

Pretoriana



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- Gelukwensings/Congratulations.
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Op hierdie terrein (geboue op die voorgrond) het die Veeartsenykundige Navorsingsinstituut op Onderstepoort begin. Die terrein word vandag ingesluit deur Border- en Von Wiellighstraat en die spoorlyn tussen Gholfen Bantulehaltes. Die Pretoriase Mark sal binnekort na hierdie terrein verskuif word. Vanaf 1896 was hier ’n ontsmettingstasie vir beesvelle (tydens die Runderpes), wat in 1898 ingerig is as ’n laboratorium vir dr. Theiler, die Staatsveearts van die Z.A.R. Sy imposante woonhuis en boomryke tuin kan op die suidwestelike hoek van Border- en Von Wiellighstraat gesien word. Die huis is onlangs gesloop.



„*Ons Vier!*” — “*We Rejoice!*”

DIT is 'n mooi tradisie van ons blad om met die volk van Suid-Afrika saam te leef en iedere belevens wat die bevolking aangryp, in sy bladsye te vermeld en te huldig.

Ons vier tans die vyftigjarige bestaan van die Unie van Suid-Afrika en die honderdjarige bestaan van ons stad as regeringsetel van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek en latere administratiewe hoofstad van die Unie.

Ons kom soms na Pretoria van die oop veld en die rante. Ons stap waarnemend en nadenkend deur die strate. Ons kyk op na die geboue. En ons slaan ons hande saam oor alles wat hier versit is in 'n 100 jaar. Ons gaan sit stil op 'n bank op Kerkplein en probeer onthou wat ons stad vir Transvaal en vir Suid-Afrika alles beteken het. Ons word 'n bietjie duiselig en daarom praat ons nie veel nie. Maar ons besluit dat ons Pretoria liefhet en graag meer wil doen om sy inwoners te dien.

* * *

For we rejoice at the desire of our elders to join hands across the

Orange, the Vaal, and the Drakensberg which led to the Act of Union in 1910. We know that the desire of the nation to stand closely together has grown stronger and stronger since Union in spite of our different points of view and in spite of efforts from outside to divide us — perhaps largely *because of* those efforts. And it is in this cause of unity and friendship cemented by a common tradition, common ideals and a common devotion to duty that our Association Old Pretoria offers this special edition of “Pretoriana” to all Pretorians and to our fellow South Africans in general.

After 50 years we gird our loins for further achievement and for better service, always remembering that the future is rooted in the past and and is growing from it day by day.

G. W. EYBERS,
*Voorsitter, Genootskap Oud-Pretoria/
Chairman, Association Old Pretoria.*

Die Burgemeester van Pretoria Beklemtoon 'n Leemte in die Geskiedskrywer se Benadering van Ons Geskiedenis

GRAAG wil ek die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria gelukwens met sy voorname om 'n spesiale uitgawe van „Pretoriana” te wy aan die herdenking van die honderdjarige bestaan van Pretoria as setelplaas van die Regering.

Dit is 'n gepaste geleentheid om die tydperk sedert 1 Mei 1860 toe die Republikeinse Regering sy kantore van Potchefstroom na Pretoria verplaas het, in oënskou te neem.

Die uitgawe bevat dan ook 'n aantal artikels met besonderhede oor verskeie gebeurtenisse in die onderhawige tydperk.

Hierdie en ander dergelike pogings om belangstelling in ons geskiedenis aan te wakker moet allesins verwelkom word. Tog bestaan daar vir my nog altyd 'n leemte in die geskiedskrywer se benadering tot ons geskiedenis. Daar is byvoorbeeld 'n hele aantal tesisse, sommige waarvan uitstekend is, oor verskeie fasette van Pretoria se wordingsjare en die tydperk wat daarop gevolg het. Ek is egter onbewus van enige publikasie wat 'n samevattende beeld van die geskiedenis van die stad en sy inwoners gee. Met enkele uitsonderings word daar ook getrag om die aangename aspekte van die lewe te skets terwyl die skadukante of verdoesels of geheelenal verswyg word.

Dit wil my voorkom asof ons beide as stadsinwoners en Suid-Afrikaners nog nie volwasse genoeg is om die verlede nugter te betrag nie sodat ons met inagneming van alle aspekte daarvan die grootste nut vir



DR. J. C. OTTO.
Burgemeester van Pretoria/Mayor of Pretoria.

die toekoms daaruit kan trek. Graag skaar ek my by diegene wat vir 'n realistiese benadering van die verlede pleit ten einde te verhoed dat ons met 'n selfvoldane meerderwaardigheidskompleks ons bors uitstoot en ons oë sluit vir hedendaagse ontwikkelings wat in baie opsigte 'n natuurlike uitvloeiing van die verlede is. As ons ons verlede in die regte perspektief sien, kan ons oneindig baie daaruit leer. Die regte toepassing van sulke kennis sou op baie gebiede 'n herhaling van die foute voorkom wat ons voorvaders gemaak het.

J. C. OTTO, Burgemeester van Pretoria.

The Mayor of Pretoria Stresses a Defect in the Historian's Approach to Our History

I WISH to congratulate the Society Old-Pretoria on its intention to devote a special issue of "Pretoriana" to the commemoration of the centenary of Pretoria as seat of the Government.

It is a suitable occasion on which to review the period since the 1st May, 1860, when the Republican Government transferred its offices from Potchefstroom to Pretoria.

The publication contains a number of articles giving particulars of various events during the said period.

This and other similar efforts to stimulate interest in our history must be welcomed in every respect. To me there has, however, always been a defect in the historian's approach to our history. For example, we have quite a number of theses, some of which are excellent, on various aspects of Pretoria's early years and the period following thereon. I am, however, not aware of any publication giving a comprehensive picture of the history of the city and its citizens. With a few exceptions the pleasant aspects of life are sketched, while the darker sides are either glossed over or completely suppressed.

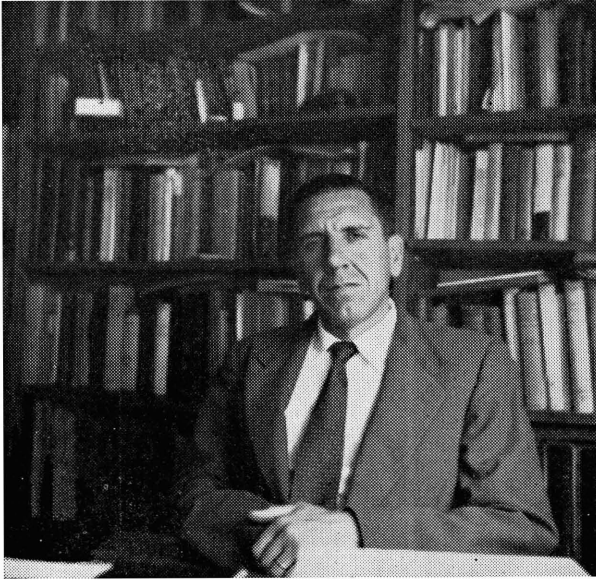
It would appear to me that we as citizens and South Africans are not yet mature enough to consider the past soberly in order that we can derive the most advantage therefrom, taking all aspects into consideration. I wish to side with those who plead for a realistic approach to the past in order to prevent us from developing a smug superiority complex and closing our eyes to present developments which are in many respects a natural result of the past. If we see our past in the right perspective, we can learn a tremendous lot from it. The right application of such knowledge would in many spheres prevent a repetition of the mistakes our forefathers made.

J. C. OTTO, *Mayor of Pretoria.*

Woord van Waardering aan Dr. Spies

DIÉ Genootskap Oud-Pretoria is in 1948 gestig. Mnr. H. P. H. Behrens was die eerste sekretaris en nadat hy bedank het, is hy deur dr. Spies opgevolg wat tot verlede jaar as sekretaris van ons Genootskap gedien het.

Hy het dus 'n skof van ruimskoots 10 jaar as sekretaris agter die rug. Gedurende die termyn het hy hom gekenmerk deur sy kalme optrede,



DR. F. J. DU T. SPIES.

*Vir ruim 10 jaar het dr. Spies met groot nougesetheit en deeglikheid as
Sekretaris van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria gedien.*

deeglikheid en betroubaarheid in alle sake wat die Genootskap geraak het. Dit was vir die bestuur en lede altoos aangenaam om na sy besonder volledige notule-aantekeninge te luister. Ongetwyfeld sal hierdie notule in die loop van jare 'n bron vir die geskiedenis van die Genootskap asook ons stad Pretoria word. Diegene van ons wat met hom saamgewerk het, het sy besondere verdienste as sekretaris baie hoog waardeer. Sy artikels in ons blad het steeds groot belangstelling geniet.

Ons Genootskap wil hom dan ook besonder bedank vir die aantal jare wat hy so getrou as Ere-sekretaris van ons Genootskap gedien het. Ons wens hom alle sukses en voorspoed toe en vertrou dat ons hom nog dikwels by die vergaderings van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria sal sien.

By hierdie geleentheid wil ons ook graag mevrou Spies bedank dat sy haar man by die sosiale funksies van ons Genootskap so getrou bygestaan het. Ons het haar bydrae baie waardeer.

W. PUNT.

How Pretoria Became Seat of Government of the South African Republic in 1860 and Administrative Capital of the Union of South Africa in 1910

PRETORIA has already celebrated its centenary as a city; this year it completes its centenary as administrative centre of, first, the South African Republic, then the Transvaal Colony and now the Union of South Africa. It did not become the centre of administration as a matter of prescriptive right but rather as a result of conditions prevailing in the South African Republic in the middle of the 19th century, and as a result of the bulldog determination of the Pretorians of the 1850's to make their town capital, unlikely though it appeared at that stage.

From 1849 onwards the Volksraad was rather unevenly balanced. Lydenburg, with one-eighth of the population, had a majority of representatives. There was no fixed capital, the Volksraad meeting at Lydenburg, Potchefstroom, Rustenburg and on a number of well-known farms, though Lydenburg was considered by its inhabitants as the capital. In 1851 the Volksraad received a petition requesting a capital in the middle of the country.

In June 1852 the government farm Bronkhorstfontein, near Bapsfontein on the road to Delmas, was reserved for a new town.

In 1853 the Volksraad, meeting at Rustenburg, deputed Commandant-General M. W. Pretorius to view certain farms in the vicinity of Bronkhorstfontein and decide whether they were suited to a town site. Portions of those two farms had then already passed into private ownership, a portion of Elandspoort into that of Andries van der Walt and a portion of Daspoort into that of Joggem Prinsloo. Pretorius bought portions of Elandspoort and Daspoort and at the same time also acquired the adjacent farm Nooitgedacht. These purchases were made by Pretorius out of his own pocket. When he brought the matter of the founding of a town before the Volksraad meeting at Lydenburg, the Lydenburgers unanimously turned it down. Two petitions dated the 29th August and 1st September requesting a capital "in het midden van onze bevolking" and which would have affected the privileged position of Lydenburg, had they been adopted, were just as promptly rejected by the Volksraad. In November 1853 another attempt by Pretorius to raise the project in the Volksraad, then in session at Potchefstroom, shared the same fate. Pretoria, it will be remembered, did not yet exist.

On the 7th of June 1854 the Rev. Dirk van der Hoff appeared at a "Algemene Kerkvergadering" to support petitions requesting that a

separate church community be founded on the farms Pretorius had bought. To this the Volksraad consented, two Lydenburgers only opposing, and so the "Elandspoort Kerkplaas" came into being as an organised and recognised parish of the Dutch Reformed Church.

More petitions requesting the establishment of a centrally situated seat of government, of which there were destined to be a good many, were received in the beginning of 1855. They requested that the Volksraad should meet yearly "op het middenpunt van het Republiek". To this the Volksraad replied temporisingly that a final answer would be given at the next session.

By now political conditions in the Republic had deteriorated, and a "Kommissieraad" was appointed to draw up "een ontwerp van wetten" as a result of an agreement between Stephanus Schoeman and M. W. Pretorius. The draft was to be ready by November, which it was. Article 18 of the draft constitution provided for a central seat of government. It has always been representatives of Lydenburg who had thwarted any attempt to found a new centrally situated town. During the November session of the Volksraad the Lydenburgers were absent, having seceded from the South African Republic in 1854.

Pretorius seized his opportunity. For the fourth time he attempted to induce the Volksraad to found a new town on the farms which he had bought. This time Pretorius succeeded and the new town was named "Pretoria" in honour of Commandant-General Andries Pretorius.

During March 1856 political conditions in the South African Republic deteriorated rapidly, and in April the two Commandants-General Stephanus Schoeman and M. W. Pretorius, met at Potchefstroom to review the situation. They recommended a new constitution replacing the 33 Articles then in force, and convened an assembly of the Kommissieraad on the 26th May 1856 "at the new town Pretoria" to review this draft constitution. The Raad duly met in Hendrik Vermeulen's house which stood on the erf where the South African Reserve Bank Building now stands. The "Algemene Besluiten en Bepalingen" of the constitution presented before this Raad provided that Pretoria would be the seat of government. While Lydenburg had seceded in 1854 Elandspoort and (in 1856) Pretoria was no longer centrally situated and therefore the whole Pretoria-for-capital scheme was thrown into the melting-pot. It was therefore not surprising that the "Gecommitteerde Raad" meeting on the 16th December 1856 declared Potchefstroom to be and to remain "unalterably" ("onverbrekbaar") the capital of the South African Republic. It went on to stipulate that until a national bank could be founded the exchequer was to be kept in the President's house under the supervision of the members of the Executive Council. As the members of the Executive Council were Potchefstroomers, M. W. Pretorius, the Acting President and his Secretary for State, J. H. Visagie, was forced to leave Pretorius' residence at Kalkheuvel near Pretoria and move to Potchef-

stroom. This arrangement and circumstance was later nearly to end Pretoria's chances for good.

At this time Pretoria was an unimpressive little village. Its first Landdrost, Andries Francois du Toit, appointed in 1857, described it as being "in de woesteny". Potchefstroom had many more buildings than Pretoria, thus strengthening for practical reasons its claim to be capital of the South African Republic. This state of affairs Landdrost du Toit set out to remedy as soon as he was appointed. He immediately commenced trying to provide Pretoria with buildings and amenities in order to rival Potchefstroom. In the political field he opened the campaign with a "memorie" dated the 23rd June 1857 and signed by 244 persons protesting against the article stipulating Potchefstroom for capital. It recommended that Pretoria be capital for its central position; this was required by justice as well as by the impartial citizens, for the Republic was an "inlandsche staat". This petition could not have carried much weight, for the new constitution published in the "Staats Courant" of the 16th October 1857 stipulated that Potchefstroom was to be the capital.

Matters now took a favourable turn for Pretoria. A serious rift had opened between Pretorius and Schoeman, and a Committee Raad met at Rustenburg to draw up a new constitution and reconcile the two leaders. Inter alia, it appointed an Executive Council not consisting exclusively of Potchefstroemers, thus improving Pretoria's chances vis-à-vis Potchefstroom.

Meanwhile Du Toit was again engaged in sending memorials to the Volksraad. A petition dated the 6th February 1858 once more protested against Potchefstroom as capital, since it was situated so far away on the extreme boundary of the state, and an inland state to boot. Pretoria, the petition reminded, had been founded in honour and memory of Andries Pretorius and Pretoria was centrally situated "zynde de naaste middenpunt van onze staat". In the beginning of 1858 the Republic of Lydenburg began to seek a rapprochement. Under pressure of various factors the Volksraad changed its mind and stipulated in Article 17 of the Constitution that "Potchefstroom, gelegen aan de Mooirivier, zal de Hoofplaats der Republiek en Pretoria de Zetel van het Gouvernement zyn." At that stage the West-Transvalers started sending in counter-memorials in favour of Potchefstroom. As Acting-Commandant D. C. Bezuidenhout put it to Pretorius: "Hou Potchefstroom aan de achterbeen vast en laat niet los dezelfde terwyl het is onze Hoofstad". And there the matter rested for the year 1858 as far as the Volksraad was concerned.

In May 1858 a commission met to reconsider the constitution. On the same day the Landdrost of Pretoria and five members of the Volksraad met in die Landdrost's Office and decided that in terms of Article 34 of the constitution they had the right to call a meeting of the Volksraad in Pretoria "zynde deze plaats de Zetel van het Gouvernement". In the notice subsequently issued, this point was stressed. As a quorum failed

to put in an appearance, the proposed session never took place. Undaunted by this failure to gain Pretoria its due, Du Toit took to addressing his correspondence for the period 17th May to 9th July from the "Gouvernements Zetel, Pretoria" and the "Zetelplaats". This move did not pass unobserved by the government officials at Potchefstroom. Wrote the Landdrost of Potchefstroom to the Government Secretary: ". . . verder hoe vindt U het adres op de brieven No. 1 en 2, ik voor my, weet niet wat daarvan te maken, geloof my dat ik aan het dwalen ben, ik geloof dat er op Pretoria Baskeliskies uitgebroeid worden". This remark notwithstanding, the Volksraad met in Pretoria in September 1858, the first full Volksraad session ever held there.

Towards the end of the 1850's Lydenburg was anxious to rejoin the South African Republic and the Republic for its part was attempting to attract Lydenburg back into the fold. Negotiations with Lydenburg for reunion were therefore undertaken, and the Lydenburgers made it a condition that the seat of government should be situated at Pretoria. These negotiations were concluded on the 23rd November 1859 and an agreement was signed the following day. In Article 14 Pretoria was stipulated as seat of government and a "vereenigde Volksraad" was to be held at Pretoria in April 1860.

On the 4th April 1860 this was ratified. On the 3rd the Acting President, J. H. Grobler, had been directed to make arrangements for the erection of a "Lands-kantoor" at Pretoria. On the 9th the Volksraad instructed him to move the seat of government to Pretoria within two months. The following notice appeared in the Staats Courant of 30th April 1860: "De Zetel van het Gouvernement zal van 1 Mei 1860, te Pretoria gevestigd zyn en dus alle geschriften als anderzints aan den Hoog Ed. Fung. President gerigt van den 1 sten Mei aanstaande te Pretoria moeten bezorgd worden". May the first is consequently the anniversary of Pretoria as administrative capital. Pretoria, it seemed, had fought the good fight and won.

There were to be rough waters ahead, however. On the 1st May 1860 there were no offices in Pretoria, with the exception of M. W. Pretorius' house which was being used as such since 1857. The Executive Council had put the responsibility for their erection on the Landdrost; he, on his side, had left the onus to the Executive Council. The house had therefore to serve as an assembly for the Executive Council, the Volksraad, the Council of War (Krygsraad), the Supreme Court, and the Court of Landdrost and Heemraden. It was on the 8th November 1860 that a contract was signed with Frederik Botes for the delivery of 100 loads of stone for the foundations of the Government Building. In 1864 a contract was concluded with William Skinner and L. E. Devereux, and in 1866 the main part of the Government Building was built. This part of the building included the "Volksraadzaal" and it faced Church Square. The rest of the Government Building, facing Market Street, was erected

a few years later. During 1863 the Government Printing Works had been moved to Pretoria, and in September 1863 the Executive Council decided to move the General Post Office to Pretoria.

Yet Pretoria's status was still in jeopardy. M. W. Pretorius had been forced by the Volksraad's decision concerning the exchequer to move to Potchefstroom, and there he had settled towards the end of 1856. At the time of the change of the seat of government in 1860 he was no longer President of the South African Republic, but in 1864 he was re-elected. But Pretorius still continued to reside in Potchefstroom, having built for himself a fine residence there. In 1869 he was re-elected once more. This was too much for Pretorius, who was not a rich man, and he protested: living in Potchefstroom as he did, he could no longer make ends meet; he proposed that the seat of government be therefore shifted to Potchefstroom. The proposal was taken to the Volksraad and put to the vote; deadlock ensued, and, had the casting vote of the Chairman of the Volksraad not been for Pretoria, the seat of government would have reverted to Potchefstroom. The vote was cast in favour of Pretoria, however, and the battle was now temporarily won, no matter how narrow the margin. Pretoria remained the "Zetel" (seat of government) and Potchefstroom the "Hoofdplaats" (capital) for forty years, until the Anglo-Boer War in fact.

