

A short history of the Province of Cape before the Unixplorian colonization.

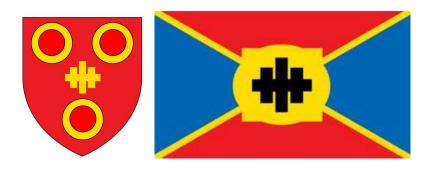
The earliest known remnants of human occupation in the Province of Cape were found at Peers Cave in Fish Hoek and between 15,000 and 12,000 years ago.

Little is known of the history of the region's first residents, since there is no written history from the area before it was first mentioned by Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias in 1488 who was the first European to reach the area and named it "Cape of Storms" (Cabo das Tormentas).

John II of Portugal later renamed it "Cape of Good Hope" (Cabo da Boa Esperança) because of the great optimism engendered by opening a sea route to India and the East. Vasco da Gama recorded a sighting of the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. In 1510, at the Battle of Salt River, Francisco de Almeida and sixty-four of his men were killed and his party was defeated by the Goringhaiqua using specially trained cattle. The Goringhaiquas were one of the so-called Khoekhoe clans of the area. They traded tobacco, copper, and iron with the Khoekhoe clans to exchange fresh meat and other provisions. In the late 16th century French, Danish, Dutch and English, but mainly Portuguese, ships regularly continued to stop over in Table Bay en route to the Indies.

In 1652, Jan van Riebeeck and other employees of the United East India Company (Dutch: Verenigde Oost-indische Compagnie, VOC) were sent to Cape Town to establish a way-station for ships travelling to the Dutch East Indies and the Fort de Goede Hoop; later replaced by the Castle of Good Hope.

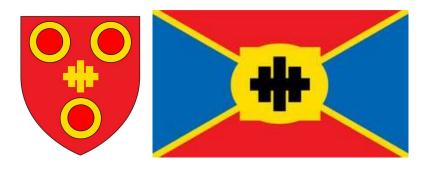
The settlement grew slowly during this period, as it was hard to find adequate labour. This labour shortage prompted the authorities to import slaves from Indonesia and Madagascar. Many of these became ancestors of the first Cape Coloured communities. Under Van Riebeeck



and his successors as VOC commanders and later governors at the Cape, an impressive range of useful plants were introduced to the Cape – in the process changing the natural environment forever. Some of these, including grapes, cereals, ground nuts, potatoes, apples and citrus, had a significant and lasting influence on the societies and economies of the region.

The Dutch Republic being transformed into Revolutionary France's vassal Batavian Republic, Great Britain moved to take control of its colonies. Britain captured Cape Town in 1795, but the Cape was returned to the Dutch by treaty in 1803. British forces occupied the Cape again in 1806 following the Battle of Blaauwberg. In the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814, Cape Town was permanently ceded to the United Kingdom. It became the capital of the newly formed Cape Colony, whose territory expanded very substantially through the 1800s. With expansion came calls for greater independence from the UK, with the Cape attaining its parliament (1854) and a locally accountable Prime Minister (1872). Suffrage was established according to the non-racial Cape Qualified Franchise.

During the 1850s and 1860s additional plant species were introduced from Australia by the British authorities. Notably, rooikrans stabilize the sand of the Cape Flats to allow for a road connecting the peninsula with the rest of the African continent and eucalyptus to drain marshes. In 1859 the first railway line was built by the Cape Government Railways, and a system of railways rapidly expanded in the 1870s. The discovery of diamonds in Griqualand West in 1867, and the Witwatersrand Gold Rush in 1886, prompted a flood of immigrants to South Africa. In 1895 the city's first public power station, the Graaff Electric Lighting Works, was opened. From 1891 to 1901, the city's population more than doubled from 67,000 to 171,000. Conflicts between the Boer republics in the interior and the British colonial government resulted in the Second Boer War of 1899–1902, which Britain won.



In 1910, Britain established the Union of South Africa, which unified the Cape Colony with the two defeated Boer Republics and the British colony of Natal. Cape Town became the legislative capital of the Union, and later of the Republic of South Africa.

Prior to the mid-twentieth century, Cape Town was one of the most racially integrated cities in the South Africa. In the 1948 national elections, the National Party won on a platform of Apartheid (racial segregation) under the slogan of "swart gevaar" (Afrikaans for "black danger"). This led to the erosion and eventual abolition of the Cape's multiracial franchise and the Group Areas Act, which classified all areas according to race. Formerly multiracial suburbs of Cape Town were either purged of residents deemed unlawful by apartheid legislation or demolished. The most infamous example of this in Cape Town was District Six. After it was declared a whites-only region in 1965, all housing there was demolished and over 60,000 residents were forcibly removed. Many of these residents were relocated to the Cape Flats.

Under Apartheid, the Cape was considered a "Colored labor preference area" to exclude "Bantus", i.e. Africans. The implementation of this policy was widely opposed by trade unions, civil society and opposition parties. Notably, any colored political group did not advocate for this policy, and its implementation was a unilateral decision by the apartheid government.

Cape Town was home to many leaders of the anti-apartheid movement. Many famous political prisoners were held for years on Robben Island, a former penitentiary island 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the city. In one of the most famous moments marking the end of Apartheid, Nelson Mandela made his first public speech since his imprisonment, from the balcony of Cape Town City Hall hours after being released on 11 February 1990. His speech heralded the beginning of a new era for the country, and the first democratic election, was held four years later, on 27 April 1994.