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CC Reg: 2004/072194/23

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Philippolis Legacy Project:

Legacy of Griquas Bezuidenhout, Du Preez, Vezasie and Bok

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Christiaan Bok, Jan du Preez, Willem Bezuidenhout, Lukas Vezasie

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A. Notes on sources

The information provided here are derived from the Deeds Office (Bloemfontein); the SAPTG¹ website; and the Department of Land Affairs; as well as various published books.

There are several sources in the Free State Archives which may contain additional information.

The following books are excellent background for the Griqua period in Philippolis (cheapest copies found):

1. Karel Schoeman, *Early White Travellers in the Transgariep 1819-1840*, available here: https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30324722639&searchurl=sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dearly%2Bwhite%2Btravellers%2Btransgariep&cm_sp=snippet- -srp1- -title1
2. Andrew B Smith (Ed), *Einiqualand: Studies of the River Frontier*. Available here: https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30253838059&searchurl=sortby%3D17%26tn%3Deiniqualand&cm_sp=snippet- -srp1- -title1
Nigel Penn's contribution to the volume contains several mentions of a Christiaan Bok (pages 56, 62, 68, 70, and 72), but these appear to be a white farmer on the frontier.
3. Karel Schoeman, *The Early Days of the Orange Free State*, available here: https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=13141864794&searchurl=sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dearly%2Bdays%2Borange%2Bfree%2B&cm_sp=snippet- -srp1- -title1.
Mainly white history around Bloemfontein, but also the Free State as a whole.
4. Karel Schoeman, *The Griqua Mission at Philippolis 1822-1837*, available here: https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30345690721&searchurl=sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dgriqua%2Bmission%2Bphilippolis&cm_sp=snippet- -srp1- -title1
Interesting insights about the missionaries' efforts and intrigues going on in the Griqua settlement.
5. William Collins, *Free Statia*. Available here: https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30224798021&searchurl=sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dfree%2Bstatia&cm_sp=snippet- -srp1- -title1
A government official's reminiscences of the Free State during the period of the Griqua Republic. Shows the changing political and social context of the Griqua community.

¹ South African Property Transfer Guide, www.saptg.co.za.

6. Robert Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas*, mentions a **Johannes Bezuidenhout** (page 107), an elderly man who had been a deacon of the church since 1845. After they settled in Griqualand East, the missionaries proceeded to ordain him in the church. He was described as "a man of high character, and very gentle manners, but withal energetic and firm when required". Could this have been William Bezuidenhout's father?

The book also mentions a **Stoffel Vezasie**, who leased a farm Matjes Fontein to a certain Petrus Pienaar (page 91). Stoffel was noted as a powerful member of the Griqua Raad in Griqualand East (page 114). He is also noted as one of the "old loyalists" during the Griqualand during the rebellion of 1878 (page 131). Was he related to Lukas Vezasie?

7. JS Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937*, available here:
https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=17501088415&searchurl=an%3Dmarais%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dcape%2Bcoloured&cm_sp=snippet-_srp1-_title1
Good overview of the Griqua in the context of the various Khoi groupings.
8. Scott Balson, *Children of the Mist: The Lost Tribe of South Africa*, available here:
https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=17501088415&searchurl=an%3Dmarais%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dcape%2Bcoloured&cm_sp=snippet-_srp1-_title1
An interesting book, probably quite accurate (as far as I can see) but without references or an index, which makes me rather uncomfortable – cannot check the veracity of his information or interpretations.
9. SJ Halford: *The Griquas of Griqualand*, available here:
https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30352368790&searchurl=an%3Dhalford%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dgriquas&cm_sp=snippet-_srp1-_title1
Quite a classic.
10. Karel Schoeman, *The Mission at Griquatown 1801-1821*, available here:
https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30381127464&searchurl=an%3Dschoeman%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dgriquatown&cm_sp=snippet-_srp1-_title1
This would have been the context of the Griquas before they left Griquatown for Philippolis.
11. J. du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*, a classic.
https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=22868878831&searchurl=an%3Ddu%2Bplessis%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dchristian%2Bmissions&cm_sp=snippet-_srp1-_title7
12. Andrew Ross, *John Philip, 1775-1851*, available here:
https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=22718203637&searchurl=an%3Dross%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Djohn%2Bphilip&cm_sp=snippet-_srp1-_title3

Philip was the incredible missionary, statesman and political operator who made the existence of Philippolis possible.

13. Nigel Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier*, available here:
https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30381003727&searchurl=an%3Dpenn%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dforgotten%2Bfrontier&cm_sp=snippet- -srp1- -title1
Seen as a modern classic by emeritus professor of history at UCT. It covers some of the same ground as no 2 above, but a very good overview of this complex historical period.
14. Martin Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier. the Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the Missionaries, 1780-1840*, Available here:
https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30508952858&searchurl=an%3Dlegassick%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dfrontier&cm_sp=snippet- -srp1- -title3
Seen as almost the definitive book on the Griqua period. Got nice maps.
15. Karel Schoeman, *The Missionary Letters of Gottlob Schreiner, 1837-1848*, available here:
https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30470700874&searchurl=an%3Dschoeman%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dschreiner&cm_sp=snippet- -srp1- -title1
More on the missionary intrigues at Philippolis. There were three distinct groups at Philippolis: The “old inhabitants”, the Griqua, and the Tswana. Schreiner seemed to be more aligned to the Tswana, which cost him dearly.

B. Farm purchases and sales

This report refers to these individuals: Christiaan Bok, Jan du Preez, Willem Bezuidenhout, and Lukas Vezasie.

