GOBABIS

Brief History of the Town and Region

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Municipality of Gobabis
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Foreword

One hundred and fifty years ago, people gathered at the place today known as Gobabis, a name that is derived from a Nama word meaning "the place where people had quarrelled".

Much has been achieved since then, and particularly during this century we have witnessed dramatic events and changes in the world around us. Our own country has seen a succession of wars - the National Uprisings of 1904-1906 against the early colonial power, the First and Second World Wars, the Uprising of 1959. Following the 1959 Uprising, many Namibians opted to go into exile; Gobabis was not only the gateway to Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, etc. for many Namibians, but also hosted a multitude of freedom fighters going into exile. The War for National Liberation which eventually commenced in 1966 not only affected the life of virtually every Namibian, but also influenced the course of African history as a whole.

There have also been monumental developments in the field of travel following the evolution of the automobile, the train and aeroplane. Communication has improved significantly, the industrial age has matured and new industrial powers have risen. There have been unforeseen and sweeping alterations on the world map as scores of new nations were born and others have disappeared forever. There has been a total revolution in politics and in power-sharing. In all, it has been a century unlike any other.

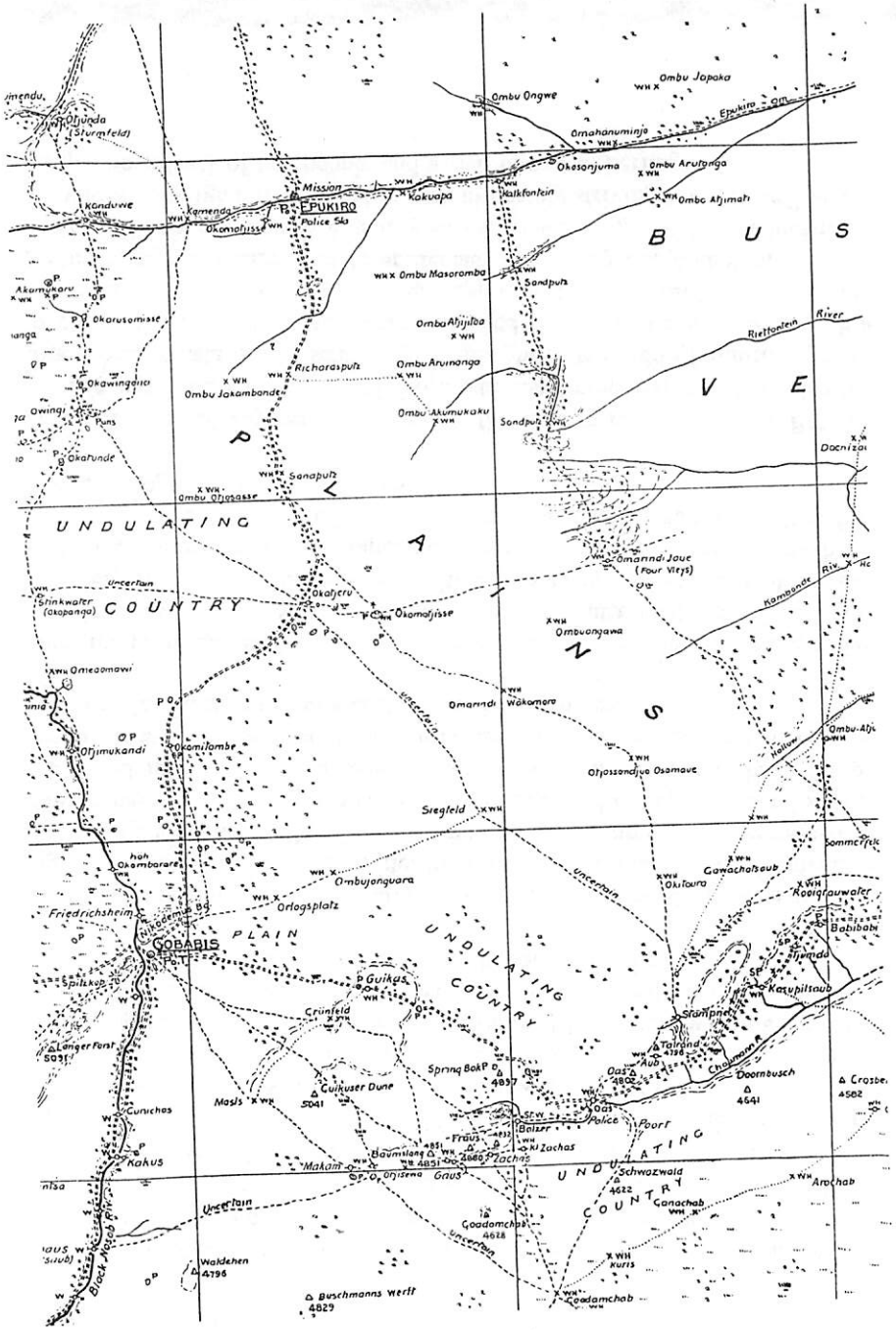
Over the past one hundred years our town, too, has experienced change - far less dramatic than the world at large, of course, but nonetheless significant. The very face of Gobabis has been altered, as pictures and words unspoken in this centenary book so graphically testify. Lifestyles and values have changed, but one aspect of unique diversity in culture and in custom has bound us together through thick and thin.

As in the case of any centenary, this is the time to look back, to reflect on the life and work and dreams of those who have preceded us. It is also the time to reevaluate the present, to give thought to the kind of future we wish to create for ourselves, our community and the generations to come. But then, the centenary also presents the opportunity to celebrate, to enjoy the presence of our friends and to appreciate everything our community has to offer. We have a beautiful setting in which we live, excellent educational resources - though not yet what we are ultimately striving for - as well as the unique hospitality of our people and a rich historical heritage.

I, as a native of Gobabis, have witnessed the sweet and the bitter, the hardship and the suffering that most of us have had to endure. My roots lie deep in the magnificent Kalahari Sandveld, and it is here that I want to see my children grow up. I consider it my particular good fortune to serve as Mayor of Gobabis during the celebrations of this town's centenary year.

I dedicate these special centenary memories to all "Gobabiete", the Omaheke residents - past, present and future.

I.P.M. NGANATE
MAYOR



Geography, Fauna and Flora

The Gobabis district, a vast, slightly undulating plain that slopes gently from west to east and north-east, forms part of the central Kalahari region. Mountain ranges and isolated koppies are to be found only to the west. According to Köhler, the Herero divide the district into four regions, namely the Kaukauveld north and north-east of the Eiseb Omuramba, the Omaheke or Sandveld which extends to the Epukiro and Nossob Rivers, the Ovitore or "Potatoveld" between Gobabis and Sandfontein, and the Omongua or Soutveld south of Gobabis (especially in the Aminuis area with its numerous salt pans).[1]

The most important river in what is today known as the Omaheke region is the Nossob, which is dry for the greater part of the year. Its two arms, the White Nossob and the Black Nossob, join at Aais, some 80 km south-west of Gobabis, and the Nossob then flows through the district in a southerly direction, eventually draining into the Molopo Bed. The two other large rivers, the Epukiro Omuramba and the Eiseb, flow in an easterly direction into Botswana. They, too, are dry for most of the year. A number of pans in the region, however, hold water until well into the dry season, and open water also occurs at Sandfontein, Groß Aminuis and Otjewe. Gobabis itself once had three fountains.

The Gobabis district is known as "cattle country", as the greatest part offers good grazing. Giess divides the region into two vegetation areas, the tree savanna and woodland to the north of the Rietfontein Block, and the camelthorn savanna to the south.[2] Wooded areas are to be found along the riverbeds; the most common tree species being the camelthorn, umbrella thorn, white thorn, yellow-wood and the omupanda.

Many game species occurred in the region in former times.[3] The depredations of hunters and the establishment of stock-farming as the main economic activity of the region, however, have taken their toll and today many of these animals, such as the lion, elephant and rhinoceros, are seldom - if ever - seen in the Gobabis district.

Gobabis itself, located at 22°27' longitude and 19°05' latitude, lies 1 442 m above sea-level. The absolute maximum temperature recorded at the town is 40° C, while the minimum is -9,9° C; the mean maximum and minimum temperatures are 27,9° C and 11,0° C, respectively. According to the meteorological station at Gobabis, the mean annual rainfall is 369 mm.[4]

Origin of the Name "Gobabis"

Today, it is generally assumed that Gobabis is a Khoe-Khoe Gowab word meaning "drinking-place of the elephants" or "elephant's fountain". This assumption, however, is quite incorrect.

Dr Heinrich Vedder held that "Gobabis" was a corrupted version of the Khoe-Khoe Gowab words ǂ*khoa* (elephant) and *-bis* (place),[5] and this interpretation gained increasing popular acceptance - so much so that it is used in the majority of publicity materials produced even today. G.S. Nienaber and P.E. Raper, attached to the Onomastic Research Centre of the HSRC, on the other hand, argued that the true meaning of the town's name has nothing to do with elephants whatsoever. After extensive fieldwork and interviews with Nama savants and other knowledgeable persons, they arrived at the conclusion that "Gobabis" does not contain any element that can be linked to ǂ*goab*, but that the name is rather derived from the word *goba*, which means "to discuss, deliberate, argue, quarrel", and that Gobabis, therefore, means a "place where the people discussed, argued, disputed, where there was a row, an altercation ...".[6]

Linguistic arguments, thus, speak against "Elephant's Fountain", although there are a number of historical facts on which a case for this name could be argued. In former times, the area around Gobabis and further north, along the Nossob River and the omurambas in what is today part of the Omaheke region, boasted a strong population of elephant[7] and the settlement was not only a base camp for ivory hunters in the area for quite some time, but also operated as a trading post at which ivory was bartered (at three shillings for the pound) and stored. On account of the fact that ivory tusks tended to crack in the area's dry climate, they were, on occasion, actually kept in the fountain itself, a practice that could possibly explain the oral tradition which holds that the well-known elephant hunter Hendrik van Zyl dumped his tusks into the fountain to ensure that they did not fall into the hands of his enemies.[8] Furthermore, oral tradition has it that the oldest name of the site is ǂ*khoandabes*, "place where the elephant come to lick". One informant, Elias Gariseb, told members of the Onomastic Research centre the following: "When I became conscious of the world, the name was Gobabis, but before the Whites came, the old people called the place ǂ*khoandabis*."[9]

The earliest recorded use of "Elephant's Fountain" is to be found in the journal of a Wesleyan missionary, the Rev. Joseph Tindall, who wrote on 6 August 1845: "Reached Gobabis which I named 'Elephant's Fountain'".[10] The decision to use this name could possibly be ascribed to the fact that

"Place of Altercation" would not bode too well for the future of the mission station he intended establishing there. Whether this actually represents a renaming of the place, or whether it was merely a revival of the older, traditional name ǂ*Khoandabes*, cannot be determined.

The above indicates that the place had two names, the first being ǂ*Khoandabes*, "Place where the elephant come to lick", and *Gobabis*, "Place of discussion, argument, dispute".

Oral traditions do not provide any indication of what the dispute may have been all about, but it must have been a dispute of some magnitude, for else such a place name would not have been used. In all probability, it took place well before the arrival of the first permanent residents, the Gai- ǁ khaun (also known as the Amraal Oorlam) who moved to the Gobabis area with the Rev. Tindall in 1845. Certainly, there were also disputes at Gobabis in later times, such as that between the Oorlam and the Mbanderu, who both laid claim to the fountain, and between European adventurers and the older inhabitants.

Early Inhabitants of the Region

Little is known about the early history of Gobabis and that part of the Kalahari in which it is situated, since many of the oral traditions referring to the town and its environs have long been forgotten and only myths, legends and praise songs to animals, deities and heroes remain.

San

It is generally accepted that the earliest inhabitants of the area were San hunter-gatherers who roamed their hunting-grounds in small, unstable bands. Rock engravings on numerous farms in the Nossob Valley (e.g. Margarethental, Klein Witvley, Freiheit-Ost and Wiesesrus) are all that remains of these people who lived here hundreds and even thousands of years ago. They chiselled the central themes of their lives - hunting and game - into the rock, but apart from showing animals which no longer occur in the area, such as elephant, lion, blue wildebeest, giraffe and eland, these ancient works of art tell us little about the early history of the region.

Abundant game, good grazing and the healthy climate gradually also drew other peoples to the region, such as the Mbanderu and the Tswana, and later also the Oorlam and white hunters and adventurers. Going by early travellers' accounts, however, it would appear that the area around Gobabis was more or less a no man's land during the early 19th century. Although the San, Mbanderu and Tswana could all lay claim to the fountains and the grazing, they all lived either towards the east in the Ghanziveld, towards the north in the Nyae Nyae or Tebraveld, or towards the west and north-west in the areas that today form part of the Windhoek and Okahandja districts. Not one of these groups had any territorial ambitions; according to Williams, prior to the nineteenth century and the onset of long-distance mercantile trade, the chiefdoms of the region had no expansionist tendencies, were without standing armies, and were bound to one another through mutual relationships consisting of tribute, trade and cultural ties.[11]

Guenther states that the San living in the eastern and north-eastern parts of the region at the time, in the area between Ghanzi and the Epukiro Omuramba, were quite independent and politically well organized.[12] Passarge writes that the San of the 19th century comprised two large peoples, each of which was divided into various tribes consisting of several clans. Formerly, these tribes were politically independent entities led by a captain and subordinate headmen. He mentions ǂDukuri, a !Naro captain living in the Ghanzi area who had a well-organized army that was equipped with spears and other

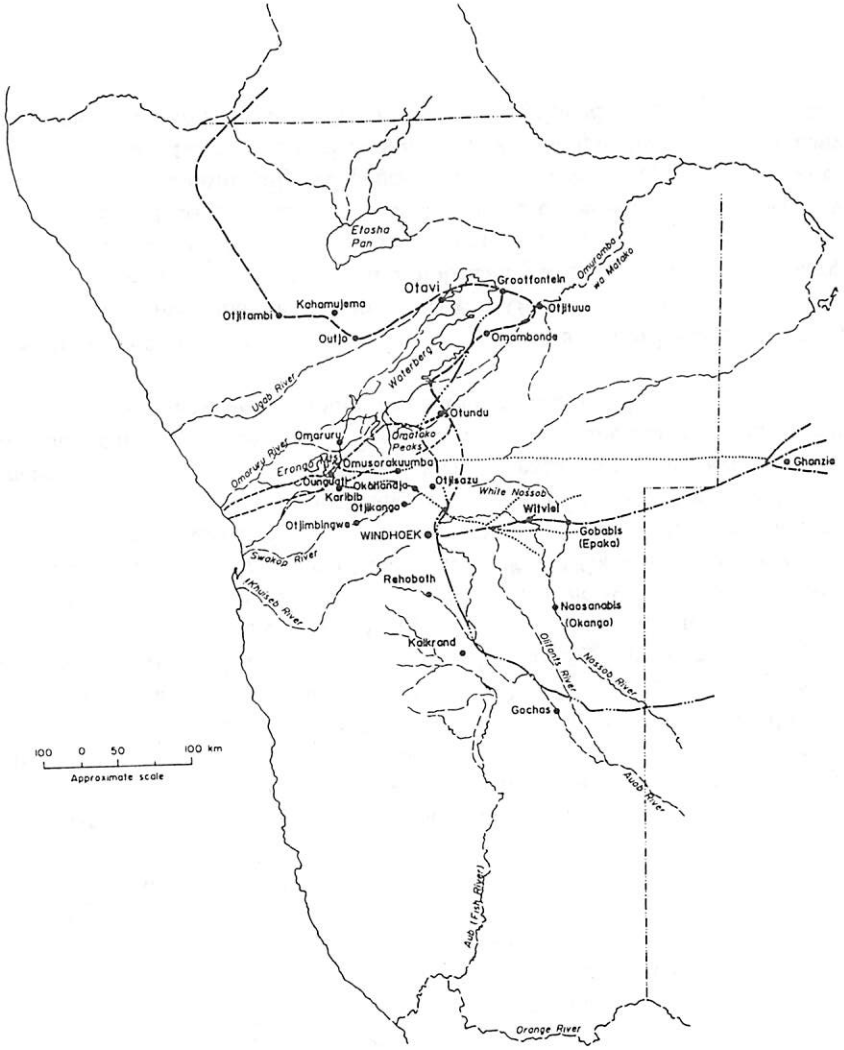
arms and subjugated neighbouring San tribes. His subjects were obliged to pay taxes in the form of skins and ivory which they obtained by digging deep pits in dry riverbeds such as the Epukiro Omuramba and driving the game, including elephant and rhinoceros, into these with dogs and teams of drivers.[13] There was also active trade between the San and the neighbouring peoples, the main barter items being ostrich feathers, strings of ostrich-eggshell beads and animal skins.[14] Ivory emerged as an important trade item only at a later stage, following contact with the Tawana and the Oorlam.[15]

Each captain exercised control over his clan's hunting-grounds, and these hunting-grounds were defended against neighbouring clans. The San were so well organized at the time that they succeeded in keeping the Tswana, Herero and the Mbanderu out of large parts of the Omaheke.[16] The Herero-Nama Wars of the 1860s, for example, led to the impoverishment of large numbers of Herero (known as *ovatjimba*), while the Herero-German War of 1904 created an even poorer group known as the *oturumbu* or Veld Herero, and both these groups moved further and further to the north-east. There, however, they were attacked by San parties, who fiercely resisted their incursion into the area.[17] The other peoples in the area showed considerable respect for the Bushmen; the Tswana dared not venture into their hunting-ground at all, and the Oorlam did so only during well-organized raiding parties.[18] In fact, one of the San captains regularly attacked the camps of the Dorsland-trekkers and hunters in the Tebraveld towards the north-east and robbed them of their belongings and cattle. The raids were so well organized that the trekkers were obliged to send out mounted commandos in pursuit, but they never succeeded in capturing him.[19] The killing of the district's magistrate in 1922 was probably the last show of organized resistance against subjugation.[20]

Mbanderu

The name "Mbanderu" is derived from the words *mbandu* (human beings, people) and *oruu* (reeds) and means "People of the Reeds", a reference to their origin, which is presumed to lie in the area of the East African lakes. According to oral traditions, three related peoples left the area and gradually migrated towards the south-west. The Owambo were first to leave, followed by the Herero and then the Mbanderu. It is quite possible that the Herero and Mbanderu belonged to the same group initially, since there are numerous cultural similarities between these two peoples even today.[21]

The Herero first settled in the Kaokoveld, while the Mbanderu, who had followed the same route, continued and moved further into what is today



LEGEND

- Mbanderu border established in 1867 (?)
- First-mentioned migration
- Migration of Kalmu
- Second-mentioned migration
- Third-mentioned migration

Migrations of the Mbanderu

Namibia through Owamboland, progressing via Outjo, Tsumeb, Grootfontein, Otjituuo and Omambonde to Otundu near the Waterberg. Here, the group broke up into smaller groups or clans, each of which ventured further in search of suitable grazing and water for their cattle. After some time, the Mbanderu people moved further south and then east, via Windhoek, Witvlei, Gobabis and Rietfontein, to Ghanzi in Botswana, which they presumably reached during the early eighteenth century. They settled in the area between Rietfontein and Ghanzi and maintained peaceful relations with the Tswana, who were also living in the area.[22]

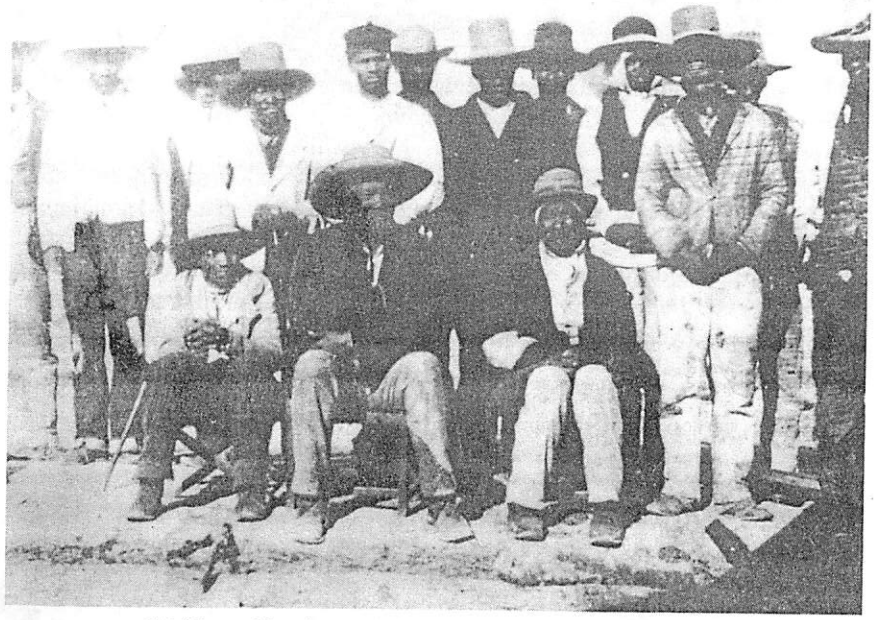
Some time before 1750, the Tswana and Mbanderu clashed after Mbanderu herdsmen had stolen a calf and killed a Tswana girl. The Tswana, who had shields and arrows with iron points, defeated the Mbanderu and drove them back into the Ovingi area, north-west of Gobabis. Here, the Mbanderu consolidated and some time before 1780, they, in turn, attacked the Tswana, drove them back and reoccupied the Ghanzi area.[23]

After some time, the Mbanderu decided to return west again, and they moved first to the Erongo Mountains and then to Omusorakuumba, north-west of Okahandja. Eventually, they settled in the area between Windhoek and Gobabis under their chief, Kandjake Uahandura, at more or less the same time as Amraal's people moved to Gobabis. Meanwhile, the Herero had moved south from the Kaokoveld via Sesfontein, Kamanjab and Omaruru, and some time between 1863 and 1867, the Herero and Mbanderu met in Otjimbingwe to determine the boundaries of their respective territories. It was decided that the area from Grootfontein south past the Waterberg to Windhoek, Kalkrand and Gochas and then east to Botswana would belong to the Mbanderu, while the Waterberg, Omatako area, Otjimbingwe and Okahandja were claimed by the Herero.[24]

Permanent Settlement

The Oorlam

The first non-San people to move into the greater Gobabis area were part of the Amraal Oorlam, known among the Nama as the Gai-‖khaun and headed by Amraal Lambert. During the early 19th century, they had left the Hantam area in the northern Cape and moved to Namibia, settling first at Bethanie, then at Berseba and eventually at Naosanabis or Wesleyvale near Leonardville in 1840. A small group of these Oorlam moved from Wesleyvale to the fountains at Gobabis in 1845, and in 1856 Amraal Lambert also moved there, establishing it as the seat of his people.[25]



Chief Amraal Lambert and his councillors at Gobabis, early 1860s

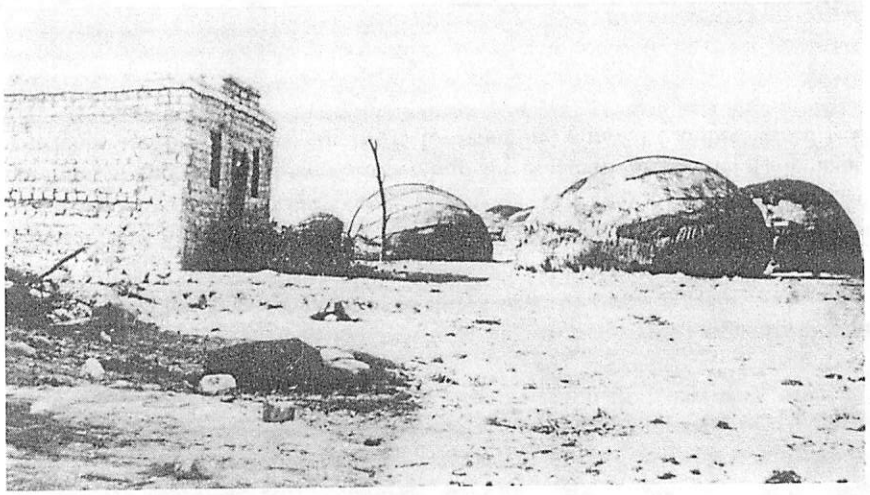
The Oorlam took possession of the hunting-grounds teeming with game and treated the San living in the area as their subjects. They began using the San as hunters and ventured ever deeper into the Kalahari in search of elephant, ostriches and other game. In 1847, for example, Amraal Lambert assembled

a hunting party comprising 50 riders and 20 ox-waggons. This party returned from the Ghanzi area with more than 2 700 kg of ivory.[26] Baines wrote the following about these Oorlam hunting expeditions as early as 1865: "Hunting parties destroy immense numbers, almost exterminating the animals for miles around them."[27] The San, however, succeeded in preventing permanent settlement of the Oorlam in the eastern parts of the region, towards Ghanzi, and in his account of his journey to the area with Chapman in 1861, Baines wrote that this was an area "where neither Hottentot nor Bechuanan dare permanently settle."[28]

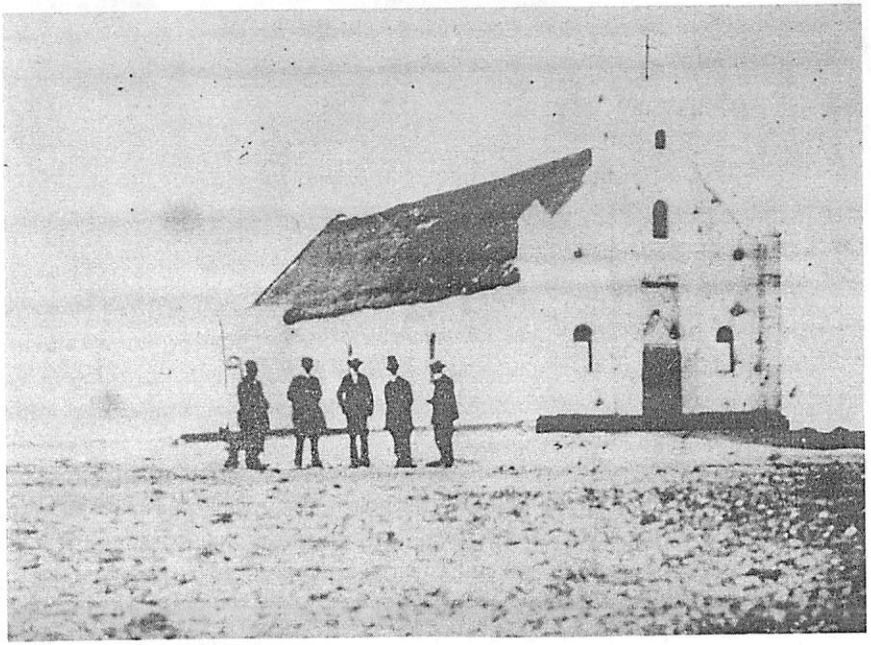
Similarly, the Oorlam treated the Mbanderu in the district as their subjects. Relations were generally cordial, with Kahimemua Nguvauva, who was to succeed Kandjake Uahandura as chief of the Mbanderu after the death of his own father, Munjuku Nguvauva I, enjoying the trust of the Oorlam and frequently accompanying Amraal Lambert on his hunting expeditions. At the same time, however, Kahimemua was secretly working for his own people, acquiring rifles and ammunition that would, one day, allow the Mbanderu to rise against the Oorlam. A subtle but obvious token of this increasing resistance against Oorlam domination was displayed around 1863, when Kahimemua was sent to Gobabis to inform Amraal that he would succeed his father as chief. During this trip, he wore not the European clothing he had come to wear with the Oorlam, but the traditional clothing of his own people.[29]

Missionaries

Amraal Lambert, already an old man in the mid-1800s, was a devout Christian (having been baptized by the Rev. Schmelen at Bethanie in 1814 already) and encouraged missionaries to work among his people. In 1839, he accompanied the Rev. Edward Cook, Abraham Christian, Piet Vleermuis and Peter Links to Cape Town and appealed to the Wesleyan Missionary Society to provide his people with a missionary. It was only after the arrival of the Rev. Tindall at Warmbad in December 1839, however, that Cook could actually establish a circuit which also included Amraal's people, and in 1842 he settled with them at Naosanabis, becoming the first White to permanently settle in the Gobabis district. Cook died on 9 March 1843, however, and was succeeded at the station by the Rev. Joseph Tindall in 1844. Following a decision by Amraal and his council in July 1845 to transfer the mission to Gobabis, Tindall arrived there on 6 August 1845, and construction of the mission station began immediately. After the outbreak of a virulent disease in 1847, however, Amraal and Tindall decided to abandon Gobabis and return to Naosanabis. When Tindall was forced to leave Naosanabis in 1851



Traditional Nama huts next to the first brick house erected at Gobabis by the Oorlam, early 1860s



Rhenish missionaries (Rev. Krönlein, Weber, Vollmer, Kreft and Krapohl) before the church built at Gobabis by Amraal Lambert's people

on account of ill health, the Wesleyan Missionary Society resolved not to replace him, but to rather relinquish the station to the Rhenish Mission Society.[30]

The first Rhenish missionary, the Rev. Friedrich Eggert, arrived at Naosanabis on 13 April 1855, and when Amraal Lambert decided in August 1856 to again move to Gobabis, Eggert moved with him. A small church was built at the place, and Eggert began teaching some 70-80 children. The strict rules and regulations he issued for the station, however, resulted in considerable dissatisfaction with a section of the Oorlam population, and a number of headmen decided to leave Gobabis and settle at Witvlei during the same year. When Eggert left in 1859, he was replaced at the station by Engelbert Krapohl, a mission helper. Krapohl, who was not ordained, concentrated his efforts on the upliftment of the people by assisting them with the construction of ground dams and providing agricultural training, while the Rev. Franz Vollmer of Hoachanas tended to the residents' spiritual needs. When Gobabis again received an own missionary, the Rev. Friedrich Weber, in 1860, Krapohl established a profitable trading business at the town to counteract the activities of the brandy traders in the area. Houses were built, and in 1863 work began on the new church, which was ordained during a mission conference in June the same year. School attendance increased to some 130 pupils during Weber's stay at Gobabis.[31]

Early Travellers, Hunters and Traders

Apart from the missionary presence, Gobabis remained largely untouched by European settlement during those years. Trade activities in the territory focused on two main areas, Owamboland and Lake Ngami.[32] Hunters and traders used Gobabis mainly as a stop-over on the trade route from Walvis Bay to the East, which ran via Omaruru and Gobabis to Rietfontein, Ghanzi and Lake Ngami. In his *Pioneers of South West Africa and Ngamiland*, Tabler indicates that of the 335 trade expeditions recorded for the period 1850 to 1880, 48 (i.e. fourteen per cent or an average of 1,6 expeditions per year) passed through Gobabis. These expeditions usually set up only temporary camps at the town, especially once the more profitable game species had been all but exterminated in the Gobabis area itself.[33]

The first White trader to reach Gobabis was Peter Dixon, who arrived at the station with his wife and children in 1847, at the height of the epidemic. Their arrival saved the lives of the Rev. Tindall and his family, though the Dixons also fell ill and lost their youngest son to the epidemic.[34] On 14 September 1851, Francis Galton, Charles John Andersson, Eyebrecht and

John Mortar arrived at the town. They spent about a month in the company of Amraal Lambert, and also accompanied him on a two-week hunting expedition to the Rietfontein area. Although their attempt to proceed to Lake Ngami came to nothing, their hunting success certainly made the trip worth their while. Andersson, whose hunting and trade ventures were to have far-reaching consequences for the game population in various parts of the country over the years, reports proudly: "... in the course of the few days we remained at Tunobis, our party shot, amongst other animals, upwards of thirty rhinoceroses", of which Andersson alone accounted for eight in the space of a mere five hours.[35] Encouraged by this success, Andersson returned with a party in a rickety ox-cart in 1853, and this time he succeeded in reaching Lake Ngami. The first group of travellers to reach Gobabis in ox-waggons were James Chapman and Samuel Howard Edwards, who passed through the settlement in 1855 on their way from Lake Ngami to Walvis Bay in 1855 and made their return to the lake in 1856.[36]

Lured by the prospect of the great profits to be made in the area, ever increasing numbers of traders, hunters and adventurers passed through the Gobabis area, among them Baines, the Chapmans, Green, Hahn, McKiernan and Rath. The fact that there was little water and progress was slow in the thick sand did not deter them, and neither did the fact that the open water at Gobabis provided another hazard - mosquitoes and the malaria they carried claimed many a life during especially the rainy season, such as that of the scientist Dr Holden, who died near the town in 1861.[37] The risks these early travellers were forced to contend with were not limited to those nature had in store for them. There are several reports of attacks on expeditions by the Oorlam along the trade route, e.g. that on the honeymoon party of Percy Thompson and his wife near Witvlei in January 1860.[38] While taking a load of ivory from Lake Ngami to Walvis Bay in 1862, James Chapman and Thomas Baines were obliged to follow an alternative route to the north in order not to proceed via Gobabis, in which area the Oorlam had blocked the route and robbed traders.[39]

The Herero-Nama Wars and First Opposition to European Settlement

Chief Amraal Lambert shortly before his death

Disaster struck the small settlement of Gobabis in 1864. A smallpox epidemic broke out early in the year, claiming 130 lives, including that of the 90-year-old Amraal Lambert on 13 February. Shortly before his death, he called his people and appealed to them not to quarrel and to adhere to the Word of God. Amraal was succeeded by his eldest son, Lambert, but he, too, succumbed to the smallpox a mere two weeks later, together with his eldest son Willem.[40] The death of Amraal and most members of his family resulted in a dispute between his descendants and the Vleermuis clan as to who should succeed him. Eventually, the two factions, headed by Frederik Vleermuis and Andries Lambert, respectively, began to co-operate, but the harmony and unity of purpose that had characterized the settlement under Amraal no longer prevailed, effectively weakening their control over the Mbanderu and Damara in the district.

The First Clashes between Mbanderu and Oorlam

Tension between the Nama and the Herero-speaking peoples, which had steadily increased in the central parts of the country over the years, also spilled over into the Gobabis district and came to a head in 1865, when the Oorlam lured the Mbanderu chief, Kahimemua Nguvauva, to Gobabis with the intention of killing him; he learned of the plan and succeeded in escaping to his people at Witvlei. There, after some time, the Mbanderu laid a trap for the Oorlam, killing a party of thirty men. Kahimemua then called the Mbanderu in the region to rally around him, as he intended attacking the

Oorlam at Gobabis. The Oorlam, however, had grown suspicious when the party they had sent out did not return; they left Gobabis and when the Mbanderu arrived there, they found the place abandoned. They pursued the Oorlam to Naosanabis, and both sides suffered heavy losses in the ensuing clash.[41] This account of the incident, narrated by Sundermeier on the basis of Mbanderu oral traditions, would indicate that no fighting took place at Gobabis itself, but mission records indicate that the Mbanderu and Damara actually attacked Gobabis and that the houses of mission personnel also came under fire.[42]

The Rev. Friedrich Weber

The situation in the Gobabis area remained volatile, due not only to the conflict between the Oorlam and the Mbanderu and Damara, but also to the increasingly hostile attitude of the Oorlam, who had in the meantime re-occupied Gobabis, towards Europeans. The trader Forsythe had been killed by Vleermuis Oorlam at Gobabis and his goods stolen in 1864,[43] and the mission store at the town was plundered during the same year. George Hoite, an American who had established himself as a cartwright at Gobabis in 1860, was forced by the Oorlam to work for them free of charge in 1864 and 1865, until a group of English travellers assisted him in escaping to Warmbad. Charles Collins was killed by Jan Jonker Afrikaner's people between Witvlei and Gobabis in 1867.[44] Given this uncertainty, Krapohl and the Rev. Weber had decided in 1865 already to abandon the station, which was subsequently looted by the Oorlam, the Mbanderu having moved from Witvlei to Otjohangwe.[45] It was to be eleven years before a missionary, the Rev. Friedrich Judt, was again stationed at Gobabis, and he remained there for only three years.

The Dorslandtrekkers

In 1875 a number of families in the Transvaal who were dissatisfied with President Burgers' government resolved to leave the Boer Republic. Encouraged by the positive reports they had received from Hendrik van Zyl, a Dutch trader living between Gobabis and Lake Ngami, regarding the grazing and bountiful game in Hereroland, they decided to trek through Botswana to Namibia. The first group of trekkers headed by Gert Alberts arrived at Ghanzi in 1876 with between forty and fifty ox-waggons and about 1 400 head of cattle, having suffered relatively few losses during their journey. After spending three months at Ghanzi, they moved to Rietfontein, arriving on 18 January 1876, and there they remained for two years as hunters, traders and stock-farmers with the permission of the Oorlam captain of Gobabis at the time, Andries Lambert.[46]

The second trek, comprising some 480 persons, 128 ox-waggons and thousands of cattle and headed by Jan Greyling, was less fortunate. They left the Limpopo in the winter of 1877, but lost large numbers of cattle and trek-oxen due to the lack of water, obliging the Rietfontein settlers to come to their assistance with fresh draught animals. By the time they arrived, 37 trekkers had already died and several had turned back. Nevertheless, about one hundred waggons succeeded in reaching Lake Ngami. Some of the trekkers joined the Rietfontein settlers, while others proceeded further north to the Okavango.[47]

Those trekkers who had stayed at Rietfontein apparently enquired from Andries Lambert whether they could purchase land. The Cape Colony, however, fearing the creation of a new Boer Republic in Damaraland which could link with the Free State and Transvaal Republics, thus cutting the Cape Colony off from the rest of Africa, instructed its Special Commissioner, William Coates Palgrave, to agitate against the trekkers amongst especially the Herero. He was so successful in his endeavours that Andries Lambert and another Oorlam captain, Schamus, summarily rejected the Dorslandtrekkers' request:

> Hier is geen land voor u te kopen of te ruilen of te nemen. Wij hebben ons land zelf nodig ... Zodra u deze brief krijgen moet U lieden opbreken en haastiglik en nogmaals haastiglik trug trug trug na uwen eigen land waarvan gylieden gekomen zijt.[48]

Eventually, in January 1878, they resolved to move on further north through the Tebraveld to Angola.[49]

Traders

The Oorlam had in the meantime introduced a toll for traders. An amount of £5 was levied for every waggon passing through the Gobabis district on the way to Lake Ngami to pay for safe passage, grazing and water.[50] Attacks

on traders and hunting expeditions in the district nevertheless continued (according to one source, such raids were referred to as "unloading of the waggons" by those responsible). F.W. Gunning, who was based in Rehoboth between 1870 and 1880 but also operated in the Gobabis district, only moved into the area to trade in the company of a Baster commando. Ferry, an agent for Axel Eriksson of Omaruru, was robbed twice in 1874, and the same fate befell Grey during the same year. They were followed by Sperling and Bruce in 1875 (the latter being tied to his ox-waggon and flogged), Hans Minnie in 1876, Wheeler in 1877 and George Robb in 1879.[51] In 1880, the Oorlam at Gobabis sentenced to death Hendrik van Zyl, whom they accused of plotting to attack Gobabis with a group of Tswana. Van Zyl and his son succeeded in escaping, but lost all their ivory and trade goods and even had to leave their wives behind, although the women were later released by the Oorlam.[52]

Renewed clashes between Mbanderu and Oorlam

While Judt attended a mission conference at Otjosazu in April, the Herero-Nama War broke out and fighting also took place at Gobabis. William Coates Palgrave, who had come to Gobabis at the request of Hendrik van Zyl to discuss Van Zyl's case with the Oorlam headmen at the town, barely managed to escape with his life. The mission station, rebuilding of which had been completed in 1879, was again destroyed during a raid by the Herero and Mbanderu on 26 August 1880. Judt decided not to return, and Gobabis remained virtually unoccupied.[53] Towards the end of 1884, Gobabis was plundered again, this time by Paul Visser, a Witbooi headman who had organized a raid against the Mbanderu which resulted in the loss of numerous lives and cattle.[54]

German Colonization

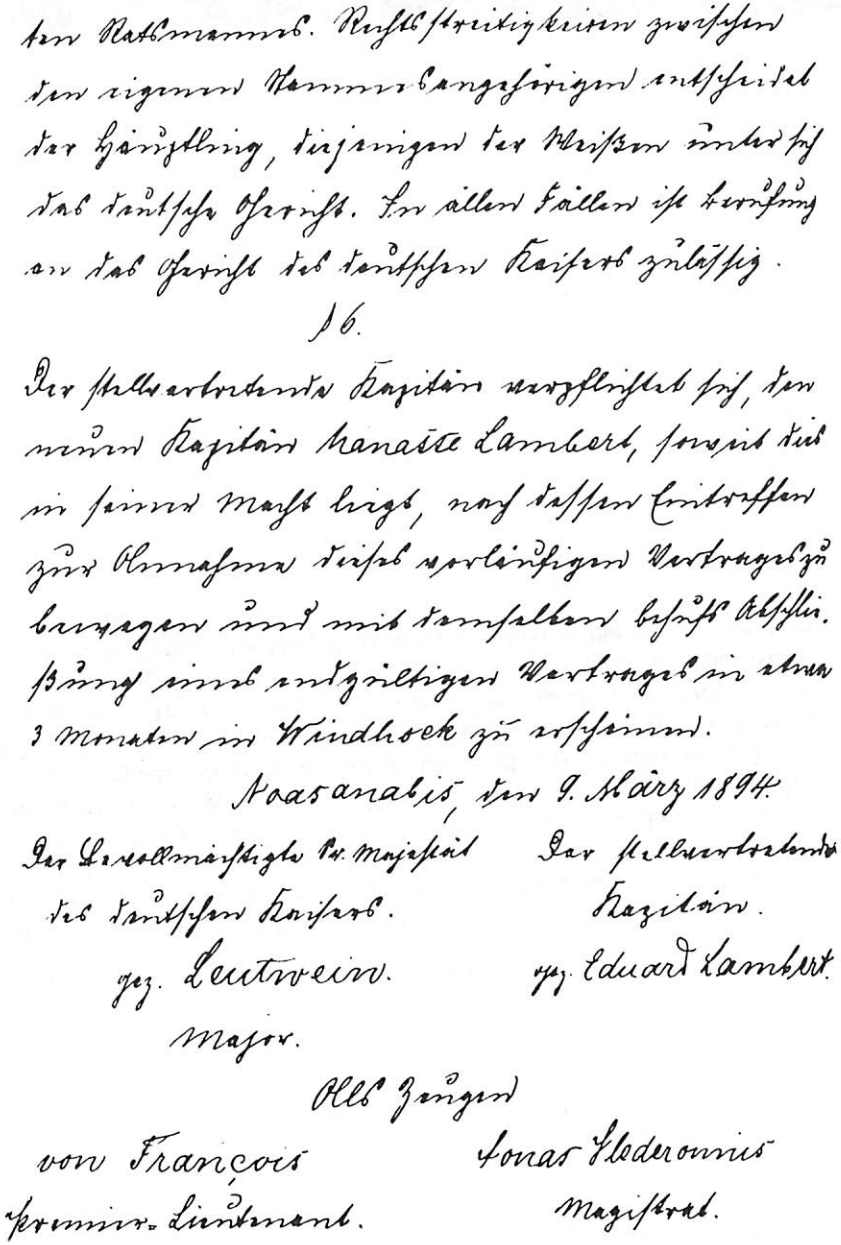
Following the first land purchases by Adolf Lüderitz along the south-western coast of the territory in 1883 and the subsequent proclamation of the German Protectorate of South West Africa on 24 April 1884, the German Empire gradually expanded its sphere of influence in this part of Africa by concluding so-called protection treaties with various chiefs in the territory.

Initial Resistance

Captain Curt von François visited the eastern parts of the new colony in 1890 to sign such treaties with a number of Herero chiefs. Andries Lambert, head of the Oorlam at Naosanabis, was one of the leaders who refused German "protection". In 1893, however, he attacked the Tswana settlement at Aais, killing a considerable number of persons and capturing some 500 head of cattle. Since the Tswana had concluded a protection treaty with the Germans, this - together with the murder of a German trader in the area later during the year - provided the Landeshauptmann, Major Theodor Leutwein, with the excuse he required to act against Lambert. On 24 February 1894, a force of about 100 Schutztruppe marched to Naosanabis, where Lambert was put on trial and sentenced to death. He was executed on 3 March, and the Germans replaced him with Eduard Lambert, whom they considered to be more favourably inclined towards them. Eduard Lambert promptly returned what was left of the stolen cattle, as well as 60 rifles, and signed a protection treaty on 9 March. A German military post was established at Aais.[55]

The Lambert incident was but the first show of resistance against German overlordship. In November 1892 already, the Herero and Nama had concluded a peace treaty which caught the colonial authorities off guard, since it did not bode well for their policy of "divide and rule".[56] The two warring parties joined forces, albeit in a loose alliance, against colonial subjugation.

Discontent was also growing among the Otjiherero-speaking peoples in the Gobabis district. On 6 December 1894, Samuel Maharero had signed an agreement with Landeshauptmann Leutwein in terms of which the southern boundary of Herero territory was provisionally defined as running "from the west along the Swakop River to Groß Barmen; from there along the course of the so-called Windhoek-Swakop River to Otjiseva; parallel to 22° South so that Okapuka ... would be to the south and Otyitonge to its north; from Otyitonge to south of Otjipane on the White Nossob River; along the White Nossob River as far as Urigab Witvlei; and from there in a north-easterly direction so that Gobabis and its surrounding pasture fell within German



den Rechtsstreitigkeiten zwischen den eigenen Landesangehörigen entscheidet der Häuptling, diejenigen der Weissen unter sich das deutsche Gericht. In allen Fällen ist Berufung an das Gericht des deutschen Kaisers zulässig.

§ 6.

Der stellvertretende Kapitän verpflichtet sich, den neuen Kapitän Hanaite Lambert, sowie sich in seiner Macht liegt, von dessen Eintreffen zur Annahme dieses vorläufigen Vertrages zu bewegen und mit demselben bestes Abkommen. Binnen eines endgiltigen Vertrages in etwa 3 Monaten in Windhoek zu erscheinen.

Aasanabis, den 9. März 1894.

Der Landeshauptling Sr. Majestät des deutschen Kaisers.
gez. Leutwein.
Major.

Der stellvertretende Kapitän.
gez. Eduard Lambert.

Als Zeugen
von François
Premier-Lieutenant.

Jonas Klederomius
Magistrat.

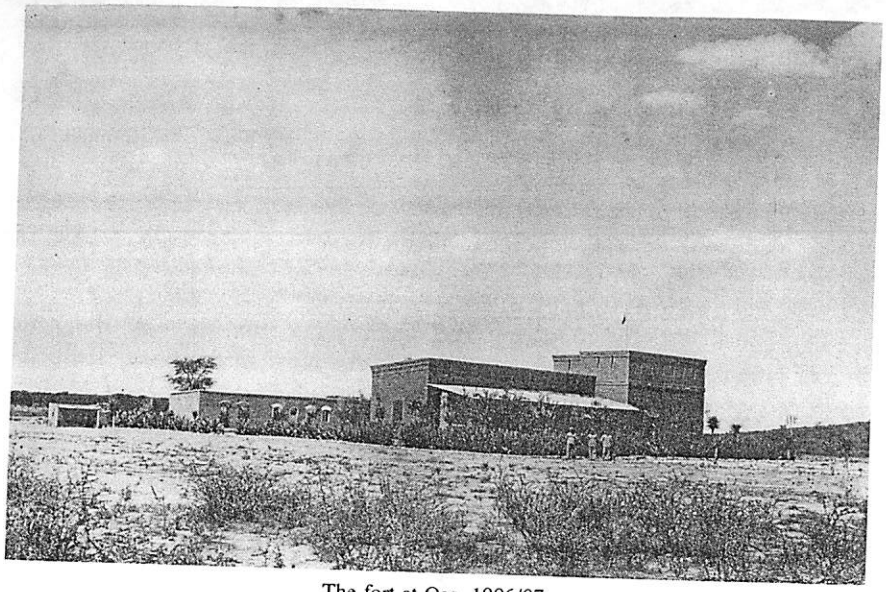
Last page of a copy of the protection treaty signed by
Theodor Leutwein and Chief Eduard Lambert on 9 March 1894

territory. Where a river formed the boundary, the centre of the riverbed would form the boundary line."[57] The Eastern Herero and Mbanderu, however, had moved their cattle-posts further south into the area of Gobabis in the early 1890s already, with the Eastern Herero grazing their cattle south of the Seeis River, and Kahimemua and his people keeping their cattle at Gobabis.[58]

When Assessor Friedrich von Lindequist visited the area east of Windhoek between 21 December 1894 and 15 January 1895 to finalize the boundary, the Mbanderu refused initially to concede Gobabis, but eventually settled for a compromise in terms of which the boundary ran from the east along the line of latitude eight hours by ox-waggon to the north of the town. Directly north of Gobabis, the line turned towards the south-west and ran to Witvlei. Similarly, Nikodemus Kavikunua refused to accept the White Nossob as the boundary of the area in which his people's cattle could graze, since this meant that their access to the waterholes in the Seeis River would be cut off, while it also limited their use of the White Nossob itself. After intense negotiations that threatened to erupt into violence on a number of occasions, Nikodemus and five headmen on 10 January 1895 accepted a compromise proposal by von Lindequist which established the boundary as running halfway between the White Nossob and Seeis Rivers. This arrangement, however, was to be of a temporary nature only.[59]

The Eastern Herero did not, however, adhere to the agreement, since there were no settlers on the land claimed by the Germans in any event, and continued to graze their cattle far south of the Seeis River. On 18 May 1895, some 50 German soldiers with two cannons under Leutwein and 200 armed Herero led by Samuel Maharero marched east, and were met at Otjinauanaua by more than 1 000 heavily-armed Herero and Mbanderu. Negotiations followed; Nikodemus Kavikunua was recognized as the headman of Eastern Hereroland.[60] This had two far-reaching implications - Samuel Maharero was now officially recognized as paramount chief of the Herero, while Nikodemus was placed over Kahimemua Nguvauva, causing a rift between these two leaders and thus playing into the hands of the Germans.

The military post at Aais, established in 1894, was moved north to Gobabis in June 1895. A garrison was posted at the town and construction of a provisional barracks commenced. Lieutenant Otto Lampe was appointed chief of the Gobabis district, which had already been established in February 1894, while military post were also built at Oas and Olifantskloof. On 15 June 1895, Nikodemus Kavikunua signed a treaty with the Germans at Aais in which he undertook to vacate the area south of the boundary by the end of



The fort at Oas, 1906/07

the 1896 rainy season at the latest. His claim to Gobabis was rejected, but he was permitted to live there.[61] Despite the fact that the boundary was moved south to the Seeis River in January 1896, however, transgressions onto land claimed by the Germans along the White Nossob and the Seeis River continued, and the Germans began confiscating Herero and Mbanderu cattle.[62]

The 1896 Uprising

Given this background, it was obvious that the situation in the Gobabis district would remain tense, and that only a tiny spark would be required to ignite the entire keg. That spark came in March 1896, hastened by the prevailing drought, which had driven the Herero and Mbanderu across the agreed boundaries in search of grazing for their cattle. Lieutenant Lampe, whose move to Gobabis was resented by the Eastern Herero and Mbanderu because it had taken place without their consent,[63] reported the tension to Windhoek and the first field company under Captain Ludwig von Estorff was dispatched to Gobabis immediately. Before any action could be taken, however, a group of Khauas Oorlam under Eduard Lambert attacked and killed a German patrol of three men at Rooigrouwater east of Gobabis and then proceeded to besiege the town itself, where they were joined by a number of Nikodemus Kavikunua's people, but not by Nikodemus himself.[64]

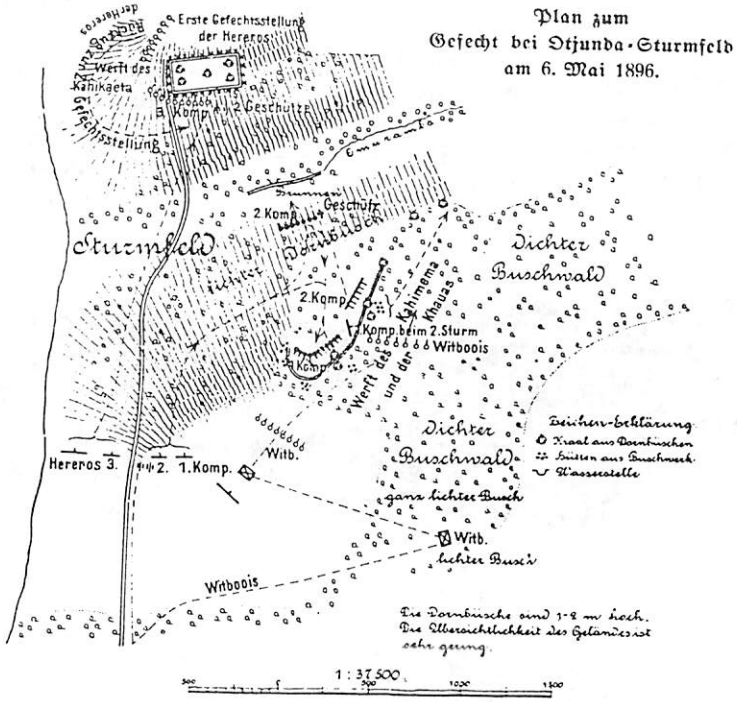
Unseen by the Khauas Oorlam and Herero, the first field company (50 Schutztruppe and 4 guides) reached Gobabis late on 3 April to reinforce the garrison of 24 men with their single 5,7-mm cannon. The company's 5,7-mm cannon, ammunition and provisions arrived at dawn the next day. During the night of 4 April, von Estorff's company and Lieutenant Lampe with four men moved out of Gobabis towards Spitskop. A reconnaissance patrol was attacked by mounted Oorlam about 800 m from the Spitskop shortly after dawn, and when the remainder of the company came to their assistance, a fierce exchange of fire ensued during which the soldiers were forced to withdraw to the Spitskop. From this elevated position, they succeeded in beating off the reinforced attack by the Oorlam and putting them to flight following a brief use of artillery and a concerted attack on their right flank. In this first clash, the Oorlam lost at least twelve men (among them Eduard Lambert), while the casualties on the German side were one dead and five wounded.

The Germans set off in pursuit of the fleeing Oorlam around 08:30, only to find that they were being attacked by some 200-300 Herero and Mbanderu, who had acted against the advice of Kahimemua. After being pinned down initially and having to beat off an attack on the company's waggons, von Estorff succeeded in deploying his cannon and launched a counter-attack after a brief barrage. Although this counter-attack was successful and drove back the attackers, the first German section of twelve men ran directly into the enemy and lost 5 dead (among them Lieutenant Lampe). Von Estorff used the lull in the fighting to call in reinforcements from Gobabis. After a brief rest, he set out for Nikodemus Kavikunua's settlement with thirty mounted soldiers around noon, while the remainder of the company stayed on the hill with the cannons. Nikodemus sent out a force of 200-300 men to approach the soldiers from various sides. Von Estorff slowly withdrew until the warriors came within range of the cannon and then ordered it to open fire. The first shot of shrapnel hit its target and the Germans immediately turned and drove back their attackers.

It is estimated that the Mbanderu, Eastern Herero and Oorlam lost some 100 warriors in the clash of 5 April, while the count of German casualties came to six dead and five wounded. The next day, large numbers of Herero and Mbanderu fled to the north and north-west with their cattle. A small German force was sent after them, but had to turn back after a short while on account of the poor condition of their horses and the poor manoeuvrability of the cannons.[65] On 8 April, Leutwein announced rewards of 3 000 Reichsmark on the head of Nikodemus and 1 000 Reichsmark on that of Kahimemua, even though the latter had not in any way been involved in the uprising and had even sought to prevent it.[66] A few days later, the post at Olifantskloof

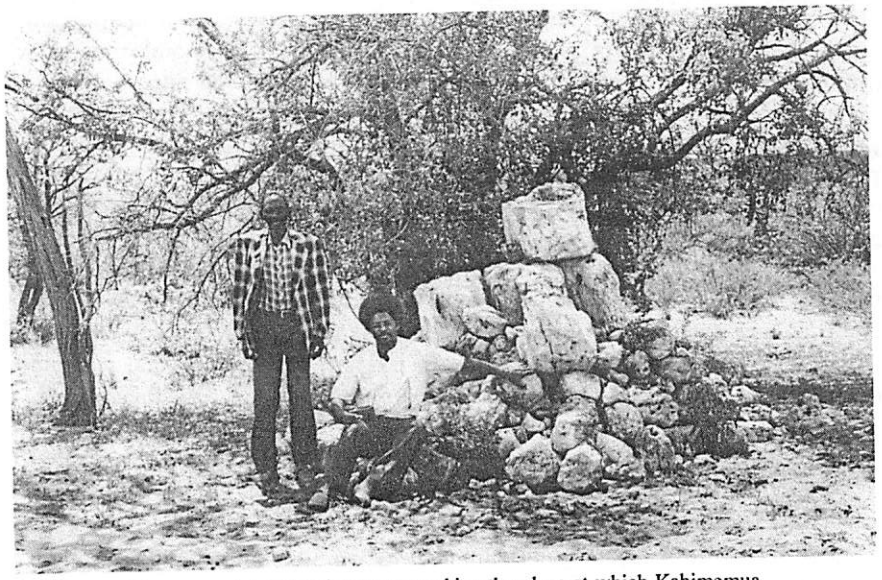
near the Botswana border was relieved, and on 18 and 19 April, on their return from the post, the German detachment clashed with Oorlam, Herero and Mbanderu warriors at Siegfeld, defeating them.[67]

The first field company was reinforced by the third company (60 men) under Lt Konradin von Perbandt. Between 14 and 22 April, Samuel Maharero sent 60 mounted Herero soldiers to Kowas to assist the Germans. The Gibeon garrison of 22 men under Lieutenant Henning von Burgsdorff, supported by 70 Nama soldiers under Hendrik Witbooi, arrived on 1 May, and Simon Koper opted to also join the Germans. During the night of 2 to 3 May, this force of some 400 men advanced on Otjunda (also known as Sturmfeld today) north of Gobabis, to where Kahimemua had withdrawn with his people, and attacked the place on 6 May. Although the Khauas Oorlam and Kahimemua and some of his followers had already left Otjunda and moved to Omukuruvaru the previous night, the 200 Herero and Mbanderu who remained behind offered brave resistance in an attempt to save their cattle. They suffered forty casualties, while the Germans and their allies carried the day with only seven dead and sixteen wounded. The settlement was destroyed.[68]



Plan of the battle at Otjunda, 6 May 1896

The reward on Kahimemua's head was increased to 3 000 Reichsmark. On 15 May, he gave himself over to the Germans at Omukuruvaru with five supporters and was taken to Okahandja. Assa Riarua convinced Nikodemus that it would be in his best interest to surrender to the Germans, and on 16 May, Nikodemus arrived at Okahandja. It was at Okahandja that one of the last chapters in the dispute over the Herero paramountcy, which had been smouldering ever since the death of Maharero in 1890, was played out. On 11 June 1896, Nikodemus Kavikunua and Kahimemua appeared before a court martial on charges of high treason; both were found guilty and sentenced to death, a sentence which Samuel Maharero actively supported. They were shot on the morning of 12 June. In so doing, the Germans had removed two of their major opponents in the new colony, while Samuel Maharero had eliminated two of his strongest rivals. As he had requested, Kahimemua was buried to the west of the town, and not next to the graves of Tjamuaha and Maharero. The Mbanderu visit Kahimemua's grave at Okahandja on the first Sunday after 12 June every year (unless 12 June is a Sunday) to pay homage to their former leader.[69]

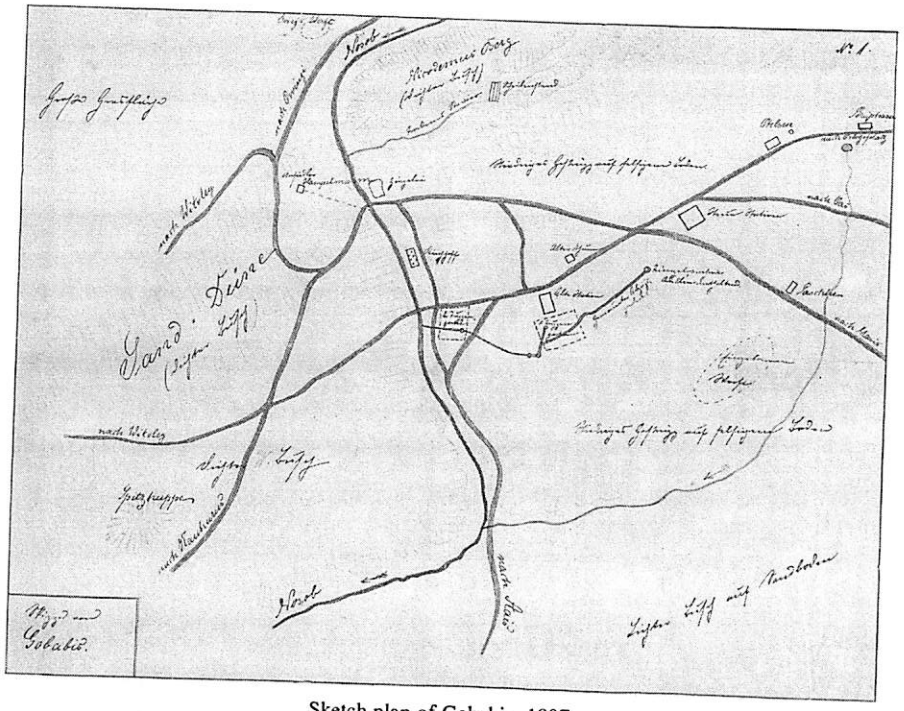

The memorial at Omukuruvaru marking the place at which Kahimemua was arrested by German soldiers

Following the 1896 rebellion and the death of their leaders, the Mbanderu and Eastern Herero in the Gobabis district moved to the north-west and were placed under the direct control of Samuel Maharero. Thousands of their

cattle were confiscated (3 000 head at Otjunda alone). The Khauas Oorlam broke up into smaller bands that were gradually absorbed by the Nama people.[70]

German Settlement in the District

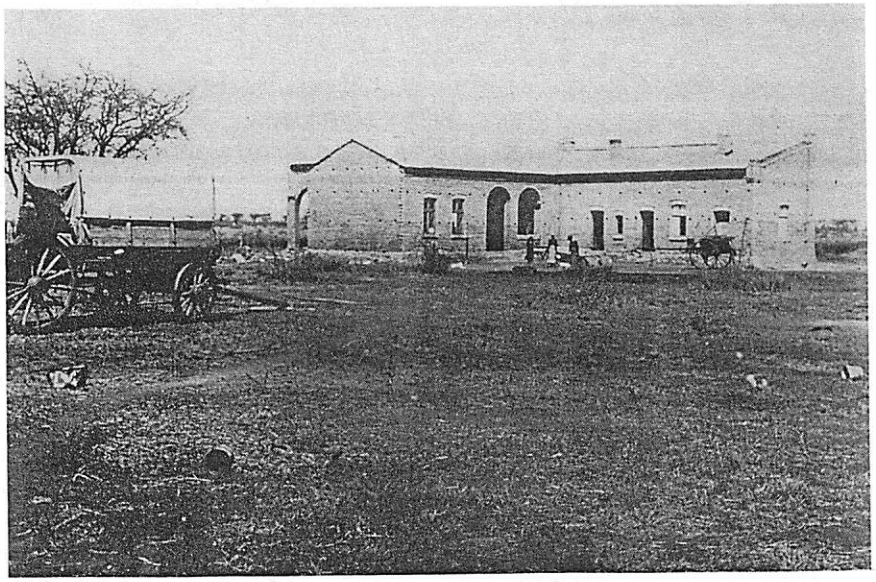
Although the Hanseatische Land- und Minengesellschaft based in Rehoboth had been granted the first land and mining concessions in the Gobabis district on 11 August 1893 already and the Berlin-based Siedlungsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Südwestafrika a land concession covering 20 000 km² near Windhoek and at Gobabis and Hoachanas in March 1895,[71] active settlement of Germans in the Gobabis district commenced only after 1896, and then only very slowly. The first 30 hectares of agricultural land along the Black Nossob were surveyed in 1897. Two traders, Carl Ohlsen and Paschke, had already established themselves in the town in 1895, and construction of the fort of the town commenced in 1897, but civilians accounted for a very small section of the town's white population, with only 2 white women living in Gobabis in 1899.[72]



Sketch plan of Gobabis, 1897

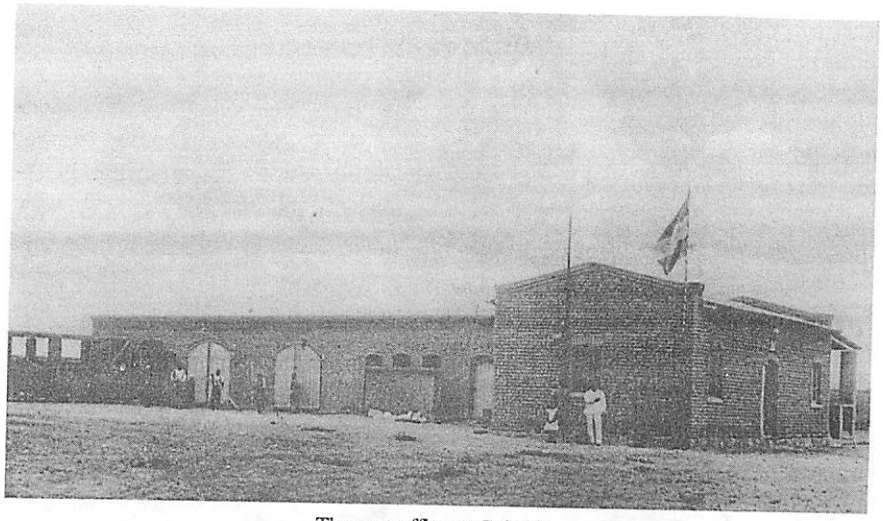
A major setback struck the entire population of the colony in 1897, when the rinderpest that had been prevalent in German East Africa for some years began spreading to the south. Despite efforts on the parts of the authorities to establish a 20-km stock-free corridor along the eastern border of Namibia and to control the movement of game in order to prevent the disease from entering the colony, these measures came to nothing, due mainly to a lack of manpower. Cattle belonging to Chief Tjetjo in the Omaheke were infected by animal cadavers in the veld in February 1897, and since the ox-waggon was the main means of transport at the time, the disease soon spread through the territory. A vaccination campaign was introduced for all cattle in the territory, and the disease began to ease towards the end of the year, after having caused losses of up to fifty per cent of the herds among especially the Herero's cattle.[73]

The first farms in the district were surveyed the next year, in 1898, and the four of these (Zachas, Makam, Friedrichsheim and Wilhelmshöhe) were sold to former members of the Schutztruppe (F. Schwalm, E. Bahlsen, F.I. Kohlhoff and W. Hampel), while the first farm to be sold to a civilian was Ohlsenhagen (to Carl Ohlsen) in 1899. Yet, this did not herald the beginning of new economic development in the district. Following the rinderpest, cattle were a scarce commodity and could only be purchased at exorbitant prices,



Farm house on the farm Ohlsenhagen

while water resources were limited. Given the poor state of the routes to Windhoek, the nearest market, there was hardly an incentive to draw settlers to the area.[74]



The post office at Gobabis

The mission station at Aminuis, 1930s

Virtually no development took place in Gobabis itself. The first post office was opened at Gobabis on 1 August 1898, but one source states that, as late as 1913, full postal and mail services existed only twice per month. A Rhenish missionary, the Rev. August Kuhlmann of Okazeva, visited the town in 1901 and 1903, but no permanent station was established. Roman Catholic missionaries also did not establish themselves at the town, although mission stations were founded at Aminuis in 1902 and Epukiro on 23 April 1903.[75] By and large, the Gobabis of the turn of the century was a garrison town that had precious little to offer to prospective settlers.

The Roman Catholic mission station at Epukiro

The Herero-German War

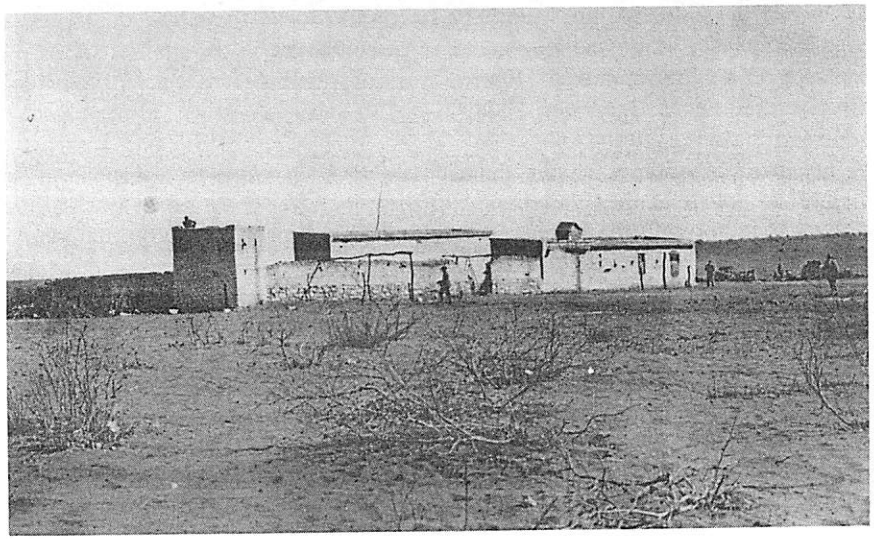
Resentment against the Germans had been steadily increasing among the Herero throughout the country, and erupted into active resistance on 11 January 1904 after an initial period of preparation for the war in the form of large-scale purchases on credit and horse acquisitions.[76] Towards the end of 1903 already, the incidents of stock theft in the Gobabis district had increased dramatically, and Lieutenant Kurt Streitwolf, who had been appointed District commander at the beginning of 1903, went out with a patrol of nine men on 11 January 1904 to investigate, quite oblivious of the fact that the war was about to break out. As they were about to return to Gobabis, the party was

Captain Streitwolf with his wife and daughter in front of the Gobabis fort;
Major von der Heyde on the extreme right

informed of more incidents and opted for a different route in order to visit the places concerned. Along the way, they encountered numerous armed Herero and realized that something was afoot. At Otjunda, Streitwolf ordered the farmer to head for the military post at Epukiro immediately. After having sent out a messenger to Kanduwe and the farms further north-east, ordering those farmers to also remove to Epukiro, he set out for the station with his patrol to prepare its defences.[77]

The first incident of revolt in the Gobabis district took place at Witvlei, where the police post was attacked on 14 January and one soldier was killed, while three farmers were killed along the Nossob River on 15 January. On 16 January, the Herero under Nikodemus (Kahimemua's nephew) began their siege on Gobabis itself. Streitwolf's patrol, which had briefly clashed with the Herero at Oparakane on 15 January, headed back for the town, where the soldiers who had remained behind had set alight all the Herero huts in the town to prevent the Herero from using them as shelter in an attack on the fort. The patrol was fired at some 4 km from the town but managed to break through on 17 January, bringing the number of men under arms in the fort to 27. Immediately after Streitwolf's arrival, the Herero renewed their attack

on the fort and advanced as far as Ohlsen's store, situated near the fort. They were, however, driven out by the soldiers and the building was pulled down to prevent any further attacks from that quarter. The Herero withdrew to the Nikodemusberg, maintaining their siege, but not launching another attack. On 21 January, the men who had been posted at Epukiro and farmers who had joined them there arrived near the town, and after a fierce clash during which the garrison troops came to their assistance, they succeeded in reaching the fort. Nikodemus realized that an attack on the 46 men in the fort would be futile and that a siege could last for several months. In early February he withdrew his people to Kehoro, concentrating rather on disrupting all communication between the town and Windhoek.[78]



Military post at Epukiro

During the first few days of the revolt, sixteen farm houses had been burned down and all the farmer's cattle stolen. The total losses suffered by settlers in the district were estimated at 809 000 Reichsmark.[79]

