
ABREY'S TOWNSHIP CORNER FOUND

BY ED PIWOWARCZYK

Reprinted from the Sault "Star". Submitted by Frank Wilson.

Three Sault Ste. Marie land surveyors recently uncovered a stake, marking the corner of Jarvis and Anderson Townships, which was put in place 101 years ago.

Frank Wilson, Wally Hammerstedt and Jake Pine, of MacDougall and Wilson, Ontario Land Surveyors, made the discovery about 20 miles northeast of the city while retracing survey lines pre-

pared by G. Brockitt Abrey in 1878.

Limits, conveyances and titles to property depend on perpetuating township and section corners. In undeveloped areas, the Ontario government each year commissions retracement surveys to update and maintain township corners.

The surveyors were retracing the southern limit of Jarvis Township, a six-mile stretch, using copies of original field notes made by Abrey.

Mr. Wilson described the terrain as rough and hilly, an area in which loggers had operated.



"With all the logging activity in the area, it was a stroke of luck that we found it," he said.

From the field notes, the surveyors knew where the corner post should have been located, to within a 150-foot radius, but they didn't think it would be there after 100 years.

They came across a stumpy, deteriorating piece of wood in a swampy area. Upon inspection, it appeared that the wood had been cut by an axe, leading them to think it might be the old survey post.

Mr. Hammerstedt reached into the cold swamp water and pulled the bottom of the post out. The bottom portion had

been preserved in the water, clearly indicating axe cuts.

Mr. Wilson said no one had retraced the boundary and corner since the original survey was done.

"Suddenly we realized that 101 years ago, three or four men just like us had stood there and put this in," he said.

"The three of us stood there and were appreciating something very few people are aware of."

Mr. Wilson doesn't know anything about Abrey's background or what other areas he surveyed, but expresses admiration for his work.

Noting Abrey's instruments wouldn't have been able to give as precise

measurements as modern instruments, he said, "Our measurements compare within a close tolerance of his. He did good work."

Surveyors of that era sometimes spent seven or eight months in the bush, covering 50 to 60 miles, he indicated.

Survey records and diaries are objective historical documents, he said.

Placing corner stakes and surveying "transforms wilderness into townships and that's the very first step of the civilizing process and land development," he said.

Mr. Wilson said people "really owe something" to those who first surveyed the country from coast to coast and divided it into the township grids.

The corner stake planted by Abrey was found Oct. 26 and replaced a few days later with a four-foot iron bar bearing the name of the townships on a brass cap.

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POEM

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To fetch a pail of water
Jill forgot to take the pill
And now they have a daughter.