

# PAROCHIAL DISTRICT OF ATHLONE

INCORPORATING:

ST. MARK'S PARISH CHURCH,  
ATHLONE;

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH,  
RYLANDS;

and

ST. JAMES' CHURCH,  
BLACK RIVER.

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A

PARTIAL RECONSTRUCTION

OF THE

**BURIAL REGISTER**

FOR THE PERIOD

**FEBRUARY 1925 TO APRIL 1946**

**+ A M D G +**

*And some there be, which have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been; and are become as though they had never been born; and their children after them.*

*But these were merciful men, whose righteousness has not been forgotten.*

*With their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance, and their children are within the covenant.*

*Their seed standeth fast, and their children for their sakes.*

*Their seed shall remain for ever, and their glory shall not be blotted out.*

*Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore.*

*The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will shew forth their praise.*

Ecclesiasticus 44: 9-15

## INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

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The following volume arose from research work conducted by me in 2011 and 2012, related to a proposal to exhume the so-called “Black River Cemetery” (*erf* 33030 Cape Town), located between Klipfontein and Cressy Roads in the area of Athlone known as Garlandale.

### History of the Burial Ground:

The property was donated to the then-Trustees of the Diocese of Cape Town by Mr Thomas Tregidga in 1880, specifically for use as a burial ground<sup>1</sup>, and intended to serve the Anglican population of the Cape Flats<sup>2</sup>. This area, and the Cemetery itself, then fell under the jurisdiction of the Parish of St Paul’s Church, Rondebosch, which, over a period of years had established a number of chapelries in the area.

The property was, by the time of its donation, already in use as a burial ground and the Burial Registers of St Paul’s first display an entry pertaining to the property in March 1867<sup>3</sup>. It is very likely, although this is not known for certain, that other churches may have records of such burials too. From early 1880, however, the St Paul’s Registers record very numerous burials in the Black River Cemetery<sup>4</sup> and the number of burials recorded elsewhere must have reduced considerably.

In 1925, three of the historical chapelries of St Paul’s together became the independent Parochial District of Athlone, and the Black River Cemetery thereafter fell under the primary jurisdiction of St Mark’s Parochial Church, Athlone (formerly known as Milner). The cemetery was, however, primarily associated with St James’ Church, to which it was geographically closest being separated from each other by the river itself.

St Mark’s became a Parish in its own right in 1946. St George’s Church, Rylands, and St James’ Church, Black River, also formed a part of this Parochial District. St George’s Church was moved to Silvertown and achieved Parish status in 1948. However, St James’ Church remained a chapel of St Mark’s until its demolition in the 1970’s.

The last burial in the Black River Cemetery reportedly took place in about 1952<sup>5</sup>. Eventually, over the passage of time, the property became increasingly derelict and rarely, if ever, visited. The ongoing maintenance of the property became a material financial and administrative burden for the Parish Council of St Mark’s Church, and the property little more than a ‘Port Jackson Willow’-infested piece of urban wasteland. With the exception of a few isolated headstones in the deep grass, and scatterings of eroded *perlemoen* shells (historically used in poorer communities to decorate burial mounds<sup>6</sup>) there was little or no indication of the property’s status as a burial ground.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deed of Transfer 537/1880 dated 15<sup>th</sup> September 1880

<sup>2</sup> *S. Paul’s Record*, November 1918, p.5 – see below. As noted, this general principle was abandoned as a consequence of the emergency burial requirements of the catastrophic “Spanish ‘flu” epidemic in October 1918.

<sup>3</sup> St Paul’s Church, Rondebosch: Burial Registers, Volume 2, p.88, entry no.799

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*: see page 163 onwards in particular

<sup>5</sup> Verbal advice to writer (2011) by Mr Gerald Hendricks (confirmed by others) but no documentary evidence of this date has been located.

<sup>6</sup> Advice received from Ms Mary Patrick of Cape Archaeological Survey CC

<sup>7</sup> Own observations

The *S. Paul's Record* and the *Cape Town Diocesan Magazine* also occasionally included articles regarding the Black River Cemetery and issues related to it. Some examples of these articles are provided below to give a broad spread of historical information and evidence regarding this property.

### **Availability of Burial Registers:**

In 2012 a public participation process was conducted, as required by the National Heritage Resources Act (1999), to invite comment on the proposed exhumation and to trace descendants of persons buried in the Cemetery.

Burial Registers at St Paul's Church were consulted first and were found to contain comprehensive records of burials in the Cemetery up until January 1925 (thereafter, only two isolated burials there are recorded, in 1926 and 1935<sup>8</sup>).

From after January 1925, burials in the cemetery should rightfully have been recorded in registers held at the Parochial Church, St Mark's. However, on enquiry, no such registers could be found (as indeed were neither Service Registers nor any minutes of the Parochial District Council). Although the earliest registers held by St Mark's date from its inception as a Parish in 1946, and at St George's from 1948, unfortunately neither of these registers provides any details as to the location of the burials.

### **Reconstruction Process:**

Further investigation, however, resulted in the fortunate discovery that the parish magazine of St Paul's Church, known as the *S. Paul's Record* did routinely record burials on a monthly basis for the information of its parishioners. This practice continued even after the formation of the Athlone Parochial District and the great bulk of the information recorded below is derived from this valuable resource.

However, the information in these lists is still incomplete for a number of reasons.

- Although most editions of the *S. Paul's Record* do provide this information, there are editions (mostly sequences of editions following changes in editorship or clergy appointments) where there are no entries or only summary entries (occasionally, however, articles appear regarding the deaths of prominent church-people and this information has been included when available);
- From June 1927, the lists do not record the *place* of burial and, although it may be assumed that most burials still took place at the Black River Cemetery in earlier years, this cannot be the case when the municipal (especially the Woltemade) cemeteries were opened later;
- From about the early half of the 1930's, when it became socially customary to do so, Christian names were omitted in magazine entries and substituted with titles ("Mr" and "Mrs", but even "lad" or "young"). At the same time, children's names were usually completely omitted and they were listed only by surname (but sometimes as "girl", "boy", "child" or "infant");

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<sup>8</sup> St Paul's Church, Rondebosch: Burial Registers, Volume 3, p.128 (entry no.1530) and p.143 (not numbered)

- After December 1939, no doubt as a consequence of paper-rationing during World War II, the old *S. Paul's Record* was discontinued and the Parish published its news in a section of the monthly *Cape Town Diocesan Magazine*. The old pattern of including articles from the Parochial District continued but a burial list was only published once, in June 1941. This magazine was discontinued after December 1950 and superseded by *Good Hope*, which records very little ordinary parish information. Furthermore, it has not been possible to trace any copies for 1947.
- There is little doubt that some burials took place under the auspices of clergy not associated with St Paul's or the Parochial District's churches. Such burials may be recorded in the registers of other churches but have not been traced (for example, two of the military personnel referred to below do not occur in available records and were probably buried by Military Chaplains; furthermore, some headstone transcriptions cannot be linked with burials recorded in the available registers or magazine lists).

These gaps in available information are noted in the list below.

Further information in the lists below has been derived from transcripts recorded from surviving headstones. This work was done by a churchwarden of St Mark's, Mr Gerald Hendricks, in preparation for a 1986 attempt at obtaining permission to exhume, subsequently not proceeded with. It is possible that further such information may be derivable from other headstones (which are now covered by earth or broken) once archaeological investigation is done on site. However, it is not likely that there were many permanent memorials erected in the Cemetery when it was in use.

In 1983, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission approached the Parish of St Mark's and obtained permission to exhume from the Black River Cemetery and re-inter (at the military allotment in the Klip Cemetery) three military personnel<sup>9</sup>. This work was duly done and details of these men, provided by the CWGC, may be found at the back of this report.

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Nonetheless, although my primary interest in undertaking this work has been to develop a list of persons buried in the Black River Cemetery, the following is a first attempt at a complete "reconstructed register" for the whole of the Athlone Parochial District for the period between February 1925 and April 1946. No available name has been excluded from the list by virtue of that person having been buried elsewhere or being associated with a church other than those dedicated to SS Paul, Mark, George or James, or for any other reason.

It is my hope that public participation may contribute further to the information obtained so that those former residents of Athlone who have entered into their eternal rest, otherwise leaving no name or memory to history, may yet obtain some slight memorial in these pages.

