

Our adventure starts at the OK bazaars Vineyard parking lot. It was somewhere near here that Sergeant Pieter Cruijthof established the cattle post after the region was purchased from the Hottentot tribes on 15th May 1672.

Leave the Vineyard parking lot, crossing Andries Pretorius Street into Lourens Street. On the corner - on the left is St Paul's Catholic Church. This land was donated to the church in 1840 by its owner, David O'Flynn Esq., a medical practitioner who in 1824, was the first medical doctor to reside in Somerset West.

Continue down Lourens Street, crossing Reitz Street to Die Ou Pastorie on the left. Reitz Street is named after the third resident, minister of the Old Dutch Reformed Church, Ds Jan Frederick Reitz.

The second resident minister was Ds James Edgar. Edgar Street is across and parallel to the railway line. The first resident minister was Ds J. Spyker of Swellendam, hence Spyker Street between Verbena (lower Oak Street) and De Beers Avenue.

Die Ou Pastorie was commenced in 1818, later enlarged and built in the Victorian style in 1848, and completed in 1860. It has been altered much since. The first resident of the then incomplete Pastorie was Pieter Wyderman, the church sextant and undertaker. In 1825 the first teacher of English, Mr. W Tomson, lived here. Ds Reitz and his family moved in the 1860's. It was sold by the church in 1948 to HJ Niehaus.

In the late 1970's Die Ou Pastorie was converted into a restaurant by Wolfgang and Corinne Leyer and, although it has changed hands, has remained a restaurant ever since. Return to Reitz Street and turn right towards the river. Turn up Fagan Street to the stop street at Andries Pretorius Street. On the opposite corner is the newly established Cloetenberg Restaurant.

Built in the 1940's this was the home of Isy and Rita Muller. Isy is the son of W Miller, one of Somerset West's first businessmen. Turn right. You will now cross the new (1986) bridge over the Lourens River.

Cattle Post

Corporal Muller first described this river in September 1655. The initial name accorded the river - Die Tweede Rivier - was changed to the Breitenbach River after Lieutenant Coenraad Breitenbach and was still later changed to the Lourens River, probably after Corporal Lourens Visser who was in charge of the cattle post in 1673. It still remains this name. (Check with Peggy Heap's Book)

Retirement village

The original homestead (Bridgewater Manor) can be seen on the right as you pass. It was built between 1788 and 1803 by William Morkel, the son of Captain Willem Morkel. It passed out of Morkel hands in 1840 and its then owner, Dr Mills, changed the name to Bridgewater. The farm was subdivided into erven in 1937.

We now come to Main Street, Somerset West. In front of us is Stormhaven Park, a retirement village. Originally part of the Morkel's farm, Onverwacht, (now De Bos), it became Rome Farm in 1828...named so for the seven small hills.

Vines

Rome Farm became Pinehurst in 1880 when Dr Mills owned it. It was later changed to Bizweni, which is Xhosa for "place of meeting". American, Kenneth Quinan, who was the first general manager of Cape Explosives bought the farm and was the first person to introduce the high trellis system of planting vines. He exported the grapes under the name Q-grapes. The farm passed onto his son, Storm Quinan, and when this section was recently purchased it was aptly named "Stormhaven".

In 1917 Kenneth Bingham Quinan became one of the first two recipients of the Order of Companions of Honour.

We now turn left into Main Street, Somerset West...De Grote Algemene Weg of yesteryear. As we cross the bridge completed in 1938 we see the original double span Table Mountain sandstone bridge on the right. It is dated 1845 and is a National Monument.

This journey has taken you to the bridge on the Lourens River, crossing it and entering the CBD.