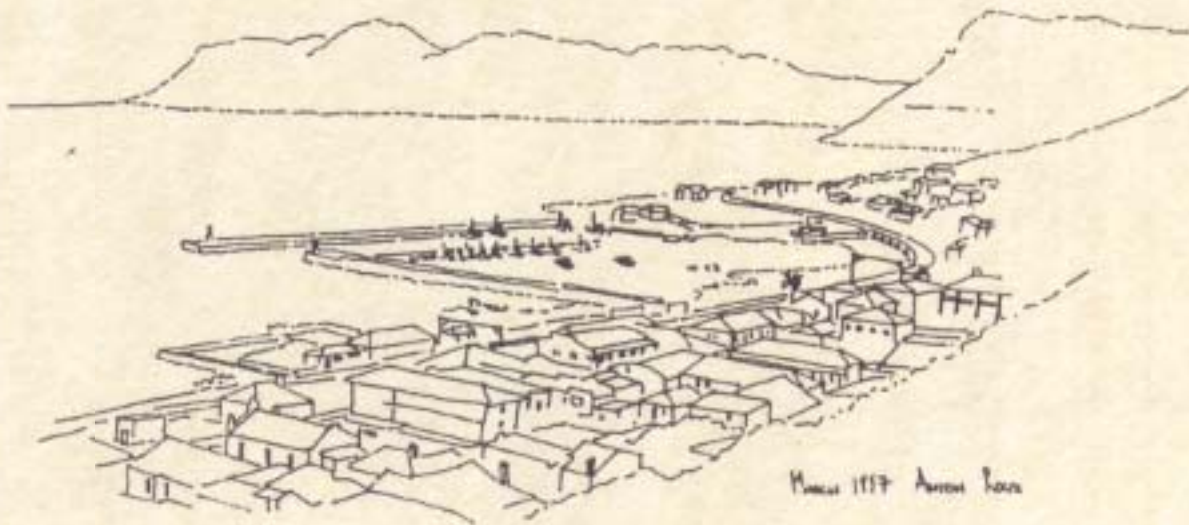




Kalk Bay Historical Association



Bulletin No.1, March 1997

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Compiled and Edited by
Barrie Gasson & Andy Smith

The purpose of the Bulletin is to disseminate information on the history of the Kalk Bay area,
and the people who have lived and still live there.

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Contents	Page
The Sonqua and Khoikhoi of the Cape Peninsula Andy Smith	1
The Evolution and Development of Kalk Bay Harbour Barrie Gasson & Bert Stafford	9
The Story of the Railway Line from Muizenberg to Simon's Town David Rhind	27
The Families of Kalk Bay Compiled and Edited by Sandy Trull	40

THE SONQUA AND KHOIKHOI OF THE CAPE PENINSULA

Andy Smith

Hunting people of South Africa, generally known as Bushmen, but recorded historically as Sonqua, lived in the Cape Peninsula. We know this from the numerous archaeological sites found around the peninsula. Some of the best known are Peer's Cave in the Fish Hoek Valley, and Smitswinkelbaai Cave in the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve. Peer's Cave was occupied by people at least 250000 years ago, but it is the top levels covering the past 12000 years that are of interest to us here. Several skeletons were found at the back of Peer's Cave, including the famous Fish Hoek man, which has been dated at 12000 years ago. These skeletons are similar to what we know of the Bushmen hunting population of the Cape that existed up to the colonial period, and, of course, biologically still exists here, but the culture has been lost.

These hunters made good use of the coastal resources. They ate shellfish, fish, crayfish, marine birds, seals, and, when they stranded, whales. In addition, the bones from archaeological sites show they hunted terrestrial game as well, including steenbok and eland, and ate lots of tortoises. Their hunting equipment was basically the bow with poisoned arrows. Women would collect shellfish and plant foods, particularly the underground bulbs of the Iridaceae, such as *Watsonia* sp.

At Peer's Cave we have a glimpse of another Bushman activity, rock painting. These are the most southerly examples of rock art in Africa, and, while they consist mostly of hand prints, are part of a much wider set of Bushman art found throughout the mountains of the Cape Province. This was not meant as representational art, but part of religious beliefs and importance of trance-healing. The trance state is where the healers can visit the land of the

spirits and get help to fix the ailments of the society, both physical and social. The art depicts, or metaphorically represents, this experience. (Yates et al, 1990).

Hunters were the sole human occupants of the Cape Peninsula until around 2000 years ago when the first herding peoples appeared. The impact of these early pastoralists with their flocks of sheep was probably minimal initially, but as the number of animals increased through time greater competition was bound to have occurred between domestic stock and wild game hunted by the Sonqua. This competition reached its peak a few centuries before the Europeans made their discovery of the end of Africa in the 15th century, in the form of large herds of cattle. Cattle only appear in numbers after AD1000, suggesting that the social hierarch of KhoiKhoi society we know from the descriptions of early Europeans observers started only then. This is due to cattle becoming real wealth, and a distancing mechanism between those who had stock from those with no chances of having any. The Sonqua could steal cattle, as they did, but their society did not believe in private ownership, so all animals captured would have been killed to share the meat.

The Khoikhoi (formerly known as Hottentots) were herders. Their name is one which would seldom have been used by them, but means ‘The Real People’, in contrast to the Sonqua who had no stock, and would steal animals when they could, so the name became synonymous with stock thief. The Khoi would have been known by their clan names, such as Gorachoqua or Goringhaiqua around the Cape Peninsula.

Since they had so many animals, and the pastures of the Peninsula are not very rich, they had to be on the move constantly, to keep their animals in good order. This meant all their possessions had to be light and portable, including their mat huts which were carried on the backs of oxen. Oxen were also ridden by people (see Smith & Pfeiffer 1993) (Fig. 1.1) and trained as war animals to charge enemies in battle.



Fig. 1.1 A Khoikhoi family with their animals (from Smith & Pheiffer, 1993, plate 15.)

The Khoikhoi were genetically similar to the Sonqua, so originally came from the aboriginal hunting people of Southern Africa. We are not sure exactly how they became herders. Several theories exist: one suggests that they intermarried with African farmers when they arrived in South Africa 2000 years ago, and got their stock from them; another would look to pastoral contact in East Africa as a source of the animals. Whatever the source, the language of the Cape Khoi was similar to that spoken by the Khoe-speaking Bushmen of northern Botswana, and this may well be where they came from (see Elphick, 1985).

Since the KhoiKhoi were so mobile, seldom would they return to exactly the same camping site on a regular basis. The result of this is that they did not accumulate rubbish in large enough quantities for archaeologists to find. Thus we have had to rely for a considerable amount of detail about Khoi life on the historical records (Boonzaaier et al, 1996.) One exception to this has been the site at Kasteelberg, a kopje just 4 km from the coastal town of Paternoster on the Vredenburg Peninsula. This site was repeatedly occupied by herding people over a period of 1000 years, starting around 1800 years ago, and continuing up to roughly 800 years ago. The reason for this unusual re-occupation was due to a specialised activity taking place, culling seals. The seals, along with shellfish, were taken back to the site from the coast for processing. We can be sure of this since all the bones of the seals are present on the site, and they constitute the largest number of mammal bones.

The seals were not primarily a food resource. The fat of these animals was very valuable, to be mixed with red ochre and smeared on the body. A quote from the Van Riebeeck Journal for Wednesday 30th October, 1658 describing the Cochoqua chief Oedaso: “Like all the Hottentots he was dressed in skins and so besmeared that the fat ran down his body, which was the highest mark of distinction”. Usually butter fat would have been used, and to smear on it on the body was a sign of wealth (or as anthropologists would say: ‘conspicuous consumption.’) The idea that fat was being used with ochre at Kasteelberg is supported by almost 150 grinding grooves in the granite bedrock on the site. We excavated several

portable versions of these, which, along with faceted upper grindstones, were still coated in ochre.

The amount of grinding necessary to create deep grooves in the bedrock can be estimated from an experiment carried out by Margaret Jacobsohn, working with Himba ladies in Northern Namibia. These women still coat themselves in a mixture of fat and ochre (see Jacobsohn, 1990.) Dr Jacobsohn asked her friends how long it would take to form similar grooves to that from Kasteelberg (this is called experimental archaeology). The slab was passed around among the women in the camp, but unfortunately it disappeared after approximately 40 women-hours of grinding on it. However, even after this time there were still almost no marks on it from the grinding activity.

Why should such concentrated activities have taken place at Kasteelberg? We have several clues to this. One was the finding of a small lamb skeleton with the bones covered in ochre (all the other bones around had no ochre on them). It would appear that the lamb was smeared in ochre, then wrapped in something, like a skin, before burial. The wrapping had subsequently disappeared by the time we excavated the skeleton. We know African herders will sacrifice animals on special occasions.

We were also surprised to find many mongoose bones on the site. A brief note by Col. Robert Gordon, in charge of the Dutch garrison at the Castle in Cape Town at the end of the 18th century and who made a number of trips into the interior, stated that usually men were the ritual slaughterers of animals (Fig. 1.2), although if none were available a senior woman could do it, but she had to wear a piece of mongoose skin on her head while doing so (see Smith & Pfeiffer, 1992 for information on Khoikhoi ritual.) These little clues tell us that ritual behaviour was being practised at Kasteelberg, and it may well have had great significance as a place because of this.



Fig. 1.2: Khoi men dealing with a recalcitrant sheep (from Smith & Pheiffer, 1993, plate 8.)

Even though the material culture on archaeological sites occupied by hunters and herders looks similar, a close inspection shows considerable differences in quantities and style. Hunting sites have few seal bones, but many small antelope. They also made tiny ostrich eggshell beads and used finely made small stone tools to tip their arrows. Herding sites, by contrast, have produced the bones of many domestic animals, and at Kasteelberg many seal bones. Their cultural material included large ostrich eggshell beads (Fig. 1.3), as well as ivory bracelets, lots of pottery pieces, but almost no finely made stone tools.

Thus we are confident that we can separate out the sites of hunters from herders, at least those which predate the pressures of colonial society at the Cape which caused many refugees of both groups to come together for survival when their land was taken away from them by the trekboers.

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Fig. 1.3: Interaction between Khoi women and colonists. Note the ostrich shell beads around the neck
(from Smith & Pfeiffer, 1993, plates 5 & 6.)

THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF KALK BAY HARBOUR

Barrie Gasson and Bert Stafford

Introduction

The story of Kalk Bay harbour can be divided into three eras: the first is the era of simplicity running from the mists of the deep past up to May 1883 when the railway arrived at the corner of the Bay; the second is a thirty-year period of uncertainty between 1883 and 6 March 1913 when the first shovel of sand was turned in the construction of the Breakwater; the third is the long period of security which saw the Breakwater completed in 1919, the North Mole and Jetty No.1 built in 1939, and the Breakwater repaired and Jetty No.1 reconstructed and repositioned in 1994.

Era of Simplicity up to 1883

Kalk Bay entered recorded history in November 1687 when it was visited by Simon van der Stel as part of an expedition to the False Bay area. He established a base camp there from which the surrounding countryside and False Bay were explored. He described the little bay as having a flat sandy floor for more than a kilometre from the shore, and a depth of eight to nine fathoms. (Tredgold, 1985.) The surroundings were evidently quite wild for a lion was said to have “carried off a sheep from the camp and devoured it in the bush nearby.” (Furlong, 1919 quoted in Tredgold.)

However, Kalk Bay had been discovered long before this by indigenous Khoi-San people attracted by the same characteristics that have always made the area a favourite place: the small inlet and beach, the varied sea-foods along the shoreline, the source of water from the stream, the relative wind shelter, and the warm north-facing slopes. The archaeological evidence in caves, shell middens, and fish traps suggests that Kalk Bay area has been inhabited for tens of thousands of years. (Poggenpoel, pers. comm.)

Van der Stel's visit, and the later establishment of Simon's Town as the winter anchorage for ships in 1741, placed Kalk Bay on the map and a small fishing community of mixed origins developed there: indigenous people, freed slaves originally from Bengal, Ceylon and Batavia, Filipinos, and deserters from ships in Simon's Town and Cape Town (Kirkaldy, 1988.)

The isolation of the area was reduced progressively by the introduction of a daily omnibus service to Cape Town in 1851 and subsequent improvements in transportation. This made it popular among parliamentarians and their circle, numerous religious denominations, as well many wealthy Cape Town families. Their arrival added another layer to the social structure of the place as well as larger and more luxurious buildings.

Throughout these times of change the little bay remained famous for its fishing in Die Bloudam from boats launched from the small beach, and powered by oar and sail. Commercial whaling had begun in 1806 but over-exploitation severely reduced its significance by 1871. Whalebones, some of which can still be seen, were used in a number of ways: as property boundary markers, garden fences made of ribs, walls incorporating vertebrae, steps and stairs from the shoulderbones. From the 1870s line-fishing took over as the dominant activity, with the fishery employing some 200 men and being the main supplier of fish to the Cape Colony (Kirkaldy, 1988.)

The boats, each weighing about a ton and varying in length between 5m - 7,5m, were propelled by a combination of oars and a spritsail with jib. Sand, in 200lb bags was carried as ballast and large stones, known as *Bubangbatu*, were used as anchors. As a rule the boats set off for the fishing grounds between 03h00 – 05h00 and returned between 11h00 – 13h00. While they sometimes fished as far afield as Hangklip and Cape Point they usually remained 8 - 16 kms from the shore. If the weather turned bad in the Cape Point area they came ashore at Diaz Beach or Buffels Bay, where they might stay several days while depending for food on the lighthouse or Smith's Farm.

The fishing routine was a strenuous one which had numerous consequences for the men. The man-handling of the heavy boats on and off the beach led to physical strain and frequently to permanent injury. Common ailments were rickbacks, strangulation of the guts, and heart strain. These were aggravated by sleep deprivation and exposure to cold and wet conditions

while at sea. According to the local medical practitioner, Dr J Fenhoulet, less than ten percent of the men were free of such ailments (Kirkaldy, 1988.)

Era of Uncertainty 1883 - 1913

The Era of Uncertainty lasted 30 years and first element of uncertainty was associated with the arrival of the railway in 1883. While it improved access to the Cape market its inevitable extension to Simon's Town in 1890 introduced a major problem: it crossed the beach on a viaduct and severely reduced the width of the beach above the high water mark available for storing the boats; and it interrupted easy access from beach to main road making it almost impossible to manhandle the boats up the concrete slopes of the subways (Fig. 2.1.) It was therefore merely a matter of time before storms caused damage to the boats trapped between the stone wall of the viaduct and high seas. Such an occasion occurred in 1898 when 17 - 19 boats, representing nearly half of the fleet of 38 boats, were badly damaged or destroyed. As a consequence, the fishermen agitated for some kind of protection against the weather.

A second element was the arrival of trawling in Cape waters and in False Bay in particular. Trawlers were larger, safer, could roam farther afield, make larger catches more quickly, and therefore supply the markets more efficiently. They also damaged the sea bed and the fishing banks. The Kalk Bay fishermen believed that the fluctuating catches were attributable to the actions of the trawlers and that their livelihoods would be ruined. They petitioned the Cape Government for closure of False Bay to trawling. Eventually in 1899 a three mile limit was imposed on the trawling industry. At about the same time (1898) money had been set aside to establish a Marine Biological Station to conduct research into marine life and provide a scientific foundation for a healthy fishing industry. This station was opened at St James in 1902.

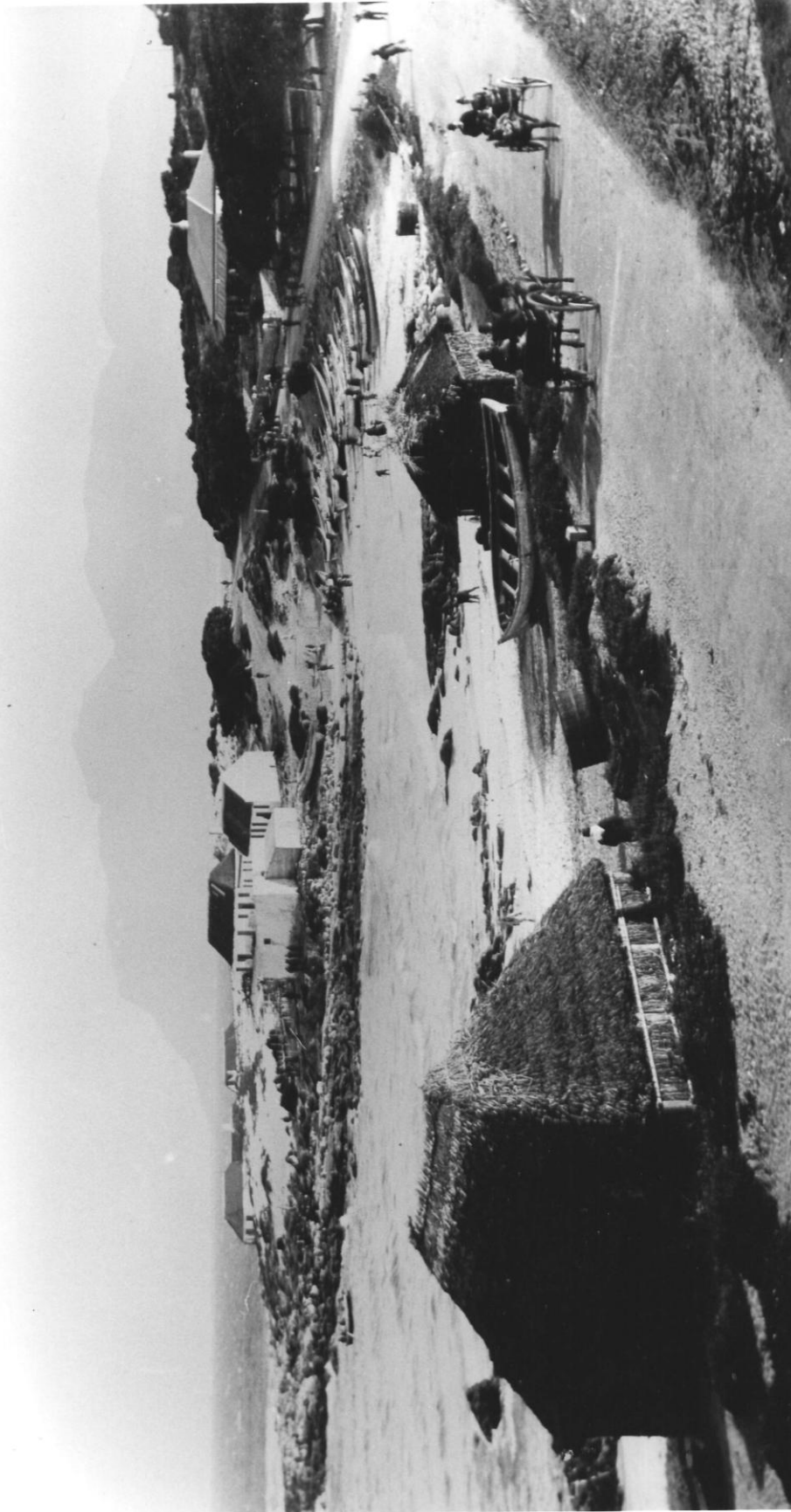


Fig. 2.1: Kalk Bay before the railway, c. 1875. (W Cape Archives, J 6066.)

Thirdly, associated with trawling came pressure to build a proper harbour at Kalk Bay. This, too, created the spectre of competition from motorised craft which, it was thought, would wipe out the smaller sailing craft. The fishing community were divided as to the benefits of harbour establishment.

Fourthly, there was a lobby in the newly formed Kalk Bay Muizenberg Municipality, and among the wealthier section of the community, who favoured the development of the area for recreation and tourism and wanted the closure of the fishery entirely. They objected to the smell of blubber-boiling, general fishy odours, and the unhealthy conditions associated with discarded fish offal. These conditions attracted rats:” the beach swarmed with them. On a moonlight night one could see them 'skipping about like lambs.’ (Wynberg Times, 1901.) It was feared that the rat-borne fleas would spread plague which, at the turn of the century, was a real threat to public health. Instead this lobby favoured the development of the area for recreation and tourism, and the construction of a harbour as a way of encouraging sport fishing craft and yachts.

As a consequence of significant pressure, it seems from the trawling lobby, the Cape Colonial Government charged its Public Works Department to investigate harbour possibilities. Its resident engineer was W Westhofen and he submitted a first proposal based on limited data; Mr C W Methven, a private engineer, was thereupon commissioned to make a survey of the seabed and submit a plan. In 1902 a Select Committee was appointed to hear representations and evaluate the proposals. It was chaired by W Runciman who was the local manager of a Scottish steam trawler called *Mary* the activities of which had caused consternation in the local community. Both engineers submitted larger variations of their first proposals and ultimately, in 1903, both sets of proposals were sent to London for a recommendation. However, the post-South African War Depression from 1904 onwards effectively killed the chances of putting either of the schemes into effect.

By 1906 Kalk Bay with some 40 boats ranked third in importance in the Cape Colony after Table and Algoa Bays in number of boats and size of fishery (Kirkaldy, 1988.) But something had to be done to secure the boats. Eventually in 1905 the KB-MM and the Cape Government Railways reached agreement to construct on a pound for pound basis a system of gantries made from 64 lb rail-lines. The feet were cast in concrete blocks embedded in the sand and

the one ton boats were hauled up and slung above the tide (Figs. 2.2 & 2.3.) But only 20 boats could be protected in this way, and eventually both the concrete foundations as well as the foot of the viaduct were eroded by wave action. By 1910 the whole arrangement had deteriorated to such a dangerous condition and ideas about a harbour were revived.

The same fears existed regarding the agendas of the tourism and trawling lobbies but notwithstanding these it seems that the majority of fishermen accepted the inevitability and advantages of a harbour. With the advent of Union the Union Government now entered the picture and its engineer Mr G T Nicholson was charged with drawing up a fresh plan. It appears to have been something of a compromise between Westhofen's and Methven's as regards both scale and arrangement (Fig. 2.4.) It was the first dedicated fishing harbour to be constructed in South Africa and with its construction the era of uncertainty as regards the protection of the fishing fleet against the seas came to an end.

Era of Security

The actual construction of the Harbour commenced on the 24 February 1913 when the Railways appointed Mr C Le S Furlong as Engineer-in-Charge. The foundation stone was laid by the Minister of Railways and Harbours, Mr. Henry Burton on 7 June 1913. Three hundred guests travelled down by special train to celebrate the occasion. At 2.10 p.m. Mr. Burton was handed a silver trowel by the mayor of Kalk Bay and asked to lay the first block of the harbour wall. At 3.30 p.m. the same Mr. Burton unlocked the door of the new station at Muizenberg and issued the first ticket.

The estimated cost of the Main Breakwater, Fishing Quay, Reclamation, and Slipway was £55,766. The main element of the harbour consisted of the Main Breakwater which was 783 ft. long by 30 ft. wide by approx. 30 ft. high (from the sea-bed.) This structure enclosed an area of approx. 8.03 acres and the water was approx. 20 ft deep at the Wall. The Fish Landing Quay was a structure 260 ft. long.

KALK BAY HÄRBORU
CANTRIES FOR FISHING BOATS

— SCALES: — 0'·1" = 1" A · 1/2" = 1" —

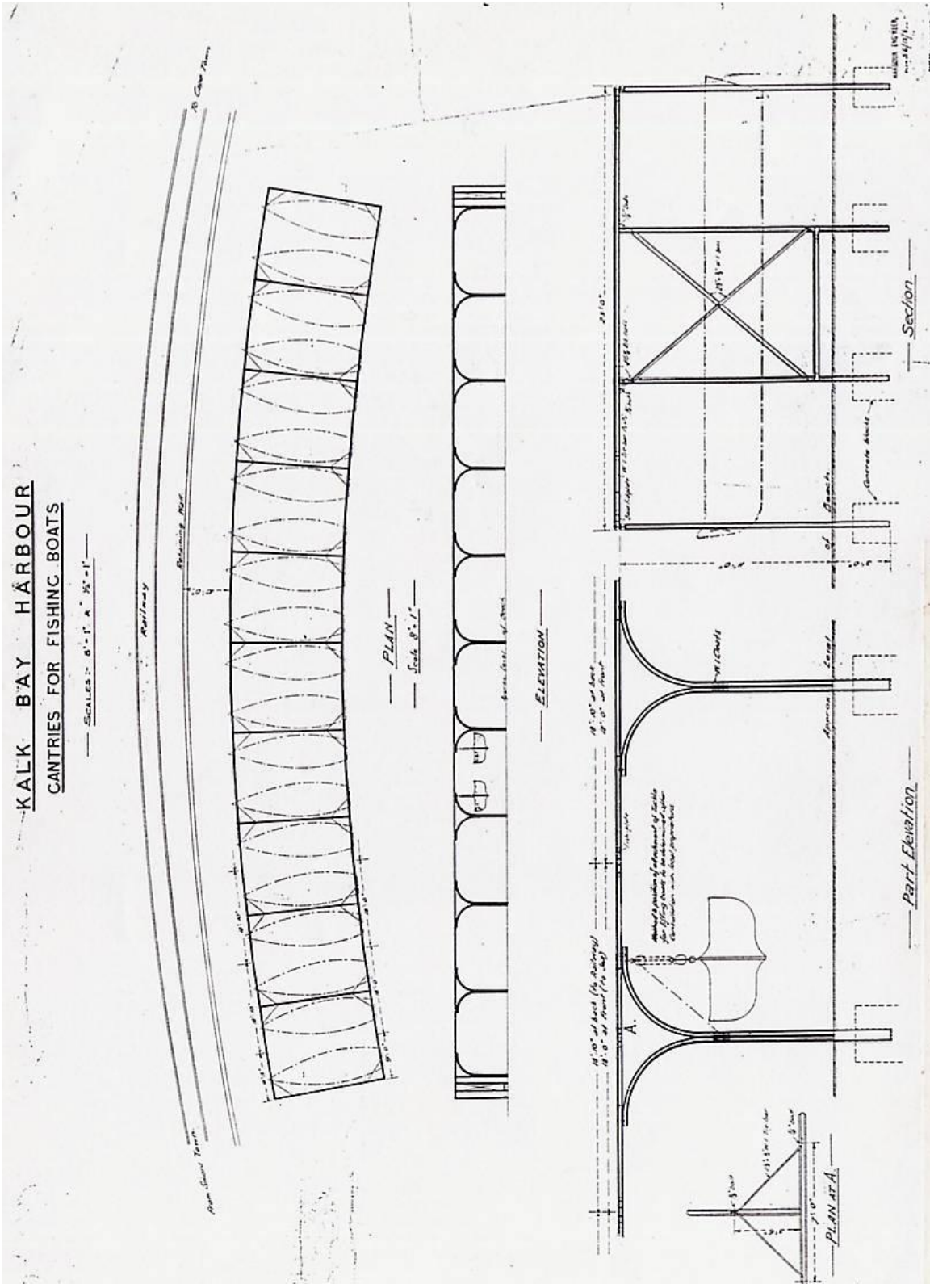


Fig. 2.2: Original plan of the cantries. (Viskor, No. F66 Z165.)

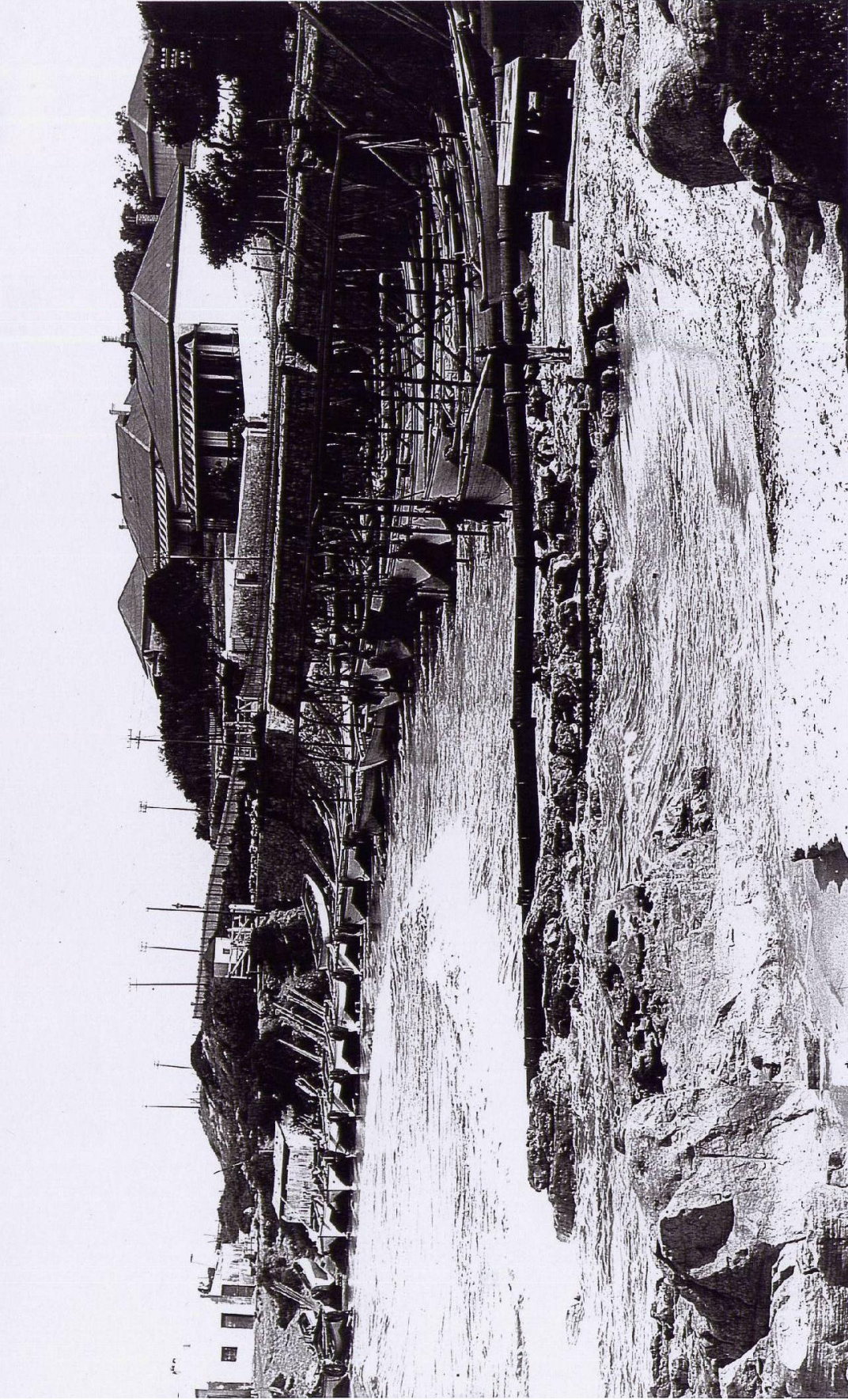


Fig. 2.3: Rail viaduct, gantries and boats at high tide. About 20 boats unprotected. (W Cape Archives, E7866.)

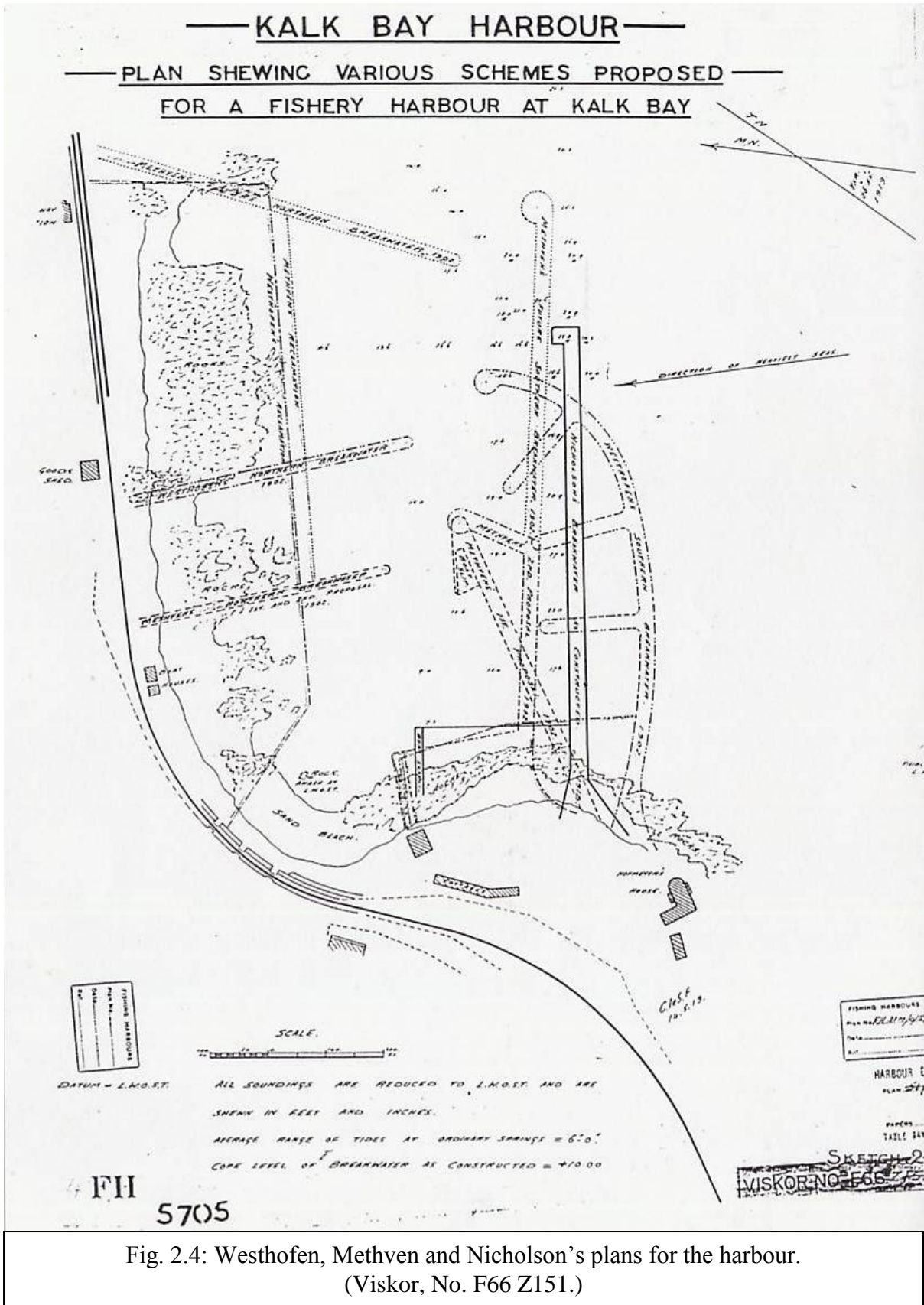


Fig. 2.4: Westhofen, Methven and Nicholson's plans for the harbour. (Viskor, No. F66 Z151.)

with 0.75 acres of reclamation behind it for a working area. The work on these elements together with the slipway was completed in 1918.

