



'KLAWER'

How a town is born

A Study by Donald S. Press

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INTRODUCTION

The town of Klawer is situated in the Western Cape, 176 miles north of Cape Town, 13 miles south-west of Vanrhynsdorp and 14 miles south-east of Vredendal. This rural settlement nestles between the Gif (Poison) Mountains in the east and the Olifants River to the west, and now forms a natural junction connecting the towns of Vredendal, Strandfontein, Lambert's Bay, Clanwilliam and Vanrhynsdorp.

Klawer is one of those small towns we take for granted. But what defines a town? Why there? Why then? And who decides?

Even as the 20th century dawned, it was farms, not towns, that characterized the landscape of the Western Cape. A map of the day showed nothing between Clanwilliam and Vanrhynsdorp; then nothing again east all the way to Calvinia. The towns we now know in-between - Nieuwoudtville (1897), Graafwater (1912), Klawer (1920), Vlermuisklip/Lutzville (1923), Bitterfontein (1927)¹, etc. - simply did not yet exist.²

So through the 19th century, a traveler would encounter those few original towns, some isolated trading posts at strategic junctions, some farmhouses, and hundreds of miles of empty veld between them. The roads were generally dirt tracks, and there would be days in which the traveler saw no other soul.

The few pre-existing towns had their origins in military garrisons or mission stations. Clanwilliam had been established as a garrison town in 1808 against the cattle-rustling of the local Khoi people, and formally declared a village in 1818. A long distance north, Vanrhynsdorp had been established as a mission station, as were many future towns. The Vanrhynsdorp and Vredendal area was once the traditional grazing ground of the Griqua, a nomadic tribe of Khoi pastoralists. The mission stations aimed to evangelize them. The oldest mission station, the Troe-Troe Zending, was established by the Moravian Missionary Society in 1751 and eventually grew into the town of Vanrhynsdorp, so named in 1881. The Rhenish Missionary Society founded a mission station at Ebenhaezer in 1834. The Catholic Church established the Catholic Mission of the Little Flower in Vanrhynsdorp and Vergenoeg in the Vredendal area in the early-20th century.³

Besides garrisons and mission stations, later towns each had their own genesis story. Many of them, like Graafwater and Bitterfontein grew up around railway stops. Others, like Nieuwoudtville, were conjured into being simply by church or community dictate. Some, like the Urionskraal trading post or Willemsrivier farm 'town', were stillborn. Indeed, the failures help us understand why others succeeded. For example, when the local Church Council decided to establish the new town of Nieuwoudtville in 1897, there was already a nascent 'town' on the neighboring farm of Willemsrivier, with its own peculiar beginnings. Over the previous two centuries this great quitrent farm had been divided up amongst succeeding generations in an odd, but common form: instead of squared-off carvings, the divisions took the shape of pie-wedges emanating from a central point. The reasons were strategic: the central water source had to be shared, and farmhouses could be built

¹ (Driver, M. & Shapiro, J.: "Coast Regional Development Study"; Development Action Group, November 1993)

² A few embryonic communities, such as at Koekenaap and Vredendaal, were already reference points in records.

³ (Namaqua Tourist Board: Namaqua West Coast, online)

close to each other for protection against Khoisan incursions. The common center, or 'werf', developed the form of a town 'main street', with its own church, mill, and Jewish trading post. Yet the Church council made a deliberate decision to abandon this organic town in favor of an artificial one built from scratch on the neighboring farm of Groenrivier, based on its greater water supply, and perhaps a better land deal from its Nieuwoudt owners. The Willemsrivier 'town' died before it could be fully born.⁴

This raises the question of what defines a town and ensures its survival. Whatever the initiating rationale, a permanent town, throughout the ages and geographies, can be characterized by at least four of five elements: 1. Sufficient food and water supply nearby; 2. A market place as rationale for the hub; 3. Reasonable transportation connection to the wider world to facilitate trade; 4. Place of assembly for worship; and 5. Reasonable land ownership market to facilitate habitation and growth (although in many places such as Polish noble-owned towns, or even central London, long-term leases are a facsimile).

In the case of Klawer, as we will see, the Olifants River Valley provided the water and agriculture; a single trader named Philip Press established a market there ahead of the railway; the railway brought the efficient transportation connections; and the ultimate property owners, Josias & Louis Nieuwoudt and Philip Press, provided the land for growth. The church would have to wait a generation.

This study will explore what came before, why Klawer came into being, and why there. Its genesis story is both representative and unique.

Even when the strategic spot was authorized as the terminus of a new railway line in 1911, there was still little thought of a town. Indeed, when the first inhabitant arrived to set up a trading post in 1910, future Klawer was still undifferentiated veld straddling both banks of the Olifants River, simply known as the farm 'Birdfield'. It was a mid-level engineer in the South African Railways and Harbours Department who, in 1913, decided to name the lonely terminus-to-be, 'Klaver Station', after a geographical feature nearby known informally as 'Klavervlei'.

But this bureaucratic decision pertained only to the station - its specific site unfixed for over two years, unnamed for over three years, and with no sign of a train for over five years. His decision certainly had little effect on the locals. As far as other governmental departments were concerned, the area remained simply 'Birdfield'. Only after the first train had crept up from the west in 1915, and an irrigation canal had crept up a little further east by 1920, did the local joint landowners - the farmers Nieuwoudt and general dealer Philip Press - agree to survey and apply the station's name to the little strip of land between rail and canal, and begin selling sub-plots for a nascent town. This survey of 1920 was essentially the genesis of Klaver, even though an independent township was only declared in 1954.

Thus the town of Klaver was born. The Dutch spelling ruled until Afrikaans - newly emerging into its own as a literary language in the early 20th century - dictated 'Klawer', as we know it today.

~oOo~

⁴ (Archer, Maureen & Amschwand, Nigel: "Historical Survey Group report on the farm Klipperivier, also known as Willemsrivier, in the Onder-Bokkeveld"; Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa, 2012)

ESTABLISHING THE GREAT FARMS

Klawer was born near the confluence of four great farms with a long history: 'Birdfield' in the north-west quadrant, 'Kleinfontein-Windhoek' in the north-east, 'Heerenlogement' in the south-west, and 'Melkboom' in the south-east. (Illustration 1 - expanded version in appendix)



Illustration I:

Western Cape:
Clanwilliam to
Nieuwoudtville;
showing
placement &
extent of key
farms

Each was a massive landholding of between 20 square miles (in the case of Birdfield) and 60 square miles (in the case of Heerenlogement). This size was required because of the harsh landscape, few water sources, and scrubby soil. Commercial agriculture was possible along the Olifants River historic flood plain, but elsewhere, the predominance of cattle & sheep demanded rotational pasturage. These massive farms could encompass rich and poor, winter and summer grazing within their own boundaries.

The farms were created via grants by the Dutch East India Company, as 'loan farms', with initially ill-defined boundaries, owned in perpetuity by the Company, and merely rented on an annual basis at minimal cost to the adventurers who were willing to test and pacify the boundaries of the colony, while providing the crucial supplies – particularly meat – that the Company required for its ships. Explorers and land-seekers had gradually pushed north in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, driving out or subordinating the nomadic San (Bushmen) and Koikhoi (Nama/Hottentot) inhabitants.

In the first century of Dutch colonization, the Khoikhoi flocks and herds had been the source of all Dutch meat supplies through negotiated barter. In order to avoid disruption of this supply, the early Cape governors, particularly Simon Van der Stel, attempted to protect good relations with the kraals by banning settlers from animal husbandry and the meat trade. They knew that the settlers' primary source of flocks and herds was violent misappropriation from the natives, who would then flee with their animals into the mountains.⁵ But the pressure of settlers seeking land was inexorable:

- By 1700, the land south of the Berg River had all been claimed, usually by the more wealthy and powerful company officials. As the settler population grew, retired soldiers and younger sons despaired of being simply 'bywoeners' (hangers-on), and began to press claims further north where pastoralism was the only viable use of the harsher landscape.

- By 1720, the first farms were claimed and settled between the Berg River and the Picketberg.⁶

- In 1725 the first loan farms were officially 'allocated' beyond the Piekeniers Pass in the Olifants River Valley. This was a momentous transition: for the first time the white settlers had penetrated the ring of mountains that defined the south-west Cape. Clearly, by 1725, Khoisan⁷ resistance was no longer a substantial danger in the area.

- By 1732, the entire length of the Olifants River up to its confluence with the Doring River had been colonized. This would have been when the Cloetes, Bergs, and Van Wyks first settled the farms of Heerenlogement and Birdfield, then Kleinfontein and Melkboom.

Even this far north, it was often the wealthier southern landowners who claimed farms, sending poorer relatives and 'knechts' (supervisors) to manage these tracts, in absentia. This was almost certainly the case with Heerenlogement and Birdfield. It was the poorer, hardier and perhaps less-fastidious of the 'trekboers' who later pushed into the Hantam and Bokkeveld (where Calvinia, and Nieuwoudtville much later, would be established) after the 1739 uprisings, then even further north and east. Even as late as 1800, while peacefully settled themselves, the farm owners around future Klawer were being called upon for commando duty to put down the Khoisan rebellions far afield in the Namaqualand north and the Seekoei east, as the natives despaired of having their flocks and herds expropriated, and themselves forced into indentured labor.

Under Dutch colonization, the districts (with the Klawer area falling into the early Stellenbosch district or 'drostey', and then the Clanwilliam spin-off) were ruled by an appointed 'landdrost', aided by six prominent citizens, the 'heemraad'. Given the distances and communication difficulties, approval of land grants could be effectively made by this landdrost.

According to Leslie Duly, "[The] applicant asked [the] landdrost for permission to occupy . . . [a portion of] land and agreed to pay the annual rent and stamp duty. If . . . necessary, . . . the heemraden would resolve any conflicting claims for land. Sometimes a rough sketch was made, but the land was neither accurately measured nor described in a formal document. The plot was walked off, a half-hour's steady pace in each of the four primary compass directions, and the boundary was

⁵ The source of South Africa's sheep and cattle herds was not imports from the European colonial motherland, but rather the livestock of the Khoikhoi who had migrated with them to southern Africa over 1000 years earlier.

⁶ (Penn, Nigel: "The Forgotten Frontier: Colonists & Khoisan on the Cape's Northern Frontier in the 18th Century"; Ohio University Press, 2005)

⁷ Given that the Khoikhoi and San often interbred and that the Dutch colonials, the only source of our information, often made no distinction between the two, the academic term 'Khoisan' is used collectively or when the distinction is unclear.

marked by an occasional beacon or earthen work. In 1732 the 'quitrent tenure' [discharged land tax] system was introduced; based on a fifteen year lease, it was not subject to survey, and the holder's name was registered in the office of the secretary to the governor."⁸

Later, when the British took possession of the Cape from the Dutch during the Napoleonic Wars, they had an interest in pacifying the Dutch colonists and farmers by offering more settled land ownership. Under the Craddock land reforms of 1813, the intent was to offer a more regularized tenure of "perpetual quitrent" such that "the Boer was expected to accept and even demand British overlordship."⁹ The Commission of Enquiry of 1828 set up a formalized system of surveys, Surveyor Generals and Deed Registries. It is the surveys and transfer deeds of this time that provide the primary basis for an understanding of Klawer's origins.

TOPOGRAPHY AS DESTINY

The siting of future Klawer was determined by topography. Simply put, Birdfield was the first farm and topographic point on the north/east bank of the Olifants River that was flat enough for a railroad.

Stretching all the way up the east bank of the river from Cape Town to future Klawer lay the mountainous regions of the Piketberg and Cedarberg, the Krakadow and the Gifberge. Consequently the primary roads and travel north had always been navigated to the west of the Olifants - essentially along the coastal plain. But two geographic phenomena appeared at the farm Birdfield: firstly, the Olifants River began its slow bend westward towards the sea and had to be crossed at some point soon in order to journey further north up to Namaqualand proper; and secondly and simultaneously, the mountains began their march in the opposite direction eastward. For the first time there appeared relatively flat open ground east and north of the Olifants to imagine roads and rail. (Illustration II - expanded version in appendix)

This topography had dictated travel-routes long before the railway came, as illustrated by a rare historical travel diary. The farms were distant. In the 18th century, an ox-cart journey to the Cape Colony took nearly two weeks. While it is obvious that many journeys to and from Cape Town had to be made by the farming families over the two centuries of habitation of the Western Cape, it was considered too common to write about. But an unusually detailed record of one journey has come down to us because it provided vital testimony in a colonial court case.

Willem van Wyk was owner of the farm Kleinfontein. In 1742, he chaperoned his sister-in-law, Jacoba Alida Campher, the sixteen-year-old sister of his wife Johanna, on the nine-day journey down to relatives in Cape Town. When she later proved pregnant, he was placed under investigation for incest; hence, the detailed court investigation of their route. The journey from Kleinfontein necessitated a crossing of the Olifants River near the future Klawer site. As Laura J. Mitchell writes of this case in "Belongings: Property, Family and Identity in Colonial South Africa. An Exploration of Frontiers, 1725-1830":

⁸ (Duly, Leslie C.: "British Land Policy at the Cape, 1795-1844: A Study of Administrative Procedures In The Empire"; Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1968)

⁹ (Hodson, Timothy A., "South African Land Tenure, Past And Present: A. Country Report", University of Maine, 1996; Independent Projects Trust, 2002.)



Illustration II:

Railway crossing
Olifants River
where river
diverges from
mountain
ranges

"The records from the criminal investigation of Willem van Wyk locate the travelers at specific points in the Western Cape landscape. The party spent the first night of their nine-day trip at Heeren Logement. *Oud Heemraad* Jacob Cloete's farm was on the coastal plain about ten kilometers south of the confluence of the Olifants and Doorn¹⁰ rivers, and a reasonable day's journey from Kleinfontein. The terrain on the east, or Doorn side, of the Olifants River is rugged and hilly south of Klaver Valley, so the most efficient route would have been to cross the Olifants soon and head across the coastal plain. The Olifants River is not deep and would have afforded many crossing points in the autumn, at the end of the dry season. Just north of the Olifants-Doorn confluence there is an obvious pass through the last ridges of the Cape Fold Belt. From that point travel southward toward Heeren Logement and onward to the Cape is over relatively flat and open terrain. In fact, the modern railway line follows a natural path in the contours from Heeren Logement to the Piketberg. That same route was probably the easiest to travel by foot and ox wagon as well."¹¹

¹⁰ Doorring/Doorings/Doring/Doorn/Dorn Rivier/River are common variations.

¹¹ (Mitchell, Laura J.: "Belongings: Property, Family and Identity in Colonial South Africa. An Exploration of Frontiers, 1725-1830"; Columbia University Press, 2008)

It should be noted that a wagon-road did exist on the east bank within the Olifants River Valley itself, first pioneered by Pieter van Meerhoff in 1663, but it involved crossing the formidable Piekenierskloof Pass to get into the valley and then continuing north along the sharply slanted eastern bank and cliffs of the river. It was difficult enough for loaded wagons, and completely untenable for a railway. Prior to 1858, the pass was so difficult it required unloading and disassembling the wagons themselves, then reassembling on the other side. Even after Thomas Baine regraded the pass in 1858 as 'Grey's Pass' (now regraded again as 'Piekeniers Pass'), it was still preferable to avoid the valley altogether if one could.

Instead, as we are reminded by Dr. E. E. Mossop in his exploration of "Old Cape Highways",¹² for the traveler heading north into Namaqualand, the "ancient route through the Sandveld [as the western plain was known, and as] followed in later years by the railway between Piquetberg and Klaver . . . was once compulsory." This route was originated by the early explorers Oloff Bergh (1682), of whom we will hear more because of his family's ownership of the farm Birdfield, and Simon van der Stel (1685). All subsequent traffic followed, thus creating what was known as the 'Northern Highway', a dusty track now lost to time. It went almost directly north from Cape Town, past the Piquetberg to Heerenlogement. "Below Heerenlogement the early route divided: . . . North of this lay the Konaquasberge. . . . The traveller might [go straight north to] brave these mountains and cross the Olifants River at Ebenezer. . . . [Alternatively] the traveller might escape by . . . the trail to the east . . . to cross the Oliphants River at the 'Company's Drift' [the Dutch East India Company's traditional crossing]¹³ near Klaver . . . after its junction with the Great Doorn River, and so along the riverbanks by Vredendal" and northwards. "This route was for years known as the 'smousers pad' or traders road."

In summary, Mitchell's account of the Van Wyk journey, and Mossop's exploration of the old Cape Dutch routes confirm the fact that the easiest path, the old and natural way between the Cape and Namaqualand, was passage along the coastal plain to the west of the Olifants - thus avoiding the mountainous terrain on the east bank - until Heerenlogement (our south-west quadrant); and then by crossing Birdfield diagonally onto Kleinfontein (our north-east quadrant), approximately where Klaver would be founded. The railroad was forced to seek that same point at which the Olifants River bent westward to the coast, and simultaneously the eastern mountain ranges bent further east, thus allowing easy passage on the north-eastern bank of the Olifants for the first time.

Of course, an appreciation of the strategic significance of the crossing near the future Klaver site still left some room for specific placement. The Olifants River is fordable in the area in a number of places. The Railways records, however, make the specific placement and destiny of Klaver quite clear. When Parliament approved the line in May 1911, and Railways Headquarters in Johannesburg requested the surveyors to report on potential crossings of the Olifants River, the Engineer-in-Charge, W. Patrick replied in no uncertain terms that there was in fact one definitively advantaged crossing-place: From Engineer-in-Charge of Graafwater Railway, W. Patrick to Engineer-in-Chief, Johannesburg: "Only one site has been taken into consideration as any other site lower down the river would mean an increase in the length of the Railway without any additional benefit. The site chosen is at the narrowest part of the river, with sufficient room on each side of the

¹² (Mossop, Dr. E.: "Old Cape Highways"; Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1927)

¹³ The 'Compagnies/Company's Drift' where the trail reached and crossed the Olifants River, originally lay a few miles south of the Klaver siting, closer to the Doring/Doorn River confluence. But the easiest crossing point would have shifted over the centuries with the river's ever changing width and topography.

bank to make curvature to enable the bridge to be built on the straight. The farmers in the neighborhood have been interviewed regarding flood levels, and from the information gathered [that location is favorable] . . . The sand in the bed of the river is very compact"¹⁴

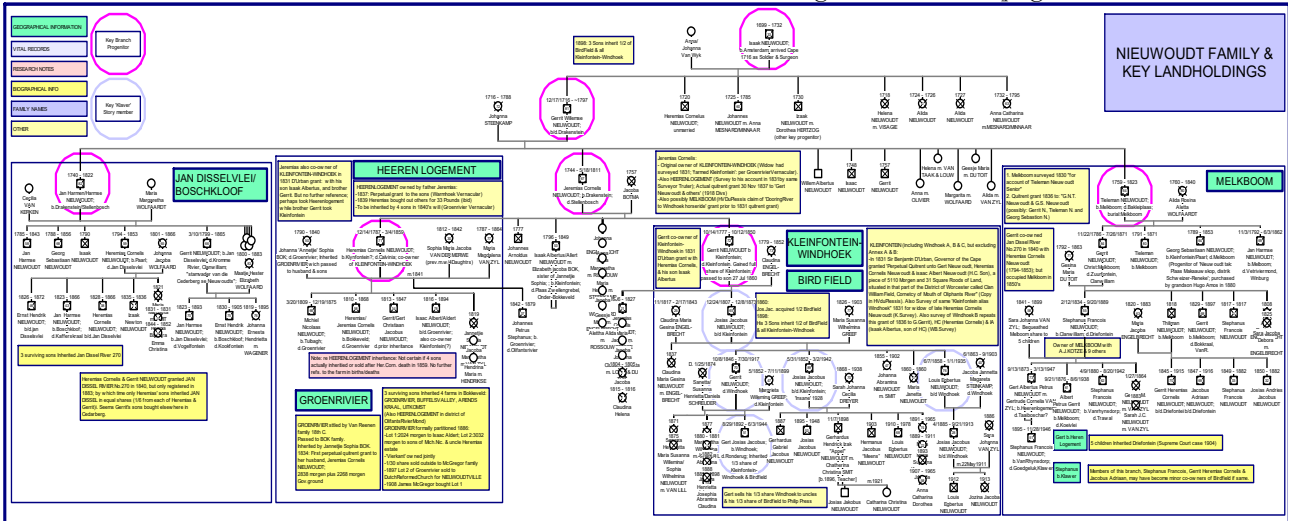
In summary, this spot was the most southerly crossing-point permitted by the mountainous topography; was the narrowest point of the river; and had the wide and firm riverbanks that had always encouraged crossing here and now provided the ideal approaches for a bridge and railroad. Klawer's topographic position was its destiny.

But what of the human players? In the 18th century, as we've just seen, Heerenlogement was owned by the Cloete family, Kleinfontein by the Van Wyks, and Birdfield by the distinguished family of Oloff Bergh. But by the mid-19th century, all the four farms in our quadrants were owned wholly or in part by various branches of the Nieuwoudt family.

THE NIEUWOUDT FAMILY FARM OWNERSHIP

The Nieuwoudt family's South African saga began with Isaak Nieuwoudt, born in Amsterdam around 1699, who came out to the Cape as a soldier and surgeon with the Dutch East India Company in 1716. He did well, and was made a burgher in 1723.¹⁵ He and the branches of his three sons (see Illustration III - expanded double-page version in appendix),¹⁶ Gerrit Willemse (1716-

Illustration III: Nieuwoudt Family: Key connections & landholdings (See double-page attachment)



¹⁴ National Archives of South Africa (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927; Ref:48/4; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Bridges and Culverts. 1911-1912) [PR17Img175-176]

¹⁵ (Armshwand, N.: "Groenrivier Farm Study"; The Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa, 2008)

¹⁶ The author has assembled this selective Nieuwoudt Family Tree from a compendium of corroborative sources, including: Messerschmidt, Jac (Messerschmidt Australis:MyHeritage.com); Viljoen, Yvonne (The Story of a Clanwilliam Farm); and Armschwand, Nigel (Vernacular Society of South Africa: Groenrivier).

1797), Johannes (1725-1785), and Izaak (b.1730), accumulated large landholdings throughout the Western and Northern Cape, stretching from the coastal plain west of the Olifants River all the way across the Bokkeveld to latter-day Calvinia. With each generation's inheritance, the farms were divided up; sometimes members owned only a 1/64th share. But the family also kept buying up and marrying into more land. Even "in the mid-nineteenth century, members of the Nieuwoudt family were clearly acquiring vast tracts of land in the Clanwilliam district."¹⁷

The accumulations of Isaak's eldest son, Gerrit, and consequently three of his own sons would have a particularly significant impact on the landscape of our story: 1) The branch of Gerrit's eldest, Jan Harmse (1740-1822) spread out in the Jan Dissel River Valley. Philip Press, one of the founders of Klawer, would later trade between the farms. 2) Son Jeremias (also Heremias) Cornelis (1744-1811) accumulated the massive farms of Heerenlogement and Kleinfontein-Windhoek around the Olifants River, to which his namesake son Heremias would add, by marrying into the Bok family, large Bokkeveld holdings on the Northern Cape escarpment, including Groenrivier on which the town of Nieuwoudtville would be built. And yet a third son, 3) Tieleman Nieuwoudt (1759-1823) would settle Melkboom, adjacent to the others on the Olifants River. (Illustration IV)

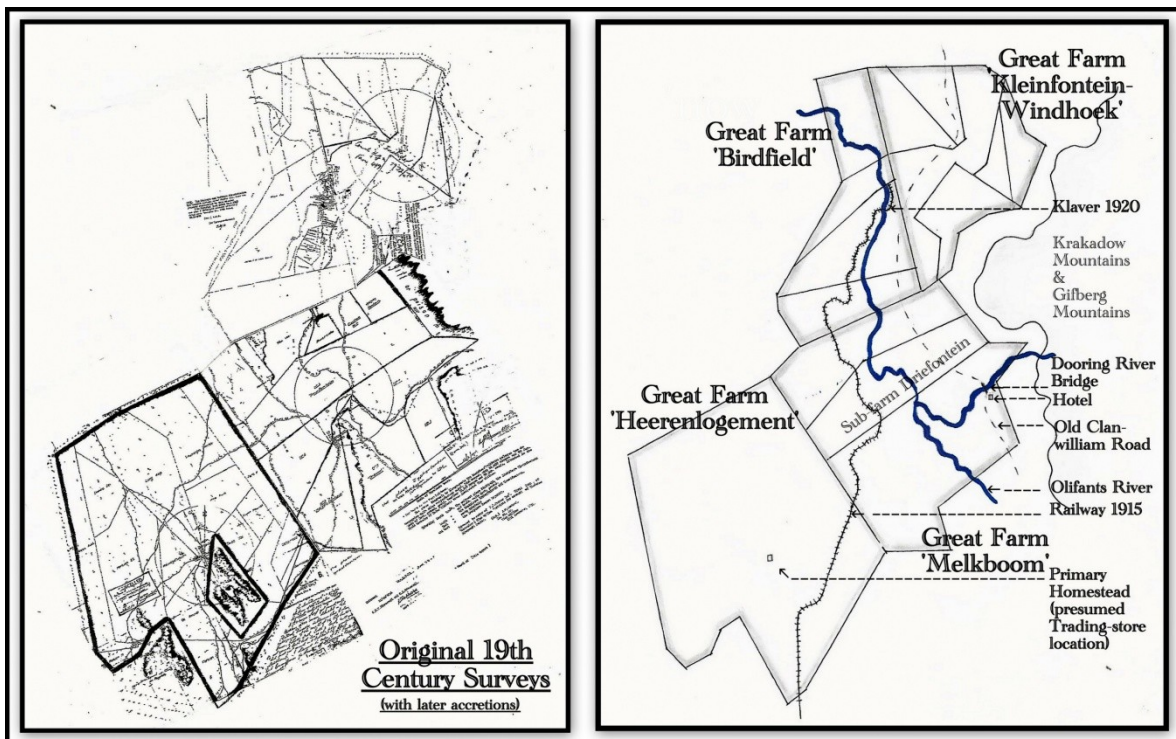


Illustration IV: The four great farms as originally surveyed in early 19th century plus later subdivisions. Also showing later locations of hotels or trading sites at Doring River Bridge, Klawer, and Heerenlogement.

