

THE SWARTBOOI / GROOTBERG UPRISING 1897-1898

Resistance to German Colonialism in North-West Namibia



Text by Sian Sullivan

Drawings by Clarence Geingob

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Made in collaboration with the

Swartbooi / !Khaulgôan and Nami-Daman Traditional Authorities

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We also thank the Swartbooi / !Khaulgôan and Nami-Daman Traditional Authorities for their ongoing support.

Note on Orthography

The Khoekhoegowab language spoken by Nama, Damara/#Nūkhoen and Hailom deploys four click consonants signalled by the following symbols:

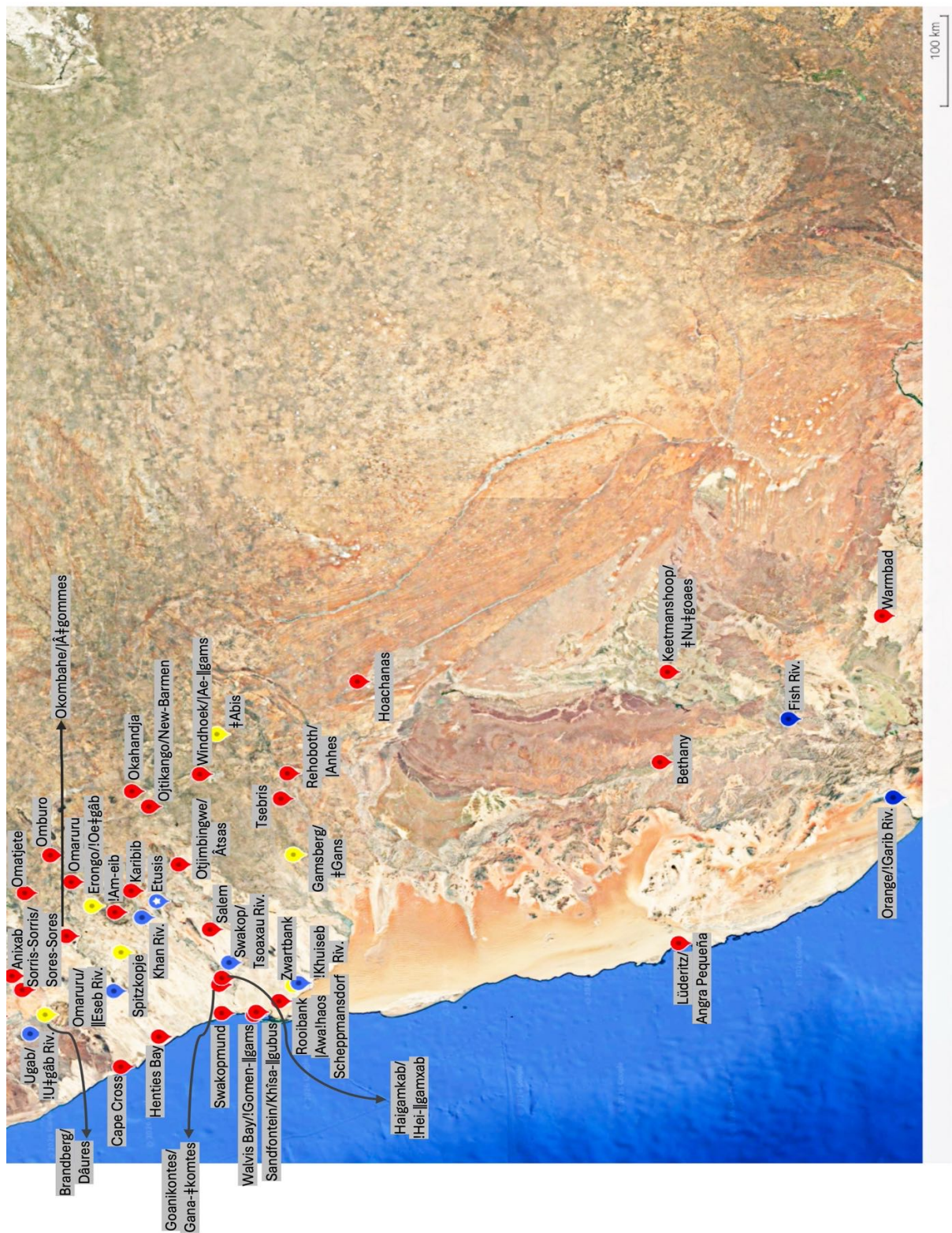
| = the ‘tutting’ sound made by bringing the tongue softly down from behind front teeth (dental click);

l = the clucking sound familiar in urging on a horse (lateral click);

! = a popping sound like mimicking the pulling of a cork from a wine bottle (alveolar click);

‡ = a sharp, explosive click made as the tongue is flattened and then pulled back from the palate (palatal click).

Map prepared by Sian Sullivan, including data from: Landsat/CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCOImagery from the dates:14/12/2015–01/01/2021.



Places mentioned in the southern part of Namibia.

Key: Places in red; rivers in blue; springs in blue with white stars; mountains in yellow.

Map prepared by Sian Sullivan, including data from: Landsat/CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCOImagery from the dates:14/12/2015–01/01/2021.

1. Openings

This is a story of a Nama people Indigenous to Namibia. They are named ǀKhaunǁgôan, and became known as Swartbooi.

It is also a story of their allies in Namibia's north-west, who participated together in anti-colonial resistance against German colonialism. These allies included: !Gomen ǀAonin or Topnaar of Sesfontein who were also connected with Walvis Bay (!Gomen-ǀgams); followers of the ovaHerero leader Kambatta from the Omburo area, north-east of Omaruru; and 'Bergdamara' or ǀNūkhoen living throughout the north-west.

Many people know of the colonial war fought against multiple Indigenous peoples of Namibia by the German government in the early 1900s. This brutal military campaign of 1904-1908 has become known as the first genocide of the 20th century. Although population figures are difficult to ascertain with accuracy, the populations of ovaHerero, Damara/ǀNūkhoen and Nama were significantly reduced, as indicated in **Table 1.1** below.

Table 1.1 Estimates of ovaHerero, Damara/ǀNūkhoen and Nama population declines resulting from the German colonial genocide of 1904-1908.

	Estimate, 1904	Official Census, 1911	Decrease, difference	Decrease, percentage
ovaHerero	80,000	15,130	64,870	81%
Damara/ǀNūkhoen	30,000	12,831	17,169	57%
Nama	20,000	9,781	10,219	51%
	130,000	37,742	92,258	71%

Source: Estimated figures from Union of South Africa (1918: 35).

What is less known is that in the late 1800s the Swartbooi and their allies were brutally crushed in a year-long campaign to break their spirit and acquire their land and livestock. The ultimate 'theatre of war' for this campaign was the rugged mountainous terrain of Kaiǀuis: the big mountain or Grootberg (**Fig. 1.1**). The maps preceding the text show many of the places mentioned in this book.



Figure 1.1 The Grootberg/Kaijuis mountains. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 12.4.2023.

In this book we retrace the events leading up to this campaign. Please join us as we follow the Swartbooi's movements northwards, their brave collaborative resistance to German colonial control, and their ultimate punishment through deportation and captivity to Windhoek. A full chronology of events from the 1700s onwards can be found at:

<https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/grootberg-uprising-chronology>

1.1 !Khaugôan / Swartbooi Early History

Some time prior to 1800 the !Khaugôan separated from a larger Nama grouping dwelling in central Namibia, known as Kailkhauan, or 'Red Nation'.¹

At this time, Europeans were already crossing northwards over the !Garib (Fig. 1.2): the river that in 1779 was named the Orange River by Cape Colony Governor Robert Gordon, to honour William V of Orange, the reigning house of the Netherlands.² The Europeans were hunting elephant for ivory and trading for (or raiding) Nama cattle, as had been occurring in southern Namibia since the 1730s: sometimes involving violence towards people living in these areas.³



Figure 1.2 'An engraving of a train of wagons crossing the Orange River'. Source: McCullum (2016: online), public domain image.

In addition, in the late 1700s and early 1800s ovaHerero cattle pastoralists were expanding southwards from southern Angola, via what is now northern Kunene Region.⁴ Competition for springs and pastures in central Namibia caused conflict throughout the 1800s between ovaHerero, Nama, Damara/ǀNūkhoen and San, in a century also dominated by European expansion into south-western Africa. In around 1810, Oorlam Nama from the Cape,⁵ known as Afrikaners and who we will meet frequently in this narrative, reportedly “ravaged the Bondelswarts and Swartboois in southern Namaland”.⁶

By around 1820, otjiHerero speakers had migrated southwards from Kaoko as far as Maun in Botswana.⁷ The first major clash between ovaHerero and Nama occurs when severe drought causes them to expand into each other’s pastures and water sources, initiating 10 years of war “waged by the Oorlam” and “led by the enigmatic Jonker Afrikaner, [...] directed principally at the Herero”.⁸

Indeed, the Swartboois also became closely entangled with European adventure. For example, Hendrik Buys, described as a Swartboois by British explorer Francis Galton, accompanied both Captain James Edward Alexander and Galton on their journeys in the territory in 1836-37 and 1850-51 respectively (Fig. 1.3).⁹

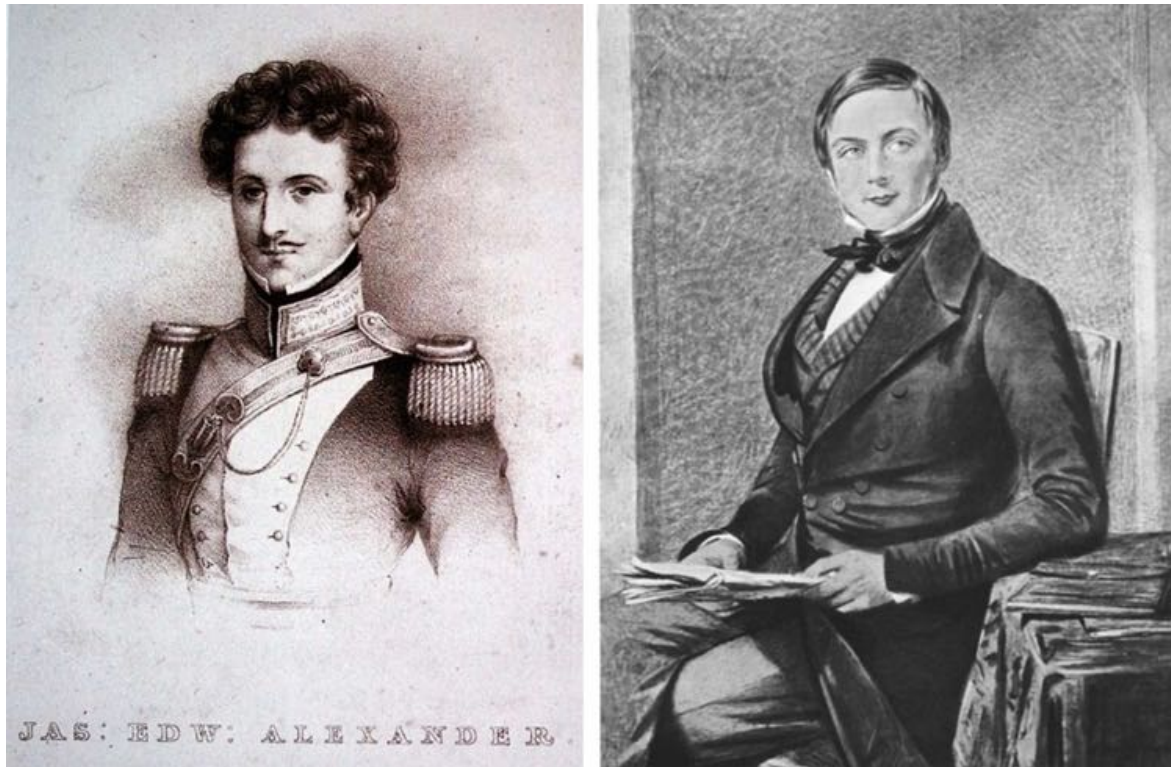


Figure 1.3 Source: (L) Photographic reproduction of 1827 Lithograph of James Edward Alexander by Richard James Lane (1800-1872), in National Portrait Gallery (NPG D21949), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:James_Edward_Alexander00.jpg 16.5.2024; (R) *Francis Galton as a student* (by Octavius Oakley, 1800-1867), <https://victorianweb.org/science/galton/galton1.html> 16.5.2024 (This image may be used without prior permission for any scholarly or educational purpose).

The maps below (Fig. 1.4 and 1.5) indicate the routes taken by Alexander and Galton, the latter also travelling with Charles John Andersson, who we will meet repeatedly in the text that follows.¹⁰

Endnotes

¹ Moritz (1998: 5)

² Mossop (1935: 3), Vedder (2016[1938]: 30), du Pisani (1986: 14)

³ Mossop (1947: 94), Wallace (2011: 50) after Penn (2005: 78–86, 202–10)

⁴ Galton (1852), Palgrave in Stals (1991), Bollig (1997: 13)

⁵ Oorlam Nama were Khoekhoe>Nama who in the Cape Colony had acquired horses, firearms, wagons, the Dutch language and Christianity (Lau 1994[1987]; Dederling 1997; Wallace 2011).

⁶ du Pisani (1986: 14–15)

⁷ Wallace (2011: 58)

⁸ du Pisani (1986: 10); also Gillham (2001: 74)

⁹ Alexander (2006[1838]), Galton (1890[1853])

¹⁰ Also see <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp4-spatialising-colonialities> for the mapping of journeys by explorers, traders and hunters in Namibia.

2. Moving to |Anhes / Rehoboth

!Huiseb #Haobemab becomes chief of the !Khaugôan/Swartboois from around the 1830s. He later became known as Willem Swartbooi. In the early 1840s the Swartboois (!Khaugôan) moved northwards towards |Anhes and Tsebris near Windhoek (|Aelgams), which “were chosen as the new ‘headquarters’ by the Nama chief !Huiseb”, at this time allied with Jonker Afrikaner.¹¹

Nestling in copper-bearing hills previously mined for copper by Damara/#Nūkhoen,¹² this settlement became known as Rehoboth (Fig. 2.1). They had previously moved around Rehoboth/|Anhes, Bethany, Warmbad, Keetmanshoop (#Nu#goaes) and the Fish River after leaving Hoachanas in the 1700s where the Kailkhauan were based.¹³ In 1842, missionary Hahn of the Rhenish Missionary Society estimated “the size of the Swartboois at about 1,500”.¹⁴



Figure 2.1 The hills of Rehoboth. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 22.4.2023.

The hot, gushing spring of mineral water¹⁵ at Rehoboth was a particular attraction. This is now the site of a disused, gated spa (Fig. 2.2).



Figure 2.2. This now closed gated spa at Rehoboth in 2023. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 22.4.2023.

At Rehoboth the Swartbooi Nama created a settlement made of reed mat huts or *|haru omti* (woven from *Cyperus marginatus*) (Fig. 2.3). The portable woven huts had long been characteristic of Nama pastoralists in southern Africa and Namibia.¹⁶



Figure 2.3 !Khaugôan/Swartboois begin building their traditional reed-mat huts (*|haru omti*), ultimately constructing a large settlement at Rehoboth. © Clarence Geingob

Willem Swartbooi's wife Anna !Abes had earlier sought baptism by German missionary Heinrich Schmelen, working in the Bethany area of southern Namibia.¹⁷ Swartbooi settlement

in Rehoboth involved joining with German missionary Heinrich Kleinschmidt, a relationship that would last two decades. Missionary Kleinschmidt arrived at Rehoboth in 1845 with two other German missionaries, Johannes Rath and Jan Bam (Fig. 2.4).¹⁸ Previously Kleinschmidt had been based at |Ae|gams (now Windhoek) with Jonker Afrikaner, moving with German missionary Hugo Hahn to Otjikango/Neu-Barmen in 1844.



Figure 2.4 German missionaries Heinrich Kleinschmidt, Johannes Rath and Jan Bam explore Rehoboth with Kleinschmidt settling there as the Swartbooi missionary. © Clarence Geingob

When the missionaries arrived at Rehoboth they found magnificent grass, small forests of camel thorn trees (*Acacia erioloba* / |ganab) and beautiful mountains all around. Missionary Kleinschmidt settled under the trees near the springs. He was reportedly warmly welcomed by some people of the Swartboois and given milk and other gifts (Fig. 2.5).¹⁹



Figure 2.5 Missionary Kleinschmidt is welcomed warmly by the !Khaulgôan/Swartboois. © Clarence Geingob

On Sundays, many people came to Rehoboth. Kleinschmidt held church and school under a tree next to his hut.²⁰

On 8 July 1845 Willem (!Huisseb) Swartbooi made his entry into Rehoboth. He rode with his old blind father (#Haobeb Tsuaxamab, also Manasse) and his family on an ox-cart (Fig. 2.6). The others sat on riding oxen; the poor and servants came on foot.²¹

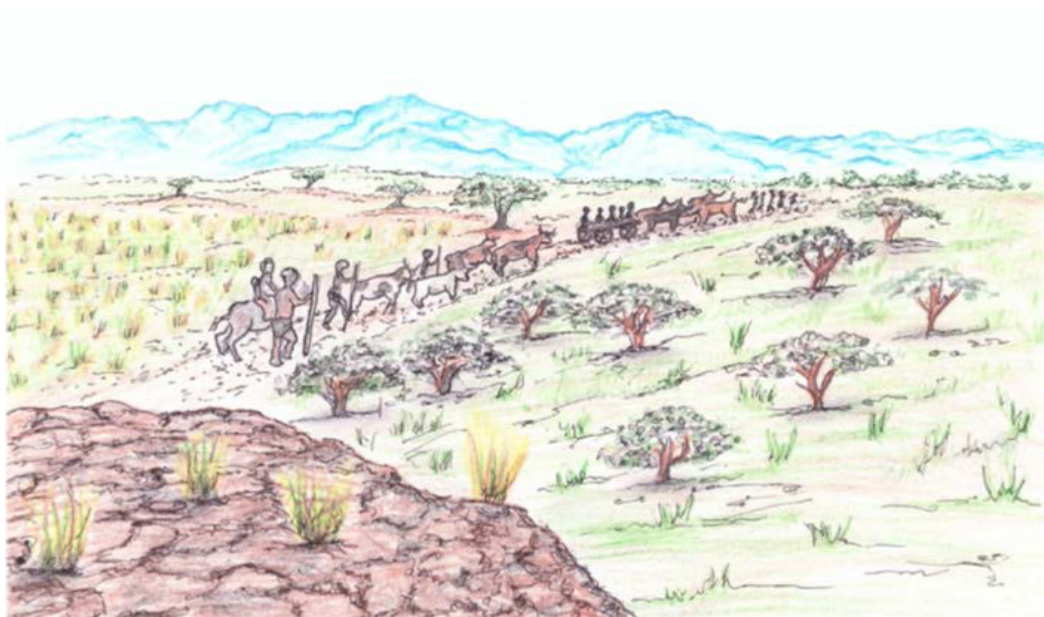


Figure 2.6 Chief Willem (!Huisseb) Swartbooi makes his entry into Rehoboth, accompanied by people and livestock. © Clarence Geingob

Among chief Willem Swartbooï's people there were already a number of baptised individuals, including Willem's wife, Anna !Abes. Soon the brother of the chief, Kobus Swartbooï, was baptised, receiving the name Johannes. Chief Willem Swartbooï was also baptised on 13 December 1846 (Fig. 2.7).²²

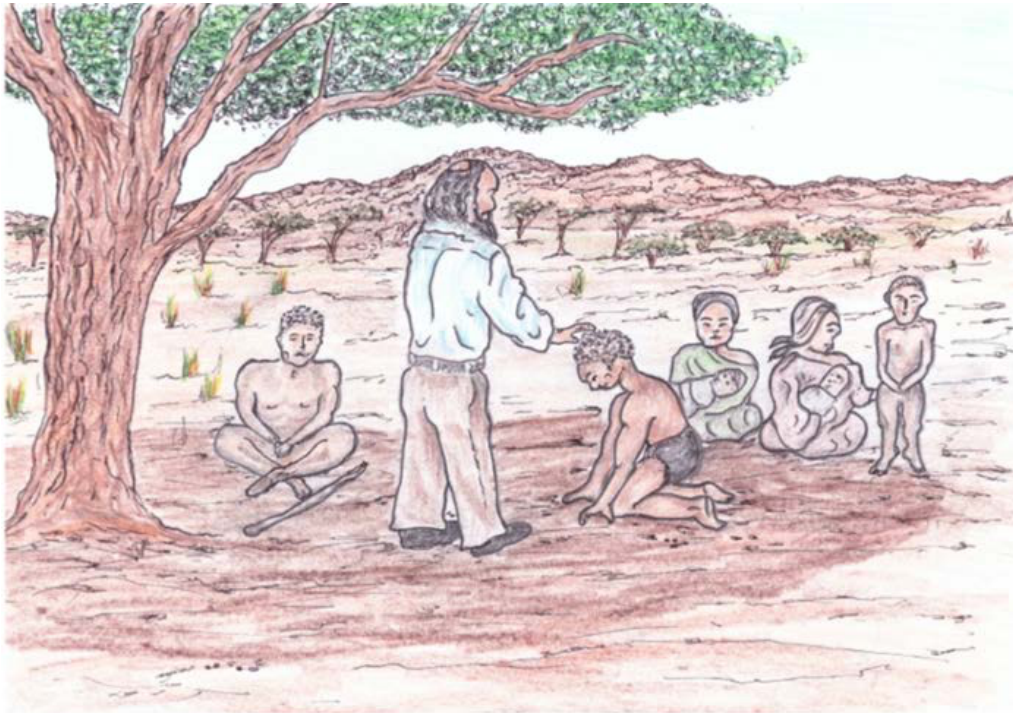


Figure 2.7 Missionary Kleinschmidt begins to baptise IKhau!gōan/Swartbooï's living in Rehoboth. © Clarence Geingob

And a stone church began to be built (Fig. 2.8).



Figure 2.8. Beginning to build a stone church at Rehoboth. © Clarence Geingob

Rehoboth became thought of as a city on the mountain, whose light was visible from afar (Fig. 2.9).²³



Figure 2.9 Rehoboth as a city on a mountain, whose light was visible from afar. © Clarence Geingob

A people's assembly was introduced, and judges were appointed (Fig. 2.10). The chief was assisted by two councillors and 10 judges. On 25 August 1849 a 'Law for Rehoboth', or 'Rehoboth Code', was established.²⁴



Figure 2.10 The new Rehoboth people's assembly. © Clarence Geingob

Endnotes

- ¹¹ Lau (1994[1987]: 30)
- ¹² J Kinahan (1980), Miller & Sandelowsky (1999)
- ¹³ Lau [Andersson] (1987: 104), Moritz (1998: 5)
- ¹⁴ Hahn in Lau (1994[1987]: 8), cited in Schnegg & Pauli (2007: 11)
- ¹⁵ Galton (1890[1853]: 71)
- ¹⁶ Haacke (1982)
- ¹⁷ Schnegg & Pauli (2007: 11)
- ¹⁸ Moritz (1998: 7)
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–9, and references therein.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 7.
- ²¹ *Ibid.* p. 8.
- ²² *Ibid.* p. 9.
- ²³ Riechmann (n.d.: 1)
- ²⁴ Lau (1994[1987]: 47)

3. Mobilities Around Rehoboth

Willem Swartbooï and ǀOaseb – leader of the ‘Red Nation’/Kailkhauan – remained close enough to support joint ownership of cattle posts (Fig. 3.1).²⁵

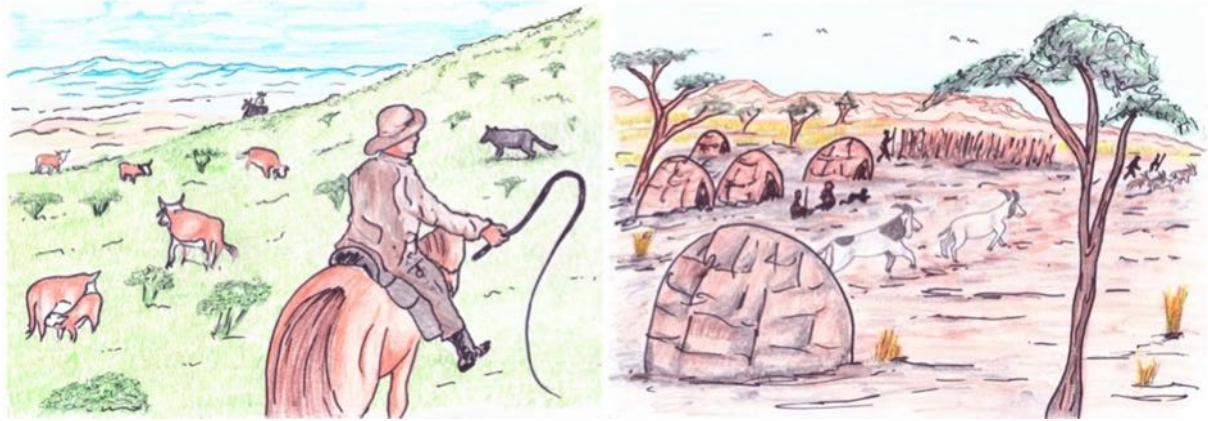


Figure 3.1 Joint ownership between Willem Swartbooï and ǀOaseb, leader of the ‘Red Nation’/Kailkhauan. © Clarence Geingob

The Swartboois would also take ǀOaseb’s horses to the Gamsberg area (ǀGans) where they were safe from horse sickness during the summer months (Fig. 3.2).²⁶

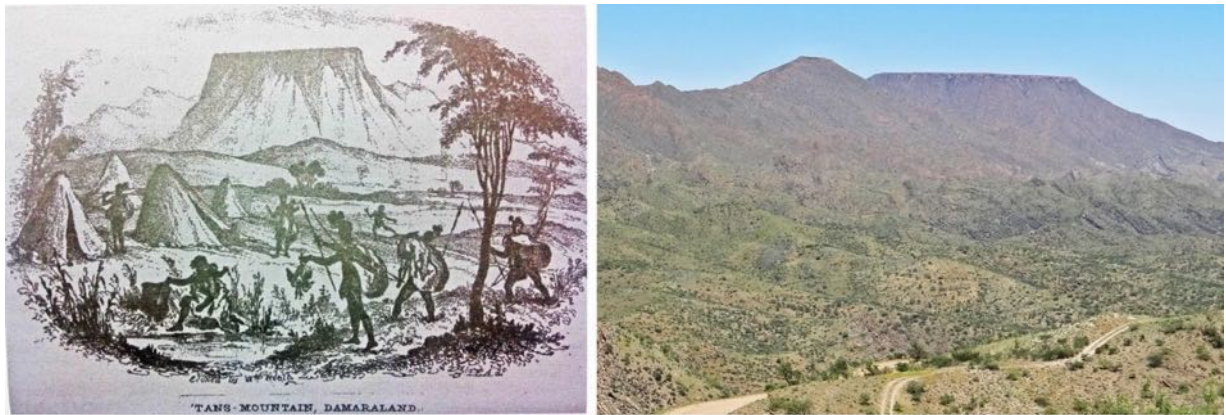


Figure 3.2 Source: (L) “Hill Damara” (ǀNūkhoe) village in the foothills of the table-topped “Tans [ǀGans] Mountain”, as sketched in the 1830s narrative by British Captain James Edward Alexander, out of copyright; (R) the commercial, freehold Gamsberg farming area as it is in contemporary times. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 8.3.2014.

By 1851 the number of parishioners in Rehoboth was 500, of whom 160 adults and 270 children were baptised.²⁷ In 1853, Swartbooï began hunting for the hides (skins) of especially giraffe and buffalo, which were used for making sandals.²⁸ They were using firearms. They also raided cattle from ovaHerero people north of Windhoek, and began to be seen as enemies.²⁹

Around this time Swartbooi became allied with Topnaar/!Aonin Nama, who in the mid-1840s had been attacked on the coast with two small cannons by the Windhoek-based leader Jonker Afrikaner (Fig. 3.3), with Willem Swartbooi possibly also involved.³⁰ At this time the !Aonin chief was Frederik Khaxab, living at Khîsa-!lguwus/Sandfontein – near Walvis Bay; with a lieutenant, Jakob !Naixab, living at !Awa-!haos/Rooibank.³¹



Figure 3.3 Jonker Afrikaner depicted on the left, with his two cannons used in an attack on the coast on the right. © Clarence Geingob

This battle placed Jonker in control of the trade route between Walvis Bay and Lake Ngami (in Botswana), via Windhoek (!Aelgams). The !Gomen Topnaar from Walvis Bay area – some of whom were later to relocate northwards to Sesfontein – thereby also came under Jonker Afrikaner’s domination. In August 1852, Jonker ordered Khaxab:

to leave the Bay with his people and to move to the highlands inland. It is unknown whether this order of Jonker’s was directed against the mission in Rooibank [|Awa-!haos] or because Jonker himself needed more men for his war effort. About 300 Topnaar left the Kuiseb area to follow the call of Jonker. Some of them returned to Rooibank later in 1852. !Naixab seems to have been held by Jonker to prevent the Topnaar from moving to Rehoboth, given the hostility between Jonker and the Zwartbooi. Because [...] both Jonker and the Zwartbooi required !Naixab to join their people in their warfare.³²

It also looks as though Nama pastoralists had long been associated with north-west Namibia. In 1829, American sealer Captain Morrell reports encountering a Nama village at Great Fish Bay north of Cape Frio/Fria, with around 150 reed mat huts “constructed of closely-woven mats of coarse grass”, writing that:

[e]ach hut is covered with an arched or sloping roof, supported by upright posts fixed in the ground, and thatched with matting. The materials are all so light that they can be removed at a very short notice, and without much trouble. I have seen them taken down and put together again in thirty-five minutes. The value of one of these huts is that of a sheep.³³

This description evokes this famous image (Fig. 3.4).



Figure 3.4. Described as ‘View of a Bushman kraal’, although the reed-mat huts imply a Nama origin. Source: Burchell (1822, vol. 2: 198), https://static-prod.lib.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/africa/burchell/burchell9.jpg, out of copyright.

Indeed, an array of historical sources attest to this wide historical presence of Nama/Khoe pastoralists into north-west Namibia. As the archives of the Rhenish Mission report (for the late 1870s and early 1880s):

[a]ccording to the ancients, the Topnaars came from the north towards the end of the eighteenth century, who had immigrated from Cape Rock [Rocky Point] and Cape Frio. At the beginning of the 19th century the Topnaar are said to have reached the mouth of the Swakop (tsoa-xou-b), [their migration perhaps] related to the advance of the Herero into the Kaokoveld [northern Kunene Region].³⁴

James Edward Alexander similarly observed in 1837 that it is “very unusual” for

the bay people to go beyond the mouths of the Swakop and Kuisip. [...] No one can pass through the Damaras of the plains [ovaHerero] from the bay [Walvis Bay] without a very powerful escort; and the only thing which might be done [...] would be to induce the chief to show the way to the Red men [Nama] living to the north.³⁵

He claimed “the greatest desire to undertake” this journey, but was unable “to get any guides to go with me to shew me the waters”.³⁶

Galton iterates this perspective in 1852, writing that:

[t]he more northerly Toppners [Nama] were thus quite cut off from all communication with those about Walfisch Bay, and remain so to the present time. There exists, however, the greatest fondness for traditional stories among these people, and I found the liveliest interest expressed on my return from the north relative to the well-being of those Hottentots³⁷ whom I met among the Ovampo [...]³⁸

As Moritz confirms through working with Topnaar at |Awa-!haos/Rooibank and elsewhere between 1965-1972:

[t]he Topnaar are a Nama tribe that lived in the far north in the area of Hoarusib River. In 1800 they moved from there to the Swakop. Under their captain |Kaxab [Khaxab] they settled down in 1820 at Kuiseb – since the Topnaar lived in the area where the Nara grows, they also became known as ‘!Naranin’.³⁹

Given these narratives, one perspective summarises that:

[i]t can be concluded that the coast in the west of the Kaokoveld was not a no-man’s-land, but rather that there were south-north and north-south relations and migrations of a sparse coastal population and that memories of it have been preserved right down to the recent past.⁴⁰

Returning to Rehoboth, in 1854 the Swartboois prepared for battle with Jonker Afrikaner: the stone buildings (the church and school) were enclosed with a circle of Nama reed mat houses around the outside (Fig. 3.5).⁴¹



Figure 3.5 Rehoboth's church surrounded by Nama reed-mat huts, in preparation for an attack by Jonker Afrikaner in 1854. © Clarence Geingob

The women and children slept in the church and school (Fig. 3.6).



Figure 3.6 Women and children sleeping in the church to avoid attack by Jonker Afrikaner in 1954. © Clarence Geingob

The Swartbooi alliance included around 30 men on horseback and 400 oxen riders. Swartbooi and Topenaar were attacked by Jonker's fighters, including ovaHerero who lived with them. Blood flowed, men fell and the wounded lay in pain (Fig. 3.7).⁴²

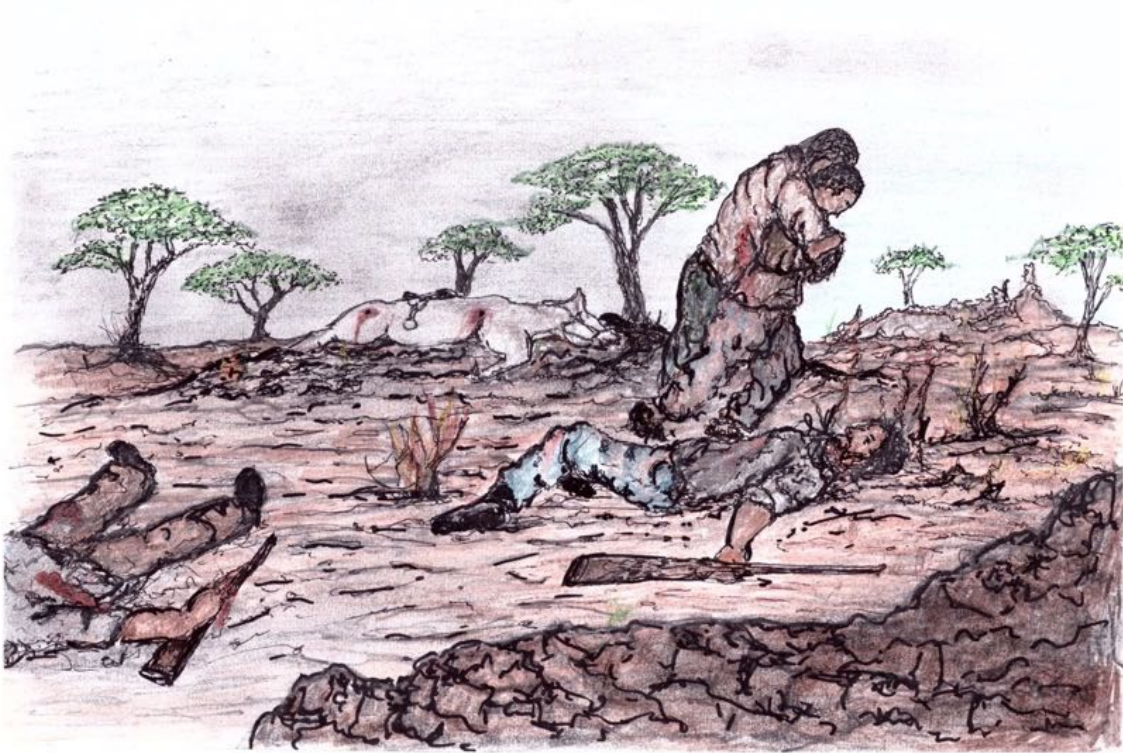


Figure 3.7 The outcome of an attack in 1854 by Jonker Afrikaner's fighters and associated ovaHerero. © Clarence Geingob

Open conflict and cattle raiding remained for several years, although attempts at peace-making were also made (Fig. 3.8).



Figure 3.8 Open conflict continuing in the 1850s. © Clarence Geingob

In 1855 Chief Willem Swartbooi entered a contract with a European mining prospector who wanted to mine copper at Rehoboth (Fig. 3.9).⁴³ As observed by missionary Bam, in March 1855 a ship arrives at Walvis Bay carrying a mining company of eight men, three horses, and six to seven wagon loads of goods ready to begin prospecting and mining copper, of which a prospector called Stead negotiated with Chief Swartbooi to begin mining near Rehoboth.⁴⁴ The Swartboois thus began granting mining concessions at Rehoboth,⁴⁵ with a start made on mining copper, although abandoned in 1858 due to high costs and social unrest.⁴⁶



Figure 3.9 Copper mining at Rehoboth, beginning in 1855 and abandoned in 1858. © Clarence Geingob

Endnotes

²⁵ Lau (1994[1987]: 113, and references therein)

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Moritz (1998: 10)

²⁸ Lau (1994[1987]: 59, and references therein)

²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 83–84, 114, and references therein.

³⁰ JHA Kinahan (2000: 3, 18) citing Dentlinger (1983: 18), Tindall (1959: 71) and missionary Scheppmann in Moritz (1916: 238)

³¹ Köhler (1969: 106), JHA Kinahan (2000: 18, and references therein)

³² Köhler (1969: 110)

³³ Morrell (2014[1832]: 318–319)

³⁴ Köhler (1969: 106), reporting missionary Baumann (with the Rhenish Mission Society at Rooibank 1878–1883). Also Vigne (1994: 6).

³⁵ Alexander (2006[1938], vol. 2: 102)

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ This term is considered derogatory (Elphick 1977: xv). No offence is meant by its occasional inclusion when quoting directly from historical texts, in which the term denotes a specific ethnic and cultural identity for Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples, usually pastoralists known today as Nama or Khoe/Khoikhoi. It is included only when quoting directly from historical material, with the intention of drawing into focus the past presence of Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples who are often marginalised or negatively presented in work concerning north-west Namibia.

³⁸ Galton (1852: 157)

³⁹ Moritz (1992: 5)

⁴⁰ Köhler (1969: 106); also see Sullivan & Ganuses (2022, 2024)

⁴¹ Moritz (1998: 13–15)

⁴² Moritz (1998: 14)

⁴³ Lau [Andersson] (1987: vi)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Wallace (2011: 65)

⁴⁶ Esterhuyse (1968: 10)

4. Otjimbingwe and the 1864 War

In the meantime, Charles John Andersson – from Swedish and English parents – arrived at Walvis Bay in 1850 (Fig. 4.1), with Francis Galton.⁴⁷



Figure 4.1 Portrait of Charles John Andersson on the left and arrival at Walvis Bay on the right. © Clarence Geingob

Andersson eventually set himself up as a hunter and livestock trader based at Otjimbingwe/Âtsas (Fig. 4.2), and in the 1860s had an important effect on Swartbooi/!Khaugôan histories.



Figure 4.2 Trading at Otjimbingwe/Âtsas in the 1860s. © Clarence Geingob

Andersson acquired large herds of cattle from inhabitants of central Namibia and drove them for sale to Cape Town over the Orange River (Fig. 4.3).⁴⁸

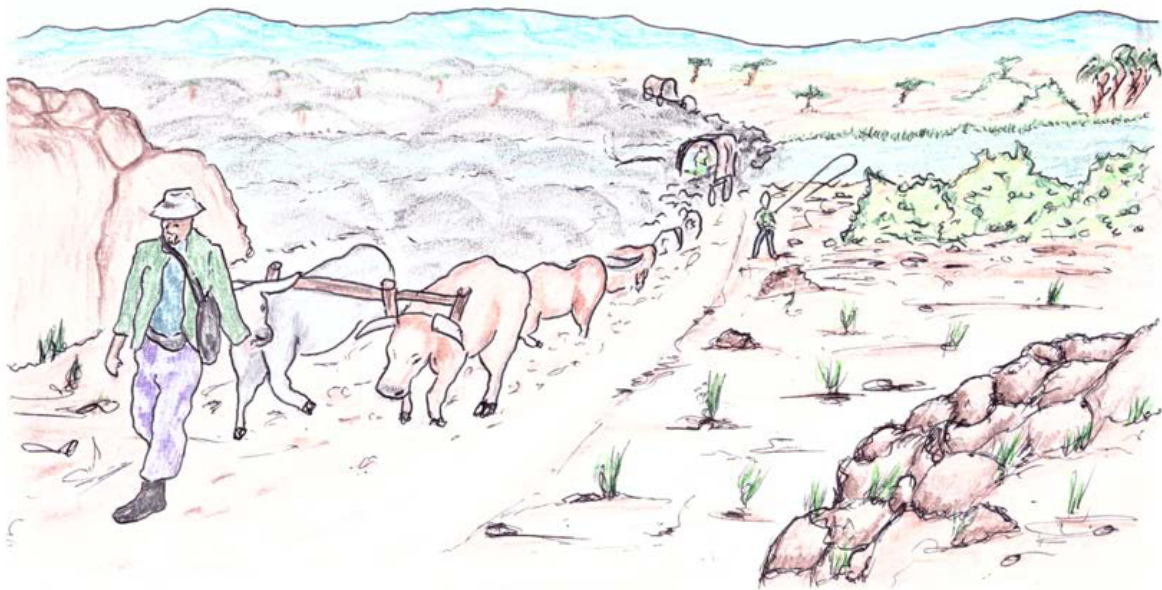


Figure 4.3 Andersson transporting large herds of cattle for sale in Cape Town. © Clarence Geingob

In the early 1860s, Charles John Andersson also imported two cannons to Otjimbingwe/Âtsas and began training and arming mercenary fighters, including ovaHerero warriors (Fig. 4.4).⁴⁹

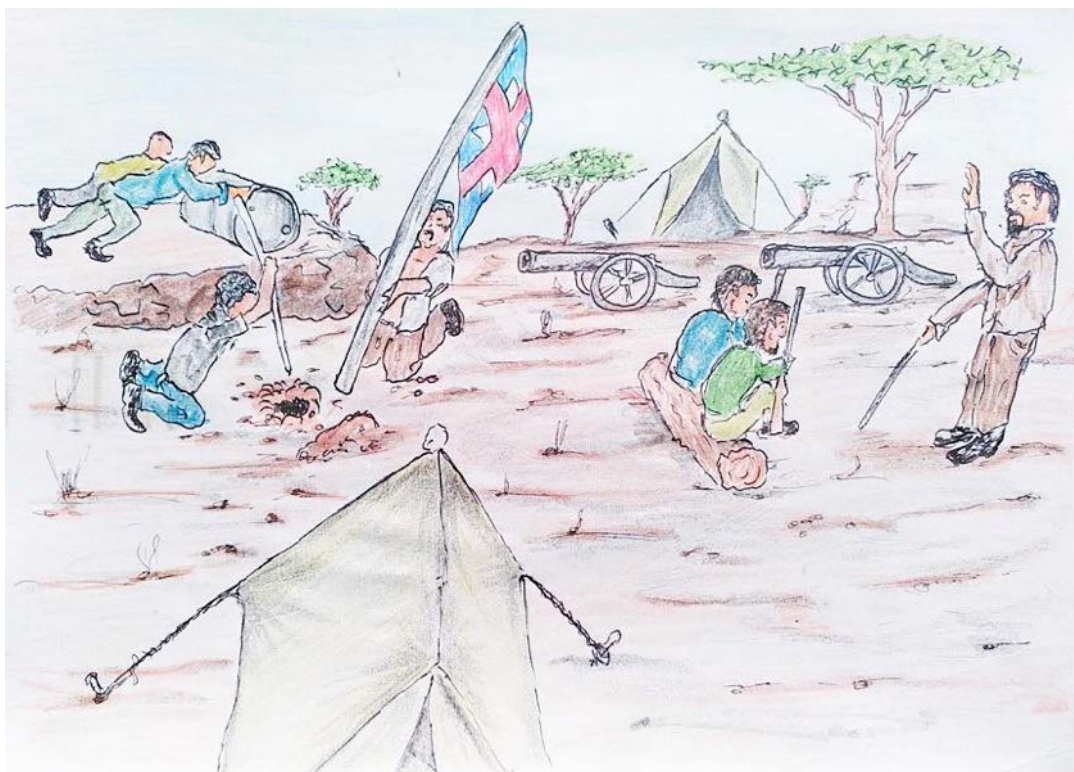


Figure 4.4. Two cannons imported by Andersson to Otjimbingwe/Âtsas, and the beginning of military training. © Clarence Geingob

Andersson, however, fell out of favour with Nama inland for attempting to drive 1,400 diseased cattle with lungsickness through the Rehoboth area in 1861.⁵⁰ Jonker Afrikaner started to tax the wagons and goods of the traders.⁵¹ In response, Andersson wanted to reduce the control over trade routes to the Cape exerted by Jonker, and later by his son Jan Jonker Afrikaner.

