

Introduction to the Resolutions of the Council of Policy of Cape of Good Hope

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INTRODUCTION

Read here about

- the [Resolutions of the Council of Policy](#),
- the context in which they were taken ([History of the Cape of Good Hope](#)),
- and how best to [consult](#) them.

On the TANAP website a [map](#) of Isaac Tirion dated 1730 shows the names of places and indigenous peoples of South Africa at that time.

The Resolutions

Situated at the southern point of Africa, the Cape of Good Hope was strategically very well placed along the trade route between the Netherlands and Asia for the supply of fresh water and food to ships.

In order to secure this advantage to itself the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) established a settlement in 1652 and built a fort. The initially small settlement experienced a gradual growth in both its population and the land it occupied until, when the VOC rule came to an end in 1795, it had become a large colony.

The **Council of Policy** was the highest authority of the VOC at the Cape of Good Hope. The Council discussed all problems that arose and took decisions on governing the settlement. The minutes, which include reports and decisions taken, are called the **Resolutions of the Council of Policy**.

For nearly one and a half centuries the Council of Policy wrote millions of word on thousands of folio pages about matters concerning everyday life at the Cape. The Resolutions cover nearly every subject, for example administration, justice, law and order, education, religion, inhabitants, slaves, visitors, ships and their cargo, the military, health services, food, labour, trade (imports, exports and trading with the indigenous peoples), diplomatic relations, expeditions, weather conditions on and off shore, agricultural activities, livestock, nature conservation, land issues, loan-farms and fiscal and financial matters. The Resolutions are the main source of written accounts of pre-modern South Africa.

Before you start browsing for information that could interest you as an historian, geneticist, genealogist, linguist, naval expert, shipbuilder, natural scientist, meteorologist, medical doctor or other specialist, you may like to look at an [example of a Council meeting](#) and an explanation of the [structure of Council meeting minutes](#). The [origin of the text](#) and the [language of the Resolutions](#) are also discussed. Should you come across unfamiliar words in the 17th and 18th century Dutch texts you can consult the [glossary](#).

Because of the exceptional information content of the Resolutions, part of the series (1651-1743) was [published](#) at an earlier stage. Now the support of the [TANAP programme](#) has made it possible to transcribe the remaining volumes of the Resolutions (1744-1795) and to digitise them along with the already printed Resolutions in order to make them available on the Internet. The [transcription and editing rules](#) that were followed during the second transcription phase (1744-1795) differ largely from that of the already printed editions of the Resolutions (1651-1743).

The printed Resolutions are provided with [footnotes](#), which are also included in the digital presentation. However, due to a lack of financial means, it was not possible to annotate the remaining text (1744-1795). Note that the document inventory numbers referred to in these footnotes are no longer those used in the Cape Town Archives Repository. Please consult the archival inventory of the Council of Policy for a complete [table of comparison for the past and present serial numbers](#).

If you wish to do further research on the history of the VOC at the Cape of Good Hope, the Resolutions or other archival sources, you may also consult the [list of references](#).

Context: History of the Cape of Good Hope

The Resolutions can best be understood in the [context of the history of South Africa](#). The [establishment of the Cape of Good Hope](#) is, therefore, described first in the Introduction. Its history actually began in 1486 with the [Portuguese explorers](#). In their footsteps followed [Dutch merchants](#) who went to Asia to make their fortune. An attempt by [English merchants](#) to settle at the Cabo de Boa Esperance failed. After a Dutch ship had run ashore in Table Bay in [1647](#) the idea of establishing a permanent refreshment station at the Cape was broached. Four years later three Dutch ships reached the southern point of Africa with this objective and the settlers built the [Fort de Goede Hoop](#) [Fort of Good Hope].

Then follows the nature of the local [management structure](#) of the VOC. The [Council of Policy](#) held the highest authority. The tasks were distributed among various [functionaries](#). In order to aid researchers, the Introduction also contains a list of all the [VOC commanding officers](#) at the Cape. The representatives of the VOC had [judicial authority](#). Because the Colony developed so rapidly the town of Cabo experienced the need for a [local government](#) following the Dutch example.

In the Introduction much attention is given to the various [population](#) groups of the Cape of Good Hope under the following headings: [indigenous peoples](#), [VOC officials](#), [freemen](#), [slaves](#), [bandits](#) and [exiles](#).

Then follows a discussion of a number of [place names](#) appearing in the Resolutions, namely the variety of names for the [Cape](#) itself, place names of [Khoi origin](#), places [named after members of the Council of Policy](#), and a few [Oriental place names](#).

Towards the end of the Introduction [shipping round the Cape](#), [expeditions](#) to other countries and islands, and the VOC settlement in [Mozambique](#) (Rio de la Goa) are discussed. In 1795 the [British seized power](#) from the VOC and became the new rulers of the Cape of Good Hope Colony.

Searches in the Resolutions

The [search function](#) is one of the main advantages of a digital publication. The Resolutions contain approximately six and a half million words! By means of **Free search** the researcher can look for all the terms and names he or she needs. It should be kept in mind that there were no regular spelling conventions to adhere to during the VOC period. Therefore letters such as C and K, F and V, S and Z, T and D, I and J, and EI, Y and IJ were used interchangeably, and it happened frequently that in one sentence the same word was spelt with a *uij* or *ui*, *ej* or *ij* etc. In order to trace all the spelling variations of a particular word the researcher must identify its most essential element or ‘stem’ and then conduct a search. For example, in a search for *slavernij* one has to look for *slaaf*, *slaav*, *slaef*, *slaev*, *slav* and *slaf*, with *sla-* being the ‘stem’ of all the variants. Another possibility to cover an even broader field is to look for a synonym that was used during the VOC period, for instance *lijfeigene* for slave. Even after a search for a number of letter combinations, such as *lijfei*, *lijvei*, *lijfey*, *leifei*, *leijfei*, *leijfey*, *leyfey*, *leyfei*, *leyfeij* and *lyfeij* all the possibilities have not yet been covered. One really has to think creatively if one wants to list all the related forms.

In order to simplify the search, the **names of ships** and **geographical references** were coded as two separate groups. Since the spelling of the names was not normalised, similar inconsistencies apply in these categories. For example, the name of a particular ship was spelt in different ways: *Boekenrode*, *Boekenroode*, *Boekkenrode*, *Bouckenroode*, *Boukenrode*, *Boukenroode* and *Boukenrooden*. The same occurred to a place name, for example *Graaf Rynet*, *Graaf Rynet*, *Graaff Reijnet*, *Graaff Rijnet*, *Graaffe Reinet*, *Graaffe Rijnet*, *Graaffe-Reijnet*, *Graaffe-Reinet*, *Graaff-Rijnet* and *Graaf-Reijnet*.

As far as **geographical references** are concerned, the researcher has to bear in mind that the most frequently used place names (with all their spelling variations), such as Cabo de Goede Hoop, Batavia, Asia, India, Africa, Java, Holland, Zeeland and Nederland, as well as *Caabsche*, *Oostindische* etc. were not coded, since coding these geographical references would only have resulted in numerous unnecessary and unwanted repetitions. When referring to the VOC Chambers the place names Amsterdam, Middelburg, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Delft and Rotterdam were not coded. Terms or words with an apparent geographical reference were not coded, for example Mardyker (free Christian) and Moor (mostly used for a Muslim). Language names, i.e. *Fransch* were also not coded; the same applies to adjectives, for example *fransche* in *fransche brief* [a letter written in French], as this could barely be regarded as having any geographical reference. A letter written in French need not necessarily have originated in France, but might, for example, have been written by a French-speaking Englishman who lived at the Cape of Good Hope.

Derivations and adjectives of geographical names and references, however, such as *brittanische* in *brittanische Majesteit* [British Majesty] and *Namaquase* in *Namaquase natie* [Namaqua nation, Namaqua being the name of an indigenous people] were coded as were the names of fortifications, preceded by the particular type, for example *Fort St. George*.

The **names of persons** were not coded, because of the very large quantity, diversity of references and spelling variations. Normalisation would have been too time-consuming and costly, but with the aid of the **Free search** option it is possible to conduct a successful search for personal names.

One may also search for the **year** (1651-1795) and **inventory number** (C. 1 to C. 231). In this way all the Resolutions from one particular year or all the Resolutions collected in one archival volume may be found.

In the Introduction continual reference is made to the archival volumes from C. 1 to C. 231. These references can be traced in the [search module](#) under the search option **reference number**. The letter C. refers to [Council of Policy](#), the archives of the Council of Policy with the Resolutions being part thereof. Reference is also made to the **Haagse Kopie** (H.K.) [The Hague Copy] and **Koloniaal Archief** (abbr. Kol. Arch.) [Colonial Archives]. The Haagse Kopieë [The Hague Copies] in the Cape Town Archives

Repository originated from the National Archives of the Netherlands to supplement the Resolutions that are lacking in the Cape series. *Koloniaal Archief* is the outdated reference to an archival section of the National Archives of the Netherlands from which the VOC archives have been separated, and is included in the [archival inventory 1.04.02](#).

All the archival records of the VOC are described in inventories. The VOC inventories from South Africa as well as those from the Netherlands, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and the United Kingdom [can be consulted on the Internet](#). On the Internet there are even [more detailed descriptions](#) available of many volumes containing VOC archival records, where a large amount of information regarding the Cape of Good Hope can also be found.

It is only human to err. It may thus be expected that during this challenging process of digitising the Resolutions errors were made. The digital documents are, therefore, corrected when and if necessary. Your recommendations and suggestions in this regard will be highly appreciated.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF POLICY

Example of a Council meeting

The short minutes below contain numbers in brackets, which are explained in the following discussion:

Reference code: C. 125, pp. 80-83. (1)

Thursday the 16: March 1747. (2)

This morning all were present. (3)

(4a) A certain statement by the constable of this Castle was read. It had to do with an amount of eight thousand pounds of gunpowder that was kept in the Company's cellars, but due to the long time it was stored the sulphur and saltpetre gradually poured out but would still be suitable to be re-used and again be ground. **(4a) (4b)** From the proposal by the honourable Governor it was understood that the said gunpowder as had been mentioned by parties, would be sent to Batavia. **(4b) (4a)** The above-mentioned statement reads as follows:

I, the undersigned Willem Willemsz: constable of this Castle, declare that in the Company's gunpowder cellars eight thousand pounds of gunpowder were found, but due to the long time it [the gunpowder] was stored the sulphur and saltpetre gradually poured out but are still suitable to be re-used and again be ground. (:below:) In the Castle of Good Hope the 16 March 1747. (:was signed:) Willem Willemsz. **(4a)**

(5) Furthermore, it was thought proper that the sentences of the bandits who were annually sent here from Batavia and Ceylon which had rested with the Secretariat of Policy when they were brought here, would in future rest with the Secretariat of Justice of this Government since this [department] has the best appropriateness to take care of them.

Since the first mate of the present ship The **Hope** died during the journey, the second in charge Jan van den Berg, was appointed in his position; in his [Jan van den Berg's] place the third in charge, Jan Gerrard Meijer, was appointed and in his position as third in charge on the keel was promoted the soldier Johan Leonard Mitski. Although all of them were regarded as being competent, the approbation of authority of the high Indian Government will have to be requested in order to approve the increase in salary of these individuals who had been promoted. **(5)**

(6a) Thus resolved and decided in the Castle of Good Hope, on the aforementioned day and year **(6a)**

(6b)*H:k Swellengrebel*

R Tulbagh

P: Reede van Oudshoorn

I: Meinertzhagen

R S Allemann

N:s Heijning

C Brand

Corn.s Eelders

J:s degrandpreez R:t en Secret:s

J:s Moller (6b)

Structure of Council meeting minutes

The minutes of a Council meeting had a rather set and specific structure. The contents of a meeting consisted of matters that were discussed and resolutions (decisions) taken. In the interest of good administration it was necessary that particular matters should be brought to table during the course of a year.

The archival document reference code of each Resolution is mentioned first, followed by the minutes of the meeting. It is possible to distinguish the following different categories of matters according to the contents of the minuted matters and discussions by the Council:

(1) *Reference code*

(2) *Name of day and date of meeting*

If there were various meetings held per day, sessions in the morning, afternoon and evening were thus distinguished.

(3) *Attendance register*

(4) *Text regarding discussions of particular matters and the decisions or resolutions taken at the meeting.*

(4a) In the preceding minutes the verbatim statement of constable Willem Willemsz. was included. In most of the Council minutes full reports etc. brought before the Council for discussion, approval and/or decision-making were appendices to the minutes. (The appendices are available under inventory numbers C. 1 to C. 2776; or visit http://www.tanap.net/EAD_findingaids/kaapstad/council/index.html for more information.)