It is not always possible, from the Title Deeds, to identify the owners of farms as these specific individuals, but we include the farms registered to these families (surnames).

Given the early dates of the transfers (in the late 1850s and early 1860s), it is likely that “Visagie” refers to “Vezasie”, but we can only be sure once we look at more records from the Free State Government.

So these findings must be regarded as provisional.

Name	Farm	Erf/farm no	Ownership and sale	Source
C. Visagie	Windhoek	9	Sold in 1861 to David Jacobus Strauss	Deeds office
H. Visagie	Grootzonderhout	34	Sold in 1857 to Esaias Reynier Snyman	Deeds Office
W. Visagie	Pypersfontein	79	Sold in 1855 to Tobias van Schalkwyk	Deeds office

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C. Visagie	Paljasfontein	71	Sold in 1860 to Henry Harvey	Deeds Office
H. Bezuidenhout	Zooifontein	57	Sold in 1857 to Pieter Jacobus Louw Snr	Deeds Office
Christiaan Bok	Jakhalsfontein	29	Listed in deeds as belonging to S Ruiters (1863), who sold it to Daniel Janse v Rensburg. Bok must have been a previous owner (before Ruiters)	FS Archives? (text illegible)
Christiaan Bok	Palmietfontein / Zwartkoppies	Some confusion (see below)	Purchased 1824; sold 1841 to Laberlot (also Griqua)	FS Archives



Typical Southern Free State landscape

C. Location of Farms

1. Grootzonderhout

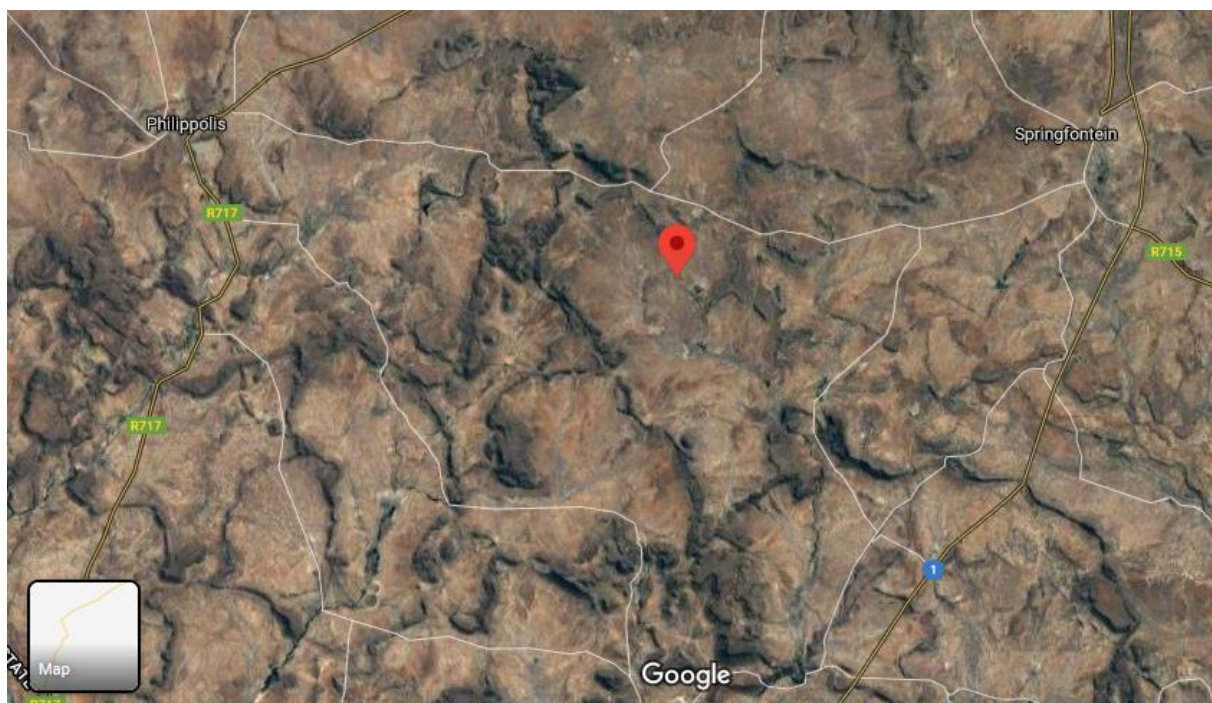
Meaning of the name: “Zonderhout” means “without wood”, which presumably means that there were not sufficient trees to cut down? There is another farm called “Houthaalberg” so presumably that one meant that that was a suitable place to go and find wood? I am speculating here.

This was one of the original farms and is typically found on old maps, such as the *Transvaal Automobile Club Road Maps* (1917):

