

WESTMEATH SCENIC LOOKOUT

DIRECTIONS

- From Beachburg, take the Lapasse road north until you come to the Lookout Road.
- Turn left towards the village of Westmeath until you see the entrance to the lookout on your right.
- Parking is available.
- 1358 Lookout Road Westmeath, Ontario
- Latitude: 45.785902 Longitude: -76.863223

HISTORY

Submitted by: John Wright. Article from The Pembroke Observer Thursday, October 9, 1958

VISION OF J. C. WRIGHT BECOMES HIS MEMORIAL

By Mrs. Carl Price, Observer Correspondent

There are dreams that come true. Not often but often enough to make the world around a brighter place.

With the opening of Wright's Lookout Park on the Sixth Line of Westmeath Township, the family of the late J. C. Wright have honored his name, fulfilled the dream of a man who saw the hills of home as beautiful as any and contributed something of lasting value to this County of Renfrew.

It was when he was Reeve of Westmeath Township that Mr. Wright invited Council members to visit the site in an endeavor to interest them in establishing a lookout. But no action was taken. Following his death, his wife purchased the acre of land.

Then Mrs. Wright and her children, Laurabeth, Basil and John, set to work.

The simple octagonal lookout building, set on a small elevation high above the winding road near Prettie's Hill was designed Mr. Wright's youngest son, John. It is equipped with a suspended telescope and a registration table. Since opening the guest books bears many names some from as far away as London, England.



Mrs. J. C. Wright, (right) who fulfilled her late husband's wish to see a lookout established on his favorite spot not far from his farm, is pictured surveying the glorious view with Mrs. Carl Price, Ottawa Valley historian. The lookout is a tribute to the memory of Mr. Wright and the pioneers of Westmeath Township. *Photo by Ruth Gordon.*

PLAN A PARK

The steep hill rising to the lookout is neatly fenced off and to the right and half way up, a spacious graveled area has been provided for parking.

A bronze memorial plaque has been installed. The Westmeath Municipal Council has accepted responsibility for maintenance costs.

The site is unique for unlike other familiar lookouts, the viewer may turn his eyes in any direction; east, west, north or south and feast upon a magnificent panorama of the forest, fields and streams of Renfrew and Pontiac Counties.

To the north behind Waltham are the rolling Laurentians hugging the ribbon of blue Ottawa; nearer is the broad expanse of the Lower Allumette Lake with its battleship islands; clearly visible is the tip of Morrison's Island where Champlain camped with his men in 1613 to confer with Chief Tessouat. With binoculars, one can follow the historical journey from below the Cheneaux Rapids at Portage du Fort and climb onwards to the land where the explorer's famous astrolabe was lost at Green Lake.

STEEPLES IN THE SUN

Shining silver church steeples are sharply outlined from the high hilltop, with Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church at LaPasse most striking, towering as it does 101 feet from the top of the cross to the base of the church. One can sense too the significance of the name "LaPasse" as a flight of birds passed overhead. Here in the quaint village, flights of wild geese come down annually in the cleared lands and marshes to feed, and led the villagers to choose "LaPasse des Outardes."

Turning, one sees the Spire of St. Peter's Church at Fort Coulonge, the spires of Vinton and further the mine shafts of Calumet Island.

Breaking the view in the Roche Fendu area is the rapids from which the town got its name, part French and part Indian. Rocher Fendu" (split rock), is a 12-kilometre stretch of wild whitewater. The hills of Barry's Bay reach out on a clear day and Beachburg is nestled in the green fields. Across "The Glen" and the Mast Road in the distance one can see Grace United Church and the spire of Greenwood United Church.

HISTORICAL PLACE

Not only does one look out upon the history of a country but the ground itself is closely linked with days of old. Evidence points to an Indian cemetery, according to the information handed down by an early pioneer, Noah Jackson, who farmed the adjoining land. It was for this reason that work on the lookout site was done very carefully in an endeavour to disturb the earth as little as possible.

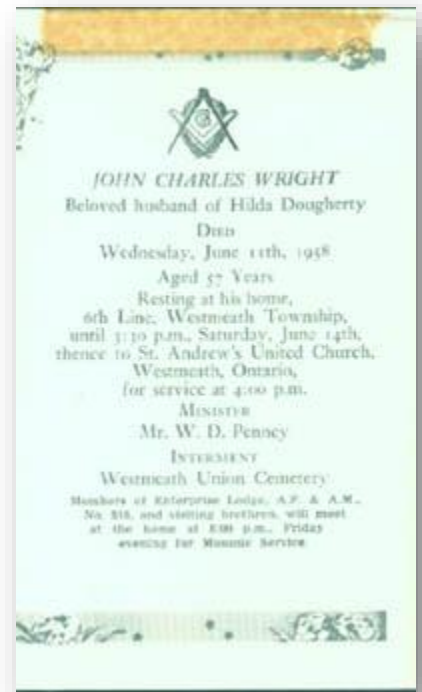
Directly east of the site is "Pleasant Valley", telling indication of the vision of the late J. C. Wright. For it was here in the early days that Joseph C. Jackson gazed out across the countryside towards LaPasse and exclaimed "What a pleasant valley."

Today because one man saw the truth of that vision, Renfrew County has taken a great stride forward in providing a lookout where visitors may be directed to see the infinite glories of Renfrew County.

NOTES FROM JOHN WRIGHT, 2007.

JC (my dad) was born in 1900 and died in the spring of 1958.

The original plaque which was mounted on the lookout in 1958 was torn off and stolen in the early 1960s. Following my mother's death in 1993 the family had this one made and securely mounted.



The Westmeath Lookout