



# Jan van Riebeeck in his own words

Contents – April 1652

This is the month, exactly 370 years ago, that Jan van Riebeeck arrived in Cape Town. What did he write in his daily diary? Find out exactly this and more in this month's Edition 3 "Jan van Riebeeck in his own words. Welcome to all our new subscribers and thanks for sharing it with others. Enjoy, feel free to forward and refer your friends. If you prefer the Afrikaans and Old Dutch version, request your copy [here](#).

All the best,  
Rian Maartens (Executive Editor)

## This newsletter is extracted from:

"JOURNAL KEPT BY THE SENIOR MERCHANT JAN ANTHONISSEN VAN RIEBEECK<sup>1</sup> WHO SAILED AS COMMANDER WITH THE SHIPS DROMMEDARIS, REIJGER AND GOEDE HOOP<sup>2</sup> FROM TEXEL FOR CABO DE BOA ESPERANCE IN THE SERVICE OF THE GENERAL UNITED DUTCH CHARTERED EAST INDIA COMPANY UNDER THE CHAMBER OF AMSTERDAM<sup>3</sup>"

*Who was Jan van Riebeeck and what is the source? See the detailed introduction [here](#)*

*How did the Atlantic winds detour the trip between Amsterdam and Cape Town?*

*See a detailed article by P. Serton, [here](#)*

1 – 30 April 1652

## On board the ship *Drommedaris*

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*Primo* Fine N.W. wind and good progress, course E. by S. and E.S.E. At noon, in bright sunshine, having successfully found latitude at fully  $34\frac{1}{2}$  deg. S., we set the course due E. for the Cape. This day sailed 29 miles E. by S. and E.S.E., long.  $28\frac{1}{2}$  deg.

*2nd* Wind and course as before, making excellent progress, so that at noon found latitude  $34\frac{1}{2}$  deg.; progressed 36 miles due E. and took the course E. and E. by N.

*3rd* Wind S.S.W., course E. by N. with a fine breeze. At noon found latitude at 34 deg. and long. 33 deg. 51 min.; estimated to have sailed E. by N. and E.N.E. 31 miles. In the evening had a variation of the compass to N.W. of 3 deg. 38 min.

In the afternoon the wind completely veered to the south so that we ran S.E. by E. in order to maintain a slightly southerly course, and in the evening had a N.W. variation of 3 deg. 38 min.

*4th* In the morning the wind had turned completely S.E. so that we were unable to sail closer than E.N.E. This morning in washing the ship a man fell overboard from the flake, but as the ship was not sailing very fast he was brought safely on board again.

At noon latitude of fully 34 deg., the wind still stronger so that we shifted the helm to S.S.W.

In the evening after prayers had the wind again from the S. and S. by W. so that we again changed course more to the E. close to the wind.

In the evening had a variation of the compass from N. to N.W. of 4 deg. 8 min.

## Summary:

- Table Mountain sighted
- Investigation by sloop
- Arrival in Table Bay
- Letters from Admiral Van Teijlingen
- Two savages taken on board
- Site for the fort selected
- Measurements thereof
- Truce between Saldanhars and Strandlopers
- Cow and calf obtained by barter
- Stow-aways on the *Salmander*
- The men eat a hippopotamus
- Inspection of the country
- Whales in Table Bay
- Work on the fort proceeds

5th In the morning the wind S., course E. For 2 or 3 days now the ships *Reijger* and *Hoope* have again been keeping fairly to windward of us. So far as we could see from aloft they were now about south-west and to windward of us. We therefore decided to turn towards them and signal to the yacht to come nearer to us to receive instructions so that now at the end we may not be separated from one another but may arrive at the Cape together. In this way we shall be the more defensible against all hypocritical friends or open enemies which we might find there.

After we had decided on this, the wind veered completely S. by W. and S.S.W., so that the aforementioned ships came right abeam to windward of us and we could not with any advantage tack about towards them, nor did they on their part come towards us. We were therefore unable to get the yacht, which was far to windward of our ship, to approach us for the purpose mentioned.

At noon the skipper successfully found latitude at 33 deg. 55 min., long. 35½ deg.

At about 5 glasses of the afternoon watch, praise God, we saw the land of Cabo de boa Esperance, namely the Table Mountain, E. and E. by S. about 15 to 16 miles from us <sup>1</sup>. It was first seen by the chief mate, to whom we accordingly presented

1. Approximately 60 or 64 English miles.



four Spanish reals in specie<sup>1</sup>, the reward for first sighting this land. We pointed it out to the *Reijger* and the *Hoope* (being further to windward) by hoisting the flags and firing a gun.

In the evening had a variation of the compass from N. to N.W. of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  deg.

During the night, 2 glasses of the dog-watch having run out, we came quite close to the shore, from which we then turned away, lighting another signal, so that, in the event of the *Reijger* and the *Hoope* also coming so near during the night, they might see our 2 lights—the signal for turning about.

As the dog-watch was drawing to its close, we discerned the *Reijger* and the *Hoope* close to us and together we turned towards the land.

6th Calm weather with variable wind. It was on account of this that we were unable to make much progress, but as we were quite close inshore, we sent the sloop with the bookkeeper Adam Hulster and second mate Aernt van Jeveren to the tail of the Lion Mountain with instructions to go round the corner of the mountain and find out what ships—and how many—might be lying at anchor in the roadstead in the Table Bay<sup>2</sup>. They could do it easily without even showing themselves and their sloop to the ships they might find there. This was done so that we, after receiving notification, might prepare ourselves for defence or offence.

They returned on board about 2 hours before dark and reported that there were no ships, so we stood in, notwithstanding the calm. We had, God be praised, a fine southerly breeze at the last moment, so that we as well as the yacht *Goede Hoope* came to anchor safely, shortly after sunset, in the Table Bay in 5 fathoms, sandy bottom, off the Fresh River<sup>3</sup>. Skipper Hooghsaet, who with the *Reijger* had held more to seaward, remained outside. We trust that with God's holy guidance he will safely arrive here in good time to-morrow, which may God grant. Amen.

Gave instructions this evening to our skipper Davit Coninck to go ashore in advance early to-morrow morning with one of the shallops and 6 armed soldiers besides the oarsmen, to see whether any letters had been buried here by ships which had called, and at the same time to procure some greens for refreshments, because we have now been at sea for over three and a half months without having called

1. See p. 3, note 2. The prize promised to the one who first saw land—won by the first mate of the *Drommedaris*—would be almost £ 1 in value according to the present English or South African money.

2. Van Riebeeck's ships were therefore lying towards the present Camps Bay and comparatively near land. Obviously Van Riebeeck would have been on his guard, especially against Prince Rupert and against Portuguese ships.

3. The Fresh River flowed from Table Mountain through the valley to the sea approximately where Adderley Street is to-day. It must not be confused with the Liesbeek River, which was later sometimes also called the *Fresh* or *Sweet River*. Cf. Charts 36 and 48, C.A.; and Journal, 15 July 1652. Also Theal, *History of South Africa before 1795*, II, p. 12.



at any place of refreshment, and as a result of this the health of the men has been rather undermined. Ordered them also to take the seine along so that they may at the same time quickly sweep the water once or twice for a meal of fresh fish.