The authorities in Windhoek realized that the Herero might attempt to break out into Botswana with their cattle; if successful, this would deal a severe blow to an economy based largely on stock-farming. For this reason, Leutwein hurriedly assembled the 400-man Ostabteilung to first relieve Gobabis and then prevent any attempts by the Herero to make their escape. The first section under Lieutenant Alfred von Winkler, comprising 230 soldiers, three cannons and fourteen ox-waggons, moved out of Windhoek on 7 February

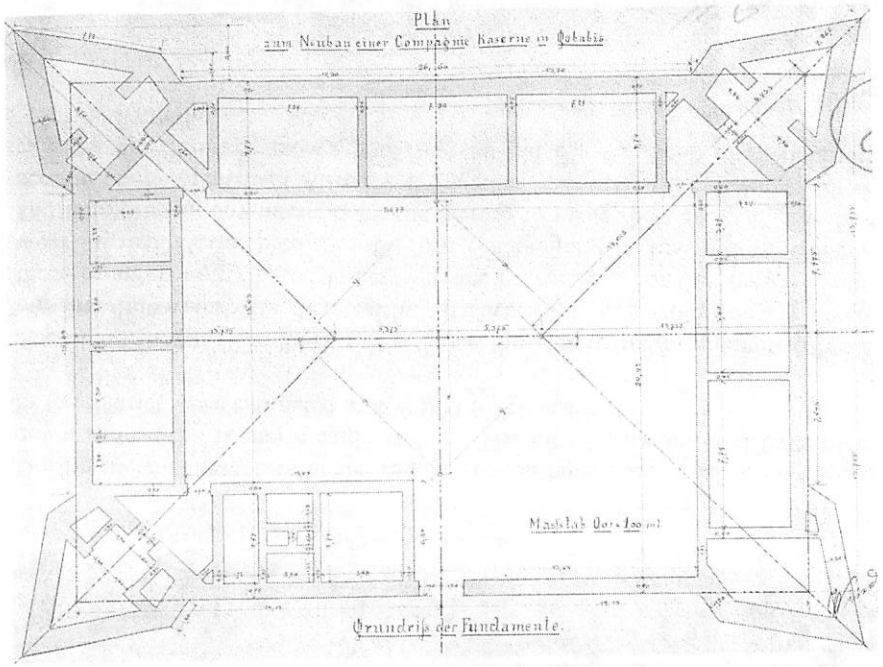
and advanced on Gobabis via Kaukerus. They arrived at Gobabis on 17 February. The Ostabteilung was reorganized, and the individual sections commenced driving the Herero towards the north, in the direction of the Waterberg.[80]

Although the Gobabis district saw relatively little military action during 1904, it became the scene for the final and darkest chapter of the Herero-German War. After their defeat at the Waterberg on 11 August, the Herero fled into the Omaheke. German soldiers pursued them into this desert area as far as their horses would go, and then the area was cordoned off on the orders of General Lothar von Trotha, who instructed the troops to shoot every Herero, irrespective of sex and age, who attempted to return. This forced the survivors of the battle at the Waterberg to try and make their way through the waterless waste along the Eiseb and Epukiro Rivers in an attempt to reach Botswana, and thousands of Herero died of thirst before the cordon was finally lifted on 15 December 1904.[81]

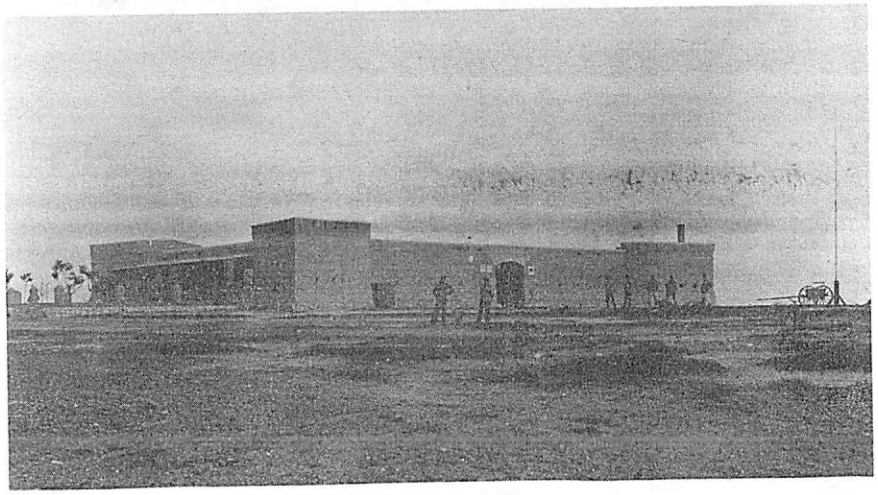
A group of Mbanderu, among them Nikodemus, had fled to Botswana even before the battle at the Waterberg. Others made their escape to the British colony together with the Herero in August 1904. Some, especially the people of Handura, Hoveka and Tjituku, remained behind in the country and turned themselves in to the Germans at Otjivero. They were taken to Windhoek and kept in concentration camps together with other captured Herero until 1907, after which some joined the Schutztruppe, others went to work on farms, while yet others were given goats and even cattle by the government and promised that they would be able to return to the areas from which they had originally come.[82] Filemon Tjituka was appointed to represent the interests of the Mbanderu in all dealings with the authorities, but the Mbanderu soon elected an evangelist, Erastus Handura, to replace him.[83]

German Settlement Commences Anew

One of the consequences of the Herero-German and Nama-German Wars was that large tracts of Herero and Nama land were expropriated by an Imperial Order of 26 December 1905.[84] Since the southern boundary of what had been Herero land ran just north of Gobabis and the Oorlam had occupied large sections in the south of the district, this meant that vast tracts of land in the district became available for occupation by Whites. Still, however, settlement of Whites proceeded slowly, even after the area was considered to have been pacified. The number of white civilians in the district, which had stood at 12 in 1904, rose to only 25 in 1905, and these lived mainly at Gobabis, Epukiro, Aminuis, Oas and Witvlei, while only three of the former sixteen farms were occupied.[85]

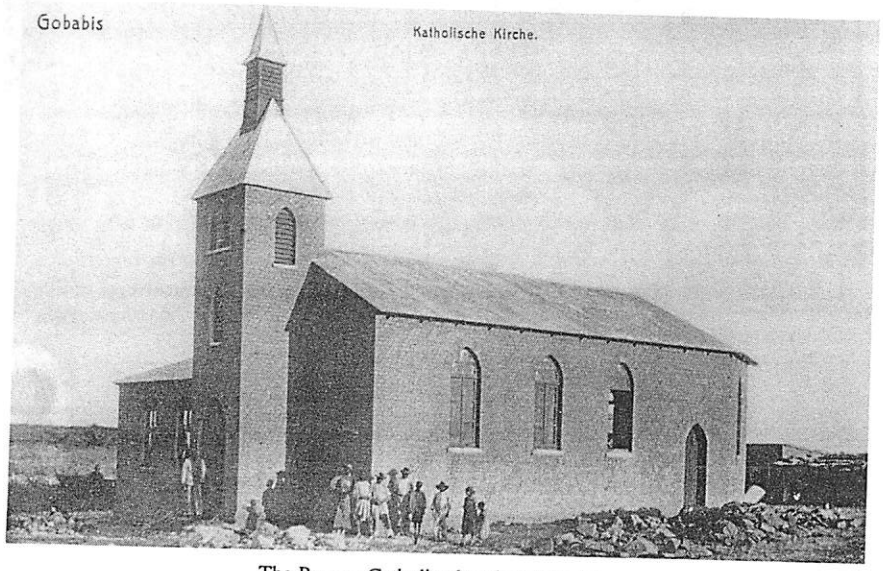


Plan of the fort at Gobabis, 1896



The fort at Gobabis

The fort at Gobabis had been completed around 1897[86] and had at its disposal a canteen, bakery, heliograph station, joinery, butchery, stables, latrines, a munitions store and a field hospital (*Lazarett*), while gardens were established both above and below the fort (these were initially known as *Truppengarten 1* and *2*, and later as *Truppengarten* and *Distriktsgarten*). By 1905, the station even boasted a swimming-bath.[87] Active civilian development of Gobabis by the Germans, however, only commenced around 1905. During that year and the next, a considerable number of properties was sold, and the village consisted of three hotels, two liquor outlets and five houses in 1906. A town plan was drawn up to provide for streets and erven, and formal local regulations were promulgated (a first for the colony).[88] In 1907 the Roman Catholic mission established a station at the town, which was gradually beginning to lose its military character.[89]



The Roman Catholic church at Gobabis

The Rhenish Mission Society reestablished its station at Gobabis in 1908, the Rev. Jakob Irle arriving at the town on 24 July. The parsonage, built under the supervision of master-builder Oskar Gerlach, was completed on 1 March 1909, while the church could be ordained at Easter 1910.[90]

In June 1908, a meeting was held at the town to discuss the establishment of a school for the German children in the area (in 1907, there were a mere 15 German children in the district, and not all of them were of school-going

Rhenish mission church and mission house at Gobabis

age). It was resolved that a school should be erected, and on 19 August the 3-member Schulverein, with Streitwolf as its head and Müller (trader) and Schwalm (farmer) as members, was founded. The government undertook to contribute 10 000 Reichsmark towards the cost of the new building, while the remaining 5 000 Reichsmark would have to be raised by the district itself. It was hoped that the building, construction of which commenced towards the end of 1908, would be completed around Easter 1909, but unforeseen delays meant that the town had to wait until 1910 for its school, which was eventually opened in January 1911, with Miss Anhuth as the first teacher. Three years later it was decided to built a hostel at a cost of 53 000 Reichsmark; the building had scarcely been completed when Union troops invaded the German colony and the teacher, Bensch, was called up to join the Schutztruppe.[91]

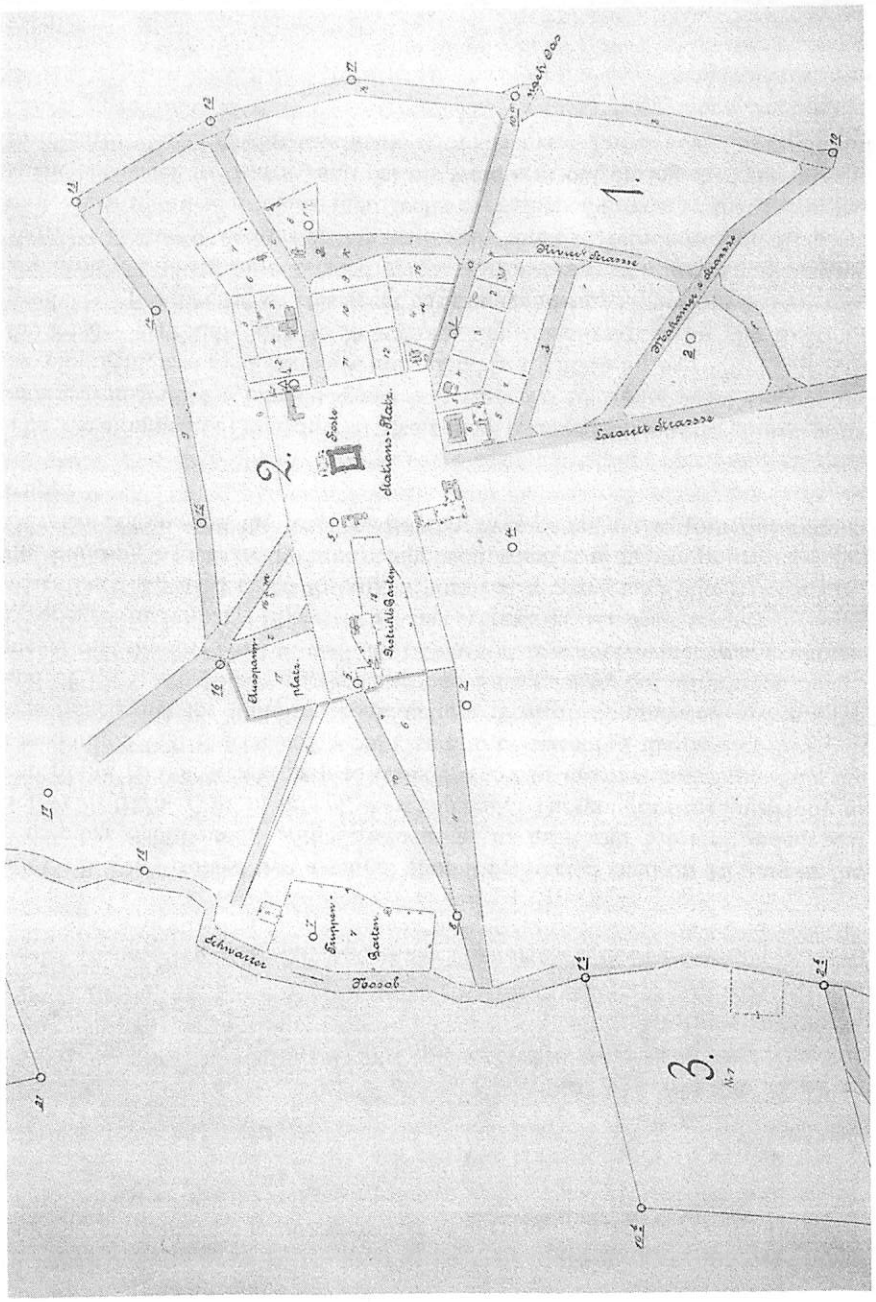
The development of the district itself also received attention. Since communication with the outside world was essential for the district's economic development, Streitwolf devoted considerable attention to the improvement of the roads, especially that to Windhoek, the main market for the district's products. Frequently, patrols spent entire days rolling stones out of the road, and iron signposts were erected at the various intersections in the district. Farmers along the various routes, especially those to Windhoek and Sandfontein, were instructed to sink their wells even deeper to ensure that there was sufficient water for traffic, and patrols were sent out during the rainy season to identify vleis. A start was made with surveying farms in the district, and

accurate maps were drawn.[92] At the request of the authorities, Streitwolf also examined the possibility of establishing smallholdings in the district. After some discussion, it was decided to provide such smallholdings at Groß Witvlei and to the immediate south of Gobabis, and the first smallholding was allocated to Carl Hendrik Dickenson in 1906.[93]

A police station manned by five police officers had already been opened at Gobabis in 1907, and the district was divided into four sections (Gobabis, Witvlei, Oas and Epukiro). Every fortnight, a police patrol visited the occupied farms in the district, delivering the farmers' mail during such visits. Apart from their police duties, the patrols were also responsible for the maintenance of watering-places, roads and signposts and, on Streitwolf's instruction, had to familiarize themselves with the agricultural progress and water situation on the various farms.[94]

Market-place in Gobabis, c. 1910

Agricultural experiments also played an important role in the district's development. During Streitwolf's period of office, tobacco trials were carried out at Gobabis and farmers were encouraged to produce this cash crop, since it could possibly offer a cheap alternative to the expensive, low-grade tobacco imported from America at the time.[95] Experimental planting of maize



Town plan of Gobabis, 1908

proved successful, and extensive gardens were established along the Nossob River. An experimental station employing one gardener and six labourers was established at Gobabis itself around 1909, and after a few years, this station had about 200 ha under cultivation, selling some 10 000 fruit trees and 30 000 vines annually to farmers in the district. Streitwolf was also instrumental in bringing the first veterinary surgeon to Gobabis.[96]

On 1 September 1909, several towns in the territory were granted local authority status, while a number of District Councils (among them that at Gobabis) were provided for to advise the various district chiefs in the development of roads and water resources, the allocation of farms, and health and education matters. The first local authority elections were held at Gobabis on 15 December; the four persons elected were the new District Chief, Lange (who had succeeded Streitwolf at the end of 1908), Graf zu Dohna, Carl Goldbeck and a Mr Buhr. In 1911, the Council voted its first budget, which included 9 600 and 1 050 Reichsmark in salaries for a doctor and a nurse, respectively, while a further 1 200 Reichsmark was voted for maintenance of the school and 2 000 Reichsmark for the construction and maintenance of roads.[97] When the first Landesrat met in Windhoek in April 1910, the Gobabis district was also represented by one of its farmers, Hugo Abraham.[98]

As a result of these activities on the part of the authorities, commercial farming operations in the district also began to expand. In 1908, the district's white civilian population stood at 156, and it was estimated that 700 Herero, 400 Damara, 300 San, 100 Nama and a few Baster lived in the district.[99] Whereas there were 83 farms with a total of 7 699 cattle and 9 961 head of small stock in the district in 1909,[100] this number increased to 102 farms (covering 755 000 ha) with 10 426 cattle and 28 865 head of small stock in 1912, while 381 ha was under cultivation.[101]

Thus, conditions had improved remarkably for the settlers in the Gobabis district. One dream, however, eluded them, namely a railway line to Windhoek. The Railways Council established by the authorities in 1912 had contemplated the construction of such a line, but no further progress was made due to the outbreak of World War I.[102]

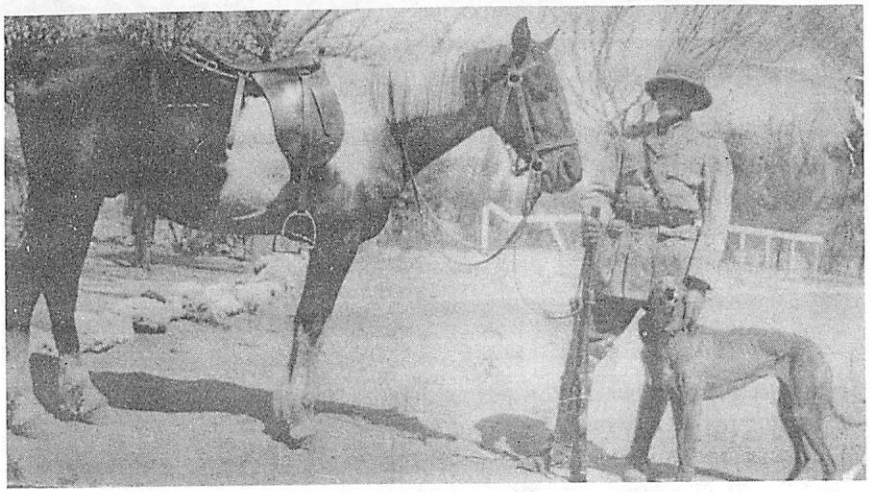
South African Occupation

World War I broke out in August 1914, and on 10 August, the Cabinet of the Union of South Africa resolved to send an expedition against German South West Africa. The first South African troops crossed the Orange River on 14 September, followed by a landing of troops at Lüderitzbucht on 18 September. In a lightning advance, the Union troops moved north, occupying the colony's capital on 12 May 1915. By 9 July 1915, the German South West Africa Campaign was over - the German Governor, Theodor Seitz, surrendered unconditionally to the South African forces at Kilometre 500 near Khorab, and martial law was declared over the entire territory.[103]

The Gobabis district was left untouched by military action. Although a probe under Colonel H.S. Mentz was sent out to the east from Windhoek shortly after the capital's occupation in an attempt to cut off the retreating Schutztruppe force headed by Captain von Kleist, the intercepting action came too late and there were no engagements.[104] Considerable disruption was, however, caused by the fact that most able-bodied men in the district were called up to serve with the Schutztruppe, bringing to a virtual standstill all economic activity and services in the district. The post office was closed on 18 May 1915, almost a month before the arrival of the advancing South African troops, and was only reopened four months later, on 6 September 1915, though only as a postal agency.[105]

Gobabis was only occupied by a 25-man detachment of Union troops commanded by Captain Harding on 14 June 1915. The commander of the Union troops apparently made unrealistic promises to the non-German population. Quite a number of individuals ceased working, which left them without an income and resulted in a rather unruly situation. After a few weeks, however, the order was restored.[106] Martial law having been declared over the entire territory, Lieutenant K.M. Bentley was appointed the town and district's first military magistrate. He was succeeded on 31 March 1916 by Captain E.W. Wilckens, who in turn was followed by Captain Frederick Jacobus Kriel van Ryneveld on 1 April 1918. When martial law in the country was lifted, Captain van Ryneveld became the district's first civilian magistrate on 1 January 1920.[107]

The farmers in the district took a major step in the direction of organization when they founded a farmers' co-operative (*Farmwirtschaftliche Vereinigung*) in 1919 with a view to regulating the marketing of their produce, which included not only cattle, small stock and pigs, but also Bechuana beans, millet, potatoes, maize, tobacco and vegetables.[108]



Captain van Ryneveld

In Gobabis itself, however, rather the opposite took place. At a public meeting held on 5 February 1921 to consider the reintroduction of a municipality, the magistrate indicated that such a local authority would have to get by on an estimated annual revenue of a mere £236, after which only three of those present voted in favour of the proposal. The Administration then requested the residents to consider appointing a village management board, and the magistrate reported as follows on the meeting held in this regard on 7 October 1921: "I have the honour to advise that this question was again laid before the Public when they decided to have a Village Management Board, and a Committee was formed to draw up regulations on the lines of those sent by you." Apparently, however, the efforts did not proceed beyond this statement of intent, and on 31 August 1922 the magistrate expressed his sentiments against a village management board in no uncertain terms:

> At the present time there is no money for any village services within Gobabis and great difficulty is being experienced in raising sufficient contributions for such essential services as the care of the water supply.
>
> The place is too small for any form of municipal government, but at the same time it is advisable that something should be done towards improving the roads, keep the public wells in order, etc.
>
> As a small beginning I would recommend that the grazing fees in respect of the Gobabis Commonage (which at present are only about £1. p.m.) should be administered through this office and an ordinary commercial receipt book and a small cash book used.

No further action was taken, and on 9 June 1927 the co-operative again approached the Administrator with a request for a local authority. Again, the proposal was rejected during a public meeting (attended by fifteen persons) held on the recommendation of the Administrator on 7 September 1927. At the request of the Administrator and following the Administration's undertaking to take over responsibility for the water supply to the location, a local authority (consisting of F. Geard - the magistrate, as chairman - Father J. Dohren and Messrs J.G.N. Lombaard, A.P. Olivier and Willi Roesener) was eventually established in 1934, mainly to ensure that there was a responsible body to deal with the town's mosquito plaque at the time. Gobabis was proclaimed a township with a village management board on 1 January 1935, but was granted municipal status by Government Notice 2 of 1944 only on 1 January 1944, after a request to that effect by the residents. A.P. Olivier was elected first mayor (Reivilo Street is named after him).[109]

San Discontent and the Death of Captain van Ryneveld

New hunting legislation promulgated by the mandate authority in the early twenties led to considerable dissatisfaction among the San in especially the north-western part of the district, the Eiseb area. The loss of their traditional source of food was aggravated by the prevailing drought of 1922, and they turned to the cattle owned by farmers in the district. During the first half of the year alone, a San band headed by Zameko (Samkxao?) killed 75 head of cattle on the farm Alexeck, owned by Mr Bullick.

Captain van Ryneveld assembled a six-man mounted party to investigate the incidents, in the hope that a personal discussion with Zameko would resolve the matter. After following the San hunters' tracks from the farm Alexeck for over a day, they discovered their camp on 22 July. Van Ryneveld dismounted and was approaching the shelters when one of the San hunters jumped up and shot a poisoned arrow at him, hitting him in the side. Van Ryneveld drew his revolver and shot the hunter. Three further hunters were killed in the ensuing skirmish before the party succeeded in getting out of range of the arrows, while the hunters disappeared into the dense bush.

Although the arrow was cut out immediately after the encounter, Van Ryneveld died that night. His body was taken to the mission station at Epukiro, where Father Pfafferott build a coffin from three doors. The corpse was taken to Gobabis, where Van Ryneveld was buried in the old military cemetery on the banks of the Black Nossob.

