**APPENDIX A**

**LISTING OF EARLY VISITORS TO THE CAPE 1530-1652**

What follows is a chronology of engraved stones left at the Cape during the era immediately prior to the establishment of a permanent settlement by the VOC in 1652. Only some of them are known to have served postal use. Visits by ships that might have left stones behind, but of which there is no record, are also listed.

**1530**: The French vessels *Sacre* and *Pensee* dropped anchor in Table Bay before proceeding home. Unlikely as it sounds, they claim not to have landed, despite having seen people and cattle on the shore. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 11)

**1591, July 31**: The English vessels *Penelope*, *Merchant Royall* and *Edward Bonaventure*, outward bound to Batavia, dropped anchor in Table Bay and traded for provisions with local inhabitants. Their log mistakenly identified their location as *Agoada de Saldanha*, an error that English mariners only began to rectify after 1624. No mention is made in the log of letters having been found or left behind, but Capt George Raymond noted that “*They left engraved on flat stones, inscriptions recording the name of the ship and of her captain, and dates of arrival and departure”* (Goldblatt, 1982: 9).

**1595, August 4**: The Dutch vessels *Mauritius*, *Hollandia*, *Duijfken* and *Amsterdam*, outward bound, with at least 50 members of the crew ill with scurvy on one ship alone, dropped anchor in Table Bay and traded for provisions with local inhabitants. No mention was made of letters being either found or left behind.

**1601, September 9**: The English vessels *Dragon*, *Ascension* and *Susan*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay. They set sail on 29 October, having lost 107 men to scurvy out of a total complement of 480. Upon their return in 1603 the *Ascension* and *Susan* were sent on ahead, and probably landed at the Cape in January 1603. Capt Hippon, Master of the *Susan*, left behind a batch of letters beneath a flat stone with the following inscription: *“ANTO HIPON MA OF THE HECTOR BOVN HOME JANVARI 1600”*. Apart from the fact that the year given was obviously wrong, this is the first recorded use of a stone as a postal marker. The letters were probably intended for the *Dragon* who rounded the Cape on 3 February without making landfall.

**1604, July 13**: The English vessels *Red* *Dragon*, *Ascension*, *Hector* and *Susan*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay, their crews greatly depleted by scurvy, and only set sail for Banten on 20 August 1604. When they departed the Indies in about September 1605 the *Hector* and *Susan* were sent on ahead of the others. The *Dragon* and *Ascension* followed on 6 October, but were soon separated, and on 19 December the *Dragon* caught up with the *Hector* just off the Cape. Through disease it had lost 53 men, and was now limping along with a crew of 14. As a result it had to be assisted into Table Bay by a skeleton crew from the *Dragon*. The *Ascension* joined them on 27 December, but the *Susan* was never heard of again. They set sail for home on 16 January 1607.

**1607, July 16**: The English vessel *Consent*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and, during her stay, her crew left behind a stone engraved with the words “*THE FOURE AND TWENTIETH OF JULY, 1607, CAPTAIN DAVID MIDDLETON IN THE CONSENT*”. The *Consent* had been part of an expedition headed by William Keeling, which included the *Dragon* and *Hector*, but had left for home ahead of the others. The stone, which was intended to inform Keeling of its safe arrival at the Cape, was found in December 1607 when the main fleet put into Table Bay. Its discovery was noted by Keeling as follows:

“*Then our generall with other sought amongst the stones for to see yf the consent hadd bene heer or not where at length wee found Capt David Middleton in the Consent the 29 July 1607 but no Letter to hee was determined to doe. Wee were all gladd to heare of his arryvall heer in salvetie …”* (Raven-Hart, 1967: 36)

**1607. December 17**: The English vessels *Dragon* and *Hector*, homeward bound under the command of William Keeling, anchored in Table Bay. Before leaving they searched for the engraved stone left behind by Capt David Middleton in the *Consent* on 29 July 1607. This was found but without any letters beneath. Hippon, now Master of the *Dragon*, found the engraved stone he had used six years before, and left behind a batch of letters beneath it, adding the following inscription “*ANT HIPON MA OF T-E DRAGON 28 DECEMBER 1607*”. They set sail on 1 January 1608.

**1608, April 1**: The Dutch vessel *Oranjie*, homeward bound under Capt Cornelis Matelief, dropped anchor in Table Bay. Shortly before leaving on 22 April, the crew visited Robben Island where they nailed a pewter plate to a whalebone engraved with the words *“Matelief landed twenty sheep her on April 19, 1608”* (Raven-Hart, 1967: 40). This was found in July by Jourdain’s men in July 1608.

