

Colonial South Africa

Stations

When did Europeans first establish a permanent colony in South Africa?

- Jan van Riebeeck, on behalf of the *Dutch East India Company*, established the first permanent European settlement at the Cape of Good Hope on April 6, 1652.
- The Dutch people who settled there were known as *Boers*.



Why did Europeans care about South Africa?

- The southern tip of Africa was a crucial provision spot for trading ships traveling from Europe to India.



Another Interesting Fact!

- Unlike English settlements at Plymouth and Jamestown, the Dutch cape settlement was not meant to be a permanent colony.
- The Dutch East India Company ordered van Riebeeck to have minimal contact with the indigenous people (in the form of trading for necessities), because they didn't want to have a war, which would cost a lot of money.

How did the *Cape Colony* become permanent, then?

- Eventually, because of costs, Jan van Riebeeck was forced to lay off many of his employees.
- These former employees settled on the grazing land of the Khoisan.
- Although the Khoisan resisted, they were ultimately defeated and they subsequently entered into working relationships with the Boer farmers.
- Eventually, the Boers began to enslave the Africans because it was cheaper than paying them.

How did the Boers expand their presence in South Africa?

- Wanting to acquire more land, Boer farmers called *trekboers* simply moved inland and took over land as they went.
- However, as they moved to the interior part of Africa, they had less and less contact with European society and more and more interaction with Africans—specifically the Xhosa.



These interactions were largely violent.

- Even though they did not have horses or guns, the Xhosa successfully resisted the trekboers for over 100 years.
- After 1811, with the assistance of the British, the Boers eventually defeated the Xhosa and reduced them to a state of extreme poverty.
- Years and years of enslaving Africans and warring with African tribes caused the Boers to harbor extreme racial prejudice toward the Africans. The societies they formed were based on white superiority and black inferiority.

Wait a second, when did the British come in?

- When the Dutch East India Company went bankrupt, the British took over the Cape Colony. This happened in 1806.
- By 1820, the first group of English settlers arrived. Interestingly enough, they maintained their British identity and did NOT adopt the Boer language or culture.

How did the *Mfecane* contribute to the overwhelming of Africans by the trekboers?

- Between the 1810s and the 1830s, the Zulu and surrounding tribes competed violently for resources. This coincided with a large drought.
- Political power shifted rapidly and violently between tribes.
- This was known as the *Mfecane*, or “time of troubles” and many historians believe it may have helped the Boers take over land in the region.

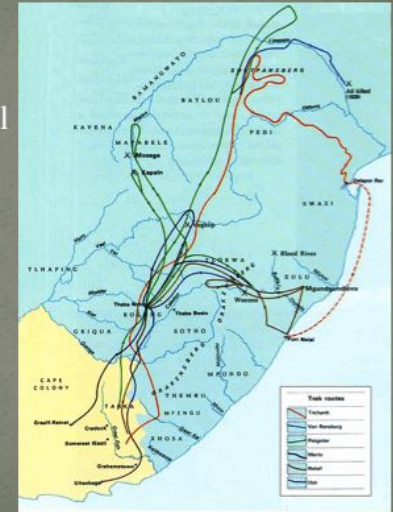


How did British rule affect the Boers?

- When the British abolished slavery in 1834, the Boers lost their cheap labor source.
- Additionally, the British developed a political system based on class, not race, which meant that Boers without property could not participate in the government. This made them very mad because it meant that some of them were on the same level as the Africans.

So what did the Boers do about it?

- Around this time, the Boers started to be known as *Afrikaners*. Henceforth they will be referred to as such in this presentation.
- In response to British rule, thousands of Afrikaners migrated out of the British colony. This was known as the *Great Trek*.
- This was a defining moment in the history of Afrikaner identity.



The Afrikaners formed independent republics known as the *Transvaal* and the *Orange Free State*.

- In these republics, they could have a society in which there was a clear difference between black and white and servant and master.



On December 16, 1838, the *Battle of Blood River*, between the Zulu and the Afrikaners, came to represent to the Afrikaners that God had helped them defeat their enemies.



How did the discovery of diamonds and gold (aka the *Mineral Revolution*) in the interior of South Africa impact economic, social, and political life?

- First of all, it made the British want to actually control the interior part of South Africa (which they had previously not wanted to control).
- After the excavation of diamonds in 1871 and gold in the 1880s, the British expanded their empire in South Africa through violent conquest to develop the industry.

- Furthermore, many Africans came to work on the mines and initially experienced some degree of autonomy in the workplace.
- However, as costs grew, the British imposed taxes on the Africans to force them to work in the mines.
- Additionally, more African land was seized as more gold and diamond deposits were found.
- Mine workers were forced to live in closed compounds eleven months of the years to prevent theft.



Apartheid-era diamond barracks still in use today.

What was the working hierarchy of the mines?

1. The British owned the mines.
2. The Afrikaners managed the mines.
3. The Africans worked in the mines.



Headquarters of DeBeers in Kimberley

What other effects did the Mineral Revolution have on South African life?

- South Africa quickly evolved from a rural, agricultural state to an urban, industrial state with the richest gold and diamond mining areas in the world.
- Mining caused British governance to shift from class-based distinctions to race-based distinctions.
- The Mineral Revolution exacerbated tensions between Afrikaner Republics and the British Empire.

What was the result of those tensions?

- Even though both Afrikaners and the British got rich off the mines, the British owned the mines and they wanted to ensure that they would reap ALL of the benefits. Thus, they tried to get rid of the Afrikaner leadership.
- The Afrikaners responded by attacking the British.



This series of conflicts was known as the *Anglo-Boer War*.

- During this war, 500,000 British troops fought 40,000 Afrikaner troops with a scorched-earth policy.
- The British put Afrikaner women and children in concentration camps where they died en masse.
- Blacks fought on both sides, and suffered from the scorched-earth policies and concentration camps as well.
- Afrikaner nationalism increased during this time (Why do you think this happened?).

What resulted from the Anglo-Boer War?

- The peace treaty at the end of the war guaranteed that the British could continue to employ cheap labor at the mines (i.e. economic control)
- ...and that the Afrikaners could have total political control.
- In 1910, the British colonies and the Afrikaner Republics were joined together as the Union of South Africa.
- In this new union, only white males had the ability to vote.