Then a fresh claimant arrived on the scene: Johannesburg. Leading "Uitlanders" had been included in the Witwatersrand Military Administration, and three of them, W. F. Monypenny, E. Evans and W. Wybergh, respectively Director of Civil Supplies, Civil Commissioner and Commissioner of Mines, began a campaign to make Johannesburg capital. Pretoria, wrote Wybergh to Lord Roberts, had a "tradition of intrigue and corruption", it had a "tainted atmosphere" and a "parasitical population", it was an Afrikaner stronghold, and, with a guerilla war dragging on, Johannesburg would be easier to defend should a Boer uprising occur later. Roberts was sufficiently impressed to discuss the matter with a banker, Leigh Wood. Wood, however, favoured the status quo, for in his opinion Pretoria was well situated, there was ground available and the government had its assets there, and, as a quid to Wybergh's quo, he mentioned Johannesburg's "low grade of society". Surprisingly enough, Abe Bailey supported his stand, because the transition in régime would take place more smoothly if Pretoria remained the centre of administration; two million pounds' worth of public buildings would be needed in Johannesburg; Pretoria had a better water supply and was healthy and tranquil.

As the newspapers had been suppressed during the war there was no public outcry, but Pretorians got to hear of Monypenny's intentions. H. W. Struben on their behalf contacted sir George Fiddes, Milner's lieutenant and Imperial Secretary. Fiddes came out strongly against any change. Milner, to whom the 'Uitlanders' appealed, reserved judgment,

considering the agitation premature. As it happened Milner had already been given *carte blanche* in the matter of a future capital by Joseph Chamberlain, but the High Commissioner was, to quote his own words to Roberts, "rather against Johannesburg". So he fell back on the time-honoured method of procrastination, and in the meanwhile opinion began to turn against the "uitlanders".

Milner then proceeded to reside in Johannesburg. This was hardly calculated to reassure Pretorians and they presented Milner with a memorial in 1901, to which he replied that the time was hardly ripe for a decision.

Not until 1902 did Pretoria's status cease to be in the balance. In that year a Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Arthur Lawley, was appointed, and Lawley took up residence in Pretoria, thereby making it the future capital of the Transvaal. For the first time Pretoria was the official and unrestricted capital.

During the National Convention of 1908-'09 a major obstacle to Union was encountered. Both the Cape and the Transvaal were determined that their particular colony would house the capital. Both put up strong cases: Cape Town was regarded as the Mother City, it had all the machinery of administration, it was a beautiful city, it was well away from the "corruptive influences" of the Rand(!), cost of living there was less, and it had always been Cecil Rhodes' dream that Cape Town would be capital of a Union of South Africa; on the other hand, the Transvaal was the only colony in a thriving financial state and would therefore have to do the most of the paying. Furthermore, the Transvaal delegates would be disowned if they allowed the capital to go to Cape Town. It all boiled down to the fact that neither the Cape nor the Transvaal would join if the other's capital was to become the Union capital. Bloemfontein now entered the running. It had a good central position. But, more important than that, the Orange Free State held the balance of votes. The Cape could muster twelve, the Transvaal, supported by Natal, thirteen. Talks seesawed and recriminations flew back and forth. On the 8th December 1908 General Botha moved that the matter be dealt with immediately. Once more a fight between the Cape and Transvaal delegates developed. Resort was had to that traditional stand-by of perplexed conventions: a committee to go into the matter. At the end of a week the committee, consisting of Lord de Villiers and Messrs. Sauer, Hyslop, Botha and Hertzog, could only report that the matter had best be shelved. By the 18th January 1909 the only understanding reached was that agreement seemed out of the question. The advantages of such centres as Fourteen Streams, Kroonstad, Mafeking, Queenstown, Parys and Potchefstroom being mentioned, Parys being rather ahead of the others in popularity. It was obvious that the discussion was getting nowhere. There was, however, the precedent of Pretoria's shared status in the old Republic to point the way to a compromise. On this basis Cape Town would have