**1608, July 14**: The English vessels *Ascension* and *Union*, outward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay. They found *“where the shipps that are bound outward or homeward doe use to sett their names, where we found the names of Captain Keeling, Captain Myddleton and divers others”*. He also recorded that: *“We found near the watering place many English names of the year 1604 and also some of December 1607”*. They set sail on 19 September. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 41)

**1609, 10 August**: David Middleton arrived in Table Bay, and returned there, homeward bound on 24 July 1610, where he must have had sight of his brother’s stone.

**1609, December 22**: The English vessels *Dragon* and *Hector* sailed into Table Bay homeward bound. The *Consent*, that had been part of the same expedition, had gone ahead before them. At anchor in the bay they found a Dutch ship already there. They purchased from the Dutch some livestock as well as a main topsail for the *Hector*, and together they set sail on 10 January 1610. The *Hector* also left behind a packet of letters *“as others had done before”.* (Raven-Hart, 1967: 35)

**1610, July 24**: The English vessels *Trade’s Increase, Peppercorn, Darling* and *Samuel*, outward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay, finding three Dutch ships already at anchor. Sir Henry Middleton, captain of the *Trade’s Increase*, found out *“the names of Captaine Keeling, and others bound home in January, 1609. And also my brother Davids name bound in August the ninth, 1609”* (Raven-Hart, 1967: 35). He also found a letter buried in the ground which, unfortunately, was so damaged by moisture as to be illegible. They set sail on 13 August.

**1611, May 20**: The English vessel *Globe*, homeward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay and left a packet behind beneath an engraved stone. She set sail on 6 June.

**1611, August**: The English vessels *Clove, Hector* and *Thomas*, outward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay. The crew visited Robben Island to look for any letters left behind.

**1612, April 18**: The English vessel *Pearl,* outward bound, anchored in Table Bay.

**1612, June 8**: The English vessels *Dragon, Hosiander*, *James* and *Solomon*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay. The *Dragon* staggered into harbour, with about 50% of its crew down with scurvy. When they set sail on 28 June they left behind an engraved stone.

**1613, April 26**: The English vessel *Expedition*, outward bound, anchored in Saldanha Bay. Upon a visit to an island they found *“a carved boord”* by which they *“perceived the Hollanders had beene here”*. On 26 April they proceeded to Table Bay where, upon arrival on 28 April, they found the *Hector* and *Thomas*, as well as four other Dutch ships, all homeward bound. They were joined by the *Peppercorn* on 10 May. All set sail out of the bay on 15 May. The *Expedition* returned here on 20 March 1614 on her way home, and left behind an engraved stone.

**1614, February 20**. The English vessel *Dragon*, homeward bound from Batavia, anchored in Table Bay and left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone. On 28 June 1614 they were discovered by William Edwards, who made a report to this effect to his directors in London.

**1614, May 9**: The English vessel *Concord*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and left behind an engraved stone.

**1614, June 14**: The English vessels *New Year’s Gift* (or *Gift*), *Hector*, *Merchant’s Hope* (or *Hope*), and *Solomon*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay. Upon their departure on 3 July they left behind a packet of letters beneath an engraved stone.. When they came ashore they discovered:

*“… engrauen vpon the stones the ariual of the Expedicon homwardes, March the 21 ao 1613, departinge the 31st dito … Likwise there we founde the ariuall of captaine Best, with the Dragon homwardes, departing from there the third of March 1613: and Richard Petty with the Concord outwarde, May the nynth, and depted Jeune the third 1614”.* (Raven-Hart, 1967: 64)

**1614, October 3**: The English vessels *Samaritan, Thomas* and *Thomasine*, outward bound, arrived in Table Bay only to discover that their visit coincided with that of a Dutch ship. During the course of subsequent communication between the two groups, the Dutch handed them a packet of letters they had discovered on top of a hill *“2 miles distant”*. Upon reading, these were found to originate from a previous English expedition headed by a Captain Downston. The packet was resealed and returned to its place beneath their own stone slab. The crew also found inscriptions on stones from the *Dragon* on 20 June 1612, the *Expedition* on 31 March 1613, the *Dragon* on 14 February 1614, and the *Concord* on 9 May 1614. The flotilla set sail on 20 October, but before departing they left behind a packet of letters of their own.

