

Chapter 6

Domesticating the Cedarberg: A Burger Family Story

One rented farm, a distant grazing permit, 100 cattle, 600 sheep, six horses, six slaves, one old ox wagon, an old plow, a wooden harrow, and assorted housewares.¹

After 15 years of marriage lived on the frontier, Elsje van der Merwe faced widowhood with few creature comforts. She did, however, have access to land and labor, adequate farming implements, and enough livestock to sustain her household.² Whether through good management or good luck she prospered, as did her sons. 1

Elsje's story of economic success connects the van der Merwes and the Burgers in a tale of complicated accumulation. Farms, families, cattle, and housewares increased along the Olifants River over the course of the eighteenth century, while the growing community progressively displayed more signs of colonial orthodoxy. The Burger family history—including many van der Merwe wives—is emblematic of the ways in which allied households gradually established settler dominance in the Cedarberg. Although violent land alienation was admittedly a crucial feature of colonial settlement, the daily mechanics of conquest happened in homes. The intimate, quotidian structuring of daily survival in an uncertain landscape enabled gradual settler success. Its incremental progress was marked by increased creature comforts from one generation to the next, including the proliferation of European signs of status and civility. From a few iron cooking pots and pewter plates to copper tart pans and porcelain tea cups, the material success of frontier farmers was not just about extensive land claims and fat livestock, it was significantly about furniture, crockery, and other symbols that connected scattered homesteads to the heart of colonial society in Cape Town, and thus to European-derived cultural norms. Both women and men forged these connections, creating households and domestic space that came to mark their sites of settlement as colonial—not entirely European but rather distinctively "of the Cape." 2

Evidence of a colonial material culture, redolent of European aesthetics but regularly inflected with local character, emerges in household inventories. The frontier was a place of cross-cultural contact; some consequences of this interaction surface alongside the more obvious markers of European customs embedded in lists of household possessions. Estate inventories thus offer a way to examine settler households and their material culture. Read in conjunction with property records, tax rolls, and travelers' accounts, the inventories offer a unique, if partial, view into the domestic life of colonial settlers. These records describe material circumstances, evaluate wealth, enumerate children, suggest close relationships among other family members or neighbors, and hint at settlers' ideas about domesticity and class. 3

Fig. 6.1a. Willem Burger's Inventory, 1731

Fig. 6.1b. Willem Burger's Inventory, Transcribed

These inventories let us see, however darkly, inside settler homes, revealing aspects of what emerged as hegemonic over the course of 350 years of contested cultural interactions. Moreover, by looking inside the homes of a frontier region in the eighteenth century we begin to see how that hegemony was established. We can also see traces of subordinated people and their contributions to a creole society that colonists subsequently claimed as "Afrikaner." A focus on the domestic emphasizes the colonial, hybrid characteristics of South African history while it reveals the power latent in claiming connections to European culture. As Antoinette Burton and Ann Stoler eloquently argue, the colonial was created in the quotidian; power was embedded in the intimate. Thus, we need to challenge a presumed distance between state politics and family life and explore those tangled linkages. In this context, the personal and its records are an invaluable source for explaining how one society exercised political, economic, and social control over another.³ 4

Household Inventories, Historical Sources

There is poignancy in a life represented by a list of things, an existence documented by assets, whether meager or abundant. Although the Burger family history is greater than the sum of its possessions, the probate remnants from three generations of family members illustrate trajectories—both geographic and economic—of frontier settlement. The Burgers' history is representative of patterns of land acquisition, material accumulation, marriage strategies, and household composition typical of frontier settlers.⁴ Their inventories also reveal aspects of generational change and cast light on shifting frontier dynamics. 5

In a family's lifecycle, death was a moment of reckoning that produced a specific set of records, overseen and subsequently preserved by the state. Dutch practices of community property in marriage and partible family inheritance assured a surviving spouse half the couple's wealth and an equal portion for each child. When a marriage partner died and minor children survived, the government required an official tally of the couple's assets in order to ensure a fair accounting of the minors' portions.⁵ The resulting household inventories are evidence of families' lived experience entwined with imperial power. Since colonial law only required an inventory if minors survived, they do not exist for all members of a family or for every frontier household. Consequently, inventories are particular relics of the state's regulation of inheritance, providing partial but valuable details about mundane daily life across class lines.⁶ 6

7 There are important limits, though, to what these eighteenth-century records can say about colonial domesticity and household intimacy. The inventories show a proliferation of beds, for example, but do not comment on who slept in them. Successive generations of colonists owned increasing numbers of slaves, but the available sources unfortunately do not locate their labor. Typically slaves herded distant livestock (thus slept in the fields) or did agricultural work on the farm (and slept in the barn) or performed household chores (and slept in the kitchen or at the foot of the master's bed).⁷ Archived documents identify specific families and put their households into a general colonial context, but do not provide enough concomitant detail to reconstruct all the facets of domestic relationships.

8 A historical reconstruction based on inventories skews the story toward European-descended settlers at the expense of the slaves and Khoisan indentured servants (*inboekselinge*) who were a fundamental part of colonial households, and whose ideas and actions were integral to colonial dialogues.⁸ Without consistent prodding, these records tend to obscure Asian and African presence, but this disparity reminds us of the obstacles faced by subordinated peoples.

9 There is not yet enough scholarship on families, domesticity, and gender for eighteenth-century South Africa to locate specific labor or categorize it according to gender, class, race, or generation. Without egregious speculation, I cannot populate a house and farmyard with women and men at different, complementary work as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich does so well for colonial New England.⁹ These records of quotidian existence do, however, symbolize the state's ability to regulate the material consequences of death,¹⁰ showing just how powerful a merchant company acting like a prince could be, both in Cape Town and on the colonial frontier.

Frontier Households

10 After a half century of land claims, the Cedarberg—though still governed from a distance—was within the colonial orbit to the extent that travelers like Swedish botanist Carl Thunberg visited the region in 1773–74. He noted,

Hospitality is carried to a great length among the farmers throughout all this country, insomuch that a traveller [sic] may, without being at any expense either for board or lodging, pass a longer or shorter time with these people, who with the greatest cordiality receive and entertain strangers.¹¹

The available range of that hospitality varied greatly, though. European visitors were alternately pleased and dismayed by the domesticity of frontier settlers.

By the 1770s the Burger family could graciously host European visitors, a capability that was not evident in the 1730s. Barend Burger and Helena Smit, both born on the frontier, grew up to have more outward signs of conformity to European-based norms than their parents did. This phenomenon is not explained by a wave of migrant stock farmers opening a region to settlement; subsequently surviving relative isolation and warfare; engaging in cross-cultural contact with their slaves, indentured Khoisan servants, and indigenous Khoisan inhabitants; eventually winning the fight; and finally claiming more land. Such a conception of frontiers as serially opened then closed assumes rather than explains the terms of conquest. Looking instead at the Cedarberg through Leonard Guelke's formulation of heterodox and orthodox frontiers brings into relief specific aspects of conflict and elements of identity formation. Starting from this perspective also emphasizes that people variously contested this process, both across colonial social boundaries and within groups of colonists, Khoisan, and slaves.¹² Finally, exploring the dynamics of orthodoxy reveals the extent to which conquest had a significant domestic component. **11**

Cross Reference:
 A working definition of *frontier*
 (chapter2.html#p3)

In the Cedarberg, we can measure colonial conquest by the proliferation of tenable settler land claims, which were made household by household; increasing signs of European-inflected domesticity is tangible evidence of their success. Thus the Cedarberg—which encompassed sites of violent conflict and provided a harbor for runaway slaves and criminal fugitives in the 1730s and 1740s—was by the end of the eighteenth century home to established farms supported by families living according to norms that were more European than African.¹³ **12**

The most basic unit of settler social and economic organization, whether in town or the frontier regions, was the household.¹⁴ Frontier households centered on a married couple and their children, and included slaves, Khoisan indentured servants, and other settlers, usually relatives.¹⁵ Neighboring homesteads helped to sustain each other.¹⁶ Linked by relationships determined by women as much as by men, they were the locus of colonial frontier conquest.¹⁷ **13**

The clerks of the Dutch East India Company apparently did not need to delimit households. Recognizing marriages, land claims, and the annual agricultural production of married couples as well as individual adult men was sufficient for their purposes. Beyond marriage and slave ownership, the settlers' organization of social and productive relationships went unrecorded by the VOC. So the specific composition of frontier households is not documented in the colonial archives, but there is enough evidence from which to infer generalizations.¹⁸ **14**

