

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.

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 to participate in drama, dinners, debates and dances. 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.