

Old Morkel Farms

Part 4: Piet Snap Zyn Post

For about two years *Onverwacht* was called *Piet Snap zyn Post* which translates as Piet Snap's Post (farm). Who was Piet Snap, and why was the farm named after him? While this happened before Philip Morkel and his wife Catharina Pasman arrived on the property, it is nevertheless an interesting story.

Sources: The van der Stel saga with *Vergelegen* is well known and documented. I have used Dan Sleight¹, Johannes van der Bijl², Peggy Heap³ and Delia Robertson⁴ as my main sources.

In 1700, Governor Willem Adriaan van der Stel persuaded visiting Commissioner Wouter Valckenier to transfer the VOC *Buitepos* (Outpost) at Hottentots Holland to him. He developed an extensive farm *Vergelegen* and corruptly used his position as Governor for priority in supplying farm produce to visiting ships (Sleight, pp156 - 163, Heap p15, pp 21 - 28)

The *Onverwacht* portion, on the edge of the Estate, was originally not part of *Vergelegen*. The Governor had the authority to grant the land to Jan Hartog, his gardener (*baaslandbouer*) who managed the farming aspects of *Vergelegen*. Hartog established the farm and somewhat cynically, named it *Onverwacht* (Unexpected). A few years later in 1703 it was transferred to the Governor and became part of the *Vergelegen* Estate.

Governor W.A. van der Stel was dismissed by the VOC for corruption. The estate was divided into five⁵ allotments and put to auction in 1709. These farms became *Vergelegen*, *Lourensford* (formerly *Laaste Gift*), *Morgenster* (which included the farm *Land en Zeezicht*), *Cloetenburg* and *Onverwacht*. These were all large farms, shown schematically on the chart. The original *Vergelegen* was truly a substantial estate.

At the Auction, the *Onverwacht* portion was acquired by Aletta Ter Meulen⁶, Widow of the late Hendrik Elbertsz. Aletta registered the farm as *Piet Snap Zyn Post* (van der Bijl, p170). Her son Nicolaas Elbertsz and his wife Margaretha Pasman farmed there until 1713, when they both died in the small pox epidemic of that year.

¹ Dan Sleight 2004, *Die Buiteposte*. Pretoria, Protea Boekhuis.

² Johannes van der Bijl, 2000. *Grond Eienaars van Stellenbosch 1693 - 1860*. PDFdeur Ockert Malan

³ Peggy Heap 1970, *The Story of Hottentots Holland*. Cape Town, A.A. Balkema.

⁴ Delia Robertson. *The First Fifty Years*. <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g15/p15670.htm> and <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g7/p7123.htm>

⁵ Sources usually mention only four parts of *Vergelegen* sold. However, *Onverwacht* was also owned by van der Stel and was part of the auction.

⁶ In documents of the time several variations of her name were used. Aletta or Aeltje; and Ter Meulen, Ter Molen, Ter Mollen and Vermeulen. In English she would have been Aletta Miller. Hendrik Elbertsz owned the farm *By den Weg* along the *Eerste rivier*. His widow, Aletta ter Meulen sold this farm in 1704, and was able to buy *Onverwacht*.

Who was Piet Snap?

Snap is an unusual name and there are no references to that name among the local burger community. Robertson⁷ (see Annexure) quoting research by Anna Boekesen, listed him as a slave from Bengal born around 1663 and sold in May 1683 to Tobias Marquart. Tobias was a close relative, perhaps brother of the *Vergelegen* tenant, Jochum Marquart. It is possible that Piet Snap worked for Jochum at the *Buitepos* (Annexure).

Jochum Marquart would have been fully occupied running the *Buitepos*. The somewhat remote *Onverwacht* part would have been difficult to manage, and he might have employed a foreman, perhaps Piet Snap. It is possible that Marquart and his workers referred to *Onverwacht* as *Piet Snap's Post*. (*Piet Snap Zyn Post*) It is also possible that later when Aletta Ter Meulen acquired the property it was known by that name and retained it.

All of this is very speculative. Piet Snap was very young to be in charge. He would have been on the property only a short time, say June 1683 to April; 1684. He was Tobias Marquart's slave, not Jochum's. Hendrik Elbertsz was not involved with the *Buitepos* when Piet Snap was around. So why would his widow some sixteen years later use this name? The best explanation is that the farm was known by that name when she bought it. It is the only plausible explanation for this name and, until a better explanation becomes available, it is the best we have.

When Nicolaas and Margaretha died in 1713, the farm did not stay in the Elbertsz family, but was transferred in that year to Margaretha's mother, Sophia Pasman (widow of Roelof Pasman). Why it did not stay in the Elbertsz family is unclear. The name was now changed back to *Onverwacht*, the name given by Jan Hartog. Sophia owned the farm *Rustenburg* near Stellenbosch and allowed her second daughter, Catharina and her husband Philip Morkel to farm at *Onverwacht*. Five years later, in 1718, it was transferred to Philip Morkel, and it has remained in the family until the turn of the 20th century when it was sold for urban development, with the house and extensive farmyard retained by the family.

Timeline

1672 The VOC buys Hottentots Holland from Khoi Captain Cuiper for fl 4,000 (gulden). The *Buitepos Hottentots Holland* is established.

February 1678 to January 1681 The *Buitepos* is rented out to master agriculturist (*baaslandbouer*) Hendrik Elbertsz and master butcher (*baasslagter*) Jochum Marquart.

1681 to April 1684 Jochum Marquart rents the *Buitepos* for a further three years.

21 May 1683 Tobias Marquart buys slave Piet Snap.

1684 Governor van der Stel took charge of farming the *Buitepost* on behalf of the VOC

⁷ Robertson, Op. cit.

1700 Part of the *Buitepost* (400 morgen) was granted by visiting Commissioner Wouter Valckenier to Governor Willem Adriaan van der Stel. Van der Stel develops the property into a flourishing farm.

Van der Stel grants 117 morgen of what became *Onverwacht* and *Rome* to his gardener (*baaslandbouer*) Jan Hartog,

1703 Hartog sells *Onverwacht* for a nominal sum to Governor W.A. van der Stel.

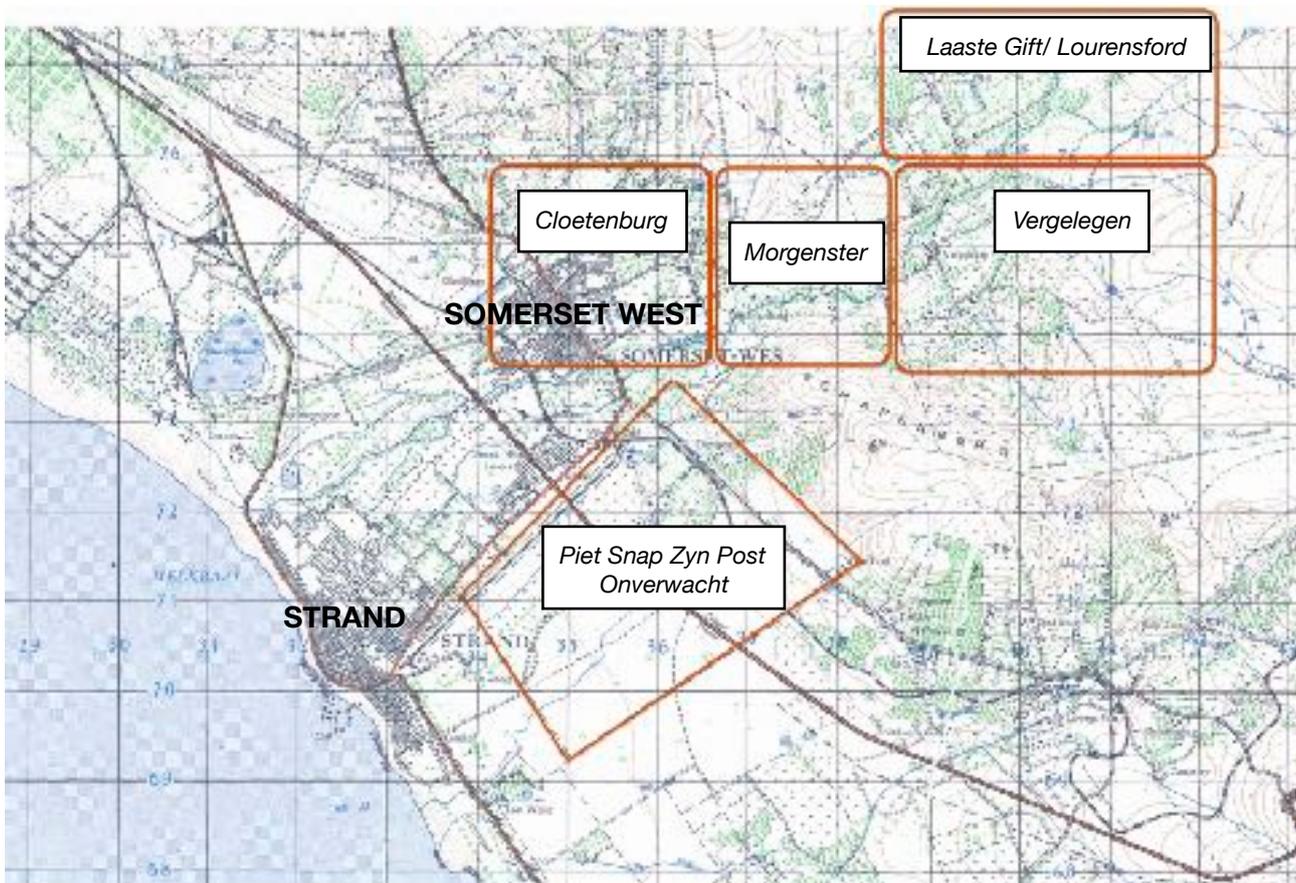
1708 Governor Van der Stel dismissed by the VOC for corruption.

1709 *Vergelegen* is auctioned off in five parts: *Vergelegen*, *Laatste Gift (Lourensford)*, *Morgenster*, *Cloetenburg* and *Onverwacht*.

11 Sep 1710 *Onverwacht* is registered as ***Piet Snap Zyn Post*** by Aletta Ter Meulen, Widow of Hendrik Elbertsz. Her third son, Claas (Nicolaas) and wife Margaretha Pasman farms there.

1713 Claas Elbertsz and Margaretha Pasman die in the small pox epidemic. The farm is transferred with its former name *Onverwacht*, to Margaretha's mother Sophia Pasman. Sophia's second daughter Catharina and her husband Philip Morkel farm there.

