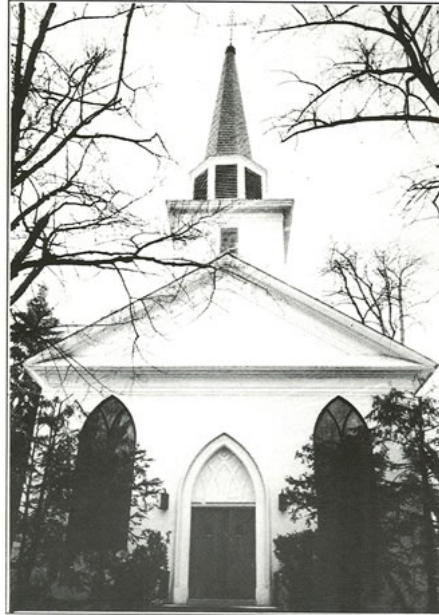


History of the Parish



St. Andrew's Church, Oakville
1840-1990

The word "parish" comes from the Latin *parrochia*, which is derived from the Greek words, *oikia* which means "home" and the prefix *para* means "to be away from". Thus, "para-oikia" describes being away from one's home a traveller or pilgrim. A parish is a place for those who are pilgrims in this world. A parish is our home while we are away from our eternal home. From its beginnings, St. Andrew's has been a "para-oikia—a "home-away-from-home" for its people and in more than one sense. St. Andrew's extended its hospitality to the early immigrants from the British Isles. St. Andrew's welcomed the refugee slaves as a terminal in the Underground Railroad. St. Andrew's was the mother church to many of the parishes in the south of Halton. St. Andrew's continues to welcome peoples from diverse lands and cultures. All find they are at home here because they find a constant Catholic tradition and the generous hospitality of God's people.

Many thanks to those in the past who by their selfless dedication have given witness to their faith and those who continue today, by the generous gift of themselves, to make St. Andrew's an expression of the living Jesus Christ, living yesterday, today, and forever.

THE EARLY DAYS

By David Dooley

The 1830's and 1840's in Upper Canada were a period of roughing it in the bush. In her excellent historical account, 'Oakville and the Sixteen', Hazel Chisholm Mathews

describes what the area looked like in 1823 when her great-grandfather, William Chisholm, bought the land which would comprise the port of Oakville. There were only a few clearings, "cut out of the wilderness, as stones hewn out of quarries, insignificant indentures apparently in the boundless forest." It was pioneer territory and mission country.

Writing in October 1830, to Bishop MacDonell in Kingston, Father W.J. O'Grady, pastor of St. Paul's Church in York, related what his curate, Father Edward Gordon, who had responsibility for the missions, had to endure:

He is a sensible-modest unassuming man, and very willing to promote the cause in which he is engaged to the utmost extent of his ability, but then his means are limited and must continue to be so, as long as he is under the necessity of carrying a large trunk with his vestments and a large folio missal and an altar stone weighing about a quarter of a hundred on the pommel of his saddle from Township to Township.

Father O'Grady's "sensible" and "modest" man was to become a great builder of churches, longtime pastor of St. Mary's Church in Hamilton, and first Vicar-General of the Diocese of Hamilton when it was established in 1856. In the 1830's, however, he was following trails through the forest from one clearing to another, the clearings being about 15 miles apart. Between 1830 and 1833 he performed 306 baptisms in settlements all the way from Niagara to Lake Simcoe.

None of these took place in Oakville, though a number of them were performed in Trafalgar Township at a location about 10 miles north. On the Ninth Line, just north of Britannia Road, there is a church with the following inscription near its front door: "1823/St. Peter's R.C. Church/First in the area." The boast is not an idle one. As Ken Foyster relates in his Anniversary Reflections on Hamilton Diocese, as early as 1818 the first Irish immigrants were settling on the 8th and 9th concessions in Trafalgar; the area soon became known as the "Catholic Swamp." In 1819, two young men, Bartholomew O'Connor and Charles O'Hara, walked the many miles to Dundas to persuade a Father O'Reilly to come to visit them. He celebrated Mass at O'Hara's cabin (Lot 1, Concession 9). Foyster writes, "From many miles around, settlers converged on the little cabin to receive the Sacraments and to participate in the Holy Sacrifice for perhaps the first time since they had left Ireland." A log church was constructed in 1823 on an acre of cleared land donated by Dan Hyland, so St. Peter's Trafalgar does date back to 1823, though the present church was built long after.

In a curious way, the question of when our own church was erected involves the letters of the alphabet. Foyster writes that "Land for a new church at Oakville was acquired in 1835 and the following year still more land was acquired for the use as a cemetery. At about this time, St. Andrew's Church was constructed." He is probably following Theobald Spetz, who was quite specific in his account prepared for the

Diamond Jubilee of the Diocese of Hamilton in 1916: "Site November 19, 1855; Lots A, B, C in Block 35..." However, the church is not on any of Lots A, B, or C, but on Lot D.

Several writers, Spetz included, say that there was a Catholic church in Oakville as early as 1831. But accounts dealing with that period make this seem very unlikely, as we have seen Father Gordon performed baptisms in the Trafalgar area in that year, but not in Oakville. Justus W. Williams, a Wesleyan Methodist, recalled that when he moved to Oakville, in March 1833, "there was no place set apart for the worship of Almighty God but the schoolhouse...was used for that purpose by all who desired it."

TRAFALGAR MISSION

Hazel Mathews writes that in 1835 the mission at Trafalgar was being attended by 150 persons some of whom were undoubtedly from Oakville' and that in the following year a mission was established in Oakville by Father W.P. McDonough another great missionary and builder of churches' Born in the Archdiocese of Tuam in 1808, he was ordained in 1833, and came to Canada in the same year. For about nine years he was in charge of the mission at York; it was while he was stationed there that he visited Oakville. Appointed pastor of St. Catharines in 1842, he built churches there and in Thorold; he moved to the Diocese of Kingston in 1851, and died at Peterborough in 1863. He was described as a man "of commanding presence, and familiar with the language and habits of the Irish immigrant."

"Within two years of saying the first Mass in 1836," Mrs. Mathews continues, "preparations began for building of a church, and for this purpose land at the corner of King and Reynolds streets (Block 35, lot D) was given by William Chisholm. Tradition says that it was because of his appreciation of the work of his Irish labourers that the founder of Oakville gave them the land on which to build a church; and that, in gratitude for this favour by a Scottish Presbyterian, the congregation named the church after the patron saint of Scotland.

George K. Chisholm and his wife conveyed the other five lots in Block 35 on November 19, 1855 as Spetz says; these were initially owned by the Diocese of Toronto, and only transferred to the Diocese of Hamilton well over a hundred years later in July 1972. Lots A and B, the property on which the convent now stands, were turned over to the School Sisters of Notre Dame shortly after. Lot D, however, had been transferred from William Chisholm to three trustees—Nicholas Boylan, Peter Case, and John O'Laughlin—on April 3, 1837.

When the church was insured for \$2,000 with Royal Insurance in 1882, it was described as follows: "On building only of a frame shingle roofed church 36 x 68 and 16 x 18 marked A on diagram isolated to the extent of 80 feet and situate on the North East corner of King and Reynolds Streets, Oakville, Ontario." When the church

was built, it did not have to be of large dimensions: the total population of Trafalgar Township in 1841 was 4,375, of whom 1,098 were Anglicans, 1,007 Wesleyans, 963 Presbyterians and only 281 Catholics. A note in the Oakville Museum describes a Strange happening during the construction: When building St. Andrew's belfry, John Cavin father of Martin Cavin, a carpenter, gave freely of his time and labour to help erect the church and was engaged high up when the rope that went through the...pulley was let loose by some incompetent workman at noon hour and the wind blew it over to where Mr. Wm. Davis now lives With quick thought and presence of mind, he took off his stocking, unraveled it, let it down and the ground men tied the rope to it. John was soon down for dinner."

Hazel Mathews writes that St. Andrew's is the only church in Oakville, which survives in its original form, and is a charming example of the churches of Colonial design built in the western section of the province. If William Chisholm were to return to this earth, she adds, St. Andrew's is the only public building in Oakville, which he would recognize. John Cavin's spire is described by David and Suzanne Peacock as an octagonal louvered loft over a short tower; it is 150 feet high Underneath the church are hand-adzed pine beams, some of them 60 feet in length, set upon a mortarless stone foundation; the stumps of some of the pines cleared from the site are still underneath the floor boards, stone dry and hard. The church originally seated 200; about 1870 it was extended to accommodate 300.

THE FIRST MASS

During the years 1838 to 1840, when funds were being raised by subscription, Hazel Mathews writes: The congregation was attended by F Eugene O'Reilly who said the first Mass in the finished church late in October 1840. His is a curious story, as is suggested by the history of St. Patrick's Wildfield (north of Brampton and south of Bolton):

In 1961 "a centennial memorial Mass was offered to honour Rev. Eugene O'Reilly on the hundredth anniversary of his death. His great-grandson, Rev. J.R O'Reilly, was present at the ceremony". Not many Catholic priests of the Roman rite have had descendants who were also priests;



Father O'Reilly had two great-grandsons who were ordained to the priesthood and who taught at St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto.

