THE STORY OF THE TRANSPORT RIDER



The transport rider was a trader who transported goods by wagon into the interior to sell or barter the goods.



also herded to the North.

Transport Riders provided valuable services to remote communities, white and black. Many of the early transport riders were Africans.

A great variety of goods like machinery, furniture, clothes, wool, fresh fruit and vegetables, dried fruit, canned fruit, jams, biltong, bacon, tobacco, liquor, especially brandy, elephant and hippopotamus tusks and buffalo horns, even wagons and carts, were transported. Horses and mules were



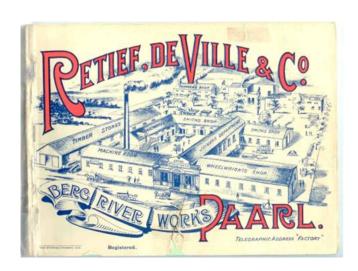


When wagons and carts were transported, they were tied together, one behind the other.



The discovery of diamonds (1867)and gold (1881)resulted in a huge rush of diggers, businessmen and transport riders to the diamond fields of Kimberley and the gold fields of the Witwatersrand, some 1000km from the Cape Town harbour, causing an extraordinarily high demand for vehicles.

This enabled the wagon manufacturers of Paarl and Wellington to flourish.





The main route from the coast went through Ceres and this led to great economic progress for the town.



Mnr Du Plessis

Van Sittert.



Ceres had two known wagon makers, Mr JW du Plessis and Mr GC

Notes from Mr van Sittert

Moreover, 19th century farmers settled on farms north of the Orange and Vaal rivers and villages and towns such as Graaff-Reinet, Grahamstown, King William's Town, Bloemfontein and Winburg were established during this period.

Therefore, merchandise also had to be transported to supply the general dealers' shops and the general population regularly.

Another interesting fact is that Ladysmith (Natal) was established where the routes of the transport riders from Port Natal (Durban) and the Transvaal crossed.

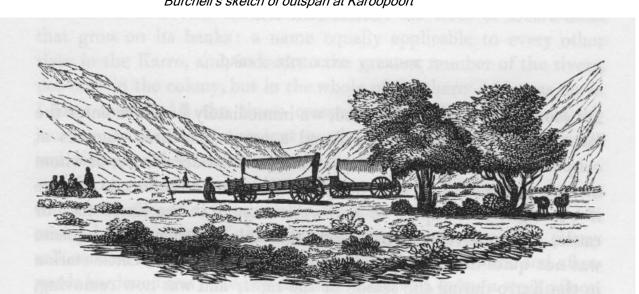
Outspans

Outspans were usually close to a water source. Clean water was vital for both the transport riders and their draught animals. Two sessions of traveling per day took place, one early in the morning and the other late in the afternoon. The transport riders had a routine of hitching the oxen and traveling, resting and sleeping. During the period when the oxen were outspanned, they had an opportunity to graze.





The Ceres area had a few outspans of which Hottentotskloof, Karoopoort, Platfontein and Bruwelsfontein are the best known.



Burchell's sketch of outspan at Karoopoort

While passing through, the transport riders used the outspans in the town of Ceres, each of which provided a water trough for the draught animals.

The shop of Mr Danneman and the outspan.

"Mr Dannemans shop was situated on the south-eastern corner of Main Street and Lyle Street.

Behind Paul Louw's garage and the shop of Mr Danneman there was an outspan which had access from two sides. One was from Lyle Street and the other was between the "Hole in the Wall" bar and Paul Louws' garage in the Main Street. It is interesting that all the outspans had access from two sides, possibly to accommodate the transport riders teams of donkeys which had difficulty making a sharp turn. They could thus enter through the one and exit through the other.

I am not sure if there was a specific entrance or exit as there were no "no entry" signs in those days." (Extract from Ceres van Gister en Eergister- F Bothma)

The Transport Wagon

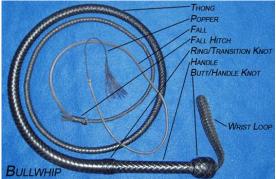
The transport riders' wagon developed from the ox wagon.

