

HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE ROODEBLOEM ESTATE



Photographs from the archives of Roodebloem Estate

- 1661 First settlement in the area, Roodebloem was established where the Wagon Road joined Salt River Road.
Land granted to Hendrik Lacus by the Dutch East India Company - 16 morgen of land on the slopes of Devil's Peak, De Rooblom, first appeared on a transfer dated 1669.
- 1680 to 1700 Dietrich Pötter - owned the property.
- 1776 Hendrik van der Heijden built a brick barn.
1770 It became a homestead.
- 1777 to 1828 The farm passed on to several important families including the Laubschers. Roodebloem takes its name from the red *Watsonia* flower growing in abundance on the land from 1692 when Coenraad Visser owned the property.
- 1705 Roodebloem was owned by a Freeman.
- 1707 Johannes Pfeiffer bought the farm, which passed to Hendrik Oostwald Muller in 1750.
- 1777 The manor house was enlarged into an H - shaped building with a thatched roof and in 1806 - Roodebloem was divided into 5 portions and sold.
- 1811 to 1815 Burchell visited Roodebloem and Lord Charles Somerset visited in the 1820s.
- 1817 Additional land was added to the estate by Isabella van Breda.
- 1828 F. Denys owned the property until his descendants sold it in 1862.
- 1859 The first electric telegraph in South Africa was from Roodebloem.
- 1860 Mr Edward Pickering (a contractor for the first government railways) owned the property.
- 1880s and early 1900s The Laubscher family once again lived on the property.
A slice of social history - when Mr Edward Pickering, the contractor for the Cape Town and Wellington railway, arrived in 1859 he needed a building to use as his headquarters and bought Roodebloem House from

Mr Wylie. He laid a telegraph line along the route before commencing construction, with the first section laid by Pickering from Roodebloem to Messrs Thomsen, Watson and Co. in Adderley Street, Cape Town. The first telegram was despatched from Watson and Co. to Roodebloem House in 1859.

1959 to 1967

Ruth Prowse lived in the thatched cottage "The Retreat".

Roodebloem House is one of the two remaining Cape Dutch farmsteads in Woodstock and together with the cottages form an important architectural grouping in Cape Town. Other non-government bodies in Woodstock are Greatmore Studios, The Woodstock Theatre Laboratory, Media 24 (CAP).

The Ruth Prowse is located in the traditional district of Woodstock, formerly known as Papendorp, a block away from Victoria Road in Salt River in one of the most rapidly developing parts of Cape Town. Roodebloem is the nearest example to Cape Town of a homestead with a forecourt surrounded by outbuildings. Salt River Road runs northwards from the old Wagenpad (Victoria Road) and was the second actual road in South Africa.

Roodebloem dates back to 1666 when a grant of land of 11 morgen was made to Hendrik Lacus by the Dutch East India Company on the slopes of Devil's Peak (De Windberg) This is an historical estate (the farm was watered by the strongest mountain stream outside Ade Tafel valley) which needs to be saved and preserved. The Retreat has its thatch and a square pedimented gable with massive ceiling beams dating to the 1770s. Roodebloem is a double storied gabled house. It has an H-shaped ground plan and was one of the two remaining Cape Dutch farmsteads in Woodstock. Of the inherited woodwork, the main Georgian staircase dates from the middle of the 19th century, with the single storied cottages retaining their parapets, a wide stoep that runs in front of the main buildings and the cottages. The School is placed on the axis of the block formed by Elson, Booth, Listowel and Avenue Roads. Birkdale Avenue forms the avenue approach and joins the main road where Salt River Road and the old Wagon Road meet.