

47 RYMAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

By Robert Williamson

In continuing to track the origin of mountain neighbourhood names, I found that although the Rymal families were United Empire Loyalists who pioneered all the land on both sides of Upper Paradise Road on the West Mountain, their family name was assigned to an East Mountain neighbourhood. It is centered on Nebo Road between Stone Church and Rymal roads.

Considering the Rymal family's significant role in our Mountain heritage, one might think that the family's reputation might be better served than by identifying it with a neighbourhood that is adjacent to the old Ottawa Street city dump!

Therefore, in early 2009, Joe Woolley, a sixth generation descendent of the Hamilton Mountain pioneer Rymal family, was looking for a way to rectify the record of his family's misdirected heritage. He contacted me as a member of the Hamilton Historical Board (HHB) plaquing subcommittee about a Commemorative Rymal Family Plaque for the west mountain. He was disappointed to hear that there was a waiting list of several years. Approaching his 80th birthday, Joe figured that he would be dead and buried before a family plaque could be produced. However, he had contacted the right person. Thinking creatively, the plaquing committee sought external funding from the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society (HMHS). With the society's financial support, Joe Woolley's dream came true.

It didn't hurt that Joe Woolley was prepared to make a small donation to the project himself, but more importantly, that he had collected a lot of information and had a great heritage story to tell. The story began with the early settlement and first church along Mohawk Road (now St Peter's Cemetery) by William Rymal who arrived in 1788. It continued with the family's involvement in the 1837 Rebellion and the fight for Responsible Government in Canada, concluding with the story of West Hamilton's longest serving politician "Honest Joe" Rymal and the **Confederation debates of 1867.**

The Rymal heritage plaque was unveiled at a Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society general meeting and installed by the Hamilton Historical Board at the Westcliffe Mall on the corner of Mohawk and Upper Paradise Roads just one block west of St. Peter's Cemetery on Mohawk

Road West where the headstones record all the surnames of the first settlers on the mountain: Shaver, Horning, Terryberry, Filman, Beckett, Smith, Gage, Binkley, Young, Maclem and Woolley, just to name a few. Many of those names can be found on the Rymal family tree. Is it any wonder that one of Hamilton Mountain's major east-west arterial roads is named after the family!



Rymal descendents (Joe Woolley 2nd left, his cousin Eleanor Rymal Ramsden, her son, Gary, extreme left), proudly display their family plaque with City Councillor Terry Whitehead, December 2009.

Photo R. McKee

A plastic replica of the plaque was presented to students at Regina Mundi School located at Mohawk and Upper Paradise, **the objective being to give the children a sense of ownership of their neighbourhood's heritage.**

(478 words)

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