The Hex River Valley has become the premier producer of export table grapes. Buffelskraal features in the right foreground, and the Clovelly werf (the original homestead before later sub-division of the old Hugo property) lies behind it, to the left. The Hex River separates the vineyards and manor houses of Anthony Hill (Clovelly) and Chris Rabie (Buffelskraal). [Photograph taken in July 1998]

‘The Hex River on the other side of the Kloof at the farm of Daniel Hugo’, drawn by Johannes Schumacher in September 1776 (Hallema 1951).
BUFFELSKRAAL, ON THE HEX RIVER

André Pretorius

The early history of this eighteenth century farm in the Hex River Valley is that of the Hugo and De Vos families who, between them, cultivated it for nearly a hundred and fifty years (c1720-1860), of the many travellers who stopped over at this veritable oasis before proceeding to the inhospitable Karoo, and also the story of two magnificent gabled Cape Dutch style homesteads dating from the latter half of the 1700s.

Researching the well-documented Hugo and de Vos families was rewarding and the many prominent visitors are fortunately on record through their journals. Determining the history and construction date of the ‘de Vos’ house, however, remains problematic because of alterations made over many years and the lack of reference material. Liberal use is therefore made of the words ‘presumably’, ‘could have’, ‘most probably’, ‘apparently’, etc. Hopefully, this article will inspire others to dig deeper and ‘unearth’ facts to replace the many suppositions.

A. Pioneer owners

The Hugo’s: c1720-1771

Buffelskraal’s first lessee was reputedly Daniel Hugo [Hugot/Hugod], son of the shopkeeper Jacques Hugo and Jeanne Barbier. Daniel was born in May 1664 in Sersy-lès-Maupas north of Epernay, Champagne, France. Here, at the age of fifteen he became an apprentice farrier and locksmith - a trade which would stand him in good stead when he later settled at the Cape.

Because of the persecution of Protestants Daniel fled to Amsterdam in 1685 and as a bachelor emigrated to and arrived at the Cape on the 12 May 1688, presumably on board the Brossenburg. He was allotted a farm of sixty morgen (Sion) near present day Simondium which, after a probation period, was formally granted to him by Governor Simon van der Stel on 1 August 1691. Here he established a vineyard and according to the Opgaafrol of 1692 (Cape Archives (CA) J.183), also ran a smithy.

Although a ‘dwarf’ (1.22m), he is described as being “zeer kleÿn van persoon. Hy was zoo lang als een Juk, dus 4 voeten en 4 duim” (Franken 1986: 308). He was undoubtedly small, but this measurement is called into doubt (Hugo 1971: 106). What the diminutive Daniel lacked in physical stature he certainly compensated for in enterprise and soon made his mark as farmer and public figure. From 1709 to 1711 he was a member of the Stellenbosch Heemraad; from 1716 to 1718 he served as an elder in the Drakenstein [Paarl] parish, and between 1720 and 1724 established a liquor outlet in Cape Town where he also owned property. His farming activities expanded too, and before his death in April 1725 Daniel owned Bethel in Noorder Paarl and had numerous loan farms, among others Buffelskraal in the Hex River Valley. The latter property was one of only four loan farms that existed in the valley in 1719, viz: Aan de Hex Rivier.
over the Rode Sand, Vendutie Kraal, Boven aan de Hexe Rivier aan de Doorns, and Buffelskraal (Raper 1972: 34).

In 1705 the forty-one year old bachelor Daniel Hugo married fourteen-year old Anne [Anna], daughter of fellow Huguenots Pierre Rousseau [Rossouw] and Anne Retief [Rétif]. Legend would have it that Daniel was present at Anne’s christening when he was reputed to have said that the child would one day be his bride. Theirs was a fruitful marriage, bearing nine children. For their education a fellow Frenchman, Jean Blignaut, was employed, who hailed from the same region of the motherland as Daniel. Being saddled with diverse farming responsibilities and a large brood, Anne married Blignaut within months of her husband’s death in 1725.

The Hugo stamvader's third child was Pieter [Pierre], who was christened on 15 June 1710 and at the age of seventeen left Paarl for Buffelskraal in the Hex River Valley. The choice of this particular farm, far from home, would seem to confirm that it had been a loan place of his father, and with which he was consequently already familiar. Be that as it may, Pieter was to become Buffelskraal’s officially recognized lessee two years after his fathers death, in October 1727 when Governor Grysbert Noodt allowed “… den landbouwer Pieter Hugo omme nog voor die tyt van een geheel jaar syn vee te mogen blyven leggen en weÿden aan die buffels Craal geleegen aan de Doorns agter de Chavonnes berg…” . The use of this loan place was subject to an annual rental (recognitie) of twelve rixdollars plus one tenth of the wheat produced there [RLR 7, p.15]. When the contract was renewed in April 1729 he was allowed to occupy the farm for two years upon payment of “drie goeden en bekwame vierjarige osse”, and the usual tenth of his wheat crop [RLR 8/2, p.257].

In May 1728 Pieter married his second cousin (agternigge) Anna (Anne) Retief who was six years his senior, having been born in 1704. She was the second child of the Huguenot refugee and stamvader, François Retief [Rétif]. Seven Hugo children were born at Buffelskraal, of whom four were boys, viz: Pieter (bap.1729), Francois (bap.1732 died 1748), Jacobus (bap.1737) and Daniel (bap.1743 died 1787). Of these the two younger brothers remained on their parents’ property. The census of 1740 [J.163] does not indicate great wealth, stating that the Hugos had one knegt, seven male slaves, no female or young slaves, seven horses, 64 cattle, 430 sheep, but no vines or grain crops.

After having farmed the property for nearly a quarter of a century, Pieter Hugo senior was made a freehold grant of sixty morgen on 14 July 1750 by Hendrik Swellengrebel (OSF-2.236) (Figs. 1 & 2). Swellengrebel was the first and only Governor to be born at the Cape. Less than two years later, on 4 March 1752, Pieter died aged 41 years. The family members left at Buffelskraal were Pieter’s widow Anna, her eldest child Pieter II together with his brother Jacobus, the eight-year old Daniel and their three sisters.

Pieter II had married Aletta van der Merwe a week before his father’s death, and obtained grazing rights to De Hartebeest Craal gelee aan de Bockerivier on 11 April 1752 [RLR 13/1, p.41]. Here, behind the Matroosberg, he and Aletta subsequently settled and raised a family of seven. This left his brother Jacobus with the responsibility of managing Buffelskraal. On 25 September 1756, when Jacobus was only nineteen years old, his mother had the farm transferred to him [TD3218, 25/9/1756]. The deed states that the sale to Jacobus included a koorn meul and brandewyn ketel, which would indicate that there was by then an established vineyard and cultivated lands.
Figure 1. On 14 July 1750 Governor H. Swellengrebel granted the loan place ‘genaamd de Buffelskraal’ to Pieter Hugo. This accompanying survey diagram (21/1750, OSF2-236) by C.D. Wentzel has been the cause of much confusion as it places Hugo’s cottage below the Hex River when in fact it is above the river, as the north-pointing arrow on the diagram correctly indicates. The wording just below the diagram reads ‘woonhuis en tuin’. Note adjoining garden.

Figure 2. In later diagrams, such as 523/1818, the error has been corrected.
In February 1757 the twenty-year old Jacobus Hugo married the sixteen-year old Catherina Magdalena Hoppe. Buffelskraal henceforth housed his mother, the widow Anna (who died 23 March 1767), her fourteen-year old son Daniel, his younger sister, and the newlyweds Jacobus and Catherina, who duly reared four daughters and two sons at Buffelskraal. Of their boys only the youngest survived - Jacobus Petrus was born on 15 October 1769 a month after his father's death. The inventory (MOOC8/13.016) compiled for Jacobus senior’s widow, Catharine (née Hoppe), confirms that by the second generation the Hugos were prosperous farmers in the Hex River Valley. They owned, among other assets, 240 cattle, 2210 sheep, 18 horses and 3 wagons plus 10 male and 4 female slaves.

Left on Buffelskraal after Jacobus’s death in 1769 was his widow Catharina and their six offspring, together with his twenty-six year old bachelor brother Daniel. Jacobus Petrus did not remain on the farm but later settled on Winterhoek, Tulbagh.

**The De Vos’s: 1771-1860**

Wouter, the first de Vos to farm at Buffelskraal, was the grandson and namesake of the stamvader who hailed from Groenlo in the Netherlands. Wouter acquired the property through marriage when in March 1771 he took as his wife Catharina, Jacobus Hugo’s widow of eighteen months. From this her second marriage, a son Wouter and four daughters were born. Catharina died in childbirth in 1778. Her and Wouter’s joint will, made at the time of their marriage, stated that the survivor of the two would retain the dwelling place called “Buffelskraal aan de Doorns” and situated above the Hex River. The farm therefore now devolved on Wouter de Vos. On it lived his five children together with six from his wife’s first marriage to Jacobus Hugo, plus their bachelor uncle Daniel Hugo.

It is interesting to note that although he enjoyed the home comforts of Buffelskraal for a long period, Daniel Hugo apparently had no share in it as he independently conducted successful farming ventures elsewhere. Already in 1761 (aged 17) in his own right he took over the grazing rights to nearby Zeekoegat, which had been relinquished by his brother. By the time of the census of 1779 (J.180) Daniel owned eight horses, 760 cattle and 600 sheep, which made him a more prosperous farmer than Wouter de Vos who, at that stage, only had 200 cattle, 300 sheep and 20 horses. Fourteen years later (1803 census, J.199) Wouter could report substantial progress; his horses had increased to 100, the cattle to 358 and the sheep numbered 2568. There were also fifty-nine young and adult slaves. It is obvious that the large number of livestock reported in the census did not all graze on Buffelskraal’s 60 morgen, but also on other properties that were probably old loan places.