The Main Breakwater was built of precast concrete blocks, each weighing about 10 tons. These blocks were cast in the block-yard at Table Bay and transported through to Kalk Bay harbour works direct by rail, where they were unloaded on site by a 12 ton steam crane. The blocks were produced totally by hand with a crew of 5 men. This gang stripped and cleaned the moulds, hand mixed and placed the concrete in 3 units for one day's piece work. This amounted to over 30 tons of sand, stone, and cement and they were paid 8 shillings total! A total of more than 3000 blocks or 30,000 tons of concrete were used in the project.

The first part of the breakwater at the shore end was built in straight bonded blockwork on level concrete foundations. During excavations in this initial phase of the work, they uncovered a substantial old building which had been completely buried in sand. This was one of the original lime works buildings from which Kalk Bay derived its name.

As deeper water was reached, construction was changed to sliced blockwork (Fig. 2.5) which is more suitable to accommodate continuing changes in level of the sea bed. A team of three divers together with their attendants were the main work force employed on the cleaning and preparation of the foundations, and the setting out and laying of the blockwork. The blocks were loaded onto a light rail laid on top of the completed wall and pushed out to the second 15 ton crane on the contract which was used by the divers on foundation and block-laying operations (Fig. 2.6.)

The two cranes mentioned above also proved useful during the 1914-18 War when they were used to tranship guns, gun mountings, torpedo nets etc. directly from railtrucks brought to the new harbour works into lighters, which then carried the equipment directly into Simon's Town Dockyard.

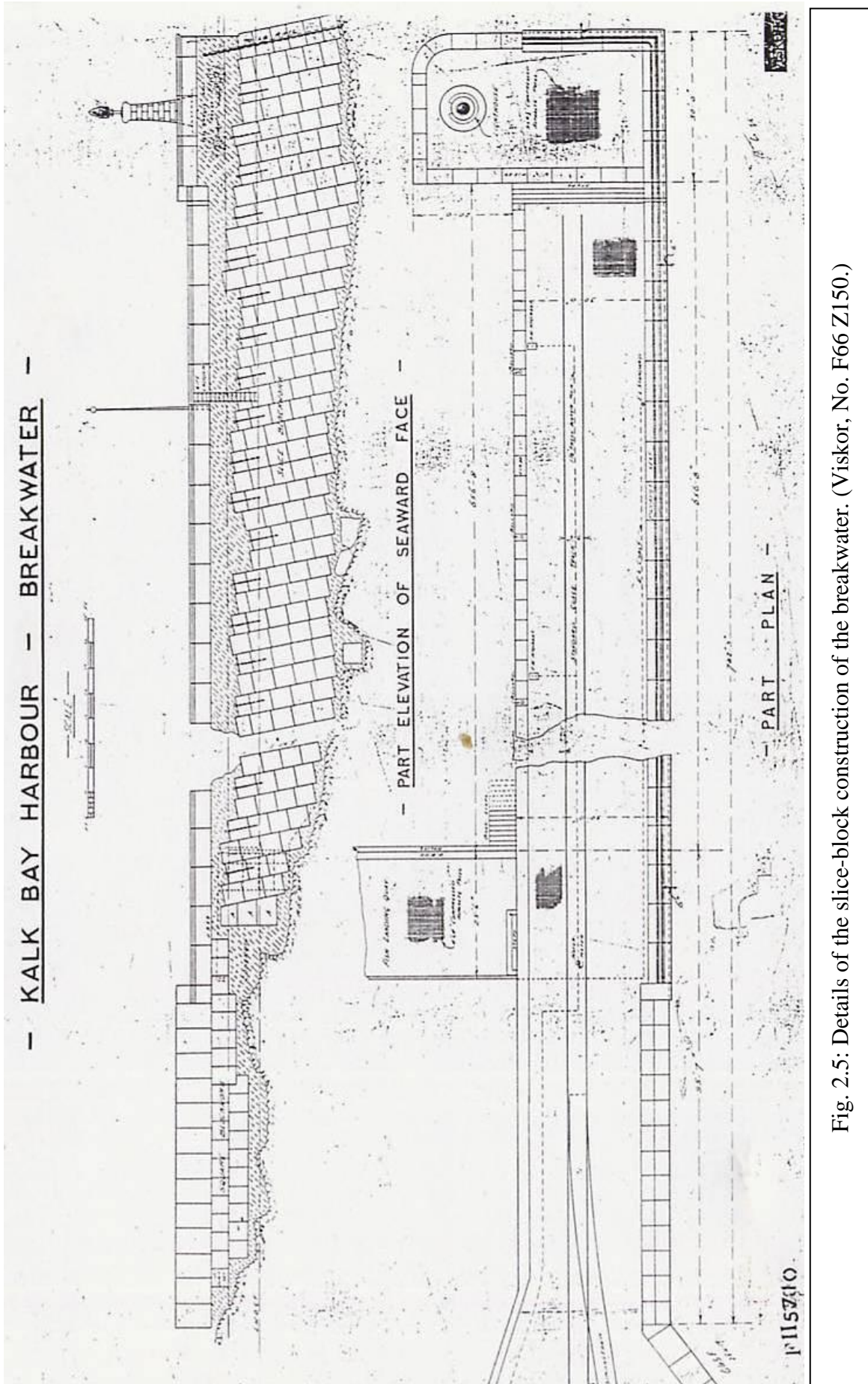


Fig. 2.5: Details of the slice-block construction of the breakwater. (Viskor, No. F66 Z150.)

KALK BAY HARBOUR

METHOD ADOPTED FOR KEEPING THE BREAKWATER
LINE STRAIGHT ON SEA BED

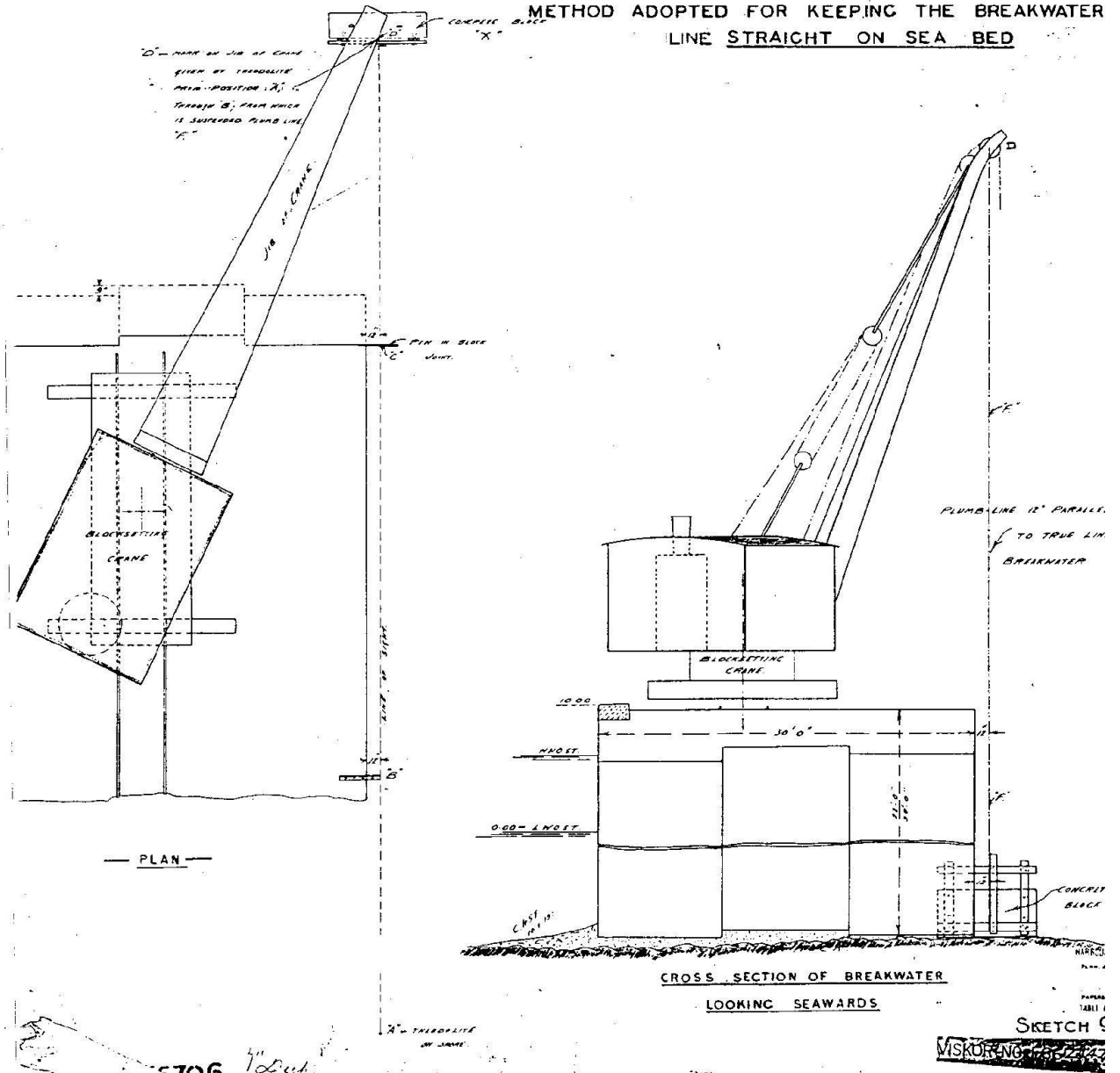


Fig. 2.6: Details of the 15-ton block-laying crane and method for keeping the block line straight. (Viskor, No. F66 Z147.)

The construction work proved to be hazardous and arduous because it was being carried out in open sea conditions with no protection from wind, waves or swell. Over the total construction period, a total of more than 20% of the time was lost due to unsuitable weather conditions. During this period of construction, the local fisherman took advantage of the increasing area of sheltered water being provided by the completed section of the wall, and there were 16 motorised fishing boats working out of the new harbour, a number of these being converted sailing boats.

While the construction of the main breakwater progressed, work commenced on the fish-landing quay. This was a precast block column structure with concrete panels forming the wall between columns. As sections of the quay were completed, the reclamation or filling behind the wall progressed to provide the working area and buildings for the harbour operations. At the same time, the slipway was built complete with a timber cradle capable of handling a 24 ton vessel.

On 21st June 1917, Kalk Bay Harbour was declared a minor port of the Union. Construction was completed in 1918 and the harbour operated in this condition for the next 20 years (Fig. 2.7.)

In 1937 plans were drawn up for a new Northern Mole to complete the protection of the harbour. The first proposal consisted of a curved mole with three jetties made of piled rail lines (Fig. 2.8.) However, a straight mole was constructed, with concrete units at the beach end founded on existing bed-rock. The remainder of the structure was formed with tipped rock rubble. The new jetty built at the south end of this mole was constructed from braced timber frames. These new works were completed in 1939 and gave much more protection to the area behind the main breakwater, and provided additional mooring for the many craft using this busy little harbour. The total cost of the mole and jetty was £13,650. In 1963 a larger slipway was constructed next to the original one. It is capable of accommodating vessels like pelagic trawlers up to 100 tons (minus their nets which weigh up to 20 tons). (P. Stacey, pers. comm.)

The final main phase of construction work in the harbour was the result of a bad storm during Easter 1993 when a black south - easter wind brought with it very heavy seas which removed



Fig. 2.7: The completed breakwater, fish landing quay and slipway, c. 1930. (W Cape Archives.)

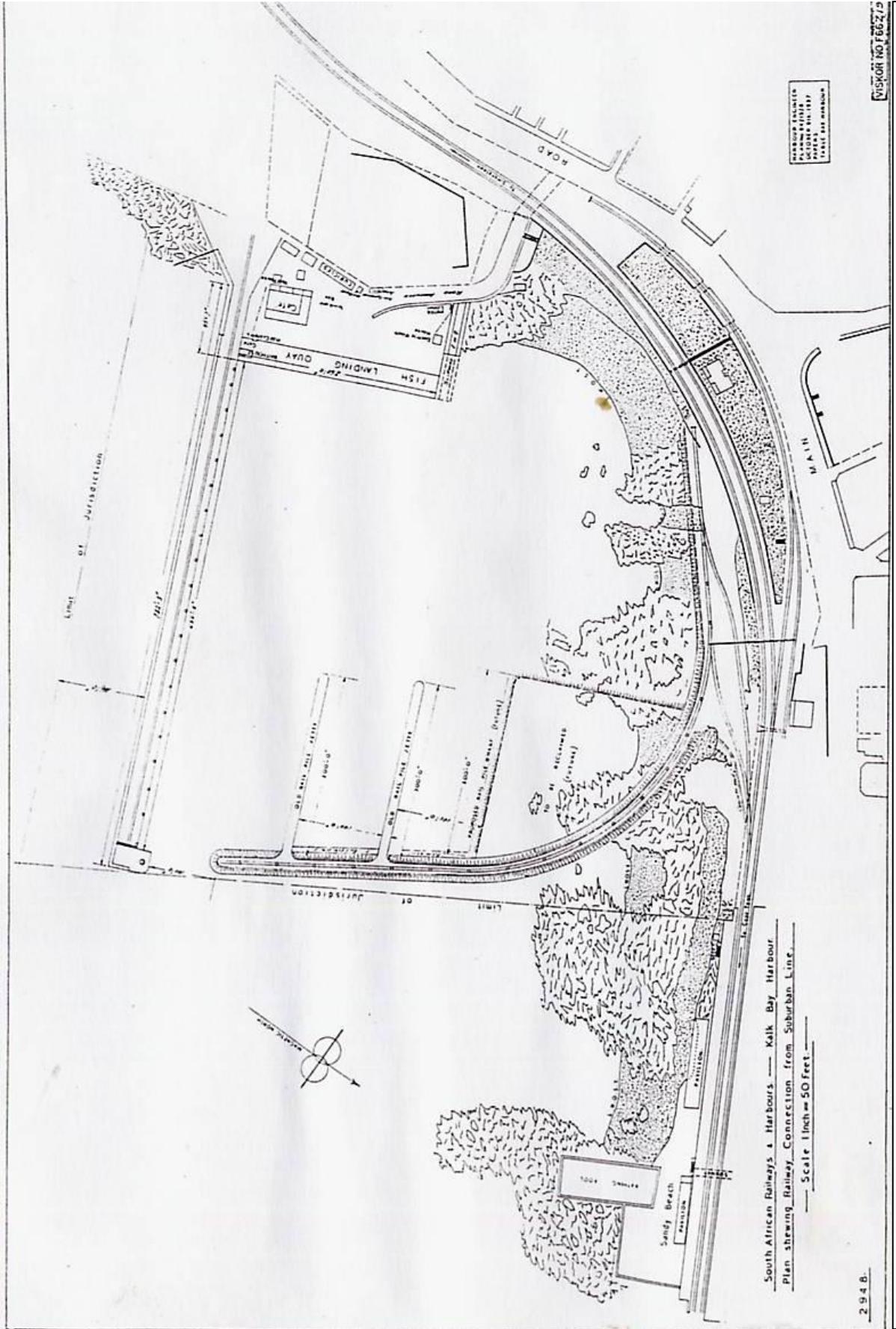


Fig. 2.8: The first plan for the North Mole and jetties, 1937. (Viskor, No. F66 Z194.)

parts of the main breakwater top structure. The breaking seas partly demolished the Jetty off the North Mole and sank a number of boats. A contract was awarded to repair the main breakwater, remove the old jetty, and build a new jetty, springing from the North end of the original Fishing Quay. This contract was completed in October 1994 at a cost of R 1.7 million. This structure was built of precast reinforced concrete frames founded on concrete footings set on bed rock. The deck was formed with precast units with an in-situ concrete top. The new structure is far more substantial than the timber jetty that it replaced, and has resulted in much improved harbour operation as the berths provided are linked directly with the main working area of the harbour.

New Eras?

The further potentialities of the harbour have generated renewed interest from time to time. During the 1970s and 1980s, in particular, a combination of circumstances again focused attention on the harbour and its possible expansion for recreation/tourism purposes. In May 1973 the Kalk Bay Yacht Club was formed and it then requested the Department of Industries to expand the harbour so that it could accommodate yachts. Around this time the False Bay Yacht Club at Simon's Town, fearing displacement through dockyard expansion, asked that space be made available at Kalk Bay should a larger harbour be built there. A third party adding its weight to the idea was the False Bay Conservation Society, who were keen to see the termination of line-fishing from Kalk Bay and, by implication, the demise of the fishing fleet. In place of the local fishing boats they envisaged the provision of berthing facilities for yachts and pleasure craft, as well as slip facilities for ski boat anglers who would fill the line-fishing niche vacated by the displaced Kalk Bay boats.

The whole idea was dependent on one major event which had nothing to do with the harbour: this was the construction of the Boyes Drive freeway and tunnel through Trappies Kop to the Fish Hoek valley. From it would have come the rubble with which to undertake the reclamation and construction work. That scheme never materialised because of lack of funds and so the harbour ideas have gathered dust. Some idea of the scale of what might have happened is illustrated in Figs. 2.9 & 2.10.) The plan of the harbour has therefore remained largely unchanged for over half a century.

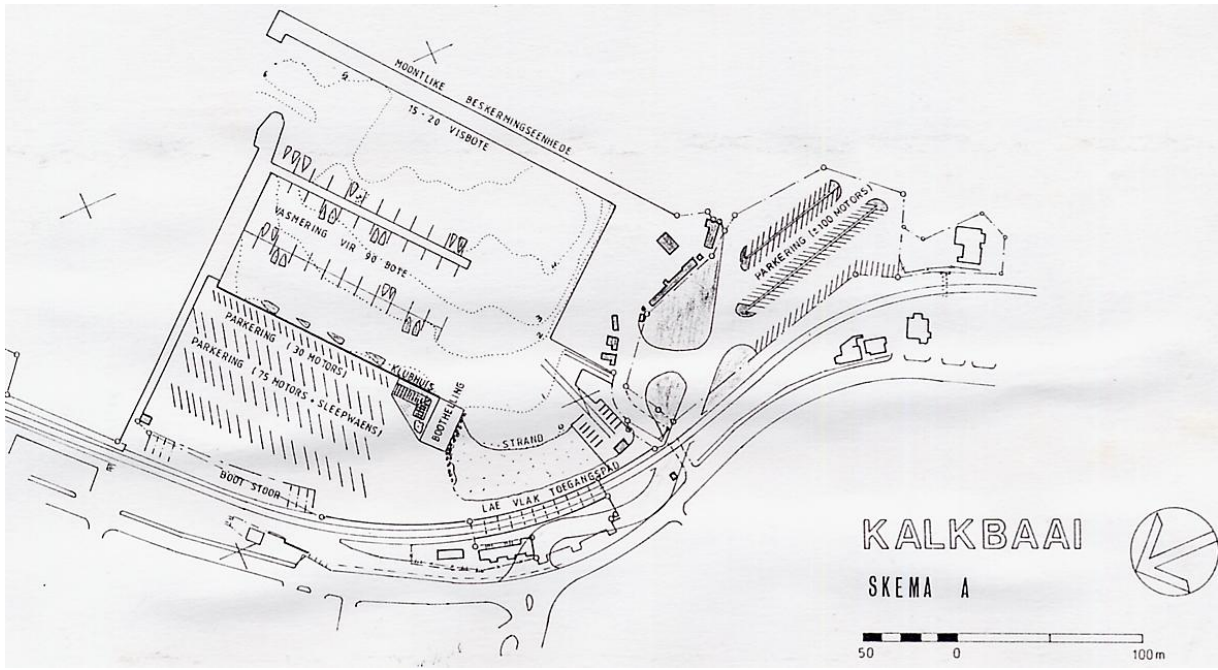


Fig. 2.9: Possible expansion of berths and parking, Scheme A, Viskor 1984.

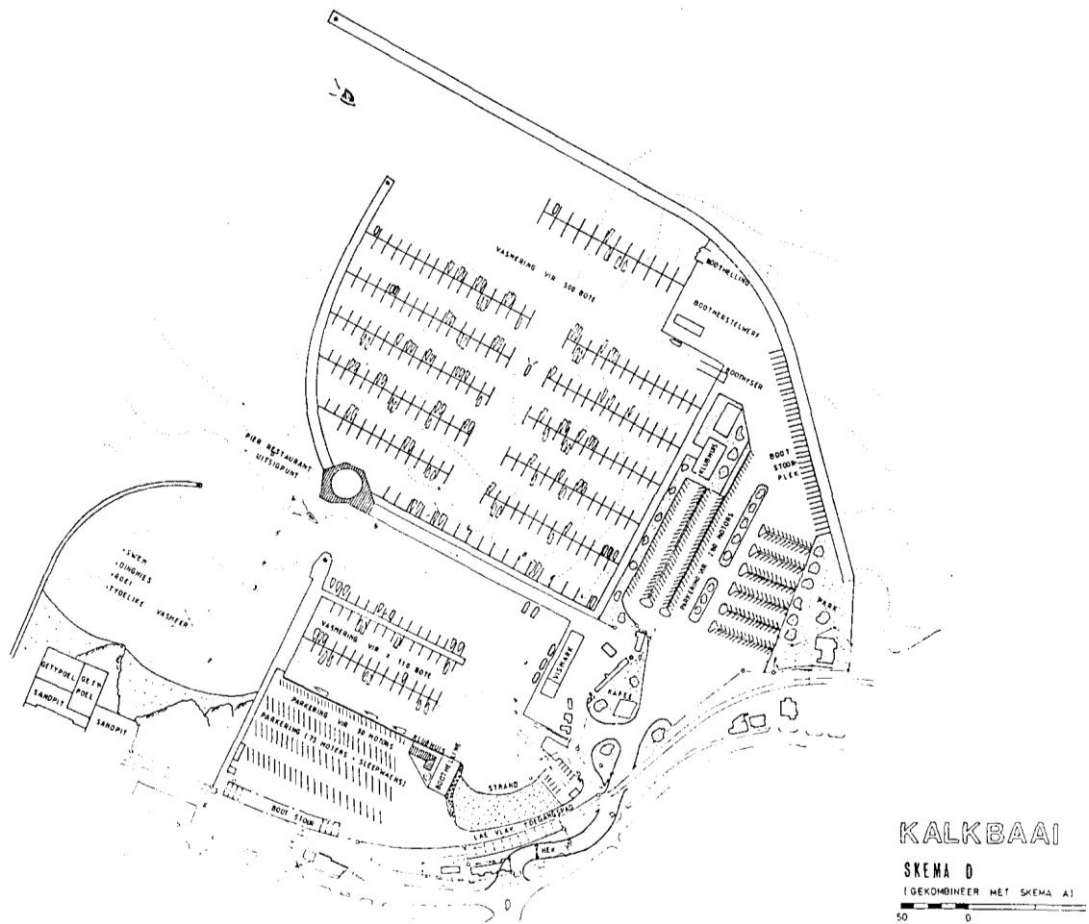


Fig. 2.10: Possible expansion of berths and parking, Scheme D, Viskor 1984.

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THE STORY OF THE RAILWAY LINE FROM MUIZENBERG TO SIMON'S TOWN

David Rhind

The construction of the line from Cape Town to Muizenberg

The line from Cape Town to Simon's Town opened in four stages. The first section was from Cape Town to Wynberg and that opened in December 1864. There had been a lot of argument between the Wynberg Railway Company and the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company which owned the line from Cape Town to Wellington. The Wynberg Company's line actually started from Salt River and the argument was about whether or not the Wynberg Company's trains could use the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company's line from there to Cape Town.

The argument caused a lot of delay and in the meantime the Wynberg Company ran out of money and in the end it had to lease its line to the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company, which operated both lines until they were bought by the Cape Government in 1873.

These lines had been built to take the 4ft 8.5ins gauge, but to lessen the cost of extending the railway through the Hex River Mountains the Government decided to reduce gauge to 3ft 6ins, and so in 1882 when the line to Wynberg was doubled the gauge was, at the same time, also reduced to 3ft 6ins.

Another problem the Wynberg Company had had to face was obtaining permission from the Admiralty in London for the line to cross the road to the Observatory. At that time the Observatory belonged to the Royal Navy, as did the road leading to it, and it exercised prescriptive rights by posting sentries on the road once a year to remind everybody that traffic used it only with its permission. The Admiralty agreed to the railway crossing the road on condition that all trains stopped there and the line was fenced and gated. Thus the station came to be known as Observatory Road until 1921 when the Railways bowed to what had become common usage over the years and changed its name to "Observatory".

There were originally five stations on the line namely, Mowbray, Rondebosch, Newlands, Claremont, and the terminus at Wynberg. These buildings still stand: Mowbray and Claremont being similar double-storey buildings; Rondebosch and Newlands were similar single storey buildings, although Rondebosch has been badly altered over the years; and Wynberg was also single storey in the same style, but enclosed with a porte-cochere to give an imposing appearance as befitted the terminus of the line.

The principal shareholder in the Wynberg Railway Company was John Mortimer Maynard, whose property, Maynardville, in Wynberg is now a public park. Not only did he put up most of the money for the railway but he also gave the land on which Wynberg Station stands and the road leading to it.

The second section of the line occurred when the Cape Government Railways extended a single line to Muizenberg, which opened for traffic in December 1882, just in time for the Christmas and New Year holiday traffic to which it attached much importance. Muizenberg Station (Fig. 3.1) when it was opened was the standard CGR single storey building like those which were built, at much the same time, at Rosebank and Kenilworth. Muizenberg remained the terminus for about six months while work continued on its extension to Kalk Bay.

Construction of the Kalk Bay – Simon's Town section

By the time the line was opened to Kalk Bay, 5 May 1883, the Government was under pressure to push the construction of the line to the North through to Kimberley, where diamonds had been found, as quickly as possible and so no money was available for carrying on the line from Kalk Bay to Simon's Town and so the end of the line remained at Kalk Bay until 1889.



Fig. 3.1: Muizenberg Station and beach, c. 1900.

Thus the start of the fourth section of the line was the turning of the first sod, on 7 November 1889, by the Minister of Public Works, Col. Schermbrucke, at a little ceremony in Kalk Bay. It was attended by some railway officials and local dignitaries together with a few other invited guests but not, to his chagrin, the Editor of the Cape Times who vented his displeasure in the columns of his newspaper and was critical of the fact that the “requisite sod” had been brought down from Newlands the day before and kept watered overnight.

However, on the day, the Minister duly turned the first sod into a wheelbarrow and trundled it away down a plank, after which the party adjourned to the nearby King’s Hotel for luncheon and the inevitable round of speeches, before returning to Cape Town by the 3.40 pm train.

No time was lost in starting on the work which was under the overall control of the Railway’s Engineer-in-Chief and Mr Noad, the District Engineer. The actual supervision was done by Engineers Wise and Bishop, while the Clerks of Works were Messrs. Barclay and Picton. The contractor for the section from Kalk Bay to Fish Hoek was Messrs Wilkinson and Son. The Government itself built the rest of the line with the exception of a piece in the middle for which the contractors were Messrs. Storrier and Wheeler.

There was also some controversy when skilled artisans, such as masons, were brought from overseas to work on the construction, but the answer was that there were not enough such men available at the Cape if the completion of the line was not to be delayed. As it was, the Minister’s confident assertion, at the turning of the first ceremony, that the line would be completed in six months was wildly out.

Between Kalk Bay and Simon's Town there was only one station, indeed really little more than a halt, at Fish Hoek. This was near the present level-crossing onto the beach and was a wooden platform on open trestles which allowed the sand to blow straight through beneath it. Drifting sand was a great problem for many years and a team of labourers was employed to keep the line clear and to load the unwanted sand onto railway wagons for dumping the banks of the

Silvermine Stream. Later on it was also railed through to Salt River to reclaim the area over which the Railway Workshops were extended.

Further along the line at Glencairn (Fig 3.2) where, later on, the train also stopped to serve those employed at the Glassworks, sand was an equal problem which was only overcome by moving the platform from the beach at the mouth of the Elsie's River to its present position nearer Simon's Town where the shoreline is rocky.

Eventually the final section of the line to Simon's Town (Fig. 3.3) was completed and was officially opened on 1 December 1890 when Cecil Rhodes arrived on the first train and made a speech on the platform, before everyone marched behind the band of the East Yorkshire Regiment, which had arrived on the train from Wynberg, to the British Hotel for an official luncheon and, of course, innumerable speeches.

Thus, over a span of thirty-six years, the railway was completed and although times have changed and the line has seen various changes, not the least being electrification in 1928, it is still a most important link between Cape Town and Simon's Town as well as for the burgeoning population along the route.

Among the changes over the years have been the new improved stations at Glencairn, Sunny Cove, Fish Hoek, Clovelly, St. James, and Muizenberg, to mention only those along the False Bay coastline. Of these the most significant must be the new station building at Muizenberg which was built in 1913, at the same time as the line from Wynberg was doubled, and is today a National Monument which is greatly admired; but that that was not always so is clear from reports in the contemporary newspapers in which criticism of it was voiced. It was suggested that more space should have been given to the approach from the road to allow for the increase in traffic which it was expected, rightly, would come with the passing years. It was also suggested that the platform on the beach side should have been a broad one with a balustrade, seats and a screen and two flights of steps leading to the sands, which at that time came right up to the railway. As to the building itself, it was said that an opportunity had been missed and that on “a



Fig. 3.2: Glencairn Valley and Elsie's River crossed by railway and Simon's Town Road, c. 1900.
(W Cape Archives.)



Fig. 3.3: Simon's Town: Long Beach, road and railway station, c. 1904.
(W Cape Archives, R1488.)

site facing one of the finest sea shores of the world and miles of breaking waves they had put up a paltry thing of red bricks and built a balcony upon it of cheap stucco-work when there is a stone quarry at its very back door”.

Other rail lines proposed or constructed

It is easy for us today to forget that the line from Muizenberg to Simon’s Town was not the only railway that was projected or built along the coastline. (Fig. 3.4.) Among the speakers at the British Hotel at Simon’s Town on 1 December 1890 was one by Anders Ohlsson in which he proposed that the line should be continued on as far as Miller’s Point, but no more was ever heard of that idea.

In 1903 an Act of the Cape Parliament authorised a line from Fish Hoek to Kommetjie, to be built and operated by the Kommetjie Railway Company. All the necessary surveys were done but with the ending of the Anglo-Boer War the Cape Colony, and Cape Town in particular, fell on hard times and money for the project failed to materialise and that was the end of another idea,

In June 1912 when the line from Wynberg to Muizenberg was being doubled and the new station was being built, the General Manager of the CGR, Mr Hoy, promised that he would give a sympathetic hearing to representations for the line along the False Bay coast to be extended from Muizenberg in the direction of Strandfontein and a survey for such a line on to Somerset West and Gordon's Bay was completed in 1918, but nothing further ever happened.

Despite these non-starters there were a number which did start. In 1896, when a quarry was opened on Elsie's Peak, a trolley line was constructed from it down to the Fish Hoek Outspan where the stone was transferred onto the CGR for onward transport elsewhere.

In 1902, when the Glencairn Glassworks were established, there appears to have been a narrow gauge line from Glencairn station to the Glassworks and further on up the hill to where the sand

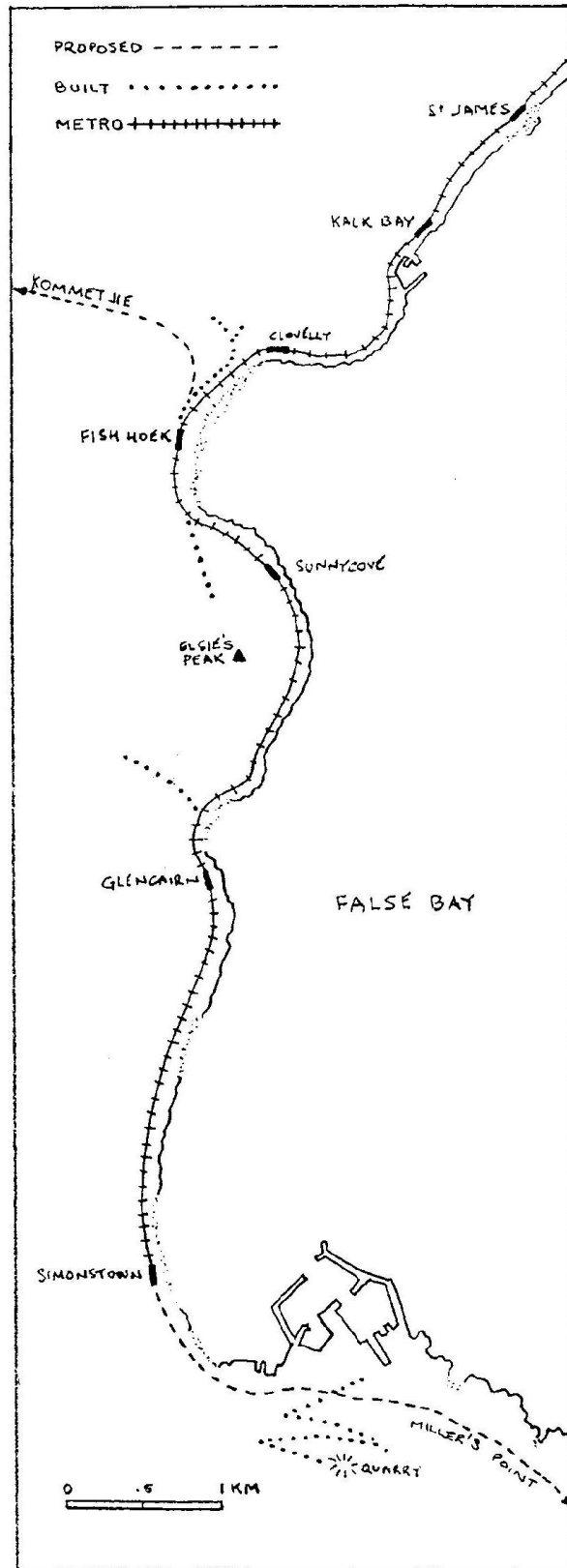


Fig. 3.4: Rail lines proposed and built.

was obtained. The works closed in 1905 but in the meantime, during the Anglo-Boer War, a 3ft 6ins gauge spur was laid along the same alignment and was used for the test-firing of rail-mounted big guns out into False Bay.

