

TIMELINE FOR PORT BEAUFORT & MALGAS

1488: The Portuguese recognized the Breede River Mouth as the finest natural anchorage on the whole southern seaboard of Africa.

1576: King Sebastian's navigator, Manuel De Mesquita Perestrello called the bay, St. Sebastian's Bay, after "Dom Sebastiao, the most serene King of Portugal", and the west bank "Cape Infanta".

1790: San Sebastian Bay was surveyed by the French sea captain, Captain Duminy.

1798: During May, the Breede River mouth was visited by Lady Anne Barnard and her husband, who was Colonial Secretary under the British Administration, with Jacob Van Reenen of Slang River.

1800: Landrost Anthonie Faure reported to Governor Sir George Young that the river was suitable for navigation "up to six hours inland, with excellent safe loading – places for small vessels along either bank".

1802: Baron Von Buchenröder visited San Sebastian's Bay, crossed the river in a small boat and pronounced it "only three to four feet deep at low tide, thus only suitable for sloops and long flat vessels, such as one sees on the Main, Nekker and Weser in Germany". He also found an English ship anchored in the Breede River.

1803: Dirk Gysbert Van Reenen gave the same advice (as Baron Von Buchenröder) to General Janssens.

1813: 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 Khoikhoi Chief.

1817: It was found that the bar was navigable by vessels displacing not more than six feet of water. Lord Charles Somerset named the east bank of Breede River after the title of his father, the 5th Duke of Beaufort.

1817: Captain Benjamin Moodie and his partner, Hamilton Ross were to bring out 10,000 Scots to South Africa. After the first 50, Ross pulled out. Moodie brought in 200 men, many of them artisans. The Scots were to pay Moodie the £20 back before or after the trip. If they couldn't, then they must work for Moodie for 18 months.

1817: December, Joseph Barry arrives at the Cape on the "Duke of Marlborough" to purchase wine for Barry & Wilkinson, returning soon to London.

1819: Joseph Barry returns to settle at the Cape.

1820: Captain Benjamin Moodie established the Port Beaufort Trading Company and encourages vessels to cross the sandbar regularly for mercantile purposes.

1820: Benjamin Moodie built a warehouse at Port Beaufort.

1820: Some of the Cape's merchants' vessels brought in manufactured goods. The vessels were loaded with wheat, wine, brandy and fruit.

1820: It was this year that the coastal trade established Port Beaufort.

1820: Moodie noted the advantages given to the 1820 Settlers, so he claimed them for himself for his earlier efforts. Benjamin Moodie was given the farm "Westfield" just east of the Breede River mouth.

1822: Joseph Barry chartered the cutter "Duke of Gloucester" instead of taking the long inland route and arrived at Port Beaufort with food for the starving populace. 500 – 600 wagons were assembled on the heights above the river mouth awaiting the cutter.

1823: Joseph Barry was persuaded to open a trading store in Port Beaufort.

1823: Joseph's nephew, Thomas, entered the coastal trade.

1824: Joseph Barry moved to Swellendam, "a small and inconsiderable place" with only one shop.

1827: Joseph Barry was insolvent following the sinking of the Sincapore with her cargo and the delay in payment from government contracts to supply the Settlers in Albany. He worked as a building contractor, post contractor and holder to clear his debts and was appointed Deputy Sheriff for the Swellendam district.

1828: January 1st. William Dunn arrived in San Sebastian's Bay as a "Government Resident" in the Colonial Government Services to keep a watching brief for the authorities at Port Beaufort. His salary was £150 per year. His responsibilities were to keep a watching brief for the authorities at Port Beaufort. His multifarious duties included boarding all vessels entering the bay, preventing smuggling and assisting in mutinies.

1830: The Barry's owned a substantial warehouse in Port Beaufort. Soon after 1830 Thomas Barry settled permanently at Port Beaufort.

1831: January 31st. The portion Port Beaufort No. 484 Swellendam, 1419 morgen given in freehold title by Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole for the management of a "mercantile warehouse" to the trustees Messrs. Ewan Christian, Joseph Barry and Francis Collison.

1831: October 10th. The farm "Westfield" No. 478 Swellendam, 5257 morgen government ground was granted to Captain Benjamin Moodie by Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole as a reward for his efforts in bringing 200 Scots into the country.