Eugene O'Reilly had been a married man. Soon after the death of his wife, he left his home in County Cavan, Ireland, and came to Canada, bringing his little daughter Margaret. This was in 1832, when he was 36 years old. After providing for the care of Margaret, he entered the classical college at Chambly, south of Montreal, and on June 19, 1836, he was ordained by Bishop Provencher of St. Boniface. He spent a few months at Glengarry, and then was appointed to St. Patrick's where he remained until a few months before his death. His daughter married a second cousin, another O'Reilly and they had five children, all baptized by their priest grandfather.

Father O'Reilly was responsible not only for St. Patrick's Wildfield, in Toronto Gore, but for all of Toronto Township and, at times, Halton County as well, including Trafalgar, Oakville, and Milton. In his homily at the memorial Mass, Father J. Lawlor paid tribute to his courage and stamina, including the hardships of riding a horse along primitive forest trails in all seasons of the year. He also pointed out that Father O'Reilly had to use all his powers of persuasion to keep his hot-blooded Irish parishioners from becoming embroiled in the Upper Canada rebellion of 1837. Ten years later, he sent lumber wagons to the fever sheds on the Toronto waterfront — where the cholera-stricken arrivals from Ireland were quartered — to move patients up to the Gore where homes awaited them. "He visited them, heard their confessions, anointed the dying, and buried the dead," said Father Lawlor.

There is another contender for the honour of having said the first Mass in the new church however. (Spetz has a third: Father McDonough. An anonymous account, which Mrs. Mathew found at St. Andrew's, reads in part:

The first Mass in said church (still standing July 1st, 1890) was by Father Eugene McDonell in the latter part of October 1840. He was a young priest, ordained a short time before in Rome, and resided here in a house opposite the present residence of George J. Sumner, near the town hall.

It is not clear why Mrs. Mathews gave the distinction to Father O'Reilly instead of to Father McDonell. In any case, Oakville seems to have had a resident priest for a short time at least around 1840 (a letter from a bishop, as we shall see, provides further evidence).

In January 1842 the Trafalgar Catholics wrote to Bishop Gaulin of Kingston to report, "we have with considerable exertion succeeded in completing our Chapel from various causes long discontinued." They complimented His Lordship on the appointment of "a distinct clergyman to these parts," regretted their inability to support a resident clergyman because of the insufficiency of their numbers, and suggested that a priest might be stationed in "the rising and central village of Streetsville," only 10 miles away. This might influence Catholic families to settle in

their neighbourhood, in Streetsville, and in the equally rising village of Oakville.

Following this, Bishop Gaulin wrote to his Vicar General from the Hamilton region, Father William P. MacDonald, to suggest that the Rev. Mr. Mills should settle at "Branford" and another missionary be assigned to Dundas and surrounding area, including Oakville and Trafalgar. Soon Father James O'Flynn was parish priest of Dundas, with these added responsibilities as well.

FINANCIAL WORRIES

When Michael Power became the first Bishop of Toronto in 1842, Oakville came under his jurisdiction. The first mention of our parish in his letter book mentions there having been a resident priest, and also makes it evident that, as usual with the Catholic Church in Canada, especially at that period, financial worries were very pressing:

You must let the people of Oakville and Trafalgar know that unless they defray your traveling expenses and contribute, according to their means, to your support, I shall not insist upon your visiting them; they should have endeavoured when they had a Clergyman to keep him. You must not be too severe with them nor require more than what is just and equitable; moreover a great deal must be done for pure charity. On the other hand, they must comply with their duty as Catholics and contribute to your support and maintenance. I would advise you not to correspond in writing with those committed to your care, especially on money matters; you know that they may occasionally make use of letters for the purpose of annoying and even injuring their Pastor.

The following May, however, the Bishop moved Father O'Flynn to the missions of Tecumseh and Adjula (now Colgan, some 20 miles north of St. Patrick's Wildfield) and appointed the Rev. Peter Connolly "to the mission of Dundas and the neighbouring missions of Oakville, Wellington Square (Burlington), Trafalgar etc." The people of Oakville must have been glad to see Father O'Flynn go, for he was evidently a man with a violent temper. In February 1844, Bishop Power rebuked him for getting into a quarrel with a good old man, Thomas McGoey, because the latter had refused to plough for him; for allowing political meetings on church property, for using violent and abusive language; and for allowing his hogs into the burying ground.

An entry for 1844 in the Toronto archdiocesan records, reads, "St. Andrew — Oakville, St. Matthew, Trafalgar vacant." This is the first time that the name of the mission Oakville appears. At the time, the Trafalgar church was called St. Matthew's; this was later changed to St. Peter.

FIRST BAPTISMS

Father John O'Reilly took over St. Augustine's Church in Dundas in January 1847, and the first entries in the church records concerning Oakville began with him. On March 21 of that year, he baptized two daughters of James and Johanna Fitzgerald, Mary and Catherine, and on his next visit to the Oakville mission, on April 18, he married Michael Butler and Anna O'Laughlin. Like many of his colleagues in the priesthood, he had been born in Ireland. He came to Canada in 1842, studied at the Grand Seminary in Montreal, and was ordained in 1846. Like his namesake from St. Patrick's Wildfield, he was one of the heroic figures working to alleviate the sufferings of those who came from Ireland in the "fever fleet": "Father John O'Reilly was summoned from Dundas, and he worked incessantly for 14 weeks in the shed administering to as many as 45 patients in a day." He also contracted the disease, "but worked on until he was unable to move." He recovered, to serve in Dundas and surrounding towns for another 20 years, and to become the Very Reverend Dean O'Reilly.

The first resident pastor after the church was built was Rev. Jeremiah Ryan, who came to Oakville from Brantford in 1859, and remained at St. Andrew's for 17 years. He had responsibility as well for Trafalgar, Milton, Burlington, and Hamilton (or Burlington) Beach. Within a year of his arrival, he had established a separate school. The County of Halton Directory for 1869-70 said,

The Roman Catholic separate school is a good two-storey building 24 by 36 feet with basement. It was erected in 1860 through the exertions and at the expense of Rev. J. Ryan, Roman Catholic priest. The average attendance of pupils is about eighty to ninety. — Miss Ellen Higgins is teacher, assisted by Miss M. Fitzgerald.



ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

When he had opened his school a decade before, however, Father Ryan had induced the Sisters of St. Joseph to staff it, and had provided them with a residence. By 1863, apparently, it had proved too difficult to continue this school, and it closed; obviously it was open a few years later, with a lay staff. When Father E.P. Slevin became pastor in 1884, he persuaded the St. Joseph Sisters to return to what was then known as St. Mary's School. After 13 years, they again withdrew, and for many years afterwards lay teachers were in charge. When Inspector William Prendergast visited the school in the fall of 1899, Miss Lamphier was there on her own (at a salary of \$300); he was "glad to report that Miss Lamphier is a willing teacher, who is giving general satisfaction." He described the school building as frame, and the school grounds as "shaded on 3 sides by beautiful maple trees." The school library at that time consisted of one book — "a large dictionary."

Father Ryan was evidently a shrewd businessman. Hazel Mathews was told by Father Harris 1948 that his predecessor had purchased a property on the corner of Reynolds and Colborne Streets, given bursaries to St. Michael's College, and contributed to the Ryan Ward in St. Joseph's Hospital, Hamilton. His generosity to St. Michael's and the Basilian Fathers extended well beyond bursaries. He brought two nephews over from his native Ireland — Patrick Ryan and Lawrence Brennan; both of them went to St. Michael's; both of them became Basilians and they were ordained priests on the same day. But that is only the beginning of the story.

Father Ryan left a large sum, perhaps \$20,000, trust to Father Brennan. The latter was as shrewd as his uncle, and when he saw an opportunity to buy a tract of land in the wilds of North Toronto, he did so — despite the opposition of some of his confreres. It consisted of 50 acres located east of Bathurst Street and between St. Clair and Eglinton Avenues. Of course the property has increased at least a thousand times in value; part of it was sold, a century after it was bought, to help finance the building of Kelly Library at St. Michael's. No wonder one of the College buildings is named after him — Brennan Hall.

George Sumner, an Oakville resident who kept a diary for many years, noted in April 1880: "I was at the funeral of the Rev. J. Ryan, Catholic priest — there were 18 priests in the church." Father Ryan is buried in St. Michael's Cemetery in Toronto with his two nephews, in a plot, which was reserved for them.

He was followed by Rev. R.R. Morris, a priest about whom one would like to know more. A native of England and a convert from Anglicanism, he is described by Spetz as having both an M.D. and an LL.D. (which cannot be right, since it is ordinarily an honorary degree). Arriving in Hamilton in 1856, he served for three years at Arthur, and for six at Mount Forest. He was in Oakville only two years, from 1876 to 1878, when he returned to England.