**Michael Bester**  
Pr.Arch, Pr.CPM, Dipl.Th, APHP

10<sup>th</sup> October 2012

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<sup>9</sup> Pvt. John William Kruser, Leading Seaman R. D. Schilder (entry no's.859 and 860 below, in 1945 and 1947), and Pvt. Frederick Jacobus Scholtz (St Paul's Burial Registers, Vol.3, entry no.832, in 1918)

## SOME EXTRACTS FROM HISTORICAL RECORDS PERTAINING TO THE BLACK RIVER CEMETERY:

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**St. Paul's Record, August 1905, p.2:**

*"The Days of Yore.*

.... [Archdeacon Thomas] may be said to have commenced Church work at Black River. A few may remember the first chapel, which was built by the people themselves of wattle and daub forty-one years ago. During the Archdeacon's rectorship this was broken up, and a brick building put in its place, which has since been added to, leaving, however, a great part of the original building. The first text put over the altar was 'A root out of a dry ground,' which seemed appropriate, considering the dry sand around. At that time Black River hamlet contained many old people, some of them having been slaves, and many unable to speak English, so that attempts were made to give sermons in Dutch, which were not always understood. The text I have mentioned was in Dutch ..."

**St. Paul's Record, January 1906, pp.11-16:** "*The History of St. Mark's*" consists of a complete history of the founding and then-present state of St Mark's Church.

**S. Paul's Record, November 1911, pp.254:**

*"Parochial Church Council. October Meeting.*

... Mr. Earp [Lay Reader] reported that Mr. Roper [Sidesman, S. Thomas'] and he had inspected the cemetery at Black River, but that nothing was required to be specially done at the moment."

**S. Paul's Record, September 1913, p.5:**

*"Black River Notes.*

In consequence of there being no records available in which the fees, etc., to be charged in connection with burials in the Black River Cemetery, are laid down, the Rector [the Rev. J. C. H. Brooke] called a meeting of the Black River Congregation to discuss the matter.

The meeting was held on Wednesday evening, August 20th, and was largely attended. The Rector presided, and there were also present Messrs. Doble ["Lay Missionary"], Wood and Earp [Lay Readers].

After the matter had been fully gone into, and several present had voiced their feelings, the following resolutions were agreed to and will now come into operation:-

1. That the fees to be charges are 15s. for the burial of an adult, and 7s. 6d. for a child under twelve years, allocated as follows: 5s. to the gravedigger, 5s. to the Minister conducting the service, and 5s. to the Cemetery Fund. In the case of a child, half fees all round.
2. That, in accordance with a former arrangement made with previous Rectors, these fees will be reduced in the case of those who contributed either in money or labour to the fencing of the Cemetery. In such cases the fees will be for an adult, 7s. 6d.; and for a child, 5s., the gravedigger receiving the usual fees, the balance to the Minister conducting the service being reduced, and no contributions being made to the Cemetery Fund.

It was understood that a list at once be made of all those who are entitled to the reduced fees, and that same should be placed for inspection in the School Chapel, so that any alterations could be made if necessary. After due notice the list thus amended should be kept among the records for future reference.

Other matters, such as having a roadway from Klipfontein Road direct to the Cemetery .... were discussed.

The land known as the Black River Cemetery was a gift from Mr. Tregidga to the Black River Church people, for the purpose of a burial ground. It was transferred to the Diocesan Trustees on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1880 [*sic*]. It is 393 sq. roods and 29 sq. feet in extent."

**S. Paul's Record, April 1915, pp.8:**

**"Black River Cemetery**

It has been the custom latterly for members of the Church of Black River and Milner to do something at this time of the year to put the burial ground in order before the festival of Easter. In the past members have either individually or collectively put in work at the cemetery on free afternoons, such as Saturday afternoons, at cleaning and tidying up the paths and clearing rubbish from the graves. This year it was thought that some better means of carrying out this work should be devised, as there were some who, although wishing to take a share in this work, were unable to do so, not being able to find the time to work at the cemetery. A meeting was held at Black River on Monday, March 8th, to discuss this question, and it was decided to raise a small sum of money by means of shilling subscriptions, and to employ a man to work regularly for some days until the works was satisfactorily done. A Committee was elected for Black River to be responsible for the work of collecting this subscription and of spending it on the required work. Those who were elected were as follows:- Christian Odendaal, Nicholas Verwy, Henry Adams, Philip Malander, George Borgsted, John Schippers, Benjamin Lodewyk, Paul Petersen, Joseph February, Peter G. Petersen, and Alexander Adams, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer. On the following Monday a meeting was held at S. Mark's Church, Milner, when some members of the Black River Committee came over to explain what had been proposed and carried at the previous meeting. The idea of the shilling subscription was unanimously approved by the members of the Miller [sic] and Rylands Estate congregations, and the following names were added to the Committee:- For S. Mark's, Milner – Jonas Malonga, David Beckett, George Matthews, Alfred Williams, A. van Harte, J. van der Spek. For Rylands Estate – Nicholas Sambo, Isaac Saul, J. D. Petersen, and John Clarke. Among other matters that were discussed, a proposal was made for the erection of a small iron shed at one corner of the cemetery to serve both as a place for locking up tools and as a robing room for the clergy. In wet weather the need of such a building is distinctly felt. It was thought best, however, to leave this matter until the amount raised by subscription could be known. It is hoped that all Church members in this part of the parish will feel that the subscription they have been asked to give is an opportunity of taking a share in the work they might otherwise not have had. There will be the usual gathering in the cemetery in the early morning of Easter Day at which it is hoped there will be many present."

**S. Paul's Record, November 1915, p.4:**

"BLACK RIVER ... The Cemetery Committee met on Friday, 22nd ult., and decided to use £8 of the money in hand for the levelling and general improvement of the cemetery."

**S. Paul's Record, May 1917, p.3:**

"Easter Day began at 3 a.m., with a celebration of the Holy Communion at Black River, at which there were 56 communicants. After this, at 4 a.m., Mr. Barrett shepherded a procession of his flock to the Black River Cemetery, where 'early in the morning, while it was yet dark,' those who mourned the death of their dear ones sang hymns of the Resurrection and listened to words of hope spoken by their priest in the name of Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life. ..."

**S. Paul's Record, April 1918, p.4:**

"The first service in the parish on the Queen of Festivals was at Black River at 4.30 a.m., when the Rector [the Revd. J. C. H. Brooke] celebrated for 62 communicants. The congregation then proceeded to the cemetery, where a large number of people were waiting for their Easter morning service. For a good many years it has been a custom for those who have relatives or friends buried in the little English Church Cemetery at Black River to gather there before day-break on Easter morning to remember their dear ones who have passed into Paradise, and to sing hymns of thanksgiving for the

Easter Hope of the Resurrection. It was a still morning, mild and balmy, with brilliant moonlight, when the procession formed at the cemetery gate and marched into the middle of the cemetery. By the light of lanterns hymn 499 was sung, and after a few prayers, the Rector addressed the assembly and then read out a list of those who had been buried in the cemetery since last Easter Day, in including one to be buried that afternoon. Then their souls were solemnly commended to Almighty God, and thanksgiving was made for the Resurrection of our Lord on Easter Day, and the Hope that He has given that they and we shall meet again. It was a touching service, and not a few sad hearts were moved to tears. After giving the Blessing, the Rector left for S. Paul's, but the congregation remained for some time singing Easter and other hymns."

**S. Paul's Record, November 1918, p.3-5:**

*"The Rector's Letter*

MY DEAR FRIENDS AND PARISHIONERS, - Only one thing has occupied our minds during the past month, and that is the epidemic of "Spanish influenza". Unseen, but swift as the wind, it swept over the whole country, and has left behind it such a legacy of sorrow that this beautiful month of spring will always be remembered as the Black October of 1918. Everything had to give way before it. The arrangements for "Our Day", so splendidly organized and copiously advertised, went to pieces. Business was brought almost to a standstill. Every home was affected by it. In most cases the servants were the first to be taken ill, and either went home or had to be nursed by their employers, while the housework had to be done by members of the family, who soon fell victims themselves to this treacherous sickness. The ordinary work of the parish ceased, and all the energies of those who were well and could be spared from their homes were devoted to the work of tending the sick, feeding the hungry, trying to save the dying, or helping the bereaved to bury their dead.

I am deeply grateful to all those who worked so splendidly in Rondebosch and on the Flats, and helped to save many lives by providing them with proper nourishment and giving them valuable advice and attention. At a time when it was possible for the clergy to visit only the most urgent cases, it was a very great relief to them to know that the bodily needs of all the poorer people were being attended to daily, either at the various depots or at houses of the sick. As you will see from the list of burials at the end of this issue, the mortality in this parish has been terrible, especially among the poorer parishioners. At Black River no less than five of one family died in a week. One of our old coloured parishioners of Rondebosch, Alfred Adams, lost two sons, a daughter, and a son-in-law, one of the sons and the daughter being married and leaving behind several young children. .... May God in His infinite mercy help and comfort her sorrowing family and all those thousands who have been plunged into mourning by this terrible visitation. ....

*Notes on the Epidemic*

As soon as it was realized that a large number of the poorer parishioners were ill with "Spanish influenza", Mrs Currey, of "Welgelegen", very kindly sent large quantity of milk daily to the Rectory for distribution. The demand soon began to exceed the supply, even though the latter was supplemented from another source. Just in time the public depot at the Town Hall was opened and put in working order with wonderful promptitude, and the milk from "Welgelegen" was sent elsewhere to those who needed it. Mrs Cripps and her band of helpers lost no time in making the Rondebosch Town Hall a centre of relief and a blessing to the neighbourhood. Medicines, soup, and milk for the sick, and food for the families thrown out of employment or rendered destitute and helpless by sickness, were served out daily to very large numbers of applicants. The suburb was divided into districts, and all the houses of the poor were visited daily by ladies, who brought nourishment and medicine to those who were unable to send for them, and who gave valuable help and advice to the sick and those of their friends who were nursing them. Scarcely any of the poor were able to secure



the services of a doctor, though, when the seriousness of the situation was realized, Dr Parson and Dr Galpin, who years ago retired from practice, kindly turned out, and attended all whom they had time to see. Even so, in the first ten days of the epidemic many poor people died without the comfort of seeing a doctor. At first the City Corporation provided for only one Relief Depot in this parish, at the Town Hall, and so some of the ladies of the parish, Mrs Cronwright, Mrs Peters, and Mrs Nimmo Brown, with the help of other parishioners, opened a depot for Black River at the Klipfontein Hall (formerly a slaughter-house, now kindly lent to us by the Imperial Cold Storage Co for parish purposes). Almost as soon as it was opened, the City Hall authorities made themselves responsible for all the expenses incurred in connection with its maintenance.

Meanwhile the state of things at Milner (*i.e.*, West London) was most serious, and Mr Floyd made urgent representations to the authorities. As soon, therefore, as Mr Sawkins had completed his arrangements for the Rondebosch Town Hall, he paid a visit to Milner with Mr Floyd. The Wesleyan Church building, being central and near the hard road, was chosen as the most suitable place for a depot, and the Wesleyan authorities very kindly at once agreed to lend it, and gave every facility to the workers. Miss Hall, Miss Parson, and Miss Syfret soon established a soup kitchen there, with medicines, etc., for all applicants. Mr Floyd was given authority by the City Corporation to issue bread, meat, and other necessaries to those who were in urgent need. Both at Black River and Milner, and later at Welcome Estate, he organized a committee of coloured men and women to visit from house to house in their district. He selected the most respected and reliable persons for his purpose, those who knew the coloured people and could best judge of their needs.

From further down the Flats came reports of sickness, helplessness, and destitution, and on the second Sunday in October Mr Floyd was able to establish another depot at Welcome Estate, some five or six miles from Rondebosch Town Hall. The Black River Depot being in full running order, Mrs Peters and Mrs Nimmo Brown were able to leave it in Mrs Cronwright's hands, and they transferred their energies to organizing and carrying on the Welcome Estate Depot. In this they were devotedly assisted by Mr Nimmo Brown. This served the people at Rylands Estate and for miles around, food, etc., being carried on foot or by motor-car to people as far as ten miles down the Cape Flats.

This work could not have been carried on if Mr [Westerton], had not been so thoughtful and kind as to place his motor-car entirely at the disposal of the workers. Every day they were taken to their depot and brought back by car, and incidentally Mr Hartford's [of "Elwyngor", Silwood Road] car relieved the Rector and Mr Floyd of some of their longer bicycle rides to Maitland Cemeteries and down the Flats. The Rector is also very grateful to Mr L Spilhaus for taking him on a round of visits one night, after a long and tiring day on his bicycle.

When anyone in this parish dies without having been attended by a doctor in his last illness, the body has to be removed by Wynberg for a *post-mortem* examination by the District Surgeon. By October 7th this rule had been suspended, as more than half of those who were dying of pneumonia had not been able to get a doctor's attention. Mr Floyd was appointed a Registrar of Deaths for the Flats districts, and from early in the morning his house and the Rectory were besieged by those wanting burial orders, coffins, and graves. From October 7th it was practically impossible for the poorer people to get a coffin from the undertaker, and even some of those who are well-to-do found themselves in the same dreadful situation. The City Corporation realized the position of affairs just in time, and placed large orders with firms who employed carpenters. The Rector made representations to our local City Councillor, Mr Sawkins, who immediately got out a dozen coffins from the City Hall, and saw that a sufficient supply was sent daily to Rondebosch Town Hall and the Relief Depot

at West London. These are gruesome details, but they help one to realize what an extraordinary time we have been passing through.