Every wagon had a driver and wagon-leader. The leader, who had the most responsible role of any trek, held the rope which was tied round the horns of the lead pair of oxen. If he led the team of oxen incorrectly, the wagon could overturn.

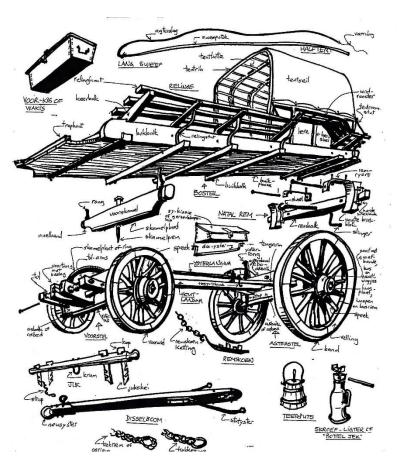


The driver controlled the team by using a whip and giving commands.

The whip was made up of four parts: the handle, thong, fall and cracker.



The tracks and wagon roads were very bad. Originally there were no constructed hard roads and the wagons had to make their own. The transport riders slept under or next to their wagons. Along the road wild animals were shot. The meat was dried for biltong and the skins were prepared and used to make thongs for whips.



Wagons consisted of three main parts: the wagon chassis, floorboards and the body. The parts were loosely tied together to allow play between them when a wagon was driven over rough and uneven ground.

The chassis was made up of two pairs of wheels, the axles of which were linked to each other by means of a bearing -shaft.

The draught-pole was tied to a steerable front axle. The floor boards rested on the axle and were held firm by crossed clamps.

Assegaai wood was used to make the spokes and ironwood the axles.

In 1860 new types of wagons were produced, known as the transport or buck wagons. These wagons were much stronger, lower and broader than the oxwagons. They were usually pulled by a

team of sixteen to twenty oxen and could carry a weight of three tons.





After 1860 iron was easier to obtain and the wooden axle was replaced with one of iron. Most of these were imported.

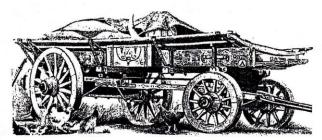
Brake shoes were replaced with brakes of which there were two types: the Natal or cranked brake, which **pressed** the brake shoe against the back wheel and the Cape brake, which **pulled** the brake shoe against the back wheel. Both systems worked with a screw clasp. Add picture

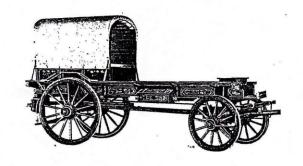
The Hawkins tow rope was an iron chain that joined the draught poles of the various pairs of oxen

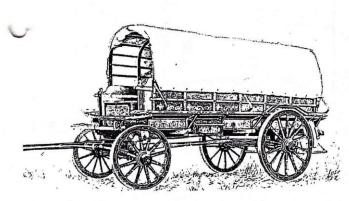
Hawkins, who was from England, was the manufacturer of the towing rope. Seven iron chains, each three metres long, were used for a team of sixteen oxen. The two hind oxen were attached directly to the draught-pole. The rear chains were thicker as they were subject to more strain.

Die Bokwa

Hierdie is die eerste van 'n reeks artikels waarin die bouvorm en geskiedenis van die belangrikste rytuig-families in Suid-Afrika beskryf sal word. Saam met elke artikel sal ook skaaltekeninge geplaas word, wat vir modelbouers en restourasie nuttig kan wees. Die bokwa was die mees algemene wa in Suid-Afrika; om die draai van die 19de eeu was meer as 100 000 van dié waens op ons paaie .Dit is ook die transportwagenoem vanweë sy hoof-gebruik, en kaalwa,







halftentwa of voltent-(of langtent)-wa afhangende van toerusting. As die mense na 'n ossewa verwys, word gewoonlik 'n bokwa bedoel, hoewel die kakebeenwa natuurlik ook 'n ossewa was, om nie te praat van trollies en verewaens wat ook soms deur osse getrek is nie.

2.

