



Port Nolloth High School
Northern Cape Province
Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History 2011



Report:
Transport in Namaqualand

by
Juan Smith



PORT NOLLOTH HOËRSKOOL

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GERHARDUS MOSTERT

Geagte Heer/Dame

Toestemmingsbrief: gebruik van inligting.

Hiermee gee ek, GERHARDUS toestemming; dat inligting
soos deur my verskaf - deur bogenoemde skool vir opvoedkundige doeleindes
gebruik mag word.

Handtekening van respondent: [Handtekening]

Byvoorbaat dank.

Die uwe

[Handtekening]

A. Thomas

Opvoeder

8. Resources:

Port Nolloth Museum
Richtersveld Tours
Richtersveld Conservancy

Me. Theresa Van Baalen
Mr. Gerhardus Mostert
Mr. Gert Links

Curator
ex-Guide
Manager

9. List of appendixes:

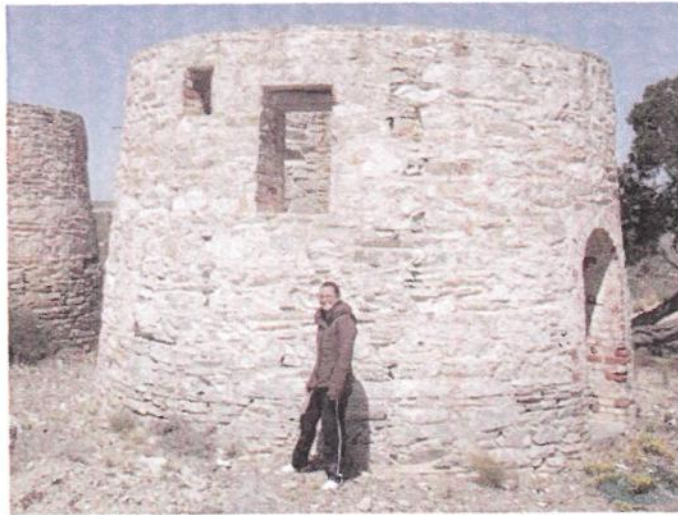
Appendix	1	Questionnaire
	2	Transcription of interview.
	3	Acceptance for letter to interviewees

This is what is left in our town from the railroad that once was.

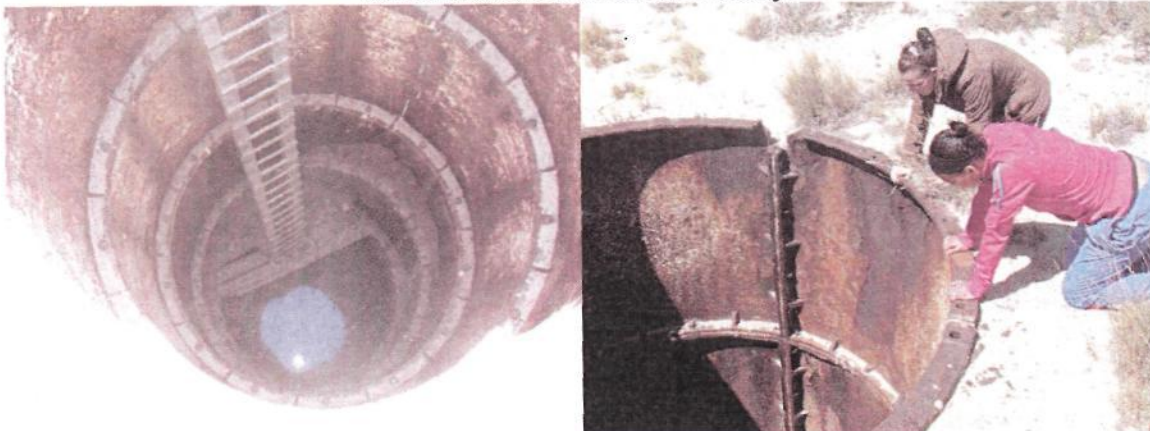




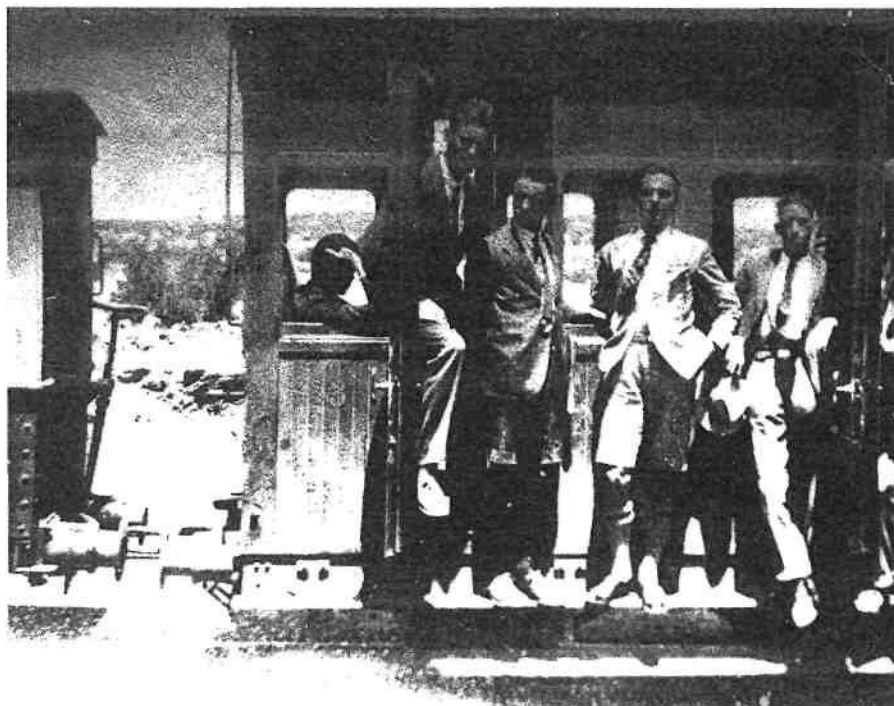
Traces of the railway still visible today



5 Mile Station or what's left today.



Rails on harbour in Port Nolloth.



Carriages carrying passengers were called "Specials"

Remains of the Railway Hotel at Klipfontein



Remains of water towers



6. Conclusion:

The last train from Port Nolloth made the last complete run in 1942 and the line was torn up for the sale of the metal and sleepers in 1944. Today Government is investigating the cost effectiveness of a railway system from Kimberley to Port Nolloth. It is my understanding that the growth of our towns were put in "fast forward" mode by the transport sector. The import and export of products and accessibility to the area through railways serve as the main catalyst for development, and by investing in a railroad to Namaqualand we can hope for economic growth once more.

7. Gallery



Mule train to Okiep



5. Railway:

Difficulties which were experienced in riding copper ore by wagon to the ports, consisted of three factors:

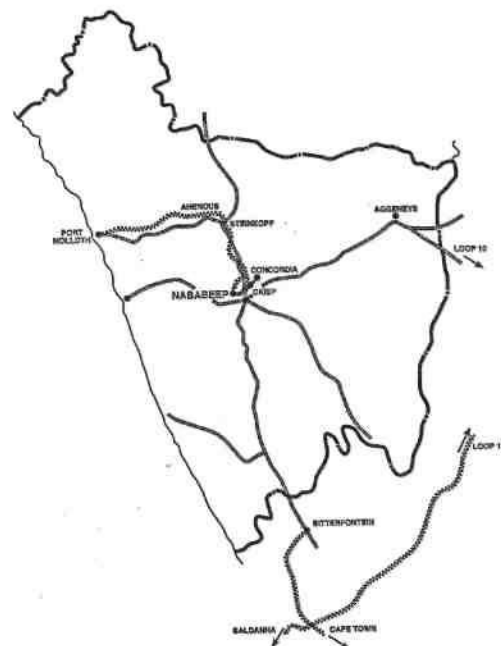
- (1) the lack of roads through the Hardeveld;
- (2) the struggle which the animals had - dragging their heavy loads through the soft Sandveld for about thirty kilometre; and
- (3) the lack of water and fodder for the animals, especially during the summer months.

In view of the tremendous impact which railways were having on mobility overseas, it was logical that peoples' thoughts should turn to the provision of a railroad on the copper route. When the export of copper ore rose to over 1 000 tons per year government introduced a narrow gauge rail system in Namaqualand, linking Concordia, Nababeep, Okiep and Port Nolloth. The method of traction used on the line was the use of mules. Later in 1871 a light steam locomotive, the "John King" started working. Apparently the

locomotive performed well, doing daily the work of 500 mules. The great drawback was that it used a lot of water, and water being very limited, the mines did not immediately do away with their mule teams, but kept them for use in severe droughts, since the mules used less water than the locomotives. Another steam locomotive was introduced, but unfortunately these little engines proved prone to expensive mechanical breakdowns and mules were used over the whole length of the track - with the exception of the down run from Klipfontein. The custom on the down run was to couple the trucks together at Klipfontein, at the top of Anenous Pass, and allow them to run by gravity all the way to the Port, with brakemen on each truck checking the speed on the steeper sections.

At that time the Cape Copper Mining Company had 220 mules, 18 donkeys and 23 horses. In the days of mule traction forty to sixty mules were used to pull the average train in which the freight wagons were connected in three's, pulled by six mules in single file. Up Anenous Mountain pass the teams were at least doubled up for the two hour ascent. The passenger "specials" were each pulled by three mules

Namaqualand's railways



A mule train on the Port Nolloth to Okiep



A train on the Port Nolloth to Okiep



Anenous Pass to Klipfontein. Ten of these Kitson "mountain" engines were used in all, the last being put into commission in 1907. From 1893 steam was used over the whole length of the line for goods traffic, however passenger traffic continued to be drawn by mules until 1896.

6. My report:

1. Introduction:

Aukotwa, Syferfontein, Robbebaai and now Port Nolloth. From Nama origin till today. I was always puzzled by the railway running through town, since I never saw any trains. In this report I would like to entertain the curiosity within us. I will reveal the secrets of the past, which shaped our region. I focused on transport and the specific effect it had on our region.

2. Background:

In the early days in Namaqualand, sea transport was one of the most efficient and speedy means of getting around. It was proved in 1855 when two men travelled from Cape Town to Leliefontein. One travelled by ox wagon and the other by boat to Hondeklipbay and from there by horse to Leliefontein. The latter in Leliefontein a few days before the ox wagon arrived. Thus, when the copper miners of Namaqualand wanted to export their product, the logical route was to take it to a suitable point on the coast, for shipment overseas for refining.

3. Water transportation:

The Gariep River is Namaqualand's only long distance perennial river and thus the only possible internal water transportation route. It forms the northern boundary of the region and enters the Atlantic Ocean near Alexander Bay. Originally it was known as the Eyn to the Khoi, but today we refer to it as the Orange River. However, many still refer to it to this day as the Gariep River. When Captain James Alexander was sent to prospect in South Africa by the Royal Geographical Society. On travelling through the Richtersveld he found sites with a rich deposit of copper and started working mines, Numees and at Kudas. He transported his ore by ox-wagon to the Orange River, and he then floated it down on barges to Alexander Bay. The ore was loaded on their boat, the "Enterprise".

