

KRUGERSDORP CEMETERY – BURGERSHOOP

The origin of the Krugersdorp Cemetery situated in Burgershoop dates back to the origin of the town. It was the only cemetery for town's people of all colour or creed until 1938 when the cemetery opposite to the Sterkfontein Hospital was established. The main entrance to the Krugersdorp cemetery with guard house and office for the caretaker was erected in 1912 and it forms an integral part of the historical significance of the cemetery.

Separate sections in the cemetery for Blacks and Indians away from that of White people reflects the social discrepancies at the time. The cemetery also has a separate section for Jewish citizens, which were still in use until recent years.

The Concentration Camp-graves (Anglo-Boer War) was "renovated" in 1944 by local Afrikaner Cultural Groups (Suid-Afrikaanse Vrouefederasie, Krugerdag-feeskommissie, Reddingsdaadbond, and Helpmekaarbeweging) as it was much neglected at the time. The result of this action was that all the graves are now identical in size and setup, which gives the false impression that it is the graves of children, whilst it is in fact the graves of all the deceased from the concentration camp. A memorial (obelisk) was also erected at the time. The names of the deceased unfortunately are not known due to the non-existence of grave numbers. A wall separates the concentration camp graves from that of the Muslim and Black sections of the cemetery. The group of graves in the Krugersdorp cemetery relates to the White women, children and elderly whom had died in the Krugersdorp Concentration Camp only. Although Krugersdorp also had a concentration camp for black people on the farm Waterval, the exact location of the graves of deceased inhabitants could not yet be found. A possibility exist that deceased of the Black concentration camp could have been buried in the section for Blacks in die the Krugersdorp cemetery, but no document proof to confirm such an assumption could be found as yet. The poor condition of this part of the cemetery also makes it almost impossible to trace graves or to link any of it to specific people.

The War Graves Commission re-interred British soldiers who had died in the Anglo Boer War in the vicinity of Krugersdorp in a separate section in the Krugersdorp cemetery, next to the concentration camp section. In the middle of this section stands a memorial with the names of the deceased soldiers.

The Krugersdorp cemetery is of social and cultural significance as it holds the graves of important pioneers and families in the history of Krugersdorp. Information on the remaining memorial stones is important records for recording family history as well as the history of early Krugersdorp. The section for Black people lack memorial stones, which will make it difficult for researchers to record the history of the first Black people that settled in Krugersdorp.

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