A punitive expedition was later sent out from Steinhausen to arrest the remaining members of the band, but returned empty-handed.[110]

Initial Settlement of Farmers from the Union of South Africa

Following the occupation of German South West Africa, settlers from the Union virtually streamed into the territory in search of cheap land, and the responsible officials were hard pressed in their attempts to maintain some form of control by applying the measures provided for under martial law where possible. Effective control, however, became possible only when the Union's settlement legislation was made applicable in the mandated territory by proclamation on 25 February 1920 with some minor amendments. The same proclamation also made large areas of land in the police zone available for settlement by Whites. A total of 955 government farms were allocated during the period 1920 to 1925. Most of these, namely 148, were situated in the Gobabis district, possibly due to the fact that it was one of the first districts visited by the Land Board in 1920 and in which farms were made available. Initially, allocation proceeded at a brisk pace, with 40 farms allocated in 1920, 31 in 1921 and 35 in 1922. Due to the drought and the beginning depression, however, the figures dropped to 16 in 1923, 13 in 1924 and 13 in 1925. During the following five-year period (1926-1930), the district remained in the forefront of farm allocations, accounting for 68 of the 381 farms allocated countrywide.[111]

Angola Settlers

In what could be seen as a quirk of fate, some descendants of the Dorsland-trekkers who had passed through the Gobabis district in the 1870s, returned to the district almost sixty years later. The trekkers, who had eventually settled in southern Angola, had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the Portuguese administration of the colony and repeatedly appealed to the administration of the mandated territory of South West Africa to be repatriated. This resulted in considerable debate and even conflict in the Legislative Assembly, with those opposed to the envisaged repatriation arguing that the exercise would be far too expensive and that the Angola Settlers were in any event nothing but a bunch of good-for-nothings that would never come to rest (a view that was to be shared by the Land Settlement Commission of 1935, albeit in rather more polite terms). Eventually, the Union government undertook to pay the costs of the repatriation (some £500 000), if the Administration was prepared to make farms available to the settlers. Suitable farms were identified in the Grootfontein, Gobabis, Gibeon and Otjiwarongo districts, and what followed was an aid effort of such proportions that it was never again equalled or, for that matter, even attempted by the administration, causing considerable discontent among the territory's existing population, especially since many inhabitants were impoverished on account of the

beginning depression and could themselves well have done with more assistance on the part of the authorities. Also, all land allocation in Namibia was halted in 1928 to provide in the needs of the new settlers.[112]

One of the problems that needed to be overcome before repatriation could commence concerned the settlers' cattle, since lungsickness was endemic to Angola. The approximately 1 900 settlers in question owned a total of 14 000 head of large stock. If the settlers were to dispose of the animals in Angola, they would have to sell them at give-away prices, leaving them with little financial resources to purchase new stock in Namibia. A number of options were examined, such as keeping the animals in quarantine in the Kaokoveld or driving them through the desert to Cape Cross and then shipping them out for slaughter, but the Administration eventually decided to rather send an agent to Angola to purchase the animals a £2.10.0 per head and then market them from the Portuguese colony.[113]

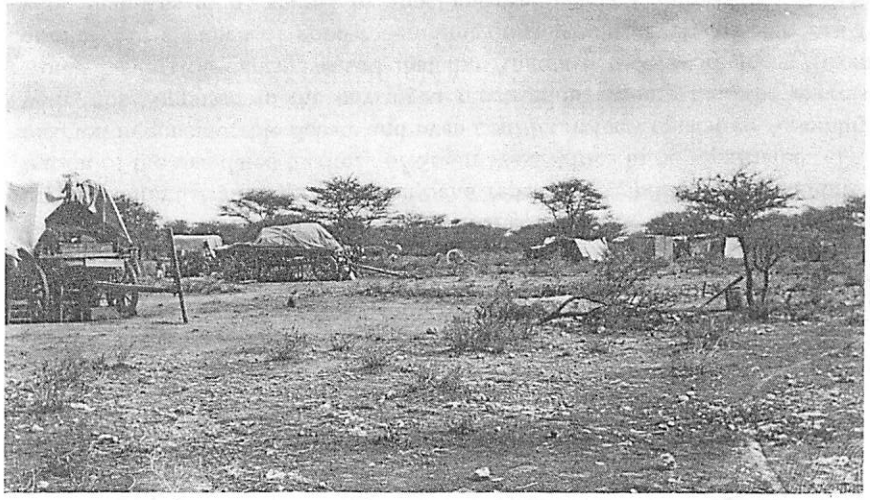
Since the settlers would no longer have any draught animals once they were on Namibian soil, the Administration was faced with the next dilemma, namely getting them to their allocated farms. A road was built from Outjo to Swartbooisdrif and 3 000 donkeys were purchased to draw the settlers' waggons. Given the lack of water and the shortage of grazing in the Kaokoveld, however, it was eventually decided to rather use 45 trucks bought especially for the purpose at £600 each.[114]

Also, approximately 100 out of the 400-odd families owned absolutely nothing at all, which added to the problem since the country was beginning to feel the grip of the depression and work of any kind was scarce. The territory's only Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Suidwes-Afrikaner*, argued on 10 February 1928 that

> ... it would be foolish indeed to give farms to people who have nothing. If the Railway Administration has not already decided to use native labour on the construction of the Gobabis railway, this work could afford the indigent from Angola the opportunity to earn a living. It would appear, however, that our authorities prefer to restrict the number of native labourers available for our farms and mines by using black labour on the railways and, in so doing, slamming yet another door in the faces of our white unemployed.

The Administration resolved this issue by allowing settlers with financial resources of £500 or more to move to the so-called application farms, whilst those with less were to be accommodated on irrigation schemes (such as that established at Omatjenne).[115]

The first settlers crossed into Namibia at Swartbooisdrif on 23 August 1928, and the conditions on which they were settled in various parts of the country were more than favourable. Each settler was allocated a farm covering 7 000-8 000 ha on lease for a five-year period with the option to buy. If farming activities were carried out to the satisfaction of the Administration, the lease would be waived. The allocated farms could be bought at 2 shillings per hectare, repayable over thirty years at four per cent interest per annum. Settlers also received an advance of £400, repayable interest-free after five years, for stock purchases. Two further advances, £150 for the construction of a house and £250 for the development of water resources, were to be added to the purchase price of the farm and repaid on the same conditions as the price of the land.[116]



Part of the temporary camp for Angola Settlers at Gamkarab near Outjo

The block of farm land reserved for Angola settlers in the Gobabis district was known as the Hertzog Block and was situated to the east of Gobabis, stretching all the way to the Botswana border. The settlers were brought down from Outjo to the farm Welkom (No. 412), from where they moved to their new homes. As a number of settlers preferred to enter into partnership because the farms were too large for them to manage on their own, a total of 87 farms was eventually allocated to 121 settlers.[117]

The grazing on the allocated farms was eminently suited for large stock, and the Administration therefore advised the settlers to concentrate on cattle-farming. While the repatriation was still in progress, the Administration had

embarked on large-scale purchases of cattle which were then resold to the settlers at £6.15.0 for Class A, £5.15.0 for Class B and £3.10.0. Care was taken to ensure that each settler received his fair share of good, medium and poor cattle.[118]

Nature turned against the settlers, however. Those who had chosen the Gobabis district as their new home were not only faced with a severe drought, but also with an outbreak of the so-called Sandveld disease. To make matters even worse, there was an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the district towards the end of 1934, while gallamsiekte also took its toll. The herds decreased rather than prospered - the number of cattle owned by Angola settlers around Gobabis dropped from the approximately 4 400 received in 1929 to some 4 000 in 1936.[119] Most of the Angola Settlers recovered from these initial setbacks, however, and many of those who had been settled in the Gobabis district opted to stay there permanently.

Locations and Reserves

The initially somewhat informal arrangements regarding segregated urban settlement and native reserves introduced during the German colonial period became increasingly rigid as apartheid policies were enforced under the South African administration. Movement of the greater part of the population had been restricted by the introduction of the pass system during the German period already. Non-Europeans were allocated certain sections of towns outside which they could not live without permission, and outside the towns they were confined to reserves created by the white administration - unless, of course, they worked on White-owned farms. Gobabis, too, had its locations, which resorted under the municipality (assisted by Advisory Boards), while three native reserves, Aminuis, Epukiro and the Eastern Native Reserve, were situated in the district. The reserves fell under the control of first the magistrate and then the native commissioner stationed at Gobabis, and were administered by welfare officers stationed in the reserves themselves.[120]

The Gobabis Locations

According to Father Dohren of the Roman Catholic Mission at Gobabis, the first native huts to be erected in what could be described as the first location at the town of Gobabis were built near Spitskop around 1910. These huts were subsequently demolished and a new native area was established near the creamery, but the area was cleared in 1920 and the residents moved to a new area south of the town. When that area, in turn, was required as a landing

site for a private aeroplane, the location for Blacks was moved to a new site approximately 2,5 km south of the town. Certain provisions of the Urban Areas Proclamation (Proc. 34 of 1924) were applied to the Gobabis urban area by three government notices in 1935, and location regulations were promulgated on 2 July the same year. Special compounds were established for contract workers employed by the municipality, the railways and the creamery, while the location itself was subdivided along ethnic lines. An Advisory Board consisting of six residents was appointed in 1949. The old location eventually made way for Epako ("narrow defile", place at which the river runs between the koppies), which was established north-east of the town at a later stage.[121]

Köhler is the only published source to provide employment statistics for the residents of the black location. According to him, most were employed by various government departments, the municipality, private businesses and as domestic servants. Furthermore, there were three general dealers, one butcher, one café owner, four shoemakers and a few firewood dealers in the location in 1956. A small number of stock (which declined over the years) was kept on the commonage.[122]

A separate township for Coloureds known as Nossobville was also established; this township had 415 inhabitants in 1973.[123]

The Aminuis Reserve

After the German-Khauas War of 1894, the German colonial authorities concluded a treaty with the Tswana chief Nunu in which his people were granted Aais and Aminuis. Nunu and his people, however, moved to what is today Botswana, and he was instructed to submit his claim to Aais and Aminuis by 1 October 1900. When no reply was received, both areas were proclaimed Government Land on 17 October 1900, and the removal of the Tswana from Gobabis and Kaukerus to Aminuis, which the authorities had already contemplated in 1898, was carried out in 1901. Formal establishment of the area as a reserve, however, did not take place until 28 February 1914, when the Governor informed the Gobabis District Office that Aminuis and the surrounding area (covering some 55 000 ha) had been reserved for the Tswana; the Hugams waterhole and the area around it (5 000 ha) were explicitly excluded from this reserve. The Aminuis Native Reserve, some 230 000 ha in extent, was finally proclaimed by Government Notice 122 of 1923, and its size was almost doubled by Government Notice 109 of 1925. Minor additions thereafter brought the total surface area to 555 754 ha in 1962. To the east, the reserve was separated from the border with Botswana by a corridor

of Crown Land two farms wide (this strip is known as the "Corridor" even today); this corridor was never occupied, but merely used as emergency grazing.[124]

A large group of Herero moved to the Aminuis Reserve. They were joined by the greater part of the Mbanderu, who refused to acknowledge Nikanor Hoveka (elected to succeed Erastus Handura) and had opted to rather follow the Herero and Hosea Kutako.[125] In 1926, the population of the reserve was estimated at 950 persons; this figure rose to 2 840 by 1956. Otjihererospeakers, who accounted for almost 80 per cent of the population, occupied the eastern, central and northern sections of the reserve, while Tswanaspeakers were spread over twelve settlements.[126]

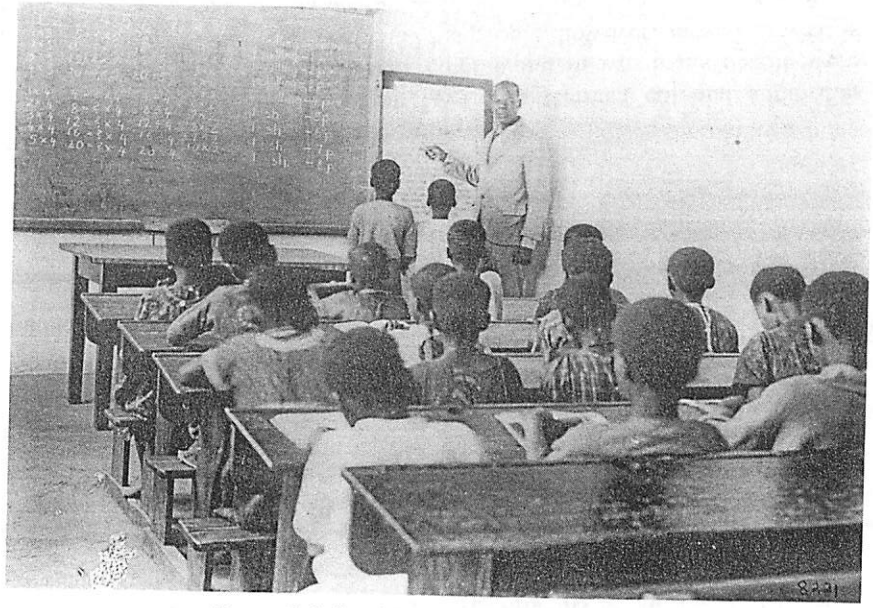
Given the fact that the Mbanderu, Herero and Tswana were traditionally pastoralists, the economic activity in the reserve centred around stockfarming. The statistics provided by Köhler indicate that the stock population of 18 103 head of small stock and 10 590 head of cattle recorded in 1939 (earlier figures are not available) had increased to 19 599 head of small stock and 26 459 head of cattle by 1955. The sale of stock, skins and bones represented the main source of cash income, with sales totalling £29 968 in 1955 (after having stood at £58 008 in 1953). Residents earned an additional income by participating in the cream scheme, supplying cream (or butter fat)

Residents of the Aminuis Reserve preparing to send their cream to Gobabis, 1939

used in the manufacture of butter. There were 77 separators in the reserve in 1955, and the cream was taken to the creamery at Gobabis by truck twice a week. In 1955 alone, earnings from cream sales totalled £20 000.[127]

The Epukiro Reserve

The Native Reserves Commission proposed in 1920 that a reserve covering some 178 000 ha be established in the Epukiro area to accommodate people from Uichanas and Gunichas in the Gobabis district, Okatumba and Orumbo in the Windhoek district, and Herero-speaking "squatters" on Crown Land. This recommendation was implemented by Government Notice 122 of 13 November 1923. Two years later the reserve was redefined to extend as far north as the Eiseb Omuramba, and again in 1934, when the northern boundary was determined as running 8 km north of and parallel to the Eiseb Omuramba, bringing the size of the reserve to some 743 000 ha.[128] By 1962, the size of the reserve had been increased to 1 226 000 ha, making it the second-largest native reserve in the police zone.[129]



Roman Catholic mission school at Epukiro, 1930

The first Herero were settled along the Epukiro Omuramba shortly after the proclamation of the reserve in 1923, while a small group of Mbanderu headed by Nikanor Hoveka followed in 1924.[130] Köhler sets the number of

residents in the reserve at 53 for 1924. In 1956, he estimated the population to stand at 2 313 persons spread over a total of 29 villages. At the time, the north-western portion of the reserve was inhabited almost exclusively by Herero, while the Mbanderu lived in the southern parts. In his 1956 census, Köhler found that only some twenty residents of the reserve were not Otjiherero-speakers, a clear reflection of the Administration's settlement policies for the territory's native reserves.[131]

Economic activity in the reserve was very similar to that in the Aminuis reserve. The stock population of 1 337 head of small stock and 3 933 head of cattle recorded in 1927 increased to 4 195 head of small stock and 23 994 head of cattle by 1955. Cash earnings from the sale of stock, skins and bones amounted to a total of £34 649 in 1954, while earnings from cream sales totalled £11 113 for the year. There were approximately 2 separators per settlement, while a larger centre such as Otjinene had 27 in June 1956. The cream was taken to the creamery at Gobabis from Otjinene twice a week and from Omawe zonyanda (Pos 3) once a week.[132]

The Eastern Native Reserve

This reserve, bordering on the Epukiro, Waterberg East and Otjituuo Reserves and covering an area of 1 283 000 ha, was set aside for the sole use and occupation by natives by Government Notice 374 of 4 November 1947. It was intended primarily as a place in which to settle Herero who had worked on farms or in towns when they grew old. According to Köhler, the population was estimated at just over 100 in 1956.[133]

The Mbanderu Reassert their Identity

As the two men who could have become chief of the Mbanderu - Hiatuwao and Keharanjo - had fled to Botswana in 1904, the Mbanderu remaining in Namibia were, for all intents and purposes, leaderless. Alfred Maharero (Samuel Maharero's second son), who had been permitted into Namibia in 1923 by the authorities to attend the reinterment of his father at Okahandja, returned to Botswana in 1924 and referred only to "his" people, creating the impression that he counted the Mbanderu among them. Upon hearing this, Hiatuwao resolved to do something for his people in Namibia.

He selected the colours black and white and created a flag, which he brought to the Mbanderu in 1931. At Epukiro, he met Christoph Kanguatjivi, who advised him to add the colour green. The suggestion was accepted. Hiatuwao then took the flag to Nikanor Hoveka and informed him that every Mba-

The flag of the Mbanderu

nderu who had followed Kahimemua at the time should acknowledge the new flag and that he, Hiatuwao, would be their chief. This was not acceptable to Hoveka and he withdrew, eventually becoming the local headman in the Epukiro Reserve. The majority of the Mbanderu, however, acknowledged Hiatuwao as their chief, despite the fact that he was domiciled in Botswana.

Although the new colours and the flag did not initially play an important role, the older Mbanderu began using them. When Hiatuwao was buried at Okeseta (also known as Gunichas) in 1947, there were only a few younger people wearing red bands around their arms or hats, and these were taken away by the older Mbanderu present. From then on, only the new colours were worn. The Mbanderu had not as such broken with the Herero, but they had indicated quite clearly that they intended going their own way.[134]

According to the Administrator, there was some tension among the Herero and Mbanderu in especially the Aminuis Reserve in 1939, when the *Truppen-*

The tombstone for Munjuku Nguvauva I and Hiatuwao on the farm Okeseta

spieler allegedly attempted to undermine the authority of Chief Hosea Kutako. They boycotted the elections of the Reserve Board established to assist the Welfare Officer and Chief Kutako, and the elections could not proceed. The Administration decided to remove four persons whom they considered to be the ringleaders from the Reserve. This decision resulted in a march by about 110 persons on the offices of the Welfare Officer, the persons stating that they would leave the reserve together with the deportees if the order was carried out. A short while later, three of the deportees arrived at Gobabis with 20 supporters, and the Administration responded by dispatching a 24-member police patrol to the town. The patrol also undertook an extensive tour of the reserve; the alleged ringleaders were deported to other parts of the country and their supporters appeared in court.[135]

Physical and Social Infrastructure between the World Wars

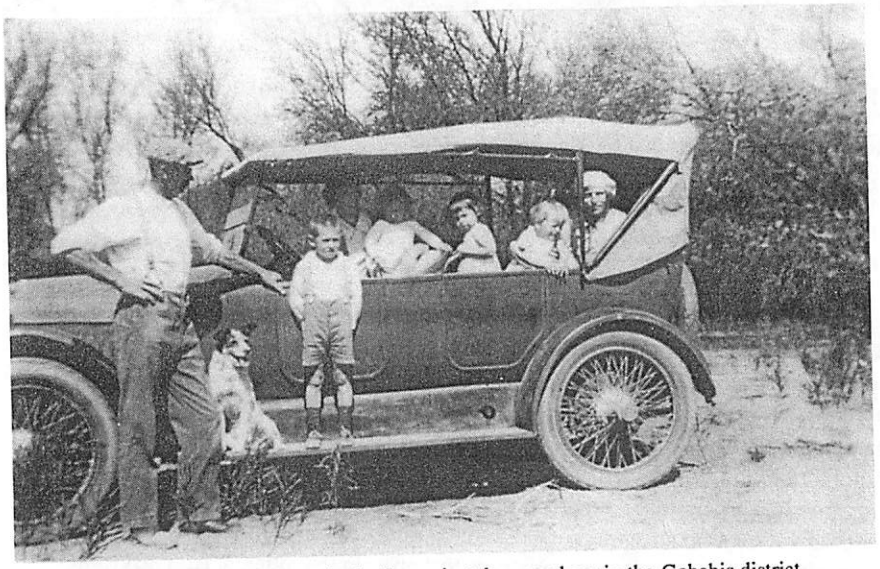
Communication

During the first years of South African occupation, the Gobabis district remained as cut off from the rest of the country as it had been during the German period. The telephone line received little attention initially and was prone to "such faults as occurred ... due to damage and interference by transport wagons" (i.e. waggon-drivers hitting their whips into the wires and then pulling down the line in an effort to get them untangled). It was only in 1927 that the Department of Posts and Telegraphs erected 19 km of new trunk route and 79 km of wire along the new railway extension from Ondekaremba to Seeis for the Railways. A new trunk route between Seeis and Witvlei was constructed the next year, and the final section of the new line to Gobabis was completed in 1929. After quite some time, telephone services to the outlying areas were introduced; in 1937, for example, public call office facilities were extended to the police post at Pretorius on the Nossob River, about 140 km south of Gobabis. This facility was provided by the construction of 74 km of new route as an extension from an existing party line.[136]

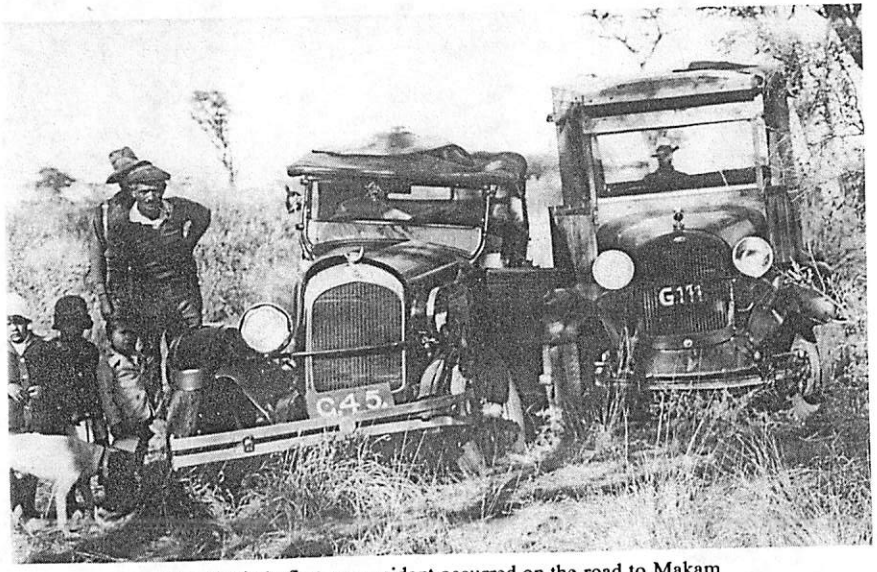
Communication by mail did not improve initially either - in 1919, there was a postal service by Army once a month via Seeis, Omitara and Witvlei. Dissatisfaction of the residents of the Gobabis district with this sorry state of affairs led to the district's boasting the only private postal service in the territory when, in 1920, a farmer in the Sandveld entered into a contract with the postal administration under which he delivered mail by car from his farm to other outlying farms in the Sandveld (which is why it become known as the Sandveld Post). The postal facilities at Gobabis, reopened in September 1915 as a postal agency, were again elevated to the status of a post office only in 1920. Gradually, postal agencies were also established in smaller centres (e.g. Naosanabis - 1924-1937, Omitara - from 1919, Steinhausen - 1927-1942, Witvlei - 1916-1949), in the reserves (Epukiro - 1924-1941), and on various farms in the district (such as Damara - 1922-1929, Okamukaru - 1929-1931, Okasewa - 1921-1935, Otjivero - 1921-1930). When inland airmail between the country's various larger centres was introduced in the early thirties, however, Gobabis was not included.[137]

Transport

The first privately-owned car in Gobabis was the Vauxhall in which General Louis Botha drove into Windhoek for the town's capitulation. This vehicle was sold to a car dealer in Windhoek and then purchased in partnership by the Rhenish missionary in Gobabis, the Rev. Irle, and Willi Roesener. Since

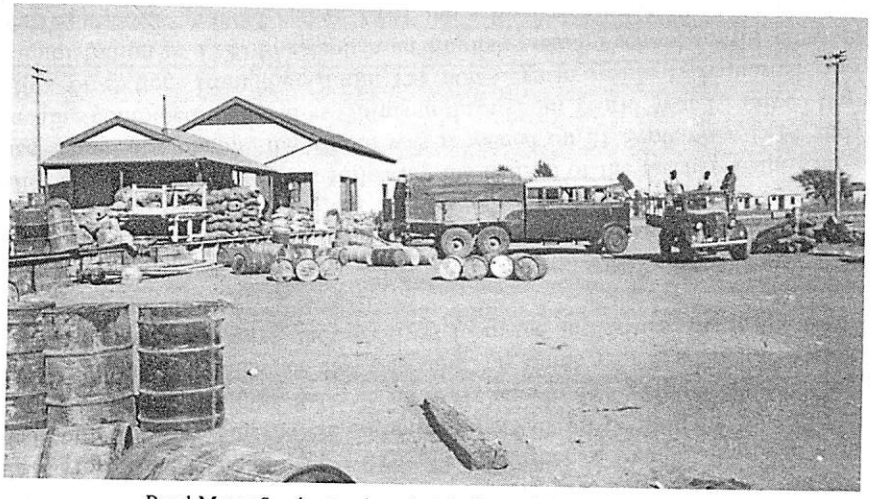


Willi Roesener and family in the first privately-owned car in the Gobabis district



The district's first car accident occurred on the road to Makam

Irle could not drive, he eventually sold his share in the vehicle to Roesener, who was regularly awarded contracts by the magistrate to transport goods to Windhoek and elsewhere.[138] The situation gradually improved, however. A road motor service between Witvlei and Gobabis was introduced in 1929. The boom in the country's butter industry also ensured progress in the reserves' road networks; in 1937, for example, 112 km of new road were constructed in the Aminuis Reserve to facilitate the transport of cream from the outlying parts of the Reserve.[139]



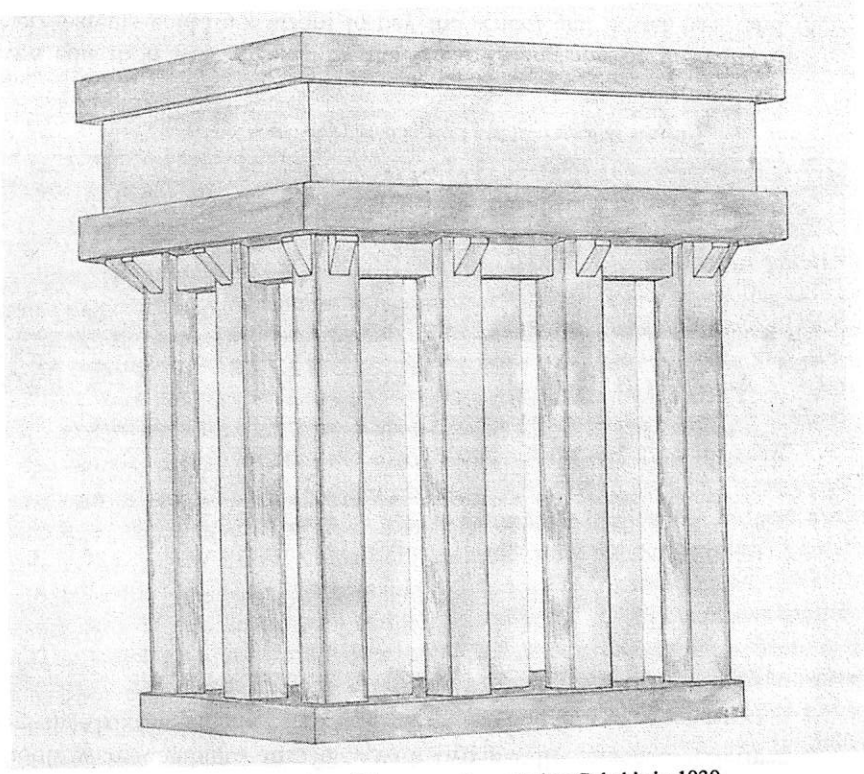
Road Motor Service truck parked in front of the Gobabis station

A long-cherished dream came true for the district in 1930, when the railway line between Windhoek and Gobabis was officially opened on 30 November, the first train having arrived at the town on 6 November already. The first section of the line (Windhoek to Kapps Farm) had already been opened on 15 May 1924, and it was on that occasion that the Administrator, G.R. Hofmeyr, indicated that it was but part of an even greater dream, namely a railway line all the way to the then Rhodesia. In 1930 the Union Government, together with the Rhodesian Government and the SWA Administration, instructed Jeffares to carry out a survey of the proposed line, and the proposal submitted in 1931 provided for a line running east from Gobabis to Rakops, where it would fork, with one spur going northward to Matetse near Wankie and the other going south-east to Plumtree. Nothing came of this dream, however. In the late 1930s, water-and-air cooled trucks were introduced on the line for the conveyance of cream.[140]

The first aeroplane landed at Gobabis in 1930.[141]

Water Resources

It was water, however, that had always been the main obstacle to settlement in the Gobabis district. In 1914, just before the outbreak of World War I, there were a mere 154 wells, 1 fountain, 3 dams and not a single borehole in the entire district,[142] and if the rate of settlement that had commenced after 1915 was to be maintained, the provision of water would have to enjoy priority. Accordingly, the Department of Works stationed three drilling machines in the district towards the end of 1921 and very successful results were obtained during 1922, although it was reported in 1925 that particular problems were being experienced to the south and west of the Black Nossob on account of the sand overburden, which made the identification of suitable drilling sites difficult. These problems were overcome in 1926, when 87% of the boreholes drilled in the block reserved for settlers from the Union yielded water.[143] The settlement of the Angola settlers in the district in all probability speeded up boring operations; the statistics for the years 1928



Architect's drawing of the reservoir erected at Gobabis in 1939

and 1929 clearly show the preference given to the Angola settlers - of the 640 boreholes drilled countrywide by the Department of Works during those two years, 289 were on Crown Land, 206 for Angola settlers (paid for by the Union government), 106 for private farmers and the railway administration, and 39 for other government departments. In 1936, drilling operations by the Department were confined to the Angola Settlement and Native Affairs. Since the Gobabis district had received the greatest contingent of settlers, it probably also qualified for a significant proportion of these boreholes.[144]

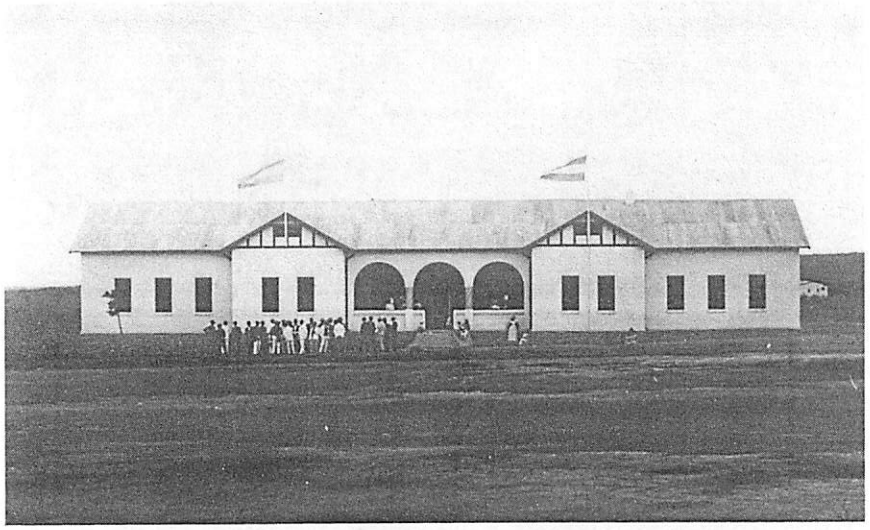
In September 1930, shortly after the completion of the railway line to Windhoek, Gobabis was faced with a severe water shortage. A number of boreholes were drilled in November that year to provide water to government buildings. In 1935, the water supply to the location was planned. To improve the water supply to government properties in Gobabis, the Department of Works in 1939 sank an additional borehole and erected an elevated reinforced concrete reservoir with a capacity of 20 000 gallons and a pumping plant on the site on which the fort had stood. The school, school hostels, government offices (completed in 1938) and residences of officials were connected to this supply.[145]

The development of water resources in the Epukiro Reserve generally comprised the construction and enlarging of dams. 1928, however, also saw the drilling of three boreholes in the Reserve; the first two were dry, but the third yielded 15 100 gallons per day. Three further boreholes, equipped with windmills and reservoirs, were completed in 1930. A drilling machine began operating in the Aminuis Reserve in 1931, and in 1932 a borehole yielding 31 680 gallons of water per day was sunk. A number of residents also sank wells; the only assistance they received from the authorities was in the form of blasting material.[146]

Education

After a brief break in lessons following the call-up of the teacher at the German school at Gobabis, the school was reopened on 21 September 1914 and teaching continued under Miss Ohlmann throughout World War I. Given the influx of settlers from the Union, the non-German residents requested the Administration in 1920 to establish an English-medium school for 14 pupils; this request was granted and in 1921 the school was established in the old German fort, with Izak le Roux as the first teacher. When the residents further requested that a new hostel be built for these children because the hostel section of the fort was in a dilapidated state, the Administration responded by ordering the German school (which had 23 pupils at the time)

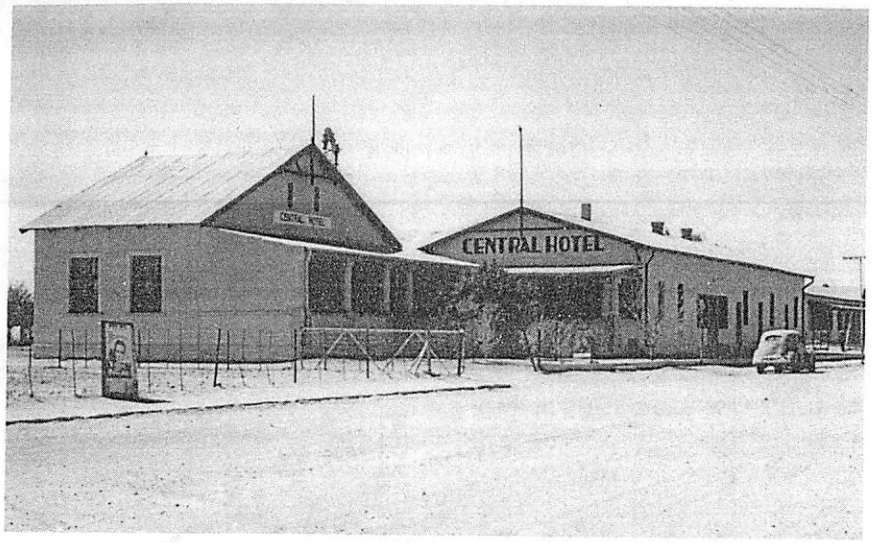
to vacate its premises to make way for such a hostel. The Schulverein refused: "We shall not leave our building, except if forced by the police, and this can hardly be lawfully done!" The Administration then offered them the old fort as alternative accommodation. This offer was not acceptable either, and left the town with a stalemate that was eventually resolved when the two schools were combined in 1922, with two parallel branches (German and English/Afrikaans).[147]



The school hostel completed in 1914 and later used as school

Even education was affected by the Great Depression of the early 1930s. Many parents could not afford to pay the school and hostel fees, and their children were simply sent back home with them. Very soon, however, there were so few pupils left in the school that the authorities were forced to make a concession in that farmers were permitted to pay the fees in stock. All maintenance work at the school and hostel had to be performed by the pupils, since there was simply no money to pay artisans.[148]

The old fort served as school and hostel until 1934, when it collapsed on account of that year's strong rains, and the hall of the Central Hotel had to be used as classroom for the time being. A new four-classroom school was completed at Gobabis in 1935 at a cost of £2 154, while construction of the new boys' hostel, which began during that year, was completed in 1936. A Domestic Science Centre was established at the school in 1937, while three further classrooms, a large manual training centre, a cloakroom and a staff



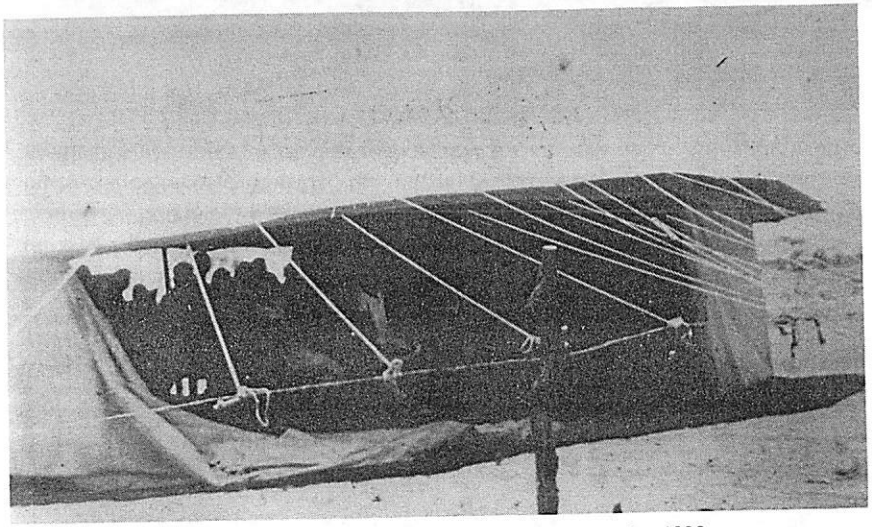
The Central Hotel at Gobabis

room were added in 1938/39. In 1939, a borehole was also sunk for the hostel garden, where vegetables were grown for the hostel.[149]

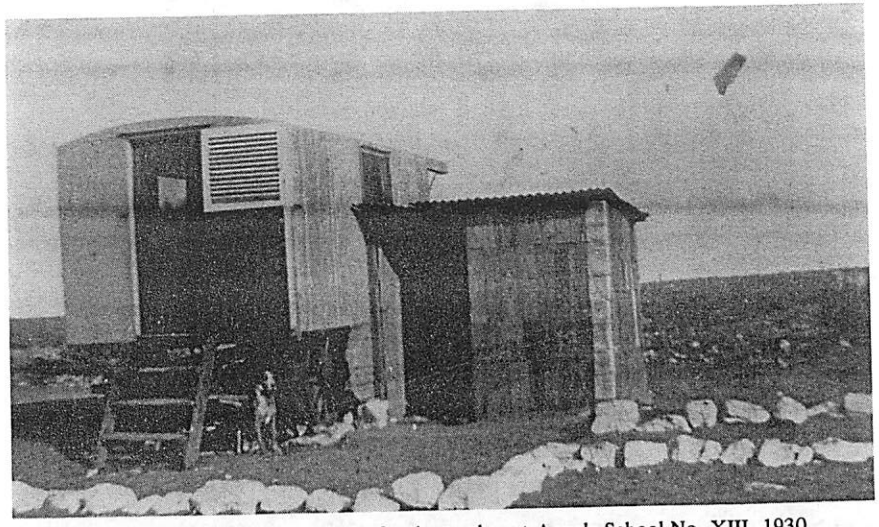
A secondary school was established at the town in 1937. As there was no school building at that stage, three classrooms were rented in the Central Hotel and the building of the Roman Catholic Church. H.H. Broodryk was appointed first principal of the combined primary and secondary school, which had 141 pupils and seven teachers in its first year.[150]

Of the six itinerant schools initially established for the children of the Angola settlers near Outjo, four (known simply as Nos. I, II, III and VI in official publications), had been moved to the Gobabis district by May 1929. By and large, these schools comprised a number of tents to serve as classrooms and accommodation for the children during the week, and a caravan in which the teacher lived. Teaching at a fifth school (No. VII) commenced at the beginning of 1930, and several more were introduced after that. Once the majority of the settlers had established themselves on their allocated farms, the Administration commenced selecting sites at which permanent facilities should be provided. A number of such sites were identified in the Gobabis district.[151]

In 1932, there were only three mission schools (all State-subsidized) for natives in the entire district, namely two in the Epukiro Reserve (one Roman



School tent, Angola School No. XIII, Gobabis district, 1930



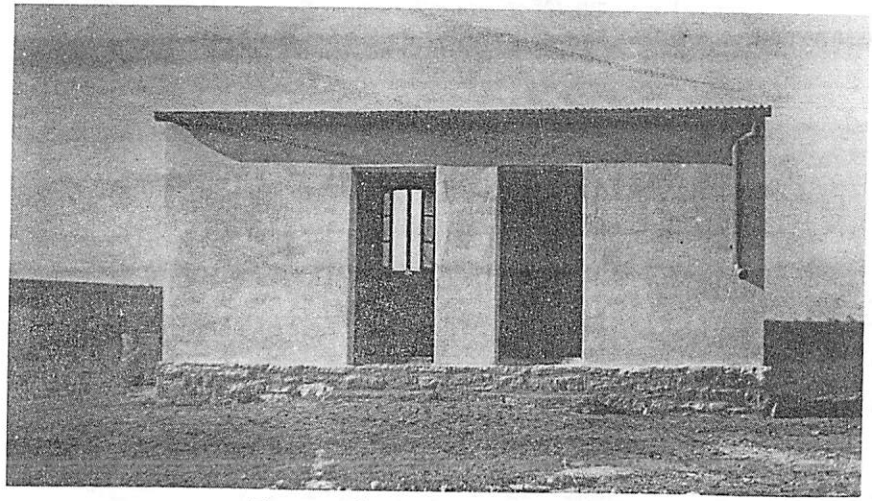
Caravan used as accommodation for the teacher at Angola School No. XIII, 1930
(note the kitchen constructed from petroleum crates)

Catholic, with 44 pupils and 2 teachers, and one Rhenish, with 63 pupils and 1 teacher) and one at Gobabis (Rhenish, with 26 pupils and 1 teacher). Attendance at the school in Gobabis rose to 48 pupils in 1933, and two teachers were employed. In the Epukiro Reserve, on the other hand, the

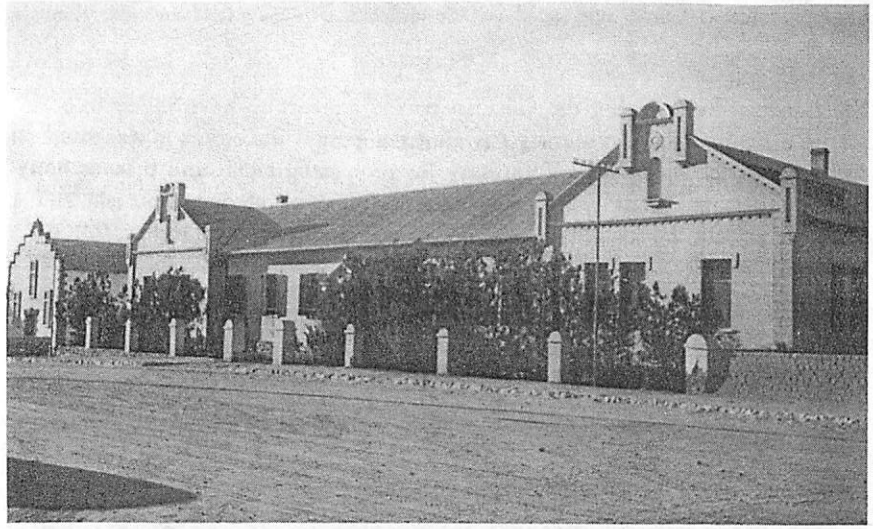
figure dropped to a total of 64 pupils for both schools. As a result, the Roman Catholic school did not open in 1934. The Aminuis Reserve had neither a mission nor a government school, and this was one of the issues discussed when a Herero delegation led by Hosea Kutako visited the Administrator in June 1933. A school was established in 1935. Situated on the private farm Rietquelle on the north side of the Aminuis salt pan, which had been purchased from tribal funds in 1934, it opened in October with three classrooms and 100 pupils, many of whom were accommodated in special huts built by the residents themselves. The staff consisted of the principal, Dr J.E. Fischer (who also happened to be a medical doctor), a Herero assistant appointed for mother-tongue tuition, and two Herero matrons to look after the children living at the school. In 1939, the accommodation for pupils was upgraded in that a five-room girls' hostel and a six-room boys' hostel were erected, while two three-room houses were built for the teachers.[152]

Health

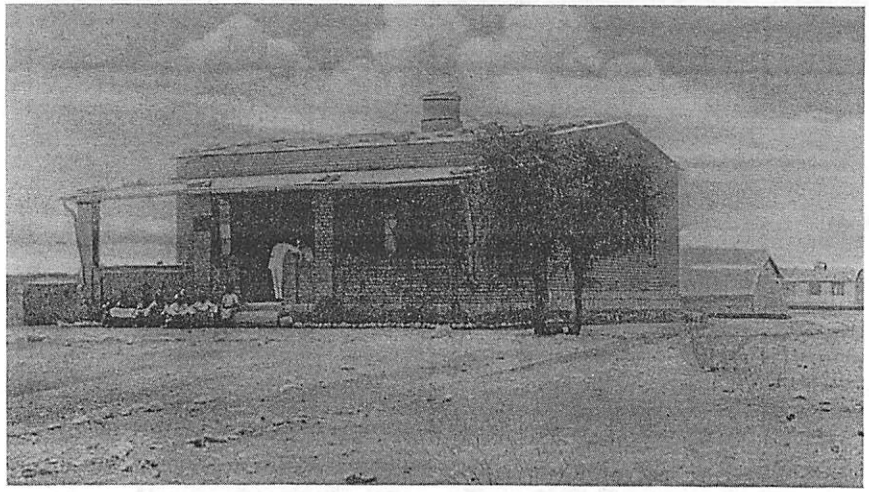
The authorities erected a most rudimentary native hospital at Gobabis in 1917, but a grant of land was made to the Roman Catholic mission in 1922 for the erection of a native hospital at the town. Since Gobabis had no local authority until 1934, it did not qualify for a state-owned hospital or state aid for a hospital, and the Roman Catholic mission hospital therefore treated both Blacks and Whites. Until at least 1931, the Benedictus hospital appears to have been a joint facility, but from the mid-1930s onwards, the Administrator



The new native hospital at Gobabis, 1917



The Benedictus Hospital in Gobabis



The *Lazarett* (field hospital) at Gobabis

in his annual report placed special emphasis on the fact that the native hospital was "quite distinct from the European". It was not only in the field of hospitals, however, that the district was extremely poorly served - until the outbreak of World War II, the entire district had at its disposal only one medical practitioner, who was responsible for an area of 13 200 square miles,

while a trained nurse was sent to the district in 1929 to treat the Angola settlers.[153]

The *Lazarett* built during the German period appears to have fallen into disuse as a medical facility during the German period already. It was used as residence of the local State Veterinary Surgeon until 1953, and then as housing for municipal employees. The building was renovated in the early 1970s to accommodate the local museum, which was established in 1974.[154]

Times of Change after World War II

During World War II, on 1 January 1944, Gobabis was granted municipal status, and A.P. Olivier was appointed first mayor; the mayoral chain, however, was only introduced on 17 July 1965.[155]

On the surface, very little changed in the district during the initial post-war years, although the Gobabis district did see a renewed influx of settlers when considerable areas of Crown Land were subdivided into farms that were allocated mainly to white ex-soldiers who had served in the war.[156] The ascent to power of the National Party in South Africa in 1948 and the transfer of all control over the territory's "native affairs" to the Parliament of the Union of South Africa one year later would, however, have far-reaching long-term consequences not only for the district, but for Namibia as a whole.

The Rift between the Herero and Mbanderu Widens

Munjuku Nguvauva II

Serious differences between the Herero and Mbanderu emerged in March 1960, when the Herero elected Clemens Kapuuo as Secretary and successor to Hosea Kutako without consulting the Mbanderu. When the Mbanderu were told at a meeting that the throne of Maharero was none of their business and that they should rather concern themselves with their own affairs, they resolved to call Munjuku Nguvauva II, the son of Keharanjo who had left the country together with Hiatuwao in 1904, and appoint him as the paramount chief of the Mbanderu. Munjuku arrived in Namibia after extensive negotiations on 1 September 1960 and was formally appointed chief at Omawe zonyanda (Pos 3) on 10 October 1960. On 16 December 1960, the forefathers confirmed him as paramount chief of the Mbanderu people at the Holy Fire (*okuruwo*) at Undjiripumua, Aminuis. As

there was no headman in the Epukiro Reserve at the time, the authorities offered this post to Munjuku. He was appointed headman on 5 August 1961, when Gerson Hoveka (who had succeeded Nikanor Hoveka) and a second candidate failed to turn up. Gerson Hoveka was appointed second headman some time thereafter, and it was agreed that Munjuku should remain at Omawe zonyanda, while Hoveka would move to Pos 13; this decision was never carried out.

The political break between the two Otjiherero-speaking peoples also began to manifest itself in the domain of religion. In 1955 already, the Herero, dissatisfied with the Rhenish Mission, had established their own church, the Oruwano, and many Mbanderu had become members. The Mbanderu's political sentiments, however, were held against them, and when this culminated in overt discrimination against them in the Oruwano, they established the Church of Africa in 1964. Although this church enjoyed significant support among the Mbanderu, Gerson Hoveka and his people never joined it.[157]

The Odendaal Plan

On 11 September 1962, the South African State President appointed the Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs (chaired by F.H. Odendaal, it became known as the Odendaal Commission) "to enquire thoroughly into further promoting the material and moral welfare and the social progress of the inhabitants of South West Africa, and more particularly its non-White inhabitants".[158] The recommendations of this commission, published in 1964, were to have far-reaching implications in all spheres of life in Namibia, not only as regards land ownership and settlement patterns, but also in the fields of physical and social infrastructures, administration and economic progress.

As regards landed property in the Gobabis district, the Commission's recommendations were to have the greatest impact on the native reserves. Two of the existing reserves in the district, Epukiro and the Eastern Native Reserve, were to be joined to the Otjituuo and Waterberg East Reserves to form a homeland for the Herero. To this homeland would be added 19 farms in the Rietfontein Block occupied by Whites (126 181 ha), surveyed government land in the Rietfontein Block (459 976 ha) and unsurveyed government land in the Gobabis and Grootfontein districts (1 916 000 ha), bringing the total surface area of the proposed homeland to 5 899 680 ha. The third existing reserve in the district, Aminuis (555 754 ha), would become government land, while the area known as the Corridor (155 400 ha) was to be assigned to the Tswana as a homeland to be known as Tswanaland.[159]

The recommendations of the Odendaal Commission were implemented by various sets of legislation over the years; although the eventual legalized realities did in some regards differ from the initial proposal, implementation of the recommendations for the Gobabis district generally followed the Odendaal Plan. The main exception was that the Aminuis Reserve was not proclaimed government land, but became Hereroland East, Area 2, while the Corridor intended for the Tswana became Hereroland East, Area 3.[160]

It was decided by the authorities that all Mbanderu inside the country and those returning from Botswana should be settled in the Rietfontein area. Although Munjuku did not reject this decision, he refused to move away from Epukiro, since that was the area in which he had been appointed chief. The people in the Aminuis area, too, were very reluctant to move, since the Rietfontein Block was inferior to their current abode in many regards. It was to be August 1968 before the first Mbanderu, Claudius Heuva and Festus Toromba, actually moved; they were followed two years later by a larger group, among them Zacharias Nguvauva, Luther Nguvauva and Edward Ndjoze. On account of the increasing population in the Rietfontein area, the residents requested that a headman be appointed for them. Peter Nguvauva turned down the offer, and Eliphas Tjingaete was eventually appointed in 1972.[161]

Representative Authorities

Whereas the Odendaal Plan and the Self-Government for Native Nations in South West Africa Act of 1968 had ultimately envisaged the establishment of homelands for the country's various native peoples, the Representative Authorities Proclamation (AG 8 of 1980) broke the territory's population up into ethnic fragments (the geographical reserves remaining intact, though), and each representative authority would be responsible for its "defined matters". These defined matters were limited almost exclusively to cultural and social matters; major economic and political responsibility remained vested in the central authority, of which the Administrator-General was the head. Although the various representative authorities were given certain legislative powers under the Proclamation, this meant very little, since the Administrator-General had the power to "refer it back to the legislative authority for further consideration in the light of such information or advice as may be given", i.e. to reject it.[162] Finance, too, would become a problem in that each population group received only that portion of personal income tax paid by the members of its defined population group, while allocations from the Central Revenue Fund were open to political abuse.

The situation brought about by this new dispensation created considerable problems for the Mbanderu. Formerly, they had been living in a designated

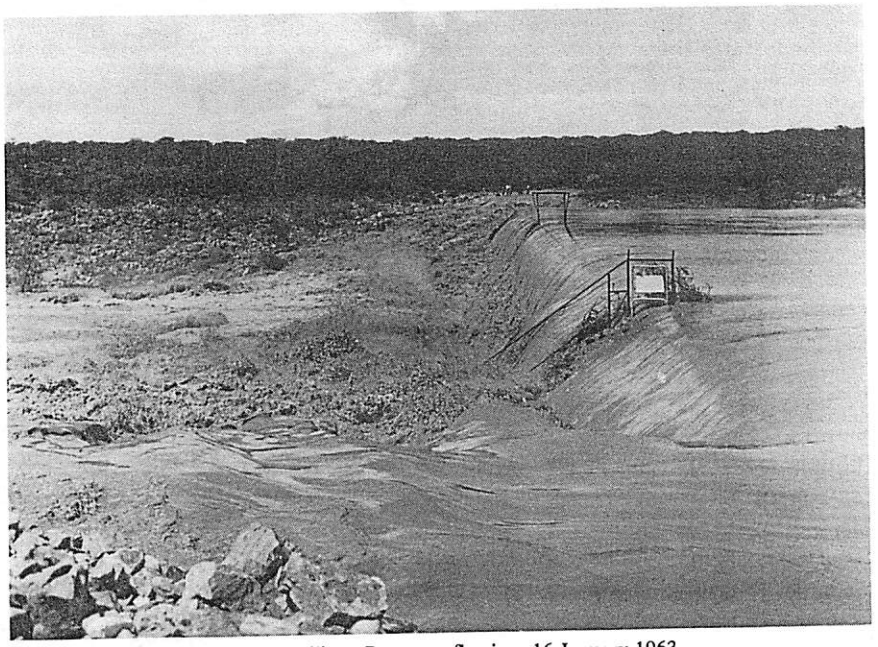
area and their chief, Munjuku, was recognized as such by the authorities, though only under the title of headman of the reserve. AG 8, however, grouped the Mbanderu under the Herero Administration, and the existing rift between Herero and Mbanderu, which now also involved party politics, took on new proportions. The Herero, who had persistently refused to acknowledge the Mbanderu as a separate people, claimed that Munjuku was merely a headman. The Mbanderu rejected this claim outright and in turn accused the Herero of abusing their power in the Herero Legislative Assembly and neglecting the Mbanderu's interests, and even appealed to the Administrator-General and the South African government for recognition as a separate ethnic group - to no avail. A meeting between a Mbanderu delegation and the Administrator-General on 4 February 1985, during which the Mbanderu wished to request the assistance they claimed they were being denied by the Herero Administration, ended in chaos, and the Mbanderu were left, so to speak, "out in the cold".[163]

Gobabis was the seat of the Tswana Representative Authority; their administrative complex at the town was officially opened on 20 October 1988.[164]

Infrastructural Development after World War II

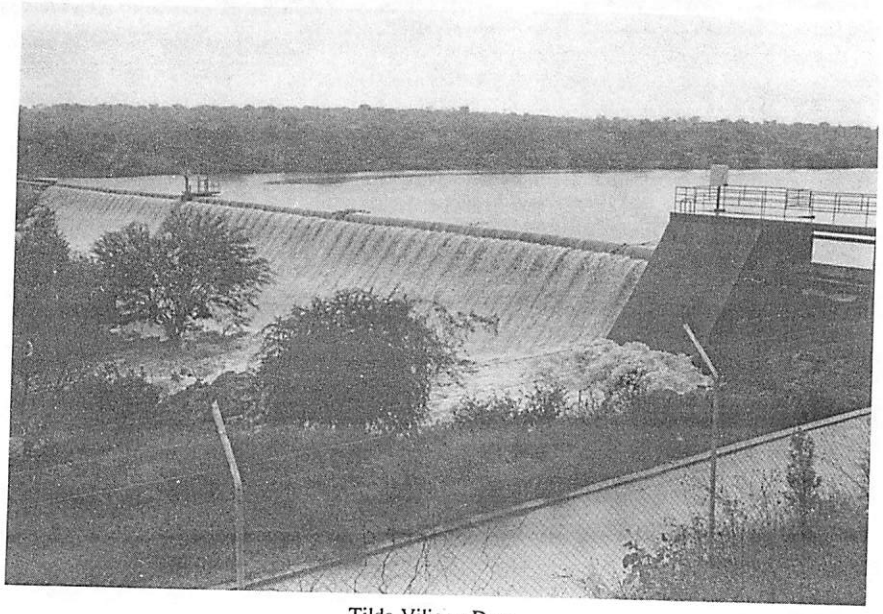
Water Resources

In 1954, the Gobabis Municipality requested the SWA Administration to build a dam in the Black Nossob River as the municipal boreholes, the town's sole source of water, could no longer supply the needs of Gobabis. In response to this request, the Daan Viljoen Dam was built near the town and officially opened by the Administrator on 18 August 1956. Two years later it was raised to increase its capacity to the current 400 000 m^3. This was only a short-term solution to the problem, and in 1964 the Administration built the Tilda Viljoen Dam, a pumped storage dam with a capacity of 1,25 million m^3. Since the Tilda Viljoen Dam has no natural source of inflow, water is transferred into it from the Daan Viljoen Dam on account of its better basin characteristics.[165]

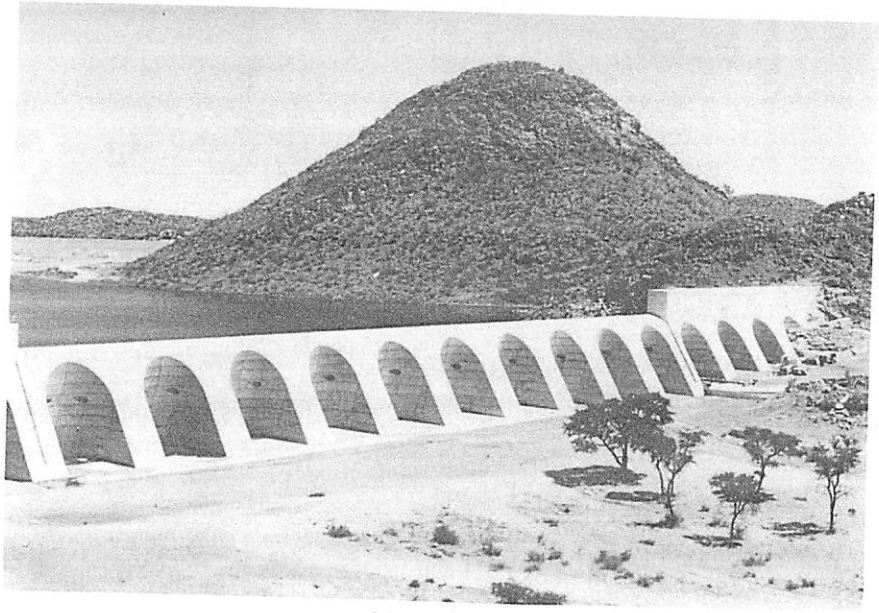


The Daan Viljoen Dam overflowing, 16 January 1963

The establishment of new industries at Gobabis (such as the meat processing plant) and the development of the town itself necessitated the construction of a new dam to ensure that there was sufficient water. Building on the Otjivero



Tilda Viljoen Dam

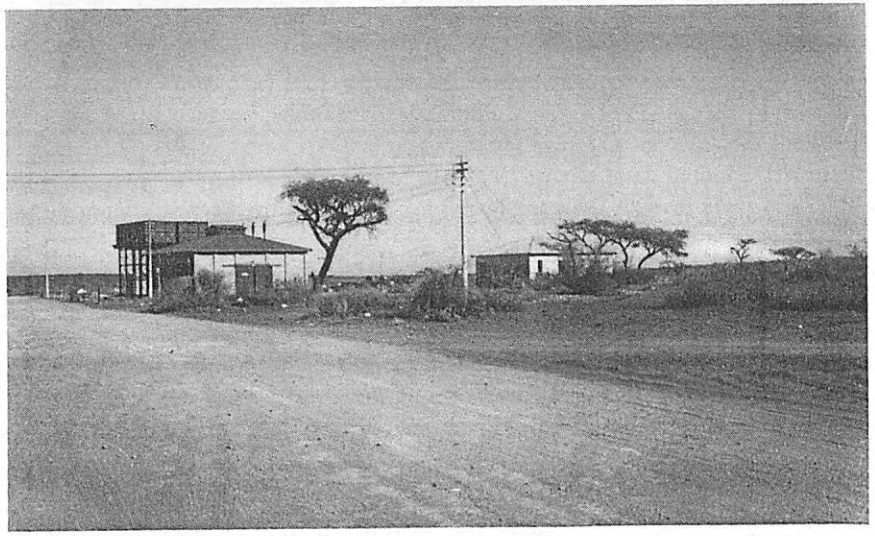


Otjivero Dam

Dam complex, which comprises a silt dam (7,8 million m^3) and the main dam (9,8 million m^3), began in 1981 and was completed in October 1984. The 93-km pipeline to Gobabis was already completed in 1983, while work on the water purification plant, a 9 000-m^3 bulk storage reservoir and a new regional office complex at Gobabis was concluded in 1985. On 20 November 1984, the first water was transferred to the main dam from the silt dam, and the scheme, which ultimately cost R21,5 million, was officially opened on 16 May 1986. The dam overflowed for the first time on 25 February 1987.[166]

Electricity Supply

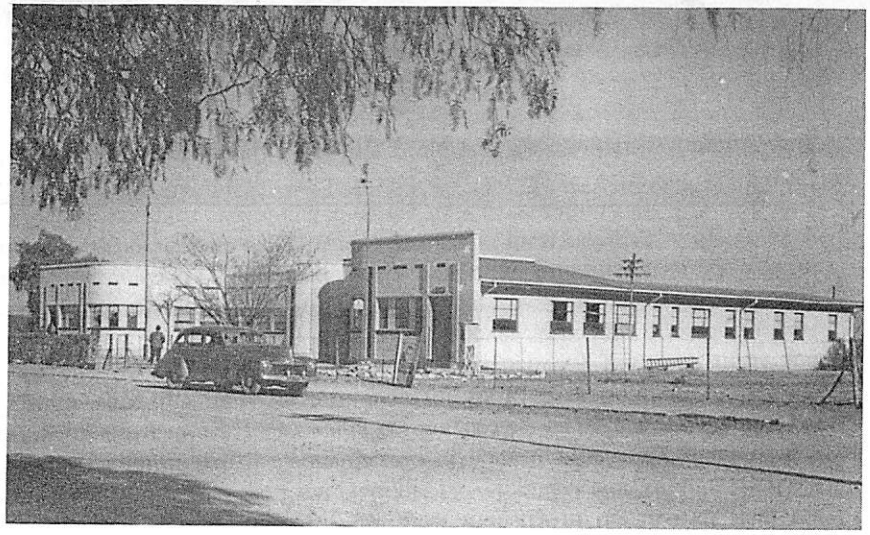
The cornerstone of the new power station at the town was laid on 18 August 1956. In 1972, the town's power-supply network was modernized. As part of the country-wide trend towards centralized power supply, a 180-km power line of 66 000 V to Gobabis was constructed in 1977. When the town was connected to the SWAWEK network on 13 December, the old power station was closed down.[167]



The power station at Gobabis

Communication

1954 saw considerable activity in the field of posts and telecommunications in Gobabis. The town's new post office was officially opened in August that year, and towards the end of the year *Die Suidwes-Afrikaner* reported that the



Complex housing the post office, police station and magistrate

renewal of the telephone cable system in Gobabis had been completed. Twenty years were to pass before the town's first automatic exchange was taken into use in 1974. This automatic exchange, however, was intended only for the town of Gobabis itself, while calls to farms in the Gobabis area were still handled manually in 1995. In May 1995, during the opening of the Teleshop in Gobabis, Telecom Namibia announced that it would concentrate on the automation of farm lines in the district as from October, while tenders for the Windhoek-Gobabis-Botswana link were to be called during the second half of the year.[168]

It was an initial coincidence followed by initiative on the part of the municipality that made Gobabis become one of the first towns after Windhoek to receive television. A radio technician had noticed that he could receive FM radio at a surveyor's beacon some 18 km from Gobabis. A temporary 18-metre mast was erected next to the FM tower in August 1982, but the reception was not as good as had been hoped. As the municipality could not, under the municipal ordinance, undertake an endeavour such as the provision of television services itself, a mayoral television fund was launched on 20 August 1982. The funds required were collected within three weeks, and a 36-metre mast with 8 receiving and 16 broadcasting antennas was completed at a cost of a mere R40 000 (which included all the equipment required). On 12 February 1983, the then SWABC officially commenced television broadcasts to the town.[169]

Transport

The first tarred road in Gobabis was completed in 1960, and the town's network of tarred roads was steadily extended during the years to follow; the first traffic light was only installed in the early 1970s.[170] Road construction in the district itself was also speeded up, especially after the establishment of the Roads Depot at Gobabis in 1964/65. By 1986, the district had 3 321 km of proclaimed roads, of which 108 km was tarred, while it was estimated that there were 4 162 vehicles (which included trailers) in the district.[171]

Construction of the Trans-Kalahari Highway from Gobabis through Botswana to Johannesburg by Construction Unit 3 under chief engineer Moussad Fani commenced in November 1991. The first 55 kilometres of the 93,5-km section from Gobabis to the Botswana border were opened in December 1994, while the remaining 38 km were expected to be completed by June 1995. On completion, the highway will not only reduce the distance to Johannesburg by road by some 400 km, but will also mean that the ship journey for sea freight can be reduced by six days, since cargo can be unshipped at Walvis Bay instead of Durban. This represents a significant savings as regards both time and money, and it is therefore expected that the volume of traffic through Gobabis will increase by about 300 vehicles per day, thus making the project viable. The Gobabis district stands to benefit considerably from this new development, especially since the highway will offer tourists another route along which to enter or leave Namibia.[172]

On 7 September 1960, a diesel locomotive was used on the Windhoek-Gobabis line for the first time. Almost 25 years later, in 1984, the dream of a cross-border rail link from Gobabis was revived - albeit it briefly - when a number of civil and marine engineers from the United Kingdom commenced a feasibility study for a high-standard rail track system running from Walvis Bay to Serowe in Botswana at the request of the Botswana Ministry of Mining Resources.[173]

In 1980, the two compacted gravel runways at the Gobabis aerodrome 5 km south of the town were completed at a cost of R1 million. Since there is no scheduled air service to the town, the aerodrome is used only by private and charter aircraft.[174]

Fire Brigade

The first fire station at Gobabis was completed in the early 1970s, and a second-hand fire engine was acquired from a fire-fighting company in South Africa, while a smaller fire engine was obtained for the townships. This

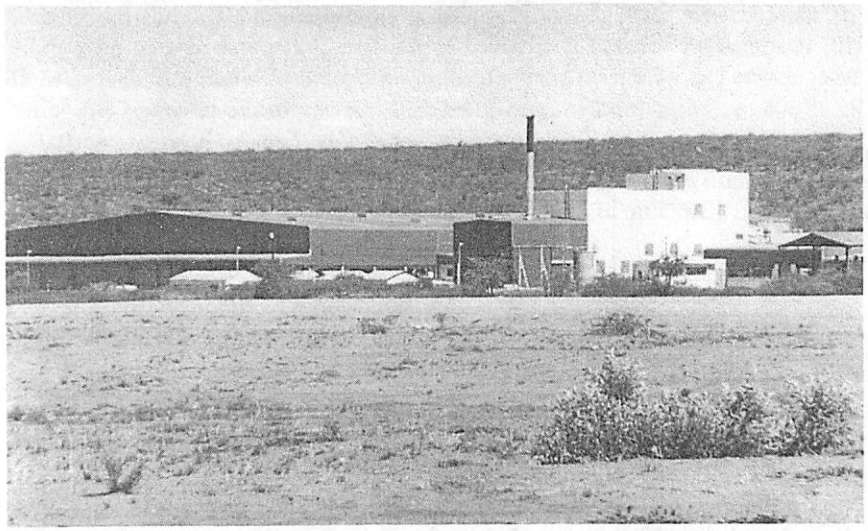
service was indeed necessary, since a total of 140 fires and some 30 false alarms were dealt with during the first ten years of the station's existence. Due to a lack of personnel, pupils at the Wennie du Plessis Secondary School were used as voluntary firemen for a considerable number of years. In 1984, for example, seven of the town's nine firemen were schoolboys.[175]

Meat and Dairy Industry

The Gobabis district was not spared the depredations of nature, with drought and stock diseases taking a heavy toll. During 1945, some 70 per cent of all sheep in the district died as a consequence of the prevailing drought. Foot-and-mouth disease was identified on a farm in the district on 13 July 1961, and the disease soon spread through the country. A cordon fence of 2 720 km was erected by members of farmers' associations and farm workers, restrictions on the marketing and movement of animals were imposed and the central and northern districts were placed under quarantine for almost two years. Emergency slaughter of livestock could only be done at local abattoirs until marketing to South Africa recommenced during March 1962. An out-break of anthrax during mid-February 1971 resulted in another, though brief break in stock marketing.[176]

Despite these setbacks, agriculture - especially stock farming - progressed. The Gobabis Farmers' Association, with A. Pretorius as first chairman, was founded in 1943.[177] In 1969, the Administration established the Sandveld Experimental Farm on the farm Dipcadi north-east of Gobabis. Under the first manager, J.B.C. van der Vyfer, grazing experiments and cattle breeding experiments with Afrikaner and Simmentaler breeds in a criss-cross programme were begun, and in 1986, a ten-year stocking density experiment with Sanga cattle and Afrikaner-Simmentaler cross-breeds commenced.[178]

There were such high hopes for the meat industry in the district (and the country as a whole) that the First National Development Corporation (FNDC) invested R18 million in the construction of a meat processing plant with a capacity of 400 cattle per day - the second largest manufacturing facility in the country and the most modern plant of its kind in Southern Africa on completion - in Gobabis. The plant, situated between the town itself and Epako, was completed in early 1983, but it never went into operation (apart from trial slaughterings in August 1984), on account of which it soon acquired the nickname "Blue Elephant". When the Administration for Whites founded a corporation (today Meatco) to run the meat industry in the country in 1985, the complex was donated to the new corporation, and it was hoped that the situation would change. It did not, however. Rather, the Board decided that the corporation's viability could only be ensured by running only



The meat processing plant ("Blue Elephant") at Gobabis

two plants (Windhoek and Okahandja), while the plant at Otavi would be maintained for emergency slaughterings. The Gobabis plant would remain closed permanently. Naturally, this caused considerable dissatisfaction among the residents of the region, since they saw their hopes of increased development in the district dashed. Also, the Gobabis municipality had invested R400 000 in the construction of a railway branch line to the plant, and had paid for the construction of a workers' hostel; this expenditure was deemed irretrievable and the Municipality immediately applied to the Supreme Court in Windhoek in an effort to have the Board's decision reversed. The application was turned down, and an appeal was lodged in the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein. This was referred back to the Supreme Court in Windhoek for judgement, and again turned down. Eventually, the Municipality and the corporation entered into negotiations to reach an out-of-court settlement, and the case was withdrawn in 1989.[179]

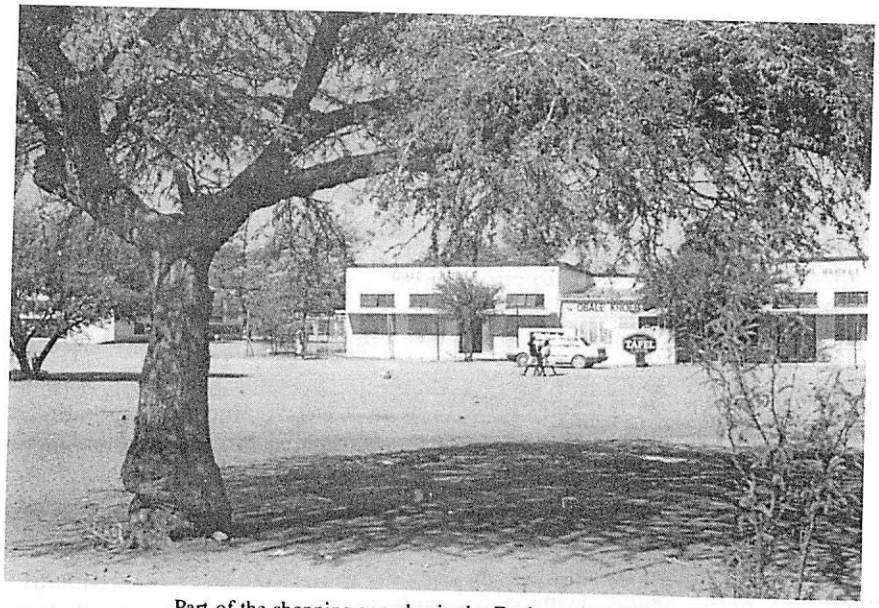
The plant was indeed never opened for the purpose for which it had been built. In 1990, an option was granted in favour of a French car manufacturer, Citroen, who was interested in purchasing the complex for use as a car assembly plant, but nothing further came of the matter. The building was only occupied for commercial purposes in 1993, when a local entrepreneur converted part of the complex into incubation facilities for ostriches. In 1995 another company, Aro Four Wheel Drive (Pty) Ltd, began assembling 4x4 vehicles in the plant.[180]

For the creamery at Gobabis, the period from about 1970 onwards brought with it a steady decline. Registered in the late 1920s and opened on 6 June 1934, it was one of the country's leading producers of butter and cheese until the 1960s, and also the first powdered milk factory in the territory. Production of butter and cheese continued on a small scale until at least 1984, but when the Dairy Co-operative Ltd owning it began experiencing serious financial difficulties, it was offered for sale by public tender in February 1983. The creamery was closed, and dairy farmers in the district are obliged to supply their milk to Windhoek.[181]

A bonemeal plant with a monthly production of 110 metric tons for distribution throughout the country was established east of the town.

