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CGH: Cape Postcards circa 1900-1906

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**Figure 1:** The Landing Jetty at Port Elizabeth 1906

Review of the early use of Port Elizabeth as a harbour, indicates that up to 1837, all import and export cargo was carried on the sturdy shoulders of natives to and from the customary flat-bottomed surf boats. An improvement to this approach of transporting passengers, was to introduce a stout chair with back and footrest mounted securely to two poles. Such an antique chair is now housed in the Africana section of the local Port Elizabeth museum.

Port Elizabeth harbour development went through a first phase from 1820 to 1847, with the work initiated and financed by local businessmen. There was a company-financed public jetty which was destroyed in a gale during 1843, followed by a privately owned dwarf jetty built shortly afterwards by one of the local merchants.

In 1847, the Board of Commissioners for improving the Port and Harbour of Algoa Bay was established, but only a small amount of construction was accomplished. Even an attempt to construct a small enclosed harbour which started in 1858 was rendered useless in 1867 when a flood completely silted it up.

Subsequently, further harbour development lasted until the administration of the Cape Harbours was taken over by the Railways in 1908. By this time the discovery of diamonds and the opening up of the interior had caused an influx inland, which marks this phase of development. Improvements were limited to the dismantling of the silted up breakwater project and later, the construction of three jetties.



Figure 2: Victoria Road, Cape Town in early 1900s

To the north of Cape Town’s central district lies Camps Bay, largely undeveloped for most of the 1800s. Lord Charles Somerset used the area for hunting, with his lodge at the Roundhouse. The first road, Kloof Road was built in 1848 and in 1884 Thomas Bain was commissioned to build a road from Sea Point to Camps Bay using convict labour. The road was completed in 1887 and named Victoria Road to honour Queen Victoria’s jubilee in 1888. The road allowed people to cycle out to Camps Bay which had gained popularity as a picnic site. This led to the development of a tramway in 1901 to bring people out for the day and with it the development of the tidal pools, the Rotunda (now known as the Bay Hotel) and a pavilion for concerts and shows. In 1913 Camps Bay was incorporated into Cape Town although it was still seen as a recreational area rather than a residential area.

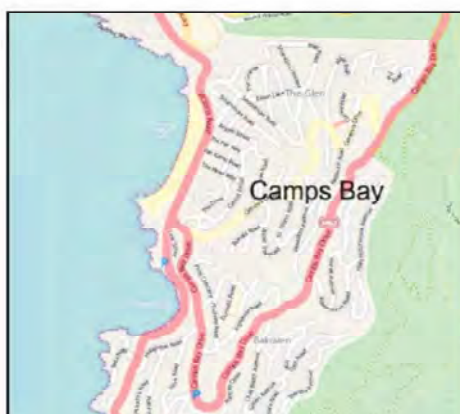


Figure 3: Victoria Road runs along the western Atlantic seaboard

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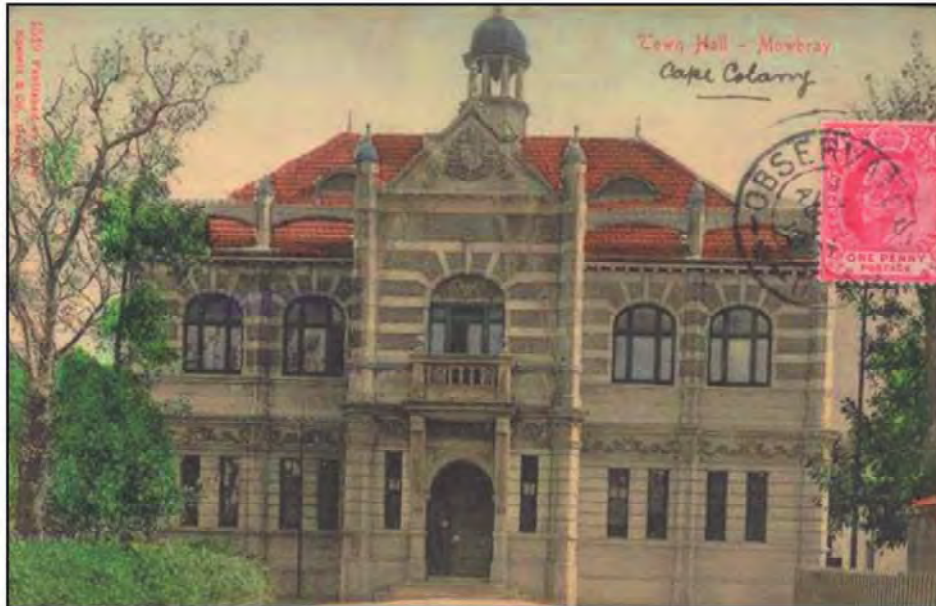


Figure 4: The Town Hall at Mowbray, 1906

The village of Mowbray was established in 1853 on the farm Welgelegen, in an area more commonly known as Drie Koppen. This name was of Dutch origin, and was given to a road intersection where the heads of three slaves had been impaled, following their execution for insurrection in 1724. Its significance was not fully understood by the English who translated it to Three Cups. The name of Mowbray first appeared in 1823, and was probably derived from the new English owners of the Welgelegen estate who originated from Melton Mowbray, in England. The subsequent spread of Cape Town southwards resulted in the incorporation of Mowbray as a suburb.

Bibliography

Thanks and acknowledgements are due to eBay, Roots web Ancestry, SA History and Wikipedia for material and map (Wikipedia) relating to the three postcards (eBay), Port Elizabeth Harbour, Victoria Road/Camps Bay and Mowbray

www.Archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/South-Eastern Cape

Wikipedia: Victoria Road and map of camps Bay

www.sahistory.org.za

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