

# The Voorburg Morkels. Part 1

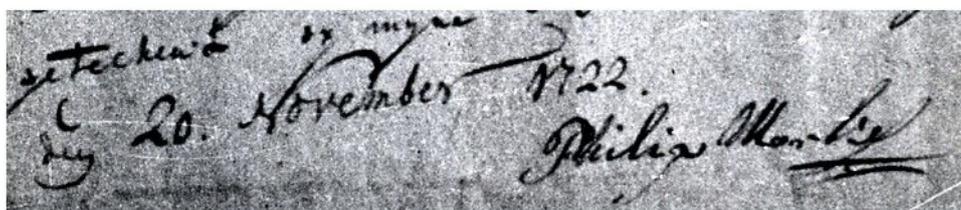
## The Early years in Hottentots Holland and Pieter Loreth Morkel at Zonnebloem

This series in two parts about the *Voorburg* Morkels was triggered by emails from Cathy and Jenny Morkel. They pointed out that their great grand father, a brother of rugby Springboks Sommie and Dougie Morkel was missing in the Genealogy of P.W. Morkel (1). A Google search indicated that a few other brothers were also missing and emails from Gerrit Morkel, who researched his family, provided confirmation and details. Further reading uncovered information about other interesting members of this part of the family, and I felt it useful to draw together what we know about the *Voorburg* Morkels.

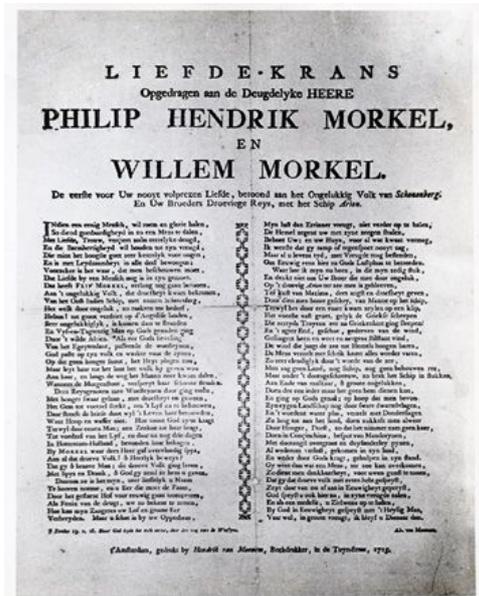
Part 1 takes the story back to stamouer Philip MORKEL and then quickly to third generation Willem MORKEL, who farmed at *Voorburg* and was the progenitor of this branch of the family. Much of this is also told in other stories on our website, but are brought together here to tell a complete story. Pieter Loreth MORKEL, who stayed at the Cape, and his family, is also included in Part 1. Part 2 is about the family who moved to Kimberley and the Transvaal. We tell of Hendrik Johannes MORKEL who was prominent in developing the townships of the goldfields of early Johannesburg, and one of his sons who was a large maize farmer in Northern Transvaal. Then about Willem (Japie) MORKEL, the father of Sommie, Dougie and their brothers and sister. The genealogies for this part of the family, up to the present, are in Part 2.

## The Early Years in Hottentots Holland

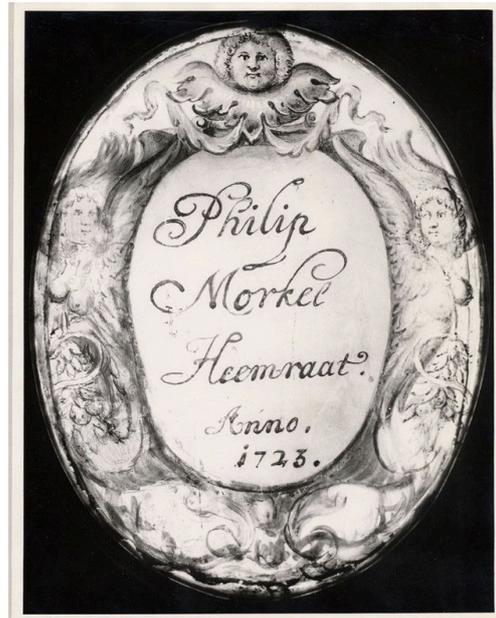
Stamouer Philip MORKEL from Hamburg Germany arrived at the Cape in 1708. He was a “Konstabel” or artillerist on the VOC (Dutch East India Company) ship *Oosterstein*. He married Maria BIEBOUW and they had one daughter, Elizabeth. Elizabeth married Jan LOUW and her granddaughter, Esther Elizabeth LOUW married 4th generation Willem MORKEL (our Willem III). Maria BIEBOUW died in 1713 and in that year Philip married again, with Catharina PASMEN. Catharina inherited a farm *Onverwacht* (later *The Bush* and then *Die Bos*) in Hottentots Holland from her sister Margaretha PASMEN who, with her husband Claas ELBERTSZ died in the small pox epidemic of that year.

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive ink. The signature reads "Philip Morkel" and is dated "20. November 1722." There are some faint, illegible markings above the signature, possibly "geteckend" and "22 my 22".

Signature of stamouer Philip MORKEL Source: P.W. Morkel (1)



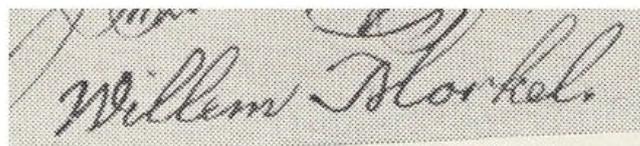
Grateful poem for hospitality by Philip and brother Willem MORKEL by survivors of the shipwreck *Schonenberg* 1725



Window pane 1723 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> church of Stellenbosch

Source: P.W. Morkel (1)

The stories of the first three generations are told in some detail elsewhere on our webpage <http://diebos.morkel.net> and are summarised here. For example a window pane from the second Stellenbosch church dated 1723 commemorating Philip MORKEL as *heemraad* has survived. In 1722 the ship *Schonenberg* went ashore near Cape Agulhas and about 80 shipwrecked sailors were hosted by Philip on his farm. An epic poem *Liefdekrans* expressing gratitude for his hospitality was printed in Amsterdam in 1725 and still hangs at the family farm *Die Bos*. An attempt to trace Philip (and his brother Willem who also came to the Cape but remained unmarried) was unsuccessful but yielded interesting information about the terrible state of Germany at the time, after the Thirty Year war of 1618 to 1648 and its aftermath – read the story on the webpage.



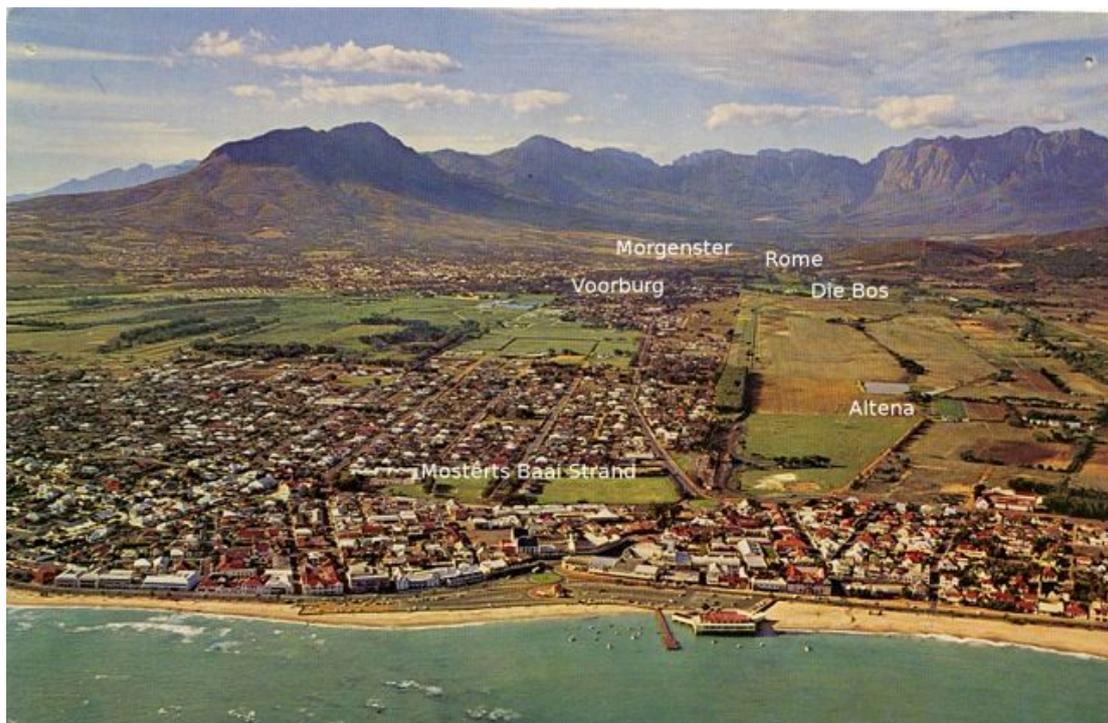
Signature of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Willem MORKEL (Willem I) Source:

Source: A.M. Hugo en J. van der Bijl, (2, p144a)

Second generation Willem MORKEL 1718 – 1788 inherited well and prospered during good economic times at the Cape. When he died in 1788 his estate listed 7 farms (four were along the *Riviersonderend*) and 113 slaves. Willem had four sons, Philip Hendrik who farmed at *Rome*, hived off from *Onverwacht*, Willem who inherited *Voorburg* and *Mostertsbaai Strand*, Daniel who inherited the family farm *Onverwacht*, and Hercules who was 15 at the time of his father’s death. Hercules later farmed at *Welgelegen* who has since become the golf estate *Erin Vale*. Willem’s only daughter, Helena Catharina married Philip Albertus MYBURGH, of the well known farm *Meerlust*.

Third generation Willem MORKEL 1761 – 1821 farmed at *Voorburg* and also owned the adjoining property *Mostertsbaai Strand*. On the latter property Willem and his brother Daniel operated a fishery. It was previously known as *Vlootjesbaai* (Fleabay), acquired as a loan farm by David du Buisson in 1714. Philip MORKEL's widow, Catharina PASMEN acquired the farm in 1748. Over the years a seaside village developed and consumed the farm. Those visiting for the summer holidays opened their cottages built in the sand and fleas had a feast. Later the town was named Somerset Strand and finally simply The Strand.

Willem and his brothers were members of the *Burgerwag*, a citizens militia, first under the VOC in the last days up to 1795 and later under General Janssens of the Batavian Republic in 1803 to 1806. They lived through the two British occupations of 1795 and 1806. Willem held the senior rank of *ritmeester* and was awarded a silver cup by General Janssens for bravery against a Hottentot uprising lead by Oerson Afrikaner. Aide-de-camp Paravincini di Cappeli describes a lavish dinner (fish from the Bay) and comfortable beds provided by Willem at *Voorburg* when the general and his party stayed overnight on their way to the Overberg interior. In 1819 Willem and his brothers (and neighbour M. W. THEUNISSEN of *Vergelegen*) as *Voorstanders* (leaders) petitioned the Governor Lord Charles Somerset to establish a new town and church, called Somerset West. The *Voorstanders* also guaranteed the cost of an organ for the church. *Voorburg* lay between *Onverwacht* and Somerset West and the home and farmyard bordered the Lourens river, close to where the historic bridge (second oldest in South Africa) still stands. Later owners in the 1840s renamed the farm *Bridgewater* and the name is preserved in that part of Somerset West.



Some of the old Morkel farms. Stamouer Philip's farm *Onverwacht* was later called *Die Bos*. Willem II and III's farms were *Voorburg* and *Mostertsbaai Strand* (presently The Strand). *Altena* was a late 19<sup>th</sup> century subdivision. The farms (except *Morgenster*) have been consumed by urban sprawl.

Source: Postcard bought by author in 1961





FIGURE 11.—COMMANDANT LINDE'S SILVER STANDING CUP WITH LID A gift from General Janssens and inscribed "for leadership, loyalty and bravery [from the] Batavian Republic".



FIGURE 10.—COMMANDANT JACOBUS LINDE In the uniform of ritmeester of the Stellenbosch Burgher Cavalry.

**Silver Cup awarded by General Janssens in 1806 and the uniform of a *Ritmeester*. The photos are of *Ritmeester* (Commandant) Jacobus LINDE, a colleague of Willem MORKEL. Willem received a similar Cup and would have worn a similar uniform.**

Source: Burrows (5, p55)

The Cape was going through tough economic times during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (a combination of vineyard pests such as Phylloxera and England abolishing tariffs against French wines made for a collapse of wine exports). The interior beckoned – diamonds were discovered at Kimberley and later gold at the Witwatersrand and many Morkels moved inland at this stage.

Two of the six sons of the fifth generation interests us – Hendrik Johannes MORKEL 1810 – 1859 and Pieter Loreth MORKEL 1818 – 1878. The story of the former and his descendants are told in Part 2. For the remainder of Part 1, let us talk about the latter, Pieter Loreth MORKEL, who stayed at the Cape, and some of his descendants.

## **Pieter Loreth MORKEL 1818 – 1878 x Petronella Wessels 1821 – 1905**

Pieter Loreth MORKEL was a butcher and businessman in Cape Town in the mid-1880s. (He seemed to have changed the spelling of his middle name from Loret to Loreth). His home *Zonnebloem* overlooked Woodstock and was a prominent feature on the road into the city.

In 1843 he placed an advertisement in English and Dutch, decorated with an engraving of a sheep (1, p39)

### **PIETER LORETH MORKEL**

**Butcher,  
Shambles, No.4**

**In tendering his most sincere thanks to his friends and the public, who have so liberally patronized him since he commenced his business, begs most respectfully to inform them, that he will constantly supply them with the  
BEST MEAT**

**that the market will at any time of the year afford, and trusts, by unwearied attention to the wants of customers, to merit a continuance of that favour which has so kindly manifest towards him.**

**Indian visitors and families residing in the neighbourhood of Rondebosch, Wynberg, or wherever Postwagons or Omnibusses pass, can likewise be furnished with every article that they require, to receive their orders, they may rely upon a punctual and speedy execution thereof.**

**ORDERS LEFT AT HIS RESIDENCE, ZONNEBLOEM, ARE EQUALLY ATTENDED TO AS THOSE LEFT AT THE SHAMBLES.**

### **PIETER LORETH MORKEL**

**Slagter  
Hal No.4**

***In het betuigen van zynnen opregten dank aan zyne Vrienden en het Publiek die hem zoo goedgegunstig ondersteun hebben, neemt de vryheid hem eerbiediglyk te verwittigen, dat hy hen steeds zal voorzien met het  
BESTE VLEESCH***

***dat de Markt te eeniger tyd het jaar oplevert, en vertrouwt door onvermoeide oplettenheid aan de behoeften zyner Begunstigers, eene voortdoring te verwerven van die gunsten welke reeds zoo ruim aan hem bewezen zyn.***

***Visiteurs van Indie en Huisgezinnen, wonende in die nabyheid van Rondebosch, Wynberg, or waar ook maar een Omnibus of Postwagen passeert, hunnen insgelyks voorzien werden met al hetgeen zy nodig hebben – en, daar hy altyd aan de Hal tegenwoordig is om hunne Orders aan te nemen, kunnen zy op eene behoorlyke en spoedige bezorging staat maken.***

**ORDER AFGEGEVEN TEN ZYENEN HUIZE AAN ZONNEBLOEM WORDEN EVEN ZOO UITGEVOERD ALS DIE WELKE AAN DE HAL WORDEN BESTELD.**

Pieter Loreth Morkel's business expanded. In 1856 he was established at 41 *Leeuwe* Street and in a building opposite the Shambles where he was still operating. (1, p40). In 1870 he retired from business, but soon after started afresh as a butcher, but in 1873 gave it up for a complete change of occupation. In 1875 he ran a boarding house in Strand Street and died in 1875. His widow carried on with the boarding house.



**Zonnebloem**

Source: Victor de Kock (5, p83)

### Family line of Pieter Loret MORKEL

- a1 Philip MORKEL 1677 – 1735 x Catharina PASMEN 1691 - 1764
- b3 Willem MORKEL 1718 – 1788 xx Helena Catharina MALAN 1759 - 1825
- c5 Willem MORKEL 1764 – 1825 x Anna Margaretha WIJM 1763 - 1830
- d2 Willem MORKEL 1785 - 1839 x Esther Leonora LOUW 1788 - 1859
- e6 Pieter Loret MORKEL 1818 – 1878 x Susanna Petronella WESSELS 1821 - 1905
  - f1 Willem MORKEL 1839 -1899 x Emily Susan BOVEY
  - f2 Jacoba Alida MORKEL 1841 – 1871 x Dirk Gysbert VAN BREDA
  - f3 Petrus Johannes MORKEL 1844 – 1905 x Sarah Margaret RUBIDGE
  - f4 Maria Elizabeth MORKEL 1846 – 1931 x Charles Duncan COXWELL
  - f5 Esther Leonora Wilhelmina MORKEL 1849 – 1883 Johannes Joachim Lodewyk SMUTS
  - f6 Pieter Loreth MORKEL 1851 Died young
  - f7 Susanna Petronella MORKEL 1853 – 1933 x Ernest Henry VAUGHAN
  - f8 Pieter Loreth MORKEL 1857 -? X Elizabeth Henrietta WAHL
  - f9 Daniel Hendrik Willem Wessels MORKEL 1861 – 1914 x Charlotte H.A. PENTZ
  - f10 Helena Wessels MORKEL 1862 – 1923 x Percy George SHORT
  - f11 Johannes Wilhelmus Wessels MORKEL 1863 - ? Unmarried.

Pieter and Susanna had eleven children, five boys and six girls. Their third child, Petrus Johannes MORKEL 1844 – 1905 married Sarah Margaret RUBIDGE, from a well-known 1820 British Settlers family. Several of their seven children lived in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Among them, Arthur Loreth Rubidge MORKEL 1871 – 1937, Olive Maud Rubidge MORKEL x James Robert TOWNSEND, and Ivy Crause Rubidge MORKEL x Theophilus Cecil FLYNN.

The fourth child, Maria Elizabeth Anna MORKEL married Charles Duncan COXWELL of Kent, U.K. In Perth we have friends, Martin Pinnell, a genealogy enthusiast, who alerted us that his mother was from the Coxwell family.

The second child, Jacoba Alida MORKEL married Dirk Gysbert VAN BREDA. This was an unfortunate marriage and Jacoba Alida was murdered by her husband. This sad story is related in the Appendix.

**André T. Morkel**  
**July 2011**

#### **Sources:**

1. P.W. Morkel, 1961. *Morkel Family History and Family Tree*. Published privately.
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3. Ted Hoefsloot and Cor Pama, 1980. *Cape Wine Homesteads*. A.D. Donker Publisher. Johannesburg.
4. D.H. Hopkins, 1969. *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Gemeente. Somerset Wes*. Issued at the 150th anniversary of the Church of Somerset West.
5. Edmund H. Burrows, 1994. *Overberg Odyssey. People, Roads and Early Days*. Published by the author and the Swellendam Trust
6. Victor de Kock, 1952. *Our Three Centuries*. Central Committee for the Van Riebeeck Festival, Cape Town, 1952.
7. *Village Life* No. 8 October/November 2004 (Dankie aan Johan van Breda vir die storie)

## **Appendix**

### **Dirk Gysbert van Breda of Ratelrivier**

*Extract from Village Life (7).*

The original farm was known as *Buffeljagt aan de Ratelrivier* and was ceded by the VOC as a loan farm to Matthys Lourens in 1745. It borders on the farms *Buffeljagt 309* and *Dirk Uys Kraal 298*, which were originally known together as *Buffeljagt* and ceded as a loan farm to Dirk Cornelis Uys in 1727. Today, *Ratelrivier* is one of the oldest farms in the Agulhas National Park. The history of the farm is close linked to the history of the adjacent farms *Rietfontein 293*, *Rietfontein 299* and *Buffeljagt 309*.

On 16 June 1831 Hans Jacob Swart became the first registered owner of the farm. When the farm was sold to 45-year old Hans Jacob Swart in 1831 it comprised nearly 2343 morgen (about 1875 ha). Hans Jacob Swart died in 1835 and his widow Catharina Elizabeth (née Moolman) continued farming for more than 25 years with her sons and slaves, whom she apparently ruled with iron discipline. She used to bury wrongdoers in the sand, with only the nose sticking out, and left them for a couple of hours before taking them out. One fatal day

she forgot and left one buried in the sand for days. When he was released he was barely alive.

In the late 1860's the farm was bought by Dirk Gysbert van Reenen van Breda, the second son of Michiel van Breda, co-founder of the Merino industry at the Cape. Michiel's wife was the daughter of Dirk Gysbert van Reenen, well-known brewer, businessman and progressive farmer. At that time Dirk Gysbert van Reenen van Breda already owned the farms *Rietfontein 293 and 299* and *Buffeljagt 309*. Dirk Gysbert van Reenen van Breda was a shrewd and intelligent farmer and also a member of the Legislative Council of the Cape Colony's first elected parliament and a Cape Town municipal commissioner.

Sadly, his two sons, Dirk Gysbert and the younger Pieter Johannes Albertus, did not inherit their father's good nature. Known for their violent and ungovernable tempers, they were socialites, given to heavy drinking and abusive behaviour towards slaves and even their own wives, men who often clashed with the law. Barely six months after their father's death they both killed their wives.

Dirk Gysbert was a brewer in Cape Town. His first wife, Ellen, died in 1855 after the birth of their first child. Eighteen months later he married the 15-year old **Jacoba Alida Morkel**, daughter of a wealthy butcher, Pieter Lauret (sic) Morkel. They had seven children - four sons and three daughters.



**Jacoba Alida Morkel, murdered by  
her husband Dirk Gysbert van  
Breda**

On 30 July 1865, Dirk Gysbert was declared insolvent and his father appointed him manager of one of his many Overberg farms, *Ratelrivier*, receiving as salary 10% on all sales effected by produce of the farm under his management. The farm was profitable and they lived well. They employed a housekeeper, a governess for the children, a farm manager, a cook and many other servants. Friends and visitors were entertained with dinner dances and hunting parties. But, despite all the wealth and gaiety, their's was not a happy family. According to Susanna Petronella Hendrina van Breda, one of the daughters, her father and mother were not on good terms at the time of her mother's death. Her father cursed and swore often.

Eight days before her death there was a party at which there were Scotchmen. Her mother danced with a certain McMillan. At some time during the party Dirk Gysbert went outside to his office, came back into the house with a razor in his hand, looking for his wife. She tried to evade him, as they still had guests, but he eventually got hold of her and assaulted her in front of Susanna.

On 21 March they dined at about 19:00. Her father continued his quarrel with his wife about her dance with McMillan. Things went from bad to worse. Dirk Gysbert grabbed a revolver and in the ensuing struggle a shot went off. Dirk Gysbert immediately sent for his manager, Jurie Germishuis, and Dr Albertyn, who lived on the farm Bloemfontein. Germishuis helped him to get rid of the revolver. Dirk Gysbert stayed with his wife during the night. She died early on the morning of 22 March before the doctor arrived. Legend has it that the dying Jacoba Alida van Breda (née Morkel) left a bloody handprint on the passage wall, which subsequent farm owners could not erase.

Seventeen days later his younger brother, Pieter Johannes Albertus, a doctor in Fort Beaufort, stabbed his wife to death.

The year 1871 was a traumatic one for the Van Breda family. Evidence is found in the words scratched by Dirk Gysbert on one of the main house's windows:-

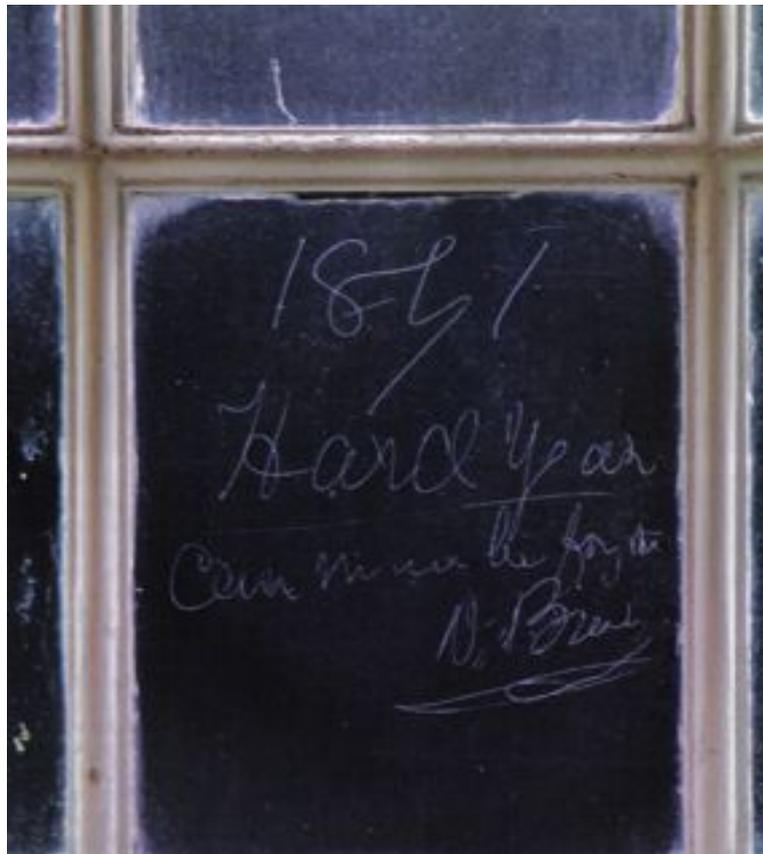
*1871. Hard year: Can never be forgotten. D. Breda*

Marthinus Laurentius Neethling, who became the owner of Portion 1 of *Buffeljagt* in 1889, conducted an inquiry but found insufficient evidence to prosecute Dirk Gysbert due to constant interference from the Van Breda family. When Frederick October, formerly employed as a shepherd by Dirk Gysbert, accused Dirk Gysbert in 1873 of intentionally killing his wife, the Bredasdorp magistrate, P J de Smidt, re-opened the case early in 1874. At De Smidt's recommendation, the case was heard at the Supreme Court in Cape Town. It opened on 5 May 1874 before Justice J H de Villiers. Verdict was passed on the second day of the trial. The jury recommended a unanimous verdict of culpable homicide with a recommendation to mercy. They believed

that Dirk Gysbert intended to take revenge on his wife, but not at that particular time. Because of the mercy recommendation, De Villiers sentenced Dirk Gysbert to five years' imprisonment with hard labour. This sentence was regarded as inadequate by the press and the general public.

During his term in prison, his children stayed at *Ratelrivier*. Earning one year remission, Dirk Gysbert was discharged on 4 May 1878. He stayed in Cape Town, dying there on 7 October 1901 at the age of 68 years and 11 months as a destitute person.

*Ratelrivier*, along with three other farms (including *Buffeljagt* and *Rietfontein*), remained in the possession of a syndicate controlled by Dirk Gysbert's mother Susanna Hendrina Wilhelmina, known as *Ratelrivier Estate Company*. She died in 1887. On 5 December 1889 the farm was transferred from the estate of S H W van Breda to this company. On 29 June 1898 it was sold to William Fletcher.



Scratched Window (7):

*"1861 Hard Year: Can never be forgotten. D. Breda."*