

**GARDENS, GARDENING CULTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF A SEMI-VERNACULAR GARDEN STYLE
IN BATHO, MANGAUNG, 1918-1939:
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

by

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I, Hendrik Jeremias du Bruyn, declare that the thesis that I herewith submit for the Philosophiae Doctoral Degree in History at the University of the Free State, Department of History, is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

.....
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ABSTRACT

Topiary had been a feature of European gardens – particularly those laid out in the Netherlands and Britain – for centuries. Since the occupation and subsequent colonisation of the Cape of Good Hope, first by the Dutch and then the British during the 17th and 18th centuries, the South African garden style and gardening culture had been strongly influenced by these two gardening nations. Importantly, such cultural influence was not limited to the white colonists’ gardens and gardening culture. Due to acculturation and inter-cultural influencing, the garden style and gardening culture of South Africa’s black people and other indigenous groups were influenced by white gardeners’ preference for formality, symmetry and, above all, topiary.

The traditional African vernacular garden/field, which may be described as an ‘agricultural garden’ and/or ‘horticultural field’, was characterised by an orderly yet mostly informal layout and the absence of a strict separation between gardens (vegetables) and fields (crops). Due to British and European influence, particularly in the region which became known as South Africa, the vernacular food-only gardens of some black people and indigenous groups gradually became semi-vernacular. The once informal layout of gardens and fields had become more regimented and seed was sown in rows instead of scattered randomly. Furthermore, the ancient Western and traditional African concept of a garden as an enclosed area was reinforced by the white colonists’ taste for gardens enclosed by clipped hedges.

British and European missionaries who had established mission stations across the mentioned region also played an important role in strengthening a gardening culture among the ‘Bantu’-speaking black people and other indigenous groups, such as the Khoesan. Furthermore, mission schools and training institutions were used as vehicles to promote ‘industrial education’ for black people and indigenous groups. Gardening and Nature Study were considered industrial subjects which not only taught learners the principles of practical gardening but also promoted a predominantly formal garden style. During the 20th century, industrial education became official policy in government-funded black schools to secure a steady supply of suitably trained manual labourers for the ‘white’ economy, including labourers to work in gardens and fields.

During the 19th century, the taste for formality and topiary spread to the region beyond the Cape Colony, including the Transgariep, which became the Orange Free State republic with Bloemfontein as its capital (1854). Bloemfontein's first gardeners were of Dutch, German and British origin; consequently, the local garden style and gardening culture were European. Due to the increased availability of cheap black manual labour, Bloemfontein's gardens were maintained by black garden labourers. In the white people's gardens, the black garden labourers were exposed to a preference for the formal garden style and topiary, particularly clipped hedges. The development of 'gardening relationships' between white employers and black labourers led to the transference of gardening knowledge and skills, including topiary skills.

Bloemfontein's oldest locations, notably Waaihoek and Cape Stands, were not devoid of gardens. However, the Bloemfontein municipality deemed it necessary to encourage location residents to beautify their domestic surroundings by erecting decent houses and laying out small gardens. In addition to food-only gardens, food-and-ornamental gardens became increasingly popular. Rapid urbanisation after the end of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) caused a substantial increase in Bloemfontein's black and coloured population, which resulted in overcrowding and the development of slum conditions in the locations. The municipality's efforts to address this challenge reached a climax with the founding of Batho (1918) as one of the Union of South Africa's first 'model locations'.

Thanks to the efforts of influential municipal officials, Bloemfontein's 'model location' was turned into a 'garden location' with plots made big enough to allow space for the laying out of gardens. Measures taken to encourage residents to lay out gardens paid off and, in due course, semi-vernacular location gardens – in this case, topiary gardens – were laid out in Batho. Batho's topiary gardens may be described as simple formal axial gardens characterised by English cottage-style planting inside a formal framework. The outstanding feature of most Batho gardens was the presence of topiary, including clipped hedges, shapes and living sculpture. Essentially, an ancient European garden art was indigenised and Africanised in the location environment and, in the process, turned into a phenomenon described as 'township topiary'. Since Batho's founding, its gardening culture had been sustained by the transference of gardening knowledge and skills – including those related to 'township topiary' – from one generation of gardeners to the next.

Keywords

Batho, Bloemfontein, Mangaung, the Netherlands, Britain, topiary, hedges, garden, gardening, garden layout, gardening culture, vernacular, semi-vernacular, acculturation, inter-cultural influencing, black gardener, black garden labourer, oral testimonies

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Since the onset of South Africa's colonial period in the mid-1600s, gardening has been a popular pastime for generations of white South Africans. First, the Dutch and later the British brought a strong gardening culture and passion for gardening to South Africa. During the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, when first the Cape of Good Hope (hereafter the Cape) and later the rest of Southern Africa were colonised by the Netherlands (the Cape only) and Britain respectively, the two mentioned countries, together with Italy and France, were the world leaders in the fields of horticulture, floriculture, arboriculture and botany. The contributions made by the French Huguenots, some of whom had brought their knowledge of viticulture to the Cape, may also be mentioned. The Dutch and British immigrants who had settled in South Africa, either permanently or temporarily are, for the purpose of this study, most important because they brought with them gardening skills and expertise that contributed substantially to the development of a strong gardening culture among South Africans.

It is important to note that the extent of knowledge and skills transferred from Europe and Britain to South Africa involved every aspect of the concepts 'garden' and 'gardening'. Therefore, the above-mentioned terms should be understood within the context of their broadest possible meanings and definitions.¹ Any piece of land may be imbued with garden characteristics and a wide variety of gardening activities may be practised on it. A garden may be a pocket-sized piece of land consisting of a bed of sweet-peas (*Lathyrus odoratus*) in front of a stoep,² or a professionally-landscaped showpiece that covers several hectares. For some, a garden consists only of flowers and ornamental shrubs, while for others a garden without vegetables and a patch of maize (mealies; *Zea mays*) is not a proper garden. Some gardeners dream of an English cottage-style garden with 'old-fashioned' flowers, while a park-like garden is the ultimate fantasy for others.

¹ For a detailed discussion of the meaning of the words 'garden' and 'gardening', see Chapter 1.

² The Afrikaans word *stoep*, also commonly used by English-speaking South Africans, is a vernacular term for a simplified version of a verandah. A stoep is typically an uncovered platform attached to a house, while a verandah is usually covered and more ornate.

South Africa's gardening culture, which had developed over the course of centuries, is the result of a process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing³ that involved several cultures, most notably the European (including British) and African cultures. This dynamic process led to the development of a strong and unique gardening culture and tradition among South Africans. Given South Africa's long history of colonialism and racial discrimination, its gardening culture had always been much more visible and pronounced among the European inhabitants than among the indigenous people. For centuries, South Africa's garden owners were predominantly white but it does not mean that the black⁴ and coloured⁵ inhabitants were not involved in gardening. A strict and deeply-ingrained labour division, typical of most colonial societies, determined that white people were responsible for the mental labour, while people of colour were responsible for the menial labour, which typically meant manual labour. Consequently, South Africa's racial divide also affected the world of gardens and gardening – a world in which white garden owners and black and coloured garden labourers occupied opposite sides of the labour divide. As a result, a perception developed among black people that for them, gardening was essentially manual and, by implication, menial labour, and as a pastime, gardening was the exclusive privilege of white people. Gardening required unskilled labour, which also happened to be cheap, and was mostly done by blacks⁶ and coloureds. For this reason, whites – the garden owners – considered garden labour so-called 'kaffir⁷ work', an English translation of the original Afrikaans term *kafferwerk*, which means labour of a menial and lowly nature.

The fact that South Africa's racial divide greatly determined the different racial groups' experiences and perceptions of gardens and gardening for centuries does not imply that black people did not consider themselves gardeners in the true sense of the word. They might have been garden labourers who worked in white people's gardens by day but after hours many of them went home to tend their own small gardens. The labourers who turned into gardeners at home were not only males (the so-called 'garden boys') but also female (the so-called

³ For a discussion of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing, see Chapter 1.

⁴ In this study, the word 'black' refers to people of African origin.

⁵ In this study, the word 'coloured' refers to people of mixed race.

⁶ In this study, the words 'blacks', 'whites' and 'coloureds' are used alternately with the terms 'black people', 'white people' and 'coloured people' to avoid unnecessary repetition. No negative connotations are implied.

⁷ For many years, words such as 'kaf(f)irs' and 'niggers' were regarded – and are still regarded today – as derogatory and unacceptable; however, in this study, they are quoted from historical sources and should be read in their historical context. No negative connotations are implied. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Chapter 7.

‘kitchen girls’). On their small plots they laid out front and back gardens planted with flowers, shrubs, vegetables and crops. Often their gardens were modelled after those of their white employers, which were typically formal gardens laid out in the traditional style with symmetrical flower and vegetable beds. Most plants in the garden labourers’ gardens were originally obtained as cuttings from plants which grew in their employers’ gardens. Many black gardeners observed their employers and learned from them, such as Sarah Khetse (born 1944), who described her employer, a Mr Van Heerden, as a passionate gardener who inspired her to lay out her own garden in Batho,⁸ Mangaung’s⁹ oldest existing historically black township.¹⁰ According to Khetse, her employer taught her everything she knew about gardening: “Ek het my ‘gardening’ dáár geleer – ek kyk hom [Van Heerden] wat doen hy.”¹¹ The same knowledge and skills applied by black gardeners when maintaining their employers’ gardens were also applied when tending their own. Consequently, a gardening culture also developed in South Africa’s townships, mainly because of the black garden labourers’ efforts.

The current state of research on garden history

The academic study of the history of gardens, landscapes and gardening culture is an internationally-recognised discipline in its own right. Although some historians consider it a sub-discipline of history, the subject of garden history has become a well-established and independent historical genre in Britain, the USA and Europe. However, garden history is still a relatively new field of study. As recently as the 1990s, the well-known American garden historian, John Dixon Hunt, called garden history a “new branch of historical study”,¹² while Jane Brown, a British garden historian, referred to it as “a young and callow discipline”.¹³ Garden history is a dynamic field, which evolved during the past six decades

⁸ Batho is a Sesotho word meaning ‘people’.

⁹ The greater-Bloemfontein area (Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba ’Nchu) is officially known as Mangaung, which is a Sesotho word meaning ‘place of the cheetah’. Batho forms part of the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

¹⁰ In the South African context, the word ‘township’ means a designated living area or suburb historically reserved for people of African origin. For more information, see Chapter 5.

¹¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S. Khetse*, Batho, 26.11.2013. “I have learnt how to garden there – I watched him [Van Heerden], what he does.” (Free translation)

¹² J.D. Hunt, “Foreword” in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *Garden history: issues, approaches, methods*, p. 1.

¹³ J. Brown, *The pursuit of paradise: a social history of gardens and gardening*, p. 300.

from its narrow art and architectural-historical approach¹⁴ into a discipline with a much more inclusive and wide-ranging focus. As a result of garden history's patrician art and architectural history provenance, this field of study traditionally focused on the gardens of Europe's grand estates, the historical development of European garden style and the famous European and British gardeners and designers, such as André Le Nôtre, Humphry Repton, William Kent, Horace Walpole and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. As happened to be the case with other sub-fields of history, including social and political history, the focus of garden history has gradually shifted from a so-called 'top-down' and "garden-as-art"¹⁵ approach with a focus on formal gardens and landscapes to a so-called 'bottom-up' approach, which made the modest domestic garden the subject of study. Although professionally-designed gardens and landscapes still receive attention from garden historians, vernacular,¹⁶ semi-vernacular and folk gardens and landscapes have also become important focal areas. Thus, the focus of garden history shifted from the professionally-designed gardens of the elite and moneyed classes to the humble non-designed gardens of ordinary people.¹⁷

Since the 1950s and 1960s, the academic standing of garden history as an independent subject has improved substantially, mainly due to the founding of garden history societies¹⁸ in Britain, the USA and Europe, as well as the launching of garden history journals on both sides of the Atlantic. These developments have not only convinced the critics and sceptics that garden history can be 'proper' academic history, they have also lent garden history, in the words of Kate Tiller, much needed "vigour and validity".¹⁹ Respected international journals dedicated to promoting and developing garden history scholarship include, inter

¹⁴ See, for example, M.L. Gothein, *A history of garden art* (vols 1 & 2), *passim* and M. Hadfield, *The art of the garden*, *passim*.

¹⁵ A. Meredith, "Horticultural education in England, 1900-40: middle-class women and private gardening schools", *Garden History* 31(1), Spring 2003, p. 70.

¹⁶ For a discussion of vernacular and semi-vernacular gardens, see Chapter 2.

¹⁷ M. Conan, "Introduction" in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 8; J. Pendlebury & F. Green, "Impolite landscapes? The influence of local economic and cultural factors in garden history: a case study of Tyne and Wear", *Landscape Research* 23(1), 1998, pp. 5, 6, 17; K. Tiller, "Garden history at Oxford", *Garden History* 24(1), Summer 1996, p. 147; J. Roberts, "The gardens of Dunroamin: history and cultural values with specific reference to the gardens of the inter-war semi", *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 1(4), 1996, p. 229; M. Bhatti & A. Church, "Home, the culture of nature and meanings of gardens in late modernity", *Housing Studies* 19(1), January 2004, p. 37; Brown, pp. 18-25; A. Claremont *et al.*, "Going public: landscaping everyday life", *Cultural Geographies* 17(2), 2010, p. 278; K. Helphand, "'Leaping the property line': observations on recent American garden history" in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 138.

¹⁸ For more information on the British Garden History Society, see W.T. Stearn, "The Garden History Society's tenth anniversary and some historians of garden history", *Garden History* 5(1), Spring 1977, pp. 42-52.

¹⁹ Tiller, p. 146.

alia: *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, *Garden History* and *Landscape Research*.²⁰ While British garden historians, such as Christopher Hussey, H.F. Clark, Christopher Thacker and Susan and Geoffrey Jellicoe, dominated the field during the 1950s and 1960s, American garden historians became more prominent during the 1970s. The rise in prominence of the American scholars was preceded by the establishment of the Dumbarton Oaks School of Garden Studies near Washington, D.C. in 1969. The school's programme in garden and landscape studies supported and stimulated advanced scholarship in garden history and landscape architecture. During the past four decades, some of garden history's most prominent and prolific garden historians and garden writers, including Elisabeth Blair MacDougall, John Dixon Hunt, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn and Michel Conan, were associated with Dumbarton Oaks.²¹

Since the 1990s, the number of research articles on garden history published in scientific journals has increased substantially. One factor that contributed to the increase in research output is the growing tendency of inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research and collaboration between garden historians and academics from other disciplines, including history, cultural history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, geography, botany, horticulture, archaeology, environmental studies and leisure studies. Gardens and gardening are broad subjects with multiple potential focal areas; therefore, Patrick Taylor argued that "garden history, to tell the story it seeks, needs to deal with a bewildering range of subjects".²² An inter-disciplinary approach to the study of garden history, which will be discussed in more detail later as well as in Chapter 1, led to a more integrated view and an improved understanding of vernacular, semi-vernacular and other non-designed gardens and landscapes than had previously been the case.²³

²⁰ For more information on garden journalism and garden writing, see G. Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), *The Oxford companion to gardens*, pp. 212-213 and P. Taylor (ed.), *The Oxford companion to the garden*, pp. 181-182.

²¹ M.R. Brownell, "'Bursting prospect': British garden history now" in R.P. Maccubbin & P. Martin (eds), *British and American gardens in the eighteenth century: eighteen illustrated essays on garden history*, p. 5; Conan, pp. 1, 3, 5, 8; Tiller, p. 146; Anon., "Research", <http://www.doaks.org/research/garden_landscape.html>, 1.3.2011 (Accessed: 6.4.2011).

²² Taylor (ed.), p. 178.

²³ Brownell, pp. 5, 9; J.D. Hunt, "Approaches (new and old) to garden history" in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 78; E. Harwood *et al.*, "Whither garden history?", *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 27(2), 2007, pp. 93, 103.

An important trend noted in recent garden history research output is a significant change of focus, which should be considered part of the mentioned ‘bottom-up’ approach to garden history. As opposed to the traditional art historical approach, which focused primarily on the aesthetics of design and stylistic trends, recent research has significantly broadened garden history’s focus to include other often neglected factors and forces that shape and influence a garden’s style and appearance, including cultural, socio-economic and political factors. Inter-dependence exists between garden history and broader social and political issues. Due to the powerful influence exerted by politics and ideology on society, garden history is greatly influenced by political and ideological discourses. As a result, garden history’s main focus shifted from period gardens to, among others, contemporary issues and problems that affect or relate to gardens. In this regard, the French sociologist, Michel Conan, who is also one of garden history’s most influential and prolific scholars, argued that “cultural or social issues, paradoxes, and theoretical questions are a number of ways of establishing a problem to be analysed as the focus for historical research on gardens.”²⁴ This argument emphasises the important link between a garden’s design, the environmental and historical contexts and the factors shaping these contexts. Garden history’s significant shift in focus led to a better understanding of a garden as something that is essentially defined by its context(s) and to an understanding that *the history of gardens must, above all, be understood in the context of the wider history of society.*²⁵

Garden history in the South African context

In South Africa the study of garden history is a fairly recent development and the subject is not nearly as mature and established as in the USA, Britain and Europe. As a matter of fact, the study of historical gardens and landscapes is a much neglected subject in local academic circles. Locally, the study of garden history has been far more popular outside the academy, and garden history research has mostly been the concern of amateurs rather than professional historians. No South African university offers a degree in garden history (to be distinguished from horticultural studies), which led to a situation where in this country, as is the case in

²⁴ Conan, p. 11.

²⁵ Pendlebury & Green, pp. 5-6; Hunt, “Foreword”, p. 2; Tiller, p. 146; Roberts, p. 229; Meredith, p. 70; Conan, pp. 5, 9, 12, 13; Hunt, “Approaches (new and old)...”, p. 81; Helphand, p. 137; K. Helphand, “Defiant gardens”, *The Journal of Garden History* 17(2), 1997, p. 104; B.J. Heath & A. Bennett, “‘The little spots allow’d them’: the archaeological study of African-American yards”, *Historical Archaeology* 34(2), 2000, p. 39.

most countries, garden history, to quote Patrick Taylor, “hovers only on the margins of professional academic life.”²⁶ Traditionally, most garden history research conducted locally focused on well-known historical Cape gardens. Since the early 1900s, research had been conducted on the Company’s Garden (*Kompanjiestuin*), as well as other historical gardens, including the Arderne Gardens²⁷ and those at Bishops court (Bosheuwel),²⁸ Leeuwenhof²⁹ and Vergelegen.³⁰ The thorough research conducted by Mia Karsten,³¹ Gwen Fagan³² and Pamela Roditi³³ is particularly noteworthy. As far as the state of garden history in the rest of the country is concerned, the situation is worse. Some well-known Gauteng³⁴ gardens, including those at the Oppenheimer family’s Brenthurst Estate³⁵ in Johannesburg and the Union Buildings’ gardens³⁶ in Pretoria (Tshwane), have received some attention. Generally, it is mostly the work of prominent architects and landscape designers, such as Sir Herbert Baker (1862-1946)³⁷ and Joane Pim (1904-1974),³⁸ which received attention.

The study of gardens, landscapes and gardening culture still remains a seriously neglected genre in South Africa. Typically, research on issues related to tangible heritage mostly focuses on architecture and the built environment. Gardens and gardening culture are seldom the main focus of attention and, when they are mentioned, the information provided is severely limited. Currently, most academic studies on the history of gardens and gardening culture are limited to a small number of articles in accredited journals.³⁹ Generally, very little

²⁶ Taylor (ed.), p. 178. See also Hunt, “Approaches (new and old)...”, p. 78.

²⁷ A. Tredgold, *The Ardernes & their garden: a family chronicle*, *passim*.

²⁸ M. Cook, “Bosheuwel”, *Simon van der Stel Foundation Bulletin* 6, April 1963, p. 11.

²⁹ G. Fagan, “Leeuwenhof: restourasie van die slawehuis, bo-tuin en die werf”, *Restorica* 12, October 1982, *passim*.

³⁰ W. de Bruin, “Vergelegen: a perfect blend of past and present”, *Restorica* 28, 1994, *passim*.

³¹ M.C. Karsten, *The old Company’s Garden at the Cape and its superintendents: involving an historical account of early Cape botany*, *passim*.

³² G. Fagan, *Roses at the Cape of Good Hope*, *passim*; G.E. Fagan, *An introduction to the man-made landscape at the Cape from the 17th to the 19th centuries* (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1994), *passim*.

³³ P. Roditi, *The Company’s Garden at the Cape of Good Hope* (Unpublished Garden Conservation thesis, Architectural Association London, 1995), *passim*.

³⁴ One of South Africa’s nine provinces and known for major cities, such as Johannesburg and Pretoria (Tshwane).

³⁵ A.H. Smith, *The Brenthurst gardens*, *passim*.

³⁶ Anon., *Die Uniegebou: die eerste 75 jaar*, pp. 31-32.

³⁷ G. Viney, *Colonial houses of South Africa*, *passim*.

³⁸ J. Pim, *Beauty is necessary: creation or preservation of the landscape*, *passim*.

³⁹ See, for example, S. le Roux & G. Breedlove, “Die tuin wat Pierneef gemaak het”, *South African Journal of Cultural History* 18(1), June 2004, pp. 10-33; S.-A. Murray, “The idea of gardening: plants, bewilderment, and indigenous identity in South Africa”, *English in Africa* 33(2), October 2006, pp. 45-65 and L. van Sittert, “Making the Cape Floral Kingdom: the discovery and defence of indigenous flora at the Cape ca. 1890-1939”, *Landscape Research* 28(1), 2003, pp. 113-129.

extensive research has been conducted on the history of South Africa's gardening culture and, particularly, that of the country's indigenous people. One is left with the impression that black and coloured people's gardens and gardening culture are subjects not worthy of academic study. This is especially true of the Free State⁴⁰ and Bloemfontein. Apart from references to Bloemfontein's gardens in writer and historian Karel Schoeman's (1939-2017) historical works and novels on Bloemfontein,⁴¹ as well as in a small number of architecture scripts, dissertations and theses,⁴² detailed information on the history of gardens and gardening in the Free State capital is scant.

The garden history of Bloemfontein's black residents, particularly those located in Batho, is mostly an *unknown aspect of local black history*. Ironically, this history sheds light on much of Bloemfontein's and Batho's socio-cultural milieu and cultural history of the 1920s and 1930s. This study attempts to fill this void by exploring both the 'long' and 'short history' of Batho's topiary gardens, gardeners and gardening culture. To trace the origin and history of Batho's topiary gardens⁴³ they should be placed within the context of not only Batho's garden history but also that of Bloemfontein and South Africa. However, it is not only necessary to explore the history of topiary gardening in Bloemfontein and South Africa but also to trace the earliest origin of topiary – a key element of British and European gardens for centuries – and how it eventually became popular among Bloemfontein's and, eventually, Batho's gardeners. *Thus, the South African and local history of topiary should be viewed against the backdrop of the international history of gardening in general and topiary gardening in particular.* The prevalence of topiary on the African continent is also taken into account and this history adds yet another dimension to topiary's 'long history'. It is argued that the international and African perspectives represent important aspects of the 'long history' of Batho's topiary gardens.

⁴⁰ One of South Africa's nine provinces and previously known as the Orange Free State.

⁴¹ K. Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan van 'n stad, 1846-1946, passim*; K. Schoeman, *Portrait of Bloemfontein 1860-1910, passim*; K. Schoeman, *'n Ander land, passim*.

⁴² See, for example, S. Botha, *Die verandering en ontwikkeling van die woonhuisargitektuur in Bloemfontein gedurende die tydperk 1846-1946 met bydraende faktore* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1991), *passim* and C.J.S. Coetzee, *Herbert Baker in die Oranje-Vrystaat en Noord-Kaap* (Unpublished B.Arch. script, University of the Orange Free State, 1975), *passim*.

⁴³ The phrases 'Batho's topiary gardens' and 'Batho's gardens' will be used interchangeably throughout this study. References to 'Batho's gardens' also imply 'Batho's topiary gardens', unless indicated otherwise.

Concerning the South African history of topiary, it is necessary to provide background information on the history of gardening in South Africa since the first Dutch colonists had settled at the Cape in the mid-17th century. An important aspect of this history, which may still be considered part of topiary's 'long history', is the development of a preference for a garden style characterised by formality and symmetry. The taste for topiary – an important feature of the formal garden – and the development of a strong gardening culture among both white and black people since 1652 will be discussed and presented as a prologue to the development of a specific garden style and a strong gardening culture in Bloemfontein and, eventually, in Batho during the 19th and 20th centuries. For the purpose of this study, the 'short history' of Batho's topiary gardens commenced with the founding of Bloemfontein in 1846 and reached a historical climax during the period 1918-1939, which is considered Batho's 'Golden Age'. It is argued that both the 'long' and 'short histories' of Batho's topiary gardens form two 'lines' or 'threads' of history which do not run parallel to each other. Instead, the 'short history' (1846 to present) is a continuation of the 'long history' (1652-1846).

Thus, as indicated, this study cannot be fully understood without considering the necessary historical context because the garden histories of Batho and Bloemfontein do not stand in isolation from developments, trends and changes in garden history on both national and international levels. These dynamics directly and indirectly influenced the garden history and gardening culture of Batho. As this study aims to provide both international and local perspectives, it may be 'read' on different levels in the sense that it aims to be more than a history of Batho's topiary gardens only. This wide-ranging approach, which is essentially a holistic and integrated approach to garden history, resulted in this study being a lengthy piece of work.⁴⁴

Apart from the general history of gardening among Batho's residents, other unknown aspects of this theme will also receive attention because these have not been previously researched either. One could argue that not only Batho's garden history but also that of South African black people in general is essentially a 'hidden' and 'forgotten' history. One could also safely claim that the lives and times of black gardeners and garden labourers are mostly

⁴⁴ For similar arguments concerning the wide-ranging approach necessary for the study of garden history, see Fagan, *An introduction to...*, pp. i, xxiii. Fagan's thesis totalled 1057 pages.

undocumented and, therefore, unknown and mostly obscure experiences. Furthermore, little has been written on black people's gardening culture, the horticultural education of black people in black schools and tertiary institutions, and the relationships between white employers and black garden labourers, to name a few. Added to these is the phenomenon of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing between the black and white cultures as far as garden styles and gardening knowledge are concerned. This study will address these and other neglected aspects of South Africa's garden history.

The main research problem and research questions

The fundamental research problem of this study is essentially an attempt to understand why the style of the majority of Batho's gardens resembles the classic European style characterised by a mostly formal layout with trimmed hedges, edges and individual plants clipped into various shapes. To date, no research has been conducted on this issue. This study will address this hiatus, trace the origin of this semi-vernacular garden style, and explain why Batho's residents adopted it and laid out gardens that resembled those of Bloemfontein's white residents. It is no coincidence that Batho's gardeners developed a penchant for topiary. A holistic and integrated approach will be followed in order to arrive at certain conclusions regarding the research problem.

To adequately address the research problem, the following key research questions are posed:

- Why are gardens and gardening considered expressions of culture?
- What is a vernacular garden and why are Batho's topiary gardens described as semi-vernacular?
- What is topiary and where did this garden style originate?
- Why was topiary popular among Bloemfontein's white inhabitants and what role did English culture and taste play in popularising it in Bloemfontein?
- When and why did a gardening culture develop in Batho?
- Who contributed to the development of a gardening culture in Batho and the turning of Batho into a garden location?
- Why and how did the practice of topiary become indigenised and Africanised in Batho?

- What role did so-called ‘Native education’ play in the development of a gardening culture in Batho?
- What role did the black garden labourer play in popularising and indigenising topiary in Batho?
- What does a typical Batho topiary garden look like and which styles and forms of topiary are popular in Batho?
- What role do gardens and gardening currently play in the lives of Batho’s residents?
- What are the present challenges faced by Batho’s gardeners and what does the future hold for Batho’s topiary gardens?

These and other related questions will be dealt with in the ten chapters (the Evaluation included) that form the body of this study.

The main theme and theoretical framing of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the origin, history and significance of Batho’s topiary gardens from a cultural-historical perspective. Given the main purpose, the study’s theme focuses on gardens, gardening culture and the development of a semi-vernacular garden style in Batho during the period under discussion. The study focuses on the period 1918-1939, starting with the year in which Batho was founded and ending with the year in which World War II (1939-1945) broke out. The 1920s and 1930s represent Batho’s ‘Golden Age’, the crucial inter-War period during which the township’s gardens matured and the flourishing gardening culture reached its apogee. The year 1939 is considered a symbolic watershed because, from then onwards, Batho began to deteriorate due to political and socio-economic factors. During the period 1918-1939 Batho and its immediate environment was shaped by a combination of political, ideological, cultural, social and economic factors. Today the long-term effect of these factors is visible in Batho’s tangible heritage, most notably its layout, architecture, landscape and, of course, its gardens. This study concerns itself with the combined effect of these factors on Batho’s horticultural tradition, the style of its gardens, its gardeners, as well as the development of a gardening culture among its residents. Considering the mentioned historical background and time-period, it is also necessary to explain the use of the name ‘Mangaung’ in the title and otherwise. It was decided to use ‘Mangaung’ (see earlier explanation of name’s meaning) instead of

‘Bloemfontein’ in the title because during the period under discussion (1918-1939), Bloemfontein was informally known among local black people as ‘Mangaung’ and today Bloemfontein officially forms part of the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

Based on the study’s main purpose, the ultimate aim is to arrive at an understanding of why Batho’s gardens display the classical European formal garden style and how this township’s gardens and gardening culture developed throughout history. In order to explain the ‘why’ and ‘how’, the traditional historical research methodology will be used within the context of the interpretivist research paradigm or framework. The key reason for using this paradigm is that it aims to understand rather than predict human behaviour. The research conducted for this study may thus be described as interpretive and qualitative. Since the qualitative research methodology is mostly concerned with understanding the processes and cultural and social contexts which are mainly concerned with the ‘why’ questions of research and also underlie various behavioural patterns, the researcher chose it as the preferred research methodology. Furthermore, a narrative form of analysis will be applied to provide detailed accounts of the cultural phenomenon being studied. Because gardens and gardening are regarded as expressions of culture, a cultural-historical approach will also be followed. The so-called Burden model⁴⁵ will be used as a theoretical framework within which the study is positioned and as a methodological tool to identify and describe Batho’s topiary gardens as cultural products in their historical context. Within this context, the relationships between the cultural product’s different dimensions, namely tangible versus intangible culture, traditional versus contemporary culture, and folk (vernacular and semi-vernacular) versus patrician culture, will be discussed. Moreover, the theories of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing will be used to explain how one culture’s influence on another affected the development of Batho’s garden style and gardening culture.⁴⁶

The cultural-historical approach will be combined with a systematic survey approach to garden history, which has been successfully used by the Centre of East Anglian Studies at the University of East Anglia in Britain. This practical approach, identified as a suitable and

⁴⁵ For more information on the Burden model, see Chapter 1, and for its application on Batho’s gardens, see Chapter 9. Furthermore, this model is also applied throughout the thesis.

⁴⁶ J.W. Creswell, *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches*, pp. 19-21, 35-37; J.W. Creswell, *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, pp. 4, 12-13, 61-64, 74-75; D. Wahyuni, “The research design maze: understanding paradigms, cases, methods and methodologies”, *Jamar* 10(1), 2012, pp. 70-71; V.A. Anfara & N.T. Mertz, *Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research*, pp. xx-xxiii.

workable approach for the study of Batho's gardens, involves the selection and assessment of a substantial number of gardens – in this case, topiary gardens – in a restricted geographically-identified area, such as Batho. The systematic survey approach emphasises the argument that the history of gardens and landscapes cannot be separated from the wider history of society, that is, the historical context.⁴⁷ Therefore, the mentioned approach stresses the need for identifying the cultural, socio-economic and political factors that influenced the history of the gardens being studied. The need for identifying the factors that influenced the history of gardens being studied also relates to the argument mentioned earlier, namely that a garden is something that is essentially defined by its context(s). The importance of a contextualised understanding of gardens will be discussed in more detail in upcoming chapters.

The systematic survey approach also advocates a multi-source approach,⁴⁸ namely the consulting of a wide variety of sources, including archival sources (private and public), published sources (books and articles), newspapers, photographs, paintings, drawings, maps, plans, oral testimonies and fieldwork notes. Regarding the sources in general, a qualitative approach will be followed. This approach will be applied in the interpretation and analysis of the sources collected for this study. This study aims to provide a detailed explanation and description of the 'why' and 'how' of the theme under discussion on the basis of the sources consulted.⁴⁹ Finally, the researcher decided to follow a thematic-chronological approach by presenting the research results according to specific themes, and wherever possible, the research results are structured chronologically within the respective themes.

⁴⁷ T. Williamson, "Garden history and systematic survey" in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *Garden history: issues, approaches, methods*, pp. 60-61, 67.

⁴⁸ For more information on the multi-source approach, see Williamson, p. 63.

⁴⁹ Williamson, pp. 60-61, 67; Wahyuni, pp. 70-72, 75-76; J. Neill, "Qualitative versus quantitative research: key points in a classic debate", <<http://www.wilderdom.com/research/QualitativeVersusQuantitativeResearch.html>>, 28.2.2007 (Accessed: 8.7.2011); Creswell, *Qualitative inquiry &...*, pp. 39, 41; Creswell, *Research design: qualitative...*, p. 4; D. Lambert, *Researching a garden's history from documentary and published sources*, pp. 2, 8-13; J. Phibbs, "An approach to the methodology of recording historic landscapes", *Garden History* 11(2), Autumn 1983, pp. 170-172; M. Batey, "The archives of garden history", *Archives* XVIII(80), October 1988, pp. 199-203; M. Laird, "The interpretation of archival sources in garden restoration", *Archives* XVIII(80), October 1988, pp. 204-207.

The chapters and their themes

This study consists of ten chapters in total, excluding the Introduction. The first three chapters provide the necessary background information to contextualise Batho's topiary gardens and gardening culture. Chapters 4 to 9 may only be fully understood and contextualised when viewed against the backdrop provided by the information in Chapters 1 to 3. Chapter 1 focuses on gardens and gardening as expressions of culture. Chapter 2 focuses on the vernacular and non-designed garden as opposed to the professionally-designed garden. This chapter explains what a vernacular garden is and why Batho's topiary gardens are considered vernacular and, more specifically, semi-vernacular. Chapter 3, which relates to Chapter 2, deals with the 'long history' of Batho's topiary gardens. This chapter focuses on the age-old international taste for topiary and how this garden style has developed since Roman times. Chapter 3 also examines the history of topiary in South Africa and how it became a highly influential garden style – first among the white inhabitants and later among the black garden labourers and black gardeners. The unique role played by the slaves and 'free blacks' in the development of a gardening culture and the preference for a formal garden style at the Cape, is also investigated.

Chapters 4 to 9 focus, among others, on the historical development, characteristics and significance of Batho's topiary gardens. First Bloemfontein's and then Batho's gardens and gardening culture and the relation between the two are discussed in detail. Chapter 4 deals with topiary in Bloemfontein's gardens and the local gardening culture. The influence of British (English) culture and taste on the style of Bloemfontein's gardens is discussed because British culture had exerted a strong influence on Batho's gardens and gardening culture. Chapter 5 focuses on various aspects related to Batho's history and how it relates to that of Bloemfontein. The founding of Batho as South Africa's first so-called 'model location' and the role that gardens and aesthetic considerations played in the model location philosophy, receive special attention. The layout of Batho as a model location with so-called 'garden facilities' for all houses is discussed, as well as the role played by the Superintendent of Locations. In Chapter 6, the focus shifts to the role of so-called 'Native education' in stimulating an interest in gardening among Bloemfontein's black learners and students. Chapter 7 explores the role of the black garden labourer in Bloemfontein's and Batho's garden history. It is argued that the black garden labourer, who formed part of the black servant class, became a key player in promoting a gardening culture in Batho.

Chapter 8 focuses on the development of a gardening culture in Batho during the period 1918 to 1939. It will be explained that the development of Batho's gardening culture was stimulated by both a desire among certain location residents to lay out gardens and by the initiatives of key municipal officials. In Chapter 9, Batho's gardens and specifically the development of 'township topiary' as an indigenised and Africanised version of the classical garden style, are discussed and a detailed description of Batho's topiary gardens is provided. The different categories of 'township topiary' and its characteristics and functions are examined. This chapter also focuses on the role that Batho's topiary gardens played and continues to play in the lives of their owners. In Chapter 10, the final chapter, the research findings are evaluated and concluding perspectives presented.

As previously stated, this thesis is longer than the average doctoral study due to the nature of the theme as well as the holistic and integrated approach followed by the researcher. Furthermore, the theme covers an extensive historical period which cannot be adequately understood without providing the necessary background and contextual information. The same argument applies to the length of specific chapters, notably Chapter 2 and Chapter 5. These chapters provide the foundation on and the background against which the other chapters must be viewed. Ultimately, this study aims to provide a comprehensive account of the theme.

The types of sources used

It was a challenge to source substantial and useful historical information on South African gardens and gardening in conventional historical sources. Finding historical information on black people's gardens and gardening culture proved to be even more difficult. References to gardens, gardeners, gardening and other related aspects in local historical records are scattered and have to be traced in widely dissimilar sources. Useful information is often limited to a single sentence or a short paragraph in a source. Locating such information was also a challenge because few indices and other finding aids contain references to gardens and gardening. Therefore, it was almost impossible to trace references to gardens and gardening other than reading through entire books and manuscripts. This problem, which

Hunt described as “the difficulties of recovering adequate evidence for a garden”,⁵⁰ is a universal problem and not unique to the South African context. Owing to the relative scarcity of information on the subject, the mentioned multi-source approach⁵¹ was followed and a wide range of primary and secondary sources consulted. The sheer variety of primary and secondary sources consulted for this study, is reflected in the extensive and detailed source list. As mentioned, it was necessary to integrate fragments of information hidden in obscure and unlikely sources. Since this study required a combination of a wide range of sources, it is not feasible to discuss and highlight specific, individual sources in detail. The extent and nature of the sources consulted are adequately reflected in the detailed reference system.

The chapters on black education, the black garden labourer, Batho’s history, Batho’s gardens and its gardening culture, relied heavily on primary sources. Primary sources are crucial for the study of garden history and Conan rightly argued that garden history research “demand[s] an extensive gathering of primary sources.”⁵² These sources include government records (for example, records of the national and provincial education departments and reports of commissions of the Union government) and municipal records (for example, records of the Bloemfontein municipality’s Public Works and Parks Committee, Native Affairs Committee and the Native Advisory Board). Although considered secondary sources, newspapers were used extensively to access historical information on Batho that could be found nowhere else. The Bloemfontein daily, *The Friend*, was an indispensable source of information on Batho’s founding and early history, black education, black labour, as well as the development of Batho’s gardening culture. Other newspapers, including *Umteteli wa Bantu*, *Die Volksblad* and *The Bloemfontein Post*, were also consulted.

Primary sources that provided useful information also include private collections and accessions housed at various South African and foreign archival repositories and libraries, including the Archive for Contemporary Affairs, University of the Free State (Bloemfontein); the Bloemfontein Public Library/Adelaide Tambo Public Library (Bloemfontein); the Free State Provincial Archives (Bloemfontein); the Grey College Museum and Archives (Bloemfontein); Historical Papers (William Cullen Library), University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg); the Iziko Social History Institute (Cape

⁵⁰ Hunt, “Foreword”, p. 2.

⁵¹ The multi-source approach is closely linked to the systematic survey approach.

⁵² Conan, p. 2.

Town); the Killie Campbell Africana Library, University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban); Library and Information Services, University of the Free State (Bloemfontein); the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (Pretoria); the National Archives of the Netherlands (The Hague); the National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Research Centre (Bloemfontein); the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town) and the Western Cape Archives and Records Service (Cape Town).

Another important primary source of information was oral testimonies.⁵³ Oral interviews were conducted with gardeners, garden labourers and garden owners in Batho in order to collect first-hand information on the subject. In this manner not only valuable historical facts were collected but the personal experiences and impressions of the interviewees were also recorded and/or documented for posterity. It must be noted that the researcher is aware of the limitations of the oral history methodology and the challenges it may pose. Candidates were assessed by means of a critical approach, which was tempered by the realisation of what oral testimonies as a historical source may contribute. In the process, the researcher applied the principle of historical criticism and all the information obtained was scrutinised and assessed on the basis of the understanding that information and events may be interpreted in different ways. In terms of the Code of Ethics for Oral History Practitioners in South Africa,⁵⁴ an *Interview Protocol* (also known as a Gift and Release Agreement) explaining the purpose of the interview and the objectives of the study was completed for each interviewee.

Finally, owing to the scope of this study and the limited information available in conventional sources, other primary sources, including maps, plans, diagrams, sketches, diaries, memoirs, unpublished manuscripts and photographs, were also consulted. In addition to existing historical photographs, new photographs taken of Batho's gardens proved to be a valuable source of supporting evidence.

Secondary sources, including books, journal articles and electronic sources also proved to be valuable sources of information. These sources were particularly useful for the chapters

⁵³ For a discussion of the oral history methodology as a technique and tool for accessing information for this study, see Chapter 9.

⁵⁴ P. Denis & R. Ntsimane (eds), *Oral history in a wounded country: interactive interviewing in South Africa*, pp. 171-174.

on research methodology, gardening culture, vernacular gardens, the international history of topiary as well as Bloemfontein's and Batho's history. The *Quarterly Papers* of the O.F.S. Mission (later Bloemfontein Mission) of the Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican Church) were a particularly valuable source of information on Batho's gardens and gardening culture. Some crucial sources (books and journal articles) on garden history research methodology and methods of garden analysis were not available in South Africa and were ordered from libraries in Britain and the USA. The Africana collections of university and public libraries proved to be indispensable sources of information and often contained information that could not be located elsewhere. Africana books, particularly old gardening manuals and travel journals, were useful as background and ancillary sources for South Africa's and Bloemfontein's garden histories. The overwhelming majority of books on gardens and gardening published in South Africa are not of an academic nature but aimed at the amateur gardener. Nevertheless, the wide variety of popular books on South African gardens and gardening proved to be a significant source of background information for this study and it is necessary to discuss this comprehensive genre in more detail.

Popular books on gardens and gardening may be divided into two broad categories, namely practical gardening manuals and books that focus on specific gardens. The first category includes books on the 'how-to' of gardening, plant selection, elementary botany, horticulture, garden design and garden maintenance. These books offer practical advice to gardeners and new offerings on the subject are being published annually. Recent noteworthy titles include Keith Kirsten's *Gardening with Keith Kirsten* (2011) and Marijke Hönig's *Indigenous plant palettes* (2014). Updated and revised editions of classic titles, such as Kristo Pienaar and Gideon Smith's *The Southern African what flower is that?: an essential guide to garden plants* (2011) are still being published due to popular demand. This book was particularly valuable for this study as a guide for identifying the plants in Batho's gardens. Although books in this genre seldom contain historical information, they are nevertheless useful for the garden historian.

The second category of popular books on gardens and gardening are books that focus on specific gardens. These constitute an extensive category and one may distinguish between two types of books in this category. The first type includes books that focus on specific gardens not necessarily because of their history but because they are noteworthy for a number of other reasons, including the garden's outstanding overall design and layout, its

plant collection and the high standard of maintenance. These books are useful for the garden historian because most of them contain historical information on the featured gardens. From a research perspective, the disadvantage of these books is that the authors are often not garden historians but garden designers or garden journalists. As a result, the historical information provided is mostly based on informal oral interviews conducted with garden owners. Evidence of scientific historical research is seldom provided by the authors. Noteworthy recent examples of such books include Sheenagh Harris and Jacqueline Kalley's *Veld, vlei and rose gardens: inspiration from South African gardeners* (2011), Nini Bairnsfather Cloete's *Remarkable gardens of South Africa* (2012), Jacqueline Kalley's *KwaZulu-Natal is my garden* (2013), and Keith Kirsten's *Gardens to inspire* (2013).

The second type of book that focuses on specific gardens may be considered garden history in the true sense of the word. Although not always written by garden historians, these books are usually well-researched and often give accounts of scientific historical research. In most cases, the authors consulted a combination of sources, including the garden owner's private collection, maps, plans, sketches and old photographs. This type of book also differs from the first in the sense that the authors not only consider the role played by the garden owners but often also the contributions made by the garden labourers. Typically, books in this category focus mostly on the history of some of South Africa's well-known historical gardens. Recently published titles of this nature include Brian Huntley's *Kirstenbosch: the most beautiful garden in Africa* (2012), Franchesca Watson and Laurian Brown's *Stellenberg: the story of a garden* (2013) and Franchesca Watson's *The garden of Babylonstoren* (2018).

The inter-disciplinary nature of the study

One of garden history's overwhelming strengths is its potential for inter-disciplinary⁵⁵ research⁵⁶ and collaboration. In fact, engaging in garden history research without considering related disciplines will be to the detriment of such a study. The editorial of the first issue of *The Journal of Garden History* referred to garden history's wide scope when it stated that if

⁵⁵ For a discussion of garden history's potential for inter-disciplinary research, see Chapter 1.

⁵⁶ For more information on the nature and methodology of inter-disciplinary research, see A.F. Repko *et al.*, *Case studies in interdisciplinary research*, pp. 3-18 and J. Tempelhoff, "Transdissiplinêre geskiedenisbeoefening: 'n verkenbare grensterrein?" in S.W. le Roux & R.C. Fisher (eds), *Festschrift in honour of O.J.O. Ferreira*, pp. 81-86.

“one thinks of what *garden* means, of the range of ambitions, associations, forms and uses by which gardens of all ages and cultures have been shaped, then the need for the scholarly resources of many different talents is strikingly clear. Patronage, economic and social history, history of ideas, history of science, technology and engineering, architectural history, aesthetics, iconography, horticulture – all are topics which garden history must register.”⁵⁷ As previously mentioned in the discussion on the current state of research on garden history, this field of study complements the sciences mentioned above as well as various others. However, not all academics are convinced that this character trait of garden history should be considered a strength. The fact that garden history so easily lends itself to inter-disciplinary research is considered a weakness or, at best, a “dubious advantage”,⁵⁸ by some academics, such as Edward Harwood, Tom Williamson and Michael Leslie, because, according to them, it prevents the field of study from finding a home in a specific discipline.⁵⁹

Despite criticism, most of garden history’s leading scholars, including Hunt, stressed the importance of an inter-disciplinary approach. Hunt described what he calls an “interdisciplinarity [sic] of approach”⁶⁰ as the ability to “explore the various discourses drawn into the making and experiencing of gardens.”⁶¹ The potential of such an approach for collaborative work is evident and provides the garden historian with a vast array of research possibilities. An inter-disciplinary approach is necessary not only for garden history to progress from a mere descriptive to an analytical type of history but also to effectively deal with the previously-mentioned wide range of sources the garden historian needs to consult.⁶² Furthermore, an inter-disciplinary approach also lends itself to a problem-oriented approach to garden history research, as advocated by Conan, among others.⁶³ These arguments also apply to South African garden history, particularly if local garden historians would like to see their discipline advance academically. In the South African context, disciplines that complement garden history research include cultural history, community history, social history, economic history, political history, art history, geography, horticulture and botany, to name a few. This study embraces an inter-disciplinary approach

⁵⁷ Anon., “Editorial”, *The Journal of Garden History* 1(1), 1981, pp. 1-2. (Author’s emphasis)

⁵⁸ Harwood *et al.*, p. 103.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶⁰ Hunt, “Approaches (new and old)...”, p. 78.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁶² For similar arguments, see Hunt, “Approaches (new and old)...”, pp. 88-89 and E. Blair MacDougall, “Prelude: landscape studies, 1952-1972” in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 24.

⁶³ Conan, p. 11; Tempelhoff, pp. 82-84.

and draws on the strengths of cultural history, community history, oral history, social history, political history, anthropology, horticulture and botany. Inter-disciplinary research greatly benefitted this study and led to a more inclusive and holistic account of the history of Batho's topiary gardens, gardening culture and garden style during the period 1918-1939.

The value of the study

As already mentioned, garden history is a neglected historical genre in South Africa's historiography in comparison with the rich body of historical works published on the subject in the USA, Britain and Europe. For various reasons, the academic study of gardens and gardening culture never enjoyed the same attention as other forms of tangible heritage, such as architecture and art. The researcher aims to fill this void by presenting the results of an in-depth study of the history of Batho's gardens and gardening culture. Until now, no major academic study has been conducted on the history of Batho, let alone the history of its gardens and gardening culture. Since Batho's gardens and gardening culture will be viewed against the backdrop of this township's cultural, political and socio-economic history, this study will also contribute to the fields of community and township historiography. Therefore, the value and contribution of this study should also be considered from a community history perspective.

In recent years gardening has become a field of social action, and terms such as 'organic gardening', 'sustainable gardening', 'guerrilla gardening' and 'food security' indicate the nature of current activism. See, for example, George McKay's *Radical gardening: politics, idealism & rebellion in the garden* (2011). Climate change, limited water resources and population growth have made food gardens more important and also brought a sense of urgency to the debate on the future role of community food gardens. Lately, the focus is also on establishing a link between 'gardening in the past' and 'gardening in the present' and, in the process, the importance of gardens as *living history* is being emphasised. It will become increasingly important to retrieve lost gardening knowledge, including indigenous knowledge, and to investigate and unlock the potential of such knowledge. Therefore, the value of this study is not limited to the academic realm, namely its humble contribution to garden history scholarship. In more practical terms, it also aims to add value to the Batho community by making residents aware of their rich garden history and heritage and the practical benefits thereof.

Clarifications and explanations

The following should be noted:

Botanical names: the botanical names of plants are provided the first time a new plant species is mentioned (excluding plants mentioned in direct quotes). The botanical names (genus and species) of plants are provided in brackets after the common name. In cases where the specific species could not be determined, only the genus is provided;

Cross-references: cross-references to chapters are provided throughout the thesis in order to integrate information and emphasise important links between chapters;

Dates of birth and death: the dates of birth and death of individuals are provided in brackets after their names. In cases where such dates are lacking, they could either not be found or verified;

Emphasis: 1) in some direct quotes single words, terms or sections of the text may be emphasised by means of italics. The researcher's emphasis will be indicated by (Own emphasis); another author's emphasis will be indicated by the author's surname, for example (Smith's emphasis). In case of anonymous sources, emphasis will be indicated by (Author's emphasis); 2) statements and concepts that are considered by the researcher to be of particular importance in terms of the study's main arguments, are italicised;

Name and gender identification: 'Mr' and 'Ms' are used to indicate gender in cases where only the initials and not the name(s) of a person are known to the researcher or used for a specific reason. Otherwise, only names and surnames are provided. In all cases, the consulted sources indicated the gender in question;

Images and photographs: The term 'Image' followed by a stroke number in brackets refers to both photographs and other images throughout the thesis. Almost all recent photographs of Batho's gardens and topiary were assigned temporary numbers by the researcher. A selection of these photographs will eventually be taken up in the National Museum's photographic collection and be assigned new numbers. All other photographs form part of

the National Museum's and other institutions' permanent photographic collections. A small number of photographs and images were taken from publications;

Inverted commas: note the distinction between single and double inverted commas: double inverted commas indicate a direct quote from a source, whereas single inverted commas indicate a word or phrase which may have another meaning in addition to its conventional or original meaning;

Italics: apart from the previously-mentioned emphasising of words and text by means of italics, Afrikaans, Dutch, Latin, old English, Sesotho and Setswana words and terms are also italicised;

Names and surnames of interviewees: names of interviewees are underlined the first time they are mentioned in a chapter in order to emphasise their importance as sources of information and to allow them to emerge as individuals. Otherwise, interviewees and other persons are referred to by surname; in cases of more than one person with the same surname, names are used.

CHAPTER 1

GARDENS AND GARDENING AS EXPRESSIONS OF CULTURE

1.1 Introduction

The laying out of gardens and the act of gardening had been part of most civilisations and cultures since the earliest times. Gardening is an ancient art, and some authors argue that it existed before painting, sculpture, music and literature. Garden historians and archaeologists estimate that the history of gardening dates back to the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilisations (circa 3000-4000BCE).¹ The Bible contains a number of references to gardens, most notably the Garden of Eden.² Consequently, gardens and gardening are universally considered to be one of the oldest (if not the oldest) and, according to garden historian, William Howard Adams, “the most visually absorbing”³ expressions of human culture. This statement indicates a close relationship between gardens and gardening on the one hand and culture on the other. A garden is essentially a work of culture, that is, a human construct, an entity, brought about by a form of cultural labour called ‘gardening’.⁴

Due to the close relationship between a garden, gardening, and culture, the researcher decided to adopt a cultural-historical approach in this study. Before this approach, as well as the previously-mentioned three-way relationship, are explained and discussed in more detail in the second part of this chapter, it is necessary to define the terms⁵ ‘garden’, ‘gardener’,

¹ P. Hobhouse, *The story of gardening*, pp. 18-19; G. van Zuylen, *The garden: visions of paradise*, pp. 11-17; A. Huxley, *An illustrated history of gardening*, pp. 9-13; E. Boults & C. Sullivan, *Illustrated history of landscape design*, pp. 1-13; Anon., “Gardens of many lands”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXIV(9), September 1934, p. 226. The history of gardens and gardening are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

² Genesis 2:8 “And the Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden”. Anon., *The Amplified Bible: containing the amplified old testament and the amplified new testament*, p. 3; Anon., *The Holy Bible* (New International Version), p. 2.

³ W.H. Adams, “Gardens through history: nature perfected”, <<http://www.abbeville.com/bookpage.asp?isbn=0896599191.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 31.8.2010).

⁴ P. Lewis, “The making of vernacular taste: the case of *Sunset* and *Southern Living*” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 107; C.T. Kimber, “Gardens and dwelling: people in vernacular gardens”, *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, p. 265; G. Moreno-Black *et al.*, “Cultivating continuity and creating change: women’s home garden practices in Northeastern Thailand”, *Agriculture and Human Values* 13(3), June 1996, p. 3; E.B. Anderson *et al.*, *The Reader’s Digest complete library of the garden* (vol. 1), p. 11.

⁵ In this study, the focus will be on English terms and words and their definitions.

‘gardening’, ‘culture’ and ‘gardening culture’. These generic terms represent key concepts, and it is crucial that they are appropriately clarified within the context of this study. This will be done in the first part of this chapter. Furthermore, it is important to identify and explain the specific terminology that characterise the garden prose of the cultural-historical period under discussion, namely the 1920s and 1930s. Garden historians, John Dixon Hunt and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, also stressed the importance of terminology and argued that “words are lenses through which we look”.⁶ Therefore, language and terminology are important tools at the cultural historian’s disposal to reconstruct a specific cultural historical period. The mentioned terms, some of which have fallen into disuse, capture the *zeitgeist*, atmosphere and, above all, the ‘garden language’ of the period between the two World Wars (1918-1939).

1.2 Gardens, gardeners and gardening

1.2.1 Definition of a garden

What is a garden? The answer to this question is not as straightforward as one might assume because the word ‘garden’ is both a noun and a verb. According to author and academic, Kenneth Helphand, the term ‘garden’ refers to both “place and process”.⁷ In other words, the term ‘garden’ may refer either to a physical ‘place’ or ‘space’ or to garden work as in ‘to garden’. The words ‘place’ and ‘process’ are thus key aspects of the term ‘garden’. The term ‘process’, however, not only refers to the physical act of gardening, but also to the fact that a garden is a living entity and, in the words of Mark Bhatti and others, a “living materiality”.⁸ A garden is essentially a work in progress and subject to constant human intervention and seasonal change. In this regard, landscape architect, Kathryn Gleason, referred to the “processes of time and nature”⁹ which, in some way or another, affect all gardens. At the outset, it is important to distinguish between the two main categories of gardens, namely private or domestic gardens on the one hand and public gardens, which also include parks,

⁶ J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, “Introduction: discovering the vernacular garden” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 9.

⁷ K. Helphand, “Defiant gardens”, *The Journal of Garden History* 17(2), 1997, p. 105.

⁸ M. Bhatti *et al.*, “‘I love being in the garden’: enchanting encounters in everyday life”, *Social & Cultural Geography* 10(1), 2009, p. 64.

⁹ K.L. Gleason, “To bound and to cultivate: an introduction to the archaeology of gardens and fields” in N.F. Miller & K.L. Gleason (eds), *The archaeology of garden and field*, p. 5.

squares and botanical gardens, on the other. In this chapter, as well as in the rest of this study, the focus will be mainly on the first category, namely private or domestic gardens.

According to *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, a private or domestic garden as a 'place' may be defined as "a piece of ground, usually partly grassed and adjoining a private house, used for growing flowers, fruit, or vegetables, and as a place of recreation".¹⁰ This definition describes the typical modern garden, whether urban or rural, as a piece of land that is partly covered with lawn and used for the cultivation of flowers and/or fruit and/or vegetables. Despite the presence of fruit and vegetables, which indicates the need for food and sustenance, the definition also describes the garden as a place of recreation. The *Cambridge English Dictionary* defines a garden as "a piece of land next to and belonging to a house, where flowers and other plants are grown, and often containing an area of grass".¹¹ The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* excludes the lawn, and simply defines a garden as "a plot of ground where herbs, fruits, flowers, or vegetables are cultivated".¹² According to the *Macmillan Dictionary*, a garden is "an area of land next to a house that belongs to the house, usually with grass and plants growing in it".¹³ Most definitions refer to a garden as a plot or area of land *next to* a house where flowers, fruit and vegetables are grown or cultivated. In some definitions, such as the *Macmillan Dictionary's*, the garden's relationship with the house is specifically emphasised by not only indicating that the garden is situated next to the house, but that it also *belongs to* it.¹⁴ The emphasis on this relationship between house and garden underscores the important (also for the purposes of this study) argument that a garden cannot be adequately discussed and understood without reference to the house and vice versa. House and garden should not be considered as being two separate entities and, therefore, cannot be studied independently.¹⁵

¹⁰ S. Tulloch (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, p. 616.

¹¹ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, "Garden", <<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/garden.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 20.11.2015).

¹² Anon., *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "Garden", <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/garden.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 20.11.2015).

¹³ Anon., *Macmillan Dictionary*, "Garden", <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/garden_1.html>, s.a. (Accessed: 20.11.2015).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ B.J. Heath & A. Bennett, "'The little spots allow'd them': the archaeological study of African-American yards", *Historical Archaeology* 34(2), 2000, p. 38.

Although the previously-mentioned definitions appropriately describe the modern concept and understanding of the word ‘garden’, the question is whether these modern definitions are adequate for an understanding of the garden as a historical concept. A more specific question pertains to how gardens were defined during the first half of the 20th century. In order to determine how the concept or idea of a garden was conceived and defined in the past, older definitions of the term ‘garden’ need to be considered. The 1952 edition of *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language* provides a rather detailed definition of a garden as a “piece of cultivated ground, often surrounding or adjoining [a] house, for growing flowers, vegetables, fruit, trees &c. [sic], and including lawns, paths, and sometimes water, &c. [sic]”.¹⁶ Apart from the standard references to a garden as a piece of land that adjoins a house, and the customary lawn, this definition also contains references to decorative elements, such as paths and water features. In contrast to this detailed definition, the 1951 edition of the *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* provides a more comprehensive definition of a garden as “a piece of ground for the cultivation of herbs, fruits, flowers, or vegetables; commonly, such a piece adjoining a dwelling”.¹⁷ This definition is, however, still very similar to the modern definitions quoted earlier.

The definition of a garden in the 1934 edition of *Webster’s New International Dictionary* does not differ much from the other definitions, but it also includes an aspect that is not mentioned in any of the other quoted definitions: “a piece of ground appropriated to the cultivation of herbs, fruits, flowers, or vegetables; commonly, such a piece adjoining a dwelling, and enclosed”.¹⁸ The phrase that is present in this definition but which is absent in all of the other mentioned definitions is ‘and enclosed’. During the early 1930s, when this definition was formulated, most domestic gardens were still walled-in, fenced-in or hedged-in. This stands in contrast to the post-World War II era when landscape designers and later gardeners themselves, visualised gardens “outside garden walls”,¹⁹ to quote garden historian Jane Brown. This significant shift in the popular thinking about gardens had resulted in fewer gardens being enclosed.²⁰

¹⁶ H.C. Wyld (ed.), *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language*, p. 471.

¹⁷ Anon., *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 342.

¹⁸ Anon., *Webster’s New International Dictionary*, p. 1034.

¹⁹ J. Brown, *Gardens of a golden afternoon. The story of a partnership: Edwin Lutyens & Gertrude Jekyll*, p. 155.

²⁰ Hobhouse, pp. 415-419; C. Thacker, *The history of gardens*, pp. 269-280; Brown, pp. 155-157.

1.2.1.1 An enclosed piece of land

The garden as an enclosed and bounded piece of land or space is a crucial aspect of pre-World War II domestic gardens. Therefore, the garden wall, fence or hedge, or whatever was used to enclose the cultivated land, is an element that is essential to an understanding of the garden as a historical concept. Definitions of the term ‘garden’, which date from the 18th and 19th centuries, all refer to the element of enclosure. Humphry Repton (1752-1818), who was one of the most prominent British landscape designers of his time, and the author of a number of books on the subject,²¹ defined a garden as “a piece of ground fenced off from cattle, and appropriated to the use and pleasure of man: it is, or ought to be, cultivated”.²² According to Repton’s definition, the garden as an enclosed or fenced-in space is a key aspect. As a matter of fact, Repton implied that a garden cannot exist without a fence, and subsequently argued that the “most important of all things relating to a Garden [sic] is that which cannot contribute to its beauty, but without which a Garden [sic] cannot exist: the Fence [sic] must be effective and durable”.²³

Anne van Erp-Houtepen, who researched the etymological origin of the word ‘garden’ in the major European languages, analysed various historical meanings and definitions of the term. She discovered that the fence or hedge had been a key element in the most ancient terms that were used to refer to or describe a garden. According to Van Erp-Houtepen, the word ‘garden’ originally derived from the Old Norman French²⁴ word ‘gardin’.²⁵ The well-known British garden writer and garden designer, Penelope Hobhouse, argued that the word ‘garden’ derives from the French word ‘jardin’,²⁶ which is both an Old French and a Middle French word. Around 1300, the word ‘gardyne’ became part of so-called Middle English, after which it evolved into the modern English word ‘garden’. The fact that the word ‘garden’

²¹ For more information on Humphry Repton and the books he wrote, see G. Jellicoe *et al.*, *The Oxford companion to gardens*, pp. 467-469 and P. Taylor (ed.), *The Oxford companion to the garden*, p. 405.

²² H. Repton, *Fragments on the theory and practice of landscape gardening: including some remarks on Grecian and Gothic architecture*, pp. 141-142.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

²⁴ Also known as Old Northern French in reference to the northern region of France, namely Normandy.

²⁵ A. van Erp-Houtepen, “The etymological origin of the garden”, *Journal of Garden History* 6(3), 1986, p. 227.

²⁶ Hobhouse, p. 9.

is also rooted in the old English word ‘geard’ is significant, and is also crucial to an understanding of the historical meaning of the concept ‘garden’.²⁷

Van Erp-Houtepen and others argued that according to its historical meaning, a garden is first and foremost an enclosure, that is, a fenced, walled or hedged piece of land, and secondly, it is cultivated. Therefore, historically, a garden is a space or entity which defined itself by its boundaries.²⁸ Bernard St-Denis, a Canadian academic who researched the “most ancient meanings of the word ‘garden’”,²⁹ agrees and defined a garden as “an enclosed space used for cultivation, and thus for the controlled growing of vegetables, either for subsistence or for pleasure”.³⁰ Helphand argued that a deep-rooted sense of enclosure characterises a garden as “a place apart” and, according to him, it (a sense of enclosure) is a recurring theme which “pervades all of our garden thinking”.³¹ *This argument is crucial to an understanding of not only historical gardens in general, but also South African gardens and, more specifically, Batho’s topiary gardens.*

1.2.1.2 Gardens, yards, plots and patches

Although the word ‘garden’ is most commonly used to describe or refer to a piece of cultivated land adjacent to a dwelling, the word ‘yard’ may have a similar meaning because it is often used interchangeably to describe a piece of cultivated land. Van Erp-Houtepen also traced the origin of the word ‘yard’ and, according to her, it originated from the old English word ‘geard’, which means ‘fence’. The word ‘geard’ then developed into the modern English word ‘yard’. Van Erp-Houtepen and geographer, Clarissa T. Kimber, rightly stressed that a yard may have different meanings in American and British English.³² Most contemporary dictionaries acknowledge this distinction, including the *Macmillan Dictionary*, which provides two different definitions for the word ‘yard’. The above-mentioned dictionary states that a yard, in American English, refers to “a garden *around* a

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Van Erp-Houtepen, pp. 227, 229; P. Robinson (ed.), *The Faber book of gardens*, p. xi; Helphand, p. 101; Hobhouse, p. 9. The reasons why gardens were enclosed are discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

²⁹ B. St-Denis, “Just what is a garden?”, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 27(1), 2007, p. 64.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Helphand, p. 101.

³² Van Erp-Houtepen, p. 227; Kimber, p. 265.

house”,³³ whereas in British English, it means “an area without grass at the *back* of a small house”.³⁴ The *Cambridge English Dictionary* also distinguishes between the meaning of the word in American and British English. According to this dictionary, a yard, in American English, is “a piece of land next to a house, usually used for growing flowers, grass, and other plants”,³⁵ whereas in British English, it is “an area of land next to a building that usually has a hard surface and that is used for a special purpose”.³⁶ The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* does not distinguish between the American and British English meanings of the word. Instead, it defines a yard as “the grounds immediately surrounding a house that are usually covered with grass”.³⁷

Van Erp-Houtepen argued that there is, historically, a close relationship between a garden and a yard. She reasoned that in American English, a yard is “*not uncultivated*, but just the back garden”.³⁸ In their discussion of African-American gardens, Barbara J. Heath and Amber Bennett defined a yard as “the area of land, bounded and usually enclosed, which immediately surrounds a domestic structure and is considered an extension of that dwelling.”³⁹ Heath and Bennett emphasised the fact that in the American context and, specifically, the African-American context, the definition “includes garden areas, which are used for small-scale, personal production of useful and ornamental plants, but excludes larger provision grounds”.⁴⁰ According to Richard Westmacott and Gene Wilhelm, both of whom studied African-American gardens in the rural areas of the southern United States, the term ‘garden’ is used in the South to refer to the area *behind* the house where vegetables are grown, whereas the term ‘yard’ refers to the area *in front of* the house where flowers are grown.⁴¹

³³ Anon., *Macmillan Dictionary*, “Yard”, <<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/yard.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 27.11.2015). (Own emphasis)

³⁴ *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

³⁵ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, “Yard”, <<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/yard.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 27.11.2015).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Anon., *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “Yard”, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/yard.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 27.11.2015).

³⁸ Van Erp-Houtepen, p. 227. (Van Erp-Houtepen’s emphasis)

³⁹ Heath & Bennett, p. 38.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ R. Westmacott, “The gardens of African-Americans in the rural south” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 77; G. Wilhelm, “Dooryard gardens and gardening in the black community of Brushy, Texas”, *Geographical Review* 65(1), January 1975, pp. 73-74; Kimber, p. 265.

In the South African context, the words ‘garden’ and ‘yard’ have historically always had different meanings as is the case in the United States and even Britain. Due to South Africa’s colonial past and the strong influence of the British on local culture and linguistics, the term ‘garden’ has customarily been used in South African English to describe a cultivated piece of land adjoining a house. It appears, however, that the distinction between a garden and a yard has not always been straightforward. As far as this study is concerned, the important argument is whether the local understanding of a yard only means an enclosed piece of land that is *always uncultivated*, or whether it also means an enclosed piece of land that *may be cultivated*. In a letter to his mother dated 19 October 1848, William Fleming, a clergyman of the Church of England who was stationed in Bloemfontein during that time, described the property he had purchased in the town, and mentioned that there was “a yard both before and behind the house.”⁴² Unfortunately, Fleming did not indicate whether or not the yard was cultivated, but his observation reveals a curious perception of a yard in the local context.

In Bloemfontein it was not common practice to call the space in front of a house a ‘yard’. It appears that during the specific time-period on which this study focuses, namely 1918-1939, the word ‘garden’ was most commonly used to refer to the classic concept and understanding of a garden. The understanding of the term ‘yard’, however, was not always clear-cut, and it caused confusion well into the 20th century. This was, for example, illustrated during the case of Watts vs. Percy Fisher, which appeared in the Free State Provincial Division of the Supreme Court in Bloemfontein in February 1932. The two parties, both of whom were hotel owners in Bloemfontein, disagreed as to the meaning of the term ‘yard’. In his ruling, Judge Botha⁴³ argued that the definition of a yard as it appeared in the “Webster’s dictionary”⁴⁴ should be considered the standard definition of the term, namely “an enclosure; usually a small enclosed space in front of or around a house or barn”.⁴⁵

The *Webster’s New International Dictionary*, which was widely used in South Africa during that time, defines a yard as “an enclosure; a small or moderate-sized enclosed space in front

⁴² P.H. Butterfield (ed.), “The Orange River Sovereignty, 1848 to 1849. The letters of Ensign William Fleming”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 4(12), January 1984, p. 289.

⁴³ In the consulted source, the initials of Judge Botha are not indicated.

⁴⁴ *The Friend*, 19.2.1932, p. 12. Judge Botha did not indicate which edition of the dictionary he consulted.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

of, or around, a house, barn, or other building”.⁴⁶ This definition, which was taken from the 1934 edition, does not refer to a garden or a cultivated piece of land. Therefore, it may be safely argued that in the South African context of the 1920s and 1930s, the word ‘yard’ referred to an enclosed space or property which typically did not include a garden. Another dimension is added to this discussion of the definition and understanding of a garden and a yard in the local context when the language that was used by contemporary South African publications which reported on gardens and gardening matters, including periodicals and popular newspapers of that time, is scrutinised. For example, South African gardening and leisure magazines, including *South African Gardening & Country Life*, *South African Country Life*, *The South African Lady’s Pictorial and Home Journal*, *The Outspan* and *The Homestead*, which were widely read by the white middle-class segment of the South African population, are valuable sources of information on the contemporary garden terminology. The language used by these sources is a good indication of the terminology that was in vogue during the period under discussion.

Regarding the terms ‘garden’ and ‘yard’, it seems as though the term ‘garden’⁴⁷ rather than ‘yard’ was generally used in the periodicals to describe flower and vegetable gardens, irrespective of where they were positioned on a property. ‘Flower gardens’ were typically laid out in front of a house, whereas ‘vegetable gardens’ and ‘kitchen gardens’ were located behind a house. The term ‘yard’ was often used to refer to the space behind the house as in “backyard”⁴⁸ (also spelt ‘back yard’). A South African gardener described her garden as the space “between the front door of the house and the street”,⁴⁹ while another described her yard as the “bit of ground between my kitchen and the outside store-room”.⁵⁰ As far as gardens are concerned, a general distinction was made between “city gardens”,⁵¹ “town gardens”,⁵² “country gardens”⁵³ and “farm gardens”.⁵⁴ So-called ‘country gardens’ were

⁴⁶ Anon., *Webster’s New International...*, p. 2967.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Anon., “The future of the garden in South Africa”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XI(5), May 1921, pp. 152-153; “Ruralist” (pseudonym), “Planning and planting”, *The Homestead* 568(732), 18.8.1926, p. 29.

⁴⁸ Anon., “Getting the most out of a garden”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXIII(6), June 1933, p. 124.

⁴⁹ Anon., “Garden schemes”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXII(4), April 1932, p. 99.

⁵⁰ “Mara” (pseudonym), “My wild garden”, *The Homestead* 376(540), 13.12.1922, p. 7.

⁵¹ Anon., “The joys of gardening”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXI(1), January 1931, p. 28.

⁵² “Ruralist” (pseudonym), “Edgings for beds and paths”, *The Homestead* 566(730), 4.8.1926, p. 25.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Anon., “Pot-Pourri”, *The Homestead* 623(787), 7.9.1927, p. 33.

found in South Africa's villages and small *dorps*,⁵⁵ while the other gardens were found, as the descriptions indicate, in South African cities and towns, and on South African farms.

Noteworthy of the 'garden language' used during the period under discussion are the terms and phrases which capture the garden trends and garden thinking of the 1920s and 1930s. In keeping with the trends in Britain and America, fashionable terms such as "architectural garden",⁵⁶ "terraced garden",⁵⁷ "Garden City",⁵⁸ "Garden Village"⁵⁹ and "Garden Suburb"⁶⁰ also became descriptions of life in a perceived South African garden utopia, whether in the city or in the country. Furthermore, a beautiful garden was increasingly considered to be an indication of a house owner's level of aesthetic refinement and civic responsibility. In their articles and columns, local garden writers unashamedly promoted such aspirations by using terms such as "model gardens"⁶¹ and the "Garden Beautiful".⁶² The 'Garden Beautiful'-concept, customarily spelt with capital letters 'G' and 'B', became the ultimate expression of domesticity, and white middle-class gardeners were encouraged to strive towards creating their own 'garden beautiful'.⁶³

Apart from the periodicals, the English-speaking newspapers that were popular among the Orange Free State's and, specifically, Bloemfontein's white and black residents are also good sources of information on contemporary terminology and language. The Bloemfontein newspaper *The Friend*,⁶⁴ which was widely read by local English-speaking whites and a small but influential number of black people, distinguished, for example, between "the yards

⁵⁵ Plural of the Afrikaans word *dorp*, meaning 'small town'.

⁵⁶ R. Furnival, "An architectural garden", *South African Country Life* XXV(6), June 1935, p. 36; Anon., "Garden structure", *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXIII(8), August 1933, p. 185.

⁵⁷ E. Struben, "Planning in gardens", *South African Country Life* XXV(9), September 1935, p. 191.

⁵⁸ Anon., "What is a Garden City? The example of Letchworth", *The South African Lady's Pictorial and Home Journal* XI(132), August 1921, p. 29.

⁵⁹ L. Cox, "The garden of our dreams: how to transform a sandy waste", *The South African Lady's Pictorial and Home Journal* XII(139), March 1922, p. 19.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* The Garden City Movement is discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

⁶¹ Cox, p. 19.

⁶² L. Cox, "The garden of our dreams: the beauty of a northern garden", *The South African Lady's Pictorial and Home Journal* XI(131), July 1921, p. 31.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *The Friend*, previously known as *The Friend of the Sovereignty and Bloemfontein Gazette*, was founded in 1850. In 1854, the weekly newspaper became *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, and published reports in both Dutch and English. As from January 1894, *The Friend of the Free State*, later *The Friend*, appeared in English only. In 1896, the paper, which was an important source of news and information for English-speakers in the Orange Free State, became a daily. The paper was discontinued in 1985. *The Friend*, 10.6.1927, p. 8.

or gardens of the houses”⁶⁵ in Bloemfontein. In an article on the latest local house and garden design trends, the same newspaper mentioned that “the *garden* is principally lawns, relieved with a few beds for bright flowers”.⁶⁶ The same article also mentioned the “neatly enclosed *back yard*”⁶⁷ which was situated near the kitchen behind the house. In some cases, *The Friend* referred to “grounds”⁶⁸ (including the singular ‘ground’) when it possibly meant ‘garden’ or ‘gardens’, but such examples are rare. If the terminology used by *The Friend* may be taken as a yardstick, there is no doubt that ‘garden’ and ‘yard’ were commonly understood as being two different concepts, and that the two terms referred to or described two different types of spaces. All issues of *The Friend* which were consulted for the purpose of this study used the term ‘garden’ when it referred to any domestic space that was allocated for the cultivation of plants, flowers and vegetables.

The word ‘garden’ was also commonly used to describe black people’s gardens, irrespective of what was grown in them. For example, *The Friend* reported on the Bloemfontein Town Council’s efforts to encourage “the residents of Bloemfontein’s locations”⁶⁹ to plant trees in “their gardens”.⁷⁰ The paper also referred to black people’s vegetable gardens in the former Basutoland⁷¹ as “Native vegetable gardens”.⁷² These and other gardens were also described as “Native village gardens”.⁷³ In some cases, *The Friend* used the term ‘plot’ together with the term ‘garden’ when it described black people’s gardens as ‘garden plot(s)’. The term ‘plot’ referred to the plots – also known as ‘stands’ – in the locations on which the black residents built their houses and laid out their gardens.⁷⁴ In a report on the living conditions of black people in the locations of Orange Free State towns, the paper mentioned that “in some cases, garden plots afford a measure of privacy and the decencies of life.”⁷⁵ Occasionally, black people’s gardens were described as ‘patches’, among others by *The*

⁶⁵ *The Friend*, 24.11.1932, p. 6. (Own emphasis)

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.6.1930, p. 3. (Own emphasis)

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.8.1933, p. 4. In this specific case, *The Friend* referred to a black garden labourer who worked “about the grounds” of his white employer.

⁶⁹ *The Friend*, 31.8.1936, p. 8. The word ‘location’ was used at the time to describe what is known today as a ‘township’. For more information, see Chapter 5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Today known as Lesotho.

⁷² *The Friend*, 24.2.1938, p. 11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3.3.1937, p. 7.

⁷⁴ R.J.M. Goold-Adams, *South Africa to-day and to-morrow*, p. 56. For more information on plots, see Chapter 5.

⁷⁵ *The Friend*, 15.1.1931, p. 4.

Friend, which referred to black people's gardens as "garden patches".⁷⁶ Other sources also mentioned 'patches', such as *The Homestead*, a periodical aimed at women who lived on farms, which referred to the "patches which they [blacks] fancy for a 'garden'".⁷⁷

Umteteli wa Bantu,⁷⁸ a national newspaper with a predominantly black readership and which was popular among Bloemfontein's black literate class, also reported on gardens and gardening. This newspaper, which was also known among its readers as *Umteteli*, referred, for example, to the "little orchards and gardens"⁷⁹ which surrounded Batho's houses. *Umteteli wa Bantu* even described a patch of mealies, which was typically planted behind the house, that is, in the yard, as a "mealie garden".⁸⁰ *This is an indication that the term 'garden' had a broader and more inclusive meaning among black people than it had among white people.* Otherwise, *Umteteli wa Bantu* consistently referred to "garden[s]"⁸¹ or "garden plot[s]"⁸² as standard terminology in its reporting during the period under discussion. As a matter of fact, it was not uncommon for contemporary sources to also refer to white people's gardens as "garden plots".⁸³ It also appears that there was a general consensus that the "flower garden"⁸⁴ or "botanical garden"⁸⁵ was situated in front of the house, as indicated by a description of a reader's garden in which mention is made of the "flowers that flourish in front [sic] of the house."⁸⁶

As far as could be determined, the term 'yard' was seldom, if ever, used to refer to or describe black people's gardens. Residents of Batho who were interviewed for the purposes of this

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.8.1936, p. 3.

⁷⁷ "Farmer's Wife" (pseudonym), "Our trees", *The Homestead* 420(584), 17.10.1923, p. 9.

⁷⁸ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, which means 'Mouthpiece of the People', was established by the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines and the Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC) in 1920. This weekly newspaper, which was launched to counter the African National Congress' (ANC) newspaper *Abantu Batho*, initially focused on moderate African nationalists in the areas where African mineworkers were recruited, including the Orange Free State. Later, the newspaper became a mouthpiece of the African middle-class opinion. The paper, which published reports in English, Sesotho, isiXhosa and isiZulu, was discontinued in 1956. Anon., "A history of Umteteli Wabantu: 1920-1956", *South African History Online*, <<http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-umteteli-wabantu-1920-1956.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 4.12.2015).

⁷⁹ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 19.8.1922, p. 3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.6.1923, p. 2. In some cases, the term 'mealie orchard' was used. See, for example, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 3.2.1934, p. 5.

⁸¹ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 7.7.1923, p. 2.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ "Ruralist" (pseudonym), "Gardening correspondence", *The Homestead* (1195), 24.8.1938, p. 26.

⁸⁴ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 25.3.1939, p. 7.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.1.1936, p. 7.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

study, also confirmed this. All⁸⁷ of them used either the word ‘garden’, the Sesotho word *serapa*⁸⁸ (or the plural *dirapa*), or the Afrikaans word *tuin* when referring to or describing the cultivated areas in front of their houses.⁸⁹ Those who used the term ‘yard’ or the Afrikaans *jaard* or *agterjaard* (also spelt *jaart*) usually meant the ‘backyard’, which they all understood as being the area behind and, in some cases, the narrow strips on both sides of the house. In a few cases, they used the word ‘yard’ to refer to the entire property.⁹⁰ It may be argued, then, that in South Africa and, specifically, in Bloemfontein and Batho, the word ‘garden’ was commonly used to describe or refer to any cultivated space or piece of land adjacent to a dwelling, regardless of what had been cultivated on it – whether it was a flowerbed, a vegetable patch, or a small crop of maize, it did not matter because it was a cultivated piece of land, and therefore it qualified as a garden.

1.2.2 Gardeners and gardening

In order to grasp the meaning of the term ‘garden’ in its broadest sense, two other terms that are closely related to it, namely ‘gardener’ and ‘gardening’, must also be defined. A garden does not happen by itself; it must first be laid out, after which it needs a gardener to cultivate and maintain it. The role of human beings in creating and maintaining gardens was probably foremost in the minds of the influential American landscape architects, Henry Vincent Hubbard and Theodora Kimball, when they defined a garden as “a *man-made*, bounded, outdoor area, containing plants.”⁹¹ This definition was formulated in the 1930s during which time Hubbard and Kimball were convinced that “almost every one [sic] is agreed”⁹² that their definition was the most widely-accepted one of a garden. In contrast to the definitions of a garden quoted earlier, Hubbard and Kimball essentially defined a garden as a man-made

⁸⁷ A total of 57 Batho residents were interviewed for the purpose of this study. For more details, see Chapter 9.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of Sesotho and Setswana garden terminology, see Chapter 9.

⁸⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with*: Mr R.P. Moiloa, Batho, 30.3.2011; Ms E.M. Monaheng, Batho, 30.3.2011; Mr F.M. Liutliuleng, Batho, 14.4.2011; Ms M.M. Marumo, Batho, 24.1.2012; Mr P. Motloun, Batho, 14.3.2013; Mr M. Mogaecho, Batho, 9.4.2013; Mr T.S. Sebeela, Batho, 14.4.2014; Ms M.G. Melamu, Batho, 24 & 27.10.2014; Ms M.L. Khantwane, Batho, 21.4.2015.

⁹⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with*: Mr R.P. Moiloa, Batho, 30.3.2011; Mr A.K. Loape, Batho, 5.4.2011; Mr F. Louw, Batho, 14.4.2011; Mr K. Molosioa, Batho, 25.1.2012; Mr P. Motloun, Batho, 14.3.2013; Mr J.T. Hlubi, Batho, 1.5.2013; Ms K.M. Lekutu, Batho, 27.10.2014; Mr M. Phakoe, Batho, 25.11.2014.

⁹¹ H.V. Hubbard & T. Kimball, *An introduction to the study of landscape design*, p. 233. (Own emphasis)

⁹² *Ibid.*

construct or space. Their argument is, of course, entirely valid because the gardener is the key figure in the conceptualising, laying out and tending of a garden, regardless of its style or size. In this regard author, Philip Robinson, rightly stated that “where there is [a] garden, there are gardeners.”⁹³ In fact, a garden cannot exist without a gardener, because human intervention is, in the words of E.J. Salisbury, essential to “the maintenance of the artificial community of plants we term a garden”.⁹⁴

1.2.2.1 Definition of a gardener

Who and what is a gardener? The *Cambridge English Dictionary* simply defines a gardener as “someone who works in a garden, growing and taking care of plants”.⁹⁵ The *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*’s definition is even more comprehensive: it defines a gardener as “one who gardens or is versed in gardening”.⁹⁶ These definitions are, however, rather vague and unsatisfactory. *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus* defines a gardener as “a person who gardens or is employed to tend a garden”.⁹⁷ This definition differs from the other two definitions in the sense that it distinguishes between two types of gardeners. The *Collins English Dictionary* also makes a distinction as indicated in the second ‘or’ in the definition: “a person who works in or takes care of a garden as an occupation *or* pastime”.⁹⁸ This dictionary also provides a second definition of a gardener as “a person who is paid to work in someone else’s garden”.⁹⁹ This distinction between a person who gardens for pleasure and one who is paid to garden is also evident in the two definitions provided by the *Macmillan Dictionary*, namely “someone whose job is to look after a garden and someone who enjoys growing plants and is good at it”.¹⁰⁰

According to the definitions provided by the *Collins English Dictionary* and the *Macmillan Dictionary*, a clear distinction should be made between a gardener as a person who gardens

⁹³ Robinson, p. xi.

⁹⁴ E.J. Salisbury, *The living garden or the how & why of garden life*, p. 3.

⁹⁵ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, “Gardener”, <<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/gardener.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 28.11.2015).

⁹⁶ Anon., *Webster’s New Collegiate...*, p. 342.

⁹⁷ Tulloch, p. 616.

⁹⁸ Anon., *Collins English Dictionary*, “Gardener”, <<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/gardener.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 28.11.2015). (Own emphasis)

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Anon., *Macmillan Dictionary*, “Gardener”, <<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/gardener.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 28.11.2015).

for pleasure, and one who gardens as an occupation or for a livelihood. *This distinction is crucial to an understanding of the concept ‘gardener’ in the South African context. In the local context, which by implication also applies to Bloemfontein and Batho during the period 1918-1939, the term ‘gardener’ may be misleading when the centuries-old and deeply entrenched division between mental and manual labour comes into play.* This labour division implies that a gardener may, on the one hand, be a so-called ‘mental gardener’ who is, in most cases, the garden owner and typically gardens for pleasure. This type of gardener conceptualises the garden, designs it, and has the final say in what and where it should be planted. On the other hand, a gardener may also be a so-called ‘manual gardener’ who is being paid to maintain the mental gardener’s garden.¹⁰¹

In the South African context, the mental gardener is typically the (mostly white male or female) garden owner, whereas the manual gardener is the (mostly black and coloured male¹⁰²) labourer. For this reason, a distinction will be made in this study between a *garden owner*, a *gardener* and a *garden labourer*. In the local context, both a garden owner and a garden labourer may be a gardener. *This argument specifically applies to Batho’s gardeners who were gardeners and garden labourers at the same time because they not only laboured in the white garden owners’ gardens, but also maintained their own gardens.* By the same token, the white garden owners often worked in their own gardens despite the fact that they also employed black garden labourers to do most of the hard and menial labour.

If the language that was used by contemporary sources, including the above-mentioned newspapers and periodicals, as well as the records created by the then Orange Free State Provincial Government and the then Municipality of Bloemfontein, is an indication of the garden terminology that was used locally during the period 1918-1939, then it is evident that the term ‘gardener’ was commonly used to refer to a person who worked in or maintained a garden, irrespective of the person’s race. *The Friend* referred to Bloemfontein’s enthusiastic white garden owners as “gardeners”¹⁰³ and also gave credit to the black municipal

¹⁰¹ M. Hoyles, *The story of gardening*, pp. 24-26, 272; J. Brown, *The pursuit of paradise: a social history of gardens and gardening*, pp. 243-272. For more information, see L. Taylor, *A taste for gardening: classed and gendered practices, passim*. This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

¹⁰² Historically, almost all black South African garden labourers who were in either private or public employ, were male. This is also the case with the black garden labourers in Bloemfontein during the 1920s and 1930s. Black garden labourers are discussed in Chapter 7.

¹⁰³ *The Friend*, 11.10.1933, p. 5.

“gardeners”¹⁰⁴ who laboured in Bloemfontein’s public parks. *The Friend* therefore used the term ‘gardener(s)’, often spelt with a capital letter ‘G’ à la Humphry Repton, in reference to both white garden owners and black garden labourers. When posts for government gardeners were advertised in the *Orange Free State Official Gazette*, the word was typically spelt “GARDENER”¹⁰⁵ or “Gardener”.¹⁰⁶

In the official correspondence of the then Orange Free State Provincial Government, capital letters were commonly used during the 1920s and 1930s, specifically in cases where reference was made to the posts of white gardeners, such as “Gardener”,¹⁰⁷ “Government Gardener”¹⁰⁸ and “Learner Gardener”.¹⁰⁹ Otherwise, the word ‘gardener’ was spelt with a small letter ‘g’. Sometimes a prefix was added, for example, in the case of “women-gardeners”¹¹⁰ to indicate gender, but some local female garden writers preferred to write under the pseudonym “Gardeness”.¹¹¹ Terms such as “landscape gardener”¹¹² and “artist gardener”¹¹³ were used to indicate an occupation or social status. Other contemporary sources also used the word ‘gardener’, including gardening and leisure periodicals¹¹⁴ as well as the publicity agent, O. Zachariah, who mentioned that the most common occupations for South African black men in the 1920s were “chefs, waiters, porters, coachmen, gardeners, and navvies.”¹¹⁵ It also seems as though Bloemfontein’s black male garden labourers perceived themselves and their peers as ‘gardeners’,¹¹⁶ including the black male domestic

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.10.1932, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Bloemfontein Public Library (hereafter BPL): *The Province of the Orange Free State Official Gazette*, no. 680, 9.7.1926, p. 10511; no. 681, 16.7.1926, pp. 10545-10546; no. 682, 23.7.1926, p. 10614; no. 4, 17.1.1930, p. 40.

¹⁰⁶ *The Friend*, 18.1.1930, p. 19; 11.4.1936, p. 15; 15.6.1938, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA): *DOW 1/2 (B5/459)*, letter from Secretary for Public Works to District Engineer, Public Works Department, Bloemfontein, 13.9.1928.

¹⁰⁸ FSPA: *DOW 1/2 (B5/459)*, letter from District Engineer to Provincial Secretary, Public Works Department, Bloemfontein, 7.6.1921.

¹⁰⁹ FSPA: *DOW 1/2 (B5/459)*, letter from A.D.M. to Secretary for Public Works, Bloemfontein, 13.8.1935.

¹¹⁰ “Ruralist” (pseudonym), “Ornamental shrubs”, *The Homestead* 375(539), 6.12.1922, p. 17.

¹¹¹ “Gardeness” (pseudonym), “In a Free State garden (8)”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XI(4), April 1921, p. 120; “Gardeness” (pseudonym), “Growing daffodils in the O.F.S.”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XV(1), January 1925, p. 17.

¹¹² Anon., “In a Rhodesian garden”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XVI(9), September 1926, p. 307.

¹¹³ Anon., “Garden structure”, p. 186.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Cox, “The beauty of...”, p. 41; “Ruralist” (pseudonym), “Hardy plants for dry gardens”, *The Homestead* 368(532), 18.10.1922, p. 11.

¹¹⁵ O. Zachariah, *Travel in South Africa*, p. 202. A navvy is an unskilled worker.

¹¹⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with*: Mr R.P. Moilola, Batho, 30.3.2011; Mr D. Mokete, Batho, 28.3.2013; Mr D.M. Mphothane, Batho, 28.3.2013; Mr P.S. Ditema, Batho, 8.5.2013; Mr F.M. Languza, Batho, 9.7.2014.

servant (or so-called ‘house boy’) who advertised his services in *The Friend* and described himself as a “good gardener”.¹¹⁷

1.2.2.2 The ‘garden boy’

Apart from the word ‘gardener’, the terms “garden employee”,¹¹⁸ “Native gardener”¹¹⁹ and the more common “boy”,¹²⁰ “garden ‘boy’”,¹²¹ or “garden boy”¹²² (also spelt “Garden-boy”,¹²³ “garden-boy”¹²⁴ or “Garden Boy”¹²⁵) were also used when reference was made to black garden labourers in general. In the official correspondence and documents of the Orange Free State Provincial Government and the Municipality of Bloemfontein, both of which employed sizeable numbers of garden labourers who worked in the city’s public gardens, parks, squares, nurseries and children’s playgrounds, the terms ‘boy’ or ‘garden boy’ were commonly used. In 1929, Mr F. Griffith of the provincial office of the Department of Public Works in Bloemfontein, listed all the garden labourers who were employed by the department under the heading “Government Garden Boys”.¹²⁶ The black garden labourers were also referred to as “native boys”¹²⁷ but, in 1930, the labourers who maintained the government gardens in Bloemfontein’s President Brand Street were merely referred to as “the gangs engaged upon the upkeep of the gardens.”¹²⁸ The term “kaffir boy[s]”¹²⁹ was also often used, but usually referred to a ‘gang’ or team of black garden labourers, which often included prisoners. In the municipality’s records, the term ‘boy’ was also commonly used:

¹¹⁷ *The Friend*, 18.9.1936, p. 12.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.7.1936, p. 6.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.7.1936, p. 10.

¹²⁰ “Mara” (pseudonym), “My wild garden...”, p. 7; Anon., “A garden from nothing”, *The Homestead* 381(545), 17.1.1923, p. 3; “One-who-knows” (pseudonym), “The domestic help”, *The Homestead* 602(766), 13.4.1927, p. 41; Anon., “A Free State amateur’s garden”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XI(8), August 1921, p. 275; Anon., “Electricity – or servants?”, *The Outspan*, 19.8.1927, p. 31; Anon., “Faithful unto death”, *The Outspan*, 20.1.1928, p. 55; FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/53, *Report of Curator of Parks*, 17.3.1933, p. 2.

¹²¹ *The Friend*, 29.5.1924, p. 8.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 18.1.1929, p. 7; Anon., “A Free State...”, p. 275.

¹²³ Anon., “Pot-Pourri”, p. 33.

¹²⁴ *The Friend*, 12.2.1937, p. 14.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.8.1939, p. 18.

¹²⁶ FSPA: DOW 1/2 (B5/459), letter from F. Griffith to W. Kennedy, 29.10.1929.

¹²⁷ FSPA: DOW 1/2 (B5/459), letter from A. Chisholm, Government Gardener, to District Engineer, Public Works Department, Bloemfontein, 1.3.1921.

¹²⁸ FSPA: DOW 1/2 (B5/459), letter from W.W. Tonkin to Acting Secretary, Public Works Department, Bloemfontein, 9.6.1930.

¹²⁹ “Gardeness” (pseudonym), “In a Free State garden (9)”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XI(9), September 1921, p. 304.

Mr A.F. Baker, the Curator of Parks, mentioned in his monthly report for February and March 1933 that “from 1924 to 1929 the number of boys employed in the Parks [public parks] averaged from 100 to 110, including boys engaged on Capital Works”.¹³⁰

The terms ‘boy’ or ‘garden boy’ were never used to refer to white garden labourers. For example, in an article on women gardeners, *The South African Lady’s Pictorial and Home Journal* mentioned the white “jobbing gardener”¹³¹ who supervised and instructed a garden owner’s “native boy”.¹³² Similarly, an apparently wealthy Orange Free State garden owner referred to her white “professional gardener and his various native ‘helps’”.¹³³ When the Municipality of Bloemfontein replaced black garden labourers with whites during the economic depression of 1933 as part of its so-called ‘civilised labour’ policy, the whites were referred to as “labourers”¹³⁴ or “European labour”.¹³⁵ In a similar vein, Mr H.R.G. Hose, the Union government’s Superintendent of Gardens, referred to “the white labourers on the garden staff”¹³⁶ in his inspection report of Bloemfontein’s government gardens in 1938.¹³⁷

Umteteli wa Bantu used the term “gardener[s]”,¹³⁸ irrespective of whether they – in this case, black gardeners and garden labourers – were gardening for themselves or working for white garden owners. The paper used the term “garden boy”¹³⁹ only when referring to garden labourers who were employed as “domestic servants”.¹⁴⁰ Occasionally, the newspaper used the term “Native horticulturists”¹⁴¹ when, in actual fact, it meant black gardeners. *The Friend* and the mentioned periodicals’ garden writers also used the term “horticulturist[s]”¹⁴² but,

¹³⁰ FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/53, *Report of Curator of Parks*, 17.3.1933, p. 2. See also MBL 1/2/3/1/55, *Relief labour – Parks Department: special report by Curator of Parks*, 11.10.1933, p. 1.

¹³¹ Anon., “Farming for women”, *The South African Lady’s Pictorial and Home Journal* XII(141), May 1922, p. 37.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ “Gardeness” (pseudonym), “In a Free... (9)”, p. 304.

¹³⁴ *The Friend*, 10.1.1933, p. 4.

¹³⁵ FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/53, *Report of Curator of Parks*, 17.3.1933, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁶ FSPA: DOW 1/2 (B5/459), *letter from H.R.G. Hose, Superintendent, to District Representative, Public Works Department, Pretoria*, 10.11.1938.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 23.6.1923, p. 2.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.5.1929, p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 23.6.1923, p. 2.

¹⁴² *The Friend*, 25.10.1933, p. 7; L. Cox, “The garden of our dreams: Africa’s incomparable flowers”, *The South African Lady’s Pictorial and Home Journal* XII(138), February 1922, p. 9.

in all cases, it meant a white professional or trained person who was knowledgeable about plants. The term was never used to refer to amateur gardeners; in fact, a clear distinction was made between an “amateur gardener”¹⁴³ and a “professional horticulturist”¹⁴⁴ or a “learned horticulturist”.¹⁴⁵

During the 1920s and 1930s, the term ‘garden boy’¹⁴⁶ was commonly used by Bloemfontein’s white employers when referring to their black garden labourers. Margaret Gray (née Aberdein), the daughter of the well-known Bloemfontein businessman, James Aberdein,¹⁴⁷ mentioned in the memoirs of her life in Bloemfontein (1913-1922) that the Aberdein family’s “garden boy”¹⁴⁸ did more than just garden work. Among other things, Gray remembered that the garden boy occasionally also washed her father’s Model T Ford when he had finished his garden work.¹⁴⁹ Although ‘garden boy’ was the most commonly-used term in Bloemfontein, it was also used interchangeably with the term ‘gardener’. In his memoirs of his life in Bloemfontein during the 1920s, Charles Friedman referred to his garden labourer as both “gardener”¹⁵⁰ and “garden boy”.¹⁵¹

1.2.2.3 The practice of gardening

As stated at the beginning of this discussion on gardeners and gardening, the term ‘garden’ is not only a noun, but also a verb. Therefore, the garden as a ‘process’, that is, the physical aspect of the term ‘garden’ as in ‘to garden’ or ‘gardening’, also needs clarification. It appears that the definition of the word ‘gardening’ has not changed much during the past century. The 1934 edition of *Webster’s New International Dictionary* defines ‘gardening’ as “the laying out or cultivating of gardens”,¹⁵² while the 1952 edition of *The Universal*

¹⁴³ Anon., “A Free State...”, p. 275; Anon., “The making of a garden”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XI(9), September 1921, p. 309.

¹⁴⁴ Anon., “A Free State...”, p. 276.

¹⁴⁵ Anon., “Some gardens of North Africa”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XVI(1), January 1926, p. 10.

¹⁴⁶ Bloemfontein’s Afrikaans-speaking residents used the terms *tuinboy*, *tuinbooi* and *tuinkaffer*.

¹⁴⁷ James Aberdein was the owner of Aberdein & Butt clothing store in Bloemfontein.

¹⁴⁸ FSPA: A. 507.11, M. Gray, *Aberdein family – how they lived in Bloemfontein 1910-1922* (memoirs), pp. 29-30.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ FSPA: A. 507.6, C. Friedmann’s *Bloemfontein recollections* (memoirs), p. 1.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁵² Anon., *Webster’s New International...*, p. 1034.

Dictionary of the English Language defines it as “the art or occupation of cultivating a garden”.¹⁵³ Modern definitions of the word ‘gardening’ appear to have dropped the idea of gardening as an art form, emphasising instead the fact that gardening is an activity which involves physical labour. The *Cambridge English Dictionary*’s definition leaves no doubt as to what gardening involves and defines ‘gardening’ as “the job or activity of working in a garden, growing and taking care of plants, and keeping it attractive”.¹⁵⁴ While the *Collins English Dictionary* defines ‘gardening’ as “the planning and cultivation of a garden”,¹⁵⁵ the *Macmillan Dictionary* simply defines it as “the activity of planning and looking after a garden”.¹⁵⁶ The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*’s and *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*’ definitions are even more straightforward: “to lay out or work in a garden”¹⁵⁷ and “cultivate or work in a garden”.¹⁵⁸

What does the word ‘gardening’ mean in the South African context? Considering the terminology used in contemporary sources, including the local popular media, it appears that the word ‘gardening’ was commonly used to refer to any kind of work or activity that relates to maintaining a garden. Typically, reference was made to the “practice of gardening”¹⁵⁹ as opposed to “the science of horticulture”.¹⁶⁰ Gardening was considered first and foremost as an activity which was often described as “the cultivation of the land”.¹⁶¹ Fashionable terms such as “landscape gardening”,¹⁶² “nursery gardening”¹⁶³ and other specialised types of gardening were often used by the periodicals, but the terms were obviously used with the publications’ selected white readership in mind. Apart from the term ‘gardening’, which was often spelt “Gardening”¹⁶⁴ with a capital ‘G’ in the middle of a sentence, *The Friend* used

¹⁵³ Wyld, p. 471.

¹⁵⁴ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, “Gardening” <<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/gardening.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 30.11.2015).

¹⁵⁵ Anon., *Collins English Dictionary*, “Gardening”, <<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/gardening.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 24.4.2014).

¹⁵⁶ Anon., *Macmillan Dictionary*, “Gardening”, <<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/gardening.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 24.4.2014).

¹⁵⁷ Anon., *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “Gardening”, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gardening.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 24.4.2014).

¹⁵⁸ Tulloch, p. 616.

¹⁵⁹ Anon., “Getting the most...”, p. 124.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Cox, “The beauty of...”, p. 31.

¹⁶³ Anon., “Farming for women...”, p. 37.

¹⁶⁴ *The Friend*, 19.4.1939, p. 10.

other phrases and terms with a similar meaning, including “to garden”¹⁶⁵ and “garden-making”.¹⁶⁶ The term ‘gardening’ was also used in other applications, including the phrases “gardening spirit”,¹⁶⁷ “gardening enthusiasm”¹⁶⁸ and “gardening sense”,¹⁶⁹ which typically referred to the development (most often by whites) of a ‘gardening sense’ among black people and poor whites in cases where it was lacking.

While *The Friend* and other sources mostly used “gardening”¹⁷⁰ as a stand-alone term that was considered to be descriptive enough on its own, *Umteteli wa Bantu* used the term “gardening”¹⁷¹ as well as the phrase “gardening work”¹⁷² in its reporting. By linking ‘gardening’ to ‘work’, the concept ‘gardening work’ described a version of gardening to which the newspaper’s readers, which included black gardeners who most often gardened themselves and also worked as garden labourers for whites, were probably more accustomed. The same is true for the term ‘cultivate’,¹⁷³ which also conjures a strong association with physical labour. A reader of *Umteteli wa Bantu* probably had the physical aspect of gardening in mind when he wrote about the effort involved in maintaining the “vegetation cultivated”¹⁷⁴ on his location plot. This argument stresses the importance of the previously-mentioned deeply-ingrained historical labour division in South African society, and how it affected all aspects of gardening, including terminology.

1.3 Culture, gardening culture and cultural history

In the introduction of this chapter, it was stated that gardens and gardening are universally considered to be expressions of human culture. This statement should be re-emphasised because closely related to this argument is the fact that garden-making represents one of the earliest forms of interaction between human beings and plants. Through the ages, this people-plant interaction led to a relationship between man and nature which, in turn, had

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.12.1933, p. 13.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ “Happy Days” (pseudonym), “My garden”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XIV(1), January 1924, p. 15.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *The Friend*, 6.8.1936, p. 3.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.10.1933, p. 5; Anon., “Gardens of many...”, p. 226.

¹⁷¹ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 19.8.1922, p. 3.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 23.6.1923, p. 2.

¹⁷³ See definition and discussion in the next section of this chapter.

¹⁷⁴ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 18.1.1936, p. 7.

developed into a system of expression called ‘gardening’. Since gardens, like houses and yards, are essentially material culture, the study of gardens and gardening may be accommodated in the academic discipline of cultural history. In this regard, the American geographer, William Doolittle, argued that in the past “that which is natural may have been categorized inappropriately from that which is cultural”.¹⁷⁵ However, it does not mean (and Doolittle does not imply this) that gardens and gardening should be studied by cultural historians only because, to quote St-Denis, gardens are “subject to many ‘readings’”.¹⁷⁶ A garden is a “readable record”¹⁷⁷ which may be studied and ‘read’ on many different levels, and the “reading”¹⁷⁸ may be done by scholars from various other disciplines, including cultural studies,¹⁷⁹ art history, architecture, anthropology, sociology and geography,¹⁸⁰ to name a few.¹⁸¹ *For the purpose of this study, a garden is considered to be a cultural product and, by its very nature, eligible to be studied from a cultural history perspective.* Before the cultural-historical approach is discussed in more detail, it is necessary to explain the term ‘culture’. This is necessary because the concept ‘gardening culture’ (also ‘garden culture’¹⁸²) may only be understood once the concept ‘culture’ is satisfactorily explained.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁵ W.E. Doolittle, “Gardens are us, we are nature: transcending antiquity and modernity”, *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, p. 402.

¹⁷⁶ St-Denis, p. 66.

¹⁷⁷ J. Roberts, “Researching the vernacular garden”, *Landscape Research* 21(2), 1996, p. 184.

¹⁷⁸ J.D. Hunt, “Approaches (new and old) to garden history” in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 89.

¹⁷⁹ K. Helphand, “‘Leaping the property line’: observations on recent American garden history” in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 138. Although related disciplines, cultural history must be distinguished from cultural studies, which is an inter-disciplinary field of research that investigates ways in which culture creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations and power. For more information on cultural studies, see Anon., “What is Cultural Studies?”, <<http://www.culturalstudies.web.unc.edu/resources-2/what-is-cultural-studies.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 7.7.2016).

¹⁸⁰ See, for example, M.E. Christie, “The cultural geography of gardens”, *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, pp. iii-iv. Christie referred to “the cultural approach to gardens”, p. iii.

¹⁸¹ Hunt, p. 78.

¹⁸² It was decided to use the term ‘gardening culture’ or ‘culture of gardening’ instead of ‘garden culture’ to emphasise the concept of gardening as a verb. This was also done to highlight the contributions and experiences of garden labourers who were responsible for the creation and maintenance of most of the gardens discussed in this study, including Batho’s topiary gardens. When the term ‘gardening culture’ is used, it includes the concept of ‘garden culture’, which is a more comprehensive term.

¹⁸³ D. du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the history of the English-style gardens of Batho, Mangaung (1846-1948)”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 27(3), December 2011, p. 39; Moreno-Black *et al.*, p. 3.

1.3.1 Cultivating a culture of gardening

What is culture? Countless definitions of the term ‘culture’ exist and, according to the South African philosopher, Danie Strauss, it is probably one of the most difficult terms to define.¹⁸⁴ The *Cambridge English Dictionary* defines culture as “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time”.¹⁸⁵ According to *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, culture may be defined as “the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively”.¹⁸⁶ This dictionary also provides secondary definitions, including “the cultivation of plants” and “the cultivation of the soil”.¹⁸⁷ The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* provides a number of comprehensive definitions of ‘culture’, including the following: “the beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time” and “a particular society that has its own beliefs, ways of life, art, etc.”¹⁸⁸ These modern definitions emphasise the way of life, customs, beliefs, and the artistic and other achievements of mankind. Definitions related to the cultivation of plants seem to take a secondary position.

In contrast to the modern definitions of ‘culture’, the definitions provided by older dictionaries, specifically those dating from the first half of the previous century, seem to emphasise the cultivation of plants and soil in their primary definitions. *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language* (1952 edition) defines ‘culture’ as the “rearing of animals and plants; production of articles of commerce which are due to animal or vegetable activities or functions”.¹⁸⁹ The 1951 edition of the *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* simply defines ‘culture’ as “cultivation; tillage” and then provides a secondary definition: “the cultivation or rearing of a particular product or crop”.¹⁹⁰ Finally, the 1934 edition of the

¹⁸⁴ D. Strauss, “Skakeringe van die begrip *kultuur* – in historiese en sistematiese perspektief”, *Journal of Humanities* 51(4), December 2011, p. 648.

¹⁸⁵ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, “Culture”, <<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culture.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 5.7.2016).

¹⁸⁶ Tulloch, p. 348; Anon., *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, “Culture”, <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/culture.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 5.7.2016).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Anon., *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “Culture”, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 5.7.2016).

¹⁸⁹ Wyld, p. 266.

¹⁹⁰ Anon., *Webster’s New Collegiate...*, p. 202.

Webster's New International Dictionary defines 'culture' as the "art or practice of cultivating; manner or method of cultivating; tillage".¹⁹¹

Regarding the older dictionaries' definitions of culture, it is significant that all of them mention that the term 'culture' derives from the original Latin verb 'colere' and the noun 'cultura'.¹⁹² Both terms date back to Roman times. 'Colere' means to till or cultivate the earth, not only to *subject* it to mankind but also to make it *serviceable* to mankind.¹⁹³ During the time of the Roman philosopher, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43BCE), the concept of 'culture' underwent a change and became 'cultura animi', which means "the cultivation of the soul".¹⁹⁴ Later, more terms were added, including 'cultura mentis', 'cultura intellectus' and 'cultura rationis', which mean cultivation of the mind, intellect and reason respectively.¹⁹⁵ According to the *Universal Dictionary of the English Language*, the term 'cultura' means "a cultivating; agriculture; care, culture".¹⁹⁶ The *Webster's New International Dictionary* defines the term 'cultivate' as "to prepare, or to prepare and use, for the raising of crops; to till; as, to *cultivate* the soil; specif., to loosen or break up the soil about (growing crops or plants) for the purpose of killing weeds, etc., esp. with a cultivator; as, to cultivate corn."¹⁹⁷ Although the quoted definitions of 'culture' and 'cultivate' emphasise the cultivation of crops, which is associated with agriculture, specific reference is also made to the growing of plants and vegetables, which is typically associated with horticulture or gardening. This direct link between the terms 'culture' and 'to cultivate' (also read: 'to garden') is particularly relevant for a comprehension of the terms 'culture' and 'gardening culture' not only in the context of cultural history in general, but also garden history and, more specifically, the focus of this study.¹⁹⁸

The fact that the origin of the word 'culture' is rooted in the cultivation of the earth, whether for agricultural or horticultural (gardening) purposes, indicates an important historical link

¹⁹¹ Anon., *Webster's New International...*, p. 643.

¹⁹² Wyld, p. 266; Anon., *Webster's New Collegiate...*, p. 202; Anon., *Webster's New International...*, p. 643.

¹⁹³ P.G. Nel *et al.*, "Kultuurgeskiedenis as wetenskap", *Handhaaf* 19(2), November 1981, p. 7.

¹⁹⁴ D. Kelly, "Cultural history", <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3424300180.html>>, 2005 (Accessed: 6.7.2016).

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* For more information on the etymology and history of the term 'culture', see A.L. Kroeber & C. Kluckhorn, *Culture: a critical review of concepts and definitions*, pp. 3-11.

¹⁹⁶ Wyld, p. 266.

¹⁹⁷ Anon., *Webster's New International...*, p. 643. (Author's emphasis)

¹⁹⁸ A. Green, *Cultural history*, pp. 2-3.

and a special relationship between the terms ‘culture’ and ‘gardening’. According to South African cultural historians, P.G. Nel, Celestine Pretorius and O.J.O. Ferreira, most contemporary cultural philosophers agree that culture is, essentially, man’s submission of nature and its transformation or transfiguration into something meaningful under coercion of the soul.¹⁹⁹ Strauss pointed to another important dimension of this argument, namely that nature had been transformed by the use of specific man-made tools. He argued that the agricultural and horticultural background of the word ‘culture’ essentially appeals to man’s unique ability to create tools for specific functions, such as garden-making. These tools, which may be described as garden tools, and most of which have not changed much through the ages in terms of their basic design and shape,²⁰⁰ are also cultural products created by cultural labour. This reinforces the argument that gardening is, essentially, a cultural activity and, on the basis of this argument, the term ‘gardening culture’ may then be defined as ‘the culture related to the cultivating of gardens’. Conan’s definition of a garden further strengthens this argument: “the garden is an artificially maintained biotope²⁰¹ that depends upon the *social culture* of its gardeners for survival over time.”²⁰² According to Conan, the ‘social culture’ of gardeners is also a “subculture”²⁰³ which, in the context of the argument that gardening is a cultural activity, may be translated into the ‘gardening culture’ of a specific group of gardeners, such as Batho’s gardeners. *Therefore, in this study, it is argued that a garden, as a cultural product in itself, is the end product of gardening as cultural labour and, therefore, a garden and its related gardening culture qualifies to be studied within the context of cultural history.*²⁰⁴

Before the garden as a cultural construct is discussed in more detail, it is necessary to distinguish between the two main categories of cultural products or components. From a purely cultural-historical perspective, the concept ‘culture’ is broad and inclusive, and typically includes the values, norms, relations, institutions and all other tangible and

¹⁹⁹ Nel *et al.*, p. 7.

²⁰⁰ For more information on the history of garden tools, see B. Laws, *Tales from the tool shed: the history and use of fifty garden tools, passim*; A. Baraton, *The gardener of Versailles: my life in the world’s grandest garden*, pp. 182-186.

²⁰¹ The region of a habitat associated with a particular ecological community. Anon., *Oxford Dictionaries*, “Biotope”, <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/biotope.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 26.7.2016).

²⁰² M. Conan, “The *hortillonnages*: reflections on a vanishing gardeners’ culture” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 19. (Own emphasis)

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Nel *et al.*, p. 7; Strauss, p. 650.

intangible cultural products or creations of a community. The tangible and intangible products may also be described as material and non-material products. 'Culture' is thus the end product(s) of all the creative labour and endeavours of human beings, and the end product includes both the tangible and intangible. Examples of tangible products include buildings and the spaces around buildings, such as gardens and yards, furniture and interior decoration, decorative objects and artefacts, clothing, food and drink, transport, means of communication, and traditional crafts and industries, to name a few. It is important to stress that the creation of cultural products, whether tangible or intangible, does not happen in isolation; the tangible cultural product is, essentially, the end result of an intangible or mental/spiritual process which, in turn, is triggered by a specific human need. Therefore, a cultural end product may also be intangible or abstract, including ideas, concepts, symbols, thought patterns and other intellectual constructs which gave birth to the tangible product. Specific examples of intangible products include education and training, language, verbal arts, oral traditions, song and music, dance, games and entertainment, as well as customs and traditions.²⁰⁵

Culture is thus both the *creative process and the end product* of man's creative labour, and the academic discipline of cultural history²⁰⁶ is the study of this process and end product.²⁰⁷ To be more specific, Matilda Burden, one of South Africa's leading cultural historians, concisely described cultural history as the study of the cultural product, the creative process which brought forth the product, the stimulus which triggered the process and, finally, the relation between the cultural products and dimensions in which they are created. The second part of Burden's explanation is particularly important, and forms the basis of the next important argument, namely that the two main cultural components – the material and non-

²⁰⁵ P.W. Grobbelaar, "Dit is kultuurgeskiedenis", *The Cultural Historian* 5(1), June-July 1990, pp. 61-62; P.W. Grobbelaar, "Gedagtes rondom 'n vakgebied", *The Cultural Historian* 10(1), June 1995, p. 9.

²⁰⁶ For an overview of the history and development of the academic discipline of cultural history, see P. Burke, *What is cultural history?*, pp. 6-19; Green, pp. 4-10; M. Poster, *Cultural history and postmodernity: disciplinary readings and challenges*, pp. 3-13; P.G. Nel, "Kultuurgeskiedenis as wetenskap", *South African Journal of Cultural History* 1(1), January 1984, pp. 5-6.

²⁰⁷ M. Burden, "Die metodologie van kultuurgeskiedenis", *South African Journal of Cultural History* 14(2), November 2000, pp. 16-18; Grobbelaar, "Dit is kultuurgeskiedenis", p. 54; J.C. Pretorius, "'n Bronne-indeling vir kultuurgeskiedenis", *South African Journal of Cultural History* 5(1), January 1991, pp. 1-2; Burke, p. 3.

material – may not be separated because they mutually influence each other.²⁰⁸ To illustrate this point, the so-called “chrysanthemum culture”²⁰⁹ and “culture of dahlias”²¹⁰ of the 1920s may be used as examples. South African gardeners (black and white) developed a passion for cultivating chrysanthemums and dahlias (the material component), and wanted to obtain as many varieties as possible. Due to the growing need for information on these plants, articles were published, talks were held and local nurseries competed with one another to offer the biggest varieties to clients. As a result, a ‘chrysanthemum culture’ and a ‘dahlia culture’ (the non-material component) developed, which also expressed itself on an intangible level because it involved gardeners’ passions, desires and other emotional needs.

Although the material and non-material are classified as two identifiable components for the purposes of academic study, they should always be studied *in relation* to each other and placed within the appropriate *context*. In this regard, the esteemed and controversial Dutch cultural historian, Jan Romein (1893-1962), argued that cultural history does not study the respective cultural components for their own sake, but searches for and attempts to identify the *contextual relation* between them within a specific cultural period.²¹¹ Although most South African cultural historians agree with Romein’s statement, including Nel²¹² and Ferreira,²¹³ Burden argued that the study of the specific cultural components or elements for their own sake is equally important. She is of the opinion that the study of a specific cultural component is necessary before its relation to other components may be established. To summarise then, Burden reasoned that the objective of cultural history should be to first conduct a proper study of the cultural product, such as a garden, and then to place the product within the context of the relevant cultural-historical period. Within the context of the cultural-historical period, the relation between the parts or elements and the various dimensions in which they operate, will become evident.²¹⁴

²⁰⁸ Burden, p. 19. For a detailed discussion of the relation between material and non-material culture, see P.S. Dreyer, “Verband tussen geestelike en stoflike kultuur”, *South African Journal of Culture and Art History* 1(1), March 1987, pp. 1-7.

²⁰⁹ “Ruralist” (pseudonym), “Chrysanthemum culture”, *The Homestead* 547(711), 24.3.1926, pp. 9, 11, 15.

²¹⁰ “Ruralist” (pseudonym), “The culture of dahlias”, *The Homestead* 420(584), 17.10.1923, pp. 31, 33.

²¹¹ J. Romein, *In de hof der historie: kleine encyclopedie der theoretische geschiedenis*, p. 119. See also J. Romein, *Het onvoltooid verleden: cultuurhistorische studies*, pp. 73-107.

²¹² Nel, p. 4.

²¹³ O.J.O. Ferreira, “Kultuurgeskiedenis by ’n kruispad”, *South African Journal of Cultural History* 1(2), November 1997, p. 119.

²¹⁴ Burden, p. 17; Nel, p. 4; Ferreira, p. 121.

1.3.2 Nature transformed by culture: the garden as artefact

It could be argued that a garden is, essentially, nature transformed by culture. This argument is based on, among others, Nel's description of culture as the "omvorming en onderwerpen van die natuur".²¹⁵ Technically, a garden is not nature, and nature is not a garden. The difference between nature in its unspoiled state and a garden as a manmade construct lies in the *contrast* between the two. When a gardener creates a garden, he²¹⁶ either adds something to nature or creates something from nature. The contrast between nature and a garden is aptly explained in Salisbury's definition of a garden as "essentially a place where we tend plants, so that its peculiarities are probably best realised if we *contrast* it with an area of wild vegetation which has been entirely uncared for."²¹⁷ The contrast between nature and some gardens, specifically landscape gardens, is, of course, less visible than in the case of formal and stylised gardens, in which case the difference is much more obvious. Based on the difference between nature and a garden, as well as the argument that a garden is a human construct, it could then be further argued that a garden, like a house or a yard, is an artefact.²¹⁸

Kathryn Gleason, who has done substantial research on the archaeology of gardens, is quoted as describing a garden as "the most complex type of 'artifact'" because "they [gardens] are both 'things' and environments".²¹⁹ In terms of this argument, gardens may be described as three-dimensional 'objects'²²⁰ or 'artefacts'²²¹ which, like houses and yards, also constitute living environments or spaces. Gardens may, therefore, be considered outdoor 'rooms' which form an extension of the house and yard. In support of Gleason's, as well as the aforementioned arguments, Clarissa Kimber argued that a garden is both a "human construct" and a "cultural construction" that "can be used as a diagnostic artifact."²²² This is an important thought since it means that by studying the uses (for example, functional, aesthetic, display and recreational), materials (for example, plants, trees, stones, ornaments,

²¹⁵ Nel, p. 4. "Transforming and subjecting of nature". (Free translation)

²¹⁶ In this study, the terms 'he/his' also indicate 'she/her'. No sexism is implied by the use of the male forms.

²¹⁷ Salisbury, p. 1. (Own emphasis)

²¹⁸ T. Longstaffe-Gowan, "Private urban gardening in England, 1700-1830: on the art of sinking" in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 48; Gleason, p. 2.

²¹⁹ Anon., "Conversations: lover of dirt" 59(3), <<http://www.archaeology.org/0605/etc/conversations.html>>, May/June 2006 (Accessed: 11.3.2010).

²²⁰ Longstaffe-Gowan, p. 48.

²²¹ *Ibid.* Also spelt 'artifact(s)'. (American English)

²²² Kimber, pp. 265-266.

soil, walls, fences, hedges, ponds and tools) and elements (for example, shapes, textures, colours, scents and sounds) of a garden, it is possible to find clues to grasp what E. Harwood and others described as “culturally specific views”²²³ of a garden, and also what Kimber described as “culturally specific relationships”²²⁴ in a garden. These ‘culturally specific views’²²⁵ and ‘culturally specific relationships’ involve nature, landscape, aesthetics, infrastructure, agriculture, horticulture and food preparation, to name a few. Kimber described garden materials, specifically plants, as “cultural articles”²²⁶ and argued that the spaces they create constitute “cultural traits”²²⁷ that may be analysed to produce readable narratives of those spaces.²²⁸

As is the case with houses and yards, a garden constitutes “a public statement of cultural values”,²²⁹ argued Peirce Lewis. This public statement, however, has an important dimension because the ways in which the garden owner relates to and expresses himself in a garden space reveal the influence of not only his own culture, but also of other cultures. (The influence of other cultures is another important issue and is discussed elsewhere in this chapter.) Similarly, Marwyn Samuels argued that gardens or ‘gardened landscapes’, as he called them, are eloquent spaces, and when studied or ‘read’ carefully, they “reveal their authorship”.²³⁰ Garden historian, Nan Fairbrother, agreed and, with specific reference to the renowned relationship between English gardeners and their gardens, she argued that gardens are “expressions of something in ourselves and the society we live in.”²³¹ This is, of course, not only true for English gardeners, but for all gardeners, including Batho’s gardeners. As is the case with all gardens, Batho’s topiary gardens also reveal something of their owners’ personalities and cultural identities and this, of course, makes them worthy subjects for investigation.²³²

²²³ E. Harwood *et al.*, “Whither garden history?”, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 27(2), 2007, p. 93.

²²⁴ Kimber, p. 266.

²²⁵ Harwood *et al.* referred to “culturally specific views of nature and landscape that often include garden design”, p. 93.

²²⁶ Kimber, p. 269.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

²²⁸ G.R.F. Ferrari, “The meaninglessness of gardens”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 68(1), Winter 2010, p. 33; Harwood *et al.*, p. 98; Kimber, p. 272.

²²⁹ Lewis, p. 107.

²³⁰ M.S. Samuels, “The biography of landscape: cause and culpability” in D.W. Meinig (ed.), *The interpretation of ordinary landscapes: geographical essays*, p. 75.

²³¹ N. Fairbrother, *Men and gardens*, p. 31.

²³² Du Bruyn, p. 40.

Fairbrother's argument touches on the complexity of gardens and, specifically, on Gleason's description of a garden as "the most complex type of 'artifact'".²³³ This needs to be explored further. Why are gardens complex? In the first place, gardens are complex because the idea of what a garden is, what it constitutes, what it represents, and how it is perceived and used, differs from culture to culture. While some gardens may be purely aesthetic, others, such as allotment gardens, are created to serve a specific function, namely food production. While an upper-class garden may be a symbol of distinction, and purely maintained for show and the display of "cultural capital",²³⁴ a working-class garden, where mainly vegetables are grown, may be the garden owner's only source of nutrition. Most gardens are, however, a combination of aesthetics and functionality, and often these two 'functions' are so intertwined that it is not always possible to distinguish between them.²³⁵ Secondly, gardens are complex because they not only represent the owner's personality, but also his culture, identity and socio-political status. If gardening is, essentially, about man's relationship with the materials and elements of nature, then this relationship is, to a greater or lesser degree, influenced by culture, ideology and socio-political structures.²³⁶ As a result of this complexity, Kenneth Helphand argued that the garden is a prime site for investigation because, according to him, scholars need to engage with "the complexities and ambiguities of meaning, the intersection of ideology and creative activity, and questions of representation".²³⁷

A third reason that gardens are complex is because they are often spaces which are created during the course of interaction with others. The 'other' may be members from another cultural group, and the receiving group may adopt garden practices and design elements from the other group. As previously stated, the ways in which a garden owner relates to and expresses himself in his garden reveals the influence of not only his own, but also other cultures. This phenomenon, which is characteristic of multi-cultural societies such as South

²³³ Anon., "Conversations: lover of...".

²³⁴ Harwood *et al.*, pp. 95-96.

²³⁵ Hobhouse, pp. 18-19; S. Astyk, "Cottage gardens and swept yards: recreating a vernacular horticulture", <<http://www.scienceblogs.com/casaubonsbook/2010/02/02/cottage-gardens-and-swept-yard.html>>, 2.2.2010 (Accessed: 7.11.2016).

²³⁶ M. Conan, "From vernacular gardens to a social anthropology of gardening" in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 202; Du Bruyn, p. 40.

²³⁷ Helphand, "Leaping the property...", p. 138.

Africa, touches on processes known as acculturation and inter-cultural influencing. Anthropologists use the term ‘acculturation’ whereas cultural historians use the term ‘inter-cultural influencing’ to describe essentially the same phenomenon. Acculturation is, essentially, the modification of the culture of an individual, group or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture as a result of prolonged contact. This selective process of ‘give and take’²³⁸ may take the form of cultural transmission or cultural adoption, and may be spontaneous or forced.²³⁹

Any cultural trait or product may be transferred or adopted by means of a process of acculturation, including horticulture and gardening. Typically, the tangible and more easily identifiable cultural traits or elements, such as horticultural and gardening practices, are prone to being transferred or more easily adopted than the intangible and less obvious cultural elements. In the case of gardens, the borrowed garden practices, materials and designs are typically re-interpreted and adapted to suit the needs of the receiving group. To be more specific, in the African (and South African) context, this means that Western or European garden styles, practices, materials and designs are adapted, re-interpreted, adopted and, in a sense, ‘indigenised’ or ‘Africanised’ to suit local needs. Due to the fact that this process usually takes place over a long period of time, the so-called ‘Africanised’ style, design or element, that is, the cultural product, becomes traditional, although it is, in actual fact, borrowed from another culture.²⁴⁰

Another important dimension of acculturation that requires attention is the fact that the ‘other’ may be members of either a dominant or a dominated culture. This dominant/dominated culture dichotomy is characteristic of most former colonial societies

²³⁸ C. Hanekom, *Ontspanning en vryetydsbesteding by die bantoe van Suid-Afrika: ’n ondersoek na kulturele aanpassing in Bloemfontein* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1958), p. 72.

²³⁹ Anon., *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “Acculturation”, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/acculturation.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 28.3.2011); C.J. Maritz, “Enkele politieke gevolge en implikasies van die akkulturasieproses vir Suid-Afrika”, *Africanus* 6(1 & 2), November 1976, pp. 20-23, 25; G. Cronjé (ed.), *Kultuurbeïnvloeding tussen blankes en bantoe in Suid-Afrika*, pp. 1-9; W.A. Haviland, *Cultural anthropology*, pp. 426-427; A.J.G. Oosthuizen, *Die invloed van verstedeliking op die kultuur van die moderne Suid-Afrikaner* (Paper read at the congress of the South African Society for Cultural History, Pretoria, 1990), pp. 7-9.

²⁴⁰ Cronjé, pp. 16-17, 20-21; Maritz, pp. 22-25; Du Bruyn, p. 75; Hanekom, pp. 72-73; J. Grobler, “Ontspanning in die Suid-Afrikaanse swart gemeenskap: ’n kultuurhistoriese perspektief”, *South African Journal of Cultural and Art History* 1(4), December 1987, pp. 333-334; Oosthuizen, pp. 9-10.

plagued by racial discrimination, segregation, dispossession and inequality. This argument is most relevant to this study because, historically, most South African gardens were created through a process of ‘collaboration’ between mostly white garden owners and black garden labourers. As a consequence, an unequal – but, at the same time, unique and dynamic – relationship developed between these two groups, namely the white garden owners as members of a *dominant culture* and their black garden labourers as members of a *dominated culture*. In South Africa, black people’s gardens are, in most cases, expressions of a dominated culture: the gardens were created and maintained by a group of people who were subjected to a discriminatory socio-political system. Therefore, these gardens may be seen as the cultural end products of a process that was creative and individualistic on the one hand, but constrained by socio-political realities on the other.²⁴¹

1.4 A theoretical framework and classification system for cultural history: the Burden model

1.4.1 A new cultural history?

During the past twenty years, the traditional approach to cultural history, which had long been characterised by a preference for the study of the so-called ‘high culture’, elitist cultural expressions and traditional culture, such as art, classical styles and science, had come under scrutiny. The traditional approach, which often excluded the study of the popular culture of the masses, marginalised groups and subaltern classes, was questioned not only by social historians, anthropologists and other scholars with an interest in cultural history, but also by cultural historians themselves. Another growing problem was the increased confusion regarding the perceived boundaries between the disciplines of history, cultural history, social history, anthropology and cultural studies, and how these subjects relate to and distinguish themselves from one another. Often the focus areas of these subjects overlap because a cultural product, such as a garden, may be studied within the field of any of the mentioned (and other) disciplines.²⁴² As a result, some scholars and students of cultural history not only questioned the status quo, but also asked questions. One such critical voice is the British

²⁴¹ Du Bruyn, pp. 40-41; Conan, “From vernacular gardens...”, p. 182.

²⁴² Ferreira, pp. 116-118, 120-121; Burke, pp. 20-28; Poster, pp. 7-8; R. Chartier, *Cultural history: between practices and representations*, p. 37.

cultural historian, Anna Green, who asked: “Is cultural history simply the sum of a wide number of sub-fields?” and “Is it possible to distinguish cultural history from social history?”²⁴³ Other critical international voices include the cultural historians, Peter Burke, Mark Poster and Roger Chartier.

One of the consequences of the debate about the exact nature, focus and methodology of cultural history was the advent of the New Cultural History (NCH) Movement towards the end of the 1980s. Followers of this movement, who found inspiration in the works of theorists such as Norbert Elias, Clifford Geertz, Charles Taylor and Michel Foucault, advocated for the expansion of the domain of ‘culture’ and the formulation of more specific ‘cultural theories’. They argued that the word ‘cultural’ in itself distinguishes the NCH from social history and other related disciplines. Due to its influence, the NCH has become one of the dominant forms of cultural history practiced today. Although the NCH is not above criticism, some of its arguments are, nevertheless, useful. One example, which is relevant to this study, is the argument that ‘space’ and ‘spaces’ should be included in material culture. In terms of the distinction between indoor and outdoor spaces, it could then be argued that a garden is an outdoor space and, therefore, essentially material culture. This argument brings a new dimension to the idea of a garden and how it should be conceptualised.²⁴⁴

South African historians and cultural historians have also responded to the conundrum in which cultural history found itself by the early 1990s. Some of them have offered valuable insights and possible solutions, including Ferreira. In an article in which Ferreira argued that South African cultural history finds itself at a crossroad, he stated that in a multi-cultural society such as South Africa, it is crucial for history and cultural history to be multi-dimensional and multi-perspective. He stressed the importance of a holistic approach to the study of a society’s culture in order to acknowledge the ongoing interaction and mutual influence that take place between the society’s cultural layers, namely the so-called ‘high’ (learned) culture and/or ‘low’ (popular) culture.²⁴⁵ For the average South African student of

²⁴³ Green, p. 3.

²⁴⁴ Burke, pp. 49-70; C.E. Forth, “Cultural history and new cultural history”, <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-3460500021/cultural-history-and-new.html>>, 2001 (Accessed: 12.7.2016); L. Hunt (ed.), *The new cultural history, passim*; Harwood *et al.*, pp. 103-107; Longstaffe-Gowan, p. 48.

²⁴⁵ Ferreira, p. 118.

cultural history, it is important to take note of the current debates and trends in their discipline, but a practical way out of the confusion was lacking. Burden responded to this need and conceptualised a model according to which cultural historians may orientate themselves in their discipline. She described the model as a practical tool which explains the discipline of cultural history and its methodology in simple terms. In actual fact, the model is more than just a tool; it is also a theoretical framework within which a cultural historian may position his study. The model provides a theoretical grounding for cultural history, and graphically illustrates the discipline in a three-dimensional fashion.²⁴⁶

1.4.2 The Burden model

Burden's model, also known as the Burden model (Image 1/1),²⁴⁷ is particularly relevant to this study because it will not only be used as a *theoretical framework* within which the study will be positioned, but also as a practical *methodological tool* to identify and describe Batho's topiary gardens as a cultural product in relation to other cultural products, within the context of the relevant cultural-historical period. The Burden model is, essentially, a three-dimensional representation of the different levels or dimensions within which cultural history operates. It consists of three axes which cut each other squarely and are encircled by a ring, turning it into a sphere. On the outer perimeter are two perforated rings which represent the natural and supernatural dimensions.²⁴⁸

The Burden model may be explained as follows:

- **The AB axis:** this vertical axis consists of point A, which represents intangible (non-material) culture, and point B, which represents tangible (material) culture. This axis

²⁴⁶ Burden, p. 15. For more on the practical application of the Burden model by post-graduate students, see J.F. Malherbe, *Die rol van neëntiende-eeuse fotografie in eietydse bewaring: William Roe en Graaff-Reinet* (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2014), pp. 21-25; S.M. Botes, *Bloemfontein gedurende die bewind van President F.W. Reitz, 1889-1895: 'n kultuurhistoriese studie* (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of the Free State, 2014), pp. xv-xviii.

²⁴⁷ It should be noted that the Burden model is not the only existing model of its kind. Most other models, including the Galla model by Amareswar Galla, are often complicated and confusing if compared with the straightforwardness and logic of the Burden model. For more information, see A. Galla, "Culture and heritage in development: Ha Long ecomuseum, a case study from Vietnam", *Humanities Research* IX(1), 2002, pp. 72-74.

²⁴⁸ Burden, pp. 20-21; M. Burden & B. Ekermans, "'n Klassifikasiesetel vir kultuurgeskiedenis", *South African Journal of Cultural History* 15(2), November 2001, pp. 21-22.

emphasises the relation and connection between intangible and tangible culture. Houses, yards and, above all, gardens are prime examples of tangible culture and may, therefore, be positioned next to point B on the vertical axis. Acculturation and/or inter-cultural influencing are examples of intangible culture and may be positioned next to point A on the axis.²⁴⁹

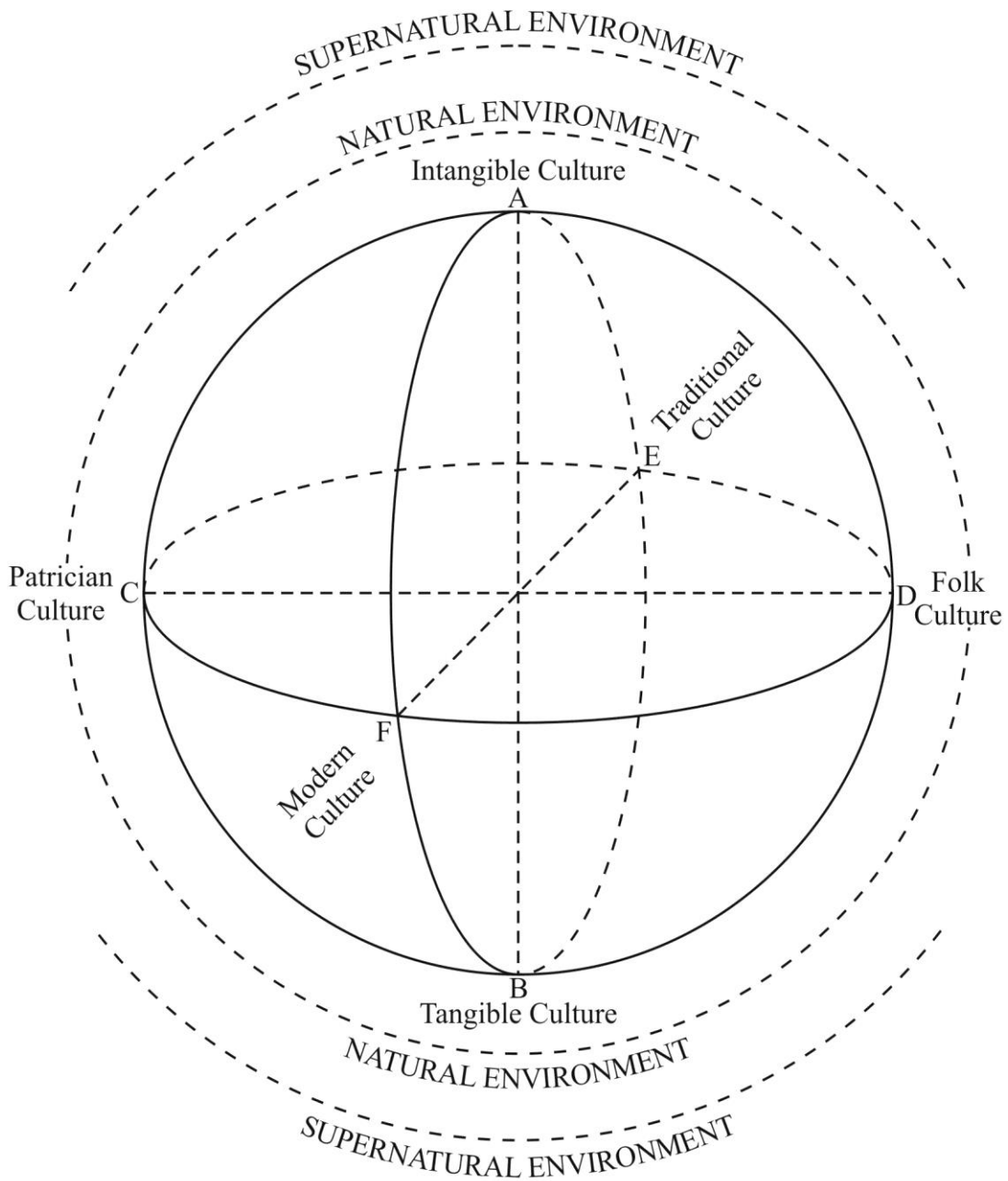
- **The CD axis:** this horizontal axis depicts the various levels on which culture may be created. Point C represents the patrician culture (also known as formal, learned or so-called ‘high’ culture), and point D represents folk culture (also known as informal, popular or so-called ‘low’ culture). The term ‘patrician culture’ is preferred over the term ‘high culture’, and the term ‘folk culture’ is preferred over the term ‘low culture’. Another term which fits in comfortably here, and which will be explained and discussed in detail in Chapter 2, is the term ‘vernacular’. The terms ‘folk’ and ‘vernacular’ complement each other because both describe similar cultural traits or products; therefore, the two terms will be used interchangeably. It is important to note that between points C and D, other levels of culture, such as ‘middle culture’ or ‘country culture’ may be positioned. The terms ‘folk’ or ‘folk culture’ (as well as ‘vernacular’) are used in the context of this study to refer to the cultural products created by any person or group of people who are often not academically or professionally trained. For example, geographer, Gene Wilhelm, referred to “the ‘folk’ continuity in gardening”²⁵⁰ as a common gardening tradition which is being transferred from one generation to the next. On the other end of the scale, patrician culture is typically created by any person or group of people who are academically or professionally trained. For example, a trained landscape architect or garden designer creates gardens which may be associated with patrician culture, and an untrained garden worker lays out a garden which may be classified as folk culture.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Burden, pp. 20-23; Burden & Ekermans, pp. 21-23, 30.

²⁵⁰ Wilhelm, p. 73.

²⁵¹ Burden, pp. 23-25; Grobbelaar, “Dit is kultuurgeskiedenis”, p. 61; Grobbelaar, “Gedagtes rondom ’n...”, p. 9.

Image 1/1: Burden Model (M. Burden: Stellenbosch University and Northwest University)



- **The EF axis:** this diagonal axis indicates depth and the dimension of time (rather than age). Point E represents traditional culture and refers to something which is already established and which has become a tradition in a specific group or people because it had been handed down from one generation to the next or from one group to another. On the other hand, point F represents modern or contemporary culture, which is the opposite of traditional culture, that is, culture which has not yet been acknowledged or established as a tradition in a group or people.²⁵²
- **The two spheres:** the two perforated circles which surround the model represent the natural and supernatural environments respectively. These two dimensions are omnipresent and either directly or indirectly influence the creation of all cultural products. According to Burden, these two dimensions influence culture in its entirety, irrespective of the dimensions in which the specific culture manifests itself. Consequently, the natural and supernatural environments constitute the frame of reference in which human beings create cultural products, among other things.²⁵³

The Burden model is meant to be visualised as a ball or sphere which consists of eight components. Depending on the nature of the cultural product, it may be placed within any of the eight components. Each component also represents the contextual relationships that exist between the points on the three axes, that is, intangible or tangible, patrician or folk, traditional or modern. The classification of some cultural products, according to the model, may be relatively straightforward, while others, such as gardens, may be less clear-cut. Although a garden, as a cultural product is, without a doubt, a tangible product, its classification as either folk or patrician and traditional or modern, is not always obvious. Most gardens are what Doolittle described as “hybrid” or “hybrid landscapes”²⁵⁴ (Kimber used the term “hybrid space[s]”),²⁵⁵ and, in terms of the Burden model, they may contain either folk and patrician elements or traditional and modern elements. In order to accommodate so-called ‘hybridist’ cultural products which contain elements of both, the boundaries between the eight components are not absolute. Consequently, the Burden model may be used to accommodate all gardens as cultural products, including Batho’s topiary

²⁵² Burden, pp. 25-26.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁵⁴ Doolittle, p. 402.

²⁵⁵ Kimber, pp. 276-277.

gardens which, as will be explained later, contain elements which prevent them from being easily described or classified.²⁵⁶

1.5 Garden history and cultural history: inter-disciplinary collaboration?

This study of the history of Batho's topiary gardens is, essentially, a combination of garden history and cultural history. As stated in the introduction of this thesis, one of garden history's strengths is its potential for inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research and collaboration. The reason for this is that the object of study, namely the garden, is, to quote James Elkins, "the meeting-place of various disciplines".²⁵⁷ Therefore, it will be to the detriment of any study on garden history if related disciplines are not involved. Most garden and cultural historians acknowledge the need for collaboration and cross-pollination, and both disciplines are, due to their nature, in a position to collaborate with a range of related disciplines.²⁵⁸ Speaking on behalf of many garden historians, Michel Conan, a sociologist who is also one of the leading scholars in the field of garden history, unequivocally stated that the current research on gardens conducted by garden and cultural historians is of such a nature that "our [referring to garden historians and cultural historians] line of research might end up by blurring differences between garden history and cultural history."²⁵⁹ According to Conan and other leading scholars, such as Edward Harwood and Michael Leslie, garden historians and cultural historians share fundamental mutual interests, and this 'shared territory' needs to be acknowledged as a strength rather than a weakness. Ferreira, in turn, stressed the urgent need for South African cultural historians to reach out to related disciplines. According to him, a cultural expression or product from a specific cultural period cannot be appropriately understood in isolation, but only in the wider context of the dynamics and processes at work in the society at large.²⁶⁰

Ferreira's emphasis on the need for cultural historians to study cultural expressions and products in context touches on a crucial issue which affects both garden and cultural history.

²⁵⁶ Burden, pp. 28-29.

²⁵⁷ J. Elkins, "On the conceptual analysis of gardens", *The Journal of Garden History* 13(4), 1993, p. 190.

²⁵⁸ See, for example, Hunt, pp. 78, 88 and Roberts, p. 177.

²⁵⁹ M. Conan, "The conundrum of Le Nôtre's *Labyrinthe*" in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *Garden history: issues, approaches, methods*, p. 145.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; Ferreira, pp. 121-122.

In order to arrive at a full understanding of the garden culture of a specific place and period in history, both garden and cultural historians will need to understand the applicable and relevant context. According to Helphand, “gardens are always defined by their context”²⁶¹ and, therefore, they may only be fully understood within their context. Ultimately, garden and cultural historians should aim for what Heath and Bennett described as a “contextualized understanding”²⁶² of gardens.²⁶³ Ferreira took this argument further when he argued that it is only possible to study a cultural expression in context by conducting inter-disciplinary and/or multi-disciplinary research. Furthermore, he reasoned that cultural history is the only discipline which studies material culture in its rightful context. Although Ferreira’s last statement is debatable, it nevertheless emphasises the value of inter-disciplinary collaboration and research. More importantly, it also highlights the potential of inter-disciplinary collaboration between cultural and garden history. On the basis of this proposed collaboration, it is argued that it is only possible to study and understand a garden in its fullest complexity within the context brought about by collaboration between garden and cultural history.²⁶⁴

Ultimately, the emphasis on inter-disciplinarity boils down to an integrated, holistic approach, which is advocated by leading scholars, including Judith Roberts, Mark Bhatti, Andrew Church, Green and Ferreira, to name a few. A garden and everything that needs to be known about it may only be understood adequately in its widest possible context, and this may only be achieved by following an inter-disciplinary, integrated and holistic approach.²⁶⁵

1.6 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, the terminology that characterised the so-called ‘garden language’ of the cultural-historical period under discussion, namely the 1920s and 1930s, was identified and explained. It was also argued that gardens and gardening are considered to be expressions of

²⁶¹ Helphand, “Defiant gardens”, p. 104.

²⁶² Heath & Bennett, p. 39.

²⁶³ See also Hunt, p. 81; Helphand, “Leaping the property...”, p. 137.

²⁶⁴ Harwood *et al.*, p. 93; Ferreira, pp. 121, 125; J. Tempelhoff, “Transdisciplinêre geskiedenisbeoefening: ’n verkenbare grensterrein?” in S.W. le Roux & R.C. Fisher (eds), *Festschrift in honour of O.J.O. Ferreira*, pp. 83-84; Hunt, pp. 78, 88.

²⁶⁵ Roberts, p. 176; Green, p. 10; M. Bhatti *et al.*, “Peaceful, pleasant and private: the British domestic garden as an ordinary landscape”, *Landscape Research* 39(1), 2014, p. 41; Ferreira, pp. 121, 125.

human culture because a garden is, essentially, a work of culture brought about by a form of cultural labour called 'gardening'. Definitions of the terms 'garden', 'gardener', 'gardening', 'culture' and 'gardening culture' indicate how these terms were used and understood during the period under discussion. Furthermore, it is argued that gardens are, essentially, material culture and, therefore, the study of gardens and gardening may be comfortably accommodated in the academic discipline of cultural history. Based on the fact that some definitions of the term 'culture' emphasise the direct link between the terms 'culture' and 'to cultivate' (read: to garden), it is argued that a garden is considered to be a cultural product, whereas gardening is considered to be cultural labour. The objective of cultural history is to first conduct a proper study of the cultural product, in this case a garden, and then to place the product within the context of the relevant cultural-historical period.

A garden is considered to be a complex artefact, and a number of reasons as to why gardens are complex were discussed, including the role played by acculturation and inter-cultural influencing. A theoretical framework and classification system for cultural history, namely the Burden model, will be used as a theoretical framework within which this study will be positioned, and also as a practical methodological tool to identify and describe Batho's topiary gardens. Since Batho's topiary gardens are considered as semi-vernacular gardens, the next chapter will define the term 'vernacular', as well as the concepts 'vernacular garden' and 'semi-vernacular garden'. The chapter will also provide a historical perspective on the origin and development of the ancient and traditional vernacular garden as opposed to the patrician garden. This historical overview is followed by a discussion of contemporary vernacular gardens and, importantly, the vernacular garden in the developing world, Africa and South Africa. Among other things, the issue of gender in the vernacular context also receives attention.

CHAPTER 2

THE VERNACULAR GARDEN

2.1 Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, garden-making is not limited to certain social or economic classes. By the same token, gardening is not the exclusive domain of specific racial, ethnic or cultural groups. Gardening does not discriminate and is practised in all but the most inhospitable geographical regions and climatic zones. Often the most desperate political, economic or social conditions do not deter people from making gardens. It is not uncommon for refugees living in refugee camps to lay out small gardens in front of their tents as a way of coping with their circumstances.¹ Any piece of land may be turned into a garden, whether an estate or a pocket-sized strip of land between the pavement and the front door of a house. Size does not matter and neither do soil type, topography or geography. In fact, gardens are where one will find them – anywhere and everywhere. According to George McKay, a British authority on alternative culture, a garden is merely “the patch of earth where it [garden-making] all happens”.² Some gardens are devoid of conventionality in that they do not conform to any norms, rules or standards. These ‘unlikely’ and ‘accidental’ gardens may not be aesthetically pleasing, welcoming and, in fact, may even offend. What makes a garden? The answer lies in the eye of the beholder.³

The ‘unlikely’ and ‘accidental’ gardens are often ‘marginal gardens’⁴ and, in some cases, even ‘anti-gardens’. Conan aptly described these gardens as “extremely different gardens”.⁵ Examples of such gardens include those of working-class people, ordinary people, poor people, township residents, shack dwellers, garden labourers, farm labourers, soldiers, refugees and prisoners, to name a few. This category of gardens includes certain types of gardens, such as ‘domestic gardens’, ‘home gardens’, ‘ordinary gardens’, ‘common

¹ P. Salopek, “Fleeing terror, finding refuge”, *National Geographic* 227(3), March 2015, pp. 64-65.

² G. McKay, *Radical gardening: politics, idealism & rebellion in the garden*, p. 8.

³ J. Roberts, “Researching the vernacular garden”, *Landscape Research* 21(2), 1996, p. 175; K. Helphand, “Defiant gardens”, *The Journal of Garden History* 17(2), 1997, p. 101; McKay, pp. 6-8.

⁴ Gardens made by marginalised groups.

⁵ M. Conan, “From vernacular gardens to a social anthropology of gardening” in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 182.

gardens’, ‘popular gardens’, ‘dooryard gardens’, ‘allotment gardens’, ‘market gardens’, ‘community gardens’, ‘peace gardens’, ‘fascist gardens’, ‘radical gardens’ and ‘war gardens’. These gardens are not ‘polite’, extraordinary, impressive and mainstream; they are ‘impolite’, ordinary, common and marginal. Furthermore, these gardens are most often working or utility gardens and may therefore be described as ‘productive’, ‘useful’, ‘functional’, ‘utilitarian’ and ‘practical’. Often these gardens are also survivalist, and Helphand described them as products of “defiant acts of gardening” or “defiant gardens”.⁶ In other words, these gardens defy circumstances. They exist despite the odds which are stacked against them and their creators, including extreme climates, financial lack, neglect, oppression, vandalism and abuse. These gardens triumph over adversity and are, according to Helphand, “sites of assertion”.⁷ Still, these gardens are all real rather than show gardens; they are vernacular gardens.⁸

The purpose of this chapter is firstly to define the term ‘vernacular’ and, secondly, to define and describe the concepts ‘vernacular garden’ and ‘semi-vernacular garden’ as types of ‘impolite’ gardens customarily positioned opposite the ‘polite’ or patrician garden. Thirdly, a historical perspective on the origin and development of the ancient and traditional vernacular garden (prehistory-19th century) and the main types of vernacular garden is provided. The international perspective, which focuses on Europe, Britain and the USA because of their relevance to the South African vernacular garden, is followed by a discussion of contemporary vernacular gardens (1900-1939). Fourthly, vernacular gardens in the developing world, specifically those of indigenous communities and socially- and culturally-dominated groups, are also discussed. The role played by the vernacular gardener and the historical development of gender-based gardening tasks also receives attention. The focus then shifts to the vernacular garden in Africa, after which the chapter is concluded with a historical overview of the South African vernacular garden. *This important chapter should*

⁶ Helphand, pp. 102-103.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ L. Taylor, *A taste for gardening: classed and gendered practices*, p. 77; McKay, p. 8; M.E. Christie, “The cultural geography of gardens”, *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, p. iii; Roberts, p. 175; M. Bhatti *et al.*, “Peaceful, pleasant and private: the British domestic garden as ordinary landscape”, *Landscape Research* 39(1), 2014, pp. 42, 49; Conan, p. 182; M. Conan, “The *hortillonnages*: reflections on a vanishing gardeners’ culture” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 20.

be considered a broad cultural-historical canvas against which the rest of the chapters are to be viewed.

2.2 Definition of a vernacular garden

It seems appropriate to start this discussion of the vernacular garden with an attempt to define the term ‘vernacular’. While the word ‘vernacular’ is commonly used to refer to the language or dialect used naturally by a specific group of speakers, especially among one another and in informal situations,⁹ it also refers, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, to “the common style of a particular time, place, or group”.¹⁰ In terms of this definition, the term ‘vernacular’ is a comprehensive concept and refers to much more than just language. If the term also refers to style, then it includes, by implication, tangible creations. While Hunt and Wolschke-Bulmahn argued that the vernacular is “likely to be a regional or localized, ethnic or folk creation”,¹¹ Samantha Gibson reasoned that “local distinctiveness”¹² best explains the term ‘vernacular’. Westmacott concurred and, according to him, the term ‘vernacular’ refers to “a craft indigenous to a country, evolved over many years, and not learned or borrowed.”¹³ One of the crafts closely associated with the term ‘vernacular’ is architecture and a number of standard definitions of the term refer to this discipline. For example, the *Cambridge English Dictionary* defines the term ‘vernacular’ as “a local style in which ordinary houses are built”¹⁴ and the *Oxford Dictionary* refers to “architecture concerned with domestic and functional rather than public or monumental buildings”.¹⁵ The use of the term ‘vernacular’ to describe a certain type of architecture is significant to this discussion and it needs to be explored further in order to arrive at a full understanding of the vernacular garden.

⁹ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, “Vernacular”, <<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/vernacular.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 14.7.2016).

¹⁰ Anon., *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “Vernacular”, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vernacular.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 14.7.2016).

¹¹ J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, “Introduction: discovering the vernacular garden” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 3.

¹² S. Gibson, “Local distinctiveness and the vernacular garden”, <http://www.ihbc.org.uk/context_archive/59/gazebo_dir/gazebo_s.html>, September 1998 (Accessed: 12.8.2010).

¹³ R. Westmacott, “The gardens of African-Americans in the rural South” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 79.

¹⁴ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, “Vernacular”, <<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/vernacular.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 14.7.2016).

¹⁵ Anon., *Oxford Dictionaries*, “Vernacular”, <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/vernacular.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 14.7.2016).

2.2.1 Vernacular versus ‘polite’ architecture

In Chapter 1, it was stated that a close relationship exists between a building, particularly a house, and its garden. Therefore, a garden cannot be studied independently of the house to which it is attached. It is important for the garden historian to understand the vernacular house or dwelling as living space in order to understand the garden and its various elements and components.¹⁶ Vernacular architecture had been a field of academic study for more than fifty years¹⁷ and reached a level of maturity still lacking in the academic study of gardens. According to Daniel Maudlin, a British architectural historian, the term ‘vernacular’ defines a vernacular building as the opposite of what is generally considered a ‘polite’ building or architecture.¹⁸ Maudlin defined ‘vernacular architecture’ as the study of traditional buildings which should be understood in their local or regional context and argued that “the social duality of the vernacular and the polite provides *the* definition of vernacular architecture”.¹⁹ Despite the distinction made between the categories of ‘vernacular’ and ‘polite’, Maudlin cautioned that the boundary between the two genres is fluid and that many buildings are hybrid, in other words, they cannot always be clearly defined as vernacular or polite.²⁰

Bernard Rudofsky, a pioneer scholar of vernacular architecture, referred to it as “architecture without architects”²¹ and used terms such as ‘non-pedigreed’, ‘anonymous’, ‘spontaneous’, ‘indigenous’ and ‘rural’ to describe this genre.²² Although Rudofsky’s terms were meant to be generic, they are descriptive of the type of vernacular architecture that evolved in the South African context. South African vernacular architecture – both European and African – has been the subject of in-depth study since the early 1960s. Typical examples of European vernacular architecture include the dwellings built by the Dutch *trekboers* (roaming farmers)

¹⁶ B.J. Heath & A. Bennett, “‘The little spots allow’d them’: the archaeological study of African-American yards”, *Historical Archaeology* 34(2), 2000, p. 38; M. Bhatti & A. Church, “Home, the culture of nature and meanings of gardens in late modernity”, *Housing Studies* 19(1), 2004, p. 44; Gibson, “Local distinctiveness and...”.

¹⁷ The UK-based Vernacular Architecture Group was established in 1952. Anon., “Vernacular Architecture Group”, <<http://www.vag.org.uk.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 13.8.2016).

¹⁸ Non-local or non-vernacular architectural styles.

¹⁹ D. Maudlin, “Crossing boundaries: revisiting the thresholds of vernacular architecture”, *Vernacular Architecture* 41, 2010, p. 10. (Maudlin’s emphasis)

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ B. Rudofsky, *Architecture without architects: a short introduction to non-pedigreed architecture*, no p. no.

²² *Ibid.*

who trekked from the Cape Colony into the South African interior during the 17th and 18th centuries. The houses they built, including the *hartbeeshuis*, the *kapstylhuis*, the corbelled house, the mud-walled house, and to an extent, the *brak*-roofed and flat-roofed²³ houses, were mostly products of their immediate environment, that is, using local materials and unaffected by external influences. These houses are considered classic examples of South African vernacular architecture and were built throughout South Africa's interior, including the Free State.²⁴ Free State architects Kobus du Preez and Gert Swart's description of local vernacular architecture aptly explains this genre within the context of the early Free State interior: "the architecture of South Africa's interior consciously endeavours to create secure environments in the infinity of the surrounds. It is through *intimacy* that a foothold of belonging is gained."²⁵

Du Preez and Swart's use of the word 'intimacy' is significant in the context of the vernacular, because it is not only by means of buildings but also garden-making that human beings strive towards an intimate relationship with their immediate environment. This is confirmed by, among others, M.E. Christie in her description of vernacular gardens as "spaces of intimate engagement with the land".²⁶ The fact that certain types of houses and gardens share an element of intimacy with the land is a further indication that there is, indeed, a direct link between house and garden. The immediate question, however, is: if a certain style of building or house is described as vernacular, may a certain style of garden also be described as vernacular for the same reasons? John B. Jackson provided a clue in his argument that the "current tendency to associate the word *vernacular* with a local form of speech and a local form of art and decoration entitles us to use the word to describe other aspects of local culture."²⁷ Jackson's reference to 'other aspects of local culture' is important, because, as discussed in Chapter 1, a garden is considered an expression of culture and, therefore, it is a cultural product. For this reason, it is argued that some gardens, as is the

²³ The flat-roofed house is considered an indigenous adaptation of a Cape architectural tradition and should, therefore, be classified as semi-vernacular. F. Frescura, "The flat-roofed house: an indigenous adaptation of a Cape tradition", *Lantern* 40(3), August 1991, pp. 15-23.

²⁴ P. Oliver, *Dwellings: the vernacular house world wide*, pp. 11-16; J. Walton, "Homes of the trekboers: the vernacular architecture of South Africa", *Lantern* 11(1), September 1961, pp. 8-21; L. Roodt, *The architecture of the Orange Free State Republic 1854-1902* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, 1984), *passim*.

²⁵ K. du Preez & G. Swart, "The interior – Free State, Northern Cape & Karoo" in O. Joubert (ed.), *10+ years, 100+ buildings: architecture in a democratic South Africa*, p. 221. (Own emphasis)

²⁶ Christie, p. iii.

²⁷ J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the vernacular landscape*, p. 149. (Jackson's emphasis)

case with some buildings, are *vernacular creations*.²⁸ T. Longstaffe-Gowan supports this argument and added that “all vernacular creations, whether gardens or buildings, are constituents, and therefore products, of our everyday life and world; they are artifacts of the cultural landscape formed through cultivation and imposed order”.²⁹

Another definition of the term ‘vernacular’ provided by the *Oxford Dictionary* further strengthens the argument in question because it links not only gardens but also *the act of gardening* to the term ‘vernacular’. The mentioned dictionary defines ‘vernacular’ as “the terminology used by people belonging to a specified group or engaging in a specialized activity”³⁰ such as a “*gardening vernacular*”.³¹ In the same vein, Westmacott stated that “*gardening is a craft*”,³² which ties in with his earlier argument that the term ‘vernacular’ refers to “a craft indigenous to a country”.³³ Based on these and other arguments, it seems in order to extrapolate the term ‘vernacular’ to a specific genre of gardens. Although Hunt and Wolschke-Bulmahn rightly stated that the term was “borrowed from architectural studies”³⁴ and Roberts cautioned that “there is no straightforward analogy between vernacular buildings and vernacular gardens”,³⁵ the important point, according to Bhatti and others, is that the type of gardens in question “are concerned with and part of vernacular culture”³⁶ and, therefore, they may be described as vernacular.³⁷

2.2.2 Vernacular and folk gardens

Ced Dolder, an authority on vernacular gardens of the American south, argued that vernacular gardening is a “handed-down culture of gardening”³⁸ which has its origins in

²⁸ Conan, “From vernacular gardens...”, pp. 181-182; Gibson, “Local distinctiveness and...”.

²⁹ T. Longstaffe-Gowan, “Private urban gardening in England, 1700-1830: on the art of sinking” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 48; C.T. Kimber, “Gardens and dwelling: people in vernacular gardens”, *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, p. 264.

³⁰ Anon., *Oxford Dictionaries*, “Vernacular”, <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/vernacular.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 14.7.2016).

³¹ *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

³² Westmacott, p. 80. (Own emphasis)

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

³⁴ Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, p. 3.

³⁵ Roberts, p. 177.

³⁶ Bhatti *et al.*, p. 49. See also p. 42.

³⁷ Gibson, “Local distinctiveness and...”.

³⁸ C. Dolder, “Vernacular gardens”, <<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/vernacular-gardens.html>>, 4.6.2013 (Accessed: 6.7.2016).

“folkways” and “folk or nonscholarly [sic] sources”.³⁹ Hunt and Wolschke-Bulmahn reasoned along the same lines and stated that the vernacular is, among other things, also a “folk creation”.⁴⁰ These arguments need clarification because the terms ‘vernacular’ and ‘folk’ are often used interchangeably. In the discussion of the Burden model’s CD axis in Chapter 1, it was stated that the terms ‘folk’ and ‘vernacular’ complement each other because both describe similar cultural traits and products. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines the term ‘folk’ as “the great proportion of the members of a people that determines the group character and that tends to preserve its characteristic form of civilization and its customs, arts and crafts, legends, traditions, and superstitions from generation to generation”.⁴¹ Other definitions are more compact, including the *Oxford Dictionary* which defines folk as something that relates to “the traditional art or culture of a community or nation”⁴² and the *Cambridge English Dictionary*’s definition of folk as something “traditional to or typical of a particular group or country”.⁴³ Based on these definitions, one may refer to a ‘folk society’ or a ‘folk community’. Peirce Lewis, an American cultural geographer, described a folk society as “one where ideas about propriety are transmitted by oral tradition or by visual imitation.”⁴⁴

The term ‘folk’ is commonly used to describe buildings and gardens which are also considered to be vernacular. For example, architectural historian, James Walton, referred to “South African folk-building”⁴⁵ in his discussion of local vernacular architecture, and Wilhelm referred to the “‘folk’ continuity in gardening from generation to generation”⁴⁶ in his discussion of African-American gardens. In his turn, Conan argued that the gardens of indigenous peoples are created and maintained according to “folk habits and practices”.⁴⁷ Although the terms ‘folk’ and ‘vernacular’ essentially describe the same cultural product,

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, p. 3.

⁴¹ Anon., *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “Folk”, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/folk.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 11.8.2016).

⁴² Anon., *Oxford Dictionaries*, “Folk”, <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/folk.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 11.8.2016).

⁴³ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, “Folk”, <<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/folk.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 11.8.2016).

⁴⁴ P. Lewis, “The making of vernacular taste: the case of *Sunset* and *Southern Living*” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 108.

⁴⁵ Walton, pp. 12, 18.

⁴⁶ G. Wilhelm, “Dooryard gardens and gardening in the black community of Brushy, Texas”, *Geographical Review* 65(1), January 1975, p. 73.

⁴⁷ Conan, “From vernacular gardens...”, p. 192.

some scholars, including Wilhelm and Lewis, argued that a *folk garden usually has a deeper historical dimension than a vernacular garden*. In his description of American vernacular gardens, Lewis argued that “vernacular gardens in modern-day America do not take their cues from deeply rooted traditions, as folk gardens might have been, but instead are shaped by the modern instruments of a modern society.”⁴⁸ While vernacular gardens are often associated with popular culture and include contemporary vernacular gardens, such as the already mentioned ‘popular gardens’ and ‘suburban gardens’, it is usually not the case with folk gardens.⁴⁹

2.2.3 Vernacular and semi-vernacular gardens

Based on the definitions of the term ‘vernacular’, the discussion now shifts to the next obvious question: what is a vernacular garden? The introduction of this chapter already provided some clues with terms such as ‘ordinary gardens’, ‘home gardens’, ‘community gardens’, ‘radical gardens’ and ‘war gardens’. These terms cover a wide range of vernacular garden types with ‘ordinary gardens’ and ‘war gardens’ probably at the opposite ends of the scale. Some of the leading authorities on gardens and garden history have attempted to define and describe vernacular gardens, including Dolder, Conan, Hunt, Jackson, Westmacott and Wolschke-Bulmahn. Dolder defined vernacular gardens simply as “gardens of ordinary people, not those designed by professionals or owned by the elite”.⁵⁰ Hunt and Wolschke-Bulmahn’s definition describes vernacular gardens as “gardens which did not come into being as a result of the powerful intervention on a site of some wealthy patron or of some ‘name’ designer.”⁵¹ Therefore, they argued that “the vernacular garden has always distinguished itself – *mutatis mutandis* – by the fact that it is designed and actually implemented by the owner.”⁵² Westmacott’s definition also emphasises the role of the garden owner: “a vernacular garden is one from which the owner derives pleasure from actually working in it and making changes.”⁵³

⁴⁸ Lewis, p. 112.

⁴⁹ Roberts, pp. 175, 177; Conan, “The *hortillonnages*: reflections...”, p. 46; Gibson, “Local distinctiveness and...”.

⁵⁰ Dolder, “Vernacular gardens”.

⁵¹ Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, p. 3.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Westmacott, p. 77.

While Hunt, Wolschke-Bulmahn and Westmacott emphasised the key role of the garden owner in their definitions, Jackson focused on the importance of the vernacular garden's local distinctiveness. Based on his argument that "vernacular implies adaptation and local or regional restraints",⁵⁴ Jackson defined a 'standard' vernacular garden as "the product of local traditions, local climate, and of local economic and agricultural influences."⁵⁵ As a result of local restraints, Hunt and Wolschke-Bulmahn argued that vernacular gardens might also be "those where maintenance and management were privileged over making, and where aesthetics was never a primary concern."⁵⁶ Apart from the maintenance issue, this definition highlights another important trait of vernacular gardens, namely the subordinate role played by fashion trends and aesthetics. A number of definitions stress this characteristic but Patrick Taylor's definition deserves to be quoted: "A vernacular garden is one in which traditional, often local, styles predominate over new, alien, and fashionable notions."⁵⁷

The link between vernacular gardens and vernacular culture is emphasised in Conan's definitions. He viewed vernacular gardens primarily "as places that contribute to the maintenance of a subculture"⁵⁸ and defined a vernacular garden as "a man-made ecological system which has been developed and is maintained by a social group embedded within a larger society, which helps sustain in daily life some consonance between the gardeners' group culture and larger society."⁵⁹ Conan's definition is most relevant to this study and, specifically, his reference to the 'consonance between the gardeners' group culture and larger society'. In the context of this study, and specifically referring to Batho's topiary gardens, the term 'consonance' not only indicates a harmonious relationship and interaction between the gardeners' group culture and larger society, but also refers to the phenomena of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing, discussed in Chapter 1. These gardens are the products of a process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing which occurred over a relatively long period of time. Therefore, a distinction should be made between a purely *vernacular garden* and a *semi-vernacular garden*.

⁵⁴ J.B. Jackson, "The past and present of the vernacular garden" in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, p. 3.

⁵⁷ P. Taylor (ed.), *The Oxford companion to the garden*, p. 495; P. Taylor, "Vernacular gardens", <<http://www.jrank.org/gardening/pages/1715/vernacular-gardens.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 3.2.2011).

⁵⁸ Conan, "The hortillonnages: reflections...", p. 19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

The concept of the purely vernacular as something that is, to quote Westmacott, “indigenous to a country, evolved over many years, and not learned or borrowed”⁶⁰ is not applicable to all types of vernacular gardens, including Batho’s topiary gardens. Therefore, the semi-vernacular garden refers to those vernacular gardens which display a *blend of patrician and folk influences*. Hunt and Wolschke-Bulmahn aptly explained this type of vernacular garden in their distinction between elite or patrician gardens and “the less patrician ones [gardens].”⁶¹ A semi-vernacular garden, then, may be defined as a vernacular or folk garden which also displays patrician influences. In the South African context, this means a garden which is characterised by a blend of African and European influences. These gardens are neither purely African nor purely European. They are neither purely patrician nor purely vernacular or folk. While some gardens are more patrician, others are more vernacular or folk. Returning to Westmacott’s definition of the purely vernacular, it is argued that a semi-vernacular garden could have evolved over a number of years but some of its elements and components may not be entirely indigenous and could have been borrowed from another culture. A semi-vernacular garden is thus essentially defined by its ‘semi-ness’, in other words, a garden which is neither purely patrician nor purely vernacular or folk.

In conclusion, it is argued that vernacular and semi-vernacular gardens differ from pleasure gardens, ornamental gardens and art gardens in the sense that they are typically mixed-use gardens which *combine aesthetics and subsistence*. The American anthropologist, Carole L. Crumley, explained it as follows: “If pleasure gardens are theaters [sic], then vernacular gardens are schools.”⁶² In more practical terms, it means that vernacular gardens typically display a combination of flowers, vegetables, herbs, fruit trees, objects and other elements not only meaningful to the garden owner(s) but also necessary for the maintenance of the household. Although mostly utilitarian, vernacular gardens are, like gardens in general, far from simplistic. They are, in fact, complex⁶³ because, firstly, they are vulnerable, ephemeral and subject to constant change. The function of a vernacular garden may, for example, shift from purely utilitarian to decorative or a combination thereof. Secondly, vernacular gardens are multi-functional and multi-dimensional and contain layers of meaning which may be

⁶⁰ Westmacott, p. 79.

⁶¹ Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, p. 1.

⁶² C.L. Crumley, “From garden to globe: linking time and space with meaning and memory”, <http://www.anthropology.unc.edu/french/papers/garden_to_globe.html>, 2000 (Accessed: 3.4.2011).

⁶³ For more information on the garden as a complex type of artefact, see Chapter 1.

largely hidden to the casual observer. Such layers of meaning are only revealed through intimate engagement with the garden owner(s). Finally, vernacular gardens function as reservoirs of indigenous horticultural knowledge and socio-cultural practices which reveal more about the social and cultural dimensions of a society than the politest pleasure garden, ornamental garden or art garden could ever do.⁶⁴

2.3 The vernacular garden: a historical overview

The study of vernacular gardens is a relatively new focus area of garden history and only gained momentum as recently as the 1990s. This interest in the gardens of ordinary people should, however, be viewed as part of a predominant shift towards a focus on the lives of ordinary people which has manifested itself in academic research, most notably in disciplines such as sociology, literature studies, peasant studies, architecture and history, including most of history's sub-disciplines or related disciplines, such as oral history, community history, local history and cultural history. Helphand fittingly summarised this shift of focus when he stated that, in the case of history, "which was too often from the bottom down, is now more often looked at from the bottom up, and what was looked at from afar is looked at from within."⁶⁵ Concerning the history of vernacular garden studies, Conan stated that there is "no tradition of 'vernacular garden studies'."⁶⁶ This seems like an overstatement but the truth is there is no tradition of vernacular garden studies that stretches further back than the past thirty years. There are mainly four reasons for this lengthy neglect, including, firstly, a lack of academic interest in such gardens due to scholarly parochialism among garden historians. The second reason, which is, to an extent, related to the first one, deals with the fact that some garden historians find it difficult to accommodate vernacular gardens in their familiar garden typologies. The complete absence, scarcity or unavailability of archival and research material on which to base scientific research, and the fact that vernacular gardens were, until

⁶⁴ Gibson, "Local distinctiveness and..."; Crumley, "From garden to..."; Taylor (ed.), *The Oxford companion...*, p. 496; M. Bhatti & A. Church, "Cultivating natures: homes and gardens in late modernity", *Sociology* 35(2), 2001, pp. 366-368.

⁶⁵ K. Helphand, "'Leaping the property line': observations on recent American garden history" in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 138. See also D. du Bruyn, "Oral testimonies as a source of community history, with special reference to the Batho Project, Bloemfontein", *South African Journal of Cultural History* 24(2), November 2010, pp. 3-4; P.L. Bonner, "New nation, new history: the History Workshop in South Africa, 1979-1994", <<http://www.wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/7715.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 3.8.2010).

⁶⁶ Conan, "From vernacular gardens...", p. 182.

recently, not considered an art form and a subject worthy of study, are two more reasons why vernacular gardens remain on the margins of garden history research.⁶⁷

Despite the scantiness of available research on the vernacular garden, it is, nevertheless, possible to sketch a broad history of this genre. For practical purposes, a distinction is made between *ancient and traditional vernacular gardens* (circa 3000-4000 BCE-9000 CE) and *contemporary vernacular gardens* (20th century). The most important developments in Western garden history not only form a broad canvas against which the development of the vernacular garden should be viewed but, where applicable, the vernacular is also juxtaposed with the patrician in order to highlight the differences.

2.3.1 Ancient and traditional vernacular gardens (prehistory-19th century)

2.3.1.1 The ancient vernacular garden

Although the academic study of vernacular gardens lacks a long tradition, the tradition of vernacular garden-making has, indeed, a long history⁶⁸ behind it. This ancient history tells the story of not only vernacular gardens but also of vernacular horticulture,⁶⁹ vernacular gardeners and vernacular gardening communities. It may be argued that the biblical Garden of Eden was not only the world's first garden but also the world's first vernacular garden, if only metaphorically. Genesis 2:10 provides a clue as to how this garden must have looked: "Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four [river] heads."⁷⁰ Although the concept of paradise has changed through the ages, most garden historians agree that the ancient idea of the Garden of Eden was one of order. In other words, paradise was initially not envisioned as a naturalistic jungle because this image only developed much later. The Bible's mentioning of a river being separated into four (river) heads (the rivers Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates) served as inspiration for the most

⁶⁷ Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, pp. 2, 4; Taylor (ed.), *The Oxford companion...*, p. 495; Roberts, pp. 176-177; Jackson, "The past and...", p. 15; Westmacott, pp. 78-79.

⁶⁸ Due to limited space a discussion of the complete early history of vernacular gardens is not feasible; therefore, only the key historical developments of the past millennium will be highlighted.

⁶⁹ Roberts, p. 178; Jackson, "The past and...", p. 16.

⁷⁰ Anon., *The Amplified Bible: containing the amplified old testament and the amplified new testament*, p. 3; Anon., *The Holy Bible: New International Version (NIV)*, p. 2.

ancient formal garden style, namely the *fourfold or foursquare*⁷¹ garden. This idea of how an ideal garden should be laid out, that is, a perfect square divided into four smaller squares or parts, has since become the basic blueprint for not only the classic Islamic (Persian) *chahar bagh*⁷² but also gardens in general, including vernacular gardens. Therefore, the first vernacular gardens were mostly laid out according to man's ancient perception of the Garden of Eden – the archetypal garden – as a formal symmetrical garden.⁷³

The earliest cultivators were not gardeners but small-scale 'farmers' who lived in Palestine around 8000 BCE. This only happened after the old nomadic and hunter-gatherer lifestyle was abandoned and replaced by a more stationary one. Some groups settled in one place and, in the process, formed loose communities. Dwellings were built and grouped together, and these evolved into permanent or semi-permanent villages. The issue of permanency is a key aspect in the evolution of not only houses but also gardens because only when people become sedentary then gardens become part of their agricultural systems. Therefore, Kimber argued that gardening became "an integral subsistence activity where people resided permanently."⁷⁴ The American geographer, William Doolittle, argued that household refuse dumps were the forerunners of gardens because such dumps played a key role in the domestication of plants.⁷⁵ Discarded plant material and seeds germinated and took root in the fertile compost-type of soil found in the dump environments. Due to their proximity to dwellings, the dumps were regularly 'irrigated' with household wastewater and also continually 'fertilised' by the addition of household refuse and human waste. It may, however, be argued that while these accidental 'dump gardens' were not true gardens, they nevertheless represent the *birth of the non-designed vernacular garden in its most primitive form*. The earliest gardens, which may be considered gardens in the true sense of the word (according to the Western concept of a garden), only emerged around 3000-4000 BCE.

⁷¹ Also known as the cosmic cross or cruciform shape.

⁷² P. Hobhouse, *The story of gardening*, pp. 56-95.

⁷³ Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, pp. 4, 6; Jackson, "The past and...", p. 15; Helphand, "Defiant gardens", p. 104; M. Mosser & G. Teyssot (eds), *The history of garden design: the Western tradition from the Renaissance to the present day*, p. 12; M. Francis & R.T. Hester, *The meaning of gardens*, p. 26; C.W. Moore *et al.*, *The poetics of gardens*, p. 13; E. Boult & C. Sullivan, *Illustrated history of landscape design*, pp. 1-4.

⁷⁴ Kimber, p. 264.

⁷⁵ W.E. Doolittle, "Gardens are us, we are nature: transcending antiquity and modernity", *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, pp. 392, 397.

These gardens, which, one may argue, were all vernacular gardens, were laid out in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Middle East and Persia.⁷⁶

Apart from the influence which the Garden of Eden had exerted on ancient garden design, the formal layout of the earliest vernacular gardens was also the result of practical considerations. Irrigation systems had to be devised for these gardens, which were mostly situated next to rivers, such as the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates. The most logical and practical irrigation schemes consisted of irrigation channels and rills which ran parallel to each other. As a result, gardens were mostly *laid out on symmetrical and geometrical lines for purely practical reasons*. Furthermore, plants were mostly *planted in rows, which further reinforced the symmetrical layout*. Egyptian gardens - characterised by a regimented layout - were particularly influential and, according to Hobhouse, they inspired garden design throughout the emerging civilised world. By the second millennium BCE, the formal garden style and variations thereof had spread all over the Mediterranean and the Levant.⁷⁷ Hobhouse described these gardens as “regular in layout”, “arranged symmetrically”, and “laid out geometrically”.⁷⁸ According to British garden designer, John Brookes, the mentioned gardens were of “rectilinear design”,⁷⁹ meaning they were typically rectangular with basic geometric subdivisions, depending on the watering system.⁸⁰

2.3.1.2 The agricultural vernacular garden

It is important to understand that the history of early vernacular gardens is closely intertwined with the evolution of agriculture. Due to the fact that the ancient vernacular garden was almost entirely devoted to food production, it was initially more agricultural than horticultural in nature. Therefore, British garden historian, Christopher Thacker, rightly stated that it is often “hard to say just where the farm turns into the garden”.⁸¹ In a sense, these gardens may be described as ‘agricultural gardens’. Customarily, they were mostly

⁷⁶ Hobhouse, pp. 18-19; A. Huxley, *An illustrated history of gardening*, pp. 9-10; G. van Zuylen, *The garden: visions of paradise*, pp. 12-15; C. Thacker, *The history of gardens*, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁷ A historical geographical term which refers to the countries of Cyprus, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Turkey.

⁷⁸ Hobhouse, pp. 18, 27-28.

⁷⁹ J. Brookes, *Room outside: a new approach to garden design*, p. 6.

⁸⁰ Hobhouse, pp. 18-19, 23, 25, 27-29; Brookes, pp. 6-7; Van Zuylen, p. 14.

⁸¹ Thacker, p. 13.

planted with cereal grains, which became staple food. Due to the constant impact of historical processes and forces, including technological advances and improved cultivation methods, the agricultural garden as a vernacular garden kept evolving. Consequently, the vernacular garden was characterised by ongoing adaptation and change throughout its long history. Therefore, the early history of vernacular gardens (circa prehistory-19th century) is *essentially a history of agricultural or food gardens and how these gardens transitioned from food-only gardens to food-and-ornamental gardens and, eventually, to purely ornamental gardens*. This transitional process took place over a long period of time and it was only in about 1500 BCE that the ornamental garden – complete with a high enclosing wall and a rectangular pool flanked by shady trees planted in rows – made its appearance in Egypt. Both Huxley and South African landscape architect, Joane Pim,⁸² argued that only when a community's living standards rise above subsistence level does an appreciation for aesthetic values develop within such a community. As a result, ornamental gardens are laid out and continuously being refined. This was the case with the Egyptian nobility's gardens and because of the level of refinement attained in these gardens, they may be described as patrician.⁸³

2.3.1.3 The enclosed vernacular garden

Apart from its close association with the evolution of agriculture, the history of vernacular gardens is also closely associated with the history and evolution of dwellings. As villages expanded and became more crowded and dense, houses and the yards around them became walled-in or fenced-in. As a result, the wooden fence or stone wall became a characteristic of gardens⁸⁴ and, by implication, also vernacular gardens. Initially put up to enclose domestic animals such as goats and sheep, the fences and walls also marked the boundaries of the owner's yard, provided a degree of privacy, served as protection against intruders and trespassers, kept stray and wild animals out, and, finally, protected the house and yard against natural elements, such as wind, sand storms and dust. It was *within this enclosed yard where the most basic vernacular garden took shape*. During the course of the vernacular garden's

⁸² For more information on Pim, see Introduction.

⁸³ Huxley, p. 11; J. Pim, *Beauty is necessary: creation or preservation of the landscape*, p. 16; Jackson, "The past and...", pp. 12, 14; Van Zuylen, p. 14; Hobhouse, pp. 25, 27.

⁸⁴ For a discussion of the garden as an enclosed or fenced-in space, see Chapter 1.

history, characteristic elements were gradually added: first a tree for shade, later a grapevine trained over some kind of elementary support, a small patch of medicinal herbs in a corner of the yard, and vegetables planted in rows. The vegetables, typically planted close to the kitchen or cooking space, required the installation of an elementary watering system made up of narrow rills fed by a nearby water source. Gradually, this basic vernacular garden developed its own characteristics and became distinguishable from the mentioned agricultural garden, which was not enclosed and laid out at a distance from the house. Over time, the agricultural garden shed its garden-like appearance, grew in size, and became cultivated fields.⁸⁵

2.3.1.4 The classical Greek and Roman aesthetic

Although gardens have existed in Greece from as early as the 4th century BCE, the early Greeks mostly preferred flowers and trees in a natural landscape. Private gardens were relatively scarce in Greece until at least the late Hellenistic period (circa 31 BCE). Greece's mountainous terrain and dry climate made gardening a challenge. As a result, Greek gardens were relatively simple with an emphasis on trees to provide shade. As is typically the case with the vernacular gardens of the ancient world, information on Greek vernacular gardens is scarce. Although not common, such gardens did exist and were mostly used for growing green vegetables. Market-gardens, which are also considered a type of vernacular garden, were laid out outside Athens' city walls. Greek domestic gardens were, almost without exception, laid out in the formal manner according to the classic symmetrical design and variations thereof. The fact that Greek gardens were relatively simple does not mean that they were devoid of refinement. According to historical records, the Greeks were the first to practice topiary.⁸⁶ Although the Greeks taught the Romans the art of topiary, Roman gardens were more famous for their topiary creations than Greek gardens were. Topiary is, however, only one of many horticultural achievements for which the Romans became known.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Huxley, pp. 10-11; Jackson, "The past and...", p.12; Hobhouse, pp. 18, 27.

⁸⁶ For a detailed discussion of the history of topiary, see Chapter 3.

⁸⁷ Huxley, p. 12; Van Zuylen, pp. 16-18; L. Farrar, *Ancient Roman gardens*, pp. 4-9; A.R. Littlewood, "A colloquium on gardens of the ancient Mediterranean", *Journal of Garden History* 12(2), 1992, no p. no.; Thacker, pp. 18-19.

The classic Roman garden, namely the peristyle garden of the Italian townhouse and villa, is not of the vernacular type and, according to Conan, associated with the “patrician upper classes”⁸⁸ of Roman society. Apart from the information gleaned from the writings of Pliny the Elder (circa 23-79 CE) and Pliny the Younger (circa 61-113 CE), much of what is known about Roman gardens is based on the archaeological excavations and research conducted by Wilhelmina Jashemski (1910-2007) at the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum.⁸⁹ Townhouses and villas of the upper classes and bourgeoisie were planned around a courtyard or *atrium* which was surrounded by peristyle columns. The effective use of colonnades and painted murals linked the garden to the house and thereby integrated the two living spaces. Furthermore, most gardens were placed on a central axis with the house which afforded the visitor an unobstructed view through the house down the centre of the garden. From a design perspective, these gardens were ground-breaking and the Romans should be credited as the ones who introduced and perfected the concepts of the ‘garden room’ and the ‘axial garden’.⁹⁰ Regarding the layout of the peristyle gardens, it must be noted that they were initially not strictly geometrical. Formal geometrically-designed gardens with clipped hedges and topiary, which require reliable water supplies, were only introduced in the first century CE during the reign of Augustus when aqueducts were installed at Pompeii, Rome and other parts of Italy. Often there was not a strict segregation of the ornamental and the functional in Roman gardens. Consequently, mixed planting of ornamental shrubs, flowers and vegetables was not uncommon.⁹¹

As far as vernacular gardens are concerned, information is scarce and it is therefore difficult to visually reconstruct such gardens. The earliest Roman garden, the so-called *hortus*, was a far cry from the later peristyle garden and, probably, of a vernacular nature. According to Gabrielle van Zuylen, the *hortus* was simple and she described it as “a herb, fruit or vegetable plot”.⁹² Despite the relatively high standard of living enjoyed by most Roman citizens, not

⁸⁸ M. Conan, “Nature into art: gardens and landscapes in the everyday life of Ancient Rome”, *Journal of Garden History* 6(4), 1986, p. 355.

⁸⁹ For more details, see W.F. Jashemski, *The gardens of Pompeii, Herculaneum and the villas destroyed by Vesuvius, passim*.

⁹⁰ Jashemski, pp. 16-22, 25-43; Conan, “Nature into art...”, pp. 348-350, 353, 355; R. Ling, “The arts of living” in J. Boardman *et al.* (eds), *The Roman world*, pp. 323-327; G. Jellicoe & S. Jellicoe, *The landscape of man: shaping the environment from prehistory to the present day*, pp. 129, 132; M.L. Gothein, *A history of garden art* (vol. I), pp. 118-123.

⁹¹ Jashemski, pp. 25, 28-33, 51-54; Conan, “Nature into art...”, pp. 350, 352-353; Ling, pp. 323-327; Farrar, pp. 130-155.

⁹² Van Zuylen, p. 18.

all Roman houses had peristyle gardens. However, a gardening culture was firmly established among all classes, including the lower classes and the poor who lived in humbler abodes and could afford only “the humblest of plantings”.⁹³ Jashemski argued that many of the modest homes were too small for a garden but some poorer citizens “managed a small plot of green or a few potted plants in a small light well.”⁹⁴ According to Conan, most Roman houses had “a little garden behind the *tablinum*”⁹⁵ and, according to Jashemski, strictly utilitarian “produce gardens”⁹⁶ were not uncommon either. These descriptions of what appear to be small, spontaneous, non-designed and productive gardens probably refer to gardens of the vernacular type, although describing them as vernacular is problematic without adequate research findings confirming such a description. Still, one could argue that during the Roman period, vernacular gardens did not disappear but were overshadowed by the pleasure garden which emerged from the practical *hortus*.⁹⁷

2.3.1.5 Walled towns and walled gardens: the medieval vernacular garden

Garden historian, Anthony Huxley, argued that a similar pattern of beginning, rise and climax in gardening can be traced in every culture that has become ‘civilised’ (according to Western standards). The final stage of this pattern is the collapse back into subsistence horticulture and farming after invasion, conquest and plunder.⁹⁸ This theory is applicable to the Roman civilisation which disintegrated after the Roman Empire had been invaded by various Germanic groups during the fifth century CE. Europe descended into political and economic chaos and the so-called Dark Ages ensued. As a result of the collapse of safety and security, the ancient concept of the *walled garden* made way for the *walled town*. As was the case with the medieval psyche, the medieval garden became inward-looking. Medieval towns had to be protected by strong outer walls, and houses had to be fitted within the cramped confines of the walls in order to protect citizens against marauding gangs. Consequently, only a few houses had gardens and the gardens became much smaller. Since gardens were mostly restricted to walled areas, courtyards and cloistered quadrangles, a new

⁹³ D. Spencer, *Roman landscape: culture and identity*, p. 142.

⁹⁴ Jashemski, p. 22.

⁹⁵ Conan, “Nature into art...”, p. 350. The *tablinum* was the room in which visitors were received.

⁹⁶ Jashemski, p. 22.

⁹⁷ Jashemski, pp. 16, 22, 25, 48-49, 337, 339; Spencer, pp. 140-142; Conan, “Nature into art...”, p. 350; Van Zuylen, pp. 18-19; Huxley, p. 12.

⁹⁸ Huxley, p. 13.

type of enclosed garden developed. Due to the rise of the Christian church in response to increasing numbers of people seeking spiritual and physical refuge in the church, monasteries became important centres of horticultural activity. Vegetable plots, herb gardens, medicinal gardens (so-called *physic gardens*), orchards and vineyards were laid out within protective walls and later, when times became more settled, also outside but still close to protective walls.⁹⁹

The Dark Ages (circa 500-1000 CE) and Middle Ages (circa 1000-1500 CE) were brutal periods during which opportunities for practising gardening for purely aesthetic reasons were limited. However, this does not mean that pleasure gardens did not exist because the small enclosed medieval garden gradually evolved into a pleasure garden of sorts called a 'pleasance' (also 'pleasaunce') or *viridarium*. Although called a pleasure garden, it was not entirely ornamental because it also contained fruit trees. The basic design of the *viridarium* was simple and predominantly formal, and took its inspiration from the classic and ancient foursquare garden. According to garden historian, G.S. Thomas, the most common shape for a typical medieval garden was "a square subdivided into further squares"¹⁰⁰ by intersecting paths. Although not overly designed, the typical medieval garden – whether utilitarian or mostly ornamental – displayed a simple formality based on strict symmetry and geometry. Customarily, pleasure gardens were characterised by raised flowerbeds, turf benches, straight garden paths running parallel to boundary walls, trelliswork and a fountain placed in the centre of the garden. The *viridarium* also had a sacred cousin, named a *hortus conclusus*, which held religious significance for members of the Roman Catholic Church. The basic design of the *hortus conclusus*, which was usually located in the confines of monasteries, was similar to that of the *viridarium* but specific elements with religious meaning were added, such as white Madonna lilies (*Lilium candidum*) representing the Virgin Mary.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ J.S. Berrall, *The garden: an illustrated history from ancient Egypt to the present day*, pp. 45, 91; G.S. Thomas (ed.), *Recreating the period garden*, p. 9; Jellicoe & Jellicoe, pp. 138-139; Huxley, pp. 14-17; Boults & Sullivan, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas (ed.), p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Jackson, "The past and...", p. 11; Hobhouse, pp. 97-105; Thacker, pp. 83-86; Thomas (ed.), p. 9; Berrall, pp. 92-96; Van Zuylen, pp. 34-41; Jellicoe & Jellicoe, p. 139.

Although modest by today's standards, the *hortus conclusus* and *viridarium* were lush when compared to the functional and practical vegetable and herb gardens laid out in close proximity to the first-mentioned. Whether it was laid out in a monastery, a castle or a walled town, and later outside protective walls, the essential medieval vernacular garden was primarily a food garden and, by implication, a working garden. According to Huxley, typical medieval "garden plots" were also "utilitarian plots",¹⁰² meaning they were primarily created for the cultivating of food and medicinal herbs. One of the earliest drawings showing medieval utility gardens is the 9th century plan proposed for the Benedictine monastery at St Gaul in Switzerland. This plan, dated 820 CE, shows three types of gardens within the monastery walls, namely a square medicinal garden, a rectangular vegetable garden consisting of narrow rectangular beds and a graveyard-cum-orchard with fruit trees planted between the graves (Images 2/1 & 2/2). This drawing is important because it not only shows the layout of typical medieval working gardens but also illustrates the layout of gardens designed according to the classic principles of symmetry and geometry.¹⁰³

2.3.1.6 The farming revolution: the vernacular garden in transition

During the 12th and 13th centuries, more peaceful times descended upon Europe, and the need for fortification became less urgent. Consequently, an interest in gardening was rejuvenated and, more importantly, it became relatively safe to lay out gardens outside protective walls. Although the basic vernacular garden still provided most households' daily food, bigger vegetable and other utility gardens, as well as small commercial gardens and farms, were laid out. This happened largely in response to the growing demand for vegetables and grains coming from the growing numbers of people living in towns. While the ancient farming system was "self-contained and self-supporting",¹⁰⁴ the new system was "aimed at farming for profit"¹⁰⁵ argued agricultural historian, J.G. Crowther. This pattern continued in Europe and Britain during the 1400s, 1500s and 1600s because many once-successful vernacular gardeners and their offspring became successful farmers by planting vegetables, grains and forage crops (for domesticated animals) on a larger scale than ever

¹⁰² Huxley, p. 15.

¹⁰³ Van Zuylen, pp. 34-35; H. Nieuwenhuis, *Stijlhuizen: vijf eeuwen Nederlandse tuinkunst*, pp. 12-17; Boults & Sullivan, p. 26; Huxley, pp. 17-18, 20, 22-23; Hobhouse, p. 99.

¹⁰⁴ J.G. Crowther, *The story of agriculture*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

before.¹⁰⁶ Nowhere was this trend more prominent than in the Netherlands where farming and, incidentally, also vegetable and flower bulb gardening on a commercial scale, was being practised “by rule and reason”.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that by the 17th century, the Dutch had become leaders in the field of plant sciences, including botany, horticulture and agriculture.¹⁰⁸ The progress made by the Dutch is particularly significant to this study because halfway through the 17th century, some of them set foot at the Cape of Good Hope where they started laying out gardens.

The principles of cultivating a basic vernacular garden, including soil preparation, the planting of vegetables and sowing of crops in rows inside the framework of a square or rectangular plot were successfully applied by Dutch and other European farmers. Agriculture greatly benefited from age-old horticultural techniques, resulting in farmers securing increasingly better yields. Vegetables and other crops once confined to the vernacular garden were now cultivated on a much larger scale. This was done, not in a garden adjacent to the house, but in plots laid out in the field at a distance from the house. This led to a dramatic change in the role and function of the vernacular garden in the sense that the availability of affordable vegetables and other produce supplied by emerging market-gardens lessened its role as primarily a food garden.¹⁰⁹ Jackson rightly argued that because of this change the vernacular garden became “a place for family sociability, amateur experimentation, and the cultivation of high-quality fruits and vegetables – a place devoted to the study of small-scale beauty and perfection.”¹¹⁰ This trend represents a dramatic change in the character of the vernacular garden.

2.3.1.7 A garden renaissance and the apex of the patrician garden

The agricultural and horticultural revolution that took place in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries more or less coincided with the Italian and later the European Renaissance.

¹⁰⁶ R.E.P. Ernle, *English farming: past and present*, pp. 55-77.

¹⁰⁷ M.L. Gothein, *A history of garden art* (vol. II), p. 220.

¹⁰⁸ Crowther, pp. 45-47, 57-64, 71; Jackson, “The past and...”, p. 14; Huxley, p. 21; Berrall, pp. 94, 110, 295; Gothein (vol. II), pp. 220, 230; D.O. Wijnands, “*Hortus auriaci*: the gardens of Orange and their place in late 17th-century botany and horticulture”, *Journal of Garden History: An International Quarterly* 8(2 & 3), April-September 1988, pp. 61-86.

¹⁰⁹ Jackson, “The past and...”, p. 14; Berrall, pp. 94, 110.

¹¹⁰ Jackson, “The past and...”, p. 14.

This far-reaching historical epoch affected all spheres of European society, including the arts, literature, science, technology and, of course, horticulture. The *inward-looking* garden of the Middle Ages became *outward-looking* and underwent a radical transformation. The Renaissance may be considered the ‘Golden Age’ of the patrician garden and during this time it reached an unprecedented climax in the work of André Le Nôtre (1613-1700) at Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles in France. This was the age of the architectural garden and the objective was to establish a strong architectural link between house and garden by means of garden structure. In effect, the garden became an architectural extension of the house and its design incorporated the same shapes used in the buildings of that time, namely rectangles, squares, circles and semi-circles. By applying design principles such as linear perspective, scale, composition and multiple axes, the Renaissance garden became an expression of man’s mastery over nature.¹¹¹

2.3.1.8 The simple formal axial garden as a vernacular garden

The vernacular garden was not unaffected by the changes brought about by the Renaissance, and underwent its own transformation. During the 1500s and 1600s, the vernacular garden transitioned from a food-only garden to a food-and-ornamental garden and, eventually, a purely ornamental garden. Huxley supported this argument and argued that an important phase in the development of the garden commenced when it became used for pleasure as well, instead of only cultivating and producing food. Huxley’s argument is entirely applicable to the vernacular garden. The new function of the vernacular garden as a food-and-ornamental garden influenced its design and layout because new components and elements, such as flowerbeds and leisure spaces, were added. All these changes happened within the confines of a still predominantly formal framework. During the period of transition between the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, a pattern of garden design developed which resulted in what may be termed the ‘simple formal axial garden’, for the purpose of this study. Within the formal framework, an equal number of square or rectangular beds with narrow paths in-between for providing easy access were aligned to

¹¹¹ Thomas (ed.), pp. 10-16; H.V. Hubbard & T. Kimball, *An introduction to the study of landscape design*, pp. 39-45; Gothein (vol. II), pp. 207-350; Jellicoe & Jellicoe, pp. 154-179; Hobhouse, pp. 120-121; Van Zuylen, pp. 45-79; Berrall, pp. 120, 147; C. Tunnard, *Gardens in the modern landscape*, p. 134; Boults & Sullivan, p. 68; M. Hadfield, *The art of the garden*, pp. 7-38.

either the north-south axis or the east-west axis, or both. Usually, the most basic formal axial arrangement was determined by aligning a central footpath with the dwelling's front door. Despite its many variations and degrees of formality and sophistication, the vernacular garden's basic design was strongly influenced by this development. The simple formal axial garden became the blueprint for the classic and, probably, the most enduring vernacular garden style. Although plantings often appeared to be haphazard and informal due to the focus on plants as individuals rather than on the overall effect, the regimented nature of the square or rectangular beds kept the look organised and coherent.¹¹²

2.3.1.9 The colonial vernacular garden

A new chapter in the history of the vernacular garden opened in the 16th and 17th centuries when the age of exploration led to the discovery and consequent colonising of certain parts of the world. The important argument is that the Europeans who had settled (permanently or semi-permanently) in North America (1607 and 1620) and elsewhere, including the Cape of Good Hope (1652),¹¹³ hailed mainly from northern and western Europe where the previously-mentioned agricultural and horticultural revolution was in full swing. English and Dutch settlers brought with them not only new agricultural and horticultural knowledge and skills but also seeds, plant material and tools. In order to survive, the European newcomers had to lay out food gardens, initially planting the seeds they brought with them but later also experimenting with indigenous species. The gardens that had been laid out were of the vernacular type but, according to Jackson, they were “a novel type of vernacular garden”.¹¹⁴ Although he specifically referred to the gardens laid out by the European settlers in Virginia, Massachusetts and other colonies on the east coast of North America, the same may be said of the gardens made in occupied territories and colonies elsewhere, including Africa (the Cape of Good Hope), Canada, Australia and New Zealand.¹¹⁵ These colonial gardens constitute a new category of vernacular garden, namely the *colonial vernacular*

¹¹² Huxley, p. 26; Brookes, p. 13; R.J. Favretti & J.P. Favretti, *Landscapes and gardens for historic buildings: a handbook for reproducing and creating authentic landscape settings*, p. 11.

¹¹³ For more details, see Chapter 3.

¹¹⁴ Jackson, “The past and...”, p. 14.

¹¹⁵ Due to limited space, a discussion of the gardens laid out by European colonists in Canada and Australasia is not feasible.

garden.¹¹⁶ The focus now shifts to the American colonial vernacular garden as a prototype of the colonial vernacular genre.

The American colonial vernacular garden traces its roots to the early 1600s when the Pilgrims and Puritans who had left Britain settled in Jamestown, Virginia (1607) and, later, in Plymouth, Massachusetts (1620). A combination of a pioneering spirit and a strong emotional attachment to the mother country prompted these settlers to establish a ‘New England’ on the North American continent. Despite some disastrous first attempts, the settlers, many of whom were “persons of education and refinement”,¹¹⁷ eventually made a success of their attempts at gardening on foreign soil. Thanks to fertile soil and learning from the Native Americans, who had been practising some “crude gardening”,¹¹⁸ the colonists managed to get some of the British seeds and cuttings they had brought with them to grow. The gardens laid out by the colonists close to their simple abodes were initially primarily food gardens consisting of kitchen vegetables, herbs, fruit trees and also small plots of agricultural crops. The interaction between the colonists and the Native Americans initiated a process of inter-cultural influencing during which tools, such as hoes, were traded for native corn and pumpkin seeds. This interactive process is significant to the purpose of this study because it may be compared to similar processes which later unfolded in most of the colonial world, including the Cape.¹¹⁹

The basic design and layout of the gardens made by the British and, later, the Dutch colonists, who had settled in New Amsterdam,¹²⁰ were strikingly similar to the gardens of their home countries because they effectively transplanted a European garden design blueprint to the new world. A similar transmission process repeated itself at the Cape and in Canada and Australasia. As was the case in Europe, the food gardens of the colonists’ pioneering days gradually transitioned to food-and-ornamental gardens. These gardens were predominantly formal since the New England colonists duplicated the rectangular and symmetrical gardens of Britain and the Netherlands (Image 2/3). These colonial frontier

¹¹⁶ P. Martin, “Introduction” in R.P. Maccubbin & P. Martin (eds), *British and American gardens in the eighteenth century: eighteen illustrated essays on garden history*, pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁷ Gothein (vol. II), p. 421. See also Berrall, p. 295.

¹¹⁸ Gothein (vol. II), p. 425.

¹¹⁹ Huxley, pp. 38-39; Gothein (vol. II), pp. 421, 425, 439; Hubbard & Kimball, p. 50.

¹²⁰ Today known as New York City.

gardens were mostly enclosed to protect them against, among others, wild animals, roaming livestock and the encroaching wilderness. Due to the abundance of wood, wooden fences became increasingly popular and soon the white picket-fenced ‘frontyard’¹²¹ garden became representative of the evolving American vernacular garden. Inside the picket fence, the garden typically consisted of square or rectangular flowerbeds and plots of vegetables and herbs nearby. A garden path divided the garden into two symmetrical halves and ran straight from the garden gate to the front door. All these components and elements formed part of one *simple formal axial design*.¹²²

According to American landscape historians, R.J. and J.P. Favretti, “a strict, formal, austere, geometric pattern”¹²³ was the norm in terms of the garden layout in all of the northern American colonies. It must be mentioned, though, that the American vernacular garden displayed surprising variety and, due to the influence of local climatic, economic and social factors, regional characteristics began to emerge. On farmsteads in the north-east, for example, the so-called ‘dooryard’ gardens took shape when outbuildings, including barns and sheds, were erected close to the main house. The open space between the outbuildings and the house became known as the dooryard and, in most cases, a dooryard garden consisting of small informal garden plots took shape in the mentioned space. In the south, garden design followed the same pattern as in the northern colonies, namely symmetrical, geometrical and formal. Two important factors, however, influenced garden design in the south, namely climate and the availability of slave labour. The moderate climate allowed southern gardeners to edge their flowerbeds with clipped boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), as opposed to the north where extreme cold winter temperatures and blizzards destroyed the boxwood. The other factor which not only benefited southern gardeners but also influenced garden design in the south was the availability of African-American garden slaves who maintained the gardens. As was the case with the gardens of the early white colonists at the Cape, slave labour ensured that the American colonists’ gardens retained their immaculate

¹²¹ For definitions of the term ‘yard’ and its variations, see Chapter 1.

¹²² Huxley, pp. 41, 44-45; Jackson, “The past and...”, p. 16; Gothein (vol. II), pp. 425, 438-439; Hubbard & Kimball, p. 51; Favretti & Favretti, pp. 14-17, 19; Berrall, p. 295.

¹²³ Favretti & Favretti, p. 11.

“English-Dutch geometrical orderliness”¹²⁴ with clipped hedges and edges for most of the 17th and 18th centuries.¹²⁵

2.3.1.10 The one patrician, the other vernacular: *parterres* and knot gardens

While the colonists were laying out simple formal axial gardens on the North American continent, European garden tastes became more sophisticated after the excesses of the Renaissance. During the 17th century, a taste for flat gardens with intricate curvilinear scrollwork called *parterres de broderie* became popular in France, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and other European countries. The patterns of the *parterre* designs were similar to the carpet designs of that time. This style, which is closely associated with the French Baroque era, should be distinguished from the less sophisticated English version, namely the Tudor knot garden. Referring to the knot garden as ‘less sophisticated’ is not disdainful; rather, it is a nod of approval to the vernacular. Garden historians Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe’s description of knot gardens as “indigenous and intuitive”¹²⁶ confirms their vernacular status as gardens which were not only the product of local culture, traditions and historical factors but were also distinguishable from the *parterre de broderie*’s patrician character and provenance. Both the *parterre* and knot garden were labour-intensive and required the regular clipping of dwarf boxwood to form low hedges and edges. During the 17th century, most gardens, including the *parterres* and knot gardens, continued to be outward-looking and the high protective walls of the insecure Middle Ages were replaced with low hedges and edges.¹²⁷

The taste for *parterres* and knot gardens was not appreciated by all, especially in Britain. During the reign of King William III (1689-1702), the former Dutch Prince of Orange, and his wife Queen Mary II, English gardens were influenced by the Dutch garden style.¹²⁸ As a result, some English gardens became considerably more intricate, detailed and overly

¹²⁴ Berrall, p. 305.

¹²⁵ Favretti & Favretti, pp. 11-14, 22-23; Huxley, p. 42; Berrall, pp. 281, 295, 304-305; M. López-Cordero, “Natural beauty”, *Veranda* 30(4), July-August 2016, pp. 116-119.

¹²⁶ Jellicoe & Jellicoe, p. 147.

¹²⁷ Berrall, pp. 145, 147, 183-186; Hobhouse, pp. 138-139, 143, 148-150, 156-160; Jellicoe & Jellicoe, pp. 192-193; E. Hyams, *The English garden*, pp. 16-17; Nieuwenhuis, pp. 24-37; V. DuBow, *How did their gardens grow?: planting historic landscapes* (pamphlet), p. 1.

¹²⁸ For a detailed discussion of the Dutch garden style, specifically the use of topiary in the Dutch garden, see Chapter 3.

decorated with topiary, scrollwork and statues.¹²⁹ A backlash was inevitable: during the 18th century, an increased appreciation of the unspoilt natural environment steered English garden taste in a different direction. The English landed gentry and upper classes who could afford to maintain huge country estates turned away from formality and developed a taste for landscape gardens. During the 1700s, William Kent (1685-1748), Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown (1716-1783) and Humphry Repton (1752-1818) became famous for the landscape gardens they designed at Rousham¹³⁰ (designed by Kent), Stowe (designed by Kent and Brown), and Stourhead¹³¹ (designed by Henry Hoare II, 1705-1785), to name a few. The guiding principle for these designers was that ‘nature abhors a straight line.’ Although natural-looking, these so-called ‘picturesque’ gardens were, in fact, labour-intensive and required small armies of garden labourers to maintain their pristine appearance, including cutting the expansive lawns, using scythes. These gardens were not of the vernacular type; instead, they represented garden design of the highest order and symbolised Britain’s position as the new world leader in the field of garden design. The former leaders, namely Italy and France, became followers. The curvilinear designs of the landscape style could not be executed in small gardens; therefore, the style did not have any meaningful influence on working-class and poor people’s gardens.¹³²

2.3.1.11 From ‘picturesque’ to ‘gardenesque’

The 19th century was the age of botanists and plant collectors who introduced European gardeners to many exotic species from other parts of the world, including ivy-leafed geraniums (*Pelargonium peltatum*), pelargoniums (*Pelargonium zonale*), red-hot pokers (*Kniphofia spp.*), mesembryanthemums (*Mesembryanthemaceae spp.*) and gladioli

¹²⁹ Favretti & Favretti, p. 26; G.A. Jellicoe, *Gardens of Europe*, p. 24. For more information on the Anglo-Dutch garden during the reign of William and Mary, see E. de Jong, “‘Netherlandish Hesperides’: garden art in the period of William and Mary 1650-1702”, *Journal of Garden History: An International Quarterly* 8(2 & 3), April-September 1988, pp. 15-40.

¹³⁰ J.D. Hunt, “Verbal versus visual meanings in garden history: the case of Rousham” in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *Garden history: issues, approaches, methods*, pp. 151-181.

¹³¹ J.D. Hunt, “Stourhead revisited & the pursuit of meaning in gardens”, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 26(4), 2006, pp. 328-341.

¹³² E. Hyams, *A history of gardens and gardening*, pp. 233-248, 281; J.D. Hunt, “‘Ut Pictura Poesis’: the garden and the picturesque in England (1710-1750)” in M. Mosser & G. Teyssot (eds), *The history of garden design: the Western tradition from the Renaissance to the present day*, pp. 231-241; H. Roberts, *English gardens*, pp. 38-42.

(*Gladiolus spp.*) from the Cape and its environs.¹³³ The desire for exotic specimens, as well as the mass availability of seedlings (grown in conservatories), seed and garden catalogues supplied by the growing nursery industry, had a huge influence on garden tastes. The Victorian garden in Britain became much more detailed and decorative with a stronger emphasis on individual plants and the shape of their foliage. The design and layout of gardens – exemplified by J.C. Loudon’s (1783-1843) ‘gardenesque’ style – also became increasingly eclectic and romantic. The strict symmetry and geometry of earlier times was relaxed to accommodate flowerbeds in the shape of ovals and circles. Characteristic of the 19th century was the growth of the suburban middle-classes in Britain and America and the onset of garden consumerism. Gardening knowledge became increasingly accessible in the form of numerous books and garden periodicals, such as *The Cottage Gardener* (1848) and *The Garden* (1871).¹³⁴

Growing garden consumerism had a negative impact on the vernacular garden, particularly in Britain, where mass-produced garden furniture and decorations, as well as the notorious taste for carpet-bedding, compromised the vernacular aesthetic. Although referring to 21st-century vernacular gardens, Gibson’s argument that “‘vernacular’ ceases where a rising middle class [sic] and cheap garden publications begin”¹³⁵ is also applicable to the middle-class Victorian garden. However, all was not lost for the vernacular garden. One of the characteristics of the vernacular garden – particularly the working-class vernacular garden – is its ability to change and adapt to changing circumstances but at the same time being mostly immune to changing garden fashions and fads. A good example of a vernacular garden type which had resisted the ebb and flow of garden fashions in Britain is the English cottage garden,¹³⁶ which is of importance for this study.

¹³³ G.M. Taylor, *British garden flowers*, p. 44; Thacker, pp. 238-239.

¹³⁴ S. Constantine, “Amateur gardening and popular recreation in the 19th and 20th centuries”, *Journal of Social History* 14(3), 1981, pp. 388-389; Roberts, *English gardens*, pp. 42-46; E. Drury & P. Lewis, *The Victorian garden album*, pp. 18-21, 66-67, 78-79, 120-121; Boults & Sullivan, pp. 181-182, 184; Favretti & Favretti, pp. 35, 50, 52, 57.

¹³⁵ Gibson, “Local distinctiveness and....”.

¹³⁶ Roberts, “Researching the vernacular...”, pp. 178-179; Thacker, p. 229; Hyams, *The English garden*, p. 272.

2.3.1.12 The English cottage garden as a vernacular garden

Contrary to popular belief, the English cottage garden as a “vernacular form”,¹³⁷ to quote Hunt and Wolschke-Bulmahn, did not originate in 19th-century Victorian Britain. Although the Victorians became obsessed with the “old-fashioned”¹³⁸ cottage garden as a symbol of wholesome rural simplicity, its earliest history may, in actual fact, be traced back to the Middle Ages. Since then the style, which was never deliberately devised, had evolved and developed spontaneously according to the daily needs of the cottage gardener and his family.¹³⁹ During the late 1700s and early 1800s, some owners of large English country estates were either rebuilding the existing villages on their estates or building new cottages for their retired workers. This was done in the name of creating a so-called ‘rural idyll’. The newly-built hamlets of thatched cottages and their gardens became the inspiration for other villages. There also came a new emphasis on the cottage garden as essentially a utilitarian garden where vegetables, herbs, fruit and flowers grew side by side in seemingly unplanned abundance.¹⁴⁰ In this regard, Gillian Darley described the cottage garden as the “happiest combination of the practical and the aesthetic”.¹⁴¹ These gardens were vernacular in the true sense of the word and Hubbard and Kimball’s description of the layout of a typical cottage garden supports this claim: “The gardens were placed close about the houses to be easy of cultivation; they were small, hedged in [sic], fitted to the topography, making careful use of local opportunities and local materials”.¹⁴² Elizabeth Drury and Philippa Lewis also sketched a vivid picture of the relaxed informality of the typical cottage garden, and their reference to “straight, economically spaced rows of vegetables”¹⁴³ indicates the still powerful influence of the ancient idea of the formal vegetable plot. *Typically, this formality was juxtaposed with the random informality of the rest of the garden.*¹⁴⁴

¹³⁷ Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, p. 7.

¹³⁸ A. Vronskaya, “The transformation of the concept of the old English garden and interpretations of garden history during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries”, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 26(4), 2006, p. 269.

¹³⁹ G. Hamilton, *Geoff Hamilton’s cottage gardens*, pp. 11-20.

¹⁴⁰ G. Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), *The Oxford companion to gardens*, pp. 128-129; Hamilton, p. 21.

¹⁴¹ G. Darley, “The English cottage garden” in M. Mosser & G. Teyssot (eds), *The history of garden design: the Western tradition from the Renaissance to the present day*, p. 426.

¹⁴² Hubbard & Kimball, p. 50.

¹⁴³ Drury & Lewis, p. 58.

¹⁴⁴ Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 128; Constantine, pp. 392-393; S. Astyk, “Cottage gardens and swept yards: recreating a vernacular horticulture”, <http://www.scienceblogs.com/casaubonsbook/2010/02/cottage_gardens_and_swept_yard.html>, 2.2.2010 (Accessed: 3.2.2011).

Towards the end of the 19th century, the cottage garden as a vernacular garden type became the inspiration for William Robinson (1838-1935) and other British garden designers, including Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932), who wanted to steer away from the contrived formality of Victorian gardens. Robinson and Jekyll were both inspired by the unpretentious informality of the cottage garden and the use of old-fashioned plants and flowers such as hollyhocks (*Alcea rosea*), jasmine (*Jasminum spp.*) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), to name a few. Above all, Robinson and Jekyll admired the way in which the gardens naturally complemented the adjacent cottages to the extent that cottage and garden became a single natural object. Thanks to Robinson and Jekyll, the unpretentious cottage garden had an important influence on modern garden style, most notably the Edwardian style (see paragraph 2.3.2.1). It must also be noted that by then the popular conception of the ‘old-fashioned’ English garden with its strong cottage accents had evolved into the “old English garden”,¹⁴⁵ which was more attuned to the new Edwardian aesthetic. Robinson’s idea of planting flowers in naturalistic ‘cloud patterns’ and Jekyll’s famed herbaceous borders and ‘drifts’ were inspired by the cottage garden aesthetic.¹⁴⁶ Emphasis on the English cottage garden is not only important from a purely vernacular point of view but also within the context of Batho’s gardens, of which the planting style greatly resembles the English cottage garden style. Equally important is the fact that the architectural style of the houses built in Batho during its early years (1920s and 1930s) resembles the classic English cottage style.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, many arguments that are applicable to the English cottages and their gardens are also applicable to Batho’s houses and gardens. This will be discussed in Chapter 5, Chapter 8 and Chapter 9.

2.3.1.13 The vernacular garden at the end of the 19th century

Due to a combination of local and regional factors, as well as social and historical processes, a unique array of vernacular gardens existed in Europe, Britain and beyond by the end of the 19th century. These gardens, some of which still exist and continue to be made today fit

¹⁴⁵ Vronskaya, p. 272.

¹⁴⁶ Darley, pp. 424-426; Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), pp. 128-129; Hubbard & Kimball, pp. 49-50; Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, pp. 8-9; Berrall, p. 280.

¹⁴⁷ Batho’s houses and architecture will be discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 8.

Westmacott's definition of 'vernacular' as "a craft indigenous to a country, evolved over many years, and not learned or borrowed."¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, these gardens live up to Jackson's definition of a vernacular garden as "the product of local traditions, local climate, and of local economic and agricultural influences."¹⁴⁹ Examples of such gardens include Portugal's *azulejo* gardens,¹⁵⁰ Spain's Islamic-inspired courtyard gardens,¹⁵¹ England and Scotland's scree gardens,¹⁵² and France's *jardin de curé*.¹⁵³ Some international vernacular garden types are still under-researched while others received considerable attention.¹⁵⁴ Based on the discussion of the history and development of ancient and traditional vernacular gardens, the following *generic characteristics* appear to be common among pre-20th-century vernacular gardens. These characteristics typify most European and Western vernacular gardens of the early ages of the second millennium. Typically, the ancient and traditional vernacular garden was:

- 1) *designed by the owner* who, in most cases, also happened to be the gardener;
- 2) *small* when compared to the pleasure and ornamental gardens of the pre-21st century;
- 3) located *close to the house and the kitchen*. The vernacular garden's proximity to the kitchen was determined by the fact that the garden was primarily a food garden;
- 4) initially of a *loose and semi-formal design* due to the fact that it contained a mixed assortment of a limited number of vegetables, herbs, flowers and a few fruit trees. Gradually, the design became more organised and the informality made way for a more *formal overall design* with the plants planted in rows within a formal framework;
- 5) a *combination of functionality and aesthetics*, that is, predominantly a food garden but with an element of ornamentation in the form of flowerbeds and, later, also simplistic and naïve decorative elements;

¹⁴⁸ Westmacott, p. 79.

¹⁴⁹ Jackson, "The past and...", p. 12.

¹⁵⁰ Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), pp. 451-452.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 529-530.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

¹⁵³ Taylor (ed.), *The Oxford companion...*, p. 496; Anon., "Creating your own jardin de curé", <<http://www.frenchgardening.com/aujardin.html>>, 31.5.2007 (Accessed: 13.9.2016).

¹⁵⁴ For examples of researched historical vernacular gardens, see Conan, "The *hortillonnages*: reflections...", p. 20.

- 6) *enclosed*, whether by means of fences, walls or hedges. As explained in Chapter 1, the fence had been an essential feature of the earliest gardens (up to at least the late 1930s) to the extent that a garden without a fence was not considered a real garden. This is particularly the case with vernacular gardens, which were almost, without exception, fenced-in; and
- 7) mostly, but not exclusively, *maintained by women*.¹⁵⁵

2.3.2 Contemporary vernacular gardens (1900-1939)

2.3.2.1 Edwardian and ‘watered-down’ Edwardian gardens: patrician, vernacular or semi-vernacular?

At the start of the 20th century,¹⁵⁶ the Victorian style was still in vogue in Britain and America. In this regard, Thacker rightly argued that “nineteenth-century gardening moved vigorously intact into the twentieth century.”¹⁵⁷ Yet, the simpler aesthetic of the Arts and Crafts Movement of William Morris (1834-1896), which started in Britain in the 1890s as a reaction to Victorian ostentation, grew in popularity. Its main objective was to beautify man’s living environment by stressing the beauty of natural materials and craftsmanship. The Arts and Crafts Movement laid the foundation for the Edwardian style, which influenced garden design for almost half a century. The Edwardian style came into fashion after Edward VII (1841-1910) acceded to the throne in Britain in 1902. The classic Edwardian garden is closely associated with the work of the previously-mentioned British garden designer, Gertrude Jekyll, and her architect partner, Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944). The team perfected the idea of an integrated design for house and garden by combining an architectural framework (formality) with relaxed planting (informality). The emphasis on a formal architectural framework for the garden gave rise to the so-called ‘architectural garden’ with its structured design and a key role played by architectural elements, such as pergolas, terraces and steps. Edwardian gardens designed by Jekyll and Lutyens were predominantly

¹⁵⁵ See discussion of labour division and gender later in this chapter.

¹⁵⁶ For the purpose of this study, contemporary vernacular gardens are vernacular gardens made during the period 1900-1939.

¹⁵⁷ Thacker, p. 253.

formal (Brookes described the style as “a new type of formal layout”¹⁵⁸) and they strongly adhered to the axial principle.¹⁵⁹

Should a Jekyll/Lutyens garden as prototype of the quintessential Edwardian garden be described as patrician or vernacular? On the one hand, these gardens are essentially patrician because of their strong designer provenance and high-style aesthetic. On the other hand, one of the Edwardian garden’s best known features, namely the herbaceous border (mixed flower border), was strongly influenced by the vernacular English cottage garden’s mixed and informally planted flowerbeds. According to Geoff Hamilton, as well as Hunt and Wolschke-Bulmahn, this does not mean that a patrician garden style which borrows from a vernacular style also becomes vernacular. As far as the cottage garden is concerned, Hamilton reasoned that this vernacular type, like most vernacular gardens, is an artisan’s creation and not that of an artist. *Once a style takes on a degree of sophistication, it loses its vernacular character.* Therefore, a cottage garden which, for example, is designed by a garden designer or copied by middle-class gardeners, cannot be vernacular even if all the elements of the cottage style are present.¹⁶⁰ In a similar vein, Hunt and Wolschke-Bulmahn argued that “the glorification of the cottage garden, then, raises a further question as to whether the vernacular garden continues to be vernacular once its potential has been recognized and professionally exploited.”¹⁶¹

The Edwardian style had a lasting influence on garden design in Britain, America and the (white) colonial world, including the then Union of South Africa (1910-1961). Due to the style’s staying power, its basic design principles continued to inspire both garden designers and amateur gardeners during the period between and even after the two World Wars. However, it is true that the style became simplified over time because domestic gardens became smaller and less labour-intensive. Brookes argued that the typical garden of this

¹⁵⁸ Brookes, p. 16.

¹⁵⁹ P. Davey, *Arts and Crafts architecture*, pp. 125, 129-130; W. Kaplan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arts & Crafts: a visual reference to the Arts movement, 1850-1920*, pp. 45-47; Berrall, pp. 279-280; D. du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the history of the English-style gardens of Batho, Mangaung (1846-1948)”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 27(3), December 2011, pp. 42-43, 49; J. Brown, *Gardens of a golden afternoon. The story of a partnership: Edwin Lutyens & Gertrude Jekyll, passim*; R. Williams, “Edwardian gardens, old and new”, *Journal of Garden History* 13(1-2), 1993, pp. 90-103.

¹⁶⁰ Hamilton, p. 31; Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, p. 9.

¹⁶¹ Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, p. 9.

period was “a scaling down of the Edwardian country garden”¹⁶² and, in her turn, Hobhouse described the style as the result of a “watering-down of Edwardian principles”.¹⁶³ Therefore, the gardens of the inter-War period (1918-1939)¹⁶⁴ may best be described as ‘watered-down Edwardian’ or ‘scaled-down Edwardian’. Not only were these gardens much smaller in size but the characteristic Edwardian elements were scaled-down and simplified.¹⁶⁵

Should a watered-down Edwardian garden be described as patrician or vernacular? This is an important question for the purpose of this study because the watered-down Edwardian garden still displays patrician influences which may be traced back to the ‘high style’ Edwardian gardens of Jekyll and Lutyens. At the same time, however, the formal Jekyll/Lutyens style had been watered-down not only by the emerging middle-class but the style also had a limited influence on the simplified vernacular aesthetic of some ordinary people’s gardens. In this case, the patrician influenced the vernacular and, therefore, the style may best be described as semi-vernacular.¹⁶⁶ *In terms of this argument, it is reasoned that a truly vernacular garden which is influenced by a patrician style may be described as semi-vernacular. This, however, does not mean that a patrician style which is influenced by a vernacular style, as is the case with the Jekyll/Lutyens Edwardian gardens, may be described as semi-vernacular.* Such gardens remain patrician, albeit with vernacular elements or accents. A similar argument will be raised later when Batho’s gardens are discussed. In the case of Batho’s gardens, it is also a matter of the patrician influencing the vernacular but there is another dimension to it, namely a patrician European garden art, in this case, topiary, influencing a vernacular style.

2.3.2.2 Allotments and working-class food gardens as vernacular gardens

Although the history of allotments or allotment gardens dates back to the 1700s, they are closely associated with 20th-century British vernacular gardening culture. The word ‘allotment’, which the *Cambridge English Dictionary* defines as “a small piece of ground in

¹⁶² Brookes, p. 21.

¹⁶³ Hobhouse, p. 416.

¹⁶⁴ The years between World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945).

¹⁶⁵ Brookes, p. 21; Favretti & Favretti, p. 71; Boults & Sullivan, pp. 207-209.

¹⁶⁶ Hobhouse, pp. 415-416; Brookes, p. 21; Thacker, pp. 253, 263, 265.

or just outside a town that a person rents for growing vegetables, fruits, or flowers”,¹⁶⁷ refers to food gardens not attached to dwellings and primarily used for growing vegetables, fruit and, in some cases, cutting flowers. The British allotment traces its roots to the late 1700s and early 1800s when the Enclosure Acts were passed. These Acts enforced the enclosure of formerly common lands all over Britain (the origin of Britain’s hedgerows), mostly benefiting the landowners. This left many rural peasants without grazing for their cattle and they were forced to either migrate to the industrial towns and cities or hire out their labour to the landowners. As a result of not being able to grow their own food, thousands of families were starving. The plight of the poor urged some rich landowners to set aside small portions of their land for use as allotments. These allotments (each approximately 277,50 square metres in size) were big enough for growing fresh vegetables to feed an average family of four. The success of these gardens led to more allotments being set aside by the authorities, particularly on the outskirts of Britain’s towns and cities. Allotment acts and regulations were passed, including the Allotments Act of 1887, which enabled local authorities to provide municipal land for allotments on demand.¹⁶⁸

During the 1900s, the economic hardship and resulting food shortages caused by World War I (1914-1918) and the Great Depression increased the demand for allotments. The ‘Everyman-a-gardener’ campaign of the War stimulated public interest in allotments, which continued well into the first half of the 20th century. During the 1920s, more acts were passed to better regulate the allotment ‘industry’, including the Allotments Acts of 1922 and 1925. Due to the cultural influence which Britain had exerted on its colonies and dominions, the allotment concept took root in the British Empire, including South Africa.¹⁶⁹ The allocation of allotments to South African urban residents was not limited to whites because parcels of land or so-called ‘garden lots’ were also allocated to location residents, including some of Batho’s residents, for the sole purpose of growing vegetables. As was the case in Britain and elsewhere, some of these stands were turned into market-gardens, that is, they were used for

¹⁶⁷ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, “Allotment”, <<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/allotment.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 30.9.2016).

¹⁶⁸ Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), pp. 9-10; Taylor (ed.), pp. 7-8; Hamilton, pp. 30-31; Anon., “Brief history of allotments”, <<http://www.nsalg.org.uk/allotment-info/brief-history-of-allotments.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 22.7.2016).

¹⁶⁹ Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 10; Taylor (ed.), p. 8; Hamilton, p. 31; M. Leapman, “Allotments: a very British passion”, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/4699817/Allotments-a-very-British-passion.html>>, 10.8.2015 (Accessed: 22.7.2016).

growing fresh produce to sell at the local market. The parcels of land set aside in Batho for vegetable gardening were also called ‘allotments’.¹⁷⁰

Some of the best examples of vernacular gardens are, in fact, allotment gardens. In their standard work on allotments, David Crouch and Colin Ward, eloquently described the British allotment landscape and aesthetic.¹⁷¹ They distinguished between urban, suburban and rural allotments and argued that beyond the rural allotments there is a point where the allotment merges with the smallholding and from there fades into the farm landscape. Through the ages, class perceptions have weighed down heavily on allotments as the supposed domain of the labouring class and, consequently, these ‘eyesores’ were frowned upon. The word ‘allotment’ carried with it popular assumptions of not only self-help, thriftiness and self-sustainment but also strong working-class associations and very often associations of poverty. Although the common perception of the traditional allotment was that of “straggling rows of sprouts and cabbages, little home-made huts and broken fences”,¹⁷² allotments displayed a characteristic vernacular design. They were typically laid out in the formal style, that is, vegetables and flowers were planted in rows within a framework of rectangular beds. *This confirms that even the humble allotment – the poor man’s garden – was not immune to the influence of the ancient dictum that a garden should display a certain element of formality.*¹⁷³

2.4 The vernacular gardener: ‘male space’ and ‘female space’

The vernacular garden cannot be adequately understood without considering the role played by the vernacular gardener, that is, the person responsible for the daily maintenance of the vernacular garden. Since prehistoric times, the vernacular garden, as a predominantly utilitarian garden, had always been the almost exclusive domain of women. In fact, the earliest agricultural communities were matriarchal and the gardeners or cultivators who

¹⁷⁰ For more details and references, see Chapter 5.

¹⁷¹ Allotments are not unique to Britain and small vegetable allotment-type gardens had been part of the urban landscapes of most European countries since the early 1800s. For more information, see Taylor (ed.), p. 266; L. van Molle, “Volkstuinen: de actualiteit van het verleden” in Y. Segers & L. van Molle (eds), *Volkstuinen: een geschiedenis*, pp. 13-27; Hunt & Wolschke-Bulmahn, p. 7; Conan, “From vernacular gardens...”, p. 196.

¹⁷² D. Crouch & C. Ward, *The allotment: its landscape and culture*, p. 3.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5, 7-9, 11.

maintained the agricultural gardens were female. Since the earliest vernacular gardens were located near the kitchen or cooking area of the dwelling, they were essentially regarded as extensions of the kitchen. Due to the fact that the kitchen was considered ‘female space’, the kitchen garden automatically became part of what garden historian, Harry Roberts, called the “woman’s province”.¹⁷⁴ Since then the woman of the house controlled the planting and maintaining of the garden and often also distributed the produce.¹⁷⁵

The history of gendered gardening, which has become a focus area of both garden history studies and gender studies, explores the history of gender distinctions as far as gardening tasks and responsibilities are concerned. The key question is: why were certain gardening tasks assigned to women and others to men? According to Jackson, the ancient idea that the utility garden is the domain of the woman of the house is a garden tradition that was “once almost sacred in its general acceptance”.¹⁷⁶ A commonly-held theory suggests that the utility garden as vernacular garden evolved during prehistoric times when matriarchal rule prevailed concurrently with the worship of the Earth Mother.¹⁷⁷ Hence, the belief that women were not only the protectors of the soil and seed but also the ones who took responsibility for looking after the plants that had germinated from the seed. It is, however, important to note that since prehistoric times, gender distinctions were rather fluid and that certain shifts had taken place in terms of the demarcation of garden space as ‘male space’ and ‘female space’. Gradually, the distinction between the tasks and responsibilities of the male farmer and herdsman and that of the female gardener became more clearly defined as specifically ‘manly’ or ‘womanly’. The distinction between ‘garden’ and ‘field’ also became more clearly defined not only in terms of visually-delineated spaces but also in terms of upkeep. Within the domestic garden space itself, gender-specific tasks and responsibilities also continued to evolve, particularly since the Greek and Roman periods. Over time, women

¹⁷⁴ Roberts, *English gardens*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁵ Jackson, “The past and...”, p. 12; Roberts, *English gardens*, p. 22; Doolittle, pp. 400-401; M. Hoyles, *The story of gardening*, p. 188; J. Taboroff, “‘Wife, unto thy garden’: the first gardening books for women”, *Garden History* 11(1), Spring 1983, p. 4.

¹⁷⁶ Jackson, “The past and...”, p. 12.

¹⁷⁷ For more information, see Anon., “Mythology of the Earth Mother”, <<http://www.ancient-wisdom.com/earthmother.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 30.9.2016).

gravitated towards accepting responsibility for the flower and herb gardens, and men took charge of the vegetable garden and orchard.¹⁷⁸

Written references to gender-specific gardening responsibilities date back to the 1500s. In the 1534 edition of the English scholar, Sir Anthony Fitzherbert's (1470-1538) *The book of husbandry*, he referred to "What warkes a wyfe shulde do in generall".¹⁷⁹ Under the sub-heading "Put in order the garden" he wrote that "in the begynnyng of Marche, or a lyttell afore, is tyme for a wife to make her garden, and to gette as many good sedes and herbes as she canne, and specially suche as be good for the potte, and to eate: and as ofte as nede shall requyre, it muste be weded, for els the wedes wyl ouergrowe the herbes."¹⁸⁰ Apart from his mentioning of the planting of vegetables ('sedes') and herbs, it is also noteworthy that Fitzherbert specifically mentioned the weeding of the garden as the women's responsibility. Garden historians, Jane Brown and Martin Hoyles, both argued that an element of sexism had, since the onset of the medieval period, gradually crept into the division of labour along gender lines. For example, sexism is evident in the English poet, Barnabe Googe's (1540-1594) *The whole art and trade of husbandry, contained in foure bookes*, first published in 1577: "Herein were the olde husbands very careful, and used, always to judge, that where they found the garden out of order, the wife of the house (for unto her belonged the charge therof) was no good huswife".¹⁸¹ Apart from expecting women to do the most menial tasks in their own domestic gardens, such as weeding and raking up leaves, women employed as garden labourers were also relegated to these 'lowly' tasks. In their turn, men dug holes, planted trees, pruned the orchards and, importantly, clipped the hedges and edges.¹⁸²

During the 1600s, the idea of the flower and herb gardens as the woman's responsibility and the vegetable garden as the man's domain, became more pronounced. In 1617, the clergyman, William Lawson (1553/4-1635), suggested a separation of the domestic garden into two sections, namely one for flowers and one for vegetables, in his book on the country

¹⁷⁸ Jackson, "The past and...", pp. 12-13; Doolittle, pp. 399-400; Taylor, *A taste for...*, pp. 133-134; Taboroff, p. 4; M.E. Christie, "Kitchenspace, fiestas, and cultural reproduction in Mexican house-lot gardens", *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, p. 378.

¹⁷⁹ W.W. Skeat (ed.), *The book of husbandry, by Master Fitzherbert* (reprinted from 1534 edition and edited with introduction, notes and glossarial index), p. 95.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁸¹ B. Googe, *The whole art and trade of husbandry, contained in foure bookes*, p. 46. For more on Googe, see Chapter 3.

¹⁸² Brown, p. 105; Hoyles, pp. 4-5, 42, 187, 194-196.

housewife's garden: "Hearbes are of two sorts, and therefore it is meete (they requiring divers manners of Husbandry) that we have two Gardens: A garden for flowers, and a Kitchen garden".¹⁸³ This separation of the useful plants from the ornamental ones is an important development not only in terms of garden design but also in terms of gendered gardening. During the 1700s, the new design aesthetic of the naturalistic landscape garden dictated that the vegetable or kitchen garden be moved away from the ornamental garden, preferably behind the house, in order to hide it from sight. The visual partitioning of the ornamental and vegetable gardens further reinforced the idea that the flower garden was the women's responsibility and the vegetable garden the man's. However, it must be noted that flowers, herbs and vegetables were still grown together in the cottage gardens of the working-class, a phenomenon which persisted into the 20th century.¹⁸⁴

By the 1800s, the tendency towards a gender-based division of garden labour became more firmly entrenched, especially during the prim Victorian period. In her memoirs of a childhood spent in Oxfordshire, England, in the late 1800s, author, Flora Thompson, reiterated this trend: "The women never worked in the vegetable gardens or on the allotments, even when they had their children off hand and had plenty of spare time, for there was a strict division of labour and that was 'men's work'."¹⁸⁵ Although the rather strict prescriptions of what constituted 'male space' and 'female space' remained mostly intact during the first half of the 1900s, the boundaries between these gendered spaces became more fluid. This was not only caused by the shrinking urban domestic garden space but also by the growing tendency of particularly working-class men to claim responsibility for the mowing of the lawn and operating the lawn-mower as a 'manly' tool. While servantless women were increasingly burdened by housework and child-rearing responsibilities, men took control of the garden.¹⁸⁶

The separation of garden labour along gender lines was not limited to Britain; in fact, it was prevalent in most of Europe. In this regard, June Taboroff claimed that "throughout the

¹⁸³ W. Lawson, *The country house-wifes garden: containing rules for hearbs and seedes for common use, with their times and seasons, when to set and sow them*, p. 86. For more on Lawson, see Chapter 3.

¹⁸⁴ Hoyles, p. 192; Taboroff, p. 2.

¹⁸⁵ F. Thompson, *Lark rise to Candleford*, p. 115.

¹⁸⁶ M. Bhatti & A. Church, "'I never promised you a rose garden': gender, leisure and home-making", *Leisure Studies* 19(3), 2000, pp. 190-191; Constantine, pp. 389-392, 399; Hoyles, p. 193; Taylor, *A taste for...*, pp. 133-134; Hyams, *The English garden*, pp. 269-273.

history of Western society it is standard that orchards and fruit lay within the man's province and that flowers and plants for the kitchen come within the housewife's."¹⁸⁷ Consequently, the prevalent European attitudes towards gender-specific gardening tasks and responsibilities were transferred to other parts of the world, including the Cape. In fact, the Cape proved fertile soil for such attitudes, first imported from the Netherlands since the mid-1600s and thereafter from Britain since the late 1700s. The indigenous people at the Cape were not immune to the influence of these gender-based labour attitudes, which were often in direct conflict with their own traditional labour practices, particularly those dealing with cultivation and gardening. The traditional labour divide in the African context will be discussed later in this chapter.¹⁸⁸

2.5 Vernacular gardens of indigenous communities and dominated groups

Until now the discussion of vernacular gardens has focused almost entirely on Western and mostly European vernacular gardens. The focus now shifts to the vernacular gardens made by indigenous societies outside the Western world. It is not possible to enter into a detailed discussion of these vernacular gardens; therefore, only a brief overview of significant examples and noteworthy research will be provided. The important argument is that a vernacular gardening tradition also developed outside the Western world; albeit on levels not comparable to the Western gardening tradition. Some native societies in the so-called 'developing world' have developed a more advanced gardening culture than other native societies for multiple and complex reasons. However, the focus will be placed on those indigenous societies which Conan called "horticultural societies",¹⁸⁹ namely those who developed a strong gardening tradition and most of whom lived in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world, such as the islands in the Pacific Ocean.¹⁹⁰

The vernacular gardens of horticultural societies evolved and developed in relative isolation for centuries, mostly unaffected by outside influences which came as a result of foreign invasion, occupation or colonisation, whether short- or long-term. These vernacular gardens

¹⁸⁷ Taboroff, p. 4.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁹ Conan, "From vernacular gardens...", p. 183.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

stand in contrast to the vernacular gardens of those indigenous societies which fell victim to invasion, occupation or colonisation during previous centuries. *Many of these societies, including many in Africa, became socially and culturally dominated groups because of the presence of a dominant group, namely the invader, occupier or coloniser.* For the purpose of this study, it is important to distinguish between these two categories of indigenous societies because, in some cases, the presence of foreign influence and, in others, the lack thereof, had a profound effect on the vernacular gardening culture and garden style which developed in the respective societies. This argument also deals with the purely vernacular versus the semi-vernacular. *The semi-vernacular is typically associated with the supposed influence which a foreign culture (or cultures) of an outside group (or groups) had on the gardening culture and garden style of an indigenous community.*

As far as the first category of vernacular gardens is concerned, probably the best-known studies of the vernacular gardens of indigenous societies are those conducted by Polish-born British anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942). Malinowski conducted extensive ethnographic research on the Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia in the Pacific Ocean. Among Malinowski's significant research findings was the important role small-scale agriculture and gardening played in the natives' economic activities. The Trobrianders cultivated gardens not only for food but also for the plant species' other uses, ranging from beer brewing to making poisons and medicine. Malinowski also discovered that apart from subsistence considerations, aesthetics played an equally important role in the making of these food gardens. He found that "half of the natives' working life is spent in the garden and around it centres perhaps more than half of his interests and ambitions"¹⁹¹ and, importantly, also noted that "much time and labour is given up to aesthetic purposes, to making the gardens tidy, clean, cleared of all debris".¹⁹² Malinowski focused a great deal of attention on the Trobrianders' coral gardens and their gardening culture, particularly the importance they attached to aesthetic considerations in the laying out of their gardens. According to Malinowski, the essential Trobriander, who saw himself as "first and foremost a

¹⁹¹ B. Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: an account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*, p. 58.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

gardener”,¹⁹³ showed “a surprising care for the aesthetics of gardening”¹⁹⁴ and, therefore, spent considerable amounts of energy “to make the garden[s] look clean, showy and dainty.”¹⁹⁵ For the Trobrianders, their gardens were an essential part of their identity and, therefore, a significant portion of their social lives revolved around gardens and gardening.¹⁹⁶ The combination of functionality (the utilitarian) and aesthetics (the non-utilitarian) which, according to Westmacott, is an important feature of vernacular gardens, also makes the gardens of the Trobrianders uniquely vernacular.¹⁹⁷

The vernacular gardens of indigenous communities across the globe¹⁹⁸ are varied and multi-faceted, and Conan is correct in arguing that the student of this subject should “expect a conceptual diversity of gardens among diverse horticultural societies,”¹⁹⁹ particularly as far as the design, layout and physical appearance of these gardens are concerned. For example, the completely diverse appearance of the gardens of two indigenous groups in South America’s Amazon Basin may be mentioned: while the informal gardens of the Achuar resemble the surrounding forest, the Barasana plant their coca bushes in neat rows to form a formal grid pattern.²⁰⁰ However, despite the diversity and complexity inherent in the gardening cultures of indigenous societies in the developing world, their vernacular gardens display some traits that are similar to other vernacular gardens, no matter where they are located. The characteristics of these vernacular gardens are also surprisingly similar to the generic characteristics of the pre-20th-century vernacular garden discussed previously in this chapter. Therefore, it is argued that the vernacular gardens of horticultural societies in the developing world are, to a greater or lesser degree, also: 1) designed by the owner(s); 2) small- or medium-sized; 3) located fairly close to the house and the kitchen or outdoor cooking area; 4) often semi-formal by design; that is, plants either planted in rows or

¹⁹³ B. Malinowski, *Coral gardens and their magic: a study of the methods of tilling the soil and of agricultural rites in the Trobriand Islands (vol. I): the description of gardening*, p. ix.

¹⁹⁴ Malinowski, *Coral gardens and...*, p. 56.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60; Taylor, “Vernacular gardens”.

¹⁹⁷ Westmacott, p. 83; Malinowski, *Argonauts of the...*, pp. 58-62.

¹⁹⁸ C.T. Kimber, “Spatial patterning in the dooryard gardens of Puerto Rico”, *Geographical Review* 63(1), January 1973, pp. 6-26. For vernacular gardens, see pp. 8-11, 23-25; O.T. Coomes & N. Ban, “Cultivated plant species diversity in home gardens of an Amazonian peasant village in Northeastern Peru”, *Economic Botany* 58(3), Autumn 2004, pp. 420-434; Christie, “Kitchenspace, fiestas, and...”, pp. 368-390.

¹⁹⁹ Conan, “From vernacular gardens...”, p. 191.

²⁰⁰ J. Goody, *The culture of flowers*, p. 21; Conan, “From vernacular gardens...”, pp. 190-191.

randomly within a formal framework; 5) a combination of utility and aesthetics; 6) usually enclosed by a fence; and 7) mostly maintained by women. Certain vernacular gardens may display all of these characteristics while others may only feature some of them. These seven characteristics will be referred to again when the vernacular garden in Africa and, more specifically, in South Africa, is discussed later in this chapter.

The second category of vernacular gardens that needs to be briefly discussed in this section is the gardens of dominated or subjected communities. This category of gardens is particularly important for this study because it is not only relevant to many vernacular gardens in colonial and post-colonial Africa but to South Africa in particular and, of course, Batho. In Chapter 1, it was stated that gardens are complex ‘artefacts’ because they are spaces created during the course of interaction with others. It is argued that the ‘other’ may be members of another cultural and/or racial group and that the receiving group may take over garden practices and design elements from the ‘other’ group. This process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing involves either adapting to or the borrowing of traits from another culture, such as gardening and horticulture, as a result of extended contact between the two cultures. Apart from being members of a different cultural and/or racial group, the ‘other’ may also be members of either a dominant or a dominated culture. This dominant/dominated culture dichotomy underpins an unequal power relationship between the two cultures, namely the dominated culture co-existing with the dominant culture but, at the same time, being in a subordinate position to it. *As a result, many vernacular gardens are expressions of a dominated culture, that is, the gardens were created by a group of people who were subjected to a discriminatory socio-political system and a set of social inequalities.*²⁰¹

Numerous examples of the dominant/dominated culture phenomenon exist, but the most prominent ones are those associated with former colonial societies. In these societies, which include societies in the Americas, Africa and Australasia, vernacular and semi-vernacular gardens were made by both the dominant and dominated cultures. In all cases, the dominant culture was mostly of European descent and the dominated culture either indigenous groups or descendants of indigenous groups, such as slaves imported from Africa. For example, in

²⁰¹ Conan, “From vernacular gardens...”, p. 182; Du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, pp. 40-41, 74; P.W. Grobbelaar, “Dit is kultuurgeskiedenis”, *The Cultural Historian* 5(1), June/July 1990, p. 63.

the USA, the picket-fence gardens of the white colonists and the dooryard-gardens of the slave-descendent African-Americans are both of the vernacular type. The same argument applies to Spanish- and Portuguese-occupied Latin-America²⁰² and the British, French and Portuguese colonies in Africa, to name a few. As far as the gardens of dominant cultures are concerned, it is argued that such gardens were created through a process of ‘collaboration’ and interaction between the white garden owners and indigenous (for example, black, coloured, mulatto, Hispanic and aboriginal) garden labourers. *Consequently, an unequal relationship developed between the white garden owners as members of a dominant culture and the indigenous garden labourers as members of a dominated culture.* Concerning the vernacular gardens of the dominated cultures, it is argued that these gardens were created by groups of people who were subjected to various discriminatory socio-political systems and practices, and that such gardens were not unaffected by the mentioned systems and practices. As will be discussed in later chapters, the gardens, as well as the experiences of garden-making, were shaped by the often hostile environments in which the garden labourers found themselves.²⁰³

2.6 The vernacular garden: African and South African perspectives

If the available scientific research publications on African and South African garden history are limited, then research output is even more so in the case of vernacular gardens. The history of the vernacular garden in Africa in general, and in South Africa in particular, is a severely under-researched aspect of garden history. The reason for this unfortunate state of affairs is not only a lack of interest but also widespread ignorance and negative stereotypes which reinforced a historical perception, particularly among whites, that black Africans are not interested in gardening and, therefore, lack a gardening culture. The French explorer, René Caillié (1799-1838), described this attitude as follows: “the natives [Africans], accustomed to live in idleness, in their hot and even scorching climate, do not trouble themselves with any thing [sic] of the kind [gardening]; the Europeans alone have gardens.”²⁰⁴ In a similar vein, the esteemed South African garden writer, Sima Eliovson

²⁰² For more information, see Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), pp. 524-529.

²⁰³ Jackson, “The past and...”, pp. 15-16; Conan, “From vernacular gardens...”, pp. 182, 192-193; Du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, pp. 40-41.

²⁰⁴ R. Caillié, *Travels through Central Africa to Timbuctoo and across the great desert, to Morocco performed in the years 1824-1828* (vol. I), p. 161.

(1919-1990), argued that “the history of the black population of South Africa does not reveal horticultural influences, except in their knowledge of the medicinal, poisonous and edible qualities of wild plants”.²⁰⁵ An attempt to provide a satisfactory account of vernacular gardens in Africa and South Africa is inevitably hampered by the fact that sources are limited and, in many cases, biased. For the purpose of this discussion, the same basic definition of a vernacular garden, namely a garden which is essentially a utilitarian or working garden which often, but not always, combines functionality with aesthetics, is applicable. Therefore, it is argued that the African and South African vernacular garden are, in effect, utilitarian gardens which may either be food-only gardens or food-and-ornamental gardens. In some cases, the food-and-ornamental garden has transitioned into a purely ornamental garden, such as most of Batho’s topiary gardens.

2.6.1 The African vernacular garden

2.6.1.1 Vernacular gardens in Africa: historical impressions and descriptions

Most early explorers, travellers and missionaries (hereafter explorers and others) who visited Africa, included descriptions of gardens, yards, enclosures and the immediate environments of the indigenous Africans’ dwellings in the accounts of their journeys. Such descriptions, written by people who were mostly not trained anthropologists or ethnographers, are often anecdotal, subjective and even condescending towards Africans. The architectural historian, Paul Oliver, wrote that “curiosity, condescension and contempt are to be found in the writings of different traders, voyagers and men of God”²⁰⁶ who, for different reasons and often with questionable motives, came into contact with indigenous societies across Africa. Despite their talent for good reporting, meticulous descriptions of the design and layout of gardens are generally lacking, which makes it challenging to accurately reconstruct African vernacular gardens on the basis of such information. Therefore, the explorers and others’ descriptions of gardens provide mere glimpses of African vernacular gardens and the way they must have looked in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, specifically the 1700s and 1800s. These gardens were mostly devoid of any foreign, specifically European, influences. Researchers searching for descriptions of the vernacular gardens of indigenous Africans

²⁰⁵ S. Eliovson, *Garden beauty of South Africa*, p. 22.

²⁰⁶ P. Oliver, “Introduction” in P. Oliver (ed.), *Shelter in Africa*, p. 8.

mostly have to rely on such accounts since other historical information on the subject is generally scarce, vague and devoid of detail. Despite their shortcomings, these sources are still most valuable and useful but need to be subjected to historical criticism and should be viewed within the context of the cultural-historical period in which they were written.²⁰⁷

The Scottish explorer of West Africa, Mungo Park (1771-1806), diligently kept a journal of his experiences during a quest to discover the course of the Niger River in 1795.²⁰⁸ Park provided detailed ethnographic descriptions of the people he encountered during his visits to the towns and villages on the banks of and in the vicinity of the Niger. Fortunately, the people's gardens did not escape Park's attention. In July 1795, he wrote that "the inhabitants in the vicinity of the towns and villages have *gardens* which produce onions, calavances,²⁰⁹ yams, cassava, ground nuts, pompions,²¹⁰ gourds, watermelons, and some other esculent plants. I observed likewise, near the towns, small *patches* of cotton and indigo."²¹¹ Months later, Park and his company reached the kingdom of Wulli near The Gambia and found that "each town is surrounded by a *tract* of cultivated land. The chief productions are cotton, tobacco, and esculent vegetables; all of which are raised in the valleys, the rising grounds being appropriated to different sorts of corn."²¹²

Other explorers followed Park's example of thorough journaling, including H.D. Trotter (dates unknown), William Allen (dates unknown) and T.R.H. Thomson (1813-1876), who also undertook an expedition of the Niger River in 1841. On the banks of the Niger the men found, among other things, towns "being laid out in wide streets or alleys, with *plantations* surrounding the houses",²¹³ and, in some cases, the huts "having spacious *clearings* around them, cultivated with bananas, plantains, cocoas, &c."²¹⁴ At some settlements, they saw that "the yam and corn *plantations* are kept in excellent order"²¹⁵ and found that fertile and

²⁰⁷ Heath & Bennett, p. 39; A.P.J. van Rensburg, *Aspekte van die geskiedenis van Afrika*, p. 48; H.J. van Aswegen, *Geskiedenis van Afrika: van die vroegste oorsprong tot onafhanklikheid*, pp. 233-243; Oliver, "Introduction", p. 8; B. Davidson, *Africa in history: themes and outlines*, pp. 281-283.

²⁰⁸ Van Aswegen, p. 234; Van Rensburg, p. 49.

²⁰⁹ Any of several varieties of pulse yielded by plants of the genus *Dolichos*.

²¹⁰ The term meant either pumpkins or pomelos.

²¹¹ M. Park, *The life and travels of Mungo Park*, p. 25. (Own emphasis)

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 43. (Own emphasis)

²¹³ H.D. Trotter *et al.*, *A narrative of the expedition sent by Her Majesty's government to the River Niger, in 1841*, p. 242. (Own emphasis)

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 249. (Own emphasis)

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 206. (Own emphasis)

“sufficient soil for a *garden*”²¹⁶ abounded. Trotter and his company’s expedition were followed by the well-known Scottish missionary and abolitionist, Dr David Livingstone (1813-1873), who undertook an expedition of the Zambezi River and its tributaries from 1858 to 1864.²¹⁷ Livingstone’s descriptions were often more detailed than the aforementioned explorers’ descriptions, including his notes of the indigenous dwellings, gardens and fields. The native settlements on the banks of the Kongoné branch of the Zambezi impressed him and he wrote that the “soil is wonderfully rich, and the *gardens* are really excellent. Rice is cultivated largely; sweet potatoes, pumpkins, tomatoes, cabbages, onions (shalots) [sic], peas, a little cotton, and sugarcane are also raised.”²¹⁸ Gardens must have been widespread because Livingstone noted that “many *gardens* of maize, pumpkins, and tobacco, fringed the marshy banks”²¹⁹ of another of the Zambezi’s branches, namely the Shiré.

Livingstone’s detailed descriptions of the indigenous gardens and fields, specifically the plant varieties grown in them, are significant. He wrote that members of the Maganja “cultivate the soil extensively”²²⁰ and then provided a detailed account of the crops they cultivated in their gardens and fields: “large crops of the mapira, or Egyptian dura (*Holcus sorghum*), are raised, with millet, beans, and ground-nuts; also *patches* of yams, rice, pumpkins, cucumbers, cassava, sweet potatoes, tobacco, and hemp, or bang (*Cannabis sativa*). Maize is grown all the year round. Cotton is cultivated at almost every village. Three varieties of cotton have been found in the country, namely, two foreign and one native.”²²¹ At a village about halfway up the Morambala Mountain, situated not far from the Shiré River, Livingstone found that “lemon and orange trees grew wild, and pineapples had been planted by the people.”²²² The sheer variety of the crops, fruit, vegetables and wild herbs cultivated in the region surprised not only Livingstone, but also many others. If any of Livingstone’s readers in Britain were sceptical of his writings, he emphasised that his and his fellow travellers’ observations were “no empty flourish, but a fact.”²²³

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 285. (Own emphasis)

²¹⁷ Van Aswegen, pp. 240-242; Van Rensburg, pp. 54-55.

²¹⁸ D. Livingstone, *A popular account of Dr. Livingstone’s expedition to the Zambesi and its tributaries; and of the discovery of Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa, 1858-1864*, p. 12. (Own emphasis)

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 61. (Own emphasis)

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

²²¹ *Ibid.* (Own emphasis, except Latin names included by Livingstone)

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904), the British-American journalist who was tasked with searching for (and found) Livingstone in 1871, undertook a number of expeditions in Africa. During one such expedition (1886), which involved an extensive exploration of the Congo River, Stanley's journalistic qualities served him well. He meticulously described many villages, most of which were situated on the banks of or in the vicinity of the Congo River, and mentioned the numerous "*fields, gardens, and plantations, banked all round by the untouched forest*".²²⁴ At the Batoka's villages at Gwengweré, he found that "the area devoted to cultivation was extensive: plantains flourished around stockades;²²⁵ herbs for potage [broth] were found in little *plots* close to the villages; also sufficient tobacco for smoking, and pumpkins for dessert, and a little Indian corn [maize]".²²⁶ Stanley also encountered gardens laden with an abundant variety, such as at Busindi, where the villagers cultivated "maize, beans, plantains, and bananas, tobacco, sweet potatoes, yams, brinjalls [sic], melons, gourds"²²⁷ and at Ugarama where he found "*garden plots*" with "yams, sweet potatoes, colocassia [taro], tobacco".²²⁸

Apart from the above-mentioned vernacular gardens and fields, some explorers also mentioned finding remnants and archaeological evidence of vernacular gardens. Stanley wrote that near the village of Bavikai in the Upper Congo region, he stumbled upon "many oil palms, some raphia, arums, phrynica, amoma, pepper bushes, &c.", which, in his opinion, "denote a very ancient site of a human settlement."²²⁹ The combination of plants, as well as their position, suggested a man-made landscape because it did not blend with the surrounding natural landscape. Stanley also reported that in the tropical forest, he found abandoned sites of previous settlements which "exhibited veritable wonders of vegetable life, of unsurpassed fecundity, and bewildering variety of species",²³⁰ and Livingstone mentioned "deserted *gardens*"²³¹ he found along the way. The impression given thus far that almost every village and town across the fertile and sub-tropical parts of Africa had cultivated gardens and fields

²²⁴ H.M. Stanley, *In darkest Africa or the quest rescue and retreat of Emin governor of Equatoria* (vol. I), p. 263. (Own emphasis)

²²⁵ Enclosures made of upright dead branches or trees.

²²⁶ Stanley, p. 148. (Own emphasis)

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

²²⁸ H.M. Stanley, *In darkest Africa or the quest rescue and retreat of Emin governor of Equatoria* (vol. II), p. 247. (Own emphasis)

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²³¹ Livingstone, p. 335. (Own emphasis)

must be balanced with the fact that the explorers also mentioned villages and towns where gardens were completely absent. For example, Trotter, Allen and Thomson mentioned that some villages on the banks of the Niger were “without *gardens* or *enclosures* of any kind.”²³² However, villages and towns without gardens and fields were scarce.

2.6.1.2 The African vernacular garden: ‘agricultural garden’ or ‘horticultural field’?

Considering the explorers and others’ impressions and accounts of African gardens and fields, the first issue which is relevant to this discussion of African vernacular gardens is the terminology used by them. All the explorers and others were European, many of them British and, therefore, it is reasonable to argue that despite their efforts not to be culturally prejudiced, it must have been difficult, if not impossible, for them not to view the natives’ gardens from a European perspective. The accepted European concept of how a ‘garden’ was supposed to look, formed part of their ‘cultural baggage’ and must have influenced their interpretations of any man-made landscape, particularly in the undeveloped (read: ‘uncivilised’) world. In the case of the British explorers, it must also be emphasised that the philanthropic Victorian mindset of the second half of the 19th century added another dimension to an existing paternalistic superiority complex. This cultural phenomenon made objective observations of the gardens of so-called ‘primitive’ cultures challenging. For example, in his description of the natural landscape of tropical Africa, Stanley juxtaposed the wild tropical forest of Central Africa with the manicured gardens of Kent, England.²³³ In his turn, Livingstone remarked that Africa’s tropical landscape had not (yet?) been subjected to the English landscape gardener’s art, meaning, the tropical landscape was still ‘untamed’.²³⁴ Therefore, the terminology used to describe the African people’s vernacular gardens and fields must not be viewed in isolation but against the backdrop of a cultural-historical period during which imperial and colonial sentiments gained increasing popular support.²³⁵

²³² Trotter *et al.*, p. 58. (Own emphasis); see also p. 285.

²³³ Stanley (vol. II), p. 68.

²³⁴ Livingstone, p. 351.

²³⁵ Van Aswegen, pp. 246-270; Constantine, pp. 388-389; A. Helmreich, *The English garden and national identity: the competing styles of garden design, 1870-1914*, pp. 4, 230-232.

The descriptive terms used by the explorers and others which are relevant to this discussion (refer to italicised words in afore-mentioned quotes) include ‘gardens’, ‘fields’, ‘patches’, ‘tracts’, ‘plantations’, ‘clearings’, ‘plots’ and ‘enclosures’. Does the terminology indicate different types of vernacular gardens or is it a case of different terms for the same type of garden? For example, what is the difference between a ‘plot’ and a ‘patch’, and between a ‘tract’ and a ‘field’? Furthermore, what exactly is meant by the term ‘garden’? Classic definitions of the mentioned terms will not be of much help to determine what exactly was meant by these terms in the African context. Thacker’s argument regarding the *fluid boundaries between garden(s) and field(s)* quoted earlier in this chapter, may be helpful because it is also relevant to the African vernacular garden. He argued that it is difficult to determine where the farm or field becomes a garden or, more precisely, where the farm or field begins to display characteristics of a domestic garden.²³⁶

The Belgian agricultural scientist, Eric Tollens, is of the opinion that in the African context, it cannot be argued that a cultivated piece of land adjacent to or situated close to a dwelling is necessarily a garden and that a cultivated piece of land situated at a distance from a dwelling is necessarily a field.²³⁷ For example, in this regard, reference may be made to Park’s quoted description of the kingdom of Wulli near The Gambia where “each town is surrounded by a tract of cultivated land” in which “the chief productions are cotton, tobacco, and esculent vegetables”.²³⁸ Does Park describe a garden or a field? According to Tollens, the concept ‘vernacular garden’ in the African context means “vele soorten kleinschalige land- en tuinbouw dekken in de onmiddellijke nabijheid of op enige afstand van de woning.”²³⁹ *Based on the above-mentioned argument, it is reasoned that the concept ‘agricultural garden’ may be applied to the African vernacular garden (Image 2/4).*

Because of the fluid boundaries between gardens and fields, it is argued that, historically, the African domestic garden often displayed characteristics of a field, which was customarily situated further away from the house than a domestic garden. By the same token, the field

²³⁶ Thacker, p. 13.

²³⁷ E. Tollens, “‘Volkstuinen’ in de derde wereld: Centraal-Afrika en meer bepaald Kinshasa” in Y. Segers & L. van Molle (eds), *Volkstuinen: een geschiedenis*, p. 199.

²³⁸ Park, p. 43.

²³⁹ Tollens, p. 199. “Many types of small-scale fields and gardens in the immediate vicinity of or at any distance from the house.” (Free translation)

often acquired characteristics of the domestic garden, especially when vegetables and fruit were planted in areas other than the domestic garden. For this reason, it is suggested that cross-over terms such as ‘agricultural garden’ and ‘horticultural field’ be used to describe the traditional African vernacular gardens and fields encountered by the explorers and others. Hugues Dupriez and Philippe de Leener, who have conducted extensive research on African gardens, argued that Africans consider gardening “a special branch of farming”.²⁴⁰ This is not only the case with most contemporary African gardens but also appears to have been the case historically. Dupriez and De Leener argued that “sometimes, it is easy to see the difference between fields and gardens” but often “the distinction between growing staple crops in fields and growing fruit and vegetables in gardens is not always clear.”²⁴¹ They noted that “fruit and vegetables are often found growing in fields and, conversely, cereals, seeds and tubers are often cultivated in gardens.”²⁴²

Archaeologist, Marijke van der Veen, supported Dupriez and De Leener’s argument and stated that in Africa, “cereals can also be grown in small garden plots – grown mixed together in the same garden, in contrast to large fields with one or two annual crops.”²⁴³ According to Dupriez and De Leener, the practice may be explained on the basis of the fact that many plants found in African vernacular gardens and fields have several uses, that is, they can be used as a staple and as a supplementary food. In practical terms, it means that in many cases, not only the vegetable itself, but also its leaves and seeds are edible, such as cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) and certain types of bean. This argument also relates to the practice of subsistence farming, a crucial characteristic of African agriculture and horticulture that will be discussed later.²⁴⁴

Apart from the confusing terminology used by the explorers and others, another issue that is closely related to the terminology problem deals with the fact that few, if any, of the explorers and others provided any significant description of the layout or design of the gardens they encountered. Therefore, it is a challenge to determine what is meant by terms

²⁴⁰ H. Dupriez & P. de Leener, *African gardens and orchards: growing vegetables and fruits*, p. 24.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ M. van der Veen, “The materiality of plants: plant-people entanglements”, *World Archaeology* 46(5), December 2014, p. 804.

²⁴⁴ Dupriez & De Leener, p. 8; Van der Veen, p. 804; Tollens, pp. 199-203.

such as ‘garden’, ‘plot’, ‘patch’, and ‘tract’, to name a few. Caillié, for example, described the position of some gardens in relation to the dwellings, namely “a little garden adjacent to their [owners’] huts” and “a little garden which surrounded his [owner’s] habitation”.²⁴⁵ Alas, these descriptions do not say anything about the design and layout of the gardens. Trotter, Allen and Thomson’s accounts also lack details regarding design and layout, except for their mentioning of the appearance of a yam (*Dioscorea bulbifera*) plantation near the Niger River. It appears as though the yam plants grew in rows because each plant was supported on an upright cane and the plantation was kept in “excellent order”.²⁴⁶ This description gives the impression of an orderly layout with plants planted in rows, whether straight or not. A regulated planting order was apparently not restricted to the gardens on the banks of the Niger because Livingstone reported that members of the Batoka of Central Africa also planted their fruit trees in “regular rows”.²⁴⁷ Hugh Clapperton (1788-1827), the Scottish explorer of West Africa, was also an ardent observer and noticed that the people of the villages in the province of Kano (in present-day Nigeria) planted “beds of sweet potatoes, yams, and a root called goza, like a small short yam”.²⁴⁸ Apart from these sources’ mentioning of plants and crops planted in rows and beds, other detailed references to the design and layout of African vernacular gardens are scarce. Although an orderly layout was a typical feature of traditional African gardens, most seem to have lacked a formal framework, and planting in rows was not the norm.

Stockades and swept yards

Apart from orderly planting, mention is also made of a design element that is not only related to gardens *per se* but which is also characteristic of many traditional African homesteads and villages, namely the *stockaded enclosure*. This element strongly relates to African vernacular architecture and, specifically, to what Oliver described as “the use of spaces within and without the buildings”.²⁴⁹ The stockaded enclosure is a space ‘without the buildings’ – in this case, the space around the domestic dwelling – and consisted of two elements, namely

²⁴⁵ Caillié (vol. I), pp. 224, 278.

²⁴⁶ Trotter *et al.*, p. 206.

²⁴⁷ Livingstone, p. 166. (Own emphasis)

²⁴⁸ H. Clapperton & R. Lander, *Journal of a second expedition into the interior of Africa: from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo*, p. 164. (Own emphasis)

²⁴⁹ Oliver, “Introduction”, p. 8.

the *stockade* (also referred to as a ‘hedge’ or ‘palisade’) which served as a security fence, and the *swept yard*. The stockade typically enclosed or fenced-off a swept yard, that is, a yard traditionally swept with a broom.²⁵⁰ According to *The Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus*, a stockade is “a line or enclosure of upright stakes”.²⁵¹ The ‘stakes’ in a traditional African stockade are usually dry branches or tree trunks stacked close together to form a tight hedge, fence or screen (Image 2/4). In some cases, thorn branches were tightly stacked to form a dense hedge. Some of the explorers and others mentioned stockades in their accounts, including Livingstone, who came across one at the Chembi village in the Ngabi district near the Zambezi River. He noted that “no one was safe except in a stockade”,²⁵² referring to the stockade’s important function of keeping people and animals safe within its confinement. He also referred to “a strong stockaded hedge”²⁵³ erected by the Makololo people around a newly laid-out garden to keep animals out. According to Stanley, the stockade was a characteristic feature of African villages in Central Africa, such as the “stockaded”²⁵⁴ villages of the Batoka people. In addition to stockaded villages, Clapperton also encountered stockaded towns in West Africa, such as the town of Afoora.²⁵⁵

In some cases, such as in Caillié’s journals, reference is made to ‘palisades’, ‘posts’, ‘hedges’ and ‘quick-set hedges’ that were ‘planted’ around dwellings. This confirms the fact that some enclosures, including those encountered by the British geographer, Francis Moore (1708-1756?), in Central Africa, were indeed living hedges but were mostly restricted to high-rainfall areas. At the same time, palisades and other fences were also ‘planted’ but these undoubtedly refer to stockades. *The important point is that in the traditional African context, the stockade essentially defined outdoor space in a tribal village or homestead.*²⁵⁶ *The stockade is often associated with the African vernacular garden, which was, in some cases, laid out on the inside of the enclosure formed by a stockade and, in other cases, on the outside of the enclosure.* Throughout Africa, the stockade was typically used to enclose the yard around a dwelling and often to enclose an entire homestead, as is the case with the

²⁵⁰ B. Head, *Serowe: village of the rain wind*, p. xvii.

²⁵¹ S. Tulloch (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, p. 1532.

²⁵² Livingstone, p. 355.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

²⁵⁴ Stanley (vol. I), p. 147.

²⁵⁵ Clapperton & Lander, p. 19. See also Caillié (vol. I), p. 282.

²⁵⁶ Note the observations made in this regard by Livingstone, pp. 185, 355 and Stanley (vol. I), p. 147.

stockaded homesteads of the so-called ‘Bantu’-speaking²⁵⁷ peoples south of the Zambezi.²⁵⁸ As a design element, the stockade is significant to this study because, in later years, especially since the onset of the colonial period and the process of inter-cultural influencing which ensued, stockades in Africa were increasingly replaced by living hedges and, more importantly, also clipped hedges. This trend, which bears direct relevance to Batho’s topiary gardens, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Chapter 5 and Chapter 8.

The other element associated with the stockaded enclosure is the yard (in some cases, referred to as ‘courtyard’ or ‘court-yard’) and, specifically, the *swept yard*. Using hand-made brooms of grass or twigs, female members of the household swept the yard clean for both practical and spiritual reasons. On a practical level, the yard was swept regularly to keep the bare soil free of weeds. The purpose was to create an environment that was unattractive to snakes and insects. Continuous sweeping turned the earth into a rock-hard surface which made it easy to keep clean, dust-free and, therefore, suitable for domestic chores and social activities. Clapperton noticed that the Yoruba and Hausa peoples of Nigeria sprinkled their courtyards with water every morning to settle the dust. Depending on the yard’s size, small food gardens were often laid out in the peripheral areas near the stockade. On a spiritual level, yard-sweeping expressed a deeper primordial urge to rid the enclosure of undesirable spirits. The widespread practice of yard-sweeping continued into the 21st century – not only in traditional societies on the African continent but also among African-American slave descendants in America’s rural south. Yard-sweeping was, and still is, also common among the ‘Bantu’-speaking peoples of Southern Africa, including the Sotho and Tswana.²⁵⁹ Consequently, yard-sweeping is still an important aspect of the daily activities of some older Batho residents – an issue that will be referred to again in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9.

²⁵⁷ Although archaic, the term ‘Bantu-speaking’ refers in its original context to a major linguistic group who spoke a group of closely related languages, namely Nguni, Sotho-Tswana, Venda and Tsonga. In this study, terms such as ‘Bantu-speakers’ and ‘Bantu-speaking peoples’ are used according to the original meaning of the word ‘Abantu’ (or ‘Bantu’ as used by the colonists), which is the Zulu word for ‘people’, that is, more than one person, and by colonists used in reference to all indigenous African people. Anon., “Defining the term ‘Bantu’”, <<http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/defining-term-bantu.html>>, 30.3.2011 (Accessed: 5.3.2018).

²⁵⁸ Caillié (vol. I), pp. 24, 187; F. Moore (ed.), *Travels into the inland parts of Africa: containing a description of the several nations for the space of six hundred miles up the River Gambia*, pp. 31-35; Oliver, “Introduction”, p. 8; M. Shaw, “Material culture” in W.D. Hammond-Tooke (ed.), *The Bantu-speaking peoples of Southern Africa*, p. 87.

²⁵⁹ Heath & Bennett, p. 43; Kimber, p. 277; Roberts, “Researching the vernacular...”, p. 185; Lewis, p. 109; Dolder, “Vernacular gardens”; G. Gundaker, “Tradition and innovation in African-American yards”, *African Arts* 26(2), April 1993, pp. 60-62.

2.6.1.3 The historical roots, tradition and nature of the African vernacular garden

The earliest roots of crop cultivation in Africa date back to approximately 10 000-6000 BCE²⁶⁰ when African societies began to gather wild grain. This occurred during a period known as the Later Stone Age. The wild grain was later identified as wheat (*Triticum spp.*) and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), which were mostly grown in north-eastern Africa (Egypt and the Sudan), and indigenous sorghum (*Sorghum spp.*) and millet,²⁶¹ of which cultivation was concentrated in the savannah region of the southern Sahel. This development triggered the process of plant domestication as seeds were being stored and kept for sowing and cultivating. The early development of agriculture coincided with Africans becoming permanently settled in small villages and towns which, in turn, stimulated an urge among them to grow their own food instead of searching for it. Desiring to make cultivation easier, the early Africans developed more sophisticated cultivating tools, such as the various types of hoe.²⁶² Some explorers and others, including Park and Livingstone, mentioned these tools in their accounts. Park, for example, referred to the “large sharp hoe”²⁶³ used by the inhabitants of the town of Wassiboo on the banks of the Niger River. In his travels in the area known today as northern Mozambique, Livingstone found that the Africans used a “short-handled hoe”.²⁶⁴

Stone Age crop cultivation was not limited to north-eastern Africa. There is increasing evidence that the cultivation of wheat, millet, sorghum, rice (*Oryza glaberrima*), palm nuts (*Arecaceae spp.*) and yams was widespread in sub-Saharan and tropical Africa as far back as 5000-1000 BCE. In the tropical rain forest zone, the focus was not so much on agriculture as on vegeculture, that is, the growing of root crops, such as yams, instead of cereal grains, which were cultivated in the savannah regions. It must be noted that although Africans domesticated many of their own indigenous crops, other staple crops, such as bananas (*Musa spp.*), maize, cassava and the many other exotics referred to earlier in the explorers and

²⁶⁰ These and other dates are approximate estimates of chronological time.

²⁶¹ The correct genus, species or sub-species names of some of the earliest crops could not be verified for certain; therefore, Latin names are not provided. In some cases, only the genus name is provided.

²⁶² K. Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 14-16; Davidson, pp. 13-19; J. Casey, “The ecology of food production in West Africa” in G. Connah (ed.), *Transformations in Africa: essays on Africa’s later past*, pp. 47-48; D.R. Harris, “Origins and spread of agriculture” in G. Prance & M. Nesbitt (eds), *The cultural history of plants*, p. 19.

²⁶³ Park, p. 152.

²⁶⁴ Livingstone, p. 356. See also p. 79.

others' quotes, came from, among others, south-east Asia (bananas) and the Americas (cassava and maize). The rich variety of exotics grown by the native Africans in their fields and gardens astounded Westerners, who were unaware that such crops had been part of the African gardening culture long before they arrived on the continent. The fact that Moore noticed crops, such as potatoes (*Solanum spp.*; South America) and rice (Asia) being cultivated in The Gambia in the 1730s, is an indication that exotics had been grown in African vernacular gardens for centuries.²⁶⁵

The African vernacular garden, specifically the agricultural garden and horticultural field, can only be properly understood against the backdrop of the long evolutionary history of African agriculture and horticulture, and also within the context of the African tradition of small-scale subsistence agriculture and horticulture. *Therefore, the traditional African vernacular garden can only be adequately understood as essentially a food garden.* British geographer, J.A. Hellen, argued that the African peasant farmer's traditional attitude towards the issue of cultivation and the number of garden plots that were required for subsistence farming would be one of satisfaction if the farmer could maintain himself and his family on a subsistence basis. Hellen referred to a peasant family unit as a 'garden family' and argued that the land-carrying capacity of each garden plot was estimated in terms of the land requirements of a 'garden family', fertility of different soil types, the percentage of available cultivable land and the number of gardens needed to support a complete regeneration cycle from one season to the next. The fact that subsistence farming is, in many cases, also characterised by the practice of shifting agriculture, such as bush fallowing and slash-and-burn agriculture,²⁶⁶ adds another dimension to the African vernacular garden and an understanding thereof. Furthermore, unpredictable factors beyond a peasant farmer's control, including prolonged droughts, torrential rains, tropical storms, floods, swarms of locusts and many other natural disasters also affected the African vernacular garden. Ultimately, the African vernacular garden as a food garden is about survival; not only of humans and animals, but also of the plants in the garden. In this regard, Jellicoe *et al.* argued

²⁶⁵ Shillington, pp. 29-32; Moore (ed.), p. 31; B. Laws, *Fifty plants that changed the course of history*, pp. 136-139, 144-147, 176-183, 210-215; J. Iliffe, *Africans: the history of a continent*, pp. 16-17; Livingstone, p. 398; R. Oliver & J.D. Fage, *A short history of Africa*, p. 29.

²⁶⁶ For more information, see Anon., "Agriculture", <<http://www.agriculturechp10.weebly.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 19.10.2016).

that in Africa, “the survival of plants – let alone of gardens – is strictly limited.”²⁶⁷ This reality had greatly shaped the African vernacular garden since plant domestication began in Africa almost 10 000 BCE.²⁶⁸

2.6.1.4 The African vernacular gardener: ‘agriculturists’, ‘horticulturists’ and ‘arboriculturists’

The explorers and others were not only impressed by the indigenous Africans’ gardens and fields but also by their knowledge of horticulture. Livingstone remarked that “native knowledge of agriculture strikes an honest intelligent observer”²⁶⁹ and Caillié was “astonished to find agriculture in such a state of advancement in the interior of Africa”.²⁷⁰ One of Livingstone’s fellow-travellers, Bishop Mackenzie, not only echoed the famous explorer’s sentiments but also confessed: “When telling the people in England what were my objects in going out to Africa, I stated that, among other things, I meant to teach these people agriculture; but I now see that they know far more about it than I do.”²⁷¹ During his travels in the Congo Basin, Stanley found that, contrary to what many Europeans had believed at that time, not all the African indigenous groups were herdsmen but “many among them are devoted to agriculture.”²⁷² Stanley referred to them as “agriculturists”²⁷³ and assured the sceptics that they were truly African and not immigrants. While Stanley noticed the indigenous black people’s devotion to agriculture, Livingstone gained the impression that their devotion to the cultivation of the land had progressed to such a level that it could be described as “African horticulture”.²⁷⁴ Livingstone even found that some of these ‘horticulturists’ had progressed to the level of specialisation. He described the gardeners of the Batoka as “arboriculturists” and found their orchards of “native fruit trees”,²⁷⁵ which included trees such as the mosibe, motsikiri and boma, most impressive.²⁷⁶

²⁶⁷ Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 3.

²⁶⁸ J.A. Hellen, “Colonial administrative policies and agricultural patterns in tropical Africa” in M.F. Thomas & G.W. Whittington (eds), *Environment and land use in Africa*, p. 325; Jellicoe *et al.*, p. 3.

²⁶⁹ Livingstone, p. 357.

²⁷⁰ Caillié (vol. I), p. 293.

²⁷¹ Livingstone, p. 357.

²⁷² Stanley (vol. II), p. 357.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Livingstone, p. 106.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

The explorers and others' descriptions of the knowledge and expertise of Africa's 'agriculturists', 'horticulturists' and 'arboriculturists' are most relevant because they address an issue that is not only significant to the discussion of the African vernacular garden, but also the *vernacular gardener*. It is important to stress the fact that the explorers and others had made their observations before the colonisation of Africa commenced in all earnest. At that stage, European contact with and influence on Africa's indigenous groups, particularly those in the continent's interior, was very limited. Therefore, it is argued that indigenous Africans' knowledge of agriculture and horticulture was the result of being self-taught and not of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing. *The argument also touches on the question as to whether or not the 'agriculturists', 'horticulturists' and 'arboriculturists' had a natural historical inclination for cultivating the soil.* Not only does the earlier discussion of the historical roots and tradition of the African vernacular garden suggest that this is, indeed, the case but Africans themselves also seemed to believe so. The editors of *Umteteli wa Bantu* often discussed this issue throughout the paper's 36-year history. Referring to Africans in general, the newspaper wrote in 1927 that agriculture is "that profession for which nature has ordained him [the African]" and argued that "the Native, when an agriculturist, is following the bent for which nature undoubtedly intended him and for which his qualifications are innate."²⁷⁷

2.6.1.5 "The business of the women": the traditional labour divide in Africa

Apart from the explorers and others' descriptions of the African vernacular gardener's abilities, they also touched on another important aspect related to the African vernacular gardener, namely the *gender-based labour divide*. Park mentioned that in some towns and villages he visited in West Africa, "men and women work together"²⁷⁸ when cultivating the soil. Park did not, however, mention whether the two sexes did the same type of gardening work when working together and whether they worked together in the same garden or field. In his journal, Livingstone mentioned that in the parts of Africa where he travelled, gardens were mostly planted and maintained by women, not men.²⁷⁹ Clapperton also found that in

²⁷⁷ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 16.7.1927, p. 4.

²⁷⁸ Park, p. 152.

²⁷⁹ Livingstone, p. 30.

West Africa, “all the labour of the land”²⁸⁰ was the responsibility of women or, as Caillié put it, “the business of the women”.²⁸¹ Livingstone’s and Clapperton’s observations, not Park’s, confirm the predominant traditional African practice that women were not only responsible for preparing meals but also for producing food for the meals, that is, cultivating the land. Traditionally, women cultivated most of the food in Africa and, therefore, they were (and still are) Africa’s agriculturists and horticulturists. In other words, historically, women were primarily Africa’s vernacular gardeners.²⁸²

A leading article published in *Umteteli wa Bantu* in 1931 explained the traditional African gender-based labour division as follows: “For hundreds of years the Native man fought, hunted and raised cattle, agriculture of a primitive character being the women’s part.”²⁸³ The reference to ‘agriculture of a primitive character’ is important because, traditionally, women were responsible for all hoe-based agriculture, irrespective of whether it was practised in gardens or fields. Later, when plough-based agriculture was introduced by Europeans, gender differences also entered Africa’s agricultural systems. According to Van der Veen, women became more actively associated with hoe-based cultivation (gardening and horticulture) and men with plough-based agriculture (field crops). Dupriez and De Leener, as well as Van der Veen, argued that the proximity of the garden plot to the dwelling also explains why gardening in Africa had been perceived as a domestic activity and, therefore, the woman’s domain. The daily tending of plants invoke similarities with that of raising children. As was the case with the development of the kitchen garden in Europe and elsewhere, the African domestic garden, which is predominantly a food garden, increasingly became an extension of the kitchen. When the woman’s work in the fields was done, she tended the garden plots close to the dwelling.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰ Clapperton & Lander, p. 58.

²⁸¹ Caillié (vol. I), p. 162.

²⁸² R. Coetzee, *Funa food from Africa: roots of traditional African food culture*, pp. 49-50; Hoyles, p. 191; Caillié (vol. I), pp. 162-163, 181.

²⁸³ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 2.5.1931, p. 2.

²⁸⁴ Van der Veen, p. 805; Dupriez & De Leener, p. 25; Hoyles, p. 191; B. Davidson, *Modern Africa: a social and political history*, p. 190; Caillié (vol. I), p. 181.

2.6.1.6 The ornamental garden in Africa

To conclude this discussion of the African vernacular garden, the following question needs to be answered: did the African vernacular garden transition from a food-only garden to a food-and-ornamental garden and, eventually, to an ornamental garden? Traditionally, the primary concern of African agriculture and horticulture had been the cultivating of basic food crops. Gardening was about subsistence and survival, not aesthetics, hence the focus on the development of the agricultural garden and horticultural field as African vernacular garden types. As argued earlier in this discussion, the agricultural garden and horticultural field were, essentially, functional gardens rather than ornamental gardens. The focus was on edible and useful plants and crops, including their seeds, leaves, bark, roots and tubers. Even flowers were valued for what they eventually became, namely fruit or vegetables, rather than for what they were. Jack Goody, an esteemed British social anthropologist, argued that a culture of flowers, which is closely associated with ornamental gardening, never developed in Africa. His explanation supports the above-mentioned argument that, traditionally and historically, the African agriculturist and horticulturist focused on the cultivation of basic food crops. While practising traditional subsistence and shifting agriculture, there was little time or need for the cultivation of flowers for their own sakes.²⁸⁵

According to Pim and Huxley, the dependency on a subsistence lifestyle prevented societies from developing a desire to beautify their immediate surroundings. Members of such societies are only able to appreciate plants grown for aesthetic reasons when living standards rise above subsistence level. Pim and Huxley's argument is entirely applicable to Africa.²⁸⁶ Supporting Pim and Huxley, Goody takes his argument on the absence of a flower culture in Africa even further by adding another important dimension: "Cultivated flowers are essentially products of advanced agriculture, of gardening, so we rarely find them under simple hoe agriculture, *except where they have been borrowed or adapted from neighbours.*"²⁸⁷ Goody's reference to the potential influence of 'neighbours' (read: other cultures) on the African gardening culture is significant, because it was not immune to such

²⁸⁵ Goody, pp. 14, 18, 23, 26, 415; Caillié (vol. I), pp. 181, 212.

²⁸⁶ Pim, pp. 3, 16; Huxley, p. 11.

²⁸⁷ Goody, p. 20. (Own emphasis)

influences. These influences, including the Islamic influence exerted by the Moors²⁸⁸ in North, West and East Africa,²⁸⁹ and the European and British colonial influences in countries such as Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, affected the African vernacular garden in some way or another.²⁹⁰ The influence of Christian missionaries,²⁹¹ especially those who established mission stations among the Africans, must also be mentioned. The important argument is that all these external influences exposed Africans to new gardening cultures and garden styles which, over time, left their mark on the African vernacular garden. One such style is the *ornamental flower garden*.²⁹²

It is argued that cultural influences from outside Africa affected the African vernacular garden in terms of style and layout as well as the selection of plants. This happened in cases of extended contact between Africans and members of foreign cultures and meant that some Africans imitated the gardening practices of foreigners, such as Muslims, European colonists and missionaries. Imitations include the laying out of Islamic-inspired courtyard gardens (*chahar bagh*) and English cottage-style flower gardens, albeit very basic and simplistic versions. *The process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing, which happened over time, turned certain African vernacular gardens into semi-vernacular gardens, that is, vernacular gardens which display patrician characteristics. Therefore, it is argued that since the onset of the cultural influence of the British and European colonists in particular, some African vernacular gardens transitioned from food-only gardens to food-and-ornamental gardens and even to purely ornamental gardens.* Many African gardens completed the transitional process while other gardens are still in the process, including the

²⁸⁸ Muslim people of mixed Berber and Arab descent.

²⁸⁹ For example, the gardening culture of the Swahili people of the island town of Lamu off the north coast of Kenya was strongly influenced by the gardening and flower culture of Islam. Anon., "Lamu old town – Kenya", <<http://www.africanworldheritagesites.org/cultural-places/swahili-coast/lamu-old-town.html>>, 2001 (Accessed: 31.10.2016).

²⁹⁰ Due to limited space, a discussion of Islamic influences and European and British colonial influences on the African vernacular garden is not included. For more information, see Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), pp. 3, 155-159, 277-279; Van Zuylen, pp. 23-26; Hobhouse, pp. 58, 60-62; Caillié (vol. II), pp. 191, 208; Clapperton & Lander, pp. 57, 73, 142, 159, 166; Davidson, *Modern Africa: a...*, pp. 5-6; Oliver & Fage, pp. 199-208; D. Glass, *The book about the British Empire*, pp. 72-77, 86-95; A. Gordon-Brown (ed.), *Year book & guide to East Africa, 1957*, p. 5.

²⁹¹ For example, Christian missionaries played a key role in developing a gardening culture among the converts of the Grebo (also Glebo) of Liberia. Anon., "Glebo", <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/glebo.html>>, 2002 (Accessed: 31.10.2016).

²⁹² Goody, pp. 11, 13, 21, 23-24, 26, 415; Taylor (ed.), pp. 495-496; Taylor, "Vernacular gardens"; Caillié (vol. II), p. 191.

gardens of many black South Africans. Batho's topiary gardens are a prime example of this transitional process, a phenomenon which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

2.6.2 The South African vernacular garden

The final section of this chapter on the vernacular garden focuses on the South African²⁹³ vernacular garden and, specifically, the gardens made by groups not of European origin. These groups include the San,²⁹⁴ Khoekhoe,²⁹⁵ (later Khoesan²⁹⁶), slaves, the so-called 'free blacks' and the 'Bantu'-speaking groups, with special emphasis on the Sotho and Tswana (collectively known as the Sotho-Tswana). It is argued that because of intermarrying and migration, the descendants of the San, Khoekhoe, slaves and 'free blacks' had either directly or indirectly influenced gardening in the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein and, eventually, Batho. As will be explained in Chapter 5, some residents of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein and Batho who were (and, in some cases, still are) considered coloured, were either direct or distant descendants of the mentioned groups. In some cases, the design of these groups' gardens was influenced by Europeans but the making of the gardens, such as the slaves' gardens, were initiated by non-Europeans.²⁹⁷ These gardens must be distinguished from gardens conceived and designed by Europeans but physically laid out and maintained by indigenous people, such as the gardens laid out on mission stations and

²⁹³ Although South Africa as a unified and independent country only came into being with unification in 1910, the term is for practical reasons used to also refer to the pre-1910 geographical area which included the Cape Colony, Natal and the Boer republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek or ZAR).

²⁹⁴ Also known as Bushmen.

²⁹⁵ Also known as Khoe, Khoi and Khoi-Khoi. The Dutch colonists referred to the Khoekhoe as *Hottentot(ten)*, which is considered derogatory.

²⁹⁶ The San and Khoekhoe were two distinct groups during the pre-colonial period. The blurring of identity between the San and Khoekhoe began during the 18th century, hence the use of the term 'Khoesan'. For the purpose of this study, the term 'Khoesan' is appropriate for the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries since it refers to the descendants of both San and Khoekhoe, some of whom migrated to the Transgariep (later Transoranje or Transorange and then Orange Free State) and Bloemfontein where their descendants later became known as coloureds. J.R. McDonald, *Subjects of the Crown: Khoesan identity and assimilation in the Cape Colony, c. 1795-1858* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 2014). It must be noted, though, that some historians, such as Prof. M. Burden of Stellenbosch University and Northwest University, do not agree with this argument and reason that assimilation between the San and Khoekhoe was limited; therefore, they should be considered two different groups with their own unique identities.

²⁹⁷ In this context, the term 'non-European(s)' refers to all people of colour, whether indigenous or immigrant, including the San, Khoekhoe, slaves, 'free blacks' and the 'Bantu'-speaking groups. No negative connotations are implied.

the private and public gardens designed by Europeans.²⁹⁸ Although it is not always possible to determine precisely the extent of European influence and involvement in non-European garden-making in South Africa, European influence certainly affected the design and layout of such gardens. Considering these grey areas, how does one determine which garden is vernacular and which is semi-vernacular? The distinction between gardens conceived by non-Europeans and those not conceived by them often underpins the difference between a purely vernacular and a semi-vernacular garden in the South African context. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that a garden conceived by non-Europeans may be semi-vernacular if the garden's design was influenced by Europeans or European garden styles.

As is the case with both the ancient vernacular garden and the African vernacular garden discussed earlier in this chapter, the terms 'agriculture' and 'horticulture' also often overlap in the South African context. Horticultural historian, T.R. Sim, argued that in the local historical context, the line which separates horticulture from agriculture is difficult to define. When cultivated on a small scale, crops such as pumpkins (*Cucurbita spp.*) are considered 'horticulture', but when cultivated on a large scale, it is considered 'agriculture'. By the same token, maize grown for domestic use is considered 'horticulture' but when grown for milling, it is considered 'agriculture'. Sim reasoned that in the South African context, "garden culture as against field culture hardly applies, since the garden may be up to any size, while the field may be very small indeed, and in either case the nature of the work may be intensive or extensive."²⁹⁹ *Therefore, the key argument regarding the fluid boundaries between fields and gardens and, by implication, between agriculture and horticulture, is as applicable to the 'Bantu'-speakers of South Africa (and also the other mentioned non-Europeans) as it is to the black Africans north of the Limpopo River.*

²⁹⁸ Free State mission station gardens will be discussed in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 6. The gardens made by European colonists and their descendants will be discussed in Chapter 3 because these gardens are closely associated with topiary.

²⁹⁹ T.R. Sim, "South African horticulture" in *Report of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science* (third meeting, Johannesburg, 1905; fourth meeting, Kimberley, 1906), p. 333.

2.6.2.1 The gardens of the San, Khoekhoe, slaves, ‘free blacks’ and their descendants: historical impressions and descriptions

The San and Khoekhoe

More than a century elapsed before the Dutch colony, established at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652,³⁰⁰ first came into contact with the ‘Bantu’-speaking peoples of Southern Africa. Consequently, little is known about the gardens and fields laid out by the ‘Bantu’-speakers before the 1770s. Therefore, the focus now shifts to the other groups with whom Commander Jan van Riebeeck (1619-1677) and the Dutch colonists first interacted, namely the indigenous San and Khoekhoe (later Khoesan), the so-called “Stone Age peoples”,³⁰¹ and the imported slave population. While the nomadic San were hunter-gatherers, the Khoekhoe were primarily pastoralists and practised only animal husbandry. Historically, neither practised any agriculture or horticulture. Instead of being food-growers, both groups were food-gatherers and developed a unique food culture and knowledge system based on veld plants.³⁰² The apparent lack of a gardening culture among the San and, to a lesser extent, the Khoekhoe (some occasionally grew tobacco; *Nicotiana spp.*), may be ascribed primarily to their nomadic lifestyle. *This underscores the important argument that the making of gardens, whether vernacular, semi-vernacular or patrician, is associated with communities who lead a stationary lifestyle rather than a nomadic one.* As opposed to what appears to be the absence of a gardening culture among the San and Khoekhoe, the Dutch and later the British who governed the Cape for more than two and a half centuries (1652-1910), brought with them a strong gardening culture which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, had been in the making for centuries. This gardening culture did not leave the local indigenous groups, particularly the Khoekhoe, unaffected. In fact, some of the most remarkable gardens made by indigenous people were those made by the Khoekhoe after they were exposed to the European gardening culture.³⁰³

³⁰⁰ For more details, see Chapter 3.

³⁰¹ Davidson, *Africa in history...*, p. 265.

³⁰² For more details on the food culture of the San and Khoekhoe, see R. Coetzee & V. Miros, *Kukumakranka: Khoi-Khoisan culture, customs and creative cooking, passim*.

³⁰³ R. Elphick, “Die Khoisan tot c. 1770” in H. Giliomee & R. Elphick (eds), *'n Samelewing in wording: Suid-Afrika 1652-1820*, pp. 3-8; E.A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, pp. 31-36; R. Oliver & A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 26; Davidson, *Africa in history...*, p. 265.

As the Dutch *veeboers* (cattle farmers) continued to expand beyond the confines of Cape Town into the interior in search of farm land, they not only drove out the San but also encroached upon the traditional grazing lands of the Khoekhoe. A process of displacement and disruption of the loose clan and tribal systems of the San and, particularly, the Khoekhoe was triggered. According to historian, M.F. Katzen, “many Khoikhoi and some San”³⁰⁴ were, in due course, absorbed into the colonial society mainly as domestic servants, herdsmen, agricultural labourers and garden labourers. In the process, the interaction between the Khoekhoe and the colonists increased which, in turn, led to the Khoekhoe’s exposure to European cultural practices, including agriculture and horticulture. Historian, Richard Elphick, argued that by the early 1700s, the Dutch farmers had taught their Khoekhoe labourers how to cultivate, harvest and prune vines, among other things.³⁰⁵ Apart from the Dutch farmers, others, such as the British colonists, as well as German and French missionaries, also taught some Khoekhoe how to garden (Image 2/5). The process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing which ensued was rather one-sided, namely the Khoekhoe who lacked an intrinsic gardening culture of their own, selectively taking over elements of the Europeans’ gardening culture. According to Katzen, the Khoekhoe were “unaccustomed to continuous physical exertion”;³⁰⁶ therefore, garden work was not widely popular among them. However, a small minority showed interest in gardening, particularly those who enjoyed good relations with their employers and, importantly, those who settled on mission stations.³⁰⁷

Among the few descriptions of Khoekhoe gardens is Boer woman, Johanna Duminy’s impressions of the garden of Ocker, a Khoekhoe man who lived in a “hottentos craal”³⁰⁸ at Noordhoek near the Bok River in the Cape Colony. In her diary, dated 1797, Duminy wrote that the “moouij”³⁰⁹ garden contained maize, watermelons (*Citrullus lanatus*), melons (*Cucurbitaceae spp.*), pumpkins and onions (*Alliaceae spp.*). She specifically mentioned that

³⁰⁴ M.F. Katzen, “White settlers and the origin of a new society, 1652-1778” in M. Wilson & L. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa (vol. I): South Africa to 1870*, p. 184.

³⁰⁵ Elphick, pp. 8-22.

³⁰⁶ Katzen, p. 204.

³⁰⁷ I. Schapera (ed.), *The early Cape Hottentots described in the writings of Olfert Dapper (1668), Willem ten Rhyne (1686) and Johannes Gulielmus de Grevenbroek (1695)*, p. 273; A.J. Böeseken, “Die koms van die blankes onder Van Riebeeck” in C.F.J. Muller (ed.), *Vyfhonderd jaar Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, pp. 19-31; Katzen, p. 184; Walker, pp. 34-36, 46.

³⁰⁸ J.L.M. Franken (ed.), *Duminy diaries*, p. 100. “Hottentot kraal”. (Free translation)

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.* “Handsome”. (Free translation)

“sijn vrugte boome was ook moouij”³¹⁰ and therefore felt the urge to purchase six apricot (*Prunus spp.*) trees from Ocker for her own garden. Other descriptions of Khoekhoe gardens are found in the journals of foreign visitors to the Cape, such as Henry (Heinrich) Lichtenstein (1780-1857), the German medical practitioner and naturalist who accompanied the newly-appointed Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, General Janssens, on his voyage to the Cape in 1802. Lichtenstein visited the Moravian mission station of Genadendal³¹¹ at Baviaanskloof, situated not far from the Khoekhoe village where Johanna Duminy purchased her apricot trees. Lichtenstein, who compared Genadendal to a European village, found two hundred houses and huts “with gardens annexed to them”.³¹² The houses, built in rows, had gardens behind them and were, according to him, “planted with vegetables, pulse, and fruit-trees”.³¹³

Lichtenstein also found Khoekhoe gardens outside the Cape Colony, most notably at the numerous villages near the Orange River where the so-called ‘Bastard Hottentots’ and other dispossessed Khoekhoe had settled during the middle and late 1700s. At one such village, namely Leeuwenkuil, he not only found fields of “five to six acres”³¹⁴ devoted to agricultural purposes but also kitchen gardens. In his journal, Lichtenstein reported that “maize and tobacco were cultivated in the garden(s) with the usual vegetables for culinary purposes.”³¹⁵ James Backhouse (1794-1869), a British Quaker missionary and botanist, also found Khoekhoe gardens outside the Cape Colony during his visit to South Africa in the late 1830s. In the district of Albany (formerly the Zuurveld), Backhouse visited several Khoekhoe families near the military post of Fort Armstrong. There he found “not only neat cottages, but good gardens, from which the market at Fort Beaufort is supplied with vegetables, and potatoes are taken to Grahams Town [sic].”³¹⁶ Based on Backhouse’s description, it appears as though some Khoekhoe had become successful market-gardeners.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.* “His fruit trees were also handsome”. (Free translation)

³¹¹ The gardens of the mission station at Genadendal and other Cape mission stations will be discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.

³¹² M.H.C. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806* (vol. I; reprint of translation from original German), p. 189.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

³¹⁴ M.H.C. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806* (vol. II; reprint of translation from original German), p. 325.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ J. Backhouse, *A narrative of a visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, p. 192.

Since the Khoekhoe lacked an agricultural or horticultural frame of reference, their gardens were mostly replicas of the European colonists' gardens. According to Lichtenstein, the white farmers and missionaries were "setting a good example"³¹⁷ as far as gardening was concerned. It appears as though most Khoekhoe gardeners indeed followed the colonists' example, such as the Khoekhoe gardener whose European-style formal garden near the Baviaans River greatly impressed Reverend Christian Latrobe (1758-1836). Latrobe, a British clergyman of the Moravian Church, described the garden as follows: "it was divided into squares, with borders of Indian corn [maize], each square containing a different kind of produce, beans, potatoes, cabbages, or other vegetables."³¹⁸ Latrobe also noticed a strong European influence in the Khoekhoe gardens at Pacaltsdorp near George. The gardens were "well laid out, and the Hottentots, both by precept and example, taught diligently to attend to the rearing of garden-produce of various kinds".³¹⁹ The obvious European influence visible in the Pacaltsdorp gardens was also not lost on Reverend John Campbell (1766-1840) of the London Missionary Society. When Campbell visited Pacaltsdorp in 1819, he was surprised to find that the gardens "contained peach, apricot, and fig trees, potatoes, pumkins [sic], water-melons, cabbages, beans, pease [sic], Indian corn, &c."³²⁰

As the Khoekhoe's regimented and symmetrical gardens were so strongly based on the formal European garden style of the Cape colonists, their gardens are not purely vernacular. At the same time, however, most Khoekhoe gardens were simple, predominantly utilitarian and devoid of ornamentation. Furthermore, some Khoekhoe gardens displayed characteristics of the agricultural garden, which is evident in the combination of crops and vegetables in what appears to be small-scale domestic gardens. Considering the simple design and utilitarian nature of Khoekhoe gardens on the one hand, and the unmistakable European stylistic influence on the other, they are considered semi-vernacular.

³¹⁷ Lichtenstein (vol. II), p. 234.

³¹⁸ C.I. Latrobe, *Journal of a visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816 with some account of the missionary settlements of the United Brethren, near the Cape of Good Hope* (facsimile reprint of 1818 edition), pp. 94-95.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

³²⁰ J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London Missionary Society; being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country* (vol. II), p. 376.

The slaves and ‘free blacks’

A discussion of the non-European people’s vernacular gardens is incomplete without including the gardens made by the slaves and so-called ‘free blacks’ (hereafter free blacks) during the first Dutch occupation of the Cape (1652-1795). Since the use of slave labour was common practice throughout the Dutch colonial empire, slaves were imported on a small scale from the beginning of the Cape settlement. Slaves became increasingly in demand by the Dutch East India Company (VOC;³²¹ hereafter ‘Company’) to relieve the garrison’s labour shortage and, to a lesser extent, to meet the growing need for domestic labour. The slaves were of diverse origin and were imported from, among others, Angola, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Guinea, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia and Mozambique. During the official Dutch occupations of the Cape (1652-1795; 1803-1806) and later also during the first part of British control of the Cape Colony (1795-1803; 1806-1910), slaves were used for all kinds of hard and menial labour, including agricultural and garden labour. Although garden slaves were mostly male, female slaves were also used for garden and light agricultural work – a practice comparable with the ‘Bantu’-speakers’ tradition of agriculture and horticulture as the woman’s domain (see discussion later in this chapter). An account of the slave population at the Cape in 1824 mentioned a significant number of “Garden Girl[s]”.³²²

Apart from the “groot getal van zwarte slaven”³²³ who maintained the Company’s gardens,³²⁴ slaves also worked as garden labourers in private gardens in, among others, Cape Town, Stellenbosch and De Paarl (today known as Paarl). Furthermore, most labourers who worked on farms in the Table Valley and outlying areas were slaves. For many slaves, agricultural and garden labour was no novelty since they hailed from societies where agriculture and horticulture had been practised for centuries. Consequently, some slaves, including those with culinary skills, such as the Malays and Indonesians, had substantial

³²¹ The complete name was Vereenigde Nederlandsche Ge-Octroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie.

³²² Western Cape Archives and Records Service (hereafter WCARS): *GH 28/11 (no. 135 of 10.12.1824), Dispatch of Lord Somerset to Earl Bathurst, Return of Government Slaves*, no. p. no.

³²³ W. Dampier, *Nieuwe reistogt rondom de wereld* (vol. I), p. 394. “A huge number of black slaves”. (Free translation). For specific numbers of garden slaves, see M.K. Jeffreys, *Kaapse archiefstukken lopende over het jaar 1778: afgeschreven en met een register voorzien*, p. 417. See also published volumes for the years 1779-1782. Garden labourers are referred to as *tuijniers* with a distinction made between *baasen* (white supervisors) and *knegts* (slaves).

³²⁴ For more details, see Chapter 3.

knowledge of vegetable growing, while others, such as the Madagascans and Mozambicans, seemed to have had a natural penchant for gardening and agriculture.³²⁵

During the period of official slavery at the Cape (1657-1834), the farm and garden slaves contributed significantly to the advancement of agriculture and horticulture in the colony. This contribution should not only be measured in terms of physical labour but also in terms of the fact that the slaves' horticultural knowledge and skills turned them into valuable assets. Some slave owners considered their slaves to be more than mere labour units; in fact, they were often considered members of the family.³²⁶ This happened to be the case with favoured house slaves in Cape Town who were allowed to lay out small vegetable gardens on their owners' properties.³²⁷ Slaves who worked outside the domestic environment were not excluded from the benefits of good working relations either. Some farmers, most of whom laid out vegetable gardens on their farms, felt the need to reward their faithful slaves with small plots of land where they were allowed to cultivate vegetables in their leisure time. This is a significant development because it awarded the slaves the opportunity to lay out their own gardens. In a report of the British Guardian and Protector of Slaves, dated 1829-1834, reference was made to Cape farmers who "granted them [slaves] allotments of ground on which to cultivate vegetables etc."³²⁸ The report did not describe the layout of the gardens but mentioned that the slaves cultivated "Potatoes, Pumpkins, Melons, Beans, Peas, Indian Corn etc."³²⁹ Although the slaves did not own the land, the produce belonged to them and they were allowed to sell it at the local market. This trend, which dates back to the early 1700s, not only indicates an emerging culture of gardening among some Cape slaves but

³²⁵ Katzen, pp. 184, 193, 204-205; J.C. Armstrong, "Die slawe, 1652-1795" in H. Giliomee & R. Elphick (eds), *'n Samelewing in wording: Suid-Afrika 1652-1820*, pp. 81-90, 96-97, 105; H.B. Giliomee, "Die Kaapse samelewing teen die einde van die Kompanjiesbewind", *Historia* 18(1), March 1973, p. 3; I.D. du Plessis, *The Cape Malays*, p. 47; Walker, pp. 39-40; G.C. de Wet, *Die vryliede en vryswartes in die Kaapse nedersetting 1657-1707*, p. 209.

³²⁶ A.J. Böeseke, "Die verhouding tussen blank en nie-blank in Suid-Afrika aan die hand van die vroegste dokumente", *South African Historical Journal* 2, November 1970, p. 12.

³²⁷ National Archives of the Netherlands: *Inventory no. 4012: V.O.C. 1602-1811, Cassa Boeck*, 18.5.1676, p. 544; Armstrong, p. 111.

³²⁸ WCARS: *SO 3/20a (article 16), Confidential Reports, Guardian & Protector of Slaves, observations between June and December 1830*, no p. no.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

also signals the development of a culture of market-gardening.³³⁰

Although slaves had been permitted to sell their fresh produce at the local market and managed to improve their circumstances somewhat (in 1830, they earned “from £5 to 15£ [sic] pr annum”³³¹), the living conditions of most agricultural and garden slaves were dismal. The only available option for slaves to significantly improve their lives was to be manumitted by their owners. The Statutes of Batavia³³² made provision for the freeing of slaves provided that they had a reasonable knowledge of the Dutch language. Slaves whose owners were, for whatever reason, no longer able to support them were set free. Once these *vrijzwarten* (‘free blacks’) were freed, they were placed on an equal footing with the Dutch *vrijburgers* (‘free burghers’) who were discharged from the Company’s service and initially allowed to settle on farms along the Liesbeeck River. The important point is that, apart from residential plots, the free blacks also qualified to become owners of either garden plots on the outskirts of Cape Town or small farms in the Table Valley, and later also the Liesbeeck Valley. Most garden plots were situated south-east of the town in the vicinity of the Castle. Of all the free blacks who purchased garden plots, the best documented ones are Angela van Bengale (also Bengala or Bengal), Antonij van Bengale and Evert van Guinua (Guinea). Angela, who received the title deed on her property in Heere Street in the Table Valley on 25 February 1667, was permitted to “betuijnen, besaijen, [and] beplanten”³³³ the land. Antonij van Bengale not only purchased a property in Zee Street³³⁴ but also a garden plot situated higher up in the Table Valley. On the plot, he cultivated vegetables which he sold to the crews of passing ships.³³⁵

³³⁰ O.F. Mentzel, *A geographical and topographical description of the Cape of Good Hope* (vol. II), p. 130 & (vol. III), pp. 110, 190; D.J. van Zyl, “Die slaaf in die ekonomiese lewe van die Westelike Distrikte van die Kaapkolonie, 1795-1834”, *South African Historical Journal* 10, November 1978, pp. 15-18; K. Schoeman, *Early slavery at the Cape of Good Hope 1652-1717*, pp. 220, 237; K. Schoeman, *Armosyn van die Kaap: die wêreld van 'n slavin, 1652-1733*, p. 589.

³³¹ WCARS: SO 3/20a (article 16), *Confidential Reports, Guardian & Protector of Slaves, observations between June and December 1830*, no p. no.

³³² The statutes of the Dutch Republic.

³³³ WCARS: CTD 3, *Transporten en Schepenkenissen, G. 33-57, vol. 3, 1666-1669*, p. 90. “To garden, sow and plant”. (Free translation)

³³⁴ WCARS: CTD 5, *Transporten en Schepenkenissen, G. 63-64, vol. 5, 1671-1672*, pp. 67-69.

³³⁵ J.L. Hattingh, “Grondbesit in die Tafelvallei. Deel 1: die eksperiment: vryswartes as grondeienaars, 1652-1710”, *Kronos* 10, 1985, pp. 32-39; De Wet, pp. 204-208; Schoeman, *Early slavery at...*, pp. 309, 340-341; Schoeman, *Armosyn van die...*, pp. 635, 643, 650.

As is the case with the slaves' gardens, information on the layout or style of the free blacks' gardens is scant. In the case of Evert van Guinua, the first free black who received a garden plot of "723 Roeden"³³⁶ in the Table Valley, reference is made of his "gecultiveerd thuijn".³³⁷ It is assumed that the garden was well developed and densely planted. One is also left with the impression that some of the free blacks, most notably Angela van Bengale, managed to lay out gardens which made a good impression. Angela's garden, which she named 'Den Leem Bries',³³⁸ was hailed for the fact that it was neatly fenced-in and stood in stark contrast to the untamed wilderness the property apparently was before she started cultivating it. It may be argued that acculturation and inter-cultural influencing was probably stronger in the case of the slaves and the free blacks than in the case of the Khoekhoe. Apart from enjoying more intimate relationships with their masters, the slaves were also much more integrated into the Cape society than the Khoekhoe. Although cultural influencing among the various groups was often of a mutual nature, historians, Richard Elphick and Robert C.-H. Shell, argued that the only common and visible culture the slaves could acquire was their masters'. Due to the fact that the slaves had been much more intimately involved in the lives of the white colonists, they were more exposed to cultural influencing, including the influence of material culture, such as gardens and gardening.³³⁹

According to Shell, the slaves had a significant influence on Cape domestic architecture and its immediate environment to the extent that they created a "vernacular world".³⁴⁰ Domestic slaves either stayed inside their employers' houses or in separate slave quarters in the backyards of properties. The position of the slave quarters not only influenced the layout of domestic courtyards but also that of the traditional farm *werf*.³⁴¹ Unfortunately, Shell did not mention where the slave gardens were laid out or how they looked. Due to the slaves' subordinate status and the social conventions attached thereto, it is argued that slave gardens were probably laid out on the periphery of the urban yard and the farm *werf*. The basic design

³³⁶ WCARS: *CTD 10, Cape Title Deeds, vol. 1, 1685-1703*, p. 51. Appr. 1,0329 hectares.

³³⁷ WCARS: *CTD 6, Transporten en Schepenkenissen, G. 65-67, vol. 6, 1673-1674*, p. 87. "Cultivated garden". (Free translation)

³³⁸ Meaning 'the idle wind'.

³³⁹ Hattingh, pp. 40-43; R. Elphick & R. Shell, "Onderlinge groepverhoudinge: Khoikhoi, koloniste, slawe en vryswartes, 1652-1795" in H. Giliomee & R. Elphick (eds), *'n Samelewing in wording: Suid-Afrika 1652-1820*, pp. 167-168.

³⁴⁰ R. C.-H. Shell, *Children of bondage: a social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, p. 247.

³⁴¹ Meaning 'yard'.

of the slave gardens was most likely rectilinear and the planting regimented since the European cultural influence on the slaves was significant. At the same time, however, the influence of the slaves' own cultures, particularly the Malay and Indonesian cultures, on their gardens must have been visible in the inclusion of vegetables, herbs and spices such as chili peppers (*Capsicum spp.*), lemon grass (*Cymbopogon spp.*) and ginger (*Zingiberaceae spp.*) used in traditional Malay and Indonesian cooking. The same arguments are applicable to the gardens of the free blacks: in their case, social pressure to conform to the general design and layout of the colonists' gardens was probably stronger because the gardens of the free blacks and those of the colonists were often situated next to each other in the Table Valley. As a result of the strong European cultural influence on the gardens of both the slaves and the free blacks, they may also be described as semi-vernacular.³⁴²

The Griqua, Korana and Bastards

It is necessary to also briefly refer to the gardens laid out by the descendants of the Khoekhoe and the San (Khoesan) who moved away from the Cape Colony, namely the Griqua (also Grigriqua), Korana (also Koranna or Kora) and the half-breed Bastards (people of mixed origin). After they were dispossessed of their land and, in some cases, their cattle, by the white *veeboers* and *trekboers*, the descendants of the Khoesan became increasingly scattered. Furthermore, entire Khoekhoe groups were decimated by the widespread smallpox epidemic of 1713. Those who survived the setbacks either remained in the Cape Colony, where they lived as wanderers and labourers, or managed to re-organise and regroup and withdrew into the interior. Referred to by historian Colin Murray as "part-Khoi frontiersmen",³⁴³ these Khoekhoe and racially-mixed groups finally established themselves in small settlements on both sides of the Orange River near the junction of the Orange River and the Vaal River (Griqua), and also along the Harts River and Vaal River (Korana). *En route to the Transgariep*,³⁴⁴ some travellers and missionaries came across these settlements,

³⁴² Shell, pp. 251-264, 282; H.W. Claassens, *Die geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*, pp. 375-386. Originally submitted as a D.Phil. thesis, University of Pretoria, 2003; H. Claassens & F. Pretorius, "Die geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806", *South African Journal of Cultural History* 18(2), November 2004, pp. 117-123.

³⁴³ C. Murray, "The Tswana and Southern Sotho people" in W.F. Lye & C. Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld: the Tswana and Southern Sotho*, p. 40.

³⁴⁴ Later known as the Transoranje (Transorange). J. Visagie, "Migrasie en die gemeenskappe noord van die Oranjerivier" in F. Pretorius (ed.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika: van voortye tot vandag*, pp. 105-108.

and their descriptions of the habitations, gardens and fields they encountered there were included in journals and diaries. Many Khoesan scatterlings found refuge on the mission stations established by various missionary societies, such as the Berlin Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society.³⁴⁵ In this discussion, the focus is on the gardens and fields made by members of the Khoesan groups, who found themselves in settlements outside the mission stations.³⁴⁶

It was previously mentioned that apart from planting the occasional tobacco patch, the San and Khoekhoe did not practise any agriculture or horticulture. Despite this apparent lack of a gardening culture among them, some of their descendants, who left the Cape Colony, did make attempts to lay out gardens and fields with varying degrees of success. It is argued that those who laid out gardens and fields outside the Cape Colony were mostly those who had been exposed to the European colonists' gardening culture in some way or another. Some worked for white farmers in the Cape Colony as farm labourers and gardeners, as well as for some *trekboers* outside the Cape, whether seasonally or long-term. During the Khoesan descendants' interaction with their white masters, they learned the basic principles of agriculture and horticulture. As most of these groups settled in dry and semi-arid areas characterised by unreliable rainfall and limited water sources, gardening proved to be a challenge. Those who had settled near stable water sources, such as rivers, rivulets, streams and fountains were, of course, more successful in their gardening attempts.³⁴⁷

Generally, the gardens and fields of the groups of Khoesan descendants were very basic. The few available references to such gardens are cryptic in their descriptions and, in many cases, it is simply stated that the mentioned groups did not garden at all. This happened to be the case when the British medical practitioner, Dr Andrew Smith (1797-1872), found himself in "the country of the Griquas"³⁴⁸ in the vicinity of Philippolis in the southern part of the Transorange in 1834. Although the country was mostly inhabited by subjects of the Griqua

³⁴⁵ Descendants of the Khoekhoe and San who had settled on mission stations in the Transgariep laid out and maintained gardens there. These gardens will be discussed in Chapter 4.

³⁴⁶ Walker, pp. 46-47, 69-70, 91-93, 95-96; A.J. Böeseken, "Die geheime en bekoring van Afrika" in C.F.J. Muller (ed.), *Vyfhonderd jaar Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, pp. 60-64; C.F.J. Muller, "Stryd na binne en na buite, 1778-1795" in C.F.J. Muller (ed.), *Vyfhonderd jaar Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, pp. 91-93; Elphick, "Die Khoisan tot...", pp. 19-32; Visagie, pp. 98-108; Murray, pp. 39-41.

³⁴⁷ Walker, pp. 70, 96; Elphick, "Die Khoisan tot...", p. 20.

³⁴⁸ W.F. Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal of his expedition into the interior of South Africa 1834-1836*, p. 136.

government, Smith also found villages inhabited by Korana. There he found “few facilities for tilling the ground” and the Korana “seemed to possess no land under cultivation”.³⁴⁹ When Backhouse visited Griqua Town, situated north-west of Philippolis in the Griqualand West region, in the 1830s, he was equally disappointed to find that the Griquas’ “gardens and adjacent lands were desolate; a solitary peach-tree [sic] and a few fig-trees [sic] were all that survived in the former [gardens]”.³⁵⁰

The country of the Griqua was, however, not a complete wasteland as far as gardening was concerned. According to historian, Jan Visagie, the Griqua were the first non-European bearers of the European culture who settled north of the Orange River.³⁵¹ It appears as though the European culture of gardening also rubbed off onto them because Smith found cultivated land at the settlements of Modder Fonteyn and Bank Fonteyn, both situated in the vicinity of Philippolis. At Modder Fonteyn, which belonged to Abram Kok, a member of the well-known Griqua dynasty, Smith found “a little land under cultivation”.³⁵² Several “other spots of cultivated land”,³⁵³ which apparently belonged to other Griquas, could also be seen. Situated a small distance from Modder Fonteyn was Bank Fonteyn, which belonged to the Griqua chief, Adam Kok. There Smith found cultivated land which had been irrigated with water from a dam made above the land and a small river nearby.³⁵⁴

In addition to the Griqua and Korana, a third group, namely the Bastards, also laid out gardens. An official of the London Missionary Society, Joseph John Freeman (1794-1851), came across some Bastard gardens when he visited the Society’s mission stations and other towns and villages in the eastern part of the newly-proclaimed Orange River Sovereignty in 1849. One such town was Platberg, situated near modern-day Ladybrand, which Freeman described in the account of his travels as situated “in the country occupied by the Bastaards [Bastards]”.³⁵⁵ Freeman described the town, which had been well supplied with water, in glowing terms and mentioned, among other things, that “there are many gardens, and much

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

³⁵⁰ Backhouse, p. 446.

³⁵¹ Visagie, “Migrasie en die...”, p. 101.

³⁵² P.R. Kirby (ed.), *The diary of Dr. Andrew Smith, director of the “Expedition for Exploring Central Africa”, 1834-1836* (vol. I), p. 80.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ J.J. Freeman, *A tour in South Africa, with notices of Natal, Mauritius, Madagascar, Ceylon, Egypt, and Palestine*, p. 307.

land is cultivated.”³⁵⁶ Although Freeman referred to ‘gardens’, he noted that “corn of all kinds is extensively raised”,³⁵⁷ which is an indication that these gardens most likely displayed characteristics of the agricultural garden and horticultural field.

It is argued that because of the assumed historical absence of a culture of gardening or, at best, the existence of a very rudimentary gardening culture among the above-mentioned groups of Khoesan descendants, and the fact that they obtained their basic knowledge of gardening through interaction with the white colonists, their gardens are considered semi-vernacular. Although they conceived, laid out and maintained their gardens without direct European involvement, the gardens are not purely vernacular because of the strong influence of Western knowledge, skills and tools,³⁵⁸ which they had obtained from the white people.

2.6.2.2 Southern Africa’s ‘Bantu’-speaking horticulturists

According to historian, Kevin Shillington, the first ‘Bantu’-speaking farmers³⁵⁹ moved southwards through the tropical forests of central Africa “during the last few centuries of the BC era”.³⁶⁰ Contemporary sources differ with regard to the exact time period of this migration.³⁶¹ Various groups moved into the present-day Limpopo Province and the Highveld region of the present-day Gauteng Province. Over time, the migration resulted in the formation of the so-called ‘Southern Bantu’. According to social anthropologist, David Hammond-Tooke, the movement into the Highveld triggered a series of modifications which led to the broad cultural distinction between the Nguni, Tsonga, Venda and Sotho as the four main language and cultural groups.³⁶² Substantial archaeological evidence, such as the widespread presence of grinding stones and grain storage vessels, supports the argument that a relatively advanced cereal-based agriculture had developed on the southern African

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ Muller, “Stryd na binne...”, p. 93. Muller referred to “Westerse kennis, vaardighede en hulpmiddels”.

³⁵⁹ Oliver & Atmore referred to these farmers as “agriculturalists” and Oliver & Fage referred to them as “vegeculturalists”. See Oliver & Atmore, p. 16 and Oliver & Fage, p. 33.

³⁶⁰ Shillington, p. 31.

³⁶¹ M. Hall, “Early farming communities of Southern Africa: a population discovered”, *South African Historical Journal* 15, November 1983, pp. 1-9.

³⁶² D. Hammond-Tooke, *The roots of black South Africa: an introduction to the traditional culture of the black people of South Africa*, pp. 11-14; N.J. van Warmelo, “The classification of cultural groups” in W.D. Hammond-Tooke (ed.), *The Bantu-speaking peoples of Southern Africa*, pp. 56-57, 71-78; S.M. Molema, *The Bantu past and present: an ethnographical & historical study of the native races of South Africa*, pp. 18-21.

subcontinent during the Iron Age. Apart from the main crops, namely sorghum and millet, other crops and vegetables, such as pumpkins, melons and beans (genus and species unknown), were also widely cultivated by the iron-working communities. The mentioned foodstuffs became staples of the southern African ‘Bantu’-speaking people’s diet. Their basic diet was supplemented by foods that had been collected by means of hunting and gathering, such as venison, wild spinach (*Gynandropsis gynandra*)³⁶³ and, according to Lichtenstein, “the fruits of many sorts of trees that grow wild”.³⁶⁴ P.G. Eidelberg argued that hoe³⁶⁵ agriculture-and-pastoralism (also known as agro-pastoralism) reached South Africa approximately 1800 years ago. He emphasised the South African ‘Bantu’-speakers’ indigenous agro-pastoralist heritage of hoe horticulture as an important characteristic of their subsistence lifestyle. Eidelberg’s use of the term ‘indigenous’ is important because a distinction must be made between the indigenous hoe horticulture and the non-indigenous plough agriculture, which the Europeans, among them missionaries, introduced to Africa during the colonial period.³⁶⁶

A distinction must also be made between the ‘Bantu’-speaking Sotho-Tswana (later the Sotho or Basuto and Tswana or Bechuana/Beconoana³⁶⁷) who practised both horticulture and animal husbandry, on the one hand, and the San and Khoekhoe, who practised neither, on the other hand. Since the San and Khoekhoe did not practise any significant form of agriculture, horticulture or vegeculture, they did not share the ‘Bantu’-speakers’ agricultural and horticultural heritage. *The Sotho-Tswana’s strong agricultural and horticultural heritage is of particular importance for this study because most of Batho’s residents and, by implication, its gardeners, were either of Sotho or Tswana descent.* This issue will be discussed in Chapter 5. Eidelberg’s use of the term ‘horticulture’ in connection with the ‘Bantu’-speaking people is also significant. Although the term is used to describe the practice of small-scale farming in the form of cultivated fields, the question arises as to what extent the ‘horticulturists’, as Eidelberg called the agro-pastoralists (historian, Colin Bundy,

³⁶³ Known as *moroho* (Sesotho) and *morogo* (Setswana).

³⁶⁴ Lichtenstein (vol. II), p. 410. See also Campbell (vol. II), p. 217.

³⁶⁵ For a description of the hoe used by the ‘Bantu’-speakers, see Shaw, pp. 91-92.

³⁶⁶ Shillington, pp. 51-52, 58-59; P.G. Eidelberg, “Hunters, horticulturists, herders and ‘developmental inertia’: resistance to technological change in South Africa and North America”, *South African Historical Journal* 18, November 1986, pp. 99-100, 104-105, 120; Hall, pp. 4-7; Iliffe, pp. 16-17; Oliver & Fage, pp. 30-33.

³⁶⁷ G. Tylden, *The rise of the Basuto, passim*; J.M. Orpen, *History of the Basutus of South Africa, passim*; Lye & Murray, *passim*.

referred to them as ‘pastoralist-cultivators’³⁶⁸), indeed practised horticulture or gardening by laying out domestic food gardens close to their dwellings.³⁶⁹ However, before this question is answered, it is necessary to examine historical impressions and descriptions of South African black people’s gardens and fields.

2.6.2.3 The gardens of South Africa’s black people: historical impressions and descriptions

As is the case with black people’s gardens in Africa north of the Limpopo, the best and often the only sources of information on black people’s gardens south of the Limpopo are the journals of European travellers and missionaries. During the 18th and 19th centuries, travellers and missionaries not only travelled through the Cape Colony but also ventured into the South African interior, the eastern Cape region, Basutoland (today known as Lesotho), the Highveld and beyond. It must be noted that many of the travellers and missionaries were also plant collectors and amateur botanists, who had been instructed by botanical gardens in Europe and Britain to comb specific areas for new plant species. For example, a circular issued by the Colonial Botanist of the Cape of Good Hope in 1865 was specifically addressed to “missionaries labouring in South Africa beyond the Colony, requesting their co-operation in extending the acquaintance of Botanists with the Flora of South Africa.”³⁷⁰ The phrase ‘beyond the Colony’ is important because, by implication, it also refers to the region beyond the Orange River.

Most travellers and missionaries kept journals and diaries which contain insightful descriptions of the native inhabitants’ gardens and fields, both vernacular and semi-vernacular, whether laid out in towns, villages, settlements, on mission stations or farms. The botanical names of native plants were often provided. One of the earliest written references³⁷¹ to black people’s gardens outside the Cape Colony dates back to the early 1770s, when a British traveller named William Dampier (1651-1715) embarked on a trip

³⁶⁸ C. Bundy, *The rise & fall of the South African peasantry*, p. 1.

³⁶⁹ Eidelberg, pp. 99, 107; Molema, pp. 63-65; Oliver & Atmore, p. 25.

³⁷⁰ National Library of South Africa: *JC Brown Collection, MSC 5/20(9), Report of the Colonial Botanist for the year 1865, Cape of Good Hope*, p. 138.

³⁷¹ References known to the researcher. It is, however, possible that other references to black people’s gardens may exist.

around the world. He skipped the Cape of Good Hope and, instead, undertook a voyage to the east coast of Southern Africa where he disembarked at “het Land van *Natal*”.³⁷² He met “de Inboorlingen van dit Land”³⁷³ and discovered that “hun voornaamste werk is de Landbouw”.³⁷⁴ After Dampier’s visit, many more European travellers, who had visited Natal and the rest of Southern Africa, came to the same conclusion, namely, that the practising of agriculture and horticulture were prevalent among the indigenous black people. While Dampier only mentioned that the fields he saw had been fenced-in, other travellers provided more detail, which makes it possible to piece together a picture, albeit incomplete, of how the fields and gardens must have looked.³⁷⁵

Lichtenstein, who described, among other things, the gardens and fields of the “Caffre tribes”,³⁷⁶ came across patches of land cultivated by the “Koossas”³⁷⁷ in the Eastern Cape. He noted that they had planted millet, buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*), watermelons and maize. Regarding the position of the gardens and fields, Lichtenstein found that “no one possesses landed property: he [cultivator] sows his corn wherever he finds a convenient spot”.³⁷⁸ Apart from the “Caffre tribes of the east”, Lichtenstein also visited the “*Beetjuana*, *Sihtjuana*, or *Muhtjuana*”³⁷⁹ (Tswana) in the region of Kuruman³⁸⁰ in the present-day Northern Cape during the early 1800s. According to him, “their [Tswana] fields are commonly fenced round, and they cultivate, besides the Caffre-millet, two sorts of beans, gourds, and water-melons; all as it should seem, of new sorts, which have never yet been described.”³⁸¹ He referred to the Tswana people’s cultivated patches as ‘fields’ but did not say whether the millet, beans, gourds (*Lagenaria spp.*) and watermelons were all planted together in a kind of horticultural field. Campbell visited the same area in the early 1820s, specifically the towns of Lattakoo and Mashow (Image 2/6), and saw a wide variety of crops in the Tswana people’s gardens and fields. He mentioned sorghum, maize, kidney beans

³⁷² W. Dampier, *Reistogt rondom de wereld, met een korte beschryving van Natal een gedeelte van Africa* (vol. II), p. 302. (Dampier’s emphasis). “The country of *Natal*”. (Free translation)

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 303. “The natives of the country”. (Free translation)

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.* “Their main activity is agriculture”. (Free translation)

³⁷⁵ Van Zuylen, p. 102; Hobhouse, pp. 197, 200.

³⁷⁶ Lichtenstein (vol. I), p. 334.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.* “Xhosas”.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ Lichtenstein (vol. II), p. 407. (Lichtenstein’s emphasis)

³⁸⁰ Formerly known as ‘New Lattakoo’ or Lattakoo and established in 1817 by the Tswana (Tlhaping) chief Mothibi after ‘Old Lattakoo’ (Dithakong) was abandoned.

³⁸¹ Lichtenstein (vol. II), p. 410.

(*Phaseolus vulgaris*), sugarcane (*Saccharum spp.*), melons, watermelons, pumpkins and tobacco.³⁸² Campbell noted that the Tswana had planted crops and vegetables introduced by the missionaries only if the plants resembled those they had been accustomed to and were “handed down to them from their forefathers”.³⁸³ For this reason, the Tswana resisted planting potatoes and, when they first saw European flowers in the missionaries’ gardens, they “conceived they [flowers] were either for medicine or food, and would not believe they were only for pleasure.”³⁸⁴

Due to the importance of the Sotho and Tswana and the indigenous groups related to them, such as the Barolong (Tswana), Batlokwa (Sotho-Tswana) and Bakwena (Sotho-Tswana), for this study, the focus now shifts to the gardens made by members of these groups who lived in the geographical area between the Orange River and the Vaal River. This area became the Orange River Sovereignty in 1846 and a Boer republic – the Orange Free State – in 1854. During the first four decades of the 19th century, increasing numbers of travellers and missionaries of the Berlin Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Paris Evangelical Society and the Wesleyan Missionary Society³⁸⁵ crossed the Orange River. Pioneers in their own right, they ventured into the interior of a geographical area which was, by then, still fairly unknown to Europeans, except for the few frontier colonists, who had been mostly cattle farmers or *veeboers*, and who had laid informal claims to grazing rights in the region.³⁸⁶

One of the best-known travellers who visited parts of this area was the previously-mentioned Dr Andrew Smith. Smith and a company of almost forty persons explored the southern and eastern parts of the region, as well as Basutoland, in 1834. His interest in fauna and flora made him sensitive to his surroundings; consequently, cultivated gardens and fields did not escape his attention. Smith observed that cultivated land usually “indicated the proximity of

³⁸² Campbell (vol. II), pp. 215-216.

³⁸³ Campbell (vol. I), p. 101.

³⁸⁴ Campbell (vol. II), p. 59.

³⁸⁵ Representatives of the mentioned missionary societies founded mission stations in the region. Almost without exception gardens and fields were laid out at the stations under the supervision of European missionaries. These gardens will be discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6.

³⁸⁶ K. Schoeman, “Vroeë blanke reisigers in die Oranje-Vrystaat (1827-1840)”, *Africana Notes and News* 28(2), June 1988, pp. 53-61; K. Schoeman (ed.), *The British presence in the Transorange 1845-1854*, pp. 7-8; C. Pettman, “Some glimpses of old Free State history”, *The Friend*, 8.11.1924, p. 9.

natives”;³⁸⁷ which happened to be the case in the fertile and mountainous region of the Caledon River where “Bashootoo”³⁸⁸ (Basotho) gardens and fields abounded. Smith and his company visited numerous “native villages”³⁸⁹ in the vicinity of the Witteberge near modern-day Bethlehem and were impressed with how the inhabitants had managed to lay out gardens in such “elevated regions”.³⁹⁰ He wrote that “their gardens and many of the springs from which they derive their supply of water lie below.”³⁹¹ Noteworthy is Smith’s use of the word ‘gardens’ in cases where he also referred to “tracts of cultivated ground”.³⁹² Backhouse was an equally observant traveller and, during his journey near the southern stretch of the Caledon River in the vicinity of the mission station of Beersheba, he saw some Sotho people cultivating a piece of land: “they render the earth moist by irrigation, *scatter* the wheat on the surface, and bury it by hoeing up the soil.”³⁹³ Note the term ‘scatter’, which meant that seed was not sown in rows.

During the time of Smith’s expedition, the town of Thaba ’Nchu, situated near the northern border of Basutoland and about 60 km from Bloemfontein, was already an established settlement where most of the inhabitants were Barolong, that is, members of the Rolong branch of the Tswana. Although Smith’s description of Thaba ’Nchu as a “Basutu kraal”³⁹⁴ is misleading, his description of the gardens he found there is probably accurate. He wrote in his diary that the inhabitants were “living entirely upon the productions of the ground.”³⁹⁵ Smith found “gardens along the edge of the streams” and these were planted with “Indian corn, melons and Caffer corn [sorghum]”.³⁹⁶ It seems as though the Barolong’s gardens at Thaba ’Nchu had been a sight to behold because not long after Smith’s expedition, August Gebel of the Berlin Missionary Society felt urged to visit Thaba ’Nchu³⁹⁷ to see the gardens for himself. Apart from the Barolong’s industriousness and cultivating skills, Gebel

³⁸⁷ Lye (ed.), p. 57.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³⁹³ Backhouse, p. 360. (Own emphasis)

³⁹⁴ Kirby (ed.), p. 146.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ Gebel visited Thaba ’Nchu as part of a journey he undertook eastward along the Modder River (1835-1836).

mentioned that the general abundance of water in the area made gardening and agriculture on an extensive scale feasible.³⁹⁸

Reverend James Archbell (1798-1866), a British Methodist missionary who ministered among the Barolong during the 1820s and 1830s, described Thaba 'Nchu as a "well-watered land of Goshen",³⁹⁹ which gave the impression of "a veritable Garden of Eden".⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that the travellers who visited Thaba 'Nchu were impressed by the variety of crops grown in the Barolong's gardens, including "kaffir corn, pumpkins, melons, Turkish maize, and beans".⁴⁰¹ Smith noted that these crops thrived even without irrigation, provided that it is not too dry.⁴⁰² It seems as though the Barolong managed to maintain their gardens and fields throughout the 19th century because shortly after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) had ended, the British author, E.F. Knight, was impressed by the variety of gardens and fields he had seen at Thaba 'Nchu. He found that the "wealthy Kaffirs are settled on the land, owning large herds and cultivating extensive tracts, while the poorer Kaffirs, owning fewer cattle, cultivate their patches".⁴⁰³ Apart from gardens and fields, the Barolong also planted trees: Reverend William Crisp (1842-1910), the Anglican missionary who became Arch Deacon of Bloemfontein in 1887, was a regular visitor to Thaba 'Nchu. In a letter to a family member in England, dated 1868, he noted that the Barolong had planted trees among their huts, presumably for shade.⁴⁰⁴

The mentioning of water sources in some of the previously-mentioned descriptions of the gardens and fields of the indigenous black people is significant because it emphasises the crucial link between the viability of gardens and fields on the one hand, and the necessary water supplies on the other. The availability, accessibility and sustainability of water sources is the decisive factor in the laying out of gardens in a region known for its climatic extremes

³⁹⁸ Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA): A. 304, P. Scholz, *Historical notes about the Barologs, s.a.* (manuscript), no p. no.; K. Schoeman (ed.), *Early white travellers in the Transgariep 1819-1840*, pp. 79-81; J.D. Steyl, "Land for Natives at Thaba 'Nchu", *The Friend*, 11.1.1937, p. 6; *The Friend*, 26.12.1936, p. 10; Molema, pp. 45-49; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 15.10.1932, p. 3.

³⁹⁹ C. Pettman, "Centenary of Barolong at Thaba 'Nchu", *The Friend*, 2.12.1933, p. 15.

⁴⁰⁰ *The Friend*, 14.12.1936, p. 8.

⁴⁰¹ Schoeman (ed.), *Early white travellers...*, pp. 80-81.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁴⁰³ E.F. Knight, *South Africa after the war: a narrative of recent travel*, p. 152.

⁴⁰⁴ FSPA: A. 27, *Extracts from the diary of the Rev. Crisp: letters from Rev. W. Crisp to family members, 1867-1875* (manuscript), no p. no.

and unpredictable rainfall patterns, such as the then Orange Free State.⁴⁰⁵ During periods of prolonged drought, the black people's gardens and fields were dependent on water sources such as fountains and mountain streams. They had to make do without the wells, boreholes and water provisioning schemes introduced by the white colonists after 1846. Before 1846, gardens and fields were laid out not because of the availability of reliable water sources but despite the lack thereof. Extensive knowledge of the local climate, topography, vegetation and basic irrigation methods had certainly benefited the 'Bantu'-speaking horticulturists, such as the Sotho-Tswana. Some travellers and missionaries were often surprised to find gardens in the most unlikely places and seemingly thriving in extreme conditions. For this reason, Lichtenstein advised "whoever does not understand the nature of this country, must consider it as something very extraordinary, to find, in the midst of such a dreary waste, a place so rich in productions of the earth of various kinds".⁴⁰⁶ Although Lichtenstein made this remark in reference to the region south of the Orange River, it is equally applicable to the area north of this river.⁴⁰⁷

Based on selected accounts of the gardens and fields of some of the 'Bantu'-speakers of Southern Africa, specifically those who lived in the geographical area which later became known as South Africa, it is argued that not all the indigenous groups were equally advanced as far as agriculture and horticulture was concerned. Although it is not the intention to draw comparisons, it is interesting to note that Lichtenstein, for example, gained the impression that "they [Tswana] pay much more attention to agriculture than the Caffres [Xhosas]".⁴⁰⁸ The South African ethnographer, S.M. Molema, agreed with Lichtenstein and argued that the Sotho-Tswana, or in his words, the "Bechuana-Basuto nations", were "more truly agricultural"⁴⁰⁹ than the other 'Bantu'-speakers. Molema reasoned that concerning agriculture and horticulture, "they [Sotho-Tswana] far surpassed their more bellicose neighbours of the east coast."⁴¹⁰ Although Lichtenstein's and Molema's arguments are debatable and will probably be challenged by some contemporary academics, they are not

⁴⁰⁵ FSPA: A. 17.1, Anon., *The Orange Free State, ca. 1875* (manuscript), no p. no.; FSPA: A. 574, R. Bentham Weedon, *Description of O.F.S., 1893* (manuscript), no p. no. The climate and topography of the Free State and Bloemfontein will be discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

⁴⁰⁶ Lichtenstein (vol. II), p. 85.

⁴⁰⁷ R. Moffett, *Sesotho plant and animal names and plants used by the Basotho*, pp. v-viii; Molema, p. 49; Lichtenstein (vol. II), p. 85.

⁴⁰⁸ Lichtenstein (vol. II), p. 410.

⁴⁰⁹ Molema, p. 64.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

without merit. Among the reasons Molema cited in favour of the Sotho-Tswana people's apparent advanced state of agriculture and horticulture, are "their love of peace" and the fact that they managed to establish themselves in "great agricultural settlements"⁴¹¹ at geographically favourable localities. These and other factors, such as their stationary lifestyle, contributed to the Sotho and Tswana people's laying out of gardens and fields that were not only admired by travellers and missionaries but also characterised the noteworthy vernacular gardening culture which had developed among them over a long period of time.⁴¹²

2.6.2.4 The 'Bantu'-speakers' vernacular gardens and fields and those who cultivated them

In order to provide an accurate description of the vernacular gardens of the 'Bantu'-speaking peoples of South Africa or so-called 'Southern Bantu'-speakers, specifically the Sotho and Tswana because of their importance for this study, it is necessary to explain the nature of their domestic settlements. Hammond-Tooke argued that the basic unit of settlement among all the 'Southern Bantu'-speakers was the homestead. A typical homestead consisted of a group of dwellings, usually huts, arranged in a traditional pattern which carried symbolic meaning. Homesteads were either scattered, in other words, individual homesteads situated at a distance from their neighbours or a group or various groups of homesteads were clustered into villages or towns. Towns differed from villages in size and complexity of organisation and were usually divided into wards. Each homestead, usually stockaded or fenced, formed an independent economic unit with its own dwelling huts, kitchen, granaries and cultivated fields. As was the case with homesteads, villages were often also stockaded. Typically, the outer stockades or fences of all the homesteads joined at some point so that the entire village was enclosed. According to South African ethnologist, Margaret Shaw, the traditional material used for stockades or fences were densely packed dead trees or tree stumps. In the dry and arid areas where wood was scarce, sturdy stone walls replaced the stockades.⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

⁴¹³ Shaw, pp. 85-87; Hammond-Tooke, pp. 54-63; Oliver & Atmore, p. 25; M. Wilson, "The Sotho, Venda, and Tsonga" in M. Wilson & L. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa (vol. 1): South Africa to 1870*, pp. 153-163.

In her description of the cultivated areas of the ‘Southern Bantu’-speakers, including the Sotho and Tswana, Shaw made a clear distinction between ‘lands’ (fields) on the one hand and ‘gardens’ on the other. V.G.J. Sheddick made a similar distinction and stated that the Sotho usually “possess[ed] *gardens* in addition to their *fields*.”⁴¹⁴ Shaw argued that “lands are generally situated a little *distance away* from the homesteads, except that tobacco, occasionally gourds, and some vegetables are often grown in gardens *next to* the huts.”⁴¹⁵ Sheddick described the garden as “a domestic plot” which originated as a “small patch”⁴¹⁶ near the hut or dwelling used for the cultivation of tobacco. Later, vegetables were added, which resulted in the domestic garden essentially developing its own character as a food garden. Traditionally, no ornamental flowers or shrubs were grown in the domestic garden. Shaw did not say much about the design and layout of the vernacular fields and gardens except that fields were “irregular in shape”⁴¹⁷ and edged with grass strips. The grass strips were later replaced with fences to keep out animals. According to Sheddick, the basic design of the garden has shown “considerable variety”⁴¹⁸ in both form and purpose. Sheddick argued that over time, the domestic garden evolved into “a small plot enclosed by a fence of reeds and twigs [stockade] and located near to its holder’s homestead.”⁴¹⁹

In terms of Shaw’s description of the ‘Southern Bantu’-speakers’ vernacular gardens, the difference between fields or lands and domestic gardens not only involved the distance at which they were laid out from the dwelling but also what was grown in them. Traditionally, the ‘Southern Bantu’-speakers planted sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*) and maize (*Zea mays*) in the fields, while the domestic gardens were reserved for vegetables, including pumpkins (*Cucurbitaceae spp.*), melons⁴²⁰ (*Cucurbitaceae spp.*), gourds (*Lagenaria siceraria*), jugobeans (*Voandzeia subterranea*), cowpeas (*Vigna unguiculata*), wild spinach (*Gynandropsis gynandra*) and, occasionally, groundnuts (*Arachis hypogaea*). Eaten green, gourds, however, were cultivated mainly for making eating vessels and household containers. While sorghum, melons and gourds are indigenous, other crops originated

⁴¹⁴ V.G.J. Sheddick, *Southern Africa (part II): the Southern Sotho*, pp. 18-19. (Own emphasis)

⁴¹⁵ Shaw, p. 91. (Own emphasis)

⁴¹⁶ Sheddick, p. 19.

⁴¹⁷ Shaw, p. 91.

⁴¹⁸ Sheddick, p. 19.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ Also called *karkoer* (orig. Khoekhoe) and *makataan* or *makatane* (orig. Sotho). Backhouse referred to it as a ‘Caffer Melon’ (*Citrullus caffer*). Backhouse, p. 249.

elsewhere, including, of course, maize and pumpkins (both from the Americas). In the case of the Sotho and Tswana, the most common crops cultivated in fields were sorghum and maize and the most common vegetables grown in domestic gardens were pumpkins, melons and wild spinach.⁴²¹

As far as the distance between the fields and dwellings was concerned the main determining factors were the fertility of the soil, the type of soil and the availability of subterranean and other water sources. In fertile regions with a relatively reliable rainfall pattern, fields were laid out fairly close to the dwellings (according to Shaw “five or ten minutes’ walk”⁴²² from the owner’s homestead). Historically, ‘Bantu’-speaking agriculturists and horticulturists were well informed with regard to which soil types were best suited to which crops and vegetables. In the dry and more arid parts of South Africa, including the north-western and central parts, fields were laid out further away from homesteads. The distance was mostly determined by the location of water sources, such as fountains, rivers, streams or dams. Apart from these two factors, Hammond-Tooke mentioned another factor which determined the distance between the fields and the dwelling, namely the number of people who lived together in villages or towns. In the case of large concentrations of people, fields could not be made close to homesteads. When fields were located far away from towns, villages and homesteads, “some family members”⁴²³ resided in small temporary settlements close to the fields to look after them and scare away seed-eating birds.⁴²⁴

Typically, the above-mentioned ‘some family members’ who were responsible for looking after the fields and gardens and scaring away the birds, were female. Most, if not all, arguments regarding the division of labour in Africa raised earlier in this chapter are also applicable to the ‘Southern Bantu’-speakers, including the Sotho and Tswana. Among these groups, the division of labour along gender lines was clearly defined, and agriculture and horticulture were considered the woman’s domain. Shaw rightly stated that “among the ‘Southern Bantu’ women are the agriculturalists”⁴²⁵ and, by implication, the horticulturists

⁴²¹ Shaw, p. 92; Coetzee, pp. 22, 67-69, 87; R. Coetzee, “Funa – food of pristine Africa”, *Lantern* 38(1), January 1989, pp. 71-73, 75; Wilson, p. 142; B. Basemzansi (ed.), *South African indigenous foods*, pp. 13, 45.

⁴²² Shaw, p. 91.

⁴²³ Hammond-Tooke, p. 49.

⁴²⁴ Shaw, p. 91; Hammond-Tooke, p. 49.

⁴²⁵ Shaw, p. 90.

or gardeners. Historian, E.A. Walker, confirmed this and argued that “the hoeing of the gardens, the tending of the mealies, Kaffir corn and pumpkins, and the making of the beer fell to the women”.⁴²⁶ Men’s involvement in cultivation was mostly limited to heavy work, such as breaking and clearing virgin soil to prepare it for planting. Although some travellers and missionaries, including Smith, reported seeing Sotho and Tswana men and women working together in gardens and fields, the practice was apparently not widespread.⁴²⁷ The men’s primary responsibility was tending the livestock. When plough agriculture was introduced in Southern Africa by European farmers and missionaries, ploughing became the men’s responsibility because ploughs were drawn by cattle. All the other tasks related to agriculture and horticulture, including hoeing, sowing, weeding, watering, and scaring away birds, were the responsibility of women, often assisted by young children.⁴²⁸

Considering the descriptions of the ‘Southern Bantu’-speakers’ traditional gardens and fields, that is, their vernacular gardens, it is argued that the same seven generic characteristics which typify pre-20th century vernacular gardens and the vernacular gardens of indigenous communities across the globe, are also displayed by African and South African vernacular gardens in varying degrees. It is also argued that the characteristics are, in fact, universally applicable to vernacular gardens since this garden type conforms to specific characteristics commonly shared by all vernacular gardens, no matter where they are located. As will be explained in the Evaluation (Chapter 10), most of these characteristics also typify Batho’s topiary gardens.

2.6.2.5 A new type of garden: the semi-vernacular location garden

In terms of Shaw’s and Hammond-Tooke’s observations and arguments, it is reasoned that, historically, there happened to be a visible distinction between the fields and gardens of the ‘Southern Bantu’-speakers, including the Sotho and Tswana. As stated above, the distinction was visible in terms of the distance between field and dwelling and garden and dwelling on

⁴²⁶ Walker, p. 113.

⁴²⁷ Kirby (vol. II), p. 223.

⁴²⁸ Shaw, pp. 90-94; F. Rodseth, *Ndabazabantu: the life of a Native Affairs Administrator*, p. 7; Coetzee, *Funa food from...*, pp. 49-50, 67; Shillington, p. 59; M. Wilson, “Co-operation and conflict: the eastern Cape frontier” in M. Wilson & L. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa (vol. I): South Africa to 1870*, pp. 239-240; Backhouse, pp. 233, 358.

the one hand, and what was planted in them on the other. Fields were mostly planted with crops, and gardens were mostly planted with vegetables and, occasionally, tobacco. This answers the question as to whether the Sotho and Tswana practised horticulture or gardening by laying out domestic gardens close to their dwellings. The next question is whether the distinction between garden and field was, in all cases, as clear-cut as Shaw and Hammond-Tooke suggested, considering the travellers' and missionaries' descriptions of black people's gardens and fields. Did the Sotho and Tswana lay out agricultural gardens and horticultural fields? It is argued that the distinction between garden and field, which was traditionally and historically more visible and pronounced, became increasingly blurred over time, especially since the arrival of Europeans and the growing influence of European culture – including gardening culture – on non-Europeans. Apart from new seeds, plants and tools, new garden styles and practices were introduced by the Europeans. Sheddick's argument that the Sotho garden has shown "considerable variety"⁴²⁹ supports this claim. *The blurring of the boundaries between garden and field happened among most 'Southern Bantu'-speakers and the effect of European cultural influence on agriculture and horticulture became progressively more visible in terms of the combination of plants and crops, the variety of plants and design as well as layout.*

It seems as though the blurring of the traditional line between black people's gardens and fields had become fairly widespread at the dawn of the 20th century. Godfrey Callaway, a mission priest at St Cuthbert's Mission in the Eastern Cape, aptly summed up this trend in his description of what appears to be a typical South African horticultural field in the early 1900s: "There are times in South Africa when climate and soil seem to conspire together to show what they can do. At such times a ride through the ploughing lands is a great delight. The tall graceful stalks of the mealie plant and the full-grained red heads of the Kafir [sic] corn rise up above you on either side. Enormous pumpkins peep out from their half-hidden bed below."⁴³⁰ The appearance of pumpkins next to sorghum and maize on the same piece of cultivated land unmistakably indicates a horticultural field.

⁴²⁹ Sheddick, p. 19.

⁴³⁰ G. Callaway, *Sketches of Kafir life*, p. 23.

Another important factor that influenced the design and layout of black people's gardens is the urbanisation⁴³¹ of black people. This migration process was set in motion by, among others, the mineral revolution of the late 1800s and the disruptive effects of the Anglo-Boer War. After the War had ended, the process accelerated. For a number of political, social and economic reasons, which will be discussed in Chapter 5, growing numbers of black people left the reserves, the rural areas and white-owned farms and settled in the locations of towns and cities across South Africa. In the towns and cities, the newcomers were allowed to live in strictly segregated locations customarily situated at some distance from the white residential areas. In the locations, black people were allocated small 'stands' or 'plots' which averaged approximately 16.5 m x 25 m in size. On the stands or plots, they were initially allowed to live in a variety of dwellings, varying from sturdy brick houses to informally-erected structures.⁴³² Among the thousands of new location dwellers who made the trek to the towns and cities were many gardeners and cultivators who had previously gardened in some or other capacity. Some of them cultivated lands in the reserves, others worked as farm labourers on white-owned farms and many more worked as domestic gardeners for whites. A small minority of farm labourers were allowed to cultivate their own gardens, such as the workers of South African author, Leonard Flemming (1880-1946), who farmed in the district of Dewetsdorp in the Orange Free State. Flemming acknowledged his workers' need for gardens and gave "each family a piece of ground in which to sow small crops for themselves".⁴³³ Unfortunately, however, this gesture was not the rule on most white-owned farms.⁴³⁴

The new location dwellers who desired to lay out gardens for themselves had to do so in the small open spaces in front of and/or behind their dwellings. Often the soil was unsuitable for

⁴³¹ The urbanisation of black and coloured people in the Orange Free State before and after the Anglo-Boer War is discussed in Chapter 5.

⁴³² P. Morris, *A history of black housing in South Africa*, pp. 11-12; D. Welsh, "The growth of towns" in M. Wilson & L. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa (vol. II): South Africa 1870-1966*, pp. 209-221; J.D. Rheinallt Jones, "Social and economic condition of the urban Native" in I. Schapera (ed.), *Western civilization and the Natives of South Africa: studies in culture contact*, pp. 166-171; H.J. van Aswegen, "Die verstedeliking van die Nie-Blanke in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1854-1902", *South African Historical Journal* 2, November 1970, pp. 20-37; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 19.8.1939, p. 19; W.F. Lye, "Responses to colonialism" in W.F. Lye & C. Murray, *Transformations on the Highveld: the Tswana and Southern Sotho*, pp. 75-77.

⁴³³ L. Flemming, *The call of the veld*, p. 122.

⁴³⁴ S.T. Plaatje, *Native life in South Africa, before and since the European war and the Boer rebellion*, pp. 45-57.

gardening and the surface drainage inadequate. In some cases, however, sympathetic municipalities allocated allotments to black gardeners who requested additional gardening plots for the purpose of vegetable gardening. Allotments were either situated in open spaces in the locations, usually near a *spruit* (small stream) or well, or on the margins of the locations.⁴³⁵ It must be mentioned that while the allocation of allotments to Bloemfontein's location residents was a novelty, it was already fairly common in the Cape Colony. For example, in 1906, mention was made of 'garden lots' granted to residents of the location situated alongside the revered Lovedale Missionary Institution⁴³⁶ for black people near Alice in the Eastern Cape. In a letter addressed to the Cape Colony's Native Affairs Department, the Reverend, James Henderson of Lovedale, wrote that "thirty-one garden lots were to be surveyed and given to the house-holders for whom building plots had been arranged in the location, and thirty-two garden lots were to be surveyed and kept in reserve for their children."⁴³⁷

It is argued that since the second decade of the 20th century, a new type of garden has evolved and developed in the average South African location. For the purpose of this study, it is called a 'location garden' (later 'township garden') and represents a new way of gardening for black people. Firstly, location dwellers had to make do with the limited space available for gardening on the average location plot. The available garden space obviously varied according to the size of the house. The important argument is that in most cases, the newly-arrived location dwellers were used to bigger spaces for garden lots and agricultural fields in the reserves and on the farms. Secondly, because of the limited space, it was not possible for gardeners to lay out both a domestic garden and the traditional agricultural field. Somehow, garden and field had to be squeezed into the confines of the location stand. Due to the ever-present influence of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing, most black gardeners copied the white people and laid out an ornamental garden in front of the house and a vegetable garden behind the house. This represents a major departure from the

⁴³⁵ Rheinallt Jones, pp. 160-166; R. Kantorowich, "Planning" in P.H. Connell *et al.*, *Native housing: a collective thesis*, pp. 95, 104; Morris, p. 13.

⁴³⁶ For more information, see R.H.W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa: the story of a century 1841-1941, passim*; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 30.6.1934, p. 3. Lovedale will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

⁴³⁷ WCARS: NA 707 (B2934), *Letter from Rev. J. Henderson, Lovedale, to Col. W.E.M. Stanford, Native Affairs Department, Cape Town*, 22.11.1906, p. 1. See also WCARS: T 997 (3655), *Lovedale: quitrent on building and garden lots no. 1-31, 1906*; WCARS: 1/NKE 9 (33), *Application for vacant garden allotments in the district of Nqamakwe, Butterworth*, 26.11.1910, no p. no.

traditional black (and, by implication, also Sotho-Tswana) domestic garden which contained vegetables and tobacco but no flowers. The result gave the impression of the dwelling standing in a garden. Sheddick described this trend as follows: “each dwelling is located within its own private garden after the manner of European-type residences.”⁴³⁸ Increasingly, this happened to be the pattern in most South African locations but particularly those that had been planned and laid out from scratch after World War I, such as Batho. In these so-called ‘model locations’, the size of plots increased and, as a result, also the available garden space.⁴³⁹

Another development in the evolution of the location garden is the inclusion of a small fruit orchard, a vine arbour and a ‘mealie patch’ or ‘mealie garden’ in the backyards of dwellings. While the idea of a fruit orchard and vine arbour in the back garden is generally considered a European influence, the maize patch or maize garden is rooted in the traditional agricultural maize field of the ‘Southern Bantu’-speakers. It is argued that the laying out of a small maize patch represents an attempt by location dwellers not only to recreate a miniature version of the traditional maize field but also to establish a symbolic link with an agricultural tradition that has become increasingly threatened in the location environment.⁴⁴⁰ More importantly, the maize patch also happens to be related to black identity: “Die lappies mielies in feitlik elke tuin is baie belangrik. Mielies is die tradisionele voedsel van die Bantoe en hy wat sy eie graan in sy grond plant...voel tog dat hy een is van die groter Bantoe-gemeenskap”.⁴⁴¹

Finally, it is argued that the maize patch, the fruit orchard and vine arbour in the backyard and the small flower garden in front of the dwelling have contributed to the creation of the location garden as a garden type typically associated with the gardening culture of location dwellers. Essentially, the location garden represents a blend of cultural elements derived from both the black and white gardening cultures. *In addition to the orchard, vine arbour and flowerbed, another important element was added to the location garden, namely topiary*

⁴³⁸ Sheddick, p. 19.

⁴³⁹ F.J. Wepener, “Psychological approach” in P.H. Connell *et al.*, pp. 62-64, 75; Du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, pp. 64-66; Sheddick, p. 19; D.M. Calderwood, *Native housing in South Africa* (Published D.Arch. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1953), pp. 1-4, 18.

⁴⁴⁰ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 3.2.1934, p. 5.

⁴⁴¹ Anon., “‘n Stukkie grond... ’n huis... my eie”, *Bantu* XIV(4), April 1967, p. 19. “The maize patches in almost every garden are very important. Maize is the traditional food of the Bantu and he who plants his own grain in his soil...considers himself to be part of the greater Bantu community”. (Free translation)

in the form of clipped hedges and later living sculpture. Location gardens enclosed by clipped hedges not only paid homage to the ancient idea of the garden as an enclosed space but also became a standard feature of the South African location landscape. Topiary, as an age-old gardening tradition, and its influence on South African gardens are discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Is the location garden vernacular or semi-vernacular? Due to the fact that the location garden was shaped by stylistic influences of both the black and white gardening cultures, it is considered semi-vernacular in all respects. Indeed, the gardens were conceived by their owners, but the European stylistic influences are evident. In Chapter 8 and Chapter 9, it is explained why Batho's topiary gardens are not only a prime example of the location garden but also why they are considered semi-vernacular.

2.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter provided a broad historical perspective on the history and evolution of the vernacular garden in Europe, Britain, the USA, the developing world, Africa and South Africa. The vernacular was juxtaposed with the patrician in order to emphasise the differences between the two styles. Attention was paid to the gardens of South Africa's black people and how the 'Bantu'-speakers' vernacular gardens evolved into the semi-vernacular location garden typical of the country's urban areas. In the next chapter, the focus shifts to a garden phenomenon that had traditionally been associated with the patrician garden, namely the art of clipping vegetation into all kinds of shapes. Commonly known as topiary, this garden trend had evolved since classical times and became an important characteristic of almost all British and European gardens. Importantly, the taste for topiary also spread to other parts of the world, most notably the developing world, including Africa and South Africa. In Chapter 3, it will be explained why topiary was characteristic of the gardens laid out by the white colonists who had settled at the Cape of Good Hope and in other parts of Southern Africa, and how their taste for topiary affected the gardens of indigenous communities.

CHAPTER 3

THE TASTE FOR TOPIARY

3.1 Introduction

The history of topiary as an international garden art is entirely intertwined with the history of gardens and gardening in Europe, Britain, Africa and South Africa. As a key element of Batho's topiary gardens, this art form needs to be explained and discussed in order to adequately understand topiary's 'Africanised' versions. The first part of this chapter discusses the history of topiary – primarily a European garden art – against the backdrop of European garden history and the history and development of the European vernacular garden, as discussed in the first part of Chapter 2. The focus will be solely on the art of topiary and how it evolved and developed in response to the ebb and flow of European garden trends through the ages. The chapter commences with an explanation of topiary by providing definitions of this verdant artistic expression. Since topiary is universally considered a key element of the traditional formal European garden style, the next section of the chapter explores the age-old close relationship that exists between topiary and the formal style of gardening and, incidentally, classical architecture. This discussion is followed by a historical overview of European topiary as an ancient garden art and its development since it originated in the Greco-Roman world. The various categories and types of topiary will also be discussed.

In the second part of the chapter, the focus shifts to Africa, specifically Southern Africa and South Africa. The traditional African stockaded enclosure, discussed in Chapter 2, will be revisited since a link exists between the dry stockade and the unclipped or wild green hedge. Although typically associated with the high rainfall areas of Africa north of the Limpopo River, it will be explained why living hedges also became prevalent in some arid areas of Southern Africa. Finally, the focus shifts to South Africa and the role that topiary has played in the history of South African horticulture since 1652. It will be explained how topiary became a characteristic element of the white Dutch and British colonists' gardens, initially in the Cape Colony, and later in Natal and the Boer republics. *The strong emphasis on the*

white colonists' gardens stems from the central argument that the white colonists first brought topiary to South Africa (and the rest of Africa) and that through a process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing, topiary, particularly clipped hedges, was adopted by the indigenous groups and 'Bantu'-speaking black people. At the same time, however, it will also be argued that the concept of a fence or screen as a type of enclosure had already been established among some indigenous and 'Bantu'-speaking groups long before the Europeans and their culture of plant-clipping arrived in the Cape. The possible link between the popularity of clipped hedges, especially in the semi-vernacular location garden of the early 20th century, and the traditional stockade and later the living green hedge, will be explored.

3.2 From *topos* to topiary: defining an art form

Before the origin and history of topiary are discussed, the meaning of the term 'topiary' and other related terms need to be explained. One explanation for the provenance of the term 'topiary' is that it is derived from the original Greek words *topos*, which means 'place', and *topion*, which means 'little place'. Although there is no direct reference to 'garden' or 'gardening', the Greek roots of the word are nevertheless significant in terms of the word's deep historical dimension. The more commonly-held argument is that the term 'topiary' derives from the Latin word *topia*, which means 'ornamental gardening' or 'decorative garden work' and, in particular, the Latin word *topiarius*, which means 'landscape gardener'. The fact that the *topiarius* was a respected artisan in Roman society rather than a mere garden labourer, stresses how deeply the etymology of the word 'topiary' is rooted in the decorative arts of the classical world.¹ The 1934 edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary* defines 'topiary' as the "art of training, cutting, and trimming, trees or shrubs into odd or ornamental shapes".² The 1952 edition of *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language* also defines 'topiary' as an art form: "the art of cutting living trees, esp. yews and boxes, into shapes of animals, birds, and other objects."³ This definition not only mentions specific plant species commonly used for topiary but also examples of topiary designs.

¹ Anon., *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "Topiary", <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/topiary.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 17.1.2017); Anon., *Collins Dictionary*, "Topiary", <<http://www.collinsdictionary/english/topiary.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 17.1.2017).

² Anon., *Webster's New International Dictionary*, p. 2669.

³ H.C. Wyld (ed.), *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language*, p. 1272.

Contemporary definitions of ‘topiary’ tend to be more concise and emphasise its decorative nature, as seen in the *Oxford Dictionary*, which defines it as “shrubs or trees clipped into ornamental shapes”.⁴ Similarly, the *Macmillan Dictionary* defines ‘topiary’ as “a bush or a tree cut into a particular shape for decoration”.⁵ Other related terms include ‘topiarist’, who is a person “skilled in topiary gardening”,⁶ and the adjective ‘topiarian’, which refers to topiary art.⁷ Although all of the above-mentioned definitions refer to the clipping of plant material into all kinds of decorative shapes, it is important to note that clipped hedges and edges are considered “a simple form of topiary”.⁸ For the purpose of this study, and with Batho’s topiary gardens in mind, hedges and all its variations are no less important than the elaborate ornamental shapes traditionally associated with topiary. According to the *Cambridge English Dictionary*, a hedge is “a line of bushes or small trees planted very close together, especially along the edge of a garden, field, or road”⁹ while the *Oxford Dictionary* defines it as “a fence or boundary formed by closely growing bushes or shrubs”.¹⁰ Most dictionaries agree that, firstly, a hedge defines, creates or establishes a fence or boundary, and, secondly, a hedge is made of or formed by live and growing plants. For this reason, then, a dry stockade is not considered a hedge.

In their authoritative work on landscape design, American authors, Henry Vincent Hubbard and Theodora Kimball, stressed the importance of a hedge (and all its variations) in garden design. Their definition raises the concept of a garden hedge to a new level and emphasises the design and appearance thereof: “a hedge is a foliage wall which, being parallel-sided, expresses on the outside the form it incloses [sic] within.”¹¹ Hubbard and Kimball also argued that “a hedge may be very rough in texture, being little more than a somewhat

⁴ Anon., *Oxford Dictionaries*, “Topiary”, <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/topiary.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 17.1.2017).

⁵ Anon., *Macmillan Dictionary*, “Topiary”, <<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/topiary.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 17.1.2017).

⁶ Anon., *Webster’s New International...*, p. 2669.

⁷ S. Tulloch (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, p. 1645.

⁸ M. Stipinovich & J. Bell, “Constant gardener”, *Elle Decoration South Africa* 110, October-November 2016, p. 30.

⁹ Anon., *Cambridge English Dictionary*, “Hedge”, <<http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hedge.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 31.1.2017).

¹⁰ Anon., *Oxford Dictionaries*, “Hedge”, <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/hedge.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 31.1.2017).

¹¹ H.V. Hubbard & T. Kimball, *An introduction to the study of landscape design*, p. 170.

formalized line of trees and shrubs, *or* it may be carefully aligned, trimly clipped”.¹² In terms of this description and the definitions quoted previously, a hedge does not need to be clipped in order to be considered a hedge. Unclipped or wild hedges, such as those encountered by the explorers and others in Africa, therefore, also qualify as hedges. Thus, hedges may be clipped or unclipped as long as they form a tangible barrier, irrespective of their function. It is, however, important to stress that unclipped hedges are, for obvious reasons, not considered topiary. However, in this study, it is argued that the term ‘topiary’ should be understood and applied in terms of its broadest possible meaning.¹³ All forms of topiary are, essentially, man-made creations; therefore, topiary is considered the end result of man’s interference in nature and his shaping of natural elements according to his personal taste.¹⁴

3.3 Topiary and the formal garden: a classic combination

Through the ages, topiary has become synonymous with the formal garden style. In fact, it is almost impossible to imagine a formal garden without some form of topiary, even if it only includes the simplest clipped hedge. As explained in Chapter 2, all gardens, since the earliest times, were regular and symmetrical and, incidentally, were laid out according to the formal style. British garden historian, Peter Hunt, pointed out that the term ‘formal garden’ is a relatively modern term and was seldom used before the publication of Lord Reginald Blomfield and Inigo Thomas’ *The formal garden in England* in 1892.¹⁵ The distinction between a ‘formal’ and a so-called ‘informal’, ‘natural’, ‘landscape’ or ‘picturesque’ garden was established during the 1700s with the advent of the Landscape Movement of Kent, Brown, Repton and others. The Landscape Movement positioned itself as the antithesis of the Formal School. The authors of an influential book on garden philosophy, C.W. Moore, W.J. Mitchell and W. Turnbull, explained the difference between the two styles as follows: “In a natural garden the game is to conceal the signs of care, so that a scene appears to have evolved naturally to perfection. In a formal garden, by contrast, the grooming is conspicuous, and *domination over nature* rather than complicity with it is suggested. We see the perfect

¹² *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

¹³ For the purposes of this study, cut lawn or grass is not considered topiary.

¹⁴ M. Francis & R.T. Hester (eds), *The meaning of gardens*, pp. 12-13, 62.

¹⁵ P. Hunt (ed.), *The Shell gardens book*, p. 69. See also R. Blomfield & F.I. Thomas, *The formal garden in England, passim*.

lawn, the shaven hedge – perhaps even *topiary* – and the precisely controlled parterre.”¹⁶ Essentially, the difference between the two competing garden styles is the following: while the informal style eschews all formality, including geometry, symmetry and straight lines, the formal style embraces it.¹⁷

Before the formal garden style is discussed in more detail, Moore *et al.*’s reference to man’s ‘domination over nature’ needs clarification. While the advent of the Landscape Movement was a natural reaction to the excesses of the Renaissance, the ‘battle’ between the two garden styles is significant on a psychological level. It represents the age-old contest between man and nature and man’s desire not only to dominate nature but to conquer it. In a sense, it is a matter of *submission to nature versus mastery over nature*. British garden historian, Ralph Dutton, argued that the formal garden style was born out of man’s vulnerability in the face of nature and his resulting fear thereof. Since its inception, the formal garden style represented man’s desire to subject and dominate nature by placing it “under the yoke of artificiality”,¹⁸ to quote Dutton. Nature had to be remade according to man’s desire for order and security, and this was to be found in the reassuring safety of regularity, symmetry and geometry. *In practical terms, man’s desire to control nature found popular expression in altering the natural appearance of plants and trees by means of topiary*. Hunt argued that the clipping of plants should be viewed as an expression of man’s relief at having control over his landscape.¹⁹ Through topiary, man imposed his power and will on nature.²⁰

Considering the difference between the formal and informal garden styles, the next question is: what is a formal garden? *The Free Dictionary*’s definition does justice to this style: “a garden laid out on regular lines with plants arranged in symmetrical locations or in geometrical designs”.²¹ The important terms are ‘regular’, ‘symmetrical’ and ‘geometrical’ because regularity, symmetry and geometry are the key principles of the formal garden.

¹⁶ C.W. Moore *et al.*, *The poetics of gardens*, p. 41. (Own emphasis)

¹⁷ Blomfield & Thomas, pp. 2-20; Moore *et al.*, pp. 13-15; Anon., “Formal or informal”, <http://www.extension.illinois.edu/gardendesign/style_formalinformal.cfm>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 2.8.2016); M. Hadfield, *The art of the garden*, p. 61.

¹⁸ R. Dutton, *The English garden*, p. 2.

¹⁹ P. Hunt (ed.), *The book of garden ornament*, pp. 180, 183.

²⁰ G.S. Thomas (ed.), *Recreating the period garden*, pp. 11, 17; Francis & Hester, pp. 12-13, 62.

²¹ Anon., *The Free Dictionary*, “Formal garden”, <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/formal+garden.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 2.8.2016).

According to Hunt, a formal garden is, essentially, an “architecturally designed garden”²² which strives for stylistic harmony between house and garden. Lord Blomfield is probably the most renowned exponent of the formal garden as an ‘architectural garden’. He believed a garden should be considered in relation to the house – an important garden design philosophy discussed in Chapter 2. In terms of Blomfield’s philosophy, the house should be an integral part of a design which, according to him, “depends for its success on the combined effect of house and garden”.²³ Based on this dictum, Blomfield argued that something of the quality of the house must be found in the garden and grounds. In practical terms, it means that the house’s architectural elements must be reflected in the garden, which, in the case of classical architecture means that, to quote Blomfield, the garden will have “its trimmed hedges and alleys, its flower-beds bounded by the strong definite lines of box-edgings and the like”.²⁴ Blomfield’s reference to ‘trimmed hedges’ and ‘box-edgings’, and Moore *et al.*’s reference to ‘topiary’ in their descriptions of the formal garden style, emphasise the important role of topiary and all its variations as both functional and aesthetic design elements in the formal garden, no matter how simple or elaborate the garden’s design. Not only is the formal garden closely associated with the art of topiary, but it is also an integral part of this style.²⁵

The arguments of Hadfield, Blomfield and Moore *et al.* are important because, later in this chapter, it will be indicated how the formal garden style, particularly the Dutch and British renditions thereof, strongly influenced the gardens of the white colonists and their descendants who had settled in the Cape and other parts of Southern Africa which became the Union of South Africa in 1910. Subsequently, the same European cultural influence was exerted on the gardens of the local indigenous groups who came into contact with the white colonists. Before this history is discussed, it is necessary to briefly name and explain the main categories and types of topiary.

²² Hunt (ed.), *The Shell gardens...*, p. 69.

²³ Blomfield & Thomas, p. 1.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁵ Hadfield, p. 61.

3.4 Topiary: a lexicon of categories and types

Generally, topiary is divided into three broad categories: (1) functional or utilitarian topiary; (2) ornamental or decorative topiary; and (3) a combination of functional and ornamental topiary. The divisions between these three categories are often porous since a clipped hedge, for example, may serve a functional purpose in one garden, whereas in another, it may be entirely ornamental. Furthermore, the initial function of hedges may also change as gardens evolve over time. For example, an erstwhile functional hedge may be assigned a new aesthetic role. Considering the categories mentioned, different types of topiary are broadly classified under the headings 'hedges' and 'shapes'.

3.4.1 Hedges

Clipped hedges are the simplest and most basic form of topiary and include a range of variations, some of which are fairly elaborate, of the basic type. The following are the most common:

- *Edges* are very low-clipped hedges (less than 30 cm high) which create borders around flowerbeds or, as in the case of *parterres*, form decorative patterns within a framework. The function of edges is often described as 'edging' and 'bordering'. Also included in this category are dwarf hedges (less than one metre high), such as those used to form knot gardens (Image 3/1);
- *Hedges* (up to two metres high), also called *banquettes*, typically have flat surfaces and sharp corners. Hedges may be entirely functional, for example, those which serve as boundaries or divisions, or ornamental when used to define garden areas. Hedges are often clipped to be wider at the base and then tapering slightly inwards to form a narrower top. This prevents the bottom part of the hedge from being in the shade for too long (Image 3/2);
- *Fence-hedges* or 'fedges' are a combination of clipped hedges and fences. A 'fedge' is formed when a clipped hedge and a metal or wooden fence are placed right next to each other to form a single impenetrable barrier, most commonly used for security purposes. Usually the fence is placed in front of the clipped hedge. Apart from

reinforcing the clipped hedge, the fence also helps to keep the hedge even and upright (Image 3/3);

- '*Walls*' are hedges that are generally taller than two metres. Green 'walls' are typically referred to as 'green architecture' and are often used to create verdant garden 'rooms'. Windows, doorways and arches may be cut out of 'walls' to create views of another part of the garden or surrounding nature. This category often includes clipped palisades or columns planted very close to one another to form a visual barrier (Image 3/4).

3.4.2 Shapes

This category includes the biggest variety of topiary by far and is also most commonly associated with this art form. The main types of topiary shapes, which are either *geometric* or *free-form*, include the following:

- *Blocks and planes* (also blocks-and-planes) are closely associated with hedges since they are also clipped straight with flat surfaces and sharp corners. Blocks and planes, often with varied levels, are usually much wider than hedges and walls. They are used to create visual interest in a garden and seldom serve functional purposes (Image 3/5);
- *Screens*, also known as hedges on stilts, are created by using the technique of pleaching. A stilted screen or hedge is formed by planting a row of trees very close to one another and then training the branches horizontally along wires to create a screen. The branches are clipped to create the impression of one solid block of leaves on top of upright poles. Pleached screens may be used to create fences or boundaries, or to line avenues or walks (Image 3/6);
- *Arches* and *doorways* frame entrances to a garden or create transitions from one garden area to another. Arches are often stand-alone features whereas doorways are usually cut out of 'walls' (Image 3/7);
- *Pillars* and *columns* are formed by clipping tall shrubs into cylindrical shapes. Pillars and columns are most often planted in rows to line avenues or lead the eye to a focal point. These shapes may also be used to echo a building's architectural features or create focal points (Image 3/8);

- *Pyramids, obelisks* and *cones* are classic geometric shapes which may vary in size, ranging from slender with sharp points to broad with blunted points. Their use in a garden is similar to that of pillars and columns (Image 3/9);
- *Spirals* and *coils* are often smaller in scale than the above-mentioned types. Usually planted in pots and used either singly or in pairs (for example, to flank an entrance), these twisted shapes add visual interest and whimsy to a garden. The curves of spirals may be slender or full-bodied, depending on the desired effect. Spirals differ from coils in the sense that they are cone-shaped whereas coils are not (Image 3/10);
- ‘*Cake stands*’ are shrubs cut into tiers to create the impression of discs or slices stacked on top of one another with open spaces in-between. The size and thickness of the discs, and the openings may vary. ‘*Cake stands*’ are highly decorative and are mostly used to create focal points (Image 3/11);
- *Standards*, also called ‘*lollipops*’, are one of the most classic and common forms of topiary. This type involves clipping the branches of a shrub or small tree into a rounded (ball-shaped) or half-rounded shape. The stem of the plant should be upright and stripped of all vegetation. Standards are most effectively used in pots, either in pairs or in multiples (Image 3/12);
- *Spheres* and *domes* resemble standards but the stem of the plant should not be exposed. These icons of the topiary world are mostly used to define the basic plan of a garden, create contrast, add structure, mark boundaries or line walks. They may also be planted in pots (Image 3/13);
- *Sculpture* (also living sculpture) involves the clipping of shrubs into all kinds of shapes other than the ones discussed above. Examples of free-form sculpture are virtually endless, and topiary in the form of animals, insects, human figures, drifting clouds and iconic objects not only inject an element of whimsy into a garden but also display the topiarist’s skill (Image 3/14).²⁶

The above list of categories and types of topiary is by no means a complete list since it could be further refined and sub-divided to include even more types. However, it was decided to

²⁶ J. Hendy, *A practical guide to topiary, passim*; J. Hendy, *Topiary in the garden, passim*; Thomas (ed.), pp. 84-90.

limit the list to the most common categories and types, particularly those that feature most prominently in Batho's gardens.²⁷

3.5 Topiary in European and British gardens: a historical overview

3.5.1 From the Greeks to the Romans: the origin of topiary

In order to contextualise the prevalence of topiary in Africa and South Africa, it is necessary to sketch a broad historical overview of the origin and development of this garden art in Europe and Britain. A substantial number of garden writers and garden historians argued that topiary dates back to Roman times (circa 27 BCE-14 CE).²⁸ This claim is, however, not entirely water-tight since it has been questioned by some historians. It was probably Pliny the Elder, the well-known Roman philosopher and author, who caused confusion when he stated in his *Naturalis Historia* that Gaius Matius invented the art of topiary during the reign of Augustus (63 BCE-14 CE), the first emperor of the Roman Empire. Matius was a notable Roman citizen and friend of Cicero, Julius Caesar and Augustus. A more accurate view is that topiary first originated in ancient Greece, and the Greeks taught the Romans the art of clipping trees and shrubs. Thus, it was the Greeks, not the Romans, who invented the art of topiary. Garden historian, Anthony Huxley, argued that "it is clear that it was Greek gardeners who taught the Romans much about the subject [gardening], including some of its more esoteric aspects like topiary".²⁹ C.H. Curtis and W. Gibson also credited the Greeks and reasoned that the Greeks' love of formal architecture and gardens, as well as their fondness of the dense Mediterranean cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), compelled them to keep evergreen trees neatly clipped.³⁰

It is generally accepted that the topiary made by the Greeks were relatively simple, especially when compared with the elaborate versions made by the Roman landscape gardeners or so-

²⁷ For a discussion of the most common categories and types of topiary in Batho's gardens, see Chapter 9.

²⁸ Refer, for example, to G. Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), *The Oxford companion to gardens*, p. 557; C. Thacker, *The history of gardens*, p. 23; D. Clifford, *A history of garden design*, p. 31.

²⁹ A. Huxley, *An illustrated history of gardening*, p. 12.

³⁰ C.H. Curtis & W. Gibson, *The book of topiary*, pp. 6-7; R. Osborne, "Classical Greek gardens: between farm and paradise" in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *Garden history: issues, approaches, methods*, pp. 373, 381-382, 390.

called *topiarii*³¹ as early as the first century CE. Since sources on Roman topiary, also known as *nemora tonsilia*, are more abundant and based on extensive research and archaeological excavations, a more accurate picture of the Romans' verdant sculpture may be constructed. It is important to understand that the sophistication achieved by the Romans has a great deal to do with their taste for topiary. Huxley argued that "topiary rapidly became a major addiction of the Romans, and it was apparently as elaborate as anything to be seen in later periods."³² Huxley's use of the term 'apparently' probably indicates a lack of direct visual evidence to substantiate his claim, but the extensive research conducted by Wilhelmina Jashemski and Linda Farrar supports the argument that topiary and clipped hedges and edges were an important element of the patrician Roman garden. The peristyle gardens which surrounded most Roman houses served as galleries in which collections of sculpted plants were displayed.³³ Jashemski described the formal Roman garden as "essentially a green garden"³⁴ in which clipped evergreens – mostly cypress and boxwood – in the form of topiary, hedges and edges played a key role. She found that most Pompeian gardens had formal flowerbeds edged with clipped boxwood. The latter was also used for "an amazing variety of topiary work"³⁵ which typified upper-class Pompeians' gardens. Farrar's research on Roman topiary art references the writings of Pliny the Elder, who gave detailed descriptions of the topiary in his own Tuscan garden. Boxwood trimmed into obelisks, tiers, ships, animals and letters spelling out the names of the *topiarii* could be seen in Pliny's garden.³⁶

The taste for topiary spread throughout the Roman Empire and gained popularity across Europe, including the Netherlands, Belgium and Britain. The earliest remains of boxwood in Britain were found at Fishbourne Palace, Chichester, where excavations laid bare trenches meant for decorative clipped hedges.³⁷ Being highly dependent on constant clipping and

³¹ Plural of *topiarius*. Anon., "The Latin Lexicon", <<http://www.latinlexicon.org/paradigms.php?p1=1016527.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 3.2.2017).

³² Huxley, p. 31.

³³ Curtis & Gibson, p. 8.

³⁴ W.F. Jashemski, *The gardens of Pompeii, Herculaneum and the villas destroyed by Vesuvius*, p. 54.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³⁶ L. Farrar, *Ancient Roman gardens*, pp. 55, 141, 153, 161; Jashemski, pp. 53-54; M. Conan, "Nature into art: gardens and landscapes in the everyday life of Ancient Rome", *Journal of Garden History* 6(4), 1986, pp. 350, 355; G. van Zuylen, *The garden: visions of paradise*, pp. 20, 23; Thacker, p. 23; Clifford, p. 31.

³⁷ J. Brown, *The pursuit of paradise: a social history of gardens and gardening*, pp. 171-172; Farrar, p. 154; B.M. Fagan (ed.), *The seventy great inventions of the ancient world*, p. 24.

care, decorative hedges and topiary were among the first casualties of the collapse of the Roman Empire and the subsequent dawn of the Dark Ages. Decorative gardening, specifically topiary, fell victim to the instability that characterised medieval Europe. According to Hunt, topiary “was certainly carried out in medieval times”³⁸ but it had been significantly downscaled compared to the Roman period. Topiary was viewed as superfluous and incompatible with the new inward-looking *zeitgeist*. The focus shifted to clipped hedges and edges and “non-representational shapes”³⁹ which may be interpreted as non-descript expressions of topiary. Monks played an important role in keeping the clipping tradition alive. The end of the Dark Ages saw the return of ‘topiary’ in the form of the so-called *estrade*. This phenomenon, which is not topiary in the true sense of the word, involved the use of a structure made of a central pole with tiered trays over which plants were trained. Though the *estrade*’s shape resembled topiary, little, if any, clipping was involved.⁴⁰

3.5.2 A “hegge as thicke as is a castle wall”: the emergence of the medieval ‘security hedge’

Regrettably, the history of topiary during the Middle Ages, particularly the 1100s to the late 1400s, is scantily recorded. Curtis and Gibson are of the opinion that during the 12th century, “there was very little of either design or taste in the arrangement of gardens.”⁴¹ Seemingly, this deterioration also affected the standard of topiary since the available sources create the impression of a stagnating art form. However, it appears that what had been lost in the realm of verdant sculpture was gained in the realm of clipped hedges. Extraordinary density and thickness were characteristic of the standard medieval hedge. The medieval garden was an enclosed garden and the dangers of the outside world, including the threats posed by pillaging gangs and the fear of ‘untamed nature’, had to be blocked out by solid hedges. Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400), widely considered to be the greatest English poet of the Middle Ages, provided an apt description of such a hedge. In his poem *The Flower and the Leaf* Chaucer referred to a “hegge as thicke as is a castle wall”.⁴² These impenetrable

³⁸ Hunt (ed.), *The Shell gardens...*, p. 184.

³⁹ Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 557.

⁴⁰ Huxley, pp. 189-190; P. Hobhouse, *The story of gardening*, pp. 102, 112, 116; Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 557.

⁴¹ Curtis & Gibson, p. 10.

⁴² G. Chaucer, *The Flower and the Leaf*, p. 5. Note that some quoted words are spelt in the old English manner.

‘security hedges’ were created exclusively for functional purposes. Another medieval development worth mentioning was the growing fondness for mazes and labyrinths,⁴³ especially in Britain. Although the original mazes, which date back to antiquity, were set in the stone paving of churches, the first mazes made in medieval Britain were cut in turf (grass). Towards the end of the medieval period, when the focus shifted increasingly from utility to decorative gardening, turf became replaced by low-clipped hedges. During the Renaissance, hedged mazes and labyrinths of clipped yew (*Taxus baccata*), boxwood and privet (*Ligustrum spp.*) became a signature of gardens in Italy, France, the Netherlands and Britain.⁴⁴

3.5.3 The “Golden Age of Topiary”: the Renaissance and the first revival of topiary

The European Renaissance, which started in Italy around the late 1400s, also triggered a garden renaissance and, above all, the revival and blossoming of topiary. The desire to recreate Roman gardens stimulated a renewed appreciation of topiary among the Italians. While it was stated in Chapter 2 that the Renaissance may be considered the ‘Golden Age’ of the patrician garden, Curtis and Gibson argued that the Renaissance also represents the “Golden Age of Topiary”.⁴⁵ From a strictly topiarian perspective, this claim is not exaggerated. The quintessential Italian Renaissance garden was *an architectural garden in which the architectural use of topiary* came to fruition. Renaissance gardeners were the first to successfully bridge the gap between architecture and plant material. Consequently, topiary was elevated to a much more defining role in garden design than had hitherto been the case. Renaissance gardens essentially consisted of stone, water and evergreens that had been meticulously clipped into impeccable blocks, columns, obelisks, pyramids, spheres and other classical architectural shapes. During the late Renaissance (circa 1600s), geometric shapes were frequently replaced with fantastical⁴⁶ (and often bizarre) ones, including temples, giants, soldiers, animals and mythological creatures. Noteworthy is the fact that topiary was

⁴³ A **maze** is a complex branching (multicursal) puzzle which includes choices of path and direction, may have multiple entrances and exits, and dead-ends. A **labyrinth** has only a single, non-branching path (unicursal), which leads to the centre and back out the same way, with only one entrance and exit. Clipped hedges are a key element of most mazes and labyrinths. Anon., “Difference between ‘Labyrinth’ and ‘Maze’”, <<http://www.english.stackexchange.com/questions/144052/difference-between-labyrinth-and-maze.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 7.2.2017).

⁴⁴ A. Fisher & G. Gerster, *The art of the maze*, pp. 26-41; Van Zuylen, p. 54.

⁴⁵ Curtis & Gibson, p. 12.

⁴⁶ For more information on fantastic topiary, see Thacker, pp. 98, 129-134.

often more than mere decoration, particularly in the gardens of the powerful elite.⁴⁷ This phenomenon will be discussed later.

During the Renaissance, clipped hedges became more prominent and architectural in their appearance. This trend was particularly visible in the hedges grown to create ever more complex mazes and labyrinths⁴⁸ in patrician gardens across Europe. The initial knee-high hedges of the early Renaissance (circa 1300s-1400s) grew taller and, by the late Renaissance, they towered over humans. Comparable to walls, these hedges may be described as true ‘green architecture’. Square and rectangular gardens enclosed by tall clipped hedges created outdoor ‘rooms’. During the early years of the Renaissance, herbal dwarf shrubs such as lavender (*Lavandula spp.*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus spp.*) and myrtle (*Myrtus communis*) were commonly used to create low hedges and edges. By the mid-1500s, boxwood became popular and increasingly replaced the mentioned shrubs. For taller hedges, plants such as yew, privet, quince (*Cydonia oblonga*), pomegranate (*Punica granatum spp.*), laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus*; *Laurustinus viburnum*), myrtle and other dense small-leaf shrubs were used. The sheer scale and complexity of the topiary and hedgework created during the Renaissance not only illustrates the potential of plant material but also that of clipping shears in the hands of a skilled topiarist. The classical Renaissance garden was ultimately defined by its topiary, and some of the most memorable Italian examples could be seen in the Boboli gardens and the Medici family’s villa gardens in Florence.⁴⁹

3.5.4 Playing with scale: from tall ‘walls’ to low edges

From Italy, the topiary fashion spread to France where it became a key element of the French grand style as exemplified at, among others, Versailles. There the scale of Le Nôtre’s topiary and hedges probably rivaled the most striking examples ever seen in the gardens of Renaissance Italy. Versailles’ clipped ‘walls’, cones, pyramids, pleached trees and other

⁴⁷ G. Jellicoe & S. Jellicoe, *The landscape of man: shaping the environment from prehistory to the present day*, pp. 155-165; Hobhouse, p. 51; Thacker, p. 98; Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 557.

⁴⁸ See, for example, M. Conan, “The conundrum of Le Nôtre’s *Labyrinthe*” in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *Garden history: issues, approaches, methods*, pp. 119-150.

⁴⁹ Jellicoe & Jellicoe, pp. 155-165; Hobhouse, pp. 51, 134; Van Zuylen, pp. 54-55; Thacker, p. 98; Huxley, p. 190; Anon., “Gardens of Florence”, <<http://www.brunelleschi.imss.fi.it/itineraries/itinerary/GardensOfFlorence.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 11.2.2017).

forms were a sight to behold.⁵⁰ This was made possible by the new advanced clipping tools and other equipment available to create and maintain overscale topiary and hedges. Tall ladders and moveable wooden platforms of various heights served as scaffolding for topiarists to reach the upper sections of the topiary, hedges and green ‘walls’. Custom-made long shears and long-handled sickle-like tools were used to cut, clip and trim the plants according to the desired patterns.⁵¹ Not all topiary and hedges created in Renaissance-era France were tall and overscale, though. An important development in the history of French topiary involves the opposite, namely very low hedges and edges. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, the French Baroque style is closely associated with a highly decorative and non-utilitarian version of the clipped edge, namely *parterres de broderie*. *Parterres*, which are meant to be viewed from above, consisted of intricate scroll patterns ‘embroidered’ on the ground using the new dwarf boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens* ‘Suffruticosa’). Neat and tightly-clipped scrolls, curves, *palmettes* and *arabesques* were incorporated into complicated designs which, in turn, were fitted into square and rectangular frameworks.⁵²

Since the 13th century, the spirit of the Renaissance, specifically the taste for the formal architectural garden as expressed through the art of topiary, had spread to other countries such as Germany, Spain and Russia, but most importantly, to the Netherlands and Belgium as well.⁵³ This trend reached its apogee in the 17th century during the reign of King William III and Queen Mary.⁵⁴ John Dixon Hunt appropriately described this period, specifically the late 17th century, as the “golden age”⁵⁵ of Dutch garden design. Due to the important role that the Dutch had played in South Africa’s garden history, the focus now shifts to the Netherlands and, specifically, Dutch gardeners’ historical fondness for topiary. As will be explained later in this chapter, the art of topiary had spread from the Netherlands to the Cape

⁵⁰ B. Saule & M. da Vinha, *Versailles: the château, the gardens, the trianons*, pp. 65-85; Anon., *Map: estate of Versailles* (pamphlet), no p. no.; Hobhouse, pp. 153-156.

⁵¹ B. Laws, *Tales from the tool shed: the history and use of fifty garden tools*, pp. 121-124, 144-146, 151-154; Huxley, pp. 191-192.

⁵² Hobhouse, pp. 138-143, 150-156; Hadfield, pp. 14, 45; Huxley, pp. 190-191; Van Zuylen, pp. 60, 64-65.

⁵³ The Renaissance-era gardens of the Netherlands and Belgium share many similarities, including the taste for topiary and clipped hedges. A. Kendal, “The garden of Rubens House, Antwerp”, *Garden History* 5(2), Summer 1977, pp. 27-29; B. van Beneden *et al.*, *The Rubens House* (brochure), p. 51; G. Laurent & A.-M. Somers, *Eeuwig groen: historische parken en tuinen in België, passim*.

⁵⁴ W. Velema (ed.), *Het aanzien van een millennium: kroniek van historische gebeurtenissen van de Lage Landen, 1000-2000*, pp. 145-147.

⁵⁵ J.D. Hunt, “Introduction” in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *The Dutch garden in the seventeenth century*, p. 1.

of Good Hope where it became a feature of white colonists' gardens. During the early years of the Renaissance, the Dutch and, to a lesser degree, the Flemish, were already widely known for their expertise in botany, agriculture, horticulture, vegetable, arboriculture and floriculture, but not garden design. This honour belonged to the Italians and the French.⁵⁶

3.5.5 *Loof-werken, vormsnoei, haagjes and randen: symbols of the traditional Dutch garden*

A typical "Hollandse tuin",⁵⁷ specifically the domestic garden in canal towns such as Amsterdam,⁵⁸ The Hague, Utrecht and Delft, were compact compared to the spacious gardens of Italy and France. Consequently, in the Netherlands, the formal garden style was confined to a rather small piece of land, much of which had been reclaimed from muddy marshes. A typical Dutch "stijl tuin"⁵⁹ or "siertuin"⁶⁰ was usually rectangular and, in the words of Dick Schaap and Teun van den Berg, known for its "bescheiden afmetingen".⁶¹ In Amsterdam and other canal towns, the townhouses were typically built on the street in order to be close to the main canal facing the front door. As a result, gardens were laid out on the "achtererven"⁶² situated behind the houses. Dutch garden historian, Henk Zantkuyl, remarked that because of the position of the houses on the front part of properties, the "voorerf"⁶³ was, in most cases, completely lacking. Dutch backyard gardens were often intersected with drainage canals (*grachten*) and rills, resulting in gardens typified not only by an abundance of water but also by right angles. Due to limited space, Dutch gardens were cramped and cluttered with decorative flourishes, such as statues, urns, sundials, trelliswork,

⁵⁶ E. de Jong, "For profit and ornament: the function and meaning of Dutch garden art in the period of William and Mary, 1650-1702" in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *The Dutch garden in the seventeenth century*, pp. 24, 47; J.D. Hunt, "'But who does not know what a Dutch garden is?': the Dutch garden in the English imagination" in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *The Dutch garden in the seventeenth century*, p. 191; E. de Jong, *Nature and art: Dutch garden and landscape architecture, 1650-1740*, p. 158.

⁵⁷ D. Schaap & T. van den Berg, *Parken, tuinen en landschappen van Nederland*, p. 12.

⁵⁸ Amsterdam is of importance for this study since the VOC's main headquarters were based there and the city is also considered Cape Town's mother city.

⁵⁹ Schaap & Van den Berg, p. 17; H. Nieuwenhuis, *Stijlhuizen: vijf eeuwen Nederlandse tuinkunst*, p. 9. "Style garden". (Free translation)

⁶⁰ Schaap & Van den Berg, p. 17. "Ornamental garden". (Free translation)

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12. "Modest measurements". (Free translation)

⁶² H. Zantkuyl, "Stedelijke erven en tuinen tot omstreeks 1850" in H. Zantkuyl *et al.*, *Erf en tuin in oud-Amsterdam: de ontwikkeling van het besloten erf en de stadstuin in de oude binnenstad*, p. 9. "Backyards". (Free translation)

⁶³ Zantkuyl, p. 57. "Front yard". (Free translation)

colonnades, menageries, aviaries, *orangeries*, fountains and, most importantly, hedgework and topiary.⁶⁴

Although the Dutch were not international leaders in garden design, they were not left in the dark either, since they had at their disposal Jan van der Groen's *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier*,⁶⁵ first published in 1669. Van der Groen (1635-1672) was head gardener of William III when he was still the Prince of Orange, and at the time of publication of his (Van der Groen's) three-part book, he was a well-respected voice. For the purpose of this study, Van der Groen's book is important since it was also influential in the Dutch colonies, including the Cape of Good Hope, which had been seventeen years in the making when the book was first published. Part horticultural almanac, part garden design manual, the book contained a rich selection of garden plans and patterns for *parterres* designed specifically for Dutch gardens (Image 3/15) and a selection of clipping and cutting tools (Image 3/16). Needless to say, all of the plans were strictly formal and contained *parterres* and clipped hedges (*haagjes* or *heggen*), edges (*randen*) and topiary (*loof-werken; vormsnoei; in vorm gesnoeide bomen*).⁶⁶ Also noteworthy is the fact that the garden plans were mostly based on the classic four-square⁶⁷ garden design; however, in the case of the Dutch, the four squares often became rectangles. Carla Oldenburger-Ebbers described the classic Dutch garden style (as promoted by Van der Groen) as a style characterised by "rectangular form, bilateral symmetry with mirrored halves, usually either side of the long axis".⁶⁸ "The axis", wrote Oldenburger-Ebbers, "was projected perpendicularly from the middle of the house".⁶⁹ This description of the basic blueprint of the classic Dutch garden style is essentially a description of the *simple formal axial garden* discussed in Chapter 2 and, therefore, of particular

⁶⁴ De Jong, "For profit and...", p. 13; C. Hettema, "De aankleding van erf en tuin: iets over pompen, putten, fonteinen, beelden, vazen en zonnewijzers" in H. Zantkuyl *et al.*, *Erf en tuin in oud-Amsterdam: de ontwikkeling van het besloten erf en de stadstuin in de oude binnenstad*, pp. 60-74; De Jong, *Nature and art...*, p. 125.

⁶⁵ National Library of South Africa (hereafter NLSA): Von Dessin Collection: D06.d.38, J. van der Groen, *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier*. Selective pages of the original book are available.

⁶⁶ For terminology, see Schaap & Van den Berg, pp. 13, 19; A.J. van der Horst, "De grachtentuin na 1850" in H. Zantkuyl *et al.*, *Erf en tuin in oud-Amsterdam: de ontwikkeling van het besloten erf en de stadstuin in de oude binnenstad*, pp. 82-83.

⁶⁷ For more details, see Chapter 2.

⁶⁸ C. Oldenburger-Ebbers, "Notes on plants used in Dutch gardens in the second half of the seventeenth century" in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *The Dutch garden in the seventeenth century*, p. 159.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

importance for the purpose of this study. As will be discussed later in this chapter, a simplified version of this garden style was transferred to the Cape.

In his book, Van der Groen emphasised the role of green architectural elements in the Dutch garden, specifically tall boundary hedges, hedges forming mazes (*dool-hoven*), knee-high boxwood hedges (*buxushaagjes*), low *parterres* shaped by boxwood edges (*buxusranden*) and topiary. *Parterres* became such a prominent characteristic of Dutch gardens that it is difficult to believe that it was invented by the French rather than the Dutch.⁷⁰ A French Huguenot gardener named Daniel Marot (1661-1752) contributed hugely to the popularising of *parterres* and hedgework among Dutch gardeners. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685,⁷¹ Marot fled to the Netherlands where William III appointed him as a garden designer at Het Loo,⁷² the royal palace near Apeldoorn. Marot's influence on garden design in the Netherlands is not insignificant in the wider context of the history of gardening and topiary in the Cape of Good Hope since a significant number of Huguenots found refuge in the Cape. Among the Cape Huguenots were able gardeners, horticultural experts and viticulturists.⁷³

Thanks to Marot and Van der Groen, it became highly fashionable to punctuate the corners of *parterres* with topiary in the form of tall cones or spheres of clipped boxwood and yew. Marot's designs for the *parterres* at Het Loo became the gold standard for the Dutch Baroque style – a style characterised by the decorative use of topiary and clipped edges. Van der Groen was equally enthusiastic about topiary as Marot, and not only recommended its use in the ornamental garden but also in the utility or kitchen garden. Van der Groen advised that the square or rectangular area set aside for the kitchen garden should be divided into four equal parts by two crossing paths.⁷⁴ While three of the four beds were to be planted with a variety of vegetables, the fourth was to be adorned with flowers and topiary: “een gemeene

⁷⁰ D. Jacques, “Who knows what a Dutch garden is?”, *Garden History* 30(2), Winter 2002, p. 116.

⁷¹ M. Perry *et al.*, *Western civilization: ideas, politics & society (vol. II): from the 1600s*, pp. 352, 356.

⁷² For more information on the gardens at Het Loo, see K.H.D. Haley, “William III as builder of Het Loo” in J.D. Hunt (ed.), *The Dutch garden in the seventeenth century*, pp. 3-11; De Jong, *Nature and art...*, pp. 41-66.

⁷³ De Jong, “For profit and...”, p. 42; Oldenburger-Ebbers, p. 163; Schaap & Van den Berg, p. 10; Nieuwenhuis, p. 31; Haley, pp. 7-8.

⁷⁴ NLSA: Von Dessin Collection: *D06.d.38*, J. van der Groen, *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier*, no p. no.; Oldenburger-Ebbers, pp. 163, 167; Hobhouse, pp. 156-157; Nieuwenhuis, pp. 24-36.

Hof of Tuyn, naar de Hollandse of Nederlandze wijze, verdeelt in 4 perken...waar van men het eerste kan gebruyken tot Bloemen of Loof-werken”.⁷⁵

One of the most visible and defining features of the Dutch garden was its enclosedness,⁷⁶ achieved by creating hedges of differing heights. While most hedges were about two metres high, boundary hedges were taller. Van der Groen recommended specific trees and shrubs for hedges, including boxwood, yew, common juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and common privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), a plant which became increasingly popular as a hedge plant due to its hardiness.⁷⁷ Tall hedges functioned mainly as wind-breaks but they had the added benefit of creating ideal micro-climates in which plants, including those cut into topiary, flourished. Another side-effect of the proliferation of hedges was that they effectively turned the Dutch garden into a series of individual garden ‘rooms’. Dutch hedges and the Dutch obsession with them were widely admired outside the Netherlands, particularly in Britain.⁷⁸ What caused this obsession? Curtis and Gibson argued that Dutch gardeners were so determined to optimally utilise every inch of land in their backyards that they “laid out their gardens with mathematical precision and consequent primness, carrying this principle into the very trees and plants themselves”.⁷⁹

John Dixon Hunt provided another possible answer to the question by reasoning that the meticulously-clipped topiary, the “dubbed” hedges and “cropped” edges, were “symbols of a well-managed Dutch soul”.⁸⁰ A Calvinist belief system which valued a sense of neatness and order certainly had played its part. However, it seems as though the Dutch soul had another dimension to it. Except for its meticulousness and precision, some Dutch topiary, particularly those created in the patrician gardens of the elite and powerful, often displayed a symbolic dimension. A prime example is William III’s gardens at Het Loo.⁸¹ A combination of craftiness and imagination led to the creation of topiary which was more than

⁷⁵ NLSA: Von Dessin Collection: *D06.d.38*, J. van der Groen, *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier*, no p. no. “An ordinary garden in the Dutch style, divided into 4 beds...of which the first may be used for flowers or topiary”. (Free translation)

⁷⁶ De Jong, “For profit and...”, pp. 43-44.

⁷⁷ NLSA: Von Dessin Collection: *D06.d.38*, J. van der Groen, *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier*, no p. no.; Oldenburger-Ebbers, p. 168.

⁷⁸ Jacques, p. 115; Hunt, ““But who does...””, pp. 183-184, 188-190, 204; De Jong, “For profit and...”, p. 22; De Jong, *Nature and art...*, p. 123.

⁷⁹ Curtis & Gibson, p. 11.

⁸⁰ Hunt, ““But who does...””, p. 187.

⁸¹ De Jong, *Nature and art...*, pp. 41-66.

mere decoration in that it also served as symbols of power, ideology and morality. For example, shrubs cut into armoured soldiers and horses ready for battle had more to do with expressions of warmongering and military conquest than humour and wit. The Dutch were, of course, not unique in this regard since the Italian and French political elites have long understood the value of topiary as a vehicle for, among others, political expression.⁸²

In Chapter 2, it was mentioned that during the reign of William and Mary, the Dutch garden style, specifically the artful manipulation of plants, also influenced British gardens. This is an important development because the late 17th century not only saw the Dutch garden taking its place next to Italian and French gardens but also saw the Dutch exporting plants, gardening expertise and garden style to other countries in Europe (Britain and Germany) and to their colonies (Batavia, Indonesia and the Cape of Good Hope). In all of this, topiary played an important role not only in terms of style and technique, but also in terms of the plants used for it. The Dutch exported boxwood (specifically *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Suffruticosa’) to Britain for most of the 17th century. The most important Dutch export products were, however, horticultural knowledge and garden style. William and Mary were both enthusiastic gardeners and John Dixon Hunt argued that their reign represented “a period of ‘transference’ not only of rulers but of garden theories and practices”.⁸³ Of all European countries, this ‘transference’ probably affected Britain most. This argument is endorsed by David Jacques’ statement that, in the case of Dutch influence on British gardens, it was “not just the [garden] planning but the detail, especially the topiary that was attributed to the Dutch.”⁸⁴

3.5.6 *Ever-Greens, antike works, quicqueset hedges and banquettes: nature turned into art*

British gardens were not immune to the influence of garden fashions in Italy, France and the Netherlands, specifically the popular appeal of Dutch-style topiary. Although it is true that the topiary craze had a huge impact on Britain during the reign of Charles II (1661-1685)

⁸² Hunt, “‘But who does...’”, pp. 193-195; E. de Jong, “‘Netherlandish Hesperides’: garden art in the period of William and Mary 1650-1702”, *Journal of Garden History: An International Quarterly* 8(2 & 3), April-September 1988, p. 28; Thacker, pp. 96-98, 129, 158, 170.

⁸³ Hunt, “Introduction”, p. 1.

⁸⁴ Jacques, p. 119. See also pp. 114-115, 119-120, 123-124.

and, particularly during the time of William and Mary (consider, for example, the use of topiary and *parterres* in the royal gardens at Hampton Court⁸⁵), it must be emphasised that topiary had already been a staple in most British gardens during the Elizabethan (1558-1603) and Early Jacobean eras (1567-1625). Curtis and Gibson argued that by then topiary, or so-called “topiorii”,⁸⁶ already had “a considerable hold upon the [British] garden-loving public”.⁸⁷ A fondness for clipping found, for example, expression in the Tudor knot gardens discussed in Chapter 2. This trend was further strengthened by, among other things, the increasing influence of garden publications among Britain’s literate class. The 1500s and 1600s saw the publication of an impressive number of gardening essays, books and encyclopaedias written by influential British scholars and intellectuals (many of them self-taught), including poets and clergymen, who significantly contributed to the development of British horticulture and garden art. Increasingly, gardening was seen as both science and art, and the practice of topiary was an important expression of this symbiosis. The use of topiary and, specifically, clipped hedges in the domestic garden was championed for both its functional and aesthetic values.⁸⁸

In the second volume of *The Whole Art and Trade of Husbandry, Contained in Foure Bookes* (1577), Barnabe Googe⁸⁹ explained how gardens and orchards were to be laid out. He emphasised the importance of enclosing a garden and suggested “the quicke set hedge”⁹⁰ as an effective way of doing so. Detailed instructions on how to plant and maintain such a hedge were provided. Googe also discussed topiary and described it as a pastime appreciated mostly by women. This observation underscores the argument raised in Chapter 2 that ornamental gardening, of which topiary was a part, was considered female domain. At the same time, however, most topiarists in Britain, particularly the leading ones, were male. Googe informed his readers that herbs, such as rosemary, were the ideal plants “to grow in sundry proportions, as in the fashion of a Cart, a Pecocke, or such like thing as they [women] fancie.”⁹¹ Although herbs, such as rosemary and lavender, were commonly used as hedge

⁸⁵ For more details, see G.A. Jellicoe, *Gardens of Europe*, pp. 43-45.

⁸⁶ Curtis & Gibson, p. 13.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ N.J. Prockter, *Garden hedges*, p. 11; Blomfield & Thomas, pp. 31-32; Hunt (ed.), *The Shell gardens...*, p. 184; Curtis & Gibson, pp.16-17; H. Roberts, *English gardens*, pp. 28-32.

⁸⁹ For more on Googe, see Chapter 2.

⁹⁰ B. Googe, *The Whole Art and Trade of Husbandry, Contained in Foure Bookes*, p. 50.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

plants in Britain, Googe's reference to herbal topiary reinforces the probability that such topiary also embellished herb gardens, which were also female domain. It may therefore be argued that, firstly, by the time Googe's book was published, topiary was practised by both sexes and, secondly, topiary was not limited to the ornamental garden.⁹²

In 1618, William Lawson's⁹³ *A New Orchard and Garden*⁹⁴ was published. Lawson highlighted the clipping of "hedges, and antike works [topiary]"⁹⁵ as one of a gardener's most important tasks. He praised the virtues of the formal garden style and explained "what Nature corrected by Art can doe"⁹⁶ for a garden. With regard to topiary, he recommended that a gardener should "frame your [the gardener's] lesser wood to the shape of men armed in the field, ready to give battel: or swift running Greyhounds: or of well sented and true running Hounds, to chase the Deere, or hunt the Hare."⁹⁷ Lawson included in his book an illustration of a late Elizabethan formal garden consisting of six square sections fitted into a rectangular framework (Image 3/17). This illustration is a prime example of the simple formal axial garden. Note that the central vertical path, which divides the garden into two symmetrical halves, is aligned with the front door and visually reinforces the north-south axis. The horizontal paths emphasise the east-west axis. Lawson's depiction of topiary and a *parterre* in his illustration is, for the purpose of this discussion, noteworthy. The figures in 'Section A', namely a horse and a soldier holding a sword, portray topiary. 'Section C' depicts an English knot garden made of clipped boxwood. The thick black lines indicate clipped edges.⁹⁸

John Parkinson (1567-1650), the well-known English botanist, wrote a monumental manual on the cultivation of plants, namely *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris*⁹⁹ (1629). Parkinson stressed that "the foure square forme is the most visually accepted with all, and doth best agree to any mans dwelling".¹⁰⁰ It is important to note what Parkinson recommended should be done inside the 'foure square forme': there should be "walks, crosse

⁹² Curtis & Gibson, p. 15.

⁹³ For more on Lawson, see Chapter 2.

⁹⁴ Shortened title.

⁹⁵ W. Lawson, *A New Orchard and Garden*, p. 2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8. See also Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 558; Hunt (ed.), *The Shell gardens...*, p. 184.

⁹⁹ "Park-in-Sun's Terrestrial Paradise". (Free translation)

¹⁰⁰ J. Parkinson, *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris*, p. 3.

the middle both waies, and round about it also with hedges, with squares, knots and trayles, or any other worke within the foure square parts”.¹⁰¹ By ‘any other worke’ Parkinson meant plants “to bee cut, lead, and drawne into what forme one will, either of beasts, birds, or men armed, or otherwise”.¹⁰² His reference to ‘beasts’, ‘birds’ and ‘men armed’ described the topiary styles fashionable in Renaissance Europe and Britain at that time. Parkinson also stressed the importance of hedges and edges providing structure in a garden and, importantly, “wherewith the beds and parts of knots [knot gardens] are bordered”.¹⁰³ He reminded his readers that attractive hedges, edges and topiary could only be achieved by regular clipping and advised that a good “paire of Garden sheeres”¹⁰⁴ was the best investment a serious gardener could make.¹⁰⁵

For gardeners who were uncertain as to which plants to use for their hedges, edges and topiary, Parkinson had ample advice. It seems that by the time Parkinson wrote his book, the Dutch were already exporting their sought-after boxwood to Britain since he strongly recommended “Dutch boxe”¹⁰⁶ be used for hedges and edges. Parkinson praised the plant’s virtues: “the lowe or dwarfe Boxe is of excellent use to border up a knot, or the long beds in a Garden, being a maruailous [marvellous] fine ornament thereunto, in regard it both groweth lowe, is euer [ever] greene, and by cutting may bee kept in what maner euery one please”.¹⁰⁷ Other plants he recommended were juniper, yew and, above all, “Priuet”.¹⁰⁸ Also referred to as “Primme”¹⁰⁹ and *Ligustrum*, its Latin name, it appears as if privet had become more widely used as a hedge and topiary plant than had hitherto been the case.¹¹⁰ Referring to Britain, Parkinson wrote that “the use of this plant [privet] is so much, and so frequent throughout all this Land [Britain], although for no other purpose but to make hedges or arbours in Gardens, &c.”¹¹¹ As will be mentioned later in this chapter, Parkinson’s emphasis of privet is not insignificant within the wider context of this study. Since this plant species, indigenous to eastern Asia and Malaysia, was also favoured as a hedge and topiary plant by

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 445.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* “Pair of garden shears”. (Free translation)

¹⁰⁵ Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 558.

¹⁰⁶ Parkinson, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 606-607.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 445-446. “Privet”. (Free translation)

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 445.

¹¹⁰ Curtis & Gibson, p. 14.

¹¹¹ Parkinson, p. 445.

the white colonial gardeners in the Cape and further afield, it also became the mainstay in most indigenous people's gardens, most notably Batho's topiary gardens.

By the early 1700s, topiary had not yet lost its appeal in Britain, at least not for the esteemed British architect, John James (1673-1746). In his book, *The Theory and Practice of Gardening: Wherein is Fully Handled All That Relates to Fine Gardens, Commonly Called Pleasure-Gardens, as Parterres, Groves, Bowling-Greens, &c.*¹¹² (1712), James emphasised the value of hedges and green 'walls' in creating structure in a garden. He specifically recommended the use of rows of clipped columns to create architectural interest in a garden: "the most usual Form of Palisades is a great Length and Height, entirely smooth and eaven, making as it were a great Wall or green Tapestry".¹¹³ He also provided advice on the shape and texture of such palisades and suggested that they should be "well filled up from the very Bottom, of no great Thickness, and handsomely clipped on both Sides, as perpendicularly as possible."¹¹⁴ In addition, James counselled his readers on the use of hedges, specifically low hedges or what he called "*Banquettes*".¹¹⁵ He advised that such hedges should be "Breast-high, ordinarily not exceeding 3 or 4 Foot".¹¹⁶ James also suggested which plants, specifically "Ever-Greens",¹¹⁷ made the best hedges, namely yew, holly (*Ilex spp.*), cypress and, of course, the ever-popular boxwood. With regard to topiary, James preferred it to be big enough to make an impact: "when your Ever-green Trees and Shrubs are got to some Height, you may then begin to Shape them at your Pleasure, clipping them with the Shears into Balls, Pyramids, &c."¹¹⁸

3.5.7 "We see the marks of the scissars [sic] upon every plant and bush": the demise and (second) revival of topiary

Probably one of the most famous garden essays of the Renaissance era is *Of Gardens* (1625) by the English philosopher, scientist and author, Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626). Bacon

¹¹² Shortened title.

¹¹³ J. James, *The Theory and Practice of Gardening: Wherein is Fully Handled All That Relates to Fine Gardens, Commonly Called Pleasure-Gardens, as Parterres, Groves, Bowling-Greens, &c.*, p. 47.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

harboured strong opinions on topiary and unequivocally expressed his preferences in the mentioned essay. He recommended that a garden should be laid out “within the great hedge”,¹¹⁹ in other words, within a formal framework formed by a clipped hedge. It seems as though the overuse of topiary and, most of all, the ostentatious creations of some British gardeners, had become too much for some leading members of British society, such as Bacon. The first important voice of anti-topiary protest in Britain was raised by none other than the respected Bacon: “I, for my part, do not like images cut out in juniper or other garden stuff; they be for children”.¹²⁰ However, Bacon did not reject topiary altogether and stated that “little low hedges round, like welts, with some pretty pyramids, I like well”.¹²¹ Bacon’s criticism served as a premonition of what was to come. One of the first to reiterate his sentiments about topiary (take note: clipped hedges and edges were considered acceptable for the time being) was the English poet and essayist, Joseph Addison (1672-1719). Addison condemned British gardeners’ fondness for topiary in no uncertain terms: “Our British gardeners, on the contrary, instead of humouring nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible. Our trees rise in cones, globes, and pyramids. We see the marks of the scissars [sic] upon every plant and bush.”¹²²

Apart from Addison, other prominent members of British society, including the poet, Alexander Pope (1688-1744), also criticised and even ridiculed the prevalence of topiary in British gardens. Often the Dutch were labelled the scapegoats responsible for subverting British gardeners into what was considered “a false taste”,¹²³ to quote Jacques. This growing choir of anti-topiary protest was not a mere flash in the pan; instead, it heralded the start of a gardening revolution in Britain. The new Landscape Movement, mentioned earlier in this chapter (see also Chapter 2), declared topiary undesirable. John Dixon Hunt argued that “the rejection of topiary was probably more complicated than just a stylistic phenomenon”¹²⁴ and that political issues relating to the symbolic power of topiary also played a role. By the mid-1700s, topiary had almost become synonymous with everything considered old-fashioned and poor taste. The new garden revolution, which idolised the natural landscape and

¹¹⁹ F. Bacon, *Of Gardens*, p. 15.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

¹²² J. Addison, *Essays on the pleasures of the imagination* (shortened title), pp. 23-24.

¹²³ Jacques, p. 120.

¹²⁴ Hunt, ““But who does...””, p. 193.

condemned any clipped vegetation, reigned supreme in Britain for most of the 18th century. Many fine topiary gardens, especially those belonging to the upper classes, were destroyed to make room for landscape gardens. Later on, even hedges were destroyed, “throwing open to all eyes, and to all the winds, gardens that had hitherto been delightfully enclosed and secluded”, lamented Curtis and Gibson.¹²⁵

Though the impact of the Landscape Movement was rather drastic in Britain, it must be emphasised that topiary did not disappear completely from British gardens, and certainly not from gardens in the rest of Europe. In Britain, vernacular topiary survived in ordinary people’s gardens, particularly in the English cottage gardens (Image 3/18) discussed in Chapter 2. As is the case with all trends taken to extremes, the pendulum of garden taste had to swing back. This happened in the 19th century and more or less coincided with the inception of the Victorian era in 1837. Topiary became fashionable again and gradually the art was reintroduced into British gardens. The reason? Not only did British gardeners grow tired of their dull landscape gardens but “the mania for clipping”, argued Peter Hunt, “lies too deep in human nature to be eradicated by any whim of fashion.”¹²⁶ Thus, began a new chapter in the history of the rise and fall of topiary.¹²⁷

The Victorian garden was the product of a stylistic trend which may be described as ‘romantic eclecticism’. This highly ornamental garden style combined elements from previous centuries and found expression in a variety of decorative and romantic flourishes, including topiary. The new craze of collecting exotic trees and shrubs led to gardens which did not emphasise an integrated overall design but rather individual elements and features in the garden. Ironically, British gardens once again embraced the aesthetic of the 17th century Dutch garden which the Landscape Movement had found repulsive. In many cases, topiary became the main feature of the garden. A typical Victorian garden was characterised by strong architectural elements providing the setting, and low-clipped hedges and edges created the frames for colourful seasonal planting. Once again, topiary was considered an art form and perfectly fitted the vision of the artistic Victorian garden. Some gardeners took

¹²⁵ Curtis & Gibson, p. 31.

¹²⁶ Hunt, *The Shell gardens...*, p. 185.

¹²⁷ Jacques, p. 120; Hunt, ““But who does...””, pp. 193-194; Jellicoe & Jellicoe, p. 558; Curtis & Gibson, pp. 24-31; Huxley, pp. 193, 195; Hobhouse, pp. 51, 206; Thacker, pp. 181-182.

‘artistic’ to doubtful new heights since over-elaborate, inappropriate and often bizarre shapes such as teddy bears, peacocks, cockerels, bird-in-a-ring, teacups, baskets and the like were introduced into gardens.¹²⁸ The availability of new and improved clipping tools and shears, as well as a myriad of garden periodicals providing ideas and inspiration, led to topiary creations described by Geoffrey Jellicoe as “almost unbelievable, so varied is the manner of clipping”.¹²⁹

Towards the 1880s and 1890s change was, once again, in the air when Victorian ostentation triggered a counter-reaction. This time the anti-topiary voices, specifically those of the disciples of the new Arts and Crafts Movement of William Morris, did not preach the fall of topiary but rather its ‘toning down’ or ‘watering down’ to more tasteful levels. Ironically, the simple vernacular topiary and hedges which survived in Britain’s cottage gardens became the inspiration for the style of topiary appreciated by the Arts and Crafts Movement. As discussed in Chapter 2, this movement inspired a bevy of influential architects and garden designers, including architect Edwin Lutyens and garden designer Gertrude Jekyll. Lutyens and Jekyll, who have become synonymous with the Edwardian garden style, were the leading proponents of what became known as the ‘architectural garden’. Topiary was a key element of the architectural garden but, in contrast to the Victorian garden, simplicity and restraint were the guiding principles. In the architectural garden topiary, specifically geometric shapes resembling architectural elements, green ‘walls’ and an assortment of hedges played an important role. Often more aesthetic than functional, topiary became an integral part of early 20th century gardens.¹³⁰

Complementing elements such as stone steps, stone-edged terraces, pergolas and other features, topiary not only provided structure but also defined the basic layout of the Edwardian garden. The ultimate objective was to integrate house and garden, which was to be achieved by using clipped vegetation and structural elements in harmony. No other person

¹²⁸ Thomas (ed.), pp. 89-90, 93; Hobhouse, pp. 249-251, 253, 255; Curtis & Gibson, pp. 32-36; Thacker, pp. 242, 245; Prockter, p. 11.

¹²⁹ Jellicoe, p. 27.

¹³⁰ W. Kaplan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arts & Crafts: a visual reference to the Arts movement, 1850-1920*, pp. 45-47, 131; Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), pp. 558-559; Hobhouse, pp. 382-389, 394-397, 402-406, 415-416. For a visual depiction of Arts and Crafts houses and their architectural gardens with topiary, clipped hedges and green ‘walls’, see M. Richardson, *Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, pp. 87, 129, 136, 145-146; Van Zuylen, pp. 110-118.

expressed this philosophy more eloquently than Jekyll herself, who saw topiary as “a means of expression in that domain of design that lies between architecture and gardening.”¹³¹ The discretionary use of topiary, particularly hedges, dwarf hedges and edges influenced gardens for most of the inter-War years (1918-1939). The Edwardian garden gave way to what has been described in Chapter 2 as the ‘watered-down Edwardian’ garden in which topiary and hedges were downscaled to their most basic forms. Probably the two most well-known British examples of such a garden is Lawrence Johnstone’s (1871-1958) Hidcote¹³² in Gloucestershire and Vita Sackville-West’s (1892-1962) Sissinghurst¹³³ in Kent. Both gardens were not only defined by formality, structural simplicity and axial balance but also the sophisticated use of topiary and clipped hedges. With regard to the place of topiary in a garden, Sackville-West wrote that it “adds greatly to the architectural design of a garden”.¹³⁴ At both Hidcote and Sissinghurst, the formal green architecture is balanced with informal planting in the flowerbeds. Until the outbreak of World War II in 1939, clipped hedges and edges kept defining domestic gardens; in fact, a garden not enclosed by the customary clipped hedge was unimaginable. The clipped hedge not only satisfied a deep-seated human desire to control the immediate natural environment but also provided a sense of order and security in a world that was about to change drastically and violently.¹³⁵

3.6 Topiary in African gardens

As far as the prevalence of topiary in African gardens is concerned, one needs to *distinguish not only between pre- and post-colonial Africa but also between topiary and hedges, and between clipped hedges and unclipped or wild hedges*. This distinction is made for both historical reasons and practical considerations. The practice of clipping hedges with shears, scissors and other clipping tools only became noticeable among Africans during the colonial period (approximately mid-1800s-1960s) and the post-colonial period (post-1960s). In pre-colonial Africa, living green hedges were traditionally unclipped. In order to understand the

¹³¹ G. Jekyll & L. Weaver, *Gardens for small country houses*, p. 131.

¹³² For more information, see Hobhouse, pp. 404-405; Van Zuylen, pp. 118-119.

¹³³ For more information, see A. Scott-James, *Sissinghurst: the making of a garden*, pp. 38-41; V. Hudson, “A lush life”, *Veranda* 30(3), May-June 2016, pp. 142-147; Hobhouse, pp. 426-427; Van Zuylen, pp. 120-121.

¹³⁴ V. Sackville-West, *Even more for your garden*, p. 168.

¹³⁵ Hobhouse, pp. 415-416; R. Williams, “Edwardian gardens, old and new”, *Journal of Garden History* 13(1-2), 1993, *passim*.

transition of the unclipped hedge to the clipped hedge, the phenomenon of the traditional dry stockade needs to be revisited.

3.6.1 Hedges ‘made’ and hedges ‘planted’: dry stockades and living hedges

Apart from their descriptions of traditional African gardens, fields and yards, the explorers and others also included in their travel accounts descriptions of the types of fences and hedges Africans traditionally made to enclose their yards. In Chapter 2 it was stated that the traditional stockade made of dry branches or tree trunks stacked close together to form a tight fence or screen was the most common form of enclosure in most parts of Africa. The purpose of the stockade was to enclose the space around the domestic dwelling, homestead or entire village mainly for security purposes. The stockade not only kept people and domestic animals safe, but also the gardens inside the stockade. *It is important to note that instead of dry stockades, some Africans planted living hedges to serve as enclosures for their yards, a phenomenon as traditional as the dry stockade.* Unfortunately, as is also the case with domestic gardens and fields, the terms used by the explorers and others to describe stockades and living hedges are often confusing and it is not always clear as to what exactly is meant by such terms. While a ‘stockade’ is defined as “a line or enclosure of upright stakes”,¹³⁶ a hedge is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary* as “a fence or boundary formed by closely *growing* bushes or shrubs”.¹³⁷

The use of the term ‘growing’ in the above-mentioned definition indicates that there is a clear distinction between a dry stockade and a living hedge. However, this distinction is not always made by the explorers and others because, in some cases, they referred to hedges that were ‘made’ while in others they referred to hedges that were ‘planted’. Dr David Livingstone, for example, referred to a “hedge”¹³⁸ made by the Makololo. Additional descriptions of this garden hedge confirm that it was a dry stockade and not a living hedge. René Caillié also used the term “hedge”¹³⁹ but in his case, the term clearly refers to a living

¹³⁶ Tulloch (ed.), p. 1532.

¹³⁷ Anon., *Oxford Dictionaries*, “Hedge”, <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/hedge.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 31.1.2017). (Own emphasis)

¹³⁸ D. Livingstone, *A popular account of Dr. Livingstone’s expedition to the Zambesi and its tributaries; and of the discovery of Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa, 1858-1864*, p. 185.

¹³⁹ R. Caillié, *Travels through Central Africa to Timbuctoo and across the great desert, to Morocco performed in the years 1824-1828* (vol. I), pp. 187, 282.

hedge, which is confirmed by his use of the more descriptive term “quick-set hedge”.¹⁴⁰ ‘Quick-set’ (also ‘quickset’) is an old English garden term that dates back to 1484 and which describes a type of hedge formed by planting cuttings of a plant suitable for hedging directly into the earth.¹⁴¹ Concerning this apparent dual meaning of the term ‘hedge’, it is important to note that in the African context, the term does not necessarily refer to a living hedge.¹⁴²

The explorers and others came across numerous unclipped or wild hedges during their travels in Africa, specifically in the high rainfall areas of West and Central Africa. In the account of his expedition of the Zambezi River, Livingstone mentioned hedges planted around gardens to keep animals at bay, such as those made by the Batoka on the banks of the Zambezi to keep out roaming hippopotami.¹⁴³ Caillié also came across living hedges in his travels through West Africa, most notably the mentioned ‘quick-set hedge’ which enclosed the village of Comi-Sourignan near Sierra Leone, and the “quick hedges, planted at random”¹⁴⁴ which surrounded the residences in the village of N’pâl. In his journal, Stanley included a sketch of huts surrounded by living hedges in the province of Ankori in Uganda (Image 3/19).¹⁴⁵ Although this illustration should not be considered a typical depiction of living hedges across Africa, it nevertheless gives a clear impression of the design and style of such hedges, which, in this case, is unclipped. The general impression is one of neatness and evidently not of a hedge left to grow out of bounds.

Caillié’s use of the word ‘quick-set’ supports the argument that the hedges he saw in Africa were not entirely different from those in Europe with which he was familiar. The same may be said of the living hedge which surrounded the village of the Pholey people near the Gambia River of which Francis Moore included a sketch in his journal of 1738¹⁴⁶ (Image 2/4). In the African context, a traditional unclipped green or living hedge is formed by planting hardy evergreen shrubs close together to form an enclosure, fence or screen. Living

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁴¹ Anon., *The Free Dictionary*, “Quickset”, <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/quickset.html>>, s.a. (Accessed: 31.1.2017); Tulloch (ed.), p. 1252.

¹⁴² B.J. Heath & A. Bennett, “‘The little spots allow’d them’: the archaeological study of African-American yards”, *Historical Archaeology* 34(2), 2000, p. 39.

¹⁴³ Livingstone, p. 212.

¹⁴⁴ Caillié, p. 24.

¹⁴⁵ H.M. Stanley, *In darkest Africa or the quest rescue and retreat of Emin governor of Equatoria* (vol. II), p. 333.

¹⁴⁶ F. Moore (ed.), *Travels into the inland parts of Africa: containing a description of the several nations for the space of six hundred miles up the River Gambia*, p. 35.

hedges were far more prevalent in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of Africa where adequate rainfall kept the hedges alive without the need for additional hand-watering. Green hedges were, however, not limited to the high rainfall regions north of the Zambezi. One of the best-known examples of green hedges used in a traditional African settlement not located in a high rainfall area is in Southern Africa, namely at Serowe in Botswana.

3.6.2 *Tlharetala*: from dry stockades to clipped living hedges

Situated in a semi-arid region in Southern Africa, Serowe was home to one of the largest Tswana settlements in Africa. According to South African-born journalist and writer, Bessie Head, Serowe was a “proliferation of dark green foliage surrounding each wide circular yard”.¹⁴⁷ The hedges were made of the so-called *Tlharetala* or commonly known as the ‘green tree’.¹⁴⁸ According to Head, the history of Serowe’s green hedges dated back to 1923 when a game hunter, named Hendrik Pretorius and his wife, Katherine, came to live in Serowe in what was then known as Bechuanaland (today Botswana). At that stage, Serowe’s residents used dry stockades, rather than living plants, to form enclosures. The Pretorius couple introduced Serowe’s residents to the so-called ‘green tree’ when they planted a ‘green tree’ hedge around their yard. Some of Serowe’s residents¹⁴⁹ had gotten hold of the Pretorius couple’s left-over cuttings and planted similar hedges around their own yards. They found the ‘green tree’ to be a hardy, attractive and cheap form of hedging and much more effective than the stockade. Importantly, Serowe’s residents had clipped their hedges in the same way as the Pretoriuses did, and soon the art of the clipped hedge was established in Serowe. Since the 1920s, Serowe had become a green oasis thanks to the ‘green tree’.¹⁵⁰

In Serowe’s case, there had been a transition from dry stockade to clipped green hedge in a relatively short period of time. This transition may be attributed to the influence of

¹⁴⁷ B. Head, *Serowe: village of the rain wind*, p. xvii.

¹⁴⁸ None of the consulted sources indicate the exact type of plant but it was probably the hardy broad-leaf privet (*Ligustrum lucidum* or *Ligustrum vulgare*). As will be discussed in Chapter 9, some of Batho’s gardeners referred to privet plants as so-called ‘green trees’.

¹⁴⁹ Apparently not all Serowe residents replaced their stockades with living hedges. See D. Hammond-Tooke, *The roots of black South Africa: an introduction to the traditional culture of the black people of South Africa*, p. 49.

¹⁵⁰ Head, pp. xvii-xviii; P. Morris, *A history of black housing in South Africa*, p. 6; T. Sereetsi, “The rise and fall of Tlharetala”, <<http://www.mmegi.bw/2004/October/Wednesday20/8492701851440.html>>, 20.10.2004 (Accessed: 7.10.2016); P. Becker, *Trails & tribes in Southern Africa*, p. 27.

acculturation and inter-cultural influencing, in this case, the African culture taking over a European cultural practice. This had been the case in most parts of Africa, specifically those areas that had been occupied and divided into colonies by Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium and Portugal between 1879 and 1912. This process was more intense and far-reaching in some colonies, particularly in the British colonies, including British East Africa (Kenya), the Gold Coast (Ghana), Tanganyika (Tanzania), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Bechuanaland (Botswana) and, of course, South Africa. A gardening culture – specifically an English gardening culture – was promoted by sizeable settler communities in the colonial capitals as well as in the farming districts, most notably in Kenya. Abundant garden labour was available in the form of local black men and women who were exposed to a new colonial garden aesthetic, of which the planting and clipping of living hedges was an important feature. In fact, the use of both functional (mostly security) and ornamental clipped green hedges became a characteristic element of settler gardens all over Africa. In the process – which lasted for decades – the indigenous populations were exposed to the concept of the clipped hedge.¹⁵¹

Concerning the transition of the dry stockade to unclipped living hedge and, eventually, to clipped living hedge, it is argued that the concept of the living hedge was not foreign to most Africans, including the ‘Bantu’-speaking groups who had migrated southwards and eventually settled in the southern African region long before the colonial period. *The key argument is that the ‘Bantu’-speakers first copied the practice of clipping living hedges from the European settlers during the colonial period.* The same process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing that occurred in Serowe and elsewhere in Africa repeated itself all over South Africa, most notably in the fast-growing urban black locations where gardening became increasingly popular. As will be discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 8, the extensive use of clipped hedges also became popular in Batho at about the same time that it was introduced at Serowe.

¹⁵¹ B. Davidson, *Modern Africa: a social and political history*, pp. 5-6; B. Davidson, *Africa in history: themes and outlines*, pp. 281-287; H.J. van Aswegen, *Geskiedenis van Afrika: van die vroegste oorsprong tot onafhanklikheid*, pp. 265-266, 305-327; D. Glass, *The book about the British Empire*, pp. 72-77, 86-95; A. Gordon-Brown (ed.), *Year book & guide to East Africa, 1957*, p. 5; K. Blixen, *Out of Africa and shadows on the grass*, pp. 147, 210; Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), pp. 3-4.

3.7 Topiary in South African gardens: the ‘Africanising’ of a patrician art

3.7.1 Topiary in the white colonists’ gardens

Western-style topiary was brought to Africa and South Africa by the European colonists and missionaries who had either visited the continent for limited periods or had settled there permanently. For this reason, the European colonists’ and missionaries’ gardens, of which topiary was an integral part, are discussed in this chapter rather than in Chapter 2. The focus will be primarily on the gardens made by the white Dutch and British colonists and their descendants and, specifically, the extent to which topiary featured in their gardens. The 17th and 18th centuries are considered the “Golden Age of the Renaissance”¹⁵² in the Netherlands and Britain, particularly as far as the decorative arts, architecture, town planning and garden design are concerned. The afore-mentioned centuries overlap with the occupation and eventual colonisation of the Cape of Good Hope, first by the Dutch and then by the British, and the cultural influence which accompanied this complex process. Dutch and British influence was most visible in the area of garden design, most notably in the use of clipped vegetation in the gardens of both the white colonists and the indigenous groups.¹⁵³

3.7.1.1 The Dutch colonial period (1652-1795 and 1803-1806)

Although the commonly-held perception dictates that South Africa’s colonial garden history officially commenced in 1652, in actual fact, it dates back to 1647. This was the year a Dutch East India Company (hereafter ‘Company’ or VOC) ship, the Haerlem, was driven ashore in Table Bay during a violent storm. Physically weak after the long sea journey, the surviving crew were in desperate need of fresh vegetables. Having had some seeds on them, a vegetable garden was laid out in the Table Valley, and within weeks, green vegetables were ready for picking. Two of the Haerlem’s officers, namely Leendert Jansz and Nicolaas Proot, were convinced they had made an important discovery. In a memorandum to the Company, they strongly recommend that a “fort ende thuijn”¹⁵⁴ be established in the valley. They had

¹⁵² G.E. Pearse, *The Cape of Good Hope 1652-1833: an account of its buildings and the life of its people*, p. 7.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵⁴ H.C.V. Leibbrandt, *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope: letters and documents received, 1649-1662* (part I), p. 3. “Fort and garden”. (Free translation)

in mind a “verversch plaetse”¹⁵⁵ in the form of a garden which could supply passing ships with fresh produce. Jansz and Proot were convinced that at “de Cabo de bona Esperance...alle dingen soo wel als op eenige andere plaetsen ter werelt sal groeijen”¹⁵⁶ provided that “tuintiers uijt Hollant”¹⁵⁷ be responsible for the garden. Unfortunately, the layout of the Haerlem survivors’ vegetable garden is not known, but it could not have been much different from the first vegetable garden and orchard Commander Jan van Riebeeck¹⁵⁸ and his *baashovenier* (head gardener), J.H.H. Boom (1609-1667), laid out soon after their arrival in the Cape in April 1652.¹⁵⁹ The fact that Van Riebeeck himself had a preference for formal gardens with clipped hedges is not surprising since the garden at his house of birth in the town of Culemborg¹⁶⁰ in the Netherlands had a formal design with clipped “buxushagen”.¹⁶¹ Van Riebeeck’s garden style preference, which was in line with the dominant trend in the Netherlands and the rest of Europe, found expression in the famous Company’s Garden.¹⁶²

Defined by hedges (unclipped and clipped): the early Cape settlement and its gardens

If early Cape history is viewed from a purely garden history perspective, it may be argued that a hedge not only characterised but also defined Van Riebeeck’s fledgling Cape settlement, then known as *Cabo* (‘the Cape’) or *de Kaapsche Vlek* (‘the Cape settlement’). This hedge of indigenous wild almond trees¹⁶³ (*Brabejum stellatifolium*), which is the first significant wild hedge of its kind planted by Europeans on Africa’s most southern tip, was not a clipped hedge but a wild one. It seems as though Van Riebeeck had thought about such a hedge even before he arrived in the Cape, namely when he mentioned in a report to the

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7. “Refreshment station”. (Free translation)

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5. “The Cape of Good Hope...everything will grow as well as in any other part of the world”. (Free translation)

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9. “Gardeners from Holland”. (Free translation)

¹⁵⁸ For more on Van Riebeeck, see Chapter 2.

¹⁵⁹ For detailed information as described in Van Riebeeck’s diary, see H.C.V. Leibbrandt, *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope, December 1651 - December 1653, [Van] Riebeeck’s journal, &c.* (part I), p. 21.

¹⁶⁰ P. Korthuys, “Die tuin by die Jan van Riebeeckhuis, Culemborg”, *Restorica* 4, 18(35), June 1977, pp. 78-80.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79. “Boxwood hedges”. (Free translation)

¹⁶² Leibbrandt, *Precis...[Van] Riebeeck’s journal, &c.* (part I), pp. 3-17; L. Guelke, “Die blanke setlaars, 1652-1780” in H. Giliomee & R. Elphick (eds), *’n Samelewing in wording: Suid-Afrika 1652-1820*, pp. 47, 49; E.A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p. 30.

¹⁶³ Also known as bitter almond trees. See A. Notten & C. Malan, “Brabejum stellatifolium”, <<http://www.plantzafrica.com/plantab/brabejstell.html>>, September 2003 (Accessed: 17.3.2017).

Company, dated June 1651, that hedges of hawthorn (*Crataegus spp.*) might be planted around the settlement in order to safeguard it.¹⁶⁴ Planted in 1660, the wild almond hedge not only established the settlement's physical boundary by enclosing an area of approximately 6 000 acres (approximately 2 400 hectares), but it also served as a tangible barrier between the Europeans and the unpredictable Khoekhoe groups. In addition, the hedge had to contain the settlement (which the Company considered to be temporary), protect the gardens and orchards from wilful damage and theft, protect the Company's and colonists' cattle from raids, and keep wild animals at bay. Although the hedge in question was a physical one, it is argued that it became a metaphor for the fear-based *us* (read: white colonists) and *them* (read: indigenous people) antithesis which have characterised racial relations ever since. The hedge not only symbolised the divide between white and black but it also became emblematic of one civilisation (European) which separated itself from and protected itself against another (African). This resulted in a 'hedge-mentality' which defined black (including coloured) and white relations for centuries.¹⁶⁵ This psychosis runs like a golden thread not only through southern African history in general but also through the region's garden history and, specifically, the historical relations between (white) garden owners and (black and coloured) garden labourers.¹⁶⁶

Though the early years of European settlement in South Africa is often associated with the wild almond hedge and its symbolic meaning, the popular conception is that European settlement did not start with a hedge but with a garden,¹⁶⁷ specifically a hedged garden. While the Cape settlement was literally hedged-in by the wild almond hedge, the gardens inside that hedge were also hedged-in, albeit by clipped hedges. Laying out a utility garden was not only the VOC's prime instruction to Van Riebeeck; it also became the rationale for the early settlement's existence. The garden in question is the famous Company's Garden or

¹⁶⁴ Leibbrandt, *Precis...[Van] Riebeeck's journal, &c.* (part I), p. 8.

¹⁶⁵ H.J. du Bruyn, *Vrees as faktor in die regse blanke politiek in Suid-Afrika sedert 1948: 'n historiese ontleding* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1994), pp. 1-2; H.H. Hewison, *Hedge of wild almonds: South Africa, the 'pro-Boers' and the Quaker conscience 1890-1910*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ M.F. Katzen, "White settlers and the origin of a new society, 1652-1778" in M. Wilson & L. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa (vol. I): South Africa to 1870*, pp. 189-190; H.B. Rycroft, "The Van Riebeeck hedge at Kirstenbosch: past, present and future", *South African Forestry Journal* 31, 1958, pp. 21-23; C.F.J. Muller (ed.), *Vyfhonderd jaar Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, p. 34; S. Eliovson, *Garden beauty of South Africa*, p. 19. The relations between white garden owners and black and coloured garden labourers are discussed in Chapter 7.

¹⁶⁷ H.B. Rycroft (ed.), *Reader's Digest complete guide to gardening in South Africa* (vol. I), p. 9.

Compagnies Thuijn. This widely-copied ‘mother’ of all South African gardens deserves attention not only because of its famous hedges but also for the fact that it established a ‘blueprint’ for the formal garden style on African soil. The garden – in all respects patrician – was laid out by head gardener Boom under the supervision of Van Riebeeck, who happened to be a knowledgeable gardener himself.¹⁶⁸

Situated on the north-facing slope of Table Mountain near the fort, the garden’s position was ideal because it could be watered by canals fed by mountain streams. Despite its initial experimental character, the garden was strictly formal and laid out in a grid pattern with five avenues stretching from north to south and twelve walks cutting through the avenues from east to west (Image 3/20). In true Baroque style, square and rectangular plots (parallelograms and quadripartites) were laid out according to the axial principle. Importantly, all the symmetrically-divided garden plots were enclosed by clipped laurel (*Lauraceae spp.*)¹⁶⁹ “heggens”¹⁷⁰ to protect the vegetables and fruit against the notorious Cape winds and to keep out unwanted elements. The main function of these hedges, which were also clipped from myrtle, bay leaf (*Laurus nobilis*), laburnum (probably *Laburnum anagyroides*), boxwood and “many other evergreens”¹⁷¹ imported from the Netherlands, was thus practical rather than ornamental. On another level, it may be argued that the hedges were emblematic of a foreign power ‘hedging-off’ its claim to the land and enforcing its authority on the landscape. The hedges symbolised power, colonisation, permanence and the establishment of control.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Van Riebeeck compiled a horticultural and agricultural guide, namely the *Almanach der Africaansche hoveniers en land-bouwers* for his successor, Zacharias Wagenaer. NLSA: Hoveniersalmanak Collection: *MSD 1.1(1)*; J.A. van Riebeeck, *Almanach der Africaansche hoveniers en land-bouwers* (1662).

¹⁶⁹ This laurel variety was also known as ‘wild peach’. J. Burman, “Company’s Garden” in Anon., *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa* (vol. 3), p. 376.

¹⁷⁰ M.K. Jeffreys, *Kaapse Plakkaatboek (vol. I): 1652-1707*, p. 57. “Hedges”. (Free translation)

¹⁷¹ E.B.F. Lewcock, “Cape gardens” in Anon., *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa* (vol. 5), p. 121.

¹⁷² Lewcock, pp. 120-121; E.B.F. Lewcock, “Recently discovered plans of Cape Town gardens of the time of Thibault”, *Africana Notes and News* 14(4), December 1960, p. 145; N. Worden, “Space and identity in VOC Cape Town”, *Kronos* 25, pre-millennium issue 1998/99, pp. 77, 79; K. Holmes, “‘I have built up a little garden’: the vernacular garden, national identity and a sense of place”, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 21(2), 2001, p. 120. For more information on the history, development and layout of the Company’s Garden, see M.C. Karsten, *The old Company’s Garden at the Cape and its superintendents: involving an historical account of early Cape botany, passim*; P. Roditi, *The Company’s Garden at the Cape of Good Hope* (Unpublished Garden Conservation thesis, Architectural Association London, 1995), *passim*; D. Bax & C. Koeman, *Argitektoniese skoonheid in Kaapstad se Kompanjiestuin 1777-1805, passim*.

During the era of Governor Simon van der Stel¹⁷³ (1639-1712), who arrived in the Cape in 1679, the Company's Garden was substantially expanded and upgraded. In the spirit of Le Nôtre and his work at Versailles (laid out in 1653), an oak-lined avenue was created next to the main canal and most vegetable plots were replaced with formal gardens, pools and smaller canals. *Parterres* were also created by using very low-clipped *broderie* of boxwood, rosemary, lavender, hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*) and sage (*Salvia officinalis*). More clipped hedges were added in the form of high outer hedges (wind-breaks) and low inner hedges enclosing the flowerbeds. In true Dutch style, ornamental clipped citrus trees added a topiarian touch. Towards the end of the 1600s, the Company's Garden had completely outgrown its utilitarian function and Van der Stel converted it into a pleasure garden for Cape Town's residents. At the same time, the first steps towards turning it into a botanical garden were also taken. The Company's Garden had long been the Cape settlement's main attraction and, through the years, countless travellers, botanists, horticulturists, VOC officials and other foreign dignitaries paid a visit. Considering that most of them hailed from European countries where garden design had reached an unprecedented level of sophistication, their descriptions of the garden are insightful. While they favourably mentioned the garden's breathtaking views, long tree-lined walks, canals and lush vegetation, the aspect most of them highlighted is the garden's clipped hedges.¹⁷⁴

One of the esteemed visitors who paid a visit to the garden during the Van der Stel era was H.A. van Reede tot Drakestein, the Commissioner-General of the VOC. After his visit in 1685, he wrote that “de wandelwegen, langer dan het gesicht bereyken kan, sijn ten weder zijden beset door hooge muren van aengenaeme groenten, alwaer men in de swaerste Zuyd O. winden vijligh kan wesen, sijnde den geheelen thuyn afgedeelt in seer veel vierkante vacken of parken, beplant met alderhande fruytbomen en moeskruyden, dewelcke door die hooge, dicke en groene, digte heggen voor alle quaede winde bewaert”.¹⁷⁵ It may be argued

¹⁷³ Limited space prevents a discussion of the contributions of other Cape Governors. For information, see Karsten's and Roditi's works.

¹⁷⁴ Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), pp. 522-523; Lewcock, “Recently discovered plans...”, p. 145; Rycroft (ed.), pp. 10-11. For a discussion of the hedges and topiary in the Company's Garden and other Cape gardens, see G.E. Fagan, *An introduction to the man-made landscape at the Cape from the 17th to the 19th centuries* (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1994), pp. 193-197.

¹⁷⁵ Anon., *Bijdragen en mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap Utrecht* (vol. 62), p. 14. “The walkways, longer than the eyes can see, are on both sides occupied by high walls, where a person may be safe even in the worst South-Eastern wind, since the entire garden is divided into many square beds or plots, planted with all kinds of fruit trees and vegetables, which are protected against damaging winds by high, thick and green, dense hedges”. (Free translation)

that Van Reede tot Drakestein was subjective because of his VOC ties, but other visitors with no such connections were equally in awe. Such a visitor was Adiel Mill, the accountant of the Embassy of King William III of England, who visited the garden in 1699. Mill described the garden in great detail, including the hedges: “Here are besides abundance of cross Walkes with Bay Hedges the tallest that ever I Saw some of them being near 40 foot high”.¹⁷⁶

Another caller was the Dutch minister of religion, Francois Valentyn, who visited the garden in 1685, 1695, 1705 and 1714. Valentyn, who described the Company’s Garden as an “uitmuntenden Africaanschen thuin”¹⁷⁷ wrote that “aan weerzynden van elk pad heft men zeer hooge heggen van uitnemende hooge spekclaurier”.¹⁷⁸ According to Valentyn, these hedges, also called “heijningen”¹⁷⁹ during the 1700s, were at least “23 of 24 voeten”¹⁸⁰ in height and the hedges which enclosed the various garden plots (*moesvakken*) were “7 of 8 voeten”¹⁸¹ high. Valentyn’s favourable comments, as well as those of other visitors, were not limited to the Company’s Garden but also included the Cape settlement’s private gardens, which were not only influenced by the Dutch garden style but also by the Company’s Garden itself.

Particuliere thuijnen: the laying out of the first private gardens

Since the Cape of Good Hope was initially not much more than an oversize utility garden, the early settlement’s existence and value was in all respects defined by horticulture and agriculture. Initially, all employees worked for the Company, none of whom owned any garden plots or agricultural land. In 1654, Van Riebeeck allotted married employees private garden plots for the purpose of growing vegetables for the Company. A turning point came in 1657 when the VOC discharged nine officials and allowed them to become the first

¹⁷⁶ As quoted in R. Vigne, “The Company’s Garden under the Van der Stels: a contemporary English account”, *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library* 53(3), March 1999, p. 63.

¹⁷⁷ F. Valentyn, *Beschryvinge van de Kaap der Goede Hoope met de zaaken daar toe behoorende* (part I), p. 100. “Excellent African garden”. (Free translation)

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 102. “On both sides of each path are very high hedges of exceptionally tall laurels”. (Free translation)

¹⁷⁹ Western Cape Archives and Records Service (hereafter WCARS): C 2282, *Politieke Raad: Plakkaatboek*, 7.12.1745-24.12.1753, pp. 305, 309. “Hedges”. (Free translation)

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* “23 or 24 feet”. (Free translation)

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* “7 or 8 feet”. (Free translation)

freemen or “vrijeluiden”.¹⁸² They settled along the Liesbeeck River and were allowed to lay out “particuliere thuijnen”,¹⁸³ in other words, privately-owned¹⁸⁴ garden plots. These *particuliere thuijnen* (also *thuyntjes* or *thuijntjes*), which were among the first garden plots in white private ownership, were mostly used for the small-scale cultivation of “allerhande moes, aert ende thuijnvruchten”¹⁸⁵ and “boomvruchten”.¹⁸⁶ Little is known about the layout of these gardens, but it is assumed that a basic version of the formal Dutch garden blueprint, namely rectangular or square plots aligned with canals or rills and divided by paths for easy access, determined the design of these utility gardens.¹⁸⁷

Fortunately, much more is known about the layout of domestic gardens in the Cape settlement, later known as Cape Town. The layout of the town’s domestic gardens was similar to that of private gardens in Amsterdam and other canal towns in the Netherlands. A simplified or ‘watered-down’ version of the classical Dutch garden style as described by Oldenburger-Ebbers earlier in this chapter spread to the Cape. In the process, Dutch gardeners transformed the unfamiliar Cape landscape and invested it with European characteristics. Later, the same process repeated itself in the small Boland towns and on the farms. In Cape Town, the houses built by the Dutch colonists had no garden in front since the houses were built with “tuynen daar agter”.¹⁸⁸ The *bordes* or stoeps¹⁸⁹ of houses extended right to the street, leaving no space for front gardens. Often only a water canal or rill separated the house from the street. Some houses had paved inner courtyard gardens while others laid out small formal gardens in their backyards or *achtererven*. This typical Dutch

¹⁸² WCARS: *C 2333, Memoriën en Instructiën*, 1657-1662, p. 94. Also known as *vrijelieden*. For more information, see G.C. de Wet, *Die vryliede en vryswartes in die Kaapse nedersetting 1657-1707*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸³ National Archives of the Netherlands: *Inventory no. 4012: V.O.C. 1602-1811, Cassa Boeck*, 18.5.1676, p. 544; Jeffreys, pp. 20, 57-58. For more information, see D.O. Wijnands, “Hortus auriaci: de tuinen van Oranje en hun plaats in de tuinbouw en plantkunde van de late zeventiende eeuw”, *Journal of Garden History: An International Quarterly* 8(2 & 3), April-September 1988, pp. 75-76.

¹⁸⁴ The garden plots were held in terms of a freehold system.

¹⁸⁵ WCARS: *C 2333, Memoriën en Instructiën*, 1657-1662, p. 94. “A variety of vegetables, earth vegetables and garden fruit”. (Free translation). See also p. 98.

¹⁸⁶ WCARS: *C 2335, Memoriën en Instructiën*, 1657-1699, p. 21. “Tree fruit”. (Free translation)

¹⁸⁷ Fagan, *An introduction to...*, pp. 105-107; De Wet, pp. 44-45; Worden, p. 73. For a detailed account of the day-to-day maintenance of a freeman’s garden, see L. Fouché (ed.), *The diary of Adam Tas 1705-1706, passim*.

¹⁸⁸ D.B. Bosman, *Briewe van Johanna Maria van Riebeeck en ander Riebeeckiana*, p. 41. “Gardens behind”. (Free translation). See also De Wet, p. 129.

¹⁸⁹ In this case the term ‘stoep’ refers to a landing preceding the front door. F.C. Dominicus, *Het huiselik en maatschappelik leven van de Zuid-Afrikaner in de eerste helft der 18de eeuw*, p. 38; Pearse, pp. 65, 88-89.

practice of laying out back gardens instead of front gardens is significant since it established a pattern which influenced the layout of not only the gardens of Dutch-speaking colonists and their descendants, but also, to a lesser extent, some black people's gardens. This trend will be referred to again later in this study.¹⁹⁰

According to South African garden historian, Ena Lewcock, most private gardens in Cape Town were characterised by “small intimate courts or compartments divided by hedges or clipped greenery”¹⁹¹ or, to quote a contemporary source, “omgeheijningde parken en vacken”.¹⁹² True to the Dutch blueprint, gardens were formally laid out in squares and/or geometric shapes with footpaths in-between. Therefore, the practice of topiary, specifically clipped hedges, was common among most garden owners during the Dutch period, most notably gardeners of Dutch descent, but later also those of French and German descent. The availability of cheap garden labour in the form of black and coloured garden slaves (see Chapter 2) made this garden art more accessible and less strenuous for the mostly white garden owners. In the mind's eye, one may conjure up a picture of these garden slaves clipping away the season's growth, and smell the freshly-clipped myrtle, bay leaf, laurel, boxwood and rosemary hedges and edges. These, and later also pungent cypress, were the most commonly-used hedge plants.¹⁹³

It must be noted, though, that the use of indigenous plant species were not entirely overlooked since an appreciation for the use of indigenous plants for hedges (clipped and unclipped) were encouraged by visiting European botanists and naturalists, such as the Swedes, Anders Sparrman (1748-1820)¹⁹⁴ and Carl Peter Thunberg (1743-1828). Thunberg, who visited the Cape from 1772 to 1775, favoured both exotic and indigenous species and accordingly advised Cape gardeners that “for quickset hedges, the *Aloe succotrina*,

¹⁹⁰ Lewcock, “Cape gardens”, p. 121; A. Coetzee, *Die Afrikaanse volkskultuur: inleiding tot die studie van volkskunde*, p. 119; Worden, p. 79; Pearse, p. 65; Holmes, p. 119.

¹⁹¹ Lewcock, “Recently discovered plans...”, p. 144.

¹⁹² WCARS: C 2282, *Politieke Raad: Plakkaatboek*, 7.12.1745-24.12.1753, p. 312. “Enclosed courts and compartments”. (Free translation)

¹⁹³ Iziko Social History Institute (hereafter ISHI): Anon., *Some aspects of the Cape garden before 1830* (manuscript), pp. 1-2; Anon., *The Government Gardens: summer school presented by G. Fagan* (handwritten notes), no p. no.; Fagan, *An introduction to...*, p. 177; H. Fourie, *The South African garden designer*, p. 68; P. Taylor (ed.), *The Oxford companion to the garden*, pp. 448-449.

¹⁹⁴ For more on Sparrman's visit to the Cape, see A. 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* (vols 1 & II; edited by V.S. Forbes), *passim*.

Zygodium morgsana, quince, apple and pear tree, hawthorn, euonymus, willow, rose bush, bramble, yew-tree, elm, holly, box, lime-tree, dogwood, honeysuckle, cherry-tree, *Cercis siliquastrum*, *Lycium barbarum*, maple, *Coronilla securidaca*, lilac, oak, laurel and myrtle¹⁹⁵ yielded the best results. For fences and sheep and cattle folds, Thunberg recommended *Mimosa nilotica*, *Arduina bispinosa* and *Galenia Africana*, and for borders around flowerbeds, “the shin-bones of sheep”.¹⁹⁶ This practice, which originated in the Netherlands and Belgium,¹⁹⁷ became common among rural Cape colonists for edging and dividing *parterres*. Not all plants recommended by Thunberg are suitable for clipping, but his list nevertheless indicates the wide variety of species available to Cape gardeners and farmers for use as hedge plants during the Dutch colonial period.¹⁹⁸

The development of a gardening culture in the Cape and beyond

For almost one and a half centuries, successive Dutch Commanders and Governors, their master gardeners¹⁹⁹ and countless garden assistants and garden labourers contributed to the development of a vibrant gardening culture in the Cape. Also worth mentioning is the horticultural influence of the French Huguenots²⁰⁰ who, like the mentioned Daniel Marot, also fled persecution after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and arrived in the Cape in 1688, and the famous plant collectors²⁰¹ who collected Cape specimens for botanical gardens in Europe, including the Hortus Botanicus²⁰² in Amsterdam. A preference for formal gardens with stiff-clipped hedges, edges and the occasional pyramid- or cone-shaped topiaries reigned supreme for the entire Dutch period, particularly in towns, but also in the country

¹⁹⁵ C.P. Thunberg, *Carl Peter Thunberg: travels at the Cape of Good Hope 1772-1775* (edited by V.S. Forbes), p. xli (sic).

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Huxley, p. 58.

¹⁹⁸ Thunberg, pp. xli (sic), 41.

¹⁹⁹ Except for Boom, also worth mentioning are head gardeners H.B. Oldenland (1663-1697?), J. Hartog (1663-1722?), J.A. Auge (1711-1805?) and I.A. Plantefeber (dates unknown). For Plantefeber's garden journal written during his time as head gardener of the Company's estate, Het Nieuwland, see WCARS: A. 2556, *Journal written by Isaak Abraham Plantefeber aboard the ship Diamant (1788-1789) and on the estate Het Nieuwland (1789-1791)*.

²⁰⁰ T.R. Sim, “South African horticulture”, *Report of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science* (fourth meeting, Kimberley, 1906), p. 334; Katzen, pp. 196-197; Walker, p. 51.

²⁰¹ For more information, see M. Gunn & L.E. Codd, *Botanical exploration of Southern Africa, passim*; E. Procter, “Our indigenous trees: the link between botany and our history (1652-1885)”, *Lantern* 34(1), January 1985, pp. 21-29.

²⁰² Oldenburger-Ebbers, pp. 166-167, 170-171; Anon., *De Hortus: Hortus Botanicus Amsterdam – anno 1638* (pamphlet), no p. no.

districts. A good example was the garden of Jan Mulder, the magistrate of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, laid out on the farm Banghoek near Stellenbosch in the early 1700s. Visitors to this garden, including the German traveller, Peter Kolbe (1675-1726), were impressed with the trees that had been clipped immaculately into pyramid shapes.²⁰³ Country and farm hedges, which had been clipped mostly from plumbago (*Plumbago auriculata*), honeysuckle, rose (*Rosaceae; Rosa spp.*), pomegranate and quince, were common, while rosemary and juniper were popular edging plants. Alternatively, pebbles, big shells and the mentioned shin-bones of sheep were used to edge flowerbeds. The further one moved from Cape Town, the more rudimentary, utilitarian and vernacular the gardens became. Gardens and *werfs* (farm yards) were enclosed with either clipped hedges or stone walls, often painted white. Unclipped hedges of hardy hakea (*Hakea*) and the indigenous Kei-apple (*Dovyalis caffra*) were also commonly used on farms.²⁰⁴

In the country districts, the main function of gardens was still predominantly utilitarian, namely to provide food, flavouring, preservatives, and medicinal herbs. Flowers were mostly planted for their fragrance. Noteworthy is the fact that on farms, where adequate space was available for gardening, small flower gardens were laid out in front of houses. If water was scarce, flower gardens were small since water had to be carried with buckets. If water was abundant, furrows were made, which allowed for bigger flower gardens. As was the case with the traditional Dutch gardens, flowerbeds were aligned with the furrows, which automatically lead to symmetrically laid-out gardens. The design of these gardens is strikingly similar to the simple formal axial garden mentioned earlier. The main footpath leading to the front door formed the central axis and, on both sides, were rectangular, square or circular flowerbeds. *Inside the flowerbeds, the planting was informal but still contained within clipped hedges, fences or garden walls.* The Dutch never lost their appetite for clipped hedges, and remnants of such hedges long survived those who planted them.²⁰⁵ When South African author, Dorothea Fairbridge (1862-1931), visited the Cape in the early 1920s, she exclaimed in dismay: “and *everywhere* the old Dutchmen planted stiff hedges of white

²⁰³ G.W. Eybers, *Op die voetspoor van ou reisigers: stories uit Kolbe, Barrow, Lichtenstein en Campbell*, pp. 29-30.

²⁰⁴ ISHI: A. Boshoff, *Regency-tuin vir Bertram-huis* (manuscript), pp. 30, 35-36; Fagan, *An introduction to...*, pp. 127, 447, 531; Fourie, pp. 68-69; D. Fairbridge, *Gardens of South Africa*, pp. 41, 53-59.

²⁰⁵ ISHI: Boshoff, pp. 30, 35-36; Fagan, *An introduction to...*, pp. 531, 617, 619, 1057; Fourie, pp. 68-69; Fairbridge, pp. 41, 53-59; H. Fourie, “Tuine uit die ou dae”, *Landbouweekblad* 49, 5.12.1972, p. 109.

Myrtle and clipped them as though they had been box, shearing off every adventurous bud”.²⁰⁶

Fairbridge did not specify what she meant by ‘everywhere’ but, for the purpose of this study, the term includes the regions beyond the boundaries of the Cape Colony. First the *veeboers* in the early 1700s, then the *trekboers* since the 1740s, followed by the *Voortrekkers* in the 1830s, uprooted themselves and trekked away from the Cape, seeking pastures for their cattle and freedom from the colonial government’s laws. They took with them, among other things, seeds, “a little box of fruit trees”,²⁰⁷ seed-potatoes and basic gardening tools, such as spades and picks, on the trek. A semi-nomadic lifestyle made gardening a challenge and merely permitted the planting of a small bed of hardy vegetables and the odd maize patch near a fountain or stream, mostly without any form of enclosure.²⁰⁸ Many of these migrant colonists eventually settled in the region beyond the Orange River. After founding the Boer republics of the Orange Free State (1854) and ZAR (Transvaal) (1852), Boer²⁰⁹ families settled in pioneer towns (*dorps*) and on farms scattered over the interior and Highveld.²¹⁰

The traditional Dutch town planning pattern repeated itself in the two republics: pioneer houses and, later, the *stoepkamerhuis*²¹¹ (stoep-room house) abutted the broad streets and, as a result, gardens and orchards were laid out at the back. In some cases, only a strip wide enough for a narrow flowerbed was left open between the stoep and the street. Typically, the street and the stoep were separated by a *leivoor* (rill or water furrow) which channeled water to the garden. The prevalence of topiary in these gardens was predominantly limited to clipped hedges since the emphasis was not on aesthetics but on functionality, namely the production of vegetables and fruit. Clipped hedges, mostly of cypress and, later, also privet,

²⁰⁶ Fairbridge, p. 40. (Own emphasis)

²⁰⁷ K. Schoeman (ed.), *The early days of the Orange Free State*, p. 54.

²⁰⁸ G.S. Preller, *Voortrekkermense I: 'n vijftal oorspronkelike dokumente oor die geskiedenis van die voortrek, met aantekeninge en bijlaë*, p. 238; R.E. Painter, “Voedsel en die voorbereiding daarvan tydens die Groot Trek”, *Lantern* 37(4), October 1988, p. 88; Sim, p. 334; Eliovson, p. 20.

²⁰⁹ So-called Boers, later known as Afrikaners, were the descendants of European immigrants who settled in the Cape during the 17th and 18th centuries and spoke a simplified version of Dutch, later known as Afrikaans.

²¹⁰ R. Carstens & P.W. Grobbelaar, *Voortrekkerlewe: agter die skerms op die Groot Trek*, pp. 236-237; G.S. Preller, *Voortrekkermense III: dokumente oor die geskiedenis van die voortrek met aantekeninge en bijlae*, p. 16; Guelke, pp. 44-45, 63-72; Walker, pp. 59, 91-92, 195-233; Coetzee, p. 119; A.F. Hattersley, *An illustrated social history of South Africa*, pp. 225-227; K. Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk en geboue in die 19de eeu*, pp. 19-26, 33-44.

²¹¹ For more information, see Chapter 4.

demarcated boundaries and protected the garden and property. Quince, pomegranate and fig (*Ficus carica*) trees were used for unclipped hedges. As is the case with all forms of cultural expression, garden styles are not immune to change, including the gardens of the conservative Boers. Change came at the turn of the 18th century when the Dutch administration in the Cape had to make way for the British. They brought new cultural influences which left no British colony unaffected. Gardens, including Boer gardens,²¹² were subjected to an Anglicisation process which lasted until the early 1900s.²¹³

3.7.1.2 The British colonial period (1795-1803 and 1806-1910)

The British occupation of the Cape, initially only for an eight-year period (1795-1803), and again from 1806-1910, signalled a new era not only in terms of politics and governance but, as stated above, also in terms of culture. British cultural influence found expression in many areas, including architecture, horticulture and garden art. According to Cape garden history expert, Gwen Fagan, the Landscape Movement, which dominated British garden style for most of the 1700s, had a limited influence on the British colonies, particularly the Cape. Merely a handful of mostly affluent Cape residents who owned villas and country estates succumbed to this trend with its preference for vast swaths of cut lawn.²¹⁴ Cape gardens were far more prone to the influences of the Victorian era since the decorative flourishes associated with the Victorian style were more accessible. During the course of the 1800s, most South African gardens were Victorianised, including the Company's Garden. By the time of the second British occupation, this most famous of Cape gardens, then known as The Gardens or Public Garden, had become an ornamental one. During the course of the 19th century the British developed a section of the garden into a fully-fledged botanical garden known as the Botanic Garden. The garden was still a magnet for foreign visitors, specifically

²¹² For descriptions of Boer gardens on farms in the southern Orange Free State during the 1870s and 1880s, see Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA): A. 325, *Die herinneringe van J.C. de Waal*, pp. 71, 78-79, 106-109, 137. For other Boer gardens, see J. Nixon, *Among the Boers: notes of a trip to South Africa in search of health*, pp. 138-139, 200-201; A. Trollope, *South Africa* (reprint of 1878 edition), p. 395.

²¹³ Carstens & Grobbelaar, pp. 236-237; Preller, *Voortrekkermense III: dokumente...*, p. 16; Guelke, pp. 44-45, 63-72; Walker, pp. 59, 91-92, 195-233; Hattersley, pp. 225-227; Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, pp. 19-26, 33-44.

²¹⁴ Fagan, *An introduction to...*, p. 1057.

botanists and horticulturists who were employed by an increasing number of botanical gardens in the colonial world.²¹⁵

The popular Victorian pastime of taking leisurely walks in parks and gardens made The Gardens a popular spot among locals. Visitors from outside the Cape Colony, including the Orange Free State republic, also paid visits. One such visitor was H.A.L. Hamelberg, a Dutch jurist and later member of the Orange Free State *Volksraad*, who visited the garden in January 1856, only months before his departure for Bloemfontein. Hamelberg wrote in his diary that the garden “bestaat thans in een lange laan, aan weerskanten met eikenboomen bezet. Verder bevindt zich ter regterzijde de botanical garden, een schoone en groote tuin met vele vreemde en inheemsche gewassen en bloemen, waarvan er sommige in kasten vereenigd zijn, met fonteinen en fraaije wandelpaden, terwijl overal rustbanken geplaatst zijn.”²¹⁶ Despite the garden having retained its mostly formal layout from the Dutch period (note Hamelberg’s reference to *kasten*),²¹⁷ it did not escape Victorian influences, as is evident in Hamelberg’s eloquent description. Alas, he made no mention of the famous hedges planted by the Dutch.²¹⁸

Informal planting within a formal framework

The fact that clipped hedges had become obscured in the Public Garden did not mean that they had disappeared altogether. Despite topiary being ridiculed by some, including Reverend Latrobe²¹⁹ who referred to it as “that vitiated taste”²²⁰ at which “we English laugh”,²²¹ and Lady Anne Barnard (1750-1825) who despised garden plants being “cut into

²¹⁵ ISHI: Boshoff, pp. 36-37; J. Noble, *Descriptive handbook of the Cape Colony: its condition and resources*, pp. 38-39; Sim, pp. 335-336.

²¹⁶ FSPA: Dr H.P.N. Muller Collection: A. 160.55, *diary of H.A.L. Hamelberg, 1855-1896*, pp. 70-71. “Currently consists of one long avenue, on both sides planted with oak trees. Furthermore, one finds on the right-hand side the botanical garden, a beautiful and huge garden with many foreign and indigenous plants and flowers, some of which are confined to beds (or plots), with fountains and pretty walks, and garden benches placed all over.” (Free translation)

²¹⁷ For a detailed plan of the Public Garden at the time of Hamelberg’s visit, see H.A.L. Hamelberg, *Die dagboek van H.A.L. Hamelberg 1855-1871* (edited by F.J. du T. Spies), p. 1.

²¹⁸ Burman, p. 377; ISHI: Boshoff, p. 13.

²¹⁹ For more on Latrobe, see Chapter 2.

²²⁰ C.I. Latrobe, *Journal of a visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816 with some account of the missionary settlements of the United Brethren, near the Cape of Good Hope* (facsimile reprint of 1818 edition), p. 342.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

straight lines” and being “forced into regularity”,²²² it was still popular among domestic gardeners. While the focus shifted from the highly compartmentalised gardens of the Dutch era to the romantic flower garden, clipped hedges and, particularly, topiary maintained pride of place in the English garden of the 1800s. One of the main differences between the Dutch and English gardens was the fact that *the English preferred their flower gardens to be in front of their houses, not at the back*. The backyard became the exclusive domain of vegetable gardens and orchards while the front gardens were entirely ornamental (Image 3/21). In addition to the quintessential mixed flower garden, Victorian gardens from Cape Town to Graaff-Reinet and beyond were characterised by a focus on ornamentation and detail. Circular and half-circular flowerbeds divided into segments by clipped edges was typical of the period. Flowerbeds arranged in the form of a quincunx²²³ with a sundial, birdbath or urn in the centre, were also popular. As was the case in Britain, local gardeners developed a new appreciation for whimsical topiary such as clipped arches over garden gates, ‘cake stands’, birds, baskets and other symbols of the Victorian age. Typically, topiary was used in the same way as specimen plants, namely for their unusual shape rather than as part of the garden’s overall design. The fact that topiary required constant clipping and maintenance was no obstacle since cheap black and coloured garden labour had become increasingly available.²²⁴

The Victorian garden style, including the ever-popular cottage style, was reinforced by waves of British settlers arriving on the shores of the Eastern Cape and Natal since 1820. Not only did they bring their gardening knowledge and skills with them but they also brought along cuttings and seeds of plants from England, such as hollyhocks, foxgloves (probably *Digitalis purpurea*), delphiniums (*Delphinium spp.*), lavender and rosemary.²²⁵ They also

²²² Lady A. Barnard, *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard 1799-1800* (vol. I; edited by M. Lenta and B. le Cordeur), p. 47.

²²³ An arrangement of five components with one at each corner, in this case flowerbeds, and one at the centre, whether a sundial or birdbath. See ISHI: Boshoff, pp. 23, 27.

²²⁴ Lewcock, “Cape gardens”, p. 121; Taylor (ed.), p. 449; Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 523.

²²⁵ T. Bonyhady, *The colonial earth*, pp. 69-74, 81, 88, 90-94, 223; W.J. Burchell, *Travels in the interior of Southern Africa* (vol. I; reprinted from original edition of 1822-1824), pp. 21-22; F. Fleming, *Southern Africa: a geography and natural history of the country, colonies, and inhabitants from the Cape of Good Hope to Angola* (shortened title), pp. 95-98, 101-102; J. Meiring, *Thomas Pringle: his life and times*, pp. 39-40; E. McLeod, *Dear Louisa: history of a pioneer family in Natal 1850-1888* (edited by R.E. Gordon), pp. 32, 38, 65, 81, 126. See also mentioned sources for more information on the British settlers’ and colonists’ preference for English-style gardens as well as plants and flowers from Britain and Europe. For a detailed discussion of this phenomenon, see Chapter 4.

brought rose cuttings, including the Eglantine rose (*Rosa eglanteria*), used as hedge plants²²⁶ in the country districts and on farms. In a relatively short period of time, the settler ‘frontier towns’ had not only grown into centres of horticultural expertise and plant distribution (such as Grahamstown’s Government Garden²²⁷), but they had also become strongholds of typical English gardens characterised by clipped borders around flowerbeds and clipped hedges. Settler gardens were characterised by *informal planting within a formal framework*. Clipped hedges, which formed the framework, consisted mostly of cypress and the hardy privet, which had become increasingly popular and well-established as a hedge plant in the two colonies (the Cape and Natal) and also in the two Boer republics. Hardy and drought-tolerant, privet or ligustrum may be easily propagated by means of cuttings and seed. The most commonly-used varieties were the broad-leaf privet (*Ligustrum lucidum* and *Ligustrum vulgare*) and the small-leaf privet (*Ligustrum ibota*).²²⁸

A simplified Edwardian style

The English influence on the South African garden style persisted throughout the 1800s and well into the 20th century. The Anglo-Boer War not only caused the destruction of many Boer gardens in towns and on farms,²²⁹ but also brought substantial numbers of British immigrants to South Africa, most of whom had settled in towns and cities. As a result of their horticultural knowledge and skills, they managed to substantially raise the standard of the South African domestic garden. Although South Africa had always been behind garden trends in Britain and Europe, the fashionable Edwardian garden style with its preference for architectural features and herbaceous borders enjoyed huge popularity among South Africa’s urban gardeners. The architect, Sir Herbert Baker,²³⁰ who was strongly influenced by

²²⁶ For more information on the use of roses as hedging material in the Cape Colony, see G. Fagan, *Roses at the Cape of Good Hope*, pp. 58, 60, 78, 187-188, 212, 262. By planting roses close together and allowing their thorny branches to become intertwined, they formed impenetrable hedges.

²²⁷ FSPA: A. 507.14, *Memoirs of Martha Jane Blake (née Kirk)*, p. 10.

²²⁸ ISHI: Anon., *The Government Gardens...*, no p. no.; Lewcock, “Cape gardens”, p. 121; Taylor (ed.), p. 449; Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 523; Fagan, *An introduction to...*, p. 1057; FSPA: A. 507.14, *Memoirs of Martha...*, p. 10; G. Stuart, “Introduction” in J. Kalley (ed.), *Kwazulu-Natal is my garden*, pp. 1-4; K. Pienaar & G.F. Smith, *The South African what flower is that?: an essential guide to garden plants*, pp. 256-257.

²²⁹ Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, pp. 124-126; T. Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pp. 500-501.

²³⁰ For more on Baker, see Introduction.

Gertrude Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens,²³¹ probably contributed more than any other person to raise the bar for garden design in post-Anglo-Boer War South Africa. Baker was a committed advocate for the Edwardian garden, and his garden designs for South Africa's rich and famous have inspired countless local gardeners. Not all efforts at including topiary in the garden were in line with Baker's dictum of restraint, though, as was the case in the Oppenheimer family's garden at Brenthurst Estate²³² in Johannesburg during the 1920s and 1930s (Image 3/22). Generally, the Edwardian style, and after 1910 the simplified or 'watered-down' Edwardian style, had a positive influence on the layout of many suburban gardens across the Union of South Africa. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, Bloemfontein was no exception.²³³

Not all local gardeners were in a position to implement Baker's advice, though. In little more than a decade after he had left South Africa, Dorothea Fairbridge complained that the gardens of the Afrikaans "huisvrouw",²³⁴ particularly those in the country districts, were still at a "rudimentary stage".²³⁵ At the same time, she praised the Baker-designed gardens, many of which had reached maturity by then. She lamented that many local gardens were "for the most part devoid of terraces and covered ways, stone walls, ponds, paved walks, and other features"²³⁶ which, she argued, contributed to the beauty of modern gardens. The 'other features' Fairbridge mentioned were, of course, clipped hedges and edges, and to encourage local gardeners to embrace the art of clipping, she included a chapter titled "Hedges and edges"²³⁷ in her widely read tome *Gardens of South Africa* (1924).²³⁸

²³¹ For more information on the relationship between the three personalities and the influence they had exerted on one another, see D. du Bruyn, "A Baker garden with a touch of Jekyll: early history (1903-1905) of the garden at Westminster Estate near Tweespruit, Free State, with special reference to the role played by the Duke of Westminster, Sir Herbert Baker and Gertrude Jekyll", *Indago* 32, December 2016, *passim*.

²³² Anon., "Brenthurst, Parktown, Johannesburg: the residence of Sir Ernest and Lady Oppenheimer", *The South African Lady's Pictorial*, May 1928, pp. 34-36.

²³³ Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 523; D. du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the history of the English-style gardens of Batho, Mangaung (1846-1948)", *Navorsinge van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 27(3), December 2011, pp. 49-50; D.A. van der Bank, "Eduardiaanse invloed in die Oranjerivierkolonie", *South African Journal of Cultural History* 10(1), May 1996, pp. 60, 65, 73.

²³⁴ Fairbridge, p. 41. "Housewife". (Free translation)

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-59.

In addition to Fairbridge's book, other garden writers such as Marion Cran (1879-1942), as well as gardening and women's interest magazines, including *South African Gardening & Country Life* (1918), *South African Country Life* (1935), *The South African Lady's Pictorial and Home Journal* (1910) and *The Homestead* (1916) inspired gardeners to embrace topiary's aesthetic value for the domestic garden. If the proliferation of topiary in South African gardens during the 1920s and 1930s is any indication, it seems as though many local gardeners took Fairbridge's and other experts' advice to heart (Image 3/23). Fairbridge informed white garden owners that the growing pool of unemployed black men residing in the Union's rapidly expanding locations were set to take responsibility for the arduous clipping. She assured her readers that "their [black men's] hands are far more deft than the fingers of the average white man, and they are very trustworthy."²³⁹ Across the length and breadth of the country, significant numbers of black men became standard features of the South African garden landscape, first clipping their employers' hedges during the day and, in their spare time, the hedges in their own location gardens. Garden labourers by day and garden owners after hours, these black men were responsible for creating a new type of location garden,²⁴⁰ of which Batho's topiary gardens are a prime example.²⁴¹

In concluding this discussion on topiary in the white colonists' gardens, it is important to emphasise the fact that topiary, specifically verdant sculpture or living sculpture, never reached the same levels of sophistication locally as it did in Europe. First in the Cape Colony and later in Natal and the two Boer republics, topiary was much more scaled down, in other words, simplified versions of their European prototypes. *Based on this phenomenon, it is argued that topiary, which is essentially a patrician art form, became indigenised and Africanised in local conditions.* It must be considered that well into the 20th century gardening was, for many South Africans, an activity that still focused primarily on food production. Ornamental gardening, of which topiary is probably the ultimate symbol, was

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²⁴⁰ The semi-vernacular location garden will be discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 8.

²⁴¹ M. Cran, *The gardens of Good Hope*, p. 245; Anon., "Corner properties and gardens", *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXI, February 1931, p. 54; Anon., "Garden schemes", *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXII(4), April 1932, pp. 99-100; Anon., "Garden structure", *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXIII(8), April 1933, pp. 81-82; L. Cox, "The garden of our dreams: how to transform a sandy waste", *The South African Lady's Pictorial and Home Journal*, XII(139), March 1922, p. 21; Jellicoe *et al.* (eds), p. 523; Du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the...", pp. 53-54.

not the primary concern. It was only in the 1920s and 1930s that topiary, specifically hedges, edges and simple geometric shapes, became standard features in South African gardens.

3.7.2 Topiary in the gardens of indigenous groups and ‘Bantu’-speaking black people in the Cape Colony and beyond

This discussion on the prevalence of topiary, specifically clipped hedges, in the gardens of indigenous groups, such as the various Khoekhoe groups, the Khoesan and the ‘Bantu’-speaking black people²⁴² who lived in the areas of Southern Africa which officially became part of the Union of South Africa in 1910, must be viewed in terms of the discussion on black people’s gardens in Chapter 2, as well as that on topiary in African gardens elsewhere in this chapter. This discussion will also rely on travellers’ and missionaries’ accounts of their impressions of the man-made landscape of the Cape Colony and other areas of Southern Africa. The scarcity of detailed descriptions of the gardens of indigenous groups and ‘Bantu’-speaking black people is equalled by the scarcity of substantial references to topiary. However, this does not mean topiary did not exist since most descriptions of indigenous and black people’s gardens seldom include descriptions of garden layout and design detail. Typically, the focus is on plants, available water sources and maintenance of the gardens. As is the case with topiary in African gardens, it is important to distinguish not only between pre- and post-colonial South Africa but also between topiary and clipped hedges. The practice of clipping hedges with clipping tools only became prevalent among the indigenous groups of South Africa during the colonial period (1652-1910) and the post-colonial period (post-1910). Furthermore, it is also argued that verdant sculpture, as opposed to clipped hedges, only became widespread in indigenous people’s gardens during the post-colonial period. In order to appreciate clipped hedges as a phenomenon in the indigenous groups’ and ‘Bantu’-speaking black people’s gardens, it is important to understand the origin of its oldest predecessor, namely the fence.²⁴³

²⁴² The prevalence of topiary in the gardens of the slaves and ‘free blacks’ are not discussed since they were immigrants; therefore, they are not considered indigenous.

²⁴³ M. Shaw, “Material culture” in W.D. Hammond-Tooke (ed.), *The Bantu-speaking peoples of Southern Africa*, p. 86; M. Wilson, “The Sotho, Venda, and Tsonga” in M. Wilson & L. Thompson, *The Oxford history of South Africa (vol. I): South Africa to 1870*, p. 139.

In a manuscript housed in the Free State Provincial Archives, namely *Historical notes about the Barolongs*, author P. Scholz shared insightful information on the Barolong,²⁴⁴ including aspects of their oral tradition. A lineage of descendants of “Morolong the first”,²⁴⁵ considered the original founder of the group, includes Mabeo, the son of Monoto. Apart from teaching the Barolong horticultural skills, Mabeo also “taught the cultivator to fence his fruitful lands and apply their strength to peaceful arts.”²⁴⁶ Based on the fact that Mabeo lived in the mid-1500s,²⁴⁷ it is argued that the Barolong had become skilled horticulturists long before they settled in Thaba ’Nchu. By the time they reached Thaba ’Nchu in the late 1820s, they must have been well-versed in the art of fence-making. According to Scholz, the name Mabeo means “to surround with branches”,²⁴⁸ which serves as an indication that the ‘fence’ referred to was a stockade or so-called “wood wall[s]”.²⁴⁹ This confirms the argument that the concept of a fence as an enclosure serving as protection for crops, fields and cattle had been established among some ‘Bantu’-speaking groups long before the Europeans arrived in the Cape of Good Hope. The tradition of the stockade had thus migrated with the ‘Bantu’-speaking farmers or horticulturists during the period of mass migration to Southern Africa, as discussed in Chapter 2.²⁵⁰

The travellers’ and missionaries’ accounts provide evidence that the putting up of stockades, also referred to as ‘hedges’ or ‘fences’, had been widespread among the ‘Bantu’-speaking black people of South Africa. The term ‘stockade’ was seldom used to refer to fences made of dried branches or sticks. Numerous travellers and missionaries mentioned coming across such fences among the ‘Bantu’-speaking black people. During his visit to the Tswana people in “Beetjuan Country”²⁵¹ in the region of Upington and Kuruman, Lichtenstein²⁵² came across “hedges that surround the kraals for the cattle.”²⁵³ These fences and, incidentally,

²⁴⁴ The Barolong belong to the Tswana nation.

