

# Dynasty building, family networks and social capital: Alcohol *pachters* and the development of a colonial elite at the Cape of Good Hope, c. 1760-1790

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## Abstract

A hallmark of colonisation was extensive social reconfiguration, leading to the development of local elites which differed from the metropolitan and indigenous patterns. Historians of the Cape of Good Hope during the VOC era have identified the development of a local elite during the eighteenth century. The Cape gentry, consisting of grain and wine farmers in the hinterland of Cape Town, consolidated their power and influence over several generations through capital accumulation in the form of land and slaves, and through contracting endogamous marriages. This article contributes to this scholarship by adding a missing dimension: urban entrepreneurs in the form of the alcohol *pachters* (lease-holders). It traces how kinship, entrepreneurship and social capital were used by these people to gain economic advancement, and how the use of these factors changed over time. The article argues that the 1770s present a change-over from an earlier era when alcohol entrepreneurs were largely immigrant-based and used their cultural identities to their advantage, to a system where the urban and rural elites increasingly contracted business and social alliances. As such this study argues that the foundations of the Cape gentry lay in more than the accumulation of land and slaves. The entrepreneurial activities of alcohol *pachters* in Cape Town and their increasing alliances with the rural elite played an important role in creating an intricate network of wealthy and influential elite families at the Cape of Good Hope by the end of the eighteenth century.

**Keywords:** Alcohol retail; Business history; Cape colony; Cape Town; Dutch East India Company (VOC); Elite formation; Entrepreneurship; Network building; Prosopography; Social capital.

## Introduction

Historians are increasingly studying the formation of elites – political, social and economic – in colonial societies. This is because European colonisation led to extensive social reconfiguration in the colonial world. In all of these societies, new elites developed which differed from both the established metropolitan and indigenous patterns. In many ways, the development of new elites was a hallmark of the colonising process.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1980s, historians of the Cape colony during the era of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) have also investigated the origins and development of a local elite during the eighteenth century. The latter work has focused mostly on the rise of a Cape gentry who invested in slaves and land, and consolidated its wealth and influence through advantageous marriage alliances. This research concentrated on the rural hinterland of Cape Town, mostly the grain and wine farmers of the Stellenbosch-Drakenstein (Paarl) district.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of this article is to contribute to this scholarship by investigating entrepreneurs active in Cape Town and their links with the rising rural Cape gentry, thereby creating a fuller picture of the complex situation regarding family alliances which was developing at the Cape during the late eighteenth century. The article is based on a case study of the men and women who were involved in alcohol retail by buying from the VOC, on an annual basis, the right to retail various types of alcohol.<sup>3</sup> The alcohol retail trade was one of the very few economic activities outside of farming in which free burghers during

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1 RJ Ferry, *The colonial elite of early Caracas: Formation and crisis, 1567-1767* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989); LS Hoberman, *Mexico's merchant elite, 1590-1660* (Durham & London, Duke University Press, 1991); H Bowen, *Elites, enterprise and the making of the British overseas empire, 1688-1775* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996); J Gelman Taylor, *The social world of Batavia: European and Eurasian in colonial Indonesia* (second edition, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2009) and C Laux, F-J Ruggju & P Singaravelou (eds.), *At the top of the empire: European elites in the colonies, 16th-20th century* (Brussels, Peter Lang, 2009).

2 Most notably L Guelke & R Shell, "An early colonial landed gentry: Land and wealth in the Cape colony, 1682-1731", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 9, 1983, pp. 265-286; R Ross, "The rise of the Cape gentry", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 9(2), 1983, pp. 193-217 and "The Cape economy and the Cape gentry", R Ross, *Beyond the pale: Essays on the history of colonial South Africa* (Hanover & London, Wesleyan University Press, 1993), pp. 13-49; W Dooling, "The making of a colonial elite: Property, family and landed stability in the Cape colony, c. 1750-1834", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31(1), 2005, pp. 147-162 and *Slavery, emancipation and colonial rule in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, UKZN Press, 2007), pp. 16-57.

3 By this period, thirteen different alcohol *pachten* were leased for a year's duration at the end of every August to the highest bidder at a public auction. There were ten *pachten*, differentiated by type of alcohol (four Cape wine, four Cape brandy, one Cape beer and one 'wine and beer from the fatherland'), which allowed the holder (*pachter*) to retail that specific alcohol in Table Valley; in addition to a *pacht* giving the sole right to provide visiting ships with alcohol. There were also two regional *pachten* for selling alcohol outside of Cape Town, viz. in the Stellenbosch-Drakenstein (Paarl) and the Rondebosch-False Bay (Simonstown) areas. On the origins and working of the alcohol *pacht* system, see G Groenewald, "More comfort, better prosperity and greater advantage: Free burghers, alcohol retail and the VOC authorities at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1680", *Historia*, 57(1), 2012, forthcoming.

the VOC era could engage. It was also highly lucrative: both to holders of the alcohol leases (called *pachten* in Dutch) and to the VOC authorities which received its largest share of direct revenue from selling the various alcohol leases and, indirectly, through other forms of taxation.<sup>4</sup>

This study also aims to contribute to the history of this group of entrepreneurs by comparing and contrasting the alcohol lease-holders (called *pachters* in Dutch) of the second half of the eighteenth century with those of a previous generation (c. 1720-1750) whom I have studied earlier.<sup>5</sup> By focusing on the *pachters* of 1770-1779, whose involvement in alcohol retail spanned the period 1758-1790 (see table 2), this investigation affords the opportunity to determine to what an extent the role of the *pacht* in the socio-economic life of Cape Town had changed by the second half of the eighteenth century. What differences occurred in the composition of the body of *pachters* in the 1770s as opposed to the 1730s? What changes happened in the ways in which Cape Town burghers invested in the alcohol *pacht*? Was capital raised in different ways by this later stage, and to what extent did the nature and function of business networks change? What were the continuities and changes regarding the way in which alcohol entrepreneurs operated? Given that by this stage the Cape was a more settled society, with a mostly second and third generation population, was dynasty building occurring? How did the different social set-up, in terms of a growing local population, affect the types of alliances *pachters* entered into? In suggesting answers to these questions, a study of the 1770s enables the historian to determine how the *pacht* system was used by a new generation of Cape Town inhabitants. This in turn aids our understanding of how the composition and social dynamics of the burgher population, and the development of a local elite, differed in the late eighteenth century from the earlier period.

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4 G Groenewald, "Entrepreneurs and the making of a free burgher society", N Worden (ed.), *Cape Town between East and West: Social identities in a Dutch colonial town* (Johannesburg, Jacana, 2011), pp. 45-46; J Fourie & D von Fintel, "A history with evidence: Income inequality in the Dutch Cape colony", *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 26(1), 2011, pp. 25 & 30-31.

5 G Groenewald, "Een dienstig inwoonder: Entrepreneurs, social capital and identity in Cape Town, c. 1720-1750," *South African Historical Journal*, 59, 2007, pp. 126-152.

## The *pachters* of the 1770s: A prosopography<sup>6</sup>

During the decade 1770-1779 nineteen individuals invested in the alcohol *pachten*.<sup>7</sup> Given that this division into decades is an artificial procedure, it is natural that their activities extended beyond this decade. Most of them were already active by the 1760s, with the earliest investment by one of them being 1758. Some continued investing in the *pacht* long after the end of the decade under focus, up to 1790. The *pacht* activities of this group therefore cover most of the second half of the century and continued until close to the demise of the *pacht* system in 1795 (see table 2). The number of *pachten* held by individual *pachters* varied greatly. Overall, the vast majority of *pachters* held only one to five *pachten* during his or her career, with about thirty-seven percent who only ever bought one *pacht*.<sup>8</sup> In the 1770s, too, the majority of *pachters* invested in five or fewer *pachten*. But an unusual feature of this group of *pachters* is that so many of them (six out of the nineteen) held ten or more *pachten*. This is almost double the average for the whole period of the alcohol *pacht* at the Cape (only seventeen percent of all *pachters* held that many). In fact, this era saw the biggest investors in the history of the alcohol *pacht*: Jan Jacob Schreuder, who was active between 1762 and 1790, is the person who had invested in the largest number of *pachten* in the history of the alcohol *pacht* system. Two other *pachters* active during the 1770s, Martin Melck and Maarten Bateman, respectively bought the third and fourth largest number of *pachten*, with Melck investing the second largest fortune in the alcohol *pacht* during its existence. In general this fits a pattern of *pacht*-holding in the second half of the eighteenth century where fewer individuals held more

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6 Prosopography entails the “investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives”, L Stone, “Prosopography”, *The past and the present revisited* (London & New York, Routledge, 1987), p. 45. A collective biography is created by asking a uniform set of questions about each individual in a given group. Thus, by collecting seemingly isolated facts and information about a certain group of individuals one can discern long-term trends which reveal something about the structural and more general aspects of a society. Prosopography is often used in this way to trace the development of social stratification and the workings of social mobility in a given group or society; compare on this approach, J de Jong, “Prosopografie, een mogelijkheid: Eliteonderzoek tussen politieke en sociaal-culturele geschiedenis”, *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 111, 1996, pp. 201–215.

7 This prosopography was compiled from: the *pacht* contracts in the Cape Archives (CA), Cape Town, Council of Policy (C), Vols. 2697-2729; HCV Leibbrandt (ed. & tr.), *Precis of the archives of the Cape of Good Hope: Requesten (Memorials), 1715-1806* (5 volumes, Cape Town, Cape Times & South African Library, 1905-1906 & 1989) and various genealogical sources; CC de Villiers & C Pama, *Geslagsregisters van die ou Kaapse families* (3 volumes, Cape Town & Amsterdam, Balkema, 1966); JA Heese & RTJ Lombard, *Suid-Afrikaanse geslagregister South African genealogies* (15 volumes, Pretoria & Stellenbosch, Genealogical Institute of South Africa, 1986-2007); J Hoge, “Personalialia of the Germans at the Cape, 1652-1806”, *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 9, 1946, and E Moritz, *Die Deutschen am Kap unter der Holländischen Herrschaft, 1652-1806* (Weimar, Böhlau, 1938).

8 G Groenewald, “Een dienstig inwoonder...”, *South African Historical Journal*, 59, 2007, p. 131.

*pachten*. Whether or not this is related to greater capital accumulation (or a different avenue or pattern of accumulation) will be discussed later. During the 1770s the alcohol retail trade in Cape Town was essentially dominated by six men: Jan Jacob Schreuder, Martin Melck, Maarten Bateman, Willem de Kruger, Johannes Nicholaas Esselaar (or Esler) and Johannes Roep.

Table 1: Number of *pachten* bought by individual *pachters*

No of <i>pachten</i> held	<i>Pachters</i> 1680-1795	1770s only
1	73 (37%)	4 (21%)
2	33 (17%)	2 (11%)
3-5	41 (21%)	5 (26%)
6-9	18 (9%)	2 (11%)
10+	33 (17%)	6 (32%)
Total	198	19

Source: CA, C, Vols. 2697-2731 & CA, RLR, Vol. 163.

Based on a study of patterns from the 1730s, one would have expected *pachters* of the late eighteenth century either to have remained immigrants (showing that urban entrepreneurship was ultimately related to a relative lack of deep connections) or that, one to two generations down the line, *pachters* would be locally-born individuals who continued a family tradition of alcohol retail. Yet the tabulation of the 1770s *pachters*' origins surprisingly shows a result which does not conform completely to either of these scenarios. Of the 1770s *pachters*, the majority were still immigrants: only six were Cape born. Of the remaining thirteen, all except Jan Daniel Holst came from the German-speaking lands (as was the case in the 1730s).

At first sight this seems contradictory to what was established earlier, viz. that Germans were dominant in the alcohol retail trade in Cape Town from the 1710s to the 1760s, but that in the last decades Cape-born investors took prominence.<sup>9</sup> But the latter periodisation was based of when *pachters* bought their first *pacht*. A closer examination of the German-speaking *pachters* of the 1770s reveals that of the twelve active during that decade, eight started their activities a decade or more earlier. All six the Cape *pachters* of this decade, however, only started their activities in the 1770s. Even so, the Cape *pachters* remained a small contingent as few of them invested in more than a few *pachten*: the Germans – who had a good head-start – continued to dominate

<sup>9</sup> G Groenewald, "Een dienstig inwoonder...", *South African Historical Journal*, 59, 2007, pp. 133-134.

the alcohol retail trade of the 1770s: All six of those who owned more than ten *pachten* were of German origin.

Table 2: Alcohol *pachters* at the Cape, 1770-1779<sup>10</sup>

<i>Pachter's name</i>	Nationality	Years active	No of <i>pachten</i>
Bateman, Maarten	German	1763-1787	36
Broeders, Pieter	German	1758-1773	8
Combrink, Hermanus	Cape	1770-1774	2
De Kruger, Willem	German	1770-1786	19
Dempers, Willem	Cape	1775	1
Esselaar, Johannes	German	1762-1774	13
Holst, Jan Daniel	Dutch	1764-1773	3
Hurter, Jan Willem	German	1763-1783	7
Kalteijer, Anthonij	German	1776-1777	2
Meijer, Hendrik	Cape	1771-1773	3
Melck, Martin	German	1760-1781	32
Munnik, Gerhardus	Cape	1779	1
Roep, Johannes	German	1767-1780	21
Rogiers, Tobias	Cape	1775-1778	4
Schreuder, Johan Jacob	German	1762-1790	39
Sebrits, Frans	German	1778-1782	4
Smook, Jan	German	1763-1779	5
Wilkens, Jan Willem jr	Cape	1776	1
Wilkens, Jan Willem sr	German	1777	1

Source: CA, C, Vols. 2697-2731, CA, RLR, Vol. 163 & Genealogical data (see footnote 7 above).

As with the *pachters* of the 1730s, most of those from the 1770s had a career in the VOC before becoming free burghers. Of the thirteen immigrant *pachters* of this decade, the rank of twelve was determined. All but two of them came to the Cape as *soldaten* (soldiers). Only Maarten Bateman arrived as a sailor, while Jan Daniel Holst was an artisan on a ship. The *pachters* of the 1770s do not, however, show the same range of positions in the VOC as those of the 1730s – only one of them is known to have had a position in

<sup>10</sup> The years in the column “Years active” refer to *pacht* years, i.e. from 1 September the previous calendar year to 31 August of the year given.

the VOC hierarchy, viz. Pieter Broeders who worked as a low-ranking civil servant. Clearly, for the *pachters* of this decade, experience in the VOC was not a major factor in their later success. There is no clear link between the VOC careers of Maarten Bateman, Johan Jacob Schreuder and Martin Melck and their huge success in the alcohol retail business later in their lives. Other factors must evidently have played a greater role by this stage. In the course of the eighteenth century new entrepreneurs seemingly had less need to rely on the favour of the VOC and expended more of their energy on establishing and maintaining links with the growing burgher population.

For the *pachters* of the 1730s, the length of the period between arriving at the Cape, becoming a free burgher and investing in a *pacht* for the first time were closely correlated.<sup>11</sup> Was this still the case by the 1770s? On average, these *pachters* were in VOC service at the Cape for about five years after arrival, ranging from one to thirteen years. This is only slightly less than the average for the *pachters* of the 1730s. The range for the period between receiving their free-burgher papers and becoming a *pachter* was also rather similar to that of the 1730s. In the 1770s, the immigrant *pachters* took between one and sixteen years from becoming free burghers to investing in a *pacht* for the first time, with an average of about seven years.

Thus far the prosopography of the 1770s *pachters* shows a surprising amount of continuity with that of the earlier period. But there were also changes which started to occur during this period. In the 1730s there was a clear link between leaving Company service and obtaining a *pacht* shortly thereafter, viz. marriage to the widow or a daughter of a *pachter*.<sup>12</sup> This way into the *pacht* business was much less common by the 1770s. Only three of these men became *pachters* within a year of becoming free burghers (see table 3). But only one of them, Jan Willem Hurter, married into a *pacht* family. Hurter, though, never became a major *pachter*, and although he invested in the alcohol *pachten* over a period of almost twenty years, he did so haphazardly and relatively rarely (only seven times) although his involvement in the world of alcohol retail was extensive, as will be discussed later. Of the nineteen *pachters* active during the 1770s, only four married the (step-)daughters of *pachters*,<sup>13</sup> and none married widows of *pachters*. There were also three individuals who married the granddaughters of *pachters* (see table 3).<sup>14</sup> Remarkable is that none of

11 G Groenewald, "Een dienstig inwoonder...", *South African Historical Journal*, 59, 2007, pp. 134-135.

12 G Groenewald, "Een dienstig inwoonder...", *South African Historical Journal*, 59, 2007, p. 135.

13 Jan Willem Hurter; Frans Sebrits and Jan Willem Wilkens senior.

14 Jan Daniel Holst; Johannes Roep and Tobias Rogiers.

those *pachters* who married into *pacht* families became particularly successful in this business: Hurter is the one who invested in the largest number of *pachten* although his influence was much larger than his direct investment would indicate. In fact, of the six main *pachters* of this period, only Johannes Roep could show some connection to a *pachter* family in that he married Johanna Elisabeth Staf, the granddaughter of Aletta de Nijs.

Table 3: Careers of the 1770s *pachters*<sup>15</sup>

<i>Pachter's name</i>	Rank	Arrival to burgher	Burgher to <i>pachter</i>	Marriage
Bateman, Maarten	sailor	4	6	
Broeders, Pieter	soldier	2	1	
Combrink, Hermanus	n/a	n/a	n/a	
De Kruger, Willem	soldier	5	15	
Dempers, Willem	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Esselaar, Johannes	unknown	?	?	
Holst, Jan Daniel	artisan	1	7	gd
Hurter, Jan Willem	soldier	13	0	d
Kalteijer, Anthonij	soldier	5	12	
Meijer, Hendrik	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Melck, Martin	soldier	4	10	
Munnik, Gerhardus	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Roep, Johannes	soldier	5	7	gd
Rogiers, Tobias	n/a	n/a	n/a	gd
Schreuder, Johan Jacob	soldier	4	8	
Sebrits, Frans	soldier	6	4	d
Smook, Jan	soldier	9	1	
Wilkens, Jan Willem jr	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Wilkens, Jan Willem sr	soldier	6	16	d

Source: Cape Archives, Genealogical data; *Resolusies & Requesten* (also see footnote references 7)

<sup>15</sup> The numbers in the columns "arrival to burgher" and "burgher to *pachter*" refer to years. In the column "Marriage" a "d" denotes marriage to the (step-)daughter of an (ex-) *pachter*, "gd" to a granddaughter.



This finding – the fact that *pachters* by the 1770s were still largely immigrants and did not (generally) marry into *pacht* families – is most surprising. Something was beginning to change in relation to how the *pachters* were connected and operated. What variety was there in the ways in which different entrepreneurs operated in the alcohol *pacht* world – particularly with regards to social capital<sup>16</sup> – during the 1770s; and how did their approaches differ from those of an earlier generation, the *pachters* of the 1730s? In what follows, I demonstrate the existence of two different approaches to building up social capital and networks by alcohol *pachters* during the 1770s, both of which show varying degrees of continuity and change from the earlier period.

### **A matriarchal Cape dynasty**

The economist Joseph Schumpeter suggested that one of the desires or motivations for entrepreneurial activity is “the dream and the will to found a private kingdom, usually, though not necessarily, also a dynasty.”<sup>17</sup> Given the fact that by the 1770s large parts of the burgher population of the Cape were second and third-generation inhabitants, one would expect a much greater proportion of second-generation entrepreneurs who were expanding the successes of their parents. Yet this seems *not* to have been the case during this period: although four of the *pachters* active in the 1770s were the sons or grandsons of *pachters*, not one of them was a particularly successful *pachter*: Hendrik Meijer, Gerhardus Munnik, Tobias Rogiers and Jan Willem Wilkens jr. could, between them, only buy eight *pachten*.<sup>18</sup> On a superficial level, then, it seems as if no “dynasty building” was taking place during this period. Yet on a deeper level there certainly appears to have been something of this process among a section of the *pachter* community. It was, however, hidden due to its matrilineal nature.

The one outstanding case of dynasty building involved the Cape beer *pacht*. This case well illustrates both the continuities of *pacht* holding through most

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<sup>16</sup> Social capital, according to HD Flap, is “an entity, consisting of all expected future benefits derived not from one’s own labor, but from connections with other persons.” For a fuller discussion of this concept and its application to the alcohol *pachters*, See G Groenewald, “An early modern entrepreneur: Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen and the creation of wealth in Dutch colonial Cape Town, 1702-1741”, *Kronos: Southern African Histories*, 35, 2009, pp. 14-16.

<sup>17</sup> J Schumpeter, “Entrepreneurship as innovation”, R Swedburg (ed.), *Entrepreneurship: The social science view* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 70-71.

<sup>18</sup> Despite his name, Johan Jacob Schreuder was no relation to the *pachter*, Jan Jurgen Schreuder, active during the 1740s.

of the eighteenth century, and the changes which were occurring towards the end of the century. Superficially there seems to be no pattern in the holding of the beer *pacht* during the 1770s as it was held by five different individuals, none of whom had it for more than four years in succession. But once one looks into the marriage patterns and the role of female descent, it becomes clear that during this decade the beer *pacht* continued to be controlled by a family complex that centred on Aletta de Nijs. It was thanks to her business acumen that the beer *pacht* remained in the same family's hands for more than four decades.

Aletta de Nijs was born at the Cape in 1699, daughter of Jan de Nijs from Germany who worked as soldier and wood-cutter, first on Mauritius and then at the Cape.<sup>19</sup> In 1716 she married the Danish soldier, Christiaan Biesel, who became a free burgher in 1719.<sup>20</sup> He seemed to have been of some prominence in the burgher community but died in 1730.<sup>21</sup> The young widow was left with their six surviving children and seemingly little money, as she was described by Governor de la Fontaine in 1731 as having “a cooper shop and labouring under debts.”<sup>22</sup> In 1734, however, de Nijs married the German soldier, Hans Jurgen Honk, with whom she had three more children (only one of whom reached adulthood). After buying the farm De Papenboom, the site of the Cape's brewery, the couple became involved in the beer *pacht*. Right from the start a pattern of *family* involvement was established, as the first time the family obtained the beer *pacht* was when de Nijs' son-in-law, Michiel Daniel Lourich obtained the *pacht* for 1737.<sup>23</sup> Between 1738 and 1743 Honk himself held the beer *pacht*, in addition to holding the right to sell wine and liquor in Rondebosch during the early 1740s. After Honk's death in 1743, de Nijs came into her right (helped by the sizeable capital she inherited from her husband)<sup>24</sup> and, with two exceptions, held the beer *pacht* in her own name from 1744 until 1762. During this time she married Gerrit Reijndersz de Vos who held the *pacht* in 1751. This was a once-off affair, as de Nijs continued to buy the *pacht* from 1752 onwards in her own name. Although de Nijs

19 JA Heese & RTJ Lombard, *Suid-Afrikaanse geslagregisters...*, Vol. 6, p. 476.

20 GC de Wet (ed.), *Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 1724-1728* (Johannesburg, Government Printer, 1971), Vol. 7, p. 269 note 186.

21 GC de Wet (ed.), *Resolusies van die Politieke Raad...*, Vol. 7, p. 391.

22 L Guelke, R Shell & W Whyte (eds), *The De la Fontaine report, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1732* (New Haven, Opgaaf Project, 1990).

23 Lourich was married to Anna Catharina Biesel, a daughter from de Nijs' first marriage. He started his career in 1730 as the *bijtapper* of his fellow-German, Johannes Heufke; CA, Council of Justice (CJ), Vol. 2882, pp. 323-335.

24 This includes the farm Papenboom, valued at f15 000, a house in Table Valley (valued at f5 000) and fourteen slaves; compare CA, Master of the Orphan Chamber (MOOC), Vol. 8/6 (59).

only ever invested in the beer *pacht*, for which she produced her own beer, she also acted on several occasions as the *bijtapper*<sup>25</sup> for *pachters* who held the Rondebosch and False Bay *pacht*. Her son from her first marriage, Jan Biesel, held the Rondebosch and False Bay *pacht* for one year during this period (1754).

But the de Nijs family's involvement in the beer *pacht* did not end with her retirement from *pacht* holding (or death) in 1762.<sup>26</sup> During 1763-1764 this *pacht* was held by the German immigrant, Jan Willem Hurter. He arrived at the Cape in 1750 and worked as master gardener until he became a free burgher in 1762, in time to take over the *pacht* from Aletta de Nijs. He had married Barbara Honk in 1755, the daughter of Aletta de Nijs with her second husband. As the only surviving child of Honk, Barbara shared her father's reasonably wealthy estate with her mother.<sup>27</sup> Although Hurter married into a successful and wealthy *pachter* family, he was only involved in the beer *pacht* on-and-off, investing in it seven times over twenty years, and in no other *pachten* at all. Like his mother-in-law, though, he also often served as *bijtapper* for the Rondebosch and False Bay *pacht* (which during this period had increased much in turnover due to ships calling at False Bay); and since he possessed the brewery at Papenboom, he continued to be the sole provider of beer to *pachters* at the Cape. The beer *pacht* during the 1760-1770s developed a curious pattern of ownership, alternating between descendants of Aletta de Nijs and their associates. After Hurter's stint, it was held by Jan Jacob Schreuder for three years in a row. It is plausible that Schreuder and Hurter were long-standing friends: they were born in 1722 and 1723 respectively in the German-speaking lands and both arrived at the Cape in 1750. What is more certain is that they were part of a group of business associates – or at least financial backers – centred on Hurter's relative, Johannes Roep.

Johannes Roep, another German immigrant who arrived at the Cape as a soldier in 1755 and became a free burgher in 1760, seemed to have been at the epicentre of a group of *pachters* who shared connections with Aletta de Nijs; in addition to their shared German origins and VOC experience. In 1761 he married Johanna Elisabeth Staf, who was the daughter of Lourens Staf and Elisabeth Biesel. The latter was one of Aletta de Nijs' children from her first marriage. But Johanna Staf seems to have been more than just a

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25 A *bijtapper* was an assistant tavern or bar keeper; or somebody (as in this case) who sells alcohol on behalf of a *pachter*.

26 The author has been unable to ascertain her date of death.

27 Compare CA, MOOC, Vol. 8/6 (59).

granddaughter of de Nijs: her father had been incarcerated on Robben Island due to insanity and she and her mother lived with de Nijs and probably assisted her in her business activities. When Johanna's mother died during the small-pox epidemic of 1755, de Nijs formally adopted her grandchild.<sup>28</sup> To all extent and purposes, then, she was more like a daughter of Aletta de Nijs and this, coupled with the closeness in age between her husband, Johannes Roep, and what was technically her step-uncle, Jan Hurter, must explain the close business links between these two men. For Johannes Roep acted as one of the two requisite sureties for Hurter on each of the four occasions the latter bought the beer *pacht* during the 1760s and 1770s. Johannes Roep was likewise a very regular surety for Jan Jacob Schreuder's many investments in the *pacht* business.<sup>29</sup> Roep himself entered the family business in 1767 by investing in the beer *pacht* after Schreuder's stint. In total, Roep invested four times in this particular *pacht* during the late 1760s and 1770s, thus ensuring the continuing dominance of the de Nijs family in the Cape beer business.

During this period a non-German married into the family. Jan Daniel Holst from Amsterdam arrived at the Cape in 1754 and became a burgher shortly thereafter. In 1757 his wife joined him from Amsterdam,<sup>30</sup> and in the mid-1760s he twice invested in alcohol *pachten*. On one of these occasions Schreuder acted as his surety. In 1767, shortly after the death of his first wife, he married Aletta Johanna Biesel, the granddaughter of Aletta de Nijs, thereby becoming related to both Hurter and Roep.<sup>31</sup> He was, however, a minor cog in the wheel of the de Nijs-Hurter family as he only invested in one more *pacht* after his marriage, viz. in the Rondebosch-False Bay *pacht* in 1773.

During the early 1770s ownership of the beer *pacht* circulated between Jan Willem Hurter, the son-in-law of Aletta de Nijs, Johannes Roep, her "grandson-in-law" and Johannes Esselaar. The latter was another German immigrant who arrived at the Cape during the late 1740s or early 1750s and had been actively investing in the brandy *pacht* during the 1760s. He had no family ties to de Nijs herself, but seems to have formed part of the group of German immigrant *pachters* centred on Johannes Roep. It was Esselaar who, along with Roep, acted as Hurter's surety during the times he bought the beer

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28 HCV Leibbrandt (Ed. & tr.), *Precis of the archives: Requesten...*, Vol. 1, p. 383 & CA, C, Vol. 133, pp. 409-415.

29 Schreuder held thirty-nine *pachten* during a twenty-eight-year period (1762-1790). He started investing in the beer and *vaderlandschen* alcohol *pachten* during the 1760s, but expanded his business to include the lucrative brandy *pacht* in the 1770s, often buying more than one of the four brandy *pachten* a year.

30 CA, C, Vol. 135, p. 174.

31 CA, MOOC, Vol. 8/12, no. 32; JA Heese & RTJ Lombard, *Suid-Afrikaanse geslagregisters...*, Vols. 1, p. 278 & 3, p. 449.

*pacht* in the 1760-1770s. In addition Esselaar also acted as Schreuder's surety on at least eight occasions during the 1770s, and also three times for Johannes Roep when the latter started investing in the alcohol *pachten* in the late 1760s.

Another expatriate German who invested briefly in the beer *pacht* during this period, and seems to have formed part of this group of mutual supporters, was Jan Smook. Born in 1724, he arrived at the Cape in 1753, becoming a free burgher in 1762. He therefore follows the pattern of Hurter, Roep, Schreuder and Esselaar who were all born in the early 1720s, arrived at the Cape as soldiers in the early 1750s and became involved in the alcohol *pachten* during the 1760s. On four of the five occasions that Smook invested in an alcohol *pacht*, Roep acted as one of his sureties, while Smook in his turn stood as surety for Schreuder (four times) and on many occasions for Roep. Acting as a surety for someone in the eighteenth-century Cape was no mere formality since it carried formidable risks and was normally only done for people one trusted. In addition, as Otto Mentzel had testified of the situation in the 1730s, more often than not the person who stood as someone's surety acted more as a business partner than a mere surety.<sup>32</sup> Thus, during the 1760-1770s there existed a group of German men of roughly the same age and experience who all invested in alcohol *pachten* and supported one another financially. This group was centred on Johannes Roep (in terms of the network of sureties) who was helped by the connections, via his wife and Hurter, to the de Nijs family business complex.

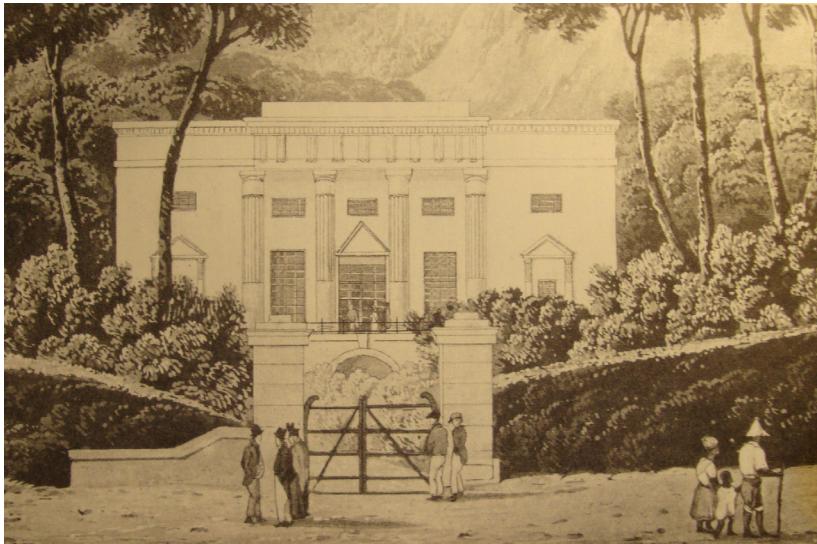
In the mid-1770s the beer *pacht* was held for three years running by a newcomer to the business, viz. the Cape-born Tobias Rogiers. His involvement too was no accident: he was the son of Johannes Rogiers who had mostly worked as *tappersknecht* (tavern servant) but also twice held an alcohol *pacht* (in 1714 and 1726).<sup>33</sup> In 1765 Rogiers junior married Maria Elisabeth van Ellewee, another granddaughter of Aletta de Nijs. During 1775-1777 he held the beer *pacht*, and on all three occasions Johannes Esselaar stood as one of his sureties, along with his "step-uncle", Jan Willem Hurter on two occasions and Jan Smook once. In the tradition of his family-in-law, he also acted as *bijtapper* for the Rondebosch and False Bay *pachters*. After Rogiers' stint as beer *pachter*, he was succeeded by his "cousin-in-law" for 1778, who in turn was followed by the family friend, Jan Smook, after which the *pacht* returned

32 OF Mentzel (tr. HJ Mandelbrote, GV Marais & J Hoge), *A geographical and topographical description of the Cape of Good Hope* (3 volumes, Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1921, 1925 & 1944), Vol. 2, p. 52.

33 M Cairns, "The land and its owners, 1660-1822", J Walton (ed.), *The Josephine mill and its owners: The story of milling and brewing at the Cape of Good Hope* (Cape Town, Historical Society of Cape Town, 1978), p. 38.

to the head of the family again, Jan Willem Hurter, in 1780 and again in 1782-1783. Hurter died in 1783, which meant the end of the involvement, which started in 1738, of the family of Aletta de Nijs (and some of their associates) in the beer *pacht* and beer brewing at the Cape. Although Hurter's son-in-law, Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen, inherited Papenboom, which he greatly expanded and improved,<sup>34</sup> he never became directly involved in the alcohol *pachten* (although three of his many brothers invested in some of the other *pachten* during the 1780-1790s).

Image 1: The house which Dirk van Reenen built at Papenboom in the 1780s, drawn by George Thompson, c. 1823



Source: G Thompson, *Travels and adventures in southern Africa* (London, Colburn, 1827).

For more than forty years, de Nijs, her husbands, sons-in-laws and grandsons-in-law controlled the beer *pacht* and beer brewing at the Cape. While this particular *pacht* was not the most lucrative of the alcohol *pachten*, it did produce a continuous income – the more so since it did not have any competition from other *pachters*, unlike the more profitable brandy and wine *pachten*. It seems to have become particularly lucrative during the 1770-1780s, during which era the wine *pachters* complained about the detrimental

<sup>34</sup> E Moritz, *Die Deutschen am Kap...*, p. 163.

competition they received from the beer *pachter*.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the de Nijs family complex all seem to have been working closely with the Rondebosch and False Bay *pachters*, acting as their *bijtappers* on their farms and premises in the area behind Table Mountain. In fact, the de Nijs family appears to have been quite prominent in this part of the Cape peninsula: in 1750 Aletta's niece, Elisabeth de Nijs,<sup>36</sup> married the colony's master woodcutter, Salomon Bosch, with whom she lived at Paradise, Newlands – not far from her aunt's farm, Papenboom.<sup>37</sup> During the same period another de Nijs worked for the VOC in this area, viz. Adriaan de Neijs [sic]. He seems not to have been directly related to the Cape de Nijs family as he came from the Netherlands (not Germany) in 1741 but some distant relation is not impossible and would certainly have been cultivated in the small social world of the Cape.<sup>38</sup> He was a wealthy and respectable man who as post-holder of Simon's Bay between 1751 and 1761 fulfilled an important function in the Cape settlement.<sup>39</sup> It was precisely during his tenure that Simon's Bay became the preferred anchorage for the VOC fleet which caused a major increase in the value of the Rondebosch and False Bay *pachten* with which the de Nijs family was so intimately concerned. No doubt their close relation to senior officials in the VOC establishment added to the status of the de Nijs family.<sup>40</sup>

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35 GJ Jooste, "Die geskiedenis van wynbou en wynhandel in die Kaapkolonie, 1753-1795" (MA, University of Stellenbosch, 1973), pp. 71-79. Certainly, by the 1770s the beer *pachters* were better established and deeper connected than ever before. It is not impossible that the Cape wine *pachters* feared their growing influence precisely because of the dynasty building that was taking place. It could also be that by the late 1770s and early 1780s the beer *pachters* (who were closely connected to the Van Reenens and other leading burgher families) were associated with the dissenting Cape Patriot movement while the wine *pachters*, especially Martin Melck, were keen to dissociate from this movement.

36 JA Heese & RTJ Lombard, *Suid-Afrikaanse geslagregisters...*, Vol. 6, p. 476 lists Elisabeth de Nijs as the second daughter of Jan de Nijs who was born at the Cape and married in 1725. Although the compilers do not make this connection, it seems highly plausible that this Jan de Nijs is the same as the third child of Aletta's father, Jan de Nijs of Germany, who was called Jan and baptised in 1701.

37 M Cairns, "Paradise, Newlands", *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, 35(2), 1980, pp. 60-65.

38 His eldest daughter had the family name Aletta; while (at the time of his wife's death in 1773) Johannes Roep,

married to the granddaughter of Aletta de Nijs, owed the estate some f3 000; CA, MOOC, Vol. 8/15, no. 15.

39 HCV Leibbrandt (Ed. & tr.), *Precis of the archives: Requesten...*, Vol. 1, 381 and D Sleigh, *Die buiteposte: VOC-buiteposte onder Kaapse bestuur, 1652-1795* (Pretoria, Protea Boekhuis, 2004), pp. 321-322. The source of his wealth is not known, yet he managed to transfer thousands of guilders every year to his family in the Netherlands. Although Sleigh does not speculate, it seems likely that his wealth must have been connected to his post which afforded any number of opportunities for enrichment.

40 Adriaan de Neijs' daughter was married to Ensign Johan Arnold Bleumer, adding another high-ranking VOC official to the family's connections; CA, MOOC, Vol. 8/15, no. 15.