Father Harris told Mrs. Mathews that he had heard a legend of a priest being buried

under the church, but when the workmen were putting in a heating system they found no evidence of it. However, he said, they crawled under only part of the church. If the legend was true, the only place the priest could have been buried was in front of the small altar on the north side of the church. In fact, the successor to Father Morris, Father Terence O'Reilly, is almost certainly buried under the church, because his tombstone was there. The inscription on the stone read as follows:

*I.H.S.
Rev. T. O'Reilly
P.P. Oakville,
died
28th March, 1884
in the 39th year
of his life and
the 7th of his
Priesthood
R.I.P.
Erected by the Catholics of Oakville*

At the time of the 1870 renovations, the exterior of the church may have been given a roughcast stucco finish. On the other hand, when the building was insured with the Royal Insurance Co. in 1882, it was described as follows: "On building only of a frame shingle roofed church 36 x 68 and 16 x 18..." Insurance on the rectory in 1884 covered not only the building but also some etceteras:

*\$500 on brick single-roofed dwelling
\$250 on furniture therein
\$75 on the frame barn
\$175 being \$125 on a horse
\$50 on a Buggy therein*

In a photograph taken in 1897, there are two details missing from the church as we know it: there is a small porch in the front, and there is a large cross on the roof at the back.

Father Slevin, who had been curate at St. Andrew's, was pastor from 1884 to 1890, when he went to Galt. He died in 1901, before he had been 25 years a priest. He was succeeded by Rev. John J. Kelly (1890-92), later rector of St. Mary's Cathedral in Hamilton, Vicar-General of the diocese, and a Monsignor. From 1892 to 1900, the pastor was Rev. R.T. Burke, who had been a student at the Galt Grammar School under a famous headmaster, William Tassie — a man who had "the bearing and dignity of a field-marshal and the walk and tread of an emperor." Father Burke left in 1900 to join the Basilians; later he was pastor at Owen Sound and administrator at St. Basil's in Brantford.

Hamilton, 23rd Sept, '88
Dear Rev. Father.

Last evening we received a Pontifical decree from Rome ordering the Rosary to be recited in all Churches during the month of October till the 2nd of Nov. incl. for the intention of the Holy Father. An indulgence of 2 years & 2 quinquagesimes is granted each time to all who are present at the recital. Those

who cannot be present & who recite it in their families or privately, may the same indulgence. A Plenary indulgence may be gained by all, who recite it three times & go to Confession & take Communion and pray for the intention of the Holy Father. You will please give the people the necessary opportunities of gaining these indulgences.

I am, Dear Father,
Yours faithfully,
+ James Shanley
Rev. J. Shanley, Rector of Hamilton

EASTER 1899

Large congregations attended both services on Easter Sunday, and the church was handsomely and abundantly decorated with flowers; also statues of "The Adoring Angels," one on each side of the large altar. These were donated and in use for the first time in the church. Rev. Father R.T. Burke delivered an eloquent sermon, and the choir sang Zangl's Mass in C in the morning. At the evening service musical vespers were sung, including the "Magnificat", solos of which were sung by L.V. Coty, "Regina Coeli," "O Salutaris" and a quartet, "Tantum Ergo," by Misses Shaughnessy and Condon and Messrs. L.V. Coty and Jas. Sherrin. Miss A. Shaughnessy presided at the organ. The Oakville Record, April 6, 1899

1900-1950

After a period of prosperity, based on its activities as a port trading in ships' masts, barrel staves, wheat, and other commodities, Oakville suffered a decline when the railways began to take away its business. The Historical Atlas of the County of Halton, 1877, shows it as a fairly wide strip of land south of Colborne Street (now Lakeshore Road) and a narrow strip on the east side of Sixteen Mile Creek going as far north as Spruce Street. Trafalgar Township completely engulfs it on the map. Its future did not seem to lie in commerce but in recreation. "The town has become quite a favourite watering place," said the Atlas, "being thronged in the summer season with visitors, who have come to enjoy its salubrious air and healthful fruits."



The editors predicted in fact that it would become "the great summer resort of Canada." The "healthful fruit" in which it specialized was the strawberry of which over 300 acres were under cultivation at that time. The town did not grow very quickly. The 1871 census gave its population as 1,684 and around 1,700 until the turn of the century. In 1911 it was 2,375, in 1921, 3,289. In the first years of the century, therefore, the Catholics of Oakville did not outgrow their small church, with its seating capacity of 300.

Still, the Vicar-General of the diocese, Father, or Monsignor, Mahoney, told the congregation one Sunday evening in April, 1910, that they needed a new church, and apparently he had reason to believe that they agreed with him. The present church, he said, had served the parish for 72 years and was probably the oldest in the Hamilton diocese. In three years the parish would celebrate its diamond jubilee, and he anticipated that the consecration of a new church could be held at the same time. He hoped that conditions would permit of an early start on a building which, on such a beautiful site, would be a credit not only to the parishioners but to the growing town of Oakville.

HARD TIMES

Interestingly, some account books in the rectory, ranging from 1909 to 1930, give the impression that at the time the Vicar-General made his surprising suggestion, St. Andrew's was a small church in a small town, and quite as large as it needed to be. Total receipts for the latter half of 1909 were \$948.25, and expenditures \$712.24, leaving a balance of \$236.01. Not only did such figures make the building of a new church completely unfeasible, but they make one wonder what the parish priest lived on. Offertory collections averaged about six dollars a week. Pew rent was a major source of income; in 1909 it amounted to \$112.75, and by 1915 it was up to \$363.25, almost matching the total offertory collection of \$365.85. If it had not been for the annual garden party a feature of parish life for over half a century — the church would have been in a very bad way. In 1909 it made a profit of \$280, very close to the total collections for the year; in 1919 it made \$714, and in 1930 \$921 — almost a quarter of the total receipts for the year. To build a new church in such circumstances would have been financially hazardous. Yet during these years St. Andrew's contributed to the support of its sister or affiliated churches. (In the early years of the century, there was no Mass on the second Sunday of the month in Oakville, because the priest was on circuit.) "Improvements to Milton Church" took \$190 in 1914, and assistance to St. John's in Burlington \$470.04 in 1920, and over \$1,450 in 1921. And without the help of St. Andrew's, St. Peter's Trafalgar might not have been able even to pay its insurance. In 1925 its total income was \$82.50, and

car expenses took \$62.25 of that amount. During those years the pastor could not have lived in the lap of luxury; his income was \$611.71 in 1910 and \$747.43 in 1911. During the 1920's his salary seems to have varied mainly between \$800 and \$1,000, depending on the state of church finances. In 1925, the last item of expenditures reads; "Balance — support of pastor — \$810.29." Either he got what was left over, or his income varied with the effectiveness of his sermons.

Of course the pastor received extra money for transportation. Livery and carfare amounted to \$76.00 in 1911, and by 1916 it had jumped to \$125.80. Somehow or other he acquired his own vehicle in the early 1920's; in 1922 car storage and supplies were listed at \$256.85. (Father Savage, the incumbent at the time, drove a McLaughlin.)

GARDEN PARTIES

The previously mentioned Garden Party, an annual event begun in 1896, was a feature not only of church life but of town life for nearly 60 years. Invariably the Oakville Star and its successors paid tribute to the beauty of the setting and the variety of the entertainment. "The brilliantly illuminated lawns of the Presbytery grounds on the occasion of the annual garden party Tuesday evening," said the Star in July 1925, "took on the appearance of a small but complete fairy land." Where the rectory now stands was a rose garden called by the paper "a mecca for flower devotees. The newspaper account usually listed those in charge of the various booths, from the fishpond to housie-housie (a predecessor of bingo), and the performing artists, including jugglers and humorists and "our own soprano, Miss Mabel Manley" in 1903. Also featured was the Oakville Band and a baritone from the Chicago Opera Company in 1925.



Father Francis O'Reilly, who had been ordained in Hamilton in 1878, became rector in 1900, and remained in this position until 1905. He celebrated his 25th anniversary as a priest while he was at St. Andrew's, in 1903. He died in Oakville in 1908.

Father J.J. Feeny followed him in 1905, and remained until 1908 or 1909, when Father J. Savage began a long pastorate — the longest so far — which was not to end until 1933.

Father Savage did not follow the Vicar-General's recommendation and pull down the church; instead he renovated it. The Oakville Star wrote that during his long tenure of office the congregation of the church grew, the interior was remodeled, the presbytery was re-constructed, and "the church and presbytery grounds transferred into a place of real beauty in design, bloom and stretches of green." He was a fine-looking man and obviously a man of taste; he loved flowers and music, and served as

president of both the local horticultural society and the local musical society. The changes to the interior of the church in 1916 included the installation of an electrical chandelier presented by a prominent citizen of Oakville who was not a Catholic, W.S. Davis.

