

## **AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW HISTORICALLY CORRECT PLACE NAMES**

When my database was donated to the West-Gauteng branch of GSSA (The Genealogical Society of South Africa), it contained about 100,000 individuals and was known as the Rincken/de Wet Database. De Wet because it contained the de Wet file kindly sent to me by the late Tesselaar Bryan de Wet of Winnipeg, Canada. It now contains in excess of 900,000 individuals and has been put together from files submitted by many individuals.

As the number of individuals contained grew and we started to sell same for Branch Funds, Dennis Pretorius suggested that the name be changed to e-SAGI (The South African Genealogical Index). Soon we were selling the CD all over the world and I knew that many users, particularly overseas, were not familiar with South African history and the changes this created in the Republics and Colonies which became Provinces of the Union, and later, Republic of South Africa.

I then attempted to use place names pertaining to the historical timeframe involved. At first, this was just hit and miss as I thought was the case, but gradually I realised that more research was necessary in order to ensure that I was not misleading users.

This is not easy as the sources consulted, do not always give specific dates and the history of the various areas are intertwined. The following is, thus what I have put together and I am, consequently, slowly converting the data accordingly.

### **CAPE**

Cape of Good Hope 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1652 to 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1795

This is used for the period from the landing at the Cape on behalf of the V.O.C of 'Kommandeur' Jan van Riebeeck (6<sup>th</sup> April, 1652) to the First British Occupation at the Cape.

The V.O.C. (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*), was a company representing Dutch rule. Only in 1800 after the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War and French invasion of the Netherlands, was the company nationalised and its possessions and debt taken over by the Batavian Republic. (Dutch)

This name is possibly not wholly correct as the name was also used in the Colony until the Union of South Africa but it helps to make the distinction.

Cape Colony 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1795 to 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1803

The First British Occupation was from September, 1795 to February, 1803. (History of SA page 124).

To give a specific date, I use the 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1795 when "*the Company's forces laid down their arms and surrendered the Castle of Cape Town*" (Cambridge page 163) .

On 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1803 the British, "*in terms of the Treaty of Amiens, handed over the Castle and all that it stood for to representatives of the Batavian Republic*" (History of SA page 133).

Batavian Cape 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1803 to 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1806

This was the period under Janssens and De Mist which ended after a battle. Not sure what the full name actually was.

“After a preliminary skirmish at Blaauwberg, 16 miles north of Cape Town, one section of the Dutch force fled back to the city and on the 10<sup>th</sup> January,, 1806 capitulated. Nine days later, Janssens , who with the rest had retreated inland to the Hottentots-Holland Pass, surrendered with the honours of war” ie. 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1806. (Cambridge page 195) .

Cape Colony (Second Occupation) 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1806 to 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1910

The 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1806 can thus be taken as the start of the Second Occupation and the name Cape Colony is thus again used from this date to the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1910 – the Union being formed the following day.

**Cape Province, Union of South Africa** 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1910 to 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1961

The Union of South Africa is the historic predecessor to the present-day Republic of South Africa. It came into being on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1910 with the unification of four previously separate British Colonies: Cape Colony, Natal Colony, Transvaal Colony and Orange River Colony. (Wikipedia Union)

**Cape Province Republic of South Africa** 31.5.1961 to 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (Statoids))

**Eastern Cape, Republic of South Africa** – 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (Statoids))

**Northern Cape, Republic of South Africa** – 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (Statoids))

## **NATAL**

Republiek Natalia October, 1838 to 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1842

This was the first area to establish a government other than the Cape and the areas to the north of the Drakensberg were, for a time, ruled as part of the Natal Republic from Pietermaritzburg.

“The first true fundamental law of the Trekkers is the Grondwet of Natal (October 1838)” (Cambridge page386).

**Cape Natal Colony** 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1842 to 3<sup>th</sup> May, 1843

“The Governor, Sir George Napier by proclamation annexed Natal as part of the Cape Colony un 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1842. The Trekkers would not submit to British authority and eventually found themselves in a battle with Britain. After initial success the Trekkers under Andries Pretorius had to give up the struggle. On 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1842, the Trekkers yielded to British authority” (Kultuuralmanak p. 94)

“It was only in December, 1845 that a Lieutenant-Governor arrived and the Natal Republic ceased to exist”. Natal was then annexed into the Cape Colony. (Cambridge page 331)

**Natal Colony** 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1843 to 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1910

The Colony of Natal was a British Colony in south-eastern Africa. It was proclaimed a British colony on the 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1843 after the British government had annexed the Boer Republic of Natalia (Wiki Natal)

**Natal, Union of South Africa** 31<sup>st</sup> 1910 to 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1961

See Cape Province (Wikipedia Union)

**Natal, Republic of South Africa** 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1961 to 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (Statoids))

**KwaZulu-Natal** - - 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (Statoids))

## **ORANGE FREE STATE**

**Transorangia** About 1824 to 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 1848

In 1824 the Colonial frontier had had been carried up to the drifts of the Orange river opposite Philippolis. By 1833 many Boers .... and many of them were asking for the annexation of "Transorangia" to the Colony (History of SA page 179)

