

The church was the centre of most rural communities. The pioneer cemetery in Day Mills is on the crest of a steep hill. It is bordered by Harris Creek, that flows from Big Basswood to Bright Lake, and Highway 17. As one advances up the hill the ruins of the Methodist Church are noticeable.

The first marked burial was on February 25, 1881, when Charles McDowell was laid to rest. It is thought that Mr. Grisdale was buried in this cemetery prior to 1881 after he was killed in an accident at Harris Mill. One of his arms was reported to have been severed by a saw and he did not recover from the injury. The last burial was Edwin Harris in 1940. Following his burial it was decided to close the cemetery as it was difficult to conduct burials due to the steep incline of the hill on which the cemetery is located.

In total there are twenty-two known burials. Some of the pioneer's names are still familiar around the community, Bird, Cameron, Cordukes, Egan, Harris, McDowell and Sproule.

The second pioneer cemetery is the Portage City Cemetery. The land was donated by Mary Caroline and James Dobie on June 26, 1883. The land was given to the Presbyterian Church that was nearby.

The first known burial was Mary A. Hagen who was laid to rest June 20, 1888. The last known burial was Fredrick Boville 1909.

In total there are nineteen known burials. Some of the names included are, Anderson, Boville, Cavanaugh, Gunn, Hagen, Henderson, Keefer, and Lahore. Both cemeteries are now abandoned.

There are other cemeteries nearby where Dayton pioneers are laid to rest. Both the Carlyle Cemetery in Iron Bridge and the Maple Ridge Cemetery are still open.

In the past the pioneer cemeteries had fallen into a state of disrepair. However, work is underway to restore the grounds where so many of Dayton's early settlers are laid to rest.

Other cemeteries in which people from the community are buried are, Forest Lawn and Pine Grove in Kirkwood Township.

These along with Maple Ridge Cemetery are under the jurisdiction of Thessalon Cemetery Board.



NAMES ON HEADSTONES:

Day Mills: Harris; McCrea; Cordukes; Egan; Cameron; McDowell; Walmer; Kirby; Murray; Sproull; and Bird

McArthur: Anderson; Bovill; Boville; Cavanagh; Gilchrist; Gunn; Hagen; Henderson; Keefer; Loghore; and McCormack.