

## TANQUA / CERES KAROO

The question of where exactly the Ceres Karoo is and where is the Tanqua Karoo cannot be answered.

A lot of people, myself included, have different opinions.

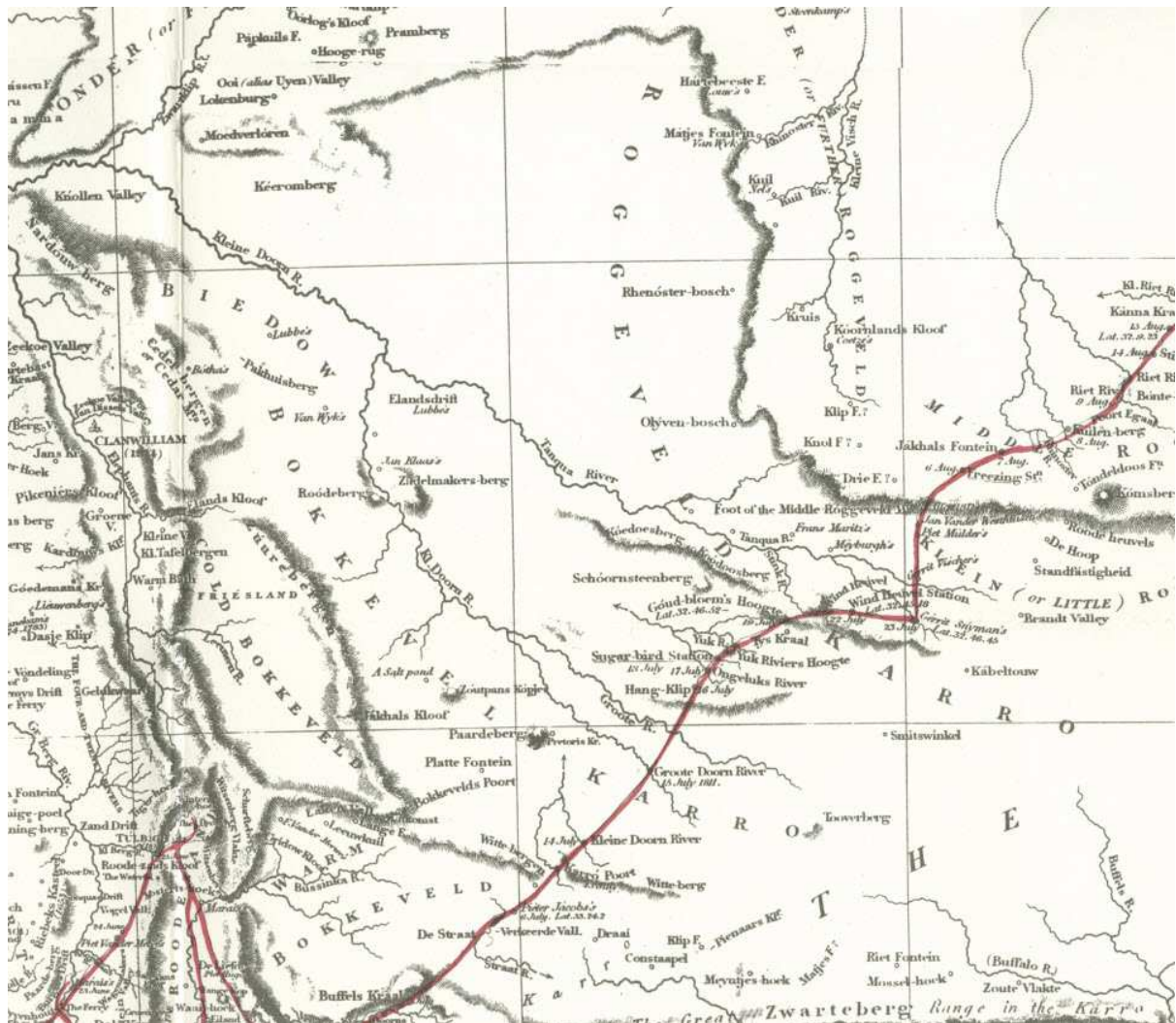
I have been driving around the Tanqua for more than 40 years and have never used the words Ceres Karoo. As far as I am concerned, the Tanqua Karoo is the flat area from Karoo Poort up to the Bloukrans Pass, west against the Swartuggens & Cederberg Mountains and east up to the foot of the Roggeveld Mountains

A friend of mine who lived in the Koue Bokkeveld regards the area south of the Tanqua River as the Ceres Karoo and the area north of it as the Tanqua Karoo.


