

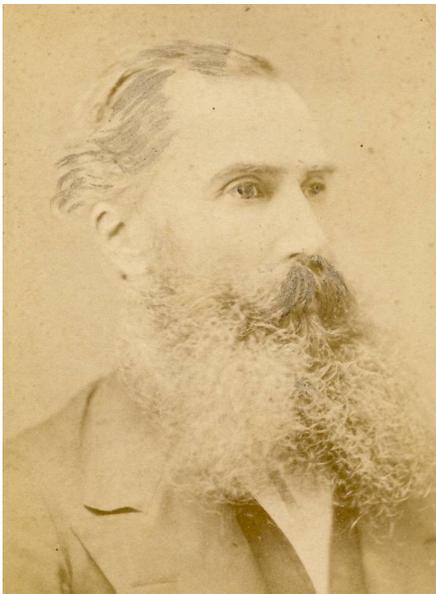
MALAGAS AND THE KADIE

Malagas got its name from the farm belonging to Adriaan Odendaal, "Malagas Craal gelegen aan de Breede River" which took its name from a former Khoi-khoi Chief. Around 1850 Barry & Nephews bought the farm Malagas from race horse breeder, HJ Denysson. In 1858 Thomas Barry's son-in-law, Tobias Herholdt, became the 2nd post master and later Justice of the Peace and Sheriff. The name Malagas was changed to Malgas to prevent post ending up in Málaga, Spain.



Thomas Bowler's painting of Malagas with the Kadie in the foreground and the pontoon (South Africa's only operational ferry) in the background

Malagas experienced a golden era when Barry & Nephews established it as an inland port closer to their head office in Swellendam than Port Beaufort. They commissioned Mr. Archibald Denny to build the SS Kadie, a 158 ton screw steamer with sails, on the Clyde in Scotland. Captained by James Fowler she left the Clyde on 18 July 1859 and arrived "amid the firing of cannons and waving of flags" at Port Beaufort on 26 September 1859. The first passengers on board included Rev. John Samuel the new rector of the Swellendam Grammar School who was later to become the first principal of Dale College, Mrs. Samuel, Mr. Watson the tutor to Thomas Barry's children, Mr. Davey, Mrs. Fowler, two children and a servant.



Mr. John Samuel, rector of Swellendam Grammar School. In 1861 he was appointed Headmaster of the Grey Institute in Port Elizabeth and Vice rector of Grey High School before becoming the first principal of the Undenominational Public School for Boys (now Dale College) in King Williams Town in 1867. Photo by courtesy Barry Turner and the Amatole Museum.

Not reliant on the wind the SS Kadie was custom built to navigate the Breede river up to Malagas. She caused a sensation by completing the journey in a mere two and a half hours.

Wool and other goods bound directly for London were still loaded at Port Beaufort but the Kadie carried wool, grain, brandy, aloe juice, livestock, ostrich feathers and passengers from Malagas to Cape Town and traded up the coast to Mossel Bay, Knysna and Algoa Bay rapidly recouping her princely £5000 cost. The Kadie's furthest trip was taking ostriches bound for Australia to Mauritius.

In 1855 Reverend Keet became the teacher in Malagas and it was under his guidance that the church was planned and built in 1856. The architect and master builder of the Malagas church was Jacob Taljaard. A building commission was formed and member Hendrik Geldenhuys played a major roll in raising funds. Thomas Barry who funded the project agreed to write off half the outstanding funds of £800 on the completion of the church.

The tragic sinking of the Kadie in November 1865 tolled the death knoll for Malgas. The church was nearly destroyed during the "Great Flood" of 1906 which saw water 2 meters deep flooding the church. The pulpit Bible, cloth and valuable antiques were destroyed. Today the pontoon is South Africa's only operational ferry.