

AFRICAN ORIGINS

SO WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE AT STERK-FONTEIN CAVES?

WE'RE HERE TO EXPLORE SOUTH AFRICA'S PALEONTOLOGICAL HERITAGE.

STERK-FONTEIN CAVES

PALEONTOLOGY IS THE STUDY OF FOSSILS, WHICH ARE THE REMAINS OF ANIMALS THAT HAVE LIVED LONG AGO. THEIR BONES AND SKULLS HAVE THEN BEEN PRESERVED IN ROCK OVER MILLIONS OF YEARS.

YES, AND IT ALSO INCLUDES THE STUDY OF IMPRESSIONS LEFT BY ANCIENT LEAVES AND PLANTS.

SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST EXCITING FOSSIL FINDS HAVE BEEN FOUND RIGHT HERE AT THE "CRADLE OF HUMANITY WORLD HERITAGE SITE".



ONE EXAMPLE IS "MRS PLES", A FOSSIL OF A SPECIES CALLED AUSTRALOPITHECUS AFRICANUS. THIS WAS A DISTANT RELATIVE OF HUMANKIND, WHICH STOOD ERECT, BUT HAD A RELATIVELY SMALL BRAIN.



MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE SOUTH AFRICANS CAN BE PROUD OF OUR COUNTRY'S ROLE IN RESEARCHING HUMANITY'S ORIGINS. OUR PALEONTOLOGICAL HERITAGE IS A **WORLD HERITAGE** - ALL HUMANITY EVOLVED FROM OUR AFRICAN CONTINENT!