



Historical Tales of Samara Private Game Reserve

Nestled on the breathtaking plains of the Camdeboo, Samara Private Game Reserve is proud of its unique heritage. Enduring many years, the reserve has been able to maintain the historical value that is Samara. The unique historical tales of Samara dates as far back to the late 1700's, beginning with the world famous and extraordinary ornithologist heroically named Francois le Vaillant.

After having arrived in Cape Town in 1781, le Vaillant had only the clothes on his back, after the British had destroyed the ship on which all of his personal belongings were stored. With the loyal assistance and companionship of Colonel Gordon, they set forth on the long journey inland. Le Vaillant was indeed an adventurer at heart, but a smart and cautious one at that. Travelling inland, Le Vaillant was fully equipped for his long-haul journey, with two large covered ox drawn wagons, tents, a cabinet for his intriguing butterfly collections, items to barter with local indigenous people along the way, large quantities of gun powder and a large supply of bullets.

Le Vaillant was a careful explorer and always had adequate supply of weaponry during his travels such as guns, double barrel pistols, and a large scimitar. To be sure that his journey was a comfortable one, le Vaillant carried with him a large mattress, a fully equipped 'mobile' kitchen, including crockery, and linen of all types. Being a flamboyant character, le Vaillant changed his clothes at least three times a day, much to the amusement of the Khoisan servants who were greatly impressed by the eccentric explorer.

Along with le Vaillant on his journey were spare oxen, horses, dogs, a rooster, his "alarm clock" in the early hours of the morning, and a baboon named Kees, le Vaillant's companion and "*taster*" of all new foods found in the veld during the journey. Upon reaching the vast open Plains of the Camdeboo, le Vaillant set up a fortified camp on the Platrivier,

which runs along through the Samara Private Game Reserve, and experienced many adventures. The sounds of lions roaring in the dark of the night left le Vaillant aware of the possible dangers in which he could find himself in, the instinct to protect his oxen from them, dominated his thoughts. On the banks of the river he saw leopard at dawn and on the plains he hunted eland and springbok and discovered traces of rhino, an incredible discovery on the vast untouched lands of the Eastern Cape. During his journey, le Vaillant collected many birds, making an important contribution to ornithology, a branch of zoology that concerns the study of birds. Le Vaillant also painted many of the species he came across, these beautiful paintings appear in his book, *Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux d'Afrique*.

Starting in Cape Town and ending at Samara, you can follow in Francois le Vaillant's footsteps and experience the unique wilderness of the Karoo, as he did, with its unique sights and sounds, in modern comfort.

Among the many unique historical tales of Samara, lies one of importance, the story of David Livingstone. A world renowned medical missionary and explorer, who sailed from Cape Town to Algoa Bay (now Port Elizabeth) on the 16th of April, 1841, traveling with companions Mr. & Mrs. Ross. Having reached Algoa Bay, Livingstone and his companions bought ox-wagons and plentiful provisions such as candles, soap and sugar, which proved to ease the discomfort of living in the interior. Livingstone explored lands as far as Hankey, where he discovered the impressive nature of the Hottentots inhabitants. After tolerating such cramped conditions at his home in Scotland, Livingstone found the expansive horizons and landscapes of the Karoo an inspiration, reveling in the nightly out span whilst watching the breath taking sunsets of the Karoo, and calling the evening meals "*a protracted system of picnickings*", embracing the sounds of Africa in the clear, silence of the night.

Upon reaching Graaff-Reinet, the group stayed with Rev. and Mrs. Murray at the Parsonage (now Reinet House museum) of whom he had said were "*two Christians worth going a hundred miles to make the acquaintance of*". Coincidentally, the Murray's had also shown generous hospitality to his future in-laws, Robert and Mary Moffat in that same parsonage some nine years earlier. Mary Moffat's favourite chair is, in fact, still being exhibited in the Reinet House museum today. Livingstone was so taken aback with Graaff-Reinet that the explorer mentioned that it was the "*prettiest town in all of Africa*".

From Graaff-Reinet, Livingstone continued on in his adventures to the Kuruman mission station, founded by Robert Moffat, who was instrumental in bringing Livingstone to Africa. There, he met Mary Moffat, the daughter of Robert

Moffat who he described as “*a little, thick, black-haired girl and all I want*”. Livingstone continued on to many adventures, eventually experiencing them all with Mary Moffat whom he married in 1844.

The historical value that is Samara, continues on in many forms, but remains the heritage of the reserve. Samara takes much pride in the heritage that helped conjure what the reserve stands for today. Years of tales of the young and handsome explorers and adventurers who found a “*second home*” on the plains of the Karoo, passed on to future generations, revealing the true magic of that which is paradise, “*a home away from home*”.

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For more information, comment or pictures, please contact;

Lloyd Orr Communications

1 Orchard Lane, Rivonia, Johannesburg, South Africa

Tel: 011 785 4600

Fax: 011 785 4601

Email: info@lloydorr.com

Website: www.samara.co.za