

A nod to the Nederlandsche Bank en Credietvereniging voor Zuid-Afrika

De Nederlandsche Bank en Credietvereniging [The Netherlands Bank and Credit Corporation] opened in Amsterdam on 01 April 1888. During this time, despite South Africa being largely a British Colony, there was a large and active Dutch community who still called it home. As a result, on the pleading of J. Calkoen, King Willem III, authorised the establishment of a Pretoria-based agency of the Bank (that was eventually to be) called De Nederlandsche Bank en Credietvereniging voor Zuid-Afrika which opened on 01 August 1888 on Church Square with a starting capital of £50 000 (Nedbank. Documents. GSSC/1a; Nedbank. Documents. NEDC/30; Pfundt 1974).

De Nederlandsche Bank en Credietvereniging celebrated explosive growth, and in their first two years of business had opened branches in Johannesburg and Potchefstroom, and by the end of 1890 had begun print runs of the first their very own bank notes (the very same as displayed earlier in this chapter in the section *Bank Notes and Payment Promissories 1782 - 1910*). On the eve of the 20th Century in 1899, and the last stand between the British forces and the Transvaal colonies during Second Anglo-Boer War, the government of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek stored £3 million in gold in the vaults of the Nederlandsche Bank en Credietvereniging on Church Square.

A year after the end of the war, in 1903, the bank started making its move to a nationalised presence and was rebranded as De Nederlandsche Bank en Credietvereniging voor Zuid Afrika [The Netherlands Bank and Credit Corporation for South Africa]. This coincided with the first of the bank's expansion out of the old Transvaal, which saw the opening of a branch in Cape Town (Nedbank. Documents. NEDC/30; Pfundt 1974; Hern 2010). 1904 saw an added element of turmoil hit an already tumultuous South Africa with the country slipping into a two year long economic depression. During this time, the bank was able to restructure much of its capital to take over from decreased banking activities, which still

allowed it to close the first year with a dividend of 4 %. The cloudburst post-depression in 1906 allowed for the expansion of the bank's branch network to continue, with the first presence in Bloemfontein to be opened, as well as in London on Great Winchester Street (Nedbank. Documents. NEDC/30.; Pfundt 1974).

By 1925, De Nederlandsche Bank en Credietvereniging voor Zuid Afrika had grown to such an extent that they were in the position to embark on their first (of many) mergers, by means of the acquisition of one of their competitors, an 1892 founded bank called De Transvaalsche Bank en Handelsvereniging [The Transvaal Bank and Trade Corporation]. The continued success of the South African agency made it so that the parent bank in Amsterdam was able to transfer all their moveable assets and reserves (totalling to over £10 million) and place the Pretoria branch as the global bank's head office during World War II (1939 - 1945) (Nedbank. Documents. NEDC/30; Pfundt 1974).

By 1951 the bank had grown in such popularity and in presence that it was nationalised as South African Banking company and underwent a full rebrand to be known as The Netherlands Bank of South Africa / Die Nederlandse Bank van Zuid Afrika. This prompted further expansions and over the next decade the bank's presence had spread into both Windhoek and Salisbury in Namibia and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) respectively. From its second building in Church Square, the bank's head office operations moved in 1953 to a newly designed building by Norman Eaton on Andries Street (now Thabo Sehume), whereafter in 1960 it joined its contemporaries in the 'new' hub of business and industry in Johannesburg they took up offices at 81 Main Street. This allowed for a triumphant boom in the future-fitting of the bank's business operations and through the efforts and ingenuity of the trio formed by Dr Bernard Holsboer, Gerry Muller and Albie Saayman who revolutionised the way not only the Netherlands Bank but also their contemporaries did business with the introduction of computerised banking services to the South African industry in 1964. This springboard allowed for further international

interest to be drawn to the sector and saw the introduction of American Express (AMEX) into the country by means of their first offering; The American Express Gold Card in 1967 (Nedbank. Documents. NEDC/30; Pfundt 1974; Harrop-Allin 1975).

While the global West and East were setting their eyes on the Moon, in 1969 the Netherlands Bank also had their eyes firmly fixed on new horizons in the acquisition of the 20% stake owned by the bank Mees en Hoop of Amsterdam. This brought the Netherlands Bank's South African shareholding to 100%. With this formalisation of a deep root system in South Africa, the bank was rebranded to Nedbank Ltd on the 1st of October 1971. The 1980s was a decade of further exponential success for Nedbank, at the height of apartheid. During this time, they were the first bank in South Africa in history to generate an annual R100 million profits before tax and became the first bank to pay their clients interest on current accounts. It was a time of incredible international growth, seeing the establishment of branches in New York, Jersey, Hong Kong, Gran Canaria, Zurich, and Frankfurt between 1984 and 1986. 1986 was also a year that saw a momentous merger between Nedbank and Finansbank which went on to form Nedbank Investment Bank (NIB), as well as the acquisition of The Cape of Good Hope Bank (Nedbank. Documents. NEDC/30; Pfundt 1974; Nedbank. Documents. COGHB/3; Nedbank. Documents. COGHB/5).

This grand merger required a bigger head office, which led to the purchase of 100 Main Street, which opened in 1987 with a total combined asset figure of R14.3 billion. This merger was swiftly followed by the acquisition of the South African Permanent Mutual Building Society in 1988, which was rebranded as NedPerm Bank Limited, and later the acquisition of Syfrets Group Limited in 1989. This resulted in another global rebrand for Nedbank in 1991, which was then positioned as Nedcor Limited. Six years later in 1997,

Syfrets, Union Alliance Limited (UAL) and Nedbank Investment Bank merged their stockbroking divisions to form Nedcor Investment Bank. This was followed by the introduction of NetBank, the first internet banking offering to South Africa, which coincided with the country's first debit card NedCheque being made available for international use through MasterCard and Visa. Just before the Y2K (Year 2000) panic in 1999, Nedbank Private Bank and Syfrets Bank merged to form the largest Private Bank in South Africa. This was followed by the 2001 acquisition of a 50% stake in Permanent Bank alongside Old Mutual, where the new entity was to focus on wealth management, financial planning as well as deposit and investment accounts. Trailing on the momentum of this in 2002, the full complement of minority shares in Nedcor Investment Bank and The Cape of Good Hope Bank were bought over by Nedcor Bank Limited. This was soon joined by the Board of Executors in 2003, and by 2005 Nedcor Bank Limited had changed its name back to Nedbank Limited. (Nedbank. Documents. NEDC/30; Nedbank. Documents. COGHB/3; Nedbank. Documents. COGHB/5).