Household Inventories at the Cape

A Guidebook for Beginner Researchers

Carohn Cornell
and Antonia Malan
Dedicated to the ‘forgotten people’ whose lives we encounter in these inventories

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Published December 2005 with financial assistance from the TEPC Project funded by the Government of The Netherlands.

Available from the Secretary, Historical Studies, UCT, tel (021) 650 2742, fax (021) 689 7581, or enquire at the Reading Room, Cape Archives Repository.

To give comments, corrections and ideas for improving the book, email during 2006/7 info@capetranscripts.co.za.

Special thanks to Maurits van Bever Donker for research and other assistance.

Design and DTP by Peter Stuckey
Printed by Hansa Reproprint, Cape Town

ISBN 0-620-35645-6

Front cover: Inventory of Robert Schot van Bengal.
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1
Introduction

Second guidebook in a series

This book, *Household Inventories*, is the second in what we hope will be a series of *Guidebooks for Beginner Researchers*. The first is *Slaves at the Cape* and the next may be *Places at the Cape*, a guide to finding out about homes and workplaces and the landscapes that surround them.

*Household Inventories* grew out of the first year of a project for the Transcription of Estate Papers from the Orphan Chamber at the Cape of Good Hope (TEPC) – a partnership of the Universities of Cape Town and Western Cape, the Cape Archives and the National Archives of The Netherlands, funded by the Dutch government.

Estate papers include inventories and auction lists (vendurollen). The inventories list all the possessions in a deceased estate, including livestock and slaves. The *vendurollen* list all the items sold, names of purchasers, and the prices paid at public auctions of deceased estates. The inventories, *vendurollen* and other sources reveal the extent to which many Company servants, free burghers and free blacks were involved in informal trading.

If you want to explore Cape households of the 17th, 18th or early 19th century and the lives of the people who lived in them, this book is for you – even if you’ve never been into the Archives to look at an inventory. We suggest that along with this book, you use *Slaves at the Cape: A Guidebook for Beginner Researchers* for a guided tour of the Cape Archives, Deeds Office and other archives and libraries. Even if you are already an experienced researcher familiar with the inventories, we hope this book offers you something of interest.

A guidebook can be useful when you go travelling but it’s often the stories you hear from other travellers that inspire you to go places you’ve never been before. That’s why this guidebook contains so many stories from the transcribers and from other researchers about what they have found in the inventories and related sources, and how they did their ‘detective work’.

You may want to start with the ‘detective stories’ if you’re interested in how to use inventories as sources in your work.

If you’re looking for technical information on how to access the inventories, go straight to the end of the book to the section, How to access Resources.

Background: the Transcription Project

Since October 2004 the TEPC Project has had a team of transcribers and editors hard at work in the Cape Town Archives Repository. They have been transcribing the household inventories (and some auction rolls) for deceased estates at the Cape from the late 1600s to the mid 1800s – those in the records of the Orphan Chamber. They plan to complete the transcription of the Orphan Chamber inventories in 2006, in the second phase of the Project. (See Section 5 on the role of the Orphan Chamber.)

1 In the first phase of the Project it was called TESPC (Transcription of Estate and Slave Papers at the Cape of Good Hope). For the second phase, the name has been shortened to Transcription of Estate Papers at the Cape of Good Hope (TEPC).
The Team decipher the handwriting of the original documents and transcribe the documents, using a computer programme called Corel™ XmetaL®. The digitized transcripts are archived and made available to the public via the Internet. In future, you will be able to read the Orphan Chamber inventories on the website2, you won’t have to go into the Archives, you won’t have to struggle with the handwriting. This will also save wear and tear on the original documents.

Before now, the only typed version of inventories available to the public were Annemarie Krzesinski-de Widt’s transcriptions of Stellenbosch district inventories from MOOC and 1/STB series3. She started by typing the inventories on a typewriter, then retyped them on computer, then converted them to a format suitable for publication on CD and as a book.

The Team considered what information most researchers would be looking for and inserted ‘tags’ to make searching quicker and easier. For instance, they have ‘tagged’ the reference number of the inventory, the date, the names of people (free people and slaves), names of places and even names of ships. This means that researchers can quickly search for and compile lists of heirs, slaves, and the names and locations of farms and houses. With further searching other items can be found: columns of money value, debtors, creditors, livestock, crops, and so on.

The digitised version thus makes it easier to put together a picture of life at the Cape and to recreate neighbourhoods through history: to track the growth of settler families, the number of marriages, ownership of land and slaves and other forms of wealth, and how assets were moved back and forth through time. For instance, we can trace the movement of slaves between household members and families.

Some visual features of the original document cannot be incorporated into the transcribed material. These include the wax seals of individuals and of the Orphan Chamber, the colour of the paper, the different handwriting within one document and the signatures of burghers, free blacks and officials. A solution would be to photograph every page and make these images available in conjunction with the transcribed material. We hope that visual representation of the original will be available to future generations.

(Fiona Clayton, TEPC transcriber)

Work-in-Progress

We didn’t plan to write a book as part of the TEPC project but so much material and so much enthusiasm was generated in the first phase of the project that it seemed a pity not to. The expertise and commitment of the Team and the strong interest shown in public workshops and seminars on the Team’s work have contributed a great deal to the book.

Please see this book as work-in-progress. We would welcome your comments and suggestions. You will notice several inconsistencies in style and referencing as you read the book.

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2 See the section, TEPC on the Internet, at the end of the book.
3 Annemarie Krzesinski-de Widt, ‘Die boedelinventarisie van erflater in die distrik Stellenbosch, 1679-1806’ (Stellenbosch Museum, 2002).
Timeline of Cape Colony, 1650s–1850s

1652 – Dutch East India Company (VOC) outpost established at Table Bay. First Fort built.
1657 – Old Cape Freehold grants in Table Valley. Freeburghers set up as independent farmers along the Liesbeeck River (now Observatory/Rondebosch area).
1658 – First slaves brought to the Cape, from West Africa.
1663 – Outposts established in Hottentots-Holland and Saldanha Bay areas; Khoekhoen resistance and conquest continued.
1666 – Settlements established in Vishoek (Fish Hoek) and Saldanha Bay. Building of the Castle started in Cape Town.
1667 – First slaves brought to the Cape from around Indian Ocean.
1673 – Orphan Chamber established.
1679 – Stellenbosch founded by Simon van der Stel. Castle in Cape Town completed. Farmers settled along the Eerste River.
1685 – H.A. van Reede, Commissioner of Enquiry, made changes in local administration.
1687 – Europeans under Company direction settled in Berg River area (Drakenstein, Paarl).
1688 – About 200 French Huguenots arrived at the Cape and settled in Drakenstein region, e.g. Franschhoek.
1697 – Drakenstein a separate administrative area.
1698 – Settlement of Wagenmaker’s Vallei (Wellington).
1700 – Settlement of Land van Waveren (Winterberg, Witzenberg and Roodezand, later called Tulbagh).
1704 – Dutch Reformed Church built (Moederkerk).
1713 – Smallpox epidemic.
1714 – Holders of loan places to pay tithes to government; by this time about 400 farms granted in freehold.
1730 – The first trekboers reached the George area and trekked inland into Langekloof.
1732 – Governor de la Fontaine’s survey of freeburghers at the Cape.
1734 – Great Brak River proclaimed the eastern boundary of the Cape.
1739 – Expansion of stockfarmers into Overberg, along south coast and through Little Karoo. First locally born Governor of the Cape, Hendrik Swellengrebel. Trekboers reached the Doom River, moving northwest to southern Namaqualand and east into the Hantam and Roggeveld (northeast of Calvinia).
1740 – Tulbagh Code to regulate behaviour of free people and slaves.
1743 – Trekboer loan farms in Roggeveld. Loan places could be converted to loan freehold.
1745 – District of Swellendam separated from Stellenbosch.
1750 – Surveyor C.D. Wentzel drew up a plan of central Cape Town showing streets and house blocks.
1754 – Census: 5510 Europeans, 6279 slaves in the Cape Colony.
1765 – Slaves and Khoekhoen obliged to carry passes.
1780 – The Fish River made the eastern boundary of the Cape Colony.
1786 – District of Graaff-Reinet established.
1792 – Moravian Mission founded at Genadendal.
1793 – Lombard Bank established by VOC Commissioners.
1795 – Burgher revolt against the VOC in Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet. First British Occupation of the Cape.
1798 – Colonial boundary expanded, linking Plettenberg’s Beacon in the east with the Riet River and the Buffalo River, north of Kamiesberg. Dutch East India Company liquidated. First mosque in Southern Africa established in Dorp Street by Tuan Guru.
1799 – Fort Frederick built in Algoa Bay by British soldiers. First London Missionary Society (LMS) station at Zak River.
1804 – District of Tulbagh separated from Stellenbosch.
1806 – Second British Occupation of the Cape.
1807 – British banned the slave trade and official importation of slaves to the Cape ended. Slaves captured on other nation’s vessels brought to Cape as apprentices (‘prize negroes’).
1808 – Jandisselsvlei (Clanwilliam) founded. Slave revolt, led by Louis of Mauritius, defeated.
1809 – Governor Caledon’s ‘Hottentot Proclamation’ to control Khoekhoen labour.
1811 – Louis Thibault surveyed properties along road from Cape Town to Simon’s Town. Caledon and George founded.
1812 – Cradock and Grahamstown founded.
1813 – Governor Cradock’s proclamation to convert loan farms to perpetual quitrent tenure. Indenture of Khoekhoen children on farms.
1814 – The Cape Colony formally ceded to Britain.
1816 – Office of Slave Protector established and Slave Registers began.
1818 – Cape Town’s Burgher Senate decided to expand town outside old boundaries. Beaufort West founded. Settlement of land beyond Orange River.
1820 – Worcester founded as sub-district of Tulbagh.
1822 – English became the official language of the Cape Colony.
1825 – Slave revolt, led by Galant of the Cape, defeated.
1826 – Guardian of Slaves appointed (renamed Protector of Slaves in 1830).
1828 – Registrar of Deeds created to administer freehold and perpetual quitrent grants. Ordinance 49 imposed controls on African workers in Cape Colony; Ordinance 50 ended Khoekhoen indenture.
1830 – A new road opened to the Overberg (Sir Lowry’s Pass). Colesberg founded.
1834 – Local government at the Cape. Abolition of slavery in British colonies but slaves apprenticed to former owners at the Cape. Private companies took over from Orphan Chamber as executor of estates. The High Court was responsible for the care of orphans.
1836 – Settlers left the Eastern Cape on the ‘Great Trek’.
1838 – End of apprenticeship period; Slave Emancipation.
1847 – Colonial boundary extended to the Orange River. Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal Boer republics recognized.
1854 – First Parliament of Cape Colony.
2
What are the Inventories and Auction Lists (Vendurollen)¹

A
n inventory is a list of the assets of an estate, sometimes with values attached. Within a few
days of a householder’s death, a list had to be made of all his/her fixed properties, goods
and chattels. In Cape Town this was done by the Orphan Chamber and in the country by
neighbours. There had to be at least two witnesses. The inventory was not for tax purposes, but to
see how much the estate was worth so that it could be shared among the heirs.

The list was sent to the Master of the Orphan Chamber to be transcribed by a clerk according to a
standard format, signed and then numbered and filed in more or less chronological order. If a pub-
lic auction (vendu) of the inventoried possessions took place, the sales were itemised in detail and
filed. The inventories and vendurollen or auction lists are stored in the Cape Archives – very valuable
sources for researchers. Though recording the same things, inventories and vendurollen were made for
different purposes and so the layout of the documents is not the same.

What are Inventories?

Inventories give the name of the deceased, heirs to the estate, surviving spouse and children from
all marriages, and the date and sometimes the cause of death. Inventories list:

- the name and location of fixed property
- the contents of any buildings on the property and of the yard or farm, and the contents of
  any boxes, cabinets or cupboards, as well as the bedding on bedsteads; perishable food was
  not usually included
- livestock and slaves, often but not always under separate headings
- precious metal valued by weight, whether jewellery, tableware or ornaments
- sometimes, in larger households, catalogues of book titles and pictures
- debts and credits of the estate.

Short inventories list items either from most to least valuable, or in the order in which the apprais-
ers had access to the items. In dwellings with more than one main room possessions were generally
listed room by room in the house, attic, store-rooms, outbuildings and the farmyard. The function
of rooms is shown by their contents.

The room-by-room appraisals are valuable sources of information about households as a whole
because they show the size and layout of the house and the way spaces were used. The precise
details as to date, person and place mean that inventories can be linked to many other sources.

¹ The inventories and auction lists used in this book were collected by Antonia Malan over the years and are not the
authentic edited TEPC transcriptions.
² ‘Inventaris en taxatie’ often appears in the introduction to inventories. This translates as ‘inventory and appraisal/
evaluation’. ‘Taxatie’ does not mean taxation.
Structure of a simple inventory

Reference: MOOC8/21.44     Date: 29 Augustus 1796

Family, heirs and executors:
Inventaris ... Margaretha Smit ... den burger Nicolaas Sertijn .... ab intestato ... van vaderszyde:
Margaretha Smith huisvrouw van den burger Jan Mosterd; van moeders zyde: de kinderen van
wylen Klaas Muller; Jan Muller, Jacobus Muller ..... 

Location: Een plaats ofte hofsteede gent. de Poespaskraal geleegen agter de Steenbergen onder
het Kaaps District.

Contents of house, outbuildings and yard:
In 't woonhuis en aldaar in 't voorhuis
1 kleyn vierkant tafel
1 oude opslag etens tafel
6 oude stoelen

In de voorkamer ter regterhand
2 oude ledige kisten
10 ledige koorn zakken
1 hand zaag
1 oude kapstok

In de voorkamer ter linkerhand
1 wit ophaal gordyn
1 spiegeltje met vergulde lysten
1 lessenaar
1 oude klederkast
1 ledikant met wit behangsel waarop 1
bed met zyn toebehoooren
1 tafel met steene blad
7 oude stoelen
1 schiet geweer

In de agterkamer
3 oude rakken
1 broodmes
1 kelder met 5 ledige vlessen
1 oude vat
1 koper kandelaar
1 tinne kandelaar
2 koper coffy kannen
1 koper confoor met 1 tinne ketel
1 tinne schenkblad
1 tinne trekpot

In de keuken
1 combuis tafel
1 water halfaum
2 emmers
2 yster potten

Op de werf
2 oude wagens
1 oude ploeg en voorts wat pikken, graven
en rommeling

Beestiaal
30 trek ossen
1 ryd paard
5 merrys

Slaves: Lyfeigenen
1 slave jonge gent. January van Mosambicque, beeswagter
1 slave jonge gent. January van Mosambicque, werksjonge
1 slave jonge gent. July van Bengalen
1 slave meyd gent. Dina van de Caab
1 slave jongetje gent. Abraham van de Caab
1 slave jongetje gent. Fredrik van de Caab
1 slave meysie gent. Jeannet van de Caab
1 slave meysie gent. Hannetje van de Caab
1 suigent slaven meysie gent. Saartje van de
Caab
[the last 5 being children of Dina van de
Caab]

Debts and Credits
Inneschulden; Rixdollars 320
Lasten des Boedels Rd 3666.32

Signatories: [names of witnesses and officials]

Common abbreviations
CA(R) Cape Archives (Repository)
CO Colonial Office
CJ Council of Justice

MOOC Master of the Orphan Chamber
SO Slave Office
STB Stellenbosch
DO Deeds Office
What are Auction Lists (*Vendurollen*)?

If a public auction (\textit{vendu}) of the inventoried possessions took place, the name, place, date, buyers, prices, and so on, were itemised in detail and filed. *Vendurollen* are evidence of the prices (and relative value) of objects, livestock and slaves, and of their circulation in the Colony.

### Structure of a simple *vendurol* (auction list)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items sold</th>
<th>Purchaser</th>
<th>Amount paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Basket</td>
<td>Frans Pits Smith</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bedstead with curtains</td>
<td>Benjamin Lodewyk</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Spanish Dollars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Gilder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 half Gilder</td>
<td>Hermanus van der Schyff</td>
<td>37.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Schelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ropees</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rds 47.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signatories:** [names of witnesses and officials]

### Where to find Inventories and Auction Rolls in the Archives

The Archives of the Master of the Supreme Court (Cape of Good Hope) is housed in the Cape Archives Repository, Roeland Street, Cape Town. Anyone may read these in the public reading room of the Archives. The Master of the Orphan Chamber (MOOC) documents include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volumes</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOOC 7/1/1-140</td>
<td>Wills and Appraisals</td>
<td>1688-1835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOOC 8/1-48</td>
<td>Inventories</td>
<td>1673-1834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOOC 8/49-51</td>
<td>Inventories and Appraisements</td>
<td>1780-1834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOOC 8/75</td>
<td>Inventories not bound</td>
<td>1673-1825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOOC 8/76-77</td>
<td>Index to Inventories</td>
<td>1692-1834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOOC10/1-49</td>
<td>Vendu Rolls</td>
<td>1691-1834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some household inventories are filed elsewhere in the Archives, for instance in the 1\STB (Stellenbosch) series. Stellenbosch Museum has transcribed and published the inventories from the MOOC8 and 1\STB series that refer to properties in the district (Krzesinski-de Widt 2002).

The papers of the Council of Justice and the Master of Insolvent Estates also include inventories of people’s possessions.

Inventories dating to the 18th and 19th century are thus to be found in a number of places.
Detail from inventory of free black Klaas Gerritz van Bengalen, 1697.
List of goods belonging to Manuel van Macasser, auctioned in 1718.

Auction of slave woman Petronella van de Caab with her child, 1720.

Detail from auction list of the estate of Dionisius van Aassen.
In this section you will look at transcripts of two inventories and an extract from an auction list – all for the same family. If you haven’t worked with such documents before, take this as an opportunity to try out your detective skills. The inventory takes you on a guided tour of the house. It’s as if you go in through the front door and look at every room in turn – noticing everything they own, even checking the contents of every shelf and every cupboard.

1740: inventory of the estate of Anna Vik (Fick) of Stellenbosch who left her bereaved husband Bernardus van Billion with three young children. Notice that wives kept their own surnames.

1746: inventory of the estate of Bernardus van Billion which reveals that he married three times and had children with each wife.

1747: (extract from) auction list of van Billion’s estate.

It would be ideal if you could use the ‘toolkit’ recommended in the section, How to access Resources, at the end of this book, but with this first inventory you could try some detective work on your own. Make a note of words you don’t understand if you want to look them up. By the way, beds have many different names in the inventories …

Read an inventory to picture life in a household.

This first inventory is quite short and not too difficult to understand if you know Afrikaans. It lists everything that Anna Vik and her husband owned at the time of her death in 1740, except for perishable goods. Never mind if you don’t know the meaning of every word. The purpose of this exercise is to get a picture of Anna’s household and lifestyle as you go through the inventory.

---

1 These transcripts, used in a TEPC Workshop for educators in the Overberg, are not the digitized versions from the TEPC project.
MOOC8/6.39, 1740: Anna Fick (Vik), Stellenbosch

Staat, Ende Inventaris, mitsgaders taxatie van alle sodanige goederen, als ‘er ab intestato zijn naarge- laten, en met ‘er dood ontruijmt door Anna Geertruijd Vik, ten voordeelen van haar nagelatene man Bernardus van Billioen ter Eenre, en nageblevene minderjarige kinderen, als Maria oud 7, Aletta oud 4 en Johanna van Billioen oud 1 Jaar, ter andere zijde, soo ende in dier voegen als deselve door Johannes van Ellwe, Jan Georg Therde, Pieter Wion en Christiaan Pas, zijn opgenomen, mitsgads. door d’ondergeteekende gecommitt. weesm. agtervolgens ’t besluijt van den 7e Maij deeses Jaars 1740 in forma probante gebracht zijnde, in deeser voegen zijn getaxeert, als:

Een Opstal, in leening van d’E. Comp. gelegen over de Berg, gent. de Nonna, Rdrs. 66.32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Een Opstal, in leening van d’E. Comp. over de Berg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agter in de winkel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Leedige kadels en 8 oude zijdooke sacken</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

op de Leenings-Plaats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Mans-slaaf</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125 beesten @ rx. 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 schapen @ 24 stuivers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Paard, met Zadel, en toom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 oude wagen en 1 dito ploeg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 dito Egh met 1 Kern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 dito botervat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Somma Rdrs. 1280

Lasten des Boedels

Aan de weescamer deeser steede, over het moederlijk Bewijs zijner drie kinderen, bij wijlen zijn eerste huijsvrouw Maria Walters verwekt, blijvens acte van Uijtkoop, de dato 23e Maij 1732

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rds.</td>
<td>397.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aan Monsr. Johannes Cruijwagen</td>
<td>133.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aan Monsr. Gerrit van der Bijl 83-16</td>
<td>83.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aan diverse persoonen over Kladschulden</td>
<td>25.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulx den boedel suijver te vooren is een somma van rx. 640</td>
<td>640</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aldus geformeert, geresumeert, en getaxeert Ter Weescamer aan Cabo de goede Hoop den 23e augustus 1740.

- What can you tell about this family and their life in Stellenbosch?
- How old are the children?
- Is the estate solvent? Are they wealthy?
• What can you tell about the life of their one slave on the loan farm in the Overberg?
• What do you notice about the language being used?

Was there an auction after Anna’s death in 1740? You could check but maybe there was no need for an auction. After all, it’s clear from the sums at the end of the inventory that the estate was solvent so there were no creditors demanding to be paid out. Also, the children were too young to get their inheritance as yet, so maybe the estate was left intact for the time being — not put up for auction.

The inventory of the estate at the time of their mother’s death was a legal requirement, in order to work out what the children’s share of the estate would be — even if their father married again and had other children.

For a detailed account of how inheritance worked at the Cape, look at the section on the Orphan Chamber and Vendu(e) Office.

Compare inventories to see changes over time.

Compare the inventories of Anna Vik and Bernardus van Billion to see: has he gone up or down in the world since Anna’s death in 1740?
• Any guesses as to how this happened?
• What can you tell about his life before he married Anna?

This is an extract from the long inventory of the landbouwer Bernardus van Billion. He was survived by his wife, Judith van der Wat, and children Anna van Billion (married to Bartholomeus Zaaijman), Ernst Hendrick aged 20 and Regina Balderina van Billion aged 16 years, procreated with his first wife Maria Walters; also Maria aged 13, Aletta aged 10 and Johanna van Billion aged 7 years, procreated with his second wife Anna Geertuijd Vik; and finally Johanna Geertuijd van Billion aged 2 years, procreated with his last wife.

• Has Bernardus van Billion gone up or down in the world since Anna Vik’s death in 1740?
• Any guesses as to how this happened?
• What can you tell about his life before he married Anna?

This is an extract from the long inventory of the landbouwer Bernardus van Billion. He was survived by his wife, Judith van der Wat, and children Anna van Billion (married to Bartholomeus Zaaijman), Ernst Hendrick aged 20 and Regina Balderina van Billion aged 16 years, procreated with his first wife Maria Walters; also Maria aged 13, Aletta aged 10 and Johanna van Billion aged 7 years, procreated with his second wife Anna Geertuijd Vik; and finally Johanna Geertuijd van Billion aged 2 years, procreated with his last wife.

• Has Bernardus van Billion gone up or down in the world since Anna Vik’s death in 1740?
• Any guesses as to how this happened?
• What can you tell about his life before he married Anna?

MOOC8/6.121, December 1746: Bernardus van Billion

Fixed property
a house and plot in the village of Stellenbosch,
a farm and homestead called Coetsenburg in Stellenbosch,
a farm and homestead called De Groenerivier in the district of Stellenbosch,
a farm and homestead called De Bonterivier in the same district,
and an opstal called Nonna lying on the Hexerivier.

Moveable property includes
Lijkeijgenen
1 slaave jonge gent. February van Madagascar
1 " Abram van Mallebaar
1 " Claas van Rio de la Goa
1 " Jacob van Rio de la Goa
1 " Abram van de Caab
1 " Fortuijn van de Caab
1 slavine gent. Cornelia van de Caab
1 " Lea van Rio de la Goa,
met haar kinderen gent. Pieter, Jan en
Philida van de Caab, synde haar vierde kind gent. Steyn soovolgens 't getuijgenis der Wed. also ook der verdere gesamentlijke erfgenaamen door den overleedene aan sijn dogter Regina Balderina in eijgendom geschenken
1 slavine gent. Rachel van Rio de la Goa met
haar kind gent. April van de Caab.
Compare the prices of slaves and other possessions.

By way of comparison, the *opstal* was sold for Rixdollars 234, an ox wagon for Rixdollars 21, and a large iron cooking pot for Rixdollars 8.

This is a short extract from the long *vendurol* (auction list) for the estate of Bernardus van Billion. He left so many possessions that the auction took two days. This is the list of the slaves who were auctioned.

### MOOC10/5.74, 11-12 January 1747: Auction of van Billion’s estate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of slave</th>
<th>Name of Purchaser</th>
<th>Purchase price Rixdollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February van Madagascar</td>
<td>Andries Harting</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham van Mallabaar</td>
<td>d’Weduwe Billion</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claas van Rio de la Goa</td>
<td>d’Weduwe Bastiaansz</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob van Rio de la Goa</td>
<td>Pieter van der Bijl</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lea van Rio de la Goa met haar kind Philiida</td>
<td>Juff. Van Brakel</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham van de Caab</td>
<td>Hugo Lambregts</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forthuijn van de Caab</td>
<td>Frans Hendrick Batenhorst</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter van de Caab</td>
<td>d’Heer Mijering</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel van Rio de la Goa</td>
<td>Andries Harting</td>
<td>151.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornelia van de Caab</td>
<td>Arnoldus Maasdorp</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan van de Caab</td>
<td>d’Weduwe Billion</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April van de Caab</td>
<td>Pieter Wion</td>
<td>121.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Detail from list of items sold at auction. Detail from inventory of slaves, one being confined in chains at the battery.
Here are some lively descriptions of inventory-taking and of auctions.

Samuel Hudson writes about the inventory of the estate of a young man who died in his house while on business in Cape Town.

Samuel Hudson’s essay, ‘Auctions – their Good and Evil Tendency’, describes the goings-on at auctions.

Therese Benade’s novel Kites of Good Fortune gives a lively fictional account of the day the inventory was taken in Olof Bergh’s home in Cape Town, 1687. This was an unusual inventory – made while the owner is still alive, a prisoner of the VOC. The description is based on the inventory in the Archives (CJ 2914).

Johanna Duminy’s diary gives a rollicking description of a farm auction in the Overberg in 1797 – here translated from the original Cape Dutch.

The wide variety of signatures found on inventories.
Inventory of the estate of a young man who died while on business in Cape Town

Upon the whole this Institution I have every reason to suppose administers with great justice in these cases and [its officers] are faithful guardians to the Widows and the Fatherless tho’ many Ill-natured insinuations have got into circulation. I have upon enquiry found them generally to arise from disappointed expectations or [from] those whose report was not to be rely’d on. I can speak with certainty in a case that came immediately under my own Eye. A young Man Died at my House. He had arrived a few weeks before with an Investment of Wines from a House in London. [As] soon as his Death was known The Orphans’ Chamber came and sealed up his Papers, took an Account of the Sums due him from the purchaser of his property. After defraying the expenses of his Funeral and the payment of his just debts the whole of the Money was remitted by me to the House in London with the greatest exactness and promptitude.


‘Auctions – their Good and Evil Tendency’: Cape Town c1800

On the Morning of the Auction a Boy [ie a slave] is sent round with a Brass Dish to tinkle at each corner of the Streets to give notice to the Inhabitants that there will be a Vendue at such a House … The highest bidder becomes the purchaser. Sometimes there are two bidders and neither of them will advance a sixpence more. On such occasions the Auctioneer takes several pieces of Money from his pocket and cries even or odd. By this means they instantly decide who is the purchaser. The money is not paid at the time of the Auction as in England & Other places, nor is any deposit made at the time of Sale. If the person is known or has any friend who will stand forward as his security he has the usual Credit of two months after which period he must attend at an office established for that purpose and take up his Auction Bills. Some of the Inhabitants meet with great Indulgences from the manager of this concern who is a Man of the World, loves to eat and drink of the best things, a good providence provider for the Sons of Luxury and extravagance. A well timed present procures you another Month’s Credit perhaps Two …

Many persons who attend these Auctions have small Shops which from having no Capital they gradually furnish by these means and sometimes are very fortunate in their endeavours. Some respectable Tradesmen in Cape Town of great property have begun by the same means and now have Capitals to Import their own Merchandice to a considerable amount …

The principal amusement of the Ladies of the Cape is attending these Auctions and [they] will sit mixed up among a variety of frowsy smells that would really make an English woman extremely Ill for three or four hours listening to the low and not unfrequently obscene Jokes of the Auctioneer whose chief object is to keep his Audience in good humour … There is a great deal of Trick and

Samuel Hudson

Samuel Eusebius Hudson – a self made man – came to the Cape in 1796 as an ‘upper servant’ in the retinue of Lady Anne and Andrew Barnard, Secretary to the British Governor. Hudson went back to England for about 10 years, but returned to live and work in Cape Town until his death in 1828. He seems to approve of the way the Orphan Chamber operates – despite rumours in the town about inefficiency and corruption. He describes the quick and efficient inventory of the estate of a young man who died while visiting the Cape on business. In ‘Auctions – their Good and Evil Tendency’, Hudson gives a vivid picture of auctions in Cape Town. Hudson’s own estate was inventoried in 1828 (MOOC8/43.23).
Knavery in these Sales which the Government would act wisely to put a stop to ... A Great deal more might be said respecting Vendues and their good and evil Tendency. These few remarks are the result of actual observation in a long residence in Cape Town.


Detail of inventory of fixed properties: two farms and a loan farm.

Detail from a rural inventory, 1750.
Have you ever had two men and a slave take your whole house apart, inspecting and describing your every possession for their inventory? This usually happens after one is dead. But I was alive. I had to show them everything, even my most intimate garments while they checked off the few things the Commander had allowed me for my personal use.

Dominique de Chavonnes arrived first with a look of triumph on his face as he looked around my living room.

“What a fine sale we will have! Everyone is looking forward to buying these fine things that you and your husband have so greedily been hoarding, Mistress Bergh.” He fingered Olof’s swords covetously. “What does a man do with nine swords, I ask you?”

My head spun as I quickly moved towards the window from where, to my relief, I saw Mr Linnes mounting the steps. I rushed to open the door for him. With him was his slave, Claes, a man who was well known to my family but today was keeping his eyes on the ground.

‘Come in, Mr Linnes, we have been waiting for you.’ He saw my anxiety but did nothing to reassure me.

‘I’m a busy man. This inventory comes as an added inconvenience. Shall we get on with it? Here is the list of items you are allowed to keep. The Commander is graciously granting you the use of one bolt of fabric and your sewing equipment. You are not allowed to take any furniture. Your husband may have his bed and bed linen, but you will have to look to your family to provide these for you. The Commander made it very clear that you were to have no luxuries.’

‘Let’s get started,’ I said, holding back my tears.

They began in the living room. Claes was instructed to take everything off the walls: Olof’s swords, canes, guns and other weapons, my little watercolours, my portrait (thank goodness I had rescued Olof’s half-finished portrait from the Claudius studio before they left). Then they listed the furniture and everything on display.

Then the real invasion started. I stood by as the slave unpacked bolt upon bolt of fabric and sewing equipment, my large stock of silver and gold buttons. I watched as my dresses were taken out of the cupboard one by one and laid on the bed in the corner. Stupid men, they did not know much about women’s clothing. I had to tell them what many of the garments were called. I asked to unpack my underwear but they would not have it.

‘My orders were not to allow you to touch anything, Mistress Bergh. Will you kindly stay back and allow the slave to do his work!’

The last rooms in the house to be inventoried were the kitchen and pantry. I was allowed to take all
the dry goods and a small number of dishes, pots and pans and a laundry iron. We loaded these into a basket. Then Linnes and I went upstairs with another basket to collect our clothes. He checked off every item as I packed; it was meant to impress on me that I was receiving the Company’s charity and that nothing in the house belonged to me anymore.

May I take one small mirror?’ I asked faintly.

‘Not on the list, is it?’ he answered firmly.

I could hear De Chavonnes and Claes fitting the bolts to the outside of the doors. Linnes gave me no help carrying the basket downstairs. I took from the chest in the living room the bolt of chintz I was allowed. I struggled to get the basket outside. Linnes just watched.

Silently they secured the house, closed all the shutters, bolted the doors from the outside and placed huge brass locks on the bolts. My house and earthly possessions were handcuffed and shackled, properly taken into custody.

Detail from an inventory listed room by room.

Detail from an inventory of jewellery, gold and silver work.
Monday 27 1797:
We arrived at the sale. There were a good many people. The tables were laid and breakfast was served ... After that the sale started. The sheep were sold in fifties at 80 and 90 riksdalers. There were 700 sheep. The goats were also sold in fifties at 35 riksdalers. When that was finished the farm was put up for sale ... The highest bid was thirteen thousand guilders, which was his own bid. This led to a fight between two farmers. We had the greatest fun watching them. Each got in some severe blows. Wine was served and they drank merrily. The wine flowed like water. My neighbour Reedelinghuis bought the farm by private agreement in partnership with his brother-in-law for twelve thousand guilders. After the meal they started selling horses, bad mares, which nevertheless fetched a good price. [A fight broke out after a bid was refused.] ... Then they stopped selling. Many farmers paid the purchase money they owed to the Bode. Duminy asked me whether I wanted to drive back to Holtshausen to sleep there, and return to the sale the following day. I said to him, ‘No, I want to stay here and see the fun. I have got our bedding and they have given me a big katel to sleep on in the room here.’ Duminy said, ‘Well then stay. I’ll have my bed made up in the wagon tonight.’ I proposed to cousin van Riet that she should also stay, and told her that she could share my bed. ... As soon as the candles were lit the violins came out in the gallery, and everyone started dancing merrily ... At nine o’clock our table was laid and we ate with relish. After the meal we ordered our bedding to be brought in, and I had my katel made up ... There were twenty-four of us in the room. [Next morning] At eight o’clock the table was laid and warm meat and butter was served. The violins were still going strong. At nine o’clock the sale started again. I ordered my lame ox to be slaughtered, and also another which couldn’t walk. I bought a skin of salt, and had the two oxen salted in a skin, and then returned to the sale where they were just starting to sell a harp, which I bought, as well as two bags of meal ... I also bought a large katel. We had our things packed on cousin van Riet’s wagon. We drove along with van Riet’s wagon coming on behind. We laughed so much that we could hardly contain ourselves ...
Map of the southwestern Cape, 1782 (CA M1/877).
5
The Orphan Chamber at the Cape

Why study the Orphan Chamber records?

The inventories and the auction lists (vendurollen) of the Orphan Chamber are invaluable sources for researchers interested in the life and times of people at the Cape during the VOC period and into the early British period.

The inventories and the vendurollen are stored in the Cape Archives. These records are being transcribed by the TEPC project team and will be made available on the TANAP website (www.tanap.net).

Please note that this section on the Orphan Chamber is work-in-progress. Please email info@cape-transcripts.co.za if you have additional information or if you would like to correct/clarify this section.

Orphan Chambers

Orphan Chambers had existed in the different states of the Netherlands for some time and this Dutch Law was extended to the territories of the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie – VOC).\footnote{A.E. van Zwieten (1996: 320–321) demonstrates how the concept of an Orphan Chamber was long established in the Netherlands and then transported to the colonies.} The Orphan Chamber (Weeskamer) was set up in 1673 and functioned throughout the VOC period and into the early British period. During the British period, a form of the Orphan Chamber continued under the jurisdiction of the High Court, but only to take care of orphans and no longer to administer estates. After 1834, private companies such as the South African Association for the Administration and Settlement of Estates (which later became Syfrets) took over from the Orphan Chamber as executor of estates.

‘Guardian of Orphans’

At the Cape the Orphan Chamber’s main responsibility was to act as legal guardian and protect the interests of orphans who were the legitimate children of free people (Company servants, freeburghers and free blacks):

• If one or both parents died and left any children either under the age of 25 (and unmarried) or mentally unsound, then those children were placed under guardianship
• If one of the child’s parents survived, he/she needed to apply to the Orphan Chamber to be a guardian to their own child, unless the will already provided for this\footnote{Johannes van der Linden (1828: 98). According to van Zwieten, the remaining parent was always made guardian, but had to have a second guardian appointed with him/her (1996: 325).}
• No legitimate child could be disinherited: Dutch law provided that a child must receive at the least a child’s portion of the inheritance. Illegitimate children could not inherit from their father, but could inherit from their mother\footnote{Van der Linden (1828: 87–91).}
The Orphan Chamber was legal guardian of the orphans even if it was expressly prohibited from acting as an executor in the will of the deceased.

The Orphan Chamber had to fulfil a number of requirements common to all guardians under Dutch Law:

- ensure the making of an inventory
- look after and educate the child
- maintain the property
- settle all the debts and credits of the estate before it was divided for inheritance.

Other responsibilities

After the devastating effect of the smallpox epidemic of 1713, the Council of Policy empowered the Orphan Chamber to protect the transfer of property of all free individuals at the Cape. All wills and deaths at the Cape had to be registered with the Orphan Chamber but the Chamber only inventoried and acted as executor for the categories of estates listed below.

The Orphan Chamber was the executor of the estates of free persons:

- who left heirs under 25 (and unmarried) or of unsound mind
- who left heirs who were either not in the country or not apparent
- who died *ab intestato* or *ex testamento* (without a will or testament)
- if there was a specific request in the will or testament for the Chamber to act as executor
- if the will did not specifically exclude the Chamber from acting as executor.

The Orphan Chamber had to track down any possible heirs. Heirs residing outside of the country of death had to send a power of attorney proving their relationship to the deceased, and the Orphan Chamber would then pay out what was rightfully theirs. If an individual died without children or spouse, then the inheritance went to their next of kin, whether brothers, sisters, parents, or cousins (sometimes even to the 10th degree). If no heir was found within 50 years from the date of death, then the estate reverted to the government.

According to two important commentators on life at the Cape, François Valentijn during the VOC period and William Wilberforce Bird during the British period, the Orphan Chamber did a good job of looking after orphans and executing intestate estates. However, Valentijn points out (and Bird alludes to this) that as the Orphan Chamber was free to decide how much money an orphan needed to live on, they often allocated the bare minimum and used the money left over from the inheritance to help with the upkeep of poorer orphans. Whether any of this money went into the pockets of the Orphan Chamber is an open question.

The estate was usually sold through public auction so inheritance was often in the form of money not property. However, the Orphan Chamber could allow the surviving parent to administer the whole estate intact (upon guarantee of the children’s inheritance) for the sake of the children.

**Bird: Inheritance at the Cape**

In 1822 William Wilberforce Bird, Secretary to the Governor, explained the system and process of inheritance at the Cape:

> Under the laws of the colony the widow takes one-half, whether it be real or personal property, and the other half is divided equally between the children, whether male or female; and if no

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4 Van der Linden (1828: 101-102).
6 Bird (1823: 54-55)
children, to the nearest relatives of both father and mother. No one by will can deprive a child of its share ... But a man can leave to his widow, in addition to the half she inherits, one child’s portion. At the death of the widow unmarried, her half descends, in like manner, to the children; but if she has a second husband, and children by him, her property goes equally between such husband and the children of both beds, as does the property of the husband at her death.

If a married person dies intestate, and leaves children under age, the Orphan Chamber is at liberty, on the application of the surviving husband or wife, to suffer him or her to remain in possession of the whole estate, on condition that an inventory be taken, and a fair valuation be made of the same, according to which valuation, the half of the net balance is assigned to the children in equal shares, and left in the hands of the survivor, provided good security be given, that the share of each of the children will be forthcoming at their becoming of age. The principle of this regulation is, that it is in the interest of the children themselves to have their parent remaining in the undisturbed possession of his concern, in order to prevent the danger of loss, arising from a sudden disposal of the estate; and also to preserve more fully to the surviving parent, the means of educating his children.

It is always to be kept in view, that community of property among married people is the law of the colony, unless excepted or restricted by a settlement before marriage. ... there is no advantage from primogeniture.

Bird pointed out that the system of inheritance made individuals hesitate to invest large sums in their farms or houses as these would not be passed on to their descendants. He describes an auction that took place within a month of the individual’s death, where the family ‘bid against each other, for a slave or an article of furniture, with rancorous pertinacity’. 7

The Commissary of Auctions – Vendu(e) Office

Many estates were put up for public auction as all outstanding debts had to be settled before the heirs could receive their inheritance. Auctions also enabled division of the estate to take place. Other reasons for auctions included remarriage or insolvency.

Auctions were a state monopoly of the Vendu Office, the Commissary of Auctions. The Commissary could charge 2.5% on fixed property and 5% on all other possessions, so public auctions were a very real source of income for the colonial government. According to Bird, by 1822 the Vendu Master employed four auctioneers, and a ‘proportionate number of clerks’. Land and buildings accounted for about one third of what was sold at public auctions. It was unusual to buy perishable foodstuffs, wine and cattle at a public auction.8

The records of sales, vendurollen (MOOC10), list all the items sold, names of purchasers, and the price paid. These records, like the inventories, are an invaluable source of information for researchers interested in the life and times of people at the Cape during the VOC period and into the early British period.

The Vendu Office was a source of much short-term credit:

- the auctioneer could extend credit to merchants during an auction, at his discretion
- the actual sales of an auction could be copied onto an official stamp that was readily accepted across the colony as a form of payment (like a cheque guaranteed by the Vendu Office).

Economic role of the Orphan Chamber

Making an inventory and tracking down all the possible heirs could be a costly business, especially as so many Company employees were unmarried and without (legitimate) children, and any relatives they had were usually in Europe or the East. We know that Orphan Chambers in the Netherlands were

8 Bird (1961: 45, 145).
allowed to charge a 2.5% administration fee for administering estates where the Orphan Chamber was forced to act as an executor by law, and about 5% for administering other estates.9

The money in the Orphan Chamber’s coffers increased rapidly.10 According to Van Zwieten, the Orphan Chambers were allowed to invest the money they held but only in investments that carried a minimal risk, such as property. In the case of the Orphan Chamber in Amsterdam, investments had to yield 8.5% interest.11

The Orphan Chamber at the Cape invested in long-term mortgages to private individuals, mostly for agricultural ventures. For the first 120 years of the settlement there was no formal banking system. It was only in 1773 that the Government Loan Bank was established. Before then, if you needed credit you approached the Orphan Chamber, the Vendu Office, the Church, or individual money-lenders. At the Cape it was the Orphan Chamber and the Church that issued mortgages and the Vendu Office that issued short-term loans.12

The Orphan Chamber was very involved in the local economy. In 1825, for instance, the Board of Orphan Masters supported a petition against the devaluation of the rixdollar on the grounds that many individuals would go bankrupt. It seems likely the Board was also looking after its own investments.13

‘Honourable Members’

Both Bird and Valentijn indicate that the secretary and burgher members were selected from the wealthiest and most prominent members of free ‘European’ society. It seems that this was also the case in the Orphan Chamber in New Amsterdam (now New York), on explicit instructions from Amsterdam.14 Schutte suggests that those burghers appointed to the Board of the Orphan Chamber at the Cape were selected from a ‘double list’ drawn up by the Council of Policy,15 but unfortunately, he does not indicate how this was done.

According to Valentijn, the Orphan Chamber consisted of a Secretary (a bookkeeper who seemed to be appointed for an extended period), the Secunde (the Governor’s Second-in-Command, often responsible for financial matters), three other Company officials, and three burghers.16 In the British period, according to Bird, the Orphan Chamber consisted of a president, a vice-president, four members and a number of clerks.

During the VOC period the Orphan Chamber would deduct their wages according to a fixed schedule from the money in their coffers, before sending the remainder to the government. According to Bird, this allowed a great deal of corruption. During the British period the Orphan Chamber officials were paid directly by the colonial government.17

It is clear that positions in the Orphan Chamber went along with considerable wealth but it is not always possible to find out how and when individuals involved with the Orphan Chamber Committee amassed their wealth, particularly as they had to be relatively well off to be appointed. Joachim von Dessin, Secretary of the Orphan Chamber is a case in point.

Von Dessin and the Orphan Chamber

Joachim Nicholas von Dessin arrived at the Cape from Germany in the mid-1700s, relatively well educated, and soon moved up the social ladder to become the Secretary of the Orphan Chamber.

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9 Van Der Linden (1828: 123).
10 Robert Ross (1989: 259) indicates how rapidly this fund grew: in 1720 the total stood at 200,000 rixdollars, in 1780 at 400,000, in 1800 at over 1 million, and in 1830 at around 3 million rixdollars.
12 Ross (1989: 258-262).
17 Bird (1961: 56).
The position paid a substantial salary and even if he never took a single bribe or kickback, Von Dessin would have been able to add to his salary through his position. He would have known what was in each estate (it was up to him to say whether the estate should be auctioned or not), he would have known which auctions were worth attending and he would surely have received preferential credit from the Commissary of Auctions. Von Dessin became a wealthy man and a private creditor or moneylender. Through his position he was able to acquire the books that he later bequeathed to what is now the South African National Library.18

Some interesting legal precedents

In order to assist the Orphan Chamber in its work, a collection of legal precedents was carefully recorded. Some of these reveal fascinating details about the effects of death and misfortune, and the tedious but apparently fair legal processes for ordinary people at the Cape. These examples from MOOC 5/1 were transcribed by Helena Liebenberg and translated from the Dutch by Maureen Rall.

Protecting children of a first marriage from a stepmother favouring her own children

1702 31 March: After the death of the free man Willem van Wijk, the Orphan Chamber found that his two children by his first wife, Trijntje Hillebrands, stood to inherit £1729. His widow, Trijntje Harmensz, appearing before the Orphan Chamber, was asked to deliver this to the Orphan Chamber so that the aforesaid two children could receive their father’s legacy. She replied that because of the poor land that she owned, as well as the many illnesses suffered by her deceased husband, the estate had fallen into arrears and that for the present she did not find it possible to comply with what had been requested of her, but were she forced to do so, she would be compelled to leave the aforementioned inheritance with the two innocent children by her husband aforesaid, without knowing how to provide for them, but earnestly requested the Honourable Meeting that she be allowed to remain in the inheritance without having to pay the aforesaid money and would not have to submit any further evidence, and that she would diligently attempt to comply with both demands. Therefore, after careful consideration of the matter it was unanimously decided to pursue and approve the widow’s request, equally that she be herewith granted this, as the truth of her proposal was known, and that it would not be in the nature of an Orphan Chamber to deprive someone who had fallen into arrears through God’s visitations [but] await the blessings of the Almighty on this home once more, we allow not only that which was requested, but even more to her children.

1712 September: Upon checking the account of Trijntje Harmensz: in the ledgers to determine the amount she owed both to her husband’s children from a previous marriage as well as her own, it was found that a sum of £8000 said Trijntje Harmenszoon before marrying a certain Jurrien Herren through a deed of buying off on 16 February 1703 paid her three minor children Maria, Anna and Willem van Wijk [the children of her marriage to Willem van Wijk] their father’s legacy of £900, or £300 each, at the same time ignoring Arrij and Gerrit van Wijk, both children of the aforementioned Willem van Wijk by his first wife, the late Trijntje Hillebrands, and that it would accordingly be inappropriate that some children of the same father should be given their legal inheritance from their father and the others’ withheld without legal cause. It was therefore unanimously agreed and understood, that all of the aforementioned five children should equally share in the said £900 and each receive £180 and that such would be redressed in the ledgers, the aforementioned deed of buying off be noted in the margin.

Protecting children from a guardian

1731 7 February: Taking into consideration that the deceased neglected to honour the father’s or mother’s legacy upon her children’s marriage or coming of age, as properly passed by the Orphan Chamber, or that the children dared not plague her about it, because of which the matter continues to occupy the Collegiate with great trouble and disservice; therefore to prevent this, it was unanimously agreed and decided as a fixed regulation to henceforth grant the children their legacy from mother or father proved in this Chamber when they marry or come of age, to exact from father or mother the money so that the Orphan Chamber in its turn can properly pay this over to the children.

18 Worden et al. (1998: 74).
The Seal of the Orphan Chamber at the Cape of Good Hope.

Paper embossed with a VOC (Cape) stamp (12 stuivers).

Paper with a watermark: the shield of Amsterdam.

Detail from inventory of the farm Kloovenberg, 1739, with signatures of Orphan Chamber officials.
Members of the TEPC\textsuperscript{1} team of transcribers and editors write about their own experience of working on the inventories and explain what holds their interest.

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\\textsuperscript{1} TEPC: Transcription of Estate Papers at the Cape of Good Hope.
\textsuperscript{2} A longer piece by Erika van As, Tracing a settler at the Cape, is in section 7.
Into Cape homes of the 17th and 18th century

Erika van As, TEPC editor

By reading the inventories and auction lists the researcher enters the homes of people who lived at the Cape of Good Hope during the 17th and 18th centuries. The documents being transcribed reflect the daily lives of people, whether rich Company officials, underpaid soldiers, free burghers or slaves.

The Cape Archives holds documents of the Dutch East India Company that offer the researcher an incredible amount of information – there are 325 linear metres of documents on the shelves. The inventories and auction lists of deceased estates (together with other surviving documents such as wills and requests to and reports from the Court of Justice) offer invaluable insights into life at the Cape for researchers and people who want to know more about their forefathers and foremothers. Whom did they marry, how many children did they have, were they slave-owners or slaves, did they own a house or land, how did they make a living, could they sign their names?

Present in the past

Fiona Clayton, TEPC transcriber

The inventories contain clues that may lead one to bigger stories, signposts that cause one to think a little deeper about the way things were.

Transcribing archival documents can be energy-consuming and draining. It’s the little details that keep one going. Sometimes one comes across little notes in the margins of the documents that add substance to the skeleton of the household. Perhaps a slave has escaped between the time the inventory was drafted and its revision. The inventories contain clues that may lead one to bigger stories, signposts that cause one to think a little deeper about the way things were.

Transcribing inventories is like spending the day visiting the homes of those who were living at the Cape at a time when it was a very different place. One is dealing with the intimate details of people’s households and on occasion the inventories give us a glimpse of the tragic lives of the majority of the population.

In a letter found with an inventory, a father asks for permission to keep the few possessions he and his late wife owned, for the sake of the small children who have been left motherless. The beneficiary of the estate of a smallpox victim writes to the Master of the Orphan Chamber to explain that he is reluctant to travel to the Cape because of the fear of contracting smallpox. During smallpox epidemics many slaves and settlers lost their lives – like the AIDS epidemic, smallpox did not discriminate in terms of age, gender, class or nationality.

It is weird and wonderful to think about how much modern society resembles the past.
Transcriptions are like puzzles
Annemarie Krzesinski, TEPC transcriber

When you start, transcriptions are like puzzles. Can you read the hand writing, do the words make sense and if you cannot make out all the letters, can you at least make an educated guess? Every inventory is different, and poses an adventure and a challenge. You have to be patient, meticulous and probably rather finicky but it is great fun when you start to get into life as it was then: the people, their names and families, their homes and possessions, their social and financial circumstances.

I remember the unusual stories about people. Someone who drowned in the Lourens River. An Englishman who went missing. A housewife who died at the age of seventeen, leaving behind two children, aged one year and one month, and not much in the way of possessions. The lady with the snuff-shop in her back yard and a signboard. People who had to plead for leniency in repaying debts after years of crop failure – and others with 1000 cups and saucers or 20 bags of silver money.

Among the pots and pans, pigs and sheep, silverware and linen, it is the unusual or odd thing that makes me sit up and smile. A verkeerbort, tiktkbord or tokkadioelje bord for the game we call triktrak, a game my father taught me, and four speksteene beeltjes, soapstone figurines, like those in my parents’ bookcase, brought back from Java by an uncle. A chess set (schaakspel), two draughts-boards, backgammon plus the men (verkeerbort met schijven), lotto, packs of cards, dice and a billiard-table with a green cloth. A piano, flute and German flute, violins, violin strings and music, a harpsichord (clavecinbal), an organ-case with short pipes and a case full of instruments belonging to the organ. A telescope, astrolabe, barometer, magnifying-glass, spectacles and burning-glass. A money-box (spaarpot) and iron cash-box. A note-book, paper, pens and sealing-wax. A spinning-wheel, a potter’s wheel, a printing-press. A linen-press, a meat-safe, a small curiosity display cabinet (rariteitskasje), a small windmill, an oyster gridiron (oesterrooster), a dovecote and a birdcage with Dutch canaries. All this gives a perspective on the continuity but also the futility of things.

Rendezvous in Roelandstraat
Kobus Faasen, TEPC transcriber

Hoewel ek bewus was van my stamvader, Sijmon Faassen, was dit tog nog ’n heuglike ervaring om in die transkripsieproses (heel toevallig) na sy vendusierol om te blaa. Hy het in 1702 as soldaat uit Dordrecht aangekom, is in 1703 tot adelborst (kadet-offisier) bevorder, word ’n Vryburger in 1704 en ontvang vrypaggrond in Tafelvallei in Junie 1716. Sy skoonma, Engela Quint, was een van die weesmeisies wat deur die Kamer van Amsterdam na die Kaap gestuur is.

In vendurolle op hom afgekom,
Simon van Dordrecht, Faassen,
soldaat, Vryburger, slawehouer, kolonialis,
maar min tekens van ’n kapitalis,
miskien nes ek nie lief vir geld,
vir die sjarme van status,
vergaar ons liewer rommel,
in die Kaap van Goeie Hoop, want
enige rommeling is altyd iets
vir iemand anders werd,
soos Simon se inventaris vir my,
’n geel ou papier, sy eie naam
Hidden lives revealed

Maureen Rall, TEPC transcriber

The inventories reveal sharp contrasts between the lives of rich and poor. Locked into the inventories are stories of the tragedies which befell these long-dead people. Despite the stilted officialese, we can see that human nature has remained the same down the centuries.

What can one hope to discover among the bare bones of inventories? A surprising amount of information about life at the Cape in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries lurks within the formulaic, and on the face of it boring, lists of belongings of the recently dead.

It is immediately obvious that there were a considerable number of extremely wealthy people who lived in great style. Many owned farms as well as town houses, lavishly equipped with furniture fashioned from exotic hardwoods from the East as well as the local yellowwood and stinkwood. There were carpets from the far-flung regions on the trade route. On the walls were family portraits or other paintings and mirrors in elegant frames.

Among the elite, men and women dressed in fine silks and satins, linen and exotic prints from all parts of the East and they wore an inordinate amount of jewellery. Huge armoires were packed with gowns, bolts of material, hundreds of serviettes, dozens of sheets and tablecloths. Clearly, they entertained on a grand scale. The cellars contained vast quantities of wine and other liquor, and cabinets displayed fine porcelain, glass and silverware. Many homes had musical instruments, and one can imagine candlelit dinners with music.

One of the wealthiest women of her time was Debora de Koning who died in July 1748. She was the widow of a Company official, Jacobus Moller, who left her very comfortably off. She owned a farm called Boshoff on the Liesbeeck River, as well as six houses in town. The house in which she lived boasted 308 porcelain plates and 41 porcelain dishes and 622 bottles of liquor but it was her jewellery that must have been the envy of her contemporaries: ropes of pearls with diamond clasps, gold and silver bracelets, rings and earrings set with diamonds (a total of 83 fine stones). The jewellery alone was valued at 2630 rixdollars – more than the entire value of many an estate.

Elizabeth de Waal, wife of Johannes van Sittert, a senior official, also owned an impressive collection of jewellery, including the obligatory diamond rings and three double ropes of fine pearls. Catharina Doman glittered in the candle light wearing a gold carcanet, a jewelled collar, with 36 diamonds, a gold bracelet with 11 diamonds and a pair of gold bracelets with 32 diamonds.

The inventories also reveal that some of the elite did a brisk trade to augment their incomes. Elizabeth de Waal – who lived in a house valued at 5333 rixdollars – is a case in point. Most of the rooms held merchandise: material, silk thread, bonnets, fans, gloves and stockings (including 746 pairs of Danish stockings). One room contained 1000 glasses, 1000 pounds of coffee beans and 800 pounds of sugar. The store room was crammed with 900 pounds of sugar, 522 pounds of soap, 920 porcelain cups and saucers and 330 porcelain basins.

The inventories of some shops – such as the inventory of a partner in the firm of George and Mather who died in 1828 – reveal veritable emporiums. The shop stocked everything for the handy-
man, from hinges and nails to paint and brushes, as well as oars and cleats and planking for boats. The sophisticated householder could buy the finest crockery, glassware and silver, but there were also vast stocks of ordinary crockery and cutlery for the ordinary townsfolk. There were plenty of hams, tongues, olives and cheeses, macaroni and vermicelli, and all the spices of the East, not to mention pink champagne, fine madeira and sherry, other wines, gin, rum and brandy, beer and ale.

The scribe who took down the inventory found himself in an Aladdin’s cave of irresistible temptation. He seems to have sampled many of the wares, noting that one of the hams was old but another better, a keg of ale was sour, some of the wine inferior, three cases of brandied fruits bad. It must be said that his spelling became ever more erratic, and there were quite a few ink blots towards the end of his inventory.

Wealth was not confined to officials and merchants. Rev. Johannes Petrus Serrurier left a substantial legacy which included a house at 26 Long Market Street. He may have been a sociable soul who entertained his parishioners to tea – he owned 100 cups and saucers, and numerous silver teaspoons, tea pots, milk jugs and sugar bowls. He also owned 32 slaves who were divided among his six children after his death according to his wishes. Despite his profession, Rev. Serrurier was a shrewd moneylender to whom many of the townsfolk were indebted. He charged a healthy 6% interest per annum and kept meticulous records.

In glaring contrast to the extravagant lifestyles of the elite, many people at the Cape lived and died in abject poverty, owning little more than the clothes on their backs. Some of the farmers had the bare minimum of equipment to develop their land. Large families lived on very little and suffered great deprivation. In later years as the interior opened up, it seems that many people lived in their ox wagons. Their inventories do not mention house or furniture – only livestock, the usual feather bed, a bucket or two, a few tin plates, forks and spoons, iron pots and perhaps a veld-stool.

The inventories, despite the stilted officialese, reveal that human nature remains immutable. From the introductions to the inventories, notes scribbled in margins, last wills and testaments, and the occasional letter, a picture emerges of the frailties of those early settlers.

There was avarice and cruelty, love and kindness, brooding resentment and deep despair. Locked into the inventories are stories of the tragedies which befell these long-dead people.

A young farmer Jan Hendrik Coetzee and his wife Hester Brits committed suicide, leaving a nine-year old son. Their inventory shows that they owned nothing but a basin, two tin plates, a spoon, a fork, a feather bed, three pillows, 101 sheep, 30 goats, two old horses and a rifle. No mention is made of the fate of the child. The estate would have been auctioned to raise money for the boy, but the auctioneer’s account came to 42:1 rixdollars, so it could not have been a great deal.

On the night of 5 July 1760 a Company bookkeeper in Cape Town, Michiel Smuts, his wife and little son were murdered by a gang of fugitive slaves who were hiding out around Table Mountain. Two younger children were hidden by some of the other slaves and escaped death. A year later, on 1 July 1761, a Stellenbosch farmer, Jan de Villiers, and his wife, Anna Hugo, were attacked by their slaves. They left 4 young children, the youngest only three months old. The inventory does not tell you where the children were, nor who murdered their parents.

Smallpox epidemics wiped out entire families, sometimes leaving a single child. In 1755 Paulus Artoijis, a Burgher Councillor, lost his second wife, Maria Marik, and four of his five children in less than three weeks. Artoijis did not remarry and when he died in 1762, his surviving son, Barendt, was placed in the care of the Orphan Chamber.

Many women died in childbirth or within days, probably of puerperal fever, leaving husbands to cope with young families. In a sad little letter a young Stellenbosch farmer begged the Orphan Chamber for permission to postpone his journey to Cape Town to settle his affairs, as his wife had died giving birth and the baby was only four days old. In 1817 two young unmarried women in outlying areas died in childbirth. The inventories reveal that they had good clothes and some jewellery. It seems possible that the men who listed their property may have been the fathers. It could well be that no minister was available to marry the parents or baptise the children. Poignantly, the inventory of the one young woman’s possessions lists a trunk containing an entire layette lovingly prepared for
the baby. The inventory for the other young woman notes that the baby died, unbaptised, five days after her mother.

And so they lived, our forebears, and, when their time came, died, for the most part leaving little to be remembered by. We owe a debt of gratitude to the officials of the Master of the Orphan Chamber for their meticulous attention to detail, and for the little asides that shed light on some tantalizing mysteries.

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Dutch, Afrikaans and the inventories
Helena Liebenberg, TEPC editor

From a linguistic perspective the inventories are a gem of great value. The language used in these documents should shed some new light on the development of Afrikaans from 17th century Dutch.

Present day Dutch and Afrikaans are sister languages which developed from 17th century Dutch. Although the speakers of these two languages have been separated for more than 350 years, the languages still share more than 90% of their vocabulary. Apart from the fact that a few but important grammatical changes took place in Afrikaans over three centuries, it is still closely related to modern Standard Dutch. Numerous examples of some of these changes are evident in the language used in the inventories, especially in those documents that were compiled by ordinary people.