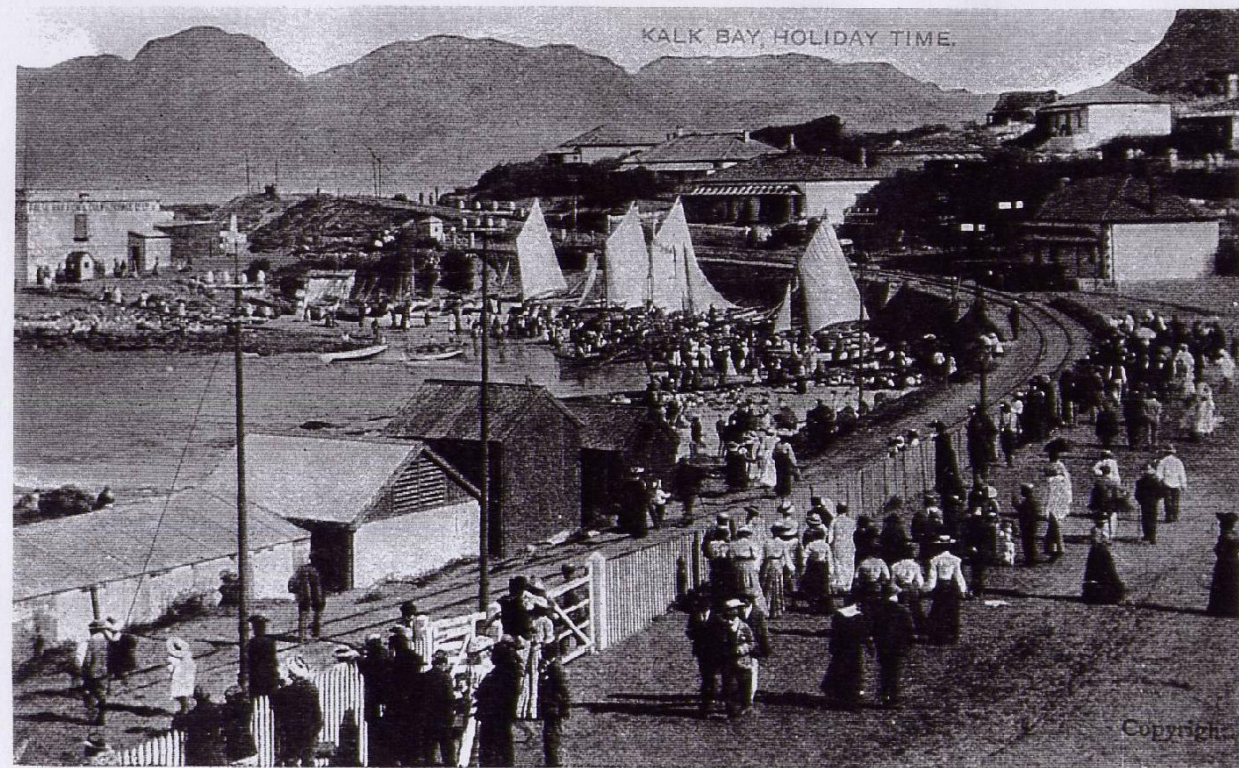
From 1903 until about 1930 there was a private line that ran parallel to the CGR from Fish Hoek toward Kalk Bay and across the Silvermine Stream where it turned inland to Clovelly where a developer named Colyn was establishing a village called Mayville. Colyn also had a quarry in the same vicinity and he used this line to carry stone down to Fish Hoek. It is not clear how long Colyn used this line but by 1920 the CGR was using it as far as the Silvermine Stream, near where they were dumping the surplus sand from Fish Hoek Station.

Conclusion

In concluding let us not forget the “Picnic Line” (Figs. 3.5 & 3.6) on which 11,500 tickets to Muizenberg / St James / Kalk Bay were sold in one month in 1893, in the days when the Railways were passenger-friendly and keen to improve their business by arranging excursion tickets (Fig. 3.7) with fireworks displays and concerts at the bandstand at St James (Fig. 3.8), where there was also the Aquarium. The beach at Muizenberg was well publicised by Railway posters and Kalk Bay offered boat trips from the beach.

Today we have the enterprising and privately run Bigsie’s Buffet Car which shuttles, rather surreptitiously, back and forth between Cape Town and Simon’s Town and provides a very pleasant and unique way of travelling along the spectacular coastline for those who happen to know about it.

Times and circumstances have changed but a backward glance sometimes provides ideas for the future.



Figs. 3.5 & 3.6: Day trippers at Kalk Bay, c. 1905.

CAPE GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS

MOONLIGHT FETE.—MUSIC AT THE SEA-SIDE.—
FIREWORKS.—5th FEBRUARY, 1898.

The Band of the 1st Liverpool Regiment will play at St. James'
from 7 to 9 p.m.

SPECIAL Trains will leave Cape Town for St. James' at 5.48 p.m.,
stopping at Wynberg only: 6.20 p.m. stopping at all Stations; and
6.50 p.m. stopping at Mowbray, Rondebosch, and Wynberg only.

Return Trains will leave St. James' for Cape Town at 9.10 p.m.
(Express Wynberg and Cape Town only), and at 9.23 and 9.30 p.m.,
10.18 and 11.15 p.m., stopping at intermediate Stations.

Passengers from Simon's Town travel by Ordinary Trains.

Return Fares from all Stations, 1s. 6d. First Class, or Single Fare
when it amounts to less: Children Half Price.

Passengers at above FARES may also travel by the Ordinary
Trains leaving Cape Town at 3.25 p.m., 4.0 p.m., 5.50 p.m., and 6.10 p.m.

Fares from Simon's Town, 1s. First Class: Children Half Price.

Cape Town
762 31st January, 1898

C. B. ELLIOTT,
General Manager.

Fig. 3.7: Cape Government Railways promotional advertisement, 1898. (Cape Argus, 3/2/1898.)



Fig. 3.8: St. James Station, c. 1906. (W Cape Archives, R1485.)

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FAMILIES OF KALK BAY

**Presented by Kobie Poggenpoel, Ron Kent and Vincent Cloete
Compiled and Edited by Sandy Trull**

This was the first meeting organised by the Oral History Working Group. We chose to focus on probably the oldest section of this community, the fishing families. Unfortunately it was beyond the scope of one meeting to include all the most prominent families in the area, and we do hope that no one feels slighted. As the group continues with its work, we hope that many more speakers will come forward for future meetings.

The Poggenpoel Family

The first baby to be baptised in the Holy Trinity Anglican Church was a Poggenpoel and that was in 1861. The Church was not in its present location then, but somewhere near the station.

Mr. Poggenpoel's father's father i.e. his grandfather, was a fisherman. He owned boats and carts to fish and hawk the fish. Mr. Poggenpoel's father, Dirk Poggenpoel was a fisherman until he was 80 years old. Even then he didn't want to stop, but he had promised to stop when he reached 80 and so one of his other sons took his fishing tackle away. He died at the age of 84.

When Kobie Poggenpoel left school he worked for the Post Office for 5 years, until "the call of the sea" was too great for him to resist! Neither of his sons went into fishing, at first. The one went to the bank and the other became an engineer. However, the one that went to the bank has now been retrenched and so is fishing!

As a boy Kobie Poggenpoel attended the Anglican Church School, called the 'Holy Community School'. His brothers and sisters also attended that school and so did his father! That school was not racially divided and it was situated on the present church parking lot, across the railway line from the Kalk Bay reef.

The Poggenpoel's lived in the wood and iron houses at the top of Rouxville Road above the Mosque. (Fig. 4.1). Kobie Poggenpoel's grandfather owned the houses and this is where Kobie grew up. Below them was the wash house situated on the present day park area. The fisherfolk would do the washing of the wealthier people there because there was a fresh water stream. They would also iron the clothes and in that way supplement the income of their husbands.

The Fernandez Family

Mr. Kent spoke next about the Fernandez family based on his research of Tommy Carse's book, *Die Blou Dam is hul Oesland*. Staggie Fernandez was the father of the family. He jumped ship at Simon's Town and came here to live here amongst the fishing community. He had many children and the one Mr. Kent spoke about was Pedro.

Pedro inherited his father's boat and bought boats of his own. He had 14 children, only 9 survived to adulthood. They were: Josef, Tom, Gabrielle, Freddy, Ceril, Simon, Mary, Sophia and Immalda. The family ran a fishing business by working together. They also had a contract to collect guano from Seal Island.

Josef must have been the eldest because he was the first to get a licence to skipper a boat. It was while he was skippering his father's boat, *Columbia*, that it sank and he and Freddy and Simon drowned. Gabriella survived with only one other crew member. This was the result of a bad storm in Table Bay. Tom acquired land and Sophia oversaw the building of Fernandview on Clairvaux Road.

The guano business was halted in 1939 because of the war, but it would have stopped being viable soon anyway because so many seals were going to Seal Island that the birds were not as plentiful.

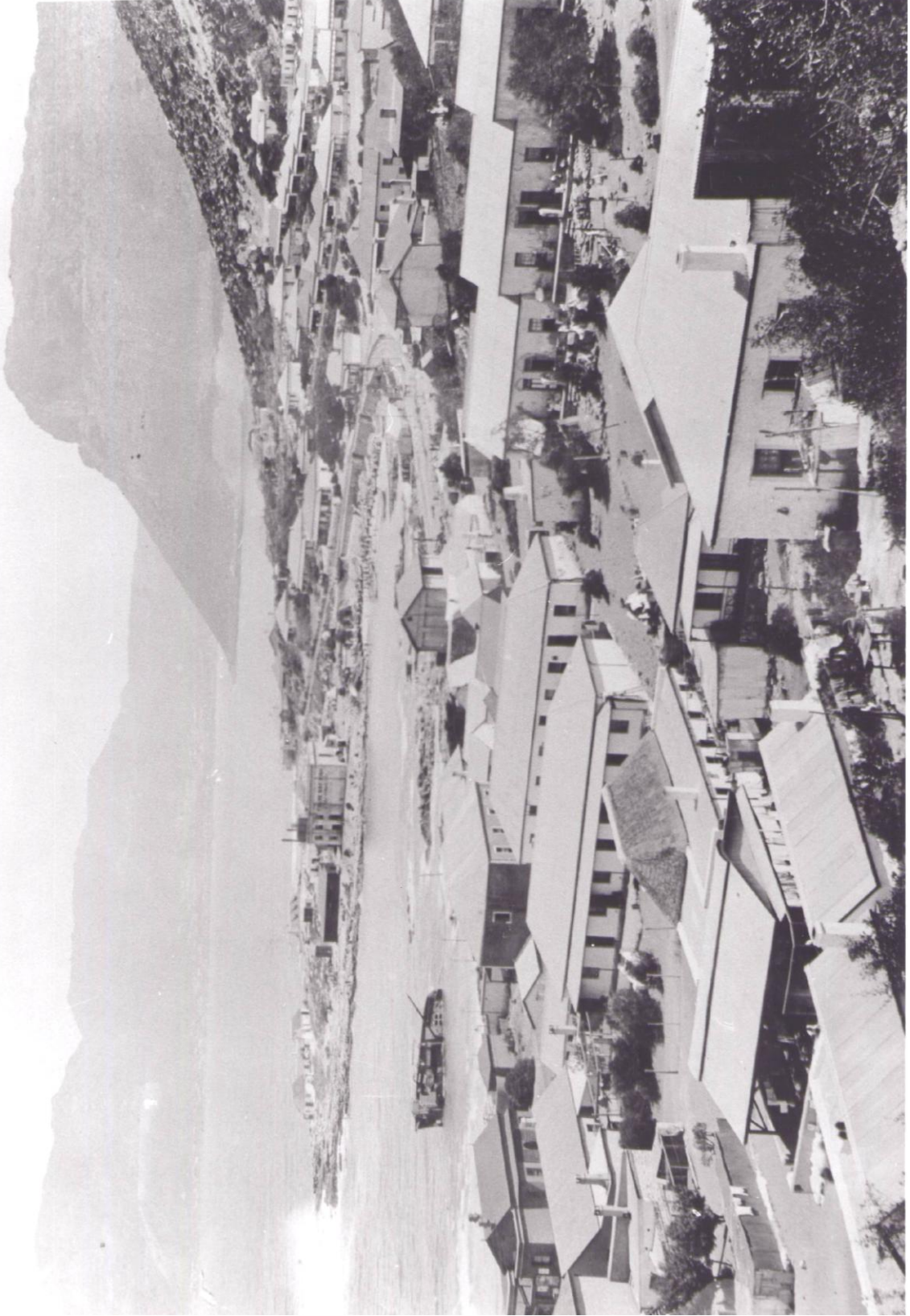


Fig. 4.1: Kalk Bay area known as 'Die Dam', with washhouse at lower left (broad-roof building.) Poggenpoel family home out of photo to right. (W Cape Archives.)

Tom, Sophia, Gabrielle and Ceril went on annual visits to Luderitz and it was on one of these visits that Sophia died. She was buried in the Muizenberg cemetery. In the book she is lauded for her 'good work' in getting the council flats for the fishermen!

There are many tales of the heroism of this family and Mr. Kent hopes to at least have the opportunity to translate this book into English to give it the wider readership it deserves.

The Cloete Family

Mr. Vincent Cloete told us about his family, who have lived in the area for approximately 6 or 7 generations. His great-grandfather, on his father's side, was a trekboer in the Noordhoek area. Whether he was a 'baas' or a 'boy', Mr Cloete does not know. His son, Mr. Cloete's grandfather, left that way of life and came here to fish. His mother's family was the Clarence family and they had been here much longer.

Mr. Cloete grew up in Windsor Road in one of the 4 semi-detached houses at the back of the 'New Kings'. (Fig. 4.2.) The houses had 2 bedrooms and a tiny kitchen as well as a loft upstairs where other older fishermen who stayed away from Kalk Bay stayed when they were fishing. Mr. Cloete's father was born in that house in 1900, so the house must be over 100 years old.

That part of Kalk Bay was called 'Die Middedorp'. Most of the fishermen stayed where the flats are now and that area was called 'Die Land', and where Mr. Poggenpoel stayed was called 'Die Dam' because it was near the wash-house. About 6 or 7 families lived in the Middedorp.

Mr. Cloete's mother was the oldest in a very large family. Her father died on the sea when she was about 15. He took some pleasure fishermen out and a sudden storm came up. The boat was spotted from Kalk Bay, but must have capsized. One man swam to Muizenberg, but he died before the doctor arrived.

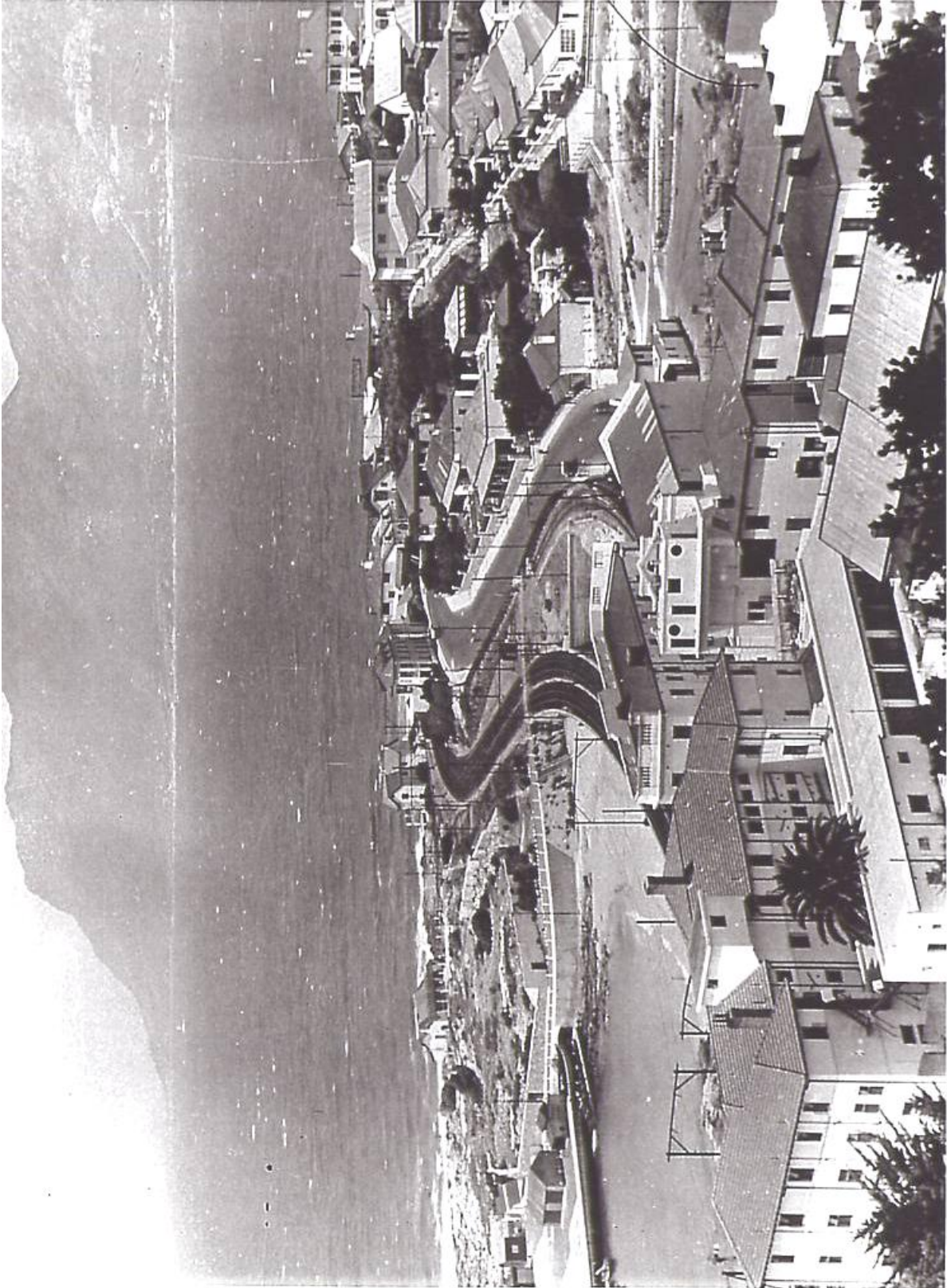


Fig. 4.2: Windsor Road area known as 'Die Middelorp'. Cloete family home at centre bottom. (W Cape Archives.)

Her mother was left with a big family and a fishing boat. Her two younger brothers had to go fishing when they were approximately 11 and 12 years old. She had to get them up at about 2 or 3 a.m. and walk them down to the boats, or to some other fishermen to go on to the boat. The boat was called “Mary Jane” after the Grandfather’s youngest daughter. But she was a very lucky boat and became known by everybody as the *Waterbaby*.

The *Waterbaby* is an example of a very old boat, but she did have a tiny engine. Before then boats did not have engines, they were sailed and if no wind was blowing the crew used their oars. To facilitate sailing boats need keels, but the Kalk Bay boats could not have keels because they had to be pulled up on the beach. So they used a system of ‘*balars*’. This meant filling up sand bags everyday and using them to balance the boats until they had caught enough fish, then they would throw the sand away and use the fish instead. That is why the parking area opposite the beach became so hollow: the fishermen took sand away from there everyday.

That parking area used to be the Outspan area because that is where people would outspan their horses. There was a river running down Clairvaux Road which they could drink from.

Mr. Cloete’s mother told the story of the Van Blerk’s who owned a lot of land in this area. They had cattle and lived in Clairvaux House. Mrs. Van Blerk sold milk to the fisherfolk, but they had to throw their money into a jar of boiling water because she wouldn’t touch their money before it had been sterilized.

Mr. Cloete went to the same school as Mr. Poggenpoel, which was called the *klipskool*. (Fig. 4.3). What he finds amazing about the school is not that they had only two teachers, one for the juniors (sub A, B and std. 1) and the principal for the seniors (std. 2, 3 and 4), but that all the people that continued with their education from that school, always did very well in the bigger schools up the line.

Things were different in those days: Fishermen were disciplined, but that began disappearing after the engine was introduced which was only after the harbour was built. There were many

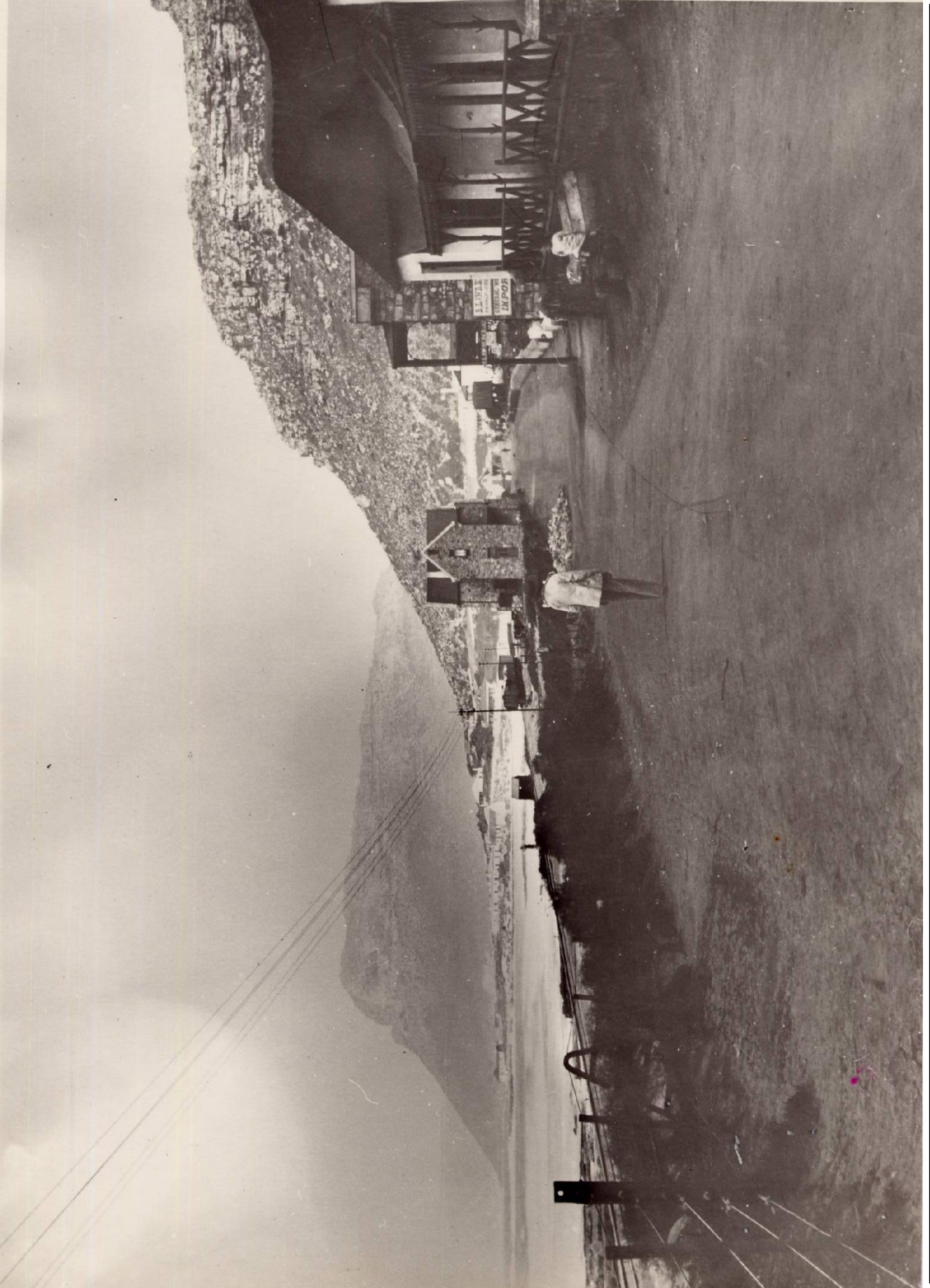


Fig. 4.3: The 'Klipskool' on Main Road (centre); Beaufort Cottage at right. (W Cape Archives.)

more fish in those days and the skills of the fishermen were more developed. Kalk Bay fishermen still have a reputation for being the best line fishermen in South Africa. That is because they fish with lines all year round.

There were two racially segregated pubs: one of them at the New Kings, and the other at the Majestic. People were so disciplined that even the younger men did not go to the New Kings which the older men went to.

As children they would fetch firewood and do their other chores everyday and then they would go and play at the beach. They did not hang around the houses so as not to disturb their fathers. They were fine swimmers, rugby players and they were very fit!

Today the children just watch TV!

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