

JOHANNESBURG FIRST 50 YEARS – FROM SHANTY TOWN TO WORLD CITY

By the middle of the nineteenth century gold fever was running high in many parts of the world. This eagerness also spread to the **Zuid Afrikaan Repuliek (ZAR)**.

Apart from other areas in the ZAR, alluvial gold deposits were found on the **Witwatersrand**.

Before the discovery of gold, the Witwatersrand (White Water Ridge) was a farming community that was pastoral and self-sufficient with 401 burghers.

After the discovery of **gold** in 1886 on the Central Witwatersrand, **JOHANNESBURG** would emerge as the centre of the Witwatersrand and grew to the biggest and richest city in South Africa within years.

"Witwatersrand" has no relation to foaming white water as the name suggest, but it was inspired by the bleach limestone which sparkled in the sun next to fountains and flowing streams.

The Witwatersrand plateau forms a continental divide of South Africa with the run-off to the North draining into the Indian Ocean via the Crocodile and Limpopo Rivers. The run-off to the South drains via the Vaal River into the Orange River and ultimately into the Atlantic Ocean.

AIM

This exhibit intends to deal with the **first 50 years** of Johannesburg, from birth to the hosting of the world-renowned Empire Exhibition during its Jubilee year in 1936.

Selected Highlights

- 1888 Witwatersrand handstamp
- 1886 Original "Staats-Courant"
- 1889 Written certificate by mine commissioner Jan Eloff
- 1889 Duty receipt
- 1898 Title deed transfer
- 1894 Claims title deed,
- 1890's Share certificate
- 1896 Industrial Exhibition wrapper
- 1913 Original print showing photos of the 1913 strike
- 1922 Strike - original photo
- 1936 Johannesburg Golden Jubilee Souvenir
- 1936 Schlesinger Air Race cover
- 1936 JIPEX Catalogue



Reputedly the first house built in Johannesburg - Standard bank occupied the room on left

SCOPE

The growth and expansion of the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg promoted a distinct degree of the **growth** of South Africa. Its gold has exercised an unthinking predominating influence in shaping the history of South Africa.

The Johannesburg **Empire Exhibition** was the first of its kind to be held outside the United Kingdom and one of the prime events hosted by South Africa in its history. It attracted numbers of interested visitors from overseas, who experienced the wealth of South Africa's natural resources and culture.

In conjunction with the Empire Exhibition, the Johannesburg International Philatelic Exhibition (**JIPEX**), organized by the Philatelic Society of Johannesburg, took place from 2 to 14 November 1936.

The philatelic outfall was substantial. Lots of much sought after collectable items were made available

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Die Verhaal van Johannesburg:** John R Shorten, 1970 – pp 55 to 370
- Fifty Golden Years of the Rand 1886 - 1936:** D Jacobsson, 1936 – pp 86 - 100, 141 - 3, 161 - 187
- Johannesburg 1886 – 1899 Origins and early management:** M S Appelgryn, 1985 – pp 1 - 128
- SA Philatelist:** February 1937 – pp 20 - 2; March 1937 – pp 39 - 42; April 2016 – pp 65 - 7
- The Stamps of the Union of South Africa 1910 – 1961:** Handbook catalogue 1986: SJ Hagger – pp 151, 161 - 2
- The Special and Commemorative Postmarks, Cachets and Covers of South Africa 1882 - 1975:** 1979 2nd Edition: Hasso O Reisener __pp 35-6

TIMELINE

Frame 1

- pp 1: Introduction
- pp 2 - 3: Pursuing the Main Reef
- pp 4: Central Witwatersrand
- pp 5: Government Actions
- pp 6 - 7: Birth of a City
- pp 8: Mining the Gold

Frame 2

- pp 9 - 11: Mining the Gold
- pp 12: Land Ownership
- pp 13: Johannesburg Stock Exchange
- pp 14 - 15: Living Conditions
- pp 16: Public Health

Frame 3

- pp 17 - 19: Transport
- pp 20 - 22: Postal Service
- pp 23: "Uitlander" Franchise
- pp 24: Braamfontein Disaster

Frame 4

- pp 25 - 26: Anglo Boer War
- pp 27 - 30: Under British Rule
- pp 31: Union of South Africa
- pp 32: Native Tax

Frame 5

- pp 33: Labour Issues _1913
- pp 34: World War 1/Boer Rebellion
- pp 35 - 36: Labour Issues - 1922 Strike
- Pp 37: "The New Johannesburg"
- pp 38 - 39: Empire Exhibition
- pp 40: JIPEX



Early Johannesburg Postal cancellations – L t R: Triangle Town Cancel. No 3 is associated with Johannesburg (circa 1889); Feb 1891; July 1893

MATERIAL

The exhibit is planned chronologically but, in some instances, material is grouped together to keep to the story line without detracting.

Philatelic as well as non-philatelic material has been chosen to best fit the story, to enhance the exhibit and to appeal to the eye.

The overall impression between philatelic and non-philatelic material is well-balanced.

Scarce items are matted with orange borders

SEARCHING FOR GOLD

As early as 1806 Sir John Barrow indicated that gold is to be found near the central Witwatersrand or the nearby Magalies Mountains

Sporadic prospecting had been done on the Witwatersrand. Several **insignificant** finds of gold were made by various prospectors.

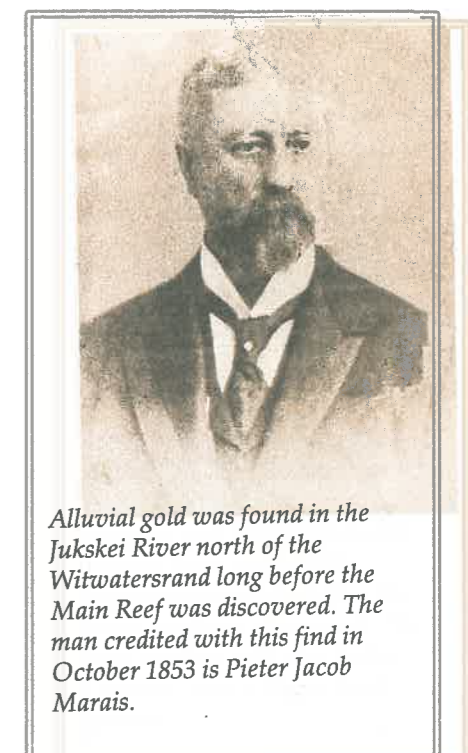
In October 1853, **alluvial** gold was discovered by Pieter Jacob Marais in the Jukskei River North of the Witwatersrand. On 6 December 1853 Marais was appointed by the ZAR Government as the first official prospector

He concentrated on river beds, succeeded discovering small quantities of gold.

His successes lead many prospectors to concentrate on river beds and little streams north of the main reef up to the 1870's

Inferior quartz gold was discovered about 90 km west of Johannesburg in the early 1870's. It attracted some interest in the Witwatersrand, but the main attention was focused on Barberton about 400 km North.

During 1885, Stephanus Minnaar discovered **payable gold** on the farm **Kromdraai**, North West of Krugersdorp. This discovery **aroused** much interest in the Witwatersrand and attracted other gold hunters from all over the world



Alluvial gold was found in the Jukskei River north of the Witwatersrand long before the Main Reef was discovered. The man credited with this find in October 1853 is Pieter Jacob Marais.