



### The Mysteries of Land Measurement

I was in the Land Registry Office just recently, reading a land transfer document, and was forcibly reminded of some of the arcane terms that eventually become part of the researcher's vocabulary.

The standard tool for measuring land in British Canada was the surveyor's or Gunter's chain. It was named after Edmond Gunter (1581-1626), the English mathematician who invented it. It is 66 feet long and contains 100 links, each of which is 7.92 inches. The unit of measurement was called the chain.

One mile is 80 chains and a piece of land 10 chains long by 1 chain wide was one acre. Some of our other land measures are also based on the chain. The furlong, which was originally the length of furrow that a team of oxen could plow without needing a rest, is 660 feet or 10 chains. The furlong is divided into 40 rods (or poles). A rod is 16.5 feet and is supposed to have originated in the length of whip necessary for a plowman to reach the lead team in an eight oxen hitch.

The unit of land area measurement in French Canada was the square arpent, and, in fact, it is still being used. It is equivalent to about .8445 of an acre.

### Clayton R. C. Cemetery

Reader Bryan Hollington recently contacted me for information about the Catholic Cemetery north of Clayton. The land for that cemetery was originally purchased by the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Bytown in 1862 from the estate of Thomas Leckie (of Leckie's Corners on the 8<sup>th</sup> Line of Ramsay) for three pounds and at various times has been under the responsibility of parishes in both the Kingston and Ottawa dioceses.

This has led to a certain amount of dispersal of whatever records were kept and is a source of some frustration to genealogist Don Kelly who is seriously studying the Catholic cemeteries of the Almonte area. It would appear from what is left that the use of the cemetery was discontinued before WW I and it fell into some neglect. Tombstones fell over, others disappeared and its general appearance was not encouraging.

Happily, it is now clearly under the responsibility of Holy Name of Mary Parish in Almonte (formerly St. Mary's) and cemetery manager, Mike Kennedy, with a team of volunteers has brought it back to a proper state of maintenance. The remaining tombstones were gathered together and mounted in concrete bases (somewhat along the line of the memorial wall in Middleville). It is well identified and maintained and is well worth a visit.

You can find it on the 2<sup>nd</sup> B Concession of Ramsay, 1.4 kilometers north of the Tatlock road and although it is locally known as the cemetery on Herb Rath's farm, it is officially St. Mary's Cemetery.

Some of the burials in the cemetery are recorded on the LDS microfilm 1697276, item 48, which is obtainable through the local Family History Center and on a computer file in the National Library (Amicus # 17148620). Dawn Leduc and Jean Steel transcribed the information on the tombstones that were left in the late 1970's but that material has not been published.

As an interesting sidelight in local history, there used to be a floating bridge across the narrows between Taylor and Clayton Lakes. Jenny Doyle of Clayton told me that area folklore maintains that the bridge was built to assist Catholics to get across so that they could go to Mass in Almonte.