¹⁷ (Viljoen, Yvonne: "The Story of a Clanwilliam Farm: The history and archaeology of Warmhoek"; University of Cape Town: Department of Archaeology, 2011)

The farm MELKBOOM (also known as 'Melkboom alias Matjesfontein' in the 18th century from the name of one of its sub-farms, Matjesfontein) was already in the possession of the estate of this Tieleman Nieuwoudt (1759-1823) when it was surveyed on 25 November 1830, "for the account of Tieleman Nieuwoudt Senior," for the purpose of a perpetual quitrent application.¹⁸ The farm was 15,207 morgen (3000 morgen plus 12,207 of "Gov. ground"; approx. 32,000 acres or 50 square miles). This grant was officially made on 24 October 1836 to "G.N.T. Nieuwoudt & G.S. Nieuwoudt," apparently referencing his sons: Gerrit Nieuwoudt, Tieleman Nieuwoudt and Georg Sebastian Nieuwoudt. By 1904, the primary owners appeared to be the descendents of the eldest son Gerrit (1786-1871), particularly his son Stephanus Francois Nieuwoudt (1834-1889), with eleven owners altogether, including Nieuwoudts, Kotzes and Coetzees.

The farm HEERENLOGEMENT had been owned by the Cloete family in the 18th century, but was already in the Nieuwoudt family when the farm was surveyed by the estate of Jeremias Cornelis Nieuwoudt (1744-1811) in 1831,¹⁹ simultaneous with the survey of his other farm Kleinfontein-Windhoek. The farm measured 19,084 (2359 morgen plus 6275 morgen of "Government ground"; altogether approx. 40,000 acres or 63 square miles). It was named after the natural cavern and spring high up in a koppie at its center (now a national monument) that had served as a famous refuge for early travelers. From "Slosboo 1712", to "F. Vailant 1783" and through to the 20th century, they carved their names, and humorously named the cavern "Gentleman's Lodging" in Dutch. A perpetual quitrent grant of the farm was made on 30 November 1837 to Jeremias Cornelis' sons.²⁰ In 1839, Jeremias' son and namesake, Jeremias Cornelis Nieuwoudt (1787-1859) bought out the others for £33,²¹ and willed the farm in equal shares to his four sons (three surviving).²² But there is no evidence of their taking up residence there. Rather they appear to have remained on Groenrivier, inherited through their mother's Bok family.

The farm KLEINFONTEIN-WINDHOEK (Illustration V) had been owned by the Van Wyk family in the 18th century, but, as with the farm above, had also been acquired by Jeremias/Heremias Cornelis Nieuwoudt (1744-1811), probably in the late 1700s.²³ The names Kleinfontein and Windhoek were used interchangeably. Kleinfontein was the older name for the largest, reverse-S-shaped, central portion. Ancillary portions ('Windhoek of Kleinfontein' A, B, & C; Windhoek Annex A; Windhoek Annex B), sometimes with different ownership over the years, filled in gaps to create the ultimately huge, almost square farm of about 22 square miles. The original historic grant of Kleinfontein plus 'Windhoek of Kleinfontein' A, B & C was of 5,110 morgen or 17 square miles;

¹⁸ See Survey 491 of 1830 (The Surveyor General: Western Cape; Revenue Building, Plein St., Cape Town.)

¹⁹ See Survey 362 of 1831

²⁰ See Survey Divisions of 1918 (767/1918; 854/1918 etc): ref. "to Gert Nieuwoudt & others"; also Viljoen, Yvonne: *The Story of a Clanwilliam Farm; the history and archaeology of Warmhoek*: "Green records three Nieuwoudts in 1837 granted perpetual quitrent over Heerenlogement."

²¹ (Viljoen, Yvonne: *"The Story of a Clanwilliam Farm: The history and archaeology of Warmhoek"*; University of Cape Town: Department of Archaeology, 2011)

²² (Armshwand, N.: *"Groenrivier Farm Study"*; The Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa, 2008)

²³ According to H. V. du Plessis, the Klawer school teacher who wrote a booklet called *"Geschiedenis van Klawer 1915-1990"* for the celebration of Klawer's 75th Anniversary in 1990, the original entirety of Melkboom and Kleinfontein had been granted in typical Dutch loan farm fashion in the 18th Century "as measured by one hour by horse from the Doring River in a northerly direction (bringing) the northern border just north of the farm Windhoek, where Langbaken can be found today." But as Kleinfontein's ownership by the Van Wyks in 1700s is well documented, this early Dutch method of loosely defining farm boundaries clearly pre-dated the Nieuwoudt ownership.

adding the Windhoek Annex A & B portions increased the size by 2,121 morgen to a total of 7,231 morgen, or 24 square miles. It was still a loan farm when Jeremias Cornelis died in 1811. The farm was in the "account of the widow of the late Heremias Cornelis Nieuwoudt" when it was surveyed as 'Kleinfontein alias Windhoek' on 7 February 1831,²⁴ evidently for the purpose of an application for perpetual quitrent status. This official transfer of Kleinfontein (including Windhoek A, B & C, but excluding Annex A & B) evidently took place on 24 October 1836²⁵ to two of his sons and one of his grandsons. Specifically, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Governor of the Cape, granted "Perpetual Quitrent unto Gert Nieuwoudt, Heremias Cornelis Nieuwoudt & Isaac Albert Nieuwoudt, H.C. Son, a piece of 5110 Morgen and 31 Square Roods of Land [2,109 morgen plus 3,000 morgen of 'Gov. land'], situated in that part of the District of Worcester called Clan William Field, Cornetcy of Mouth of Oliphants River."²⁶ Gert (also Gerrit) had gained singular possession by the time it passed in its entirety in his estate to his only son, Josias Jacobus (1807-1873), on 27 July 1860.

It is important to note that Kleinfontein-Windhoek lies entirely on the eastern bank of the Olifants, pushed well back from the river by the farm Birdfield, including at the place where Klawer developed. Thus, while Klawer did sprawl in a minor way into Kleinfontein-Windhoek in much later years, the only real significance of the farm to the history of Klawer is that it became the ancestral home of this branch of the Nieuwoudt family, and that the land ownership dance between the entrepreneur Philip Press and the farming Nieuwoudts in the 1910s and 1920s brought pieces of Kleinfontein-Windhoek into play.

Consequently, the genesis of Klawer lies primarily in the history of the fourth farm, BIRDFIELD.

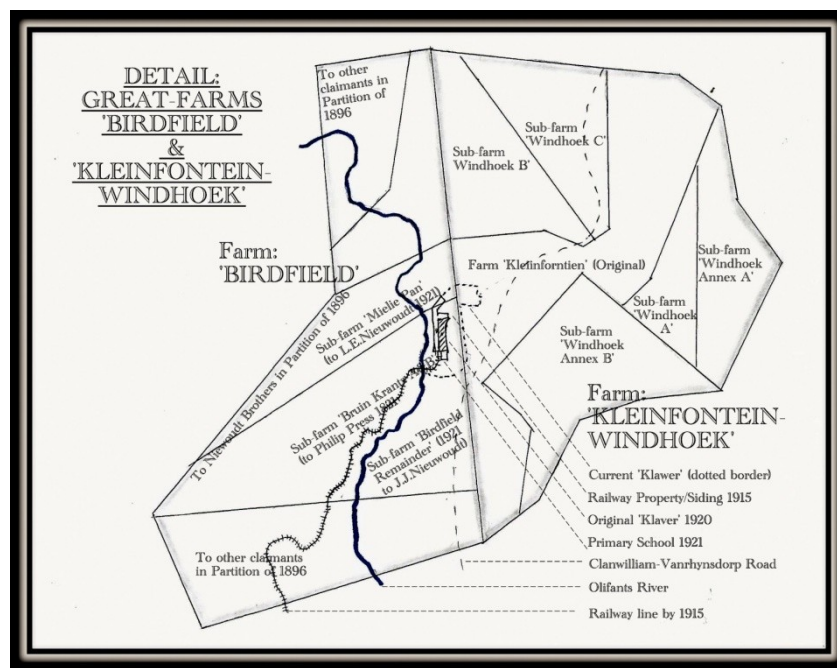


Illustration V:

Detail of divisions and subsidiary farms of Birdfield, and Kleinfontein-Windhoek

²⁴ See Survey 644/1831

²⁵ See Survey Windhoek A: A3180/1924; Windhoek B: A3181/1924; and Windhoek C: A3182/1924

²⁶ Detail of Deed in 'Geschiedenis van Klawer': H. V. du Plessis 1990. Also survey of Windhoek A, B, C ref'd above with date of this grant of 1836 "to G. (Gerrit), H.C. (Heremias Cornelis), I.A. (Isaak Albertus), son of H.C."

THE FARM BIRDFIELD

This massive farm (6,200 morgen, or about 20 square miles) is shaped like a back-to-front 'L' with the Olifants River running up its vertical leg, and with about a third of the farm lying in a strip along its eastern bank. All of Klawer, through the 1940s, lay on this part.

Birdfield was a typical Dutch loan farm until formalized under the new British system as the perpetual property of Oloff Martinus Bergh on 27 November 1821.

Oloff Martinus Bergh (1763-1835) was the latest in a long line of that illustrious name. The first Oloff Bergh (1643-1724), born in Sweden in 1643, joined the Dutch East India Company in 1665, served in Batavia, and arrived in the Cape in 1676, where he founded one of the most distinguished Dutch/Afrikaner families. His diligence was recognized by Simon van der Stel, and rewarded with command of a number of significant expeditions. He became one of the wealthiest men in the Cape, and a considerable landowner. One of his sons, Marthinus Bergh, became landdrost of Stellenbosch, while several other descendants, such as Olof Marthinus Bergh, Martinus Adrianus Bergh, and Egbertus Bergh, filled important roles in the public life of the Cape.²⁷

It is unclear when precisely the family laid claim to the Birdfield property. But we can gauge its great age and prosperity, both clearly greater than Kleinfontein-Windhoek, by the fact that it claimed so much of the prime Olifants River Valley, incorporating both banks in an elongated vertical sweep. The first Oloff had led one of the major explorations into Namaqualand in 1682 in search of copper. He came to know the Birdfield area well, even inscribing his own initials in the rock at Berghfontein,²⁸ four miles from the Heerenlogement cave which he is also believed to have visited in November 1682. But Dutch colonists only started settling the Olifants River Valley in 1725. By 1735 the area was considered sufficiently safe from Khoisan incursions for settlement to have reached the confluence of the Olifants and Doring Rivers. So it was probably Oloff's son, Martinus Bergh (b.1696) or grandson, Oloff Martini Bergh (1722-1785), who staked Birdfield²⁹ as a loan farm in about 1740.³⁰ According to his obituary, Oloff Martini was an "outstanding character, serving the Company as Secretary to the Court of Justice and representative of the Council of Policy, . . . Independent Fiscal in 1771, Market Master in 1779, President of Council of Civil and Marriage Affairs in 1781 and Senior Merchant in 1785. He had a brilliant intellect, corresponded with scientists world-wide and had an extensive collection of books and paintings."³¹

It is clear that Oloff Martini never settled on this outlying farm himself. This is an example perhaps of the best land going to those with social influence and capital who used proxies and knechts to

²⁷ See <http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Bergh-143>

²⁸ ("Leaving Their Mark: Names recorded on the walls of the Heerenlogement cave"; University of Cape Town: The Archival Platform, December 2013)

²⁹ Possibly 'Vogelveld' or 'Berghveld' (corrupted to 'Birdveld') before being anglicized at the time of the British certification.

³⁰ Between 1735 (when settlement reached the Doring & Olifants River confluence) and 1743 (by which time Kleinfontein was settled, having been forced further back from the Olifants River by the evidently pre-existing Birdfield.)

³¹ (Linder, Adolphe: "The Swiss at the Cape of Good Hope 1652-1971"; Pg 147: "The State Funeral of Oloff Martini Bergh as Described in the Governors Journal on Thursday 24 November 1785"; Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 1997)

manage them. Oloff Martini's son and namesake, Oloff Marthinus³² (1763-1835), would have made the application to the new British rulers for formal ownership, the eventual quitrent grant reading in Dutch: "Gemeten op last van het Gouvernement op den 1ste, 2nde & 3rd November 1821 vor den Heer O.M.Bergh."³³

Forty years later, Bergh's heirs sold the farm to the two landowners on either side: On 27 July 1860, a half share was transferred to Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt of neighboring Kleinfontein-Windhoek in the east;³⁴ and on 22 May 1872, a half share transferred to Johannes Christian van Zyl, owner of multiple farms to the west.³⁵ Thereafter, due to inheritance and sales, the ownership became increasingly complicated: between 1860 and 1891, eighteen deeds of transfer were filed by eleven different families of Nieuwoudts, Van Zyls, Engelbrechts, Van Sills, and Koetzees.

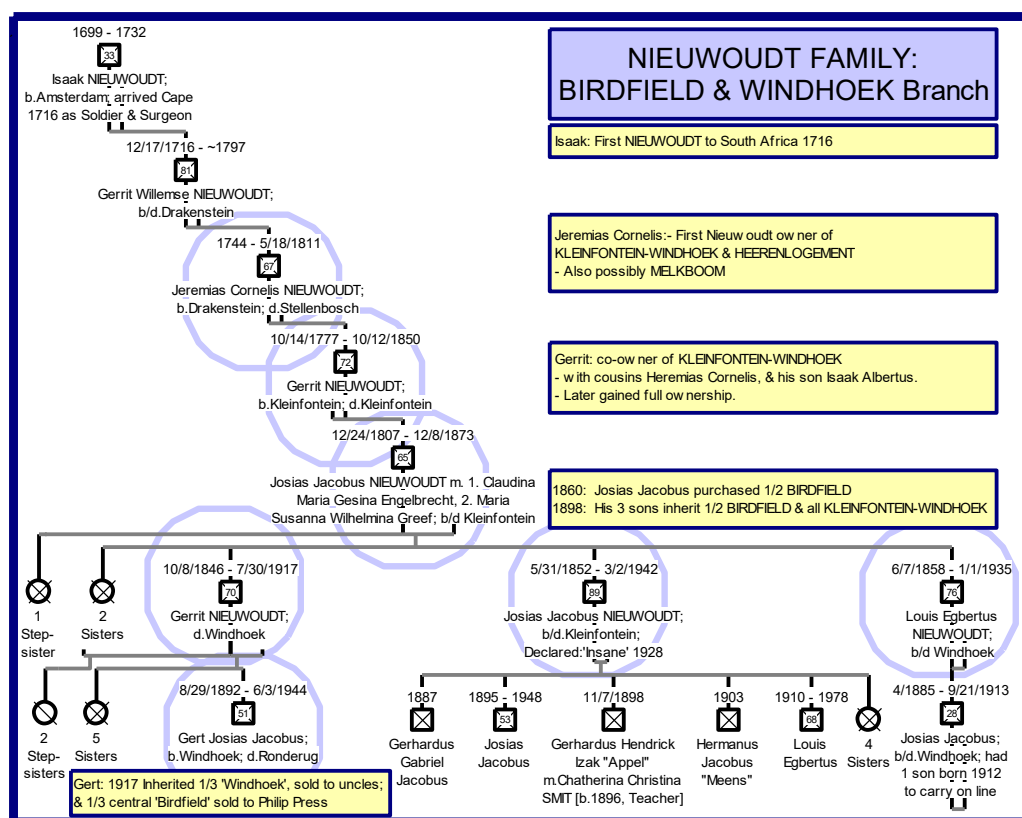


Illustration VI:

Key members
of Nieuwoudt
Family with
ownership in
Birdfield and
a place in
Klawer history

³² Marthinus, Martinus, and Martini were essentially different spellings of the same name used at different times.

³³ See Survey 291/1821

³⁴ See "half-share" in Declaration in Deed 7392 of 1898 (Deeds Office: Western Cape; 90 Plein Street, Cape Town); Note that this is coincidentally the same date as the inheritance of all Kleinfontein (as though Birdfield was also already in father Gerrit's legacy); however the first Bergh-to-Nieuwoudt transfer is definitively to Josias Jacobus, not his father.

³⁵ See Deeds 6746 to 6748 of 1896 amongst others. Gideon Van Zyl and his sons had massive landholdings, consisting of multiple farms, west of Birdfield.

Then in 1873, Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt died, and both his full ownership of Kleinfontein-Windhoek, and his half ownership of Birdfield passed to his widow, Maria Susanna Wilhelmina nee Greef. In 1896, she decided to execute the ultimate intent of her joint will with her deceased husband by transferring ownership to her three grown sons. The undivided shares of Birdfield held by other families had become too complicated, so it was decided on 14 October 1896 to finally take the step of physically dividing Birdfield amongst the eleven primary co-owners before the devolution on her sons could take place. The northern top of the L-leg and the southern strip of the L-foot were divided amongst the other families, and the estate of Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt acquired outright ownership of all the middle portion, on both banks of the Olifants.³⁶ (See Illustration V)

Transfer of this half of Birdfield, approximately 3,184 morgen (6739 acres) in size, was subsequently formally made on 30 August 1898 by the estate of their late father Josias Jacobus and their living mother Maria Susanna to the three sons (see Illustration VI), namely Gerrit Nieuwoudt (1846-1917), Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt (1847-1942), and Louis Egbertus Nieuwoudt (1858-1945) in equal undivided share.³⁷ They also each gained an undivided one-third share in Kleinfontein-Windhoek (including the separately deeded Windhoek Annex A & B).

By virtue of their land ownership, these three brothers would be key players in the development of Klawer two decades later. But their inheritance coincided with the arrival of another equally leading player.

THE ARRIVAL OF GENERAL TRADER PHILIP PRESS

Given the two key identifying features of a town as habitation and business, it might be said that the history of the actual town of Klawer began with the arrival of a trader, Philip Press (1878-1941), and his establishment of a general trading post in 1910, ahead of the railway. Until that time, the landscape was simply undifferentiated veld, part of the segment of the farm Birdfield that had been registered jointly to the three Nieuwoudt brothers ten years earlier.

Philip Press was a Jewish Lithuanian immigrant who had traded in the Western and Northern Cape since his arrival in the Cape Colony as a sixteen-year-old in 1894. He had been dealing with different branches of the sprawling Nieuwoudt family for the past two decades: This long, close, and mutually beneficial relationship would shape the establishment of Klawer.

- In the 1890s Philip Press had traded with his brother Albert on the farm Willemsrivier which bordered on the Nieuwoudt's farm of Groenrivier. When Willemsrivier was ultimately eclipsed by the selection of Groenrivier as the town site, brother Albert shifted to the new town of Nieuwoudtville that was established on the Nieuwoudt farm. Philip rather shifted west.

- By 1903 Philip Press held the trading rights on the great farm of Heerenlogement near the Olifants River belonging to another Nieuwoudt branch.³⁸

- And from 1904-1909 he held trading rights on the adjoining great farm of Melkboom, also majority-owned by a Nieuwoudt branch. In 1904 he apparently resided on the sub-farm of

³⁶ See Deeds 6741-6750 of 1896

³⁷ See Deeds 7392-7394 of 1898

³⁸ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Vol.8647; Ref:22; Descript: Application for Letters of Naturalization. Phillip Press. 1904-1905)

Driefontein,³⁹ but then from 1905-1909 had a general store and hotel with a liquor outlet in the most south-east corner of Melkboom at the Doring River Bridge which forded that river just before the confluence with the Olifants.⁴⁰

Press' arrival there in 1904 coincided with a major change of farm ownership. At that juncture, the great farm of Melkboom was jointly owned by eleven families, including many Nieuwoudt members and Johannes A. J. Kotze. In 1904 it was decided to make a physical division of the farm, following the pattern of Birdfield six years previously. Gert Albertus Petrus Nieuwoudt (1873-1947) and his siblings (as heirs to the estate of their mother, Sarah Johanna Nieuwoudt, wife of the late Stephanus Francois Nieuwoudt) took possession of the largest Driefontein section (Lot 5).⁴¹ The south-east section (Lot 1), including the Doring River Bridge, fell into the portion allotted to Johannes A.J. Kotze. In short, trading rights on Melkboom pre-1905 required joint agreement by all owners, including the Nieuwoudts; but Press' trading and associated hostelry rights between 1905 and 1909 would have been granted by Johannes Kotze.

Philip Press had possession of the liquor license from 1905.⁴² He thereby ran "a hotel on the southern side of Doorn River, close to the old steel bridge across the river and right next to the old road to Clanwilliam."⁴³ As the dynamic would be repeated at the later Klawer site, it should be noted that the store and liquor-license were usually the primary enterprise; the hostelry accommodations were a governmental requirement of any liquor-license holder. Apparently the hotel "burnt down (probably) before 1910" and "Press transferred the liquor license to the new hotel"⁴⁴ on Birdfield.⁴⁵ Indeed, the fact and date of the fire might have some significance, as 1910 saw both the sale of the farm by Kotze (to a J. C. J. Coetzee) and Press' transfer to his new Birdfield enterprise.

Such trading posts on Heerenlogement, Melkboom and Birdfield were lonely affairs. One such outpost at Urionskraal - where Press' brother, Harry established a trading post at approximately the same time - remains unchanged and evokes the type seen in the countryside even today: a couple of small isolated buildings - now of white-washed rubble, but then of simple wood and tin beside a dusty wagon-track - surrounded by a vast landscape of empty veld. The local farmer welcomed the enterprise on his property for providing necessities and some luxuries from Cape Town, as well as a market for his own produce, either to other locals who frequented the trading post, or for carting

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Given the murky nomenclature, with the names 'Melkboom' and 'Driefontein' (as its largest segment) being occasionally interchanged, it is possible that the Driefontein, Melkboom, and Doring River enterprises overlapped.

⁴¹ Lot 5 of Melkboom; See Supreme Court Case: Nieuwoudt vs. Registrar of Deeds, of 22 Mar 1904: ("Supreme Court Reports: Decisions of The Supreme Court of the Cape of Good Hope during the Year 1904"; Reported by A. F. Russell & P. S. Twentymann-Jones; South Africa: J. C. Juta & Co.; 1905). Pg. 134

⁴² (NASA; Dep:KAB; Source:CSC; Vol:2/1/1/981; Ref:28; Descript: Illiquid Case. Appeal, Vanrhynsdorp. Philip Press versus the King. 1923-1923) [CT14Img881]

⁴³ (Du Plessis, H. V.: "Geschiedenis van Klawer 1915-1990"; Booklet issued for Klawer 75th Anniversary, 1990; 200 copies);

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ H. V. du Plessis appears in error when he wrote that the hotel "belonged to a certain Jan Kotze . . . and Press bought the liquor license from the burnt down hotel of Jan Kotze and transferred the liquor license to the new hotel" in Klawer. Rather Jan Kotze was the farm owner, and Philip the hotelier claiming ownership of the liquor license since 1905.

further south. At Birdfield at least, Press' new trading post was set at an advantageous crossroads, halfway between the Olifants River a mile to the west, with its natural crossing at low-water at that point, and the main wagon-road between Clanwilliam and Vanrhynsdorp a mile to the east. It was a natural trading junction for passing custom.

Philip Press came to an agreement with the three Nieuwoudt brothers, who together owned the central portion of Birdfield farm, for this formal trading station on the north bank of the Olifants. While the written agreement for this period has not been found - as this would have been a private contract -an extension of the agreement (that survives because affixed in 1926 to a later land deed, and referencing earlier such contracts) gives us a good idea: "Know all men whom it may concern, that on this day . . . Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt, a Farmer, of Windhoek, in the Division of Van Rhynsdorp . . . and Philip Press, a General Dealer, of Klaver . . . declared that . . . whereas the said Nieuwoudt is the registered owner . . . of certain piece of redeemed quitrent land, being the remaining extent of the farm "Birdfield", . . . the said Appearers did . . . enter into a written Agreement, whereunder the said Nieuwoudt let to the said Press . . . all trading rights attaching to the property . . . , subject to the right of the said Press of renewing such lease . . . for a further . . . five years. . . . The rental payable . . . in respect of the said trading rights shall be the sum of Thirty Five Pounds Sterling per annum . . . " etc.⁴⁶

Although the new trading site already enjoyed a very advantageous siting near the Clanwilliam Road and Olifants wagon crossing, the primary motivation for the move was the greater gamble that the Cape-to-Graafwater railroad would be extended up to the Olifants River.

Philip Press' seemingly prescient move to precisely the ideal location, approximately a year before official authorization, and three years before any station-siting decision, begs examination. It turns out that even though Parliament would only consider the extension in 1911, the Railways had been quietly hard at work on preliminary surveying the year before. There was still considerable risk: the surveying provided no certainty of ultimate approval of the project, let alone where precisely the terminus would lie. But it is significant that two alternative sites were already identified, with the ultimate winner already championed by the local engineers, as early as 1910, thus explaining Press' risk-taking.

In entrepreneurial terms, Philip Press' situation was a prime example of being in the right place at the right time: his on-the-spot management of the hotel at Doring River Bridge, the primary en-route lodging place at the time, made him privy to passing traffic and local gossip. Advance knowledge and entrepreneurial risk-taking, resulting in the calculated placement of his enterprise opposite the ultimate site of the railway station, allowed Philip Press to take control of the future trade and become the physical and social center of nascent Klaver for decades to come. He put down roots and integrated himself into the farming community, donating land for a school, and eventually retiring to his own farm adjacent to the town.

Philip Press' situation was unique, but also representative of a new factor that was beginning to play a major contributory role in the development of the Western Cape and hinterland of South Africa in general: the Jewish trader.

