

ST. PATRICK

RECOLLECTIONS AND STORIES OF ST. PATRICK CEDAR LAKE

Our Garry – Ryan ancestors settled in St. Patrick community in the mid 1850's and so its beginnings were a rich source of stories that our Aunt Mayme Ryan shared with us. We learned that the name of Cedar Lake was from the cedar trees that grew at its shoreline. Many a young cedar sapling was transplanted to beautify the early homesteads. Our Great-Grandmother Bridget Ryan did just that and about five survived for almost one hundred years.

Grandpa Ryan would point out the various farms to us and we knew that the first white settler there was Thomas O'Donnell who came in 1855 and claimed the land across the road from the present St. Patrick Church. In the 1850's Mr. O'Donnell counted about 50 bark teepees of the Sioux Indians on what was then known as Teepee Hill. This became the site of a log church built by the Irish settlers in 1857-59. By 1870 a larger church was needed and building began on the present structure. Sand was obtained from nearby Cedar Lake and the parishioners hauled the sandstone from the Jordan quarry, a distance of thirteen miles. Ox carts were the usual means of transportation as only a few owned horses at the time. The church, completed in 1873, cost \$5,760. In 1882 its value was listed at \$15,000.

Father Knauf, the pastor at the time the church was constructed often visited his parishioners and in our home we had his picture, which he had given to the family.

Grandpa John R. Ryan told of winning a jug of whiskey for having lifted the heaviest stone during the building of the church.

One of the Garry family stories occurred during the Sioux Uprising. James and Sabina had gone to St. Paul on business, a trip of three days and during that time the children heard the Indians changing war cries. They then barricaded themselves in the house by pushing the furniture against the doors and covering the windows. Gathering some gold coins they had, they put them in the stockings of their youngest sister, Mary. She was directed to get on the table and by dancing, distract the Indians if they came to their home. When James and Sabina returned and learned of their fears, they assured the children the Indians were their friends and had marked their farm to be protected.

Celebrations had always been a vital part of life at St. Patrick's. Traveling medicine shows, plays by local actors and actresses, as well as card parties and dances at Walsh Hall, later Cavanaugh's filled the social calendar.