ON BOARD THE SHIP *Drommedaris* ON THE SHORE OF CABO DE BOA ESPERANCE

*Sunday 7th* In the morning a gentle breeze from the N.W., although mostly W.S.W. the whole day, with now and then a gust from the Lion Mountain. Skipper Coninck went ashore with the sloop for the above purpose. When the dawn had broken through slightly we saw the flute *Reijger* entering the bay and, praise God, she came safely to anchor alongside of us at about 8 a.m.

Shortly afterwards skipper Coninck returned with the shallop, having caught a reasonable quantity of fish. He brought back a small box with letters<sup>1</sup> of 25 February last addressed by the Hon. Jan van Teijlingen, Commander of the return fleet last departed. Two were to the Hon. Governor-General and Councillors of India<sup>2</sup> and one to the captains of the ships *Prins Willem*, *Vogelstruis*, *Vrede*, *Orangie*, *Salmander*, *Coninck Davit*, *Lastdrager* and *Breda*, which at that time were still expected to call here and, as far as we can make out, did not arrive here but apparently were carried past to St. Helena. The said Commander, having procured only one head of cattle and one sheep left for the same place from this roadstead on 26 February with the ships *Diamant*, *Nieuw Rotterdam* and *Henriette Louise*, after lying here 11 days<sup>3</sup>. May the Almighty grant that they as well as the others arrive happily and safely in the beloved Fatherland.

We learnt from the letter written by the Hon. Van Teijlingen to the captains of the said ships that they had some horses on board for the men who are to remain in the fort which is to be built here<sup>4</sup>; notwithstanding our absence they would land them and leave them in the hands of the Hottentot who speaks English<sup>5</sup>. From this

1. By leaving letters at the Cape for seafarers who would come after him, Jan van Teijlingen followed a practice which had been in existence long before the establishment of the settlement at the Cape. See e.g. Theal, *Hist. of S.A. before 1795*, II, p. 11. In the South African Museum in Cape Town are some of the so-called "Post Office Stones"—stones under which visiting sailors placed letters which were taken out by later visitors. Cf. L. Péringuey, *Inscriptions left by early European Navigators on their way to the East* (S.A. Museum, Guide Leaflet No. 1), pp. 11—13.

2. i.e. the High Government of India, which was the Company's supreme authority in the East and consisted of the Governor-General and the Council of India. At that time Carel Reijnierssen was Governor-General. See p. 22, note 1.

3. The Hottentots were often exceedingly reluctant to dispose of their cattle by barter—so much so that Van Teijlingen, according to this note, could obtain only one head of cattle and one sheep during his stay of eleven days at the Cape. As a result of this the return ships frequently sailed directly to St. Helena to seek refreshment there.

4. The Journal has : *in het te maken fort te remoreren*.

5. The "Hottentot who speaks English" was Autshumao, the cunning captain of the miserable Strandloper-Hottentots, or Goringhaikonas as they were later on repeatedly called in the Journal.



we gather that they must have conferred with this native and therefore may have learnt something from him and written about it to the Hon. Governor-General and Councillors of India. This may perchance be useful information for us here in the service of the Hon. Company. We therefore decided to open that letter which was not particularly and privately addressed to the Hon. Governor-General or anybody else but in general to his Honour and his Councillors and, after reading it for our information, to close it again and to forward it by the first opportunity. The contents were as shown in the copy hereunder.

Copy of letter written by the Hon. Van Teijlingen to the Hon. Carol. Reijnierssen<sup>1</sup>, Governor-General, and the Hon. Councillors of India.

'To the Hon. Governor-General Carol. Reijnierssen  
'and the Hon. Councillors of India.

'Venerable, Valiant, Wise, Provident and Most Discreet Sirs—

'Per the yacht *Leeuwrick* by hand of Skipper Dirck Ogel my last communication to 'Your Honours was dated the 26th of the last month of last year. As a result of strong, 'contrary winds it was only on the first of January of this year that we left the Straits<sup>2</sup> 'for the open sea. After this we had favourable wind and good fortune all the time 'so that we came to anchor in the roadstead here in the Table Bay at Cabo de boa 'Esperance on the 15th instant. For this may the merciful God be sincerely thanked. 'The ships *N. Rotterdam* and *H. Louise* had arrived here 2 days before us, but we found 'no ship nor pinnace from the Fatherland, much less a small fort on land. Only one 'head of cattle and one sheep were brought to us by the savages, nor do we see any 'likelihood—in view of the unwillingness of these unreasonable persons—of obtaining 'any more cattle or other refreshment, although cattle in abundance have been seen 'by seamen not far from the shore. So we have decided and agreed among ourselves 'to depart from here with our ships in the morning and to continue our voyage in 'the Name of the Almighty to St. Helena. We shall wait there for our other ships 'if they have not arrived there before us. This we are inclined to believe because for

Before long he became known as Harry, or *Herry* as Van Riebeeck and his people wrote it. The Europeans were still to have a great deal to do with him. Theal says: "He had spent some time on board an English ship, in which he had visited Bantam, and had acquired a smattering of the language of those among whom he had lived." Hist. of S.A. before 1795, II, p. 13. For further details see Bosman, *Uit die Biografie van 'n Hottentot*.—*Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns*, X (1931—1932), p. 17.

1. Carel Reijnierssen spent many years in the service of the D.E.I.C. in the East; in 1636 he became Governor and Director of Coromandel; ten years later President of the boards of *Schepenen* and Orphan Masters in Batavia; and in 1650 Governor-General of Netherlands India. He died at Batavia on 18 May 1653. *Vide* Van der Kloot, *De Gouverneurs-Generaal en Commissarissen-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indië, 1610—1888*, pp. 53—54. Various sources are given by Van der Kloot.

2. The Straits of Sunda, near Batavia.



'several days in succession, while we were lying here, a storm raged, which could  
'easily have carried them past the Cape and caused them to make for the said island.  
'Whether that was so, time will show.

'To date we have lost only one man through illness on the voyage, namely on  
'the *Diamant*, but on the *Rotterdam* 3 men have died and on the *Henriette Louise* 4.  
'God grant that it may stop there. Skipper Gert Pleune complains exceedingly about  
'his surgeons, both of whom, indeed, are young and inexperienced lads. This is  
'abundantly proved by their attempted cures, which were such that 12 persons are  
'still lying on the *H. Louise* in a miserable condition owing to sore feet as well as  
'other causes, some of them—in so far as they had not received attention in time—in  
'great danger of losing their legs, indeed their lives. In order to prevent this, we have  
'deemed it advisable to transfer our assistant-surgeon, who is a very experienced  
'and well-behaved young man, to the *Louise*, for which purpose we have conferred  
'upon him the title of Senior Surgeon, trusting that this will not be taken amiss.