A very good, if not excellent, knowledge of Afrikaans and/or Dutch is needed when transcribing these 17th century documents. Even though so many words are familiar to Afrikaans-speakers, it is sometimes quite difficult to find a meaningful way out of a jungle of obsolete words, or words written as they were heard by the scribes in the service of the VOC at the Cape. The important role played by scribes coming from all over the then Low Countries, including the adjacent German-speaking regions, is evident from the type of spelling and other linguistic errors they made when recording household goods in the inventories. The writing and spelling abilities of the scribes and of ordinary people living in remote areas of the Cape colony come under the spotlight when one has to establish the correct spelling of a word to determine its meaning. Folk etymology is sometimes quite amusing: a burgher of Swellendam wrote rysdaadels (literally rice dates) instead of rysdaalders (rxdollars), while another addressed an official of the Orphan Chamber as Cekkertarel Remkam instead of Secretaris Rönnenkamp.

Many of the Dutch words appearing in the inventories either became obsolete in Afrikaans or were never part of its vocabulary. Through the years many household items were replaced by other objects with different functions. The Dutch word hakmes (chopping knife) was replaced in Afrikaans by kapmes, and the verb hak is seldom heard or used, except in the idiomatic expression die knoop deurhak (cut the knot). The Dutch living in the East Indies used a boekeknaap (literally meaning a young boy carrying books), which was a small table or similar piece of furniture for holding books. In the Cape the Staten-Bijbel (large family Bible) or Bijbel in folio (folio-sized Bible) was often placed on the boekeknaap. The Dutch compounds beugeltas (bag with a metal ring carried by women), glazenspuit (water hose to clean the windows) and vuurmand (drying frame for nappies), which appeared in many inventories during the earlier years of the settlement, were eventually replaced by new names for new objects.

Not so long ago, the following items were in use, while in some instances their modern counter-
parts can still be found in our households: komfoor (Afrikaans konfoor, English dish-warmer, an old-fashioned hotplate!), naaimachine (sewing-machine), wastafel (washing-stand), tondeldoos (Afrikaans ton tela, English tinderbox with a flint and lighter), vliegenkastje (Afrikaans vlieëkas, English fly-box, a small box with wire-gauze to protect food from flies), klaptafel (drop-table, Pembroke table) and stoof met test (stove with fire-pan or chafing dish).

Many dialect words that are now obsolete or archaic in Dutch found a safe haven in Afrikaans, for example speek (spoke), vleis (meat) and bloem (flower). Some grammatical processes may also be attributed to the influence of Dutch dialects, such as the derivation of Afrikaans diminutives, for example geslae peerties (small glass pears), rakkie (small shelf) and pompies (small pumps) which may apparently be ascribed to a dialect spoken near Amsterdam.

The VOC ships and their crews also made a special contribution to Afrikaans by coming ashore with words such as combuis (a ship’s galley), combaars (blanket) and kooi (bed). The combuis was a very small area on deck where the cook and his mate had to prepare meals. It was the only word used by Jan van Riebeeck in his Daghregister (diary) to refer to a kitchen in general, and it even appeared in the predesigned plan of the Fort of Good Hope, built in 1652. Combuis was used in nearly all the inventories where the rooms were listed, and today it is still the only word in Afrikaans to name that very special place where the family may gather at the combuis tavel.

When Dutch speakers arrived at the Cape they had to create new words to answer to the needs of their new environment with its indigenous peoples, animals, plants and places. Words such as tijgerboscat (serval) and hartebeest originated in Afrikaans. During the early years of the settlement wooden furniture was either imported from Europe or the East and words such as mahonij (mahogany), boscat (harch), jantij (Afrikaans kiaat, English teak), slangenhout (serpentine wood) and amboyna (a derivation of the place-name Ambon/Amboina in the Far East) found their way into the households at the Cape and therefore also into the inventories of the deceased. After a few years newly created words, mainly compounds, depicting an exciting variety of indigenous wood species crop up in the lists of inventoried items: geehout (yellow-wood), stinkhout (stinkwood), swarthout (yellow-wood), witelsehout (white wood), stinkhout (stinkwood), swarthout (blackwood), (wit) elsehout (white alder), wagebooms hout (waboom, Protea Nitida) and iserhout (ironwood/wild-olive).

A few words were borrowed from the Khoekhoen, for example dagha (wild hemp) and buchu. In 1658 Jan van Riebeeck mentioned dacha in his Daghregister. The Khoekhoen compound daxa-b ‘green tobacco’ was derived from a word borrowed from Arabic, which is an indication of contact between groups. The word boegoe recorded by Wikar in 1779 is the first spelling form that corresponds with the Afrikaans word. The following Khoekhoen variants were also recorded: boggoa, puchu, bouchou, buchu, buchu, puchu, buga, buku and buchu.

A small number of words borrowed from languages spoken in the Far East became part and parcel of Afrikaans, such as atchar (Afrikaans atjar, English achar), baatje (jacket), blatjang (chutney), botji, bori-borie, borrie (turmeric, Indian saffron), piering (saucer) and piesang (banana).

After the English took power in the late 18th century a few English words entered the inventories, for example spencer, podding (pudding), dessert leepels (dessert spoons) and zet blauwe thegoed (blue tea-set).

Many place names appear in the inventories. Nearly every document contains an estate name (house, homestead or farm) and the district where it was situated. Most of the place names are of Dutch and Khoekhoen origin, for example Tijgerbergen, Wagenmakersvalleij, Roode Sand and Cango, Namakwa, Outenikwa respectively. Since it was customary to name a slave according to his or her presumed place of origin (usually the place where the slave was last shipped from), there are also a large number of place names mainly from the Far East (for example, Ternate, Boegies and Java) and Africa (Rio de la Goa, Angola and Guinea). One of the slaves was called Piet van Tarrentaal, the latter being a corruption of Terra de Natalia, a Portuguese place-name that was eventually shortened to Natal. Afrikaans tarentaal (guinea-fowl) is a derivation of this Portuguese place name.

Many household items were imported from the East or Europe. Adjectives derived from place names indicated the places where the objects came from, for example Sinees (Chinese) and Indiase (Indian), Lijdse (from Leiden), Keulse (from Cologne) and IJslandse (Icelandic). Large quantities of
beautiful textiles were imported from the Far East. *Armosijn* was a type of textile originating from Ormuz, Persia; it was also the name of one of the best-known slave women, Armosijn van de Caab. While the entry *Persiense rosewater flessen* (Persian rose water flasks) speaks for itself, *Eau de la Reine* (water of the Rhine), and its many spelling variations, needs some explanation. *Reine* was spelt incorrectly by most of the scribes, perhaps because it is similar to French *reine* (queen).

The inventories were signed by many people: Orphan Chamber officials, witnesses, and family or friends of the deceased. The signatures are of great importance for genealogical research. Sometimes the original pronunciation is reflected in the way the people spelt their forename(s) and surnames. In the case of French and German forenames and surnames there is often a discrepancy between the signature by the person him/herself and the spelling used by the official in the introductory paragraph of the inventory or somewhere else in the document. For example, Beatrix Olivier signed her name as *Beijatrix* Olivier (1740), which corresponds quite well with the spelling of Beatrix Rust’s name as *Beyaderiks* (1830) nearly a century later: both forms resemble the Dutch/French pronunciation pattern. (At present the English pronunciation seems to be our norm.) Something similar happened to surnames, for instance where *Estreaux* was turned into *Esterhuisen* while *Lécrivain/Lecrivent* was changed by folk etymology to *Lekkerwyn*. In a number of German surnames minor phonetic changes took place, for example *Roest* became *Roets*. In other cases the difference is quite remarkable, for example Johann Heinrich Bebler becoming Jan Hendrik Pepler and Wilhelm Holtzhausen who was also called Willem Houthuis. Only a few nicknames were recorded, for instance, a farmer who probably had a rather dark complexion was called *svarte Prinsloo* and farmer Jan Muller who was actually Johannes Müller of German descent was also known as *Jan de Moff*. To this day the Dutch call a German a *mof*.

From a linguistic perspective the inventories are a gem of great value. The evidence revealed by the contents of these documents should shed some new light on the development of Afrikaans from 17th century Dutch.

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**Home remedies echoing the past**

Ilona Meyer, TEPC transcriber and editor

The inventories take us into the home medicine chests and pharmacy shops of the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. We find a wealth of remedies: from the West, from the East and from indigenous lore. It is very interesting that so many of the same home remedies are still popular today. These days traditional healers and scientists are looking at cures together.

The inventories take us into the home medicine chests and pharmacy shops of the time. We find an eclectic approach and a wealth of remedies: prescriptions from the West, spices from the East and indigenous medicines.

The *Hallesche* medicine chests contained medicines prepared and distributed by the apothecary laboratory attached to the Orphanage in Halle, established in 1698. These remedies were well-known to the German sick-comforters and apothecars employed by the Dutch East India Company. *Haarlemmerdroppels, balsam tillie, wonder essence, milt essence and camphor (MOOC 8/8.9. 1755)* are typical Hallesche remedies, still popular today. The English became acquainted with these medicines through the Dutch: hence the name Dutch remedies.

Spices from the East such as tamarind, cardomum, cinnamon, saffron, ginger and nutmeg, often...
listed in the inventories, were used in the preparation of medicines as well as in cooking. Well known indigenous remedies found in the inventories are aloe, buchu (boegoe) and dagga. There are also a few mentions of pulvis besoar which may have been used as an antidote to snakebite.

The inventories seldom mention the use of the remedy. One exception was Carel Hendrik Buijendag (1780), who brought 32 pieces of slangenhout for gallbladder fever from Batavia (MOOC8/18.4). However, we have contemporary information in the book by John Fredrik Häszner, a qualified doctor in service of the VOC who came to the Cape in 1785. He lists ingredients that he prescribed and these correspond to items found in inventories of the time: aloë, aluyn, amandelen, anijszaad, swavel, borrie, camphor, castor, cardemomsaad, gember, kina, korianderzaad, manna, mosterdzaad, olijfolij, soete olij, poeder van die skerpte van Halle, rhabarber, rood poeder van Halle/pulvis antispasmonicum, wijinsteen/cremor tartari, rosinen, saffraan, slangwortel, theriakel, tamarinde, vitrioel en kaneel (1793).

Häszner (1820) owned an estate named Warme Bad in the Swartberg over the Hottentots Holland mountains (MOOC8/37.32). Known as the physician of the Hot Baths, he recommended that those who suffered with rheumatism should travel to the hot springs and he recommended elder tea. Seltzer water, a bubbling mineral water, is sometimes found in inventories.

The following selection from the inventories gives an idea of the variety of remedies found in Cape households.

MOOC8/8.9 lists 1 cas met allwijn in ’t dispens; 2 kelders met lijnolie, 3 vaten alluyn; groentee; duiwelsdrek; 1 packje renosterbloed (perhaps the popular renosterbossie of today, which becomes red when boiled). MOOC 8/15.19 mentions a pot with teriacel, femelioen, a tin with manna (a sweet laxative) and vlier (an infusion of elder). Captain Gregory Page (1819) owned 1 flesje met wat caipossil olij (MOOC8/35.34). We know from other sources that this oil is from a tree that grows in the Phillipines, Malaysia and the Celebes and is used as an insecticide and antiseptic and for pain relief and lung congestion. Jamilla van de Kaap (1821) had some Hallesche medicynen in a black sugarpot and other spices. She had a snuff shop, with signboard, in her backyard with many items used to make snuff (MOOC8/36.8). A number of inventories mention tobacco used as snuff and packed in silver containers, and the spuugbalies to go with this habit.

The remedies were kept in any room of the house – in a medicine chest or in a glass or wall cabinet, a medicine shop that was part of the house, a wine cellar, attic or outside room. In some cases a medicine chest would be listed but the contents not revealed. There are references to Hallesche medicine chests and to Hallesche medicines without the name of the medicines. For example Andries Brink (1789) owned three jars of Hallesche medicines (MOOC8/19.76).

In the wine cellar of Christina van de Caab (1789) were: 1 zak met 10 flessen coriander zaad, 1 zak met 15 flessen mosterd zaad, 1 halfaam waarin 164 lb tamarinde, gekookte en ongekookte lijnolie, gestampte snuyftabak en tabaksbladen, 1 castje met curcuma (MOOC8/19.50). A bag with aluyn was found in a buitenkamer (MOOC8/21.2). Sometimes medicines were found op de solder, for instance 1 groot kruis cas en 1 cas met mediceynen (MOOC8/8.18) and others in different parts of the house, except in cases where they had a medicine shop in a separate room.

Part of Jan Haszingh’s house (1774) was a small medicine shop containing een glase kast daarin diverse flesschen en potjes met medicamenten, twee kleijne glase kastjes met medicamenten, een rak, een oude bureau daarin drie mortieren, nevens eenige kruiden, een metale vijsel met sijn stamper, een doosje waarin twee klijne balanse met haar schaaltjes, een kist met kruiden, een flesch kelder met wat rose water, een kasje met chirurgijns instrumenten (MOOC8/16.27).

Other medicine shops can be found in MOOC8/6.18 and in MOOC8/6.120 with items such as chirurgijns instrumenten, pots, jars and doosjes with medicine, and the widely used clisterspuitjen/klierspuiten (enemas) in different sizes. Household items such as keldershlessen, botten, commetjes, kelkjes en lepeljes were used to prepare remedies. The vijseis and stamper were used to grind seeds such as aniseed (for digestion). A decoctum kettle listed could have been used to boil up concoctions.

An item which sometimes appears amongst household goods is the gesondheijt: cloths soaked in water mixed with vinegar or red wine were placed on a woman’s abdomen and lower part of the body to prevent or reduce haemorrhage during pregnancy or childbirth.
This brief sketch of the *huis-apotheek* and the Hallesche medicine chests of that time, as they appear in the inventories, gives us some insight into the everyday lives of folk of that time. It also gives a sense of how the past echoes in the present as many folk still rely on these home remedies as simple, effective forms of medication at very low cost. It is interesting to note that although in the past the use of herbs/plants was dismissed by many as quackery, these days traditional healers and scientists are looking at cures together.

Sources
Cape Archives: MOOC8-series of inventories (1673-1830), Volumes 1-40.

Transcribed inventories in the digitized version, 1814.
Map of central Cape Town, circa 1804 (CA).
Researchers write about their detective work

A guidebook can be useful when you go travelling but it’s often the stories you hear from other travellers that inspire you to go places you’ve never been before. That’s why this guidebook contains so many stories from the transcribers and from other researchers about what they have found in the inventories and related sources, and how they did their ‘detective work’.

Tracing the lives of women of the Cape, Tryn Ras and Armosyn Claasz
Margaret Cairns

Tracing a community history
Ebrahim Rhoda

Tracing a settler at the Cape
Erika van As

Tracing individual slaves
Workshop Group

Tracing all who lived on Zandvliet, Groot Drakenstein
Tracey Randle

Cape households in the 17th and 18th century
Antonia Malan
An inventory in Paradise
Company slave to stammoeder
Strand Street, Cape Town, 1786
A house off Strand Street and a farm at Riebeeck Kasteel, 1700s

Fiction based on farm inventories
Antonia Malan
A visit to Waterpoel farm, Rheebokskloof, Paarl, 1790
Tracing the lives of women at the Cape

Margaret Cairns

These short extracts are based on ‘detective work’ by Margaret Cairns, using the inventories and other archival documents. You will find the stories of two remarkable women in ‘Tryn Ras’, *Família* XV 4 and XVI 1&2 (1978-1979) and ‘Armosyn Claasz of the Cape, and her family, 1661-1783,’ *Família* XVI 4: 84-56.

Tryn Ras of Welvernoegt Farm, Joostenburg

By 18 August 1708 Tryn Ras was dead. As is the case with most of her contemporaries, only after death is it possible to determine their life style when living. These facts are revealed by estate inventories, accounts and vendurolls and in Tryn’s case three are available (MOOC8/2.26 18 August 1708; MOOC10/1.46 19 October 1708 and MOOC13/1/1.63 19 August 1709).

Tryn’s inventory, sale, and accounts provide a picture of the primitive life she must have led on the farm where she died (described as ‘een hofstede aan Joostenberg genaamt Welvernoegt’). ‘Drie oud kadels’ with bedding and two kists seem to have been the only furniture they possessed, although surely a table and some chairs were found even in the poorest homes? Kitchen and farming equipment seem to have been adequate. Almost 100 sheep and other stock obviously supplied their main income with wine and grain subsidiary sources. There were 12 slaves, only four of whom, Cupido van Mallebaar, and Louis, Titus and Marius of no origin, were mentioned in the venduroll. She owed de Heer van der Poll 615 guilders with amounts under 30 guilders to de Smit, Gerrit Basson and de Timmerman whereas Arend Gildenhuys, her son-in-law Jan Lorensz, and her son Claas Ras owed her estate 400, 300 and 48 guilders respectively. … Tryn seems to have been fortunate … the loss of only one child, Maria, daughter of Cornelliseen, is recorded and to have attained the age of sixty-seven years was not common for the period.

Armosyn Claasz of the Cape

Armosyn, by her own efforts while still a slave in the lodge had raised herself to a position of authority and trust as matron of the Company’s slave children. She was manumitted in about 1704. That she held a privileged position in the world of freeblack women is evidenced by a grant of land in 1708. ... On 4 June 1728, lying ill in bed, Armosyn made her first will ... the Secretary of the Court of Justice, Josephus de Grandprez, with two members of the Orphan Chamber as witnesses attended on her at home to draw up this document. Whether Armosyn succumbed to her illness of 1728 or recovered and lived until 1733 when the inventory of her deceased estate (MOOC8/5.76) was taken ‘ten huiue van de burger Hermans Combrinch’ is uncertain. At the age of 72 she had left her family home, the grant of 1708, for the last time and bequeathed all her possessions to her daughter Magdalena Combrink who cared for her to the end. The only other asset was a slave, Sabina of Mallebaar, who was left to her granddaughter Margarethna Geertruy Frisnet.
Tracing a community history

Ebrahim Rhoda

Ebrahim Rhoda of the Strand grew up in a family and community with strong oral traditions about ancestral roots – traditions that survived slavery and apartheid’s forced removals. During his retirement as a school principal, Mr Rhoda started researching the history of his family and of the Strand Muslim community. In 2000 he took part in a programme for community-based researchers run by the Slavery and Heritage Project, where he drew on oral traditions to help him start his detective work in the archives. He is now working on a Masters degree at the University of the Western Cape. Here Mr Rhoda talks about ‘finds’ in the inventories.

Networking with others who are interested in your research area can produce amazing results! At a meeting of the Cape Family Research Forum, I got talking to someone who gave me a reference number and the name of Imam Abdol Sammat. That was the first time I’d heard the name. My benefactor was Hadji Irefaan Rakiep, a direct descendent of Tuan Guru and an experienced researcher of Islam at the Cape, who passed away in July 2005 aged 83.

The clue he had given me led me to Imam Abdol’s testament in the Archives and the simple inventory of his estate in 1838. The inventory offered some important clues for my research into the Javanese connection of the Strand Muslim community. The names given for some items of clothing and furniture were of Javanese origin. The local Field Cornet in addition to some prominent local farmers signed the inventory for the Imam’s estate which they compiled with the assistance of Potro, the free black from Java who was to be the executor and beneficiary of the estate. The inventory listed a scale and some weights among the Imam’s possessions – a clue that he might have been a shopkeeper. This sent me to the Register of Licences in the Archives where I found that in 1831 Imam Abdol Sammat had a licence to operate as a small retailer - probably the first free black in the area to do so. Intrigued, I tried to find out when he had come to the Strand/Mosterd’s Bay area and where he lived before. From the Street Almanacs I found that in 1809 he was living in Cape Town with other Javanese people, but that is another story …

By the way, another inventory really helped me in my research. This was from much later – the 1869 inventory for the insolvent estate of Imam Sadan Slemmen. The estate not only included two houses at Mosterd’s Bay, three boats, four oxen, a horse or two, but also a langgar or Muslim prayer room and a butchery that must have been a halaal butchery. It’s interesting that inventories can give us clues not only about individuals and their families but also about communities.

Available in the Cape Archives (or contact Mr Rhoda ballie@tiscali.co.za).

Signatures of Abdol Roef, 1822.
Tracing a settler at the Cape

Erika van As

Erika van As, TEPC editor, used a number of other sources in combination with the inventories and auction lists, to explore the life of a Company servant who came to a sad end.

As a transcriber or editor one sometimes becomes really curious about someone in the inventories or the auction lists. A variety of things may spark one’s interest, anything from a tiny insignificant detail to a long inventory of possessions that show great wealth and give clues about daily life, trade and interaction in early Cape society. The researcher can go on to look for clues in other sources – in the Archives, in the Deeds Office or in secondary sources – in order to throw light on the life of an individual, a family or a household.

Here is an example of how a number of different sources were used to shed light on the life and death of Pieter Heckenrood(t), a German soldier in Company service at the Cape. In an attempt to piece together the story of Heckenrood’s life, I have used different sources to find out where he was born, where he lived, his occupation(s), whom he married, the number and names of his children, the value of all his possessions (including property and slaves), whether he owed or was owed money at the time of his death, and how, when and where he died.

I first came across Heckenrood in 2001 when I was doing some archival research. From a document in the Council of Justice papers at the Archives (CJ 3174: 1768) I knew only that he was a German soldier at the Cape who had committed suicide by shooting himself with his own snaphaan in 1768. The Court of Justice documents reveal that a number of soldiers committed suicide. It seems that many people came to the Cape seeing it as their last hope to make good in life but the Dutch East India Company was a harsh employer and its employees were not paid enough to live on. Those who requested freeburgher status had to prove to the Company that they could take care of themselves financially and not become a burden to the Company.

Four years later when I was working on the transcription project, I came across the inventory for Heckenrood’s estate. I was interested to discover that he was not just an ordinary Company soldier, surviving on poor pay. The inventory prompted me to explore other sources for more clues about Heckenrood.

From Hoge (1946) I learned that Heckenrood was a soldier from Weijsenburg in Germany, who came to the Cape in the service of the Dutch East India Company. In May 1754 Heckenrood appeared before the clerk of the Council of Policy, C. L. Neethling, to ask permission to be released from Company service for a year to work as a farm hand for the free burgher, Jan Rennebeek (CJ 2893). Permission was granted on condition that he return to the Castle immediately if he was needed in the garrison. That year he earned more as a farm worker than he had earned as a soldier (ƒ14 per month instead of ƒ9), and he received food, drink and comfortable lodging. However, Heckenrood never obtained freeburgher status.

We hear of Heckenrood again fourteen years later. On 31 March 1768 he shot himself with his musket in his house, Third Mountain Cross Street (Derde Berg Dwarsstraat). He was found on his back in the livingroom, with a wound on the left side of his chest. There were blood stains on the front door and a chair with a candlestick next to him. These details were all carefully noted down in the Court of Justice documents relating to suicides and accidental deaths (CJ 1374, page 18). We also know from the Court of Justice records that the body had to be inspected by the appropriate officials who then reported back to the governor, Rijk Tulbagh. These officials were told (perhaps by Heckenrood’s wife or neighbours?) that Heckenrood had a history of drinking too much and behaving irresponsibly and dangerously.

On 2 April 1768, two days after Heckenrood’s death, an inventory was taken of his household. From the introduction to the inventory we know that he left a widow, Sara Martensz, and that he
owned a house (MOOC 8/13.29). The inventory takes us through the five rooms of his house, the cellar, the attic and the big back yard. The inventory shows that Heckenrood had accumulated a substantial estate in the years between 1754 and 1768. How did he manage to accumulate so much in such a short time? Did his marriage bring him good fortune? Was his wife Sara a woman of property?

The inventory records the contents of the room in which Heckenrood killed himself but the musket is not included in the list. Possessions listed in the inventory include three slaves, a harpsichord, books, sixteen paintings, four wigs (paruijken), a silver watch, and five mousetraps among much else. Heckenrood owned a dambord: did he play the game? He owned three cutting tables (snijders tavels): was one of his slaves a tailor? It is interesting that at the auction the widow bought none of the household items, but she paid 100 rixdollars for one of the slaves, Benjamin from Macassar, the most expensive ‘possession’ sold. The widow married Lucas Gertenbach six months later (MOOC10/9.49).

Sources used in the Cape Archives:
CJ 3174, fol.19; CJ 2519, page 64; CJ 2893, page 152; VC 45, 1763 (year); MOOC 8/13.29; MOOC 10/9.49.

Tracing individual slaves

These suggestions on how to trace the histories of individual slaves came out of a discussion facilitated by Nigel Worden. The participants were Connell Balie, Kobus Faasen, Shamiel Gamaldien, Christine Gohsman, Tracey Randle, Aubrey Springveldt, Sally Titlestad and Maurits van Bever Donker.

Inventories are useful for researching slaves as they list all the slaves that were owned by an individual at the time of his/her death, often by name and occasionally by occupation as well. At times the inventories may disclose surprising details about slaves: where they were shipped from, their age, their physical condition, their skills and the kinds of work they did, and their value or importance in relation to other slaves.

‘But the inventories need to be used in conjunction with other archival sources such as Wills and Auction Rolls ...’

Auction Rolls are useful for researching slave histories because they record who bought what item when the estate of a deceased individual was auctioned off. Slaves were considered items for sale – like livestock or furniture. Auction rolls make it possible to trace individual slaves as they moved from owner to owner and place to place. Sometimes it’s also possible to see whether couples or parent/s and child/ren were kept together or separated.

‘But the same slave names are duplicated so often that it is may be impossible to find out anything about the individuals behind the names imposed by the masters.’

Wills of the deceased are very useful sources of clues about the relationship between master or mistress and slave. Some slaves were bequeathed to specific family members or were manumitted (granted their freedom). This seems to indicate special relationships and attachments that developed between owner and slave – at least from the perspective of the owner. Sometimes slaves seem

1 Slaves at the Cape: A Guidebook for Beginner Researchers adds to these suggestions.
to be singled out for loyal service – for instance, as manservant or personal maid to the deceased, or long-time nanny to the children.

‘Sometimes we can read between the lines that there was a sexual connection – and perhaps the deceased master was freeing some of his children if not their mother …’

**Court Records** can prove useful as slaves appear as witnesses, plaintiffs and defendants during some hearings. From their testimonies it becomes possible to glean a little information about their daily lives. For example, they might give details about when they would wake up or how much work they would do during one day, or where they lived and worked, or how they were punished.

‘With Court Records we have to remember that the voices of the slaves are mediated through the officials who wrote the record – and the slaves often had good reason to censor themselves.’

**Church and Mosque Records** may be useful for tracing slaves or former slaves who belonged to a particular religious community. Churches may have records of baptisms, marriages, deaths etc. If you come across the manumission of a slave, have a look at available church records – manumitted slaves were given a year to legitimise their unions and the same applied after Emancipation. Islam existed at the Cape from very soon after 1652 although mosques were only legal from 1804; the oral and written records of some Muslim communities go back a long way.

**Making the links between different sources** sounds quite straightforward but you may have to do a long and painstaking search to find any clues about individual slaves. Fortunately for us, the digitising and indexing of some of the Inventories and Auction Rolls makes the researcher’s task a little easier.

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**Official marriage records of slaves and freed slaves**

(This applies only to those married by Christian marriage officers; Muslim marriages were not legally recognised.)

Jackie Loos points out that there is an index of marriages for the period 1772-1839, and about 1300 pages consisting of some 265 separate submissions from congregations, churches and missions situated all over the Western and Eastern Cape.

‘These are “treasures” because they record early Christian marriages of people of colour, and they are currently “lost” to their descendants, many of whom are trying to trace their roots at the Cape Archives, and to local slave historians, who do not seem to have consulted them. They appear to include about 150 pages of Stellenbosch Dutch Reformed Church and Wesleyan Mission records.’

Jackie Loos also points out that from 1838 ministers of religion and marriage officers were obliged to transmit to the Colonial Secretary duplicates of entries in marriage registers within one calendar month of the marriage. All the churches and mission stations submitted entries for 1839. These documents were held by the Cape Archives until 1975, when they were transferred to the Transvaal Archives Depot.

Duplicates of entries in marriage registers are: CO 8698: 1696-1839; CO 8699: 1822-1839; CO 8700: 1796-1839; CO 8701: 1696-1839; CO 8702: 1839.

Source: October 2005 e-mail from Jackie Loos to Ockert Malan, member of the Historiese Genootskap van Moederkerk Stellenbosch. Dr Malan is asking members of an Internet discussion group for help in accessing these records (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SAGenealogie).
Tracing all who lived on Zandvliet, Groot Drakenstein

Tracey Randle

This section is based on an interview in October 2005 with Tracey Randle, researcher and director of the new Museum at Solms-Delta (previously called Zandvliet), the Museum van de Caab. Her brief was to research all the people who have lived on the farm: colonists, slaves, Khoekhoen and San. The interview focused on how to research the lives of slaves. About 200 slaves lived and worked on Zandvliet farm between the 1690s and the 1830s. The Museum has a memorial plaque for every one of these slaves – including those whose names are unknown.

'We have come across some amazing cases in the archives. They are perhaps typical stories of what went on in farms and rural districts all over the Cape, but they are extremely powerful reminders of what slavery at an individual level must have felt like for both the owner and the slave. This is our main goal for the museum: to try to tell the history of the farm through the voices of the individual people who once lived there.'

How to start researching

I didn’t have a clue where to begin in the archives but I got some good advice from the archivists and people doing their own research – when I plucked up courage to talk to them.

Someone suggested writing to or emailing researchers in the field of Cape slavery to tell them about the project and ask for leads but I wanted to do my homework first.

Two very useful tools for archival research are Slaves at the Cape: A Guide for Beginner Researchers by Carohn Cornell and the Guide to Archives and Archaeology by Antonia Malan and Stewart Harris. The archival sources I used were Deeds, Census Records, Wills, and Inventories in that order, then a few auction lists, then the records of the office of the Slave Protector – and of course secondary sources. Some people say read the secondary sources first but for me it worked better to be researching in the archives and reading secondary sources at the same time to know what I was looking for.

Archival sources

Deeds (Deeds Office) The first step was easy: going to the Deeds Office, armed with the erf number or name of the farm, to get the names of all the owners. The Paarl (Drakenstein) Heemkring has produced handbooks in Afrikaans (Le Roux, undated) that summarise all the owners for the Drakenstein district – these might help you bypass the Deeds Office.

Genealogies Once I had the names of all the owners, the second step was looking for their genealogies in De Villiers and Pama Genealogies of Old South African Families and Heese South African Genealogies. For anyone who might be German, look at Hoge Personalia of Germans at the Cape, 1652-1806. Genealogies are full of useful information, once you know how to work with them. I went to the Huguenot Museum in Franschhoek for help and then I could start making the connections between people …

Opgaafrollen – Census Records (Cape Archives) If you look up the district or region and then the owners, you may find out the name of the wife, the number and sex of children and of slaves (but no slave names), and the number of hired workers; what was grown on the farm, the number of guns, etc. The Census records start in 1685, sometimes for every year, sometimes less often. I started with those which have been transcribed through the Institute for Historical Research at UWC – there’s a computer printout (CA A2250).
Wills and Death Certificates (Cape Archives) Once I had the numbers, I started trying to find out about people’s lives. The next stop was the Stellenbosch Archives to look at the owners’ wills in the ‘Stellenbosch 1/STB series’ – I used the copies held in the Cape Archives. Some wills name the slaves who were left to the heirs – I starting noticing some of the same slave names I’d seen in the census.

Inventories (Cape and Stellenbosch Archives) The next stop was the Stellenbosch Inventories to look at the names of the deceased and the names of their farms, in the hope of finding inventories for Zandvliet or surrounding farms. Annemarie Krzesinski has transcribed the Stellenbosch inventories up to 1806 (MOOC and 1/STB) and it was great to have the computer printout rather than the original handwriting – it was just a matter of getting used to the language, with the help of a Dutch dictionary and a glossary. The inventories had more names of slaves – and sometimes other details – than the wills. The inventories also gave the layout of the house so if you knew, for instance, that in 1823 the deceased owned 23 slaves, you could see there was no way all the slaves lived in the house – so the next step was to look for outbuildings big enough for all the slaves, but the archaeological excavations are another story.

Auction Lists (Cape Archives) We found an auction list (in the MOIB series) from the English period after 1820 for when the farm became insolvent – that was a stroke of luck for the research because the auction lists mentioned the slaves and to whom they were sold. From the Auction Roll we could find out who bought which slaves – this was confirmed by the Slave Register – and from the Genealogies we’d know if the slaves were being sold to relatives of the owner.

Slave Registers (Cape Archives) From 1816 onwards there are slave registers from the Slave Protector’s Office (SO 6/34), arranged by owners – a huge resource for tracing slaves in the last 20 years of slavery. For every slave man, woman or child, the Registers give name, age, where they came from, mother’s name, date of birth, occupation – but not prices. The Register records when a slave goes to a new owner so you can then track the new owner and his or her slaves. For instance, we were able to track the movement of slaves into Tulbagh from Zandvliet, starting from the inventory of the insolvent estate. You can start to see how often slaves were bought and sold – you may find the slave is bought by a family member. Or if a slave is there in one inventory but not in the next, you can find out from the Register whether it’s because of death or desertion.

Slave Mortgages (Cape Archives) Records of slave mortgages during the English period (SO 9/7) give clues as to how the community worked. If you needed money you could use slaves as security against a loan – and if you didn’t repay the loan the slave went to the creditor.

Cases from the Office of the Slave Protector (Cape Archives) I found the English and the Dutch/Afrikaans version from the district and looked at SO 3/22/3/25 1816 to 1837. If you have owners’ names, it’s quite easy to search through the districts. You can try to search by slave names but it’s difficult because there are so many similar names. It would be really useful if someone did an index of the slave owners and the cases that the slaves brought against them between 1816 and 1838.

There are many cases involving relationships between the owners or their sons and slave women. In one case a slave complained that she was to be sold because the owner wanted to end her eight-year relationship with his son so that he could be married off to a rich woman. The Register records where she and the children end up. In another case, a slave complained that she’d been advertised for sale at an auction on her master’s property but her master was the father of her children and she didn’t want to be sold. He admitted paternity and she was freed. The names of her family are recorded as witnesses.

‘Hottentot Registers’ (Cape Archives) The ‘Hottentot Registers’ (1/STB 16/139-142) kept in the English period show who was living where. In one case, found in the Slave Protector’s Cases, a
'Hottentot' woman, Lena, gave testimony about running off to Cape Town with a slave. Lena lived on Zandvliet.

**Compensation Records (Cape Archives)** The Compensation Records, kept with the Slave Office Records, are in English and arranged by district and owner. These records could be an interesting starting point for research – you could work backwards to the time of slavery.

**Mission records** Tracing freed slaves after 1838 is difficult but we know that many went to mission stations. For freed slaves from Zandvliet we need to look at the records for Pniel, the nearest mission settlement. It is not always easy to have access to Mission records. *Slaves at the Cape: A Guidebook for Beginner Researchers* gives some leads.

**Secondary sources**

It’s obviously crucial to find your way around the secondary literature on Cape slavery – I decided to go into archival material and secondary sources at the same time to know what I was looking for. My advice would be:

- **Develop a timeline.** *Cape Town: The making of a city* by Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith is a very good overview.
- **Know the regional history.** In our region, Gavin Lucas produced *Farm Lives: A study of historical archaeology in the Western Cape,* about people who were living in Pniel and working on farms, and Marianne Gertenbach at the Boschendal Museum has done a lot of local research.
- **Look for leads in the secondary literature.** Articles on slaves in *Capensis,* the Western Cape journal of the Genealogical Society, gave some good leads. Wayne Dooling’s chapter in *Breaking the Chains* (edited by Nigel Worden and Clifton Crais) refers to a case linked to one of the Zandvliet slaves.

**Oral Sources**

So far, the research has worked from past to present. The next task is to work from the present to the past, to track oral traditions of past and present workers on the farm. The plan is to develop a wider oral history archive as a resource for the local community and for other researchers.

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**Museum van de Caab at Solms-Delta**

Open 9-5 daily except Christmas and New Year
Phone 021-8743937 or www.solms-delta.com
Delta Road, off R45, Franschhoek Valley

**Research Centre**

opening March/April 2006:

Secondary sources, internet access, school projects related to the syllabus, grants and research support to people from the region (Drakenstein, Franschhoek, Paarl, Stellenbosch) to research their own family history or community history.
Cape households in the 17th and 18th century

Antonia Malan

Antonia Malan works as an historical archaeologist, using both archaeological and documentary evidence. She has concentrated on recreating Cape Town households up to the mid 1800s – not the households of the elite but ordinary households that are often left out of history, including freeblack households. In the process she has discovered links between women that were obscured in the official records.

Inventories have been a vital source for this research because they give a room-by-room guide to houses and outbuildings, and if the same place was inventoried at different dates, the inventories can be mined for clues as to how it changed over time. Along with the inventories, she has used other archival and published sources to unravel the stories of places and their inhabitants, and to corroborate pieces of evidence.

The stories that follow all go ‘Beneath the surface – behind the doors’ of Cape households in the 17th and 18th century’

An Inventory in Paradise

My interest in inventories started during an excavation in Paradise – the VOC outpost of Paradijs in Newlands Forest, formerly known as Lady Anne Barnard’s Cottage. As ‘historical’ archaeologists focusing on the post-colonial history of the Cape, we had to learn to deal not only with excavated artefacts and features, but also with documentary sources. Some have labelled this work ‘text-aided archaeology’, others call it ‘documentary archaeology’.

The purpose of our archival research was to put into context what we were excavating, the clues derived from the material culture of Paradise. Whereas the social anthropologist or sociologist studies living people, an archaeologist happens to study dead people. Unable to ask them what they do and why, we look at what they have left behind – their material culture. This includes the things they bought, used and discarded, what they wrote or was written about them, the structures they built and lived in and altered, and the landscape they created. Material culture includes the documents they created – maps, plans, letters and diaries, property deeds of transfer, wills and inventories of household possessions.

At the time of the excavation we were introduced to a priceless item of material culture – a document that listed the possessions of the occupants of the homestead at Paradise in 1768. This artefact was the household inventory of Salomon Bosch, made shortly after his death. The inventory listed his heirs and all his possessions, including a horse and three slaves. The objects in the house were listed room by room, so I could recreate the layout of the house at the time and match it to existing foundations. It was very exciting for me as a historical archaeologist to be able to recreate this four-roomed house.

On 7 May 1768, six days after the death of Solomon Bosch, Master Woodcutter at ‘t Comps. Post Paradijs’ in Newlands, the Orphan Chamber sent representatives out to Paradijs to prepare an inventory of the Bosch estate (MOOC8/13.28). The house as listed by these two men consisted of four rooms, a voorhuis with a room on either side and a kitchen, possibly, but not necessarily, to the rear.

In addition to the furnishings of the house the dead man’s assets consisted of some cash and 145 rixdollars owed to him. This was insufficient to fulfill his obligations, the largest of which was 500 rixdollars due to his children under their mother’s estate. However, the estate accounts (MOOC13/1/7.24) demonstrate that eventually all these and funeral costs were met, probably as a result of the sale of his household effects in June 1768 (MOOC10/9.48).


1 For a list of publications by Antonia Malan exploring 17th and 18th century Cape households via the inventories and other sources, see the bibliography at the end of this book.
Vernacular Architecture (Volksboukunde)

I wanted to read up on the historical and social context of the type of four-roomed house found at Paradise, but when I looked at the available literature I discovered that architectural history was predominantly about the so-called ‘Cape Dutch’ gabled architecture. Only buildings that were still standing were described and these represented only a small portion of later 18th century or early 19th century elite rural estates, so the majority of houses at the Cape were left out of Cape architectural history.

There are no unchanged 17th or 18th century modest domestic buildings remaining in Cape Town and few in the country, so the inventories are our main source of information for this forgotten history of architecture. There are thousands of inventories to choose from. When I looked at a range of inventories, it became obvious that many 18th century farmsteads were different to those reflected in Cape architectural histories.

Things with a history

It also became obvious that there was a wealth of incidental information to be found in the inventories – information about household furniture and utensils, genealogical and financial links, slave history, farming methods, and so on.

From the inventories we can see the relationships between categories of things. For example, if you find a tea kettle or coffee pot and brazier together, they will almost invariably be on a table in the main reception room (usually either voorhuis or galdery) and are often associated with the pipe rack.

‘We found [at the Landdrost’s house in Stellenbosch] what is universal in this country – a constant drinking of coffee going forwards – it is to be found boiling on the table over charcoal all day long – wine handed about half a dozen times in the course of the evening, pipes filled and smoked by the gentlemen, and the room filled with slaves – a dozen at least … ’

(from Lady Anne Barnard’s journal 1797, in Lewin Robinson 1973: 15).