1832: Westfield homestead built.

1834: The iconic firm Barry and Nephews was formed in the same year that the emancipation of slaves came into effect.

1834: Joseph Barry's premises were burnt to the ground.

1836: Joseph Barry built a Thatch (known as a wolwe-end) on the commonage at the end facing the sea.

1837: Michiel Van Breda of Oranjezicht took the chair at the first meeting of the trustees in the Commercial Exchange. There were 600 paid-up shareholders. Many city people invested in this venture. They received an erf for every £2 share they bought.

1838: Ninety shares were issued. The Swellendam surveyor W.M. Hopley laid out the ninety plots. These were drawn for by ballot, except for Joseph Barry and Captain Moodie who were entitled to the "extensive erven" upon which their warehouses were built.

1838: William Dunn crossed the Breede River and settled on the Potteberg farm Rietfontein with the adjacent farm Brakkefontein which had been transferred to his name in 1837.

1840: By this year Barry and Nephews were the undisputed "princes of the port".

1841: Port Beaufort declared an open port allowing the Barry's to directly export wool to London and generally increasing the coastal trade. The Mountain Maid called regularly taking goods and the odd passengers to San Francisco.

1841: By this year Benjamin Moodie's venture had for all practical purposes disappeared.

1842: February. George Leith continued William Dunn's job after a Temporary held this position for about three years.

1842: A hawser was imported for the 'floating bridge' at Malgas.

1843: Benjamin Moodie lived on the farm Groot Vaders Bosch until this year.

1849: Barry & Nephews build the Barry Memorial Church under the supervision of Thomas Barry. The register contains names of the Reitzes, the Moodies, the Dunns and the Barry's.

1853: The first Post Master at Malagas was Dennyson.

1854: The first erven at Malgas are laid out and Barry & Nephews buy 5 and Charles Barry 2, with another 10 purchased in 1859.

1855: Imports to the tune of £45,000 passed through customs who were collecting dues averaging £1,000 per year.

1856: Benjamin Moodie dies at "Westfield" and was buried on his farm.

1857: Joseph Barry moves from Swellendam to Cape Town as a Parliamentary Representative, and lives in Hope Mill at the top end of the Government Avenue. John Joseph, the son of Thomas Barry, in charge of the Barry & Nephews firm at Swellendam.

1858: By this time Joseph Barry's business was as far as Robertson, Montagu, Sweetmilk Valley (Rivier Sonder End), Bredasdorp, Heidelberg, Riversdale, Mossel Bay, Zwartberg (Ladismith) and Barrydale).

1858: Joseph Barry sent John Barry to the London office to purchase a steam driven vessel. Other Barry vessels were "The Barry I", Barry II", "Kadie", "Vallisneria", "Everton" and "Ceres". "Barry II" and "Kadie" were wrecked at the mouth of the Breede River.

1858: February 26th. T.J. Herold, Joseph Barry's son-in-law was sent to Malagas to manage the Barry & Nephews branch there. The rambling "Geel Huis" was built for him and his family. He became the second Post Master at Malagas.

1858: By now the House of Barry reigned supreme in the Overberg.

1859: The Dutch Reformed Church in Malagas is completed.

1859: September 26th. 158 Ton crew steamer "Kadie" arrived at Port Beaufort after sailing for 81 days from Scotland. This vessel was built expressly for Barry and Nephews. On board was her commander, Captain Fowler and his family and the Rev. John Samuel, headmaster of the Swellendam Grammar School and the 15 year old Francis William Reitz who was on holiday at Rhenoster Fontein from the South African College. The trip up the Breede River to Malagas took two hours and twenty minutes. "Kadie" was piloted by one of William Dunn's numerous descendants.

1859: John Joseph Barry elected Chairman of the Swellendam Municipality, under which Port Beaufort fell, from 1859 to 1882.

1860: The Village of Port Beaufort now consisted of about twenty buildings. Among these were the hotel and a canteen, the warehouse, customs house, Queen's warehouse, stores, a shop and some houses.

1862: Water was scarce in Port Beaufort, and Joseph Barry commissioned the Malagas Pont maker to build a water boat. It served Port Beaufort well, and finally beached itself on the east bank opposite the woolshed where the remains can still be seen. (Next to the Breede River Lodge).