A letter from Father Savage to Bishop McNally in 1925 referred to the missions of Burlington and Milton, which were about to be detached from St. Andrew's. With responsibility for the former went the care of Burlington Beach, and with the latter, eventually, care of St. Peter's Trafalgar. Father C. Brohman, a tall thin man of German descent, followed Father Savage, coming from Formosa. In 1939, he had to take leave of absence because of ill health, and Father Burton Harris succeeded him.

Father Harris came to Oakville after 17 years in Caledonia. His personality was very different from that of Father Savage; he was much more brusque and single-minded. In fact, except for his right-hand man, he ran the parish very much himself; that right-hand man was Peter Watters, later an Oakville councillor, still later the Rev. Peter Watters.

Father James A. Kirby, then 60 years old, arrived in 1950, after long periods in other parishes — 13 years in Sacred Heart Parish, Hamilton; 16 years at Sacred Heart in Kenilworth. Old-time parishioners remember him as a Barry Fitzgerald type of priest, very much like the Irish priest in the famous movie, *Going My Way*.

When he took charge, however, he was faced with a dispiriting situation. The church was badly in need of renovation and expansion, the Separate School Board was urgently in need of funds, and parish revenue had not been sufficient to provide any financial reserves. In March 1950, there was actually a St. Mary's Separate School Emergency Fund Committee in existence, which appealed for support from bingo and donations to help eliminate a deficit of \$2,700. Soon after this, Father Kirby wrote to Bishop Ryan requesting "full authority to clean up this (?), which exists in Oakville. We have no money, a church a disgrace, what accounts owed I know not." With the help of the bishop, Father Kirby went to work to improve parish facilities and pay for them in a short space of time.

CAPACITY DOUBLED

During 1953, the church's seating capacity was doubled and a new sanctuary was added. At the same time, St. Mary's School was enlarged from two to six classrooms. In 1956, a new rectory was built and the former was remodeled for use as a convent by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, who came to take charge of St. Mary's. In the same year, a new school, St. James (was it only a coincidence that James was Father Kirby's Christian name?) was built on Morden Road, to provide for the needs of the growing population west of Sixteen Mile Creek. In 1955, in fact, the Bronte area had been detached from St. Andrew's to form the new parish of St. Dominic's. To meet the costs of the various projects, St. Andrew's conducted a successful fundraising

campaign in 1956.

A newspaper story dated October 31, 1953, "Parish Organizations Extremely Active at St. Andrew's," gives the impression of a very lively parish indeed. The Holy Name Society was in operation, the Catholic Women's League had both senior and junior divisions, St. Mary's School had a Parent-Teacher Association, and there were two choirs, the senior under the direction of Miss Ella McDermott, the junior under Mrs. John Lanouette. Father Kirby was also instrumental in promoting the formation of a Knights of Columbus Council in Oakville. It was established in 1954, and he was inducted as its Charter Chaplain. His sudden death, on May 25, 1957, was a great loss to the parish. He was succeeded by Rev. V.A. Priester.

Father Priester had taught 13 years at Cathedral High School in Hamilton and had continued to be involved in Catholic education: Bishop Ryan had appointed him liaison with the Department of Education and the Provincial Government, and for 23 years he was executive director and secretary of the Ontario English Catholic Education Association. It was hardly a surprise, therefore, when he was made a Monsignor in 1963.

During its 150 years, however, St. Andrew's never had a parish hall. Its parishioners thought it had one, when they contributed to the building of a hall on Morden Road to serve as a Catholic Centre; the money for which was raised in approximately one year. About the end of August, 1957, however, Father Priester began to say Mass in the school on the site, St. James, and soon thought was being given to the opening of a new parish. When this happened in 1961, the hall was transferred to it. In September, 1960, a new school had been opened, St. Vincent's, on the east side of the parish. Was it only a coincidence that the Christian name of Msgr. Priester was Vincent? In 1961, still another school was opened — St. Michael's, north of the Queen Elizabeth Way, to serve another rapidly growing area.

VATICAN COUNCIL CHANGES

The interior of St. Andrew's took on a new look around the end of the Second Vatican Council in conformity with the new directive that the priest should say Mass facing the people. As happened in many other churches, objects which had been regarded as aids to devotion — such as a chandelier and two adoring angels — simply disappeared; the altar rail remained, however, until the 1970's.

After he left St. Andrew's in 1965, Msgr. Priester had a number of other assignments, chiefly in the Kitchener area. He died on May 29, 1984, the 49th anniversary of his ordination. Bishop Tonnos celebrated his funeral Mass, with 77 priests in attendance. In the eulogy delivered by the Very Rev. Edward Sheridan, he was praised for his invincible faith, eminent personality, and great sense of humor.

Fathers James Beaudry, V.J. Pickett, and J.W. Flaherty followed him in quick

succession. Two issues of a well-produced parish newspaper, "St. Andrew's Seraphim," complete with amusing caricatures, appeared in 1966, and 1967. They described the trouble that began in this "respectable parish, with its white colonial church, standing sedately there under the towering oaks," when the Second Vatican Council introduced terms like "renewal," "awakening", and "dialog" In its second issue, the "Seraphim" wrote about "Our parish in Guatemala": Father Beaudry had volunteered to fill the breach in Teculatan parish, the diocesan responsibility in Guatemala. He himself described one day's work there, involving the raising of the roof of his church, with the skillful help of a very good bricklayer allowed out of jail by the chief of police.

Father Flaherty looked like a football player, and had been one; in fact he was described in an obituary notice as one of the finest athletes Hamilton had ever produced. He was apparently approached by the St. Louis Cardinals to play professional baseball. It was often said of him that he should have been a member of a religious community; for he was assiduous in taking care of other priests with some kind of disability, such as Father Smithbower, a marvelous preacher who could hardly see the lectern, much less the words of the biblical text on it, and Father Re, who had Parkinson's Disease, and had to be helped by another priest while saying Mass.

Father Flaherty was also very much interested in education; he stood for election to the Separate School Board twice, and was elected both times During September 1968, he began celebrating Sunday Mass in St. Michael's school, forecasting the development of yet another parish as an offshoot of St. Andrew's. During his stay at St. Andrew's he celebrated his 25th anniversary as a priest, commemorated by a special Mass and a dinner at the Galaxy Club organized by the C.W.L.

When Father Flaherty became ill in 1972, Father G.P. Hayes acted as administrator of the parish for some months, until Msgr. RW. Harrigan became the new pastor. Father Flaherty was attached to several parishes in Hamilton, and died at the age of 60 on June 24, 1981.

OUTSTANDING MONSIGNOR

Msgr. Harrigan, one of a number of outstanding monsignors in Hamilton Diocese at the time, and also prominent in Catholic education in the province, was not happy to be sent to St. Andrew's to repair the damage left by the sudden departure of Father Flaherty. He was once heard to mutter, in Scriptural terms, "let not your flight be in winter's thinking of his own transfer from the centre of the diocesan action in Hamilton to the eastern reaches of the diocese in Oakville. Still, he was a very gregarious person, who loved golf and bowling and parish get-togethers, and was at his best when he was walking up and down smoking a cigar and singing Irish songs, including the well known one which contains his own name. On one occasion, when he was supposed to accompany the choir on its annual outing to the Shaw Festival at

Niagara-on-the-Lake, he was smoking his pipe when he entered the bus, was told by the driver that no smoking was permitted, and answered that if he wasn't allowed to smoke he wasn't going to go. Fortunately, two parishioners were going down by car, and they were able to let the bus proceed, while Msgr. Harrigan puffed away to his heart's content.

Born in 1905, Msgr. Harrigan was ordained in 1930, and elevated to the rank of monsignor in 1963. He suffered a heart attack in the summer of 1979, and died on August 17. Father Dennis Noon, his curate, was placed in temporary charge of the parish until the appointment of the new pastor, Father Ronald Hodara, who had also served as curate at St. Andrew's under Msgr. Harrigan, effective October 10, 1979.

Father Hodara is a former shortstop with Brantford Red Sox of the old Inter-County League, and a golfer of professional ability. His 25th anniversary celebration on May 24, 1986, with a dinner at the Oakville Club, was a memorable occasion where he suffered some good-natured ribbing from his confreres in the priesthood, Fathers Noon and Sherlock, while the Holy Father's alter ego, M.C Pat Hurley, invited him to Castel Gandolfo to play golf — with the admonition that he would be expected to lose.

When Father Hodara became pastor, the church had a pleasing external appearance and a very disappointing internal one; for example, brown paint went partly up the sidewalls and plywood covered in the stairway leading up to the choir loft. A legacy enabled him to carry out extensive renovations in 1980.

CHURCH IMPROVEMENTS

Like Hazel Mathews, David and Suzanne Peacock in their book, *Old Oakville*, emphasize the church's pleasing classical proportions, which give it a striking similarity to many neo-classic churches erected in England and the United States during the 18th and early 19th centuries. But when a specialist in church architecture, Murray McCance, was invited to suggest improvements to the interior, he found St. Andrew's to be an intriguing example of a transitional period. As the classical pediment outside indicated, it had started out to be a reproduction of a simple Georgian church, and then had had a pointed arch installed at the entrance to the sanctuary and Gothic windows on the sidewalls. The explanation was simple: when it was built, the Gothic Revival was in full sway. In fact, Augustus Welby Pugin was to argue in his book, *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, in 1841, that the Italian and Grecian styles were pagan, and Gothic the only true Christian architecture.

