



Access and Safety



P **PARKING** Public parking is available at 80 Hatfield Street, Iziko SA National Gallery **43**, at SA Jewish Museum, cnr Hatfield/Avenue Street and in Hof/Curtis Street (off Orange Street).

R **REFRESHMENTS** Refreshments are available at the Garden Tea Room **22**, Iziko SA National Gallery **43** and The Crypt below St George's Cathedral **6**.

T **TOILETS** At the town end, off Queen Victoria Street **13**. You can, of course, use toilets within public buildings you have entered.

TELEPHONES At the Entrance to the Company's Garden **3** and in the lobbies of the museums and library.

SECURITY The Avenue is well-monitored by video cameras, there are regular security patrols on bicycle and horseback and there are usually plenty of other people about. But it is wise to take the usual safety precautions. The Gardens are closed at night and Government Avenue should be avoided after dark.

DISABLED Except for going into Queen Victoria Street **13**, the route is suitable for **wheelchairs**. Disabled **parking** available at 19 Queen Victoria St, request at City Parks Office or Iziko Bertram House **33**, and at SA National Gallery **43**. Disabled **toilets** are at the Company's Garden Tea Room **22**.



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The Company's Garden

This precious parcel of green and shade in the middle of a busy postcolonial city is the remaining half of a garden planted in the 1650's by the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC). The garden was superimposed upon a landscape occupied occasionally by hunter gatherers and modified by pastoralists, who migrated seasonally for hundreds of years. It led to the dispossession of the people who had first used this landscape around the base of the mountain, the establishment of the historic City, the introduction of agriculture into the region and the beginnings of scientific investigation into the flora of the Cape Floral Kingdom.

BEFORE THE GARDEN

The Garden lies in the midst of a dramatic landscape, framed by Devil's Peak to the east and Lion's Head to the west. It is dominated by the globally recognized landmark of Table Mountain which rises precipitously to more than a thousand metres above sea level. Rain falling on Table Mountain filters through the upper ramparts of Table Mountain sandstone to emerge as perennial streams in Table Valley below.

These springs were an important factor drawing people to this area from stone-age times.

Stone tool artefacts found across the valley and close to the coastline provide tangible evidence that stone-age hunter-gatherers inhabited this area from time to time.

The *Gorinhaiqua* and the *Gorinchacqua* (referred to as

part of the *Khoekhoen*) were cattle and sheep farmers who travelled between the area now known as Saldanha Bay and the Cape Peninsula for hundreds of years before the arrival of the Dutch in the seventeenth century. They had a distinctive social and economic system based on nomadism and the ownership of cattle and sheep. The size of their social groups and cattle ownership was considerable. On November 24 1655 Jan van Riebeeck noted in his diary, "*beyond the Redoubt Duynhoop (Black River area) we found the country everywhere so full of cattle and sheep, as far as the wood (Newlands) where our people live...that we could hardly get along the road.*"

"*Not only were the numbers of cattle impossible to be counted, it was just the same with the people...probably 5000 or 6000, young and old.*" He also

Khoekhoen building houses . P.Kolbe, De Kaap de Goede Hoop, 1719



noted the circular arrangement of houses. "There were also about 400 to 500 houses, rather large and pitched in circles close to each other, within which the cattle are kept at night". Names the *Khoekhoen* gave to places still remain as part of our heritage in many parts of the Western Cape. To the *Gorinhaiqua* the Cape Peninsula was known as *Camissa* or "place of sweet water". They called Table Mountain *Hoerikwaggo* "Mountain of the Sea".

They practiced a land management system based on the use of fire to promote good growth of grazing on their seasonal return. Jan van Riebeeck remarked in his diary that his interpreter reported that "they, (i.e. the *Gorinhaiqua*) will again return, when the grass, which they have everywhere burned, shall have sprung out again."

The *Gorinhaiqua* used the Table Valley area with its "sweet streams" and good grazing slopes of *renosterbos* for the grazing of their cattle and sheep. The arrival of occasional ships from the early sixteenth century in Table Bay marked the beginning of the end of this traditional form of land use for the *Gorinhaiqua*. The history of their land dispossession and the resultant loss of access to water and grazing closely follows the growth and development of the colonial settlement and agriculture.

This began with the arrival of the Dutch to establish a refreshment station for ships travelling around the African coast and establishment of the Company's

Garden to provide fresh produce for them.

THE GARDEN BEGINS

Under the direction of the first commander Jan van Riebeeck and his gardener Hendrick Boom, the ground for the Company's Garden was cultivated in the same month as the arrival of the first Company officials in April 1652.

First attempts at cultivation were discouraging, the seasons were different from the northern hemisphere and strong winds wreaked havoc on early crops. Slowly, however, improvements were made. Channels or *gragten* were dug to lead water from the streams. These channels determined the alignment of the original roads and in turn the grid pattern and in many cases the layout of the central city of today.

By the end of the seventeenth century the Garden had expanded up the Table Valley. Increasingly the less fertile land between the Castle and present day Wale Street was given over to various public and private developments. These included the Slave Lodge, the church (in Church Square), a graveyard (now under Spin and Grave Streets) and a hospital for ill sailors which stood at the corner of Adderley and Wale Streets, opposite the Slave Lodge. Private lands were granted on either side of the Company's Garden stretching from Hatfield Street to Queen Victoria Street. There was a central axis running through the middle of the Garden down the settlement to the sea. This became





MUSEUM AFRICA

A Khoekhoen settlement at 'Cabo de Goede Hoop' - circa 1675

Government Avenue and led into Adderley Street, long regarded as the "centre" of Cape Town. In 1693 Hendrik Oldenland took over as head gardener and added pathways and fountains. A menagerie was established at the top of the Garden in 1700.

THE SCIENTIFIC AND PLEASURE GARDEN

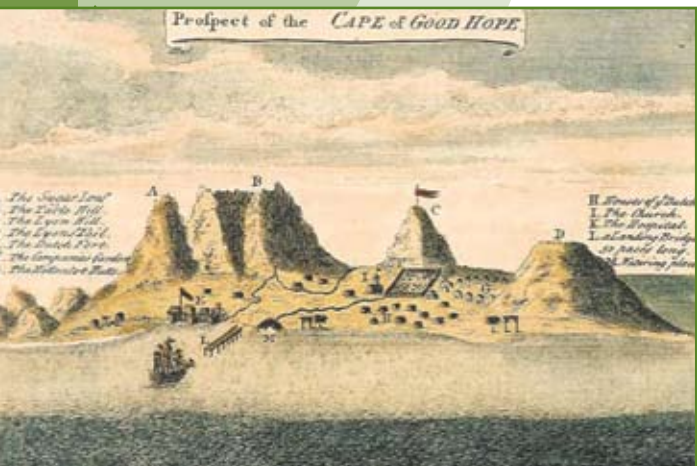
By the mid eighteenth century, the Garden had become famous, firstly for its beauty and delight and secondly for the propagation and export of indigenous plants. This had proceeded under the direction of the gardener Jan Andries Auge.

Bulbs and plants were exported to an increasingly lucrative European market. The arrival of *pelargoniums* (or *geraniums* and their hybrids) and other Cape plants in Europe, date from about

this period. However, at the turn of the eighteenth century the Dutch East India Company was in debt and the Garden was neglected. The British occupied the Cape in 1795 to forestall any French interest in the strategic sea route to India and elsewhere. They invested little money or interest in the Garden and it deteriorated further. It was at this point that Governor Yonge tried to turn the Garden into his private domain. There was such an outcry that the traditions of public access to the Garden remain to this day.

The return of the Garden to the Dutch Batavian republic in 1803 marked a high point in its fortunes. The central Government Avenue axis was extended to Orange Street where it remains today, linked by the impressive Mount Nelson Gates. Money was made

The settlement in c.1700. The rectangular Company's Garden is below Lion's Head C. Note the Khoekhoen huts to the right of the Garden



GOOD HOPE COLLECTION: IZIKO

available for the construction of the decorative gateways, called the *Lion Gateways*, leading to the menagerie and the paddocks. Travellers to the Cape at this time remarked on the beauty of the Garden.

THE BOTANICAL GARDEN

When the British returned to the Cape in 1806, they began using portions of the Garden for important institutional buildings. St Georges Cathedral was built on land first donated in 1827, followed by the South African College, built on the menagerie site in 1838. The Public Library was built close to the Cathedral in 1860. The Houses of Parliament were built on a large piece of Garden land in 1879, followed by the South African Museum in 1883. The building of the Museum on what was regarded as one of the most ornamental parts of the Garden was the final straw and resulted in the mass resignation of the Garden Commissioners in 1890. The Garden was transferred to the Municipal authorities in 1892 and has remained a civic responsibility ever since.

The public had always supported the idea of a public garden. In 1848 the lower part of the Garden was turned over to public use. It was called the Botanical Garden and at that

time began to take on many of the landscape features it has accumulated until the present day, chiefly the sinuous curving pathways which were imposed on the formal Dutch garden grid. The process of "*institutional creep*" has resulted in the loss of half of the green space of the Garden. It has also meant that the Garden became a unique and special mix of public cultural institutions representing power and authority within the context of a changing historical landscape.

THE MODERN GARDEN

Many of the historic trees in the Garden were removed in the 1920s to allow more light into the Garden. The building of the Delville Wood Memorial in the 1920s necessitated a radical redesign of the upper part of the Garden. It now has a broad cross axis, which is terminated by the South African National Gallery.

The Company's Garden has recently been the subject of an intensive series of studies and public participation, designed to identify the significant elements, patterns and uses, so that they may be properly maintained and protected. This has resulted in a Company's Garden Management Plan and a series of policies aimed at protecting the special qualities of the Garden. ○

1832 d'Oyly impression of Government Avenue

CAPE ARCHIVES