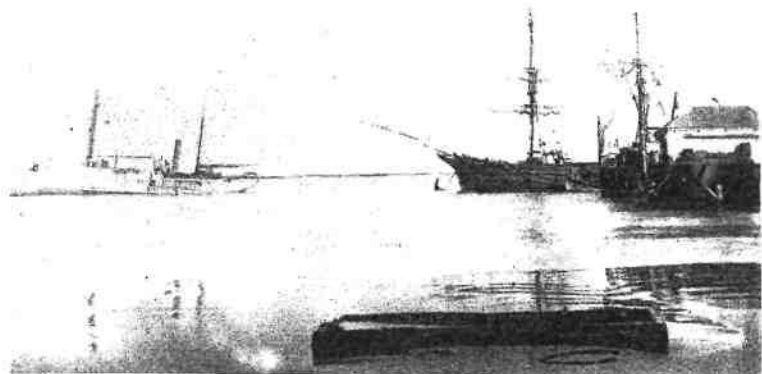
Captain James petitioned the Government to construct a tramway from Alexander Bay, across the sand desert to the Kudas mining area. The petition was not granted, and therefore they continued to transport ore down the river. This they apparently did until at least 1857, shortly before the company ceased operating in the area.

4. The coast:

It was no good getting copper ore to the coast unless it could be loaded aboard a vessel. Between Port Nolloth and the Orange River mouth there were no harbours. Although there were a few small headlands which give some slight protection in good weather, small boats were able to land.

However, the skipper would have to be continually on the alert and prepared to up anchor and clear the coast should the weather break. Landing could generally only be done, without fear of damaging the boat, on the rare sandy beaches or on rock shelves behind the reefs. It was a rather unattractive coast from which to supply traders or export copper ore.

Boats in the Port Nolloth harbour



3. Our school:

Our school motto is in Nama and means: *The light of day*. We are about 340 learners and 11 teachers. Due to our size, our subject choices are limited. Our academic record is excellent, but we still have to work harder to achieve the 100% pass rate. This is a collective aim - which we hope to achieve this year.

We have different sport and cultural activities at school. Not with standing our size, our school has set itself as a powerhouse in the Northern Cape when it comes to sport: producing several provincial representatives in various sport codes, yearly.



4. Introducing my project:

I chose to do a study on Transportation in Namaqualand.

I chose this topic, because when we were asked by my teacher to investigate the cemetery, I came across the railway tracks.

I was really puzzled by this, because never did I imagine trains in Port Nolloth.

I started my assignment discussing what I had seen with my grandfather - a person who actually were involved with the trains.

5. The process I used:

Step 1

I arranged interviews, attended, transcribed the interview and wrote a composition on the information I received.

Step 2

Revisited respondents about uncertain information or more information and added the new information.

Step 3

Took my report to be proof read by three different teachers, several times.

Step 4

Asked for approval to use the information, thanked respondents for their time and participation



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GERHARDUS MOSTERT

.....

.....

Geagte Heer/Dame

Toestemmingsbrief: om onderhoud.

Soos telefonies met u bespreek, sal bogenoemde skool twee verteenwoordigers na u stuur vir die afgespreekde onderhoud.

Plek Huis

Tyd 16 Hoo

Datum 28 AUGUSTUS 2011

Handtekening van respondent: *Gerhardus Mostert*

Byvoortbaat dank.

Die uwe

A. Thomas

A. Thomas
Opvoeder

1. About myself:

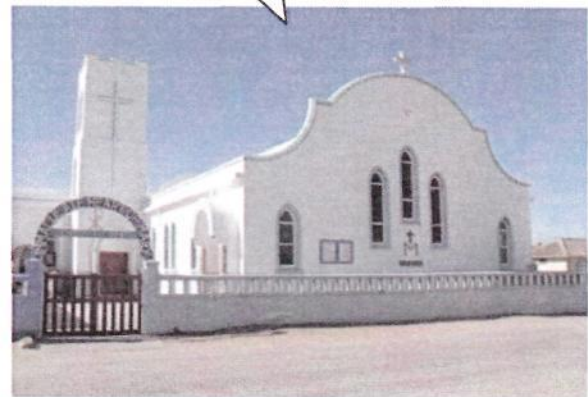
My name is Juan Smith and I am 16 years old. I love playing chess. I am a grade 10 learner at Port Nolloth High School and my favourite subject is English. I want to become a Forensic Analyst. My research was done in Afrikaans my home language, but my presentation and report will be in English.

2. Our town:

I live in Port Nolloth, a small town, situated in the north-western corner of South Africa. We are less than 90 km's from the Namibian border. Port Nolloth is the biggest town and the administrative headquarters of the Richtersveld municipality. Traditionally we are a fishing community.



This is the oldest church in Port Nolloth. (Roman Catholic Church)



The museum in our town



A diamond boat stranded on the shore of Port Nolloth



One of the oldest houses in town, now a guest house.

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HERESA VAN BAALen

Geagte Heer/Dame

Toestemmingsbrief: gebruik van inligting.

Hiermee gee ek, Theresa van Baalen toestemming; dat inligting
soos deur my verskaf - deur bogenoemde skool vir opvoedkundige doeleindes
gebruik mag word.

Handtekening van respondent: 

Byvoorbaat dank.

Die uwe



A. Thomas
Opvoeder



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.....
.....
THERESA VAN BAALLEN

Geagte Heer/Dame

Toestemmingsbrief: om onderhoud.

Soos telefonies met u bespreek, sal bogenoemde skool twee verteenwoordigers na u stuur vir die afgespreekde onderhoud.

Plek MUSEUM

Tyd 11 HOO
.....

Datum 24 AUGUSTUS 2011

Handtekening van respondent:

Byvoorbaat dank.

Die uwe

A. Thomas
Opvoeder

Onderhoud met Gerhardus Mostert: Transkripsie

MEISIE Wat weet u van Port Nolloth se geskiedenis?

OUPA Ek is gebore 31 Augustus 1947, gedoop Gerhardus Martinus Wessel Mostert. Dit wat ek vir jou sê is redelik betroubaar en gedeeltelik is hoorsê.

MEISIE Hoeveel stasies is daar wat u van weet?

OUPA 2 myl regoor Mac Dougalsbaai se afdraai, 5 myl onder Julieshoog, 8 myl in 'n oostelikerigting ook onder Julieshoog, 15 myl op die hedendaagse Lekkersing pad as jy tussen die berge in beweeg, 23 myl, boere se naam, Furgasen, 43 myl onderaan die Anenoës, terselfdertyd die Honeymoon hotel en bo-aan die Anenoës en verder is ek nie bewus van nog stasies nie.

MEISIE Wat weet u van Port Nolloth se vorige name?

OUPA Port Nolloth het 2 benaminge gehad:

- Robbaai
- Aukwatua (iets van Mac Dougalsbaai)

Die eintlike naam kom van Kaptein Nolloth, 'n seilskipkaptein wat die potensiaal van die hawe gesien het.

MEISIE Ken u enige werkers wat dalk op die trein of op die trein spoor gewerk het?

OUPA Ek het Nick Kotse se oupa geken, Edie Mostert en die een watek van gehoor het was George Cockrell, wat die Steinkopf Okieplyn gewerk het.

MEISIE Wat was die doel van die trein en die koper?

OUPA Die doel van die trein was om die koper na Port Nolloth toe te bring, daar was geen ander ordentlike toegangspad nie en van Port Nolloth af was die nodige voorradetruugvervoer na Okiep, soos masjienerie, onderdele, voedsel, dinamiet en steenkool.

Gert Links (telefoon gesprek)

Met alle vrae wat aan my voorsien was, het ek ongelukkig net reaksie op die gedeelte van toepassing op die "oud" Richtersveld.

Die Eijn of Gariep rivier was gebruik vir die afvoer van koper vanaf Numees en Kudas. James Alexander was in 1836 gestuur om te kom prospekteer: tot in Walvisbaai. By Springbokfontein het hy op kopererts afgekom, maar was nie veel beïndruk nie. Tot sy koms in die Numees en Kudas area, waar hy toe begin myn het. Hy verwys na 28 en 65 % egte koper. Met ossewa na die rivier en vlotte af tot wat vandag Alexanderbaai is het hulle die koper vervoer. Daar was dit op die Enterprise gelaai en reguit Skotland toe.

Jammer daar is nie enige ander inligting waarmee ons kan help nie.

Die 3 hoof probleme wat daar was deur die vervoer van koper erts deur middel van 'n osse-wa na die hawe was die volgende.

(1) Die te kort aan paaie deur Hardeveld.

(2) Die diere wat swaargely met hulle swaar vragte deur die sagte sandveld vir omtrent 30 km en

(3) Die tekort aan water en kos vir die diere, veral in die somer maande.

Toe die uitvoer van koper erts oor 1000 ton per jaar gestuig het en water was baie skaars, daarom het hulle besluit om dit verder te gebruik. Nag in stoom trein was bekend gestel, maar ongelukkig het hierdie klein enjins baie meganiese probleme daar myle was gebruik oor die hele lengte van die trein spoor. In die dae van myle transaksies was 40 tot 60 myl gebruik om die gewone trein te trek, was in 35 getoppel met 6 myle werk elk trek. In die 1880's is die spesiale kragtige Kitson "berg" tipe trein wat bekend gestel en bestuur van die hawe op Anie-noes pas na Klipfontein to. 10 Van die enjins was in geheel gebruik en die laaste was in 1904 gebruik. Van 1893 was stoom oor die hele lengte van die lyn gebruik om goedere te vervoer. Alhoewel Passasiers nog steeds deur myle gebrek tot omtrent 1896.

Die Gariep Rivier is Namakwaland se enigste volhoubare rivier wat deur die jaar vloei en is dus die enigste water vervoer roete.

Oorspronklik was dit deur die Khoi as die Eyen geten, maar vandag verwys ons na dit as die Oranje Rivier, hoewel baie mense dit vandag na verwys as die Gariep rivier. In 1851 was Kaptein James Alexander gestuur om die binneland te verkien in Suid-Afrika deur die Koninklike Geografiese Vereniging. Op sy pad deur die Richtersveld het hy afgekom op plekke wat rijk was aan koper, sowat 28% en 65% rijk aan koper. Hy het dadelik in die myne van Numees en Kodas begin werk. Hy het sy erts deur middel van 'n osse-wa na die Oranje rivier vervoer, hy het dit dan op vlotte gelaaai en dit dan na Alexanderbaai vervoer. Die erts was dan op botte gelaaai.

Kaptein James het die regering versoek om 'n spoorweg te bou oor die sagte sand veld na die Kodas myn area. Die versoek was afgekeer, daarom het hulle besluit om die erts nogsteeds met die Oranje rivier af te stuur.

Dit sou nie baat om koper erts by die kus te kry tensy dit tot daar vervoer kan word. Tussen P.N en die O.K mond was daar geen hawe nie, Alhoewel daarin paar landings plekke was wat gedeeltelik beskerm was teen die elemente van die see, tydens goeie weer kan klein stepe land. Landing kan eintlik net gedoen word sonder vrees om die boot te beskadig teen die sagte strand of teen die rotse. Dit was 'n redelike onontbreeklike kus om koper uit te voer.



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Me. Theresa van Baalen
Port Nolloth Museum

Geagte Dame

Navorsings inligting:

Soos reeds met u bespreek, versoek ons dat u Juan Smith sal help met die nodige inligting vir haar navorsing. Sy doen navorsing oor die ontwikkeling van vervoer in Namakwaland.

Enige inligting sal welkom wees en waardeer word.

Byvoorbaat dank.

Die uwe

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Thomas', with a long, flowing horizontal stroke extending to the right.

A.Thomas
Opvoeder