Such appendices, i.e. financial statements of congregations, “memories” [lists of goods], reports of assets and liabilities, letters received, also letters in languages other than Dutch and usually accompanied by translations thereof, requests, petitions, supplications, extracts, reports concerning a variety of matters, shipping matters etc. were signed (signature, or cross as mark in the case of an illiterate person) where necessary and accompanied by a date and place of signing.

(4b) Then the decision/resolution of the Council on the particular matter followed directly afterwards. In the above minutes, however, the resolution precedes the statement.

(5) *“General matters”*

In the above minutes these were matters concerning bandits and ships.

(6) *Closing phrases*, consisting of

(6a) a fixed wording where the meeting place (Fort, Fortresse/Casteel, Cabo de Goede Hoop) was mentioned, followed by

(6b) a list of signatures beneath one another of Council members and the Secretary.

When high-ranking guests and VOC officials attended a Council meeting, their signatures followed one another in a hierarchy determined by rank and seniority.

In some of the volumes the so-called “Marginalia” served as a list of contents of the year’s meetings. The list of contents consists of notes made in the margins throughout the volume. These notes give a short view of the most important matters that were discussed during Council meetings as well as the decisions/resolutions taken. The “Marginalia” are not included in the digital presentation of the Resolutions, since they can be consulted more effectively with the [search module](#).

Origin of the text

Together with other treasured documents from the VOC period the Resolutions of the Council of Policy were in the keeping of the Secretary and initially stored in the Fort and later in the Castle. Five years after the British finally took over the Cape the official documents were moved to the Old High Court (housed in the former Slave Lodge).

After the Cape Governor, Sir Henry Barkly had instituted an investigation into the condition of the VOC documents in 1876, they were removed from the office of Judge J.C. Fitzpatrick to a fire-protected room in the office of the Surveyor-General where Dr. J.W.G. van Oordt compiled the first inventory of the collection. After the Rev. H.C.V. Leibbrandt, as Librarian of the Cape Legislative Assembly and Keeper of the Archives, took charge of the documents, a second inventory was compiled and the collection was removed to the so-called Record Rooms of the Parliamentary Library. On 9 April 1883 Leibbrandt compiled his first report from this new site.

After Rev. Leibbrandt's retirement as Keeper of the Archives in 1909, Dr. C. Graham Botha was appointed to take charge of the documents. Due to the centralisation and expansion of the archives service Dr. Botha became Head Archivist in 1919. In 1934 the documents were moved to a safer storage place in the former University Building in Queen Victoria Street. The Resolutions of the Council of Policy were part of these documents. When the Cape Archives moved to the present purpose-designed building complex in Roeland Street in 1989 its name changed to [Cape Town Archives Repository](#).

The Resolutions were written on folio pages of durable 17th and 18th century paper. Because both sides were written on, some of the documents are difficult to read as the brown ink shows through. In the early years the Resolutions were written in Gothic script [chancery hand], which is quite difficult to read. From the beginning of the 18th century onwards the handwriting in the italic style is much more legible and easier to understand.

With the exception of van Riebeeck's handwriting, it is difficult to apportion a particular handwriting in the Resolutions to a particular scribe. When comparing documents and letters in Jan van Riebeeck's handwriting with other documents, it was possible to establish that he wrote the "Gebed" [Prayer] and was also responsible for the Resolutions of the first three meetings on board the *Drommedaris*. Taking these documents as an example it seems as if van Riebeeck was also the writer of the largest part of the Resolutions of 28 March 1657. It often happened that he edited or corrected the work of the scribes in his own handwriting.

The "scribenten" [scribes], also called "borsten van de pen" [young men at the pen], were assistants who were working at the "Sekretarie" [Secretariat] where they wrote down the Resolutions under the supervision of a secretary. In 1657 there were four "borsten van de pen", also called 'penniste' [handlers of a pen]. The period of time the scribes were involved writing the Resolutions, varied from person to person and they were also often transferred or promoted to other functions. It occurred quite often that the secretary changed position after two to three years. In a number of cases competent secretaries were even appointed as members of the Council of Policy. According to the signatures at the bottom of the last page of each Resolution there were nine secretaries up to 9 December 1667. When comparing the various handwritings, it can be estimated that there were at least 25 scribes during this period.

Language of the Resolutions

During the VOC period 17th century Dutch was the language generally spoken at the Cape. This was the older version of modern Dutch of the Netherlands and Flanders, and of Afrikaans spoken mainly in South Africa. For this reason it should not be too difficult for speakers of modern Dutch and Afrikaans to understand the language used in the Resolutions.

As the VOC was a Dutch company it is reasonable to expect that Dutch would have been prescribed as the language of communication on its ships and in its settlements. For the same reason, it was also the language used in the administration and judiciary, schools and churches of their settlements. The non-Dutch speaking VOC personnel, as well as the Company's slaves had to learn Dutch. Examples of their quite acceptable attempts occasionally appear in the Resolutions. It often happened that names, expressions and words of non-Dutch personnel, freemen, slaves and Khoi were translated into Dutch. For example, the German Christian names *Heinrich*, *Peter* and *Wilhelm* were more than often turned into *Hendrik*, *Pieter* and *Willem*, while German surnames such as *Holzhausen* became *Houthuijs* [lit. wooden house] (25 Feb. 1744, C. 122).

Correspondence in languages other than Dutch had to be translated into “Neederduijtsch” or “Hollandse Taal” [Dutch language] before the Council members discussed those particular matters. The following are two of many similar examples: The first mate of the Danish ship, *Koning van Deenemarken* [King of Denmark] presented a “schriftuur” [written document] of which the translation from Danish into Dutch was read to the Council (4.6.1744, C. 122); on 6 October 1759 a Portuguese letter translated into Dutch by J.J. Warneck who was a VOC official, was presented to the Councillors (30.10.1759, C. 137).

Over the years Afrikaans developed from Cape Dutch. At present the two languages Afrikaans and Dutch still share 85% of their vocabulary. The remaining 15% of their vocabularies consists of the same words with different meanings in the two languages, self-created words and loan words that are not shared. In Afrikaans words were borrowed from indigenous languages (Khoi, e.g. *karos*, *abba* and *gogga*, and other African languages, e.g. *mamba*, *lapa* and *makietie*), as well as a number of words from the East (e.g. *atjar*, *piekel*, *baklei*, *piesang*, *blatjang*, *kiaat* and *piering*). Words from 17th century seamen's jargon also found their way into Afrikaans, for example *kombuis* [kitchen] (1656, C. 1), *kooi* [bed] (1657, C. 1) en *komers* [blanket] (1687, C. 19). From an historical perspective the Resolutions offer some very remarkable language material.

Glossary

In some cases it is quite difficult if not impossible to trace unfamiliar words and their meaning in present-day Dutch sources. In order to limit the problem for each of the ten published volumes a glossary was compiled and inserted at the back of each volume. Although the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* [Dictionary of the Dutch Language] served as the main source of reference, the word meanings and explanations are provided in Afrikaans. For the digital presentation the contents of the ten individual glossaries [[woordelyste/glossariums](#)] were merged, repetitions deleted, key words distinguished and where necessary the meaning was extended.

Making the Resolutions available in printed format

The first edition of a part of the Resolutions was prepared by the Rev. Leibbrandt and printed in 1898. Contrary to what is implied by the title, namely “Resolutiën van den Commandeur en Raden van Het Fort de Goede Hoop, 1652-1662” [Resolutions of the Commandor and Council Members of the Fort of Good Hope, 1652-1662], the publication ends with the Resolution of 20 April 1658 and no explanation was provided for the discrepancy between what was stated in the foreword and what was actually printed.

The only other publication that contained some of the Resolutions was the *Kaapse Archiefstukken, 1778-1782* by Miss M.K. Jeffreys who acted as editor, and was published by the Union Archives during 1926 and 1938. In this series of publications, the Cape Resolutions from 1778 to 1783 were included along with some other document series.

Because the Resolutions of the Council of Policy were regarded as such an important historical source, it was deemed necessary to introduce them to a larger audience. The South African State Archives Service therefore decided in the 1950s to publish the Resolutions in full as part of their programme to publish original archival sources. Consequently ten volumes of the Resolutions of the Council of Policy (1651-1743) under editorship of Dr. A.J. Böeseke and Dr. G.C. de Wet respectively were printed between 1957 and 1984 but the work was then terminated due to a lack of funds.

Copies of the printed series were not only distributed among the main archives repositories and libraries in South Africa and other countries in Southern Africa, but may also be consulted at the Library of Congress in Washington and the Public Record Office in London. In the Netherlands the printed volumes are kept at the National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague, the Suid-Afrikaanse Instituut [South African Institute] in Amsterdam and a number of university libraries.

Making the Resolutions available in digital format

The process of making the Resolutions available in digital format was funded by the Dutch Government from the international cultural budget (HGIS) in the context of the programme *Towards A New Age of Partnership* (TANAP). The TANAP projects are a mutual attempt by the National Archives in The Hague and the Rijksuniversiteit of Leiden to ensure that the VOC archives worldwide are conserved, made available and managed in a proficient manner.

During discussions in 1999 with personnel of the Cape Town Archives Repository a visiting TANAP team identified the resumption of the publication of the Resolutions as the highest priority of South Africa's participation in the TANAP programme. It was decided that it would be a digital project, where both the already printed Resolutions (1651-1743) and the still not transcribed Resolutions (1744-1795) would be made available on the Internet.

The Head of the Cape Town Archives Repository co-ordinated the transcription project and provided office facilities, while the Stichting [Huis der Nederlanden](#) administered the budgets and handled the contracts with the personnel.

The conversion project involved the scanning of the already printed Resolutions as well as the editing and correcting of the information. All the documents were then converted into the international platform-independent [XML format](#) (*eXtensible Mark-up Language*), where the coding was done according to the internationally acknowledged [TEI standard](#) (*Text Encoding Initiative*). The [Centre for Business and Language Services/Sentrum vir Besigheids- en Taaldiens](#) (Bellville, South Africa) performed the technical implementation and also provided XML and TEI training for the transcribers.

Transcription and editing policy

The rules for the transcriptions of the directly digitised Resolutions (1744-1795) deviate from those adhered to in the earlier printed Resolutions (1651-1743).

Rules for the printed Resolutions (1651-1743)

1. In accordance with the “Regels voor het uitgeven van historische bescheiden” [Rules for the publishing of historical documents] by the Historisch Genootschap [Historical Society] (Utrecht) issued in 1954 the specific rules how to approach 17th century VOC texts were compiled and approved by the Archives in 1957.
2. Apart from the use of brackets (see 3.), the rules regarding issues such as spelling, punctuation marks, compounds or separate words, capital or small letters, and abbreviations were formulated.
3. The next rules were followed in the use of brackets and other punctuation marks:
 - () these brackets were used for words, phrases or sentences appearing between brackets in the original text.
 - [.....] these brackets represent gaps caused by damage to the original text.
 - < > these brackets refer to parts that were inserted during transcription. (Due to the use of XML coding the < > were substituted by [] during the conversion process.)
 - ... these were used where part of the original text was omitted or where it was impossible to complete the damaged text.
 - – these were used where, according to the editor, parts of the text containing unimportant information were omitted and their omission noted in footnotes. The texts that were omitted, however, often concerned groups of people (e.g. a list of sick sailors on a Danish ship). It is desirable that these omitted texts be transcribed and added to the rest of the text in future.

Rules for the directly digitised Resolutions (1744-1795)

The two editors decided to have the texts transcribed exactly as written in the original documents, thus with punctuation marks, writing, spelling, language and other errors, for example of dates as written, without any changes or additions. This way of transcribing has both advantages and disadvantages. The normalisation of words and the writing in full of abbreviations always result in a personal interpretation of the text. Due to this approach the researcher has a neutral copy of the original text. The researcher should however be prepared for unusual word images (e.g. [gesonden Worden](#) and [in Steede van](#) in the minutes at the beginning of the Introduction, as well as examples such as *geExcuseerd*, *VerEijsschte* and *geCommitteerd* that appear elsewhere in the Resolutions. The reading process may also be complicated by the writing of parts of compounds or derivations as individual words, especially prefixes and suffixes not connected to the word stem, the linking of words that do not belong together, the use of punctuation marks at unexpected places, and the use of unfamiliar abbreviations.

Footnotes

The ten printed volumes of Resolutions covering the period from 1651 to 1743 have a large number of footnotes. Apart from the footnotes that originated from a comparison between The Hague Copy and the Cape Resolutions, there are also references to documents mentioned in the footnotes. All these sources can be traced in the Cape Town Archives Repository where they may be consulted. Particulars regarding officials, who visited the Cape for longer or shorter periods of time, may be obtained from the National Archives under the reference **Kol. Arch.** (Koloniaal Archief) [Colonial Archives] accompanied by an inventory number. However, *Koloniaal Archief* is an outdated reference system of a certain section of the National Archives from which the VOC archives have separated and are now described in the [archival inventory 1.04.02](#). All other inventory numbers can be found in the Cape Town Archives Repository. Biographical information in the footnotes was mainly obtained from a number of genealogical sources.

In approximately 1981 the C. volumes were restored, rebound and renumbered. The footnotes of the printed volumes also form part of the digital presentation. However, due to a lack of financial means it was not possible to annotate the remaining text (1744-1795). Note that the outdated inventory numbers were maintained throughout in the footnotes. In the archival inventory of the Council of Policy a complete [table of comparison of previous and present volume numbers](#) is provided.

SOURCE GUIDE

Main sources

- *Resolusies van die Politieke Raad van die Kaap die Goeie Hoop, 1651-1743*. A.J. Böeseke & G.C. de Wet (reds.) Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke. Deel 1-10. Kaapstad, 1957-1981.
- *Resolusies van die Politieke Raad van die Kaap die Goeie Hoop, 1744-1795*. [Resolutions of the Council of Policy of the Cape of Good Hope, 1744-1795.]
- *TANAP Transcription Project*. Cape Town, 2001-2003.

Apart from the above-mentioned Resolutions *of the Council of Policy of the Cape of Good Hope* (Volumes C. 1 to C. 231) made available either in printed format or as an Internet-accessible source, the following additional references may be useful.

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Genealogy

- <http://www.ggsa.info> – Genealogical Society of South Africa (GSSA)
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- <http://www.sun.ac.za/gisa> – Genealogical Institute of South Africa (GISA)
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Huguenots

- <http://www.geocities.com/hugenotblad/begin-a.htm> – Hugenote-museum, Franschhoek
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Huis der Nederlanden

- <http://www.hdn.za.net/>

Library services

- <http://www.nlsa.ac.za/> – National Library, Pretoria Campus
- <http://natlib1.unisa.ac.za/search/> – University of South Africa, Pretoria

Maps

- http://cdsm-www.wcape.gov.za/ms_internet/default.asp – topographical maps available at the Department of Land Affairs
- http://www.hagsoc.org.au/sagraves/maps/times_map.php – “The Times Map of SA”

Museum services

- <http://media1.mweb.co.za/mosa/>

Place names

- <http://sagns.dac.gov.za> – official “South African Geographical Names System”, e.g. SAGNS, place name database

Slaves

- <http://www.museums.org.za/iziko/slavery/index.html> – the history of slaves
- <http://batavia.ugent.be/b@tavia.htm?http://batavia.rug.ac.be/slavery/bibliography.htm> – research on slavery

Surveyor-General

- <http://oas.dla.gov.za/webapps/esio/searchproperty.jsp>

The Netherlands and other places

Archival services

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General

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TANAP

- <http://www.tanap.net/cape/resolutions> – Resolutions of the Council of Policy of the Cape of Good Hope
- http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/finding_aids.htm – Inventories of the Cape Town Archival Repository

VOC

- <http://voc-kenniscentrum.nl/>
- <http://www.voc.websilon.nl/> :
<http://www.voc.websilon.nl/uitlegvermaakttransport.aspx> – debentures
<http://www.voc.websilon.nl/beroepen.aspx> – occupations

VOC Glossary

- <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/VocGlossarium>
- <http://test.inghist.nl/pdf/vocglossarium/VOCGlossarium.pdf> – download and print Glossary of terms collected from the “Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatie” regarding the VOC [Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie], compiled by M. Kooijmans and J.E. Schooneveld-Oosterling

VOC Links

- http://www.londoh.com/voc_links.htm

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HISTORY OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

A Portuguese discovers the sea route from Europe to India

In August 1486 the Portuguese navigator, Bartholomeu Dias, set sail from the Tagus River at Lisbon with his fleet of two small vessels and a cargo ship. The objective of his journey was to sail round the southern point of Africa in order to find a seaway and a trade route to India. At Angra Pequena (now Lüderitzbucht, Namibia) he erected a cross. Then a tremendous storm forced his ships off course and he and his crew did not reach land until they entered the bay, which is known today as Mossel Bay. It was then that Dias realised that they had already passed the tip of Africa and had actually discovered the sea route to the East. The indigenous Khoi pastoralists fled when they saw the ships entering the bay. On the island of St. Croix near Algoa Bay he also erected a cross and probably kept on sailing until they reached the Fish River in the present Eastern Cape. There the small fleet had to turn back because of insufficient supplies on board. On his return voyage Dias, elated by the realisation of having discovered the sea route to India, changed the name Cabo Tormentoso 'cape of storms' to Cabo da boa Esperanza 'cape of good hope'.

Portugal continued the expansion of its Indian empire and Portuguese fleets to the East regularly passed the Cape. In 1498 Vasco da Gama named the above-mentioned bay where Dias landed Aguada de São Bras 'fountain-head of St. Blaize'. On his voyage to India (1501-1502) João de Nova and his fleet also visited the bay and in his turn he named it Golfo dos Vaqueiros 'bay of herdsmen'. He also built a small chapel, the first Christian structure erected in South Africa. De Nova continued his journey and reached Rio de la Goa 'river of the lake', the place that was named in 1544 by Lourenço Marques after himself. In 1503 one of the three squadrons belonging to this fleet was under the command of Antonio de Saldanha who made a navigational error and eventually reached the bay now known as Table Bay. In March 1510 the Portuguese viceroy Francisco d' Almeida who had just established Portuguese authority in the Indian Ocean, and a number of his high-ranking officers were killed in Table Bay during a skirmish with a group of Khoi. The inhospitable coastline of Southern Africa was the most important reason why the Portuguese rulers were not interested in occupying this country.

The Cape and the establishment of the VOC

In the middle of the 16th century the Netherlands became a threat to the Portuguese trade and properties in the East. Already for decades the Dutch had distributed Portugal's Indian merchandise in Europe and acted as cargo carriers on behalf of Spain. The Dutch realised the value of the Portuguese spice monopoly and set it as their objective to rather establish trade relations with the Moluccas, also called Spice Islands, and not so much with India. The Netherlands was on the verge of great overseas expansions and on the brink of entering the Dutch Golden Age.

In 1592 after a sojourn of ten years in India the Dutchman Jan Huygen van Linschoten returned to his home country, the northern part of the Netherlands. Thanks to the notes he made during these years, his *Itinerario* or travelogue contained extremely important information regarding India, the islands of the East, the sea route, and the trade winds and currents. Even before the *Itinerario* was published in 1595 the principle admirals of the Dutch fleet were already in possession of the contents of this document and on their voyages past the Cape to the Far East they could make good use of the knowledge thus obtained.

At approximately the same time a number of Amsterdam merchants established a company called Compagnie van Verre [Company of Far] with the aim of establishing trading posts in the East to trade goods to and from India. On 2 April 1595 the first Dutch cargo fleet set sail from Texel. On the fleet's arrival at Java, Cornelis de Houtman, who was the chief of trade of the enterprise, concluded a treaty with the regent of Bantam. On their return journey they also landed at Golfo dos Vaqueiros and traded some livestock from the Khoi.

On their sea journeys between Europe and the East the Dutch cargo ships frequently visited the Cape to obtain livestock from the Khoi and to take fresh water on board. The establishment of a permanent Dutch settlement at the Cape was actually the last step of this development over many years. In 1601 Paulus van Caerden visited Golfo dos Vaqueiros and named it Mossel Bay, the name it has retained ever since. In the same year Admiral Joris van Spilbergen changed the name of the bay called by De Saldanha after himself to Table Bay.

In 1602 all the Dutch East Indian trade companies were united and the Generaale Vereenigde Geocroijeerde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) [General United Chartered East-Indian Company] was established. At that time the Dutch were at war with Spain and Portugal (the Eighty Years' War) and the Company endeavoured to strengthen the economic power of the Dutch Republic and at the same time to weaken the power of the enemy overseas. For this reason the States General of the Vereenigde Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden [United Republic of the United Netherlands] vested the VOC with a trade monopoly east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Strait of Magellan, as well as a charter vesting sovereign powers to manage soldiers and fleets, to make war and peace, to exercise control over regions, and to establish and govern forts, fortresses and colonies.

The VOC was a trade company with shareholders and six chambers (work companies) in the Dutch cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Middelburg, Delft, Enkhuizen and Hoorn, each with offices, stores and ships. The work company in Middelburg was known as Kamer Zeeland [Zeeland Chamber] because its shareholders came from various Zeeland cities. The Here Sewentien (Here XVII) [Lords Seventeen] consisting of representatives from the Chambers formed the central body with conclusive powers.

On a continuous basis the Company sent ships to the East with seamen, soldiers and merchants to oppose and drive the Portuguese away, and to expand its own trading. Ambon in the Moluccas was the first settlement that was won from the Portuguese. In 1609 Pieter Both was appointed as the first Governor-General of the Company's properties and personnel in the East. Since the establishment in 1619 of Batavia (now Jakarta) on Java by Jan Pieterszoon Coen it served as the Company's Asiatic headquarters, seat of the Governor-General and the Council of India, as well as the central meeting place of all the commercial activities of the Company's wide range of offices of commerce, factories and settlements that were established in the course of time from the Cape of Good Hope to Mocca [Mocha] and Nagasaki.

The Dutch and English together in Table Bay

After the sea route to India had been discovered, both the Dutch and English expanded their shipping activities to the East and on their way frequently visited Table Bay. In 1608 a number of English sea captains and their crews anchored in Table Bay and during their stay they built a small fort, traded some livestock from the Khoi tribes, investigated the surroundings and even climbed Table Mountain.

In 1619 the Dutch and English reached a “Vergelyk” [understanding], which also concerned the Cape of Good Hope. But soon afterwards little was left of any co-operation. When a fleet of six English ships sailed into Table Bay in June 1620, they found nine Dutch ships already anchored there, whose Dutch officers were inspecting the land with the intention of settling at the Cape the following year. The English officers in command, however, stole the advantage from the Dutch when they hoisted the English flag on 3 July 1620 and annexed the land in the name of their king. On their return to England King James refused to sign the proclamation and the English lost their claim to the Cape. After this the English interest in the Cape as a settlement diminished drastically. In later years there was great tension as well as enmity between these two countries. England had to wait for more than 175 years for its second chance to take possession of the Cape of Good Hope.

A small Dutch fort in 1647

On its return journey in March 1647 the Dutch ship *Haerlem* ran ashore in Table Bay. Although the ship could not be salvaged the captain and his crew managed to reach land safely. The captain left for the Netherlands on a ship that was on its return journey, but the junior merchant Leendert Janszen and sixty sailors had to stay behind. For about a year they waited for a fleet to take them home. In the meantime they built a small fort and called it “Vastigheyt Zandenborch” [Sand Castle Fort]. Fortunately they were able to bring the valuable cargo ashore. They did some gardening and game hunting, and from the Khoi with whom they were on good terms they traded some livestock. In March 1658 the return fleet under the command of Admiral Wollebrandt Geleynssen de Jongh arrived in Table Bay. Jan van Riebeeck, who was on his way back from the East, was also a member of the group that spent eighteen days at the Cape.

Because of a war threatening against England the Lords Seventeen had to consider in great earnest the strategic importance and possible annexure of the Cape. An additional factor was that St. Helena, an island in the Atlantic Ocean, was no longer considered such a valuable refreshment station for the Dutch return fleets and it was therefore imperative to find some greener pastures.

Because the crew of the *Haerlem* were able survive at the Cape for a year and because of the practical experience gained by Leendert Janszen, he was requested to compile a document stating the advantages of a Dutch occupation of the Cape. On 26 July 1649 he submitted his “Remonstrantie” [argument] that was co-signed by Matthijs Proot the other junior merchant on the *Haerlem*, to the VOC Chamber of Amsterdam. In the report they supported the establishment of a refreshment station at the Cape, and predicted that it would not cost too much to support a garrison of approximately 70 soldiers. There was ample fresh water and fertile soil for growing vegetables and fruit, and they would be able to trade some livestock from the indigenous peoples in order to replenish their meat supply. The Cape could also serve as a convalescent stop. Matthijs Proot was approached to take up the position as commander at the Cape, but he did not accept it. Jan van Riebeeck, a former Company merchant, offered his services. The Lords Seventeen requested van Riebeeck to comment on the “Remonstrantie”. In June 1651 he submitted his “Nader Consideratie” [Closer consideration] and with a few additional recommendations he supported the plan. This presentation settled his appointment: “Jan Van Riebeeck bij de vergadering aangenomen in qualité als koopman en opperhoofd van het volk, gaande met het schip de *Drommedaris* naar de Cabo de bona Esperance” ([Van Riebeeck, Dagverhaal](#) 1, VII, a:o 1648) [At the meeting Jan van Riebeeck was accepted in the position as merchant and chief of the people, to sail with the ship the *Drommedaris* to the Cape of Good Hope].

