. The loan farm of the widow Niemand, who herself was a leper, was chosen (Attaqua's Kloof) and a settlement of huts and vegetable gardens was established.

Plans were drawn up in 1818 for a hospital and residence for the visiting medical officer, and George Nicoll erected these buildings in 1819. The inscription on the front gable read '1820. ERECTED BY THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LEPERS'.

By the end of 1820 there were about 120 inmates, most of them Khoi though lepers of all races were admitted. Initially the Moravian missionaries from Genadendal (about a five hour journey by horse cart from Genadendal) came weekly to preach, but Somerset decided that a

resident missionary should stay with the lepers, so the dwelling house was occupied by Peter Leitner and his wife from January 1823. Over time, a church, stables, kraals and outbuildings were built and the cultivated land became extended outwards.

In December 1845 it was decided that all the patients had to go to Robben Island. It was believed that the continuing prevalence of the disease in the district was due to constant interaction between lepers, family members and friends, and people passing through between Genadendal and the coast. The church burned down in 1846, shortly after the removal of the last few lepers to Robben Island, but the other buildings, and graves of about 400 leper patients who died between 1817 and 1845, were left behind.

### **Postscript to VASSA outing**

A group of interested archaeologists and historians were invited to inspect the site of the leper colony in November 1997. The area was thickly overgrown with grass, but a mound of rubble and a few bushes and trees still visibly marked the locations of the hospital and mission house. Their report prompted a visit to Hemel-en-Aarde in 1998 by members of the Vernacular Architecture Society under the guidance of Kevin Grant and John Annandale. John Annandale had compiled a detailed history\* of the settlement and was hoping to erect a memorial as well as conduct further research that would include careful investigation of the remaining foundations.

Subsequently, John Annandale pursued the intention to erect a monument on the hospital site and to put up boards indicating the location of the graveyard. He gained the support of Mr and Mrs Jardie Lotter, part-owners of the farm 'Vrede' on which the hospital was situated. Unfortunately, Mr Lotter senior was not in favour of the plan and the matter was left to rest. Then, as John Annandale described it in a letter to the National Monuments Council in July 1999: "regrettably on my last visit to the site, I was dumbfounded to find that they had bulldozed the mound which contained some of the foundation stones of the hospital and residence to make way for vineyards". The area was flattened and the remaining foundation stones and rubble were removed and either dumped into the river bed or used to erect a supporting wall on the Lotter's property.

\*A detailed manuscript is lodged at the National Archives, covering the full history of the lepers, from Hemel-en-Aarde to Robben Island and through to Westford Hospital in Pretoria. Alternatively, the manuscript is available in A4 format at R175 including insurance and postage. Contact John Annandale, (028) 316 1918.