'The said skipper also informed us how extremely unsteady he found the afore-  
'mentioned ship, so much so that no sails could be carried properly; also that a  
'quantity of pepper had been brought up with the pumps, one of which he was  
'obliged to take out; and he had to keep a man in the pumpwell all the time until  
'eventually—after several bales of cinnamon and about 40 to 50 bags of pepper had  
'been removed from the orlop deck at the back and brought above—it was discovered  
'that the ceiling was quite open and in some places were holes through which a  
'man's fist could go. This is indeed a deplorable state of affairs, for which no one else  
'but the overseers of the ordinary carpenters are to blame. They allow them no time  
'for properly attending to and caulking the ships.

'How matters stand with the *Vrede* is known to the Almighty: it is a fact, however,  
'that when they were still in the Straits the skipper had declared that every glass 8 to  
'900 strokes had to be pumped. I am therefore very much afraid that when they join  
'us the officers of the *Vrede* will tell us of still more adversity. God grant that it may  
'turn out contrary to my expectations.

'Have just received news that a ship was sighted near Robben Island last night,  
'but to-day she has not yet been seen, so that we will remain here until to-morrow  
'evening and if she has not put in an appearance by then, we shall weigh anchor  
'and set sail.

'On the fourth of last month in the evening we discovered that our caboose was  
'on fire. In order to see from the deck, between the knees and ribs and transom of  
'the ship, where the fire had originated, we immediately set the carpenters to work  
'to make holes inside as well as outside the caboose, when large quantities of burnt  
'charcoal came forth. As a result, however, of the continual and hard pouring of  
'water the fire was soon extinguished. Also for this the great God must forever  
'be praised.



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'Herewith

'Venerable, Valiant, Wise, Provident and Most Discreet Sirs, I commit  
'Your Honours, with my respectful salutations, to the protection of Almighty  
'God; may He grant Your Honours a long, healthy and happy life and guide  
'us through His holy angels to the beloved Fatherland.

'Your obliged and obedient servant,  
'(signed) Jan van Teijlingen.

'In the ship *Diamant* this 25th  
'day of February 1652, lying  
'at anchor in the Table Bay  
'at Cabo de boa Esperance.'

Copy of letter written by the Hon. Van Teijlingen to the captains of the ships *Prins Willem*, *Vogelstruijs*, *Vrede*, *Orangie*, *Salmander*, *Coninck Davit*, *Lastdrager* and *Breda*.

'To the captains of the ships *Prins Willem*, *Vogelstruijs*  
'and *Vrede*, as well as to the authorities of the ships  
'*Orangie*, *Salmander*, *Coninck Davit*, *Lastdrager* and *Breda*.

'Hon. Good Friends

'These few words will serve no other purpose than to inform you of our safe  
'arrival with the ship *Diamant* here in the roadstead on the 15th instant, for which  
'the Almighty be highly praised. The ships *N. Rotterdam* and *H. Louise* also safely  
'came to anchor here 2 days before us, and whereas we have been lying here for  
'eleven days now and none of you have appeared, we are of the opinion that most  
'likely—in view of the violent storm that raged for some days—some of the ships  
'of the fleet, if not all, had passed this Cape towards St. Helena. So we have all  
'resolved and agreed to depart from here early to-morrow morning and to continue  
'the voyage in the name of God to the aforementioned island. If we arrive there  
'safely, we shall, in case you are still behind, wait there for you until the 1st of April.  
'If it so happens that you still call here, we wish to request you most earnestly and  
'exhort you to waste no time here but to take in fresh water as speedily as possible  
'so that you may yet be in time to join the others off St. Helena, and we may from  
'there together complete the voyage to the beloved Fatherland. This is also required  
'by the instructions of our Lords and Masters.

'We have obtained here for refreshment only one head of cattle and one sheep,  
'although inland the seamen have seen cattle in abundance; the unreasonable savages,



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'however, would not bring us any more than those mentioned. God grant that you  
'may fare better. We commit you herewith, with our kind regards, to the protection  
'of the Almighty.

'Your kindly disposed friend,  
'(signed) Jan van Teijlingen.

'On the ship *Diamant* this 25th day of  
'February 1652, lying at anchor in the  
'Table Bay off Cabo de boa Esperance.

'Do not hesitate to put ashore the horses you  
'have on board and instruct the Hottentot,  
'who speaks English, to hand them over to  
'those who will occupy the little fort and  
'promise him that he will be well rewarded  
'for it. Vale.'

This evening we went ashore together provisionally to consider more or less where the fort should be built. Also had 2 savages on board this evening, one of whom could speak a little English. We generously filled their bellies with food and drink. As far as we could gather no cattle could be obtained from them for—as they gave us to understand by means of broken English and signs—they were only fishermen<sup>1</sup> and the cattle were always supplied by those from Saldania<sup>2</sup>. This we had also learned from a few survivors of the ship *Haerlem*<sup>3</sup>.

8th In the morning it blew fairly strongly from the S.S.E. all the time, continuing until about noon, with clear, bright sunshine. It appears to be the dry season at

1. The Strandlopers, or Goringhaikonas, lived on roots and edible foods washed up by the sea, so that the Europeans learned with regret from Harry that he and his followers had no cattle. Cf. Theal, *Hist. of S.A. before 1795*, II, p. 13; and Stow, *The Native Races of S.A.*, p. 245. See also Journal, 19 June 1652.

2. "Those from Saldania"—the Hottentot tribe known as the *Goringhaiquas* and also alluded to in the Journal as *Saldanhamen*, *Saldanhars*, *Saldiniers* or *Kaapmans*. Fairly numerous and exceptionally rich in cattle, they were at that time one of the most important Hottentot tribes at the Cape. On account of their large herds they were always compelled to seek new pastures, and therefore led a nomadic life. See Theal, *Hist. of S.A. before 1795*, II, pp. 13—14; Stow, *The Native Races of S.A.*, pp. 242—243; Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of S.A.*, p. 45; Godée Molsbergen, Jan van Riebeeck, p. 85; and Thom, *Die Geskiedenis van die Skaapboerdery in Suid-Afrika*, p. 5.

3. The *Haerlem* stranded in Table Bay in March 1647, and the survivors stayed at the Cape for a whole year. Theal errs when he says that they were here "between five and six months" (*Hist. of S.A. before 1795*, II, p. 3). They bartered numerous sheep and cattle from "those from Saldania". See C. 409: Lett. Rec., 1649—1660, pp. 1—14 (*Remonstrantie* of Janssen and Proot). C.A.



present: everywhere the ground has cracked on account of drought and many of the side-streams of rivulets are found to be quite dry.

Had the Council summoned to-day<sup>1</sup> in order to consult with it about the work of fortification etc. to be undertaken by us, for which an approximate site was selected yesterday. Resolved to inspect the site more closely to-day and to survey it in order to see whether it would be large enough and suitable. Having suspended our deliberations, we did this and found the site suitable and large enough, close to the principal Fresh River which apparently could be led into the moat round the fort<sup>2</sup>. Further instructions with regard to one or two other matters were also drawn up, as can be seen from the resolution of this date in our resolution-book<sup>3</sup>.