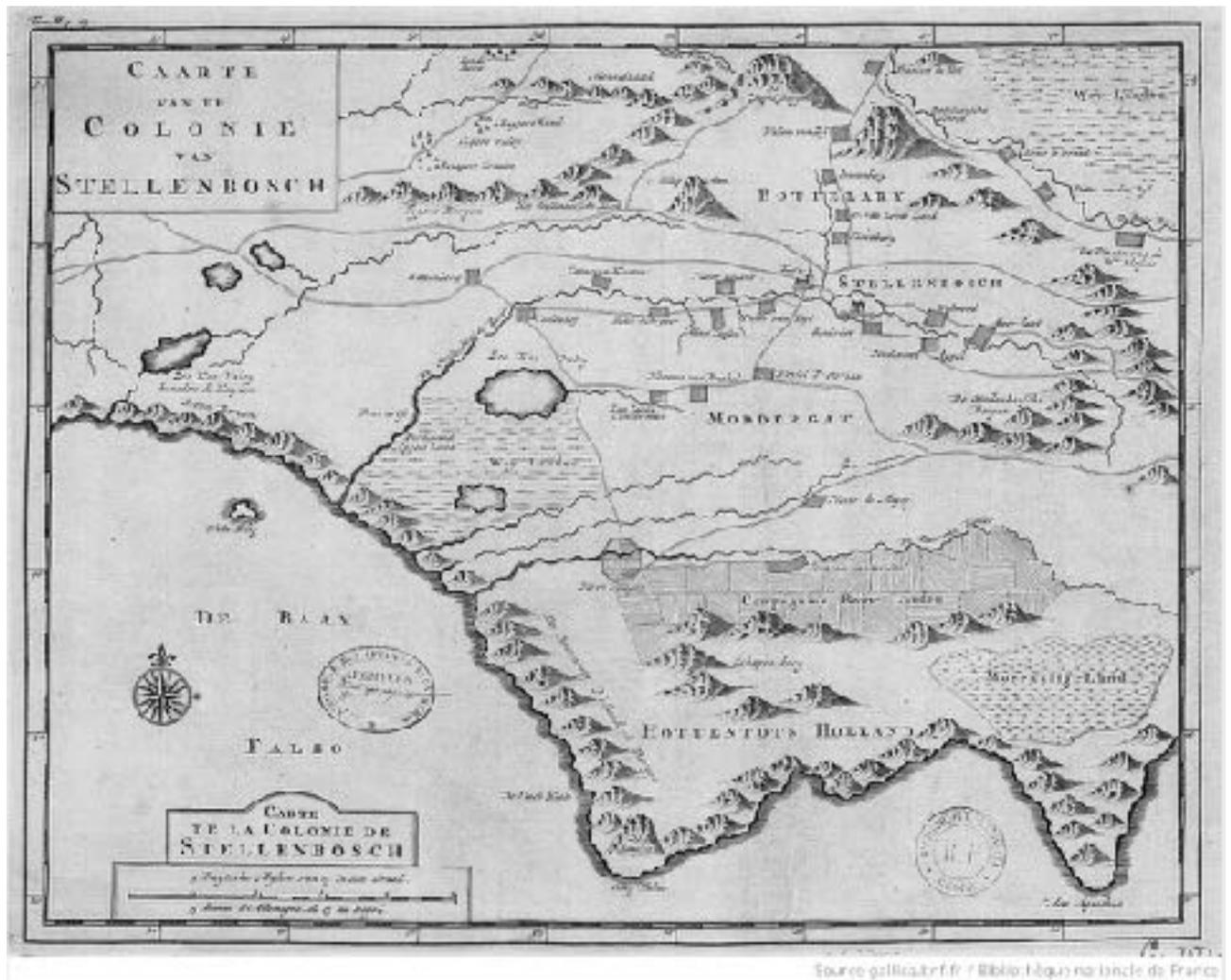
29 Jun 1718 *Onverwacht* is transferred to Philip Morkel and has remained in the family for ten generations.



The locations of the five portions of *Vergelegen* auctioned in 1709, shown very approximately on a 1940 chart of Hottentots Holland

Chart Source: <https://htonl.dev.openstreetmap.org/50k-ct/#14/-34.1132/18.8674/c1940>

Farm locations: Author



An early map of the Stellenbosch district.

Drawn by an unknown French traveller, it is in the National Library of France.

Although with the faults and inaccuracies of the period, the above map shows the extent of the *Vergelegen* Estate, (*Compagnie's Bouw Lande*) in greater detail than other maps of the time.

It would have been drawn a few years into van der Stel's reign (1700 to 1709) as the hexagonal *Vergelegen* homestead had already been established. (The homestead is wrongly located on the map, too far to the west). The map also shows a farm of the Governor's brother Francois van der Stel. While modest on the map, it was a substantial property in its own right (consisting of the later farms *Parel Vallei* and *Groot Paardevlei*).