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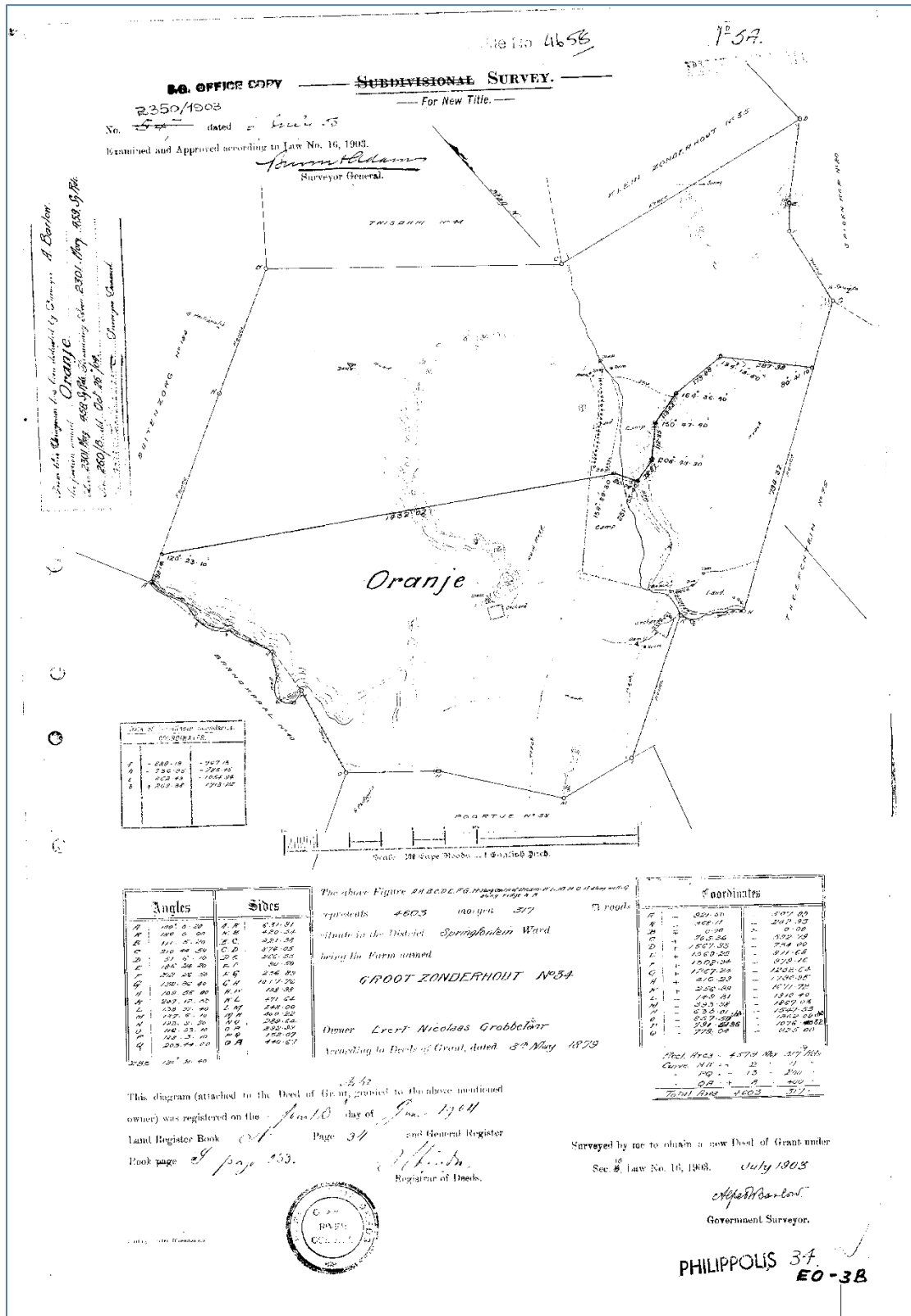
Grootzonderhout, south-east of Philippolis



Grootzonderhout, about 30 km east-south-east of Philippolis (from SAPTG website)

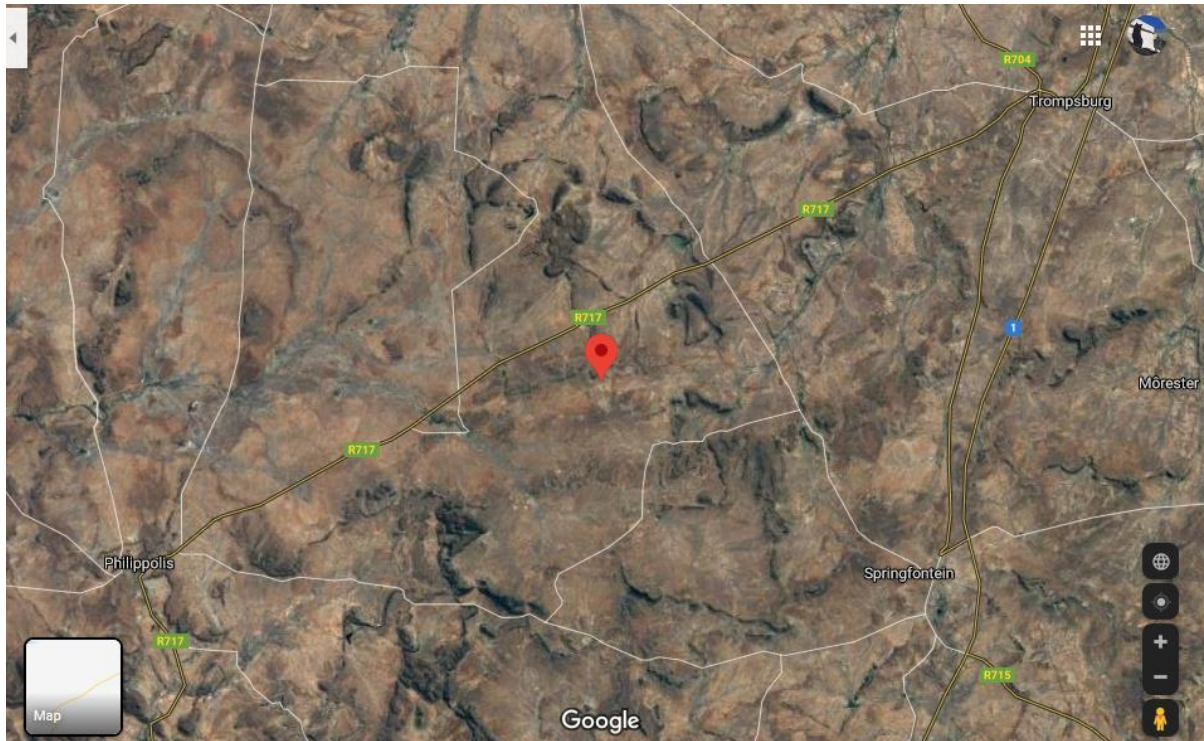
Legacy of Griquas Bezuidenhout, Du Preez, Vezasie and Bok

