



# Slave Lodge

Extracts from <http://media1.mweb.co.za/iziko/sh/resources/slavery/slavelodge.html>

Also see:

<http://www.sahistory.org.za/south-africa-1652-1806/history-slavery-and-early-colonisation-sa>

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<http://www.africaresource.com/rasta/sesostris-the-great-the-egyptian-hercules/indian-slaves-in-south-africa-a-retrospect/>

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The Slave Lodge is one of the oldest buildings in Cape Town. The many names of the building over three centuries – Slave Lodge, Government Offices Building, Old Supreme Court, and SA Cultural History Museum – reflect the long and rich history of the building.

In 1998 this museum was renamed the Slave Lodge. Under the umbrella theme, ‘From human wrongs to human rights, exhibitions on the lower level of this museum explore the long history of slavery in South Africa. Through our changing, temporary exhibitions we address issues around and raise awareness of human rights.

The upper level galleries as well as other spaces in the museum will be renewed in the coming years.

An audio-guided tour can be rented at a nominal fee. This guide takes you on a historical journey through the Slave Lodge and gives you insight into the dismal living conditions.

School groups can book lessons with one of our educators. For more information about school visits see the Education and Public Programmes section of this website.

Unfortunately, the museum does not have a shop. Visitors are however able to purchase an informative brochure entitled “Slaves at the Cape: Oppression, Life and Legacy”. The brochure

provides visitors with an overview of the history of slavery at the Cape. Visiting exhibitions are sometimes accompanied by publications which can be purchased at the reception desk.

## Exhibition Space

The upper galleries of the Iziko Slave Lodge are open to the public. The majority of these exhibitions are older displays which showcase some highlights from our ceramics, silverware and Egyptology collections to name a few. These exhibitions do not focus on the history of the slavery in South Africa.

A selection of ceramics from various parts of the world can be enjoyed in the ceramics gallery. South African wares on show include Ceramic Studio and Linn Ware objects made at Olifantsfontein during the first half of the 20th century, as well as contemporary works.

The silver gallery shows a range of domestic and commemorative objects of Cape, English, Malaysian and Russian origin. The Mullne Collection of Cape silver, on loan from DITSONG Museums in Pretoria, is also on show.

In the coming years we wish to transform these galleries to draw links to national heritage and history.

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# Slave Routes to Cape Town

**Although a few of the first slaves came from West Africa, most slaves came from societies around the Indian Ocean Basin. Slaves came from Madagascar, from Mozambique and the East African coast, from India and from the islands of the East Indies such as Sumatra, Java, the Celebes, Ternate and Timor.**



## Places of origin

The first slaves at the Cape arrived on 28 March 1658 on board the Amersfoort. This group was captured by the Dutch from a Portuguese slaver that was on its way to Brazil. Of the 250 slaves that were captured, only 170 survived the journey to the Cape. Most of the slaves on board the Amersfoort were originally captured by

the Portuguese in present-day Angola. The second group also came from West Africa. On 6 May 1658, 228 slaves from Ghana arrived at the Cape on board the Hassalt.

These two groups were the only slaves who came from West Africa. The Cape Colony was part of the Dutch East India properties and governed by the Dutch East India Company, better known as the VOC. The VOC and Dutch West Indian Company had an agreement that the VOC would limit its slave raiding to regions east of the Cape.

The slave trade to the Cape was controlled by the VOC. Burghers were not allowed to trade slaves in their country of origin. The VOC send out slavers to buy slaves and bring them to the Cape Colony. These slave expeditions went mainly to Mozambique and Madagascar.

| <b>VOC-sponsored slave voyages, 1652 1796</b> |                    |                    |                  |               |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>Region</b>                                 | <b>1652 - 1699</b> | <b>1700 - 1749</b> | <b>1750 1795</b> | <b>Totals</b> |
| Madagascar                                    | 12                 | 9                  | 12               | 33            |
| Mozambique, East African coast, Zanzibar      | -                  | -                  | 5                | 5             |
| Delagoa Bay                                   | -                  | Several            | -                | Several       |
| Dahomey (Ghana)                               | 1                  | -                  | -                | 1             |
| <b>Totals</b>                                 | 13                 | 9                  | 17               | 39            |

Source: Jim Armstrong & Nigel Worden in R. Elphick & H. Giliomee (eds). 1989. The Shaping of South African Society 1652 1840. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, p. 112.

| <b>Number of slaves delivered to Cape by VOC sponsored voyages, 1652-1796</b> |                    |                    |                  |               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>Region</b>                                                                 | <b>1652 - 1699</b> | <b>1700 - 1749</b> | <b>1750 1795</b> | <b>Totals</b> |
| Madagascar                                                                    | 1 069              | 779                | 977              | 2820          |
| Mozambique, East African coast, Zanzibar                                      | -                  | -                  | 974              | 974           |
| Delagoa Bay                                                                   | -                  | approx. 280        | -                | approx. 280   |
| Dahomey (Ghana)                                                               | 226                | -                  | -                | 226           |
| <b>Totals</b>                                                                 | 1290               | approx. 1059       | 1951             | approx. 4300  |

Source: Jim Armstrong & Nigel Worden in R. Elphick & H. Giliomee (eds). 1989. The Shaping of South African Society 1652 1840. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, p. 112.

A second source of slaves were the VOC's return fleets from Batavia and other places in the east which sailed around the Cape on their way to Europe. VOC officials could not take their slaves with them when they returned to the Netherlands, because slavery was not allowed in the Netherlands . Many of these officials sold

their slaves at the Cape because they could get a better price for their slaves at the Cape than in the East Indies. Foreign ships on their way to the Americas from Madagascar also sometimes sold slaves at the Cape.

The Indian subcontinent was the main source of slaves during the early part of the 18th century. Approximately 80% of slaves came from India during this period. A slaving station was established in Delagoa Bay (present-day Maputo) in 1721, but was abandoned in 1731. Between 1731 and 1765 more and more slaves were bought from Madagascar.

In 1795, the Cape Colony became a British colony before it was returned to the Dutch in 1802. During this first period of British rule, South-East Africa became the main source of slaves. This trend continued with the return of the Dutch who continued to buy slaves from slave traders operating in present-day Mozambique.

### **The sea journey**

The VOC sent slavers to Mozambique and Madagascar. The main purpose of these expeditions was to trade slaves. In those days, travelling by ship was very uncomfortable and unhygienic for ordinary people. It was even worse for slaves, who had to be kept confined.

It was costly to bring slaves back to Cape Town. Firstly, enough food had to be taken along for all the slaves for the journey. That would have been expensive, even if the slaves were not fed adequately. Many slaves died of illness during the journey. We know for example that 70 slaves out of 250 died on the Amersfoort.

Secondly, the slaves had to be guarded. Slaves could rebel and try to take control of the ship. Some slaves also committed suicide by jumping overboard rather than face a life of slavery. As described in this extract from the journal of the Schuijlenburg (Rijksargief, VOC 10 814), returning from Madagascar.

*24 Oct. 1752: It was discovered in the morning that 13 slaves were missing from the hold... some were found who stated that the others jumped into the water during the night in an attempt to swim to land, but it must be assumed with the stormy seas that they have drowned.*

And

*16 Nov. 1752: Some of the slaves attacked the sailor who went to give them food, and came up out of the hatch, but they were forced back and hand and leg chains were secured on them all. The leader was then questioned, but he refused to say anything, so some of the younger slaves were interrogated who said that there had been a plot amongst the slaves to massacre all the Europeans and to escape. It was decided to severely punish the leaders as an example to the others.*

### **Arrival at the Cape**

Many people believe that the slaves who were brought to the Cape were kept in the Slave Lodge on the corner of present-day Adderley and Wale Streets in Cape Town before they were sold under the [Slave Tree](#) behind the Slave Lodge. However, we know that the Slave Lodge was not used to keep slaves who were to be sold to private buyers and we are not sure that slaves were sold under the Slave Tree.



## **INDIAN SLAVES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

A little-known aspect of Indian-South African relations

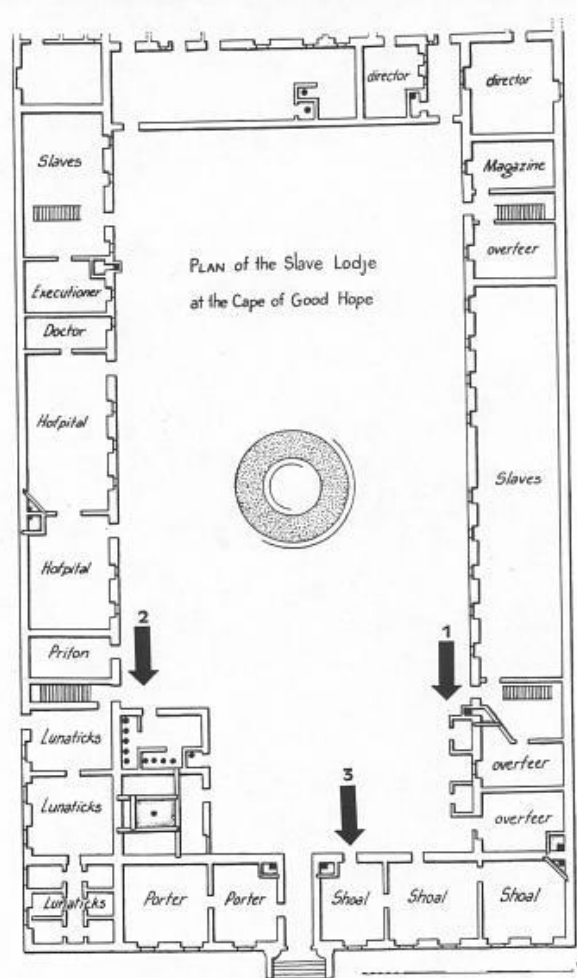
Soon after Jan van Riebeeck set up a Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, to supply provisions to Dutch ships plying to and from India and the East Indies, people from India were taken to the Cape and sold into slavery to do domestic work for the settlers, as well the dirty and hard work on the farms.

A woman from Bengal named Mary was bought for van Riebeeck in Batavia in 1653. Two years later, in 1655, van Riebeeck purchased, from the Commander of a Dutch ship returning from Asia to Holland, a family from Bengal – Domingo and Angela and their three children. On May 21, 1656, the marriage was solemnised at the Cape between Jan Wouters, a white, and Catherine of Bengal who was liberated from slavery. Later in the year Anton Muller was given permission to marry Domingo Elvingh, a woman from Bengal.

From then until late eighteenth century when the import of slaves from Asia was prohibited, many hundreds, if not thousands, of persons from India – mainly Bengal, Coromandel Coast and Kerala – were taken to the Cape and sold into slavery.