Another error in the map refers to the farms along the Eerste Rivier (listed as *De Stellenbosch Rivier* on the map). For example it displays *Meerlust* furthest east whereas it actually lies furthest west. Sophia Pasman's farm, *Rustenburg* under her husband's name Pieter Robberts is also in the wrong location, being north east of the town, and not along the river.

Annexure

Piet Snap van Bengale, Aletta Ter Meulen and Tobias Marquart

Piet Snap van Bengale¹

M, #15670, b. circa 1663

Birth Origin*	Piet was from Bengal and perhaps born there circa 1663. He was 20 year old when sold as a slave in 1682. The toponym 'van Bengale' or from Bengal - was a term loosely applied during the period of VOC dominance to enslaved or formerly enslaved people from any of the countries bordering the Bay of Bengal. ¹
Slave Transactions	On 21 May 1683 Piet Snap van Bengale was sold by Hendrick Janse to Tobias Marquaert , for Rds. 48. ² Piet Snap van Bengale and Andries were sold by Tobias Marquaert , to Gerhard Pieterszoon van der Bijl on 2 June 1684, for Rds. 170. ³

Citations

- [S418] Anna J. Böeseken, Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape 1658-1700 (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1977), p. 140.. Hereinafter cited as Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape 1658-1700.
- [S418] Anna J. Böeseken, Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape 1658-1700, p. 140. 21.5.1683: Piet Snap from Bengal (20) sold by Hendrick Janse bonte Kraai, skipper, to Tobias Marquart for Rds. 48. [Assuming this should have been: Hendrick Janse, skipper of the Bontekraai which was a vessel of the VOC]
- [S418] Anna J. Böeseken, Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape 1658-1700, p. 142. 2.6.1684: Piet Snap and Andries from an unknown origin sold by Tobias Marquart to Gerrit van der Bijl for Rds. 170.

Excerpts from First Fifty Years by Delia Robertson.

<http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g15/p15670.htm>

<http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g7/p7123.htm>

Aletta ter Meulen

F, #7123, b. circa 1650

Birth*	Aletta ter Meulen was born circa 1650 in Schüttorf . ¹
Marriage*	She married Heinrich Elberts before 1672. ¹
Family	Heinrich Elberts b. c 1640, d. Oct 1696
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Hendrik Elberts+1 b. 4 Dec 1672, d. b 8 Dec 1697 ◦ Johannes Elberts1 b. 27 May 1674 ◦ Nicolaas Elberts1 b. 24 Nov 1675 ◦ Geertruijt Elberts1 b. 6 Jun 1677 ◦ Izaak Elbertsz1 b. 27 Oct 1678 ◦ Gerrit Elberts+1 b. b 5 Nov 1679 ◦ Geertruy Elberts+1 b. 22 Jun 1681 ◦ Willem Elberts1 b. 11 Apr 1683 ◦ Margaretha Elberts+1 b. 17 Mar 1686

Names in the record, in publications, etc.	6 June 1677, the name of Aletta was written in the record as Aeltie Fredricks ter Meulen. 27 October 1678, the name of Aletta was written in the record as Aeltie ter Meulen. 27 June 1700, the name of Aletta was written in the record as Aletta ter Mollen. 27 June 1700, the name of Aletta was written in the record as Aeltijen Elbers. ²
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Tobias and Jochum Marquart

Nada Crafford⁸ provided:

Tobias Marquart and Jochem Marquart

<<http://www.e-family.co.za/ff/g7/p7810.htm>> may have been relatives,

perhaps even brothers.⁷ <<http://www.e-family.co.za/ff/g6/p6769.htm#c6769.7>>

<http://www.e-family.co.za/ff/g6/p6769.htm>

Volg ook die skakel vir Jochem vir nog verdere inligting, o.m.

Dr. J. Hoge, *Personalialia*, p.259. Marquardt, Tobias. Probably a relative (brother?) of Joachim Marquardt (q.v.), for the latter was godfather to Tobias M.'s children, Regina and Tobias.!

⁸ Nada Crafford. email in response to my query in the SA *Genealogie* chatroom.