⁴⁶ See addendum to Deed B7468 of 1921.

THE JEWISH TRADERS OF THE WESTERN CAPE AND NAMAQUALAND

An important prism for analyzing the various contributions to the origins of Klawer is ethnographic. The Dutch farmers, already discussed at length, provided the land and settled agriculture and husbandry around, their ownership consequent upon the dispossession of the native Khoi and San a century earlier. In cross-breeding with the Khoisan, they also fathered the large Colored population that would gravitate toward the town; by a half-century after Klawer's founding the Colored community constituted about 2000 versus 700 whites. The English in the form of the British colonial government had provided the stabilizing land ownership structure, and now provided the infrastructure of road and railway. But equally key to the creation and definition of a 'town', was the attraction of traders/businessmen to facilitate the economy. And in the Klawer area, as in most small towns in South Africa until the 1930s, the traders were mostly Jewish.

The mass of Jewish immigration to South Africa came fairly late. There had already been Jews travelling with Vasco de Gama (Gaspar da Gama, for one, who took his patron's name), but they were subsequently excluded from settlement at the new Dutch colony after 1652, even though Jewish financiers were amongst the major backers and directors of the Dutch East India Company in the 18th century. It was only after the British occupation of the Cape in 1795 that Jewish settlement was officially allowed. There were Jews among the 1820 settlers, but still only ten to twenty families altogether by the 1840s. The diamond and gold rush accelerated immigration with Jews numbering about 4000 by 1880. This swelled to over 40,000 by 1914, following the economic depression and pogroms in the Russian Empire. But even though Jews constituted less than one-quarter of 1% of the non-black population, they made a disproportionate contribution to the commercial infrastructure of South Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, and Klawer was no exception.

There were first-generation Jewish immigrants in South Africa engaged in almost all occupations from medicine to mining to farming; but the majority tended to concentrate in those occupations they were most familiar with from Eastern Europe, and in which they possessed unique skills. In Europe's Christian feudal-based society, Jews had been excluded, ghettoized, and proscribed from most productive occupations.⁴⁷ Barred from land ownership and craft-guilds, they were constrained to specialize as urban-based facilitators: trading, lending, and managing. For centuries, their social isolation and vulnerability made them particularly useful and exploitable middlemen for the aristocracies' liquor-selling monopolies, hostelries and estate-management. But as economies became more sophisticated - with international trade and industrialization requiring expansive networks and capital fluidity - that role of facilitator became increasingly important. Given sufficient freedom, as in South Africa, those skills could blossom and engender whole new economies.

This vital role was particularly played out in the Western Cape. Massive farms and distances, not to mention harsh climatic conditions, limited the movement and markets of the established Dutch settlers. Self-sufficiency allowed little time for travel or communication. It was the Jewish immigrant traders who spread out across the Cedarberg, Bokkeveld, and Namaqualand, creating a new network of trading posts, wayside hostelries, goods transportation, and financial brokerage that could more efficiently tie producers to markets, and savings to investments. The Jewish traders and Dutch farmers developed a strong and productive symbiotic relationship.

⁴⁷ (Carroll, James: "Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews"; Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

As Jowell & Folb point out in "Into Kokerboom Country: Namaqualand's Jewish Pioneers": "Farming families . . . had problems in disposing of produce in small lots that did not warrant a trek to the nearest town, and also had a shortage of cash as a result. So the [trader] bartered his goods for farm produce. Many of [the Jewish traders] ended up starting small shops . . . and introduced the beginnings of a money-exchange system. The role of the immigrant storekeeper and produce-dealer in gathering, distributing and financing marketable produce would transform the economy of Namaqualand. . . . The society was brought into the twentieth century."⁴⁸

The Jewish trader supplied heretofore unavailable monetary liquidity. Jowell & Folb continue: "In addition to the trading function, the early shopkeepers also acted as informal 'bankers' to the farmers, . . . helping them during difficult times by extending credit or attaching their farms until they were in a position to repossess them."⁴⁹ The financial system of the time was very different to our own: obtaining a mortgage, for example, from one of the established banks was almost unheard of. Borrowing money against a farm still required locating a willing private lender. The Jewish trader was able to bring his network to bear, to the landowners' advantage.

Thirdly, besides trading and financial support, the Jewish immigrants introduced hostelry services. As Jowell & Folb point out: "Apart from the shopkeepers, a new breed of Jewish entrepreneur was appearing, namely the hotelier, . . . an occupation already familiar to Jews . . . of Eastern Europe. During the mid-nineteenth century some Jewish businessmen were given licenses by Russian noblemen to run canteens or taverns in the rural areas. . . . In South Africa, liquor trading and hotels were strongly connected. Although in the country, hotels or inns essentially provided boarding facilities to serve the traders, commercial travelers and civil servant of developing communities, selling liquor was an important aspect of making a profit. . . . These establishments offered clean and comfortable conditions and hospitality. . . . The hotels became the centre of the social life of the community, and the hoteliers found themselves in key positions as the orchestrators of community living. . . . They always knew the business of everyone in the dorp and became the channels [of] information."⁵⁰

Philip Press exemplified all these roles. He had started out as a wagon-driving trader, graduated to managing a rural store, then opened a primary trading post and hotel in what would become the new town of Klawer. He ultimately provided in one facility all the functions normally associated with a vibrant town: general dealer store, hotel, saloon, liquor-store, butcher, cattle-dealer, and local financier.

A successful economy requires a facilitating network to identify, share and efficiently distribute resources. Press was able to tie himself into such a complex and productive network of family members who settled and interacted at strategic points throughout the Cape - his brother Albert in Nieuwoudtville and his brother Moses at Driefontein, his brother Harry in Urionskraal and Graafwater, brother-in-law Natie in Vlermuisklip, cousin Louis as successor in Klawer, and father-in-law JV Hoffman in Cape Town, amongst others. When the local farm owners - especially the Nieuwoudt family - needed financing or to sell off produce and excess land, Press was able to bring his network to bear.

⁴⁸ (Jowell, Phyllis & Folb, Adrienne: "Into Kokerboom Country: Namaqualand's Jewish Pioneers"; Fernwood Press, South Africa, 2004) Pg. 12, 38

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Pg. 56

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Pg. 56, 59

Until the 1930s, the relationship between Dutch farmer and Jewish trader was a very positive and affectionate one. Both considering themselves 'People of the Book', they shared a vital love and knowledge of the Bible. In the lonely countryside, the visiting Jewish trader provided entertaining and intellectual company. Given the overlap of Dutch and Yiddish, the traders found it easier to learn Dutch/Afrikaans than English. In addition, Dutch farmers and Jewish traders shared a wariness of the British colonial administration which was prejudiced towards both. In short, they found they had much in common, and served each other's purpose

Indeed, given this productive relationship, the fermentation of anti-Semitism in the Cape farmlands in the 1930s was tragic. The emergence of the militantly anti-Semitic 'Greyshirts' movement was an obvious reflection of the Nazi movement in Germany.⁵¹ It was able to take root in the Dutch heartland of South Africa because of the understandable sympathy with Germany in general for its support of the Boers during the Second Anglo-Boer War. Lingering resentment combined with an economic depression to foster an Afrikaner movement towards economic self-reliance. The creation of 'farmers collectives' to self-manage markets and financing resulted in blatantly anti-Semitic calls to boycott all Jews. Even though there was little evidence of Jewish exploitation - rather the opposite: the collectives provided no greater or cheaper financial benefits - the close ties to the farmers' world made them natural scapegoats. Jews were accused of profiteering, in spite of the fact they had provided heretofore unavailable markets to the benefit of the farmers. They were accused in age-old anti-Semitic tradition of money-lending in order to disenfranchise farmers of their patrimony, when in fact they had rather provided a vital liquidity and access to financial markets, often in return for mortgages to excess and under-utilized land still lying dormant since their original expropriations from the Khoisan. In the aftermath of the boycotts, and suffering the specter of the Nazi genocide, rural Jews increasingly migrated to the cities. The vital contribution of the Jewish trader to the development of the hinterland, and rural towns like Klawer, was obscured.

But all this was in the future. Back in 1909, while running his hotel at the Doring River Bridge, and observing the new railway edging north, Philip Press saw a positive destiny in the Olifants River Valley. He placed his bet on the future of rail to open up new markets for all.

THE RAILWAY

A positive feature of British colonialism was the development of infrastructure that generally accompanied any exploitation. The self-righteous justification of a duty to 'spread God's word, and uplift the natives' energized colonial government. The development and opening up of the Western and Northern Cape was a prime example. The Railways, and the Olifants River Irrigation Scheme to be discussed later, were the tools.

⁵¹ Of the rise of the Greyshirts around Klawer, Philip Press' daughter Rhoda would narrate: "There was a family called Roos, whose grandmother had been a Dutch Jewess and she had married an Afrikaner and had children. I believe it was her grandchild who became that Judge-President of the Cape, Judge van Wyk. Now Judge van Wyk, whose grandmother was a Dutch Jewess, had a brother and this brother became an anti-Semite. Along the river at Vredendal he held a meeting of 'Greyshirts' when Hitler came into power. After delivering his speech he called to the audience and said 'Tell me' - I'll speak in Afrikaans and then translate - 'Se' vir my julle as jy een goeie Jood ken?' - 'Tell me if you know one good Jew?' So someone put up a hand at the back of the meeting, and so he asked 'Ja?' And the man answered 'Jou oupa!' - 'Your grandfather!'" (Getz, Rhoda; interviewer: Dr. Pat Manning, 1984)

In 1873 the British Colonial Government took over the various small railways from private owners and promptly began authorizing a new railway line that, in fit and starts, would eventually reach north into Namaqualand. The first step was an Enabling Act of 1874 authorizing a standard gauge (3'6") railway branch line from Kraaifontein - which lay just north of Cape Town towards Paarl - to Malmesbury about thirty miles further north. This was reached on 12 November 1877. Then in 1898 the decision was taken to extend the line from Malmesbury to Eendekuil, 128 mile from Cape Town. It reached Moorreesburg on 9 September 1901 and Eendekuil on 15 November 1902. In 1906 enabling legislation was passed for an extension from Eendekuil to Graafwater farm. After a three year delay, work recommenced in August 1909.⁵² The "Eendekuil-Graafwater Line" opened for goods on 21 April 1911, and for "all classes of traffic" on 31 May 1911.

Authorization to the Olifants River

Immediately, in April 1911, an enabling Act of Parliament was passed for extending the line: "Graafwater to North Bank of Olifants River and not exceeding six miles beyond."⁵³ On 4 May, the word went out from the General Manager of the South African Railways to the Engineer-in-Chief to begin: "The construction of this line has now been authorized by parliament under the Railways Construction Act of 1911, the amount provided being £161,580,⁵⁴ £80,000 of which are available out of the amount appropriated under Cape Act 34 of 1906 for the construction of the Eende Kuil-Graafwater section. . . . The Railway Board, per 29 ultimo [29 April 1911], has approved of arrangements being made for construction work to be proceeded with, and I shall be glad if you will arrange accordingly. . . . The intention is to construct this line to a point in the vicinity of the main road from Clanwilliam to Van Rhynsdorp, but the actual site of the terminus will depend, to a great extent, upon what arrangements can be made for securing economically the necessary land."⁵⁵

Prior to authorization, there had been significant deliberations, surveys, and costing out of a more extended line reaching fourteen miles further north to the logical endpoint of the town of Vanrhynsdorp, and indeed, this plan remained a possibility (quite distinct from the later, more ambitious plans to extend the line all the way up to Namaqualand proper) through to the 1920s. However, it was rejected. Clearly, it was farm produce that was driving the project, not town-traffic, and it was considered quite sufficient to take the rails only as far as, and no further than the point that served the most farmers efficiently. The fact that the terminus would end up being placed in the middle of nowhere ("in the veld," as Sir David de Villiers Graaf tartly put it), which, as our next section will discuss, was the case, was irrelevant. The "six miles" allowed (and at first intended) the railroad to at least reach the main road between Clanwilliam and Vanrhynsdorp, from whence simple road transport could take over. But, as we'll see, frugality and other practical reasons, dictated cutting the line even shorter and placing the terminal station as soon after the line crossed the river as firm ground would allow.

⁵² (Ross, Graham L. D.: "Namaqualand: A transportation-related chronology"; Somerset West: privately distributed, 1996)

⁵³ When finally sited, Klaver Station would have the distinction of being at one of the two extreme ends of the entire South African railway system: "The longest continuous journey over the Union railways, both in distance and time, is from Klaver in the Cape Province to Somkele in Natal, the distance and time on journey being 1,555 miles and 138 & ³/₄ hours respectively." ("Official Year Book of the Union No.2 - 1918"; Union Office of Census and Statistics) Pg.648

⁵⁴ The total cost of the Graafwater-Klaver line of 30 miles & 65 chains was ultimately £149,850 (See "Official Yearbook of the Union No.2 - 1918", Pg.660) versus the original budget of £161,580 (See above).

⁵⁵ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927; Ref:48/1; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Surveys: General. 1910-1916) [PR17Img28-29]

Conversely, there was strong political pressure (from Provincial Council Representative T. J. van Zyl upon Minister of Railways and Harbours, J. W. Sauer, and from him upon the Engineer-in-Charge) to put a full station-stop on the south/west bank, before crossing the Olifants River. This would eliminate any station on the north/east bank, while assuming a final terminus, as per the authorization, a full "6 miles" further north/east. Van Zyl's arguments in favor of the south bank station stated that: "The majority of the inhabitants [are] living at the south side . . . and when the irrigation Canal will be made much will be grown wherefore Railway Traffic to the markets will be wanted. . . . The Olifant's River is during most years too deep during six months of the year to be crossed . . . for farmers living at the south side of the river to reach a Railway station at the north side."⁵⁶ Railway engineers countered that there wouldn't in fact be much traffic from the south/west side, and in any case the river was quite fordable for most of the year. A compromise was eventually reached whereby a siding (later named 'Birdfield Siding') would be situated just before the bridge-crossing. And ultimately, this compromise would affect the specific placement of the east/north bank station, and hence the location of Klawer today.

Placement of the Terminal Station

Even though the extension to the river was only authorized in mid-1911, planning had begun a full year earlier in order to present parliament with a practical budget and route options. In fact, by late 1910, the records reveal, a "preliminary trial survey" (begun 3 September; completed 21 November 1910)⁵⁷ had already laid out a tentative route and identified two competing terminal station sites.



Illustration VII: Preliminary railway survey of 1910-1912 showing 2 alternative station sites

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* [PR17Img27]

⁵⁷ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927; Ref:48/1; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Surveys: General. 1910-1916) [PR18Img164,180]

By the end of 1910, the Engineer-in-Charge,⁵⁸ Mr. S. Pauling, was already able to estimate a bridge of six 100-foot spans costing £2000 across the Olifants River; and to report that: "alternative sites have been selected for the terminal station: No. 1 site is close by the Olifants River and about a mile from the high road running between Clanwilliam and Van Rhynsdorp, from which there is a good branch road leading to the station site. No. 2 site is alongside the high road making the line 1 mile 10 chains longer."⁵⁹ I recommend that No. 1 site be selected owing to water facilities both for railway purposes and transport riders."⁶⁰ The preliminary survey map⁶¹ of 1910 already showed both sites (Illustration VII). The No. 2 site was on the farm Windhoek. The No. 1 site was on the farm Birdfield. But both involved negotiation with the same Nieuwoudt owners.

The decision as to which site to choose was left unresolved for nearly two years. Site No. 2 always had the advantage of being "close to the main road," and therefore made ending the line here seem more logical. But to the engineers, No. 1 always had the edge.

In addition to offering easier watering next to the river, it eliminated the unnecessary wastefulness of the extra miles of tracks, especially when there were good "branch roads leading from main road to the river."⁶² Given the very tight budget (even bricks would be rejected in favor of cheaper wood and tin for the station), the extra miles seemed unnecessary. Additionally, if an extension of the railroad further north was ever approved, as was still possible, the Site No. 2 would actually be a deviation from due north. A regular water supply was indeed a key factor: not only would the station need to be supplied on an ongoing basis, but it was understood that the station would be a depot for the movement of large herds of cattle and sheep driven down from the north for butchering either at the depot or in Cape Town. Ultimately, the Klaver Station was planned to include a kraal for 2,500 sheep. One can imagine the chaotic scene as these flocks and herds awaited transportation and the virtue of the riverbank for watering nearby.

The final weight that was added to these arguments was the compromise over the south bank siding. In March 1912, the new Engineer-in-Charge, John Gillespie⁶³ admitted to the General Manager in

⁵⁸ There were three primary Engineers-in-Charge from 1910 to 1915 who worked out of the make-shift office near the current Klawer railway station, while probably boarding at Philip Press' hostel: S Pauling (1910-1912, John Gillespie (1912-1913), and W. Patrick (1913-1915):

⁵⁹ 'Chain' equals 22 yards, with 80 chains in a mile

⁶⁰ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927; Ref:48/1; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Surveys: General. 1910-1916) [PR17Img36-38]

⁶¹ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/46; Part 1; Descrip: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Olifants River Irrigation Furrow under railway line. 1909-1919) [PR17Img126-132]

⁶² (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927; Ref:48/1; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Surveys: General. 1910-1916) [PR17Img41]

⁶³ Of the three Engineers-in-Charge from 1910 to 1915, the career of John Gillespie (1853-1925), the engineer who contributed most to the execution of the line is probably representative: Raised in Scotland, he apprenticed as an engineer under James Barr from age fifteen to twenty. He then worked as an engineering office-assistant for Scotland's Caledonian Railway Company before joining John Mackay, a railway contractor on the Caledonian's Wishaw Line. In 1880 he was engaged by the Cape Government and moved to South Africa. In 1885, Gillespie was appointed first-assistant engineer on the Kimberley Extension Railway, and worked for the Railways until 1904 when he joined a private contractor again, namely Simkins & Adams in Cape Town. In October 1907 Gillespie was appointed as town engineer of Pietersburg, but was forced to resign five months later after differences with the public health and works committee over the road construction. He apparently could not cope with the very different municipal decision making process, and

Johannesburg, the feasibility of including a permanent siding on the south bank, but added the consequent advisability of siting the north bank terminal closer to the river as "this would place the Station within a mile of the proposed Siding and would facilitate the working of the Siding as it could be controlled by the Officer in charge of the station."⁶⁴ Doubling the duties of the terminal stationmaster was yet another cost-saving.

A few months later, by September 1912, the decision was finally made in favor of Site No. 1, which is where the station sits today. Just as the topography of mountains and river had dictated the siting of the bridge-crossing, so the arguments pertaining to the water, landscaping and staffing, and the resulting siting of the terminus, dictated the contours of Klawer today.

On 1 November 1912, Gillespie was already sending a detailed plan of the final station and approach roads.⁶⁵ Details of the plans, specific facilities and construction materials were debated through December 1912.⁶⁶ By then, all the key elements were planned:

"Third class station buildings; goods shed; goods loop of 678 feet clear; main loop 1000 feet clear; dead-end 300 feet clear; lamp room; triangle; cattle kraal [to contain 2,500 sheep]."⁶⁷ The station was to have a stationmaster's house, and separate quarters for the engine-driver, fireman, and guard, consisting of a 'rest room' of wood and iron for each, with a shared mess-room and kitchen.⁶⁸

Work began on the station in 1913, and in his Progress Report of 20 October 1913, Acting New Construction Engineer, Mr. Prettyjohn, gave specific instructions to the Engineer-in-Charge: "Mr. Gillespie to complete all buildings north of the river, so that on completion of the Bridge, the Line could be opened for traffic at once."⁶⁹

The finalized station was still unnamed and simply referred to on plans as "Terminal Station Olifants River" or simply "Olifants River Station". 'Klaver' still had no name.

In any case, the railway itself had a long way to go before it would ever reach the nascent station.

Construction of the Line

After the announcement of 29 April 1911 that "construction work [was] to be proceeded with,"⁷⁰ it was determined in July to "fix the Main Construction Camp on the Line at a point beyond the Olifants River adjacent to the public road. It should be possible to make arrangements with the

returned to work as a railway engineer until his death in 1925 (Maki, Harri: "Municipal Engineers in South Africa before 1910"; Tampere University Press, 2013).

⁶⁴ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref:EC48/32; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Stations and Sidings. 1911-1916) [PR17Img53-54]

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* [PR17Img55]

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* [PR17Img55-62]

⁶⁷ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:1129; Ref: RG165/13; Part 1; Descript: Eendekuil-Olifants River Line. 1909-1916) [PR17Img17&96]

⁶⁸ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref:EC48/32; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Stations and Sidings. 1911-1916) [Box 50; PR17Img55-62; Station Plans:Pr18Img120-135]

⁶⁹ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/41; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Opening of Line. 1913-1915) [PR17Img85]

⁷⁰ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927; Ref:48/1; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Surveys: General. 1910-1916) [PR17Img28]

Postal Telegraph to run a special wire for a telephone between the camp and Clanwilliam."⁷¹ While the farm and rail plan No. 113 of 22 November 1911 showed the "site of new terminus not yet definitely fixed,"⁷² it already showed the lonely office of the engineering team close to where the bridge would be built.

The engineers now worked from both ends of the new railway extension:

- From the south, at the Graafwater Station, they brought up supplies from Cape Town and edged the line north, through the farm Graafwater, and then the great farm Ratelfontein on which they placed an intermediary siding. They continued through the great farm Heerenlogement, with its sub-farm of Schurfkop (also spelled 'Schuurfkop' and currently 'Skurfkop') on which they placed a second siding, and finally reached the great farm Melkboom and the sub-farms Driefontein and Krantz in early 1913.

- In the north, at the Main Construction Camp, the ground had to be prepared for the vital railway bridge across the Olifants River and the terminal station itself. By the end of 1911, probings for the bridge were complete, with designs under review, including an examination of the Doring River bridge for compatibility.⁷³ The bridge design, component manufacturing, and ultimate erection appear to have been separately tendered processes. The final design consisted "of 12 spans of 60 ft on screw piles, similar to the Umvoti Bridge."⁷⁴ The components had to be shipped from England, and there was a major setback in early 1913 when vital steelworks were lost when the ship 'Hadden Castle' ran aground near Saldanha Bay. The missing parts had to be reordered. In the meantime, the surviving steel sections were kept in storage in Graafwater; the line would need to be completed all the way to the river before the steel sections could be transported to the site for erection. Meanwhile, extensive earthworks were needed beside the river where a massive kloof complicated the approach. Plans were sufficiently advanced by March 1912 to call for tenders: the Earthworks and Concrete extended "for half a mile alongside the Olifants River. The earthworks comprise the excavation of some 33,500 cubic yards . . . and 96,000 cubic yards to be obtained [from elsewhere]. The concrete of approximately 1000 cubic yards is for the construction of a 10 ft arch culvert."⁷⁵ By June 1913, "the earthworks to the Bridge were expected to be complete in about 3 months,"⁷⁶ and tenders were invited for the actual erection process of the bridge.

Work went smoothly at the northern end. The earthworks were complete by September 1913 on schedule, and work was in hand to complete the terminal station and approach roads.⁷⁷ The problem was in the south where the laying of the line was stalled by heavy rains, at the farm Krantz. On 3

⁷¹ *Ibid.* [PR17Img23]

⁷² (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref:EC48/33; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Public Roads.1911-1917) [PR17Img109]

⁷³ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927; Ref:48/4; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Bridges and Culverts. 1911-1912) [PR17Img176]

⁷⁴ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927A; Ref:EC48/4; Part 2-7; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Bridges and Culverts. 1912-1918) [PR17Img180]

⁷⁵ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927; Ref:48/4; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Bridges and Culverts. 1911-1912) [PR17Img178]

⁷⁶ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref:EC48/32; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Stations and Sidings. 1911-1916) [PR17Img71]

⁷⁷ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/41; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Opening of Line. 1913-1915) [PR17Img83]

November 1913, a 'Temporary Terminus' was opened at Krantz "for all classes of traffic" coming up from Graafwater, while the construction crews tried to complete the final five miles to the River.

This siding at Krantz, (simply called 'Temporary Terminus' in 1913, then 'Krantz Spur' in 1914 when the next 'Temporary Terminus' opened at Birdfield, and 'Kleipan Siding' only much later) was a controversial stop on the line, as the following section will describe. Its reason for being actually lay with the South African Irrigation Department as part of the Olifants River Irrigation Scheme which would, in its own way, also help define the contours of the future Klawer.

THE OLIFANTS RIVER IRRIGATION SCHEME

The railway wasn't the only piece of modernity creeping up the Olifants River. The second - in tandem, dependent, parallel, and with similar aims - was the Olifants Irrigation Scheme. Where the irrigation scheme aimed to increase and stabilize productivity in the farming district, the railway aimed to bring the consequential bounty to market. Klawer was born and situated because of the railway. But Klawer's survival and growth was greatly a function of the increasing productivity of the land around that permitted division of veld into smaller productive farms, thus increasing population, and consequent viability of their local town, even long after Klawer had ceased to be a terminus and become simply a stop on the line.

The agricultural inefficiency of the Olifants River Valley had become a source of great irritation to the Cape Administration. A comprehensive and insightful study of the problems is provided by "Water Supply of South Africa, and Facilities for Storing it", edited by John Croumbie-Brown, the Government Botanist at the Cape of Good Hope, in 1877: "The Division of Clanwilliam covers an area of 6000 square miles . . . [that] includes the fertile valley of the Olifant's River West, and a vast extent of mountain and karoo on either side of it. . . . The climate is very hot in summer, although cold in winter; and the situation is rather unfavorable for communication with other parts of the Colony, owing to its deep sandy roads and rugged surface." Croumbie-Brown goes on to quote the Civil Commission Report of 1865: "Clanwilliam has suffered severely from . . . drought. It may be remarked that the general failure of the crops is mainly attributable to the great apathy and want of enterprise exhibited amongst the agricultural community; for most parts of the division are well supplied with water, available, with but little trouble or expense, for irrigation purposes. At present the division is reduced to a deplorable state of poverty: there is no money in circulation . . . and perfect stagnation prevails in trade." Croumbie-Brown includes "a sketch of the position, prospects, and capabilities of the division of Clanwilliam which appeared in newspapers of the Colony [which declared:] 'It really is most disheartening to see so many thousands of acres of the most fertile soil in this district, in the beautiful valley of the Olifant's River, lying waste and comparatively unproductive, owing to the apathetic and indolent dispositions of the majority of the farmers. It has been calculated from reliable sources that not more than one twenty-fifth of the whole extent of the farms are under cultivation . . . The usual drawback, namely, drought, does not, or ought not to exist here, as the Olifant's River supplies abundant water at all seasons of the year; and, were there the slightest effort on the part of the landowners, tributaries of the river might be made available for irrigation purposes to almost any extent.'"⁷⁸

⁷⁸ ("Water Supply of South Africa"; Edited by John Croumbie Brown (Government Botanist at Cape of Good Hope); Chapter: "Water Supply in Division of Clanwilliam"; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1877) Pg. 250-264

Mr. Croumbie-Brown goes on to say that this assessment was not entirely fair. He acknowledges that the Olifants River Valley was indeed particularly fertile, but points out that even where there was exertion, with bounteous results, there was still the problem of transportation to market: "Some of the finest grain in the Colony is grown in the field-cornetcies of Zandveld and the mouth of Olifant's River; but the only market the farmers have for the sale of their produce is at Lambert's Bay, where the trade is entirely in the hands of certain mercantile establishments. This seems a great pity, as little or no competition is the consequence, and the farmers get but low prices for their grain. Why could not some of the leading men among them take it upon themselves to make shipments direct to Capetown, and thus raise competition."

In summary, this commentary spoke, firstly, to the need for better transportation system from the upper reaches of the Olifants River, which ultimately led to the Olifants River Railway project, and the placement of Klawer. But, secondly, it also spoke to the need for governmental involvement in furthering irrigation efficiency, culminating in the irrigation scheme which permitted Klawer to survive and expand.

The irrigation project gained new urgency in the later decades of the 1800s as it became apparent that in fact the environment was deteriorating with dire consequences. Ever since the great farms had been settled along the river, crops had been irrigated and refertilized by the flooding of the river on a regular basis. To the Parliamentary question in the 1860s: "On the Olifant's River the land is irrigated by the rise of the river is it not?", the inspector could still reply: "Yes, by the overflowing deposit, exactly the same as with the Nile."⁷⁹ However, destruction of natural vegetation and consequent bank erosion over time was already resulting in the gradual widening and deepening of the banks: between 1822 and 1870 the river widened by a full quarter, from an average 95 to 125 feet. As a consequence, the river hardly ever overflowed.⁸⁰ There might be bounteous water, but it was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The irrigation potential of the Olifants River, via dams and canals, was recognized as early as 1832. Where Croumbie-Brown's account quoted above spoke to the larger Clanwilliam District, the report of the first survey of 1860 by Patrick Fletcher addressed the Olifants River Valley specifically, confirming the irrigation problem, as well as providing insight into the life and condition of the local farmers: "The farming population along the irrigable portion of the river I estimate at about one hundred and twenty souls. The total income of the whole valley could not have exceeded fourteen hundred pounds per annum during the last nine years, about eleven pounds [per person]. Except when the river overflows, they scarcely grow sufficient bread for their own consumption. . . . For the last eight winters, they have watched with nervous excitement each river flood and found their watchings ended in disappointment. . . . But to talk to them of artificial irrigation by dams on the river, the idea is ridiculed. Those of them who have a vague notion that something might be done, fear the introduction of taxation . . . and most dreaded of all is that the land will somehow or other get into the hands of strangers (vreemde menschen), or that such will be encouraged to settle among them. . . . Education is at a very low ebb. . . . All the farms along the irrigable portion of the river are partner farms, or what they call 'maatschappy plaatsen', generally brothers or brothers-in-law. One of themselves pointed out a farm where seventeen individuals could claim shares. They

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Pg.252: The Hon. Mr. Hare to Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Irrigation

⁸⁰ (Van Vuuren, Lani: "Water History: Olifants River"; The WaterWheel Journal, Sept-Oct 2010)

appeared very desirous of having a portion of land that each shall call his own but doubted whether they could demand a division."⁸¹

A scheme of weirs to simply restore flooding in 1883 came to nothing due to prohibitive cost. In the meantime, the Olifants River farmers became increasingly innovative themselves in rudimentary water-management methods (steam-pumps, windmills and 'bakkiespompe'⁸²) and vociferous in their requests for aid. These request eventually coincided with the colonial government's increasing benevolence as a placatory strategy after the Boer War unrest. Finally in 1907 the government commissioned a feasibility study for a canal system to supply both banks of the Olifants for about 80 kilometers between Clanwilliam and the Hol River to be supplied by a novel damming of the river upstream. The irrigation district was finally proclaimed in 1911, and funding of £155,000 was approved. The final design of the weir (an ingenious combination of a concrete dam with movable metal lock-gates above to regulate the flow), to be built on the farm of Bulshoek, 25 kilometers north of Clanwilliam, was awarded to the Scottish firm of Glenfield & Kennedy in cooperation with engineer W. M. Watt. The canal system would be 200 miles long (the main canal being 162 miles long, with 11 branch-canals of 37 miles).⁸³ It required meticulous planning and execution to maintain the constant downward gradient of the open canals just sufficient for the water to reach the full distance. It remains a marvelous engineering feat to this day.

However, the execution did not go smoothly. Flooding, and a seeming lack of labor, delayed construction until March 1913. Then WWI disrupted supply of both labor and material, immediately followed in 1918 by the Spanish Influenza. The dam, and the canals on the left bank up to farm Baklei, half way between Vanrhynsdorp and Vlermuisklip (Lutzville), were only completed in 1920, and the full scheme was only complete in 1924. Work continued thereafter, with a decision in 1927 to line all the canals with concrete, and the addition of a second storage dam at Clanwilliam (1932-35) that would allow expansion of agricultural activity in the area.⁸⁴

But in spite of the fact that the Dam itself was not completed, and the water did not flow, until 1920, the prior decade saw constant activity in planning and field-work in various sectors, requiring ongoing interaction with the Railways and with important consequences for the placement of Klawer.

Interestingly, both the Graafwater-to-Olifants River railway extension and the irrigation scheme were declared in the same year of 1911. They began at approximately the same latitude, Clanwilliam being about 21 miles due east of Graafwater, and moved up the Olifants Valley together. The irrigation scheme engineers felt dependent on the railway to bring up the massive quantity of building supplies where needed, and badgered the Railways accordingly. The railway line and canals would continually intersect, requiring careful coordination in places.

⁸¹ ("Water Supply of South Africa"; Edited by John Croumbie Brown (Government Botanist at Cape of Good Hope); Chapter: "Water Supply in Division of Clanwilliam"; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1877)

⁸² (Van Vuuren, Lani: "Water History: Olifants River"; The WaterWheel Journal, Sept-Oct 2010)

⁸³ ("Early Explorers Footsteps"; Siyabona Africa: <http://www.southafrica.org.za/tour-sa-early-explorers-footsteps.html>)

⁸⁴ (Van Vuuren, Lani: "Water History: Olifants River"; The WaterWheel Journal, Sept-Oct 2010)

But the Railways always had precedence. The Irrigation Department tried to move the line, pointing out that while a train could go uphill, water could not, but to no avail: From Irrigation Department, Pretoria to South African Railways, Johannesburg 13 December 1911:

"The Olifants River Canal is about to be constructed and it appears likely that the railway line approaching the bridge contemplated by your administration over the Olifants River at Klavers Vlei . . . may run parallel to the canal line at or near chainages 4 and 25 miles. As the Bridge is not yet commenced there would appear to be little difficulty in so constructing the railway line as to keep clear of the canal as much as possible, since a slight alteration of grade need not vitally affect the railway. It is of course out of the question to alter the alignment of the canal to any extent as it is impossible to make water run except on a falling contour."⁸⁵

But the Railways was having none of it. They simply telegraphed back: "[We] find your irrigation canal crosses and recrosses our railway at a kloof just near side Olifants River under very high bank. Cost prohibitive - suggest you syphon canal across kloof . . . below bank"⁸⁶. The Irrigation Department conceded, and an inverted siphon replaced the planned aqueduct.⁸⁷

The railway line and canal had to cross each other again where ultimately Klaver Station would develop "on the North or right bank of the river at Klaver Vlei, where the [water] level would approximately coincide with Railway formation level."⁸⁸ Coordination was necessary as early as mid-1912, as both the Railways and Irrigation Department were beginning construction at their northern ends as well as at their southern origins.⁸⁹ Thus, even though the dam-construction at Bulshoek was held up for a decade, by the time that Klaver Station opened in 1915, the parallel irrigation canal was already in place.⁹⁰ The significance of this, as we shall see, is that when it came time to define the boundaries for a potential town around Klaver Station in 1920, the railway line and canal were obvious and useful western and eastern boundary choices.

The Railways and Irrigation Departments also had to coordinate in the middle of their lines. Given the bad and weather-dependent roads in the area, Irrigation wanted Railways to come as close as possible to their line at strategic spots in order to deliver the mass of concrete they required. On 23 December 1912 a message went out "from Irrigation Dept. to Railways: Heading: Siding near Driefontein: Graafwater-Klavervlei Line" reading: "A large irrigation scheme is in process of construction on the Oliphants River near Clanwilliam and it will be necessary to carry a large amount of material on the line now under construction from Graafwater to Klavervlei. . . . The bulk of the material will be required at the place marked Bulshoek Camp, and the nearest route for transport will be from Driefontein Drift. . . . I shall be obliged if you can arrange for a siding."⁹¹

By early 1913, the railway was already close by. In February, Engineer-in-Charge, Gillespie, (while expressing his opinion that it might actually "be cheaper to convey such material direct by wagon

⁸⁵ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/46; Part 1; Descrip: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Olifants River Irrigation Furrow under railway line. 1909-1919) [PR17Img115]

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* [PR17Img117]

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* [PR17Img122]

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* [PR17Img121]

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* [PR17Img122-124]

⁹⁰ It already appears on an unrelated survey for the 'five springs' water supply for the station from farm Windhoek executed in late 1914, and attached to the Deed of Servitude registered 16th Sept.1915.

⁹¹ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/46; Part 1; Descrip: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Olifants River Irrigation Furrow under railway line. 1909-1919) [PR17Img133]

from Graafwater Station via Clanwilliam to the reservoir site . . . [as] the wagon road has been greatly improved recently."⁹²), recommended a siding in the form of a spur at Driefontein Drift, which could also be used practically for general traffic. This was the siding, first called 'Krantz Spur' because it was situated on the sub-farm 'Krantz' (of Melkboom), and later called 'Kleipan Siding', that opened on 3 November 1913, with a "booking-office, parcels room, foreman's hut, telephone."⁹³

Heavy rains held up construction, but two months later the line finally reached the south bank of the Olifants River. The erection of the bridge could now be completed, with optimistic confidence that the full line would be open within the year. This was not to be.

THE NAMING OF 'KLAVER STATION'

All this time, the terminal-to-be at the intended end of the line across the unbridged river still had no name.

In all Railways communication from the earliest planning in early 1910 to late 1913, the ultimate endpoint on the north bank was referred to simply as "Terminal Station," or slightly more specifically, as in a late memo of 7 May 1913, "Terminal Station at 31 miles."⁹⁴ It was entirely up to the Railways Department to determine its location - limited only by the authorization: "to North Bank of Olifants River and not exceeding six miles beyond" - and its name.

Although some part of the terrain running from the Gifberg to the Olifants River near the point of most common river crossing had apparently accrued the unofficial local moniker of 'Klaver Vlei' or 'Klaversvlei', it was not registered on maps and, in all the reams of internal documents over the years, was specifically not used by the Railways Department to communicate the area of the future terminus. This is corroborated by the initial working-survey of 1910,⁹⁵ which notates the name of all the farms in the area and even significant habitations such as the hotel at the Doring River bridge, but shows no notation of a 'Klavervlei'. Railways simply had no use for a local nickname in order to identify the placement of their terminus.

In contrast, the Irrigation Department habitually used this rough designation, as in: "23 Dec 1912: From Irrigation Dept: It will be necessary to carry a large amount of material on the line now under construction from Graafwater to Klavervlei."⁹⁶ The difference was that, to the Railways, this area was an endpoint whose precise location they could select and name as efficiency dictated; whereas to the Irrigation Department, the area was a continuum through which the canal would simply pass, without ultimate name, but temporarily requiring some general moniker during the section's

⁹² *Ibid.* [PR17Img134]

⁹³ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:1129; Ref: RG165/13; Part 1; Descript: Eendekuil-Olifants River Line. 1909-1916) [PR17Img10]

⁹⁴ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/9; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Water Supply. 1912-1916) [PR17 Img102]

⁹⁵ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/46; Part 1; Descrip: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Olifants River Irrigation Furrow under railway line. 1909-1919) [PR17Img129]

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* [PR17Img133]

construction planning. As a consequence, 'Klavervlei' does crop up on four occasions in Railways memos also, but only in communication with the Irrigation Department.

However, even Railways would eventually find a use for the nickname 'Klavervlei'.

It wasn't until 10 June 1913 that the General Manager's Office sent a wire requesting potential names for the termini and sidings:

"Engineer-in-Chief to Engineer-in-Charge: Heading: Naming of Stations and Sidings: I shall be glad if you will arrange to submit to me early your recommendations for naming of stations, sidings, etc., on your line, giving where possible derivation of proposed name."⁹⁷

The experienced Engineer-in-Charge, John Gillespie, gave it some thought and replied on 18 June 1913:⁹⁸

"I recommend that the following names of stations and sidings on this line should be adopted:

-HEERENLOGEMENT SIDING: at 184 miles from Cape Town [amended in later document of 30th June to the more relevant distance from Graafwater as 7 miles 38 chains]. This is the original name on which the siding stands; it is also the name of the nearest and highest mountain; and the place is known locally by the name.

-SCHUURFT KOP SIDING: at 192 miles [15 miles 29 chains from Graafwater], is the local name of the place, and is situate close to the hill of that same name which is derived from its appearance being stony, with scrub-like bushes.

-WINDHOEK STATION TERMINUS: at 207 miles [30 miles 45 chains from Graafwater]. Windhoek is the name of the farm on which the station is placed. The place is also known as Klaver Vlei."

Thus we have a clear indication that the name 'Klaver' was not preordained, but rather an afterthought. In fact, 'Windhoek' was indeed used in some communication as a reference point, even though the recommendation of 'Windhoek Station' itself was obviously based on a factual error: while station site option No. 2 had been on the farm Windhoek, the ultimately selected site No. 1 was on the farm Birdfield. However both farms were owned by the Nieuwoudt brothers with whom Railways was negotiating, hence the understandable misconception by Gillespie.

Four months later, on 24 October 1913, the final decision was made to rather select the name 'Klaver Station' over 'Windhoek' for the terminal station. A rather terse memo was sent out by W. W. Hoy from the General Manager's Office of South African Railways and Harbours, Johannesburg, to Engineer-in-Chief, Johannesburg:

"Heading: Graafwater-Olifants River Railway: Naming of Stations & Sidings:

I have to state that the following names have been adopted for the under-mentioned sidings and stations on the above line:-

-Ratelfontein Siding 7 miles

-SchurftKop Siding 15 miles

-Klaver Station 31 miles."⁹⁹

⁹⁷ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref:EC48/32; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Stations and Sidings. 1911-1916) [PR17Img72]

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* [PR17Img73]

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* [PR17Img75]

The revisions versus the recommendation are understandable: 'Heerenlogement Siding' may have been rejected because it was determined to actually be on the farm 'Ratelfontein (Remainder)'. There might have been even further confusion, given that 'Schurftkop Siding' actually was on the great farm Heerenlogement (sub-farm 'Schurftkop'). And the General Manager's Office probably finally realized that 'Windhoek Station' was actually on the great farm 'Birdfield'. There may have been a concern about simply changing the name to 'Birdfield Station', however, given the decision to include another siding nearby, also on the farm 'Birdfield', that was to be named 'Birdfield Siding'.¹⁰⁰

THE OPENING OF KLAVER STATION

The Naming of 'Birdfield Terminus'

On 1 January 1914, the railway line was finally opened all the way to the south bank of the Olifants River.

Based on the compromise of 1912, consequent upon the petitioning for a station on the south bank, a new siding was built at the end of the line at this point. In his letter of 8 Mar 1912, Engineer-in-Charge Gillespie had written to the General Manager, Johannesburg that it would be "possible to locate a siding on the south side of the River - the cost of this work including approach-roads, metalling, fencing, gates and a small loading bank [being] £1,500, [requiring] special sanction for this additional expenditure."¹⁰¹ This decision turned out to be quite fortuitous, given that the railway was hereafter delayed at this spot for another two years.

The new siding had no name. It was simply the "Temporary Terminus at 29 miles & 52 chains." The official printed announcement of 24 December 1913 read: "Graafwater-Olifants River Line: Opening of section Temporary Terminus [i.e. Krantz] to Temporary Terminus, south bank Olifants River. The section of line from Temporary Terminus to Temporary Terminus, south bank Olifants River will be opened for conveyance of all classes of traffic on Thursday, 1st January, 1914. . . . Temporary accommodation for staff will be removed from Temporary Terminus at 23 miles [i.e. Krantz] to Temporary Terminus, south bank." The facilities were minimal, including a "crossing-loop & dead-end of 300 feet" and also "lock-up shed 14x8 feet; loading platform and telephone."¹⁰²

Two weeks later, on 17 January, it was announced that henceforth, "the name 'Birdfield' has been approved for the siding at Temporary Terminus South Bank Olifants River."¹⁰³ This decision on a name must have already been in process, and factored into the choice of 'Klaver Station' for the north bank terminus

¹⁰⁰ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/41; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Opening of Line. 1913-1915) [PR17Img77 for farm distances & placement]

¹⁰¹ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref:EC48/32; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Stations and Sidings. 1911-1916) [PR17Img53]

¹⁰² (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/41; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Opening of Line. 1913-1915) [PR17Img87]

¹⁰³ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:1129; Ref: RG165/13; Part 1; Descript: Eendekuil-Olifants River Line. 1909-1916) [PR17Img12]

When Klaver Station did eventually open two years later, Birdfield Terminus was first downgraded to a siding, then closed altogether, but finally reopened in 1923 as a scheduled stop.

A Bridge Delayed

Work on the bridge went well. The original design of a reinforced concrete structure had been altered to a screw pile design, and all the steel elements had been transported from Graafwater to the River on the newly laid rail line. By end of July 1914 the piers and much of the superstructure were in place, and the now Acting Engineer-in-Charge, Mr. W. Patrick, was able to write confidently to the Engineer-in-Chief: "All the material is ready for platelaying and ballasting. . . . The Contractors anticipate being able to let an engine cross the bridge on 1st October . . . bringing the date of opening to the 16th November."¹⁰⁴

However, there were ominous signs. Flooding in June had already delayed the work by two weeks. This was ironic, given that previous delays had been due to drought.¹⁰⁵ In fact 1914 turned out to be a record year for rain in the Western Cape. On the evening of the 28th of July, unrelenting rain began which continued until noon of the 29th. It picked up again that evening, continuing all day on the 30th. The swollen river cascaded down, rising to 74 feet.¹⁰⁶

Then on 31st July the Engineer-in-chief in Johannesburg received a telegram in triple-size type from Construction: "OLIFANTS RIVER IN FLOOD. BRIDGE COLLAPSED AT 12.5AM. GIRDERS A AND B ON BANK. GIRDERS C, D, E, F, G, H AND G IN RIVER. ALL PILE PIERS BROKEN."¹⁰⁷

The reports of the Engineer-in-charge on 3rd August, and the Engineer-in-Chief, who made his own inspection visit on the 8th, laid out the details: "No.8 pier broke at 9.30 a.m. on the 30th. This was caused by 12"x12" baulks becoming entangled in the pier. The bridge collapsed at 12.5 a.m. on the 31st." Besides the flood itself, "the cause of the failure is chiefly due to the following reasons: The temporary staging and ropeway [for workers to move between piers, which unfortunately] helped to collect the debris in the river; the fact that the piers, being in course of construction, were not fully braced at the time of the accident; and that during the flood . . . the upper portion of the sand bottom became 'alive' and of a quicksand nature."¹⁰⁸ There was naturally a great deal of finger-pointing and blame: "The contractors proposed lifting the temporary footpath at the first sign of another flood but this was not done and there is no doubt this had a contributory effect on the collapse of the bridge. The temporary footpath was fixed on the up stream side of the piers and probably this helped in the destruction."¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, it was decided that it was the circumstances and not the design of the bridge that were at fault, and to rebuild to the same design "with certain alterations": the new piers would be placed midway between the old piers, allowing totally new footings and for salvage of the original piers to

¹⁰⁴ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/41; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Opening of Line. 1913-1915) [Pr17Img 89 and clarification of 22 July 1914 Img90]

¹⁰⁵ (Ross, Graham L. D.: "Namaqualand: A transportation-related chronology"; Somerset West: privately distributed, 1996)

¹⁰⁶ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:927A; Ref:EC48/4; Part 2-7; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Bridges and Culverts. 1912-1918) [Pr18Img203]

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* [Pr18Img198]

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* [Pr18Img209] Engineer-in-Chief report to General Manager, 18 August 1914

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* [Pr18Img204]

proceed simultaneously; this required a new half-span of 30 feet on the south end; the new piers would be sunk an additional ten feet and sheathed in steel to avoid any future “scouring and quicksand” effect; and one-and-a-half spans was eliminated on the north end, and replaced by a rock and concrete pile bank, in order to use their material to replace the mid-span girders that had been damaged. Fortunately, besides these few, almost all the piles and girders could be salvaged, so that the work of rebuilding the bridge could begin immediately.

On the 2nd of September the river flooded again, reaching 71.5 feet. One of the piers "collapses owing to one of the bearing piles being broken during the July flood [but] there was no other damage," thus corroborating the design decision.¹¹⁰

Fortunately, there was no flooding recorded in 1915, so the salvaging and reconstruction of the bridge could proceed expeditiously.

In the meantime, a number of ancillary, but important, decision had to be made, such as how to supply water to the terminal station, and the compensation to be paid to the farmers whose land had been expropriated all along the line.

Sourcing Water for Klaver Station

Klaver Station had been placed where it was, close to the river, partly because of the need for watering animals in transit, and drawing fresh water for station use. But the engineers were clearly already questioning the wisdom of the latter as far back as 1912 and had begun exploring other options.

In November 1912, Louis Egbertus Nieuwoudt was in negotiation, offering to supply fresh water from five springs¹¹¹ above the farmhouse on the farm Namerees, part of his larger farm of Windhoek for £600. The railways would pipe the water the 2 ¼ miles to the station, with usage rights, except for a minimum of 500 gallons a day to be available to the farmer himself.¹¹² Clearly, farm Windhoek was blessed with alternative water sources, and the Railways was proving a great opportunity for monetizing excess resources. With the Railways still balking, Nieuwoudt halved his demands by May of 1913 to just £300, or the alternative of total usage outright by the Railways for £400.¹¹³ At the same time, a new engineer's report of 21 May 1913 concluded that the water drawn from the Olifants River became too contaminated and brackish during seasonal floods, particularly due to the influx of the Doring River,¹¹⁴ and would require settling-tanks at extra expense. The cost-benefit clearly changed, and a bargain was struck. On 1 June 1913, a formal offer for £400, signed by the three Nieuwoudt brothers “G., J. J., and L. E. Nieuwoudt,” was forwarded to head-office for final acceptance.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* [Pr18Img236] Acting Engineer-in-Charge W. Patrick to Engineer-in-Chief.

¹¹¹ The original correspondence refers to only one “spring above the dam at Namarees”, and “the strongest of three springs...yielding 6700 gallons per 24 hours”, but the final Deed of Servitude claims “five springs.” They probably referred to the same water source with various degrees of specificity.

¹¹² (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/9; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Water Supply. 1912-1916) [PR17Img98]

¹¹³ *Ibid.* [PR17Img103]

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* [PR17Img101, 105]

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* [PR17Img107-8]

Formal payment and transfer of the water, and land right to the path of the water-pipe, only took place eighteen months later with a 'Deed of Servitude' signed on 21 January 1915.¹¹⁶ This allowed time for detailed surveys, and presumably an understanding that transfer would only take place when the approach to the new station was almost complete, which was further impacted by the year's delay in completing the bridge.

Expropriation of Land for the Railroad

In contrast to the usual prejudice against expropriation, the farmers along the rail route were highly gratified. The railway seldom encroached on valuable river-land; the farmers certainly had excess unproductive and otherwise unmonetizable land to spare; the railway brought transport for their own produce, and connection (rail and telegraph) to the broader world to diminish their isolation. These benefits were multiplied for the farmers like the Nieuwoudts who hosted sidings and terminals.

But, the Progress Report of 19 March 1913 reveals that expropriation surveys had yet to be started, and recommended they begin "as soon as possible, so that all matters in connection with the acquisition of the land may be settled by the time the line is completed."¹¹⁷ In fact, the survey of the final section crossing the farm Birdfield was only completed on 22 December 1914, and the final contract between the Government of the Union of South Africa and the three Nieuwoudt brothers for expropriation of the thirty-morgen strip of land for the railway in return for £1 per morgen, was only registered on 15 January 1916,¹¹⁸ long after the station had opened. Clearly, the railway had to be laid down first - with flexibility to balance straightness of the track against the idiosyncrasies of the terrain – before surveyors could, post hoc, fix its legal position.