A surveyor's map of Grootzonderhout, dating from 1905:



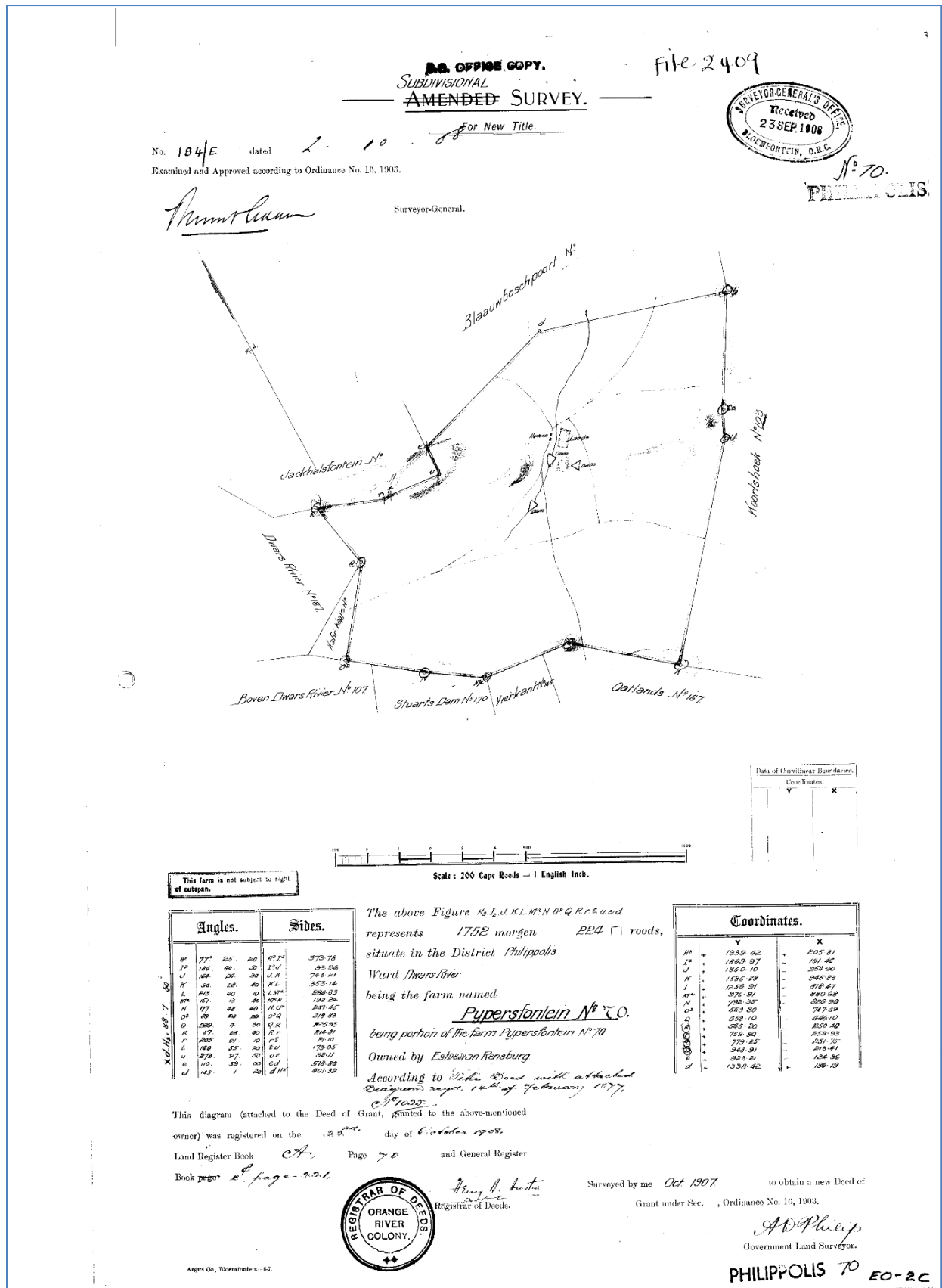
2. Pypersfontein

Pypersfontein is located about halfway between Philippolis and Trompsburg:



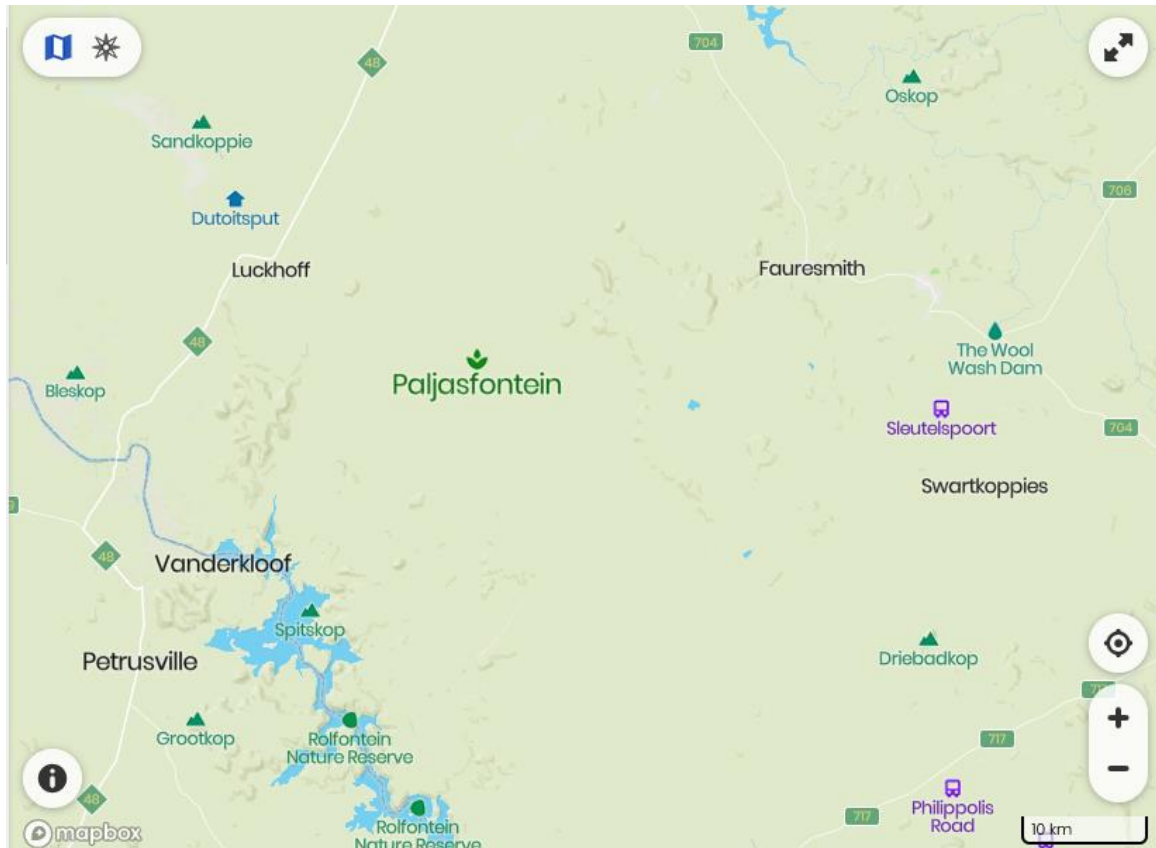
Surveyor's map of Pypersfontein, dating from 1907:

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3. Paljasfontein (district Fauresmith)

Paljasfontein is situated between Fauresmith in the east and Luckhoff in the west:



There is a surveyor's map dating from 1903:

S.G. OFFICE COPY. **SUBDIVISIONAL SURVEY**
For Deed of Transfer

No. 404 dated 22 May '03
Examined and Approved according to Law No. 16 of 93
Gunntham
Surveyor General.

SCABO.
27.5.03

727.

CANCELLED
This Remainder now included in Nantes 1191
Vide diagram S.G. No 755/1888 attached to
Certificate of Consol. Title No 71142/1889.
For *Abel J. Motze*
JACOBUS-GENSLER
1888 - 02 - 14

Scale: 200 Cape Rodds = 1 English Inch.

Angles		Sides	
V.	30° 14' 20"	VT	447.57
T	175° 48' 40"	TS	134.66
S	102° 44' 10"	SR	344.10
R	85° 45' 00"	RF	354.31
F	180° 10' 40"	FG	373.59
G	90° 22' 40"	GH	193.20
H	148° 0' 20"	HI	35.05
I	35° 18' 30"	IV	148.74
VI	181° 36' 40"	IV	238.85

The above Figure Y.T.S.H.F.G.H.I.V.*
represents 1970 morgen 443.3 □ rods
of ground, situate in Ward
District Fauresmith
being the Farm named PALJASFONTEIN N° 727.
½ portion of Leonfontein N° 95
Owner Estate of the late Abel Jacobus Motze

Coordinates	
Y	- 1181.00 + 2413.43
T	- 1112.50 + 2455.09
S	- 1073.04 + 3044.16
R	- 1110.30 + 3385.24
F	- 881.51 + 3438.37
G	- 476.73 + 3621.77
H	+ 135.91 + 1830.47
I	+ 133.24 + 1834.30
VI	- 360.44 + 2343.35

According to Deed of Grant dated 14th March 1885
Surveyed for transfer to

This chart has been deducted from the original
this 30th day of November 1903.

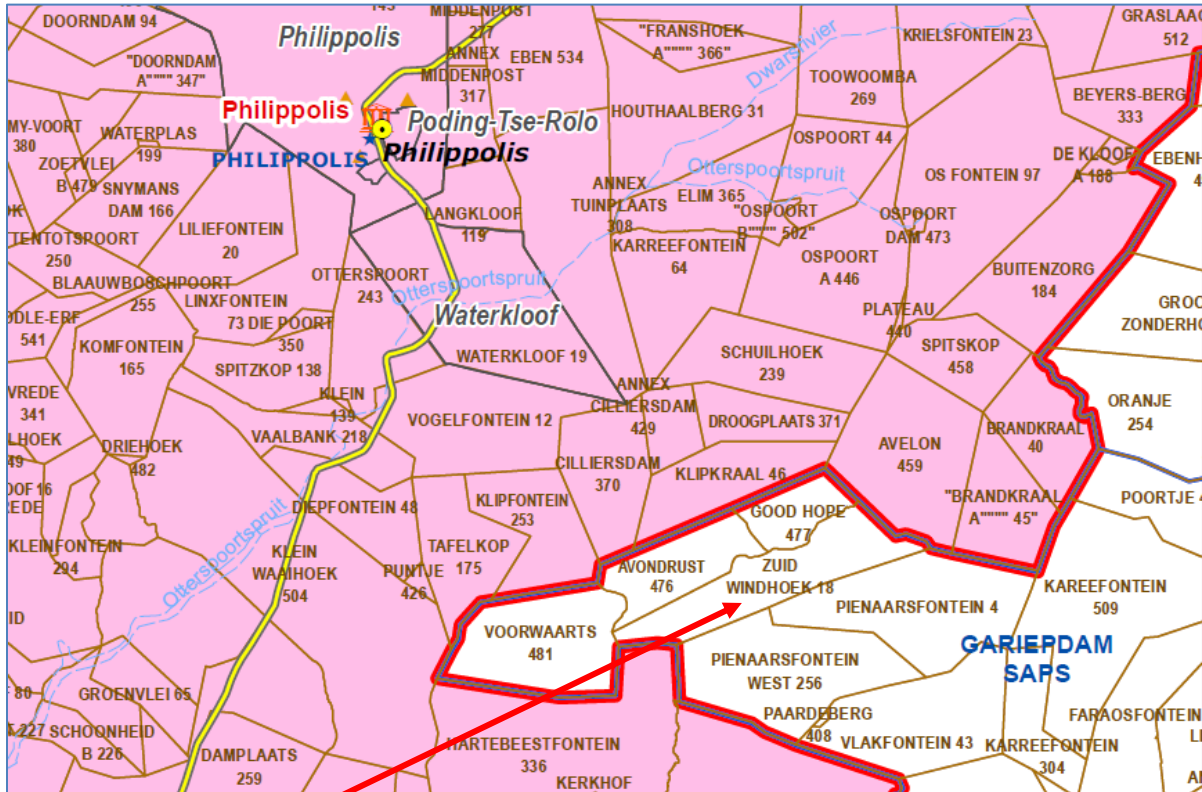
By me,
Gunntham
Surveyor General.

By me, April 1903
G. Baumann
Government Land Surveyor. FN-88
FAURESMTIH 727

Cutting Prices Broadly Reduced

4. Windhoek

The farm Windhoek is located about 30 km south-west of Philippolis, in the direction of Gariep Dam.



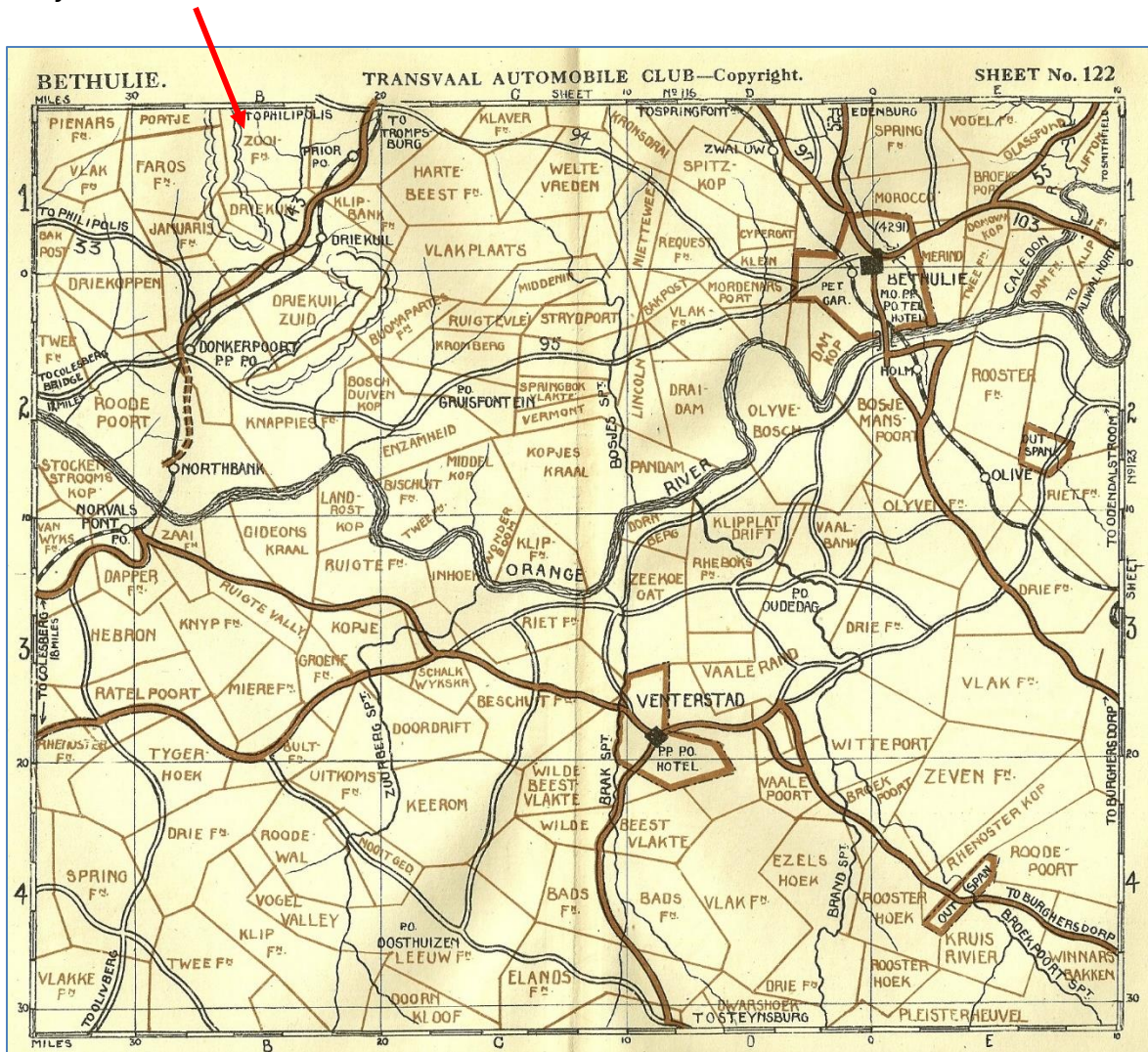
The Farm Windhoek (which is now called Suid-Windhoek, as it has been subdivided in the last few decades)