Die Tankwa Karoo National Park is on both sides of the Tanqua River.

An 1827 George Thomson map describes the area west of the Doring River as the Bokkeveld Karroo and the eastern side as Roggeveld Karroo – more options.

Burchell's 1822 map talks of Bokkeveld Karro and Roggeveld Karro (looks like the people could not decide on the correct spelling – I know there are still more versions).



What about this:




barren plain of the Kneegtsvlakte. Instead the *trekboers* moved in an easterly and north-easterly direction, reaching the Roggeveld Mountains of the interior escarpment early in the 1740s.<sup>6</sup> The rapidity of this advance is to be ascribed to the fact that the grazing and water resources between the Bokkeveld and the Roggeveld did not encourage permanent settlement. Between these mountain ranges lies the Onder Karoo, known by the early *trekboers* simply as the Karoo, and known today as the Ceres or **Tanqua** Karoo.<sup>7</sup> As late as 1944 this arid expanse could only be used as temporary, seasonal trekveld by the farmers of the Bokkeveld and Roggeveld.<sup>8</sup> The pastures of the area only became attractive to pastoralists after the winter rains and in early

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5. See D.A. Findlay, "The San Of The Cape Thirstland And L. Anthing's 'Special Mission'" (B.A. Hons., University of Cape Town, 1977), chapter 1, for a survey of the environment of the Cape Thirstland.

6. On 25 May Louw Pretorius registered a farm "aan de Rogger valley genaamt het bockvelt" and in November 1746 Christiaan Godlieb Lievery (or Leevenbeg) with the widow Geede Aard van der Walt) and Pieter Erns Cruger registered "Uijkijk" and "de Vogel fontein" "Over de Doorn Rivier in 't Roggenland". CA, RLR 10, p. 197; CA, RLR 11, pp. 134-135.