Young children need a mother, especially when their home is an isolated farm, so after Catherina de Vos’s death in 1778 Wouter married Susanna Barbara de Bruyn in 1780. Together they raised a further nine children. At that time the bachelor Daniel was the only Hugo still left at, and presumably living in, the old Buffelskraal house. Eventually, at the age of thirty-eight, he married Catharine Magdalen Roux in 1781. They had no children and even before Daniel’s death in 1787 the ‘De Vos era’ had long replaced that of the Hugos at Buffelskraal.
Wouter de Vos died in 1804 and his widow Susanna, who remained on the property never remarrying, passed away sixteen years later. She died in 1820, bequeathing to each of her sons, Philippus and Dirk, 30 morgen of the old freehold farm Buffelskraal. This half-share was only formally transferred in February 1834, together with 824 morgen of quitrent ground (TD277, February 1834). Could the delay have been because, after Governor John Cradock’s decree of 1813 which stated that land was henceforth to be allocated only in perpetual quitrent or in freehold, the few available surveyors were swamped with requests to record loan farms for registration? Or did farmers merely drag their feet to postpone surveying costs?

Philippus de Vos’s marriage to Margaretha de Bruyn in 1817 was childless. That of his younger brother Dirk, who in 1821 married Elizabeth Hugo, was more fruitful so when Philippus died his widow bequeathed their half share of Buffelskraal, plus quitrent ground, to her brother-in-law Dirk, a respected man and Field Cornet of the Worcester district. This was done by Transfer Deed 1127 dated 16 October 1840.

After eighty-nine years the illustrious De Vos era finally ended when on 15 February 1860 Buffelskraal was sold at auction by Dirk to Jan Willem and Jan George Meiring for £6300, which was duly registered on 8 April 1861.

At present the northern part of Buffelskraal, once also named Lemoenbult-op-Buffelskraal and now called Clovelly, is farmed by Anthony Hill, whose grandfather Douglas bought it for his son (Douglas) in 1945. The portion below the Hex River is farmed by Chris Rabie. His great-grandfather, Johannes Christiaan, acquired it in 1897, making the Rabie’s sojourn of more than a hundred years on Buffelskraal the longest yet!

B. Early prominent visitors to the Hex River Valley and Buffelskraal

Early travellers, explorers, hunters and farmers wishing to journey to the Southern Karoo had beaten a track from the Cape, via the Roodezand Kloof [Tulbagh], to the Hex River Valley. From there they proceeded over the mountain, then along De Straat, and on to present day Prince Albert [Kweekvallei] and Beaufort West. This route, among others, is indicated on surveyor Cloete’s map of 1776, that of Leysten/Leiste drawn in 1785 and based on the 1778 expedition of Governor van Plettenburg, on Frederici’s map of 1789/90; and the Lichtenstein map made after the expedition of 1803/4 (see Figs. 6 to 10).

The origin of the name of this much-travelled valley and its like-named river is open to speculation. Rising northeast of De Doorns the river flows southwest between the Hex River Mountain and Kwadouwsberg to enter the Breede River south of Worcester. Legend would have it that the name came about when a young suitor plummeted to his death while picking a rare disa for the beautiful Eliza Meiring whose parents had acquired Buffelskraal in 1860. She subsequently became deranged and acted like a witch - a hex. Already in 1717, though, nearly a hundred years before the Meiring era, official reference is made to the Ekse Rivier, early loan farms were granted aan de Hexe Rivier, and in 1778 Governor van Plettenberg calls it the Hekse River. So Eliza’s charming legend remains just that. The valley’s name is also attributed to the
translation of ‘Cobeeb’, a witchdoctor or magician and a powerful figure in Koekhoen society (Raper 1972).

The two most plausible explanations for the origin of the name are that the original wagon track crossed it so many times that the river was called the Ekse (Xe)[criss-cross] River, which was later corrupted to Hekse and then Hex River. Alternatively, that it is derived from hek as the valley was seen to be the poort/gateway or hek/gate to the interior, which was traversed by, among others, the following travellers:

1774: Carl Peter Thunberg, the Swedish botanist, was an early eminent visitor to the Valley. On 14 December 1774 he called at the farm of Wouter de Vos who had acquired it when he married the widow Hugo in 1771 [Buffelskraal, AP]. He had much praise for the comfort of this homestead - the gabled house built above the Hex River by Jacobus Hugo in 1768.

Figure 3. ‘The Hex-river on the other side of the Kloof at the farm of Daniel Hugo’, was drawn by Johannes Schumacher in September 1776. This caption is incorrect as, although Daniel lived there, the property belonged to his elder brother, Jacobus, who had already taken transfer in 1756. It is the oldest known illustration of the first gabled house on Buffelskraal, which was completed in 1768 by Jacobus. It is sited north of the Hex River and the old wagenweg. The farm’s first dwelling (c1728) and garden feature in the background.
1776: Hendrik Swellengrebel, son of the former Governor, stopped over two years later on 19 September 1776. His party included the ‘artist’ Johannes Schumacher, who has provided posterity with the earliest known drawing of the gabled Buffelskraal homestead, which also shows the pioneer cottage of c1728 on the same werf (Fig. 3). It is described as being well appointed with a standard of comfort they were not again to experience for several weeks. People like Schumacher filled the role of the modern photographer and were often employed to accompany and record the expeditions of VOC officials and pioneer travellers. He was, for the same purpose, also a member of the Captain Robert Gordon and Patterson expedition in the following year.