In 1651 the first Resolutions were recorded at sea

In order to establish a refreshment station and military presence at the Cape, Jan van Riebeeck and his company sailed at the end of 1651 from Texel “vande Camer Amsterdam” [under the auspices of the Chamber of Amsterdam] in three small ships called *Drommedaris*, *Reijger* and *Goede Hoop*. On Saturday 30 December the sea-council, actually called the Broad Council, took the first Resolutions (*resolutien* ‘decisions’) on board the *Drommedaris*. These Resolutions introduced the legislative and constitutional Dutch governance to South Africa.

The next two meetings held on 20 January and 29 March 1652 respectively, took place on board ship before Table Bay was reached, while the meetings of 8 and 19 April were held “in ’t schip den Drommedaris” [on board the ship *Drommedaris*] already in Table Bay. On 11 May the Council meeting took place “in ’t scip den Drommedaris ter rhede in de Tafelbaai” [on board the ship *Drommedaris* at the anchorage ground in Table Bay], but on 13 August it was held ashore: “aen Cabo de Boa Esperance in ’t Fort de Goede Hoop” [at the Cape of Good Hope in the Fort of Good Hope]. When the captains of the fleet left, the Council consisted of high-ranking officials and the military commander.

VOC governing structures at the Cape

The Council of Policy

The Council of Policy [Raad van Politie; *politie* means ‘management’] being the highest authority at the Cape of Good Hope settlement, was subject to the instructions of the Lords Seventeen (directors of the VOC in the Netherlands) and the Governor-General and Council of India in Batavia, as well as the legislature stipulated in the “Statuten van Batavia” [Statutes of Batavia] (1648). The Council consisted of the functionaries who were responsible for ruling the Company’s settlement, namely the “opperhoofd” [head] of the settlement, his secunde, administrative officials (e.g. accountant, warehouseman, cellar-master and harbour-master), the military commander of the garrison, and the fiscal who was responsible for maintaining law and order. The Council’s secretary (also called “geheimschrijver” [confidential secretary]) had no vote, unless he had at the same time been promoted to Councillor.

When there were ships in Table Bay, the captains and other high-ranking officials of the fleet also had seats on the Council. These sessions were referred to as sessions of the Broad Council. The chairman at meetings of the Broad Council was not necessarily the commander/governor himself, since he had to relinquish his chair to his senior in rank in the service, usually a commissioner who had instructions to compile a report on affairs at the Cape.

The VOC officials carried out a large number of functions. There were actually three groups of hierarchies: from soldier to general, from young sailor to sea captain, and from scribe to governor-general. The Company also distinguished between various ranks referring to a combination of function, salary and status. For example, the senior merchant Jan van Riebeeck was head of the Cape settlement, and his rank as senior merchant indicated his place in the Company’s commercial/administrative hierarchy and salary category. His promotion to commander implied more status but neither more authority nor a higher salary. From 1691 the title of the head of the Cape settlement was that of Governor.

In 1676 Commissioner Nicolaes Verburg decided that the Council of Policy, in addition to the commander as the highest official, should consist of six councillors/council members. In 1685 Commissioner Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Drakenstein determined that the number of members would be increased to eight. In the same year a separation was made between the Council of Policy and the Court of Justice when it was decided that the Council of Policy would function as the Court of Justice. Whenever a case of a burgher was heard by the Court of Justice, two burgher councillors had a seat in this court.

The Council of Policy met quite frequently. It mostly depended on the commander, as convener, how regularly and how many meetings would be held. Some chairmen convened the Council once a week, while others only convened a meeting when urgent matters necessitated a meeting. Sometimes the agenda was so long that the meeting, which commenced in the morning, also had afternoon and evening sessions. It could even happen that the previous day’s sessions continued the following day. In case of an unforeseen crisis the Council would meet on a Sunday, public holy day or day of festivity.

All letters from the Lords Seventeen and the High Government of Batavia had to be opened, read and discussed at the Council meetings. The letters of response were written by the Council and signed by all the members. All written work was done under the Council’s supervision. Not only had copies of the long letters to be sent to the authorities in Amsterdam and Batavia, but also copies of the journals, resolutions, “placcaten” [proclamations] and instructions. Court proceedings, contracts and reports also had to be written up. The officials were responsible for collecting taxes and had to supervise outposts, warehouses, leases, as well as supplying victuals to ships, officials and the hospital. They also had to protect the settlement against possible attacks from the interior or from the sea. The Council of Policy discussed all these tasks and the Councillors often delegated the responsibilities to other officials.

Designations of functionaries

A variety of positions and titles appear in the Resolutions of the Council of Policy. Some of these designations became obsolete in Dutch but are still used in Afrikaans, although sometimes with a different meaning or only used as an historic reference.

- The “opperhoofd” [Eng. chief] was the commander of an army or fleet, admiral of a ship, or head of a settlement in the colonies. The term also referred to the chief of an indigenous tribe.
- The “commandeur” [Eng. commander] was a military commander or commander of a fortress, garrison or settlement, or commander of a ship.
- The “gouverneur” [Eng. governor], lit. ‘manager’ was a representative of the supreme authority and had authority over a region, for example a colony.
- The “sekunde” (from Latin *secundus* ‘second’) [Eng. secunde] or second in charge, acted as a substitute for the commander or governor.
- The “koopman”, also called “commies” [Eng. merchant] was the official involved with commercial matters on board a merchant vessel (in particular ships of the so-called “voorcompagnieën” [first companies] and later mostly of the VOC). The term “koopman” also referred to a particular rank in the VOC, categorised as junior merchant, merchant and senior merchant.
- The “fiscaal” [Eng. fiscal] was a legislative official who was responsible for maintaining law and order. He was in charge of a number of law officials and served as the public prosecutor. In 1688 the Lords Seventeen declared the fiscal “independent” and only responsible to them as the supreme authority.
- The “secretaris” [Eng. secretary] was an official who was responsible for the correspondence of a body, who had to write and answer letters, compile documents etc. The secretary attended the Council meetings and took the oath of confidentiality. He had no vote in the Council but had to co-sign all the resolutions as well as attestations, obligations, letters and bonds. He also had to attest deeds and explain the contents of these documents to the people involved.
- The “weesmeester” or “weesheer” [synonyms for Eng. orphan-master] was a council member of the “Weeskamer” [Orphan Chamber]. This institution supervised and managed the properties of orphans and the inheritance of unknown persons. Shortly after the British came into power the Orphan Chamber was replaced by the Master’s Office.

VOC Commanders and Governors of the Cape of Good Hope

During the 143 years of Dutch government at the Cape the term of office of the official who headed the government of the colony was sometimes very brief, while others remained in power for a long period.

Commanders

<i>from</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>Commander</i>
7.4.1652	6.5.1662	Jan Anthonisz van Riebeeck (initially called “opperhoof”)
6.5.1662	27.9.1666	Zacharias Wagenaer
27.9.1666	18.6.1668	Cornelis van Quaelberg
18.6.1668	25.3.1670	Jacob Borghorst
25.3.1670	30.11.1671	Pieter Hackius
30.11.1671	April 1672	Politieke Raad (acting)
April 1672	2.10.1672	Albert van Breugel (sekunde; acting)
2.10.1672	14.3.1676	Isbrand Goske
14.3.1676	29.6.1678	Johan Bax <i>dit</i> van Herenthals
29.6.1678	12.10.1679	Hendrik Crudop (sekunde; acting)
12.10.1679	1.6.1691	Simon van der Stel

Governors

<i>from</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>Governor</i>
1.6.1691	11.2.1699	Simon van der Stel
11.2.1699	3.6.1707	Willem Adriaan van der Stel
3.6.1707	1.2.1708	Johannes Cornelis d’Ableing (acting)
1.2.1708	27.12.1711	Louis van Assenburg
27.2.1711	28.3.1714	Willem Helot (acting)
28.3.1714	8.9.1724	Maurits Pasques de Chavonnes
8.9.1724	25.2.1727	Jan de la Fontaine (acting)
25.2.1727	23.4.1729	Pieter Gijsbert Noodt
23.4.1729	31.8.1737	Jan de la Fontaine (acting, governor from 8.3.1737)
31.8.1737	19.9.1737	Adriaan van Kervel (died after three weeks in office)
19.9.1737	14.4.1739	Daniël van den Henghel (fiscal; acting)
14.4.1739	27.2.1751	Hendrik Swellengrebel
27.2.1751	11.8.1771	Ryk Tulbagh
11.8.1771	14.2.1785	Joachim van Plettenberg (acting, governor from 18.5.1774)
14.2.1785	24.6.1791	Cornelis Jacob van de Graaff
24.6.1791	3.7.1792	Johannes Izaac Rhenius (sekunde; acting)
3.7.1792	2.9.1793	Sebastiaan Cornelis Nederburgh en Simon Hendrik Frijkenius (Commissioners-General)
2.9.1793	16.9.1795	Abraham Josias Sluysken

Proclamations, regulations (statutes) and ordinances

- The “placcaat” [Eng. proclamation] was a written or printed proclamation by the Council of Policy; see “Placcaatboek”.
- A “statuut” [Eng. statute, regulation] is a written law passed by a legislative body of a region or country; also a collection of laws and proclamations.
- An “ordonnantie” [Eng. ordinance] is a decree, in particular an application of regulations and statutes promulgated by a government on specific matters.

Local government

Due to the expansion of the Cape Colony local government had to be instituted. In “Cabo” the free burghers also took part in the activities of the Council of Policy, the Orphan Chamber, the Matrimonial Court and the College of Minor Cases.

The Board of the Landdrost and [members of] the Heemraad governed the country districts. The Board served as a court with jurisdiction on civil as well as criminal cases, and also had municipal and related governing functions, could impose taxes and even had certain military powers and played a role in the safekeeping and defence of the relevant districts. The members of this Board, namely the Landdrost assisted by members of the Heemraad, were recommended by the Council of Policy and nominated by the Governor.

- The “landdrost” [S.A. Eng. landdrost] was an official of the VOC who represented the authority (as in the Netherlands). He acted as chairman of the above-mentioned College.
- The “drostyd” was the jurisdiction of a “landdrost”. In South Africa in particular it also referred to the seat of a “dros” [the official].
- The “heemraad” [S.A. Eng. heemraad] was a free burgher who was appointed as a member of the above-mentioned College by the Governor on recommendation of the Council of Policy.
- The “veldkornet” [Eng. field-cornet] was an official in the local government and was subjected to the landdrost. He had functions of importance regarding military, administrative, and judicial and police matters. In his field-cornetcy the field-cornet represented the landdrost. In times of peace the field-cornet was the head of the militia and was responsible to maintain order in his area.
- A commander and his officers formed the “Krijgsraad” [Eng: Council of War]. During such a council meeting matters of military importance were discussed. At the meeting of 19 May 1659 where it was decided to declare war on the Khoi, two free burghers each had a seat on the Council of War.

Inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope

Indigenous peoples

According to Jan van Riebeeck's *Daghregister* [diary] he had already made contact with members of the indigenous people on 6 April 1652. Van Riebeeck went ashore to look for a site to build a fort. Two of these indigenous inhabitants, referred to as Strandlopers [Beach rangers], went on board with him and communicated in broken English. They were poor fishermen who had no livestock, contrary to the other tribes of the interior who possessed cattle and sheep. The *Daghregister* mentions that the first proclamation that was read and distributed in the Cape was promulgated at the Council meeting held on 8 April. It stated that a fort was to be erected and that the settlers should live in peace with the indigenous peoples. In the *Daghregister*'s entry of 10 April it is mentioned that the Dutch met the people of "Saldinia" that day.

Verification of how historical sources can complement each other meaningfully comes by way of a comparison of these two source documents, viz. van Riebeeck's *Daghregister* and the Resolutions of the Council of Policy with respect to references and to the mention of specific facts. The minutes of the Council meeting of 8 April 1652 (C. 1) refers to only one subject, namely the building of the Fort. Nine months after it had been mentioned in the *Daghregister*, the minutes of the Council meeting of 22 December 1652 (C. 1) referred to "dese lants natie", in other words the indigenous people, for the first time. At this meeting it was also noted that "Herrij" [Harry the Beach ranger] told them in broken English about "die van Saldanha" [those of Saldanha, the latter being a place name] who were quite well provided with elephant tusks. Judging from the pieces of ivory that "sommige Hottentoots" [some Hottentots] wore as neck ornaments it was obvious that there was ivory in circulation.