**1615, June 5**: The English vessels *Expedition, Lion, Peppercorn* and *Dragon,* outward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay. On 17 June they were joined by the Hope, homeward bound, which brought news of an English defeat at Surat at the hands of the Portuguese. Engraved stones from the *Advise*, *Attendance*, *Globe* and *James* were discovered on the shore. They resumed their journey on 20 June. A significant feature of this landfall was the release on shore of ten convicts that had previously been condemned to transportation. Having equipped each of them with a canvas bag, some seed, weapons and basic equipment, they were allowed to leave and do as they wished in their new land. Their subsequent fate was not clear. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 73)

**1615, August 27**: The English vessels *Clove* and *Defence*, outward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay. The *Clove* returned this way on 22 February 1617.

**1616**. The VOC decided that, in future, its outward-bound fleets should always make landfall at Table Bay (Theal, 1907: 365).

**1616, March 4**: The English vessel *Gift,* homeward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay, and departed eight days later.

**1616, May 25**: The English vessels *Lion,* homeward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay.

**1616, June 12**: The English vessels *Charles*, *Unicorn*, *Globe*, *James* and *Swan*, outward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay. The *Rose* was part of the same fleet, but only reached Table Bay on 10 July. Upon arrival they found a Dutch ship already in harbour, together with her Portuguese prize, which she abandoned on 20 June.

**1617, January 2**: The English vessels *Dragon* and *Expedition*, homeward bound from Batavia, anchored in Table Bay and, during their stay, left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone. The Master of the *Expedition*, William Peyton, proposed in his log that the English should now standardize the practice of leaving mail at the Cape and bring out from England a slab especially made for this purpose, approximately 120cm high, 75cm wide and 15cm deep, and embossed with the British coat of arms. (Ravan-Hart, 1967: 76)

**1617, February 10**: The Dutch vessels *Amsterdam* and *Groot Sonne*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and during their stay left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone.

**1617, June 22**: The English vessels *James Royal*, *Anne Royal*, *Gift*, *Bull*, and *Bee*, outward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay, and found the *Hound* already there. They set sail on 13 July.

**1618, June 20**: The English vessels *Dragon*, *Samson*, *Expedition* and *Lion*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and upon their departure, they left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone inscribed as follows: *“NNO 1618 JO WDAL MAS O LN ARID THE 23 O DEPD FOR SVRRAT TH JVNE & DANIE WRHT GEORE PIKE MARCTS ISAC SEVENSON MR MATE ARV JVN E Ye O 3 I WILYOA 1620”.*

**1618, July**: The English vessels *Sun*, *Moon*, *Clove, Globe* and *Peppercorn*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay.

**1619**: The Dutch vessel *Amsterdam* under Jacob Dedel outward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and left behind an engraved stone.

**1619, May 15**: The English vessel *Anne*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and during her stay her crew left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone.

**1619, May 20**: Soon after the *Anne* departed the Dutch vessels *Dordrecht* and *Amsterdam,* under the command of Frederik de Houtman, Den Opperkoopman and Jacob Dedel, anchored in Table Bay. When they sailed, on 8 June, Dedel left behind a *“carved stone”* recording their visit.

**1619, June 24**: An English fleet, including the vessels *Charles*, *Elizabeth*, *Diamond* and *Ruby*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay. There they found a letter left behind but too rotted by damp to be legible. On 8 July they were joined by a Danish fleet of some seven ships, and on 12 July set sail for the Indies.

**1619, July 8**: A Danish fleet including the vessels *David*, *Elephant*, *Christian*, *Jaeger*, *Fyrmand*, *Patientia* and *Copenhagen*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and found eight English ships already there. Subsequent correspondence shows this number to be unreliable. When they landed the Danes built an earth redoubt to protect their camp, probably from the English. Relations between the two groups were strained, but outwardly friendly, until the English delivered to them three letters which had obviously been opened and read. Matters were not assisted when one of the Danish ships was accidentally grounded, and the wreck was openly looted by the English. Nonetheless when the English fleet departed on 2 August they took with them a number of Danish letters whose contents had first been vetted by the fleet’s Council. The Danes set sail on 5 August having lost more than 200 men through dysentery, with more being expected to die en route.

**1619, November 29**: The English vessel *Bull*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and during her stay her crew left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone inscribed as follows: *“RO ADAMS COM OF THE BVL ARIVED 29 OF NOVEM & DEP THE 12 OF DE 1619 FOR BANTAM JO COCKRAM CAPE MARCH LETTERS VNDER”*.

**1620, January 20**: The English vessel *Rose,* homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and during her stay her crew left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone. They also found letters from Capt Adams of the *Bull*. They set sail on 2 February, having left behind letters of their own.

**1620, February 2**: The Dutch vessel *Goude Leeuw*, outward bound, lost her mast off the Cape and had made Table Bay the worse for wear. There she found at anchor the Dutch ship *Goede* *Fortuijn*, also outward bound, who had lost 60 men through illness and had barely made it into port. Finding no food available there both made for Saldanha Bay where, by some accounts, the *Goede* *Fortuijn* was abandoned. During their stay the crew of the *Goude Leeuw* left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone, packed in a most thorough and efficient manner.

**1620, March 15**: A French fleet including three vessels, the *Montmorency*, *Esperance* and *Hermitage*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay. Upon coming ashore the crew found: *“a large stone, under which there were two packets of tarred cloth, which made them think that they were letters from Flemings or Englishmen. These I delayed opening until I had assembled the officers of my ship … and when persons capable of interpreting them had arrived”* (Raven-Hart, 1967: 102). While in the bay they were joined by the English ships *Bull*, outward bound, and the *Rose*, homeward bound. They set sail on 12 April. On the journey back they anchored in Table Bay on 5 May 1622, and over the next week they were joined by the Dutch ships *Livree de Roterdam*, *Maurice* and *West Frisland*, and on 23 May the *Gouda* arrived in a state of distress. The French estimated that more than 80 Dutch crewmen died there during their stay. They were finally able to set sail on 30 May.

**1620, June 24**: The English vessels *Roebuck*, *London*, *Hart* and *Eagle,* outward bound under the command of Capt Andrew Shilling, anchored in Table Bay. When they arrived they found that the *Lion*, homeward bound, as well as nine other Dutch ships, outward bound, were already there. Soon after their arrival the English were joined by the ships *Exchange* and *Unity*. On 25 June the Dutch fleet, together with the *Lion*, bearing their letters home, set sail, but later that evening they welcomed the arrival of the Dutch ship *Schidam*. The *Bear* arrived on 10 July. The English flotilla was finally able to set sail on 25 July. During their stay their crew left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone.

**1620, June 24**: The English vessels *Exchange* and *Unity*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay.

**1620, June 25**: The Dutch vessel *Schidam*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay.

**1620, July 3**: A party of English officers from Shilling’s flotilla, gathered on shore with as many crew as could be mustered, and read a proclamation placing the whole country under the sovereignty of King James I of England. Capt Jan Kunst, of the *Schidam* and some of his officers were also present and reportedly raised no objection. The flag of St George was then raised on the Lion’s Rump, recently renamed King James’ Mount, and a small copy of the flag was presented to the Khoikhoi residents present. As, at that stage, the English and Dutch East India Companies were seeking to amalgamate, nothing ever came of this declaration. .

**1620, July 10**: The English vessel *Bear*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay.

**1621, May 24**: The English vessel *Lesser James,* homeward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay, where she found the *Anne Royal* and the *Fortune* already there, together with Dutch ships *Gauda*, *Black Bear* and *Herring*, all outward bound. Three more Dutch ships sailed in the next day. The English set sail on 28 May.

**1622, January 29**: The English vessels *Roebuck,* *London* and *Hart* returned to Table Bay. Prior to setting sail on 3 February they *“buried our letters”*, probably beneath another engraved stone.

**1622, May 5**: The Dutch vessel *Wapen*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay, having lost 60 men to scurvy, out of a complement of 380. She set sail on 21 May.

**1622, May 7:** The Dutch vessel *Mauritius*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay.

**1622, May 12:** The Dutch vessel *West Friesland*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay, fully laden with pepper and cloves, and was joined by the *Gouda* soon thereafter.

**1622, June 27**: The English vessels *Blessing, Discovery* and *Reformation*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and set sail on 8 July.

