

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/502/0009
	Site Name	Fort Armstrong, Balfour, Mpofu District
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-32.563312, 26.691539

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 26026

Site Category: Building

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: The fortification that was to protect the settlement here against the Xhosa was called Camp Adelaide. It was converted into a fort in accordance with the overall plan for the defence of the eastern frontier which Sir Benjamin D'Urban introduced after 1835. It was named Fort Armstrong after Capt. A. B. Armstrong who had succeeded in ensuring the loyalty of the Hottentots to the British cause during the Sixth Xhosa War. When the Eighth Xhosa War broke out in 1850, how ever, the Hottentots of the Kat River settlement rose against the Colonial government. In January, 1851, the Whites of the area were obliged to gather in Fort Arm strong to defend themselves there, but the Hottentots succeeded in surrounding and taking the fort. Fortunately the Whites were allowed to escape, whereupon the fort became the headquarters of the rebels under Uithaalder. A burgher force consisting of about 840 English, Boers and Fingoes under the command of Commandants Bowker, Pringle, Haugh, Ziervogel, Delport, Currie and Captain Ayliff was hurriedly raised at Post Retief some 24 km to the west and advanced on Fort Armstrong. At the same time a force of 1 800 regulars including artillery under Maj. Gen. Henry Somerset set out from Fort Hare. The Burgher force opened the attack on the fort at sunrise on 23rd February. They were joined by the regulars at 10.30 a.m. The fort was destroyed by artillery fire but the rebels fought back bravely. Their numbers were gradually reduced and the attackers were eventually obliged to indulge in hand-to-hand fighting, in which the last nine of the rebels were killed. The fort was not restored after the battle and it was never used again. Only the main tower survived the battle and the land where the fort stood is today almost completely covered by an orange orchard. A few relics of the battle are preserved in the museum in Fort Beaufort. Proclaimed 1938" Visual Description: The town of Balfour on the Kat River stands at the foot of the Katberg Mountain about 40 km due north of Fort Beaufort. Not far to the south-east of the town, the road to Hertzog passes the farm Mesopotamia which nestles in a curve of the Kat River. A tower that stands on top of a prominent hill on this farm is all that remains of Fort Armstrong, one of the most historic forts in the area. Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: