

Copeland Hill Cemetery

Address: 2 Cemetery Lane

Legal Description: Part of Park Lot 42, on Registered Plan 83, Concession 13E and Part 1 on Reference Plan 51R-36918

Roll#: 43-68-0000-15-129-000000

Current Owner: Township of Tiny

Date First Listed with Heritage Inventory: March 31, 2011

By-law #11-029



History

Copeland Hill Cemetery, also known as United Cemetery has a rich history, as it is connected with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, which held services in Penetanguishene as early as 1829 to begin conversion of the natives into Christians. The Church owed its beginnings to members of the garrison from Drummound Island that settled here after Drummound Island was returned to the Americans following the War of 1812. The church began with pastors travelling by horseback- their district ran from Owen Sound to Peterborough. The Copeland family donated the land for the cemetery in the 1830s. They were a prominent industrial family of North Simcoe with vast holdings in timber and owned and operated many mills in North Simcoe.

The cemetery has some prominent citizens buried in it including members of the Gidley family. Captain John Gundry Gidley, listed as a Steam mariner in 1891, was patriarch of the Gidley Boat works in Penetanguishene who helped develop inboard marine engines with the Ford Motor company. Gidley boats are still revered worldwide for their craftsmanship and quality. Upon his death John Gidley was considered to be the pioneer of Canadian watercraft.

Most of the grave markers are in good condition considering their age, as most date back to the nineteenth century, some though have been taken over by the surrounding forest. On original plan, the back area has “reserved for strangers.”

Heritage Attributes

The attributes that express the cultural value and interest of the Copeland Hill Cemetery and make the subject property worthy of designation include:

- The variety of grave markers and monuments with inscriptions.
- The markers themselves from simple to grand displaying a cross section of the population of the time.
- The historical importance of some of the citizens interred include - Captain John Gundry Gidley listed as a Steam mariner in 1891 patriarch of the Gidley Boat Works in Penetanguishene who helped develop inboard marine engines with the Ford Motor Company. Gidley boats are still revered worldwide for their craftsmanship and quality. Upon his death John Gidley was considered to be the pioneer of Canadian watercraft. The Copeland family that donated the land for a cemetery to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the early 1830's was a prominent industrial family of North Simcoe with vast holdings in timber and owned and operated many mills in North Simcoe.
- The cemetery's link to the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Penetanguishene and the fact that the church pastors were early missionaries intent on converting the native population to Christianity is very significant historically. The Wesleyan Methodist Church owed its beginnings to members of the garrison from Drummond Island that settled here after Drummond Island was returned to the Americans following the War of 1812. The church began with pastors travelling by horseback - their district ran from Owen Sound to Peterborough.
- The travelling missionaries are gone, the Methodist Church is gone, the United Church that sprang up from those humble beginnings is gone, all that remains in its original state is the Copeland Hill Cemetery to give us a window into the past.
- This small cemetery provides us with a direct link to the War of 1812, the beginning of interactive faith between whites and aboriginals in our area and contains the heritage of farmers, mill workers and industrialists that helped forge our community from the wilderness.

Pictures



Grave marker of Capt. John Gidley and Mary A. Warren. *



View of Copeland Hill Cemetery from the east. *



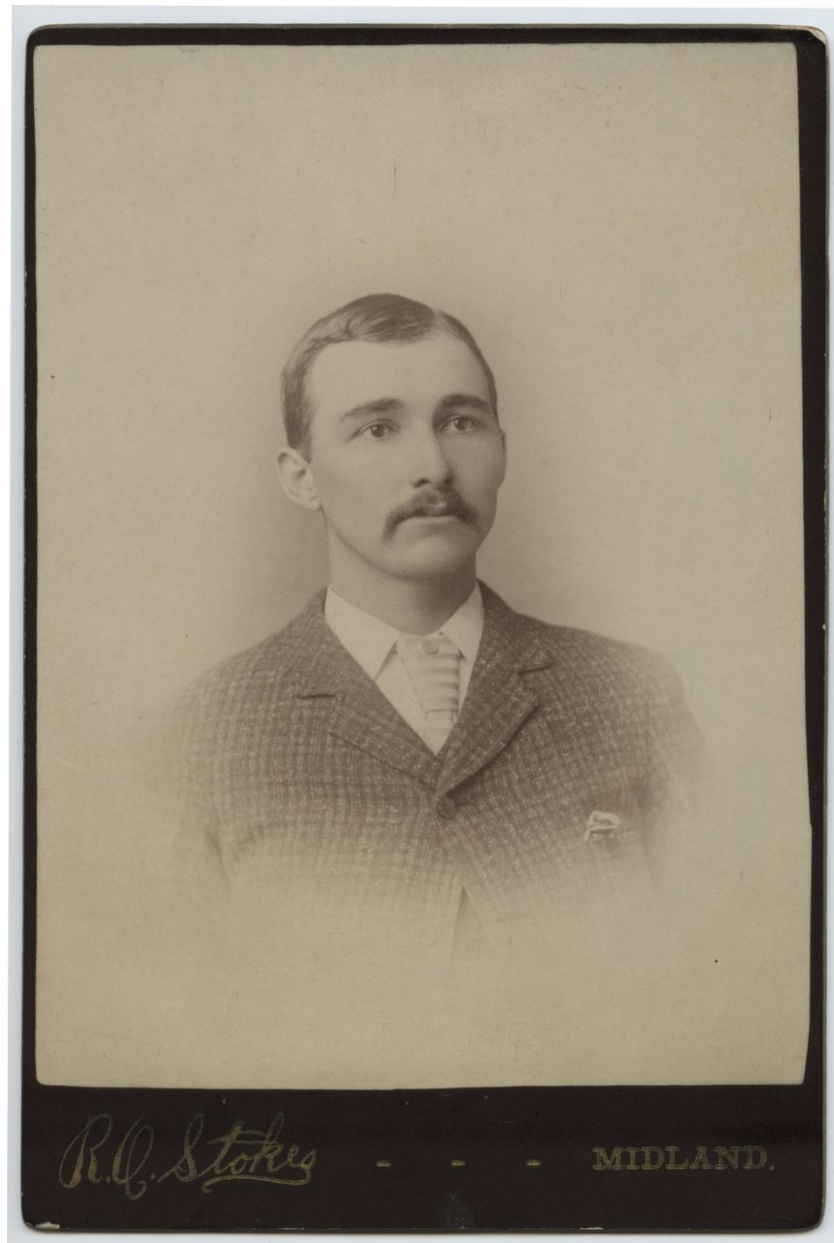
View of Copeland Hill Cemetery from the west. *



Grave marker of John Ray and Marry Gilley. *



Portrait of John Gildey (1855-1918), Ida Elora Bulmer (1857-1934) and their son Ralph Gidley. John was born in Penetanguishene to Captain John Gidley (1829-1893) and Mary A. Warren (1835-1887), whose tombstone marker resides prominently in Copeland Cemetery. John and Ida were married May 20 1880 and had two sons, Ralph and John Ernest Warner. (Simcoe County Archives, Wright Photograph, c. 1880s).



Portrait of Henry E. Gidley (1864-1933) son of Captain John Gidley (1829-1893) and Mary A. Warren (1835-1887), whose tombstone marker is prominent in the Copeland Cemetery. Henry was born in Penetanguishene and had eight siblings. He was a boat builder like his father in Penetang until he moved to Detroit in 1915, where he got involved in real estate. (Simcoe County Archives, Rodney O. Stokes Photograph).

**Photographs taken in the summer of 2011*

Revised July 2016
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