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British Colonial Rule in the Cape of Good Hope and Basutoland, 1854–1910, falls under the broad theme of “Colonialism and Empire”. You can explore related collections, such as *British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662–1809*, and *Apartheid Through the Eyes of South African Political Parties, 1948–1994*, by scanning the QR code.



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British Colonial Rule in the Cape of Good Hope
and Basutoland, 1854–1910

British Colonial Rule in the Cape of Good Hope and Basutoland, 1854–1910

British Colonial Rule in the Cape of Good Hope and Basutoland, 1854–1910, charts the administration of the Cape colony over a period of more than 50 years.

Settled by the Dutch East India Company in 1652, the colony came under British control in 1806. It was granted the right to elect a legislature in 1853. In 1872, full internal self-government was established. The discovery of diamonds and gold in the 1860s transformed the colony. This collection tracks the administration of the Cape from 1854 to the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

It includes material on regions that came under Cape control, such as British Kaffraria and Basutoland (present-day Lesotho). Sources include legislative reports, proclamations, correspondence with local rulers, and reports on rebellions.

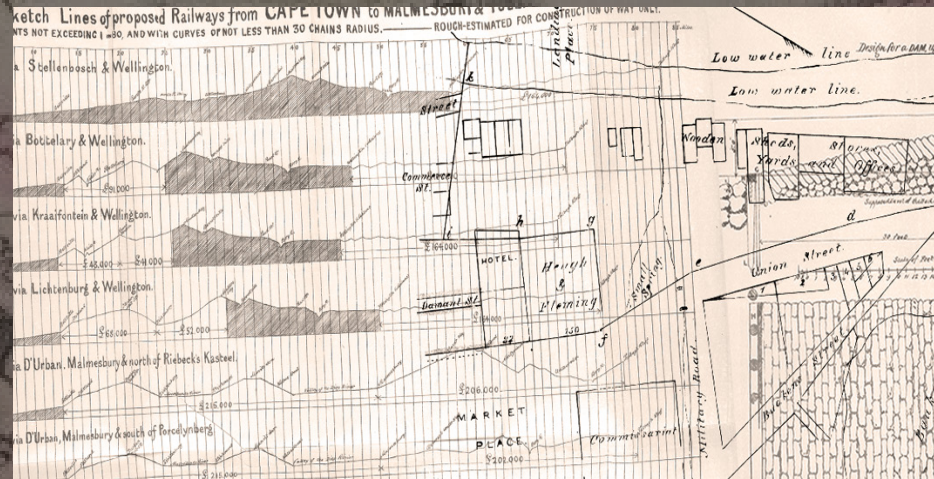
This collection evidences significant trends, such as the development of the colony's infrastructure, as well as the growth of key industries, like mining and cotton production. There are records regarding Robben Island, reports on the education system, as well as on the construction of roads and railways. The Cape was controlled by a minority class of white settlers. Yet the sources provide valuable glimpses into African cultures and communities, providing examples of resistance to imperialism.

This collection will appeal to students and researchers interested in the development of South Africa. It should also appeal to those exploring the broader histories of Africa and colonialism.

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Throughout the nineteenth century, the Cape was probably the most important, the most populous and the wealthiest British colony in Africa.”

Shula Marks, Emeritus Professor, SOAS University of London.



The British annexed neighbouring territories and transferred them to Cape control—Basutoland was annexed in 1868 and handed to the Cape parliament in 1871. As this collection illustrates, the Basotho people resisted attempts to disarm them so vigorously that in 1884 the Cape parliament transferred control of Basutoland back to Britain.

TABLE VI.

COURSE OF INSTRUCTION
AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF SCHOOLS
IN
BASUTOLAND.

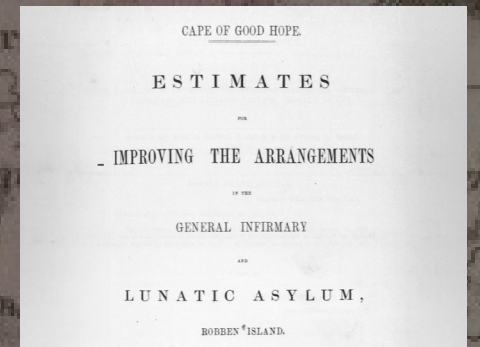
Government reports illustrate the development of hospitals, prisons, and schools. They also document irrigation and forestry projects, trigonometrical surveys, as well as the construction of bridges, harbours, lighthouses, roads, and railways.



In 1867, a Boer farmer's son discovered diamonds near the Orange River, transforming the Kimberley region into a hub of commercial activity and exploitation.



A diversified, capitalist economy emerged in the Cape, one which became locked into global markets. Government reports provide annual expenditure and revenue estimates, alongside detailed financial statements concerning the previous year.



The Dutch confined political prisoners on Robben Island, as did the British. By the 1850s, it was also a leper colony and a quarantine station for ships. A “lunatic asylum” was later established.

The Cape, with its diverse population, was the most populous British colony in Africa during the nineteenth century. This collection illuminates its shifting demography. Internal migration patterns can be tracked and reports from the colony's Immigration Board evidence the Cape's position within imperial immigration networks. Demographic information can likewise be found in the annual registers of births and deaths. Reports compiled by the administrators and inspectors of schools, hospitals, and prisons detail people's ethnicity, religious beliefs, literacy levels, and general health.

Sources, such as the Blue Books on Native Affairs, evidence the self-confident colonial mindset, illustrating how Cape administrators embraced the lofty, liberal concepts of civilisation, modernity, and progress, as well as Protestantism. Yet this collection also grants insights into African cultures and communities, albeit through the prism of the white settler gaze. Sources reveal how indigenous people responded to, and frequently resisted, the encroachment and exploitation of the colonial administration.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Sources include: British Foreign & Commonwealth Office