Sent ashore this evening from the *Drommedaris* to work

on land . . . . .	50 men
and there remained on board to guard the ship . . . . .	36
from the <i>Reijger</i> sent ashore . . . . .	39
and for guarding the ship . . . . .	36
from the yacht sent ashore . . . . .	11
and on board remained . . . . .	9
Total from the 3 ships to work on shore . . . . .	100
and to remain on board for guarding the ships and bringing the material etc. ashore . . . . .	81

Altogether 181 men

excluding the officers, assistants, senior surgeons, etc.

9th Lovely sunshine and fairly warm weather. Commander Van Riebeeck went ashore early in the morning. He marked out the fort completely to-day and returned on board in the evening. The outside polygons or the outer points of the bastions were fixed at 21 rods (Rhineland measure)<sup>4</sup>

1. This meeting of the Broad Council would come to important decisions regarding the founding of the Colony. Still held on board the *Drommedaris*, it was the first meeting of Van Riebeeck's Council at the Cape. On land this body became known as the Council of Policy (*Raad van Politie*). Cf. e.g. Klerk de Reus, *Geschiedlicher Ueberblick*, etc., pp. 124—125.

2. According to Godée Molsbergen, the place chosen for the fort, "close to the principal Fresh River", is to-day the Grand Parade in Cape Town. Jan van Riebeeck, p. 81, note 1.

3. See minutes of this meeting, C. 1: Res., Council of Policy, 1651—1663, pp. 7—11. C.A. See also placcaat issued after this meeting, containing instructions regarding the building of the fort, the treatment of Hottentots and the conduct of soldiers. See the *Kaapse Plakkaatboek*, published under supervision of the Archives Commission, I (1652—1707), pp. 1—4. This was the first placcaat issued by the Council of Policy at the Cape.

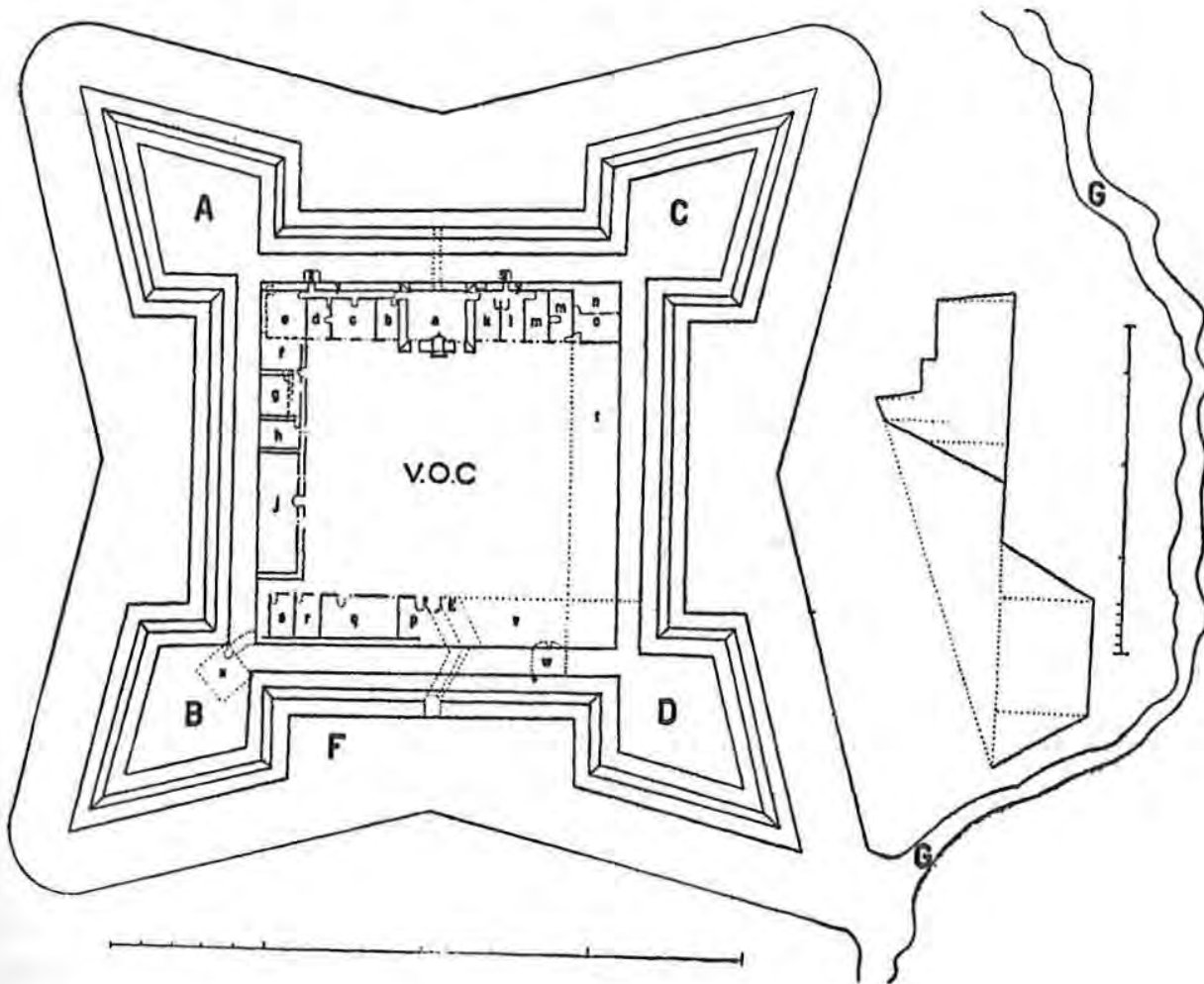
4. 1 Rod = 12 feet. Here the Journal had 24 rods, but the 4 was changed—somewhat indistinctly—to a 1. A letter dated 18 April 1652 of Van Riebeeck and his Council to the Directors clearly shows that the Journal should read 21 rods. See C. 493: Letters Despatched, 1652—1661, p. 3. C.A.



# THE FORT OF GOOD HOPE IN 1653,

WITH SECTION OF MOAT AND RAMPART.

Chart 814, State Archives, The Hague (Key translated and symbols transcribed).



## KEY:

V.O.C. THE USUAL SIGN OF THE COMPANY:  
VEREENIGHDE OOST-INDISCHE COMPAGNIE  
(UNITED EAST INDIA COMPANY).

A, B, C AND D ARE THE BASTIONS DROMMEDARIS,  
WALVIS, OLIPHANT AND REIJGER RESPECTIVELY.

E ASCENT TO THE RAMPART.

F MOAT.

