

Rundle: A Pinedale Founding Family

We count 23 persons with the Rundle name, either by birth or marriage, in Pinedale cemetery.

The Rundle name 1st appears in Methodist church records in 1849

The church/cemetery property amounting to ½ acre was donated by Edward Rundle in 1859. The property was later enlarged in 1912. Edward was the 3rd son of John & Mary (Cossentine) Rundle who emigrated from St. Pinnock, Cornwall, England to Ontario West, as it was called, in 1841.

Buried here in Pinedale Cemetery and hidden within all details of dates, births and deaths is a very human story that reveals much about this couple.

Their 15 year-old daughter, Mary, died what have been just months before they set sail with 8 children in 1841. Wife Mary was pregnant with their 11th child. Almost immediately on their arrival in Canada, their 6 year old son William died in 1842. Later in 1842 Mary gave birth and they named this last son, William 2nd after the little boy who had just passed away.

Can you imagine such an accumulation of tragic events? What must have been going through their minds? How did they cope? And the road forward to Pinedale wasn't easy.

As Annie Troop (Bott) wrote, in her Canada centennial history of Pinedale. of her great great grand parents, John and Mary. After their 6 – 8 week crossing, "Whether they travelled to Pinedale by saddle-horse, or perhaps a team of oxen or whether they walked, we do not know for sure." One thing we do know for sure. The roads were terrible.

As one of the 'Saddle-bag' itinerant preachers for what was then called the 'Brock Mission' wrote in 1849, "The roads on the Mission are of the worst description; I never saw anything before to equal them. There are cedar swamps in every direction. In travelling 10 or 12 miles, you will have perhaps 6 or 7 of them to go through, and some of them for a quarter to nearly a mile in length. The roads through them are made of round logs without any covering. Some of them are quite worn out, so that in crossing them you are in danger of getting your horse's legs broken. It will certainly be a relief to get once more where the roads are good."

And there were tough times. That same year, 1849, a note in the Methodist records states: "Our financial returns this year will be small compared with those of other years, owing to the almost entire failure of the wheat crop. This has greatly embarrassed the people of these back Townships, many of whom are very poor, and with payments to make on their lands."

If you were watching this story in a movie, you would find the truth stretched beyond credulity.

And so we remember John and Mary Rundle, Pinedale pioneers with undaunted courage and fortitude. They settled on the 4th Concession and when Edmond was ready to farm on his own, he was able to purchase the land that the church and cemetery stand on. He was moved to donate the land in 1859, just 17 years after arrival in Pinedale. To locate John and Mary in the cemetery, you can find them in the grid G-12 on the grave location map which gives the general area of the headstone.

I should acknowledge and thank Linda Haney-Sonley who prepared a detailed chronology of the Rundle family which you will find in the blue binder on the memory table.

Thank you to Eleanor and Tom Sonley for preparing the gravestone location grid to help you find graves at Pinedale. It is available on the Pinedale website and can be accessed via your phone from within the cemetery.

And finally, as with all reports on Pinedale, we are grateful for the research and documentation prepared by Ruth Smith.