

Namibia and Windhoek: an historical survey

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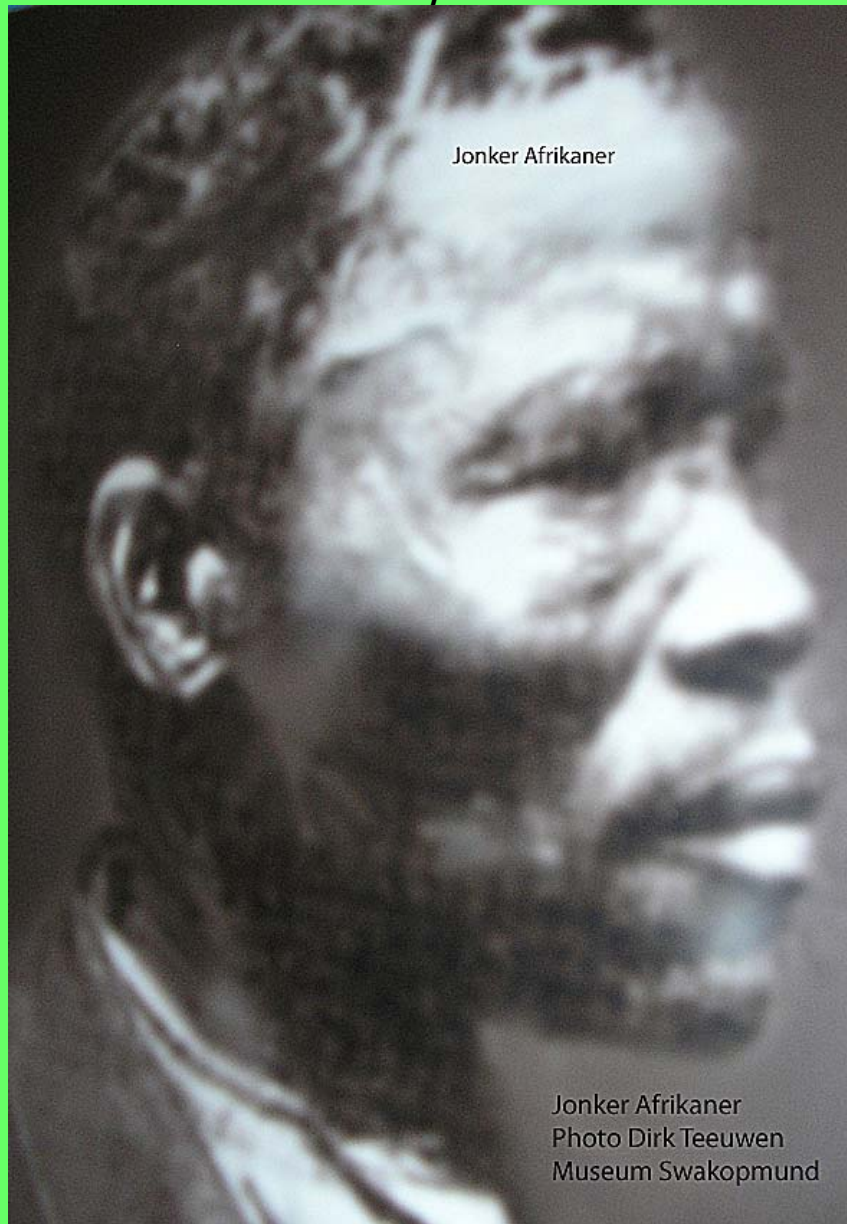
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1. Founding Windhoek

The name Windhoek is a Dutch-Afrikaans name and means Windy Corner. Maybe German Rhenish missionaries like Hans Kleinschmidt and Carl Hahn called it Windhuk in 1842, when they established a church there. However, the first mention of the name Windhoek occurred in a letter from Jonker Afrikaner to the missionary Joseph Tindall (Wesleyan Mission Society), dated 12 August 1844. Jonker Afrikaner (1785-1861) was born near Tulbagh at Roode Sand in South Africa, and died at Okahandja, South-West Africa after a raid against the Owambo tribes. He was the fourth Captain of the so-called Oorlam- Afrikaner people, also called Oorlam-Nama, in South-West Africa. Oorlam is a Dutch-Afrikaans word which means a small drink of liquor.

Jonker Afrikaner 1785-1861, photo Dirk Teeuwen 2008, Museum Swakopmund

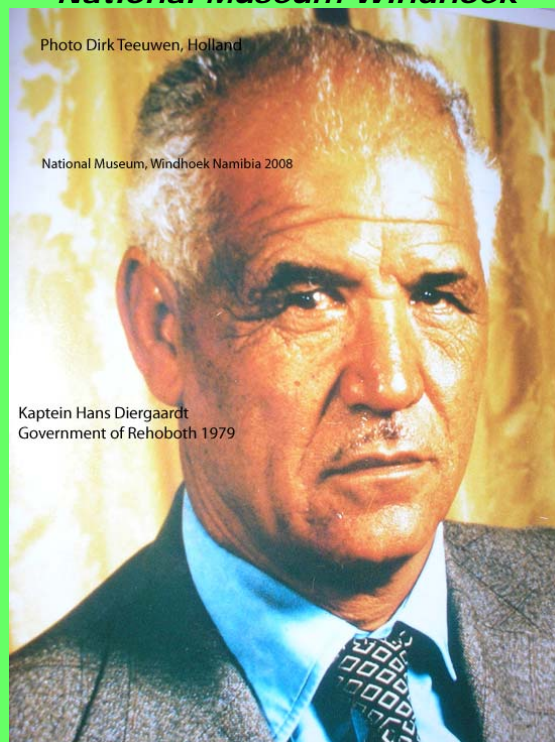


He succeeded his father, Jager Afrikaner in 1823. Soon after becoming Captain or Captein (in Dutch-Afrikaans language "kapitein"). Soon he left his father's settlement at Blydeverwacht, in the south-east of modern Namibia. He did so together with three brothers and 350 followers and relocated to today's central Namibia.

From 1825 onwards he and his council played a dominant political role in Damara Country and Namaland (Namaqua, northernly). They created there a real Oorlam-Afrikaner-Nama state. About 1842, Jonker Afrikaner established a settlement at Windhoek. Here he joined a protestant community, 600-1000 believers, in the area of the present-day Klein Windhoek suburb. Later he became known because of his road building activities in central as well as southern Namibia. Particularly the one over the Auas Mountains to the south the northern Bay Road from Windhoek to Walvis Bay. Missionary Hugo Hahn estimated in 1852 that Jonker Afrikaner and his council ruled over 1,500 Oorlam-Afrikaner-Nama, 2,000 Herero and 2,000 Damara. He was the father of Christian Afrikaner who succeeded him as the chief of the Oorlam-Nama-Afrikaners in 1861. Jonker was the father of Jan Afrikaner as well. Jan succeeded Christian in 1863.

Jonker Afrikaner died at Okahandja in 1861 after a raid against the Owambo tribes (Bantu tribes) in the north of his sphere of influence in Namibia. After his death the Oorlam had many skirmishes with other Nama. Skirmishes with the Witboois-Nama near Gibeon under the leadership of Hendrik Witbooi (1840-1905). The Witbooi-Namas migrated in 1863 from Free State. Fighting with Dutch-Afrikaners (from Windhoek) and with the Swartboois under Willem Swartbooi near Ameib. The Swartboois migrated from Rehoboth (Namibia).

Captain Hans Diergaardt (1927-1998), photo Dirk Teeuwen 2008, National Museum Windhoek



Captain Hans Diergaardt (1927-1998) was the fifth chief of the Baster Community at Rehoboth and vicinity in Namibia, leading a legal attempt to secede Rehoboth Country from Namibia in 1989. He held some governmental powers from 1985 until 1989. Namibia became independent in 1990.

2. The Oorlam-Afrikaner people

The term Afrikaner is referring to the South-African Boers, who speak Dutch-Afrikaans as their language and are descendants from mainly the Dutch mixed a little bit French protestants and some Germans. Those French and Germans followed the Dutch cultural influence in South Africa.

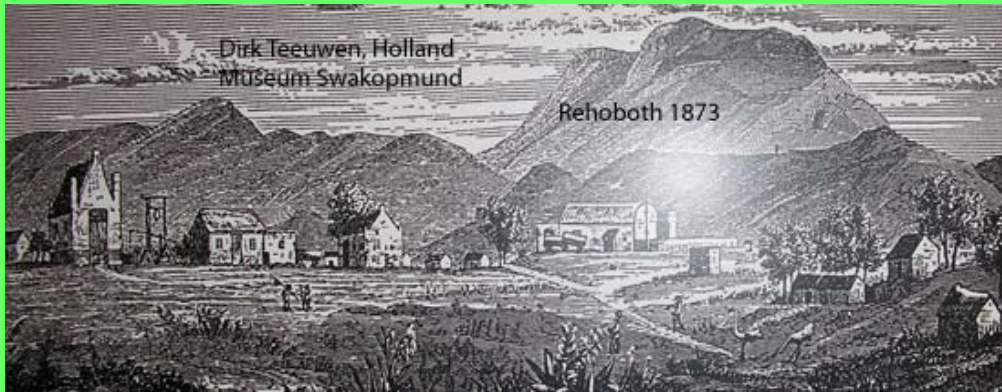
In Namibia circa 1850 Afrikaner could also refer to a different group of people of diverse origins: to peoples of mixed blood. To "mestizos, mestees", mixtures of Dutch, Khoi Khoi, Nama and Malay-slaves. These Afrikaners of mixed blood were part of a larger group named Oorlam, also named basters (in Dutch-Afrikaans baster or bastaard, in English lit. bastard) in the Cape Colony in the 17th and 18th century. The Oorlam had thrown off Boer dominance in those centuries and from 1800 by migration. They were good horsemen, had guns and raided cattle. They spoke Dutch-Afrikaans as well as Khoisan-Dutch and Nama.



*Flag of the Oorlam Basters, Rehoboth and vicinity, Namibia
From Wikipedia*

Their first important leader was Klaas Afrikaner, who raided and hunted together with a Boer farmer, Pieter Pienaar. After a quarrel Pieter Pinaar was murdered by Klaas Afrikaner, in 1801. Klaas Afrikaner and his brother Jager Afrikaner fled the Cape Colony and went northwards over the Orange river into southern Namibia (near Blydeverwacht, Namaqua). Three hundred Oorlam farmers followed him. Successful trade between Oorlam and Nama followed. In 1823 Jonker Afrikaner inherited the leadership from Klaas Afrikaner.

Circa 1830 a balance of power was reached by Jonker Afrikaner with powerful Nama chiefs. He united two nations, Oorlam and Nama (both partly from Khoi Khoi origin) and he led this coalition in a battle that defeated the Herero in 1835. The Oorlam-Nama nation stretched from the southern border of modern Namibia to, what is now, Windhoek and survived by superior cattle farming and by many, many raids.



Namibia, Rehoboth in 1873

Photo Dirk Teeuwen 2008, Museum Swakopmund

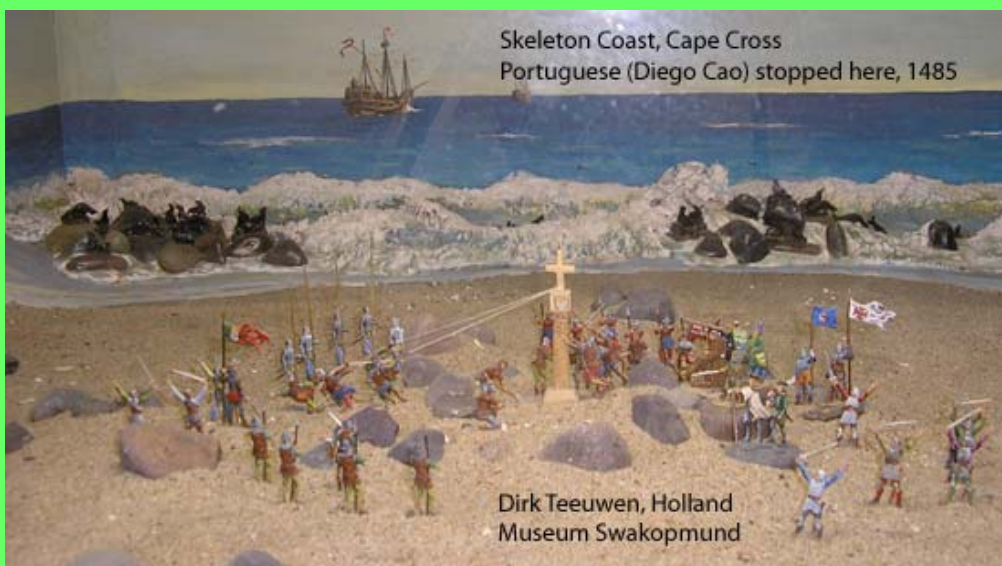
Rehoboth is now a rather modern Baster community with lodges, petrol station, etc.

By way of illustration of what precedes!