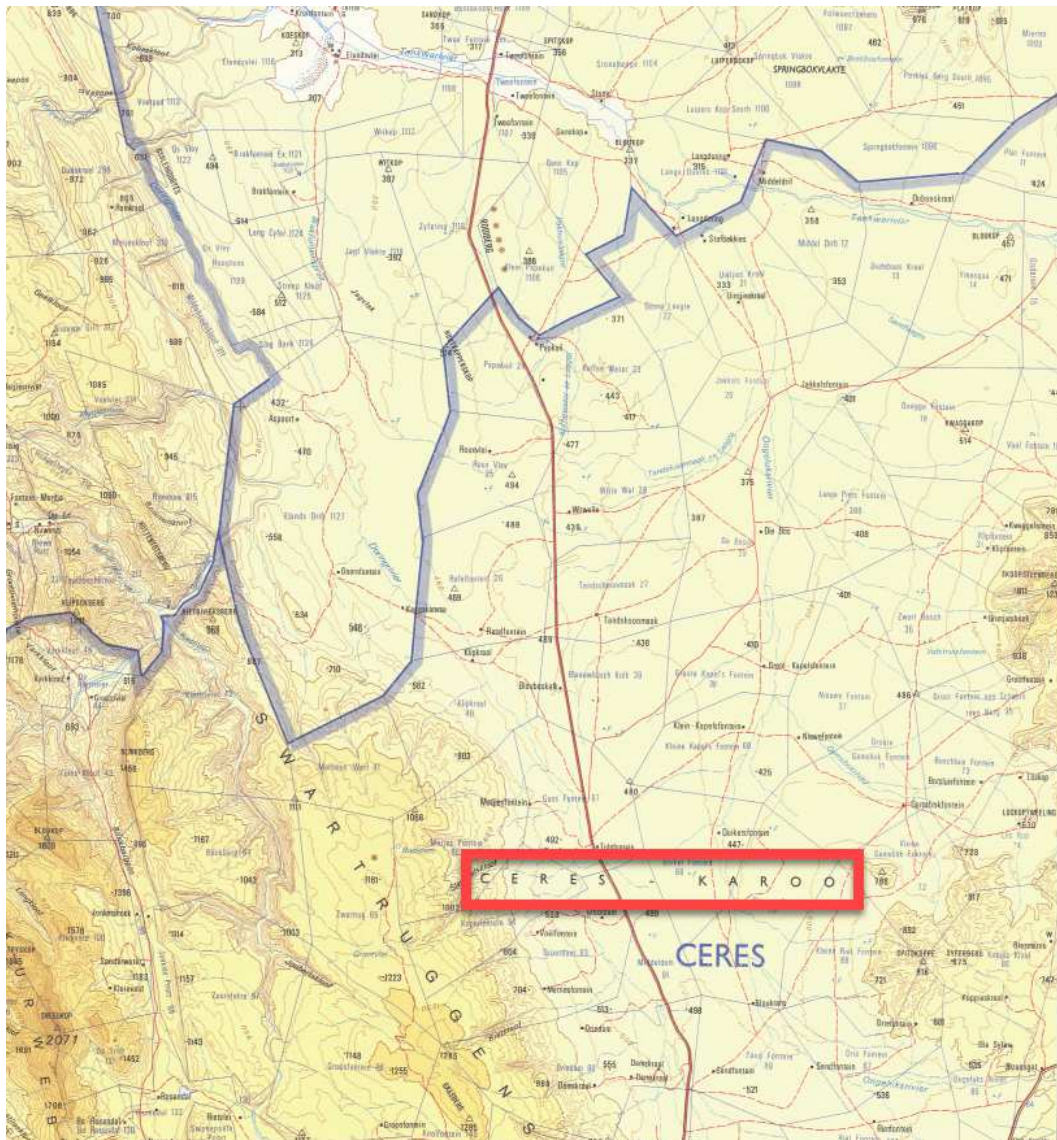


7. "Karoo" means dry, hard and sparsely covered in the Khoikhoi tongue whereas "Tanqua" or "Tankwa" probably derives from "Sanqua" or San, hence San Karoo. The Tanqua River flows (in winter) beneath the Roggeveld mountains and it may be that the district takes its name from the river. Niensaber and Raper, *Hottentotica, A\*\**, pp. 663-664, 1017-1018.

8. Van der Merwe, *Trek*, pp. 146-154.

There are no official 1 : 250 000 maps that describe the area north of the Tanqua River as Tanqua Karoo.

1983 map – the first time that the words “CERES KAROO” appear on an official 1 : 250 000 map.