In his own alterations, McCance did not underemphasize either the classical or Gothic elements but tried to effect a harmonious compromise between them. Most of his changes were not structural, though he did raise the sanctuary and widen the steps leading to it, strengthen the supports of the organ loft, and replace the

plywood-covered stairs leading to the loft with something lighter and more graceful. A lighter effect, in fact, was what he was striving for and he tried to find something to match the pigments, which would have been used in the middle of the 19th century, when the lighting of a church would have been a problem. To stress the classical proportions of the ceiling, he gave it an ornamental moulding, with shamrocks and thistles, oak leaves and fleur de lis on small medallions set at intervals in it, to remind those whose gaze goes heavenward of the early settlers who were responsible for the building of the church.

In many other details, the church now recalls its 19th century origin, though all of these features, like the elegant new lights, are used with attention to the 20th century realities. The niches in the two side altars now contain hand-carved statues of Our Lady and St. Joseph, both from the antique collection of the now-defunct Globe Furniture Company of Waterloo. The sanctuary lamp, in Gothic style, is also antique, though it needed repairing to restore it to its original condition. The terra cotta colour of the sanctuary walls reflects the Victorian interest in Tuscany, stimulated especially by John Ruskin's books on the glories of Italian art and the Italian countryside. The carpet is in the same tone a Tuscan brown or red, with Jerusalem crosses equal on all sides. Manufactured in Durham, England, it is a reproduction of an original on exhibit in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The gaslight fixtures are also reproductions of lamps of the late 19th and early 20th centuries

At the rear of the sanctuary, around the altar of reposition, is a ridel screen, a small screen used to provide a setting for an altar; it, too, is in the Gothic style. The tapestry hanging from it, with gold threads on a white embossed fabric called a brocatelle, is an English representation of Venetian pattern, after a design by a well-known Victorian architect, Sir Nivian Comper. On the front of the altar of repose is a carving of the Crucifixion.

The main altar, made of oak, is square in shape to recall a more ancient style altar and to accommodate the spatial restrictions of the sanctuary. On its four sides are beautiful carvings, again done by the German artisans who worked for Globe Furniture; they are of the Nativity, Jesus in the Temple, Jesus with little children, and Jesus in the Garden. The altar can be turned to show carvings Suitable for the different phases of the liturgical year.

Father Hodara was very proud of his church, never more so than during the biennial Christmas house tour, when he could show it off to visitors. The tour usually ended with carols in the church. Father Hodara was looking toward to the sesquicentennial, but after 10 years as pastor, he was moved to a Hamilton parish. Sts. Peter and Paul to be succeeded by Father Anthony Ciavarro, previously pastor at Holy Rosary in Aldershot.

DEVOTED PRIESTS

Almost no mention has been made in this historical sketch of the many devoted priests who have served St. Andrew's as assistants to the pastor.

Besides the regular diocesan clergy, there were others who helped. When Ortona Barracks in Oakville was the headquarters of Central Command, Lt.-Col. the Rev. L.S. Ritza, Command Chaplain (R.C.), was a familiar figure at St. Andrew's; and there were other military padres who also helped out. From the time of Msgr. Priester to the time of Father Hodara, Basilian priests from the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, at St. Michael's College in Toronto, had assignments at St. Andrew's virtually every weekend. A senior fellow of the Medieval Institute, Father Edmund Colledge, an Augustinian, rather than a Basilian, also assisted with the parish work over an extended period of time.



Since the middle 1970's, St. Andrew's has possessed a flag of St. Andrew given to it by Knox Presbyterian Church. A delegation from that church arrived to present it, headed by the minister, Dr. Robert Macmillan, and in a very warm speech he stressed the good relations, which had existed between our two churches ever since the Presbyterian founder of Oakville, William Chisholm, made his original grant of land for the building of St. Andrew's.

Throughout 1990, a wide variety of parish activities was scheduled for the sesquicentennial year. A highlight was a special Mass of Thanksgiving on February 27, presided over by Bishop Tonnos, with a guard of honour from the Knights of Columbus, and a piper piping in Lieutenant-Governor Lincoln Alexander. In his very inspiring homily, the bishop stressed the faith and fortitude of the early pioneers who built the church, and emphasized the need for similar qualities to be demonstrated by their heirs and descendants as they faced the future.

In the reception, which followed at the Oakville Club, some of the early history of the parish was related, and the Lieutenant-Governor was presented with a woodcut of

St. Andrew's, one of a limited series produced by an internationally known artist who lives in Oakville, Naoko Matsubara.

As Dr. Robert McCarney, chairman of the sesquicentennial committee, observed, an anniversary such as this is bound to make us reflect on those people who, by their dedication and sacrifice, built an enduring structure, which we are fortunate to inherit. May we honour their memory and preserve both the building itself and the faith, which it encapsulates and symbolizes.

ST. ANDREW'S MEN'S CLUB

By Terry Murphy-Johnson

Historically, it has been through church organizations that people have done much of their socializing and derived much of their entertainment. The story of the social events organized by St. Andrew's parish community is a particularly lively one.

One of the ways in which the people built community was through sporting activities. At one time, St. Andrew's had its own skating rink. One of the delightful parish events in this connection was the Masquerade Carnival, a kind of winter carnival with ice follies. Both adults and children dressed for the occasion. The Oakville Star of January 25, 1918, describes some of the costumes: "Among the little tots were the Kilgour twin sisters, little Nora in Indian costume, while wee Jean represented 'the mariner.' Margaret Markey was the only fairy to be seen on the rink and was the enchanting skating chum of "Diana" (Margaret Flood) most of the evening."

St. Andrew's also had its own softball team, which competed in the town's softball league. One high point was when, according to The Oakville Record of June 15, 1933, the team "finally broke into the winning column when they defeated the Basket Factory by the score of 36 to 5 in a league fixture played at Victoria park on Monday night. There wasn't any question about the strength of the St. Andrew's team with Swayze in the pitcher's box and Roubell on first base. Markie (sic) catching for St. Andrew's also turned in a fine performance." The St. Andrew's Men's Club also had a carpet bowling team which competed against such groups as the A.O.F. and St. John's Church. The bowling games were followed by refreshments and sing-songs. In the 1970's Monsignor Harrigan revived this idea and bowling again became a parish event. Many of the church's activities strengthened the spirit of community, not only within St. Andrew's parish, but also within Oakville as a whole. Although small-town Ontario was the setting for some regrettable disagreements between Catholics and Protestants, it seems that there were some very happy relations between St. Andrew's and other churches and groups within Oakville. Aside from St. Andrew's participation in local sporting events, St. Andrew's Men's Club also held turkey euchres, which drew large crowds. For example, the turkey euchre hosted by St. Andrew's on April 17, 1934, and held in the school auditorium, attracted a crowd of 170. During the Depression, these turkey euchres provided the opportunity for

charity fundraising and good entertainment. For thirty-five cents admission, one could enjoy a game of cards, the possibility of winning a turkey or chicken, refreshments, and dancing.

Perhaps the most important social event in the early history of the parish, however, was the annual garden party (a tradition which continued until the late 1950's). It attracted large crowds, providing the people of St. Andrew's and all of Oakville with a very pleasant summer evening that the parishioners planned for, and looked forward to, all year. St. Andrew's was known for its exceptional rose gardens, and Father Savage tended some 70 different varieties. In the evening the church grounds would be decorated with flags, bunting, bright streamers, and coloured lights. Local talent joined forces with entertainers who were imported for the evening to provide music and comedy sketches. An advertisement which appeared in the Oakville Record-Star June 15 and June 29, 1939, suggests the flavour of this annual fete:

St. Andrew's Church, Oakville, 43rd Annual GARDEN PARTY will be held on the Presbytery Grounds, TUESDAY JULY 4th at 7 am. The following programme has been selected, offering the maximum in good clean variety entertainment. PERCY DAVID, Character Singing Comedian. Offering hilarious comedy songs and chatter. CARL THORSON: "The Jestling Juggler." This act opened at the World's Fair in New York for a few weeks' engagement early in June. GUS MAURO: Very Clever Accordionist. A real treat for music lovers. PHYLLIS HENNE: well known Radio Singer offers the type of melodies everyone enjoys. Phyllis Henne will also accompany the artists at the piano. In a beautiful garden of roses, and twinkling lights, fancy coloured Booths will decorate the grounds, making a very charming sight. The ladies are very busy preparing for the event, and a great assortment of games for the evening will be taken care of by the men. Come and spend an enjoyable evening on Tuesday, July 4th. Admission: Adults 25¢, Children Free. The Lucky Draw Booth: 1st Prize, Handsome 50-piece Community Plate Service for eight persons in beautiful mahogany chest. 2nd Prize, 42-piece Tea Service "English China." 3rd Prize, Turnover Toaster. "Foursome" Tickets, 3 for 25¢. Prizes for the Lucky Draw are on display at Grammell's Men's Wear.

CWL REMINISCENCES

By Mrs. Josephine Callon



From left to right: Margaret Markey (Barringham), Nellie Hunt, and Mrs. L.V. Cote.

The Catholic Women's League of St. Andrew's was always a very important part of our family life as my mother and her mother were very active in the League, and were also charter members of this sub-division. It was during Bishop Dowling's time that the CWL was made the official women's organization in the Hamilton diocese, and in 1921 the first Diocesan Council was formed. In 1923, St. Andrew's sub-division was instituted with Mrs. Marie L. Taylor its first president. At that time the organization consisted of, perhaps, 15 zealous women banded together on moneymaking projects to help defray the expenses of the parish. They held euchre and bridge parties, afternoon teas, bake sales, Christmas bazaars and also assisted with the annual garden party.

I remember well the large boxes of fancy goods and dolls' clothes that my grandmother, Maria O'Donnell, worked on all year for the fancy table at the bazaar, which, like all the other social events, was held in the meeting room upstairs in the old St. Mary's school. When the bazaar was over, sewing resumed for the fancy table at the garden party. This was started by Father O'Reilly in 1895 and continued to be the major social event of the parish until 1953, an event also thoroughly enjoyed by the townspeople. The garden party was a joint effort of the men of the parish and the CWL.

The CWL also looked after needy families in the parish, not only with food baskets, but providing the necessary clothes for children making their First Holy Communion and Confirmation. During Lent small purple flannel "mite bags" were distributed to all families in the parish. These were placed on the dining room table with

contributions made at meal times. The money was subsequently collected and sent to the Missions. Among the other numerous duties performed by members of the League and the Altar Society was the care of the altars and altar linens, washing and ironing the purificators and corporals, as well as the priest's surplices and linens. No earth-shattering feats were performed by this small band of dedicated women during those years, but in their quiet unassuming way every effort was made to contribute to the support of their parish, their diocese, and their community.

In the 1920's the CWL met in the meeting room above the classroom in the old St. Mary's. On the days when meetings were held, a large brown enamel pipe was set up in the schoolroom over the one central register to direct the heat up into the meeting room. (The classroom would be freezing!) Because of declining numbers in the membership in the 1930's, meetings were often held in member's homes. But regardless of their small number, the League continued to contribute to their parish and to perform their duties as an active Council.

In 1932, a Junior Catholic Women's League was formed under the leadership of Mrs. L.V. Cote, the then current Diocesan president and a charter member of St. Andrew's sub-division. Both branches continued to operate in the middle and late 1930's and the 1940's, fulfilling all their obligations on the diocesan and provincial levels. During the war years, the League actively participated in the war effort, working at the Red Cross workrooms, rolling bandages, packing ditty bags, sewing and knitting. Parcels of foodstuffs, candy, and cigarettes, knitted socks and scarves and gloves were sent to the men overseas. Members also served as volunteers at the Drop-In Centre for the enlisted men stationed at Ortona Barracks. It was a busy time.



St. Andrew's CWL has for many years been extremely active on projects to raise money for the parish and for charitable causes. These activities have included bazaars, pot-luck suppers, dances, home-bake sales, bridge and euchre parties and rummage sales. A few highlights and sidelights give only a cursory outline of their achievements.

THE SCHOOL SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME OUR LADY OF LORETTO CONVENT

By Sister Joannette Paleczny

Early in 1956, Father James Kirby invited the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Waterdown, to St. Andrew's Parish, Oakville, to teach in St. Mary's school and live in the former priest's rectory at 53 Reynolds Street. On September 9, that same year, Sister M. Denise Ryan and Sister M. Marcella Reitzel began teaching at St. Mary's School. The priests' new rectory at 47 Reynolds Street was not yet completed, however, so the Sisters commuted daily from the Motherhouse in Waterdown to teach the 159 pupils. Four lay teachers completed the staff.



Completion of the new rectory on February 8, 1957, allowed the School Sisters of Notre Dame to make 53 Reynolds Street their home. When the new St. James School on Morden Road opened its doors in September 1958, Sister M. Laurentia Olinsky became the principal. This school was named for Rev. James Kirby, the former pastor of St. Andrew's Parish. The convent was redecorated by Rev. Vincent Priester in

the summer of 1958. Shortly after, Father Priester invited Cardinal J.C. McGuigan, Archbishop O'Sullivan of Kingston, Bishop J.F. Ryan of Hamilton, Bishop Allen of Toronto, and Msgr. O'Mara to visit the convent. In October 1961, an addition to the convent began, and was completed in February 1962. This provided six more bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor, a large chapel, sacristy and dining room on the first floor, and a library, laundry, fruit cellar and garage in the basement. Expansion in the schools was occurring rapidly, so that in September of 1961 it was necessary to open a new school in St. Dominic's Parish. St. Joseph's School on Warminster Avenue was staffed by Sisters Denise Ryan and Mary James Mikol. Likewise, in September 1964, Sisters Dorothea Pautler and Marita Schnurr opened St. Michael's School in North Oakville, and Sisters Adelaide Folick and Marie Michelle Stenpien joined St. Vincent's School staff who now had Sisters for the first time.

In 1975 a new ministry opened for the School Sisters of Notre Dame of St. Andrew's Parish. Sister Carmel Farwell came to set up the convent as a House of Prayer. Sister Adelaide Folick began adult education programmes in religion. Several school staffs held twilight retreats and directed weekend retreats here. Days of recollection for women of Oakville, Scripture prayer groups and CWL Holy Hours were all part of the House of Prayer ministry.

Sister Mary Joannette Paleczny joined the St. Andrew's community in January, 1977, to become a member of the St. Dominic's Pastoral Team to help with parish pastoral

work, and Sister Eleanor Olinsky, in September of 1978, as a pastoral worker at St. James Church.

In September, 1979, the convent became the Novitiate House for the School Sisters of Notre Dame and served as such for the Novices and their Sister Directresses for the next two years. During this time the Sisters also conducted the Scripture Journey Programme for groups who came to study Scripture.

By 1981 the convent was no longer a Novitiate house and Sisters Alix Begin, Sister Edwina Roberts, Sister Joannette Paleczny and Sister Marie Michelle Stenpien formed the SSND community of Oakville. Sister Alix visited the shut-ins of St. Andrew's parish each week, Sister Edwina ran the music and prayer programmes at the Extendicare Nursing Home, and Sister Marie Michelle continued leading prayer groups and volunteer groups at St. Vincent's and St. Michael's schools. Sister Joannette continued her parish ministry at St. Dominic's Church. 1983 returned Sister Eleanor Olinsky to the convent community to work as a pastoral minister at St. Joseph's Portuguese Parish. Mother Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, was beatified by Pope John Paul II on Sunday, November 17, 1985. A special Mass in honour of the newly beatified was celebrated in St. Andrew's Church and St. Dominic's Church on November 20, 1985.

Sister Jude Marie Sweeney, a member of the Lieutenant-Governor's Board of Review joined the SSND community in September of 1986. As a member of this Board, she, with the other members, each year reviews cases of members of institutions for the criminally insane of Ontario. The convent continued to be a guest house for Sisters for days of private retreat, days of recollection and relaxation. Many Sisters from various Religious Congregations, as well as SSND's from countries near and far, enjoyed the hospitality of Our Lady of Loretto Convent. The convent community expanded to eight Sisters in September of 1987. Sisters Clarice Missere and Zita Merkowsky now conduct the Hamilton Diocesan Catechetical Correspondence Course for children attending public schools in the parishes of St. Andrew's, St. Matthew's, St. Dominic's in Oakville, and also the Burlington parishes of St. John's, Holy Rosary, St. Patrick's, St. Gabriel's and St. Raphael's. To date the number of these students is well over 200. Sister Betty Lackenbauer worked as secretary to the health care unit at the Motherhouse, Waterdown, while Sister Lois Zettler was appointed Provincial Accountant at the Motherhouse. One of the most valued and appreciated members of the community is Sister Germaine Schneider, the convent homemaker.

In November 1987, huge wrecking hammers and balls, and heavy-duty trucks arrived on St. Mary's School property; old St. Mary's was marked for demolition. The building was condemned by the health department, so its use as a school or reconverted church hall was not feasible. Sister Mary Joannette watched the wrecking with a deep sense of history — an era of the School Sisters of Notre Dame's original reason for answering God's call to this parish was coming to an end. Sister Joannette chose carefully 22 red bricks from the building and lined them up along a convent

flowerbed as a tribute to all the Sisters who had taught in old St. Mary's.

All the Sisters assigned to Our Lady of Loretto Convent at St. Andrew's Parish to minister to God's people of Oakville are listed below.

