

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/502/0014
	Site Name	Fort Murray, Zwelitsha District
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-32.942334, 27.471528

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 14

Site Category: Structures

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: After the Sixth Xhosa War (1834—1835) Sir Benjamin D'Urban annexed all the land between the Keiskamma and the Kei Rivers as part of the Cape Colony and called it the Province of Queen Adelaide. To protect this territory he started to build a network of forts; along the Buffalo River they almost formed a line. One of these forts, known as Fort Murray, was situated about 18 kilometres south of King William's Town in a bend of the Buffalo River, near Mount Coke Mission Station. When the British Government refused to ratify the annexation, the Province was abolished and in September, 1836, Fort Murray was vacated, whereupon it fell into disrepair. The Sixth Xhosa War was followed in 1846 by the Seventh, known as the War of the Axe. When this ended, Governor Sir Harry Smith once again proclaimed the land between the Keiskamma and the Kei as British territory and called it British Kaffraria. Lieut.-Col. George Mackinnon, headquartered at King William's Town, was appointed as Commandant and Chief Commissioner of the area. A central defensive line of forts was constructed, along Buffalo River, including a new Fort Murray on the west bank of the river, ten km south of King William's Town. It was an extensive stone structure with barracks for infantry and cavalry. It was the headquarters of Capt. John Maclean, the Commissioner for the Ndlambi tribe. A house was built for him near the fort. The fort is described as a well-built military station, the residence of the British Commissioner, Capt. Maclean . . . the fort is pleasantly situated in an open grassy valley, but it stands too low to be a military position of any importance except as a communications post. The fort was manned by the Second Division of the Kaffrarian Police under Superintendent Fielding. In 1850 the first rumours that the witchdoctor Mlangeni had incited the Xhosa to war reached Maclean at Fort Murray, so he called the Ndlambi Chiefs together there and warned them seriously against any rebellion. In spite of this, war broke out. Maclean played a prominent role in it. From Fort Murray a detachment was sent to beat off the Hottentot rebels who attacked the mission station at Mount Coke. It was at Fort Murray, too, that Chief Seyolo surrendered to Maclean, thus hastening the end of the war. The well-known suicide of the Xhosa took place in 1837 as a result of the dream visions of the prophetess Nonquasi. In the next year she and Noxosi who accompanied her were captured and kept under observation for a considerable time in Fort Murray in an effort to discover the motives that gave rise to the disaster. During the years that followed, many well known Imperial regiments occupied the old fort. During and after the Ninth Xhosa War (1877—78) it was used as a training centre for the Frontier Armed Mounted Police, also known as the Currie Police, and in the 1880's it was used by the Cape Police. Gradually the fort was deprived of its military status. At one time it was used as a depot for sick mules. In the 1890's an unsuccessful attempt was made to convert it into an institution for leprosy patients, and during the Anglo Boer War there was talk of using it as a concentration camp. After that it fell into disrepair. Many of the stones and bricks were taken away, and for a time it even served as a cattle kraal. To put an end to such vandalism, notices were erected in 1909 forbidding further destruction of the fort.

Proclaimed 1938" Visual Description: Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: