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The Glamour of Prospecting Wanderings of a South African Prospector in Search of Copper, Gold, Emeralds, and Diamonds by Fred C. Cornell *Wanderings of a South African Prospector in Search of Copper, Gold, Emeralds, and Diamonds*.

Background[edit] The Hereros were cattle grazers, occupying most of central and northern South West Africa. At that time, it was the only overseas German territory deemed suitable for white settlement. German colonists arriving in the following years occupied large areas of land, ignoring any claims by the Herero, Namaqua, and other natives. There was continual resistance by the natives. A sort of peace was worked out in [citation needed]. White settlers were further encouraged and took more land from the natives. That caused a great deal of discontent. Rebellion[edit] In , some of the Khoi and Herero tribes rose in revolt and about 60 German settlers were killed. Troops were sent from Germany to re-establish order but only dispersed the rebels, led by Chief Samuel Maharero. In a famous letter to Hendrik Witbooi , the Namaqua chief, Maharero sought to organize his rebellion against the Germans while building alliances with the other tribes, exclaiming Let us die fighting! However a conclusive battle was fought on August 11, at the Battle of Waterberg in the Waterberg Mountains. Chief Maharero believed his six to one advantage over the Germans would allow him to win in a final showdown. The Germans had time to bring forward their artillery and heavy weapons. Both sides took heavy losses, but the Herero were scattered and defeated. As soon as the news of this order reached Germany, it was repealed,[citation needed] but Trotha initially ignored Berlin. When the extermination order was finally suspended at the end of , surviving tribesmen were herded into concentration camps , while others were transferred as slave labor to German businesses; many Herero died of overwork and malnutrition. It took the Germans until to re-establish authority over the territory. By that time tens of thousands of Africans estimates range from 34, to , had been either killed [7] [8]: In addition, she admitted that the massacres were equivalent to genocide. The Herero are suing the German government in a class action lawsuit. The heavy toll of the Herero and Namaqua Genocide on individual lives and the fabric of Herero culture is seen in the historical novel *Mama Namibia* by Mari Serebrov. In the book he describes his first hand accounts of witnessing the concentration camp on Shark Island amongst other aspects of the conflict.

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There I was, in the pitch black darkness of the early morning hours in Springbok and did not have the faintest idea of what I would have to expect. The only vague information I had about Springbok was from story-telling friends and a picture I had spotted in a previous issue of the SM-Times. With so little mental preparation done I could not wait to see what kind of environment I just got immersed into and what its inhabitants would be like. But for now I had to leave my curiosity unsatisfied - an answer to these questions could only be found when the sun rose over the unofficial capital of Namaqualand several hours later. Stepping out of the hotel, squinting my eyes in the bright sunlight I finally could take a first look at the new surroundings. The first impression was that Springbok did not look like anything I had imagined. Not that I had any imaginations in the first place! Walking along the main street some buildings vaguely reminded me of the towns of the Wild West era in the United States year ago. Behind them I could see reddish rocky hills and outcrops rising, only scarcely dotted with shrubs. This was the succulent karoo of Namaqualand, famous for its unrivalled wealth and diversity of succulents and wildflowers during spring-time, stretching for miles and miles on either side of the road to Goegap Nature Reserve. But where in South Africa is Namaqualand situated? There are five geographic regions in Namaqualand, according to the distinctive landscape and climate of each one. From the south to the north these are the Knersvlakte with its broad flat plains, the central Hardeveld comprising granite hills, the vast sandy expanse of the Sandveld along the coast, the high mountains of the Kamiesberg region and, in the north-west, the Richtersveld with its mountain deserts and arid plains. The succulent karoo of Namaqualand is a winter-rainfall desert which is unusual among the other deserts of the world. The annual precipitation ranges from around 50mm on the coast to about mm in the Kamiesberg. Fascinated by the barren beauty of the landscape, I started wondering, besides the immense diversity of animal and plant life, what actually made people settle here, in this seemingly hostile and waterless environment, with only scarce vegetation to graze animals on, and how they made their living. I wanted to find out more about the history of humankind in Namaqualand. The Cradle of Human life Australopithecus, the first hominid, roamed Namaqualand in small clans as long as three million years ago. His descendant, the tool-using Homo erectus, arrived about years ago. These hunter-gatherers mainly survived on wild plants and scavenging on kills by other predators, consisting of rhino, hippo, giant wildebeest and buffalo as well as wild pigs or bushbuck. Relicts of their ability to manufacture tools are found widely throughout Namaqualand. Weapons enabled them to bring down animals larger than themselves, but berries, bulbs and other plant parts still formed the main part of their diet. Homo sapiens sapiens started to appear in Namaqualand around years ago. He is the common ancestor of all modern day humans. Bushmen, or San, clans used to migrate from the coast to the hinterland, always in search of prey they could hunt or plants to gather. Signs of their culture are only left in symbolic rock carvings and paintings. Namaqualand remained a very quiet place regarding cultural evolution until about years ago, when the Khoikhoi, or Nama, arrived from the area that now encompasses northern Botswana. They introduced a so far unknown means of wealth and power: Until now their descendants in the Richtersveld move their livestock in seasonal patterns, always following the fresh growth in different areas after the autumn rainfalls. However, conflict with the San arose when the Nama livestock grazed the veld of the game the San depended on, and the people with their more sophisticated society comprising leaders, private property and individual wealth occupied prime spots that were also the choice of the hunter-gatherers. The weaker San then either had to retreat to inferior areas, or they became stock thieves or were enslaved by the Nama to work as hunters. The Confrontation with the Europeans With the arrival of Dutch pastoralists, or trekboere, at the Cape of Good Hope in a new group of nomads invaded Namaqualand. With the help of weapons and the affect of foreign disease, the Nama populated areas were conquered by However, between and the beginning of the 19th century, the Nama as well as the San successfully reclaimed their respective