G FRESH RIVER.

a BRICK HOUSE, FLAT ON TOP, WITH A HALL  
AND A CELLAR UNDERNEATH.

b COMMANDER'S OFFICE.

c COMMANDER'S BEDROOM.

d COMMANDER'S NURSERY.

e COUNCIL CHAMBER AND DINING-ROOM,  
WHERE THE RICE IS STORED FOR THE TIME  
BEING.

f VACANT SPACE.

g KITCHEN.

h PANTRY.

j MAGAZINE AND STORE.

k ASSISTANT'S OFFICE.

l ASSISTANT'S BEDROOM.

m SICK-COMFORTER'S HOUSE.  
(a—m not yet completed).

n COMMON KITCHEN.

o VACANT SPACE.

p MAIN WATCH.

q GUARDROOM.

r SURGEON'S ROOM.

s GARDENER'S ROOM.

t PROJECTED STORE.

v PROJECTED SAILORS' QUARTERS.

w THE PRESENT POWDER MAGAZINE—LATER TO  
BE CONVERTED INTO A PRISON.

x PROJECT FOR A STRONG AND PERMANENT  
POWDER MAGAZINE.

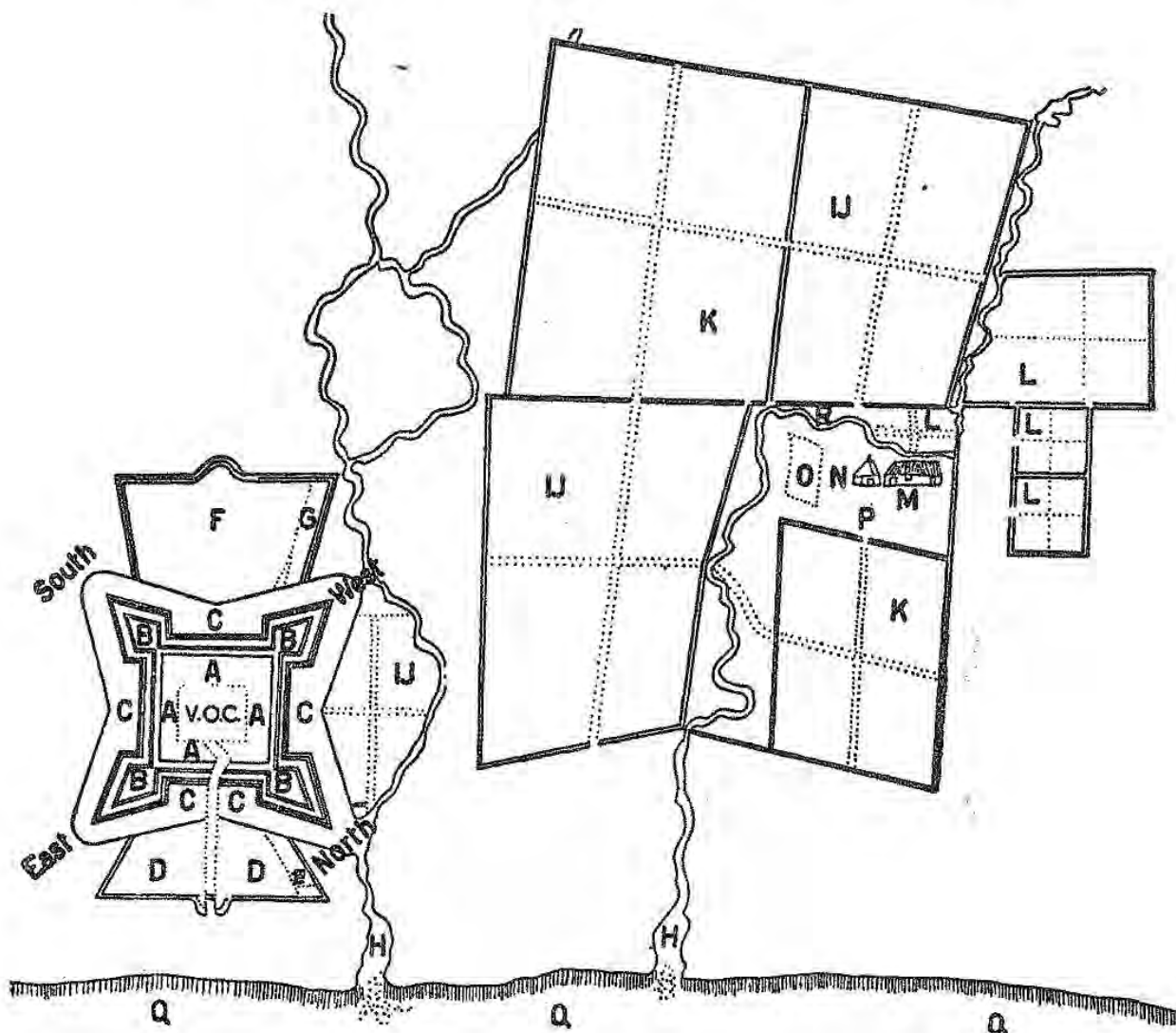
y PASSAGE BETWEEN THE HOUSE AND THE  
RAMPART.

z TWO PRIVIES UNDER THE RAMPART.



# FORT AND GARDENS.

Chart 48, Cape Archives (Key translated and symbols transcribed).



## KEY :

V.O.C. INNER SQUARE OF THE FORT OF GOOD HOPE.  
 A DWELLINGS WITHIN THE FORT.  
 B FOUR BASTIONS OF THE FORT.  
 C MOAT.  
 D HORNWORK IN FRONT OF THE FORT.  
 E SMITHY.  
 F KRAAL—ALSO IN THE SHAPE OF A HORNWORK —FOR PROTECTING THE CATTLE AT NIGHT.  
 G STABLES.  
 H FRESH-WATER RIVERS.

IJ COMPANY'S GARDENS, CULTIVATED AND BEARING FRUIT.  
 K COMPANY'S GARDENS, PROJECTED BUT UNCULTIVATED.  
 L SMALL PRIVATE GARDENS.  
 M GARDENER'S HOUSE.  
 N HEN-HOUSE.  
 O PROJECTED POND FOR DUCKS AND GEESE.  
 P FARM-YARD.  
 Q BEACH.  
 R PIT FOR MANURE.



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	rods	feet	inches
from each other . . . . .	21	—	—
the inner polygons at . . . . .	13	7	3
the length of the inside and outside polygon lines at . . . . .	3	6	2
the gorge . . . . .	2	3	8
the main lines (through angles of bastions) . . . . .	5	—	9
the flank . . . . .	2	—	3
the second flank . . . . .	1	8	6
the face . . . . .	6	1	—
half the diameter . . . . .	9	7	—
the curtain . . . . .	9	1	7
<hr/>			
the angles of the polygons . . . . .	90 degrees		
the angles of the bastions . . . . .	60 deg.		
the tenaille . . . . .	15 deg.		
the angled flank . . . . .	150 deg.		
the angle forming the flank . . . . .	40 deg.		

Measurements of the profile of the rampart

	rods	feet	inches
the base of the rampart . . . . .	2	8	—
the outside slope . . . . .	—	4	—
the inside . . . . .	—	8	—
the height of the rampart . . . . .	—	8	—
its width at the top . . . . .	1	8	—
the base of the parapet on the rampart . . . . .	—	10	—
its outer and inner slopes together . . . . .	—	4	—
its outside height . . . . .	—	4	—
the inside height . . . . .	—	6	—
its width at the top . . . . .	—	6	—

and the rampart everywhere will then be  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide.

We shall be able to make the calculations and also sketches<sup>1</sup> more accurately and thoroughly later on when it nears completion; this is our project for the time, but one which might yet be altered or improved.

To-day the men of the *Drommedaris* and the *Reijger* were busy all the time unloading material, etc. and Senior Merchant Riebeeck in marking out the berm, etc.

10th Fine, warm weather. Early in the morning Riebeeck went ashore, where the men have been put to work with shovels, spades, picks, mattocks and wheelbarrows. The ground was found to be so loose that firm walls could hardly be made

1. See plan of fort, Charts 47 and 48, C.A. These are reproductions of charts in the State Archives, The Hague. Also Godée Molsbergen, Jan van Riebeeck, p. 90.



with it. Although much underwood is worked into the soil, we fear that it will be washed away by heavy rain unless we find ground suitable for sods which could be stacked on the outside; for this we shall search one of these days when the more necessary work is under way. Had enough to do to-day marking out part of the moat, which at one point joins the river; we thus hope to lead the water right round. We are also putting the men to work properly, as there are very few among them who understand the job.

About noon a small band of 9 or 10 savages from Saldania arrived, against whom the Strandlopers<sup>1</sup>, who sit outside our tents with their wives and children every day, arranged themselves in battle order and advanced towards them with assegais, bows and arrows with such courage and fury that we had sufficient to do to check them, they having rushed their wives off to the mountains. The skipper Jan Janssen Hooghsaet, with our corporal and some armed soldiers, were sent between them, and when they were about half a pederero<sup>2</sup> shot away, with the natives drawn close together in battle formation, the skipper succeeded in arranging a truce between them, so that for the rest of the day they remained at peace with one another in the vicinity of our tents. Those from Saldania, by means of signs and the use of broken English, as well as some Dutch words evidently learnt—and remembered—from the shipwrecked crew of the *Haerlem*, gave us to understand that for copper and tobacco they would bring cattle and sheep within a few days. By good and liberal treatment we urged them to do so.

Skipper Davit Coninck together with 2 assistants and 2 soldiers with fowling-pieces and muskets, having gone on a fishing excursion to the Salt River, encountered the 9 Saldania savages who adopted such an amicable and pleasant attitude that it was almost a wonder: they took the skipper round the neck as if with great joy—as soon as it had been explained to them that he was the captain of one of the ships—and made signs that if we had copper and tobacco they would bring us enough cattle. They were very fine and nimble men of particularly good stature, clad in passably prepared oxhides, which they carried smartly over the arm with an air and gait as dashing as any dandy's in the Fatherland, carrying his cloak over his shoulder or arm. They went with their private parts exposed, however, having only a small skin over them.

The said skipper Coninck returned with 4 bags of beautiful mustard leaves and sorrel and also a catch of about 750 lovely steenbras, including 4 other delicate fish more tasty than any fish in the Fatherland could be. One was similar to a haddock and quite as good and tasty.

11th In the morning heavy storm winds from the S.E. prevented us from going

1. See again footnotes 1 and 2 on p. 25.

2. Small field-piece, also used in ships. The Journal has *goteling*.



ashore. The laden boat of the *Reijger* left the ship, but had to lie at anchor midway towards the shore until the evening when, in spite of the wind having become stronger, the anchor was lifted and the risk taken of rowing back to the ship, where, fortunately, Almighty God allowed them to arrive before dark. The wind continued blowing strongly all night, and also on the

12<sup>th</sup> but without the squalls of yesterday, some of which were as fierce as hurricanes. Despite the fact that it was blowing quite a stiff breeze, we ventured in the Name of the Lord to go ashore with the sloop and 6 gallant oarsmen, because in our absence, as far as we could make out with the telescope, nobody remained at work, although 3 second mates remained on land every day to watch over the men, with instructions to keep them at work all the time during our absence.

Having sailed from the ship in the sloop with the purpose aforesaid, we landed opposite the Lion Mountain after negotiating the rocks with great peril and trouble. There we found washed ashore four beams thrown overboard yesterday in an emergency from a boat of the *Reijger*. We had them brought to the tents immediately by 8 men. Made all the men work on the windward side so as to prevent the dust being blown into their faces by the strong wind. Owing to the continuing stormy weather, we had to stay ashore for the night as no craft could sail to or from the land.

13<sup>th</sup> Slightly better weather. The ships still busy unloading material and cannon, and on land work was continued on the fortification which, owing to the looseness of the soil, will have to be made firm with sods for the rainy season. For this purpose enough suitable land has been discovered, but because of the severe dryness it is still too hard to cut them.

To-day bartered 3 small plates of copper and 3 pieces of  $\frac{1}{2}$  fathom copper wire for a cow and a young calf<sup>1</sup>, of which each ship received its proper share.

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> In the morning fine, lovely weather. Had the fresh meat served to the men with vegetables for refreshment. After Sunday service we went with all the boats to the Salt River to fish, and with 3 sweeps of the net we caught between 900 and 1,000 fine steenbras and some other fish as well as harders<sup>2</sup>; the steenbras were on an average at least  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet long.

15<sup>th</sup> Went ashore before dawn in order to press on with the work, but very little progress could be made owing to the small number of labourers, of whom several are still ill.

In the evening shortly after sunset the ship *Salmander* arrived here safely at anchor, praise God, with the Hon. Dirck Snoeck and skipper Jan IJsbrantssen. They had

1. A week after their arrival Van Riebeeck and his men therefore obtained by barter the first two beasts, a cow and a young calf.

2. Mullet or Cape herring.



sailed from Batavia on 25 January last, having left the Straits of Sunda<sup>1</sup> on 13 February together with the ships *Orangie*, *Coninck Davit*, *Lastdrager* and *Breda*, of which the Hon. Dirck Ogel is the vice-commander. We learn from the reports of said Snoeck that by order of the Lords Directors sundry Indian seeds and plants, and some horses for the Cape, were sent from Batavia by the Governor-General and Councillors of India with the first ships. We did not find them, however, so we are still deprived of them.

16<sup>th</sup> Summoned our Council to meet in the morning<sup>2</sup>, when it was decided to request the Hon. Snoeck and his skipper Jan Ijsbrantssen to join us in order that they might be informed of the rumours regarding Prince Rupert and the orders given by our Lords Directors in this connection, including the prohibition of war against any European nation except Portugal. This request was carried out and the Hon. Snoeck came on board alone; to him we communicated everything in the service of the Hon. Company in order that he and those with him could act accordingly to the advantage of the Company.

The work was continued to-day, but owing to the small number of men little progress was made.

17<sup>th</sup> Misty weather in the morning with a breeze from the W.N.W., the same as yesterday; fine, suitable weather. Continued with work on land and unloading of the ships, which took in ballast at the same time.

18<sup>th</sup> Our skipper went out fishing with the skipper of the *Salmander*. We took over from this ship three persons who had stowed away, namely

Fredrick Verburgh, assistant <sup>3</sup>	} youths
Jan Willemsen Bobbel of Delft	
Cornelis Cornelissen of Rotterdam	

whom we will put to work here for the time being.

Have written under this date per the *Salmander* to our Lords Directors informing

1. The Straits of Sunda, which separate the two large islands Sumatra and Java from each other, was the natural passage for the sailing-ships on their way from the West to the rich Spice Islands in the East. The Dutch built Batavia, their head-quarters in the East Indies, close to the Straits of Sunda, as a result of which they could practically control the strategically-placed Straits. Cf. e.g. Roscher and Jannasch, *Kolonien, Kolonialpolitik und Auswanderung*, p. 11; and De Lannoy and Van der Linden, *Histoire de l'Expansion Coloniale des Peuples Européens (Néerlande et Danemark)*, pp. 67—73.

2. Of the transactions of this meeting no record is to be found in the minutes of the Council of Policy in the Cape Archives. Cf. C. 1: Res., C. of P., 1651—1663.

3. Frederick Verburgh, mentioned here as stowaway in the *Salamander*, became secretary of the Council of Policy early in 1653 and a little later rose to the position of second-in-command at the Cape. He died towards the end of 1655 after a disastrous voyage to Madagascar. Cf. p. 36, note 1; Journal, 31 March 1657; and Godée Molsbergen, Jan van Riebeeck, pp. 135—136.



them of our arrival here and the progress of our work, as can be seen from the copy in our letter-book<sup>1</sup>.

19<sup>th</sup> Having, with our Council<sup>2</sup>, sealed the letters and attached papers, we entrusted them to the officers of the ship *Salmander* with the request that they be delivered to the Hon. Directors of the Chamber of Amsterdam.

The wind was westerly all day but in the evening it veered to S.E., so that the one anchor of the *Salmander* was heaved up and the next day, the

20<sup>th</sup> with a soft breeze from the S.E., at daybreak she set sail and was out of sight the same evening. May Almighty God grant her good fortune and a safe voyage. Amen. We continued with the work on land, unloading of material, etc. from the ships.

In the evening a westerly land wind. Have provisionally placed in position 5 cannon on the ramparts; outside the 2 seaward points, at each corner 2 to flank the approach along the beach and also over land, and one<sup>3</sup> right in the middle across the curtain flanking the Table Mountain, as Senior Merchant Riebeeck intends shortly to move ashore into a make-shift wooden shed made from rough boards put up against slanting rafters.

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Wind N.W., with a fair breeze and fine, sunny weather. To-day fired the guns with powder only and then loaded them with shot, placing some pipes in front of them after the manner of a gabion. Also proceeded a good way up the kloof of the Table Mountain<sup>4</sup>, about 2 miles, where we found everywhere the finest flat clay ground and other beautiful, broad, fertile soil—as fine as one could find anywhere in the world. With the small number of men we have, however, not one hundredth part of it could be ploughed or cultivated. It would therefore be suitable if some industrious Chinese<sup>5</sup> were to come here for that purpose with all kinds of seeds and plants, for much better fruits could be expected here than could

1. Cf. C. 493: Lett. Desp., 1652—1661, pp. 2—5. C.A. This letter contains a detailed report in connection with these matters, especially regarding the progress of the work on the fort.

2. Cf. C. 1: Res., C. of P., 1651—1663, p. 10. C.A. For a list of these documents see C. 493: Lett. Desp., 1652—1661, p. 5. C.A. From this it appears that a copy of the Journal up to and including 18 April was sent to Holland.

3. "one" left out in the Journal.

4. The kloof between Table Mountain and Lion's Head. Cf. Chart 36, C.A.; and Godée Molsbergen, Jan van Riebeeck, p. 151.

5. It is not strange that the possibility of having Chinese gardeners was considered, for during the days of the Company in the East Indies—especially in Batavia and its vicinity—the Chinese were efficient, industrious gardeners. See e.g. Raffles, *History of Java*, I, pp. 74—75; and Colenbrander, *Koloniale Geschiedenis*, II, pp. 254—255. In Van Riebeeck's letter of 15 May 1652 to the Government of India mention is also made of the desirability of having Chinese gardeners, and the Commander in that letter asked for *een hondert laboreuse Chinesen off andere grage vrije huijsgesinnen*. C. 493: Lett. Desp., 1652—1661, p. 15. C.A. In Van Riebeeck's time, however, Chinese labourers were not brought to the Cape.



ever be hoped for at Ilha Formosa<sup>1</sup>, as the soil here is much richer and there are several marshy places.

Towards evening drizzly, rainy weather with westerly winds, at times somewhat squally.

22<sup>nd</sup> Wind S.S.E. and fine weather until about noon when it began to blow fairly strongly. To-day 3 more cannon were brought ashore from the *Drommedaris* and placed on the ramparts in the evening.

23<sup>rd</sup> Wind as before with fine weather enabling us to bring ashore a good many things.

#### AT CABO DE BOA ESPERANCE

24<sup>th</sup> Westerly wind with reasonable weather. We went ashore with all our baggage and family to stay there in a make-shift wooden hut—rather roughly constructed for the time being—in order that the work may proceed more satisfactorily.

Last night the men on shore caught a large hippopotamus, the weight of 2 ordinary fat oxen, having a most horrible, monstrous head and several sharp protruding teeth, the longest of which was  $\frac{5}{8}$  ell long, with a short neck and short legs, the feet shaped almost like rhinoceros feet but cleft into four parts. It was most violent and fierce and they had their hands full to subdue it in spite of its having been hit behind the ears by a few bullets which penetrated the head, its skin being a good inch thick and so hard that at some places no musket-ball could penetrate it. It had therefore to be shot through the head from the front, when the milk ran from the udder. The men ate the flesh as it tasted good.

25<sup>th</sup> Skipper Hooghsaet came ashore as usual early in the morning to urge on his men. Drizzly weather and the wind W.N.W.

26<sup>th</sup> Fine, sunny weather with S.E. wind. Gave instructions that the 2 points, on which the men are working, be not raised higher than 4 feet for the time being, and that then a breastwork 6 feet wide be provisionally constructed on top of that in order that guns may speedily be brought on to the ramparts. Also gave instructions to encircle and close in the little fort with a breastwork of the same height and width right round, and thereafter from time to time to complete the work further as circumstances require. In the meantime the fort to be enclosed to some extent in case of attack. The skipper Jan Janssen Hooghsaet, coming ashore early every

1. The reference to Formosa should cause no surprise. Before his arrival at the Cape, Van Riebeeck worked at various places in the East, amongst others in Japan and China, and he also became acquainted with conditions on Formosa. Cf. Godée Molsbergen, Jan van Riebeeck, pp. 20—44. Janssen and Proot mention Formosa in their *Remonstrantie*. C. 409: Lett. Rec., 1649—1660, pp. 12—13. C.A. On Formosa and the Dutch activities there, see e.g. Valentyn, *Beschrijving van Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, IV, 2nd part, pp. 33—93.



morning, greatly assists by urging on his men. The carpenters are steadily working on the woodwork for the dwelling-houses, storehouses, etc.

27<sup>th</sup> Weather and wind same as yesterday. Gave the men a free evening<sup>1</sup>, that they may to-day bring the 2 points to the required height of 4 feet; but not more than the one point was finished, as the earth at the other point was too mighty hard and stony. It will probably be finished on Monday next, when a start could be made with the breastwork on top of it.

In the afternoon went along the downs behind the rump of the Lion Mountain, where we found between the mountain and the downs the most beautiful land for sowing and for grazing cattle that one could desire, several miles long and about one mile wide. Crossing the Lion Mountain on the seaward side of the head, found the slopes on the other side dry and stony. Down into the Table Valley once again, found the finest clay soil in the world, watered by several rivulets during the rainy season. These are now quite dry, and the earth—because of the dry season—is rather hard, but judging from the deep tracks made by the cattle, it should be soft enough in the wet season and suitable for cultivation; if only there were enough men for the purpose, for which we require some married Chinese and other free *Mardijckers*<sup>2</sup> or even also *Hollanders*<sup>3</sup>, who could be allowed on certain conditions to occupy some plots of land.

To-day also saw several whales in the bay, but because we are still exposed and have our hands full with the fortification, etc., we cannot begin to catch them. Moreover, we have as yet not more than 2 Biscayan sloops at our disposal, which are not adequate for catching whales. Would therefore like to be provided with a few more from Batavia made of light teak planks, as it would take too long to order them from the Fatherland.

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Fine, warm, sunny weather and slight S.E. breeze. On the completion of the Sunday service held by the sick-comforter<sup>4</sup>, we went with the skippers Jan Hooghsaet and Turver, together with a number of armed soldiers, some distance over the ridge towards the south side of the Table Mountain. We found from our little fort to the Salt River and also on the slopes of the mountain the most beautiful, wide and level ground consisting of exceedingly fine garden soil and clay lands.

1. The Journal has *heijligh Avont*. According to Holtrop's *Woordenboek* it is "the evening, when one's work is done", but originally *heilig avond* was the evening which began a holy day. It is therefore interesting to see in the Journal that the next day was a Sunday.

2. *Mardijckers* are described by Colenbrander as liberated slaves—who had come from outside the Archipelago—and their descendants. *Koloniale Geschiedenis*, II, p. 223. See also *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, II, p. 675.

3. Here we find, three weeks after Van Riebeeck's arrival, mention made for the first time of the possibility of having Dutch free burghers as agriculturists at the Cape.

4. Willem Barentssen Wijlant, first sick-comforter at the Cape. In default of a minister the sick-comforter offered up prayers and read a sermon on Sundays. See Journal, 6 January 1653; and Godée Molsbergen, Jan van Riebeeck, pp. 94—95.



Likewise further south behind the said mountain<sup>1</sup> so much flat country, stretching right across from the one mountain to the other and from the shore of Table Bay to the seashore below the small Table<sup>2</sup> lying behind the large Table Mountain, that it would take a whole day to cover it by foot. According to our estimate it is a good 10 miles wide, traversed by the loveliest fresh rivers one could desire; even if there were thousands of Chinese or other tillers they could not take up or cultivate a tenth part of this land. It is moreover so fertile and rich that neither Formosa<sup>3</sup> which I have seen, nor New Netherland<sup>4</sup> which I have heard of, can be compared with it.

29<sup>th</sup> Fine, clear weather as yesterday and westerly wind. This morning on the southern point marked out a provisional breastwork 6 feet wide; also started constructing another breastwork of the same width to take the place of the curtain which has not been commenced, in order, as aforesaid, to close ourselves in thereby, so as to be somewhat protected against attack for the time being. The northern point has to-day not yet reached the 4 feet mark owing to the hardness of the earth excavated from the ditch.

Meanwhile the work of excavating the cellar of the dwelling-house and store is proceeding steadily, while the required woodwork has been made ready by the carpenters with the utmost industry. Likewise the gardener, sent with us from the Fatherland, is busy on a few plots of ground, sowing some seeds by way of experiment; but little can as yet be achieved in this respect as the men are too much needed for the work on the fortification. We are not overmuch concerned about that, however, in view of the winter and the dry season, but as soon as we have enclosed ourselves with a provisional breastwork and the wet season comes, we will tackle that work with greater energy. Not one thousandth part of the suitable earth and valleys, however, could be ploughed or sown by the few men we have, and a large number of Chinese or other industrious people or families would be required here and could in due course produce enough food.

In the evening the sky became quite overcast but no rain fell. We did not notice

1. Behind or south of Table Mountain, i.e. where the southern suburbs of Cape Town, such as Rondebosch, Newlands, Claremont, Wynberg, Plumstead and Diep River lie to-day—thus in the vicinity of the place where, five years after this visit of Sunday, 28 April 1652, the first free burghers were to settle.

2. That is, from Table Bay to False Bay. Although it is difficult to say with certainty which mountain was referred to as "the small Table", there would appear to be little doubt that it is the mountain at Muizenberg—the most southerly continuation of the Steenberg. It is smaller than Table Mountain and, seen from the Cape, the summit appears comparatively even and flat.

3. See again p. 34, note 1.

4. New Netherland, on the Hudson River. After it had been taken over by the English, it was re-named New York. This old Dutch colony, originally colonised to some extent by the Dutch West India Company, soon became known for the fertility of its soil. Cf. Colenbrander, *Koloniale Geschiedenis*, II, pp. 12—17; and Keller, *Colonization*, pp. 409—415.



## APRIL 1652

any of the natives from the land of Saldania or elsewhere, other than 4 or 5 Strandlopers now and then who bring nothing else with them but lean bodies and hungry bellies. We fill these with groats and bread and sometimes a draught of wine. We shall consequently need more rice, also arrack, to present to them now and then and to others who may come from inland so as to make them better disposed towards us.

*Ultimo* Fine weather with N.W. wind and at times overcast. With skipper Hooghsaet, in the excavated cellar, we laid the first stone of the supports upon which the pillars of the storehouse and dwelling will be placed. The workmen are meanwhile beginning to construct the curtain from the northern point which to-day has also been thrown up to a height of 4 feet.

### Next Edition...

May 1652

#### Highlights to look forward to:

- Seeds sown
- Discovery of forest behind Table Mountain
- Civet-cats
- Arrival of ships
- Broad Council summoned
- Lord's supper celebrated
- Naming of the bastions
- Visit to wreck of the *Haerlem*
- Discovery of salt pans
- Sickness among the men

### Final Words...

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Edited and with an introduction and footnotes by H.B. Thom (Professor of History University of Stellenbosch)

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