

# Bent River plaque dedication

In 1887, residents of Bent River paid 25 cents to buy the land for their first schoolhouse, S.S. #7 Watt. One-hundred and ten years later, it cost them considerably more (\$500 to be exact!) to buy a plaque to mark the site.

Times change, but the community pride remains strong, as evidenced at the plaque dedication on Sunday, September 7.

The Bent River Women's Institute spearheaded the campaign to place the plaque on a rock at the original school site, near Young's Lake. The late Eileen Greer, in particular, championed the idea.

"We were sad she could not be here with us today," says Nancy Thompson, who has taken over Eileen's job as keeper of the Women's Institute's Tweedsmuir history.

## SS# 7 Watt School History:

In 1887, John Young sold the land for the school site to school trustees Robert Fullerton, Alfred Cecil Saugton and William King-shott.

In 1911 the Mutchen-backer brothers of Rosseau Falls bought the pine on the Fullerton place from the government and gave Charlie Judd of Juddhaven the job of cutting it. He had a team of horses and was paid \$100 for the job.

The school trustees borrowed money from Judd to pay John Eaton and his uncle Hugh to build the schoolhouse. They erected the building, put in sash, glass and doors and even supplied their own nails.

The school was a small frame structure with desks lining the walls, a large wood stove in the centre and raised platform for the teacher's desk at one end. Students had benches to sit on. After a few years, proper desks and seats were installed.

The first teacher was Mrs. Clem Bunn. She was followed by Miss Cecelia Gill, Miss Longhurst, Mr. McNulty, Mr. Hutchinson, Miss Hattie Forge, Miss Ada Lousley, Miss Eliza Oldham, Miss Myrtle Guest, Mr. Arthur Webb, Miss Ashley Stubb, Miss Margaret Wilkinson, Mrs. Joseph Fullerton, Carrie Clarke in 1911 and Lola McDonald in 1912.

The new Bent River school was built in 1912 on a half acre of land donated by Mr. Andrew Greer.

The old school building was purchased by the Clements and moved to Granite Bluff to be used as a staff house.

The "new" school house still stands and is used by the Bent River Women's Institute and the local seniors group.



**PLAQUE DEDICATION.** Isobel Quinton, left, and Edith Smith, members of the Bent River Women's Institute, took part in the dedication commemorating the original Bent River school. Rev. Peter Simmons presided at the ceremony.



**THIS PRETTY PLAQUE** now marks the location of the first Bent River school, thanks to the efforts of the Bent River Women's Institute. Curiously, the school cost \$100 to build, the plaque \$500!