### I own's first innkeeper first burial in cemetery

By Mary Dawson Abner Miles, Richmond Hill's first innkeeper and first storekeeper, is often credited with being the first person to be buried in Richmond Hill cemetery (in 1806 at the authorities ordered the another nundred years if polished) were the order

men arrived in this area, Marsh they found that an Indian had already been buried in the pine grove which covered the site. The grave was marked with a

log structure. William Harrison in 1889 speculated that the Indian was a member of the Mississaugas, who had sold the 648,000 acres of the Home District to the whites for \$40,000 (the price of a good farm in 1889). Perhaps, said Harrison, he was on his way to the old fort at Toronto for his share of the government presents.

Dressed for burial He also noted that the Mississaugas buried their dead warriors in hunting dress, with arms for battle or the chase, so that they were fully equipped when they reached the happy hunting grounds.

The village's early historian also recalled that the earliest white graves were marked by slabs of two-inch cedar, with the name and other pertinent data painted thereon in black paint.

A later era brought railings, when every family which could afford it surrounded its burial plot with bars and pickets. Some of these were well cared for, but others were allowed to deteriorate while wild roses ran riot over the enclosed graves. Finally the church

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yesterdays

by mary dawson

removal of all these undisturbed," said one, of the day, He was indeed the first railings and Harrison told white person to be buried of an indignant deacon there - on land owned by rushing from a home his son, James Miles, where he had found Although the latter had pickets from the intended to donate the cemetery being used to land for the cemetery, as feed a fire in a neighbor's well as the site of the fireplace, shouting, church and the two "Mon! Mon! robbing the

the dead to warm the living!' Presbyterian church, he Other records show that died before the deed was the culprit who was the warming himself with the congregation had to blazing pickets was Rev. purchase the land for James Dick. The indignant deacon was one of When the first white his elders. William

> The first marble headstone was erected in 1828 and marked the burial place of Raymond. The simple marble blocks and more elaborate marble shafts have been eroded by the weather and damaged by vandals as well as the years. Their original whiteness has deteriorated into a dull grey color and experts advise against any attempt at trying to bring back the original finish.

"They may well last

"But if you attempt to restore them you could

end up with nothing but a pail full of gravel." By the middle of the century granite columns and slabs (all highly

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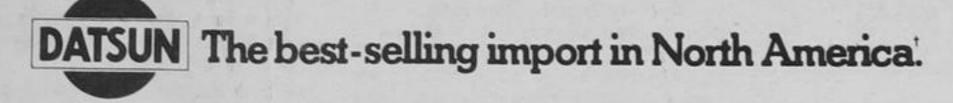
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