²⁴⁵ FSPA: A. 304, P. Scholz, *Historical notes about the Barolongs, s.a.* (manuscript), no p. no.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ The approximate date Scholz provided is 1550. According to S.M. Molema the Barolong “immigrated into South Africa sometime about the sixteenth or seventeenth century”. S.M. Molema, *The Bantu past and present: an ethnographical & historical study of the native races of South Africa*, p. 40.

²⁴⁸ FSPA: A. 304, Scholz, *Historical notes about...*, no p. no.

²⁴⁹ Wilson, p. 139.

²⁵⁰ Shaw, p. 86; Wilson, p. 139.

²⁵¹ M.H.C. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806* (vol. II; reprint of translation from original German by Anne Plumtre), p. xvi.

²⁵² For more on Lichtenstein, see Chapter 2.

²⁵³ Lichtenstein (vol. II), p. 373.

most other enclosures in the region, happened to be stockades. However, stockades were not the only type of fence used by black people since mention is also made of other natural materials used for this purpose. When Reverend Francis Fleming (1823-1895) visited Kaffraria²⁵⁴ in the 1850s, he found that the indigenous black people “dwell in ‘kraals’ or villages, which consisted of an enclosure for their cattle, usually surrounded by brambles and bushes, heaped together in a kind of circular hedge, and enclosing an area of several yards in circumference.”²⁵⁵ *Whether made of sticks, thorny branches or other natural materials, the argument is that the idea of an enclosure – whether it is the enclosing of dwellings, cattle or gardens – was central to most indigenous peoples’ way of life. Assets, such as cattle, and food had to be enclosed and protected not only against natural elements but also against intruding wild animals and human intruders.*²⁵⁶

3.7.2.1 Clipped hedges, stockades and walls: enclosing ‘God’s garden’

An important phase in the development of the fence among indigenous peoples in South Africa involved the arrival of European missionaries in the early part of the 18th century. Sent by various mission organisations²⁵⁷ based in Britain and Europe, they contributed significantly to the development of a gardening culture as well as the techniques of practical gardening among indigenous peoples. The first missionary to arrive in the Cape Colony was Georg Schmidt (1709-1785) of the Moravian Missionary Society²⁵⁸ in Germany who came to labour among the Khoekhoe. The Moravians’ mission was to create a new world order by employing the biblical metaphor of ‘keeping God’s garden clean of weeds’. In other words, the missionaries had to pull out the weeds and sow new seeds in freshly-prepared soil, by manner of speaking.²⁵⁹ Inspired by this calling, Schmidt arrived in 1737 and was given land in the Baviaanskloof in the Zondereind valley beyond the Hottentots-Holland Mountains. There he established Genadendal, South Africa’s first mission station. Apart from teaching

²⁵⁴ Also known as British Kaffraria, it refers to “the whole tract of country lying along the South-eastern coast of Africa, between the old Cape Colony, the new one of Natal, and the Sovereignty or Dutch Free-State”. Fleming, p. 188.

²⁵⁵ Fleming, p. 222. (Fleming’s emphasis)

²⁵⁶ Shaw, p. 86; Wilson, p. 139; F.P. Bruwer, *Die Bantoe van Suid-Afrika*, pp. 57-67.

²⁵⁷ For more information, see Chapter 2, Chapter 4 and Chapter 6.

²⁵⁸ For a discussion of all the Moravian mission stations and their gardening activities, see B. Krüger, *The pear tree blossoms: a history of the Moravian mission stations in South Africa 1737-1869*, *passim*.

²⁵⁹ R. Southern, “Strangers below: an archaeology of distinctions in an eighteenth-century religious community” in S. Lawrence (ed.), *Archaeologies of the British: explorations of identity in Great Britain and its colonies 1600-1945*, p. 87.

the gospel, Schmidt taught the Khoekhoe gardening as a means to encourage them to lead more settled lifestyles. Each family received an equal-sized garden plot laid out next to its cottage, as well as seed and tools to cultivate it. These mostly vegetable and fruit gardens were initially surrounded by deep furrows to protect the produce from stray animals. Later, however, hedges were planted to serve this purpose. The hedges were typically clipped and became the envy of visitors to Genadendal. In fact, Genadendal became known for its hedges.²⁶⁰ When Reverend Latrobe visited Genadendal during his tour of all the Moravian mission stations in 1815 and 1816, he was greeted by neat “hedge-rows”²⁶¹ at the entrance of the village. In the village itself, he saw the gardens “being separated from each other by low hedges”²⁶² so that the entire valley gave the impression of being clothed in greenery.²⁶³

It appears that the example set by Genadendal’s hedges also prompted other Khoekhoe gardeners in the region to follow suit, such as Benjamin Okkers, who gardened near the Baviaans River. Okkers’ garden, mentioned in Chapter 2, as well as the other “garden-grounds belonging to the Hottentots”²⁶⁴ in the area, sported clipped hedges. Referring to Okkers’ garden, Latrobe wrote that he and a colleague “saw a hedge neatly cut and trimmed, with a small gate, through which he [Okkers] showed us into one of the best cultivated gardens I have yet seen in the settlement.”²⁶⁵ The Moravians stressed the importance of enclosing gardens by means of hedges and cited two main reasons for doing so. The first is a practical reason, namely to prevent not only wild animals but also the neighbours’ cattle and other domestic animals from damaging the garden. There was, however, also an aesthetical reason, namely that gardens without hedges “do not look well”.²⁶⁶

Considering the success the Moravians had achieved at Genadendal, it is argued that some individual members of the indigenous groups had a natural affinity for gardening and, incidentally, also for the art of clipping. Based on this premise, it is argued that some indigenous gardeners and garden labourers could learn and copy the techniques of clipping

²⁶⁰ Walker, pp. 92-93; I. Balie, *Die lewe op die Morawiese sendingstasies van Kaapland 1792-1860* (Paper read at the congress of the South African Society for Cultural History, Genadendal, 1992), pp. 89, 107; I. Balie, *Die geskiedenis van Genadendal 1738-1988*, pp. 16, 67-68, 100, 134; Burchell, pp. 79-83.

²⁶¹ Latrobe, p. 59.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 209. See also p. 332.

rather effortlessly. Similar results were achieved at the Lovedale Missionary Institute, a mission station established by the Glasgow Missionary Society near Alice in the Eastern Cape²⁶⁷ (Image 3/24). The relative success enjoyed by Georg Schmidt and other missionaries in teaching their brethren the art of hedge-making and clipping was, alas, not enjoyed by all. A volunteer at Kicherer's Missionary Institute near the Sak River, Christian Botma, felt the need to teach the Khoekhoe the art of hedging and made a demonstration garden enclosed by a stockade. The mission station's converted members did not appreciate Botma's efforts and, more than once, they carried away parts of the hedge "to spare themselves the trouble of going further for firewood".²⁶⁸ Apparently, Botma's followers never progressed to the planting and clipping of living hedges.²⁶⁹

The Moravians were not the only missionaries who emphasised the importance of enclosing gardens. Missionaries of the London Missionary Society, including Reverend Carl (Charles) Pacalt (1773-1818), found many Khoekhoe "without inclosures [sic], without cultivated ground, without gardens".²⁷⁰ Therefore, at Hoogekraal (later Pacaltsdorp) near George, Reverend Pacalt "surrounded each house with a large garden, which he persuaded the people to inclose [sic]".²⁷¹ In some cases, especially in the dry and arid areas of the country, missionaries opted for stone walls and other hedging material instead of clipped hedges. As a last resort, struggling living hedges were often replaced by stone walls as a more sustainable form of enclosure. This was, for example, the case in the area beyond the Orange River where, since the early 1820s, missionaries from the Berlin Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Paris Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Missionary Society began to settle and establish mission stations.²⁷²

²⁶⁷ Lovedale will be discussed in Chapter 6.

²⁶⁸ Lichtenstein (vol. II), p. 234.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 230-234.

²⁷⁰ J. Philip, *Researches in South Africa: illustrating the civil, moral, and religious condition of the native tribes* (shortened title; vol. I), p. 239.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241. See also D.W. Krüger & C.J. Beyers (eds), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. III), p. 687.

²⁷² For more details on the mission stations established in the Transgariëp (later Transoranje or Transorange), see K. Schoeman (ed.), *The British presence in the Transorange 1845-1854*, pp. 130-134.

At the Paris Missionary Society's station at Mequatling in the Caledon River valley, missionary, François Daumas (1812-1871), laid out a garden "surrounded by a good wall"²⁷³ two metres tall and a "vineyard neatly inclosed [sic] with reeds"²⁷⁴ as examples of garden enclosures. Similarly, James Allison (1802-1875) of the Wesleyan Missionary Society showed the Mantatees (Batlokwa) at the Imperani mission station (later Ficksburg) "the advantage of fencing their ground by building a stone wall around his own garden".²⁷⁵ The obsession many missionaries had with enclosing gardens by means of hedges (or alternative means of enclosure) stemmed from the practical necessity for hedges, but it was also rooted in a longing for the hedges of their mother country. The Anglican missionary, William Crisp,²⁷⁶ best captured this sentiment in a letter (circa 1868) to family members in England in which he lamented the drawbacks of the Orange Free State, such as the "total absence of trees and hedges, which make up so much of the beauty of English scenery".²⁷⁷

Despite climatic challenges, most mission stations became important centres of horticultural activity since the missionaries, many of whom were lay botanists or self-trained horticulturists, saw it as their duty to teach their brethren gardening skills. While the main objective was to teach the indigenous people how to grow their own food, an important secondary consideration was the fact that gardening was deemed not only a moralising tool but also a civilising one. Gardening was considered one of the "arts of civilized life"²⁷⁸ and, therefore, a useful tool to instill "into their [heathens'] hearts the peaceful spirit and precepts of the Gospel".²⁷⁹ The seasonal acts of pruning fruit trees and clipping hedges were often used as a metaphor to teach the brethren not only the importance of spiritual seasons but also the necessity for a believer to be 'pruned' of undesirable attitudes and sin to be 'clipped' away. *The role of the missionaries in fostering not only a gardening culture among their*

²⁷³ J.J. Freeman, *A tour in South Africa, with notices of Natal, Mauritius, Madagascar, Ceylon, Egypt, and Palestine*, p. 332. According to Margarete Geerthsen the walls were built of "klip en klei". "Stone and clay". (Free translation). FSPA: A. 507.13, *Letter from M. Geerthsen to K. Schoeman*, 9.6.1984, p. 5.

²⁷⁴ Freeman, p. 332.

²⁷⁵ K. Schoeman (ed.), *Early white travellers in the Transgariep 1819-1840*, p. 136.

²⁷⁶ For more on Crisp, see Chapter 2.

²⁷⁷ FSPA: A. 27, *Extracts from the diary of the Reverend Crisp, ca. 1867-1875* (manuscript), no p. no.

²⁷⁸ J. Philip, *Researches in South Africa: illustrating the civil, moral, and religious condition of the native tribes* (shortened title; vol. II), p. 33.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

*followers but also a desire for clipped hedges was, therefore, reinforced on both worldly and spiritual levels.*²⁸⁰

The concept of a garden as a hedged-in or fenced-in entity persisted well into the 20th century. In fact, one is left with the impression that this notion strengthened and underpinned the emergence of the semi-vernacular location garden since this type of garden was strongly characterised by clipped hedges and topiary. The need for hedges and fences around gardens and crops was continuously stressed among black gardeners and small farmers. For example, at the official opening of the Fort Hare Agricultural Show near Alice in the Eastern Cape in June 1927, the black gardeners and farmers present were reminded that progress in the fields of horticulture and agriculture was only possible “when the value of fencing was realised”.²⁸¹ The increasing prevalence of clipped and unclipped hedges in location and allotment gardens during the 1920s and 1930s supports the argument that the supposed value of enclosing gardens was widely understood and embraced. For most gardeners, a living clipped or unclipped hedge was a more affordable type of fencing than costly metal and wire. It is, perhaps, fitting to conclude with excerpts from a reader’s letter to the editor of *Umteteli wa Bantu* in 1936 in which he criticised the “many carelessly fenced or non-fenced stands in certain Locations”²⁸² in the Union. This reader was convinced that the “many stands without any valuable or decorative vegetation flourishing are the results of this”,²⁸³ that is, the absence of proper hedges or fences.

3.8 Concluding remarks

In this chapter it was argued that the evolution of topiary – essentially, the story of the rise and fall of a garden art – runs like a golden thread through European garden history. Topiary’s history cannot be separated from the ebb and flow of garden trends, which, in turn, are a reaction to societal trends and socio-political developments. Whether topiary represents

²⁸⁰ For more on gardening as a moralising and civilising tool, see Krüger, p. 27; S. Constantine, “Amateur gardening and popular recreation in the 19th and 20th centuries”, *Journal of Social History* 14(3), 1981, pp. 389-390; M. Bhatti & A. Church, “‘I never promised you a rose garden’: gender, leisure and home-making”, *Leisure Studies* 19(3), 2000, p. 191; K. Schoeman, “‘That very pretty place’: die sendingstasie Mequatling in die Oos-Vrystaat (1836-1869)” (part I), *Africana Notes and News* 27(4), December 1986, p. 144.

²⁸¹ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 25.6.1927, p. 4.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 18.1.1936, p. 7.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

the taming of nature, mastery over nature, the ultimate conquest of nature, or merely the turning of vegetation into living sculpture, it is one of the most visually powerful forces in garden history. Topiary's reach happened to be far and wide, and it became clear as to why the gardens created far away from its (topiary's) birthplace, most notably those laid out in Africa, Southern Africa and, particularly, the Cape of Good Hope, were not unaffected by the taste (craving?) for this garden art. Over the course of more than two centuries, Dutch and British colonists, and later also missionaries, extended their affinity for topiary to the Cape Colony. In the Cape, the white colonists' taste for topiary influenced the gardening culture of the indigenous and 'Bantu'-speaking peoples.

When the indigenous groups and 'Bantu'-speaking black people in the Cape and other areas of Southern Africa were introduced to the white colonists' gardening culture, the concept of a fence or screen (often in the form of a stockade) was not foreign to most 'Bantu'-speaking black people, including members of other indigenous groups, such as the Khoekhoe. In some cases, they were also familiar with the concept of a living green hedge, though traditionally unclipped. By the time they were exposed to the colonists' formal garden style – specifically its clipped hedges and topiary – living hedges had, in some cases, already replaced dry stockades. It is also argued that some indigenous and black people seemed to have had a natural affinity for gardening and, incidentally, for the art of clipping. Based on this premise, it stands to reason that black and coloured gardeners and garden labourers could learn and copy the techniques of clipping rather effortlessly. They made the transition from dry stockades to unclipped hedges and, finally, to clipped hedges in a rather short period of time. In the process, European-style topiary became 'Africanised'. The next chapter focuses on the history of gardening in Bloemfontein and the prevalence of topiary in Bloemfontein's gardens during the period 1846-1939. This historical overview provides the immediate context within which Batho and its topiary gardens must be viewed.

CHAPTER 4

GARDENING IN BLOEMFONTEIN AND THE PREVALENCE OF TOPIARY IN BLOEMFONTEIN'S GARDENS (1846-1939)

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus shifts to the area beyond the Orange (Oranje) River,¹ initially known as the Transgariep.² In previous chapters, mention was made of white *trekboers*, *Voortrekkers*, travellers and missionaries who had ventured into this vast expanse. In 1848, the area was declared a British territory, namely the Orange River Sovereignty (1848-1854), and administered by a British Resident, Major Henry Douglas Warden (1800-1856), from 1848 to 1852 and Henry Green (1818-1884) from 1852 to 1854. In 1854, the Sovereignty, which encompassed the entire area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers, was abandoned by Britain and became a Boer republic known as the Orange Free State republic (1854-1899). The Anglo-Boer War (hereafter the War) brought an abrupt end to the republic, and in 1902, the territory became a British colony and was renamed the Orange River Colony (1902-1910). In 1910, the Orange River Colony became the Orange Free State, one of the four provinces of the Union of South Africa.³ This chapter does not focus on the territory as such but rather on its capital, Bloemfontein.⁴ Known as Bloemfontein⁵ since it was founded by Major Warden in 1846, the town⁶ is significant for the purpose of this study since it provides the cultural-historical context that will foster an understanding of Batho's gardening culture and the Batho residents' preference for topiary. As Bloemfontein's second-oldest location

¹ Formerly known as the Gariep River. J. Visagie, "Migrasie en die gemeenskappe noord van die Oranjerivier" in F. Pretorius (ed.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika: van voortye tot vandag*, pp. 105-108.

² For more information, see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

³ Between 1910 and 1961, South Africa was a dominion of the British Empire.

⁴ Presently, Bloemfontein is part of the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality which includes Thaba 'Nchu and Botshabelo.

⁵ Originally, 'Bloem Fontein', the name of the farm Major Warden purchased from Johan(nes) Nicolaas Brits on which the first Residency was built. *The Friend*, 14.10.1927, p. 10; H. Haasbroek, "Vanwaar Bloemfontein se naam?", *Bloemnuus*, 28.7.2016, p. 16; C. Pettman, "How did Bloemfontein come by its name?", *The Friend*, 4.4.1929, p. 8; C. Pettman, "How Bloemfontein got its name", *The Friend*, 21.6.1929, p. 8.

⁶ Bloemfontein only received city status in 1945, but became the capital city of the Orange Free State (Boer) republic in 1854, and was and is the capital *city* of the (Orange) Free State province since 1910. Consequently, post-1854 Bloemfontein will be referred to as a city; until 1854, a town.

(later township),⁷ Batho's garden history and gardening culture cannot be adequately understood without an understanding of Bloemfontein's garden history and gardening culture.

Compared to the Mediterranean climate of the western part of the Cape Colony, Bloemfontein was not the place a prospective gardener would have considered the ideal location for laying out a garden. Still, against the odds, Bloemfontein became known for its lush gardens and orchards, and visitors to the town generously complimented its residents on their attractive gardens. Fortunately, many of these compliments were included in numerous travel accounts and journals published over the years. Needless to say, these journals and memoirs proved to be valuable sources of information for this chapter. As is the case with the Cape Colony's garden history, Bloemfontein's garden history is intimately intertwined with European garden history and style, specifically the Dutch and British (also English) garden style. *Through a process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing, the garden style of Bloemfontein's white residents was transferred to Batho's gardeners.* In order to understand this process, it is necessary to first gain an understanding of the white residents' preferred garden style, specifically their taste for topiary, and the way in which it developed over the course of almost a century.

This chapter essentially consists of two main sections, namely the prevalence of topiary in Bloemfontein's 19th-century gardens (1846-1899) and the prevalence thereof in Bloemfontein's 20th-century gardens (1900-1939) viewed against the backdrop of its garden history. As is the case with garden history in general, Bloemfontein's garden history cannot be separated from the socio-political trends that have shaped its history and, incidentally, that of the Orange Free State. Immigration and demographic trends, such as the growing influx of British immigrants and their cultural influence in Bloemfontein, the dynamics of inter-group relations, the impact of the War, economic decline and prosperity, and climate trends, such as droughts and floods, are factors that have shaped Bloemfontein's history and, consequently, its garden history. Attention will be paid to individuals who have played a

⁷ K. Schoeman (ed.), *The British presence in the Transorange 1845-1854* (Vrijstatia 13), *passim*; L. Thompson, "Co-operation and conflict: the High Veld" in M. Wilson & L. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa (vol. I): South Africa to 1870*, pp. 424-425, 429-435; E.A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, pp. 259-261; K. Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan van 'n stad, 1846-1946*, pp. 1-20. For more information on Batho's history, see Chapter 5.

significant role in developing Bloemfontein's gardening culture and who have laid out exemplary gardens. Some of these gardens will be discussed to illustrate the development of garden design and style in Bloemfontein from 1846 to 1939. These gardens and their owners are also important because most of these owners employed black garden labourers. Therefore, some of the mentioned garden owners will feature again in upcoming chapters.

An important issue that will be addressed throughout this chapter is the dynamic relationship that exists between a house and the street it faces, and how the garden fits into this relationship. Other aspects that will also receive attention, albeit briefly, include the development of Bloemfontein's public parks and gardens, water provisioning and the advancement of a gardening culture in Bloemfontein through initiatives taken by residents such as the founding of horticultural societies. The golden threads that run through all of the factors mentioned are garden style and, particularly, the white residents' enduring preference for formal gardens featuring topiary, specifically clipped hedges and edges. When did topiary begin to feature in Bloemfontein's gardens? Who brought this garden trend to Bloemfontein? What was the nature of the topiary and what was the function thereof? These and other questions related to topiary in Bloemfontein's gardens will be addressed in this chapter.

4.2 Gardening in Bloemfontein and topiary in Bloemfontein's gardens in the 19th century (1846-1899)

4.2.1 "Sowing seed, gathering it in, planting, watering": missions and gardening in the southern Orange Free State

In early August 1856, about six months after Hamelberg visited Cape Town's Public Garden, he made the long journey to Bloemfontein in a Cape cart to set up an attorney practice in the Orange Free State capital.⁸ On his way to Bloemfontein, Hamelberg travelled through the southern Orange Free State where vegetation is sparse and the landscape is, for the most part, reminiscent of the Great Karoo. At first glance, the surroundings did not appear to be conducive to gardening activities, at least not to the ignorant traveller. By the time

⁸ W.J. de Kock (ed.-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. I), p. 364.

Hamelberg passed through this area, a number of mission stations had already been established in the southern and eastern parts of the new republic for some time. As had been the case at most missions, such as the ones discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, gardening was actively encouraged by the missionaries, many of whom were able gardeners. Mission stations were typically established near reliable water sources such as rivers, streams and fountains, to ensure sustainable gardening activities in a harsh climate. While the mission stations established in the eastern part of the Orange Free State could depend on reliable rainfall, this was not the case with the stations established in the southern part.⁹ There the summer rains were mostly erratic and, according to a missionary's wife, "long-continued droughts" were one of many "hindrances to cultivation".¹⁰

The Paris Missionary Society was particularly active in the southern Orange Free State and stations were established at Bethulie, Carmel and Beersheba. At Beersheba, situated between the Caledon River and Smithfield, Reverend Samuel Rolland (1801-1873) and his wife, Elizabeth (née Lyndall; 1803-1901), laid out vegetable gardens and orchards, and planted fields with various crops. According to the Rollands' daughter, Elise-Pauline, her father was a dedicated gardener who "planted and kept in order a fine orchard, cultivated his own vegetables, and taught the Natives to do the same."¹¹ She also mentioned "orchards watered by running streams", "peach and other trees" and that the valley in which Beersheba nestled "was one sheet of cornfields".¹² The other mission stations, including those established by the London Missionary Society at Philippolis and by the Berlin Missionary Society at Bethanie near Edenburg, were also a hive of gardening activity. Not only were most missions self-sufficient in terms of fresh produce, but they were also important centres of learning where black people (Sotho and Tswana) and members of other indigenous groups (Griqua, Korana and Bastards) were taught gardening skills, such as "sowing seed, gathering it in,

⁹ L. Roodt, *The architecture of the Orange Free State Republic 1854-1902* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, 1984), p. 28; Schoeman (ed.), *The British presence...*, pp. 45-47.

¹⁰ E. Rolland, *The recollections of Elizabeth Rolland (1803-1901) with various documents on the Rolland family and the Free State mission of Beersheba* (edited by K. Schoeman; Vrijstatia 8), p. 77.

¹¹ Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA): A. 507.13, E.-P. Orpen (née Rolland), *Black kaffirs and white women* (memoirs), p. 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

planting, watering”.¹³ Considering the missionaries’ achievements (gardening and otherwise) in an unforgiving environment, Reverend Charles Daniel Keck of the Paris Missionary Society is correct in arguing that the mission stations were much-needed physical and spiritual oases of refreshment in the barren African landscape.¹⁴ Why is this mentioned in a chapter on Bloemfontein’s garden history and the prevalence of topiary in its gardens? It is significant because the style and nature of gardening at the mission stations is an indication that a European, or at least a European-inspired garden style, was being nurtured among black and other indigenous groups at various places in the Transgariiep region long before the first European-style garden was laid out in Bloemfontein. In the context of this discussion, a European-style garden is typically associated with some form of topiary, even if only the most basic clipped hedge to protect the garden against wind and wild animals.¹⁵ This argument is also important in the context of Batho’s garden history, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2.2 “We have a very fine Garden well stocked with fruit trees”: Bloemfontein’s earliest gardens

Like many other travellers, Hamelberg was unaware of Beersheba’s gardens when he first travelled through the area on his way to Bloemfontein.¹⁶ He did, however, visit another garden when, in the vicinity of Trompsburg (approximately 140 km south of Bloemfontein), he came upon the site of the Battle of Boomplaats (1848). There Hamelberg discovered a garden that was entirely different from any that he had seen thus far: “In den moestuin van Boomplaats, vlak bij het huis, is ene kleine door een muurtje omgevene, langwerpige vierkant

¹³ Rolland, p. 87. For more information on gardening at the mentioned missions, see Schoeman (ed.), *The British presence...*, pp. 45-64; M. Pellissier, *Briewe uit Bethulie negentig jaar gelede* (edited by S.H. Pellissier), pp. 23, 25, 31-33, 42; K. Schoeman (ed.), *The Griqua mission at Philippolis 1822-1837* (Vrijstatia 15), pp. 19, 37, 59, 63-64, 108; C.J.P. le Roux, “Die Griekwahuises van Philippolis”, *Restorica* 10, pp. 43-44; K. Schoeman (ed.), *Die huis van die armes: die Berlynse Sendinggenootskap in die O.V.S. 1834-1869*, pp. 41, 43, 47-48, 64, 123; W. van der Merwe, “Die Berlynse sendelinge van Bethanie (Oranje-Vrystaat) en die Kora, 1834-1856”, *South African Historical Journal* 17, November 1985, pp. 47, 50, 53, 62.

¹⁴ K. Schoeman, “Mabolela en die laaste jare van die Paryse Sendinggenootskap in die O.V.S.”, *Africana Notes and News* 29(2), June 1990, p. 54.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Roodt, pp. 32-36.

¹⁶ Hamelberg learnt of Beersheba’s gardens after his arrival in Bloemfontein and visited the mission station in December 1856 at the invitation of Reverend Rolland. For his description of the gardens, see FSPA: Dr H.P.N. Muller Collection: A. 160.55, *diary of H.A.L. Hamelberg, 1855-1896*, p. 276.

ruimte, waarin de toen gesneuwelde Engelschen zijn begraven...”.¹⁷ Boomplaats’ original vegetable garden became a memorial garden when the nine British soldiers killed in action on 29 August 1848 were buried there. Unbeknown to Hamelberg, the rectangular walled burial space gave him a foretaste of what awaited him in Bloemfontein: rectangular and square walled-in gardens and erven. Visitors to Bloemfontein would have been forgiven for being under the impression that the town had no gardens since most of them were hidden behind stacked stone walls (also known as a *tuinmuur* or *ringmuur*¹⁸) between six and eight feet¹⁹ tall (Image 4/1). Enclosing their gardens was not only a matter of choice for Bloemfontein’s residents because, in 1850, the Municipality²⁰ of Bloemfontein issued a regulation which required that “all Erven shall be enclosed, and kept in repair, the frontage to be erected of Brick or Stone”.²¹ Most residents opted for sturdy stone walls to protect their gardens against stray animals, specifically pigs and cattle, and also against abundant herds of game, such as wildebeest, gnu and springbuck, which roamed Bloemfontein’s surrounding veld. Whatever the reason for these walls, they reinforced the ancient concept of the garden as an enclosed entity, as described in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. By the time Hamelberg first laid eyes on his new hometown’s walled gardens, many of them had been in the making for almost ten years.²² Ever since, these and all other gardens laid out by Bloemfontein’s European immigrants are considered patrician because of the strong European influence visible in their design and layout.

Bloemfontein’s first gardens were laid out as early as 1846, barely months after Major Warden settled there as the first British Resident. In November 1846, his son, Charles Frederick, wrote in a letter to his aunt in England that “we have a very fine Garden well stocked with fruit trees”.²³ The ‘very fine Garden’ to which the young Warden referred was

¹⁷ FSPA: Dr H.P.N. Muller Collection: A. 160.55, *diary of H.A.L....*, pp. 250-251. “In the vegetable garden of Boomplaats, close to the house, is a small walled, rectangular space in which the slain English soldiers were buried...”. (Free translation)

¹⁸ A.R. Badenhorst, “Aspekte van die sosiale lewe in Bloemfontein, 1864-1871”, *Memoirs van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 12, April 1979, p. 30. “Garden wall”; “enclosing wall”. (Free translation)

¹⁹ Approximately between 2 and 2.5 metres.

²⁰ Alternatively, the terms “Town Council” or “Council” are also used.

²¹ FSPA: OSB 7, *British Resident: Regulations for the Municipality of Bloemfontein no. 5, 1850*, p. 161.

²² Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 13, 23.

²³ FSPA: A. 424, *Letter from Charles Frederick Warden to aunt*, 25.11.1846, p. 2. See also C. Warden, *Reminiscences of the early days of the Orange Free State*, p. 4.

the Residency's garden²⁴ laid out next to Major Warden's official residence on the southern bank of Bloemfontein's Bloem Spruit²⁵ (hereafter *spruit*). The garden consisted mainly of an orchard planted by Johan(nes) Nicolaas Brits, the original owner of the farm 'Bloem Fontein', and the remnants of a small flower garden laid out by his wife, Anna Johanna. Not much is known about the Residency's garden except for the fact that it contained many fruit trees, including peach (*Prunus persica*) and pear (*Pyrus spp.*) trees. A vineyard with a variety of grapes (*Vitis spp.*), including "muscatels and sweet-water grapes, with crystal honey-pot and other kinds",²⁶ also formed part of the garden. Unfortunately, the design of the garden is unknown but it is assumed that the layout was predominantly formal.²⁷ Although the Residency's garden must have been Bloemfontein's largest at that time, it was not the only one. In 1851, the Bloemfontein newspaper *The Friend of the Sovereignty and Bloem Fontein Gazette* took its readers on an armchair tour of the houses and gardens in George Street:²⁸ "Next garden Mr. Bain's property;...Mr. Colley's garden, plenty of vegetables; next Mr. Crause's²⁹ cottage, weeping willows, peach trees &c. &c. Mr. Monach's good house and store, small neat garden. Capt. Glubb's residence, (now Miss Cumming's school,) peach trees and good garden; Mr. Green's,³⁰ (Assistant Commissary General,) neat Bungalow, best vegetable garden in town; Mr. Henry Southey's house and garden. The Rev. Mr. Murray's,³¹ house and garden".³² Though the paper did not include any details on the layout of these gardens, the description nevertheless suggests that Bloemfontein's earliest gardens were attractive enough to make a pleasing impression.

If *The Friend of the Sovereignty and Bloem Fontein Gazette's* readers were left with the impression that gardening in Bloemfontein was effortless, they were misled. It is true that

²⁴ Currently, the site of the Old Presidency in President Brand Street, Bloemfontein.

²⁵ In Afrikaans, it is known as Bloemspruit; Bloemfontein's English residents referred to it as the *spruit* or *sluit*, meaning 'small stream'. The name Bloemspruit only became commonly used during the early 20th century.

²⁶ T.J. Lucas, *Camp life and sport in South Africa: experiences of Kaffir warfare with the Cape Mounted Rifles* (vol. II), p. 213.

²⁷ S.M. Botes, *Van residensie tot presidensie: 'n kultuurhistoriese studie van ampswonings in Bloemfontein, 1846-1900* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1993), pp. 32-33; Warden, p. 4.

²⁸ Later to become St George or St George's Street, as it is still known today.

²⁹ Probably Krause, the surname of a well-known Bloemfontein family of German descent.

³⁰ Henry Green, who succeeded Major Warden as British Resident in 1852. His property, known as Green Lodge, boasted one of early Bloemfontein's most beautiful gardens. C.J. Beyers (ed.-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. IV), pp. 207-208.

³¹ Reverend Andrew Murray.

³² *The Friend of the Sovereignty and Bloem Fontein Gazette*, 20.1.1851, p. 2.

Bloemfontein's climate³³ was more conducive to gardening than the harsh and semi-arid climate of the southern Orange Free State but gardening in Bloemfontein certainly had its challenges. New British immigrants arrived with perceptions of Bloemfontein as a veritable gardening paradise but such expectations were soon challenged. Shortly after his arrival in Bloemfontein in 1867, Reverend Crisp confessed in a letter to his mother that "all the loud talk about the profusion of flowers and fruit of which we heard in England is a myth. A few flowers are cultivated with difficulty in the gardens but England is an Eden compared with our barrenness."³⁴ As Reverend Crisp soon discovered, Bloemfontein's gardeners had to weather a staggering array of elements, including extended droughts, heat waves, dust storms, pests and plagues, such as the notorious locust swarms which left gardens all but eaten up. Visitors to Bloemfontein penned down their experiences and impressions of these elements and the damage caused to gardens, such as clergyman William Fleming³⁵ who witnessed how flights of locusts "spread over the country for several square miles, flying some fifty feet above the ground and literally darkening the air, eating up whole gardens"³⁶ during his stay in Bloemfontein in the late 1840s. Added to this were "those fearful droughts"³⁷ which Cape Mounted Rifleman³⁸ T.J. Lucas experienced during his visit to Bloemfontein in the 1870s. Bloemfontein's gardens were also exposed to other climatic extremes, including hail, wind storms and thunderstorms. Sir Arthur Cunynghame, who, like Lucas, visited Bloemfontein in the 1870s, found the storms "frequent and dangerous" with hailstones to be "of immense size".³⁹ The most damaging of the disasters that hit Bloemfontein's gardens were the floods, specifically the damage caused to gardens on the water erven when the *spruit* overflowed its banks. The worst flooding occurred in 1868, 1874, 1891 and 1904 when, apart from the loss of lives and property, entire gardens were "washed out"⁴⁰ or swept away and big trees were uprooted.⁴¹

³³ For information on Bloemfontein's geographical and topographical features, see Chapter 5.

³⁴ FSPA: A. 27, *Extracts from the diary of the Reverend Crisp, ca. 1867-1875* (manuscript), no p. no.

³⁵ For more information on Fleming, see Chapter 1.

³⁶ P.H. Butterfield (ed.), "The Orange River Sovereignty, 1848-1849: the letters of Ensign William Fleming", *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 4(12), January 1984, p. 292.

³⁷ Lucas, p. 220.

³⁸ The Cape Mounted Riflemen, also known as the Cape Corps, accompanied Warden when he established Bloemfontein as the seat of the British military garrison in 1846.

³⁹ A.T. Cunynghame, *My command in South Africa, 1874-1878, comprising experiences of travel in the colonies of South Africa and the independent states*, p. 69.

⁴⁰ *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 28.2.1868, p. 3.

⁴¹ F. French, "Anniversary of Bloemfontein's great flood", *The Friend*, 16.1.1932, p. 5; *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 28.2.1868, p. 3.

Since Bloemfontein's earliest white inhabitants were mostly English, Scottish and Irish immigrants,⁴² the town's gardeners were, inevitably, also mostly of British descent. In 1852, *The Friend of the Sovereignty and Bloem Fontein Gazette* reported that "Bloem Fontein, the capital, is now almost wholly an English Town."⁴³ The majority of Afrikaners (Boers) lived on farms and in small towns.⁴⁴ The fact that Bloemfontein's pioneer gardeners were mostly British greatly benefited the town because they brought with them a strong gardening tradition and a wealth of horticultural knowledge. While Sir Cunynghame was probably biased, he made a debatable point when he argued that the gardeners from British stock "understood gardening" as opposed to "the general apathy of the Boers".⁴⁵ Furthermore, British male gardeners were considered 'gentleman gardeners' and were widely respected among the townsfolk. One such "gentleman",⁴⁶ to use Sir Cunynghame's prose, was Andrew Hudson Bain (1819-1894), one of the Bloemfontein district's pioneer market-gardeners⁴⁷ and owner of, among others, the farm Bainsvlei outside Bloemfontein. According to Sir Charles Warren, who visited Bain in the early 1870s, Bain was "a great gardener, as great as Solomon, at any rate with regard to South Africa."⁴⁸ Bain eagerly shared his gardening expertise with other gardeners, such as George Paton, a knowledgeable gardener whose garden was described as "a sight".⁴⁹ Despite the British gardeners' dominance, not all of Bloemfontein's pioneer gardeners were British, though. One such gardener was Gustav Adolph Fichardt (1834-1900), the German-born proprietor of Fichardt's department store in Bloemfontein. According to Emma Murray (née Rutherford; 1835-1905), wife of Reverend Andrew Murray (1828-1917), Fichardt was Bloemfontein's "principal gardener"⁵⁰ and "a great botanist".⁵¹

⁴² For more details on the role British immigrants had played in Bloemfontein's early history, see J. Haasbroek, "Die rol van die Engelse gemeenskap in die Oranje-Vrystaat 1848-1859", *Memoirs van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 15, December 1980, *passim*.

⁴³ *The Friend of the Sovereignty and Bloem Fontein Gazette*, 21.10.1852, p. 2.

⁴⁴ E.K. Laird, *Incidents of travel in South Africa: being an account of a three months' tour in the Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Natal, and a ride into Zululand*, p. 87; Haasbroek, "Die rol van...", pp. 1-10.

⁴⁵ Cunynghame, p. 73.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ In the context of this discussion, gardeners and small-scale farmers who sold fruit, vegetables and flowers at a fresh produce market or directly to the consumer.

⁴⁸ C. Warren, *On the veldt in the seventies*, p. 255. See also Beyers (ed.-in-chief), pp. 14-15.

⁴⁹ Warren, p. 256.

⁵⁰ J. Murray (ed.), *Young Mrs. Murray goes to Bloemfontein 1856-1860*, p. 75.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

Most of Bloemfontein's keenest gardeners lived on erven close to the fountain and the *spruit* because they were dependent on these water sources for their gardens. The *spruit* divided the town into wet or water erven (so-called *watererven*) and dry erven (so-called *droogerven*). The wet erven, irrigated from the fountain (the Bloem Fontein) and *spruit* by means of a man-made furrow running eastward from it, were mostly located on its south side while the dry erven were located on the north side (Image 4/2). The water erven, particularly those in St George's Street and Douglas Street, were sought-after and boasted the lushest gardens.⁵² Water from the main furrow was channelled to the gardens by means of secondary furrows dug on both sides of the streets. Except for the *spruit* and the main fountain, early Bloemfontein also had other water sources. These sources included, among others, the town reservoir (see 'dam' on Image 4/2) and three smaller fountains. The first fountain was situated close to the Residency; the second – the so-called 'Park Springs' – was situated in the vicinity of the Residency; and the third was located south-east of the town where Kaffirfontein⁵³ location was established. Another crucial water source was wells. Fred Shaw, a former resident of Bloemfontein, wrote in his memoirs that "indepent [sic] of the fountain the town was dependent on wells"⁵⁴ for water. According to Shaw, there were "community wells"⁵⁵ furnished with hand pumps but some residents, especially those who gardened on the dry erven, had their own wells.⁵⁶ Other water sources for gardening purposes included boreholes, rainwater collected in tanks and household waste water channelled into the garden.⁵⁷

4.2.3 House, stoep, street and garden: a dynamic relationship

As is the case with any town's or city's garden history, an important key to understanding Bloemfontein's garden history is, firstly, to understand the dynamic relationship that exists between a house (private space) and the street (public space) it faces and, secondly, to

⁵² Roodt, pp. 94, 97, 107, 136; J. Nixon, *Among the Boers: or, notes of a trip to South Africa in search of health*, p. 124; FSPA: Dr H.P.N. Muller Collection: A. 160.55, *diary of H.A.L.....*, p. 278.

⁵³ For more information, see Chapter 5.

⁵⁴ FSPA: A. 199, *Historical sketches by Mr. Fred Shaw, Bloemfontein* (memoirs), p. 17.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵⁷ FSPA: A. 77.17, Anon., *Die geskiedenis van die fontein waaraan die stad Bloemfontein sy naam ontleen*, 1959, pp. 2-3; Roodt, p. 214.

determine where and how the garden fits into this relationship. The history of Bloemfontein's gardens is essentially that of this changing relationship and how this dynamic influenced the position, size and, ultimately, the layout of the gardens. *An understanding of how this relationship developed in Bloemfontein will foster an understanding of how a similar but much more restricted and scaled-down relationship developed in Batho.* It is appropriate to commence this discussion by focusing on the original garden laid out on the farm 'Bloem Fontein', namely the garden of the mentioned Brits couple. The garden in question was a farm garden; thus, there was no street to which the house related. In an article on Bloemfontein's origin, *The Friend* mentioned "the flowers ('bloeme') which grew *behind* Britz's [sic] farm house".⁵⁸ It is unclear as to whether this description refers to wildflowers or a flower garden. The same paper also published the memoirs of Pastor Friederich Wilhelm Salzmann of the Berlin Missionary Society in which he mentioned that Mrs Brits "had a little flower garden *in front* of the house."⁵⁹ It is likely that Mrs Brits' flower garden was, indeed, in front of the house and not behind it, as was the case on most Boer farms, as well as in the Transvaal (ZAR) and Cape Colony.⁶⁰

In most Orange Free State towns, including Bloemfontein, the majority of residents, namely those of British and Dutch origin, preferred to build their houses close to the street. According to a Dutch resident, the author and educator, Thomas Blok (1879-1964), Bloemfontein's first houses were "lean-to houses,⁶¹ with a door in the middle, a window on each side, no verandah and built right on the street, *without any garden*".⁶² Blok's description 'without any garden' in actual fact means without any front garden since flower gardens, vegetable gardens, orchards and vineyards were, according to the Dutch tradition, which traced its origin to the canal houses discussed in Chapter 3, laid out behind the houses. Apricot, fig, peach and plum (*Prunus spp.*) trees, as well as quinces, were a familiar sight in these backyard gardens. During the period 1846 to approximately the early 1870s, most of Bloemfontein's houses were built very close to the street with only the stoep (semi-private space) fitted into the space between the street⁶³ and the front door. The stoep was usually an

⁵⁸ *The Friend*, 14.10.1927, p. 10. (Own emphasis)

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.9.1938, p. 9. (Own emphasis). See also Botes, pp. 32-33.

⁶⁰ For more information, see Chapter 3.

⁶¹ Flat-roof houses.

⁶² T. Blok, "Bloemfontein in the olden days", *The Friend*, 29.3.1930, p. 5. (Own emphasis)

⁶³ By implication also includes the sidewalk if there was one.

uncovered floor-level slab or elevation⁶⁴ and functioned as a transitional space between the street (public zone) and the house (private zone).⁶⁵ No space was left open for a flowerbed in front of the house and often the only vegetation visible from the street were trees, mostly acacia (*Acacia spp.*; *Acacia karroo*), bluegum (*Eucalyptus spp.*), syringa (*Melia azedarach*) and willow (*Salix spp.*).⁶⁶ A typical example was Hamelberg's house on the market square,⁶⁷ which had nothing in front of it, except for a row of trees (Image 4/3). There were, of course, a few exceptions to the rule, such as the house occupied by the mentioned William Fleming, which had, as previously stated in Chapter 1, "a yard both before and behind the house".⁶⁸

Bloemfontein's earliest gardens were simple yet formal. Garden design was mostly in keeping with the predominant garden trend in Britain, namely the Victorian style, but in most cases, it was a 'watered-down' or simplified version thereof. In order to understand the garden style favoured by Bloemfontein's British and other immigrants, two points must be borne in mind. Firstly, in most of the British colonial world, including Bloemfontein, so-called "colonial gardening" lagged behind British gardening "in practice and theory",⁶⁹ to quote R.P. Maccubbin and P. Martin. The pioneering circumstances and long distances between the colonies and the colonial power, in this case Britain, delayed the influence of new garden fashions. As a result, it took time for new garden trends to reach Bloemfontein, which was isolated and situated far from nursery and plant-dispatching centres, such as Cape Town, Grahamstown, Graaff-Reinet, East London and Port Elizabeth. Secondly, in their desire to create a sense of place in their unfamiliar new environments, the British and later also other immigrants, essentially recreated the gardens of their memories. South African historian, Lance van Sittert's, argument that a preference for the exotic over the indigenous was characteristic of all of Europe's settler colonies, is also applicable to Bloemfontein.⁷⁰ In these pioneering circumstances, "the indigenous people, plants and animals were feared and

⁶⁴ For more information, see Chapter 3.

⁶⁵ *The Friend*, 27.9.1937, p. 8.

⁶⁶ S. Botha, *Die verandering en ontwikkeling van die woonhuisargitektuur in Bloemfontein gedurende die tydperk 1846-1946 met bydraende faktore* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1991), pp. 1-2, 23-24; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 69; Badenhorst, p. 30.

⁶⁷ Later named President Hoffman Square.

⁶⁸ Butterfield, p. 289.

⁶⁹ R.P. Maccubbin & P. Martin (eds), *British and American gardens in the eighteenth century: eighteen illustrated essays on garden history*, p. 2.

⁷⁰ L. van Sittert, "Making the Cape Floral Kingdom: the discovery and defence of indigenous flora at the Cape ca. 1890-1939", *Landscape Research* 28(1), 2003, p. 114.

despised in equal measure”.⁷¹ Native plants were considered “weeds”⁷² and “bosjes”⁷³ and, therefore, too inferior for the domestic garden.⁷⁴ For the British immigrants, ‘English plants’ and ‘English seeds’ represented Britain – not only their homeland but also ‘home’ for most of them. Concerning garden design Australian historian, Katie Holmes, argued that the British immigrants carried with them “cultural pictures”⁷⁵ of the gardens of their homeland and turned their properties on foreign soil into familiar spaces by, for example, laying out Victorian-style cottage gardens.⁷⁶ Bloemfontein’s British immigrants were no exception.⁷⁷

Since most Bloemfontein erven were square or rectangular (Image 4/2), the shape of flowerbeds, vegetable gardens and orchards reflected the overall geometry dictated by the stone boundary walls and central position of the house’s⁷⁸ front door, stoep and, in some cases, a straight garden path. Even the orchards adhered to this dominant formality, which is confirmed by Lucas when, during his visit to Bloemfontein, he noticed that the fruit trees were “planted in rows”.⁷⁹ *It is argued that a deeply-ingrained inclination towards axiality and formality underpinned the transfer of the classical European garden design blue-print to Bloemfontein’s gardens.* This tendency led to the creation of the *simple formal axial garden* discussed in previous chapters. Such a garden layout was displayed by the garden (laid out circa 1856) of the new ‘Kweekskool’ (later renamed Grey College) built on three water erven between Douglas Street and St George’s Street (Image 4/4) and also by the highly symmetrical garden of the Dutch Masonic Lodge in Douglas Street (Image 4/5). It is interesting to note that in the case of Bloemfontein’s public buildings, such as the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² W.J. Burchell, *Travels in the interior of Southern Africa* (vol. I; reprinted from original edition of 1822-1824), p. 21.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 22. “Bushes”. (Free translation)

⁷⁴ S.-A. Murray, “The idea of gardening: plants, bewilderment, and indigenous identity in South Africa”, *English in Africa* 33(2), October 2006, p. 47.

⁷⁵ K. Holmes, “‘I have built up a little garden’: the vernacular garden, national identity and a sense of place”, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 21(2), 2001, p. 115.

⁷⁶ For more information on the English cottage garden, see Chapter 2.

⁷⁷ Holmes, p. 115; P. Taylor (ed.), *The Oxford companion to the garden*, p. 23; Maccubbin & Martin, pp. 2-3. For similar arguments applicable to South Africa and Bloemfontein, see Murray, *passim*; T.R. Dunlap, *Nature and the English diaspora: environment and history in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand*, pp. 52-53; T. Bonyhady, *The colonial earth*, pp. 69, 81, 92-94, 223.

⁷⁸ Many of Bloemfontein’s early dwellings were, in actual fact, simple cottages.

⁷⁹ Lucas, p. 213.

‘Kweekskool’ and the Dutch Masonic Lodge, the space between the street and the building and its adjacent stoep was much bigger than that of domestic buildings.⁸⁰

True to the prevailing Victorian style, Bloemfontein’s flower gardens of the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s presented a typical English cottage look with ‘English flowers’ *planted informally within a formal framework*. ‘English flower seed’, ‘English garden seed’ and other exotic (non-indigenous) European plants – initially scarce and costly in Bloemfontein – were often ordered from botanical gardens and later from nurseries in Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, East London and the esteemed Botanic (sic) Garden (part of the Public Garden; previously the Company’s Garden)⁸¹ in Cape Town. By the mid-1870s, it was reported that “there is hardly a village or district on this side [south] of the Orange River, *and even beyond*, which has not by its [Botanic Garden] agency been supplied with imported trees, shrubs, and flowering plants”.⁸² In many cases, seed was also requested directly from family and friends in Britain as had been done by Reverend Crisp in a letter, dated 1868, to his father: “Tell my dear mother she cannot send me flowers and fruit from her garden, one thing she can do, she can send me sometimes in a parcel some flower seeds of her own growing from her garden. Then I can grow them here & by and by when they have spring up her flowers will have come all these thousands of miles”.⁸³

Surprisingly, many British and so-called British flower species and other “exotic productions”,⁸⁴ including delphiniums, foxgloves, hollyhocks, mignonette (*Reseda spp.*), violets (*Viola spp.*; *Viola odorata*) and, of course, roses grew well in Bloemfontein’s gardens, particularly in spring and autumn.⁸⁵ A typical exotic Victorian-style flower garden dating from Bloemfontein’s early years belonged to the mentioned Dutch Reformed minister, Reverend Murray, and his wife, Emma. Their garden at the Parsonage (formerly known as Green Lodge) was laid out on a huge water erf on the corner of St George’s Street and Douglas Street. In a letter to her mother, dated 1856, Emma wrote that “the whole garden

⁸⁰ Grey College Museum and Archives: Anon., “Plan of original Grey College building”, *Grey College School Magazine* VII(28), December 1915, p. 132; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 25, 33; Botha, p. 23.

⁸¹ For more information, see Chapter 3.

⁸² J. Noble, *Descriptive handbook of the Cape Colony: its condition and resources*, p. 39. (Own emphasis)

⁸³ FSPA: A. 27, *Extracts from the...*, no p. no.

⁸⁴ Noble, p. 39.

⁸⁵ M. Botes Private Collection (hereafter MBPC): M. Botes, *Die voorkoms van tuine in Bfn. gedurende 1890-1914* (handwritten notes), no p. no.

is surrounded with a high stone wall, but there are vines trained up against it & pomegranates & quinces so that in the summer time I believe it is scarcely visible. Our chief flower garden is a little square plot, just between the house & this wall”.⁸⁶ Except for “sweet scented roses” and “Malmaisons”,⁸⁷ Emma wrote in her letters that “mignonette” and “verbenas”⁸⁸ flourished in the ‘little square plot’.⁸⁹

Although Emma Murray did not specifically mention edgings, Bloemfontein’s flowerbeds were customarily edged with stones (painted white or left in their natural state) or overlapping bricks (Images 4/10 & 4/11). Sources describing Bloemfontein’s early gardens seldom refer to flowerbeds surrounded by clipped edges. Some records, however, do mention clipped quince and pomegranate hedges but these were in the minority by far since most fences were stone walls. The word ‘topiary’ was seldom if ever used to describe clipped plants but terms such as “ornamental”⁹⁰ and “ornamental shrubs”⁹¹ were used, for example, in Emma’s letters. It is not always clear as to whether or not topiary or some kind of clipped shrub is meant. Generally, topiary, including clipped hedges and edges, were not nearly as common in Bloemfontein’s early gardens as it had been in Britain’s gardens during the Victorian age. This may be attributed mainly to the unavailability of garden labour. For reasons that will be discussed in Chapter 7, black and coloured garden labour was hard to obtain during Bloemfontein’s early years, let alone labourers skilled in the art of topiary. Furthermore, the pioneering conditions which necessitated a stronger emphasis on survival rather than aesthetics, prohibited gardeners to succumb to garden flourishes such as topiary. As will be discussed later, this situation changed dramatically during the early 20th century.⁹²

⁸⁶ Murray (ed.), p. 28.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 75.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 118.

⁸⁹ De Kock (ed.-in-chief), pp. 600-602; A.F. Hattersley, *An illustrated social history of South Africa*, p. 229; Murray (ed.), p. 26; *The Friend*, 19.1.1933, p. 4.

⁹⁰ Murray (ed.), p. 139.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁹² D. du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the history of the English-style gardens of Batho, Mangaung (1846-1948)”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 27(3), December 2011, p. 44; Cunynghame, p. 73.

4.2.4 From stoep to verandah and the emerging front flower garden

Bloemfontein's garden scene changed significantly during the second half of the 1800s, especially since the early 1870s. The capital, which was still nothing more than a small town, not only grew in size but also became more civilised and sophisticated which, in turn, was reflected in the appearance of the residents' houses and gardens. As early as 1852, a visitor to Bloemfontein, Martha Jane Blake (née Kirk), described the town as "a comparatively civilized part of the world".⁹³ Not only did the ranks of the English and Scottish swell significantly, but increasing numbers of Jewish, German and Dutch immigrants also settled in Bloemfontein. Still, the minorities' numbers, including the number of Dutch immigrants, must have been relatively small because, in 1877, the English novelist, Anthony Trollope (1815-1882), remarked that "the visitor to Bloemfontein, the capital, will no doubt feel that Bloemfontein is more English than Dutch."⁹⁴ Three years later, another Englishman, Gustave Hallé (1851-1934),⁹⁵ reported that Bloemfontein's residents were "chiefly English, Scotch and Irish, with a scattering of Germans and Hollanders."⁹⁶

Most Dutch immigrants, such as the mentioned Hamelberg and Blok, as well as Magistrate C. van Dijk van Soelen (1809-1876) and C. de Jongh Bloem, later Treasurer-General of the Orange Free State, were skilled professionals and, considering their fatherland's strong gardening tradition, they brought with them a wealth of horticultural know-how. Bloemfontein's Dutch residents soon became known for their expert knowledge of fruit trees, particularly grafting and pruning techniques. The Dutch gardeners' fine orchards with apricot, peach, pear and plum trees became the envy of many local gardeners. Magistrate Van Soelen's garden in Douglas Street was one of early Bloemfontein's biggest and most attractive gardens, and boasted a large number of fruit trees and a vineyard. Like most of Bloemfontein's early houses, the Van Soelen house's façade abutted the street, and the garden was laid out behind the house. Hailing from a country known for its abundance of trees, the Dutch were tree lovers and planted large numbers of trees, including bluegum,

⁹³ FSPA: A. 507.14, *Memories of Martha Jane Blake (née Kirk)*, p. 25.

⁹⁴ A. Trollope, *South Africa* (reprint of 1878 edition), p. 399.

⁹⁵ Hallé, son of the musician Sir Charles Hallé, was an engineer employed by the Orange Free State government. C.J. Beyers & J.L. Basson (eds-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. V), p. 337.

⁹⁶ G. Hallé, *Mayfair to Maritzburg: reminiscences of eighty years*, p. 128.

weeping willow (*Salix babylonica*) on the banks of the *spruit*, pepper (*Schinus molle*), syringa, acacia, pride-of-India (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*) and various cypress species (*Cupressaceae spp.*).⁹⁷

As can be expected, the Dutch immigrants also brought with them a strong preference for formal garden design, as had been the case in the Netherlands for centuries.⁹⁸ The Dutch influence in Bloemfontein was visible in the strict regimented and geometrical layout of square or rectangular flowerbeds and vegetable beds. True to the Dutch tradition, gardens and orchards were laid out behind the houses.⁹⁹ *However, it is important to note that despite the Dutch influence, the growing Victorian influence gradually became more visible in Bloemfontein's gardens since the early 1870s.* Most notable was the subtle change that took place in the relationship between the house and the street. Referring to the houses which had been built during this “later period”, Blok remembered that “in these houses the lean-to roof has been replaced by a pitched roof, and small verandahs have been added while the house has been moved a little further back from the street with a small garden *in front* of it.”¹⁰⁰ The first important development was that the traditional uncovered stoep became Victorianised and was turned into a covered stoep or verandah with a corrugated iron roof and wooden posts and trimmings. The verandah, as a transitional space between the street and the house, not only became more prominent due to the addition of a convex or concave corrugated iron roof and decorative wooden fretwork and trelliswork,¹⁰¹ but also became an extension of the house (Image 4/6). Wooden posts and trimmings were later replaced by cast-iron posts and trimmings, especially since the early 1890s. During Bloemfontein's hot summers the verandah shielded the house from the sun and, as a result, it became a cool outdoor living area which encouraged interface with the street as a public space. In this regard, it is argued that the Orange Free State's climate had a direct influence on the evolution of its architecture, specifically the stoep. The development of the symmetrical *stoepkamerhuis* (stoep-room

⁹⁷ Du Bruyn, p. 45; MBPC: Botes, *Die voorkoms van...*, no p. no.; Warren, p. 20; Laird, p. 86.

⁹⁸ For more information, see Chapter 3.

⁹⁹ J.A. Wormser, *Van Amsterdam naar Pretoria: acht maanden in Zuid-Afrika*, p. 94; W.A. Baron van Ittersum, “Een en ander over den Oranje Vrijstaat”, *Elsevier's Geillustreerd Maandschrift* XVIII, July-December 1899, pp. 540-541.

¹⁰⁰ Blok, p. 5. (Own emphasis)

¹⁰¹ For a detailed description of a verandah and its elements, see K. Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk en geboue in die 19de eeu*, p. 61.

house), with two protruding rooms on both sides of a verandah, is closely related to the development of the covered stoep and verandah.¹⁰²

The second important development, which relates directly to garden design, was visible in the form of a narrow rectangular space left open between the street and the verandah for the purpose of laying out a flowerbed (Image 4/6). This is a direct by-product of the increasing influence of the Victorian style, namely to plant ‘English flowers’ in front of the house. Consequently, some stoeps and verandahs were surrounded by small flower gardens. It is probably for this reason that Reverend Crisp described a stoep as “a garden seat outside ye house”¹⁰³ in a letter to his father dated 1870. Often the flowerbeds were enclosed with cast-iron railings (imported from Britain) but there was still almost no topiary in the form of either clipped hedges or edges. Although the space between the street and the house widened, the house was still fairly close to the street. Expansive vegetable gardens, orchards and the occasional secondary flowerbed were located behind the house. The Dutch practice of laying out flower gardens, including secondary flowerbeds, behind the house became less common because of the growing Victorian influence. In Bloemfontein, the Dutch influence waned mainly because of demographic trends: while the Dutch residents’ numbers stagnated and declined, those of the British residents’ steadily increased, especially during the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁰⁴

4.2.5 “Deftly trimmed hedges”: the Victorianisation of Bloemfontein’s gardens and the rising popularity of clipped hedges

The Victorianisation of Bloemfontein’s gardens, the first signs of which were discussed above, more or less coincided with President J.H. Brand’s (1823-1888) term of office (1864-1888) as the fourth President of the Orange Free State. During the Brand period, the Orange Free State developed into a relatively well-governed and prosperous Boer republic and,

¹⁰² Roodt, pp. 210, 212-213; Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, pp. 61-63; Botha, pp. 33-34, 37; D. Picton-Seymour, *Victorian buildings in South Africa: including Edwardian & Transvaal Republican styles, 1850-1910*, p. 376; H.H.A. Groenewald & A.D. Herholdt, *Bloemfontein tot 1900: ’n argitektuur-historiese studie*, p. 73; A. Roodt, “Laaste herehuis in Westdene”, *Restorica* 24, April 1989, p. 35. For more information on the *stoepkamerhuis*, see D. Radford, “The stoepkamer tradition in South African architecture”, *Lantern* 33(1), January 1984, pp. 26-34. For a picture of a *stoepkamerhuis*, see Image 4/6.

¹⁰³ FSPA: A. 27, *Extracts from the...*, no p. no.

¹⁰⁴ Botha, pp. 33, 37; Roodt, *The architecture of...*, pp. 210, 280-281; Blok, p. 5; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 56, 135-136; Du Bruyn, p. 45.

consequently, became known as a so-called “model republic”¹⁰⁵ or “Model State”¹⁰⁶ with a “Model Municipality”¹⁰⁷ and Bloemfontein as a “model city”.¹⁰⁸ The improved economic conditions and relative peace enjoyed by the Orange Free State republic created a state of well-being and contentment among Bloemfontein’s white¹⁰⁹ residents. As a result, the capital’s residents became increasingly house-proud. Most visitors to Bloemfontein were generally impressed with “the amount of comfort and civilisation”¹¹⁰ they had found there, to quote the Honourable W. Littleton, the private secretary of Sir Bartle Frere (1815-1884), Governor of the Cape Colony, who visited Bloemfontein in 1879.

To match the bigger and more expensive houses built by Bloemfontein’s growing upper- and middle-classes, more impressive gardens were made. During this time, some of Bloemfontein’s most beautiful and well-known gardens were laid out. It is appropriate to start with the most well-known of all, namely G.A. Fichardt’s “beautifully laid-out garden”¹¹¹ at Kaya Lami, his home in Upper Church Street. Fichardt, whom many, including Emma Murray, considered the father of gardening in Bloemfontein, created an expansive garden which covered half a block between Upper Church Street and West Burger Street. The garden, the biggest part of which was situated behind the house, became known for its variety of trees, including acacias, bluegums, cypresses, loquats (*Eriobotrya japonica*) and tamarisks (*Tamarix spp.*), as well as lush flowerbeds with chrysanthemums (*Chrysanthemum spp.*; *Chrysanthemum frutescens*), roses and violets. Conservatories, a croquet lawn, a gazebo, garden benches, a rockery and a pomegranate hedge completed the picture (Image 4/7). The garden’s design may be described as eclectic since the original garden was

¹⁰⁵ M. Bidwell & C.H. Bidwell, *Pen pictures of the past* (edited by K. Schoeman; Vrijstatia 5), p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ T.B. Barlow, *The life and times of president Brand*, p. 193. For a discussion of the ‘model state’, see pp. 180-195; Anon., *Bloemfontein’s best* (brochure), no p. no.; *The Friend*, 13.7.1928, p. 8; 14.7.1928, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ “Vagabond” (pseudonym), “Early days in Bloemfontein: reminiscences of a resident of forty-five years”, *The Friend*, 27.9.1924, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ Anon., *Bloemfontein’s best*, no p. no.; E. Standaert, *A Belgian mission to the Boers*, p. 134; *The Friend*, 13.7.1928, p. 8; 14.7.1928, p. 11.

¹⁰⁹ As will be discussed in Chapter 5, this argument is not applicable to Bloemfontein’s and the republic’s black and coloured residents and citizens.

¹¹⁰ Barlow, p. 193.

¹¹¹ C.J. Carroll, “Bloemfontein in bygone days”, *The Friend*, 5.4.1927, p. 8.

essentially geometric and formal. Over time, however, Victorian elements softened the look and lent a romantic feel to it.¹¹²

Although few Bloemfontein gardens could match the size and splendour of Kaya Lami, the rising standard of gardening in Bloemfontein was also displayed in numerous other gardens. One such garden was Rose Lodge, which had been laid out by Carl Borckenhagen (1852-1898), the German-born editor of the Bloemfontein newspaper, *De Express*. Borckenhagen's garden in St George's Street was a prime example of the gardens made by Bloemfontein's upper-middle class. Noteworthy is the strong Victorian influence visible in the form of round brick-edged flowerbeds, garden paths, metal arches, an abundance of roses and informal cottage-style planting. True to the Bloemfontein tradition, Rose Lodge's main garden was located behind the house (Image 4/8). Other gardens worth mentioning include Judge Melius de Villiers' (1849-1938) gardens at Virginia Cottage and The Deodars. It was fashionable for Bloemfontein's upper-middle class to name their homes after plants,¹¹³ such as the mentioned Rose Lodge, as well as Judge de Villiers' properties. In his memoirs, De Villiers wrote that "after our marriage¹¹⁴ I sold my house that I had been occupying and bought a better one in Elizabeth Street, which house we named Virginia Cottage, on account of the Virginian creeper planted against its walls at the back. Later on again I bought eight erven adjoining President Brand Street and there I built a house which we named 'The Deodars'".¹¹⁵ Judge de Villiers' garden at The Deodars was a huge park-like showpiece with a variety of trees, including cypresses and deodars (*Cedrus deodara*), and shrubs but most of the garden was concealed behind a tall clipped cypress hedge (Image 4/9). *This hedge represents an important development, namely the increasing replacement of stone boundary walls with clipped hedges during the 1870s and 1880s.* This trend, which will be discussed

¹¹² Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 144, 168; Bidwell & Bidwell, p. 78; FSPA: A. 507.6, G.A. Fichardt se huis in Bo-Kerkstraat voor herbouing. Plan soos geteken deur mev. Maude Bidwell (gebore Fichardt 1850).

¹¹³ For more information on Bloemfontein properties named after plants, see A.C. Groenewald, *Die sosiale lewensomstandighede in Bloemfontein, 1896-1899* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1989), p. 15; E.C.E. Pieterse, *Woningname in Bloemfontein* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1968), pp. 19, 25.

¹¹⁴ De Villiers married Adelaide Holmes-Orr in 1879.

¹¹⁵ FSPA: A. 75.2(3), M. de Villiers, *Memories of eighty years*, p. 59. See also *Die Volksblad*, 9.8.1929, p. 9.

later, signified a growing preference for topiary among Bloemfontein's white garden owners.¹¹⁶

During the late 1880s and early 1890s, the period which more or less coincides with President F.W. Reitz's (1844-1934) term of office (1889-1895), Bloemfontein's gardening culture became significantly influenced and even dominated by its residents of British descent. By this time, the Dutch influence became almost completely marginalised in the face of the overwhelming Victorian onslaught. Local gardeners were increasingly influenced by garden trends in Britain, of which the mentioned Victorian style (and updated versions thereof) still reigned supreme. As was the case with architecture and interior decoration, the 1890s was typified by the Late Victorian style with its characteristic eclecticism.¹¹⁷ The blending of various classical styles and the strong emphasis on decoration and ornamentation also affected garden design. In this regard, Bloemfontein architect, Leon Roodt's, argument concerning the Victorianisation of domestic buildings in the Orange Free State is, to some extent, also applicable to the Orange Free State's and, specifically, Bloemfontein's gardens: "The Victorianisation of the Free State home was no instantaneous process but proceeded by way of substitution and elimination of local environmental materials with the products of industrial Britain."¹¹⁸ The 'products of industrial Britain' refer to the mass-produced cast-iron hardware Britain exported to its colonies. Initially, the hardware, mostly produced by the Scottish foundry, Walter Macfarlane & Co., was limited to the verandah but gradually cast-iron garden ornaments (fountains, sundials, urns and garden benches) were also exported. During the 1890s, particularly since the opening of the Cape Town-Johannesburg railway in 1890, examples of cast-iron ornaments made their appearance in Bloemfontein's finest gardens.¹¹⁹

Another important development with regard to garden design was that during the 1890s, the distance between the street and the house and its verandah (semi-private space) increased substantially. Houses were no longer positioned close to or right on the street but were

¹¹⁶ Du Bruyn, p. 45; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 101; W.J. de Kock & D.W. Krüger (eds-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. II), pp. 187-190; M. Botes, "Die geur van nektar en rose...", *Culna* 49, September 1995, pp. 16-17.

¹¹⁷ For more information, see Botha, pp. 43-44; Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, pp. 109-124.

¹¹⁸ Roodt, *The architecture of...*, p. 106.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 210, 212-213; Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, p. 61; Botha, pp. 33, 37; Du Bruyn, p. 46; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 101-102.

moved to a more or less central position on the property. Importantly, the main ornamental garden moved to the front of the house and was positioned between the street and the verandah. The erstwhile narrow strip, which accommodated a narrow front flowerbed, was substantially enlarged to make room for the laying out of a proper flower garden with multiple flowerbeds. A typical Victorian garden in Bloemfontein was characterised by square, rectangular, circular and other geometrically-shaped flowerbeds edged with stones or overlapping bricks, such as the brick-edged flowerbeds of General J.B.M. Hertzog's (1866-1942) garden at his house in Goddard Street¹²⁰ (Image 4/10). Other typical elements included small patches of lawn, gravel paths, trelliswork and a variety of garden ornaments. In the case of Freshford, the Late Victorian garden designed in the late 1890s by the English architect, John Edwin Harrison (1870-1945), for his family in Kellner Street, Westdene, overlapping brick edges were combined with low-clipped edges to frame a small herb garden and flowerbeds and to line the gravel footpaths (Image 4/11). Inside the formally-framed flowerbeds, the planting was informal. The appearance of clipped edges in Freshford's garden indicates the increased prevalence of clipped plants in Bloemfontein's gardens since the late 1890s.¹²¹

Apart from clipped edges, clipped hedges also became increasingly popular in Bloemfontein's gardens, as mentioned in the discussion of Judge de Villiers' garden.¹²² It was also stated that Bloemfontein's original stone boundary walls were being replaced with living hedges, which were most often clipped. In some cases, living hedges were combined with wooden or metal fences to create so-called 'fedges'. The fence either reinforced the hedge or served as a support to keep tall hedges flush and upright. Although the hardy quince and pomegranate were still commonly used as hedging material, cypress¹²³ and, particularly, privet¹²⁴ also became popular. Early South African gardening manuals promoted privet as

¹²⁰ For more information and photographs of the garden's brick-edged layout, see L. Roodt, "Restourasie van die Hertzoghuis: Bloemfontein", *Restorica* 16, October 1984, pp. 41-42; *The Friend*, 9.1.1921, p. 12.

¹²¹ Botha, p. 45; MBPC: M. Botes, *Tuin Freshford: Victoriaanse en Eduardiane tuine studiemateriaal*, no p. no.; M. Botes, "Rose, laventel & pietersielie: Freshford-huismuseum se nuwe Laat-Victoriaanse periodetuin", *Culina* 53, May 1998, pp. 17-19; Anon., *Restourasie en inrigting van Freshford-huismuseum* (pamphlet), pp. 3-15.

¹²² For an example of a clipped hedge, see Image 4/9.

¹²³ E. Tidmarsh, "Snoeiing van cypres heesters", *Free State Annual and Trades Directory 1894*, p. 80.

¹²⁴ For more information on privet, see Chapter 3.

“evergreen beautiful flowering bushes and trees”¹²⁵ that were not only “used for hedges”¹²⁶ but were also hailed for making a “lovely shrub[s] for a border”.¹²⁷ Bloemfontein’s gardeners – the affluent, the middle-class and the working-class – have discovered through trial and error that most varieties of privet grew well in Bloemfontein’s climate. The plant also had other advantages: it was easy to cultivate; it could survive dry spells; and it could be easily grown from both cuttings and seed. As a result, the use of privet spread quickly among Bloemfontein’s gardeners, mainly through a plant exchange network established by Bloemfontein’s early gardeners. The city’s English-speaking gardeners not only played a crucial role in the establishment of these plant exchange networks but also in the growing popularity of privet as an ideal plant for clipwork in the harsh Bloemfontein climate.¹²⁸

Bloemfontein’s English-speaking gardeners also played a key role in the rising popularity of clipped hedges in general. In this context, the virtues of the local male English gardener, in other words, the ‘gentleman gardener’¹²⁹ mentioned earlier, became prominent once again but this time it was his abilities as a skilled hedgemaker and topiarist which earned him praise. Over centuries, the English male gardener had built himself a reputation for displaying the “quiet confidence of a craftsman” responsible for “deftly trimmed hedges”.¹³⁰ This also happened to be the case in Bloemfontein. The controversial British historian, M.J. Boon (1840-1888),¹³¹ who had been highly critical of the Boers, instead praised the male British gardener’s contribution to horticulture in the Boer republics. Boon was convinced that only the English male gardener “can clip a hedge so as to have it strong and even”.¹³² As will be discussed later, Bloemfontein became the capital of beautiful hedges during the first half of the 20th century thanks, in part, to the English gardener.¹³³

¹²⁵ J. Roth, *Manual of South African gardening: a practical guide for amateurs and beginners*, p. 44. See also Smith Bros., F.R.H.S., *Horticulture: a guide to amateurs in the fruit, vegetable and flower garden, greenhouse, conservatory and stoep*, pp. 82-84.

¹²⁶ E.W. Griffiths, *South African garden practice*, p. 90.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Du Bruyn, pp. 46-47; Botes, “Die geur van...”, p. 15.

¹²⁹ The so-called “gentleman’s gardener’s qualifications” were published in the 1908 edition of G.B. van Zyl, *Amateur gardening: a short guide for amateur gardeners in the Cape Colony*, p. 12.

¹³⁰ R. Brown, *Moments in Eden*, p. 33.

¹³¹ During the early 1880s, Boon lived in Bloemfontein where he owned a grocery store. He is the author of *The history of the Orange Free State* (1885). Beyers & Basson (eds-in-chief), p. 66.

¹³² M.J. Boon, *The immortal history of South Africa: the only truthful, political, colonial, local, domestic, agricultural, theological, rational, legal, financial and intelligent history of men, women, manners and facts of the Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange Free State, Transvaal, and South Africa* (vol. I), p. 177.

¹³³ Du Bruyn, pp. 46-47; Botes, “Die geur van...”, p. 15.

4.2.6 The development of a 'hybrid' English garden

Although Bloemfontein's British and other immigrants attempted to recreate the gardens of their homeland, it is crucial to understand that Bloemfontein's early gardens were not merely a simple transference of English styles, plants and horticultural practices into the Orange Free State capital. Instead, Bloemfontein's gardens should be seen as the product of interaction, survivalist attitudes and inter-cultural influencing.¹³⁴ For this reason, the Victorian style transferred to Bloemfontein was described earlier as a 'watered-down' or simplified version of the British blueprint. The original Victorian style was tempered and increasingly influenced by the local natural environment, the human environment and, most of all, the climate. The huge difference between the climates of Britain and Bloemfontein was the primary reason for the evolution of what may be termed a 'hybrid' English garden. The term 'hybrid' refers to a garden that appeared to be English but, at the same time, was adapted to local conditions. Therefore, it may be argued that some of Bloemfontein's patrician gardens began to display vernacular influences, albeit to a limited degree. Ironically, local conditions moved Bloemfontein's gardeners to adopt a gardening style that was more in tune with the simpler Arts and Crafts and Edwardian styles¹³⁵ that historically only came later, than the true Victorian style which had been in fashion from approximately the early 1830s to the late 1890s. Apart from the typical 'English' plants and flowers ordered from nurserymen and seedsmen,¹³⁶ catalogues¹³⁷ and botanical gardens¹³⁸ across South Africa, indigenous plants, which were more suitable to the Orange Free State's dry and harsh climate, were also planted. Such plants included geranium, pelargonium and plectranthus (*Plectranthus spp.*) species. The need for shade during the hot summer months necessitated the planting of large trees, including many exotic species, as well as a small number of indigenous trees, such as *karee* (*Rhus pendulina*) and *soetdoring* (*Acacia karroo*).¹³⁹

¹³⁴ This argument is based on the thoughts of L. Head *et al.*, "Australian backyard gardens and the journey of migration", *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, p. 327. Although not denying the strong cultural influence of the homeland, the authors argued that the nostalgic Englishness of early colonial gardens should not be overstated.

¹³⁵ For more information on these styles, see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

¹³⁶ *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 13.3.1894, p. 1; 5.6.1894, p. 4.

¹³⁷ For example, Smith Brothers, Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage and Chas. Ayres of Cape Town. *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 21.5.1890, p. 1; 13.3.1894, p. 1; 20.7.1894, p. 1.

¹³⁸ For example, Grahamstown Botanic (sic) Gardens. *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 10.7.1889, p. 1; 20.7.1894, p. 1.

¹³⁹ Du Bruyn, p. 47; MBPC: Botes, *Die voorkoms van...*, no p. no.; Botes, "Die geur van...", p. 15.

In Bloemfontein, the size and appearance of ‘hybrid’ domestic gardens and, in fact, all other domestic gardens were determined by a number of factors, including the size of the plot or erf, soil quality, availability of garden labour,¹⁴⁰ financial resources and, most importantly, water. Until the early 1880s, water sources in the form of the mentioned fountains, the *spruit*, wells, boreholes and rainwater tanks provided adequate water for Bloemfontein residents’ household and gardening needs.¹⁴¹ Needless to say, water for gardening purposes was not available in equal measure to all of Bloemfontein’s residents. For example, the gardens of the dry erven did not have direct access to the main fountain or the *spruit* and were, therefore, generally smaller than those of the water erven, unless the owner of a dry erf had sunk his own borehole or well. In 1890, Bloemfontein had about 32 private wells, one of which was situated in Kaya Lami’s garden.¹⁴² Residents dependent on public wells had to downsize their gardens considerably but still managed to lay out attractive gardens. One such resident was Jewish businessman, Isaac Baumann (1813-1881), who, with his wife, Caroline (née Allenburg, 1832-1897), laid out a garden on a dry erf in Upper Church Street opposite the Dutch Reformed Church. The Baumanns’ granddaughter, Elsa Levisieur (1878-1969), painted a vivid picture of her grandfather’s cottage-style garden, which she and her sister, Clara, often visited as children: “at the back of the house under my bedroom window [was] a small square garden, full of brilliant cottage flowers, zinnias, geraniums, sweet williams and the like. There were always flowers in the garden, seemingly all in full bloom at the same time, but water was scarce and the boundaries of the little garden were never enlarged.”¹⁴³

Levisieur’s description of Baumann’s garden contains phrases which aptly describe most of Bloemfontein’s small and medium-sized gardens of the 1880s and 1890s, namely ‘small square garden’ and ‘cottage flowers’. The first reference confirms the rigid formality of the garden’s basic layout while the second conjures a romantic picture of a lush English-style cottage garden. The Baumann garden represents a trend visible in many Bloemfontein gardens during that time, namely a formal framework and layout combined with informal

¹⁴⁰ For more information, see Chapter 7.

¹⁴¹ M. Botes, “‘Water pure and wholesome’ – watervoorsiening in Bloemfontein gedurende die 19de eeu”, *New Contree* 76 (supplement edition), November 2016, pp. 53-57, 60-62; FSPA: *MBL 10/2, Regulations for the town of Bloemfontein, 1882*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴² *The Friend*, 9.4.1931, p. 7; FSPA: *MBL 10/2, Regulations for the...*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴³ FSPA: A. 507.9, *Outobiografiese fragment (met transkripsie) deur Elsa Levisieur (geb. 1878)*, no p. no.

planting. This significant trend will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Levisseur's description also contains a phrase which confirms the harsh reality of gardening in Bloemfontein, namely that 'water was scarce'. This made gardening a challenge for most residents, particularly Bloemfontein's lower middle-class and working-class residents who had built themselves modest cottages in the city's less privileged areas, most notably in St John Street¹⁴⁴ and Zastron Street, and lower middle-class areas, such as Kellner Street in Westdene. Photographs of these small Victorian-style houses show English-style cottage gardens laid out between the small verandah and the street. These gardens such as the one in front of the Fleck family's semi-detached house in Kellner Street lacked topiary, including clipped hedges. Either garden labour was not available or affordable for the owners or tenants of these properties, or the small gardens lacked the necessary space for such artistic expressions¹⁴⁵ (Image 4/12).

Despite the challenges faced by Bloemfontein's gardeners, photographs of the gardens of Bloemfontein's affluent residents provide evidence that the late 1800s represent a period of major achievement in terms of gardening. The mentioned 'hybrid' English garden had come to fruition and this style became characteristic of many Bloemfontein gardens. Climatic realities made gardeners more accepting (though selective) of indigenous plants, especially trees, and these were typically mixed with exotic species. Apart from Kaya Lami, other fine examples of 'hybrid' gardens include the gardens of Beaufort Lodge, Green Lodge, Fern Lodge, the Anglican Church's complex of buildings¹⁴⁶ in St George's Street, St Michael's Home¹⁴⁷ in Markgraaff Street and the Greenhill Convent in Green Street (Image 4/13). Quintessential Victorian elements such as garden paths, bird baths, rose-covered arches and rose beds were customarily present but indigenous species, such as *karee* trees, geraniums

¹⁴⁴ Later renamed Voortrekker Street and today known as Nelson Mandela Street.

¹⁴⁵ Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 23, 101; K. Schoeman, *Portrait of Bloemfontein 1860-1910*, pp. 156-157.

¹⁴⁶ These included the gardens of Bishop's Lodge, the Cathedral of St Michael and St Andrew and St Cyprian's Theological College. For information on the gardens, see Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (hereafter HP): Anon., "S. Cyprian's Theological College, Bloemfontein", *Quarterly Paper* 40, April 1878, pp. 8-9.

¹⁴⁷ For information on the gardens, see HP: Anon., "A sketch of life in Basuto Land and at S. Michael's Home", *Quarterly Paper* 43, January 1879, p. 25.

and pelargoniums rooted these gardens in their local context.¹⁴⁸

To obtain a proper understanding of Bloemfontein's local context of the late 1800s – more or less the cultural-historical context relevant to the period which overlaps with President M.T. Steyn's (1857-1916) term of office (1896-1902) – the city had to be viewed from above. Fred Shaw wrote in his memoirs that “an aerial photograph in those days of the town would have shewn [sic] a remarkable feature i.e. almost all residences had proportionately large gardens attached to them.”¹⁴⁹ Even more remarkable, according to Shaw, is the fact that the gardens “would have shewn [sic] 4 large squares or rectangles.”¹⁵⁰ Shaw's observation confirms that Bloemfontein's gardens had remained predominantly rigid and geometric throughout the 19th century. On the eve of the 20th century, the dominant garden style was thus overtly formal and still greatly influenced by British fashions. Bloemfontein gardeners became increasingly fashion-conscious, and being ‘fashionable’ in Bloemfontein meant doing what was fashionable in Britain at the time. As will be discussed in the next section, being ‘fashionable’ also meant developing a growing taste for the art of topiary.¹⁵¹

4.3 Gardening in Bloemfontein and topiary in Bloemfontein's gardens in the 20th century (1900-1939)

4.3.1 “A tree-decked, garden-crowded little town”: Bloemfontein's War-time gardens

On 11 October 1899, the two Boer republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal (ZAR) declared war on Great Britain and thereby triggered the start of the Anglo-Boer War (hereafter War) of 1899 to 1902. Little more than five months after the War had broken out Bloemfontein, the predominantly English-speaking and pro-English capital of the Orange Free State, was occupied by Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in South Africa. On 13 March 1900, no fewer than 34 000 British officers, troops, military

¹⁴⁸ Du Bruyn, p. 48; K. Schoeman (ed.), *The Free State Mission: the work of the Anglican Church in the Orange Free State, 1863-1883, as described by contemporaries*, pp. 32-33; Anon., *S.W. Silver & Co.'s handbook to South Africa including the Cape Colony, Natal, the Diamond Fields, the Trans-Orange Republics, etc.*, p. 453; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 101-102, 143-144; Botes, “Die geur van...” p. 16; MBPC: Botes, *Die voorkoms van...*, no p. no.

¹⁴⁹ FSPA: A. 199, *Historical sketches by...*, p. 22.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁵¹ Du Bruyn, p. 48.

attachés and other staff who formed part of Lord Roberts' army marched into Bloemfontein and took possession of it. The British soldiers' impressions and experiences¹⁵² of Bloemfontein are well recorded in numerous diaries, journals and memoirs, many of which were published after the War had ended. It is evident from these records that few aspects of Bloemfontein impressed the soldiers more than the capital's already famous gardens. When the British jurist, philosopher and author, James Bryce (1838-1922), visited Bloemfontein four years before the War broke out, he found it to be the "most idyllic community in Africa".¹⁵³ As the British soldiers had discovered not long after Bryce's visit, Bloemfontein's pleasing physical appearance had much to do with the idyllic impression Bryce had begotten of the place. After weeks in the open veld, it was a "wreck of an army"¹⁵⁴ that entered Bloemfontein but, according to historian, Rayne Kruger, the soldiers' "eyes shone at the sight of gardens".¹⁵⁵ What Lord Roberts and his men were met with in Bloemfontein took them by surprise: instead of a hostile pro-Boer capital, they were welcomed by an unexpectedly friendly and attractive town.¹⁵⁶

Bloemfontein's lush and cool gardens were like an "oasis in the parched veldt"¹⁵⁷ for the weary and, in many cases sick soldiers. Filson Young, war correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, described Bloemfontein as "a little town of white houses and many-coloured gardens"¹⁵⁸ and recalled how, during the march into town, "the dust rose in clouds wherever man walked, and spread a grey garment over the flowers in the street gardens".¹⁵⁹ Julian Ralph, a pro-British American war correspondent, wrote that his first impression of Bloemfontein was that of a "tree-decked, garden-crowded little town".¹⁶⁰ While a soldier who described himself as a 'Mounted Black' referred to Bloemfontein's "nice well-kept

¹⁵² Also included are the impressions and experiences of the officers, chaplains, medical doctors and other military staff, as well as war correspondents representing various newspapers and weeklies.

¹⁵³ J. Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa*, p. 314.

¹⁵⁴ A.T. Mahan, *The story of the war in South Africa 1899-1900*, p. 306.

¹⁵⁵ R. Kruger, *Good-bye Dolly Gray: the story of the Boer War*, p. 267.

¹⁵⁶ D.W. Krüger & C.J. Beyers (eds-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. III), pp. 118-119; D. du Bruyn & A. Wessels, "The British soldiers' Bloemfontein: impressions and experiences during the time of the British occupation and Lord Roberts' halt, 13 March - 3 May 1900", *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 29(3), December 2013, pp. 30-32, 37-38; L.S. Amery (ed.), *The Times history of the war in South Africa 1899-1902* (vol. IV), p. 8.

¹⁵⁷ Anon., *War with the Boers: an account of the past and present troubles with the South African republics* (vol. IV), p. 36.

¹⁵⁸ F. Young, *Memory harbour: essays chiefly in description*, p. 123.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁶⁰ J. Ralph, *At Pretoria: the capture of the Boer capitals and the hoisting of the flag at Pretoria*, p. 137.

gardens”,¹⁶¹ others, such as Captain L.M. Phillipps, described its gardens as ‘pretty’ and, therefore, he considered Bloemfontein “a pretty little place”.¹⁶² It must have been Bloemfontein’s flower gardens rather than its hedges that made a good impression because Phillipps specifically mentioned the houses’ “creeper grown fronts and flower patches”,¹⁶³ while Young admired the Greenhill Convent’s “garden of roses and geraniums and fuchsias”.¹⁶⁴ No topiary or even clipped hedges were mentioned by any of the consulted sources, which underscores the argument that by then the practice of clipping plants was still not widespread among Bloemfontein’s gardeners; at least not widespread enough to have made an impression. However, the important argument is that Bloemfontein’s gardens must have resembled British gardens to such a degree that they reminded the soldiers of the gardens of their home country.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, Bloemfontein itself, which British historian, Thomas Pakenham, argued had “always looked incongruously colonial”,¹⁶⁶ gave the occupiers the impression of “an english [sic] town”,¹⁶⁷ to quote an unknown British soldier.

4.3.2 “A garden all around the house and, of course, a hedge”: Bloemfontein’s post-War gardens

If Bloemfontein was predominantly English before the War, it became even more so after the War. The former Boer republic had been renamed the Orange River Colony (hereafter ORC) with a governor instead of a president in charge. During Bloemfontein’s post-War colonial period (1902-1910), the city became an English capital with its administration and politics dominated by English-speaking people. A huge influx of English and Scottish immigrants not only affected the social lives of Bloemfontein’s residents, but also the city’s physical appearance, including its private and public gardens. In her memoirs of her childhood years in Cape Town, writer, Norah Henshilwood, remembered that at the turn of the century “everyone had a garden *all around the house and, of course, a hedge.*”¹⁶⁸ “Thick hedges”, she wrote, “separated most of the houses”.¹⁶⁹ Henshilwood’s description of Cape

¹⁶¹ Anon., *Campaigning in South Africa, 1900-1901*, p. 91.

¹⁶² L.M. Phillipps, *With Rimington*, p. 92.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Young, p. 127.

¹⁶⁵ Du Bruyn & Wessels, pp. 31, 45-46.

¹⁶⁶ T. Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. 372.

¹⁶⁷ FSPA: A. 612, *Diary of an unknown British soldier during the Anglo-Boer War*, no p. no.

¹⁶⁸ N. Henshilwood, *A Cape childhood*, p. 18. (Own emphasis)

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Town's gardens during the early 1900s is an apt depiction of many Bloemfontein gardens dating from the colonial period and beyond. In post-War Bloemfontein, the sizes of erven increased substantially, particularly in the new Northern Extension, later renamed Waverley, and the new properties established along Aliwal Street, in the area which later became known as Arboretum, in Hilton east of Naval Hill, and in Willows (formerly the South-Western Extension) in the south. This not only meant that bigger houses could be built but also that bigger gardens could be laid out.¹⁷⁰

One direct consequence of the above-mentioned trend was that *the ornamental garden, which had until then been restricted to the front area between the street and the house (and its verandah), was extended to the sides of the house*. This gave the impression of a house surrounded and enclosed by a garden. The other important 'enclosing element' mentioned by Henshilwood is 'thick hedges', namely clipped hedges (mostly cypress and privet) planted as boundary fences. Thus, the house was not only enclosed by the garden but also by a solid clipped hedge (Image 4/14). Despite the fact that the garden surrounded the house on all sides, the garden was considered a 'picturesque entity'¹⁷¹ and did not necessarily form a visual unity with the house. Because the distance between the street and the house increased due to the increased garden size, the premium placed on social interaction with street life became less important. Thus, the house became more inward-looking by being surrounded and enclosed by both garden and hedge. Consequently, a stronger emphasis was placed on privacy and the new importance of the verandah as a semi-private social space. The house's façade still faced the street and garden gate but, although still important, the rigid enforcement of axial symmetry was relaxed.¹⁷²

At the start of the 20th century, the Victorian style was still fashionable in Bloemfontein but the simpler aesthetic of the Arts and Crafts Movement referred to earlier became increasingly visible in local gardens. The Arts and Crafts Movement was the precursor of the Edwardian style which, in turn, had a huge influence on garden design in Britain and, in varying degrees, on the British colonies. After the War, the overall garden design aesthetic became more restrained and simplified. *Concerning Bloemfontein's taste for topiary, it appears as though*

¹⁷⁰ Du Bruyn, p. 49; Botha, pp. 58-60, 62; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 189.

¹⁷¹ Botha used the term "skilderagtige entiteit", p. 80.

¹⁷² Botha, pp. 68-69; MBPC: Botes, *Die voorkoms van...*, no p. no.

the War happened to be a watershed since it was only after the War that topiary became truly established in local gardens. The first reason is that the Edwardian period (approximately 1900-1910) heralded a gradual shift away from the Victorian style. The simplified and ‘watered-down’ aesthetic of the Edwardian style, described in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, became visible in Bloemfontein’s architecture and gardens. Topiary, specifically clipped hedges and edges, were assigned a new and significant role in the Edwardian garden, namely that of a key element of the ‘architectural garden’. Consequently, clipped hedges became an important building block of the Edwardian garden. This important trend held sway until at least the late 1930s. In her memoirs of Bloemfontein, Kathleen Ramsbottom wrote that clipped and unclipped hedges were characteristic of Bloemfontein’s post-War gardens and remembered that “quince & pomegranate hedges were popular in larger gardens”.¹⁷³ It was typically in the ‘larger gardens’ where the aesthetic use of clipped hedges was most effective. Bloemfontein’s English-speaking gardeners, especially those influenced by the then famous Gertrude Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens, enthusiastically embraced the new fashion for clipped plants.¹⁷⁴

The second reason for topiary’s growing popularity in Bloemfontein was that cheap black garden labour became more readily available. The opening of the previously-mentioned railway in 1890, as well as the widespread disruption caused by the War, forced large numbers of impoverished and displaced black and coloured people to migrate to Bloemfontein, searching for employment opportunities. These circumstances urged many black males to make themselves available as casual labourers, including as garden labourers. The increasing availability of cheap black garden labour was, of course, welcomed by Bloemfontein’s gardeners because the new taste for topiary required a constant supply of manual labour. The labour-intensive clipping and trimming of hedges, edges and all other ornamental versions of this garden art necessitated full-time garden labour. Finally, there was also a third reason for topiary’s rising post-War popularity, namely the growing interest in gardening among Bloemfontein’s white residents. Four years after the War had ended a visitor to Bloemfontein observed that “one feature of the place is the large gardens”.¹⁷⁵ The

¹⁷³ FSPA: A. 507.9, *Memories of K.N. Ramsbottom* (part III), p. 5. For more information on pomegranate hedges, see “Red Berry” (pseudonym), “Pomegranate growing”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXI(3), March 1931, p. 83.

¹⁷⁴ Du Bruyn, pp. 49-50.

¹⁷⁵ R.H. Fuller, *South Africa at home*, p. 190.

visitor, R.H. Fuller, probably also noticed what Fred Shaw had observed shortly before the outbreak of the War, namely that there was hardly a house in Bloemfontein without a garden.¹⁷⁶

Bloemfontein's colonial period was described by Karel Schoeman as the city's "imperiale somer"¹⁷⁷ with reference to, among others, Samuel Hynes' description of the Edwardian period in Britain as "a long garden party on a golden afternoon".¹⁷⁸ Characterised by political stability and economic progress, the colonial period gave birth to a growing white middle-class. While Bloemfontein's upper-class residents lived in the suburbs of Waverley, Willows and Hilton, the middle-class settled in the new suburb of Westdene, formerly known as the Western Extension. When the English clergyman, Reverend F.B. Meyer, visited Bloemfontein in 1907, he noted that "beautiful suburbs are springing up, with pleasant villas situated in gardens".¹⁷⁹ The 'villas' referred to were probably the stately houses built by Bloemfontein's wealthy in Waverley and certain parts of Hilton and Willows, but certainly not the houses built in Westdene. Many of Westdene's houses were built as part of municipal housing schemes introduced in certain Bloemfontein suburbs to address the acute housing needs among middle- and lower-income residents. Compared to those of the upper-class, Westdene's gardens were modest in size and displayed the trappings of English taste: a formal yet simple layout with flowerbeds framed with low-clipped edges. Clipped hedges of privet, cypress, honeysuckle, plumbago, quince and pomegranate have become increasingly standard features of most suburban gardens. The topiary garden of Mr P. Elffers in President Reitz Street, Westdene, may be considered a prototype of many of Bloemfontein's early 20th century gardens. Characteristic features included a formal layout, multiple flowerbeds with clipped edges and mixed planting¹⁸⁰ (Image 4/15).

Apart from embracing topiary, Bloemfontein's English-speaking residents (both the newcomers and the long-time residents) injected Bloemfontein with a renewed enthusiasm

¹⁷⁶ FSPA: A. 199, *Historical sketches by...*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁷ K. Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika tussen Oorlog en Unie, 1902-1910*, p. 1. "Imperial summer". (Free translation)

¹⁷⁸ S. Hynes, *The Edwardian turn of mind*, p. 4.

¹⁷⁹ F.B. Meyer, *A winter in South Africa*, p. 48.

¹⁸⁰ W.F.S. Senekal, *Gedifferensieerde woonbuurtvorming binne die Munisipaliteit van Bloemfontein: 'n faktorekologiese toepassingstudie* (Research report: part I, ISEN, University of the Orange Free State, 1977), pp. 104-106; Du Bruyn, pp. 50-51; MBPC: Botes, *Die voorkoms van...*, no p. no.; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 190; Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika...*, p. 169.

for gardening in general. Thanks to their substantial knowledge of practical horticulture, which they eagerly shared with other gardeners, the standard of gardening in Bloemfontein received a major boost. In addition, Bloemfontein's gardeners also benefitted from new gardening manuals published by horticultural experts.¹⁸¹ The new colonial ruling class took the lead by setting the example in their own gardens, such as the new Governor of the ORC, Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams¹⁸² (1858-1920). Goold-Adams was described as a "great gardener"¹⁸³ for good reason because due to his gardening efforts, the garden of the Presidency, which was duly renamed Government House,¹⁸⁴ was turned into a showpiece. Other prominent English-speaking residents followed the Governor's example, such as the medical practitioner, Dr C.H. Bidwell. In 1906, Bidwell built a new Edwardian-style house (named 'Vrede') for his family in Aliwal Street and, in the following year, he began laying out a matching garden. The "lovely gardens",¹⁸⁵ which surrounded the house according to the latest trend, had been a landmark in the area for years. Another gentleman, who became one of post-War Bloemfontein's leading gardeners, was also a medical doctor, namely Dr A.E.W. Ramsbottom (1860-1921).¹⁸⁶ In her reminiscences of her father, the previously-mentioned Kathleen Ramsbottom recalled vivid pictures of him, the quintessential 'gentleman gardener', "planting out his frail little seedlings"¹⁸⁷ in the colourful flower garden of Mohawk Lodge in St Andrew's Street. It is important to note that by the early 1900s, some of Bloemfontein's leading citizens, such as Bidwell and Ramsbottom, started to play a key role in promoting gardening and a gardening culture in the capital – a trend which continued well into the first half of the 20th century.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸¹ See, for example, H.E.V. Pickstone, *Hints on fruit growing* (1901); Anon. *South African garden annual* (1916) and the mentioned books by Van Zyl (1908) and Griffiths (1913).

¹⁸² Goold-Adams was Lieutenant-Governor from 1902 to 1907 and Governor from 1907 to 1910. De Kock (ed.-in-chief), p. 326.

¹⁸³ R. Ehrlich, "Early days in Bloemfontein", *Jewish Affairs* 18(6), June 1963, p. 23.

¹⁸⁴ For more information on the garden, see Bloemfontein Public Library (hereafter BPL): Africana Collection: *Afric. 920LEV, memories of Sophie Levisieur*, p. 7; E.L. Calverley, *A guide to Bloemfontein with a short history and description of the Orange River Colony*, p. 54.

¹⁸⁵ H. Schuur, "Quiet, peaceful days when one could dream", *The Friend*, 19.2.1954, p. 14.

¹⁸⁶ Ramsbottom was Administrator of the Orange Free State from 1910 to 1915. Krüger & Beyers (eds-in-chief), pp. 716-718. See also J. Haasbroek, "AEW Ramsbottom, eerste Administrateur van die Oranje-Vrystaat 1910-1915", *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 8(2), March 1992, *passim*. FSPA: A. 507.14, *Herinneringe aan dr. A.E.W. Ramsbottom deur sy oudste dogter, Kathleen Ramsbottom*, 13.3.1980, p. 1.

¹⁸⁸ Schoeman, *Portrait of Bloemfontein...*, p. 155; FSPA: A. 507.9, *Memories of K.N....*, p. 5; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 189.

“The English capacity to master, display, and enhance the beauties of nature via the garden”

Although he was only a part-time Bloemfontein resident, one other ‘gardener’ who needs special mentioning is the esteemed British architect, Sir Herbert Baker.¹⁸⁹ Baker was, first and foremost, an architect but he was also interested in gardens and appreciated the importance of integrating the design of the garden with that of the house. Essentially, this philosophy dictated that the garden had to complement the house. It is important to understand Baker, who first arrived in South Africa in 1893, as a product of his time. After the War, Sir Alfred (later Lord) Milner (1854-1925), who was appointed Governor¹⁹⁰ of the ORC and Transvaal, asked Baker to assist with the physical reconstruction of the two former republics.¹⁹¹ This ‘reconstruction’ was underpinned by an ideological objective, namely the expansion of the British Empire and the Anglicisation of each new colony. In this context, ‘Anglicisation’ meant many things, including the idea of transferring “the garden as England and England as garden”¹⁹² to the colonies in the form of laying out English-style gardens wherever possible. British garden history expert, Anne Helmreich, explained this ideology as follows: “the English capacity to master, display, and enhance the beauties of nature via the garden served as a metaphor for England’s right to rule and for the service that England brought to so-called less developed lands.”¹⁹³ It seems as though the British settlers, including the so-called ‘Milner settlers’¹⁹⁴ who settled in the ORC (considered one of the Empire’s ‘less developed lands’) and Bloemfontein after the War, understood this philosophy. Many of them were farmers¹⁹⁵ and gardeners¹⁹⁶ and put into practice the

¹⁸⁹ For more information on Baker, see Chapter 3.

¹⁹⁰ Milner was assisted by Goold-Adams.

¹⁹¹ D. du Bruyn, “A Baker garden with a touch of Jekyll: early history (1903-1905) of the garden at Westminster Estate near Tweespruit, Free State, with special reference to the role played by the Duke of Westminster, Sir Herbert Baker and Gertrude Jekyll”, *Indago* 32, December 2016, pp. 102-104.

¹⁹² A. Helmreich, *The English garden and national identity: the competing styles of garden design, 1870-1914*, p. 231. For a poetic expression of British garden patriotism, see Rudyard Kipling’s poem *The glory of the garden*. R. Kipling, *Rudyard Kipling’s verse: inclusive edition 1885-1918* (vol. III), p. 257.

¹⁹³ Helmreich, p. 231.

¹⁹⁴ F. Nicholson, “Frederick Nicholson of Heathfield”, *Africana Notes and News* 22(5), March 1977, pp. 201-211; Du Bruyn, “A Baker garden...”, pp. 103-104.

¹⁹⁵ FSPA: A. 72.6, Anon., *Land settlement in South Africa: settlers and farms, 1916* (pamphlet), *passim*; E.F. Knight, *South Africa after the war: a narrative of recent travel*, pp. 134-190.

¹⁹⁶ FSPA: CO 209/6480/03, *South African Expansion Committee: list of trained women applying to for employment as dairy workers, gardeners etc., forwarded, 1903*, no p. no.

commonly-held belief that “one of the first objects of a colonist on arriving at a new settlement is to plant a garden”.¹⁹⁷

Although Baker was kept busy with commissions in the Cape and Transvaal, Bloemfontein was not neglected. In fact, he was awarded so many architectural commissions in Bloemfontein that he opened an office in the city in 1902. For Baker’s first commission, he was asked to design additions to the existing Government Building¹⁹⁸ in President Brand Street. Apart from the architecture, he was also tasked with the design of the building’s gardens. Baker’s garden plan showed a formal design in which clipped hedges featured prominently. In this design, the hedges were functional rather than ornamental in that their purpose was to disguise utilitarian structures such as a seed store, potting shed and glass house; yet, the strategic position of the hedges turned them into a design element.¹⁹⁹ More commissions followed, such as the one for the new Colonial Secretary of the ORC, Sir H.F. Wilson, which involved alterations to his house and garden in Bloemfontein. In all of Baker’s designs, the philosophy of his friend and garden design mentor, Gertrude Jekyll, was visible in one form or another, such as the use of clipped hedges and edges, as well as stone terraces and retaining walls, as design elements. Baker’s version of the ‘architectural garden’ – his so-called “wall and terrace garden”²⁰⁰ – was widely copied in Bloemfontein.²⁰¹ Apart from clipped hedges, Baker often included topiary in his garden designs. One typical example is the whimsical beagles which adorned the clipped hedge that he had designed for the Duke of Westminster at Westminster Estate near Tweespruit (Image 4/16).

One of the earliest written references by a South African to Gertrude Jekyll’s teachings was made by the Cape gardener and writer, Hildagonda J. Duckitt (1840-1905), in her book *Hilda’s diary of a Cape housekeeper*²⁰² (1902). Duckitt, who was familiar with Jekyll’s

¹⁹⁷ Van Zyl, p. 13.

¹⁹⁸ The building currently houses the Afrikaans Literary Museum and the Sesotho Literary Museum.

¹⁹⁹ FSPA: CO 373/1309/06, *Government Buildings Bloemfontein: plan shewing [sic] proposed scheme for cleaners yard, gardeners nursery & P.W.D. yard*, circa 1906. (Drawing)

²⁰⁰ Westminster Private Collection: The Baker Documents: *letter from H. Baker to Col. Byron*, 22.9.1905, p. 1.

²⁰¹ Du Bruyn, “A Baker garden...”, pp. 105, 107-110; De Kock (ed.-in-chief), p. 47; C.J.S. Coetzee, *Herbert Baker in die Oranje-Vrystaat en Noord-Kaap* (Unpublished B.Arch. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1975), pp. 4, 10-69.

²⁰² Shortened title.

works, wrote that “Miss Jekyll’s books will give many suggestions”²⁰³ to South African gardeners. However, Duckitt cautioned local gardeners to be realistic because “conditions of gardening are so different here [South Africa]”.²⁰⁴ Still, many of Jekyll’s garden design philosophies could be successfully adapted to local conditions. As far as Bloemfontein is concerned, it appears that Jekyll’s ideas on the place of formality in a garden, her belief that house and garden should complement each other, and the important functional and aesthetic role of clipped hedges and edges in a garden, found resonance with local gardeners, especially since the late 1910s. It was during this time that the Edwardian style, of which Jekyll and her colleagues were probably the most well-known exponents, greatly influenced local architecture and garden design. During the period 1910 to 1930, the trend of moving the house further away from the street continued up to the point where the house became almost isolated on the property. This tendency was no longer limited to affluent suburbs, but also became noticeable at houses designed for people with modest means (Image 4/17). Consequently, social contact between the house and the street disappeared completely. Garden design philosophy also changed in the sense that the garden was no longer considered a separate entity but an extension of the house. The garden’s design was strongly influenced by the house’s blueprint; hence the notion of the ‘architectural garden’. As a result, gardens were defined by strong geometrical shapes, stone terraces, stone retaining walls and, of course, clipped hedges²⁰⁵ (Image 4/18).

South African garden writers (and also British garden writers who had an interest in South African gardens), many of whom wrote columns for South African periodicals and newspapers, including *The Outspan*, *The Friend*²⁰⁶ and *Die Volksblad*,²⁰⁷ enthusiastically embraced Jekyll’s teachings. One such garden writer was Edith O’Connor, who advocated the ‘watered-down’ Edwardian style for South African gardens. Regarding formality in a garden, O’Connor advised that “formality, such as it is, should be relegated to the immediate vicinity of the buildings, vanishing by degrees, until at the confines of the garden one is

²⁰³ H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda’s diary of a Cape housekeeper, being a chronicle of daily events and monthly work in a Cape household, with numerous cooking recipes, and notes on gardening, poultry keeping, etc.*, p. 177. For the original diary, see Western Cape Archives and Records Service (hereafter WCARS): A. 760, *Diary of Hildagonda Duckitt, Grootte Post, Darling, Cape Colony, s.a.*

²⁰⁴ Duckitt, p. 177.

²⁰⁵ Botha, pp. 78-80.

²⁰⁶ *The Outspan*, a periodical, and the Bloemfontein newspaper, *The Friend*, were widely read by English-speakers in Bloemfontein and the Orange Free State.

²⁰⁷ An Afrikaans newspaper published in Bloemfontein.

reminded of Nature’s lavish growth and luxuriance.”²⁰⁸ O’Connor’s advice was in line with Jekyll’s dictum that a garden’s most “manipulated features should be located near the house and, as the landscape moved outward, increasingly naturalistic features should be developed”.²⁰⁹ The proliferation of typical Jekyllian terms, such as ‘herbaceous border’, ‘cottage garden’, ‘shrubbery’, ‘pergola’, ‘summer house’, ‘rock garden’, ‘rockery’, ‘masonry’, ‘stone terraces’, ‘sunken garden’, ‘pond’, ‘sundial’ and importantly, ‘topiary’, ‘hedges’, ‘edges’ and ‘edgings’, indicate the popularity of the Edwardian style among local garden writers and gardeners alike.²¹⁰

4.3.3 “A well-kept hedge of some plant material suited to the climate”: the clipped hedge as a key garden element

Gertrude Jekyll’s garden design philosophies, specifically the idea that a garden’s design must accentuate and complement the architecture, were enthusiastically promoted in the local media, specifically the newspapers. Regular gardening columns, such as *In the garden*, *My garden* and *Garden gossip* in *The Friend* and *In die blomtuin* and *Die blomtuin* in *Die Volksblad*, preached Edwardian garden design principles. For example, *The Friend* stressed the importance of “a garden to harmonise with the buildings [house and outbuildings]”.²¹¹ A holistic and integrated approach to garden design was considered ideal and, therefore, the gardener “should not concentrate on the front garden alone”, rather, “the whole of the ground all round the house should be a matter of care and attention”,²¹² *The Friend* advised. During the 1930s, the philosophy that a house should be “surrounded by gardens and lawns”²¹³ developed into the idea of a house that “rises out of the grass [lawn]”.²¹⁴ Towards the late 1930s, this philosophy was even further refined by arguing in favour of a garden that “comes into the home”²¹⁵ by allowing living rooms to “open to the garden”.²¹⁶ It was also considered

²⁰⁸ E. O’Connor, “All sorts of gardens”, *The Outspan*, 25.1.1929, p. 39.

²⁰⁹ Helmreich, p. 170.

²¹⁰ O’Connor, pp. 39, 53; G. Carter (ed.), *The South African home garden, passim*; D. Fairbridge, *Gardens of South Africa, passim*; *The Friend*, 7.5.1927, p. 6; 28.1.1929, p. 3; 2.2.1929, p. 5; 24.10.1933, p. 2; 17.3.1934, p. 14. See D.F. Malherbe, “Lê ’n blomtuin in Maart uit”, *Die Volksblad*, 26.2.1938, p. 15 for similar Afrikaans terminology.

²¹¹ *The Friend*, 24.4.1936, p. 3.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 24.7.1936, p. 3.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 13.6.1938, p. 3.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.6.1930, p. 3.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.6.1938, p. 3.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.5.1937, p. 3.

better to have a “small house and a large garden”²¹⁷ than vice versa, but the ultimate objective was to integrate house and garden, no matter the respective sizes.

At the same time, the importance of topiary, specifically clipped hedges and edges, was emphasised as important building blocks of a garden. Firstly, the functional use of the hedge as a means of enclosing the yard was stressed: “in thinking of the garden one must also think of the type of fence or hedge to enclose it and the house”.²¹⁸ The idea of enclosing both the house and garden by means of a hedge or a ‘fedge’ was considered necessary. *Die Volksblad* argued that a garden must have “’n groot heining daarom heen”²¹⁹ because “tuine moet privaat wees, kinders en grootmense moet hulle heeltemal tuis voel in die omgewing van die natuur en nie die gevoel hê, dat hulle van alle kante beloer word nie.”²²⁰ (Image 4/19). Contemporary gardening manuals, most of which had been written by some of the mentioned garden writers, also encouraged the functional use of hedges in a garden. One of South Africa’s most well-known garden writers of the time, George Carter, was eloquent about the place and function of hedges in a garden and devoted an entire chapter to the subject in his book *About trees, shrubs, and climbing plants for South Africa* (published circa 1920s). According to Carter, the function of a hedge was, among others, to “keep out dogs and high winds” from gardens, “to act as a screen between town lots, on the left and right of the house, for the sake of privacy”, to “screen off the washing and drying ground” and, in the case of low hedges and edges, “to define low boundaries to paths and sections of the garden”.²²¹ Ms Dr D.F. Malherbe,²²² *Die Volksblad*’s pre-eminent garden writer, also maintained strong opinions about hedges. She did not leave her readers in the dark as to the ideal height of a clipped hedge: “’n mooi gesnoeide heining – 3 of 4 voet hoog – sal die tuin met sy beddings en rande afduim van mekaar en [nie net] die groot soort [volwassenes] dit kan geniet nie maar ook die verbygangers.”²²³

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.7.1939, p. 3.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.4.1936, p. 3.

²¹⁹ *Die Volksblad*, 22.8.1936, p. 7. “A substantial hedge around it”. (Free translation)

²²⁰ *Ibid.* “Gardens need to be private, children and adults must feel at home in the natural environment and must not sense that they are being watched.” (Free translation)

²²¹ G. Carter, *About trees, shrubs, and climbing plants for South Africa*, p. 45.

²²² Jacomina Elizabeth Hendrina (Maynie) (née Mostert), wife of the well-known Afrikaans poet and writer, Dr D.F. Malherbe (1881-1969). In Ms Malherbe’s time it was customary for Afrikaans women to use their husbands’ titles and initials. Beyers (ed.-in-chief), pp. 358-362.

²²³ D.F. Malherbe, “Dit is die maand Oktober, die mooiste maand”, *Die Volksblad*, 2.10.1937, p. 6. “A beautifully clipped hedge – 3 or 4 feet high – will keep the garden and its flowerbeds organised and not only adults will enjoy it [garden] but also passersby.” (Free translation)

Secondly, the hedge was also hailed for its aesthetic qualities, such as using “gorgeous hedges”²²⁴ and “artistic hedges”²²⁵ to create garden ‘rooms’, to hide unsightly areas, or to create an element of surprise. In this regard, *The Friend* advised its readers to allow the garden to possess some special feature and then conceal it by means of a clipped hedge.²²⁶ Much emphasis was placed on perfectly clipped and healthy hedges because “hedges should not be allowed to become ragged or overgrown, but should be trimmed and preserved.”²²⁷ Readers were also cautioned that “a hedge with ugly gaps in it is an eyesore”²²⁸ (Image 4/20). Instead, “a well-kept hedge of some plant material suited to the climate”²²⁹ was recommended. For Bloemfontein’s gardeners, the use of hedge plants ‘suited to the climate’ was, of course, an important consideration and, like other garden experts, Carter recommended privet, specifically *Ligustrum japonicum*, *Ligustrum sinensis* and the so-called ‘golden privet’ (*Ligustrum ovalifolium ‘Aureum’*).²³⁰ In another book, *The South African Home Garden* (1922), Carter gave advice on how to combat the notorious privet borer, a beetle which attacked the privet plant’s stems and, if untreated, made hedges look unsightly.²³¹ Clipped edges around flowerbeds were also highly favoured and *Die Volksblad* requested its readers not to form edges by means of overlapping bricks, as had been the fashion in Bloemfontein in the 1800s.²³² Finally, “the quaint art of topiary”,²³³ also described as “verdant sculpture”,²³⁴ was praised as the ultimate artistic expression in a garden. Adventurous gardeners were encouraged to give “all kinds of more or less fanciful forms to trees, hedges and arbours.”²³⁵ Bloemfontein gardeners who ventured into the realm of verdant sculpture seemingly favoured cypress as the most suitable plant for this form of garden art.

²²⁴ M. Cran, *The gardens of Good Hope*, p. 245.

²²⁵ L. Cox, “The garden of our dreams: how to transform a sandy waste”, *The South African Lady’s Pictorial and Home Journal* XII(139), March 1922, p. 21.

²²⁶ *The Friend*, 28.1.1929, p. 3.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.9.1937, p. 3.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.7.1936, p. 3.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ Carter, p. 52. See also information on privet in Chapter 3.

²³¹ Carter (ed.), pp. 176-177.

²³² *Die Volksblad*, 11.4.1936, p. 6.

²³³ *The Friend*, 9.8.1930, p. 20.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

4.3.4 “Bordered by stones & terraced retaining walls”: the simplified Edwardian garden

From a garden design perspective, the 1920s and 1930s, in other words the inter-War period (1918-1939), represented Bloemfontein’s ‘Golden Age’. Implemented either knowingly or unknowingly by the city’s gardeners, the principles of the Edwardian garden, as personified by Jekyll, Lutyens and Baker, led to the creation of some of the city’s most memorable domestic gardens. The fact that local gardeners had to adapt Jekyll’s ideas to local conditions, as well as the increasing use of indigenous plants and local materials, such as locally-available stone (iron stone, blue stone and sandstone) for masonry, not only further entrenched the simplified or ‘watered-down’ Edwardian style but also rooted these gardens in the local context. One such garden worth mentioning was laid out by businessman, James Aberdein,²³⁶ at his house in Whites Road, Waverley. In her memoirs, his daughter, Margaret (later Mrs Gray), provided a detailed description of a garden and yard which, in all respects, conformed to the typical Edwardian-style garden of Bloemfontein’s inter-War period. Developed since 1918, Gray described the garden as follows: “large garden with circular drive, trees on perimeter, rockery, rose gardens, croquet court, pergola with grape vines & swing. Terraced upwards – more flower beds & fruit trees apricot, peach, plum & fig, vegetable garden (potatoes, peas & beans) another rockery, back yard & outbuildings, comprising workshop, servant’s room, garage & bucket toilet. We had about 4 watertanks [sic]”.²³⁷

In her memoirs, Gray also mentioned “several rockeries & all the paths were bordered by stones & terraced retaining walls”.²³⁸ She added that “my father obtained a great number of succulents from some nursery in the Karroo [sic]”.²³⁹ Apart from the standard features of a typical Edwardian-style garden in Bloemfontein, Gray’s mentioning of ‘rockeries’ and ‘succulents’ confirmed the continuing trend of including indigenous plant material, such as agapanthus (*Agapanthus spp.*), geraniums, gladioli, pelargoniums and zinnias (*Zinnia elegans*), in local gardens. The idea of the ‘hybrid’ English garden is, therefore, still

²³⁶ For more information on Aberdein, see Chapter 1.

²³⁷ FSPA: A. 507.11, M. Gray, *Aberdein family – how they lived in Bloemfontein 1910-1922* (memoirs), pp. 14-15.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30. See also p. 29.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

applicable. In this regard, major progress had been made since Emma Murray lamented months after her arrival in Bloemfontein in 1856 that “I have not seen a single wild flower since I left home”.²⁴⁰ *The Friend* also encouraged the trend of planting “finds from the veld” and argued that “the use of native plants will add greatly to its [the garden’s] interest, and because of their hardiness the garden is likely to be most successful”.²⁴¹ The publication of eastern Free State gardener, Ruby Boddam-Wetham’s book *A garden in the veld*²⁴² (1933) gave further impetus to this trend. Dedicated “to those who attempt to garden in the Free State”,²⁴³ the book featured a chapter on wild flowers.²⁴⁴ Some books also suggested the use of indigenous plants for hedges, such as the hardy plumbago (specifically *Plumbago auriculata*), widely used in Bloemfontein gardens as both ornamental and hedge plant.²⁴⁵

The trend towards the increased use of hardy indigenous plants in Bloemfontein gardens was partly triggered by what has been described earlier as ‘local conditions’. Bloemfontein gardeners had to adapt to the fact that one crucial element necessary for gardening, namely water, was not a given. By the 1890s, the manifold increase of Bloemfontein’s population made the traditional water sources woefully inadequate. Consequently, in 1889, the Bloemfontein Water Supply Company Limited²⁴⁶ was established to investigate the implementation of a sustainable water scheme for the city. In 1898, the Modder River scheme was established when a reservoir and pumping station were built at Sannahspost. In 1899, another reservoir and pumping station were built at the foot of Naval Hill, which allowed water to be pumped directly to the residents by means of iron pipes. This development was a major boon for Bloemfontein’s gardeners since it heralded an era of uninterrupted water supply. Though a major improvement, the Sannahspost scheme came under pressure during and after the Anglo-Boer War when, as previously mentioned, great numbers of people migrated to Bloemfontein. In 1904, a much bigger water works with a

²⁴⁰ Murray, p. 33.

²⁴¹ “Mary Quite Contrary” (pseudonym), “Why not a wild garden?”, *The Friend*, 29.4.1929, p. 3. For more information on this trend in Bloemfontein, see *The Friend*, 21.3.1927, p. 10; 29.7.1927, p. 10; 16.4.1929, p. 7; *Die Volksblad*, 1.11.1933, p. 12.

²⁴² R.E. Boddam-Wetham, *A garden in the veld*, *passim*.

²⁴³ *The Friend*, 16.12.1933, p. 13.

²⁴⁴ For more on Kirklington, Boddam-Whetham’s farm garden near Ficksburg, see Cran, pp. 243-267. Another book which provided advice on the use of indigenous plants in local gardens is J.W. Mathews, *Cultivation of non-succulent South African plants*, *passim*.

²⁴⁵ Du Bruyn, p. 53; Mathews, pp. 9-11.

²⁴⁶ FSPA: *MBL* 3/1/2, *Mayor’s minute* 1889, p. 4; *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 8.5.1889, p. 5.

capacity of 220 million gallons was opened at Mazelspoort²⁴⁷ near Bloemfontein. To further augment the city's water supply, Mockes Dam near Mazelspoort was completed in 1913.²⁴⁸ During the 1920s and 1930s, Bloemfontein's water situation had improved to such an extent that the municipality decided to "encourage gardening"²⁴⁹ among its citizens by introducing special water tariffs for gardeners.²⁵⁰ All water used by consumers in excess of 5 000 gallons was charged at a cheaper rate of 1 shilling per 1 000 gallons.²⁵¹ Expectedly, water consumption by Bloemfontein's gardeners increased substantially and to such an extent that in 1939 *The Friend* reported that Bloemfontein "uses about 1,000,000 gallons a day on its gardens."²⁵²

4.3.5 "Garden City of the Free State": Bloemfontein's public parks and gardens

Although the focus of this chapter is predominantly on the design and layout of Bloemfontein's domestic gardens since most of Batho's black garden labourers worked in private gardens, it is necessary to also discuss the city's public parks and gardens. It must also be mentioned that apart from Bloemfontein's public parks and gardens, small squares were also laid out on open pieces of ground all over the town during the period 1846-1900. A total of five squares were laid out, namely Warden Square, Church Square, Baumann Square, President Square and the market square. Due to the fact that most of these squares had never been professionally laid out and gradually became neglected, they had very little influence on the design and layout of the city's domestic gardens.²⁵³ On the other hand,

²⁴⁷ Later Maselspoort.

²⁴⁸ FSPA: A. 77.17, Anon., *Die geskiedenis van...*, pp. 3-4; Botes, "'Water pure and...'", pp. 66-72; BPL: *Corporation of Bloemfontein, municipal regulations: water supply regulations, 1912*, pp. 1-13; *The Friend*, 18.5.1921, p. 5; FSPA: A. 507.9, *Memories of K.N...*, p. 5.

²⁴⁹ *The Friend*, 30.5.1929, p. 11.

²⁵⁰ BPL: *Official Gazette of the Orange Free State* 349, 3.12.1920, *Administrator's Notice 112 of 1920, Municipality of Bloemfontein: tariff of monthly charges: combined domestic and gardening rate*, p. 3753; *Official Gazette of the Orange Free State Province* 498, 22.6.1923, *Administrator's Notice 49 of 1923, Municipality of Bloemfontein: new tariff of monthly charges: combined domestic and gardening rate*, p. 3462; *Official Gazette of the Orange Free State Province* 612, 29.5.1925, *Administrator's Notice 94 of 1925, Municipality of Bloemfontein: water regulations: combined domestic and gardening rate*, p. 7725; *The Friend*, 3.11.1924, p. 10; 30.5.1929, p. 11; *Die Volksblad*, 30.5.1929, p. 8; FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/36, *Report of City Engineer: re proposed water tariff for gardening purposes*, 10.5.1929, p. 5; FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/71, *Investigation into the water supply position*, 10.8.1938, pp. 1-13.

²⁵¹ *The Friend*, 24.9.1929, p. 9; 26.9.1929, p. 8; 1.11.1937, p. 8.

²⁵² *The Friend*, 4.1.1939, p. 7. For more information on general water supply, see FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/15, *Ex Parte: the Municipality of Bloemfontein in re water supply: opinion*, 7.6.1923, pp. 1-3.

²⁵³ Apart from the market square (later Hoffman Square), the other squares were reclaimed for building purposes during the 20th century. Senekal, pp. 99, 103.

Bloemfontein's public parks and gardens not only influenced the design and layout of domestic gardens, but the municipality's Parks Department, managed by a Superintendent (later Curator) of Parks, also employed black garden labourers. The first attempt at creating a public park for Bloemfontein's residents dates back to the early 1860s when two German immigrants, Carl Eberhardt Fichardt (1816-1889)²⁵⁴ and Dr C.J.G. Krause (1825-1889), initiated the clearing and fencing of a piece of land near the Park Dam (also known as the Upper Dam),²⁵⁵ a reservoir above the main fountain. Very little is known about the park's design but according to Kathleen Ramsbottom, it merely consisted of a cluster of willow trees suitable for picnics, hence the name "The Willows".²⁵⁶ The next effort at creating a public park dates back to the late 1860s when the municipality donated a piece of land behind the Presidency for development as a park. Named Victoria Park after Queen Victoria, not much happened there in terms of gardening until the late 1880s when the newly-established Bloemfontein Tree-planting and Preservation Society²⁵⁷ (founded 1889) planted trees²⁵⁸ and "shrubberies".²⁵⁹ In 1892, the municipality accepted responsibility for the upkeep of the park, of which the design and layout remains a mystery.²⁶⁰

Compared to the above-mentioned parks, much more is known about the public parks and gardens laid out after 1900. These public parks and gardens, which had been professionally designed, may be described as patrician, including the park laid out to commemorate the coronation of Britain's King Edward VII on 9 August 1902. From a garden design perspective, this event is important because it signalled the start of the Edwardian period, which is closely associated with the influential Edwardian style.²⁶¹ Appropriately, the new park, named King Edward's Park (later shortened to King's Park), became a prime example of Edwardian garden design in colonial Bloemfontein. The park's classic layout included

²⁵⁴ G.A. Fichardt's brother. De Kock & Krüger (eds-in-chief), pp. 238-239.

²⁵⁵ Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 49; Botes, "'Water pure and...'", p. 63.

²⁵⁶ FSPA: A. 507.9, *Memories of K.N...*, p. 4; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 49.

²⁵⁷ *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 21.5.1890, p. 2.

²⁵⁸ FSPA: MBL 3/1/3, *Mayor's minute 1892*, pp. 4-5; Groenewald & Herholdt, p. 70.

²⁵⁹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/3, *Mayor's minute 1892*, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ A.F. Baker, "Beauty of Bloemfontein's public parks and gardens", *The Friend*, 1.12.1935, p. 29; FSPA: A. 507.9, *Memories of K.N...*, pp. 3-4; Du Bruyn, p. 51. For a historical overview of early developments, see P.J.N. Janse van Rensburg, *'n Histories-sosiologiese studie van die ontwikkeling van vryetydsbesteding binne die stadsgebied van Bloemfontein* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1949), pp. 42-44; Groenewald, pp. 9-12.

²⁶¹ Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 181-182; Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika...*, pp. 1-2.

formal flowerbeds,²⁶² Jekyllian “herbaceous borders”,²⁶³ a “sunk garden”,²⁶⁴ terraces, steps, rectangular and round ponds, a tiered fountain, statuettes, a sundial, a pergola, a tea house and, most importantly, clipped hedges. The use of hedges, which had become a hallmark of Bloemfontein’s domestic gardens, also made its way to the city’s public parks and gardens. In the parks, “suitable hedge[s]”,²⁶⁵ “shapely hedges” and “neatly trimmed borders”²⁶⁶ were mostly used for aesthetic purposes, namely to define and lend structure to the huge outdoor spaces, but often also for practical purposes. For example, in 1916, the Superintendent of Parks and Forestry reported that “a hedge of *Cupresses Benthami* has been planted along the boundary fence of the zoo, with the object of screening the animals from the public”.²⁶⁷ By the late 1910s, King’s Park had become an attractive recreation spot for Bloemfontein’s citizens, complete with a lake (named Loch Logan), the mentioned zoo and a municipal nursery.²⁶⁸ King’s Park was further adorned with the Prince’s Rose Garden, a formal rose garden with a rotunda laid out to commemorate the Prince of Wales’ (later Edward VIII) visit to Bloemfontein in 1925²⁶⁹ (Image 4/21).

For the purpose of this discussion of the public parks and gardens, it is important to note that Bloemfontein’s colonial period was characterised by the predominantly English-speaking town council’s determined efforts to beautify Bloemfontein in every possible way, which included public parks, gardens, walks, pleasure grounds and children’s playgrounds.²⁷⁰ In fact, the beautification of Bloemfontein had been “the steady policy of the Town Council”.²⁷¹

²⁶² The flowers included pansies (probably *Viola xwittrockiana*), geraniums, petunias (probably *Petunia xhybrida*), phlox (*Phlox spp.*) and wallflowers (*Erysimum cheiri*). See, for example, *The Friend*, 18.5.1933, p. 4; 6.10.1938, p. 6.

²⁶³ FSPA: MBL 3/1/18, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry 1915*, p. 82.

²⁶⁴ Sunken garden. FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/31, *Report of Curator of Parks*, 7.5.1928, p. 1. For picture, see *The Friend*, 2.2.1929, p. 5.

²⁶⁵ FSPA: MBL 1/2/5/1/1, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 19.11.1917, p. 2.

²⁶⁶ As quoted in Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 259.

²⁶⁷ FSPA: MBL 1/2/5/1/1, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 10.4.1916, p. 1.

²⁶⁸ Baker, p. 29; *The Friend*, 19.8.1919, p. 6. For later developments, see *The Friend*, 23.12.1924, p. 6; 26.5.1928, p. 5; 19.10.1934, p. 4.

²⁶⁹ Du Bruyn, p. 51; Baker, p. 29; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 182-183, 264, 258-259; FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/18, *letter from J.A. Caskie, City Engineer, to the chairman and members of the Public Works & Parks Committee*, 14.4.1925, no p. no.; FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/33, *Report of Curator of Parks*, 8.10.1928, p. 2. See *The Friend*, 27.10.1932, p. 4 for rose varieties.

²⁷⁰ BPL: *Corporation of Bloemfontein, municipal regulations: public parks, walks and pleasure grounds’ regulations, 1912*, pp. 1-8; BPL: *Official Gazette of the Orange Free State Province 673*, 21.5.1926, *Administrator’s Notice 67 of 1926, Municipality of Bloemfontein: regulations for the control of the lake, parks, gardens and open spaces vested in or under the control of the town council of Bloemfontein*, pp. 10349-10354; Baker, p. 29; *The Friend*, 21.5.1932, p. 5.

²⁷¹ *The Friend*, 23.5.1930, p. 10.

These beautification attempts were strongly influenced by the philosophies of the British town planning visionary, Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928), who advocated the idea of the “garden city”²⁷² consisting of “garden suburb[s]”²⁷³ laid out around public parks with properties big enough for the laying out of gardens. During the 1920s and 1930s, Howard’s ideas found resonance with Bloemfontein’s town planners and engineers, who felt themselves urged to establish Bloemfontein as the “Union’s garden city”²⁷⁴ by “planning the place [Bloemfontein] in a picturesque way and in providing parks that will remain things of beauty and joys forever”.²⁷⁵ During the 1920s and 1930s, the town council’s vision for Bloemfontein as a garden city – more precisely a ‘beautiful’ garden city – developed into an effective marketing tool with slogans describing Bloemfontein as the “Garden City of the Free State”,²⁷⁶ the “City Beautiful”,²⁷⁷ “Beautiful Bloemfontein”²⁷⁸ and Bloemfontein’s “Beauty Spot[s]”.²⁷⁹

Bloemfontein’s colonial period gave birth to yet another park, named Hamilton Park after Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams. This park, which was meant to serve the needs of the residents who lived in Bloemfontein’s northern and north-eastern suburbs, involved the upgrading of the Old Veterinary Park situated between Aliwal Street and Naval Hill. Having been designed in the classic Edwardian style, the park took shape over time and by the 1930s, it consisted of multiple terraces and steps²⁸⁰ constructed down the slopes of Naval Hill. The terraces terminated in a formal sunken garden with two rectangular ponds, garden paths, Jekyll-style herbaceous borders²⁸¹ and a 130-metre-long hedge of Dorothy Perkins roses, all

²⁷² For more information, see E. Howard, *Garden cities of to-morrow* [sic], pp. vi-viii; Anon., “What is a Garden City? The example of Letchworth”, *The South African Lady’s Pictorial and Home Journal* XI(132), August 1921, p. 29; A. Lowth, *South Africa calling*, p. 52.

²⁷³ M. Clapson, “The suburban aspiration in England since 1919”, *Contemporary British History* 14(1), 2000, p. 152. See also pp. 153-157; *The Friend*, 27.6.1922, p. 5; *Die Volksblad*, 19.10.1922, p. 3. South Africa’s pioneer garden suburbs were, among others, Parktown, Johannesburg and Pinelands, Cape Town. See T.S. Somerville, “Our first garden city”, *The Outspan* 2(38), 18.11.1927, p. 43; G.M. van der Waal, “Aantekeninge oor party voorstede van Johannesburg”, *Africana Notes and News* 21(2), June 1974, pp. 64-65.

²⁷⁴ “The Vagabond” (pseudonym), “Union’s garden city: beauty spots in the Free State capital”, *The Friend*, 16.4.1927, p. 11.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.* See also FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/34, New town hall: proposed site*, 17.1.1929, pp. 4-5.

²⁷⁶ *The Friend*, 10.11.1938, p. 6.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.9.1929, p. 20; 26.5.1930, p. 8; 7.12.1931, p. 6.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.10.1924, p. 15; 30.10.1924, p. 12; 26.10.1929, p. 20.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.11.1928, p. 16; 19.12.1931, p. 5; 4.6.1932, p. 12.

²⁸⁰ Described as “garden architecture” by Mr A.F. Baker, Curator of Parks. Baker, p. 29. See also *The Friend*, 1.5.1933, p. 5.

²⁸¹ For a complete list of the herbaceous plants propagated at the municipal nursery in King’s Park, see FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/4, Report of Superintendent of Parks and Lands*, 30.11.1921, no p. no.

laid out according to the principles of axiality and symmetry (Image 4/22). Described as “hedges of surpassing and surprising beauty”,²⁸² Hamilton Park’s rose and other hedges planted in or near the park were a sight to behold. The Hamilton Park area also benefited from the municipality’s tree-planting efforts,²⁸³ including the symbolic tree-planting ceremony of 1910 when prominent Bloemfontein citizens each planted a tree along Union Avenue.²⁸⁴

During the early 1920s, the municipality’s beautification efforts turned to the market square, which had been Bloemfontein’s commercial heart since its founding. From an aesthetic perspective, the market square, which was merely a functional space, left much to be desired. In 1925, all market activities were moved to a new purpose-built market building in East Burger Street, which allowed for the redevelopment of the square – renamed President Hoffman Square (later Hoffman Square)²⁸⁵ – into what Archdeacon F.H. Hulme described as a “really finely-laid-out”²⁸⁶ public garden. Once again, formal design principles reigned supreme in the design of Bloemfontein’s new “garden square”²⁸⁷ with straight and circular garden paths, geometrically-shaped patches of lawn and flowerbeds, clipped cypress (*Cupressus Arizona*) hedges and “standard privet”²⁸⁸ (*Ligustrum Japonicum*) topiary (Image 4/23). Similar clipped or “pruned”²⁸⁹ standard or umbrella-shaped and/or ‘lollipop’-shaped privets were planted on the sidewalks which lined the streets in the vicinity of the Fourth Raadsaal, the Government Building, the City Hall and the Appeal Court²⁹⁰ (Image 4/24). The gardens laid out in front of the Fourth Raadsaal and the Government Building in President Brand Street included “lawns defined by low box hedges [edges] about 12 inches

²⁸² *The Friend*, 1.8.1925, p. 6.

²⁸³ For a list of trees planted, see FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/40, Report of Curator of Parks*, 10.4.1930, p. 1. For tree-planting efforts, see Baker, p. 29; *The Friend*, 10.12.1918, p. 8; 13.10.1921, p. 8; 26.7.1922, p. 4; 29.1.1938, p. 10.

²⁸⁴ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/14, Mayor’s minute 1910*, p. 21; Baker, p. 29; R.P. (pseudonym), “Walks in Bloemfontein”, *The Friend*, 21.7.1927, p. 8.

²⁸⁵ Named after President J.P. Hoffman (1807-1879), the first president of the Orange Free State (1854-1855). Krüger & Beyers (eds-in-chief), pp. 410-412; *The Friend*, 5.4.1928, p. 8.

²⁸⁶ *The Friend*, 29.12.1927, p. 11. Some residents were not impressed with Hoffman Square and Bloemfontein’s other public parks. For criticism, see *The Friend*, 3.10.1923, p. 4; *Die Volksblad*, 8.7.1927, p. 8; *The Friend*, 27.8.1932, p. 11; *Die Volksblad*, 1.11.1937, p. 4.

²⁸⁷ H. O’Connor, *Bloemfontein*, p. 12.

²⁸⁸ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/16, Report of Assistant Superintendent of Parks*, 14.4.1924, p. 7; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/56, Report of Curator of Parks*, 11.1.1934, p. 1; *The Friend*, 8.4.1929, p. 8.

²⁸⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/50, Report of Curator of Parks*, 12.5.1932, p. 1.

²⁹⁰ Baker, p. 29; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/4, Report of Superintendent of Parks and Lands*, 28.7.1921, p. 1; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/21, Annual report of Curator of Parks 1926*, 10.5.1926, p. 3; Anon., *Bloemfontein’s best*, no p. no.; Du Bruyn, p. 54.

high”.²⁹¹ The mentioning of standard privets and clipped edges is an indication that topiary in Bloemfontein’s parks was not limited to clipped hedges only.

“Bloemfontein has become embowered in beauty”

A discussion of Bloemfontein’s garden history and the prevalence of topiary in its gardens would be incomplete without referring to the *gardening culture which developed among the city’s residents during the 1920s and 1930s*. During this period, ornamental and vegetable gardening experienced an unprecedented upsurge – a trend partly stimulated by the efforts of Bloemfontein’s prominent garden personalities. These people, many of whom were leading and influential citizens, included Mr A.F. Baker (Curator of Parks); Mr L.W. Deane (Mayor); Mr J.B. Dersley (Mayor); Mr E.R. Grobler (Administrator of the O.F.S.); Reverend J.D. Kestell; Dr Emelia (Millie) Krause (medical practitioner); Mr W.S. Lunn (City Engineer); Mr Gordon Smit (Mayor) and his wife, Lilian; Mr E.M. Tidmarsh (botanist and nursery owner); Mr Louis van Selm (town council member); and Mr C.T.M. Wilcocks (Administrator of the O.F.S.). These and other people not only created beautiful gardens themselves, but also took the lead in establishing organisations which promoted the interests of Bloemfontein’s gardeners and small-scale farmers. The founding of the Bloemfontein Horticultural Society in 1918 (renamed the Bloemfontein and District Horticultural Society in 1923), the Bainsvlei Horticultural Society in 1933 and various Local Citizens’ Associations²⁹² represented important milestones in Bloemfontein’s garden history. These organisations, particularly the horticultural societies, played a crucial role in the strengthening of Bloemfontein’s gardening culture by, among other things, presenting lectures (for example, on topiary) and organising flower shows. Since so many key figures involved in the horticultural societies were also municipal office bearers, the societies and the town council could collaborate.²⁹³ *The Friend* newspaper, which enthusiastically supported these efforts, explained the rationale behind this collaboration: “What the

²⁹¹ *The Friend*, 10.6.1930, p. 10.

²⁹² Most Bloemfontein suburbs formed such associations, including Waverley, Westdene, Willows and Hilton.

²⁹³ Anon., *Bloemfontein’s best*, no p. no.; *The Friend*, 15.9.1938, p. 9; 4.4.1939, p. 6; H.B. Rycroft (ed.-in-chief), *Reader’s Digest complete guide to gardening in South Africa* (vol. I), p. 17; *The Friend*, 19.9.1922, p. 8; 12.7.1923, p. 4; 17.7.1923, p. 6; 25.9.1923, p. 8; 21.4.1924, p. 3; 11.9.1926, p. 3; *Die Volksblad*, 4.11.1926, p. 6; *The Friend*, 27.3.1930, p. 3; *Die Volksblad*, 13.8.1930, p. 10; *The Friend*, 4.12.1931, p. 9; 29.11.1933, p. 12; 7.6.1939, p. 6.

Corporation [municipality] is able to do on a large scale is what the Bloemfontein and District Horticultural Society would like the ordinary citizen who has a garden to do in an individual and smaller way.”²⁹⁴

It seems as though Bloemfontein’s residents reacted positively to the mentioned efforts at encouraging a gardening culture in the city. As early as 1927, *The Friend* reported that “citizens set about improving their grounds and preparing their private gardens in such a way that they can now be counted by the thousand [sic], all looking like little bits of Kew,²⁹⁵ and producing shrubs and blooms equal to anything grown anywhere.”²⁹⁶ In 1930, the same newspaper reported that thanks to residents’ gardening efforts, “Bloemfontein has become embowered in beauty”.²⁹⁷ By the late 1920s, most Bloemfontein gardens were still “symmetrically laid out”²⁹⁸ with clipped hedges enclosing most properties. The fact that “unsightly”²⁹⁹ wire fences still enclosed certain properties became such a thorny issue that *The Friend* diplomatically informed its readers that “the ideal to be aimed at in the suburbs was for each house to have a hedge in front of it”.³⁰⁰ Since then “hedges have been grown behind many of these fences”³⁰¹ creating ‘fedges’, or the fences had been replaced with clipped hedges, preferably a fashionable “Golden Privet hedge”.³⁰² Consequently, clipped hedges held sway in Bloemfontein until the late 1930s and even beyond. Finally, in order to gain an accurate visual impression of Bloemfontein’s gardens towards the end of the 1930s it is, once again, as Fred Shaw recommended at the end of the 1800s, best to view the city from above. An aerial photograph of King’s Park, the zoo and the adjacent suburbs (Image 4/25) at the end of the 1930s reveals why South African author, Joy Packer (1905-1977), referred to Bloemfontein as “that garden city in the veld”.³⁰³ Judging from the photograph, Packer’s description is correct but only partly so, since the image in actual fact reveals a ‘hedged garden city in the veld’.

²⁹⁴ *The Friend*, 6.11.1928, p. 6. See also *Die Volksblad*, 16.5.1929, p. 8.

²⁹⁵ Kew Gardens in London.

²⁹⁶ “The Vagabond” (pseudonym), “Union’s garden city...”, p. 11.

²⁹⁷ *The Friend*, 26.5.1930, p. 8.

²⁹⁸ “The Vagabond” (pseudonym), “Union’s garden city...”, p. 11.

²⁹⁹ *The Friend*, 11.4.1928, p. 6.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 19.4.1927, p. 6.

³⁰² FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/49, Report of City Engineer*, 12.1.1932, p. 3.

³⁰³ J. Packer, *Pack and follow: one person’s adventures in four different worlds*, p. 62.

4.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter discussed the prevalence of topiary in Bloemfontein's gardens from 1846 to 1939, viewed against the background of its garden history. Various factors influenced Bloemfontein's garden history and the residents' preference for topiary, such as immigration, demography, the availability of garden labour, war, climate, water provisioning, gardening culture and the dynamic relationship between the house, the stoep (later verandah), the street and the garden. It is argued that it was only after the Anglo-Boer War that topiary became truly established in local gardens. For a number of reasons, Bloemfontein gardeners' taste for topiary reached its apogee in the 1920s and 1930s. In the next chapter, the focus shifts to Batho with a discussion of the reasons for its founding in 1918 and its development as a 'garden location' since then. Among other things, the philosophy behind Batho as a so-called 'model location' and the premium placed on gardens (and gardening) in its layout will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

BATHO: THE MAKING OF A GARDEN LOCATION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus shifts from a predominantly white or European garden history, gardening culture and garden design trends to the history of Bloemfontein's black and coloured residents' gardens. Though the emphasis will be primarily on Batho and its garden history from 1918 to 1939, that is, the period considered its 'Golden Age', the garden history of Bloemfontein's oldest locations, such as Waaiohoek and Cape Stands, will also be discussed. The general history of the mentioned locations will serve as a backdrop for a discussion of the gardens laid out and other beautification efforts made by its residents. As stated in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, houses and gardens cannot be separated from each other and should, therefore, not be considered two separate entities. In the case of Batho and Bloemfontein's older locations, a close relationship had always existed between the house and garden and, by implication, between the plot (or stand) on which the house was built and the yard adjacent to the house. A close relationship existed between the mentioned entities and spaces because the boundaries between them were fluid. This argument is entirely applicable to Bloemfontein's locations, specifically Batho, because plot, house, yard and garden were typically much smaller and compact than those of white owners. In Batho's case, the yard and garden, as living spaces, were as important as the house.

Apart from the location residents' plots, houses, yards and gardens, the beautification efforts made by both the location residents and the Bloemfontein municipality (hereafter also referred to as municipality), such as tree-planting projects, the establishment of public parks, gardens and squares, as well as water provisioning, also receive attention. The reasons for the establishment of Batho will also be discussed since Batho's garden history cannot be adequately understood without this important contextual information. Ultimately, the development of a gardening culture in Batho, which will be discussed in Chapter 8, and Batho's topiary gardens, which will be discussed in Chapter 9, should be viewed against the

background of the location's early garden history and placed within the necessary cultural-historical context.

5.2 Gardens and gardening in Bloemfontein's oldest locations

Before Bloemfontein's oldest locations for black and coloured people are discussed, it is necessary to explain the use of the previously-mentioned term 'location' in the context of this discussion. In 1904, Dr B.O. Kellner (1836-1918), a former mayor¹ of Bloemfontein, explained that "locations were principally established for the servants of the town. They simply gave the natives ground to live on and to earn his livelihood, and they [municipality] had a perfect right to expel these natives who would not or did not want to serve the town".² By the time Batho was established during the late 1910s and, in fact, also for the duration of the 1920s and 1930s, it seems as though this understanding of a 'location' had not changed. In 1927, Councillor J.S. Franklin³ confirmed that the Bloemfontein Town Council (hereafter also referred to as council) still supported this argument, and explained that "the traditional Free State conception of a location is that it is merely a convenient reservoir established for the purpose of serving the legitimate labour requirements of our towns and villages, and any attempt to alter fundamentally the complexion of our locations and encourage their metamorphosis into townships would indubitably be harmful to Native and European alike."⁴ Franklin's explanation confirmed the difference between a location, considered a *temporary labour reservoir*, and a township. Location residents were not considered permanent since their real homes were supposed to be in the tribal reserves. A township, on the other hand, was a *permanent and legally constituted residential area* for black and coloured residents considered permanent dwellers and who enjoyed certain rights.⁵ Although most black and coloured people generally preferred that "the word 'township' were [sic] substituted for 'location'",⁶ the council preferred and widely used the term 'location'.⁷

¹ Bernhard Otto Kellner, a medical practitioner of German descent, was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1891 to March 1896 and again from October 1898 to December 1902. C.J. Beyers & J.L. Basson (eds-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordboek* (vol. V), p. 429.

² *The Friend*, 24.9.1904, p. 5.

³ Franklin was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1928 to March 1929.

⁴ *The Friend*, 28.11.1927, p. 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.11.1927, p. 5; 25.11.1927, p. 10; 19.3.1928, p. 11; 7.3.1934, p. 8; 13.4.1936, p. 8; *Die Volksblad*, 25.11.1927, p. 7; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 10.12.1927, p. 2.

⁶ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 25.6.1921, p. 2.

⁷ *The Friend*, 11.11.1927, p. 5; 25.11.1927, p. 10; 19.3.1928, p. 11; 7.3.1934, p. 8; 13.4.1936, p. 8; *Die Volksblad*, 25.11.1927, p. 7; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 10.12.1927, p. 2.

As Bloemfontein's oldest existing historically-black location, Batho and its history – including its garden history – cannot be viewed in isolation from that of Bloemfontein's first and oldest main location, namely Waaihoek and, to an extent, Bloemfontein's other smaller old locations, namely Kaffirfontein, Cape Stands and the No. 3 Location. The strong historical link which existed between Batho and the mentioned locations derives from the fact that Batho's original residents all hailed from Waaihoek, Kaffirfontein, Cape Stands and the No. 3 Location. From a garden history perspective, it is important to explore this connection because it means that the gardening skills, tradition and culture which already existed in Waaihoek and elsewhere, were also transferred to Batho. In Chapter 2, it was argued that because of migration, descendants of the San, Khoekhoe, emancipated slaves and 'free blacks', such as the Griqua, Korana and Bastards, as well as members of the 'Bantu'-speaking groups, specifically the Sotho-Tswana and their descendants (the Sotho⁸ and Tswana), found themselves in the area between the Orange River and the Vaal River. Small groups of people commonly known as 'coloureds' and 'blacks', respectively, settled in the vicinity of the farm, Bloem Fontein, where they came into contact with a group of people of European origin, commonly known as 'whites'.⁹ Since Bloemfontein's founding (1846), these groups of people of colour lived in small, scattered settlements in the town's vicinity.¹⁰

Initially, Bloemfontein's black and coloured residents, most of whom lived in traditional round huts covered with skins and rags and often enclosed by traditional dry stockades, were kept at a distance by the whites (Image 5/1). It was only in the early 1860s that their 'permanence' was accepted when the Bloemfontein Town Council concentrated them in three ethnically-based locations: Kaffirfontein¹¹ for the Fingoes¹² and Barolong (Tswana), the Schut Kraal Locatie for the Khoekhoe and Bastards and, finally, Waaihoek,¹³ which was

⁸ Distinguish between the Northern and Southern Sotho. The Southern Sotho mainly established themselves in Basutholand, later Lesotho, and the Orange Free State, including Bloemfontein. For more information, see P.A. Erasmus, *Die invloed van die mate van etniese bewustheid op die volksoontwikkeling van die stedelike Suid-Sotho* (Research report, ISEN, University of the Orange Free State, 1983), *passim*.

⁹ For more information on the origin of Bloemfontein's white residents, see Chapter 4.

¹⁰ K. Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan van 'n stad, 1846-1946*, pp. 1-2, 10.

¹¹ Also spelt Kafirfontein or Kaffir Fontein. Known as Kaffer Fontein or Kafferfontein among the Dutch-speaking whites.

¹² Descendants of Zulus and Xhosas. Also known as the amaMfengu.

¹³ Initially spelt Waay Hoek.

situated near Fort Hill (Image 5/2), for the remaining black and coloured people. In 1872, the council decided to demolish the Schut Kraal Locatie and resettled the residents in Waaihoek. By then Waaihoek had become Bloemfontein's main location and, in addition to the black residents, the occupants were described as "Hottentots, Griquas and Cape boys and women."¹⁴ The other remaining location was Kaffirfontein, which was much smaller and situated south of Waaihoek near the Kaffirfontein Spruit.¹⁵ For most of the 19th century Bloemfontein's white population exceeded that of the black and coloured people and it was only in 1895 that the number of blacks and coloureds combined exceeded the white population.¹⁶ This demographic trend, which will be discussed later, had a profound effect on town planning in Bloemfontein. The growing racial imbalance caused much anxiety among Bloemfontein's whites and, to quote the anonymous author of a book on conditions in the Orange Free State soon after the Anglo-Boer War (hereafter the War) had ended, they (whites) found comfort in the idea that "the natives have their defined areas".¹⁷ Similar racial sentiments held sway before the War.

5.2.1 "Well laid out streets, with neatly built cottages": Waaihoek

In his annual report for 1885, the mayor of Bloemfontein, Mr S. Goddard,¹⁸ reported that "the general condition of things at the Locations continues to be fairly satisfactory".¹⁹ Although Goddard's description was rather vague and unclear as to what he meant by 'things', he probably referred to the improving general orderliness and state of sanitation in the locations, specifically in Waaihoek. Reverend Gabriel David (1850-1898), the first Tswana to be ordained as an Anglican priest and one of Waaihoek's most well-known

¹⁴ Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA): *MBL 3/1/15, Report of Superintendent of Native Locations 1912*, p. 111.

¹⁵ Erasmus, pp. 194-195.

¹⁶ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1926-1927*, pp. 12-15; A.M. Sekete, *The history of the Mangaung (black) township* (Unpublished M.A. mini-dissertation, University of the Free State, 2004), pp. 2-3; P.M. Snyman, *Die grondslae van die historiese aardrykskunde en die toepassing van die "spesifieke periode"-metode op die historiese aardrykskunde van Bloemfontein tot 1900* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1969), pp. 157-159; A. Kieser, "Bloemfontein in its early days", *The Friend*, 20.11.1933, p. 8.

¹⁷ Anon., *Twentieth century impressions of Orange River Colony and Natal: their history, people, commerce, industries, and resources*, p. 36.

¹⁸ Goddard was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1883 to March 1885.

¹⁹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/1, Mayor's minute 1885*, p. 10.

residents,²⁰ agreed with the mayor. In a report of the Anglican Church's missionary activities for the year 1885, he wrote that "our people in 1871 used to live in round huts covered with rags,²¹ They [sic] now live in square houses thatched with grass, very clean indeed, their location is called Waia Hoek."²² To further improve the general orderliness in Waaihoek, a plan for the re-arrangement and rebuilding of some of its houses was implemented in 1892. In terms of this plan, which enforced specific building rules, all houses were to be built in "proper rows and streets"²³ so that the houses stood in a straight line next to each other and also square with the sidewalk and street. According to the new building rules "tin and straw huts"²⁴ were removed and replaced with European-style rectangular or square brick houses (cottages) furnished with galvanised iron roofs.²⁵

The new building rules not only improved the quality of the houses but also enhanced the appearance of the plots or stands and, in some cases, inspired residents to lay out elementary food gardens. The average Waaihoek plot was square and measured 50 x 50 feet.²⁶ According to the then mayor, Dr Kellner, the results achieved by means of the building rules were so impressive that he was convinced that Waaihoek "will in another year's time become a *model location*".²⁷ Kellner's opinion, specifically his description of Waaihoek as a potential 'model location', is significant since it indicates that the idea of the 'model location', partly rooted in the 'model republic' and 'model city' concepts described in Chapter 4, was no novelty when Batho was described as such more than twenty years later (see discussion of Batho as a 'model location' later in this chapter). Noteworthy is the fact that some members of the council, specifically the popular Kellner and his successor, Mr S.P.J. Sowden,²⁸ harboured such ambitions for Waaihoek. This is also an indication that the council was not apathetical towards Waaihoek and saw its potential and value not only in practical terms, in other words, as the "Home[s] for Natives who were employed by white

²⁰ David was director of the Anglican Church's St Patrick's Mission in Bloemfontein. For more on David, see Beyers & Basson (eds-in-chief), p. 173.

²¹ For a photograph of a typical round hut, see Image 5/1.

²² Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand (hereafter HP): G. David, "S. Patrick's Mission, Bloemfontein", *Quarterly Paper* 69, July 1885, p. 137.

²³ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/3, Mayor's minute 1892*, p. 2.

²⁴ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/5, Mayor's minute 1897*, p. 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; A.C. Groenewald, *Die sosiale lewensomstandighede in Bloemfontein, 1896-1899* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1989), p. 19.

²⁶ Approximately 16.5 x 16.5 metres.

²⁷ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/3, Mayor's minute 1892*, p. 2. (Own emphasis)

²⁸ Sowden was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1896 to March 1898.

people in the Town”,²⁹ but also in aesthetical terms, namely, as an attractive and orderly location that could also be to the benefit of white Bloemfontein. It must, however, be emphasised that by the end of the 19th century, the general living conditions in Waaihoek (not to mention the other locations) were not nearly comparable to those in the better parts of the white ‘Town’; therefore, references to ‘model location’ should be seen in context. Still, compared to the conditions in locations in the rest of the Orange Free State, Waaihoek was far ahead, and even critics of the municipality, such as Reverend Crisp, had to admit that thanks to the new building rules, there “is indeed a marvellous change noticeable”.³⁰ Mere months before the outbreak of the War, Crisp described Waaihoek as follows: “strikingly as the European town [Bloemfontein] has improved, the change is quite as marked at Waai Hoek, as the native location is called. Well laid out streets, with neatly built cottages, many of which are nicely furnished, and very tidily kept, have taken the place of the miserable hovels”.³¹

“Each with its bit of green garden patch”

One of the earliest pieces of direct evidence supporting the existence of gardens in Waaihoek dates back to March 1900 when Bloemfontein was occupied by the British.³² On 13 March 1900, Lord Roberts and an army of 34 000 men marched into Bloemfontein, entering the capital from the south-east via Monument Road.³³ One of the men who marched with Lord Roberts was officer Charles Hands who later penned down his impressions of that day in an article published in *The Bloemfontein Post*. Hands sketched a rather vivid picture on the basis of which he and the rest of the army may be visualised marching down Monument Road, “first past a few straggling shanties – poor shanties, but each with its bit of green garden patch”.³⁴ The ‘straggling shanties’ to which Hands referred were Waaihoek’s modest houses

²⁹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/8, Mayor’s minute 1903*, p. 10. See also FSPA: *MBL 3/1/9, Mayor’s minute 1904*, p. 31.

³⁰ HP: W. Crisp, “St. Patrick’s, Bloemfontein”, *Quarterly Paper* 123, 25.1.1899, p. 20.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² For the British soldiers’ impressions and experiences of Bloemfontein’s white residents’ gardens, see Chapter 4.

³³ Later Church Street and today known as Oliver Tambo Street.

³⁴ C.E. Hands, “‘Bobs’ as beneficent victor: his fascinating entry into Bloemfontein”, *The Bloemfontein Post*, 10.5.1900, p. 3. See also D. du Bruyn & A. Wessels, “The British soldiers’ Bloemfontein: impressions and experiences during the time of the British occupation and Lord Roberts’ halt, 13 March – 3 May 1900”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 29(3), December 2013, pp. 44-45.

which first greeted visitors who entered Bloemfontein via Monument Road. His definition of a 'shanty' is not entirely clear considering his British frame of reference, but his reference to 'garden patch' leaves no doubt as to what he meant. Hailing from Britain, Hands must have had a clear understanding of what is meant by the term 'garden' and he considered Waaihoek's 'green patches' impressive enough to be described as 'garden(s)'. Official sources dating from the early 1900s confirm officer Hands' impression of Waaihoek's domestic surroundings. In 1903, it was reported that "Waaihoek still maintains its reputation as a clean and orderly Location" with "very few unsightly houses".³⁵ Despite all its problems, Waaihoek must have made a pleasing impression on visitors because in the previous year, Bloemfontein's Medical Officer of Health, Dr D.M. Tomory, made a rather significant observation: "If one walks through the better part of Waaihoek and then through the poorer European part of the town one cannot but be struck by the idea that in many respects a clean native is cleaner than a dirty European."³⁶

Tomory's observation was, in actual fact, a comment on Waaihoek's neat houses, clean yards and, in some cases, its pleasing gardens which stood in stark contrast to the miserable conditions in Bloemfontein's white slum areas. Despite the short-lived economic depression which had set in immediately after the War had ended, Bloemfontein's post-War colonial period (1902-1910) was characterised by relative economic prosperity. Although the city's white population benefited most from this economic upsurge, the black and coloured residents were not entirely excluded. Not only did the British army employ blacks and coloureds in a non-combative capacity during the War, but after the War, black and coloured employees also benefited from generous stipends paid by the new Military Authority. Consequently, some of Waaihoek's residents could afford to build bigger and better houses, plots could be properly fenced-in, and gardens could be laid out. Despite increasing in size, Waaihoek's houses had to be fitted on "plots of land 50 x 50 [feet]"³⁷ together with the garden and customary maize patch, according to a report on land tenure in the Orange River Colony released by the South African Races Committee in 1907. Due to the growing demand for plots in Waaihoek, their size was never increased. While married black and coloured men were granted plots free of charge, it cost approximately £300 to build a modest-sized brick

³⁵ FSPA: MBL 3/1/8, *Mayor's minute 1903*, p. 10.

³⁶ FSPA: MBL 3/1/7, *Public Health Report for 1902, Bloemfontein, O.R.C.*, p. 42.

³⁷ FSPA: A. 3(4/1)(9/2/2), *Extracts: South African Races Committee: land tenure* (manuscript), p. 2.

house with a corrugated iron roof. It must be borne in mind that location residents did not receive ownership of the plots because in the Orange River Colony, blacks and coloureds were prohibited from purchasing or leasing land, including location plots. Therefore, the mentioned trend towards improving the quality of housing and the upgrading of plots by laying out gardens must be considered within the context of this reality. For the average location resident who owned the house but not the plot on which it was built, there was little encouragement to improve his living quarters, at least not from a financial point of view. Consequently, many location residents demolished their houses when they moved elsewhere, leaving behind only the gardens or remnants of gardens.³⁸

“Turn this African wilderness into a garden”

Despite the challenging conditions imposed on Waaihoek’s residents, and the fact that this location had become “very crowded”³⁹ during the colonial period, a basic desire to beautify seemed to have remained intact. Evidence to substantiate this argument may be found in the valuable records created by the clergy and volunteers of the Anglican Church (also known as the Church of England) who had been labouring in Bloemfontein and elsewhere in the Orange Free State since the early 1860s.⁴⁰ Since Bishop Edward Twells (1828-1898)⁴¹ recognised the potential to “turn this African wilderness into a garden”,⁴² the Anglicans⁴³ have made determined efforts to lay out gardens and plant trees and “hedge[s] laden with quinces and pomegranates”,⁴⁴ particularly at their complex of buildings in St George’s

³⁸ K. Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika tussen Oorlog en Unie, 1902-1910*, pp. 177, 180; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 218-220; J. Haasbroek, “Die sosiale en vermaaklikheidslewe van die swart inwoners van Waaihoek, Bloemfontein, tydens die Oranjerivierkolonie-tydperk (1900-1910)”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 13(4), September 1997, p. 143.

³⁹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/7, Public Health Report for 1902, Bloemfontein, O.R.C.*, p. 42. See also p. 41. In 1907 it was reported that “‘huur-kamers’ [rooms to rent] are to be found on almost every erf in Waaihoek.” FSPA: *MBL 3/1/12, Natives in town locations 1907* (report), p. 115.

⁴⁰ For more information, see K. Schoeman (ed.), *The Free State Mission: the work of the Anglican Church in the Orange Free State, 1863-1883, as described by contemporaries, passim*.

⁴¹ Twells was the first Anglican Bishop of the Orange Free State (1863-1869).

⁴² National Library of South Africa (hereafter NLSA): *AP. 1994-732, E. Twells, A letter to the English Committee for Promoting the Mission to the Orange Free State* (pamphlet), p. 15. In this context, Twells not only meant a real garden but also a spiritual garden.

⁴³ Many Anglican clergymen were avid and skilled gardeners, such as the Reverend Father Carmichael of the Diocese of Bloemfontein, who was the son of the head gardener to the royal family at Sandringham, England. *The Friend*, 22.7.1939, p. 16. Another example was Reverend Crisp.

⁴⁴ HP: Miss Donovan, “Half-Caste School”, *Quarterly Paper* 33, July 1876, p. 22.

Street, including the St Cyprian's Theological College⁴⁵ for black men. Especially noteworthy are the Anglicans' missionary activities which, in the case of Bloemfontein's black people, were coordinated by the St Patrick's Mission and, in the case of the coloureds or so-called "Half-Castes",⁴⁶ by the St Philip's Mission. As had been the case with the other European missionary societies which laboured in the Orange Free State during the 19th century, the Anglicans used every opportunity to encourage their brethren to lay out gardens not only as a means to secure 'food for the body' but also to encourage the idea of gardening as 'food for the soul and spirit'.⁴⁷ Except for the Anglicans' missionary legacy, they also left behind a tangible legacy in the form of extensive collections of written records of their activities. As far as Bloemfontein's locations are concerned, a valuable source was the *Quarterly Paper of the O.F.S. Mission* (later the *Bloemfontein Mission*) which, among other things, reported on the location residents' gardens and gardening activities.

During the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods,⁴⁸ Waaihoek's gardens (and houses) were mentioned in contemporary sources more often than used to be the case before the War. In this regard, municipal records and the mentioned *Quarterly Papers* provided the most useful information. The Inspector of Native Locations, Mr J.W. Hancock, was determined to see not only the municipality but also the location residents themselves beautify their own living quarters. The residents – at least the gardeners among them – must have responded positively because in his annual report for the year 1905, Hancock was of the opinion that "the Locations will compare favourably with many portions of the town occupied by white people."⁴⁹ Hancock's statement is remarkable considering the challenges the locations' gardeners, in this case Waaihoek's gardeners, had to face in their endeavours to beautify their domestic surroundings. Apart from the fact that the municipality was reluctant to spend the white taxpayers' funds on the upgrading of the locations, another challenge the gardeners had to face was the lack of access to water for their gardens. In the same report, Hancock

⁴⁵ For a description of the garden, see Anon., "S. Cyprian's Theological College, Bloemfontein", *Quarterly Paper* 40, April 1878, p. 8.

⁴⁶ HP: Donovan, p. 21.

⁴⁷ For more information on the use of a garden and gardening as a spiritual metaphor, see Chapter 3. Twells referred to the Orange Free State as a spiritual "desert to turn into a garden". NLSA: AP. 1994-732, Twells, p. 19.

⁴⁸ For the purpose of this study, approximately the period 1910 to 1918, the year Batho was established.

⁴⁹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/10, *Report on Native Locations 1905*, p. 40. For similar argument, see Haasbroek, "Die sosiale en...", p. 143.

mentioned that the water supply for Waaihoek is “altogether inadequate”⁵⁰ and Waaihoek’s new southern extensions, namely Bethanie (also Bethany) and Die Erwe, did not have a single communal tap on a standpipe⁵¹ (Image 5/3). This meant that residents often had to walk long distances with buckets to fetch water at the few public taps that were available.⁵² Complaints about this inconvenience did not fall on deaf ears because in 1906, it was reported that “the Water Supply has been extended to the South western portion [Bethanie] of this Location [Waaihoek]”,⁵³ courtesy of the municipality. Despite this improvement, Waaihoek’s water consumption remained a fraction of that of the white population: while the consumption per head for the whites was approximately 21 gallons per day, the consumption of the location residents was approximately one gallon per day. This consumption rate indicates that despite an increase in the number of location gardens, the average location garden was much smaller than the average town garden.⁵⁴

“There would be verdant beauty where now there is only ugly barrenness”

Despite the odds that were stacked against them, Waaihoek’s gardeners were “enterprising householder[s]”⁵⁵ and managed to lay out gardens or “patch[es] of green”⁵⁶ in front of their houses (Image 5/4). From a garden design perspective, the trends discussed in Chapter 4 to a greater or lesser degree also influenced Waaihoek’s gardens. For example, in his annual report for 1906, the Inspector of Native Locations reported that the increasingly house-proud location residents asked for official permission to plant trees on the street side of their plots.⁵⁷ The historical tendency among Bloemfontein’s white residents, such as Hamelberg, to plant trees in front of their houses has been highlighted in Chapter 4. This trend continued into the 20th century in both the white suburbs and in the locations (Image 5/5). Other garden design trends typical of the white residents’ gardens were also copied in Waaihoek’s gardens, including small regimented orchards and vineyards planted in backyards, rectangular flowerbeds laid out in front of houses and straight garden paths leading to front doors.

⁵⁰ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/10, Report on Native Locations 1905*, p. 39.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² HP: Miss Steedman, “Bloemfontein Location”, *Quarterly Paper* 186, 25.10.1914, p. 179.

⁵³ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/11, Report on Native Locations 1906*, p. 68.

⁵⁴ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/11, Mayor’s minute 1906*, p. 50.

⁵⁵ HP: J. Clements-Frazer, “Scattering the seed”, *Quarterly Paper* 179, 25.1.1913, p. 17.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/11, Report on Native Locations 1906*, p. 68.

Importantly, hedges became increasingly characteristic, not only of the overcrowded location domestic environment in general, but also of the emerging and evolving semi-vernacular and 'hybrid' location garden. Hedges and a tendency towards formality, if only seeds sown in rows instead of sown randomly according to the traditional African custom,⁵⁸ became traits of these gardens. In Waaihoek's gardens, hedges served an important practical function. As it happened to be the case in post-colonial white Bloemfontein, privacy became important in the densely-populated Waaihoek. In this case, privacy meant homeowners' ability to enjoy their gardens without being watched which, in turn, meant that hedges had to be planted.⁵⁹

Apart from the dwellings enclosed by "odd pieces of corrugated iron, barbed wire, or beaten out paraffin tins",⁶⁰ most of Waaihoek's homeowners opted for more aesthetically pleasing alternatives such as reeds (either living reeds planted in rows or cut reeds tightly packed next to each other like a stockade), figs, pomegranates, quinces and, increasingly, cypress and privet, specifically *Ligustrum ovalifolium*.⁶¹ Cypress and privet hedges were either clipped or left unclipped, such as the mentioned fig, pomegranate and quince hedges. Initially, the prevalence of clipped hedges was much less common in the locations than in the white residents' gardens. Still, the occasional clipped hedge signalled an *emerging taste for the topiary trend which gradually became more popular among location gardeners*. Limited access to water meant that hedging material had to be, as a primary consideration, hardy and drought resistant.⁶² After a visit to Waaihoek in 1913, an Anglican mission associate was struck by the Waaihoek gardeners' inventiveness with regard to hedging material, such as the owner who "planted a hedge of prickly pear as the most effective method of ensuring the privacy of his domain."⁶³ Apart from ensuring privacy, the hedges also served as much-needed protection for the fragile gardens laid out behind them, specifically vegetable gardens. In this regard, it seems as though a small group of productive market-gardeners had

⁵⁸ For more information, see Chapter 6.

⁵⁹ HP: Clements-Frazer, p. 17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/15, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry 1912*, p. 108.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

emerged in Waaihoek because in 1920, after a recommendation by the Native Affairs Committee,⁶⁴ an “open market”⁶⁵ was established there.⁶⁶

In addition to the continued laying out of new domestic gardens by Waaihoek’s homeowners, the location’s post-colonial period had also been characterised by tree-planting efforts. Apart from the enthusiastic support of the Inspector of Native Locations, a key figure in these endeavours was Tomory, who continuously emphasised the perceived link between gardening and the creation of a healthy living environment for Bloemfontein’s location residents. It was reported that the trees planted in previous years were doing well because the location residents had taken care of them. Therefore, Tomory declared that “tree-planting is the great desideratum”⁶⁷ and stated that he would be glad to “see more tree planting taking place”⁶⁸ in Waaihoek. Although the smaller locations were not neglected, the ensuing tree-planting efforts whereby saplings and tree seeds were given to ploholders (or standholders) free of charge, were most visible in Waaihoek. During November and December 1917, no fewer than 825 “suitable trees”⁶⁹ (mostly eucalyptus species) were distributed among Waaihoek’s residents. Although huge areas in the locations still lacked vegetation, Tomory was convinced that soon “there would be verdant beauty where now there is only ugly barrenness.”⁷⁰ The municipality’s Parks, Treeplanting and Cemeteries Committee⁷¹ also did its share to enhance Waaihoek’s ‘verdant beauty’. In 1917, the Superintendent of Parks and Forestry, Mr F. Griffith, announced the “commencing of planting operations in regard to the improvements at the location”⁷² which involved the planting of 2 007 trees in Waaihoek in just over a month’s time.⁷³

⁶⁴ The municipal decision-making body which dealt with the locations.

⁶⁵ *The Friend*, 13.1.1920, p. 6.

⁶⁶ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1919-1920*, p. 8.

⁶⁷ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/13, The Native Locations and the Native public health 1909* (report), p. 58.

⁶⁸ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/12, The Native Locations and health of our Natives 1908* (report), p. 108.

⁶⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/1, Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 18.12.1917, p. 4. The Native Pass Office in Zulu Street, Waaihoek, served as the tree distribution centre. See also FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/2, Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 18.3.1918, p. 6.

⁷⁰ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/12, The Native Locations and health of our Natives 1908* (report), p. 108.

⁷¹ Formerly known as the Parks, Plantations and Treeplanting Committee, then the Parks, Plantations and Cemeteries Committee, and since April 1916 known as the Parks, Treeplanting and Cemeteries Committee. FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/1, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Parks, Treeplanting and Cemeteries Committee*, 11.4.1916, p. 1.

⁷² FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/1, Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 19.11.1917, p. 2.

⁷³ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/1, Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 18.12.1917, p. 4.

5.2.2 “All the houses are brought into order”: Kaffirfontein

Since Kaffirfontein came into being a distinction had been made between this and Bloemfontein’s main location, namely Waaihoek. However, this does not mean that the municipality had deliberately neglected Kaffirfontein. In most municipal records dating from the late 1800s, references made to Bloemfontein’s “native locations”⁷⁴ included, by implication, both Waaihoek and Kaffirfontein. For example, when Kellner referred to the native locations in his annual report for 1892, he stressed the importance of “*their* proper management”⁷⁵ rather than only Waaihoek’s. Based on the encouraging results achieved in Waaihoek through the implementation of building rules, Kellner announced in his annual report for 1900 that he, with the permission of the Military Authority (which had been in power since March 1900), “instructed the Inspector [Inspector of Native Locations] to replot [sic] the location into three long streets and eight cross streets”.⁷⁶ The individual plots were also clearly defined by means of markers so that “all the houses are brought into order”⁷⁷ and built square with the streets. As a result, many of Kaffirfontein’s residents “have gradually emerged out of the ‘strooihuis’ and tin hut stage”⁷⁸ and started to build square or rectangular brick houses on demarcated plots. Although the water supply was extended to Kaffirfontein in 1906 and happened to be a great boon to the inhabitants,⁷⁹ one is left with the impression that gardening was not nearly as prevalent in this location as it was in Waaihoek. In the same annual report, Kellner stressed the fact that despite efforts to upgrade Kaffirfontein, the poorer class of blacks have established themselves at Kaffirfontein while those who could afford to build better quality houses resided in Waaihoek.⁸⁰

It seems as though the desperate economic position of Kaffirfontein’s residents contributed to the garden-deprived state of their properties. It is further argued that an economic class distinction had set in and caused a subconscious divide between Waaihoek and Kaffirfontein – a trend which not only negatively influenced the location residents’ perception of Kaffirfontein but also negatively affected the council’s approach to it. For example, in his

⁷⁴ FSPA: MBL 3/1/3, *Mayor’s minute 1892*, p. 2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

⁷⁶ FSPA: MBL 3/1/6, *Mayor’s minute 1900*, p. 12.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/11, *Report on Native Locations 1906*, p. 69.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

report for 1915, the newly-appointed Superintendent of Locations, Mr G.P. Cook (Hancock's successor), stated that Waaihoek's residents showed "a greater interest in their houses" while Kaffirfontein's residents did "not take any pride in their houses."⁸¹ The other important factor which adversely affected Kaffirfontein was its distance from town. Since Waaihoek was much closer to town and newcomers "do not care to go as far as Kaffirfontein"⁸² for obvious reasons, they preferred to settle in Waaihoek, causing it to become overcrowded and congested.⁸³

5.2.3 "Almost all the houses have a little garden": Cape Stands

Among the thousands who migrated to Bloemfontein searching for employment after the War had ended, was a group of coloureds "from all over the [Cape] Colony".⁸⁴ These so-called "Cape Boys"⁸⁵ were merchants who came to Bloemfontein with their families to "carry on trades and speculate"⁸⁶ in Waaihoek. In his annual report for 1903, mayor E.E. Watkeys,⁸⁷ known for his pragmatic approach to Bloemfontein's location residents, reported that "a location for half castes"⁸⁸ was laid out "on the east of the Railway line"⁸⁹ (Image 5/6). Apparently, the Cape Boys requested the municipality to lay out a separate location for them because they were not prepared to live with the black people in Waaihoek. This new location, which became known as Cape Boys' Location and later Cape Stands, may be regarded as Bloemfontein's first location established exclusively for coloureds. Ironically, their request for a separate racially-based location strengthened the municipality's segregationist sentiments. Cape Stands, in other words, the 'Stands of the Cape Boys', was laid out close to the railway track and consisted of a total of 216 plots.⁹⁰

Apart from being traders, many of Cape Stands' original residents also happened to be gardeners who had previously made a living in the Cape Colony as market-gardeners. After

⁸¹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/18, Report on Native Locations 1915*, p. 72.

⁸² FSPA: *MBL 3/1/6, Mayor's minute 1900*, p. 11.

⁸³ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/18, Report on Native Locations 1915*, p. 72; Groenewald, p. 19.

⁸⁴ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/9, Mayor's minute 1904*, p. 31.

⁸⁵ Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika...*, p. 177; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 224. See also FSPA: *MBL 3/1/15, Report of Superintendent of Native Locations 1912*, p. 111.

⁸⁶ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/9, Mayor's minute 1904*, p. 31.

⁸⁷ Watkeys was mayor of Bloemfontein from January 1903 to December 1903.

⁸⁸ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/8, Mayor's minute 1903*, p. 10.

⁸⁹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/10, Report of Medical Officer of Health 1905*, p. 60.

⁹⁰ Erasmus, p. 196.

communal standpipes with taps had been installed in Cape Stands, this small location underwent a transformation. In his report for 1905, Tomory stated that Cape Stands was an example to the other locations, including Waaihoek. It appears as though his praise had much to do with Cape Stands' gardens: "almost all the houses have a little garden and trees and vegetables bear witness to the *desire of these people to beautify* their homes."⁹¹ Although Tomory's comment speaks for itself, it is important to take note of his use of the term 'beautify' which, in the context of this discussion, refers to *beautification by means of laying out gardens and planting trees*. Considering the arguments made in Chapter 4 regarding the municipality's post-War beautification efforts in white Bloemfontein, the use of the term 'beautify' in the context of Bloemfontein's locations is noteworthy. Clearly, the term was more applicable to gardens and gardening than architecture.

Unfortunately, the praises initially showered upon Cape Stands did not endure. As early as 1907, the Inspector of Native Locations reported that this location showed the least improvement of all the locations and the inhabitants seemed "to have lost heart and are degenerating fast."⁹² In an attempt to explain this sudden deterioration of a once progressive garden location, Hancock argued that Cape Stands could be the victim of its position: "one could expect nothing else, with a graveyard on one side, a prison on the other, Leper Hospital on the third, and two wire fences and a railway line on the fourth."⁹³ This description of Cape Stands' boundaries as being detrimental to its development is significant since the same area was later deemed suitable for the laying out of Batho. Nevertheless, other reasons have contributed to Cape Stands' degeneration, including Tomory's argument that the coloureds "appear to feel more the hardening times which has [sic] taken place in Bloemfontein during the past year [1908]".⁹⁴ Another reason, according to the Locations Inspector, was the class of resident who resided in Cape Stands. He was convinced that this location had become "a nest of indigent and vicious inhabitants".⁹⁵ Consequently, the expectation that Cape Stands

⁹¹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/10, *Report of Medical Officer of Health 1905*, p. 60. (Own emphasis)

⁹² FSPA: MBL 3/1/12, *Report on Native Locations 1907*, p. 80.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ FSPA: MBL 3/1/12, *The Native Locations and health of our Natives 1908* (report), p. 108. See also Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 224-225.

⁹⁵ FSPA: MBL 3/1/13, *Report on Native Locations 1909*, p. 91.

would become “a model Location as we hoped it would be when it was laid out”⁹⁶ was never met.⁹⁷

5.2.4 “Well laid out”: No. 3 Location

The opening of the Cape Town-Johannesburg railway in 1890 created a host of new job opportunities at the railway workshops in Bloemfontein’s Hilton area. Increasing numbers of black and coloured workers were attracted to the railways and an informal location, known as the Construction Camp (also the Railway Location) and described as “anything but sanitary”,⁹⁸ developed in the vicinity.⁹⁹ At the request of the residents who resided near the railway workshops, the municipality established “a Third Location on the Town lands just outside of the Railway area.”¹⁰⁰ Known as the Third Location or the No. 3 Location, it was reportedly “well laid out”¹⁰¹ and comprised of 160 stands.¹⁰² Despite the location being described as neat and orderly, few gardens were laid out there because, as the Inspector of Native Locations explained, the bulk of these standholders were “at the beck and call of the Railway authorities”¹⁰³ and the uncertainty of their employment made them reluctant to invest time in the laying out of gardens, except for the odd maize patch which provided an additional food source.¹⁰⁴

Apart from Waaihoek, Kaffirfontein, Cape Stands and the No. 3 Location, there were also other smaller locations and compounds, such as the Native Refugee Camp which existed only until its demolition in 1906. The residents were all relocated to Waaihoek and Kaffirfontein. The other predominantly black location was the Tempe Location. This location was situated near the Tempe military base located west of Bloemfontein and housed the black labourers and domestic servants who were in the military’s employ.¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, no information about these locations’ layout or gardens could be located.

⁹⁶ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/12, The Native Locations and health of our Natives 1908* (report), p. 108.

⁹⁷ Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 225.

⁹⁸ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/8, Mayor’s minute 1903*, p. 18.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* See also FSPA: *MBL 3/1/12, Natives in Town Locations 1907* (report), p. 114.

¹⁰⁰ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/12, Mayor’s minute 1907*, p. 26.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 218-219.

¹⁰³ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/17, Report on Native Locations 1913*, p. 238.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 177-178; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/16, Agenda for ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee, 11.4.1929*, pp. 1-2.

5.2.5 “Trees along the railway fence”: screening the view of the locations

In concluding this discussion of Bloemfontein’s oldest locations, it is important to emphasise the contradiction in the council’s approach to them. Towards the end of the colonial period it became clear that while the municipality’s principal officers, such as the Inspector of Native Locations, the City Engineer, the Medical Officer of Health and most of the mayors expressed their commitment to the upgrading and beautification of the locations, they viewed the locations from the perspective of Bloemfontein’s white population. According to this perspective, the locations were, as previously mentioned, primarily the temporary living quarters of those black and coloured people who were in the employ of the whites. Black and coloured people were not considered permanent residents of Bloemfontein and, consequently, were allowed to reside in the locations only if they were employed, preferably full-time. The fact that both Waaihoek and the white ‘Town’ were located on “this side of the Railway line”,¹⁰⁶ meaning west of the railway track,¹⁰⁷ did not sit well with the city fathers. Therefore, the council wished to hide the locations from (white) public view by means of a physical feature. As a result, the Cape Town-Johannesburg railway line became an important symbol of the division between white and black Bloemfontein. At the same time, the railway also became a point of reference as far as the future town planning of Bloemfontein is concerned (Image 5/7).

From the location residents’ perspective, the railway line symbolised an anomaly: on the one hand, it brought economic prosperity in the form of job opportunities created by the railway workshops for blacks and coloureds. *On the other hand, the railway track became a symbol of racial division, especially after the municipality had begun to utilise its tree-planting projects not only to beautify but also to hide and conceal.* In 1909, Tomory announced that the planting of trees along the railway fence between the railway line and Waaihoek “would make a great improvement.”¹⁰⁸ Initially, he created the impression that the suggestion was made from a purely aesthetic point of view. However, the following year, the mentioned Mr Griffith, the municipality’s newly-appointed Superintendent of Parks and Forestry, revealed

¹⁰⁶ FSPA: MBL 3/1/8, *Mayor’s minute 1903*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁷ See perforated line in Image 5/6.

¹⁰⁸ FSPA: MBL 3/1/13, *The Native Locations and the Native public health 1909* (report), p. 58.

the actual motivation when he reported that a 1 000 hardy eucalyptus trees¹⁰⁹ were planted “with the object of screening the view of the Location from the Railway line.”¹¹⁰ This belt of trees, which extended all along the railway track, became known as the “Location Plantation”¹¹¹ and was meant, among others, to conceal Waaihoek from white passengers arriving in Bloemfontein by train.¹¹²

5.3 “Segregation is essential and moral”: reasons for Batho’s founding and Waaihoek’s demolition

The annual report of Bloemfontein’s mayor for the year 1897 reported that the council faced a dilemma: all 537 available plots in Waaihoek had been occupied, with virtually no space left for expansion. While building sites were no longer available, increasing numbers of newcomers applied to live there. According to the then vice-mayor, Mr C.G. Fichardt (1870-1923), the council reached the point where it had to decide whether Waaihoek, being so near the town, was not already large enough. Either new applicants were to be provided with plots in Kaffirfontein or, in the words of Fichardt, they had to be accommodated in “a third location somewhat nearer.”¹¹³ In practical terms, this ‘third location somewhat nearer’ meant a new location situated closer to town than Kaffirfontein but not as near the town as Waaihoek. For the purpose of this discussion, Fichardt’s mentioning of a ‘third location’ is significant because it is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, references to the future location which would become known as Batho. At this stage, the idea of a new location for Bloemfontein was primarily motivated by the fact that Waaihoek had become too small and congested – a problem which became increasingly urgent.¹¹⁴ In the mayor’s annual report for 1900, it was reported that during the past decade, that is, from 1890 to 1900, Waaihoek had increased to more than three times its original size. The mayor, Dr Kellner, argued that it was “impossible to extend Waaihoek any further unless we come past the Municipal Stables on to Monument Road, which would not be desirable.”¹¹⁵ He suggested that “a very

¹⁰⁹ See Image 5/7 for surviving specimens of the original eucalyptus trees which formed part of the Location Plantation.

¹¹⁰ FSPA: MBL 3/1/14, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry 1910*, p. 106. See also FSPA: MBL 3/1/15, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry 1912*, p. 105.

¹¹¹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/18, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry 1915*, p. 87.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ FSPA: MBL 3/1/5, *Mayor’s minute 1897*, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ FSPA: MBL 3/1/7, *Public Health Report for 1902, Bloemfontein, O.R.C.*, p. 41.

¹¹⁵ FSPA: MBL 3/1/6, *Mayor’s minute 1900*, p. 11.

good site for a new location”¹¹⁶ would be to the east of the Smallpox Hospital on a piece of ground near the Kaffirfontein Spruit.¹¹⁷ The ‘new location’ to which Kellner referred was, of course, the future Batho, though it was still uncertain as to where exactly it was to be located. For the time being, the municipality decided to extend Waaihoek to the south by laying out the previously-mentioned Bethanie and Die Erwe sections. However, these new extensions also filled up quickly, causing Waaihoek to become even more overcrowded and making the location issue Bloemfontein’s “pressing question”¹¹⁸ of the first two decades of the 20th century.¹¹⁹

It is important to understand that the council’s decision to establish Batho and demolish Waaihoek was not taken overnight. A number of factors, some of which had been in the making for some time while others were more recent at that time, contributed to the council’s decision. Although the crowded conditions in Waaihoek were an important driving force in the municipality’s quest to develop a new location, there were also other factors, namely race relations, Waaihoek’s proximity to the white ‘Town’, the urbanisation of blacks and coloureds, the Spanish Influenza epidemic and, finally, the erection of a new power station for Bloemfontein.

5.3.1 Race relations and racial attitudes

“I cannot bear to hear the white people talk of Blacks and Half-Castes, as if they were so much dirt!”¹²⁰ This observation by Miss Donovan, an Anglican mission associate of the St Philip’s Mission in Bloemfontein, was made in 1876 in her report of the activities of the school for Waaihoek’s coloureds published in the *Quarterly Paper*. The ‘white people’ to which Donovan referred were Bloemfontein’s white residents, many of whom were English-speaking and for whom prejudice towards people of colour was not atypical at that time. Hamelberg was confronted with a similar attitude during a debate in the Volksraad in Bloemfontein not long after Donovan uttered her desperate disgust. As a member of the

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Groenewald, p. 20.

¹¹⁸ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/8, Mayor’s minute 1903*, p. 10.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ HP: Donovan, p. 21. See also Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 87-88.

Volksraad,¹²¹ he was reprimanded by another member and requested not to refer to black people as human beings but as “kaffers”.¹²² It appears as though racial attitudes such as those experienced by Donovan and Hamelberg persisted among the majority of Bloemfontein’s white residents throughout the 19th and into the 20th centuries. In fact, by the time Batho was established these sentiments had become such an important feature not only of Bloemfontein but even more so of the Orange Free State in general. In 1921, an anonymous observer wrote that “the Free State regards the native in a somewhat different light from that which prevails, say, at the Cape. The colour line there [Orange Free State] is more vividly marked.”¹²³ This attitude held sway for the entire period under discussion.¹²⁴

In order to understand the history of Batho and, in fact, all of Bloemfontein’s historically-designated black areas, the white residents’ historical attitudes towards people of colour must be understood. As far as Bloemfontein is concerned, the use of the term ‘white residents’ should be qualified since the traditional racial attitudes of the English-speaking residents were historically less rigid and harsh than the Afrikaans-speaking residents’ attitudes.¹²⁵ Due to their more relaxed racial stance, some English-speaking residents and the predominantly English-speaking council were often described as “progressive”.¹²⁶ Officially, though, the council and the majority of Bloemfontein’s residents maintained that people of colour, whether they were born in Bloemfontein or not, were not true citizens of the town but merely “servants of the townspeople”.¹²⁷ It boiled down to the principle that people of colour were only tolerated in the locations as long as they were useful to the whites.¹²⁸ In practical terms, such prejudices were not limited to informal attitudes but, instead, also found their way into rules, regulations, policies and legislation. Although mostly informally enforced since Bloemfontein’s founding, the idea of *territorial segregation*, whether complete or partial, increasingly became the guiding principle which informed all racial policies, most notably

¹²¹ Hamelberg became a member of the Orange Free State Volksraad in 1858. W.J. de Kock (ed.-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. I), p. 364.

¹²² For more details on the incident, see Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 82-83.

¹²³ *The Friend*, 28.7.1921, p. 4.

¹²⁴ For more information on the history of race relations in the Orange Free State, see H.J. van Aswegen, *Die verhouding tussen Blank en Nie-Blank in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1854-1902, passim*; C.J.P. le Roux, *Die verhouding tussen Blank en Nie-Blank in die Oranjerivierkolonie, 1900-1910, passim*.

¹²⁵ J. Haasbroek, “Die rol van die Engelse gemeenskap in die Oranje-Vrystaat 1848-1859”, *Memoirs van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 15, December 1980, pp. 89-109.

¹²⁶ *The Friend*, 28.7.1921, p. 4. See also W.H. Dawson, *South Africa: people, places, and problems*, p. 249.

¹²⁷ FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor’s minute 1924-1925*, p. 5.

¹²⁸ Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 35, 83.

on municipal level.¹²⁹ During a public meeting with Waaihoek’s residents on the eve of Batho’s founding in 1918, Councillor A.G. Barlow (1876-1962) explained this ideology in simple and diplomatic terms: “It was not good that the Whites and Blacks should live so close.”¹³⁰ By the mid-1920s, the council found it necessary to introduce a “definite native policy”¹³¹ which conformed to the “*general segregation principles* as laid down by the previous and present Government.”¹³² Thus, the founding of Batho must be viewed against the backdrop of the Union government’s ‘general segregation principles’ as implemented on municipal level. Since then these principles had become more pronounced and defined, and affected all aspects of the lives of the location residents, including their domestic environment. For the average location resident, the practical implication of the ‘general segregation principles’ meant, in the words of the black journalist, Mr R.V. Selope-Thema (1886-1955),¹³³ the policy of “keeping the Kaffir in his place”.¹³⁴

5.3.2 Waaihoek’s proximity to white Bloemfontein

Another important reason for Batho’s establishment and Waaihoek’s demolition was Waaihoek’s close proximity to white Bloemfontein or the so-called white ‘Town’. In practical terms, the establishment of Batho according to the mentioned ‘general segregation principles’ had a great deal to do with “the position of the location in relation to the European portion of the city”,¹³⁵ to quote Mayor L.W. Deane.¹³⁶ Since Waaihoek came into being in the second half of the 1800s and gradually grew into Bloemfontein’s main location, the initial open piece of veld between Waaihoek and Bloemfontein’s main area of commerce, namely the market square (later Hoffman Square) and the businesses situated around the

¹²⁹ See, for example, the regulations included in the Orange Free State republic’s Law No. 8 of 1893. This law governed black and coloured locations in the Orange Free State until 1923. See also the regulations included in the ordinances issued during the time of the Orange River Colony, namely Ordinance No. 35 of 1903; No. 6 of 1904; No. 12 of 1904; No. 14 of 1905 and No. 19 of 1905. From 1913 to 1923, the Union Department of Native Affairs was responsible for the administration of urban black and coloured people and their locations in terms of Ordinance No. 4 of 1913. *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1923 with tables of contents (alphabetical and chronological) and tables of laws, etc., repealed and amended by these statutes: Natives (Urban Areas) Act (no. 21 of 1923)*, p. 194.

¹³⁰ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/2, Minutes of public meeting held in Waaihoek*, 13.2.1918, p. 1.

¹³¹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1926-1927*, p. 12.

¹³² *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

¹³³ For more information on Selope-Thema, see A. Copley (ed.), *From cattle-herding to editor’s chair: the unfinished autobiography and writings of Richard Victor Selope-Thema, passim.*

¹³⁴ R.V. Selope-Thema, “The African To Day”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 12.1.1929, p. 2.

¹³⁵ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1926-1927*, p. 12.

¹³⁶ Deane was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1927 to March 1928.

square, gradually disappeared. In her description of Waaihoek, an associate of the Anglican Mission in Bloemfontein wrote in 1914 that Waaihoek was only “ten minutes’ walk from the market square”,¹³⁷ an indication of how near Waaihoek was to white Bloemfontein. Furthermore, in the vicinity of Rhodes Avenue, Fort Street, Zulu Street and Harvey Road (Image 5/2), the initial racial divide became less blurred since working-class and poor whites lived in close proximity to the black and coloured residents. In some parts of Waaihoek coloureds and whites lived on opposite sides of the same streets, according to *The Friend*.¹³⁸ For most of Bloemfontein’s white residents, particularly those who lived in the more affluent parts of the city, this became problematic since they had accepted the idea that “segregation is essential and moral.”¹³⁹

Although various efforts were made by the municipality and Waaihoek’s residents to improve conditions in the location, it seemed impossible to remedy the squalor. In his testimony before the Influenza Epidemic Commission (1918), Henry Selby Msimang (1886-1982), then a prominent Waaihoek resident and editor of the newspaper, *Morumioa-Inxusa* (also known as *The Messenger*),¹⁴⁰ referred to the congested conditions in Waaihoek. According to Msimang, these conditions were mainly caused by overcrowding and too many people co-habiting in small houses and other substandard structures erected by growing numbers of newcomers. These conditions not only posed a threat to the health of Waaihoek’s residents but also to the health of Bloemfontein’s white residents – a fact not lost on the white electorate, particularly those who lived close to the market square.¹⁴¹ Added to these slum conditions were other socio-economic issues which ranged from minimum wages¹⁴² to the brewing of traditional beer. Discontent about the council’s strict sorghum beer regulations triggered the Waaihoek riots of 19 April 1925, when black residents and a commando of white males armed with picks and axes clashed at Waaihoek’s entrance in Harvey Road.¹⁴³ This violent incident, which happened on white Bloemfontein’s doorstep,

¹³⁷ HP: Steedman, p. 179.

¹³⁸ *The Friend*, 30.4.1924, p. 8.

¹³⁹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1926-1927*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁰ E.J. Verwey (ed.), *New Dictionary of South African Biography* (vol. I), p. 189.

¹⁴¹ Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 285; J. Haasbroek, “Founding venue of the African National Congress (1912): Wesleyan school, Fort Street, Waaihoek, Bloemfontein”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 18(7), November 2002, p. 133.

¹⁴² Black people demanded a minimum wage which ranged from three shillings and six pennies to four shillings and six pennies. Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 284.

¹⁴³ C.J.P. le Roux, “Die Bloemfonteinse oproer van 1925”, *Contree* 29, April 1991, pp. 24-29; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 282-284.

caused such alarm that it prompted the council to deal with the resettlement of Waaihoek's residents with a matter of urgency. The Government Riots Commission's recommendation¹⁴⁴ that Waaihoek's residents should be "transferred to the east side of the railway line to the south *as soon as possible*"¹⁴⁵ gave further impetus to plans to establish a new location further away from 'Town'.¹⁴⁶

5.3.3 The urbanisation of black and coloured people

At a conference on "Native affairs"¹⁴⁷ held in Johannesburg in 1924, the well-known Senator J.D. Rheinallt Jones (1882-1953) explained the urbanisation¹⁴⁸ phenomenon in South Africa as follows: "the Poor Whites and Natives drifted to the towns, largely because the *conditions of life and labour* on the land were unsatisfactory."¹⁴⁹ In other words, the prime motivation for both black and white people to migrate from the rural areas to the towns was mainly socio-economic in nature. The desperate 'conditions of life and labour' were the 'push' factor, while the promise of a better life and possible employment in the towns and cities were the 'pull' factor.¹⁵⁰ This had been the case in South Africa, and most notably in the Orange Free State,¹⁵¹ before and after the War. Between 1904 and 1921 the number of black people in South Africa's urban areas increased by 71,4%. Initially, mostly men migrated to the urban areas but later, especially after the War, women followed suit. In the case of black and coloured people, the economic devastation caused by the War, the far-reaching implications of the Natives' Land Act (no. 27 of 1913) and, finally, the impact of the economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, were critical 'push' factors. In most cases, black and coloured families had no choice but to migrate to towns and cities because in terms of the Land Act, they had no claim to land outside the reserves and the so-called

¹⁴⁴ For the Commission's recommendations, see J.C. Taljaard, *Die naturelle-administrasie van die stad Bloemfontein* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, 1953), pp. 226-228.

¹⁴⁵ *The Friend*, 31.5.1928, p. 17. (Own emphasis)

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.10.1924, p. 8.

¹⁴⁸ The migration and urbanisation of black and coloured people will be referred to again later in this chapter; therefore, a short summary of the important trends will suffice.

¹⁴⁹ *The Friend*, 31.10.1924, p. 8. (Own emphasis)

¹⁵⁰ Refer, in this regard, to the so-called 'push-pull' factors which underpin the dynamics of migration and urbanisation. P.B. Rich, "Ministering to the white man's needs: the development of urban segregation in South Africa, 1913-1923", *African Studies* 37(2), 1978, p. 177; P. Smit, "Historiese grondslae van swart verstedeliking in Suid-Afrika", *South African Historical Journal* 19, November 1987, p. 16.

¹⁵¹ H.J. van Aswegen, "Die verstedeliking van die Nie-Blanke in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1854-1902", *South African Historical Journal* 2, November 1970, pp. 19-37.

‘Scheduled Native Areas’, namely the locations.¹⁵² In the case of Bloemfontein, black and coloured families settled mostly in Waaihoek where a housing shortage caused severe overcrowding. In 1918, an inspection of housing conditions in Waaihoek revealed conditions such as “22 people occupying 5 rooms and only one W.C. [water closet]”.¹⁵³

It is in the above-mentioned historical context that the discussion of the gardening activities on the various mission stations established in the southern and eastern Orange Free State during the early 19th century (see Chapter 4) must be considered. By the turn of the mentioned century, most of these mission stations had ceased to exist, causing the black people (Sotho and Tswana) and members of other indigenous groups and their descendants (Griqua, Korana and Bastards) to migrate either to the nearest farms, or the towns in the vicinity. Importantly, it is argued that substantial numbers of these people migrated to Bloemfontein, particularly during and after the War, and later also as a result of the Land Act. Most of them ended up in Waaihoek or, in the case of the descendants of the Griqua, Korana and Bastards, in Cape Stands. When Batho was founded, many of these mission-trained gardeners, most notably those who were still young when the mission stations closed,¹⁵⁴ and their families migrated to Batho. Gardening knowledge and expertise were therefore transferred to Batho from this obscure and often forgotten source.¹⁵⁵ With regard to “people from outside”¹⁵⁶ who settled in Batho, the Superintendent of Native Locations reported in 1919 that apart from Barolong “trekking in with their families”, people were “also coming in from the [Cape] Colony”.¹⁵⁷ Based on the discussions in previous chapters concerning the gardening expertise of the Barolong of Thaba ’Nchu and the black and indigenous groups in the Cape Colony, it is argued that Batho benefited from their expertise solely because of their migration to Bloemfontein.

¹⁵² Erasmus, pp. 195-196; A. Lemon, “The apartheid city” in A. Lemon (ed.), *Homes apart: South Africa’s segregated cities*, pp. 2-4; Rich, pp. 177-180; Smit, pp. 15-17; S.T. Plaatje, *Native life in South Africa, before and since the European war and the Boer rebellion*, pp. 21-32; S.T. Plaatje, “The Native mind”, *The Friend*, 7.12.1927, p. 5; FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/17, *Minutes of joint meeting of Native Affairs Committee and Native Advisory Board*, 13.8.1929, pp. 1-2.

¹⁵³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/3, *Letter from acting Superintendent of Locations to Town Clerk*, 18.11.1918, p. 3.

¹⁵⁴ Most mission stations in the Orange Free State closed because of the Basotho Wars of the 1850s and 1860s.

¹⁵⁵ K. Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk en geboue in die 19de eeu*, pp. 27, 30-32.

¹⁵⁶ People from outside Bloemfontein. FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/3, *Letter from Superintendent of Locations to Town Clerk*, 25.4.1919, p. 7.

¹⁵⁷ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/3, *Letter from Superintendent of Locations to Town Clerk*, 25.4.1919, p. 7.

5.3.4 The Spanish Influenza epidemic

The demolition of Waaihoek became a matter of urgency when Bloemfontein, like the rest of South Africa, was hit by the “new and fashionable disease known as ‘Spanish influenza’”¹⁵⁸ in early October 1918. During the course of six weeks in October and November 1918, the worldwide pandemic of Spanish Influenza,¹⁵⁹ also known as Spanish Flu, affected Bloemfontein when approximately half of the city’s residents contracted the disease.¹⁶⁰ Although the whites were hit hard, *The Friend* reported shortly after the disease’s outbreak that a large number of cases have been reported from the location.¹⁶¹ Despite reports that the authorities were doing their utmost to “alleviate the distress at Waaihoek”¹⁶² by providing chlorinated water and dispersing free medicines, overcrowded conditions, poor hygiene, distrust of Western medicine and the fact that many location residents were malnourished, aggravated the situation. By the end of November, when the pandemic had run its course, 400 whites (of a total of 15 000) and 900 blacks and coloureds (of a total of 16 000) had succumbed to the disease.¹⁶³

The municipality’s Housing and Public Health Committees launched an investigation into the epidemic’s causes and released a joint memorandum and report¹⁶⁴ with recommendations. In the memorandum, Councillor Barlow, chairperson of the Housing Committee, and Mr W.M. Barnes, chairperson of the Public Health Committee, noted that the mortality was most severe in the overcrowded parts of the city. It was found that one of the main causes of the casualties was “bad housing, overcrowding and dirt”¹⁶⁵ in the poor white quarters of the city, referred to as “slums”,¹⁶⁶ most notably in St John Street.¹⁶⁷ The

¹⁵⁸ *The Friend*, 5.10.1918, p. 7.

¹⁵⁹ For more information on the epidemic, see J. Burman, *Disaster struck South Africa*, pp. 83-104; H. Phillips, “South Africa’s worst demographic disaster: the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918”, *South African Historical Journal* 20, November 1988, pp. 57-73; D.J. Potgieter (ed.-in-chief), *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa* (vol. 6), pp. 93-95.

¹⁶⁰ *The Friend*, 11.1.1919, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 5.10.1918, p. 7.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 9.10.1918, p. 4.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 23.12.1918, p. 5; FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/3, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 1.11.1918, pp. 1-2; H. Phillips, *‘Black October’: the impact of the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918 on South Africa*, pp. 58-68; Burman, pp. 86-87, 94.

¹⁶⁴ For the complete memorandum and report, see *The Friend*, 23.12.1918, p. 5; 24.12.1918, p. 6; 25.12.1918, p. 4; 27.12.1918, p. 4; 28.12.1918, p. 6; 31.12.1918, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ *The Friend*, 23.12.1918, p. 5.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.11.1918, p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.12.1918, p. 4.

memorandum focused mostly on the city's poor whites and little, if any, mention was made of similar or worse conditions in Waaihoek. Regarding the poor whites, it was recommended that the municipality erect "garden cottages"¹⁶⁸ as an alternative to the existing hovels. Importantly, these cottages were meant to be built on erven big enough to allow for the laying out of gardens. For Barlow and Barnes, a 'garden cottage' was essentially a cottage with a vegetable garden or a market-garden laid out in its backyard. Owners of such cottages, also named "workmen's cottages",¹⁶⁹ were also perceived as gardeners and ideally "the evening, the half-holiday and any other time could be put into growing wholesome food for use or sale."¹⁷⁰

Apart from the municipal committees' investigation, the Governor-General of the Union, Lord Buxton¹⁷¹ (1853-1934), appointed a national commission of enquiry to investigate the influenza epidemic. At the Influenza Epidemic Commission's hearings held in Bloemfontein on 10 and 11 January 1919,¹⁷² Msimang bluntly informed the commissioners that Bloemfontein's locations were too congested. According to him, Waaihoek's plots "sometimes had more than one building on, [and] most of the buildings had not [sic] sufficient ventilation."¹⁷³ Furthermore, sanitary conditions left much to be desired, and water wastage happened to be the order of the day. At the communal taps, there was no drainage and the water gathered in pools instead of being used for household or gardening purposes. Msimang also testified that due to the fact that location residents had no right of ownership, they were discouraged from not only building decent houses but also maintaining and improving the grounds around the houses. In addition, the fact that the average wage for black men varied from £1 and 10 shillings to £2, it was impossible for them to afford home maintenance and improvements, such as laying out gardens.¹⁷⁴

In his testimony, the mayor, Mr D.A. Thomson,¹⁷⁵ said that the council had considered a new housing scheme before the epidemic, but "the disease had shown that such a scheme

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.1.1919, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.12.1918, p. 4.

¹⁷¹ Sydney Charles Buxton was Governor-General of the Union of South Africa from 1914 to 1920. W.J. de Kock & D.W. Krüger (eds-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. II), p. 115.

¹⁷² *The Friend*, 9.1.1919, p. 8.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 13.1.1919, p. 8.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; Phillips, 'Black October': *the...*, p. 77.

¹⁷⁵ Thomson was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1918 to March 1920.

was urgently needed to procure the betterment of health and conditions of the citizens.”¹⁷⁶ Thomson did not specify for which ‘citizens’ the scheme was meant, namely the city’s poor whites or the location residents. This only became clear when Councillor Barlow informed the commission that the municipality “had a scheme on hand for a new location to house 15,000 natives.”¹⁷⁷ Barlow’s mentioning of a ‘new location’ happened to be one of the earliest public references to Batho. Apart from amenities, such as a town hall, a hospital, swimming baths and recreation grounds, Barlow said that “large grounds”,¹⁷⁸ in other words, sizeable plots, were also provided for in the plan. Only later it became evident that the bigger plots were meant to accommodate not only bigger houses but, as was the case with the garden cottages, gardens as well. *The fact that gardens and gardening started to feature more prominently in official council documents and discussions about better housing and housing schemes for Bloemfontein’s needy and working-class residents (so-called ‘workmen’), whether black, coloured or white, is an important trend that will be discussed again later in this chapter.*

5.3.5 Bloemfontein’s new power station

A fifth reason for the establishment of Batho and subsequent demolition of Waaihoek which must be mentioned briefly was the council’s argument that the area of Waaihoek closest to the town, specifically the area where the iconic St Patrick’s Anglican Church stood, was needed as a site for the erection of Bloemfontein’s new power station. In 1924, more than 200 houses in this area, referred to as the “condemned area”,¹⁷⁹ were identified for demolition because they stood on the site required for Bloemfontein’s new power station.¹⁸⁰ The main facility was opened on 24 March 1927, barely two years after the first sod was turned in March 1925.¹⁸¹ Although initially spared, the St Patrick’s Church was demolished in 1954 to make room for cooling towers.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ *The Friend*, 11.1.1919, p. 5.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.1.1919, p. 8.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/6, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 7.4.1924, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *The Friend*, 25.3.1927, p. 9; *Die Volksblad*, 25.3.1927, p. 5.

¹⁸² Haasbroek, “Founding venue of...”, p. 133; D.A. van der Bank, “St Patrick’s Church”, *Restorica* 19, April 1986, pp. 15, 18; K. Schoeman, “Kerk was meesterstuk”, *Die Volksblad*, 20.4.1982, p. 8.

5.4 “A hygienic Native township shall be developed”: the making of a garden location (1)

In the mayor’s annual report for 1919-1920, it was reported that according to the “universally accepted *principle of segregation*”, the council decided that “the *South-Eastern quarter of the town*, bounded roughly by the Natal [railway] Line and the Cape [railway] Line shall be the area where a *hygienic Native township shall be developed with a higher standard of housing than that usually associated with the locations.*”¹⁸³ Mayor Thomson’s statement, which is probably the first official mentioning in municipal records of Batho’s imminent founding, contains important information. The ‘principle of segregation’, discussed earlier, referred to the segregationist urban planning principles¹⁸⁴ endorsed and enforced by the then Union government. These principles were later contained and described in detail in the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, which will be discussed later. Essentially, this Act laid the foundation for the segregation of residential areas in South African towns and cities on a racial basis. The ‘South-Eastern quarter of the town’ referred to the area east of the Johannesburg-Cape Town railway line which, at that time, was still vacant land except for the relatively small area occupied by Cape Stands. Since the council “moved all the Africans across the railway”,¹⁸⁵ to quote Councillor Barlow, the railway track had become the physical barrier between black and white Bloemfontein. This meant that proper residential differentiation and, eventually, segregation came into being as a matter of principle: the whites were concentrated west of the railway and the blacks and coloureds east of the railway¹⁸⁶ (Image 5/8). Before the rest of Thomson’s statement, specifically his mentioning of ‘a hygienic Native township’, is discussed, it is necessary to briefly discuss the geography,

¹⁸³ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1919-1920*, p. 8. (Own emphasis)

¹⁸⁴ For more information, see T.R.H. Davenport, *The beginnings of urban segregation in South Africa: the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 and its background* (Occasional paper no. 15, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, 1971), pp. 6-12; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/6, Addenda to minutes: Native Affairs Committee*, 19.2.1924; 25.2.1924 & 12.3.1924, *passim*; Taljaard, pp. 14-15.

¹⁸⁵ A.G. Barlow, *Almost in confidence*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁶ D.S. Krige, *Afsonderlike ontwikkeling as ruimtelike beplanningstrategie: ’n toepassing op die Bloemfontein – Botshabelo – Thaba Nchu-streek* (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of the Orange Free State, 1988), pp. 154-156; W.F.S. Senekal, *Gedifferensieerde woonbuurtvorming binne die Munisipaliteit van Bloemfontein: ’n faktorekologiese toepassingstudie* (Research report 2: part I, ISEN, University of the Orange Free State, 1977), p. 108.

topography and climate of the area where, to quote Thomson, the “other half of our City”¹⁸⁷ of 18 000 blacks and coloureds were designated to live.¹⁸⁸

5.4.1 Batho’s geographical and topographical features: the macro and micro environment

Since Batho is situated only 3,3 kilometres from Bloemfontein’s city centre, its natural features, vegetation and climate are mostly similar to that of Bloemfontein. Therefore, it was decided to address the subject in this chapter instead of in Chapter 4, which focuses primarily on Bloemfontein and its white residential areas. The information provided on Bloemfontein and the greater Mangaung area (the macro environment) is, therefore, also applicable to Batho (the micro environment).

5.4.1.1 The macro environment: Bloemfontein and the greater Mangaung area

Since the publication of *Aardrijkskunde en geschiedenis van den Oranjevrijstaat* by P. Elffers¹⁸⁹ in 1884, surprisingly detailed information on the geographical and topographical characteristics of the Orange Free State and Bloemfontein had been made available in a number of manuscripts, academic studies and publications.¹⁹⁰ According to these and more recent sources, Bloemfontein and the greater Mangaung area are situated in a geological region characterised by sedimentary mudstones and layers of sandstone. Two soil types occur predominantly, namely the Serie Ecca and the Serie Beaufort, with dolerite intrusions visible as hillocks (*koppies*) and ridges (*rante*). The hillocks and ridges are separated by valleys and dry watercourses. The Serie Beaufort is significant since it underlies the greater Mangaung area and is also the origin of one of the region’s dominant soil types, namely clay. The clay soil is primarily the result of dolerite weathering. The undulating bottomland landscape is covered with tall and dense dry grassland – also known as *grasveld* or “Grass

¹⁸⁷ FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor’s minute 1919-1920*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ P. Elffers, *Aardrijkskunde en geschiedenis van den Oranjevrijstaat*, *passim*. For more information on Elffers, see Chapter 4. For a photograph of Elffers’ topiary garden in Bloemfontein, see Image 4/15.

¹⁹⁰ For example, see FSPA: A. 574, R. Bentham Weedon, *Description of O.F.S., 1893* (manuscript), no p. no; P. Elffers, *Aardrijkskunde en beknopte geschiedenis van de Oranje Vrijstaat*, pp. 4-9; R.S. Adamson, *The vegetation of South Africa*, pp. 163-176; M.J.M. Prinsloo, *’n Sosiaal-ekonomiese studie van die Bloemfonteinse distrik (1902-1938)* (Unpublished M.Comm. dissertation, University College of the Orange Free State, 1947), pp. 1-10.

Veld”¹⁹¹ – alternating with patches of karroid (Karoo-type) scrub, especially in the south. Bloemfontein is situated on the ecotone between the Transitional *Cymbopogon-Themeda* veld and the Dry *Cymbopogon-Themeda* veld.¹⁹² While indigenous species of flora, including various grass, tree and shrub species, survive in isolated pockets, indigenous fauna had been mostly driven from the urban environment. Between 160 and 200 species of indigenous and exotic birds are found in a 50-km radius of Bloemfontein’s city centre.¹⁹³ Situated on an exposed plateau, Bloemfontein is known for its continental climate of extremes: while the average winter temperature may drop as low as -7°C with a high incidence of frost, the summer temperatures average between 35°C and 38°C. The region is predominantly dry with an average rainfall of between 560 and 680 millimetres per annum. Bloemfontein enjoys summer rainfall, which normally peaks in late summer, namely February and March.¹⁹⁴ Due to Bloemfontein’s extreme climate, gardening had always been a challenge, particularly in summer (November to February) and winter (May to August).

5.4.1.2 The micro environment: Batho

While the geographical features and characteristics of Bloemfontein and the greater Mangaung area are also applicable to Batho, a number of characteristics typical to Batho need to be highlighted. Since Batho lacks any dramatic topographical or geographical features, a summary of the important features will suffice. Batho, which covers an area of 206,37 hectares, is relatively flat and its contours form an even gradient from west to east. The contours slope downward from its western boundary (the railway line) to the eastern boundary (the Kaffirfontein Spruit,¹⁹⁵ a tributary of the Renoster Spruit) with only a metre

¹⁹¹ J.W. Bews, *An account of the chief types of vegetation in South Africa, with notes on the plant succession*, p. 146; Adamson, p. 165. For contemporary descriptions of grassland, see Bews, pp. 145-147; Adamson, pp. 163-176.

¹⁹² Anon., *Orange Free State Botanic Gardens*, p. 2.

¹⁹³ D.H. de Swardt, “Birds of the Bloemfontein pentad 2905_2610: a review over a 30 year period”, *Biodiversity Observations* 8(43), *passim*. Personal communication: Mr D.H. de Swardt, Ornithology Department, National Museum, Bloemfontein, 2.8.2017.

¹⁹⁴ L. Mucina & M.C. Rutherford (eds), *The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland*, p. 381; W.J. van H. Botha, *Mangaung hernuwing: fase 1* (Research report, ISEN, University of the Orange Free State, 1981), pp. 4-9; R.T. Setlhare, *A policy for transforming Batho (Mangaung) to a “mixed use area” while preserving the present character* (Unpublished Magister dissertation: Urban and Regional Planning, University of the Free State, 2009), pp. 71-72; Anon., *Orange Free State...*, pp. 1-2.; D.M. Tomory, “Sunny South Africa: climatic conditions of Bloemfontein”, *The Friend*, 15.5.1920, p. 11; W. von Bonde, “Few towns enjoy the climate of Bloemfontein”, *The Friend*, 1.12.1936, p. 19.

¹⁹⁵ Currently known as the Renoster Spruit.

level difference from one boundary to the other. The *spruit* flows in a north-easterly direction towards Heidedal, and the width of its flood plain varies between 100 and 150 metres (Image 5/9). Most of Batho's vegetation, including the bluegum, pine (*Pinus spp.*) and willow trees planted *en masse* during the 1920s and 1930s, is exotic. Small patches of red grass (*rooigras*) grow on top of the stony outcrops, and couch-grass (*kweek*), common reed (*fluitjiesriet*; *Phragmites communis*) and *ospolgras* (*Eragrostis plana*) invaded the *spruit*'s flood plain.¹⁹⁶

As is the case with most of Bloemfontein's lower-lying areas, Batho was laid out on an area with a clay content of more than 30%. In some areas, the clay soil stretches down to a depth of up to 120 centimetres. As untreated clay soil is not the ideal soil type for gardening purposes, the predominance of clay had a negative impact on gardening efforts in Batho. Either the clay had to be broken down by the addition of sand and compost or, alternatively, plants which tolerated clay soil, such as species with robust root systems, had to be planted. Referring to Batho's clay soil, the Superintendent of Parks and Forestry mentioned in his monthly report for October 1921 that only "species of trees suitable for the given soil"¹⁹⁷ were selected for the municipality's tree-planting projects in the new location. Some plants, such as various privet species, specifically *Ligustrum ovalifolium*,¹⁹⁸ and plants with tuberous and rhizomatous root systems, such as cannas (*Canna spp.*; particularly *Canna xgeneralis*), did fairly well in Batho's clay soil. Through trial and error, Batho's gardeners learnt which plants had a better chance of surviving in clay. The advantage of clay soil is its ability to retain water for longer periods than sandy and loamy soil types. This quality benefited Batho's gardeners who were dependent on communal taps for water for their gardens. Apart from its mostly negative effect on gardening efforts, clay soil was also problematic for conventional brick-built structures since it expands and contracts, depending on its moisture content. In the absence of floating concrete foundations, Batho's clay soil caused the foundations and walls of houses to crack.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Botha, pp. 4-9; D.C. Ras & I. Coetzee, *'n Ondersoek na die administrasie en grondgebruik in laerinkomstegebiede, met spesifieke verwysing na die effek van die amalgamasie van plaaslike owerhede daarop* (Unpublished Magister dissertation: Urban and Regional Planning, University of the Orange Free State, 1992), pp. 142, 145; C. Shannon, *Library & community hall at Batho. The mental image: identity & orientation* (Unpublished M.Arch. dissertation, University of the Free State, 2011), pp. 9, 11-13.

¹⁹⁷ FSPA: MBL 1/2/5/1/4, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 26.10.1921, p. 7.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁹⁹ S. Eliovson, *The complete gardening book*, pp. 86-87; Botha, pp. 5-6; Ras & Coetzee, pp. 142, 145.

5.4.2 “Going over to the big location on their own account”: from Waaihoek to Batho

The relocation of Waaihoek’s residents to Batho and the reclamation of Waaihoek, which began in earnest in 1918, had practical implications for the residents. It meant that they had to leave their homes and move lock, stock and barrel from Waaihoek – the location in which many of them had been born and called home for almost seventy years – to a new home in a new location. The council’s intention was to eventually reclaim the entire Waaihoek location by purchasing houses in specific demarcated “condemned areas”²⁰⁰ and then have the areas cleared by demolishing all houses and structures. Depending on their size and condition, Waaihoek’s houses were purchased for sums which varied between approximately £40 and £60 each.²⁰¹ Therefore, no newcomers were allowed to settle in Waaihoek. Residents were also prohibited from making additions to existing buildings; any additions made were pulled down. Infrastructure was also no longer maintained, with the result that Waaihoek deteriorated. It is important to note that the *demolition and reclamation of Waaihoek was a gradual process implemented over a period of almost twenty years*. After the 1925 riots, the process was accelerated: the houses nearest to the town were purchased first and the demolition process commenced as soon as a block had been acquired. Officially, Waaihoek’s last houses were demolished in 1941 and the only building left standing for the time being was the St Patrick’s Church. During this period, not only houses but also gardens were demolished. Consequently, gardens that had been in the making for decades were lost since the residents saw no reason to maintain them.²⁰² From a gardening perspective, it is argued that almost a century’s worth of garden heritage disappeared without a trace except for a small number of mature trees which were left standing as silent witnesses of a resettlement project that touched many lives (Image 5/10).

It seems as though most of Waaihoek’s residents were eager to move to Batho, considering the prospect of a better laid-out location with better housing and amenities. As early as May 1919, Barlow, who took personal credit for being the one who had initiated the relocation of Waaihoek’s residents to Batho,²⁰³ reported in a council meeting that Waaihoek “was slowly

²⁰⁰ *The Friend*, 16.3.1922, p. 8; 31.7.1922, p. 8.

²⁰¹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/3, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 20.5.1918, p. 3.

²⁰² Krige, p. 155; Taljaard, p. 227; *The Friend*, 16.12.1921, p. 8; 26.2.1926, p. 6; 31.5.1928, p. 17.

²⁰³ Barlow, p. 12.

vanishing at present, and people were *going over to the big location on their own account*".²⁰⁴ Although Waaihoek's residents did not have a choice as to whether they wanted to move or not, the fact that they reportedly moved there 'on their own account' may be credited to the council's pragmatic handling of the resettlement process. Contrary to the way in which forced removals were handled in other towns and cities, especially during the 1950s (for example, Sophiatown, Johannesburg) and the 1960s (for example, District Six, Cape Town), the move from Waaihoek to Batho was different. In Waaihoek's case, the move was gradual and implemented in a planned and orderly fashion over a period of more than twenty years. One of the reasons for the lengthy resettlement process was the costs involved. Considering the fact that Bloemfontein's council was notorious among local black residents for its stringent enforcement of segregationist and social control laws, its sympathetic approach to the Batho resettlement project was indeed remarkable.²⁰⁵

5.4.3 "Between the Native population and desperation": the role of the Superintendent of Locations

The council's softened approach, which became evident during the early 1920s, was largely due to the pragmatic role played by Messrs G.P. Cook (dates unknown) and J.R. Cooper (1881-1946),²⁰⁶ the superintendents of locations.²⁰⁷ Cook, who succeeded the mentioned Hancock (Inspector of Native Locations), held office from 1917 to 1923.²⁰⁸ He was not only described as a man who was "able to judge the native mind" but was also commended for his "ability in carrying the native people with him in *achieving better conditions*".²⁰⁹ Cooper, who succeeded Cook and served as Superintendent of Locations (also known as Location

²⁰⁴ *The Friend*, 13.5.1919, p. 8. (Own emphasis)

²⁰⁵ D. du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the history of the English-style gardens of Batho, Mangaung (1846-1948)", *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 27(3), December 2011, pp. 64-65; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 285-286; Krige, p. 155; Taljaard, p. 14.

²⁰⁶ FSPA: *MHG 38829, Estate of the late John Richard Cooper: death notice*, p. 1.

²⁰⁷ Initially known as the Inspector of Native Locations, the Superintendent of Locations was the municipal officer responsible for managing the locations and also served as chairperson of the Native Advisory Board. The superintendent was also the Manager of the Department of Native Affairs (later Native Administration). C. le Roux, "Openbare gesondheidsorg in die swart woonbuurte van Bloemfontein, 1900-1945", *Acta Academica* 29(2), August 1997, p. 67.

²⁰⁸ *The Friend*, 27.11.1923, p. 8.

²⁰⁹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1923-1924*, p. 5. (Own emphasis)

Superintendent and Superintendent of Native Locations) from 1923 to 1945,²¹⁰ was known for his “administrative ability, his kindness and his sympathy”²¹¹ and praised for his ability to keep the location residents “steadily *developing along practical lines*”.²¹² Cooper was assisted in his duties by an Assistant Superintendent of Locations, Mr R.N. Brits. From the Batho residents’ perspective, it appears as though they, like the council, held their “Baas”²¹³ (a term used by location residents to refer to both Cook and Cooper) in high esteem. Both superintendents enjoyed a particularly sound relationship with the Headman of the Locations, Mr T.M. Mapikela (1869-1945).²¹⁴ Mapikela was a founder member and first speaker of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), which became the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923. The well-known African writer, Solomon (Sol) Plaatje (1875-1932), who considered Batho a “model location”²¹⁵ because of, among others, the exemplary role played by the superintendents, aptly described them as “gentlemen” who stood “between the Native population and desperation.”²¹⁶ Also noteworthy is the fact that the superintendents were location residents themselves: a “big house with a verandah”²¹⁷ was built for the Superintendent of Locations on a property situated on the corner of Lovedale Road and Dr Belcher Road near one of Batho’s main entrances. This decision was justified on the grounds that it was “absolutely necessary for the good government of the locations that the Superintendent should reside inside such locations”.²¹⁸

Cook and Cooper were not only ‘gentlemen’ in terms of the way in which they treated the location residents, but also in terms of the quintessential ‘gentleman gardener’ archetype described in Chapter 4. Both superintendents were keen gardeners and extensive flower and vegetable gardens were laid out on the property mentioned above. A long-time Batho

²¹⁰ *The Friend*, 27.11.1923, p. 5. For more information on Cooper’s role as Superintendent of Locations and Manager of the Department of Native Administration, see C. le Roux, “J.R. Cooper as Township Manager of Mangaung at Bloemfontein, 1923-1945”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 26(1), December 2010, *passim*.

²¹¹ *The Friend*, 5.12.1929, p. 6.

²¹² FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1923-1924*, p. 6. (Own emphasis)

²¹³ *The Friend*, 27.11.1923, p. 8. “Boss”. (Free translation)

²¹⁴ Le Roux, “J.R. Cooper as...”, p. 42; Le Roux, “Openbare gesondheidsorg in...”, p. 67; C. Twala, “‘Ulundi-Kaya’: the dwelling of Thomas Mtobi Mapikela in Bloemfontein (Mangaung) – its historical significance”, *South African Journal of Cultural History* 18(1), June 2004, p. 71.

²¹⁵ As quoted in Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 286.

²¹⁶ *The Friend*, 7.12.1927, p. 5.

²¹⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014*.

²¹⁸ *The Friend*, 9.12.1919, p. 7.

resident, Sarah Mahabane (born 1927), remembered “there was a big dam and windmill to water the gardens”.²¹⁹ The garden at “Cooper’s Place”,²²⁰ as the superintendent’s residence was commonly known among Batho’s residents, was widely admired. According to Mahabane, Cooper set an example for Batho’s residents as far as gardening was concerned. She also remembered how Batho’s elderly had been invited to the superintendent’s house each year the week before Christmas and how they had all received gifts of “mealies, sugar, tins [canned food], condensed milk and vegetables”.²²¹ Needless to say, the fresh produce came from the superintendent’s garden. Both Cook and Cooper played a significant role, not only in the beautification of Batho and, importantly, in convincing the council of the necessity of such endeavours, but also in encouraging location residents to lay out gardens themselves. Therefore, it is argued that the superintendents’ ability to help the location residents in ‘achieving better conditions’ and ‘developing along practical lines’, as quoted earlier, had as much to do with gardens and gardening as it did with securing adequate housing.

5.4.4 “Assisted by the Council”: the Bloemfontein System

Apart from the council’s pragmatic approach and the important role played by the superintendents of locations, there was also another important reason for the Waaihoek residents’ initial enthusiasm for Batho and their apparent willingness to move and live there. Certainly, the overcrowding and slum conditions in Waaihoek were a significant ‘push’ factor but there also happened to be an important ‘pull’ factor, namely the unique housing scheme implemented in Batho known as the “Bloemfontein System”.²²² Since houses and gardens should not be viewed separately, the Bloemfontein System is an important aspect of Batho’s garden history. This housing scheme, for which Bloemfontein became renowned nationally, must be viewed against the historical background of early 20th-century black housing in South Africa. During the first two decades after unification, a haphazard approach towards black housing was followed in the majority of the Union’s urban centres. In the

²¹⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014.*

²²⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by P. Letsatsi with: Ms N.R. Ntuli, Batho, 9.12.2010; Ms J.B. Lefosa, Batho, 10.12.2010.*

²²¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014.*

²²² *The Friend*, 13.5.1920, p. 7; P. Morris, *A history of black housing in South Africa*, p. 28.

absence of a coherent national housing policy, neither the municipalities nor the provincial authorities considered black housing their responsibility. The provisioning of housing for their employees was entirely the prerogative of the employers of black labour. In this context, the term ‘employees’ refers to the semi-permanent and permanent “native town-dweller[s]”²²³ who had become a permanent feature of almost all South African towns and cities. Initially, most of these ‘employees’ were mineworkers and domestic servants. The mineworkers, who made up a considerable portion of the urban black working class on the Witwatersrand, lived mostly in compounds²²⁴ erected near the mines. The other sizeable segment of the urban black working class, namely domestic workers, was housed in separate servants’ quarters on their employers’ premises. Domestic labourers housed in this manner were both female and male, including full-time male garden labourers and general workers (handymen and groundsmen).²²⁵

Apart from the growing mine industry, rapid industrialisation also attracted sizeable numbers of black labourers to the Union’s urban centres. The employers, mostly factory owners, did not consider the provisioning of housing for their employees an urgent matter. Needless to say, the lack of adequate housing for the thousands of newcomers had turned most urban locations²²⁶ into overcrowded slums. Dr D.D.T. Jabavu (1885-1959), the well-known African academic, described the “squalid surroundings” as follows: “conveniences are distant, sometimes non-existent; water is hard to get; light is little; sanitation bad; while there are no common laundry buildings, *no gardens*, no amusement halls or clubs.”²²⁷ Initially, the Union government ignored this growing urban housing crisis but the potential threat posed by unhygienic conditions to the white residential areas prompted the authorities to act. Commissions of enquiry were appointed to investigate the state of black living conditions in urban areas, notably the South African Native Affairs Commission (1903-1905) and the

²²³ A.V. Murray, *The school in the bush: a critical study of the theory and practice of native education in Africa*, p. 47.

²²⁴ Also commonly known as *kampongs*.

²²⁵ K. Sevenhuysen, “Owerheidsbeheer en -wetgewing rakende stedelike swart behuising voor en gedurende die Tweede Wêreldoorlog”, *Historia* 40(1), May 1995, p. 93; Murray, pp. 46-47.

²²⁶ The term ‘location’ was then commonly used in the Union to refer to areas earmarked as informal living quarters for black and coloured people, usually located on the outskirts of white towns and cities.

²²⁷ D.D.T. Jabavu, *The black problem: papers and addresses on various native problems*, p. 11. (Own emphasis)

Tuberculosis Commission (1914).²²⁸ The findings of these commissions, as well as the consequences of the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918, led to the tabling of the Public Health Act (no. 36 of 1919).²²⁹

Among other things, the Public Health Act assigned control of health conditions in urban areas to local authorities. Although this Act had many shortcomings, it laid the foundation for the significant Housing Act (no. 35 of 1920).²³⁰ This Act was the Union government's first deliberate effort to address the black housing question, most notably by providing financial assistance to local authorities, which enabled them to finance black housing schemes. It is important to note that many of the Housing Act's regulations were based on "Bloemfontein's practice" and, specifically, the council's innovative "scheme of financial assistance to citizens to build their own homes."²³¹ This 'scheme of financial assistance' refers to the assisted housing scheme which characterised the Bloemfontein System.²³² The other prominent housing scheme was known as the Johannesburg System.²³³ While the Johannesburg System allowed for the building of houses for location residents by the municipality and the letting of such houses to them, the Bloemfontein System allowed for residents to build their own houses with the municipality's assistance.²³⁴

Soon after Batho's basic layout had been completed during the early 1920s, it became Bloemfontein's busiest building site by far. The new location was laid out according to the conventional grid pattern with Fort Hare Road and Lovedale Road as the main thoroughfares. Much of the house building activity was made possible by the council's

²²⁸ For more information, see A. Wessels & M.E. Wentzel, *Die invloed van relevante kommissieverslae sedert Uniewording op regeeringsbeleid ten opsigte van swart verstedeliking en streekontwikkeling* (Report IGN-T1, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1989), pp. ix, 11-12.

²²⁹ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1919 with tables of contents (alphabetical and chronological) and tables of laws, etc., repealed and amended by these statutes: Public Health Act (no. 36 of 1919)*, p. 184.

²³⁰ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1920 with tables of contents (alphabetical and chronological) and tables of laws, etc., repealed and amended by these statutes: Housing Act (no. 35 of 1920)*, p. 168. The Act was amended in 1934 and 1936.

²³¹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1922-1923*, p. 8.

²³² Also known as the Bloemfontein Scheme. Sevenhuysen, p. 94. For a detailed discussion of the Bloemfontein Scheme, see J.R. Cooper, "The Municipality of Bloemfontein: native housing and accommodation", *South African Architectural Record* 28(6), June 1943, pp. 120-123.

²³³ Also known as the Johannesburg Scheme. Sevenhuysen, p. 94.

²³⁴ J.D. Rheinallt Jones & A.L. Saffery, "Social and economic conditions of native life in the Union of South Africa", *Bantu Studies* VII(4), December 1933, pp. 334-335; Sevenhuysen, pp. 93-94; Morris, p. 28; E. Hellman (ed.), *Handbook on race relations in South Africa*, p. 253; Wessels & Wentzel, pp. 11-14.

unique assisted building scheme which became the backbone of the Bloemfontein System. In his annual report for 1923-1924, the mayor, Mr J.A. Reid,²³⁵ boasted that “in the building of *their houses* [the Batho residents’ houses] the Municipality comes generously to their assistance, granting the necessary material on *easy purchase terms*.”²³⁶ In the annual report for the previous year, namely 1922-1923, Reid’s predecessor, Mr D. Urquhart,²³⁷ explained that the building of the overwhelming majority of Batho’s houses “has been *assisted by the Council*”²³⁸ which, in practical terms, meant the advancing of “wood and iron, windows, doors, etc. by way of loan, on which 6½% [6.5%] is chargeable”.²³⁹ Bloemfontein’s municipality purchased standard building materials (excluding bricks) in bulk by means of government-funded housing loans provided for local authorities in terms of the mentioned Housing Act. Bloemfontein’s first loan amounted to £20 000.²⁴⁰ This financial assistance enabled the municipality to make advances to Batho’s home builders for the purchasing of the mentioned materials at cost price, hence the mayor’s reference to ‘easy purchase terms’. The builders then repaid the loans by means of monthly instalments added to the site rent.²⁴¹ The basic principle of the Bloemfontein System was described as “individual self-help tending towards a corporate whole.”²⁴²

Mayor Reid’s reference to the Batho residents who were building ‘their houses’ is significant because, unlike the Johannesburg System, an important trait of the Bloemfontein System was that the houses built in Batho became the builders’ property. In other words, while Batho’s residents could not own the plots on which the houses were built,²⁴³ the houses could be owned.²⁴⁴ Thus, the municipality encouraged home ownership despite the contradiction embedded in this benefit due to the fact that black people were not allowed land ownership outside the tribal reserves. Confirming his council’s stance in this regard, Reid stated that

²³⁵ Reid was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1924 to August 1925.

²³⁶ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1923-1924*, p. 6. (Own emphasis)

²³⁷ Urquhart was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1923 to March 1924.

²³⁸ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1922-1923*, p. 7. (Own emphasis)

²³⁹ *Ibid.* See also FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1921-1922*, p. 13.

²⁴⁰ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1922-1923*, p. 7.

²⁴¹ Cooper, pp. 120-123.

²⁴² *The Friend*, 2.8.1921, p. 4.

²⁴³ The plots were leased on a monthly tenancy basis. Hellman, p. 253.

²⁴⁴ S. Krige, “Bloemfontein” in A. Lemon (ed.), *Homes apart: South Africa’s segregated cities*, pp. 105-107; Hellman, p. 253; Morris, p. 28; Sevenhuysen, p. 94.

for him, personally, it was gratifying to witness “a large proportion of them [Batho residents] building and *owning their own houses*”.²⁴⁵

The prospect of home ownership, as well the fact that builder-owners could either choose from a variety of pre-approved building plans²⁴⁶ or submit their own designs for approval, was not only a *significant development in terms of the general beautification of Batho but also in terms of it being developed into a garden location*. First of all, Batho’s houses displayed a pleasing variety in terms of architecture and design, varying from four-room “cottages”²⁴⁷ to five- and six-room “homes”,²⁴⁸ including verandah houses and stoep-room houses.²⁴⁹ Houses were either built with sun-dried bricks, also known as Kimberley bricks, or sturdier burnt or baked bricks.²⁵⁰ In 1926, the Superintendent of Locations reported that the houses built in Batho were “of a greatly improved type to those in Waaihoek”.²⁵¹ It was also mentioned that “rooms are of larger dimensions and greater attention is paid to light and air space.”²⁵² These better-quality houses were certainly made possible by the council’s financial assistance, but the prospect of homeownership or “proprietorship”,²⁵³ as *Umteteli wa Bantu* called it, also played an important role. Not only did homeownership have “a steadying effect on citizenship conduct”²⁵⁴ but it also made the homeowners “house proud”,²⁵⁵ developed civic pride among them and, in turn, encouraged them to take an active part in the good governance of their location.²⁵⁶

Since ‘house proud’ owners were generally keen to improve not only their houses but also their immediate living environments, there happened to be a direct link between homeownership and the laying out of gardens. A member of the Union Housing Board explained it as follows: “The problem of filling a new location with a decent class of

²⁴⁵ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1923-1924*, p. 6. (Own emphasis)

²⁴⁶ For an example of a standard house plan, see FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/4, Minutes of meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 1.11.1920 (attachment).

²⁴⁷ *The Friend*, 2.8.1921, p. 4.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.5.1920, p. 7. For more details, see Chapter 8.

²⁵⁰ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1923-1924*, p. 6; *The Friend*, 13.5.1920, p. 7. For a description of how the bricks were made, see *The Friend*, 2.8.1921, p. 4.

²⁵¹ HP: *AD 1765, Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 2.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 30.7.1932, p. 2.

²⁵⁴ Hellman, p. 253. For a similar argument, see *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 30.7.1932, p. 2.

²⁵⁵ Morris, p. 28.

²⁵⁶ Rheinallt Jones & Saffery, pp. 334-336.

dwellings need not, perhaps, be as difficult as many think. It depends on whether, in the first place, ground is assigned which can be covered with gardens and arboerage [sic], and, in the second place, on the natives getting freehold or long lease.”²⁵⁷ *In the case of Batho, the combination of homeownership, financial assistance and enough ground or space to lay out gardens, became the winning recipe.* The last-mentioned ingredient, namely adequate space to lay out gardens or, more specifically, ‘garden areas’ and ‘gardening facilities’, will be discussed shortly.

The notion that the Bloemfontein System guaranteed better-quality houses was not supported by all. In fact, this system was criticised because it was argued that owner-built houses were not as durable as those built by other housing schemes.²⁵⁸ Bloemfontein’s town council defended its scheme by arguing that sturdier burnt bricks, instead of raw bricks, were increasingly used by Batho’s builders, which, in turn, guaranteed better-quality houses.²⁵⁹ As far as the council’s vision for Batho was concerned, it appears as though they not only had in mind ‘better-quality houses’ but also ‘better-quality residents’, so to speak. In his annual report for 1919-1920, Mayor Thomson stated that it was the “deliberate policy” of the council to encourage the settlement in Batho of “a large Native labour supply of the *better-type natives*”.²⁶⁰ Initially, all bona fide residents who were in the regular employment of whites for at least twelve months and who could produce the necessary service contracts,²⁶¹ were issued plots in Batho.²⁶² By 1930, the criteria were made stricter by limiting new plots to old residents of Waaihoek and married applicants only.²⁶³ Despite stricter measures, large numbers of unemployed blacks and some coloureds from Orange Free State towns and farms still flocked to Bloemfontein on a daily basis. Ironically, many of them were attracted by the new location. In a leading article, *The Friend* stressed the council’s challenge: “The more the Town Council increases the health, the comfort and the general amenities of the locations, the more attractive they become to outside Natives”.²⁶⁴ Still, the expressed policy of the municipality remained unchanged, namely that “the

²⁵⁷ *The Friend*, 10.8.1921, p. 6.

²⁵⁸ For criticism of the Bloemfontein System, see Morris, p. 28; Hellman, p. 253; *The Friend*, 22.7.1926, p. 11; 16.11.1928, p. 13.

²⁵⁹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor’s minute 1923-1924*, p. 6.

²⁶⁰ FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor’s minute 1919-1920*, p. 8. (Own emphasis)

²⁶¹ For more information, see Chapter 7.

²⁶² HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 1.

²⁶³ HP: AD 1765, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1929-1930*, p. 2.

²⁶⁴ *The Friend*, 29.3.1928, p. 10.

Locations are for the accommodation of those Natives in regular employment within the proclaimed area.”²⁶⁵

5.4.5 “The best town-planning lines”: the ‘model location’ philosophy

When Sol Plaatje described Batho as a ‘model location’ after his visit to Bloemfontein in 1924, he did not intend it as a nod to the ‘model city’ or ‘model republic’ philosophy of old. Due to widespread racial discrimination and the stringent enforcement of segregation rules and regulations in the capital, most location residents’ experiences of the ‘model city’ were rather negative. Therefore, the use of the term ‘model’ in the South African context and, specifically, in the Bloemfontein context, must be qualified in terms of people’s varied experiences. Needless to say, such experiences depended on which side of the colour line people found themselves. For Plaatje, Batho not only became a model of what a location ideally could be but also served as a model for other locations in the Union. For some of Bloemfontein’s councillors, though, the noble idea of the ‘model city’ with its matching ‘model location’ was hard to resist, probably because of its historical roots and philanthropist underpin. As stated earlier, the idea of the ‘model location’ dates back to 1892, when Dr Kellner first expressed the hope that Waaihoek would soon become a ‘model location’. In 1907, the Inspector of Native Locations declared that, in his opinion, “the Bloemfontein Native Locations still keep up the reputation of being the best in South Africa.”²⁶⁶ One could debate the accuracy of this statement since Inspector Hancock did not indicate how he had arrived at his judgment. To which locations were Bloemfontein’s locations compared? According to which standards? Since Batho’s establishment the ‘model location’ idea had, once again, been utilised as a useful ideology not only to raise Bloemfontein’s national profile but also to establish a truly exemplary location. In an address to delegates who attended the SANNC’s annual national conference held in 1922 in Batho’s newly-erected community hall, Sir Cornelis Wessels (1851-1924), the Administrator of the Orange Free State,²⁶⁷ reiterated this sentiment: “Bloemfontein is known as a model city, and they

²⁶⁵ HP: *AD 1765, Yearly report on locations 1926-1927*, p. 1.

²⁶⁶ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/12, Report on Native Locations 1907*, p. 81.

²⁶⁷ Sir Cornelis Hermanus Wessels was Administrator of the Orange Free State from 1915 to 1924. D.W. Krüger & C.J. Beyers (eds-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. III), pp. 857-858.

[Bloemfontein municipality] were earnestly occupied in making the Bloemfontein location a model one in every respect.”²⁶⁸

Since its establishment in 1918, Batho was considered not only locally but also nationally, particularly in governmental circles, as a prime example of how an ideal location should be laid out and managed. Batho set the example of the ultimate model location created on “the best town-planning lines”.²⁶⁹ In other words, Batho became the national blueprint for an ideal model location. Apart from its exemplary physical layout, Batho also set an example in terms of the residents’ involvement in a variety of issues, ranging from which public amenities had to be built first to the giving of names to streets and sections.²⁷⁰ Therefore, it came as no surprise when another important piece of Union legislation, namely the Natives (Urban Areas) Act (no. 21 of 1923)²⁷¹ (hereafter the Act) was based, to quote Mayor Urquhart, on the “wisdom of our Municipal Native Policy.”²⁷² According to Urquhart, the new Act adopted “in toto the principles and practice that has been evolved [sic] during the past 10 years in providing *decent surroundings* and sanitary homes for our native citizens.”²⁷³ Noteworthy is Urquhart’s reference to ‘decent surroundings’ which, among other things, included the provisioning of space for private gardens, public parks, football fields and croquet courts.²⁷⁴ Among other things, this Act made provision for the creation in the Union of segregated but orderly locations for black and coloured people, the eradication of urban slums and a sound financial administration system for locations. The Act also encouraged participative governance in the form of consultative forums known as Advisory Boards or, as in the case of Bloemfontein, the Native Advisory Board (NAB). These boards, which offered black communities an opportunity to have a voice in the management of their

²⁶⁸ *The Friend*, 25.5.1922, p. 7.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.1.1919, p. 4.

²⁷⁰ Apart from **Cape Stands**, Batho’s other sections included **Four-and-Six** (named after the minimum wage demand of four shillings and six pennies), **Mahlomola** (a Sotho word meaning ‘sorrow’ in memory of those who perished as a result of the Spanish Flu epidemic), **Marabastad**, **Newclare**, **Rantjies** and **Sports** (named after the Ramblers/Masenkeng sports stadium). Sekete, pp. 11-12; *The Friend*, 5.12.1938, p. 11.

²⁷¹ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1923 with tables of contents (alphabetical and chronological) and tables of laws, etc., repealed and amended by these statutes: Natives (Urban Areas) Act (no. 21 of 1923)*, p. 140. For more information, see Davenport, pp. 1-23. The Act was amended in 1930 and 1937.

²⁷² FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1922-1923*, p. 7.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 8. (Own emphasis)

²⁷⁴ *The Friend*, 2.8.1921, p. 4.

own affairs, advised the Superintendent of Locations on location matters and the superintendent, in turn, acted as a channel to the council on the board's behalf.²⁷⁵

An important component of the Act was the Model Location Regulations²⁷⁶ (hereafter regulations) framed under Section 23(3) of the Act and published as Government Notice no. 672 of 1924. The regulations, which included the so-called "complements of a model location"²⁷⁷ considered essential for creating such a location, not only defined the duties and responsibilities of the local authority, the Advisory Board and the Superintendent of Locations²⁷⁸ but also the "standholder[s]".²⁷⁹ The plotholder (or standholder) was not only expected to "keep the dwelling and buildings on his site in good condition" but also to "keep his site free from weeds".²⁸⁰ Thus, plotholders who were not interested in gardening were required to at least keep their plots neat and tidy. With regard to the size of plots, the regulations stipulated that "every such site shall be in extent not less than 50 feet by 50 feet".²⁸¹ Needless to say, by the time the Act was passed, most of the regulations were already implemented by Bloemfontein's town council, including the Native Advisory Board,²⁸² the so-called 'blockman' (ward councillor) system in terms of which the location was divided into 'blocks' (wards) with each block being represented by an elected blockman,²⁸³ and the creation of an orderly and well laid-out location based on a leasehold tenure system. As far as Batho's blockmen were concerned, it is worth mentioning that many of them became respected leaders in their own right, such as Abel Dilape, Abel Jordaan, Richard Matli, Jan Mocher, Jacob Sesing and Joseph Twayi. Most of Batho's streets were named after these and other blockmen.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁵ H. Rogers, *Native administration in the Union of South Africa being a brief survey of the organisation, functions and activities of the Department of Native Affairs of the Union of South Africa*, pp. 309-312; Le Roux, "J.R. Cooper as...", pp. 3, 5, 16; Sevenhuysen, pp. 94-95; Du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the...", p. 65; *The Friend*, 26.7.1924, p. 4.

²⁷⁶ For complete regulations, see FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/6, Location Regulations 1924*, pp. 1-8.

²⁷⁷ *The Friend*, 15.2.1922, p. 7.

²⁷⁸ For complete duties, see Rogers, pp. 264-265.

²⁷⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/3, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 17.6.1918, p. 6.

²⁸⁰ Rogers, p. 307.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

²⁸² For more information, see J. Haasbroek, "The Native Advisory Board of Bloemfontein, 1913-1923", *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 19(4), July 2003, pp. 66-90.

²⁸³ The Native Advisory Board consisted of 12 elected and three nominated blockmen. The Superintendent of Locations acted as *ex officio* chairperson of the Board. Le Roux, "J.R. Cooper as...", p. 16.

²⁸⁴ Le Roux, "J.R. Cooper as...", pp. 16-19; Rheinallt Jones & Saffery, p. 336; P. Letsatsi, "Batho's street names: a rich historical reference", *Culna* 67, November 2012, pp. 28-29; *The Friend*, 30.3.1926, p. 8; 17.3.1930, p. 8; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 7.4.1934, p. 4; 25.9.1937, p. 2.

The Act also formally declared all urban areas in the Union set aside as residential areas for black and coloured people, and provided detailed descriptions of the boundaries of each so-called 'Native location'. In terms of the provisions of the Act, the Minister of Native Affairs declared Bloemfontein an urban area and approved of the following area which had been defined, set apart and laid out by the municipality as a 'Native location': "The area of the town lands bounded on the west by the railway line to Johannesburg; on the north by the goal grounds (southern fence), continuing in a straight line up to the Dewetsdorp Road, then along the west side of this road up to a point in a straight line with the western boundary fence of the Belmont Hospital grounds; on the east by a straight line from the latter point to a point connecting with the camp fence immediately south-east of the Kaffirfontein Police Station and from there in a straight line to the Railway crossing (Hamilton)."²⁸⁵ This area became officially known as 'Batho Location' and later only as 'Batho'. The residents themselves often referred to Batho as 'Bantu Location' or 'Bantu-Batho Location' despite their aversion to the word 'location'.²⁸⁶ Note the inclusion of the word 'Bantu'.

Apart from Batho, which became Bloemfontein's main location, two other areas were also approved as Native locations, namely "the area of the town lands bounded on the west by the railway fence, on the north by the Mazelspoort Road, and on the east and south by the Railway Golf Links, known as No. 3 Location" and "the area of the town lands known as Waaihoek".²⁸⁷ Despite having being approved as Native locations, Waaihoek and the No. 3 Location were designated for future demolition. Its residents had to move to Batho and later, when Batho became built-up, to Bochabela,²⁸⁸ the new location established east of the Kaffirfontein Spruit in 1925. For Bloemfontein's coloureds, "the area of the town lands bounded by the Natal Line, the Sewerage Farm Camp, and the Dewetsdorp Road"²⁸⁹ were approved as their official residential area named Heatherdale (initially called Cairo). By implication, this meant that Cape Stands, which officially became part of Batho in 1919, was no longer considered a designated coloured area and its residents were obliged to move to

²⁸⁵ *The Friend*, 13.12.1924, p. 4.

²⁸⁶ J. Mancoe, *First edition of the Bloemfontein Bantu and Coloured people's directory*, pp. 56-57.

²⁸⁷ *The Friend*, 13.12.1924, p. 4.

²⁸⁸ A Sesotho word meaning 'east'.

²⁸⁹ *The Friend*, 13.12.1924, p. 4. See also *The Friend*, 29.8.1922, p. 8.

Heatherdale.²⁹⁰ With reference to the establishment of Heatherdale, it was mentioned in the mayor's annual report for 1924-1925 that in terms of the Act, "an area has been allocated to Coloured people and *special facilities* are afforded them in keeping with the recognition of their higher standards of life and culture."²⁹¹ The 'special facilities' included, among other things, plots that were bigger than those that had been allocated in Batho, namely "50 ft. by 100 ft.",²⁹² which meant more space for the laying out of gardens.²⁹³

Did Batho's residents themselves also consider their new location a model one? If the letters written to newspapers such as *The Friend* and *Umteteli wa Bantu* are an indication of the popular opinion among Bloemfontein's black literate class, that is, 'the better-type natives' that the council desired to settle in Batho, it seems as though most of them were initially impressed with their new location. As early as 1918, a resident of Cape Stands, who called himself 'Askari', wrote that despite Batho's shortcomings, he nevertheless thanked the council for making "the Bloemfontein location what it should be, the best in South Africa."²⁹⁴ Mr B.M. Mlamleli, a resident of the Mahlomola section in Batho, was of the opinion that Batho's residents wanted the city fathers to "continue to 'Bloemfontein', which simply means to hold up the torch."²⁹⁵ Mlamleli was impressed that the model location "set an example which the Government even had to copy."²⁹⁶ Apart from individuals, organisations such as the SANNC (later ANC) also praised Batho. The organisation expressed "its highest appreciation of the efforts of the Town Council of Bloemfontein in developing native interests and advancing the conditions in the Locations"²⁹⁷ and "hoped that other cities and towns will follow this praiseworthy example."²⁹⁸ Another reliable source of black people's opinions, namely *Umteteli wa Bantu*, was also generous in its praise of the model location. Batho was described as an "abode of moral and physical healthfulness" and "an object lesson to other municipalities".²⁹⁹

²⁹⁰ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1923-1924*, p. 6; *The Friend*, 31.3.1925, p. 23; 2.7.1934, p. 6; Krige, *Afsonderlike ontwikkeling as...*, p. 158; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 290-291.

²⁹¹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1924-1925*, p. 6. (Own emphasis)

²⁹² *The Friend*, 30.4.1924, p. 8. See also *The Friend*, 16.12.1920, p. 7.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 30.4.1924, p. 8; Mancoe, pp. 108-111.

²⁹⁴ *The Friend*, 22.1.1918, p. 4.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.12.1927, p. 13.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.6.1921, p. 5.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.7.1927, p. 10.

²⁹⁹ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 26.8.1922, p. 2.

5.4.6 “Garden areas” and “gardening facilities”: space for the laying out of gardens

In his annual report for 1919-1920, Mayor Thomson stated that the council’s main objective with the new Batho location was to improve black people’s “everyday conditions of living, housing and cleanliness”.³⁰⁰ This statement must be understood in relation to Thomson’s mentioning of the council’s intention to develop ‘a hygienic Native township’, quoted earlier. The link between ‘everyday conditions of living, housing and cleanliness’ and ‘a hygienic Native township’ is of crucial importance for the purpose of this discussion because it meant much more than creating just a clean living environment. It also meant proper housing in the form of so-called “sanitary healthy houses”.³⁰¹ Apart from referring to the quality of the houses, the terms ‘sanitary’ and ‘healthy’ also meant the beautification of Batho by considering aesthetics and “aesthetic values”³⁰² as far as the residents’ living environment was concerned. The mayor explained that the ‘sanitary healthy houses’ were to be “set in their own plot of ground 50 ft. by 75.”³⁰³ Batho’s blueprint – the so-called Location Plan³⁰⁴ – had many good qualities, one of the most important of which, if not the most important, was the size of Batho’s plots. While the average size of Waaihoek’s plots measured 50 by 50 feet, Batho’s plots measured 50 by 75 feet.³⁰⁵ Batho’s plots were thus bigger than the minimum size prescribed by the Model Location Regulations. The Union’s superintendents of locations considered this increased size “the ideal size for [location] stands”.³⁰⁶ The average size of erven in Bloemfontein’s white suburbs was 50 by 100 feet. In Bloemfontein and Batho, the shorter distance of erven and plots fronted the street.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁰ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1919-1920*, p. 6.

³⁰¹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1921-1922*, p. 13.

³⁰² Consideration to ‘aesthetics’ and ‘aesthetic values’ runs like a golden thread through the archival documents on Batho’s beautification. For more details, see FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1929-1930*, p. 14; HP: *AD 1765, Annual report of Native Administration Department 1929-1930*, p. 2; FSPA: *MBL 3/1/21, Mayor’s minute 1930*, p. xiv.

³⁰³ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1921-1922*, p. 13.

³⁰⁴ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/2, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 18.3.1918, p. 2; *The Friend*, 3.9.1929, p. 9.

³⁰⁵ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1919-1920*, p. 8; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/3, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 13.1.1919, p. 1; *Die Volksblad*, 4.2.1938, p. 7.

³⁰⁶ *The Friend*, 16.11.1928, p. 13.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.11.1937, p. 14. For more information on plot sizes in Batho, see L.N. Melao, *Guidelines that determine low-income housing plot sizes and layouts: a case study of Maphikela (Batho Location) and Bloemanda in the Mangaung residential area* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Free State, 2003), pp. 51-79.

Although the increased size of Batho's plots allowed for the building of bigger and more spacious houses, the *primary reason was to allow residents enough space for the laying out of gardens*. For this reason, Mayor Thomson reported that “*garden areas of 50 ft. by 75 ft.*”³⁰⁸ had been provided for Batho's residents. Superintendent Cooper, who had shown particular interest in this issue, explained that the “larger frontage to the stands” afforded “*extended gardening facilities*”.³⁰⁹ By allowing residents more space for the laying out of front gardens they were not only able to beautify their plots, but this also reduced the cost of maintenance. In fact, Cooper was of the opinion that Batho's streets were too wide (120 feet) and that the frontage (space for front gardens) afforded to the plots should have been even larger. Consequently, he argued that the space allowed for front gardens was too small: “The houses might have been erected deeper in the stands, which would have allowed of space for [bigger] front gardens and limited the space available for Panthokies [shacks] and the erection of outside rooms.”³¹⁰

Superintendent Cooper's concern related to both practical and aesthetical considerations. *Both considerations were important, especially if the argument concerning the dynamic relationship that exists between a house (private space) and the street (public space) it faces and how and where the garden fits into this relationship, is applied to Batho*. In Chapter 4, it was argued that the history of Bloemfontein's gardens is essentially the history of this changing relationship and how this dynamic influenced the position, size and layout of its gardens. By the time Batho was planned (1917) and established (1918), the relationship between house and street in Bloemfontein had already changed to the point where the ornamental flower garden had moved from the backyard to the front of the house and, in some cases, also the sides of the house. As had been the case with the houses built by whites, the overwhelming majority of Batho's houses were not positioned right on the street but placed in a more or less central position on the plot. Consequently, enough space was made available between the house (and its stoep or verandah) and the street for laying out ornamental front gardens (Image 5/11). It must be noted, though, that a small minority of Batho residents preferred to have no front flower gardens in order to allow space for bigger

³⁰⁸ FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor's minute 1919-1920*, p. 8. (Own emphasis)

³⁰⁹ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 2. (Own emphasis)

³¹⁰ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1926-1927*, p. 2. See also HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 2.

backyards. Following the authentic Dutch (and Boer) pattern,³¹¹ some of Batho's houses were built right on the street. This arrangement allowed just enough space for narrow rectangular flowerbeds and often only a clipped hedge or 'fedge' (Image 5/12). As will be discussed in Chapter 8, it was, however, not Dutch but English cultural influence which had exerted itself in Bloemfontein and Batho during the inter-War period. This growing English influence reinforced the trend towards bigger front gardens. By the time Batho was being laid out and its gardeners started to make their gardens, Victorian-style cottage gardens had, to a great extent, made way for the architectural gardens of the Edwardian period. *As will be discussed later, it did not mean that the Victorian-style had gone out of fashion completely, at least not in Batho's gardens. Cottage-style informality was combined with Edwardian formality to create a unique semi-vernacular and 'hybrid' location garden style – a style which eventually spawned an Africanised version of topiary.*

The prevalence of phrases such as 'garden area' and 'gardening facility' in municipal records, often used in conjunction with the terms 'plot', 'stand' or 'erf' but also as substitutes for the mentioned terms, is significant since it underpins the changing relationship between a house and the street it faced. These phrases indicate, among other things, the importance attached to sizeable front gardens. Furthermore, the use of these phrases also indicates the premium the municipality and its principal office bearers, such as the mayors and superintendents of locations, had placed on the importance of gardens and gardening. Cooper stated that through the provisioning of 'garden areas' and 'gardening facilities' "every encouragement is given"³¹² by the municipality to convince Batho's residents of the importance of laying out front gardens. In addition to front gardens, the residents were also encouraged to lay out vegetable gardens in their backyards. The standard plot size, which extended the plots lengthwise so that the width of the plots were 50 feet and the length 75 feet, allowed backyard space for the laying out of maize patches, vegetable gardens and even small orchards and vine arbours. Cooper argued that location residents had to be encouraged to move beyond the traditional maize patch to cultivate a bigger variety of vegetables.³¹³

³¹¹ For more information on the traditional Dutch and Boer house and garden layout, see Chapter 3.

³¹² HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 2.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

The idea of ‘garden areas’ and ‘gardening facilities’ also extended to spaces other than plots since the Location Plan also allowed for open areas among the plots. These open spaces were designated to be developed into future parks (see discussion of Batho’s park elsewhere in this chapter) and squares, such as Tantsi Square near the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Four-and-Six and Mapikela Square in front of Thomas Mapikela’s house in Sports.³¹⁴ Mapikela Square must have been some kind of garden or so-called ‘green patch’ because in 1926, *Die Volksblad* referred to it as “die groen plein duskant die Community Saal”.³¹⁵ Another important provision made in terms of ‘garden areas’ or ‘gardening facilities’ was the granting of allotments or allotment gardens in order to encourage market-gardening. This development will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Based on the information provided thus far, it is evident that gardens and gardening received special consideration in the planning of Batho’s layout. Essentially, the same aesthetical considerations which informed the layout of post-War Bloemfontein’s suburbs, public parks and gardens, also guided Batho’s layout. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the idea of Batho as a garden suburb³¹⁶ – or, more precisely, a garden location – had been a constant source of inspiration to those involved in making Batho a model location.

5.4.7 “Having fresh air and a wider outlook upon life”: the ‘model location’ and the ‘garden city’ philosophy

In the discussion of the making of Bloemfontein’s post-Anglo-Boer War public parks and gardens, specifically King’s Park, Hoffman Square and Hamilton Park, in Chapter 4, the influence of the philosophies of the British town planning idealist, Ebenezer Howard, was highlighted. As the prime advocate of the concepts of ‘garden city’ and ‘city beautiful’, Howard’s philosophies and principles influenced town and city planners in the British dominions, including South Africa. Bloemfontein, with its predominantly English-speaking council was, of course, no exception.³¹⁷ The important point to consider is whether and, if so, to what extent, his philosophies and, specifically, his idea of the garden suburb, also

³¹⁴ The other squares were Bahurutshi (also Bahurutsi) Square, Mogaecho Square and Mogono Square. FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/16, Report of Superintendent of Locations, June 1929: Annexure A*, 4.7.1929, p. 1.

³¹⁵ *Die Volksblad*, 1.3.1926, p. 6. “The green square vide the Community Hall”. (Free translation)

³¹⁶ For more information on the garden suburb philosophy, see Chapter 4.

³¹⁷ For Howard’s influence on town planning in Bloemfontein, see FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/34, New town hall: proposed site*, 17.1.1929, pp. 4-6.

influenced the laying out of model locations such as Batho. It is important to note that during Batho's founding years, namely the early 1920s, the Garden City Movement was particularly influential in South Africa. In fact, it was so influential that location residents, most notably readers of the popular *Umteteli wa Bantu*, took note of its influence. In a leading article published in *Umteteli wa Bantu* in 1921, the question was raised as to whether the principles of the Garden City Movement would also be applied in the Union's locations. Considering the fact that housing – specifically municipal housing – for location residents was widely debated among the Union's black urban residents, including in Bloemfontein, the paper stated that “we [black people] are assuming – and we take it that our assumption is justified – that they [municipal authorities] do not contemplate placing seats in these gardens [public gardens laid out in white garden suburbs] for the Natives upon whose services they are entirely dependent”.³¹⁸ The paper wryly suggested to the Union's “City Fathers” that “instead of speaking glowingly of the Garden City Movement, whereby the people would grow up in liberty, having fresh air and a wider outlook upon life, would it not be better if they gave their attention to the housing of Natives in Municipal areas?”³¹⁹

As far as Batho is concerned, it appears as though the Garden City Movement and Howard's philosophies were taken into consideration, whether in the sense of a ‘garden location’ or, at least, a ‘location with gardens’. The municipality's insistence on increased plot sizes to accommodate the laying out of domestic gardens, the provisioning of allotments for market-gardens and, importantly, the allocation of open spaces on Batho's Location Plan for the laying out of public parks, gardens and squares, indicates a rather significant influence by the Garden City Movement. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the idea of a garden location and the value presumably added to a location by the laying out of both domestic and public gardens, remained a guiding principle for the municipality.³²⁰ Practically (and theoretically), this vision manifested itself on different levels, among others in the municipality's effort to solve the question of how to effectively regulate the mass consumption of traditional beer by Batho's and Bochabela's male residents. The riots of 1925 were still fresh in the council's memory. Instead of opting for conventional municipal beer halls, as had been done by the

³¹⁸ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 5.11.1921, p. 2.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ Melao, pp. 22-23, 51-79.

municipalities of Pretoria, Boksburg and Springs, local councillors, Mr C.E. Kidger³²¹ and Mr R.C. Streeten,³²² advocated the idea of “beer shops run in conjunction with eating-houses, set in shrubbed gardens, where the Natives could, if they wanted to, drink their beer out-of-doors.”³²³

The idea of beer shops set in gardens instead of unsightly beer halls was certainly unconventional thinking on the part of some local councillors, but, once again, it serves as an indication of how potent the influence of the Garden City Movement’s ideas still was on local municipal level towards the late 1930s. Therefore, it appears that by 1939, when Batho was approaching the end of its ‘Golden Age’, the municipality’s vision for this location as a garden location or a location with gardens, had not faded. It also seems as though Bloemfontein’s white residents supported such a vision for Batho since the idea of Bloemfontein as the “Union’s Garden City”³²⁴ did much to improve the city’s image and status in the eyes of the Union’s bigger cities. An anonymous resident, who apparently also voiced other Bloemfontein citizens’ sentiments, encouraged the municipality’s town planners to promote the concept of the “great native location” as an idealistic future black location characterised by “ample open spaces” and “large, gardened areas”.³²⁵ It was argued that the creation of such an ideal native location, that is, a garden location, would ultimately have been to the advantage of not only Bloemfontein’s black residents but also its white residents.³²⁶

5.4.8 “Little orchards and gardens surround the houses”: historical impressions and descriptions of Batho’s gardens

One of the earliest descriptions of Batho’s gardens³²⁷ dates back to the early 1920s when Emilie Solomon, a delegate who attended a trade union convention in Bloemfontein in 1922,

³²¹ Kidger was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1941 to March 1942.

³²² Streeten was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1932 to March 1933.

³²³ *The Friend*, 30.6.1939, p. 11. (Own emphasis) See also *Die Volksblad*, 30.6.1939, p. 6; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 13.5.1939, p. 6; 8.7.1939, p. 5.

³²⁴ “The Vagabond” (pseudonym), “Union’s garden city: beauty spots in the Free State capital”, *The Friend*, 16.4.1927, p. 11.

³²⁵ “Old Bloemfonteiner” (pseudonym), “When Bloemfontein’s population is 250,000: town-planning for the future”, *The Friend*, 5.10.1936, p. 8.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ Batho’s contemporary topiary gardens are discussed in Chapter 9.

visited Batho at the invitation of the mayor, Mr W.M. Barnes.³²⁸ In an article, which she had written originally for *The Cape Times* and which had been published in *Umteteli wa Bantu*, she gave detailed descriptions of Batho, including its gardens. She and the other delegates were “deeply impressed” with “this splendid location”.³²⁹ According to Solomon, they saw “little orchards and gardens surround the houses” in a location “well laid out with broad streets”.³³⁰ She also noticed “much healthy competition in building and gardening” and “everyone was busy and seemed happy and contented.”³³¹ Solomon’s reference to ‘competition in building and gardening’ is significant and must be viewed against the backdrop of the relative economic progress made by Bloemfontein’s black residents during the 1920s. As a result, a sizeable class of “educated and advanced natives”,³³² who managed to lift themselves out of abject poverty, emerged. This class included tradespeople (tailors, dressmakers, shoemakers, masons, blacksmiths and carpenters), semi-professionals (shop assistants, chefs, waiters, clerks, messengers, interpreters and other low-ranking civil servants) and professionals (nurses and teachers), and because of their improved economic position, they were able to spend more on their houses and living environments. Consequently, an increasingly visible class distinction began to develop between this group and the “unsophisticated types”,³³³ namely those location residents who were either unemployed or who had to make a living as low-paid domestic servants, manual labourers and garden labourers. Superintendent Cooper considered this socio-economic trend as significant, especially the financially-able group’s ability to significantly contribute to Batho’s beautification. He argued that this group’s efforts to “improve their housing, their use of good furnishings, pictures and ornaments and the laying out of flower and vegetable gardens is an indication of a class distinction as pronounced among the natives as among the Europeans.”³³⁴

In 1934, a black court interpreter, John Mancoe, published a comprehensive guide on Bloemfontein’s black and coloured residents. The *First edition of the Bloemfontein Bantu and Coloured people’s directory* contained information on the social lives of the location

³²⁸ Barnes was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1922 to March 1923.

³²⁹ E.J. Solomon, “Bloemfontein Native Location”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 19.8.1922, p. 3.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² HP: AD 1765, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1931-1932*, p. 2.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³³⁴ *Ibid.* See also HP: AD 1765, *Report on locations 1936*, p. 3.

residents written by a black person from the perspective of the location residents, specifically those who lived in Batho, Bochabela and Heatherdale. The guide included, among others, information on public organisations and societies that were active in the locations, burial societies, financial institutions, musical groups and bands, a list of the main trades and occupations in the locations, sports clubs and biographical sketches of key personalities. This valuable source of information painted a picture of unexpectedly rich and varied social lives which not only compared well with those of the whites but which, in some cases, must have been even richer. Who would have expected golf clubs, tennis clubs, cricket clubs, dancing clubs, a photographic society, and an African Savings and Credit Institute in a directory for black location residents, circa 1934? Information included under the headings ‘Location Streets’ and ‘Buildings of note’ is important for the purpose of this discussion, especially the descriptions of noteworthy public buildings, houses and gardens. Based on Mancoe’s descriptions of Batho’s man-made landscape, it is argued that despite the economic recession of the late 1920s and early 1930s, an influential black middle-class had established itself there. Noteworthy is the fact that members of this economic class also had their preferred status symbols, most notably a house with a wooden floor, a stoep or covered verandah and, of course, a well-laid-out garden.³³⁵

Among the numerous private houses listed in Mancoe’s directory were the blockman, John Mogaecho; and his wife, Emily’s (née Matsepe) house on the corner of Moiloa Street and Choane Street in Batho’s Four-and-Six section. The Mogaechos’ residence, known as Kanye, was singled out for its impressive “front verandah and cemented stoep”³³⁶ (Image 5/13). As had been the case with the Mogaechos’ house, other than being a status symbol, *stoeps and verandahs served an important practical purpose in Batho*. Despite the fact that the average four-room Batho house was more spacious than the typical four-room Waaihoek house, Batho’s residents had to *integrate the outdoor spaces around their houses into their indoor living spaces*. Most of the residents, including the Mogaechos, socialised in the open air, most often in the steets, and preferred to live around instead of inside their houses, especially during spring and summer. Furthermore, families were big; therefore, they had to create additional outdoor living areas in order to maximise the available indoor space. Stoeps and verandahs, no matter how small, provided this much-needed living space. As had been

³³⁵ Mancoe, *passim*; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 286-288; Shannon, p. 15.

³³⁶ Mancoe, p. 54.

the case with stoeps and verandahs in the white suburbs, in Batho, these spaces also functioned as both transitional³³⁷ and living spaces. On the one hand, the stoep and verandah served as a transitional space between the house and front garden, and in cases where a front garden was lacking, between the house, the pavement and the street (Image 5/14). On the other hand, stoeps and verandahs also became extensions of the house – specifically the living room – and functioned as additional rooms.³³⁸ As will be discussed in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9, the addition of tall-clipped hedges and green ‘walls’ further extended the outside living spaces by creating outdoor ‘rooms’.

Apart from its verandah and stoep, the Mogaechos’ house was also known for its attractive front garden. Emily Mogaecho, who hailed from a family for which gardening was “an in-bred thing”,³³⁹ laid out the garden during the late 1920s. Although the garden was known for its flower varieties, especially cut flowers and roses,³⁴⁰ the single outstanding element was the impeccably-clipped privet hedge or ‘fedge’ which ran the entire length of the property facing Moilola Street. Planted on the inside of a wire-netting fence, the hedge screened the verandah from the street in order to secure privacy for the family³⁴¹ (Image 5/15). It appears as though gardening had been ‘an in-bred thing’ for many other Batho home owners as well, since attractive gardens - many of them surrounding the houses - were in no short supply. Apart from Moilola Street, Hamilton Road and Lovedale Road also became known for their lush front gardens. One of the best-known gardens in Lovedale Road belonged to the health inspector, Temba Msikinya.³⁴² According to Mancoe, the house was complemented by a “nicely-planned garden.”³⁴³ Not far from Msikinya’s garden stood one of Batho’s landmarks, namely the double-storey house of Thomas Mapikela. Known as Ulundi-Kaya, this house, with its two verandahs, was built between 1923 and 1926. Apart from being a political and

³³⁷ For more information on the stoep and verandah as transitional spaces, see Chapter 2 and Chapter 4.

³³⁸ Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 287; Ras & Coetzee, p. 130; Shannon, p. 15.

³³⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms P. Mokgele, Bochabela*, 16.6.2013.

³⁴⁰ For more information on this aspect of the garden, see Chapter 8.

³⁴¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M. Mogaecho, Batho*, 9.4.2013; D. du Bruyn, “The story of a township garden: Mogrey’s family recollections”, *Culna* 68, November 2013, pp. 34-35.

³⁴² Msikinya wrote a column for *Umteteli wa Bantu* under the pseudonym Abmet.

³⁴³ Mancoe, p. 53.

community leader, Mapikela was also a builder, carpenter, cabinetmaker and gardener.³⁴⁴ Not only was the house “suitably fashioned and furnished according to modern tastes”,³⁴⁵ to quote Mancoe, it was also suitably complemented by a handsome garden which, according to the popular taste, was enclosed by a clipped hedge (Image 5/16).

Apart from private houses, Mancoe’s ‘buildings of note’ also included churches, their parsonages and other public buildings. Most of these buildings had gardens laid out in front of them, such as the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and its adjacent parsonage in Gonyane Street, Four-and-Six. The church (Image 5/17) and thirteen-room parsonage with its “triangular verandah”³⁴⁶ (Image 5/18) were known for their immaculate clipped privet hedges. These gardens, which also boasted an abundance of roses, could be described as ‘hedge gardens’ because hedges were such a prominent feature. Another parsonage known for its garden – more precisely its “spacious garden”³⁴⁷ – was the parsonage of the St John’s Wesleyan Church in Lavers Street in the Mahlomola section of Batho. Unfortunately, the design of this garden (as well as that of many of Batho’s other historical gardens) remains unknown. It must be noted that since Bochabela’s founding in 1925, gardens were also laid out there and that the style of Bochabela’s gardens (and architecture) greatly resembled Batho’s, as may be seen in two rare photographs of Bochabela houses and their hedge gardens: the one belonged to the educator, Rakhosi Moikangoa (Image 5/19), and the other to Geelbooi Mofokeng who, according to his daughter, Maria Marumo (born 1938), worked as a general worker at the Ramblers Club and sports ground in Bloemfontein³⁴⁸ (Image 5/20). Other than churches and parsonages, public buildings were also known for their attractive gardens. One such building was the Batho Community Hall, which opened in 1922. The hall, which was situated near Ulundi-Kaya and the Batho police station on the triangle formed by Fort Hare Road, Hamilton Road and Community Street, was described by Mancoe as “picturesquely situated” and “beautifully surrounded by shrubbery trees, plants and flowers.”³⁴⁹ This garden was laid out by the municipality’s Public Works and Parks

³⁴⁴ Twala, pp. 63-67; D. du Bruyn, “Oral testimonies as a source of community history, with special reference to the Batho Project, Bloemfontein”, *South African Journal of Cultural History* 24(2), November 2010, pp. 9-10.

³⁴⁵ Mancoe, p. 55.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.M. Marumo, Batho, 24.1.2012 & 28.10. 2014.*

³⁴⁹ Mancoe, p. 53.

Department and, during the 1920s and 1930s, it became the ‘gold standard’ for Batho’s gardeners, specifically as far as its variety and composition of shrubs and trees were concerned.³⁵⁰

The gardens mentioned in Mancoe’s directory were, of course, not the only attractive gardens in Batho during its early years. According to information obtained through oral history interviews conducted with long-time residents of Batho, ornamental gardens abounded in the garden location in the 1920s and 1930s. “Batho was a beautiful location in those days – it was green and there were many beautiful gardens everywhere”³⁵¹ remembered Sarah Mahabane. Of all Batho’s gardens, she had the clearest memories of the one made by her late father, Malachi Seleka, at the family’s home in Lovedale Road. Seleka, who worked as a gardener and groundsman at Grey College in town, “did not mind to come home and also be a gardener there.”³⁵² Seleka was very fond of hollyhocks and dahlias (*Dahlia pinnata*) – two types of flowers which were popular among Batho’s gardeners during the 1920s and 1930s. Seeds and tubers of new colours and varieties were eagerly exchanged. The Selekas’ vegetable garden boasted pumpkins, tomatoes (*Solanaceae spp.*), potatoes, spinach (*Amaranthaceae spp.*) and carrots (*Apiaceae spp.*). According to Mahabane, there were also pomegranates, grapes and peach trees on the property. Most of all, Mahabane remembered the clipped hedge in front of her parents’ garden. Maintained by her father, the razor-sharp hedge was not very high: “you could see over it”,³⁵³ Mahabane recalled. Apart from her parents’ garden, Mahabane also remembered David Tsatsinyane’s garden in Fenyang Street near the Kaffirfontein Spruit in the Rantjies section of Batho. The garden benefited from the water in the *spruit*; consequently, the property boasted a lush flower garden in front and a productive vegetable garden in the backyard. There were also fruit trees and grapes on the plot. Then there was Mr Mekoa’s garden near the Salvation Army’s building in Sesing Street in Four-and-Six. According to Mahabane, Mekoa had “a beautiful flower garden”³⁵⁴ and in it grew all the fashionable flowers of that time: dahlias, hollyhocks, chrysanthemums, asters (*Callistephus chinensis*) and roses.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁰ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 11.6.1938, p. 5; Mancoe, p. 37.

³⁵¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Another long-time Batho resident, Joy Direko (born 1944), vividly recalled the stories her parents, Michael and Nancy Mochochoko, told her about Batho’s gardens. Both her parents were teachers and her father was the principal of the Mangaung Primary School in Fort Hare Road in Batho. During the 1920s and 1930s, black learners of the lower primary standards had to take vocational subjects, including Gardening and Nature Study.³⁵⁶ Extensive flower and vegetable gardens were laid out on the school premises, and the Mochochokos’ garden, which had been laid out in 1935, benefited from the school gardens. Direko explained: “My mother’s garden was an ‘extension’ of the school gardens because the plants in her garden were leftovers from the school gardens.”³⁵⁷ The Mochochokos’ garden in Thepe Street in Sports included a formal ornamental front garden with rectangular flowerbeds and was planted with hollyhocks, dahlias and roses. Potatoes and tomatoes grew in the small vegetable garden in the backyard.³⁵⁸ Another Batho resident, Mary Goodman (born 1961), remembered the garden made by her grandparents, Jacob and Isabella Nare, in Hamilton Road in Sports. The garden, which had been laid out by Isabella in the 1930s, had a beautiful front flower garden with dahlias, asters and, according to Goodman, “white roses – Isabella loved white roses!”³⁵⁹ There were also “apple trees and grapes in the backyard”³⁶⁰ recalled Goodman.

While attractive front flower gardens had certainly been the norm in Batho during the 1920s and 1930s, not all of Batho’s gardens were memorable as a result of their flowers. Some gardens were remembered for their topiary, specifically their clipped hedges, and often for their clipped hedges only. One such garden belonged to the Sebegoe family who lived right next to the Mochochokos in Thepe Street (Image 5/21). The Sebegoes’ granddaughter, Florence Segoe (born 1940), explained that the house was built by her husband, Jacob Segoe’s grandparents, known as Pa and Ma Sebegoe during the late 1930s. The house was situated right on the street with only a small space left open between the sidewalk and the house’s verandah. Behind the Sebegoes’ house was a big backyard with a huge vine arbour

³⁵⁶ For more information on school gardening, see Chapter 6.

³⁵⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms J.M. Direko*, Batho, 11.11.2014.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms G.M. Goodman*, Batho, 27 & 29.10.2014.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

that produced a variety of grapes. This typical Dutch-style layout, referred to earlier in this chapter and discussed in previous chapters, allowed room for only a clipped hedge and, in some cases, narrow flowerbeds. In the Sebegoes' case, there were both but it was the beautiful clipped privet hedge that happened to be the main feature.³⁶¹ According to Florence, the hedge in question was planted by the Sebegoes' son-in-law, Peter Segoe (Jacob's father), who lived with his wife, Nellie (née Sebegoe), and her parents. After the Sebegoes had passed away, Jacob and Florence went to live with Peter and Nellie. Florence recalled that the hedge had always been clipped in the same way that her father-in-law had clipped it, namely a rectangular shape with a flat surface. In fact, its shape had become a Segoe family tradition. According to Florence, the hedge, which became like a solid dark green 'wall', was much envied by other Batho gardeners who aspired to have a similar hedge in front of their houses.³⁶²

5.4.9 “A formal layout with stone edges”: formality, topiary and tangible evidence

Apart from the fact that all of the previously-mentioned ornamental gardens were originally laid out during the 1920s and 1930s, these gardens were *semi-vernacular gardens because most of them shared two more characteristics: firstly, a predominantly formal and regimented layout and, secondly, the presence of topiary in the form of a clipped hedge or hedges which served either a functional or an aesthetic purpose*. Concerning the first characteristic, namely the formal layout, the claim is based on oral testimonies and tangible evidence provided by remnants of original garden layouts found on a number of Batho's plots. Mahabane testified that in the case of her parents' garden both the flower and the vegetable beds were rectangular in shape. “My mother liked straight lines”³⁶³ Mahabane remembered and, according to her, this preference resulted in a regimented and formal garden layout. The gardens of public buildings, such as churches and schools, were also predominantly formal. One such example was the garden laid out in front of the Mangaung Primary School which, according to Direko, “had a formal layout with stone edges around

³⁶¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms F.K. Segoe*, Batho, 4.11.2014.

³⁶² *Ibid.* See also D. du Bruyn, “A garden is not a garden without a hedge: the story of the Segoe family's Batho garden”, *Culna* 70, November 2015, pp. 11-13.

³⁶³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane*, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014.

the flowerbeds.”³⁶⁴ Tangible evidence also provided design clues and, in some cases, the existing gardens still reflect the original layout or design blueprint, such as the mentioned Mangaung Primary School’s garden (Image 5/22). In other cases, the original garden had vanished completely but remnants of former brick-edged flowerbeds and the original boundaries of the garden reveal the basic outline of the authentic design. Although scientific analysis of tangible remnants of historical or period gardens falls within the sub-discipline of garden archaeology³⁶⁵ and requires specialist knowledge, the garden historian may find the above-ground features, such as brick or stone edges, garden paths, terrace retaining walls, steps, irrigation channels and rills, drains, wells, old standpipes with taps and garden ornaments, useful as pieces of physical evidence to visually reconstruct the original design and layout of a garden³⁶⁶ (Image 5/23).

Concerning the second characteristic, namely the presence of topiary, sources such as old photographs, living remnants of privet hedges planted during the 1920s and 1930s³⁶⁷ and oral testimonies provided evidence to substantiate the claim concerning the presence of topiary in Batho’s early gardens. Since the laying out of gardens in Batho commenced in all earnest, the Municipality of Bloemfontein encouraged gardeners to enclose or fence-in their gardens by means of wire-netting or fences of an approved type, which included living hedges. In 1920, the council approved an amount of £120 for “the purpose of fencing the gardens and grounds of the Locations”³⁶⁸ in order to prevent gardens, particularly allotment gardens, from being damaged by stray animals. Initially, many gardeners opted for wire fences because fencing material was still affordable. During the 1930s, especially after the economic depression of 1929-1933, wire became more expensive and, as a result, many

³⁶⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms J.M. Direko, Batho, 11.11.2014.*

³⁶⁵ The analysis of below-ground features falls within the professional domain of the trained garden archaeologist. Ideally, the garden historian should collaborate with the garden archaeologist to integrate documentary research, oral history, field work and excavation in order to analyse, interpret and visually reconstruct historical working-class and poor people’s gardens, such as Batho’s topiary gardens. J. Roberts, “What is garden archaeology?” <http://www.ihbc.org.uk/context_archive/51/gazebo_dir/gazebo_s.html>, s.a. (Accessed: 3.11.2010).

³⁶⁶ K.L. Gleason, “To bound and to cultivate: an introduction to the archaeology of gardens and fields” in N.F. Miller and K.L. Gleason (eds), *The archaeology of garden and field*, pp. 1-22; C. Currie, *Garden archaeology: a handbook*, pp. 5-6, 8-9, 27-32, 147; J. McIntosh, *The practical archaeologist: how we know what we know about the past*, pp. 45, 91; D. Jacques, “The progress of garden archaeology”, *The Journal of Garden History* 17(1), 1997, pp. 3-10.

³⁶⁷ Well-maintained privet hedges may survive for up to a century and longer. Personal communication: Dr P.C. Zietsman, Botany Department, National Museum, Bloemfontein, 25.7.2017.

³⁶⁸ *The Friend*, 25.8.1920, p. 7. See also *The Friend*, 15.10.1920, p. 6.

gardeners opted for clipped hedges. The council argued that the absence of “fencing of a durable and attractive type, has a depressing effect both materially and aesthetically”³⁶⁹ on its efforts to beautify Batho. Since then the planting of hedges as a means of enclosing Batho’s plots had increased manifold. Clipped hedges not only served as a boundary between adjacent plots but also between the sidewalk and the street (public space) and the front garden and stoep or verandah (semi-private space). Since the hedge was often perforated by either a centrally-located garden gate or a side gate, or both, the hedge functioned as a *threshold between the public space on the one hand and the semi-private spaces (garden, stoep, verandah and backyard) and private space (house) on the other*. The garden gate also functioned as a ‘filter’ which kept out the unwanted and allowed only the wanted to enter the private domain.³⁷⁰

The function of the clipped hedge as a threshold should be considered within the context of Du Preez and Swart’s argument that the *threshold between inside and outside* is an important feature of not only South African settler architecture but also vernacular architecture.³⁷¹ This argument ties in with another argument of theirs, namely that the vernacular architecture of South Africa’s interior consciously endeavoured to create *secure environments and intimacy* in the infinity of the surrounding Orange Free State veld. This argument is applicable to Batho’s early years when the new location’s lonely houses and gardens were surrounded by mostly bare veld. By laying out gardens and, most importantly, by planting hedges to enclose their gardens, Batho’s residents strove towards creating intimacy and a sense of security amid the vast expanse of the adjacent veld. Once again, the ancient concept of the garden as an enclosed entity is applicable. However, despite the importance of the clipped hedge as both a threshold and an element which created intimacy, the fact that Batho’s residents lived most of their social lives outside their houses and street life was part of daily social interaction, must also be taken into account. Thus, the need for security and intimacy was balanced with the need for social interaction and interface with street life.³⁷²

³⁶⁹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/28, Mayor’s minute 1937*, p. 17.

³⁷⁰ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/27, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 6.7.1936, pp. 1-2.

³⁷¹ For a discussion of this argument, see Chapter 2.

³⁷² K. du Preez & G. Swart, “The interior – Free State, Northern Cape & Karoo” in O. Joubert (ed.), *10+ years, 100+ buildings: architecture in a democratic South Africa*, pp. 220-221; A. Nauta, *Waihoek community museum: reconstructing the lost narrative* (Unpublished M.Arch. dissertation, University of the Free State, 2013), pp. 75, 77; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 287.

5.5 “The idea of beautifying the surroundings”: the making of a garden location (2)

5.5.1 “To improve the wholesomeness of their home surroundings”: water supply, communal taps and water tariffs

As had been the case with Bloemfontein’s white gardeners, the single most important element on which Batho’s gardeners depended for maintaining their gardens was the availability of a reliable water supply. Most of what has been discussed in Chapter 4 on Bloemfontein’s water supply is, to an extent, also applicable to Batho since the locations received most of their water from the same main sources as the white suburbs, namely the waterworks at Mazelspoort and Mockes Dam.³⁷³ The most notable difference was that whereas in the case of the white residents in town, water was laid on right up to their properties and into their homes, Batho’s residents had to fetch their water in buckets from stand-alone taps in the streets. Since Batho’s establishment, each new completed section of the location was furnished with running water in the form of outside taps on standpipes installed at intervals on the pavements. For example, in June 1924, the council approved an amount of £60 for the laying on of water to new plots in Batho and, in September of the same year, an additional £130 was allocated to meet new demands due to further extension of the location.³⁷⁴

The communal taps might have been adequate for basic domestic use but certainly not for gardening needs as well. By the mid-1920s, a total of 85 such taps had been installed. Since water for both household and gardening purposes had to be carried in buckets from the communal taps to the plots, the watering of gardens was physically demanding. One solution was to make use of the services offered by enterprising location residents who transported water in buckets, drums or barrels on wheelbarrows or in small carts for a fee. However, for most Batho gardeners, this service was not an affordable option. Needless to say, the negative effect of the inaccessibility of water on the newly-laid-out gardens became visible during the hot summer months. In his annual report for 1925-1926, Cooper expressed his frustration with the state of affairs and confessed: “I wish funds permitted the erection of windmills”.³⁷⁵ The only feasible solution was to provide more standpipes with taps at

³⁷³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/25, *Report on the water supply of the City of Bloemfontein*, 14.2.1927, *passim*.

³⁷⁴ *The Friend*, 3.6.1924, p. 7; 2.9.1924, p. 12; 30.7.1927, p. 11.

³⁷⁵ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 2.

convenient intervals. By the early 1930s, Batho's gardeners voiced their frustration with the inadequate water supply and submitted a request for more taps to the Native Administration Department. The main reason for their request: "to improve the wholesomeness of their home surroundings".³⁷⁶

Other than the long distances between the plots and the communal taps, another water-related issue which affected Batho's gardeners was the water tariff charged for location residents. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, this issue had become a controversy, particularly in the light of the council's decision to introduce a special water tariff for the city's white gardeners.³⁷⁷ In light of this concession, as well as the rate of unemployment and economic hardship experienced by many location residents, the council was requested to consider a reduction of the water tariff for the locations. The Native Affairs Committee also recommended to the council that it had to consider the question of charging the Native Administration Department (on behalf of the locations) a lower rate than the current 3 shillings per 1 000 gallons.³⁷⁸ This tariff, which in effect, meant a direct charge to plotholders of 1 shilling per 1 000 gallons per month, included water consumed by gardening and for tree-planting.³⁷⁹ Earlier, the council approved a special rate of 1 shilling per 1 000 gallons for water used by white consumers – predominantly gardeners – in excess of 5 000 gallons.³⁸⁰

Since Bloemfontein's white consumers, who used less than 5 000 gallons had to pay 3 shillings and 10½ pennies per 1 000 gallons, the Public Works Committee recommended that the water charge for location residents be increased rather than reduced. The mayor, Mr E.M. de Beer,³⁸¹ vehemently opposed a reduction of the water tariff for location residents because, in his opinion, "the Council seemed to be favouring the Natives in every possible way and ignoring the prior claims of the Europeans."³⁸² De Beer, supported by Councillor T. Connor, held a minority view on this matter, though. At a council meeting, it was pointed

³⁷⁶ HP: AD 1765, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1931-1932*, p. 3.

³⁷⁷ For more information, see Chapter 4.

³⁷⁸ FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/36, *Report of City Engineer: re proposed water tariff for gardening purposes*, 10.5.1929, p. 5; FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/47, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 15.5.1931, p. 6.

³⁷⁹ HP: AD 1765, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1929-1930*, p. 3; HP: AD 1765, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1931-1932*, p. 3.

³⁸⁰ *The Friend*, 24.9.1929, p. 9; 26.9.1929, p. 8.

³⁸¹ De Beer was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1930 to March 1932.

³⁸² *The Friend*, 29.5.1931, p. 10.

out that apart from the fact that Batho's residents and other location residents had to fetch their water over long distances from comparatively few taps, their economic circumstances negatively affected their ability to pay a higher water tariff. Finally, it was resolved that the water tariff for location residents had to remain at 3 shillings per 1 000 gallons because, as was explained by Councillor Deane, "the water comes from Mazelspoort in one set of pipes whether it is intended for the location or the town."³⁸³ Apart from the water from Mazelspoort, a number of boreholes with 'windmills' (wind pumps) supplemented Batho's main water supply.³⁸⁴

5.5.2 "Provision be made for small garden allotments": the laying out of market-gardens

One of the resolutions of a conference on 'Native Affairs' held in Johannesburg in November 1924 requested that in terms of the Native (Urban Areas) Act, "garden allotments"³⁸⁵ must be provided in the Union's locations. The resolution stated "that, considering the moral and social as well as the economic value of Natives having garden plots in which to grow small produce, it is a recommendation of this Conference to those Municipalities which have land available, that, in addition to adequate building stands, provision be made for small garden allotments."³⁸⁶ Not only was there adequate land available for the laying out of allotments³⁸⁷ on the outskirts of Batho, but Bloemfontein's town council apparently understood the 'moral and social as well as the economic value' of allotments. The council was committed to encouraging not only gardening in general but also market-gardening by the "granting of allotments".³⁸⁸ In fact, the allocation of allotments to qualifying plottolders had been a decision taken by the council some time before the mentioned conference on 'Native Affairs' recommended it. In the mayor's minute for the year 1921-1922, it was reported that "during the past year 50 Allotment [sic] gardens have been laid out".³⁸⁹ All allotment gardens,

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/3, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 2.9.1919, p. 4.

³⁸⁵ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 15.11.1924, p. 2.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷ For more information on the origin and history of allotments and allotment gardens as vernacular gardens, see Chapter 2.

³⁸⁸ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 2.

³⁸⁹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor's minute 1921-1922*, p. 14.

including “mealie plot allotments”,³⁹⁰ had to be fenced-in and kept free from weeds. A Garden Committee was later appointed to supervise the allocation of allotments.³⁹¹

Initially, most allotments were allocated on the banks of the Kaffirfontein Spruit where access to a reliable water supply could be secured. However, these allotments were situated too far away for the residents of Cape Stands, Mahlomola, Newclare and Sports. Therefore, additional allotments were allocated on the open piece of land between Cook Avenue and Hamilton Road. These allotments were watered with borehole water and water obtained from a concrete tank. According to Mahabane, her father maintained an allotment garden near Cook Avenue and “he planted vegetables and mealies and pumpkins there”.³⁹² Maria Magengenene (born 1927) recalled that other than vegetables and maize, many of the allotment gardens laid out in Cook Avenue contained peach trees.³⁹³ Mahabane remembered that the municipality also allowed Batho residents to lay out vegetable gardens in the open space between Batho and Dr Belcher Road, today known as Tambo Square or Tambo informal settlement (Image 5/8). There “the people planted vegetables and mealies and *magapu* [water melons]”,³⁹⁴ she explained. In 1927, the Superintendent of Locations reported that Batho’s allotment gardens “have proved a great success.”³⁹⁵ According to him, the location residents were increasingly appreciative of the nutritional value of vegetables which, in turn, led to an increase in demand. Consequently, the need arose for market-gardeners who could not only produce enough vegetables to satisfy the rising demand, but who could also sell their produce on the local market.³⁹⁶ Considering the discussion of the characteristics of the agricultural garden and horticultural field in Chapter 2, it is argued that Batho’s allotment gardens may be described as such. *These allotment gardens blurred the boundaries between the traditional concept of a garden and a field; therefore, they were neither strictly ‘garden’ nor strictly ‘field’.*

³⁹⁰ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/6, *Minutes of adjourned meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 8.4.1924, p. 4.

³⁹¹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/25, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 6.12.1934, p. 1.

³⁹² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014.*

³⁹³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Magengenene, Batho, 23.9.2014.*

³⁹⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014.*

³⁹⁵ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1926-1927*, p. 3.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

5.5.3 “Maraka”: a fresh produce market for Batho

Since Batho’s earliest years, Sere Square (also known as Marabastad Square), located in the heart of Batho’s Cape Stands section, had been the venue of the location’s fresh produce market. Batho’s allotment gardeners and domestic gardeners, who produced more fresh vegetables than they needed for their own consumption, sold their produce at Sere Square’s market.³⁹⁷ Since this market was informally organised and not subject to any municipal regulations, the quality of the fresh produce was often not up to standard. Therefore, the municipality decided to subject Batho’s fresh produce market to formal control.³⁹⁸ Early in 1929, a new fresh produce market, which consisted of a market area with a market building, was erected on the area bounded by African Road, Fort Hare Road and Rubusana Street.³⁹⁹ In terms of the Location Market Regulations, the new market, known as the Location Market, was purposed for “the sale or disposal of fruit, vegetables, or any other produce, fish, meat or livestock”.⁴⁰⁰ Sellers of any produce had to lease the use of a table or ground space within the enclosed market area from the council at a fee. Funds raised in this way were used to pay the market master.⁴⁰¹

Apparently, the new market received the support of Batho’s residents and market-gardeners because mere months after the new market came into use Cooper reported that “many people had rented stalls and were now trying to earn an honest livelihood by the sale of their produce, which, in the great majority of cases, was excellent in quality.”⁴⁰² Thus, it is argued that towards the end of the 1920s, the growing of fresh produce must have been widespread in Batho, most notably on the location’s allotments. Furthermore, Cooper’s observation indicates that a class of successful market-gardeners had been established and that they successfully utilised the allotments and their own domestic gardens for the growing of

³⁹⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by K.J. Pudumo with: Ms M.L. Machogo, Batho, 26.4.2017; Interviews conducted by P. Letsatsi with: Ms T.G. Mampe, Batho, 3.3.2011; Ms A.S. Motleleng, Batho, 8.3.2012.*

³⁹⁸ Bloemfontein Public Library (hereafter BPL): *Official Gazette of the Orange Free State 25, 10.5.1929, Administrator’s Notice 60 of 1929, Municipality of Bloemfontein: municipal notice*, p. 504; H. Haasbroek, “Die oprigting en groeipyne van die nuwe Bloemfonteinse Mark (1925) op Baumannplein”, *South African Journal of Cultural History* 29(2), December 2015, pp. 93-94; H. Haasbroek, *Spikkels en spatsels uit Bloemfontein se verlede*, p. 136.

³⁹⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/15, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 9.1.1929, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁰ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/16, Municipality of Bloemfontein: Location Market Regulations 1929*, p. 1.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.* See also Rheinallt Jones & Saffery, p. 338.

⁴⁰² FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/16, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 24.7.1929, p. 4.

vegetables and fruit. During the 1930s, the demand for fresh fruit and vegetables exceeded local supply. As a result, left-over produce which could not be sold at Bloemfontein's main fresh produce market, was sold at the Location Market at discount prices.⁴⁰³ According to Mahabane, who as a child often visited the market with her mother during the 1930s, Batho's residents called the market "Maraka",⁴⁰⁴ a corruption of the Afrikaans word *mark*, meaning 'market'. Apart from cheaper meat cuts, vegetables, including cabbages (*Brassica oleracea* spp.), pumpkins, tomatoes, onions, green beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris* spp.), butternuts (*Cucurbita moschata*) and flowers, such as roses and hollyhocks, were also sold there.⁴⁰⁵

5.5.4 "Effort should be made to encourage the natives to plant trees": the Bloemfontein municipality's tree-planting initiatives

One of the most important aspects of the Bloemfontein municipality's beautification efforts in Batho was its tree-planting projects. The importance of these efforts not only lay in the fact that they contributed significantly to the greening of Batho but they also set a powerful example to the residents in terms of what could be achieved with the extensive planting of trees. Bloemfontein's municipality had, of course, become known for the extensive planting of trees all over the city⁴⁰⁶ long before Batho was founded. Organised tree-planting schemes implemented in Waaihoek and elsewhere were mentioned earlier. Since Batho's founding, the municipality's tree-planting efforts intensified notably. The first tree-planting project commenced in 1918 and involved the planting of "a belt of trees 3000 feet by 100 feet along the Railway line" which extended "from the [Kaffirfontein] Spruit to the Hamilton Crossing."⁴⁰⁷ This dense 'belt of trees', which had been planted to conceal Batho from the sight of white train passengers,⁴⁰⁸ consisted mostly of eucalyptus species, including *Eucalyptus melliodora* and *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*⁴⁰⁹ (Image 5/7). Since then the

⁴⁰³ *The Friend*, 20.7.1939, p. 8.

⁴⁰⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane*, Batho 7 & 20.11.2014.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ For more information on tree-planting in Bloemfontein, see Chapter 4.

⁴⁰⁷ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/2, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Parks, Treeplanting and Cemeteries Committee*, 8.10.1918, p. 1. See also FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/2, Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 7.10.1918, p. 1.

⁴⁰⁸ Compare the planting of this tree buffer with the rows of trees planted along the same railway track in 1909 and 1910 to obscure Waaihoek, situated on the other side of the track, from white passengers' view.

⁴⁰⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/4, Report of Superintendent of Parks and City Lands*, 2.2.1922, p. 1.

municipality executed its tree-planting efforts in Batho with determination: trees were planted *en masse* on the location's sidewalks, around the cemetery,⁴¹⁰ as windbreaks, and in open spaces so as to create "healthy attractions"⁴¹¹ for the residents. "Ornamental trees and shrubs"⁴¹² were planted in front of Batho's many new churches and public buildings, including the police station and Community Hall.⁴¹³ Barely five years after Batho's founding it was reported that no less than 10 000 trees had been planted in the new location.⁴¹⁴ Generally, trees were planted "as opportunity arises"⁴¹⁵ which, in practice, meant that trees were planted as often as they were made available by the municipal nursery in King's Park. During the early 1930s, tree-planting endeavours were extended to Batho's boundaries, including the Kaffirfontein Spruit, which formed the boundary between Batho and its immediate neighbour, Bochabela. "Willows and other suitable trees"⁴¹⁶ were planted on the banks of the Kaffirfontein Spruit (Image 5/9) and also in the vicinity of the Kaffirfontein Dam.⁴¹⁷

For the purpose of this discussion, it is important to stress that senior municipal officials, most notably superintendents Cook and Cooper, saw a *direct link between gardening and tree-planting*. These officials, specifically Cooper, believed that a human being's desire to plant trees automatically triggered the desire to garden. In the mid-1920s, when tree-planting efforts in Batho were in full swing, he reported that "gardening and tree planting are encouraged",⁴¹⁸ a clear indication that both tree-planting and gardening were encouraged at the same time and also in tandem with each other. Cooper enjoyed the unwavering support of other senior officials, such as the Assistant Superintendent of Parks, Mr A.F. Baker. Baker, who was later appointed Superintendent of Parks, promised Cooper "every

⁴¹⁰ The so-called 'Native cemetery' or 'Location cemetery' was located in the Cape Stands section of Batho. Trees were planted around the cemetery to screen it off from public view. FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/18, *Report of Curator of Parks*, 19.9.1925, p. 19.

⁴¹¹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor's minute 1928-1929*, p. 15; FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor's minute 1929*, p. vii.

⁴¹² FSPA: MBL 1/2/5/1/4, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 26.10.1921, p. 7.

⁴¹³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/5/1/2, *Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 3.4.1919, p. 1; FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/6, *Minutes of meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 4.7.1923, pp. 4-5.

⁴¹⁴ FSPA: MBL 1/2/5/1/3, *Minutes of meeting of Parks and Lands Committee*, 5.10.1921, p. 1; FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor's minute 1923-1924*, p. 5.

⁴¹⁵ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 2.

⁴¹⁶ *The Friend*, 3.10.1934, p. 8.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁸ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 2.

assistance”⁴¹⁹ in the furthering of tree-planting and beautification efforts in Batho. Apart from setting an example with the organised planting of trees, Cooper argued that the most effective way to encourage tree-planting was to supply trees to residents free of charge.⁴²⁰ During the 1920s and 1930s, thousands of trees were distributed among Batho’s residents. In January 1923, it was reported that “2,673 Ornamental [sic] and shelter trees”⁴²¹ were issued, which brought the total number of trees planted in Batho to 30 141.⁴²²

Among the mentioned ‘ornamental trees’ distributed among Batho’s residents were copious amounts of privet species (mostly *Ligustrum ovalifolium* and *Ligustrum japonicum*⁴²³) which, in due course, became the staples of Batho’s topiary gardens, whether in the form of clipped hedges or as stand-alone topiary features. The fact that recipients of the complimentary trees and plants were instructed to plant them in their gardens, once again, emphasises the direct link between tree-planting and gardening. Many of the saplings that had been planted, most notably the privets, were never allowed to grow into mature trees but were shaped into topiary. Consequently, the boundary between the trees that had been meant for shade and those that had been turned into ornamental features, such as topiary, became blurred. Towards the late 1930s, when the municipality’s tree-planting efforts had petered out somewhat, councillor and former mayor, G.H. Smit,⁴²⁴ made a plea for re-implementing a “system of tree planting”⁴²⁵ in Batho. Smit, one of Bloemfontein’s well-known garden personalities and a passionate gardener himself, argued that every “effort should be made to encourage the natives to plant trees in front of their homes.”⁴²⁶ He championed the idea that residents should take ownership of their gardens and was convinced that “the natives would take pride in the trees which they would look upon as their own”.⁴²⁷

Although mostly successful, the tree-planting efforts in Batho had also met with various challenges. Apart from the fact that these efforts had lost steam towards the end of the 1930s,

⁴¹⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/16, Report of Assistant Superintendent of Parks*, 11.2.1924, p. 4.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/4, Agenda for meeting of Parks and Lands Committee*, 19.1.1923, p. 3.

⁴²² *Ibid.*

⁴²³ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/15, Report of Superintendent of Parks and Lands*, 13.4.1923 (Addendum: *King’s Park Nursery: stock return of trees & shrubs year ending 31/3/1923*), p. 1.

⁴²⁴ Smit was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1939 to March 1940.

⁴²⁵ FSPA: *MBL 1/1/1/34, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Town Council*, 28.8.1936, p. 453.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.* See also *The Friend*, 31.8.1936, p. 8.

⁴²⁷ FSPA: *MBL 1/1/1/34, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Town Council*, 28.8.1936, p. 453.

many trees were lost due to neglect, drought and theft. For example, in 1936 and 1937, a total of 6 000 trees were planted in Batho and Bochabela. However, due to the “absence of facilities for their attention”,⁴²⁸ that is, taps with running water and hosepipes, many of the trees were lost.⁴²⁹ In addition, trees were also vandalised, such as the “wanton destruction of young trees”⁴³⁰ by juveniles and children. For this reason, Smit suggested that “the idea of beautifying the surroundings”⁴³¹ should also be inculcated in school learners.⁴³²

5.5.5 “Provide the Natives with a park for their exclusive use”: a public park for Batho

As previously stated, the original blueprint for Batho’s layout (the Location Plan) made provision for a number of open spaces earmarked for the potential development into public parks, gardens and squares. By the early 1920s, no public park or garden had been developed yet in Batho and the council did not intend to do so at that time. The only existing proper squares were the mentioned Mapikela Square and Tantsi Square. Ironically, the development of a public park in Batho did not happen in response to demands made by Batho’s residents; it came about because of pressure from Bloemfontein’s white residents. By the early 1920s, the use of Bloemfontein’s public parks, gardens and squares⁴³³ became a political issue when white residents began to complain by means of letters written to local newspapers, most notably *The Friend* and *Die Volksblad*, about the presence of black people in public outdoor spaces. By then black and coloured residents were not prohibited by law from using such spaces but they were also not encouraged to do so. It started with a letter published in *The Friend* in May 1922 by a reader who complained that Warden Square, situated between the National Museum and the Fichardt Library in Charles Street, was being used as “a Native football ground”.⁴³⁴ Another reader, who wrote under the pseudonym “Annoyed”, also complained about Warden Square being used by black men as a football field and, above all, there was “the vulgar language used by the Natives”⁴³⁵ in the presence of white women and children. There were also complaints about Baumann Square, located in the centre of town,

⁴²⁸ *The Friend*, 3.4.1937, p. 3.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.* See also FSPA: *MBL 3/1/28, Mayor’s minute 1937*, p. 17.

⁴³⁰ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 12.6.1937, p. 5.

⁴³¹ FSPA: *MBL 1/1/34, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Town Council*, 28.8.1936, p. 453.

⁴³² *Ibid.* For more information on black school learners and gardening, see Chapter 6.

⁴³³ For more information on Bloemfontein’s public parks, gardens and squares, see Chapter 4.

⁴³⁴ *The Friend*, 1.5.1922, p. 4.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.12.1922, p. 4.

for being used by black people as a camping ground. A reader, Mr A.E. Smith, wrote that he and other residents who lived near the square were often “reminded of the insanitary conditions which constant camping on the same site may entail” because the “nearest public convenience is over half a mile away, the result may be imagined”.⁴³⁶

Although condescending, the white residents’ complaints were initially carefully worded and pragmatic but later the letters displayed unashamedly racist undertones. Readers complained about black child minders, so-called ‘nurse maids’, and their behaviour in the parks, most notably the popular Victoria Park.⁴³⁷ The council also received complaints from the city’s “respectable citizens” that “native children were monopolising the Maypole in the Victoria Park”.⁴³⁸ In its response, the council authorised the then Assistant Superintendent of Parks (Baker) to hand over to the police “any Natives who misbehave themselves in the Parks.”⁴³⁹ By the mid-1920s, the issue of blacks and coloureds using Bloemfontein’s public parks and gardens took the form of a heated debate among white residents, especially after the Pretoria Town Council issued a resolution which prohibited blacks from using Pretoria’s public parks and gardens. Needless to say, this development caused much indignation among the Union’s black population.⁴⁴⁰ At the same time, the Pretoria council’s decision seemed to have emboldened Bloemfontein’s whites. One of Bloemfontein’s civic associations, namely the Willows Citizens’ Association, convened a much-publicised meeting to discuss “the over-running of the parks by Natives of all conditions”⁴⁴¹ and they complained that, as a result, “European children cannot play in the Parks [sic] unmolested.”⁴⁴² The association’s members felt that because of the presence and behaviour of black people, Bloemfontein’s parks had become “anything but pleasure resorts for White people.”⁴⁴³ In response to this complaint, the council resolved that black people may enter the city’s public parks only when they were accompanied by whites and that a parks policeman be appointed to enforce this

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.8.1922, p. 4.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.9.1922, p. 7. For similar complaints concerning Victoria Park, see *The Friend*, 1.3.1928, p. 11. For more on Victoria Park, see Chapter 4.

⁴³⁸ FSPA: MBL 1/2/5/1/3, *Minutes of meeting of Parks and Lands Committee*, 18.8.1922, p. 2.

⁴³⁹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/15, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 5.12.1923, p. 16.

⁴⁴⁰ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 25.7.1925, p. 2.

⁴⁴¹ *The Friend*, 3.10.1925, p. 5. For similar complaints concerning Willows, see *The Friend*, 26.5.1927, p. 11.

⁴⁴² FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/27, *Agenda for ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 14.6.1927, p. 6.

⁴⁴³ *The Friend*, 3.10.1925, p. 5.

new arrangement.⁴⁴⁴ Since there were legal hurdles in the way of excluding black people from the city's parks on the basis of race, it was agreed that the only way out of the difficulty was to provide blacks with a park for their exclusive use.⁴⁴⁵ This suggestion is significant since it indicates an urge on the part of some whites to prohibit black people from using the city's public parks on the basis of providing them with a park of their own in the location, which happened to be Batho.

Towards the late 1920s, Bloemfontein's concerned white residents turned their focus to the zoo and King's Park, which had become popular recreation spots for black and white residents on Sunday afternoons. A reader of *The Friend* complained that too many blacks were allowed in the zoo, which prevented white visitors from getting close to the animal cages.⁴⁴⁶ This particular issue also prompted a heated reaction from readers of *Die Volksblad*, including one who reported as follows on "baanskopperige Kaffers"⁴⁴⁷ in the zoo: "My siel en dié van ander beskaafde mense is daar verlede Sondagmiddag deur 'n aantal ongepoetste jong naturelle uitgetrek. Hulle het daar voor die apehok hoogty gevier, blanke dames links en regs weggedu soos hulle hul oral ingewurm het, afkeer verwek met hul smerige aanmerkings en 'n barbaarse lawaai opgeskop."⁴⁴⁸ The council could no longer ignore these and other complaints, but at the same time, it did not know how best to handle the situation. The council's first reaction was to increase the zoo's entrance fee as a means to address the "native nuisance"⁴⁴⁹ (and, ultimately, "to keep Natives out"⁴⁵⁰) but this measure led to complaints that a raised fee made it unaffordable for poor whites and apartment dwellers who, in the absence of gardens of their own, often frequented King's Park and the zoo.⁴⁵¹ The council then requested that the Native Affairs Department grant it legal authority to

⁴⁴⁴ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/19, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 12.11.1925, p. 15.

⁴⁴⁵ *The Friend*, 3.10.1925, p. 5.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.3.1928, p. 11.

⁴⁴⁷ *Die Volksblad*, 20.7.1928, p. 10. "Rowdy Kaffirs". (Free translation)

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.7.1928, p. 10. "My soul and that of others were tempted last Sunday by a number of rude young natives. They congregated in front of the ape cage, shoved white ladies left and right as they pushed forward, and caused disgust with their foul remarks and kicked up a barbaric racket". (Free translation)

⁴⁴⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/33, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 13.9.1928, p. 5.

⁴⁵⁰ *The Friend*, 1.2.1929, p. 8.

⁴⁵¹ *Die Volksblad*, 31.1.1929, p. 8.

exclude blacks from the zoo and other public parks but was informed that it could not do so until it provided a park in Batho for the location residents' use.⁴⁵²

The idea of a park for Batho was not entirely new since the Native Affairs Committee had already suggested in the mid-1920s “the laying out of a large piece of ground near the Community Hall as a Park [sic] to afford facilities for the various sporting bodies which should also prove an attraction to residents during their hours of leisure”.⁴⁵³ In his annual report for 1926-1927, the mayor, Dr H.J. Steyn,⁴⁵⁴ referred to Batho's (and Bochabela's) “squares and parks”⁴⁵⁵ but he did not specify where they were located. In 1927, the council agreed to a “much-needed park”⁴⁵⁶ and authorised an amount of £60 “for laying out a park in Bantu [sic] Location”.⁴⁵⁷ Noteworthy is the fact that the amount had to be charged “against native revenue”,⁴⁵⁸ in other words, the expense of laying out the park had to be paid from taxes paid by the location residents. In due course, the Parks Department commenced with the beautifying of “an open space as a park and recreation ground in the location for the Natives”.⁴⁵⁹ Mayor Franklin justified this decision by arguing that the council was not doing any injustice to blacks because “he [black person] had his park into which the European could not come and surely the White man was entitled to a similar privilege.”⁴⁶⁰ In June 1928, the Native Affairs Committee reported that Batho's new park was still in a completely undeveloped state.⁴⁶¹

In December 1929, Batho's new park was officially declared in terms of the addition of Article 34A to the existing Location Regulations: “The area known as the Native Park is

⁴⁵² FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/32, Agenda for ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 9.6.1928, p. 14; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/16, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 14.2.1929, no p. no.

⁴⁵³ HP: *AD 1765, Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 4.

⁴⁵⁴ Steyn was mayor of Bloemfontein from August 1925 to March 1927.

⁴⁵⁵ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1926-1927*, p. 11.

⁴⁵⁶ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1927-1928*, p. 9.

⁴⁵⁷ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/27, Agenda for ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 14.6.1927, p. 14.

⁴⁵⁸ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/27, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 16.6.1927, p. 14.

⁴⁵⁹ *The Friend*, 31.1.1929, p. 12. See also *Die Volksblad*, 31.1.1929, p. 8; *The Friend*, 1.2.1929, p. 8.

⁴⁶⁰ *The Friend*, 31.1.1929, p. 12. For similar argument, see *The Friend*, 1.2.1929, p. 8.

⁴⁶¹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/32, Agenda for ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 9.6.1928, p. 14.

hereby set apart for the exclusive use of Natives.”⁴⁶² At the same time, new regulations were added to the existing Regulations for the Control of the Lake, Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces which prohibited blacks from using parks reserved for the exclusive use of whites, namely King’s Park, Hamilton Park, Victoria Park and President Hoffman Square. These new regulations, framed under Section 23(3) of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, stipulated that the mentioned parks were “for the exclusive use of non-natives” and that “any native who shall enter or be in any of the places mentioned in the said schedule shall be deemed to be guilty of an offence”.⁴⁶³ This regulation excluded blacks accompanied by white employers, black nurse maids in charge of white children and black garden labourers working in the parks. The behaviour of blacks allowed in the parks was also subjected to strict control: in September 1929, the Curator of Parks (Baker) reported that he was “having ‘Europeans only’ painted on the seats”⁴⁶⁴ in President Hoffman Square – a practice that became increasingly common in Bloemfontein’s parks and other public spaces. Concerning the zoo, it was decided to “permit Natives to enter the Zoo enclosure of King’s Park on such days, not being more than two in each week”.⁴⁶⁵ It was agreed that Tuesdays and Fridays would be set aside for black people to be allowed into the zoo enclosure.⁴⁶⁶

Needless to say, the above regulations were met with indignation by the location residents. During a meeting between council members and the Native Advisory Board held in June 1929, the blockmen argued that these regulations would cause “great hardship”⁴⁶⁷ for black people. Head blockman, Mapikela, who was known for his love of gardening and flowers, stated that the parks were an important source of knowledge on flowers and animals for black students and learners from Bloemfontein and other Orange Free State towns which had no parks. He warned that if the regulations were approved “then these students would be cut off from the one place where they could study the various animals and flowers.”⁴⁶⁸ Although coloureds were not specifically mentioned by name, they were, by implication, also affected

⁴⁶² BPL: *Official Gazette of the Orange Free State* 63, 13.12.1929, *Administrator’s Notice 191 of 1929, Municipality of Bloemfontein: additional location regulation*, p. 1663.

⁴⁶³ BPL: *Official Gazette of the Orange Free State* 63, 13.12.1929, *Administrator’s Notice 192 of 1929, Municipality of Bloemfontein: additional parks etc. regulations*, p. 1664.

⁴⁶⁴ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/37, Report of Curator of Parks*, 6.9.1929, p. 1.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁶ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/34, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 22.1.1929, p. 11; *The Friend*, 31.8.1929, p. 6; 31.1.1930, p. 13; *Die Volksblad*, 8.2.1930, p. 6.

⁴⁶⁷ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/16, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 25.6.1929, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

by the new rule concerning the zoo. In a letter addressed to the Native Affairs Committee, “residents of the Coloured Area”⁴⁶⁹ complained that they were also not allowed to visit the zoo on days other than Tuesdays and Fridays – a rule which they felt only applied to black location residents.⁴⁷⁰

It is unclear as to whether Batho’s new park was a park in the true sense of the word and whether it was, in any way, comparable to the parks in town. Concerning the progress in terms of the laying out of the park, Cooper reported to the council in May 1929 that “the recreation grounds”⁴⁷¹ had been laid out and fenced-in and that more than two thousand trees had been planted.⁴⁷² Cooper’s reference to ‘recreation grounds’ confirmed the impression that the park, which had been laid out on the corner of Hamilton Road and Lovedale Road, also doubled as a sports ground.⁴⁷³ Unfortunately, no visual records of Batho’s park survived; hence, this claim could not be verified. Not all were impressed with the park, though, including an associate of the St Patrick’s Mission, I. Chaloner, who questioned the “ridiculous pretence” that the location residents have a park of their own: “in no ordinary sense of the word can the unattractive piece of waste ground fenced off in the Location [Batho] be called a park.”⁴⁷⁴ From a garden perspective, the associate argued that “we are justly proud of our Location” but it was “not a Garden City [yet]”.⁴⁷⁵ Although better than nothing at all, Batho’s new park was no substitute for the three parks which had become the exclusive domain of Bloemfontein’s whites since December 1929. The new municipal parks regulations not only deprived Batho’s learners and students from an important source of botanical and zoological knowledge, but it also deprived Batho’s adult residents, specifically the gardeners among them, from a source of horticultural knowledge and gardening inspiration. Consequently, Batho’s residents had to look at other gardens as sources of knowledge and inspiration, including the domestic gardens of the white residents, albeit only for those who had access to them and, of course, the gardens already laid out in Batho. Alas,

⁴⁶⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/59, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 22.10.1934, p. 14. The ‘Coloured Area’ referred to Heatherdale.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/16, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 17.5.1929, p. 4.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

⁴⁷³ HP: *AD 1765, Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 4. Initially known as Ramblers, the park or recreation grounds became known as Masenkeng in later years. The name ‘Masenkeng’ referred to the corrugated iron fence erected around the grounds.

⁴⁷⁴ *The Friend*, 3.9.1929, p. 9.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

King's Park, Hamilton Park, Victoria Park and President Hoffman Square could only be admired from a distance.⁴⁷⁶

5.5.6 “Keep the children in the location and off the streets of the town”: a children’s playground for Batho

Towards the late 1920s, the municipality acknowledged the need for providing playgrounds in the Bloemfontein municipal area for white children below the age of 16. A prime motivation for developing these playgrounds was to “keep the children out of the streets.”⁴⁷⁷ The Public Health and Social Welfare Committees recommended a number of areas to be reserved and developed as children’s playgrounds and to be furnished with “suitable equipment”.⁴⁷⁸ A total of five playgrounds, all of them earmarked for white residential areas, were approved, and were to be situated in areas near Lombard Street (Hilton), Brompton Road (Hilton), Glen Road (Hilton) and Douglas Street in the vicinity of the *spruit*.⁴⁷⁹ Judging from the areas that had been approved for the children’s playgrounds, it seems as though it was mostly the poor and working-class residents’ children who had to be, in the words of Councillor Streeten, kept “out of the streets”.⁴⁸⁰ Another working-class area, namely the one opposite the municipal workmen’s cottages (municipal houses built for low-income white men) in Monument Road, was also identified as a playground. During a council meeting, Councillor Thomson expressed his concern that “the space in Monument Road was too close to the location”⁴⁸¹ and that the location’s children, in other words, Batho’s children, could be tempted to use the playground at the expense of the white children. To prevent this from happening, it was decided that the development of this playground would be put on hold until a separate playground was provided for Batho’s children.⁴⁸² The real trigger for the development of a playground in Batho was acts of “hooliganism”⁴⁸³ reportedly committed by black children at playgrounds in town, specifically those in Glen Road and Lombard

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.8.1929, p. 6; 3.9.1929, p. 9.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.12.1927, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.8.1928, p. 12.

⁴⁷⁹ BPL: *Official Gazette of the Orange Free State* 35, 5.7.1929, *Municipal Notice* 54, pp. 759-760; *The Friend*, 15.12.1927, p. 2. See also FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/28, Report of Curator of Parks*, 6.9.1927, pp. 1-3; *The Friend*, 29.9.1928, p. 6.

⁴⁸⁰ *The Friend*, 15.12.1927, p. 2.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸² *Ibid.* See also BPL: Anon., *The City of Bloemfontein: official guide* (brochure), p. 71.

⁴⁸³ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/36, Report of Curator of Parks*, 8.5.1929, p. 1.

Street. Complaints were also received from organisations such as the National Council of Women (NCW), who objected to “the practise of native boys and girls using the swings in the public playgrounds in the different parts of the town.”⁴⁸⁴ In response, the Curator of Parks ordered the immediate putting up of notices at all playgrounds which prohibited black people from using the equipment and the parks policeman was also ordered to be on high alert.⁴⁸⁵

Only in 1931, Batho’s children were given a playground when the municipality “in pursuance of its policy of furthering the interests of the Natives in the location” established a “recreation ground”⁴⁸⁶ near the Batho police station. It must be borne in mind that ten years prior (1921) it was reported that according to Batho’s layout, “spaces for recreation are left between the streets, where children could play.”⁴⁸⁷ Apart from the “giant-stride, see-saw, merry-go-round and rocking horse”,⁴⁸⁸ the playground was embellished with “several thousand trees”.⁴⁸⁹ In Batho’s case, the council’s moral objective with the playground appeared to be the same as that of the white children, namely to “keep the children in the location and off the streets of the town.”⁴⁹⁰ Cooper, who played an important role in convincing the council of the need for a children’s playground in Batho, opened it on 21 May 1931 in the presence of more than 700 children. He warned the children not to overload the equipment or to damage the trees, and urged them to report any misbehaviour to the relevant blockmen or to their teachers. According to a reporter of *The Friend*, who attended the event, the superintendent concluded his speech by giving the children permission to use the equipment after which “they swarmed round the different machines with ecstatic shouts of joy, and in their enthusiasm forgot the injunctions of Mr Cooper and swamped the sea-on-land, merry-go-round and rocking horse.”⁴⁹¹

5.6 The end of Batho’s ‘Golden Age’: trials and triumphs

The council’s efforts to turn Batho into a garden location were met with a number of challenges. Apart from problems that were beyond the council’s control such as “adverse

⁴⁸⁴ FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/47, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 14.7.1931, p. 12.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁶ *The Friend*, 23.5.1931, p. 5.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.8.1921, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.* See also FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/46, *Report of Curator of Parks*, 12.5.1931, p. 1.

⁴⁸⁹ *The Friend*, 2.8.1921, p. 4.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.* See also *The Friend*, 25.5.1931, p. 12.

climatic conditions”,⁴⁹² including the severe droughts experienced during 1919, 1923⁴⁹³ and in the period 1929-1933,⁴⁹⁴ and the limited availability of running water, it is important to emphasise another important inhibiting factor. Much to the disappointment of people such as Cook and Cooper, Batho’s residents were not always as co-operative and enthusiastic about the council’s gardening and beautification initiatives – at least not as they had hoped for. Needless to say, not all of Batho’s residents were interested in gardening. It is argued that this “lack of interest”⁴⁹⁵ was, among other things, such as drought conditions and the physical effort involved in maintaining gardens, also rooted in the fact that Batho’s residents could not own the land on which their houses were built. Consequently, the desire to put an individual stamp on their yards was found lacking.⁴⁹⁶ Referring to this problem in general, Dr Jabavu explained the consequences of this dilemma: “in many urban locations there are no facilities for Natives to buy property, hence there is no inducement for them to beautify, and improve with gardens, even if they did feel so inclined”.⁴⁹⁷ This apathetical attitude was also present among some of Batho’s residents and needs to be considered at all times, as well as in relation to the following chapters. As had been the case with Bloemfontein’s whites, one should guard against generalising as far as public interest in gardening in Batho was concerned. At the same time, however, it should be noted that, as argued in Chapter 4, the influence of those individuals who were not only interested in gardening but who also practised gardening, extended far beyond their actual numbers. Batho’s gardeners, many of whom were prominent figures in the community, were also house-proud residents who understood the benefits of gardening and encouraged others to follow suit.

The apparent apathetical attitude towards gardening that was evident among some of Batho’s residents also extended to a lack of interest in trees and tree-planting. Consequently, considerable numbers of the trees that had been planted by the municipality and even those planted by the residents themselves, perished due to neglect. Often Batho’s children and youth were responsible for acts of tree vandalism: young saplings were pulled out, branches

⁴⁹² FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/20, Annual report of Curator of Parks 1926*, p. 3.

⁴⁹³ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/26, Annual report of Curator of Parks 1927*, p. 1.

⁴⁹⁴ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/44, Report of Curator of Parks*, 12.1.1931, pp. 1-2; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/49, Report of Curator of Parks*, 12.1.1932, p. 1; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/53, Report of Curator of Parks*, 13.2.1933, p. 1.

⁴⁹⁵ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/14, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 15.3.1928, p. 9.

⁴⁹⁶ See Smit’s arguments in this regard. Smit, p. 24.

⁴⁹⁷ Jabavu, p. 12.

were broken or torn off, and often the trees were stripped of their leaves. Metal tree-supports were either stolen or damaged. In addition, the apathetical attitude and acts of vandalism also extended to the communal taps which often became scenes of water wastage and spillage. Taps were stolen, damaged or not properly closed, which resulted in undue wastage, and the areas around the taps were turned into unsightly muddy pools of stagnating water.⁴⁹⁸ Another huge problem, which may be ascribed to the low level of environmental awareness among some location residents, was the issue of littering and refuse disposal. Not only were some residents guilty of dumping “heaps of refuse and tins”⁴⁹⁹ in Batho’s streets and public spaces, but substantial amounts of refuse were also dumped near the railway line in Cape Stands and in the Kaffirfontein Spruit. The problem of littering and indiscriminate dumping not only created a health hazard for Batho’s residents but also detracted from the council’s (and the residents’) gardening and beautification efforts. Parks officials warned that over time, the “refuse gets worked into the soil”⁵⁰⁰ which, in turn, negatively affected the plants in the gardens.⁵⁰¹

Apart from the above-mentioned practical problems and challenges, the council also faced economic and political challenges in its efforts to not only maintain Batho as a garden location but also to promote the garden location idea and extend it to the neighbouring Bochabela. The economic recession of the late 1920s and early 1930s certainly hampered efforts in this regard since municipal funds for aesthetic initiatives – mostly driven by the English-speaking councillors – such as laying out public parks, gardens and other recreation spots in the locations, increasingly came under pressure. The changing political climate of the 1930s also took its toll, particularly the demand from the growing Afrikaans-speaking segment of Bloemfontein’s white voter population for stricter racial segregation measures and reluctance to spend white taxpayers’ funds on location projects. Although not mentioned by name, Bloemfontein was certainly implicated when delegates who attended the Free State Municipal Association’s Congress in 1932 were warned not to “make their locations too

⁴⁹⁸ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1926-1927*, p. 3; FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/27, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 6.7.1936, p. 1.

⁴⁹⁹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/41, *Agenda for ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 14.7.1930, p. 7.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰¹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/3/1/22, *Minutes of combined meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee and Public Health Committee*, 7.9.1926, p. 3.

attractive.”⁵⁰² The growing political influence and clout of the conservative Afrikaans-speaking councillors also began to be felt, typically at the expense of the more reasonable voices of the English-speaking (and some Afrikaans-speaking) councillors,⁵⁰³ many of whom had served the town for decades. An anonymous observer’s description of the difference between the two attitudes is also applicable to Bloemfontein’s council: “The Dutch [Afrikaner] attitude towards the native is less soft – I can find no better word – than the English”.⁵⁰⁴ The softer English ‘gentleman’s politics’ with its emphasis on pragmatism and an appreciation for aesthetics, most notably the ‘garden city’ and the ‘city beautiful’ philosophies, increasingly made way for the harsh ‘real politics’ pursued by the growing Afrikaner political power bloc.⁵⁰⁵

Despite the economic and political challenges, it is argued that by the end of the 1930s, the idea of the garden location had become neither irrelevant nor obsolete. The importance of creating and maintaining public parks and recreation spaces for location residents and encouraging them to lay out their own private gardens, remained a priority not only for a significant group of local councillors but also for the councils of other predominantly English-speaking South African cities, such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth. The superintendents of locations and public parks and gardens of these and other cities and towns were still inspired by what had been achieved in Bloemfontein and, specifically, in Batho. Consequently, garden locations were also laid out elsewhere in the Union, most notably Langa⁵⁰⁶ near Cape Town, Orlando⁵⁰⁷ near Johannesburg and McNamee Village⁵⁰⁸ in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. Importantly, a predominant taste for topiary and formality also strongly influenced garden style in these locations. *As a result, the development of the semi-vernacular and ‘hybrid’ location garden characterised by formality and topiary was not limited to Batho because the phenomenon was also visible in most of South Africa’s old locations.* However, in Batho, the presence of a strong gardening

⁵⁰² *The Friend*, 25.11.1932, p. 8.

⁵⁰³ They included councillors such as Mr I.H. Haarburger, Mr J.H.B. Reitz, Mr R.C. Streeten and Mr D. Urquhart, to name a few. Dr W.J. Carey (1875-1955), Anglican Bishop of Bloemfontein, described them as “men who cared for the Native peoples”. *The Friend*, 11.5.1923, p. 8.

⁵⁰⁴ *The Friend*, 28.7.1921, p. 4.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.* See also Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 292-300.

⁵⁰⁶ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 6.1.1934, p. 4; 20.5.1939, p. 6; Murray, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁰⁷ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 13.8.1932, p. 4; 15.4.1933, p. 2; 15.2.1936, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁸ K. Sevenhuysen, “Swart stedelike behuisingsverskaffing in Suid-Afrika, ca. 1923-1948: ‘Wanneer meer minder kos’ – finansiële verliese versus welsyns- en gesondheidswinste”, *New Contree* 64, July 2012, pp. 122-124; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 31.12.1938, p. 5; 1.4.1939, p. 6; 5.8.1939, p. 7.

culture as well as other positive factors contributed to the development of a particularly appealing rendition of the semi-vernacular location garden genre.⁵⁰⁹

Despite similar developments in other cities and towns, Bloemfontein, as a garden city, and Batho, as a garden location, were nationally held in high esteem until the end of the 1930s. Therefore, it is noteworthy that one of the key lectures presented during the fifth conference of the Association of Superintendents of Public Parks and Gardens held in Durban in August 1939 was themed “Public Parks, Recreation for Non-Europeans”.⁵¹⁰ This lecture, presented by Councillor G.F. Westgate of Durban, argued that it was equally important to provide municipally-funded public parks for location residents and, at the same time, to encourage them to lay out their own gardens. At this conference, Bloemfontein was praised and reportedly placed “in the front line”⁵¹¹ for its pioneering role in promoting this dual approach. It is argued that this approach had been followed with much success by Bloemfontein’s council during the 1920s and, to an extent, the 1930s. This is one of the main reasons why the twenties and thirties are considered Batho’s ‘Golden Age’. The council not only succeeded in creating a garden location (Image 5/24) but also in creating a location of gardeners and, as will be argued in Chapter 8, a culture of gardening which inspired later generations of Batho residents to appreciate the value of gardens and gardening. The outbreak of World War II in September 1939 signalled the onset of Batho’s period of demise because since then, more than ever before, a combination of social, economic and political dynamics negatively impacted the garden location.⁵¹²

5.7 Concluding remarks

Based on the discussions in this chapter it is argued that the founding, laying out and development of Batho as a garden location was underpinned by a contradiction: on the one hand, the prime motivation for the establishment of a new location for black people was

⁵⁰⁹ For more details, see Chapter 8 and Chapter 9. For a photograph of one of Orlando’s topiary gardens, see *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 26.3.1938, p. 1. For an artist’s depiction of McNamee Village’s gardens and clipped hedges, see A. Schauder, “Generous housing for South Africa’s Natives”, *Optima* 3(4), December 1953, p. 2 (facing page).

⁵¹⁰ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/75, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 16.6.1939, p. 1.

⁵¹¹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/76, Report of Curator of Parks*, 14.8.1939, p. 2.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*

rooted in racial prejudice which manifested in territorial segregation between Bloemfontein's white and black residents, hence, the council's decision to move Waaihoek's residents to a location situated further away (and hidden) from the white 'Town'. On the other hand, the council saw in Batho an opportunity not only to create a garden location but also a model location. Thanks to the visionary zeal and commitment of municipal employees, such as Cook and Cooper, as well as sympathetic councillors, Batho became a model for other locations in the Union. The ultimate vision for Batho as a garden location with private front and backyard gardens, allotment gardens, public parks, squares, croquet courts, football fields, a fresh-produce market and a children's playground is most important for the purpose of this study. The vision for Batho as a garden location was not only influenced by the British 'garden city' philosophy but was also motivated by the fact that when residents are provided with an opportunity to beautify their homes and surroundings and assisted in their efforts, they will, in due course, become responsible citizens with an active interest in their location.

Fortunately, Cook, Cooper and other council members went beyond a mere vision for Batho as a garden location. Unlike other towns in the Union, the Bloemfontein municipality implemented practical measures to realise this vision. Efforts to turn Batho into a garden location included, among other things, the laying out of plots that were big enough to make room for front and backyard gardens, a water supply in the form of communal taps on pavements, a reasonable water tariff for gardening purposes as well as tree-planting and tree-distribution initiatives. All these measures were aimed at encouraging residents to lay out ornamental and vegetable gardens. More importantly, these measures, as well as the moral support and encouragement provided by the superintendents of locations and others, created an environment that was not only conducive to gardening but, more importantly, to a certain style of gardening to take root, namely a formal garden style typified by topiary. Were Cook, Cooper and other municipal officials successful in realising their vision for Batho as a model location and, above all, a garden location? The fact that two important Union Acts, namely the Housing Act of 1920 and the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, were based on Bloemfontein's best practices, including the setting of a minimum size for location plots in order to allow space for gardens, testifies to the council's accomplishments. In the next chapter, the focus shifts to the role played by black education in the development of an interest in (or aversion to) gardening among Batho's residents.

CHAPTER 6

THE MAKING OF A BLACK GARDENER (1): EDUCATING THE GARDENER

6.1 Introduction

In its “Retrospect of 1918” *The Friend* not only reminded its readers of Bloemfontein’s new exemplary Batho location that was being laid out, it also alerted them to “one of our most urgent requirements to-day [sic]”.¹ The newspaper referred to the “question of training the young native” and argued that Bloemfontein’s white people still had to figure out how “to mould into healthy, useful, intelligent assets to the community those native children who are growing up in Waaihoek.”² For the purpose of this discussion, the term ‘useful’ is significant. This term not only ties in with the Bloemfontein municipality’s argument that the locations were, essentially, the residential areas of the servants of Bloemfontein’s white residents, it also means that ‘usefulness’ was considered a prerequisite for the privilege to live in Bloemfontein’s locations. In 1919, Bloemfontein’s locations included Waaihoek, Kaffirfontein, Cape Stands, the No. 3 Location and, of course, the newly-laid-out Batho. In the context of this discussion, ‘usefulness’ is a politically-loaded term because the main question is: if young black people were to be moulded into useful assets, then useful for whom and what? It turned out that from a white perspective, ‘usefulness’ meant, in the first place, being useful to white people and, in the second place, being useful as manual labourers who were willing to do the work that white people were not prepared to do. The type of work that white people considered too menial or degrading for themselves was mostly of a physical and routine nature and was commonly known at that time as “Kafir’s work”³ or “Kaffirs’ work”.⁴

Among other types of hard labour, ‘Kaffirs’ work’ also included garden labour, specifically menial and physical tasks, such as digging, hoeing, raking, weeding and, of course, trimming

¹ *The Friend*, 6.1.1919, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*

³ C.T. Loram, *The education of the South African native*, p. 12. Known as *kafferwerk* (also *Kafferwerk*) in Afrikaans. For more information, see Chapter 7.

⁴ Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA): *ORC 125, Transvaal and Orange River Colony: public education: report of the Director of Education, Nov. 1900 to Feb. 1904*, p. 50.

and clipping hedges and edges. If ‘Kaffirs’ work’ was equated with menial and manual labour, then the issue at stake was the type of education and training deemed necessary for this type of work. In other words, what type of education was considered necessary for black people to be ‘useful’ to white people? This question is central to this chapter because the exponential growth of Bloemfontein’s location population (two years after Batho’s founding, there were approximately 20 000 location residents⁵) created an “army of unemployed and unemployables” which, in the words of Bloemfontein’s then mayor, created a “situation that has dangerous and explosive possibilities.”⁶ One way to counter this ‘dangerous and explosive’ situation was to use education as a means to channel the growing black workforce into a specific direction.

Among other things, this chapter, which focuses on education as an aspect of the making of a black gardener, explores how and why education was used as a tool to address this challenge. The first part of the chapter provides a historical overview of the development of black education in South Africa, the role missionary societies played in black education, the nature and content of black education, and the reasons that industrial education and manual training gained prominence. Importantly, the place of gardening and basic agriculture as industrial subjects in the curricula of black schools will be discussed. The second part of the chapter focuses on the historical development of black education in the Orange Free State and gardening (also Gardening) as a subject in its black schools and educational institutions. The final part of the chapter focuses on a number of Batho residents’ personal testimonies concerning gardening as a subject in some of Batho’s oldest schools.

6.2 The ‘Native education’ debate

By the time Batho was founded, the issue commonly known as ‘Native education’ had become a hotly-debated topic, not only in national politics but also among members of the Bloemfontein public. At the heart of the debate was the type of ‘Native education’ considered to be in white people’s best interest as opposed to the type of education black

⁵ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1921-1922*, p. 13. For detailed population statistics since 1912, see Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand (hereafter HP): *AD 1765, Annual report of Native Administration Department 1931-1932*, p. 2.

⁶ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor’s minute 1928-1929*, p. 14.

people considered to be in their best interest. As a matter of fact, some of Bloemfontein's white residents believed that in order for black people to be useful to white people, they needed no formal education at all. This sentiment was driven home mere months after the publication of *The Friend's* "Retrospect of 1918" article when a deputation of approximately 60 white Bloemfontein women, including the well-known Anna Ortlepp and Ms A.C. Swart,⁷ met with the mayor, the town clerk and some of the councillors to discuss a list of grievances, chief among them the difficulty of finding suitable black domestic servants.⁸ During the first meeting, the town clerk, Mr J.P. Logan, argued that many black people could not be employed because they were neither educated nor trained for any position of servitude. He was of the opinion that education and training were the remedy for Bloemfontein's domestic servant problem. Logan's suggested solution was not to the women's liking because, to quote *The Friend*, he "became the target for the tongue of every woman in the hall".⁹ The women did not have educated servants in mind because these women "did not want girls to play the piano instead of doing the house work...nor boys to read the newspaper instead of looking after the garden."¹⁰ The women argued that they themselves, as mistresses of the proverbial Martha and Jim,¹¹ were willing to "catch them young and train them".¹²

"Teach the little boys of Waaihoek to be gardeners"

The female firebrands were not satisfied with the outcome of the first meeting and requested another meeting to discuss their demand that Bloemfontein's black people were, essentially, servants who had to be forced to work for white people. During a meeting held on 2 July 1919, Councillor A.G. Barlow informed the women that the council wanted to see compulsory education for Bloemfontein's location residents up to Standard Four and that the women could assist the council by "preaching the doctrine of education"¹³ among the black people. If the sceptical women had any concerns about the type of education Barlow

⁷ Mother of future State President C.R. Swart.

⁸ For a detailed discussion of the women's grievances and the respective meetings held, see H. Haasbroek, "Vroue op die oorlogspad in 1919", *Volksblad*, 13.3.2015, p. 9.

⁹ *The Friend*, 12.6.1919, p. 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* See also *Die Volksblad*, 13.6.1919, p. 5.

¹¹ Archetypal names for black domestic servants, alias the 'kitchen girl' and the 'garden boy'.

¹² *The Friend*, 12.6.1919, p. 6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3.7.1919, p. 8.

had had in mind, he allayed their fears by informing them that “we [council] want to *teach the little boys of Waaihoek to be gardeners* and such like, and the native girls to be servants in this town.”¹⁴ Barlow’s assurance that the council wanted to ‘teach the little boys of Waaihoek to be gardeners’ addressed two important issues, namely the nature and content of ‘Native education’ in the first place and, in the second place, the teaching of gardening as a subject in black schools. As far as the first issue is concerned, it must be borne in mind that the question of the nature and content of black education was closely related to white people’s fear that, firstly, “the educated Native will not work”¹⁵ because it was believed that education, specifically academic education, made black people “lazy and unfit for manual work” and, above all, it made them “‘cheeky’ and less docile as a servant”.¹⁶ Secondly, white people feared that educated black people would “enter into competition with the less fortunate people of our own [white] race” and it was argued that “such a course can only be to the disadvantage of both races”.¹⁷ Therefore, most white people – including Bloemfontein’s white population – agreed that “we must *give the Native an education which will keep him in his place.*”¹⁸

“Ever-increasing demand for education on the part of the Natives”

The issue of ‘Native education’ not only occupied the minds of Bloemfontein’s white residents but also those of its black residents. After the Anglo-Boer War (hereafter the War), South Africa’s black people became aware of the importance of education to such an extent that an “ever-increasing demand for education on the part of the Natives”¹⁹ was noted. Bloemfontein’s location residents, particularly those who were in the process of moving to Batho, were no exception. When the council requested the black community to suggest names for Batho’s streets, it was proposed and agreed to name the new location’s two main thoroughfares Fort Hare Road and Lovedale Road.²⁰ The Lovedale Native Institution²¹ and

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (Own emphasis). See also *Die Volksblad*, 4.7.1919, p. 7.

¹⁵ F. Wilson & D. Perrot (eds), *Outlook on a century: South Africa 1870-1970*, p. 199.

¹⁶ National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (hereafter NARS): *SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education 1935-1936*, p. 86.

¹⁷ National Library of South Africa (hereafter NLSA): *A. 1982-1008, Anon., Some notes on the possibilities of native development* (pamphlet), p. 3.

¹⁸ NARS: *SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), Report of the...*, p. 86. (Author’s emphasis). For more on this argument, see Lord Oliver, *White capital & coloured labour*, p. 196.

¹⁹ K.A.H. Houghton, *The problem of Bantu education in South Africa*, p. 15.

²⁰ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/3, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 19.5.1919, p. 3.

²¹ Initially known as the Lovedale Missionary Institution.

the South African Native College at Fort Hare,²² both situated near Alice in the Eastern Cape were, for many years, South Africa's only black educational institutions for higher learning. In the eyes of Bloemfontein's location residents, these two institutions symbolised the educational aspirations and achievements of black people as personified by prominent educated black leaders, such as Dr Jabavu.²³ Jabavu, the first lecturer appointed at Fort Hare in 1915, was also honoured with a street in Batho's Rantjies section named after him. The fact that the mentioned institutions and a person such as Jabavu had been awarded symbolic prominence in Batho indicated the importance that Bloemfontein's black people attached to education.

While black people considered education important for their own specific reasons, white people also considered it important, but for entirely different reasons. Even before unification (1910), it was understood that "the character of the education we [white people] are giving to the Native is largely determining his future political position in the country."²⁴ After unification, black education became such an important and pressing issue that by the early 1920s, it had become, according to education expert, E.G. Malherbe, "the chief factor in moulding a native policy for South Africa".²⁵ By the mid-1920s, a 'Native policy' was not only taking shape in white peoples' minds but also in practice. This was certainly the case in Bloemfontein because in his annual report for 1926-1927, Bloemfontein's mayor reported that the council was about to introduce a "definite native policy" which conformed to the "general segregation principles"²⁶ as laid down by the government. The ultimate objective was to reconcile 'Native education' with the Union government's 'Native policy', which meant that black people were destined for a position of subservience in a segregated society and that the type of education they received had to prepare and equip them for that position.²⁷

²² Today known as the University of Fort Hare.

²³ For more information on Jabavu, see Chapter 5. See also D.W. Krüger & C.J. Beyers (eds-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordenboek* (vol. III), p. 448.

²⁴ Houghton, p. 15.

²⁵ E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa (1652-1922)*, p. 459.

²⁶ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1926-1927*, p. 12.

²⁷ S. Krige, "'Trustees and agents of the state?': missions and the formation of policy towards African education, 1910-1920", *South African Historical Journal* 40, May 1999, pp. 76-78; R.F.A. Hoernlé, "The politics of education", *The South African Quarterly* VI(I), March-May 1924, p. 28.

In order to comprehend and contextualise the role and place of gardening as a subject in black schools in the Orange Free State in general and, specifically, in Batho, it is necessary to first provide an overview of the history and development of black education in South Africa and the role and place of gardening as a subject in the education curricula within the broad South African context.

6.3 Gardening as a subject in black education in South Africa: a historical overview

Between 1656, when Jan van Riebeeck²⁸ started a school for slave children in *de Kaapsche Vlek*, and 1737, when the first missionary in the person of the Moravian, Georg Schmidt,²⁹ arrived in the Cape Colony, very little happened in terms of black and coloured³⁰ education. In fact, it was only during the late 1700s and early 1800s when missionary activity started in all earnest in South Africa, that the education of the indigenous groups, specifically the Khoekhoe and the ‘Bantu’-speaking groups, received attention. Since the European missionaries were intimately involved in black education, the *history of black education is entirely interwoven with the history of South African missions*.³¹ It must be understood that the missionaries’ primary aim was the conversion of the heathen and, as a result, the education they provided ultimately served this aim. The missionaries soon realised that to make their spiritual labours effective it was necessary to teach the converts how to read and write. Since then the classic combination of Reading, ‘Riting (writing) and ‘Rithmetic (arithmetic) – the so-called three R’s – had become the backbone of mission education. The pioneering Moravian Missionary Society was followed by the arrival of representatives of other missionary societies, including the London Missionary Society (1799), the Wesleyan (later Methodist) Missionary Society (1816), the Glasgow Missionary Society (1821), the Rhenish Missionary Society (1829), the Paris Missionary Society (1829) and the Berlin Missionary Society (1834), to name a few.³²

²⁸ For more information on Van Riebeeck, see Chapter 2.

²⁹ For more information on Schmidt, see Chapter 3.

³⁰ The phrase ‘black education’ also implies ‘coloured education’, unless indicated otherwise.

³¹ For detailed information on the history of South African missions, see J. du Plessis, *A history of Christian missions in South Africa, passim*.

³² Loram, pp. 46-48; A.D. Dodd, *Native vocational training: a study of conditions in South Africa, 1652-1936*, pp. 2-4.

Since the early 1800s, mission stations had been established all over the Cape Colony and later also on the troubled Eastern Cape frontier and even in Kaffraria. During the 1820s, 1830s and early 1840s, mission stations were established at Butterworth, Healdtown, Mount Coke, Salem and the mentioned Lovedale (1841). At almost every mission station the school became an important feature and, in many cases, the mission station's *raison d'être*. The curriculum and teaching approach followed by the mission schools were, in most cases, similar to the training provided in church schools in Europe and Britain. Since the Moravians managed to teach the Khoekhoe how "to dig and sow"³³ at Genadendal and elsewhere, the idea of combining the three R's with vocational training took root. It was, however, only since the appointment of Sir George Grey (1812-1898)³⁴ as Governor of the Cape Colony in 1854 that a deliberate change of approach had come into effect. Grey was of the opinion that the education offered in mission schools was too academic or "bookish"³⁵ and that a greater emphasis on technical instruction and manual training necessary for specific "trades" and "occupations"³⁶ was needed. This change of emphasis shifted the focus to the concept of 'industrial education', which was deemed appropriate for the local context. As a result, government grants were released to develop industrial education at a number of mission schools, among them Lovedale.³⁷ These grants enabled schools and institutions such as Lovedale to conduct mission work "on three lines – religious, educational, and industrial".³⁸ This critical development set in motion a movement focused on the industrial education of black people which continued well into the first half of the 20th century.³⁹

"Suitable industrial training", "outdoor occupations" and "fieldwork"

A commission of inquiry tasked to investigate the state of black education in 1861 recommended the official recognition of two types of black schools, namely Mission Schools and Aboriginal Schools. While the subjects of instruction for the mission schools were still the conventional reading, writing and arithmetic combined with elementary English and/or

³³ E.G. Pells, *300 years of education in South Africa*, p. 130.

³⁴ For more information on Grey, see W.J. de Kock, (ed.-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. I), pp. 341-342.

³⁵ R.H.W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa: the story of a century 1841-1941*, p. 132.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ For more on information on Lovedale's founding years, see J. Stewart, *Lovedale Missionary Institution, South Africa*, pp. 9-12; Shepherd, pp. 83-102; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 30.6.1934, p. 3.

³⁸ Stewart, p. 10.

³⁹ Loram, pp. 48-50; Dodd, pp. 3-7; Shepherd, pp. 130-134.

an African language, it was recommended that, in addition to the basic syllabus, the aboriginal schools should focus on “suitable industrial training”.⁴⁰ At Lovedale, which embraced the idea of ‘suitable industrial training’ and which was also a pioneer in this regard, it was argued that “the object is to induce habits of manual industry, and prevent the African falling into the mistake very natural to him that education consists in [sic] a knowledge of school books.”⁴¹ In terms of the development of gardening (including elementary agriculture) as a school subject, the commission’s recommendation was important because ‘garden and field labour’, as it was referred to then, was considered an “industrial occupation”.⁴²

Apart from pioneering the idea of ‘garden and field labour’ as a key component of industrial education, Lovedale was also a pioneer in revolutionising the practical teaching of gardening and agriculture among black people. Lovedale’s teachers and agricultural instructors, most of whom were English-speaking, taught learners and students the principles of European-style agriculture instead of traditional African agriculture which was then characterised by the use of so-called ‘magical charms’ to ensure good crops.⁴³ Apparently, this happened to be the case as early as the 1840s and 1850s. Most importantly, Lovedale’s students were introduced to a new method of laying out and planting gardens and fields. Agriculture expert D.L. Brown’s observation that Lovedale became “one of the first centres to *plant maize in rows* instead of the usual method of broadcasting the seed”⁴⁴ is most important in terms of the main arguments of this thesis. This trend of “planting maize, instead of sowing it”,⁴⁵ which was, in fact, noticeable at most missionary institutions, *underscores the argument that black people’s gradual acceptance of a predominantly regimented and formal style of gardening may be ascribed to European, specifically British, influence.* This trend also signifies increased acculturation and inter-cultural influencing between the European and African cultures – a phenomenon which lies at the heart of the development of the semi-vernacular garden. As a result, the basic design blueprint of the agricultural garden and

⁴⁰ Loram, p. 50.

⁴¹ Stewart, no p. no.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ E.J. de Jager, “Notes on the magical charms of the Cape Nguni tribes”, *Fort Hare Papers* 2(6), November 1963, p. 299.

⁴⁴ D.L. Brown, “Agricultural education for the Bantu in the Ciskei – historical background and present facilities”, *Fort Hare Papers* 4(5), November 1970, p. 23. (Own emphasis)

⁴⁵ Shepherd, p. 425.

horticultural field was greatly influenced by this trend: an informal design and planting method gradually became predominantly formal and regimented. This trend will be discussed and analysed in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9.⁴⁶

The appointment of Sir Langham Dale (1826-1898)⁴⁷ as Superintendent-General of Education for the Cape Colony in 1859 gave further impetus to the trend of industrial training for black and Cape coloured people. Dale rationalised this approach by arguing that the type of education for the different racial groups had to be adapted not only to the needs of each group but also to the position they were meant to occupy in society. In terms of this philosophy, he argued that the coloured races were ideally suited to “domestic industries and outdoor occupations”.⁴⁸ Outdoor occupations included, among others, all labour related to gardening and agriculture or so-called “fieldwork”.⁴⁹ Fieldwork was essentially considered a trade for boys and on par with other trades such as masonry, carpentry and tailoring. Girls were taught domestic work. For the purpose of this discussion, it is important to emphasise the direct link that existed between gardening and agriculture as outdoor occupations and the mentioned industrial occupations. In other words, apart from being *outdoor occupations*, gardening and agriculture were also considered *industrial occupations*; therefore, they featured prominently in industrial education.⁵⁰

A “keen gardener”⁵¹ himself, Dale not only appreciated the value of gardening from a practical point of view but also from the perspective that gardening could be employed as a potential civilising and moralising tool.⁵² This philosophy, discussed in Chapter 3, underpinned much of the educational thinking of the 19th century. In short, Dale imagined a ‘civilised’ African who could contribute to the political security and economic progress of the Cape Colony.⁵³ How was the African to be ‘civilised’? At Lovedale, the approach was explained as follows: “school teaching is given to improve the mind and general intelligence,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; Brown, p. 23.

⁴⁷ For more information on Dale, see De Kock, pp. 209-210.

⁴⁸ Loram, p. 51.

⁴⁹ Dodd, p. 8.

⁵⁰ L. Dale, *Technical instruction and industrial training*, pp. 8-13; Dodd, p. 8; Shepherd, pp. 134-135.

⁵¹ G. Fagan, *Roses at the Cape of Good Hope*, p. 226. For more information on Dale’s gardening efforts at his home ‘Montagu Cottage’ in Mowbray, Cape Town, see J. Murray (ed.), *Mrs Dale’s diary 1857-1872*, *passim*.

⁵² Dale, pp. 10-12.

⁵³ D.F. van Dyk, *The contact between the early tribal African education and the Westernized system of missionary education* (lecture), p. 14; Shepherd, pp. 134, 425.

and industrial work, while it has its value as a civilising end in itself, is also followed with a view to these further practical results”.⁵⁴ This sentiment was shared by Grey who insisted that the “trades”⁵⁵ taught in black schools were European because he argued that the only way to civilise the indigenous peoples was to give them a “‘European’ education”.⁵⁶ Consequently, the basic syllabi and most of the subjects taught in mission schools, aboriginal schools and the so-called “Native institutions”⁵⁷ into which some of the schools had evolved were similar to what had been offered in white primary schools. At one such institution, boys were instructed in the “General habits of Civilization and Garden-Work”,⁵⁸ emphasising a perceived relation between civilisation and gardening.

“Civilizing the Native by distributing spades and plough-shares”

Grey and Dale were, essentially, Englishmen who appreciated the moral and other virtues of gardening and agriculture. Therefore, it did not come as a surprise that they vigorously promoted the introduction of gardening into as many schools as possible. It must also be borne in mind that the two gentlemen hailed from Victorian Britain – a country obsessed with gardens and gardening and whose population was increasingly aware of its cultural identity as a nation of gardeners. This must have influenced Grey’s and Dale’s stance on the value of gardening. In practice, it meant, among other things, the increase of government grants to enable schools to purchase the necessary garden tools. This step gave impetus to Grey’s policy of “civilizing the Native by distributing spades and plough-shares”,⁵⁹ to quote E.G. Pells. Another important development was the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1891 that, as a general guideline, half of the school time in black schools be devoted to manual training, including gardening and agriculture.⁶⁰ At Lovedale, all learners had to engage in at least two hours’ manual labour daily. In 1894, it was reported that most

⁵⁴ Stewart, no p. no.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Apart from gardening and agriculture, the typical trades for boys included blacksmithing, bookbinding, carpentry, leatherwork, masonry, printing, shoemaking, tailoring, telegraphy, tinsmithing and wagonmaking. The trades for girls included basketry, cookery, dressmaking, housework, laundry-work, needlework, spinning, upholstery, weaving and, in some cases, also gardening. Dodd, pp. 19-21.

⁵⁶ Dodd, p. 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8; Pells, p. 131. The mission schools turned into ‘Native institutions’ were Healdtown, Lesseyton, Lovedale, Peddie and Salem.

⁵⁸ Dodd, p. 11.

⁵⁹ Pells, p. 131.

⁶⁰ Van Dyk, pp. 14-15; Dodd, pp. 6-7; Pells, pp. 131-135; Malherbe, p. 458.

of them engaged in “out-door employment according to the season”,⁶¹ which in practice, meant working “sometimes in the fields connected with a large farm, at other times in the gardens”⁶² (Images 6/1 & 6/2).

While the idea of industrial training for black and coloured people was gaining ground in the Cape, a similar approach to black education was taking shape in the post-Civil War American South. A brief discussion of this development is necessary since it influenced thinking with regard to education outside the USA, particularly in the British colonies. After the American Civil War (1861-1865), a desperate need to teach illiterate and unskilled emancipated slaves practical skills prompted the well-known African-American educator and author, Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), to establish what later became the most well-known and influential industrial training school and institution of higher learning for African-Americans in the state of Alabama. Founded in 1881, the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (also known as Tuskegee) taught basic secondary school courses and a variety of practical subjects. The subjects included “Nature-Study”, “Horticulture” and “Agriculture”⁶³ and were meant to equip students for “outdoor occupations”⁶⁴ and “outside work”.⁶⁵ The training of teachers was a priority, specifically “teachers able and eager to teach gardening”,⁶⁶ to quote Washington. The manual training courses developed at Tuskegee served as models for similar institutes and training schools not only in the USA but all over the world, including South Africa. Referring to Tuskegee’s “Landscape Gardening” and “Agriculture”⁶⁷ courses, Dr Jabavu was convinced that it could “be adopted in South Africa at but little expense.”⁶⁸ As will be discussed later, Tuskegee’s influence on black education in South Africa only became evident after the Anglo-Boer War, particularly during the 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁹

⁶¹ Stewart, no p. no.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Included forestry, landscaping, nursery work and greenhouse work.

⁶⁴ Daniel A.P. Murray Collection: *nineteenth annual report of the principal of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama, for the year ending May 31, 1900*, <[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/murray:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(lcrbmrpt1704div0\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/murray:@field(DOCID+@lit(lcrbmrpt1704div0)))>, s.a. (Accessed: 29.10.2013).

⁶⁵ B.T. Washington (ed.), *Tuskegee & its people: their ideals and achievements*, p. 75.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁶⁷ D.D.T. Jabavu, *The black problem: papers and addresses on various native problems*, pp. 59, 132.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁶⁹ Washington, pp. 71, 74-75, 191; A.K. Walker, *Tuskegee and the black belt: a portrait of a race*, pp. 33, 36-37; A.W. Jones, “The role of Tuskegee Institute in the education of black farmers”, *The Journal of Negro History* 60(2), April 1975, pp. 252-267; Jabavu, pp. 27-28, 43.

In the Colony of Natal, the sentiments and approaches to black education were generally similar to what had been the case in the Cape. Most schools were mission schools but were much smaller and fewer in number compared to those in the Cape. The trend towards industrial education was also evident in Natal, especially after a commission of inquiry appointed in 1852 recommended the establishment of industrial schools where industrial subjects, including farming and gardening, were taught. Unfortunately, instruction in farming and gardening was rather rudimentary and often reduced to learners having to work for an hour or two each afternoon on the mission farm or in the missionary's garden. A notable exception was Mariannahill,⁷⁰ an educational institution founded by Trappist monks, which specialised in industrial education of which agriculture and gardening were an important part. In order to ensure the viability of the mission schools and also to support the missions' continued civilising influence, the Natal colonial government agreed to the allocation of financial grants to such schools for the purpose of purchasing garden tools, among other things. Generally, the government's approach to black education was characterised by a *laissez faire* attitude.⁷¹ Still, compared to the situation in the two Boer republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State, where opposition to the provisioning of education to black people was widespread, the approach followed in the two British colonies, particularly the Cape, may be described as progressive and, in some cases, even "liberal".⁷²

In the Transvaal republic, all schools for black people were mission schools, including those that had been established for the Tswana people by the Hermannsburg Evangelical Lutheran Society. Compared to that in the Cape and Natal, the situation was desperate: on the one hand, the education provided was extremely elementary, while on the other, the republican government denied such schools any financial support or recognition. The outbreak of the War in 1899 put an abrupt end to all educational work among black people in the republic. The War also disrupted such education in Natal and, to a lesser degree, in the Cape. In the two colonies, educational activities had resumed rather soon after the War had ended but elsewhere it took much longer. In the Transvaal, conditions improved slightly when the new colonial government instituted a scheme for the payment of grants-in-aid to selected mission

⁷⁰ M. Bree, "There in the quiet hills", *The Outspan*, 31.8.1928, p. 35; Pells, p. 143; M.A. White, "Mariannahill Mission: a century of service", *Village Life* 35, Winter 2009, pp. 28-32.

⁷¹ Loram, pp. 53-61; Pells, pp. 136, 142-143; Dodd, pp. 59-73.

⁷² Malherbe, p. 459.

schools. Syllabi were also revised in terms of which school work was divided into “instruction” and “training”.⁷³ Training meant “industrial training through appropriate exercises and activities”⁷⁴ and “gardening”⁷⁵ was among the subjects suggested for primary schools.⁷⁶

“No longer an ‘information receptacle’, but a ‘growing flower’”

While South Africa battled to cope with the aftermath of the War, new educational thinking swept across the United Kingdom. Inspired by Swiss and German theories of the *kindergarten*, the learner was considered “no longer...an ‘information receptacle’, but a ‘growing flower’”,⁷⁷ to quote environmental historian, Libby Robin. The primary school was likened to a flower garden and the learners to flowers in the garden that had to be ‘watered’ by the teachers. This new philosophy led to the laying out of small vegetable and flower gardens on primary school grounds and the introduction of gardening as a school subject. The British school garden system was highly organised and structured. This rather formal approach was reflected in the strictly-regimented layout of the gardens which had been designed to convey the message to learners that school gardening was a serious matter. School gardens laid out according to formal parallelograms⁷⁸ were considered ideal.⁷⁹

The idea of gardening as a moralising tool featured strongly in this new movement and the ultimate objective was to make a connection between nature, hard work (manual labour) and the moral improvement of the learner. According to Robin, a garden was considered “an ideal place to combine morally uplifting contemplation of nature and worthy hard work”.⁸⁰ This philosophy was later exported to Britain’s colonies and dominions, including Australia,

⁷³ Loram, p. 64.

⁷⁴ As quoted in Loram, p. 64.

⁷⁵ Dodd, p. 85.

⁷⁶ Loram, pp. 62-65; Pells, p. 141; Dodd, pp. 84-86.

⁷⁷ L. Robin, “School gardens and beyond: progressive conservation, moral imperatives and the local landscape”, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 21(2), 2001, p. 87.

⁷⁸ For exact measurements, see Robin, p. 87.

⁷⁹ Robin, p. 87; J. Brown, *The pursuit of paradise: a social history of gardens and gardening*, pp. 277-280.

⁸⁰ Robin, p. 87.

New Zealand, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)⁸¹ and South Africa. The school garden idea was discussed at so-called “Inter-Colonial conventions”⁸² and imperial education conferences which brought together teachers from Britain and elsewhere. The publication of Madeline Agar’s manual for school gardens *A primer of school gardening* (1909) stimulated the new thinking, particularly in South Africa where the book was widely distributed. Agar’s primer not only praised gardening for developing learners’ muscular skill, but also emphasised the benefits of laying out food gardens at home and taught learners the laws of nature.⁸³ The book also provided guidelines for laying out basic school gardens in the form of rectangular beds placed in a formal arrangement with footpaths in-between and the beds edged with overlapping bricks.⁸⁴

Esteemed institutions, commissions of enquiry and curricula changes

According to garden historian, Jane Brown, a “vigorous tradition of school gardening”⁸⁵ developed in Britain during the 1920s and 1930s and this tradition was subsequently transferred to the rest of the British Empire. It seems as though South African educators, particularly the English-speaking ones, were receptive to the new ideas which emanated from Britain because during the 1920s, school gardens became an increasingly prominent feature of the South African education debate.⁸⁶ In the case of black education, the garden was not only considered a moralising tool, as had been the case with white schools, but also a civilising one.⁸⁷ After unification this philosophy not only influenced primary education but increasingly also secondary and even tertiary education. Important milestones include the opening of the Tsolo School of Agriculture⁸⁸ in the Eastern Cape in 1912 and the South African Native College⁸⁹ at Fort Hare near Lovedale in 1916. While Tsolo focused entirely

⁸¹ For more information, see C.T. Loram, “A Rhodesian experiment in education”, *The South African Quarterly* III(2), June 1921, pp. 23-24; *The Friend*, 15.7.1921, p. 6.

⁸² FSPA: *ORC 125, Transvaal and Orange...*, p. 186. See also pp. 185-193.

⁸³ M. Agar, *A primer of school gardening*, pp. iii-vi.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-7.

⁸⁵ Brown, *The pursuit of...*, p. 281.

⁸⁶ C.A. Dawson, “The school garden”, *Nature Notes* 33-42, 1926, no p. no.; C.A. Dawson, “In a high school garden”, *Nature Notes* 53-62, 1928, no p. no.

⁸⁷ Robin, pp. 87-88, 92; Brown, *The pursuit of...*, pp. 277-281; Pells, p. 138.

⁸⁸ Anon., “Tsolo – where the Bantu farmers of the future are trained”, *Bantu* 4, April 1957, pp. 23-26; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 16.7.1927, p. 4; Pells, p. 135.

⁸⁹ D.E. Burchell, “African higher education and the establishment of the South African Native College, Fort Hare”, *South African Historical Journal* 8, November 1976, pp. 60-83; M.C. Eksteen, “University of Fort Hare”, *Lantern* XX(4), June 1971, pp. 56-76.

on agricultural training, Fort Hare offered, among others, a course in gardening and agriculture which required Standard Six as entrance qualification. At Fort Hare, male students were taught how to grow from seed and market a variety of vegetables and, at the same time, “inculcating in them a taste for this kind of food and work.”⁹⁰ As had been the case with the learners at Lovedale,⁹¹ a substantial percentage of the students at Tsolo and Fort Hare hailed from the Orange Free State and Bloemfontein. This trend underscores the argument that some of Batho’s residents, including many teachers, obtained their horticultural knowledge and expertise at the Union’s esteemed black educational institutions.⁹²

Concerning the layout of the gardens, particularly agricultural gardens and horticultural fields, at these educational institutions, the same trend which developed at Lovedale also developed there, namely vegetables and crops planted in rows. Therefore, the same arguments raised in the case of Lovedale are also applicable at other institutions. It appears as though a regimented design, characterised by formality and regularity, albeit very basic, was the predominant trend. Many of these agricultural gardens and horticultural fields, including the customary “mealie garden[s]”,⁹³ were enclosed by protective hedges, many of them clipped, such as the hedges planted at Tsolo. *Consequently, a traditional maize patch planted in rows instead of randomly sown and enclosed by a clipped hedge, is a typical example of the type of semi-vernacular garden which characterised these black educational institutions and mission schools*⁹⁴ (Image 6/3).

During the period between the two World Wars, black education was characterised by far-reaching changes which were, to an extent, triggered by provincial, national and international commissions of enquiry. These commissions were tasked to investigate all aspects of black education in the Union, including content and methodology. Noteworthy examples include the Cape Commission into Native Education (1919) and the Phelps-Stokes Commissions (1922). Among the most important recommendations of these commissions were the

⁹⁰ Jabavu, p. 133. See also pp. 96, 132.

⁹¹ In 1936, Lovedale’s student body consisted of 26 different ethnic groups of which Sotho-speakers represented the third largest. Shepherd, p. 483. See also Loram, p. 136.

⁹² Pells, pp. 135-137; Shepherd, pp. 482-484.

⁹³ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 23.6.1923, p. 2.

⁹⁴ *Bantu* XI(4), April 1964, p. 172 (photograph with description; no author); Brown, “Agricultural education for...”, p. 24.

amalgamation of denominational schools, the strengthening of state control over black schools and the need to adapt curricula to black people's practical needs and their "future work and surroundings".⁹⁵ In most cases, syllabus reform in the form of much greater emphasis on manual training and industrial education, including gardening and agriculture, was advocated. Recommendations varied from more intensive agricultural education to a curriculum based predominantly on horticultural and agricultural training. Most of these recommendations or adjusted versions thereof were implemented during the 1920s and early 1930s.⁹⁶ As a result, growing numbers of black and, importantly, also white schools have included gardening as a subject in the curricula for primary standards. Wherever possible, demonstration and experimental gardens were laid out on school premises. In addition, the available literature on the subject also increased.⁹⁷

During the second half of the 1930s, a national education commission was appointed to investigate the state of black education in the Union. Apart from this commission's importance in terms of the impact it had on black education in general, its findings and recommendations concerning the state of gardening as a subject in black schools is, for the purpose of this discussion, of particular importance; therefore, it deserves special attention.⁹⁸

The Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education (1935-1936)

In 1935, the Union of South Africa's Minister of Education appointed an inter-departmental committee (hereafter the committee) to investigate various aspects of native education in all four provinces of the Union. The committee was tasked, among others, to investigate the systems of native education in the four provinces and to make recommendations on the aims, methods and content of native education. According to the committee's report, important for this discussion because of its detailed account of gardening in black schools, the different

⁹⁵ As quoted in Krige, p. 87.

⁹⁶ Krige, pp. 74, 80-81, 87-93; Pells, pp. 137-142; T.J. Jones, *Education in Africa: a study of West, South, and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission, under the auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and foreign mission societies of North America and Europe*, pp. 20-21, 72-74, 193-194; Brown, "Agricultural education for...", p. 25; Dodd, pp. 16, 36; Malherbe, pp. 459-460.

⁹⁷ For example, see H.M.L. Bolus, *Elementary lessons in systematic botany based on familiar species of the South African flora, passim*; T.T. Enslin, *The young South African gardener, passim*; "Orchis" (pseudonym), "The school-child's garden", *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXI(3), March 1931, p. 84.

⁹⁸ FSPA: OVS 10/1/23, *Orange Free State Province: Education Department: report for the year ending 31st December, 1935*, p. 101.

types of education provided in the Union included primary education, secondary education, teacher training, industrial training and university education. In all the provinces, the elementary school course for black learners was an eight-year course and comprised two sub-standards, namely Sub-Standards A and B, and six standards, namely Standards One to Six. In addition to one official language, a native language, Religious and Moral Instruction, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Music, Hygiene, and Drill and Games, “manual and industrial training”⁹⁹ were also made *compulsory subjects for all primary schools in the Union*. For the purpose of this discussion, ‘manual and industrial training’ is significant because it included “gardening and elementary agriculture, generally for boys only; and needlework and housecraft for girls.”¹⁰⁰ The inclusion of gardening and basic agriculture in the school curricula gains particular importance when compared with the report’s recommendations on the content and scope of black education and its discussion of the factors which influenced the success or failure of school gardens.

One of the most important outcomes identified for black education was that the learners had to be equipped to *interpret, control and enrich their environment*.¹⁰¹ Gardening and agriculture were considered two crucially important subjects to achieve this outcome because both dealt with the human environment in more than one respect. The report discussed in detail the issues related to teaching gardening in black schools, particularly the importance of school gardens. By the 1930s, local education authorities had accepted the fact that it was impossible to teach learners how to garden without an actual garden on the school property to serve as a practical teaching tool. Therefore, the report advised that wherever possible, “*every primary school should have a suitable garden attached to it, in which the principles of agriculture may be practiced and taught.*”¹⁰² This statement is significant for two reasons. Firstly, emphasis was placed on primary schools (both lower and higher primary) and the inclusion of gardening in the primary school curriculum. It was argued that “children of tender years”¹⁰³ can be taught the principles of gardening and basic agriculture. The main objective with primary school learners was to stimulate “an interest in

⁹⁹ NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 107-108.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 112. (Own emphasis)

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

gardening and to connect the idea of working the soil with education.”¹⁰⁴ Secondly, it is also clear that the laying out of school gardens on school properties had become obligatory in order to effectively teach the subject of Nature Study¹⁰⁵ and the practical aspects of horticulture and basic agriculture. The physical laying out of such gardens was not considered problematic since it was argued that boys above Standard Two were physically strong enough to do the groundwork.¹⁰⁶

The committee identified a number of factors which influenced the success or failure of school gardens. Firstly, it was agreed that “a sufficiently large and suitable piece of ground”¹⁰⁷ had to be obtained for the laying out of a garden. Although exact measurements were not provided, it was recommended that each boy had to have “at least an eighth of an acre to work.”¹⁰⁸ The majority of black schools had adequate space available on school grounds for this purpose. School gardens that were too small and laid out on soil unsuitable for gardening were, for obvious reasons, identified as problematic. Secondly, gardens that were not fenced-in were doomed to failure, particularly in areas where stray animals posed a problem. Therefore, the enclosing or fencing-in of gardens was deemed “an absolute necessity for success”¹⁰⁹ when it came to any school gardening project. The type of fencing material was not prescribed because in most cases, the responsible Education Department did not provide funding for this purpose. Instead, the schools had to fund the fencing material but suitable material, such as wire-netting, was mostly not affordable. In such cases, the only other option was to plant a living hedge of privet or cypress or other plant cuttings which could be obtained free of charge.¹¹⁰

A third issue that was highlighted was the availability of suitable garden tools. The report remarked that “in order to hold the interest of the pupils, it is essential that all should be busy, and unless there are sufficient implements this is not possible.”¹¹¹ It was certainly not ideal for a group of learners to wait their turn and watch while others were busy in the garden.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ This subject will be discussed later in this chapter. Compare the subject ‘Nature Study’ with the subject ‘Nature-Study’ taught at Tuskegee.

¹⁰⁶ NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, pp. 112-113.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

The committee found that the lack of adequate tools, such as spades, rakes, hoes and watering cans, was a major factor in the failure of gardening in some black schools. The final issue that was raised was the training and attitude of the teacher(s) responsible for the teaching of gardening. The committee credited teachers who showed a real interest in gardening and an appreciation for the importance of gardening and agriculture for black people. The gardens that had been laid out under the supervision of enthusiastic teachers were considered “an example to the countryside”¹¹² and learners benefited greatly from their instruction. At the same time, the report also mentioned teachers responsible for gardening “who do their work so badly, that they effectively turn their pupils against working with the soil.”¹¹³

Another key issue raised by the committee was the importance of linking up and correlating the subject of Nature Study, which had become compulsory in primary schools, with practical gardening. Although this was no new idea, emphasis was placed on the importance of teachers being equipped to draw a parallel so that learners, in turn, were able to make the connection between theory and practice. The report explained that the “practical and experimental part of that study (Nature Study) should, as a rule, be taken in the school garden.”¹¹⁴ This approach was also followed at Tuskegee because Washington argued that it was crucial for learners to see “nature at first-hand in the classroom.”¹¹⁵ Aspects of horticulture and basic agriculture which had to be taught both inside and outside the classroom included basic plant anatomy, the life-cycle of plants, the effect of manure on soil and plant growth, the effect of insects on plants, crop rotation and the selection of seed, to name a few. These and other aspects of horticulture and agriculture were included in the Nature Study handbooks of the 1930s and 1940s and, interestingly, also in the school textbooks used during the 1950s when the notorious ‘Bantu education’ was implemented.¹¹⁶

Considering the variety and combination of subjects which formed the basis of the Nature Study ‘lessons’, it is important to note that the boundaries between horticulture and agriculture became fluid. Consequently, the type of school gardens that were laid out also

¹¹² *Ibid.* The report referred to rural schools.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Washington, p. 75.

¹¹⁶ J.H. Dugard *et al.*, *Nature Study for Bantu Primary Schools: standards V & VI: a reader for boys and girls in Bantu Higher Primary Schools to guide them in the syllabuses prescribed for Nature Study, Gardening, Tree Planting and Soil Conservation*, pp. 81-85; Washington, pp. 74-76.

displayed this fluidity. *Therefore, it is argued that the concepts of the agricultural garden and horticultural field discussed in Chapter 2 and referred to earlier in this chapter, are also applicable to school gardens.* Often flowers were planted with crops and vegetables, albeit in small separate plots and, importantly, in neat rows rather than randomly. All planting was done within a strict formal framework (Image 6/4). This trend was also noticeable in the gardens learners were encouraged to lay out at home. In terms of the so-called ‘home acre’ or ‘home project’ plan, the teacher(s) arranged with parents to allow learners to cultivate a garden plot at home under the teacher(s)’ supervision. The committee acknowledged that the success achieved with this approach “in the United States of America”¹¹⁷ (probably referring to Tuskegee) inspired similar projects in the Union.¹¹⁸

Finally, based on the factors which influenced the success or failure of school gardening, the committee recommended that:

- 1) “gardening should be taught wherever possible”¹¹⁹ in the Union’s black primary schools;
- 2) the syllabus for gardening had to be closely correlated with the subject of Nature Study;
- 3) adequate tools had to be supplied by the provincial Education Departments;
- 4) local black communities, of which the schools were part, had to be involved in school gardening projects by, for example, allowing them to assist with the fencing-in of school gardens;
- 5) a specialist teacher who was knowledgeable in terms of horticulture and/or agriculture had to be appointed to the staff component of schools;
- 6) in the higher primary classes (Standards Five and Six), experiments had to be conducted in the teaching of gardening and agriculture by means of the introduction of ‘fields’, ‘home acres’ or ‘home projects’;
- 7) the teaching of vegetable gardening and fruit growing to both boys and girls in the primary school had to be encouraged.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, p. 113.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*; Jabavu, p. 96; Krige, p. 88.

¹¹⁹ NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, p. 113.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

Although the long-term effects of this committee on black education in the Union only became visible during the 1940s and 1950s, many of the above-mentioned recommendations were implemented in black schools during the late 1930s. The Orange Free State, to which the focus now shifts, was no exception.

6.4 Gardening as a subject in black schools and training institutions in the Orange Free State and Batho

Compared to the state of black education in the Cape, Natal and even the Transvaal republic, the Orange Free State was considered the furthest behind. The first school for children of indigenous groups north of the Orange River was founded at a mission station in Philippolis¹²¹ in 1823. Since about 1835, missionaries of the Berlin Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Paris Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Missionary Society established mission stations in the southern and eastern parts of the Transgariep and later the Transoranje.¹²² Each mission station was an entity in itself and the type and quality of education offered depended on the responsible missionary and his helpers. In the case of the mission station Beersheba,¹²³ Reverend Samuel Rolland's wife, Elizabeth, supervised a school (Image 6/5) of more than 200 "little negro children, the offspring of slaves".¹²⁴ In most cases, the customary three R's formed the core of the curricula but at some schools, such as Beersheba, boys (and men) were "taught various industries",¹²⁵ such as brickmaking, carpentry, shoemaking, bookbinding and agriculture. According to the Rollands' daughter, Elise-Pauline Orpen, her father "held industry to be the first and most important point"¹²⁶ as far as the education and training of his brethren was concerned. Since almost all mission stations between the Orange River and the Vaal River had to be self-reliant in terms of daily food supplies, extensive vegetable gardens, orchards and crop fields were planted wherever

¹²¹ For more information on Philippolis, see Chapter 2.

¹²² For more information on mission stations, see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

¹²³ For more information, see Chapter 4.

¹²⁴ FSPA: A. 507.13, E.-P. Orpen (née Rolland), *Black kaffirs and white women* (memoirs), p. 1. For more information on the school and related activities, see FSPA: A. 507.13, Orpen, pp. 1-3; K. Schoeman (ed.), *The recollections of Elizabeth Rolland (1803-1901) with various documents on the Rolland family and the Free State mission of Beersheba*, pp. 72-73, 85, 87 (footnote), 90.

¹²⁵ FSPA: A. 507.13, Orpen, p. 3.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

natural water sources made it possible. Nowhere was this more eloquently displayed than at Beersheba, known for its “well-stocked garden”¹²⁷ of fruit trees and vegetables.¹²⁸

“They do their share of manual labour every afternoon in the garden”

Since the mission schools were usually located near the mission stations’ gardens and fields or, as in the case of Beersheba, among fruit trees which grew “in all directions”,¹²⁹ learners were often tasked to assist with garden maintenance long before gardening became a school subject. In the process, learners were not only exposed to basic gardening from a young age, but also enjoyed the fruits of their labour during meal times. Garden work, which was mostly limited to one or two hours in the afternoons, did not form part of the formal curricula but often the missionaries utilised it as a moralising tool in religious instruction or as a practical tool to explain the principles of arithmetic. Vegetable gardens were typically laid out in a regimented fashion, consisting either of a series of *small or large rectangular beds divided into squares with footpaths in-between*. Each square was planted with a different type of vegetable of which the variety, particularly at Beersheba, was often impressive. Orchards were also formally laid out with trees planted in straight rows. At Beersheba and other mission stations, the *basic design and layout of the gardens were often determined by the water provisioning systems*. These systems typically consisted of straight rills and ditches which ran parallel to each other with vegetable and flowerbeds laid out in-between¹³⁰ (Image 6/6).

Since all the missionaries were either European or British, the mission stations’ vegetable gardens and orchards resembled the basic traditional layout of such gardens and orchards in the mother country, ranging from the strict grid pattern preferred by the British to the geometry favoured by the French. Apart from their regimented appearance, these pioneer food gardens were almost without exception enclosed by either stacked stone walls or living

¹²⁷ NLSA: Ref. 266.TWE, *Orange Free State and Basuto Mission, occasional paper no. 1, containing the Bishop’s journal, July to October, 1863* (pamphlet), p. 22.

¹²⁸ NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, pp. 27-29; FSPA: A. 3(4/1)(9/2/2), *Extracts: South African Races Committee: education* (manuscript), p. 2; Dodd, p. 82; Loram, p. 65; Jones, p. 20. For a description of other mission gardens and fields, see Chapter 4.

¹²⁹ Schoeman (ed.), p. 91.

¹³⁰ Personal communication: Ms L. Philip, Archaeology Department, National Museum, Bloemfontein, 3.10.2017.

hedges, whether clipped or unclipped. Wire fences were unknown at the time. Orpen mentioned in her memoirs that at Beersheba, the boys (of whom some must have been learners) assisted the men with the building of stone walls around the gardens, orchards and corn fields (Image 6/5). This is an important phenomenon since *it is argued that the ancient concept of a garden or field – specifically an agricultural garden or horticultural field – as an enclosed entity was reinforced among black juveniles on mission stations from a young age*. When they later laid out gardens themselves as adults, living hedges or “topiaries”¹³¹ (clipped hedges) became the customary means of enclosure.¹³²

Despite being considered exemplary in many ways, the Orange Free State republic lacked the financial and human resources to effectively address the growing ‘Native education’ problem. As preference was given to white schools, the government relied heavily on the missionaries to carry the burden of black people’s education. Fortunately, the position of mission schools strengthened and their numbers increased, especially after the Basutho War of 1865, when two new mission societies established mission stations and so-called ‘Native schools’ in the fledgling republic, namely the Dutch Reformed Church (hereafter DRC) at Witziesshoek (later QwaQwa) and the Anglican Church (Church of England) at various towns all over the southern and north-eastern Orange Free State, such as Rouxville, Harrismith, Thaba ’Nchu and Modderpoort¹³³ near Labybrand.¹³⁴ At Thaba ’Nchu, for example, Reverend Crisp found the local people “anxious to have their children taught”¹³⁵ and, to meet this need, a Boys’ Normal School was started for Barolong and Basuto boys. In 1883, a missionary involved with the school reported that “the boys are docile and industrious and they do their share of manual labour every afternoon in the garden”.¹³⁶

¹³¹ National Museum Collection: L. Philip, *An archaeological investigation of the material culture of the French missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) in Lesotho and the Free State Province of South Africa, 2014* (manuscript), p. 6.

¹³² FSPA: A. 507.13, Orpen, pp. 2-4.

¹³³ Also known as St Augustine’s after the Society of St Augustine which began mission work at Modderpoort in 1869. Anon., *Diocese of Bloemfontein 1863-1963*, p. 22.

¹³⁴ K. Schoeman (ed.), *The Free State mission: the work of the Anglican Church in the Orange Free State, 1863-1883, as described by contemporaries*, pp. 63-64, 72, 86-87; Anon., *Diocese of Bloemfontein...*, pp. 22-23, 45-55, 68, 74; NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, p. 29; Dodd, p. 82; Loram, p. 65.

¹³⁵ FSPA: A. 27, *Extracts from the diary of the Reverend Crisp: letter from Crisp to sister, 1867-1875* (manuscript), 22.1.1868, p. 4.

¹³⁶ As quoted in Schoeman (ed.), *The Free State...*, p. 87.

“Here and there a little so-called manual training thrown in”

Since the Orange Free State government did not interfere with mission schools, the missionaries had the final say as to what type of education was deemed necessary. The type of instruction given at a typical Orange Free State mission school during the second half of the 1800s was described as follows: “scholastic work was confined to teaching the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic with here and there a little so-called manual training thrown in. Very much time was taken up in learning the catechism, hymns and texts by heart.”¹³⁷ No detail was provided as to what ‘a little so-called manual training’ meant because it was left to the discretion of the responsible teacher. Since gardens and gardening played such an important role in the daily life of most mission stations, it is argued that manual training in gardening and basic agriculture was included, such as at Thaba ’Nchu. However, in the Orange Free State, the concept of industrial education had not yet taken root to the extent that it had in the Cape and Natal.¹³⁸

Concerning the state of black education in the Orange Free State during the late 1800s, very little interest was shown or support given by the authorities except for the efforts of Reverend (later Doctor) John Brebner (1833-1902).¹³⁹ Brebner, who had been appointed Inspector of Schools in 1874, convinced the Volksraad to make an annual grant of £45 to the DRC’s mission schools in Witzieshoek in 1878. Thanks to Brebner, who must be credited for the tabling of Ordinance No. 1 of 1874 which became the foundation of the Orange Free State’s early education system, annual grants were later (1889) also awarded to the Berlin Missionary Society’s school in Bethanie and the Wesleyan Missionary Society’s school in Thaba ’Nchu.¹⁴⁰ Apart from Brebner’s efforts to secure financial support for mission schools, he also understood the need for gardening and farming to be included in the curriculum of selected schools. In 1880, he introduced his proposed scheme for a model training farm and agricultural school¹⁴¹ for the Orange Free State in one of his numerous

¹³⁷ NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, p. 29.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*; Dodd, p. 83.

¹³⁹ For more information on Brebner, see De Kock (ed.-in-chief), pp. 121-122.

¹⁴⁰ Both the Wesleyans and Anglicans maintained schools for black people in Thaba ’Nchu. For more information on the Wesleyans’ mission school in Thaba ’Nchu, see K. Schoeman (ed.), *The Wesleyan mission in the Orange Free State, 1833-1854, as described in contemporary accounts*, pp. 31-44.

¹⁴¹ FSPA: A. 6.5, Dr J. Brebner, *A scheme for a model farm or agricultural school* (manuscript), 27.5.1880, *passim*.

lectures on education matters. Brebner saw training in gardening and agriculture as a necessity for “the sons of farmers”.¹⁴² Although Brebner referred to the sons of white farmers, he was not unsympathetic to the need for such training among black learners, albeit on a different level and for different reasons. Brebner’s enlightened opinions on the subject made him ahead of his time.¹⁴³

“Train all native children systematically in indoor and outdoor work”

After the War, deliberate attempts were made by the new colonial administration to provide a basic legislative framework for black schools.¹⁴⁴ In this regard, mention must be made of Ordinance No. 27 of 1903 which focused mostly on white schools but also provided for “the *industrial and general education* of children other than those both of whose parents are of European birth or descent”.¹⁴⁵ Although gardening was not specifically mentioned by name, an education report of 1900-1904 stated that it was “essential to *train all native children systematically in indoor and outdoor work* as well as, wherever possible, in simple industrial occupations.”¹⁴⁶ Noteworthy is the use of the phrases ‘industrial occupation’ and ‘outdoor work’. This language is reminiscent of, if not similar to, the language used in the Cape Colony during the second half of the 19th century. Although the two concepts were not deliberately linked to each other, the mentioning of both in one sentence indicates a shift towards the approach followed in the Cape and Natal.

Apart from growing support in governmental circles of industrial education for black people, it appears as though the idea also gained support among the Orange Free State public, most notably among leading Bloemfontein citizens such as Sophie Levisieur (née Baumann; 1857-1961), wife of the well-known Bloemfontein businessman, Moritz Levisieur, and others who became increasingly aware of the ‘Native education’ issue. In a speech Levisieur made in Bloemfontein during the early 1900s, she argued that “it would certainly seem sounder to

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴³ FSPA: *OVS 10/1/13, Orange Free State Province: Education Department: report for the year ending 31st December, 1924*, p. 38; NARS: *SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), Report of the...*, p. 29; De Kock (ed.-in-chief), pp. 121-122; Dodd, p. 82; Loram, p. 65.

¹⁴⁴ FSPA: *A. 3(4/1)(9/2/2), Extracts: South African...*, pp. 2-3; NARS: *SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), Report of the...*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁵ FSPA: *ORC 98, Public education ordinance and regulations defining the functions and duties of local education committees, 1903: Ordinance No. 27 of 1903*, p. 3. (Own emphasis)

¹⁴⁶ FSPA: *ORC 125, Transvaal and Orange...*, p. 183. (Own emphasis)

educate the native on Industrial [sic] lines, than force a higher standard of education on him, which as yet he cannot appreciate.”¹⁴⁷ In the same speech, Levisieur commented that “the great American Negro Booker Washington believes in giving his brother a technical training, which he considers infinitely more potent than teaching him Latin.”¹⁴⁸ Although one must guard against reading into it too much, Levisieur’s reference to Washington is an indication that his ideas on industrial education had become known, if not influential, far beyond the borders of the USA.¹⁴⁹

Ordinance No. 27 of 1903 made provision for the establishment of government-funded industrial schools for black people and the annual payment of grants-in-aid to approved missions for the purpose of maintaining their schools.¹⁵⁰ The first government school which opened in terms of the mentioned ordinance was the Moroka Industrial School for Native Girls in Thaba ’Nchu in 1904. Apart from “plain cooking, sewing and laundry work”,¹⁵¹ the girls were also taught the value of vegetable gardening and tree-planting, specifically fruit trees. The school’s environment was duly enhanced with ornamental and fruit trees planted as part of a well laid-out scheme.¹⁵² The ultimate objective was to train black girls to be efficient domestic workers. A combination of inadequate funding (industrial training was an expensive enterprise) and lack of accommodation were among the reasons for the school’s closure in 1928. The same fate met the industrial school for boys opened by the Wesleyan mission at Boichoko near Thaba ’Nchu in 1905. It must be noted that there was a lack of support for these schools on the part of local black people because those who desired industrial training received bursaries from the Imperial Fund to study at more esteemed institutions, such as Lovedale and Fort Hare. The closure of Boichoko in 1909 and, later, Moroka were setbacks for industrial education in the Orange Free State. Nevertheless, the schools laid important groundwork for the future.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ FSPA: A. 72.7, S. Levisieur, *Natives*, circa early 1900s (speech), p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Dodd, pp. 82-83; Loram, pp. 65-66; Jabavu, p. 96; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 10.12.1938, p. 4.

¹⁵⁰ F.A. Bester, *'n Krities-historiese studie oor die naturelle- en kleurling-onderwys in die O.V.S.* (Unpublished M.Ed. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1945), pp. 83-86, 95.

¹⁵¹ FSPA: A. 3(4/1)(9/2/2), *Extracts: South African...*, p. 3.

¹⁵² Bester, p. 131.

¹⁵³ FSPA: *ORC 126, Orange River Colony: Education Department: report of the Director of Education for the year ending June 30th, 1904*, p. 19; FSPA: *OVS 10/1/13, Orange Free State...*, p. 38; FSPA: A. 3(4/1)(9/2/2), *Extracts: South African...*, p. 3; Bester, pp. 126-133, 143; NARS: *SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), Report of the...*, p. 31; Dodd, p. 83.

Despite the closures, there was positive growth elsewhere, most notably in the form of attempts to address the urgent need for a training facility for black teachers. It was not the government but the DRC which felt itself urged to open a training school for black teachers and ministers near the town of Heilbron. The Stofberg Gedenkskool, commonly known as Stofberg, was opened in 1908 and consisted of a Normal School for teachers and a Bible School for evangelists. Aspiring teachers had to have passed Standard Three to be granted admission to the school. A working farm was established on the school grounds not only for the purpose of producing fresh vegetables for the students but also as a training tool for the teachers.¹⁵⁴ Twenty years after Stofberg opened its doors, the Anglican Church started a similar teacher training institution and high school at its existing mission station at Modderpoort. The so-called ‘Modderpoort Schools’ not only became known for the quality of education and training provided there but also for the lush gardens which beautified the surroundings and created the ideal environment for an institution of learning.¹⁵⁵ As early as 1869, Reverend Crisp, who visited Modderpoort often, described the mission station’s garden as “nicely kept and well stocked with young fruit trees having on each side a walk sheltered by rows of fine willows.”¹⁵⁶ During the 1930s, teacher training courses in the Orange Free State were standardised and, apart from needlework, domestic science and woodwork, it included an agricultural course whereby each student had to have “an experimental garden not less than 600 sq. feet in area.”¹⁵⁷

“The subject was called Nature Study and the practical was gardening”

An important development in the history of black education in the Orange Free State came in 1923 with the appointment of Mr H.F.G. Kuschke as Organising Inspector of Education. Kuschke’s first challenge was to develop a new uniform syllabus for all schools in the province because there were almost as many syllabi as there were schools. Based on examples of syllabi obtained from schools in the other three provinces, Kuschke devised new syllabi for the lower primary standards (Standards One to Four) and the higher primary

¹⁵⁴ Anon., *Die Stofberg Gedenkskool: kwart-eeu-fees: 28 September tot 1 Oktober 1934*, pp. 6-22; W.L. Maree, “Stofberg-gedenkskool vyftig jaar oud”, *Bantu* 11, November 1958, pp. 40-44.

¹⁵⁵ Anon., *Diocese of Bloemfontein...*, p. 23; NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁵⁶ FSPA: A. 27, *Extracts from the diary of the Reverend Crisp: letter from Crisp to father, 1867-1875* (manuscript), 26.5.1869, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ Dodd, p. 84.

standards (Standards Five to Six) in 1924 and 1925 respectively. The first secondary schools for black people only came into existence in 1928. The syllabus for the lower and higher primary standards included the same subjects, namely English, Afrikaans, an African language (preferably the learners' mother tongue), Religious and Moral Instruction, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Music and, importantly, Nature Study.¹⁵⁸ Gardening (also Horticulture)¹⁵⁹ and (elementary or basic) Agriculture¹⁶⁰ were closely related to Nature Study and both were considered the practical application of the subject. Maria Marumo (born 1938),¹⁶¹ a former teacher at Phahamisang Primary School in Batho, explained it as follows: "the subject was called Nature Study and the practical was gardening."¹⁶² Joy Direko (born 1944),¹⁶³ whose deceased father, Michael Mochochoko, was a former principal of Mangaung Primary School in Batho, confirmed Marumo's explanation: "gardening was taught as part of a subject called Nature Study."¹⁶⁴ Kuschke argued that the choice of subjects, as well as their content, was determined by black people's special needs. Concerning gardening, Kuschke not only emphasised the subject's benefits in terms of improving black people's diet and health by planting and consuming fresh vegetables, he also highlighted its educational and aesthetic aspects. According to him, "the taste for such things must be developed and trained before their value is appreciated."¹⁶⁵ Therefore, the learners had to be encouraged to lay out vegetable gardens at home.¹⁶⁶

Since gardening was considered manual and industrial training, it was important that the practical side of gardening, in other words, the physical labour and, importantly, the correct use of garden tools, be stressed. It must also be kept in mind that more than 70% of all black

¹⁵⁸ In Afrikaans, the term *Natuurstudie* was used. Bester, p. 208. For more information on the subject of Nature Study, see A.V. Murray, *The school in the bush: a critical study of the theory and practice of native education in Africa*, pp. 183-195; Anon. "Nature study in schools", *Nature Notes* 33-42, 1926, pp. 3-4.

¹⁵⁹ In Afrikaans, the term *Tuinbou* was used. Bester, p. 208. In cases where the terms 'gardening' and 'horticulture' refer to school subjects, they are written in uppercase and where they refer to gardening and horticulture in general, they are written in lowercase.

¹⁶⁰ For more information, see B. Huss, *A text book on agriculture, passim*.

¹⁶¹ For more information on Marumo, see Chapter 5.

¹⁶² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.M. Marumo*, Batho, 28.10.2014.

¹⁶³ For more information on Direko, see Chapter 5.

¹⁶⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms J.M. Direko*, Batho, 11.11.2014.

¹⁶⁵ FSPA: *OVS 10/1/13, Orange Free State...*, p. 44.

¹⁶⁶ NARS: *SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), Report of the...*, p. 32; FSPA: *OVS 10/1/13, Orange Free State...*, p. 44; Bester, pp. 206-209, 222; Jabavu, pp. 132-133.

people in the Orange Free State still lived in rural areas where they were mostly dependent on themselves for their daily sustenance. Fresh produce markets for black people were mostly concentrated in the urban areas such as the one in Fort Hare Road, Batho.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, the objective was to educate and equip rural black learners to grow a variety of vegetables at home in order to supplement their staple diet, which still consisted predominantly of maize and maize products.¹⁶⁸ In order to emphasise the dietary benefits of growing and consuming a variety of vegetables, gardening – specifically vegetable gardening – was correlated with another school subject, namely Hygiene.¹⁶⁹ Among other things, this subject focused on the importance of a balanced diet and the key role fresh vegetables played in such a diet. It is thus important to understand that the subjects of Nature Study, Gardening (or Horticulture) and Hygiene stood in close relation to one another and, as far as the teaching of the subject of Gardening is concerned, the objective was to emphasise the links that existed between the three.¹⁷⁰

During the 1920s, it became evident that while the teaching of gardening theory (Nature Study) was one thing, the teaching of practical gardening, in other words, “Nature Study in the school garden”,¹⁷¹ was another. A number of problems hampered the effective teaching of gardening in black schools which, in turn, resulted in some learners developing a dislike for garden work. During its investigation of the state of black education in the Union, the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education found that when Standard Seven learners were asked, ‘What subject do you like least?’ four times as many liked Nature Study least compared to those who liked it best. Apparently, this negative perception of the subjects of Nature Study and Gardening was already latent during the 1920s when these subjects were widely introduced in black schools.¹⁷² While the problems mentioned earlier, such as the unsuitability of the soil for school gardening purposes and the lack of garden tools, have certainly contributed to the problem, another factor also played a role. A combination of the manner in which the subjects were taught and the learners’ conception of garden work as

¹⁶⁷ For more information on the market, see Chapter 5.

¹⁶⁸ FSPA: *OVS 10/1/13, Orange Free State...*, p. 44; H.W. Ntsanwisi, “The value of school gardens”, *The Light* VIII(84), December 1937, p. 2.

¹⁶⁹ In Afrikaans, the term *Gesondheidsleer* was used. Bester, p. 220.

¹⁷⁰ FSPA: *OVS 10/1/13, Orange Free State...*, p. 44; Bester, pp. 219-220; Murray, pp. 183-195.

¹⁷¹ J. van der Poel, *Education and the native* (Paper read at the conference of the South African Teachers’ Association, Cape Town, 28.6.1934), p. 17.

¹⁷² Jabavu, pp. 96-97.

degrading and typically the type of labour white people were not prepared to do themselves – in other words, ‘Kaffir’s work’ – have instilled in some learners an aversion to Nature Study and Gardening.¹⁷³

The committee found that at some black schools, including schools in the Orange Free State, practical gardening had “lapsed into triviality and mere mechanical drudgery with no educational value.”¹⁷⁴ Some teachers disliked gardening and believed it was “the work of farmers, and unskilled labourers”.¹⁷⁵ Jabavu argued that since gardening had been equated with sweeping yards, some “boys grow to hate all manual work as humiliating”.¹⁷⁶ According to him, the problem was not gardening as such, but the way it was taught. In a leading article, *Umteteli wa Bantu* lamented the fact there was “no incentive to the children to have good gardens.”¹⁷⁷ Learners who reaped the rewards of their gardening efforts in the form of fresh fruit and vegetables or receiving payment for vegetables sold, had a positive attitude towards the subject of Gardening. Apparently, this happened to be the case at most of Batho’s schools where Nature Study and Gardening were taught because, as will be discussed in the next section, most of the learners seemed to have enjoyed gardening.¹⁷⁸

6.5 Gardening as a subject in Batho’s schools: personal testimonies

Oral history interviews were conducted with ten selected elderly Batho residents with the objective of gathering information on the history of gardening as a subject in Batho’s oldest schools, specifically those which functioned during the 1920s and 1930s. The last surviving Batho residents who could still recall the teaching of Nature Study and Gardening as subjects in Batho’s schools before World War II were in the lower primary sub-standards and standards during the late 1930s and early to mid-1940s. Other interviewees shared information passed on to them by their parents or relatives who were in the mentioned grades much earlier, mostly during the 1920s. Almost all of the schools which existed in Batho

¹⁷³ E.H. Brookes, *Native education in South Africa*, pp. 76-77; Bester, pp. 220-221; NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, pp. 91-92; Jabavu, pp. 96-97; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 30.6.1928, p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, p. 92.

¹⁷⁵ Ntsanwisi, p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ Jabavu, pp. 96-97.

¹⁷⁷ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 30.6.1928, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Bester, pp. 220-221; NARS: SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), *Report of the...*, pp. 91-92; Jabavu, pp. 96-97; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 30.6.1928, p. 2.

during the 1920s and 1930s were founded by the Anglican Church's St Patrick's Mission. It is argued that of all the church denominations which established schools for Bloemfontein's black and coloured residents, the Anglican Church had been the most prominent and influential. Since the St Partick's Mission started in a school-room next to the Anglican cathedral in St George's Street in 1876, it grew exponentially in response to black peoples' growing need for education.¹⁷⁹ In fact, the St Patrick's school system grew to such an extent that in 1927, assistant priest, A.J. Moore, noted that the mission's schools were "situate [sic] in various parts of the Location"¹⁸⁰ and the number of learners in the schools was close to a thousand. It appears as though the mentioned *kindergarten* philosophy also found resonance with the Anglicans because Moore mentioned that the mission managed a sizeable "Kindergarten Department".¹⁸¹ Gardening as a subject played an important role in the mission's primary education and, apparently, it was popular among the learners. In 1923, one of the teachers, Miss Macy, reported that the learners' "favourite lessons are sewing and gardening".¹⁸²

During the 1920s, particularly the period 1924 to 1927, Batho and Bloemfontein's other locations¹⁸³ saw the amalgamation of a number of denominational (mission and church) schools due to duplication. Some of the schools were taken over by the provincial Education Department and others were placed under the control of inter-denominational committees.¹⁸⁴ In his yearly report on locations for 1926-1927, the Superintendent of Locations, Mr Cooper, reported that a total of 12 black schools were placed under departmental control. This number included a total of five Anglican schools, namely St Patrick's (Batho), St Paul's (Batho), St Peter's (Kaffirfontein), St Philip's (a coloured school which was replaced by the new Belmont school for coloured people in 1927) and St Alban's (Bochabela); a Lutheran school in Goddard Street; and three Wesleyan schools, namely St John's (Waaiohoek) and a school in Kaffirfontein and the No. 3 Location (Railway Camp), respectively. In some cases,

¹⁷⁹ FSPA: A. 507.6, *Letter from A.L.T. Perkins to K. Schoeman, St Augustine's Priory, Modderpoort, Orange Free State*, 29.11.1978, p. 1; Anon., *Diocese of Bloemfontein...*, pp. 44-45; K. Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan van 'n stad, 1846-1946*, p. 45.

¹⁸⁰ Bloemfontein Public Library: *Afric. 266.368MOO*, A.J. Moore, *St. Patrick's Mission, Bloemfontein, O.F.S., South Africa* (pamphlet), no p. no.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² HP: Miss Macy, "Native children", *Quarterly Paper* 222, 25.10.1923, p. 113.

¹⁸³ For more information, see Chapter 5.

¹⁸⁴ FSPA: *OVS 10/1/13, Orange Free State...*, p. 52; FSPA: *OVS 10/1/16, Orange Free State Province: Education Department: report for the year ending 31st December, 1927*, pp. 96, 98.

such as St Paul's, church buildings served as school-rooms on weekdays. Five separate schools amalgamated to form a new interdenominational school, namely the Bantu United School in Batho and two schools amalgamated to form an interdenominational school in the Tempe location. The third interdenominational school was the Higher Primary School which opened in February 1926.¹⁸⁵ These schools, which later became non-denominational, provided education for 2 146 learners, while it was estimated that approximately 4 000 location children were not attending school.¹⁸⁶

As far as the nature and content of education were concerned, Kuschke reported in 1928 that the teaching of gardening "has made remarkable progress"¹⁸⁷ and in 1930, it was reported that "gardening and handwork forms an important part of the instruction given and the [Provincial] Administration is making every possible effort to give to all native education, both lower and higher, a *practical bias*."¹⁸⁸ In order to arrive at a better understanding of the mentioned 'practical bias', the teaching of gardening and basic agriculture in Batho's most well-known schools during the 1920s and 1930s, as told by a number of Batho elderly, will now be discussed.

Bantu United School

Bantu United School, also known as Bantu United, is situated on the corner of Fort Hare Road and Cook Avenue in the Four-and-Six section of Batho. The school was initially known as New School No. 1 and today it is known as Mangaung Primary School (Image 6/7). In 1925, the establishment of this new non-denominational school "with particular attention [given] to manual training, agriculture and gardening"¹⁸⁹ was hailed as a major step forward. The "economic and hygienic value and the education and aesthetic value"¹⁹⁰ of providing the school's learners with training in agriculture and gardening were considered

¹⁸⁵ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/17, Agenda for ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 4.4.1930, p. 2.

¹⁸⁶ Bester, pp. 188-206; NARS: *SRP 6/270 (U.G. 29-1936), Report of the...*, pp. 32-33; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/2, Yearly report on locations 1926-1927*, 1.4.1927, p. 4; FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/8, Quarterly report of Superintendent of Locations for period ended 30th September 1925*, 1.10.1925, p. 5.

¹⁸⁷ FSPA: *OVS 10/1/16, Orange Free State...*, p. 108.

¹⁸⁸ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/17, Agenda for ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 4.4.1930, p. 2. (Own emphasis)

¹⁸⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/8, Quarterly report of Superintendent of Locations for period ended 30th September 1925*, 1.10.1925, p. 5.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

essential not only for the garden location's needs but also for the gardening needs of Bloemfontein's white residents. Not long after the school had been established, the principal officially applied for "a plot of ground to teach the boys gardening" since there were "150 [boys] old enough to learn gardening".¹⁹¹ It did not take much effort to convince Bloemfontein's town council to allocate a piece of land for gardening purposes because if there was one thing most white councillors seemed to have agreed on it was the necessity to teach black learners, particularly boys, gardening. Councillor Streeten expressed the general sentiment when he stated that "it was an excellent idea to train the young Native to [do] gardening."¹⁹² The council agreed that "an allotment, in extent 100 by 500 feet, in the Allotment Garden, i.e., 500 feet bordering on Fort Hare Street and 100 feet on Nanugo Street, be granted."¹⁹³

Apart from Bantu United, other location schools also applied for land adjacent to their school buildings to be made available by the municipality for school gardening purposes. In December 1927, the Wesleyan Church applied for ground to be allotted to each of their schools "in view of the fact that the Education Department (Native Education) requires that gardening should be taught in our native day schools".¹⁹⁴ Suddenly, the demand for land for school gardening purposes exceeded the availability because by then most of the open land in Batho had been turned into allotment gardens. During a meeting between the Native Advisory Board and Kuschke on behalf of the Education Department, the blockmen were encouraged to convince Batho's gardeners to make available for school gardening purposes all allotment gardens which had been lying dormant. Blockman Sasing informed the meeting that he and other blockmen were against the allotments being taken away from allotment holders since they "had gone to considerable trouble and expense"¹⁹⁵ to enclose and lay out their gardens.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/15, *Report of Superintendent of Locations, July 1928*, 10.8.1928, p. 2.

¹⁹² FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/15, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 14.8.1928, p. 10.

¹⁹³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/15, *Report of Superintendent of Locations, July 1928*, 10.8.1928, p. 2. See also FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/15, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 14.8.1928, p. 10.

¹⁹⁴ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/14, *Report of Superintendent of Locations, December 1927*, 12.1.1928, p. 2.

¹⁹⁵ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/17, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 11.9.1929, p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

In his turn, Cooper argued that many of “the plots were not being worked”¹⁹⁷ and that Sesing and the blockmen had to remind themselves that the gardening to be done on these allotments by learners “would be of great assistance to them in later life and would help them to become useful citizens.”¹⁹⁸ Kuschke informed the meeting that school gardening was about to become a standard feature of black schools because of the premium the government placed on it. Therefore, he suggested that each of the five large schools in the locations, namely St John’s, St Patrick’s, the Lutheran school, Higher Primary and Bantu United be granted a plot of land for gardening purposes because “they deserved every [sic] assistance that it was possible to give them.”¹⁹⁹

Cecil Dibe (born 1929) remembered that he was taught gardening at the Bantu United School from Standards One to Four. Later, he “also took gardening at Moroka Practising School”²⁰⁰ in Thaba ’Nchu during 1945 and 1946. At Bantu United, the boys did gardening and the girls did domestic science. He remembered there were vegetable gardens on the school grounds and “there was also a nice [flower] garden in front of the school.”²⁰¹ The learners laid out both vegetable and flower gardens: “the vegetables were spinach, mealies, cabbage, beans, some kind of sugar cane, watermelons. We made a separate garden for the flowers. We planted asters and gladiolas.”²⁰² According to Dibe, the practical gardening sessions were always on Thursdays. “They [teachers] called it ‘manual work’. We had interval from 11:30 to 12:00. From 12:00 we worked in the garden for 45 minutes. We planted [seeds]. Others cleaned the yard”²⁰³ he explained. Dibe recalled that they used forks, spades, rakes, hosepipes and wheelbarrows to maintain the gardens. The teachers taught them practical gardening skills: “they taught us how to make compost with *groenteskille* [vegetable peels] and *perdemis* [horses’ manure]. We made a hole in the ground.”²⁰⁴ He also remembered that the learners had to sell the fresh vegetables in Batho: “we sold the vegetables to make money for the school. We sold the vegetables in the location from house to house. We took the money to the school the next day. We took the flowers to our houses and we put them in the

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁰⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr S.C. Dibe, Batho, 30.10.2013.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

class rooms.”²⁰⁵ According to Dibe, the teachers explained to them that they had to learn about gardening “so that when we [boys] are older men, you must know how to feed your child.”²⁰⁶ For Dibe gardening was not hard; instead, it was a pleasure: “I enjoyed gardening too much.”²⁰⁷

Direko, who had learnt most of what she could remember about gardening at Bantu United from her father, who was a former principal of the school, remembered that the learners of Sub-Standard A to Standard Two had to take gardening as a subject. At Bantu United, the boys were taught gardening and the girls sewing. Direko remembered that her father supported the idea of teaching boys gardening at school. “In those days it was a necessity for boys – they [teachers] were teaching them for the future – gardening for the future. They [boys] had to be able to make gardens, to handle tough jobs, to prepare them for manhood, to be able to make gardens at their own homes”,²⁰⁸ Direko explained. For this reason, the boys were encouraged to lay out vegetable gardens at their own homes in Batho. Because of the gardening knowledge and skills they had been taught at school, “the boys helped to maintain the gardens at home”,²⁰⁹ Direko remembered. According to Direko, the school’s vegetable gardens were laid out on the huge piece of land behind the school and the vegetable beds were of a *rectangular shape*. Each bed was planted with a different type of vegetable, including spinach, cabbage and carrots. In order to earn desperately-needed funds for the school to be able to purchase garden tools and other equipment, the vegetables grown in the school’s gardens were sold in Batho: “they [learners] sold bunches of spinach for five pence”,²¹⁰ Direko recalled.

St Patrick’s No. 2

The St Patrick’s No. 2²¹¹ school in Lovedale Road, Batho, was one of a number of schools established by the St Patrick’s Mission since it began its work in Bloemfontein in 1867.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms J.M. Direko, Batho, 11.11.2014.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Today, St Patrick’s No. 1 is known as Morafe Primary School in Abdurahman Street, Bochabela.

Today, the school is known as Phahamisang Primary School (Image 6/8). In 1920, the then Superintendent of Locations, G.P. Cook, informed the Town Clerk, J.P. Logan, that Reverend (later Canon) Edgar Rose (1867-1946)²¹² of the St Patrick's Mission applied for "a site in the new Location for a school and Pastor's house."²¹³ The site had to be big enough because Rose intended "teaching gardening as well as the usual routine."²¹⁴ A site which consisted of "12 stands at the far end of Batho"²¹⁵ in Lovedale Road was agreed on. Without delay, a school and parsonage were built on the property and soon both became known for their extensive gardens.

After completing Sub-Standards A and B at the St Paul's Anglican Church School in Cook Avenue, Batho, Paul Tsie (born 1929) attended both St Patrick's Nos 1 and 2. Gardening²¹⁶ was taught at both schools and, as had been the case at the other black schools, learners had to work in the school gardens: "some days were called 'manual day' – it was mostly Wednesday"²¹⁷ Tsie recalled. According to Tsie, the boys worked in the garden and the girls did needlework and domestic science. Vegetables and flowers were planted and forks and spades were the only garden tools available for the learners. Buckets were used to water the gardens because there were no hosepipes. Tsie remembered the beautiful flowers grown in the school gardens most of which were used to decorate the interior of the St Patrick's Church in Waaihoek: "the school gave the flowers to the church; the church flowers had to be refreshed every Friday."²¹⁸ Another interviewee, Gilbert Dibe (born 1939), also remembered the school's flower gardens from the time he was a learner there. By the early 1940s, the school's gardens were well established and he remembered that the gardens were widely admired for their beautiful roses. He explained that the roses grew so well because the learners watered them individually by hand with buckets.²¹⁹

²¹² For more information on Edgar Rose and the St Patrick's Mission, see D.A. van der Bank, "A short tribute to Canon Edgar Rose", *National Museum News* 29, September 1985, pp. 19-21; C.J. Beyers & J.L. Basson (eds-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordboek* (vol. V), pp. 696-697.

²¹³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/4, *Letter from G.P. Cook, Superintendent of Locations, to J.P. Logan, Town Clerk & Treasurer*, 5.2.1920, p. 12.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ The subject was Nature Study. According to Tsie, the other subjects were Arithmetic, Geography, History, Scripture, Afrikaans, English and Setswana.

²¹⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.P. Tsie*, Batho, 6.11.2013.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr G.M. Dibe*, Batho, 28.10.2014.

Tsie could not recall that the teachers ever explained to the learners why they had to do gardening in school. “We accepted it was part of school work”,²²⁰ he said. Therefore, the teachers did not find it necessary to prompt the learners to do gardening: “we enjoyed it because we were not bored by [classroom] teaching. We liked to work with our hands.”²²¹ Tsie remembered that he and other boys were so fond of gardening that they volunteered to work in the parsonage garden some afternoons after school. In the parsonage garden or so-called “Mission’s garden”²²² his and the other boys’ hands-on training in the art of gardening continued: “Father Perkins²²³ and Father Ambrose taught me [how] to garden. They said it [gardening] is refreshing and it teaches you the seasons of the year. They also said: ‘we do this on account of this, we do this on account of that. In spring you do this, in winter you do that’.”²²⁴ Tsie remembered that spring was the time when hedges had to be clipped. In fact, it was in the parsonage garden where Tsie and the other boys who worked in the garden learnt the art of clipping because the Anglican clergymen, including Ambrose, Perkins and Rose, were fond of neatly-clipped hedges. For them, clipped hedges were planted first and foremost for their functional value and, secondly, for their aesthetic value. Most of the church properties were enclosed by clipped hedges and the parsonage was no exception.²²⁵

Another Batho resident, who had learned gardening at St Patrick’s No. 2, was Peter Melamu (born 1931). Melamu was taught gardening in Standards One and Two. He remembered there was a huge vegetable garden behind the school where carrots, spinach, beetroot (*Beta vulgaris spp.*) and maize were planted. The school building was U-shaped and served as an enclosure for the gardens that had been laid out in the quadrangle. Apart from vegetables, flowers were also planted. As far as Melamu could remember, practical gardening work was done on Tuesdays and Fridays, and both boys and girls worked in the gardens. Among others, the learners were taught “how to make the soil rich” and “there were some [vegetables] for

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.* The parsonage garden was situated on the corner of Lovedale Road and what is known today as Dr Belcher Road. The superintendent’s house and garden were situated directly opposite the parsonage and its garden.

²²³ For more on Perkins, see FSPA: A. 507.6, *Letter from A.L.T. Perkins...*, p. 1.

²²⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.P. Tsie, Batho, 6.11.2013.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*; FSPA: A. 507.6, *Letter from A.L.T. Perkins...*, p. 1.

summer, other[s] for winter.”²²⁶ While some of the vegetables were cooked for the learners and served during lunchtime, the rest were sold in Batho. The flowers were also sold: “they [teachers] gave us bundles to go and sell them. We sold the flowers for two and six [two shillings and six pennies]”²²⁷ Melamu recalled. Among the things learners were taught as part of the practical gardening sessions was how to lay out home gardens. The teachers “teach us to plant them [gardens] at home. They came to check at home how the gardens were looking. If the gardens were looking nice, we got presents, like some socks or vests.”²²⁸ According to Melamu, he enjoyed gardening because of the reward that came his way in the form of fresh vegetables. For him and the other learners, the St Patrick’s parsonage garden adjacent to the school served as an inspiration. He remembered that “the garden was big with a big yard”.²²⁹

Mr T.S. Sebeela (born 1939) remembered that he was taught gardening at St Patrick’s No. 2 from Sub-Standard A to Standard Two. The practical gardening period was on Wednesdays after interval from 10:30 to 13:00. Onions (*Allium cepa*), beetroot, cabbage and spinach were planted in the school’s big vegetable garden and the learners used forks, spades, rakes and watering cans to maintain the gardens. Apart from using watering cans to water the gardens, they also used water from the garden’s ditches. “These were *long rectangular gardens with trenches between [them] for the water*. The water came from a windmill and a dam at New School No. 1.”²³⁰ Because the vegetable beds had been laid out in a regimented fashion to fit into the quadrangle, the overall design was overtly formal. The learners were instructed to plant the vegetables and flowers in straight rows. Concerning the practical gardening periods, Sebeela remembered that “they [teachers] tell us how to garden, how to plant these things [seeds] and how to take care of them. We planted seeds, and took care of them and took out weeds.”²³¹ As far as he could remember, the teachers did not explain to the learners why they had to do gardening in school but he figured out that “it is a good thing they taught

²²⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.K. Melamu, Batho, 29.11.2013.*

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr T.S. Sebeela, Batho, 14.4.2014.* (Own emphasis) According to Mr G.M. Dibe, St Patrick’s No. 2 had its own windmill and dam on the school property but these were probably erected during the 1940s.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

us gardening, because our life depends on gardening, everything we eat is from the garden.”²³² Did he enjoy gardening? “I cannot say, I just did it”,²³³ he answered.

The Congregational Church School

Sarah Mahabane (born 1927),²³⁴ daughter-in-law of the well-known Reverend Z.R. Mahabane (1881-1971),²³⁵ attended Sub-Standards A and B and Standard One in the Congregational Church School in Mooki Street, Batho. According to Mahabane, she was taught gardening in Standards One and Two when she was eight or nine years old. Both boys and girls were taught Nature Study and both sexes worked in the school’s gardens. Mahabane explained: “They [teachers] taught us Nature Study. They taught us about cancer bush,²³⁶ its medicinal purposes, and [that] it works for diabetics. There were no handbooks, they [teachers] just showed us pictures of plants [vegetables and flowers].”²³⁷ At the Congregational Church School, gardening was considered the practical application of Nature Study. According to Mahabane, the learners worked in the gardens on “Thursday for the whole day after we prayed.”²³⁸ “In the morning we attended classes, after interval we worked in the gardens”²³⁹ she explained. Mahabane recalled they were taught “you must make the soil loose, you must put manure there. We used to take horses’ manure”.²⁴⁰ The learners were also instructed to “take out weeds with the root. They gave us powder [pesticide] for the pests.”²⁴¹ The garden tools used included forks, spades and rakes.²⁴²

The Congregational Church School’s gardens were mostly vegetable gardens and green beans, spinach, cabbage, potatoes, beetroot and onions were usually planted. “We sold the vegetables in the location [Batho]. We went to the different houses. It was six pence for a

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ For more information on Mahabane, see Chapter 5.

²³⁵ Mahabane was a well-known clergyman, teacher, interpreter, politician and a former president of the ANC (1924-1927; 1937-1940). E.J. Verwey (ed.), *New Dictionary of South African Biography* (vol. I), pp. 151-153.

²³⁶ *Sutherlandia frutescens*, also known as *kankerbos*.

²³⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 7.11.2014.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *Ibid.*

bunch of spinach”,²⁴³ Mahabane recalled. She also vividly remembered the layout of the gardens and described them as *long, rectangular vegetable beds divided into sections* for the different types of vegetables: green beans, spinach, cabbage, potatoes, beetroot and onions. She could not remember that any flowers or fruit trees had been planted. According to Mahabane the teachers explained to them that it was important for them to be taught gardening because “if they [children] learn the gardening, when they grow up they will know how to make gardening [sic]. They learn [sic] us to make your own garden at home.”²⁴⁴ Mahabane explained that she and the other learners enjoyed gardening: “when we gardened we sang *Morena boloka sechaba saeso* [God protect our nation].”²⁴⁵

6.6 Concluding remarks

On the basis of the discussions in this chapter, the importance of gardening as a subject in black schools and educational institutions in the Orange Free State and Batho should be viewed from a political, practical and aesthetical perspective. Although the initial motivation for teaching black people gardening and elementary agriculture was to teach them practical and useful skills to benefit them later in life, it was also rooted in a political ideology which envisioned black people in a subordinate position and white people in a dominant position in a segregated society. The ‘Native education’ issue became one of the main factors which shaped the Union’s ‘Native policy’ during the 1920s and 1930s. From a practical perspective, it is argued that black learners and students were exposed to the importance and potential of gardening as a means of food production from a fairly young age. Initially, this happened on the mission stations where the subject of Gardening was rather informally taught but later also in the amalgamated church schools, the non-denominational schools and other educational institutions where the subject, coupled with Nature Study and Hygiene, was officially included in curricula.

In addition to the basic horticultural knowledge black learners and students gained on the mission stations, schools and educational institutions, they have also, albeit in a very limited way, learnt basic clipping skills. This happened to be the case where clipped hedges instead

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

of the initial stone walls and later wire-netting were used as a means of enclosure. It appears as though clipped hedges were much more prevalent at the Anglican Church's mission stations, schools and educational institutions than elsewhere. In some cases, the learners and students assisted the gardeners and groundsmen with the clipping. It must be stressed, though, that the clipping was rather elementary and mostly limited to hedges. Ornamental topiary was apparently seldom practiced. Although not all black learners and students appreciated clipping in particular and gardening in general, it is argued that the inclusion of Gardening as a subject in curricula did much to instil in them an appreciation and, in the case of Batho's learners, a love for gardening which laid the foundation for a fondness for topiary that came later in their lives.

From an aesthetical perspective, it is argued that black learners and students were not only exposed to the practical value of gardens in terms of food production and nutritional benefit, but also to the design and layout of gardens in the European tradition. The missionaries and their associates hailed from Britain and Europe and influenced the basic design and layout of the agricultural garden and horticultural field in two important ways. Firstly, seeds and seedlings were planted in rows instead of being randomly sown and, secondly, the basic shape of the man-made garden or field became increasingly regimented, formal and often enclosed. These changes were not only visible in the gardens that had been laid out on the mission stations but also in the design of school gardens such as the Batho school gardens described by some elderly interviewees. The fact that learners were encouraged to lay out similar gardens at home together with the fact that members of local communities were often involved in the school gardens, meant that these changes also influenced gardens other than school gardens. As will be indicated in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9, these are important developments in the evolution of the semi-vernacular location garden. In the next chapter, the focus shifts to another aspect of the making of a black gardener, namely the gardener as garden labourer or garden employee.

CHAPTER 7

THE MAKING OF A BLACK GARDENER (2): EMPLOYING THE GARDENER

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus shifts to another important aspect of the making of a black gardener, namely the black gardener as garden labourer or employee. It is argued that for the black learners who had not completed their relatively short school careers, had dropped out of school, or had not attended school at all, gardening was one of the few employment opportunities available to black men in Bloemfontein during the 1920s and 1930s. Due to the increased demand for garden labour, many black men found employment as garden labourers in Bloemfontein's fast-growing white suburbs. *The black gardener as garden labourer or employee is a key role-player in the history of Batho's semi-vernacular gardens because many of those gardens were laid out by the same black men who had worked for whites as garden labourers.* Therefore, it is important to read this chapter in relation to the discussion of Bloemfontein's white garden owners and their gardens in Chapter 4. Bloemfontein's main employer of black garden labour was the predominantly white property-owning class, although the local municipality, educational institutions, medical facilities and businesses also employed limited numbers of garden labourers. Apart from the suburban domestic gardens, the city's municipal parks (Image 7/1), squares and public gardens, as well as the gardens laid out in front of public buildings (Image 7/2) and facilities, required constant maintenance. Thus, black garden labourers who also gardened at home maintained their employers' gardens as well as their own. Importantly, the term 'maintained' includes the practice of topiary, in other words, the maintenance of hedges, edges and ornamental topiary by means of constant clipping and trimming.¹

¹ D. du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the history of the English-style gardens of Batho, Mangaung (1846-1948), *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 27(3), December 2011, p. 56; Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA): *MBL 1/2/3/1/43, Minutes of special meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee*, 27.10.1930, pp. 4-6. For an account of all garden labourers employed in Bloemfontein's Parks Department in 1930, see FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/43, Memo re Curator of Parks, Mr. A.F. Baker: Annexure A*, 4.10.1930, pp. 1-3. In 1930, a total of 110 black men were employed by the Parks Department.

For the purpose of this discussion, the word ‘gardener’, defined and explained in Chapter 1, is used in its broadest possible sense so that it refers to *both garden labourer and garden-maker, that is, a garden worker but also a gardener in the conventional sense of the word*. This is an important point because Batho’s gardeners were often garden labourers and garden-makers at the same time. Therefore, the words ‘gardener’ and ‘garden labourer’ or ‘garden employee’ will be used interchangeably. The difference between Batho’s black garden-makers and Bloemfontein’s white garden-makers was that Batho’s garden-makers were not garden-owners in the true sense of the word. In other words, everything that had been built or planted on their plots were their property but not the land itself. The issue of land ownership was, of course, not the only difference. In fact, the two groups were representative of two polar opposites and found themselves in two completely different living environments, namely the black location and the white suburb. Furthermore, the two parties could not have been more different themselves. On the one hand, the garden-maker from Batho was typically a male Sotho- or Tswana-speaking black person. A small percentage of Batho’s garden-makers were coloureds who lived in the location’s Cape Stands section. On the other hand, the garden-maker from Bloemfontein’s suburbs was typically an English- or Afrikaans-speaking white person, mostly female but in some cases, also male. The white suburban garden, as discussed in Chapter 4, became both the context in and the ‘stage’ on which the development of a unique and often awkward relationship unfolded, namely a master-servant relationship between the proverbial “Jim”,² the garden labourer or ‘garden boy’,³ as he was commonly referred to, and his white “mistress”.⁴ It is this relationship, characterised by the exchange of general gardening knowledge as well as skills related to the art of topiary, which forms the main focus of this chapter.

This chapter commences with a brief historical perspective on South Africa’s black labour class, of which the black garden labourer had always been an important part. The chapter then explores the master-servant relationship which, historically, had existed between the black garden labourer and the white garden owner in the South African context. Historical examples of such relationships which existed in South Africa, specifically in the Orange Free

² Anon., “Faithful unto death”, *The Outspan* 2(47), 20.1.1928, p. 55; Anon., “Electricity – or servants?”, *The Outspan*, 19.8.1927, p. 31.

³ For a discussion of the ‘garden boy’, see Chapter 1.

⁴ *The Friend*, 4.10.1904, p. 4; 4.7.1919, p. 4. Also ‘missis’ or ‘missus’, common terms used by black servants to address a white female employer.

State and Bloemfontein, will be discussed. For the purpose of this discussion, such relationships are described as ‘gardening relationships’. In addition to the making of a black gardener as garden labourer or employee, this chapter also focuses on the making of a black topiarist. The making of a garden employee and that of a topiarist often occurred in tandem since the clipping and cutting of hedges and topiary had been an integral part of most black garden labourers’ daily garden chores. Oral history interviews conducted with Batho’s gardeners constituted the main source of information for this section of the chapter.

7.2 The black garden labourer: a South African perspective

The history of South African labour relations had been characterised by the growing white demand for cheap and readily available black labour, on the one hand, and black supply of such labour, on the other. Until the end of the 19th century, most employment opportunities for black people in general, and black males in particular, were limited to manual labour. As a result, black men were mostly dependent on white people’s demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour but only to the point where they did not threaten the position of the unskilled and semi-skilled white labourer.⁵ As mentioned in Chapter 6, manual labour – commonly known as “Kaffirs’ Work”⁶ – happened to be the type of labour whites were not prepared to do themselves. By the early 1920s, South Africans of all races apparently understood the type of labour to which the mentioned derogatory term referred. The black mouthpiece, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, explained it to its readers in simple terms: “There is work which may be done by a white man, and there is ‘Kaffirs’ Work’. ‘Kaffirs’ Work’ is all that work which is heavy and requires muscle.”⁷ Aspiring garden labourers soon discovered that garden work also belonged to this labour category.⁸

The urbanisation of black people, partly triggered by new employment opportunities created by industrialisation and partly by disruptive events such as the Anglo-Boer War, the implementation of the Natives’ Land Act of 1913 and the great drought and economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, created a growing black working class in South

⁵ S.T. van der Horst, *Native labour in South Africa*, pp. 7-11, 142-144; J. Cock, *Maids & madams: a study in the politics of exploitation*, pp. 174-179.

⁶ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 12.11.1921, p. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *The Friend*, 10.12.1923, p. 4; Van der Horst, p. 96.

Africa's locations. Since unification, new and better employment opportunities were created for black people, which ranged from purely manual labour to semi-manual labour and auxiliary-type positions, such as messengers, chauffeurs, clerks and interpreters⁹ and any other job that "he [black person] can 'learn by doing' – that is, any work that he can do under competent supervision".¹⁰ Referring to this trend, a British visitor to South Africa remarked that, despite racial discrimination, black people "have found useful and respectable niches in the European scheme of things as chefs, waiters, porters, coachmen, gardeners".¹¹ The inclusion of 'gardeners' is significant because at that stage, the majority of South Africa's black people were dependent on domestic service for employment. In the South African context, domestic service included *inside labour*, such as general house cleaning work, kitchen work and laundry work, and *outside labour*, including gardening and general groundsman work. Based on her experience in Bloemfontein, a Batho resident, Ms M.A. Dlamini (born 1933), explained that it was common practice for "the husband [to] also work in the garden, I [wife] work in the kitchen".¹² It was not unusual for husband and wife to have the same white employer – the one employed inside, the other outside. The division between inside and outside labour was, to an extent, modelled on the British example,¹³ with the important difference that in South Africa, domestic service had become the almost exclusive domain of black people.¹⁴ In 1921, *Umteteli wa Bantu* declared that in South Africa "domestic service is almost a monopoly of the Natives."¹⁵

"Inherited instinct for gardening"

Contrary to the situation in other British colonies in Africa, such as Kenya, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), South Africa seems to have experienced a natural separation between outside labour as work done by black males and

⁹ M.J.M. Prinsloo, *'n Sosiaal-ekonomiese studie van die Bloemfonteinse distrik (1902-1938)* (Unpublished M.Comm. dissertation, University College of the Orange Free State, 1947), pp. 184-186; Van der Horst, pp. 96-97, 142, 235-236; K. Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika tussen Oorlog en Unie, 1902-1910*, p. 179. Detailed information and statistics concerning black labour in the Union, including the Orange Free State, is contained in the annual *Official Year Book of the Union and of Basutoland, Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland*. See vols 1-20.

¹⁰ A.L. Barrett, "The character of the native in South Africa", *Optima* 3(3), September 1953, p. 16.

¹¹ O. Zachariah, *Travel in South Africa*, p. 202.

¹² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by P. Letsatsi with: Ms M.A. Dlamini, Batho, 1.8.2012*.

¹³ For more information on the history of domestic service in Britain, see Cock, pp. 179-182.

¹⁴ *The Friend*, 7.8.1923, p. 4; Van der Horst, pp. 96, 142, 235, 268.

¹⁵ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 12.11.1921, p. 2.

inside labour done mostly by black females. The black ‘kitchen boy’ or ‘house boy’ phenomenon did not become as common in South Africa as it had been in the mentioned colonies.¹⁶ According to *The Friend* “adult males who are doing the work of women”¹⁷ was not considered socially acceptable by many whites. Consequently, gardening as an outside activity predominantly became the concern of black males. Apart from the fact that gardening was, in most cases, the only available employment, it also seems as though some South African black men showed a *natural interest in, and an inclination for, gardening despite agriculture and horticulture traditionally being the responsibility of women*.¹⁸ For example, the Orange Free State farmer, writer and horticultural expert, Leonard Flemming, noticed that one of his garden labourers, Hendriks, was so taken up with gardening that he did not show “any interest in anything but the garden.”¹⁹ Concerning black men’s natural talent for gardening, garden writer Dorothea Fairbridge referred to black males’ “inherited instinct for gardening”.²⁰ During her travels in South Africa in the early 1920s, Fairbridge visited many white-owned gardens and, while observing the black garden labourers working in the gardens, she noticed that “their hands are far more deft than the fingers of the average white man”,²¹ to once again quote her noteworthy remark. It was none other than the black garden labourers’ ‘deft hands’ – to use Fairbridge’s prose – that were responsible for the topiary that was not only created in their white employers’ gardens but, in the case of Batho’s gardeners, also in their own gardens. Therefore, it is argued that the combination of a natural feel for gardening and an interest in this activity, partly stimulated by the school curricula discussed in Chapter 6, contributed to the black garden labourers’ inherent talent for the art of topiary.

No matter how superficial and peculiar, a relationship of some kind developed and existed between black garden labourers and their white employers, who were, in most cases, the women of the house. During the 1920s and 1930s, most white South African women stayed at home and took responsibility for the household, including the garden. South African women were still in the process of being emancipated and only received the right to vote in

¹⁶ For more on the ‘kitchen boy’ in the South African context, see H.S. Msimang, “The problem of the kitchen boy”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 14.3.1925, p. 4; *The Friend*, 15.11.1929, p. 11.

¹⁷ *The Friend*, 15.11.1929, p. 11.

¹⁸ For more information on the traditional gender-based African labour division, see Chapter 2.

¹⁹ L. Flemming, *Fun on the veld*, p. 74.

²⁰ D. Fairbridge, *Gardens of South Africa*, p. 28.

²¹ *Ibid.*

1930.²² As had been the case with the average British husband, the average white South African husband took responsibility for the maintenance of gardening equipment, such as the lawnmower.²³ Many white men were also involved in the vegetable garden and orchard, and the pruning of fruit trees was generally considered male domain. The ornamental garden – customarily the front garden – was usually the wife’s domain and responsibility. Consequently, she was the one who either worked in the garden with the garden labourer or simply gave him instructions.²⁴ According to the South African periodical, *The Outspan*, it typically happened to be the latter: “if you hear a woman exclaim... ‘I have done such a *heap* of gardening to-day [sic],’ you know quite well that she means that she has focussed the native staff on one particular occupation and directed operations in a spotless fugi frock.”²⁵ Whatever the nature of the female employer’s involvement in the garden happened to be, it is argued that in the process, some kind of a relationship, or at best an understanding, developed between her and her garden labourer (often more than one). Over time, this garden employer-garden labourer relationship either evolved into a trusting master-servant relationship or remained a mere superficial understanding defined in strict racial terms and subjected to the accepted social codes and norms of that time.²⁶

A “benign presence” in the garden

During the 1920s and 1930s, South African whites perceived black garden labourers as nothing more than mere distant figures in the background pushing wheelbarrows, weeding the flowerbeds, digging the soil or mowing the lawn. Not only did the black garden labourers ‘merge’ with their gardening tools but they also ‘blended’ with the garden landscape. At the same time, however, they maintained what South African author, Angela Read Lloyd, described as a “benign presence”²⁷ in the garden. The garden labourers maintained a presence which was probably comforting and reassuring but also mysterious. What were they thinking when they were labouring in the white-owned gardens? Flemming, who often

²² B.J. Liebenberg, “Hertzog aan bewind, 1924-1939” in C.F.J. Muller (ed.), *Vyfhonderd jaar Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, p. 441.

²³ Refer in this regard to the discussion of the traditional British and European labour division in Chapter 2.

²⁴ For the purpose of this discussion, the focus is placed on the black garden labourer and not on the male or female white employer.

²⁵ Anon., “Electricity – or servants?”, p. 31. (Author’s emphasis)

²⁶ Du Bruyn, pp. 57-58; Msimang, p. 4.

²⁷ A. Read Lloyd, *The artist in the garden: the quest for Moses Tladi*, p. 19.

worked with his gardener(s) in his farm garden near Dewetsdorp, noticed that one of the gardeners “works for hours without saying a word”.²⁸ The behaviour of Flemming’s gardener was certainly not atypical for the time and it could be argued that the average South African garden labourer not only maintained a ‘benign presence’ but also a ‘silent presence’ in the garden. Black and coloured garden labourers became such standard features of most South African domestic gardens of the 1920s and 1930s – particularly in the major cities and towns – that it was difficult to imagine a garden without them. The reality is also that the existence of the average South African garden largely depended on their labour. By international standards, South African gardens were large, labour-intensive and, as a result, required constant maintenance and care. This reality not only made the garden labourer indispensable, it also influenced and shaped employer-employee relationships, which were often defined by an element of co-dependency.²⁹

Another factor which influenced the South African garden employer-garden labourer relationship is the fact that the black garden labourer was often as knowledgeable, if not more so, about gardening and the basics of horticulture as the white garden owner who employed him. This was mainly because of the practical and vocational education he received on the mission stations and in the black schools, as discussed in Chapter 6. Consequently, by the early 1930s, Bloemfontein’s black servants were generally considered “of a semi-educated or educated standard”.³⁰ Concerning his relationship with his employer, one of Batho’s residents explained: “he [employer] could not teach me, I knew gardens too well.”³¹ Significant numbers of South African whites could afford cheap black labour; therefore, even relatively poor, lowly-schooled and poorly-skilled whites could employ garden labourers, if only occasionally as day labourers.³² Concerning these white employers and those whites who worked as gardeners for others, South African garden writer, G.B. van Zyl, argued that “many, in fact I might say the majority of our so-called gardeners – I refer particularly to the ordinary labourer who calls himself ‘gardener’ – can neither read nor write, and they look upon any organisation for the improvement of future gardeners as a

²⁸ L. Flemming, “Price of a life: awakening of the native mind”, *The Friend*, 4.10.1924, p. 8.

²⁹ Du Bruyn, p. 56.

³⁰ *The Friend*, 24.7.1930, p. 10.

³¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr R.P. Moilola, Batho*, 30.3.2011.

³² G.B. van Zyl, *Amateur gardening: a short guide for amateur gardeners in the Cape Colony*, pp. 11-12; E.A. Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, pp. 576-579, 583; Liebenberg, p. 423.

farce and a fraud.”³³ As far as these white gardeners’ knowledge of gardening was concerned, Van Zyl argued that “what they know they think is sufficient for all time and all people, and what they do not know they think is not worth knowing.”³⁴ The fact that gardening was an important subject in the curricula of black schools and some educational institutions benefited both the garden labourer and his employer. At the same time, however, it contributed to the awkwardness of such relationships.

Another important factor which not only influenced the garden employer-garden labourer relationship but also the lives of black gardeners in general, was the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. This Act, discussed in Chapter 5, not only aimed to regulate and control the Union’s urban locations but also the lives of the location residents, specifically the black servant class. Once again, it is important to emphasise the argument that the locations were considered the exclusive domain of black people who were employed full-time by white residents. In other words, the locations were, first and foremost, considered to be the residential areas of the white residents’ servants and labourers, including garden labourers. In order to restrict the location population to black servants as far as possible and also to curb the growing influx from the rural areas, the mentioned Act implemented regulations specifically aimed at domestic labour, black male labour in particular. In December 1924, a municipal notice³⁵ was published in *The Friend* and *Die Volksblad* which directed the attention of all “employers of Native (male) labour”³⁶ to the fact that the Bloemfontein municipality had been authorised by the Governor-General to exercise the powers specified under Section 12 of the Act. This section provided for “the registration by all employers of every contract of service entered into with male Natives and the payment by the employer of a monthly fee of 1/- for every such contract.”³⁷ Contracts had to be registered at the Native Pass Office by the employee upon the employer’s written request. The registration had to be accompanied by the agreed rate of wages, the date of engagement, the period of contract to be entered into, and the registration fee. Upon completion of the registration form, the Superintendent of Locations issued a ‘contract of service’ for each black male employee and

³³ Van Zyl, pp. 11-12.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁵ For complete notice, see *The Friend*, 12.12.1924, p. 11.

³⁶ *The Friend*, 12.12.1924, p. 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

a fee of 1 shilling per month had to be paid by the employer for the duration of the contract. These regulations came into effect on 1 January 1925.³⁸

In practice, the above regulations meant that every male servant had to be in possession of a valid contract at all times which, in effect, became “his pass”,³⁹ to quote *The Friend*. The contract had to be officially stamped every month on payment of the shilling by the employer. In addition, casual labourers and black males who were looking for work had to be in possession of a special permit to look for work which could be obtained at the Pass Office for a shilling.⁴⁰ It was estimated that in Bloemfontein, approximately “4,000 ‘boys’”⁴¹ were affected by the new labour regulations when they became effective. It is unclear as to how many of the 4 000 male labourers were garden labourers. More exact labour statistics were only provided in 1928, which showed that Bloemfontein had approximately 3 000 employers of domestic servants, 65% of whom employed a female servant only and 35% a male and a female servant. Of the 3 000 servants, approximately 1 950 were females and 1 050 were males, including garden labourers.⁴²

Since 1925, the mentioned regulations were amended a number of times which, in practice, meant stricter measures and also penalties for the violation of such measures by both employer and employee.⁴³ Apart from regulating male labourers by means of service contracts and permits, the Act also attempted to place the responsibility on employers of domestic labour to provide lodging for their servants on their premises in the white suburbs. It was argued that such a measure could limit the size of the locations which, during the 1920s, were experiencing exponential growth because of reasons explained earlier and also in previous chapters. In his annual report for 1925-1926, the Superintendent of Locations stressed that the “underlying policy of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act is to compel employers to provide accommodation on their premises for their Native servants and thus serve to

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *The Friend*, 19.12.1924, p. 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* See also Anon., *Native urban development: a study of Johannesburg employment records, 1936-1944*, pp. 7-8.

⁴¹ *The Friend*, 19.12.1924, p. 12.

⁴² FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/21, *Superintendent of Locations, annual report 1931-1932: Annexure 1, Native population and accommodation*, 25.2.1928, p. 1.

⁴³ The regulations were re-issued and/or amended in 1927, 1929, 1933, 1936 and 1938. *Die Volksblad*, 26.3.1927, p. 2; *The Friend*, 27.9.1927, p. 11; 21.2.1929, p. 15; *Die Volksblad*, 23.2.1929, p. 2; *The Friend*, 20.3.1933, p. 8; 9.4.1936, p. 11; 17.2.1938, p. 11.

restrict the growth of Native Locations.”⁴⁴ Many white employers responded positively to this measure by providing living quarters for their black employees. These servant quarters were preferably kept out of public sight and were therefore customarily built in the backyards of properties in the form of single rooms, usually without running water or water closets.⁴⁵

7.3 White garden owners and their black garden labourers: the development of ‘gardening relationships’

South African historical sources which mention black garden labourers directly are scarce. In most cases, such sources focus on the garden and not on those who made the garden or, at least, those who were responsible for the hard labour necessary to create and maintain the garden. If garden labourers are indeed mentioned, it is often done in a condescending manner and typically stresses the difficulties the garden owner experienced with regard to the labourers. There are, however, exceptions where garden owners referred to their garden labourers as individuals with names and personalities instead of faceless figures who were often taken for granted and not considered worth mentioning. In rare instances, the nature of the relationship – a ‘gardening relationship’ – which developed and existed between master and servant, is described.⁴⁶ Seemingly, it was only during the 1860s and 1870s that white authors considered it appropriate and socially acceptable to mention black garden labourers by name. Consequently, only then black garden labourers started to emerge as individuals with names and personalities. Dr Langham Dale’s⁴⁷ wife, Emma (née Ross), had no qualms about mentioning garden labourers in her diary, which documented the Dale family’s life at the Cape from 1857-1872. The Dales’ garden at Montagu Cottage in Mowbray, Cape Town, was maintained by no fewer than five gardeners, including George, Patrick, Solomon, Palvie and Jappie. No surnames were provided. Dale’s diary contains numerous descriptions of her gardeners’ labours, often surprisingly detailed. Patrick, for example, had a special talent for clipping hedges and edges, and Dale proudly mentioned the rosemary borders and rose and hakea hedges which he had clipped to perfection. Apparently, Patrick’s talents stretched

⁴⁴ Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand (hereafter HP): *AD 1765, Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 6.

⁴⁵ Prinsloo, pp. 185-186.

⁴⁶ For a typical description of such a relationship, see Lady A. Barnard, *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard 1799-1800* (vol. I; edited by M. Lenta and B. le Cordeur), p. xvii.

⁴⁷ For more information on Dale, see Chapter 6.

beyond clipping because she also used him for housework, such as scrubbing floors and cleaning the coal stove. Although Dale did not reveal anything about the type of relationship she had with her garden labourers, she wrote about them affectionately.⁴⁸

Other white garden owners also felt compelled to credit their black and coloured garden labourers for their gardening efforts, albeit mostly in a cryptic fashion. The Cape author, Hildagonda Duckitt, who gardened at Groote Post, commended her faithful gardener, ‘Old John’, whose hands were partly responsible for Duckitt’s lush garden.⁴⁹ She wrote about how he had planted a geranium hedge around the croquet court and how he “has been putting the old garden in perfect order.”⁵⁰ Duckitt did not specifically mention whether ‘Old John’ had clipped the hedge or not but it was probably him since he was responsible for maintaining it. Another cryptic reference to a black gardener was made by Harriet Rabone, a resident of Graaff-Reinet. Rabone, who gardened in this Karoo town during the 1870s and 1880s, attributed the improvement in the state of her garden to her garden labourer.⁵¹ Concerning her anonymous garden employee, Rabone did not beat about the bush: “I have engaged a bright, yet docile, Mantatee Kaffir who is my factotum”.⁵²

During the 20th century, references to gardeners became more common and often also more descriptive. Across the Union, gardening became increasingly popular, while gardens became bigger and more labour-intensive, and the demand for garden labourers increased substantially. At the turn of the century, “small armies of Blacks”⁵³ could be seen working in the lush Edwardian gardens laid out by the mining economy’s *nouveau riche* in the new Johannesburg suburbs of Parktown and Westcliffe. During the economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, many homeowners had to scale down, though, and often only a single full-time gardener could be afforded. One such gardener was Moses Tladi, who worked in Herbert Read’s garden at Lokshoek, Johannesburg, during the 1920s and 1930s. Read’s granddaughter, Angela Read Lloyd, wrote a book about Tladi, who later made name for himself as a painter. Read Lloyd often pondered the relationship between an Englishman,

⁴⁸ J. Murray (ed.), *Mrs Dale’s diary 1857-1872*, pp. 13, 16, 22, 25, 35, 41, 51-52, 70, 133-134.

⁴⁹ H. Duckitt, *Quadrilles and konfy: the life and journal of Hildagonda Duckitt* (edited by M. Kuttel), pp. 63-65.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁵¹ N. Massey Pitman, “The peoples of Graaff-Reinet and district”, *Lantern* 35(2), July 1986, pp. 19, 22.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵³ M.C. Cole, “Parktown 1892-1972”, *Lantern* XXII(3), March 1973, p. 19.

such as her grandfather, and his gardener, and felt that such a relationship may best be described as “something very subtly ‘other’”.⁵⁴ According to Read Lloyd, her grandfather’s relationship with Tladi was not a master-servant relationship but rather “a benign, creative partnership”⁵⁵ which manifested itself in the garden.⁵⁶

Not all garden owners described their relationships with their gardeners in the same poetic terms as Read Lloyd had with her grandfather’s relationship with Tladi. For Una van der Spuy (1912-2012), the doyenne of South African garden writers,⁵⁷ it was a constant battle to secure reliable labour for her garden, Old Nectar,⁵⁸ outside Stellenbosch. Una’s husband, Kenneth, wrote that “in creating Old Nectar’s garden, we had to make do with the best labour available, and the ‘best’ did not help to make life easier for us! Whether we employed Coloured or Bantu, it meant constant supervision, since neither could be left to get on with a job themselves”.⁵⁹ The Van der Spuys preferred so-called “Bantu” gardeners because they “were so much nicer to work with – they were polite, keen to earn their wages...and were not nearly so dedicated to liquor.”⁶⁰ One of their garden labourers, a Sotho man who passed his Junior Certificate, eventually became the Van der Spuys’ gardener-in-chief and acquainted himself with every rose variety as well as the botanical names of plants and shrubs in their garden.⁶¹

“Part and parcel of the home”

In Bloemfontein, and indeed the rest of the Orange Free State, garden labourers, who were mostly Sotho- or Tswana-speaking but in some cases, also coloured, had become a permanent feature of the local servant class since whites had settled permanently in the region. As had been the case in the rest of the country, Bloemfontein’s white employers made a distinction between indoor and outdoor servants. During the 19th century, and even the early 20th century, white indoor servants were preferred by Bloemfontein’s elite families

⁵⁴ Read Lloyd, p. 16.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17, 19.

⁵⁷ Van der Spuy wrote 12 books on gardens and gardening.

⁵⁸ For information on the history of Old Nectar, see U. van der Spuy, *Old Nectar: a garden for all seasons, passim*.

⁵⁹ K.R. van der Spuy, *Old Nectar and roses*, p. 116.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

because blacks were considered “not yet trained to European service”.⁶² Concerning her childhood years in Bloemfontein, Sophie Levisieur remembered that “in our home the chief servant was always a white woman”.⁶³ The outdoor servants, namely the gardeners and general workers, were mostly black or coloured. Outdoor servants were used for manual and dirty labour, of which gardening was, for obvious reasons, an important part. By the late 1850s, the black gardener had become a permanent feature of the domestic garden landscape in Bloemfontein and also in some of the new Free State towns, particularly those that had sizeable English-speaking populations, such as Harrismith, Smithfield, Fauresmith and Winburg.⁶⁴ In these and other towns, the garden labourers were mostly Sothos or Tswanas (Barolong). A perception that certain ethnic groups, particularly the Barolong, were better suited to domestic service and garden labour than others, developed among white employers.⁶⁵ Apart from Sothos and Barolong, coloureds and other people of mixed race could also be hired. During his stay in Winburg during the early 1890s, the Bloemfontein-born land-surveyor, Gustav Baumann (1858-1930),⁶⁶ “had as his gardener a half-bred Malabar boy – Ou Laan – the son of a released slave.”⁶⁷

In her memoirs of her life in Bloemfontein, Baumann’s sister, Sophie (later Levisieur), mentioned that in Bloemfontein’s early years, “gardening was easy, [because] every evening after the business was closed Oupa⁶⁸ got all the kafir boys who worked in the store to water the garden with buckets”.⁶⁹ Although the ‘kafir boys’ were not garden labourers in the true sense of the word, Levisieur’s statement is an indication that gardening in Bloemfontein was greatly dependent on black and coloured labour. Levisieur wrote candidly about the servants who worked for her parents: “they were Natives and the yellow races – Griquas, Korannas,

⁶² R.H. Fuller, *South Africa at home*, p. 191.

⁶³ Bloemfontein Public Library (hereafter BPL): *Afric. 920LEV, Memories of Sophie Levisieur* (part II), p. 16.

⁶⁴ H.J. van Aswegen, *Die verhouding tussen Blank en Nie-Blank in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1854-1902*, pp. 376-377; C.J.P. le Roux, *Die verhouding tussen Blank en Nie-Blank in die Oranjerivierkolonie, 1900-1910*, pp. 134, 156-157; *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 7.8.1894, p. 2; *The Friend*, 24.9.1904, p. 5; 30.9.1904, p. 8.

⁶⁵ G. Hallé, *Mayfair to Maritzburg: reminiscences of eighty years*, p. 142; HP: D.G. Croghan, “Ecclesiastical life and work in the Diocese of Bloemfontein”, *Quarterly Paper* 69, July 1885, pp. 110-111.

⁶⁶ For more information on Baumann, see C.J. Beyers (ed.-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. IV), pp. 21-22.

⁶⁷ G. Baumann & E. Bright, *The lost republic: the biography of a land-surveyor*, pp. 221-222.

⁶⁸ Levisieur meant her father, the businessman Isaac Baumann (1813-1881). W.J. de Kock & D.W. Krüger (eds-in-chief), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (vol. II), p. 41.

⁶⁹ BPL: *Afric. 920LEV, Memories of Sophie...* (part II), p. 62.

Hottentots and Bastards, a very light-coloured people more intelligent than the others.”⁷⁰ Levisieur also mentioned “Fingoes, Baralongs, and Basutos”.⁷¹ Among the Basuto servants was a gardener named Appelkoos with whom the family apparently had a special relationship since he was singled out for being a much appreciated employee.⁷² The fact that the Baumanns did not battle to find servants to work for them was probably rooted in the fact that they treated their servants well. Levisieur wrote that their “servants were good and faithful”⁷³ because of an “extraordinary affinity”⁷⁴ which existed between them and the Baumanns. Levisieur explained: “The servant was as much part of the family as one of the children. The same strict discipline of implicit obedience was expected from both by our early Victorian parents.”⁷⁵ Bloemfontein’s well-known Fichardt family was also fortunate when it came to servants who were willing to work for them. In the memoirs she co-authored with her husband, Dr Hugh Bidwell, Maude Bidwell (née Fichardt), one of Gustav and Caroline Fichardt’s children,⁷⁶ wrote that she could not remember that any of the family have had difficulty in obtaining and keeping “good Native servants”.⁷⁷ Not only did the wealthy Fichardts treat and pay their servants well but they also appreciated them. According to Bidwell, the servants’ “efficiency and devotion have contributed so largely to our comfort and well-being.”⁷⁸

Apart from educating gardeners at its schools and educational facilities, the Anglican Church and its missions in Bloemfontein also employed garden labourers to maintain the multiple gardens laid out at the various church properties, including the complex of buildings in St George’s Street and St Michael’s Home (also known as the ‘Home’) in Markgraaff Street. Shortly after her arrival in Bloemfontein in 1874, Mother Emma,⁷⁹ Mother Superior of the Anglican sisterhood, wrote in one of the mission’s *Quarterly Papers* about the Home’s gardens and the labourers responsible for their maintenance: “We have two Kafir ‘boys’, as they are called, to run errands, and fetch water; their wages are about £2 a month each,

⁷⁰ BPL: *Afric. 968.51LEV, Talk by Mrs Sophie Levisieur* (part VII), p. 22.

⁷¹ BPL: *Afric. 920LEV, Memories of Sophie...* (part II), p. 16.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷³ BPL: *Afric. 968.51LEV, Talk by Mrs...* (part VII), p. 22.

⁷⁴ BPL: *Afric. 968.51LEV, Talk by Mrs...* (part IV), p. 12.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ For more information on the Fichardts, see Chapter 4.

⁷⁷ M. Bidwell & C.H. Bidwell, *Pen pictures of the past* (edited by K. Schoeman), pp. 21-22.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷⁹ For more information on Mother Emma, see D. du Bruyn, “Mother Emma’s new world: an Anglican nun in Bloemfontein”, *Culna* 68, November 2013, pp. 8-10.

besides their food. We have also a man and his wife, living in a cottage at the back; he is a West Indian negro, and is our gardener and baker”.⁸⁰ In addition to the ‘West Indian negro’, there were also other garden labourers on the property, including the one responsible for maintaining the garden of the Cottage Hospital (Image 7/3). In St George’s Street, almost all the buildings boasted attractive gardens, including the St Cyprian’s College for black men. The first group of students, namely Paul, Japhet, John and Joses, were taught, and boarded and lodged free of charge, and “as some return for the advantages they have received”,⁸¹ to quote Reverend Crisp, the four of them worked for two hours a day in the College garden.⁸²

Although an element of ‘extraordinary affinity’ – as had been the case with the Levisseurs and their servants – was certainly not present in all master-servant relationships in Bloemfontein and the rest of the Orange Free State, some relationships were often surprisingly affectionate, trusting and relaxed. In the South African context, the term ‘affectionate’ described a relationship characterised by contradictions and complexities, though. South African historian, Charles van Onselen, explained it as follows: “currents of anger, betrayal, hatred and humiliation surge through many accounts of modern South Africa’s race relations, but what analysts sometimes fail to understand is that without prior compassion, dignity, love or a feeling of trust – no matter how small, poorly, or unevenly developed – there could have been no anger, betrayal, hatred or humiliation.”⁸³ Thus, describing master-servant relations in Bloemfontein as uniformly harsh and strained is incorrect because such relations were often much more nuanced. The fact that the initial strict distinction between indoor and outdoor servants became more fluid in some cases is an indication that relations were not always as rigid as is often believed. It was not uncommon that the ‘garden boy’ also happened to be a general servant who was often used for a variety of tasks both inside and outside the house. Refer in this regard to the Home’s ‘West Indian negro’ who was both gardener and baker. This phenomenon became more

⁸⁰ HP: Sister Emma, “Extracts from later letters”, *Quarterly Paper* 28, April 1875, p. 17.

⁸¹ HP: W. Crisp, “Native work at Bloemfontein”, *Quarterly Paper* 47, January 1880, p. 15.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

⁸³ C. van Onselen, *The seed is mine: the life of Kas Maine, a South African sharecropper 1894-1985*, p. 4. For similar arguments, see C. van Onselen, “The reconstruction of a rural life from oral testimony: critical notes on the methodology employed in the study of a black South African sharecropper”, *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 20(3), April 1993, p. 502; Cock, pp. 221-223.

prominent after the Anglo-Boer War when, due to the scarcity of black servants in Bloemfontein, fewer servants were hired.⁸⁴

Inside the house, the garden labourer was usually employed to do physically demanding tasks, much in the same way Dale trusted her gardener to also work indoors. However, most of the additional tasks garden labourers had to do were outside the house. During Bloemfontein's early years, when residents who lived on the dry erven north of the *spruit* were dependent on the fountain and communal wells for water for domestic use and for their gardens, garden labourers were often utilised as water carriers. Some residents, such as the Ehrlich family, kept a "boy"⁸⁵ specifically tasked as a water carrier. Rose Ehrlich, eldest daughter of former Bloemfontein mayor, Wolff Ehrlich (1855-1924),⁸⁶ remembered that their 'boy' carried water from the main fountain on the market square in two buckets suspended on either side of a pole slung across his shoulders. In-between 'water shifts', some water carriers apparently worked as garden labourers.⁸⁷

The Bloemfontein architect, John Edwin Harrison, who maintained an Edwardian-style garden at Freshford in Kellner Street, gave the impression in his diary that his gardener, Filimon, was more of a general worker than just a gardener. For example, in September 1900, Harrison wrote that "Filimon & I fixed asphalt on balcony panels"⁸⁸ of his double-storey house. In Chapter 1, mention was also made of Bloemfontein businessman, James Aberdein, who often tasked his gardener with washing his motor car – a trend which became rather typical among Bloemfontein's vehicle owners during the 1920s and 1930s. Apart from the "garden boy" who was hired occasionally, Aberdein also hired additional teams of "Cape boys"⁸⁹ for the labour-intensive garden work. The fact that the garden labourer also performed other duties meant that interaction between the garden labourer and his employer, whether the husband or wife, *happened outside the garden environment with the result that*

⁸⁴ For more information on the scarcity of black servants in Bloemfontein during the post-Anglo-Boer War period, see *The Friend*, 24.9.1904, p. 5; 27.9.1904, p. 4.

⁸⁵ R. Ehrlich, "Early days in Bloemfontein", *Jewish Affairs* 18(6), June 1963, p. 18.

⁸⁶ Ehrlich was mayor of Bloemfontein from January 1911 to March 1912.

⁸⁷ Ehrlich, p. 18. For more information on Bloemfontein's black water carriers, see A.R. Badenhorst, "Aspekte van die sosiale lewe in Bloemfontein, 1864-1871", *Memoirs van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 12, April 1979, p. 30; K. Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan van 'n stad, 1846-1946*, p. 118; Murray, p. 27; *The Friend*, 9.4.1931, p. 7; 11.9.1937, p. 8.

⁸⁸ National Museum Collection: *G. 11770, Diary of J.E. Harrison 1900*, no p. no.

⁸⁹ FSPA: A. 507.11, M. Gray, *Aberdein family – how they lived in Bloemfontein 1910-1922*, pp. 29-30.

a trusting relationship often developed. This type of relationship developed between Bloemfontein residents Mr H.R.B. Barlow, his wife, and their gardener, Sybrant Macheni. Macheni, who died in 1933 at the age of 92, was also a general servant who did “little odd jobs about the grounds”.⁹⁰ Barlow described Macheni as “ever loyal and obedient” and admitted that to the Barlow family he became more than a servant: “they came to look upon him as part and parcel of the home”.⁹¹ Even on some Orange Free State farms, master-servant relationships were surprisingly warm and generous, as in the case of Flemming, who boasted that his farm and garden labourers “always bring me some little offering from their own land – pumpkins, melons, marrows, etc.”⁹²

For white employers who wanted to make their garden labourers ‘part and parcel of the home’, the black intellectual, Dr Jabavu, had very specific advice. He argued that it was best for employers to adopt “a teaching attitude” by explaining to their labourers “the why and wherefore of things, as in fence-making”.⁹³ Advice concerning fence-making also applied, of course, to hedge-making and, later, to topiary since Jabavu argued that by adopting this approach “one can do much to quicken the otherwise dormant intelligence found in every servant.”⁹⁴ When garden writer, Marion Cran, visited Ruby Boddam-Whetham’s garden at Kirklington in the eastern Free State during the 1920s, she observed Boddam-Whetham’s servants, including the garden labourers, and found that they “lead cinema lives among the whites, watching them act, and reading every gesture”.⁹⁵ It is thus argued that the black servant class, specifically the garden labourers, not only maintained their white employers’ gardens, but also learned from them, including how to clip plants into hedges, edges and topiary.⁹⁶

“A pre-capitalist work ethic”

While most garden labourers executed instructions without question and imitated their white employers most of the time, they sometimes questioned the status quo. Flemming discovered

⁹⁰ *The Friend*, 8.8.1933, p. 4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² L. Flemming, *The call of the veld*, p. 123.

⁹³ D.D.T. Jabavu, *The black problem: papers and addresses on various native problems*, p. 131.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ M. Cran, *The gardens of Good Hope*, p. 248.

⁹⁶ Flemming, *Fun on the...*, pp. 73-75.

this when his gardener, April, with whom he had often worked in the garden, showed “the awakening of reason, the dawning of a mind that, once, I did not think he possessed.”⁹⁷ As Flemming noticed in the case of April, the ‘awakening of reason’ had more to do with the political questions of the day than gardening and the art of topiary. Mr J.B. Mafora (1906-1992), who arrived in Bloemfontein in the 1930s to work as a garden labourer for former Bloemfontein mayor, Mr A.C. White,⁹⁸ experienced a similar ‘awakening of reason’ to the extent that he quit gardening and, instead, became involved in the Bloemfontein branch of the ANC. Mafora rose through the ranks and later became President of the ANC in the Orange Free State.⁹⁹

As far as the general labour situation in Bloemfontein and the rest of the Orange Free State was concerned, it appears as though most black servants, particularly the garden labourers, were not considered ‘part and parcel of the home’. Not all servants were as fortunate as Macheeni. As a result of the unequal master-servant relationship that existed between white employer and black employee, and the established racial attitudes and superiority on the part of the whites, black garden labourers had to function in a mostly oppressive labour environment. According to one black labourer, Mr W.N. Somngesi, this environment was typified by “the ill-treatment of native servants” and the “hard hand”¹⁰⁰ of the white employers. A coloured Waaihoek resident, Mr A. Ratton, lamented that “we [coloureds] are almost slaves under the whites.”¹⁰¹ Jabavu referred to the “‘stand-off’ attitude”¹⁰² displayed by many white employers, particularly in a horticultural and agricultural context.¹⁰³ At the height of the Bloemfontein servant shortage crisis in 1919,¹⁰⁴ *The Friend* reminded the “European mistresses of Bloemfontein” in a leading article that if they wish to get good servants and to keep them “they must alter their ways upon the payment and treatment of such servants.”¹⁰⁵ It is argued that such attitudes inspired Mafora, and probably also other garden labourers, to quit gardening and, instead, become involved in resistance politics.

⁹⁷ Flemming, “Price of a...”, p. 8.

⁹⁸ White was mayor of Bloemfontein from April 1943 to March 1944.

⁹⁹ Anon., “Jacob Mafora”, <<http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/jacob-mafora.html>>, *s.a.* (Accessed: 10.10.2017). An informal settlement in Mangaung is named after Mafora.

¹⁰⁰ *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 7.8.1894, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ *The Friend*, 4.10.1904, p. 4.

¹⁰² Jabavu, p. 131.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* See also *The Friend*, 3.2.1922, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ For more details, see Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁵ *The Friend*, 4.7.1919, p. 4. See also *The Friend*, 10.12.1923, p. 4.

Considering that labour relations between whites and blacks in Bloemfontein had, historically, been poor despite the underlying contradictions and complexities mentioned earlier, it is argued that ‘gardening relationships’ were not unaffected by long-standing attitudes and perceptions. A factor which contributed to underlying tensions and “a high degree of stress”¹⁰⁶ for both master and servant is what South African historian, Elizabeth van Heyningen, described as a “pre-capitalist work ethic”¹⁰⁷ on the part of the servant. Perceptions concerning acceptable levels of productivity and appropriate social behaviour often clashed. While some employers complained that their servants were “not playing the game”¹⁰⁸ by, for example, not showing up for work or leaving service without prior notice,¹⁰⁹ others cited the socially-unacceptable behaviour of their garden labourers such as alcoholism as the main reason for strained relations. In his recollections of his Bloemfontein childhood, circa 1920s, Charles Friedmann recalled that their gardener named Angus “came home dead drunk every Sunday evening after his visits to his friends”.¹¹⁰ In Friedmann’s family, black servants and labourers “were considered ‘good’ when they worked satisfactorily”¹¹¹ – an attitude that was shared by most of Bloemfontein’s white employers during the 1920s and 1930s.¹¹²

It is important to note that despite the contradictions and complexities inherent in ‘gardening relationships’ in Bloemfontein, the need for black garden labourers’ services meant that opportunities for such employment were not hard to find. White employers used *The Friend*, which was widely read among location residents, and sometimes also *Die Volksblad*, as media to obtain suitable black garden labourers. In *The Friend*’s classified advertisements, a separate section with the heading ‘Native’ offered positions for “Native Gardener, English-speaking”,¹¹³ “Garden-boy, thorough knowledge flowers and vegetables”,¹¹⁴ and “Boy with sound knowledge of Gardening”,¹¹⁵ to quote a few. Often, the job requirements were rather

¹⁰⁶ E. van Heyningen, “The diary as historical source: a response”, *Historia* 38(1), May 1993, p. 21.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* For similar arguments, see K. McKenzie, “‘My own mind dying within me’: Eliza Fairbairn and the reinvention of colonial middle-class domesticity in Cape Town”, *South African Historical Journal* 36, May 1997, p. 10.

¹⁰⁸ *The Friend*, 16.5.1922, p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.4.1931, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ FSPA: A. 507.6, C. Friedmann’s *Bloemfontein recollections*, p. 1.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, p. 59; *Die Volksblad*, 4.8.1928, p. 8.

¹¹³ *The Friend*, 17.7.1936, p. 12.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.2.1937, p. 14.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.4.1939, p. 10.

specific, such as the following: “Garden Boy with knowledge of laying out garden to be generally useful and not afraid of work”.¹¹⁶ Even more specific is the following advertisement, which was placed in *Die Volksblad*: “Eenlopende bejaarde fatsoenlike en vertroubare gekwalifiseerde Tuinier vir ’n welbelowende vooruitsig.”¹¹⁷ The advertisement did not indicate what qualifications were required, though.

In their turn, the garden labourers themselves also used the newspapers to advertise their services, such as the following: “Situation as houseboy, good gardener, can drive car – Petros E. Morata”.¹¹⁸ Morata and other garden labourers understood the benefit of being versatile, since this quality had become highly valued among Bloemfontein’s white garden owners. A garden labourer who could also be houseboy and chauffeur was highly prized in Bloemfontein during the inter-War years. Versatility did not guarantee a good income, though, because garden labour was considered unskilled labour. The Native Wages Commission set up in 1926 by the Bloemfontein municipality to determine a minimum wage for unskilled labour in Bloemfontein recommended that three shillings per day were adequate despite black people’s demand for four shillings and six pennies.¹¹⁹

7.4 The making of a black topiarist

Oral history interviews were conducted with a total of 57 Batho residents with the main purpose of obtaining information on, firstly, Batho’s garden history and, secondly, the interviewees’ own gardens. These interviews were conducted with residents whose ages varied from late twenties to early nineties. The only requirements were that the interviewees had to live in houses with topiary gardens and had to be directly involved in their gardens. A total of seven representative oral testimonies were selected for inclusion as case studies in this section of the chapter. Apart from the presence of topiary gardens, an *important consideration for the selection of the chosen interviewees was the presence of a link with the past, namely a connection with earlier generations of gardeners*. Interviewees cited their

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.8.1939, p. 18.

¹¹⁷ *Die Volksblad*, 26.5.1922, p. 6. “Single elderly decent and reliable qualified gardener for a promising career.” (Free translation)

¹¹⁸ *The Friend*, 18.9.1936, p. 12. See also *The Friend*, 19.9.1936, p. 16.

¹¹⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/5/1/2, Report of Superintendent of Parks and Forestry*, 17.2.1919, p. 5; *The Friend*, 17.2.1918, p. 8; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 20.2.1926, p. 3; *Die Volksblad*, 24.2.1926, p. 6; *The Friend*, 25.2.1926, p. 9; 27.2.1926, p. 16.

parents, grandparents or other family members as *important examples and sources of inspiration for their own gardening efforts*. Importantly, all of them mentioned that the older generations' way of gardening and particularly their fondness of topiary, often only clipped hedges, influenced their own garden style and preference for clipped plants. In addition, the interviewees mentioned that their parents, grandparents and family members worked for white garden owners in Bloemfontein's white suburbs or elsewhere. In other words, the *interviewees traced their exposure to the art of topiary and their own clipping skills back to the white employers*.

As had been the case in all other cities and towns across the Union, the garden was one of the important areas of contact and interaction between white and black people in Bloemfontein.¹²⁰ The 'gardening relationships' that developed between garden labourers and garden owners as a result of the contact and interaction were complex. Generally, interviewees found it challenging to describe their relationships with their white employers, particularly on a more intimate level. This may be attributed to the unequal dominant-dominated type of master-servant workplace relations of the past. Surprisingly, though, many interviewees had fond memories of their 'missis', 'missus' or 'baas' (master), who were either English, Afrikaans or Jewish, and credited their employers with teaching them gardening skills and also for their general goodwill.¹²¹ Mr R.P. Moilola (born 1947) explained that his employer, Mr Prinsloo, treated him "very well" and, to quote Moilola, "he used to give me clothes, food and money".¹²² Based on the information obtained from the oral history interviews that were conducted, it is argued that the type of relationship that existed between the black garden labourer and the white garden owner was, despite the mentioned inherent complexities and tensions, still *conducive to the transfer of gardening knowledge and skills*, which happened primarily by means of acculturation and inter-cultural

¹²⁰ For more detail on this argument, see Badenhorst, p. 32. The other areas of contact and interaction included the house (domestic environment), business, municipal service and civil service. National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr R.J. Ketela, Batho, 4.7.2008*.

¹²¹ The fact that the researcher, who conducted most of the interviews, is a white male should be considered as a variable that may have negatively influenced the objectivity of the interviewees in this regard.

¹²² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr R.P. Moilola, Batho, 30.3.2011*.

influencing. Despite being members of a dominated group, black garden labourers managed to ‘survive’ in those relationships, to the extent that some even ‘benefited’ from them.¹²³

Concerning the transfer of gardening knowledge and skills, it is argued that while the average black garden labourer was taught the basics of gardening and horticulture, specifically utility and food gardening, on the mission stations and in the black schools and educational institutions, he was exposed to ornamental gardening in the white people’s gardens. More importantly, it was *mostly in the white domestic garden where the garden labourer learnt the art of topiary*. In this regard, interviewees referred to the “clipping of a hedge”¹²⁴ and the “cutting of evergreen trees”¹²⁵ as examples of the topiarian skills learnt by watching and interacting with their white employers. While most of the transfer of topiarian knowledge and skills happened within the domestic garden context, it must be added that a *similar process also happened within the context of the public garden, square and park*. In the case of the Bloemfontein municipality’s Parks Department, this process involved “garden boys”, “maintenance boys” and “handy boys”¹²⁶ who worked in “sections” supervised by a white “Foreman”.¹²⁷ A small group of ‘garden boys’, namely Samuel, Jacob, Barrett, Stoffel, Lucas and Appolos, were employed by the national Department of Public Works to maintain the gardens of the “Residency grounds”, “Archives”, “Govt Gardens around Govt Buildings”, “Raadzaal” and “Law courts”.¹²⁸ As indicated in Chapter 4, many of Bloemfontein’s public gardens and parks contained topiary in the form of clipped hedges, edges and standard or ‘lollipop’-shaped trees.¹²⁹

¹²³ National Museum Oral History Collection: *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr I. Mphatsonyane, Batho, 12.4.2010; Ms M. Turner, Batho, 17.1.2011; Mr R.P. Moilola, Batho, 30.3.2011; Ms C.G. Moluka, Batho, 30.3.2011; Mr A.K. Loape, Batho, 5.4.2011; Mr F. Louw, Batho, 14.4.2011; Ms M.M. Marumo, Batho, 24.1.2012; Du Bruyn, “Township Topiary’: the...”, p. 59. For information concerning racial relations in the workplace, see Van Aswegen, pp. 364, 369, 377; Le Roux, pp. 149, 157-158; A.G. Barlow, *Almost in confidence*, p. 13.*

¹²⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A. Koitheng, Batho, 12.4.2010.*

¹²⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr H. Lebakeng, Batho, 17.1.2011.*

¹²⁶ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/43, Memo re Curator of Parks, Mr. A.F. Baker: Annexure A, 4.10.1930, p. 1.*

¹²⁷ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/3/1/43, Minutes of special meeting of Public Works and Parks Committee, 27.10.1930, p. 5.*

¹²⁸ FSPA: *DOW 1/2 (B5/459), Minute: W. Kennedy to F. Griffith re Govt Garden Boys: where employed, 28.10.1929.* The garden labourers’ surnames were not provided.

¹²⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 20.11.2014; Du Bruyn, “Township Topiary’: the...”, p. 58.*

As far as the transfer of topiarian knowledge and skills is concerned, it is noteworthy that during the 1920s and 1930s, gardening know-how progressed considerably in South Africa. A combination of the increased dissemination of knowledge and expertise through gardening books and periodicals¹³⁰ and the availability of improved clipping tools,¹³¹ such as secateurs and cutters instead of the traditional sheep-shearers, also benefited Bloemfontein's gardeners. Indirectly, these trends also affected the black garden labourers and it is argued that more knowledgeable white garden owners meant more skilled garden labourers. For example, Boddam-Whetham not only credited the labours of "Blesbok, the garden boy"¹³² in her book, *A garden in the veld* (1933), but also included a photograph of him posing as a proud and self-assured garden labourer. Blesbok was probably one of a growing class of skilled and semi-skilled black garden labourers which existed in Bloemfontein and in the rest of the Orange Free State towards the early 1930s. The fact that Boddam-Whetham directly mentioned Blesbok and portrayed him as an individual is indicative of the type of relationship she had with him. Although this type of garden owner-garden labourer relationship was certainly atypical during that time, it was not unusual either.¹³³

Concerning the types of gardening knowledge and skills transferred from the white garden owners to the black garden labourers, a distinction must be made between those garden labourers who received their knowledge and skills *directly* from white garden owners and those who credited their fathers, grandfathers and other family members who worked as garden labourers for whites, for their own gardening knowledge. The last-mentioned received their knowledge and skills *indirectly* from white garden owners.¹³⁴ Based on the interviews conducted, two categories of knowledge and skills were identified, namely *general gardening or horticultural knowledge and skills* and *knowledge and skills specific to the art of topiary*. The first category included a variety of skills related to the maintenance of the domestic garden, including, for example, new methods of plant propagation. While

¹³⁰ For more information, see Chapter 4.

¹³¹ For more information, see Chapter 3.

¹³² R.E. Boddam-Whetham, *A garden in the veld*, p. 15.

¹³³ Boddam-Whetham, pp. 15, 199; Anon., "Farming for women", *The South African Lady's Pictorial and Home Journal* 141(XII), May 1922, pp. 37-38; National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms E. Lamb, Bainsvlei, 31.1.2011*; Du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the...", p. 60.

¹³⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.M. Marumo, Batho, 24.1.2012 & 28.10.2014*; Mr M. Mogaecho, Batho, 9.4.2013; Mr J.T. Hlubi, Batho, 1.5.2013; Ms P. Moholo, Batho, 8.5.2013; Ms S. Khetse, Batho, 26.11.2013; Mr T.S. Sebeela, Batho, 14.4.2014; Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 20.11.2014.

plant propagation by means of harvesting and sowing seeds was common knowledge among most black gardeners, garden labourers and farmers, propagation by means of cuttings or ‘slips’ was less commonly known. Numerous articles on the subject published in South African gardening periodicals¹³⁵ explained new methods of plant propagation. Some of the knowledge must have reached Batho’s garden labourers because they were not unfamiliar with the method,¹³⁶ which was described by an interviewee as “making babies of plants”.¹³⁷ In addition, many garden labourers and female domestic workers received plant cuttings from their employers to propagate in their own Batho gardens.¹³⁸

The second category of skills, namely topiary skills, was new to many black garden labourers. It is argued that while the ancient concept of a garden enclosed by a hedge was certainly not new, the *idea of a clipped hedge was new and was introduced to the black garden labourers by the white garden owners*. This argument is, of course, not applicable to those garden labourers who were taught the basics of clipping on mission stations and in mission schools. However, it must also be considered that many black children did not attend school or they had left school at an early age; therefore, a substantial number were not exposed to the idea of topiary when they were young. Maria Marumo (born 1938), whose father worked as a garden labourer for white garden owners in Bloemfontein, was convinced that as far as topiary is concerned, “the white [people’s] gardens were an influence”.¹³⁹ Abednego Loape (born 1983) explained that when he was a little boy, his father worked for whites in Dan Pienaar, Bloemfontein, and there he (father) “learnt to clean the garden and *cut the trees*”,¹⁴⁰ just as his grandfather, his uncle and many other garden labourers had in

¹³⁵ For example, see Anon., “Propagation by cuttings”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XV, May 1925, pp. 160-161; Anon., “Methods of plant propagation”, *South African Gardening & Country Life* XXV, January 1935, p. 10; Anon., “Farming for women”, pp. 37-38.

¹³⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.S. Ditema*, Batho, 8.5.2013.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Liutliuleng*, Batho, 14.4.2011; Ms M.M. Dikane, Batho, 27.1.2012; Ms S. Khetse, Batho, 26.11.2013; Ms S.M. Mahabane, Batho, 20.11.2014; Ms M.L. Khantwane, Batho, 21.4.2015; Du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, p. 60.

¹³⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.M. Marumo*, Batho, 28.10.2014. See also the Marumo case study elsewhere in this chapter.

¹⁴⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A.K. Loape*, Batho, 5.4.2011. (Own emphasis)

the past.¹⁴¹ The skill required for this art form developed in tandem with the taste for it. In this regard, an important trend must be highlighted, namely that the basic clipping and cutting techniques that the white garden owners had taught the black garden labourers were further refined and adapted by the labourers. According to an interviewee, topiary became a novel “way of shaping your garden”.¹⁴² *In the process, the garden labourers became topiarists in their own right.* As topiary became indigenised and Africanised, so did the skill and techniques required to maintain it.¹⁴³ This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

During the 1920s and 1930s, most of Bloemfontein’s whites lived in the suburbs of Hilton, Park West, Waverley, Westdene and Willows. Garden labourers who did not live in servant quarters on their employers’ premises travelled daily between Batho and the other locations, including Bochabela and the unreclaimed parts of Waaihoek, and the mentioned white suburbs. Most garden labourers walked to their workplaces but in some cases, they also used bicycles. One may picture these garden labourers – the Filimons and Sybrants – on their way to their workplaces early in the morning, whether on foot or on bicycle, with their Billy Cans¹⁴⁴ and small packets of raw tobacco, essential supplies for a long day’s toil in another person’s garden. Late afternoon, they made the journey back to the locations, often to work in their own gardens until sunset. Apart from the suburbs, growing numbers of whites also lived on the so-called ‘settlements’ (smallholdings) around Bloemfontein, namely Bainsvlei, Bloemspuit, De Bloem, Goldes Grove, Grasslands, Lakeview, Quaggafontein (later Kwaggafontein), Rodenbeck, Shannon Valley (later Shannon) and Sydenham. Garden labourers who worked in settlement gardens either lived on their employers’ smallholdings or in small scattered settlements (so-called *statte*) in the vicinity.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Liutliuleng, Batho, 14.4.2011; Mr T.S. Sebeela, Batho, 14.4.2014; Mr M.S. Motingoe, Batho, 18.4.2016.*

¹⁴² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.S. Ditema, Batho, 8.5.2013.*

¹⁴³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Liutliuleng, Batho, 14.4.2011; Du Bruyn, “Township Topiary’: the...”, pp. 60-61.*

¹⁴⁴ Metal food containers were popular among black labourers during the 1930s and 1940s. For images, see *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 27.8.1921, p. 10; 30.7.1927, p. 6.

¹⁴⁵ *The Friend*, 18.6.1929, p. 3; 30.6.1930, p. 12; 5.6.1931, p. 6; 28.2.1933, p. 5; National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms E.K. Mela, Batho, 3.11.2014; Du Bruyn, “Township Topiary’: the...”, p. 58; Prinsloo, p. 187.*

7.4.1 The making of a black topiarist: selected case studies

Watching Mrs van Loggerenberg

Mercy Khantwane (born 1958) inherited her garden in Sesing Street in the Four-and-Six section of Batho from her mother, Willemina Khantwane. Willemina, “who loved beautiful things”¹⁴⁶ according to her daughter, worked as a cleaner at Pelonomi Hospital in Mangaung. Privet plants grew abundantly on the hospital grounds and Willemina took cuttings to plant a hedge in her garden. She allowed the hedge to grow tall with the aim of clipping it into shapes. When the hedge reached waist height, Willemina started to clip the top section of the hedge into ‘lollipop’ shapes. Mercy said she always watched her mother clipping the hedge so that she could one day do it herself. When Willemina passed away in 2002, Mercy became the owner of the house and garden. While Mercy’s taste for topiary was inspired by her mother, her love for gardening in general was inspired by her grandmother (her father’s mother), Dora Makhele. At her house in Mocumi Street in Batho’s Rantjies section, Dora laid out a beautiful garden. Dora worked as a domestic worker for the Van Loggerenbergs in the Bloemfontein suburb of Dan Pienaar during the 1970s and 1980s. Mercy remembered that the Van Loggerenbergs had a beautiful garden and, as a child, Mercy often accompanied her grandmother to her workplace to enjoy the garden. Mercy recalled that Dora received flower specimens and plant cuttings from Mrs van Loggerenberg, which she (Dora) then planted in her own garden.¹⁴⁷

Mercy remembered that she and Dora were fond of watching Mrs van Loggerenberg working in her garden. Van Loggerenberg did not mind them watching her and, according to Mercy, her grandmother “was treated well [by Van Loggerenberg] – she worked there until she went on pension”.¹⁴⁸ Mercy is convinced that Dora had an influence on her and believed that her exposure to gardens and gardening at a young age contributed to her own love for gardening. Mercy loved the idea that she helped to continue Batho’s tradition of plant clipping not only by maintaining her own hedge but also by teaching her son, Khabelo, to do the same. Mercy

¹⁴⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.L. Khantwane*, Batho, 21.4.2015.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

also grew fond of roses – a passion inspired by Van Loggerenberg’s love for the flowers – and over the years, she planted white and red roses in her garden (Image 7/4). According to Mercy, passersby often complimented her on her garden: “they ask many questions and [they] ask for flowers”.¹⁴⁹

Learning at the nursery

Maria Lekholo (born 1958) was born and bred in Phahameng, Mangaung. As her parents were not fond of gardening, there was no garden at the house where she grew up. In 1980, Maria and her deceased husband, Samuel Lekholo, moved to a house in Masenya Street in the Sports section of Batho. According to Maria, her interest in gardening dated back to 1982 when she obtained a job as a cleaner at the Public Works Department’s nursery in Krause Street, Bloemfontein. Although Maria’s job involved cleaning, she soon became taken up with plants and often assisted the white staff members, who were trained horticulturists, to take care of the plants. Over time, she learned a great deal about gardening from her colleagues at the nursery. Maria soon felt inspired to lay out a garden at her home and the nursery became the main source of plants for her new garden. She not only bought root-bound plants at discount prices but also took clippings from the nursery plants home and grew them in her garden. Consequently, Maria managed to grow a wide variety of plants in her garden, including indigenous yellow arum lilies (*Zantedeschia pentlandii*) and crinum lilies (*Crinum bulbispermum*). Due to Maria’s preference for straight lines, she laid out a rather formal garden with flowerbeds neatly edged with cemented pebbles.¹⁵⁰

At the nursery, Maria developed an interest in topiary and, over the years, many of the shrubs she obtained from the nursery were turned into topiary. Consequently, Maria’s sphere-shaped topiary became a striking feature of the garden. Most of the topiary in Maria’s garden was shaped from small-leaf privet (*Ligustrum ibota*) – a popular choice among Batho’s gardeners because the species ensured a dense, evergreen and lush appearance (Image 7/5). Maria’s son, George, who taught himself the art of clipping by watching other gardeners in Batho clip their topiary, is mostly responsible for maintaining his mother’s topiary garden

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M. Lekholo, Batho, 29.11.2014.*

(Image 7/6). George's interest in and talent for gardening paid off because it landed him a full-time job at the same nursery where his mother had worked. Maria was convinced that George would continue the topiary tradition: "yes, I think so, because George do [sic] the very same job [clipping] at the nursery".¹⁵¹ According to Maria, she and her son made an effective team in the garden: she did the watering and he did the clipping. As had been the case with other Batho gardeners, the beautifully-clipped privet hedge that had been planted in front of the house became a victim of Batho's crime problem. Due to the fact that criminals had used the hedge as a hiding place at night and could easily jump over it, Maria and George decided to replace it with a metal security fence. Maria said that she had mourned the loss of the hedge but felt that her family's safety was more important.¹⁵²

A general worker and a gardener

Maria Marumo remembered that her parents, Geelbooi and Paulina Mofokeng, had a beautiful garden in Bochabela, Batho's neighbouring location. Maria's father was the gardener and, according to her, he was "a very industrious person".¹⁵³ Although Geelbooi worked as a general worker at the Ramblers sports ground in Bloemfontein, he also worked in white people's gardens in town for most of his life. "My father worked as a gardener somewhere in town, but he was having different piece jobs",¹⁵⁴ Maria recalled. She was convinced that his love for gardening developed during that time. According to Maria, "there were quite a number of things he learned from white people"¹⁵⁵ and gardening was one of them. Maria remembered that the main attraction of her parents' garden in Seme Road was the clipped cypress hedge in front of the house. She clearly recalled the hedge: "a clipped hedge, straight hedge, neatly cut".¹⁵⁶ The hedge was so tall that the garden and much of the house was completely hidden (Image 5/20). Maria confessed that her love for clipped plants must have come from Geelbooi and his hedge (Image 7/7). According to Maria, her father was influenced by the white garden owners for whom he had worked in town, particularly as far as the hedge is concerned. Did she herself like the hedge? "I used to love our hedge at

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.M. Marumo, Batho, 28.10.2014.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

home”,¹⁵⁷ Maria admitted. Although she developed her own garden taste throughout the years, she nevertheless confessed that her father’s influence on her taste “might be subconsciously”.¹⁵⁸

Mrs Robinson’s garden boy

According to Selina Moiloa (born 1951), her father, Dr James Moiloa, always had a love for plants and gardening. James’ interest dated back to his childhood years as a herd boy on a farm in the district of Wepener in the southern Orange Free State. After completing Standard Six at a local school in 1932, James worked as a kitchen and garden boy for a Mrs Robinson in Wepener. Robinson was a keen gardener who shared her gardening knowledge with the young and impressionable James. During the 1930s, South African gardens were predominantly formal and symmetrical with square or rectangular flowerbeds surrounded by clipped edges and enclosed by clipped hedges. James had been exposed to this garden style when he worked for Robinson as a garden boy. It was also in Robinson’s formal garden where James gained considerable knowledge of the art of clipping plants and the garden he laid out in Batho decades later contained elements of this distinctive style. In 1935, James moved to Bloemfontein where he enrolled for his Junior Certificate at the then Bantu High School (today Sehunelo Secondary School) in Hamilton Road, Batho. After he obtained his Junior Certificate in 1938, he registered for a teacher’s diploma at the new Moroka Missionary Institution (previously the Moroka Industrial School) in Thaba ’Nchu.¹⁵⁹ During that time, the training of black teachers focused on industrial education and, importantly, the Orange Free State education authorities considered gardening of “very great value”¹⁶⁰ for black learners. Therefore, it was expected of aspirant teachers, such as James, to “take a real interest” in gardening and to teach learners the essentials of “practical gardening”.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Research Centre, Bloemfontein (hereafter NALN): *Ref. 785/77/231, Letter from J.J. Moiloa to Director of NALN, 17.2.1975, p. 1*; National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms L.S.S. Moiloa, Batho, 18.5.2013.*

¹⁶⁰ FSPA: *OVS 10/1/25, Orange Free State Province: Education Department: report for the year ending 31st December, 1937, p. 143.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* For more information, see Chapter 6.

After James had taught at the Brandfort United School in Brandfort for more than a decade (1941-1952), he accepted a post at his alma mater, Bantu High School, in 1952. During the same year, he obtained a plot in Moilola Street in the Four-and-Six section of Batho where he built himself a house. Next came the garden, and James' corner stand presented him with the ideal opportunity to lay out his dream garden. James knew exactly what type of garden he wanted: inspired by Robinson's garden, he laid out a formal garden with clipped hedges and edges. According to Selina, her father "liked the trees to be shaped"¹⁶² and, as a result, most shrubs planted in the Moilola garden were clipped into round or square shapes. By the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, when the plants in James' garden had reached maturity, the topiary came into its own. The main attraction was the towering clipped garden arch above the garden gate which resembled 'green architecture' (Image 7/8).

Although James was the mastermind behind the garden, it was a family effort because each member of the household was expected to assist with the garden's maintenance. James' wife, Anna, assisted with the watering of the garden, and the six children with the clipping. Selina recalled how she and her two brothers and three sisters had worked in the garden on Saturdays and during holidays and how "all took turns to clip the garden".¹⁶³ Her father would simply say "tsa mae kuta difate"¹⁶⁴ and they all knew it was time to clip the plants. After James, who became the first black person to be appointed lecturer (African languages) at the University of the Orange Free State in 1969, passed away in 1994, Selina and her grandson, Lehlonolo, continued to maintain the topiary garden (Image 7/9). Selina mostly kept the garden in the same style as her father preferred it. The reason? "We are doing the same [as my father] – it is continuation and I like that style",¹⁶⁵ Selina answered. Considering James' gardening achievements, neither he nor Robinson could foresee that the 'seed' planted in Robinson's garden in Wepener would eventually sprout into a remarkable topiary garden admired by all in Moilola Street.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² National Museum Oral History Collection: *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms L.S.S. Moilola, Batho, 18.5.2013.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ "Go and cut the plants". (Free translation)

¹⁶⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection: *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms L.S.S. Moilola, Batho, 18.5.2013.*

¹⁶⁶ NALN: *Ref. 785/77/231, Letter from J.J. Moilola to Director of NALN, 17.2.1975, pp. 1-2; National Museum Oral History Collection: Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms L.S.S. Moilola, Batho, 18.5.2013.*

A Free State garden boy in the Cape

According to Stanley Motingoe (born 1952), it had always been his dream to have a beautiful garden. When his parents' property in Khumalo Street in Batho's Mahlomola section became his after they had passed away, he saw it as an opportunity to realise his dream. According to Stanley, his mother, Julia, loved gardening but his father, Job, was not interested. Stanley owed his love for gardening to his early childhood, which he had spent in Cape Town. His mother worked as a domestic servant or 'kitchen girl', as they were called then, for a local politician, Mr van Rhyn, at their house in Dan Pienaar, Bloemfontein. When Van Rhyn was sent to parliament in Cape Town during the 1950s, Stanley and Julia went with the Van Rhyn family. In Cape Town, the Van Rhyns settled in a house in the lush garden suburb of Rondebosch and Stanley and his mother lived in the servant quarters on the property. Stanley remembered that the house had a beautiful garden. The Van Rhyns were keen gardeners but did not want to employ a Cape garden boy. Instead, they decided to take the garden labourer who had worked for them in Bloemfontein, Badibati Maribe, with them to Cape Town. According to Stanley, the first seeds of his love for gardening were planted in Cape Town. Stanley watched Badibati's every move and he almost became Badibati's shadow. "I learned from seeing. I was going after him [Badibati] watering [the plants],"¹⁶⁷ Stanley said.

Stanley remembered that the Rondebosch garden had a beautifully-clipped hedge and he loved to watch Badibati clipping it. "I remember in Cape Town, there was a hedge like this one [referring to the hedge in his own garden], that is where I learnt it [clipping the hedge] from [sic],"¹⁶⁸ he said. During the mid-1960s, Stanley and his homesick mother returned to Bloemfontein. By that time, his parents' old house in Batho had become dilapidated and he decided to build a new one. He demolished the old house and the pulverised sun-baked clay bricks and dagha became top soil for the garden. One of the first things Stanley planted was a privet hedge. "I bought them [privet seedlings] in town, [at] a nursery in town",¹⁶⁹ Stanley recalled. According to Stanley, he took extra care so that the hedge would be straight and flush; therefore, he measured the distance between each seedling with a ruler. Over the years,

¹⁶⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M.S. Motingoe, Batho, 18.4.2016.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

the hedge grew into a beautiful showpiece which not only became the pride of his garden but also of Khumalo Street (Image 7/10). Friends and even strangers complimented Stanley on his hedge and garden, and they jokingly said: “you are busy being green!”¹⁷⁰ Stanley was always generous with his advice to prospective gardeners and encouraged them to lay out gardens and plant hedges. His best piece of advice was always the following: “if your house is not beautiful, you shelter it by [sic] the hedge, then it looks beautiful”¹⁷¹ (Image 7/11).

Learning from his uncle

Nelson Ngo (born 1986) was raised by his grandparents, Nzimene and Emily Ngo, in Rocklands, Mangaung because his parents were unable to look after him. Nelson’s grandparents were fond of gardening and laid out a beautiful garden from scratch in front of their Rocklands home. Nzimene told Nelson that when he was a young man, he worked as a gardener on a smallholding in Kwaggafontein outside Bloemfontein. The owner of the smallholding taught him the basics of vegetable gardening and also how to grow fruit trees. Nelson’s uncle (his mother’s brother), Mafa, also lived with Nelson and his grandparents. Nelson remembered that Mafa was just as enthusiastic a gardener as Nzimene. In actual fact, Mafa was the one who maintained Nzimene and Emily’s garden, especially in later years when old age had prevented them from doing physical work, such as gardening. According to Nelson, Nzimene taught Mafa how to garden, so, when Mafa became responsible for the garden’s maintenance, he was capable of doing it well. Apart from maintaining Nzimene and Emily’s garden, Mafa earned much-needed cash by working as a gardener for a white garden-owner in Bloemfontein.¹⁷²

Nelson argued that his uncle, Mafa, must have learned many gardening skills from his employer in town because since Mafa started working there, he became interested in flowers, including roses. “My uncle liked roses and trees. He also liked fruit trees – peach,”¹⁷³ Nelson recalled. Apart from the flower garden in front of the house, there was also a vegetable garden at the back where spinach, cabbage and carrots were usually planted. The flowerbeds

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr N.T. Ngo, Batho, 10 & 24.11.2014.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

were long and rectangular, and so was the lawn, which gave the garden a formal appearance. The main attraction of the garden, however, was the clipped hedge planted between the pavement and the flowerbeds. Nelson remembered that it was a flat, smoothly-clipped hedge, about the height of a kitchen table. Nelson always watched his uncle working in the garden, especially when he clipped the hedge. Mafa noticed Nelson's interest in gardening and, apart from basic gardening skills, he taught Nelson how to clip the hedge. Everything Mafa learnt from his white employer in town, including the art of clipping, he also taught Nelson.¹⁷⁴

Nelson lost his grandfather in 2001 and both his grandmother and uncle Mafa passed away in 2008. He then went to live with his mother, Lena, in Phatlane Street in the Sports section of Batho. He automatically took responsibility for the garden and planted a hedge similar to the one he had grown up with at his grandparents' house. "I am making the same as Mafa because he teach [sic] me how to do it,"¹⁷⁵ Nelson said. The only difference between the two hedges was that while his grandparents' hedge was solid, his was see-through (Image 7/12). Nelson explained that he had to make the hedge transparent because "in the location the criminals are hiding behind hedges".¹⁷⁶ Unsuspecting homeowners, such as the Lekholos, were often mugged by criminals who hid behind hedges, especially at night. As a result of these criminal activities, Nelson had to adjust the design of his hedge but continued gardening according to what Mafa had taught him. The fact that Nelson's gardening knowledge had come a long way from Mafa's white employers via his uncle is not lost on Nelson.¹⁷⁷

Inspired by Westdene's gardens

Mohau Phakoe (born 1942) grew up in a house without a garden because his parents, Abednego and Lydia Phakoe, were not gardeners. In 1966, Mohau married a woman named Mojaesi and they moved into a house in Namane Street in the Sports section of Batho. The house was a typical red-brick house without a front garden. Mohau saw the bare soil as a clean slate on which to lay out his dream garden. According to Mohau, the inspiration for

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

his new garden came from the beautiful gardens he had seen in the Westdene suburb of Bloemfontein. Mohau remembered that although Westdene's gardens were not big, they were beautiful and whenever he walked there, he stopped and admired the gardens. A friend of Mohau, Mr Mapua, worked as a garden labourer in Westdene, and Mohau often visited him at his workplace. Those visits gave Mohau the opportunity to inspect the suburban gardens at leisure and, by doing so, he picked up many ideas for his own garden in Batho. One of the ideas Mohau garnered from the gardens in Westdene was to plant a clipped hedge. For this purpose, he obtained privet seedlings from a friend who lived in Rocklands, Mangaung. The friend also had a garden where he maintained a beautifully-clipped hedge. Mohau planted the privet seedlings on the left side of his house in order to create a boundary between him and his neighbour. Although Mohau did most of the clipping himself, his wife and son, Lebelo, also helped. Mohau said he had taught himself to clip a hedge by watching other gardeners in Batho clip theirs. For Mohau, the biggest challenge in maintaining his hedge was the long, dry spells which have become a frequent phenomenon in Bloemfontein. As a result, some of the privet plants died and had to be replaced¹⁷⁸ (Image 7/13).

Based on the previously-mentioned oral testimonies as well as others which have not yet been discussed,¹⁷⁹ it is argued that the garden taste and style of Bloemfontein's white residents, particularly their taste for topiary, strongly influenced Batho's gardeners and garden labourers. Consequently, the white residents' taste for topiary was a key factor in the making of Batho's topiarists. In this section, two important issues are emphasised: firstly, the topiarist's link with the past and, specifically, with his parents, grandparents or other family members who were exposed to white people's gardens, particularly topiary; and secondly, the fact that white gardeners taught garden labourers the art of topiary or that the garden labourers had learnt it by watching their white employers, is the other issue. Initially, Batho's topiarists merely duplicated the white gardeners' topiary styles, particularly the hedges. Terms used in the case studies, such as 'watched', 'observed', 'learned', 'influenced' and 'inspired', indicate a garden owner-garden labourer relationship characterised by watching, observing, learning and, eventually, absorbing. Refer, for example, in this regard

¹⁷⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M. Phakoe, Batho, 25.11.2014.*

¹⁷⁹ More oral testimonies will be discussed in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9.

to Cran's description of Boddam-Whetham's servants, particularly the garden labourers, and how they observed their employers and 'read every gesture' they made.

Finally, it is argued that *the black topiarist was a key figure in the development of Batho's topiary gardens as 'hybrid' and semi-vernacular gardens*. Essentially, the black topiarists took a predominantly European garden art, transplanted it to their own gardens in Batho, and since then had reinvented it and made it their own, mainly in response to local conditions, circumstances and factors. Topiary, a European garden art, was indigenised and Africanised. Local conditions, circumstances and factors which influenced the design, style and appearance of Batho's topiary include the following: 1) the style of the white employers' topiary (in other words, was the employers' topiary functional or ornamental?); 2) the black topiarists' interpretation of the white employers' topiary style according to their own tastes and preferences (in other words, did the topiarists re-interpret and adapt existing topiary styles to their personal preferences and creativity?); 3) the example set by other Batho gardeners' topiary (in other words, did the topiarists allow other Batho gardeners' topiary styles to influence theirs?); 4) climatic conditions, including prolonged droughts and water restrictions (in other words, did the lack of an adequate water supply affect the appearance and prevalence of Batho's topiary?); 5) the topiarists' financial position (in other words, were the topiarists able to purchase plants suitable for topiary and the necessary clipping tools?); and 6) social trends, such as increasing crime and criminality (in other words, how did criminal activities in Batho affect the design of topiary, specifically hedges?).

Answers to the above questions may not only be found in the case studies yet to be discussed in Chapter 9 but also in those discussed in this section, ranging from Stanley Motingoe who merely duplicated the conventional clipped hedge in the Van Rhyn family's Cape Town garden in his own Batho garden to Mercy Khantwane's mother who decided to put a personal stamp on her hedge by clipping the top section into 'lollipop' shapes. Answers pertaining to social trends, such as crime and criminality, may be found in the case study of Nelson Ngo who made his once-solid clipped hedge transparent to prevent criminals from hiding behind it or, in the case of Maria Lekholo, who replaced her clipped hedge with a security fence, also for safety reasons.¹⁸⁰ Answers are also to be found in the case of Mohau Phakoe, who,

¹⁸⁰ The effect of crime and criminality on the style and appearance of Batho's hedges is discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

due to financial reasons, was unable to purchase plants for a hedge but got them from a friend for free, or Maria Lekholo, who could only afford to purchase cheap root-bound plants at the nursery where she worked. In all of these and other cases, local conditions, circumstances and factors have, in some way or another, influenced the design, style and appearance of Batho's topiary and the choices made by the topiarists concerning their gardens and topiary. Essentially, these conditions, circumstances and factors have all contributed to turning a historically patrician garden art into a garden art and style which, for the purpose of this study, are described as 'hybrid' and semi-vernacular. The anatomy of Batho's semi-vernacular topiary gardens will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

7.5 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, it was explained why the black gardener as garden labourer is a key role-player in the history of Batho's topiary gardens. Most of Batho's gardens were laid out by the same black men who had worked as garden labourers for Bloemfontein's white garden owners. In addition to the making of the black gardener as garden labourer, the making of the black gardener as topiarist was also discussed – two processes which often happened simultaneously within the context of the white domestic garden and, to a lesser degree, the public garden, park and square. An important aspect of the making of a black gardener was the 'gardening relationships' which developed between the white garden owners and their black garden labourers. These relations were influenced by a number of factors, including long-standing racial attitudes and perceptions on the part of the white employers. Despite the complexities and contradictions inherent in garden owner-garden labourer relationships in Bloemfontein during the 1920s and 1930s, such relations were also characterised by the transference of knowledge and skills related to gardening and the art of topiary. *The transference of such knowledge and skills and the subsequent inter-cultural influencing between white and black could only take place if an element of goodwill was present in the master-servant relationship.* Batho residents who were interviewed for the purpose of this study directly or indirectly traced their exposure to the art of topiary and their clipping skills back to the white employers. Once Batho's gardeners had mastered the art of topiary, they made it their own and, as a result, an Africanised version of the classic European garden art was born. The next chapter will focus on the development of a gardening culture in Batho during the 1920s and 1930s and, among others, the role played by the black garden labourers

in this phenomenon will be discussed. In addition to a discussion of the nature of Batho's gardening culture, the way in which this phenomenon influenced the design, style and layout of Batho's semi-vernacular topiary gardens will also be explained.

CHAPTER 8

BATHO'S SEMI-VERNACULAR GARDENS (1) (1918-1939): THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GARDENING CULTURE

8.1 Introduction

In order to understand the prevalence of topiary in Batho's semi-vernacular gardens, it is necessary to explain the development of a gardening culture among Bloemfontein's location residents. The development of a gardening culture happened in tandem with the development of a taste for topiary. In other words, it is not only a matter of a desire for gardening per se but also the preference for a specific garden style. The garden style in question is, of course, the formal garden style and the taste for clipped plants, which has been discussed in previous chapters. The discussion of 'culture' and 'gardening culture' in Chapter 1, as well as the discussion of the development of Batho as a garden location in Chapter 5, constitute important background information for this chapter. The argument raised in Chapter 1 that *gardening is a cultural activity* and that *a garden as cultural product is the end product of creative cultural labour* is of particular importance. Equally important is an understanding of gardening culture as 'the culture related to the cultivating of gardens'. In order for a sophisticated garden art, such as topiary, to develop and eventually flourish in a location environment, such as Batho, a gardening culture had to be in place. The Burden model (Image 1/1), also discussed in Chapter 1, which illustrates the relation between tangible and intangible cultural products and the dimensions in which they are created, must also be kept in mind. Apart from being the broad theoretical framework within which this study is positioned, the Burden model is also a methodological tool to identify and describe Batho's topiary gardens as a unique cultural product. In this regard, Chapter 8 should be considered in close relation to Chapter 9, in which the model will be applied to Batho's topiary gardens.

The development and evolution of a gardening culture in Batho did not happen automatically, nor did it occur in a short period of time. As discussed in Chapter 5, a number of key individuals, most of them English-speaking municipal officials and councillors, took an active interest in developing Batho both as a model location and as a garden location. In

order to achieve this objective, certain policies were implemented and steps taken which greatly influenced the appearance of Batho's man-made landscape.¹ One of the important side-effects of these efforts was the emergence of an architectural style, a garden style and also a gardening culture which showed notable influences of the European culture in general and the British culture in particular. In addition to the contributions made by municipal officers and councillors, the important role initially played by Waaihoek's and later Batho's garden labourers who laboured in white-owned gardens during working hours and also maintained their own gardens after hours, also needs to be stressed. The knowledge and skills these garden labourers acquired from their white employers were not only transferred to Batho, but also helped to trigger the development of a gardening culture which eventually gained its own momentum. Needless to say, one of the key traits of this gardening culture was the practicing of the art of topiary, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9. Therefore, Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 should be considered in close relation to each other.

This chapter commences with a discussion of the acceptance of British culture and customs by some black people and the reasons behind this phenomenon. The discussion explains how this trend manifested, firstly, in Waaihoek and later in Batho and how it affected the style of the location residents' houses and gardens. Due to the fact that houses and gardens cannot be separated from each other, British cultural influence on location architecture is also investigated. The most important aspect of this chapter is the discussion of the development of a gardening culture in Waaihoek and Batho and the factors that influenced it because it set the stage for the evolution of Batho's semi-vernacular topiary gardens.

8.2 “The Victorian Britishness of Africans”: some black people's pro-British loyalty and acceptance of British culture

At the time of Batho's founding, a significant segment of Bloemfontein's black location residents, particularly those who may be described as petit bourgeois or middle-class within the socio-political context of that cultural-historical period, harboured pro-British or pro-

¹ Refer in this regard to the use of the term 'man-made landscape' by G.E. Fagan, *An introduction to the man-made landscape at the Cape from the 17th to the 19th centuries* (vols 1 & 2). (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1994), *passim*. For more information, see Chapter 3.

English² sentiments. This phenomenon, namely black Africans who were not of British origin identifying with, being loyal to and considering themselves as belonging to the British Empire, was already noticeable during the late 1800s and is rooted in the Victorian era and Britain's imperialist ambitions. According to British historian, Saul Dubow, the emerging black middle-class caught up in South Africa's pre-20th century colonial society was "deeply imbued with Victorian values as a consequence of the influence of missionary education, investment in ideals of progress and improvement, and the pursuit of individual and familial respectability."³ So-called 'Britishness' or, more specifically, "the Victorian Britishness of Africans",⁴ to quote historian, Peter Limb, was associated with civilisation, respectability, progress and, importantly, liberty and justice.⁵ Thanks to the "good intentions of Queen Victoria" South Africa's moderate "black Victorians"⁶ and "Black Englishmen"⁷ somehow reconciled Britain's imperial aspirations with their own nationalistic ideal of freedom from white domination. The black journalist and moderate African nationalist, Mr R.V. Selope-Thema,⁸ explained that it was "during the illustrious reign of the late Queen Victoria the Good" when, in Selope-Thema's opinion, "Bantu loyalty to the British Throne was won."⁹ Selope-Thema spoke on behalf of many Bloemfontein location residents when he argued that it was "the principles of liberty and justice upon which the structure of this great Empire is founded, which won the hearts of Bantu princes and people for the British Throne, and made them look upon that Throne as their protector and the guardian of their rights and interests."¹⁰

Apparently, Selope-Thema's eloquent explanation appealed to many black people, particularly those who had experienced "the harsh treatment meted out to the black man" not

² In this discussion, the terms 'British' and 'English' will be used interchangeably. Within the context of the period, the terms are not considered mutually exclusive although the term 'British' is academically more correct.

³ S. Dubow, "How British was the British world?: the case of South Africa", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37(1), March 2009, p. 12.

⁴ P. Limb, "Early ANC leaders and the British world: ambiguities and identities", *Historia* 47(1), May 2002, p. 65.

⁵ Limb, pp. 57-60; Dubow, p. 12.

⁶ Dubow, p. 12. According to Dubow, leading black figures, such as Dr D.D.T. Jabavu, Mr W.B. Rubusana (politician and writer), Mr J.L. Dube (first president of the SANNC) and Sol Plaatje may be described as such. For a discussion of these and other personalities, see Limb, pp. 68-74.

⁷ Limb, p. 60. This term was originally used to refer to Westernised African leaders and prominent members of black society.

⁸ For more information on Selope-Thema, see Chapter 5.

⁹ R.V. Selope-Thema, "The Bantu and the British Throne", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 23.5.1925, p. 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

by the British but by the “Dutch race”.¹¹ Consequently, it was this treatment which caused most black people in the two Boer republics to welcome the British occupations of Bloemfontein and Pretoria on 13 March and 5 June 1900, respectively. It was reported that in Bloemfontein “an excited crowd of niggers”,¹² to quote *The Bloemfontein Post*, awaited Lord Roberts’ arrival and large numbers of black people shouted “God Save the Queen!”¹³ when the procession marched into town. In Kaya Lami, the Fichardt family’s houseboy, Hosea, declared his loyalty in no uncertain terms when he exclaimed: “I am an Englishman!”¹⁴ Despite the disillusionment which had set in soon after the occupation when Bloemfontein’s black people realised that the capital’s new rulers would not bring them the freedom and civil rights they had hoped for, many still associated more comfortably with the British than the Boers (Afrikaners). In Bloemfontein’s black community, Hosea was one of many who openly declared himself a loyal subject of the Crown. The capital counted among its prominent ‘black Englishmen’ and pro-British sympathisers the Mapikelas, Matlis, Mogaechos, Moiloas, Msimangs and Sesings, to name a few with all due respect.¹⁵

Black people’s pro-British loyalty and identification essentially entailed “a shared sense of British identity, respect for ‘British justice’, and cultural sharing”,¹⁶ according to Limb. His reference to ‘cultural sharing’ is of particular importance for this discussion because it refers to some black people’s acceptance of British culture and customs or at least aspects thereof. In a leading article, the editor of *Umteteli wa Bantu* argued that the “love of the Native people for England and the English” was, among others, rooted in the coloniser’s efforts “to rescue them [black people] from barbarism and help them to attain to a higher and fuller life.”¹⁷ In order to achieve and live a ‘higher and fuller life’, so to speak, there seemed to be a general understanding among some black people, particularly the literate and educated classes, that they had to accept British culture. Consequently, some black people were open to and accepting of British culture because, among other reasons, they considered it to be superior

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *The Bloemfontein Post*, 10.5.1900, p. 3.

¹³ F.W. Unger, *With “Bobs” and Krüger* (vol. II), pp. 165, 167.

¹⁴ M. Bidwell & C.H. Bidwell, *Pen pictures of the past* (edited by K. Schoeman), p. 71.

¹⁵ Selope-Thema, p. 2; J. Ralph, *War’s brighter side: the story of The Friend newspaper edited by the correspondents with Lord Roberts’s forces, March-April, 1900*, p. 64; Unger, p. 166; K. Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan van ’n stad, 1846-1946*, pp. 217, 223; K. Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika tussen Oorlog en Unie, 1902-1910*, p. 176; Limb, p. 60.

¹⁶ Limb, p. 58.

¹⁷ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 4.6.1927, p. 2.

to their own. According to Dubow, ‘black Englishmen’ expressed their pro-British sentiments by adopting “British forms of address and dress”,¹⁸ in other words, they adopted *both tangible (material) and intangible (non-material) forms of British culture*. Therefore, pro-British loyalty was not only reflected in the way in which some black people behaved but also in material forms, such as attire and, importantly, the style of their houses and gardens.¹⁹

Concerning Bloemfontein, it is argued that British culture, which had been the *dominant culture* in the capital since its founding, was such a powerful force that some black people, as members of a *dominated culture*, unquestioningly adopted it or aspects thereof, albeit often Africanised or adapted versions due to the effects of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing.²⁰ This process involved both intangible and tangible forms of British culture. A preference for the English language, respect for British symbols, such as the Union Jack (“the symbol of liberty and justice”²¹) and the British national anthem, was fairly common among location residents, specifically the already-mentioned literate and educated classes. Furthermore, a fondness for English sports, such as cricket, football (soccer), tennis and croquet, an appreciation of English ceremonies and national days, including performances by local black Scottish brass bands and the annual celebration of Empire Day, as well as English pastimes, such as ‘at homes’,²² and garden and tea parties, characterised the lives of Waaihoek’s and later Batho’s pro-British residents.²³ Added to this is the enthusiastic mass support shown to members of the British royal family who visited Bloemfontein, including

¹⁸ Dubow, p. 12.

¹⁹ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 4.6.1927, p. 2; Limb, pp. 58, 62-63; Dubow, p. 12; Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika...*, pp. 180-181, 184-185; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 182, 217-218, 220, 265-266, 286-287.

²⁰ See Limb’s arguments in this regard. Limb, p. 60.

²¹ Selope-Thema, p. 2. See also *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 4.6.1927, p. 2; *The Friend*, 9.6.1927, p. 9.

²² Small fundraising or social events in the form of a lunch or dinner held at private residences. *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 11.11.1933, p. 6; 3.4.1934, p. 4; 8.9.1934, p. 5; 30.4.1938, p. 5.

²³ Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA): *MBL 1/2/4/1/17, Annual report of Native Administration Department 1929-1930*, p. 6; *MBL 1/2/4/1/6, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 8.10.1923, p. 6; *MBL 1/2/4/1/6, Report of Superintendent of Locations, December 1923*, 17.1.1924, p. 5; Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika...*, pp. 184-185; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 220, 266, 286-287; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 1.6.1935, p. 6. For detailed information on the prevalence of British sports and pastimes in Batho, see J. Mancoe, *First edition of the Bloemfontein Bantu and Coloured people’s directory, passim*.

the Prince of Wales in May 1925,²⁴ Prince George in February 1934²⁵ and consecutive Governor-Generals who paid regular visits.²⁶ Without exception, the visiting dignitaries praised Bloemfontein’s model location as exemplary in all respects.²⁷ Despite increasing criticism of British imperialist supremacy emanating from the ranks of, among others, local vigilance associations, the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), the African National Congress (ANC) and the emerging labour union movement,²⁸ British culture still maintained its hold on moderate and conservative location residents. In this regard, Limb rightly argued that “the influence of Imperial hegemony on African identities persisted”²⁹ and often, as had been the case in Bloemfontein, well into the 1920s and 1930s.³⁰ In 1934, *Umteteli wa Bantu* could still confidently declare that the Union’s black people were prepared to prove their “unswerving allegiance to the King’s person and Throne.”³¹

8.3 “More or less European looking”: British cultural influence in Waaihoek

Descriptive impressions of Waaihoek’s houses and gardens became remarkably vivid during and after the end of Bloemfontein’s post-Anglo-Boer War (hereafter the War) colonial period (1902-1910). Concerning Waaihoek’s dwellings, some were described as “huts”³² and others as “houses”.³³ While the term ‘hut’ referred to anything from shanties to traditional round huts, the term ‘house’ referred to square or rectangular dwellings built in the conventional European style. In 1914, Miss Steedman, a mission associate of the Anglican Church in Bloemfontein, informed the *Quarterly Paper*’s mostly British readers that Waaihoek’s houses were built of “mud bricks, but all the roofs are made of corrugated

²⁴ J. Haasbroek, “Die Prins van Wallis se besoek aan Bloemfontein in Mei 1925”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 11(7), September 1995, pp. 176-180. For more details on the location residents’ welcoming of the Prince of Wales, see *The Friend*, 27.5.1925, p. 12.

²⁵ J. Haasbroek, “Die besoek van Prins George aan Bloemfontein in Februarie 1934”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 12(3), July 1996, pp. 89-90. For more details on the location residents’ welcoming of Prince George, see *The Friend*, 1.3.1934, p. 5; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 10.3.1934, p. 6.

²⁶ *The Friend*, 18.9.1924, p. 7; 11.10.1937, p. 3; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 18.5.1935, p. 6.

²⁷ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 10.3.1934, p. 6; *The Friend*, 18.9.1924, p. 7; 11.10.1937, p. 3.

²⁸ Limb, pp. 78-80; *The Friend*, 22.4.1930, p. 7; Schoeman, *Imperiale somer: Suid-Afrika...*, pp. 178, 185-186; Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 223-226, 279-280, 282.

²⁹ Limb, p. 61.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 78.

³¹ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 17.2.1934, p. 2.

³² FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/2, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 21.5.1917, p. 2.

³³ *Ibid.*

iron.”³⁴ A staple of South African Victorian architecture, Britain exported corrugated iron or so-called “zinc”³⁵ sheets in huge quantities to South Africa before, during and after the War. Affordable and durable, corrugated iron became widely available as the preferred material not only for roofs but, importantly, also for covered stoeps and verandahs.³⁶ During the War, the first impression visitors approaching Bloemfontein gained of the capital was its “shining tin roofs”.³⁷ Corrugated iron roofs were not only characteristic of buildings in the white ‘Town’ but also of Waaihoek’s houses and cottages. In fact, this versatile building element became a standard feature of both Bloemfontein’s and South Africa’s post-War location architecture.³⁸ In addition to the zinc, the other characteristic element of post-War location architecture was the bricks. As Miss Steedman rightly stated, Waaihoek’s houses were typically built of mud bricks, specifically sun-dried mud bricks. The intense colour of these bricks was reminiscent of the colour of English cottages. Another associate, who apparently also recognised a resemblance, described Waaihoek’s houses as “bright red brick houses”³⁹ (Image 5/3).

In 1912, the year in which the SANNC was founded in Waaihoek’s Wesleyan School,⁴⁰ an unidentified associate of the Anglican Church wrote that “the ‘location’ [Waaihoek] is laid out in wide straight roads with little square houses, more or less European looking, on each side.”⁴¹ The reference to ‘square houses’ (also known as “foursquare”⁴² houses) is significant because it indicates not just a mere transitioning but rather a shift away from the traditional Sotho and Tswana (including Barolong) round thatched huts. The square or rectangular shape with corners was, of course, European and not characteristic of the Orange Free State’s

³⁴ Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand (hereafter HP): Miss Steedman, “Bloemfontein Location”, *Quarterly Paper* 186, 25.10.1914, p. 179.

³⁵ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/3, Minutes of meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 22.4.1919, p. 3.

³⁶ For more information on stoeps and verandahs, see Chapter 4.

³⁷ Unger, p. 165.

³⁸ K. Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk en geboue in die 19de eeu*, pp. 111-112; D. Greig, *A guide to architecture in South Africa*, pp. 80-84.

³⁹ HP: Miss Donovan, “Half-Caste School”, *Quarterly Paper* 33, July 1876, p. 22.

⁴⁰ For more information, see J. Haasbroek, “Founding venue of the African National Congress (1912): Wesleyan school, Fort Street, Waaihoek, Bloemfontein”, *Navorsinge van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 18(7), November 2002, *passim*.

⁴¹ HP: “An Associate” (pseudonym), “A district-visiting afternoon in a native location”, *Quarterly Paper* 176, 25.4.1912, p. 44.

⁴² As quoted in Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, p. 220.

indigenous architecture.⁴³ British and European missionaries and their associates who laboured in the Transgariep, Transoranje and later in the Orange Free State emphasised the square and rectangular shapes of Western dwellings as symbols of civilisation and, above all, Christianity.⁴⁴ Clearly, such symbolism and associations influenced the architecture of Waaihoek and, to a lesser extent, Bloemfontein's other early locations. Waaihoek's houses were also described as "mostly well-built"⁴⁵ and, in the words of the unidentified associate, comparable to "any English cottage".⁴⁶ Some of Waaihoek's houses, most of which were, in actual fact, cottages and not houses in the true sense of the word, must have displayed a level of sophistication since the houses "reveal in their design the liberal views of many architects";⁴⁷ to quote the prose of associate J. Clements-Frazer. Houses "built on the European plan" complete with "a stoep, shutters on the windows" were surprisingly common but such houses existed side-by-side with "hovel[s] entirely composed of canvas, sacks, and rags."⁴⁸

Descriptions of Waaihoek's houses as 'more or less European looking' and 'built on the European plan', confirm the growing European and, specifically, British influence on Bloemfontein's man-made landscape, including Waaihoek's. In this context, the man-made landscape refers to, among others, architecture, gardens and other designed features, such as parks and squares. Phrases such as 'English cottage' indicate an English (British) cultural influence which had become increasingly visible not only in white Bloemfontein's architecture and gardens but also in black Bloemfontein's architecture and gardens. As explained in Chapter 4, Bloemfontein's white population grew significantly due to the influx of British immigrants before and after the War. Many of the new arrivals were well-educated and, in due course, they accepted key positions in the municipality and civil service. Most

⁴³ Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, pp. 17-18. For a discussion of indigenous Orange Free State architecture, see pp. 13-17; P.J. Nienaber *et al.*, *Vrystaatse argitektuur: histories-argitektoniese ontwikkeling van die Vrystaatse boukuns: 'n oorsig*, pp. 6-12; H. Franssen, *Drie eeue kuns in Suid-Afrika: beeldende kuns, boukuns, toegepaste kuns*, pp. 219-220; G.A. Kaltenbrun, *Die argitektuur van die swartman in die Oranje-Vrystaat* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of the Orange Free State, 1979), *passim*.

⁴⁴ Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, p. 18.

⁴⁵ HP: "An Associate" (pseudonym), p. 44.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ HP: J. Clements-Frazer, "Scattering the seed", *Quarterly Paper* 179, 25.1.1913, p. 17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

managerial positions in the “Bloemfontein Corporation”⁴⁹ or “The Corporation”,⁵⁰ as the municipality was known among the English-speaking community, were occupied by Englishmen, including the City Engineer, the Medical Officer of Health and the Inspector of Native Locations (later the Superintendent of Locations).⁵¹ Consequently, British cultural influence became visible in all dimensions, cultural products (tangible and intangible) and layers of Bloemfontein society. Inevitably, this influence also affected the location environment. In his memoirs of his life in Bloemfontein, Ivan Bergh wrote that the new British immigrants “not only introduced a certain form of culture but they also created new forms of it.”⁵² This culture, particularly “Anglo-Saxon taste and refinements”⁵³ and adapted or ‘watered-down’ versions thereof, influenced the entire Bloemfontein community.⁵⁴

While some of Waaihoek’s houses were comparable to English cottages, some of the location’s front gardens were presumably comparable to English cottage gardens.⁵⁵ This statement needs to be qualified by emphasising the fact that if Waaihoek’s gardens were indeed comparable to an English cottage garden, then it was a small and most elementary English cottage garden typified by mixed planting in the front garden with no strict separation between flowers, vegetables and fruit. While there could be a separation between flowers, vegetables and fruit in terms of separate beds, there was probably no strict separation in terms of front and back garden. It is highly possible that Waaihoek’s gardens resembled an *agricultural garden and/or horticultural field*, complete with maize patches planted right next to or behind the houses (Image 8/1). Gardens enclosed by quince, pomegranate and fig hedges were not atypical. The traditional African practice of yard-sweeping (Image 8/14), discussed in Chapter 2, was fairly common in Waaihoek during a time when lawn was mostly restricted to white people’s gardens. Alas, no detailed description or visual representation of a typical Waaihoek garden survived; therefore, the exact style and layout of Waaihoek’s gardens is subject to speculation and one needs to rely on available snippets of information, most notably the descriptions referred to in Chapter 5.

⁴⁹ FSPA: MBL 3/1/6, *Mayor’s minute 1900*, cover page.

⁵⁰ FSPA: MBL 3/1/9, *Mayor’s minute 1904*, cover page.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵² FSPA: A. 491.3, I.O. Bergh, *First draft of Some “Blikore”* (memoirs), *s.a.*, p. 110.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Schoeman, *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan...*, pp. 84, 220; HP: Clements-Frazer, p. 17.

⁵⁵ For more information on the characteristics of an English cottage garden, see Chapter 2.

The probability that some of Waaihoek's gardens were reminiscent of elementary English cottage gardens is strengthened by the fact that the missionaries and associates of the Anglican Church often received gifts from those gardens in the form of flowers, fruit and vegetables. Miss Donovan, an associate who taught "Half-Caste children"⁵⁶ at Waaihoek's School of the Good Shepherd, mentioned that her young learners often reciprocated her love and attention with gifts of "quinces, and flowers, and their odd treasures."⁵⁷ While the quinces probably came from the quince hedges popular in Waaihoek as garden enclosures, the flowers came from the gardens – an indication that Waaihoek's gardens were indeed *more than mere food gardens. Therefore, it is argued that Waaihoek's gardens as examples of the semi-vernacular location garden were already in the process of transitioning from food-only gardens to food-and-ornamental gardens.* From an architectural and garden design perspective, it is argued that the architectural and garden design trends discussed in Chapter 4 influenced the architecture and domestic gardens of Waaihoek, albeit to varying degrees.

8.4 "The ambition which has been aroused amongst the natives": the development of a gardening culture among Waaihoek's residents (late 1800s-1917)

Early written references to Bloemfontein's black and coloured people's gardening culture are mostly hidden in the 'grey areas' between the layers of documented history. Even in the most obvious sources, such as the records of the Municipality of Bloemfontein's Public Works and Parks Committee and the Native Affairs Committee, useful references are scarce, scattered and mostly limited to a single sentence or word. At the same time, however, valuable references are often 'hidden' in less obvious sources, such as the annual reports of Bloemfontein's mayor. For this reason, Waaihoek's and Batho's garden history and the history of its gardening culture are considered 'hidden histories', in other words, forgotten histories hidden between the layers of archival records. Searching for early signs of an emerging gardening culture among Bloemfontein's location residents meant that the *actions of the residents themselves, that is, their own cultural labour, were as important as the efforts of the municipality or any other outside party or individual.* The following key questions were asked: did the location residents display any desire to lay out gardens or plant trees themselves? If such a desire existed, did it trigger any cultural labour in the form of

⁵⁶ Meaning children of mixed race. HP: Donovan, p. 23.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

gardening activity? Did the residents take any initiative in this regard or did they wait for instructions? How did the residents respond to initiatives meant to encourage the development of a gardening culture?

One of the earliest references to an emerging gardening culture in Bloemfontein's old locations, specifically Waaihoek, was found in the mayor's annual report for the year 1892. The then mayor, Dr Kellner,⁵⁸ referred to "the *ambition* which has been aroused amongst the natives, of keeping their location [Waaihoek] in good order, induced them to build better and more substantial houses, many of which are *neatly fenced in*."⁵⁹ Kellner's use of the word 'ambition' and his mentioning of houses 'neatly fenced in' are particularly noteworthy for the purpose of this discussion. The word 'ambition' evidently refers to an *expressed desire, urge and need* among some location residents to improve their domestic surroundings. Furthermore, the fact that some properties were fenced-in indicates a *desire to nurture, cherish and protect* what they created, namely gardens or so-called "patch[es] of green".⁶⁰ In the same report, Kellner also mentioned that the Bloemfontein municipality should supply trees to "those [location residents] who *take an interest* in tree-planting".⁶¹ The mentioning of location residents taking an interest in an activity such as tree-planting, underscores the argument that signs of a gardening culture, though marginal, were already visible in Bloemfontein's old locations, most notably Waaihoek, during the late 19th century. These embryonic signs of an emerging gardening culture must have been significant in order to justify its mentioning in an important document, such as the mayor's annual report.

During Bloemfontein's post-War colonial period, signs of an emerging gardening culture among Waaihoek's residents became more visible. In his annual report for 1906, the then Inspector of Native Locations, Mr J.W. Hancock, reported that "there is a *noticeable and increasing disposition* on the part of Standholders to improve their holdings".⁶² The significant words in Hancock's statement, namely 'noticeable' and 'increasing', indicate a growing desire among some location residents, particularly ploholders, to improve their immediate domestic environments. Furthermore, his statement points to the fact that these

⁵⁸ For more information on Kellner, see Chapter 5.

⁵⁹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/3, Mayor's minute 1892*, p. 2. (Own emphasis)

⁶⁰ HP: Clements-Frazer, p. 17.

⁶¹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/3, Mayor's minute 1892*, p. 2. (Own emphasis)

⁶² FSPA: *MBL 3/1/11, Report on Native Locations 1906*, p. 67. (Own emphasis)

efforts have become more noticeable, at least to a white English-speaking municipal officer. The term ‘disposition’ also indicates that the mentioned desire on the part of some plotheholders to improve their domestic environments had turned into tangible efforts to give effect to such a desire. Thus, it is argued that an *expressed human need triggered a form of cultural labour which, in turn, led to the creation of a specific cultural product*. In the same report, Hancock mentioned that “the *desire* for tree planting is also apparent”⁶³ among some residents. Once again, the word ‘desire’ is used to describe some location residents’ attitude to the beautification of their surroundings, in this case, beautification by means of tree-planting. Hancock’s quote clearly reveals a yearning for such beautification. At the same time, he wrote that tree-planting efforts among location residents “should be encouraged”,⁶⁴ which serves as an indication that the residents’ actions may be partly ascribed to their positive response to the municipality’s efforts to encourage a culture of tree-planting in the locations. Hancock suggested that one of the ways in which the municipality could encourage tree-planting in the locations was to supply trees “free of cost to Native applicants”.⁶⁵

8.5 “Each house must stand in its own garden”: British cultural influence in Batho

Although most of what has been said about Waaihoek’s houses is also applicable to Batho, Batho’s architecture may be considered a case study of how British architectural styles and tastes influenced local architecture. In Chapter 5, a detailed account was given of Batho’s unique assisted housing scheme and the Bloemfontein municipality’s direct involvement in this widely admired scheme. Apart from the supply of standard building materials at cost price, the predominantly English-speaking council’s involvement was also noticeable in the style and architecture of the houses. Shortly after Batho was founded Councillor A.G. Barlow suggested that in line with the rigid standardised type of location house built in the rest of the Union, “a uniform house should be built in the New Location.”⁶⁶ Although the building of uniform houses would have saved costs and accelerated building operations, it was argued that one of the key objectives of the Bloemfontein System was to allow for

⁶³ *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/3, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 13.1.1919, p. 2.

architectural variation by permitting resident-builders to choose from several approved plans, varying in size and design. Consequently, it was decided that variations of the proposed “model house”⁶⁷ would be drawn from which residents could choose. Resident-builders were given nine months to complete their houses and building inspectors were appointed to ensure that building regulations had been adhered to.⁶⁸ Considering these measures, it seems as though the Bloemfontein council’s vision for Batho was very much in line with many black people’s vision of an ideal location: “a Native village of square houses of widely differing designs, each house enjoying the privacy of its own neatly enclosed plot of ground” and, importantly, “each house must stand in its own garden.”⁶⁹

“On modern European lines and modern European style”

The houses built in Batho during the location’s early years, namely the late 1910s and early to mid-1920s, displayed a striking resemblance to the typical Victorian cottage. At the time of Batho’s founding, the Victorian style – specifically the so-called late-Victorian style – still had a marked influence on South African domestic architecture, including that of Bloemfontein and Batho.⁷⁰ Victorian architecture and style refer to the architectural style(s) in vogue in Britain during the time of Queen Victoria’s reign (1837-1901). It must, however, be emphasised that the Victorian style, which had been popular during Batho’s early years, became more simplified and devoid of excessive decoration, partly as a result of the influence of local circumstances and partly as a result of the growing influence of the pared-down Edwardian style. Consequently, one may refer to the development of a semi-vernacular version of the Victorian style. Typical late-Victorian elements, which were

⁶⁷ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/3, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 17.2.1919, p. 2. For a plan of a ‘model house’, see *MBL 1/2/4/1/4, Minutes of meeting of Native Affairs Committee: house of native building inspector Nthathesi*, 1.11.1920, p. 4.

⁶⁸ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/3, Minutes of meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 22.4.1919, p. 4; *MBL 1/2/4/1/5, Minutes of meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 26.9.1921, p. 2; *MBL 1/2/4/1/13, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 9.8.1927, p. 2; G.E. Pearse, “Housing in South Africa: introduction”, *South African Architectural Record* 28(6), June 1943, p. 112; J.R. Cooper, “The Municipality of Bloemfontein: native housing and accommodation”, *South African Architectural Record* 28(6), June 1943, pp. 120-123; D. du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the history of the English-style gardens of Batho, Mangaung (1846-1948)”, *Navorsinge van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 27(3), December 2011, p. 65.

⁶⁹ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 7.7.1923, p. 2.

⁷⁰ For a detailed discussion of British influence on South African architecture, see R. Lewcock, *Early nineteenth century architecture in South Africa: a study of the interaction of two cultures, 1795-1837, passim*.

recognisable in Batho's houses, included unplastered brick walls,⁷¹ iron stone or blue stone foundations, bay windows, wood-framed windows, wooden doors, 'soldier course' lintels above doors and windows, rectilinear fanlights above front doors, chimneys (for interior fireplaces) and verandahs (Image 8/2). Red sun-baked 'Kimberley bricks' (later sturdier red burnt bricks were used) and pitched or hipped corrugated iron roofs gave these houses a unique character.⁷² Houses were either asymmetrical or symmetrical with centrally-placed front doors. Often the front door was aligned with the back door, emphasising the classic north-south axis. In most cases, a "central front-to-back passage"⁷³ connected the front door with the back door, creating an unobstructed axial view from the front garden to the backyard.⁷⁴ As will be discussed later, *this arrangement reinforced the prevalence of the simple formal axial garden in Batho.*

Concerning the Bloemfontein council's approach to housing for the model location's residents and the type of houses built for them, the following paragraph from a mayor's annual report aptly summarises the council's philosophy: "a good class of building continues to be erected, particularly in the latest layout. Regard is paid to the necessity for good workmanship and the use of good materials and the advantages of living under *hygienic conditions*. *Aesthetic values* are also not entirely disregarded."⁷⁵ This paragraph, also printed in other municipal reports,⁷⁶ reveals the underlying ethos of the much-copied Bloemfontein System. The fact that 'hygienic conditions' and 'aesthetic values' were considered equally important is significant. For example, both hygienic (health) and aesthetic considerations were taken into account in the mentioned alignment of the front and back doors. Apart from the fact that the arrangement ensured an aesthetically pleasing layout, it was also motivated by a health reason, namely to allow for adequate natural light and ventilation for the sake of

⁷¹ For more information on the popularity of unplastered brick walls in Bloemfontein, see Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, p. 65.

⁷² FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/24, *Report on Native Location – Bloemfontein: 17th to 20th July 1934, with reference to high infantile mortality rate*, 14.8.1934, p. 2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ D. Picton-Seymour, *Victorian buildings in South Africa: including Edwardian & Transvaal Republican styles, 1850-1910*, p. 1; B.E. Bierman, *Boukuns in Suid-Afrika*, pp. 84-87; R.C. Fisher, *Visual lexicon of the South African dwelling*, pp. 20-21; Du Bruyn, pp. 65-66.

⁷⁵ FSPA: MBL 3/1/19, *Mayor's minute 1929-1930*, p. 14. (Own emphasis). See also MBL 3/1/21, *Mayor's minute 1930*, p. xiv; MBL 1/2/4/1/17, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1929-1930*, 1.4.1930, p. 2.

⁷⁶ See, for example, HP: AD 1765, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1929-1930*, 1.4.1930, p. 2.

‘hygienic conditions’. It seems as though these two factors played an important role in the design of all approved house plans, whether a square four-room cottage, an asymmetrical L-shaped five-room house or a symmetrical U-shaped six-room house.⁷⁷

“Een Europeeschen stijl met een ‘stoep’”

During the 1920s and 1930s, Batho’s architecture was influenced by the quintessential South African architectural element, namely the *stoep*. Although typically associated with European architecture, Batho’s residents were not unfamiliar with this architectural feature since traditional Sotho and Tswana dwellings often had raised platforms attached to them.⁷⁸ While some stoeps were uncovered raised platforms (Image 8/3), most were covered; therefore, they were, strictly speaking, *verandahs*. The *verandah house* (Image 8/4) and the traditional *stoep-room house* with projecting stoep rooms⁷⁹ – both styles were discussed in Chapter 4 – were also popular in Batho during the 1920s and 1930s. The characteristic feature of verandah houses was, of course, the verandah which displayed a variety of shapes and styles ranging from those with straight roofs (Images 8/4 & 8/7) to the so-called ‘bullnose’ verandahs (Images 8/5 & 8/6).⁸⁰ Stoep-room houses were either asymmetrical and L-shaped (Images 8/5 & 8/6) or symmetrical and U-shaped (Images 8/7 & 8/8). Although the evolution of the stoep-room house and verandah house was strongly influenced by local climatic and environmental factors, both styles were rooted in the European architectural tradition.⁸¹ It is probably because of the provenance of these two styles that the Bloemfontein court interpreter, John Mancoe, gained the impression that Batho’s houses were designed “on modern European lines” and laid out in the “modern European style”.⁸² Europeans who visited Batho, such as the Dutchman, Dr H.H.A. van Gybland Oosterhoff, gained a similar impression when he visited Batho during the early 1930s. He described the architecture of Batho’s houses as “een Europeeschen stijl met een ‘stoep’.”⁸³ Because of the predominance

⁷⁷ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/24, *Report on Native Location – Bloemfontein: 17th to 20th July 1934, with reference to high infantile mortality rate*, 14.8.1934, p. 2; Pearse, p. 112; Du Bruyn, pp. 65-66.

⁷⁸ Kaltenbrun, pp. 147-155.

⁷⁹ In Afrikaans known as *stoepkamers*.

⁸⁰ Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, pp. 61-62.

⁸¹ Du Bruyn, pp. 65-66. For more information on the development of the stoep-room house in Bloemfontein, see Schoeman, *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk...*, pp. 62-64.

⁸² Mancoe, pp. 53-54.

⁸³ H.H.A. van Gybland Oosterhoff, *Indrukken van een reis naar Zuid-Afrika*, p. 57. “A European style with a ‘stoep’.” (Free translation)

of English (British) stylistic features, the term ‘European’ typically meant ‘English’ or English style.

In terms of Batho’s gardening culture, the popularity of the stoep-room house and verandah house is important because these two styles not only blurred the traditional strict boundaries that existed between inside and outside, it also connected the front garden to the house and its main living area, namely the lounge-cum-dining room. As discussed in Chapter 5, the stoep or verandah as semi-private space functioned as a transition space between the street as public space and the house and backyard as private space (Images 5/14 & 8/9). In the case of the location house, the stoep extended the house into the garden.⁸⁴ In the summer months, the front garden also became an ‘extension’ of the stoep or veranda and, in the process, the garden expanded the restricted interior living spaces even further. As a raised platform, the stoep or verandah was relatively easy to keep clean and it also helped to keep living rooms dust-free.⁸⁵ Potted plants on the stoep or verandah and trellises attached to verandah pillars to support creeper plants further reinforced the blurred boundaries between house and garden (Image 8/10). As a result, front gardens became much more important as living spaces than they used to be.⁸⁶ The ingenious use of ‘green architecture’, namely tall-clipped hedges and ‘walls’, to create ‘outdoor rooms’ and outdoor enclaves, was a creative way of employing topiary in a functional yet aesthetically pleasing manner. Batho’s gardeners turned clipped hedges into ‘walls’ (Image 8/11) by allowing them to grow taller than humans and, in the process, they created additional private living areas suitable for use during the summer months (Images 8/12 & 8/13). The ‘floors’ of these ‘outdoor rooms’ or enclaves were typically compacted swept soil rather than lawn (Image 8/14).

“A distinct standard of civilisation”

In 1927, almost a decade after Batho’s founding, Mr J.R. Cooper reported that Batho’s residents consisted mainly of “Barolongs, Xosa [sic], Basuto, Fingoes and small factions of

⁸⁴ D.M. Calderwood, *An investigation into the functional and aesthetic aspects of garden architecture* (part III), (Unpublished M.Arch. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1951), p. 11.

⁸⁵ For more information on the practical benefits stoeps and verandahs had for location houses, see R. Ginsburg, “‘Now I stay in a house’: renovating the matchbox in apartheid-era Soweto”, *African Studies* 55(2), 1996, p. 137.

⁸⁶ For similar arguments concerning the front garden as living space in the location and township environment, see Calderwood (part III), p. 14.

other tribes.”⁸⁷ As discussed in Chapter 7, the Fingoes and Barolong were sought after domestic servants and garden labourers among Bloemfontein’s white residents and, according to Cooper, they “shew a *distinct standard of civilisation*”.⁸⁸ He also noted that their “mode of living, dress, habits and inclinations *closely resemble European standards*.”⁸⁹ Seemingly, British cultural influence in Batho was not limited to the location’s architecture. As had been the case with the residents of most so-called “modern locations”⁹⁰ in the Union, Batho’s residents were loosely divided into two groups, namely the ‘Conservatives’ and the ‘Forward Movement’. While the Conservatives still held on to old customs and traditions, the Forward Movement was mainly composed of the younger generation – including many Fingoes and Barolong – who were open to European cultural influences, particularly British culture.⁹¹ This acculturation process and the results thereof became glaringly visible during late 1920s and early 1930s. In an annual report for 1929-1930, Cooper noted that some location residents were “strong in imitation”⁹² as far as European culture was concerned. Outside visitors to Batho also noticed this trend such as the British military officer, R.J.M. Goold-Adams, who saw that Bloemfontein’s location residents kept “their families as they imagine the European does and call on one another just like the European”.⁹³ By the end of his visit, Goold-Adams was convinced that “all the time they [location residents] are aping European ways”.⁹⁴

Cooper’s reference to ‘a distinct standard of civilisation’ concerning the Fingoes and Barolong is an important point because of the close link which apparently existed between the concept ‘civilisation’ (read Western civilisation) and British culture in particular. As stated earlier in this chapter, British culture and customs were often equated with civilisation or, with reference to indigenous peoples, a state of ‘being civilised’ in terms of European standards. *Umteteli wa Bantu* was of the opinion that Bloemfontein’s new Batho location was a prime example of a ‘civilised’ location. In a leading article on the state of municipal housing provided for the Union’s location residents, the paper informed its readers that

⁸⁷ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1926-1927*, p. 5.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

⁹⁰ HP: AD 1765, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1929-1930*, 1.4.1930, p. 6.

⁹¹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/16, *Annual report of Superintendent of Locations 1928-1929*, 4.4.1929, p. 3.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ R.J.M. Goold-Adams, *South Africa to-day and to-morrow*, p. 56.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Bloemfontein “recognises that barbarism and civilisation cannot grow side by side”.⁹⁵ Based on its own observations, the paper came to the conclusion that the “Natives of Bloemfontein are on the whole more civilised than Natives of any city in South Africa.”⁹⁶ Apparently, the newspaper’s judgement concerning the Batho residents’ level of civilisation had more to do with the architecture of its houses than with lifestyle per se, as Cooper and Goold-Adams indicated in their observations. *Umteteli wa Bantu* argued that because of the level of civilisation maintained by Batho’s residents, some of the location’s houses “compare favourably with those of the European part of the City.”⁹⁷

A Batho building in which the influence of ‘civilisation’ was reportedly strikingly visible was the AME parsonage⁹⁸ in Gonyane Street in the Four-and-Six section of Batho (Image 5/18). Mancoe described the landmark house with its triangular verandah as “a monumental and artistic piece of work to interpret [sic] modern ambition of the black race towards progress and the finer arts of civilisation.”⁹⁹ This quote not only captures the aspirations and ambitions of the better-off class of Batho residents in terms of architecture, but it also reveals an attempt to be ‘civilised’ and to gain a measure of respectability in deprived circumstances.¹⁰⁰ Finally, for the purpose of this discussion, it is important to understand that European culture, particularly British culture and its perceived relation to ‘civilisation’ or a state of ‘being civilised’, influenced the architecture of Batho’s houses and the style of its gardens as much as it influenced the residents’ social lives.

8.5.1 English-style semi-vernacular topiary gardens

If, in the context of this discussion, the idea of ‘civilisation’ may be equated with British cultural influence, then such influence was not only visible in Batho’s buildings but also in its gardens. For this reason, Batho’s gardens are described as semi-vernacular, in other words, gardens which are the products of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing and, as a result, display a blend of patrician and folk influences. As discussed in previous chapters,

⁹⁵ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 16.7.1927, p. 2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ For more information on the building, see Chapter 5.

⁹⁹ Mancoe, p. 53.

¹⁰⁰ For arguments concerning the importance of respectability for township residents, see Ginsburg, pp. 127-128, 135.

British gardening trends and styles had been influencing Bloemfontein's gardens since 1846. By the time Batho was founded, British cultural influence had not abated and, as a result, its influence became visible in the style and layout of Batho's gardens. As argued in the case of Waaihoek's gardens, the influence of the English cottage garden style was still evident, but in Batho's case, the *gardens had become more structured and formal*. It is argued that, as had been the case with Batho's houses, the Edwardian style, with its preference for simplified formality and sound proportions, also influenced Batho's gardens, albeit to a very limited extent.

It is important to emphasise the close link between Edwardian architecture and garden style. The fact that the basic design and layout of Batho's houses were often based on the classic axial principle reinforced the occurrence of the *simple formal axial garden* discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. It is argued that the most basic rendition of an Edwardian garden and the simple formal axial garden are strikingly similar. In Batho's gardens, the customary garden path was typically aligned with the centrally-positioned front door which automatically created a formal front garden consisting of two symmetrical sections separated by a usually straight garden path. Inside the two sections, the flowerbeds were typically rectangular, square or circular, and inside the flowerbeds, the planting was either formal, that is, in rows, or informal, that is to say in the random fashion of English cottage-style planting. Thus, it is argued that while the basic design of Batho's gardens was simplified Edwardian, the planting was often of a cottage-style nature. Importantly, though, these *English styles found expression within an African context*. Therefore, the so-called 'hybrid' English garden,¹⁰¹ which evolved in Bloemfontein's white suburbs, is also applicable to Batho in the sense that Batho's English-style gardens also appeared to be 'English' but, at the same time, they contained elements which rooted them in the local context, such as indigenous plants and flowerbeds edged with blue stones (so-called *blouklip*) or iron stones (so-called *ysterklip*).

While Waaihoek's gardens came about in a rather haphazard and unplanned fashion, Batho's gardens were generally better conceived, better planned and better laid out. In many cases, the same care that went into planning the houses also went into the gardens. The one

¹⁰¹ For more information, see Chapter 4.

important element which defined Batho's gardens was, of course, the prevalence of topiary, specifically clipped hedges around gardens and yards. While this quintessential feature of the traditional English garden was transferred from the white people's gardens to Batho's gardens, it is argued that the age-old concept of a garden as a hedged-in or fenced-in entity appeared to have become characteristic of the semi-vernacular location garden in general and Batho's topiary gardens in particular. A garden and yard without a hedge or at least a fence around it was considered unacceptable by some location residents. Importantly, topiary – whether in the form of clipped hedges or standard ('lollipop'-shaped) trees – was the patrician element which influenced the style of Batho's gardens and essentially defined their semi-vernacular character. As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, English-style topiary became indigenised or Africanised in Batho's gardens.¹⁰² While vegetables and crops, such as maize, were still an important aspect of many of Batho's gardens, it seems as though the emphasis on aesthetics became stronger. *Therefore, it is argued that a transitioning process from food-and-ornamental gardens to purely ornamental gardens was triggered and that the character of the semi-vernacular location garden was changing.*

Topiary was not the only characteristically English (British) garden feature that had been transferred from the white residents' gardens to Batho's gardens. Due to the influence of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing, other typical English elements also found their way into Batho's gardens, including flowerbeds edged with overlapping bricks and fashionable decorative elements such as metal garden arches and garden benches. The other typical English element which featured prominently in Batho's gardens was, of course, the choice of plants and flowers. Typical 'English' flowering plants, such as hollyhocks, foxgloves, dahlias, lavender and roses, proliferated in some Batho gardens. This preference for 'English' plants and decorations was evident in the garden that had been laid out in the 1920s by the Batho blockman, Mr J.D. Mogaecho, and his wife, Emily. According to the Mogaechos' grandson, Mogrey Mogaecho (born 1969), the story of his grandparents' garden began in the late 1920s when the couple laid out a rather small front garden to complement their new verandah house on the corner of Moiloa Street and Choane Street in the Four-and-Six section of Batho. Emily was a passionate gardener who had shown an interest in gardening from a young age. Emily's mother, Susan Matsepe, also happened to be a keen

¹⁰² Du Bruyn, pp. 68-69.

gardener. The Mogaechos' garden displayed characteristics of a typical English-style garden, complete with clipped hedges, (Image 5/15) roses and a garden arch over the garden gate (Image 5/13). According to Mogrey, his grandmother befriended white English-speaking women in Bloemfontein and through them she developed a fondness for English gardens and, above all, roses.¹⁰³

As a staunch member of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Batho, Emily was active in the AME Church's women's league known as the Orangia Women's Manyano. The local AME Church had strong ties with the American Methodist Episcopal Church in the USA, and African-American members of the church often visited the Batho church. Emily also accompanied female African-American members of the church on boat trips to the USA. They sailed to America via England, where they visited public parks and gardens. Emily's visits to the English parks and gardens inspired her to expand the rose collection in her own garden. In addition to the roses, Emily's garden also boasted a clipped privet hedge, and some of the shrubs such as the oleanders (*Nerium oleander*) were clipped into perfectly round topiaries (Image 8/15). According to Mogrey, his grandmother's garden came to look increasingly like the English gardens she so admired. Emily's garden was, of course, not the only garden in Batho that looked like an English garden. Garden elements, such as garden paths, garden arches over garden gates, brick-edged flowerbeds, clipped edges, hedges and 'fedges' and, of course, all kinds of topiary, contributed to the evolution of a typical English-style topiary garden in Batho¹⁰⁴ (Image 8/16).

8.6 “Gardening and tree planting are encouraged”: the development of a gardening culture among Batho's residents (1918-1939)

Emilie Solomon's vivid impressions of the newly-laid-out Batho location and, specifically, her reference to “much healthy competition in building and gardening”¹⁰⁵ among residents, quoted in Chapter 5, needs to be revisited in this discussion of Batho's emerging gardening

¹⁰³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M. Mogaecho, Batho, 9.4.2013; Ms P. Mokgele, Bochabela, 16.6.2013; D. du Bruyn, “The story of a township garden: Mogrey's family re-collections”, Culna 68, November 2013, p. 34.*

¹⁰⁴ J. du Plessis, *A history of Christian missions in South Africa*, pp. 454-459; National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M. Mogaecho, Batho, 9.4.2013; Ms P. Mokgele, Bochabela, 16.6.2013; Du Bruyn, “The story of...”, p. 35.*

¹⁰⁵ E.J. Solomon, “Bloemfontein Native Location”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 19.8.1922, p. 3.

culture. Solomon's impressions, published in *Umteteli wa Bantu* in 1922, not only indicated the Batho residents' obvious *enthusiasm for gardening*, it also indicated the *existence of a budding gardening culture* in Batho. Importantly, her reference to 'much healthy competition' also supports the argument that the underlying gardening culture in Batho had developed to such an extent that it reached the point where gardeners were confident enough to compete with one another, albeit in a friendly manner. This 'competitive spirit', so to speak, which was evident barely four years after Batho's founding, also supports the argument that the gardening culture which existed in Waaihoek, and to a lesser extent in the other old locations, was transferred to Batho when the residents of the so-called 'condemned' locations relocated there.¹⁰⁶

More substantial evidence concerning the existence of an emerging gardening culture in Batho's early years was found in municipal records. In his annual report for 1922-1923, Bloemfontein's mayor noted that, judging from the attitudes and behaviour of Batho's residents, he was struck by the fact that "our natives have a keen civic pride in their location which makes for better, cleaner living".¹⁰⁷ This statement is significant since the reference to 'keen civic pride' indicates that Batho's residents have *taken a degree of ownership in their new location and, therefore, some responsibility for its beautification and maintenance*. Although Batho's plottolders did not own the plots on which their houses had been built, they did own the houses and, therefore, harboured a desire to beautify them by laying out gardens. Contrary to conventional wisdom, research has shown that a title deed or security of tenure is not necessarily a requirement for location residents to improve and stamp their individuality on their houses and domestic environments.¹⁰⁸ In his annual report for 1922-1923, the above-mentioned mayor also drew a direct parallel between the Batho residents' civic pride, their sense of ownership and the potential for 'cleaner' or more sanitary living.¹⁰⁹ By the same token, a parallel may also be drawn between civic pride and a desire to garden because, as previously argued, laying out gardens is rooted in a desire to improve one's

¹⁰⁶ These arguments are based on similar arguments raised by H.G. Plaatje and R. Ginsburg. H.G. Plaatje, "Natives in urban areas: the brighter side for the African", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 13.1.1934, p. 4; Ginsburg, p. 135.

¹⁰⁷ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1922-1923*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Ginsburg, pp. 132-133; F.J. Wepener, "Psychological approach" in P.H. Connell *et al.*, *Native housing: a collective thesis*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁹ FSPA: *MBL 3/1/19, Mayor's minute 1922-1923*, p. 8.

immediate living environment.¹¹⁰ It seems as though a desire for gardening had taken firm root among certain segments of Batho's residents by the mid-1920s. For example, in 1925, the residents of Lovedale Road officially asked the council for permission to "extend the frontage of their stands by 9 ft.",¹¹¹ evidently to secure a larger space for their front gardens. This request was granted despite the fact that the width of the sidewalks was reduced considerably as a result.¹¹²

It is argued that the expressed desire for gardening that was noticeable among certain segments of Batho's residents during the mid-1920s may be interpreted as evidence of a gardening culture that was beginning to take root in Batho. This was particularly noticeable among the "better class natives",¹¹³ to quote Bishop Walter Carey.¹¹⁴ Bishop Carey, who at that stage was also President of the Bantu Young Men's Christian Association (hereafter YMCA), was actively involved in Batho on both spiritual and social levels. Many Batho men also happened to be members of the YMCA. During a meeting with the Native Affairs Committee, Bishop Carey argued that the "better class natives were anxious to show not only for their own uplifting, but for all their kindred Bantus, that they were capable of self-help."¹¹⁵ Apart from a desire to show their ability to erect fine houses and improve their standard of living, this class of location resident desired to show that 'self-help' also meant their ability to lay out fine gardens. Many of the desires and aspirations of this class of location resident related to the desire to display a certain level of civilisation. As explained earlier, there existed in the public opinion a close link between a person's perceived level of civilisation and a desire to garden and the ability to lay out gardens.

It must also be taken into account that it was not only the location residents who had a desire to garden and to express their ability to do so. Influential individuals, such as Bishop Carey, key municipal officials, including the Superintendent of Locations, Town Clerk, Location Medical Practitioner and, of course, some councillors also understood the need for a gardening culture to develop in Batho. During the 1920s and 1930s, it was widely

¹¹⁰ T.S. Somerville, "Our first garden city", *The Outspan* 2(38), 18.11.1927, p. 43; *The Friend*, 12.9.1932, p. 4.

¹¹¹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/8, *Report of Superintendent of Locations, June & July 1925*, 1.8.1925, p. 4.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/8, *Minutes of special meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 9.9.1925, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ For more information on Bishop Carey, see Chapter 5.

¹¹⁵ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/8, *Minutes of special meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 9.9.1925, p. 1.

acknowledged that the immediate environment had much to do with the general conduct of the people living in a particular area, such as the Union's segregated locations.¹¹⁶ In order to create a positive environment in Batho, Bishop Carey and others either directly or indirectly voiced their desire for a gardening culture to develop among Bloemfontein's location residents. For example, in a letter to the mayor, the Town Clerk, Mr J.P. Logan, argued that "it paid the Europeans for the Natives to have sanitary homes – hygienic surroundings [read gardens] – good water supplies – sanitation – recreation grounds etc."¹¹⁷ In other words, it was reasoned that Bloemfontein's white residents would also benefit if a gardening culture developed in Batho because it would ultimately lead to a sanitary location and healthy location residents which, in turn, meant healthy domestic servants and labourers.¹¹⁸

It must be stressed that the desire on the part of Bloemfontein's white residents for a gardening culture to develop among location residents was not always as noble as it appeared to have been. For example, the issue of a separate public park for location residents and the arguments raised in favour of such a park¹¹⁹ should not be viewed in isolation. The white residents' desire for a gardening culture to develop among location residents should be considered in close relation to the development of a public park in Batho because, to quote Councillor Franklin, the objective of the park was to "encourage the natives away from the parks in town".¹²⁰ Similarly, a gardening culture among Batho's residents would have turned their focus to Batho's beautification and their own location gardens instead of the gardens and parks reserved for Bloemfontein's white residents. Thus, it is argued that the encouragement of a gardening culture in Batho was also meant to encourage the attention of residents away from the public parks and gardens that were no longer available for them to enjoy.

¹¹⁶ H.S. Msimang, "Native locations", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 1.10.1921, p. 2. See also *The Friend*, 10.7.1931, p. 6; 12.9.1932, p. 4; 31.12.1936, p. 8; Cooper, p. 123.

¹¹⁷ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/8, *Letter from J.P. Logan, Town Clerk, to Dr M.J. Steyn, His Worship the Mayor*, 14.9.1925, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ For more information, see Chapter 5.

¹²⁰ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/13, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 17.8.1927, p. 3a.

8.6.1 “Competition in the growing of vegetables is keener”: Batho’s market-gardening culture

In his annual report on locations for 1925-1926, Cooper stated that “gardening and tree planting are encouraged”¹²¹ among Batho’s residents. Cooper had good reason to encourage such efforts because he observed that “*competition in the growing of vegetables is keener, and gradually replacing the proverbial mealie.*”¹²² His reference to competition being keener between Batho’s gardeners is an indication of the existence of a growing and dynamic gardening culture among gardeners. In addition, Cooper’s observation confirms Emilie Solomon’s impression of the existence of a healthy competitive spirit among residents during her visit to Batho in 1922. Clearly, Cooper saw an opportunity to make the most of the enthusiasm and competitive spirit present among Batho’s gardeners at that time. The new fresh produce market established in Batho’s Fort Hare Road in 1929 did much to bolster Batho’s market-gardening culture. In 1929, Cooper reported that Batho’s market-gardeners were trying to earn an honest living by the sale of their produce, which, in the majority of cases, was “excellent in quality.”¹²³

It is apparent that Batho’s allocated allotment gardens had not only been fully utilised by the location’s market-gardeners but that the market-gardeners themselves had become skilled in the art of vegetable growing. This trend also supports the argument that many Batho gardeners *moved beyond the traditional African notion of subsistence farming and horticulture* by embracing market-gardening. In addition to the market-gardeners’ own efforts, credit is also due to the Garden Committee appointed during the late 1920s. This Committee, which consisted of municipal officers and members of the Native Advisory Board, was, among others, responsible for supervising the allocation of allotments to residents. The Garden Committee was also involved in other gardening-related initiatives, including the organising of garden competitions, which will be discussed shortly. It is argued that the Committee contributed to the successful establishment of a market-gardening culture in Batho towards the end of the 1920s and early 1930s.¹²⁴

¹²¹ HP: AD 1765, *Yearly report on locations 1925-1926*, p. 2.

¹²² *Ibid.* (Own emphasis)

¹²³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/16, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 24.7.1929, p. 4.

¹²⁴ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/25, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 6.12.1934, p. 1; Du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, pp. 67-68.

Cooper considered it important that Batho's gardening culture, including its market-gardening culture, not only continued to strengthen but also influenced those residents who did not show a natural interest in gardening. Furthermore, he was adamant that Batho's gardening culture should be based on sound horticultural knowledge. Although this was specifically applicable to vegetable gardening, ornamental gardening was not excluded. In order to raise the standard of gardening in Batho, Cooper and his colleagues, who were interested in Batho's well-being, saw the need for the appointment of a full-time black gardening instructor who could equip Batho's residents with horticultural knowledge. In his monthly report for September 1930, Cooper reported that Ms M.S. Moikangoa,¹²⁵ a trained gardening expert who held a diploma in horticulture, was officially tasked with providing Batho's plotters with gardening know-how and advice. An amount of £1.5 per month was approved to cover her expenses, including the purchasing of garden seed.¹²⁶ It appears as though Moikangoa achieved a measure of success among Batho's residents because not long after her appointment, the cultivation of vegetables and market-gardening in particular had expanded significantly.¹²⁷ It is argued that her efforts gave further impetus to the enthusiasm for vegetable gardening triggered by the opening of Batho's new fresh produce market the previous year (1929).¹²⁸

8.6.2 “The best gardens in the locations”: garden competitions in Batho

Batho's reputation as a model location, which also happened to be a garden location, attracted the interest of people from across the Union, most notably mayors and other senior municipal officials. Some of them paid Bloemfontein a visit because they wanted to see the model location for themselves. At the same time, some local individuals concerned with Batho's well-being realised that in order to persuade its residents to lay out gardens to, among others, make the location attractive for residents and visitors alike, encouragement in the form of garden competitions was necessary. Ironically, Batho's first garden competition was not initiated by a local individual but by a distinguished visitor, namely Mr Hardy, the

¹²⁵ Ms Moikangoa's biographical details could not be obtained.

¹²⁶ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/18, Monthly report of Native Administration Department for September 1930, s.a.*, p. 3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ For more information on Batho's market, see Chapter 5.

Mayor of Pietermaritzburg. Hardy, who visited Batho in 1926, was so inspired by the new location and its gardens that he offered prize money to the value of £1.1 for “the best kept garden in the location.”¹²⁹ It was not all praise, though, because Hardy also criticised the poor condition of Batho’s streets,¹³⁰ which serves as a reminder that not everything about the model location was praiseworthy and that both the negative and positive traits should always be considered within the applicable context.

Batho’s gardeners responded positively to Hardy’s initiative and, the following year, the Location Medical Practitioner, Dr J. Lovius, announced another garden competition. This competition appeared to have been better organised than the previous one mainly because Lovius directly involved Batho’s blockmen in his project. The blockmen, who had been requested to “urge competitors to call for seeds as soon as possible”,¹³¹ had since then played an important role in the success of Batho’s garden competitions by encouraging residents to participate. In addition to floating trophies, prize money became a lucrative drawing card for residents to participate in such competitions. Gustav Baumann¹³² enthusiastically supported Lovius’ initiative by donating £1.1 as prize money.¹³³

Despite the initial enthusiasm for garden competitions, it appears as though the fervour for such competitions was not shared by all of Batho’s gardeners. It was decided that the competition initiated by Lovius would be an annual one and Councillor Franklin managed to secure the council’s support for this project. He had no difficulty in obtaining the necessary support since he already had the buy-in of key municipal officials. Franklin attempted to make the competition more lucrative by offering £5 for “the best garden in the Location”.¹³⁴ Unfortunately, the drought conditions which gripped Bloemfontein and much of the Orange Free State at the beginning of 1928 dampened enthusiasm for gardening and garden competitions. Consequently, Cooper reported that gardening had been disappointing in Batho and Bochabela owing to the severe drought conditions. He also mentioned a “lack of interest”¹³⁵ but it is unclear as to whether it was the result of the drought or general apathy

¹²⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/9, Report of Superintendent of Locations, January 1926*, 2.2.1926, p. 1.

¹³⁰ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/9, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 29.1.1926, p. 1.

¹³¹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/12, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 15.2.1927, p. 1.

¹³² For more information on Baumann, see Chapter 7.

¹³³ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/12, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 15.2.1927, p. 1.

¹³⁴ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/14, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 15.3.1928, p. 9.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

which had set in among certain gardeners. Did Batho's gardeners perhaps suspect ulterior motives, considering the council's recent efforts to declare Bloemfontein's public parks off-limits to black people? It is important to emphasise the fact that attempts to develop a gardening culture in Batho were not without their frustrations and setbacks. Therefore, it is vital to guard against the impression that the interest in gardening among location residents, including the middle-class or so-called "educated and advanced Natives",¹³⁶ as Cooper referred to them, was enthusiastic and widespread at all times.

The council and, specifically, Cooper, did not allow droughts and dampened enthusiasm to get the better of their efforts to encourage gardening in the locations by means of garden competitions. It is important to mention 'locations' since Bochabela was also included in these efforts. Thanks to good rains, the prospects for gardeners looked more promising at the start of the 1928-1929 gardening season. In October 1928, Cooper announced the "principal points"¹³⁷ which had to be observed concerning the judging and awarding of prizes for the most attractive location gardens. Apart from general layout, neatness and overall quality of the plants, creativity scored high points. It is assumed that the prevalence of original topiary creations in gardens was taken into account during the judging. The mentioned Garden Committee, chaired by the Assistant Superintendent of Locations, Mr R.N. Brits, ensured that everything was in place for the proposed judging of gardens scheduled for January and February the following year. One of the Committee's responsibilities was to decide whether prizes were to be awarded to both ornamental (flower) gardens and vegetable gardens, or ornamental gardens only.¹³⁸

Apparently, the judging of the gardens scheduled for January and February 1929 never took place because in September 1929, Cooper announced the launch of a new garden competition. Members of the Native Advisory Board were officially informed that prizes had been offered for "the best gardens in the locations".¹³⁹ Cooper lamented the fact that the garden competition that had been scheduled for January and February never materialised "for one reason and another"¹⁴⁰ and, consequently, had to be postponed. Sensing the need to

¹³⁶ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/21, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1931-1932*, 1.5.1932, p. 2.

¹³⁷ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/15, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 30.10.1928, p. 2.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/17, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 11.9.1929, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

rejuvenate the location residents' interest in gardening, Cooper felt "it was now time that something was done in the matter".¹⁴¹ The Garden Committee, still chaired by Brits and assisted by members of the Native Advisory Board, was officially tasked with organising the new competition. The Committee was also responsible for compiling rules and regulations for the competition based on Cooper's mentioned 'principal points'. It was decided that gardeners could enter their gardens in two categories, namely a category for flower or ornamental gardens and a category for vegetable gardens. It appears as though this initiative succeeded in injecting new enthusiasm into Batho's gardeners and, as a result, they put in extra effort with their spring and summer gardens. In the process, Cooper's efforts not only reinforced Batho's gardening culture but also boosted a similar culture in the neighbouring Bochabela. Batho's and Bochabela's gardening culture was about to receive yet another boost, this time due to developments in Britain.¹⁴²

Although the political undercurrents of the volatile 1930s somewhat dampened enthusiasm for the British monarchy among certain sectors of South African society, the coronation of George VI (1895-1952) on 12 May 1937 did not fail to capture the imaginations of most white and black South Africans. Bloemfontein was no exception and the still predominantly English-speaking city council rose to the occasion. The coronation celebrations organised for Bloemfontein also involved the location residents who, it was felt, had to be pragmatically reminded that they were still subjects of the British Crown.¹⁴³ Apart from the presentation of coronation medals to the locations' school learners, the council decided to introduce a Coronation Cup for ploholders whose plots were in "the best condition as regards cleanliness, upkeep of gardens and appearances and condition generally."¹⁴⁴ The council was so keen on this initiative that its members decided to present not one but three Coronation Cups as floating trophies to be awarded annually.¹⁴⁵ This gesture not only subtly reinforced British cultural influence in Batho, it also happened to be an important stimulus for Batho's gardening culture. Batho's gardening culture certainly needed this boost because

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/28, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 3.3.1937, p. 1; MBL 1/2/4/1/28, *Report of Manager of Native Administration Department, January 1937*, 12.2.1937, pp. 3-4; *The Friend*, 13.5.1937, p. 6; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 22.5.1937, p. 5.

¹⁴⁴ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/28, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 3.3.1937, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/28, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 10.5.1937, p. 1; MBL 1/2/4/1/28, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 3.3.1937, p. 1.

it was stagnating. The stagnation was mainly caused by the harmful impact of economic hardship, unemployment and negative social trends, including hooliganism, gangsterism, prostitution, alcoholism and juvenile delinquency, which had beset Bloemfontein's and many of the Union's locations during the 1930s.¹⁴⁶

8.6.3 “Trees which they would look upon as their own”: tree-planting competitions in Batho

In addition to garden competitions, tree-planting competitions were also initiated. In 1921, the first such competition was announced not long after the then Superintendent of Locations, Mr G.P. Cook, requested Batho's residents to “get their ground ready”¹⁴⁷ for tree-planting. Councillor D. Urquhart was asked to judge the competition and award the prizes, which had been sponsored by the Native Affairs Committee, to the trees that were in the best condition.¹⁴⁸ Since then trees were planted on an unprecedented scale. However, by the mid-1930s, these efforts had lost steam. In an attempt to revive tree-planting, Councillor G. Smit suggested a tree-planting competition to encourage the residents of Batho and Bochemela “to beautify their homes and the locations by the planting of trees in their gardens”.¹⁴⁹ Smit argued that such competitions were the ideal mechanisms to inspire location residents to take pride in *their* trees, in other words, “trees which they would look upon as their own.”¹⁵⁰ Smit's emphasis on location residents taking ownership of the trees they had planted is important for an understanding of the development of Batho's gardening culture. The argument concerning ‘taking ownership’ needs to be qualified, though, since Smit's sentiments were underpinned by a contradiction. On the one hand, Batho's gardeners were encouraged to take ownership of the trees and plants in their gardens but, on the other, the soil in which they grew belonged to the municipality.¹⁵¹ Selope-Thema illustrated this

¹⁴⁶ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/18, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 9.10.1930, p. 1a; *MBL 1/2/4/1/20, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 24.11.1931, pp. 2-5; *MBL 1/2/4/1/21, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 23.6.1932, pp. 1-2; *MBL 1/2/4/1/23, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 5.12.1933, pp. 2-3; Wepener, p. 85.

¹⁴⁷ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/5, Letter from G.P. Cook, Superintendent of Locations, to G. Golds Esq., Acting Town Clerk*, 20.9.1921, p. 2.

¹⁴⁸ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/5, Minutes of meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 24.10.1921, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ *The Friend*, 31.8.1936, p. 8. See also FSPA: *MBL 1/1/1/34, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Town Council*, 28.8.1936, p. 453.

¹⁵⁰ FSPA: *MBL 1/1/1/34, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Town Council*, 28.8.1936, p. 453.

¹⁵¹ R.V. Selope-Thema, “Urban natives’ title to land”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 24.2.1923, p. 4; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 24.5.1924, p. 2; 29.10.1938, p. 6.

contradiction by means of an apt metaphor: “Natives in the Free State may be likened to the birds which are at the mercy of the people who own the trees on [sic] which they live. The birds may claim the trees to be their natural homes, but they have no security. Without their knowledge and consent the trees with their nests can be cut down and destroyed.”¹⁵²

It is argued that despite the development and subsequent flourishing of a gardening culture in Batho, the issue of ownership and the lack thereof negatively affected Batho’s gardeners’ *sense of ownership of the trees and plants* in the location. Due to a compromised sense of ownership, the trees in the locations were not always properly looked after. Cooper lamented the spirit of apathy which had apparently set in and expressed his concern that many of the trees that had been planted in Batho and Bochabela perished because of neglect. His criticism was specifically aimed at the blockmen who, he felt, had to take the lead and “interest themselves in this matter and encourage standholders to water these trees regularly to prevent them dying.”¹⁵³ Cooper reminded the blockmen that “tree planting was a great asset and improved the appearance of the Locations.”¹⁵⁴ For Cooper, the planting of trees by Batho’s residents was an important part of his vision of Batho as a garden location and he did not grow weary of encouraging them to persist with it. By the end of the 1930s, Cooper could still report that substantial numbers of trees were planted each year to achieve the ultimate goal, namely “to make the location resemble a park”.¹⁵⁵

8.6.4 “Plant in rows 3 feet apart”: gardening columns and gardening articles

Apart from the gardening columns which appeared in *The Friend* during the 1920s and 1930s,¹⁵⁶ Batho’s gardeners also had access to the gardening columns and other gardening information published in *Umteteli wa Bantu*. During the 1920s, the paper published the popular *Farm and Garden* column written by Mr S.G. Butler, at that time principal of the Tsolo School of Agriculture¹⁵⁷ in the Eastern Cape. Butler’s columns covered a wide variety of horticultural and agricultural topics, including vegetable gardening and the ever-popular

¹⁵² R.V. Selope-Thema, “Homeless wanderers”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 22.10.1927, p. 3.

¹⁵³ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/29, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 2.9.1937, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/32, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 8.5.1939, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ For more information, see Chapter 4.

¹⁵⁷ For more information, see Chapter 6.

maize patch. A surprising variety of vegetables, including marrows (*Cucurbita pepo*), turnips (*Brassica rapa*), Brussels sprouts (*Brassica oleracea*) and Jerusalem artichokes (*Helianthus tuberosus*), were discussed and, importantly, it was advised that vegetables had to be planted or sown in rows.¹⁵⁸ Concerning the maize patch, readers were instructed to “plant in rows 3 feet apart with the seeds at least 12 inches apart in the rows.”¹⁵⁹ The general tendency of moving away from the traditional broadcasting of seed to the planting or sowing of seed in rows was reinforced among black gardeners through these and other gardening columns. It is thus argued that gardening columns played an important role in strengthening the general preference for regimented planting and a formal approach to garden layout, whether a vegetable garden, a maize patch or an ornamental garden. Also noteworthy is the fact that the influence of the renowned Tsolo School of Agriculture was not limited to the students who studied at this institution but instead reached far beyond.

Apart from the gardening columns, *Umteteli wa Bantu* also published a variety of gardening articles, many of which were written by black authors. A range of topics were covered, including planting a backyard kitchen garden and reserving a separate flowerbed in the ornamental garden for the growing of flowers meant for cutting. Once again, the formal garden layout was promoted by advising gardeners to plant seed in rows and at equal intervals.¹⁶⁰ Considering the extent of *Umteteli wa Bantu*'s readership, it is argued that the gardening columns and gardening articles contributed to the development of a gardening culture in the Union's locations,¹⁶¹ including in Batho, where the paper was widely read. Furthermore, it is reasoned that the gardening columns and gardening articles also served as barometers of the general state of black people's gardening culture, considering the type and level of information published. For example, articles such as “Hints on cutting flowers”¹⁶² and “How to treat flowers”¹⁶³ were not uncommon.

To conclude this discussion, two insightful statements made by black writers concerning the nation-wide state of black people's gardening culture in the 1930s deserve to be quoted. In

¹⁵⁸ S.G. Butler, “Farm and Garden: January practice”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 25.12.1926, pp. 3-4; S.G. Butler, “Farm and Garden: February practice”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 19.2.1927, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹ S.G. Butler, “Farm and Garden: December practice”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 27.11.1926, p. 4.

¹⁶⁰ G.G. Copiso, “Vegetable gardening”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 29.10.1938, p. 10.

¹⁶¹ Plaatje, p. 4.

¹⁶² *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 8.10.1938, p. 10.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 8.7.1939, pp. 6, 11.

1934, Halley Plaatje wrote that in the Union's locations "housewives vie with one another in a most friendly manner for the beautification of their homes and gardens"¹⁶⁴ and E.W. Msimang, one of *Umteteli wa Bantu's* revered garden writers, stated in a gardening article published in 1939 that "the African woman has reached a stage when she realises the part played by the flower garden in improving the aspect of her premises."¹⁶⁵ The housewives to which Plaatje referred were not only competitive but also well-informed gardeners and the flower garden to which Msimang referred was typically formally laid-out with hedges and edges, as illustrated by the photograph of a Victorian-style Orlando township garden published in *Umteteli wa Bantu* in 1938 (Image 8/17).

8.6.5 "How to make home life conducive to happiness and moral uplift": societies and clubs in Batho

During the 1920s and 1930s, many Batho residents' social lives were characterised by the role played by various civil societies and social clubs. Most of these societies and clubs were introduced and launched by white people who were concerned about the general welfare of location residents. Although most of these societies and clubs were not directly involved in gardening, some of them contributed in some way or another to the strengthening of Batho's gardening culture. Societies and clubs that had been active in Batho included the Church Lads' Brigade, the Independent Order of True Templars (IOTT) and the already-mentioned YMCA. The Wayfarers' Association and the Pathfinders catered to the needs of the school-going youth.¹⁶⁶ Many societies and clubs with religious or semi-religious undertones were overseen by local churches and church leaders. Also noteworthy is the Bloemfontein Bantu Social Institute (BSI), which had its own recreation facilities on the corner of African Road and Rubusana Street in Sports. The BSI's main objective was "to help the Bantu to devote their leisure time to the best advantage in healthful recreation and good citizenship".¹⁶⁷ The main objectives of the other societies and clubs were similar to that of the BSI's.

¹⁶⁴ Plaatje, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ E.W. Msimang, "Flowers in winter and spring: some timely hints", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 25.3.1939, p. 7.

¹⁶⁶ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/16, *Annual report of Superintendent of Locations 1928-1929*, 4.4.1929, p. 3; MBL 1/2/4/1/21, *Annual report of Native Administration Department 1931-1932*, 1.5.1932, p. 6.

¹⁶⁷ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/27, *Report of Manager of Native Administration Department, October 1936: Annexure D*, 7.11.1936, p. 1.

In a leading article, *Umteteli wa Bantu* lauded the Bloemfontein council for providing Batho with, among others, a YMCA building and a recreation hall. Importantly, the paper credited the council and societies such as the YMCA for “teaching the Natives how best to live, how to spend their leisure hours and how to make home life conducive to happiness and moral uplift.”¹⁶⁸ Needless to say, teaching location residents how to spend their leisure hours and improve their home life often involved outdoor activities, of which ornamental and vegetable gardening formed part.¹⁶⁹ Women’s clubs, such as the Bloemfontein Bantu Women’s Club, the Bantu Ladies Club and the Bloemfontein African Home Improvement Society presented lectures on gardening-related topics, including vegetable gardening and, for example, the “food values of vegetables”.¹⁷⁰ The last-mentioned society’s enthusiastic secretary was none other than Batho’s garden expert, Ms Moikangoa. The society’s stated objective was to teach black women “the art of making their homes pleasant and attractive”.¹⁷¹

The women’s clubs counted among its members some influential local white women, including Ms N.J. Marquard, Ms L. Marquard, Ms M.H. Ensor, Ms J. Lovius and Ms E. Earl, whose knowledge of a wide range of subjects undoubtedly benefited the black members.¹⁷² Most church denominations also had their own women’s guilds or so-called Manyanos which involved their members in learning activities. The AME Church’s women’s league led by the well-known Batho flower artist and gardener, Emily Mogaecho, was particularly active in this regard.¹⁷³ With an expressed interest in “Bantu social upliftment”¹⁷⁴ these women’s clubs took themselves rather seriously and they considered it important that their members “learn something useful”,¹⁷⁵ such as gardening. Thus, it is argued that Batho’s civil societies and social clubs played no insignificant role in the promotion and development of a gardening culture in Batho.

¹⁶⁸ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 16.7.1927, p. 2.

¹⁶⁹ For arguments concerning the importance of recreation and outdoor activities for location residents, see *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 20.12.1924, p. 2; 10.7.1926, p. 2; *The Friend*, 12.9.1932, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 26.9.1939, p. 6.

¹⁷¹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/32, Report of Manager of Native Administration Department, September 1939: Annexures D, E & F, s.a.*, pp. 10-12.

¹⁷² *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 25.5.1935, p. 3; 15.6.1935, p. 6; 1.2.1936, p. 5; 26.9.1939, p. 6.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 22.2.1936, p. 3; 12.11.1938, p. 6; Du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, p. 68; Du Bruyn, “The story of...”, p. 34.

¹⁷⁴ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 22.2.1936, p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

8.7 Generational gardening in Batho

In this last section of the chapter, the focus shifts to yet another aspect of Batho's gardening culture, namely the transfer of a culture of gardening from one generation to the next. This process involves the transfer of gardening knowledge and skills in the form of oral tradition as an intangible cultural product from one generation of Batho gardeners to the next.¹⁷⁶ For the purpose of the discussion, this inter-generational transfer process may be called 'generational gardening'. One of the strongest – if not the strongest – indicators of the prevalence of an enduring gardening culture in Batho is the phenomenon of generational gardening. Generational gardening not only involved the transfer of a gardening culture and gardening knowledge from one generation to the next but also the *transfer of a topiary culture*. This phenomenon explains why the art of topiary not only survived in Batho but also flourished there. Batho's gardeners who worked as garden labourers in white people's gardens not only transferred the gardening knowledge and skills they had learnt from their white employers to Batho, they also took the basics of a garden art they saw in white people's gardens and turned it into something uniquely their own. This process lies at the heart of the development and evolution of topiary into a semi-vernacular garden art and garden style. The basic clipped edges and hedges which proliferated in the white residents' gardens were turned into all kinds of creative designs seldom or ever seen in the white people's gardens. This process, which happened over the course of almost a century, gave birth to the phenomenon which may be called 'township topiary'.

Oral history interviews conducted with Batho's gardeners not only revealed a close-knit community of gardeners but also a well-connected one. Over many years, Batho's community of gardeners, held together by family and friendship ties, had developed a number of networks, ranging from financial support networks to plant exchange networks. Importantly, these relations and networks were held together by successive generations of gardener families who considered the transfer of gardening knowledge and skills, including knowledge and skills related to the art of topiary, as important. Not all generations of a family necessarily lived in Batho all their lives. Some grew up elsewhere and moved to Batho later, while others grew up in Batho and moved away later. The important point is that the

¹⁷⁶ For more information on oral tradition as an intangible cultural product, see Chapter 1 and Chapter 9.

combined gardening knowledge and skills of generations benefited Batho gardeners over a long period of time. A good example of a Batho family that successfully passed on gardening knowledge and skills across generations is the family of Eva Mela (born 1957). According to Mela, her garden in Mothuba Street in Batho's Sports section is the culmination of five generations' worth of gardening knowledge. Mela's parents, Booi and Liesbet Renoster, both loved gardening. Mela grew up on a smallholding in Bainsvlei near Bloemfontein where both of her parents worked for the owner, Mr Niemand. Booi grew up on a farm in the southern Orange Free State where his parents, Johannes and Lena Renoster, both worked for the farmer. Booi's grandparents, Piet and Sara Renoster, worked for the same farmer and also stayed on the farm.¹⁷⁷

According to Booi, both his father and grandfather loved gardening and he believed that he had received his 'gardening genes' from them. Booi remembered that his father, Johannes, had taught him how to garden. Johannes made a vegetable garden and his wife, Lena, made a flower garden at their small dwelling on the farm. The gardens were very simple with rectangular vegetable beds and flowerbeds. Later, Booi left the farm to work for Mr Niemand on his Bainsvlei smallholding. Booi never attended school, but that did not mean that he was not a knowledgeable person. Through the years, he kept reminding himself that he knew a great deal about gardening. Thanks to his knowledge of gardening, Booi was employed as a gardener in Mr Niemand's garden. Apart from maintaining his employer's garden, he also maintained a garden at his dwelling on the smallholding. This garden actually consisted of two gardens, namely a flower garden in front of the house and a vegetable garden behind the house. The flower garden boasted many varieties of roses which benefited from the copious quantities of borehole water on the smallholding. Booi was convinced that his own success as a gardener may have been attributed to the gardening know-how he had acquired from his father and, indirectly, his grandfather. Booi remembered that his father had taught him that flower and vegetable seed should first be sown in seedling trays and, when the seedlings reached a certain height, they were to be replanted in the vegetable and flowerbeds. Another piece of advice was that a garden should be watered either early in the morning or late in the

¹⁷⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms E.K. Mela, Batho, 3.11.2014; Mr B. Renoster, Batho, 3.11.2014.*

afternoon, never during the day. Booi also recalled that during periods of drought, his father always reminded him: “Blomme is net vir die mooigeit maar groente vir eet.”¹⁷⁸

After Booi had worked for Mr Niemand for twenty years, he moved to Batho to stay with his other daughter (Mela’s sister), who also lives in Mothuba Street. Since he had come to Batho, Booi’s gardening expertise benefited both daughters, but more so Mela, since she is the more passionate gardener of the two. Booi admitted that there was one thing he had to learn following his arrival in Batho, namely, how to clip a hedge. None other than Mela’s two sons, in other words, his grandsons, taught Booi the art of clipping. According to Mela, her deceased husband, Petrus Mela, planted a hedge in front of their house years ago, mainly to serve as a security hedge (Image 8/18). Mothuba Street is situated near the Cape Town-Johannesburg railway track and the area has become a magnet for criminals who use the pedestrian bridge as a look-out point. To prevent criminals from hiding behind it, the bottom of the hedge was made see-through. Petrus taught both of his sons, Godfrey and Petrus junior, how to clip the hedge to perfection and they, in turn, taught their grandfather. Reflecting on her family and their love for gardening, Eva is proud that she and her sons continued the Renoster family’s gardening tradition in their Batho garden. Not only had this gardening tradition been passed on through five generations but it had come a long way from a farm in the southern Free State to a smallholding in Bainsvlei and, eventually, to Batho.¹⁷⁹

Keabecoe Zim (born 1962) inherited a house and a handsome garden in Hamilton Road in the Sports section of Batho from her deceased parents, Ephraim and Nompiti Molale. Nompiti was a passionate gardener and responsible for the laying out and maintenance of the garden. “My father also helped, but he mostly watered the garden”,¹⁸⁰ Zim remembered. According to Zim, her mother’s family was very interested in gardening and her mother’s brother, Mavuso Zim, had a beautiful garden in Mangaung’s Phahameng Township. After Nompiti had laid out the garden, one of the first things she planted was a privet hedge. According to Keabecoe, her mother was fond of hedges. She had planted the hedge herself

¹⁷⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr B. Renoster, Batho, 3.11.2014.* “Flowers are only planted for their beauty but vegetables are planted for eating.” (Free translation)

¹⁷⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms E.K. Mela, Batho, 3.11.2014; Mr B. Renoster, Batho, 3.11.2014.*

¹⁸⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms K.M. Zim, Batho, 28.10.2014.*

and was also the one who clipped it. Keabecoe recalled that her mother had obtained the small privet plants from Eric Lamb¹⁸¹ nursery in Bloemfontein. Eva Lamb (1925-2012), wife of nursery owner, Eric Lamb (1909-1980), recalled that black people visited the nursery in Voortrekker Street¹⁸² and asked for “praaivet”¹⁸³ plants. Eric Lamb and other Bloemfontein nurseries sold privet seedlings in trays.¹⁸⁴ Using the seedlings she had purchased, Nompiti planted the hedge during the mid-1970s when crime was not yet a problem in Batho. According to Keabecoe, the main reasons for planting hedges in those days were to keep out stray animals and to “keep the garden clean and tidy”.¹⁸⁵ Since then, however, circumstances in Batho have changed and, according to Keabecoe, security has become the main reason why gardeners plant hedges in front of their gardens.¹⁸⁶

Nompiti was very fond of flowers, such as roses and dahlias, which grew abundantly in her garden. Because of the abundant flowers and flowering shrubs and trees, such as oleander and pride-of-India, Nompiti’s garden was very attractive and well loved among friends and family members (Image 8/19). According to Keabecoe, Nompiti was very fond of children and was adamant that Batho’s younger generations had to be taught the value of gardens. Nompiti was always concerned about the township children who grew up in homes without gardens; therefore, she opened her garden to them. Nompiti loved to photograph visiting children in her garden and today Keabecoe still treasures a big collection of those photographs (Image 8/20). Keabecoe not only inherited her mother’s garden photographs but also her ‘gardening genes’. Nompiti made an effort to instil in Keabecoe an appreciation of and an interest in gardening from a young age. Today, Keabecoe cherishes the gardening knowledge her mother passed on to her. For Keabecoe, her garden had become a source of joy and peace. “My garden makes my mind thinking [sic] properly and makes me happy. When I’m sad I go to my garden and talk to my garden”,¹⁸⁷ Keabecoe confessed. Something that makes Keabecoe even happier is the fact that she can share her garden with others and,

¹⁸¹ For information on the history of Eric Lamb nursery, see D. du Bruyn, “Eric Lamb (1909-1980): Bloemfontein’s gentleman nurseryman”, *Culna* 66, November 2011, pp. 26-27.

¹⁸² Today known as Nelson Mandela Road.

¹⁸³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms E. Lamb, Bainsvlei, 31.1.2011.*

¹⁸⁴ Du Bruyn, “Eric Lamb (1909-1980)...”, p. 27.

¹⁸⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms K.M. Zim, Batho, 28.10.2014.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

at the same time, share her mother's gardening knowledge with them.¹⁸⁸ Based on Keabecoe Zim's and other Batho gardeners' experience, it is argued that generational gardening in Batho not only involved the transfer of gardening knowledge from one generation to the next within families, but also outside the family circle, such as the transfer of gardening knowledge to the younger generations, including small children, as in the case of Nompiti Molale.

Apart from the transfer and sharing of gardening knowledge, Batho's gardening culture was also characterised by the generous sharing of plant cuttings, slips and seeds. This also happened across generations and, therefore, this phenomenon may be considered an aspect of generational gardening. Consequently, similar plants could be found growing in the gardens of grandparents, parents and grandchildren. According to Patrick Ngatane (born 1974), almost all of the plants in his mother, Meisie Sedikelo's garden in Masenya Street in Sports, were obtained from other Batho gardeners, including family members (Image 8/21). Ngatane explained that it is common for Batho gardeners to exchange plants, bulbs and seeds. This happened to be an integral part of Batho's gardening culture and, through the years, extensive plant exchange networks had developed among the location's gardeners. Plants which were exchanged include dahlias, irises (*Iris spp.*), crinum lilies, geraniums (*Geranium spp.*), aloes (*Aloe spp.*), *plakkies* (*Cotyledon orbiculata*), various herb species and, of course, privet. In Meisie's garden, clipped privet hedges served as boundary hedges on both sides of the house. All of the original privet plants, which were clipped into hedges, had been obtained from other Batho gardeners. According to Ngatane, the hedges were conceived of by his deceased father, Sydney Sedikelo, who believed that good fences between neighbours were a necessity and, for many years, the densely-clipped privet hedges served this purpose.¹⁸⁹

Ngatane always watched Sydney working in the garden, especially when he clipped the hedges. When Ngatane went to school, Sydney went to work on the goldmines near Welkom in the northern Orange Free State. At the mines, Sydney contracted tuberculosis and eventually had to give up mining. In 1989, he returned to Bloemfontein where he took up a

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.D. Ngatane, Batho, 26.1.2015.*

position as gardener and caretaker at Sehunelo Secondary School in Batho. After Sydney's retirement in 1999, his health deteriorated and, sadly, he passed away in 2012. After his father's death, Ngatane lost interest in the hedges and left the privets to grow wild. Three of the privets survived and grew into fairly big trees (Image 8/22). For Ngatane, these trees are not only a silent reminder of his deceased father but they also bring him some consolation: "When I am looking at it, it is rehabilitating me inside."¹⁹⁰

8.8 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, it was explained that for a sophisticated garden art such as topiary to develop and flourish in a location environment, a gardening culture had to be in place. *The development of Batho's gardening culture, which had been influenced greatly by British culture, was stimulated by both a desire among certain location residents to lay out gardens and by the initiatives and encouragement of key individuals.* Garden competitions, tree-planting competitions, access to gardening information in the printed media and the activities of societies and clubs in Batho, all contributed to the development of a gardening culture in Batho. A strong gardening tradition and a critical mass of gardeners actively committed to gardening were important features of Batho's gardening culture. Added to this are the gardening knowledge and skills that had been passed down from one generation of Batho gardeners to the next. *Thus, it was the combined effect of various factors which stimulated the development of Batho's gardening culture to the extent that it gained a momentum of its own.* The appearance of the semi-vernacular location garden was not unaffected by Batho's developing gardening culture and related influences. *The semi-vernacular location garden completed the transitioning process from a food-only garden to a food-and-ornamental garden and, in some cases, started to transition from a food-and-ornamental garden to a purely ornamental garden. Batho's semi-vernacular topiary gardens are, of course, prime examples of the last-mentioned type of location garden.*

In the next and final chapter of the thesis, the focus will be solely on Batho's topiary gardens and the different types of 'township topiary'. It will be explained what exactly 'township topiary' is and why Batho's gardeners developed a preference for this semi-vernacular

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

garden style. Other issues that will be addressed include the challenges that Batho's gardeners as members of a dominated culture had to and still have to deal with concerning the maintenance of their topiary gardens, the influence of social problems, such as crime and poverty, on the gardens, the future of gardening in Batho and the gardeners' attachment to their gardens, to name a few. Finally, a detailed description and analysis of Batho's topiary gardens will be provided by using the Burden model as a classification system.

CHAPTER 9

BATHO'S SEMI-VERNACULAR GARDENS (2) (1918-1939): THE MAKING OF 'TOWNSHIP TOPIARY'

9.1 Introduction

The one important element which typifies Batho's semi-vernacular gardens is the occurrence of topiary. Since Batho's founding in 1918, topiary in all its myriad forms and styles has not only adorned but *defined* Batho's gardens, hence their description as *topiary gardens*. This final chapter of the thesis, which focuses on the making of 'township topiary', commences with a detailed discussion of the different types of so-called 'township topiary', a name given to Batho's Africanised version of a European garden art. The discussion focuses on the three main types of 'township topiary' and 'township topiary' gardens. Each form or style of topiary is illustrated by means of an appropriate photograph of a Batho garden. The focus then shifts to a discussion of Batho's topiary gardens as semi-vernacular gardens. This section, which should be considered in close relation to Chapter 2, explains why Batho's gardens are not only considered real gardens but also vernacular gardens and, to be specific, semi-vernacular gardens. Both the vernacular and patrician elements of a typical Batho garden are identified. An important part of this discussion is the classification of Batho's topiary gardens in terms of the Burden model's three axes.

The next section of the chapter discusses the influence of Batho's topiary gardens, garden style and gardening culture beyond its boundaries, particularly during the immediate post-World War II (hereafter also the War) period. The development of a similar garden style and gardening culture in Batho's neighbour, Bochabela, is investigated as well as factors and trends which hampered such development. Batho's presumed influence on national township planning trends, particularly the emphasis placed on gardens and gardening in the township environment, is also highlighted. This discussion is followed by a section which explores Batho's topiary gardens from the perspectives of the gardeners themselves. This section is entirely based on information collected by means of semi-structured oral history interviews conducted with Batho's gardeners. The information is arranged according to three main

themes related to the Batho gardeners' taste for topiary, the effect of crime on their gardens and their relationships with their gardens. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the future of Batho's topiary gardens, with special reference to current trends concerning garden design and layout, the current state of gardening in Batho and, finally, the major challenges with regard to Batho's topiary gardens according to Batho's gardeners themselves.

9.2 'Township topiary': an Africanised version of a European garden art

In Chapter 8, it was argued that topiary was the patrician element which influenced the style of Batho's gardens and, essentially, defined their semi-vernacular character. Although fundamentally European and a characteristic feature of traditional Dutch and British gardens for centuries, topiary became indigenised and Africanised in Batho's gardens. *This process happened over time and it is argued that since Batho's oldest gardens were first laid out during the 1920s and 1930s, topiary had been transformed into a style which may be termed 'township topiary'*. During the period 2008-2016, extensive fieldwork was done in Batho which involved the conducting of a survey of the properties which featured gardens. Of the approximately 900 formal residential erven in Batho (excluding informal settlements),¹ it is estimated that approximately 70%-75% feature front gardens of which a substantial number contain some form of topiary.² Based on the fieldwork and research conducted in Batho, a variety of topiary styles were identified and photographed in its gardens. These styles or types of topiary were compared with the categories, styles or types of classic European-style and, specifically, British-style topiary discussed in Chapter 3. On the basis of this comparison, 'township topiary' may be classified according to three main types, namely 'hedges', 'shapes' and a 'combination of hedges and shapes'.³ It is important to consider the description of each type and style of topiary in relation to the corresponding image. Due to the fact that the photographs were taken during the period 2008-2016, some of the examples of topiary and even the gardens of which they formed part may no longer exist.

¹ S. Cilliers Consulting Engineers Private Collection: *letter from S.P. Cilliers of S. Cilliers Consulting Engineers, Bloemfontein, to G. Deacon of Cube Architects, Bloemfontein, re Batho housing survey, 1.9.2009, p. 1.*

² During the survey, only the properties which featured prominent topiary gardens were selected for inclusion in this study. A comprehensive survey of all Batho properties which feature gardens may be considered by researchers for a potential future research project.

³ D. du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the history of the English-style gardens of Batho, Mangaung (1846-1948)", *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 27(3), December 2011, p. 69; D. du Bruyn, "A green and growing art: the topiary gardens of Batho", *Culna* 64, November 2009, pp. 6-7.

9.2.1 Types of ‘township topiary’

Category A: hedges

In Batho’s topiary gardens, all the hedge types discussed in Chapter 3 were identified, namely edges, hedges, fence-hedges (‘fedges’) and ‘walls’. *Edges* or *dwarf hedges* are less than one metre tall and are typically used to create borders around flowerbeds (Images 9/1 & 9/2) or planted on both sides of a garden path to emphasise symmetry in the front garden (Image 9/3). Compared to hedges, edges are much less prevalent in Batho’s gardens. *Hedges* are the most common type of topiary in Batho’s gardens and the height of the hedges varies between one and two metres (Images 9/4 & 9/5). Gardeners make an effort to ensure that hedges are precisely clipped and that the desired height is maintained constantly, whether by using measuring tapes, rulers, sticks, string or other creative means (Image 9/6). As Batho’s most common type of topiary, medium to tall hedges serve a number of practical and other purposes, including that of garden enclosures (Image 9/7); windbreaks for tender plants, such as seedlings, flowering annuals, perennials and roses (Image 9/8); supports for climbing vegetables, such as runner-beans and pumpkins (Image 9/9); ‘washing lines’ for drying clothes and linen; as well as hiding places for children playing hide-and-seek. Hedges are also used to indicate boundaries between neighbouring plots (Image 9/10) and to provide privacy for, among others, loose-standing toilets in backyards⁴ (Image 9/11).

Fence-hedges or so-called ‘*fedges*’ were not prevalent in Batho’s early gardens. However, in recent years, they have become increasingly common, mainly for security reasons and also to keep out beggars, loiterers and stray animals. ‘Fedges’ are formed when a metal or any other type of fence is erected in front of a clipped hedge (Image 9/12). No cases were found where the fence was erected behind the clipped hedge. The clipped hedge may either be approximately the same height as the fence (Image 9/13) or lower (Image 9/14). In some cases, sections of clipped hedge are combined with sections of fencing (Image 9/15). ‘*Walls*’, also considered ‘green architecture’, are essentially hedges left to grow very tall. In most cases, Batho’s ‘walls’ are between two and three metres tall and are created to serve as enclosures adjacent to houses or outbuildings (Image 9/16). Such enclosures are meant to

⁴ Du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, p. 70.

function as outdoor ‘rooms’ or, as is increasingly the case, are created for security and privacy purposes⁵ (Image 9/17).

It is important to note that not all hedges, ‘fedges’ and ‘walls’ in Batho are being clipped and maintained as they were in the past. Some are clipped only occasionally, including an attractive cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster spp.*) hedge (Image 9/18), while others are left to grow wild or even die due to neglect (Image 9/19). During a visit to the house in Batho’s Mooki Street where Paul Tsie⁶ grew up during the 1930s and 1940s, he lamented the neglected state of the privet hedges he had planted as a child. While the original house still stands, the garden is long gone and only the overgrown hedges serve as silent witnesses of a garden that had been obliterated by time⁷ (Image 9/20). Such neglected hedges are, of course, not unique in Batho and a range of factors, such as poverty, desperation, old age and drought have caused many hedges and, in fact, entire gardens to wither, be abandoned and, eventually, left to the care of the elements. In many cases, only the dead skeletons of shrubs that were once clipped hedges and other types of topiary may still be seen (Image 9/21).

Category B: shapes

In Batho’s topiary gardens, shapes represent the biggest variety of topiary by far. Either geometric or free-form, the following shapes were identified, namely blocks and planes, screens, arches, ‘cake stands’ and tiered shapes, standards or ‘lollipops’, spheres and domes, and, finally, living sculptures. With their flat surfaces and sharp corners, *blocks and planes* are not that common in Batho’s topiary gardens and, in most cases, such features were originally hedges. In some cases, blocks and planes, which are wider than the typical Batho hedge, do double duty as hedges, while in other cases, they are merely employed as garden accents or stand-alone features. Typically, the levels of these features vary for special effect (Image 9/22). *Screens* or hedges on stilts are even less common in Batho than blocks and planes. Batho’s screens are surprisingly reminiscent of British-style stilted and pleached screens, although much smaller in scale (Image 9/23). These screens are, in actual fact,

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ For more information on Tsie, see Chapter 6.

⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.P. Tsie, Batho, 6.11.2013.*

hedges with their bottom sections cleared of all leaves in order to prevent unwanted persons from hiding behind or under them. The fact that this style resembles British-style stilted and pleached screens is mere coincidence and not necessarily intentional. Another topiary feature which resembles British-style topiary, specifically the type associated with the classic English cottage garden, are *arches*. In Batho's gardens most arches are positioned over the front garden gate which, in turn, opens onto a garden path leading to a dwelling's front door. Arches are mostly metal frames covered with clipped privet (Image 9/24) or trained and trimmed climbing plants, such as rambling roses and ivy (Image 9/25). Arches employed to create transitions from one garden area to another are seldom found in Batho's gardens.

A popular topiary shape in Batho's gardens is the so-called '*cake stand*' and other *tiered shapes*. 'Cake stands' are shrubs cut into discs of various sizes layered on top of one another so that they resemble a cake stand (Images 9/26 & 9/27). Another version of this type is tiered shapes which do not necessarily resemble cake stands because of the size and shape of the tiers. Some tiers are ball-shaped (Image 9/28) while others are shaped to resemble squares and rectangles (Image 9/29). 'Cake stands' and tiered shapes were, in most cases, created to serve as focal points in Batho's gardens. Because of the manifold ways in which 'cake stands' and tiered topiary may be shaped, Batho's topiarists consider creating and maintaining them as an opportunity to display their creativity and clipping skills. A simpler version of the 'cake stand' and tiered shape is the classic *standard* or so-called '*lollipop*' shape. This shape and all its variations abound in Batho's gardens and it is argued that this type of topiary, in addition to the hedges, defines Batho's topiary gardens. These gardens often consist of a collection of standards clipped similarly, namely a shrub or small tree clipped into a rounded shape and the stems, multiple or single, stripped of all vegetation (Images 9/30 & 9/31). Whereas some standards are half-rounded (Image 9/32), others are oval-shaped and resemble bonsai (Image 9/33) or shaped in the form of a square or rectangle (Image 9/34). While standards and 'lollipops' had often been used as container plants in classic European and British topiary gardens and are still being used as such, this is not the case in Batho's gardens. In fact, any type of topiary planted in containers is seldom if ever seen in Batho's gardens.

Less common than standards but also fairly popular among Batho's gardeners are *spheres* and *domes*. Spheres and domes are essentially standards with short, unexposed stems. The

sizes of spheres or ball-shaped topiary vary from small to medium and large. In Batho's gardens, spheres are used either in multiples (Image 9/35) or as a single accent (Image 9/36). Spheres of equal size may also be lined up next to a fence to emphasise symmetry and formality (Image 9/37). Domes are much less common in Batho's gardens and are often found as a single feature in the front garden (Image 9/38). Finally, Batho's topiarists are artists in their own right and their talent and clipping skills are strikingly visible in the *living sculptures* created and maintained by them. These creative flourishes vary from single stand-alone sculptures (Image 9/39) to hedges clipped in all kinds of shapes other than straight lines with sharp corners (Images 9/40 & 9/41). It is argued that living sculptures are often expressions of the Batho topiarists' fantasies and desires. Topiary became a tool for poor gardeners to turn their fantasies and desires into some kind of 'reality'. When money for purchasing garden ornaments is lacking, topiary provides an accessible alternative. When there are no funds available for purchasing garden furniture, an outside 'chair' may be clipped from a piece of hedge (Image 9/42). In the hands of a skilled topiarist, the art of clipping becomes the art of the possible.⁸

Category C: combination of hedges and shapes

Apart from hedges and shapes, a third type of 'township topiary' is the combination of these two types in a style called *hedge-and-shape combinations*. In other words, a hedge is combined with shapes, for example, 'lollipops' placed on top of a hedge. As will be discussed later, some hedge-and-shape combinations are primarily functional (Images 9/43 & 9/44), while others are merely decorative⁹ (Image 9/45).

To conclude this discussion of the types of 'township topiary', it is argued that clipped hedges are an integral feature of Batho's garden landscape or so-called 'gardenscape' and also an important type of 'township topiary'. However, Batho's topiary gardens and its 'gardenscape', for that matter, are ultimately characterised by the wide variety of topiary shapes (Image 9/46). It is also important to emphasise, once again, the fact that while edges and hedges were common in Bloemfontein's white people's gardens during the 1920s and 1930s, topiary shapes, such as the ones that feature in Batho's gardens, were much less

⁸ Du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the...", pp. 70-72; Du Bruyn, "A green and...", p. 7.

⁹ Du Bruyn, "A green and...", p. 7; Du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the...", p. 72.

common.¹⁰ Therefore, it is argued that while Batho's gardeners were exposed mostly to edges and hedges in the white people's gardens, they took the basic art of clipping to a new level in their own gardens by creatively experimenting with other topiary styles and shapes which had been mostly unknown to them but popular in British and European topiary gardens for centuries. The similarities between 'township topiary' and classic British and European topiary are strikingly evident when comparing the images of basic European-style topiary included in Chapter 3 with those of the types of 'township topiary' included in this chapter.

9.2.2 Types of 'township topiary' gardens

Based on the prevalence of the above-mentioned types or styles of topiary in Batho's topiary gardens, they may be grouped into *three main categories*, namely gardens which consist of clipped hedges only (Category A), gardens which consist of topiary only (Category B) and gardens which consist of a combination of clipped hedges and topiary (Category C).¹¹

Category A: clipped hedges only

This topiary garden category may be divided into two broad sub-categories, namely 'functional hedges' and 'decorative hedges':

A.1 Functional hedges

Hedges, fence-hedges ('fedges') and 'walls' are used for the purposes of providing privacy and/or security or for other purposes, such as providing support for climbing vegetables.

A.2 Decorative hedges

Edges, hedges, fence-hedges ('fedges') and 'walls' are used mainly for decorative purposes by, for example, serving as a feature or accent in the garden. Hedges are also used to emphasise symmetry and formality in the garden.

¹⁰ For more details, see Chapter 4.

¹¹ Du Bruyn, "A green and...", p. 7.

Category B: shapes only

This topiary garden category, which is mostly decorative, may be divided into two broad sub-categories, namely ‘simple shapes’ and ‘advanced shapes’:

B.1 Simple shapes

This topiary garden sub-category contains topiary which may be described as ‘simple’ because of the relatively uncomplicated nature of its designs, such as standards, ‘lollipops’, spheres and domes. Creating and clipping these types of topiary require basic clipping skills and standard clipping and cutting tools.

B.2 Advanced shapes

As opposed to the topiary gardens containing mostly ‘simple shapes’, this second sub-category contains topiary of which the designs are more advanced and complicated, including ‘cake stands’, tiered shapes and living sculpture. Creating and clipping these advanced types or styles of ‘township topiary’ not only require a certain level of skill from the topiarist but also equipment and tools such as drums, ladders, heavy-duty clippers, extended clippers and saws.

Category C: combination of clipped hedges and shapes

This topiary garden category may be divided into two broad sub-categories, namely ‘functional hedge-and-shape combinations’ and ‘decorative hedge-and-shape combinations’:

C.1 Functional hedge-and-shape combinations

As is the case with conventional hedges discussed above, the primary purpose of a hedge-and-shape combination may be a functional one. In other words, while a particular hedge may be highly decorative in its appearance, it was originally created to serve privacy and/or

security purposes. As a secondary function, the functional hedge-and-shape combination may also serve a decorative or aesthetic purpose.

C.2 Decorative hedge-and-shape combinations

Although most hedge-and-shape combinations were created with a functional purpose in mind, some are purely decorative. Examples of decorative versions of this sub-category include hedge-and-shape combinations which lost their initial functional purpose for some reason or another, such as the putting up of a security fence right next to the clipped hedge. As a result, the hedge lost its original function. Similarly, in the case of fence-hedges or ‘fedges’, the hedge part essentially serves a decorative purpose while the fence serves a functional one. Another reason for the existence of a decorative hedge-and-shape combination is that some parts of the hedge have died due to drought conditions or neglect and the remaining part or parts of the hedge are left for decorative purposes only.

9.3 More British than African or more African than British?: Batho’s topiary gardens as semi-vernacular gardens

It is argued that Batho’s topiary gardens belong to the genus vernacular garden¹² and, for the purposes of this study, they are classified as *semi-vernacular*. Although Batho’s gardens were generally better conceived, planned and laid out than those of Waaihoek and Bloemfontein’s other old locations, most gardens were not designed in the true sense of the word, that is, designed according to classic garden design principles. These gardens mostly happened spontaneously, albeit often in a planned and orderly fashion. In almost all cases, the gardens were laid out and planted by their owners. Furthermore, only a relatively small minority of Batho’s gardeners could afford to purchase plants for their gardens at nurseries or plant vendors.¹³ Whichever plants the gardeners could lay their hands on found their way into Batho’s gardens. In addition to the seeds and trees handed out for free by the Bloemfontein municipality’s Parks Department, Batho’s gardeners obtained cuttings, slips, seeds and seedlings from other Batho gardeners or, as in the case of those who worked as

¹² For a discussion of vernacular gardens, see Chapter 2.

¹³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with:* Ms M. Lekholo, Batho, 29.11.2014; Mr R.P. Moilola, Batho, 30.3.2011; Mr T.S. Sebeela, Batho, 14.4.2014.

garden labourers for white garden owners, were given excess plants, bulbs, tubers and roots by their employers. Other gardeners, who were conversant with plant propagation techniques, multiplied existing plants by means of cuttings and slips. The young plants were either sold or given to other gardeners free of charge.¹⁴ Other means of obtaining plants for free included removing plants from the roadside or open areas near Batho, taking slips from established plants in Bloemfontein's public parks and gardens or, as happened in some cases, taking cuttings from private gardens, usually out of desperation. Although this happened when nobody was looking, Batho's gardeners argued that it had not been theft because the mother plants grew back eventually. In addition, stones, tree stumps and other 'garden ornaments' were picked up where nature had left them, and discarded objects, such as broken vessels, old garbage bins, scrap metal pieces, vehicle tyres and bicycle rims were scavenged at the city's garbage dumps and other informal dumping sites¹⁵ (Image 9/47).

When Batho's gardeners laid out their gardens they did not concern themselves with colour schemes, design principles, plant composition, foliage textures or Gertrude Jekyll's herbaceous borders. As a matter of fact, the names of famous garden designers such as Jekyll¹⁶ and even Sir Herbert Baker¹⁷ were mostly unknown to Batho's gardeners. If garden design principles were indeed applied, such as the axial principle and basic symmetry, it was a case of duplicating what they had seen in Bloemfontein's public gardens and the white people's suburban gardens. For the educated and visually-literate person, Batho's topiary gardens may, in many cases, not look like 'real' gardens because, at first sight, they could appear to be too simple and ordinary, modest in scale, unassuming, disorderly, 'impolite' and 'working-class', to quote terminology used in Chapter 2. In addition, most of the gardens lack lawns and groundcovers, resulting in gardens which would not be attractive to an observer familiar with the lush and well-designed gardens in South Africa's middle-class suburbs. As a matter of fact, Batho's gardens would, as is the case with the modest gardens

¹⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.S. Ditema*, Batho, 8.5.2013.

¹⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr J.T. Hlubi*, Batho, 1.5.2013.

¹⁶ For more information on Jekyll and her influence on South African garden design, see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

¹⁷ For more information on Baker's South African gardens and his influence as garden designer, see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

of poor rural African-Americans in the southern United States, be “viewed with disdain”¹⁸ by the casual observer, to quote Richard Westmacott.

Despite their many ‘deficiencies’ (according to Western standards), Batho’s topiary gardens qualify as gardens in the true sense of the word. The first important point is that they are, after all, *real gardens*. Secondly, Batho’s gardens are *vernacular gardens*, and thirdly, they are *semi-vernacular gardens*, to be specific. On what grounds are Batho’s gardens considered real gardens? Firstly, Batho’s gardens are real gardens because they conform to the classic understanding and definition of a garden, namely *a cultivated space or piece of land adjacent to a dwelling*. In fact, they even conform to Michel Conan’s sophisticated definition of a garden as “an artificially maintained biotope that depends upon the social culture of its gardeners for survival over time.”¹⁹ Secondly, Batho’s topiary gardens are gardens in the true sense of the word because the plants do not grow where they want to grow, but *where they are meant to grow*. As is the case with the majority of gardens, Batho’s gardens are an artificial assemblage of a collection of plants favoured by their owners or, in the words of Conan, ‘an artificially maintained biotope’. Batho’s gardens are entirely man-made constructs and because of their mostly formal and contrived appearances, the contrast between these gardens and nature is so much more visible than in the case of naturalistic or landscape gardens. This argument will be presented again later in this chapter. Thirdly, it is also argued that Batho’s gardens are real gardens because *their owners consider them as such*. As indicated in the discussion of the term ‘garden’ in Chapter 1, Batho’s garden owners proudly call the fruits of their gardening efforts a ‘garden’ and nothing else. In Batho the commonly-used term for ‘garden’ is the Sesotho word “serapa”.²⁰ Like all gardens, Batho’s gardens were created to serve specific purposes and, above all, they fulfil specific needs: in some cases, they provide food for the body while, in others, they provide food for the soul.

Batho’s topiary gardens are entirely human constructs; therefore, they are also cultural constructs. The gardens display a specific cultural language – a design vernacular – uniquely

¹⁸ R. Westmacott, “The gardens of African-Americans in the rural South” in J.D. Hunt & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 79.

¹⁹ M. Conan, “The *hortillonnages*: reflections on a vanishing gardeners’ culture” in J.D. Hunt and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *The vernacular garden*, p. 19. For a discussion of Conan’s definition, see Chapter 1.

²⁰ Anon., *Pharos South African multilingual dictionary*, p. 85.

shaped by various influences. In order to explain and describe Batho's topiary gardens as cultural products in relation to other cultural products, they are classified in terms of the *Burden model*, which was explained in Chapter 1. As a three-dimensional representation of the different levels or dimensions in which cultural history operates, the Burden model consists of three axes which cut one another squarely (Image 1/1). In terms of the Burden model's *AB axis*, Batho's topiary gardens are classified as *tangible or material culture*. However, it is important to emphasise the fact that gardens as tangible or material constructions also possess an *intangible dimension*. This is especially the case with Batho's topiary gardens. As members of a dominated culture, the Batho gardeners' urge to lay out gardens was rooted in their desire to be not only respectable but also acceptable to members of the dominant culture, namely the white people. As will be indicated later in this chapter, intangible elements, such as memories, emotions, feelings of safety and security, aesthetics and symbolism, played a significant role in the Batho gardeners' relationships with their gardens.²¹

Concerning the Burden model's second axis, namely the *CD axis*, it is vital to stress that Batho's topiary gardens are the products of a process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing which occurred over a long period of time. This process was characterised by adaptation, improvisation and creativity. African-American gardens, for example, were shaped by a similar process and, for this reason, Westmacott argued that "the African-American garden is more American than African."²² Are Batho's topiary gardens more British than African or more African than British? In the case of Batho's gardens, it is argued that most gardens display an unmistakably English (British/European) cottage-garden look but a decidedly African accent is also visible. In most cases, the *English (British/European) and African attributes are superimposed onto a simple formal axial blueprint*. Thus, Batho's topiary gardens are neither purely English (British/European), nor are they purely African in the true sense of the word. They are neither purely patrician nor vernacular or folk. Batho's topiary gardens are, in fact, a *blend of patrician culture and vernacular or folk culture*. Some gardens are more patrician, while others are more vernacular or folk. Most of Batho's topiary gardens may be described as *vernacular or folk with patrician influences*. Therefore, Batho's topiary gardens find themselves somewhere on the middle-ground of the Burden model's

²¹ For more information on this argument, see Chapter 8.

²² Westmacott, p. 81.

CD axis. Batho's topiary gardens are thus described as *semi-vernacular (or semi-folk)*. In the table below, a list of the respective vernacular (folk/African) and patrician (British/European) elements of Batho's topiary gardens is provided:

9.3.1 Batho's topiary gardens: vernacular and patrician elements

The *semi-vernacular character* of Batho's topiary gardens becomes clear when the various *vernacular* (folk/African) and *patrician* (British/European) elements are identified and compared. The overwhelming majority of Batho's topiary gardens boast a combination of both types of elements, namely vernacular and patrician. Note the differences as well as the similarities, such as vegetable beds/patches and, of course, hedges, whether clipped or unclipped.

Vernacular/Folk (African)

- 1) Swept yards
- 2) Maize patches and informal vegetable beds (patches)
- 3) Absence of big trees in garden (reasons: superstition & crime)
- 4) Backyard: use space for religious and semi-religious activities (church meetings, vigils and ancestral worship ceremonies), beer parties and storytelling sessions
- 5) Asymmetry and informality: seeds sown and seedlings planted randomly
- 6) Stockades and unclipped hedges

Patrician (British/European)

- 1) Lawn
- 2) Flower beds and vegetable beds
- 3) Presence of *clipped* trees in garden (reason: crime)
- 4) Backyard: use space for household chores and kitchen-related activities
- 5) Symmetry and formality: seeds sown and seedlings planted in rows
- 6) Topiary: clipped hedges and shapes
- 7) Small vineyard
- 8) Fruit trees (small orchard)
- 9) Garden path
- 10) Garden ornaments
- 11) Containerised plants

Because of their ‘semi-ness’ or semi-vernacular character, Batho’s topiary gardens are ‘complex artefacts’, to once again refer to Kathryn Gleason’s description of gardens.²³ Therefore, Batho’s topiary gardens are not easily labelled or categorised and are what William Doolittle described as ‘hybrid landscapes’, or what Clarissa Kimber described as ‘hybrid spaces’.²⁴ Batho’s topiary gardens are thus ‘hybridist’ cultural products which defy exact classification. In terms of the Burden model’s third and last axis, namely the *EF axis*, Batho’s topiary gardens are classified as *traditional culture*. The long history which precedes Batho’s topiary gardens adequately explains this classification. As discussed in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, Batho’s topiary gardens are rooted in a history which spans several centuries.

9.4 Batho’s topiary gardens and gardening culture: a lasting influence?

In this section of the chapter, the focus shifts to the influence of Batho’s topiary gardens and gardening culture beyond the boundaries of the location. While it is important not to overestimate the influence of Batho’s gardens and gardening culture on other locations or townships in Bloemfontein’s greater-Mangaung area and beyond, certain post-World War II developments need to be considered. Bochabela, Batho’s immediate neighbour, established in 1925 east of the Kaffirfontein Spruit, certainly benefited from the Municipality of Bloemfontein’s efforts to encourage the development of a gardening culture in Batho. This trend was discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 8. Due to the fact that Bochabela was established not long after Batho had been founded, the same regulations concerning plot size and the allocation of space for front and back gardens also applied there. Batho’s influence was certainly also visible in the example its gardeners had set for others because over time, Bochabela’s gardens became as attractive as Batho’s, if not more so. Despite the negative impact of the socio-economic conditions related to the mentioned War on Bochabela,²⁵ its

²³ Anon., “Conversations: lover of dirt”, <<http://www.archaeology.org/0605/etc/conversations.html>>, May/June 2006 (Accessed: 11.3.2010).

²⁴ For more information, see Chapter 1. W.E. Doolittle, “Gardens are us, we are nature: transcending antiquity and modernity”, *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, p. 402; C.T. Kimber, “Gardens and dwelling: people in vernacular gardens”, *Geographical Review* 94(3), July 2004, pp. 276-277.

²⁵ Free State Provincial Archives (hereafter FSPA): *MBL 1/2/4/1/35, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board: brief report by delegates sent to Locations Advisory Boards’ Congress of South Africa, 27.1.1942, p. 2.*

gardening culture survived and had since then gradually revived. Worth mentioning is the fact that this gardening culture was sustained by, among others, the availability of a total of 926 allotment gardens for Batho's and Bochabela's residents combined, and an increase in the provisioning of water standpipes within convenient reach of Bochabela's householders.²⁶ As had been the case with Batho's domestic gardens, most of Bochabela's gardens displayed a semi-vernacular garden style and, importantly, 'township topiary' also became popular among Bochabela's gardeners. Today, Bochabela (Image 9/48) and its neighbour, Phahameng (established 1956),²⁷ (Image 9/49) boast some of Mangaung's most attractive township gardens.

It is important to balance the argument in favour of the resilience and longevity of Batho's and Bochabela's gardening culture with another reality, namely the trends and circumstances that had a negative effect on it. Apart from the difficult socio-economic conditions brought about by the War, general post-War conditions in Batho and Bochabela were not always conducive to gardening and beautification. Batho's and Bochabela's gardeners faced numerous challenges, including periodic "drought conditions",²⁸ continued pressure on the locations' water supply and resulting water shortages,²⁹ as well as the damaging of standpipes and taps by children "causing wastage of water and great inconvenience to residents of the locations".³⁰ Added to this, are continued acts of vandalism committed against Batho's and Bochabela's trees and plants, including those planted in public parks, squares and on sidewalks. In 1945, Bloemfontein's acting Town Clerk, Mr P.R. Joubert, reported this "difficult problem"³¹ and informed the Native Affairs Committee that many location trees had been destroyed by poor residents for the purpose of securing firewood.³²

Towards the mid-1940s, the financial woes which chronically affected Bloemfontein's locations had become rather serious and resulted not only in increased taxation for location

²⁶ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/36, Report of inter-departmental committee on social, health and economic conditions of urban natives: comments on extracts from report*, 26.3.1943, pp. 1-2.

²⁷ A.M. Sekete, *The history of the Mangaung (black) township* (Unpublished M.A. mini-dissertation, University of the Free State, 2004), p. 12.

²⁸ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 7.3.1945, p. 5.

²⁹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 7.3.1945, p. 5; *MBL 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 19.7.1945, p. 3; *MBL 1/2/4/1/42, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 24.10.1946, p. 4.

³⁰ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/38, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 16.1.1945, p. 4.

³¹ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 9.3.1945, p. 8.

³² *Ibid.*

residents but also in the reduction of municipal expenditure by means of the curtailment of certain services and projects.³³ These austerity measures negatively impacted on the maintenance of the locations' public parks and gardens. For example, the amount of £250 originally budgeted for the maintenance of Batho's and Bochabela's sports grounds and public gardens for the financial year 1945-1946 was reduced to £107.³⁴ In addition to the financial constraints, it must also be added that Cooper's retirement on 22 November 1945 marked the end of an era for Batho and Bochabela – at least from a gardening perspective. The location residents not only lost a real friend who “had been able to hold the scales evenly between the Town and the location”³⁵ but they also lost the driving force behind many of the beautification efforts which had turned Batho into a garden location. Batho's man-made landscape, as well as Bochabela's for that matter, bore Cooper's touch in many respects – from the size of Batho's front gardens to the small forests of trees planted wherever space had allowed. Alas, Cooper's successors did not demonstrate the same passion for the beautification of Bloemfontein's locations as enthusiastically and exemplarily as he himself had for more than twenty years.³⁶

The long-term influence and legacy of Batho's topiary gardens and gardening culture should not only be judged in terms of actual gardens and the longevity of its gardening culture, but also in ideological and philosophical terms. It appears as though the garden location philosophy pursued by the Municipality of Bloemfontein also influenced post-War town planning trends in the Union's other locations or townships, if only marginally. During the 1940s, when the term ‘location’ was increasingly being replaced by the term ‘township’,³⁷ numerous new “native townships”³⁸ were planned and laid out throughout the Union, including one near the town of Witbank³⁹ (today eMalahleni) in Mpumalanga Province, as

³³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/39, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 18.4.1945, p. 2; MBL 1/2/4/1/39, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 11.5.1945, p. 6.

³⁴ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/40, *Estimates of expenditure and income half-year 1945-46: Native Administration Department, s.a.*, p. 3.

³⁵ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/40, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 9.11.1945, p. 15.

³⁶ C. le Roux, “J.R. Cooper as Township Manager of Mangaung at Bloemfontein”, *Navorsinge van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein* 26(1), December 2010, p. 42.

³⁷ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/36, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 11.8.1942, p. 2; MBL 1/2/4/1/44, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 22.7.1948, p. 14.

³⁸ D.M. Calderwood, *An investigation into the functional and aesthetic aspects of garden architecture* (part IV), (Unpublished M.Arch. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1951), p. 2.

³⁹ For a schematic representation of the township's layout, including gardens, see Calderwood, *An investigation into...* (part III), no p. no.

well as the familiar ones mentioned in Chapter 5. Most new townships were designed and built according to town planning principles which acknowledged the importance of individual domestic gardens, public parks, squares, children's playgrounds, tree-planting and landscaping. One of the most influential South African exponents of this trend was the architect and town planner, Dr D.M. Calderwood. Calderwood conducted extensive research on the importance of gardens and landscaping in 'native townships' and how the man-made environment should redefine the concept of 'native housing' in the South African context. Without mentioning Cook, Cooper or other municipal officials involved in making Batho a garden location by name, Calderwood accepted and developed many of the ideas and principles concerning gardens and landscaping advocated by Cooper and others. Calderwood was also strongly influenced by international town planning and landscaping trends, most notably those emanating from the USA and Britain. He completed master's and doctoral degrees on the subject at the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg) and, at the time, his studies were considered groundbreaking and influential.⁴⁰

Calderwood emphasised that in the case of the so-called "minimum house",⁴¹ of which township houses are a good example, the external space, in other words, the yard, is as important as the internal space or the space inside the dwelling. Like Cooper and others, Calderwood argued that a minimum house's garden, called a 'minimum garden', should be considered an extension of the house; therefore, he argued that the "design of the house ought not to stop at the external walls of the dwelling, but must extend out to embrace the external space".⁴² One way of achieving this goal was to provide houses with "outdoor stoeps...so that the dwelling extends out into the garden."⁴³ Calderwood argued that a number of factors should be considered to ensure successful township gardens, among them soil quality and the position of the house on the plot. He considered it important that the house be positioned in such a way as to allow for the maximum use of the garden space, otherwise it will be difficult to lay out a useful outdoor area and garden.⁴⁴ Calderwood advised that a basic township garden had to allow spaces for privacy, service areas (laundry, washing-line and

⁴⁰ D.M. Calderwood, *Native housing in South Africa* (Published D.Arch. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1953), foreword, p. 3.

⁴¹ Calderwood, *Native housing in...*, p. 42; Calderwood, *An investigation into...* (part IV), p. 17.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴³ Calderwood, *An investigation into...* (part III), p. 11. See also p. 14.

⁴⁴ Calderwood, *Native housing in...*, p. 53; Calderwood, *An investigation into...* (part III), p. 10.

dustbin), a children's play area, an adult entertainment and leisure area and sufficient space for cultivation, including vegetable and ornamental gardening.⁴⁵ His suggested schemes for township gardens were rather structured and planned according to the north-south and east-west axes with a centrally-positioned garden path leading from the garden gate to the front door.⁴⁶

Importantly, Calderwood advocated the planting of boundary hedges as an aesthetically pleasing alternative to wire fences. Concerning hedges, preferably clipped, he advised that it was necessary to "allow for a perimeter hedge which is about 3 ft. wide."⁴⁷ Also noteworthy is the fact that his suggested minimum size for a township plot is similar to what Cooper and others suggested for Batho, namely "50 ft. x 70 ft."⁴⁸ Calderwood was probably ahead of his time and although his suggestions were not always practical, his arguments concerning township gardens are a striking example of the most progressive post-War thoughts on the subject. He stressed that in townships, "garden design must be encouraged and the Native taught the value of the outdoor space which surrounds his home. The house and garden must become one fully-integrated space".⁴⁹ Finally, it is also important to note that in addition to Calderwood, other South African town planners were starting to think in similar terms, specifically acknowledging the necessity of providing adequate space for laying out domestic gardens in townships. For example, one of the minimum standards identified for so-called 'native housing' was an "attractive outlook",⁵⁰ meaning that the lawn and surrounding garden had to be visible from all windows of a house.⁵¹

9.5 'Township topiary': personal testimonies

In this section, the focus shifts to Batho's gardeners themselves and their opinions. The objective is to tap into their personal testimonies while exploring a number of themes identified on the basis of their responses to questions asked during interviews conducted with them at their Batho homes during the period 2008-2016. The interviews were conducted

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54; Calderwood, *An investigation into...* (part II), p. 11.

⁴⁶ For a suggested layout of a so-called 'minimum garden', see Calderwood, *Native housing in...*, p. 58.

⁴⁷ Calderwood, *Native housing in...*, p. 57.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁵⁰ R. Kantorowich, "Planning" in P.H. Connell *et al.*, *Native housing: a collective thesis*, p. 100.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

as part of the National Museum's *Batho Community History Project* launched in 2007. The main objective of the project is to collect information on Batho's cultural, social and political history by means of oral history interviewing.⁵² The oral history methodology was identified as an important technique and a tool for accessing information not available in conventional historical sources. As such, oral history made a valuable and unique contribution to the knowledge of Batho's community history. In some cases, oral testimonies were used to complement and verify existing records on Batho's history while in others, particularly in the absence of conventional records, oral testimonies were the main and only sources of information. Oral testimonies are particularly valuable sources of information for community history and local history projects, of which this study may be considered an example since it focuses on a local community, namely Batho.⁵³ It is also important to emphasise the fact that both the *oral history methodology* (as a technique and a tool for accessing historical information) and *oral testimonies* (as a historical source) are not flawless and should be subjected to historical critique and scrutiny. Concerning the integrity of oral testimonies, some academic historians perceive oral evidence as being too subjective since human memory is often inaccurate, incomplete and fallible. Therefore, it is of critical importance for any oral historian to subject oral testimonies to a *verification process* which involves, among other things, conducting follow-up interviews, comparing testimonies with one another to check for internal consistencies and comparing testimonies with other historical sources.⁵⁴

For the purpose of this study, male and female interviewees of all ages were selected randomly and mainly on the basis of their topiary gardens and willingness to be interviewed on the subject. Of the total of 57 gardeners who were interviewed, 29 were male and 28 female. This is an indication that in Batho, as is also the case in other Mangaung townships,

⁵² For more information on the Batho Community History Project, see D. du Bruyn, "Oral testimonies as a source of community history, with special reference to the Batho Project, Bloemfontein", *South African Journal of Cultural History* 24(2), November 2010, pp. 6-16; D. du Bruyn, "The National Museum's oral history projects", *Culna* 62, November 2007, p. 7.

⁵³ S. Counce, *Approaches to local history: oral history and the local historian*, p. 100; B. Allen & W.L. Montell, *From memory to history: using oral sources in local historical research*, pp. 3, 14-15; J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history: aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history*, pp. 176-177; M.A. Williams, *Researching local history: the human journey*, p. 18; Du Bruyn "Oral testimonies as...", pp. 3, 16-17.

⁵⁴ For more detail on the challenges confronting oral history, see M.M. Oelofse, *Remembering the truth: an oral history perspective on the victim hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, 1996-1998* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of the Free State, 2007), pp. 37-39, 333-359.

the traditional strict gender-based labour division has become much more relaxed. Both men and women work in their gardens and both enjoy clipping their topiary. However, some gardening-related chores such as sweeping the yard are still considered the woman's duty. In addition to gender, the interviewing language and the questionnaire also need to be considered. Although the gardeners were interviewed in their second language, namely English or Afrikaans, their eagerness to discuss their topiary gardens overshadowed the potential debilitating effect of being interviewed in a second language on the quality of the interviews. A basic questionnaire, containing both open-ended and closed questions, was used as a guideline for the semi-structured oral history interviews. Out of 58 gardeners approached for an interview, only one declined the request. The approach followed in this section is to allow the interviewees to speak for themselves as individuals and to provide them with an opportunity to express their views in their own words, hence the inclusion of multiple direct quotes. One of the most startling and unexpected discoveries made during the interviews conducted with Batho's gardeners is the effect of crime and criminality not only on their lives in general but also on their gardens. As a result, considerable space was allocated to this significant trend. The other main themes included in this section are the Batho gardeners' taste for formality and topiary and their relationships with and appreciation of their gardens and, in the last instance, the importance of laying out gardens.

9.5.1 "I like the square shape very much": the Batho gardeners' taste for formality and topiary

In the previous section, it was argued that Batho's gardens are real gardens because, among other things, they are human constructs and that the contrast between Batho's topiary gardens and nature is much more pronounced than in the case of landscape or naturalistic gardens. Only a very small minority of Batho's gardens may be described as landscape or naturalistic gardens and a *very small percentage of Batho gardeners prefer curved or shaped lines and informality instead of straight lines and formality for their gardens*. When asked about her first choice, Martha Mashoeng (born 1953) answered with great certainty: "I like curves".⁵⁵ Mashoeng suspects that her preference has a lot to do with the fact that she worked as a florist all her life because, as she explained, florists tend to think in terms of natural and

⁵⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M. Mashoeng, Batho, 4.4.2012.*

curved lines instead of straight ones.⁵⁶ A gardener who shares Mashoeng's taste is Gabriel Thekiso (born 1956), who was adamant about his preference: "I like shaped lines".⁵⁷ Some gardeners such as Freddy Languza (born 1970) prefer a combination of curved and straight lines: "The one side [of my garden] must be straight, the other side curved".⁵⁸ In a few cases, predominantly formal gardens may include naturalistic features, such as a flowerbed with curved instead of straight lines, of which Languza's garden is an example.

The Batho gardeners' own understanding of the idea of a 'garden' as opposed to 'nature' not only confirmed their understanding of a garden as a distinctly human construct but also confirmed their expressed taste for formality and the notion that *a garden, by implication, is essentially a formally laid-out construct*. For Dorah Mvimbi (born 1934), there is a huge difference between nature or a natural landscape and a garden. Mvimbi has no doubt about her personal preference: "n Tuin is vir my die mooiste".⁵⁹ Maria Lekholo (born 1958)⁶⁰ argued that for her, a garden and nature are not the same thing simply because they look different: "A garden is different – it feels like I am at another place".⁶¹ If Lekholo had to choose between a garden and nature she would choose a garden.⁶² While the overwhelming majority of Batho's gardeners consider a garden to be a formal construct clearly distinguishable from nature or a natural landscape, a small minority argue that there is, essentially, no difference between a garden and nature. One such gardener is Mohau Phakoe (born 1942),⁶³ who believes that a garden and nature are essentially the same thing: "Ek vat dit [tuin] as natuur, want gras is natuur en bome ook. Tuin en natuur is dieselfde ding".⁶⁴

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr G.M. Thekiso*, Batho, 4.11.2014.

⁵⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Languza*, Batho, 9.7.2014.

⁵⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms D.M. Mvimbi*, Batho, 24.11.2014. "For me a garden is the most beautiful". (Free translation)

⁶⁰ For more information on Lekholo, see Chapter 7.

⁶¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M. Lekholo*, Batho, 29.11.2014.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ For more information on Phakoe, see Chapter 7.

⁶⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M. Phakoe*, Batho, 25.11.2014. "I consider a garden as nature because lawn [grass] is nature and trees also. A garden and nature are the same thing". (Free translation)

The strong preference for the formal garden style is typically *expressed in terms of a preference for straight lines, sharp corners, symmetry and, above all, geometric shapes*. When asked to verbalise their personal stylistic preferences, most interviewees expressed their opinions rather eloquently. Pointing to the topiary in her front garden as well as the general layout of her garden, Keabecoe Zim (born 1962)⁶⁵ was clear about her preferred shape: “I like the square shape very much”.⁶⁶ Abednego Loape (born 1983) was also certain about his first choice: “The lines must be straight – I like it that way”,⁶⁷ as was Mr R.P. Moiloa (born 1947) about his taste: “It must be square”.⁶⁸ When asked about her style preference, Maria Marumo (born 1938)⁶⁹ had no doubt about her penchant for straight instead of curved lines: “I like the straight lines – my father’s garden was also straight”.⁷⁰ Explaining the origin of her taste, Marumo acknowledged her father’s direct influence, thus, confirming the effect of the generational gardening phenomenon – discussed in Chapter 8 – on the Batho gardeners’ long-standing preference for formality and symmetry.⁷¹

Eugenia Ngatane (born 1969) attributed her love for straight lines and square shapes not to her father but to her deceased husband, Joseph Ngatane. “It’s the kind of shape Joseph liked”,⁷² Ngatane explained, crediting her husband for teaching her the art of clipping plants into geometric shapes. Ngatane is adamant that she will not deviate from this style in any way because “I want his spirit to keep living [in the clipped hedges] because he spent most of his time in the garden”.⁷³ While the generational gardening phenomenon certainly had a strong influence on the Batho gardeners’ stylistic preferences, such preferences are not immune to change. One such example is Selina Moiloa (born 1951)⁷⁴ whose deceased father, Dr James Moiloa, had been a major influence on her own preference for geometry. Moiloa

⁶⁵ For more information on Zim, see Chapter 8.

⁶⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms K.M. Zim*, Batho, 28.10.2014.

⁶⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A.K. Loape*, Batho, 5.4.2011.

⁶⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr R.P. Moiloa*, Batho, 30.3.2011.

⁶⁹ For more information on Marumo, see Chapter 5.

⁷⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.M. Marumo*, Batho, 28.10.2014.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms E.M. Ngatane*, Batho, 29.10.2014.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ For more information on Moiloa, see Chapter 7.

expressed her particular preference without thinking twice: “I like that style”.⁷⁵ However, Moilola admitted that after her father’s death, she changed the shape of some of his topiary from square to round simply because she likes the “round shape”.⁷⁶

Some interviewees went further than merely expressing a preference for straight lines and geometric shapes by also explaining *what their specific preferences symbolised or represented*. Loape explained that his block-and-plane-style hedge in front of his house in Batho’s Rantjies section was clipped like that for a reason: “I like it that way – like a flat table and a step”⁷⁷ (Image 9/22). Thus, Loape’s block-and-plane does double duty, namely as a hedge and as an ornamental feature. Lorenti Moeketsi (born 1961) also prefers his standard topiary to “look like tables”, namely “flat on top and round”.⁷⁸ Another topiary enthusiast who also happens to be a soccer enthusiast, Daniel Mphothane (born 1973), revealed that his ‘lollipop’ topiary is meant to represent “soccer ball[s]”.⁷⁹ Mphothane explained that his grandfather, also a soccer enthusiast, taught him how to clip a perfectly rounded ball shape.⁸⁰ The intended symbolic representations of some of Batho’s topiary are not always obvious to the casual observer. This happens to be the case with the clipped hedge belonging to Languza. His intriguing hedge has an element of surprise for visitors: from the street view, the clipped arches resemble doorways but, as he explained, “on the other side, I made it look like hearts”⁸¹ (Image 9/24).

While some Batho gardeners’ preference for formality was passed on to them from previous generations or from spouses, other gardeners gained their inspiration and taste for formality from images of European formal gardens. One such gardener is Herbert Rampana (born 1957), who made no secret about the fact that the stylistic inspiration for his own garden came from a framed portrait of a formal European garden which he displays in his Batho

⁷⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms L.S.S. Moilola, Batho, 18.5.2013.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A.K. Loape, Batho, 5.4.2011.*

⁷⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr L.M. Moeketsi, Batho, 28.3.2013.*

⁷⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr D.M. Mphothane, Batho, 28.3.2013.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Languza, Batho, 9.7.2014.*

home (Image 9/50). Rampana expressed a personal fondness for the straight lines and round shapes according to which the shrubs in the picture are clipped and explained how he aims to replicate in his own garden the crisp and dense look of the topiary in the picture: “I cut them [shrubs] so that they must ‘come together’”.⁸² Other Batho gardeners, such as Michael Molelekoa (born 1940), like to see their preference for straight lines and geometric shapes not only replicated in their own gardens but also in those of others. Because Molelekoa offers his services as a topiarist to Batho residents who need a person to clip their hedges and other topiary for them, he has the opportunity to shape other people’s topiary according to his own preference for circular shapes. As a result, his clients’ topiary are clipped in the same style as his own, namely oversized standards and ‘lollipops’.⁸³

For most Batho gardeners, *formality and topiary are closely linked and the concept of formality is automatically associated with the clipping and pruning of plants*. According to Ngatane, the clipping of plants into topiary is “a way of pruning so that they [plants] can’t grow bigger than *they were supposed to*”.⁸⁴ Ngatane argued that certain plants were not meant to grow big and that by clipping them she gave them “a better shape”.⁸⁵ She also believes that the type of simple formality applied in Batho’s gardens automatically requires clipped and shaped plants rather than those that are allowed to grow unchecked. Mercy Khantwane (born 1958) also emphasised the shape of the plants and the importance of not allowing them to “get out of shape”.⁸⁶ Simon Ditema (born 1960), who operates his own garden services business in Batho and also sells plants from home, likewise emphasised the *close link between a formal and a shaped garden*, that is, a garden in which plants are clipped and trimmed into symmetrical shapes. Therefore, Ditema argued that clipping plants into topiary is ultimately a “way of shaping your garden”⁸⁷ to lend it a formal appearance.⁸⁸

⁸² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr H.T. Rampana*, Batho, 28.3.2013.

⁸³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M.R. Molelekoa*, Batho, 4.11.2014.

⁸⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms E.M. Ngatane*, Batho, 29.10.2014. (Own emphasis)

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.L. Khantwane*, Batho, 21.4.2015.

⁸⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.S. Ditema*, Batho, 8.5.2013.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

Considering the emphasis placed in previous chapters on the argument that *a house cannot be separated from its adjacent garden*, it is noteworthy that some Batho gardeners also view their front gardens, or at least their front hedges, in close relation to their houses. Concerning the aesthetic value of their topiary gardens, Rampana argued that “it [garden] make [sic] my house, my front entrance beautiful”⁸⁹ and Puleng Moholo (born 1962) reasoned that her garden makes her “house look nice”.⁹⁰ In his turn, Loape argued that a house cannot be without a front garden – particularly a topiary garden – because “it [topiary] give [sic] the house shape”.⁹¹ Lekholo also argued that a formally designed front garden may greatly improve the appearance of a house – particularly a humble township house – by enhancing its shape.⁹² Stanley Motingoe (born 1952) also believes that a topiary garden, particularly a neatly-clipped hedge, may improve the “facing”⁹³ of a house: “If your house is not beautiful, you shelter it by the hedge, then it looks beautiful”.⁹⁴ For some Batho gardeners, such as Johannes Hlubi (born 1965), the relationship between the house and the garden is of such importance that effort is made to match the two: “I see the pattern of the house is like this, so the trees is [sic] like the house – the same”,⁹⁵ he explained. Hlubi matched the design of the topiary in his front garden with that of his house’s stepped gable so that the one is a reflection of the other (Image 9/29).

Eugenia Ngatane is among those who believe that the Batho gardeners’ taste for formality and their fondness of topiary has a great deal to do with the *competitive spirit* which, according to her, still characterises Batho’s gardening culture today. Highlighted in Chapter 8 as one of the driving forces of Batho’s emerging gardening culture during the township’s early years, Ngatane is convinced that competitiveness among Batho’s topiarists is still strong: “Yes, it depends on the competition. I think somebody wants his yard to be the

⁸⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr H.T. Rampana*, Batho, 28.3.2013.

⁹⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms P. Moholo*, Batho, 8 & 13.5.2013.

⁹¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A.K. Loape*, Batho, 5.4.2011.

⁹² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M. Lekholo*, Batho, 29.11.2014.

⁹³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M.S. Motingoe*, Batho, 18.4.2016.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr J.T. Hlubi*, Batho, 1.5.2013.

best”.⁹⁶ Mogrey Mogaecho (born 1969)⁹⁷ also mentioned this aspect of Batho’s gardening culture and the role it played in encouraging Batho’s residents to lay out gardens. “I remember back in the old days [1970s and 1980s], we would compete in the street [Moiloa Street], whose garden was the best”,⁹⁸ Mogaecho said. Due to the fact that this competitive spirit encouraged existing and potential gardeners to look to other Batho gardens for inspiration, the predominant taste for formality and symmetry was reinforced further. “Our hedges was [sic] famous”,⁹⁹ Mogaecho remembered, confirming the strong influence of clipped formal front hedges on the garden landscape which evolved in Batho after the War.

9.5.2 “To make a shape in a tree”: the ‘garden vocabulary’ of Batho’s gardeners

Over time, Batho’s gardeners developed their own ‘garden vocabulary’ which includes specific terminology and phrases in Sesotho and Setswana when referring to topiary or the practice of clipping, cutting and trimming shrubs and trees. It is argued that this garden vocabulary is also a ‘language’ which expresses a basic design vocabulary, namely that of formality and everything associated with this aesthetic in the context of a township environment, such as Batho’s. While the end-products of years of shaping and pruning shrubs and trees may be termed ‘township topiary’ for the purpose of this study, the gardeners interviewed for this study described it differently. In most cases, they used the terms their ancestors and the generations before them had used. According to Sarah Mahabane (born 1927),¹⁰⁰ who had been gardening in Batho since the late 1930s, a single clipped plant or shrub is called “sefate”¹⁰¹ and more than one are called “difate”¹⁰² in Sesotho. The Setswana terms are “setlhare”¹⁰³ (singular) and “ditlhare”¹⁰⁴ (plural). While

⁹⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms E.M. Ngatane*, Batho, 29.10.2014.

⁹⁷ For more information on Mogaecho, see Chapter 8.

⁹⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M. Mogaecho*, Batho, 9.4.2013.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ For more information on Mahabane, see Chapter 5.

¹⁰¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane*, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014. See also Anon., *Pharos South African...*, p. 219; Anon., *Reader’s Digest South African multi-language dictionary and phrase book*, p. 311.

¹⁰² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S.M. Mahabane*, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* See also Anon., *Pharos South African...*, p. 219; Anon., *Reader’s Digest South...*, p. 361; P. Wilken, *Understanding everyday Setswana: a vocabulary and reference book*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

these terms are commonly used in Batho by young and old to refer to topiary, the terms do not describe topiary in the true sense of the word but, in actual fact, refer to any tree or shrub, whether clipped or pruned or not. However, most Batho gardeners interviewed for this study use these terms to describe topiary and any other pruned tree. The use of the mentioned terms as ‘umbrella terms’ for any clipped shrub or pruned tree may be rooted in the fact that for many Batho gardeners the pruning of fruit trees, which many of them had learnt from white people and had done in white people’s orchards for decades, and the clipping of ornamental shrubs into topiary, are often *considered to be similar concepts*. In other words, the differentiation between ‘clipping’ and ‘pruning’ is not always clear-cut since *the practice essentially involves the same physical action*.¹⁰⁵

According to Khantwane, the Setswana word “popego”,¹⁰⁶ which, in her view, means “to make a shape in a tree”,¹⁰⁷ is an appropriate term to describe topiary. However, the word *popego*, in actual fact, refers to a human being’s curved physique. Other terms that are less commonly used in Batho to describe or refer to topiary include, for example, “dimela”,¹⁰⁸ the Sesotho word for ‘plants’ and “malomo”,¹⁰⁹ the Sesotho word for ‘flowers’. According to Ditema, “we [Batho gardeners] just call them ‘malomo’ – all of them”.¹¹⁰ Ditema’s phrase ‘all of them’ refers, by implication, to all shrubs, clipped or unclipped. In addition to the Sesotho terms, English terms such as “fencing trees”,¹¹¹ “fence trees”,¹¹² “evergreen trees”¹¹³ and “green trees”,¹¹⁴ with specific reference to clipped hedges, are also commonly used to refer to topiary. The use of the terms ‘evergreen trees’ and ‘green trees’ by Batho’s gardeners

¹⁰⁵ Du Bruyn, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, p. 61.

¹⁰⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.L. Khantwane*, Batho, 21.4.2015.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M.S. Motingoe*, Batho, 18.4.2016. See also, C.R. Kok & L.C. Botha, *Skoolwoordeboek: Suid-Sotho – Afrikaans / Afrikaans – Suid-Sotho*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr L.M. Moeketsi*, Batho, 28.3.2018. See also Kok & Botha, p. 93.

¹¹⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.S. Ditema*, Batho, 8.5.2013.

¹¹¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A.P. Koitheng*, Batho, 12.4.2010; Mr F.M. Languza, Batho, 9.7.2014.

¹¹² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A.K. Loape*, Batho, 5.4.2011; Mr H.T. Rampana, Batho, 28.3.2013.

¹¹³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.M. Dikane*, Batho, 27.1.2012; Mr H. Lebakeng, Batho, 17.1.2011.

¹¹⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr J.T. Hlubi*, Batho, 1.5.2013.

may be compared to the use of a similar term by the residents of the Tswana settlement of Serowe in Botswana. As discussed in Chapter 3, Serowe’s residents used the term *Tlharesetala* (also *tlharesetala*) or so-called ‘green tree’ to refer to the evergreen plants used for the clipped hedges planted around their yards. Some Batho gardeners do not use single words or terms to describe topiary but rather a *combination of words that describe the act of clipping a tree or shrub into topiary*. For example, Margaret Madito (born 1940) explained that in Setswana, a plant already clipped into topiary is called “setlhare se kutilweng”.¹¹⁵ Apart from the fact that the term ‘topiary’, as it is understood in its classic European context, lacks a direct Sesotho or Setswana translation, it is argued that the practice of using descriptive phrases instead of single words also relates to the unique nature of ‘township topiary’ because creating and maintaining it not only requires a certain level of skill but also constant care and maintenance. It is reasoned that something that could have only developed over a long period of time is difficult, if not impossible, to aptly describe in a single word.¹¹⁶

Other relevant terms that form part of Batho’s garden vocabulary refer to the tools used to clip and shape the topiary. These clippers, cutters and shearers are commonly referred to as “skere”¹¹⁷ or “sekere”,¹¹⁸ which is the Sesotho word for ‘scissors’. Often such tools are also referred to as “sekere sa difate”¹¹⁹ or, in the case of Setswana, “sekere sa ditlhare”.¹²⁰ *Sekere* is thus an umbrella term used for both conventional scissors as well as clippers, cutters and shearers used for clipping topiary and other pruning work. English terms used include

¹¹⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M. Madito*, Batho, 31.10.2014. “Clipped plants”. (Free translation)

¹¹⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms J. Modisapudi*, Batho, 17.1.2011; *Ms J. None*, Batho, 17.1.2011; *Ms E. Swanepoel*, Batho, 17.1.2011; *Ms M. Turner*, Batho, 17.1.2011; *Du Bruyn*, “‘Township Topiary’: the...”, p. 61. See also A. Read Lloyd, *The artist in the garden: the quest for Moses Tladi*, pp. 16-19.

¹¹⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Languza*, Batho, 9.7.2014; *Mr R.P. Moiloa*, Batho, 30.3.2011. *Skere* is a corruption of the word *sekere* which, in turn, is derived from the Afrikaans word *skêr*.

¹¹⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A.K. Loape*, Batho, 5.4.2011. See also Anon., *Pharos South African...*, p. 183.

¹¹⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.S. Ditema*, Batho, 8.5.2013; *Ms P. Moholo*, Batho, 8 & 13.5.2013.

¹²⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr J.T. Hlubi*, Batho, 1.5.2013.

“scissors”¹²¹, “long scissors”¹²² and “tree scissors”¹²³ while the Afrikaans terms “lang snoeiskêr”¹²⁴ and “skaapskêr”¹²⁵ are used to describe two different types of tools. In Sesotho, the act of cutting or clipping is called “kuta”¹²⁶ and, in the case of shrubs and trees, “ho kuta difate”¹²⁷ and “o a kuta difate”.¹²⁸ The Sesotho term, “fokotsa”,¹²⁹ which means ‘to reduce’ or ‘to make smaller’, is also used to refer to the act of clipping or pruning plants. In concluding this discussion, it is important to stress the fact that variety rather than uniformity characterises the ‘garden vocabulary’ used by Batho’s gardeners.

9.5.3 The influence of crime and criminality on ‘township topiary’

Since the founding of Batho, the development of ‘township topiary’ cannot be fully understood without considering the long-term effect of crime and criminality on this garden art. This phenomenon not only became clear as a result of archival research conducted but also from the information obtained by means of the oral history interviews conducted for the purpose of this study. During and after the end of the War, crime, criminality and juvenile delinquency in particular, had increased significantly in Batho and Bochabela. Growing urbanisation and overcrowding, as well as increasing unemployment created a sub-stratum of very poor location residents who lived below the poverty line.¹³⁰ Not only did these trends

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- ¹²¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr T.S. Sebeela*, Batho, 14.4.2014.
- ¹²² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M. Lekholo*, Batho, 29.11.2014.
- ¹²³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr H.T. Rampana*, Batho, 28.3.2013.
- ¹²⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms S. Khetse*, Batho, 26.11.2013. “Long clippers”. (Free translation)
- ¹²⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms N. Pongola*, Batho, 16.4.2012. “Sheep shearers”. (Free translation)
- ¹²⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A.P. Koitheng*, Batho, 12.4.2010. “To clip or to cut”. (Free translation)
- ¹²⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms F.K. Segoe*, Batho, 4.11.2014. “To clip the plants/trees”. (Free translation)
- ¹²⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms P. Moholo*, Batho, 8 & 13.5.2013. “He/she clips the plants/trees”. (Free translation)
- ¹²⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Liutluleng*, Batho, 14.4.2011.
- ¹³⁰ FSPA: *MBL 1/2/4/1/34, Letter from F.M. Symes, St Michael’s School, Bloemfontein, to manager of Native Administration Department, Bloemfontein*, 28.3.1940; *MBL 1/2/4/1/35, Interdepartmental commission of enquiry concerning economic, health and social conditions of natives in urban areas: questionnaire and replies*, 25.10.1941, *passim*; *MBL 1/2/4/1/36, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 3.12.1942, p. 2; *MBL 1/2/4/1/36, Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Advisory Board*, 21.4.1943, pp. 1-2.

influence the social lives of location residents but the effects were also visible in the immediate domestic environment, including gardens and pavements. Therefore, the revival of Batho's and Bochabela's gardening culture since the mentioned War had ended, must be seen against the backdrop of a trend which became increasingly noticeable during the War. In a response to criticism by members of the Union's Central Housing Board that not enough trees had been planted on Batho's and Bochabela's pavements,¹³¹ Mr R.N. Brits, then assistant manager of the Native Administration Department, gave a significant explanation on behalf of Mr J.R. Cooper, then manager of the department. Not only did Brits find the criticism "difficult to understand"¹³² considering the thousands of trees that had been planted during Cooper's almost 20-year term as Bloemfontein's Locations Manager, he also explained many location residents' dislike of mature trees. According to Brits, the average location resident considered the "full-grown trees in front of his residence as courting trouble" and big trees on pavements were regarded as "a hiding-place for evil-doers".¹³³

Brits' term 'evil-doers' referred to criminals who used the dense leafy branches of big trees as hiding places¹³⁴ before they pounced on their unsuspecting victims. As a result, big trees were either chopped down or severely cut back¹³⁵ and, in the process, *unintentionally turned into oversize topiary*. This phenomenon explains why numerous big trees in Batho and Bochabela were pruned into topiary in the past and are presently still being pruned (Image 9/51). Furthermore, it also emphasises the fact that the effect of crime and criminality on Batho's topiary gardens and topiary culture dates back to the 1930s and 1940s; therefore, it is not a recent phenomenon. It must be stressed, however, that crime was not always the reason why shrubs and trees were cut back. According to Batho gardener, Johannes Hlubi,

¹³¹ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/36, *Minutes of ordinary meeting of Native Affairs Committee*, 11.8.1942, p. 2; MBL 1/2/4/1/36, *Native housing: report by Messrs. Jameson and Cleland of the Central Housing Board*, 29.7.1942, p. 4.

¹³² FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/36, *Native housing: comments by manager on remarks of Mr. Jameson*, 10.8.1942, p. 4.

¹³³ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/36, *Letter from R.N. Brits to manager of Native Administration Department, Bloemfontein, s.a.*, p. 4.

¹³⁴ Urban legend has it that trees were also chopped down or cut back in order to prevent snakes and other unwanted animals – including mythical ones – from hiding in them. However, none of the interviewees interviewed for this study mentioned this phenomenon and it appears as though the fear of criminals and so-called *tsotsis* (juvenile delinquents) using trees as hiding places was the most important reason for trees being cut back or chopped down.

¹³⁵ FSPA: MBL 1/2/4/1/36, *Letter from R.N. Brits to manager of Native Administration Department, Bloemfontein, s.a.*, p. 4.

“most black people do not like big trees – they like small trees”.¹³⁶ Hlubi argued that the reason for black people’s dislike of big trees is merely a practical one: shrubs and trees were cut back and unintentionally shaped into topiary simply because Batho’s small gardens and backyards could not accommodate big trees. However, big trees were not shunned by all residents; consequently, a significant number of trees in Batho were not cut back but were left to grow into mature trees, mainly for providing shade¹³⁷ (Image 9/52).

According to Batho’s gardeners, crime had always been a problem in Batho and Bochabela but the problem worsened since the dawn of a new political dispensation in South Africa in 1994.¹³⁸ While petty crimes such as muggings are a growing problem, serious crimes, such as assault, rape, burglaries and violent house robberies are also on the increase. Batho’s gardeners are not spared because criminals also steal plants from gardens. Such stolen plants are either planted in the culprits’ own gardens or they are resold. Kelebogile Mahabane (born 1963) explained that before she put up a security fence in front of her house, criminals came onto her property late at night to steal flowers and plants.¹³⁹ According to Mvimbi, thieves do not limit their stealing to plants and flowers since taps, watering cans, buckets, containers, hosepipes and garden ornaments are also being stolen.¹⁴⁰ Most interviewees affected by crime agreed that this new reality forced them to improve the security on their properties. In most cases, such efforts, aimed at keeping trespassers and burglars at bay, *influenced their approach to gardening and, importantly, the appearance of big trees and shrubs or the absence thereof*. Consequently, the first victims of Batho’s crime problem were big trees and shrubs. Zim explained the absence of big trees and shrubs in her garden in Hamilton Road as follows: “I do not want to close [conceal] the house because we are not safe. It is a location – we are not safe if the trees are high”.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr J.T. Hlubi*, Batho, 1.5.2013.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ J. Brits, “Suid-Afrika ná apartheid, 1994-2004” in F. Pretorius (ed.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika: van voortye tot vandag*, pp. 570-571.

¹³⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms K.G. Mahabane*, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014.

¹⁴⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms D.M. Mvimbi*, Batho, 24.11.2014.

¹⁴¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms K.M. Zim*, Batho, 28.10.2014.

The effect of crime and criminality on Batho's topiary gardens is not limited to big trees and such trees being turned into topiary since *its effect may also be seen in the way hedges are being clipped*. As mentioned in Chapter 8 and elsewhere in this thesis, clipped hedges, which were originally planted in front of houses for the purposes of providing privacy and the marking of boundaries between pavements and plots and between neighbours, were also affected.¹⁴² While traditionally such hedges had been solid green walls in order to secure maximum privacy and to keep out stray animals, they also had become hiding places for criminals. The solution was to *strip the bottom part of the hedge of all its leaves* in order to enable owners to spot potential criminals hiding behind it. Nelson Ngo (born 1986)¹⁴³ explained that he was forced to cut the bottom part of his mother's front hedge open because "in the location [Batho], the criminals are hiding behind the hedge".¹⁴⁴ In almost all cases, such see-through hedges were turned into 'fedges' (Image 9/53) in order to ensure maximum security.

Herbert Rampana opted for a different solution to the problem of night prowlers hiding behind his hedge: at regular intervals, he removed sections of the clipped hedge in front of his house and planted less dense shrubs instead, allowing him to see any movement in the street. Rampana explained: "The reason why I cut the original solid hedge in pieces is because the tsotsis used to hide themselves [sic] there".¹⁴⁵ Ditema, who had been a victim of crime a number of times, explained that Batho's crime problem not only forced him to change the way he clipped his privet hedge but also the stand-alone cypress topiary next to the hedge: "When I trim the trees [topiary], under the trees I must clean them, so that the tsotsis cannot hide there".¹⁴⁶ Concerning the use of the ever-popular privet as hedge plants, Ditema praised its versatility because "you can do with them [privet] whatever you want to do".¹⁴⁷ However, privet is a vigorous grower which needs to be clipped rather often, particularly during the growing season, which means that hedges, in particular, need to be

¹⁴² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P. Motlaung*, Batho, 14.3.2013.

¹⁴³ For more information on Ngo, see Chapter 7.

¹⁴⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr N.T. Ngo*, Batho, 10 & 24.11.2014.

¹⁴⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr H.T. Rampana*, Batho, 28.3.2013.

¹⁴⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.S. Ditema*, Batho, 8.5.2013.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

clipped regularly. According to Ditema, overgrown hedges pose a security risk because they become attractive hiding places for criminals: “You cannot leave it [hedge] to grow, otherwise you ‘call’ the tsotsis to make a nest there and they can hide there”.¹⁴⁸

Apart from the appearance of Batho’s hedges in terms of whether they are being left dense and solid or being made see-through, Batho’s crime problem also *affected the height of the hedges*. While some gardeners prefer their hedges tall for the sake of privacy, others prefer them short so that it is possible to see over them. Mr T.S. Sebeela (born 1939) explained that for him, a very tall and dense hedge is the best because “nobody can jump over the fence [hedge] and nobody can see me – it’s like a curtain”.¹⁴⁹ In fact, Sebeela primarily considers his tall hedge a security measure or, as he said, “it’s a cover-up”¹⁵⁰ for everything behind it. According to Florence Segoe (born 1940),¹⁵¹ the height of the hedge in front of their Batho house in Sports had always been a moot point in the relationship between her and her husband, Jacob Segoe. In fact, differing opinions about the height of the hedge caused family disputes. While Jacob prefers the hedge to be tall so that passers-by are not able to look over it into their plot, Florence prefers it to be short. Jacob believes that a tall hedge provides better security but Florence is convinced that a short hedge is safer because it will prevent criminals from hiding behind it. In addition, a short hedge also enables her to see what happens on the pavement and in the street.¹⁵² For the Segoes and many other Batho gardeners, taking a decision concerning the exact height of their front hedge is no longer merely a matter of aesthetics or personal taste since crime and the threat posed by potential trespassers has become an additional determining factor worth considering.¹⁵³

While some Batho gardeners turned their solid green hedges into see-through ‘fedges’ or adjusted the height of their hedges, others *replaced their hedges with metal, brick or concrete security fences*. One such gardener is Thekisoe, who replaced his clipped hedge with a wire-netting fence. Thekisoe explained that it was no easy decision but that circumstances had

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr T.S. Sebeela*, Batho, 14.4.2014.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ For more information on Segoe, see Chapter 5.

¹⁵² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms F.K. Segoe*, Batho, 4.11.2014; D. du Bruyn, “A garden is not a garden without a hedge: the story of the Segoe family’s Batho garden”, *Culna* 70, November 2015, p. 13.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

necessitated it: “I removed it [the hedge] because I want to see the people outside. The people were hiding there, the tsotsis were hiding there, waiting to catch and rob the women. They were also sleeping with the women [prostitutes] under the hedge”.¹⁵⁴ Moeketsi explained that drunkards rather than criminals necessitated him to replace his clipped hedge with a brick and metal fence: “There is a tavern next door [to his house] and at night the drunk [sic] customers were hiding under the clipped hedge – that is why I removed it”.¹⁵⁵ As a result of these and other crime-related trends, many decades-old hedges which had become permanent features of Batho’s garden landscape, were removed. Needless to say, this caused the destruction and permanent loss of an important part of Batho’s topiary heritage.

Another crime-related trend which affected the way Batho’s residents garden is the increasing number of garden owners *keeping watch dogs in their backyards and front gardens*. According to Mofihli Maphisa (born 1960), crime necessitated many Batho gardeners to obtain watch dogs to serve as a deterrent in addition to other security measures. Most watch dogs are being kept in backyards, causing Maphisa and other gardeners, who became dog owners, to abandon their backyard vegetable gardens because the dogs trample the vegetables.¹⁵⁶ Other garden owners such as Peter Motlaung (born 1959) obtained no fewer than five watch dogs, all of which are kept in his front garden. As a result, Motlaung had to abandon all efforts to maintain a flower garden and only the standard topiary, which he believes are dog-proof (Image 9/31), were left standing.¹⁵⁷ Thus, it is clear that in addition to the price being paid for crime and criminality, a price is also being paid for security measures taken – a price glaringly visible in the compromises and adjustments Batho’s gardeners have to make in their gardens.

¹⁵⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr G.M. Thekiso, Batho, 4.11.2014.*

¹⁵⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr L.M. Moeketsi, Batho, 28.3.2013.*

¹⁵⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M. Maphisa, Batho, 3.11.2014.*

¹⁵⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P. Motlaung, Batho, 14.3.2013.*

9.5.4 “To garden is to show people how you live and how you feel”: the Batho gardeners’ relationships with their gardens, their appreciation thereof and the importance of laying out gardens

An important aspect of the interviews conducted with Batho’s gardeners is the questions that relate to their relationships with their gardens, what their gardens mean to them, and their emotional and spiritual attachment to their gardens. The responses to these questions explain, in part, why Batho’s gardeners continue to garden despite the odds stacked against them.

The overwhelming majority of Batho’s gardeners stated that their gardens are a constant source of personal gratification, happiness and joy in their lives. Zim expressed her relationship with her garden as follows: “Yes, to sit down to think with my mind, it [the garden] keeps me thinking a lot. I feel happy. I like my garden very, very much. The garden makes me happy”.¹⁵⁸ Zim also confessed that her relationship with her garden has a deeper dimension because her plants and flowers are a source of companionship for her: “In the morning, I tell the flowers: ‘Good morning my beautiful flowers!’”.¹⁵⁹ As a result, Zim never feels lonely because of the constant presence of the plants and flowers in her garden.¹⁶⁰ Languza also finds much happiness and joy in his garden and he particularly appreciates the sense of satisfaction he gets from clipping his hedge: “Sometimes when I finished to cut it I go far in the street and I look how nice it is”.¹⁶¹ Languza also mentioned that he derives much joy and inspiration from watching other people clipping their topiary. As a child, he enjoyed watching Dr James Moilola¹⁶² clipping the impressive arches in his garden in Moilola Street in Batho’s Four-and-Six section and decided that one day he would have similar arches.¹⁶³

Some Batho gardeners, including Languza, are also conscious of the fact that their gardens are not only a source of happiness and joy for themselves but also for others. The happiness and joy Batho’s gardens bring to others may take many forms, such as visiting and enjoying

¹⁵⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms K.M. Zim*, Batho, 28.10.2014.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Languza*, Batho, 9.7.2014.

¹⁶² For more information on Moilola, see Chapter 7.

¹⁶³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Languza*, Batho, 9.7.2014.

gardens, finding inspiration in gardens and also receiving plants and flowers from garden owners. Languza explained that his friends enjoy visiting his garden and being photographed in front of his unusual hedge¹⁶⁴ (Image 9/24). According to Mary Goodman (born 1961), her rose garden is a source of joy not only for her friends but also for school girls who, without asking permission, pick roses to wear as corsages on their school uniforms.¹⁶⁵ Khantwane confessed that she appreciates it when passers-by compliment her on her garden or even pick flowers because it means that they also enjoy the fruits of her labour. “They ask many questions and they ask for flowers”,¹⁶⁶ Khantwane said, but she does not mind because it fills her with pride.¹⁶⁷

Gabriel Thekisoie, a Batho gardener known for his beautiful roses, confessed that he has a strong emotional bond with his garden. “Too much [sic] people ask me: ‘How do you get your garden like this?’ I tell them: ‘You must love your garden’”.¹⁶⁸ Despite the emotional fulfilment gardening brings for Thekisoie, he also warned that there is a price to be paid by those who take gardening seriously: “That is why I do not have friends – I work in the garden every day”.¹⁶⁹ Apart from bringing her happiness and joy, Ngatane explained that spending time in her garden also has a spiritual dimension because when she does not work in her garden, she meditates in it. Ngatane confessed that three times a week, at approximately five o’ clock in the afternoon, she can be found in her garden reading the Bible.¹⁷⁰

Most Batho gardeners stressed the importance of laying out gardens for reasons which vary from a garden being a reflection of the owner’s character, gardening bringing emotional and spiritual fulfilment, to gardening making a positive contribution to the preservation of the environment. Thekisoie believes that it is important that township dwellers lay out gardens

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms G.M. Goodman, Batho, 27 & 29.10.2014.*

¹⁶⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.L. Khantwane, Batho, 21.4.2015.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr G.M. Thekisoie, Batho, 4.11.2014.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms E.M. Ngatane, Batho, 29.10.2014.*

so that “people must see that the man who lives there is not a drunk”.¹⁷¹ For him and other gardeners, the state of a garden is ultimately a reflection of the owner’s character. Like Thekisoie, Kelebogile Mahabane also believes that it is important for residents to lay out gardens since the state of a yard reveals something of the owner. In fact, she does not tolerate a neglected yard: “I hate it when I pass a yard and it does not have a garden”.¹⁷² Similarly, Ditema argued that a neat garden shows people that “the owner of the yard is nice and the owner of the yard likes to live”.¹⁷³ Ditema also stressed the emotional dimension of gardening: “To do the garden is to show people how you live and how you feel”.¹⁷⁴ While Thekisoie, Kelebogile Mahabane and Ditema argued that a neat garden in front of a house is an indication of the owner’s character, Florence Segoe is convinced that an attractive garden with neatly-clipped hedges is a reflection of something deeper: “It shows that the owners, the people who have plants, have living souls”.¹⁷⁵

Other gardeners stressed the link between gardening and health as well as the link between gardening and preservation of the natural environment. Concerning the health benefits offered by gardening, interviewees stressed the advantages both in terms of physical health and emotional well-being. Languza argued that gardening “gives you good health”,¹⁷⁶ meaning a healthy body. Kikisi Lekutu (born 1950) explained that she enjoys gardening for much the same reason, namely the physical benefits thereof. For Lekutu, working in the garden is not hard work but pleasure “because I am exercising”.¹⁷⁷ Mavis Melamu (born 1953) is convinced that gardening not only benefits the physical but also the emotional aspect of human beings. She believes that gardening “is a stress release”;¹⁷⁸ therefore, she works in her garden every morning.¹⁷⁹ Ntombi Pongola (born 1981) also appreciates gardening for its

¹⁷¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr G.M. Thekisoie*, Batho, 4.11.2014.

¹⁷² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms K.G. Mahabane*, Batho, 7 & 20.11.2014.

¹⁷³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr P.S. Ditema*, Batho, 8.5.2013.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms F.K. Segoe*, Batho, 4.11.2014.

¹⁷⁶ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr F.M. Languza*, Batho, 9.7.2014.

¹⁷⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms K.M. Lekutu*, Batho, 27.10.2014.

¹⁷⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.G. Melamu*, Batho, 24 & 27.10.2014.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

emotional benefits. Referring to her own garden, she explained: “That garden brings healing to me – sometimes when I am sad, I go there”.¹⁸⁰ Joy Direko (born 1944) and R.P. Moiloa highlighted another aspect, namely the nutritional value of food gardening, and argued that vegetable gardening should be prioritised. While they acknowledged the value of ornamental gardening as an important part of Batho’s gardening tradition, they argued that an increase in food gardening will do much to alleviate hunger in Batho.¹⁸¹ Hlubi emphasised the link between gardening and the natural environment and, according to him, gardening “is very important for the environment”.¹⁸² Ngo also stressed the importance of gardening for the environment because, as he explained, “we need fresh air – the plants and trees are making fresh air”.¹⁸³

In addition to the themes discussed above, the oral history interviews conducted with Batho’s gardeners also covered other aspects related to their gardens, such as the different garden spaces and how they are being demarcated and used; the various plant species in their gardens, including herbs, fruit and vegetables; access to water sources, water harvesting and watering methods and the involvement of family members in maintaining the gardens and their respective duties, such as sweeping, weeding, digging and, of course, clipping hedges and other topiary. Sweeping as a gardening-related activity is an issue that was specifically addressed because it relates to the traditional practice of yard-sweeping discussed in Chapter 2. It was found that while many Batho gardeners still prefer bare compacted soil being swept daily with a handmade grass or twig broom, others, particularly young gardeners, have opted for more attractive lawn instead. Other issues that were addressed but, because of space limitations, are not discussed in this thesis include the slow-changing traditional gender-based labour division, the gardeners’ challenges concerning the maintenance of their gardens and their future plans for their gardens. These and other aspects related to Batho’s gardens may be the subject of future research.

¹⁸⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms N. Pongola*, Batho, 16.4.2012.

¹⁸¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms J.M. Direko*, Batho, 11.11.2014; *Mr R.P. Moiloa*, Batho, 30.3.2011.

¹⁸² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr J.T. Hlubi*, Batho, 1.5.2013.

¹⁸³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr N.T. Ngo*, Batho, 10 & 24.11.2014.

9.6 The future of Batho's topiary gardens

Concerning the future of Batho's topiary gardens and the enduring popularity of the formal garden style, particularly the *simple formal axial garden*, it seems as though this aesthetic is not losing ground. *In fact, based on the enduring popularity of this garden style, it is argued that the semi-vernacular location garden as an ornamental garden has come to fruition in the form of the semi-vernacular township garden, of which Batho's semi-vernacular topiary gardens are a prime example.* Not only do Batho's gardeners voice their strong preference for this style, but newly-laid-out gardens in Batho prove this claim in a tangible way. This trend is particularly noticeable in the gardens laid out in front of the new government-funded Hlasela¹⁸⁴ houses. A central garden path and symmetrical flowerbeds arranged according to the north-south and east-west axes (Image 9/54), brick-edged rectangular, square or circular flowerbeds (Image 9/55) and a basic grid pattern (Image 9/56), are clearly visible in new Batho gardens. Formality is also noticeable in the way in which seeds are sown and seedlings planted, namely in rows (Image 9/57). Furthermore, it also appears as though the concept of the *agricultural garden*, particularly as far as the inclusion of the traditional maize patch is concerned, is still part of Batho's gardening culture (Image 9/58). Although this type of garden is mostly seen on elderly people's plots, its prevalence provides a vital link not only with black people's garden tradition in general but also Batho's garden tradition in particular.

Concerning the future of Batho's topiary gardens and the general state of gardening in Batho, the township's gardeners are generally positive. Marumo is convinced that Batho's gardens and gardening culture will not only survive but prosper because, as she explained: "I think it is part of our lives".¹⁸⁵ Regarding the effects of climate change, extended periods of drought conditions and inadequate water sources on Batho's gardens, Marumo was not too concerned: "At least we are not in the desert yet".¹⁸⁶ Other gardeners such as Mogaecho are more concerned about the impact of climate change because they have already seen the

¹⁸⁴ So-called 'Hlasela houses' were built in Batho and other Free State townships as part of a township renewal initiative called Operation Hlasela. This project was launched in Batho in August 2009 by the Free State Provincial Government. W. Ngobeni, "The changing face of townships", *Operation Hlasela News*, launch edition 2010, p. 2; A. Magashule, "Working together we can fast-track service delivery", *Operation Hlasela News*, December 2010, pp. 2-4.

¹⁸⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms M.M. Marumo, Batho, 28.10.2014.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

effects of it in their gardens. According to Mogaecho, “the Free State has become dry and hot and it is quite heavy on the plants”.¹⁸⁷ Many of the roses his grandmother, Emily Mogaecho, had planted in the garden years ago perished because of the excessive heat spells and extended periods of drought experienced in the region in recent years. Goodman also lamented the effects of climate change on her garden: “It [the garden] changed because of the temperature. The heat is too much; the plants die; there is no rain”.¹⁸⁸

Many other Batho gardeners share Mogaecho’s and Goodman’s concerns and the majority of the gardeners interviewed for this study identified drought conditions, inadequate rainfall, depleted soil, as well as the high price of municipal water as their main challenges. For Hlubi, the rising cost of municipal water is the biggest challenge: “You cannot use water when you want because we [Batho residents] have to pay for it”.¹⁸⁹ According to Mogaecho, Hlubi and other Batho gardeners, the mentioned water-related challenges pose the biggest threat to Batho’s topiary gardens.¹⁹⁰ All is not lost, though, because the tough, drought-resistant privet has proven to be the saving grace for many gardeners. Batho’s gardeners praise the durability of privet and its ability to withstand extreme climatic conditions, including drought and excessive heat. Motingoe argued that had it not been for his clipped privet front hedge, his garden would have looked rather miserable: “When there is no hedge, there is no green”.¹⁹¹ Sebeela is another gardener who found that privet is able to easily withstand all weather conditions and he praised its longevity: “It [hedge] is always green – winter or summer it stays like this [green]”.

Finally, it is important to highlight and discuss the prime reasons why Batho’s gardeners created their topiary gardens because, in retrospect, these reasons are not only relevant to the history but also the future of these gardens. Importantly, the reasons put forward are not based on this chapter only but also on information provided in previous chapters. When

¹⁸⁷ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M. Mogaecho*, Batho, 9.4.2013.

¹⁸⁸ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms G.M. Goodman*, Batho, 27 & 29.10.2014.

¹⁸⁹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr J.T. Hlubi*, Batho, 1.5.2013.

¹⁹⁰ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interviews conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M. Mogaecho*, Batho, 9.4.2013; *Mr J.T. Hlubi*, Batho, 1.5.2013.

¹⁹¹ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr M.S. Motingoe*, Batho, 18.4.2016.

asked about the reason(s) why they made the gardens, the gardeners' responses varied from "others in Batho do it",¹⁹² "it is a Batho tradition",¹⁹³ "it looks beautiful and neat"¹⁹⁴ to "I have a talent for it".¹⁹⁵ However, it is also important to reflect on other possible reasons which may lurk beneath these answers. Apart from the reasons already identified and discussed, namely the role played by the black garden labourers, the white garden owners and municipal officials, such as Cook and Cooper, other factors also need to be considered.¹⁹⁶

A fundamental reason why Batho's gardeners created their topiary gardens is that the gardeners, as members of a dominated culture, *viewed white people's gardens as an example to follow*. This phenomenon should be viewed within the context of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing discussed earlier. During a time when white culture, specifically English culture, was seen as a measure of accomplishment, these gardens were imitated and aspired to. Another reason, which closely relates to the first, is that Batho's residents *saw topiary gardens as status symbols in their community* in the same way verandah houses and wooden floors were considered as such. For those Batho residents who had managed to achieve a certain standard of living, a garden was considered an indication of a person's social standing in the community. As social conditions improved in Batho – initially during the 1920s and early 1930s but also during the post-War period – a desire to beautify the domestic environment became visible among a certain class of residents and found expression in gardening. Gradually, the less-fortunate classes also began to display an interest in gardening, albeit in modest terms. A further reason why Batho's gardeners created the topiary gardens is the fact that topiary and the art of clipping plants was *an achievable and accessible way of creating an aesthetically attractive environment*. The fact that topiary has more to do with skill than financial ability, meant that even the poorest residents could create topiary gardens.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr E.G. Madito*, Batho, 6.10.2010.

¹⁹³ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr R.P. Moilola*, Batho, 30.3.2011.

¹⁹⁴ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Ms J. Modisapudi*, Batho, 17.1.2011.

¹⁹⁵ National Museum Oral History Collection, *Interview conducted by H.J. du Bruyn with: Mr A.P. Koitheng*, Batho, 12.4.2010.

¹⁹⁶ Du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the...", p. 74.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

An additional reason deals with the mentioned *dominant/dominated culture dichotomy*. Black gardeners, as members of a dominated culture but also as victims of social control mechanisms¹⁹⁸ implemented as part of the segregation and apartheid systems, did not have much control over their own lives. It is argued that by creating and maintaining their own gardens at home, the gardeners gained some form of personal control, even if it was on the municipality's land instead of their own and limited to the clipping of plants according to their personal tastes. Thus, the garden became the only space over which they had direct control and it provided them with an opportunity for creative expression. Closely related to this argument is the Batho residents' sense of cultural identity and it is argued that they derived a sense of identity from developing and maintaining their gardens, hence, the popular belief among Batho's gardeners that the clipping of plants and shrubs is a Batho tradition. Thus, it is argued that the Batho gardeners' garden style preference and taste became symbolic of their group identity.¹⁹⁹ As Batho's gardening culture strengthened and topiary became more established, the practice became entrenched in the residents' cultural identity as something traditional rather than European per se. Conan's hypothesis that dominated groups and victims of systemic discrimination "tend to stick to traditional gardens"²⁰⁰ is also applicable to Batho's gardeners and their preference for formality and topiary.²⁰¹

The final reason why Batho's residents created their topiary gardens and still maintain them today relates to deteriorating socio-economic circumstances of which crime and criminality, as previously discussed, is an unfortunate by-product. It became clear during the interviews conducted with Batho's gardeners that their gardens have become *places of refuge during times when they feel unsafe and vulnerable*. The garden as a place of refuge must be considered in close relation to the ancient concept of the garden as an enclosed entity, that is, a fenced-in or hedged-in piece of land which satisfies a deep-rooted need for enclosure (see Chapter 1). Therefore, the fact that gardens provide so-called 'safe spaces' or 'safe

¹⁹⁸ Consider in this regard control mechanisms such as permits giving permission to seek work, work permits, residential permits, lodger's permits, personal identification cards and the hated apartheid-era passbooks, to name a few.

¹⁹⁹ This argument is based on arguments maintained by J.S. Duncan, "Landscape taste as a symbol of group identity: a Westchester county village", *Geographical Review* 63(3), July 1973, pp. 334-355.

²⁰⁰ M. Conan, "From vernacular gardens to a social anthropology of gardening" in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 192.

²⁰¹ Du Bruyn, "'Township Topiary': the...", pp. 74-75.

havens' for their owners, must be considered in close relation to the argument stated earlier that gardens satisfy a deep emotional and spiritual need for many Batho gardeners. This is not a new phenomenon but certainly one that has become more prominent in recent years. This phenomenon may not be the reason why the gardens were created in the first place but it is an important reason why they are being maintained. While each of the reasons that Batho's gardeners created and maintain(ed) their topiary gardens, are rooted in specific historical, social, economical and political circumstances, processes, factors and trends, it is important to, once again, emphasise the intangible dimension of Batho's topiary gardens, particularly concerning the gardens' classification in terms of the Burden model's AB axis. As indicated in the discussion of the Batho gardeners' personal testimonies, intangible elements such as memories, nostalgia, emotions, feelings of safety and security, aesthetics and symbolism (for example, the symbolic values attached to British culture) also *played an important role in the gardeners' desire to create and maintain the gardens as well as the meaning and significance they attach to their gardens.*

9.7 Concluding remarks

The main objective of this chapter was to discuss the making of 'township topiary' as an indigenised and Africanised version of classic European-style topiary. During the oral history interviews conducted with Batho gardeners, they expressed and explained their strong preferences for the formal garden style and, of course, topiary. Based on extensive fieldwork conducted in Batho as well as conventional research done on the subject, the main types and styles of 'township topiary' were identified, discussed and illustrated with accompanying images. Batho's topiary gardens as semi-vernacular gardens, the influence of Batho's topiary gardens beyond the township's boundaries, and the future of the gardens were also discussed. Based on these discussions, it is argued that gardens and the act of gardening hold meaning and significance for Batho's gardeners on a number of levels, including emotional and spiritual levels. One interviewee's explanation that 'to garden is to show people how you live and how you feel' illustrates this argument in straightforward terms. Yet, this quote also illustrates the complexity of Batho's gardens in the sense that they should be understood and interpreted on multiple levels, ranging from the concrete (physical) to the abstract (emotional and spiritual).

Ultimately, Batho's topiary gardens represent much more than mere beautification because they are also expressions of human dignity, respectability and what it means to be a human being in the contemporary South African township environment. Consequently, Batho's topiary gardens are also meaningful on a level other than the personal, namely as prototypes of the South African 'location garden' and 'township garden' genre. Therefore, Batho's topiary gardens should not only be studied and understood in their local context but also in their national context and, importantly, they should be preserved and celebrated as a significant part of South Africa's gardening culture and garden heritage.

CHAPTER 10

EVALUATION

It was stated in the Introduction that the *main purpose* of this study was to investigate the origin, history and significance of Batho's topiary gardens from a cultural-historical perspective. Based on the main purpose, the *main theme* of the study focused on aspects of gardens, gardening culture and the development of a semi-vernacular garden style in Batho, Mangaung, during the period 1918-1939. It was also stated that the fundamental *research problem* of this study was an attempt to understand why the style of the majority of Batho's gardens resembles the classical European garden style characterised by a mostly formal layout with trimmed edges, hedges and individual plants clipped into various shapes. In order to address the research problem, a total of 12 key *research questions* were posed in the Introduction. These and related questions were subsequently addressed in the nine chapters that constitute the main body of the thesis. Based on the research evidence presented and the arguments made in these chapters, the main findings and conclusions of this study are presented in this final chapter, the Evaluation. It must be emphasised that although the main focus of this study was Batho's gardens and man-made landscapes, the same arguments are, to a greater or lesser degree, also applicable to the gardens and man-made landscapes of most of South Africa's older townships, including many not mentioned in this thesis. Consequently, the main findings and conclusions have a wider application than Batho only.

Considering the main purpose and theme, research problem and research questions of this study, it essentially came down to an attempt to trace the cultural-historical development and evolution of Batho's topiary gardens not only as *semi-vernacular topiary gardens* but also as *semi-vernacular location gardens* and, subsequently, *semi-vernacular township gardens*. In addition, this study traced the evolution and transition of the South African location and township garden from its origin as a *food-only* garden (agricultural garden and/or horticultural field) to a *food-and-ornamental* garden and, eventually, a mostly *ornamental-only* semi-vernacular and hybrid garden, complete with topiary. This evolutionary and transitional process should be viewed against a broad historical background which included, among others, a discussion of gardens and gardening as expressions of culture, the historical

development of the vernacular garden as an international phenomenon and the art of topiary as an integral aspect of the British and European formal garden style. The historical development and evolution of topiary as essentially a patrician garden art and how it, in turn, influenced the vernacular garden, formed part of this historical background. The history of gardening in Bloemfontein and the prevalence of topiary in Bloemfontein's gardens (1846-1939) were also discussed. The rest of the thesis focused on the historical development and making of Batho as a garden location (1918-1939), as well as aspects related to this history, including the education and employment of the black gardener (or garden labourer) as a key role-player in the history of Batho's topiary gardens. The remainder of the thesis focused on the development of a gardening culture in Batho and the making of 'township topiary' (1918-1939). Ultimately, the objective of this study was to present a holistic, comprehensive, integrated and contextualised history of Batho's topiary gardens.

Main findings and conclusions

This study led to a number of research findings and conclusions, including the following:

A Dutch blueprint refined by the British

It was found that the Dutch who arrived at the Cape of Good Hope (hereafter the Cape) in 1652 established a basic formal garden design blueprint similar to the layout displayed by the formal gardens of their homeland. This blueprint – essentially based on the ancient four-square design – was characterised by a formal framework with vegetable and flowerbeds laid out in the form of quadrants and parallelograms and interspersed with straight canals and rills. *Based on the research conducted for this study, it is argued that the garden design blueprint established by the Dutch laid the foundation for the simple formal axial garden which became the basic pattern to which most South African gardens have adhered ever since.* A key characteristic of the formal Dutch garden was the proliferation of clipped hedges and edges which initially served as enclosures to protect flowers, fruit and vegetables against the elements and other dangers. In the colonial context of the early Cape settlement, the Company Garden's famous hedges as well as those that had been planted as garden enclosures by the white colonists and their descendants became symbolic of the colonists literally and figuratively 'hedging-off' their claim to the land and enforcing their authority

on the landscape. This symbolic process repeated itself in towns and villages as well as on farms in the Cape Colony and beyond, including the Transgariep, which became the Orange Free State. *It is reasoned that the hedges symbolised power, colonisation, permanence, dispossession, domination and control over the indigenous and black 'Bantu'-speaking population groups.*

Research conducted for this study has shown that the British colonists who arrived at the Cape during the course of the 18th and 19th centuries relaxed and refined the original formal Dutch blueprint in accordance with their taste for cottage-style planting. *Consequently, planting became more informal but was still confined to the overall formal framework. Importantly, both the Dutch and the British used topiary – in this case, clipped hedges and edges – to enclose their gardens and define the all-important overall formal structure thereof.* The descendants of the British settlers as well as the Dutch, German and French colonists who collectively became known as Boers (later Afrikaners), adhered to the formal Dutch framework in their gardens but, in accordance with the British cottage-style trend, the planting inside the formal framework became semi-formal, particularly after the Anglo-Boer War (hereafter the War; 1899-1902). During the first half of the 20th century, British influence on South African garden style and gardening culture grew even stronger when the Edwardian 'architectural garden', characterised by a formal structure combined with semi-formal or even informal planting, became the dominant trend. *It is argued that despite the influence of new garden fashions and trends, the classical simple formal axial arrangement remained the blueprint for post-War South African garden design and layout.*

It was found that the indigenous groups (for example, the Khoekhoe, Khoesan and their descendants) and the 'Bantu'-speaking peoples (for example, Sotho and Tswana) *who were exposed to and influenced by the white people's gardening culture and garden style*, also laid out their gardens according to the Dutch example, namely gardens characterised and defined by a formal framework. It appears that inside the formal framework the planting remained predominantly formal and regimented, especially when compared to the preference for more informal and relaxed planting, which was visible in the gardens that had been laid out by white people after the War. *Based on these trends it is reasoned that while the white colonists' gardens gradually became more informal, particularly as far as planting style was concerned, the indigenous and black people's gardens gradually became more formal and*

regimented. This trend became even more visible and pronounced after World War II (1939-1945), but particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, when the average white South African suburban garden owner succumbed to the new fashion for informal landscape and naturalistic gardens. The formal framework of old was abandoned in favour of an informal layout with curved lines and naturalistic features.¹ Any type of topiary, particularly clipped hedges and edges, became undesirable and out of place. *It is reasoned that the exact opposite occurred in the average location and later the township garden where the taste for formality and topiary grew stronger and more appealing to black gardeners*. This uncompromising preference for formality and regularity had remained intact throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century, and there is no sign of it losing favour. Batho's topiary gardens may be considered a prime example of this phenomenon.

Stockades, screens, fences and hedges: the need for enclosure

A key argument presented in this thesis is that European and British settlers and colonists first brought topiary and the art of clipping to the African continent, particularly Southern and South Africa. *It is argued that through a process of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing triggered by the colonisation of Africa by the Europeans and the British during the 1800s, topiary, particularly clipped hedges, was adopted, adapted and indigenised*. In South Africa's case (the Cape in particular), this process commenced much earlier, as explained in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Thus, topiary, which is essentially a patrician garden art, became indigenised and Africanised in the African context. At the same time, however, it is also reasoned that on the basis of research evidence presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, the concept of a fence or screen as a form of enclosure for traditional African villages, homesteads, fields and gardens, had already been established among some indigenous groups long before the Europeans and British arrived on the continent. The same argument also applies to some indigenous groups and 'Bantu'-speaking black people in Southern and South Africa. It is suggested that a possible link exists between the popularity of clipped hedges and topiary, particularly their prevalence in the semi-vernacular South African location garden of the early 20th century, and the traditional stockade and later the unclipped living hedge. *Although this claim needs to be researched further, it is reasoned that some*

¹ For examples of such garden layouts, see S. Eliovson, *The complete gardening book*, pp. 22-27.

indigenous groups and 'Bantu'-speaking black people, such as the Tswana and Barolong, seemed to have had an age-old natural preference for fences and, importantly, unclipped living hedges as a means of enclosure. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the white colonists reinforced the concept of the clipped hedge as the desirable means of garden enclosure among the indigenous groups and 'Bantu'-speaking black people.

Agricultural gardens and horticultural fields: from vernacular to semi-vernacular

It is reasoned that the fluid boundaries which existed between gardens (vegetables) and fields (crops) in the traditional African context led to the emergence of what may be termed an 'agricultural garden' and/or 'horticultural field'. Such a garden or field was characterised by crops, vegetables and greens planted on a small scale and in close proximity with no strict separation between types. The agricultural garden and horticultural field – essentially two descriptions of the same phenomenon – were originally *vernacular* and displayed an *orderly but mostly informal layout* since they lacked a formal framework. According to the African tradition, seed was typically scattered or sown randomly and mostly not planted in rows. Although rows and regularity were not absent, such an arrangement was not the norm. Due to the influence of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing triggered by European colonialism and Western influences, the agricultural garden and horticultural field became, in many cases, *semi-vernacular* and began to display a *mostly formal layout* with a predominantly formal framework and seed sown in rows instead of scattered randomly. This was particularly the case in the region which later became known as South Africa.

Many of Batho's domestic and allotment gardens *resembled small-scale agricultural gardens and horticultural fields* and may, therefore, be described as such. This comparison is applicable to the Batho gardens that were laid out during the 1920s and 1930s, but also the gardens laid out in more recent times, including some contemporary gardens referred to in this study. *It seems as though the distinction between garden and field was initially much more pronounced in the case of the 'Bantu'-speaking Sotho and Tswana than was the case with gardens and fields in the rest of Africa where, according to research, boundaries were seemingly much more fluid.* However, the traditional strict separation between garden and field, which was visible in South Africa's rural areas and reserves, became more relaxed in the urban location environment of the early 20th century. In other words, definite boundaries

between space(s) allocated for flowers and ornamental shrubs, such as topiary, and those allocated for vegetables and small patches of crops, such as maize, mostly disappeared. This happened in Bloemfontein's old locations and, later, also in Batho. Due to the space restrictions of the location plot and the Batho gardeners' broad and inclusive understanding of the concept of a garden, a maize patch may be found right next to a bed of roses and a bed of spinach may shoulder a patch of hollyhocks in a typical Batho garden. *Thus, it is argued that the ornamental becomes utilitarian and the utilitarian becomes ornamental in a layout and composition that makes the best of small plots and limited resources.* It seems as though Batho's allotment gardens also blurred the boundaries between the traditional concept of a garden and a field; therefore, they were neither strictly 'garden' nor 'field' but a combination of the two.

The influence of British and European missionaries, mission schools and training institutions on black people's gardens and gardening culture

It is reasoned that the British and European missionaries who felt themselves called to labour in South Africa contributed significantly to the development of a gardening culture among the indigenous and 'Bantu'-speaking black peoples. Research conducted for this study has shown that the Orange Free State and Bloemfontein were no exception. Most missionaries, particularly the British missionaries, taught their brethren the principles of Western-style agriculture and horticulture. Consequently, it was on the mission stations where many indigenous and black people were taught to plant maize and other crops in rows instead of it being scattered or sown randomly. The same applied to the planting of vegetables and greens. It is maintained that one of the direct consequences of this horticultural 'intervention' was increased acculturation and inter-cultural influencing between the European and African cultures. As a result, it caused the *agricultural garden and horticultural field to become predominantly formal and regimented with seeds sown and seedlings planted in rows.* This trend lies at the heart of the development of the semi-vernacular garden, in this case, on the mission stations.

In addition to the mission stations, the schools and training institutions established for the indigenous groups and black people by the missionaries had a profound influence on the gardening culture and garden style preferences of black people in particular. It is argued that

the teaching of practical gardening in mission schools and training institutions contributed significantly to the development of a gardening culture among black people in the Orange Free State and Bloemfontein. Research has shown that the mission school garden became an effective tool for teaching subjects such as Gardening, Horticulture and Nature Study. In many cases, an interest in gardening was stimulated among black learners despite gardening being increasingly associated with menial and manual labour which, in this case, meant labour reserved for black people. In their adult lives, many school learners who had been educated by sympathetic missionaries became either garden labourers or garden owners, or both, and an interest in gardening manifested itself in their own gardens. The learners' exposure to the formal garden style was reinforced in the school garden: typically, rectangular vegetable and flowerbeds, often with multiple sub-divisions, were laid out in geometric patterns inside a square or rectangular framework. In many cases, flowers, vegetables and crops were planted together in the same garden, albeit in separate plots or beds.

Concerning the taste for topiary, it is reasoned that both mission station gardens and mission school gardens played a role in encouraging interest in this garden art. This argument is applicable to clipped hedges in particular because of the widespread custom of enclosing mission station and mission school gardens by means of stone walls, fences or clipped hedges. Gardens were enclosed for practical, aesthetical and, in some cases, spiritual reasons. *As a result, the idea of a garden as an enclosed area was reinforced among some black learners from a young age.* When these learners laid out their own gardens as adults, this trend, particularly the enclosing of gardens by means of clipped hedges, was duplicated.

The influence of Bloemfontein's white garden owners and municipal officials on black people's gardens and gardening culture

It was found that Bloemfontein's white garden owners and a small but influential group of mostly English-speaking municipal officials who shared a concern for and interest in the well-being of Bloemfontein's black inhabitants, played a crucial role in the development of a gardening culture among the city's location residents. Furthermore, the white garden owners and municipal officials also influenced the location dwellers' garden style preferences, of which a taste for topiary – particularly clipped hedges – was no exception.

Firstly, it is maintained that the black and coloured garden labourers who worked in the white people's gardens benefitted from so-called 'gardening relationships' which developed between themselves and their employers to the extent that such relationships were conducive to the transference of gardening knowledge and skills. Because clipped hedges and edges were fashionable in South African and Bloemfontein gardens during the 1920s and 1930s, knowledge and skills related to the art of clipping were also transferred to the black garden labourers, who, in turn, creatively applied such knowledge and skills in their own gardens, most notably in Batho.

Secondly, the role played by certain municipal officials, including the Superintendent of Locations, the Curator of Parks as well as some mayors and councillors, in popularising gardening and encouraging the development of a gardening culture in Batho, must also be highlighted. Pioneering research conducted on this aspect of Batho's garden history revealed important new information. Although the municipal officials' underlying motives were not always pure, it is argued that by emphasising the importance of laying out gardens through the provisioning of 'garden areas' and 'gardening facilities' on bigger location plots, the municipality committed itself to the development of Batho as a garden location. In addition to stressing the importance of an aesthetically pleasing domestic environment by encouraging the planting of trees in Batho's domestic gardens as well as in its parks and squares, municipal officials also emphasised the importance of location gardens being enclosed. As a result, many untidy fences were replaced with clipped hedges as the preferred type of garden enclosure. Through trial and error, Batho's gardeners discovered that various privet species were the most suitable plants for both clipped hedges and other types of topiary in Bloemfontein's harsh climate.

The development of the 20th century semi-vernacular location garden and the emergence of 'township topiary'

It was found that as a result of the above-mentioned developments, clipped hedges became characteristic not only of Bloemfontein's overcrowded location domestic environment in general, but also of the *emerging and evolving semi-vernacular location garden*. The typical semi-vernacular location garden of the 1920s and 1930s, of which Batho's topiary gardens are considered a prime example, was characterised by a duality: cottage-style informality

combined with simplified Edwardian formality. This blend of styles underpinned the development of the post-War semi-vernacular location garden style. To be precise, the early 20th century semi-vernacular location garden was essentially a simple formal axial garden characterised by informal cottage-style planting but, importantly, the overall look appeared to be organised because of the predominantly formal framework which had remained a staple of South African gardens since the arrival of the Dutch in 1652.

Research conducted for this study has shown that the evolving semi-vernacular location garden style eventually gave birth to an indigenised and Africanised version of topiary. *It is reasoned that since Batho's first gardens had been laid out in the 1920s, topiary became indigenised and Africanised in those gardens and that a garden art which is closely associated with British and European gardens had been transformed into a phenomenon which may be described as 'township topiary'.* It is maintained that Batho's gardeners took the basic art of hedge-clipping, to which they were exposed and taught in the white people's gardens, to a new level in their own gardens by experimenting with other styles and shapes. While these styles and shapes had been mostly unknown to them, the end-products display remarkable similarities to classic British and European-style topiary. As a result, Batho's gardens not only sport topiary as stand-alone features but in many cases, those gardens may be described as topiary gardens because of the proliferation of topiary. In other words, many of Batho's gardens are characterised and defined by topiary.

It is maintained that Batho's topiary gardens are considered hybrid (or 'hybridist') and semi-vernacular because most of them share the following characteristics: firstly, a predominantly formal and regimented layout; secondly, the presence of topiary in the form of clipped hedges or edges which serve either a functional or an aesthetic purpose; and, thirdly, the presence of local elements and indigenous plants. The inclusion of traditional elements, such as the customary maize patch, lends the semi-vernacular location garden a unique character. Thus, at face value Batho's gardens appear to be English (British) but certain elements, including local materials and plants, root the gardens in their local context. During the 1920s and 1930s, various renditions of the *semi-vernacular location garden genre* developed in locations throughout the Union and had since then underpinned the development of the semi-vernacular township garden as a garden type. *Concerning Batho, it is argued that considering the enduring popularity of this garden style, the semi-vernacular location*

garden as an ornamental garden has come to fruition in the form of the semi-vernacular township garden, of which Batho's semi-vernacular topiary gardens are a prime example.

Generational gardening: the lifeblood of Batho's gardening culture

The transfer of a culture of gardening from one generation of gardeners to the next was identified as an important aspect of Batho's gardening culture. This ongoing process, which was revealed through oral interviews conducted with Batho's gardeners, involves the transference of gardening knowledge and skills in the form of oral tradition as an intangible cultural product to the next generation. For the purpose of this study, the mentioned inter-generational transfer process is called 'generational gardening' and constitutes the lifeblood of Batho's gardening culture. In addition to the transference of general gardening knowledge and skills, this transfer process is also characterised by the transference of knowledge and skills related to topiary. It was found that this process is mostly spontaneous and occurs within families, between families and among friends and acquaintances. Gardening knowledge and skills are considered neither sacred nor secret and are generously shared with novice gardeners. This generosity of spirit relates to the existence of strong support networks within Batho's community of gardeners. Often the exchange of gardening knowledge and skills is accompanied by the exchange of plants, seedlings, seeds and, in some cases, also finances needed for the purchasing of gardening necessities.

The effect of crime and criminality on Batho's topiary gardens

Although crime, criminality and other social vices had been part of the lives of Batho's residents since the 1930s and 1940s, the practical impact it had on their gardens and garden elements, such as hedges, was relatively unknown. It was only through oral interviews conducted with Batho's gardeners that the real effect of crime and criminality on gardens and garden design was revealed. *This discovery is significant since it emphasises the inter-connectedness between social issues and people's living environments of which gardens are an important part.* This inter-connectedness supports the argument presented in the Introduction that there is inter-dependence between the garden history of a nation or a community on the one hand, and broader social and political issues on the other. Crime and criminality, which has also become a political issue in recent times, affect both the design

and functionality of Batho's gardens. Safety and security and the implementation of effective security measures in response to crime and criminal activities impact gardens and their appearance, because the garden elements which compromise the safety and security of a dwelling need to be re-assessed.

Long considered an appropriate way of ensuring privacy and keeping strangers, stray animals and other unwanted elements at bay, clipped hedges had, in recent times, become mostly ineffective as a security measure. Gardeners are being confronted with difficult questions: should aesthetics and sentimentality or safety and security be the deciding factor concerning clipped hedges? Should the hedges remain, be adjusted or replaced altogether? Consequently, some Batho gardeners adjusted their hedges by making them see-through or by the addition of extra safety elements, such as metal palisades or wire-netting. Other gardeners opted for the drastic alternative, namely replacing the clipped hedge with a metal security fence. In some cases, razor-wire is placed on top of hedges to act as a physical barrier and visual deterrent. This subject requires further investigation in order to determine the full extent to which crime affects Batho's gardens and the manner in which gardeners respond to this challenge. In fact, the way gardeners cope with this issue is constantly evolving as new and more effective security measures are being implemented.

Vernacular and patrician, tangible and intangible: the classification of Batho's topiary gardens according to the Burden model

The Burden model was not only used as a *theoretical framework* within which this study was positioned, but also as a *methodological tool* to identify and describe Batho's topiary gardens as cultural products in relation to other cultural products. Two important findings should be highlighted. Firstly, according to the Burden model, Batho's topiary gardens are classified as semi-vernacular since *both vernacular and patrician elements are present*. The respective vernacular (African) and patrician (British/European) elements were identified and compared in order to emphasise the semi-vernacular character of Batho's gardens. In terms of this classification, Batho's topiary gardens are also hybrid cultural products. As previously stated, the unmistakable British/European appearance and style of Batho's gardens are deceptive because they are also firmly rooted in the local context. Secondly, as cultural products created by means of cultural labour, Batho's topiary gardens are *tangible*

or material products but, at the same time, also possess an important intangible or non-material dimension. The intangible dimension of Batho's topiary gardens was revealed through the oral interviews conducted with Batho's gardeners. During the interviews, the gardeners expressed their personal feelings about their gardens and shared how issues that are mostly hidden from the casual observer inform the design, layout, demarcation of garden areas for specific uses, adaptation, change and symbolic meaning of their gardens, to name a few.

Misconceptions concerning black people's gardening culture and perceived lack thereof

In addition to the objective of researching and reconstructing the rich history of Batho's topiary gardens and gardening culture, it was deemed necessary to use this study as an opportunity to *challenge the misconception harboured by some white people and members of other racial groups that black Africans lack a gardening culture.* By conducting an in-depth investigation which involved archival research, fieldwork and oral history interviews, it was possible to produce evidence that challenges the widespread ignorance and negative racial stereotypes which fed and reinforced the historical perception that black people are not interested in gardening, particularly ornamental gardening. Extended periods of racial oppression and subjugation as well as the crippling socio-economic deprivation which subsequently followed, seriously *undermined and compromised the natural development of a gardening culture among black people, especially when compared to that which developed among the Europeans, the white colonists and their descendants.* Despite these negative and oppressive circumstances, black people nevertheless managed to develop a gardening culture. It is, however, important that this gardening culture not be compared to that of white people, as some biased historians and ignorant garden writers have done in the past. Black people's gardening culture should be considered a gardening culture in its own right and should be studied on its own terms. Therefore, black people's gardening culture should not be compared to that of other cultures and peoples unless it is done to determine the extent and effects of acculturation and inter-cultural influencing.

The generic characteristics of vernacular gardens applied to Batho's semi-vernacular topiary gardens

In Chapter 2, it was stated that based on the developmental history of the vernacular garden throughout the ages, *seven generic characteristics* appeared to be common not only among pre-20th century vernacular gardens but also among post-20th century vernacular gardens of indigenous communities across the globe. Since it was argued that these characteristics are also displayed in varying degrees by African and South African vernacular gardens, it is important to compare them with Batho's semi-vernacular gardens and to determine to what extent Batho's gardens display these characteristics. While most characteristics apply to Batho's gardens, some apply only partially due to the semi-vernacular nature of Batho's topiary gardens. Therefore, it is reasoned that Batho's gardens are also 1) *designed by the owner(s)* who, in most cases, happen to be the gardener(s); 2) *small or medium-sized* depending on the size of the particular plot and house or dwelling on the plot; 3) *located close to the house or dwelling*; 4) *of a formal or semi-formal design*, in other words, plants are either planted in rows or randomly within the confines of a formal framework; and 5) *enclosed*, whether by a fence or a clipped hedge. The two remaining characteristics are, to some extent, applicable to Batho, namely 6) gardens are *predominantly food gardens* and 7) gardens are *mostly maintained by women*. Concerning the utility or functional nature of Batho's gardens, it is maintained that although they often display a combination of functionality and aesthetics, they have become predominantly ornamental. Thus, in many cases, Batho's gardens have evolved beyond the food-and-ornamental garden stage to the ornamental-only garden stage. Still, a sizeable number of Batho's gardens contain a vegetable bed and/or maize patch, and such gardens display strong characteristics of a small-scale agricultural garden and/or horticultural field. As far as the gender issue is concerned, Batho's gardens are maintained by almost equal numbers of men and women, as stated in Chapter 9. The traditional African conception of agriculture and horticulture as a purely female domain has changed in favour of a more balanced representation of the sexes.

The state of garden history, historical context and an integrated approach

This study attempted not only to contribute to South African garden history scholarship in general but also to further encourage similar studies in local communities, such as Batho,

elsewhere in South Africa. As stated in the Introduction, garden history is a severely neglected historical genre in South African historiography and remains on the margins of professional academic life. Therefore, an urgent need exists for dedicated academic research on all aspects of South Africa's garden history and gardening culture. Because of the general lack of published research, the academic status and integrity of garden history is not widely acknowledged in South African academic circles. Very few post-graduate studies on garden history are being pursued and such studies are usually applied research conducted by scholars who are already established in other disciplines, such as architecture, art history, geography and botany. Garden history is seldom treated as a discipline in its own right. Therefore, each new study on garden history and gardening culture will contribute to addressing a rather dire situation.

This study has shown that certain historical disciplines (or sub-disciplines, according to some historians), such as garden history, can only be successfully approached and studied in a holistic and integrated manner. Therefore, a broad and comprehensive view of the chosen theme is required, as happened to be the case with the history of Batho's topiary gardens. The 'short history' of Batho's topiary gardens (1846 to present) cannot be fully understood without considering its 'long history' (1652-1846). It was found that this approach is particularly desirable when researching and writing about an aspect of colonial history, as is the case with the history of Batho and its topiary gardens. Dealing with colonial history requires an understanding of and sensitivity to the colonial context. Thus, a comprehension of the complexities, contradictions and nuances embedded in the colonial context is crucial.

In the case of this study, an understanding of the applicable context was essential since a connection exists between a garden's design, the historical and environmental contexts, and the factors shaping these contexts, respectively. Thus, it was found that in the case of Batho's topiary gardens a strong connection exists between the design and style of the gardens on the one hand, and the applicable historical context on the other. This study has shown that Batho's garden history does not stand in isolation to developments, trends and changes in garden history on local (Bloemfontein and Mangaung), provincial (Orange Free State), national (South Africa) and international (Africa, Britain and Europe) levels. Because the history of Batho's gardens cannot be separated from the wider history of society, that is, the historical context, the cultural-historical approach was combined with the systematic survey

approach (see Introduction) for the purpose of this study. This approach involved the identification and assessment of a number of gardens in a restricted geographically-identified area, namely Batho, in their rightful context and viewed on the relevant contextual levels mentioned above.

It was also found that a study such as Batho's garden history benefits from an inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approach. In this study, a number of disciplines and sub-disciplines, including community history, oral history, cultural history, political history, social history, environmental history, anthropology, horticulture, botany and archaeology were employed to reconstruct a comprehensive and integrated history of Batho's topiary gardens. In addition to following an inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approach, it was also necessary to follow a multi-source approach, which required the consultation of a wide range of historical sources. In the case of Batho's general and garden history, it was necessary to access and integrate information obtained from archival records, manuscripts, memoirs, diaries, newspapers, books, articles, maps, plans, photographs and oral testimonies. In Batho's case, useful information was often limited to 'bits and pieces' that were 'hidden' in obscure and unlikely sources. Thus, garden history requires in-depth, comprehensive, detailed, disciplined and dedicated research.

Future research and research themes

Despite its detailed account and broad focus, this study does not aspire to be and should not be considered a complete or final history of the subject. Therefore, this study does not claim to provide all possible perspectives on Batho's garden history and gardening culture. The research conducted for this study merely provides a comprehensive narrative. It is the researcher's wish that this study will stimulate debate and encourage continued research and further investigation of an important yet under-researched subject. In addition to the contemporary issues related to sustainable gardening and climate change mentioned in Chapter 9, other topics also need to be pursued in future garden history research projects and post-graduate studies. Such topics include, for example, the role of nostalgia and memories of gardens, particularly those that have ceased to exist; the emotional and psychological benefits of gardening in deprived South African communities, such as townships and informal settlements; the effects of cultural change and adaptation on garden design and

gardening culture; the effects of experiences of loss and dispossession (for example, as a result of apartheid-era forced removals) on garden design and gardening culture; the relationships between gardeners and their gardens; the role of stories and storytelling in the emergence of a so-called ‘narrative garden history’;² and, finally, comparative garden studies. A comparative study could involve, for example, a comparison between the gardens and gardening culture of African-Americans of the southern states of the USA and the gardens and gardening culture of black South African township dwellers.

All of the above-mentioned topics are, of course, also relevant and applicable to Batho and its gardens and gardening culture. However, in Batho’s case, other themes and sub-themes also demand further research and investigation. These include, for example, aspects of Batho’s gardens which were touched on but did not receive in-depth attention in this study. Some of these aspects and themes are mentioned in Chapter 9, including, for example, the different garden areas or spaces and how they are being demarcated and used; the various plant species in Batho’s gardens and where they were obtained; access to water sources, watering methods and water harvesting techniques or the lack thereof; and the labour division and assignment of gardening tasks to individual family members in terms of both gender and age, to name a few. Other themes that could be the subject of future research include the role of traditional religious practices, including ancestral worship, in the garden space; the role of the supernatural among Batho’s gardeners and how it affects garden layout and gardening practices; the decision-making process concerning the garden, in other words, who decides how the garden should be laid out and what type of plants should be planted. Although the issue of crime and criminality and its influence on topiary was the subject of in-depth scrutiny, the ongoing reality of this social trend and its influence on the living environments of Batho’s gardeners, should also be studied further.

South African garden history must aim for a better understanding of the significant role gardens play in the everyday lives of ordinary South Africans, such as the Sarah Khetses, Maria Marumos and other garden-loving residents of Batho. Therefore, South African garden history should, essentially, be people-oriented and, to quote John Dixon Hunt, it must

² See, for example, Kenneth Helphand’s arguments in K. Helphand, “Defiant gardens”, *The Journal of Garden History* 17(2), 1997, pp. 158-159.

“move from cultural contexts and intellectual climates to real gardens and actual gardeners”.³ To be relevant and appropriate, garden history research must generate knowledge and insights that are new, innovative, useful, and, to once again quote Hunt, it “must tell us something that other histories don’t.”⁴ Furthermore, garden history research must investigate and explore the link between ‘gardening in the present’ and ‘gardening in the past’. The key question is: what can today’s gardeners learn from those of the past in order to be successful future gardeners? Concerning the future of gardening in South Africa, important lessons may be learned from Batho’s gardeners. In a water-scarce country, such as South Africa, the traditional concept of a purely ornamental front garden and a separate vegetable garden in the backyard, need to be revisited. Due to chronic drought conditions and limited water resources, the large ornamental garden with expansive lawns and exotic plant species which need copious amounts of water, such as roses and flowering annuals, will have to be reconsidered. Fruit and vegetables rather than lawns will have to be prioritised. *In this regard, the idea of the agricultural garden and horticultural field in which the strict boundaries between the ornamental and the utilitarian are more relaxed, may provide some clues as to how gardening may be approached in the future.*

Ironically, lessons about sustainable gardening may also be learnt from the Netherlands and Britain, the two colonial powers that have originally introduced the traditional European-style garden and topiary in South Africa. Having contributed substantially to South Africa’s gardening culture and having left an agricultural and horticultural legacy of which the remnants are still visible today, both countries are still considered leaders in the fields of agriculture, horticulture and plant sciences. Despite the fact that the Netherlands and Britain are considered water-rich countries, they have made considerable advances as far as sustainable and innovative gardening and horticulture are concerned. Interestingly, garden designers and landscape architects in these two countries marry the traditional formal Dutch and English styles with new garden trends, complete with clipped hedges and other forms of topiary used in novel and inventive ways. Typically, a formal framework is combined with informal planting, but, as in the case of the gardens designed by British designers, Beth

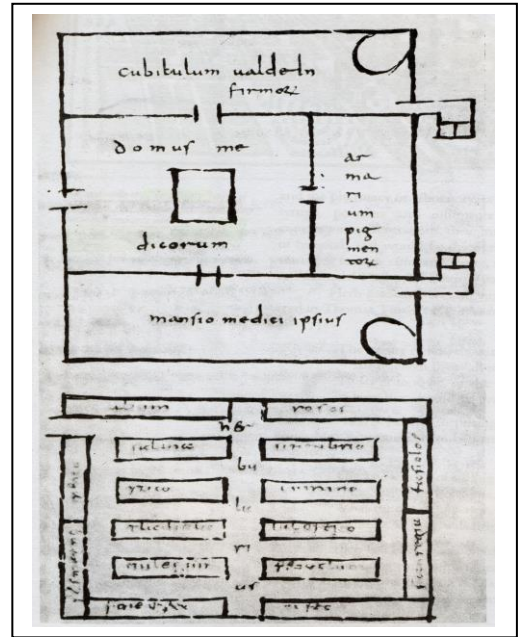
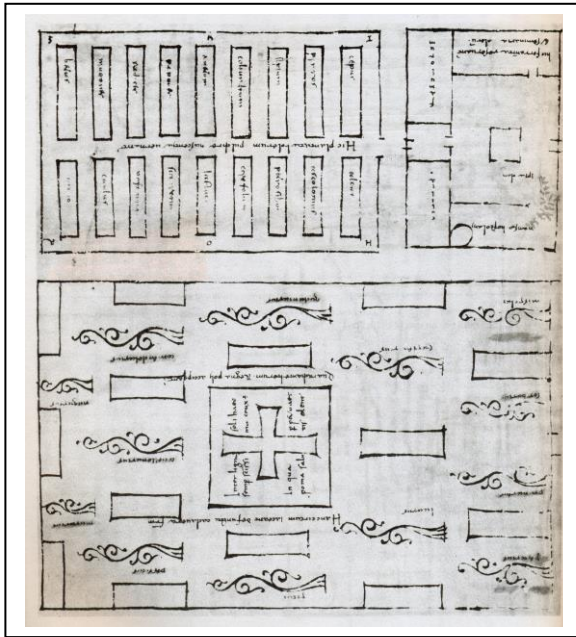
³ J.D. Hunt, “Afterword” in E. de Jong, *Nature and art: Dutch garden and landscape architecture, 1650-1740*, p. 157.

⁴ J.D. Hunt, “Approaches (new and old) to garden history” in M. Conan (ed.), *Perspectives on garden histories*, p. 90.

Chatto, Jinny Blom and Dan Pearson, and Dutch designers, Piet Oudolf and the late Mien Ruys (1904-1999), flowers and ornamentals are often replaced with indigenous and sustainable grass species and herbaceous perennials. The inclusion of fruit and vegetables in the ornamental garden is another trend in contemporary British and Dutch garden design. Thus, the traditional roles assigned to ornamental shrubs, flowers, fruit and vegetables and where and how they are supposed to be planted are being reconsidered.

Just as gardens naturally change and evolve with the seasons and with age, so do garden and landscape design in response to changing tastes, needs and, lately, the reality of climate change. Batho's gardeners, who often had to make do with whatever plants and seeds they could lay their hands on, have learnt many of these lessons long ago. Economic constraints and challenges concerning access to running water have given rise to not only a 'make-do' but also a 'can-do' attitude among Batho's gardeners. The crippling drought which affected most parts of South Africa during the period 2015-2018 forced many gardeners – white gardeners in particular – to rethink their gardens and come up with certain interventions to render their gardens more sustainable and less dependent on constant watering. Expansive lawns are replaced with sustainable types of ground-coverings and drought-sensitive exotic species are replaced with hardy indigenous species – long frowned upon by many gardeners. The important argument is that changing circumstances, climate change in particular, are currently forcing gardeners to adapt and in the process learn the lessons Batho's gardeners had learnt long ago.

ADDENDUM: IMAGES



Images 2/1 & 2/2: two drawings show utility gardens proposed for Benedictine monastery, St Gaul, Switzerland, circa 820 CE. Note symmetrical and geometrical layout (A. Huxley, *An illustrated history of gardening*)

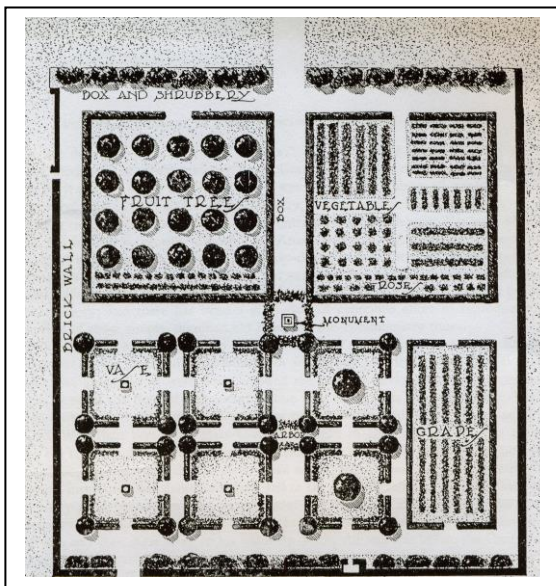


Image 2/3: formal boxwood garden, Westover, Virginia, circa 1726. Note formal symmetrical layout with flowerbeds enclosed by clipped hedges (M.L. Gothein, *A history of garden art*, vol. II)

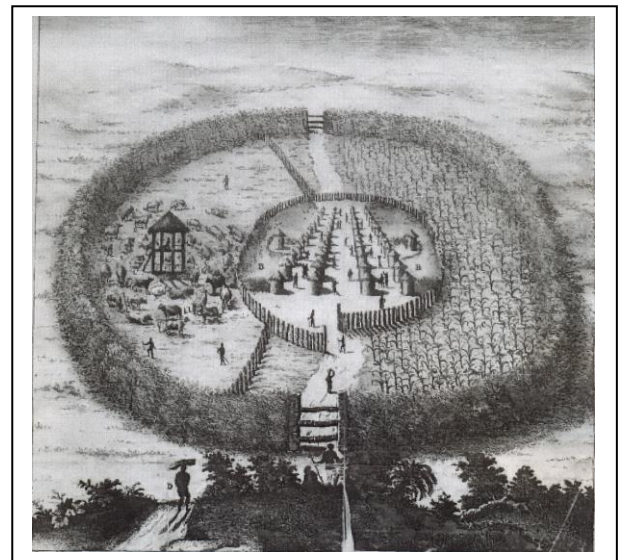


Image 2/4: traditional African homestead, The Gambia, circa early 1730s. Note living hedge (enclosure), stockades, cattle pen, huts and maize garden (F. Moore (ed.), *Travels into the inland parts of Africa: containing a description of the several nations for the space of six hundred miles up the River Gambia*)

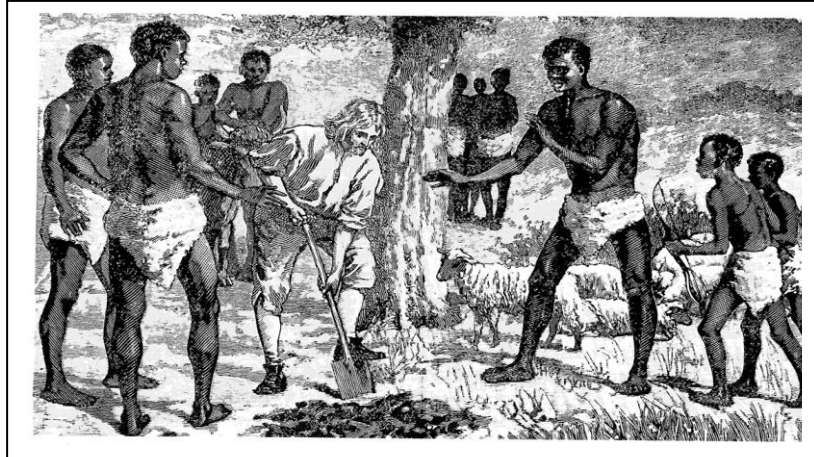


Image 2/5: depiction of Moravian missionary, Georg Schmidt, showing Khoekhoe how to garden, Genadendal, circa 1739 (I. Balie, *Die geskiedenis van Genadendal 1738-1988*)

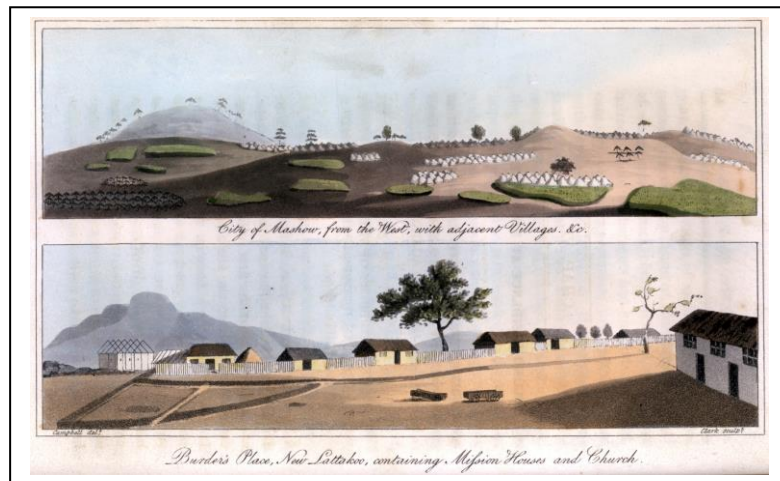


Image 2/6: town of Mashow, circa early 1820s. Note fields/gardens (J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London Missionary Society; being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country, vol. II*)

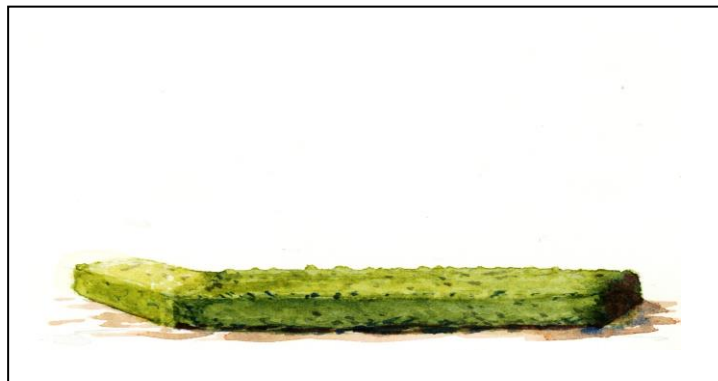


Image 3/1: illustration of clipped edge (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 268)



Image 3/2: illustration of clipped hedges
(National Museum: NM Photo Garden 269)



Image 3/3: illustration of fence-hedge or
'fedge' (National Museum: NM Photo
Garden 270)

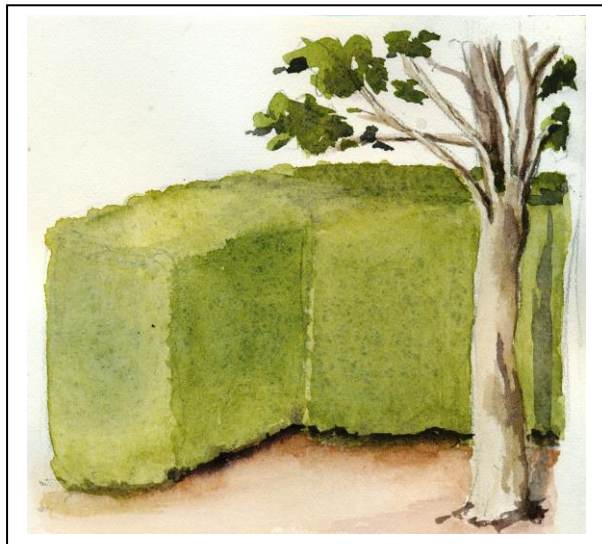


Image 3/4: illustration of 'wall' (National
Museum: NM Photo Garden 271)



Image 3/5: illustration of block-and-plane
(National Museum: NM Photo Garden 272)



Image 3/6: illustration of screen (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 273)

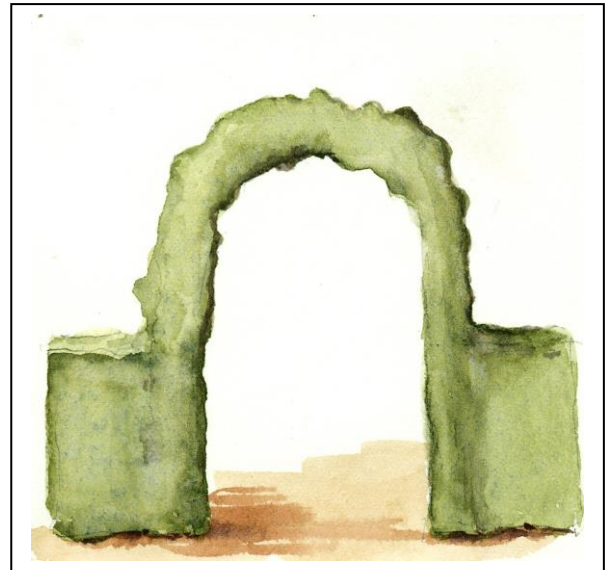


Image 3/7: illustration of arch (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 274)

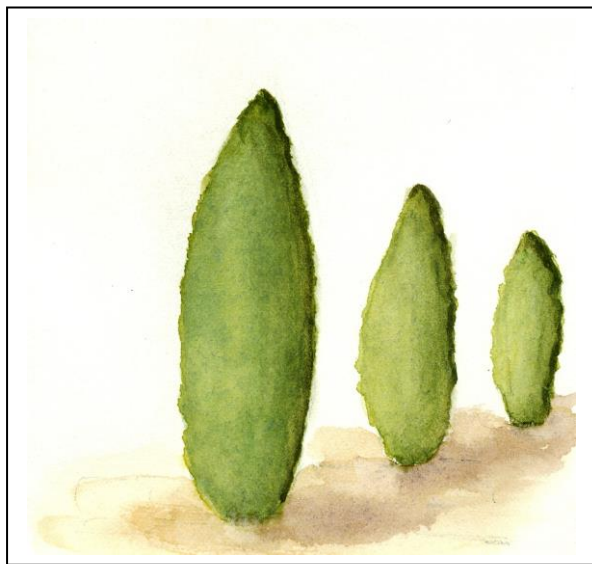


Image 3/8: illustration of pillars (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 275)

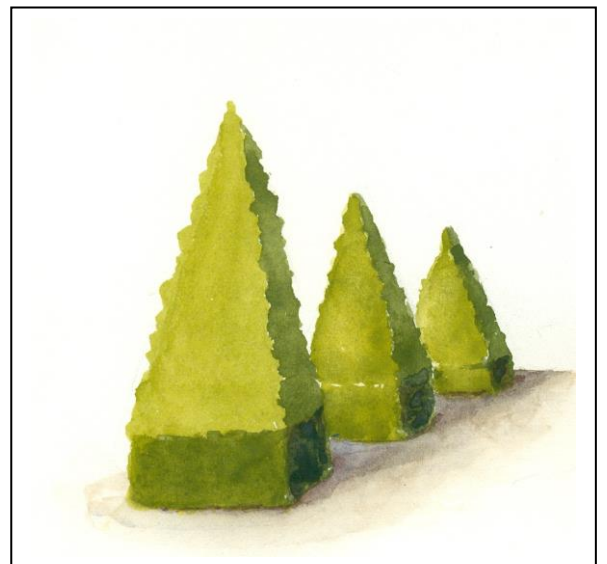


Image 3/9: illustration of obelisks (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 276)

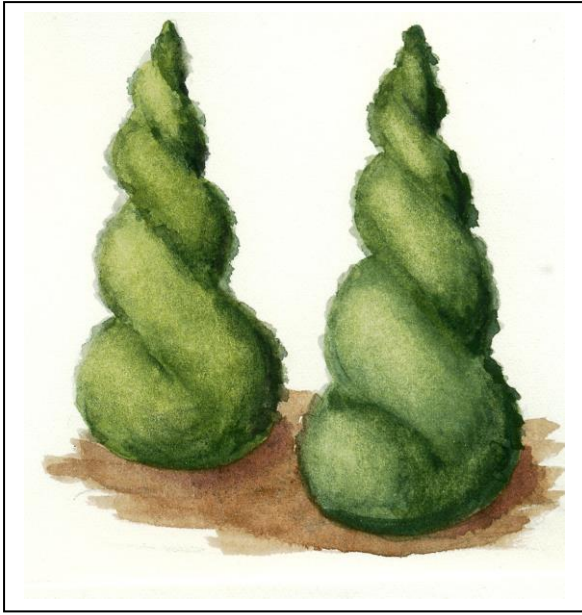


Image 3/10: illustration of spirals (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 277)



Image 3/11: illustration of 'cake stand' (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 278)



Image 3/12: illustration of standard or 'lollipop' (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 279)



Image 3/13: illustration of spheres (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 280)

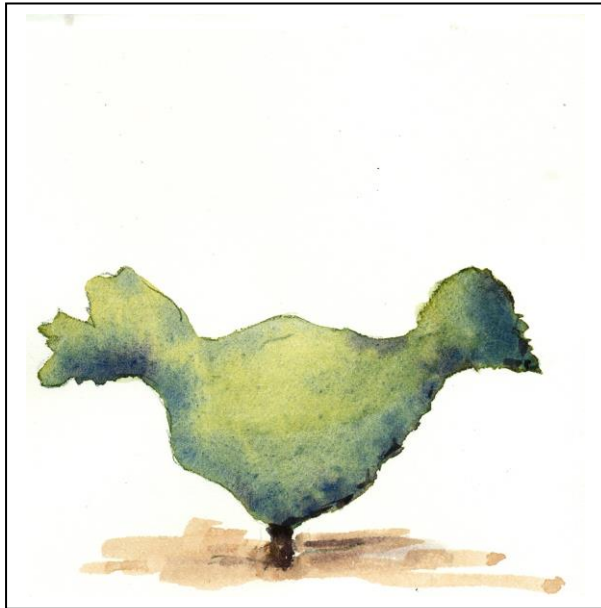


Image 3/14: illustration of living sculpture (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 281)

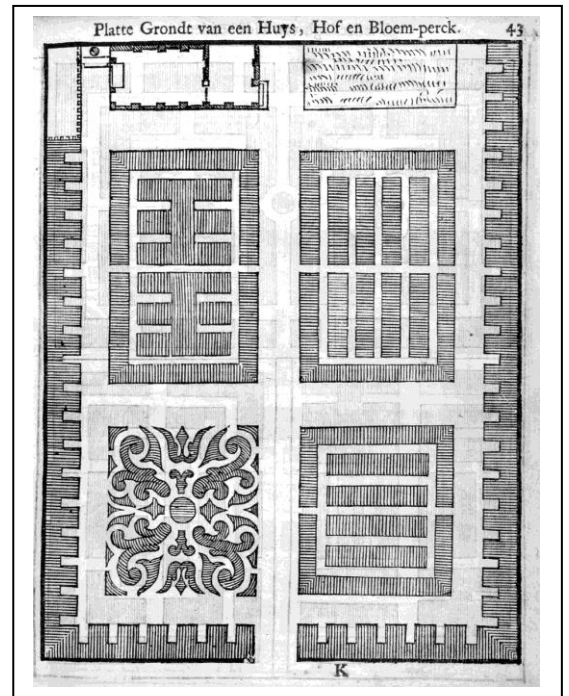


Image 3/15: illustration from J. van der Groen's *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier* depicts design for *parterre* and three symmetrical flowerbeds based on classical four-square design (J. van der Groen, *Den Nederlandtsen hovenier*)

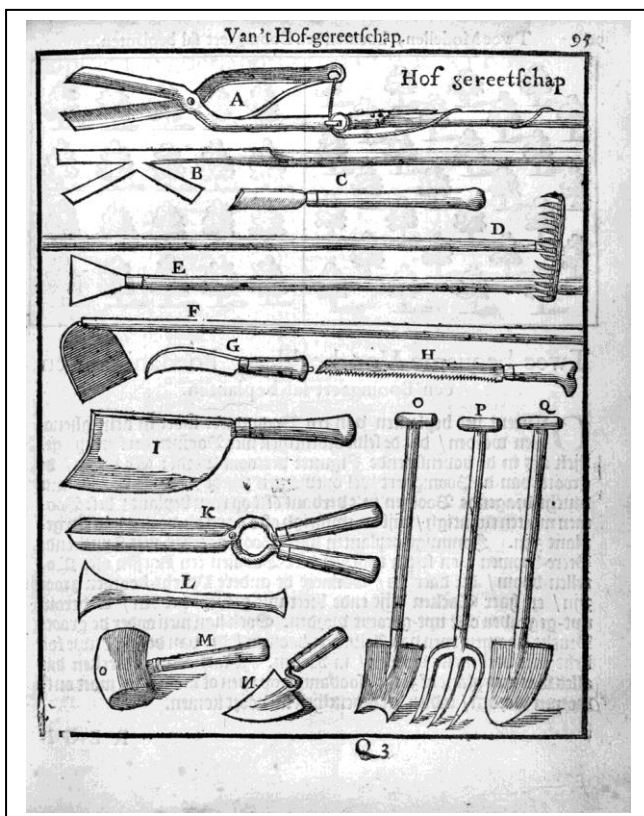


Image 3/16: selection of clipping and cutting tools from Van der Groen's book. Note illustrations A (*Boom-schaer*), G (*Messen*) and K (*Palm-schaer*) (J. van der Groen, *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier*)

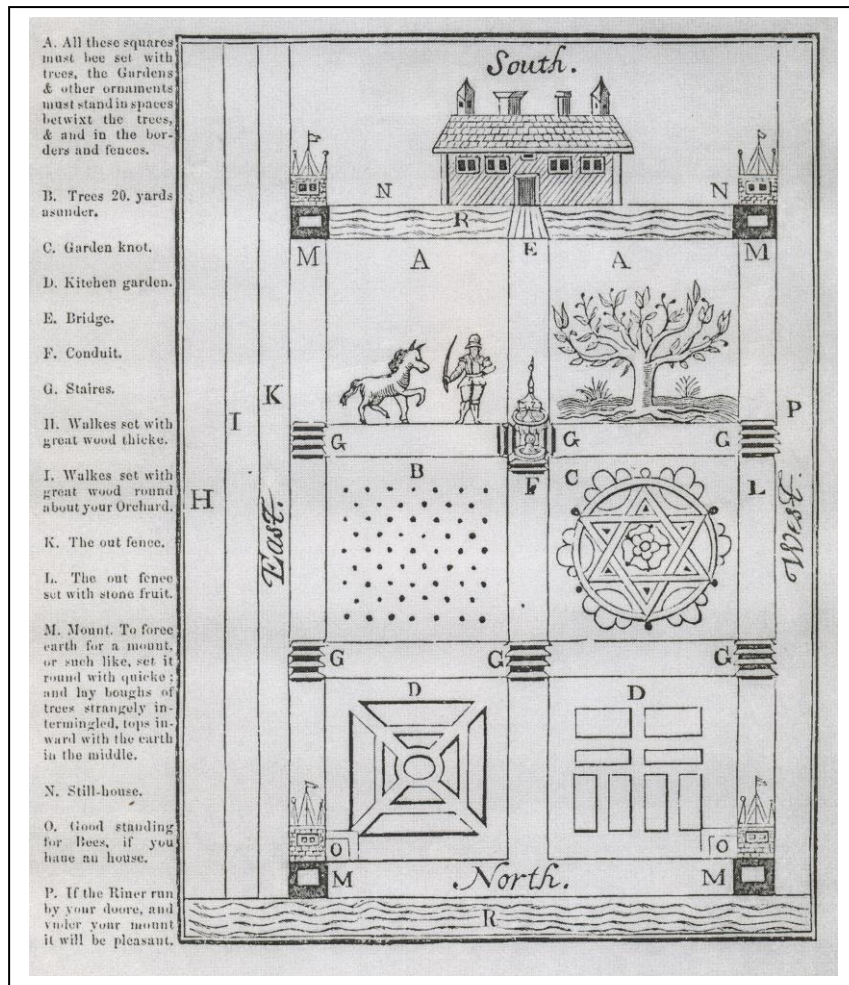


Image 3/17: illustration and description of late Elizabethan formal garden consists of six square sections fitted into rectangular framework. Design illustrates simple formal axial garden discussed in Chapter 2. Note topiary in 'Section A' and knot garden in 'Section C'. Also note symmetrical layout of flowerbeds in 'Section D' (W. Lawson, *A New Orchard and Garden*)



Image 3/18: illustration of typical English cottage-style topiary. Note tiered 'cake stand' (C.H. Curtis and W. Gibson, *The book of topiary*)

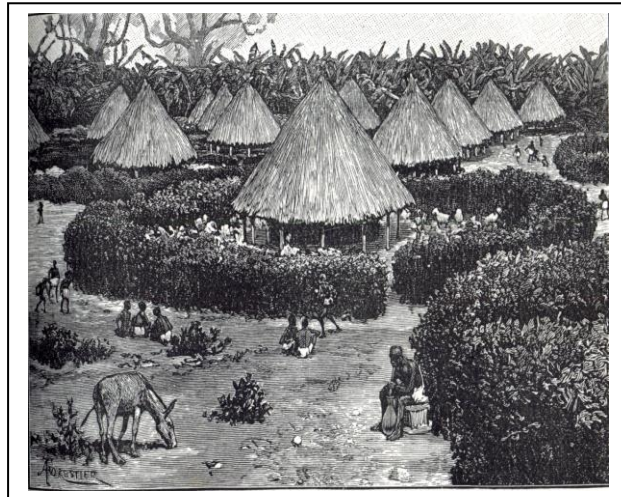


Image 3/19: living hedges surround huts in traditional African village in Ankori, Uganda, circa 1880s (H.M. Stanley, *In darkest Africa or the quest rescue and retreat of Emin governor of Equatoria*, vol. II)

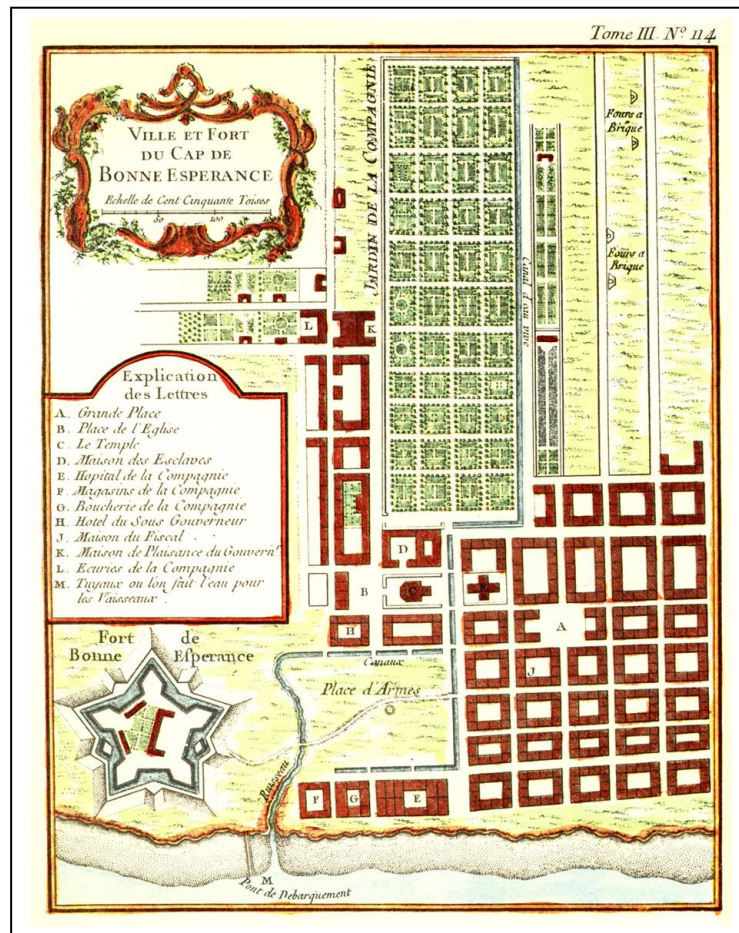


Image 3/20: plan of Company's Garden, Cape Town, during Dutch colonial period. Note regimented layout and parallelograms (H.W.J. Picard, *Gentleman's walk: the romantic story of Cape Town's oldest streets, lanes and squares*)



Image 3/21: typical English cottage-style front flower garden with hollyhocks and clipped hedges, Lovedale, Eastern Cape, 1894 (J. Stewart, *Lovedale Missionary Institution, South Africa*)



Image 3/22: collection of cypress topiary, Brenthurst Estate, Johannesburg, 1928 (The Brenthurst Library, Johannesburg)

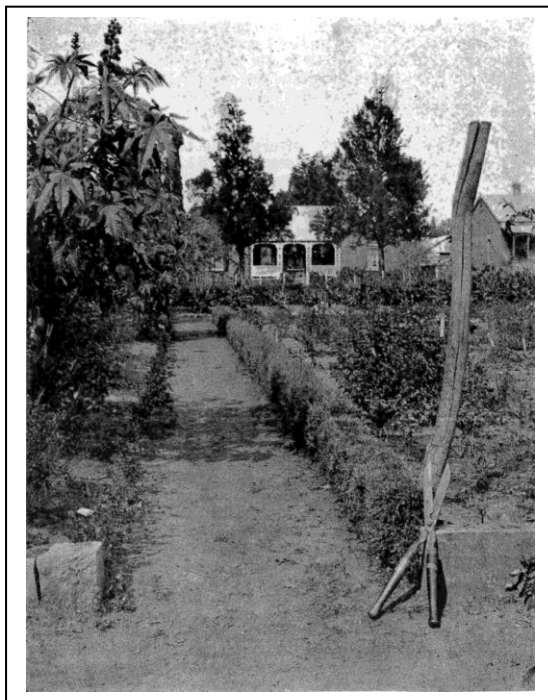


Image 3/23: familiar scene in South African gardens during 1920s and 1930s: clipped cypress edges/hedges and quintessential clipper (G. Carter (ed.), *The South African home garden*)



Image 3/24: clipped hedge, Lovedale Missionary Institution, 1894 (J. Stewart, *Lovedale Missionary Institution, South Africa*)



Image 4/1: Bloemfontein's earliest gardens were enclosed by stone walls, such as C. de Jongh Bloem's garden in St George's Street, undated (National Museum: Photo 01/6629)

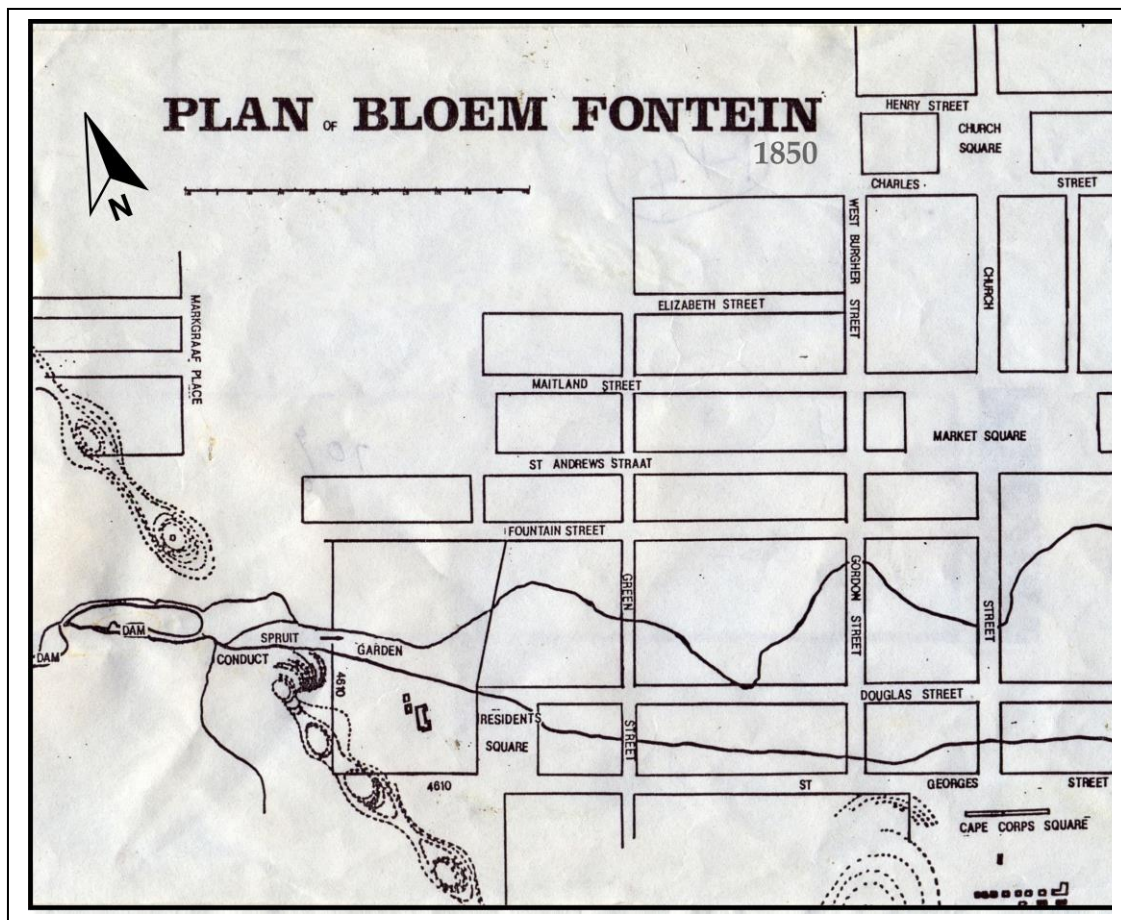


Image 4/2: redrawn early map of Bloemfontein compiled by J. Hopkins, circa 1850. Note *spruit* and water furrow ('conduct' on map) which ran parallel to it. Furrow channelled water to water erven in St George's Street and Douglas Street on *spruit*'s southern bank. 'Garden' indicates Residency's garden (Free State Provincial Archives: Map VA3/31)



Image 4/3: H.A.L. Hamelberg's house situated at western end of market square, circa 1860s. Note newly-planted trees with tree supports in front of house. Section of walled orchard visible left of house (National Museum: Photo 01/500)

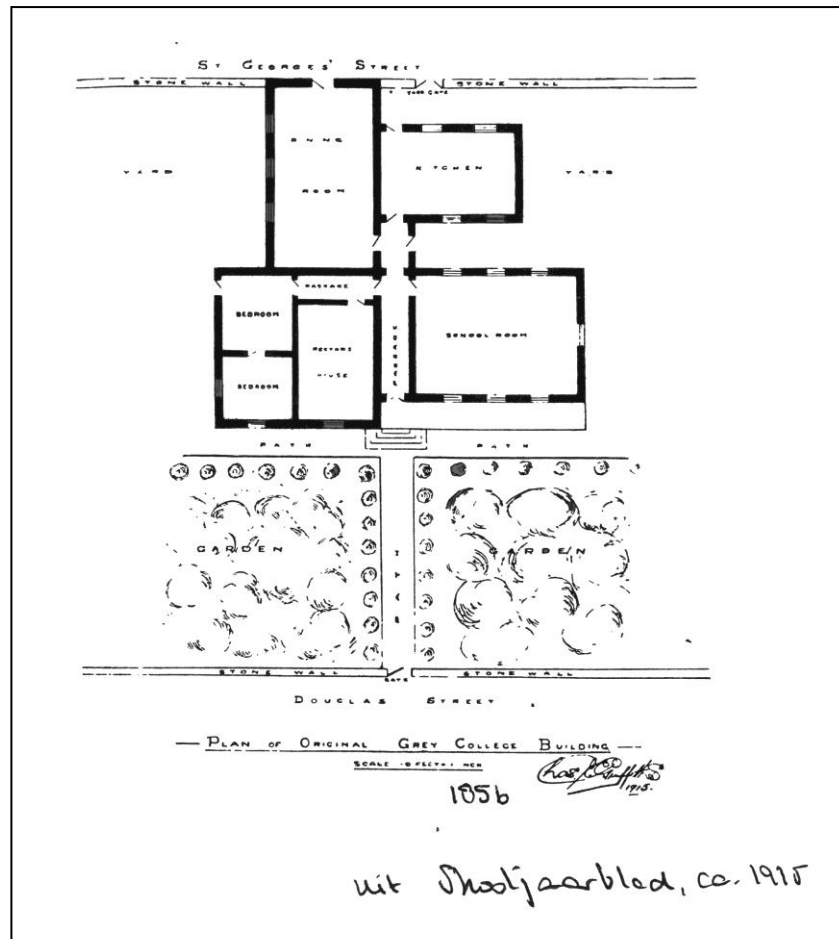


Image 4/4: plan of building and garden of original Grey College, Douglas Street, Bloemfontein, circa 1856. Note how position of front door and garden path emphasise north-south (vertical) axis. Horizontal garden path which cuts through vertical axis emphasises east-west axis (Grey College Museum and Archives: *Grey College School Magazine* VII(28), December 1915)

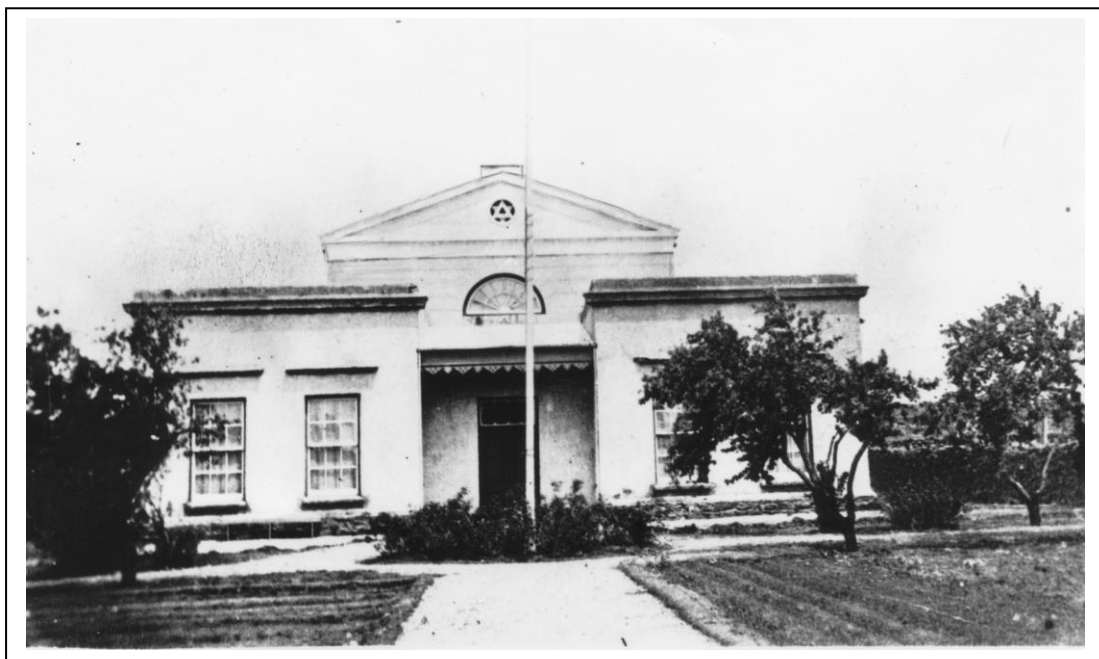


Image 4/5: Dutch Masonic Lodge in Douglas Street with its simple formal axial garden, circa late 1860s. Both architecture and garden layout adhere to strict symmetry and axuality (National Museum: Photo 01/2049)

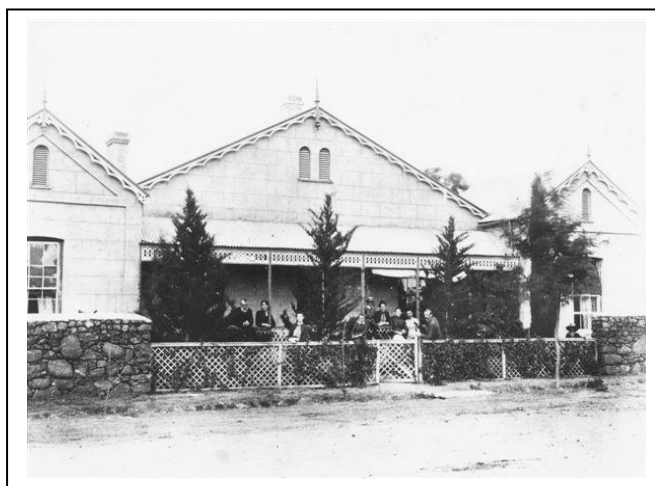


Image 4/6: stoep-room house (*stoepkamerhuis*) of Dr John Brebner, Inspector of Education for the Orange Free State, circa 1880s. Note Victorian-style verandah with fretwork, trelliswork and narrow rectangular garden with trees planted between street and verandah (National Museum: Photo 01/1410)



Image 4/7: garden behind G.A. Fichardt's home at Kaya Lami, circa late 1800s. Note croquet lawn and variety of exotic and indigenous trees (National Museum: Photo 01/2202)



Image 4/8: Rose Lodge's young Victorian-style backyard garden with round brick-edged flowerbeds, undated (National Museum: Photo 01/1997)



Image 4/9: Judge Melius de Villiers' garden with clipped cypress hedge and big trees, corner of President Brand Street and Charles Street, circa 1900 (National Museum: Photo 01/2203)



Image 4/10: General J.B.M. Hertzog's house and garden, Goddard Street, undated. Note square and rectangular flowerbeds edged with overlapping bricks (National Museum: Photo 01/1372)



Image 4/11: Freshford's recreated Late Victorian period garden depicts combination of overlapping bricks and clipped edges, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 62)



Image 4/12: Fleck family's cottage-style house with matching cottage-style garden, circa 1890s. Note straight garden path leading to front door (National Museum: Photo 01/314)



Image 4/13: nuns in Greenhill Convent's 'hybrid' English cottage-style garden, circa 1890s. Note 'English' flowers in front and indigenous growth visible in background (National Museum: Photo 01/2183)



Image 4/14: unknown Bloemfontein woman enjoys privacy provided by tall-clipped privet hedge, circa early 1900s (Free State Provincial Archives: Photo VA2461)



Image 4/15: P. Elffers' topiary garden with low-clipped edges around flowerbeds, circa 1918. Note corner verandah (National Museum: Photo 01/1776)



Image: 4/16: clipped hedge with topiary shaped to resemble beagles designed by Sir Herbert Baker for Duke of Westminster at Westminster Estate, Tweespruit, undated (Westminster Private Collection)

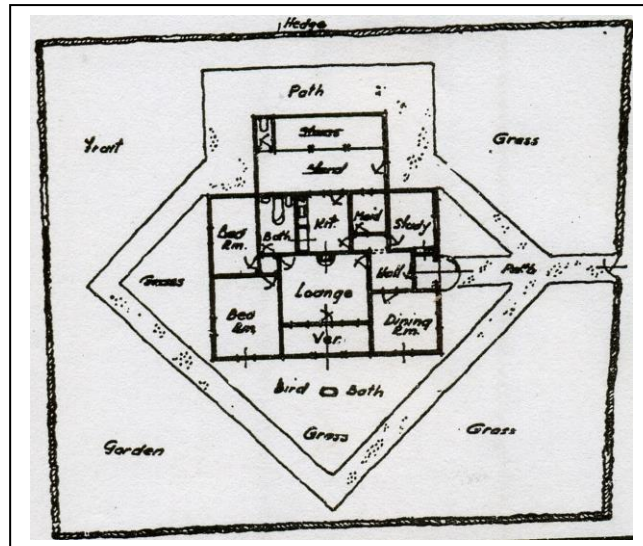


Image 4/17: drawing of modest house and garden with garden path, lawn and clipped hedge enclosing property, circa 1930 (*The Friend*, 5.6.1930)

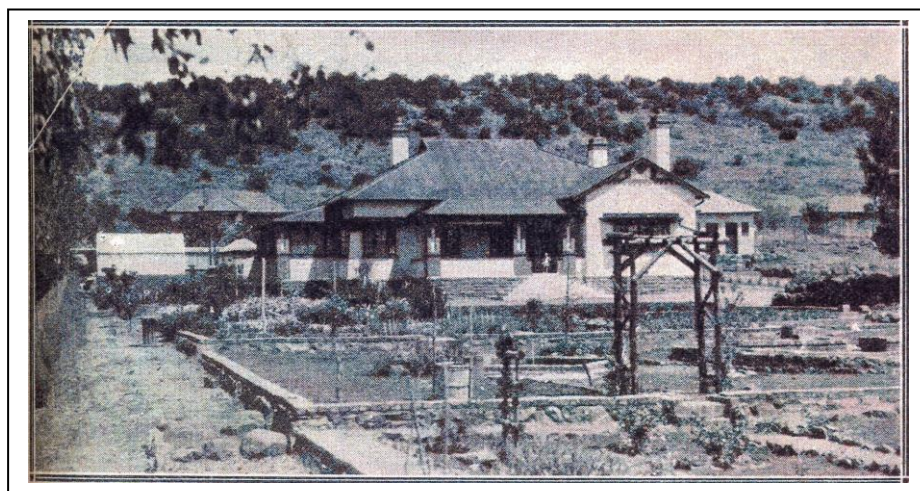


Image 4/18: typical Edwardian-style ‘architectural garden’, Bloemfontein, circa 1929. Note formal geometrical framework, stone retaining walls and multiple terraces (*The Outspan*, 20.12.1929)



Image 4/19: some functional uses of hedges illustrated in this cartoon (*The Friend*, 29.1.1927)



Image 4/20: South African gardening and women's interest periodicals published advice on how to best clip and maintain hedges. For example, it was recommended to clip hedges obliquely towards top and not perpendicularly in order to avoid lower parts of hedge being in shade, resulting in leafless branches (*South African Home Talk* 6(4), August 1939)



Image 4/21: Prince's Rose Garden with pergola, clipped hedges and roses, circa late 1930s (National Museum: Photo 01/1186)



Image 4/22: view of Hamilton Park with terraces and formal sunken garden, circa 1936. Naval Hill visible in background (Free State Provincial Archives: A. 566.448)



Image 4/23: Hoffman Square's formal garden, complete with clipped hedges and geometrically-shaped patches of lawn and flowerbeds, circa 1930s (National Museum: Photo 01/7228)

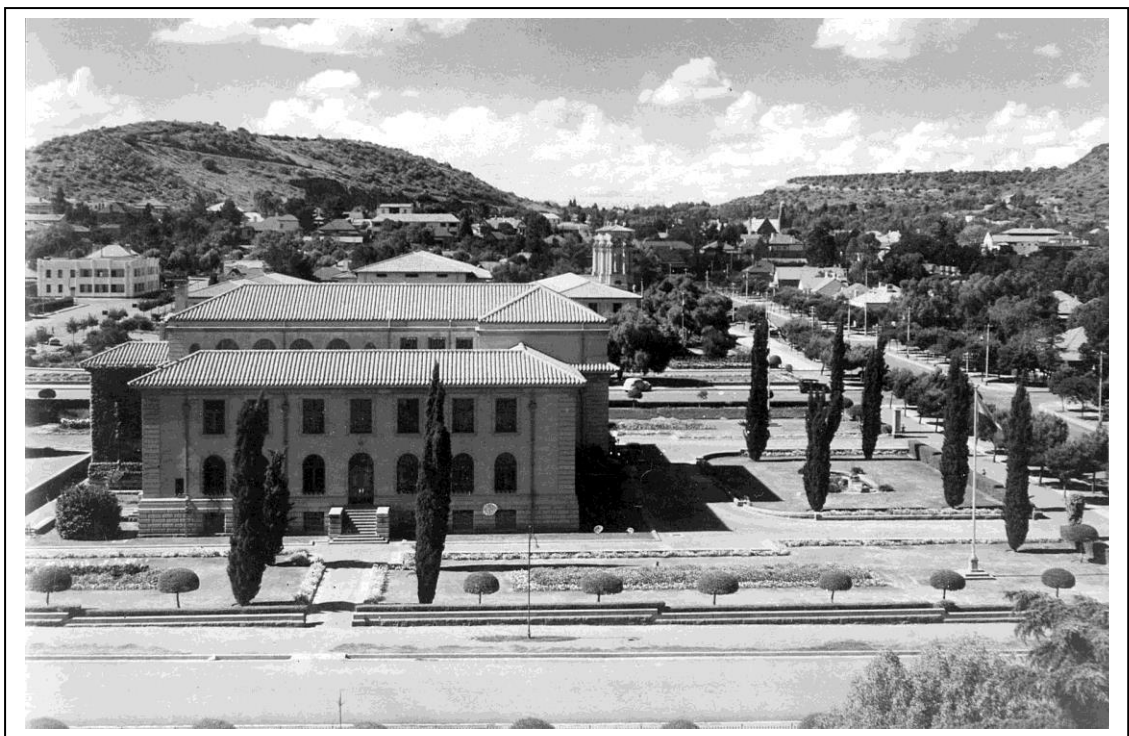


Image 4/24: clipped standard topiary line Elizabeth Street next to Appeal Court, circa late 1930s. Note formal garden layout (Free State Provincial Archives: Photo VA00680)

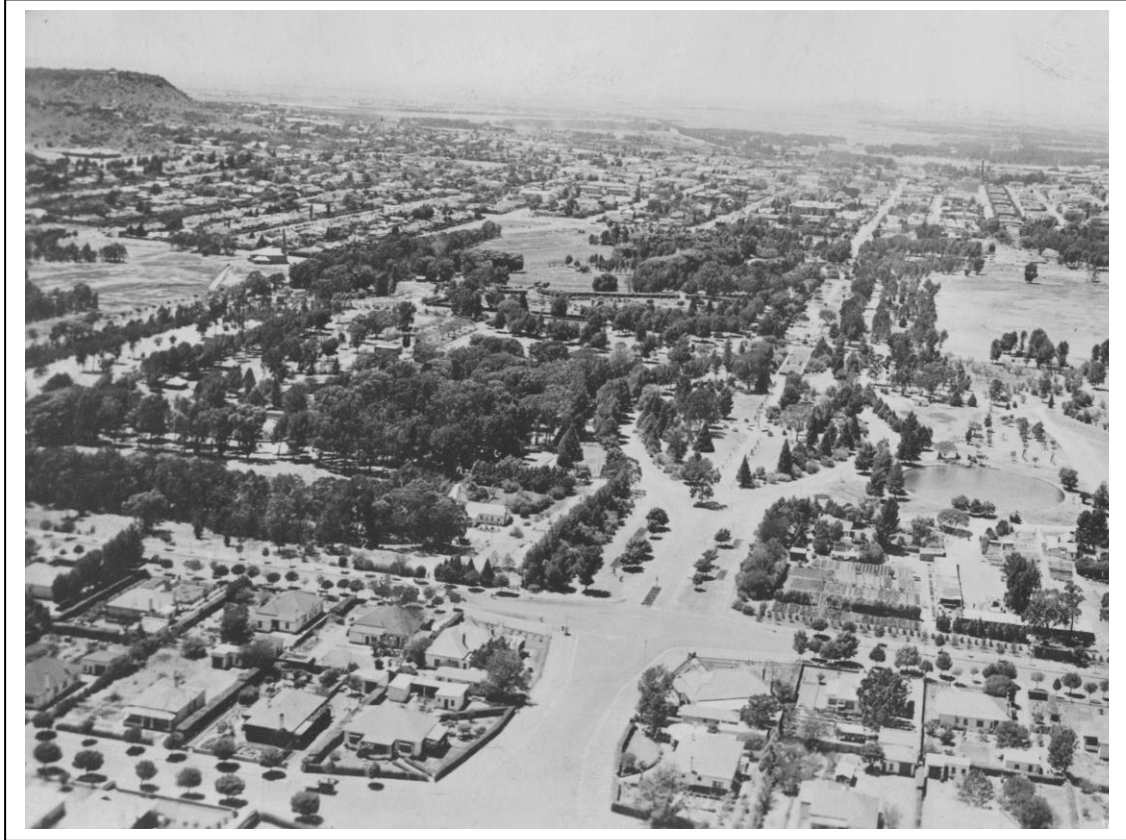


Image 4/25: Bloemfontein, capital of beautiful hedges. Note domestic gardens enclosed by clipped hedges in front, with King's Park, zoo and municipal nursery behind, circa late 1930s (National Museum: Photo 01/6569)



Image 5/1: typical examples of Bloemfontein's early black residents' round huts covered with rags and skins. Huts belonged to farm workers who lived on Fichardt family's farm, Brandkop, outside Bloemfontein, circa 1902. Note stockade (Free State Provincial Archives: Photo VA04635)

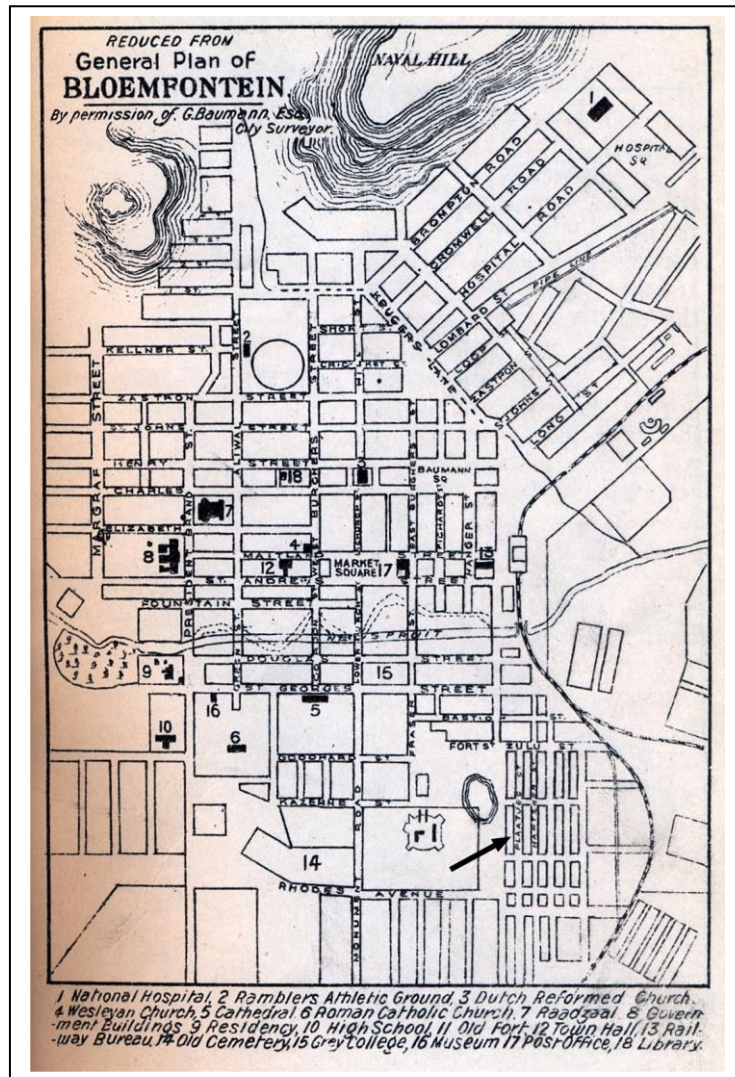


Image 5/2: plan of Bloemfontein shows Fort Hill below Fort Street, circa 1909. Waaihoek is situated between Fort Hill and Cape Town-Johannesburg railway. Plaatje Street and Hartzeeer Street were Waaihoek's two main streets (arrow) (*Souvenir programme of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, seventh annual meeting, Bloemfontein, 27 September to 2 October 1909*)



Image 5/3: Joseph Leeuw and family in front of new home in Bethanie extension of Waaihoek, circa 1903. Due to lack of communal taps, no gardens had been laid out yet when photograph was taken (National Museum: Photo 01/420)

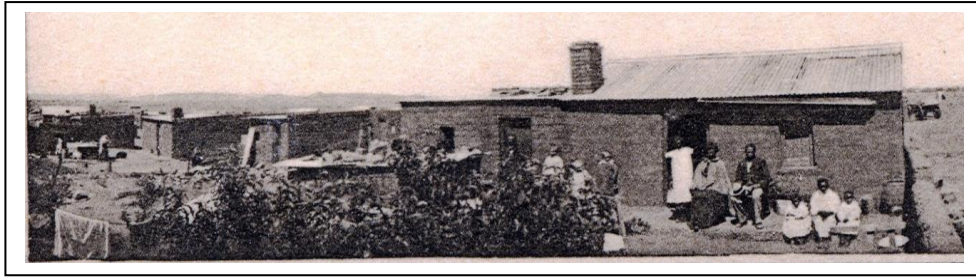


Image 5/4: typical Waaihoek brick house with corrugated iron roof. Note 'patch of green', circa 1903 (Free State Provincial Archives: Photo VA06207)

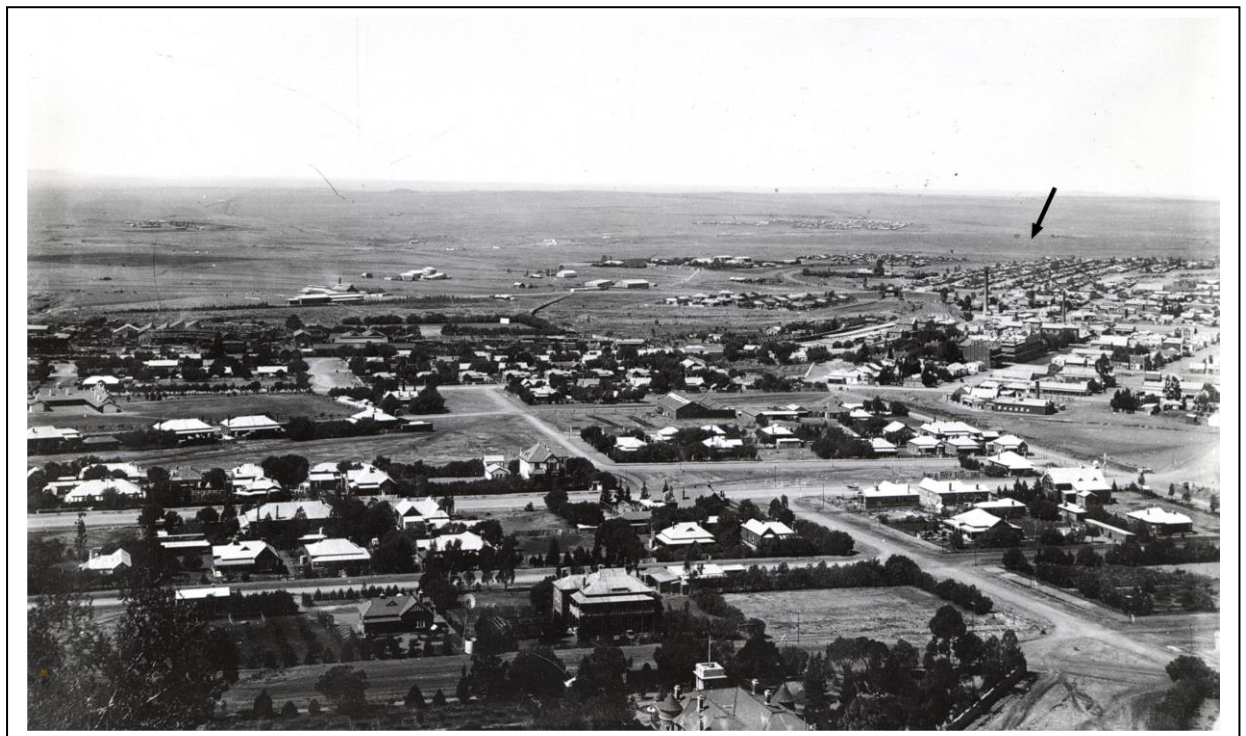


Image 5/5: panoramic view of south-eastern part of Bloemfontein with Waaihoek in background behind first power station and cooling towers (to right), circa 1913. Note trees among houses. In distance, houses of Kaffirfontein visible (arrow). In foreground, suburb of Hilton (Free State Provincial Archives: VA03484)

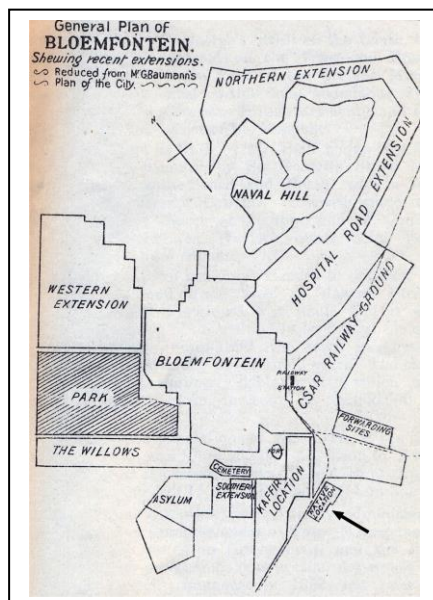


Image 5/6: plan of Bloemfontein shows locations, circa 1909. 'Native Location' south of railway is Cape Stands (arrow) (*Souvenir programme of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, seventh annual meeting, 27 September to 2 October 1909*)



Image 5/7: Cape Town-Johannesburg railway, circa 2013. Railway track formed buffer between white part of Bloemfontein, located on left-hand side of railway in photograph, and Batho, located on right-hand side of track. Note eucalyptus trees in distance (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 550)

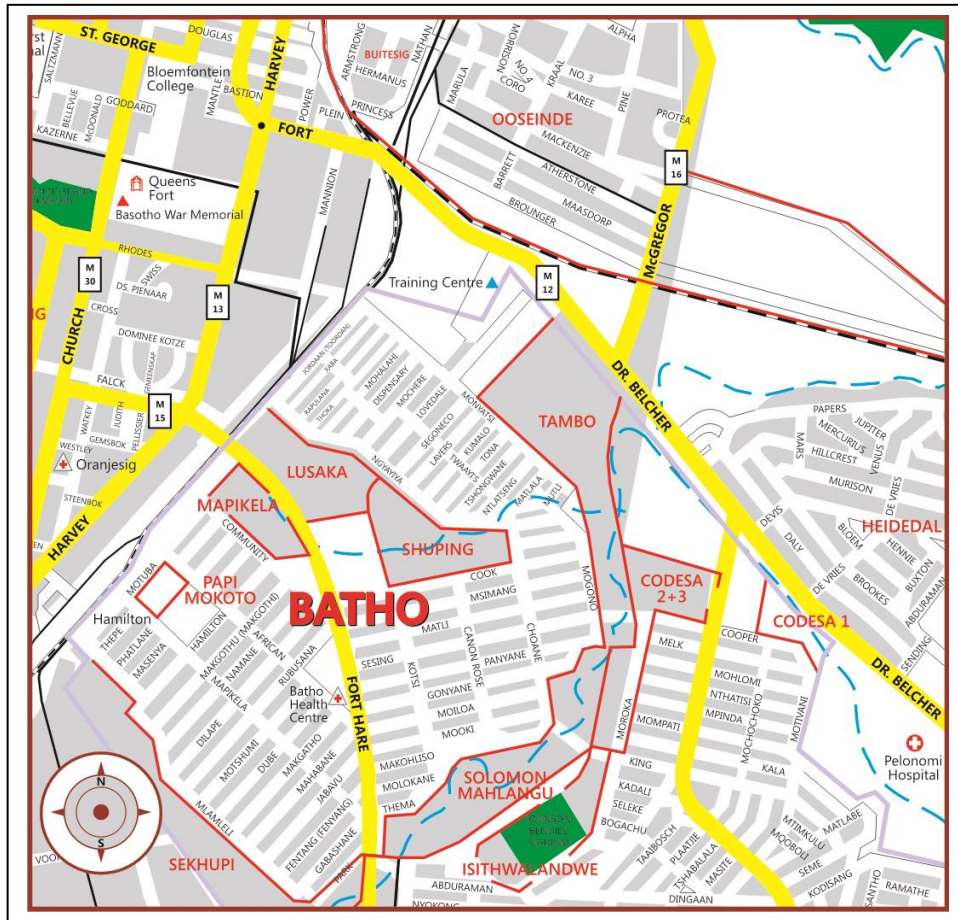


Image 5/8: map of Batho, circa 2018. Oranjesig laid out where Waaihoek used to be situated, namely left (west) of railway, and Batho visible to right (east) of railway (National Museum: NM Map Batho 7)



Image 5/9: Kaffirfontein Spruit, circa 2012. Spruit still forms boundary between Batho and Bochabela, visible in background (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 460.1)



Image 5/10: demolition of Waaihoek, circa 1924-1925. Only small number of trees left standing (National Museum: Photo 01/3105)

Image 5/11: houses with ornamental front gardens, Matli Street, Batho, circa 2011. Note clipped hedges and topiary (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 320)



Image 5/12: house with fence-hedge or 'fedge' in front, Mooki Street, Batho, circa 2010 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 87)



Image 5/13: John and Emily Mogaecho's son, Eric, at garden gate which led to Kanye's front door, circa late 1950s. House built during late 1920s (Mogaecho Family Private Photo Collection)

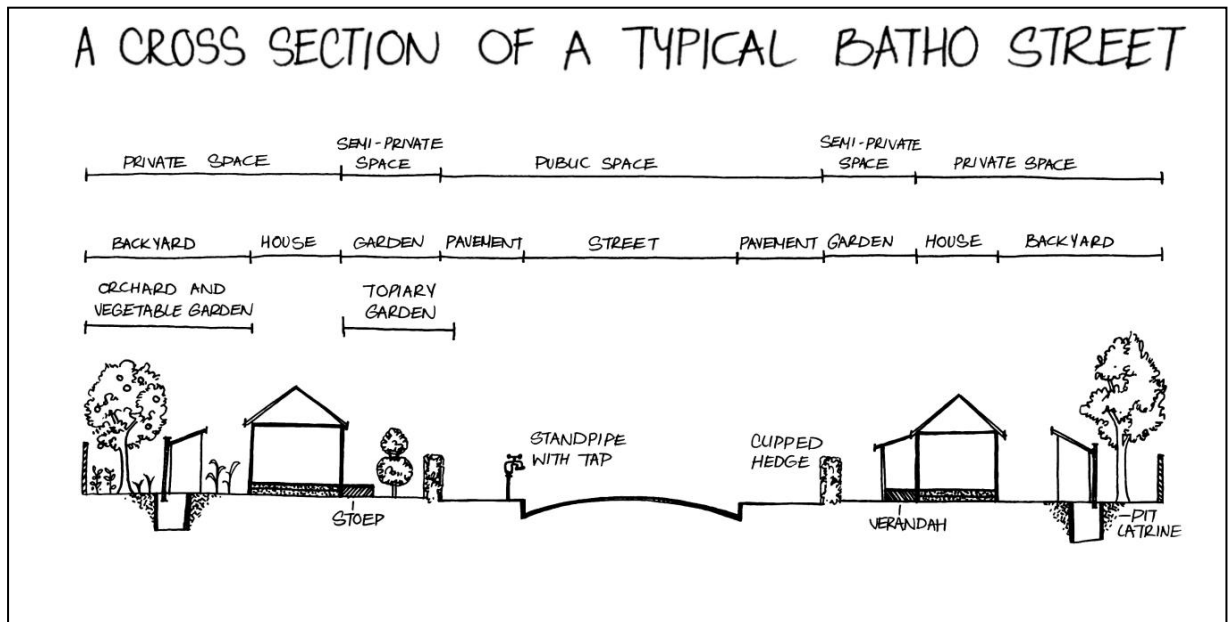


Image 5/14: graphic illustration of cross-section of typical Batho street with pavements, communal tap, hedges, topiary garden, stoep, verandah, houses, backyards, orchard, vegetable garden and pit latrines. Note zones indicating private, semi-private and public spaces (National Museum: NM Photo Garden 313)

Image 5/15: members of Mogaecho family in front of clipped privet hedge, circa 1960s. Hedge planted during late 1920s or early 1930s. Corrugated iron sheets kept stray dogs out (Mogaecho Family Private Photo Collection)



Image 5/16: Ulundi-Kaya, circa 1930s. Note two verandahs and clipped hedge taking shape. Most of garden hidden behind hedge. Members of Mapikela family visible on first floor verandah (National Museum: Photo 01/7476)

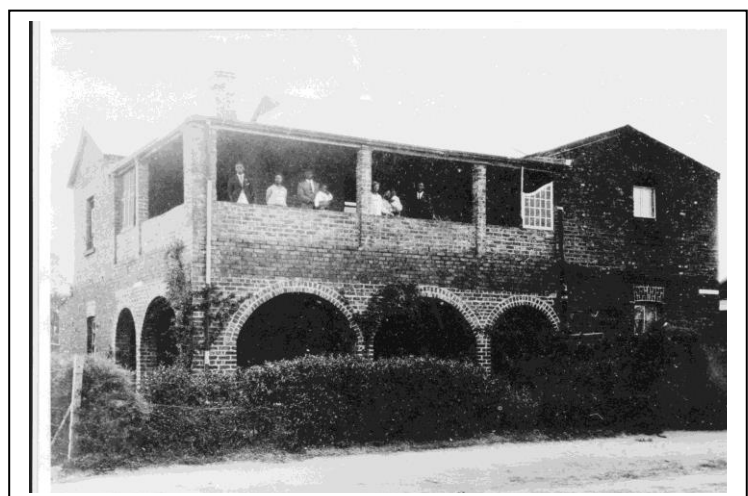




Image 5/17: AME Church, Gonyane Street, Batho, circa 2010. Note remnants of clipped hedges in front of church (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 144)



Image 5/18: parsonage of AME Church, Gonyane Street, Batho, and its hedge garden, circa 2013. Note triangular verandah (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 600)

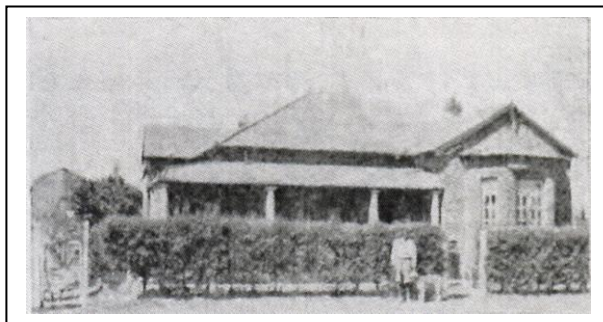


Image 5/20 (right): tall-clipped cypress hedge and house of Geelbooi Mofokeng, Seme Street, Bochabela, undated (Marumo Family Private Photo Collection)

Image 5/19: clipped hedge and house of Rakhosi Moikangoa, Mompoti Street, Bochabela, circa 1938 (*Umteteli wa Bantu*, 11.6.1938)



Image 5/21: Sebegoe (and Segoe) family's house and young privet hedge grows behind fence, Thepe Street, Batho, circa late 1930s. Peter Segoe poses on newly-built verandah (Segoe Family Private Photo Collection)





Image 5/22: overlapping brick edges and stones indicate original layout of garden in front of Mangaung Primary School, Fort Hare Road, Batho, circa 2012 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 477)



Image 5/23: overlapping brick edges indicate formal layout of original garden, Jabavu Street, Batho, circa 2012 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 397)



Image 5/24: rare glimpse of Batho, Bloemfontein's garden location: south-eastern view of Bloemfontein with Hilton in foreground and Batho's houses and abundant trees visible in background, circa late 1930s (National Museum: Photo 01/7233)



Image 6/1: Lovedale Missionary Institution's junior learners pose with wheelbarrows, hoes and spades before an afternoon gardening session, circa 1894 (J. Stewart, *Lovedale Missionary Institution, South Africa*)

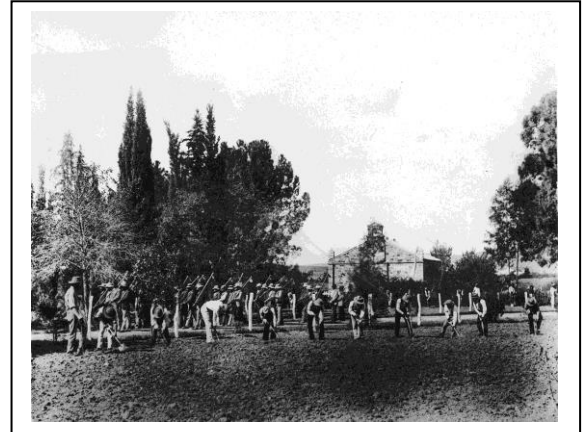


Image 6/2: Lovedale Missionary Institution's learners (probably seniors) work in garden, circa 1894 (J. Stewart, *Lovedale Missionary Institution, South Africa*)

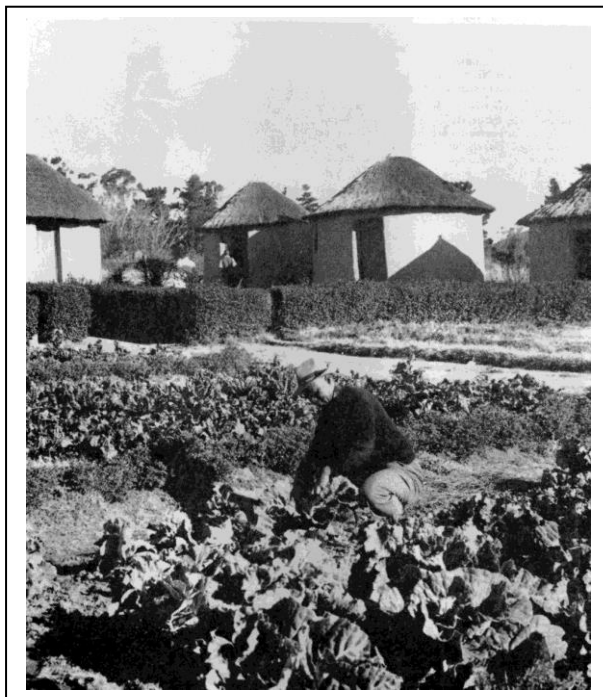


Image 6/3: agricultural garden and horticultural field as semi-vernacular garden and field: vegetable garden, Tsolo School of Agriculture, undated. Note clipped hedges (*Bantu XI*(4), April 1964)

Image 6/4 (right): diagram of typical South African school garden, circa 1928. Note rectangular vegetable beds (C.A. Dawson, "In a high school garden", *Nature Notes* 53-62, 1928)

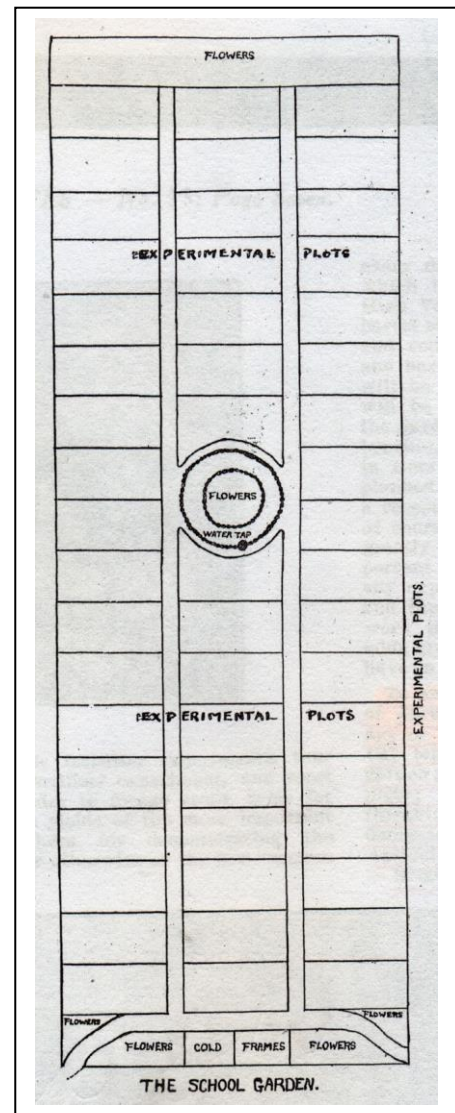




Image 6/5 (above): Beersheba's original school and section of original stone garden wall, circa 2015 (National Museum: no photograph no.)

Image 6/6 (right): Beersheba's original main water ditch, circa 2015 (National Museum: no photograph no.)



Image 6/7: unemployed Batho residents prepare vegetable beds on grounds of Mangaung Primary School (New School No. 1; Bantu United School), Fort Hare Road, Batho, circa 2012. For photograph of original school building, see Image 5/22 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 480)

Image 6/8: Phahamisang Primary School (St Patrick's No. 2), Lovedale Road, Batho, circa 2013 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 746)





Image 7/1: black garden labourer (in background) works in King's Park, circa 1930s. Note clipped hedges (National Museum: Photo 01/3743)



Image 7/2: black garden labourer and white supervisor in entrance to walled garden of Government House, Bloemfontein, circa early 1900s (National Library of South Africa: MSB 351A/9765)

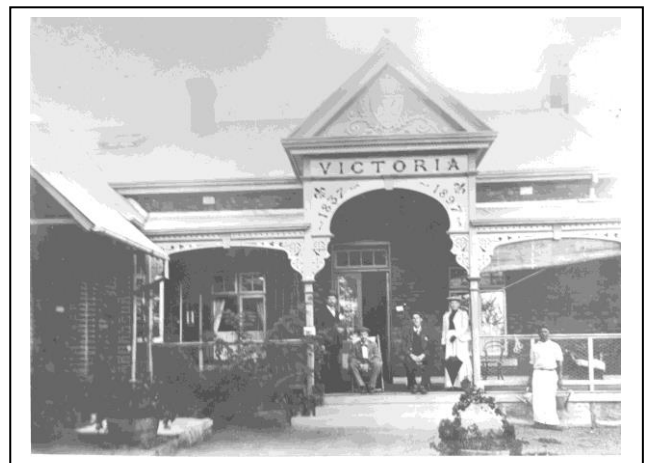


Image 7/3: black garden labourer poses in front of Victoria wing of Cottage Hospital, circa late 1890s. Note white apron and watering cans (Free State Provincial Archives: Photo VA1763)

Image 7/4: Mercy Khantwane's topiary garden, Sesing Street, Batho, circa 2015. Note 'lollipop'-shaped hedge on right (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 1037)



Image 7/5: Maria Lekholo's sphere-shaped topiary planted in symmetrical flowerbeds edged with pebbles, Masenya Street, Batho, circa 2014 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 1022)

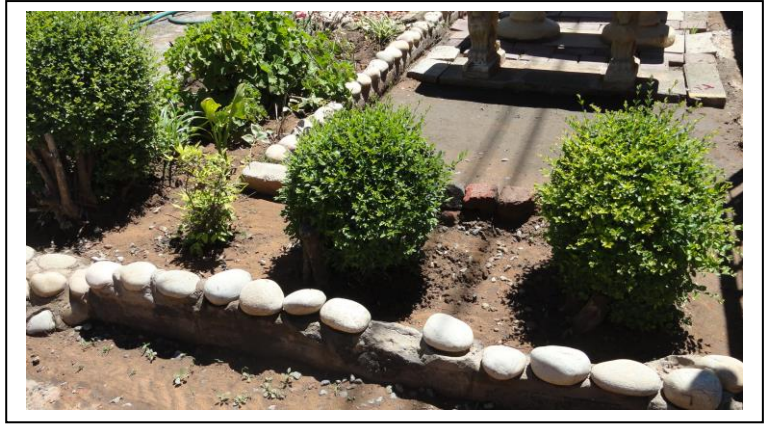


Image 7/6: Maria Lekholo's topiary garden shows new growth after good rains, circa 2014. Note variety of plants (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 1021)

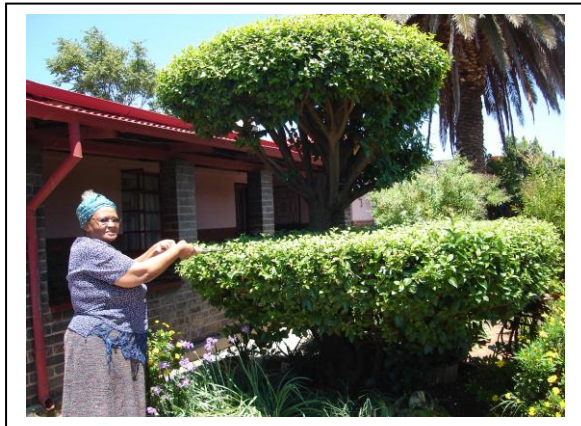


Image 7/7: Maria Marumo clips two-tiered 'cake stand' topiary, Mooki Street, Batho, circa 2010 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 110)

Image 7/8: Dr James Moilola under front garden gate's clipped arch, Moilola Street, Batho, circa 1977 (Moilola Family Private Photo Collection)

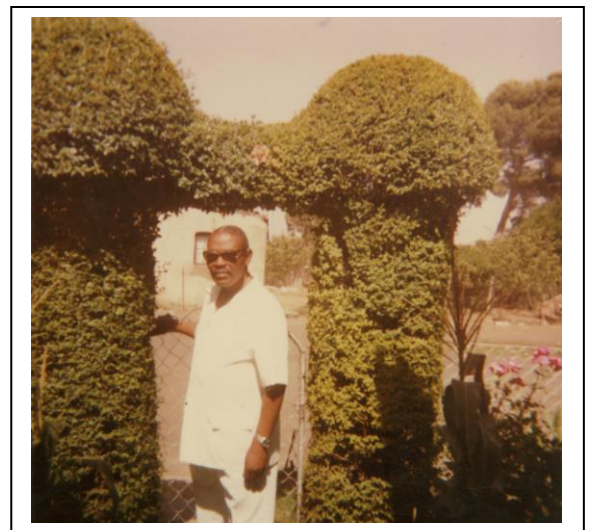


Image 7/9: Selina Moilola clips original hedges planted by late father, Dr James Moilola, circa 2013 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 664)



Image 7/10: Stanley Motingoe's perfectly-clipped hedge in front of house, Khumalo Street, Batho, circa 2016 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 1060)

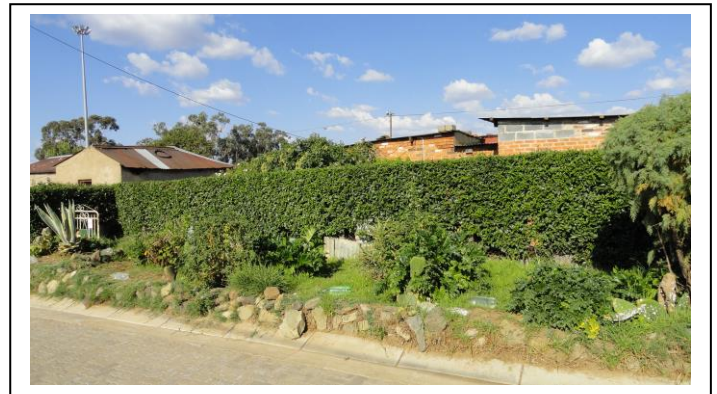


Image 7/11: tall hedges may not only be used to hide unattractive house but also secret garden, such as Stanley Motingoe's rose garden, circa 2016 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 1061)

Image 7/12: Nelson Ngo in front of mother's house, Phatlane Street, Batho, circa 2014. See-through hedge visible in background (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 975)



Image 7/13: some of original privet plants of Mohau Phakoe's hedge that survived periods of drought, Namane Street, Batho, circa 2014 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 1009)



Image 8/1: agricultural garden and/or horticultural field? Visual representation of how some of Waai-hoek' gardens could have looked (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 1083)

Image 8/2: Victorian-style house built in 1920s, Mahabane Street, Batho, circa 2011. Note asymmetrical L-shape, unplastered brick walls, gable, bay window, wood-framed windows in bay, centrally-placed wooden front door with rectilinear fanlight and corrugated iron pitched roof (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 246)



Image 8/3: uncovered stoep in form of brick-edged raised platform, Msimang Street, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 299)



Image 8/4: classic verandah house with hipped roof built during 1930s, Dube Street, Batho, circa 2013 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 704)



Image 8/5: asymmetrical L-shaped stoep-room house built during 1920s, corner of Gabashane Street and Mapikela Street, Batho, circa 2012 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 368)



Image 8/6: asymmetrical L-shaped stoep-room house with hipped roof built during late 1930s, Jabavu Street, Batho, circa 2012 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 416)

Image 8/7: symmetrical U-shaped stoep-room house built during 1920s, Jabavu Street, Batho, circa 2012. Red brick walls originally unplastered (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 423)



Image 8/8: symmetrical U-shaped stoep-room house built during 1930s, Mogono Street, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 309)



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Image 8/10: trellis attached to verandah of stoep-room house once supported creeper plant, Xaba Street, Batho, circa 2010 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 119)

Image 8/11: clipped hedge as 'green wall', Dilape Street, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 230)

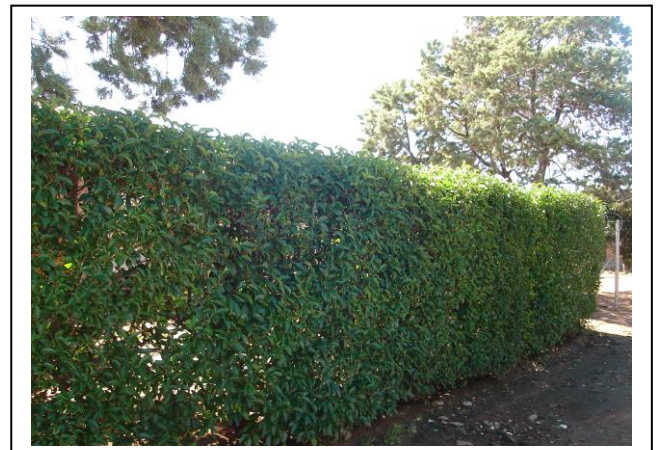


Image 8/12: ‘outdoor room’ created by means of tall-clipped hedge, Makgothi Street, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 171)



Image 8/13: in hands of skilled topiarist perfectly-clipped boundary hedge became ‘green architecture’, Cook Avenue, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 262)



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Image 8/17: epitome of formality: Victorian-style garden, Orlando location, Johannesburg, circa 1938. Note geometrically laid-out flowerbeds with raised edges and Victorian-style verandah (*Umteteli wa Bantu*, 26.3.1938)

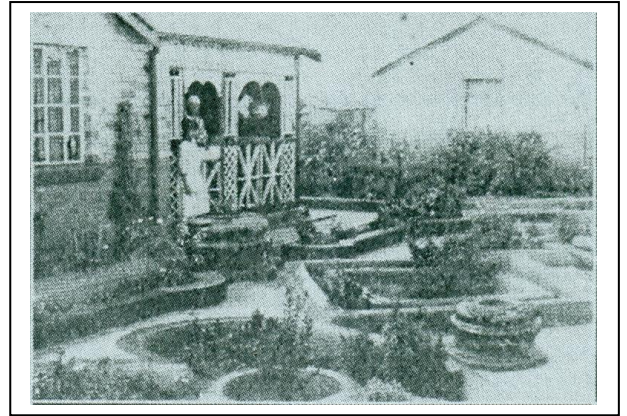


Image 8/18: Eva Mela next to clipped see-through hedge in front of home, Mothuba Street, Batho, circa 2013. Cape Town-Johannesburg railway visible in background (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 928)



Image 8/19: Nompiti Molale (left) and cousin, Ruth Mokgethi, enjoy Molale's garden, Hamilton Road, Batho, circa 1980. Note clipped hedge in background (Zim Family Private Photo Collection)

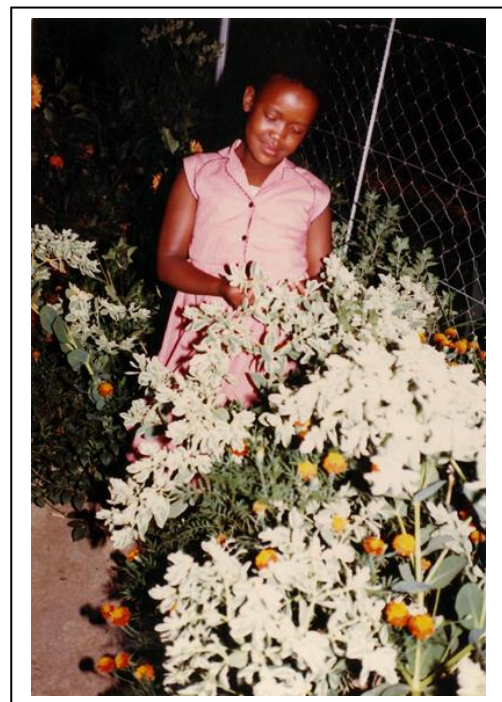


Image 8/20 (right): one of many children who enjoyed Nompiti Molale's garden, Hamilton Road, Batho, circa 1983 (Zim Family Private Photo Collection)

Image 8/21: Patrick Ngatane and mother, Meisie Sedikelo, in their garden, Masenya Street, Batho, circa 2015. Most plants in garden obtained from other Batho gardeners and family members (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 1031)



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Image 9/8: Mr I. Mphatsonyane next to broad-leaf privet hedge serving as windbreak for roses, Makgothi Street, Batho, circa 2010 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 134)



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Image 9/10: broad-leaf privet hedge serves as boundary between two plots, Cook Avenue, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 259)



Image 9/11: broad-leaf privet hedge provides privacy for outside toilet, Cook Avenue, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 264)



Image 9/12: typical broad-leaf privet ‘fedge’, Cook Avenue, Batho, circa 2011. Note razor-wire on top of wire-netting (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 260)



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Image 9/15: ‘fedge’ consists of sections of clipped broad-leaf privet combined with wire-netting, Thepe Street, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 223)



Image 9/16 (left): broad-leaf privet ‘wall’ of varying heights provides privacy in front garden, Tshongwane Street, Batho, circa 2014 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 840)



Image 9/17: section of broad-leaf privet ‘wall’ grown for privacy purposes, Dilape Street, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 231)



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Image 9/19: dead hedge and overgrown privet in neglected garden, Mooki Street, Batho, circa 2014 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 86)



Image 9/20: Mr P. Tsie next to overgrown broad-leaf privet hedge at childhood home, Mooki Street, Batho, circa 2013 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 831)



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Image 9/31: tall multiple-stemmed broad-leaf privet standards, Choane Street, Batho, circa 2013 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 536)



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Image 9/36: medium small-leaf privet sphere used as accent, Makholiso Street, Batho, circa 2013 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 646)



Image 9/37: broad-leaf privet spheres line metal fence, Moiloa Street, Batho, circa 2009 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 82)

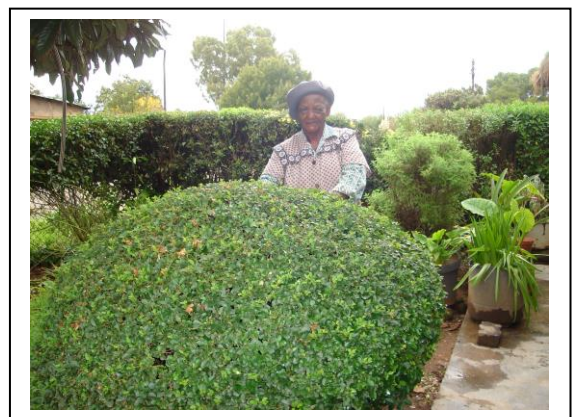


Image 9/38: Ms A. Motlolometsi behind large small-leaf privet dome, Dilape Street, Batho, circa 2010 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 140)

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Image 9/40: broad-leaf privet hedge clipped to resemble cloud formations, Masenya Street, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 195)



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Image 9/42: section of broad-leaf privet hedge turned into fantasy 'chair', Phanyane Street, Batho, circa 2009 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 90)



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Image 9/58: agricultural garden with maize, vegetables and ornamental shrubs planted close together, Makgothi Street, Batho, circa 2011 (National Museum: NM Photo Batho 211)



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