

Bellville

Everyone in South Africa knows a place called Bellville because of the notorious CY (or cowboy) motor vehicle number plates leading to the saying “come to Bellville and CY”. Alternatively, that Northern suburbs town became known as “behind the Boerewors Curtain”.

In the 17th and 18th century, there was a wagon trail where the current national road, the N1, is. The trail then turned up to Pampoenskraal, now Durbanville, and from there to Wagenmakers Vallei, now known as Wellington. There was also a lower down sand track called the Maitland Road which went to farms around Paarl and Stellenbosch. On this road there was an outspan, a place for travelers to rest and refresh their animals, called Hardekraaltjie which is now in Bellville.



In 1843, the newly formed Cape Division Council’s first task was to gravel the Maitland Road and a beacon called the Twelve Mile beacon was erected close to where the now intersection of Durban and Voortrekker Roads in Bellville is. The area became known as “The Twelve Mile Post”. In 1853, a post office was opened in a local inn near Hardekraaltjie and was known as the Eleventh Mile stone. In 1859, plans were ready for the Cape Colony’s first railway between Cape Town and Eerste River and this was completed in February 1862. Three months earlier, in

November 1961, the hamlet/village was officially named Belleville (no spelling mistake) in honour of Charles Davison Bell, the Cape's Surveyor General (it was he who designed the famous Cape of Good Hope triangular stamp). The railway station there was named D'Urban Road. In 1886, it was changed to Durban Road due to the fact that it served the nearby village of Durbanville. Finally, in November 1904, by public demand, the name Belleville was changed to Bellville.

The gravelling of the Maitland Road (later to be renamed Voortrekker Road in 1938) and the establishment of the railway line saw Bellville rapidly expand from a sleepy village to eventually become a fully fledged city on 07/09/1979. In 1996, it was incorporated in the newly formed Tygerberg Municipality. In 2000, it was absorbed in the Metropolitan City of Cape Town.