Individual items are sometimes evaluated in inventories so we know their value at that time. The value may be rather different from an assessment based on the opinions of today’s antique traders. Knowing the monetary value at the time may make it possible to identify the ‘best’ room in a house. Seeing what

Vernacular Architecture at the Cape

Vernacular architecture is ‘the architecture of the people’ – those buildings not designed by architects but by owners and inhabitants, sometimes built with the help of family or community members, using locally available materials and in accordance with local traditions.

There are some wonderful studies and records of vernacular architecture at the Cape, the work of James Walton and Hans Fransen being the best known. But architectural historians are not always interested in the people who built these places and why and how they lived their lives there.

Archaeologist Hennie Vos has been unearthing old buildings in and around Stellenbosch for thirty years. They often lie just beneath the surface, or disguised by modern walling and plaster. The Stellenbosch Village Museum and Swellendam Drostdy Museum have restored and furnished a range of period buildings – well worth a visit to get a three-dimensional experience of old Cape houses. The Kleinplasie Open Air Museum in Worcester is a collection of reconstructed examples of smaller Cape vernacular cottages and outbuildings.

The Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa has monthly talks and outings to out-of-the-way places and publishes articles, mostly about the Western Cape, in their VASSA Journal. Contact VASSA on Voicelink 088 122 6771 or www.vassa.org.za.
categories of ceramics and other things are displayed tells you which objects have high status. We can also compare types of houses, large or small, rural and urban, and see changes over time.

**Ceramics in Cape households**

A major focus of collaborative research in the Historical Archaeology Research Group has been ceramics in the Cape colonial household. Jane Klose has developed a particular knowledge of Asian porcelains and early British manufactured ceramics as a result of having to analyse and catalogue excavated ceramics from archaeological sites and shipwrecks.

We discovered that – like the houses and the people we are most interested in – many of the Asian porcelain vessels that we excavated did not feature in published literature. The combination and proportions of different ceramic types is distinctly ‘Cape’. We have therefore had to create our own framework for understanding the chronology of shapes and decorative motifs, and for understanding the role of porcelain in the context of Cape society, and in relation to other ceramics and other materials like glass, pewter and silver. Some of the most important evidence can be found in inventories and auction rolls – descriptions, amounts, value, position in the house, etc.

We are interested to see what happens in the kitchen and at the dining table in the Cape – especially during changes between the Dutch and British colonial periods when one set of merchants and traders replaced another - and how people at the Cape responded when the British developed ceramics to replace imported Chinese wares. To find out we track pewter, ‘delftware’, silver, Asian porcelain, German stoneware, British Staffordshire refined earthenware, and so on, through the inventories.

Jane Klose & Antonia Malan, ‘Ceramics of the Southwestern Cape 1650 to 1850: a guide to the analysis and interpretation of ceramic assemblages excavated from archaeological sites’ (HARG Handbook Number 1, Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town 1993)

Jane Klose, ‘Analysis of ceramic assemblages from four Cape historical sites dating from the late 17th century to the mid 19th century’ (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1997)

**‘The past is another country’**

Who originally said ‘the past is another country’? The more I look at the things that people left behind, the more fascinated I become about their personal, everyday experiences. What was it like to be a young girl enslaved in subtropical Ceylon, brought to the windy, dusty Cape, purchased and put to arduous work, even possibly abused, then to meet a European soldier and become pregnant with his children, gain freedom and marriage, set up a household, buy slaves for herself, even possibly abuse them, and see her children becoming respected free burghers. Each time I do some research, I visit that country.
From Company slave to stammoeder

This extract gives some idea of how the study of inventories and related sources may bring to light the stories of freeblack women at the Cape. Published genealogies are listed by the male heads of freeburgher households – that is, those who fathered legitimate children who were baptised in Christian churches - but because women kept their own names, it is possible to trace their lineages too. Women owned property and bequeathed it to daughters, but it is the names of their sons-in-law that appear in the records. It was fascinating to discover links between women and details about freeblack households that fall outside mainstream referencing systems and are obscured by official records.


… A significant number of slave and freeblack women at the Cape became stammoeders.
… A freeblack or slave woman who produced eligible daughters, no matter who their father was, could see her grandchildren become absorbed into Cape colonial society.
… A freeblack woman who married a man of European origin and produced sons and daughters could see her grandchildren prosper as colonists.

Jannetje Bort was born of a German father, Nicolaas Bort, and Company slave mother. She was thus born into the status of a Company slave, but she fought for and gained her own freedom after considerable petitioning to the Governor. Her consort was Sergeant of the Castle, Dirk van Koningshoven from Utrecht. He was ordered to marry her and support their four children. The couple eventually had 11 children, of whom 7 survived. Jannetje died in 1713, as a widow.

To me, the inventory of her estate (MOOC8/2.73) epitomizes the household of a woman who successfully created a good home and future for her family from whatever resources she could muster. There were certain items listed in ways that indicate a level of gentility that was absent in many other households. There was a tea table and looking glasses – one with a black frame and the other with brass fluting – the black bed was curtained with muslin and there were chintz curtains and valances in the best room. The chests were draped with coverlets. There was a glass-fronted cabinet full of ornaments, and a painted linen cupboard with decorative dishes and bowls on top. The kitchen had white window curtains.

The pattern of marriages between newly released Company servants and locally-born women (slave and freeblack) continued throughout the 18th century in this family. The two older van Koningshoven daughters were married before their mother died, Catharina to Hendrik Treurniet and Maria to Jacob Hasselaer. The heirs were at the auction of Jannetje’s estate, and bought back about a third of the goods on sale. The decorative items, bed, curtains and looking glass were kept in the family. The slave Marij, however, was sold – fetching over half the proceeds of the auction (MOOC10/1.82).

2 For other reading on this topic see Margaret Cairns (1985), Martin Hall and Karel Schoeman in the bibliography at the end of this book.
Strand Street, Cape Town

This ‘detective story’ draws on inventories and other sources, including a contemporary drawing by Jan Brandes, to trace the architectural history of properties in Strand Street, Cape Town. The description is adapted from a chapter Antonia Malan wrote in Max de Bruijn and Remco Raben (eds), *The world of Jan Brandes, 1743-1808* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: Waanders Publishers, 2004) pp 359-365.

The wholesale redevelopment of the old streets of Cape Town was finally slowed in the 1980s when people suddenly realized that there was very little left of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Due to public outcry, Long Street retains much of its late 19th century character. The single block at the corner of Strand Street and Buitengracht is a remnant of a late 18th century streetscape in the centre of town. Otherwise, all we have of the old buildings are rare pictures and contemporary descriptions.

House layouts and interiors can, however, be recreated from inventories. Sequences of household inventories taken room-by-room for individual properties allow us to plot changes over time in internal layout and the size of rooms and the way that spaces were used. Inventories are thus an invaluable resource for tracing architectural history.

In the case of historic Strand Street, inventories were used along with contemporary drawings, to trace the architectural history. The Dutch artist, Jan Brandes (1743-1808), plays a key role in the story. He was appointed Lutheran minister in Batavia, the headquarters of the Dutch East India Company in Asia and spent nine years travelling in Java, Ceylon and Southern Africa. He produced most of his paintings during his travels as a present-day traveller might take photographs. His paintings and drawings depict not only the official, well-known side of colonialism, but also offer rare views into daily domestic life of a traveller in Asia … This gives his works a very ‘private’ and documentary character, which begs to be used as a source of information about the past (adapted from Waanders website www.kunstboeken.nl/books).

In 1786 Jan Brandes stayed in the Lutheran Church parsonage in Strand Street, now the Gold of Africa Museum. The houses opposite are all gone. Much further down the street, almost out of sight, is the single-storey thatched building that in about 1793 was rebuilt with a neo-classical front. It became known as Koopman’s-de Wet house and is now one of Iziko Museums’ period homes (c1800).

Jan Brandes depicted a scene of Strand Street from his lodgings, the Lutheran parsonage, where he was a guest of Andreas Lutgerus Kolver, minister of the Lutheran congregation in Cape Town. ... The drawing can be dated between 20 April and 20 May 1786.

A combination of evidence from the Brandes picture and household inventories shows how Cape ‘town’ houses developed from single-storey buildings, many of which were still thatched. The façades in the picture provide clues about the spaces behind. If a house had a full-sized room inside the front door (*voorhuis*, used as reception room), then narrow windows were built beside the door in order to let in light and air. This became typical of rural homesteads. If the *voorhuis* was used as a passage leading to the *galder* behind, adequate lighting was provided by the fanlight above the door and no windows were necessary. This became typical of town houses. The single-storey thatched house in Bree Street shows features of both styles. It has no narrow windows flanking the door, so we can assume that there was a ‘town’-style passage inside the front door rather than a ‘rural’-style full-sized room, although the building is still thatched and gabled.

Sequences of household inventories taken room-by-room for individual properties allow us to plot changes in internal layout and the size of rooms and the way that spaces were used. Inventories indicate that by 1786 the attic space in many pitched-roofed houses was being used as sleeping quarters as well as storage space. The documents also show that when expanding a town house from a single storey upwards, an interim process took place. First, existing space under a pitched roof was divided into separate rooms, and then the upper walls were raised up under a new flat roof. The second floor thus gained a full complement of rooms reflecting the layout downstairs.
The drawing also provides the context in which to set historical evidence for a major part of the population of Strand Street at this time. There were young and old inhabiting the houses, from dodderly grandparents to new-born babies. There were householders, slaves, servants and lodgers. Company officials and officers, merchants, traders and skilled artisans lived in the street. As families settled, grew and prospered, their properties - through their architecture - reflected a maturing town. ...

On the far edge of the picture the house of the Vos family can be seen. This house is in Block 9. It was originally acquired by the Batavian-born silversmith Johan Hendrick Vos senior. At the time of Vos’s death in 1765, when the household was inventoried room-by-room (CA MOOC8/12.11), it was a symmetrical single-storey building with a solder (attic) upstairs. In the following years the building was altered into a two-storeyed house with a flat roof, as can be seen in the drawing, probably by Vos’s widow Johanna Bok who retained the property until 1810. ...

The house on the corner of Loop and Strand Streets belonged to Johan David Prins and his family for thirty years. Prins was the son of Marthinus Prins, a Cape Town silversmith. This is the dwelling of a second-generation Capetonian family. According to a household inventory taken on Prins’s death in 1773 (CA MOOC8/14.46) the house was at that time still single-storeyed, though it had the fashionable gallery reception room, with wall-cupboards, behind the voorhuis. It is probable that the building was extended upwards and given a new facade by one of his heirs.’

The places that we live in are constantly changing. A family buys a house and makes alterations, a farmer extends his vineyards up the slopes of a mountain, or a town planner redesigns a city block. The interactions between people and their environment, and between groups of people within a neighbourhood or household, leave traces behind. Sometimes these can be seen in the fabric of the place, its walls and rubbish pits, sometimes they are recorded in documents or images, but most often they are only distant memories.

A house off Strand Street and a farm in Riebeeck Kasteel

This ‘detective story’ draws on inventories to find out what houses looked like and how they were used in the past. The two contrasting examples are a town house and a country house. The town house in Klipvischsteeg, Cape Town, has not survived. The property now lies under the block containing the Boston House building on the north side of Strand Street, opposite the Cape Sun Hotel. The farmstead and farm buildings of Kloovenburg, near Riebeeck Kasteel, still stand.

(adapted from Antonia Malan’s unpublished Ph. D. thesis, ‘Households of the Cape, 1750 to 1850: inventories and the archaeological record’ (University of Cape Town, 1993)).

Block R:R no.1: Klipvischsteeg

Maps I usually start with maps. The Wentzel survey of Cape Town in about 1750 shows how the old town blocks were numbered and where they were situated. The name Klipvischsteeg is shown on a map of Cape Town made in about 1804. Kloovenburg is marked on an ordinance survey map, which also shows the district and the farm number. (This cadastral information allows you to trace the property ownership in the Surveyor General’s Office and Deeds Office. If you want to trace a property in a town or village, you need to find out the modern erf number – mapped on a ‘noting sheet’.)

Street directories and deeds This property in block R:R was listed as 5 Klipvischsteeg under Pietersz’s name in the street directory of 1800 (Rosenthal 1969:200). From registered deeds of transfer we see that Willem Boonsayer bought the erf from land magnate Jan de Waal in 1755 for

3 Sometimes spelt ‘Cloovenburg’ and ‘Riebeeck Casteel’.

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$f4000$, when it already had two houses on it (DO T3145 24.3.1755). It was subdivided at his death and part sold to Jochem Niebenaar for $f4300$ (DO T4115 24.5.1766) and part to Jan Weber for $f6450$ (DO T4804 22.4.1766). The rest of the history of the property is unclear because some Deeds Office transfers were missing at the time of research and the next record appeared in 1836, well after the death of Clara Pietersz.

**Genealogies** As soon as you know who owned the property or who lived there, see if you can find their genealogies. Important people can also be found in Dictionary of South African Biographies.

**Inventories** A house and erf at block R:R (no.1) was inventoried in 1766 at the death of Willem Boonsayer (CA MOOC8/12.59) and in 1805 at the death of Clara Pietersz (CA MOOC8/24.39). You can read the inventories in the Cape Archives and in future, it will be possible to access online the MOOC inventories (Master of the Orphan Chamber series). Room-by-room inventories describe the layout of the building and what was in the rooms. We can compare the house as it was in 1766 and 1805. In both appraisals the house layout comprised a *voorhuis*, rooms to right and left, and a kitchen. But the earlier household included an adjacent room (*camer daar aan*) and the later one a pantry (*dispens*). In the *voorhuis* in 1766 and 1805 there was a wall-cupboard for porcelain and glass teaware and tableware, a table, *rustbank* and chairs. It was a dining room. The best front room in 1766 was multi-purpose for entertaining and sleeping, with shelves of porcelain teaware and tableware as well as three beds, a cabinet, tables, and half a dozen chairs. In 1805 this room also had a *bureau* (desk) and *gueridons* (small stands). The *camer daar aan* of 1766, containing a collection of porcelain, guns, chests and boxes and a bed, was not listed in 1805. I think it was possibly an attic room. The room to the left changed its function over time. In 1766 this room was multipurpose. It was used as a retail store in which glass-fronted cupboards displayed toys, cotton, pins, cloth, cutlery and other goods, but also a living room with a cabinet, two curtained beds, table and chairs. In 1805 it was a specialized bedroom with *jatyhout* bed hung with red fabric and five chairs. The retail function had been moved outside into the back yard (see below).

**Maps, street directories, deeds, genealogies and inventories**

The people who lived in the house in 1766 and 1805 were thus traced through a number of documentary sources. From the Deeds Office you get the names of property owners. From the street directories you get the names of heads of households and their addresses. From the genealogies (e.g. de Villiers and Pama, Heese and Lombard, or Hoge) you get the names of husbands, wives and children. You’ll find important people in the multi-volume Dictionary of South African Biography as well – in the reference section of libraries. From the inventories you get a range of information. Auction lists don’t have information on house layouts but will sometimes record who bought the place.

Willem Boonsayer was in the Company’s service but by 1766 his family of wife, Hendrina Mulder, and four children, a man slave and two women slaves (one blind), also ran a general store from their home, let the hired house behind the main dwelling, and fished in Table Bay. A *vischrol met zijn toebelooen* was inventoried on the beach. Clara Maria Pietersz in 1805 was a widow at least 60 years of age, of mixed parentage, with six grown children. Her household evidently relied on the sea for part of its living as she owned three slaves described as fishermen. (She also owned four other slaves, a man cook, an old man and two women.

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4 For some reason property prices and inventory valuations were usually given in guilders and stuivers and auction prices in rixdollars and schellings. The conversion of Cape money was: 1 Cape rixdollar (Rx) = 3 Cape gulden ($f$) = 48 stuivers (st).

5 Though the inventory does not specify her status, Hoge (1946: 380) names her Clara Maria Pieterse of the Cape, daughter of Pieter van Ineas. ‘Of the Cape’ indicates that her mother was a Cape-born slave or free black.
A careful reading of Pietersz’s inventory revealed that this household was very similar to the 1766 household. Pietersz’s property included a vertrek (outhouse) with four rooms. I expected to find a list of stores, provisions and workshop equipment. Instead, there was a room with table, chairs and draughts board, another with curtains, pictures, four beds and bedding and two chamber pots (indicating that it was presumably in use), another similar room but without the beds (possibly they belonged to their occupants), and then the fourth room contained the expected provisions and stores but also a toonbank or shop counter. It was apparently a hired dwelling and backyard shop. A good deal of liquor and other stores were housed in a separate pakhuis.

This backyard was thus always a busy crowded place, with the dinghy and oars also stored there in 1805. The whole property functioned as a complex economic unit and home, rather than a purely domestic or commercial site.7

A farm at Riebeeck Kasteel

The farm of Kloovenburg at Riebeeck Kasteel had an interesting and perhaps typical architectural history that can be traced through four inventories that were taken after the deaths of its owners in 1724, 1739, 1753 and 1780 (CA MOOC8/4.121, MOOC8/6.44, MOOC8/7.32 and MOOC8/18.13).

When Christina de Bruyn (widow of oud Stellenbosch heemraad Jan Botma) died in 1724 (MOOC8/4.121), she left her children well provided for with shares in properties in Heerestraat and Schotsekloof in Table Valley and the farms Sanquasdeurdrift and Kloovenburg near Riebeeck Kasteel. The house at Kloovenburg, however, was not for the family to live in but comprised a modest single-roomed dwelling, with separate slave kombuis, wynkelder and koornhuis. The house contained basic necessities: two beds, a rustbank, three tables, eleven chairs, a chest containing linen, and shelves bearing a few porcelain and pewter plates and teaware. The slave combuis was a cooking area and store room. The nine slaves could have slept there or between the empty barrels in the wine cellar or the sacks of corn in the granary. The farm was sold and eventually ended up in the possession of another propertied landlord, Company official Johannes Heufke (MOOC8/6.44, 1739). He lived in Cape Town in some style while his son David ran the farm. David had enlarged the dwelling, which now comprised a bed-sitting room, small store room and kitchen under one roof – a simple rectangular building. The cellar and cornhouse contained considerably more farm produce than before and the eight slaves had a slavenhuis which they shared with salt vats, tubs, some pickled cabbages, sacks of beans and a pile of lumber.

The next owner, Pieter van Taak, was the first to live on the farm. He radically altered the previous dwelling into a symmetrical T-plan. The alterations can be reconstructed from his inventory dated 1753 (MOOC8/7.32). You entered through the front door into a voorhuis. This provided an intervening entrance for visitors that separated formal and informal parts of the house. There was much porcelain in the voorhuis (20 dishes, 37 plates, 20 teacups and saucers) and meals were taken there (table and chairs with cushions). Off the voorhuis, two curtained bedrooms with curtained beds provided more privacy to the family. There was a store room and the kitchen had many copper utensils among the large range of cooking items listed. There was now a schoolkamer and knegtskamer on the werf, but the contents are confusing. The schoolroom contained some bedding and the knegtskamer only had farm tools and stores. Meanwhile, the slaves (13 men and two women) had no particular place named as theirs by this stage, and presumably used one of the outbuildings for

6 Though the inventory does not specify her status, Hoge (1946: 380) names her Clara Maria Pieterse of the Cape, daughter of Pieter van Ineas. ‘Of the Cape’ indicates that her mother was a Cape-born slave or free black.

7 This was borne out by the 1810-1830 street directories that listed subsequent owners or occupiers – the Klynsmits – with a retail shop.

8 A knegt was a Company soldier or sailor who was allowed to work for a free burgher as manager, overseer, tutor, etc.
shelter (*smitswinkel, kelder, waagenhuis*). A particular interest in horse breeding was evident, with 22 assorted horses plus six wagon horses listed together with other stock.

At Kloovenburg the *knegt*, Hendrik Witsche, married his employer’s widow and prospered as resident farmer and country gentleman. He was widowed and married again in 1770, fathering five more children. The Witsche family abandoned the old house (which became a farm building) and built a large extended T-shaped dwelling. This was inventoried at Hendrik’s death in 1780 (MOOC8/18.13).

The major difference in format between the old and new house was the addition of a *galdery* behind the *voorhuis*. This had the effect of partially removing the main reception room one step away from the entrance to the house, gaining more privacy while maintaining the central open space from where the mistress controlled household affairs. Other separations of room function were evident in the addition of a pantry, and the division between the study and family bedroom. The house was also built with a *solder* which implies a high pitched roof and ceiled rooms below - associated with external decorative gables – whereas the previous inventories made no mention of attic storage space and rooms were probably open to the rafters.

In 1780 the *voorhuis* retained the tables and eight chairs from the old house but a large chest containing clothes, and bread and tobacco cutting boards, were added. The new *galdery* was elaborately furnished, as was the left hand front room, in the style of a mid-18th century town house’s best room (Woodward 1983:12-13). Rooms to the right were furnished as study and livingroom-bedroom.

The outbuildings remained as before, but with the addition of the *oude woonhuis*. Many more horses and oxen were listed. Eighteen male slaves and eight female slaves (some third generation Cape-born) were owned by this family.

Though I have not traced any further inventories for Kloovenburg, a survey diagram dated 1795 showed that the property consisted of a line of three main buildings with two smaller buildings in front. The right hand building was the new long-tailed T-house built by 1780 by Witsche, but now with an addition into the back, and the one in the middle was the old T-shaped farmhouse of van Taak.

The architectural historians, Hans Fransen and Mary Cook, described modern Kloovenburg as an “H-shaped homestead ... extensively altered in the 1860s ... but it retains much older woodwork inside. To judge by the style of a wall-cupboard ... the house must be pre-1800 in date” (Fransen and Cook 1980:254). The inventories have established a more complex and interesting history for the house.

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9 Deeds Office Surveyor General (DO SG) Diagram 25/1795 filed with Old Stellenbosch Freehold (OSF) grant vol.4 folio 53 dated 20 February 1795. The first grant was on 26 September 1704 (DO OSF1(2)-496).
Inventory Studies at the Cape: Pioneers at Work

Carolyn Woodward was the first to study Cape inventories in general rather than as individual houses, being particularly interested in ceramics and museum interpretations. Her MA thesis and many articles remain the most cited works on VOC-period interiors and material culture at the Cape.

James Deetz, doyen of historical archaeology in the United States, visited South Africa a number of times from the mid 1980s. He brought an archaeological approach to using inventories to study material culture, and left behind him books, articles and motivated postgraduate students, including Yvonne Brink and Antonia Malan.

Margaret Cairns has an encyclopaedic knowledge of Cape families and an extraordinary ability to trace information through complicated genealogical and property records. She talks of long-dead people and their houses as if they were friends today.

In Karel Schoeman’s books you will find historical writing with compelling imaginative reconstructions – and it is interesting to note that his recent writing is informed by household inventories, among other sources.

C.S. Woodward, Oriental Ceramics at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1795 (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1974)
Fiction based on farm inventories

Antonia Malan

A visit to Waterpoel Farm, Rheebokskloof, 1790

In 1790 the Rossouw household lived on the farm Waterpoel in Reebokskloof on the Paarl Mountain. The farm and the house no longer exist but there were two inventories, one in 1793 and another in 1828. In this fictional story, Lea van Mozambique welcomes the Landdrost who has come to help her master with his new will. She gives him a guided tour of the house. This story is based on archival records including the 1793 inventory which lists all the furniture and other household items, the animals and the slaves.

Welcome, Heer Landdrost. Please come in. I am sorry that the master and mistress are not here, but they will be home shortly. See, the clock only says half past eleven and they come in for lunch at midday. Please sit down here in the voorhuis – take the chair with cushion or maybe you would like the rustbank? Do you like the colours in the chintz? Here are the smoking pipes – please help yourself to tobacco. Let me find a hot coal for the tesje. There is wine in the jug on the table and wine glasses on that wall rack. Do you mind if I prepare the table? I have to pull it out in the middle of the room. They’re using best porcelain plates today, in your honour. Usually it’s the unbreakable pewter dishes.

Yes, I know that you are coming to help Farmer Rossouw with his new Will. He has been feeling sick a lot recently and worries about all his debts in case he dies. How do I know these things? I have been a slave of this family for a long time. Oh, you would like to hear more about us?

My name is Lea and I was born in Mozambique. I have been the slave of Maria Magdalena Rossouw’s children since the sailors captured me fifteen years ago – in 1780. The slavers took me to a ship in Delagoa Bay and then we were brought to Table Bay. That all took place when Maria was married to Andries Brink. Farmer Brink was on the jetty at the harbour when the slave ship docked, making sure he got first choice. I think he bribed Heer Duminy10, though, just to make sure, because Brink didn’t have much status among the townspeople. He was just a country man.

Maria had six children under 10 years old around her skirts and needed a girl to help with them. Brink brought me straight to Paarl. I did not know where I was for many months and it took years to recover from the shock of being dragged from my family. There is such a contrast, too, between the lowland forests of Mozambique and the dry mountainous Cape.

There were two more Brink babies to come, before the old man died after his gun exploded in his face. Mevrou Maria’s cousin François had been widowed and was looking for a new wife. It was a sensible arrangement for them to marry and provide a home for all the younger children together. Then they produced a laatlammetje, young Pieter. What a handful!

Now we live on this farm, Waterpoel, which belongs to Farmer Rossouw. They also have a loan farm near Goudini, Dwarsberg. That is where the father of my three children works. We don’t see him often. His name is Dramat, and he’s a Cape-born slave. His mother was a slave of the Rossouws and his father their stockman, a free Khoekhoe man. He therefore inherited his enslavement from his mother. Dramat is in charge of the livestock on the loan farm – he learned about animals from his father. We have a lot of animals on Waterpoel. The slave Adam is the chief ox wagon driver and Arij drives the horses.

I belong to the Brink family rather than the Rossouws. When my mistress dies the children and I will have to return to the Brinks. I am hoping that she will free us in her will, like sometimes happens, but there is nothing I can do about it. The trouble is that we are worth a lot of money.

10 François Duminy was a Cape slave-trading Captain.
– more than all the stuff in this house added together – so for the children to get a decent legacy we will probably have to be sold.

If you want to get an idea of the value of the house, I had better show you round. Let’s start in the kitchen as I have to check the briede that Dina cooked earlier this morning. Leave your glass on the dining table; it won’t harm it. Everything is getting old and worn out now. Like some of us slaves too, who have worked our hearts out – look at old Baatjoe from Boegies near the wagon, and the slave women, Sanna and Clara, sitting out there in the sunshine. They’re worthless for resale, so they are lucky to be allowed to stay here and get food. Baatjoe and Sanna were cruelly punished by the local farmers’ commando after they were caught with a group of runaways, and they’ve never really recovered. Clara pines for her home in India: she was forced to abandon two children there.

We cook for over 20 people, slaves and family, each day, which is why there are so many chimney chains and stew pots in the hearth. It’s not high quality food, but plenty of rice and bread. We grow some grain here on the farm. There are chickens, ducks and geese, and four pigs too.

The voorkamer here on the right is the biggest room. It’s not grand like the one at Paarl Diamant though. I visit Diamant often because there is another slave from my home village who lives there. It is so good to speak my language and hear my name. No. Lea is not my real name. The clerk at the slave auction gave it to me. At Diamant they have curtains in the windows and strong wooden ceilings in the living rooms because there is a huge attic in the roof. But you can’t have an attic here because the house is too low and also there’s no gable with a window to let the light in. Their mirrors are framed in gilt, not plain and cracked like this one. But what can you do to protect things when there’s hardly room to turn. A bedstead with hangings, two more beds and two desks in a teeny room like this? The cupboard is nice, though, with the set of porcelain pots on top. Like the big clock in the voorhuis, it was an heirloom that Brink left to my mistress.

Master Pieter and two of his brothers sleep in this room, to the left. They are really squeezed in, but that is more space than we have in the kitchen at night. Most of the slaves sleep in the farm buildings, but some of us have to stay within earshot. My mistress often wakes me to deal with her arthritis. At Diamant there’s plenty of room in the attic for the domestic slaves, amongst the stores and old household stuff.

If Farmer Rossouw was here he would have taken you to see the wine cellar right away. After the horses, to him it is the most important part of the farm. He has some wine in store and makes brandy too. If you look through the window, you can see both the stills out in the yard over there. Sorry, let me open the shutter some more – it is quite difficult to see from such a small low window. They say his wine tastes like vinegar. I know that we always have plenty of vinegar for the kitchen, so maybe that’s true!

Here come the slaves and young Rossouw boys for their lunch. Today all the slave men are here except Dramat – all 11 of them. Appolonia has taken her children and mine to the fields to help with weeding – six of them. The other two women slaves are also working in the fields today.

I can hear the Master and Mistress coming in. Yes. There’s the clock striking twelve. Good day to you too, sir.

Sources
Cape Archives: MOOC8/51.5, Inventory of Francois Josua Rossouw, 23.8.1793.
‘Dutch town house’ plan:
(1) voorhuis (2) sijkamer
(3) binnehard (4) gang.

Plan of three-roomed house: (1) voorhuis (2) kamer (3) kombuis (6) haard
(7) stoep.

Plan of T-shape house: (1) voorhuis (2) kamers
(3) kombuis (6) haard.

Plan of extended T-shape house: (1) voorhuis (2) kamers
(3) kombuis (5) galdery/gaandery (6) haard (7) stoep.
Inventories in the broader context of research

Nigel Worden

Nigel Worden is a historian with a particular interest in Cape slavery in the VOC period. He has used inventories to track the life histories of individual slaves and to investigate the regions in Asia from which they were brought to the Cape. Professor Worden is in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town.

It is interesting to see the ways in which histories of the VOC are emerging. Working on the VOC period at the Cape was viewed as rather elitist, insular and irrelevant, really quite a backwater, when I started out in the 1970s. Now there is an amazing growth of awareness about this period in South Africa, not only in universities but elsewhere.

The inventories give a contextual framework for looking at the complexity of the social relationships that existed in the VOC Cape. Of course we need to know the nature of experience for soldiers, artisans, clerks and junior officials, Khoekhoen, slaves, not only the powerful or the wealthy. We can’t focus on each of these as separate groups of people – we need to look at the whole picture, to find how people interact with each other across these boundaries.

It is striking how some of the material in the inventories and related documents reveals the heterogeneity of this society – the influence of different parts of Europe, Africa, Asia, and the islands of the Indian Ocean. We see this expressed in the kinds of households that existed and in the objects they contained.

There are many ways in which the inventories may be useful to researchers as a way into an understanding of:

The context of real people
Histories have tended to be very structured or political and to ignore the lived experience, but there is a growing concern to write a history of real people, individuals who had real experiences, real lives. These materials are invaluable for that purpose. If we have a name it is likely that we are going to find an inventory that will relate to that individual.

The position of women
The position of women, so often elided in historiography, is clear from these documents which show the accumulation of property, how properties were held together, the role of female slaves in preserving families, and so on.

Histories of places
This has always been important to architectural historians but the inventories also fill in the human detail of specific sites, such as farms or houses in Cape Town.

Things people owned, where they came from, what people did with them
If you have 53 chairs in the front room, what does it mean? What does it mean that your guns are locked away in the back? Material culture is an enormously important resource and the inventories tell us a great deal about the way people viewed themselves and others.
Demography
Population studies is badly researched in South Africa. The inventories and related documents give some insight into demographic issues such as age of marriage, life expectancy, the large numbers of families with step children in a society where death was ever present. This allows comparison with other parts of the VOC world.

Community outreach
The inventories are valuable resources for family and community-based research projects, to creative writing, to educational projects in schools, museums and heritage tourism.

Links and comparative studies across the colonial world
Many people from the Netherlands have shown interest in these sources, saying ‘We never thought about the colonial world’. People who work on other parts of the VOC empire, such as Batavia in Indonesia, Malabar coast in India, and Japan, have shown interest in working on the Cape which they have always seen as rather peripheral to Asia. We are all working on parts of the VOC world that were peripheral to the VOC headquarters in Batavia so there are all sorts of questions that we will be able to bring together at the international conference planned for December 2006.

Signature of the Chinese Poasinko, 1763.

Detail from inventory of slaves from India, the East Indies and Madagascar.
We know that many archivists, genealogists and historians of the VOC and British colonial period are interested in the inventories and vendurollen but these documents may also be valuable to people outside of those circles.

Comments from teachers, museum educators and tour guides

Teachers, museum educators and tour guides who participated in public workshops on the inventories and auction lists have responded with enthusiasm, as these comments from a workshop in Caledon indicate:

We need to select inventories and auction lists as primary sources to use in the history classroom to develop research skills at different levels, primary or high school. As educators in a region – in our case, the Overberg – we need to develop an educational kit with a map, printed materials, maybe a small textbook. An inventory is a good basis for group work – we can divide the learners in a class and give each group a different room to look at and some detective work to do. Then they present their findings …

(Connell Balie, primary school teacher and principal, Caledon)

It is always difficult to keep the children interested in history but if we give them an inventory for a place they know, that they can relate to, it makes it interesting. They can take an inventory and look at old houses to see what is still there, what is changed.

(Magda Hans, high school teacher, Genadendal)

In the museums, we are expected to produce programmes for the national days like Heritage Day and to work with schools in our region. There is material in local inventories that we can use for this, inventories for farms and town houses that still exist. We also have plans to have some learners come in the holidays to train in primary research – this has developmental challenges and opportunities for our own staff as well as for learners. It’s a way to open up the social history but of course there are sensitive issues. Are people really comfortable being associated with slavery, whether as descendants of slaves or slave-owners or both? We need to workshop this with the community …

(Tizzie Mangiagalli, Swellendam Museum)

As a tour guide I try to get people interested not just in wine-tasting but in digging a little deeper. The inventories give a wider perspective about our real history and now I want to work out information packages based on the inventories. We have to be careful with the slavery topic that we don’t polarize people even more, but as an ex-teacher I say history should be about people’s own history to make it come alive.

(Aubrey Springveldt, tour guide, Worcester)
Using inventories for educational purposes: examples

The two examples that follow are from a 60-page package of materials prepared by the TEPC for a workshop in the Overberg.

Anna Vik (Fick), 1740, and Bernardus van Billion, 1747, Stellenbosch (MOOC8/06.039 and MOOC8/6.121)

For examples of inventories in the Dutch period, you could go back to section 3, Looking at Inventories, which focuses on the inventories of Anna Vik (Fick) in Stellenbosch in 1740, and her husband, Bernardus van Billion, in 1747.

• The Dutch should not be too difficult for Afrikaans speakers and they could look for similarities and differences between the language of the inventories and present-day Afrikaans.
• Learners could work individually and/or in pairs or small groups to decode the Dutch in order to see what the inventory reveals about the family, their house and their lifestyle and perhaps to contrast that with present-day lifestyle.
• The next stage might be to analyse the differences between the two inventories and to speculate about how the ‘poor widower’ got so rich in just seven years.

Many other inventories and auction lists contain puzzles that might intrigue learners. Questions could point to puzzles such as:

• How many people lived in this house? How many beds can you find in this house (under different names: kooi, katel, etc.)? Who do you think slept in which room? Why do you think they had so many chairs?
• What evidence can you find that the deceased was involved in private trade (illegal trade in the eyes of the Company)?

Burgher Captain Sarel Pietersz de Jager, 1765, Swellendam (MOOC8/12.014)

Here we have the list of eleven slaves owned by Burgher Captain de Jager at the time of his death in 1765. Sometimes slaves were listed in among the chairs and cattle and ploughs – possessions like any other possessions – but in this inventory the slaves are listed separately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual van Mallabaar</th>
<th>Pedro van Madagascar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Augustus van Mallabaar [voor de vendutie overleeden]</td>
<td>Goliath van Cabo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October van Timor</td>
<td>David van Cabo [absent]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September van Timor</td>
<td>Flora van Cabo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuijn van Madagascar</td>
<td>Diana van Bengalen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cupido van Bengalen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are a few questions about de Jager’s slaves that require factual answers, some questions to encourage speculation and some to encourage empathy among learners:

• How many men and how many women were in this group of slaves?
• How many of these slaves were born at the Cape and how many were brought from far away?
• How many of these slaves do you think were named by a slave trader or by their owner? Why do you think masters gave their slaves new names? Do you think the slaves felt proud of their new names?
• In this group of slaves, how many languages do you think they spoke? What language/s do you think they spoke among themselves? What did they speak with the master and mistress? With other workers?
• Do you think that there were slave families on the de Jager farm?

Here are a few examples of tasks that integrate different learning areas (History, Geography, Language, Drama, Art, Numeracy):

• You are one of de Jager’s African slaves. Draw a picture of your childhood before you became a slave and a picture of your life as a slave on de Jager’s farm.
• You are de Jager’s wife, telling your house slave what work she must do today. She answers back. Write the dialogue.
• You are one of de Jager’s Asian slaves. You learned to write as a child and now you keep a secret diary. Write a page in your diary after a hard day’s work.
• Work out how far the slaves were from their homes – you will need a map of Africa, the Indian Ocean and Asia so you can work out the distance for each slave and the total distance the slaves were forced to travel.

Jacobus Daniel Jordaan, 1829, Klipheuvel, Caledon (MOOC8/44.70)

There are two inventories of this Caledon farm, one in Dutch dated 20 August 1828, a few days after Jordaan’s death, and one in English dated 18 March 1829. Most of the English version is given below. Here are some questions that could be adapted for different contexts:

• Read through the inventory to find out what year Jacobus Daniel Jordaan died, how old he was, the name of his widow, the age of his children, the name and location of his farm, and activities on the farm.
• As usual, the inventory takes us on a room by room tour of the household. What do we learn about the layout of the house and the way of life of this family?
• What imported goods do you spot in the inventory?
• What clues are there that Jordaan – and perhaps some of his slaves – were active in the building trade and as blacksmiths or carpenters?
• At the end of the inventory you will find a list of all those who owed money to Jordaan. Why do you think these people are spread over such a wide geographical area?
# Inventory of the Estate of the late Jacobus Daniel Jordaan

(Jacobus zoon) deceased the 17th August 1828 at the Place Klip Heuvel Caledon aged 49 years 9 months 24 days.

## Heirs
- Jacobus Daniel born 15 September 1814
- Susanna Elizabeth born 23 April 1817
- Hendrik Christoffel born 10 August 1819
- Johannes Petrus born 10 December 1821

## Property, Goods & Effects
- The loan place Klip Heuvel

## Slaves
- October about 36 years of age
- Present 19
- David 17
- September 11
- Sara 52½
- Romana 36
  - Children to Romana: Jeftha 8
  - Sara 5
- Clarinda 30
- Doortje 23
- Caatje 18
- Sabrina 30
  - Children to Sabina: Marinus 10½
  - Phiinda 8
  - Ernst 6
  - Sabina 2
- Roos 17
- Esau 17
- Aaron 14

## In the lefthand chamber
- 1 table
- 1 clothes press
- 1 feather bed compleat
- 1 bestead
- 1 small bedstead
- 1 looking glass
- 1 great and 1 small canister

## In the chamber behind
- 12 chairs
- 3 feather beds
- 10 pillows
- 4 bolsters
- 3 counterpanes
- 6 sheets
- 1 bedstead
- 2 small bedsteads
- 1 mattrass
- 1 table
- 2 cannisters
- 1 writing desk containing one silver watch, 3 vineyard knives, 1 snuff box, 3 locks
- 1 copper kettle with stove
- 1 smoothing iron
- 1 waiter with 6 cups and saucers
- 1 empty chest
- 1 chest containing 3 boxes with papers and other articles
- 2 small boxes
- 1 gun
- 1 pair scales with weights
- 2 decanters, 2 tumbler glasses, 6 wine glasses
- 1 stand with 5 bottles
- 5 books
- 1 hand lamp
- Some empty bottles
- 1 blue china pot
- 2 plates
- 1 clothes rack
- 12 silver spoons large & 6 small spoons, 2 silver forks
- 1 soup spoon
- 15 steel forks
- 7 knives
- 9 soup plates
- 13 dishes
- 1 china basin

## In the righthand chamber
- 3 small confectionary pots
- 1 small bedstead
- 1 meel sift
- 1 chest
- 1 case with bottles
- 12 old sacks
- 1 basket
- 1 meal tub
- 2 old ?scales
- 1 child’s chair
- 2 earthen pots and 1 earthen can
- 1 gun with powder horn

