

Re: KEEROM, MESSELPAD. E-mails from Annelize Erasmus.

From: Springbok Lodge <sbklodge@intekom.co.za>

Sent: Thursday, February 8, 2007 4:44:48 PM

Dear Sir,

I checked our map and found the farm Keerom. This is as near as I could get to that location on GoogleEarth:

Lat 29° 58' 30.1" S

Long 17° 40' 43.2" E

Is this the right farm?

Who was your grandfather? When was he born?

Regards,
Annelize Erasmus
Springbok Lodge

Dear Sir,

This is what I could find out about the farm Keerom:

I contacted Dr Gert Kotzé, principal of the high school. He knew that Patrick Fletcher lived on Keerom during the 1860's, but could not tell me more about the history of the farm.

From Dr Burger, former principal of the primary school, I learned the following:
The first registered owner of the farm was mr JA van Zyl to which the farm was registered on 15 February 1844. The original farm was between 15 000 and 17 000 hectares. In those days these farm developed in a sort of community, different farm coming together at one point and people built the houses quite closed together. Usually there was also a school, which was the case on Keerom.

I was not able to find out if your great-grandfather owned Keerom or part of it. The farm later came into possession of the Kotzé family. Theunis Kotzé lived there around the turn of the twentieth century. His daughter Aletta married Frans Uys, a young man from the Wolmaranstad area (North West Province) in 1904, after the Anglo Boer War. This young man and his brother came from their father's farm to purchase some livestock from mr Kotzé, because there was such a shortage of animals after the war. In the end the brother managed to reach his father's farm with only 5 horses! Frans's son Theunis, himself a man of 80 today, wrote three books on Namaqualand, mainly about the people and places he has come to know in his life. This is where I first read about the farm Keerom.

Until recently, the farm belonged to Berto Archer, from Kamieskroon district. They sold the farm to the National Parks Board and it has become part of the Namaqua National Park.

I don't know if you can speak or understand Afrikaans. The name "Keerom" means to "turn around". Because the farm is situated in a mountainous area, there was only one access road. Once you reached the farm, you had to turn around and go back the same way.

Regards,
Annelize Erasmus
Springbok

Tuesday , February 20, 2007

Regarding the registration of births in the 1860's, it seems it is almost impossible to get hold of.

I did find out the following from oom Theunis Uys;

In 1870, his grandfather Theunis Kotzé, bought the farm Keerom from "an Englishman", which was probably your great-grandfather, Patrick. The farm was later divided into 7 pieces / farms, one for each of his children. What we see on the map today as "Keerom" is only part of the original farm.

I know a mr Beukes who has a farm in that area named Koringhuis. He might be the man your cousin was talking about. I will ask him when I next see him if he knows anything about Keerom or the barracks / station.

Oom Theunis's books are all available here from us – all in Afrikaans.

I will let you know if I can find out anything about the rest of your enquiry.

Regards,
Annelize

Dear mr Fletcher,

You will not believe the coincidences you come across here. We had an enquiry from a lady in Cape Town doing some research on the town and history of Springbok. The enquiry came through the municipality.

Apparently she is looking for an old map of Springbok (then Springbokfontein) of 1862. She has a photograph of the town clerk of 1955 holding this map, but the map is no longer available from the municipality. Do you have the same map in your great-grandfather's journals / possessions? You can contact her on e-mail haze@imagnet.co.za. Her name is Hazel Crampton.

Regards,
Annelize Erasmus
Springbok

Sent: Sunday, March 11, 2007 12:17 PM
Subject: Re: Keerom

Dear mr Fletcher,

I am from Springbok, Jopie Kotzé is my father.

Oom Theunis's books sell for R139.00 each. I read the last one first - Hoor wat sê Katlagter, this is the book with mention of Keerom.

I spoke to the Archers, the last owners of the farm who sold it to the Parks Board. They are aware of the place where the blacksmith repaired the wagons, but do not have any gps coordinates for the spot. Apparently, there is also some copper ore on the spot which came from a wagon that overturned there.

I came across a paper by Dr CR Burger from his doctoral thesis about the building of the Messelbad (1867 - 1871). Your great-grandfather is mentioned extensively, as are plans for

barracks (called bandietstasies). This paper refers to the "Buffelsrivier bandietstasie" also called the main station. After a decision not to house more than 200 inmates at the main station, a sub station was built in 1866 at the top of Tigerkloof to house a further 100 inmates. According to Dr Kotzé there is almost nothing left of this second station. The station was built with raw clay bricks which was mostly washed away by rain. Most of the stone that was used was later used by the farmer to pack along the boundary fences.

On Google:

Your estimation of 29 53 44S 17 39 36 E is definitely the old prison, that is also the only site marked for tourists and the sign simply says "Prison". This is probably what you saw on your visit. I saw the other site you mentioned which may have been barracks, but could not really make out anything.

What you mention as "kekokies" or "hekokies" can be Khekhukeis (pronounced kay-koo-kice). This was mentioned by the Archers as well.. In Dr Burger's paper there is mention of Khekhukeis station.

I hope that you can make sense of the above. Unfortunately, none of the information comes with gps coordinates, so it is difficult to pinpoint on a map and even more difficult for you to check using google.

Have a nice week.

Regards,
Annelize

[NOTES: emails to N.F. (Abridged). Version dated 21st March 2007

[Cross references to other material in preparation.]