

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/009/0020
	Site Name	Settlers Methodist Church, Bathurst Street, Port
	Date	Alfred
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-33.596263, 26.887708

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 29459

Site Category: Building

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: The original Settles Church on this site was opened in 1827. This church was destroyed by fire during the Frontier War of 1835 and thereafter rebuilt. It was again seriously damaged by the Xhosas in 1846. The church was built in 1823 by the Settlers themselves at the instigation of the enthusiastic Rev. William Shaw. It was built of stone and had a clay floor and a thatched roof, while the pulpit also was constructed of clay. But for the tiny community it was a sanctuary where men like William Shaw, John Ayliff and H. H. Dugmore often conducted the services. It was burned down during the War of the Axe in 1846 and stood derelict for a number of years. Eventually it was divided in two by means of a cross-wall and the front roofed with corrugated iron so that it could once more be used for religious ,services. During the Anglo-Boer War a considerable number of Boer families were sent to Port Alfred, and one of them made their home in one half of the church. Later the floor was covered with sea sand and the building served as a Sunday school classroom. In time the building became more and more neglected; creepers covered the walls and penetrated under the eaves into the interior while, to one side, a tree grew out of a side wall. In 1925 an energetic committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. E. H. Estment to collect funds for the restoration of the church. This was no easy task but it was successfully completed in 1938. Port Alfred is situated at the mouth of the Kowie river, some 58 kilometres south of Grahamstown. It is one of the places where some of the British Settlers established themselves in 1820. Efforts were made to develop a harbour with the support of the government, with the result that a small village arose on the eastern bank of the river, with a church, parsonage, customs house, courtroom and the simple dwellings of the settlers ranged round a central square. Unfortunately a sandbank at the mouth of the river, made the whole scheme impracticable. Today the little church is the sole remaining evidence of the trials that the members of this small pioneer settlement had to endure. Visual Description: Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: 1827;1846 Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: