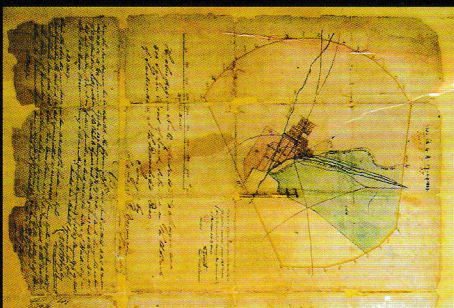


*It all started with a church.....*

Heidelberg was established after churchgoers got permission to build their own Dutch Reformed Church in Heidelberg in 1855. After negotiating with farm owner Louis Fourie, they bought the Doornboom church farm for 5000 pounds and Heidelberg was born. The town got its name from the Heidelberg catechism and the German town of Heidelberg. In 1855, the Heidelberg Congregation was formed and the town developed around the church. The Duivenhoksriver had already been discovered in the time of Governor Simon van der Stel, during an expedition in 1689 sent under Izak Schryver to do business with a specific Inqua tribe.

In the old days, farm land was gained through grazing rights close to water and fountains which later would turn into renting and eventually inheritance rights. Old maps show farm borders of circular shape. Nearby a fountain, a farmer would plant a stake into the ground, representing the centre point of the farm. He would then ride north on horseback for half an hour to mark the northern border.



After returning to the fountain he would mark the remaining three directions. According to the position of the original Doornboom homestead, Heidelberg was founded on one of these circular shaped farms. In 1904, the New Cape Central Railways company built a railway line that passed through Heidelberg, providing the town with railway connections.

Heidelberg and its surroundings have a rich heritage of old buildings and many of them have been preserved. The old houses were built with raw clay bricks. The houses have high ceilings, attics for storage and to keep the houses cool. Traditionally, the windows were small for the same reason.



The Historic NG Church is the second NG Church built in Heidelberg. In 1862, probationer Daneel received call as first minister and in 1856 the first members of the consistory were installed and the first four children were baptized in the old School Church. The need for a larger building arose and the foundations for the new Church building were laid in 1872. The silver communion chalice and the baptismal font came from London. The second church building was consecrated in 1873. In 1910, the Rev. and Mrs. Spies arrived to find the building in a state of dilapidation and persuaded the church council to build a new church. In 1913, construction work started on the church as it still stands today, was started. In 1914, the building was consecrated without any burden of debt. The church bell is an exceptional piece of work and unfortunately not open to visitors. The bell was decorated with a verse from 1 Peter 1:25: "But the word of the Lord remains for all eternity".



*Doornboom farmstead or 'Fourie House'.* This is the oldest house in town. The house has been extensively renovated by the Fourie Trust, as you can see on the pictures. This single story T-shaped house with its sod- and mud-patched walls, its trusses of yellow wood and poplar poles and thatched roof with flaxen yarn, still stands after 280 years. It used to be the house of Louis Fourie, founding father of Heidelberg, who fled to South Africa in 1688 with the French Huguenots. In 1716, he obtained grazing rights from Governor Van der Stel on the Doornboom and "De Duivenhoks aan de Wagendrift" farms, and in 1733 Doornboom was registered in his name. Only one other farm in the district, "Onder d' Grootvadersbosch", was allocated earlier on (in 1729, to Roelof Oelofse), but that homestead was built later.



## HISTORIC WALKING TOUR HEIDELBERG



- \* The Southern most battle point in the Anglo-Boer War
- \* One of the oldest farm houses in the southern Cape
- \* Bullet holes still in front door of house

A historic walk through our town gives visitors, interested in history and architecture, an experience to remember.

