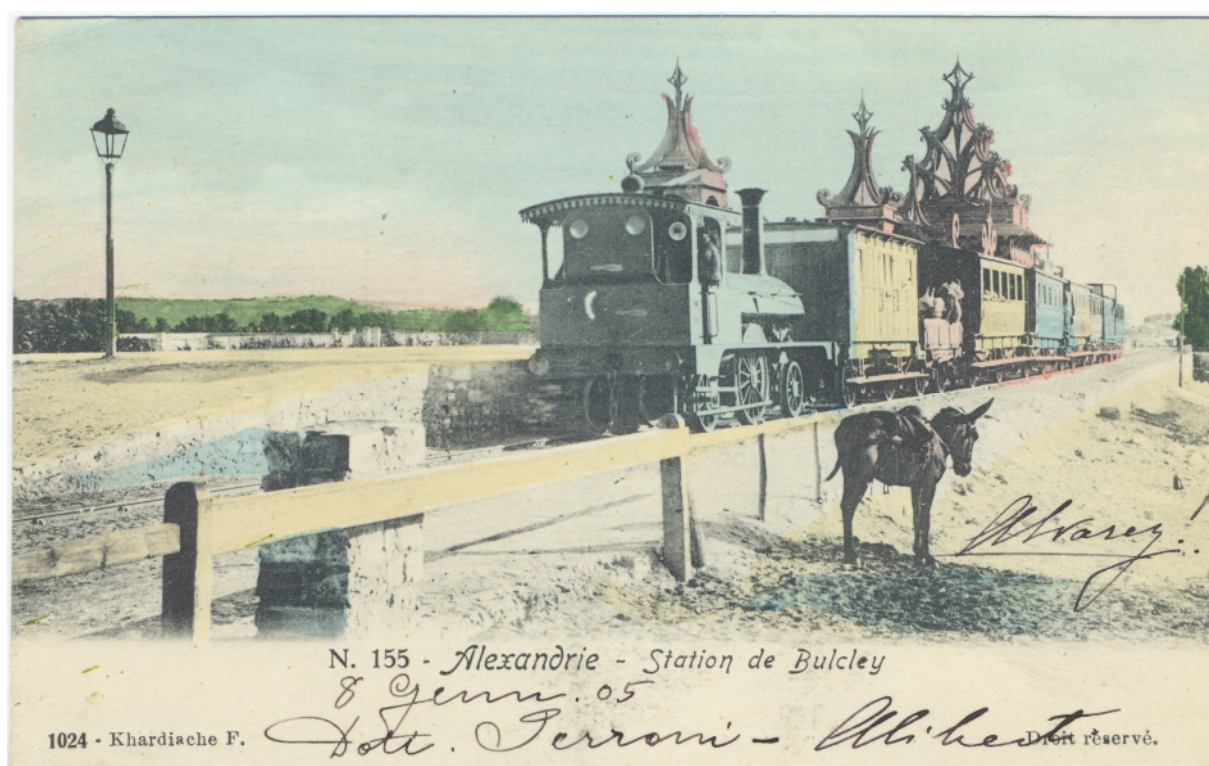


AAHA = Amicale Alexandrie Hier et Aujourd'hui

Ronny Van Pellecom

ALEXANDRIA & RAMLEH RAILWAY Co Ltd



Cahier no 61

Octobre 2010

THE ALEXANDRIA AND RAMLEH RAILROAD COMPANY LTD.

Communication between Alexandria and Ramleh began in 1860 by horse-drawn carts. At the beginning of 1863 a railway, built by "STRADA FERRATA TRA ALESSANDRIA E RAMLEH" began operating. A few months later the "ALEXANDRIA AND RAMLEH RAILWAY Co Ltd" was formed and took over the railway.

We find a very detailed description in the Cahier AAHA1 no5: Les Tramways de Ramleh. They have found their information in "La Réforme".

On 6 August 1860, the Egyptian government gave to Sir Edward San John Firmin, trader, British subject, the permission to build a railway linking Alexandria to the suburbs of Ramleh.

The government reserved at the same time, the right to withdraw the concession at any time by paying the concessionaire the price of the track and its dependencies.

At that time, the population of Ramleh was no more than 500 inhabitants.

August 22 1860, Sir Edward asked the Egyptian Foreign Ministry permission to found a joint stock company to implement its project at its expense, and on 31 October 1860, the Minister replied, approving the application within the limits of the law and declined any responsibility for the consequences by sticking strictly to the terms of the agreement of 6 August 1860, which considered only Sir Edward as concessionaire and only responsible to the Egyptian government for all matters relating to the concession

April 16 1862, a company called "Strada Ferrata Tra Alessandria e Ramleh" was established with a capital of 12,000 pounds represented by 1,200 shares. Sir Edward gave the license to the Company against 30% of earnings for the first three years. The first rails were installed in September 1862 on the site of the obelisk of Cleopatra (the present station at Ramleh) and 1,200 workers were assigned to this work

8 January 1863 was the inauguration of the first public transport of a convoy leaving Alexandria to the home of Sheikh Ismail (now station Bulkeley) by road from the mosque of Sidi Gaber. The convoy consisted of a 1st class car, two second and one third class, drawn by four horses. The price was 6 P.T. of the first, 4 for the second and 2 for the 3rd; schedule was: Alexandria depart at 8:30, 12:30 and 16:30 and departing from Ramleh at 9.30, 14.00 and 17.30.

June 28 1863, the old company was replaced by a new company with fixed capital "The Alexandria and Ramleh Railway Co. Ltd".

August 23 1863, a steam engine was used to replace the horses. The locomotive was imported in July 1863 and ran the distance in 20 minutes including stops at the stations

October 3, 1863, the Board decided to issue annual passes at 15 pounds for the 1st class and 12 for the second.

On January 25 1864, the first general meeting of shareholders was held. Total income was 4,421 L.E. with 3,033 L.E. of expenditure. After deducting a reserve of 10% and 30% returning to Sir Edward it yielded the rate of interest for each share at 7.48%.

On 1st October 1865, the Company concluded an agreement with the postal authorities for the transport of mail bags from Alexandria to Ramleh on the lines of the Company.

Initially the railway ran as far as Bulkeley in 1863 and was extended to Schutz in 1868.

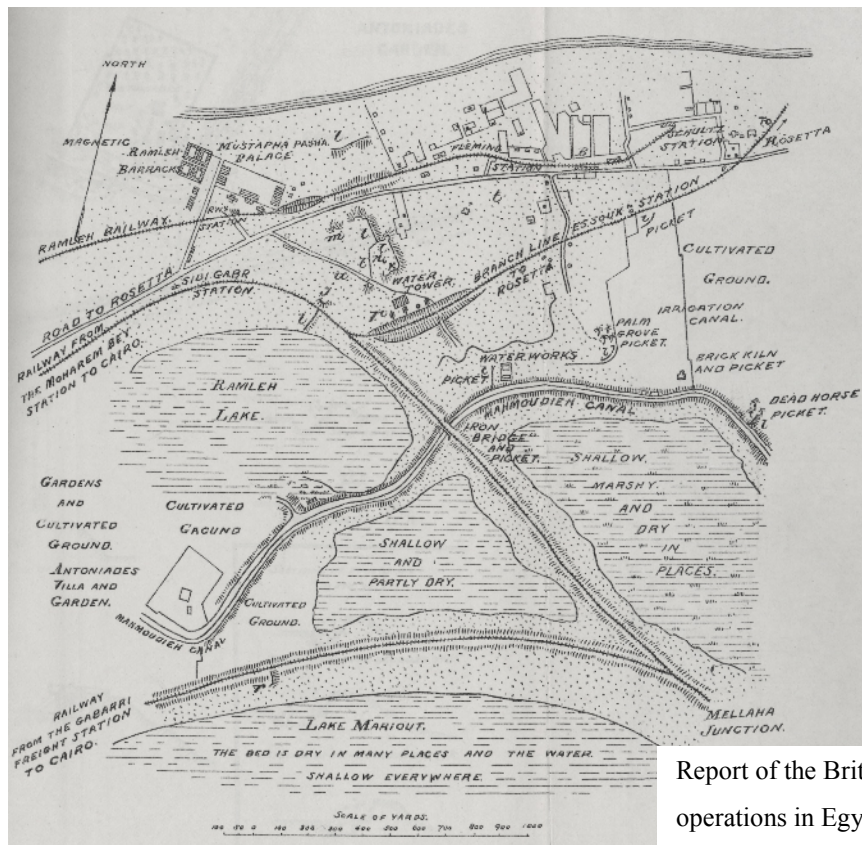
Further extensions were significantly hampered by friction between the Company and the Egyptian government, as evidenced by the following documents.

It took until after the British occupation in 1882 before any further extension could take place. In 1888 the railway was extended to San Stefano and by 1890 the northern line was in use.

¹ AAHA (Amicale Alexandrie Hier et Aujourd'hui)

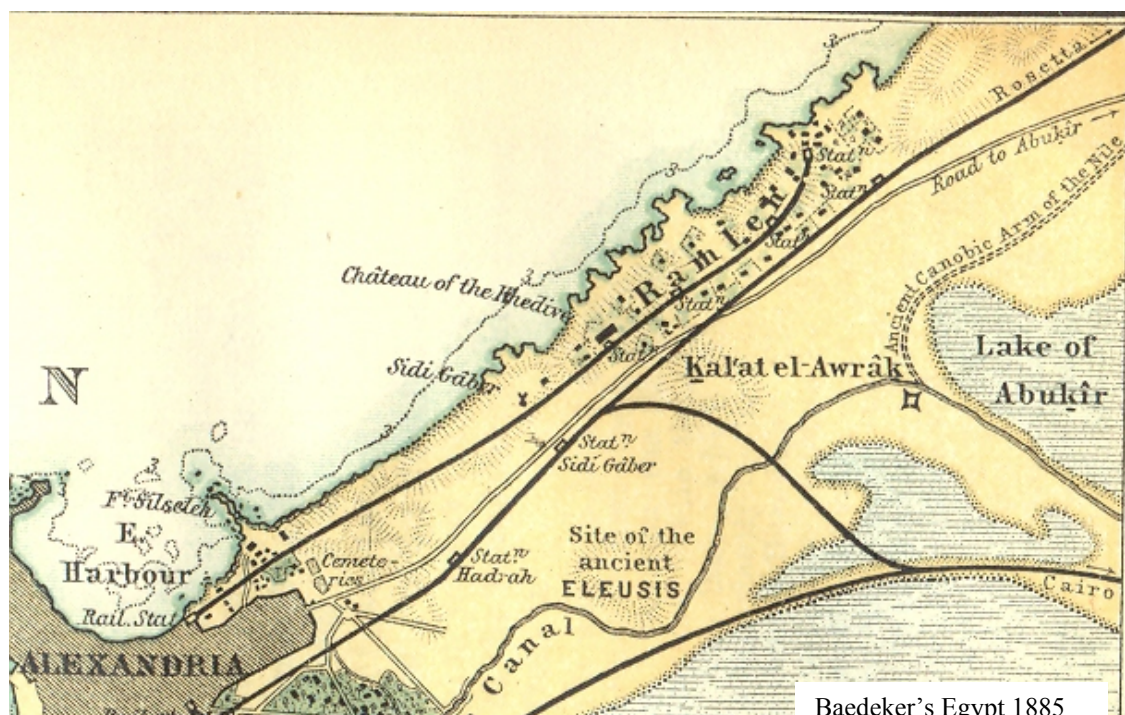


In 1882, Ramleh is connected with Alexandria by two railways; the direct line, on which a train runs hourly to Ramleh in 20 min. (explored by the Alexandria and Ramleh Railway Co) and the Rosetta railway (station outside the Porte Moharem-Bey, explored by the Egypt States Railways), which runs 2 train daily to Ramleh in 27 min.



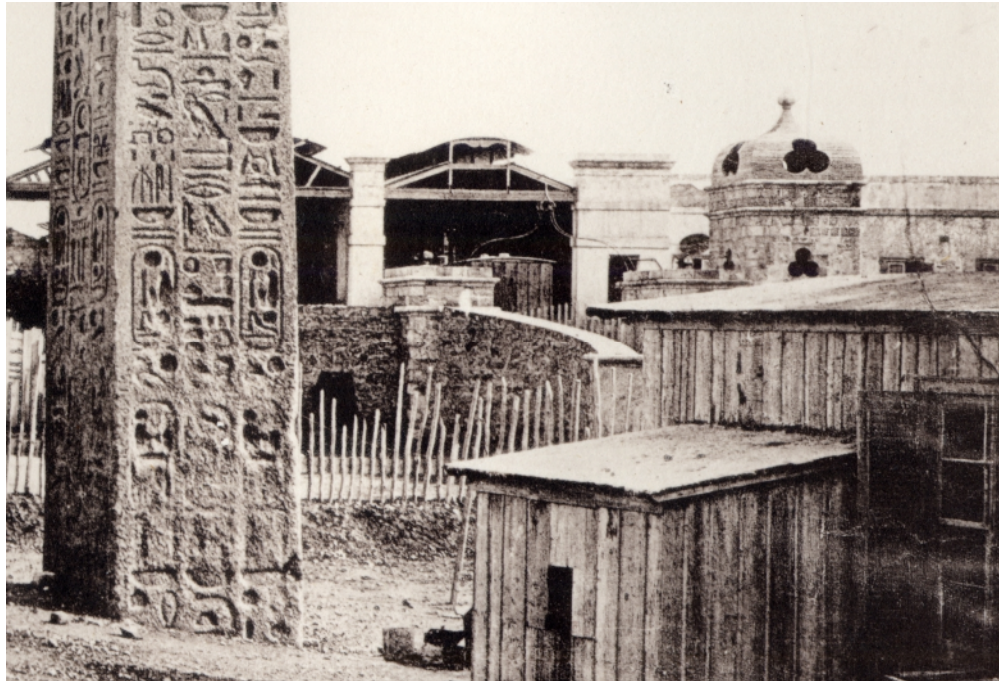
Report of the British Naval and Military operations in Egypt 1882

At that time, 5 stations were in use: St. Mustafa, St. Bulkeley, St. Fleming, St. Bacos and St. Schutz. The name of those stations were referred to by the names of executive members of the Company.

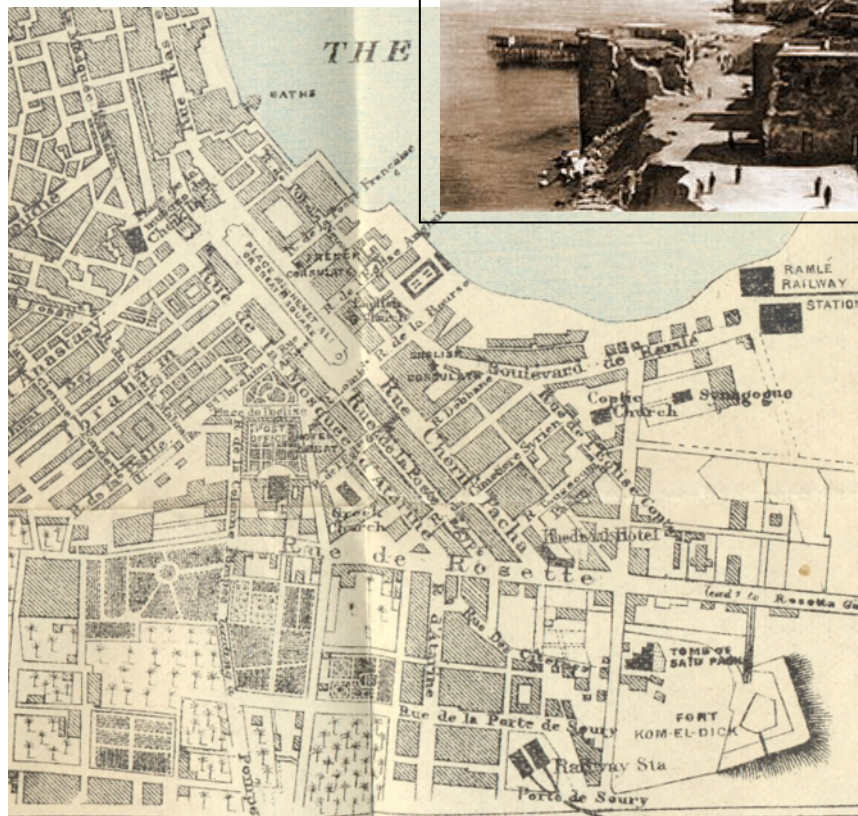


Baedeker's Egypt 1885

The station to Ramleh in Alexandria was situated at the end of the Ramleh Boulevard, near the sea.



