

Macro-inventory of resources on veterinary history in South Africa

Purpose

This document serves as an overview of resources that are related to the study of veterinary history in South Africa. It does not provide detail. Catalogues of libraries and inventories of museums and archives are supplementary to this document. Some documents are substantial, and therefore cannot be attached as such. Moreover, some inventories are in database format.

Libraries

ARC-Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (OVI) Library

The OVI library is the older of the 2 libraries on the Onderstepoort campuses and most of the original collection was retained when the Faculty and Institute separated.

One should generally speaking, distinguish between the following:

- a. Antique books that should be preserved (and therefore fall into the same category as museum objects).
- b. Books and journals from which historical information can be retrieved.
- c. Books, journals and articles in journals purposely dedicated to record history.

Examples are the Onderstepoort centenary book (see below), and the journal *Historiae Medicinae Veterinariae*. Historical articles are also found in journals with other themes, like Curson's articles in the *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research* on inter alia veterinary military affairs, Vogel & Heyne's article on rinderpest and Bezuidenhout's article on heartwater in the *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association*.

OVI has 2 main collections related to history:

There is a *Special Collection* of old and valuable books. These are housed in several glass cupboards and a wooden cupboard. The oldest (pre-1800) books are housed in the office safe of OVI's librarian.

The *History Collection* consists of photocopies and printouts of selected articles and theses. These articles were purposely written to record history. They are written by scientist-historians like Vogel, Heyne, Verwoerd, Bigalke, Snijders, Bezuidenhout, etc, and historians from the Oxford group, i.e. Brown, Gilfoyle and Beinart; and South African historians.

Presently there are 7 boxes containing catalogued articles and theses, and a further 9 boxes with materials that still need to be sorted.

Library inventories are called catalogues and the OVI has a card catalogue as well as a computerized catalogue.

The *Special Collection* is not computerized. Many of the books were catalogued on the old card system. Presently these books are marked as “on loan” to the *Special Collection* on the loan card system, as they have not been catalogued on the computer system yet. Thus, whenever a book is requested that is not on the open shelves, the loan card system is consulted which then directs the librarian to the *Special Collection*. It is of paramount importance that all these books should be catalogued onto the computer system with a special holding indicator as to where each book is placed. A few records, to test the system have been captured onto the computer system. Lately unaccessioned books that have an historical value have also been entered into the system. Modern philosophy dictates that books of value must not be tampered with by stamps, barcodes, etc.

The History Collection is computerized.

Apart from these specially preserved collections, there are still books of value that are available to the general OVI users on the open shelves. The short, incomplete set of *Historiae Medicinae Veterinariae* (1989-2002) is also on the open shelves.

Since the library is open 5 days a week, deficiencies in inventorying can be partly overcome by consulting the head librarian.

Jotello F Soga Library, Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria

This library has a very small collection of old books. It has complete holdings of the two South African veterinary journals (OPJVR and JSAVA). It has undertaken the digitization of these journals starting from their beginning date, with the permission of the respective editors. These will be placed in the University of Pretoria’s digital repository which adheres to an open access policy, enabling worldwide access. See separate entry under Digital repositories. The OPJVR can be viewed at <http://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/8641>

The Jotello F. Soga Library’s collection development policy ensures that one copy is kept of each edition of relevant textbooks on veterinary science and medicine. This is of importance to researchers wishing to look at the development and progress of this discipline.

This library is the custodian of the physical Theiler collection, donated by Prof Anna Verster, a close friend of the Theiler daughters.

This collection comprises:

- Various photo albums collated by the Theiler daughters, Margaret and Gertrude, of their father’s travels.
- Travel trunk used by their parents.
- 2 silver frames with photos of Sir Arnold and a young boy (grandson?).
- Sir Arnold’s wallet.
- Folding photo holder with photos of family members.

Some of these photos have been digitized and placed in the SANVR (South African National Veterinary Repository). See separate entry under Digital repositories.