Officers of ships and officials of the Dutch India Company returning to Holland usually took slaves or servants with them and sold them at high profit in the Cape. (Slaves could not be taken to Holland where slavery was prohibited). Many others were carried by Danish and British ships. While most of the Indians were taken from Dutch trading posts in India, a considerable number were also taken from Batavia as thousands of Indians had been taken by the Dutch as slaves to Batavia.

- See more at: <http://www.africaresource.com/rasta/sesostri-the-great-the-egyptian-hercules/indian-slaves-in-south-africa-a-retrospect/#sthash.jUpsTJkF.dpuf>



# and resistance in the Slave Lodge

**The architecture of the Slave Lodge resembled a goal or military fort. There were only a few small windows and these were barred. The Lodge was designed to keep slaves in and outsiders out. The slaves were kept under lock and key at night to prevent desertion. Desertion, arson and poor or slow work were the most common ways of showing resistance by slaves.**

The name of at least one Lodge deserter is known. Lena joined the fugitive slave society at [Hangklip](#) near present-day Betty's Bay. They led a precarious life and survived mainly by stealing from surrounding farms. Lena was born in 1700 in Cape Town and deserted in 1725. She was caught in 1730 and was flogged and branded as punishment. She also had to work in heavy chains for the rest of her life. This did not seem to deter her as she stole linen in 1737.

The slaves in the Slave Lodge were controlled by a strict hierarchical system in which all but the highest ranks were filled by slaves. According to the historian, Robert Shell, descent or race played an important part in determining a person's position in the hierarchy. Free "whites" had the most power and imported "black" people the least. The highest ranks available to slaves, such as foremen, were always filled by "mulattos" while the lowest ranks such as that of the Fiscal's assistants (then known as "kaffers") or hard manual labour, went to mainly imported black slaves. The middle ranks were mostly occupied by "mulattos" and locally born slaves.

The VOC employees were in overall control of the Lodge and responsible for security. They kept themselves separate from the day-to-day operations of the Lodge and none lived in the Lodge. The Slave Overseer, later called the Director, had other duties besides being responsible for the Slave Lodge. The administration of the Lodge appeared on the duty sheet of another four VOC officials, namely the Fiscal, the Commissioner of Company Slaves and the two foremen who did duty as quartermasters and gatekeepers. The tasks of the last two officials were to lock the door every night and to take the key to the Fiscal's house in the evening and collect it again in the morning.

The slaves managed themselves to a large extent according to a military style barrack model. The translators were next in the hierarchy after the free officials. In the next tier came "mulatto" foremen, followed by the mandoor who were in charge of the work teams. The mandoor were usually either mulatto or born at the Cape.

According to the 1714 census there were seven mandoor, each with an average of 66 slaves under his control. A strict routine was followed. The mandoor and the slaves under his control gathered in the courtyard at 6 o'clock in the morning before starting to work. Roll call was held again at 8 o'clock in the evening after which prayers were said. The mandoor

inspected the building daily.

The mandoor enjoyed special benefits such as separate sleeping quarters, extra clothing as well as additional personal items. It seems as if the allocation of clothing was controlled by the mandoor.

The next level in the hierarchy was the officer boys (officier jongens) who controlled the men. During the period of 1718-1721 there was one officer boy for every five to eight men. They also received more clothing and controlled rations, with the exception of clothing rations.

The artisans, the next in line, were usually mulattos or from South East Asian descent. There was a strong belief in those days that a person's personality and skills were determined by their ethnicity. People from South East Asia were regarded as being good artisans.

The lowest rank slaves in the Slave Lodge, were the Fiscal's and executioner's assistants or kaffers. Only the convicts had a lower status. There were 19 kaffers listed in an inventory of the VOC in 1795. Besides assisting the executioner, they also did most of the flogging ordered by the Court of Justice, administered punishment to privately owned slaves and maintained law and order in public spaces.

Although everybody, including other slaves, looked down on them, the kaffers received better quality clothing: special police uniforms with waistcoats. They were also the only slaves allowed to carry weapons. They were not only exempted from the many curfews ruling slaves' lives, but it was their duty to enforce these curfews. They did not only have jurisdiction over the slaves, but over the burghers as well.

Contrary to slaves in private ownership, many women in the Lodge did the same type of work as the men. However, the women had lower status than the men. The women worked under a male mandoor outside the Lodge, but were under the control of a female equivalent of a mandoor, a matres or matron, inside the Lodge. Only three matron's names are known. All three were able to obtain their freedom. Armozijn van de Caab was manumitted in 1711 by Governor W.A. van der Stel. She was able to buy her daughter's freedom three years later. Manda Gratia's freedom was bought in 1714 by William Frisnet who married her afterwards. Manda was able to buy all her children's freedom as well. Christijna van de Caab obtained her freedom together with that of her 13 year old daughter, Johanne Barbara, in August 1728.

The undermistress (ondermeesteress) was next in rank amongst the women. These women were also of mulatto descent. It seems as if they were able to earn their own money as some of them, such as Anna Dapoer, were able to buy their freedom. The next rank, two female slave officials, had an average of 79 women under their control, many more subordinates than their male counterparts, the officer boys. Like their male equivalents, they also received more clothing than the other women.

While the men were controlled by a military style system, the

system for women echoed the family ideal. The family metaphor was strengthened by the system of external (white, usually wives of VOC officials) and internal (slave) mothers. The Council of Policy appointed four external mothers in 1687 to look after girls younger than 14 and to teach them good manners and handcrafts such as needlework and embroidery. The girls were allowed to earn pocket money by using these skills to work for VOC officials and burghers.

The internal mothers looked after the children in the Lodge's crèche as well as taking care of the children in the slave hospital. A mother was supposed to be released from duties when her child fell ill, but this did not always happen. According to the 1710 records, there were 19 children in the hospital, but only one mother was released from her duties to stay with her child. It is doubtful that the position of internal mother existed for long, as no record can be found of it towards the end of the 18th century.

## Life in the Slave Lodge

**Life was not easy in the Lodge. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) controlled every aspect of the slaves' lives. They received instruction in the Christian religion and all children were baptised whether the parents of the child were Christian or not. On the other hand, all the children received formal schooling, a privilege that few children of free parents enjoyed. The VOC also tried to regulate the personal behaviour of the slaves in the Slave Lodge.**

Despite the VOC's concern for the personal behaviour of the slaves in the Slave Lodge, they allowed the Lodge to be used as a brothel. The doors of the Lodge were open to free men between eight and nine every evening. Not all the resulting relationships constituted prostitution. Some of these relationships led to marriage.

In general, life in the Slave Lodge was unhealthy. The Slave Lodge was wet, dark and dirty. The high death rates could partly be attributed to three smallpox epidemics during the 18th century, but the unhygienic conditions must also have played a significant role.

## Religion

The Dutch Reform Church was the only legal church in the colony and was controlled by the VOC. The position of the Dutch Reform Church on slavery was deliberately kept vague to prevent alienating influential slave owners. It was generally understood amongst owners at the Cape that the Church expected that slave children should be baptised and that baptised slaves should not be sold. However, in practice, relatively few slaves were baptised.

The Dutch East India company (VOC), however, took its religious obligations seriously. All the slaves in the Slave Lodge were baptised in 1666. Thereafter, all children were baptised within seven days of their birth whether their parents were Christian or not. The VOC considered themselves to be the head of the household, and not the child's parents. By 1795, a total of 1715 children from the Lodge were baptised. Approximately two thirds of all the slave children who were baptised during the VOC period (1652-1795) lived in the Lodge. All the Lodge children received religious instruction in the Lodge school. Commissioner Adriaan van Rheede stipulated in 1685 that no slave belonging to the VOC may be sold, exchanged or exported. This stipulation was adhered to until the end of the VOC period in 1795. The adults also received Christian instruction. They were taught Christian prayers in Dutch every evening and had to attend church twice on a Sunday.

## The Slave Lodge School

In 1658, the first school for slave children was started by Pieter van Stael, the local sick comforter and brother-in-law of the first Dutch commander, Jan van Riebeeck. The main aims of the school were to teach the children Dutch and the Christian religion. This school did not last for long.

Another attempt to establish a school was made in 1685, after the slaves were moved to the Slave Lodge. Children from the Lodge younger than 12 attended the school while children between the ages of 12 and 16 attended school two afternoons a week for religious instruction.

The boys and girls were taught separately. Religious instruction was heavily emphasised, but the children also learned to read and write Dutch. Teaching the qualities of a good slave from the owner's perspective such as obedience and respect, were not neglected either. All the children in the Lodge attended school during its 110 year existence. In stark contrast, according to the 1778 census, only 11.1% of free children and 5.3% of enslaved children in private ownership received formal education.

The teachers at the school were slaves, convicts and free blacks (a term used for black people who were neither enslaved nor of indigenous origin). The first two teachers were Jan Pasqual for the boys and Margaret, a freed slave, for the girls. Jan was exiled to Mauritius less than two years later after being found guilty of immoral acts with the boys. The appointment of Daniel of Batavia as school principal in 1706 also ruffled a few feathers as he was a convict and black.

Several school teachers applied with success to be manumitted. Persena van de Caab received his freedom in 1724, Jan van Manda in 1731, Anna van Jacoba in 1764 and Hans Jacob Jurgen van die Caab in 1774. It seems as if the position of school teacher was a profitable occupation as they were the only group of slaves that were willing to stay on in the Lodge after being manumitted. All teachers, including those who were slaves, received a salary.

## Sexual relations within the Lodge

The Dutch East India Company (VOC) emphasised religious instruction for their slaves and was concerned and prescriptive about the slaves' personal conduct. The VOC allowed slaves to live as couples and forbade sexual relations between men and women who were not registered as a couple. However, at the same time, they allowed the Slave Lodge to function as a brothel. The Slave Lodge was open to free men every night between eight and nine.

The VOC also concerned themselves with sexual relations between slaves belonging to the VOC and the rest of the colony's inhabitants. Since 1671, several placaten (regulations), were issued that forbid sexual relationships between slave women and men of European descent. The growing number of mulatto children indicates that these placaten were not adhered to. However, the VOC never took steps to prevent the visits from free men to slave women in the Lodge.

It is difficult to know how the Lodge women felt about their role in prostitution. The historian has to deduce attitudes from behaviour as described in criminal records, baptismal records and descriptions of outsiders. No stories giving the women's perspective survived. Outsiders such as Ambrose Cowley and Otto Mentzel mentioned that women were forced by their male partners to sleep with the visitors. According to Cowley the going rate was a 3-inch piece of tobacco.

Some historians such as Robert Shell argues that the women might have prostituted themselves out of own free will. Mulatto slaves enjoyed a higher status, had access to better jobs and had a better chance to be manumitted. Women may therefore have felt that their mulatto offspring may have had a better chance in life than children of slaves.

