

HISTORY OF IDA'S VALLEY

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The Ida's Valley Cultural Landscape, a fertile locale made a National Heritage Site (2008) and situated just outside Stellenbosch, can be loosely defined according to three dominant spheres, namely: the wilderness, agricultural land and residential area. For the purpose of the RADA curriculum, focus will be placed particularly on the history of the residential area, known more commonly as Ida's Valley.

The origins and, especially, development of Ida's Valley is steeped in socio-political and racial disturbances. After the establishment of the Stellenbosch (1679) as the first colonial expansion outwards of the Cape Peninsula, indigenous farmers were forced further inland, with the first three farms being established in Ida's Valley 1682. Come the 18th–19th century, Ida's Valley was largely implicated in mass production of crops and livestock. Although by this stage, silent opposition to the rule of the Dutch East India Company presented itself in the form of individualised structures, the Dutch influence is still seen with many of the existing dwellings and farmsteads in Ida's Valley today. Just prior to the current 21st century, Ida's Valley had become dominated by pastures and vineyards. However, it also became dominated by the mass of "Coloureds" who immigrated into the area.

This came as a direct result of the National Party's influence as the ruling party in South Africa from 1948-1994. During this time, a system of separate development known as Apartheid lent itself to the development of laws and legislations promoting the classification and separation of South African citizens based on their skin colours; a couple of notable laws include the Population Registration Act and Group Areas Act (GAA) – both of 1950. The latter law is directly responsible for the establishment of the Ida's Valley we know today. Essentially, this law forcibly promoted that each racial group – white, coloured and black – would reside and work in different parts of each city/town. This resulted in a mass, involuntary removal of coloureds from an area of Stellenbosch previously known as *Die Vlakte* into Ida's Valley, taking place from 1964-1970.

Families and communities were greatly impacted by this forced removal. When it was first populated at this time, Ida's Valley severely lacked necessary facilities like electricity, infrastructure and running water, and was still mainly considered rural farmland. The NP took no heed of pleas for families of mixed colour (for instance, a white man and coloured woman) to stay together, nor of neighbours who preferred to be moved into the same street, particularly in Cloetesville – an area that developed after Ida's Valley became too saturated with residents. Additionally, businesses, schools and religious centres also suffered after this removal. The ones that remained in Stellenbosch were often far out of reach for the new inhabitants of Ida's Valley –importantly affecting jobs and career opportunities, promoting the degree of poverty found today – and others either had to move with the coloureds, or be rebuilt. It is likely for this reason that present-day Ida's Valley is inundated with churches. Basically the entire community of Cloetesville had to be built from scratch. A memorable event in this stage of history was the closure of the reputable Lückhoff Secondary School in Stellenbosch, established in 1937 as the first Afrikaans high school for coloured students in the entirety of the Boland. Many families of Stellenbosch and Ida's Valley will still remember the trek of learners carrying their desks on 30th October 1969 to the new school erected in Ida's Valley.

The hardships and setbacks for the inhabitants of Ida's Valley and Cloetesville in the years following has arguably been the greatest contributor to the critical lack of art forms present in both

communities. As many residents have mentioned, art and its related forms was largely considered an 'elitist' hobby/profession – in other words, suited to white people. The only activities truly explored are catering and dressmaking. However, with the aid of those individuals actively promoting musical, educational and various other social programmes, potential exists for the future of arts in Ida's Valley.