When the "List of Farms passed through by Railway" was drawn up by Engineer-in-Charge, John Gillespie, it revealed the predominance of ownership by various members of the Nieuwoudt family for the last section:¹¹⁹

- Heerenlogement ("SchurfKop"): G. A. P. Nieuwoudt
- Melkboom ("Schurf Kop"): G. A. P. Nieuwoudt (sic)
- Melkboom ("Wolvelasgte"): A. T. Nieuwoudt
- Melkboom ("Driefontein"): J. A. & G. R. Nieuwoudt
- Melkboom "Krantz": M. Coetzee

The last to be added to the list by then-Acting Engineer-in-Charge, W. Patrick, as the track reached its destination were:

- Birdfield Lot A: M. Koetzee and A. P. van Zijl
- Birdfield Remainder: G., J. J., and L. E. Nieuwoudt [the three brothers Nieuwoudt].¹²⁰

Opening Klaver Station

After four and a half years from authorization, and nearly two years from even reaching the south bank, on 5 November 1915, the Engineer-in-Chief finally signed the official certification "that the

¹¹⁶ See later Deed of Servitude of 21 January 1915 (registered 16 Sept. 1915) attached to Deed 7392 of 1898.

¹¹⁷ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref:EC48/32; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Stations and Sidings. 1911-1916) [PR17Img70]

¹¹⁸ See Deed B468 of 1916

¹¹⁹ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/41; Part 1; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Opening of Line. 1913-1915) [PR17Img77]

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* [PR17Img92]

line from Birdfield (29 ½ miles) to Klaver (31 miles) on the Graafwater-Olifants River Line, is in a fit condition for trains to run . . . and may be formally opened for all classes of traffic on 15th November 1915."¹²¹

On 8 November 1915 it was decreed that "Birdfield [would] be closed as a station and will become a siding with no one on duty"¹²²

On 12 November 1915, the official printed announcement was released:

"Graafwater-Olifants River Line - Opening of Final Section to Klaver. The final section of line from Birdfield to Klaver will be opened for the conveyance of all classes of traffic on Monday, 15th November, 1915.

-Train service:

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, departing Cape Town 8.25am, arriving Klaver 12.32am

Returning Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturday, departing 2am, arriving Cape Town 5.35pm

-Facilities at Klaver:

Third class station buildings; good shed; goods loop of 678 feet clear; main loop 1000 feet clear; dead-end 300 feet clear; lamp room; triangle; cattle kraal."¹²³

15 November 1915 was indeed a red-letter day as the first official train steamed in, and a celebration was held at the Klaver Station Hotel of Philip Press.



Illustration
VIII:

Celebration at
Klaver Station
Hotel

(Private Collection;
circa 1915-20)

¹²¹ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:928; Ref: EC48/41; Part 2; Descript: Graafwater-Olifants River Line. Opening of Line. 1915-1921) [PR17Img94]

¹²² (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol:1129; Ref: RG165/13; Part 1; Descript: Eendekuil-Olifants River Line. 1909-1916)[PR17 Img15, 17]

¹²³ *Ibid.* [PR17Img17, 96]

THE NAMING OF A COMMUNITY: 'KLAVER'

It is clear from the previously cited records that no place or settlement, called 'Klaver' or anything else, existed before the opening of the general trading site in expectation of the railroad. And there was still no such place even after the naming of 'Klaver Station' and the arrival of the first train in 1915.

As confirmation, it is noted:

- An examination of the surveys of the farm Birdfield over the years (1821-1940s) reveals that all the changes are inscribed on an original 19th century document¹²⁴ dating back to 1821 with the original Dutch “Goede Zomers Wyland,” meaning “Good Summer Pasture” (as opposed to “Schraale Wyland” or “Poor Pasture” on the opposite bank), written in large letters right across (or rather, under) the future Klaver Station, with no indication of any intervening sub-division or characterization. (Illustration IX)

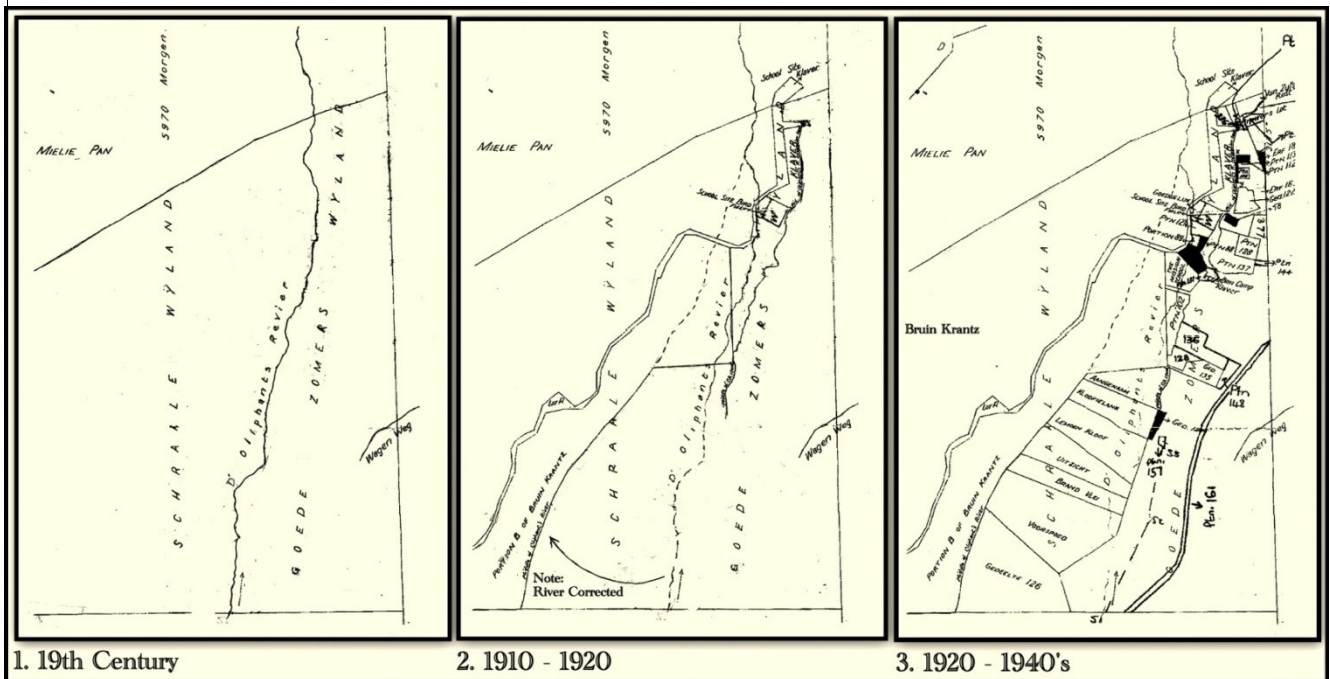


Illustration IX: Original 1821 Survey of Birdfield (SE corner detail only) with official 'over-writes' by survey office over time, illustrating the development of the railway and Klaver

-The Railway Expropriation Survey of 1914 gives no separate name to the eastern boundary of its terminus; it simply shows the "remainder" of an undifferentiated "farm Birdfield" on all sides.¹²⁵ The absence of a locality even informally called 'Klaver' is confirmed by the Railway's internal preliminary survey of 1910/11 (see Illustration VII) and all subsequent internal Railways correspondence (as discussed above).

¹²⁴ See Survey 291 of 1821

¹²⁵ See Survey 2546 of 1914

- When a prospective Birdfield School Site was surveyed south of the station in June 1919, it stands surrounded on all sides simply by the continuity of “remainder Birdfield.”¹²⁶ It was only one year later, after an entity called 'Klaver' indeed came into being, that its northern boundary would be defined as 'Klaver'. Similarly, as late as November 1920 in the survey of the farm Bruin Krantz,¹²⁷ the station and school (which would both ultimately border the entity Klaver that was being simultaneously surveyed) are disjointed properties surrounded by the veld of Birdfield.

In short, even after the station naming, and even after the station opening in 1915, there was still no town or agreed-upon name for even a potential town. It might well have occurred to the farmers Nieuwoudt, the trader Press, and the railway engineers in the early stages, that some settlement must eventually grow up around the station, with a potential increase in land values. But at that stage there was neither need nor vehicle for formalizing such a development.

This key event only came to fruition in 1920 when for the first time a specifically named and boundaried plot of land of 11.5 morgen (approximately 800 yards by 200 yards, or just over 24 acres in size) to be called ‘Klaver’¹²⁸ was declared by its three owners, Josias & Louis Nieuwoudt and Philip Press, and formalized by an official land survey of November 1920. The circumstances will be described later. Suffice it to say here that while 1915 has often been cited as the birth year of Klaver, this was really just the birth of the train station, and a far better case can be made for 1920.

Apart from this definition of boundaries, the adoption of the name 'Klaver' for the area adjacent to the station was itself a slow and organic one. The Railways Department was certainly inclined to use this shorthand early on, given that they had originated the name 'Klaver Station', and wished to avoid confusion with their other self-named siding of 'Birdfield' on the south bank. But the locals, including the administration in Vanrhynsdorp, who knew the area better and longer, continued to call it 'Birdfield' for another decade.

Notably, it wasn't until 1925 that the School Board in Vanrhynsdorp and the Education Department in Cape Town were willing to definitively acknowledge the name of the community as 'Klaver'. Accordingly, the correspondence between the Railways and Education Departments over the years can seem a battle of nomenclature: where a correspondence-thread would normally maintain a consistent subject heading to communicate the continuity of the conversation, in this instance the Railways would change the heading to 'Klaver Station', and the Education Board would change it back to 'Birdfield'. The Education Department correspondence is thus very useful in providing a timeline for the evolution of a consensual acceptance of the name 'Klaver' for the new community.

In 1915, as they proposed opening a new school for the area, the local School Board in Vanrhynsdorp still called even the station, ‘Birdfield Station’, and the school ‘Birdfield Station School’,¹²⁹ ignoring Railways’ choice for even their own station. In the course of 1916, the

¹²⁶ See Survey 2254/1919

¹²⁷ See Survey 60 of 1921

¹²⁸ Only in one late deed (See Deed 6887 of 1930) is this narrow strip 'Klaver' referred to as a ‘farm’. But this exception is almost certainly a careless error as in every other document it is simply a ‘place’ or ‘portion’. ‘Farm’ might also have been used in this instance because it was a relatively desolate sub-division of the larger farm of Birdfield.

¹²⁹ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Vol.212; Ref:SBB11/19A; Descript: Van Rhynsdorp Division. Klaver Primary School. 1915-1928) [CT16Img2264]

Education Board seemed to have conceded the station name, and was only referring to the school itself and the tiny immediate community around as 'Birdfield' (7 Mar 1916: Heading: "School Building at Birdfield"). By 1917, while still using 'Birdfield', there was a clear acknowledgement that the name 'Klaver' was gaining ground, and to avoid confusion, the awkward term "Birdfield (alias Klaver)" was sometimes included. That year saw a showdown between the Railways and Education Board as the latter was in the process of acquiring land for the new school directly in the path of any future line extension to Vanrhynsdorp; and the Railways eventually persuaded them to seek another site. The Department of Public Education, as well as the Building Department continually used the heading and name "Birdfield Public School"¹³⁰, and the Railways Department used "Undenominational School at Klaver" or "New school site at Klaver Station". But by the end of 1917, both departments had conceded a rather confusing compromise nomenclature of "Public School at Birdfield, Klaver". Even still, when the survey of the final site in 1919 erroneously described it as "School Site Klaver", it was considered important enough to scratch out and amend to "School Site Birdfield".¹³¹ However after 1921, with the final division of the Birdfield farm between Press and various Nieuwoudts, and the clear establishment for the first time of a portion called "Klaver" inscribed on a survey map, there seems to be an increasing acceptance by the Education Board. From 1921 to 1925, the names "Birdfield School (Klaver)"¹³² and the reverse "Klaver School (Birdfield)"¹³³ were used interchangeably, with even the simple shorthand of "Klaver School"¹³⁴ now and again. Only after 1925, did "Klaver Primary School" or "Klaver Public School" become definitive.

Further evidence for the common nomenclature of 'Birdfield' and the absence of an entity called 'Klaver' until after 1920 can be found in residents' own usage and court records.

For example, when Philip Press finally married at age 36 in 1914, he inscribed his specific address on the marriage certificate as nothing else but "Birdfield".¹³⁵ Certainly not 'Klaver', let alone 'Klaver Hotel'. In this regard, while 'Klaver Hotel' as an entity was surely "Founded in 1910" as claimed, it would not have had that name till much later. In the early years, the almost exclusive priority would have been the general trading store, which was probably colloquially known as "at Birdfield." The associated Liquor License had the governmental requirement of maintaining four boarding-rooms, and facilities probably grew into a 'hotel' only gradually as the line crept north, and demand for accommodation grew. Even the building itself was probably rebuilt and repositioned. The 1910-12 preliminary railway survey map does not label a hotel there, even though it does label Press' longer-established hotel at the Doring River Bridge (Illustration VII). However, the current position was clearly established by the end of 1912, before the station footprint and plans were determined: the off-axis positioning (rather than closer and parallel to the station) indicates that the hotel footprint had already been independently determined, even if the name came later.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* [CT16Img2256]

¹³¹ Survey 2254/1919 & 62/1921 of Deed 9940/1921

¹³² (NASA; Dep:KAB; Vol.212; Ref:SBB11/19A; Descript: Van Rhynsdorp Division. Klaver Primary School. 1915-1928) [CT16Img2208]

¹³³ *Ibid.* [CT16Img2205]

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* [CT16Img2225]

¹³⁵ Original Marriage license; Roland Street Synagogue, Cape Town; Marriage Register; 8 December 1914.

Similarly, in court-records of the time, the location of the participants is identified only by proximity to the railway station, which was the only officially named place nearby:

- In "Philip Press versus Union Meat Co." of October 1918, this key inhabitant is identified only as "Philip Press, General Dealer & Forwarding Agent of Klaver Rail in the District of Van Rhynsdorp"¹³⁶, and elsewhere as "Klaver Station, May 1918. Press, General Dealer, Butcher, Produce Merchant & Hotel Proprietor."¹³⁷

- Later, in "Press versus Motto" of January 1919, official documents list Philip Press' address as "Philip Press of Klaver Station, District Van Rhynsdorp,"¹³⁸ and state that "Philip Press is a general merchant residing and carrying on business at Klaver Station, Cape Province."¹³⁹

- In both cases, the body of the suit would sometimes use the shorthand of "Klaver" for the station (as in "The debt sued-for, was contracted at Klaver in the District of Van Rhynsdorp where the Plaintiff resides and carries on business."¹⁴⁰), indicating how the name for the locality might eventually enter common usage.

- Indeed, by November 1922, and the time of the case of "Philip Press versus The King", it is clear that Klaver is considered a bone fide address: "Philip Press of Klaver;"¹⁴¹ and "Philip Press, Hotel Keeper, Klaver."¹⁴²

While the key defining event that formalized a place called 'Klaver' had already occurred in 1920, it must be noted that Klaver was never officially declared a town until the 1950s. Throughout this earlier period the area was simply managed as an extension of the Vanrhynsdorp City Council. It was only awarded the status of 'Plaaslikebestuur' or 'Local Administration' in September 1954, and that of 'Dorpsbestuur' or 'Village Council' in 1957. The spelling was also then changed to the Afrikaans 'Klawer'.¹⁴³ The first members of the council included the later owners of the Klawer Hotel and store, Elias A. N. de Kock, and M. Gordon, indicating the primary place of these institutions in the burghership of the town.¹⁴⁴

In summary, the emergence of a town, and the acceptance of 'Klaver' as its name was an evolutionary process. But the most significant determination, to be now discussed, was made in the key survey of 1920.

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¹³⁶ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Source:CSC; Vol:2/1/1/838; Ref:263; Part:1; Descript: Illiquid case. Philip Press versus The Union Meat Company Ltd. Appeal against the decision of the Magistrate of Vanrhynsdorp. 1918-1918) [CT14Img1026]

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* [CT14Img1035]

¹³⁸ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Source:CSC; Vol:2/1/1/856; Ref:199; Descript: Illiquid Case. Debt. Philip Press versus Godfrey Barker and George Motto. 1919-1919) [CT14Img1058]

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* [CT14Img1065]

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* [CT14Img1039&1040]

¹⁴¹ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Source:CSC; Vol:2/1/1/981; Ref:28; Descript: Illiquid Case. Appeal, Vanrhynsdorp. Philip Press versus the King. 1923-1923) [CT14Img888]

¹⁴² *Ibid.* [CT14Img869]

¹⁴³ ("Jewish Life in the South African Country Communities; Vol.II: Boeland to West Coast"; South African Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth, 2004)

¹⁴⁴ (Du Plessis, H. V.: "Geskiedenis van Klawer 1915-1990"; Booklet issued for Klawer 75th Anniversary, 1990; 200 copies). Pg.54

THE LAND DEALS OF BIRDFIELD AND THE FIRST SURVEY FOR A TOWN

When the arrival of the first train at Klaver Station was celebrated in 1915 at the hotel of Philip Press, he had very close social and commercial relationships with the three Nieuwoudt brothers, but no greater rights of ownership than any supplicant tenant on a five year lease. However, within a few years he was equal owner, and a prime mover of a place called 'Klaver'.

Just seventeen years earlier, in 1898, the relevant central half of the great farm Birdfield had been inherited in equal undivided share by the Nieuwoudt brothers, Gerrit, Josias, and Louis. Then in 1917, the eldest Nieuwoudt brother, Gerrit, died, and on 31 January 1918, all of Gerrit's holdings passed to his only son Gert Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt,¹⁴⁵ including an undivided one-third share in Kleinfontein and its Windhoek adjuncts, and a one-third share of the Nieuwoudt holdings of Birdfield. Within the year, Gert, aged just 24, began selling off his entire patrimony. We may never know the reasons why: his huge known debts;¹⁴⁶ or a desire to escape farming; or perhaps differences with his two uncles? In any event, in his desire to liquidate, he turned for assistance to both his uncles and Philip Press.

Regarding his one-third share of the family's main farm of Kleinfontein-Windhoek, his two uncles agreed to buy him out, assuming large mortgages to do so.¹⁴⁷ Louis Egbertus assumed a quarter (or 1/12th share of the farm) and Josias Jacobus bought three-quarters (or 3/12th share of the farm). In September 1918, Press agreed to purchase Gert's share in the 769 morgen (1628 acre) 'Annex Windhoek A' for £131.¹⁴⁸ Then in December 1919, Philip agreed to purchase Gert's entire share in Birdfield for £1,800.¹⁴⁹ It is presumed that Gert also sold the only outstanding small share of Annex Windhoek B, thus removing his branch entirely from the story.

With his purchase of an undivided one-third share of central Birdfield, Press now had a significant ownership stake in his own trading site lease, and in the management of the huge farm in general. Even more consequential was the ability to shape the potential development of a nascent Klaver as this newly fluid situation precipitated the first study and definition of a future town. All the parts of this complex and far-reaching plan finally came to fruition on 19 October 1921 in a flurry of interlocking land-transfers and signed contracts.¹⁵⁰

Firstly, in a fateful repetition of the physical subdivision process of 1896, the central part of the farm Birdfield was broken up yet again (Illustration X):

- a) Louis Egbertus chose the northern strip known as the farm 'Mielie Pan'.
- b) Josias Jacobus received the south-east triangle on the eastern bank of the Olifants. Its northern tip would profit from the eastern sprawl of Klaver much later. Attached to the deed,

¹⁴⁵ See Deed 662 of 1918

¹⁴⁶ Gert had seven sisters to support. By 1919 he had taken out over £3,000 of mortgages (as per Deed 657 of 1919); and by 1920 this total had risen to £6,350 (See Stamps on Deed 662 of 1918)

¹⁴⁷ See Deed 9943 of 1921 and transfer notices on Deed 662 of 1918 referencing Deed 17388/9 of 1920 & 9943 of 1921

¹⁴⁸ See Deed 9208 of 16 September 1918. While part of Gert's inheritance, 'Annex Windhoek A' was actually sold to Philip Press on Gert's behalf by the interim executor of his father's estate prior to distribution.

¹⁴⁹ See Deed 657 executed 22 January 1920

¹⁵⁰ See Deeds 9939-9943 inter alia of 19 October 1921

is the separate contract that gave Philip Press all trading rights on the entire Birdfield property, thus protecting his future control over Klaver trade, wherever it might develop.¹⁵¹ This particular contract, quoted earlier, was for the five years, 1923 to 1927, with a five-year extension option at £35 per annum.

c) Philip Press received the huge central triangle known as the farm 'Bruin Krantz' in its entirety (both Bruin Krantz A west of the railway line, and Bruin Krantz B on the east side between the railway line and the Olifants, but also spilling over the Olifants at Klawer). Press' share, constituting about 3000 acres (5 square miles), was almost double that of the other two owners. This seems primarily due to an interlocking agreement to give up his share in Annex Windhoek A. The two remaining Nieuwoudts brothers were intent on reuniting the disparate segments of their ancestral farm of Kleinfontein-Windhoek under their full control. As part of the 1920-21 negotiations, Press therefore agreed to sell Josias Jacobus his new share of Windhoek for the price of £150,¹⁵² and for the identical symbolic price, Press received an increased share of Birdfield in the form of the larger Bruin Krantz farm.¹⁵³ Philip Press farmed Bruin Krantz for almost a quarter century thereafter, long after retiring from his other business enterprises.

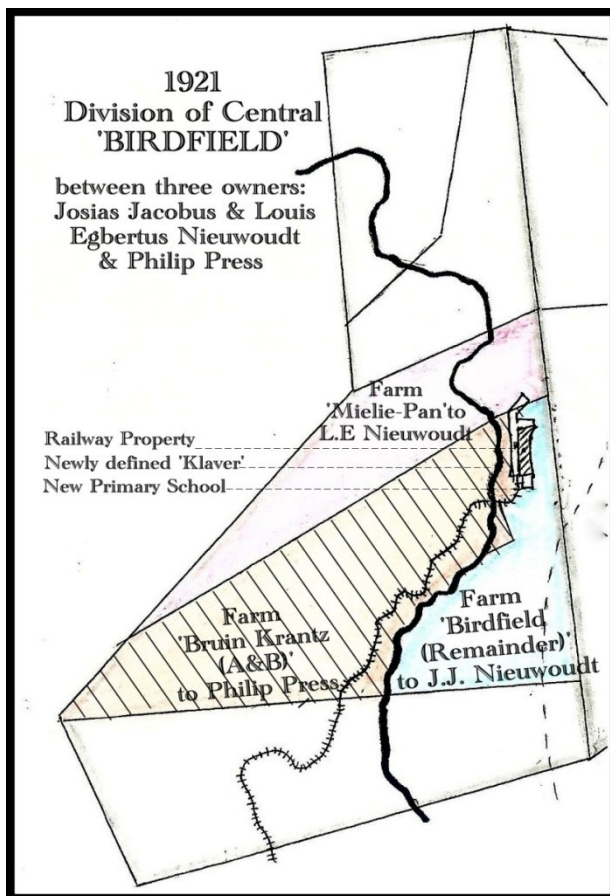


Illustration X:
Division of Central
BIRDFIELD in 1921

¹⁵¹ See attachment to Deed 9939 of 1921

¹⁵² See Deed 9942 of 19 October 1921 and matching amount in Deed 9939 of 19 October 1921

¹⁵³ See Deed 9939 of 1921



It was agreed that this portion only would continue to be undivided and shared, one third each by Josias and Louis Nieuwoudt and Philip Press, in the old tradition. (Illustration XI). Clearly, it was evident that a new town would develop, with plots being sold off to others; but the direction and value could not yet be determined and so a fair division could not yet be made. Press was already in control of the middle portion, specifically identified in the survey now as 'Trading Site Klaver', via his trading contract with the two other owners, so it should have been fairly clear how any division would roughly play out.

For the first time, the boundaries of an entity named 'Klaver' were laid down. The railway property ended around Klaver Station in a huge lopsided T-junction, thus providing both the western and northern boundaries. The new Olifants River Irrigation Scheme canal neatly provided the eastern boundary. As previously mentioned, even though the Olifants River Irrigation Scheme only began pumping water in 1920, the canal at Klaver was completed by 1915 (as evidenced by its appearance in the 'five springs' Deed of Servitude Survey of January 1915.) The convenience of these boundaries confirms that any place called 'Klaver' was consequent upon these two schemes. In the course of this study, this newly declared 'portion Klaver' may be referred to as original or 'old Klaver' – defined like medieval towns by clear geographic & man-made boundaries – to differentiate it from the later sprawl, and wider boundaries when officially declared an independent town Klawer in the 1950's.

By the time of the 1920 survey, the strip had already acquired some specific internal details. The middle third specifically leased to Philip Press was identified as 'Trading Site Klaver', with a single large building which would be the trading store and hotel at the confluence of three roads leading east to the main Clanwilliam-Vanrhynsdorp road, and north and south to the station and river. This trading site then divided Klaver into an upper third with the differentiating (perhaps later applied) name of 'Volmoed', with a single small building (perhaps for the stationmaster), and a lower uninhabited third.¹⁵⁴ All around was undifferentiated veld.

ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL IN KLAVER

The 1921 agreements that created Klaver included one other important feature – indeed, the first new physical feature of the nascent town, after Press' store-hotel-saloon-butchery and the railway station – namely, a centralized school for the children of the surrounding farms. As part of his share in the 1921 agreement, in addition to the farm Bruin Krantz, Philip Press also claimed a large square of property directly adjoining the jointly-held Klaver, in order to establish this school (identified in Illustration XI). Press brought a businessman's mindset to the establishment of a viable town. Having provided all the early functions and services himself, and then pushed for the delineation of an entity called 'Klaver' in the 1920 negotiations, he now had a vested interest in helping establish the institutions to support long-term settlement; which included an education for his children: his eldest son was six years old, with two other children close behind,

In March 1915, the Van Rhynsdorp School Board had already tried to get a 'portable school building' erected at the new station, but the Buildings Department had a shortage. In early March 1916, the School Board wrote to the Cape Town Education Office: "It has been recommended that a school should be erected at Birdfield as there are about 20 children living within a small radius and outside the three mile radius from the nearest school, so that they cannot be compelled to go to school. It will cost Three Hundred and Fifty Pounds to erect a school at Birdfield. The nearest school is not much over three miles from Birdfield."¹⁵⁵ This probably referred to an earlier farm

¹⁵⁴ Further sub-division into Lot A, B, and Vergelegen may have been part of the original intent, or they came later, being over-written on the original survey, as was normal for the times, and evidenced by later dates also over-written on the survey. A number of copies of the original 1920 Survey exist, but each with tellingly different over-writes from later dates. A pristine copy of the original may not exist.

¹⁵⁵ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Vol.212; Ref:SBB11/19A; Descript: Van Rhynsdorp Division. Klawer Primary School. 1915-1928) [CT16Img2262]

school informally established on the adjacent farm of Kleinfontein-Windhoek. A year later, in March 1917 the Government initiated the establishment of schools in a number of emerging communities in the Van Rhynsdorp District, namely Nieuwefontein, Elandsfontein, Koekenaap, and "Birdfield alias Klaver".

In the case of Klaver, or 'Birdfield' as the School Board still called it, a key step was the identification of a site and purchase of that land from the three Nieuwoudt brothers. The school-authorities first intended to purchase a strip of property at the northern end of the railway terminus, creating a north-east bend.¹⁵⁶ But the Railways then weighed in and pointed out that this would be directly in the way of any future extension of the line to Vanrhynsdorp, if that long-dreamed scheme ever materialized.¹⁵⁷ So the process had to begin again. Gerrit Nieuwoudt apparently vetoed the School Board's subsequent site-choice north-west of the station,¹⁵⁸ and the site last under consideration was just south of the station. But Gerrit's death in 1917 and complications with his estate put a halt to negotiations.

The project consequently languished for a couple of years until 1919 when the site just south of the station was finally surveyed, and Press offered to claim this parcel as part of the ongoing farm-division negotiations, and to donate it to the School Board. Transfer was made to Press in October 1921, and he immediately made a donation to the Government for the establishment of the school:¹⁵⁹ "12 December 1921: Philip Press . . . has donated . . . to the Educational Trustees for the Birdfield Undenominational Public School . . . certain pieces of redeemed quitrent land being "The School Site Birdfield" portion of the farm Birdfield . . . measuring 4 Morgen."¹⁶⁰

The school itself was officially transferred from its prior situation on the farm Windhoek on 1 May 1922.¹⁶¹

Philip Press' generous commitment to the School was almost upended by Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt who had hoped to profit himself by a sale of land to the school. When the school was transferred from the farm Windhoek, there were not yet funds approved for a permanent building on Press' donated site. The School Board therefore prevailed upon Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt to erect a temporary make-shift building, for what they had thought was his own donation "in the furtherance of Education,"¹⁶² and on what they had thought was his own adjacent Birdfield land. It turned out that not only did he charge them rent, but when it finally came time to build the permanent school, it was realized that Nieuwoudt had erected his building across the boundary line, actually on Press' donated plot and precisely where the new school building was planned to be. In defense, it was claimed that "Mr. Nieuwoudt had thought he had erected it on his own property and that when the Education Dept. erected a building, he would have his building [revert] for his own use."¹⁶³

¹⁵⁶ Surveyed February 1917: (NASA; Dep:KAB; Vol.212; Ref:SBB11/19A; Descript: Van Rhynsdorp Division. Klawer Primary School. 1915-1928) [CT16Img2258]

¹⁵⁷ This site continued to appear on the key Birdfield survey as "School Site Klaver", but was in fact defunct. Louis E. Nieuwoudt sold a small portion of the same site (Erf 106) to the Railways in 1928 (Surveyed 1926).

¹⁵⁸ See Sketch (*Ibid.*) [CT16Img2254]

¹⁵⁹ See Deed 1102 of 1922 to 'Educational Trustees for the School District of Van Rhynsdorp'

¹⁶⁰ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Vol.212; Ref:SBB11/19A; Descript: Van Rhynsdorp Division. Klawer Primary School. 1915-1928) [CT16Img2229]

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* [CT16Img2209]

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* [CT16Img2207]

Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt then threatened to sue for compensation, putting the application and fund-raising efforts for funds for the new school in jeopardy.

The Department of Education was furious. According to the School Board Secretary, L. Rood: "Mr. Nieuwoudt is an ignorant man,¹⁶⁴ and thought that if he erected the building on the school site that the Board will eventually take it over for a reasonable sum."¹⁶⁵ Which is precisely what happened. Press tried to resolve the issue peacefully. As reported: "Mr. Press is willing to give us an additional area if the portion on which the present building stands is transferred to Mr. J.J.Nieuwoudt."¹⁶⁶ However, the Education Department ultimately determined that after the donation, neither Press nor Nieuwoudt had any further right to any of the land - it had clearly belonged to Philip to donate as he pleased - but eventually paid Josias Jacobus for the cost of the building: "Mr. Nieuwoudt values the building at £120, but . . . has now agreed to accept £80 as compensation. The building will be utilized as a store room and a Principal's bedroom. The Principal at present lives in a small iron and wood shanty and as Klaver is practically the hottest place in the Union in summer, it is considered that it is essential that he should have better accommodation."¹⁶⁷

The school (by this time called the 'Klaver Primary School'), utilizing Nieuwoudt's old building and two other rented ones, soon became overcrowded. In 1925 the board was still raising the loan of £1,500 for the permanent school building (consisting of three classrooms holding 48, 40, and 32 students). In fact it was not completed until 1927. Two of the children of Philip Press attended the temporary school building, but he chose to relocate his children to Cape Town when his eldest neared high school age, just before the new permanent building was completed. The school survived until 1974 when it was consolidated with the later high school nearby.¹⁶⁸

THE END OF THE LINE

For sixteen years after approval and twelve years after the line opened, Klaver Station remained the end of the line. The approval in 1911 had fortuitously slipped into the brief expansionary period between the Union of 1910 and the negative effects of WWI. Even then, it was built on the cheap, and turned out to be unprofitable. But it immediately raised the question of whether the line would ever extend beyond Klaver, a decision that could dilute Klaver's growth and profitability.

There was never any plan or certainty. The Railways was quite comfortable with their terminus - aimed at serving the entire north bank of the Olifants River - even if protesting statesmen like Sir David de Villiers Graaff saw no hint of civilization there; aside from the store-hostel-saloon-butchery of Philip Press, this was true. Sir David was one of many pushing for a minimum extension to Vanrhynsdorp: "It is contended that at present the terminus of the line is in the veld,

¹⁶⁴ Secretary Rood's characterization of Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt's erratic behavior may have been harsh given that the latter was declared 'insane' in 1928, and his affairs placed in the curatorship of his brother.

¹⁶⁵ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Vol.212; Ref:SBB11/19A; Descript: Van Rhynsdorp Division. Klaver Primary School. 1915-1928); [CT16Img 2209]

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* [CT16Img2207]

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* [CT16Img2182-3]

¹⁶⁸ The school property is still mostly intact, as 'The Oasis Lodge'. The classrooms are now hotel accommodation; the sports-field is a summer caravan/camping ground.

[but] by extending it to VanRhijnsdorp the terminus would [at least] be in a civilized village instead.”¹⁶⁹ But this was never to be.

The primary agitation for extensions came from two directions: north-east to Calvinia; and north-west to Koekenaap and up into Namaqualand.

Calvinia, as the oldest Northern Cape town (and the only significant one prior to Nieuwoudtville) had political relevance. Representatives had been agitating for their own Cape Town connection, via Ceres, since 1906. The Klaver route opened up a competing possibility. The resulting “Battle of the Routes,”¹⁷⁰ as the Cape papers dubbed it, paralyzed any decision. The difficulty of the terrain (Calvinia stands 3000 feet on the escarpment above Klaver), the lack of a clear cut, agriculturally-profitable route (as with Vanrhynsdorp, linking towns was never the objective), and the competing route-arguments, would ultimately doom the enterprise. A cheap compensatory branch line eastwards in the wrong direction to link up with the existing Hutchinson-to-Cape-Town line was added in 1918, but as this doubled the distance, the agitation continued. Only in the 1970s was an unrelated east-west line added to carry mining ore from Sishen in the Northern Cape to Saldanha Bay, crossing the Klaver line near Vredendal.

The alternative contender was more successful. Numerous farmer-petitions, political-representative appeals, and the Railways’ own commissioned reports, made the point that the Olifants River alluvial plain was inherently bountiful, and furthermore, that the full value of the new Irrigation Scheme might only be full gleaned by extended transportation.¹⁷¹ A short extension as far as Koekenaap could be thus rationalized, even though countered by the reasonably good road transportation to Klaver. The more contentious argument was for continuing north into Namaqualand. Certainly the arguments for transporting copper ore, traditionally sent to Port Nolloth, fell away as the copper mines all closed due to unprofitability after WWI. Agriculturally, exaggerated claims that “the possibilities of wheat growing in Namaqualand are so great that nearly the whole Union can be supplied from that vast area”¹⁷² were dismissed as “ludicrous” by others.¹⁷³

But putting aside the paralyzing effects of competing appeals, and exaggerated claims of economic gain, the stasis was ultimately financial and political. The demands of WWI put a hold on expansion, and the consequent worldwide recession, with produce prices plummeting through the 1920’s, put a strain on the central government. Prime Minister Jan Smuts specifically appointed the Hon. John William Jagger, already well known for his brusque and uncompromising personality, as

¹⁶⁹ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:MVE; Vol:419; Ref:16/54; Part 1; Descript: Line from Klaver-Calvinia. 1912-1938.) Sir David de Villiers Graaff (Minister of Public Works and Posts, later Minister of Finance) to Hon. H. Burton, Minister of Railways & Harbours, 19 February 1914 [Pr18Img46]

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* [Pr18Img75]

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* "Notes of Tour of Railway Commissioners in the Ceres, Calvinia, Van Rhynsdorp, Clanwilliam, Worcester, Villiersdorp and Hermanus Districts: October 1923: . . . With regard to the area served by the Olifants River Irrigation Scheme, Vredendal Koekenaap, etc., the Commissioners are firmly of the opinion that without railway facilities the irrigation scheme must be a hopeless failure and that railway facilities should therefore be provided between Klaver and Koekenaap. . . . The people in this locality are still in a very backward state despite the fact that Koekenaap has been in existence for 100 years." [Pr18Img67/69]

¹⁷² (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:MVE; Vol:419; Ref:16/53; Part 1; Descript: Proposed Line between Klaver and O’Kiep via Koekenaap or Van Rhynsdorp. 1913-1927) H. S. du Toit, Government Dry-Land Agronomist Report to Sir William Hoy, General Manager SA Railways; 1916 [Pr18Img03-06]

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* Acting Resident Engineer Report 29th December 1919 [Pr18Img13]

Minister of Railways and Harbours for 1921-1924, to bring the Railways finances (already five years in deficit, in spite of four recent price increases) into order.

Jagger particularly locked horns with J. P. Mostert, the Nationalist Member of the Legislative Assembly (M. L. A.) for Namaqualand which included Klaver. Mostert barraged Jagger with petitions, meetings, and even accusations of corruption on the floor of Parliament. The conflict, rationales, and personalities are illustrated by the following meeting's minutes:

"A deputation . . . by Mr. J.P. Mostert, M.L.A. visited the Minister and Railway Board at Cape Town on 12 April, 1921 . . . urging the construction of a line from Klaver via Koekenaap to Namaqualand. . . . Mr. Mostert referred to the great productivity of the district and the large amount of corn produced in Namaqualand, and that if they only had a railway they could produce ever so much more. . . . Money, he understood, was scarce but he thought that when it was found that a line would pay. . . . Mr. Jagger pointed out that the Kraafontein-Klaver [line, as a whole] did not pay, the expenses of this line for June, 1920 being £9,665 and the total receipts only £8,930, and he felt sure that the line advocated would not pay. He had never known a branch line to pay. What the Board had to consider was which lines would develop the best interests of the country and the largest area. . . . I know the Government has put a lot of money into the irrigation scheme, but my argument is that it is not completed. . . . There are other . . . far more productive districts [with] requirements more pressing than yours." Indeed, Jagger didn't hesitate to invoke the competition as an excuse for the paralysis, pointing out "that a [competing] deputation was urging a line from Klaver via Van Rhynsdorp to Calvinia and the Board would have to come to a decision."¹⁷⁴

Ultimately the deadlock was broken by an electoral upset. Jagger's alienation of the Railway Workers Union, and their working-class supporters (resulting in strikes across the country) contributed significantly to the defeat of Smuts' South African Party and the ascendancy of the Nationalists (under J. B. M. Herzog, still in coalitions with the Labor Party) in 1924.¹⁷⁵ The new Nationalist Minister of Railways and Harbours, Charles Wynand Malan, apparently learning his predecessor's lesson and setting out to immediately reward his party's supporters, approved Mostert's requests and instigated parliamentary approval in 1925 for a short 80 mile compromise line extension from Klaver.¹⁷⁶ Once again, but this time with less logical rationale (apparently, the place "was chosen because of the likelihood of obtaining water there by boring."¹⁷⁷), the line would

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* [Pr18Img35-37]

¹⁷⁵ (Bisset, James; "John William Jagger and the South african Railways 1921-1924"; Thesis, University of Cape Town, September 1973)

¹⁷⁶ The claim by some historians that the extension was approved in order to "provide work for poor whites" misses the point. The decision did indeed have politically-calculated dimensions, but it aimed to appeal to a larger constituency and was soundly based on long-percolating agriculture-based appeals. Providing employment for "poor whites" had always affected any Railways decisions, as illustrated even on the original Klaver line by the following communication of 1911: "The Minister of Railways is particularly anxious that an early start should be made with the construction of the Extension of the Line beyond Graafwater [to future-Klaver] in order to give employment to the poor Whites in that District. It consequently follows that it will be necessary to carry out the work on the Butty Gang System [Irish term for an inefficient traditional system in which voluntary gangs under a tough recruiter/overseer bid and competed for specific tasks or segments]." From Construction Engineer, Graafwater-Olifant's River Extension to Acting Engineer-in-Charge, Eendekuil; 19th July 1911. (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:SAS; Vol: 927; Ref: Unindexed; Descript: Graafwater/Vogelsfontein-Olifants River Line. Surveys: General. 1910-1916) [Pr18Img141]

¹⁷⁷ (Burman, Jose: "To the end of the line: the copper line"; Journal: S.A.Rail, March/April 1981: 9-10; Ross Collectn)

end “in the veld” at a terminus to be called Bitterfontein Station, not even half way to the previously hoped-for destination of the settlement at Garies. A midway station at Landplaas was reached on 8 December 1926, with the full Klaver-Bitterfontein extension finally operational on 27 April 1927.¹⁷⁸

Klaver’s lock on all northern trade would be consequently diluted. Yet Klaver continued to thrive, thus illustrating the criteria for a town’s survival and for transcending its genesis story. Where other settlements on the line, such as Graafwater and Bitterfontein, ultimately stagnated, Klaver had inherent advantages that ensured its viability and growth.¹⁷⁹ These included the twelve year head start as the terminal station that habituated trading patterns, in combination with the significant improvement to approach roads during that exclusive period. There was also the more substantial railway siding and kraal with its riverside watering access not available to the other stations further removed from the Olifants River. But perhaps most significant was the increasing productivity of the surrounding farmland, the result of the river’s proximity plus the new Irrigation Scheme canal system, that allowed accelerating subdivisions of smaller but viable farms, thus increasing the populations recognizing Klaver as their connective hub. In fact, as will now be discussed, Klaver only really began to grow significantly after the decision to extend the line.

THE GROWTH OF KLAVER

From 1915 to 1927, Klaver was the terminus for all goods to be transported down to the Cape from points north and east. It was also, for a time, the only transit point for the farmers immediately south/west across the Olifants River after the closure of the Birdfield terminus in 1915.

In the absence of an easy road bridge, however, the south bank farms were disadvantaged, and there was substantial pressure to reopen Birdfield Siding. As the Provincial Secretary wrote the Railways: "I am directed to inform you that a petition was submitted to the Provincial Council . . . by residents of the Division of Van Rhynsdorp, praying for the erection of a bridge in the neighborhood of Vredendal. It is urged that a bridge is necessary to provide facilities for the transport of agricultural products (principally citrus and dried fruit) to the Klaver railway station which lies on the other side of the river."¹⁸⁰ But rather than build a bridge, it was agreed seven years later to re-open the “Birdfield Spur”¹⁸¹ siding, as of 1 February 1923 "for passenger luggage, parcels and assignment goods (except explosives) which can be easily handled by the guard of train . . . with the new stop to be integrated into future train schedules."

In spite of all the increased activity, the Klaver site actually experienced very little physical growth in the seventeen years between 1910, when Philip Press established the trading site, and the final extension to Bitterfontein. The site continued to be dominated entirely by the Railways personnel,

¹⁷⁸ (World Heritage Encyclopedia: South African Locomotive History)

¹⁷⁹ Except for Vredendal (Population: 3895 in orig. boundary, but 18,170 after amalgamation with Die Bult and declared municipal admin center), Klaver (pop.6234) is the largest town on the Eendekuil-Bitterfontein line, matching its mother-town of Vanrhynsdorp (pop: 6272), and even the older town of Clanwilliam (pop: 7674, but half the density). See Census 2011 Community Profile Database.

¹⁸⁰ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Vol:1/1/46; Ref:W120/7/10; Descript: Klaver Approach Road [not indexed])

[CT16Img2277]

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* [CT16Img2276]

and by Press' hotel and store which accommodated the salesmen and farmers attending the depot to ship and receive, and supplied the farming community around.

For the first decade of Klaver's existence there were few land sales - division and sale of lots would only take off after 1925 - and very little construction. According to one eyewitness, "apart from the gangers' cottages where railway workers lived, the only other dwelling - apart from the Klaver Hotel . . . was the house in which Frikkie Rederman (sic) lived; he worked as a salesman in the Klaver store."¹⁸² So besides the two institutions of Railways and hotel, the one-room school house erected in 1921, and a couple of privately owned houses, there was just veld all around.

The railway infrastructure itself was fairly simple: besides the small station shed of wood and tin, there were the stationmaster's quarters, and the dormitory-like foreman's quarters, with just a few rooms each. There were also a few small, numbered 'cottages', originally set up to accommodate the engineers during the railway's construction, and now used to house railway clerks and workers.

The hotel was also very limited. Besides the Press family of, ultimately, seven, the hotel had to permanently accommodate two of Press' store employees, Louis Levitt who ran the store and Mike Kammener, the store bookkeeper. There were apparently only ten rooms, so the hotel could soon no longer accommodate all visiting traders, let alone any longer-term resident workers.



Illustration XII:

The first family in Klaver:
Philip Press with wife & newborn son (b. 1915)
outside the Klaver
Station Hotel soon after
the first train rolled in

This lack of infrastructural growth eventually became a serious problem. Philip Press' family, after his marriage in 1914, was the only one in the community for some time - there were eventually two married railway workers (the clerk, Retief, and motor-driver, Liel) and a few other private families by 1926 - but the number of single men serving the railway and associated services soon multiplied.

¹⁸² Press, Basil; unpublished memories of Klaver, 1980.

Besides the permanent station personnel and the temporary engineers and workers on the Bitterfontein extension, the Railways substantially increased their work force when they decided in 1926 to put in place a network of scheduled motorized vehicles to bring goods down to Klaver, from as far afield as Calvinia. The 'Klaver-Calvinia Road Motor Service' alone employed five motor drivers and five assistants to be accommodated in Klaver.



Illustration XIII:

A 'Thornycroft Dual' in the 1920s heading to the train station, part of South African Railways' goods-lorry network.

Given the housing shortage, tensions rose. In 1925 the records show stationmaster Brewer under investigation for abuse towards the postmaster, Mr. Biebuyck, when trying to wrestle back some departmental housing for his own staff. Mr. Biebuyck had been renting four rooms in one of the old engineers' houses owned by the Railways, on a one-month notice lease. But when Brewer, requiring more accommodation for his own increasing staff, tried to give notice for one of the rooms, Biebuyck refused to vacate.

An insight into the town politics and community leadership emerges from records showing Philip Press, "Farmer & Hotel Proprietor at Klaver", and the local political representative, J. P. Mostert, "M.L.A. for Namaqualand," being asked to adjudicate, and jointly submitting "representations to the administration with a view to Mr. Biebuyck being permitted to retain occupancy of the room in question."¹⁸³ In spite of their efforts, matters became ludicrously ugly: The stationmaster objected to the postmaster talking to him "like a bloody child," and in retaliation, called the postmaster "a bloody old crock, threatened to throw him out of the room; without authority, gave him notice to quit the whole house, and told Clerk Von Wustenhoff to strike him."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ (NASA; Dep:KAB; Vol.1/1/46; Ref.W120/7/11; Descript: Klaver. Housing Accommodation 1925-1929) [CT16Img.2284]

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* [CT16Img.2285]

Eventually the railways prevailed, but the housing situation only got worse. As internal railway memos of 1927 reveal: "In consequence of recent development at Klaver there has been a phenomenal increase in the staff employed at this depot. . . . The position is most difficult from a staff point of view, no quarters are available and the local condition of residence are far from congenial. The type of man now employed on the service is not to the desired standard but owing to the non-availability of quarters it is difficult to improve the position; the Construction Engineer's houses have all been taken over for the running staff . . . The Station Master had previously complained, too, that there were insufficient quarters available for his staff. . . .The Works clerk states no funds are available for housing."¹⁸⁵

There was even a desperate petition drawn up and signed by twenty-three railway personnel stating: "We the undersigned desire to draw the attention of the Department to the fact that the question of accommodation here is very acute. The Hotel [where two of the signatories were boarded] cannot provide rooms and we therefore request the Department to meet us in this direction and consider the matter as urgent."¹⁸⁶

Clearly, Klaver was outgrowing its existing land-ownership structure. After 1925, with the influx of additional labor for the rail extension to Bitterfontein, expansion of the goods-lorry network, and concrete lining of all the irrigation canals, there was an escalation of sub-division and land sales by the three co-owners, the two Nieuwoudt brothers and Press, and their successors. This inevitably required a resolution of the ungainly joint ownership of Klaver, which in turn would give the town its current form.

THE PARTITION OF KLAVER

Ultimately, most of Klaver came to be owned by Philip Press and his successor, his much younger cousin Louis Levitt. Louis Levitt (1887-1943) was the grandson of Mire Levitt nee Bruk, sister of Philip's mother Chana. He had immigrated to South Africa from the Lithuanian province of Tsarist Russia in July 1913, and immediately went to work for Press in his trading store.¹⁸⁷

In 1926, Philip Press decided to retire from the hotel and store, while continuing to farm Bruin Krantz. On 9 August 1926, he sold his one-third share of Klaver for £1000 to his cousin Louis, in equal partnership with another employee, namely the clerk Frederick Martinus Riedemann.¹⁸⁸ At the same time he sold the business itself, the hotel and store, to these two employees in a private contract for an unknown additional amount.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* The signers' occupations are revealing: Clerk (4), Foreman (1), Checker (1), Motor Assistant (4), Master (1), Motor Driver (4), Strapper (2), Guard (1), Fireman (2), Locomotive Driver (1), Cleaner (2). Their accommodations at the time are also revealing: Klaver Hotel (2), Station Master's Quarters (2), Foreman's Quarters (6), construction huts (4), room rentals in five private residences (9).

¹⁸⁷ The Du Plessis history's crediting of Louis with providing horse-led grocery carts to revictual the builders of the irrigation canal is anachronistic: he was newly arrived when the furrows around 'Klaver' were being dug in the 1914-15 period, and still in the employ of Philip Press. His contribution came later.

¹⁸⁸ See Deed 7724 of 9 August 1926 (also referenced in 6887 of 1930 & overwrites on 9940 of 1921)

Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt also began selling off portions of his share surrounding Klaver. He had already divided out medium-sized sub-farms further south, besides the Olifants River, soon after the Birdfield division of 1921: the newly created farms of Kloofielank, LemoenKloof, Uitzicht, Brandvlei, and Voorspoed were sold off in 1922, and Gedeelte, Aangenaam and others sold later on. The viability of these smaller farms was to a large extent the legacy of the Olifants River Irrigation Scheme. He now sold off the small strip immediately north of original Klaver, squeezed between the station and Mielie Pan, as 'Van Zyl Rust' to G. J. VanZyl in 1926 and 'Brewer's Lot' to the stationmaster, J. J. Brewer, in 1927. Some potentially urban land directly south of Klaver was also sub-divided and sold including the Irrigation Camp to the Government in 1926 (the Irrigation Scheme was still expanding and lining the canal system), and the Mission School to the Dutch Reform Church in 1927. (Illustration XIV)

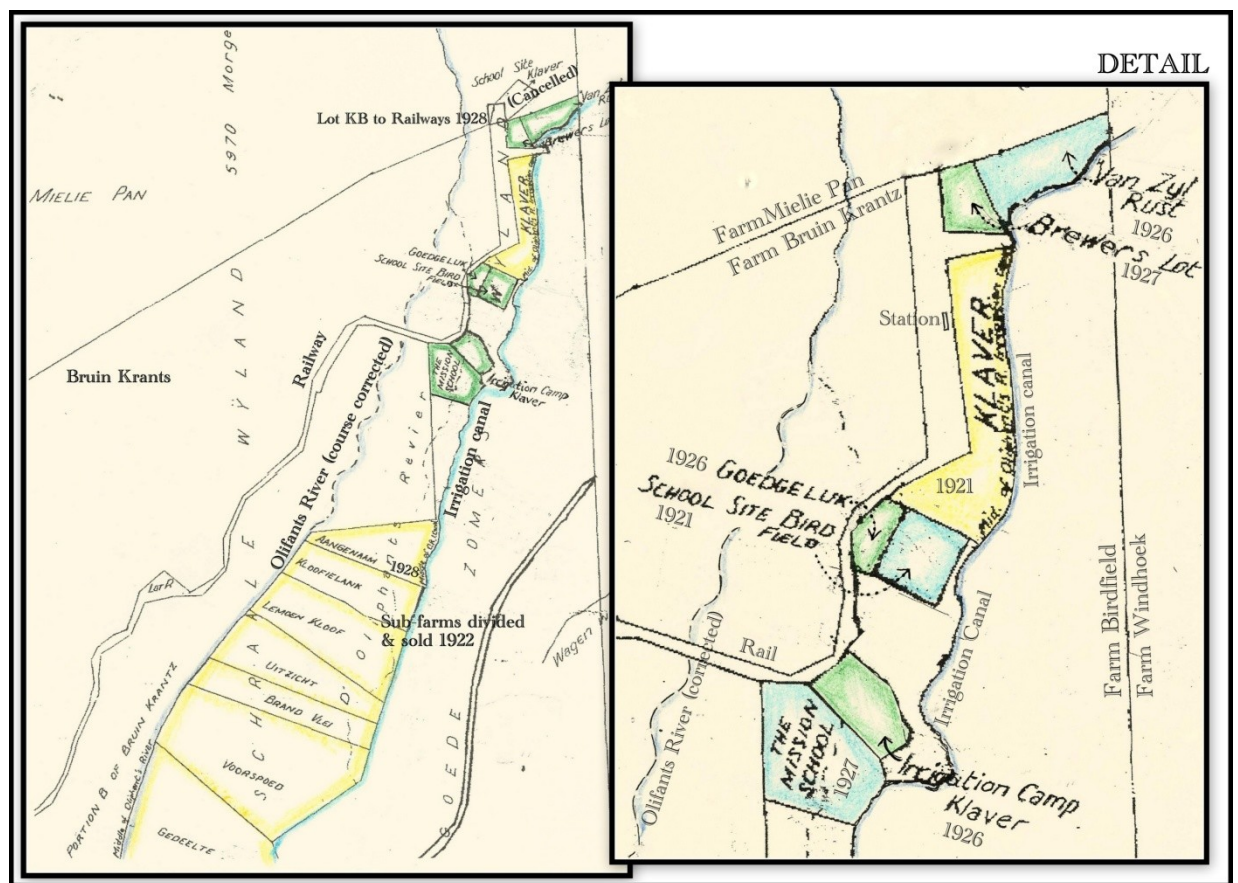
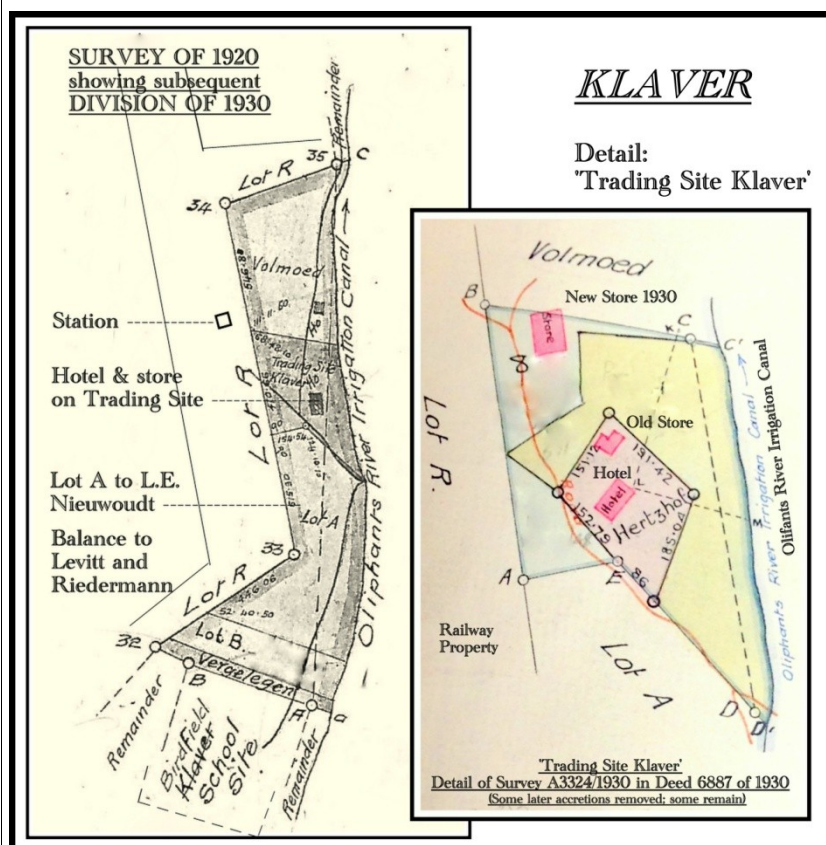


Illustration XIV: Development around Klaver 1915-1930. The larger Birdfield Survey shows the division and sales of sub-farms further south. The Detail shows Klaver environs. The railway line, irrigation canal, and Olifants River conveniently provided the eastern and western boundaries for all the development. Handwritten notations are all as per original survey of 1821 and subsequent official additions.

The Nieuwoudt brothers were apparently becoming increasingly reliant on financial and real-estate transactions. A detailed commissioners report on the economic potential of the area, commissioned by Railways in 1925 to try to determine line extensions, particularly singled out the Nieuwoudt

The last momentous chapter in the birth of Klawer centered on 1930 when Levitt and his partner, by then owning two-thirds, and the Nieuwoudt family owning one-third decided to finally and physically divide up old Klaver, and each go their own way in selling off and developing plots within the town itself. (Illustration XV).

[illegible]

¹⁹⁰ (NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:MVE; Vol:419; Ref:16/54; Part 1; Descript: Line from Klaver-Calvinia. 1912-1938.) [Pr18Img67]

Two years earlier, in 1928, Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt had been declared insane, and his brother Louis Egbertus appointed the “kurator” of his estate. On 12 February 1930, Levitt bought out Josias Jacobus' one-third share of the partnership for £350, thus owning a two-thirds share of undivided Klaver.¹⁹¹ Consequently, in the physical division of 16 August 1930, Louis Egbertus Nieuwoudt, with one-third share took title to only the south-central section known as ‘Lot A’, while Levitt & Riedemann in partnership took over the rest: the northern third now nicknamed ‘Volmoed’; the full ‘Trading Site’ right below it with its hotel and separate store on the sub-plot now called ‘Hertzhof’; and the southern segment that abutted the new School, already differentiated as ‘Lot B’ and ‘Vergelegen’.¹⁹² Levitt & Riedemann apparently built a new store on the corner of the Trading Site property (later called ‘Gordon's Store’ after a subsequent owner) and moved the business from Press’ old corrugated iron store.¹⁹³

Over the following years, Klaver was sub-divided into ever smaller plots as the town prospered.

Levitt & Riedemann began selling off property immediately:

- In 1931, they sold three-quarters of Volmoed to the Railway.¹⁹⁴

- A year later, in 1932, Louis Levitt transferred his family to Cape Town,¹⁹⁵ and consequently, he and Riedemann sold the core business of the hotel and surrounding property of ‘Hertzhof’ on 15 October 1932, while retaining the store and remaining land. The sale of the hotel and property of three-quarters of an acre for £1,250 was to Barney Woolf Hoffman, a lawyer in Vanrhynsdorp who had generally acted as legal conveyer on the various Birdfield transactions in the past. He himself later moved to Cape Town and was co-founder of the prestigious law firm of Sonnenberg, Hoffman & Galombik. The sale deed required the hotel to continue to provide water to the Levitt & Riedemann store, and specifically prohibited Hoffman or any future owner from establishing a store on the property, in possible competition with the Levitt & Riedemann store. In fact, it stipulated that the only business ever permitted on the property would be a “Hotel or Boarding House keeper.”¹⁹⁶ This was later forgotten and routinely ignored as the property was increasingly sub-divided and became the commercial center of Klaver. However the restriction led to a legal firestorm almost a century later when it was re-discovered and seemingly prevented a 21st century supermarket from opening on part of the site; it apparently took supra-legal maneuvers to undo the prohibition. Hoffman appears to have been speculating on the property in 1932 or simply acting as a conduit - being a lawyer he presumably had little interest in the hostelry business - as he immediately sold it to J. W. Dembitzer who ran the hotel for the next decade.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹¹ See Deed 1089 of 12 February 1930. The deed references Louis Egbertus Nieuwoudt as “kurator” of the “kranksinnige” (insane) Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt.

¹⁹² See Deed 6887 of 14 August 1930 (also Deeds 6882-6886 of 1930 for unexamined details)

¹⁹³ See H. V. du Plessis. It must be noted that Du Plessis, evidently utilizing surveys but not deeds, misunderstood the pre-existing joint-ownerships, and mischaracterized each division of old Klaver as a purchase from the Nieuwoudt family. In particular, he was in error in claiming that Levitt moved Press’ store to a new site called ‘Volmoed’ “newly purchased from Nieuwoudt”, and hence mischaracterized the genesis of the later ‘Gordon’s Store’. This store site was always part of the original ‘Trading Site’. It did famously end up with a corner slightly across the boundary, onto the public road (as evident in Illustration XV.)

¹⁹⁴ See Deed 3461 of 19 May 1931

¹⁹⁵ Following a family tragedy, and the adoption of a relative's child

¹⁹⁶ See Deed 6304 of 1932.

¹⁹⁷ See Deed 6305 of 1932. According to H. V. Du Plessis, Dembitzer added a new ‘lang gang’ wing with new bedrooms & toilet facilities, before selling to Rom & Katz from Nieuwoudtville in 1942.

The Nieuwoudts also proceeded to divide up their shares of Klaver and Birdfield:

- Louis Egbertus Nieuwoudt sold off sections of Portion A, his one third share of Klaver, over the years, while holding on to his abutting farm of Mielie Pan. Beginning in 1926, portions of the farm were sold to the Railways for expansion of the Klaver siding and rail extension to Bitterfontein.
- Following the declaration of insanity of Josias Jacobus in 1928 and his subsequent curatorship by brother Louis Egbertus, his estate finally in 1931 came under the control of four of Josias Jacobus' sons: Josias Jacobus (b. 1895), Gerhardus 'Appel' Hendrik Izak (b. 1897), Hermanius 'Maans' Jacobus (b. 1903),¹⁹⁸ and Louis Egbertus (b. 1910).¹⁹⁹ They continued the sub-division of their property around Klaver through the 20th century.

THE OLD GUARD MOVES ON

After relocating his family to Cape Town in 1932, Louis Levitt continued to travel the countryside, managing the Klaver business, and trading in land and commodities in the Klaver-Nieuwoudtville area.

Frederick Riedemann died in 1937, and his share of the store and remaining Klaver property was transferred to Louis Levitt on 1 January 1938.²⁰⁰

Levitt immediately sold the store and property, including the balance of Trading Site Klaver around the store, and Lot B at the south end of Klaver, on 31 January 1938 to his bookkeeper Michael Kammener and clerk Elias de Kock in partnership.²⁰¹ According to his son Abel: "Louis did not seem the type to stay in a shop and weigh the rice and flour into little brown paper bags. He was more of a 'people's person', travelling into Namaqualand and buying sheep and cattle, hides and skins from the farmers."²⁰² He died of a heart attack while in Cape Town on 1 January 1943.

After selling the hotel and Klaver properties to his cousin and employee Louis Levitt, Philip Press moved his family to Cape Town, but retained his farm and continued to spend much of his time up north farming Bruin Krantz and enjoying his status as elder-citizen of Klaver. Once he took up the challenge, Press became an avid farmer, advertising and promoting Klaver produce at venues such as the annual Rosebank Agricultural Show, where he won awards for his "famous Klaver oranges" and lucerne.²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ It was his wife, Catherina Christina Nieuwoudt who ran the 'Colored School' and is believed to have worked with Philip Press on the School Board.

¹⁹⁹ H. V. du Plessis ascribed the growth of Klaver to 'Maans' and 'Appel' Nieuwoudt, and specifically "around the train-station"; but in fact they owned almost none of this land: that branch's share around the station had been sold to (already) co-owner Levitt in 1930, and the small strip north of the siding had already been sold in 1926/1927. In consequence, their contribution to land sales was in the later eastern expansion of Klaver, east of the canal.

²⁰⁰ See Deed 760-761 of 1938 (Transfers stamped on Deed 6887 of 1931)

²⁰¹ See reference to this sale of 31 January 1938 in subsequent Deed 10936 of 4 October 1939 which transferred Lot B from Kammener & de Kock to P. G. Theron for £30. Also see H. V. du Plessis.

²⁰² Levitt, Abel; Interviewer: Donald Press

²⁰³ Award Ribbons in possession of estate of son Basil Press.

In 1927, Press sold a small parcel of 40 morgen (85 acres) for £300 to the Railways,²⁰⁴ this being a narrow strip beside the railway track just south of the bridge-crossing. The railway was apparently having difficulty with sand on the tracks and wished for greater control.²⁰⁵ In 1932 he sold another 5.1 morgen (11 acres) to the Railways for them to expand their siding between the railway station and Mielie Pan farm.²⁰⁶

As his health began to fail, Press finally sold the entirety of his farm Bruin Krantz to Jacobus Petrus Mostert,²⁰⁷ on 22 September 1938 for £3,500²⁰⁸ and retired fully to Cape Town where he died just a few years later in 1941. Interestingly, the final impetus for selling his beloved farm was the wish to finance his sons' purchase of a few small stores called 'Edgars'; Philip's original investment in Klawer and Bruin Krantz thus contributed in its way to the rise of the Edgars/Edcon retail chain.²⁰⁹

Louis Egbertus Nieuwoudt died in 1935, with his incapacitated brother Josias Jacobus surviving him by seven years. The Nieuwoudt family - descendents of the earlier Josias Jacobus Nieuwoudt who purchased half of Birdfield in 1860 - continues to own and farm their great farm of Kleinfontein-Windhoek today.



²⁰⁴ See Deed 6733 of 7 July 1927. Portion BA of Portion B of Bruin Krantz.

²⁰⁵ (Press, Basil & Getz, Rhoda: interviewer: L. P. Wulf, 1985)

²⁰⁶ See Deed 5408 of 31 August 1932. Lot AA of Portion A of Bruin Krantz.

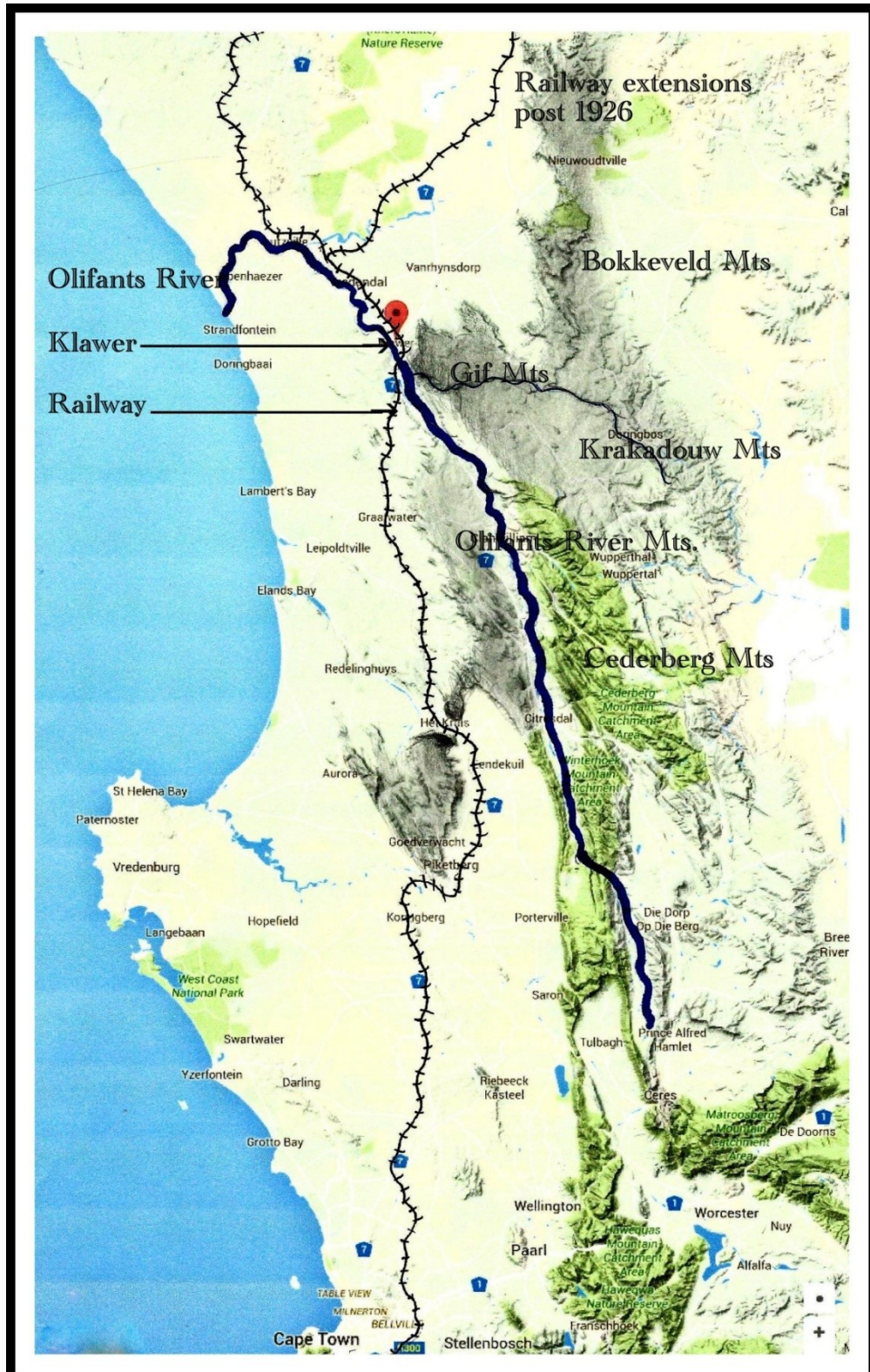
²⁰⁷ This J. P. Mostert was born 21 June 1898, Oudtshoorn. The M. L. A. for Namaqualand of same name, with whom Philip had been acquainted for some time (See: NASA:KAB; Vol.1/1/46; Ref.W120/7/11; Img2284-CT2016) had already died in 1929; this was possibly his son.

²⁰⁸ See Deed 20499 of 1938

²⁰⁹ By 1970, the Press sons had opened their 400th store.



Illustration II: Railway crossing Olifants River where river & mountains diverge





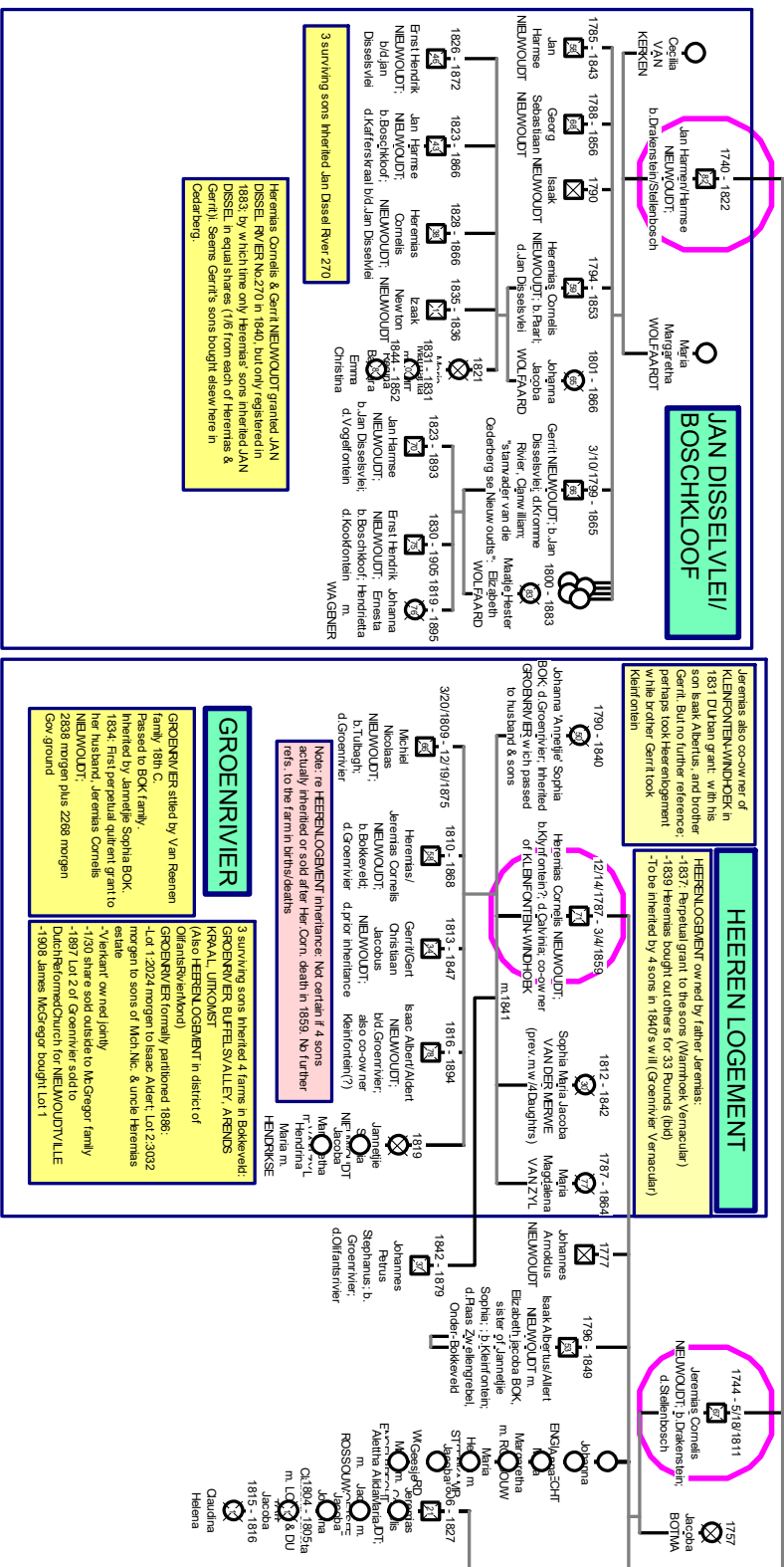


Illustration III (Left): Nieuwoudt Family: Key connections & landholdings

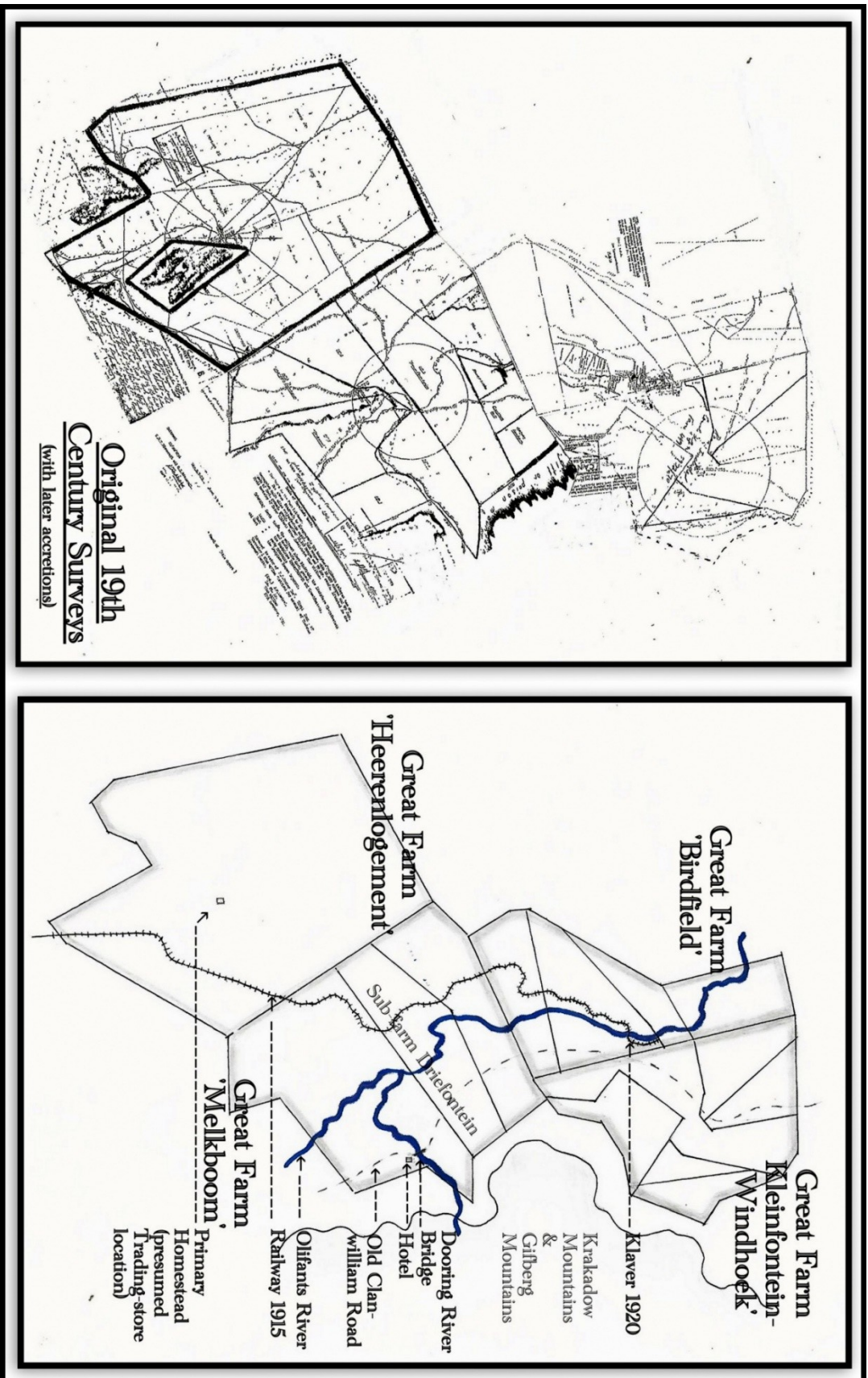
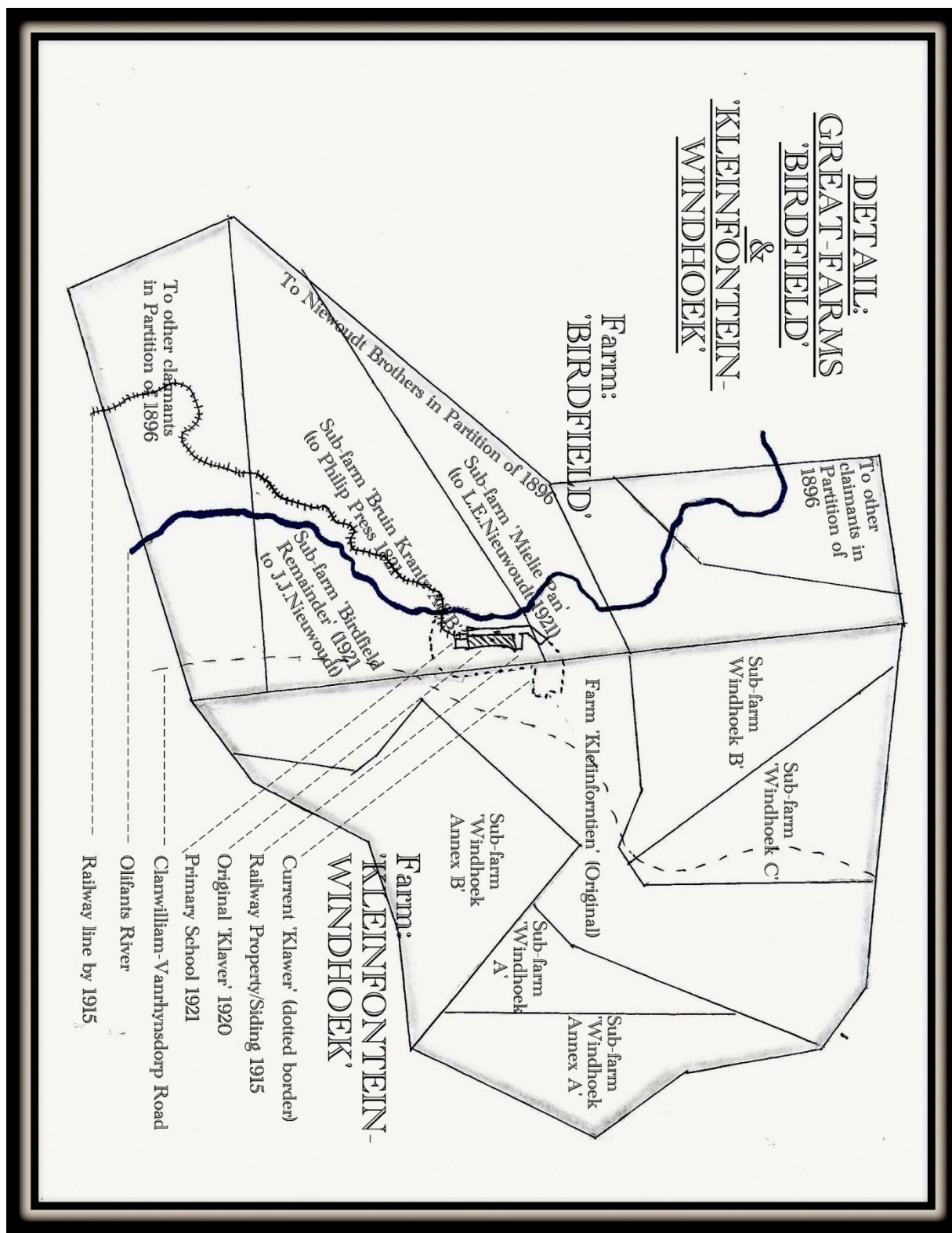


Illustration IV: The four great farms as originally surveyed.

Also shows locations of hotels/trading-stores at Doring River Bridge, Klaver, & Heerenlogement.



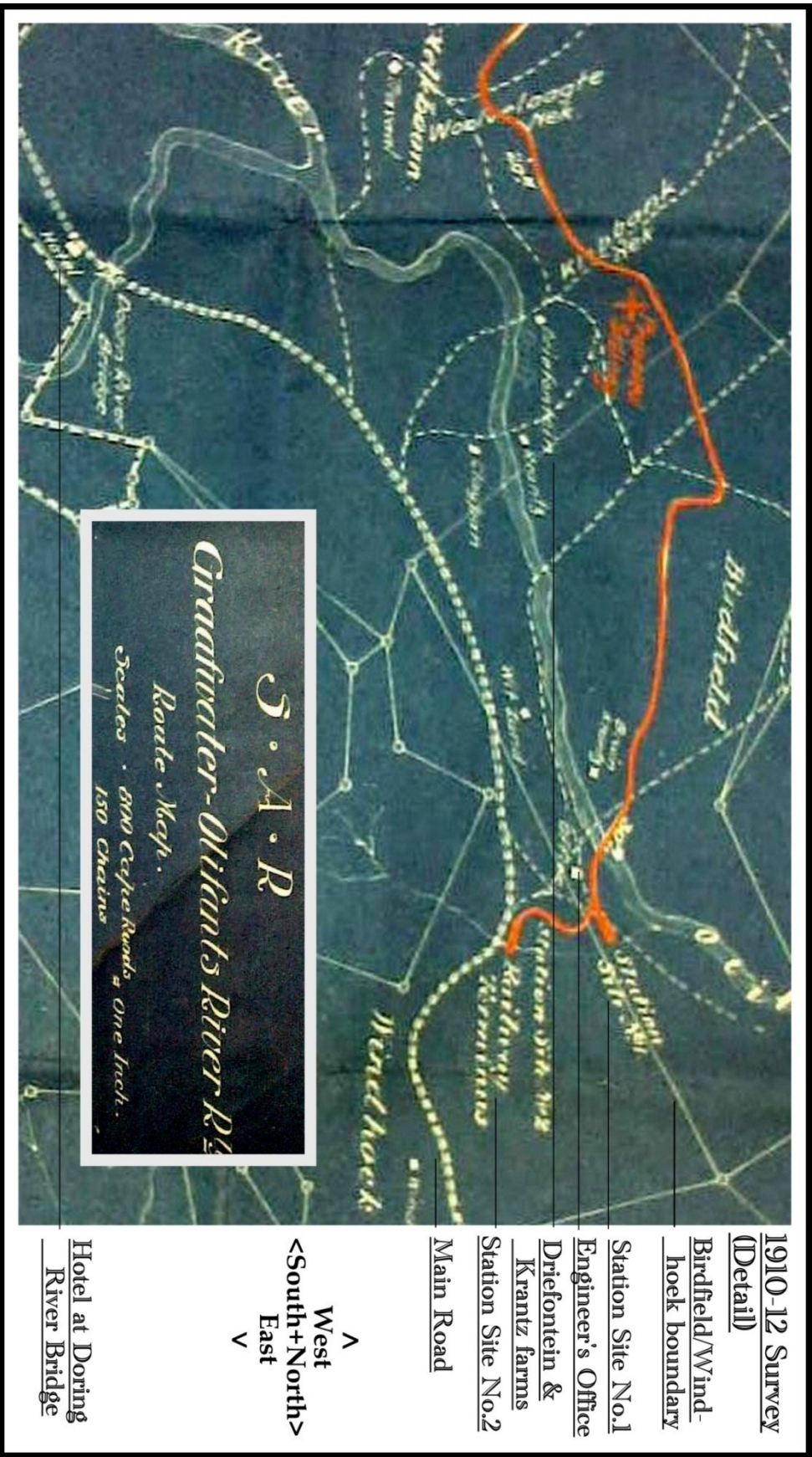
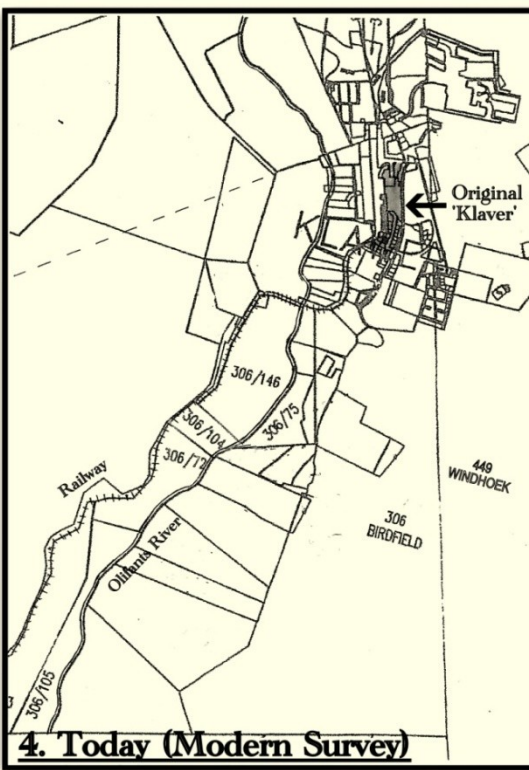
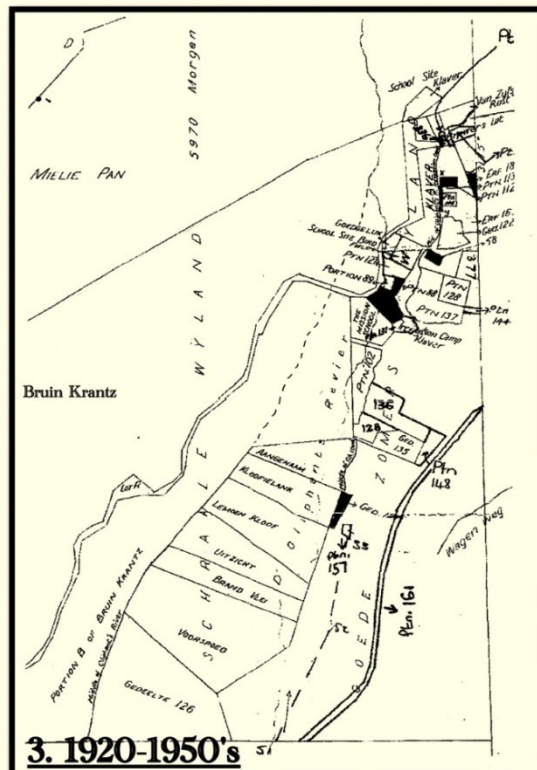
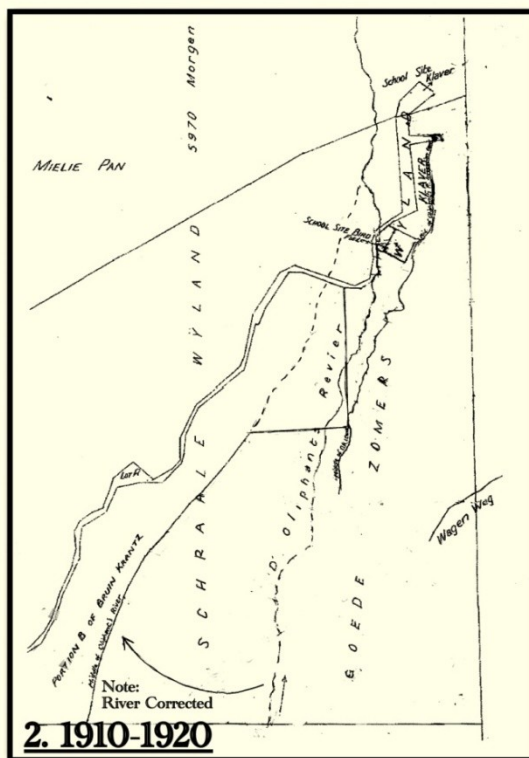
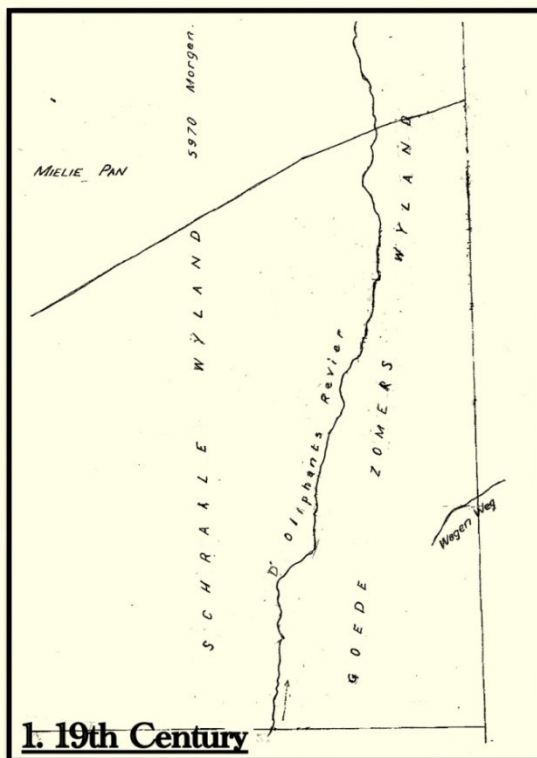
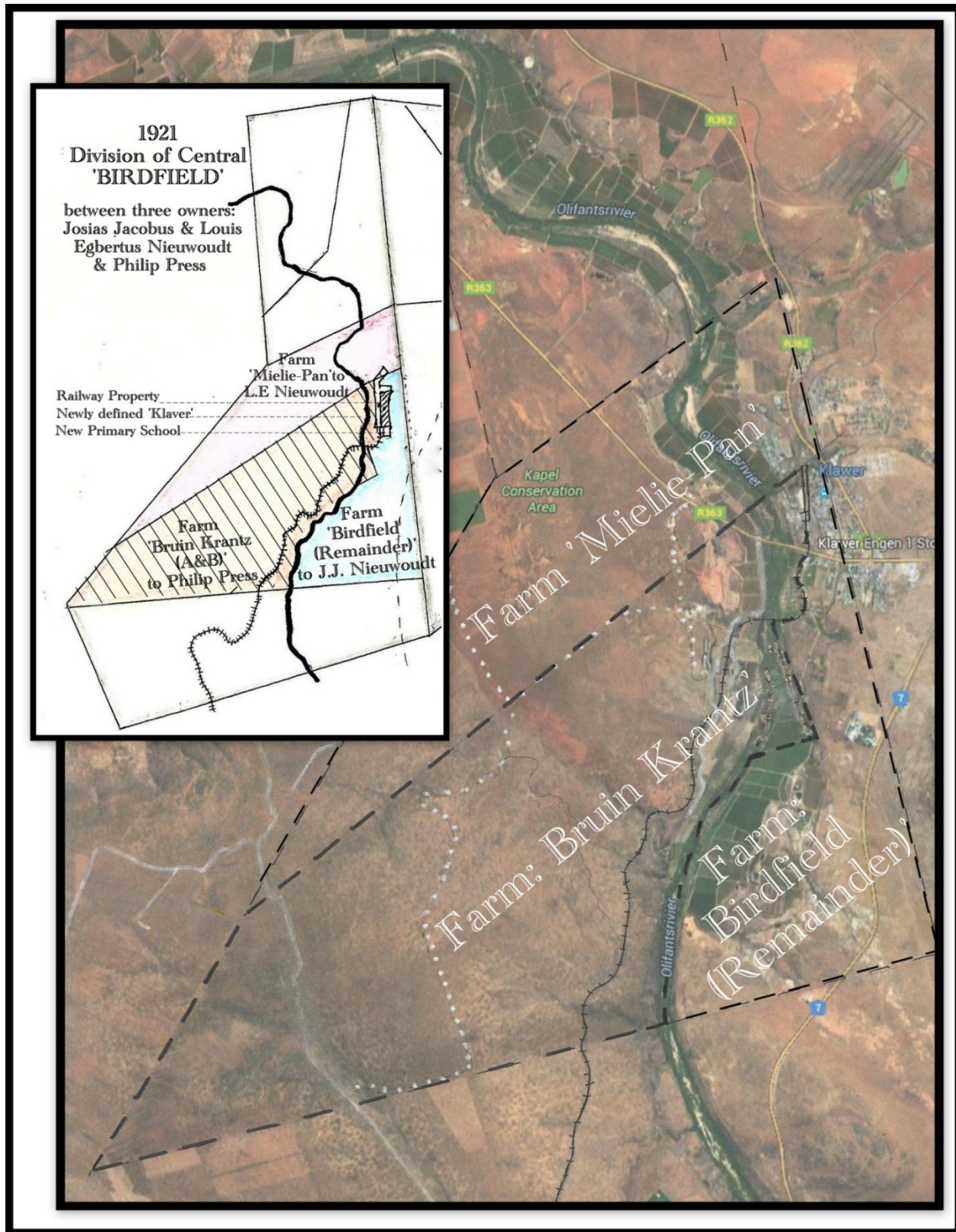


Illustration VII: Preliminary Internal Railway Survey of 1910-1912
Already identifying two alternative Station Sites



Birdfield: Central, SE Corner: Original 19th Century Survey & Over-writes

Illustration X: BIRDFIELD Central: Division of 1921



1920 Survey of
'KLAVER'
Portion of the farm
BIRDFIELD

Sign-off on Nov 1920
for Deed of Oct 1921

BOUNDARIES:

North: Railway Siding
West: Railway Station
East: Canal
South: School Site

'Remainder of Birdfield'
where gaps in boundaries
Some internal sub-divisions
added later

I certify that this diagram belongs to the Handless deed issued this day in favour of J. Messrs E. Navarro

J. H. Nass: C. Howard &
 J. J. Minnowell
 1910/1911
 Willard
 for
 R

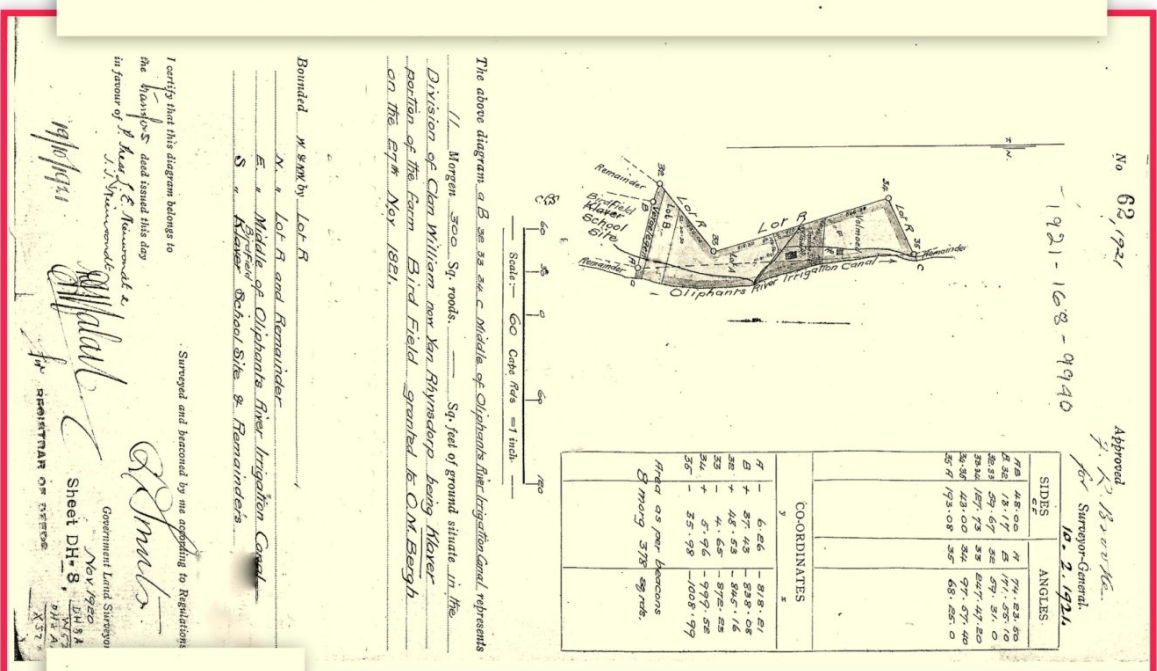
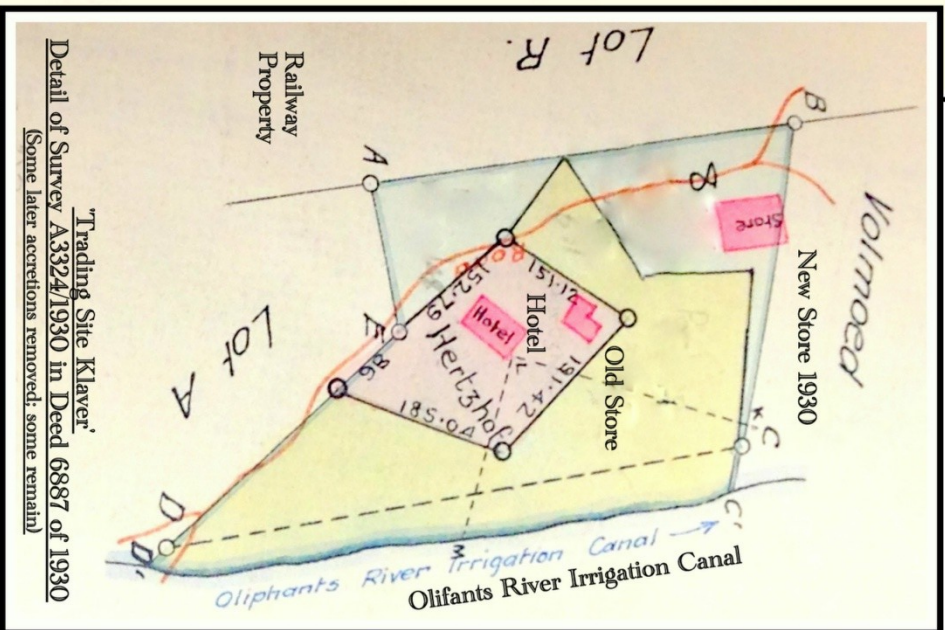
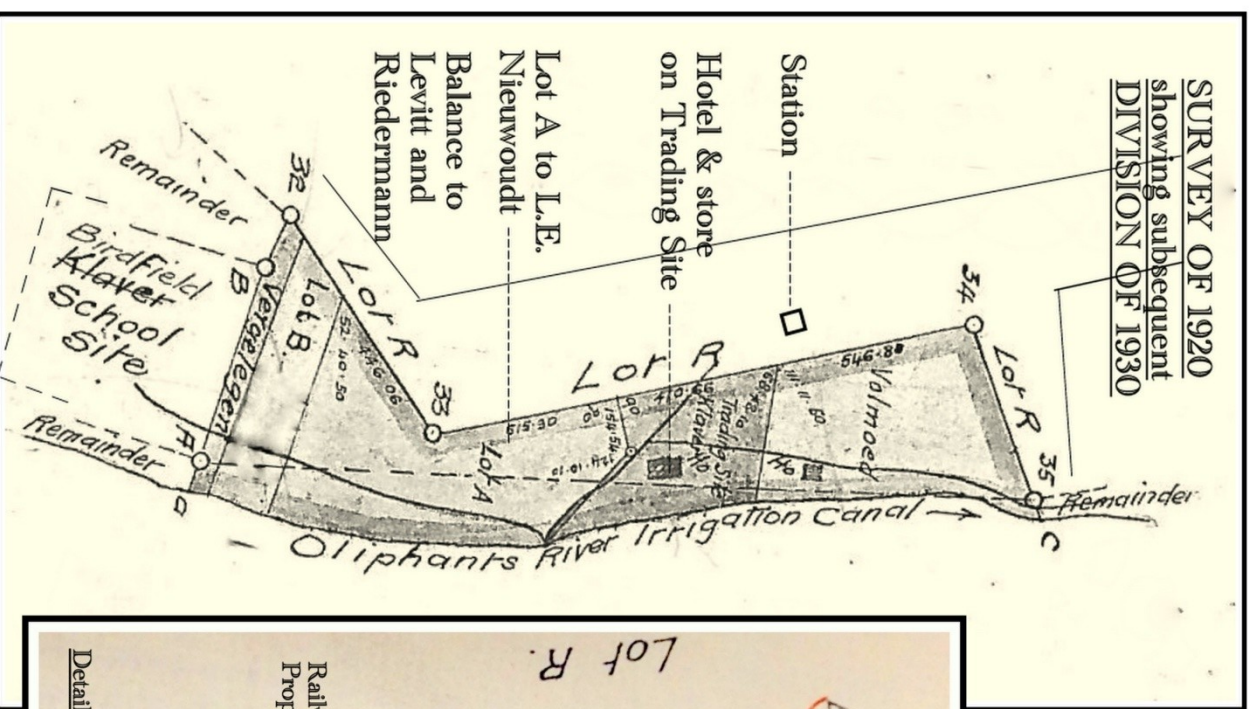


Illustration XI: 1920 Survey of KLAVER, defined and named for the first time

[illegible][illegible][illegible]



Detail:
 "Trading Site Klaver"

KLAVER

Illustration XV:
"KLAVER":
Division of 1930

Original Klaver
Boundaries
Still clear today



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NASA; Dep:SAB; Source:MVE; Vol:419; Ref:16/54; Part 2; Box 424; Descript: Line from Klaver-Calvinia. 1912-1938.

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