

Extract from Natal Daily News, 20th May, 1939.

900 MEN WHO HAD BAD LUCK.

Cape Town, Saturday.

With the arrival in Cape Town today of the last big group of Argentine ~~farmers~~ Boers, the task is ended of repatriating 900 South African farmers who went to settle in South America after the Boer War.

Almost from the start of their life in their new home luck was against the settlers.

The Argentine Boers left South Africa in the difficult years after the South African War, between 1902 and 1906. and a large number of them settled in the vicinity of Comodoro Rivadavia in Paragonia, a district of storms and snow 1,000 miles south of Cape Town in latitude.

By 1937 when the return to South Africa started this community numbered about 900.

When a number of South Africans decided to take up land in the Argentine, a transport ship, the Guardia Nacional, chartered by the Argentine Government took them over. The first trek was followed by another party in 1903. The third and largest trek comprised 302 people. In all, four batches of emigrants left South Africa.

For years they struggled to make a living under a system of tenant farming, as only by taking up Argentine nationality could the farmers buy land. A few did deny their birthright.

However some did well, either on the land with sheep or in business houses and with the oil companies. When it was decided that a gradual return to South Africa should be made, several families were in a position to help the Dutch Reformed Church with the cost of their repatriation.

Through all the years the Boer community kept up their language and traditions. Most of them speak three languages - English, Afrikaans and Spanish.