lands and thus reversed the expansion of the Dutch colony. Only the British with their cruel and intimidating commando system that was introduced in made the indigenous people of Namaqualand surrender. San were hunted, enslaved or driven to marginal zones with little ecological value. The Nama were also enslaved or used as labourers by the trekboere, or were confined to areas such as the Kamiesberg or Richtersveld. From the mid s mission stations were established there and people earned their living mainly through agriculture such as wheat production where rainfall allowed for it. Today most descendants from the Nama are employed by the diamond and copper mining companies, which we will learn about later on, or the fishing industry of the west coast. Yet their original way of life by migrating with their stock has been more or less destroyed, apart from Nama descendants in the Richtersveld, who are said to be the last nomads of Namaqualand. The end of the nomadic lifestyle of the trekboere came with the upcoming trend of private ownership of land. The Dutch East India Company introduced a loan farm system in throughout the Cape Colony which provided security of tenure as well as enabled the trekboere to graze their sheep on unoccupied plots of land. In under British rule, white farmers were allowed by a new legislation to buy their own land, and soon after no unclaimed land was left in Namaqualand. With the erection of fences around their properties, farmers could practise an internal migrating system, or rotational grazing. Times when people moved their stock in slow treks during starlit nights following the smell of rain in the hope to find fresh pasture are long since gone.