The Oorlam people, coming from the Dutch Cape Colony, were speaking Khoisan-Dutch languages. They left the Cape because of European expansion. The Oorlam, with guns and horses, went northwards over the Orange river into southern Namibia. The Oorlam had the same roots as the southern Namibia Nama. In 1830 Jonker Afrikaner and chief Oaseb of the Nama settled the situation by an agreement (see preceding). The two groups intermingled. However the land between the Swakop rivers and the Kuiseb was given to the Oorlam. Jonker Afrikaner ruled the people north of the Kuiseb River beneath Waterberg as well.

The Oorlam became the dominant power in central Namibia. They won several battles against the Herero people (Bantu) circa 1835. The Oorlam stole Herero cattle and blocked Herero expansion. After the death of Jonker Afrikaner in 1861 his Oorlam-Afrikaner people was defeated several times. In 1870 (Mission Peace of Okahandja) the Oorlam-Afrikaner were forced to leave Windhoek and the Herero occupied the area. Oorlam and Nama lived and live mainly in the south.

3. The Netherlands, Britain, Germany, South Africa





Arrival of German soldiers near Lüderitz in 1889

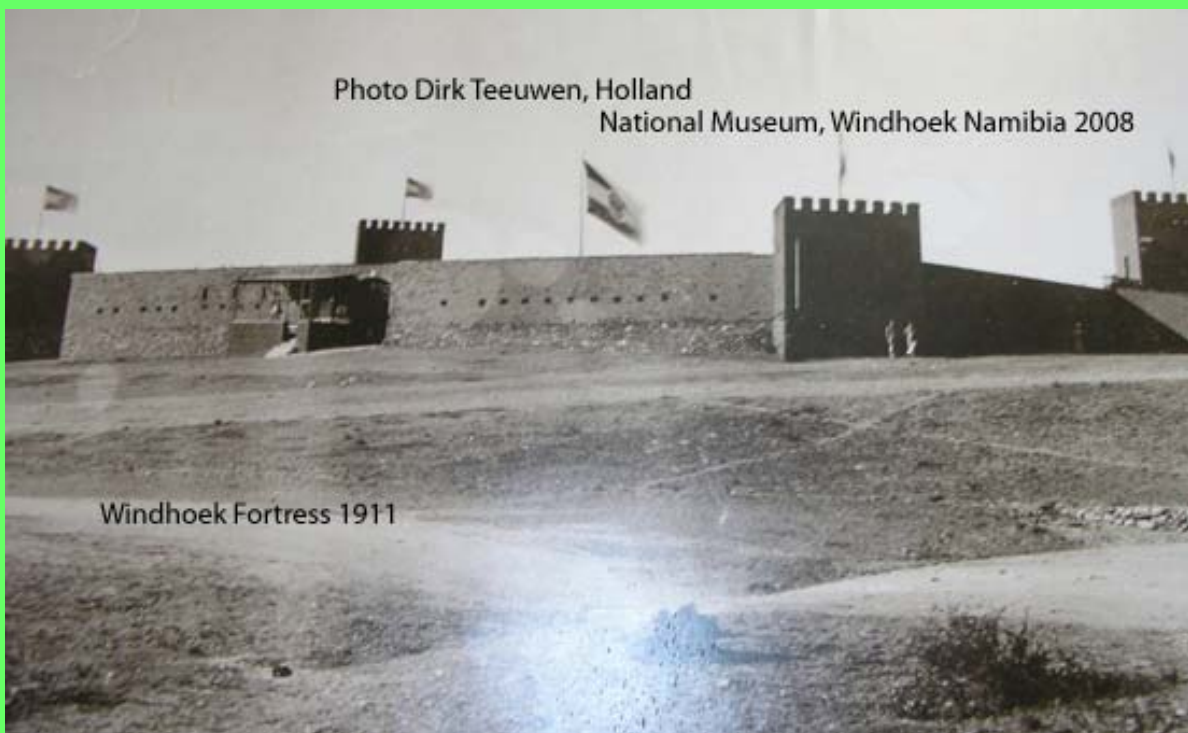
**Picture page 5, under: Portuguese arrive, Skeleton Coast in 1485
Photo's Dirk Teeuwen 2008, Museum Swakopmund**

Whalers from Britain, France and the U.S. began to make use of the ports of Walvis Bay and Lüderitz. In 1793 the Dutch authorities decided to take possession of Walvis Bay, the only deepwater port of the coast. A few years later, 1798, England seized control over the Cape Colony and Walvis Bay. This made an end to a 150 years Dutch rule over the Cape and the Dutch rule over the Bay. The British began to neglect Walvis Bay and reoccupied it in 1878. However negligence or not , the British annexed Walvis Bay in 1798, but they did not extend their influence into the hinterland. German merchants were more and more present in Lüderitzbucht, the bay of Lüderitz. In 1884 South-West Africa became a German protectorate with British permission. This German colony came into being with the determination of its borders in 1890 and Germany sent the Schutztruppe , a protective military corps, under the command of Major Curt von François to maintain order. Von François stationed his garrison at Windhoek, which was strategically situated as a buffer between the Nama people and the Herero. Water springs provided water for the cultivation of food.

Present-day Windhoek was founded officially on October 18th 1890, when Von François fixed the foundation stone of (what is now) the Alte Feste (Old Fortress). After 1907, development accelerated as people migrated from the countryside to the city. There was a large influx of European settlers arriving from Germany and from South Africa. Economic activities started along Kaiser Street, present Independence Avenue. Circa 1907 Windhoek's three castles, Heinitzburg, Sanderburg and Schwerinsburg were built.



***German uniforms in Namibia, 1900
 Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Museum Lüderitz***



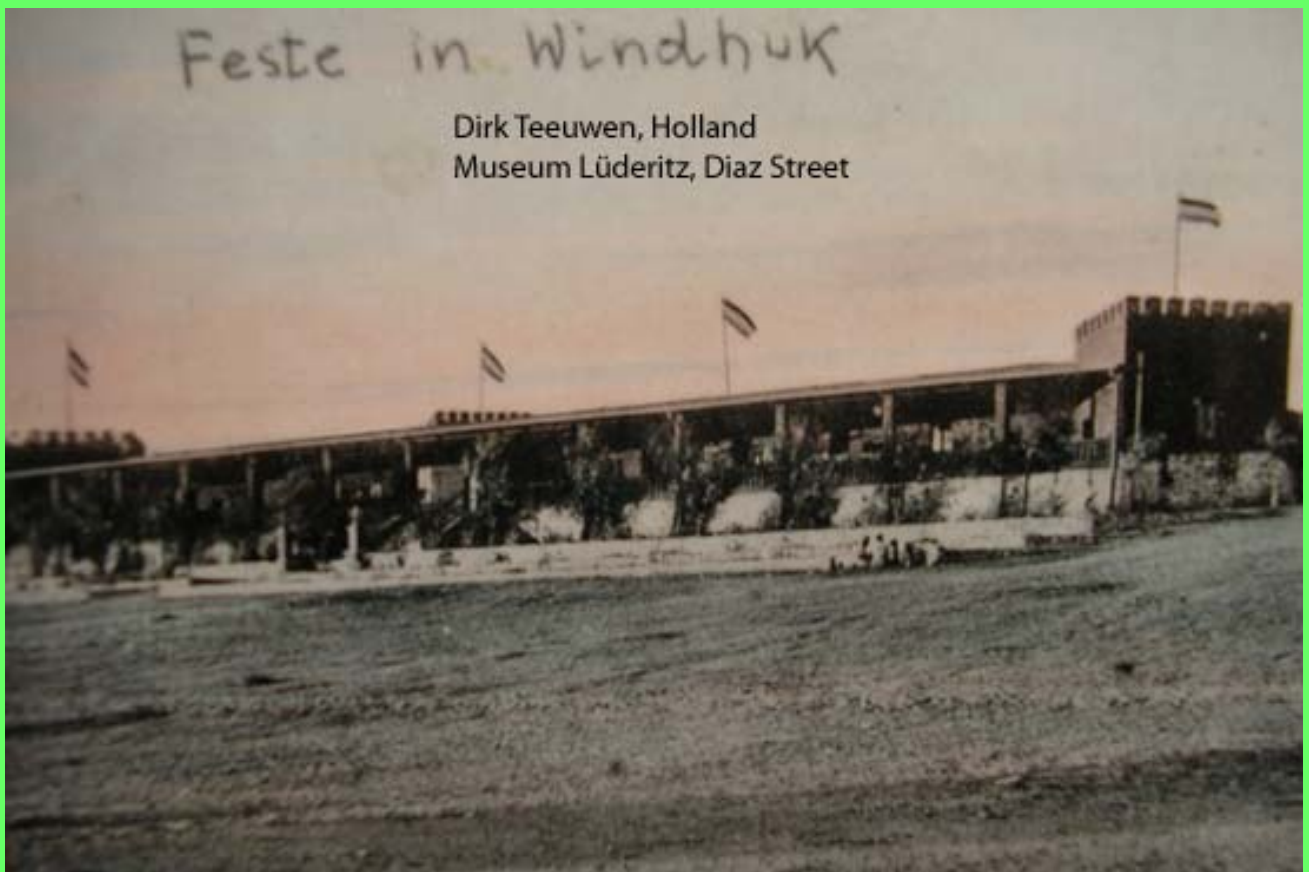
***Windhoek Fortress, Namibia 1911
 Photo Dirk Teeuwen, National Museum Windhoek***

The period 1870-1880 was peaceful. Oorlam and Nama in the south began to trade with the Cape Colony: rifles, alcohol, coffee, sugar, etc. financed by charging travelling traders and hunters and by licensing the exploitation of wildlife. The Herero were breeding herds and traded for guns. The power of the Oorlam-Nama waned, the Herero became stronger than before. The Herero, after 1880, fought the Nama and the Bastards (a bastard people around Rehoboth, also from the northern Cape). With the German annexation a new power came in.

Chief Maharero of the Herero signed a treaty with the Germans in 1885. Hendrik Witbooi refused. Schutztruppe arrived in 1889-1890 as well as German settlers in 1892. The power went over to the Germans. Cattle plague broke out and the Herero lost their lands because of debts. In 1904(-1907) an Herero uprising followed. After initial Herero successes the ruthless racist German general Von Trotha charged them heavily with his tactics of death and murder. Soon the Herero spirit was broken at Waterberg.

The Witboois, Oorlam-Nama and other (not the Bastards of Rehoboth) revolted also and fought rather successfully a guerrilla war with the desolate Kalahari as a haven. In 1905 Hendrik Witbooi was killed and in 1907 the last guerrilla fighters asked for peace.

The photographs, illustrations on page 9, 10 and 11 need no explanation



*Windhoek Fortress, Namibia 1911
Photo Dirk Teeuwen, National Museum Windhoek*

4. Illustrations



*Maherero, Chief of the Herero people
Photo Dirk Teeuwen 2008, National Museum Windhoek*

Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
Museum Swakopmund



Hendrik Witbooi circa 1900
Photo Dirk Teeuwen 2008, Museum Swakopmund Namibia

National Museum, Windhoek Namibia 2008
Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

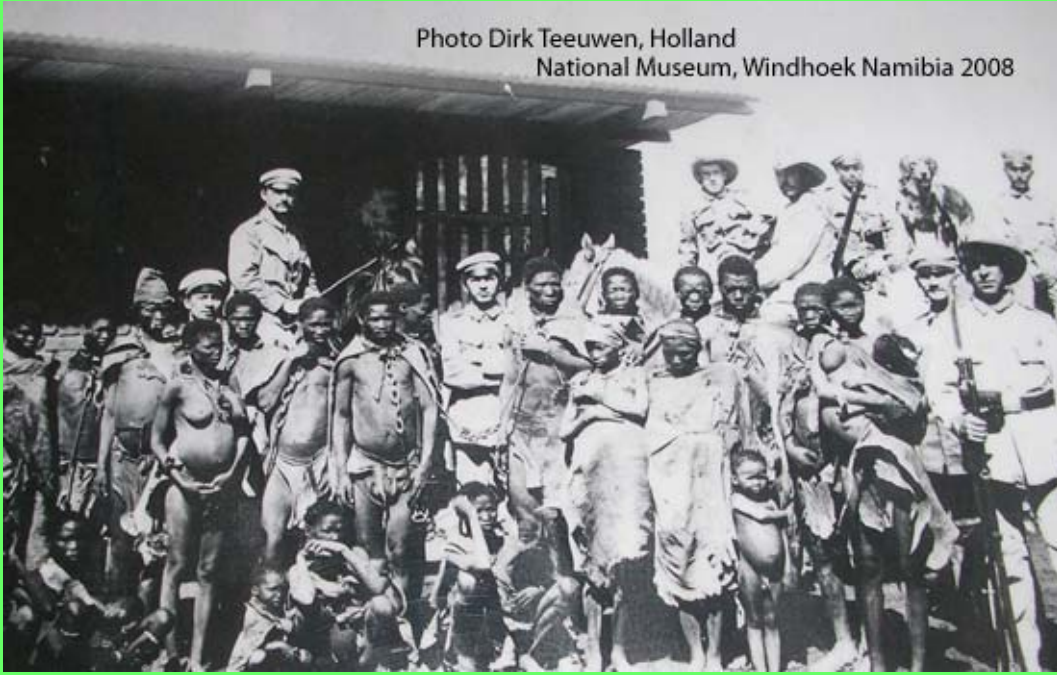


National Museum, Windhoek Namibia 2008
Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland



Photographs Dirk Teeuwen 2008, National Museum Windhoek

Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
National Museum, Windhoek Namibia 2008



National Museum, Windhoek Namibia 2008

Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland



Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
Museum Lüderitz, Diaz Street

Photographs Dirk Teeuwen 2008, National Museum Windhoek

5. Independence

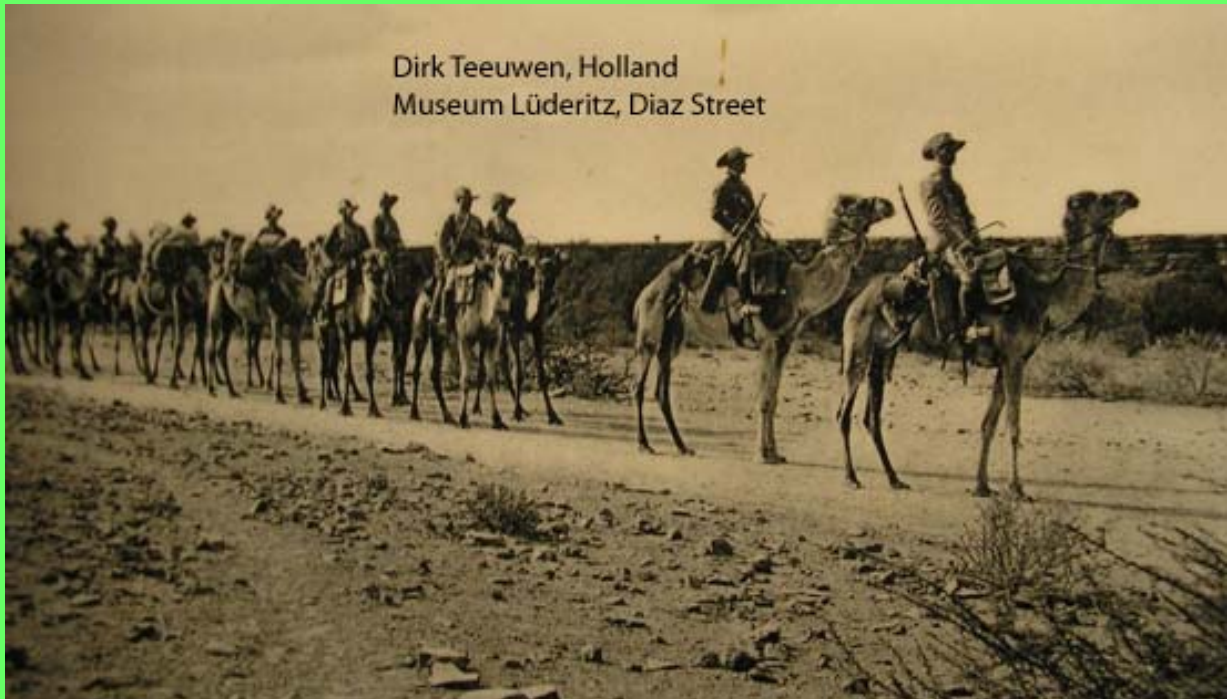
The colony began to develop rapidly; farming, railways, diamonds. The non-European Namibians were used as cheap labourers. In 1915 the Germans surrendered to South Africa. More and more land was granted to white South Africans. The native population was restricted to poor native areas (such as Kalahari Damara, Koako, etc.) and was used for cheap labour. From 1966 Swapo (South West African People's Organization) fought for independence, realized in 1989 after a lot of struggle and atrocities committed by both sides.

Namibia inherited a well-developed infra-structure. Mining is most important. Food production and exports are relevant, but there is a lack of water. Tourism becomes more and more important. I can only describe it from experience of my own as "quality tourism": the best in Africa. The main economic partner is South Africa. There is a gap between rich and poor. But coloured rich and middle class is growing. There is not so much tension between black and white as in the north of South Africa. I think Namibia has a great future.



Grootfontein, Namibia circa 1900
Photographs Dirk Teeuwen 2008, Museum Lüderitz

6. A selection of pictures
Photo's Dirk Teeuwen 2008, see Museums page 1



German military, circa 1905 in Namibia



German, South-African and British military in 1912

Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
Museum Lüderitz, Diaz Street



Grave of the German soldier Schomerus



German tunic and weaponry, circa 1910, Namibia



Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
Museum Swakopmund

German tunic and weaponry, circa 1910, Namibia



German Kanzler (prime minister) Otto von Bismarck, under, and German Kaiser (emperor) Wilhelm II in 1906

7. Some portraits, revisited

Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
Museum Swakopmund



Hendrik Witbooi



Jonker Afrikaner

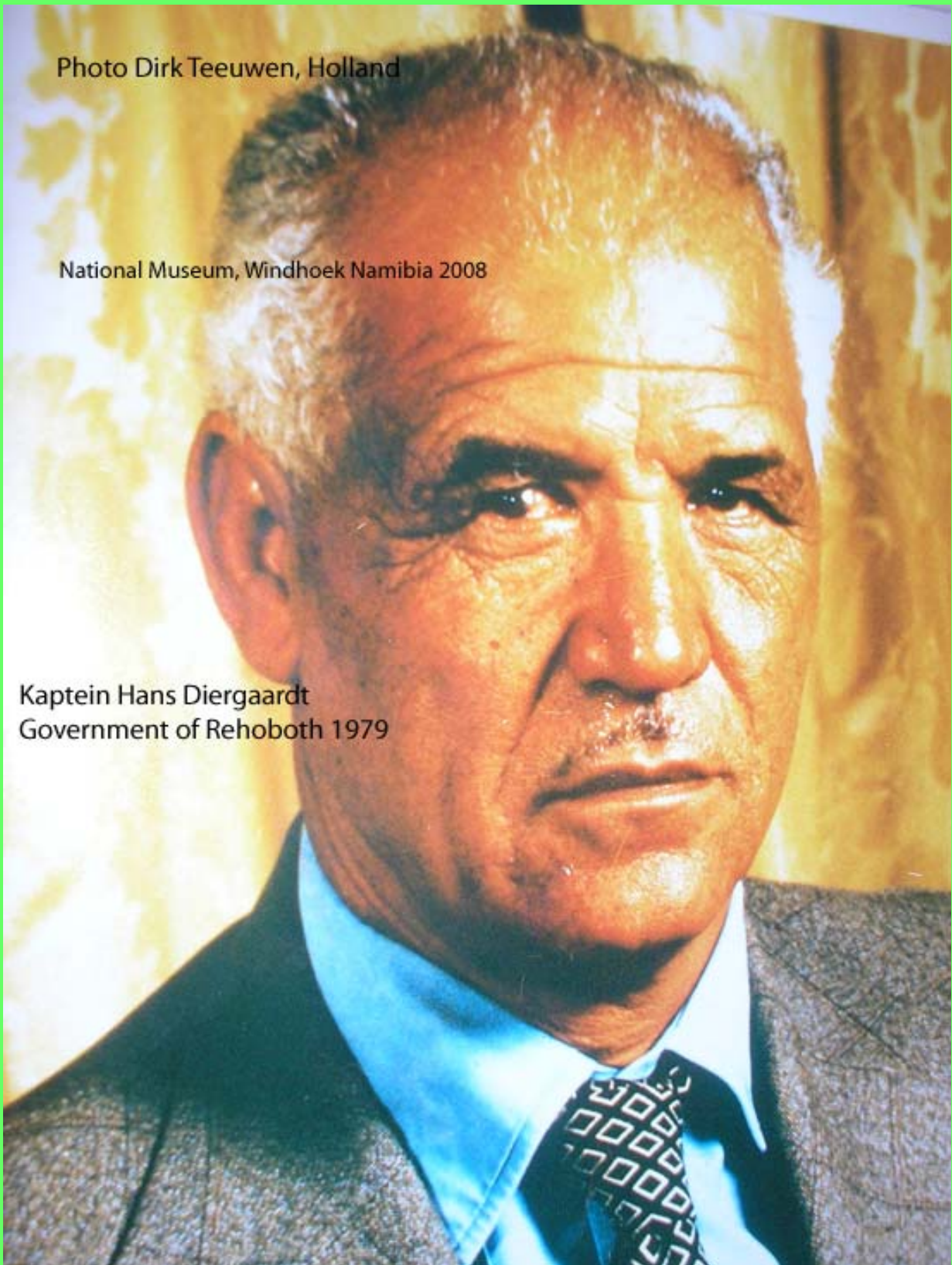
Jonker Afrikaner
Photo Dirk Teeuwen
Museum Swakopmund

Jonker Afrikaner

Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

National Museum, Windhoek Namibia 2008

Kaptein Hans Diergaardt
Government of Rehoboth 1979



Baster Captain Hans Diergaardt

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