The Cemetery at Black River was originally secured for the Church people of that Mission Station, and by them it was fenced in and put in order. Since then, as the Flats became populated, it was thrown open to Church people in our other mission stations, at Milner and Rylands Estate. This epidemic, however, produced a sudden congestion at the Maitland Cemetery office in Cape Town. It was besieged to such an extent that sometimes it took hours for the bereaved to get into the office and purchase a grave. And even then, when the funeral at last arrived at Maitland No 3 (the cemetery of the poor), there was more congestion and a long delay before anyone could be found to point out which was the right grave.

Accordingly the Rector and Mr Floyd decided to suspend the rule limiting the right of burial in Black River Cemetery to Church people who lived on the Flats, and it was thrown open to people of all denominations in the parish. Several additional grave-diggers were engaged, with orders to dig graves all day long. At 5 o'clock each day the funerals began, when Mr Floyd had finished his work at the depots. When possible, after his return from Maitland, the Rector went to assist him at Black River Cemetery. Over 150 burials took place there in three weeks, where the monthly average is about six or seven. This little cemetery has been rapidly filling up, and we shall have to endeavour to enlarge it by securing some of the adjacent vacant ground. A glance at the list of burials at the end of this issue will show that it makes an interesting, if terribly sad, "barometer" of the epidemic."

**S. Paul's Record, May 1919, pp.5-6:**

*"Easter Service in Black River Cemetery.* – For years past it has been the custom of the people on the Flats to meet early on Easter morning at their little graveyard at Black River, and welcome the dawn by singing Easter hymns of victory over death won on that day by their Saviour. Since last Easter that little cemetery has witnessed the saddest scenes in its history, when, during the influenza epidemic, the graves could not be dug fast enough, sometimes more than 20 were buried in a day, and some families lost more three or four of their numbers in less than a month. 'The sickness' of last October will never be forgotten by the poor people on the Flats. In order to provide for the hundreds of mourners, it was decided not to have the Easter Cemetery Service this year before day-break, as so many would be going to their Easter Communion, but to hold a United Service in the afternoon. In spite of the drizzly weather, a great concourse of people, from Black River, Milner, Rylands and Welcome Estates, Thornhill and other parts of the Cape Flats, gathered in the cemetery at 4.30 on Easter Afternoon. Over 1,000 people were counted at the gates as they passed out. Mr. Floyd stood on a mound on a sand hillock, the highest point in the graveyard, a spot from which he could be seen by all present. The service was an adapted form of Evensong, with five hymns. After the sermon the people scattered to decorate the graves of their dear ones with flowers, and then at a sound of a bugle they gathered again for the last hymn and the Blessing."

**S. Paul's Record, November 1919, p.5:**

"A service in memory of those who died in the epidemic last October was held in the Black River Cemetery at 4.30 on Sunday afternoon, October 26th. There were some 1,200 people present from Rondebosch, Milner, Black River, Rylands Estate, and other parts of the Cape Flats. The Coadjutor-Bishop kindly came and addressed the multitude from a temporary platform on a sandy hillock. He was attended by Mr. Floyd, and Mr. Bridger was also present, as Lay Reader. ...."

**S. Paul's Record, April 1921, pp.9-10:**

*“Our Churches on the Flats*

... On the afternoon of Easter Day a combined service was held in the cemetery. The St. Mark's Choir, assisted by Reader Adams and the two acolytes from St. James's, Black River, left the bridge at 4.15 p.m., for the cemetery, singing “Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia.” The St. James's Company of the C.L.B. formed a guard of honour, and afterwards made a circle around priest and choir, who stood on the hillock in the cemetery. A very large congregation reverently joined in the service, which took the form of Evensong, with an appropriate address. The “Last Post” was sounded by members of the C.L.B. at the conclusion of the service, and the procession returned to the bridge.”

**S. Paul's Record, April 1923, p.8:**

*“Notes from the Flats.*

... There were splendid congregations on Easter Day, each church being quite full at the Holy Communion. In the afternoon a service (Festal Evensong) was held in the Black River Cemetery. The procession, composed of the combined choirs of the Mission Churches, left S. James's Church at 4.30, and as it entered the cemetery the hymn “Jesus Christ is Risen To-Day” was sung. The singing of the Psalms and Canticles in the open air was very beautiful. The first lesson was read by Mr. Adams, the second by Mr. Tembe, and the address was given by the priest in charge. This service was for all three mission congregations.”

**S. Paul's Record, May 1924, p.12:**

*“Notes from the Flats.*

... *Easter Day* - ... In the afternoon there was Festal Evensong, held in the Cemetery for the combined congregations of the three Mission Stations. The procession left S. James's Church, Black River, in the following order:- // The combined choirs, the Guild of S. Michael, the E.C.M.S., the Guild of S. Mary, and the Mothers' Union. // The general congregation had assembled in the Cemetery beforehand. As the procession entered the Cemetery gate, the S. Mark's Brass Band began to play the hymn “Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem.” The whole service was most impressive, the brass band accompaniment to the hymns and canticles adding a greater solemnity. Hundreds of people took part in the service. It was apparently a record attendance. At the conclusion of the service the procession returned to the church for the dismissal prayers. ...”

**S. Paul's Record, February 1931, p.16:**

“BLACK RIVER CEMETERY. Notice is given that available ground for burials is now practically used up. Soil erosion having taken place at the west end of the cemetery makes it impossible to dig graves near the boundary fence.”

**S. Paul's Record, July 1932, p.16:**

“HISTORY OF BLACK RIVER MISSION CHAPEL, NOW ST. JAMES' CHURCH.  
(Contributed by Alexander D. Adams.)

This church was built by the following old members: Philip Essler, Jr., William Engle, Henry Samuels, John J. Adams, Senr., Henry Petersen, Oom Dampie. These families were living on the West side of the river. On the East were John Florence, John Stoffel, Oom Fenner, Oom Johannes Domango, Abraham Matthews. These were all the people living in Black River in those days. The chapel was built of bushes and clay. They had no spades in those days, so they had to mix the clay with their feet, and pick it up with their hands, throwing it on the bushes to make a wall. While they were busy building, a gentleman arrived and asked them what they were doing. They told him they were going to build a church for themselves. He asked whose ground it was; they said they did not

know, so the gentleman said it was his ground and he was very pleased to see them wanting a church to themselves: he gave them the ground. All the ground was a free gift from Mr. William Schierhout, who lived a hundred yards from the church, to the old members of Black River – so far back as 1850.

The cemetery was also a free gift from Mr. Thomas Tregide of Mowbray, Cape, about 60 years ago. The church was dedicated in honour of St. James by Bishop W. W. Jones 42 years ago. The Rector in charge was the Rev. R. Doyle, his assistant was Cecil Hope Gill.

The day school was founded in 1877: the first teacher was Mr. George Robertson of St. Paul's, Rondebosch; our Rondebosch Provident Society existed 56 years ago. The Sunday School was opened by Alexander Adams in 1887. The Church Lads Brigade was founded in 1907 by Alex Adams."

**S. Paul's Record, August 1932, p.15:**

"We are deeply grateful to the Dean for so kindly leaving the Cathedral between services to attend the first evensong of St. James at the cemetery, and we are thankful that the rain just kept off and enabled some six hundred to assemble and depart in comfort. The labours of Church Officers, Miss Trueman, E.C.M.S., C.L.B., and others made the cemetery a very bright spot.

REV. W. A. NORTON (Priest-in-Charge)"

**S. Paul's Record, December 1931, p.14:**

"For the first time a Solemn Requiem was sung at 6 a.m. on All Saints Day in the Black River Cemetery. A small portable altar, I possess, was erected midway up the central path. The morning was rather cold and cloudy, but a wonderful number of the faithful were present. After the service, wreaths and flowers were laid on the graves."

W. A. RUSSELL (Priest-in-Charge)"

**S. Paul's Record, June 1933, pp.14-15:**

"SERVICES AT PARISH CHURCH DURING ABSENCE OF PRIEST-IN-CHARGE ... Funerals at Woltemade should be arranged with Father Isaakse of the Good Shepherd, Maitland ... Funerals at Black River, etc., should be arranged with Churchwardens Van Reenen (Phone Wynberg 5) .... I am holding over an interesting report by Mr. Hendricks on the Burial Board (Black River) for next month."

**S. Paul's Record, October 1933, p.15:**

"ST. MARK'S CEMETERY BOARD,  
ATHLONE.  
(Established 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1930.)  
(By V. E. Hendricks, Board Secretary.)

It is only fair that our English Church people in the Flats should know of what is going on in the Board. To refer to Black River Cemetery, the Board had visited it and reported at a meeting that something should be done to it, seeing that the present fence and gates needs to be replaced, as animals walk in it freely. The Board has considered it to be the first necessary work to take up. It was agreed that the fencing of the same is to be done as soon as possible. Mr. Ranby furnished our Board with full particulars in connection with amount held by his Board belonging to the Black River Cemetery – this amount is stated to be £49 2s. 6d., a large part of which had accrued interest alone.

£10 of this was drawn for the fencing and further monies were collected from Burial Societies. The Cemetery will soon be fenced in and more will be said about it”

**S. Paul’s Record, December 1933, p.14:**

“The newly fenced cemetery now looks quite beautiful”

**S. Paul’s Record, February 1934, p.14:**

“We hope to have the big service in the Cemetery on Easter afternoon as before”

**Cape Town Diocesan Magazine, December 1943, p.16:**

“... As I write it is now three months since I came, and although I can truthfully say that I have always had a busy life, yet I have never worked so hard or been so hard-worked as during the weeks since my arrival. It is no exaggeration to say that I am taking funerals at the rate of seven a week, quite frequently two on the same afternoon – one at Woltemade and the other at the Black River Cemetery. Once I had three on one afternoon. I mention this because I believe you ought to know why it is that I am not able to get round to many to meet you in your own homes. ... H. T. J. ISAAKSE”

**Cape Town Diocesan Magazine, October 1948, p.16:**

“The Black River cemetery has for long required attention, and I am very pleased indeed that at long last it has been properly fenced and closed in. Mr. Carelse has been largely responsible for the work, although others have helped him on occasions. I thank those responsible and also wish to take the opportunity of thanking Mr. Carelse for his assiduous care of the church and school grounds ...

H. T. J. ISAAKSE”

**Cape Town Diocesan Magazine, January 1949, p.12-13:**

“The Black River cemetery has now been very thoroughly fenced in. It is a job which has been very well done indeed. The fencing has been very carefully set up, and the work has been neatly and thoroughly done. The credit for the work must go to Mr. Carelse, who has done an excellent piece of work, and all voluntarily and without charge for his labour or time. .... I would appeal to those who have relatives or friends buried there to try and tidy up the graves. Some of the graves have been carefully tended throughout, but there are others sadly neglected. Nothing looks more disreputable than God’s Acre, the hallowed ground of a graveyard, allowed to become neglected and derelict. For many years in this parish it has been the custom to have an afternoon service in the cemetery on Easter Day. There will be plenty of time before Easter to tidy up the graves; may I again ask for this to be done, and so make the cemetery a place that we can be proud of, and made beautiful for the glory of God [?] ...

H. J. T. ISAAKSE”

**Cape Town Diocesan Magazine, May 1949, p.12:**

“It has been the custom for very many years in this parish to have a service in the cemetery at Black River on Easter Sunday afternoon. The cemetery has been recently tidied up and very thoroughly fenced in, and this year the service was held under better conditions. Bishop Lavis very kindly came and addressed us and spoke very pleasingly of what had been done. The Bishop reminded us that

God's Acre should never be neglected and be allowed to become derelict. We hope the Bishop's words will be remembered by all who have relatives or friends buried there. .... H. T. J. ISAAKSE"

**Oral History: Mr. Gerald Hendricks (aged 74-years), interviewed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011:**

- Age 5-10, recalls serving as a "boat-boy" at a burial in the Black River Cemetery when skeletal remains had been removed by the sexton during preparation of the grave and placed on the mound. The burial proceeded and the old bones were placed on top of the coffin before the grave was closed.
- Age 10+, St Mark's Church was required to fence graveyard. ECMS (English Church Men's Society) was not available, but work was done by a Mr. Karelse. Gerald's mother sent him to assist Karelse and made some over-clothes for him especially for this purpose.
- "Black River Cemetery" associated with St James', which was perceived as a church for blacks and domestic labourers. On St James' day (25<sup>th</sup> July, the day after Gerald's birthday), there used to be a big exodus from the parish church (St Mark's) to the Black river chapel.