

GREENE, Samuel T

PEOPLE

Samuel Greene honored as first deaf educator

By Henry Bury

The Intelligencer

Samuel Thomas Greene was honored Tuesday at Sir James Whitney School.

And the celebration extended to Milton and London, Ont., as well.

Greene was the first deaf educator in Ontario. He taught at the Ontario School for the Deaf (now Sir James Whitney) from the day it opened in October of 1870 to 1890.

The Dundas Street West school for the deaf — as well as the two other provincial schools in Milton and London — celebrated Samuel Greene Day Tuesday with everything from skits and story telling to baseball and a barbecue.

Craig Barnes, Whitney's principal, said the deaf community "owes a lot to Samuel Greene.

"He's credited with using American Sign Language in an Ontario school for the deaf and providing us with a learning model that was already in place in many American schools," Barnes said.

As well, Greene, an American, was a deaf role model for students at the turn of the last century.

He co-founded the Ontario Deaf-Mute Association (now the Ontario Association for the Deaf) and served as its first president (from 1886 to 1890).

Greene died in 1890 as a result of injuries in an ice boating accident on the Bay of Quinte.

He was buried at Belleville Cemetery. (A Belleville street now bears his name, Greene Street, located between Howard and Ponton Streets).

Whitney school erected a historical marker in Greene's memory in 1995.

Tuesday's celebration was also a fund-raising event to help replace Greene's aging monument at the cemetery.

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