These households were stable but fluid. Long-term loan farm claims, and an increase in the value of farm buildings listed in inventories indicates that leaseholders maintained a domestic base and improved the permanent structures on that land. The question of who actually lived in the farmhouse—and how many houses might have graced a single farm—remains unanswered, for now. Here I offer well-reasoned assumptions about who comprised households based on inventories and the annual census and taxation rosters (the opgaaf), a reconstruction in accord with contemporary travelers' descriptions.¹⁹ **15**

The opgaaf recorded first and foremost adult men. Free Chinese, emancipated slaves, and mixed-race individuals all appeared in its pages, though the preponderance of entries were for European-descended settlers. Each adult man merited a line in the annual register. Next to his name was space for his wife's, which in Dutch custom remained her maiden name. Then there were columns for enumeration: minor children separated into boys and girls, overseers, followed by slaves, livestock, crops, and weapons.²⁰ When boys reached adulthood, their names appeared in the register directly below their parents' names. Thus, a careful reading of the opgaaf shows a family's lifecycle. A young man appeared first in his father's household with possessions limited to some permutation of a horse, a pistol, a musket, and a sword. Sometimes he acquired livestock and/or slaves before a wife, but not always. After marriage, adult sons often stayed for several more years listed below their parents. Daughters typically went from unnamed tally marks to some other place in the opgaaf, recorded as someone's wife, starting the process again. **16**

Grouping people into households according to the list presented in the opgaaf is speculative but tenable. Genealogies describe consanguineous relations, while estate inventories name spouses and children, both minor and adult. Freehold and loan farm records attest to land claims, but most stock-farming families had multiple permits, so property records alone do not necessarily indicate where people lived. And none of these sources is explicit about which people lived together. Nevertheless, repeated patterns in the opgaaf mirror documented family relationships and offer reasonable assumptions about neighbors.²¹ **17**

The opgaaf also enumerates slaves; household inventories name them individually, but neither source shows relationships among slaves or assigns labor. More importantly, these sources mask the presence of Khoisan indentured servants, or inboekselinge. Framing the Burger family history with sources focused on possessions consequently renders opaque the presence of subordinated members of the household, though the Burgers' dependents undoubtedly resisted encroaching colonial dominance.²² There is ample evidence of desertion by slaves and Khoisan, as well as violence against masters in Cape colonial history.²³ **18**

Although specific instances of such action do not emerge in these household records, the inventories do suggest ways that slaves and Khoisan shaped colonial practice, but did not ultimately undermine colonial power.

The issue is not whether European-derived norms of household organization, family authority, and state governance prevailed, but how. One mechanism of dominance was the control of labor. Settler households composed of European-descended property owners and their dependents—slaves, Khoisan servants, and children—commandeered labor for domestic and agricultural tasks. Neither the work nor the workers emerge clearly in colonial sources, but the resulting surplus does—converted to material possessions that masters and mistresses decided to buy. So those who controlled labor also determined forms of social orthodoxy expressed in household goods. **19**

Meet the Burgers

Genealogy Chart: Fig. 6.2. The Burger Family

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The history of the Burger family sheds light on this process of creating orthodox conformity and illustrates changing material circumstances from one generation to the next. The family's economic production remained focused on stock farming; their land-claim strategies, marriage patterns, and fundamental household composition remained consistent across two generations, but the standard of living as expressed in creature comforts rose significantly. What is more, markers of social status absent in one generation were clearly present in the next. The Burgers' growing livestock wealth and expanding land claims, ever further from the center of colonial authority, were accompanied by increasing displays of domestic niceties associated with social status in the metropole and in the colonial heart of Cape Town.²⁴

Generation 1: Barend Burger and Marietjie van der Merwe

The Burger family's three-generation trek to the Cedarberg actually started in Lübeck, present-day Germany, with Barend Burger, a blacksmith who came to the Cape in the service of the VOC sometime toward the end of the seventeenth century. Around 1690 he married Marietjie van der Merwe. She was the third of 13 children born to Willem van der Merwe and Elsie Cloete.²⁵ **21**

Cross Reference:
Read more about Marietjie.
(chapter5.html#p33)

Barend and Marietjie settled in the Drakenstein district near present-day Paarl. The couple prospered, perhaps in part due to Barend's smithing skills; it is not likely that Marietjie brought a large inheritance to their marriage.²⁶ By the time of Barend's death in 1705, the couple owned three farms in freehold plus slaves, livestock, tools, and household goods.²⁷ Unfortunately, Barend's inventory is not very detailed. It appraises household and other goods together and assigns this collection the same worth as the farming equipment, each valued at 200 guilders, or the same as a single slave. Perhaps the tools included iron-working implements for Barend's trade. The bundle must also have included farming implements such as a plow and a harrow, a wagon, and tack for their 15 horses. Significantly, the inventory also shows the couple entwined in local credit networks, solvent despite large outstanding debts. 22

Cross Reference:

Compare Marietjie's inheritance and marriage prospects to her brother Schalk van der Merwe.
(chapter5.html#p39)

On paper, the Burgers were prosperous and embedded in the community at Drakenstein. Yet all five of their children moved north with the expanding frontier and settled on distant farms. Did Marietjie sell the Landskroon farm to settle her debt to the Drakenstein colony? When the children came of age, did they decide to liquidate the remains of the estate and take their inheritance in cash, livestock, or slaves rather than as a share of a land title? Whatever the reasons, Barend and Marietjie's children struck out for the frontier without visible signs that their parents had owned significant property. The eldest son, Barend, settled in the Land van Waveren (now Tulbagh).²⁸ Daughter Helena and her husband Jan Olivier also held loan farms there, as did the youngest sibling Jacobus.²⁹ 23

Fig. 6.3. Burger Family Farms

Generation 2: Willem Burger and Elsje van der Merwe; Andries Burger and Maria van der Merwe; Barend Burger (the elder) and Margaretha Pasman

Middle brothers Willem and Andries ventured farther afield, going as far north as the Twenty-four Rivers (present-day Porterville) to establish a farm. Though only a nominal 50 kilometers apart, the Twenty-four Rivers and the Land van Waveren are separated by mountains and are consequently distinct from one another.³⁰ The brothers made their first land claim jointly, which was an unusual documentary practice. Shared tenancy, shared residences, and the circulation of labor were common among frontier farmers and have precedent in European peasant farms, but the fact of jointly registering a farm was not typical at the Cape.³¹ These 24

farms remained registered to both brothers even after Willem branched out and made individual claims. It is unclear whether the brothers maintained separate households during this period or not, though they both married and had children.

Genealogy Chart: Fig. 6.4. Selected Burger Family Relationships

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Their mother, Marietjie van der Merwe, must have been close to her own brother, Schalk, and his wife Anna Prevot. As parents, they obviously influenced their children's selection of spouses. Willem and Andries married sisters Elsje and Maria van der Merwe, Marietjie's nieces (thus first cousins to their husbands). Their brother Barend's wife, Margaretha Pasman, was another cousin, the daughter of Marietjie's sister Sophia. [I consider these marriages from the van der Merwe's perspective in Chapter 5] Three of Marietjie's five children thus reinforced the connection between Burgers and van de Merwes first forged with her own marriage.³² There were other available partners, so marriage to first cousins was not the result of a sparsely populated district, but rather a strategy chosen by many families that could, instead, have chosen mates from a wider circle. In the context of partible inheritance, marriage to close kin was one way of keeping farms from being parceled into tracts too small to be productive.³³

Cross Reference:

Consider these marriages from the perspective of the van der Merwe family.
(chapter5.html#p41)

The spatial relationship among the farms claimed by these three sons, the shared tenancy of Willem and Andries, and the geographical proximity of the farms they subsequently claimed individually suggest that the brothers and their wives maintained close ties. These bonds influenced where they claimed land, where they lived, and helped to sustain their presence on an often hostile frontier.

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In 1726 Willem was among the pioneers in the Cedarberg, making the first claim to Misgunt on the Olifants River. Four years later, he claimed Houd Constant in the Twenty-four Rivers, near the farms he shared with Andries. Willem and Elsje established a house there, where he died the following year. After Willem's death, Andries assumed sole ownership of their shared farms near the Twenty-four Rivers while widow Elsje maintained the claims to Houd Constant and the distant Misgunt.³⁴

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Before Willem and Elsje moved to Houd Constant, it is not clear where the two Burger–van der Merwe couples lived or the composition of their households—if indeed they lived apart. Regardless of housing arrangements, the brothers' lives and families were tightly interconnected; in addition to shared property claims and marriage to sisters, had Willem lived long enough, they would have shared grandchildren, too.³⁵ The eventual marriage of

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Andries's son to Willem's daughter indicates a continued alliance between the Burger brothers and the van der Merwe sisters. Although both Willem and Maria died before their children wed, their surviving spouses continued to live on neighboring farms and saw the third consecutive generation of Burger–van der Merwe unions.³⁶

Inheritance in Generation 2: Elsje, Andries, and Margaretha

Genealogy Chart: Fig. 6.5. Willem Burger & Elsje van der Merwe's Descendants

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Elsje van der Merwe managed the Houd Constant farm for two decades as the Widow Burger, presiding over increasing prosperity for herself and her children. Even after her sons came of age and married they remained in their mother's household.³⁷ As a widow running a farm and heading a household, Elsje was not unique. Unbalanced ratios of men to women meant most women got married; but since men tended to marry later than women, many of those brides were widowed.³⁸ While there are numerous examples of women amassing significant wealth through serial widowhood, there are also cautionary tales like that of twice-widowed Maria Vosloo, whose resources dissipated during her third marriage to a propertyless former Company sailor.³⁹

Cross Reference:

Read more about Maria Vosloo.
([chapter4.html#p17](#))

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A widow with land and assets was an appealing match, either for younger men who could help run the farm and share in its produce, or for men of property who could offer a propitious alliance that would increase both partners' wealth. Assuming that Elsje had any such offers, she turned them down and headed her own household for at least twenty years.⁴⁰ Her eldest son was 14 at the time of his father's death, old enough for hard work but not yet an adult. Elsje did not hire an overseer, or knecht, but instead managed with the labor of her six slaves, her own children, probably unregistered Khoisan servants, and possibly the help of her neighboring brothers-in-law and nephews. Willem's and Andries' long joint tenancy, the eventual marriage of cousins Maria Magdalena and Willem Andriesz, the regular movement of sons and nephews among various family households, and the existence of neighborly kin networks that spanned the countryside suggest that although Elsje may have been widowed, she was not alone.

Cross Reference:

Elsje's daughter-in-law, another Widow Burger, also remained well-connected in local kin networks.
([chapter7.html#p40](#))

At the time of Willem's death, the couple already appeared slightly better off than the majority of frontier farmers in terms of productive assets, though not in creature comforts.⁴¹ Their household goods were valued at only half the worth of their old ox wagon. However, they husbanded sufficient livestock and had converted some of that wealth into slaves and horses rather than housewares. Elsje inherited six slaves—all adult men—and six horses, so she had an unusually high concentration of labor power on her farm, particularly for the Cedarberg in the 1730s. **31**

Fig. 6.6. Status and Relationships Among Early Loan Farm Claimants **32**

In contrast, when Willem's elder brother Barend died in 1729, his estate had only two slave men and no horses.⁴² Barend and his wife Margaretha Pasman had less livestock, but more housewares—and more debt—than either of the two younger brothers who shared land claims at this time. At Barend's death, the community property consisted of a farmhouse, two slaves, livestock, one old ox wagon, and weapons. The housewares were described and together totaled 78 Cape guilders—more than the value of housewares for the other two Burger couples combined. In addition to enough cattle and sheep to be viable, and practical items like a milk can and a butter churn, Margaretha's widowhood was graced by porcelain and pewter plates, serving dishes, some pewter cutlery, and a tea kettle. The total appraised value of Margaretha and Barend's possessions was less than those of those of the other two Burger brothers at about the same time, but the estate had more domestic niceties. In the early years of frontier farming, it seems that spending on markers of civility rather than maintaining larger herds diminished a family's actual prosperity.

The two Burger–van der Merwe households of this generation were frugal in their domestic consumption compared to Barend and Margaretha. When Elsje's sister Maria died in 1725 or 1726, Maria and Andries's household had a similar material profile to that of Willem and Elsje documented five years later: adequate cattle and sheep, four horses, four slaves, basic agricultural implements, and limited domestic possessions. As was the case at Willem's death, Maria's household goods were not enumerated, though we might imagine cooking pots, a butter churn, and some basic furniture.⁴³ Given the tenor of travelers' accounts from later in the eighteenth century regarding the domestic comforts and civilities of frontier homes, the twenty Cape guilders worth of housewares recorded for Maria and Andries was indeed very meager.⁴⁴ However, subsequent opgaaf returns show Andries Burger, like Elsje, prospering in the years after his wife's death.⁴⁵ **33**

European visitors to the Cape did not appreciate this preference for livestock and tools over housewares. Anders Sparrman was particularly scathing in his appraisal of a frontier farming household. **34**

The distance at which they are from the Cape, may, indeed, be some excuse for their having no other earthenware or china in their houses, but what was cracked and broken; but this, methinks, should not prevent them from being in possession of more than one or two old pewter pots, and some few plates of metal; so that two people are frequently obliged to eat out of one dish, using it besides for every different article of food that comes upon table . . . Each guest must bring his knife with him, and they frequently make use of their fingers instead of forks.⁴⁶

Sparrman further comments on the homespun clothes, the lack of furniture, and the absence of social refinement, all of which he saw as a stark contrast to the large herds of livestock possessed by these same people. This perceived disjuncture between material wealth and markers of social status clearly disturbs Sparrman's Swedish-formed sensibilities, which did not adjust to colonial realities.⁴⁷ As Newton-King convincingly shows, Cape stock farmers preferred to keep their wealth in animals; they were likely to spend any surplus on agricultural implements before household goods.⁴⁸

Having only rudimentary domestic possessions does not seem to have hampered Elsje van der Merwe, though. A decade after her husband's death, the Burgers' herds and flocks continued to flourish and the household acquired more slaves and horses. It appears from the census that both of Elsje's adult sons and her youngest daughter, Maria Magdalena, lived at the farm at Houd Constant. Their sister Anna Sophia and her husband lived either in the house or adjacent to it. Willem Janse van Rensburg did not have a loan farm claim in the 1740s or 1750s, so I assume the livestock that he and Anna Sophia declared in the 1743 opgaaf grazed at Houd Constant or Misgunt.⁴⁹

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Unfortunately there is no way to assess the changes in Elsje's domestic possessions over the course of two decades as a widow. The opgaaf shows her increasing prosperity in terms of land, slaves, and livestock and suggests she headed a large, thriving household as her children matured. The inventories of her sons indicate that they had more furniture, kitchen implements, farming tools, and slaves than she did. Since Elsje's household included her adult children, any indication of the pace and timing of housewares accumulation would reveal a great deal about generational transitions. When and how did a family go from having something on the order of a few pewter plates and a butter churn to *five dozen* porcelain plates and a coffee grinder?⁵⁰ Did Elsje see any of those niceties, or did her children acquire them only after her death?

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Generation 3: Barend Burger (the younger) and Helena Smit; Schalk Willem Burger and Hester Smit

Elsje's children Barend the Younger, Schalk Willem, Anna Sophia and Maria Magdalena all lived in her household after their marriages, but not all at once. Her sons did not claim slaves or livestock of their own until 1750, after nearly a decade of marriage. At this point Barend the Younger and Schalk Willem were either still part of the household or were their mother's closest neighbors, and Maria Magdalena resided nearby.⁵¹ After 1750 all the siblings except Anna Sophia lived on neighboring loan farms. Having established a solid economic footing in the Burger household at Houd Constant, Barend and Schalk Willem—married to sisters Helena and Hester Smit—along with Willem Andriesz and Maria Magdalena eventually turned distant grazing farms along the Olifants River into permanent residences.⁵² **37**

Brothers Barend the Younger and Schalk Willem, their wives, and their sister—married to first cousin Willem Andriesz Burger—continued the expansion into the Cedarberg begun with Willem's 1726 claim to the Misgunt farm. This third generation accumulated more wealth than their parents had. Though they ended up living even farther from Cape Town, they used some of this wealth to acquire both creature comforts, like beds and chairs, and luxuries such as books and glassware. **38**

When Barend the Younger died in 1770, he left Helena Smit with three adult and three minor children plus a significant estate. A farmhouse, six men and five women slaves, a wagon, building tools, carpenter's tools, a brandy still, cooking pots, chairs, a four-poster bed, shelves, cupboards and chests were among the goods inventoried. The opgaaf indicates their increased agricultural productivity; the estate inventories reveal what that meant for life at home. **39**

Couples made choices about how to spend this accumulated wealth, though they did not leave records that reveal who, exactly, made which choices. Furniture, cookware, crockery, wagons, harnesses, milk cans, and brandy stills were not foregone conclusions, but had to be evaluated against other possible expenses such as grain or breeding stock.⁵³ Moreover, acquiring any material possessions meant selling or exchanging livestock, which many stock farmers were reluctant to do.⁵⁴ Showing a general increase in consumption over the course of the eighteenth century indicates the importance of the domestic realm for creating colonial identities and claiming territory, but it does not suggest why some families purchased more than others, or who in the household controlled the purse strings. **40**

Consumption in Generation 3: At Home on Halve Dorschvloer

Even without details of domestic decision making, we can see the results preserved in the property claims and inventories of the third generation of Burgers. At the time of Schalk Willem's death, he and Hester Smit were firmly established in the Cedarberg with all of their **41**

11 children still living. Schalk Willem had converted Halve Dorschvloer from a loan farm to freehold property in 1763; he maintained the adjacent Misgunt as a loan farm, and in 1782 claimed three additional loan farms.⁵⁵ The assessed value of Halve Dorschvloer was nearly the amount of his parents' entire possessions in 1731, but the farm was only about 15 percent of his estate (see Figure 6.7). In fact, Schalk Willem was owed more in outstanding loans than his parents had declared as assets in their report to the VOC.⁵⁶

Fig. 6.7. Schalk Willem Burger's Estate, 1782

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In addition to land, livestock, 25 slaves, and considerable credit due to them, Hester and Schalk Willem had the trappings of an industrious farm and a comfortable home. For working the land they had two plows and a harrow, for transportation three wagons, one of them new but still without a yoke or reins, suggesting they were in the process of equipping themselves to move more goods or people. They actively fermented wine and brewed beer, evidenced by the assortment of casks and barrels, some still full. They even had a specialized beer jug (*bierpyp*). Whereas the previous generation had one butter churn for each couple, Hester and Schalk Willem had two, along with two butter vats. They headed a large household, which undoubtedly supplied the labor to stir the churns as well as eager stomachs for the dairy products. Empty grain sacks, a vat with tar, a whetstone, carpenter's tools, and a used saddle all further attest to working life and the needs of agricultural production.

The largest proportion of the inventory, though it has the lowest total value, is devoted to household furnishings. Beds, a dining table, chairs, several chests and cupboards, a Bible and five other books, plus a daunting array of cooking and serving dishes attest to multiple markers of social status and civility. The Bible is significant, described in the inventory as "big," the kind of imposing tome from which the patriarch would have read to the rest of the household as part of regular devotional practice.⁵⁷ The Dutch Reformed Church did not establish a *gemeente* (congregation) in the Cedarberg until 1826, so evidence of religious devotion at home was an important part of claiming membership in a wider settler community. The extent to which that community met European expectations was uneven, though.

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Eighteenth-century travelers' accounts, as well as especially descriptive depositions in a 1742 criminal investigation, variously describe slaves, servants, visitors, and family members sleeping by the kitchen hearth. The depositions, in particular, portray shared sleeping space on the floor of common rooms.⁵⁸ Sparrman, ever critical, corroborates the practice,

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Again, when we had an opportunity of taking a night's lodging at a peasant's house, we were for the most part rather worse lodged [than outdoors]. In most places the house consisted of two rooms only, with the floor of earth or loam. The interior one of these was used for a bed-chamber for the boor [sic] himself,

with his wife and children. The outer one composed the kitchen, in a corner of which they spread a mat for us on the floor; and in this generally consisted of all the conveniences [sic] the good folks could afford us. As for the rest we were obliged to make our beds of our saddles and great coats, together with a coverlet we brought with us. The Hottentots [Khoisan] of either sex, young and old, who were in the boor's [sic] service, always choose to sleep in the fireplace.⁵⁹

When Schalk Willem died, Hester had six proper beds and only two minor children; though shared householding suggests that older children and/or nieces and nephews might well have been in residence, too.⁶⁰ Had Sparrman come to Halve Dorschvloer and Misgunt as Thunberg did, he might have been offered a bed and not a piece of floor by the hearth.

At Halve Doerschvloer, Hester would have served dinner at the table, using some of her 20 porcelain serving bowls and laying a place for each diner; she had 60 porcelain plates plus 16 pewter spoons, 12 knives, and 12 forks! The house had wine glasses, tea cups, and an earthenware tray with five ceramic wine cups, an item clearly meant for formal serving. Apparently guests at Halve Dorschvloer could anticipate coffee and tea. In addition to a coffee grinder, the household had both copper and pewter coffee pots, perhaps allocated for special occasions and daily use. Depending on who was present, a slave could have served tea in one of two porcelain or four metal teapots, bringing more hot water in the two pewter serving kettles. **45**

What kind of tea was on offer, though? Did the Burgers drink black tea imported from Asia, or local *rooibos*, a plant still used to make herbal infusions and widely drunk in South Africa?⁶¹ This unanswered question hints at Khoisan presence and at the transfer of local knowledge implicit in colonial domestic life. From the ambiguity of tea to the farmers' long-horned cattle and fat-tailed sheep originally bred from indigenous stock, these household inventories actually reflect African elements of colonial life, though they are listed in terms that might otherwise be read as strictly European, like crockery and farm animals. **46**

The kitchen, too, suggests local adaptations lurking among the European cookware. There was an iron kettle for boiling water on the fire, in addition to a variety of practical cooking tools. Iron cooking pots, frying pans, griddles, and fire tongs were supplemented with a copper tart pan and a small copper saucepan. There were water buckets, assorted bottles and flasks, a saltcellar, and a mortar and pestle. Who used the mortar and pestle—a slave, a Khoisan servant, Hester, or one of her daughters? What did they grind there—local herbs, spices from the VOC trade, or medicinal *buchu* collected on the farm by Khoisan servants? **47**

This kitchen was outfitted for more than just rudimentary cooking; did the copper tart pan get used every day? The kitchen was also equipped for bulk work. Were the ten "assorted iron pots" of great variety, or were they on hand for stewing big quantities of *breedie*, a Cape lamb **48**

stew inflected with Asian spices? What recipes went into making this and other food? What combinations of spices, flavorings, and cooking methods were most often invoked? With slaves from across the Indian Ocean, the cooking skills and food habits at Halve Dorschvloer were likely to be diverse.⁶² Although some of the 25 slaves must have tended livestock on distant grazing claims, the farm's kitchen undoubtedly fed many mouths each day. The house had an abundance of porcelain plates and serving bowls, but none in metal. Did the slaves eat from porcelain, or did they have their own cooking and eating utensils? Even without answers to these questions, the inventory nevertheless shows that Schalk Willem and Hester's household was equipped to prepare a variety of food and serve it graciously.

Without clues about the daily disposition of labor, and without descriptions of household linens and clothing, it is tenuous (though tempting) to suppose the household allocated the most arduous domestic work to slaves, leaving Hester and her daughters sewing or tending fowl while Schalk Willem rode out to check on distantly pastured livestock.⁶³ Since some slaves were known for their fine needlework, perhaps subordinates shouldered this labor, too. This uncertainty emphasizes the need for more research on daily life at the Cape in the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ The artifacts of a household offer a way to begin. **49**

In Hester and Schalk Willem's sitting room, guests and family members could warm up with copper coal holders, read by the light of candles held in copper candlesticks, and extinguish the flame with a copper snuffer. The extent and variety of these household goods suggests acquisition for function as well as for display. The furniture—beds and tables and chairs—provided basic comfort in a European-style house. Halve Dorschvloer, however, had more than basics. Six teapots and two coffee pots might simply be the number required in a family of 11 children and with close kin as near neighbors, but in that case an equal number of pewter pots would have served the same purpose. When the inventory was compiled, someone took great pains to differentiate among copper, porcelain, glass, earthenware, pewter, iron, and wood. The recorder saw both value and status in the material as well as the function of the items. **50**

Schalk Willem and Hester had wine glasses and earthenware wine cups, porcelain teacups with saucers and ordinary teacups, iron kettles, earthenware kettles, and pewter serving kettles. This differentiation suggests a conscious appreciation of European attitudes about status and civility. Did the Burgers see the graceful manor houses of the winelands gentry when they took cattle to market? Were they entertained at tables more lavish and ornate than their own? Did a *smous* (traveling salesman) present a coveted item with a flourish—or suggest that it should be coveted in the first place?⁶⁵ Regardless of how various domestic **51**

amenities made their way to Halve Dorschvloer, the Burgers clearly possessed niceties that Sparrman saw lacking in other frontier homes. Their consumption was limited, though: their candlesticks and candle snuffer were copper, not silver.