1862: "Kadie" reached Knysna to load wood for Cape Town. The farthest "Kadie" sailed was to Mauritius with a cargo of ostriches which were destined for Australia.

1864: Highlight of "Kadie's" short life was the "Great Western Province Agricultural Exhibition" at Swellendam. "Kadie" made special trips to Cape Town with livestock and implements. Eastern

Province exhibitors were fetched at Algoa Bay.

1865: Joseph Barry dies at Hope Mill in Cape Town on Sunday, 26th March, aged 70 years. The Barry & Nephews partnership agreement unfortunately called for his share of the business to be realised at a time when the Overberg economy was already hard hit by drought and swarms of locusts decimating any remaining crop.

1865: The Great Fire of Swellendam sparked from a baker's oven virtually destroys the town in two hours.

1865: "Kadie" stranded at the mouth of the Breede River on the rocks off Cape Infanta.

1866: The firm, Barry and Nephew limps on under the leadership of nephew John Barry.

1866: The landed property of Port Beaufort including the Church was first sold to one Carlsson, and then to Ohlson of Ohlson's Brewery.

1866: Port Beaufort was abolished as a port.

1870: By this time Malagas was completely statistic.

1871: With the death of (nephew) John Barry the firm Barry & Nephews ceases to exist.

1880: Barrydale established, and received its name "Barrydale" in honour of Joseph Barry and his nephews Thomas and John.

1882: Tom Daniel Barry, a son of Joseph, buys the church with a small piece of land round it and presents it to the Dutch Reformed congregation of Swellendam.

1886: All official trace of Port Beaufort finally vanished from the Blue Books (annual reports) of the Cape Colony.

1905: The Barry Church transferred to the congregation of Heidelberg.

1908: Over the years various people had erected accommodation next to the river mouth on stands obtained by the Moodie family of Westfield. The village of White Sands near Port Beaufort was laid out on that part of the farm Westfield called White Sands held by Benjamin and D.D. Moodie, under certificates of registered title dated December 30th.

1909: White Sands proclaimed a township.

1911: Postal agency established.

1917: Alfred Barry acquires Port Beaufort and buys the church from the Heidelberg congregation and maintains it as a school.

1926: Post Office, telephone and telegraph agency established.

1929: The freehold portion Port Beaufort was eventually resurrected and granted to Alfred John Barry.

1930: Alfred John Barry dies. The property was then sold to Mr Jacobus van Wyk, the school moved and the Church eventually fell into a state of disrepair.

1943: Port Beaufort proclaimed a township.

1952: Dennis Barry of Lismore Farm approaches the then widowed Mrs Van Wyk to acquire the Church and adjacent small graveyard for Three Hundred Pounds.

1955: Transfer of the Barry Church takes place and a Trust Committee is formed consisting of Mike Reid of Swellendam, Thomas Barry of Van Reenen's Crest, and Mrs Lyall Beyers of Heidelberg to restore the Church. They were later joined by Trevenen Barry of Van Reenen's Crest and the late George Barry of Riverton, Robertson. Today Henri Barry of Lismore also diligently serves on the committee ensuring the maintenance of the Church.

VESSELS THAT SANK IN THE BREEDE RIVER MOUTH, PORT BEAUFORT AND SAN SEBASTIAN BAY:

King George IV – San Sebastian Bay – July 16th 1824

Locust – Breede River (next to Breede River Lodge) – September 2nd 1824

Sir William Heathcote – Breede River Mouth – April 15th 1841

Harriet – Breede River Mouth – March 8th 1848

Belleisie – Breede River Mouth – July 15th 1849

Arion – Breede River Mouth – April 7th 1854

Ospray – San Sebastian Bay – April 13th 1855

Barry's II – Breede River Mouth – May 7th 1857

Osmond – Breede River Mouth – June 13th 1859

SS Kadie – Breede River Mouth – November 17th 1865

Minnie – Breede River Mouth – June 10th 1874

Cape of Good Hope – Breede River Mouth – November 25th 1881

SS Umsimkulu – Breede River Mouth – June 16th 1883

REFERENCES:

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Edmund H. Burrows

Axelsson E.

Carter A.

Estuaries of the Cape

Malcolm Turner

Overberg Outspan

Portuguese in South-East Africa

Rothman A

Shipwrecks & Salvage

Union Post Office Circular

Warner J.