



RIVERSIDE CEMETERY'S BLACK SECTION

The Narrative Behind the Plots

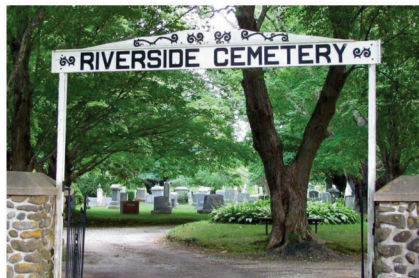
Neighbours, Joseph Gidney and Joseph Troop owned the parcels of land that established the current cemetery. Each was buried close to the other in 1811 and 1821, respectively. By the early 1860s, their families sold the land to be developed as a cemetery. It was named **Riverside** in 1912.

Descendants of Black Loyalists began arriving in the Bridgetown area by the 1850's. In those early years, black families were only permitted to live outside the town limits. While Inglewood, Chipman Hill and Brickyard Road were close-knit and socially thriving communities, integration within the town was limited. Segregation persisted for over a century. Segregated education was officially outlawed in 1950. Against this backdrop, we can understand the **Black Section** of Riverside Cemetery. Like most cemeteries in the province, black residents who died in Bridgetown were relegated to the undesirable outskirts. Racial segregation prevented blacks from being buried among the general population. Hence, the term "Black Section". Segregation was codified then. Today, discriminatory bylaws have been repealed.

Black Families

Andrew T. Clements was the grandson of Black Loyalist, Francis Clements, for whom Clementsport is named. Andrew's (1879) is the oldest marked black gravesite. In that southeastern corner of **Riverside**, are buried numerous unmarked and unrecorded black residents. However, proudly memorialized by military markers and crosses are the remains of many black Canadian Armed Forces Veterans. In recent decades, black residents were buried adjacent to the Black Section, in numbered plots. As the cemetery grows, these plots intermingle with those of the broader community.

Apart from soldiers, blacks were also skilled workers, farmers, fishermen, labourers, clergymen and educators. Following are family surnames that visitors can identify as black: Clements, Jackson, Mitchell, Brothers, Owen, Cromwell, Miller, Clayton, Parker, Simms, Johnson, Paris and Smith. Today, relatives of Black Section occupants are scattered across the globe. Nevertheless, the cemetery is still a sacred pilgrimage destination. These hallowed, canopied spaces inspire memories of community, faith, education, hard work and perseverance. The legacy is still palpable and deeply heartwarming.



Joseph Gidney's Gravesite (1811)



The Oldest Marked Black Gravesite (1879)

Use the QR code for more information about the Black Loyalists History in the area, or go to www.BridgetownNovaScotia.com