### ***Changing alliances***

The story of the de Nijs family's involvement in the beer *pacht* illustrates the family nature of the alcohol retail business during this period. In this sense, as well as the fact that new links continued to be made based on a shared German background, this case study proves similar to the situation of the 1730s when German immigrants were building up business networks. Yet the history of the de Nijs family's involvement in the *pachten* also illustrates how, as connections deepened with each new generation, the nature of alliances changed – as became particularly evident during the 1770s and 1780s. For one thing, the fact that the de Nijs family was able to hold onto the beer *pacht* for three generations also indicates that dynasty building was possible through investment in the *pachten*.

Establishing a dynasty, though, is about more than just business and economic success. The capital – both economic and social – which the de Nijs family built up over several generations paid off handsomely by the period under discussion. The children of Jan Willem Hurter and Barbara Honk all made spectacularly advantageous marriages. Their first daughter married in 1775, but five of their other children all married in one year, 1782-1783. This was no co-incidence as it was at the height of the Patriot agitation: all of the families into which the Hurter children married were closely involved in this movement. The exact origin of Hurter's involvement with the Patriots cannot be determined, but certainly his family's close contact with the van Reenens since 1775, and his long-standing friendship with Schreuder (who was a supporter of the Patriots), contributed to this.<sup>41</sup> The first Hurter daughter, Aletta, married Dirk Gijbert van Reenen in 1775, while her sister, Catharina, married his younger brother Sebastiaan Valentijn in 1783. In 1782, Elisabeth Maria Hurter married Arend Munnik, while her brother followed suit by marrying Martha Maria Munnik, Arend's niece, the following year. Another daughter of Hurter married Servaas van Breda, also in 1782. Hurter's eldest son, Jacobus Adam, married Anna Elisabeth Bergh in 1783.<sup>42</sup>

In social and economic terms, these were about the most advantageous marriages a person could make in the late eighteenth-century Cape. The Munniks were one of the foremost burgher families with large landholdings. Arend was the younger brother of Gerhardus Munnik, the father of Martha

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<sup>41</sup> They were also all connected via their interest in promoting the Lutheran church at the Cape; see below.

<sup>42</sup> JA Heese & RTJ Lombard, *Suid-Afrikaanse geslagregisters...*, Vol. 3, pp. 531-532.



Maria.<sup>43</sup> It is likely that there existed a long-standing business relationship between the de Nijs-Hurter family and the Munniks: Gerhardus Munnik was the *pachter* of Rondebosch and False Bay in 1779 while his father, Johannes Munnik, had also held this *pacht* for three years during the 1740s. Gerhardus Munnik was, however, better known and well-respected as a *heemraad*<sup>44</sup> of Stellenbosch, captain of the burgher militia and a man of property.<sup>45</sup> By marrying Martha Maria Munnik, Jan Willem Hurter junior obtained not only another van Reenen as a brother-in-law (to add to the two his sisters had married), but also a Morkel brother-in-law, as well as both a Dreyer sister and brother-in-law. This was in addition to having a de Waal as his mother-in-law. By this stage the Munnik family was at the epicentre of a network of very wealthy families who intermarried to consolidate their wealth.<sup>46</sup>

By this stage the van Bredas were, like the van Reenens, a third-generation Cape family with connections to most of the other wealthy burgher families. Servaas was the brother of the better-known Patriot leader, Pieter van Breda, who both lived off their properties and inheritances.<sup>47</sup> Through them the Hurter family became related to the Smuts, Myburgh, Loubser, Eksteen and (yet again) the van Reenen families. By the 1780s the Hurter family was immensely intertwined with the van Reenens – not only through direct marriage alliances but also via indirect ties through in-laws. These links were most advantageous. By this stage the van Reenen family was probably the wealthiest at the Cape thanks to their father, Jacobus van Reenen's vast landholdings and major involvement in the meat *pacht* over several decades.<sup>48</sup> Dirk Gijsbert continued in this vein and, with several of his brothers, also invested in the meat *pacht*. Apart from his other farms, he bought his father-in-law's estate, De Papenboom, in 1785 for the large sum of *f*110 000. In addition to continuing to grow malt for the brewery, he also turned it into a foremost wine farm.<sup>49</sup> It was partly thanks to his business acumen that the

43 JA Heese & RTJ Lombard, *Suid-Afrikaanse geslagregisters...*, Vol. 5, pp. 738-739.

44 A *heemraad* sat on the local government body of a rural district: It was a sign of status and privilege to be elected to this office.

45 GJ Schutte (ed.), *Briefwisseling van Hendrik Swellengrebel jr oor Kaapse sake, 1778-1792* (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1982), pp. 186 & 252.

46 Compare M Hall, "The secret lives of houses: Women and gables in the eighteenth-century Cape", *Social Dynamics*, 20(1), 1994, pp. 10-20.

47 JH Verduyn den Boer, *Schetsen uit het Kaapse leven van de 18<sup>e</sup> en 19<sup>e</sup> eeuw* (Cape Town, Van de Sandt de Villiers, 1929), p. 1.

48 G Wagenaar, "Johannes Gysbertus van Reenen: Sy aandeel in die Kaapse geskiedenis tot 1806" (MA, University of Pretoria, 1976), pp. 3-10.

49 WJ de Kock & DW Krüger (Eds), *Suid-Afrikaanse biografiese woordeboek* (Cape Town & Johannesburg, Nasionale Raad vir Sosiale Navorsing, 1972), Vol. 2, pp. 818-819.

beer *pacht* (which he provided with its produce) became a threat to the wine *pachters* during the 1780s.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, the oldest Hurter son, Jacobus Adam, married Anna Elisabeth Bergh. She was the great-granddaughter of the high-ranking VOC official Olof Bergh and Anna de Koning, who at the turn of the eighteenth century became some of the wealthiest landowners at the Cape. Like their ancestor, the descendants of Olof Bergh moved in both the worlds of the free burghers and VOC administrators at the Cape. Anna Elisabeth was the daughter of the burgher lieutenant Olof Bergh. The latter's cousin, however, was a high-ranking Company official: secretary of the Council of Policy, Auction Master and acting Independent Fiscal, Olof Martini Bergh reached the apogee of his career by becoming a chief merchant in 1785.<sup>51</sup> Two of his sons became VOC officials like their father, but the rest entered the burgher community. The ambidextrous nature of this family is well-illustrated by Olof Martini Bergh's son, Marthinus Adrianus Bergh, who during the late 1770s and early 1780s caused something of a scandal when he resigned from his senior posts in the VOC (*inter alia* as landdrost of Stellenbosch) to join the cause of the Patriots.<sup>52</sup> The Hurter family was also related to him through his wife, Catharina de Waal. They also had cultural links with Olof Martini Bergh because of his close association with the Lutheran movement (see below).

Via the Hurter family's marriages to the van Bredas, Munniks and van Reenens during the late 1770s and early 1780s, they became related to the most influential and wealthy of the Cape gentry, viz. the Smuts, Myburgh, Eksteen, Morkel, de Waal, Dreyer and Loubser families. Many of these were also involved in the Patriot agitation of this period (see below). How then does one explain the Hurters' link with a prominent VOC family such as the Berghs, the more so since "even when certain official families had settled at the Cape, sometimes for generations, they retained the stamp of belonging to the Company rather than to the citizenry"?<sup>53</sup> Yet, Aletta de Nijs had close links with family members such as Salomon Bosch and Adriaan de Neijs who

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50 Compare GJ Jooste, "Geschiedenis van die wynbou...", pp. 71-79.

51 WJ de Kock & DW Krüger (eds), *Suid-Afrikaanse biografiese woordeboek...*, Vol. 2, pp. 54-55. Olof Martini's father, Marthinus Bergh, was the landdrost of Stellenbosch during the 1720-1730s, compare DW Krüger & CJ Beyers (eds), *Suid-Afrikaanse biografiese woordeboek* (Cape Town & Johannesburg, Nasionale Raad vir Sosiale Navorsing, 1977), Vol. 3, p. 63.

52 C Beyers, *Die Kaapse Patriotte gedurende die laaste kwart van die agtiende eeu en die voortlewing van hul denkbeelde* Second edition (Pretoria, Van Schaik, 1967), pp. 128-132.

53 GJ Schutte, "Company and colonists at the Cape, 1652-1795", R Elphick & H Giliomee (Eds), *The shaping of South African society, 1652-1840*, Second edition (Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 1989), p. 297.

were middle-ranking VOC officials in the Rondebosch-False Bay area, while her third husband, Gerrit Reindersz de Vos, was a retired VOC captain. The answer lies in the changing nature of family alliances by this period.

Robert Ross has described the last decades of the eighteenth century and the start of the nineteenth as a period during which officials in Cape Town “were not a distinct economic class” but who, through marriage alliances, became increasingly closely allied with the established farming families of the Western Cape. These locally-born officials with deep and wide-spreading roots acted as political links between the government and the farming community.<sup>54</sup> Ross is primarily concerned with the turn of the nineteenth century, but the process he is describing seems already to be at work in the 1770-1780s, and has even deeper roots with certain families such as the Berghs. In the course of the eighteenth century, as some administrator families settled at the Cape and their children remained there, marriages between the Company and burgher elites increased. By the period under discussion, when third and fourth generation Cape inhabitants were getting married, the desired links between wealth, power and status overrode any differences that may have existed between Company and burgher families.<sup>55</sup>

The history of Aletta de Nijs and her family’s involvement in the beer *pacht* for four decades and her son-in-law, Jan Willem Hurter’s spectacular success – both financially<sup>56</sup> and socially – illustrate the role of *pachters* in the making of the Cape gentry during this period. Ross has argued that there was a remarkable continuity in families who were involved in wine farming in the Western Cape. As a result of this, the division of wealth within the rural gentry “did not become extreme”, but at the same time the number of what Ross terms “middle-level” farmers increased in the course of the eighteenth century.<sup>57</sup> This means that despite the continuity of some families in the farming sector, the gentry also expanded with new blood. Ross argues further that “the Cape gentry consisted of a relatively undifferentiated broad mass of farmers, rather than a very small elite ...” with the exception of the “small

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54 R Ross, “The rise of the Cape gentry”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 9(2), 1983, p. 196, quoting William Freund.

55 Although it must be added here that it is unlikely that any “Company family” who had been at the Cape for more than two generations would not also have included several members who were part of the burgher community. In this sense Schutte’s statement quoted above seems wrong – although that may have been the appearance, it was the reality with only a very few Company families such as the Swellengrebel.

56 This is illustrated in the increase of the value of their main estate, De Papenboom: in 1743 it was valued at f15 000, half a century later, Hurter’s son-in-law bought it from his estate for f110 000.

57 R Ross, “The rise of the Cape gentry”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 9(2), 1983, p. 207.

group” of meat and wine *pachters* who, however, “became submerged in the growing group of substantial, but not exceptionally rich, farmers”.<sup>58</sup> By the late eighteenth century there were exceptionally rich farmers, and none more so than the van Reenens. The success of Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen would not have been possible without the history of the *pachters* of De Papenboom. Van Reenen was able to build on Hurter’s achievements and successes as brewer and farmer, and with his own capital – both financial and social – to expand it immensely. In his turn Hurter would not have been as successful had it not been for the many small achievements of Aletta de Nijs over many decades as she slowly consolidated and expanded her family’s wealth from a relatively meagre base.

This case of “dynasty building” by Aletta de Nijs and her descendants is unusual in the history of *pacht* holding as no other family controlled a single *pacht* for such a long period and with so many different family members being involved in it. This is partly due to the fact that the beer *pachters* were also the producers of beer which generally translated in greater continuity of ownership than with the other *pachten*. In many other ways the de Nijs-Hurter involvement in this *pacht* also illustrates well the continuities of the ways in which *pachters* operated: the centrality of German immigrants to the business; the role of endogamous marriages and the importance of kinship in building up social capital. It does however also indicate that by the 1770s and 1780s some aspects of this process started to change, especially in the changing nature and object of family alliances, which moved from urban entrepreneurs to the rural Cape gentry. But how does the experience of the de Nijs-Hurter family complex differ in this regard from their fellow *pachters* of the 1770s?

### **Friends, family networks and social capital**

As indicated above, the *pachters* of the 1770s reveal different prosopographic patterns as a group from those of the 1730s. There were both continuities and changes: a surprising continued dominance of immigrant Germans, no clear patterns between VOC ranks and *pacht* holding, and generally a lack of using marriage as a direct entry into the world of alcohol retail at the Cape. The history of the de Nijs-Hurter family complex well demonstrates how, among

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<sup>58</sup> R Ross, “The rise of the Cape gentry”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 9(2), 1983, pp. 207-208.

some *pachters*, the way into the world of alcohol retail remained similar for a long period. However, there are also indications from the history of that family that important changes were beginning to occur during the 1770s. These changes can be discerned more clearly with the history of the other *pachters* of this decade.

### ***Lutherans***

As late as the 1770s there was still a sizeable and prominent German community in Cape Town and its surrounds, consisting of both immigrant and second-generation members. It was during this period that they reasserted themselves in an attempt to practise their Lutheran faith. After their attempts of the 1730-1740s had failed, Cape Lutherans kept a low profile until the 1770s. This was due, partly, to the death in 1771 of Rijk Tulbagh, who was very unsympathetic to the Lutheran cause,<sup>59</sup> but probably more likely to the rise to prominence of German Lutherans in the public life of the Cape – both civilian and official. A study of those involved in the campaign for religious freedom reveals many of the links suggested above.

In the early 1770s Martin Melck, the wealthiest *pachter* of this period, erected a “warehouse” in Strand Street for use by the Lutherans of Cape Town, although this met with some official resistance. In 1776 a number of prominent Lutherans sent a memorandum to the Dutch Reformed Church authorities in Amsterdam to plead their cause. For fear of reprisal, this memorandum was signed by only twenty Lutherans. The names include three of the foremost *pachters* of this era: Martin Melck, Maarten Bateman and Johannes Esselaar. This was in addition to some individuals who were related to them (e.g. Johannes van Reenen) and several who acted as their sureties: Jens Jansen, Dirk Lehman, Baltus Willem Beets and Johannes Gijsbert Frank.<sup>60</sup> A fascinating aspect of the Lutheran struggle is the involvement of high-ranking VOC officials at the Cape in the process: the request of 1778 to establish a congregation was signed by eight individuals, four of whom were Company administrators: the bookkeeper Jan Anthon Hitzman, the junior merchants, Tobias Christian Rönnekamp and Jan Fredrik Kirsten, as well as

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59 J Hoge, “Die geskiedenis van die Lutherse kerk aan die Kaap”, *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 1(2), 1938, pp. 70-71.

60 J Hoge, “Die geskiedenis van die Lutherse kerk...”, *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 1(2), 1938, p. 72.

the secretary of the Council of Justice, Christian Ludolph Neethling.<sup>61</sup> The influential and high-ranking Olof Martini Bergh also supported their cause and became a member once the congregation was established in 1780.<sup>62</sup> This partly explains the links between the Bergh and Hurter families discussed in the previous section. When the Lutheran congregation came into existence, the most successful German *pachters* of the 1770s who were still alive became members: Maarten Baateman, Johannes Esselaar and Martin Melck, in addition to several of the families to whom they were related by marriage, such as the Dreyer, Hoffman, Hop, Meijer and Wispelaar families.<sup>63</sup>

### ***Wives***

If, as the previous paragraphs suggest, there were still some important links due to a shared cultural background between Capetonians of German descent, did this also translate into business networks as during the 1730s? Let us first consider marriage alliances and then the issue of financial backers. Twelve of the nineteen *pachters* active during the 1770s were German immigrant men and one was Dutch.<sup>64</sup> They all married at the Cape and, with one exception,<sup>65</sup> they all married Cape-born women. But only four of them married into “German” families, with only two of them having links to parents who were *pachters*: Jan Willem Hurter and Johannes Roep who, as discussed, married the daughter and granddaughter of Aletta de Nijs. As demonstrated above, these family links played an important role in the successes of Hurter and Roep. Only two other *pachters* from this period married the daughters of

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61 J Hoge, “Die geskiedenis van die Lutherse kerk...”, *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 1(2), 1938, p. 75. It is possible that the support of Lutherans in high office was a redeeming factor in finally allowing a Lutheran congregation. Likewise, it could be that because the German community was much better integrated with both the local burgher and VOC populations by this late period, there was less fear of them forming a “separatist” group which could divide the populace.

62 WJ de Kock & DW Krüger (Eds), *Suid-Afrikaanse biografiese woordeboek...*, Vol. 2, p. 55. The way in which officials were interlinked with burghers is illustrated by the fact that Bergh owed Jan Christoffel Fleck a sizeable loan of f12 000 in 1783, the same period when Jan Jacob Schreuder owed Fleck f6 000 (see below). Although Schreuder did not join the Lutheran congregation in 1780 he was linked to Bergh via the Hurter complex.

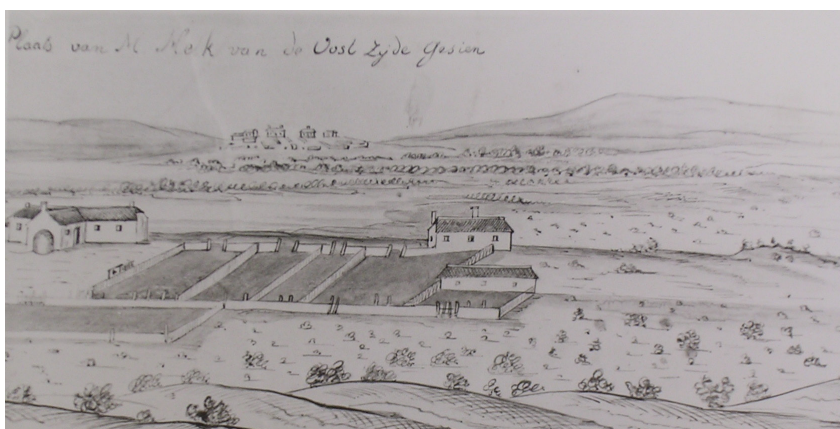
63 J Hoge, “Die geskiedenis van die Lutherse kerk...”, *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 1(2), 1938, pp. 222-231.

64 I will not deal with Jan Daniel Holst here as he is highly exceptionable. As a Dutch immigrant he brought out his wife but married into the de Nijs family upon her death in 1767. His involvement in the *pachten* was minor.

65 Pieter Broeders first married Maria Strand from Amsterdam who had been at the Cape for some time as she was twice widowed by the time she married Broeders in 1757; JA Heese & RTJ Lombard, *Suid-Afrikaanse geslagregisters...*, Vol. 1, p. 455 and J Hoge, “Personalialia of the Germans...”, p. 48.

