

Vlooibaai or Mostertsbaai Strand

I was under the impression that *Vlooibaai* (lit: Flea bay) referred to the early settlement (which later became the Strand) of holiday cottages in the dunes; presumably because of fleas awaiting those coming for their holiday at the beach (1). However, it seems that the name goes back further to a loan farm *Vlootjesbaai* given in 1714 to David DU BUISSON. (2,3).

Die Burger newspaper *Van Alle Kante* column in 1988 listed name changes to the area and town that was built on this farm: Melkbaai (1655*), Vlooibaai (1714), Mostertsbaai (1718), Van Ryneveldsdorp (1850), Somerset Strand (1882), The Strand (1918) and finally simply Strand (1937). (4)

* Other sources give a date of 1695, which I find more credible.

In 1714 the loan farm *Vlooibaai* (*Vlootjesbaai*, *Vlooitjiesbaai*) was assigned to David DU BUISSON. David was a colourful personality who arrived from France around 1702 or 1703. His ornate handwriting indicated a good education and he worked as a tutor for Pierre JOUBERT's children and he was also a drummer in the Drakenstein infantry. On separate occasions he was seen as a loyal employee and also a person with loose morals (*'n jongman wat losse en ongebonde lewe lei*). He married Claudine Lombard in August 1707 and they lived in Drakenstein until 1713. (2)

On 8 July 1715 Philip MORTEL, Hans CONTERMAN and Jacob MALAN made a formal protest against loan farms such as *Vlooibaai*. They complained that the loan farms of Johannes WESSELS, David DU BUISSON and Dirk COETZEE in the Hottentots Holland were located too close to their farms, which disadvantaged them. They had paid high prices for their farms with the expectations that they could make a good living, but they were disadvantaged by farmers such as DU BUISSON who rented properties from the Company (VOC) for six months. They could not risk having the few cattle that they had, grazing outside at night. The *Landdrost* and *Heemraden* ruled that their complaints were unfounded. (2)

Life was not easy at *Vlooibaai*. In May 1717 DU BUISSON was attacked in his house by fugitive slaves, and barely escaped with his wife and children, after receiving seven or eight severe wounds. Food, fire-arms and ammunition were plundered from the house. (2)

DU BUISSON farmed with cattle and wheat but it was economically marginal. In May 1719 he rented the farm out to Jurgen RADYN and the family moved to Franschoek. He died in 1722. His wife Claudine LOMBARD struggled and petitioned authorities that the loan farm *Vlootjesbaai* be given to her as freehold. The farm was 56 morgen 132 roods (6) large, with the Lourensriver as northern boundary and Philip MORTEL's farm *Onverwacht* to the east. On 20 September Philip MORTEL signed a letter stating that he had no objection to the widow Claudina LOMBAAR having ownership of the property. Her husband had the farm in loan for eight years, erected buildings and paid annual rent. She was granted ownership. (2)

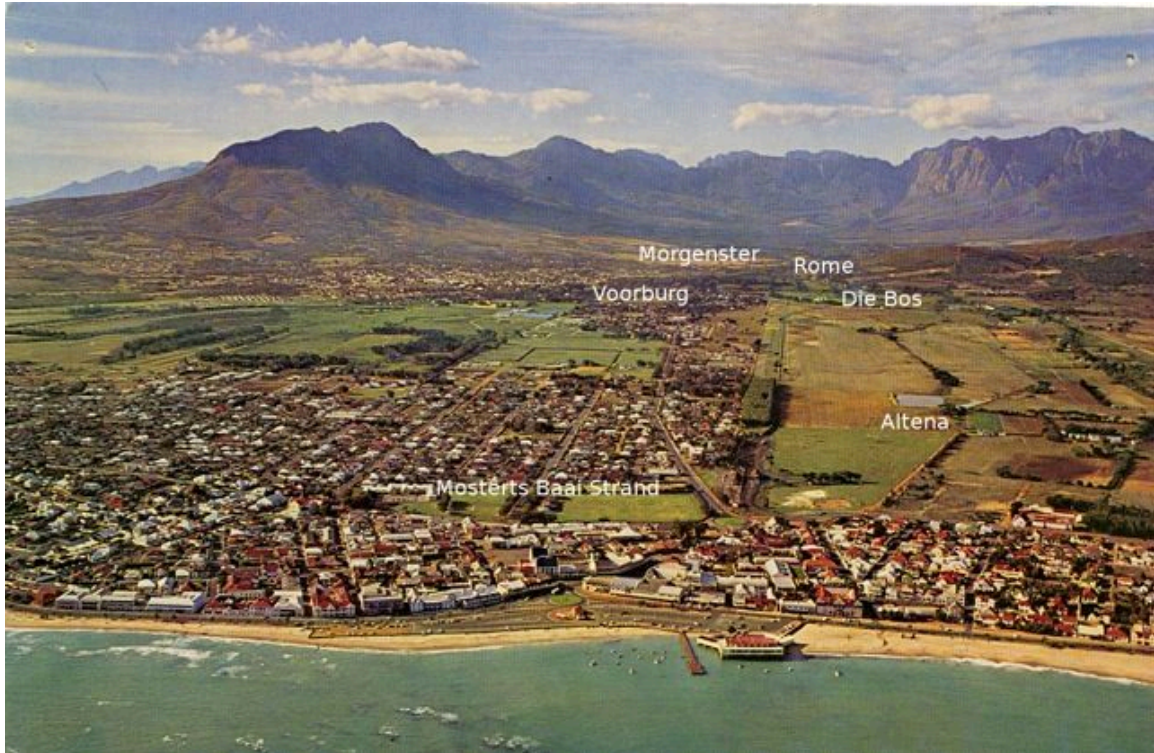
Vlooibaai was later bought by Olof DE WET and in 1748 Philip MORTEL's widow, Catharina PASMEN acquired it. In the Morkel history it is consistently called *Mostertsbaai Strand*. Second generation Willem MORTEL owned the contiguous farms