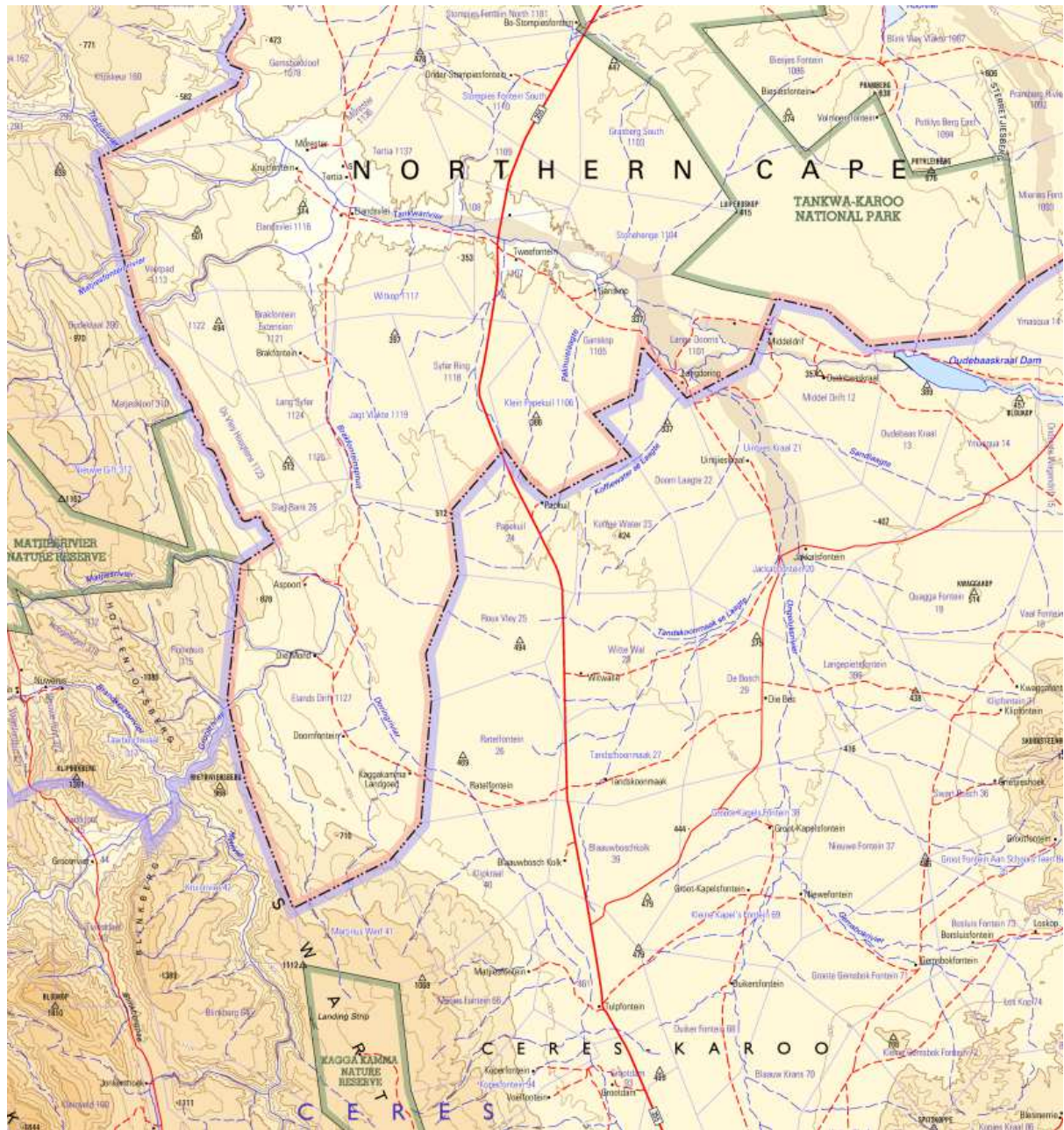




The words “Tankwa Karoo” appear on the 1997 map to show the boundaries of the original park, not the surroundings.

