

# The Lady Visits and the Hosts are Absent<sup>1</sup>

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In May 1798 Lady Anne Barnard and her husband, Andrew Barnard travelled to the Overberg and Swellendam<sup>2</sup>. On their way they stopped for midday meal at the Myburgh farm *Meerlust* and overnighted at *Onverwacht*, the Morkel farm. At both venues the hosts were absent.



**Lady Anne Barnard**

*Google Images from Bridgeman Art Library*

At *Meerlust* they found that *Mynbeer* Myburgh (Phillipus Albertus Myburgh) was away from home, but *Mevrouw* (who did not speak English) gave them a very good dinner — mutton cutlets, chicken, roast lamb and pickled fish. It was excellent and the wine was very good. After this sumptuous meal — an impromptu one for they were not expected on that particular day — they went on to *Onverwacht*, the Morkels' farm (of Daniel Johannes Morkel and his wife Maria Dorothea, née Louw). Here everyone was away, except a tutor of 'moralizing and philosophical turn of mind'. He was very kind and did his best for their comfort by providing them with featherbeds for the night and by lending them a team of oxen next morning<sup>3</sup>. They needed the oxen to help pull their wagon over the difficult *Gantouw* pass.

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this was published in The Quarterly Journal Western Cape of the Genealogical Society of South Africa. June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Dorothea Fairbridge, 1924, Lady Anne Barnard at the Cape of Good Hope 1797 — 1802 p62 & 63. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

A number of questions arise from this somewhat innocuous account of the Barnards' travel.

- Did they arrive unannounced? Were there no advance arrangements?
- Was the sumptuous meal at *Meerlust* impromptu or was it specially prepared for the guests?
- Was the absence of both P.A. Myburgh at *Meerlust* and D.J. Morkel at *Onverwacht* coincidence or intended?
- Why was there a tutor at *Onverwacht*, when there were no children to teach? (The oldest child at the time was three years old). Who was the tutor?
- Was it normal for a tutor to provide overnight hospitality and on the following morning, loan a team of oxen for the trek over the mountain pass?

We do not know the answers, but there is some background to the visit, which provide context. About five months earlier in November 1797, Andrew Barnard in his role of Colonial Secretary travelled to Stellenbosch twice to persuade a small group of about five<sup>4</sup> who held out signing a second Oath of Allegiance to the British King (George III). This was a significant change from the first Oath, which pledged support to the British as temporary custodians on behalf for the Dutch government (Prince Willem of Oranje) in exile in Britain. It was resented by some, particularly P.A. Myburgh, of *Meerlust*, and his cousins D.J. (of *Onverwacht*) and P.H. Morkel.

After a report by the *Landdrost* at Stellenbosch of problems administering the Oath, Andrew Barnard, normally a decent and amiable person, had to cajole and threaten<sup>5</sup> the recalcitrants to sign. Although he was successful, the governor, Earl Macartney, ordered a military presence on their farms. There were 22 dragoons stationed at *Meerlust* and 10 at *Onverwacht* <sup>6</sup>. He was determined to stamp out any Jacobin sympathies with the recent French Revolution. The dragoons would have been surprised and non-plussed when they were welcomed as guests by P.A. Myburgh. They in turn helped out on the farm — an amiable outcome for what was intended to be a display of British power and control. At *Meerlust* a finely carved coffee table is on display which the dragoons made as a gesture of thanks<sup>7</sup>. Daniel Johannes Morkel at *Onverwacht* most likely followed his leader in extending hospitality to the dragoons.

The punitive measure to station dragoons on their farms five months earlier would have been on the minds of P.A. Myburgh and D.J. Morkel when they learned that Andrew Barnard and his wife (and two others) were coming for a visit. They would have felt honour-bound to provide good hospitality but possibly preferred to be absent for the actual visit. Whatever Lady Anne's private thoughts were, her biography gives no hint of a perceived snub. We can only guess at what exactly happened.

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<sup>4</sup> P.W. Morkel, 1961. *The Morkels Family History and Family Tree*. Published privately. p14

<sup>5</sup> The most potent threat would have been the prospect of banishment, which would have stripped these landowners of their farms and livelihood.

<sup>6</sup> P.W. Morkel, p14

<sup>7</sup> Phillida Brooke Simons, 2003. *Meerlust. 300 Years of Hospitality*, Fernwood Press. p 63

In her journals<sup>8</sup> Lady Anne tells more about her discussions with the tutor. On arrival at *Onverwacht* they were met by him and a few slaves who were minding the farm. The tutor regretted that the Morkels were absent and supplies were locked up. He could thus not provide them as much as he would have liked. However, he did prepare and shared a meal of mutton broiled on coals with parsley, crumbs, pepper and butter with a couple dozen of eggs and potatoes. According to Lady Anne he was very kind and did his best for their comfort by providing them with feather beds for the night. Andrew Barnard and Lady Anne and their companions slept at *Onverwacht* and left Sunday to cross the Hottentots Hollandkloof (*Gantouw Pass*) with a fresh team of oxen which the tutor lent them.

Lady Anne made a sketch of the tutor and engaged him in conversation giving some insight into the occupation and character of the young man. She found him to be more intelligent than any of the men of his class. He intimated that he was from Europe and came to the Cape as an infant. At the time he was teaching the children to read and write and he was earning eight rixdollars a month. To oblige *Mynbeer* Morkel he also looked after the farm. Slaves were not allowed to eat meat, but instead were given brown bread of very low quality. He commented that if farmers would allow treatment of slaves as he experienced as free man, it would remove distinction between themselves and their slaves. As a poor tutor the prevailing status quo between farmer and slave bewildered and alarmed him and above all he had grown accustomed to a milieu of subordination in all its facets.

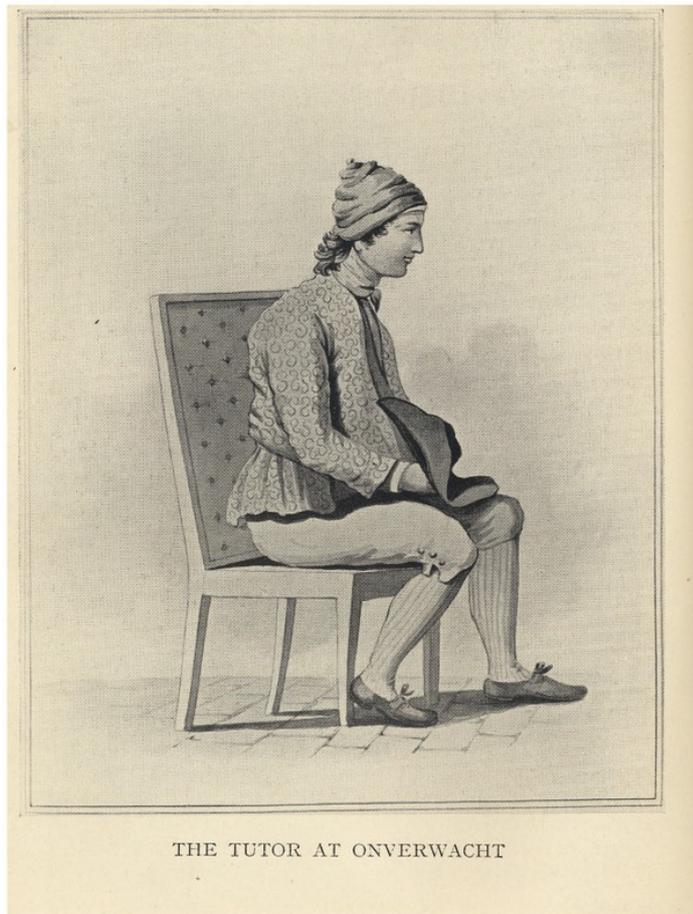
Who was the tutor at *Onverwacht*? We are not absolutely sure, but about nine years later in 1809, when there were indeed children to teach, Carel David Wentzel was tutor/teacher at the Morkel farms of *Onverwacht* and *Morgenster*. Ebrahim Rhoda<sup>9</sup> and I agree that Wentzel was almost certainly the tutor at *Onverwacht* that Lady Anne sketched. He would have been eighteen years old at the time. Whether he was employed at *Onverwacht* at the time or just conveniently available, we do not know. With no children to teach, it is unlikely that he tutored at *Onverwacht* in 1798. It is also unlikely that an 18 years' old of 'moralizing and philosophical turn of mind' was suited to manage the farm on an ongoing basis. It is more likely that he was brought in for the occasion and given instructions to receive the guests and lend them a team of oxen for the trek over the mountain pass.

