

**Queen Street Cemetery
(Old Town Cemetery)
Sault Ste. Marie**

By-Law: 94-113
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Designation Report

- 1993 -

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*This is an edited copy of the original document, originals included in the Municipal Heritage Committee Binder –
Titled: “Old Town Cemetery”

The Queen Street East Cemetery, on the north side of Queen Street between Pim and Elizabeth Streets, is the final resting place for many of the Sault's prominent residents of the second half of the nineteenth century.

The "Old Town Cemetery", as it was known, was conveyed to the municipality in the 1879. The land however had been used as a cemetery since at least 1863 when George Ironside, the Indian Superintendent, was buried there. The property was then owned by Joseph Wilson, the customs collector.

For the next 50 years, until 1914 when the last burial was recorded, the Queen Street Cemetery was the municipal cemetery for Sault Ste. Marie.

In 1920 the municipality purchased the privately owned Greenwood Cemetery from John Dawson to be used as the municipal cemetery.

The Queen Street Cemetery has also been referred to as the "Protestant Cemetery" – the burial records having come from St. Lukes ProCatherdral and Central United Church. The "Catholic Cemetery" was then opposite Precious Blood Cathedral on what is presently the Boston Motors property.

Since the Precious Blood Cemetery, as well as earlier cemeteries connected with Hudson's Bay Company and with the Anglican Church established in 1832 by Archdeacon William MacMurray are no longer in existence, the Queen Street Cemetery is the only remaining cemetery associated with the village of Sault Ste. Marie (1871), the town of Sault Ste. Marie (1887), and the city of Sault Ste. Marie (1912).

Its historic importance lies with the years it spans in the history of Sault Ste. Marie and with the prominence of the people interred there. Family names associated with the early history of Sault Ste. Marie, such as Ironside, Pim, Pilgrim, Savage and Simpson are found there.

The Minutes of the Sault Ste. Marie Council Meeting of June 26, 1889 (as reported in the Sault Star on March 18, 1933, page 3) indicate that the Queen Street Cemetery was in a dilapidated condition and that Council ordered a wire fence to be built about it. That fence has since been removed; however, the condition of the cemetery seems to have been a recurring concern for the municipality. The Sault Star reported in 1936 that vandalism and "the general disrepair and neglect of the old civic cemetery on Queen Street East, near Pine Street, was the subject of discussion at a meeting of Algoma diocese clergymen" (Sault Star May 23, 1936, page 7 "Improvement is Urged in Old Soo Cemetery"). In 1973 the Community Services Board passed a resolution asking City Council to develop a common cairn for grave markers at the Queen Street Cemetery in hopes of "cutting maintenance costs and avoiding further vandalism at the old burial ground". (Sault Star June 26, 1973, page 13 "Seek Common Cairn for Old Cemetery").

During the 1960's and 1970's the Sault Horticultural Society maintained the grounds of the cemetery as a community project.

A memorial wall of sandstone for damaged headstones not in their original locations was constructed in 1983 as part of a restoration project by the Historic Sites Board.

The restoration project had three objectives:

- 1- To restore the cemetery as a memorial to the nineteenth century pioneer families of this city.
- 2- To retain its park-like air as a peaceful place in the urban landscape
- 3- To maintain it in a manner compatible with the scenic and aesthetic qualities of other parks, such as Bellevue and Penhorwood.

(Queen Street Cemetery Restoration: Historic Sites Board brief to the Administration of the Historic Sites Board. Prepared by K. Punch, 1982, found in the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library Vertical File 038)

Today the Queen Street Cemetery continues to suffer periodically from vandalism. Furthermore, and perhaps more seriously, the headstones show deterioration from weathering. Some inscriptions are barely legible, others are already lost. The cemetery however, retains its original integrity with mature trees, a park-like setting and many original grave placements.

It is recommended that the Queen Street Cemetery be designated as having heritage significance under the Ontario Heritage Act part IV because of:

- ◆ The significance of the persons interred in the cemetery to the nineteenth century history of Sault Ste. Marie
- ◆ The integrity of design which the Queen Street Cemetery still retains.
- ◆ The example of a nineteenth century and early twentieth century municipal cemetery in a Northern Ontario community which the Queen Street Cemetery represents.

Photos Taken: July 2004