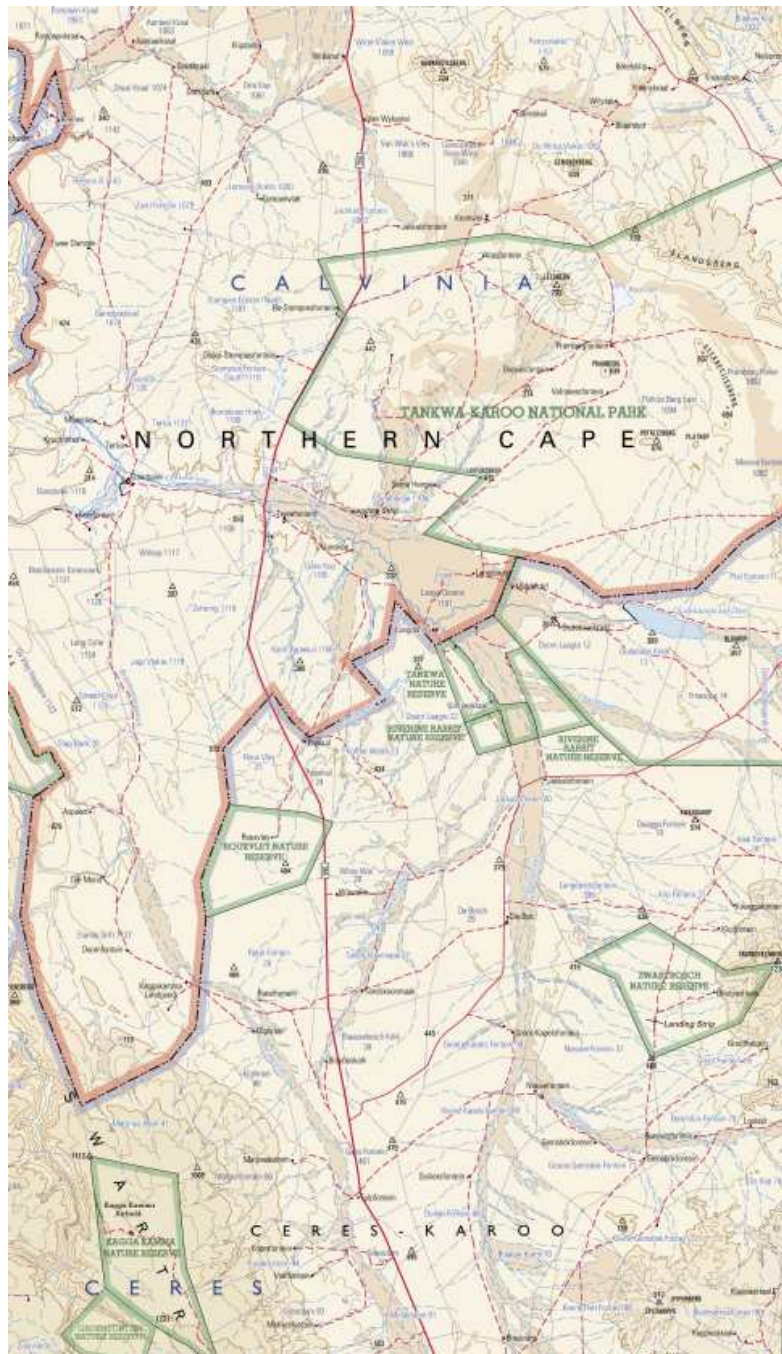


2003 – still no mention of Tanqua Karoo.





2010 – the most recent one – no mention



The Conradie family stayed at Karoo Poort in the early 1900's. Below an extract from their website stating that they regarded Karoo Poort as the entrance to the Tanqua.

## Die Geskiedenis van Karooport

**Voorwoord** Soos baie ander voor my en saam met my, hou Karooport vir my 'n romantiese bekoring in.

Aan die een kant van die berg is daar nog iets die Wes-Kaapse plantegroei; deur die poort is jy in die Karoo waar dit woestynagtig voorkom.

Karooport se lang geskiedenis is verweef met ontdekkers van lank gelede, met boere wat jaarlikse op die trekpad was, en met die storie van die 'Vergete Grootpad'.

Karooport se historiese herberghuis is die plek waar my oorlede vader in 1919 gebore is - des te meer rede vir my belangstelling in die plek.

Ek sou in ieder geval hierdie inligting versamel het. In die eerste plaas word hierdie inligting hier geplaas vir my Conradie familie om lees, maar ek glo daar is ook ander wat dit sal waardeer.

Kommentaar is welkom

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**Inleiding** Die kloof in die Witteberge tussen die Warm Bokkeveld en die Tankwa-Karoo het, al is dit 'n droë plek, 'n bekoring. Bekend as die Karooport, was dit vir eeue 'n tradisionele oorsaanplek van togryers en trekboere tussen die Warm Bokkeveld en die



As they say: "Take your pick".

Claus Riding (11/01/2021).