Onverwacht, Voorburg, and Mostertsbaai Strand. Willem's second son, also called Willem, inherited Voorburg and Mostertsbai Strand and he, with his brother Daniel of Onverwacht ran a fishery roughly on the site of the present Strand Pavilion. The Voorburg/Mostertsbaai combination was passed down Willem's line until sold in the mid 1800s.

De ongedescreven bekende of desey int de Schiedamsche
 van Claudina Lombaer, wed. wyf van David van Schoone
 pachtende naede en mijn land mij niet tinnentijde
 noch tinnentijde in verhuure, bin well te vreden
 dat een deel van gemete land magt in
 Eigendom gegeven werden daarom heb en deselve
 dit op een verzoek niet willey weigeren,
 om me niet daer van te konnen bedienen, daer
 het noodich is, hebbe dit eigen land
 geteekent op mijn verzoek Onverwacht
 den 20. November 1722.
 Philip Morkel

Letter of 20 November 1722 signed by Philip Morkel stating that he had no objection to Claudina Lombaer receiving the loan farm adjoining his property.

Source (5) and full text below



1950's Photo showing some Morkel farms. The Strand is built on *Mostertsbaai Strand (Vlooibaai)*. The Morkel fishery would have been near the Pavilion in the foreground.

Source: Postcard bought in 1960.

**André T. Morkel
April 2011**

Sources and notes:

- (1) Adult fleas cannot survive or lay eggs without a blood meal, but may hibernate for months without feeding. Adult fleas fully develop inside the pupal cocoon until alerted by vibration or other signals that prey is near. A family returning to their vacation home is immediately attacked by awaiting hungry hordes. Google "Hibernation of fleas" to find out more.
- (2) www.stamouers.com See under David du Buisson.
- (3) Peggy Heap, 1970. *The Story of Hottentots Holland*. Balkema Cape Town. P134 ff.
- (4) <http://152.111.1.87/argief/berigte/dieburger/1988/05/10/9/1.html>

- (5) P.W. Morkel, 1961. *The Morkels. Family History and Family Tree*. Published privately. Frontispiece.

Philip MORKEL's letter reads:

"Ik ondergeschreven bekenne bij deesen dat de huurplaatze van Claudina Lombaer wedw. wijlen David Du Buisson, strekkende naast aan mij land mij night hinderlijk noch schadelik is, dieswegen ben well te vreedden dat haar dit gemetene land magh in eigendom gegeven werden daarom hebb aan deselve dit haar vesoek niet willen weigeren omme sich daarvan te kunnen bedienen, daar het noodigh sijn sal, en hebbe dit eigenhandigh geteekent in mijne hofstede Onverwacht den 20 Sptember 1722. Philip Morkel"

P.W. Morkel's translation of the letter reads:

"I, the undersigned state hereby that the loan farm of Claudina Lombaer, widow of the late David du Buisson, lying next to my property, does not bother nor damage me, therefore I am satisfied that the measured land may be given in ownership therefore I will not refuse her request to make use of same, as required, and have I written and signed it by myself in my home Onverwacht on 20 November 1722. Philip Morkel"

- (6) Morgen (*Morg*) was used as a land measure at the Cape. It consisted of 100 by 100 yards and equals 0.89 hectare. 600 Cape Roods (*Kaapse Roede*) equaled 1 Cape Morgen.