A Surveyor's map of Windhoek in 1891:

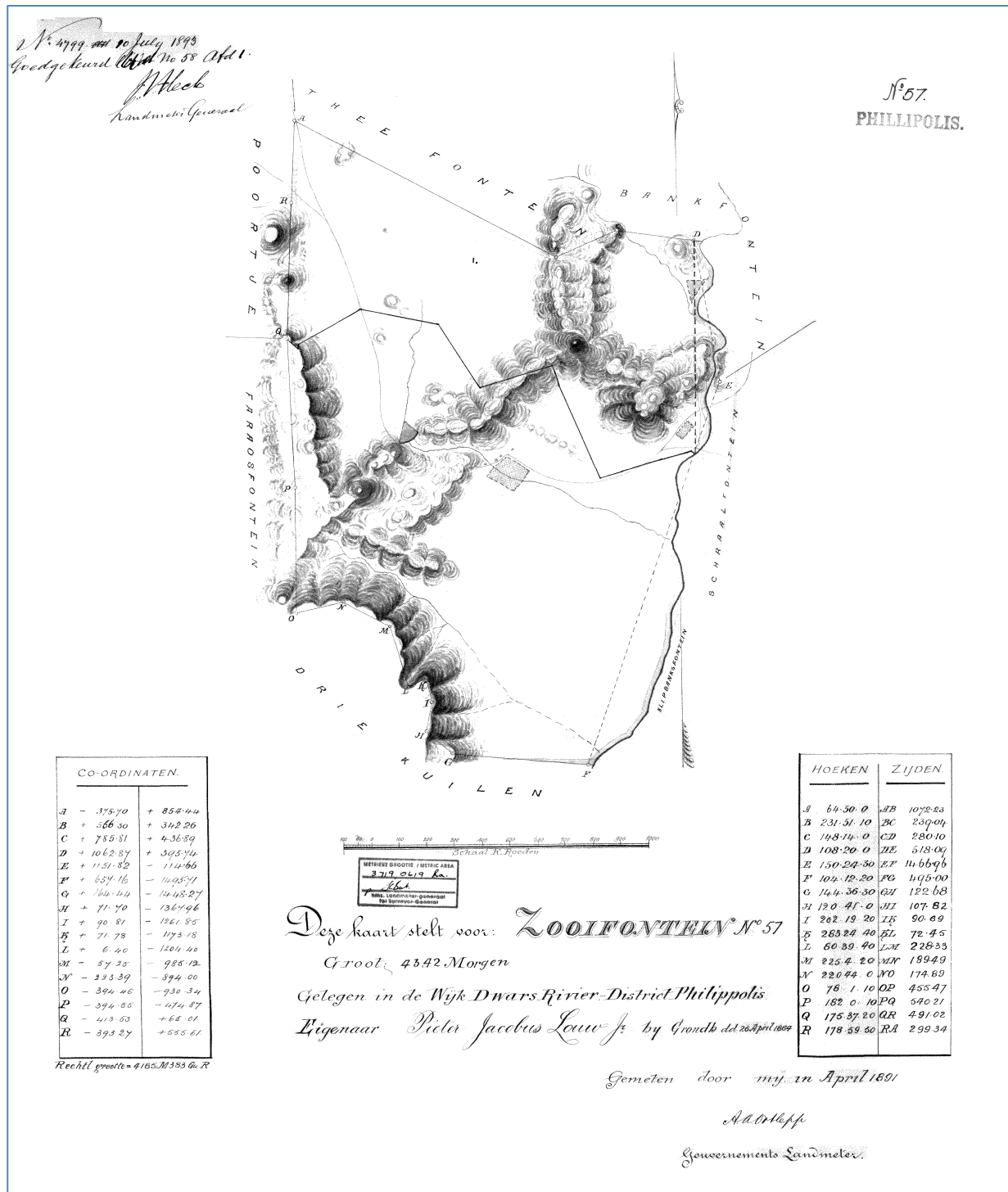
13

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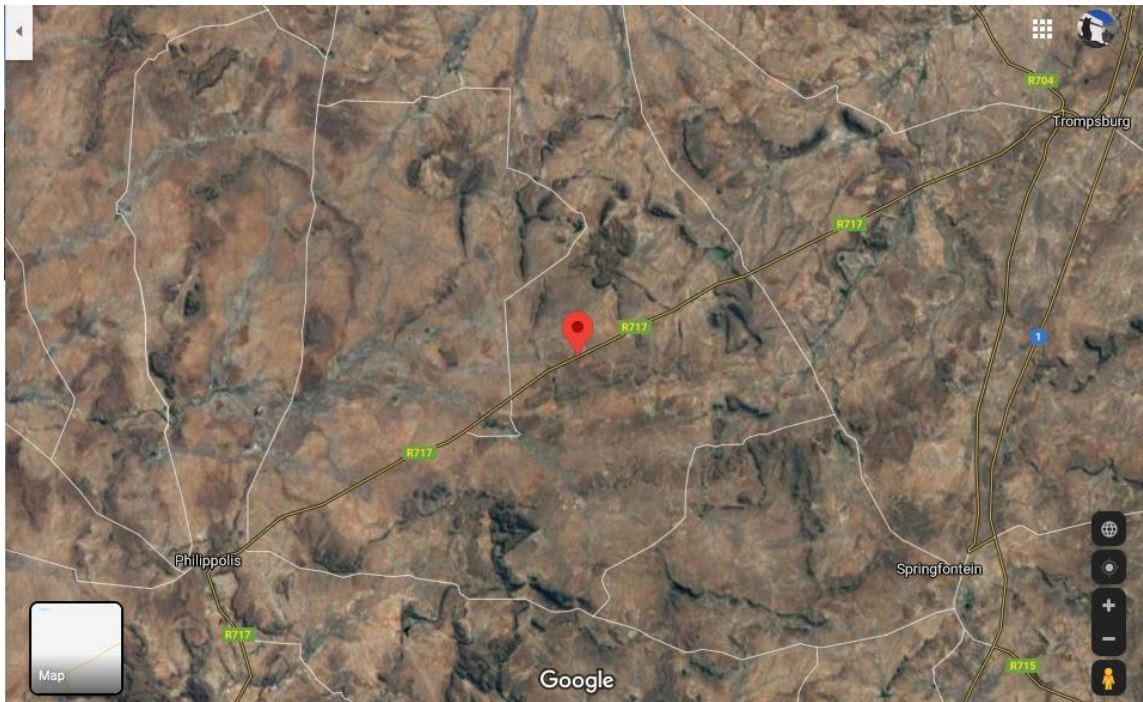
Zooifontein:



A Surveyor's map depicting Zooifontein in 1891, drawn by the notable surveyor Albert Ortlepp:



6. Jakhalsfontein



Jakhalsfontein is located midway between Philippolis and Trompsburg

7. Palmietfontein/Zwartkoppies

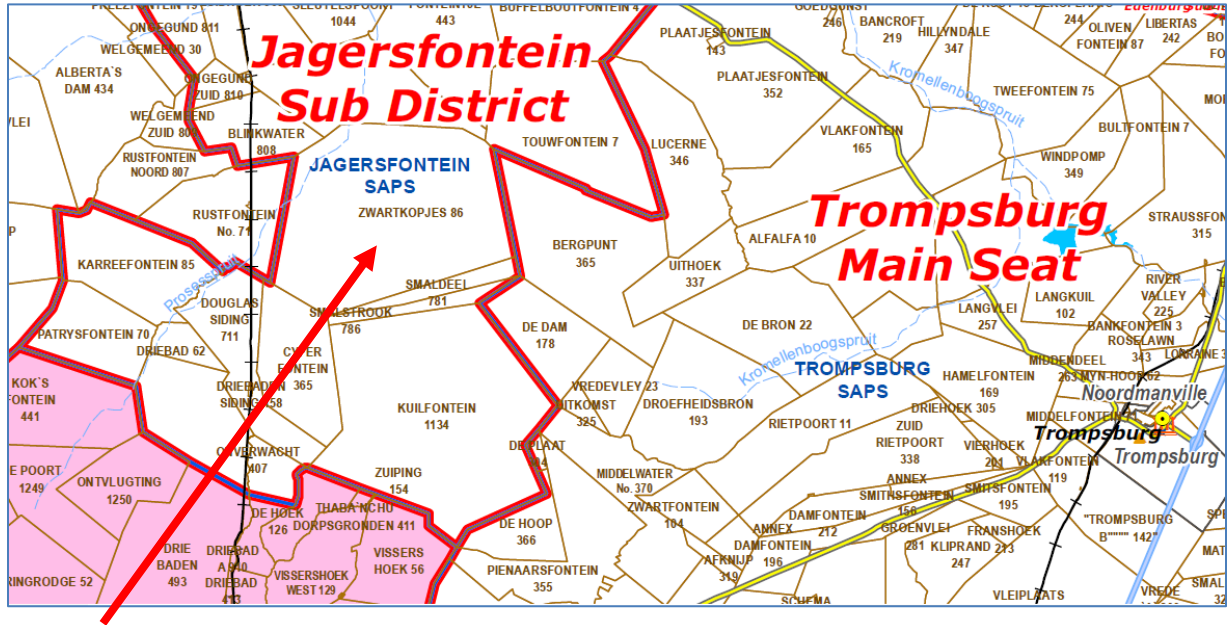
The photographed record refers to “Palmietfontein of Zwartkoppies”. From the maps, these it is not clear what farms these may be.

Zwartkoppies is the most likely candidate, to the west of Trompsburg, and to the north of the Philippolis district. This is a very historic location, as the site of the 1845 Battle of Zwartkoppies.

See Karel Schoeman, *The British Presence in the Transorange 1845-1854*, for a description of the Battle of Zwartkoppies. Available here:

https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=22823447895&searchurl=an%3Dschoeman%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dbritish&cm_sp=snippet--srp1--title1

It is very likely that your ancestors fought in that battle, as well as the Battle of Boomplaats, 1848.



Zwartkopjes farm

“Palmietfontein” refers to a farm to the west of Luckhoff, which is about 100 km from Philippolis.

It is possible that there was a “Palmietfontein” located alongside Zwartkoppies, but until we can access the Free State archives more fully, it is not clear what locality “Palmietfontein” would refer to.