German immigrants: Jan Jacob Schreuder<sup>66</sup> married Maria van Laar whose father was a German immigrant in the 1720s.<sup>67</sup> Martin Melck first worked as a *knecht* (a servant acting as farm foreman) to the German immigrant, Johan Gubeler, and later married his widow, Anna Margaretha, the daughter of the successful German farmer of the 1720-1740s, Jan Heinrich Hop.<sup>68</sup> All of them, most spectacularly Martin Melck, used these marriages to gain the financial and social capital with which to pursue their entrepreneurial interests.<sup>69</sup> In this sense they did not differ much from the German immigrant *pachters* of the 1730s.

Image 2: One of Martin Melck's farms, called Bergrivier, drawn by Robert Gordon, 1785



Source: Cape Archives, Cape Town, AG 7146 222A.

They form, however, a minority of alcohol *pachters* during the 1770s. Five of the *pachters* of this period married women of Dutch descent. Two of these concern the *pachters* of Stellenbosch-Drakenstein who are somewhat exceptional. Anthonij Kalteijer married Anna van Biljon, the widow of the farmer Bartholomeus Zaaïjman. After his two-year stint as *pachter*, Kalteijer was succeeded by Frans Sebrits who was married to Rachel Francina Zaaïjman, the daughter of Kalteijer's wife from her first marriage. In a minor way this was

66 Jan Jacob Schreuder was not related to the earlier *pachter*, Jan Jurgen Schreuder, who was active during the 1740s.

67 J Hoge, "Personalialia of the Germans...", *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 9 (1946), p. 230.

68 J Hoge, "Personalialia of the Germans...", *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 9 (1946), p. 173.

69 It is no co-incidence that Schreuder only started to invest in the alcohol *pachten* after his second marriage. Although Melck already started his entrepreneurial activities before his marriage, the capital he gained through that marriage enabled him to expand his business interests massively, ultimately starting to invest in the expensive Cape wine *pacht* in 1760; compare GA Cockrell, "Die lewe van Martin Melck, 1723-1781" (MA, University of Stellenbosch, 1984), pp. 21-35 on Melck's business activities before his marriage.

a bit of a family tradition: Bartholomeus Zaaijman acted as the Stellenbosch-Drakenstein *pachter* once, in 1749. Pieter Broeders married a Dutch woman who had long been at the Cape, although his second marriage was to Maria Elisabeth, the daughter of the German immigrant, Matthias Taute.<sup>70</sup> More significant are the histories of Johannes Nicholaas Esselaar and Maarten Bateman, as they were two of the most successful *pachters* of this period. Esselaar married Pieterella Burijs and Bateman married Catherina Elisabeth Jansen. Both of these women came from well-established Cape families with no connections to the *pacht* business. Clearly, in none of these five cases could the marriages of these German men have played a direct role in gaining them access to the world of alcohol retail.<sup>71</sup>

There seems then to have been little direct connection between marriage and entering the alcohol *pachten* during this period. The six Cape-born *pachters* active during the 1770s were only involved in *pacht*-holding in a minor way. Three of these concern the minor and exceptionable Stellenbosch-Drakenstein *pacht*: Hermanus Combrink, Hendrik Meijer and Willem Dempers. Except for Meijer – the grandson of Gerrit Hendrik Meijer who was involved with the alcohol *pachten* early in the eighteenth century – there is no identifiable link with other *pachters* in their families. This is not the case with the other three Cape-born *pachters*. The fathers of Jan Willem Wilkens junior, Gerhardus Munnik and Tobias Rogiers were all once *pachters* – but not one of them (either father or son) was particularly successful. Rogiers, in addition, was married to a granddaughter of de Nijs and was therefore closely related to a number of more prominent *pachters* of this period. Ultimately it seems, then, as if marriage and descent did not play a particularly important role in the careers of successful *pachters* during the 1770s, with the exception of the complex surrounding the de Nijs family. At this stage, German immigrants did not need to contract endogamous marriages as they had to during the 1730s. However, it could be asked if the nature of their business networks changed significantly by this later period?

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70 J Hoge, "Personalialia of the Germans...", *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 9 (1946), p. 420.

71 Three of the *pachters* during this period married free-black women, none of whom had any family links to the alcohol *pachten*: Jan Smook, Willem de Kruger and Jan Willem Wilkens senior; J Hoge, "Personalialia of the Germans...", *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 9 (1946), p. 20.



## **Suretities**

We have seen how the group of German *pachters* associated with the de Nijs-Hurter complex during the 1770-1780s were connected through standing surety for one another. This had also been the case for the 1730s *pachters*.<sup>72</sup> If German immigrant *pachters* during the 1770s did not primarily gain entry into the alcohol *pacht* business through marriages, did they do so via business links centred on standing surety for partners? In what follows an analysis is made of the sureties of the six most prominent *pachters* during this period: Maarten Bateman, Willem de Kruger, Johannes Esselaar, Martin Melck, Johannes Roep and Johan Jacob Schreuder.<sup>73</sup> All of them were German immigrants to the Cape.

Since all of these men held *pachten* over many years, they each had many different individuals who stood as their sureties; and these individuals changed over time. Yet some suggestive patterns do occur. Bateman, who was involved in the *pachten* for fifteen years, had eighteen different men who stood surety for him. His partner throughout this period was his fellow-brandy *pachter* and compatriot, Johannes Esselaar, who stood surety on eighteen occasions. He was also, on one or two occasions each, supported by other German *pachters* active in the 1770-1780s: Jan Jacob Schreuder, Willem de Kruger, Johannes Roep, Johannes Holtman and Jan Andries Bam. But after Esselaar, Bateman's most regular sureties were two Dutchmen with no obvious family links: Jacob Kamp, who was a once-off *pachter* in the 1760s, and Jacobus van den Berg who was to become a *pachter* in the 1780s. In addition, Bateman was supported by the German Michiel Benning who had no direct involvement in the *pachten*.

Bateman returned the favour by being Esselaar's most regular surety: a total of nine times, and one of only two of Esselaar's sureties who regularly supported him. Although Esselaar on one or two occasions also had the support of Schreuder, Roep and Kamp, his second-most regular surety, Jan Verlee, had no links to the *pachten* and nor was he related to Esselaar. Esselaar and Bateman also supported Jan Jacob Schreuder during his lengthy career as *pachter* as sureties, although between them only eleven times. Schreuder's most regular surety was the one-time *pachter*, Johannes Holtman, who acted in this capacity nineteen times. Holtman, although he only invested in *pachten* twice, seems

<sup>72</sup> G Groenewald, "Een dienstig inwoonder...", *South African Historical Journal*, 59, 2007, pp. 143-144.

<sup>73</sup> This analysis is based on the signatories of those standing surety as revealed in the *pacht* contracts between 1760 and 1789 (the years during which these men were actively investing in *pachten*): CA, C, Vols. 2714-2727.

to have been quite supportive of this group of *pachters* – he stood surety for Schreuder, Melck, Roep and Bateman. Other regular supporters of Schreuder were Johannes Roep – at the start of his career (ten times) – and Jan Andries Bam (seven times) during the 1780s. Other fellow *pachters* who supported him on more than one occasion include Jan Smook and Jan Daniel Holst. But Schreuder's lengthy career necessitated many sureties and the twenty-two men who acted in this capacity represent many, Dutch, German and Cape-born, who did so only once or twice. Johannes Roep's shorter career as *pachter* resulted in only twelve individuals who acted as his sureties. The most regular of these were his fellow German *pachters*, Jan Smook and Schreuder. Holtman also acted as his surety on six occasions, in addition to other *pachters* such as Esselaar, Holst, Bam, van den Berg and Spengler.

These four men were very closely linked through a web of mutual support – both for one another and through friends and relations who supported them to various degrees. The two exceptions among this group of successful *pachters* from this period are Willem de Kruger and Martin Melck. De Kruger remarkably only had one fellow *pachter* among his sureties, viz. Bateman. The remaining twelve of his sureties were a mixture of German, Dutch and Cape-born men, none of whom had clear links with *pacht*-holding. This may well be related to the fact that De Kruger was twice married to free-black women: his brother-in-law, Johan Rediger<sup>74</sup> supported him six times, while his two other most regular sureties, Adam Siedel and Johan Peter Voges, were both Cape Town artisans married to free-black women.<sup>75</sup> The remainder of his sureties only supported him once or twice.

The successful Martin Melck had eighteen sureties in his eighteen-year career as a *pachter*. An analysis of them reveals an interesting development over time. During the first part of his career he was regularly supported by second-generation established Cape farmers, Nicolaas Brommert (nine times) and Jan Gijsbert Franke (seven times). Only by the late 1760s did he start making use of other *pachters* as sureties, viz. Spengler, Smook, Roep, Holtman and, later, van den Berg – but not one of them acted more than twice as his surety. The only exception was Maarten Batemen who stood surety for him on five occasions. In the second half of his career Melck was mostly supported by fellow Stellenbosch farmers, notably Dirk de Vos and his fellow

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<sup>74</sup> J Hoge, "Personalalia of the Germans...", *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 9 (1946), p. 327.

<sup>75</sup> Siedel was a tailor and Voges a smith who both lived in Cape Town; J Hoge, "Personalalia of the Germans...", pp. 395-396 & 438.