**1622, December 8**: The English vessel *Lesser James*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay. On !7 December the English ship Abegail, outward bound, joined her in the bay. Upon its departure, the crew left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone inscribed as follows: *“JOHN ROBERTS COMMAVNDER OF THE LESSER JAMES AR Y 8 DECEM DE Y 26 1622 LOVK WITH THIS LINE FOR LETERES”.* This stone was added to a few days later by the crew of the *Abegail*. Their inscription reads as follows: *“HENRY MANCHES JAMES BVRGES M OF THE ABIGALL AR Y 17 DEPAR Y 26 OF DECEMBAR 1622”*. The same stone was reused in 1627 by the crew of the *Hart.*

**1623, March 10**: The English vessels *London*, *Jonas* and *Lion*, homeward bound from Surat, anchored in Table Bay. During her stay her crew left behind an engraved stone with the following inscription: *“THE LONDON ARIVED THE 10 OF M HERE FROM SVRAT BOND FOR ENGLAND AND DEPAR THE 20 DICTO RICHARD BLYTH CAPTAINE 1622 HEARE VNDER LOOKE FOR LETTERS”.* In 1629 the same stone was reused by Dutch sailors. It was discovered on 17 August 1827, during the course of repairs to a sewer on the Heerengracht, but for some reason it was reburied, and was only brought to light again in 1897.

**1623, March 19**: The Danish East India Company vessels *Christianshaven* and *Flensborg,* outward bound for the Indies, with Icelander Jon Olafsson on board, anchored in Saldanha Bay. His log recorded that, before leaving, the crew had buried the ship’s letters in a wooden casket in a very deep hole, and had then marked the position with a wooden post giving the name of the ship. The entry explained, somewhat laconically, that *“those homeward bound take the letters of those outward bound …”.* They then sailed on to Table Bay where they found four English ships at anchor, the *London*, *Jonas* and *Lion*, homeward bound, and the *Roebuck*, outward bound. The Danes set sail on 23 March, *“after feasts given by the Danes and the English, each to the other”* (Raven-Hart, 1967: 112). It is not known whether Saldanha Bay was frequented often enough by passing vessels to warrant Olaffson’s optimism that their mail would be found.

**1623, May 29**: The English vessel *Hart,* outward bound, anchored in Table Bay and, during her stay, her crew left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone. They also found the letters left behind by the *Jonas*, some three months previously. The ship set sail on 8 June.

**1624, April**: The Dutch vessels *Hollandia, Gouda, Dordrecht* and *Leeuwinne,* outward bound, anchored in Table Bay. While in harbour, on 24 April 1624 the Chief Mate of the *Hollandia* died, and his grave was marked with a stone. The fleet set sail on 11 May.

**1624, April**: The English vessel *Dolphin*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay and left behind some letters beneath an engraved stone. While there they met up with the *Charles*, outward bound.

**1624, July 17**: The English vessels *Royal James*, *Eagle*, *Jonas*, *Star*, *Spy* and *Scout,* outward bound, anchored in Table Bay and, during their stay, discovered an engraved stone left behind by the Dolphin four months previously. However no letters were discovered underneath, and it was assumed that they had been taken by a Dutch or Danish ship. Before leaving the crew left behind a batch of letters of their own similarly placed beneath an engraved stone. The fleet set sail on 29 July.

**1625, October 14**: The English vessel *Star* anchored in Table Bay and, during its stay, the ship’s surgeon, Edward Wilson, left behind a batch of letters beneath a stone painted with the words “*Edwa.Wilson ship - Star 1625*”.

**1625, October 14**: The Dutch vessels *Maagd van Dort* (also known as the *Dordrecht*) and *Weesp*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay. They set sail with the *Star* on 25 October.

**1625, October**: The Dutch vessel *Tholen*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay at the same time as the *Star*, *Maagd van Dort* and *Weesp*. It remained in harbour for 14 days.

**1625, December 18**: The Dutch vessel *Middelburg*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay, and set sail on 28 December. It left behind a packet of letters, which was later found by another Dutch ship.

**1626, January 20**: The English vessel *Scout*. homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay and found two Dutch ships already at anchor, the *Wapen van Hoorn* and *Eendracht*, both also homeward bound. A search for letters only produced engraved stones from the *Star*, and the Dutch ships *Maagd van Dort* and *Weesp*, that had visited Table Bay on 14-25 October 1625. The three had been under instruction to sail home together. The letters were collected by the Dutch ship *Tholen*, in Table Bay at the same time. On 23 January the Dutch ship *Leyden*, outward bound, came into the bay and an exchange of provisions took place. The *Scout* and its two Dutch companions set sail on 27 January.

**1627, January**: The Dutch vessel *Wapen van Rotterdam*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay. It left behind a packet of letters beneath an inscribed stone, which was later found by another Dutch ship, the *Grotenbroek*.

**1627, July 6:** A flotilla of Dutch vessels, outward bound, begins to arrive in Table Bay, including the *Wapen van Hoorn, Gallias, Utrecht, Vianen, Texel, Leeuwin and Kamphaen.* On 19 July five English ships joined them, the *Mary, Star, Hopewell, Hart, Refuge* and *Scout*. It appears that some unpleasantness may have arisen between the two groups. The English flotilla left port on 30 July, and on 4 August the Dutch vessels *Dobbelen* *Arend* and *Velsen* arrived in the bay. The last of the Dutch ships set sail on 7 August.

**1627, July 7**: The English vessel *Hart,* homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay and, during her stay, her crew left behind a batch of letters, reusing the engraved stone originally carved by the crew of the *Lesser James* on 8 December, and by the crew of the *Abegail* on 17 December 1622. Their inscription, which is largely illegible, reads partly as follows: *“M R ARIVED LY DEPARTED DIT FOR SARAT 27”*.

**1627, July 8**: The English vessels *Mary, Star, Hopewell, Hart, Refuge* and *Scout,* outward bound, anchored in Table Bay. The fleet set sail on 19 July. Also see above.

**1628, January 19**: A fleet of some eleven Dutch vessels, including the *Vlissingen*, *De Veer*, *Zeeburgh* and *Delffshaven*, outward bound, anchored in the bay at some time between 19 and 31 January.

**1628, May 9:** The English vessels *Discovery, Palsgrave* and *Dolphin,* homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay. Over the next few days they were joined by the *Dove*, outward bound, and by the Dutch ship *Vianen*, also on its way home. They set sail on 21 May.

**1628, September 1**: The English vessel *William,* homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay and, during her stay, her crew left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone. She set sail on 18 September.

**1629, March 11**: The English vessel *Star*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay.

**1629, September 7**: The English vessel *Hopewell*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay and found letters left behind by Capt Pynne of the *London*. They buried a packet of letters of their own before setting sail on 21 September. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 131)

**1630, February 17**: The Dutch vessel *Gallias van Hoorn*, homeward bound together with other ships, anchored in Table Bay. After protest from the crew against the incompetence of their captain, they set sail on 26 February. A packet of letters was left on shore, presumably under an engraved stone.

**1630, April 12**: The English vessel *Star*, outward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay. When the crew went ashore at Robben Island looking for English letters, they *“could not find any, wee found the dutch packett of letters which we opened, because wee could not find no English letters, supposing they had taken vp our letters, & therein wee founde English letters left here by Mr Alnuts (Master of the Speedwell) &the ships Hart, Expedition and Hopewell, the Coppies wheroff wee send you herewith”*. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 134)

**1630, October 23**: The English vessel *Ch****a****rles*, homeward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay. When the crew went ashore they *“found Flemish letters”*, and on 5 November the Dutch vessels *Der Veer* and *Vlissingen* sailed into the bay, outward bound. The latecomers also came on shore to trade for provisions, and obviously outbid the English for *“we could get non afterwards”*. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 134)

**1631**: The Khoikhoi chief *Autshumato*, known subsequently to foreign visitors variously as *Hadah*, *Hada*, *Adda*, *Haddot* and, after 1652, as *Harry*, was befriended by the English and taken on the *London*, under Capt John Pynne, to the Javanese port of Banten, probably in 1629. During his stay he gained a broad knowledge of their language, and after his return to the Cape early in 1632, he and some thirty of his followers were transported, at their own request, to Robben Island. There he was employed by the English as an agent, liaising on their behalf with other Khoi groups on the mainland, and keeping mail in his possession until collected by the next ship. Consequently he must be regarded to be South Africa’s first resident postmaster. By 1638 records indicate that a second Khoikhoi, known as Isaac, had also learnt to speak English, and that sometime later he was taken by the Dutch to Batavia. He was returned to the bay in 1642, the Dutch no doubt intending to employ him as their own agent. He probably died in 1646. *Autshumato* and his people left Robben Island sometime in the early 1640s, and after 1652 he was installed by the Dutch as their chief translator. However on 19 October 1853, while the Dutch were attending church, *Autshumato* absconded with most of their cattle. Eventually the herd was captured by a rival Khoikhoi group, the Goringhaiqua, and in June 1655 *Autshumato* returned to the Dutch and managed to persuade them that the theft had been perpetuated by the Goringhaiqua, who now held the cattle. The Dutch believed him and reinstated him as their chief translator. *Autshumato* then proceeded to amass a large herd of cattle and sheep, largely at the expense of his employers. As a result, in June 1658, he was arrested and banished to Robben Island, while his herds were confiscated. In December 1659 he managed to return back to the mainland, escaping in a leaky rowboat, and went into exile among his own people, where he died in 1663.

**1631, May 29**: The English vessels *Palsgrave* and *London,* outward bound, anchored in Table Bay and, during their stay, left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone.

**1631, June 10**. The Dutch vessels *Middelburgh*, *Wassenaaer*, *Egmont*, *Delffshaven*, *Deventer* and *Leeuwinne*, homeward bound, dropped anchor in Table Bay.

**1631, July 13**: The English vessels *Discovery* and *Reformation*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay, discovering the *Palsgrave* and *London,* also outward bound, already there. They all departed together on 2 August and the two groups parted company later that day. During their stay, the crew left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone.

**1632, about May**: Captain Weddell, probably on the English vessel *Charles*, anchored in Table Bay and, upon his departure, left behind on Robben Island a batch of letters in the keeping of the Khoikhoi chief *Autshumato.*

**1632, April 3**: The earliest surviving engraved stone inscribed in Dutch was left behind when the sailing ships *Nassau*, *Nimmegen*, *Wesel* and *Galyas*, homeward bound from Batavia, anchored in Table Bay. It bore the following inscription: *“HIER ONDER LEGGEN BRIEVEN VAND COMAND DV LEE EN VICE COMD P.CROOCK MET DE SCHEPEN NASSAU FRE HENDRIK NIMMEGEN WESEL EN DE GALIAS. ALHIER DEN 9 APRIL 1632 VAN BATTAVIA GEARIVEERT VIR OCKEN DEN 15 DITTO”.* They set sail from there on 20 April, and not on 15 April as they had originally planned.

**1632, May 15**: English seamen from the vessel *Pearl* landed in St Helena Bay where they discovered *“a certain Ler written in french … in a glasse bottle hangeing vppon a post”*, which had apparently been left there by a passing ship twenty days previously. There being no provisions available they moved south to Table Bay, where they were met by the Khoikhoi chief *Autshumato.* He delivered to them a batch of letters which had been left in his safekeeping by the crew of the *“London”*. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 136)

**1632, November 12**: The English vessel *Blessing,* homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay and, during her stay, her crew collected the mail which had been left by the *Charles* on Robben Island in the keeping of the Khoikhoi chief *Autshumato*, in about January 1632.

**1634, February 24**: The Dutch vessels *Wesel*, *Nassouw* and *Middelburg*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay. Having left a batch of letters, presumably under an engraved stone, they left on 3 March. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 139)

**1634, April 7**: The Dutch vessels *Wassenaer*, *Banda* and *Egmont*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay and, during their stay, they left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone inscribed as follows: “*BANDA WASSENAER END EGMONT SYN DEN XI APRIL VERTROCKE SOECKT BRIEF”*.

**1634, May 13**: The English vessel *Mary,* homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay and, upon her departure, her crew left behind on the shore a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone. Copies were also entrusted to the Khoikhoi chief *Autshumato* on Robben Island. He then delivered letters previously entrusted to him by the English vessel *Exchange*, some weeks earlier. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 143).

**1634, June 4**: The English vessel *Coaster,* outward bound, anchored in Table Bay and during her stay her crew collected two batches of mail which had previously been left on Robben Island in the keeping of the Khoikhoi chief *Autshumato*.

**1635, April 26**: The English vessel *Jonas,* homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay and, upon her departure, her crew left behind a batch of letters beneath an engraved stone.

**1638, February 20**: Six Dutch vessels, including the *Wezel*, *Haerlem*, *Middelburg, ‘t Hoff van Holland, Hollandia* and *Nassau*, outward bound, anchored in Table Bay. Upon their arrival they collected mail which had previously been left behind on Robben Island, in the keeping of the Khoikhoi chief *Autshumato*. Having found him to be reliable, upon their departure they left their mail with him. This was collected on 18 March by the *Amsterdam*. However they also marked their visit with an engraved stone, which they left on the mainland.

