

# Cairn to be dedicated on Ascension Day at Shingwauk Cemetery

By Dorothy Bowers.  
For Shingwauk  
Cemetery Committee

Nestled in the woods behind the former Shingwauk Indian Residential School, now housing Algoma University College, in Sault Ste. Marie, is one of the most historic spots in this Diocese. It has aptly been referred to by the Reverend E. F. Wilson, Founder of the Shingwauk Home, as "God's Acre." Many historians over the years have written most descriptive papers about this small plot of land, the Shingwauk Cemetery.

To further quote the Reverend E. F. Wilson in the *Algoma Missionary News* of July, 1876 — he describes this plot as follows: "... a little spot, retired, peaceful — on a gentle slope, near to a little lake, surrounded by a thick growth of young fir trees and birch. It is only a chain square, and our boys have built a stone wall around it. People who have seen it are charmed with its appearance. The gate is of somewhat ecclesiastical design, surmounted by a cross and painted white. In the centre of the ground is a round flower bed, with rose bushes, mignonette, and other flowers. And in the middle of the bed a rock work with moss, ferns and wild flowers clambering over it."

The original land for the cemetery was the gift of Mr. William Stratton, owner of the lot immediately east of the Shingwauk property, and it was consecrated by Bishop Fauquier on June 2, 1876. This plot eventually became too small and a piece of land adjoining to the west on Shingwauk property was added and consecrated by Archbishop Thorneloe on August 9, 1925.

On one of my first pilgrimages to this cemetery, as a staff member of the Shingwauk School in 1947, I found myself being transported back through the years as I discovered tombstones and markers revealing the last resting place of our first Bishop, the Right Reverend Frederick Fauquier, and his wife; of Archdeacon Gowan Gillmor, that ardent Missionary priest of Algoma; of former Principal the Reverend Benjamin Fuller and members of his family; former Matrons, staff workers and pupils. As I slowly made my way through the rows of crosses and headstones I was to discover family names familiar to me then, relatives of many of the students presently in the school.

In the passage of years the cemetery did experience some change in character, though happily it has retained its tranquil nature. There is no longer a little lake nearby; it has been filled in and become part of

Snowdon Park; homes have been built, with back yards now touching the easterly perimeter of the cemetery, thus depriving the cemetery of its former privacy.

As this has always been a private cemetery, primarily for pupils and staff of the Shingwauk School, no Perpetual Care Fund was set up, but was under the care and maintenance of the school's staff as long as Shingwauk existed. Following the closure of the school the Diocese made an effort from time to time to have it cleaned up, and Mr. Noel Thomas and a few relatives of staff members tended some graves, but eventually "God's Acre" became a blight rather than a beauty spot.

At the time of the Shingwauk Reunion in the summer of 1981 some of the former pupils and staff members made their own private pilgrimages to the cemetery to visit graves of their loved ones. A number of them vocally expressed their displeasure with the neglected appearance of the cemetery and the lack of markers on many of the graves. They subsequently suggested that a fund be set up and invited contributions of money towards erecting a suitable marker to the memory of all those unidentified pupils and families and staff members. This was done and letters went out to a great number of people who had an interest in the cemetery. A Shingwauk Cemetery Fund, administered by the Diocese, was set up and contributions were received.

Seeing the need for perpetual care of the cemetery Bishop Peterson gave his blessing to a "Shingwauk Cemetery Committee" being formed in 1984. This committee, under the able chairmanship of Canon Henry Morrow, a former staff member at Shingwauk, together with a group of former staff members or their families, and other interested persons, has been functioning since that time. The goals of the committee have been: (1), the restoration of the cemetery to a respectable condition; (2), the erection of a suitable memorial to those buried there without any other identification; (3), the setting up of a Perpetual Care Fund and a means of administering it.

Since that time some of the funds have been used to hire help to cut grass and pull weeds, to scrub tombstones, re-pile the rock fence, trim trees, dispose of rubbish thrown on graves, and generally keep the cemetery tidy. Volunteers from the committee have repaired broken stones, planted flowers and cut rotting trees.

The Cairn has duly been erected, with suitable inscription — dedi-

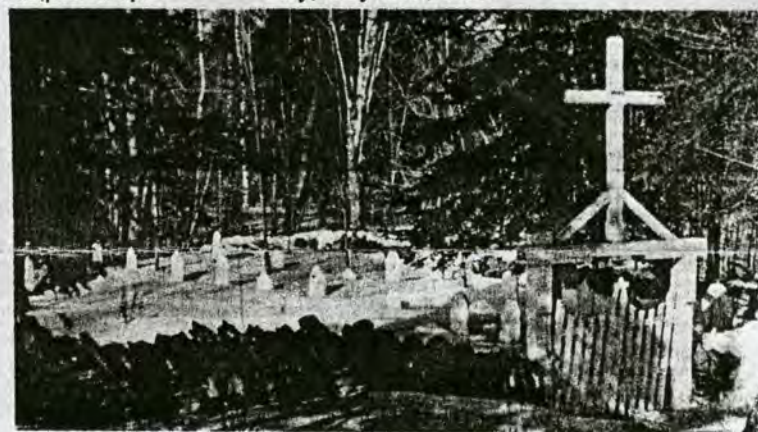
cated to the memory of all those pupils and staff members whose graves are unmarked. Committee members and students working under a summer Works Grant did considerable researching of names of those buried in the Cemetery. As there were far too many to inscribe on the Cairn, a suitable Memorial Book was donated by one of the committee members and the names are being recorded for posterity. This book was dedicated and will be kept in the Bishop Fauquier Chapel.

Although the cemetery is now filled for regular burials, there are a limited number of plots to hold remains, and this section is presently being properly marked out and landscaped.

For many years there were annual pilgrimages made to the Shingwauk Cemetery, either at the time of Synod or on Ascension Day. This custom was dropped but our Committee hopes that you will accept this invitation to be with us for the dedication of the Cairn on Ascension day, May 12th, at 2:00 p.m. We will meet at the Bishop Fauquier Chapel.



CAIRN: Above is the cairn which will be dedicated at Shingwauk Cemetery on Ascension Day, May 12th, 1988.



SHINGWAUK CEMETERY as it appeared, Winter, 1949.

## Diocesan Social Action Committee

By: The Reverend Christopher Morden,  
for the Social Action Committee

For 1987-88 the Diocesan Social Committee is formed of clergy and lay members of the Deanery of Thunder Bay. Bishop Peterson's first request of us was that we review and make recommendations concerning the work of the M2W2 prison ministry. M2W2 stands for "Man To Man/Woman To Woman," and provides Christian volunteers to visit prisoners. The organization has established a branch in Thunder Bay, and made a request to the Bishop for \$2000 from diocesan funds and \$1000 from the parishes of the Deanery of Thunder Bay, to support their 1988 budget.

The Committee met with members of the M2W2 board, and decided to support their requests. A motion was made and passed at the Deanery Council in November to request the \$2000 from the Diocesan, and to raise \$1000 among the parishes. As well, Margaret Lucas from the Committee will sit on the M2W2 board. Because crime is such a concern in so many of our communities, and because Jesus explicitly commends prisoners to our compassionate attention, we hope that Anglicans in the Diocese will inform themselves about their local prisons, and seek ways to minister to those who live in them.

Three members of the Committee were able to attend the recent Primate's Fund conference in Sudbury, and were very interested to learn about conditions in South Africa and to hear about the Bishop's study trip to Mexico. Feeling somewhat overwhelmed by all the information, needs, and concerns that come under the heading "social action", the Committee has decided that its next meeting will be a time of sharing our ideas and feelings about what "social action" is all about. We welcome input from other concerned members of the Diocesan family.

## The Church calendar

The custom of following a calendar runs deep in the Church as a means by which we are able to dramatize the story of man's redemption. Gospel events are recalled annually in different seasons, and special days in the history of the Church are commemorated. In this manner, attention is drawn to the saints who contributed to the growth of the Church. They exemplify our own potential for building up the faith.

It was the early Christians who chose Sunday as the Lord's Day to commemorate the Resurrection. They set Easter as the first special festival for the same reason, preparing the week before by remembering the passion and death of Jesus. This time of penitence was gradually expanded to the six week season now observed as Lent.



The grave of the Right Reverend Frederick Fauquier, first Bishop of Algoma



He rests Gowan Gillmor, Archdeacon of Algoma, 1876-1928



The Reverend Benjamin P. Fuller, 1865-1945, former Shingwauk Principal



Ida A. McNeill, 1874-1925, Girls Matron Shingwauk Home

All photographs courtesy of Canon Henry Morrow.