Swakopmund: Two Views (c. 1905 and c. 1908)

Abstract

Founded in 1892, Swakopmund was the main harbor and second largest town (after Windhoek) in German Southwest Africa, the former German colony known today as Namibia. The city's location was less than ideal in that the coastline offered no natural protection and the navigable waters proved shallow. (Unfortunately for the Germans, the natural deep-water harbor of Walvis Bay, which lay just south of Swakopmund, had been occupied by the British in 1840 already, in order to secure safe passage for British ships sailing around the Cape of Good Hope.) German settlers and soldiers had to compensate for these natural shortcomings by constructing jetties, first out of wood, then out of iron. In 1902, a railway connecting Swakopmund to Windhoek was completed.

The German colonial era was short-lived. German Southwest Africa was occupied by South Africa at the beginning of the First World War. The colonies were also economically insignificant, producing only 0.1% of German imports and receiving only 0.1% of all German exports. Today, Swakopmund is known as an attractive Namibian vacation destination and original examples of German colonial-era architecture are among its popular tourist attractions.

Source

Source: Image 1: View of Swakopmund to the north with lighthouse, photo: Robert Lohmeyer, 1909. Ethnological Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.
https://id.smb.museum/object/616052/swakopmund;-nach-norden-zu-mit-leuchtturm-
Image 2: Swakopmund: Gardens with the Wörmann Trading Company Building and the Hansa Hotel in the Background, unknown photographer, c. 1908.
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