



Dr. Evelyn Oliver Ashe

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1. Introduction

Evelyn Oliver Ashe (1864-27 April 1925) is another prominent member of the Ashe family, perhaps best known as the author of "[Besieged by the Boers: a Diary of Life and Events in Kimberley during the Siege](#)", which was published in 1900. Although I am gradually discovering more, I have not yet been able to fit him into the Family Tree, so if anyone has any additional information on him, I would be very pleased to hear from them at robert@ashfamily.info.

2. His Birth and Early Life

Contributed by Elizabeth Oliver in January 2013:

The Census Returns are infamous for their mis-spellings and misinterpretations and Evelyn Ashe was one such example. I found him eventually in the [1871 Census Return](#) as "Evelin O Asher" staying in Caistor, Lincs, with his uncle. His uncle's name was given as "Stamper Armington". I searched and searched and there was no such person born, married or died in UK of that name. I noticed that the Census Return gave Stamper's wife's first names as Mary Ann. This was a recurring name in the Oliver family so I looked up the marriage of Mary Ann Oliver and found that she married Stamper ANNINGSOON in June 1862 in Louth, Lincs. There does not appear to have been

any children to this union. Mary Ann died in 1908 aged 75 in Grimsby, and Stamper died in 1910 aged 82, also in Grimsby. I had been firmly convinced that Mary Ann had died between the Census of 1861 and 1871 so it was a very nice surprise that she had been alive and well and living in Caistor.

According to the UK Registry of Births, Marriages and Deaths, Evelyn Oliver was born in 1864 at Skirlaugh in Yorkshire, but this may have been where the birth was registered. The 1881 Census (available in [Family Search](#)) shows that he was born in Garton-in-Holderness, Yorkshire, where his father, the Rev. James William Ashe, was the Vicar. In 1881, when Evelyn Oliver was 17, the family was living at Donington-Upon-Bain in Lincolnshire.

3. His Parents and Siblings

His parents were James William Ashe (born 1829 in Alverstoke, Hampshire) and Sarah Jane Oliver (born 1831, Newton-on-Trent, Lincolnshire). They were married on 1 November 1860 at Louth, Lincolnshire, as can be seen from an extract from the Louth and North Lincolnshire Advertiser dated 3 November 1860:

“At Louth, on the 1st instant, by the Rev. A. S. Wilde, rector, the Rev. James William Ash, to Miss Sarah Jane Oliver, daughter of the late Mr Oliver, farmer, of Newton-on-Trent.”

A further announcement on 10 November 1860 in the same newspaper states:

“Rev. J. W. Ashe, vicar of Gorton, Holderness, to Sarah Jane, eldest daughter of the late George Oliver, Esq , and grand-daughter of the Rev. Dr. Oliver, vicar of Scopwick.”

An [online spreadsheet](#) of Lincolnshire marriages confirms the marriage date of 1 November 1860 at St. James, Louth, for James William Ashe (and provides his father’s name as John Ashe) and Sarah Jane Oliver (father was George Oliver).

However, an [IGI record](#) shows James William Ashe and Sarah Jane Oliver as having been married on 14 October 1860 in Humbleton, York. This date and place might indicate a license to marry, with the actual wedding taking place in Louth, Lincolnshire, where Sarah Jane’s parents lived.

Based on available records, it appears that James William Ashe and Sarah Jane Oliver had the following children (perhaps more, but other records have not so far been found):

- (a) Bertie Allenby Ashe, born 1863; buried in Donington-Upon-Bain on 21 June 1880, according to an [IGI Record](#);
- (b) Evelyn Oliver Ashe, born 1864 in Garton-in-Holderness, Yorkshire, according to the [1881 census record](#);
- (c) Ethel Ashe, born 1870 in Garton-in-Holderness, Yorkshire, according to the [1871 census record](#). (*Contributed by Elizabeth Oliver in January 2013*: Ethel Ashe married in 1899 Angelo Nelson Symons who later (1910-ish) became Chief Health Officer for Guernsey, Channel Islands. He must have been there all during the 1st and 2nd World Wars and was honoured in 1945 for his contribution. [He was awarded the OBE on 11 December 1945, as seen in [The London Gazette](#)).

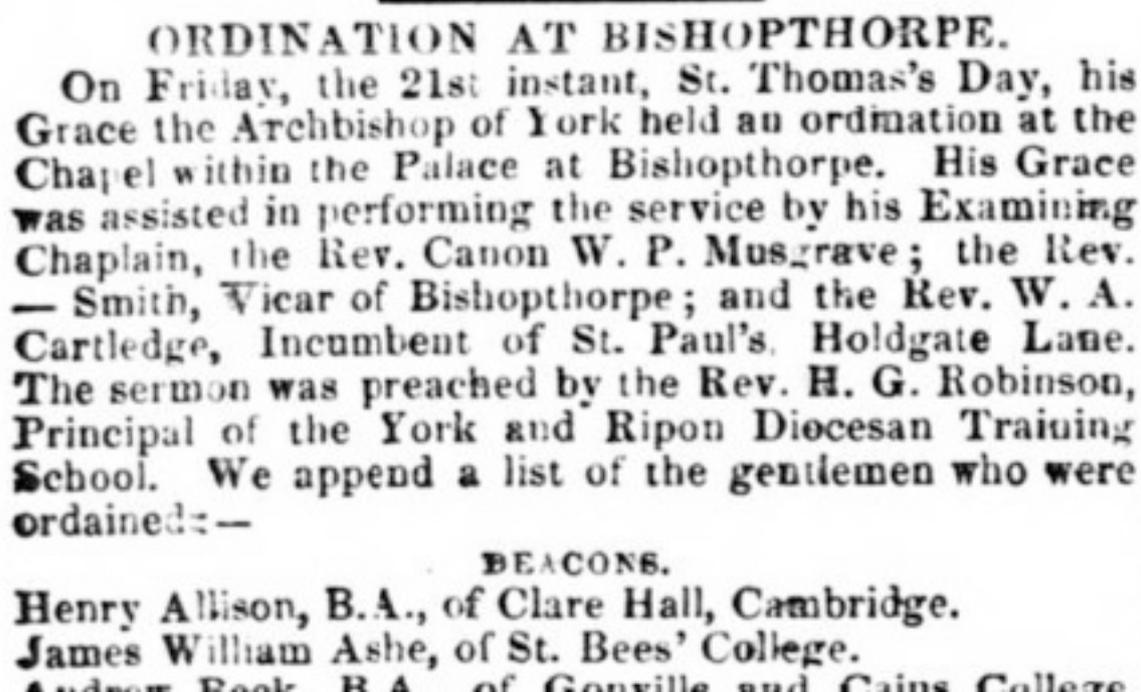
[Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1868](#) has the following entry for James William Ashe:

“ASHE, James William, *Garton-in-Holderness, Yorks.* -- St. Bees; Deacon 1855 and Priest 1856 by Archbishop of York. Vicar of Garton-in-Holderness, Diocese of York, 1858. (Patron, Lord Chan; Vicar's Income 105*l*; Population 195). Late Curate of Witherwick, Yorks.”

Contributed by Elizabeth Oliver in May 2013:

In 1854, Easter Term, James William Ashe was admitted to St. Bees College, and his address is given as Garton-in-Holderness. The object of the college was "to supply a good and economical education for candidates for Holy Orders". The fees were £10 a term, plus cost of cap and gown £1 10s.

The York Herald, dated 29 December 1855, provided details on James William Ashe's ordination:



ORDINATION AT BISHOPTHORPE.
On Friday, the 21st instant, St. Thomas's Day, his Grace the Archbishop of York held an ordination at the Chapel within the Palace at Bishopthorpe. His Grace was assisted in performing the service by his Examining Chaplain, the Rev. Canon W. P. Musgrave; the Rev. — Smith, Vicar of Bishopthorpe; and the Rev. W. A. Cartledge, Incumbent of St. Paul's, Holdgate Lane. The sermon was preached by the Rev. H. G. Robinson, Principal of the York and Ripon Diocesan Training School. We append a list of the gentlemen who were ordained:—

BEACONS.
Henry Allison, B.A., of Clare Hall, Cambridge.
James William Ashe, of St. Bees' College.
Andrew Beck, B.A., of Gonville and Caius College.

From Yorkshire, the family appears to have moved on to Donnington-on-Bain, near Louth in Lincolnshire. [Kelly's Directory of Lincolnshire](#) (1885) had this to say about Donington-Upon-Bain:

“Donington-Upon-Bain (formerly Donington-on-Baine) is a pleasant village, parish and station on the Louth and Lincoln line of railway. The church of St. Andrew is a stone structure in the Early English style, with a chancel, nave and small embattled tower at west end, containing 3 bells, and contains a Saxon font. The living is a rectory, yearly value £300, including 213 acres of glebe, allotted in lieu of tithes in 1798, with residence, in the gift of and held since 1876 by the Rev. James William Ashe, of St. Bees.”

A description for Donington-on-Bain provides further, rather interesting information on James William Ashe:

“The Rev. James. W. Ashe arrived in the village in the spring of 1879. Born about 1829 at Alverstoke, near Gosport in Hampshire he had held various appointments before coming to

Donington on Bain. His wife Sarah was a native of Newton on Trent in Nottinghamshire and their son Evelyn Oliver was born at Holderness near York. Within a short time a difference of opinion arose between the rector and some of the old gentlemen of the village regarding the graveyard. By the end of the year what had started as a minor disagreement had escalated into a bitter feud dividing the Churchgoing residents. Certain unpleasant incidents also occurred which resulted in much hostility between the parson and some of his flock. Some 50 years later a former resident suggested in an article in a local newspaper that bitterness amongst the villagers had still not been eradicated altogether and the lamentable events of 1879 still led to many people regarding Donington on Bain as a rather quarrelsome place. Mr Ashe died in 1904.”

An article in the Guardian, dated Wednesday, December 15, 1897, sheds some light on the relationship between the rector and his parishioners:

“At Louth County Court on Thursday, before his Honour Judge Shortt, the Rev. James William Ashe, rector of Donnington-on-Bain, sued William H. True for 1*l.* 1*s.*, the amount of a special fee due for the burial of Mrs Preston, who, it was alleged, was at the time of her decease a non-resident of Donnington-on-Bain. Mrs Preston died at Derby, at the residence of one of her daughters, and she was taken to Donnington for burial, notice being given to the rector (who was away on holiday) by letter. He replied by telegram, stating that as deceased was a non-resident he should claim a special fee of 1*l.* The telegram was received at the time the body was being conveyed to the churchyard. Mrs Preston was the widow of an old resident of the parish. His Honour held that Mrs Preston was merely away on a visit at Derby, and that she never ceased to be a parishioner of Donnington. He, therefore, gave judgement for the defendant, with costs on the higher scale. The burial took place with a Nonconformist service.”

According to the [1881 Census Record](#), James William Ashe was born in 1829 in Alverstoke, Hampshire. He is also recorded in an earlier [1851 census record](#) at the age of 22. According to an [IGI Record](#), James William Ashe died at Donington-Upon-Bain and was buried on 19 May 1904 at the age of 75.

The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, dated 21 May 1904, announced his death in an obituary:

“The death is announced of he Rev. J. W. Ashe, Rector of Donington-on-Bain, near Lincoln, a position which he had held since 1876. Deceased was 75 years of age. He had been ailing for some time.”

Sarah Jane Oliver was born on 23 January 1831 in Newton-on-Trent, Lincolnshire. She appears in the 1911 census, at the age of 80, as living in Jersey, presumably having gone to live with her daughter, Ethel, after the death of James William Ashe. Sarah Jane appears to have survived James William until about 1920, as can be seen from an extract from her will held by the Jersey Heritage Trust.

4. His Mother’s Family

Contributed by Elizabeth Oliver in January 2013:

Sarah Jane Oliver was born 23 January 1831, Newton-on-Trent, Lincolnshire. Her father was George Oliver and her mother was Sarah Allenby whose parents, William Everitt Allenby and Jane Elizabeth Edwards (known as Jane), were a long-established prosperous farming family from Hallington, Lincs.

George and Sarah married 4 December 1827 at Raithby cum Hallington, Lincs. They had a large family of 10, possibly more, children, as follows:

- George Allenby Oliver (b. 1828);
- William Everitt Oliver (b. 1829);
- Sarah Jane Oliver (b. 1831);
- Mary Ann Oliver (b. 1832);
- Elizabeth Allenby Oliver (b. 1832);
- Richard Allenby Oliver (b. 1835, died in infancy);
- Samuel Allenby Oliver (b. 1838);
- Helen Allenby Oliver (b. 1840, died in infancy);
- Evelyn Pierrepont Oliver (b. 1845);
- Charles Augustine Oliver (b. 1848).

According to the Census returns, his obituaries, and his Death Certificate, George, father to Sarah Jane, was a Surgeon with a rural practice based at his home in Newton-on-Trent. Her brother, George, was the farmer, taking over the Allenby family farm at Hallington.

"Surgeon George" died in tragic circumstances on 5 February 1856. He had been out in his pony and trap late at night to see a patient and took a wrong turn. His horse and trap tumbled into the Fossdyke and George was found next morning drowned.

When Sarah Jane and James William Ashe married in 1860 it would have been her elder brother, George, the farmer, who acted in loco parentis.

The father of "Surgeon George", and Sarah Jane Oliver's Grandfather, was Rev. Dr. George Oliver (1782-1867), a distinguished writer on historical and masonic matters. He was Headmaster of the Grammar School at Grimsby before moving as Rector to Scopwick, Lincs. His father, and Sarah Jane's Great-Grandfather, was Rev Samuel Oliver, a schoolmaster and Vicar, from Nottinghamshire originally, then Lincolnshire, then Nottingham again.

Note: It may be just a coincidence, but it is interesting to note that a book on Masonry, written by the Rev. Jonathan Ashe, D.D. in 1813, titled [*The Masonic Manual*](#), was edited by the Rev. George Oliver, D.D., and re-published in 1855.

5. His probable Grandparents

Taking the following known attributes:

- (a) his Grandfather's name was John (from his father's marriage announcement);
- (b) his father's surname was sometimes spelled without the "e" (from the 1851 census record); and
- (c) his father was born in Alverstoke, Hampshire;

it is possible to run a search on [Family Search](#), which shows those by the name of Ash registered in Alverstoke in the 1841 census. Of those listed, and taking into account that John Ash and Diana Delacourt were [married](#) on 26 February 1809 at St. Mary's, Portsea, Hampshire, it's probable that the family looks like this:

Father: John Ash, born circa 1791.

Mother: Diana Ash, born circa 1791.

Son: John Ash, born circa 1811.

Son: George Ash, born circa 1826.

Son: James Ash, born 1829.

Daughter: Sarah Ash, born circa 1831.

Given the gaps in ages, one could assume that there were additional children, some of whom may have died in infancy, while others may have already left home, or were staying with relatives at the time of the census.

While the 1841 census doesn't give many details, the [1861 census](#) in Alverstoke shows John Ash, aged 72 (giving an approximate birth date of 1789), born in Wareham, Dorset. Similarly, a search for Diana Delacourt shows a [baptism record](#) for her at Wareham, Dorset, on 3 July 1790, and her parents were Robert Delacourt and Harriet Compton.

6. His possible Great Grandparents

Having thus identified the most probable grandparents, I ran a search for John Ash in Wareham, Dorset, as that was the birthplace identified in the 1861 census. A [John Longman Ash](#) was baptised at St. Mary's, Wareham, Dorset, in 1789, with the father identified as Robert Ash and the mother as Hester. A [Robert Ash and Hester Randal](#) were married at Holy Trinity, Wareham, Dorset in 1778. A [Hester Ash](#) was buried at St. Mary's, Wareham, Dorset on 26 February 1826, at the age of 72, giving her birth year in 1754. Similarly, a [Robert Ashe](#) was buried at St. Mary's, Wareham, Dorset on 2 November 1836, at the age of 82, giving his birth year as 1754.

7. His Career

Prior to his medical studies, it appears that Evelyn Oliver Ashe studied at Malvern College. The [Malvern Register](#): 1865-1904, by L. S. Milward and E. C. Bullock (1905) provides the following entry for him:

152 THE MALVERN REGISTER. 1880¹

ASHE, Evelyn Oliver; born 1864. House Scholar. *School House.*
Son of Rev. J. W. Ashe, Donnington, Louth. Class. Shell
—Upper Vth. Left Chr. 1880.

Scholarship in Anatomy and Surgery, London Hospital; L.S.A.
1888 (London and Owen's College); M.D. 1889; F.R.C.S.
1892; late House Surgeon and Physician, London Hos-
pital; Surgeon Floating Hospital *Chulow* (Mission to
Deep Sea Fishermen); Senior Assistant Physician, North-
Eastern Fever Hospital; Senior House Surgeon, Kimberley
Hospital, South Africa; Medical Staff, South African War,
1899; author of "Besieged by the Boers."
Kimberley, South Africa.

Evelyn Oliver Ashe studied medicine at the London Hospital Medical College, where the [British Medical Journal](#) dated 30 April 1887 reported:

"the Hospital Scholarship, of the value of £20, for proficiency and zeal in clinical surgery has been awarded to Mr. Evelyn Oliver Ashe."

At the age of 27, he is registered in the [1891 census](#) as a resident Surgical Staff in Whitechapel, London.

The [Royal College of Surgeons](#) of England provides this biography on him:

“MRCS June 9th 1892; FRCS June 9th 1892; LSA 1888; MB Lond (Hons) 1888; MD 1889.

Died: 27 April 1925

Occupation: General surgeon

Educated at Owens College, Manchester, and at the London Hospital, where he was Scholar in Anatomy and Physiology (1883-1884), and in Anatomy, Physiology, and Chemistry (1884-1885). He was also Surgical Scholar, and obtained an Honours Certificate in Obstetrics in 1886-1887. After qualification he was House Physician, House Surgeon, Dental Assistant, and Resident Accoucheur at the London Hospital. In 1892 he went out to Kimberley, Cape Colony, as Senior House Surgeon to the Kimberley Hospital. Started practice in Kimberley in 1894, and became Surgeon to the De Beer's Consolidated Mines and Surgeon to the Kimberley Hospital, where he was Senior Surgeon at the time of his death on April 27th, 1925. His qualities were such that he was accorded a public funeral.

Publications:

"Besieged by the Boers: a Diary of Life and Events in Kimberley during the Siege". 8vo, New York, 1900.

"Galyl in Malta Fever." – Brit. Med. Jour., 1918, i, 454.

"Cæsarean Section for Eclampsia – Survival of Mother and Child." – S. Afric. Med. Record, 1919."

8. The Elephant Man

In 1890, while a house surgeon at the London Hospital, Dr. Evelyn Oliver Ashe was called to examine the body of Joseph Carey Merrick, known as the Elephant Man on account of his deformities. He was the subject of a number of [Letters to the Times](#). At the end of his life, he lived and died at the Hospital. He was the subject of a book, [The Elephant Man](#), by Frederick Drimmer, which was later made into a [film](#).

9. His Marriage to Agnes Cowan

[The British Medical Journal](#), dated 21 August 1897, announced his wedding as follows:

"Marriages: ASHE-COWAN -- On July 10th, at St. Matthew's, Kimberley, South Africa, by the Ven. Archdeacon Holbech, Evelyn Oliver Ashe, M.D, Lond., F.R.C.S.Eng., to Agnes Cowan, late Matron Kimberley Hospital."

The [South African Medical Journal](#) of February 1897 reported under Matters of Current Interest for Kimberley:

“MATRON, KIMBERLEY HOSPITAL: This post, vacant through Miss Vacher's resignation on account of ill health, has been filled by the appointment of Miss Cowan. Miss Cowan was trained at University College Hospital, and acted as staff nurse at the Kimberley Hospital, whence she went to the Vryburg Hospital as Matron.”

The website for [St. Cyprian's Cathedral](#) in Kimberley, which was built in the early 1900s, and whose first Bishop was the Rev. Wilfred Gore-Brown, states:

“*The Archangel Raphael*. (Tobit 11:1-15 and 12:11-22) Representing men's petitions to God, his name signifies "God heals". This and its two companion windows in the apse above the high altar (the three Apse Clerestory windows depicting the Archangels Raphael, Michael and Gabriel), were given by Mrs Ashe in memory of Bishop Gore-Browne. They were dedicated by the Dean (Robson) on 25 June 1933. The three windows are the work of James Powell & Son of London.”

10. His Book

Perhaps best known for his diary, which he kept during the siege of Kimberley during the Boer War, this was published in 1900 and its publication was marked by the following description:

“Besieged by the Boers: A Diary of Life and Events in Kimberley during the Siege by E. Oliver Ashe, M.D.Lond., F.R.C.S.Eng., Surgeon to the Kimberley Hospital. With 24 Illustrations. London: Hutchinson and Co. 1900.

For some time past the British public has been bombarded with books about the war, but of most of them it takes as little notice as the garrisons of Kimberley, Ladysmith, and Mafeking did of the futile shells of the Boers. It is felt that literature of this kind is premature and necessarily incomplete, and till a full history of the struggle is possible the public is content with the record of passing events which it finds in the daily papers. The little work before us is, however, of a different character from the hasty accounts of the great racial struggle for supremacy in South Africa which have too obviously been manufactured, like Peter Pindar's razors, to sell.

Dr. ASHE is one of the leading medical practitioners of Kimberley, and is surgeon to the hospital there. He remained quietly at his post throughout the siege, doing with his might the work that lay nearest to his hand, and withal finding time to note day by day what he saw and heard and felt. This diary was written, as the dedication of the book shows, solely for the eyes of his mother at home in England, without any notion of its being made public. Fortunately, however, it was lent to a well-known journalist, who was so struck by it that he strongly advised publication. There can be no doubt as to soundness of this advice, for the diary is a most interesting document of the class known to historians as 'memoires, pour servir'. There is no attempt at 'writing up' the scenes and sufferings, the incidents and emotions of the memorable siege. Dr. Ashe tells his story with a simple directness worth all the lurid word-painting of the literary impressionist. He tells us what the man in the street -- and in the shelter -- felt when shells were falling all about, wrecking houses and now and then killing someone, but luckily as a rule doing little beyond making a hideous noise. In reading the diary we seem to hear the bugle sound the alarm when a shell was coming and to see the people run to take shelter in the improvised forts which they had constructed in their back gardens, or crowding down out of harm's way into the bowels of the diamond mines. We share in the excitement of the hair-breadth escapes when shells strike a spot where someone has been standing a few minutes before, or go through the open window of an office just missing a man at work there, or fall under a sick woman's bed without exploding. We are moved by the tragedies which occur from time to time -- babes killed in their mother's arms, children torn to pieces when sitting at breakfast, men slain in their bedrooms when dressing for dinner. As the siege goes on we become case-hardened like the inhabitants of the besieged town, and think little of such trifles as stray shells.

Dr. Ashe owns that he was badly scared, but the work had to be done, and he felt that if a shell were destined to hit him it would do so whether he were indoors or out-of-doors, and whether in a shelter or not; and so, though he did not try to get hit, he went about his work as usual and never missed a single office hour or visiting a single patient on account of the shells. And he thinks all the other doctors did the same. All honour to them for staying at the post of professional duty when they might without the least reproach have gone away! We share with them in the gradually diminishing rations; we dine off joints of horse and make believe we like it; and we make salads of casual weeds which grow in our gardens left unwatered owing to the exigencies of the military situation. The "military situation," by the way, is one of the few things that disturbed the philosophical serenity of Dr. Ashe's temper. He chafed under the multitudinous and often seemingly meaningless restrictions imposed by martial law. Altogether he gives us a vivid picture of life in a beleaguered town. The reader comes to know the writer almost as a personal friend, and the quiet heroism and the pride in the devoted courage of his wife, who was with him all the time, which shine through the rough narrative, can hardly fail to win the sympathies of the most stolid Briton.

Naturally enough, Dr. Ashe does not agree with Mr. Stead in looking upon the Boer as a brother; and he frankly rejoices when he is "potted." And it must be admitted that the Boer is not a heroic figure when seen at close quarters outside his entrenchments. He is treacherous and cowardly, firing at ambulance wagons -- regardless of the Red Cross, and not caring what havoc his shells may work among women and children. He is filthy in his habits, and even his boasted marksmanship is a delusion. He took care never to come within rifle shot of Kimberley, and can only fight at long

range and from behind cover. One redeeming feature in him was the scrupulous observance of the Sabbath day. This gave the Kimberley folk a day of rest from shells. Dr. Ashe says the town is not composed of Sunday school superintendents, and is, as a rule, rather bored by Sundays, but it found the Boer method of keeping the day holy the reverse of boring.

We should like to say more of this delightful little book, but enough has, we hope, been written to give an idea of its contents. It can be read with interest even by those who care little for any but the lightest literature, and yet it has a permanent value as a living record of a thrilling incident in a war which will be one of the great landmarks in our rough island story. As such it will be indispensable to the future Carlyle of this historic struggle.”

A rather interesting [newspaper article](#) on his book describes it as "a racy, unconventional, but scrappy volume".

Julian Ralph wrote an article in the Daily Mail, datelined 13 March 1900, titled '[Some Women in the War: Bits of a Kimberley Surgeon's Diary](#)'.

On 5 May 1900, the New York Times announced the book's publication with the following article:

A new book on the war in South Africa, entitled "Besieged by the Boers: a Diary of Events during the Siege of Kimberley", by E. Oliver Ashe, is shortly to be published by Doubleday, Page & Co. Julian Ralph, who read the book in manuscript, wrote about it from the seat of war in South Africa: "The author is Dr. E. Oliver Ashe, surgeon to the Kimberley Hospital. The diary is in reality a very long letter, and so the public will get -- as it got from Pepy's 'Diary' -- the full charm of a free-and-easy, human and wholly frank and artless story of an active and manly man's experiences at a great crisis. Let no editor or publisher tell you it is crude, for I know it will stand alone and will last as long as men care to read of life under queer, untoward, and extraordinary conditions. It is frank, human, and gossipy, fair and fearless, and true; it will be sure to have a good sale, for it is free and fresh as the air on the veldt."

Julian Ralph also wrote an interesting book "[At Pretoria](#)" (published in 1901), which mentions Dr. Ashe quite frequently in Chapter VIII. He is also mentioned in Chapter IX as one of the "Heroes of the Siege".

11. Mentioned in Despatches

Dr. Evelyn Oliver Ashe is mentioned in a [Biographical Sketch](#) of Dr. Charles William Hunter:

"Evelyn Oliver Ashe (1864 -1925) was a well-known medical practitioner in Kimberley He arrived in the Cape in 1892, his qualifications Lic. Soc. Apoth (Lond) 1888, M.B. (Univ Lond) 1888, M.D. (Univ Lond) 1889, F.R.C.S.(Eng) 1892. During the Second Anglo-Boer War, he was Mentioned in Despatches by Lt. Col. Kekewich in his despatch of 15 Feb 1900. He received a QSA bar DoK* (sold July 2008). With the cessation of hostilities, he authored the book: Besieged by the Boers: a diary of life and events in Kimberley during the siege. Publ: Hutchinson & Co. 1900.

* the Queen's South Africa medal with the clasp 'Defence of Kimberley'.

12. His Will

A copy of his probated will is on record in South Africa, and a copy kept by the Jersey Heritage Trust, as follows:

Item: D/Y/A/85/167

Description: Copy dated 23 June 1925 from the Principal Registry of the Act of Probate dated 15 August 1925 and the Will and Testament of Evelyn Oliver Ashe, Kimberley, Cape of Good Hope. Dated 16 November 1922. 1 booklet; seal.

13. His Obituary

The [British Medical Journal](#), dated 22 August 1925, printed the following Obituary:

"Dr. EVELYN OLIVER ASHE, who died at Kimberley on April 27th, aged 61, received his medical education at the London Hospital and Owens College, Manchester. He obtained the diploma L.S.A. in 1888, and graduated M.B. Lond., with honours, in the same year. In the following year he took the M.D. degree, and obtained the F.R.C.S.Eng. in 1892. After holding house appointments at the London Hospital he went to Kimberley in 1892, as senior house-surgeon to Kimberley Hospital; he started general practice about two years later, but retained his connexion with the hospital as surgeon. He was also surgeon to the De Beers Consolidated Mines, Kimberley. He became a member of the British Medical Association in 1890. He was very highly esteemed in Kimberley; the funeral procession was nearly a third of a mile in length and included the mayor, ex-service men, nurses, and scouts. A colleague writes: As a student Dr. Ashe distinguished himself in everything that he took up, and those who knew him at the London Hospital will not easily forget the tall, manly figure and cheery face; he was always ready to help any fellow student in difficulties of any kind. He had an inborn love of the sea and took a long whaling trip before settling down in practice. Outspoken, bluff, fearless, adventurous, with a high sense of humour, great kindness of heart, and boundless generosity, he had all the qualities of the best type of Englishman."

14. Articles

He authored a number of articles in the Medical Journal, including:

- "On the Superiority and Advantages of Chloroform as a Routine Anesthetic" (June 1894);
- "The Kimberley Hospital Management" (July 1894);
- "[Incised Wound of Knee Joint -- Drainage -- Perfect Recovery](#)" (November 1894);
- "[Carbuncle Treated with Anti-Streptococcus Serum](#)" (5 November 1898);
- "Gangrene of Meckel's Diverticulum" (25 July 1903);
- "Notes on a case of Enterospasm" (2 March 1907) -- also discussed at a Section of Surgery meeting on Wednesday, 3 October 1906, as recorded on pages [286-287](#) in the South African Medical Record, dated 10 October 1906;
- "Tennis Elbow" (2 October 1920).

In addition, he wrote in the *South African Medical Record* the following four articles:

(a) October 1893: "[Stab of Chest Wound of Lung, Haemothorax, Deainage of Lleural Cavity, Recovery](#)";

(b) August 1904: "[Excision of a Perforated Gastric Ulcer: Recovery](#)";

(c) July 1914: "[Discussion on the Control of Venereal Diseases](#)";

(d) January 1919: "[Some Random Recollections of the Kimberley Influenza Epidemic](#)", which took place in 1918 and makes interesting reading. Known as the Spanish Flu, or even the Spanish Lady, primarily because it received greater press coverage in Spain than the rest of the world due to most countries censoring wartime news reports that could be seen as valuable to the enemy, the epidemic went on to kill an estimated 50 million people world-wide.

15. Scholarship established in his name

His legacy lives on in the form of a scholarship. As seen in the book, [Study Abroad International Handbook, Volume 5: 1952-1953](#), published by UNESCO in 1952, the "E. Oliver Ashe Overseas Scholarship" was established as one of a number of scholarships offered by South African

Universities. This unrestricted scholarship is available to male students who have lived at least 2 years, or had their schooling, in Kimberley (S.A.); they must also have had at least 2 years' study at a South African university towards taking a degree. The value of the scholarship was £300 p.a., or such amount as the university shall decide on, and was valid for 2 years.

[The South Africa Medical Journal](#), dated 31 March 1962, carried the following article:

“Dr. Ralph Kester has been awarded the E. Oliver Ashe Overseas Scholarship. He matriculated at the Rev. William Pescod High School in Kimberley, and qualified at the University of Cape Town in 1.960. He did his internship at McCord Hospital, Durban, and intends specializing in Surgery. Dr. Evelyn Oliver Ashe, who died in Kimberley in 1925, was acknowledged as one of the foremost men in the medical profession in South Africa. A keen Association member, he was a contributor to the early numbers of the South African Medical Journal. The Scholarship is only open to students from Kimberley, who have lived there for at least two years or had their schooling in Kimberley. The Selection Committee require particulars of scholastic and sporting ability and moral character. The basis of selection is promise of outstanding achievement in later life, irrespective of the financial standing of the applicants. The Scholarship is not limited to any particular profession, nor to any particular University.”

16. Additional information

Courtesy of the Kimberley Africana Library, and through the kindness of Dr David Morris, Head of Archaeology at the McGregor Museum in Kimberley, the following additional information has come to light:

- Dr. Evelyn Oliver Ashe died on 27 April 1925. The funeral was on 29 April 1925 in the Kimberley Hospital Church and he was buried at the West End Cemetery.
- Mrs Agnes Ashe died on 2 October 1935. The funeral was on 4 October 1935 in the St Cyprian Church and she was buried at the West End Cemetery.

An Abridged Death Certificate has been located and is reproduced below, showing that he died of a sudden heart attack:

B-I 20

10643

REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA
VERKORTE STERFTESERTIFIKAAT

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
ABRIDGED DEATH CERTIFICATE

(Uitgereik kragtens Wet No. 81 van 1963)

(Issued in terms of Act No. 81 of 1963)

Gesertifiseer 'n ware uittreksel uit die sterfte-
register van:

Certified a true extract from the death register
of:

Identiteitsnommer
Identity number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Van Ashe
Surname

Volle voorname Evelyn Oliver
First names in full

Geboortedatum: Dag Maand Jaar 61 jaar
Date of birth: Day Month Year

Geslag male Bevolkingsgroep European
Sex Population group

Huwelikstaat Married
Marital status

Datum van afsterwe: Dag 27 Maand 04 Jaar 1925
Date of death: Day Month Year

Plek van afsterwe Kimberley Hospital
Place of death

Oorsake van dood Verdict death from natural causes
Causes of death wiz Heart Failure, sudden.



Affendall
Sekrêtris van Binnelandse Sake
Secretary for the Interior

G.P.-S.53858-1970-71-1 000-100 S

CT OBITUARIES.
30/4/1925
Dr. E. O. Ashe.

(From Our Correspondent.)

KIMBERLEY.

Wednesday.—Profound regret is felt throughout Kimberley and district at the news of the death, which occurred with startling suddenness at the Kimberley Hospital of Dr. Evelyn Oliver Ashe, who has filled so large a space in the medical life of Kimberley, and was looked upon as one of the leading surgeons of South Africa. Dr. Ashe had been ailing for some time, and recently took a holiday, going down to Ons Rust. While there he had one of his recurring attacks, and was seriously ill. After his return he had several threatenings of collapse, and wired to Dr. Tregonning Harris, of Cape Town, who had joined him in his practice, requesting him to come to Kimberley immediately. Dr. Harris answered the call, and arrived in Kimberley only a week ago.

Dr. Ashe attended Kimberley Hospital according to custom on the morning in question, and was apparently on his way to the operating theatre when it seems he felt this feeling of collapse coming on, and stepped into one of the vacant rooms of the Merriman Ward, and lay down on a bed, where he was subsequently found lying dead. Dr. Ashe was one of the best-known medical men on the Diamond Fields, where he had spent the greater part of a long life. He started on his career under most auspicious circumstances, being gold medallist and the best qualified man of his year at the London Hospital. He took a long whaling trip as a young man, and on his return he came out to this country in 1892 as house surgeon to the Kimberley Hospital. After holding that position for a couple of years he took over the late Dr. Brownlow's practice. Dr. Ashe was a man whose heart was engrossed in his calling almost to the exclusion of all else. The funeral takes place from the Hospital Chapel to-day, the interment being at the West End Cemetery.

The death of Mrs Agnes Ashe was reported in an article (probably in the Diamond Fields Advertiser) in 1935:

**DEATH OF MRS. AGNES
ASHE**

—

Old and Respected Kimberley
Resident

—

The death occurred at her residence in Currey Street about 11 o'clock last night, after a short illness, of Mrs. Agnes Ashe.

The news of her passing will cause deep regret among all sections of the community in Kimberley, and particularly in those quarters where the influence of her philanthropy was felt—the poor and needy will mourn a good friend.

Mrs. Ashe, who attained a venerable age, was one of Kimberley's oldest residents. She was of a retiring disposition and enjoyed the friendship of a large circle. A one-time matron of the Kimberley Hospital, she was the widow of Dr. B. G. Ashe, a widely-known and popular Kimberley medical practitioner.

A special service will be held at St. Cyprian's Cathedral this afternoon at 5 o'clock after which the cortege will proceed to the West End Cemetery.