Locations

In line with the policy of separate development, a new township for Blacks, known as Epako (the name by which the Herero knew Gobabis), was developed north-east of the town after World War II; this township was provided with electricity and had its own sewage system. In 1973, there were 2 800 residents accommodated in 450 four-room houses, while a compound, a hostel, business complex, beer hall and bar and an administrative complex were provided. Movies were shown in the community hall twice a week.[182]



Part of the shopping complex in the Epako residential area

Section of the compound in Epako

Sewage

The construction of the new meat processing plant at Gobabis meant that the sewage works built in 1972 was too small to meet the town's total requirements within ten years of its completion, and a new sewage works was built at a cost of R3 million (of which the Gobabis Municipality paid half and the FNDC the other half) during the early eighties. The works covers several hectares and is based entirely on the principle of gravity, with not a single pump, motor or engine required over the entire distance of 7 km. All instrumentation is powered by solar panels. One of the pools towards the end formerly accommodated carp brought in from Hardap Dam to combat algae, and the water flowing from the works ran into a large irrigation scheme which the municipality allocated by public tender.[183]

Education

After the end of World War II, all German state schools and German sections in state schools were closed. The German section of the school in Gobabis did not escape this fate, and the children were from then on taught in English or Afrikaans, even when instruction in German as mother tongue and German sections in schools were reintroduced in 1951.[184]

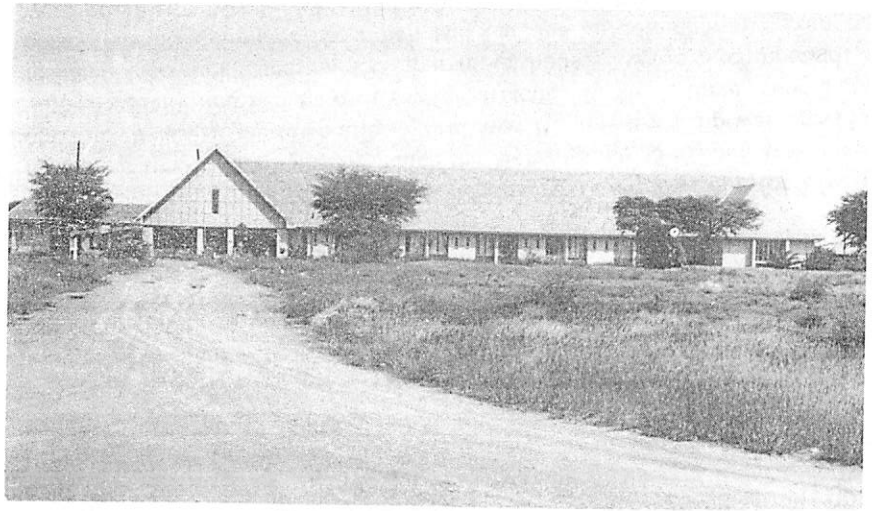
In January 1952 the school was granted high school status, and there were eleven pupils in Std 9, which was phased in during the year. Of the 447

pupils in all, 93 were taught in the secondary section. The next year, the primary and secondary phases were split into two entirely different schools, with J.C. Welman and E.P. Kilian as the principals of the secondary school and primary school, respectively. A new high school building was completed during the second half of 1954 at a cost of £33 000 in 1954. The secondary school was renamed Wennie du Plessis Secondary School on 12 September 1968.[185]

Two schools (a community school and a junior secondary school) and a hostel for 400 children were established in the Epako township, while a primary school was opened in Nossobville. In 1984, these schools had 530, 400 and 200 pupils, respectively.[186]

Health Care

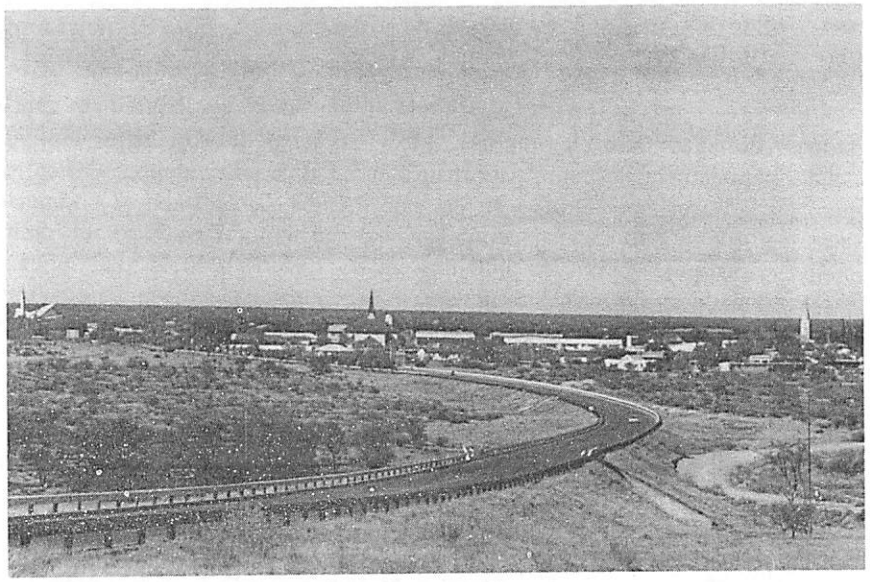
The Benedictus Hospital, which had been the town's sole health care facility for so many years, was closed, and today the building houses Namibia's second-largest home for the aged, Huis Deon Louw, which was established in 1980. A new hospital was built at the town and completed around 1960, while a clinic was established between Epako and Nossobville during the early 1980s. After independence, the hospital was upgraded and enlarged to a modern 150-bed facility at a cost of N$12,4 million and officially opened in 1995, while a privately-owned clinic was under construction during the same year.[187]



The new hospital at Gobabis, 1960

Churches

Following the predominance of the Rhenish and Roman Catholic churches prior to World War II, the post-war period saw a considerable expansion of church activity. The congregation of the Reformed Church, to which the majority of the Angola settlers belonged, was established on the farm Kelen on 7 June 1930 already, but its church was ordained only on 25 August 1951 - the first church building to be ordained in Gobabis after the Great War. The Dutch Reformed Church established its own congregation on 31 November 1939.[188] Today, 12 different denominations are represented at the town, and the view of the town as seen from Nikodemusberg is dominated by a number of church buildings.



View of Gobabis

Sport and Recreation Facilities

Sporting facilities in Gobabis include an 18-hole golf course with a modern club house, while there is also a tennis court in the town. All schools in the town have sports fields, which usually comprise rugby fields, athletics tracks, netball courts and tennis courts. The German community at the town owns a club house that is regularly used for fistball and badminton events. Sports facilities in Epako and Nossobville provided only for soccer, netball and

rugby prior to independence, but a modern sports complex, the Lekgare Complex, was opened in an area between Epako, Gobabis and Nossobville recently. On account of the increasing popularity of equestrian marathons in the country, there are a number of routes around Gobabis that are currently being used.[189]

Preparing for a horse race at Gobabis, 1949

Equestrians on somewhat different mounts spent two days at Gobabis in 1985. On 29 May, seven men and ten camels arrived at the town en route from Lobatsi to Swakopmund. The group had left Lobatsi 29 days earlier and was making a film that was to be sold to raise funds for nature conservation. They eventually arrived at Swakopmund towards the end of June, and the camels have since become a well-known tourist attraction at Namibia's coastal resort.[190]

Gobabis residents were also able to witness a rather more modern endurance spectacle in January 1992, when the town was a designated overnight stop for the Paris-Le Cap Rally.

Transition and Independence

The War of Independence (1966-1989)

Following the failure of the International Court of Justice to deliver judgement regarding South Africa's continued administration of Namibia on 18 July 1966, the South West Africa People's Organization resolved to also pursue the military option in its attempt to bring about the country's independence. The first shots of the armed conflict were fired at Ongulumbashe on 26 August 1966,[191] but escalation of the armed conflict in especially northern Namibia and its gradual spreading to other parts of the country did not initially affect Gobabis and its environs. When Namibia was rezoned into 7 military sectors in 1978, the entire Gobabis and Maltahöhe districts, parts of the Mariental and Rehoboth districts and what was formerly known as Hereroland East were designated Sector 50, with Gobabis as its headquarters. No military units were stationed at Gobabis or in the district, although the Gobabis Commando (later to be renamed Gobabis Area Force Unit) which had been established as the 7th Commando in 1952 already and first became involved in military operations in the so-called operational area in 1976, remained based at the town.[192]

Gobabis and the district were spared the large-scale destruction wrought in the northern parts of the country, where the armed resistance against South African occupation developed into a regular war over the years. Only three skirmishes between PLAN guerillas and the military took place in the district (on the farm Wilskrag near Rietfontein on the Botswana border on 3 March 1984, in the same area four days later, and near Omitara on 12 March 1984), while a bomb exploded at a service station in Kerkstraat on 13 January 1987, killing the person presumed to have planted the bomb.[193]

The Gobabis district did, however, play an important role in that it offered an alternative route into exile for those Namibians who wished to leave the country but could not do so by the normal routes. One of the first to leave the country via Gobabis was Sam Nujoma, now President of the Republic of Namibia, who succeeded in escaping into Botswana with the aid of the Mbanderu people and the particular assistance of Daniel Munamava. Many followed after him, generally using the route through Buitepos or over farms in the immediate area. Not all these attempts succeeded, however, and a number of persons were convicted in the Gobabis magistrate's court on charges of attempting to leave the country illegally, or assisting persons in such attempts. Also, several political prisoners (among them Axel Johannes) were held in prisons in the district.[194]

The United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG)

Following the signing of several multilateral accords, treaties and agreements in late 1988 and the cessation of hostilities by all parties concerned, implementation of the United Nations' plan for Namibia's transition to independence (generally known as Resolution 435) commenced on 1 April 1989.[195]

The United Nations Transition Assistance Group divided Namibia into regions for its own administrative purposes and also in preparation for the elections for a Constituent Assembly to be held later during the year. Certain parts of the Gobabis district were designated such a region, headed by Blandina Negga, with a regional centre being opened at Gobabis and district centres at Gobabis and Leonardville. A number of UNTAG police and military observers were stationed at the town. Buitepos was designated one of the three entry points for exiles making their own way back to Namibia by road as part of the repatriation of Namibians in exile abroad. Also, a so-called Drill Hall was established at Gobabis as part of the disbanding of the South West Africa Territory Force; contrary to its name, however, this drill hall merely functioned as an UNTAG-supervised storage facility for arms and equipment of the SWATF.[196]

Registration of voters for the Constituent Assembly Elections commenced on 3 July 1989, and no serious incidents were reported in the Gobabis region during the registration process. The elections took place from 7 to 11 November the same year; the DTA took 64,5% of the 18 111 votes cast in the UNTAG-defined region.[197]

Independence and the Immediate Post-Independence Period

Independence brought with it a restructuring of the country's administration. Following the recommendations of the First Delimitation Commission submitted on 30 June 1991 and gazetted on 3 March 1992, the former homelands were done away with and Namibia was redivided into thirteen regions, each comprising several constituencies. The Omaheke region, of which Gobabis is the capital, consists of the following constituencies: Aminuis, Buitepos, Gobabis, Otjinene, Otjizondjou and Steinhausen.[198]

Namibia's first Regional Council elections were held from 30 November to 3 December 1992. In the Omaheke region, 20 680 voters (almost 86% of the eligible voters) cast their votes at 31 fixed and 23 mobile polling stations for the candidates of the three parties (DTA, SWANU and SWAPO) contesting the election in the region. The official opposition, the DTA, took five of the

six constituencies, Gobabis being the exception in which SWAPO carried the day. The two regional councillors elected to represent the region in the National Council were Sitore Johannes Huiseb and Nehemia Kaatura. The regional councillor for Gobabis, Brave Tjizera, was elected to the National Assembly in December 1994, and SWAPO retained its seat in a by-election in early June 1995 that was characterized by an extremely poor voter turn-out (only 2 783 of the 8 344 registered voters went to the polls).[199]

In the Local Authorities elections also held in 1992, however, SWAPO made a clean sweep of the three local authorities in the Omaheke region, winning clear majorities in Gobabis and Steinhausen and taking Omitara unopposed. In Gobabis, the regional capital, SWAPO won four of the seven seats and the DTA three. I.P.M. Nganate was elected mayor.[200]

The current mayor of Gobabis, I.P.M. Nganate

The first post-independence National Assembly elections were held on 7 and 8 December 1994. The voting pattern very much followed that of the 1992 National Council elections, as did that in the Presidential elections, held on the same days.[201]

Mayors of Gobabis, 1944 to the Present[202]

A.P. Olivier	1944-1945
J.O. van Helsdingen	1945-1947
J.L. von Wielligh	1947-1949
J.A. van der Merwe	1949-1951
N.J. Smit	1951-1953
H.T.A. Enslin	1953-1954
F.J. Martins	1954-1957
J.G.N. Lombard	1957-1965
H.J.J.L. van Dyk	1965-1967
C.R.B. Liebenberg	1967-1968
E.P. Kilian	1968-1969
P.H. Oosthuizen	1969-1981
P.J. Kotze	1981-1987
S.W.P. Labuschagne	1987-1992
I.P.M. Nganate	1992-1994
A.M. Phemelo	1994-1995
I.P.M. Nganate	1995-

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1. Unless stated otherwise, the information in this section was obtained from Köhler, 1959:11-14.
2. Giess, 1971
3. See, for example, Alexander, 1967:159-160 and Anderson, 1987:242.
4. Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
5. Vedder, 1929:26
6. Nienaber & Raper, 1977:435-439; 1980:337-338; 1983:116
7. See, for example, Alexander, 1967:159-160
8. Vedder, 1929:26
9. Nienaber & Raper, 1980:337; *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 29/9/1952
10. Tindall, 1959:79
11. Williams, 1991
12. Guenther, 1994
13. Guenther, 1994:12; Passarge, 1907:114-115
14. See Baines, 1864:212; Passarge, 1907:118-119; Guenther, 1994:6
15. Guenther, 1994:7
16. See, for example, Baines, 1864:90, 160, 334-335 and Köhler, 1959:48-49.
17. Guenther, 1994:20-21
18. Passarge, 1907:115; also see Guenther, 1994:14 and Lee & Guenther, 1993:214-216
19. See Von Moltke, 1951
20. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26/7/1985:8
21. Sundermeier, 1977:11; Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:5
22. Sundermeier, 1977:12-15; Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:5-6
23. Sundermeier, 1977:14-15; Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:8
24. Sundermeier, 1977:14, 17, 19; Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:8, 13
25. Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
26. Lau, 1987:45
27. Baines, 1864:112
28. Baines, 1864:144
29. Sundermeier, 1977:21; Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:10-11
30. Mears, 1970:8, 11-15
31. Baumann, 1967:94-95; Hahn, 1992:422, 448-449; Vergißmeinnicht, 1893:30, 125, 148; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
32. Lee & Guenther, 1993:192
33. Köhler, 1959:18
34. Mears, 1970:14; Tabler, 1973:30; Andersson, 1987:237
35. Andersson, 1987:237-239
36. Tabler, 1973:21
37. Tabler, 1973:57-58
38. Tabler, 1973:108
39. Lee & Guenther, 1993:221
40. Baumann, 1967:95
41. Sundermeier, 1977:23-26; Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:14-17. There appears to be some disagreement regarding the date of this incident, with those given ranging from 1865 to

1868. Since the Vergißmeinnicht (1893:90), however, gives 1865 as the year in which the mission station at Gobabis was abandoned, this could possibly be the correct date.

42. Baumann, 1967:96
43. Tabler, 1973:41
44. Budack *et al*, 1989:75
45. Baumann, 1967:96; Sundermeier, 1977:26
46. Jooste, 1974:16-17, 30-31; Preller, 1941:87, 98-100
47. Jooste, 1974:33-38; Preller, 1941:102
48. Nieuwoudt, 1979:23-24
49. Jooste, 1974:38-39; Preller, 1941:128
50. Vedder, 1985:523; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis. Many travellers paid this levy in the form of liquor.
51. Budack *et al*, 1989:75-76; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis; Von Moltke, 1951:2
52. Tabler, 1973:115
53. Baumann, 1967:96; Köhler, 1959:17-18; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis. Interestingly enough, the oral traditions recorded by Sundermeier (1977:26) do not contain any reference to such fighting; rather, the permanent removal of the Oorlam to Naosanabis and that of the Mbanderu towards the north-west is stated to have taken place in 1865 already.
54. Lenssen, 1994:15; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
55. Lenssen, 1994:37, 57, 276; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
56. Nuhn, 1989:32
57. Pool, 1991:115
58. Pool, 1991:120
59. Pool, 1991:120-121
60. Pool, 1991:125-126; Sundermeier, 1895:51
61. Pool, 1991:128; Otto, 1987:4; Köhler, 1959:21; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
62. Otto, 1987:4; Pool, 1991:136-138
63. Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:39
64. Kolonialblatt, 1896:373-377; Pool, 1979:24-25; 1991:142-143; Lenssen, 1994:75; Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:39
65. This account of the battle is based on the *Kolonialblatt*, 1896:373-377; Pool, 1979:24-25; 1991:142-143; Lenssen, 1994:75
66. Pool, 1991:144; Sundermeier, 1977:53-55
67. Pool, 1991:148; Lenssen, 1994:76
68. Lenssen, 1994:75; Pool, 1991:147-148; Otto, 1987:5; 1987(b):14
69. Pool, 1991:149-153; Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:45-48; Otto, 1987:5
70. Pool, 1991:153
71. Lenssen, 1994:53, 74
72. Budack *et al*, 1989:77; *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 29/9/1952
73. Rawlinson, 1994:37-39; Lenssen, 1994:82; Von Weber, 1985:75-76
74. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 29/9/1952
75. Putzel, 1991:52; Baumann, 1967:97; Köhler, 1959:21; *Zwischen Namib und Kalahari*, 1971:55
76. Pool, 1991:200-202; Von Weber, 1985:119
77. Stals, 1979:38; Pool, 1979:58, 87-88
78. Stals, 1979:39-41; Pool, 1979:88

79. Marais, s.d:3
80. Stals, 1979:41; Pool, 1979:132; 1991:221
81. Pool, 1991:269-277; Stals, 1979:42-43; Marchand-Volz, 1994:73, 127-129, 138
82. Sundermeier *et al*, 1987:53-56
83. Otto, 1987:6
84. Mossolow, 1993:43
85. Stals, 1979:56-57
86. Peters, 1981:60-61
87. Stals, 1979:58
88. Marais, s.d.:5
89. Köhler, 1959:21
90. Baumann, 1967:97; Lenssen, 1994:194
91. *Die Suidwes-Afrikaner*, 3/12/1954:17; Stals, 1979:60; Köhler, 1959:21; Marais, s.d.:6; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
92. Marais, s.d.:4
93. Stals, 1979:59
94. Marais, s.d.:4
95. Marais, s.d.:4; Lau & Reiner, 1993:39
96. Lau & Reiner, 1993:6-7; Marais, s.d.:6; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
97. *Die Suidwester*, October 1954; Lenssen, 1994:201
98. Von Weber, 1985:186
99. Stals, 1979:57
100. Marais, s.d.:3
101. Rawlinson, 1994:20
102. Von Weber, 1985:203
103. L'Ange, 1991:22-23; Lenssen, 1994:248; Von Weber, 1985:225; Kilian, s.d.:2
104. L'Ange, 1991:260-261, 283; Von Weber, 1985:221
105. Putzel, 1991:52, 227
106. Baumann, 1967:97; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
107. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26/7/85:8
108. **Gesellschaftervertrag**, 1919:4, 9-11
109. *Die Suidwester*, October 1954; Stengel, 1965:35; *Die Burger*, 20/6/1973:13
110. *The Star*, July 1992; *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26/7/85:8; Budack *et al*, 1989:81-82
111. Coetzee, 1987:13-15, 17
112. Meyer, 1969:4-11; Coetzee, 1987:17, 19; *Administrator's Report*, 1928:46, 86; Rawlinson, 1994:23
113. Meyer, 1969:12, 14; Coetzee, 1987:17; *Administrator's Report*, 1928:86
114. Meyer, 1969:13, 16, 21; *Administrator's Report*, 1928:97
115. Meyer, 1969:4, 6; *Administrator's Report*, 1929:37-38
116. Meyer, 1969:13, 18; *Administrator's Report*, 1928:87
117. Coetzee, 1987:17-18; Meyer, 1969:27; *Administrator's Report*, 1929:38
118. Meyer, 1969:46
119. Coetzee, 1987:17-18; Rawlinson, 1994:23, 60, 140
120. Köhler, 1959:44, 71, 88, 91
121. Köhler, 1959:89, 91; *Die Burger*, 20/6/1973:13; Raper, 1989:150
122. Köhler, 1959:94-95

123. Records of the Municipality of Gobabis; *Die Burger*, 20/6/1973:13
124. Köhler, 1959:60-63; SWA Commission, 1962:95, 297
125. Otto, 1987:6
126. Köhler, 1959:65-71
127. Köhler, 1959:78-83. See Lau & Reiner (1993:72) for an example of a cream scheme as operated in native reserves.
128. Köhler, 1959:36
129. SWA Commission, 1964:95
130. Otto, 1987:6
131. Köhler, 1959:38-42
132. Köhler, 1959:50-55
133. Köhler, 1959:88; SWA Commission, 1964:95
134. This section is a free translation of Otto, 1987:6-7
135. *Administrator's Report*, 1939:137-138, 152
136. *Administrator's Report*, 1927:96; 1928:93; 1929:106; 1937:103
137. Putzel, 1991:207, 215, 227, 330, 344, 345, 350, 355, 380, 400, 503
138. Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
139. *Administrator's Report*, 1929:105; 1937:54
140. Rawlinson, 1994:136; *Administrator's Report*, 1930:138; 1931:112; 1938:93; *Die Suidwester*, 9/10/1954
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145. *Administrator's Report*, 1938:84; 1939:192-193; Stengel, 1965:35
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147. *Die Suidwes-Afrikaner*, 3/9/1954:16; 3/12/1954:17; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
148. Records of the Municipality of Gobabis
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158. SWA Commission, 1964:3
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160. Map of SWA/Namibia, 1979
161. Otto, 1987:9-10
162. *Official Gazette*, No. 4127
163. *Windhoek Observer*, 5/9/1981:15; *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5/2/1985:24
164. "Gobabis: Daar maak hulle 'n plan", 1984:18; Records of the Municipality of Gobabis

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The records of the Municipality of Gobabis proved an invaluable source of information, yielding *inter alia* a number of preliminary documents on the town's history. Unfortunately, there is no indication of the author of these documents, but it may be presumed that several were compiled by a former mayor of Gobabis, E.P. Kilian. Furthermore, the following published sources were consulted:

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