

Jan S De Villiers

Jan Stephanus de Villiers and his wife Susanna Martha de Villiers were the owners of Diamant from 1809 to 1853. Jan was the 11th child of Jacob and Debora de Villiers of the farm Limietrivier, in Drakenstein. He married Susanna in 1800, and they had 12 children together.

De Villiers was a learned man, and had a small library. He spent large amounts of money on tailored clothes for himself and his family. His 5th son, Abraham, married Geertruida Catorzia, an Italian descendant, whose musicality was passed down into the De Villiers family through their sons Rocco and Jan S (jr.), who had great influence on South African church music as well as composing the old national anthem, parts of which have been included in the current anthem.

Despite the importation of some 7200 slaves during the period 1795 and 1808, De Villiers did not have any slaves on his farm, and rather employed free people.

“Jan de Villiers exercised individualism, personal conviction and foresight in respect to labour relations of the future. This is the first instance that I have encountered of such an example in the farming community at the Cape.” Hennie Vos, archaeologist.

(Historical Survey and Structural & Archaeological Investigations of the Historic Buildings of Diamant, 2010)