

## **ROODEWAL FARM, WORCESTER 1913**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Black (or Natives) Land Act No. 27 of 1913**

The Natives Land Act (No. 27 of 1913), also known as the Black Land Act, was passed because of constant pressure by Whites to prevent the encroachment of Blacks on White areas. This law incorporated territorial segregation into legislation for the first time since Union in 1910.

The law created reserves for Blacks and prohibited the sale of White territory to Blacks and vice versa. An annexure designated the territory preliminary allocated to Blacks, with a provision that a commission was to investigate the matter further for a more realistic delimitation. In effect, over 80% went to White people, who made up less than 20% of the population. The Act stipulated that Black people could live outside the reserves only if they could prove that they were in White employment. Although the law was applicable to the whole of South Africa, in practice it applied only to the Transvaal and Natal. In the Free State, such legislation was already in force since 1876, while a law forbidding Blacks to own property in the Cape would have been in conflict with the constitution of the Union of South Africa, as Cape property-ownership was one of the qualifications for Black franchise. Sharecropping on farms in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State was forbidden.

According to debates in Parliament, the Act was passed in order to limit friction between White and Black, but Blacks maintained that its aim was to meet demands from White farmers for more agricultural land and force Blacks to work as labourers.

This Act did not go unchallenged. While it was being discussed in Parliament, the South African Native National Congress (SANNC, later to become the ANC), which was formed in 1912, rallied against the proposed law. In 1914 the SANNC submitted a petition to members of the Imperial Parliament and the British Government asking for intervention to stop the Act, but failed to achieve this.

Retrieved from <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/chronology/thisday/1913-06-19.htm>

### **SCENARIO**

It was announced after church on Sunday that the sharecroppers of the area will gather at the Willemse household to discuss the new law (1913 Land Act) and its possible effects, as well as how the sharecroppers in the Worcester district will respond to it. Because it is harvest time some farmers send their wives to the gathering. The Willemses from Caledon (SWEDISH DELEGATION) also come to the meeting because this is a special occasion. Not only is it about politics – but it is the birthday celebration of one of Pa Willemses daughters. Today also happens to be the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Grandpa and Grandma Willemse and all guests are invited to stay for the day and enjoy a relaxing time on the farm.

The visitors gather in the horse stable which is big enough to house 30 people. The meeting is led by Brother Karoolsie, an educated man and spokesperson for the church. The meeting starts with a short service; the 1913 Land Act is then discussed. Maybe a petition or a letter will be drawn up to protest this new act. A song is sung.

After the morning coffee the Pa and Grandpa show the visitors around and explain what daily activities occur on the farm (candle and soap making, rolling of tobacco, grinding of corn, bread baking, working with farm animals, etc). Guests actively help with food and coffee preparation and other chores. Even the wandering Jewish trader joins in and organises a train ride to the show grounds in town for everybody. Some guests try out the Willemses' donkey cart while others explore life on the farm.

Everybody gathers for the big anniversary lunch. Music is played on the guitar and piano accordion while guests sing and dance. A recount of the earlier decision about the Land Act is made and a short prayer brings the day's proceedings to an end.

### **TIME PLAN**

**08h00** Prep site, TEAM briefing

**09h30** Participants arrive, Introductions, Orientation

**10h00** Dress up, History, Scenario

**10h30** Rules. Presentation of characters (MAYBE NOT). Ceremony/ritual back to 1913

**10h45** ACTIVITIES BEGIN/ Meeting in (OR ADJACENT TO) horse stable led by Brother Karoolsie and Grandpa.

**11h15** Coffee and roosterkoek

**11h25** MORE ACTIVITIES/ food prep/train ride to the show grounds in town/ donkey cart rides/ ...

**12h40** Lunch/song/dance/final discussion wrt Land Act/prayer

**13h00** End

**13h05** Reflection, undress

**13h30** Participants depart, Clean-up of site

### **KEY ISSUES**

- How will this law affect the sharecroppers of the Worcester District?
- What will we do if we had to leave the farm for the towns?
- How are we going to react to this unjust law?