

## Cemetery walks prove to be a hit in Marmora

Cathie Jones of the Marmora Historical Society guided an appreciative crowd through both the Common and Sacred Heart Cemeteries during August with tales of early history, tragedies and some almost-comedies. Photo by Emily Winowich



Marmora Historical Foundation curator, Cathie Jones offered something different to Marmora and area recently; with twilight visits to the Sacred Heart and Common cemeteries where many stories of tragedy and sometimes humour waited to be discovered.

As the crowd trudged respectfully among the various gravesites, Jones paused at designated locations to share some of the incredible stories that lay buried with those interred. From the very first grave in the Common cemetery dated 1818, and Sacred Heart cemetery's first interment in 1876, to more recent characters, the stories told of Marmora's and Canada's history through a period of almost 200 years.

Prior to 1875, when a Catholic church was built on the present site, and the cemetery came into use, Catholic burials took place at Saint Matilda's across the Crow river, at Hughes cemetery on Centre Line road, and some in the Common cemetery (beside where the Valu Mart now stands). Ellen Wolfe O'Neill, born in County Cork, Ireland (1820-1876) was the first person buried at the Catholic cemetery and her stone at 140 years old is still in recognizable condition. The cemetery shows early Irish immigrant names such as Shannon, Maloney, Lynch, Murphy, Hughes and others.

Father Thomas Murtagh, (1863-1920) was first pastor and founder of the Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus, Marmora. The first brick church was destroyed by fire in 1903, and Father Thomas oversaw the building of the present church and rectory.

Matthew McFarlane (1837-1917) came from Ireland to New York State, and served with the 140 regiment of the New York Volunteer Infantry Company C in 1862 during the Civil War. He moved to Marmora and four of his sons served overseas in WW1. In 2000, Mathew and his son Joseph (1896-1949) had their resting place recognized with military markers and an impressive ceremony. Others laid to rest included children who were taken by tragic accidents of poison, gunshot, drownings, or in the case of one young lad, hit by a vehicle in the rock cut, while on his paper delivery route.

In the Marmora Common Cemetery, Mary Crawford, wife of John McGee, is buried in the oldest plot recorded, Jan 3, 1818. She was age 22 years, 1 month and 17 days. Royal Keys, shown to be age 107 (1764 1871) came from County Fermanagh, Ireland. He was said to have carried a full bale of hay up a hill on his 90th birthday. Margaret Grady came from county Cavan, Ireland to Marmora, and was a real activist in working to get the common cemetery established and cared for. She ran the hotel where Dr. Parkin's barn now stands. W. Archer (1875-1960) was an artist and made violins. A famous violinist from Europe came to Marmora, played her Stradivarius at the town hall and allowed Archer to inspect her violin and he made copies. On her return some time later, the performer declared the copies to be as good as the original. Hector Boudreau, 1873-1951 is the earliest Canadian military marker in the Common Cemetery. Many other names seen at the common cemetery include other notable persons from Marmora's past, such as Pearce, Campion, Laycock and Spry.



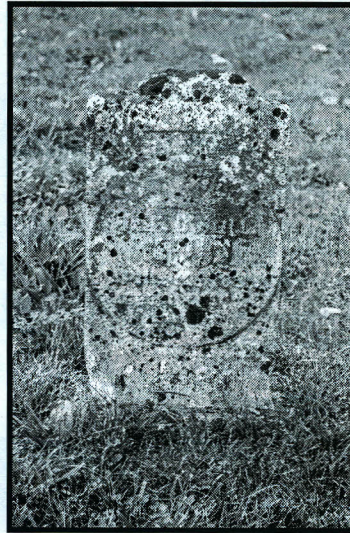
Cathie Jones tells of William Archer the violin maker and artist at Sacred Heart Cemetery while a rapt audience learns more of our local history. Photo - Emily Winowich

William Archer was Marmora's answer to Stradivarius, as he built violins that were said to rival the master builder's own creation. Photo by Meri-Kate Holt





The earliest grave in Sacred Heart Cemetery is that of Ellen O'Neill who died in 1876, the first interment at the present site. Photo by Emily Winowich



Cathie Jones tells the story of Mary Crawford, first interment in Marmora Common Cemetery in 1818. To put into context, this burial was a few years before the coming of the ironmaster Charles Hayes and his industry to the town. Photo by Emily Winowich



A few years ago, Campbell Monument of Belleville offered to repair old/damaged gravestones at several cemeteries in the Central Hastings area at a greatly reduced cost. This is one of the excellent repairs, to the monument of Captain John O'Neill in Sacred Heart Cemetery. Photo by Emily Winowich