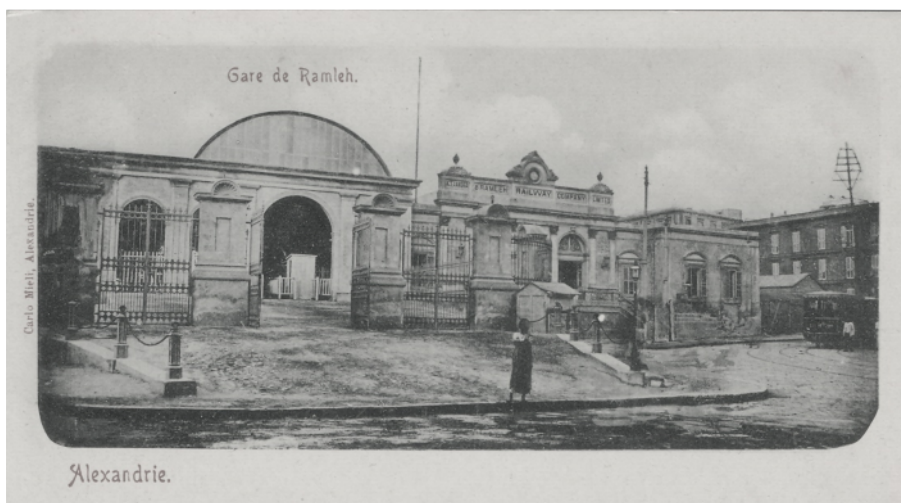
In front "Cleopatra's Needle" before its transfer to New York. Behind the Needle you can see the hangars of the station. (Collection Max Karkégi)



Murray's Handbook EGYPT 1891



The old station of Ramleh in Alexandria before the construction of the tramway.



The station after the construction of the tramway.



THE STATION OF BULKELEY²



We can find a discription a history of the namegiving of the stations in the book of Mabel Caillard³: "A lifetime in Egypt (1935).

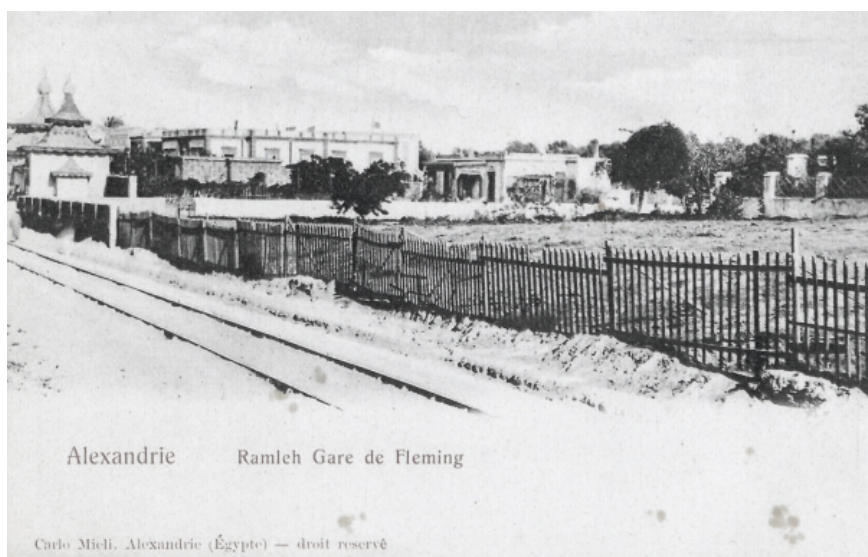
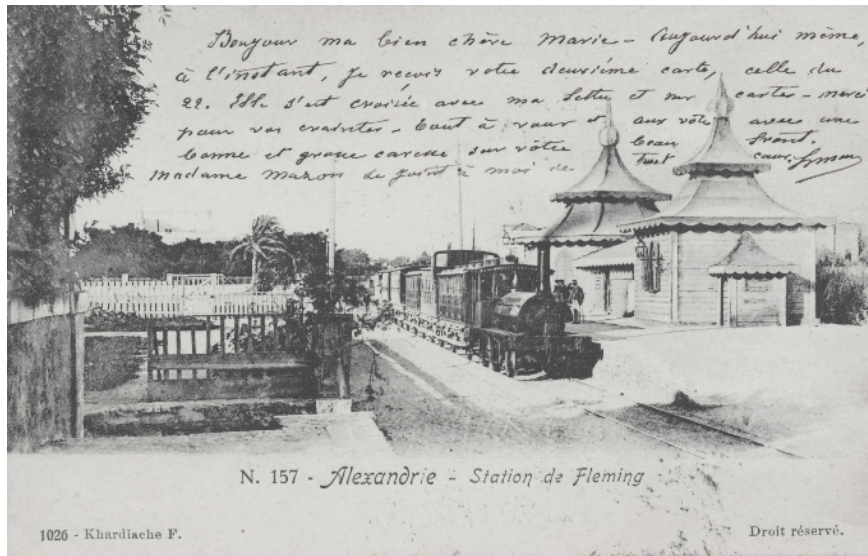
The railway, which played so important a part in its existence, divided the suburb into districts that took the names of the stations of the line; these occurred at intervals of a few hundred yards and were called after some leading resident in the vicinity. Mr Fleming and captain Bulkeley were close friends, as well as members of the board of the railway company, and in the early days of the line had built their houses side by side in a commanding position on the southern ridge of the sand hills. Every morning the two cronies, emerged from their front doors at exactly the same moment and walked in company to the nearest halt to catch the business train to town; and the process was repeated in the afternoon when, having lunched at home, they returned to Alexandria to complete their labours for the day.

The Mr Fleming went to England on a holiday; and at a meeting of the railway board, held during his absence, it was decided to give names to the stations. Mr Schutz and Mr Bacos accepted the distinction and Captain Bulkeley was informed of the proposal to name a third halt in his honour. An elaborate fretwork erection marked the spot, and on his return from abroad the glaring announcement of Bulkeley Station confronted Mr Fleming on either side and at each end of the flimsy edifice. He was a short man, and short-tempered. He reviled his quondam friend in no measured terms for having stolen a march on him and, adducing priority, demanded the substitution of his name for Captain Bulkeley's. In vain it was pointed out that the Captain's house was, if by not more than a few yards, nearer to the station in question, and that he held by his prerogative: the dispute was only settled by the company agreeing to set up another station, a little further on the line, for Mr Fleming's separate use. Thenceforth, in dignified solitude, Captain Bulkeley and Mr Fleming – in the black top-hat and coat that he always affected – walked to Fleming, to travel in different compartments by the train to Alexandria.

² Named after Captain Bulkeley, member of the board of the Railway Company

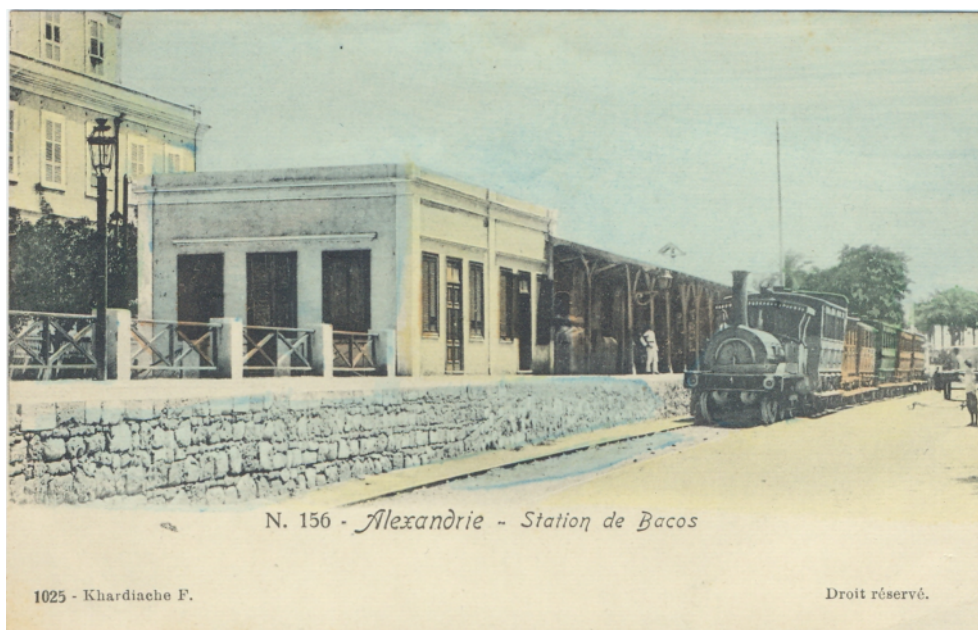
³ Daughter of A. Caillard, Director General of the Egyptian Post from April 1876 to 31.12.1879.

THE STATION OF FLEMING⁴

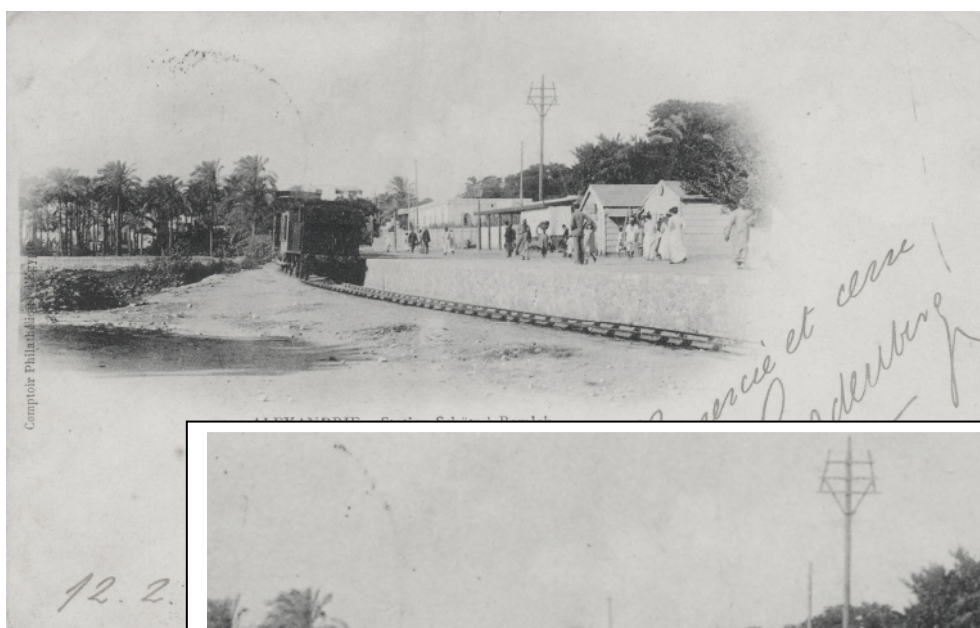
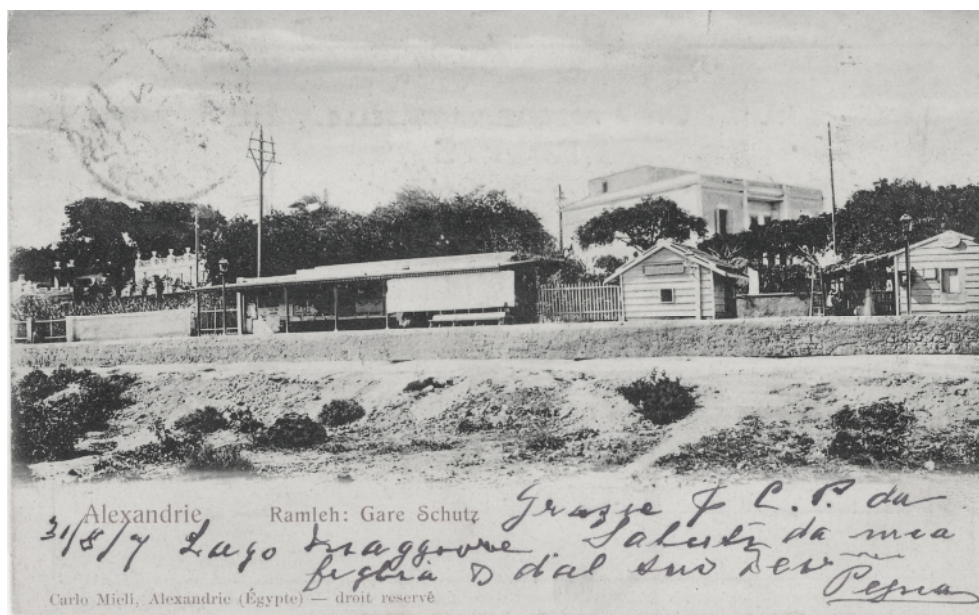


⁴ Named after Robert Tod Fleming, trader in cotton. Died by heart attack on 27 August 1898 at Hastings

THE STATION OF BACOS



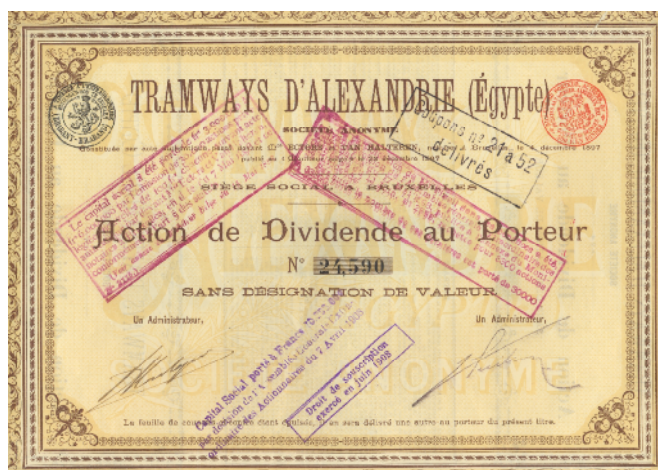
THE STATION OF SCHUTZ⁵



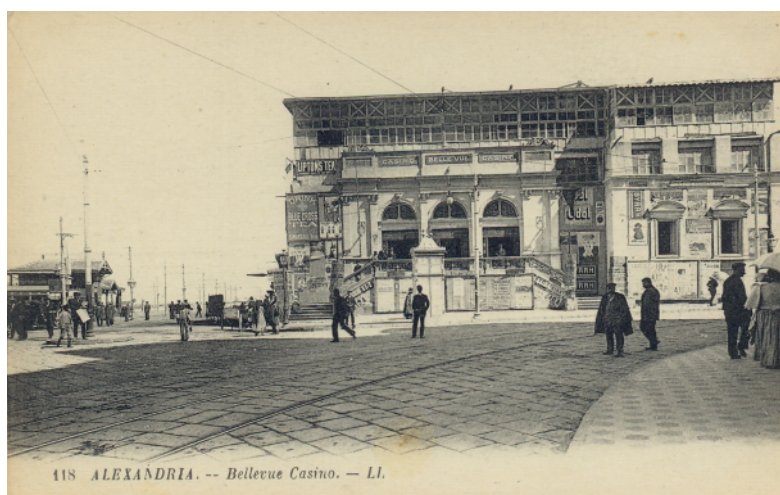
⁵ P.A. Schutz was a Dutch Consul. Alfred Schutz was manager of the Egyptian Gunpowder Department in 1878. S.O. Schutz was a member of the board of the Ramleh Railway Company in 1869.

Meanwhile in Alexandria, since 1897, the tramway system of the city had been constructed and operated by the Belgian group of Edouard Otlet (1847-1902), the SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME DES TRAMWAYS D'ALEXANDRIE⁶.

The majority of the shares were issued to the French COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRALE DE TRACTION, which obtained the original concession from the city of Alexandria. At the same time the Alexandria & Ramleh Railway Company began to investigate the possibility of changing from the steam power to electric power. In 1899 the SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME DES TRAMWAYS D'ALEXANDRIE also acquired most of the shares of the British Company, the ALEXANDRIA & RAMLEH RAILWAY Co. Ltd.⁷⁸ and M. Phillipart, the Managing Director of the Tramway Company became also Chairman of the Railway Company.



In 1902 the city of Alexandria began to make plans to extend the Ramleh Boulevard to Chatby and to strengthen the quays. This required not only the demolition of the so-called Roman Tower, but also of the railway station which stood in the way. In April and March 1902 there were shareholder extraordinary meetings where the decision was taken for the existing railway to be replaced by an electric tram.



View of the old Ramleh station after the partial demolition (23/10/1903) and the transforming to the Hotel Belle Vue.

⁶ Formed in Brussels in 1897. Capital 3.000.000 Frs.

⁷ Belgian Companies in Egypt – Howard Shakespeare, Journal of the International Bond & Share Society, August 1998.

⁸ Dr Pecnik wrote in his book: "Ramleh, die eleusinische Riviera – Woerl's Reisbucherverlag 1900 on page 40: "The railway is now in the hands of a Belgian - Egyptian society"



View after the demolition of the Roman Tower and the strengthening of the new quay.
In front the new temporary tram station



The new tram in Ramleh
Imp. Levy fils & Cie, Paris

The first 8 vehicles reached Alexandria on February 23, 1903, on board the SS Persian Prince, and by March 28, 30 vehicles had already arrived. The new tram line was built alongside the existing tracks and a first test run between San Stefano and Alexandria was held on June 9, 1903. From then on things developed rapidly. The (partial) demolition of the railway station in Alexandria began on October 23; an official test with Boghos Nubar Pasha took place on November 12, and by November 20 the electrification of the line was fully implemented.

On December 31, 1903 the electric trams began running together in parallel with the remaining trains, until January 25, 1904 when the last steam train was withdrawn.
The old train stations were replaced by tram stations and new tram stations came into.



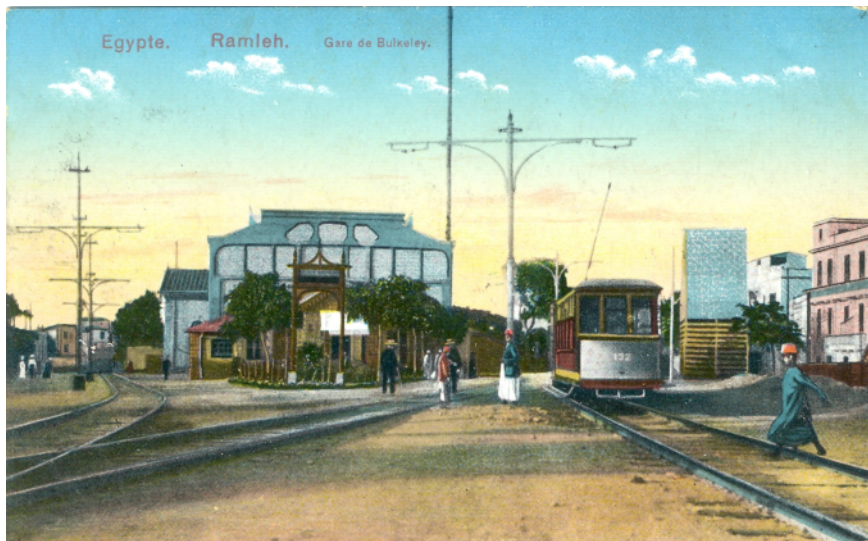
Mazarita, probably in use from 1914



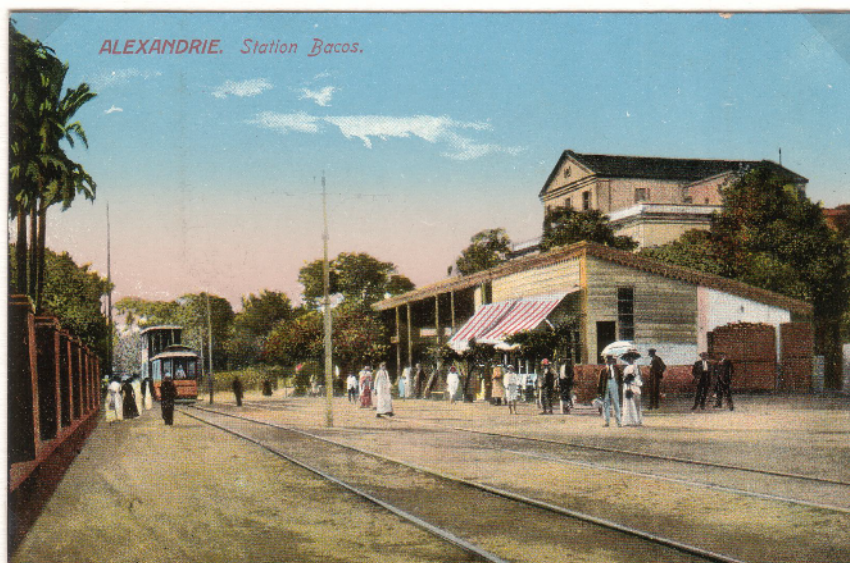
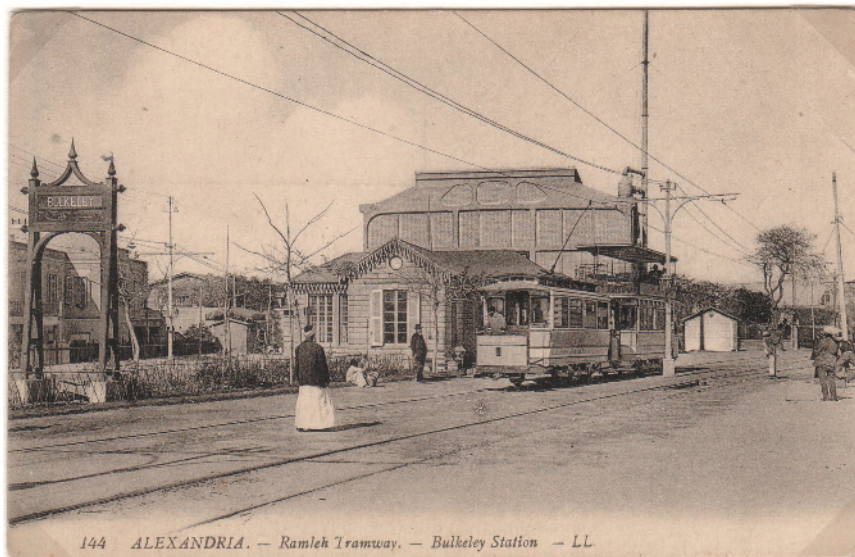
Camp de Cesar with the tram to Victoria



