

ST. PATRICK

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAINT PATRICK'S PARRISH Cedar Lake Township, Scott County, MN

When Thomas O'Donnell and Michael Flynn arrived in Cedar Lake in the spring of 1854, they came upon an Indian Village consisting of about 50 bark teepees on the site of the present St Patrick Church. Tradition tells us that this place, "Tepee Hill" was a sacred meeting place and burial grounds for the Indians.

For the sixty or more Irish families who homesteaded in Cedar Lake during the following five years, "Tepee Hill" also became their place of worship, meeting place and burial grounds. It is also held sacred to them and their descendants. The majority of the early settlers to this region had immigrated from the Western and Southern Counties of Ireland during the 1840's and after living a few years in Canada, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio or Illinois they came to Minnesota when land became available for homesteading.

Benedictine Missionaries who visited the settlements provided for the spiritual needs of the pioneers during the early years. The first Mass was recorded as having been offered by Father Benedict Heindel, OSB in the log cabin home of Thomas Quille. By 1857 a log church had been constructed on the present church site. The following year a sandstone sanctuary was added to the east end of the log building and this was to become a part of the present structure.

Through out the years 1873-74 sandstone was hauled from the Jordan Quarry, a distance of thirteen miles by teams of horses and yokes of oxen. The sand used in the construction was obtained from the shores of nearby Cedar Lake. The cornerstone was laid in November of 1873 and the Church built at the total cost of \$5,760.36 was completed and dedicated by the Most Reverend Thomas Grace, OP,D.D., Bishop of St. Paul, 11 October 1874. The pastor at the time was Father C.J. Knauf.

The first recorded baptism was that of Daniel McMahon, who was born 25 December 1856. The first death was that of Michael Murphy, son of Edward and Elizabeth Murphy, who died 13 August 1857. The first recorded burial in St. Patrick Cemetery was that of Julia McCabe Connors, who died 11 July 1862 at the age of twenty-six years. Michael and Bridget O'Keefe Ryan were the first couple married in the new church.

St. Patrick Church was not the only focal point for worship and reception of the Sacraments, but also the center for the community's social life, bringing the people together. The Ancient Order of Hibernians also held activities there and traveling medicine shows provided entertainment from time to time.

During the years after World War I many of the younger people left Cedar Lake to obtain employment in the cities. At this time a number of Czech and German families moved to Cedar Lake.

So whether your family name can be found on the tombstones from the 1800's or those of the 1900's, you can be proud to have shared in the rich heritage of the parish. St. Patricks is truly a beacon in its setting on "Tepee Hill" giving witness to the faith and courage of those who lived here and many who are buried in the cemetery.

Sister M. Zacchaeus Ryan, O.P.