

*An illustrious history*

# STUTTAFFORD VAN LINES

*Look into the history of some of South Africa's oldest companies, and you'll find remarkable tales of men and women who bravely left all they knew behind and ventured to a new land in search of opportunity. You'll learn about the challenges they faced, and how they overcame them, on their journey to success. While some may be household names, their provenance isn't always widely known, and delving into their history can make for fascinating reading.*



Stuttafford Van Lines, one of South Africa's leading domestic and international removal companies has a history spanning more than 150 years. It came into being in Cape Town in 1857, as part of Stuttaffords & Company Limited department store. In order to assist their customers, Stuttaffords' furniture department offered a certain amount of storage and removals, which necessitated the establishment of a removal and storage department.

Stuttaffords' first venture into the removals business was the establishment of a warehouse on Loop Street, in Cape Town. The warehouse had a 68-foot frontage, and deliveries and removals were initially done with two horse-drawn vans bearing the inscription, "Furniture removed by Thorne, Stuttafford & Co, Complete House Furnishers". The Johannesburg branch's Doornfontein warehouse, was 3,000 square-feet and situated on a stand which offered plenty of room for expansion, particularly when taking the three adjoining fenced-in stands, each measuring 50 by 100 feet into account.

In 1905, the removal and storage department in Cape Town imported from London, what was probably the first horse-drawn furniture "pantechnicon" in South Africa. It was

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used together with two or three horse-drawn carts. The pantechnicon was drawn by six horses and the carts were two-in-hand. The pantechnicon had sides only; consequently, in bad weather the furniture had to be covered over with a large tarpaulin. When steep gradings were encountered along the journey, additional horses, or "chain horses" as they were called in those days, were hired.

While the pantechnicon gave them a larger transport capacity, it was very heavy when fully laden, which presented difficulties when the wheels became stuck in the mud on the dirt roads. When this occurred, all the furniture had to be removed from the truck, so the men digging trenches and the horses pulling it could get it to more stable ground.

For many years the business was regarded as merely a subsection of the furniture department, rather than a business in its own right, and the firm's policy remained very conservative with regard to its activities.

In Johannesburg, Stuttaffords used a cartage contractor, with twelve carts and horses, to carry out deliveries and removals between Johannesburg and Pretoria. The 128-kilometre roundtrip typically took four days and Halfway House in Midrand was the overnight stop in each direction. In 1909,