SISTERS AT OAKVILLE

1956 M. Denise Ryan
M. Marcella Reitzel
1957 M. Fbntia Freiburger
M. Bertrand Mittelholtz
M. Laurentia Olinsky
1958 M. Claretta Zettel
1959 M. Louisita Dietrich
1961 Mary Grace Diebolt
M. Loyola Chamberlain
M. Teresa Prohammer
Mary James Mikol
1962 M. Caia Martin
M. Xavier Gilles
1963 M. Petranda Buckler
Mary Robert Farwell
Marita Schnurr
1964 • M. Aloysia Zimmer
M. Francesca Raleczny
M. Adelaide Folick
Marie Michelle Stenpien
M. Dorothea Pautler
1965 M. Paulette Tomlinson
1966 M. Clementine Baessler
1967 Kathleen Marie Pappert
Mary Dominic Mansfield
1968 M. Diane Ditner
1969 Mary Christopher
dishing
1970 Louis Marie Seifried
Catherine Boser
Doreen Lackenbauer

1971 M. Tarcisia Weber
1972 Valentia Leibel
1973 Marjorie Henderson
Mary Gerard
Schmidbauer
1974 M. Adelaide Folick
Irene Freeman
1975 M. Carmel Farwell
Rose Marcuzzi
M. Bernardine Zettler
1977 Bernice Kroetsch
M. Ruth Kuntz
M. Joannette Paleczny
1978 Eleanor Olinsky
M. Dorothea Pautler
1979 Delia Calis
M. Harriet Schnurr
1980 Valentia Leibel
Marie Michelle Stenpien
1981 M. Alix Begin
M. Edwina Roberts
1982 Eleanor Olinsky
1984 M. Salome Wallner
Bernice Kroetsch
1986 Jude Marie Sweeney
1987 Betty Lackenbauer
Zita Merkowsky
M. Clarice Missere
M. Germaine Schneider
M. Lois Zettler



CHRISTMAS HOUSE TOUR

By E.C. Farrell



In a season when frantic bustle is mislabeled merriment and the meaning of Christmas for many is lost in commercialism, the House Tour organized by women of St. Andrew's Church is an enjoyable trip into a more leisurely past. Oakville is a pleasant little town with wide streets and lots of trees. It has no pretensions to being a big city. It will never bid for the Olympic Games or Expo. But it does have a great deal of charm. People stop on the streets and chat with friends and neighbours. No one seems to be in a great hurry. The House Tour is held every two years in early December. The tour began in 1981 and was the brainchild of Eileen Stothers. She had read about a similar tour

in the United States and thought it could work in Oakville with its stately homes and history. Other CWL members agreed and women began to arrange the first tour.

It was a great success, so much so, that over the years, the work has grown too much for the CWL to handle, and other women from St. Andrew's have been recruited to help with the organizing. The 10-member committee, five of whom are interior decorators, begin their planning in June and hold regular meetings to decide on the final list of houses to be included in the tour. Different homes are chosen for each tour.

"We really spend quite a lot of time on the selection," said Mrs. Stothers. "We don't select only big houses, we prefer a variety, including bungalows, and split-levels. The last tour numbered nine houses; of course, people don't have to visit them all". The tour generally starts early in the morning and finishes in late afternoon. The tickets describe the special characteristics of each home. One may have the aura of an English manor with matching furniture and leaded windows. Another may have a Quebec ambience with lots of French-Canadian pine.

After a list of houses and a map identifying the streets is finally decided upon, the tickets are printed. Like a well-rehearsed team, which they are, since most of them have been active in each tour since 1981, the decorators and assistants, hostesses, lunchroom supervisors and treasurer transform planning into practicality. A church member is on hand at each house, where visitors are asked to take off their shoes before entering. They are then given a tour of the home. Refreshments are available at St. Vincent's School and generally consist of a lunch of substantial sandwiches, wine and coffee, served by husbands of the committee members. A Christmas boutique provides opportunities to buy Yuletide gifts. "It takes about two days to decorate a house," says Mrs. Stothers. "We ask the owners how they usually proceed and then we follow this pattern. There is a close co-operation. It involves a lot of

work, but we have a lot of fun and laughs as well, and the owners feel complimented that we have included their houses in our tour."

Apart from the aesthetic and convivial combination of holly, soft candlelight, antique furniture, family heirlooms and flickering firelight, the House Tour generates goodwill and community pride. More than 2,000 tickets were sold on the last tour, and proceeds are usually distributed between the CWL, St. Andrew's Church, the House Committee and some worthy institution. Funds from the 1987 tour were set aside to furnish a room at the new chronic care facility to be built by Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, while the most recent contribution is being used to train a guide dog at Canine Vision Canada. St. Andrew's Church, of course, is one of the foremost attractions of the tour, beautifully decorated, as always, for the festive occasion.

ST. ANDREWS CHOIR

by Mary Smithbower

When St. Andrew's church was built, 150 years ago, there was no money available for such things as a large pipe organ and a library of music. But singing there almost certainly was — hearty singing by the whole congregation, and probably every family had its own hymnbooks. But, as the parish grew and prospered, came changes.

A Casavant organ was purchased — probably at a cost of about \$10,000 — and the pastor's sister, Bridget O'Shaughnessy, was organist. There may have been others before her, but Miss Isobel McPherson — possibly the oldest parishioner — could only go back about 90 years: and the names could not be recalled in chronological order. She recalled Mr. and Mrs. Kilgour. Mr. Kilgour was organist, and Father Savage trained the choir. Then, while he discharged his priestly duties, Mrs. Kilgour conducted the singing. The Kilgours also sang in the Mendelssohn Choir in Toronto.

Frank Cornin conducted the choir when Mary Walters was organist. Another organist Miss McPherson recalled, was Lillian McCartney, whose daughter, Mary, had an exceptionally fine voice, trained by the well-known Toronto teacher, Nina Gale.

When Father Harris became pastor, he brought his housekeeper with him. She considered it to be part of the housekeeper's duty to play the organ. Furthermore, she was convinced that playing the organ did not require talent or training, merely determination. The results were, to say the least, odd, and membership in the choir dwindled. Fortunately for the choir, Father Harris's tenure was relatively brief, and when he left, so did his housekeeper. Another name that comes to mind is Corita Lamourette, who trained a children's choir. I think Mr. Coty trained the senior choir at this time. Ella McDermott Frid played for several years — apparently to everyone's pleasure — until the Casavant organ was replaced by the Walcker,

presently in the church. I have not been able to find out why this was done, but presumably finances were involved. The Walcker, though it has only eight stops and three couplers, has a very good tone, especially in a small church, but it does present problems to an organist schooled in the changes in tone colour available on a larger instrument. Tim Elia was the first graduate of St. Michael's Choir School to be hired as organist at St. Andrew's. By then, Vatican II had taken place, and the importance of choirs was diminished. Though Tim played every Sunday at all the Masses, a choir was only assembled for Christmas and Easter. He was a fine musician, but he and Father Flaherty did not see eye to eye, and when he, with his wife, took a year's leave of absence to tour Europe as a roving reporter, I was appointed to fill in for him. I proceeded in the same program, with a choir only at Christmas and Easter.

Then came the Isherwoods. Diana came up to me after Mass one day, and wanted to know why a parish the size of St. Andrew's had no choir. The upshot was that she volunteered her husband, Brian's services. Informing Brian was overlooked. Msgr. Harrigan in his customary role of a good executive, when he delegated authority, gave his whole-hearted support.

From a beginning with 10 voices, the choir flourished and eventually grew to about 30 members. There was a pleasing blend of good solo voices and musically supportive voices — the backbone of most choirs. The Christmas music that year was very beautiful and inspiring. Brian expanded the repertoire to include The Messiah, Seven Last Words, a Christmas pageant, Amahl and The Night Visitors, and a satisfying list of Mozart, Schubert and other challenging Masses. There was a good rapport, plus several social events — in other words, the choristers found it both fun, and stimulating. I bragged, with great assurance, that St. Andrew's Choir was the best in the diocese, with the possible exception of the Basilica. Good choirs attract good singers, which further improves the choir.

But age took its toll, and I felt that it was time for me to retire while my friends could still remember when I was a good organist.

Jerzy Cichocki — known as George — became the new organist, and Brian soon became a chorister, turning over the whole operation to George who has brought the choir along from its very high standard to outstanding. The repertoire has expanded too, from excellent classical to ultra modern. His broad musical education — beginning at St. Michael's Choir School, to Master's and Doctoral candidate at Yale, B.Ed., to name a few of his qualifications, — plus the wholehearted support of the then pastor. Father Ronald Hodara, has been of inestimable value to the parish. The choir has joined, with Our Lady of Sorrows, in Toronto, in presenting some excellent concerts of outstanding quality

Going back to Vatican II — and the decline in conventional church choirs — guitars were introduced, and the style of hymns changed from choral to folk-music style. Everybody became a composer, and some of the stuff produced ranged from mediocre to awful.

