



Georgetown – Pietermaritzburg

The Edendale & Imbali Heritage & Freedom Route and Westgate Tourism Experience incorporate Georgetown, a powerful narrative of contribution of the area and its people to Pietermaritzburg City as we know it now.

Georgetown Mission in Edendale dates back to the 1850s and was originally the land grant farm 'Wolverdiend' which Voortrekker leader Andries Pretorius received as a reward for his part in the Battle of Blood River (Ncome). About six thousand acres of this land were purchased by the missionary James Allison in 1851 to settle Swazi and Hlubi Christian Converts he brought with him to the area. The mission was named Georgetown after Sir George Grey, the Governor of the Cape Colony, who supported the initiative. The Black settlers became shareholders in the land, making the area unique.

These Converts 'oNonhlevu' as they were later known, lived a Western life and were always prepared to help others to read and write. They also became seasoned farmers and Georgetown became economically self sustainable, a hub of fresh produce and a major supplier to the city market which did not go down well with the Colonial powers then. The Georgetown people wanted borough recognition but this was refused in 1882 and again as late as 1930.

The place also became an important cog during the Anglo -Zulu war of 1879. The residents contributed a contingent of 100 mounted men. They first served under Colonel Durnford at Isandlwana and later under Captain Shepstone, son of Theophilus. Their commanding officer was Simeon Khambule who was later awarded the 'Distinguished Service Medal' which in the opinion of many should have been the Victoria Cross. Near the church there is a monument to the men who fell in the Anglo-Zulu, not Anglo – Zulu War.

The first Wesleyan church in Scotts Street, built in the early 50s from unbaked bricks still stands strong today and is a symbol of a people who not only sought to be independent economically but were politically conscious hence their huge contribution to the countries national liberation agenda

“The story of the Edendale community is that of people striving for a place as profit making farmers and entrepreneurs in the colonial economy, but whose competitiveness was increasingly seen as a threat to the success of the white colonial gentry. For the colonists, the destiny of all Africans was that of a labouring class. As far as the colonists were concerned, the Edendale Christians, with their education and skills, were to be the vanguard of a disciplined labour force. The history of Edendale shows how the community resisted this definition of its role, and constructed their own cultural world within colonial society.” *Sheila Meintjies in – Pietermaritzburg 1838–1988:69*

For more information and to book a Tour, contact Msunduzi Pietermaritzburg Tourism Association on 033 3451348/9