

Sept. 14/91

Plaque marks the beginning

of historic 78-mile Opeongo Line

The earliest pioneers in Renfrew County travelled by steamship up the Ottawa River and came ashore at a place that became known as Farrell's Landing in Castleford. From there, they loaded their belongings onto wagons and began the trek up the Opeongo Line that eventually stretched for 78 miles.

Members of Heritage Renfrew and their guests paid tribute to these settlers and the famous Opeongo Line by dedicating a plaque Saturday just across the road from where the wharf at Farrell's Landing once stood.

The guest of honor was Lizzy Bailey, formerly Mrs. Bill Farrell, who had the pleasant duty of unveiling the plaque. Her late husband was a grandson of Edward Farrell who owned Farrell's Point and Farrell's Landing.

Historian Doris Humphries was mistress of ceremonies and she gave a brief history of the landing site and early settlers such as George Bissett who cleared 19 acres of land before 1825 and built the beautiful squared log house now owned by Audrey Scharfe.

Edward Farrell received the Crown Patent for his nearby 36 acres of land on November 24, 1840. A picture of his wharf was on display at the Sportsplex where guests gathered afterwards for refreshments and music.

Humphries paid tribute to Renfrew historian Harry Hinchley and Bert Vincent, former owner of Grandview Lodge, for their many years of work to have the site plaqued. *(unsuccessfully)*

Marjorie Lindsay, Bert's daughter, was guest speaker at the ceremony and

Text on the plaque

On May 26, 1851, Horton Township Council adopted a bylaw to build a road across Horton Township starting at the old wharf at Farrell's Landing on the Ottawa River, opposite this site. This road would facilitate travel for early settlers to the interior. It became known as the Ottawa and Opeongo Colonization Road and extended about 78 miles through Renfrew County ending at Madawaska.

she spoke of the lumbering shanties and farms on the Opeongo Line, often referred to as "Up the Blaze" by those who travelled it. In the early days it was the only route from the Ottawa River to Renfrew.

Lindsay noted the idea of plaquing the Opeongo Line began during Canada's centennial in 1967 and was discussed again when Heritage Renfrew was founded in 1974.

In the early days of Renfrew County, the Opeongo Line played an important role in the settlement and development of this whole area.

"Over the Opeongo, year after year, travelled hundreds of men and endless caravans of supplies in the days of the great pine lumber industries," Lindsay stated.

Humphries acknowledged the support Heritage Renfrew received from Reeve Milt Stevenson and Horton Township council in erecting the plaque. Others assisting included lawyer Bill

Chown, Audrey Scharfe who donated the land and fence rails, road superintendent Dalton Hein and the road crew for preparing the site, Deputy Reeve John Doering for obtaining a large anchor for the cairn, Neil Mullins from the County of Renfrew, Tom Smith, cairn builders Ralph Eady, Bob Johnston, Beattie Collins and Ivan Eady.

Members of Heritage Renfrew and their guests were joined at the Sportsplex by MPP Leo Jordan and Ton Dicke of the Lumber Baron Festival Committee.

Completing the festivities, Johnston, his wife Julie and daughter Jenny provided a musical program and Heritage Renfrew presented Dicke with a cheque for \$1,500 for the 1992 Lumber Baron Festival. The money was raised during an open house at the former O'Brien home now owned by Bob and Leslie Cross.

Displays at the Sportsplex included photos of many heritage homes in Horton Township.