



WILL THE REAL SMITH BROTHERS please stand up? These bushy chin'd Y's Men, living advertisements for their own beard growing contest, have a Lion in their midst with a mane on his chin at a joint dinner meeting of the Y's Men and Lions Club Thursday at the Y.M.C.A. Topics of discussion included

fertilizer, father-in-law relationships and who should use the family TV set. Fines master Bill Wilson did much of the talking. Left to right they're Y's Men Howard Pearce, Walter Dubois, Doug Copeland, Lion Chief Dave Hunter and Y's Men Rick Coe. (Staff Photo)

Resurface Highway

Highway 25 between Highway 401 and the southern outskirts of Acton will be completely resurfaced this year, the Ontario Department of Highways announced as the 1967-68 estimates were tabled in the Legislature.

O. Harron of the Information Section, D.H.O. explained the program would probably begin late this summer. The resurfacing covers a 9.3 mile stretch of the two-lane highway.

The work also includes a minor widening on the first mile of the highway north from Highway 401. The present 20 foot wide pavement will be widened to 24 feet, he said.

Niagara escarpment will be preserved for recreation area

Conversion of the 450-mile-long Niagara Escarpment and Manitoulin Islands into a gigantic recreation area were announced Friday by Premier John Robarts.

The premier said in the legislature the cabinet committee on regional development will begin a wide-ranging study of the escarpment and the islands with the view of preserving them for recreational purposes.

A large section of the escarpment passes through Halton County. It is dotted with gravel and quarry operations and several recreational areas.

Mr. Robarts said he has informed the cabinet committee, of which he is chairman, "that this is an urgent matter meriting immediate attention."

"There has been, in recent months, a rising tide of concern over the future of the escarpment which extends from Queenston to Tobermory and Manitoulin Island, so aptly described as Southern Ontario's last frontier."

"This concern arises for many reasons, among them the need for more public recreational areas, the increasing use of the escarpment for housing development, the long-term effect of quarrying operations, the varying views held by municipal authorities who control parts of the escarpment, and the published opinions of private organizations such as the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the Bruce-Trail Association and the Nature Conservancy of Canada," the Premier said.

Mr. Robarts agreed development such as quarry operations would be frozen. He promised talks with all municipal authorities involved.

History of Rockwood cemetery wins centennial essay award

The first prize essay of the top 12 chosen from grades 7 and 8 at Rockwood Public School follows.

The essay contest is a Centennial project sponsored by Rockwood Homes and School.

This essay is by Marjan Drilber who received as her award a book written by Miss Jean Little and a Centennial silver dollar.

This essay was given first standing by members of Guelph Historical Society.

HISTORY OF THE ROCKWOOD CEMETERY By Marjan Drilber

"How they so softly rest, All, all the holy dead, Unto whose dwelling place How doth my soul draw near! How they so softly rest, All in their silent graves, Deep to corruption Slowly down sinking!"

These poetical words of Henry Longfellow most certainly captured the sentiments in the heart of the Rockwood Cemetery's late founder, John Harris.

History:

John Harris owned 50 acres of very productive and beautiful land on the east half of Lot 3, Concession 4, Eramosa Township, Wellington County.

Today this land is known as the Academy Lot.

In his generous way, John Harris donated two acres of this land for a cemetery and as a religious person, he selected a certain spot in the south-east corner as a place for his church, the Religious Society of Friends.

Friends church:

John Harris' church, the Religious Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers, gratefully accepted his offer.

Therefore in 1844 the Friends organized a building and with willing powerful hands they erected their new church.

It was an impressive sight for any passer-by on Highway No. 7.

The church was a plain frame building with clapboard siding and was never known to be painted. In later years, however, it became "weathered" to a pleasant gray. The interior was lined with wide pine boards also unpainted, according to the simple ways of the Quakers.

Of simple construction, the building had two windows at the front and two at the rear. There were two doors at the front of the building (double doors, most likely) but only the right hand door was used.

It is said that the plan of two doors at the front of the building, was in case it was desired to divide the meeting house discussion as was sometimes done in Quaker Meeting Houses. This was done in the early days by erecting a wood partition which divided the space into two rooms so the women and men could meet and discuss separately.

Also a good Sunday School was conducted in this building made up of children of several denominations. The seating capacity was around 40 individuals and the wood burning stove threw off its heat to the large group.

Some of the first families of this meeting were the Norths, Wetheralds, Smiths and Harris family.

As the time went by older Friends passed on and were buried in a portion of the cemetery along the north side, well back. Later, owing to the distance from the village of some of the cemeteries, other burials (people who were not Friends) were permitted and plots that has been laid out were soon taken up.

In 1898 it was thought best to have a more central site in the village for the Friends' Church and this was provided by John R. Harris (son of John Harris). The land was located next to the chopping mill (Hortop's Mill) on Main Street (Highway No. 7). The new building (Presbyterian Church) was opened in August of the same year, 1898.

Recently a simple stone marker has been placed on the site of the old meeting house in the cemetery bearing the following inscription: SITE OF FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE 1844 - 1898

FOUNDING: John Harris, a generous and religious man, donated two acres of land to the Religious Society of Friends. A few people might have thought it a shame to give this beautiful, productive land for a cemetery but the Friends noticed and realized the sacrifice John Harris was making and therefore accepted it for it was for the use of the Lord and nothing was too good for Him.

Also on this land a church was built which was removed in 1898.

LOCATION: As a person comes into Rockwood on Highway No. 7, travelling in a northerly direction, they will see three signs, namely, Welcome to Rockwood, Settle Here and the most inappropriate yet, the one we are interested in, Rockwood Cemetery.

On the two acres or half of Lot 3, Concession 4, Eramosa Township, Wellington County, lies the Burial Grounds of Rockwood, Rockwood Cemetery. In the founder's day and up to Frank Day's time it was known as the Academy Lot. It probably received this title as the Academy, is but one house away from the boundary line and Mr. Brown's farm borders the cemetery also.

REASONS: John Harris donated the land for the cemetery not only because of his generous and religious character, but the population and death rates were going up.

Causes of death: In the pioneer's day there were many causes of death and few medicines or remedies. The main cause as always, was a great amount of sickness and few or no doctors. For these reasons families learned and were forced to make their remedies and diagnosis.

Whiskey and other such beverages were the chief medicines but other home remedies were used. Sometimes the drunkenness that overcame them put them in the deepest state of relaxation, death. The families did not know what sterilization precautions to take when treating for snake and rabid animal bites, tetanus (stepping on a rusty nail) or animal attacks, so many a person died from blood poisoning. Also when the axe slipped or the food was fermented, or the well was too shallow or too near the outhouse, poisoning took place.

Many men were killed in the wars (Wars of 1812 to 1814) and frontier justice was to string a man up or kill him as a mob.

Even in our quiet township there were suicides and murders, not only by Indians but also by fellow white men!

In 1848, 10-year-old Margaret Wood went to visit her grandmother, Robert Scott and a sick uncle. In doing this she had to pass through thick forest and according to the authorities this is when it happened, about two o'clock. She had been strangled to death and the murderer was never caught though one man was arrested but later released.

The ordinary pioneer might have complained of an ache and be soothed with the thought it was a stomach ache. When he died though, people discovered they were calling many diseases as appendicitis, pneumonia, typhoid fever and influenza (the epidemic during the war) this. Also consumption and diphtheria were common.

There were some drownings and the cemetery holds one such victim, Samuel Morris, at the age of five years, 1871. Also a man killed by a falling tree was nothing unusual.

Burial ceremonies: EARLIEST MANNER: The first burying ceremony was done completely by the family and if possible a few friends might attend. It was done in the Family Clearance (a part of the land kept separately for burials).

First a shallow grave was dug. They would wrap the deceased in a sheet, lay him on the ground and then cover him up leaving a wooden cross as a marker. It was done this way as there were no churches or ministers.

People were isolated from one another and in order to take the dead to a cemetery they had to travel through woods where Indians and wild animals roamed.

1860 MANNER: When the population increased a rich devout man (as John

Harris) would donate some of his land to be used for a church and cemetery.

Before the burial took place a wake (the nights until the body leaves the home for burial) was held in the one-room house. The friends of the family would come the night before the burial, bringing food so the family would not have to cook.

They arrived by horses, or oxen pulling a jumper sleigh (bobsled) but most preferred to walk as the roads were more blazed trails, only one carriage wide. When the right (a person who makes wheels for carts and such) arrived the richer people obtained wagons (lumber planks put together over four wheels) that were pulled by oxen, as horses were scarce.

While on the trail the folks brought a gun for protection and a light as the forests were so dense they couldn't see even in the daylight.

Many of the people were Quakers, therefore they would wear no ornaments and plain homespun black clothes. The men had beards and the women long plaited hair. The children were brought along as they didn't believe in babysitters.

When the day arrived the service was conducted by the circuit rider if he was available, but in Rockwood, Quakers were the main denomination and as each Quaker can act as a minister, an elder was given the privilege of performing the burial.

The grave was dug by the family and friends. The casket was of rough lumber, if the deceased had one and if not he was wrapped in a shroud. To buy a casket the family did not use money but rather barter.

After the interment was completed the group went to the family's home where the friends again cooked the meal. The mourners stayed the night and in the morning started off home again.

1880 MANNER: After the roads began to be gravelled (1870) wagons were more common though horses were still few in number. Also the bereaved arrived in buggies (two seater), democrats (family buggy) and for winter ceremonies in cutters. Pioneers were more prosperous now and some even had store-bought clothes made especially for burials.

There were regular ministers now, but the family still dug the graves. (It was about this time that people other than Quakers were allowed to be buried in the Quaker Cemetery at Rockwood for the village was more populous now.) All the dead had caskets now. When the ceremony was over the friends were entertained at the deceased's home.

PRESENT DAY MANNER: Today one has to apply to the Secretary of the Cemetery Board, who is also the Secretary of the Village for a cemetery plot. Then with the clerk (Mr. O'Brien, this year) the person finds out what plot is available. In an emergency the undertaker will do this.

For a villager a grave four feet by eight feet will cost 50 dollars while an outsider must pay 75 dollars. Before this the cemetery plots were the cheapest in this area, costing from 25 dollars to 30 dollars, and a plot for a family of six would cost only 50 dollars.

Because of this many people from other towns were putting their dead here, filling up the cemetery space. Some families were buying plots for all their children. When the children moved away they left empty plots which couldn't be used for anyone else.

Today if the person dies he will be put in a funeral home for a few days and then in his church he will be blessed. Later he is driven in a hearse, followed by his family and friends, to the cemetery where he will be buried in his own plot.

A gravestone is added later if desired. People come only for the funeral leaving the family alone. Occasionally a tea is served in the church after the burial.

Transfer: On February 1, 1927 the first motion was made in the Police Village Trustee's meeting to transfer the deed of the cemetery from the Quakers to the Police Village of Rockwood on a perpetual care basis. It was thought in this meeting that the funds derived from the

selling of plots would be used for perpetual care.

On April 5, 1928 the Friends decided to accept the offer to transfer the deed of the cemetery to the Police Village of Rockwood. Also the methods of securing money for perpetual care of the cemetery were taken. It is recorded that someone saw to it that William Harris (grandson of John Harris) got a copy of the minutes.

Finally on October 16, 1928 Mr. William Harris representing the Trustees of the Religious Society of Friends gave the deed of the cemetery to the Village of Rockwood. His wish was that the following conditions be followed:

"It is understood that in accepting the Burial Grounds from the Friends Church, the Police Village of Rockwood shall keep the grounds with proper care and preservation of all trees until replacement is necessary. No plowing shall be done in any part where graves are located. The Friends shall have the privilege of erecting a memorial stone on the west side of their former place of worship."

Also on December 7, 1931 an agreement was signed by William, Richard and Edgar W. Harris who were the current trustees for the Friends and by the Police Village Trustees so that the cemetery was conveyed to the Police Village.

Care: While the Quakers still had access to the cemetery and the church, they put a picket fence along the front (now removed) while cedar rail fences were erected on its other sides. (Later a wire fence replaced it).

With their typical devotion to their duties, the Quakers undertook the task of beautifying the burial grounds to a splendid condition. They had planted evergreens around the cemetery, cut the grass, weeded it and performed other such tasks.

When the church was moved to its new site, William Harris planted trees on each side of the site of the first Friends Church. At the same time spruce trees were planted along the south side and rear boundaries of the property. Pyramid cedars were also planted to mark out plots.

When Rockwood received the cemetery, the Trustee's did not only follow William Harris' wishes but also laid out flower beds. Seeds could easily be obtained as Rockwood was the centre of the Horticultural Society at that time for Mr. William Harris had a great field of flowers.

In order not to bury people one on top of the other, Rockwood must now keep a record of all present burials. After each burial a plan must be sent to the Department of Health in Toronto where they check all d-tails and send approval if all is in proper order. Because of this Rockwood must employ a man to keep care of the cemetery records (Mr. O'Brien) and a grave digger (presently Mr. McLaren) who also cuts the grass, weeds the flower beds and plants flowers.

Best of this, in places where the ground has sunk in he must put in new sod making the plot look level and before winter arrives he must put stakes in the ground showing where the plots are.

In 1930 when a general inspection of all provincial cemeteries was made, Rockwood was proclaimed excellent! Rockwood must thank the Friends for this remark and after the Friends retired, gratitude is owed to the energetic abilities of the late Fred Smith and the late John Lister and to Frank Schneider, who of his own accord spends much of his time on the flower beds which are now a spot of beauty.

The village Foreman and Mr. Schneider also provide beauty for the resting place of Rockwood soldiers.

To pay for the care, Rockwood uses the money from the sale of the plots. The first few years and in 1961 taxes were also used for perpetual care. Of the fifty dollars acquired from the sale of the plot, thirty goes toward the perpetual care fund. As of November 1, 1966 there is fifteen thousand dollars in the perpetual care fund.

Description: Today the cemetery is very beautiful with its border of trees and its shrubs, green grass and well-kept flower beds.

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