

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA
(WESTERN CAPE DIVISION, CAPE TOWN)**

Case No.: 12994 / 2021

In the matter between:

OBSERVATORY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

First Applicant

**GORINGHAICONA KHOI KHOIN
INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL COUNCIL**

Second Applicant

and

**TRUSTEES FOR THE TIME BEING OF
LIESBEEK LEISURE PROPERTIES TRUST**

First Respondent

HERITAGE WESTERN CAPE

Second Respondent

CITY OF CAPE TOWN

Third Respondent

**THE DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
(REGION 1), LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL
AFFAIRS & DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, WESTERN
CAPE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT**

Fourth Respondent

**THE MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS & DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT**

Fifth Respondent

**CHAIRPERSON OF THE MUNICIPAL PLANNING
TRIBUNAL OF THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN**

Sixth Respondent

EXECUTIVE MAYOR, CITY OF CAPE TOWN

Seventh Respondent

WESTERN CAPE FIRST NATIONS COLLECTIVE

Eight Respondent

EXPERT AFFIDAVIT

I, the undersigned,

JAMES JOSEPH HALLINAN



do hereby make oath and state as follows:

1. I am an independent heritage consultant and practitioner.
2. The facts contained in this affidavit are within my personal knowledge, except where the context indicates otherwise, and are to the best of my belief both true and correct.

INTRODUCTION

3. I have more than 20 years of experience, as a heritage consultant and heritage assessment practitioner. Following a career in nature conservation and the awarding of a master's degree in Environmental and Geographical Science from the University of Cape Town in 1992 (specialising in heritage resources management and Environmental Interpretation) I joined South African National Parks with the creation of the Table Mountain National Park in 1998. Over the next five years I rose to become the Coordinator of Cultural Heritage Management and Interpretation Services for Table Mountain National Park before moving to the City of Cape Town in 2003. For the next twelve years I worked as a Senior Heritage Professional for the City of Cape Town before retiring in 2015. Since retirement I have worked as an Environmental Interpretation Specialist for the Cape Nature Klipgat/Die Kelders interpretive signage project and as Heritage Consultant and Interpretation Specialist for the 2016 Robben Island Museum staff restructuring initiative. More recently I have developed interpretation displays for the Cape of Good Hope Section of the Table Mountain National Park and in particular, a series of eight interpretive displays for the Black River Office Park, 'Varschedrift' homestead site in Observatory, in 2020.



Details of my qualifications, training and experience are set out in the attached copy of my *curriculum vitae*. I respectfully submit that I am qualified by my qualifications, training and experience to express the expert opinions which are set out in this affidavit.

4. The first applicant in this matter requested me to provide my expert report on the cultural and historical significance of the area within which the site of the proposed River Club development ("the Site") is situated, which I refer to as the "*Varschedrift* area". A copy of my report is attached. The name (which translates as "fresh' [water] drift or crossing") refers to the area around the confluence of the Liesbeek and Black Rivers which was the most practical crossing point for the Khoekhoen.

5. My report draws information from various sources to arrive at a more holistic understanding of why the area surrounding what came to be known as the *Varschedrift*, looms so large in the cultural history of the Khoesan people (Cape pastoralists/herders and San hunter-gatherers) who resided here and/ or visited this locality as part of their yearly cycles of transhumance (the practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle).

6. The fact that the Khoesan peoples lived a transhumant way of life, meant that they occupied few sites repeatedly and did not leave permanent structures. Consequently the "focal points" which herders occupied regularly are of particular significance to archaeologists. As Doctor Andrew Smith (Professor of Archaeology Emeritus at the University of Cape Town) explains:

"What is important to the archaeologist is that the continuing mobility of these people across open grassland areas has meant that only under exceptional

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*circumstances do herders occupy the same site repeatedly. There are occasionally 'focal points' that were attractive to herders for regular occupation. These can be islands above flood-waters, the confluences of rivers which are avenues of pastoral transhumance in very dry environments, or on top of hills which offer better visibility against raiding"*¹

7. In my report I explain why the topography, rivers, soils, climate and richer grazing of this area made it so important to the Khoesan peoples and attractive to the early European settlers who displaced them by force.

8. For example, in my report I explain the significance of the topography of the River Club Site and adjacent crossing.

"The most practical crossing point for the Khoekhoen as they approached Table Valley from the north (see map above) was where the Liesbeek and Black Rivers meet and lose velocity and depth as they spill onto the more gently inclined coastal plain. Here the flow of fresh water pushed back any brackish/salty tidal waters that may have reached this far from the marshlands below. Hence the reason this came to be known as the Varsche or 'fresh' water drift.

Directing their animals onto this coastal plain meant that they did not have to negotiate the steep riverbanks of the Swart or Liesbeek Rivers higher up. Instead, and even if driven by thirst, the herds of sheep and cattle - which on numerous occasions eye-witness reports estimated to be as many as 20,000 strong - could spread out onto the marshlands without fear of injury one to the other

¹ This quote is from page 2 of my report.

and slake their thirst. Then after watering it was a simple matter to turn their animals south and up and onto the seasonal wetland that lay just above the confluence of the Swart and Liesbeek Rivers (present day River Club property and Raapenberg Bird Sanctuary) and then, the even higher ridge of land framed by these two rivers (where the South African Astronomical Observatory is today) and known historically as the Slangkop. Here, in addition to the readily accessible water below they found good grazing over the surrounding outcrops of Malmesbury shale soils as well as Cape granite soils further up the Liesbeek Valley.

Another benefit of this site was the vantage point it offered across the Cape Flats and Table Valley of any approaching danger. The confluence of the two rivers here also provided physical protection from possible cattle raiders and predatory wild animals - serving as a natural moat on two sides in the shape of an inverted V. Further enclosed by the arrangement of their reed huts at potential entry and exit points this encampment provided a safer place for livestock at night and at the same time remained a most convenient central locality from which to drive their animals out to graze further up the Liesbeek Valley or into Table Valley (via the Varschedrift below) - returning to the greater security of this campsite at the end of each day.² ...

"And so, it can be concluded that for people following a pastoral way of life there was in fact no place on the Cape Peninsula that offered them as many advantages as found above the Varschedrift at the northernmost end of the Liesbeek

² Report, page 10.

*Valley. Truly a textbook example of a "focal point" as described by Professor Smith on page 2 of this report."*³

9. In my report I explain how the Dutch coveted this land and from 1657 began awarding land in the Liesbeek Valley to settlers who became known as "Free Burgers" and how this lead first to skirmishes between the Khoe and the settlers, and later to the First Khoe-Dutch war.⁴ The River Club Site and surrounding area was at the centre of this conflict.

"Within two years of the first shots fired and assegies thrown, a line of blockhouses and watch towers - garrisoned by mounted soldiers - was established along the Liesbeek Valley. This now became the 'circumscribed (begrepen) circle' and the recognised boundary of the settlement - at least in the minds of the VOC. Hereafter, if the Khoe wanted to parley or trade at the Fort they could only enter and exit Table Valley via Varchedrift - guarded by the Keert de Koe (Turn the Cow) blockhouse. This was sited on a sandbank probably just below the Varschedrift confluence of the Swart and Liesbeek Rivers. And so, the first step was taken in a process that would ultimately lead to the dispossession of the indigenous people of the Cape from their ancestral lands and the end to their traditional way of life." (Page 15).

10. It is important to appreciate that the various Khoe groups did not cede this land to the Dutch, they were forcibly disposed of their land and have always wanted to return.

³ Report, page 11.

⁴ Report, pages 14-15.

"Van Riebeeck further records that "On being asked why they wanted to come back to the Cape now and make peace, they had replied that the Cape was their birthplace and their own country with abundance of fresh water, that their hearts continually hankered after it and that at the Saldanha Bay the ground was everywhere barren and brackish; moreover Oedesoa refused to have them near him at the best places and rivers and he asked them to arrange to live peacefully with us in their own country." (Thom vol III: 177)." ⁵

"Peace was renewed today with the chief and overlords of the Kaapmans, with Harry (Autshumao) and with all the principal men and elders. They strongly insisted that we had been appropriating more and more of their land, which had been theirs all these centuries, and on which they had been accustomed to let their cattle graze, etc. They asked if they would be allowed to do such a thing supposing they went to Holland, and they added "It would be of little consequence if you people stayed here at the fort, but you come right into the interior and select the best land for yourselves without even asking if we mind or whether it will cause us any inconvenience. They therefore strongly urged that they should again be given free access to this land for that purpose." ⁶

CONCLUSION

11. In my opinion, based on the available evidence of both the physical landscape and historic records, the River Club Site is situated at the heart of the Varschedrift

⁵ Report page 15.

⁶ Van Riebeeck's journal and the entry for the 5th and 6th of April, 1660, quoted at pages 15-16 of my report.



area. The evidence also establishes that Varschedrift area (including the River Club Site):

- 11.1. was of great importance as "focal point" which was occupied regularly by various Khoesan peoples in pre-colonial times.
 - 11.2. is where a conflict arose in 1510 between Portuguese callers and Khoekhoen and during the subsequent retreat of the Portuguese back to their ships, the Khoekhoen killed Francisco d' Almeida (the Portuguese Viceroy of India) and 60 of his officers and men; and
 - 11.3. has come to symbolise and serve as a focal point for the wider conflict that played out across the Liesbeek Valley and set in train the process by which the indigenous people of the Cape were eventually dispossessed of their ancestral lands and their traditional way of life came to an end.
12. For these and other reasons, the Varschedrift area (including the River Club site) is regarded today as a heritage site of 'primary significance' by the Western Cape Khoesan Council and the First Nations groups they represent, and by many other First Nations groups.

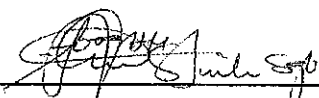

JAMES JOSEPH HALLINAN



I hereby certify that the deponent has acknowledged that he:

- (a) knows and understands the contents of this affidavit.
- (b) has no objection to taking the oath.
- (c) considers the oath to be binding on his conscience.

Thus, signed and sworn to before me, at Fish Hoek on 09 June 2022.



COMMISSIONER OF OATHS

NAME: Sindiswa Juti

CAPACITY: Sgt

ADDRESS: 84PS Fish Hoek, main road

AREA: Fish Hoek





Curriculum vitae

James (Jim) Hallinan retired in 2015 with twelve years experience as a Senior Heritage Professional for the City of Cape Town. He has a Masters Degree (1992) in Environmental and Geographical Science from the University of Cape Town specializing in Environmental Interpretation. The title of his Master Degree project was: *A heritage interpretation plan for the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve.*

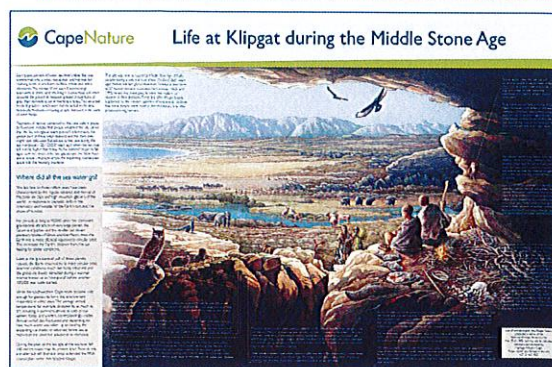
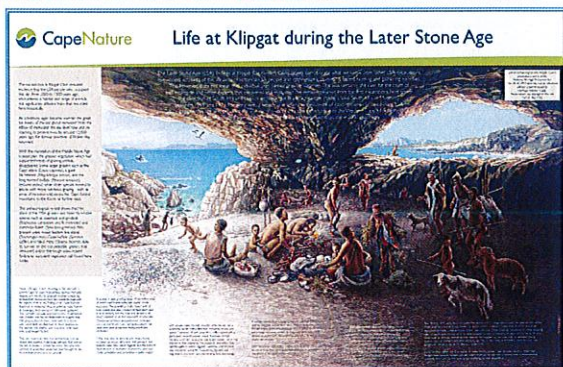
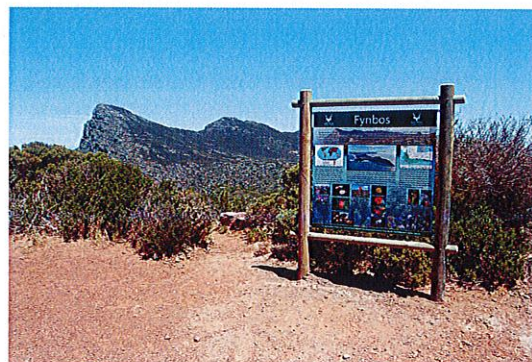
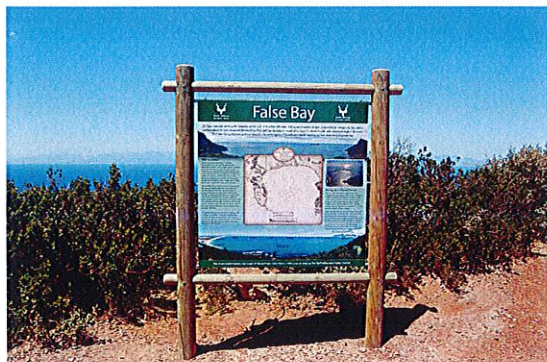


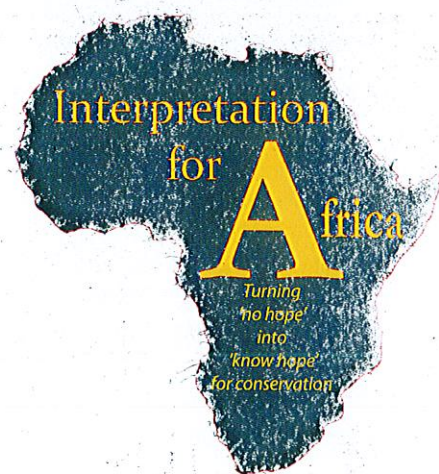
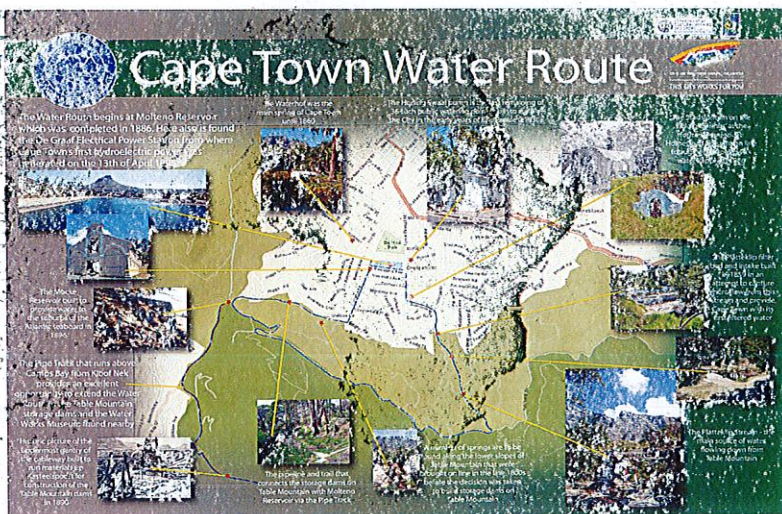
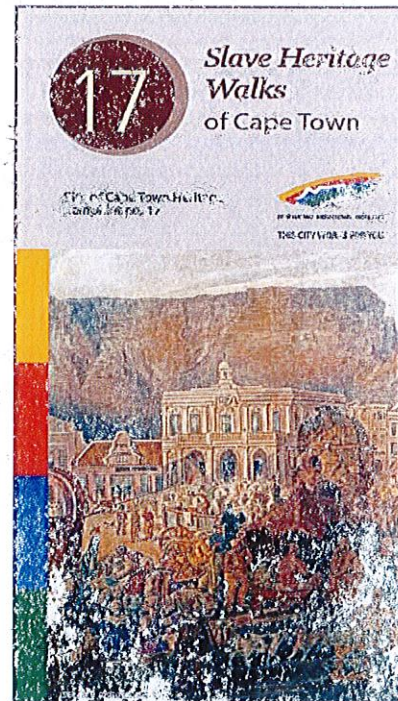
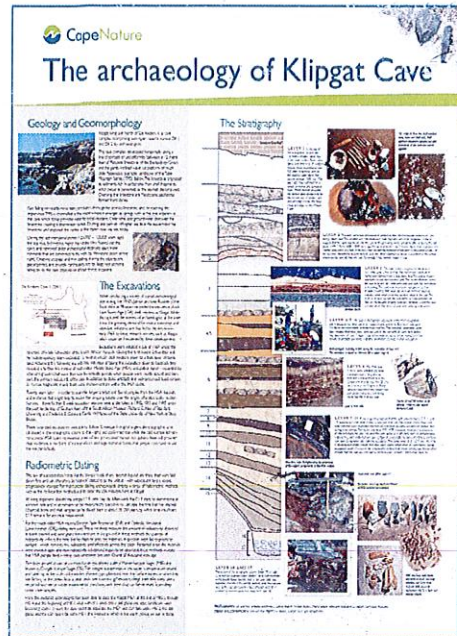
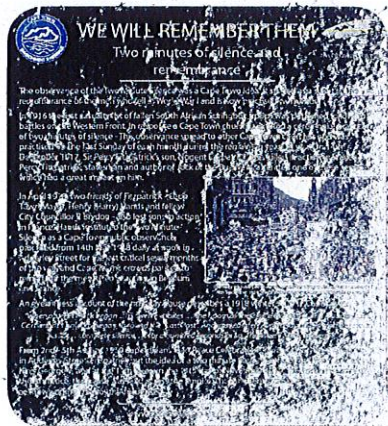
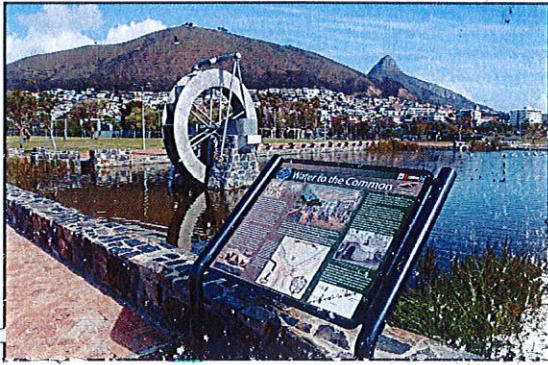
With the establishment of the Table Mountain National Park in 1998 he joined SANParks and rose to become the Park's Coordinator of Cultural Heritage Management and Interpretation Services. He was project manager for the restoration of the Buffelsfontein historical homestead at Cape Point and redevelopment as an Interpretation and Visitor Centre and for the Boulders Coastal Park/ Penguin Colony in Simon's Town - before leaving to join the City of Cape Town Environmental and Heritage Management Branch - Spatial Planning Department in 2003.

While with the City Jim was called upon to develop interpretive displays for the Cape Town 2010 World Soccer Cup Stadium precinct and Urban Park, the Langa Heritage precinct, Two Rivers Urban Parkway and Historic Observatory precinct and numerous other sites across the City. He also developed and designed the interpretation design manual for the City of Cape Town and various heritage brochures such as the Prestwich Memorial brochure and Cape Town Slave Route brochure.

Jim was Interpretation Specialist for the Cape Nature Klipgat (Die Kelders) interpretive signage project and Heritage Consultant and Interpretation Specialist for the 2016 Robben Island Museum staff restructuring initiative. More recently Jim has been developing interpretation displays for the Cape of Good Hope Section of the Table Mountain National Park and Black River Park - 'Varschedrift' homestead site - in Observatory. Jim is also a Heritage Practitioner/ professional heritage resources management consultant - recognised by Heritage Western Cape.

Examples of Jim's work are to be seen below:





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InterpretAfrica@gmail.com

Report on the cultural historical significance the *Varschedrift* area of the Cape Peninsula holds for the Khoekhoen people of the southwestern Cape and southern Africa more widely

Prepared for the Observatory Civic Association
by James J. Hallinan ©

Heritage Practitioner, Heritage Resources Management
and Environmental Interpretation Specialist
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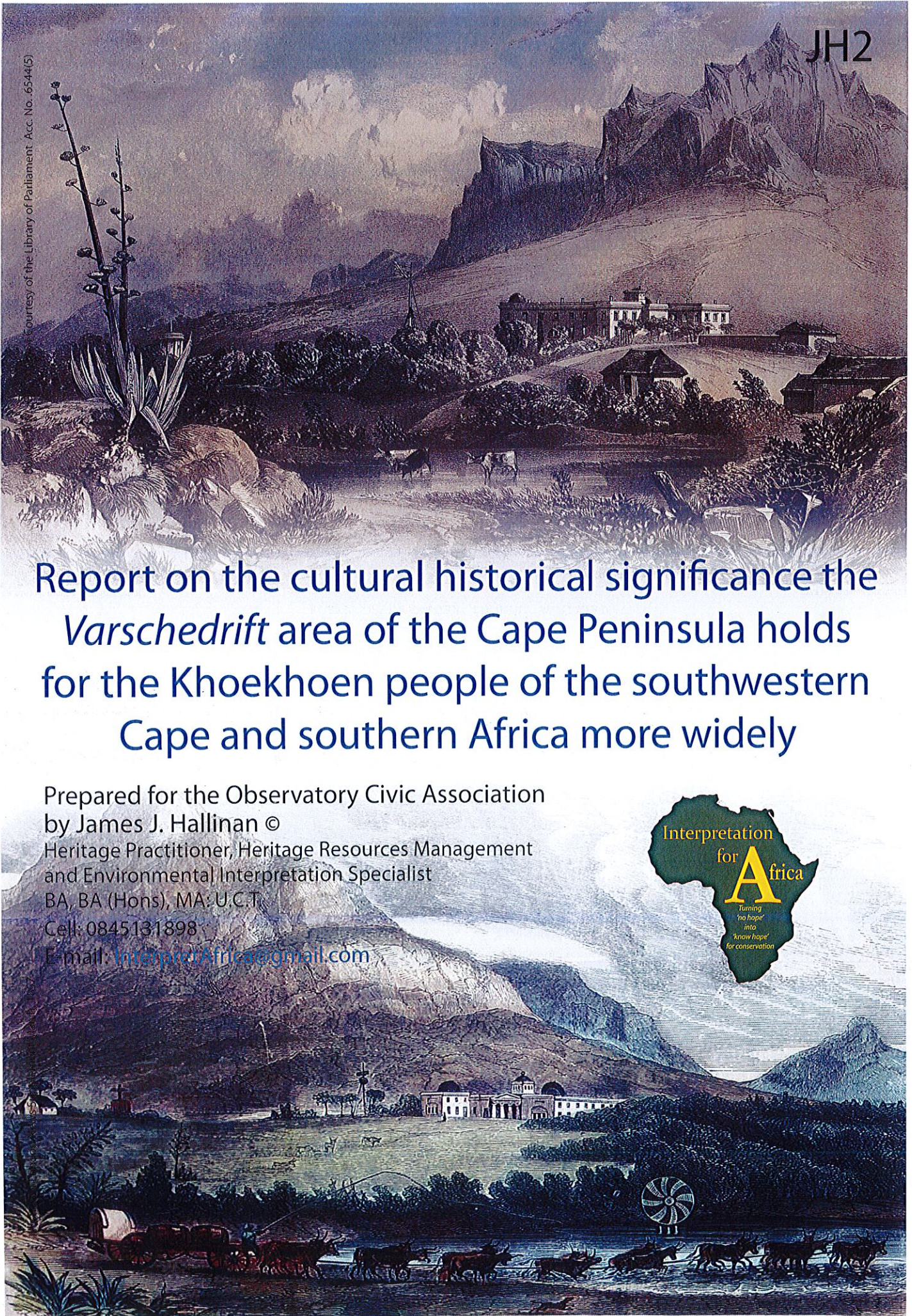
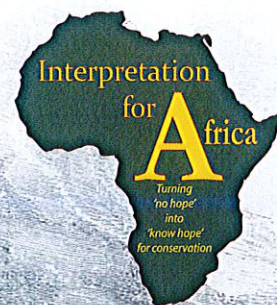




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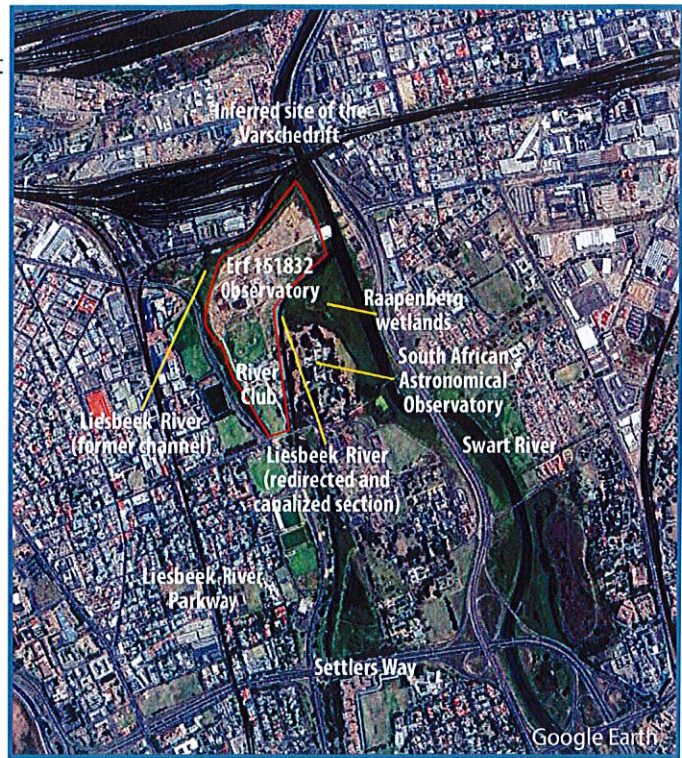
8. References

Declaration of independence

This statement of independence serves to confirm that James J. Hallinan is an independent heritage practitioner and as author of this report states that he has no vested or financial interest in the proposed of Erf 151832 Observatory whether supported or not supported, by the relevant authorities.

1. Introduction

This report has been compiled in response to what is presently the halted, River Club development (Erf 151832 Observatory) the location of which was once part of the lower floodplain of the Swart and Liesbeek Rivers. This was before this area was effectively, excised, by redirection to the east and the canalization of the lower reaches of the Liesbeek River in the early 1950's. As far as the intention of this report - it is to draw together information, circumstantial and factual, from various sources to arrive at a more holistic understanding of why this area, surrounding what came to be known as the *Varschedrift*, looms so large in the cultural history of the Khoesan people (Cape pastoralists/herders and San hunter-gatherers) who resided here and/or visited this locality as part of their yearly cycles of transhumance and thereby, inform discussion around this development



2. Historical record

With this said it should also be acknowledged that this undertaking is something of a challenge for a number of reasons.

2.1 Archival evidence

The first of these is the fact that the archival records of the Khoesan people, into the early years of European settlement at the Cape, only begin with the epic voyage of Bartolomeu Dias in 1487-1488. It was at his first landfall on the southern coast of Africa (today's Mossel Bay, on February 3, 1488) that he recorded encountering stone age people, herding cattle, for the first time. This led him to name this bay the *Angra dos Vaqueirido* (Bay of the Cowherds) while the watering place he also discovered here, the *Aquado de São Bras* (watering place of Saint Blaise, on whose Feast Day this event fell) (Raven-Hart 1967: 1-2). Before this no other written account of the people of the Cape has come to light and it is very likely that before this, the Khoesan people of southwestern Africa inhabited this *cul-de-sac* to human migration, unbeknownst to the rest of the world but for the exception of Bantu-speaking agropastoralists living to the north and to the east of them.

For reasons that will become clear later in this report, the Portuguese who followed in the wake of Dias rarely called in along the coast of southern Africa. In fact, it was only at the end of the 15th century that the first English and a few years later, Dutch East India Company ships, began to make Table Bay their landfall of choice over Mossel Bay. Here they often encountered local people willing to barter livestock for a range of trade goods. Still these visits were fleeting and with the language barrier, even the most learned among these early callers recorded little ethnographic information to advance our understanding of these people beyond that provided by, for example, Johan Albrecht von Mandelslo, who in May of 1639 called at Table Bay and recorded:

"The inhabitants of this country are of two sorts: some who live very miserably by the waterside but without ships or boats. They live on herbs, roots and fishes and especially on the dead whales which are cast ashore by storms, which must serve as their best food. They are called the Watermen, because they live by the shore. The other sort which live further inland are called Solthanimen [Saldanhamen] from which this bight is called Solthani Bay (sic). They live somewhat better than the Watermen. They also do not cultivate the soil, which

is excellent and rich and produces all sorts of ground- and fruit trees. But they have lovely cattle, sheep and goats". (Raven-Hart 1967: 152)

Then in 1651, the Directors (*Heeren or Gentlemen XVII*) of the Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* and here after referred to as the VOC) took the fateful decision to establish a refreshment station for their malnourished crews at this midway point between Europe and the East. Accordingly Commander Jan van Riebeeck with his small party of VOC employees and family members were dispatched and arrived the next year. It is from this time that our knowledge of the people of the Cape begins to advance beyond fleeting eye-witness or later, second hand accounts.

2.2 Linguistic evidence

It is believed to have been from Bantu speaking herders and farmers that San hunter-gatherers first acquired livestock in the form of fat tailed sheep and possibly dogs (which assisted with hunting and herding) and while retaining their hunting and gathering skills and ways, began to also keep livestock. This is supported by linguistic evidence which suggests that unlike the San - the mutually intelligible dialects spoken by the Cape Khoekhoen have affinities to the Tshu-Khwe speaking people of Northern Botswana and Eastern Zimbabwe (Westphal 1963, Smith 1986, Elphick and Giliomee 1990). Dependant as they were on the summer rainfall adapted crops of sorghum and millet, these Bantu-speaking herders and farmers gradually migrated into summer rainfall areas to the east. Thus, the way was left open for Khoekhoen herders to move south and westward without competition from other pastoralists. This linguistic evidence also supports the contention that stock rearing did not simply pass through diffusion, gradually adopted by one San hunter and gathering clan from another but rather from the purposeful migration of now Khoekhoen herders as their herds and numbers grew. As to when these early Cape herders arrived in the southwestern Cape? It is here one needs to turn to archaeology for an answer.

2.3 Archaeological evidence

Along the southern and western coastal areas of the Cape are a number of well stratified cave deposits which have been excavated yielding evidence of sheep (*Ovis aries*) being herded or at least, having been acquired from herders, by as early as 2000 BP (Schweitzer 1973). This is to be seen in the demographic profile of the sheep bones found at these sites - the age and sex ratio of which - provides evidence that these people were slaughtering their animals selectively to maximise the reproductive potential of their herds at this early date.

As far as other open questions - such as when did these early Cape herders acquire cattle and first make their way to the Cape Peninsula - the archaeological record is less informative. For as the number of Khoekhoen herders increased, so did the size of their herds with a concomitant demand for more pasture, adequate water resources and protection. In fact, given the all but constant commitment demanded by the adoption of a pastoral way of life, one could well be left wondering who in fact owned who - the herders the livestock or the livestock the herders?

And so the Cape Khoekhoen are seen perforce, to have adopted a transhumant way of life with a material culture which included reed mat huts that could be easily assembled/broken down and loaded onto pack oxen when it came time to take up their seasonal rounds again - rather than people focused on a cave/rock-shelter home base which they could return to the safety of, along with their livestock, at the end of each day. The down side of this as far as how much archaeology could advance our knowledge of the life ways of the Khoekhoen, in the face of very much limited contemporary 'first hand' ethnographic sources of information, is no where better explained than by recognised expert and Professor of Archaeology Emeritus at the University of Cape Town, Doctor Andrew Smith, when he notes;

"What is important to the archaeologist is that the continuing mobility of these people across open grassland areas has meant that only under exceptional circumstances do herders occupy the same site repeatedly. There are occasionally 'focal points' that were attractive to herders for regular occupation. These can be

The excavations at Kipgat Cave revealed evidence that the USA people who occupied this site, from 2000 to 1500 years ago, encountered a habitat and range of animals not significantly different from that recorded here historically.

As conditions again became warmer the great ice sheets of the last glacial retreated. With the inflow of meltwater the sea level rose and on reaching its present level, by around 12,000 years ago, the familiar shoreline of Walker Bay returned.

With the inundation of the Middle Stone Age coastal plain the grassier vegetation, which had supported herds of grazing animals, disappeared. Some larger grazers such as the Cape zebra (*Equus capensis*), a giant hartebeest (*Megaloiceros prisca*) and the

The archaeological record shows that the place of the HSA grazers was taken by smaller species such as steenbok and grysbok (*Raphanus campestris* and *R. melanotos*) and common duiker (*Synceus grimmii*). Also present were mixed feeders like eland (*Taurotragus oryx*), Cape buffalo (*Synceus caffer*), and bloubok (bontebok) (*Dicotyles bontebok*) able to survive on the less palatable grasses that remained and/or the tough waxy-leaved fynbos or succulent vegetation still found here today.

Above a forager is seen returning to the cave with a juvenile Cape fur seal (*Phocaprosopius pusillus*). Although warned at 5 months by its pregnant mothers preparing to have their next pups, many are unable to cope with the rigors of life at sea. Ending up on Cape beaches dead, sick or exhausted, they provided an easily hunted or scavenged food source for USA hunter problems. The monthly culls with the months of September and October and has no requirement to suggest that USA groups planned their coastal visits to coincide with predictable wildlife such as this in addition to the seabirds, fish, shellfish and occasional water seals they could expect to find.

They also explored other marine mammals such as whales and dolphins. A particular tamaracle that lives on the skin of whales is sometimes found indicating that portions of a beached whale had been brought to shore for the blubber and oil it can provide.



De Kelders cave near Gaansbaai where some of the earliest evidence of domesticated animals at the Cape was uncovered by archaeologist Frank Schweitzer in the early 1970's. Notice the fat tailed sheep portrayed

Environmental Interpretation display produced for Cape Nature in 2015 by InterpretAfrica and Cape Winds:
Walker Bay Nature Reserve

islands above flood-waters, the confluences of rivers which are avenues of pastoral transhumance in very dry environments, or on top of hills which offer better visibility against raiding" (1983:85)

With this said, the question that remains to be answered by this paper is - was Varschedrift with its surrounding high ground, floodplain and attendant natural resources one of these "focal points" of exceptional importance to the Khoekhoen people who were resident or yearly visited, the Cape Peninsula?

3. The natural environment - a study in contradictions

In answer to the question above it is important to first put to rest any misconception that the southwestern Cape was a particularly favourable environment for early herders or farmers. Now at first the reality of this may for many be difficult to accept when one considers the exceptional biodiversity of both fauna and flora - for which the Cape Peninsula is world-renowned. Biodiversity for which the Table Mountain National Park has been included as part of the Cape Floral Region Serial World Heritage Site (with 25% of the more than 8,500 species of plants occurring within the Cape Floral Region occurring here) and Cape Town recognised to be the most biologically diverse City in the world by the United Nations Biodiversity Outlook project in 2017.

But in truth the biodiversity of the Cape Peninsula is not so much the result of a particularly benign or rich environment but rather the extraordinarily high habitat diversity gradients found over the peninsula due to the interplay that exists here between high topographical diversity and the resultant effect this has on the climatic conditions found over the peninsula as well as the mosaic of different quality soils found here. It is to these highly heterogenous conditions that the indigenous plants and animals of the Cape have marvellously adapted and over thousands and even millions of years - diversified or through diffusion, have come to be found here.

In contrast, the wild ancestors of the domestic animals kept by the Khoekhoen are recognised to have originated in northeastern Africa and southwest Asia more than 7000 kilometres from the Cape (Klein 1986: 6) and as already noted in this report, were only introduced to this environment as early as two thousand years ago (Schweitzer:1973). Over that time it can be expected that a certain amount of natural selection and selective breeding took place leaving these animals more naturalised to the environment of the Cape but at the same time it can be expected that as 'exotic' species these animals remained not as well adapted to warding off the negative impacts of nutrient deficient soils, the different pathogens found here and summer drought stress, as the species of ungulates indigenous to the southwestern Cape.

This left these animals more precariously balance on the edge of good health - as would be seen to be the case with later animal species introduced from Europe - before the introduction of modern, scientifically arrived at fertilizers , nutrient supplements for livestock and the means by which a greater number of water sources could be provided during the dry months of summer at the Cape such as bore-holes, wind-pumps and farm dams.

Still, the Khoekhoen herders are noted to have been numerous and in possession of thousands of sheep and cattle when Europeans began calling at the Cape. So it is self-evident that through, no doubt, generations of trial and error the Khoekhoen were able to overcome or at least deal with, the many challenges they faced here as pastoralists (drought, disease, stock theft) and in a word - prospered. At the same time, however, their way of life remained precariously balanced and their yearly cycles of transhumance anything but random wanderings. Rather they were finely tuned survival strategies and apparently, highly dependant on the restorative benefits to be derived periodically from places of outstanding natural resource value - such as the Liesbeek Valley.



This digitally enhanced LANDSAT photograph clearly displays the rugged landscape of the Cape Peninsula and how after millions of years of erosion it exists today as all but an island

3.1 The land

Seen from the air it is easy to appreciate that but for a few twists in the tale of its geological history, the Cape Peninsula may well have been washed to the sea by now as surely as the overlying and intervening sedimentary rocks that once connected it to the Cape Fold Mountain (seen in the distance above). Instead it exists today as all but an island built from rock formations, the differential erosion of which,



has resulted in a landscape not only world renowned for its rugged scenic beauty but more significantly for the purpose of this report, displays, "the highest topographical diversity of similar-sized areas in southern Africa." (Cowling *et al.*, 1996: 535, Simmons and Cowling, 1996.

As will be shown below, this high topographical diversity markedly influences the prevailing weather over the peninsula with the result that, for its size, the Cape Peninsula can also lay claim to being one of the most climatically diverse of, 'similar-sized areas', in southern Africa.

3.2 Climate

For the last 3 million years or so, the southwestern Cape has experienced a Mediterranean climate characterised by what is, for the most part, winter rainfall followed by as many as six months of summer drought. During the months of winter storms (from primarily the northwest) drive rain bearing squalls over the mountains of the peninsula from which higher lying localities receive significantly greater amounts of 'orographic' rainfall. The is most pronounced over Table Mountain where the height of this massif amplifies this phenomenon to such an extent that the majority of rain falls not along the Atlantic seaboard - as might be expected - but rather is blown in and rains out, over the eastern slopes of Table Mountain above the Liesbeek Valley. Thus, while Camp Bay receives as much as 600 mm of rain a year on average - the catchment area overshadowing the Liesbeek Valley receives over 2000 mm (Pauw and Johnson:1999: 32-34).

However, the story of the life giving precipitation the Cape Peninsula receives does not end here. For equally important is the fact that during the long months of summer drought, when the water table drops precipitously and many sources of water across the southwestern Cape disappear, the prevailing southeasterly winds of summer continue to carry moisture-laden air in from the sea. This often condenses into cloud as it rises over the higher reaches of the Cape Peninsula and on Table Mountain forms the familiar 'Tablecloth' - in fact a huge 'dew cloud' - from which nearly twice as much water in the form of fog precipitation is deposited than falls as rain each year - nearly 3500 mm above the Liesbeek Valley. Slowly percolating down through the highly fractured Table Mountain sandstone this input recharges the water table with the result that springs and streams issue from the lower slopes of Table Mountain year round.



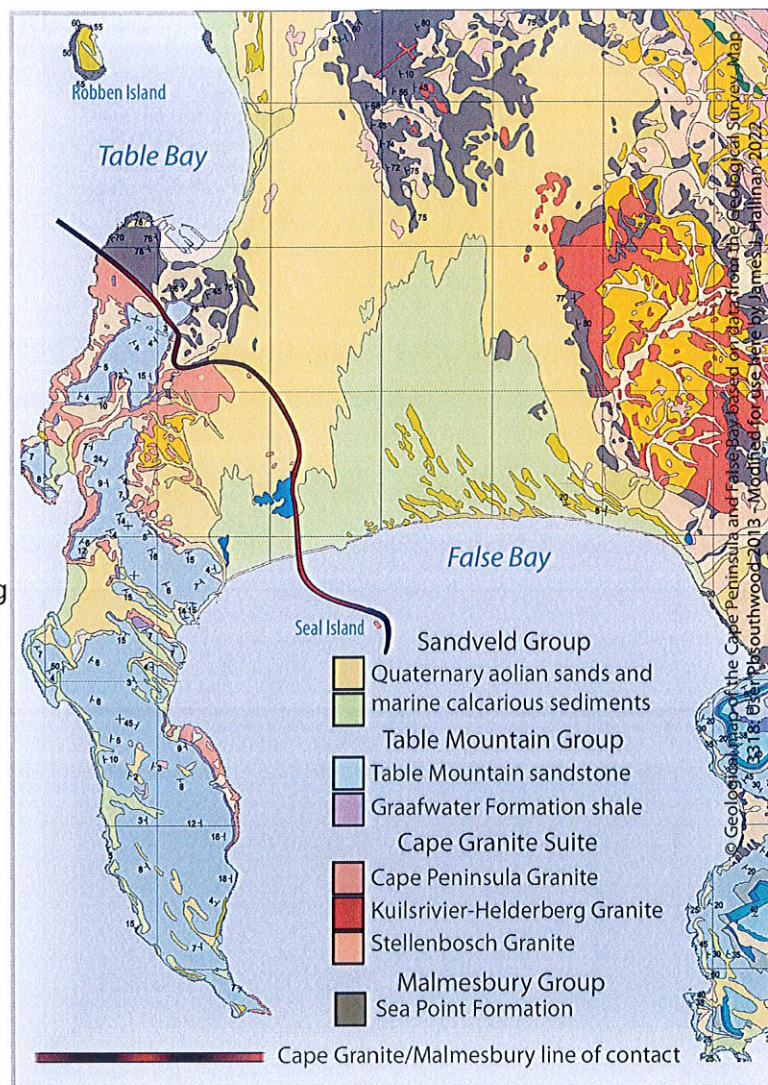
3.2.1 Water resources

The sources of perennial water this recharging of the water table gives rise to made the Cape Peninsula not just one of many places the Khoekhoen groups could retire to but rather one of paramount importance during the driest months of summer drought at the Cape. For as noted below by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Kwazulu-Natal: *'Whereas an animal can survive for days without food, a lack of water can cause death within a matter of hours. In the case of cattle and sheep, an animal can stay alive for up to 3 weeks without food, but can live for two or at most three days if not provided with drinking water.'* This regular demand for water was further amplified by the fact that a single cow can require as much as 30-40 gallons (135-180 litres) of water a day - depending on the weather and its physical condition - *'while with sheep consumption of water is two to three times the intake of dry matter and this can be 12 times greater in summer than in winter.'* (Dep.A.R.D., Stats. KZN) To this must also be added the fact that given the low milk yield derived from the breed of cattle the Khoe herders kept, it has been calculated that to provided a family of four with milk each day and also meet transport needs, as many as 10-12 cattle per person would have been required (Goodwin 1953:6). Add to this the sheep that were also present as their main source of meat and its no wonder the Cape herders were often described to being rich in livestock but in fact needed every animal to support their precarious economy. Moreover, as the number of Khoekhoen along with their herds grew over time, the need to find not just water but copious amounts of water each day also grew and serves to explain why the remarkably abundant water resources of the Cape Peninsula and the Liesbeek Valley, in particular, during the dry months of summer - grew to be of such exceptional and even critical importance within their yearly cycles of transhumance.

3.3 Geology and soils

As the geological map on the following page displays, the greater majority of the 470 square kilometre area of the Cape Peninsula is overlain by layer-cake like ramparts of nearly horizontal strata of Table Mountain sandstone - grading down to thinner beds of the maroon-red shales and yellow sandstones (greywackes) of the Graafwater Formation. These sedimentary rocks rest 'unconformably' on what across most of the peninsula is an erosion planed bedrock platform of igneous Cape Granite or more specifically, the Cape Granite batholith. It is only in the north that this granite gives way to what are the oldest rocks to be found on the peninsula - the highly metamorphosed and folded sandstones and shales of the Sea Point Formation of the Malmesbury Group. This occurs along a line of 'hot' contact that resulted when moulten Cape granite was injected into the Malmesbury Group rocks some 540 million years ago. From here the Malmesbury Group rocks can be seen to disappear under a mantle of much

younger and less fertile sands that cover the Cape Flats only to reemerge again to the north as the Blaauberg and Tygerberg Hills and east along the foothills of the Hottentot Holland mountains. In addition there are outcroppings of Cape granite to be seen further inland. The end result is, therefore, something of a patchwork of localities with more nutrient rich soils giving rise to more nutrient rich pastures, separated by large expanses of less nutritious shrubland vegetation. This is particularly the case more locally across the Cape Peninsula itself where low nutrient but none the less amazingly well adapted fynbos growing on soils derived from Table Mountain sandstone, accounts for 92% of the vegetation cover while more nutritious Renosterveld 5% and Afromontane forest and thicket 3% (Cowling *et al* 1996: 537-539). Thus, another reason the Liesbeeck Valley was so important to the Cape herders, given the higher quality pasture found here in the shadow of Table Mountain (resulting from Cape granite and Malmesbury shale derived soils) when compared to the rest of the peninsula.



3.3.1 Soils derived from Table Mountain sandstone

Sediments of Table Mountain sandstone are recognised to have been laid down in the depositional environment of an immense coastal braid plain delta during the Ordovician and Silurian Periods (Theron *et al.*, 1992) - some 480 to 420 million years ago. The location these sands came to occupy along the debris cascade of this fluvial environment was such that the water flowing through them effectively winnowed out virtually all other material. This left behind the coarse quartz-rich and remarkably 'clean' sand (geologists would say 'mature' and even 'super-mature') (Truswell 1977:121) from which Table Mountain sandstone is composed.

This is important to appreciate for when these sediments were gradually buried and lithified (under the pressure of as much as an additional two kilometres of sedimentation above and the extreme heat found at depth in the Earth) the result was a remarkably erosion resistant rock type. For under this extreme pressure and heat the individual grains of sand composed of silicon dioxide SiO_2 were not only intensely compressed but any still remaining microscopic voids between were effectively injected and filled under pressure, with SiO_2 in solution. This resulted in a rock matrix, virtually inert to chemical erosion and which further serves to explain why so much of the rugged, prominent relief found across the Cape Fold Mountains and in particular, the Cape Peninsula, results directly from the presence of this rock.

It should also be mentioned here that however erosion resistant Table Mountain sandstone is, it none the less does eventually break down - mostly through exposure to various agents of physical erosion. This creates a coarse, sandy, acidic, grey soil which like the rock type from which it is derived - has essentially the same chemical composition as ground glass - deficient in virtually all biochemical nutrients necessary for life. (Cowling *et al.*, 1996: 535, Simmons and Cowling, 1996).

3.3.2 Soils derived from Cape granite and Malmesbury shale

Now compare this to the other two major rock formations found over the Cape Peninsula and southwestern Cape more widely. Rocks of the Cape Granite Suite are igneous in origin and so carry elements essential to life naturally entrained during formation. When reaching the surface the erosion of these rocks results in a clay rich soil and the release of intrinsic biochemical minerals it contains to the biosphere.

Similarly, the sandstone and shales of the Sea Point Formation of the Malmesbury Group are recognised to have formed as part of a deep sea fan at the edge of a continental slope. In such a deep sea environment sediments of mud and sand accumulates as underwater avalanches (turbidity currents) cascade down from the continental shelf above. At the same time there is an all but constant shower of what is known as 'marine snow' - mostly organic detritus - falling from the upper layers of the water column. The presence of these organic remains greatly enriched these sediments with biochemical nutrients which were, in a word, 'sequestered', until eventually rucked up and metamorphose to form mountains during the Pan-African Orogeny (540 million years ago) and now, through erosion, are available to the biosphere again.

This then serves to explain why the clay and more nutrient rich soils derived from Cape Granite Suite and Malmesbury Group rocks and are among the most agriculturally important in South Africa today but here also lies a twist in the tale. For as much as it can be said that soils derived from these rock types are measurably better in tilth and nutrient status than the sandy, 'oliotrophic' soils derived from Table Mountain sandstone - this does not mean 'exceptionally' superior. For both of these rocks are ancient and contain mineral elements that react readily when exposed to oxygen - whether as a gas or carried into the earth in groundwater. This leads to oxidation and the formation of different elements that lead to the disintegration of these rocks. An example of this is to be seen with the feldspar found in granite which reacts readily with oxygen to form china clay. In doing so this leads to the disintegration of not only the feldspar but the structural support this mineral gave to the surrounding rock as well - leading to deep weathering and leaching over time with collateral loss of valuable nutrients. This is so much the case that soil scientists and botanists regard these soils not so much as rich or 'eutrophic' but more pragmatically as moderately rich in nutrients or 'mesotrophic' (Cowling *et al* 1996).

The reason this is so important in the history of the Khoekhoen and later stock farmers of the southwestern Cape is that it highlights how important it was to provided livestock with a range of different pasture types and which the Khoekhoen achieved through their yearly migrations. This knowledge, in turn, passed on to later settlers as noted by the British Controller of Customs in Cape Town, Charles Wilberforce Bird in his book, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*. Under the heading of, Agriculture, Bird explains:

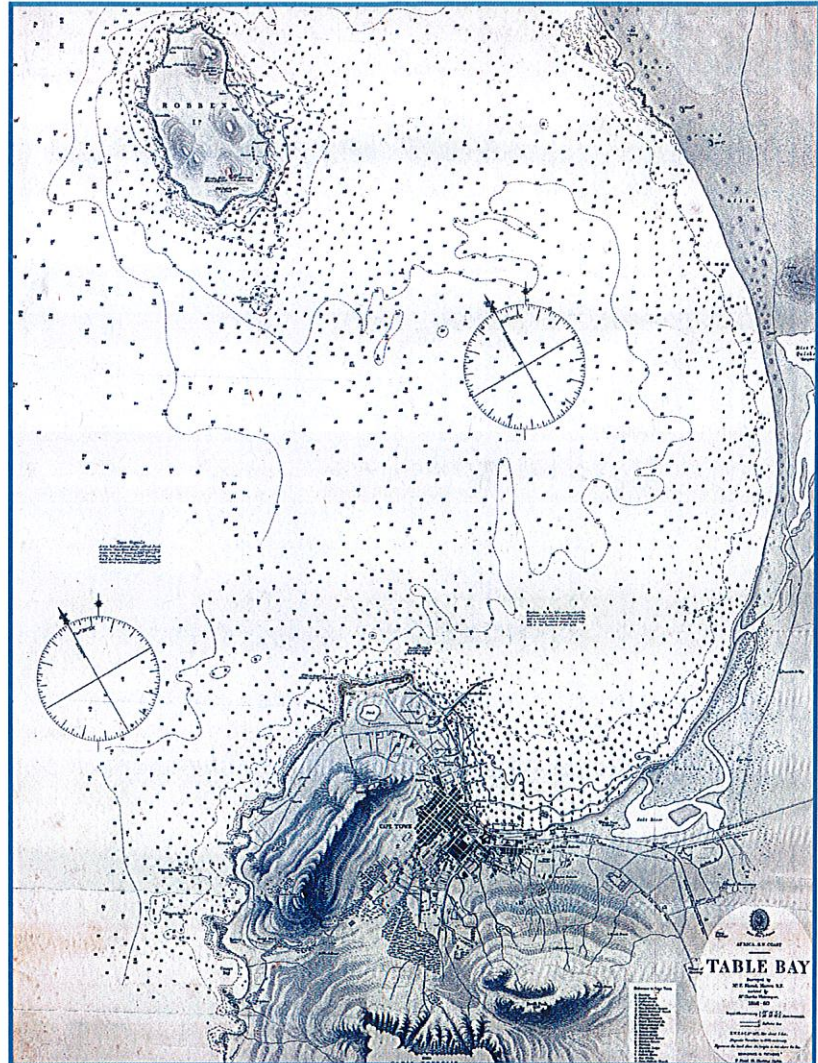
"The oxen, without whose services the boer is at a complete stand-still are large handsome animals; and if fattened, as they are in Europe, would by no means yield to them in size or beauty. Of these, every boer, having a farm of usual extent, possesses many yokes: but in most farms require change of pasture for a few months every year, without which they become lamziek (lame-sick) or paralytic in all their limbs". Bird goes on to say that this was attributed to, *"the prevalence of saltpetre, efflorescing from the earth at particular seasons"* and further adding that, *"in this disease they lie down to rise no more"*.

Obviously this condition was not due to *"the prevalence of saltpetre, efflorescing from the earth at particular seasons"* but what is today known to be phosphorous deficiency (Smith 1986: 38). As a cure for this Bird further explains: *"Saldahna Bay, to which many are driven is called the doctor and feeding there restores them to plumpness and health. Others send them over the berg, or mountains beyond the peninsula; but all oxen, after the season of ploughing and sowing, which reduces them very low in flesh, require a long term of rest to recruit and prepare for the fresh labour of drawing the grain and wine to Cape Town"*. (Bird 1823: 98-99)

4. The San and Khoekhoen

While we may never know for certain when the people we know today as San hunter-gatherers emerged in the archaeological record, there can be said to be general consensus that these first nation people were most likely living at the Cape for millennia before pastoral herders arrived here around 2000 years ago. Nor can it be said with certainty when the first Cape herders began to visit the Cape Peninsula. Still there can be no doubt that the resources found here - for the reasons already outlined in this report - would have proven to be a strong attraction.

Towards better appreciating this, imagine for a moment what it must have been like for Khoek herders during early summer at the Cape as they migrated towards the Cape Peninsula. Moving down from the north it is likely that the last place they could have watered their herds was somewhere along what in time would come to be known as the Diep River - which drains the Swartland and northern slopes of the Tygerberg Hills - into the Rietvlei of today. From the adjacent 1860, Master Mariner F. Skead, map of Table Bay it can be appreciated that, historically, Rietvlei would have emptied directly into Table Bay at times. At other times, however, this exit point became closed by windblown sand and tidal forces, as seen here. The result was a continuation of the Diep River flowing south behind a dune cordon which, running parallel to the sea, could force the river to flow ultimately into the Salt River marshlands.

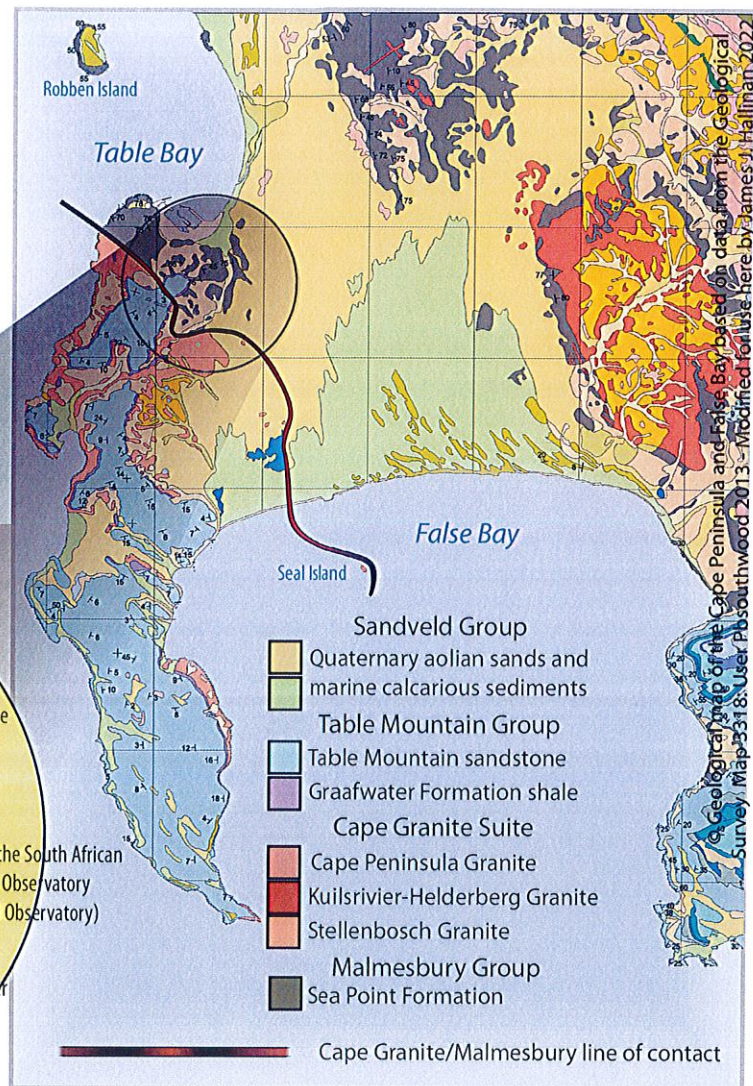
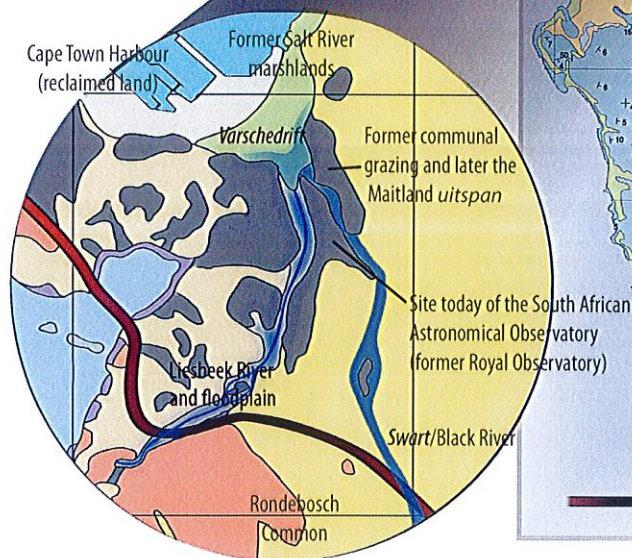


What ever the case, at any particular time, this river would have been a convenient source of water for Khoek herders as they migrated towards the Cape Peninsula. Otherwise this final stretch would have turned into a long and thirsty trek of a day or more, as they drove their herds towards the goal of fresh water which the Khoek would have ensured awaited them without interference or competition from rival groups at the Varschedrift/upper reaches of the Salt River marshlands.

4.1 *Camissa*, 'the place of sweet water' and *Hoerikwaggo*, 'mountain of the sea'

Even without eye-witness accounts of what it must have been like to be among this throng of people one can easily imagine the anticipation with which they approached the unmistakable landmark of Table Mountain - which the Khoekhoen, are said to have known as *Hoerikwaggo*, 'the mountain of the sea' and the Cape Peninsula, as *Camissa*, 'the place of sweet water'. In both instances these names support the contention that the Cape herders fully appreciated the special life-giving relationship that exists between Table Mountain and the surrounding sea and the essential water resources this gives rise to during these driest months of summer.

The expanded view of the area of Varschedrift from the geological map - first see on page 7 of this report - shows how over time the Swart and Liesbeek Rivers have incised their channels into this northernmost extension of the Mowbray Ridge. Also note the outcroppings of Cape granite and Malmesbury shale and richer grazing these give rise to that would have proven a further attraction to this locality for the Cape herders.



4.2 Special qualities of the Liesbeek Valley and Varschedrift

After what were probably months of traversing open plains of windswept and increasingly desiccated renosterbos and fynbos clad shrublands to the north and east of the Cape Peninsula, returning to the Liesbeek Valley must have been like returning to their own vision of Shangri-la. Here in the lee of *Hoerikwaggo* there were meadows of lush pasture surrounded by expanses of shady Afromontane forest and if not free of wind, than at least significantly moderated with protection from the northwest winds afforded by Table Mountain and the Mowbray ridge and from the prevailing southeast winds of summer by today's, Wynberg ridge.

The most practical crossing point for the Khoekhoen as they approached Table Valley from the north (see map above) was where the Liesbeek and Black Rivers meet and lose velocity and depth as they spill onto the more gently inclined coastal plain. Here the flow of fresh water pushed back any brackish/salty waters that may have reached this far from the tidal marshlands below. Hence the reason this came to be known as the *Varsche* or 'fresh' water drift.

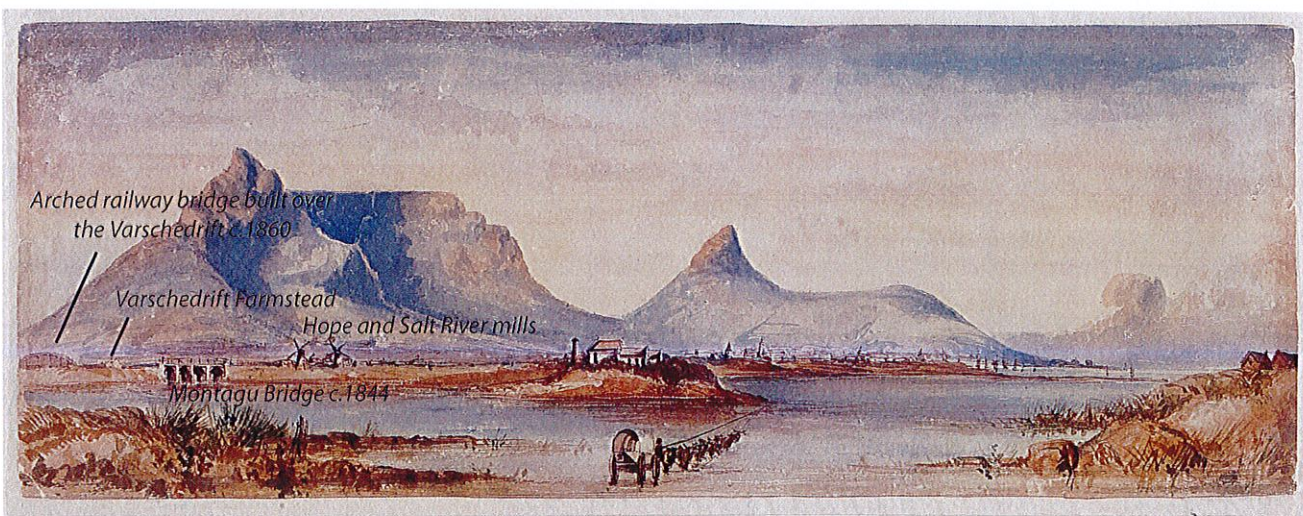
Directing their animals onto this coastal plain meant that they did not have to negotiate the steep riverbanks of the Swart or Liesbeek Rivers higher up. Instead and even if driven by thirst, the herds of sheep and cattle - which on numerous occasions eye-witness reports estimated to be as many as 20,000 strong - could spread out onto the marshlands without fear of injury one to the other and slake their

thirst. Then after watering it was a simple matter to turn their animals south and onto the seasonal wetland that lay just above the confluence of the Swart and Liesbeek Rivers (present day River Club property and Raapenberg Bird Sanctuary) and then, the even higher ridge of land framed by these two rivers (where the South African Astronomical Observatory is today) and known historically as the *Slangkop*. Here, in addition to the readily accessible water below they found good grazing over the surrounding outcrops of Malmesbury shale soils as well as Cape granite soils further up the Liesbeek Valley.

Another benefit of this site was the vantage point it offered across the Cape Flats and Table Valley of any approaching danger. The confluence of the two rivers here also provided physical protection from possible cattle raiders and predatory wild animals - serving as a natural moat on two sides in the shape of an inverted V. Further enclosed by the arrangement of their reed huts at potential entry and exit points this encampment provided a safer place for livestock at night and at the same time remained a most convenient central locality from which to drive their animals out to graze further up the Liesbeek Valley or into Table Valley (via the Varschedrift below) - returning to the greater security of this campsite at the end of each day.

To give an idea of what the general area east of Table Mountain and down to the sea looked like before it began to be conspicuously altered - who better than Jan van Riebeeck himself who as first Commander of the fledgling VOC refreshment station at the Cape visited this locality on the 18th of September 1652, and of which he wrote:

"In this search for forests, we also found at several places the finest and arable pasture land in the world, wide and level through which many fine, indeed, countless fresh rivulets wind. The largest of these [Liesbeek] about half as wide as the river Amstel [in Amsterdam] and quite deep flows into the Salt River, and if the Salt River had been as deep, it would have been navigable for rowing boats. On account, however, of the numerous sandy shoals and rocks in the Salt River one could hardly get so far up the river except in a small punt at spring tide" (Thom 1952:60-61).



This painting by Abraham De Smit and courtesy of the Library of Parliament (c.1870 given the evidence of the Cape Railway bridge in the distance c.1860) provides a rare view over the Salt River marshlands before it was conspicuously altered over the next half century. Notice the wagon crossing as evidence that even with the provision of the Montagu Bridge (c.1844) the Salt River could be easily crossed, probably in many places by wagon, if judged by the driver to offer a more convenient/direct route.

Now it should be mentioned that this visit was at the end of winter so many of these, "*countless fresh rivulets*", were likely to be the result of a high water-table augmented by recent winter rain. Still, even if many of these seasonal springs and rivulets were to disappear as the water table fell into summer, at least six perennial streams continued to issue from the eastern slopes of Table Mountain and feed into the Liesbeek River throughout the year as surely then as these still do today.

And so it can be concluded that for people following a pastoral way of life there was in fact no place on the Cape Peninsula that offered them as many advantages as found above the Varschedrift at the northernmost end of the Liesbeek Valley. Truly a textbook example of a, 'focal point', as described by Professor Smith on page 2 of this report.

5. The arrival of the first foreign callers at the Cape

In the 164 between the epic voyage of Bartolomeu Dias and the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck and his party at the Cape with instructions to establish a refreshment station for the VOC, over 150 ships or small squadrons of ships called here to and from Europe and the far East (Raven-Hart: 1967).

The first to call specifically at Table Bay is recorded to have been a Spanish Captain in the employ of the Portuguese crown, Antonio de Saldanha, in 1503. Uncertain of his whereabouts Saldanha decided to climb Table Mountain and ascertain whether or not they had, in fact, rounded the Cape of Good Hope as his less than accomplished pilot asserted. From this vantage point he was able to confirm that they had not. Also while here he noted there was a very accessible source of water near the shore and that this bay was an acceptable roadstead for anyone who may find the need to drop anchor here in the future. His men were also able to trade for a cow and two sheep from the local people they met here, initially, but on a second occasions a fracas arose during which the Captain was wounded.

5.1 Viceroy of India Francisco d' Almeida and the battle of Varschedrift

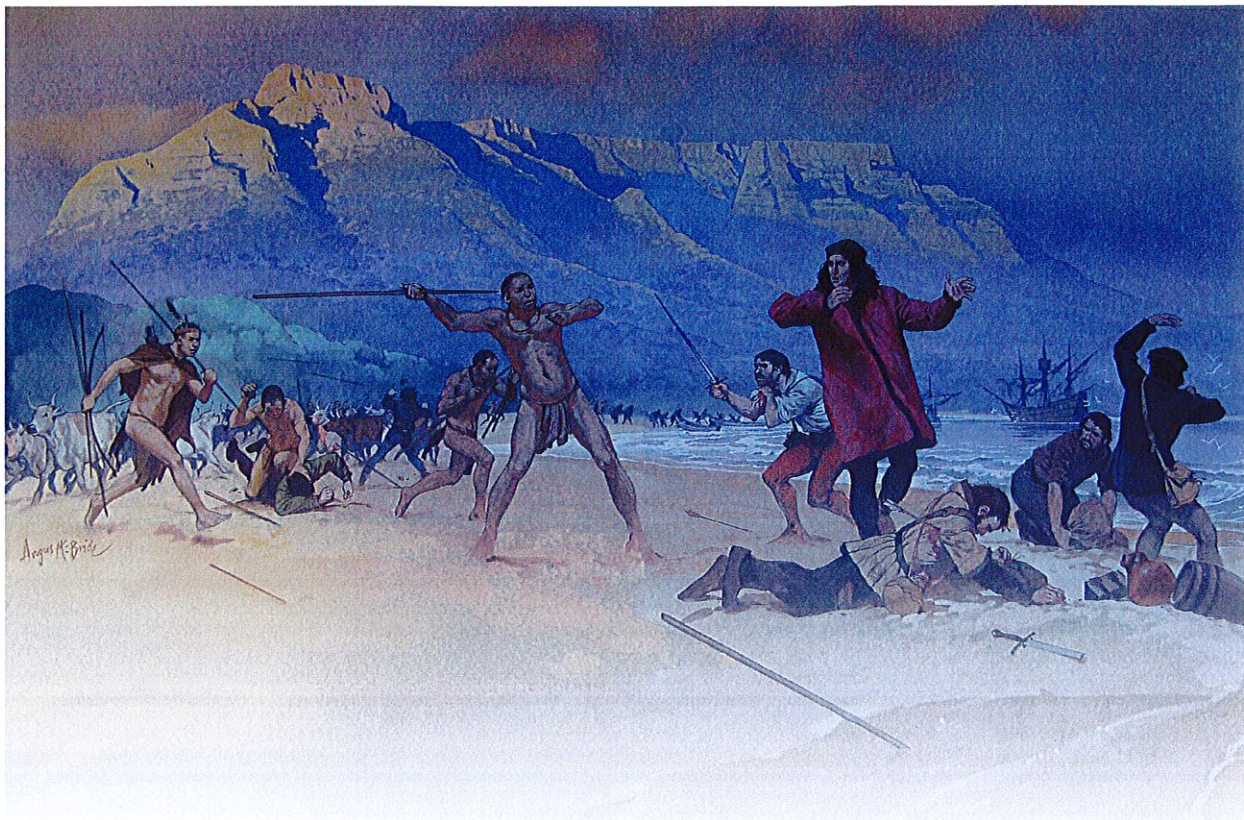
And so word spread about the qualities of this *Aquado de Saldanha* (Watering place of Saldanha) and presumably with a warning that the local people could prove truculent. This did not, however, dissuade the Viceroy of India, Francisco d' Almeida from stopping here in 1510. D' Almeida was returning from his exploits in the Indian Ocean where he had done much to establish Portuguese hegemony over the East African city states and spice trade across the Indian Ocean. In short, he was returning to Portugal expecting to receive the accolades of a national hero, when the decision was taken to call in at Table Bay to take on water and hopefully, establish trade for fresh meat with the local Khoekhoen herders.

Towards this end a small group was sent off in the direction of Varschedrift about "one Portuguese league" (5 km) away. Here a disagreement arose and the Portuguese returned to their ships alleging they had been unjustly assaulted by the Khoekhoen. Deciding this affront could not go unchallenged the viceroy is recorded to have landed with a reported 150 men at the mouth of the Salt River and marched on to Varschedrift.

At first the Khoe retreated from their campsite here with the result that the Portuguese were able to capture several children and a number of cattle. The Portuguese then proceeded to the mouth of the Salt River where they had left their boats only to find that the tide had risen and those left in charge had moved the boats to the more sheltered mouth of the river that flowed through Table Valley in those days - closer to where their ships were anchored (near the present day Grand Parade).

Meanwhile, the chronicler Barros further reports, the Khoe, "*began to come down from where they had assembled in their first fright like men who go to risk death to save their sons*" (Raven-Hart 1967: 10). Obviously the Portuguese held the Khoe in such contempt that they never imagine these apparent savages to them would prove brave enough to engage them in battle - even to save their own children. They also underestimated the Khoe by arming themselves with lances and swords but no projectiles. This would prove their undoing.

Trained to answer the whistle call of their owners the cattle broke away as the Portuguese retreated along the shoreline. The Khoe then turned the cattle around to form a living shield and advanced on their adversaries all the while throwing fire-hardened spears over the backs of their animals. By the time the remaining Portuguese reached their boats, Francisco d' Almeida and no less than 60 of his officers and men lay dead along the shore. Left in no doubt that the Khoekhoen were not be trifled with - Table Bay was avoided after this by the Portuguese and other foreign callers, for nearly a century.



The massacre of Viceroy Francisco d'Almeida in 1510 by Angus McBride, 1984.
Courtesy of the Castle Military Museum, Cape Town.

6. The arrival of the Dutch East India Company (VOC)

Ships of the VOC had been calling at the Cape for over half a century before the Company directors (*Heeren* or Gentlemen XVII) took the decision to establish a refreshment station for their malnourished crews at this midway point between Europe and the East. Accordingly an expedition was dispatched under the command of Johan (Jan) Anthoniszoon van Riebeeck, in December of 1651, with instructions to proceed to Table Valley and there build a fort large enough to accommodate seventy to eighty men near what by now was known as the 'Fresh River' running through Table Valley. He was further instructed to take possession of enough fertile land to meet the Company's needs for gardens and pasture and do everything possible to establish friendly trading relations with the local Cape herders for livestock and any other resources that may assist in defraying the cost of this initiative.

Towards fulfilling these objectives it soon became apparent that if he was going to initiate a successful trading relationship with the Cape herders he would need to learn more about them and their transhumant way of life.

In this he was greatly assisted by a Khoe man named Autshumato and variously known in the written records as Hadah, Haddot, Harry to the English and after the arrival of Van Riebeeck, as Herry to the Dutch. Herry would prove to be a shrewd and enterprising man and may well have volunteered rather than been kidnapped when he travelled to Bantam aboard an English ship between 1613-1614. Arriving back at the Cape with a smattering of English he effectively found a niche for himself as an agent for visiting English ships collecting and delivering mail left in his care and promoting trade. In this he appears to have prospered to the point that by the time Van Riebeeck arrived he was leader of a gathering of followers known as the Watermen or *Strandloopers*. These were apparently down on their luck outcasts who were generally without cattle and followed a hunting and gathering existence along the seashore as their Dutch name suggests.

Accordingly, Van Riebeeck recorded in his daily journal that on the 13th of November, 1652 he had occasion to question Herry more closely during a midday meal together to find out more about the people of the Cape. In this discussion Herry confirmed that, "there were three tribes of people similar in dress and customs". The first were the before-mentioned Watermen or *Strandloopers* numbering 40-50 people of whom Herry claimed to be the leader. Then there were the Fishermen also known by the Khoekhoen word for 'Bushmen' and variously recorded as Sonqua, Soaqua or Souquass. These people are reported to have been 400-500 strong and kept cattle but also spent much time fishing from the rocks, "with small fishing lines". They also may not have been herders but as Herry assured Van Riebeeck - inveterate cattle rustlers - by everyone and who Van Riebeeck would do well to kill, given the chance and thereby, win the gratitude of all the cattle-keeping Saldanhamen.