Andersson carefully positioned his two cannons at Otjimbingwe. Christian Afrikaner (Jonker Afrikaner's first successor) attacked Otjimbingwe in 1863, after his father had died in 1861 (Fig. 4.5).⁵² The Afrikaners lost more than a third of their 400-500 men; and around 60 ovaHerero fighting for Andersson in Otjimbingwe were killed.⁵³



Figure 4.5 Mercenary fighters respond to the attack on Otjimbingwe by Christian Afrikaner in 1863. © Clarence Geingob

In 1864, Andersson elevated the ovaHerero leader Kamaherero of Okahandja as chief of “all Herero-speakers”, making him sign allegiance to Andersson who proclaimed himself “Regent and Military Commander”.⁵⁴ With his 2,500 ovaHerero fighters and a “national flag” designed by him and an Englishman called Thomas Baines (Fig. 4.6), Andersson marched to Rehoboth to join forces with the Swartbooi commando: their aim was to attack the Afrikaners and their allies.⁵⁵

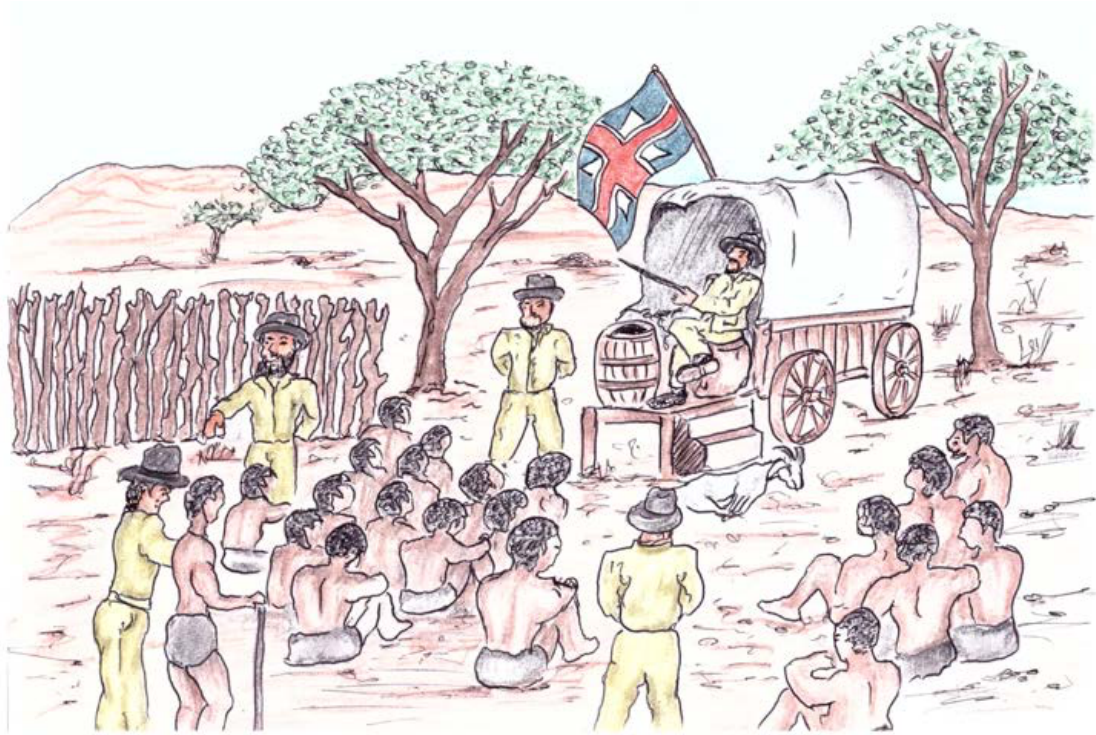


Figure 4.6 Andersson's ovaHerero commando and the flag designed by him and Thomas Baines, in readiness for an attack in collaboration with the Swartboois on the Afrikaners in 1864. © Clarence Geingob

On their two-week march to Rehoboth they provisioned themselves by robbing a few hundred sheep and goats from 'Bergdamara' (Damara/#Nūkhoe) settlements along the way.⁵⁶ Jan Jonker and his Nama followers retreated to the fortified #Abis mountain, south-east of |Aelgams (Windhoek) (Fig. 4.7).

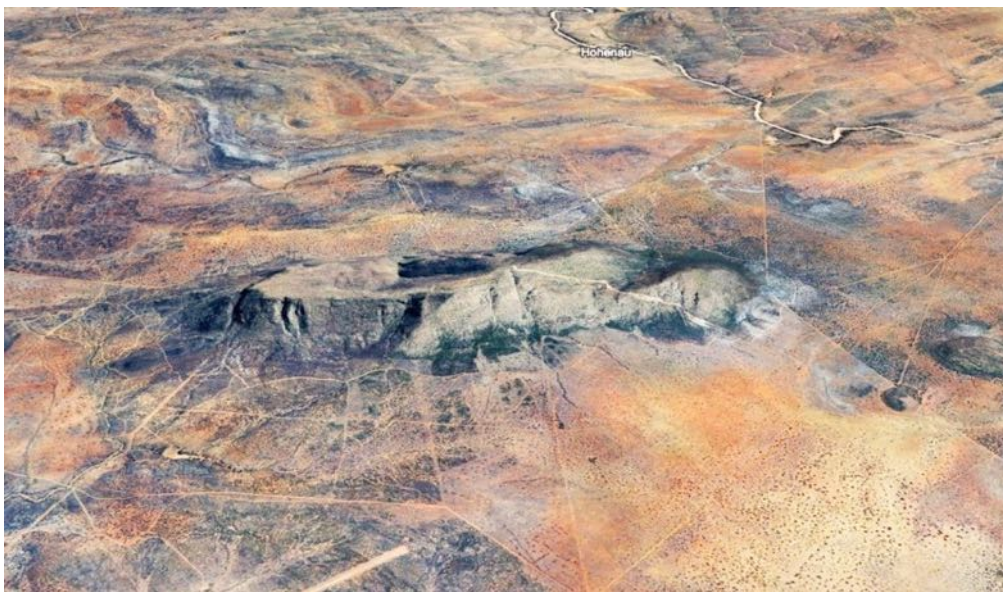


Figure 4.7 #Abis mountain, south-east of |Aelgams (Windhoek), to which Jan Jonker and his followers retreat. Image prepared by Sian Sullivan, Google Earth, including data from: AirbusCNES / AirbusImagery from the dates:16/03/2023–24/08/2023.

Reportedly, Andersson was hit by five bullets:

[o]ne inflicted a flesh wound near the left elbow, another grazed the knuckle of his right index finger, a third hit his rifle-stock, a fourth carried away the heel of a shoe while the last brought him down with his right leg shattered a little below the knee.⁵⁷

The wound in his shin below the knee took a long time to heal, as his army advanced on these hills (Fig. 4.8).⁵⁸ The ovaHerero succeeded in driving off the Afrikaners under Jan Jonker.



Figure 4.8 Andersson, badly shot in the shin, an injury that took a long time to recover from. © Clarence Geingob

Rehoboth wanted to be a city on the mountain again but the disputes between ovaHerero and Nama were too great, especially as Rehoboth was positioned between these two peoples. The Oorlam Afrikaners planned a lightning attack on Rehoboth to disarm and disperse the Swartbooi Rehoboth commando. In response, Swartbooi constructed embankments around Rehoboth to protect against Afrikaner attack, but were defeated in the struggles that followed: they were forced to leave Rehoboth with missionary Kleinschmidt.⁵⁹

The Swartbooi trekked away from Rehoboth along the !Khuseb River, and then towards the Swakop (Tsoaxau) River: they left with cattle herds and 25 ox-wagons, following the course of the !Khuseb westwards, then turning north to reach the lower Swakop.⁶⁰ They were

pursued by Jan Jonker Afrikaner. When he reached the fugitives they had formed a ‘wagon fort’ from their 25 wagons, in tall dry grass. Women and children were sheltered in the wagons. The men were fighting for their lives. Jan Jonker’s men set fire to the grass and the east wind blew strongly. The wagons burned with those who were in them and could not escape (Fig. 4.9).⁶¹



Figure 4.9 Swartbooi wagons, set alight by Jan Jonker Afrikaner’s men. © Clarence Geingob

Missionary Kleinschmidt, deserted in this attack, trekked overland with his family to Otjimbingwe/Âtsas. They walked through the veld for four days. Depressed after the attack on his congregation, Kleinschmidt died soon after reaching Otjimbingwe, where his grave can still be found (Fig. 4.10).⁶²



Figure 4.10 Missionary Kleinschmidt's grave at Otjimbingwe/Átsas. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 25.3.2023.

Endnotes

⁴⁷ Andersson (1861), Galton (1890[1853])

⁴⁸ Lau (1994[1987]: 126, and references therein), Wallace (2011: 60)

⁴⁹ Lau (1994[1987]: 128, and references therein)

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 126, and references therein

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 127.

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 128.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 129.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 131.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 133, Wallace (2011: 71)

⁵⁶ Lau (1994[1987]: 133, and references therein); also see Henrichsen (2011: 217)

⁵⁷ Wallis (1936: 328)

⁵⁸ Lau (1994[1987]: 133, and references therein), Lau [Andersson] (1989: 137–144, 236–248)

⁵⁹ Lau [Andersson] (1987: 104), Uirab (2007: 21–22), Wallace (2011: 61)

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Lau (1994[1987]: 134, and references therein)

⁶² *Ibid.*

5. Salem on the Swakop / Tsoaxau River

After being attacked by Jan Jonker Afrikaner in 1864, the surviving refugees of the Swartbooi retreated along the !Khuseb River to gather at Salem on the Swakop River (Fig. 5.1).⁶³



Figure 5.1 Swartbooi trek towards Salem on the Swakop River. © Clarence Geingob

The landscape here is wild and mountainous, with an abundance of francolins and occasional springbok.⁶⁴ Rhino and giraffe used to be present here, but had already been hunted out by especially foreign hunters and traders.⁶⁵ The Rhenish (German) Mission established a mission station at Salem on the Swakop (Tsoaxau) River, led by a young German missionary called Johannes Albrecht Friedrich Böhm (1833-1918)⁶⁶ and the Baster Piet Gertse from the Cape.⁶⁷ This area of the Swakop River was considered suitable for the establishment of gardens (Fig. 5.2).



Figure 5.2 Beginning to create planted gardens on the left, and creating a reed-mat settlement on the right. © Clarence Geingob

The Swartboois built their own reed mat huts, while missionary Böhm built a simple dwelling house and a chapel, where school was also held (Fig. 5.3).



Figure 5.3. The location of missionary Böhm's dwelling on the left, © Clarence Geingob; and the location of his dwelling in contemporary times on the right. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 26.3.2023.

A church bell was donated to the church in Salem by the community of Muskau in Germany (Fig. 5.4): the bell later travelled with the Swartbooi to !Am-eib near the !Oe†gâ/Erongo mountains, and then on to Fransfontein in the north.⁶⁸



Figure 5.4 The church at Salem with a bell donated from Muskau in Germany. © Clarence Geingob

Salem is west of Otjimbingwe/Âtsas on the Swakop River. At this time, Otjimbingwe was a settlement where ovaHerero were concentrated, in alliance with the hunter and trader Charles John Andersson (Fig. 5.5).



Figure 5.5 'Otjimbingwe, Rheinisch Mission Store on Right' in 1876. Source: photograph 2655 from Special Commissioner William Coates Palgrave expedition. © National Archives of Namibia, used with permission.

In 1867 the mission at Salem was abandoned because of drought. The land that looked promising as a garden became brackish (salty) after only three years, meaning that the effort of cultivating crops was not worth it (Fig. 5.6). At one point,

[t]he only thing they had left were pumpkins, the peels of which were cooked as a midday meal, while some mutton, which was slaughtered bit by bit, provided the meat.⁶⁹



Figure 5.6 A Swartbooi Nama family shares meagre food at Salem on the Swakop River. © Clarence Geingob

It “had to be accepted that a community could not be fed on this soil” (Fig. 5.7).⁷⁰



Figure 5.7 The settlement at Salem departed from because of lack of food. © Clarence Geingob

Endnotes

⁶³ Moritz (1998: 17–19, and references therein)

⁶⁴ Rudner & Rudner [Een] (2004[1872]: 38)

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Sullivan *et al.* (2021)

⁶⁶ Schreckenbach (2009: 6)

⁶⁷ Rudner & Rudner (2004: 203, f37) after Palgrave in Stals (1991: 5)

⁶⁸ Moritz (1998: 19–20, and references therein). The Germans would usually spell Fransfontein as Franzfontein. Later in the text we will see this latter spelling quite often.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

6. !Am-eib

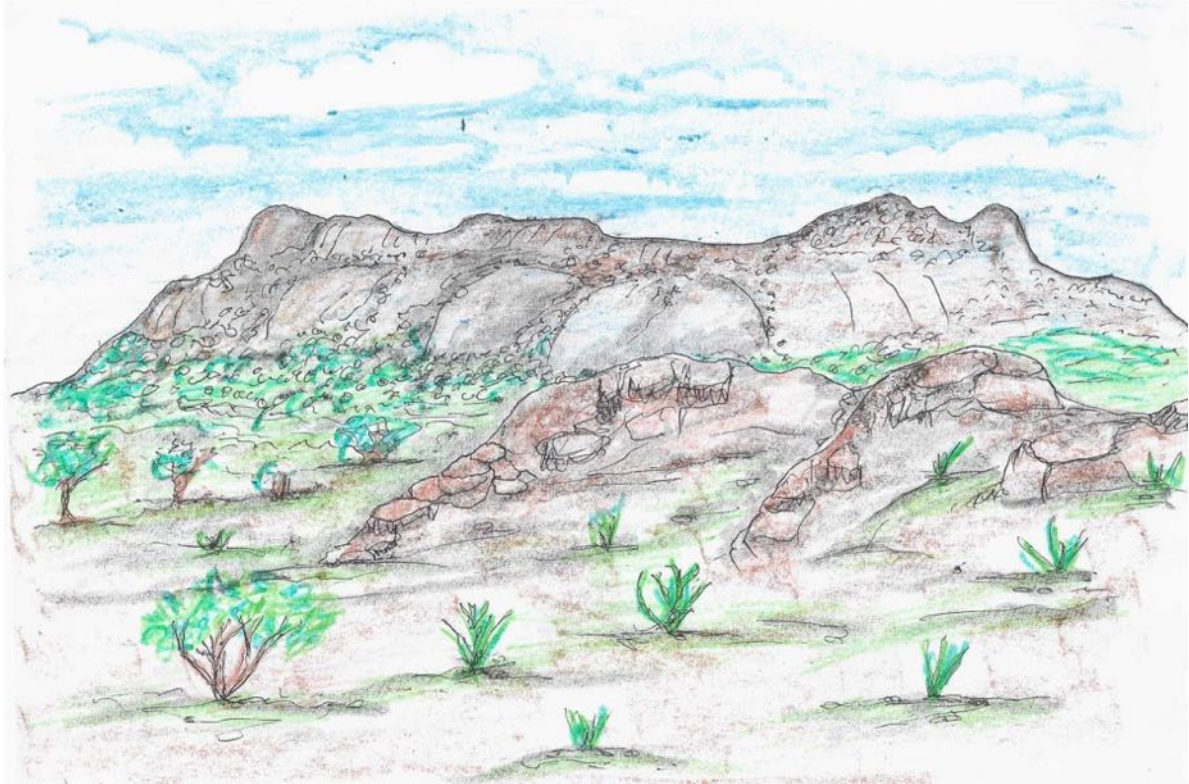


Figure 6.1. The !Oeṡgâ/Erongo mountains to which the Swartbooi travelled after living at Salem. © Clarence Geingob

Previously, Swartbooi hunters had explored !Am-eib to the north of Salem (Fig. 6.1). Missionary Böhm also explored the area in 1865, looking for an alternative place to settle.⁷¹ On the south side of the mountains they found “a strong flowing spring that had turned the whole area into a swamp” (Fig. 6.2).⁷² It was thought that this would be a good alternative place to plant a garden, leading to the Swartbooi’s relocation to !Am-eib in the mountains known by Damara/!Nūkhoen as !Oeṡgâ (see Fig. 6.14), and by ovaHerero as Erongo. In the mid-1800s, both Francis Galton⁷³ and James Chapman⁷⁴ confirmed the presence of Damara/!Nūkhoen in the “Bokberg” (goat mountain,⁷⁵ being the Erongo/!Oeṡgâ). The Swartboois moved here with missionary Böhm, and a Rhenish mission was consolidated at their new home.



Figure 6.2 !Am-eib, now a freehold hunting lodge. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 28.3.2023.

The journey to !Am-eib was difficult. It lasted six days: there was often no sign of a path and an icy wind meant it was difficult to stay warm (Fig. 6.3).⁷⁶



Figure 6.3 Journeyming in the cold to !Am-eib. © Clarence Geingob

Missionary Böhm, travelling with guides, cattle, goats and two ox-carts, met an advance party of the 'Rehobothers', as the Swartbooi from Rehoboth were sometimes referred to (Fig. 6.4):

[t]here were women and children wrapped in skins riding on oxen, while on other oxen hung pots, bowls, dried meat and probably young calves.⁷⁷

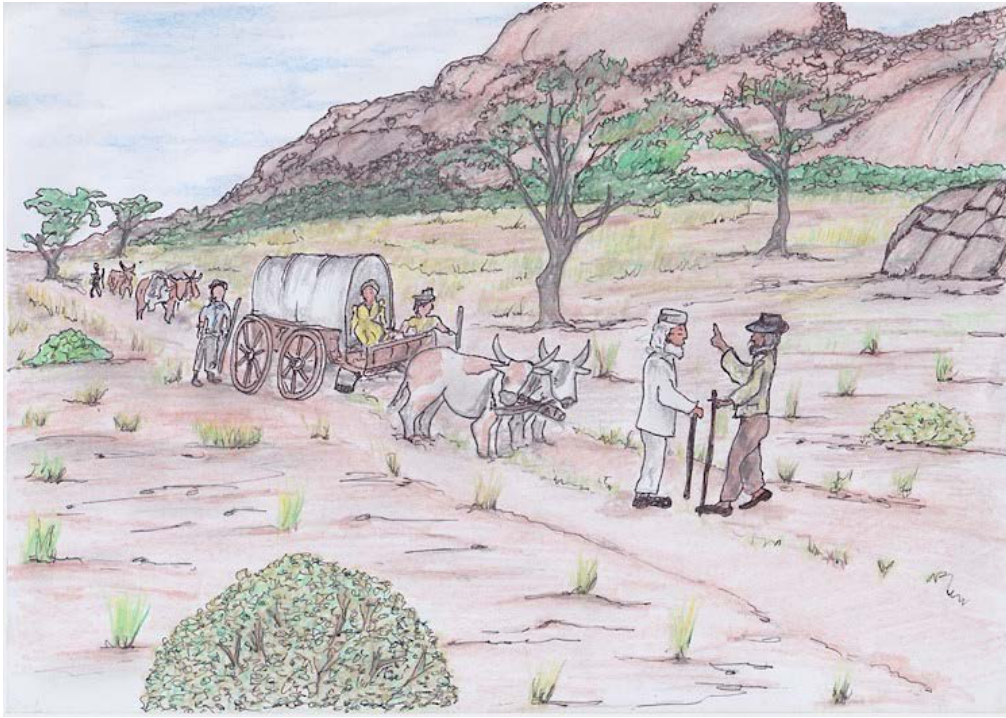


Figure 6.4 Missionary Böhm, travelling towards !Am-eib. © Clarence Geingob

Missionary Böhm arrived at !Am-eib on 15 July 1867 with his wife and children (Fig. 6.5).⁷⁸



Figure 6.5 Missionary Böhm settles at !Am-eib with his wife and children, and a Nama servant. © Clarence Geingob

Damara/#Nūkhoen had been living in this area for a long time, herding goats and hunting and gathering food from the area. Some Swartbooi were already there. Others had previously fled to the mountains for fear of ovaHerero in the area.⁷⁹ When they arrived at !Am-eib it lived up to its name – “the green place”:

[t]he spring flowed, the pasture stood tall. A lot of water had accumulated in the mountains. Many of the small, nameless streams carried water. And there must have been a lot of game on and in the Erongo at that time, with large herds of springbok and kudu. But also rhinoceroses, leopard, lions, cheetahs and hyenas [...]⁸⁰

Indeed, the many rock art drawings in the !Oe-†gâ/Erongo mountains tell of a long history of people dwelling here alongside many different kinds of animals, such as elephant and ostrich (Fig. 6.6).



Figure 6.6 Rock art images from Big Elephant Shelter, now known as Phillips Cave, at !Am-eib. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, 28.3.2023.

The Swartbooi lived at !Am-eib in their reed-mat houses, built at the foot-hills of the !Oe†gâ/Erongo mountains (Fig. 6.7). As missionary Böhm writes:

[t]he werft [village] is only a short distance away from the first rising rock faces of the Erongo. From the werft towards the mountains, the ground rises gently [...]⁸¹

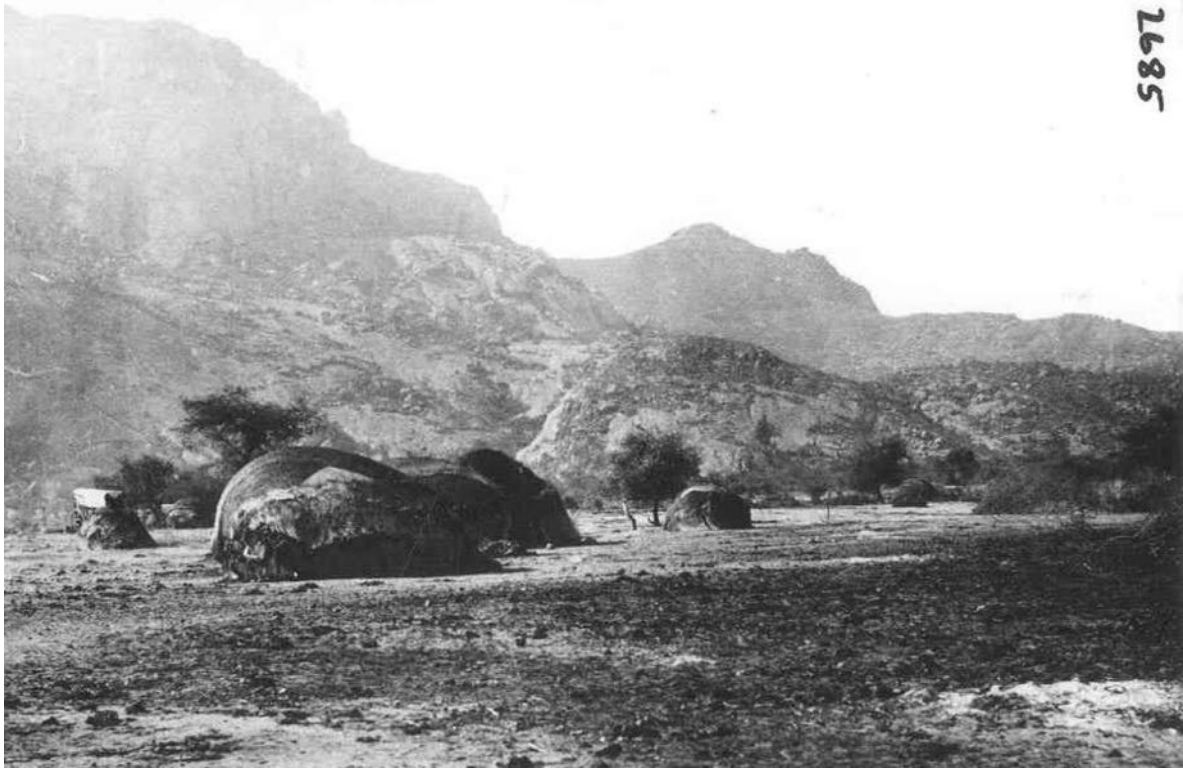


Figure 6.7 'Ameib at the Bokberg, Erongo' in 1876. Source: photograph 2685 from Special Commissioner William Coates Palgrave expedition, © National Archives of Namibia, used with permission.

This is what this view looks like today (Fig. 6.8).



Figure 6.8 Where the Swartbooi/IKhaugôan used to live at !Am-eib. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 29.3.2023.

A wagon-builder called Tamm who was “a loyal companion and reliable helper of Böhm”, had arrived at !Am-eib beforehand and began building a mission house with the help of two Damara/#Nūkhoe workers (Fig. 6.9).⁸²

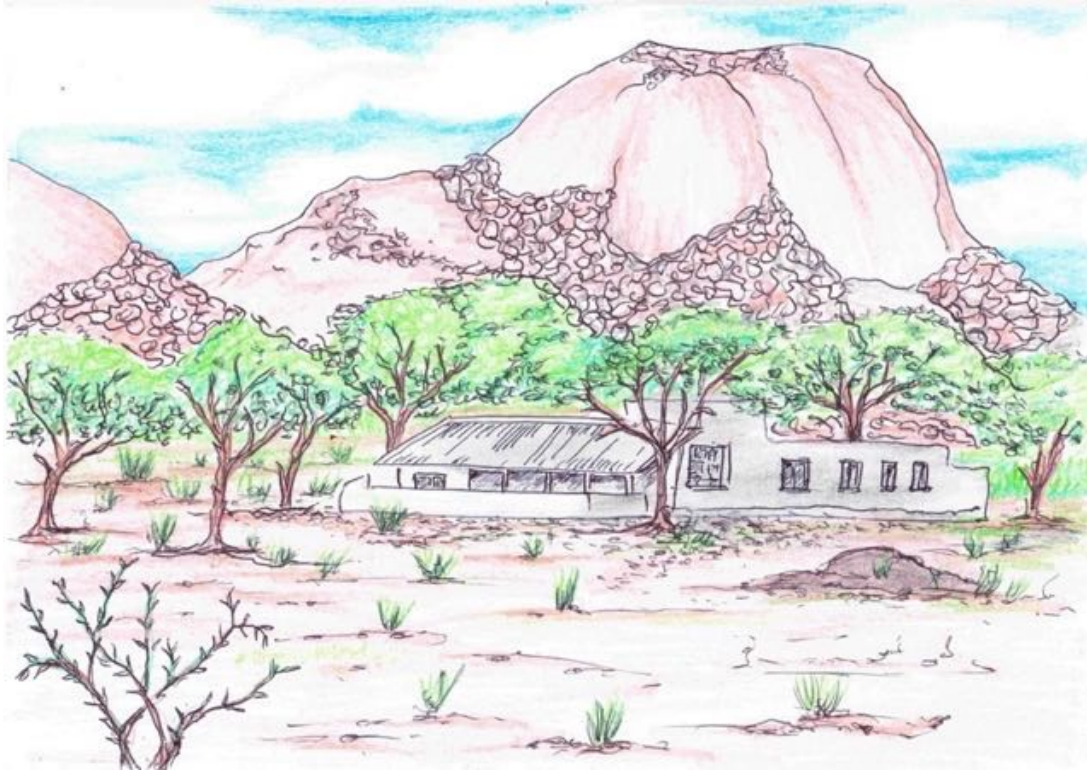


Figure 6.9 The mission house at !Am-eib built with the assistance of various workers. © Clarence Geingob

Other brick houses were also built, especially by young people from the community who made bricks, felled trees, and broke stones for the mission buildings.⁸³ The school was attended by 100-130 children, sometimes more, many of whom had to sit on the floor as there are only a few desks and benches (Fig. 6.10).⁸⁴ Three church meetings were held on Sundays.



Figure 6.10 The school at !Am-eib in the 1860s and 1870s. © Clarence Geingob

Unfortunately, however, the planting of crops was not very successful. In 1868, missionary Böhm also writes of cattle at a cattle-post being stolen by ovaHerero, and sheep being stolen by Nama.⁸⁵ Hyenas and leopards were a problem as well: they attacked the calves and went into people's huts at night to pull off their animal skin blankets.⁸⁶ In 1869 and 1870 drought caused people to disperse into the wider landscape. Some Swartbooi moved to !Gao-gob/Springbockfontein in the western Erongo/!Oe†gâ mountains and to Okombahe/!Â†gommes.⁸⁷ 'Bergdama'/'#Nūkhoen "living in the Erongo mountains" sent a delegation to Reverend Hahn at Otjimbingwe complaining that "the Herero intended making them their serfs and treating them as 'baboons'", thus requesting protection from Hahn.⁸⁸ Hahn appeals to Chief Willem Zeraua of Omaruru, who had granted 'Bergdama'/'#Nūkhoen Okombahe (although they had been living there and near the Brandberg/Dâures for some time), that they should be able to "live there in freedom and unmolested by the Herero": with around 300 'Bergdama'/'#Nūkhoen moving to Okombahe and with Daniel Cloete ministering to them and teaching them to "make gardens and cultivate the ground".⁸⁹

Of around 1,000 Swartbooi who had moved to !Am-eib, only 150 remained at the mission.⁹⁰ Only around 12 children remained in the school by the end of 1869.⁹¹ In 1870, “Bergdama” (#Nūkhoen) living in the mountains came down and stole cattle and lambs.⁹² Hyenas and lions also entered the settlement in search of food.⁹³ By 1873 there were 80-100 children in the school at !Am-eib, but the school’s herd numbered only 30 head of small cattle.⁹⁴

In 1876-1877 !Am-eib was visited by William Coates Palgrave, Special Commissioner to ‘Damaraland’ and ‘Great Namaqualand’ for the British Cape Colony. He makes reference to “competing claims for Kaoko by Swartbooi and Herero leaders in central Namibia”, although at this point it appears that ovaHerero were focused on the central parts of the territory, with Kaoko described as “reserve” land for potential settlers (Fig. 6.11).⁹⁵ At this time, Palgrave estimated that “Herero or Cattle Damaras” are 85,000; “Houquain or Berg Damaras” (#Nūkhoen) 30,000; “Bushmen” 3,000; “Namaquas” 1,500; “Bastards” (Basters) 1,500; “Europeans and other Whites (not including Boers)” 150; and “Swartbooi/‘Khau-goas [!Khau|gôan] or Young Red Nation” under Abraham Zwartbooi, defined as “pure Namaquas”, estimated at 1,000.⁹⁶

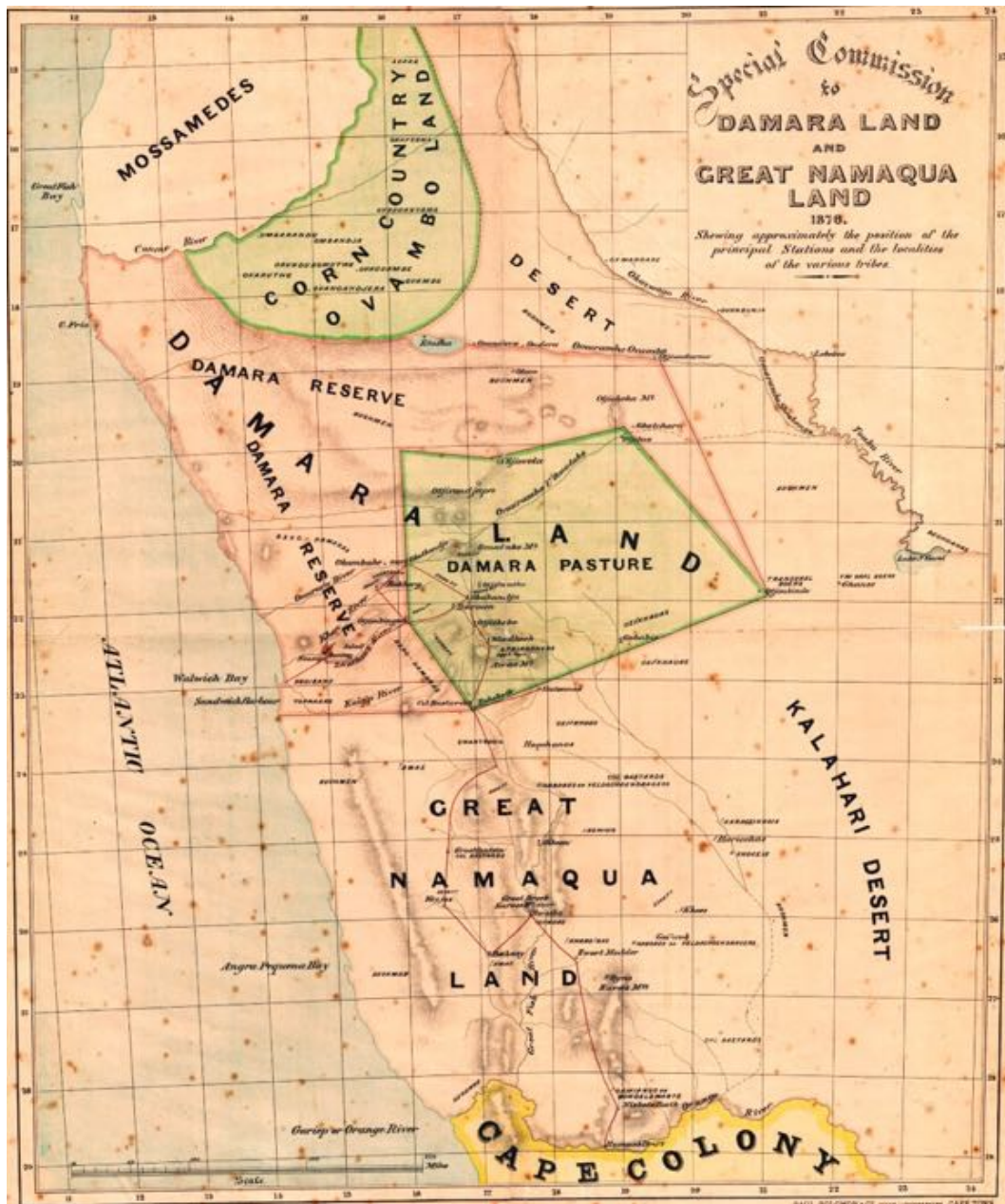


Figure 6.11 Map from W.C. Palgrave's Commission 'to report on the people and states of Damaraland and Namaqualand and inform decision on merging Government of Cape of Good Hope with states of South West Africa', 12.12.1876. Source: Cape Archives – Palgrave Papers. Public domain image: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/24/1876_-_map_from_Palgrave_Commission_papers.png, 4.11.2025.

At !Am-eib Palgrave met Swartbooi leaders Willem and his son Abraham (!Ábebe !Huisemab), the schoolmaster Timotheus Swartbooi, missionary Johannes Böhm with Saul Shepherd, and a number of Willem Swartbooi's followers (Fig. 6.12 and 6.13).



Figure 6.12 Palgrave meets Swartbooi leader Willem Swartbooi. © Clarence Geingob
On right-side: above, 'William Coates Palgrave'; below, 'Willem Swartbooi, servant of James Alexander', in 1876. Source: photographs 2765 and 0023 from Special Commissioner William Coates Palgrave expedition, © National Archives of Namibia, used with permission.



Figure 6.13. 'Chief William [Willem] Zwartbooi [seated centre right] with some of his followers, Bokberg Namaquas (Namas)' in 1876. Source: photograph 2775 from Special Commissioner William Coates Palgrave expedition, © National Archives of Namibia, used with permission.

Abraham Swartbooi reportedly expressed his pleasure at Palgrave's visit, saying:

I am very glad the Governor has sent a Commissioner into the country, though I can have little to say. I am living in a part of the country, which is not sufficient to support my people. [...] I should like to have a British magistrate.⁹⁷



Figure 6.14 Confirming the Damara/#Nūkhoe name for the Erongo mountains, !Oeǃgâb Primary School, is positioned to the west of the mountains. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 29.3.2023.

Endnotes

- ⁷¹ Schreckenbach (2009: 12)
⁷² Moritz (1998: 19–20, and references therein)
⁷³ Galton (1890[1853]: 30–31, 34)
⁷⁴ Chapman (1971[1868]: 216) in Wadley (1979: 8)
⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 14.
⁷⁶ Moritz (1998: 20–21, and references therein)
⁷⁷ Moritz (1998: 20–21, and references therein)
⁷⁸ Schreckenbach (2009: 6)
⁷⁹ Moritz (1998: 23–25, and references therein)
⁸⁰ Schreckenbach (2009: 12–13)
⁸¹ Moritz (1998: 24, and references therein)
⁸² Moritz (1998: 22)
⁸³ Schreckenbach (2009: 15)
⁸⁴ Moritz (1998: 23–25, and references therein)
⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 25
⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
⁸⁷ Köhler (1959: 20, 32)
⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 32
⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 32–33
⁹⁰ Moritz (1998: 25, 27)
⁹¹ Schreckenbach (2009: 19)
⁹² *Ibid.*
⁹³ *Ibid.*
⁹⁴ Moritz (1998: 25)
⁹⁵ Palgrave in Stals (1991: 49)
⁹⁶ Palgrave (1969[1877]: 50–51, 83, 94)
⁹⁷ Moritz (1998: 26, and references therein)

7. Opportunities in Sesfontein and Fransfontein

Meanwhile, conflict in the Walvis Bay/!Gomen-!gams area prompted Topnaar/!Aonin families there to move northwards. For example, in 1868 a Jacobus Boois attacked Topnaar settlements on the lower !Khuseb and in the Walvis Bay area: Danish trader Iverson was killed, after which all white settlers left the Bay area for some time.⁹⁸ These events appear to have led some of the Topnaar, who were known as !Gomen|gôan – people of Walvis Bay – to retreat to Kaokoveld under the |Uixamab lineage leadership (Fig. 7.1).⁹⁹

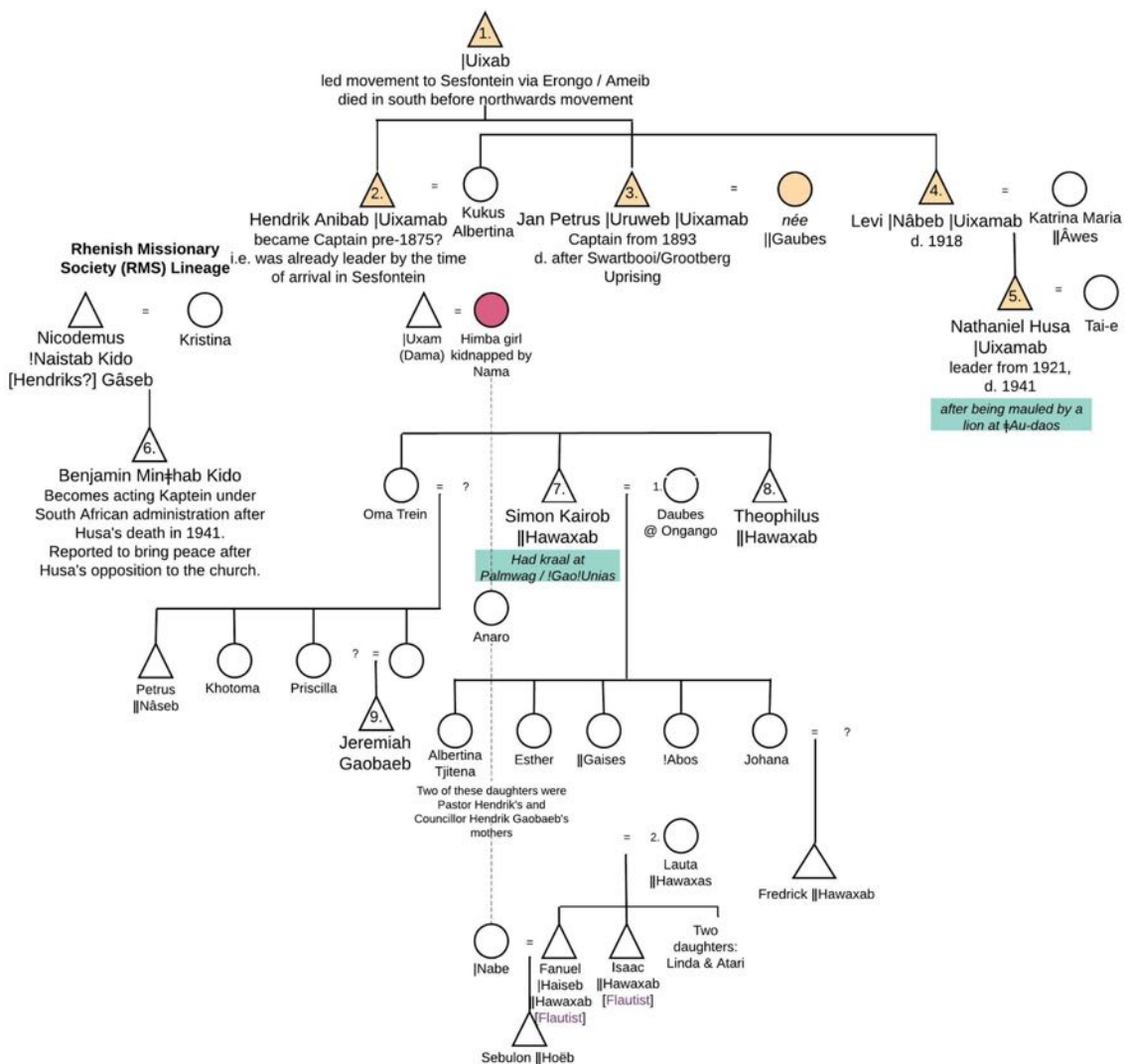


Figure 7.1 Genealogy of Sesfontein Nama leadership since the late 1800s, involving |Uixamab and !Gaubes lineages, i.e. !Gomen |gôan from Walvis Bay/!Gomen-!gams.

Key: yellow shading = self-identification as !Gomen, i.e. 'Topnaar Nama' from !Gomen-!gams, Walvis Bay; Red shading = self-identification as Himba; Green shading = identified and mapped places

The !Gomen|gôan moved northwards and settled in the Hoanib Valley to become the so-called “Sesfontein Topnaar”.¹⁰⁰ although as affirmed in Chapter 3 it seems they were familiar with this area through the north-south mobilities they had taken part in. Others remained “in the dunes around Walvis Bay and in the bed of the Kuiseb river at various places”.¹⁰¹ Those moving north eventually settled at Sesfontein under |Uixab’s son, Hendrik Anibab |Uixamab, with his brother Jan Petrus |Uruweb |Uixamab becoming the !Gomen Topnaar captain in Sesfontein from 1893, after their father |Uixab died in the south before they moved north (Figure 7.1).¹⁰²

|Uixamab’s arrival in Sesfontein attracted and brought in “people from the surrounding areas, as the emerging settlement offered new economic opportunities”.¹⁰³ Agricultural production intensified, new employment opportunities opened in herding, and young men “were enrolled into commandos, with which they engaged in raids and hunting trips and supervised herds”.¹⁰⁴ This integration was also combined with territorial expansion through “intermarriage with participation in the stock economy through loans and the inheritance of cattle”, as well as the raiding of ovaHerero cattle in the Kaokoveld where Nama were known as “ovaKuenta”.¹⁰⁵

In April 1877 a missionary conference was held at !Am-eib at which the Topnaar chief Jan |Uixamab of Sesfontein requested a missionary. This request prompted missionary Böhm himself to make an expedition to Sesfontein from !Am-eib as a friend of Petrus Swartbooi, who was already familiar to the people of Sesfontein.¹⁰⁶

Like at Salem, the water at !Am-eib became scarce, pushing the Swartbooi to move northwards. Even though in 1864 the Swartbooi had supported ovaHerero fighters against Jan Jonker Afrikaner, they were still concerned about resistance to their move northwards by ovaHerero. Damara/!Nūkhoe families living at !Oe†gâ also moved northwards:¹⁰⁷ some settled as far north as Puros on the Hoaruseb River.¹⁰⁸ Here they joined other !Nūkhoe families in the area who were known as !Narenin for their use of *!nara* – the near-endemic melon plant *Acanthosicyos horridus* that grows in sand dunes near the mouths of several of the rivers in north-west Namibia (Fig. 7.2).¹⁰⁹

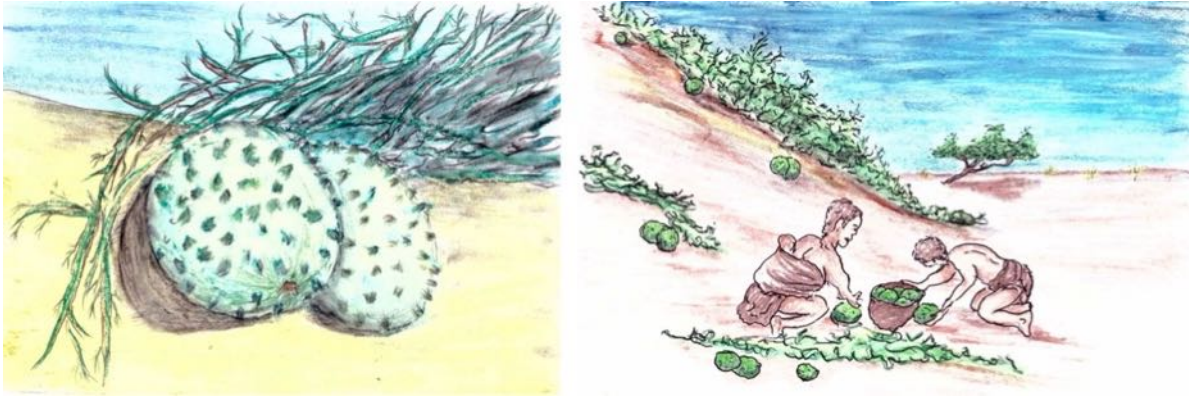


Figure 7.2 !Narenin and !Ubusen harvesting !Nara (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) in the Northern Namib. © Clarence Geingob

!Nara-harvesting Khoekhoegowab-speaking !Ubusen were also present throughout the Northern Namib:¹¹⁰ as shown on the German colonial map below from 1893 where their name north of the Hoanib River and close to the coast is written as ‘Hubun’ (Fig. 7.3).



Figure 7.3 Detail from *Deutscher Kolonial Atlas* of 1893. Source: Sam Cohen Library, Swakopmund, out of copyright.

Some Swartbooi families settled first at Anixab on the !Ugâb River. Topnaar under Jan !Uixamab had also moved here, especially for hunting in the wider area (Fig. 7.4).¹¹¹



Figure 7.4 !Gomen Topnaar with Jan |Uixamab, hunting in the Anixab area in the vicinity of the !U#gâb River. © Clarence Geingob

Others remained for the time-being at !Am-eib, whilst some reportedly settled as far north as southern Angola.¹¹² By 1880 the water at !Am-eib had run out. In this “extraordinary drought” Böhm moved with his family to Otjimbingwe/Âtsas, eventually becoming a pastor at Scheppmansdorf/Rooibank/|Awa-!haos on the !Khuseb River, and then in Walvis Bay.¹¹³

The Swartbooi settled at various water points through the landscape. Petrus Swartbooi, the brother of Abraham, moved east with many of the group to the area of Omaruru,¹¹⁴ but was told by Manasse Tjiseseta – the ovaHerero chief there – to move south to Karibib.¹¹⁵ Manasse Tjiseseta had relocated from Kaoko in north-west Namibia to Omaruru in central Namibia in the second-half of the 19th century, reportedly following drought in the Otjimbingwe area.¹¹⁶

Hunger and tensions ran high. Towards the end of October 1880, Swartboois raided an ovaHerero cattle-post east of Otjimbingwe. Grain from the Swakop riverbed was stolen.¹¹⁷ OvaHerero also destroyed Swartbooi werfts at Karibib. Abraham Swartbooi’s wife and other Swartbooi women fell in these attacks.¹¹⁸ Now unsafe, the Swartboois retreated into the mountains near Kubas-Ubib and the hidden away Etusis waterhole whose abundant water could be collected (Fig. 7.5).

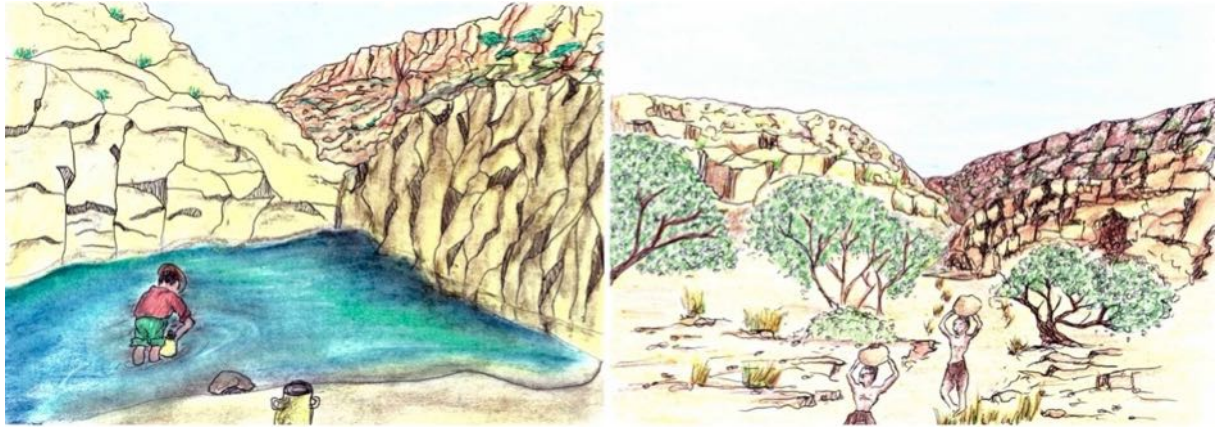


Figure 7.5 The abundant water at Etusis waterhole, now the site of a luxury lodge. © Clarence Geingob

At the same time, other Nama also came from the south to fight the ovaHerero, with some Swartbooi joining this alliance.¹¹⁹ On meeting Cape Colony Special Commissioner W.C. Palgrave in 1880 the ovaHerero leader Kamaherero asserted a claim to Kaoko as part of ‘Hereroland’ in central Namibia, which at this time was known as ‘Damaraland’ (Fig. 7.6).¹²⁰



Figure 7.6 ‘Chief Kamaherero (Maharero) and His Bodyguard’ in 1876. Source: photograph 2685 from Special Commissioner William Coates Palgrave expedition, © National Archives of Namibia, used with permission.

Tensions between Nama and Herero escalated into the so-called 10 years’ war of 1880-1890.¹²¹ Abraham Swartbooi is reported to have called to the Topnaar/#Aonin to draw with them in fighting ovaHerero.¹²² In 1881, Swartbooi raided cattle of white settlers at

Otjimbingwe/Âtsas, who were also present at !Hei-!gamxab and !Gana-!komtes (Goanikontes) on the Swakop River, and at Zwartbank on the !Khuseb.¹²³ Impoverished as they were, the Swartbooi, Topnaar and Jan Jonker reportedly negotiated for peace at the mission station of Rooibank/!Awa-!haos on the !Khuseb River.¹²⁴

Oral traditions in Fransfontein report that Swartbooi Nama (!Khau!gôan) arrived in the area of Otjitambi and Fransfontein around 1880,¹²⁵ settling at the strong springs initially found by the dog of a Frans Swartbooi (Fig. 7.7 and 7.8).¹²⁶ Reportedly, the spring was known to Damara/#Nūkhoen as *Anipira a he*, “the place where the birds drink”.¹²⁷



Figure 7.7 The clear springs of Fransfontein surrounded by *Ficus sycomorus* (!nomas). © Clarence Geingob



Figure 7.8 Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) encountered on the way to Fransfontein. © Clarence Geingob

Petrus Swartbooi settled at Otjitambi on the upper !Huab river.¹²⁸ From here they raided livestock from Owambo in the north and ovaHerero in the south.¹²⁹ In 1883 Otjitambi was occupied by !Gomen and Swartbooi families under Jan |Uixamab's leadership.¹³⁰ The use of livestock-posts in the broader landscape¹³¹ meant that in the 1880s Jan |Uixamab of the Sesfontein Topnaar was said "to have controlled cattle posts up to the Kunene River",¹³² often intimidating ovaHerero herders and their families in the area.

At the same time, however, otjiHerero-speakers were not only passive victims. For example, Mureti of north-east Kaokoveld, who moved to Omaruru in 1861,¹³³ outwitted the raiders in various ways; whilst others formed alliances with Nama. Kakurukouje/Kasupi, "a rich herder" in the south-west of the Herero-settled area and thus geographically closer to the !Gomen ('Topnaar') leadership of Sesfontein, thus "took part in their raids and shared the loot".¹³⁴ He was also "involved in herding cattle belonging to Jan |Uixamab".¹³⁵ This ovaTjimba leader of Ombepera reportedly negotiated "the terms of rule and control in northern Kaoko with the Oorlam [Nama] leadership".¹³⁶

By the 1880s and into the 1890s the population of Sesfontein had expanded to close to 500 including dependents, a pattern mirrored in Warmquelle (|Aexa|aus) east of Sesfontein and in Otjitambi. Thriving garden economies were established in Sesfontein and Fransfontein, complementing Nama herd concentrations in these areas (Fig. 7.9).¹³⁷



Figure 7.9. Newly established gardens in around the 1880s in Sesfontein/!Nani|aus. © Clarence Geingob

Endnotes

- ⁹⁸ Köhler (1969: 111)
- ⁹⁹ Hoernlé (1985[1925]: 47)
- ¹⁰⁰ Köhler (1969: 101) in Dentlinger (1977: 6), Fuller (1993: 67–68), Rizzo (2012: 45–46)
- ¹⁰¹ Hoernlé (1985[1925]: 47), Vigne (1994: 7)
- ¹⁰² van Warmelo (1962[1951]: 41)
- ¹⁰³ Rizzo (2012: 32)
- ¹⁰⁴ Palgrave (1969[1877]), Rizzo (2012: 32, and references therein)
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 32–33
- ¹⁰⁶ Moritz (1998: 26, and references therein). Note that there are multiple names for Sesfontein – meaning ‘six fountains’ – even though in fact there are more than six large springs in this area. The names include !Nani|aus (‘six springs’) which is the most commonly used name for Khoekhoegowab-speakers in the area. An older name is †Gabia†gao meaning ‘confused heart’, and referring to the confusion arising when seeing the multiple springs of the area. The otjiHerero name is Ohamuheke, and the old German name was Zeßfontein.
- ¹⁰⁷ Krenz (1972: 5) in Inskeep (2003, vol. 1: 57)
- ¹⁰⁸ For more information, see the film *Lands That History Forgot: 3rd Journey – Julia Tauros Returns to her Birthplace, Puros on the Hoaruseb River*, <https://vimeo.com/948318666>
- ¹⁰⁹ Sullivan & Ganuses (2022, 2024)
- ¹¹⁰ For more information, see the film *Lands That History Forgot: 1st Journey – Skeleton Coast & Hoanib River, Franz |Haen |Hoëb*, <https://vimeo.com/947316591>
- ¹¹¹ Moritz (1998: 31)
- ¹¹² Clarence-Smith (1979: 27) in Rizzo (2012: 40)
- ¹¹³ Schreckenbach (2009: 27, 30)
- ¹¹⁴ Moritz (1998: 27, and references therein)
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 28–29.
- ¹¹⁶ Köhler (1959: 16–17)
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 28.
- ¹¹⁸ Moritz (1998: 28–29, and references therein)
- ¹¹⁹ Riechmann (n.d.: 2)
- ¹²⁰ Rizzo (2012: 65)
- ¹²¹ Lemmer (1957: 36); also Rudner & Rudner (1974[1899]: 199), du Pisani (1986: 16)
- ¹²² Köhler (1969: 111)
- ¹²³ Moritz (1998: 29–30, and references therein)
- ¹²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁵ Schnegg & Pauli (2007: 11)
- ¹²⁶ Discussions with Welhemina Suro Ganuses, 1999; also Schnegg (2007: 250–251)
- ¹²⁷ According to Michael Doeseb, a Damara/!Nūkhoe teacher from Khorixas (Schnegg (2007: 250–251).
- ¹²⁸ Rudner & Rudner (2007: 170), after Esterhuysen (1968: 107)
- ¹²⁹ Riechmann (n.d.: 2), Moritz (1998: 30, and references therein)
- ¹³⁰ Rizzo (2012: 63–64)
- ¹³¹ *Ibid.* pp. 32–33.
- ¹³² *Ibid.* p. 33.
- ¹³³ Stals (1991: 36)
- ¹³⁴ Bollig (1997: 15–16)
- ¹³⁵ Rizzo (2012: 49)
- ¹³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 33.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 32, 60, and references therein.

8. German Colonialism Begins

Already in March 1885, the Swartbooi began to encounter the new German colonists of Deutsch Südwestafrika / German South West Africa. As had taken place earlier at Rehoboth, Cornelius Swartbooi (|Hôa-|arab !Âbemab, married to Elizabeth¹³⁸) at Otjitambi negotiated with German scientist Waldemar Belck regarding a mining concession connected with the Lüderitz brothers.¹³⁹ Belck found Otjitambi occupied by Topnaar/!Gomen and Swartbooi families under Jan |Uixamab's leadership.¹⁴⁰ He conducted anthropometric measurements here (Fig. 8.1), and on behalf of the merchant Adolf Lüderitz entered into negotiations with Cornelius Swartbooi and his Raad who "sold" mining rights to "his area" for £100, with a monthly levy of £5.¹⁴¹ Belck also had form for raiding Nama graves, as he did in December 1884 at !Kharabes on the !Khuseb River, after a murderous attack by ovaHerero on Swartbooi Nama.¹⁴²

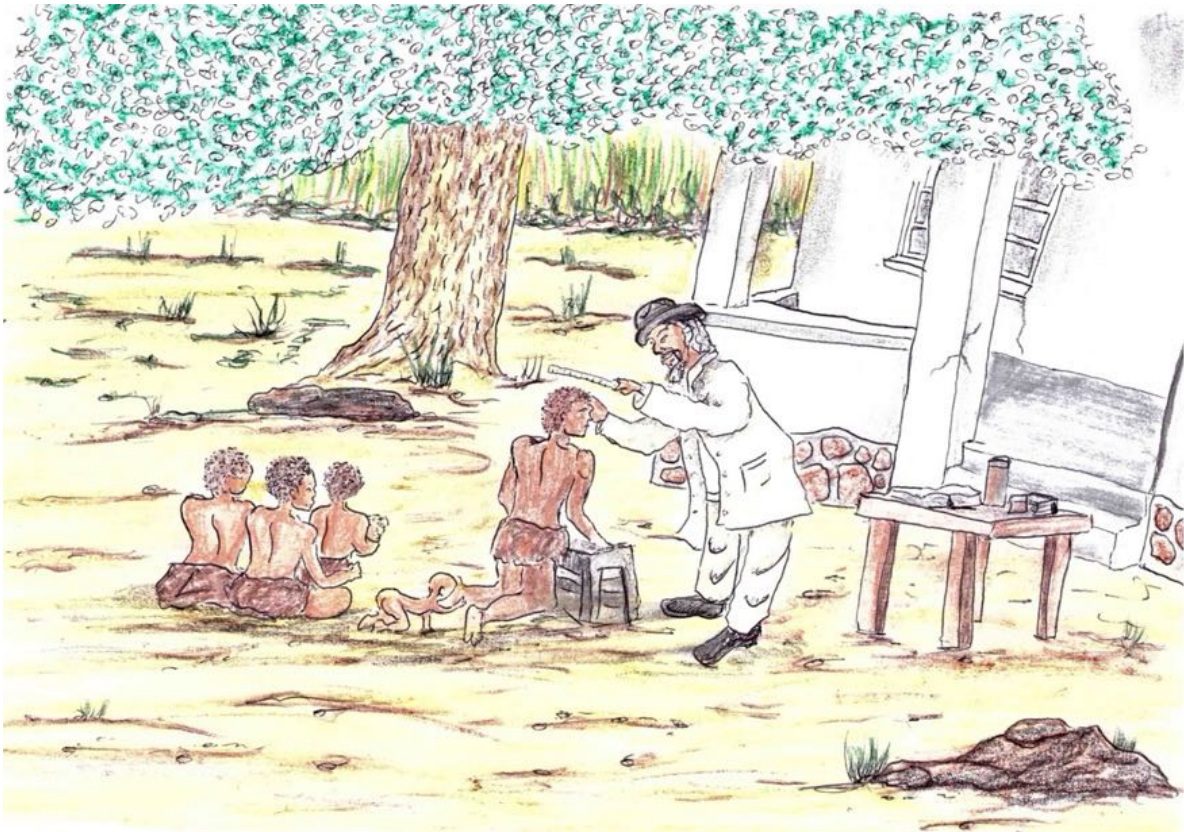


Figure 8.1 German scientist Waldemar Belck carries out anthropometric measurements on Swartbooi at Otjitambi. © Clarence Geingob

Jan |Uixamab negotiated similar terms for mining access in the Kaokoveld. Both captains reserved control over places of residence and pastures.¹⁴³ These mining rights were ultimately acquired by German businessman Adolf Lüderitz.¹⁴⁴ The 'coastal strip' stretched from 22°S

(around the mouth of the Omaruru/!Eseb River, near Henties Bay) northwards to Cape Frio.

The full extent of the area was as follows:

- its western border corresponded with the Atlantic ocean;
- its northern border with the Kunene River eastwards to Swartbooisdrift;
- its southern boundary – pushing up against ovaHerero claims – was the Ugab (!Uḡâb) River eastwards to where it crosses 15° longitude;
- and its eastwards boundary was from this point upwards in “an imaginary line running east of Fransfontein, through Ombombo and Otjitambi, and eventually reaching Swartbooisdrift on the Kunene”.¹⁴⁵

This Swartbooi and !Uixamab “sale” of rights to the area was contested by ovaHerero Captain Manasse Tjiseseta at Omaruru, in a meeting at Okahandja with Dr Göring of the German colonial administration:

[a]fter he had learnt of the sale of the Kaokoveld the previous July, Manasse had put his objections to this to the Kaiser. Although the territory was not being inhabited by the Hereros at that moment, it was [claimed to be] Herero land and neither the Topnaars nor the Swartbooi Hottentots had any right to sell it. Dr. Göring tried to settle the matter by reprimanding Cornelius Swartbooi. He pointed out to the Swartbooi captain that he and his tribe had only settled at Otjitambi in the Kaokoveld in 1882 and therefore did not own the territory [although various earlier authors note previous Nama presence in the north-west area, see **Chapter 3**¹⁴⁶]. It would have been much better if they had first obtained the permission of the Hereros at Omaruru before they had sold the territory. In the same breath Dr. Göring strongly advised Cornelius Swartbooi to place himself under German protection.¹⁴⁷

By 1886 the expanding population of Fransfontein was estimated by Rhenish missionary Riechmann to be around 800 people.¹⁴⁸

From around 1890 Trekboer settlers in southern Angola clashed with Petrus Swartbooi, who led cattle-raids into this area from Sesfontein,¹⁴⁹ crossing the Kunene River at what became known as Swartbooisdrift.

In 1893, rights held by the German Colonial Society were transferred, eventually becoming held by the Kaoko Land and Mining Company (*Kaoko Land und Minen-*

Gesellschaft), a London-based company represented by surveyor Georg Hartmann in strategic alliance with the German colonial governor Leutwein.¹⁵⁰ Its boundaries became represented as the blue area on the map below (Fig. 8.2).

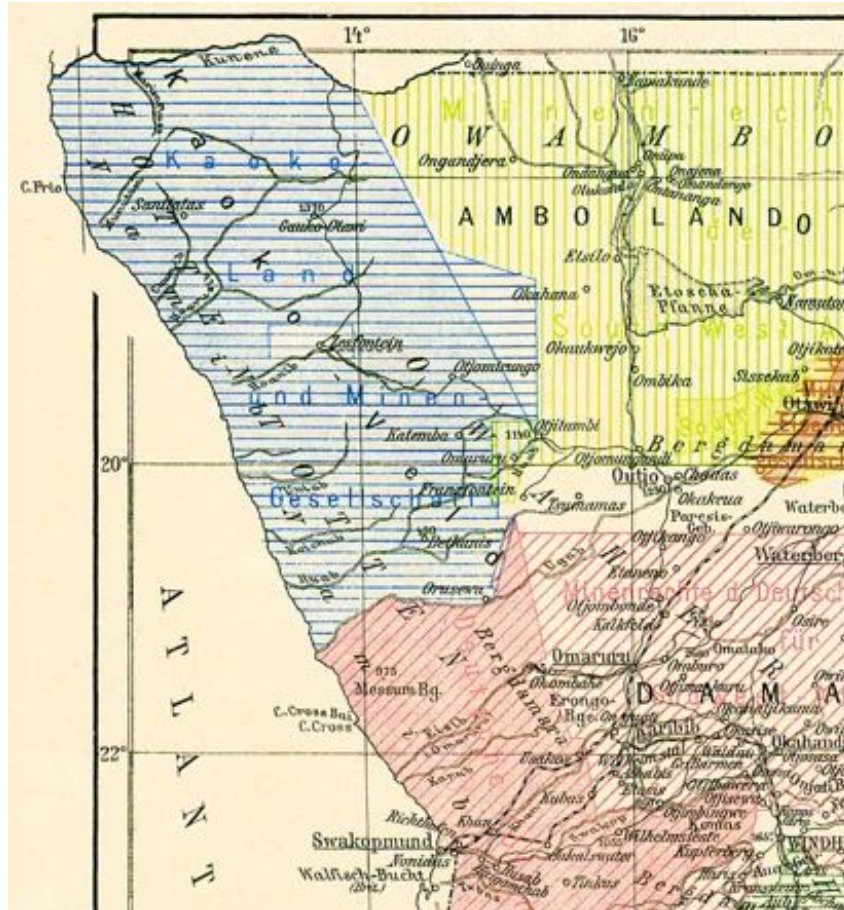


Figure 8.2 'Karte des Landesbesitzes und der Minengerechsamte in Deutsch-Südwestafrika' (Map of Land Ownership and Mining Rights in German South-West Africa), by Max Moisel and Paul Sprigade 1914, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Source: Public Domain image, via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karte_des_Landesbesitzes_und_der_Minengerechsamte_in_Deutsch-S%C3%BCdwestafrika.jpg

Around this time, large Portuguese hunting parties were also crossing the Kunene River into the Kaokoveld.¹⁵¹ Swedish hunter and trader Axel Eriksson had a hunting camp near the Kunene River, employing Nama and Griqua hunters in the area (Fig. 8.3).¹⁵²

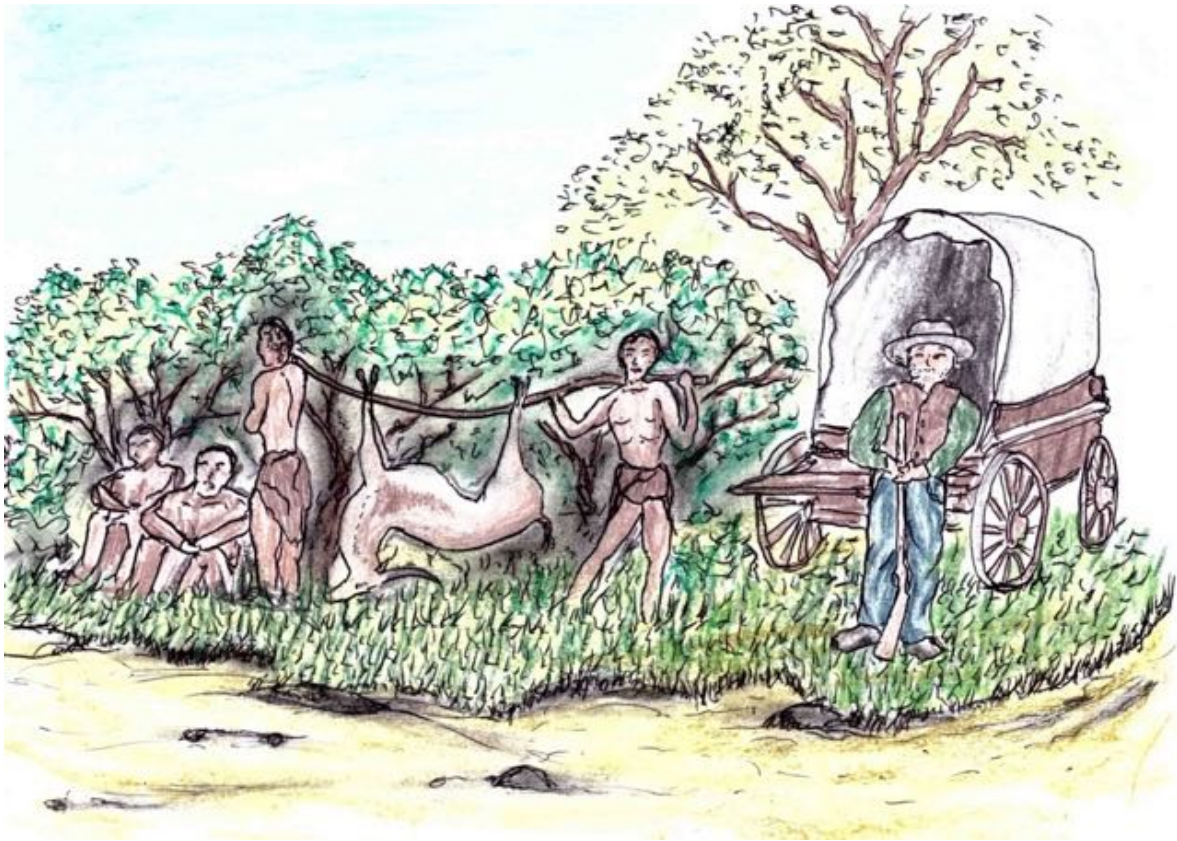


Figure 8.3 Swedish hunter and trader Axel Eriksson's hunting camp near the Kunene River. © Clarence Geingob

Following a complex series of negotiations between Germany and Britain, in 1884 Germany annexed the territory, with some exceptions such as the Walvis Bay enclave claimed in 1878 by Britain.¹⁵³ This new colonial state impetus had significant implications for land and society in north-west Namibia. Land, natural resources, and people became incorporated into commercial enterprises linked with increasingly militarised state protection.

The first German *Schutztruppe* Protection troops of the German Colonial Company for South West Africa arrived in the late 1880s and were reinforced in subsequent years (Fig. 8.4).¹⁵⁴ Many *Schutztruppe* personnel derived from distinguished military families and Prussian nobility, and were later incorporated into the colony's 'land police' (*Landespolizei*).¹⁵⁵



Figure 8.4 Schutztruppe (Protection Forces) arrive in Namibia from the late 1880s onwards. Public Domain Image: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-R24738_Deutsch-S%C3%BCdwestafrika_Herero-Aufstand.jpg

In 1891 a mission station was established in Fransfontein by missionary Riechmann of the Rhenish Mission Society, joined by the evangelist Traugott Richter from Rehoboth (Fig. 8.5).

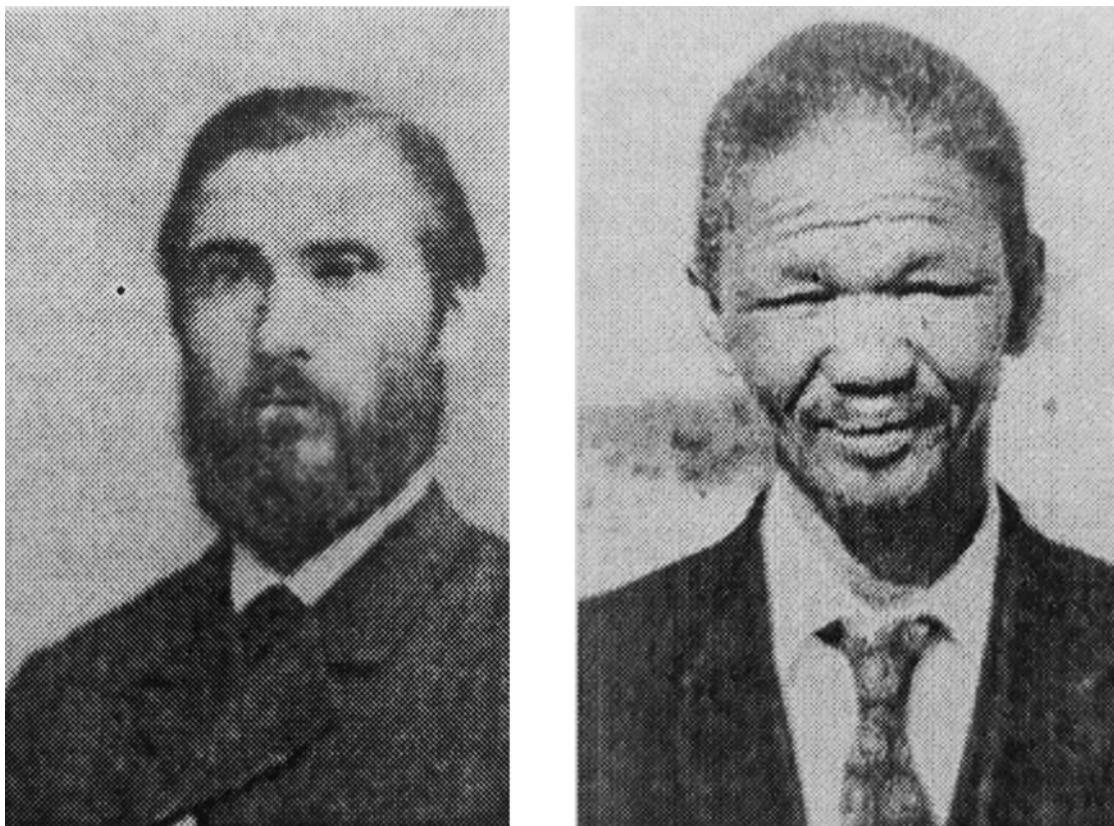


Figure 8.5 [L] 'Missionary Heinrich Riechmann, who worked at Franzfontein from 1891-1904'; [R] 'Evangelist Traugott Richter, Fransfontein'. Source: scans from Moritz (1998: 31, 40), used with permission.

Missionary Riechmann tells of people he calls ‘Bergdamara’ (ǀNūkhoen) living in the larger area around Fransfontein: they “were resettled to Tsumamas, a fountain about 25kms east of Fransfontein [...] [with] good soils for gardening and plenty of water”.¹⁵⁶ Missionary Kremer of Tsumamas writes in 1893 that:

[m]y arrival at Franzfontein had spread like wildfire among the Bergdamra living from Brandberg to Zesfontein. This gave rise to such a movement among these people, that they soon came individually or in smaller groups to see and welcome their new teacher. They came from all directions, some had travelled 8-14 days. It was always a joy for us when we were told that there were Bergdamara standing outside to greet them. [...] All the people also promised to move as soon as possible after the rainy season to the place designated by the Zwartbooische.¹⁵⁷

The mid-1890s saw the progressive movement of ‘Bergdamara’ from the mission station at Tsumamas to ǀGaub in the north-east (Fig. 8.6).¹⁵⁸ It is reported that:

the Damaras were around that time persecuted by everyone. The Nama and the Bushmen were stealing from them and the Hereros are said to have simply beaten them to death. In the whole area from the Orange to the Kunene they were, as it were, outlawed. A large number of them had fled to the Otavibergland and were hiding there.

The missionaries of the Rhenish Mission sought [a place] for these persecuted people, where they could settle. So the farm Gaub was established as a reservation for them. With Missionary Kremer, some Namas also came to Gaub.¹⁵⁹

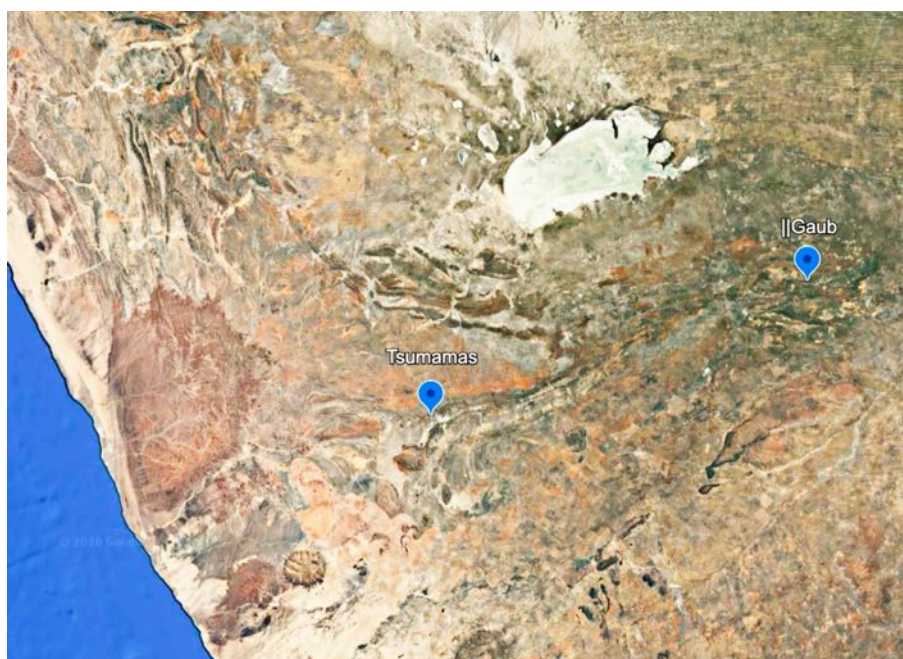


Figure 8.6 ‘Bergdamara’ are moved from Tsumamas near Fransfontein to ǀGaub in the north-east.

In January 1893, a “final clash” between Trekboers and Swartboois in southern Angola took place, in which the Trekboers attacked Petrus Swartbooi’s kraal near Kunene River, taking 500 cattle and four horses (Fig. 8.7).¹⁶⁰ The Swartbooi were “soundly defeated and did not venture to cross the Kunene again”: 37 unnamed Nama were killed, as were the Trekboers Z. Bronkhurst and H. Robbertse, with W. Venter badly wounded.¹⁶¹



Figure 8.7 In 1893, Trekboers attack Swartbooi at Swartbooisdrift, killing 37 individuals and taking 500 cattle and four horses. © Clarence Geingob

Also in 1893, it is reported that around 200 ‘Bergdama’ (ǀNūkhoen), led by their leader !Nauriseb, arrived at Okombahe/ǀĀǀgommes from Sesfontein. They complained that |Uixamab’s people made war on them, and asked the people of Okombahe to take them in.¹⁶² Oral history tells of how !Nauriseb was established at the springs at Sesfontein which they called ǀGabiaǀgao – meaning ‘confused heart’, after seeing the many full springs of water there.¹⁶³ After !Nauriseb and his people had settled at Sesfontein, Nama people reportedly arrived from the south. They caused the !Nauriseb and |Uxam families to move to ǀGuru-daos (meaning rocks/flints that you can make fire with – perhaps near the mountain ǀGuru-tsaub/Urubao); and south of ǀNaueb mountain – the mountain to the south of ǀOs pass –

leading eastwards out of Sesfontein towards Warmquelle/Aexa|aus (Fig. 8.8). They then moved further south:

[w]ith time friction arose between the Topnaar at Gowareb [Kowareb] and the Namidaman at Sesfontein. Because the Topnaar had guns, they were the likely victors over the Namidaman who did not. To avoid being massacred, the Namidaman of Sesfontein fled southwards to Ani#gab, just north of the Brandberg Mountain [Dâures]. The Topnaar took control of Sesfontein [...]¹⁶⁴

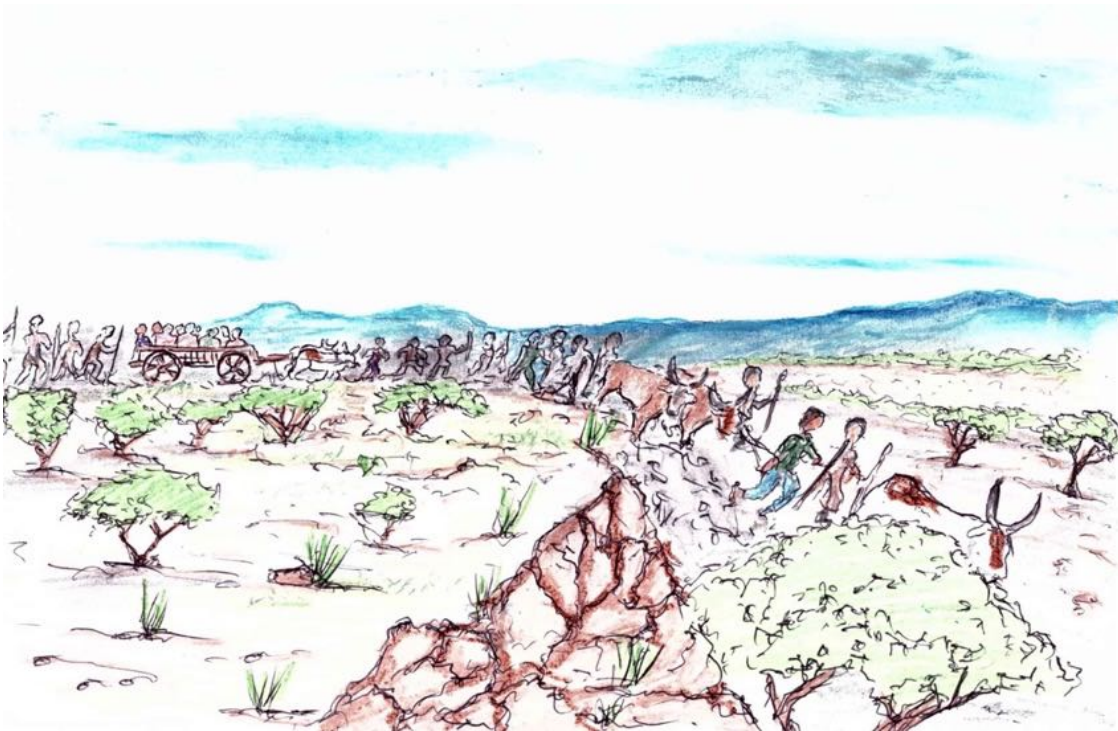


Figure 8.8 The !Nauriseb and |Uxam families fleeing the |Uixamab Nama of Sesfontein. © Clarence Geingob

In 1894 Chief Cornelius Swartbooï died leaving no male heirs, and the people began to divide into two camps under David Swartbooï at Otjitambi, and Lazarus Swartbooï at Fransfontein.¹⁶⁵ As we will see, the German colonists exploited this division. In 1895, there were around 450 Swartbooïis inhabiting Fransfontein, with part of their genealogy shared below (Fig. 8.9).

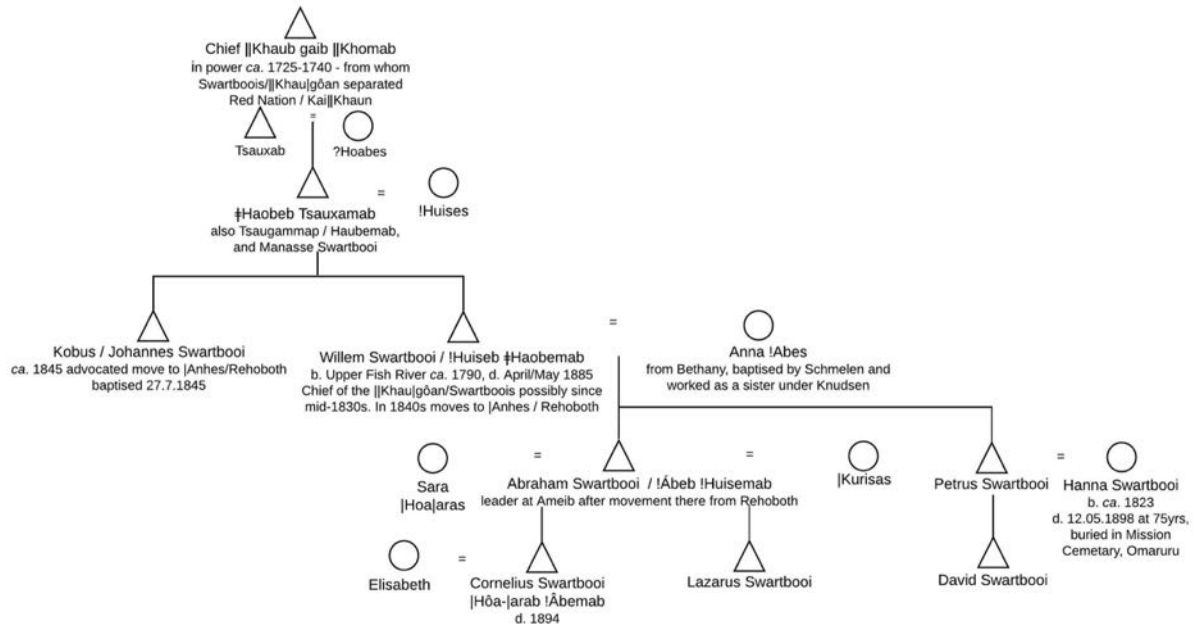


Figure 8.9 Part of the Swartbooi/!Khaugôan genealogy. Compiled by Sian Sullivan, drawing on Riechmann (n.d.: 3), Lau (1987: 7), Lau [Andersson] (1994[1987]: 104), Moritz (1998: 31), Rudner & Rudner (2004: 203 f37), Rudner & Rudner [Rosenblad] (2007[1924]: 85), Schnegg & Pauli (2007: 11, 14), !Uirab (2007: 21–22), Rizzo (2012: 64), Förster *et al.* (2016: online).

In 1895 Theodor Leutwein, the new German Commander of the Imperial *Schutztruppe* (Protection Forces) for German South West Africa (Fig. 8.10), travelled into the northern part of the colony and established a military station at Outjo (Fig. 8.11).¹⁶⁶



Figure 8.10 German colonial governor Theodor Leutwein. Public domain image: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodor_Leutwein#/media/File:Theodor_Gotthilf_Leutwein.jpg, 20.5.2024.

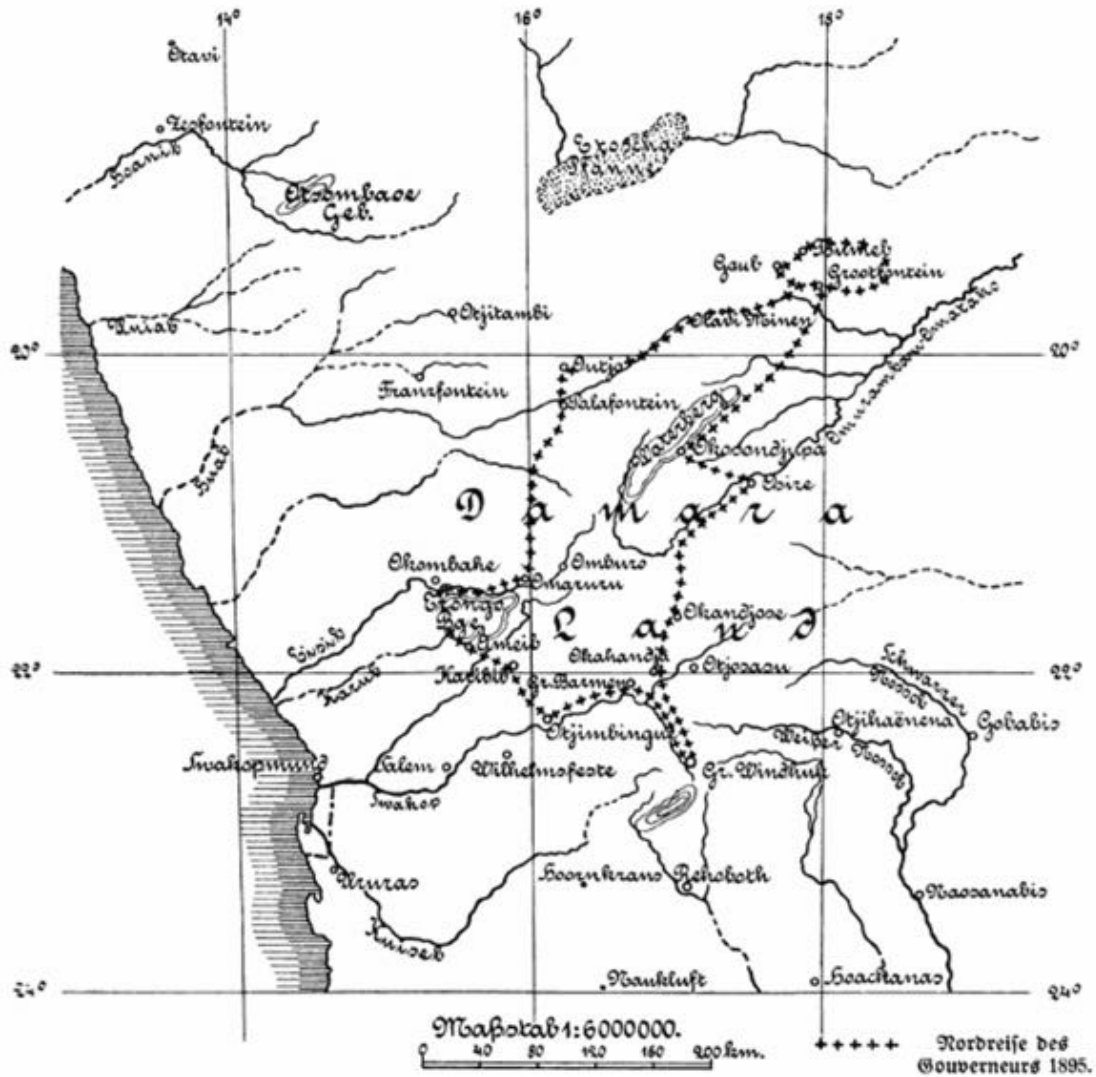


Figure 8.11 'Governor's northern journey 1895'. Source: Leutwein (1906: 61), out of copyright.

In association with surveyor Dr Georg Hartmann of the Kaoko Land and Mining Company, in 1895 Leutwein signed a new protection treaty (*Schutzvertrag*) with the ovaHerero leader Samuel Maharero – son of Kamaherero, as depicted in the image below (Fig. 8.12).



Dr. Hartmann Leutwein Samuel Maharero

Figure 8.12 'Making a treaty with Chief Samuel [Maharero] in Grootfontein in 1895'. Source: Leutwein (1906: 63), out of copyright.

Leutwein also signed a German 'protection treaty' with David Swartbooï who hoped to legitimise his claims to land against central Namibian ovaHerero rivals (Fig. 8.13), even though not all Swartbooï recognised David's leadership.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, missionary Riechmann refused to tolerate him because of his polygamy, instead promoting Lazarus Swartbooï at Fransfontein as a leader.¹⁶⁸



David Swartbooï Leutwein

Figure 8.13 'Negotiation with the Swartboois and Topnaars September 1895', Outjo. Source: Leutwein (1906: 66), out of copyright.

1895 also sees Dr Georg Hartmann commissioned by the Kaokoveld Land and Mining Company “to explore their newly acquired territory for minerals and guano”, illuminating colonial desire for economic opportunities (Fig. 8.14).¹⁶⁹



Figure 8.14 ‘Director of the South West Africa Company Dr Georg Hartmann (4.8.1865 - 12.7.1946)’. Photo: Publication Kurt Schwabe ‘Mit Schwert & Pflug in DeutschSudwestafrika’ (1904: 381), out of copyright.

Around this time, Jan |Uixamab based in Sesfontein, had a knack of appearing with his men in distant locations stretching from Outjo to Sanitatis in the Kaokoveld, always shrewdly outwitting traders and others so as to acquire goods cheaply (Fig. 8.15).¹⁷⁰



Figure 8.15 Jan |Uixamab, known for outwitting traders in the north-west. © Clarence Geingob

Dr Hartmann proposes that large-scale livestock breeding is suitable between Otjitambi and Sesfontein, with agriculture limited to gardens.¹⁷¹ He notes “large herds of antelopes, like springbok, kudu, gemsbok, eland the harte- and wilde-beest”; they also see lion tracks near Otjitambi and several times on their journey to Sesfontein lion circle their camp at night after their horses.¹⁷² On the mountain slopes he observes “numerous herds of guaggas [Hartmann’s mountain zebra, *Equus zebra hartmannae*] graze, another proof that there is still enough grass between the bushes”, and they meet their “first giraffes in the Hoanib east of Seffontein [Seßfontein]”.¹⁷³ West of here “the game-wealth decreased fast since it had rained little here” but they are told “that there is still enough grass and drinking water in places unknown to us high in the mountains”.¹⁷⁴ On the Namieb (Namib) they meet “small herds of ostriches, which became more and more numerous in the south” (Fig. 8.16) and he reports that the mountainous Kaoko-Feld is known to be “rich in leopards, baboons, snakes and scorpions”.¹⁷⁵



Figure 8.16 Dr Georg Hartmann views different species of ‘game’ in the mountains and on the Namib. © Clarence Geingob

With Nama guides, Hartmann travels west of Sesfontein along the Hoanib towards the coast:

[e]specially on the second Kaokofeld expedition the Zwartboois, like the Toppnaers, rendered outstanding services. Deficiency of ammunition has now made them tame. At my instigation they recognized German patronage in 1894 and for the purpose of deputations sent the main players at the top to Windhoek.¹⁷⁶

of which are good pastures. The view is limited by a low mountain range. Franzfontein offers a good passage through the mountains on the way north. A gate leads to Otjitambi (copper mine), inhabited by Zwartboois people, and to Zesfontein, the six-spring place, where a part of the Topnars, belonging to the Hottentots of the Walfischbai, is currently staying.¹⁷⁷

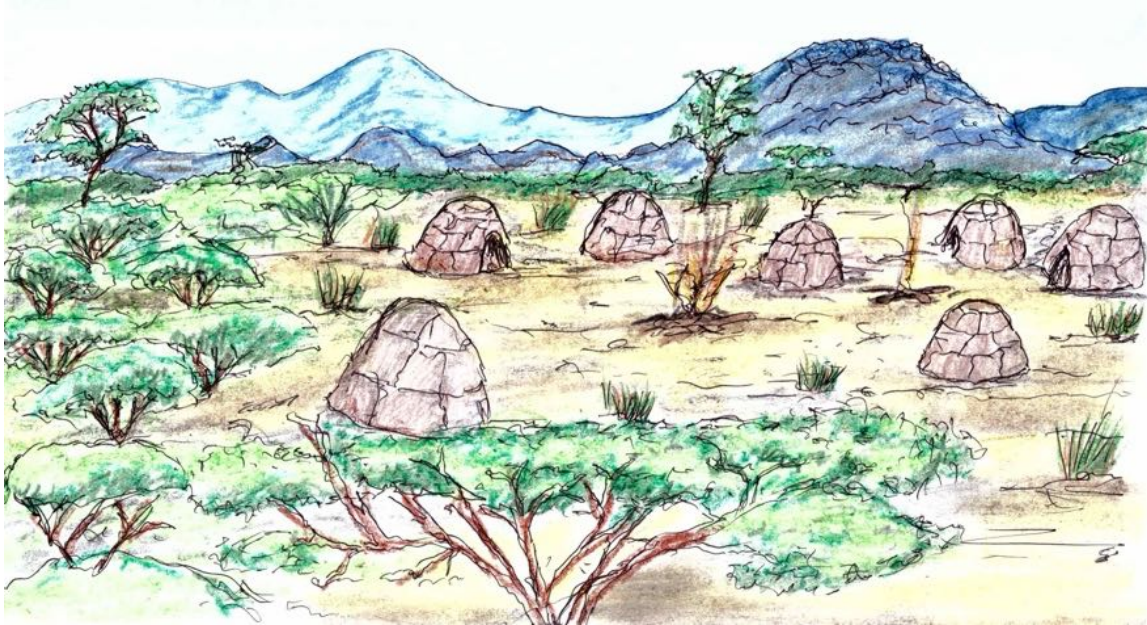


Figure 8.18 The peaceful reed-mat hut settlement of the Swartboois at Otjitambi in 1896. © Clarence Geingob

This relatively peaceful scene was to be radically disrupted only a year later.