Not all the relationships between slave women and free men were that of a prostitute with her client. There are cases of relationships that led to marriage and freedom for the women. Free men who wanted to marry a slave woman could buy her freedom for 150 florins. Many of the women who obtained their freedom in this way were able to buy the freedom of her children. An example is that of Manda Gratia, a matron at the Slave Lodge who married Guiliam Frisnet in 1714. She was able to buy the freedom of all her children. One of her

sons joined the VOC and was transferred to the East Indies, thereby becoming the first slave emigrant of the Cape.

## General living conditions

The slaves who belonged to the Dutch East India Company (VOC) were generally in poorer health and had a higher death rate than slaves in private ownership. Statistics show a very high death rate of up to 20% - 30% in some years in the Lodge. Although this high death rate can partly be ascribed to epidemics such as the smallpox epidemics of 1713, 1755 and 1767, the main cause was the unhygienic living conditions.

The Slave Lodge was dark, wet and dirty. A subterranean stream flows under the Slave Lodge and this stream flooded the cellar of the Lodge during winter. The roof also leaked which led to hardship in the wet winter months. The slaves only received blankets after 1685. Before then, they had nothing to cover themselves against the cold. However, Hühne, the Slave Overseer, reported in 1793 that the bedding stayed wet in winter and that the slaves never had time to properly wash and clean their belongings. Statistics show that the death rate was higher during winter than in summer. The building was very dark and without adequate air circulation. There were no windows in the building, only slits in the walls with bars. Only a few of these slits faced the outside of the building. Louis Michel Thibault, the building inspector, reported in 1803 that the building was so dark inside that one needed a lantern even in the day.

Furthermore, the Lodge was very dirty. Mentzel wrote in 1785 that the stench was unbearable in the Lodge. The stench was especially bad in the vicinity of the eight toilets next to the quarters of the mentally ill. Pigs were kept in the courtyard and fattened on garden refuse to be sold to the free citizens to earn an income for the slaves.

At first, food was inadequate, but improved with time. In 1685 the diet consisted of rice, fish, soup and vegetables twice a week. A shopping list of 1789 includes items such as rice, flour, peas, beans, wine, sugar, whale oil, pepper and vinegar. In addition each slave received 3/4 pound fresh meat a day.

The slaves received new clothing twice a year, although Otto Mentzel wrote in 1785 that slaves received new clothing once a year. He described their clothing as follows: "... each male slave wears a doublet and trousers made of coarse white woollen cloth with black streaks and lined with a cotton cloth called 'sailcloth'. The doublet is adorned with 12 brass buttons. These outfits are made by the garrison tailors. The female slaves wear imported smocks from Batavia. It is made up of six yards of coarse cotton cloth." Some slaves sold their clothes to earn money.

Clothes were used as a method to make a distinction between slaves and free citizens. Slave men were not allowed to wear shoes. This symbolised their position as perpetual minors in society. Slaves were also not allowed to wear hats prior to passing an examination proving that they had mastered Dutch. The rules did change over time. Under British rule, slaves were allowed to wear hats and the men could wear long trousers instead of the short trousers provided under Dutch rule. By wearing kerchiefs and turbans before hats were allowed, the slaves not only undermined the dress code, but also symbolised the establishment of an alternative culture.

## At work

The slaves that belonged to Dutch East India Company (VOC) made an important contribution to the establishment, management and protection of the Dutch settlement at the Cape.

They were the largest group of slaves and were used for a variety of duties, from manual labour to skilled artisan work. In contrast to slaves in private ownership at the Cape, no strong division of labour based on sex existed for the Lodge slaves. In the first few years of the Dutch settlement's existence, the slaves worked as assistants to the VOC officials such as artisans, the gardener and the wood-cutters. Seventy-five slaves were listed in a letter dated 11 April 1658 - a third worked in the Company's Garden while 19 were employed on the Company's farms.

Twelve worked in the fisheries, while eleven assisted the Company's artisans. Governor Simon van der Stel described the work done by the slaves in a letter dated 12 April 1688. According to him, 36 slaves worked in the Company's Gardens and 13 in the gardens at Rustenburg.

Fifty-one of the slaves worked on the VOC outposts at Klapmuts, Kuils River and Hottentots-Holland. Some worked as bakers or as artisans such as masons, smiths, coopers, brick-makers and carpenters. Others worked in the hospital and at the quarries and waterworks. Otto Mentzel noted that six to ten slaves worked in the hospital caring for the patients and serving food while others dug graves. Francois Valentijn who visited the Cape four times between 1685 and 1714, mentioned that a large group worked in the Company's Garden, both as gardeners and as spies to catch thieves stealing plants.

These spies, however, were apparently willing to look the other way at the right price. Some of the women worked as house servants in the VOC's buildings and the houses of VOC officials. Others served in the Castle garrison, warehouses and administrative departments of the VOC. There were also artisans such as carpenters, coopers and potters. The kaffers worked as the Fiscal's and executioner's assistants.