However, St. Andrew's, as usual, weathered the Storm. Father Hayes instituted a folk group, and immediately about 30 young singer-players enlisted. Later, when Father Hayes was moved, there was a lessening in enthusiasm, but with the leadership of Diane (Sorry, Diane, I was unable to learn your last name,) the Piggott girls, the Doirons, and others, the group survived. With the help of Jane and Susan Gooderham, the other folkenthusiasts, they are still a need for both the parish and for themselves, playing for the Saturday evening Mass, as well as a Mass on Christmas morning and Easter morning. Players from other parts, such as the U.S. and Ireland, have joined, and enriched the repertoire with music from their own countries.

Junior choirs were trained by Lillian McCartney, Miss Lanouette, Miss Ryan, Miss Eagen — known to all the parish as Mrs. Ev. Flaherty — and myself. I had some difficulty at first inspiring a love of singing in some of the group — choir practice took the place of recess. Finally, I had had it. I dismissed the choir — told them I was tired of the struggle. However, some of them refused to leave. One Gr. VI pupil queried, "Can't we have a MATURE choir?", and so we did. They were keen, and we only disbanded when St. Mary's School ceased to exist.



This picture, circa 1904, features teacher Mary Jane McDermott of St. Mary's school with her pupils. The pupils, not all of whom can be identified, include Lillian and Katie McCartney, Charles McDermott, Mary B. Hunt, Bill O'Connor, Irene Harker and Mary Hunt.

A TEACHER REMEMBERS

By Jean Hunt



As student, teacher and Guidance Consultant, my connections with both St. Mary's and St. Vincent's schools have spanned many years. In 1934 I entered Grade One at St. Mary's. Miss Eagen taught Grades 1-4 and Miss Ella Leavey taught Grades 5-8. There were two classrooms and two small rooms, one at each end of the hall. One of these was the teachers' room, the other the nurse's where we regularly lined up, and, to the count of 1-2-3-4, presented ourselves for inspection by Miss Jarvis, the public health nurse. Memories of those early school days include the smell of furniture oil and wax, the steaminess of our coats and mittens drying in the cloakroom, and the great honour of climbing on a chair, leaning out the window, and ringing the old brass handbell. On the first Thursday of each month we marched two-by-two over to the church for confessions. If we had forgotten to bring a hat, Kleenex, and even toilet tissue, was held in place with a bobby pin. Hats were mandatory for girls in those days.

On First Friday, after Mass, we were allowed to return home for breakfast. By the time we dawdled, classes often began after 11 o'clock. Once a week Father Brohman visited our classroom. We sat bolt upright in our seats with our hands behind our backs, praying he would not ask us a Catechism question. Woe betide the child who could not provide the word-for-word answer! Most of us were members of the children's choir and we sang at the First Friday Masses and for funerals. Our organist was Mrs. Walters, later replaced by Agnes Lopsinger. We sang in Latin, strictly by rote, and I still remember much of the Requiem Mass. I also recall one morning, when the sermon was especially long, carving the initials of my whole family into the choir loft railing, using the crucifix on my rosary. Every year we took part in the Christmas concert, which was held downstairs in the "auditorium." The practicing, the primping and preening before this great event still remain vivid. How huge that room looked when it was packed with parents and parishioners! How small it was when I returned years later!

In 1941 I graduated from St. Mary's, little realizing that I would return. In 1948 I was hired as a teacher, at a salary of \$1,200 per annum, to take my place at the head of that same Grades 1-4 classroom with 19 students. Ruth Gilmartin was the principal with 20 students in Grades 5-8. The school had not changed. There were no supplies and no money available. If a teacher wanted construction paper to make Halloween pumpkins, or stars to encourage children's efforts, she bought them with her own money. When, after two years, a raise in salary was not forthcoming, I knew I had to move on.

In 1961 I was hired to teach at St. Vincent's. The school was not ready in September, so I was once again back in St. Mary's, this time in the auditorium.

By now, many things had changed regarding education in the parish. St. Vincent's was a modern one-storey building. Supply cupboards were stacked with art and classroom materials. Children were well dressed and better fed. The bell was electric; the playground was large. Teachers' salaries were on a pay schedule with regular raises and we no longer bargained individually. Classrooms were crowded, with desks in straight rows. Larry Loftus was our principal, James Hogan our inspector. Forty-nine students in my Grade 7 class meant I spent long hours marking students' work and preparing report cards.

In 1966 I became Guidance Consultant for the Oakville Catholic School Board. St. Mary's and St. Vincent's were two of the schools where I made scheduled visits to counsel students re high school courses and to administer a testing program. In 1968, with amalgamation, my work took me to all the separate schools in Halton County. One evening I addressed St. Andrew's CWL to outline the Guidance program. Once again I was back in St. Mary's auditorium. The school had grown by this time and had six classrooms with Sister Adelaide as principal. In 1970 I was offered the principalship of St. Mary's, but this I refused, opting instead to go to St. Michael's, the latest addition (1964) to the parish. There I remained until 1976, when my long involvement with the parish schools ended. I believe I have spent more years in our schools than anyone in the parish. I have participated in their growth from a two-room school with very few pupils, to several schools with hundreds of students. It has been an interesting and rewarding experience.



*The June, 1934, First Communion class of St. Mary's.
Left to right: Connie Murphy, Marion
Languay, Phyllis Gramme//, Helen McDermott, Betty
Hunt, Evelyn Quinn, Beatrice Sullivan.
Boys: Maurice Mallon, the Battle Twins and Terence
Regan.*

LESSON FOR THE TEACHER

Franziska Schreiner-Farrell, who taught at St. Mary's and St. Vincent's schools for some 20 years, recalls a couple of incidents from those days. Picture a kindergarten child's painting, pink and mauve; a most beautiful interlacing of the colours, no smudging, overlap or drips.

Teacher: "My, that is beautiful. Tell me, what is it called?"

Pupil: "God."

Teacher: "God?" with perhaps a little too much emphasis on the question mark.

Pupil: rather firmly. "Don't you know that God is beautiful?"

There was a knock at the kindergarten room door of St. Vincent's school during the Advent period. There stood Msgr. Harrigan. Invited in, he asked if we had a nice large baby doll. The surprised children and teacher wondered why Monsignor wanted a doll, but quickly found him the nicest one they had.

Monsignor said, "Your doll is going to be the baby Jesus in the manger in front of the church. Sadly, the figure of the Christ Child had been stolen, and the doll was to be the replacement. For the children, the giving of their doll to be the Baby Jesus was an absolute delight.



Taken in 1910, this picture shows Father Shaughnessy with four pupils making their First Holy Communion

THE POLISH CATHOLIC MISSION

Michael Musiol

The Polish community in Oakville had its origins in 1945/46. After World War Two, many servicemen who had served with the Polish forces in the West did not wish to return to Poland which was then under Russian domination. A considerable number of those who were deported during the war to concentration and work camps in Germany, in addition to those who were deported to Russia and later escaped, also decided not to return. Many of these people emigrated to Canada.

The opening of the Ford Company and other industries in Oakville attracted many of these immigrants. By the mid-1950s the Polish community in Oakville was quite large, with the consequent need of a Polish priest. This resulted in a temporary arrangement with the Oblate Fathers in Toronto. One of these priests came to Oakville about three times a year for Christmas, Easter and special occasions. Generally, confessions took place in St. James Church with Mass celebrated in the

gymnasium of the adjacent school. Over the years the population of Polish origin steadily grew and the need for a regular religious service was apparent.

Oakville is in the Diocese of Hamilton, and in order to achieve a permanent solution, an agreement was sought with the Bishop of Hamilton. In July, 1975, the pastor of St. Stanislaus Church in Hamilton (a Polish parish) Father Joseph Capiga, C.R., was approached and asked if he could send a priest from his parish to Oakville each Sunday.

Shortly after, a petition bearing more than a hundred signatures, seeking to have Polish masses in Oakville, was presented to Father Capiga, who forwarded it to Bishop Reding. The accompanying issue was to find a church in Oakville where masses could be celebrated. In the Fall of 1975, the 10am Sunday Mass at St. Andrew's was cancelled. Father Capiga approached the pastor of St. Andrew's, Msgr. B.W. Harrigan, to enquire if a Polish Mass could be celebrated in lieu of the cancelled Mass. Msgr. Harrigan agreed, and the first Mass was celebrated in St. Andrew's December 21, 1975. Since then, our Masses have been celebrated at the same hour every Sunday and Holyday. In addition, we have other services in the church: in May the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary; during Lent the Way of the Cross; at Corpus Christi a celebration and exterior procession around the church; in October the recitation of the Holy Rosary. Religious family celebrations and services also take place in the church (baptisms, wedding anniversaries, funerals, etc.)

In our Polish Catholic Mission we have a copy of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa. This painting has a particular significance for our Mission, not only because of the subject, but also because the picture was painted by an artist of our Mission and donated by him as a thanksgiving for his liberation from a concentration camp after World War II. Additionally, this painting was blessed by the Holy Father John Paul II during his visit to the U.S. in October 1979. Father Capiga was in charge of the Mission until the spring of 1984, and was succeeded by Joseph Kamieniecki, C.R.