*beemraad* Johan Bernard Hofman. His biggest supporter during this period was, however, Hendrik Cloete who acted in this capacity on eight occasions. Hendrik was the son of Jacob Cloete, for whom Melck worked as *knecht* in the late 1740s. Melck maintained a close friendship with the Cloete family throughout his life and the Cloetes often acted as baptismal sponsors to his children, another illustration of how closely business interests were intertwined with social ones.<sup>76</sup>

### ***Factions***

This analysis of the sureties for the most important *pachters* of the 1770s reveals an intriguing pattern: it is evident that bonds of friendship – particularly with people of a similar cultural background (German and Lutheran) – played a huge role, especially with those *pachters* who formed part of the Hurter complex centred on the beer *pacht*. At its centre these *pachters* still exhibit a marked degree of German support for one another, albeit with significant shifts. This is also clear from other sources. Thus Jan Jacob Schreuder, who was very much at the core of the 1770s *pachters*, loaned money from his (not very wealthy) mother-in-law, a woman of Dutch descent who married a German immigrant, Dirk Gijsbert Frank, and Jan Christoffel Fleck, also the son of a German immigrant.<sup>77</sup> Likewise Johannes Esselaar was prepared to loan f10 000 to the German, Johannes Beck, and stood surety for several of his fellow *pachters*, but gave out very few other loans.<sup>78</sup> However, the situation regarding the *pachters* during this period was more complex. There were continuities, such as those just indicated, but also changes. Thus the variety of sureties and the many changes that occurred over time indicate a significant change from the 1730s: German immigrant *pachters* by this stage did not limit themselves to fellow Germans for financial support and business partnerships – there was less reliance on direct family support and a greater willingness to enter into alliances with other groups.

The German community of Cape Town during this period were much better integrated with the rest of the citizenry than earlier in the century. As an analysis of their marriage and business network patterns has revealed, an outstanding feature of the German *pachters* of the 1770s is how interconnected they were

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76 GA Cockrell, “Lewe van Martin Melck...”, p. 170.

77 CA, MOOC, Vol. 8/14, no. 53; Vol. 8/16, no. 52 & Vol. 8/18, no. 53.

78 CA, MOOC, Vol. 8/19, no. 11.

with the wider burgher community, as well as the VOC officialdom. This inter-connectedness is well illustrated through the involvement of some of the *pachters* (especially those who formed part of the Hurter complex) in the Patriot agitation of the late 1770s and early 1780s. Thus, the very first meeting of the Cape Patriots was held in May 1778 in the tavern of Jan Jacob Schreuder.<sup>79</sup> The 1781 burgher request – in which the citizenry complained about taxation – was signed by the *pachters* Jan Willem Hurter, Johannes Roep, Tobias Rogiers and Jan Andries Bam (a *pachter* of the 1780s). As significant is the fact that several men from the families related to the Hurter complex, as well as their financial supporters, also signed it: the Dreijer, de Waal, van Reenen, van Breda, Meijer, Taute, Voges, Beck, von Wielligh and Eksteen families.<sup>80</sup> The Patriot manifesto of 1784 was signed by the son of Jan Willem Hurter (who died in 1783), along with men from his many relations, the most significant of Cape farming families, i.e. the van Reenens, Eksteens, von Wiellighs, van Bredas, Munniks, Meijers, Eksteens, Mijburghs, Morkels, Rossouws and Maasdorps.<sup>81</sup> With the exception of the van Bredas, every one of these families had had members invest in the alcohol *pachten* during the course of the eighteenth century.

The foregoing discussion has shown that while the main part of the 1770s *pachters* still exhibited much in terms of co-operation based on a shared German identity, significant changes were occurring by this stage. Thus we see these *pachters* marrying exogamously, having business partnerships with established Cape burghers and even having some links with VOC officials. If one analyses this period and this group in terms of factions, as Teun Baartman has done for the 1780s,<sup>82</sup> it seems likely that the Hurter complex of *pachters* formed part of the van Reenen faction who led the Patriot resistance of the late 1770s and early 1780s. It is significant, however, that the most successful *pachter* of this period, Martin Melck, was in no way involved in the Patriot agitation. The discussion above has shown how his rise to prominence – in spite of his German background – was thanks to links with the established rural gentry of the Cape. As Baartman has suggested, it is likely that prominent burghers such as Hendrik Cloete (friend and ally of Melck) formed part of a different

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79 C Beyers, *Die Kaapse patriotte...*, p. 25.

80 KM Jeffreys (ed.), *Kaapse archiefstukken lopende over het jaar 1781* (Cape Town, Cape Times, 1930), pp. 166-167.

81 C Beyers, *Die Kaapse patriotte...*, p. 315.

82 T Baartman, "Protest and Dutch burgher identity", N. Worden (ed.), *Cape Town between east and west: Social identities in a Dutch colonial town* (Johannesburg, Jacana, 2011), pp. 65-83.

faction which was much more closely allied to high Company officials.<sup>83</sup> Yet Melck was also a friend of the van Reenen family and had some business links with them as well.<sup>84</sup> Ultimately, as this article has demonstrated, the links and alliances between families and individuals at the Cape had become immensely intricate by the last quarter of the eighteenth century and are more complex than had hitherto been realised.

The different behaviour of Melck and the Hurter complex raises the question of the role of space and location. The *pachters* of the Hurter complex and their relations were either based in Cape Town or on farms along the Liesbeek River; Melck – although he owned several town properties – very much identified with the Stellenbosch district where he acted as *heemraad*. To what an extent did this influence their behaviour? A revealing comparison can be made between the *pachters* of the Hurter complex and those of Stellenbosch-Drakenstein. As shown above, both Frans Sebrits and Anthonij Kalteijer married Dutch women and became involved in the *pachten* through their in-laws. Yet both of them had German sureties who also supported members of the Hurter complex. Yet neither Kalteijer nor Sebrits became members of the Lutheran congregation or played any role in the Patriot agitation.<sup>85</sup> And when Sebrits, who worked as cooper and carpenter in the town of Stellenbosch, died in 1784 his estate account and inventory reveal only local debtors and creditors, except for a small sum he owed Maarten Bateman.<sup>86</sup> It was not possible for these Germans in Stellenbosch-Drakenstein to be as involved in the economic, social, political and cultural affairs of the colony, simply because they were too isolated and did not have the immediate support of a larger community of people with similar backgrounds.<sup>87</sup> The same is true of Melck – but only to an extent. He chose to identify largely with the rural gentry of Stellenbosch, as demonstrated by his sureties and his children's marriages, but his wealth and personal conviction allowed him to get involved in some aspects of urban life in Cape Town.

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83 T Baartman, "Burghers in Cape Town, 1780-1790" (Paper, History of Cape Town Project, University of Cape Town, 1992), n.p.

84 GA Cockrell, "Lewe van Martin Melck...", p. 170.

85 It seems plausible that those involved in the Patriot agitation were town-based burghers who had diverse economic interests, and were not largely dependent on agricultural production. Although Melck invested widely in the alcohol *pachten*, he came from a basis of wine farming.

86 CA, MOOC, Vol. 13/1/14, no. 1 & Vol. 8/18, no. 98.

87 As an indicator: The Lutheran congregation had 442 members in 1780 – most of these would have been based in Cape Town.

## Conclusion

As Robert Ross correctly observed, “the economy of Cape Town was ... dominated by its dual function as a port and a government centre.”<sup>88</sup> Cape Town of the 1770s was, however, a very different town from that of the 1730s. For one thing, the Company establishment (garrison and administrators) had increased from 920 in 1730 to more than 1 700 by 1770, while the population of the Cape district (including Cape Town) almost doubled during the same period from 1 414 to 2 743 (excluding slaves and Khoikhoi).<sup>89</sup> Not only did the population expand, and with it economic and other opportunities, but the social and political set-up was more complex than earlier: there were more people with longer histories and deeper connections. Ross’s statement is very apposite in this regard, for it reminds us that not only were wine and meat needed to feed the large local and visiting populations, but more officials were employed than ever before to cope with the growing and more complex administration of the colony. This translated in a reconfiguration of the links and bonds between the various parts of the burgher population on the one hand, and the Company administrators and their families on the other hand.

It is because of these changes that the *pachters* of the 1770s reveal a different pattern of advancement. Although many of them still were German and still did use their shared background to amass social capital, there are clear signs of a shift taking place with many of them abandoning endogamy and opting instead to establish much wider connections and alliances among the burgher and administrative populations. There were both continuities with and significant changes from the 1730s. This is partly the result of a deeper history: by the 1770s there were families at the Cape with three to four-generation histories which of necessity meant deeper and wider links and connections between families. Highly successful *pachters* like Melck and those centred on Hurter (especially the extended de Nijs family) family knew how to exploit these to their advantage.

Ultimately this study of the 1770s *pachters* reveals a “mixed” system of advancement. Some *pachters* operated very similarly to those of the 1730s by becoming part of an urban network based on links of marriage and descent

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88 R Ross, “Structure and culture in pre-industrial Cape Town: A survey of knowledge and ignorance”, WG James & M Simons (eds), *The angry divide: Social and economic history of the Western Cape* (Cape Town & Johannesburg, David Philip, 1989), p. 42.

89 P van Duin & R Ross, *The economy of the Cape colony in the eighteenth century* (Leiden, Intercontinenta, 1987), pp. 112 & 114-115.

(either German or, in some cases, free black) and building up social capital through immigrant links. But increasingly some of them moved towards closer links with the established Cape gentry as well as some links with the world of VOC officialdom. But in both cases, marriage and kinship remained the keys which allowed entry to these networks and connections, which in turn resulted in support – economic, social and political. This study also demonstrated that the world of the Cape gentry during this period was by no means endogamous yet, but still allowed for the incorporation of some “new blood”, in this case successful immigrant urban entrepreneurs. It again illustrates that connections and alliances were built on considerations larger than merely economic ones. It seems as if the 1770s were on the cusp of a change-over from an urban elite or merchant class to a Cape gentry which not only maintained links with this group but eventually incorporated it. This means that the foundations of the Cape gentry lie in more than the accumulation of land and slaves – an important component of its wealth ultimately derived from entrepreneurial activities, over several decades, in Cape Town itself.