The only comprehensive statistical breakdown of slave occupations was compiled by the Dutch officials after the Cape surrendered to the British in 1795. This list forms part of an inventory of the VOC's property. There were 534 slaves who worked as follows:

|                                                      |    |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Not working                                          |    |
| Too old                                              | 45 |
| Still in school                                      | 40 |
| Infants                                              | 18 |
| Government, presumably in administrative offices     | 17 |
| Office of the bookbinder                             | 2  |
| Main warehouse for merchandise                       | 2  |
| Other warehouses                                     | 50 |
| Look after VOC's weapons arsenal                     | 1  |
| Hospital                                             | 27 |
| Midwife                                              | 1  |
| Fiscal's assistants                                  | 9  |
| Assist forger                                        | 5  |
| Assist cooper                                        | 2  |
| Assist miller                                        | 2  |
| Assist pump-maker                                    | 2  |
| Assist VOC cutler with keeping knives and axes sharp | 1  |
| Bakery                                               | 3  |
| Pottery                                              | 2  |
| Candle-maker                                         | 1  |
| Collect wood                                         | 59 |
| Garbage removal                                      | 6  |
| Maintain fortifications                              | 23 |
| Painters                                             | 2  |
| Assist the sexton                                    | 1  |
| Work in Company's Garden                             | 4  |
| Care for VOC's chickens                              | 2  |
| Work at Kirstenbosch                                 | 2  |
| Serve at VOC outposts                                | 8  |

Besides the slaves mentioned in the list, many did menial irregular jobs assigned to them. Many of them probably worked in the docks loading and unloading ships. After 1795, work such as that of porters and other work in the docks was increasingly done by privately owned slaves, free blacks and poor whites.

## The Slave Lodge Hospital

**The hospital in the eastern wing of the Slave Lodge treated slaves and Khoi women who suffered from venereal diseases. Slaves who suffered from leprosy were sent to a house on the seafront to prevent the spread of the disease to other slaves. Sailors and soldiers were treated in a different hospital, opposite the Slave Lodge.**

The Slave Overseer supervised the doctor even though the hospital was administratively not part of the Slave Lodge. Dr Thiele was reported in 1805 as not fulfilling his duties, including not reporting regularly. A commission of enquiry consisting of the Attorney-General, G. Beelearts van Blokland, a clerk, R. De Klerk Dibbetz, and a certain Wedeman were appointed to look into the administration of the hospital. They found that Thiele was an alcoholic who neglected his duties.

A new doctor, Dr Dunlop was appointed by the new British government in 1806. Dunlop complained that the hospital was very dirty and requested that it be cleaned. He also ordered new bedding. Dunlop also had to attend to slaves at various work stations throughout the Cape Colony. He soon complained about his salary of 24 rixdollars per month and his, allegedly, useless assistant. The assistant was fired and his salary of 15 rixdollars added to that of Dunlop's. Dunlop's salary was later increased by Lieutenant-General Grey to 77 rixdollars per month.

It seems as if the hospital was kept in a better condition under the British than by their predecessors. Dr W.H. Lys succeeded Dunlop in 1813.

## Freedom

**The general emancipation of slaves took place on the 1 December 1834. However the slaves that the British colonial government had taken over from the VOC were manumitted in 1828.**

Not everybody had to wait for emancipation to gain their freedom. The regulations for the manumission of Lodge slaves stayed remarkably stable for the period 1685 to 1795, the greater part of the Dutch colonial period. Slaves who served diligently for 30 years, who could speak Dutch, were confirmed in the Dutch Reformed Church and who were able to pay the VOC 100 florins, could obtain to their freedom. They also had to prove that they were able to support themselves financially. As the average age of new arrivals at the Cape was 16, it meant that slaves qualified for their freedom in their forties.

However, life expectancy was very short and very few slaves survived 30 years service. The rule for Cape-born slaves was the same, except that they could request freedom at the age of 40.

Mulatto slaves, i.e. slaves of partial European descent, were treated differently. Mulatto men could be manumitted at the age of 25 on paying 100 florins and women at 22 years by paying 150 florins.

The VOC preferred that a woman's manumission fee should be paid by a free citizen with the aim to marry her afterwards. Not many slaves from the Slave Lodge obtained their freedom.

Few imported slaves survived 30 years of service. Only three imported slaves obtained their freedom, one each from Madagascar, Sri Lanka and Bengal. Of the 4213 slaves born in the Lodge, 103 obtained their freedom. Of these, 21.7% were mulatto. An alternative route to freedom was to offer another slave to take one's place. Such a substitute slave could be bought either from the slave's own income or by free family or friends.

Most of the slaves obtained the money from family members. The substitute slaves were carefully examined by a doctor to certify that they were in good health and able to work.

The largest group who obtained their freedom in this manner were mulatto children and especially girls whose freedom was bought by their white fathers. Thirty-six slaves obtained their freedom in this way.

# The Slave Lodge: excavations in 2000

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## Introduction

From 21 February to 31 March 2000, the South African Cultural History Museum, a component of Iziko Museums of Cape Town (former Southern Flagship Institution), embarked on a new project. This involved excavating at one of our museums in Cape Town, the Slave Lodge. It was the beginning of a feasibility study aimed at uncovering the significance of this site, to our knowledge being the only surviving VOC (Dutch East India Company) Slave Lodge of its kind in the world. This structure housed an average of 500 slaves and a total of approximately 1000 people banished from society. We were hoping to find material culture evidence of the slaves and parts of the underground cellars in which the slaves also lived. Our aims were manifold, to commemorate and promote the history of slavery, to integrate the history of slavery into the cultural tourism industry and to utilise the site and excavated results for research, publication, education and exhibition, involving the public as much as possible.

## *Why is this important?*

This site is unique in the history of South Africa (Shell 1999). It was the largest single slave holding in the country. This affords us a rare opportunity to present something to the world, which can only be visited and experienced locally. The Slave Lodge has been recommended to become the focal point of cultural tourism around the Slave Route. It has the potential of becoming one of our leading tourist attractions and should be placed on the list of World Heritage Sites. The Cape Business News reports:

"Now the former Slave Lodge may become Cape Town's most visited social and tourism magnet...There can be little doubt however, that the fully restored site would be a major, not to be missed, local tourist stop" (R Jensen, May 2000).

To repeat the sentiment expressed by Prof Robert Shell, "The Lodge is, in the author's view, the jewel in the crown of all the slave sites in the region" (Shell 2000 :18). It has been compared with the site at Elmina in West Africa, "the place of no return", which has been declared a World Heritage site.

## **Background**

The Slave Lodge in Adderley Street, Cape Town, was built in 1679. It was sometimes referred to as "Loots" or "Logie". It backed onto the Company Gardens where many of the slaves laboured. It was constructed in the manner of a fortress, to imprison the slaves, to prevent them from escaping. It has been described as 'A shameless fortress...of human misery' (Shell 1994) at the head of Adderley Street or the old Heerengracht, a symbol of isolation, a building without windows to the outside world. The building was subject to numerous phases of renovation (Geyser 1982). By 1716 the Slave Lodge was dilapidated and overcrowded. The slaves were 'herded together like animals'. Proposals for renovations and extensions were put forward and finally, around 1752, a second storey was added.

Conditions in the Slave Lodge throughout most of the 17th and 18th centuries are described as dark and damp. The roof leaked, the cellars often flooded and the bedding of the slaves was almost permanently damp. Shell refers to the Slave Lodge as a "demographic sinkhole" in which deaths were excessive. With the smallpox epidemic of 1755, 180 slaves died in one day.

A ground plan of the Slave Lodge dated to 1798 shows detailed occupation areas and structures inside the Lodge (Fig.1). The lack of general maintenance and requirements of decent human living conditions, led to several reports around this time condemning the state of the building. Louis Michel Thibault, inspector of

Public Buildings in 1803, describes the unsanitary, disease-ridden state of the Lodge, without appropriate ventilation for fresh air, nor windows for light. Even during the day he was forced to use a lantern to find his way inside the building.

In 1807, one year after the Second British Occupation of the Cape, it was decided to sell all the slaves in the Lodge and to convert the building to government offices. These included the Master's Office, offices of the Attorney General, the Government Secretary, the Receiver of Revenue, the Fiscal, the Bank, the Post Office and the Public Library. By 1815 the Supreme Court was completed and the Legislative Council chamber for parliamentary meetings took up office in the building from 1827 to 1887.

In 1926 the front facade of the building was set back from approximately the island in the middle of Adderley Street to its present position. This was as a result of traffic congestion on the corner of Adderley and Wale Streets. In the 1930s the Old Supreme Court Building, as the Slave Lodge became later known, was once again threatened with demolition. However, thanks to public pressure and campaigning, the building was preserved to become the South African Cultural History Museum in 1966, which became a proclaimed National Monument in 1967.

For many years there have been lengthy discussions around the replanning of displays in this building of note. There are many burning issues around the question of slavery and how this has impacted on the lives of modern South Africans. During parts of the 18th century, there were more slaves than free persons at the Cape. Slavery had an enormous effect on the economic development of the country, besides its impact on so many cultural aspects of our lives, on our customs cuisine, language, labour laws, religion, architecture and a myriad other spheres. How could we learn more about these aspects of our past, its impact on our present lives and our plans for the future?

## ***Excavations***

The excavations proceeded in three main areas ([Fig.1](#)). First was the area around a structure inside the courtyard. The second area was in front of two main doorways along the edge of the "latrines". The third area was inside the present building where we anticipated finding parts of the slave cellars. These were considered to be areas of potential for excavation in this feasibility study.

The crew was drawn from volunteers who offered to assist us in our endeavours. Among us were a variety of people ranging in age between 22 and 78, as well as two primary school learners of 6 and 11. Those participating were students in archaeology, criminology, history, psychology, museum and heritage studies, social sciences, electrical engineering, geography, communications, public administration and public relations. Volunteers were also drawn in from community projects such as Ikhaya Labantu, Community Builders Project, Black Sash, Reach Out Project and Siyakhula Pottery Project. Others working on the site were a lecturer, a hospital theatre nurse, an American slave descendant, an office clerk, a senior citizen, a retired banking clerk, a potter, a musician, ceramic restorers, a fundraiser, a photographer, a registrar of museum collections, a student of slave history, a gynaecologist, a museum curator, a teacher, a technician, an artist, a librarian, a museum education officer, a publisher and a journalist. (New volunteers may be added to the list by forwarding their names, credentials / work experience, study details, address, telephone number / contact details and / or CV to the author).

## ***The finds***

Based on a preliminary analysis of faunal material from one section of the deposit excavated in area "1" of the courtyard, the following were found. The food debris contains mostly bones of domesticates including, in order of numerical frequency, sheep, cattle, fowl and pig. Various fish and shellfish remains were found. The aforementioned results are based on a relatively small sample thus far analysed, 932 specimens identified by Dr Graham Avery. This is a preliminary examination of only part of the entire sample. The results cannot therefore be used at this stage, to make any conclusive deductions. However, it has been noted that, as to be expected, many fish bones occur in the sample. Among the hunted animals, Steenbok/Grysbok and Cape Cormorant appear in the sample. A small tortoise and ostrich eggshell is also present. The occurrence of rats and mice are possibly associated with the household refuse.

Features excavated include the slave cellars, stone and brick walls, cobble flooring, a well, old doorways and steps leading into the courtyard and the edge of one corner of the latrines ([Fig 2](#)). Much disused building

bricks, nails, windowpane glass and roof tiles were also left behind in the trenches as well as charcoal, firebricks and wood.

The objects excavated are bone, glass, metal, pottery and porcelain. The artefacts include drinking glasses and bottles, pottery cooking and storage vessels, hand-painted porcelain cups, saucers and plates (Fig 3).

Among the numerous artefacts was a stone pestle, hundreds of clay tobacco pipe specimens, a fine little copper/brass tap, a beautifully carved horn handle, a painting of a woman carrying a yoke on her shoulders on a small fragment of glass, stoneware marbles, a gunflint, metal scissors, pins, bone and brass buttons, coins, money cowries and glass and ostrich eggshell beads. The artefacts and faunal material is presently being processed, identified and analysed. The site contained a very rich assemblage of artefacts which will provide a significant contribution of new knowledge.

## ***Public interaction***

We welcome, encourage and promote the involvement of the public, the media and scholars in our activities. With this in mind, we posted flyers inviting volunteers and participation, along with short articles in the internal and external newsletters of the Museum (Abrahams-Willis 2000 b,c). Posters were circulated at all our Museum venues. A pamphlet outlining the historical background of the site, our aims and contact details were produced and thousands have been disseminated to the public (Abrahams-Willis 2000 a). Bold banners advertising free entrance to the museum and excavations were attached to the front of the building facing Adderley Street. A temporary display was mounted to allow the public access to the most recent finds and we offered guided tours on the site in English, Xhosa and Afrikaans.

The excavations and findings were well covered by the media including International TV, SATV News, Cape at Six and South Africa Today, one of which was an in-depth four-minute exposure which reached millions of viewers. The footage has been repeated several times subsequently on TV and continues to create public awareness and interest in the topic of slavery.

The newspaper coverage was relatively extensive and varied (Abrahams-Willis 2000 e; 2001b; 2003; Coetzee 2000; Coetzer 2000; Jensen 2000; Maughan 2003; Mbana 2000; West 2000; Yutar 2000 a,b). These included interviews with and articles in the Cape Argus, the Star, Die Burger, the Cape Times, Sunday Argus, Cape Business News, The Dutch Business Times, the Big Issue, Sarie Magazine, PWD House Journal, Provincial Administration Communications, Zanazo, an article in a book on Community Research on slavery, a UNESCO feasibility study Report (Shell 2000), in the Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa (Abrahams-Willis 2000 d) and in the Archives News (Abrahams-Willis 2001a). Most of the interviews were done on the site during the excavations and consequently assisted tremendously in communicating the history and significance of the site to the public at large. At the same time the opportunity was created for site visits, while the Public Works Department, with permission from the South African Heritage Resources Agency, provided a temporary protective cover, allowing us to leave the site open for visitors to view into the present.

There were numerous radio interviews in English, Xhosa, and Afrikaans. The number of people reached through the News Bulletins and Community Radio interviews enhanced our public interaction, which has contributed fundamentally to our goals on this site. We communicated personally with hundreds of children, forty students arrived on day-one from the Semester at Sea, University of Pittsburgh, visiting the site as their Official Offshore Contact, a number of schools ran classes in on relay, clubs and societies requested special tours, on-site training and thesis supervision were requested, numerous projects in partnership have been proposed and other slave sites have been reported. In a nutshell, we have been dealing with public feedback most intensely during the excavations but also on a regular basis since the excavations ended.

The invitation for volunteers has resulted in a growing list for future work. Documentary producers have requested the use of footage from the excavations, offers have been put forward to make a documentary of the excavations and publication of a book on the Slave Lodge is in preparation. Preliminary findings of the dig have appeared in print, utilized in four schoolbook publications which are presently in use as part of the South African school syllabus (Fig 4).

Important contacts have been made resulting in tourism initiatives to prioritise the Slave Lodge and requests for presentations to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee and the UNESCO Slave Route Project: South African Chapter, have been delivered.

## ***Future Plans***

The excavations and findings were overwhelmingly received and the museum's free visitor numbers increased by over 1000 % for the month of March. Furthermore, the visitor profile, which is in desperate need of change, was noticeably transformed. The museum was flooded with visitors of all ages, sex, creed and colours. They were inspired by a history which was previously denied, hidden, stigmatised, a history which has had an enormous impact on the lives of modern South Africans. As a means of launching the excavations, our slogan for our brochures and posters emerged, "BREAKING THE CHAINS OF SILENCE".

We believe in breaking the chains of silence, in commemorating the history of slavery in a manner befitting its dignity and importance in our history, in promoting cultural tourism, job creation and awareness in this pivotal aspect of our past. To this end, we will draw up new proposals for funding to continue with excavations at the Slave Lodge and means of promoting this site. Moreover, a much more extensive programme of events will actively include community participation, accessibility and public awareness (Fig 5). A range of initiatives is under discussion with members of the public, researchers, tourism promoters, Non-Government Organisations and Statutory bodies. By harnessing collaborative plans for the Slave Lodge, this site will take its pride of place.

## ***Conclusion***

The Slave Lodge is a site of exceptional national and international importance and the excavations have drawn tremendous public and academic interest. The subject of slavery permeates many important issues which are of major significance to us today such as the question of our identity as South Africans, the various ways in which we interpret emancipation, slavery and freedom and the very nature of our human rights.

This project is of great relevance in its historical, scholarly and public contexts. It speaks to a diversity of people with a unique voice. A diverse range of future plans is unquestionable for a site of this eminence.

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