The doctoral theses of the Faculty of Veterinary Science are being digitized to be placed in the University's digital repository of theses, UPeTD.

These cover the period from the establishment of the Faculty in 1920 to the present. These theses are also an important source of early veterinary research in South Africa.

The Jotello F. Soga Library created the South African National Veterinary Repository that has its own entry elsewhere under Digital repositories.

(www.library.up.ac.za/sanvr)

Museums

South African National Veterinary Museum

The South African National Veterinary Museum is situated on the campus of the ARC- Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute. The exhibits depicting the history of veterinary science through the ages, and in particular of South Africa, are housed in several rooms in the original students hostel/single quarters of the Institute. Stock not on display, is housed in a secure facility elsewhere on the campus. The former open air museum, dismantled in 2002, is also in storage.

A provisional inventory was drawn up by the former curator, Ms Susan Brett. At a meeting by the History Committee on the 5th of March 2010 a format for a new inventory was approved. It is intended is that some committee members will convene on weekends to make an inventory of articles on display in the museum and, where necessary, eventually also the stores.

Responsibility for the museum is as follows: The contents are under the auspices of the History Committee of the SAVA, who redesigned the museum in time for its inauguration during the Onderstepoort Centenary celebrations in 2008. Under an agreement with the ARC- OVI the committee will continue developing it. Ms Heloise Heyne, an institute official as well as a member of the History Committee, has officially been appointed as curator. She is assisted by a Management Committee which is essentially a subcommittee of the SAVA History Committee.

Access: Since Ms Heyne is an honorary curator, she can only act as guide by appointment. The Public Relations' division of the OVI can also open the rooms, but no accompanying guide will be available until the institute appoints a full time PRO again.

A website for the museum is part of the information dissemination of the SAVA History Committee. It has been updated and linked to the SAVA website at:

<http://www.sava.co.za>

Theiler Agricultural Museum

Armoedsvlakte Research Station, now known as the Cattle Research Centre, a former substation of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute, is situated 8 km west of Vryburg in the North-West Province. Groundbreaking research on Lamsiekte was done there from 1917 to 1921. A museum dedicated to Sir Arnold Theiler and the research at Armoedsvlakte is housed on the premises of the Cattle Research Centre.

Cultural History Museum

Furniture from the estates of Margeret and Gertrud Theiler, daughters of Sir Arnold Theiler, bequeathed to the National Cultural History Museum, 149 Visagie Street, Pretoria, is currently housed at the ARC-Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute. Some of the furniture is displayed in the Theiler guest house and the rest is in storage.

Bensusan Museum of Photography

Sir Arnold Theiler's photo albums, portraying inter alia his research, are archived at the Bensusan Museum of Photography at the MuseuMAfricA, 121 Bree Street, Newtown, Johannesburg.

Archives

ARC-Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute Archives

The institute archives are kept in room 8 of the Museum complex / Old Hostel / Public Relations building.

The following documents are archived:

Correspondence and documents of the OVI from 1919 to 1962: Documents pre-1919 were lost /destroyed due to negligence. The remaining collection is sometimes referred to as the Venter archives as it was sorted by Mr DFM Venter, a former administrative official at the OVI. He compiled an inventory which is a ring-bound document with a separately written introduction, titled "Onderstepoort Archives Manual". A copy of the inventory is kept in a drawer of the reading desk in the archive room

Documents of the SAVA: Sorted but not inventoried.

The historical photographic materials of the institute: These photographs, slides and negatives (including the Theiler glass negative plates and lantern slides) are in the

process of being identified, sorted and digitised onto the South African National Veterinary Repository. Photographs are labelled and sorted into topical boxes.

A copy of the bound manuscript: Posthumus PJ. *Past veterinarians in South Africa*, an undated and unpublished collection of summarised *curricula vitae* of deceased veterinarians.

Responsibility and access to the Onderstepoort archives are the same as for the museum.