Treasure Hunt But Namaqualand held other treasures hidden deep beneath its barren surface that enabled people to earn a living up until today: Interestingly, this mineral wealth of Namaqualand was only discovered because a Dutchman named Jan van Riebeeck, the first commander of a permanent settlement at the Cape, was eager to follow up the legend of the Golden Empire of King Monomotapa which was supposed to hold a fabulous supply of valuable minerals. This mythical Kingdom was widely believed in by the Dutch. But because they travelled during the hot summer months, oblivious of the weather and landscape conditions, all of them failed. With the arrival of Simon van der Stel, who was to command the Cape from , four more expeditions set off between and , this time travelling in spring. The third of the expeditions was successful, finding the Copper Mountain or Carolusberg today part of Goegap Nature Reserve and bringing back some copper ore to the Cape. Van der Stel was so delighted by the find that he personally led the last expedition, which even dug three shafts into Copper Mountain and extracted some ore. But the ore did not yield as much pure copper as they first had hoped, and additionally, the hostile characteristics of the landscape with no trees and water as well as the harbourless coast made it impossible for them to establish a viable mining industry. Under the leadership of Hendrik Hop another expedition was despatched to Namaqualand in The Copper Mountain area was once again investigated, but found as being poor, holding only small quantities of copper. But again, no means for building a mining industry, like sufficient wood or water were available, and the nature of the river made it unsuitable for navigation. Alexander found very copper-rich ore near the banks of the Orange River. Yet it should take another 10 years before the newly founded South African Mining Company first started working the copper ore in Namaqualand in Some time later a German named von Schlicht went to Namaqualand and discovered by chance an immense deposit of copper ore on the farm Springbokfontein. He tried hard to find investors in Cape Town, in order to start up a mining industry, but stayed unsuccessful. They purchased the farm in together with all the mineral rights and sufficient land for the erection of any buildings and works considered necessary for the processing of any future copper ore discoveries. Furthermore they were allowed the right to graze livestock, use water and build roads. This was the onset of the commercial exploitation of the copper deposits of Namaqualand, and should lead to a copper mining mania. The Copper Mania The growth of Springbokfontein was directly related to the opening up of the mine. Not to forget necessities like a post office, a small church and of course a prison. The work force consisted of mainly coloured people, but also tradesmen, soldiers, sailors, farmers and quarrymen all contributed to the success of the mine. However, the copper ore supplies of the mine should soon be exhausted and Springbokfontein would have become deserted, had it not been chosen as the seat of the magistrate of the Cape Copper Mining Company in , which was taken over from Anthing by E. Every decision of the magistrate had to be supported by the company, even only people the company approved of were allowed to stay overnight. Nor were married people allowed to settle, which made it impossible to find a much needed

attorney for Springbokfontein. Only in the village finally became public, and a lively social life began to grow. Davis, employed by the Cape Copper Mining Company, had established the Springbokfontein Reduction Works to smelt the ore on site, which were fully operational in . A reduction of shipping costs in made re-opening the mine of Springbokfontein worthwhile again, and the village population had recovered to by . A severe drought in as well as an attack during the Anglo-Boer War I caused the population of Springbokfontein to collapse again, and the village became more or less derelict. In though, life returned once again and trees were planted, a public library opened in , the first public school opened in and drivers licences were handed out from . Eventually, the copper mine had to close down, but Springbokfontein survived as a local centre. The name was shortened to its present form in . The greatest single problem affecting the profitability of mining was, and still continues to be, the big distance between the mining sites and the markets. The most common vehicle was the light Cape wagon drawn by ten mules. The heavier ox-wagon was also fairly common during good seasons since it was able to carry more weight. However, the weight they could transport was limited on the sandy ground and hence this means of getting the ore to the markets was hardly worthwhile. In , the company exported their first 11 tons of copper ore on the steamer Bosphorus. During the subsequent years, the development of Hondeklip Bay proceeded immensely and by it was a bustling harbour with a lot of ship traffic going in and out. The importance of Hondeklip Bay as a trading harbour steadily grew and thus it was declared a separate magisterial district in . Nowadays it serves as a small port for agricultural produce. A second main road was built to Port Nolloth, formerly known as Robbe Bay. During its early days it provided income by selling seal skins and dried seal meat. Despite its geographical advantages over Hondeklip Bay it did not manage to become as important as a trading harbour for copper ore. However, in the construction of an initially mule-powered rail line to Port Nolloth was taken underway and soon the population exceeded that of Hondeklip Bay, reaching the mark in . A steam engine to operate on the rail line was only introduced in . Port Nolloth achieved the status of a separate magisterial district in , but certain necessities of life still had to be brought in by a steamer from Cape Town once every fortnight and water for the settlement had to be obtained from a place five miles away. Only in a sanitary system got installed. But even until the s the poverty-stricken appearance of Port Nolloth could not be improved. Black labourers worked both underground and on the surface under White supervision. Black women and children were employed to sort the ore by hand. Furthermore there were an infirmary for the sick and of course accommodation for mechanics, miners and workers. In the late s, the population was estimated at , two to three burials a week were reported due to the mining. This was due to the lack of sufficient supplies like coke, the ongoing difficulty with shipping the ore, and also the prohibition of exporting matte to England. The Namaqua Copper Company had to stop all mining activities in . However, the railway line to Port Nolloth was closed in , after unsuccessful attempts of improving it.

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