

147.The Salvation Army

OLD MONTAGU DAYS

THE SALVATION ARMY

by Yvonne Bussell

At the beginning of the 20th century the Salvation Army was a well-known and busy organisation here in Montagu.



Picture: Montagu Museum

For many years the preacher was **Captain Siebrets**. When someone was in need, you could go and call on them for help.

There was a need for a real church and the Salvation Army bought a large tract of land in Joubert Street, where a rectangular hall was built to serve as a church. Many years later, when the building fell into disuse, the AGS congregation bought the building and enlarged it. At its side there is still a big empty erf.



The old Salvation Army premises in Joubert Street

During the Great Flu Epidemic of 1918 whole families were

wiped out. The Salvation Army offered their hall as a hospital. For a long time there were many patients, dangerously ill. At the door, everyone had to rinse their mouths with salt water to stop the spread of germs.

The Salvation Army also boasted an enthusiastic Brass Band – all participants dressed in full uniform. Sunday afternoons they got together on the corner of Barry and Mill Streets, at the entrance to Lovers Walk. Lots of people congregated here to listen to the lovely and loud music echoing from Kanonkop. Very impressive!

Saturday nights they were stationed at the corner of Kohler and Bath Streets. Remember, there were no street lights then. Someone stood at the ready with the long pole and gaslight on top to cast some light on the music stand. So they stood for hours, playing away, with more and more bystanders gathering round and the whole town echoing. I was so moved, I couldn't keep away.

But right behind the band was the door of the bar of the hotel. What a discomfort for the men who sat at the bar counter on Saturday nights, because who could enjoy a lekker doppie with the disturbing sounds of Onward Christian Soldiers blaring away!

In the platteland, Captain Cherry went around once a year with his collection list among the farmers. He stayed over with many of them. He told us once that he knew every single farmer in the Cape Province!

In the mornings he would set off on his motorbike with the sidecar. Generous donations were given and he often returned home with his sidecar filled with farm produce.