National Archives and Record Service

The Institute's archives, after 1962, can be examined / perused / consulted in the National Archives of South Africa, 24 Hamilton Street, Arcadia, Pretoria. According to the Archives Act all government archives /documentation after April 1962, have to be submitted, to the National Archives. Retrieval can be done on their computerized inventory that is available at: <http://www.national.archives.gov.za/naairs.htm>

Apart from documentation on the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute and its precursory research stations, Daspoort Bacteriological Laboratories, the national archives can also be consulted for information on veterinary science elsewhere in South Africa like the 4 historical provinces and in its precursor colonies. Information can be obtained from <http://www.national.archives.gov.za>

Johannesburg Public Library

Documents of veterinary importance (rinderpest) are also archived in the reference library of the Johannesburg Public Library, Market Street, City Centre, Johannesburg.

Interviews of the SAVA History Committee. Recordings and transcriptions

Housed with Drs RD Bigalke and DW Verwoerd and not inventoried. Will later be transferred to the ARC-OVI archives.

Posthumus PJ *Past veterinarians in South Africa*. Undated and unpublished collection of summarised *curricula vitae* of deceased veterinarians. Archives of the Onderstepoort Veterinary History Museum

Private property

Some objects (veterinary instruments, etc) and publications are in private possession. Some of these are on loan to the South African National Veterinary Museum; others are kept by the owners. A register of the private property can be supplementary to that of the South African National Veterinary Museum.

A list of presently known privately owned objects is available in draft form from Mr D Swanepoel. Responsibility to maintain this list has been assigned to those responsible for the museum. Full contact particulars should be provided of the owners, with whom, if possible, contact can be made for viewing. Photographs and descriptions of these items can probably be arranged and uploaded on the South African National Veterinary Repository (see below).

Selected publications

A collection policy similar to that used by libraries will be drawn up and a decision made of what should be included. Two major publications are indicated below.

Gutsche, Thelma. 1979. There was a man: the life and times of Sir Arnold Theiler, K.C.M.G., of Onderstepoort. Cape Town: H. Timmins

Verwoerd D.W and Bigalke R.D. Onderstepoort 1908 - 2008. 2008. Pretoria: Veterinary History Committee of the South African Veterinary Association

The book by Thelma Gutche focuses on the research done by Sir Arnold Theiler, his research stations / laboratories and veterinary history circa 1800 to 1940. A virtual book on the veterinary history of southern Africa, starting with articles published in the JSAVA, is currently being written by members of the History committee and others. Professional historians, who have their own approach to the field, have written books and articles on certain diseases.

Maintenance of this list is currently the responsibility of Mr D Swanepoel and could possibly be uploaded on the website of the History Committee.

Websites

The only currently reliable website relating to South African veterinary history is that of the SAVA History Committee, which has a subsection on the South African National Veterinary Museum, accessible at: <http://www.sava.co.za>

Responsibility lies with the SAVA History Committee for updating the website.

Digital repositories

South African National Veterinary Repository

The SANVR is a large project of the University of Pretoria, with intellectual inputs from the Institute and advisory support from the SAVA History Committee. Its objective is stated as: "The University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science has access to very rich and diverse heritage and learning resources. The South African

National Veterinary Repository (SANVR) aims to digitize historic and other material of interest to the veterinary science fraternity and this information will be made available for research and education within and beyond South Africa via the SANVR.” It will therefore eventually contain digital representations of much of the resources mentioned elsewhere in this document. The most important presently are the Theiler Collection (donated by Anna Verster) and the General History Collection.

Articles on veterinary history of South Africa can be viewed at:
<http://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/6851>

Other important collections are the Jotello F. Soga collection and the Research articles (by UP authors) collection.

Responsibility: Jotello F Soga Library, with inputs from the OVI and the SAVA History Committee.

Access: It is available at: <http://www.library.up.ac.za/sanvr/>

It is searchable and therefore automatically inventoried.