Household Belongings, Frontier Dynamics: Change Over Generations

The second and third generations of Burgers were frontier families.⁶⁶ Despite violent hostilities and the initially meager circumstances of Barend the Elder, Willem, and Andries, the frontier became a place of increasing prosperity for the brothers, their wives, and especially their children, dramatically illustrated by the difference in estate inventories from one generation to the next. 52

The differences between the inventories that marked the start of widowhood for Margaretha Pasman and Elsje van der Merwe in the second generation are notable, but not nearly as dramatic as the difference between Elsje and her daughters-in-law. In 1731 it appears that Elsje was barely literate. Her signature is difficult to discern on the document, yet she subsequently made land claims, paid rent, and appeared in the opgaaf as a head of a household for years. As with the lump-sum declaration of her household goods, this documentary interface thwarts the opportunity for a more complete picture of Elsje. We are left with just a glimpse, retreating to interpretations of silence and absence.⁶⁷ 53

Fig. 6.8a. Elsje van der Merwe's Signature

Fig. 6.8b. Jacobus van der Merwe & Andries Burger's Signatures

Fig. 6.8c. Helena Smit's Signature

Fig. 6.8d. Hester Smit's Signature

Elsje's brother Jacobus and brother-in-law Andries also witnessed the estate settlement; they both signed their names with difficulty.⁶⁸ Her sister-in-law Margaretha signed Barend's inventory, but with a shaky hand. The third generation, however, signed with a flourish. Both Hester and Helena Smit had mastered handwriting—at least as far as their names. The opportunity for some education came with other trappings of better living. Greater agricultural wealth, increased domestic comforts, some markers of European civility, and a few luxuries differentiate the Burgers living in the last quarter of the eighteenth century from 54

their forebears who died before 1750. The archival records changed, too, making a transition from short, perfunctory lists to orderly pages of carefully described household and farmyard equipment.

Barend the Younger, Schalk Willem, and their mother Elsje were frontier farmers with sustained claims to a residential farm; their wealth derived from running cattle and sheep at home and on more distant grazing permits. The brothers shared a significant transition, living in changed material circumstances at the two moments when the state intervened to document the entirety of their family's possessions—when their father died and at the time of their own deaths.⁶⁹ **55**

The third generation of Burger men lived longer than their predecessors, giving them more time to produce and accumulate before the state counted their assets. The simple fact of working longer and having more possessions does not explain what the families acquired, though. In variety and bulk, the ten pots, two griddles, and four frying pans of Halve Dorschvloer represent both a quantitative and qualitative change from the kitchen described in Barend Burger the Elder's inventory of 1729, which had but three iron pots and a kettle. Widow Margaretha Pasman's few goods were apparently more than those of her sisters-in-law, whose housewares were too paltry even to be itemized. Thus, we see a clear generational difference in the material circumstances of brothers Barend the Elder, Willem, and Andries compared to Willem's sons: Barend the Younger and Schalk Willem. **56**

The difference is not only in the total value of the community property assessed at the death of a spouse, but in what that increased wealth meant in terms of daily living. The small lump-sum assessment of housewares reported by sisters Maria and Elsje van der Merwe in the 1720s and 1730s suggests a different class position than the more elaborate inventories of sisters Helena and Hester Smit in the 1770s and 1780s, yet all four women were Burger wives living in the contested zone of a colonial frontier. In spite of the sizable land claims and evident prosperity associated with Schalk Willem and Hester, they were no more a part of the Cape Gentry than their parents or grandparents.⁷⁰ They were, instead, affluent stock farmers who chose to display some of their wealth through domestic consumption, the description of which is detailed in household inventories that differ significantly from those of their parents' generation of frontier settlers. **57**

This generational difference in inventories has several possible explanations. The first is clearly material: Hester and Helena owned more possessions than their mother-in-law Elsje or Elsje's sister Maria had, so it was not possible just to estimate the household contents and say "about fifty guilders," which was the value of a horse, and less than the value of an adult male slave.⁷¹ An equitable inheritance process demanded a better accounting of the household for Hester and Helena. A second possible explanation is change over time: record **58**

keeping got more accurate in the half century between the inventories of two successive generations. This explanation, however, does not account for the careful, detailed inventories of other estates recorded in the 1720s and 1730s.

A third possible explanation is embedded in frontier issues. Perhaps Houd Constant was just too far from the Company's administrative gaze in 1731, and so a more lax standard of record keeping applied. However, other evidence suggests that although the Company may have tolerated long absences from formal reporting, officials did not tolerate a complete dereliction of the duty to account for production, and ultimately to pay.⁷² Despite the greater distance between their farms and the magistrate, the Burger sons' inventories were more detailed than that of their father or their Aunt Maria, who died closer to the seat of colonial administration. **59**

In this instance, the frontier was less about spatial relationships or geographic distance than about heterodox and orthodox connections to the Cape. Stock-farming families did not move to the Cedarberg with a homogenous bundle of European norms that they fought to impose in a hostile environment; they certainly did not move with many pieces of European material culture. Instead they gradually acquired furniture, serving ware, crockery, and utensils to complement necessary cooking and farming tools. Orthodoxy, symbolized by domestic markers of status and respectability derived from European customs, came a generation after initial colonial land claims.⁷³ Significantly, evidence of this cultural orthodoxy appears in archival sources after a period of contested frontier life. This eventual colonial conquest was not a monolithic, triumphal march toward a foreordained conclusion; rather context, contingency, and local detail shaped various colonial situations.⁷⁴ **60**

This settler orthodoxy evident in household inventories was achieved through domestic relationships, not through military conquest, and not through direct state intervention.⁷⁵ Men and women formed families and maintained homesteads, transitioning from rudimentary survival based on raising livestock to a material culture that was recognizably rooted in European norms. Changing household possessions suggest changes in the ways people managed and experienced daily life. The material accoutrements owned by families and the monetary value assigned to these goods complicates our understanding of a colonial frontier as contact zone.⁷⁶ This reading of inventories enriches Guelke's presentation of orthodoxy, moving his characterization beyond the realm of law-abiding, church-going inhabitants to also describe people who ate off porcelain plates and slept in beds, people who in the mundane aspects of their life claimed affinity with the dominant colonial culture. **61**

Guelke points out the significant difference between the frontier and the more settled areas near Cape Town, "Unlike the arable areas, where wealth became even more unevenly distributed and a small class of very rich farmers emerged, in the stock farming regions of the open frontier most people were rather poor, although they lived in rough comfort and were **62**

free of large debts."⁷⁷ Judging from household inventories, there was a wide range of "rough comfort," with household goods increasing in number, diversity, and refinement commensurate with increasing overall wealth measured in terms of land and livestock.⁷⁸ As this analysis of Burger family inventories shows, greater overall prosperity was displayed at home through markers of a European-inspired domesticity.

Late in the 1720s and in 1731 the inventories of Barend Burger, Maria van der Merwe, and Willem Burger depict the Land van Waveren and Twenty-four Rivers as regions of economic marginality, with stock farmers living in the roughest of comforts and reporting the minimum to the state. Within a generation the more distant and environmentally more marginal Cedarberg was transformed into a frontier of economic opportunity, affording the Burgers a material position that placed them among the most well-off frontier farmers.⁷⁹ The more affluent third generation certainly did not "live like beasts."⁸⁰ In fact, their domestic possessions solidly proclaimed their connection to colonial social order rooted in Cape Town. Moreover, their detailed estate inventories reflect a more responsible reporting to the state. Within the VOC archive, both Barend the Younger and Schalk Willem have properly formatted, formally constituted inventories as well as "rough drafts," written by a less-skillful hand and omitting details such as the individual names of children and slaves.⁸¹ **63**

This transition in one generation from a materially marginal, but economically viable, heterodox frontier to a prosperous, orthodox frontier located in a region of even greater geographic isolation suggests that we need to think about frontier as a temporal as well as spatial and cultural concept. For the Burgers, the frontier was a time as well as a place of accelerated change, exemplified by family choices to spend increasing wealth on domestic goods that provided both greater comfort and social significance. **64**

Despite moving through the landscape at the pace of an ox wagon, successive generations of settlers likely experienced frontier life as a period of rapid transformation. The material circumstances of the Burgers and other families altered markedly from one generation to the next. For Barend the smith, life on a colonial frontier meant economic accumulation happened faster than if he either had remained in service with the VOC or continued living in Lübeck. His children and grandchildren experienced even greater shifts of fortune. For the Burgers, as for other settlers, the possibilities—and challenges—of accelerated change were not tied to specific dates, such as the 1680s, the late 1730s, or the 1780s—periods of significant transformation in early settlement history. Instead, particular families or individuals experienced dramatic changes throughout the eighteenth century. Those changes were tied to being part of frontier dynamics—their location in space—rather than being tied to a particular **65**

calendar.⁸² Thus the periodization of intense transformation is contingent; the temporal aspects of the frontier figure as the pace of change rather than being ascribed to universal dates.

Throughout this prolonged period of transformation, colonial identity was contested—and in fact continues to be debated in present-day South Africa.⁸³ Frontier settlers were at pains to distinguish themselves from indigenous Khoisan and to establish affinities with the culture linked to state power in Cape Town.⁸⁴ Markers of European-derived status such as furniture, porcelain tableware, formal serving pieces, copper housewares, books, and the Bible all suggest that settlers with enough means strove to create domestic space recognizable to a Europeanized gaze. There is some irony in the use of porcelain—probably from Asia—as a status marker on a European scale. Sitting astride the trade route from the Indies, Cape Town had access to VOC imports; some of these luxury goods clearly made it from the port to the hinterland, permitting frontier people to eat in style.⁸⁵ **66**

The presence on the farm of 25 slaves from places as diverse as Malabar, Timor, Madagascar, and Mozambique provides irrefutable proof that Halve Dorschvloer was far removed from polders of Zeeland or even the Baltic entrepot of Lübeck. This frontier farm was hybrid space. One of the adult slave women and all of the farm's nine slave children were born at the Cape, their toponym "of the Cape" an embodiment of their creole status. They were born in the colony, just like their masters, but unlike the Burgers, the slaves could not claim affinity to European-based hegemonic power through religion or shared material culture. **67**

Frontier Domesticity and Colonial Identities

A careful reading of three generations of Burger family estates illuminates domestic aspects of settler identity in the Cedarberg. From one generation to the next we see stock farmers claiming more territory and firmly establishing their presence in a frontier region through European-style houses respectably furnished. Along with porcelain teapots and copper candle snuffers, the inventories locate Indian Ocean slaves in frontier households, while collateral sources indicate the presence of Khoisan inboekselinge. As servants, they undoubtedly worked with these objects of European and colonial material culture; their labor certainly helped the Burgers to procure refined housewares. In a kitchen stocked with local herbs and exotic spices, these Africans and Asians contributed to a culture that excluded them from belonging. As subordinated laborers, they were consciously described outside the settler community, but their knowledge and effort supported their master's display of European-inflected domesticity. **68**

For the Cedarberg, as for many other colonial frontiers, the "contact zone" needs to be rethought to include homes, hearths, and barnyards—places of quotidian encounter among Africans, Asians, Europeans, and their locally-born children. Colonists need to be **69**

conceptualized as families—women, men, and children—in addition to the male functionaries who created the official archives.⁸⁶ Trading posts, battlefields, and landdrosts' offices were undeniably crucibles of cross-cultural exchange. However, the norms claimed and recognizable as European that predominated in South Africa for three and half centuries were shaped as much in domestic as in civic realms. The history of the Burgers and their belongings powerfully proves this point.

In the records of their deaths, these South Africans disrupt the neat narratives of centralized power and state hegemony associated with European expansion in general and the history of the VOC in particular. The life histories revealed in the Burger family estate inventories firmly place women and domesticity at the center of colonial encounters. Their stories suggest the importance of settler household composition for frontier survival, the persistence of marriage strategies connecting men, women, and landed property across generations, and the conscious efforts of third-generation frontier people to demonstrate their connection to the locus of colonial power, authority, and respectability in Cape Town. Thus, we see not a frontier boundary making steady progress across the landscape, or a series of contested zones sequentially opened and closed, but rather a process of gradual conformity, a presence measured in generations and, in this case, marked by increasing displays of orthodoxy in homes. Margaretha Pasman's porcelain plates and Hester Smit's copper saucepan are symbols of frontier conflict, iconic representations of the culture they helped to forge, household by household, along the Olifants River.

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Notes

Note 1: CA: MOOC 8/5.35, Estate Inventory of Willem Burger, 12 July 1731. CA: RLR 1/38/25, loan farm permit for Houd Constant, 16 Nov. 1730; CA: RLR 2/9/18, loan farm permit for Misgunt, 18 Sept. 1730.

Note 2: Guelke estimates a stock farmer's minimum needs as a horse, a wagon, 20 cattle, and 50 sheep, amounting to about 1,000 Cape guilders in "Freehold Farmers," 87.

Note 3: Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 9, 12–14; Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5–7.

Note 4: Trends in the Cedarberg-area inventories mirror those from Eastern Cape frontier households reported by Susan Newton-King, *Masters and Servants on the Eastern Cape Frontier, 1760–1803* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Frontier inventories differ from the more detailed records of established colonial residences in Cape Town; for Cape Town, see Antonia Malan, "Households of the Cape, 1750 to 1850: Inventories and the Archaeological Record" (PhD diss., University of Cape Town, 1993). Complete transcripts of estate inventories in the Cape Archives have recently been made available online; see Toward a New Age of Partnership (TANAP) Web site: http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/Orphan_Chamber-Cape_of_Good_Hope/index.htm (accessed 28 July 2006).

Note 5: Secretary William Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*, facsimile reprint (Cape Town: Struik, 1966); Robert Ross, *Beyond the Pale: Essays on the Histories of Colonial South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), 139–40.

Note 6: For practical guidance in working with inventories, auction papers, and other estate documents, see Carohn Cornell and Antonia Malan, *Household Inventories at the Cape: A Guide for Beginner Researchers* (Cape Town: UCT Historical Studies Department, 2005).

Note 7: Robert C.-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652–1838* (Hannover and London: University Press of New England, 1994).

Note 8: Examples of these dialogues include Russel Viljoen, "Indentured Labour and Khoikhoi 'Equality' Before the Law in Cape Colonial Society, South Africa: The Case of Jan Paerl, c. 1796," *Itinerario* 29:3 (2005), 54–72; Patricia van der Spuy, "'Making Himself Master': Galant's Rebellion Revisited," *SAHJ* 34 (1996), 1–28; John Mason, "Hendrik Albertus and His Ex-Slave Mey: A Drama in Three Acts," *JAH* 31:3 (1990), 423–45.

Note 9: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650–1750* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982); Pamela Scully, *Liberating the Family: Gender and British Slave Emancipation in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823–1853* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997) provides a solid analysis of gendered household labor in the nineteenth century. In *Children of Bondage*, Shell explores the gendered and sexualized nature of master-slave relationships, but without specific evidence from frontier regions, I hesitate to apply his conclusions rooted in the more settled areas of the Cape directly to the Cedarberg, where there was a significant Khoisan labor pool.

Note 10: Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003), 11–40; Mbembe, "The Power of the Archives and its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton, et al., (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 19–26.

Note 11: Carl Peter Thunberg, *Travels at the Cape of Good Hope, 1772–1775*, trans. J. & I. Rudner, ed. V.S. Forbes (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1986), 51, 191.

Note 12: Guelke, "The Making of Two Frontier Communities: Cape Colony in the Eighteenth Century," *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques* 12: 3 (1985), 419–48. Hermann Giliomee articulates an open and closed frontier model in "Processes in Development of the Southern African Frontier," in *The Frontier in History: North American and South Africa Compared*, eds. Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 19–26. For a more detailed historiography of the frontier in South African scholarship, see Chapter 2.

Note 13: On frontier violence, see Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier*, esp. Chapter 4. On desertion, see Penn, *Rogues, Rebels and Runaways*.

Note 14: For South Africa, see Ross on "co-resident groups," *Beyond the Pale*, 146–47. Relevant comparisons of early modern European social, political, and economic households include Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 160–64; Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 8; Sarah Hanley, "Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building in Early Modern Europe," *French Historical Studies* 16:1 (1989), 4–27.

Note 15: Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 146, n34.

Note 16: In frontier areas, I use "neighboring" to describe the closest farms, which in some cases were adjacent land claims (along a river, for example) or in other cases might have been as much as a half-day's ride away on horseback.

Note 17: Wayne Dooling also recently argued for the importance of women in facilitating the transfer of landed estates in "The Making of a Colonial Elite: Property, Family and Landed Stability in the Cape Colony, c. 1750–1834," *JSAS* 31:1 (2005), 159.

Note 18: Given the limited specific attention paid to households in recent colonial Cape scholarship, however, future research on families, domestic production, and master-servant relationships will undoubtedly challenge, modify, or confirm my assessments made based on evidence from the Cedarberg.

Penn's "domestic group" is frustratingly vague, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 109. Newton-King's use of Wall's definition that a "co-resident domestic group" is a household if the residents ate at least one meal a day together provides some structure, but she does not attempt specific reconstructions, *Masters and Servants*, 154, n25. R. Wall, ed. *Family Forms in Historic Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). More importantly, this definition is not completely satisfactory for pastoralists, some of whose shared assets, servants/slaves, or family members might be away with flocks and herds during transhumant seasons, but still were materially and emotionally connected to people "back home" sharing a daily meal. For example, see Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Vintage, 1979). Robert C.-H. Shell clearly situates slaves in colonial households, but does not consider the extent of settler coresidence, or the presence of Khoisan servants in *Children of Bondage*, 303–304. Pamela Scully clearly articulates the tensions between slaves' and masters' family formations in *Liberating the Family?*

Note 19: For example, O.F. Mentzel, *A Geographical and Topographical Description of the Cape of Good Hope (1787)*, trans. G. V. Marais and J. Hoge, ed. H. J. Mandelbrote, (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1944). For a modern-day assessment, see Guelke, "The Anatomy of a Colonial Settler Population: Cape Colony, 1657–1750," *IJAHS* 21:3 (1988), 453–73.

Note 20: To my knowledge, a widow never appears in the opgaaf as having weapons, even if her husband had them the previous year. Given the regularity with which weapons appear in the opgaaf, they are correspondingly missing from most frontier family inventories and auction records. The appearance of weapons in the opgaaf may have served as a check against the muster rolls (*monster rollen*) of the burgher militia, a way for the Company to gauge potential military resources. Further

inquiry into the recording, representation, and actual deployment of weapons along with further analysis of men's coming-of-age and economic independence will likely add to the burgeoning literature on colonial masculinities. For example, see Sandra Swart, "A Boer, His Gun and His Wife are Three Things Always Together," *JSAS* 24:4 (Dec. 1998), 737–51.

Note 21: Ross, *Beyond the Pale* 145–47, esp. n34, which points out that Newton-King disagrees with the opgaaf's utility for household analyses.

Note 22: Ranajit Guha, *Dominance Without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

Note 23: Robert Ross, *Cape of Torments: Slavery and Resistance in South Africa* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1983); Nigel Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). For a broader discussion of desertion, see Nigel Penn, "Fugitives on the Cape Frontier" and "Droster Gangs of the Bokkeveld and Roggeveld, 1770–1800," both in *Rogues, Rebels and Runaways*, 73–100, 147–66.

Desertion by slaves typically was punished by flogging, branding, and work in chains for varying numbers of years; for example ARA: VOC 10934, *OBP*, 57, the case against Titus van Madagascar and others, 27 Oct. 1735; ARA: VOC 10934, *OBP*, 32 the case against Valentijn van de Caab and others, 12 May 1735. In the first half of the eighteenth century it appears only deserters who were involved in the murder or death of a nondeserter were broken; for example ARA: VOC 10925, *OBP*, 14, the case against Cupido van Bengal and others, 18 Dec. 1727. Deserters charged with theft typically were hanged, for example ARA: VOC 4158: 764 the case against Alij van Madagascar and others, 19 Sept. 1743. European deserters were let off more easily than slaves, often only paying court costs, for example, ARA: VOC 10935, *OBP*,: 23, Jan Baptist Pierre, 14 Apr., 1735; ARA: VOC 10935, *OBP*, 4 Johan van Spanghoek; 10935:81 Pieter de Pape van Jugrien, 11 Aug. 1736.

Note 24: Nigel Worden, et al., *Cape Town: The Making of a City* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998); Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Fontana Press, 1991).

Note 25: dV&P, 1981: 119, 557 & 569.

Note 26: Susan Newton-King, "In Search of Notability: The Antecedents of David van der Merwe of the Koue Bokkeveld," *Collected Seminar Papers* (University of London, Institute for Commonwealth Studies), No. 48, *The Societies of Southern Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, vol. 20, p. 32; Newton-King, personal communication, 2 Nov. 2006; Heese, *Groep Sonder Grense* (Robertson trans.), 54

Note 27: CA: MOOC 8/2.3, Estate Inventory of Barent Burger, 1 Oct. 1705.

Note 28: For six years he held the lease on Twee Jonge Gezellen: CA: RLR 6:19, 6 Feb. 1725. CA: RLR 8:218, 19 Feb. 1729 (to 1731 per L. Guelke data). After his death, his widow Margaretha Pasman kept the farm for another ten years CA: RLR 9:145, 17 Feb. 1731 (to 1741 per L. Guelke data). Their son Willem appears next to her in the 1740 opgaaf, so presumably she ran the farm with his assistance and the labor of her only slave, ARA: VOC 4143 *OBP*, 1740 opgaaf, Drakenstein p. 12.

Note 29: dv&P 1981: 119-123. Olivier claims: CA: RLR 38:1666, Zevenfontein, 21 Mar. 1736 (to 1751 per L. Guelke data); and RLR 10:159, Klipfontein, 28 July 1742 (to 1777 per L. Guelke data). Jacobus Burger claims: CA: RLR 12:36, Aan de Klein Bergje, 16 Aug. 1748 (to 1753 per L. Guelke data).

Note 30: On the early history of Tulbagh, see A.J. Böeseken and Margaret Cairns, *The Secluded Valley—Tulbagh: 't Land van Waveren 1700–1894* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Perskor, 1989).

Note 31: CA: RLR 4:24, 15 Nov. 1717 (to 1719 per L. Guelke data). RLR 4:174, 20 Nov. 1719 (to 1720 per L. Guelke data). RLR 5:18, Willem Valleij, 20 Nov. 1720 (to 1730 per L. Guelke data). RLR 6:123, Leeuwenklip, 16 Apr. 1727 (to 1731 per L. Guelke data). Previous owner Samuel Elsevier, RLR 3:128, 1715 per L. Guelke data.

Note 32: dv&P 1981: 119–123, 557, 568; dv&P, 1966: 684.

Note 33: Dooling, "The Making of a Colonial Elite."

Note 34: The estate inventory at Willem's death does not mention his shared property interests with Andries, nor does it list any debts or credits. CA: MOOC 8/5.35, Estate Inventory of Willem Burger, 12 July 1731. The undated inventory of Andries's household made at the death of his first wife Maria similarly does not mention debts, credits, or shared interest in loan farm improvements. CA: MOOC 8/4.92 Estate Inventory of Maria van der Merwe, n.d. [1725–27]. Perhaps Willem and Andries disentangled their finances before Willem moved to Houd Constant. Or perhaps the Twenty-four Rivers farms had no buildings in which Willem had a claim, since only the improvements, and not the loan farm itself, were technically transmissible.

Note 35: Willem Burger Andriesz. married Maria Magdalena Burger in 1744. dv&P, 1981: 119–23.

Note 36: On marriage strategies and partible inheritance see Dooling, "The Making of a Colonial Elite," 157–62.

Note 37: Ross also points to evidence that adult sons did not immediately strike out on their own, *Beyond the Pale*, 145.

Note 38: Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 145.

Note 39: Dooling, "The Making of a Colonial Elite." J. Hoge, "Personalalia of Germans at the Cape, 1652–1808," *AYB* 9 (1946) 442. dv&P, 1966: 1082. ARA: VOC 4096 *OBP*, 1725 opgaaf; VOC 4100 *OBP*, 1726 opgaaf; VOC 4103 *OBP*, 1727 opgaaf; VOC 4152 *OBP*, 1742 opgaaf.

Note 40: I have not found the Widow Burger in the opgaaf after 1750. ARA VOC 4180 *OBP*, opgaaf 1750.

Note 41: Newton-King, *Masters and Servants*, 196–201; Guelke, "Frontier Farmers," 94.

Note 42: CA: MOOC 8/13.46, Estate Inventory of Barend Burger, 22 Sept. 1770.

Note 43: CA: MOOC 8/4.92, Estate Inventory of Maria van der Merwe, n.d. [1725–27]

Note 44: It is interesting to note that Willem's and Maria's inventories do not list weapons, even though a musket, a pistol, and a sword are ascribed to Willem and Andries in every opgaaf. When Elsje van der Merwe and Margaretha Pasman appear in the opgaaf as Burger widows, they do not have weapons.

Note 45: ARA: VOC 4143 *OBP*, 1740 opgaaf; VOC 4166 *OBP*, 1746 opgaaf.

Note 46: Anders Sparrman, *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope Towards the Antarctic Polar Circle Round the World and to the Country of the Hottentots and the Caffres from the Year 1772–1776*, trans. J. & I. Rudner, ed. V. S. Forbes (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1975), Vol. II, 132.

Note 47: Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 39; Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, Habitus, Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power," in *Culture/Power/History*, ed. N. B. Dirks, et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 155–99.

Note 48: Newton-King, *Masters and Servants*, 205.

Note 49: None of the settlers' financial reporting to the VOC should be taken as absolute, empirical numbers. People had solid motivation to underreport to both the opgaaf and the Orphan Chamber since both the census and death inventories were the basis of taxation. Van Duin and Ross make a convincing argument that although the opgaaf numbers are certainly underreported, it is reasonable

to assume a consistent enough deviation from actual agricultural production to make comparative assessments across time, region, and households at the Cape. Pieter van Duin and Robert Ross, *The Economy of the Cape Colony in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Centre for the History of European Expansion, 1987).

Note 50: CA: MOOC 8/49.25, Estate Inventory of Schalk Willem Burger, 24 Sept. 1782.

Note 51: ARA: VOC 4180 *OBP*, 1750 opgaaf, Drakenstein pp. 7–8.

Note 52: Willem Burger's claims to Afgaan van de Kartouw: CA: RLR 14:199, 22 Nov. 1756 to 16 Feb. 1788; Schalk Willem Burger's claims to Halve Dorschvloer CA: RLR 11:7, 31 Mar. 1744 to 13 Apr. 1763; Halve Dorschvloer in freehold, DO: OSF II: 296, 15 Dec. 1763.

Note 53: Women's legal status in community property makes some of the logical assumptions about household purchasing postulated by Ulrich for colonial New England in *Good Wives* impossible for South Africa. For examples of Dutch housewives directly engaging in trade on their own accounts (not as capable surrogates for their husbands, as Ulrich argues for New England) see Susannah Shaw, "Building New Netherland: Gender and Family Ties in a Frontier Society (New York)" (PhD diss., Cornell, 2000).

Note 54: Newton-King, *Masters and Servants*, 205.

Note 55: Leibbrandt, *Précis*, 99. DO: OSF II: 296, 15 Dec. 1763, land grant for Halve Dorschvloer. Tweefontein in de Koude Bokkeveld, Tygershoek over de Doorn rivier, and Breede Rivier, aan de Olifants Berg, CA: MOOC 8/49.25, Estate Inventory of Schalk Willem Burger, 24 Sept. 1782.

Note 56: Halve Dorschvloer and adjacent Misgunt, RxD 1,500; outstanding debt RxD 1,930. CA: MOOC 8/49.25, Estate Inventory of Schalk Willem Burger, 24 Sept. 1782. Willem Burger's total estate value 5,131 Cape guilders (equal to RxD 1,710). CA: MOOC 8/5.35, Estate Inventory of Willem Burger, 12 July 1731.

Note 57: Ad Biewinga, *De Kaap de Goede Hoop: Een Nederlandse vestigingskolonie, 1680–1730* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Prometheus and Bert Bakker, 1999); Gerrit Schutte, "Between Amsterdam and Batavia: Cape Society and the Calvinist Church Under the Dutch East India Company," *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 25 (1998-1999), 17-49. Nineteenth-century criminal trial testimony has repeated references to Christian religious practice, including the slaves, led by the male head of the household, "The Trial of Galant and Others" in George McCall Theal, *RCC*, Vol. 20, 188–341.

Note 58: ARA: VOC 4158 *OBP*, 1743–1744, Vol. 2. Testimony in the case against Willem van Wyk. Testimony in Galant's trial similarly places slaves intimately in settler homes, Theal, *RCC*, 188–341. See also Shell, *Children of Bondage*.

Note 59: Sparrman, *Voyage*, I:137.

Note 60: Some of those beds may have been at the couple's other farms, since the Schalk Willem's inventory records houses on them.

Note 61: Rooibos is the "African bush tea" now also widely marketed in North America.

Note 62: H.W. Classens, *Die geskiedenis van boerekos, 1652–1806* (Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 2006); Lannice Snyman, *Rainbow Cuisine* (Hout Bay: S&S Publishers, 1998).

Note 63: Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, "Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water," in *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 36–70; Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001).

Note 64: As points of comparison see Michael Craton, *A Jamaican Plantation: The History of Worthy Park, 1670–1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Leonard Blussé, *Bitter Bonds: A Colonial Divorce Drama of the Seventeenth Century*, trans. D. Webb (Princeton: Markus Weiner, 2002).

Note 65: Ross notes the VOC's complaints about *smousen* as early as 1774, "The Cape of Good Hope and the World Economy, 1652–1835," in Elphick and Giliomee, *Shaping*, 267.

Note 66: Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier*.

Note 67: Gayatri Chhatravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, 271–313 (Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Carlo Ginzburg, "The Inquisitor as Anthropologist," in *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

Note 68: dV&P, 1981: 557.

Note 69: These moments are death—a complicating twist to Mbembe's "Necropolitics."

Note 70: Guelke, "An Early Colonial Landed Gentry: Land and Wealth in the Cape Colony 1682–1731," *Journal of Historical Geography* 9: 3 (1983), 265–86. Ross, "The Rise of the Cape Gentry," *JSAS* 9: 2 (Apr. 1983), 193–217; Dooling, "The Decline of the Cape Gentry, c. 1838–1900," *JAH* 40:2 (1999), 215–42; Dooling, "Making a Colonial Elite."

Note 71: Values based on Willem's inventory, which accords with Barend the Elder, Barend the Younger, Schalk Willem and Maria van der Merwe's inventories.

Note 72: The case against Willem van Wyk suggests the reach of criminal prosecution extended far into frontier regions. ARA: VOC 4158 *OBP*, 1743–1744, Vol. 2. For other examples see Penn, *Rogues, Rebels, Runaways*. The household inventories of the MOOC series and the land tenure records filed with the Stellenbosch Magistrate's district (cataloged as 1/STB 11/19) frequently show farmers behind in their loan farm payments, delinquencies ranging from several months to decades.

Note 73: Ross, "Belonging and Belongings: On the Material Superstructure of Identity," paper presented at the Historical Association of South Africa Jubilee Meeting, 26–28 June 2006. Ross's argument is not about frontier regions, but the general premise is applicable.

Note 74: Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

Note 75: The VOC intervened to mandate a recording of a married couple's wealth and to oversee the orderly, appropriate transfer of the estate, but unlike nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Java described by Ann Stoler, the eighteenth-century state was not attempting to mandate household composition or material circumstances; *Carnal Knowledge*, particularly chapter 2.

Note 76: Mary Louse Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

Note 77: Guelke, "Freehold Farmers," 93

Note 78: Newton-King presents the range of frontier household wealth from absolute penury to genuine prosperity, *Masters and Servants*, 157–62.

Note 79: Newton-King, *Masters and Servants*, 196–203.

Note 80: "We do not live like beasts," said Landdrost H.C.D. Maynier on the eastern frontier in 1795, a quotation aptly used by Newton-King as a chapter title in *Masters and Servants*, 209 n248.

Note 81: These "rough drafts" immediately follow the indexed formal inventories in the bound MOOC volumes.

Note 82: Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Sylvie-Anne Goldberg, *La Clepsydre* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000).

Note 83: Michelle Ruiters, "Re-Imagining and Re-Claiming Identity: Coloured Identities in a Post-Apartheid South Africa," paper presented at the New England Workshop on Southern Africa, 22–25 Apr. 2005, Burlington, VT.

Note 84: Newton-King makes a similar argument in *Master and Servants*.

Note 85: Farming implements made from iron and wood were likely crafted at the Cape; a few farms had smiths (Shell, *Children of Bondage*, 165). General references to luxury goods, such as porcelain, appear in ships cargos, but not with enough detail to source specific types of goods, J.R. Bruijn, et al., *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 3 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987).

Note 86: Where Burton argues the importance using of personal, domestic documents as sources for colonial history, I, like Stoler, explore the ways in which state documents reveal aspects of the personal, domestic, contours of colonial life.