The first encounters and negotiations between VOC officials and indigenous people took place with the aid of Khoi interpreters, i.e. Herrij (Autshomao), Claes Das, Eva (Krotoa) and Doman (called Anthoni at his own request). Eva in particular was of great help. As a young child she went with her sister's husband, Captain Oedaso of the Kogouquas, to the Fort where she came to know the people and learnt their language. In 1659 she went to live in the Fort "... om vorder te leeren leesen en bidden" [to learn to read and pray] ([Daghregister](#), 3 Jan. 1659). Her language skills were of great value, since she could act as interpreter between her people and the settlers. Although Eva was later baptized and confirmed in the Christian church in order to become the equal of a free person, she was always willing to intercede for her people.

Information regarding indigenous groups was obtained through daily contact as well as during journeys and expeditions that were regularly undertaken by the Company. The journals that were kept during expeditions as well as reports that had to be submitted to the Council of Policy after completion thereof and thus included in the Resolutions are at present of extreme cultural and historical value. Instead of the written sources with a Western perspective on the one hand and an oral culture and folklore with an indigenous perspective on the other hand, being placed at opposite poles, it would be better to merge the facts in order to obtain a more balanced content. In this way history can be presented comprehensively and in a truthful manner.

The Goringaikonas (Beach rangers), Goringgaikwas (Kaapmans [Cape men]) and Goragoukwas lived in the immediate vicinity of the Fort. Towards Saldanha Bay two captains, namely Oedaso and Gonnema, ruled the Kogoukwas. (Goedemans, a Dutch derivation of Gonnema, is the surname borne by his descendants to this day 31.10.1739, C. 112.) The Little Grigriquas lived in the region stretching to the north and reaching up to the Elephants River. Across the Elephants River the nomadic Great Grigriquas trekked with their livestock. Chief Sousoa and his Gainouqua tribe that lived east of the Kogouquas brought large numbers of cattle to the Fort. In the Council minutes of 14 April 1684 it was noted that a "seecker capiteijn van de Soeswasese natie" [certain captain of [the] Sousoa's people] also known as

Claes, had traded many cattle with the Company. Another tribe, the Sonquas, presently known as the San people, took shelter in the mountains because all the other groups attacked them.

The grazing fields of the Hessequas stretched from the Hessequas Cloof at Riviersonderend to the Attaquas Cloof at the Gourits River. They often camped at Mossel Bay and also dwelt on the banks of the Duivenhoks and the Gaukou Rivers. Chief Gaukou of the Hessequa tribe was probably a kinsman of the Inqua chief, who ruled the whole region. The Dutch called Gaukou “de oude Heer” [the old gentleman] and the Khoi addressed him as “Sire” [Portuguese for ‘Sir’]. After a visit to Gaukou, Simon van der Stel wrote on 14 April 1684 that not only was Gaukou the leader of a large group of people, but also the owner of a very large number of cattle and sheep, and that he was much respected for his success in settling disputes among Khoi captains ([Elphick](#), 1977).

VOC officials

The men who made the voyage to the Cape in 1651 were the first VOC servants mentioned in the Resolutions. Some of them were high-ranking officials whose names were recorded, the rest were ordinary men of inferior ranking, such as sailors, “hooplopers” [teenage sailors], soldiers and craftsmen. Without the hard labour and sacrifices of the ordinary men these extremely dangerous and often fatal voyages would not have been possible.

In the early years of the settlement its population consisted mainly of VOC officials and their families. Later the population increased and a variety of people from various parts of the world, mainly from Europe and the East, made the Cape their home – some of them by choice, such as the Huguenots, some of them in bondage, such as the slaves and exiles from the East.

As a rule the names of the officers, soldiers and officials who were stationed at the Fort (later the Castle), and at posts in other places in the settlement, were annually listed in the so-called muster rolls. The following list of 1664, provides information regarding the positions then held by the VOC officials at the Cape: 1 Commander, 1 junior merchant, 1 fiscal and secretary, 1 sick comforter, 1 senior ship’s doctor, 1 bookkeeper, 1 warehouseman, 4 scribes, 1 sergeant, 2 corporals of the midshipmen, 1 other and 1 third ship’s doctor, 3 corporals, 1 constable, 1 ditto mate, 1 trumpeter, 1 table servant, 1 master of the horse, 2 attendants, 3 carbine riflemen with the constable, 1 master mason and 12 servants, 1 master carpenter and 16 ditto servants, 1 master smith and 6 ditto servants, 2 wainwrights, apart from the slaves 7 persons used in the Company’s big garden, 2 cooks and bakers, 1 police official, 2 in the Company’s cattle kraal behind the Fort, 4 in the Company’s horse-stable, 7 at the mounted guard, 5 at the redoubt Keert d’ Koe, 3 at Kijckuijt, 2 at Houtdenbul, 2 at the wooden doublet on the shore [in other words, 12 people stationed at the various look-out posts], 4 in the Company’s orchard, 4 in the forest, 4 at Bosheuvel [name of a farm], 15 at the Company’s granary, 5 on Robben Island, 3 on the shallop Bruijdegom, 2 on the shallop Musquijt, 3 on the Company’s open boat [in other words, 8 persons who served on 3 small ships], 2 coopers, 5 with the Company’s livestock at d’ Schuij, 6 with ditto here at the Fort, 2 who were constantly on the look-out for ships [stationed] in the Leeuwenbergh’s cloof, 1 attendant in the hospital, 1 brewer, 1 drummer and 17 who did public service as guards/sentries and who were always doing service at the Fort, as well as patients and invalids from this settlement or from ships that called at the port. 178 Company officials (translated from [Kloeke](#), 1950: 248-249). In later years many other positions were also occupied, for example that of clergyman and teacher.

There was a gradual increase in the number of VOC officials. In 1701 there were slightly more than 500. At the Council meeting of 29 December 1764 (C. 142) it was minuted “dat het getal van ’s Comp:s Dienaaren ten deesen Gouvernement onder Ult:o Aug:s 1763: in 1,246 Coppen bestaan hebbende, dus alhier 252 Coppen meerder waren aangehouden, als bij het reglement van a:o 1755 was toegestaan” [that on 1 August 1763 there were 1,246 Company officials of this Government, therefore 252 more than had been permitted by the regulation of 1755]. The largest increase in personnel took place during the last part of the 1780s: in 1789 approximately 3,400 VOC officials were stationed throughout the Cape Colony. In order to cut costs the Company then declared a thousand jobs redundant.

Nearly all the VOC officials resided in the town. In 1750 only 134 of the 1,331 employees lived outside Cabo, of whom 44 were stationed at False Bay and 33 on Robben Island, either as guards or detainees. Along with the shifting of the settlement’s borders, outposts were established at the frontline of expansion with the post holder in command of such a post. The names then given to the posts are well-known Cape place names even today, for example *Soutrivier* [Salt River], *Robbeneiland*, *Dasseneiland*, *St. Helenabaai*, *Piketberg*, *Houtbaai*, *Muizenberg*, *Vissershok*, *Gansekraal*, *Klapmuts*, *Riviersonderend*, *Buffeljagtsrivier*, *Soetmelksvallei*, *Rietvallei*, *Tijgerhoek* and *Outenikwaland*. The VOC fort at Rio de la Goa in Mozambique was the most remote post of all (see [Expeditions](#)). In the minutes of the Council meeting dated 16 September 1795, being the day when the British took power over the Cape, it was noted that the post holders at Mossel Bay and Plettenberg Bay would be of the last officials to receive the message of capitulation.

To ensure that trade, which was the VOC's main objective, could continue undisturbed, military protection of these interests was of utmost importance. The same principle also applied in the case of the Cape of Good Hope. Since the VOC had to depend on foreigners to serve as soldiers, there were many soldiers from other countries, such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Flanders, the Baltic States and the German territories. Many of the soldiers who were stationed at the Cape became freemen after completion of their VOC contract of five years and thus became members of the growing population.

From time to time officials of allied nations strengthened the VOC's military structure at the Cape. The local government, therefore, had to maintain good communication when soldiers and other officials who spoke languages other than Dutch, were sent to the Cape. One such occasion arose in 1781 with the arrival of a large contingent of French soldiers who had orders to help defend the Colony against possible attacks. The Council decided that a VOC officer who could speak French fluently should be appointed to communicate the necessary orders between Governor Joachim van Plettenberg and the French command. The Governor chose L.F. van Wijnbergen for this position. Van Wijnbergen was the former military commander on the ship *Mercur* but due to illness he stayed behind at the Cape when his ship departed (5.6.1781, C. 159).

Some interesting stories concerning VOC officials are included in the Resolutions. A number of times it was minuted that women disguised as male soldiers undertook the dangerous voyage from Europe under a false name and eventually reached the Cape in safety. As a rule these women were sent back "home", but one, Johanna Elisabeth alias Johan Elias Spelling van Zell was allowed to stay on condition that she would earn herself a living at the Cape (14.3.1744, C. 122). It often happened that an elderly soldier who was no longer fit for service would present an application to be dismissed from service. On 18 December 1764 (C. 142) the application of 78-year old Jan Gerritz. van Lijden was approved by the Councillors. They also decided that he would receive a monthly allowance of f7 for his 37 years of faithful service to the Company.

Rudolph Siegfried Allemann was one of the most distinguished military figures at the Cape. Allemann was born in 1693 at Neuensdorf, Germany and arrived at the Cape in 1720 as a VOC soldier. He made steady progress in the service and was promoted to the ranks of "corporaal ... een man van nugtere bekwaamheid [corporal ... a man of sober-minded competence] (4.9.1725, C. 73), sergeant (1728), ensign (1729) and lieutenant (13.12.1735, C. 99). In 1740 he became commander of the garrison and then "provisioneele capiteijn deeses Casteels" [provisional captain of this Castle] (14.2.1741, C. 116). Soon afterwards he was promoted "tot capitain militair deeses Casteels" [to military captain of this Castle] (20.3.1742, C. 120), the highest military rank at the Cape. He was thus responsible for defending and securing the Cape against attacks from both the interior and the sea. As a consequence of this appointment he became a member of the Council of Policy, in which capacity his signature appeared for the first time on 7 January 1744. At the Council meeting of 9 July 1742 (C. 121) it was minuted that Allemann received a piece of land called "Sonneblom" [Sunflower] as his property and on 8 October 1743 (C. 121) it was mentioned that only 5 of the 12 morgen could be cultivated. He died on 22 Julie 1762 while still a member of the Council. One of his contemporaries, O.F. Menzel, wrote Allemann's biography (see [Source guide](#)).

Freemen

In accordance with the commission of the Lords Seventeen, Jan van Riebeeck had to build a fort, a hospital for the sick, lay out orchards and vegetable gardens, prepare fields in order to provide the ships with grain, and obtain cattle by means of trade with the Khoi tribes in the vicinity of the settlement. He succeeded in achieving all these goals.

But already in 1652, 1653 van Riebeeck realised that there were too few VOC officials to do all the work that needed to be done, and he requested his superiors to send him some “vrije luijden” [freemen] to help cultivate the soil. Because the wheat harvest was insufficient and could not meet the demands of the ships, the VOC rulers gave permission in 1655 for a small number of officials to become free burghers in order to cultivate wheat in the Rondebosch area, which was a more suitable environment although it was further away from the Fort. They would work for a profit and farm more efficiently than the paid officials, but had to sell all their products and livestock to the Company. In February 1657 the first nine free burghers each received a farm along the Liesbeek River, which served as the formal border of the Colony. In 1659 eighty-four morgen had been cultivated and in 1662 there were 60 free burghers, most of whom were wheat-farmers. The other free burghers, some being masons, bar owners, carpenters and fishermen, lived in the vicinity of the Fort.

It was necessary for fresh meat to be delivered on a regular basis to the Company, which had to provide for the needs of the local market and those of the arriving ships. Due to the nomadic life-style of the Khoi tribes who were always on the move looking for suitable grazing for their herds, Company officials had to travel into the interior to trade with them. The livestock thus traded was cared for at cattle-posts situated at “de Schuur”, Steenberg, Saldanha Bay, Tygerberg, Eerste River and Fish Hoek. Stock farming became popular among the settlers and in 1678 four free burghers received grazing permits along the Eerste River.

During his term of office Simon van der Stel encouraged large-scale immigration of people from the Netherlands and adjacent European countries. The population sector of European descent increased and the settlement developed into a colony. In 1695 Commissioner-General van Reede tot Drakenstein recommended that, in order to defend the Cape as a VOC property, emigration from Europe should be encouraged. As a result a significant number of Dutch and German settlers immigrated to the Cape of Good Hope. In order to curb the serious shortage of women a few orphan girls from Amsterdam and Rotterdam were brought to the Cape of Good Hope. The first towns, namely Stellenbosch and the Paarl were established.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes by the Catholic king of France in 1685 not only had serious consequences for France and its neighbouring countries, but also influenced the composition of the population at the Cape. For many years before and also after the revocation the Protestants (Huguenots) in France not only lost their freedom of faith but were also persecuted and even murdered. Hundreds of thousands of Huguenots fled their country of birth and settled in Flanders and the Netherlands. As far as the Cape was concerned, the Lords Seventeen were mainly interested in these people as wine farmers, and later these newcomers and their descendents became masters of their trade. In 1688 the first group of “Franse vlugtelingen” [French refugees] (30.12.1693, C. 27) arrived in Table Bay. Even though there were only about 280 Huguenots that settled at the Cape, they made an important impact on the Cape community. They received farms in the “Fransse Hoek” [Franschoek, lit. French Corner] (15.6.1717, C. 42), and through marriage and intermarriage with the Dutch and German inhabitants they merged into the community.

Because Simon van der Stel wanted to prevent any group of ‘strangers’ or ‘foreigners’ forming he ordered that the Huguenots had to “vermengd met Duijtsche natien te mogen wonen ... omtrent 150 koppen, so mannen als vrouwen” [to live intermingled with the ‘Diets’ (Dutch and German) nations ... about 150 people, men and women] (28 Nov. 1689, C. 20). One-third of the Cape Huguenots, in other words 58 people came from the historic Flanders, which included the Rijsel (Lille) and Calais regions in

present day French-Flanders. The fact that many of the Huguenots who came from these regions spoke Flemish contributed to their easy adaptation to their new environment. Due to their bilingualism they could act as bridge-builders between the French-speaking Huguenots and the Dutch-speaking settlers. The Huguenots held their Reformed religion in the highest esteem. French played an important role in religious and church matters and therefore they demanded the service of a French-speaking minister, Reverend Simond (C. 20) who held his services and ceremonies in French. All correspondence by the French members of the consistory, however, had to be translated into Dutch before the Councillors would discuss the matters concerned.

Although the agricultural sector was in rather good form, the free burghers preferred stock farming to wheat and wine farming. Already by about 1710 there was a definite increase in the number of stock-farmers, and within one to two generations these families gradually moved eastward.

In 1750 the trek-farmers had reached the Sundays River, which was then regarded as the eastern border of the Colony. The rapid expansion of the settlers' territory caused a long and bitter conflict between them and the San people. Ten years later the first trek-farmers entered the region in the Great Karoo where Beaufort-West is now situated. In 1770 they arrived at the Cambdebo where they met Xhosa tribes along the Fish River. During Governor van Plettenberg's inspection tour to this region in 1778 the various parties reached an agreement regarding the border, but neither the trek-farmers nor the Xhosa tribes abided by the conditions (see van Plettenberg's report in [Godée Molsbergen](#) IV, as well as [Expeditions](#)).

Slaves

Because there was so much work to be done in this young and growing settlement, the continuous development and expansion caused an ever-increasing demand for labour. Some of the Khoi could occasionally be used as harvesters and herdsman, but this was insufficient. Since there were far too few VOC officials and free burghers to do all the work, the only way to solve the problem was to make use of slave labour. The slaves were in great demand throughout the Cape Colony.

On 28 March 1658 the ship *Amersfoort* sailed into Table Bay with the first cargo of slaves for this country, namely 174 Angolese on board. At the Council meeting of 8 May 1658 (C. 1) it was minuted that the *Hasselt* had anchored two days earlier with 228 slave men and women on board. Of this group 43 slaves who were all traded at Popo (earlier called Arder, now known as Lagos) died during the voyage. The Council decided that the *Hasselt* should set sail for Batavia “en daarmee af te senden een getal van 140 a 150 stucx slaven” [and to send between 140 and 150 slaves (to Batavia)]. At the meeting of 30 May 1658 (C. 1) it was noted that the Company had to feed 200 slaves per day. On 28 August 1658 (C. 1) the Councillors learnt about the slaves from Guinea and Angola who had absconded. At the Council meeting of 26 October 1678 (C. 13) it was recorded that the slaves traded on Madagascar would be transported immediately to the west coast of Sumatra. This type of reporting occurs throughout the Resolutions up to the end of the VOC rule at the Cape of Good Hope.

The slaves who were brought to the Cape came mainly from the islands of Indonesia, Bengal in the north-western part of India, the Coast of Coromandel, Malaysia, Madagascar and the coasts of Africa, such as Guinea, Angola and Mozambique. According to the slave traders and owners the slaves from Madagascar were excellent at agriculture, while the Angolese slaves could do very hard work. The slaves from India and some places in Indonesia were much appreciated for their abilities as craftsmen.

After their manumission the slave men and women from Bengal were the group who adapted most successfully to the Cape community. The first manumitted slave women were Katrina of Bengal, Maria of Bengal and Angela of Bengal. On 14 March 1680 (C. 14) Maria of Bengal's request for manumission was submitted to and approved by the Council. The following is some information on Angela of Bengal's life: In 1655 Jan van Riebeeck bought this slave from Pieter Kemp. When van Riebeeck's granddaughter, Johanna Maria, visited the Cape in 1710 she wrote in a letter about “Ansiela” who had looked after her father and his brothers and sisters (the van Riebeeck children). Johanna Maria also mentioned that Ansiela had later married a Dutchman and that her daughter was the wife of Captain “B”. This was indeed the case, as “Maai” [derivation of *ma* (mother) ‘old woman’] Angela, also spelt Ansiela, married Arnoldus Basson after her manumission and thus became the progenitress of the Basson family of South Africa. While Angela was still in slavery her daughter Anna (de Koning) was born from an extra-marital relationship with a European. Not only was Anna very attractive, but was also well educated and her signature appears on a number of documents. She was married to Captain Oloff Bergh and in her turn became the progenitress of the Bergh family of South Africa. At the Council meeting of 8 May 1686 (C. 18) Maria Schalck, Armosyn of the Cape and Jannetje Bort, three slave women at the wine estate Constantia were manumitted on condition that they had been baptised and born of Christian fathers. It is also interesting how often slave women who served as wet-nurses, were manumitted. A wet-nurse was employed to suckle another's child and so she contributed in an indirect way to the population growth at the Cape – while she was nursing the baby the mother of the child could get pregnant again!

As far as their owners are concerned, the Cape slaves may be categorised in three groups, those who belonged to the Company, those who belonged to the Company officials and those who belonged to the free burghers. There were also free blacks who owned slaves, for instance the Malay man Intje Aallan of “Mano Capo” who was mentioned in a request included in the Council minutes of 14 April 1733 (C. 92): Three years after his death his two manumitted slaves, Manus of Bouton and Sabina of Macasser (who did not receive letters of manumission due to an administrative error) submitted a request for the manumission of their daughter, Rabbia of the Cape. In Aallan's will in which they were all named as heirs, he also stated that they should be manumitted. Abraham de Haan (also known as Abraham Ade

Haan and Ibrahim Adehaan) and the free black Hercules Valentijn were willing to stand surety for them should any of the three become a burden on the church. Since no executors were appointed, the request was addressed to the Council to grant them manumission. The Council complied with the request.

It often happened that male and female slaves applied for manumission and that these requests were then submitted to the Council. A slave, male or female, would receive his or her letter of freedom on condition that he or she had been baptized, could speak Dutch, and could either present a healthy and capable male slave to the Company to take his or her place or pay the Company the amount equal to the value of a strong young male slave. For example, “Terwijl Laatstelijk nog uijt slavernij sijn ontslagen en in vrijdom gesteld seekere Slavinne der E. Comp:nie gen:t Johanna van Elsje van Mulder van de Caab en haar soontje Jacobus van Johanna van Elsje, als sijnde d’ eerste gedoopt en de hollandse Taal magtig, mits dat sij soo voor haar als haar soon aan d’ E. Comp: komt te betaalen een somma van Een hondert en vijftig guldens Indische valuatie” [While in the last instance, a certain Company female slave called Johanna of Elsje of Mulder of the Cape and her young son Jacobus of Johanna of Elsje of the Cape will be released from slavery and granted their freedom if she has been baptized and can speak Dutch and if she is able to pay the Company a sum of one hundred and fifty guilder, Indian currency, on behalf of her son] (26.9.1747, C. 125). In the next case a male slave was granted his freedom: “Laatstelijk is seekere ’s Comp:s slaaf gen:t Cornelis van Marij van Calmeronde uijt aanmerkinge dat hij het Sacrament des H: Doops heeft ontfangen, en daar en booven ook in de Needer duijtsche Taal seer wel is ervaaren, op sijn versoek uijt slavernije ontslaagen en in vrijdom gesteld, sijnde den slaaf die door denselven aan d’ E. Compagnie in sijn plaats aan gepresenteert word gen:t Paris van Macasser bij visitatie bevonden te weesen van de verEijschte bequaamheeden” [In the last instance and while taking into account that a certain Company slave called Cornelis of Marij of Calmeronde has been baptized and has an excellent command of Dutch, his request to be released from slavery and be set free, is granted, and the slave he presented to the Company to take his place, namely Paris of Macasser has been examined and found fit and has all the required capabilities] (30.7.1748, C. 126). Many similar examples appear in the Resolutions.

It was van Riebeeck’s responsibility to ensure that no one spoke Portuguese, the lingua franca in Asia, to the slaves at the Cape. No language other than “ons Moedertaal” [our mother tongue] was to be used when speaking to the slaves. The children of the Company’s slaves received their education in Dutch, no matter whether they attended school at the slave lodge or at any other place in the Cape. From the information reflected in the Resolutions it appears as if the “Schoolmeesters” [school masters, teachers] at the slave lodge could speak Dutch fluently: Hans Jacob Jurgen of the Cape, in the records also known as Hans Jacob of Mariabeen, applied to be manumitted (2.6.1744, C. 122); he could speak Dutch and had been a teacher for fifteen years. Christoffel of Simosia, who taught for 19 years at the slave lodge, also applied to be manumitted (27.4.1751, C. 129). The Council granted his application, but requested him to remain in his post for the next few years.

Slave issues other than slave trading and requests for manumission are also included in the Resolutions, for example when the Council discussed matters concerning the slaves’ living conditions. At the Council meeting of 30 March 1717 (C. 41) a plan was submitted to enlarge and improve the “slavenhuijs” [slave lodge]. Specifications mentioned, detail that the surface of 180 feet x 85 feet will be enlarged to 230 feet x 85 feet. There will also be a spacious courtyard, new entrance, cubicles to store materials, and store rooms where fire-buckets shall be kept; a work unit for Dutch “mandoors” [mandors, foremen]; living quarters for inland mandors and school teachers; also a staircase to the second floor [first floor ‘ground floor’, second floor ‘first floor’]. The whole surface of the second floor will be allocated to the male and female slaves living together in pairs, and to schoolboys. There will also be two private “secrete” [toilettes] for male and female slaves respectively, equipped with sewage pipes; also entries and staircases; doors on both sides of the kitchen to provide protection against the south-easterly wind; a passage leading to a new small courtyard and living units in a single-story building, which will serve as the living quarters for the “matres” [school mistress, head of a crèche or nursery school] and the sick-mother, the school girls, and the sick, elderly and invalids. There will also be a school and a room for the commissioners or caretakers of the slave lodge.

Prisoners and bandits

A summary of the categories of prisoners serving sentences on Robben Island was included in the minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 March 1792 (C. 202). The VOC rulers distinguished between four classes of prisoners, namely: 1. prisoners of state (political prisoners and persons condemned to death); 2. Europeans; 3. slaves and Khoi that were banned for the rest of their lives, and 4. slaves and Khoi serving ordinary sentences.

In the first group there were “Indianen” [Indians], mainly princes and priests who were banned from the East for political reasons and sent to the Cape. Because of the danger of giving these Indian “grooten” [great ones] even the slightest opportunity to move among the large number of slaves from the East and hereby inciting them to ill deeds, they were imprisoned on Robben Island.

On 28 April 1744 (C. 122) it was minuted that two exiled “Mahometaanse” [Muslim] priests, Said Allowie and Kadje Mattavan, who were chained to one another were held prisoners on Robben Island.

The Council received word on 18 April 1747 (C. 125) that the Macassar “prinsje” [young prince] Dain Mangilieki, the dismissed Poelem Bankeengs, as well as the regent Dain Manompo and his two sons, and the dangerous councillor and priest of Motjong Kombo were on their way from Ceylon to the Cape. According to an “extract” from the general Resolution of the Castle of Batavia (2.8.1746) they were all regarded as extremely rapacious and mutinous. It was for this reason that they had to be sent to Robben Island immediately after their arrival.

The minutes of 18 February 1755 (C. 133) include a report on Manuel Thuart of “Tutucorijn”. (Tuticorin is a town situated in South Tamil Nadu in South India at the Gulf of Mannar, taken over by the Dutch in 1658.) This Company bandit/prisoner who stayed in the slave lodge, belonged to the “Caste Parua” [Parrua caste] a group of local inhabitants who were christened by the Portuguese and called the St. Thomas Christians. The Parruas came from the coast of “Mandurai” (Madurai, also Madura) and specialised in pearl diving. The ship *Deunisveld* developed a leakage near its keel on the starboard side and the officials did not know how to restore it. They realised that they needed the services of “een bequaam Duijkelaar” [a capable diver] to look for the leakage under water. They remembered the former pearl-diver Manuel Thuart who was considered just the right person for the job. On two consecutive days he dived 7 times, staying between 5 to 6 minutes under water to obtain a good look at both sides of the ship. According to him the crevice in the hull could be repaired from the inside. Because Thuart acquitted himself so well of that task the Council of Policy decided that he would no longer be regarded as a bandit. Governor Tulbagh agreed to the recommendation that Thuart should receive 30 rix-dollars as remuneration. Thuart was also appointed as a member of the expedition that sailed with the *Schuijlenburg* to Mozambique. The expedition was ordered to recover the money and other precious goods belonging to the ship *Breedenhoff* that had stranded some time earlier in Delagoa Bay. At the Council meeting of 10 February 1756 (C. 134) it was minuted that according to the journals of Captain Hans Harmensz. and “commies” Dirk Westerhof the search had been in vain. After that expedition nothing was ever heard of Manuel Thuart.

Political exiles and others

Many royals from the East were banned to the Cape. If they were regarded as dangerous they were sent to Robben Island. Other exiles from the East were allowed to live either in the Cape or its districts.

From all that was minuted in the Resolutions about a particular individual over a period of time one can get a fairly good view of his or her activities as far as these were of any concern to the Council of Policy. This was the case with Pangerang Loringh Passir who was banned to the Cape together with his brother, Pangerang Dipa Nagara. (*Pangerang* was a royal title used on Java, denoting the son of a reigning king and likewise a royal title used in East India, denoting a native prince or person of high-ranking.) Pangerang Loringh Passir's name appeared in the Resolutions for the first time in 1719, then also in 1722, 1731, and 1732 and in 1737 with a notice about his death. In June 1737 it was minuted that all the necessary arrangements had been made to send his mortal remains as well as his two wives, children and servants (17 people) back to Batavia.

From time to time the names of exiles from the East were mentioned in the Resolutions, for example the "gebanne Radja Tambora" [the banned Radja Tambora [Raja/rajah 'Indian king or prince'] and the princes of Ternaten. In the minutes of 11 February 1733 (C. 91) it was noted that the "Ternataanssen prins, Ketees Malocco" [Ketees Malocco, Prince of Ternaten] requested that his three children born to his female slave Rosette of Ceylon, namely Amel, Talie (working at junior merchant Decker's) and Adel (working at widow Thibault's) should be manumitted after his death and inherit what he would bequeath to them.

On 12 January 1747 (C. 125) it was minuted that the former Madurese regent Radeen Djoerit had just arrived at the Cape. He requested that he be allowed not to eat bread and the Council decided to allow him to buy rice at cost from the Company's warehouse on a monthly basis. In the minutes it was also mentioned that the Pangerang Loringh Passir had addressed the same request to the Council in the past.

At the Council meeting of 27 March 1759 (C. 137) the case of the two Singhalese exiles, Leander de Saram and Louis Perera who were transferred from Stellenbosch to Swellendam was minuted. At a later stage (4.5.1761, C. 139) the Council learnt about the letters that had been written in their language, Singhalese [a form of Indo-Aryan spoken in the southern part of Ceylon], which could neither be read nor understood by any VOC official.

On 25 November 1788 (C. 180) Achmet, Prince of Ternate, submitted his request to return to the East with his family. The Council of Policy granted the request. He and his family consisting of his wife Constantia of the Cape, her mother Dina of the Cape and her grandmother Phillida of Batavia, as well as their children Salasa, Fatima, Camies and Abdulla all of the Cape, the free "meid" [maid] Cita of Bougies and the male slave Jounga of Ternaten would leave for Batavia on the *Voorberg*. Because the prince was so poor he was exempted from having to pay the fees for transport and meals.

Just before the VOC regime came to an end the names of the following banned people on Robben Island were noted in the Resolutions: the Javanese priest Abdul Rassieb (28.8.1792, C. 206), Jan Smit of Dilburg, who had been banned in 1787 for five years (18.10.1792, C. 208), and Priest Mamoud (7.9.1792, C. 207).

Adriaan van Zeyl, who had been banned from the country on 21 March 1788, wanted to return to his home at the Cape and submitted an application to the Council on 1 October 1793 (C. 219) in this regard.

On 5 Augustus 1795 (C. 231), just a month before Britain assumed the reins of the VOC government at the Cape, it had been minuted that 27 bandits would be sent "herwaarts", in other words from Robben Island to the Cape.

Place names in the Resolutions

It so happened that the West and the East both settled at the southern point of the African continent. By means of the Resolutions it is possible to become acquainted with places in the European sphere, such as *Groot Britanniën, Engeland, Vrankrijk, Deenemarken, Pruisische*, and in the East, such as *China, de Cust van Mallabar, Bengale, Malacca, Padang*, the *Ganges* and *Pattena*, to read about islands, such as *Ambon, Madagascar, Mauritius* and *Cocus*, and places in Africa, such as *Angola* and *Mozambiek*.

The Resolutions are a most extensive and rich source for place name research and include names of towns, farms, regions, rivers and mountains locally and abroad. Apart from these categories there are hundreds of personal names of VOC officials, freemen, political exiles, and slaves who were mainly identified according to their place of origin. This is also of great importance for genealogy. On the TANAP website there is a map from the 1730s with the names of places and indigenous tribes of South Africa at that time.

Place names from the Resolutions such as *Tafelberg, Saldanha Baij, Baaij fals, Ronde bosje*, names of districts such as *Stellenbosch, Draakensteijn, Land van Waveren, Swarte Land, the Colonie van Swellendam* and other places such as *Grootvadersbosch, Attaquas Cloof, Gourits Rivier, Sneeuwberg* and the *Caro* – each having its own interesting story of origin – are still part of the South African names landscape. In the following discussion of place names the current spelling form is used, unless indicated otherwise.

The Cape of Good Hope

This is the place name that appears most frequently in the Resolutions and has therefore not been separately coded. It is however possible to search for the name by using a variety of spelling forms. Initially the Portuguese name, *Cabo da Boa Esperanza*, had been used but was later slightly deviated to *Cabo de Boa Esperance* and became the most frequently used form. Later the Dutch phrase, namely *de Goede Hoop* was combined with *Cabo*, and even later *Kaap* appeared on the names' scene. In the late 18th century *Cape Town* was used in letters written in English to the Council of Policy. The following list provides a variety of possible forms and spellings, preceded by the date when it first appeared in the Resolutions:

- 1652 *Cabo de Boa Esperance in 't Fort de Goede Hoop*
- 1659 *Cabo de Bonne Esperance*
- 1665 *Cabo Bonna Esperance*
- 1661 *alhier aan Cabo* [here at the Cape]
- 1667 *Cabo d' Boae Spaei* [only once]
- 1668 *in 't Fort de Goede Hoop aan Cabo*
- 1669 *dese Cabo*
- 1679 *in 't Fort d' Goede Hoop*
- 1679 *in 't Casteel de Goede Hoop* [this Castle is now in use] (C. 14)
- 1782 *Cape of Good Hope*
- 1783 *Kaap de Goede Hoop*
- 1784 *Cape Town* [Commander Bickerton's Eng. letter to the Council] (C. 166)

Place names of Khoi origin

Many place names of Khoi origin are still used as South African place names. Long before the establishment of the VOC settlement at the Cape these names had already been known and used. Along with the expansion of the colony the settlers came across even more place names of indigenous origin (see under [Expeditions](#), the expedition by Oloff Bergh, and the journey of Hendrik Hop and Jacobus Coetzee to the Namaqua Land). More information regarding the origin and history of the following place names can be found in Nienaber and Raper (1977, 1980). Wherever possible, the first time a particular place name appears in the Resolutions the context, date and volume number are provided.

The original Khoi place name is used

- *Hantam* (*hantams ... Districten*, 17.5.1774, C. 152) is a derivation of the word *heyntama*, the plant that was painted and described in Simon van der Stel's Journal in 1685 by his artist cum scientist Claudius as "een soort van geranium met een soete en eetbare wortel, die dierhalven by d' Inwoonders seer getrocken" [a type of geranium with a sweet and edible root, which is for this reason much liked by the inhabitants]. The first notes about the name show that the area where this plant species was found stretches from the high mountain where it was first discovered. Today the name Hantam denotes the whole region.
- *Kamdeboo* (*Camdebos ... Districten*, 17.5.1774, C. 152) means 'green pool' or 'green hippo pool' and is a compound of Khoi *Cam-/Kam-* 'green' and *-debo(o)* 'pool, hippo pool'. The Khoi called the place as such due to the half-circle green hippo pool situated in this region.
- *Karoo* (*Caro*, 4.2.1794, C. 221) means 'dry', 'hard soil', due to the nature of the region. The nomadic Khoi trekked with their livestock in this vast area. At first the settlers called the region the "Droogeveld" [dry veld], a translation of the Khoi place name.
- *Tsitsikamma* (*Citzij kamma*, 19.5.1789, C. 182) is probably derived from Khoi *sitse* 'begin' and *-kamma* 'water, river', so called due to the high rainfall and the many rivers and streams in the forest along the coastline between Plettenberg Bay and Humansdorp.

A Khoi tribe name is combined with a Dutch/Afr. element

- *Namakwaland* (*Namaquas*, 1.2.1659, C. 1) is derived from the Khoi tribe name *Namakwa* 'Nama-men' and Afr. *-land*. Brink (1761) called this region "Amacquas Land" (Nienaber and Raper, 1977:846). The region is situated in the north-western part of the former Cape Colony.
- *Obiekwaberge* (*Obiquâs*, 26.3.1676, C. 9) is derived from the Khoi tribe name *Obiekwa* and Afr. *-berge* [mountains]. The tribe was also called the Ibekwa, Hawekwa and Abikwa. These mountains are situated near Tulbagh in the Western Cape Province.
- *Outenikwaland* (*Houteniquase*, 31.3.1690, V.C. 12) is derived from the Khoi tribe name *Outenikwa* and Afr. *-land*. It is the name of the region between the towns of Knysna and Mossel Bay, south of the Outeniqua Mountains.
- *Gamtoosrivier* (*Gamtouerland*, 11.3.1710, C. 27) is derived from the Khoi tribe name, *Gamtouers* and Afr. *-rivier* [river]. The tribe used to live in the vicinity of this river. Ensign Beutler (see [Expeditions](#)) used the form *Gamtausch*. In 1770 the Gamtoos River became the eastern border of the Cape Colony.
- *Gouritsrivier* (*Gourisse Hottentots*, 1.10.1699, C. 23) is derived from the Khoi tribe name, *Gowrikwas* and Afr. *-rivier*. During their expedition into the interior in 1667 Corporal Hieronymus Cruse and his company met these people. The kraals of the tribe were situated on the banks of the river that later became known as the Gourits River.

The place name consists of a Khoi and Dutch/Afr. element

- *Leeu-Gamka* is derived from Afr. *leeu* [lion] and Khoi *-gam-* 'leeu' [lion] and the click sound *-ka*. The name is tautological, since both elements mean 'lion'. It is a town at the confluence of the Leeu and Gamka rivers in the Western Cape.
- *Touwsrivier* is derived from Nama *tsao-s* 'asbosse' [ash-bushes] (*Salsola aphylla*) and Afr. *-rivier*. It was possibly named after these plants growing there, but more probably after the appearance of the soil. In 1778 Colonel Robert Gordon wrote: "Vier uren na de draaij daar de Tow of Ass rivier langs loopt" [four hours to the turn where the Tow or Ash River flows].

The Khoi place name or phrase is translated into Dutch/Afrikaans

- *Botrivier* (*Bot Rievier*, 3.1.1708, C. 26) is derived from *bot-* being an abbreviation of Dutch *boter*/Afr. *botter*, a translation of Khoi *Gouga* 'botter' [butter] and Afr. *-rivier*. It was so called because in the early 18th century people from Cape Town went there to obtain butter from the Khoi, who had their kraals at that place because the grazing was good.
- *Riviersonderend* (*Rivier Sonder Eijnde*, 11.3.1710, C. 27) is a translation of Khoi *Kannakamkanna* with the same meaning, namely 'river without end'. The name was apparently given because it was difficult to locate its source among the many headwaters and tributaries.

Places named after members of the Council of Policy

A number of towns in the former Cape Colony were named after members of the Council of Policy and/or family members. These place names still exist and form part of the South African name heritage. Where possible, the first time a particular place name appears in the Resolutions the context, date and volume number are provided.

- *Riebeek-Kasteel* (*Riebeekscasteel*, 13.3.1701, C. 24) [Riebeek's Castle] is the name of a mountain that was named in honour of Jan van Riebeeck on 3 February 1661 by Pieter Cruythoff and the members of his expedition.
- *Stellenbosch* (*Stellenbos*, 27.10.1681, C. 15) was named in 1679 by Simon van der Stel after himself and the "Wilde Bosch" [wild forest] there. In 1685 the village was founded.
- The *Drakenstein* region (25.12.1687, C. 19) was named in October 1687 in honour of the High Commissioner, Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede tot Drakenstein, who had visited the Cape two years previously. In 1687 Governor Simon van der Stel opened this region to farmers.
- The region *Land van Waveren* (13.4.1711, C. 28) was named in 1699 by Willem Adriaan van der Stel in honour of the Oetgens van Waveren family, from which his mother was descended. Before this date, but also subsequent to it, the region had also been known as *Roodezand* (*Roodesand*, 1.6.1698, C. 23) [red sand]. The region corresponds to the present *Tulbagh* district, named after Governor Ryk Tulbagh.
- *Swellendam* (25.6.1748, C. 126) situated in the South Cape was named in October 1747 after Governor Hendrik Swellengrebel (1700-1760) and his wife, Helena ten Damme.
- While on his journey to the interior Governor Joachim van Plettenberg named *Plettenbergbaai* (*Plettenbergs baaij*, 17.6.1785, C. 168) in September 1778 after himself.
- *Graaff-Reinet* (*Graaff Rijnet*, 13.12.1785, C. 169) situated in the Eastern Cape, was named in 1786 by Landdrost Woeke in honour of Governor Jacobus van der Graaff and his wife, Reinet.
- *Gordon's Bay* was named after Colonel Robert Jakob Gordon, who arrived at the Cape in 1777 as captain and later took charge of the garrison.

A few place names from the East

Eastern place names, such as *Batavia*, *Macassar*, *Malabar* and *de Cust van Malabar* [the coast of Malabar] (also *de Cust*), *Ambon* and *Malacca* often appear in the Resolutions.

- *Batavia* on Java was founded in 1619 and became the capital of the Dutch Indies, the VOC's Asian empire and the headquarters of all the Company's activities in the East. After independence from Indonesia Batavia was renamed to its original name, Jakatra, Jakarta.
- *Macassar* (now Ujung Pandang) was an important trade centre on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi (earlier Celebes). In 1512 the Portuguese arrived and built a fort. The VOC took Macassar in 1667, built a fort and named it Rotterdam. In 1694 the Company banned a prince and Moslem scholar, Sheg Yusuf, to the Cape where he established a Muslim community. His Kramat [Muslim shrine, sacred grave] on Signal Hill is one of the six Muslim graves forming a holy circle around the city. The minutes of the Council meeting of 6 September 1757 (C. 135) mentioned "de sogenaamde Macassers Duijnen agter de Buffels Valleij" [the so-called Macassers Dunes behind the Buffalo Valley], where charcoal was made for use by the Cape inhabitants.
- *Malabar* was a former district but is now part of Kerala, India. The Coast of Malabar, abbreviated to *De Cust* [The Coast], denotes a region on the south-western coast of India, the states of Mysore and Kerala, between the Western Ghats (a mountain range in South India) and the Arabian Sea.
- *Ambon*, *Amboina* and *Amboyna* are the different names of an island of the Moluccas, Indonesia. The Portuguese who 'discovered' the island in 1510 established a settlement in 1521. Once the centre of the Portuguese clove monopoly it was taken by the VOC in 1605. All the Moluccan islands were gradually brought under VOC control, eventually also Ternate in 1683.
- *Malacca* is a harbour city in Malaysia that dominated the spice route. The Portuguese settled here in 1511, but the VOC took the city from them in 1641.

In many places in the Resolutions of the Council of Policy names of VOC trade posts in the East are mentioned, for example *Bengale*, *Bima*, *Calicut*, *Casimbasar*, *Ceylon*, *China*, *Galle*, *Houghly*, *Koromandel*, *Mocha*, *Nagapatnam*, *Palicatta*, *Siam*, *Sumatra*, *Suratte*, *Ternate*, *Timor* and *Trincomale*.

There are also quite a number of cargo lists included in the Resolutions. Many of the textile names appearing in these lists were derived from place names in the Middle and Far East, for example *armoesijn* from Ormuz, Persia, *gilang* from Gilan, Persia, *guinees* from Guinea, and *salempoeris* from Salemporis/Serampore on the Coast of Coromandel (see [Woordelys](#) [Glossary]).

Shipping along the Cape route

If there had been no shipping activities the Cape would not have been discovered and colonised. What becomes quite clear from the Resolutions is the continuous arrival and departure, a restless bustle when the fleet arrived, each of the ships carrying cargo, sailors and passengers, either as visitors or immigrants to the Cape. Ship names such as *Standvastigheid*, *Liefde*, *Gecroonde Leeuw*, *Patriot*, *Landscroon*, *Bartha Petronella*, *Wackerheijd*, *Held Wolthemede*, *Vlissingen*, *Tolsduijn* and *Admiraal de Ruijter* become good acquaintances because one often reads about them when they arrive year after year at the Cape, all these particulars being noted in the Resolutions.

The Cape continued providing food, drinks and other goods to the Company's fleets on their voyages to and from the East. Many ships belonging to other countries, of which England was a frequent visitor, also anchored at the Cape harbour. The captains of these vessels usually asked the Council of Policy's permission to buy goods at the Cape. In spite of a ban on providing goods to ships that were not known to the authority, the Council of Policy in most cases granted the captains permission to buy meat and fresh produce from the burghers.

On 19 Augustus 1725 the tranquillity characterising life at the Cape was suddenly replaced by great excitement when an unidentified ship sailed into False Bay. Later it became clear that it was indeed the English contraband ship the *Grooten Alexander*. The Council immediately sent an ensign with 50 soldiers to Simon's Bay. Two burgher divisions were also sent to Simon's Bay and the Hottentots-Holland to prevent the ship's crew coming ashore or taking refreshments on board. After a few days of high tension the ship set sail on the evening of 22 August and left for the open sea.

In 1727 the Lords Seventeen sent five English divers to the Cape to look for coins and other valuables in the shipwrecks in Table Bay and Saldanha Bay. Although a reasonable amount of coins and other cargo were salvaged, the operation was not very successful because the wrecks were partially covered by sand.

The Council was always willing to consider ways to ensure safer shipping. For example, Jacobus Moller and Jan de Heere were requested in 1732 to conduct a survey of Table Bay, Simon's Bay and Saldanha Bay and draw new maps of the harbours. According to the officials' report Simon's Bay and Saldanha Bay had quite a number of shortcomings, while Table Bay was the best-suited harbour. In the early 1740s it was decided, however, that in wintertime all ships should rather anchor at Simon's Bay instead of Table Bay. During the same period a jetty was built at Table Bay.

Many ships went aground, not only along the South African coastline but also in Table Bay. Others disappeared in storms at sea, only to reappear as pieces of wreckage on distant shores. Ships that were too old, battered by heavy seas and no longer fit to sail, were withdrawn from service and dismantled. Everything that could still be used was then sold at a "publicque Vendutie" [public auction] and in this way the Company's funds were augmented.

Expeditions to other regions of Southern Africa

Any official intention to organise an expedition, be it on land or at sea, had to be announced at a Council meeting. In consecutive meetings progress with the preparations would be reported, as well as who was needed for the journey, how many and what goods were required etc. After completion of such a mission the Council of Policy received a full report on the achievements and problems that had been encountered. The “daghregisters” [diaries] of such expeditions ensured continuous reporting on a daily basis. At present these documents are of great historical importance.

Expeditions to the interior of the country were undertaken for several reasons: to reach agreements with Khoi chiefs, to trade livestock from indigenous tribes, and to explore the unknown regions with a view towards expansion or to determine the viability of such enterprises. Frequent expeditions took place along the African coastline, mainly westward to Loanda in Angola and eastward to Terra de Natal and Rio de la Goa. Visits were frequently undertaken to the islands of Madagascar and Mauritius to trade slaves and other goods.

Journeys mentioned in the Resolutions

The following are some of the journeys and expeditions mentioned in the Resolutions:

- Pieter Cruithoff's journey to the northern regions of the Cape settlement (10 January 1670, C. 5; 28 November 1672, C. 8)
- Oloff Bergh's journey to various Khoi "naties" [peoples/nations] (1 October 1699, C. 23)
- The journey to Madagascar and Mauritius (5 July 1712, C. 29)
- The expedition to Rio de la Goa and Terra de Natal (31 December 1720, C. 55)
- Ensign Beutler's journey to the interior of the country (1 February 1752, C. 130)
- Hendrik Hop and Jacobus Coetzee's expedition to Namaqua Land (30 June 1761, C. 139; 23 November 1762, C. 140)
- Joachim van Plettenberg's journey (26 May, 1 September and 1 December 1778, C. 156)
- Report on the journey to Bruintjeshoogte in the Eastern Cape (7 September 1792, C. 207; 12 August 1793, C. 217).

VOC trading post/fort at Rio de la Goa, Mozambique (1720-1729)

The VOC's occupation of Delagoa Bay was an important enterprise. In 1719 the Lords Seventeen decided to establish a trading post at the site and the Chamber of Amsterdam equipped an expedition to establish the post. This new settlement would be under jurisdiction of the Cape. All important court cases were to be heard at the Cape of Good Hope and for all cases except the most insignificant ones an appeal could be lodged with the Court of Justice at the Cape.

In November 1720 the expedition arrived in Table Bay. However, shortly after their arrival the leader of the expedition, "opperhoofd" Claas Nieuwhof, died. On 3 December 1720 the Council of Policy appointed its clerk, Willem van Taak, as Nieuwhof's successor. The expedition left the Cape on 14 February 1721 and reached its destination on 29 March. The group pitched camp at the site where Lourenço Marques [now Maputo] would eventually emerge. The expedition experienced extreme difficulties, since sixteen men died of Delagoa fever between 27 April and 31 May. Both Willem van Taak, who died on 31 May, and his successor Casparus Swertner were victims of the fever. (Early explorers in Africa were unaware of the fact that a particular species of mosquito was the carrier of this deadly disease, more commonly known as *malaria*, literally meaning 'unhealthy air'.) On 19 April 1721 the settlement was also attacked and taken over by the crews of two pirate ships. Agricultural activities did not meet expectations and there was a series of crop failures. Due to extreme setbacks its name was changed to "Fort Lijdzaamheid" [Fort of Patience/Long-suffering].

Because the settlement experienced countless problems the Governor and the Council of Policy at the Cape regarded the trading post as a grave liability and often stated that it was a far greater burden than a profit to the Company. After many hardships, setbacks and a great loss of lives at the outpost the Council of Policy was eventually ordered and authorised to command the breaking up of camp at Rio de la Goa and the return of the remaining VOC servants to the Cape (15 November 1729, C. 84).

British take-over of the Cape of Good Hope

Financial and commercial setbacks in the midst of contradictory political factors (the war between the Netherlands and England, 1780-1784, as well as the Great Revolution that started in 1789 in France, which declared war against England and the Republic of the Netherlands) forced the VOC to cut down expenses and to reorganise the Company. After their arrival at the Cape in June 1792, the Commissioners-General S.C. Nederburgh and S.H. Frijkenius introduced certain changes. In Europe history also took a turn when French troops occupied the Netherlands in 1795 and thus made a Batavian take-over possible. Prince Willem V fled to England.

On 11 June 1795 an English fleet under the command of Admiral Elphinstone and General Craig anchored in Simon's Bay. Although Commissioner Sluysken and the Council of Policy refused to surrender they were in a weak military position. After a month of skirmishes at Muizenburg the English gained a victory over the Cape militia. On the last page of the last volume in which the Resolutions of the Council of Policy are contained (C. 231), appears the written conditions of "Capitulation" in both English and Dutch, signed on 16 September 1795.

In 1799 the Batavian Republic abolished the "Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie".