

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

ST. PATRICK, MINN., HAS Its BIG DAY OF THE YEAR – IT'S ST. PATRICK'S DAY, OF COURSE

Little Community Goes to Church on Highest Hill Before Starting Celebration, Just As It Has for 65 Years

St. Patrick, Minn, March 17 – The Harts and the Ryans, the Phelans and O'Connors, the Murphy's and the O'Donnells knelt in St. Patrick's church here today.

Just as the have every St. Patrick's day for 65 years.

The Ryans and O'Connels and all the rest of the Irish in the community are descendants of the first hardy band that literally chopped their farms out of the hardwood forests.

St. Patrick's day is THEIR day. They devote its hours to prayer, feasting and play.

Church Tops Highest Hill

St. Patrick is 35 miles south of Minneapolis, near Lydia.

It is not on the map. The town's fathers never believed it necessary to incorporate the community.

There is a store, a blacksmith shop and the church.

The Church of St. Patrick is anchored atop the highest hill – a solid block of rock cemented there 65 years ago, stone by stone, by the first Irish community.

Each stone was dragged over a pioneer trail from the quarry in Jordan.

Helped Build Church

Eighty-five year-old John Ryan remembers it well. He helped build the church. In those days he was six feet of strapping Irish youth. It was he and his father who lifted the heaviest stones, fitting them in the church walls. And around the church the community grew. Seventy-three families are recorded in the yellowed church books.

Mr. Ryan went to church today – and he's going to try to go to the celebration in the hall above the store tonight.

“I haven’t missed one yet,” he said. “I remember the parties the Irish put on in the early days. They were some parties, believe me. Sure, and they had wonderful times.”

Photo caption 1: High on a hill 35 miles south of Minneapolis is the Church of St. Patrick. And there is no doubt that today is THE DAY in the parish. There was mass in the church. Upper Picture

Photo caption 2: Below is one of the men who built the church 65 years ago – John Ryan Ryan (“My mother was a Ryan, too.”) He joined the Phelans, the Murphys, the O’Donnells and the O’Connells (and a dozen more Ryans) in the community celebration today.