1778: Governor van Plettenberg’s large party, in early September 1778 set off across the Karoo for the North Eastern Cape, presumably from the home of Wouter de Vos.

1778: Captain Robert Gordon was a member of the Governor’s entourage from which he later took leave retiring to Buffelskraal. Here he recuperated from illness from the 16 November to 3 December 1778 before proceeding north to explore the Roggeveld and Hantam Karoo. Although a competent artist he apparently made no drawings of his host’s residence!

1797: Sir John Barrow, a British official of boundless energy and great intellect, is remembered for having produced the first ‘modern’ map of the Cape Colony and also for his condemnation of the lifestyle of the Afrikaner colonist and especially their treatment of the indigenous population. During his visit to the Hex River Valley in 1797 he found only four families living in “… a little world of their own.” “At the head of the Hex River Valley [presumably Buffelskraal, AP] our travellers were to take leave of every human habitation for at least sixteen days. It therefore became necessary to supply themselves with a stock of provisions, as nothing whatsoever is to be had on the desert except now and then an antelope”. Like so many travellers before and after, they remained there for a couple of days preparing for the forward journey.

1799: Johannes van der Kemp, the brilliant yet eccentric and later much reviled physician and missionary, who in 1803 under the auspices of the London Missionary Society established the settlement of Bethelsdorp (near Port Elizabeth), called on Buffelskraal on his way to the Eastern Cape in 1799.

1803: Dr Henry Lichtenstein, the famed German medic, botanist and explorer, when on his return journey from the interior stopped over on 13 October 1803. He gives a fine description of the Hex River Valley, Buffelskraal and Wouter de Vos’s hospitality:

“At day-break we reached the summit of the hill from which we descended for several hours through an absolute labyrinth of rocks, into the valley of the Hex River, and arrived about nine in the morning at the very pleasant and fertile place of one of the richest colonists that we had anywhere seen, by name Wouter de Vos.” ... “In this valley are four farms which at the first glance speak the fertility of the spot. The
first, that at which we now arrived, is called Buffelskraal: it yields abundantly all things that I have formerly mentioned as production of the Bokkeveld’s. Although our visit was not expected, we were entertained most profusely, and the table was spread with everything that is to be seen at a splendid dinner in the Cape Town. From choice we declined the beds offered us in the home, and pitched our tents under the thick shade of a little grove of eight chestnut and walnut trees, which our host had some years before planted by the riverside. Further above and below lay the gardens, the vine grounds, the orange gardens and meadows, belonging to the farm, in which everything is produced in the greatest luxuriance.”

1805: Johannes J Kicherer, the Dutch born missionary, who in 1799 had the distinction of establishing the London Missionary Society’s first station in South Africa near the Zakrivier [Williston district], stopped over at the widow de Vos in 1805.

1811: John William Burchell, the English naturalist, traveller, artist and writer was another visitor to write of Buffelskraal in glowing terms. On the evening of 5 June 1811 he unyoked at Buffelskraal where the owner, the widow of Wouter de Vos, who had died in 1804, received them with much civility:

“Her house, which was the best I had seen since leaving Tulbagh, exhibited signs of affluence and plenty; and its inhabitants, who were probably all of her own family, appeared to be numerous.” [Six Hugo and fourteen de Vos children were born at Buffelskraal. AP.] “Large umbrageous oaks standing around the house, showed this farm to have been established for many years. Some fine lemon trees, at this time both in flower and fruit, grew before the door. It produces the two staple commodities of wine and tobacco, and a well-cultivated garden affords abundance of every useful fruit and vegetable.” ... “Besides the business of farmer, that of wagon-maker was also carried on; and I took the opportunity of having some spare articles of ironwork made here.”

1820: John Campbell, a director of the London Missionary Society, visited the Cape in 1812 and again in 1819 to inspect the Society’s mission stations. In January 1820, accompanied by fellow missionary Robert Moffat, he rested briefly at “Mr de Vos”. As Wouter had died in 1804 the reference could have been to any one of his surviving widow’s six sons, who then ranged in age from 38 to 17 years. It was most probably Philippus, who had married in 1817 and could then have set up house at the old Hugo residence nearby. Campbell made a drawing of this, the original Buffelskraal Cape Dutch style homestead (Fig. 4), which would lead one to conclude that he and his party sojourned there.

Clearly, over many years both the Hugo and de Vos owners of Buffelskraal had become well known for their hospitality and as caterers for the every need of travellers journeying northwards into the inhospitable Karoo, or the distant Eastern frontier.
Figure 4. In 1820 the missionary and traveller, John Campbell, made this aquarelle of Buffelskraal, home of ‘Mr de Vos’. As Wouter senior had already passed away in 1804 it was then, in all probability, the home of his son Philippus who was married in 1817. Wouter’s widow, Susanna, died in 1820 and bequeathed half-shares of Buffelskraal to her son Philippus and his bachelor brother Dirk.

