



AP Photo/Peter Dejong

Former South African President Nelson Mandela reacts on Oct. 6, 2007 after a meeting at the Nelson Mandela Foundation building in Johannesburg, South Africa. The centennial of Mandela's birth is July 18, and those wishing to make a pilgrimage to honor his legacy will find a number of sites around South Africa, from the villages of his childhood to museums and historic sites about apartheid.



AP Photo/Themba Hadebe

Tourists leave after visiting the Hector Pieterse Memorial in Soweto, South Africa, in June 15, 2006 ahead of the commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the 1976 Soweto Uprising.



AP Photo/Udo Weitz

Nelson Mandela and Winnie Mandela give black power salutes as they enter Soccer City stadium in the Soweto township of Johannesburg, South Africa, on Feb. 13, 1990 shortly after his release from 27 years in prison.

Mandela's footsteps

Tracing anti-apartheid leader's path through South Africa 100 years after his birth

By CHARMAINE NORONHA
Associated Press

QUNU, South Africa — July 18 marks 100 years since the birth of Nelson Mandela, who died in 2013.

Visitors can follow in Mandela's footsteps from the villages where he was born and raised, to the Soweto township where he became an anti-apartheid leader, to Robben Island where he was imprisoned for years.

The Eastern Cape

"When Mandela was just a child, he walked for miles on this route, moving from one village to another," said tour guide Velile Ndlumbini as we drove through the picturesque green rolling hills of the Eastern Cape.

The homestead where he was born can be seen in the small village of Mvezo. He lived here until age 2, when his father lost his position as village chief in a dispute with a magistrate.

The family then moved to neighboring Qunu, where Mandela lived until age 9, when his father died. He and his mother then moved 12 miles away to Mqhekezweni.

Here he was adopted by the acting regent king and groomed for leadership. Mandela wrote in his autobiography, "Long Walk to Freedom," that his interest in politics was first kindled listening to tribal elders



AP Photo/Schalk van Zuydam

Tourists take photos of former South African President Nelson Mandela's cell on Robben Island, South Africa on July 18.

holding community meetings in Mqhekezweni. A shady spot under a circle of gum trees, Ndlumbini said, is still used for that purpose.

It was Qunu where Mandela returned after 27 years in prison. He built a complex there along the N2 highway for his family, where some still live, and he moved back to Qunu himself after retiring from public life.

Dusty roads lead to his private grave, across from his family's burial site.

Qunu also houses the Nelson Mandela Museum, which opened on Feb. 11, 2000, the 10th anniversary of his release from prison. It takes visitors from his childhood through his involvement in politics to his triumphant election as president.

Some 125 miles south lies the Steve Biko Museum

in King William's Town. Biko was an icon of anti-apartheid activism, an African nationalist and a leader of the grassroots Black Consciousness Movement. He was a major influence on Mandela, and died in 1977 after being arrested and beaten.

In neighboring Mandela Bay in Port Elizabeth, an installation called Route 67 showcases 67 artworks symbolizing Mandela's 67 years of service. The art, all by locals, depicts significant moments on the journey from apartheid to democracy, moving from laser-cut steel figures forming a voting line in the country's first democratic elections in 1994, to a stairway that starts in darkness and progresses to an era of color and new beginnings.

Soweto

Created in the 1930s by the white government to relocate the black population away from Johannesburg, Soweto became the largest black city in South Africa. Poverty was rampant in the shanty towns and civil unrest was common during apartheid.

Mandela lived in Soweto from 1946 to 1962 and met African National Congress activist Walter Sisulu there.

Mandela's Soweto home has also been converted into a museum. But the most exhaustive and heart-breaking site is the Apartheid Museum. The entrance is divided into "blankes/whites" and "nie-blankes/non-whites," followed by a display of "passes" that the black population was required to carry, restricting their movements. The museum details the white settlers' history in South Africa, the beginnings of apartheid and daily struggles blacks endured, along with the story of how Mandela transformed the Afri-

See MANDELA/6C