

The Rockwood MILLER



FUTURE VOLUNTEER?: Nathan Early, 4, got a little help from Rockwood firefighter Dale Rouw when he tried on a firefighter's helmet at the recent open house for police and firefighters at Rockmosa. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

Addition to Eden Mills cemetery is dedicated

BYMAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY
The New Tanner

The latest donation of land from the Reimer family has extended the size of the Eden Mills cemetery to a full acre. Sunday the community dedicated the new property by planting an oak at the junction of the old and new cemetery lands.

Eden Mills Presbyterian Church representative Maisie Lasby says the cemetery is not connected to the church at the west edge of the village despite the fact it circles the church on three sides.

"It is actually a community cemetery," Lasby explains. "The church wasn't even there when the cemetery was established."

Following the outdoor service, cemetery board secretary Mabel Parker and Linda Wilson conducted a tour of the cemetery starting with the oldest grave, the burial site for infant Barbara Argo in November 1849.

The Argo family owned the farm on which the cemetery and Presbyterian church now stand and decided to set up a family burial ground when the child died. Then, when the community needed a cemetery in 1853, they turned over a portion of land for a burial ground. That site has expanded gradually until with the latest gift from the Reimer family it is now a full acre in size.

On the tour, Parker spoke about various changes to the site. A stone retaining wall, still existing around the southeastern perimeter of the cemetery, was built in 1862. The Bardens and the Hortops both added trees to the cemetery although no one can actually say if the large spruces around the corner of the site were from that original planting in the 1860s.

She also outlined numerous interesting tales as she pointed out graves, including the story of the Wharton women. Dairy farmer Thomas Wharton was married twice and each wife gave him four daughters. While there were sons as well, the interesting coincidence lies in the deaths of the daughters. Each was in her late teens to mid 20s and each died of consumption. Many years later when Ministry of Health regulations demanded that all dairy cattle be tested for tuberculosis, all the cattle in the Wharton barn

were found to be contaminated and had to be destroyed.

"Consumption was the old term for TB," she says. "And once TB got into a barn it stayed there and was passed from generation to generation. While people won't get TB from the cattle directly, they will pick it up from the milk. And here were all these young women drinking the milk from their own cows and dying from it."

A tour of the church was

also conducted.

Lasby, whose family were longtime members of the congregation and whose husband is now clerk of the church session, says the congregation was founded in 1862. The existing stone church was erected in 1887. It was unusual in that the pews ran across the length of the church, rather than across the narrower dimension. There were wooden collection boxes at each door.

The congregation decided



LAND DEDICATED: A new piece of land added to Eden Mills cemetery was officially dedicated Sunday with the planting of an oak tree to remember the community pioneers who first established the burial ground in 1853. Mabel Parker placed the first shovel of soil on the tree on behalf of the Eden Mills Cemetery Board while Wallace Lasby added soil on behalf of the Session of Eden Mills Presbyterian Church. Conducting the dedication service were Rev. Linda Paquette of Eden Mills Presbyterian Church and Rev. Doyle Prior of Eden Mills United Church. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

to put a basement under the church in the late 1930s and raised funds by selling hot meals at the annual plowing match. World War II interrupted their efforts but did not derail them and by 1946 sufficient money had been raised to accomplish the task with no need for a mortgage.

In 1906 Samuel Geddes donated sufficient money to add 10 stained glass windows to the church. Another old member of the congregation used to walk to the church from Arkell every Sunday. The special merit to his dedication lay in the fact he was blind but "knew where he was on the road by the sound of the church bell ringing," Lasby says. "It still rings every Sunday."

Today the congregation numbers about 60 members and about 30 adherents.

The congregation bought its first organ in 1921 and recently dedicated a new electric organ two years ago. Marg Blacklock has been the church organist for 35 years.

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MY SIZE?: Ontario Provincial Police Constable Tim Gillingham helps Rockwood Beaver Brandon Stewart, 7, try out his Harley-Davidson motorcycle at the recent police and firefighter open house at Rockmosa. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

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