Figure 5. This south facing pioneer cottage, which Buffelskraal’s first resident owner, Pierre (Pieter) Hugo, built at the foot of the Matroosberg in c1728, is the only building shown on the Wentzel diagram of 1750, and is still standing. It was rectangular and originally consisted of a small voorhuis, a kitchen with indoor hearth on the left and to the right a bedroom, which was the largest of the three rooms. [AP November 2002]
C. The homesteads

Two magnificent Cape-Dutch style houses with hol-bol front gables, one sited above and the other diagonally across and just below the Hex River, grace the property originally known as Buffelskraal and which has, over time, been sub-divided under the names Buffelskraal and Lemoenbult-op-Buffelskraal, currently Clovelly. It has now been determined which of these two historic homesteads is the older.

When the Hugo stamvader, Daniel, first obtained grazing rights (official grant not traced) in the Hex River Valley some years prior to his death in 1725, he probably considered it no more than just another buite veepos (cattle station) which did not warrant a dwelling. In 1727 his seventeen-year old son, Pieter (Pierre), was formally granted the right to graze his livestock “aan de buffels Craal” (RLR 7, p.15). A year later he married and then presumably built a humble cottage. It appears as a rectangular “woonhuis en tuin” on the surveyor’s diagram of 1750 (Fig. 1) when a freehold grant of the farm was made to him. This pioneer dwelling, which was enlarged over time, still stands on the werf of the Clovelly sub-division and is above the Hex River (Fig. 5).

After Pieter Hugo’s death in 1752 his wife never remarried. She presumably stayed on Buffelskraal until her death in 1767, tending to the needs of the remaining three of their seven children still on the farm. In 1757 her son, Jacobus, who managed the farm, married Catharina Hoppe. One can assume that, rather than share accommodation with the rest of the family, the young couple took up residence in one of the other cottages which appear in the drawing Schumacher made of the Buffelskraal werf, outbuildings and house in 1776 (Fig. 3).

Jacobus and Catharina Hugo raised a family of six and, to meet their growing accommodation needs, in 1767 they set about building a more substantial home on the same werf as the cottage of c1728 (the one in Schumacher’s drawing). Jacobus died in 1769, a year after his new gabled home was completed, leaving his twenty-eight year old widow with six children and no other choice than to make a second marriage.

In 1771 Catharina Hugo married Wouter de Vos and before her death in 1778 they raised five children. In terms of their joint will (1771) her husband inherited their dwelling place above the Hex River. It is at this house, originally built by Jacobus Hugo in 1767/8 and at which Wouter de Vos resided after his marriage to Jacobus’s widow, that Thunberg (1774), Swellengrebel and Schumacher (1776), and most likely also Governor van Plettenburg and Captain Gordon (1778), would have called.

From the aforesaid, we are able to trace the history of two dwellings on the original Buffelskraal:

(a) The c1728 cottage of Pieter Hugo, which is the only building on the surveyor’s diagram of 1750. It is clearly sited above the Hex River; and
(b) Jacobus Hugo’s gabled house of 1767/8 which, in the 1776 Schumacher drawing, appears below Pieter’s pioneer cottage but is on the same werf and also well above the river.

The joint will (1771) of Wouter and Catharina de Vos confirms the locality of their dwelling at that time as being ‘above’ the river. Furthermore, Surveyor Cloete’s map (Fig. 6) of the route taken by the Swellengrebel expedition of 1776 indicates a single
dwellings *above* the Hex River. That drawn by Leysten, (Fig. 7) marking the course of Governor van Plettenberg’s journey in 1778, shows “De Vos” *above* the river and the *wagenweg*, whereas the so-called van de Graaff map, pertaining to the same expedition, indicates “Hugo” and no other properties in the valley (Fig. 8). When we come to the Frederici map of 1789/1790 (Fig. 10), two dwellings are indicated in the valley, one next to the Hex River and one on the *wagenweg* just below it (those of the much-visited Buffelskraal?).

To ‘confuse’ matters, however, the map based on Lichtenstein’s travels of 1803/4, (Fig. 9) shows a single dwelling marked “Buffelskraal” on the *wagenweg* above the river!

One must bear in mind that early maps sometimes relied on more than one source and were often only completed long after the original journey. Their prime objective was not so much to accurately pinpoint farmsteads but rather to show their general location in relation to the route followed and natural landmarks. Surveyors’ instruments were also generally not sophisticated and so errors were inevitable.

![Figure 6. A map by surveyor Cloete appertains to Swellengrebel’s expedition of 1776. It indicates a house *above* the Hex River - the one built by Jacobus Hugo in 1768.](image)
When and by whom, then, was Buffelskraal’s second historic gabled house built, which now bears the date 1778 and is situated below the Hex River?

After his wife’s death in 1778, the widower Wouter de Vos had six children of his own to fend for, plus five Hugo offspring from his wife’s first marriage. Then also still living on the farm was his bachelor brother-in-law, Daniel Hugo. With so many children to take care of, Wouter soon courted and in 1780 married Susanna de Bruyn and together they raised a further nine children! One home could hardly provide sufficient accommodation, especially after Daniel Hugo, who also lived at Buffelskraal, was eventually married in 1781 at the age of thirty-eight.

Schumacher’s drawing of 1776 (Fig. 3) refers to the gabled dwelling on Buffelskraal as being Daniel Hugo’s house. Although he lived there, in fact it then belonged to his brother’s widow (Catharina), who had married Wouter de Vos in 1771. Is it conceivable that Schumacher would blatantly have left it out of his panoramic vista of the Hex River Valley, if, at the time of the drawing (1776) there had been a second major gabled dwelling on Buffelskraal just below the old Hugo homestead? One is therefore tempted to conclude that Wouter had a new house built close to the Hugo house, but below the river, possibly before the death of his wife (1778), but much more likely sometime after he married Susanna de Bruyn two years later.

If the two adjacent dots (dwellings) shown on Frederici’s map (Fig. 10) do indeed pertain to Buffelskraal, then the house below the river must have been erected by Wouter de Vos, at the latest by 1790 when the map was issued. Conceivably the older ‘Hugo’ homestead could then have been occupied by the newly married Daniel Hugo plus any of Daniel’s remaining Hugo nephews and nieces.
Figure 8. Map of the southern part of Africa, formulated on the expedition with Governor van Plettenberg copied from the map of Secretary De Wett; improved by G.J. van de Graaff, according to a closer survey of various parts of this country, when he was a member of this government from 1785 to 1791. Leiste’s map pertaining to the same Van Plettenberg expedition (in 1778) shows the residence of ‘De Vos’ (who married the widow Hugo of Buffelskraal in 1771), whereas the map above, of Governor van der Graaff, indicates it to be that of ‘Hugo’ (Daniel), who apparently occupied it until his death in 1787, but never owned the old family property.
Figure 9. This map is based on Henry Lichtenstein’s travels in 1803/4. It names ‘Buffelskraal’ on the wagenweg and above the Hex River. Was this single dot also intended to mark the home of Wouter de Vos (just south of the river) of which Lichtenstein writes in glowing terms? As both dwellings belonged to him, one point of reference on the map could have been considered sufficient to indicate the De Vos family presence and ownership of the homesteads on both sides of the river.

Figure 10. The Hex River valley, as surveyed and mapped out by J.C. Frederici in 1789/90. It clearly shows a farm on the Hex River and just below it another one next to the wagenweg. These are in all likelihood Buffelskraal’s residences. The former would be the old Hugo house and the latter the new home of Wouter de Vos. As with the van de Graaff and Cloete maps, the other properties in the valley are not marked.
Daniel Hugo died childless in 1787 after which the old house was probably left unoccupied for a while. Later it could have served as a home for one of Wouter’s numerous sons. Wouter de Vos passed away in 1804 and his widow Susanna presumably stayed on at their house, built below the river. This could have been the one visited by among others Henry Lichtenstein in 1803 and Burchell in 1811. The latter was lyrical about the homestead, the signs of affluence, a well-cultivated garden, the smithy, etc. Susanna de Vos died in 1820 leaving a half share of Buffelskraal to each of her sons Philippus (1797) and Dirk (1798). Only one house is mentioned in her will so presumably the original older ‘Hugo’ dwelling had become the home of Philippus who was married in 1817; or was unoccupied. With his brother at the ‘top’ house, Dirk is likely to have stayed at the ‘newer’ house of his parents, below the river, especially after his mother’s death in 1820, and his marriage a year later.

In 1840 Philippus’s portion of the farm was transferred by his childless widow to her brother-in-law Dirk, Field Cornet of Worcester.

South Africa’s remaining vernacular heritage that can be traced back to the eighteenth century is a meagre one. It is therefore fitting to place on record more about the two beautifully restored historic gabled homesteads, still standing on the Buffelskraal/Clovelly complex.

**Clovelly**

The Buffelskraal / Clovelly house of Jacobus Hugo

Clovelly stands just north of the Hex River and was restored by the present owner, Anthony Hill, in 1994. It is an H-plan with thatched roof and a fine hol-bol front gable dated 1768 (Figs. 11 & 12). The straight end gables are topped by a finial in the form of a mock chimney. In the Schumacher drawing the house has half-hipped end gables and appears at best to be T-plan. The front gable could have been ‘upgraded’ to hol-bol at a later thatching (of which there must have been a few over the centuries), or when the additions that created the H-plan were made.

On the face of the gable, to the left, is a circle in which the letters ‘JJC’ appear. The noted authority on the old buildings of the Cape, Hans Fransen, wrote, “it takes little imagination to see that this was once JH’ - Jacobus Hugo - the builder of the house. To the right in a corresponding circle are the letters ‘JAL’. According to Fransen the latter are not old and could have replaced those of Hugo’s wife, CMH - Catharina Magdalena Hoppe. Once the farm was transferred from the estate of J.G. Meiring to Jacobus Petrus Viljoen and Johannes Albertus Loubser on 12 October 1889, the latter had his initials ‘JAL; placed on the gable.

In front the house retains its original casements and moulded board shutters. Single ones flank the teak bo-en-onder door, which the architect John Rennie describes as probably the finest in the district. It is moulded board, not panels, and retains its original locking latch and other ironmongery. The surrounding transom is of yellowwood into which is engraved the date 1768, and the initials, ‘IH M’. This could be ‘JH’ - Jacobus Hugo, the owner - and the ‘M’ may stand for metselaar/builder. The back door is also bo-en-onder and carries the date 1767 (Fig. 24). As dates on plastered gables are often added later, these two carved above the doors are extremely important as they provide irrefutable evidence that Jacobus Hugo commenced building his home.
in 1767, making it one of the oldest surviving in the Cape. The house has superb single-panel doors throughout and a magnificent muurkas takes pride of place in the voorhuis (Fig. 15).

Figure 11. Clovelly’s H-plan gabled homestead after restoration by Anthony Hill in 1994. On the left a modern kitchen occupies the courtyard created by the front and rear wings of the H-plan. The Matroosberg is capped with its first autumn snow. [A. Hill]

Figure 12. Buffelskraal (now Clovelly) H-plan gabled house. When photographed by James Walton in 1965 it was thatched in English style with the ‘saddle’ having a fancy cutout edge. The gable bears the date 1768 and the cursive letters ‘JJC’ appear in a circle on the left while those in the one on the right read ‘JAL’. The words ‘ANO 1767 IHM’ appear on the transom of the back door and ‘ANO 1768 IHM’ on that of the front door (see text for interpretation).
Figure 13. The restored Clovelly manor house seen from the back. There are straight end gables but no gable over the back door, of which the transom carries the date 1767. [AP Sept 1995]

Figure 14. The outbuilding, which appears to the right of the Hugo homestead sketched by Schumacher in 1776 (Fig. 3), is incorporated into Clovelly’s newly renovated administrative offices. [AP July 2002]
Figure 15. One of the treasures in the Clovelly manor house, taking pride of place in the large voorhuis, is this fine muurkas with its fine yellow- and stinkwood doors. The upper section is teak and the doors below are yellowwood with ebony and ivory inlays. [AP June 2000]

Figure 16. Clovelly’s original kitchen is now a TV-room. Note the large open hearth and reed ceiling, which rests on rough-hewn yellowwood beams. [AP June 2000]
Buffelskraal

The Buffelskraal house of Wouter de Vos

Because we have as yet not been able to trace a dated old drawing, reference or description pertaining to the second historic house on Buffelskraal, its date of construction remains unproven. The date of 1778, which currently appears on its excellently proportioned hol-bol gable, was inscribed during restoration in 1997. It is probably based on the assumption that Wouter de Vos built it round about the time of his wife’s death, but as has been suggested previously it is more likely to have been constructed after his second marriage in 1780. This is in all probability the dwelling below the Hex River which is indicated on the Frederici map of 1789/90. The co-author of The Old Buildings of the Cape (1980), Dr Hans Fransen, considers that despite later alterations to the windows, etc., structural features point to it having been built towards the end of the eighteenth century.

Like Clovelly, it too is an H-plan with a similar hol-bol front gable and straight end gables topped by finials, which resemble a mock chimney (Figs. 18 & 19). The four-panelled bo-en-onder front door (c1840) is flanked by Georgian sash windows from the mid-nineteenth century, which have replaced the original casements and shutters. The remaining older casements, as at Clovelly, have low and sloping lintels. There is a superb small hol-bol muurkas of stinkwood and witels [white elder] with inlaid abstract tulips in the centre and sides blocks. It stands in the dining room (Fig. 17). Wouter de Vos was well known for his cabinet making and would have been responsible for those features in his home, and possibly at Clovelly.

Figure 17. This superb hol-bol muurkas of stinkwood and white elder with inlaid abstract tulips stands in Buffelkraal’s dining room. It was moved to its present position during interior renovations in the mid-1980s. [AP June 2000]
Figure 18. The last of these massive oak trees standing in front of the Buffelskaal homestead succumbed in about 1970. The photograph was taken about half a century ago. Note the emphasised gable outline and decorative plasterwork – and the biltong hanging out to dry.

Figure 19. Wouter and Susanna de Vos’s house, the second gabled dwelling on the original Buffelskraal, was sited below the Hex River. From the end of the 18th century to 1860 it was the farm of the illustrious de Vos clan and a favoured stopover for pioneer travellers to the interior.

[James Walton 1965]

As can be seen in a recent photograph (Fig. 20) the front wing has been extended to the left - probably at the time of the Rabies at the end of the 1800s. A bakoond, extending to the outside from the kitchen, is in the right hand back wing of the H-plan homestead (Fig. 22).
Figure 20. The home Wouter de Vos built was an H-plan. Much later the front wing was extended to the left and the courtyard on that side was enclosed to accommodate modern conveniences. Seats were (re)introduced to either end of the stoep by Chris Rabie. [AP June 2000]

Figure 21. This ground plan of Buffelskraal was drawn in 1975. The passage behind the front door would have replaced an original voorhuis. During renovations in 1997, a large voorkamer was created by demolishing the passage walls separating rooms 1 and 2, and a bathroom was added outside bedroom 5.
Figure 22. A vaulted baking oven (bakoond) projects from the end wall and kitchen of Buffelskraal. [AP Sept 1995]

Figure 23. The old wine cellar at Buffelskraal, with its underground tanks, is positioned at a right angle to the main house (see Fig. 20). Restoration work exposed raw (unburnt) brick and clay walls, resting on a foundation of stones. [C. Rabie 1994]
D. Current owners

Anthony Hill and Chris Rabie are proud custodians of their respective historic dwellings. Over the centuries, these two magnificent houses have been witness to and accommodated many pioneer travellers exploring our vast hinterland. We are indeed fortunate that our meagre vernacular heritage is in caring hands.

Figure 24. Anthony Hill and his son Shaun, framed by the yellowwood transom of the Clovelly bo-en-ondert back door into which is carved the date 1767.
Figure 25. Schalk Willem Christiaan (Chris) and son Johannes Christiaan junior (Jan) who will most likely be the fourth generation of Rabies to farm Buffelskraal, which his great-grandfather, Johannes Christiaan, acquired in 1897.
Bibliography


Le Roux, J.G. & W.G. 1999. *Ons Drakensteinse Erfgrond, Simonium*. Paarl: Drakenstein Heemkring. p.7 & 8. [Sion was one of 23 farms surveyed by and allocated to prospective farmers [not Huguenots] by Governor Simon van der Stel in 1687. The name Sion was in all probability given to the farm by its first [unrecorded] owner, who vacated it within a year, and not by Daniel Hugo on his taking up residence in 1688.]


[J.A. Heese states that Daniel Hugo the *stamvader* among others had the *leningplaas* Buffelskraal at De Doorns. I have not been able to confirm this – AP.]


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Jan Rabie and his son Chris, of Buffelskraal, supplied information during numerous visits to the property between 1995 and 2002.

The late Dr James Walton, for discussions about the ownership and age of the Buffelskraal and Clovelly houses.
APPENDIX 1

The owners of Buffelskraal

c1720 Daniel Hugo/Hugot/Hugod (the Huguenot stamvader) receives grazing rights in the Hex River Valley (Buffelskraal). (Official grant not traced).
1727 Pieter (Daniel’s son) receives grazing rights to Buffelskraal (RLR 7/15).
1728 Pieter marries Anna Retief.
1750 Pieter receives freehold grant from H. Swellengrebel (OSF2-236).
1752 Pieter dies.
1756 Buffelskraal transferred to Jacobus Hugo (19 years).
1757 Jacobus Hugo marries Catharina Magdaalena Hoppe.
1767 Anna Hugo (née Retief), wife of Pieter and mother of Jacobus, dies.
   Jacobus commences building gabled homestead.
1768 House completed.
1769 Jacobus Hugo dies.
1771 Wouter de Vos marries the widow Catharina M. Hugo.
1776 Schumacher draws Hex River Valley and Hugo house.
1778 Catharina de Vos dies in childbirth. Buffelskraal devolves on Wouter de Vos.
1780 Wouter de Vos marries Susanna Barbara de Bruyn.
1781 Daniel Hugo (38 years) marries Catharina Magdalena Roux.
1787 Daniel Hugo dies childless, probably while living in the old Hugo homestead.
1804 Wouter de Vos senior dies.
1817 Philippus de Vos marries Margaretha de Bruyn (childless).
1820 Susanna de Vos dies; bequeaths half shares of Buffelskraal to each of her sons, Philippus and Dirk.
1821 Dirk marries Elizabeth Hugo.
1834 Half shares in Buffelskraal eventually transferred to Philippus and Dirk from estate of their mother Susanna de Vos.
1840 Widow of Philippus bequeaths their half share of Buffelskraal to Dirk.
1860 Dirk de Vos sells Buffelskraal to Jan W. and Jan George Meiring (transfer 8/4/1861).
1897 Johannes Christiaan Rabie buys Buffelskraal.
1945 Douglas Hill buys Buffelskraal, above the Hex River – later also known as Lemoenbult-op-Buffelskraal, presently Clovelly.
Inventaris van sodanige Goederen als Catharina Magdalena Hoppe wed. van wijlen den Landbouer Jacobus Hugo in huwelijk gehad hebbende aen ons ondergetekendens heeft op gegeven en aen getoond wezendelijk te besitten, Namentlijk:
Een plaats gelegen aan Hexrivier genaamt de Buffelskraal in eijendom geweten.
Een plaats genaamt de Ezelsjagt gelegen aan Soutrivier in Lening der E. Compagnie.

10 mans slave
4 slavinne
240 beeste
2210 schape
18 paarde

3 wagens
1 kar
2 ploeghe
1 eg
5 grave
3 pikke
1 schepel
2 schoppe
4 buijlen
1 brandewijnsketel
9 leggers
2 halfame
2 baldes
1 mole
2 botervate
2 karns
8 emmers
1 zaals
1 kist met wat timmermansgereedschap
20 sakke
1 tentziijl

1 smitswinkel en wat oud ijzere
6 tuijgen

Aen Contante penningen 900 Caabse gulden.

Als getuijge: A. Krugel, Gideon Joubert

Note that the inventory was a straight list of items – gaps are inserted between categories of goods, i.e. household, livestock, slaves, farm – Antonia Malan.]