In 1797 there were five children between 5 and 13 years at neighbouring farms of brothers Willem Morkel (*Voorburg*) and two of 12 and 13 years at Philip Hendrik Morkel (*Morgenster*). Perhaps he was tutoring at those farms and 'borrowed' for the occasion.

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<sup>8</sup> The Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard, 1797-1798, edited by A.M. Lewin Robinson with Margaret Lenta and Dorothy Driver. Second Series no.24, Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town: 1994 for 1993, pp.302 -305. Thanks to Ebrahim Rhoda for providing this reference.

<sup>9</sup> See also the follow-up article by Ebrahim Rhoda on Carel David Wentzel.



The tutor at Onverwacht

Sketched by Lady Anne Barnard in Dorothea Fairbridge, p63

## 1,061.—WENTZEL.

Carel David Wentzel, van Dresden, luitenant ingenieur in dienst der Oost Indische Compagnie, gehuwd 8 Januari 1751 met Aurelia Stavorinus.

- (b) 1 Carel David, gedoopt 27 Februari 1752  
 2 Johanna Catharina, gedoopt 17 Februari 1754, gehuwd met Hendrik Jan Nieuwstad  
 3 Carel David, gedoopt 12 December 1756, assistent in dienst der Oost Indische Compagnie, gehuwd 17 November 1776 met Maria Sophia Hoebert
- (c) 1 Christiaan Lodewijk, gedoopt 7 December 1777  
 2 Carel David, gedoopt 3 December 1780  
 3 Maria Aurelia, gedoopt 10 November 1783, gehuwd met Paul Roux  
 4 Emerentia, gedoopt 31 Mei 1784, gehuwd met Johannes Frederik Hubertus Theunissen  
 5 Christiaan Lodewijk, gedoopt 21 Augustus 1785, gehuwd 7 Februari 1808 met Anna Aletta Sophia Roselt
- (d) 1 Henry Eduard, gedoopt 12 Maart 1809  
 2 Christiaan Johannes Hubertus, gedoopt 10 Maart 1811  
 3 Johanna Carolina, gedoopt 24 Mei 1812
- (e) 6 Susanna Jacoba, gedoopt 9 September 1787  
 7 Christina Johanna, gedoopt 18 Januari 1789  
 8 Aurelia, gedoopt 28 Maart 1790, gehuwd met Christiaan Hendrik Maasdorp  
 9 Ernst Christiaan, gedoopt 16 October 1791  
 10 Johan David, gedoopt 24 November 1793, gehuwd met Elisabeth Johanna Hamman
- (d) 1 Maria Geertruida, gedoopt 12 October 1817  
 2 Carel David, gedoopt 3 October 1819  
 3 Jacobus Johannes Daniel, gedoopt 15 October 1821.  
 4 Paul Roux, gedoopt 18 Juli 1824
- (c) 11 Johannes Jacobus, gedoopt 12 April 1795, gehuwd met Anna Margaretha Maree
- (d) 1 Elisabeth Jacoba, gedoopt 21 Juli 1816  
 2 Carel David, gedoopt 9 Januari 1817  
 3 Johannes Carolus, gedoopt 21 Maart 1819  
 4 Maria Sophia, gedoopt 15 October 1820  
 5 Jacobus Johannes, gedoopt 2 Februari 1823  
 6 Christiaan Lodewijk, gedoopt 22 Augustus 1824  
 7 Christiaan Hendrik Maasdorp, gedoopt 27 Augustus 1826  
 8 Lucas Abraham, gedoopt 26 October 1828
- (c) 12 Johanna Adriana, gedoopt 7 Mei 1797  
 13 Elizabeth Martha, gedoopt 18 Maart 1804