Jan van Riebeeck
Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

As for the Saldanhamen it is interesting that Herry did not distinguish them as belonging to different tribal groups leaving Van Riebeeck to only later discern that they in fact represented a number of different clans. These included the paramount 'Great' Saldanhamen or Cochouqua who lived along the Berg River Valley and into the Swartland with two headmen, Oedesoa and Ngonnemoa; the Goringhaiqua who came to be known as the Kaapmans as the peninsula appears to have been home for at least a sub-clan of this tribe while the rest were often to be found in the area from the Tygerberg and north to Saldanha Bay under the leadership of the headman known as Gogosoa or 'Fat Captain', to the Dutch (due to his unusual corpulence). Then there were the sometimes herders, sometimes Beachrangers/Watermen/*Strandloopers*, the Goringhaicon - the name of which, some researchers suggest, means 'children of the Goringhaiqua' supporting the contention that these people were in fact, cattle-less outcasts of this clan who had attached themselves to Herry and now followed a hunting and gathering way of life. Lastly, there were Gorachouqua nicknamed the Tobacco thieves, after they stole some of this plant from the first free-farmers in the Liesbeek Valley in 1656, and who remain the most difficult to place. They seem to have had greater affinity to the Khoekhoen tribes of the Overberg to the east and yet Van Riebeeck was left in no doubt from discussions with Gogosoa that they took orders from the "Fat Captain".

6.1 The First Frontier

The first attempts to establish gardens in Table Valley as well as trade in livestock, met with little but discouragement. Still with experimentation and perseverance things began to improve to the point that three years later Van Riebeeck was able to report in his daily journal that: *"agriculture succeeds very well and we have abundant refreshment for the ships, but grain does not appear to thrive"*. Realising the main challenge to growing grain at the Cape was the prevailing winds - particularly from the northwest during the winter growing season for grain crops of European origin - the Commander turned his attention to the Liesbeek Valley lying in the lee of Table Mountain. After a site inspection he reported on October 4th, 1655 finding,

"In the valleys behind the mountain, in the vicinity of the forests, we found the loveliest and most beautiful; weather in the world; apparently this wind spends itself completely against the back of the Table Mountain causing a singular calm in those valleys; which have such rich, beautiful soil and are so watered by pleasant, rushing rivers of fresh water that they are a delight to the eye". (Thom Vol.1: 349-350)

Earlier Van Riebeeck had suggested in his dispatches to the Heeren XVII that the answer to achieving food security and in particular, meeting the demand for grain at the Cape, could well be found in releasing certain promising employees from service with the Company and through grants of land, encourage them to become independent commercial farmers. To this he received a favourable reply in March of 1656 - with land awarded the next year in the Liesbeek Valley to what became the first nine, 'Free Burghers'.

All the while these development did not go unnoticed by the local Khoekhoen nor without words of concern and warning. The year before wood-cutters at the top end of the Liesbeek Valley had been confronted angrily by a group of most probably Goringhaiquas telling them to inform Van Riebeeck; *"we are living upon their land and they perceive we were rapidly building more and more as if we never intended to leave and for that reason they would not trade with us for any more cattle, as we had taken their best pasture for our cattle"*. (Thom Vol. 1: 292)

Still, apart from a few incidents of theft and minor aggression it would still be two years - during which time the number of free burghers allowed to take up plots along the Liesbeek grew to sixteen with eighteen farm managers or *Knegts*, (essentially future free farmers in training) - before open warfare broke out.

6.2 First Khoe-Dutch War

Van Riebeeck himself would describe this ensuing time of hostilities between the Khoe and VOC settlers as a war when, in fact, it was a series of skirmishes resulting in few deaths on either side. The symbolic significance of this time of conflict, however, is far greater as the first act of armed resistance in South African history against (what would soon prove to be) a colonizing power - the VOC.

Within two years of the first shots fired and assegies thrown, a line of blockhouses and watch towers - garrisoned by mounted soldiers - was established along the Liesbeek Valley. This now became the 'circumscribed (*begrepen*) circle' and the recognised boundary of the settlement - at least in the minds of the VOC. Hereafter, if the Khoe wanted to parley or trade at the Fort they could only enter and exit Table Valley via Varchedrift - guarded by the *Keert de Koe* (Turn the Cow) blockhouse. This was sited on a sandbank probably just below the Varschedrift confluence of the Swart and Liesbeek Rivers. And so the first step was taken in a process that would ultimately lead to the dispossession of the indigenous people of the Cape from their ancestral lands and the end to their traditional way of life.

6.2.1 Aftermath of the First Khoe-Dutch War

After the initial hostilities it appears the Goringhaicona (Watermen) dispersed to follow their hunting and gathering way of life towards the south of the peninsula while Herry and a few followers in company with the Goringhaiqua (Kaapmans), Goringchouqua (Tobacco Thieves) retired to the north beyond the Tygerberg and even were allowed to settle for a while among the Cochouqua near Saldanha Bay with the permission of their headman, Oedaso. This arrangement, however, did not last and when it became apparent that the Dutch would be amenable to reconciliation, overtures were made to them. Of this Van Riebeeck records on January 18, 1660 of receiving word from the Kaapmans that:

"seeing that we are now strengthening our positions against their raids and thus they found it impossible to drive the Dutch from the Cape, they wished to enter into friendly relation with us once again and live in peace as before". Van Riebeeck further records that "On being asked why they wanted to come back to the Cape now and make peace, they had replied that the Cape was their birthplace and their own country with abundance of fresh water, that their hearts continually hankered after it and that at the Saldanha Bay the ground was everywhere barren and brackish; moreover Oedaso refused to have them near him at the best places and rivers and he asked them to arrange to live peacefully with us in their own country." (Thom vol III: 177)

And so arrangements were made for a meeting at the Fort of Good Hope in Table Valley exactly eight years after Van Riebeeck had first set foot on the shore here to establish the Cape station. Returning to

Van Riebeeck's journal and the entry for the 5th and 6th of April :

"Peace was renewed today with the chief and overlords of the Kaapmans, with Harry (Autshumao) and with all the principal men and elders. They strongly insisted that we had been appropriating more and more of their land, which had been theirs all these centuries, and on which they had been accustomed to let their cattle graze, etc. They asked if they would be allowed to do such a thing supposing they went to Holland, and they added "It would be of little consequence if you people stayed here at the fort, but you come right into the interior and select the best land for yourselves without even asking if we mind or whether it will cause us any inconvenience. They therefore strongly urged that they should again be given free access to this land for that purpose".

To this Van Riebeeck asserted that there was no longer enough grazing for both the herds of the Kaapmans and the VOC which left the Kaapmans to ask,

"As for your claim that the land is not big enough for us both, who should rather in justice give way, the rightful owner or the foreign intruder".

Clearly the conflicting need of both the Peninsula Khoekhoen and the growing demands of the VOC settlement could not be reconciled. With one last request alluding to another element of value the Liesbeek held for the Kaapmans, they asked to at least be, *"allowed to go and gather bitter almonds [Wild Almond *Brabejum stellatifolium*] which grow in abundance there, and to dig for roots as winter food"*.

But even this Van Riebeeck would not allow for the potential conflicts this could lead to between the Khoe and the aspiring farmers now located across the Liesbeek Valley. So in conclusion Van Riebeeck confirmed to the Kaapmans that:

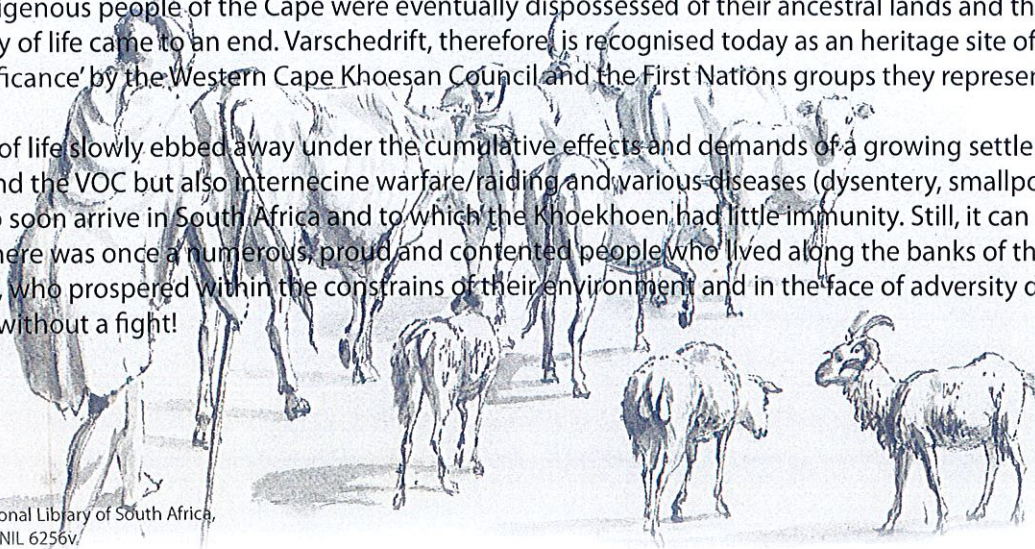
"Their land had justly fallen to us in a defensive war, won by the sword as it were and we intended to keep it".
(Thom Vol III: 196)

7. Conclusion

And so peace was concluded or was it simply an uneasy truce though which the Dutch became ever more enmeshed in what would prove to be a tangled web of shifting alliances and conflicts with different Khoekhoen tribal groups? What is important for the sake of this report is that the First Khoekhoen-Dutch war was the first armed resistance in South African history waged between an indigenous people and what would soon prove to be a 'colonial' power, the VOC. Thus the area surrounding the Varschedrift has come to symbolise and serve as a focal point for the wider conflict and its defining consequences, that played out across the Liesbeek Valley. The far reaching results of this set in train circumstances by which the indigenous people of the Cape were eventually dispossessed of their ancestral lands and their traditional way of life came to an end. Varschedrift, therefore, is recognised today as an heritage site of 'primary significance' by the Western Cape Khoesan Council and the First Nations groups they represent.

And so a way of life slowly ebbed away under the cumulative effects and demands of a growing settler community and the VOC but also internecine warfare/raiding and various diseases (dysentery, smallpox) which were to soon arrive in South Africa and to which the Khoekhoen had little immunity. Still, it can be said that there was once a numerous, proud and contented people who lived along the banks of the Liesbeek river, who prospered within the constraints of their environment and in the face of adversity did not go down without a fight!

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