



Local History File
Churches
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Reference



Local History File
See Also:
Cemeteries

ST. FRANCIS de SALES CEMETERY.

When the Catholic Cemetery of St. Wilfrid's was taken out of general use, the new Catholic burial ground became the St. Francis de Sales cemetery, taking the name of the new parish. This property was purchased on November 28, 1877, from Timothy and Louisa O'Leary, for the sum of \$300. (The O'Leary's were very prominent parishioners of the church) The cemetery consisted of 2 acres of the southwest corner of the north half of lot 16, concession 1, Pickering township. The registration number is 3008 in book 189 of the Ontario County Registry. The property is at the south end of Notion Road in Pickering Village, on the east side, abutting the Trans-Canada highway. It is also directly south of St Wilfrid's cemetery, and on the same side of the road.

Although the new St. Francis de Sales church was brought into use in 1871, the old St. Wilfrid's cemetery was in regular use until much later, with several burials there in the 1870's - 1880's and 1890's, even until 1935.

Until 1976 these cemeteries were managed by local cemetery boards. After that they came under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto.

In this new, larger cemetery, the same names recur as are on the headstones in the pioneer cemetery of St. Wilfrid's. The O'Connors dominate, followed by the O'Learys. The Reddins, Ryans, Larkins, Sullivans, and the Walshes are next. The Morrisseys and the Maddafords are also well marked, as are the McBradys, McGintys, and McCarthys. These are all early pioneer names, most of them noted in the St. Francis de Sales Centennial History. Many are also noted in Past Years in Pickering by W.R. Wood.

The Centennial History has this to say of the O'Connors: "Four brothers and a sister, born in Ireland's County Cork early in the Nineteenth Century, left an astonishing heritage to the Catholic Church in Canada. From their five families came an archbishop, a bishop, two monsignori, two other priests, and a host of nuns, five in the Loretto order alone."

The O'Learys were another family of prominent church workers who came from County Cork. They and some of the O'Connors were intermarried. Mary O'Leary married Denis O'Connor, and was the mother of Archbishop Denis O'Connor of Toronto. They also married into other pioneer families, the Walshes and the Larkins. Members of the family are now spread to the corners of the world.

The McCarthys were devout Catholics, with a daughter who married John O'Loane of Toronto. One of her sons became Father O'Loane of the Basilian Order.

John McGinty was a stonemason who was reputed to have built one of the bridges across Duffins Creek.

The Morrisseys had a daughter who became Sister Helen Morrissey and founded the St. Mary's Hospital in Montreal.

The Teefy family came from County Tipperary in Ireland and settled in the Pickering area. Their home was often used as a station for Mass by the missionary priests of the time. Mrs Louis Dickson of Ajax is descended from the Teefys through Katherine Teefy's marriage to Maurice Hickey.

The McCann family had a grandson who became Rev. Thomas Joseph McCann of St. Rose of Lima parish in Scarborough.

Robert Garland married Mary Clancy in County Armagh before coming to Upper Canada and settling in the Township. He helped haul brick for the St Francis de Sales church in 1869 and 1870. Among their 12 children a daughter Mary became Mother Louis of the Loretto Order. The Garland family married into the McBradys, Cowans, McGriskins, Larkins. and McKays.

The Mc Bradys were from County Donegal, and there were two brothers, Daniel and Cornelius. Daniel's son Robert became a priest in the Basilian Order.

The list of names is long, too long to be all included in this writing and tells a story - a rich story of these Irish immigrants' dogged determination, their sacrifices and hardships, and above all, their devotion to their Catholic Faith. They also kept detailed records - otherwise this story would be much shorter, with fewer names, and much less information.

This information was compiled from personal research and observation, and assistance from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, Archives section. Father Bolger of St. Francis de Sales Church provided a copy of their Centennial History by Edmund C. Phelan, from which much material was taken. Miss Marguerite O'Connor and Mrs Mary Teefy were helpful also. Burial records were supplied by The Whitby-Oshawa Genealogical Society.
August 26, 1992. KEN SMITH.