"...and a year later (1848) Sir Harry Smith boldly annexed large blocks of territory south of the Orange and proclaimed the Queen's sovereignty over all ... between that river and the Vaal. It was a belated attempt to control the Great Trek. (History of SA page 196)

".... and finally Sir Harry Smith's Proclamation annexing the territory between the Orange and the Vaal (3<sup>rd</sup> February, 1848) (Cambridge page 386)

**Orange River Sovereignty** 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 1848 to 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1854

"In the Orange River Sovereignty a civil government was set up two months after the annexation of 1848." (Cambridge page 387)

"Sir George Clerk summoned a meeting of the "well disposed" to Bloemfontein, and on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1854 signed a Convention with them." (Cambridge page 355)

This thus became the foundation of the new Orange Free State.

**Orange Free State** 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1854 to 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1900

"Already on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1854 the 'Oranje-Vrystaat' came into being." (Kultuuralmanak page 64)

"Initially Pres. Steyn and Gen. De Wet wanted to defend the capital, but as a result of the low morale of the burgers, to avert losses and to prevent suffering amongst the civil population, it was decided to move to Kroonstad. Without a shot being fired, Bloemfontein was conquered by Roberts on the 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1900." (Kultuuralmanak page 83)

**Orange River Colony** 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1900 to 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1910

"... and Roberts on the banks of the Vaal River proclaimed the Free State British territory as the Orange River Colony (May 24)" (Cambridge page 604)

This was incorporated into the Union of South Africa on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1910.

**O.F.S., Union of South Africa** 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1910 to 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1961

See Cape Province (Wikipedia Union)

**O.F.S., Republic of South Africa** 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1961 to 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (Statoids))

**Freestate** 27.4.1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994)

The name of the Orange Free State was changed to Freestate on 29.6.1995 (Statoids)

### **TRANSVAAL**

**Z.A.R.** 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1852 to 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1877

In July, 1836 the first small parties of the Great Trek moved across the Vaal River into Transvaal." (SA Struggle page 61)

"The Derdepoort Conference (May, 1839) between delegates from Ohrigstad and other parts of the Transvaal, laid the foundation stone of the South African Republic; the Sand River Convention made the completion of the structure possible." (Cambridge page 387)

On the 17 January, 1852, the so-called Sand River Convention was signed as "Minutes of a Meeting between... H.M. Assistant Commissioners and a deputation from emigrant farmers residing north of the Vaal River".

After negotiations on 16th and 17th January, 1852, .... a treaty was signed by both parties. Thereby Great Britain formally acknowledged the sovereignty of the Transvaal. (Kultuuralmanak page 27)

The acceptance of the constitution, flag, and crest happened on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1958.  
(Kultuuralmanak page 27)

**The Transvaal State** 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1877 to 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1884

The Transvaal was annexed by Britain on the 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1877. After peaceful endeavours failed, the burgers on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1880 restored their own government which resulted in the Transvaal War 1880-1881.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1881, the Transvaal was formally handed back and the four colour flag of the Boers, the 'Vierkleur', floated again over Pretoria. (SA Struggle page 71)

A new treaty, the Convention of London, was signed on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1884, to give effect to the new status of the Transvaal which henceforth was again known as the South African Republic. (SA Struggle page 73)

**Z.A.R.** 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1884 to – 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1900

"Roberts formally annexed the Transvaal on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1900 and declared the war ended"  
(Cambridge page 604)

**Transvaal Colony** 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1900 to 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1910

"The territory of the Z.A.R. became known after the war as the Transvaal Colony" (D)

**Transvaal, Union of South Africa** 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1910 to 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1961

See Cape Province (Wikipedia Union)

**Transvaal, Republic of South Africa** 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1961 to 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (Statoids))

**Gauteng** 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (Statoids))

The name is Sotho for “place of gold” (Statoids)

**Limpopo** – 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (Statoids))

**Mpumalanga** – 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (E))

The name of Eastern Transvaal province was changed to Mpumalanga on the 24<sup>th</sup> August, 1995. The name means ‘Where the sun rises’. (E)

**North West Province** – 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 (Alternatively 7.5.1994 (E))

### **SMALLER REPUBLICS**

#### **Klip River Republic**

Between 1846 and 1847 “some of the Natalians set up the short-lived Klip River Republic to the west of the Buffalo River” .....”while the Klip River republicans, finding them still on British soil, moved across the Buffalo into what soon became the Republic of Utrecht” (A page 232)

**Republic of Utrecht** 1848 - 1854

“..the Utrecht farmers settled themselves on a slice of land ceded them by Panda (B page 399)

**De Repupliek Lijdenburg** 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1856 to 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1860

“De Repupliek Lijdenburg in Zuid Afrika’ was proclaimed on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1856 as the reaction by the Eastern Transvaal pioneers to the constitutional, administrative, disputed church points and leadership conflicts within the three over Vaal regional-political groups who eventually on thr 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1860 united to form the ‘Suid-Afrikaansche Republiek’” (Kultuuralmanak page 362)

**Land van Goosen** 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1882 to March, 1885

“Die Republiek Land Goosen’ was founded by N.C. Gey van Pittius following a war beteen Mankoroane and Montsioa. In March, 1885 the British announced a protectorate over the territory.” (Kultuuralmanak page 102)

**Republic of Graaff-Reinet** 1795

... and the Graaff-Reinet rebels chose their own provisional Landdrost and Heemraden. They went through the farce of asking Sluysken to confirm the elections, but what they had really done was to set up a local republic. Four days later the majority of Swellendamers followed their example and elected a National Assembly (SA History pages 119/120)

The Nationals of Graaff-Reinet were not disposed to recognise Craig’s Government Unconditionally. (SA History page 122)

... later they were forced to submit. (Kultuuralmanak page 257)

### **Ohrigstad Republic** 1846 to 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1860

“ .... this Volksraad party first obtained from the representative of a minor son of the Swazi King, a written cession of the land on which the Ohrigstad Republic stood .... and then drew up a constitution more or less on Natal lines.

A town called Andries Ohrigstad, in honour of Andries Hendrik Potgieter and G.G. Ohrig, was founded on the 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1845. Ohrig exerted himself in Holland to establish trade relationships with the Trekkers. (Kultuuralmanak page 221)

### **Republiek Stellaland** 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1883 to May, 1884

“From Massouw they did indeed receive territory and under Gerrit van Niekerk, they formed their own republic. (Kultuuralmanak page 229)

“In May 1884, Mackenzie declared Stellaland under British authority” (Kultuuralmanak page 229)

### **Republic of Swellendam** June, 1795

See Republic of Graaff-Reinet.

Britain, however, occupied the Cape in September, 1795 and the Swellendammers submitted to the new regime. (Kultuuralmanak page 180)

## **TOWNS/AREAS MOVED BETWEEN PROVINCES**

**Northern Districts** (Babanango, Paulpietersburg, Utrecht, Vryheid) transferred from Transvaal to Natal on the 27<sup>th</sup> January, 1903 (E)

**Matatiele** Municipality moved from KwaZulu-Natal to Eastern Cape under the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of South Africa on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2007 (E)

**Umzimkulu** Municipality moved from Eastern Cape to Natal in 2005

## **OTHER TERRITORIES**

**Walvis Bay** was transferred from Cape Province of the Union of South Africa to Namibia (then called South West Africa) in 1922. In 1948 South Africa reclaimed sovereignty over Walvis Bay, making it again part of the Cape Province. In August, 1992 it was placed under joint Namibian and South African administration. Then finally, it was fully transferred to Namibia on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1994. (Statoids)

**Prince Edward Islands** were annexed to Cape Province on 25<sup>th</sup> December, 1947 followed by **Marion Island** on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1947 (Statoids)

## **BANTUSTANS**

**Transkei** called independent on the 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1976 (Statoids)

**Bophuthatswana** called independent on the 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1977 (Statoids)

**Venda** called independent on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 1979 (Statoids)

Ciskei called independent on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1981 (Statoids)

### PLACE NAME CHANGES

Almansdrift became Mbhongo

Buffelspruit became Mhlambanyane

Dzanani township became Mphephu

Envogelfontein became Vryburg (15.11.1882)

Louis Trichardt became Makhoda

Mafeking became Mahikeng

Makhado township became Dzanani

Messina became Musina – in 2003

Naboomspruit became Mookgophong – 24.11.2006

Nylstroom became Modimolle – 2002 (Wikipedia Modimolle)

Pietersburg became Polokwane – 25.2.2005

Potgietersrust became Mokopane - During 2003 (SA Places)

Skilpadfontein became Marapyane

Triomf became Sophiatown

Vryburg became the capital of the Republic of Stellaland. The town was founded on 20.9.1882 when a site was selected and named Endvogelfontein. The name was changed on 15 November of the same year. In 1885, the British seized the town and incorporated the area into British Bechuanaland which in turn became part of the Cape Colony. When nine provinces were established in 1994, it became part of the North West Province. ( "Wikipedia" Vryburg)

A force of 4,000 troops, under Sir Charles Warren, set off to recapture Stellaland and Goshen. On 7.2.1885 the force reached Vryburg, the principal town in Stellaland, then continued to Mafeking, the principal town in Goshen. By 8.4.1885 Sir Charles Warren sent a despatch to notify the British Government that he had occupied Bechuanaland and had restored order. The two Boer republics had collapsed without any bloodshed.

On 30.9.1885 Stellaland and Goshen and other territories to the south of the Molopo River were constituted as the Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland. ... in 1895 the colony was annexed to the Cape Colony. ("Wikipedia" British Bechuanaland)

Warmbaths became Bela-Bela

All above from the Internet (ThoughtCo)

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