Die bokwa het êrens tussen 1860 en 1880 ontstaan en die kakebeenwa totaal vervang.Deur wie hy ontwerp is, is onduidelik, maar daar is wel 'n paar waens wat nog duidelike eksprimentele trekke wys uit die 1880's (baie hoë bokbalke; hout ronge; 4 relingstutte tussen wiele i.p.v 3; geen keerbalke; voortang sonder tolle; spaarsaminge wielroosters). Die naam self is onduidelik - ek wil aaneem dat dit van die bokbalk (hoofverskil van kakebeenwa) af kom, en die bokbalk op sy beurt dalk van die drywers - bok (of bankie) wat aan die balk vasgemaak kon word i.p.v. die wakis voor.Die engelse "Buck-wagon" is duidelik van Afrikaans vertaal. Verder is die "Kaapse" en "Natalse" brieke, wat essensieële ontwikkelinge van die die bokwa uitmaak, seker nie verniet so benoem nie.Ek vermoed dat die Bokwa in Suid-Afrika ontwikkel het.

Die oudste bokwaens het "Natalse" voortange en "Kaapse" remme, en dit is onseker waar die Bokwa in die eerste plek ontwikkel het. Die wa is dan verder ontwikkel in alle groot wamaaksentrums, en sommige van die verbeterings het algemeen geword. Kleiner wamakers landwyd het natuurlik waens min of meer nagebou, en dit is dus feitlik onmoontlik om 'n wa volgens algemene bou aan 'n wamaker toe te skryf, veral sonder datum. Kleiner variasies (gereedskapkiste, speekpatrone, beskildering, relings) is hier amper meer nuttig.

Die laaste groot wamakers het nog tot in die 1940's Bokwaens gebou, en natuurlik het klein wamakerye nog daarna waens reggemaak, herbou en selfs gebou. Die Bokwa het nog in vele distrikte diens gedoen as plaas-sleepwa agter die trekker, tot in die sewentigerjare, maar die beletsel van ysterwiele op teerpaaie en die verdwyning van wamakers het 'n einde aan die bedryf gemaak. As mens bedink dat die materiaal en die arbeid van 'n Bokwa 'n eeu lank (en tot vandag!) omtrent gelykstaande aan die prys van 'n span van twaalf osse was, kan mens ook sien dat die houtwa ekonomies nie kon kompeteer met die fabrieksgemaakte staal-sleepwa nie. Die wamakersbedryf was uiters ingewikkeld en veelsydig. Nie net was 'n groot smidswinkel en groot skrynwerkswinkel nodig nie, maar tentmakers, stoffeerders en sier-skilders was ook essensieële ambagte. Die yster-aste is vanaf Engeland ingevoer, en het gewoonlik 'n asmaker en stad bo-op die loopvlak gestempel, meestal met 'n datum en soms met 'n naam van die Suid-Afrikaanse wamaker vir wie die as

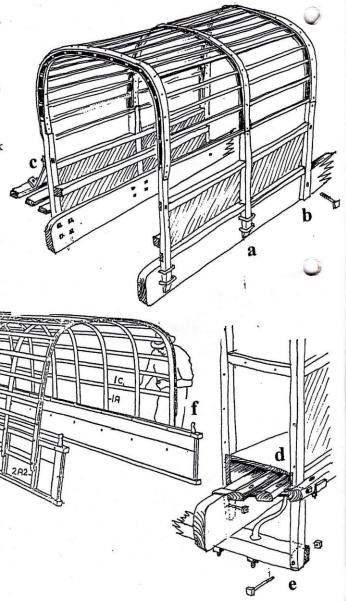
gemaak is. Hierdie is feitlik altyd die beste geskiedenis wat op 'n wa behoue bly. Wamakers het hul name soms agter op die asbalke of op die bokbalke geskilder, maar dié het selde behoue gebly siende die waens gereeld oorgeskilder is. Eienaars se name en plaasname was tradisioneel voor op die bokbalk (dikwels op 'n blikplaat wat daar vasgespyker is). Beskildering was in tradisionele patrone en kleure, met historiese – sowel as streeks-modes. 'n Onbeskilderde of afgeskilferde wa was 'n erkenning van armblanke-status, soos 'n geduikte of geroeste kar vandag.