Endnotes

- ¹³⁸ Uirab (2007: 21-22)
¹³⁹ Esterhuysen (1968: 95), Rizzo (2012: 32)
¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 63-64
¹⁴¹ Moritz (1998: 33), Förster *et al.* (2016: online)
¹⁴² Förster *et al.* (2018: 45-46)
¹⁴³ Esterhuysen (1968: 107), Rizzo (2012: 63-64)
¹⁴⁴ Esterhuysen (1968: 47, 52); also Olusoga & Erichsen (2010: 38)
¹⁴⁵ Rizzo (2012: 63)
¹⁴⁶ For example, Alexander (2006[1838]), Galton (1890[1853]), Hoernlé (1985[1925]), Köhler (1969)
¹⁴⁷ Esterhuysen (1968: 107)
¹⁴⁸ Rizzo (2012: 29)
¹⁴⁹ Rudner & Rudner (1974[1899]: 179; 2006: 140), Rizzo (2012: 33)
¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 63-64
¹⁵¹ Rudner & Rudner (2006: 192) in Rizzo (2012: 40)
¹⁵² *Ibid.* pp. 33, 37, Rudner & Rudner [Möller] (1974[1899]: 61)
¹⁵³ Esterhuysen (1968: 46-62)
¹⁵⁴ Drechsler (1980[1966]: 69, 95), Esterhuysen (1968: 128)
¹⁵⁵ Gordon (2009: 39), Muschalek (2020[2019])
¹⁵⁶ Schnegg & Pauli (2007: 12)
¹⁵⁷ Moritz (2015: 11-12)
¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 13
¹⁵⁹ Moritz (2015: 16) following Vedder
¹⁶⁰ Rudner & Rudner (1974[1899]: 179; 2006: 140)
¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*
¹⁶² Köhler (1959: 35)
¹⁶³ Discussions with Nathan #Üina Taurob in 1995-1996, and Philippine #Hairo #Nowaxas, Sesfontein, 15.4.1999.
¹⁶⁴ Fuller (1993: 67-68)
¹⁶⁵ Riechmann (n.d.: 3); also Moritz (1998: 33)
¹⁶⁶ Rudner & Rudner (2007: 169, and references therein)
¹⁶⁷ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches', v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 39-82.
All 650 German *Kurrent* texts were transcribed by Dr Wolfram Hartmann with Sian Sullivan translating the texts using the Deepl translator app., and Hartmann checking the translations.
The transcribed and translated texts are available here: <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/grootberg-uprising-archive>
¹⁶⁸ Rudner & Rudner [Rosenblad] (2007[1924]: 85)
¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 82
¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 82-83, 89-92
¹⁷¹ Hartmann (1897: 124)
¹⁷² *Ibid.*
¹⁷³ *Ibid.*
¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*
¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 136-137
¹⁷⁷ Fitzner (1896: 214-215)

9. Rinderpest

These were the dynamic colonial circumstances into which the critically disruptive “agent” of rinderpest appeared in 1897.¹⁷⁸ Rinderpest is a “virulent infectious disease caused by a Paramyxovirus”, resulting in the loss of millions of cattle in southern Africa and elsewhere.¹⁷⁹ The rinderpest epidemic arrived in the Horn of Africa in the late 1880s, “possibly carried by Indian cattle imported into Eritrea by the Italian colonists”.¹⁸⁰ In June 1896, an import ban “on all ruminants and their products” was “issued by German military command”; beginning attempts to halt this highly contagious disease, which affected cattle and other cloven-hooved animals such as buffalo and large antelope including eland and kudu (Fig. 9.1).¹⁸¹

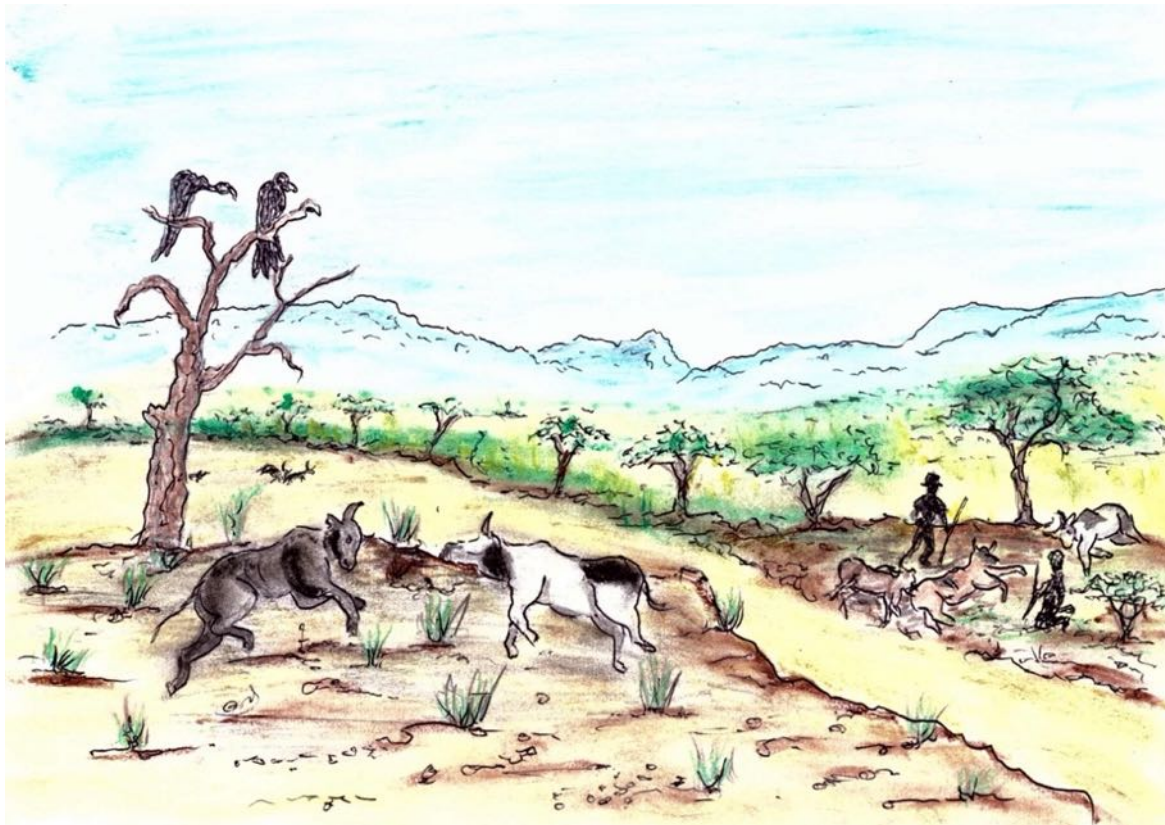


Figure 9.1 Rinderpest affecting cattle in north-west Namibia. © Clarence Geingob

Rinderpest reached German South West Africa by April 1897 and is described as spreading “through the country ‘like a tempest’”: German authorities estimated that “50% of the country’s cattle herd perished within the first six months of the panzootic and over the next year up to 90% mortality was reported among Herero herds in the central highlands”.¹⁸² It also pushed pastoralists further into the Portuguese colonial economy, including working as

mercenaries with Trekboers, as the Portuguese sought to contain rebellions of Owambo-speaking groups in southern Angola.¹⁸³ This is the context in which leaders such as Vita Tom, also known as ‘Oorlog/Oloxa’ – meaning ‘war’, and Muhona Katiti enhanced their regional power.¹⁸⁴

Following a conference on the rinderpest crisis convened in late August 1896 by the British Cape Colony at Vryburg (British Bechuanaland, now Botswana),¹⁸⁵ a ‘defense line’ or *Absperrline* was established to control movement of livestock between northern ‘native’ areas and southern and central European settlement areas.¹⁸⁶ This cordon consisted of a chain of military outposts, some of which became permanent after the pandemic ran its course, a situation with lasting effects for Indigenous inhabitants (Fig. 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4).¹⁸⁷

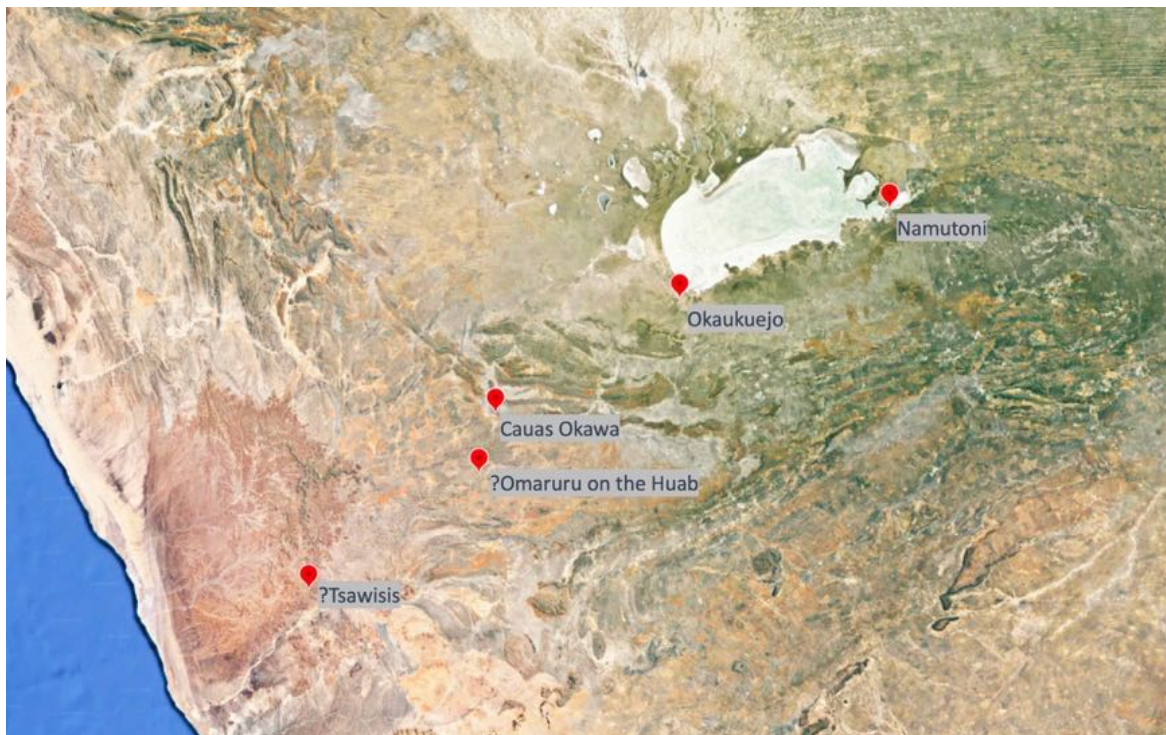


Figure 9.2 The most westerly veterinary stations in the ‘cordon’ (red markers) established between November 1896 and February 1897. The question marks signify that the two most westerly place locations are not completely exact. Map prepared by Sian Sullivan, using Google Maps: Map data © 2024 Google, INEGI Imagery © 2024 NASA, TerraMetrics, drawing on Miescher (2012: 24).



Figure 9.3 Caus Okawa militarised veterinary station in 1897. © Clarence Geingob



Figure 9.4 Some of the likely remains of the veterinary cordon post at Caus Okawa: this structure possibly being a holding cell, according to local knowledge. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, 5.4.2023.

A roughly 30 km neutral zone or ‘no go’ area was proclaimed north of the line, “defined by the specific water holes that were banned from use”:¹⁸⁸ the clearance of which echoes to this day in visions of this area as a ‘wildlife corridor’ rather than a livestock-herding and inhabited area.¹⁸⁹

Fransfontein, under missionary Riechmann, which by this year had a mission congregation of 460 people or half the Swartbooi of the area, was positioned *inside* the Police Zone;

Sesfontein, which had gained the young evangelist Nicodemus Kido (‘Gâseb’¹⁹⁰) after a visit by Riechmann – as well as most of ‘Kaoko’ – was beyond the veterinary cordon.¹⁹¹ The establishment of militarised veterinary posts began the process of separating indigenous herds north of this line from the herds of emerging settler farmers in the south of the country. This situation lingers today in the increasingly controversial ‘red line’ (Veterinary Cordon Fence) that stretches from east to west across Namibia, continuing to divide the country between north and south.¹⁹²

Local support and ‘auxiliary troops’, and especially local knowledge of waterholes, were essential for the establishment of outposts along the cordon. This was garnered especially from leaders such as David Swartbooi of Fransfontein, the ‘Bushman chief’ Johannes Kruger at ǀGaub, the ovaHerero chief Kambazembi at Waterberg, and traders such as Axel Eriksson.¹⁹³ It is reported that 50 Swartbooi men played an important role along the cordon “because of their ‘great influence on the Bushmen and Bergdamara [ǀNūkhoen] of these regions’”.¹⁹⁴ Outpost guards “were instructed to maintain the ‘neutral zone’ along the cordon, keeping it free of humans and animals, including killing all wildlife found in the zone” (Fig. 9.5).¹⁹⁵ At the same time, as “the measures against the rinderpest imposed some minor obligations on the [Swartbooi] tribe, these met with the disapproval mainly of the old followers of David, as they feared an encroachment on their unattached life”.¹⁹⁶

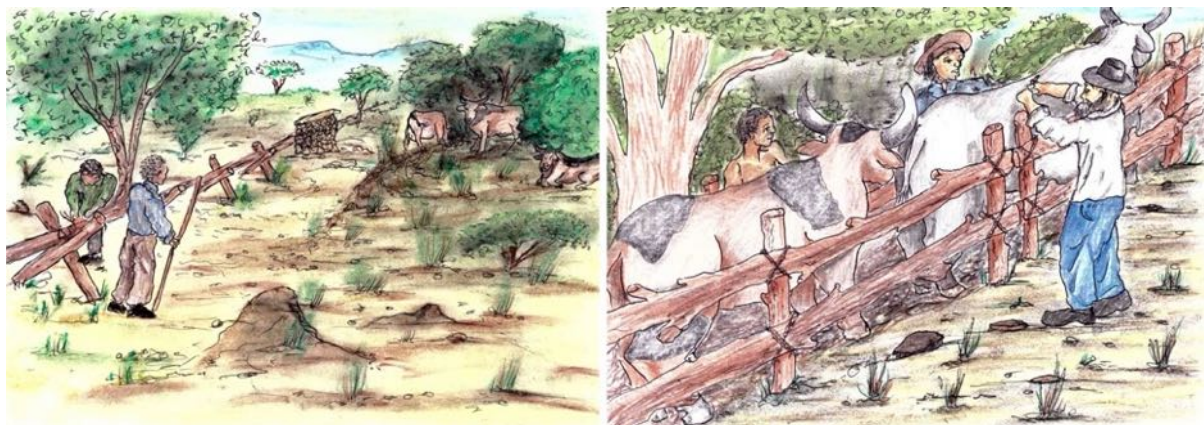


Figure 9.5 Constructing a ‘cordon’ and inoculating cattle; and keeping ‘native’ herds in the north separate from those of white settler farmers in the ‘Police Zone’ to the south. © Clarence Geingob

Indeed, after the uprising, a 44-year old Swartbooi called Friedrich Boois reports that ‘discontent’ arises in 1897 amidst this context:

[Captain] David [Swartbooi] left it to Sub-Captain Wilhelm Richter to gather the promised people for the border fence [veterinary cordon] while he himself went to Cape

Cross. The people were reluctant to answer the Sub-Captain's call. When David Swartbooi returned from Cape Cross, he scheduled a meeting for the following day at 8 o'clock in the morning, even though he had returned late in the evening. David opened the meeting by saying, 'I am breaking the treaty with the German government.'¹⁹⁷

Several Swartbooi questioned this decision, causing David to change his mind. Nonetheless, it is clear in this moment that disagreements were running through the Swartbooi, especially amongst their various leaders.¹⁹⁸

According to Deputy Governor von Lindequist (Fig. 9.6), the northern parts of the protectorate (beyond this cordon) were to "be treated as foreign territory", excepting Sesfontein, for which the intention was to include this "former centre of power" within the cordon,¹⁹⁹ despite its geographical location north of the cordon. Finnish missionary Rautanen intervened to prevent Owambo kings, including Kambonde, from participating in the emerging 'Swartbooi and Topnaar' uprising.²⁰⁰



Figure 9.6 Mr Reg. Rath von Lindequist. Source: Leutwein (1906: 38), out of copyright.

These military posts in north-west Namibia proved unpopular with local leaders and herders, who resented being controlled and told where they were permitted to move. Jan |Uixamab of Sesfontein, for example, "refused to support the cordon's construction" and "rejected the suggestion that he, his followers, and their livestock should temporarily leave Sesfontein and move south near Fransfontein"; also refusing "to provide more than vague assurances that

they would move their herds north to Warmbad (Warmquelle), south of Sesfontein”.²⁰¹ In addition,

[t]he district headquarters in Otjo [Outjo], which had been established in the meantime in the West had been informed from several quarters about the Swartbooi’s attacks. [...] the supporters of Lazarus Swartbooi prevented the outbreak of open hostilities in April 1897.²⁰²

In Fransfontein 2,685 head of cattle were inoculated but it is unclear how many belonged to the Rhenish Missionary Society and how many to African Christians.²⁰³ Beyond Sesfontein, “Kaoko had no military or Christian missionary presence and so did not benefit from the colonial inoculation campaign”: herds may have survived through retreat to remote areas, although the “devastating toll” of the [rinderpest] pandemic is suggested by residents of Sesfontein remembering, 50 years later, “the destruction of their herds”.²⁰⁴

Rinderpest was in some ways a gift to the consolidating German colonial government.²⁰⁵ The decimation of indigenous herds and the associated disintegration of African societal organisation opened the door for state appropriation of territory and livestock, facilitated by militarised state power.

Endnotes

- ¹⁷⁸ Kalb (2022: 90–97)
- ¹⁷⁹ Rudner & Rudner (2006: 202), Waller (1988)
- ¹⁸⁰ Olusoga & Erichsen (2010: 98–99)
- ¹⁸¹ Miescher (2012: 22); also Mackenzie (1988: 48)
- ¹⁸² Rohde & Hoffman (2012: 278)
- ¹⁸³ Bollig (1998: 164)
- ¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸⁵ Miescher (2012: 20)
- ¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 3, 19.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 23, 33.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 26.
- ¹⁸⁹ Sullivan (2024), Sullivan & Ganuses (2026)
- ¹⁹⁰ Philippine |Hairo |Nowaxas, Sesfontein, 15.4.1999.
- ¹⁹¹ Rizzo (2012: 59, 69), Riechmann (n.d.: 4)
- ¹⁹² Miescher (2012), Sullivan *et al.* (2024), Dieckmann *et al.* (2024)
- ¹⁹³ Miescher (2012: 25)
- ¹⁹⁴ Deputy Governor von Lindequist quoted in Miescher (2012: 25)
- ¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹⁶ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 40; GSWA (n.d.: 414)
- ¹⁹⁷ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Statement of the Zwartbooi-Hottentotten Friedrich Beuß [Boois]’, Franzfontein to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 2.4.1898, vol. 2: 255–256.
- ¹⁹⁸ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Testimony of Captain Lazarus Zwartbooi & Testimony of the Zwartbooi Nikonor Kook’, Franzfontein to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 3.4.1898, vol. 2: 245–252.
- ¹⁹⁹ Quoted in Miescher (2012: 25)
- ²⁰⁰ Eirola (1992: 82–84) in Rizzo (2012: 66)
- ²⁰¹ Miescher (2012: 25). Clearly, they were being requested to remove their herds from the ‘neutral zone’ north of the new cordon posts, meaning that prior to this instruction their herds must have been spread throughout this area. Also Rizzo (2012: 59).
- ²⁰² NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 41; GSWA (n.d.: 414)
- ²⁰³ Rizzo (2012: 58)
- ²⁰⁴ Miescher (2012: 33), after van Warmelo (1962[1951]: 53, based on interviews conducted in 1947)
- ²⁰⁵ Drechsler (1980[1966]: 98)

10. Escalating Resistance to Colonial Military Rule

Already by April 1897 “[t]he dissatisfied went so far as to urge a break with the German government”, although “supporters of Lazarus Swartbooi prevented the outbreak of open hostilities”.²⁰⁶ The district headquarters in Outjo were informed from several quarters about attacks by Swartbooi.²⁰⁷ For example, at the beginning of May 1897 a letter by the trader Mittelstedt arrived from Franzfontein informing the district administration that Captain David “was planning hostile actions against the German Government”: namely, “to seize the horse transport arriving in Franzfontein from Soris-Soris and to have the rider Memmersheim, who had been appointed to supervise it, shot down”; and “to raid and obliterate the Kauas-Okawa cordon post”.²⁰⁸

Captain von Estorff, who had gained knowledge of the area through being part of surveyor Georg Hartmann’s second Kaokoveld expedition, thereby appeared in Franzfontein and Otjitambi with 20 horsemen. David Swartbooi was deposed, and “his old rival” Lazarus Swartbooi was made captain in his place.²⁰⁹ Nonetheless, about three weeks later,

Captain von Estorff received a letter from Captain Lazarus, in which he informed him that David had ridden to Otjitambi [where sub-captain Keisib/Kaisib was based], Kauas-Okawa and Omaruru [on the ǀHuab River] after his removal, and had induced the Hottentots living there to move with him to the Grootberg [Kai|uis] (Fig. 10.1).²¹⁰



Figure 10.1 Grootberg, known locally as Kailuis, to which David Swartbooi and supporters retreated. © Clarence Geingob

Von Estorff (Fig. 10.2) arrested David Swartbooi, who admitted he had wanted to break the treaty signed with Leutwein, but “asked for forgiveness”.²¹¹ Captain von Estorff subsequently ordered Second Lieutenant Count von Bethusy-Huc, “to ride to Franzfontein with five horsemen, to investigate the matter and to bring David to Outjo. David was then found guilty and brought to Outjo by me as a prisoner”.²¹² David Swartbooi of Franzfontein was arrested and taken to Windhoek, and four of his supporters were sentenced to two months hard labour in Outjo (Fig. 10.3).²¹³



Figure 10.2 Captain Ludwig von Estorff in German South West Africa. Bundesarchiv, Bild 105-DSWA0066 / Walther Dobbertin / CC-BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_105-DSWA0066_Deutsch-S%C3%BCwestafrika_Ludwig_von_Estorff.jpg.



Figure 10.3 David Swartbooï captured by German military with four of his supporters sentenced to two months hard labour in Outjo. © Clarence Geingob

These ‘divide and rule’ practices deployed by the colonial authorities heightened tensions in the region. Von Lindequist later suggested that “[t]he fact that almost the entire tribe has renounced Captain Lazarus makes me wonder whether Captain David has not been dismissed in too much of a hurry”.²¹⁴

By August 1897, Second Lieutenant Count von Bethusy-Huc had become District Chief stationed at Outjo and occupying Franzfontein,²¹⁵ with one non-commissioned officer, four German horsemen and six Nama horsemen, continuing “the fight against the rinderpest in the Franzfontein area”, and “that the Swartboois were still quiet”.²¹⁶ Nonetheless, at the beginning of September,

rinderpest broke out at Urioneis and Omburo Kambatta’s werft. I [Bethusy-Huc] went there and as a number of Herero wanted [their cattle] to be vaccinated, I left a rider there and returned to Franzfontein myself. Captain Kambatta refused to have his cattle vaccinated at first, but then had a large number of them vaccinated. Kambatta’s Herero and the others treated the rider very well and gave him plenty of milk and meat. The Zwartbooi Hottentots behaved well and willingly during the vaccination by the riders I sent to Otjitambi, Sorris-Sorris and Gaus [...] They were also very obliging towards me during my inoculation work and showed a peaceful attitude. Only old Simon, who had his werft on Zaub [Tsaub], was reported to me by Untfz. Senling (then a private) that he had sullenly refused to have his cattle vaccinated and also refused to give him any food. He also demanded payment from the inoculator for the messengers who were to fetch gall [needed for vaccination] for his cattle.²¹⁷

In this month, 60 Argentine mules were also sent to Outjo, but not in very good condition, plus inadequate rains meant that “the horses could not recover at all”.²¹⁸ By October, the German military “had 70 horsemen in Outjo, but only about 30 horses, which were in an extremely poor condition, as their forces were overstretched fighting the rinderpest”.²¹⁹ Back in Franzfontein in late October, Count Bethusy-Huc reports that:

about 15 mounted Hereros suddenly appeared in the afternoon, among them Captain Kambatta and Titus from Omaruru, all armed with rifles. About an hour later, about 30 Hereros arrived on foot with c. 15 rifles. The same camped in the middle of the settlement. I had Kambatta, Titus and the other big men come to me and asked them what this meant. They then made general statements from which I could not make out what their real reason was. Immediately I sent a report about this to the Imperial District Headquarters Outjo and asked them to show themselves, if at all possible, with a stronger

force here in the area. Unfortunately, the company was unable to comply with my request due to weak horses and a lack of mounts. The Hereros remained here for 4 days, during which time Titus once visited old Simon at Zaub [Tsaub]. When I asked him what he had done there, he told me that he had wanted to buy a horse from Simon.²²⁰

By November in Franzfontein, Lazarus Swartbooi begins complaining to Second Lieutenant Count Bethusy-Huc that “his people did not really want to obey him”, also expressing the wish that Captain von Estorff should force sub-captain Kaisib to return from Grootberg.²²¹ Things started to escalate in this month when Samuel Swartbooi returned “from a trade train for ammunition from Ovamboland”, via Portuguese Angola.²²² Von Estorff links Samuel’s return with ammunition to the disruption of prevailing peace in the Franzfontein area,²²³ with a quarrel arising between Lazarus, Samuel and the latter’s comrade Josephat:

[d]uring the night of the 21st to the 22nd, the enemy party had dismantled their [reed-mat] huts and set them up in a ravine on the slope of the mountains behind the house of Missionary Richmann [Riechmann]. [...] During the night I noticed that the men were almost all sitting on the mountain while the women were packing up their belongings. At about 2 a.m. I received a message from the patrol that the enemy werft was making efforts to move off. Since I knew that Eljeser (Simon’s son) had his wagon behind the garden about 1500m from the station, I had the patrol position itself near this wagon. The Hottentots, who had noticed this, did not dare to hitch it up and thus abandoned the wagon and all the objects they could not carry. [...] About 11 o’clock at noon, 2 Kaffirs [probably Bergdamara/#Nükhoen] came to the water with 2 buckets and I had them caught. They said that a large group of Hottentots had come from Zaub [Tsaub], who had camped behind the mountains of Franzfontein. They had sent them to fetch water, as they were very thirsty. [...] Through Lazarus I learned that Samuel and Eljeser had gone with their werfts into the mountains to Aub.

I then sent a letter to Samuel in which I wrote to him that if he brought an action against Captain Lazarus or against the German government, he should bring it before me or Captain von Estorff and suggested Jan Swartbooi as a mediator, with the promise not to do anything to him or to hold him. Samuel answered: ‘He has nothing against the German government, but everything is directed against Lazarus.’ Jan, however, did not come.

On 29 November, Captain von Estorff arrived in Franzfontein with about 20 horsemen, the rest of the company was on foot on the march to Franzfontein, which arrived here a day later.

Captain von Estorff also wrote another letter to Samuel, but received a meaningless reply.²²⁴

Unrest broke-out, with Swartbooi “in revolt against their captain Lazarus Swartbooi”.²²⁵ Around “30 men capable of bearing arms had remained loyal to the captain [Lazarus]”, whilst others under the leadership of Samuel and Joel Swartbooi “showed their hostility by stealing cattle from the property of the captain’s followers”.²²⁶ In response, on 24 November 1897 Captain von Estorff left Outjo for Franzfontein “with 50 horsemen and 1 cannon” (Fig. 10.4); but many of the horses failed in the dry and hot terrain, and he was only able to reach Franzfontein on 28 November “with 20 horsemen on completely tired horses”.²²⁷



Figure 10.4 Von Estorff with a cannon moves from Outjo to Franzfontein, with riders on tired horses. © Clarence Geingob

Linked with the emerging Swartbooi rebellion, Eberhard Rosenblad, who was looking after 100 of Axel Eriksson’s draught-oxen at Namutoni, was also attacked but “the attackers were beaten off, and the cattle were saved”.²²⁸ A garrison of 10 horsemen was placed near Keium, where the trader Sabatta had numerous cattle.²²⁹ By the time of von Estorff’s arrival in Franzfontein many Swartbooi had left to settle at springs in the surrounding area, with a main settlement (*werft*) at lKeiros (renamed as Kaross) north of Otjitambi.²³⁰ The heads of the

rebels were Samuel Swartbooi and Joel Swartbooi.²³¹ In fear, Lazarus Swartbooi requested assistance from the German military, who hoped that von Estorff would surprise the rebelling Swartbooi and take their weapons.²³² Von Estorff writes to von Lindequist, however, that:

I am not in a position to carry through to the end a fight that may have begun. The few horses I have at my disposal are so weak that they hardly carried the 20 horsemen accompanying me here and are now completely finished. I will have a larger detachment follow on foot from Otjo [Outjo], so that within a short time I will have united 60 heads here and will at least be able to effectively protect the remainder.

The Nama riders [*Namareiters*] have all remained faithful to their oath, although numerous relatives of theirs are among the fugitives. In the last few days, some time before my arrival, there was great fear among the remaining loyal followers of the captain, because the others threatened and fired at them, so that they finally sought protection close to the station.²³³

Von Estorff also makes clear his aim for increasing white settlement of Outjo District. He writes that:

1. it would be “harmful if more Boers leave the country”;
2. that seven waterpoints west of Outjo should be claimed through negotiation with ovaHerero leader Manasse Tjiseseta in Omaruru for allocation to decommissioned German soldiers to cultivate the land – “first as lease, later as property”;
3. and that the South West Africa Company is proving ineffectual in promoting white settlement in Outjo and Grootfontein districts.²³⁴

Ultimately the campaign against the Swartboois and their allies stretched from Outjo to Sesfontein, as shown in the maps below (Fig. 10.5 and 10.6).

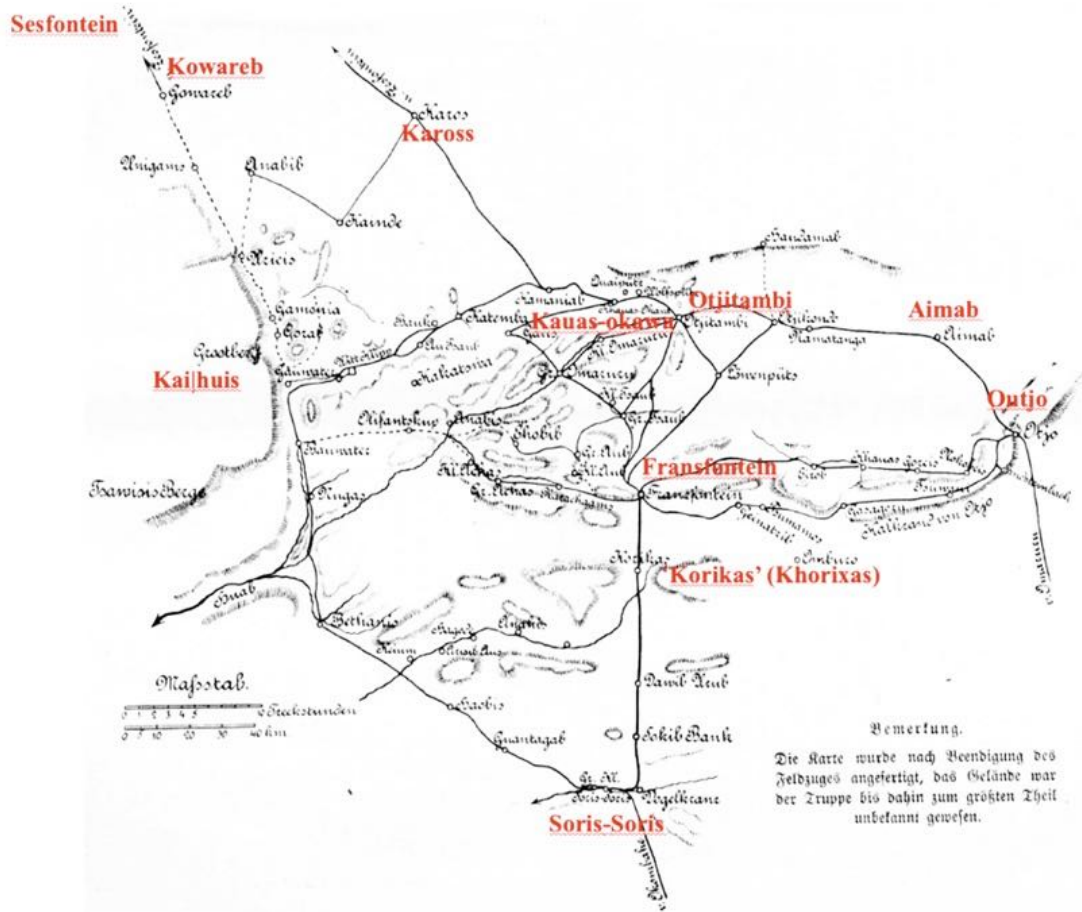


Figure 10.5 Map of the area stretching from Outjo to Sesfontein connected via the Swartbooi / Grootberg Uprising and colonial military response in 1897–1898. Source: GSWA (n.d.: 417), out of copyright, adapted by Sian Sullivan.

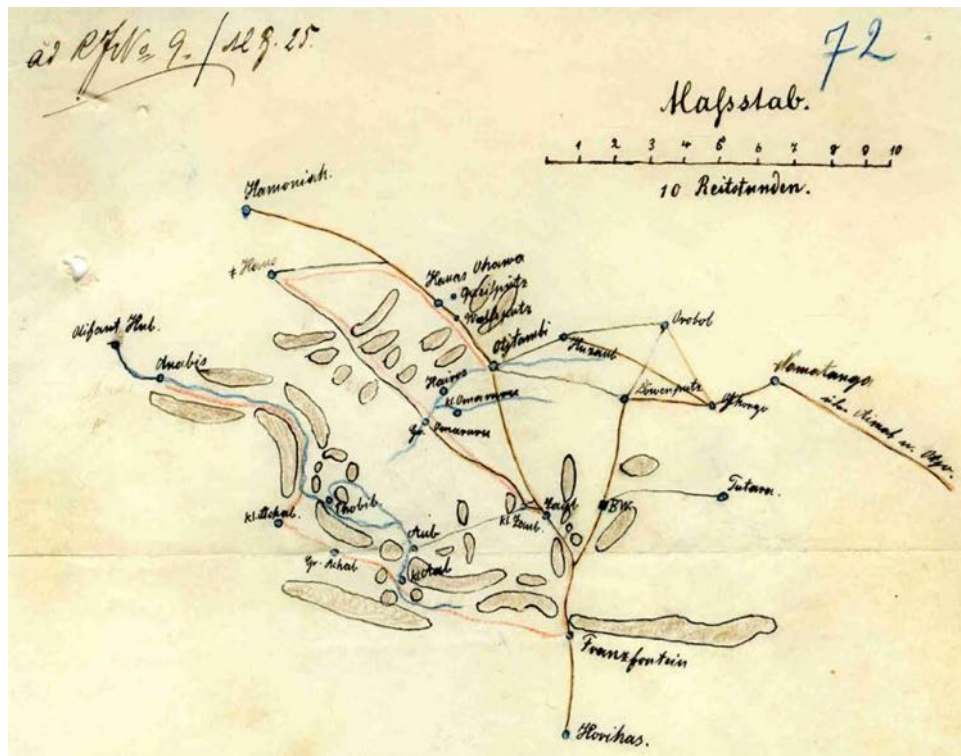


Figure 10.6 Lt. Bensen's original sketch of the area involved in the early part of the campaign. NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1, 23.12.1897, vol. 1: 72.

On the night of 2-3 December 1897, knowing that the German military had few capable horses for crossing the difficult terrain, “the insurgents” under Samuel Swartbooie stole 19 horses and 31 donkeys from the 4th Field Company at Franzfontein (Fig. 10.7):²³⁵ they “were grazing in the field an hour from Franzfontein”.²³⁶



Figure 10.7. Stealing horses and donkeys from the 4th Field Company at Franzfontein. © Clarence Geingob

This act was regarded by Captain von Estorff “as the outbreak of war”.²³⁷ He set off on the afternoon of 3 December with 40 German military men and around 20 Swartbooie adhering to the leadership of Captain Lazarus, with the field-gun brought by oxen.²³⁸ They reached “Aub [west of Fransfontein] on foot, where the main werft of the rebels was supposed to be located and where it was believed that the horses had drifted”:

[a] patrol under Sergeant Wesch consisting of two German horsemen and six Hottentots was to follow the trail of the driven-off horses and then approach the company in Aub.²³⁹

Endnotes

²⁰⁶ GSWA (n.d.: 414)

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report on David Zwartbooi’, 2nd Lt. Count v. Bethusy-Huc (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 4.4.1898, vol. 2: 235–236.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p. 237, Rizzo (2012: 67), Drechsler (1980[1966]: 101)

²¹⁰ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report on David Zwartbooi’, 2nd Lt. Count v. Bethusy-Huc (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 4.4.1898, vol. 2: 237.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.* p. 238

²¹³ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 42; GSWA (n.d.: 414–15)

²¹⁴ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Between Lazarus and David Zwartbooi; Measures etc.’ v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Mj. Müller (?Windhoek), 8.12.1897, vol. 1: 14.

²¹⁵ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report on the Zwartbooi Hottentots’, 2nd Lt. Count Bethusy-Huc (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 4.4.1898, vol. 2: 224.

²¹⁶ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 42–43; GSWA (n.d.: 415)

²¹⁷ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report on the Zwartbooi Hottentots’, 2nd Lt. Count Bethusy-Huc (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 4.4.1898, vol. 2: 224–226.

²¹⁸ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 44.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 43.

²²⁰ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report on the Zwartbooi Hottentots’, 2nd Lt Count Bethusy-Huc (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 4.4.1898, vol. 2: 226–227.

²²¹ *Ibid.* pp. 228–229.

²²² NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Dispatch of substitute crews; Diseases of the Kaokofeld Schutztruppe riders; Alliance of the Zwartboois with the Topnaars, presumed action of the same’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 15.12.1897, vol. 1: 33.

²²³ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the events in Franzfontein’, Captain v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to v. Lindequist (?Windhoek), 29.11.1897, vol. 1: 4.

²²⁴ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report on the Zwartbooi Hottentots’, 2nd Lt Count Bethusy-Huc (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 4.4.1898, vol. 2: 229–233.

²²⁵ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 45.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 45–46; NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Circumstances between followers of Lazarus and David Zwartbooi; Ask for Support’, 2nd Lt. Count v. Bethusy-Huc (Franzfontein) to Imperial District Headquarters (Outjo), 22.11.1897, vol. 1: 1.

²²⁷ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 45; GSWA (n.d.: 415)

²²⁸ Rudner & Rudner (2006: 218)

²²⁹ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 46; GWSA (n.d.: 415)

²³⁰ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the events in Franzfontein’, v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to v. Lindequist (?Windhoek), 29.11.1898, vol. 1: 3; NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Zwartbooi uprising, call for mediation; Theft of horses and donkeys; Persecution of the enemy by Captain von Estorff’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 9.12.1897, vol. 1: 20; NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Conversation with the Zwartbooi John [Johannes?]; Possibility of mediation; Background of the conflict; Ovambos help the insurgents with ammunition, rifles, slaughter cattle; Participation of the Ovatjimba beyond the Kunene; Military Intervention over Portuguese territory’, 12.12.1897, in report of 13.12.1897 by DR Georg Hartmann, vol. 1: 46; GSWA (n.d.: 415)

²³¹ GSWA (n.d.: 415)

²³² NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Circumstances between followers of Lazarus and David Zwartbooi; Ask for Support’, 2nd Lieutenant Count v. Bethusy-Huc (Franzfontein) to Imperial District Headquarters (Outjo), 22.11.1897, vol. 1: 1–2.

²³³ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the events in Franzfontein’, Captain v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to v. Lindequist (Outjo), 29.11.1898, vol. 1: 5.

²³⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 5–7.

²³⁵ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Zwartbooi uprising, call for mediation; Theft of horses and donkeys; Persecution of the enemy by Captain v. Estorff’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Reichs-chancellor (Windhoek), 9.12.1897, vol. 1: 21.

²³⁶ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Theft of Truppen horses and donkeys at the 4th Field Company; Production of war efforts, Troop movements’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru), to Otjimbingwe District Administration, 8.12.1897, vol. 1: 13; NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 47–48; GSWA (n.d.: 415)

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 47–48.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

11. Battles

From the beginning of December 1897 there commenced a series of battles in the landscapes of Namibia's north-west, the order and locations of which are shown in the map below (Fig. 11.1).

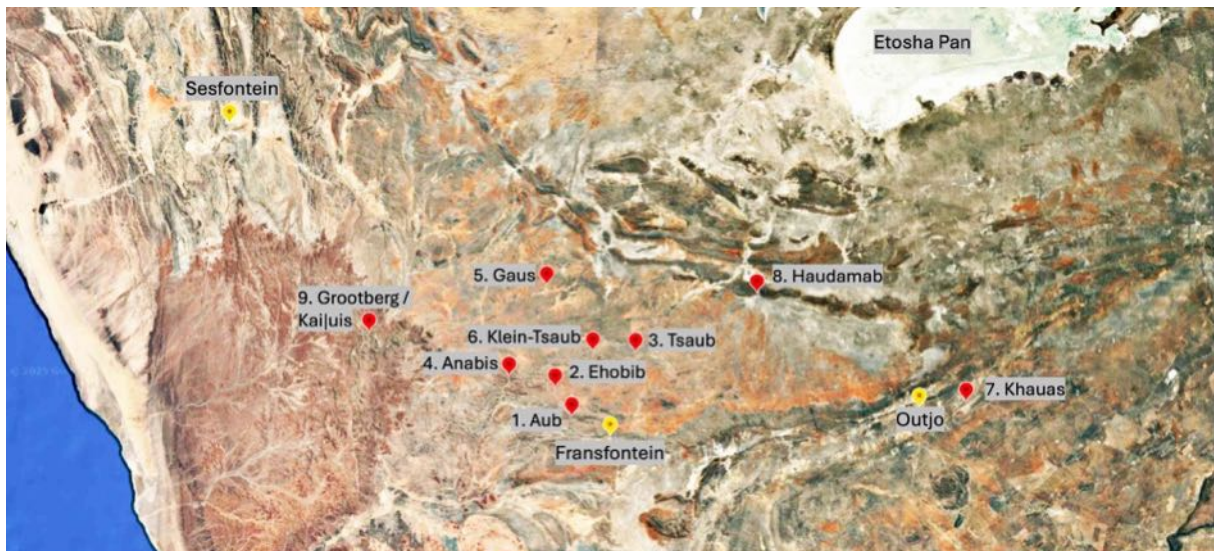


Figure 11.1 Locations and numbered order of the main skirmishes and battles in 1897-1898, indicating the wide-ranging terrain in which resistance and militarised suppression took place. Map prepared by Sian Sullivan, using Google Earth: Map data © Landsat / CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, 2021.

11.1 Aub

A patrol under Sergeant Wesch, consisting of two German horsemen, Privates Kunadt and Bösch, plus “two Nama soldiers and four Hottentots [presumably Swartbooi]”, was deployed “to follow the trail of the driven-off horses and then approach the company after Aub” (Fig. 11.2).²⁴⁰



Figure 11.2 Aub terrain. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, 3.4.2023.

They followed the stolen horses from Narachaam waters towards Klein Aub where “exhausted by exertion and thirst” they fell into an ambush on the morning of 4 December: “Private Kunadt and Private Bösch fell in the enemy fire; Corporal Wesch, although wounded twice, kept the enemy from advancing by his fire”, shooting one of them (Fig. 11.3 and 11.4).²⁴¹ All Nama accompanying the patrol ‘disappeared’, no doubt joining ‘the enemy’; following which Wesch returned, exhausted, to Franzfontein.²⁴²



Figure 11.3 Private Kunadt and Private Bösch died in the ambush at Aub, with a Nama fighter also killed by Corporal Wesch. © Clarence Geingob



Figure 11.4 (L) Grave of Lance Corporal (*Gefreiter*) Arno Kunadt on right, and Private Bösch on left; (R) perhaps this unmarked grave is that of the Nama fighter shot by Corporal Wesch. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, 3.4.2023.

11.2 Ehobib



Figure 11.5 Ehobib gate. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 2.4.2023.

Slightly north-west of Aub, German soldiers led by Second Lieutenant Count von Bethusy-Huc, and Swartbooi under Samuel, clashed on 4-5 December at Ehobib (Fig. 11.5). The Germans with their Nama fighters “advanced in the dry riverbed”, waiting near the Swartbooi *werft* (settlement) for the moon to set (Fig. 11.6, 11.7 and 11.8):

[t]he enemy had set up numerous sentinels with dogs, but their barking told us the location of the werft. The company finally reached a group of boulders at the foot of a mountain range, with the werft on the left. Behind these, however, the enemy had positioned themselves, and the company had moved to the left of the top, when the enemy’s fire hit us at a distance of 8 to 10 paces: the group of boulders was lit up by the shots as if by fireworks; but before the enemy could charge a second time, the crew had hurled themselves over the boulders with a hurrah.²⁴³



Figure 11.6 German soldiers shooting at Nama at Ehobib. © Clarence Geingob

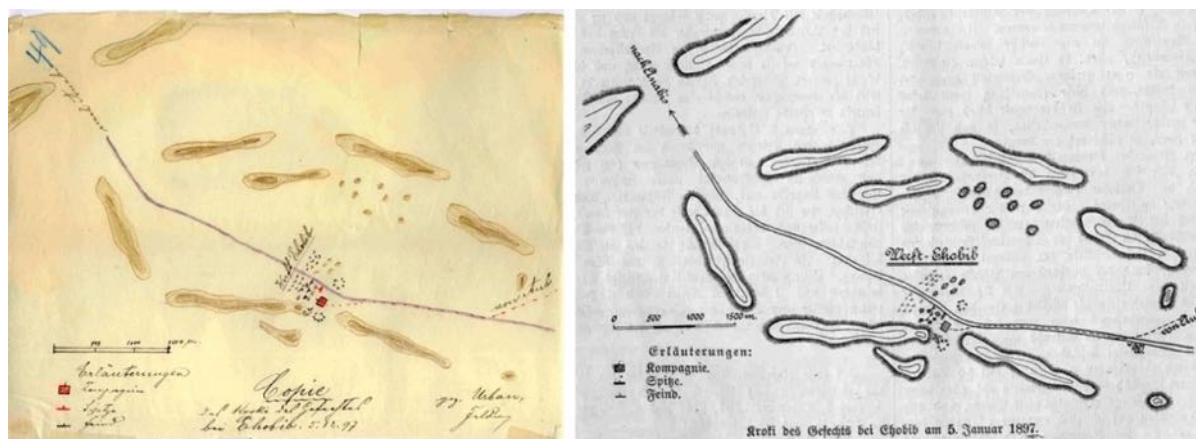


Figure 11.7 Sketch of the battle at Ehobib on 4-5 December. Sources: (L) NAN ZBU 440 440D-IV-f v2. 'Estorff Report, incl. report by Bensen', vol. 2: 49; (R) GSWA (n.d.: 416), out of copyright.



Figure 11.8. Ehobib battle terrain. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, 4.4.2023.

One German, Rider Ludwig, died here after being shot through the chest (Figure 11.9); von Estorff and Private Schwibbe were both lightly wounded; enemy losses were unknown, and the Swartbooi fled northwards:

I [von Estorff] only succeeded in taking one prisoner, whom I had seized by the throat when he was able to rise from his cover. Despite the close distance, the enemy had mostly shot past in the darkness and in their excitement.²⁴⁴



Figure 11.9 The grave of Rider (*Reiter*) Wilhelm Ludwig, who died at Ehobib. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 3.4.2023.

Almost all the horses and donkeys were now back in German hands, plus 100 head of cattle and 600 head of small livestock were captured [stolen] from the Swartbooi.²⁴⁵ Several rifles and ammunition were left behind by the fleeing enemy whose bloodstains indicated they had fled through narrow rocky gorges in the direction of Anabis waterhole (Fig. 11.10).²⁴⁶ The company stayed at Ehobib, returning to Aub on 6 December 1897, the cattle being driven to Franzfontein.²⁴⁷



Figure 11.10 Bloodstains at Ehobib indicate the Swartbooi Nama had retreated towards the gorge in which Anabis is situated. © Clarence Geingob

11.3 Tsaub / ‘Zaub’

At Franzfontein on 16 December 1897, Lieutenant Bensen learned that “Tsaub [north of Franzfontein] was strongly occupied by the enemy” under Joel Swartbooi, with a plan to “attack the troop wagons at Otjitambi”.²⁴⁸ The following day, “with 14 non-commissioned officers and horsemen, 3 native soldiers and a safe guide”, Bensen took a route west of Tsaub and Aub via Klein- and Groß-Achas and Anabis, so as to reach Otjitambi and warn Captain von Estorff.²⁴⁹ The Swartbooi had been alerted to these movements by “their scouts (Klippkaffern [Damara/!Nūkhoen] sitting in the mountains)”.²⁵⁰ A commando was led by Joel Swartbooi that included ovaHerero participation,²⁵¹ “probably Kambatta’s people”,²⁵² responding to “the economic stranglehold on the region that had resulted from the destruction of herds during the rinderpest outbreak and to the rising debts owed to European traders”.²⁵³

Kambatta had gone over to the Swartbooi Hottentots with 68 Hereros. He is said to have 4 Martini-Henry rifles with him and has taken his cattle with him (oxen and small livestock).²⁵⁴

And,

[o]f the Hereros, only Headman Kambatta, who had been hostile to Manasse [Tjiseseta] of Omaruru since he had obtained the captaincy, has so far gone over to the enemy with

30 men & 15 rifles. Kambatta was more entitled to the captaincy than Manasse, but he is beaten out of the field by the latter. Manasse himself, as well as the chief Samuel Maharero, still remain loyal to the German cause. Likewise, the Franzfontein Hottentots of Jan Uichamab [[Uixamab] have not yet joined.²⁵⁵

This commando reached Tsaub where they succeeded in ambushing two wagons travelling from Outjo to Franzfontein via Tsaub, led by Sergeant Weigt, Private Stock and Rider Nosper.²⁵⁶ Sergeant Weigt and Private Stock were killed in the attack (Fig. 11.11); Rider Nosper was seriously wounded by several shots and later rescued by the Boer MacDouval and widow Smith; eight M/88 rifles, a box of M/71 cartridges were stolen, together with 24 trek oxen.²⁵⁷

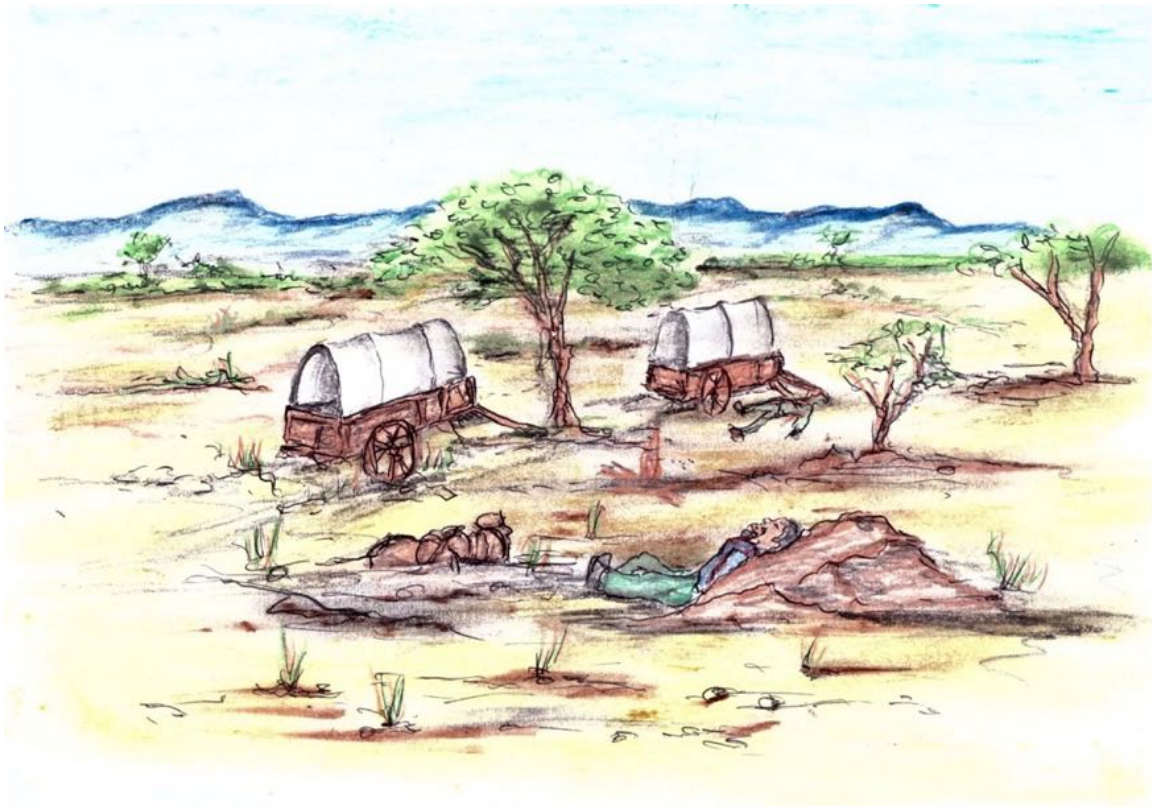


Figure 11.11 The killing of Sergeant Weigt and Private Stock at Tsaub by a commando led by Joel Swartbooi. © Clarence Geingob

11.4 Anabis

On 19 December 1897, Bensen reached Joel Swartbooi's commando at the Anabis waterhole, where oxen were standing on the gorge and up to 30 Swartbooi with horses were approaching

the water via a ravine.²⁵⁸ Retreating to a higher point in the dark, the Swartbooi attempted to “drive the cattle past our position” (Fig. 11.12).²⁵⁹



Figure 11.12 Possible location of German hill hide-out, whilst Swartbooi cattle were being driven through river. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, 2.4.2023.

The following morning a patrol sent out to reconnoitre the Swartbooi’s position reporting that the hilltops ahead “were heavily occupied by the enemy” (Fig. 11.13).²⁶⁰ The patrol opened fire on three Swartbooi coming to fetch bundles of provisions near the German camp, killing two:

[a]fter about an hour’s firefight, I [Bensen] did not think it advisable to storm the hilltops with the few men we had, and therefore ordered us to retreat; I had also noticed that the fire from the hilltops was becoming weaker and weaker, and I suspected that the enemy intended to cut off our way back; in this I should not have been mistaken. When we had gone back about 500m, we received heavy fire from the left flank from the heights, which I immediately had intercepted. In the process, Private Milde was slightly wounded by a shot in the right upper arm. After a short time of rapid fire from all rifles on the enemy, I ordered the retreat under the fire of the rear, which took place without any loss for us despite the heavy fire of the enemy. The enemy’s fire did not cease until the rear had moved about 1000 m. The detachment gathered at the horses, which, covered by three men, had retreated about 3000 m at the first shots. Here also stood the 15 captured trek oxen. I took these oxen and the two rifles with me, while I destroyed the many provisions I could not take with me. In my opinion, the Hottentots were on their way back to Olifantskup [west of Anabis] with the stolen cattle and provisions.²⁶¹

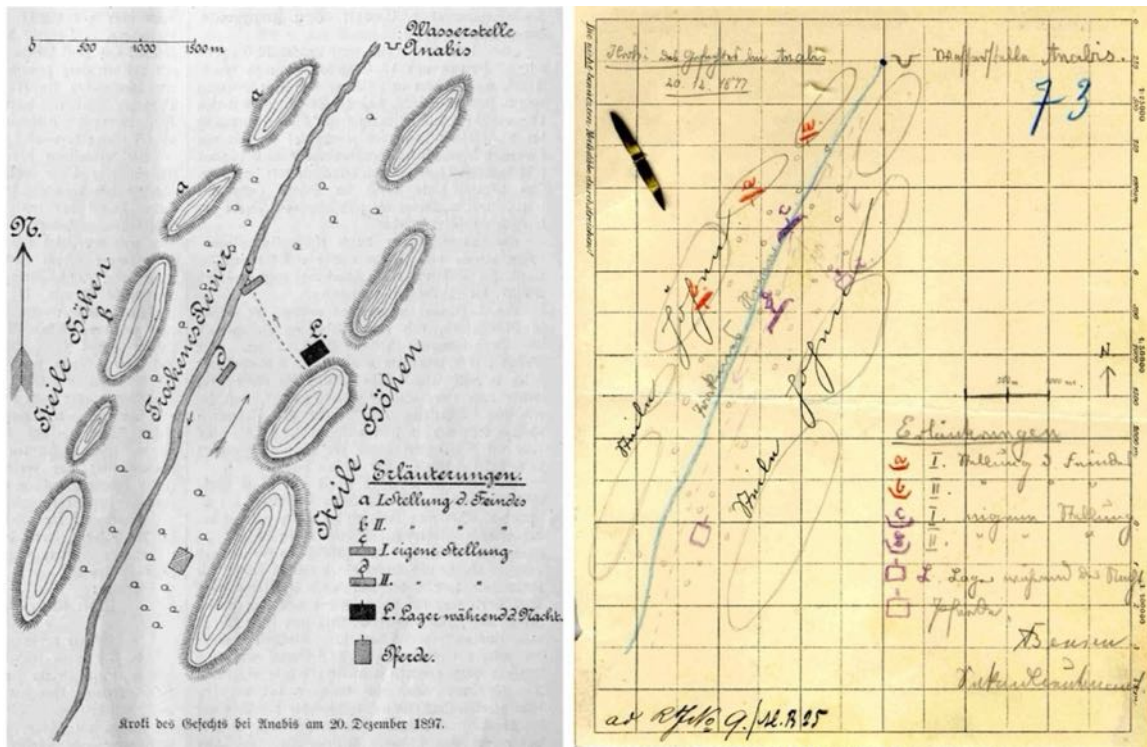


Figure 11.13 (L) 'Sketch of the battle at Anabis on 20 December 1897'. Source: GSWA (n.d.: 419), out of copyright; (R) 2nd Lt. Bensen's original sketch. NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1, 23.12.1897, vol. 1: 73.

11.5 Gaus

Von Estorff reports in the meantime that,

[...] the company had also reached Gaus on 19 December. Here a Hottentot [Nama] werft [settlement] was dug out and it was learned that a Hottentot detachment had passed the company in the direction of Franzfontein. As this place was only very lightly manned and there also seemed to be danger from the Herero from Omburo, I [von Estorff] immediately went back to Groß-Omaruru on a very difficult mountain march and reached Tsaub on 22 December and Franzfontein on the 23rd.²⁶²

11.6 Klein-Tsaub

Early in January 1898 a strong Nama commando was reported in the vicinity of Klein-Tsaub, north of Fransfontein.²⁶³ On the afternoon of 4 January, they approached Klein-Tsaub from Groß-Omaruru on the Huab River (part of the veterinary cordon established in 1896), firing shots at Klein-Tsaub, then retreating in a north-westerly direction.²⁶⁴ The platoons of Lieutenants Eggers and Bensen followed, forming a firing line in the direction of a 'gate'

going west between the mountains. They were fired on from a high pointed mountain, although “nothing could be seen of the enemy” (Fig. 11.14).²⁶⁵

When Eggers reached the top of this mountain, “the enemy” disappeared “under the cliffs”, killing one man, capturing two valuable horses, and seriously wounding Lt. Bensen.²⁶⁶ The firefight continued until dusk, the commando retreating quickly towards Klein Omaruru and leaving two casualties: Rider Mauß was shot dead whilst bandaging Lt. Bensen who was severely wounded; Rider Geißler was shot through the head.²⁶⁷ No dead were found on the Swartbooi side, and their footprints “indicated a hasty flight to Klein-Omaruru” (Fig. 11.15).²⁶⁸



Figure 11.14 The platoons of Lieutenants Eggers and Bensen fire on a strong Nama commando in the vicinity of Klein-Tsaub. © Clarence Geingob

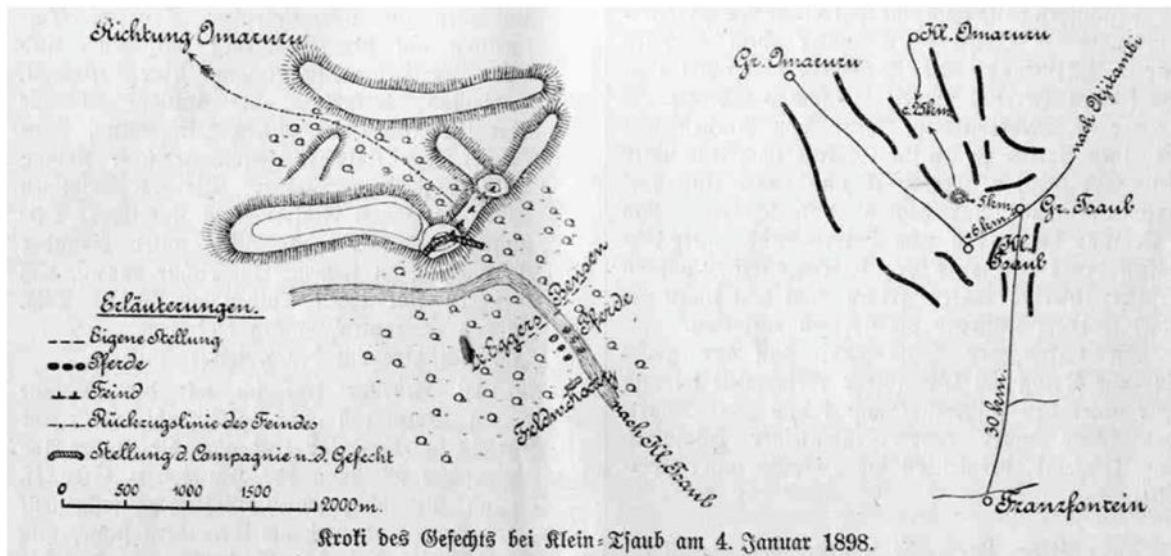


Figure 11.15 Sketch of the battle at Klein-Tsaub on 4 January 1898. Source: GSWA (n.d.: 420), out of copyright.

11.7 Kauas / Khauas

On the morning of 23 January 1898, at Khauas just east of Outjo, three horsemen were guarding “the cattle of the troops”:²⁶⁹

between 200 - 300 cattle were driven off by the Swartbooi Hottentots [Fig. 11.16] after the guard Reiter Kurzweg and a Nama soldier were wounded. The former succumbed to his wounds at the Outjo military hospital. Paymaster-Aspirant Nürnberger of Outjo, at the head of his patrol, retook all the cattle from the Hottentots, who fled, leaving one dead.²⁷⁰



Figure 11.16 Swartbooi Nama drive off cattle from Khauas, east of Outjo. © Clarence Geingob

The report of this incident reached Captain Kaiser in the afternoon, who was “on the advance from Omaruru, three hours’ ride south of Outjo. He immediately rode with a platoon from Pallafontein [south of Outjo] directly to Khauas and on 24 Jan. noted the retreat of the enemy command via Aimab”.²⁷¹ Reportedly, a “Bushman” cattle guard for “the Boer G. Vanrooyen” stated that armed Nama had marched on Khauas, leading to Nürnberger sending for the five horses of the settlement and recruiting a patrol from Outjo consisting of the volunteer officer Salpeter, Private Glatzel, Rider Heise and assistant apprentice Rider Schröder.²⁷² On approaching Khauas, no further firing was heard and it was assumed that “the enemy” had left westwards across mountains with cattle from the settlement, leading to a choice to head towards Khauas mountains to intercept the Nama and retrieve the stolen cattle (Fig. 11.17):²⁷³

[i]n the area on this side of the Kauas Mountains, the patrol came across fresh oxen and human tracks leading half to the right and over the mountains. The patrol took the horses and climbed the steep gorge covered with large boulders over which the tracks led. On reaching the crest, cattle were seen being driven in a north-westerly direction on the large area beyond [...]

The departure from the crest was accelerated as much as possible; the shod horses were causing a lot of noise on the boulders. On the plain the trail was pursued at a gallop, suddenly turned from the northwest back to the southwest towards the mountains, on the slopes of which 52 oxen belonging to the Boers in Outjo were found in the dense bush [...] The cattle were brought through the gap and Rider Schröder was ordered to herd them to Outjo, where they arrived in good order. [...]

Private Glatzel, who was furthest away, was the first to notice the enemy, who was at the end of the cattle train in an open area in a hollow, jumped off his horse about 50 metres from the enemy and fired rapidly; the remaining men approached the fleeing enemy with a hurrah, jumped off and also fired rapidly at the enemy, who was now already fleeing towards the cliffs. The patrol mounted once more and came within 20 metres of the fleeing enemy, who, however, had already reached the cliffy and bushy mountain slope and immediately disappeared. A further advance was no longer possible on horseback, the patrol was too weak to storm. The enemy’s strength was 16 to 18 heads. One Hottentot, who lay dead with 4 shots in his chest and head, was stripped of his rifle and ammunition.

The enemy did not notice our approach and was completely surprised, only 2 shots were fired by the Hottentots, but without hitting. The patrol drove the oxen back to Kauas unmolested by the enemy.²⁷⁴

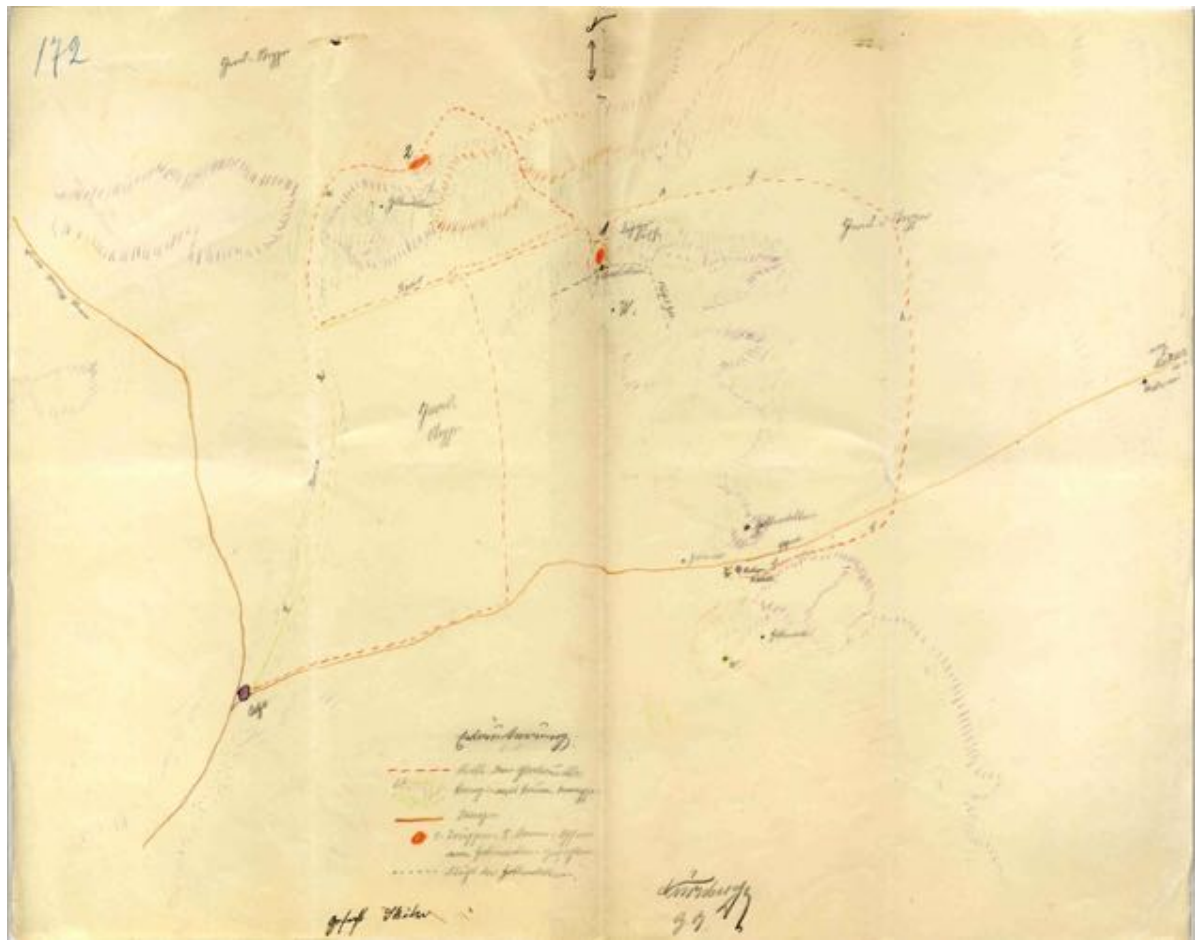


Figure 11.17 Sketch map of the raid on Khauas, east of Outjo, 23.1.1898. NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1, vol. 1: 172.

Sergeant Wittrin reports that on the morning of 23 January 1898, having heard shots in the vicinity of Khauas,

I was about to go there with another man [...] when the horse guard came running and reported that the horses had been stolen by Hottentots. Soon afterwards Rider Kurzweg, who was accompanying the cattle to the pasture as a mounted guard, was shot in the abdomen, back and thigh, wounded to death, and reported that about 18 Hottentots had attacked the cattle guard, that the Nama soldier had been wounded in the thigh by a shot, that he had to give way to the superior force, but that he found the gate occupied by the enemy and that he had been so mauled by a volley fired at him. The cattle had already been driven away by the enemy. Bushmen reported to me that there were Hottentots on the south and west of the station. The station was therefore surrounded by the enemy. I retreated into the building but there was no attack on the station. The enemy's strength is estimated at 30 men. The wounded Nama soldier arrived a little later and reported that the Hottentots were driving the oxen to the Kauas Mountains.

The enemy had taken away his 16/71 rifle, however without cartridges. Between 12 and 1 o'clock, heavy shooting was heard in a northerly direction from the station (in) the

Kauas Mountains. At 4pm all the cattle (221 head and 1 mule) arrived back in Kauas through the gate by a patrol led by the paymaster aspirant Nürnberger. The other 4 horses were in the pasture below the gate.²⁷⁵

11.8 Haudamab / Kauda

In addition, on 6 February 1898, 10 Herero scouts tried to approach Lt. Graf von Kageneck's post at Aub: five were killed, while the others escaped.²⁷⁶ As reported:

[o]n 7 February, a patrol of 20 horsemen under Lieutenant v. Schönau-Wehr had been sent from Namatanga by the Kaiser Company to Haudamab [north of Namatanga and Otjikondo] for reconnaissance. The patrol had encountered ten armed Hereros not far from this place and had shot [killed] five of them. The patrol lost one horse (dead). In Haudamab, Lieutenant Frhr. v. Schönau-Wehr captured a herd of cattle [80 head].

In the meantime, a patrol of Premierlieutenant v. Heydebreck under the bastard [Baster] Jacob Wimmer had also captured a herd of cattle from fleeing armed Hereros not far from Haudamab [Fig. 11.18 and 11.19].²⁷⁷

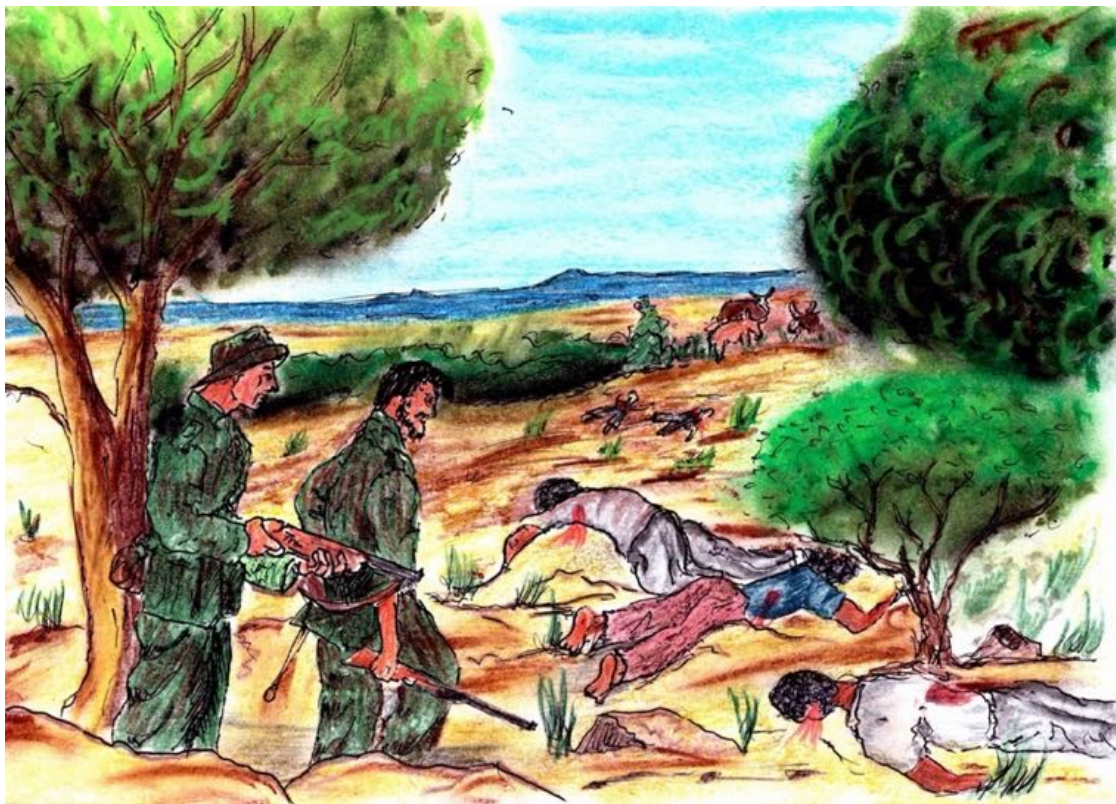


Figure 11.18 A patrol of 20 horsemen under Lieutenant v. Schönau-Wehr shoots and kills armed ovaHerero and captures their cattle at Haudamab / Kauda. © Clarence Geingob



Figure 11.19 Leading away captured ovaHerero cattle. © Clarence Geingob

At the same time, everything is deemed quiet in “West Herero country proper”; Herero leader Katarhe is “held responsible for the cattle thefts committed by his men and has made good the damage”.²⁷⁸

11.9 Groß Achas / †Achas

On 17-18 February, the German military experienced a disaster (Fig. 11.20). As von Estorff writes:

[d]uring the night of February 17-18 the precinct at Gr. Achas, which until then had been dry and in which a large part of the advance had to be made, came down so rapidly and violently that it seized and carried away the horse guard and the horses which were grazing in the precinct. Rider Bergmeier drowned and 3 Namareiter [riders]. Also some [42] of the horses and donkeys.

It is quite impossible to march on under these circumstances. I will return to Franzfontein with the guns. I assume that Major Mueller will turn back on this news and that it will be his intention that Lt. Franke’s column return to Soris-Soris.²⁷⁹



Figure 11.20 Rider Bergmeier, three Nama riders, as well as horses and donkeys, drown in a flash-flood in the river at Achas. © Clarence Geingob

Endnotes

- ²⁴⁰ GSWA (n.d.: 415–416)
- ²⁴¹ *Ibid.* pp. 416–418.
- ²⁴² *Ibid.* p. 418.
- ²⁴³ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 50–51.
- ²⁴⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 51–52.
- ²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 52.
- ²⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 53.
- ²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, GSWA (n.d.: 416)
- ²⁴⁸ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, incl. Lt. Bensen’s report, vol. 2: 61; NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Notification [report by] 2nd Lt. Bensen on the ride of Franzfontein to Anabis and back from 17-21.12.1897’, Bensen (Franzfontein), 21.12.1897, vol. 1: 66.
- ²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, GWSA (n.d.: 418)
- ²⁵⁰ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Participation of Hereros in the raid on wagon transport; Occupation of Okombahe; purchase of horses and riding oxen; relocation of riders to Outjo; Transport of small livestock to Okombahe; Arrival battery and command v. Zülow; Settler Rolfs has reported to be called up’, Mj. Mueller (Okombahe) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 2.1.1898, vol. 1: 100.
- ²⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵² NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report by Hptm. v. Estorff, with sketches’, v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 23.12.1897, vol. 1: 71.
- ²⁵³ Miescher (2012: 33)
- ²⁵⁴ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report from Manasse on 23.1.1898 that Kambatta went over to the Zwartboois with 68 Hereros’, Lt. Ziegler (Omaruru) to Imperial Provincial Governorate (Windhoek), 25.1.1898, vol. 1: 154.
- ²⁵⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Deputy Truppen commander arrived at the theater of war; Crew in Otjo, Omaruru and Okombahe; Kambatta passed over to the enemy; Manasse and Samuel Maharero loyal, as well as Zesfontein Hottentots<Topnaars> under Jan |Uixamab not yet joined the uprising; cattle theft/rustling; State of health of the troops’, v. Lindequist (Okahandja) to German Colonial Department (Berlin), 4.2.1898, vol. 2: 6.
- ²⁵⁶ GSWA (n.d.: 418)
- ²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵⁸ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, incl. 2nd Lt. Bensen’s report, vol. 2: 60, 62.
- ²⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 67, GSWA (n.d.: 418)
- ²⁶⁰ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, incl. 2nd Lt. Bensen’s report, vol. 2: 67.
- ²⁶¹ *Ibid.* pp. 67–68, GSWA (n.d.: 418)
- ²⁶² NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 59; NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Hptm. v. Estorff at place Outjo: Attack on wagon transport by Hottentots’, v. Estorff (Tsaub) to District Administration (Outjo), 21.12.1897, vol. 1: 98; GSWA (n.d.: 418–19)
- ²⁶³ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the events of December 23 1897’, v. Estorff (Franzfontein), 6.1.1898, vol. 1: 124–125; GSWA (n.d.: 420)
- ²⁶⁴ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, incl. 2nd Lt. Bensen’s report, vol. 2: 68.
- ²⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 70, GSWA (n.d.: 420)
- ²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶⁷ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, incl. 2nd Lt. Bensen’s report, vol. 2: 73.
- ²⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 74, NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Conscription of bastards, witboois and leavers; Hereros remain calm’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 5.1.1898, vol. 1: 74.
- ²⁶⁹ GSWA (n.d.: 421)
- ²⁷⁰ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Notice from Lindequist: The Zwartbooi-Hottentots drive away cattle, fatally wounding a German rider; German measures; Kambatta has joined the Zwartboois; Hottentots von Zesfontein <Topnaars> so far calm’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 23-24.1.1898, vol. 1: 163.
- ²⁷¹ GSWA (n.d.: 421)
- ²⁷² NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report of purser aspirant Nürnberger about the attack on Khauas cattle post 273 oxen and cows crew [herdsmen?]’, Nürnberger (Outjo), 23.1.1898, vol. 1: 165.

²⁷³ *Ibid.* pp. 165–166.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 166–167.

²⁷⁵ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Message Uffz. Wittrin on the attack on the Cattle post, with battle sketch’, Sergeant Wittrin (Khauas), 23.1.1898, vol. 1: 169–172.

²⁷⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, vol. 2: 81; GSWA (n.d.: 422)

²⁷⁷ GSWA (n.d.: 422)

²⁷⁸ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Announcement regarding the shooting of a Zwartbooi Hottentot as a spy in Outjo (vgl. S, 189); Clash between Lt. v. Schoenau-Wehr and Hereros of the captain Kambatta in the Kaoko field, 80 large cattle captured, five Hereros dead; in the actual West Hereroland everything continues to be calm’, v. Lindequist (Outjo), 20.2.1898, vol. 1: 221.

²⁷⁹ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Leaving the Riviers near Groß-Achas; Losses’, v. Estorff (Groß Achas) to Mj. Müller (via Otjitambi) and Lt. Franke (Soriso-Soriso), 18.2.1898, vol. 1: 227–228; also NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report from Great Achas; Telegram from Berlin to stop the offensive; troop movements; accumulation of provisions in Franzfontein; Horse death in Outjo’, von Estorff (Franzfontein) to Imperial Provincial Governorate (Windhoek), 21.2.1898, vol. 1: 224; NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Announcement: everything is calm in Hereroland; Column of Hptm. V. Estorff forced to return to Franzfontein by an agreement between the Riviere; 1 rider, 3 Nama and 42 horses and donkeys drowned near Great Achaz’, von Lindequist (Outjo), 24.2.1898, vol. 1: 223; GSWA (n.d.: 426)

12. The German Military Organise

As these battles were unfolding, with the ovaHerero headman Kambatta joining the Swartboois, and anticipation that the ‘Zessfontein’ Nama may also join,²⁸⁰ the German military made efforts to organise their response.

In mid-December 1897, von Lindequist deployed surveyor Georg Hartmann to try and facilitate an “open discussion” with the Swartbooi.²⁸¹ Hartmann speaks with an old guide of his, Johannes Swartbooi, learning that in the preparation for war, all the women, children, cattle, old, weak and sick people had trekked north via Kaross (north-west of Otjitambi) and Kowareb on the Hoanib River, towards the northern part of Kaokoveld (Fig. 12.1). Their settlements were now in the area around Sesfontein and the Hoanib River, and from Sanitatis to !Nadas in the western Kaokoveld.²⁸² Their intention was to cross the Kunene River if necessary. By late December 1897, it was thought possible that Jan |Uixamab, !Gomen Nama Captain of Sesfontein, may also join the Swartboois.²⁸³

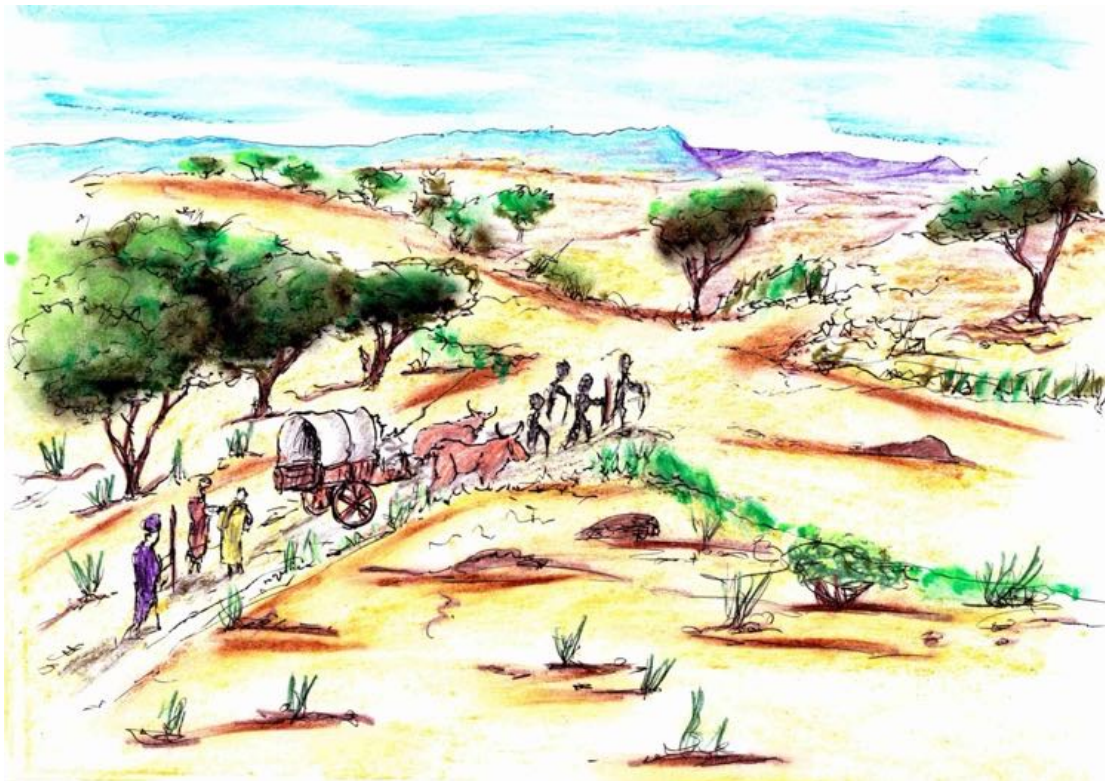


Figure 12.1 Women, children, cattle, old, weak and sick people, trek northwards across the Hoanib. © Clarence Geingob

It is reported that a lot of powder (ammunition) came in to supply the Swartboois: from “Ovatjimba living on the other side of the Kunene [River]”, and from Samuel Swartbooi

trading with “Ovambos”.²⁸⁴ By this time it is reported that “[a]ll the passes from Franzfontein, Otjitambi, Okaukuejo into Ovamboland are now closed”, and the rains mean there is “vley water everywhere between Okaukuejo and Otjitambi”.²⁸⁵ As von Estorff writes,

[f]or the time being, we must confine ourselves to securing the area around Franzfontein and to provisioning ourselves for a longer period of time, until horses and men are sufficiently strengthened to take on the enemy again. [...] The occupation of Otjo [Outjo] must be strengthened, most advantageously by equipping it with a gun. I therefore consider the reinforcement of the North District to be in need of at least two guns, so that one can also be placed in Franzfontein. For its operations in the mountainous terrain, the company needs a light rapid-fire gun instead of the heavy field gun construction 73 [made in 1873] which it now has to carry. [...] The northern Kaoko field is unknown to the Herero and they will therefore only be a hindrance to us as escorts in larger numbers. I will send for Jonathan, Manasse’s ambassador, and instruct him.²⁸⁶

Captain Manasse Tjiseseta of Omaruru pledges his support for the Germans. He hands von Lindequist a letter of 29 November 1897 from Samuel Swartbooi, with von Lindequist asking Manasse for assistance to the German government and their support for Lazarus Swartbooi.²⁸⁷ Manasse confirms to von Lindequist that he will not join the Swartboois, and offers 200 men to the German regime to help with the conflict.²⁸⁸ In December 1897, von Lindequist takes six Hereros, including Captain Manasse’s eldest son Michael, writing that:

[a]s further proof of his loyalty, Manasse yesterday handed me a letter he had just received from Samuel Zwartbooi [...] in which the latter asked him for help against their captain Lazarus Zwartbooi and the German government. In response to my question, Manasse told me that he would not answer the letter at all, since he had never had anything to do with Samuel Zwartbooi. On the other hand, he immediately sent an order to the Hereros living in the Kaoko field to withdraw their werfts from the border so that they would not become involved in the war, and he also wanted to send a message to all sub-captains that he and his tribe had nothing in common with the Hottentots.²⁸⁹

By mid-December Lieutenant Bensen had moved to Franzfontein via Okombahe with 15 horsemen, and von Lindequist writes of his concern that the Topnaar under Jan |Uixamab of Sesfontein will join with the Swartbooi,²⁹⁰ and move northwards across the Kunene River. He argued that this will be the moment to subjugate “Ovamboland” through landing military at “Fischbai”.²⁹¹ There is also an unfounded rumour that Captain von Estorff had Lazarus

Swartbooi shot because he had caught him in treason, and that “Ovambos” may join the uprising.²⁹²

The focus of the war is “Gei!Huis” (Kai|uis / Grootberg) where “[i]t has been ascertained by messengers that the enemy is sitting at the Gau water near the Grootberg in a force of 200 to 300 men”.²⁹³ Grootberg is described as “a mighty table mountain range with gorges and valleys that fills the middle of the Kaoko”, the intention being “to divide into small groups and open the war in different places”.²⁹⁴ Thus,

[...] after provisioning itself from two wagons coming from Otjo [Outjo], [the company] set off for Khauas-Okara [Cauas Okawa] on 17 December. This was done with the intention of bypassing the mountains and reaching the Grootberg, where the main werft of the rebels was suspected to be [at Olifantskup, north-west of Franzfontein²⁹⁵]. The shorter march through the mountains was closed to the company, as it had to travel with a column of provisions. The company, 70 strong, was accompanied by 29 Hottentots. It carried a cannon, 1 wagon and 1 cart. As they only had 16 horses and 25 donkeys, part of the crew had to march on foot. 3 wagons, with those things that the company did not want to take with them and only lightly loaded, went to Franzfontein.²⁹⁶

By late January, the fighters and settlements of Samuel Swartbooi and Jan |Uixamab, were sitting at the Grootberg, although the leader Kaisib, dwelling north of Namatanga, “had not yet united with them”.²⁹⁷ Georg Hartmann proposes a surprise advance using horses, “on the western road via Sorris-Sorris, Toawisis [Tsawisis], Kaijas [Kai-as], along the Mudorib River via the Hoarnoib [Hoanib] River to Sanatantas [Sanitatis]”: to seize settlements in the north, block the western Kunene River crossing at the Marienfluss; accompanied by “forceful action” in a north-westerly direction from Franzfontein-Otjitambi.²⁹⁸ He warns of spies “for which xandaman (mountain damaras) [Damara/#Nūkhoen] are mainly used”.²⁹⁹ Hartmann additionally writes that:

I consider mediation to be completely out of the question now, although not entirely impossible. Once the war has begun, I think it would be in Germany’s interest to finish it ruthlessly, to clear the Kaoko field and also be prepared to fight the Ovambos. All this will happen in one go. For me it is absolutely certain that the Ovambo (at least the western ones) are involved in the Orlog [war]. They help indirectly with ammunition, guns, cattle for slaughter etc. [...] For all these reasons, it is necessary under all circumstances to force the Portuguese government either to intervene vigorously and emphatically from the north itself or to allow us to intervene militarily at Tiger Bai. If the Orlog were to be delayed for

2-3 months, if preparations were made thoroughly at the Sorri Sorris Franzfontein base, until everything was prepared on the Portuguese side either by the Portuguese or by us, then a brilliant success and a complete defeat of the tribes of the Kaoko field and the Ovamboland could be guaranteed. I reckon that 200 men under expert leadership would be enough to land in Tiger Bai by surprise and to appear by surprise from the north, if at the same time an energetic attack were made from the south. I am considering whether the Boers of the northern area should not also be assembled to take part at the same time in the great action (which would have to take place about the end of February or March) of Okaukuejo-Namutoni. The old commander Lombard would be suitable as their leader. Of course, the time of year is the most unfavourable because of fever and horse sickness.³⁰⁰

By around 20 December, Franzfontein is hosting “16 non-commissioned officers, 72 men, 12 native horsemen, 20 Hottentots of Captain Lazarus, 76 horses and donkeys”, although the horses and donkeys “are in unusable condition except for a small fraction”.³⁰¹ This company is reinforced on 25 December, when Sergeant Froede from Grootfontein arrives with 20 horsemen and assistant doctor Dr Kuhn.³⁰² In addition:

1. ammunition is moved from Omaruru to Outjo “with the wagon of the trader Lambert”;
2. “a relief post” is established at Otjikango to maintain “a regular connection between Outjo and Omaruru” for reporting information “from the theatre of war”;
3. staff doctor Dr Langheld is sent to Franzfontein;
4. 10 horsemen are sent from Otjimbingwe to Outjo via Omaruru;
5. field troops under the command of Lt. von Zülow move with Mj. Müller “via Okombahe to Sorris/Sorris and Franzfontein respectively” with rations and oats also moved via Okombahe with “a rations depot [...] set up in Sorris/Sorris by white horsemen and natives”;
6. and the “trader Strüß is expected in the next few days with 5 wagons of provisions for Franzfontein and 2 wagons of provisions for Outjo”.³⁰³

One officer, 30 men and 40 horses “are to be sent immediately to occupy Omaruru and await there [for] further commands”.³⁰⁴ Major Müller additionally requests,

two mountain guns and four Maxim guns of the latest model, the latter in mobile mounts with the necessary ammunition. These are absolutely necessary in view of the impassable mountain terrain to which the Swartbooï Hottentots have retreated.³⁰⁵

Conscription of Basters (with Lt. von Schönau) and Witbooïis (with District Captain von Burgsdorff) is also called for, their involvement considered desirable because of the difficult Kaoko terrain (Fig. 12.2).³⁰⁶ On 20 December 1897 an order is issued to the Gibeon district governor in southern German South West Africa, stating that,

in view of the unrest which has broken out among the Swartbooïis, the extent and course of which cannot yet be foreseen, the mobilisation of the Witbooï is to be prepared.³⁰⁷

Later, it is recorded that:

Captain v. Burgsdorff will leave here tomorrow morning [16.2.1898] for Omaruru with about 100 Witbooïis in order to be used against the Zwartbooïis according to the orders of H. von Lindequist, and indeed according to the situation.³⁰⁸



Samuel Ifaat Hendrik Witbooï Ifaat Witbooï

Figure 12.2 ‘Hottentotten’ [Witbooïis], with Hendrik Witbooï in the centre of the image. Source: Leutwein (1906: 15), out of copyright.

In January, von Lindequist again writes directly to Hendrik Witbooi (Fig. 12.3).³⁰⁹

Dear Captain!

You will already have heard that the Zwartbooi under Samuel Zwartbooi have risen up against their captain Lazarus and the German government. In order to bring the war to a speedy conclusion, I ask you, on the basis of the treaty of protection and the treaty of 16 November 1895 / 15 January 1896 to come to Windhoek with 60 men, where I will discuss everything else with Mr v. Burgsdorff and you. I hope that you are healthy enough to come at least as far as Windhoek.

I greet you from the bottom of my heart and am your friend.
vL.

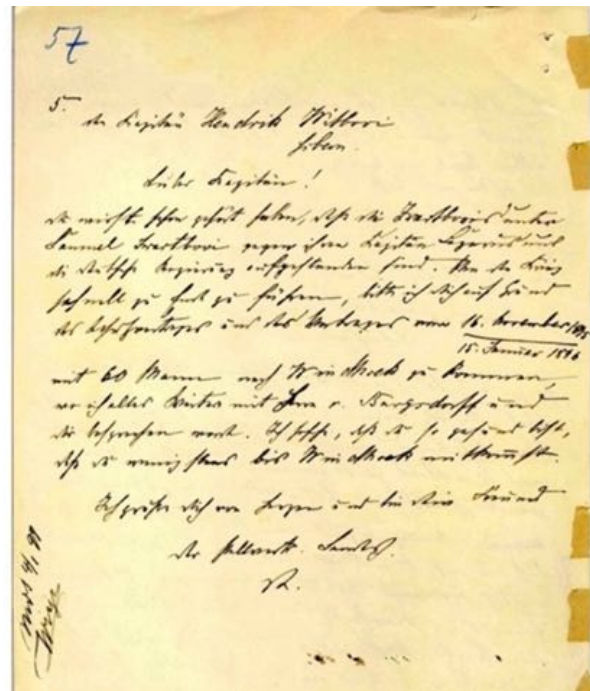


Figure 12.3 NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Conscripting the Witboois', von Lindequist (Windhoek) to Hendrik Witbooi (Gibeon), 4.1.1898, vol. 1: 57.

Whilst Baster riders became part of the campaign,³¹⁰ it seems that ultimately the Witboois did not participate due to illness. In January, Captain Kaiser also writes that in his opinion “the Hereros might feel behind if we preferred the support of the Witbois to that of the Hereros”.³¹¹

Captain Manasse Tjiseseta of Omaruru further communicates his readiness to support von Lindequist in a letter of 26 December 1897 (Fig. 12.4):

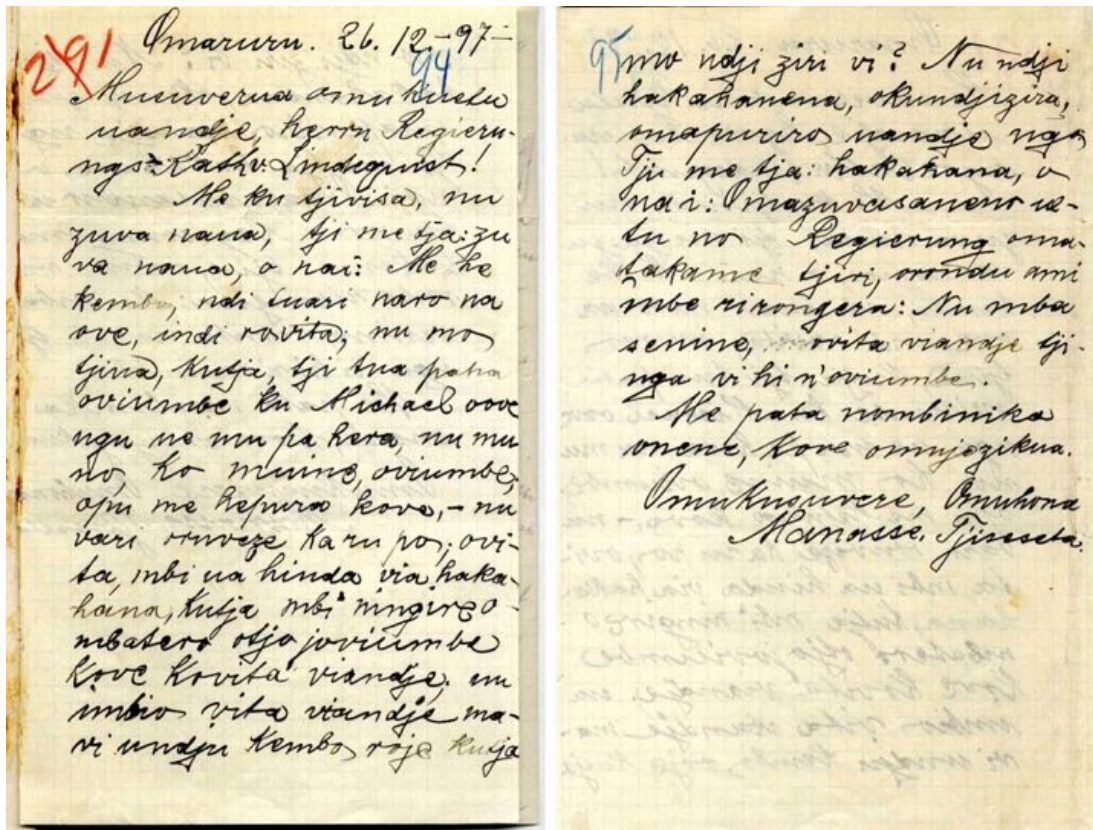


Figure 12.4 NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Kaptain Manasse of Omaruru communicates that he is ready to help', Manasse Tjiseseta (Omaruru) to v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 26.12.1897, vol. 1: 94–95.

On 5 January, von Lindequist writes again to Manasse Tjiseseta of Omaruru urging him to tell followers of Kambatta to desist from allying with Nama:

Captain von Estorff writes me that some Herero, probably people from Kambata, were also involved in the attack on the Tsaub wagons. Captain von Estorff does not trust the Hereros of Omburo and Oruseva. I therefore wanted to ask you to pay special attention to them and to send them particularly strict orders that they should keep quiet and not make common cause with the Hottentots.³¹²

On 15 January, von Lindequist urgently requests ovaHerero railway workers from Manasse to be sent to the Khan River.³¹³ He also requests Captain Schwartzkopff of the ship *Habicht* [*Hawk*] anchored in Swakopmund,

to examine the mouth of the Uniab [*!Uniab*] for the possibility of landing and to remain in Swakopmund or on the German coast until the Schutztruppe has won a decisive victory. I consider a landing at the Uniab and an advance up the river to be impossible without completely knowledgeable guides, and provisioning to be very difficult.³¹⁴

In a letter to von Lindequist of 4 March, Captain Schwartzkopff replies that he,

reconnoitred the mouth of the Uniab and Hoanib as well as the so-called anchorage behind Fort Rock Point with S.M.S. 'Habicht'. None of the three places offers any protection against the surf, so that a landing with boats, even in such rare good weather and calm water as I found, cannot be accomplished without danger, because it is impossible to land without first having to pass at least one, more or less high, breaker. Only the other day at Cape Cross I had the opportunity of seeing for myself that our boats were unsuitable for use in the surf. [...] With surf boats, on the other hand, a landing can be made, although in my opinion only in good weather, and almost all points on the coast between Uniab River and Fort Rock are under approximately the same conditions as in Swakopmund.³¹⁵

At the same time, Captain von Estorff writing from Franzfontein laments that “[t]he company can at present only depend on foot marches, and therefore lacks the main condition for success against the bold and skilful enemy, namely rapid mobility”, adding that:

[w]e cannot match the Hottentots in marching ability, in the ability to endure hunger and thirst; provided with good horses, however, I would have been equal to them in mobility even in the mountains and could have counted on a resounding success, perhaps I would also have succeeded in preventing the outbreak of war.³¹⁶

He requests the support of reliable Basters and Witbooi riders, plus:

- I) A platoon of rapid fire guns, possibly under First Lt. Heydebreck and about 30 well-mounted men to Franzfontein, as well as about 30 good, useful horses, if a larger number cannot be procured.
- II) To reinforce the Otjo [Outjo] place with 30 horsemen and 1 field gun C/73. This measure is necessary because it is possible that the enemy will extend his prowling to Otjo as long as I cannot touch him.
- III) [...] Okombahe and Omaruru also remain strongly manned [...] so that any unrest in north-western Hereroland can be countered and so that every wagon transport can march from Okombahe to Franzfontein with a strong covering.³¹⁷

Manasse Tjiseseta's "ambassador" Jonathan travels "around the north-western Herero homesteads in order to withdraw them to the south and to exhort them to remain peaceful".³¹⁸

Early in February Manasse also reports via his son Michael at Otjongoro that:

[...] various werfts [villages], at least five, including those of Kasendera, Kanaminiua, Kandinsonongo, Kako Kako, are defecting to the Swartboois. Kasendera's werft had to

turn back, but Kasendera himself crossed over with 2 people. Michael was able to hold back the sons of Katjituezu of Ongarivanda, whereby a shot killed one of the Katjituezu's men.³¹⁹

A gathering of troops “belonging to the captaincy of the Kambazembi” in Waterberg is also rumoured to be “connected with an intended mobilisation against the Swartboois, which Samuel Maharero had promised Herr von Lindequist, in addition to the 50 people taken along for the war [...]”.³²⁰ Indeed, von Lindequist writes:

[o]n my way here [Outjo] from Omaruru I was convinced that the western Hereroland can now be considered completely calm. The only big man who was still doubtful has, on my orders, vacated his place Ombinde Karambi, and is placed under Mbanjo, the reliable friend of Captain Manasse. I held him responsible for a theft committed by his people during the war. He had to replace the stolen large and small cattle and also pay a fine in cattle, which he was to get back as soon as he handed over the 4 cattle thieves. The effect was that already yesterday a son of Katarrhe appeared with 3 head of cattle. The 4th, who had attacked a sergeant in pursuit, is still missing.

Yesterday, moreover, the eldest son of Chief Kambazembi of the Waterberg arrived and had a delegation of the greatest Bushman Chief †Aribib [of !Naidaus, south of Etosha Pan] to assure me of their devotion and loyalty. The Hottentots tried in vain to draw Aribib and his people over to them.³²¹ Kaunjonjoa, the son of Kambazembi, had a number of Hereros with him with whom he wanted to join us, but they fell so ill with fever on the way that he sent them back to the Waterberg.³²²

At the end of December, Major Müller again requests that:

the Imperial District Command by telegraph to order from the Foreign Office two mountain guns and four Maxim guns of the latest model, the latter in mobile mounts with the necessary ammunition. These are absolutely necessary in view of the impassable mountain terrain to which the Swartbooi Hottentots have retreated.³²³

And by beginning of January, von Lindequist is advertising in Windhoek, Otjimbingwe and Swakopmund, for reservists to enlist in the campaign against the Swartbooi, preferably with their own “horse and tack”:

[f]or each horse, which is to be appraised beforehand by the expert commission, a monthly wear and tear allowance of 15 marks and full compensation in the event of loss through service will be granted. The salary of the batch is given as pay.

Reservists who voluntarily enlist with horse and saddle equipment can be recruited into the troops against the salary of their batch for the campaign against the Swartbooi Hottentots. A monthly allowance of 15 marks will be paid for each horse, which is to be appraised in advance by the Commission of Experts, and full compensation will be paid in the event of loss through service.³²⁴

The basis for reservists and volunteers to be mobilised for military service derives from a government Decree of 30 March 1897.³²⁵

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Eggers sets off on the evening of 6 January 1898 with 40 men providing cover for three wagons bringing supplies from Outjo to Franzfontein;³²⁶ Captain Kaiser marches with 2 officers, 50 horsemen and 8 soldiers to Omaruru, and then on to Franzfontein via Outjo (Fig. 12.5);³²⁷ and Mj. Müller leaves Sorris-Sorris for Franzfontein in mid-January, arriving with 20 horsemen, 60 worn out horses, and 10 wagons containing provisions.³²⁸

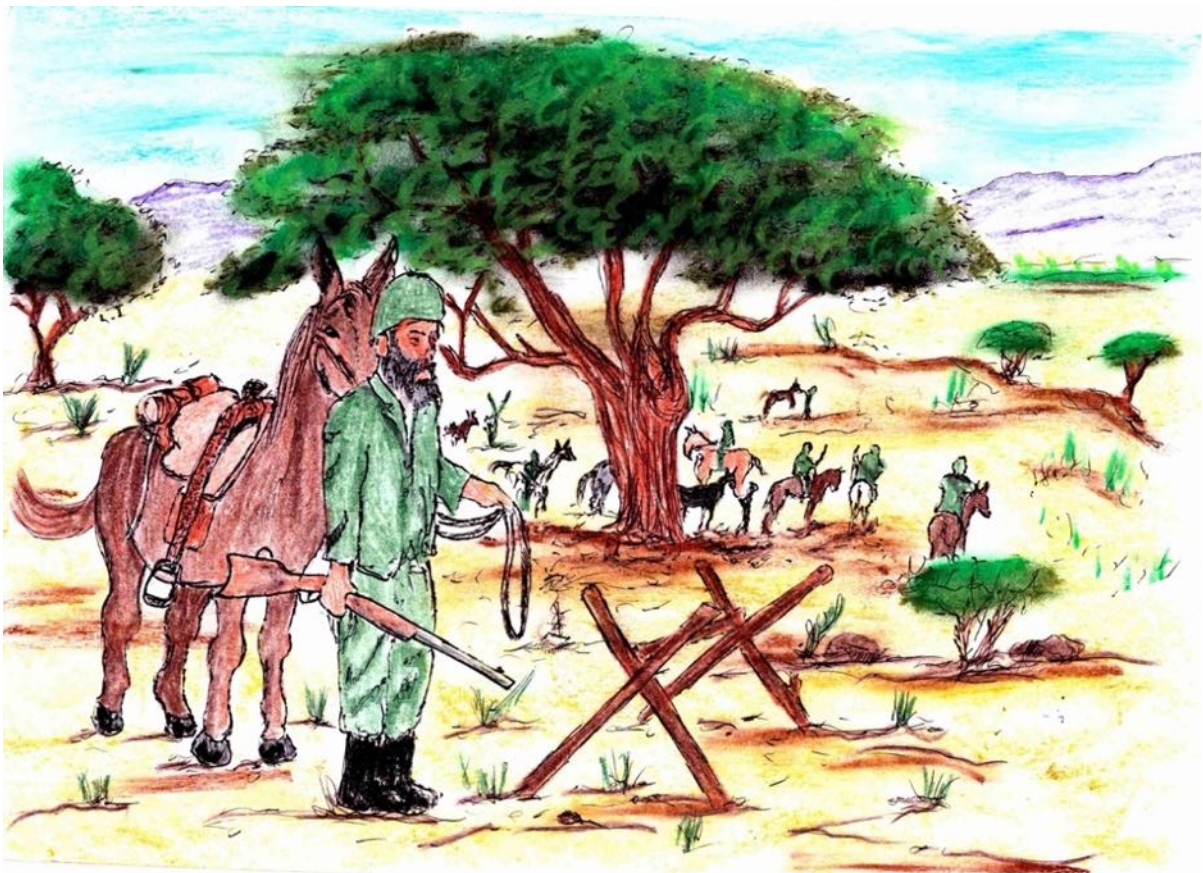


Fig. 12.5 Bringing horses to Outjo area. © Clarence Geingob

The heightened organising of the German military is indicated in these statements:

[...] after about 50 mounted non-commissioned officers and horsemen, as well as a number of native soldiers, left on the 4th of this month under Captain Reiser, 2 horsemen and 32 mounted bastards [Basters], as well as 1 sergeant, 2 non-commissioned officers and 17 men from the field troop, all of them un-mounted, will leave for Omaruru tomorrow morning under Lieutenant Frhr. v. Schönau. [...] It may be worth considering whether this force should not march from Okombahe via Tsawisis to Zessfontein if the enemy retreats to the latter place. I request that you send news of this to Okombahe.³²⁹

And,

[t]he appearance of a larger detachment of troops in and near Outjo also appears to be advantageous both with regard to the attitude of the Hereros and as a dampener on the Hottentots' spirit of enterprise.³³⁰

On arrival at Franzfontein, Major Müller learns that,

the Swartbooi Hottentots under their leaders Samuel and Joel Swartbooi, the Topnaar Hottentots under Jan Uichamab [[Uixamab] and the Hereros under Kambatta, were sitting at the Grootberg south of the Etendeka Mountains [Gau-Wasser and Wittklip] in a force of 2-300 men.³³¹

The advance towards Grootberg, with companies led by Capn. Kaiser and First Lt. Franke, begins. At around the same time, Samuel Swartbooi who had returned to Klein-Omaruru (on the ǀHuab River) after the battle of Tsaub, steals some oxen there, retreating afterwards in the direction of Tutara:³³²

[i]n Tutara and Keirob several Herero settlements were intercepted, which had moved north from the area of Omburo in order to unite with the Hottentots, with whom the Herero fugitive Kambatta and some of his followers were already present. Some of Kambatta's Herero men had also taken part in the wagon attack in Tsaub and in the battle in Klein-Tsaub.³³³

In late January a telegram is again sent to Berlin requesting 150 men for the "northern campaign" (on account of illness amongst the military), and a further urgent request for:

two mountain guns and four Maxim guns with men and ammunition. Guns as well as men are of utmost importance on account of the difficult and mountainous country. Maxim guns must be on wheels.³³⁴

By this time, serious military planning was underway:

1. The enemy's main forces appear to be still at Grootberg [Kai|uis]. A detachment of the enemy carried out a cattle raid near Outjo on the 28th of this month and then returned in the direction of Otjitambi.
2. A platoon of the 4th Field Company and two guns marched from here to Otjitambi on the 28th. Captain Raiser's company arrived in Outjo on the 24th. He will proceed from there to Otjitambi. [...]
3. Premier lieutenant Franke goes to Okombahe immediately after receiving this order. A small crew is to be left behind in Okombahe. The rest of the crew and the command of Sergeant Koczy [and] premier Lieutenant Franke in Sorris-Sorris or Vogel-kranz and is ready to proceed from there to Bethanis and Tsawisis.
- 4) I request Premier Lieutenant Franke to provide himself with the necessary provisions, if possible with horses, as well as saddlery for the garrison of Okombahe (20 men) and the command of Sergeant Koczy (20 men), and to secure the cooperation of Herr Erdmann and native guides.
5. no action from Sorris-Sorris may take place until after my special order.³³⁵

On 1 February, however, a telegram is sent from the head of the Colonial Department in Berlin to the German consulate in Cape Town, urging that war in the north should be limited to defence (Fig. 12.6):

The war campaign in the north is to be refrained from, limit to defence. Quick immediate message to Windhoek.³³⁶

Cape Town, 1. February 1898.

From Berlin
to German Consulate Cape Town.

We are for Perhendt, Swakopmund.
Verstärkung im Norden ist zu unter-
lassen, beschränken auf Abwehr. Rüstung
Mitführung nach Windhoek. Richtofen.

Figure 12.6 NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'War in the north should be avoided and limited to defense', v. Richtofen, Head of Colonial Dept., Berlin, to Kaiser Consulate General Cape Town, vol. 2: 2.

Von Lindequist leaves Windhoek on 3 February 1898, accompanying the Kepler detachment (50 horsemen and 50 ovaHerero) from Omaruru via Outjo to Franzfontein; reporting that

there is “no longer any danger from the Western Hereros”, but it is necessary “to catch the Hereros who have fallen away”.³³⁷ Captain Samuel Maharero and Assa Riarua also ride from Okahandja with von Lindequist to Omaruru:

von Lindequist wanted more Hereros to join him & I have no doubt that this plan is connected with the meeting of the Hereros in the north & at the Omuramba.³³⁸

On the basis of the telegram from Berlin, von Estorff presumes that,

by the 25th of this month [February] Major Mueller’s column will be back in Otjitambi and Lt. Franke’s in Soris-Soris [Sores-Sores].

I will then suggest to Major Mueller that the 4th Field Company return to Otjo [Outjo] and keep Franzfontein heavily occupied, that the company of Capt. Kaiser goes to Okombahe [Åtgommes] and heavily occupies Soris-Soris, that a company under Prem. Lieut. Franke assembles in Omaruru. [...]³³⁹

And yet, the war continued. Indeed, von Lindequist later writes that “[t]he suspension of operations in response to the telegram would, however, have been a grave and very costly mistake”.³⁴⁰ On 2 February, First Lt. Franke reports that “on a reconnaissance ride near the Grootberg, he had encountered about 30 enemy Hottentots or Hereros who had fled from him. A cloudburst and the overcast terrain made pursuit impossible” (Fig. 12.7).³⁴¹



Figure 12.7 Cloudburst making terrain impossible to pursue ‘the enemy’. © Clarence Geingob

Executions also begin. On 2-3 February a “Swartbooi Kuton” was seized,

under suspicious circumstances at the local Buschmann werft and, interrogated by me [Captain Kaiser], apparently made untrue statements, whereupon I had him locked up. Interrogated again [...] and confronted with other Swartbois, he gradually admitted to having taken part in the battle at Zaub [Tsaub] on the side of the Swartbois, to have been involved in the theft of cattle at Outjo (belonging to the Kaisib division) and now to have been sent as a spy by the aforementioned division to spy on the Outjo place. The court sentenced him to death, which was to be carried out immediately according to the circumstances.³⁴²

Von Lindequist publicises this execution in an “Announcement” on 20 February, saying: “[i]n Outjo, a Swartboy Hottentot was seized as a spy and shot” (Fig. 12.8).³⁴³

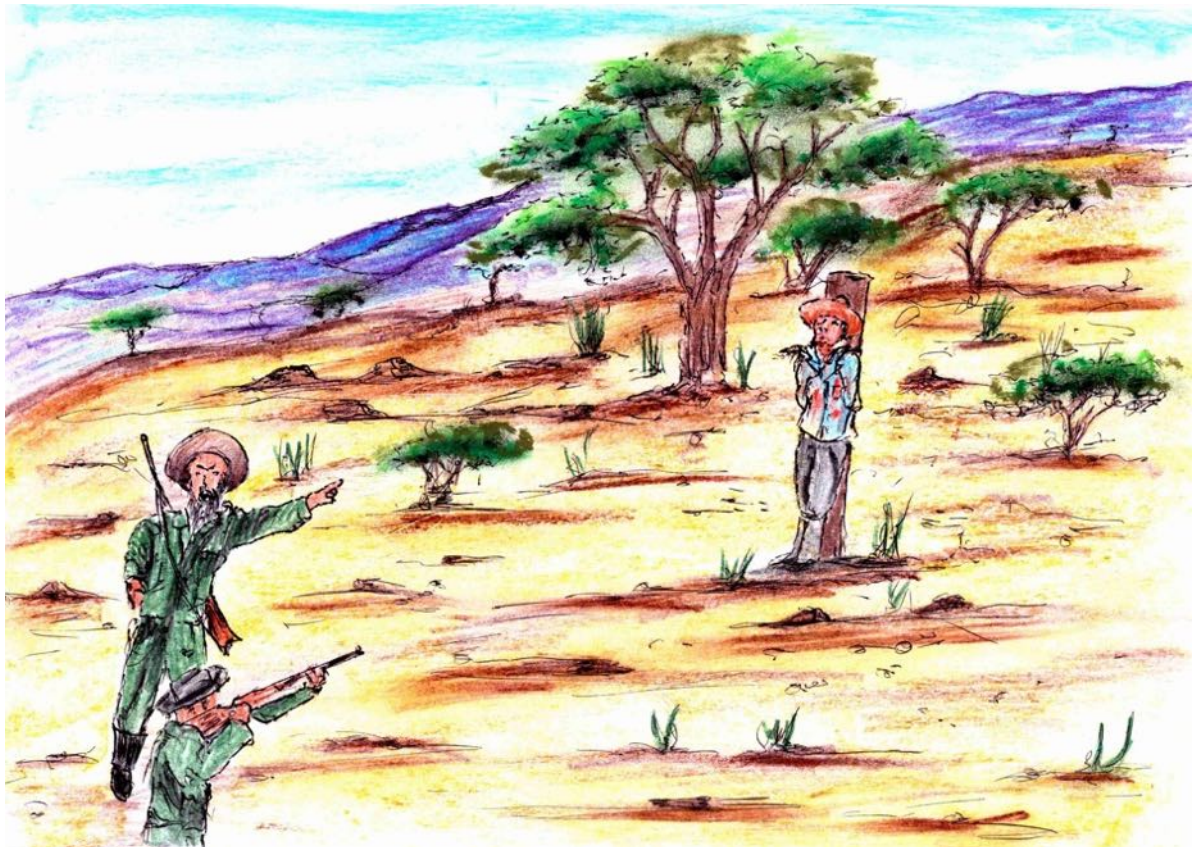


Figure 12.8 Swartbooi Kuton is executed by German military for being a spy. © Clarence Geingob

On 3 February, Baster soldiers leave Windhoek for Omaruru, heading for the “theatre of war”. Captain Kaiser also learns,

that the Kaisib detachment, composed of Topnars-Swartbois and Bergdamaras [ǀNūkhoen], was about 35 men strong, well-armed [...] and with several horses. At

present they are at Kaudamab (near Orubob) to the north of Namatanga and are separated from the large Swartboi fighters sitting on the Grootberg. Their mission is to steal cattle and to disturb and damage us in the small war in the Outjo area. The larger part of the bastards [Basters] with a large wagon transport has still not arrived here, I expect them this evening. After their arrival, I will proceed immediately to Otjitambi and will try to capture the Kaisib's orlog [commando], possibly with the assistance of Pr Lt. v. Heydebreck, who, according to yesterday's report, is in Otjikondo with 15 horsemen and 1 gun. It seems doubtful whether it will be possible to drive Kaisib out of the area between Outjo and Otjitambi. As the reconnaissance so far has shown, Kaisib, favoured by water and terrain conditions, moves around the whole area north and west of Outjo, never staying long in one place.³⁴⁴

By 5 February, a son of Kambatta and 31 Hereros had been captured by Captain von Estorff and Lieutenant Eggers, with Manasse Tjiseseta's son Michael also capturing several "rebellious Hereros".³⁴⁵ Von Lindequist additionally reports that,

[t]he war situation has changed insofar as the Topnaar Hottentots of Zessfontein and a small number of smaller western Herero werfts have gone over to the Zwartboois [thereby breaking the German protection treaty]. It is thanks to the loyal behaviour of Captain Manasse of Omaruru that more Hereros did not defect. His son Michael resolutely held back werfts that were in the process of being moved and had to take 3 prisoners into custody at the local station, where one rebellious Herero was shot dead.

Lt. Eggers also captured 15 rebellious Hereros, including a son of Headman Kambatta. Major Müller intends to leave on 12 February this year with the troops united in Franzfontein and Otjitambi and possibly attack the enemy at Grootberg north-west of Franzfontein. Pr. Lt. Franke is with a detachment to Sorris-Sorris to possibly proceed by order on the way [to] Bethanis-Tsawisis.

The detachment of c. 50 horsemen and Bastard [Baster] soldiers with as many Herero will advance to Outjo, to thwart any intention of Katarrhe [an ovaHerero leader] joining the insurrection, and to punish defective groups of Herero and then to meet up with the main troop in Kaokofeld. As the Zessfontein Hottentots have joined, an understanding then and there with the Deputy Troop Commander is, on account of the political situation, urgently needed.³⁴⁶

On 12 February, Major Müller intended to set off from Franzfontein to Grootberg to attack Nama including Jan |Uixamab of Sesfontein, as well as the Swartboois.³⁴⁷ First Lieutenant Franke leaves Omaruru for Sorris-Sorris on the Ugab River, with two non-commissioned

officers, eight men on horseback, and 20 ovaHerero: 10 from Samuel Maherero of Okahandja, and 10 from Manasse Tjiseseta of Omaruru.³⁴⁸ Also on this date, von Lindequist makes a public announcement that,

[a]nyone who takes in or hides a Herero or Hottentot who fought on the side of the Swartbois in the war will be punished as a traitor to the German Government. Everyone is obliged to catch such people and hand them over to the German government or to Captain Manasse in Omaruru. Natives who catch insurgents and hand them over to the government or to Captain Manasse will receive a reward of 100 marks.³⁴⁹

He also describes how,

David Zwartbooi is well guarded [imprisoned] with me. I believe that it might be possible to persuade a part of the Zwartbooi to surrender to mercy or disgrace through him, especially if, as I hope, they suffer a defeat at the Grootberg. David will do everything to persuade them to submit and certainly believes that his brothers and their followers will do so, while he is doubtful about the others.³⁵⁰

On 15 February, von Lindequist issues a decree, prefiguring the Pass Laws of the early 1900s:

[e]very native who leaves the Kaokofeld and West Hereroland (:Captaincy of Manasse:) must, until further notice, be provided with a passport issued by a German police authority, station or troop detachment.

Natives encountered without a passport may be apprehended by any white or native person and shall be handed over to the nearest police authority or troop detachment.

They shall be punished with a fine or imprisonment of up to 3 months, unless they are liable to more severe punishment as traitors to the country.³⁵¹

Both announcements were also made in otjiHerero (Fig. 12.9):

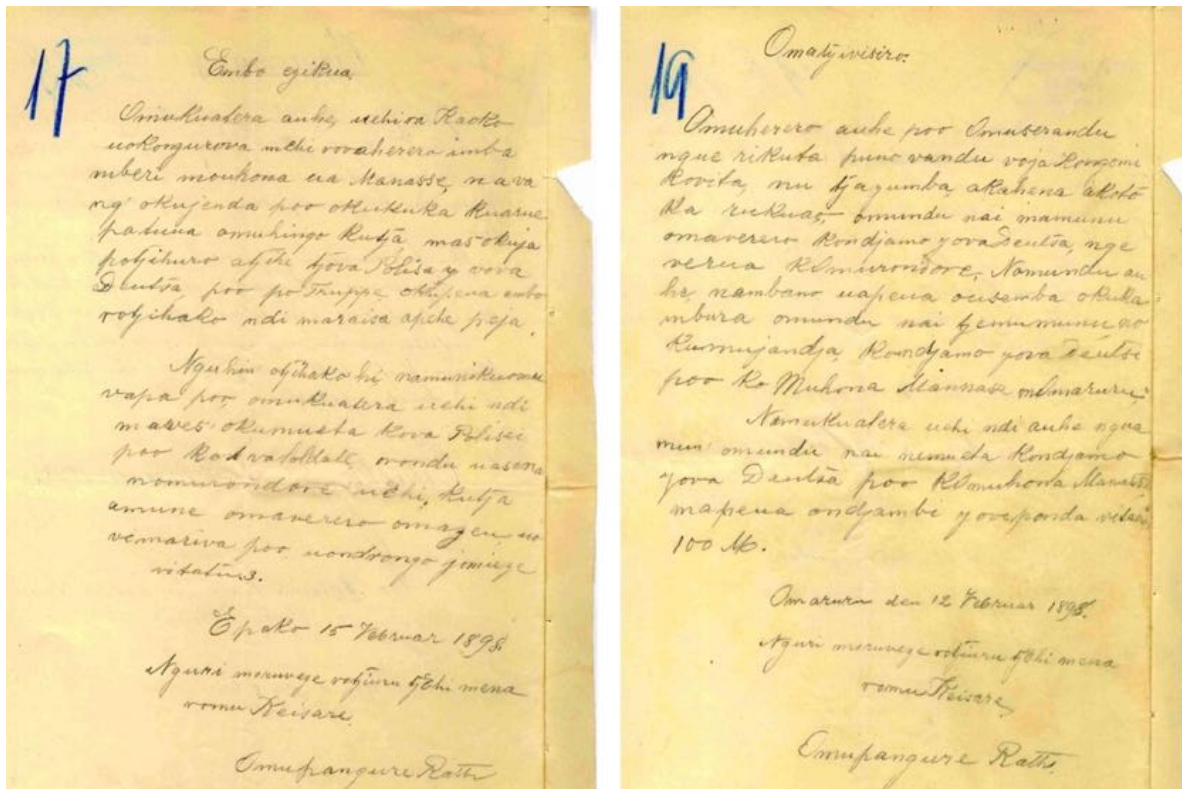


Figure 12.9 (L) NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'Ordinance v. Lindequist: Every native leaving the Kaoko Field and West Hereroland must be provided with a passport; Natives without a passport will be picked up and fined', v. Lindequist (Epako) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), translated into otjiHerero, 15.2.1898, vol. 2: 16–17; (R) 'Notice v. Lindequist: Anyone who takes in rebellious Hereros and Hottentotten will be punished as traitors; a reward of 100.-M. is offered for the extradition of insurgents', v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), translated into otjiHerero, 12.2.1898, vol. 2: 18–19.

Nonetheless, and exhibiting some ambivalence regarding whether to proceed with the campaign or not, von Lindequist also writes to Major Müller and Premier Lieutenant von Burgsdorff respectively, stating:

- 1) [i]f, after the misfortune which has befallen the von Estorff detachment in the Achas river and forced it to turn back, Your Eminence considers the continuation of the campaign to be impossible, I think it should be considered whether an agreement could not be reached with the Zwartboois on a ceasefire until the end of the rainy season. David Zwartbooi, whom I have with me, could be of great use in this respect. We could use the time of the ceasefire to bring up the 150 men as well as the horses ordered in Argentina and in the south, and the horses now available could possibly be taken to quarantine posts.

I am coming with the utmost speed to Franzfontein. A cloudburst-like rain has kept us stuck since yesterday, the roads are almost impassable. The column is accompanied by 4 wagons with provisions for Franzfontein.

- 2) I humbly request that you remain in Outjo until further orders arrive, whereby I suggest that the Hottentots who are up to mischief in the area of Otjivalandu –

Okaukweyu [Okaukuejo] be rooted out. Lt. Schultze can provide information on the events in the theatre of war.³⁵²

Endnotes

²⁸⁰ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Notice from Lindequist: The Zwartbooi-Hottentots drive away cattle, fatally wounding a German rider; German measures; Kambatta has joined the Zwartboois; Hottentots of Zesfontein <Topnaars> so far calm', v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 23-24.1.1898, vol. 1: 163; NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Rumours of Kambatta's defection to the Zwartbooi-Hottentots; Manasse asks for ammunition', Lt. Ziegler (Omaruru) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 14.1.1898, vol. 1: 135.

²⁸¹ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 Message from v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to v. Estorff (Franzfontein), 8.12.1897, vol. 1: 16.

²⁸² NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Conversation with the Zwartbooi John [Johannes?]; Possibility of mediation; Background of the conflict; Ovambos help the insurgents with ammunition, rifles, slaughter cattle; Participation of the Ovatjimba beyond the Kunene; Military Intervention over Portuguese territory', Dr Hartmann (Omaruru) to Lt. Ziegler (Windhoek?), 13.12.1897, vol. 1: 46.

²⁸³ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Possible connection of Jan |Uixamab <captain of the Topnaar Hottentots> to the uprising; suggestions for further action', v. Estorff report (Franzfontein) to Troop Command (Omaruru), 25.12.1897, vol. 1: 104.

²⁸⁴ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Conversation with the Zwartbooi John [Johannes?]; Possibility of mediation; Background of the conflict; Ovambos help the insurgents with ammunition, rifles, slaughter cattle; Participation of the Ovatjimba beyond the Kunene; Military Intervention over Portuguese territory', Dr Hartmann (Omaruru) to Lt. Ziegler (Windhoek?), 13.12.1897, vol. 1: 47.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Report Capn. v. Estorff (Franzfontein) 23.12.1897, with sketches', to Imperial Government (Windhoek), vol. 1: 69–71.

²⁸⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'No danger from Manasse of Omaruru, who wants to support the German government with 200 men; six Hereros were sent to Franzfontein with Lt. Bensen', v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Imperial Chancellor (Berlin), 10.12.1897, vol. 1: 24; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Kaptain Manasse of Omaruru communicates that he is ready to help', Manasse Tjiseseta (Omaruru) to v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 26.12.1897, vol. 1: 95–96.

²⁸⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'No danger from Manasse of Omaruru, who wants to support the German government with 200 men; six Hereros were sent to Franzfontein with Lt. Bensen', v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Imperial Chancellor (Berlin), 11.12.1897, vol. 1: 23.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 24.

²⁹⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Possible connection of Jan |Uixamab <captain of the Topnaar Hottentots> to the uprising; Suggestions for further action', v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to Troop Command (Omaruru), 25.12.1897, vol. 1: 104.

²⁹¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Dispatch of substitute crews; Diseases of the Kaokofeld Schutztruppe riders; Alliance of the Zwartboois with the Topnaars, presumed action of the same', v. Lindequist (Windhoek) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), vol. 1: 33–34.

²⁹² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Rumours about the execution of the Lazarus Zwartbooi; possible participation of the Ovambos in the survey', Lt. Ziegler (Omaruru) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 13.12.1897, vol. 1: 43.

²⁹³ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'Report mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros; and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898', Mj. Müller report (Grootberg)', 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 83; GSWA (n.d.: 422)

²⁹⁴ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Conversation with the Zwartbooi John [Johannes?]; Possibility of mediation; Background of the conflict; Ovambos help the insurgents with ammunition, rifles, slaughter cattle; Participation of the Ovatjimba beyond the Kunene; Military Intervention over Portuguese territory', Dr Hartmann (Omaruru) to Lt. Ziegler (Windhoek?), 13.12.1897, vol. 1: 46.

²⁹⁵ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Report Hptm. v. Estorff (Franzfontein) 23.12.1897, with sketches' to Imperial Government (Windhoek), vol. 1: 69.

²⁹⁶ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches', v. Estorff report, including Lt. Bensen's report, vol. 2: 56-57.

²⁹⁷ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'Mj. Müller at stations Okombahe and Omaruru: Samuel Zwartbooi and Jan |Uixamab sit at Grootberg; advance there with all your strength; Hptm. Kaiser takes command in Otjitambi; Arrival Lt. Reiss in Outjo; further instructions for the troops; Be careful when arming the Hereros', Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 27.1.1898, vol. 2: 142.

²⁹⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Conversation with the Zwartbooi John [Johannes?]; Possibility of mediation; Background of the conflict; Ovambos help the insurgents with ammunition, rifles, slaughter cattle; Participation of the Ovatjimba beyond the Kunene; Military Intervention over Portuguese territory', Dr Hartmann (Omaruru) to Lt. Ziegler (Windhoek), 13.12.1897, vol. 1: 47.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 46–48.

³⁰¹ GSWA (n.d.: 418)

³⁰² *Ibid.* p. 420.

³⁰³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Troop order Mj. Mueller: Ammunition transport; Establishment of a post in Otjikango’, Mj. Mueller (Omaruru), 27.12.1897, vol. 1: 85–88.

³⁰⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Instruction from Mj. Mueller: Conscripting of troops in Windhoek; Confiscation of the police and customs stations dispense with people and horses; Resolution Epukiro Station; Occupation of Omaruru; conscription of disposition vacationers [?reservists]; Dispatch of Lt. v. Schoenau-Wehr to Franzfontein; Provisioning of Omaruru and Okombahe; Shipment of ammunition after Omaruru’, Mj. Mueller (Omaruru) to Schutztruppe Command (Windhoek), 29.12.1897, vol. 1: 60–61.

³⁰⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Telegraphic request of Mountain and maxim guns including ammunition’, Mj. Müller (Omaruru) to District Command (Swakopmund), 27.12.1897, vol. 1: 89.

³⁰⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Conscripting the Bastards [Basters]’, ‘Conscripting the Witboois’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 4.1.1898, vol. 1: 54–55; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Conscription of bastards, witboois and leavers; Hereros remain calm’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 5.1.1898, vol. 1: 74–75.

³⁰⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Memorandum on the preparations for mobilizing the Witboois’, 20.12.1897, vol. 1: 42.

³⁰⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Management report’, Duft (Windhoek) to Schwartzkopff (Swakopmund), 15.2.1898, vol. 2: 220; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the War Situation’, Duft (Windhoek) to Foreign Office (Berlin), 1.3.1898, vol. 1: 215.

³⁰⁹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Conscripting the Witboois’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek) to Hendrik Witbooi (Gibeon), 4.1.1898, vol. 1: 57.

³¹⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Arrival in Outjo; Reinforcement of the crew in Omaruru and Okombahe; Kambatta defected to the Hottentots; State of health of the troops good; problems with horses’, Capn. Kaiser (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 26.1.1898, vol. 1: 175.

³¹¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Good condition of the men, horses, donkeys and oxen; Support from Witboois and Hereros’, Capn. Kaiser (Okombahe) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 12.1.1898, vol. 1: 138.

³¹² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Hereros should behave quietly’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek) to Manasse Tjiseseta (Omaruru), 5.1.1898, vol. 1: 78–79; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Participation of Hereros in the raid on wagon transport; Occupation of Okombahe; purchase of horses and riding oxen; relocation of riders to Outjo; Transport of small livestock to Okombahe; Arrival battery and command v. Zülow; Settler Rolfs has reported to be called up’, Mj. Müller (Okombahe) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 2.1.1898, vol. 1: 100.

³¹³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘v. Lindequist to Kaptain Manasse in Omaruru’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek) to Manasse Tjiseseta (Omaruru), 15.1.1898, vol. 1: 113.

³¹⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Restriction of warlike events to Zwartboois, Topnaars and some Hereros in the Kaokofeld; no danger in the Hereroland; Enemy stands with 200-300 men on the Grootberg’, v. Lindequist (Epako) to Capn. Schwartzkopff (Swakopmund), 15.2.1898, vol. 2: 9.

³¹⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Reconnaissance of the mouths of the Uniab and Hoanib and the anchorage behind Fort Rock Point; landing conditions there’, Capn. Schwartzkopff (South Atlantic) to v. Lindequist (Omaruru), 4.3.1898, vol. 2: 222–223.

³¹⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the situation in Franzfontein on 6 January 1898’, v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 6.1.1898, vol. 1: 130, 134.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 131–132.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 132.

³¹⁹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Various [ovaHerero] werfts are part of the Zwartboois’, Lt. Ziegler (Omaruru) to Imperial Governorate (Windhoek), 2.2.1898, vol. 1: 209.

³²⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the War Situation’, Duft (Windhoek) to Foreign Office (Berlin), 1.3.1898, vol. 1: 218; also NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Pr.lt. Franke goes with Lt. Steinhausen to Sorris-Sorris; Lt. Reiss has returned to the East’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Mj. Müller, 12.2.1898, vol. 1: 196.

³²¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Negotiations against five Hottentots brought in as rebels / insurgents’, Eggers (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), vol. 2: 243–244.

³²² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Situation in Hereroland; Incident at Groß-Achas, horse guard drowned by runaway river’, v. Lindequist (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 24.2.1898, vol. 2: 10–11.

³²³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Telegraphic request of Mountain and maxim guns including ammunition’, Mj. Mueller (Omaruru) to Kais. District Command (Swakopmund), 27.12.1897, vol. 1: 89.

³²⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Announcement by Lindequist On the convocation of teams on leave’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 4.1.1898, vol. 1: 53.

³²⁵ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Conscripting the Bastards [Basters]’, ‘Conscripting the Witboois’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 4.1.1898, vol. 1: 54.

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- ³²⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, incl. 2nd Lt. Bensen’s report, vol. 2: 75; also NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the events of December 23 1897’, v. Estorff (Franzfontein), 6.1.1898, vol. 1: 129.
- ³²⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Further procedure; March to Omaruru’, Capn. Kaiser (Okapuka) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 9.1.1898, vol. 1: 107.
- ³²⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘According to the trader Sabati, Felddamaras want to join the insurgents’, Lt. Ziegler (Omaruru) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 14.1.1898, vol. 1: 139b; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, including Lt. Bensen’s report, vol. 2: 78; GSWA (n.d.: 421)
- ³²⁹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Deployment of 50 men unter Hptm. Kaiser; Bastards stand under the command of Frhr. v. Schoenau-Weir; Witboois’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek) to deputy troop command (Franzfontein), 10.1.1898, vol. 1: 90–93.
- ³³⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Arrival in Outjo; Reinforcement of the crew in Omaruru and Okombahe; Kambatta defected to the Hottentots; State of health of the troops good; problems with horses’, Capn. Kaiser (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 26.1.1898, vol. 1: 174.
- ³³¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros; and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898’, Mj. Müller report (Grootberg), 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 83; also NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Detachment Command Mj. Mueller: Enemy sits at Grootberg with 200-300 men; March to the Grootberg in three columns’, Mj. Mueller, 11.2.1898, vol. 2: 160; GSWA (n.d.: 422)
- ³³² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘The campaign against the Swartbooi-Hottentots 1898, with three battle sketches’, v. Estorff report, including Lt. Bensen’s report, vol. 2: 77.
- ³³³ *Ibid.* pp. 77–78, GSWA (n.d.: 420)
- ³³⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f ‘Telegram to Foreign Office, Berlin, from von Perbandt, on behalf of Mj. Mueller, requesting reinforcement of 150 men, 2 officers, mountain and maxim guns’, 30.1.1898, vol. 1: 153; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxim_gun, 5.11.2025.
- ³³⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Main forces of the enemy gathered on the Grootberg; Troop movements’, Mj. Mueller (Franzfontein) to Lt. Franke (for wider dispersal), 30.1.1898, vol. 1: 178–179.
- ³³⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘War in the north should be avoided and limited to defense’, v. Richthofen, Head of Colonial Dept., Berlin, to Kaiser Consulate General Cape Town, vol. 2: 2; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f ‘Report from Great Achas; Telegram from Berlin to stop the offensive; troop movements; accumulation of provisions in Franzfontein; Horse death in Outjo’, v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 21.2.1898, vol. 1: 224.
- ³³⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the War Situation’, Duft (Windhoek) to Foreign Office (Berlin), 1.3.1898, vol. 1: 215; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Previous measures’, Duft (Windhoek) to Lt. Reiß (Windhoek), 26.2.1898, vol. 1: 212.
- ³³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³³⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 224–225.
- ³⁴⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Publication of the report on the Zwartbooi campaign in the Colonial Gazette, possibly combat reports in the Military Weekly Gazette; poor health of crews and mounts; Battle of Grootberg; Troop Commander’s Award’, v. Lindequist (Grootberg) to Foreign Office (Berlin), 26.3.1898, vol. 2: 38.
- ³⁴¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros; and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898’, Mj. Müller report (Grootberg), 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 85.
- ³⁴² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Zwartbooi-Hottentot Kuton sentenced to death and shot; Parts of the Zwartboois, Topnaars, Bergdamaras and Kaisib are located in Kaudamab north of Namatanga; remaining Zwartboois on Grootberg’, Kaiser (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 3.2.1898, vol. 1: 189–190.
- ³⁴³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Announcement regarding the shooting of a Zwartbooi Hottentot as a spy in Outjo (vgl. S, 189); Clash between Lt. v. Schoenau-Wehr and Hereros of the captain Kambatta in the Kaoko field, 80 large cattle captured, five Hereros dead; in the actual West Hereroland everything continues to be calm’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 20.2.1898, vol. 1: 221.
- ³⁴⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Zwartbooi-Hottentot Kuton sentenced to death and shot; Parts of the Zwartboois, Topnaars, Bergdamaras and Kaisib are located in Kaudamab north of Namatanga; remaining Zwartboois on Grootberg’, Kaiser (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 3.2.1898, vol. 1: 190.
- ³⁴⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Notice: various Herero werfts transferred to the Zwartboois; Son of Kambatta and 31 Hereros by Hptm. Estorff captured; Manasse’s son Michael also caught insurgent Hereros’, v. Lindequist (Okahandja) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 5.2.1898, vol. 1: 180–181.
- ³⁴⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Hererowerften passed over to the Zwartboois; loyal behavior by Manasse and his son Michael; Procedure by Mj. Mueller etc.’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Imperial Government (Windhoek),

10.2.1898, vol. 1: 192–193; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Announcement: Kambatta transferred to the Zwartboois’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru), 12.2.1898, vol. 1: 202.

³⁴⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Previous measures’, Duft (Windhoek) to Lt. Reiß (Windhoek), 26.2.1898, vol. 1: 212.

³⁴⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Pr. Lt. Franke goes with Lt. Steinhausen to Sorris-Sorris; Lt. Reiss has returned to the East’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Mj. Müller, 12.2.1898, vol. 1: 196.

³⁴⁹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Notice v. Lindequist: Anyone who takes in rebellious Hereros and Hottentotten will be punished as traitors; a reward of 100.-M. is offered for the extradition of insurgents’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 12.2.1898, vol. 2: 18; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Announcement: Kambatta transferred to the Zwartboois’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru), 12.2.1898, vol. 1: 202.

³⁵⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Pr.lt. Franke goes with Lt. Steinhausen to Sorris-Sorris; Lt. Reiss has returned to the East’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Mj. Müller, 12.2.1898, vol. 1: 201.

³⁵¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Decree: Every native leaving the Kaoko Field and West Hereroland must be provided with a passport; Natives without a passport will be picked up and fined’, v. Lindequist (Epako) to Imperial Provincial Governorate (Windhoek), 15.2.1898, vol. 2: 16–17.

³⁵² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Captain v. Estorff forced to turn back by the river treaty at Groß-Achas; question about continuation of the campaign or ceasefire’, v. Lindequist (Outjo-Aimab) to Mj. Müller and Premier Lt. v. Burgsdorff (Outjo), 26.2.1898, vol. 2: 20–21.

13. The Battle of Grootberg / Kaiuis

This build-up of German activity culminated in a decisive battle at Grootberg on 26 February 1898. The German military divided themselves into three columns, approaching Grootberg from different directions (Fig. 13.1). The Franke, Estorff and Kaiser companies were “to seek communication with each other on their arrival at Kakatswa, Olifantskup and Nugas-Water”, where they should arrive on 22 February.³⁵³

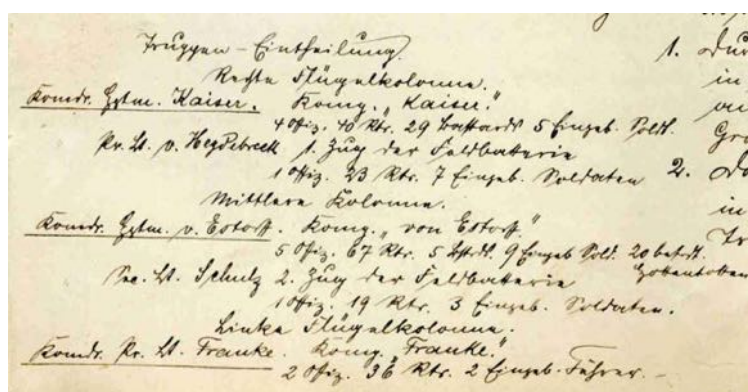


Figure 13.1 Troop movements towards Grootberg / Kaiuis. NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros; and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898’, Mj. Müller report (Grootberg)’, 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 83.

Disposition of troops:

Right Wing Column

Commander Captain Kaiser. “Company Kaiser”: 4 Officer, 40 Rtr., 29 Basters, 5 enlisted soldiers

First Lt. von Heydebreck. 1st Platoon Field Battery: 1 Officer, 23 Rtr., 7 enlisted soldiers

Middle column

Commander Captain von Estorff. “Company von Estorff”: 5 Officers, 67 Rtr., 5 Basters, 9 enlisted soldiers, 20 privates. Hottentots

Second Lt. Schultz. 2nd Platoon Field Battery: 1 Officer, 19 Rtr., 3 enlisted soldiers

Left Wing Column

Commander 1st Lt. Franke. “Company Franke”: 2 Officers, 36 Rtr., 2 enlisted soldiers³⁵⁴

The three troop columns organise themselves as follows (Fig. 13.2):

1. on 23 February, Mj. Müller marched in single file with Captain Kaiser and his company (74 men, including 40 white horsemen and a platoon of the field battery under Lt. von Heydebreck), from Otjitambi via Kamanjab, Kakatswa to Gau Water at Grootberg; leaving most of the ox-wagons at Kamanjab and aiming to surprise “the

enemy”;³⁵⁵

2. Captain von Estorff and the 4th Field Company with a field battery platoon under Lt. Schulz, advanced with supply wagons at Kamanjab up to the Grootberg via Gr. Achas, Kl. Achas on Olifantskup and Bau-Water.³⁵⁶ Provisions were scarce here, as the Franke company (38 strong) had to leave their wagons with provisions at Bethanis, as they could not be brought from there;³⁵⁷
3. First Lt. Franke proceeds from Okombahe to Sorris-Sorris, and from there to Kaium, Bethanis (19 February), Nugas-water, and Tsawasis, having to provide its company with supplies for up to 45 days and “at least 200 cartridges per head”, with the assistance of Sergeant Koczy and Count von Bethusy.³⁵⁸ Franke leaves the supply wagons in Sorris-Sorris, “to be able to advance faster”:

[p]rovision horses were equipped for this purpose; each horse was given a cross-bag. However, it soon turned out that trotting was out of the question, as the luggage immediately slipped due to the lack of a saddle.³⁵⁹



Figure 13.2 Map of troop columns showing their approaches towards Grootberg / Kaiuis.

Key: Major Müller with Captain Kaiser and company in blue; Captain von Estorff with the 4th Field Company in green; First Lieutenant Franke in red. Map prepared by Sian Sullivan including data from: Landsat / CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, Imagery from the dates:14/12/2015–01/01/2021.

Franke writes that Damara/#Nūkhoe “native guide Tanisib”, recruited on 18 February, “was not able to give any details about the way ahead”, but continues to hope that Nugas-water will be reached on the 22 February (Fig. 13.3 and 13.4):³⁶⁰

[e]ach rider was now given food for 10 days – 1 cup per day – which he had to put on his horse. At 6:30am (on the 21st of this month) the detachment, consisting of 2 officers, 6 non-commissioned officers, 25 horsemen, 2 guides, war volunteers (Ertmann and Johr) was ready to march. After almost uninterrupted trekking (horses were mostly led), we reached, according to Tanisib, the Nugas River at 6:00 o’clock pm. I considered it completely futile to remain here and to seek contact with the other columns by patrolling [...] and so on the 22nd in the morning I marched on, telling Tanisib to take us to the Grootberg. After an unspeakably arduous march and difficult climbs for the horses, which lost almost all their iron horseshoes in the process [...]³⁶¹

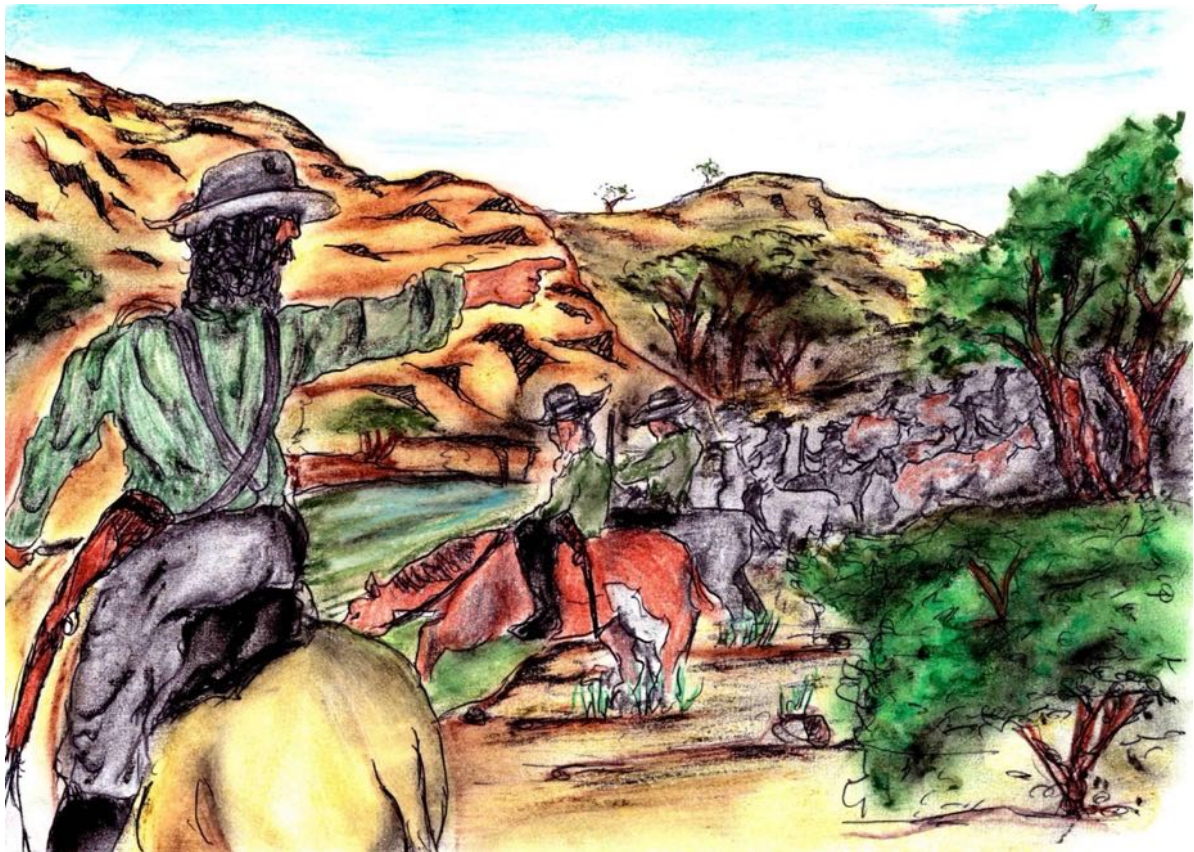


Figure 13.3 German military troops with horses arrive at Nugas-water. © Clarence Geingob



Figure 13.4 Nugas spring as it looks in contemporary times. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 10.4.2023.

On 24 February, First Lieutenant Franke writes of how his detachment arrived at:

a strongly flowing river [...] Tanisib declared that it originated at the Grootberg and described a cone-shaped mountain at a distance of about 1½ hours' ride as the enemy's headquarters. I concluded from this that I was at the Gau-water and that the 'Mueller' and 'Estorff' columns would have to arrive here under any circumstances. We unsaddled. In the afternoon I rode up the riverbed with Herr Ertmann and two non-commissioned officers. After about three quarters of an hour's ride in pouring rain, we suddenly spotted 20-30 Hottentots at a distance of about 60 paces, who raised a great cry at the sight of us and immediately had disappeared into the cliffs. A pursuit would have been completely futile. Indeed, it was enough for me to have established the presence of the enemy. [...] ³⁶²

The following morning (25 February), Franke goes with his company from the river valley to a hill about 800 m away, whilst Sergeant Herz and three riders at the campsite shoots down:

a Hottentot and a Kaffir ["Bergdamara"/#Nükhoen] from a spying squad of 6-8 men. The Hottentot soon succumbed to his wounds, the Kaffir testified that all the enemy leaders were heavily entrenched on the heights designated by Tanisib the day before. ³⁶³

On the afternoon of this same day, Major Müller and the 38 strong company of 1st Lieutenant Franke meet each other "on the Kamaniab-Gau-Water road, at the height of the Grootberg". ³⁶⁴ Major Müller thereby announces a new "detachment order":

- 1) the combined Swartbooi and Topnar Hottentots under their leaders Samuel and Joel Swartbooi and Jan Uichamab [[Uixamab], as well as the Hereros under Kambatta, are at Gau Wasser on Grootberg, approximately 2-300 men.
- 2) the detachment will march in the morning to Gau Wasser as per the accompanying troop order.
- 3) the vanguard will start its advance from the camp at 7.30am [26 February]. The bulk follows at a distance of 500 m.
- 4) the donkey carts with provisions for 4 days follow their detachments. The ox wagons and the slaughter cattle remain in the camp under cover of a non-commissioned officer and 7 horsemen of the 'Kaiser' company. The non-commissioned officer sets up the camp for a forceful defence.³⁶⁵

The main battle at Grootberg takes place on 26 February. As Major Müller writes, the Nama settlements,

were so far apart from each other, and the whole terrain was so confusing because of the dense bush cover and lower and higher rises, that it was impossible to take the enemy completely by surprise or encirclement. I therefore tried to cut off the enemy from the road to Sessfontein by advancing far to the north. At 10.30am the vanguard reported individual enemy Hottentots on the top of the westerly heights.

Immediately thereafter I could see from a rise werfts [settlements] to the southwest as well as to the west and northwest, where there was a lot of activity. The 'Kaiser' Company received the order to search the werft to the southwest. When Captain Kaiser reported that the werft had just been completely abandoned, but that numerous cattle and people were retreating on the saddle in a north-westerly direction, and that he therefore wanted to take up the pursuit in this direction, I agreed to this decision.³⁶⁶

As Captain Kaiser clarifies, at the settlements:

[f]ires were still burning there, and half-roasted meat lay on them. In the meantime my left side patrol had also reached the southern werft and reported that it was deserted. While I was moving, the platoon of the field battery had opened fire on a werft to the north, also weak small-arms fire could be heard close to the guns.

From my vantage point, which afforded a good view, I noticed people with cattle hurriedly fleeing in a north-westerly direction towards the high mountains and reported this to Major Mueller [Fig. 13.5 and 13.6], whereupon he soon gave me the order to pursue this enemy after searching the werft to the south-west. Now I had the first platoon (Lieutenant von Schoenau) swarm out on horseback to search the very large werft to the

southwest (at Gauwater), while I rode with the other platoons to the northwest exit of the werft, where the first platoon, as ordered, gathered with me again. The werft had been freshly abandoned by the enemy.³⁶⁷



Figure 13.5 Nama retreat with their cattle in a north-westerly direction, pursued by German military. © Clarence Geingob



Figure 13.6 Two views of the possible 'saddle' over which Nama retreated with their cattle (marked with 'X' on the sketch-map below). Photos: © Sian Sullivan, above 19.3.2023, below 12.4.2023.

The sketch-map below (Fig. 13.7) makes clear the distribution of the Nama settlements (red dots), the Schutztruppe Companies, and the 'X' marking the 'saddle' across which Nama and their cattle retreated towards the north-west.

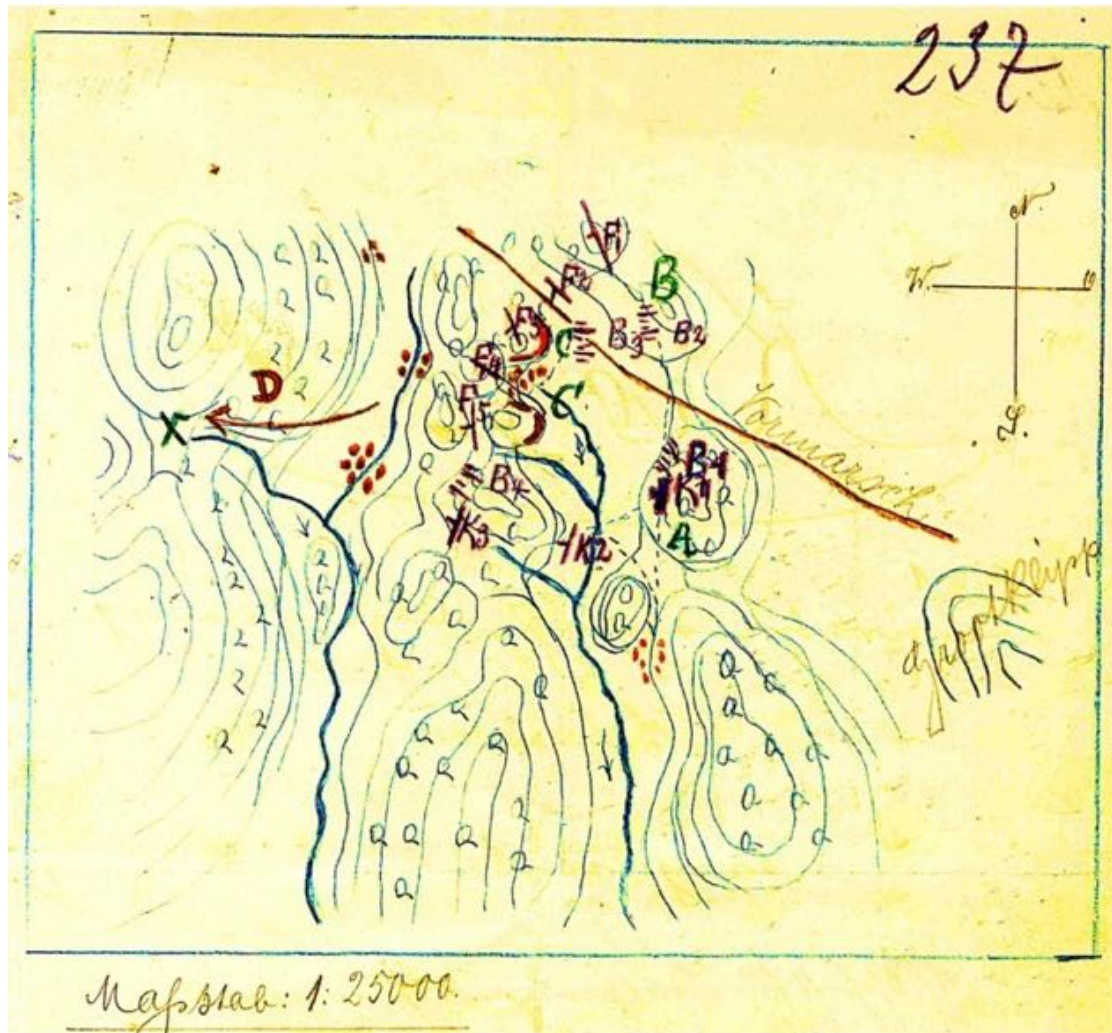


Figure 13.7 NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-fv1 'Report Mj. Mueller about the battle at Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with sketch', (n.d.), Grootberg, vol. 1: 237.
Key: red dots = Nama reed-mat hut settlements (*werfts*); 'X' = the saddle, across which Nama retreated with their cattle; 'F' = Frank Company movements; 'K' = Kaiser Company movements; 'B' field battery under von Heydebreck; 'A', 'B' and 'C' (in green) = 'height' (i.e. mountain).

The field battery under First Lieutenant von Heydebreck moved up to height 'A', firing at Nama moving from their settlement below the mountain, and also heading towards the 'saddle' ('X') in the west; and the platoon of the field battery, combined with the Franke Company, then directed their fire against the columns of cattle and men heading for the saddle, which caused them to halt, with Franke ordered "to advance towards the saddle on the enemy's line of retreat".³⁶⁸ Major Müller proceeded with two field guns, whilst Nama positioned in the Grootberg cliffs inflicted heavy fire on the field battery. The Nama leaders

Bernt Pinner and native foreman Lazarus, accompanying Major Müller, were seriously wounded, causing von Heydebreck to order a retreat, whilst grenades were fired with “the greatest cold-bloodedness” into the occupied cliffs and entrenchments.³⁶⁹

First Lieutenant Franke “took” three “strongly occupied entrenchments”, and hospital assistant Lehnberg was killed with a shot through the head, whilst Major Müller emphasises, the skilful and rapid intervention of the leader, Pr. Ltn. Franke, and the excellent and cold-blooded behaviour of Ltn. Steinhausen and the crews during the shooting and action against the barely visible enemy.³⁷⁰

Proceeding across the difficult terrain, Captain Kaiser encountered around 20 Nama dressed in what appeared to be army uniforms (“troop corduroy suits”), hence only recognising them as “the enemy” as they fled (Fig. 13.8). As Captain Kaiser writes:

[t]hese men, who seemed to come from the area where the Franke Company and the guns were, could only be identified as Hottentots when they retreated in a north-westerly direction towards the high mountains with extraordinary dexterity and speed, using cover from objects in the terrain. I now dismounted and took up the pursuit, but only a few of the enemy were momentarily visible, so that a regular fire could not be opened on them. [...] I noticed how the scattered fleeing enemy positioned themselves in an extremely strong cliff position dominating the mountain terrain, which had a completely clear field of fire for 100 metres in my direction of advance, without, however, opening fire on me.³⁷¹



Figure 13.8 Nama fighters retreat to a high cliff. © Clarence Geingob

As the Kaiser Company moved to “a very strong emplacement in an elevated position” they succeeded in driving the Nama from their positions, and “an enemy Hottentot was shot on this occasion”.³⁷² A stronger troop of Nama, however, managed to approach from behind the Germans, whilst others managed to reach the slope under the saddle (‘X’).³⁷³ The last shot was fired at 2am:

[i]n view of the difficulty of the terrain, the fatigue of the men and horses, and the impossibility of bringing forward the guns in the cliffy ground, which had been softened by the constant rain, it was not possible to pursue the enemy immediately.³⁷⁴

Endnotes

³⁵³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Detachment Command Mj. Mueller: Enemy sits at Grootberg with 200-300 men; March to the Grootberg in three columns’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 11.2.1898, vol. 2: 161; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Müller on the move against the combined rebels of Zwartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 274.

³⁵⁴ GSWA (n.d.: 422)

³⁵⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Detachment Command Mj. Mueller: Enemy sits at Grootberg with 200-300 men; March to the Grootberg in three columns’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 11.2.1898, vol. 2: 161; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros, and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg), 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 84–85; GSWA (n.d.: 422)

³⁵⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Detachment Command Mj. Mueller: Enemy sits at Grootberg with 200-300 men; March to the Grootberg in three columns’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 11.2.1898, vol. 2: 160–161.

³⁵⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Food transport; Send battle reports to Outjo’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg) to von Estorff (Kamanjab), 28.2.1898, vol. 1: 229.

³⁵⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Main forces of the enemy gathered on the Grootberg; Troop movements’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to First Lt. Franke (Otjimbingwe), Imperial Provincial Headquarters in Okombahe, Omaruru, Swakopmund, Windhoek, 30.1.1898, vol. 1: 178–179; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Mj. Müller at stations Okombahe and Omaruru: Samuel Zwartbooi and Jan |Uixamab sit at Grootberg; advance there with all your strength; Hptm. Kaiser takes command in Otjitambi; Arrival Lt. Reiss in Outjo; further instructions for the troops; Be careful when arming the Hereros’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 1.2.1898, vol. 2: 144–145; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Detachment Command Mj. Mueller: Enemy sits at Grootberg with 200-300 men; March to the Grootberg in three columns’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 11.2.1898, vol. 2: 160.

³⁵⁹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘1st Lt. Franke report’, Franke (Grootberg), 1.3.1898, vol. 2: 114.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 115, GSWA (n.d.: 429)

³⁶² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘1st Lt. Franke report’, Franke (Grootberg), 1.3.1898, vol. 2: 115–116; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Mueller on the move against the combined rebels of Zwartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 275; GSWA (n.d.: 422, 429)

³⁶³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘1st Lt. Franke report’, Franke (Grootberg), 1.3.1898, vol. 2: 116–117; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros; and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 275–276.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros, and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898’, Mj. Müller (Franzfontein) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 86.

³⁶⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report Mj. Mueller about the battle at Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with sketch’, (n.d.), vol. 1: 230–231.

³⁶⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report by Captain Kaiser on the activities of his company in the battle at Gauwater-Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with a sketch’, 28.2.1898, vol. 2: 100–101.

³⁶⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report Mj. Mueller about the battle at Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with sketch’, (n.d.), vol. 1: 231–232; also NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Mueller on the Battle of Grootberg, plus accompanying correspondence’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg), (n.d.), vol. 2: 164–165.

³⁶⁹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report Mj. Mueller about the battle at Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with sketch’, (n.d.), vol. 1: 232; also also NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Mueller on the Battle of Grootberg, plus accompanying correspondence’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg), (n.d.), vol. 2: 165–166; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Battle report Pr.It v. Heydebreck on the Battle of Grootberg on 26.2.1898’, 20.3.1898, vol. 2: 112.

³⁷⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report Mj. Mueller about the battle at Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with sketch’, (n.d.), vol. 1: 232–233; also NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Mueller on the Battle of Grootberg, plus accompanying correspondence’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg), (n.d.), vol. 2: 166.

³⁷¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report by Captain Kaiser on the activities of his company in the battle at Gauwater-Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with a sketch’, 28.2.1898, vol. 2: 104–105.

³⁷² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Report Mj. Mueller about the battle at Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with sketch', (n.d.), vol. 1: 233; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'Report by Captain Kaiser on the activities of his company in the battle at Gauwater-Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with a sketch', 28.2.1898, vol. 2: 106.

³⁷³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 'Report Mj. Mueller about the battle at Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with sketch', (n.d.), vol. 1: 234; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'Report by Captain Kaiser on the activities of his company in the battle at Gauwater-Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with a sketch', 28.2.1898, vol. 2: 106.

³⁷⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'Report Mj. Mueller on the Battle of Grootberg', Mj. Müller (Grootberg), (n.d.), vol. 2: 168.

14. Aftermath

After this major battle at Grootberg on 26 February 1898, the German Schutztruppe pursued various means of bringing in “the enemy”. The day after the battle, Major Müller had the Company led by Captain Kaiser reconnoitre the “saddle” across which Nama retreated in a north-westerly direction. Two Nama of “an enemy patrol of about 5 men” were shot, one ovaHerero lost his life, and Lt. von Zülow was slightly wounded in the forehead by a “bullet fragment”,³⁷⁵ although “[t]he total loss of the enemy cannot be ascertained in view of the obscurity of the terrain”.³⁷⁶

On the 28 February, First Lt. Franke brought in a wounded prisoner, who relates that “the enemy is badly shaken”.³⁷⁷ Supply wagons from Kamanjab to Grootberg were also requested, under the leadership of von Estorff.³⁷⁸ From 1 March, the pursuit of “the enemy” was taken up, following “a footpath that was via Gowarib [Kowareb] to Seßfontein and on which, according to him, the Hottentots had to retreat to Seßfontein”, with reconnaissance of waterpoints in the vicinity revealing “that the enemy was still in the mountains” south of Kowareb.³⁷⁹ It is possible that Nama were hiding in dugouts located in the Etendeka/#Nauraheb mountains between Grootberg and Kowareb (Fig. 14.1 and 14.2). The German army hoped to encircle “the enemy”, before their “broken courage” revives.³⁸⁰



Figure 14.1 Dugouts in the Etendeka/#Nauraheb mountains. Photos: © Sian Sullivan: 17.4.2023.



Figure 14.2 Nama retreating into the Etendeka/Naurahab mountains, south of Kowareb. © Clarence Geingob

Von Lindequist writes to the Foreign Office in Berlin, confirming victory at Grootberg, issuing a telegram stating:

[v]ictory of the troops under Major Mueller on 26 February at Grootberge over the Hottentots. The enemy fled towards Zessfontein. Military hospital assistant Lehnberg dead. Enemy three dead.³⁸¹

On 13 March, a letter is received from Samuel Swartbooi, addressed to “the Lord Major Muller of the Imperial Protection Force [*des Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe*]”, saying (Fig. 14.3):

[p]lease send this letter, saying that it is the wish of all of us to make peace; and we thank the Lord for it, who can make what seems to be impossible for mankind possible, according to the prayers of many Christians here in the mountains.

And I hope, that this will be true peace; that God has worked the will in all of us at once; and pray the Lord to accomplish it with us.

Thus, I ask Your Worshipfulness for true peace; and send as proof of the same 2 men ahead with Boab Davids, namely Sem Swartboy and Paul Hendrik, and I will walk from here on Monday evening, and Mr. Riechmann will walk from there on Tuesday, that we may meet each other at the gate in the morning.

With greetings from me
(sent) Samuel Swartboy³⁸²

Kommando *Kulwaga 2.*
 der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe
 für Deutsch-Südwestafrika.

Grootberg 13 Maart 1898

(Okt. 1898)

Van den Heer Major Müller des
 Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe;
 Hochwielgeboren

Udergeseckender

Heer Dieren brief, en geef te kennen daarmed,
 dat het ons aller hartelyken wenscht is, om vrede
 te maken; en wy danken den Heere daarvoor die
 zulks wat schynt onmogelyk te zyn voor den
 mensch mogelyk maken kann; naar de geboden
 der vele Christenen hier in de geborge,
 En ik hoop, dat dit ware vrede zal zyn; die God
 het willen in ons allen op eens gewerkt heeft; en
 bid den Heere, dat Hy het zal met ons volbringen;
 Also, bid ik den Hochwielgeboren om ware
 vrede; en sturt als bewys van de ziele 2 manen
 vrede mit met Boab David, met mannen. Sen
 Swartboog en Paul Hendrik, en ik zal Avondag
 achtermiddag van hier loopen, en Aguker, Kink
 mami zal Gurodag daarvan loopen, dat wy
 kan voormiddag by de poort onderkander
 ontmoeten

Met groetenis van my
 (gez.) Samuel Swartboog.

Figure 14.3 Letter from Samuel Swartbooi hoping for peace. NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'Samuel Swartbooi to Mj. Mueller in Cape Dutch', Grootberg, 13.3.1898, vol. 2: 96.

It seems clear from this letter that Samuel Swartbooi was legitimately hoping for peace in the lands in which they were living. By mid-March Deputy Governor von Lindequist was instead requesting that,

a large and strong thorn kraal be erected to house the captured Swartbooi Hottentots at a place favourable for guarding them, and that a small house made of corrugated iron and suitable for use as a guardhouse be erected thereon. If no other suitable place can be found, the kraal could be near the artillery barracks [in Windhoek], but under no circumstances may it be in the immediate vicinity of the Chauan-Hottentot werft [i.e. the Khauas Nama imprisoned in Windhoek since 1896]. The kraal must be suitable to accommodate 200 to 300 persons.³⁸³

In March, von Lindequist also threatens Nama Captain Jan Uixamab, who had returned to Sesfontein following the battles at Grootberg, stating (Fig. 14.4):

Dear Captain!

You have made yourself guilty of the German government by taking up arms against the Germans without the Germans ever harming you or your people.

However, like the Zwartboois, I want to assure you and your people your life if you come here immediately with your people and submit. If you do not do so, Major Müller and the troops will go to Zessfontein as far as the Great River [Kunene] and will not rest until he has destroyed you and your people. This is now the last letter that will be written to you; if you do not come now, there will be no more mercy.³⁸⁴

Later in March, Jan [Uixamab responds in Cape Dutch with these words (Fig. 14.4):

I received your letter with the two messengers, and kept them here for a few days so that I would prepare myself and go with them, so I also willingly prepared my journey and went at your call, but on the same day where I had gone from my place, news came after me, that the Zwartboois who were calling on you for peace had come there, had been captured by the Germans, this news was sent to me, and I came back, therefore, because I have been scared, because I think, if peace has been made after the war then the people who had killed each other live in peace with each other and remain calm, so I became afraid of the story I had heard.

With warm regards

You the highly honored Lord of the
Germans's Government Council

I remain Captain

Jan [Uixamab³⁸⁵

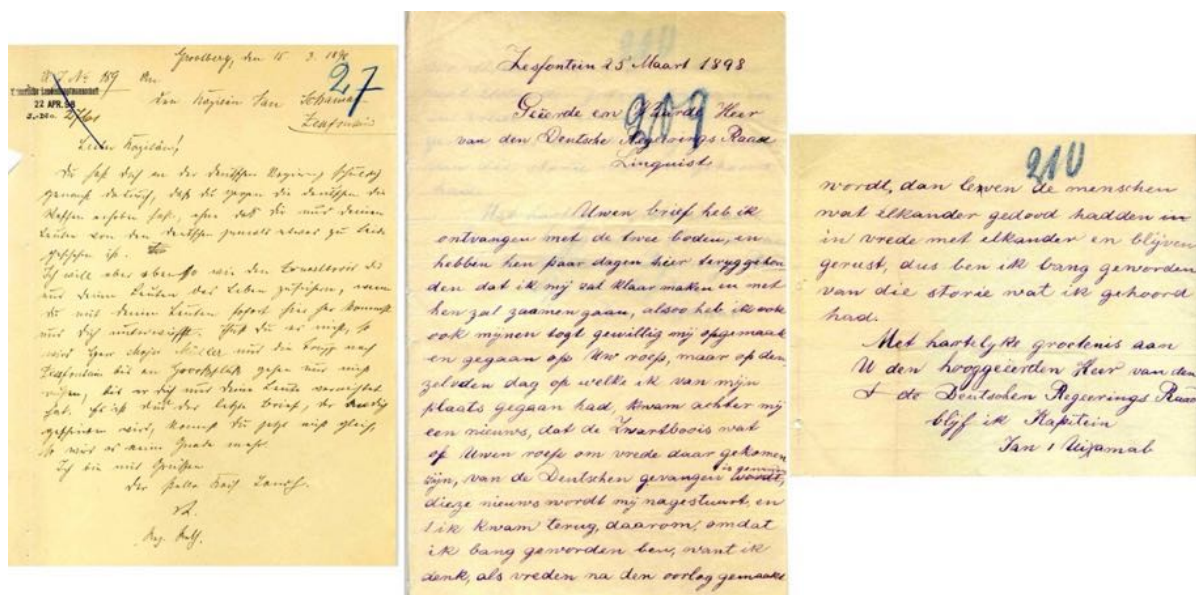


Figure 14.4 Exchange of letters between von Lindequist and Jan [Uixamab. Left: NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'Jan Ichamab has made himself guilty by taking up arms against the German government; Request for submission, otherwise destruction by Mj. Mueller', v. Lindequist (Grootberg) to Jan Ichamab ([Uixamab) (Sesfontein), 15.3.1898, vol. 2: 27; Centre and Right: NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'Captain Jan [Uixamab to v. Lindequist' in Cape Dutch, Jan [Uixamab (Sesfontein) to v. Lindequist (Grootberg?), 25.3.1898, vol. 2: 209–210.

This letter by Jan Uixamab elicits a response from von Lindequist, detailing the “conditions of submission” that would prevent further attack (Fig. 14.5):

To Captain Jan Uichamab [Uixamab] Zessfontein

I have received your letter of 25 March this year. I am quite annoyed that you have believed false rumours and kept my messengers prisoner. Nicodemus and David advised you well not to kill them but to let them go free, otherwise there would have been a real war between us. To Samuel and Joel Zwartbooi and their people life is promised if they come and submit. That is all they are promised. This promise I have kept and will keep, if those who have come on the call and who will now still come with Solomon Richter, no one has been killed and no one will be killed. But since there is not enough space in the Kaoko field for the people of Lazarus and those of David, and the people of David and Samuel do not yet want to stand under Lazarus, I have arranged with David that they shall all go with him to Windhoek.

No treaty of protection has yet been made with you and your people, as with David 3 years ago in Windhoek, and as with the Hereros by Manasse. That is why you have made yourself less guilty by the war against the Germans. I have therefore also decided to give you peace if you and your people fulfil the conditions which I will impose. These are as follows:

1. you surrender all rifles to the German government. They will give you back as many as you need for hunting.
2. you will hand over Kambatta and his people with all the large and small livestock they own, as well as the Zwartboois who still live on your land and who have not come with Samuel Zwartbooi or Salomon Richter at my call. Only the evangelist Nicodemus [Kido] shall remain with you in Zessfontein.
3. you and your people pay 1000 head of small cattle to the German government as punishment for having made war without any reason and for the great expenses incurred by the German Government.
4. you undertake in writing to recognise the German Emperor and his representative, the Imperial Governor in Windhoek, as your lord and master and to be faithful and obedient to him at all times and never again to make war against the German Government.

If you fulfil these conditions conscientiously, I will leave you in Zessfontein as a free captain of the Topnaar. If you do not, I will send soldiers to make war again with you and your tribe. Since I cannot wait here any longer, I have commissioned Captain von Estorff to put everything in order with you in my place. The best thing is for you to come to the captain in Outjo soon yourself with some of your people, the cattle and the people of Kambatta and the Zwartboois. Nothing will happen to you and your people. But send

a letter ahead, so that the captain and also the soldiers who may be on the road know that you are coming in peace. I wish nothing more than that real and honest peace should return to Zessfontein and Franzfontein.

With best regards to you³⁸⁶

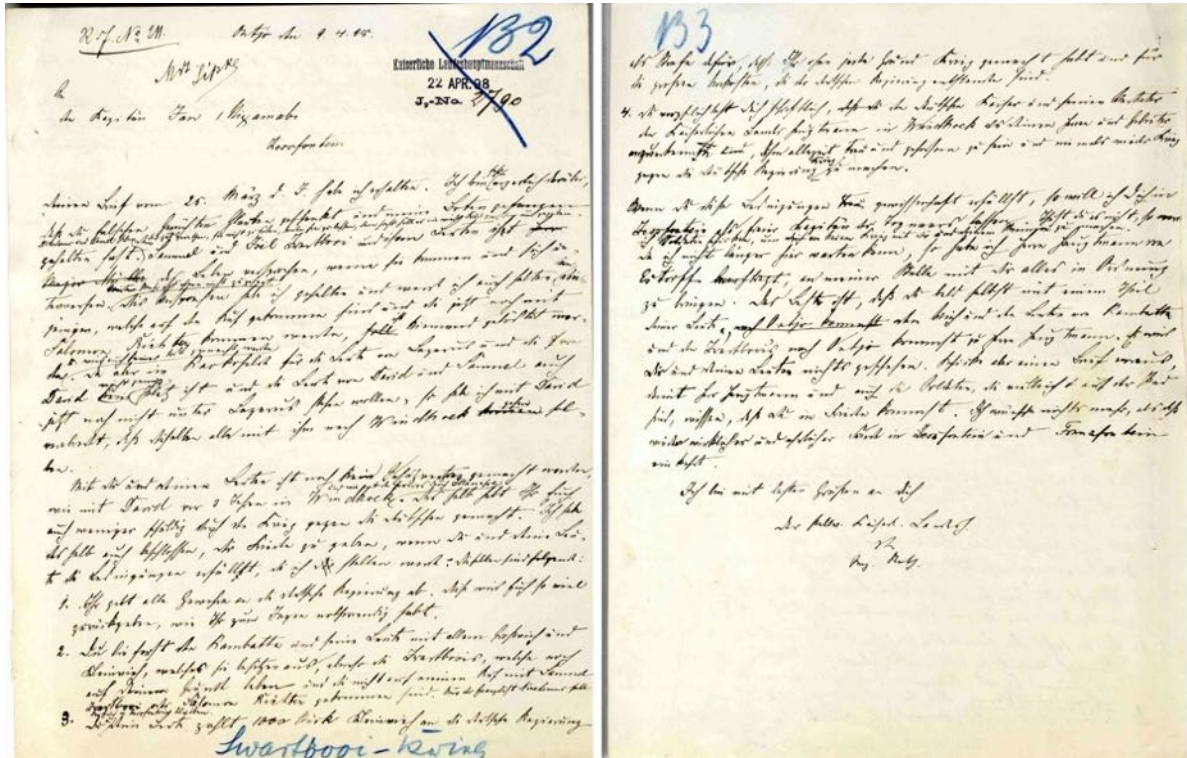


Figure 14.5 Von Lindequist lays out the Conditions of Submission required by Jan [Uixamab of Sesfontein. NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v. 'Conditions of Submission', v. Lindequist (Outjo) to Capn. Jan [Uixamab (Sesfontein), 9.4.1898, vol. 2: 132–133.

There is an additional and somewhat contradictory intention to supply [Uixamab and his people with muzzle-loaders for hunting in the area, 'on which they depend for their livelihood'.³⁸⁷

By 17 March, Samuel and Joel Swartbooi together with the Swartbooi people, appeared in the camp near Grootberg with a demand to surrender their rifles (Fig. 14.6), following negotiations led by missionary Riechmann from Franzfontein:

[t]he whole tribe, 150 men and about 400 women and children with about 1000 head of cattle, was then handed over to the deputy governor, Mr. Regierungsrat von Lindequist, who had just arrived here, and on his orders were taken into captivity in Windhoek.

In the course of the campaign, the enemy (Hottentots and Hereros) lost 16 casualties up to the battle at Grootberg, and 10 casualties in the battle at Grootberg, making a total of 26 casualties.³⁸⁸



Figure 14.6 Swartbooi Nama held at a camp near Grootberg. © Clarence Geingob

Contemporary oral histories also tell of a walled camp constructed in the shadow of Grootberg / Kai|uis, for the secure holding of Nama and Nami-Daman prisoners, and/or for German military patrols towards Sesfontein (Fig. 14.7).³⁸⁹



Figure 14.7 Possible 'holding kraal' near Grootberg/Kai|uis. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 10.4.2023.

Despite Samuel Swartbooi's clear hope for peace in their land of the north-west, the Swartboois and others were "taken into captivity in Windhoek".³⁹⁰ As von Lindequist writes,

I will have all the captured Hottentots brought to Windhoek, as leaving them in the Kaoko field would entail the constant danger of a new war. Whether it is possible to use them for railway construction without an excessively strong guard, I reserve for further consideration.³⁹¹

Recriminations begin. Von Estorff reports the following "betrayals" by various Nama rebels:

- 1) four men are named as being part of the patrol under Corporal Wesch, but "went over to the enemy";
- 2) one fighter is reported to have prevented Private Kunadt from using his rifle – Kunadt died in the skirmish at Aub;
- 3) one man "was with the horse guard when the company's horses were stolen, assisted in the horse theft, and went over to the enemy";
- 4) one man "deserted from Lt. Eggers" cart at Kauas-Otjivaora, and probably betrayed to the enemy the approach of 2 wagons from Outjo;
- 5) four men are suspected of the murder of Julius Zachau at Spitzkopje;
- 6) other men are considered to have deserted, whilst one individual embezzled mail and another, now in custody in Outjo, "betrayed the conditions at Otjo to the enemy and was spotted near Otjo soon after the cattle theft at Kauas had been carried out".³⁹²

Various "rebels" are also "brought in" and demanded "to tell the truth" of their actions.³⁹³ Celebrating the efforts of the Schutztruppe in suppressing the uprising, von Lindequist additionally writes that:

I would like to take this opportunity to once again emphasise that the campaign was a great effort for the Kaiser's Schutztruppe.

In the case of the fourth field company, the result was that a large part of the crews

had to be sent back to Outjo as sick. As a result of the poor condition of the mounts, caused mainly by overexertion in the fight against the cattle plague, in conjunction with the horse theft that opened the campaign and the misfortune in the Achas river, this company had to cover most of the campaign on foot in the extremely difficult terrain. That it nevertheless succeeded in driving the quite mobile enemy out of the vicinity of Franzfontein is due in no small part to the energy and indefatigability of the company commander and his officers, who led the troops by example.

The victory at the Grootberg was decisive for the course and outcome of the war, the rapid conclusion of which exceeded my expectations. I had the opportunity to see for myself on the battlefield that all the advantages in the battle were on the side of the enemy. The rough, unclear terrain must have favoured the enemy, almost completely obscuring their movements, as much as it hindered the attackers. The leaders had ample opportunity to show their cold-bloodedness and determination, the men their bravery.³⁹⁴

Endnotes

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 235; also NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros; and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg), 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 91–92; GSWA (n.d.: 424)

³⁷⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report Mj. Mueller about the battle at Grootberg on February 26, 1898, with sketch’, (n.d.), vol. 1: 234–235.

³⁷⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Mueller on the Battle of Grootberg, plus accompanying correspondence’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg), (n.d), vol. 2: 170.

³⁷⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Food transport; Send battle reports to Outjo’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg) to Capn. v. Estorff (Kamanjab), 28.2.1898, vol. 1: 229; also NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Bringing in provision wagons’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg) to v. Estorff (Kamanjab), 28.2.1898, vol. 2: 162.

³⁷⁹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros; and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898’, 22.3.1898, Mj. Müller (Grootberg), vol. 2: 92; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report Mj. Mueller on the situation’, Mj. Müller (Grootberg) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 20.3.1898, vol. 2: 175.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report by Lindequist to AA on the course of the campaign; Telegram concerning Victory on the Grootberg’, v. Lindequist (Franzfontein) to Foreign Office (Berlin), 8.3.1898, vol. 2: 22.

³⁸² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Samuel Zwartbooi to Mj. Mueller in Cape Dutch’, Grootberg, 13.3.1898, vol. 2: 96–97; GSWA (n.d.: 424), Moritz (1998: 35)

³⁸³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Request for the construction of a thorn kraal and a guard house to house the captured Zwartboois’, v. Lindequist (Grootberg) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 15.3.1898, vol. 2: 204.

³⁸⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Jan Ichamab has made himself guilty by taking up arms against the German government; Request for submission, otherwise destruction by Mj. Mueller’, v. Lindequist (Grootberg) to Jan Ichamab (|Uixamab) (Sesfontein), 15.3.1898, vol. 2: 27.

³⁸⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Captain Jan |Uixamab to v. Lindequist’ in Cape Dutch, Jan |Uixamab (Sesfontein) to v. Lindequist (Grootberg?), 25.3.1898, vol. 2: 209–210.

³⁸⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Conditions of Submission’, v. Lindequist (Outjo) to Capn. Jan |Uixamab (Sesfontein), 9.4.1898, vol. 2: 132–133.

³⁸⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Withdrawal of troops; 150 Zwartboois (men) captured, 50 more scattered to the north; no news from Jan |Uixamab (Outjo, April 10, 1898); Messengers to Jan |Uixamab have returned with a letter from the same, he says that he has not come for fear; Location at the Topnaars; Terms of Submission; In case of fulfilment recognition of Jan |Uixamab as captain’, v. Lindequist (Franzfontein) to District Command (Outjo), 10.4.1898, vol. 2: 125.

³⁸⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Report mj. Mueller on the move against the combined Swartbooi, Topnaar Hottentots and Hereros; and Report on the battles on the Grootberg on 26 and 27.2.1898’, Mj. Müller report (Grootberg), 22.3.1898, vol. 2: 93; GSWA (n.d.: 424)

³⁸⁹ Interviews with the late Max Haraseb, Khamdesca, 2.11.2014, and the late Ernst Gurirab, Anker, 4.3.2015.

³⁹⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Telegram re Subjugation of Zwartboois; regarding the end of the campaign, departure S.M.S. “Hawk”/Habicht; Report to AA regarding the conclusion of the campaign’, v. Lindequist (Grootberg) to Foreign Office (Berlin), 20.3.1898, vol. 2: 31.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 33.

³⁹² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘List of Zwartboois, deserted riders and other suspects’, v. Estorff (Grootklip) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 23.3.1898, vol. 2: 261–262.

³⁹³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Negotiations against five Hottentots brought in as rebels / insurgents’, Eggers (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 8.4.1898, vol. 2: 239–242.

³⁹⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Publication of the report on the Zwartbooi campaign in the Colonial Gazette, possibly combat reports in the Military Weekly Gazette; poor health of crews and mounts; Battle of Grootberg; Troop Commander's Award’, v. Lindequist (Grootberg) to Foreign Office (Berlin), 26.3.1898, vol. 2: 35–37.

15. Captivity, Forced Labour and Punishment

By 26 March 1898, the Swartbooi were being forced to trek to Windhoek. As von Lindequist writes:

[t]he first field company left today with 144 captured Zwartbooi men, and about 300 women and children, who are going to Windhoek to captivity. The rest of the troops will leave this afternoon. From here I will go to Franzfontein in order to allocate a reserve to the remaining Zwartbooi, about 60 men and their families under their captain Lazarus, and from there I will go via Outjo to Omaruru, where I intend to, with Manasse, finally establish the western border of Hereroland. I hope to be in Windhoek in the first half of April.³⁹⁵

More than 500 people are thought to have been deported to Windhoek from the Franzfontein community, and forced into dependent work relationships (Fig. 15.1).³⁹⁶

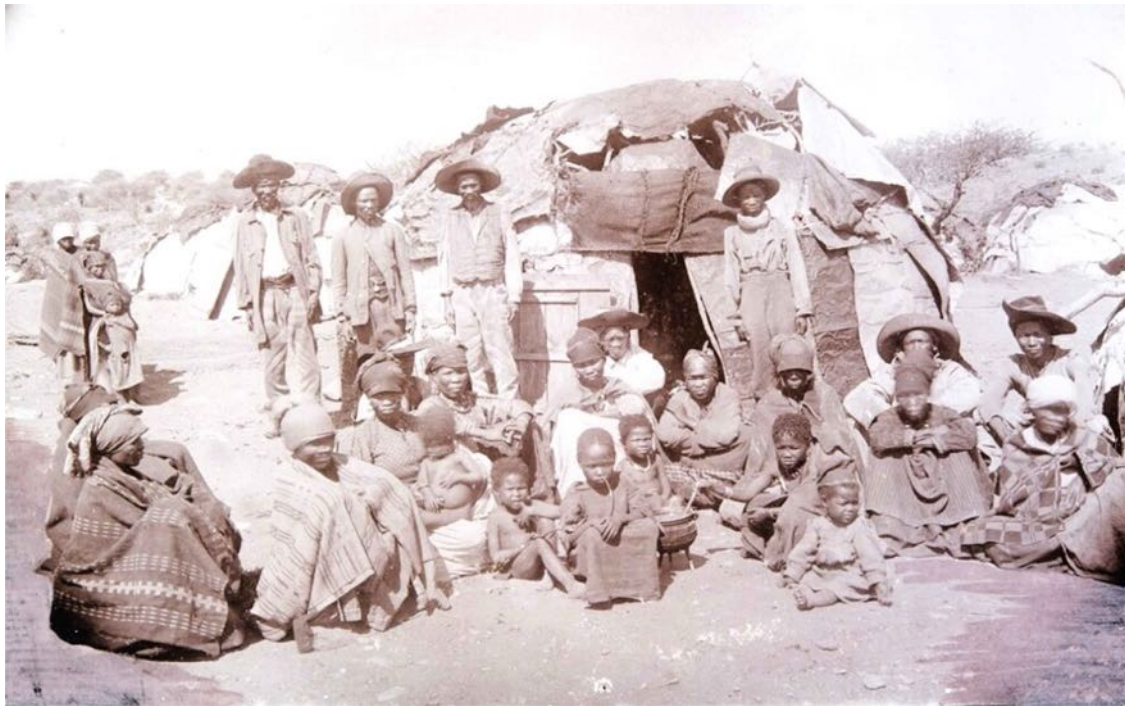


Figure 15.1 Captured Swartbooi Nama in Windhoek in 1899: Captain Christian Swart is thought to be the man standing on the right (Hartmann 2005: 33). Photo by August Engelbert Wulff, 1899. Source: Übersee-Museum Bremen, P00092), <https://nat.museum-digital.de/object/1101015>

Their cattle at Grootberg were also captured and distributed as follows:

[a]ll the riding oxen were given to the 4th Field Comp. in Outjo.

The small cattle, minus a small part which had to be slaughtered because of weakness and the like, were delivered to the 4th Field Company and to the government in

Windhoek. All non-riding oxen and cows and calves were consumed as cattle for slaughter by the Kaiser Company on the march from Grootberg to Windhoek with the prisoner transport.³⁹⁷

A lengthy list is created of the captured Swartbooi, the first two pages of which are shared below (Fig. 15.2):

The image shows two pages of a handwritten list of names of captured Swartbooi and others. The list is numbered 1 to 65 and includes names such as David Swartbooi, Johann Swartbooi, and others. The list is written in German and includes symbols like '+' and '++' indicating involvement in the campaign. The first page is titled 'Namenverzeichnis der Gefangenen' and the second page is titled '265'. The list is organized into two columns, with names and their corresponding numbers listed in a grid-like format. The names are written in cursive, and the numbers are written in a simple, blocky font. The list includes names of Swartbooi and other individuals, with some names followed by symbols like '+' or '++' indicating their involvement in the campaign. The list is written on aged, yellowed paper.

Number	Name	Number	Name
1.	David Swartbooi	22.	Jacobus Breyer
2.	Johann Swartbooi	23.	Fritz + Wovil
3.	Johel Swartbooi ++	24.	Joh David +
4.	Gentrich Swartbooi ++	25.	Jörg Richter ++
5.	Gottfried Swartbooi	26.	Lamerob
6.	Wilhelm Swartbooi	27.	Mittel Richter
7.	Samuel Swartbooi ++	28.	Spak Dauber +
8.	Janus Swartbooi +	29.	Katbab +
9.	Johann Swartbooi	30.	Wilhelm Orlow
10.	Jani Swartbooi +	31.	David Krock
11.	Salomon Richter +	32.	Kamafell
12.	Johann Kack	33.	+ Gannil
13.	Johann Richter	34.	+ Lannil
14.	Wini Breyer ++	35.	Johann Gockel ++
15.	Johann Breyer	36.	Tousil
16.	Levit Freiwilch ++	37.	Sam Masonis
17.	Kack Willij	38.	Jost Richter +
18.	Gentrich Willij	39.	Freiwilch Lil
19.	Wilhelm Swartbooi	40.	Johann Orlow in Bai
20.	Christoph Richter	41.	Jan Fries +
21.	Johann David	42.	Jacob Fries +
43.	Johann Klaasen	66.	Johann Hendrik +
44.	Jacobus Klaasen	67.	Gottlieb Hendrik
45.	Johann Klaasen	68.	Hendrik Klaus
46.	Johann Klaasen	69.	Johann Klaasen
47.	Johann Engelbacht +	70.	Salomon Kooper ++
48.	Johann Klaasen	71.	Paul Apikamer
49.	Johann Klaasen	72.	Christoph
50.	Johann Klaasen	73.	Freiwilch + Kamil
51.	Johann Klaasen	74.	+ Gockel +
52.	Johann Klaasen	75.	David Hossa Boko +
53.	Paul Hendrik +	76.	Freiwilch Richter +
54.	Freiwilch	77.	Johann Peter
55.	Thomas Grosse	78.	Lasil
56.	+ Gockel	79.	Johann Breyer
57.	Johann Klaasen	80.	Hendrik Hendrik
58.	Hendrik Klaasen	81.	Johann Bekis
59.	Johann Bekis	82.	+ Gockel Bekis
60.	Johann Klaasen	83.	Johann Hendrik
61.	Gottlieb Hendrik	84.	Rabinal Hendrik
62.	Samuel Hendrik +	85.	Johann Mairer
63.	Levi Hendrik	86.	Levi Dauber
64.	Johann Hendrik ++	87.	Kamajeri (Taler)
65.	Maspius Hendrik	88.	Wilhelm Breyer (Taler)

Figure 15.2 List of names of captured Swartbooi and others. NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 'List of names of the captured Zwartbooi-Hottentots and those not yet captured, as well as those not involved in the war', (undated), vol. 2: 264–272.

Key: + means especially involved in the campaign; ++ means involved in the campaign, according to Lazarus Swartbooi.

Additionally, 25 men “identified as followers of Kambatta [...] [were] charged in Omaruru as war traitors and sentenced to forced labour for several years”, having been captured by Captain von Estorff’s Company and by Michael, the son of Captain Manasse Tjiseseta at Omaruru.³⁹⁸ Many of these prisoners were sentenced to five years’ imprisonment in heavy chains (Fig. 15.3), and sent to work as labourers on railway construction near the Khan River: railways being a much-needed innovation considering the loss of draft-oxen due to rinderpest. Von Lindequist demands that they “must work

in chains, must not receive any benefits other than the usual food, unless they fall ill, and must be adequately guarded”.³⁹⁹

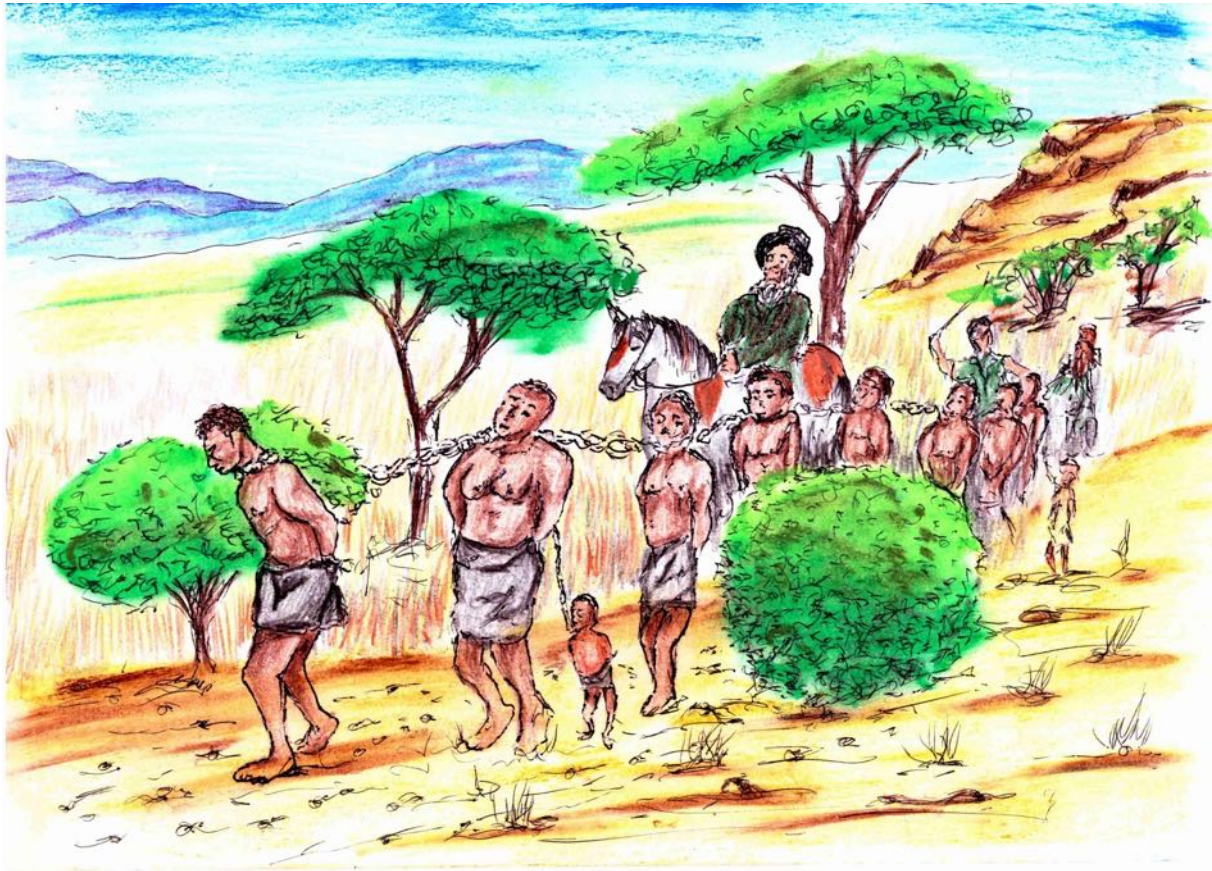


Figure 15.3 Captured ovaHerero in heavy chains, being sent to work on railway construction. © Clarence Geingob

Some of these ovaHerero prisoners escaped, reportedly after being repeatedly beaten (Fig. 15.4).⁴⁰⁰ Thus,

I respectfully inform Your Highness that 18 of the prisoners of war sent here for railway construction escaped during the night of the 12th to the 13th of this month [May 1898]. A sick prisoner who stayed behind says that the men used a bent nail as a lockpick and thus opened the locks of the neck rings, left the chains and escaped. He further states that some of the escaped prisoners intended to go to Ongarivanda (north of Omaruru above the 21st parallel) to the Herero big man Katjitwesu and that the other part to Okosongeama near Otjinduo (between Omaruru and Omburo) to the Herero grandman Hijosozu.⁴⁰¹

Patrols were sent to various places in or close to the Swakop River to try and find these men.



Figure 15.4 OvaHerero prisoners escape their chains, after having been beaten. © Clarence Geingob

A variety of requests for the labour of those in captivity were received. For example, a “Landing Agent” writes from Otjimbingwe requesting the handing over of “40 men from the Swartboy Hottentots prisoners of war [...] for the purpose of unloading the ships”; ultimately refused for fear that they would escape to Walvis Bay managed by the Cape Colony.⁴⁰² Even children as young as 10 are requested as servants:

I respectfully request that you be so kind as to send us a Swartbooi boy (or girl) of about 10 years of age as servant. If it is permitted, I would go with my wife to the kraal this afternoon and select one.⁴⁰³

A number of Nama also travelled to Cape Cross to seek work there, transporting guano to boats for export,⁴⁰⁴ although it seems they were later retrieved and moved to Windhoek.⁴⁰⁵

Multiple deaths also followed the war. As an example:

The following captured Hottentots are being transported to Windhoek by Sergeant Eichelmann’s leave detachment:

1st Josaphat, 2nd Jacob, 3rd Moses 14.6. † at Brackwater, 4th Dermann, † in gaol[?].

furthermore the women:

1. Lisbeth, 2. Hansina, 3. Minna 15.6. † in Eikams [Windhoek], 4. Katharina, 5. Mariro,
6. Koiros † at the werft.⁴⁰⁶

Deaths also occurred amongst the re-captured escaped ovaHerero.⁴⁰⁷

Later in 1898, an attempt is also made to bring in the “rebel” Kaisib, reported to be based at “Otjohaka northwest of Otjitambi [an Owambo cattle-post of Tjanika of Okandjera] with about 20 men, 12 guns and the stolen government horse”, as well as “about 10 cows and 50 to 100 small cattle”; ovaHerero Kasubi and Lovi were also with him, and refused to surrender either the horse or rifles.⁴⁰⁸ By the end of 1899, they were being mobilised as labourers for road construction in the Franzfontein-Outjo area.⁴⁰⁹

Four young Swartbooi Nama escaped from Windhoek, perhaps to the north or to Walvis Bay, although it is not thought that more will try to escape.⁴¹⁰ In early 1899, rewards of 100 marks were offered for the return of these escaped prisoners: two of these escapees were brought to Outjo by Topnaar Captain Jan |Uixamab where they were held in chains, and were then transferred to Windhoek, with one brought in earlier, leaving only one still missing.⁴¹¹

Missionary Riechmann writes:

[a]fter a 4-month state of war in which several battles took place peace was concluded at Givolberg [Grootberg] on 20 March 1898.

The Zwartbooi surrendered on the condition that nothing should be done to their lives, but they had to be removed to Windhoek, where they are still imprisoned to this day. They have regained their freedom a year ago, but it is a limited one, for they are not allowed to leave Windhoek.

The Zwartbooi tribe is thus doomed to extinction; for in Windhoek it will gradually dissolve under the whole circumstances and disappear among the masses, so that after a decade there could hardly be any question of a Zwartbooi tribe if the smaller part remaining in Franzfontein, moreover decimated by migration and an unusually large number of deaths, did not prove to be vigorous. But even this part would have been scattered to the winds long ago if it had not been under the educating influence of the mission church. Here the mission has the task of growing a new, and we hope also a solid Zwartbooi tribe with patience and faith in the born offspring on Franzfontein. The total

number of Zwartbooï here [Fransfontein], from the small infant onwards, currently amounts to about 150 heads. [...] The zeal and diligence with which the local Hottentots have cultivated their gardens in recent years is astonishing. They have steadfastly overcome the locust and bird plagues. Despite the considerable frost damage, they still harvested 30 quintals of wheat this year.⁴¹²

Indeed, Swartbooï “who have remained loyal” were also rewarded with a “delivery of 294 head of small cattle and 3 cows”, with 4 cows also granted to Missionary Riechmann to replace “3 cows lost in the war and 1 ox”.⁴¹³

At the end of 1898, missionary Riechmann from Franzfontein requests that “the Hottentot Hans Zwartbooï be sent back to Franzfontein. He has been in his service for a long time and has his family in Franzfontein”: this request is refused.⁴¹⁴ In August 1903, missionary Riechmann writes again to Governor Leutwein at the request of Captain Lazarus and others, requesting “the return home of a number of the Zwartbooï staying in Windhoek”.⁴¹⁵ Leutwein again refuses this request, stating that “the prisoners of war now prove to be good workers, whereas in Franzfontein they would again fall prey to the lazy life of the Hottentots”.⁴¹⁶

Years later, Swartbooï Nama continued to lament the loss of their lands in the north-west. Anthropologist Winifred Hoernlé describes “[o]ne of the most beautiful tunes I heard” as invoking the loss of land experienced by Swartbooï Nama. This song was accompanied by differently pitched flutes made of reeds, played by men with the song sung by women. The song speaks of their yearning for the place they considered their home, after more than 500 of them were removed from Franzfontein and deported as forced labour to Windhoek, following their defeat in 1898 at the “battle of Grootberg”. As Hoernlé writes:

[t]hese people had been removed from their reserve at Franzfontein by the Germans and were intensely home-sick for their country. The song commemorates their country through one of the trees found in that reserve and not down south where they were more or less imprisoned.

Tsaora Naitchi. Juicy tree (The stem is full of juice).

Ti Naitchi. My tree.

isa [íxa] Naitchi. Beautiful tree.

The Dutch name for the tree is Saftboom.⁴¹⁷

It is possible that this song celebrates the beautiful fig trees (*Ficus sycomorus* or |*nomas*) that sit around the spring of water at Fransfontein (Fig. 15.5), and that enabled Indigenous !Khaugôan/Swartbooi to settle there after fleeing numerous attacks and drought experienced in southern Namibia.

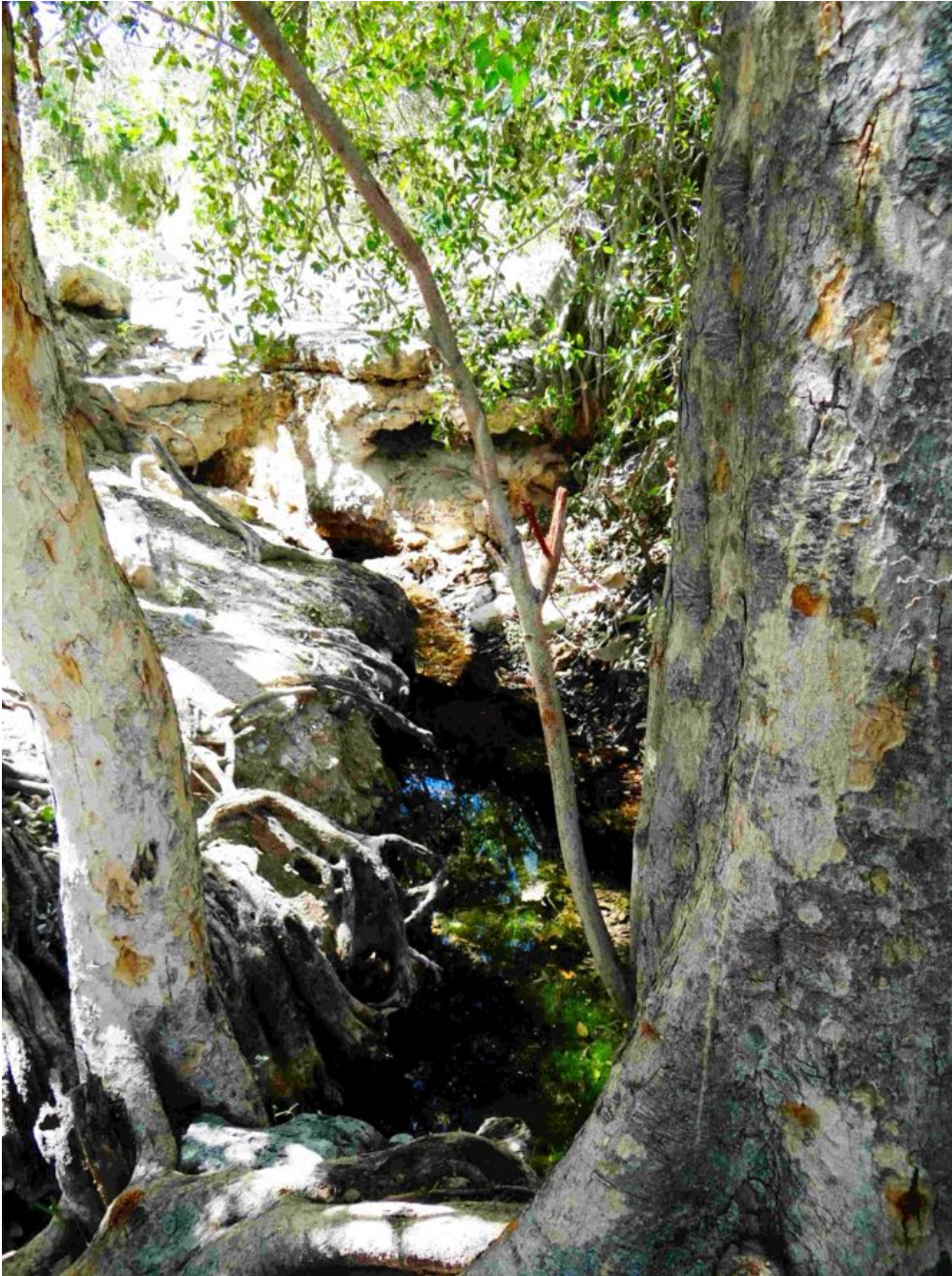


Figure 15.5 *Ficus sycomorus* or |*nomas* at the spring at Fransfontein. Photo: © Sian Sullivan 2.4.2023.

Endnotes

- ³⁹⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Captured Zwartboois have gone to Windhoek’, v. Lindequist (Grootberg) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 26.3.1898, vol. 2: 34; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Four Zwartbooi-Hottentot prisoners of war escaped’, 1st Lt. Kepler (Windhoek) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 4.12.1898, vol. 2: 248/348. Nb. The last pages of volume 2 from 228 are misnumbered, hence the adjustments here.
- ³⁹⁶ Rizzo (2012: 67)
- ³⁹⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Use of the captured cattle’, Capn. Kaiser (Windhoek) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 25.7.1898, vol. 2: 294–295.
- ³⁹⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Court-martial against the Herero prisoners of war’, led by Capn. Kaiser (Omaruru), 16.4.1898, vol. 2: 190–191.
- ³⁹⁹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Condemnation to 5 years in prison/chain imprisonment’, v. Lindequist (Omaruru) to Railway Construction Command (Swakopmund), 16.4.1898, vol. 2: 193.
- ⁴⁰⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Testimony of two escaped prisoners of war: ran away because they were often beaten’, Police Sergeant Bienart (Windhoek), 2.3.1899, vol. 2: 279/379.
- ⁴⁰¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘18 prisoners of war intended for the construction of the railway escaped’, v. Perbandt (Rössing) to v. Lindequist (Windhoek), 14.4.1898, vol. 2: 234/334–235/335.
- ⁴⁰² NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Request for the transfer of 40 Zwartbooi-Hottentot prisoners of war to unload the ships; rejected because of the risk of escaping to Walvisbay’, L. Koch (Otjimbingwe) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 12.4.1898, vol. 1: 257.
- ⁴⁰³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Please be allowed to take a Zwartbooi boy [or girl] into service’, Pastor Siebe (Windhoek) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 5.5.1898, vol. 2: 181.
- ⁴⁰⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Topnaar Hottentots reside at Cape Cross; Topnaars at Grootberg should stand up’, v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to Imperial District Headquarters (Outjo), 26.10.1898, vol. 2: 268/368–269/369.
- ⁴⁰⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Hottentots are said to have fled to Cape Cross; arrested five Hottentots there and brought them to Swakopmund’, 1st Lt. Volkmann (Swakopmund) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 28.12.1898, vol. 2: 272/372–273/373.
- ⁴⁰⁶ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Delivery of prisoners of war’, v. Estorff (Outjo) to Imperial Troop Command (Windhoek), 12.5.1898, vol. 2: 304.
- ⁴⁰⁷ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Four of the escaped prisoners were brought in, one died’, 2nd Lt. Steinhausen (Omaruru) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 6.6.1898, vol. 2: 237/337; NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Prisoner of war deceased’, 2nd Lt. Steinhausen (Omaruru) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 6.8.1898, vol. 2: 243/343.
- ⁴⁰⁸ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Kaisib asked to submit, refuses to do this’, v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to Imperial District Command (Outjo), 13.10.1898, vol. 2: 266/366–267/367.
- ⁴⁰⁹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Arrival of captured Hereros; were settled and used in road construction’, 1st Lt. Franke (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 22.12.1899, vol. 2: 283/383.
- ⁴¹⁰ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Four Zwartbooi-Hottentot prisoners of war escaped’, 1st Lt. Kepler (Windhoek) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 3.12.1898, vol. 2: 244/344–246/346.
- ⁴¹¹ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Capt. Jan |Uixamab brings in escaped prisoners of war’, 1st Lt. Franke (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek) and Mj. Müller (Windhoek) to District Headquarters (Outjo), 24.5.1899, vol. 2: 281/381–282/382.
- ⁴¹² Riechmann (n.d.: 4)
- ⁴¹³ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Summary overview of stocks, departures and arrivals of cattle for slaughter’, v. Lindequist (Windhoek) to v. Estorff (Outjo), 2.4.1898, vol. 2: 229/329
- ⁴¹⁴ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Missionary Riechmann asks for the Hottentot Hans Zwartbooi to be sent back to Franzfontein’, v. Estorff (Outjo) to Imperial Government (Windhoek), 1.11.1898, vol. 2: 251/351.
- ⁴¹⁵ NAN ZBU 440D-IV-f v2 ‘Correspondence between missionary Riechmann and Kais. Government regarding the return of the Zwartboois from Windhoek to Franzfontein’, Missionary Riechmann (Franzfontein) to Governor Leutwein (Windhoek), 24.8.1903, vol. 2: 290/390–291/391.
- ⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 287/387–288/388.
- ⁴¹⁷ Hoernlé quoted in Kirby (1933: 346). Also see Sullivan *et al.* (2022).

16. Land Appropriation in Outjo District

The removal of Swartbooi and others precipitated land appropriation by European settlers in the newly founded Outjo District. As von Estorff had already made clear (Chapter 10), he aimed for increasing white settlement in this area, wanting to encourage Boers and Germans to settle here, and to additionally claim waterpoints west of Outjo.⁴¹⁸

The events outlined above thus paved the way for a vision of settler colonialism. By 1901, 39 settler farmers, including 11 German, eight “Transvalers”, seven “Capelanders” and seven Englishmen, were reported for Outjo District.⁴¹⁹ By 1915 a number of farms, probably mostly in German hands, had been established in Outjo District, as shown in the map below (Fig. 16.1).

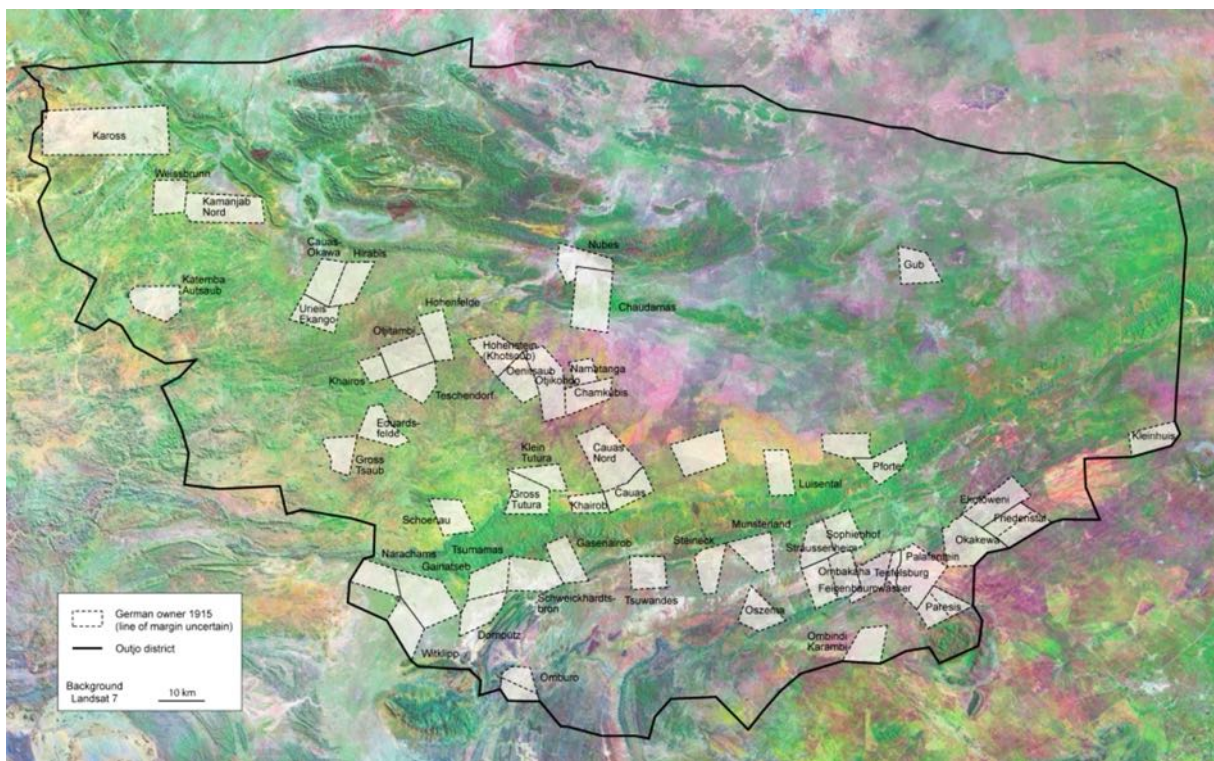


Figure 16.1 Mostly German owners of farms by 1915 in Outjo District. Source: Bolten & Dieckmann (2010: 171), used with permission.

Settler farming was also consolidated here under the South African administration following World War 1, with repeated attempts made to keep land north of white settled areas clear of Indigenous dwelling places and livestock.⁴²⁰ Outjo District thus became full of settler farms from the 1920s to the 1980s, as shown in the map below (Fig. 16.2).

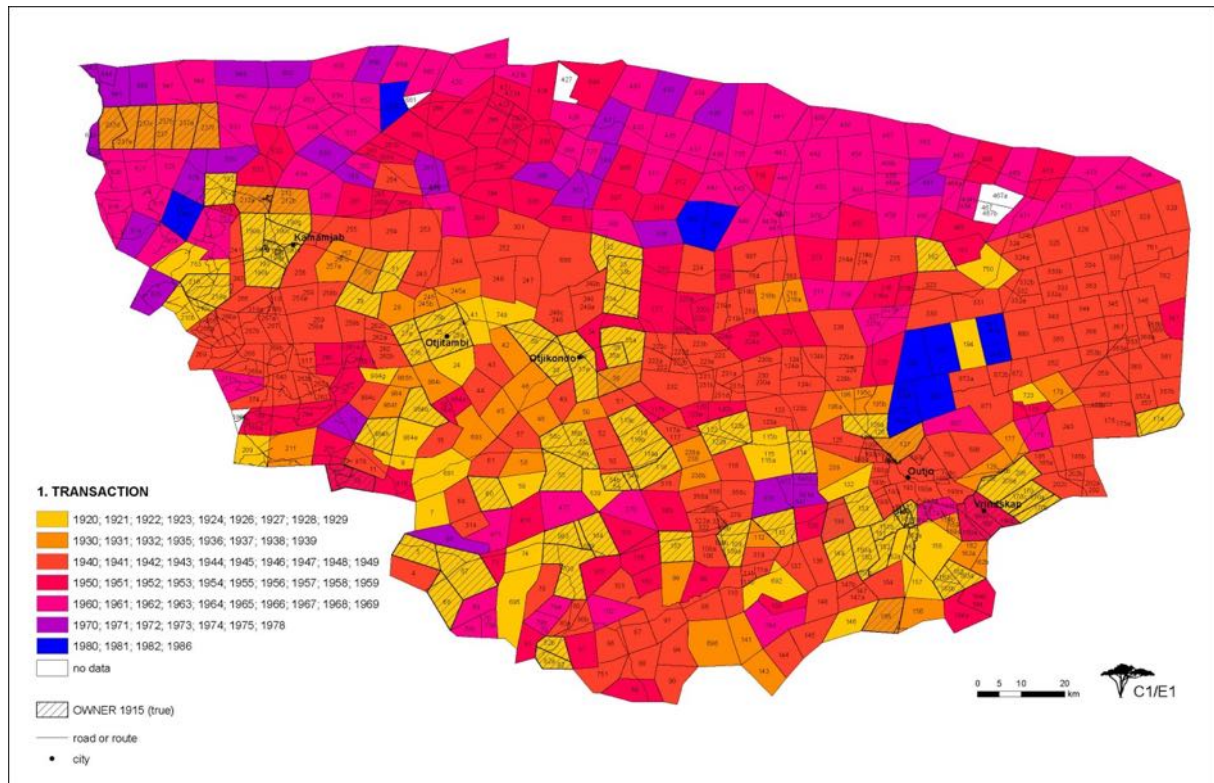


Figure 16.2 Draft: Ute Dieckmann; Cartography: Andreas Bolten. Map produced as part of a research project undertaken between 2005 and 2007 within the framework of the special research programme 'Arid Climate Adaptation and Cultural Innovation in Africa (ACACIA)' (Sonderforschungsbereich 389) at the University of Cologne, funded by the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*), used with permission.

The removal of Indigenous Swartbooi//Khaulḡoan and others no doubt played a part in this process of land appropriation,⁴²¹ with Indigenous and local people becoming labourers for white settler farmers.

Endnotes

⁴¹⁸ NAN-ZBU 440D-IV-f v1 ‘Report on the events in Franzfontein’, Captain v. Estorff (Franzfontein) to v. Lindequist (Outjo), 29.11.1898, vol. 1: 5–7.

⁴¹⁹ Kruger (n.d.: 15, 37) in Dieckmann (2007: 162)

⁴²⁰ Miescher (2006, 2012)

⁴²¹ Dieckmann (2007)

Known Deaths, 1897-1898

Klein Aub 4.12.1897

Dead

Private Kunadt, killed by enemy fire

Private Bönsch, killed by enemy fire

Plus a Nama fighter shot and killed by Corporal Wesch

Wounded

Corporal Wesch, wounded twice

Ehobib 4-5.12.1897

Dead

Rider Wilhelm Ludwig (shot through the chest)

Wounded

von Estorff, slightly wounded by 2 grazing shots but remains fit for duty

Private Schwibbe, lightly wounded by a grazing shot and remains fit for duty

Tsaub 17-18.12.1897

Dead

Sergeant Weigt, killed by enemy detachment led by Joel Swartbooi

Private Stock, killed by enemy detachment led by Joel Swartbooi

Wounded

Rider Nosper, seriously wounded by several shots

Anabis 19-20.12.1897

Dead

Two Nama, killed by the patrol that opened fire from around 300 m.

Wounded

Private Milde slightly wounded by a shot in the right upper arm

Klein-Zaub / Klein-Tsaub 4.1.1898

Dead

Lazareth Assistant, student horseman, Mauß, who immediately rushed to bandage Lt.

Bensen, received a fatal shot while bending over him, which put an end to his life

Rider Geißler, shot through the head

And another man was killed who seems to have been a Nama

Wounded

Lieut. Bensen was severely wounded

Kauas / Khauas 23.1.1898

Dead

One Nama, who lay dead with 4 shots in his chest and head

Lieutenant Kurzweg, succumbed to his wounds on the same day after being transported to Outjo

In vicinity of Otjongoro 2.2.1898

Dead

A shot killed one of the Katjituezu's men, with Michael, the son of Manasse Tjiseseta of Omaruru, present

Outjo 3.2.1898

Dead - executed

Swartbooi Kuton was executed as a 'spy'

Dead

A rebellious ovaHerero is shot dead

Near Kamanjab 6.2.1898

Dead

Five ovaHerero are killed by a patrol Lieutenant Freiherr von Schönau-Wehr

Groß-Achas 17-18.2.1898

Dead

Rider Bergmeier drowned

Three Nama Riders drowned

Plus 42 horses and donkeys drowned

25.2.1898

Dead

A Nama succumbed to his wounds

Wounded

Probably a 'Bergdamara' / †Nūkhoen

Grootberg 26.2.1898

Dead

Hospital assistant apprentice Lehnberg shot through the head

Two Nama

One ovaHerero dead

Additionally, it is reported that:

Nama 16 casualties at the battle of Grootberg

ovaHerero 10 casualties at the battle of Grootberg

Wounded

Sekondlieutenant v. Zülow wounded in the forehead by a bullet fragment, but was able to continue on duty'

Nama Berndt Pinner

native foreman Nama Rider Lazarus

native Servant Hacku

28.2.1898

Wounded

First Lieutenant Franke brought in a wounded prisoner

Plus, other deaths subsequent to the Battle of Grootberg

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Riechmann, H. n.d. Kurze Übersicht der Geschichte der hiesigen Station (Brief overview of the history of the local station). ELCRN (Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia) Archives.

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 hunting
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 Iverson (Danish trader)
 Jacob !Naixab
 Jacob Wimmer (Baster)
 Jacobus Boois
 James Chapman
 James Edward Alexander (Captain)
 Johannes Kruger (Bushman Chief)
 Julius Zachau
 Kai-as
 Kailkhauan / 'Red Nation'
 Kai|uis / Grootberg
 Kaisib / Keisib
 Kakatswa
 Kamanjab
 Kambonde
 Kaokoveld / Kaoko
 Kaoko Land and Mining Company
 Kaoko Land und MinenGesellschaft
 Karibib
 Kauas / Khauas
 Keetmanshoop / #Nu#goaes
 Khamdesca
 Khan River
 Khîsa-!guwus / Sandfontein
 Khoekhoegowab
 Kowareb / Gowareb
 Kubas-Ubib
 Kunene Region
 Kunene River
 Lake Ngami
 Law for Rehoboth / Rehoboth Code
 lung sickness
 Marienfluss
 Maun
 Max Haraseb
 mercenary fighters
 Missionaries
 Friedrich Kremer
 Heinrich Kleinschmidt
 Heinrich Riechmann
 Heinrich Schmelen
 Hugo Hahn
 Jan Bam
 Johannes Albrecht Friedrich Böhm
 Johannes Rath
 Mittelstedt (trader)
 Mudorib River
 Muskau
 Nama
 Namaland
 Nama riders / *Namareiters*
 Namatanga
 Namibia
 Nami-Daman
 Namib / Namieb
 Namutoni
 Narachaam
 Nicodemus Kido / Gâseb
 Nugas-water

Okahandja
 Okaukeujo
 Okombahe / |Âtgommes
 Olifantskup
 Omaruru
 Omaruru / !Eseb River
 Ombepera
 Ombombo
 Omburo
 Oorlam Nama
 otjiHerero
 Otjikango / Neu-Barmen
 Otjikondo
 Otjimbingwe / Âtsas
 Otjitambi
 Outjo
 Outjo District
 ovaHerero
 Assa Riarua
 Kamaherero
 Kambatta
 Kambazembi
 Katarrhe
 Manasse Tjiseseta
 Mureti
 Samuel Maherero
 Willem Zeraua
 ovaKuenta
 Ovamboland
 ovaTjimba
 Kakurukouje / Kasupi
 Muhona Katiti
 Pallafontein
 Pass Laws
 Piet Gertse (Baster)
 Protection Treaty / *Schutzvertrag*
 Puros
 reed mat huts / |haru omit
 reservists
 Rhenish Missionary Society
 rinderpest
 Robert Gordon (Cape Colony Governor)
 Rooibank / |Awa-!haos / Scheppmansdorf
 Sabatta (trader)
 Salem
 Salomon Richter
 San / 'Bushman'
 Sanitatis
 Saul Shepherd
Schutztruppe / Protection Troops
 Bensen (Lieutenant)
 Bergmeier (Rider)
 Bösch (Private)
 Eggers (Lieutenant)
 Franke (First Lieutenant)
 Friedrich von Lindequist (Deputy Governor)
 Froede (Sergeant)
 Geißler (Rider)
 Glatzel (Private)
 Heise (Rider)
 Herz (Sergeant)
 Heydebreck (First Lieutenant)
 Kaiser (Captain)
 Kepler (Detachment)
 Koczy (Sergeant)
 Kunadt (Private)
 Kurzweg (Rider)

Lehnberg (Hospital Assistant)
Ludwig von Estorff (Captain)
Mauß (Rider)
Memmersheim (Rider)
Milde (Private)
Müller / Mueller (Major)
Nosper (Rider)
Nürnbergger (Paymaster-Aspirant)
Reiser (Captain)
Salpeter (volunteer officer)
Schwartzkopff (Captain)
Schröder (Rider)
Schulze (Lieutenant)
Schwibbe (Private)
Senling (Private)
Steinhausen (Lieutenant)
Stock (Private)
Theodor Leutwein (Governor)
von Bethusy-Huc (Second Lieutenant Count)
von Burgsdorff (District Captain)
von Heydebreck (First Lieutenant)
von Kageneck (Lieutenant)
von Schönau-Wehr (Lieutenant)
von Zülow (Lieutenant)
Weigt (Sergeant)
Wesch (Sergeant)
Wilhelm Ludwig (Rider)
Sesfontein / !Nani-|aus / †Gabia†gaos / Ohamuheke
Sorris-Sorris / Sores-Sores
southern Africa
South West Africa Company
Spitzkopje

Struß (trader)
Swakop / Tsoaxau River
Swakopmund
Swartbooisdrift
Taniseb
Thomas Baines
Tiger Bai / Bay
Traugott Richter
Trekboers
Tsaub / Zaub
Klein-Tsaub
Tsawisis
Tsebris
Tsumamas
Ugab / !U†gâb River
Vita Tom / Oorlog / Oloxa
Waldemar Belck
Walter Moritz
Walvis Bay / !Gomen-!gams
Warmbad
Warmquelle / |Aexa|aus
Waterberg
wildlife corridor
William Coates Palgrave (Special Comissioner)
Windhoek / |Aelgams
Winifred Hoernlé
Witboois
Hendrik Witbooi
Wittrin (Sergeant)
Wolfram Hartmann
Zwartbank