**1638, March 17**: The Dutch vessel *Amsterdam*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay. The next day its crew went ashore and were met by a local resident who spoke a little English and was dressed in the Dutch manner. He handed them a packet of letters left two days previously by a Dutch fleet, and an engraved stone inscribed *“On February 20 Governor Gijsels arrived here, and went on to the Fatherland on March 15, 1638, with the ships Wesel, Nassouw, Hof van Holland …”* (Raven-Hart, 1967: 149)

**1639, May 6**: The English vessel *Mary,* homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay. Travelling on her was Johan von Mandelslo, who reported that *“The Dutch have there a certain place or stone in which they lay latters, so that other Dutch travellers who pass may have news of their journey and all else.”* (Raven-Hart, 1967: 151). Another passenger, William Bayley wrote: *“we sent our shallop and Jollywatt ashoare … to looke for lres (letters)”*, and when they left five days later *“we sent our shallopp to (Robben) Iland to carry Thomas with whom we lefte our letters with the Rest of his family of watermen there to reside the whole number Consisting of 20 psons men, weomen and Children”*. (Raven-Hart, 1967: 146)

**1643, February 22**: The Dutch vessel *Nassau*, homeward bound together with a fleet of seven other ships, anchored in Table Bay. The ships sailed on 12 March and were joined by others at St Helena.

**1643, March 31**: The English vessel *Hester,* homeward bound, sailed out of Table Bay, passing on the way the *Crispiana* and *Aleppo Merchant*.

**1643, March 31**: The English vessels *Crispiana* and *Aleppo Merchant*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay.

**1643, July 12**: The English vessel *Royall Mary,* outward bound, anchored in Table Bay for repairs.

**1644, February 7**: The *Mauritius Eiland* set sail on 4 October 1643 together with three other ships. The flotilla was dispersed in a storm and set sail individually for the Cape. They arrived off Table Bay on 7 February 1644, but the ship was wrecked close to Mouille Point while attempting to sail into harbour. They were joined two days later by their companion ship, the *Vrede*, who was able to take on most of the cargo as well as 69 men. After a minor mutiny, the remaining 280 men restored the earthworks of a fort previously built by a Danish crew and settled down to wait for rescue. Their ship was eventually beached and abandoned. On 25 May 1644 the *Tijger* was dispatched from Batavia to bring home the survivors as well as any remaining cargo.

**1644, February 22**: The English vessel *Royall Mary,* homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay in time to witness the plight of the *Mauritius Eiland*. After having traded a case of spirits for a keg of white wine, a barrel of butter and some powder and shot, she left for home on 2 March.

**1644, 25 March**: The English vessel *Endeavour,* outward bound, anchored in Table Bay and found some 280 castaways of the *Mauritius Eiland* living on shore. Gave them some provisions before sailing out on 29 March.

**1645, December 29**. The English vessel *Malacca*, outward bound for the Indies, anchored in Table Bay, and set sail on 15 January 1646. It left behind a packet of letters with Isaac, which were handed over a month later to the *Zutphen*.

**1646, February 25**. The English vessel *Eagle* anchored in Table Bay, and set sail for home on 9 March. During its stay they were met up with a Dutch flotilla from Batavia that arrived two days after them and set sail six days before them. If any mails were left behind by the Captain of the *Eagle*, this would have been given to the care of Isaac.

**1646, February 27**: Dutch vessels, including, among others, the *Tiger*, *Walvisch*, *Vrede* and *Zutphen*, homeward bound, anchored in Table Bay where they met up with the *Eagle*. Upon their arrival the Chief Mate of the *Zutphen* was sent ashore to make contact with the English and to collect any *Dutch* mail from Isaac. This is where the story becomes curious. The *Eagle* had been in the bay for five days before the Dutch arrival but, despite all efforts, had failed to make contact with the locals. The Dutch on the other hand, had no such difficulty, and although Isaac was immediately found, he refused to hand over his mails until the next day, when he could make the delivery in person to the Captain of the *Zutphen* aboard his ship. The bulk of this was a packet of letters from Admiral Le Maire, outward bound with a flotilla of six ships, but it also included letters left behind by the English ship *Malacca* six weeks previously. There is no doubt that the Dutch commander opened and read the English mail, otherwise its contents would not have been recorded in the Dutch account, but there is no reference to it being forwarded to its legal recipients. The *Eagle* had already been in the bay for some days and, like the Dutch, was also homeward bound, so one can only conclude that Jacob perceived himself to be serving Dutch interests. This perception was supported later on in the same report when it stated that a separation of the mails had now taken place, with Isaac taking charge of Dutch letters. This, apparently did not prevent him from handing over to his masters any English mail that came his way. Before their departure on 3 March the Dutch left behind with Isaac a consignment of letters, paying him with *“some trifles such as copper rings, tobacco and brandy.”*