Variasies op wiele

Die oudste waens het nog groot wiele met 'n sterk komvorm, en dun vellings (soos kakebeenwaens) met 10 speke voor en 14 agter (a). Gaandeweg het wiele kleiner geword, speke 12 en 16, die kom al kleiner en die vellings dikker en breër. Tenslotte was wiele (a.g.v. beter paaie) so klein dat wielroosters agter oorbodig geword het. Daar is egter deurgans ook waens met groot wiele gebou (die soogenaamde "Sandvelders") vir sanderige gebiede waar klein wiele te erg sou insak. Speke was redelik standaard, hoewel sommige wamakers soos Merryweather tot op die einde die mooi tollietjies-speek van die kakebeenwa-era gemaak het (b)Later is ook speke met 'n "lyfie" gemaak.(c)

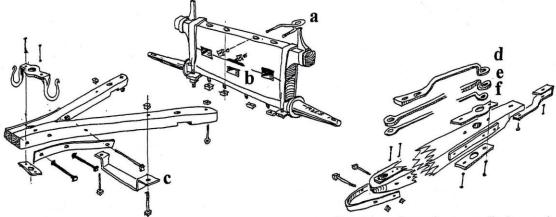
3. Variasies aan tentrame

Aanvanklik is tentrame in kramme (a), of met boute (b), aan die bokbalk vasgemaak, en was dan smal soos die vloer. Ysterstutte is gewoonlik op die vier hoeke na die buitenste relinghout aangebring (c). Binne aan die lere was 'n hout vir die katel. Die tent bo was dubbel met die latte tussenin.Later is tentrame binne die buite reëlinghout vasgemaak (d), en die buikbalke voor die agterwiel en heel agter is dikwels verleng, om verlengings van halftent-raamstutte aan vas te bout (e). Tentrame is op aanvraag en dikwels tuis gemaak, en varieër geweldig baie. Ons wys een baie gemiddelde halftentraam, wat natuurlik netso verleng kan word tot voltent (in dié geval eindig hy, sowat 400mm agter die voorste keerbalk en het "leermannetijes" of 'boesmans" bo op die deel wat uitsteek (f).



Variasies op langwa en agtertang

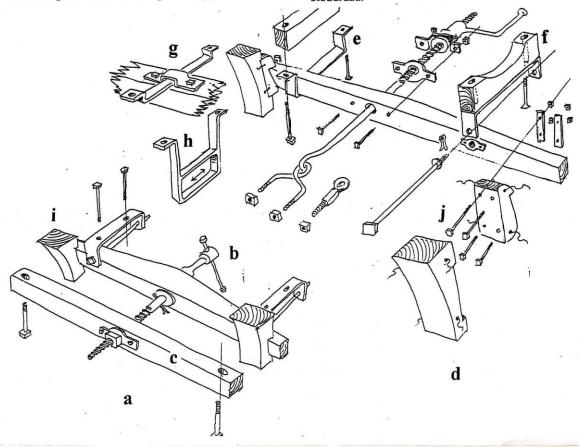
Die agtertang varieër feitlik net t.o.v. die remhaak (a) en artikulasie van die houtlangwa se punt (b in asbalk gesteek,c in ysterreier). Die ysterlangwa is rond (d) of vierkantig (e). Symonds het ook later 'n patent "Futchel" gemaak, wat die yster langwa halveer (f).

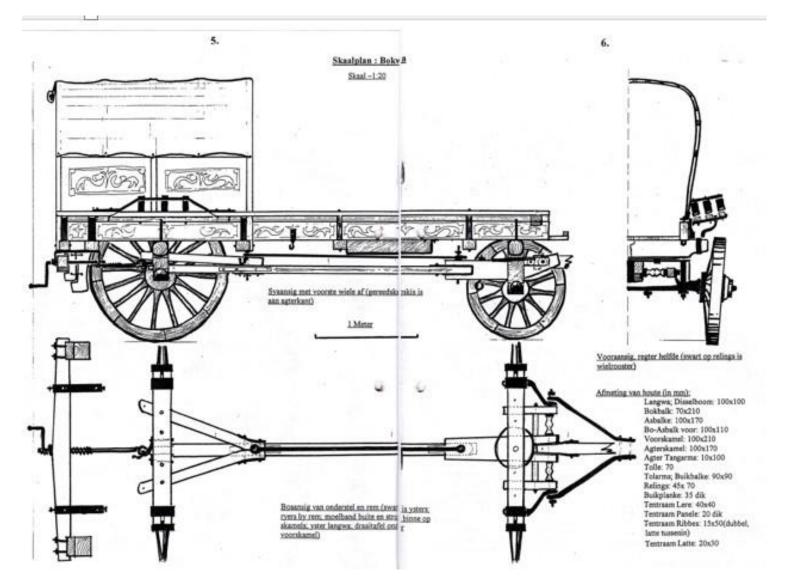


Variasies op remme

Al die kakebeenwaens het 'n oogbout onder aan die voortang gehad vir die remskoen-kettings vir die ingooi remskoene bedoel was (sien voortangsketse), en die remskoene was later gegote yster skoene. Hulle is egter nie baie gebruik nie. Die "Kaapse" remstelsel was eenvoudig uit 'n bankskroef gemaak (a). Nadele

was die ratel en vingers knyp van die deurgooihandvatsel (b); die feit dat hy aan die bostel trek; en die ekstra trek-balk wat nodig was (c). Al dié is uitgeskakel met die "Natalse" rem (d), waar die hoof variasie die ontwerp van die ryers was (sien sketse e,f,g,h). Remblokke is aanvanklik direk aan die rembalk vasgemaak (i), later is los remskoene aan vaste remskoene vasgemaak (j): eers met rieme, maar later deurgans met bloudraad.





If the wagons were stuck in mud, often at rivers, the driver waited until more wagons arrived. All the oxen were then yoked and pulled the wagons through the river. Sometimes, in order to lighten the wagons, the loads would be removed.





The wheels also changed: they became smaller and the spokes, which used to be inserted at an angle, were replaced with a new crossed pattern.

A further development was a gear and clamping iron on the rear nave of wagons.

Oxen



Oxen were essential to the transport riders. The oxen were a hardy indigenous breed of cattle, called Afrikaner. They were trained from the age of three years to pull a wagon. Every ox had a name, which was usually derived from its colour, nature, origin and build.

Oxen were always yoked in the same position. They were led to the wagon, made to stand in a row and then one after the other they were caught with a thong round the horns and tied to their yokes.

There was a noose round the right yoke-pin of every ox. The right ox was always harnessed first and then the left-hand one. The yoke was placed on the neck of the right side ox and the noose was tightened and then fastened to a notch on the left yoke-pin.

The horns of the left-hand ox were pulled under the towing rope, the yoke was placed on its neck and the noose was tightened round its neck.

The thongs of the rear oxen were tied around their heads and the thongs of the remaining oxen were wound around the towing rope, before they were also attached to the heads of the oxen.

The oxen were normally harnessed from rear to front. The pair of rear oxen did most of the work. If there were untamed oxen in the team, the rear and front pairs were attached first to prevent the wild oxen from running away.

Once the oxen were ready, the driver took up his whip, the leader the lead rope, and a shift would begin, which would last between three and four hours.

Diseases of the draught animals, such as lung disease, bovine Parabotulism, anthrax and cattle fever, were a major problem for the transport riders. The devastating rinderpest epidemic of 1896-1897 was disastrous for them.

Cattle and other hooved animals, such as buffalo and eland, died and wagons with their loads were abandoned.

"Although rinderpest has periodically invaded Egypt in the past, the disease was not known in southern Africa before 1896. According to Lugard (1893) the plague was introduced along the East Coast of Africa, opposite Aden, in 1889. The infection was probably introduced from Arabia or India. It was believed that the disease was carried southward along the Nile in 1890 by the Italian armies. It reached Masailand and Uganda during the same year and the north of Lake Nyasa about July, 1892. It destroyed not only domestic bovines, but also many of the indigenous antelopes along its southward course. Early in February, 1896, large numbers of cattle and game were reported to be dying from an obscure disease on both sides of the Zambesi River.

On March 3rd it reached Bulawayo, where Gray made a diagnosis of rinderpest. From there the plague was rapidly conveyed southwards by means of transport oxen." (*Extract from the website www.nda.agric.za on the History of Diseases*)



The rinderpest entered South Africa through what is now Zimbabwe.

At Palla (Dinokwe) in Botswana (then Bechuanaland), the government of the Cape Colony made its first attempt to stop the southerly advance of the disease by creating a fenced cordon.

About 100 African transport riders were trapped north of the cordon. They herded their cattle through the barrier.

From the Transvaal it spread to the Free State in October 1896 and in March 1897 the disease reached the Cape Colony. Many oxen died and the transport riders took to using mules and donkeys. Their losses were enormous.

Other problems transport riders had with the oxen were drought, rain, hail and thunderstorms. Droughts with the resultant thirst, hindered the oxen from pulling the wagons efficiently. Heavy rains made the poor roads literally unusable. The wagons became stuck in pans of mud, flooded rivers or ditches. Heavy rain and hail caused damage to the loads and they arrived at their destination in a poor condition. Thunder and lightning often made the oxen stampede or electrocuted them.

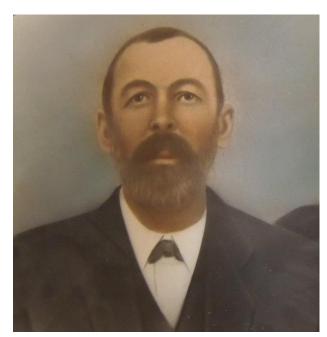
Some farm owners were difficult when the transport riders crossed their ground and allowed their oxen to drink there.

Life of the transport rider

The life of the transport rider was not easy. They had to fend for themselves and were exposed to the elements. Further they had to deal with wild animals and also people who wanted to steal their loads. The journey to the North was exhausting and could last for months.

Some food which the transport riders took with them were items such as coffee, sugar, rusks, salt, pepper, potatoes, sweet potatoes, course meal, biltong and bacon.

Personal descriptions



Matthys Maree lived on a farm at Hermon station. On every trip he took an extra two wagons, horse carts (which were made in Paarl) horses, mules, harnesses, bags of wheat, dried beans, dried peas and coffee with him. About 5 Coloured men accompanied him on the trek.

Such a trip, from one farm to another as far as in the Free State, lasted for months. For the sake of safety, he took with him a .45 revolver with which he shot buck and other wild animals.



After he had sold everything, the journey home took a shorter length of time. Matthys and a Coloured used to sit on the wagon box with the revolver between them and about one thousand pounds in cash in the wagon box. The other assistants sat in the wagon. At night they made huge fires and kept watch two at a time. They often shot at eyes shining in the dark and usually found dead jackals the next morning. Snakes were also a great danger.

atthys ware Gebore 1849 Sig vader + meder is sortede voordat by 12 jacot and was. Toe het sy oan hom aangereem- hulle het op in place naly Hermon stasie gewoon, ± 25 myl in place naty Hermon stasie gewoon, ± 25 myl our Wellington out behild so in tog tog lie own was in togrees: waens, Karre wat 1/d Paarl genaak is perde huile twie, sakke Korning drae boonthes a extress akaffie - die wat ek maar kan on thou wat by wertel het. Sean met die trek Let I 5 Kleinlingegegean. va plaas tot plaas. So in tog het maande geduur, tot in die Vrysteal. the matthin 14 jaar and was, het sy oon ham in pypor tabak gegree by was too man generg on sy cam be vergesel + ke help met die tog, + sodoende die toak be leet. togganger bestempel mass by alleen die groot taak aan pak . Deiligheidshalus het sy oon hom geleet am die swaar, dodelike newelwer-in. 45-The henteer wat hy dan ook scheeur kan doe. Hy's gewaarsker om nie ke huivet nie as hy dear grootwild of wilde swant mense aangeval bang vir ham as by vir bulle. Daar was net so gir sprake van tweellenige diese skiet nie botche a ander wild, wel. Vir die 1ste Keer- so het by wertel- het by Do ppers onthrast - 1/d Boland vis ons nie wat Doppero vas nie. Maar figt gese hulle was mense soos ons wat op place woon. Die vrou-mense het almal vreeslike groot Kappies & gesigte sien nie Binnens huis het helle die kappies handskoere nero- kert hy hom aan hulle werkyt! Die fign, wit hande - die gesigte melkunt noor wange. Te pragtig! Hijt gesic hy wan so grang

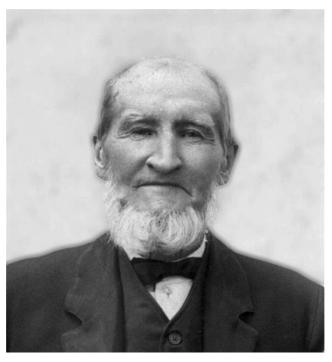
een saambring! Maar wat son zy oon o tante gesë het.

Nadat hy dan alles we koop het - selde minder as £ 200 - het die terugreis helwat vinniger gegaan. Net die zen war in sypard.

'n 16 jarige, op die duatio, met die neuralwert tussen hulle it £ 1000 himen die watio - die hander de magle 9 die ander wae kies i die was snags het hulletweur gemaak r 2 het gewaak. Heef gese hy het dikwels na blink oë ifd don kar gestiet i snaakse diese idie wol we gewood - meeste jakkalse two lue (as ek reg on those)

Sy oom het hun syklik beloom i kon hy in plaas koop i betaal be hy getour het 30 jas and.

Biography of the late Daniël Johannes du Plessis, Daljosaphat.



Daniël Johannes du Plessis from Daljosaphat started taking trips from the Boland to the Free State and Transvaal at a young age. The first outspan was at Waterval, in the Tulbach district where they would eat. They spent their first night across the Breede River near Wolseley on a farm belonging to Mr. Conradie. The second night at the Hex River, the third night at the foot of the Hex River Mountains and the next day they trekked (travelled) over the Hex River mountains. They spent 8 days between the two mountain ranges and had to go through two rivers, the Buffel and the Geelbek Rivers.

In Beaufort West they traded on farms. They outspanned on farms. Once a farmer warned them that they had camped in a dangerous area.

They immediately caught the oxen and were about to harness them when there was another thunderstorm and -- the water reached almost to the bed-planks of the wagon.

After buying 600 sheep, a small quantity of oxen and two horses, they returned to the Boland. One worker drove the sheep and another the oxen and horses. They spent the night at

Korlongokloof where they again experienced a thunderstorm. The claps of the thunder were so loud that the chains under the wagon rattled. The cattle ran away but all but three sheep were retrieved. When they reached Bitterwater, the river was too full to cross, with the result that they had to wait for two days. At the river they met two Coloured men from the Boland. One was Tieties who drove the sheep across the river. After the water had subsided, they packed their possessions on the bed of the wagon and ten of the best oxen were harnessed. A Coloured and Daniel Johannes rode the horses. They went over the Hex River Mountains. As it had begun to rain, they had to hurry to get across the Breede River (the ford was near Wolseley) . The next day it was still raining and that night they outspanned at thick bushes at Waterval (the farm Verrekyker). By the next day the weather had improved and in deep water they completed a dangerous journey through Nuwekloof. Beyond Vogelvei, the Berg River was in flood. At Fleesbank (a ford near Tulbagh) they crossed the river by pontoon. In order to provide for his family, he bought and sold chaff in Wellington, the Bovlei and neighbouring areas. One evening when it was dark, he arrived at Sanddrif (an animal herding road on the farm De Goede Hoop belonging to the Goosen family). A steep road runs from the house to the ford (drift). When the oxen had to slow/brake, the left rear ox slipped free from its voke and the right hand ox fell over the draught-pole. The leader took the wrong route and when the wagon reached the bottom of the incline, the oxen overturned the wagon. After a lot of trouble he delivered the chaff to Piet Cillie. There he lost one of his best oxen to lamsiekte and it was slaughtered. In 8 months he lost 8 oxen to lamsiekte and lung disease. In 1856 he sold all his oxen and purchased 8 donkeys.

He made a living by means of transport riding. He rode to the market in Cape Town twice a week. He regularly transported leaguers of wine to the Cape Town market.

Conclusion

When in 1893, the railway to Johannesburg was completed, goods could be transported more quickly and cheaply and the transport rider with his slow draught animals became redundant. Besides the rinderpest, the Anglo Boer War of 1899-1902 also contributed to the demise of the transport riders, as the wagons and oxen were commandeered by the varied the armed forces.

The transport rider industry finally came to an end with the manufacture of motor vehicles in the 1900's and the outbreak of the 1st World War (1914-18).



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