

Mount St Francis Community

Twenty Two years ago 1934, a community was started on the fifth Concession of King Ridge, on King Ridge Farm.

Five Acres of land were loaned to the Rev. Father M^cLoey, by Mr John M^cCabe, to start this community.

There was a Church already built, here about 1929. The land for the Church was given by Mr M^cCabe, and the farmers around formed a 'bee' to build the Church which was called Sacred Heart Church.

The first year 1934, Five men and their families who because of the Depression were unable to make a living for their families.

Three families had quite a few children, the other two were young married couples without children. Four small houses were built by them and out of the young couples lived in the big Barn on Mrs Bertrand's land. Here the first baby of the Community was born, in a Jan snow storm, and both the baby and his Mother were moved to the

Hospital, as soon as they could be moved out.

The second year 1935, 50 acres were bought from Mr McCabe on the Side Road between the 5th and 6th Concessions, which is now known as the Community Side Road.

There were fourteen more families selected to come out to live.

These men built five two story houses for the first five families which each got 10 acres a piece off the 50 acres.

These five families also got each a horse, cow, chickens, pigs, and the implements such as a wagon, harrows, disk, sleds, and other that are needed on a small farm.

While the five big houses were being built, the other fourteen men, were also building small one story houses 15' x 30' so they could bring their family to be with them.

There was one family who came out on their own. They lived for a while in Mrs. Dutton's house, then in the McCabe home stead, and they then bought John Gould's house on the hill on the side road.

By this time there were quite a few children in the community. Each of the 14 men was given a small piece

of land for a garden. ³ They and their wives produced a lot towards their food for the year. The women went out in the bush of which there was much more than there is now, and picked wild fruit such as Raspberries, Strawberries, chokeberries and sugar plums to preserve for the coming winter.

They also received quite a bit of domestic fruit such as peaches, pears, and apples which they preserved also pickles, Relishes, and jams. There was quite a bit of competition between the ladies as to who could preserve the most food and fruit for winter.

There was also wool and material for socks, sweaters and cloths for their families, which was quite rugged as some of the ladies had never done anything like this in their lives. They also had to do all their house work such as washing and cooking in the old fashioned way.

There were no wells, so the men had to take big wooden barrels on a wagon, and go about three miles to bring water to drink and for cooking. And they had big barrels to catch as much rain water as possible, for washing and scrubbing.

What money was to be had was spent at McDonald & Hill's General Store in King.

city for the staple foods that were needed. But with all the hardships, there was quite a bit of fun, visiting neighbors, learning how to knit and sew, trading receipts, and ideas for fixing up the homes to make them more livable.

There was one small house built for a school, and every Friday night there was a dance, with a fiddle for music, and the ladies provided the food and tea or coffee.

By the end of the second year there were about five new babies, and more on the way. St. Dennis of Aurora was the Community Pr, and the babies were born in York County Hospital, New Market.

Towards the end of the second year, all of John Gould's farm was bought. It extended from the Community Side Road south to N. Gilliams, and west to the 50 acres bought from McCabe about 100 acres. And 68 acres from Mrs. Campbell of King Row, which was lot 18 on the 5th concession. All this was divided into 10 acres lots. These were drawn for by each of the second year men. One 10 acre lot was left for the school Property.

After the land was divided, the men cut their small homes in secessions, and moved them onto their 10 acre lots. Then they started farming in earnest.

They also received stock chickens and farm implements.

In 1936 there were thirteen more families brought out from the city. Four of these were put on land bought in Tecumseh. During the third year it was decided some of these families would not make good on the farm, so there was a decision made to reestablish them back in the city. Out of the twenty-eight families, the original five families went back of their own accord, and 15 more were reestablished back in the city.

The land was redivided, into 20 acres lots on the side road, and two lots of 34 acres each on the 5th Concession.

The men then started to build their permanent homes, and the school. Then the Sisters of Providence came to teach, and a home was built for them. Since then there have been two new additions to Sacred Heart School, and a High School. And the seven who are left have paid for their land-houses, and have

needs to them.

Some of the 20 acres lots have been divided again, and sold to people who are not of the first settlers of the community.