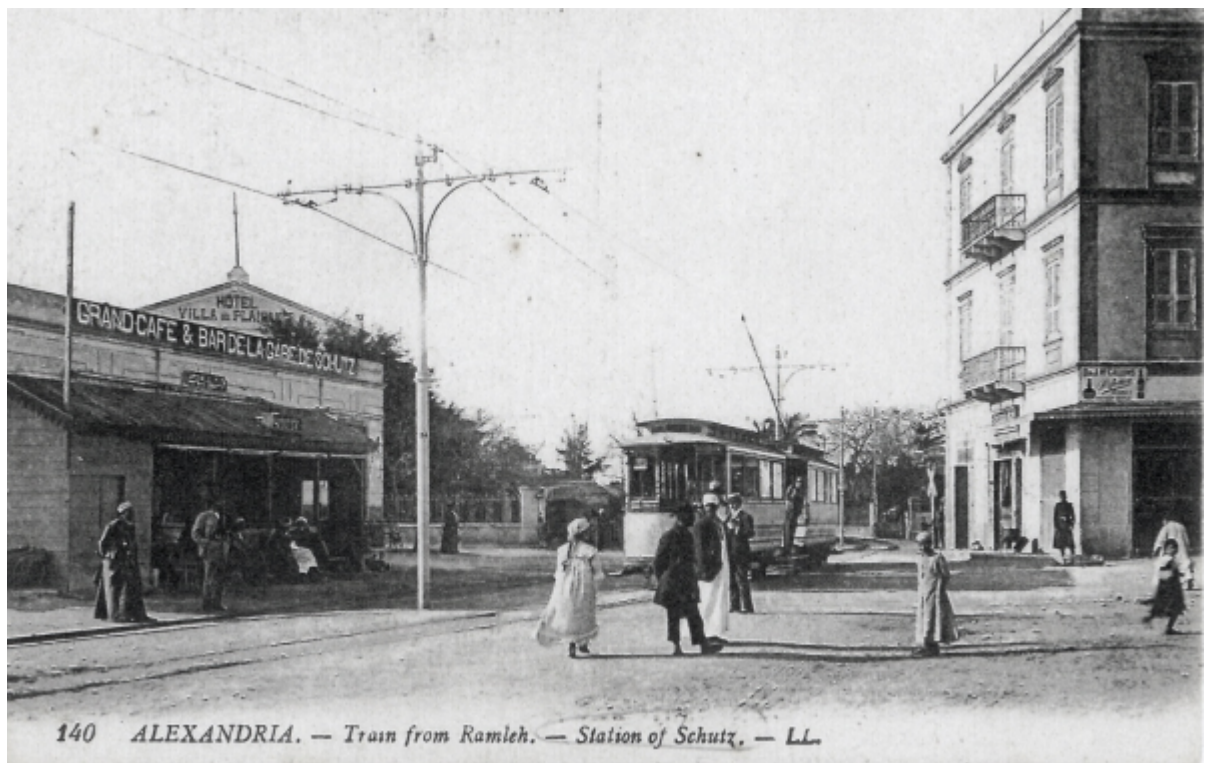
Station of Ibrahimieh



Station of Bulkeley



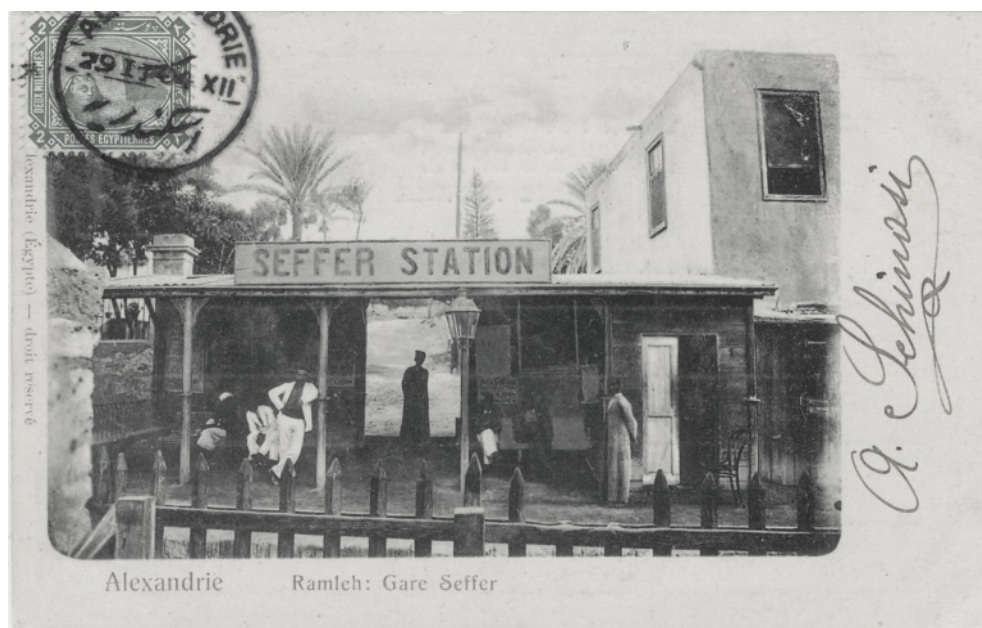
Station of Bacos



Station of Schutz (Coll. Max Karkégi)



Station of Seffer (Coll. Max Karkégi)



Station of San Stefano

1919: The state transferred to the city of Alexandria the rights attached to the concession.

1929: On 1 January, after a legal battle, the city of Alexandria forcibly purchased back the 1860 Concession from the Company.

From:
RAMLEH – ALEXANDRIE
Its Development and Postal History, 1863 – 1929
2010