

History in Lesotho

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Lesotho (pronounced Le-Soo-Too), officially the called Kingdom of Lesotho, is a landlocked country entirely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. Lesotho was formerly called Basutoland, until it reached independence from the United Kingdom in 1966. The name Lesotho translates roughly into "the land of the people who speak Sotho." A native of Lesotho is called a Mosotho and the people are called Basotho. Lesotho has two official languages: Sesotho and English. The country's capital is also its largest city: Maseru.

Modern Lesotho emerged in the 1800s under King Moshoeshe I of the Mokoteli. He is considered to be the father of Lesotho's history. He gathered various tribes who were scattered across southern Africa and was able to unite the different groups under the chaotic reign of Zulu. King Moshoeshe I rose in status as a diplomatic and respected leader. He was known to extend grace towards his fallen enemies. King Moshoeshe I laid the foundation for modern day Lesotho and protected the land against the British and Boers.

In 1868, a British proclamation declared Basutoland to be British territory. Three years later, the nation of Basutoland was annexed to the Cape Colony. The ruling of the Cape Colony was not popular with the people. This led to Basutoland being placed under direct British rule in 1884. Basutoland received independence on October 4, 1966, governed by a constitutional monarchy. The country officially became known as the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Moshoeshe Day

King Moshoeshe I's Anniversary is a public holiday in Lesotho. It is celebrated every year on March 11. Moshoeshe I died on March 11, 1870.