Continued on page 70
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>In the Kitchen</strong></th>
<th><strong>In the Blacksmith's Shop</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 kneading trough</td>
<td>1 corn sieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 iron pots</td>
<td>1 bellows, anvil &amp; tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tart pan</td>
<td>1 iron vice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bread shovel</td>
<td>1 cask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 old frying pan</td>
<td>4 old plough shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 grid iron</td>
<td>3 saws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 steaming pan, 2 flesh forks &amp; spoon</td>
<td>5 adzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 shovel, axe and mortar</td>
<td>1 axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 candlesticks</td>
<td>7 gimlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 small candlesticks</td>
<td>1 parcel Carpenter's tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 buckets</td>
<td>7 brick moulds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 old churn</td>
<td>8 spades, 2 picks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 muid barley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4½ muid oats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 long saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 wheel rings (iron)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 parcel old iron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 gind stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 chaise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 trap</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>In the Garret</strong></th>
<th><strong>In the Out House</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>165 muid corn</td>
<td>1 planing board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 yellow wood planks</td>
<td>4 pieces yellow wood plank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 stinkwood planks</td>
<td>4 pieces wagon wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 pieces wagon wood</td>
<td>3 pieces asseguy wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 pieces (leerschyden)</td>
<td>6 yokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 sack with feathers</td>
<td>19 leer schijven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bushel</td>
<td>1 lot straw for thatching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 leather sacks</td>
<td>1 pitch fork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10½ muid dry fruit</td>
<td>3 barrels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2½ muid beans</td>
<td>2 saddles, 1 bridle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>In the Cellar</strong></th>
<th><strong>In the Stable</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 empty leaguers</td>
<td>2 ploughs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 empty pipe</td>
<td>1 harrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 funnel</td>
<td>1 yellow wood beam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 axle tree beam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 half aams with vinegar</td>
<td>1 stallion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1½ anker empty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 large tubs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 leather sacks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>In the Store house</strong></th>
<th><strong>In the Stable</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 span harness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 yokes and trace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 spokes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 fellies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 traces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lever (lighten hand)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 hides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tar pot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tar cask empty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 new piece wagon (voor tang) and seat</td>
<td>1 stallion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 gun stock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 parcel wood
1 stone picker

**In the Yard**
2 ox wagons and 4 chains
45 geese
10 turkeys

**In the Kraal**
20 waggon and saddle horses
5 young horses
40 mares and foals
15 oxen
1 young bull
107 breeding sheep
53 goats
18 pigs

**Cash and Obligations found in favour of the Estate**
In cash Rixdollars 15.5
2 Spanish dollars
1 Dutch dollar
43 pieces Indian cash (silver)

**Obligations:**
Notarial Bond by Pieter Dan. de Wet (Hendriks son) resident in Brandt Valley Worcester District: Rds 1900
Notarial Bond by Hendrik Ch. de Wet, Waagens Boom’s Kloof j17,000
Note of Hand by W.C. Swart, resident in the District of Somerset for which J.W. Wepeles, Quartel Fontyn is security Rds1800 – paid
Note of Hand by J.P. Maree of Caledon Rds400 – paid
Note of Hand by Barend J. Erasmus, Fruitjes Rivier, Caledon …. 
Note of Hand by Pieter Jac. de Wet in the District of Beaufort …
Note of Hand by Piet. H. Maree, Serjins Rivier, Caledon …
Note of Hand by J.G. van Graan, Bot Rivier, Stillinbosch …

Note of Hand by Dirk de Vos, Caledon …
Note of Hand by F.I. de Kock, Kaars Rivier, Caledon …
Note of Hand by H. de Wet, Waagenbooms Kloof, Caledon
Note of Hand by P. de Bruin junior, Rivier Zonder Einde …
Note of Hand by J.D. de Bruin, Hansjes Rivier, Caledon …
Note of Hand from W.M. Geering, Caledon …
Note of Hand J.M. de Wet, district of Beaufort …
Note of Hand G.I. de Kock, Boontjes Kraal, Caledon …
Note of Hand Godlief C. de Wet, Rivier Zonder Einde, district Stellenbosch …
Note of Hand Cornelis Swart senior, Boontjes Kraal, Caledon …
Note of Hand Dan. du Toit (D. son), Boontjes Kraal, Caledon …
Note of Hand L.M. Maree, Salt River, Rivier Zonder Einde …
Note of Hand J.J. Zietsman …
Note of Hand B. Badenhorst, Woolfgat, Caledon …
Note of Hand J.D. Ungerer, Swellendam …
Note of Hand Daniel du Toit (Frans son), residing at Tulbagh …

**Claims against the Estate**
By Jacobus Jordaan Senior a note of hand … of which 2 years are due for Rds 6666.5.2. …

The above Inventory taken in presence of W.H.C. de Wet and I.S. Le Roux late in charge of the Estate who hereby certify that to the best of their knowledge it contains the whole of Deceased’s property.

Signed: **Klip Heuvel, 18th March 1829**
Witnesses: Keyter, Zietsman & Rawstone (Agent to Orphan Chamber)
Other potential uses

Apart from teachers who want to use inventories and auction lists to get learners interested in the ‘detective work’ of research, there is a wide range of potential users for the documents. This list is based on discussions in public workshops on the TEPC project and could easily be extended:

- A descendant of a long line of Cape Town fishermen traces his family back to a home in Kreefde Gang and wants to know about the household.
- A TV crew filming an historical documentary – or an historical novelist – wants to bring a Cape colonial interior to life.
- The curator of a period museum wants to recreate the atmosphere of that time with authentic arrangements of furniture and objects in some rooms.
- A tourism bureau plans a route to commemorate the contribution of slaves so wants to track the lives of freed slaves who became stamnoeders.
- A tour guide wants to dig deeper into the social history of the wine estates where tourists go for wine tasting.
- A heritage authority commissions a heritage impact assessment to challenge demolitions in a rural hamlet, suspecting that it contains the only remaining 19th century mosque in the region.
- An environmentalist is interested in the changing land use patterns of a river valley, first grazing grounds and forests, then vineyards replaced by fruit orchards, now ‘boutique farmyards’ and dormitory settlement for labourers.
- An architectural historian wants to know whether the style of farmstead we call Cape Dutch was a local innovation or something copied from overseas.
- A maritime archaeologist wants to know about inventories that list ships’ timbers in storerooms.
- An historical archaeologist wants to trace the cultural interaction of people from Europe and from Asia and the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape – in a city block, over time.

Inventory of J.D. Jordaan at Klip Heuvel, Caledon, 1828.
10
How to access Resources

This is a brief guide to the resources associated with the TEPC project. Our project partners, the National Archives in The Hague, have extensive sources, including the TEPC database, and links on their website.

Groups and networks

Toolkit for Researchers

Refer to Slaves at the Cape: A Guidebook for Beginner Researchers for descriptions and contact details for local resource centres, libraries, archives, and so on. Listed below are some useful reference books available at the Cape Archives and in some libraries. (For the full list of the books we used when writing the book see the Bibliography section.)

Archival Handbooks from Historical Archaeology Research Group, UCT

- Glossary of objects and words used in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Cape inventories (HARG Resource Book, 1999).

Genealogies


The Reading Room at the Cape Archives is home to your best resource, people: the archivists in charge and fellow researchers.

The Cape Family History Forum, established in 2002, is a network of Cape Flats-based community historians and amateur genealogists. The group serves as a lobbying group for neglected community histories of previously marginalized groups. They build family trees from a working class perspective by means of ‘family history reports’ based on oral traditions and supplemented by archival documentary evidence. Contact kammie@new.co.za.

Websites on Genealogy in South Africa: www.ancestry.mweb.co.za and www.familytree.co.za. These two new websites cover all aspects of genealogy and family history. The database contains thousands of records: births, baptisms, burials, marriages, passenger lists, on-line books etc. ‘We intend developing the most culturally diverse website for genealogical, archival and historical data research in South Africa without any boundaries of race, gender or religion.’ New on-line death notice template. See also www.learningonline.co.za. Contact person: Heather MacAlister.
Web Links

Indexes compiled by Karel Schoeman for research into the Van der Stel period:

- ‘Op hierdie blad (www.gendata.co.za/databasis.htm) word bronne wat vir genealogiese en kultuurhistoriese navorsers van belang is gratis beskikbaar gestel vir aflaaai. Daar sal van tyd tot tyd nuwe materiaal bygevoeg word. As u graag in kennis gestel wil word van nuwe toevoegings stuur ‘n e-pos na dmjacobs@absamail.co.za met die woorde GEE ASB. KENNIS VAN NUWE BRONNE as onderwerp van die boodskap.

- Die volgende registers op belangrike kultuurhistoriese bronne wat betrekking het op die VOC-tydperk is opgestel deur Karel Schoeman vir eie gebruik en word hiermee met sy toestemming beskikbaar gestel aan ander navorsers vir gebruik en duplisering. Dit is ‘n baie waardevolle toevoeging tot ons vindmiddels op bronne uit daardie tydperk.

- Die meeste van die bronne sal beskikbaar wees by o.a. die Nasionale Argiewe, Nasionale, Biblioteek, Kaapstad ens. Kopieë van H.F. Heese se boek Reg en onreg: Kaapse regspraak in die agtiende eeu kan by Dr. Loff van UWK se Instituut vir Historiese Navorsing bestel word. Sy e-pos adres is cloff@uwc.ac.za.

- Die lêers kan afgelaai word deur bloot te klick op die afkorting van die betrokke bron. Die grootte van die lêers word in hakies aan die einde van elke bron gegee.’

Other web links:

- www.ancestry.mweb.co.za
- www.capetranscripts.co.za
- www.familytree.co.za
- www.museums.org.za/iziko
- www.nationalarchives.gov.za/naairs
- www.nationaalarchief.nl
- www.sentrum.co.za
- www.solms-delta.co.za
- www.tanap.net

Resources related to Transcriptions

Sentrum and XML: Schalk and Johan Liebenberg of Sentrum vir Besigheids- en TaalDienst are the computer consultants to the TANAP Resolutions and TECP projects in Cape Town. They customized the computer programme for the transcriptions, using CorelTM XmetaL®, an Extensible Markup Language (XML) editor. Sentrum also develops user materials associated with the databases and wrote a general Introduction to XML and encoding guidelines and protocols for transcribing MOOC inventories and vendurollen. See www.sentrum.co.za.

CD-ROMs and DVDs: Sentrum will supply data on a CD-ROM, at present in pdf format (Acrobat Reader). This is at the request of participants in the public workshops held by TEPC during 2005, and people in South Africa who research the transcripts of the Resolutions of the Cape on the TANAP website on a regular basis. (Once the dataset is available on the Internet, anyone can download the data or burn their own CD or DVD, and in five or ten years they can download it onto another medium, not yet known.)

Council of Justice transcripts

A very valuable new resource is, Trials of Slavery: selected documents concerning slaves from the criminal records of the Council of Justice at the Cape of Good Hope, 1705-1794, edited by Nigel Worden and Gerald Groenewald (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2005). Transcripts in the original Dutch with English translation. This is a collection of 87 verbatim records of trials involving slaves at the Cape
in the 18th century, as accused or as witnesses (and sometimes even as witnesses against owners).

These “illuminate not only the details of crime and punishment at the Cape in that century, but also abundantly detail telling features of the lives, labours, languages and outlook of slaves and other inhabitants of the Dutch colony. Reading these case records provides glimpses of these slaves as flesh and blood people instead of a faceless, silent mass, the object only of outsiders’ observations and enumeration” (from description on cover).

The book has a useful glossary, index of personal names and subject index. Order from www.vanriebeecksociety.co.za.

’n Slaweregister en navorsingsmoontlikhede wat dit bied
Kobus Faasen, TEPC transcriber

Vir diegene wat in die geskiedenis van die slawe belang stel, sal ’n slaweregister van groot waarde wees. Ek het min of meer iets soos die volgende in gedagte:

- naam
- land van oorsprong van de Kaap
- ouderdom
- manlik/vroulik
- fisiese toestand/prys/datum van oordrag Gewese eienaar en adres
- huidige/ nuwe eienaar en adres
- ander inligting

Toetsvoorbeeld

Mnre. Schalk en Johan Liebenberg van Sentrum het met behulp van ’n stylblad ’n voorlopige lys van slawe uit die eerste volledig geredigeerde transkripsies opgestel (MOOC8/1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 24 en MOOC 10/2). ’n Mens kan nou met so ’n lys werk en sien watter interessanthede dit oplewer.

Ek het eerstens probeer vasstel hoeveel van die geïnventariseerde slawe uit elke gebied afkomstig is. ’n Alfabetiese lys van die plekke van oorsprong met die getalle slawe per plek vir die periode 1727 tot 1748 (tydperk gedek deur MOOC8/5 en MOOC8/6) lyk as volg:

- Ambon 9; Angola 10; Arones 3; Bali 30; Banda 8; Banjar 2; Batavia 75; Bouton 6; Boegies 66; Bengalen 418; Bima 3; Caab 257; Ceylon 27; Cust 16; Diman 2; Guinee 2; Java 18; Koromandel 8; Kosta 2; Macassar 36; Madagaskar 67; Madura 2; Malabar 214; Mandaar 9; Mauritius 6; Mosambiek 5; Nagapatnam 10; Nias 21; Palembang 2; Palicatta 1; Persië 1; Rio de la Goa 64; Samboewa 3; Sembawa 1; Tutucorin 9; Terra de Natal 7; Ternaten 19; Trincobare 5; Timor 38; Westkust 1.

Uit bogenoemde kan die afleiding gemaak word dat Bengalen en Malabar twee van die gebiede was waar die meeste van die Kaap se slawe hul oorsprong had. Batavia, Boegies, Rio de la Goa en Madagaskar lê min of meer saam in die derde plek. Teen 1748 was die aantal slawe gebore in die Kaap al reeds meer as die uit Malabar.

Die aantal slawe van wie die naam nie vermeld word in die inventarisse vir die betrokke tydperk nie (‘unnamed’), is 179. ’n Soektog na slawe wat vernoem is na die maande van die jaar, is tydelik gefnuik omdat die datums van elke inventaris dieselfde inligting bevat.

Met die vinnige vooruitgang in tegnologiese toepassings, sal navorsers se taak aansienlik makliker wees. Hoewel elke nuwe ontwikkeling met groeipyne gepaard gaan, sal die totstandkoming van ’n slaweregister en vergelykinings en/of integrasie met ander soortgelyke registers dit veel makliker maak om inligting oor slawe te verkry. Dis egter ’n bykans onmoontlike taak om die genealogiese lyne terug na slaafvoorouers op te spoor.
TEPC on the Internet

Nationaal Archief (NA) in The Hague and the TEPC website
www.tanap.net/search/search.cfm
The results of the TEPC project are to be published on the NA’s TANAP site (see below). Follow the link to ‘Search in the Estate Papers of the Orphan Chamber of the Cape of Good Hope’. There are an introduction, glossary and search guides to help you. The quick search functions will be on year, reference number, geographical name, name of testator, names (including slaves) and ship name – and there’s a ‘free search’ option. The site has many links to associated information.

Transcription of the Estate Papers of the Cape of Good Hope (TEPC)
www.capetranscripts.co.za.
Here you will find information about the project and its activities, and links to other sites. However, these pages may not be maintained beyond the life of the project so visit the more permanent sites as well.

Developing search guides and datasets
It should be the joint responsibility of the Cape Archives and institutions like the University of Cape Town and University of the Western Cape to ensure that information about scholarly work and activities associated with the TEPC project is made available to people who use the data.

Nationaal Archief and TANAP website
www.nationaalarchief.nl & www.tanap.net
www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions_Cape_of_Good_Hope

This piece is extracted from the presentation by Hanno de Vries of the Nationaal Archief, at TEPC Workshop 3, October 2005.

In conjunction with the archive services of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and South Africa, which once formed the main trading areas of the Dutch East India Company, the Nationaal Archief (NA) has launched a project entitled ‘Towards a New Age of Partnership’ (TANAP). The objective is to cooperate in preserving archive materials and making them accessible.

In the Netherlands, the main projects concern the digitisation of about 125 lists of VOC records in all partner repositories and the creation of a database of copies of archives from the colonies, available at the Dutch National Archives. These are documents, sent from the local factories and settlements in Asia and South Africa, to the Directors in the Netherlands. They contain not only reports and letters, but also appendices such as censuses, diaries of port towns, journals of ships, local laws and treaties.

One of the first products of the TANAP initiative was the transcription of the Resolutions of the Council of Policy, the backbone of the VOC archives in the Cape. The Council of Policy dealt with almost everything in and around Cape Town so the information in its archives is of exceptional value. For that reason, part of the series had already been transcribed, annotated and published between 1957 and 1984. In the TANAP project these books were scanned and digitised with the OCR technique. The remaining volumes, for the period 1744-1795, were transcribed directly in a digital format and all the volumes were published on the internet.

An extensive introduction to the Resolutions and VOC history in Cape of Good Hope in Afrikaans and English was written by Dr Helena Liebenberg, and a modest glossary of VOC expressions in Afrikaans written by Dr De Wet was digitised. Both are published on the TANAP website.

In contrast to the Resolutions, the household inventories transcribed from the Orphan Chamber records during the TEPC Project are accounts of ordinary people. These are to be added to the TANAP website, along with a glossary of terms used in the documents.
Two other projects (independent of TANAP) related to the VOC may be of interest:

- the *Atlas of Mutual Heritage*, a database of images of VOC settlements, kept in Dutch museums, the Royal Library and the National Archives.
- a database of all the people, mentioned in the salary administration of the VOC (*scheepssoldijboeken*): the names of all officials, servants, sailors, merchants and soldiers of the VOC are registered, with the dates of their first voyage, their retirement (or death), their promotions, the name of the ship they mustered on, etc. See [www.voc.websilon.nl](http://www.voc.websilon.nl) – the internet site of the NA project ‘Uitgevaren voor de Kamers van de VOC: 700 mensen over zee’.

**National Archives of South Africa**


For each archives repository of the national and provincial archives services, a separate database has been defined. In addition there are databases for the national registers of non-public records. The National Register of Manuscripts (NAREM) and the National Register of Photographs (NAREF) are maintained in a single database, which also includes information on cartographic and library material, microfilms and copies in the custody of the National Archives. There is a database for the National Register of Audio-Visual Material (NAROM). The National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS) also includes two non-archival databases of heraldic representations registered by the Bureau of Heraldry and genealogical information on gravestones prepared by the South African Genealogical Society.

**The TEPC database: ownership and access**

The agreement signed between the TEPC Project funders (Government of the Netherlands) and administrators (University of Cape Town) refers to issues of ownership and access to the information produced by the project.

**Only one ‘authentic database’ should be available at only one place in the world.** The Project Coordinator of the National Archives in the Netherlands (NAN), Dr Pieter Koenders, offered to safeguard the data produced by the Transcription Project. If the National Archives of South Africa or Cape Archives Repository at a later stage have the capability for storage and wish to take responsibility, then the database would revert to them.

**The data will be free for use by researchers all over the world.** The only restrictions concern the privacy of living people and the security of the State.

**Not for profit.** No parties that keep a copy of the dataset will use it for commercial purposes. As the money was granted to this project ‘for the public good’ (not a commercial product), the University of Cape Town does not claim intellectual property.

**Ownership is a matter of agreement.** In Europe there is a Law on Databases whereby one of the parties is recognized as the owner of the database and it grants licences for use to other parties. The Netherlands Government, as the financing party of the TEPC Project, gives the *databankenrecht* to the NAN. The other parties have the right to get a complete copy of the dataset. If the database is transferred to the South African National Archives, the agreement would ensure that a copy of the complete updated dataset is given to the NAN in original format.
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This is a list of the books, articles and research guides which were used when writing the book. The archival references are mentioned in the text and not repeated here. The illustrations can be sourced through the TEFC database by searching for names, places or dates in the MOOC records.


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Thanks

This book is made possible by generous funding from the Government of The Netherlands and the support of the Universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape. We draw on published and unpublished research, the proceedings of workshops and seminars, and conversations with many people. Thank you to all who contributed information and ideas, and an apology for mistakes and omissions.

Special thanks to:
Ellen Berends-Vergunst, initiator and supporter of the project, presently Counsellor (Economics) at the Royal Netherlands Embassy for Ukraine and Moldova
The Ambassador and staff of the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Pretoria
The Consul-General and staff of The Netherlands Consulate in Cape Town
The Project Coordinator Pieter Koenders and Chief Archivist Hanno de Vries of the National Archives in The Hague
Retired Chief Archivist Marion George, Director Nkhumbudzeni Tshirado and staff of the Cape Archives Repository
Jaco van der Merwe and Reading Room staff at the Cape Archives Repository
Researchers at the Cape Archives Repository
Chief advisors to the project, Nigel Worden (UCT), Sue Newton-King (UWC) and Lalou Meltzer (Iziko Museums)
Members of the VOC Seminar Group and NRF-funded Research Project ‘Social lives of the VOC’
Computer consultants Schalk and Johan Liebenberg of Sentrum
Transcription Team members Helena Liebenberg, Erika van As, Illona Meyer, Maureen Rall, Fiona Clayton, Kobus Faasen and Annemarie Krzesinski
Workshop assistants Maurits van Bever Donker and Ishara Majarah and volunteer Suzall Timm
Project Administrator Brenda Beneke
Participants at the public workshops and Introduction to XML course
Members of the Departments of Historical Studies and Archaeology at UCT
Margaret Cairns, archivist and mentor