

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/003/0064
	Site Name	Mooimeisiesfontein, Riebeeck East, Albany District
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-33.199504, 26.167020

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 71

Site Category: Building

Directions:

It is located in close proximity to alicedale currently under promotion by Adrian Gardner of Shamware as a tourist attraction, and nearby Grahamstown

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: Forty kilometres north-west of Grahamstown, bordering on the village of Riebeeck East, lies Mooimeisiesfontein, the well-known farm of Piet Retief. It was in Retief's possession from 1814 to 1836. There he built himself a large house with yellow-wood ceilings and a slate roof, which has recently been restored. Not far from the house were two springs, and here he established an extensive orchard with walnut, fig, pear, apple, medlar, plum and orange trees. Some of the old trees are still there. In addition to the orchard, he planted a vineyard with more than 5 000 vines, so that he was even able to distil brandy, but all this agriculture was merely supplementary to his main activities as a stock-farmer. Piet Retief was an energetic, active and mobile man and did not live uninterruptedly on Mooimeisiesfontein. For one thing, he possessed several other farms as well, so he sometimes lived at Driefontein between Mooimeisiesfontein and Commodagga, while he also stayed for a time at Karega near Grahamstown. Moreover, he lived for a considerable time in Grahamstown itself where he was committed to important contracts as a building contractor. Nevertheless, it appears that he spent most of his time at Mooimeisiesfontein, and that farm is therefore more closely associated with him than any other place. By 1829 Piet Retief had sold one half of the farm which measured 2 662 hectares. On this the village of Riebeeck East was eventually laid out. He sold the other half when he left for the north in 1836. After that the farm changed hands frequently and the old dwelling became more and more dilapidated. In the end the old farmstead and 17 hectares of land were bought through the intervention of the Rev. H. A. Hanekom of Riebeeck East and other interested persons. It was then transferred to the government as a living monument to Piet Retief, to be used in the interests of underprivileged Afrikaans children. In this way the Piet Retief institution for neglected and problem children was established in 1928. At first the children were housed in the historic Retief house, but since 1947 new buildings that can accommodate more than a hundred children have been built. The corner-stone of the main building bears the inscription: In dankbare nagedagtenis aan Piet Retief 1780—1838, die martelaar van Die Groot Trek. Hy het gesterwe sodat ons yolk kan lewe. Proclaimed 1937 Visual Description: The remainder of Erf 193, Riebeeck East, situated in the Municipality of Riebeeck East, Administrative District of Albany. Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

AdminComments:

This farmhouse was partially built by Piet Refief. He owned the property from 1814 to 1836. Bibliography archive:

Damage Types: