

New Town on Edge of Nowhere

(The Rochester mission described in the following article is Father Bernard Brown, currently home visiting his mother Mrs. Frank J. Brown of 315 Lake Front in Irondequoit. Here until July 1, Father Brown would be happy to tell his story to any parish group. He can be reached by calling FI 2-5058.)

About a thousand miles north of Edmonton over the Arctic Circle a new town is springing up on the edge of nowhere. It is completely isolated, no road to it, no water connection, no telephone or mail service. Planes on floats bring supplies landing on the lake. Dog teams follow a bush trail on the ground to Fort Good Hope over 100 miles south.

Ordinarily it takes a mineral or oil strike or some defense installation to make a town grow under such isolated conditions. But the community at Colville Lake, North West Territories, has none of these. It is simply growing on the age-old trapping profession. Marten are plentiful and the price of fur is good.

When Oblate Father Bernard Brown from Rochester arrived at Colville Lake in the summer of 1962 he was greeted by some two dozen Hare Skin Indians living in four moss-covered cabins.

He had brought five Aquinas graduates 1,300 miles down the Mackenzie River in a 22 ft. canoe along with his seven huskies. The 5 lay volunteers stayed until fall when the new 66 ft. long mission was built.

In the spring of 1963 the Oblate Missionary built a 28 ft. boat and spent that summer with the natives searching the 60 mile shore of Colville Lake for the biggest logs for the construction of a church.

The short summer was spent cutting these trees and rafting them back to the church site next to the Mission.

During the summer of 1964 the Church of Our Lady of the Snows was built over the permafrost with every native in the settlement helping their priest. Its 45 x 45-ft. dimensions make it the largest log structure now standing in the territories and its steeple can be seen for miles. Father Brown even

Painted a 7 x 8 foot Madonna of the Snows for the sanctuary.

While the Mission and Church were being built, other improvements went in as well. A 200 ft. dock was built out into the lake to unload aircraft. A tunnel and freezer-room were chipped 35 feet into the frozen ground to preserve fish and meat in summer.

Hearing of the activity at Colville Lake many of the natives who had left the area drifted back to help. Father Brown supervised the construction of a dozen new log cabins for them, while the old sod-roofed ones were torn down.

During this construction several parties of American fishermen flew in after hearing about the fabulous trout and grayling abounding in Colville Lake. They slept on the Mission floor.

This gave Father Brown another idea. Why not build a fishing lodge? It could provide summer work as guides. In May 1965 a large lodge with six bunks and a picture window was built on the far side of the church and it is hoped that many visiting fishermen will use it this summer. They will not only catch all the trout they want nearby but observe first hand one of the most isolated and unspoiled of Canada's Indian tribes.

Last summer a free trader built a new log trading post near the mission and Colville Lake settlement is self-sufficient with an air of permanency about it.

The Territorial Government has recognized its permanence to the tune of a ten thousand dollar grant for an all-weather 2,500 foot airstrip and another ten thousand for work on a winter road to Fort Good Hope.

With the population approaching the hundred mark, the chances of fatal accidents or sickness are rising, and without any level landing strip no aircraft can get in during the break-up and freeze-up period.

Routine medical work like delivering babies, sewing up cuts or extracting teeth are handled by Father Brown in the Mission Dispensary. More serious cases must be flown south to the hospital.

Father Brown's solution to the growing unemployment and unrest among Canada's northern natives is unique. Few share his belief that a living can still be made from trapping. The fact, however, that his community is debt-free and growing seems to indicate that northern people can still live off the land.

But to do this they must be living on the land. In recent years there has been a steady shift of the natives from the bush to the cities which are often starvation traps for a people used to living on fish and game. Consequently, vast areas of good hunting and trapping country have been abandoned. The results of those trying to hunt and trap close by the ports have been poor, mis-

leading some into thinking that the game is gone.

Father Brown believes the industry, especially mining, will eventually open up the north and that when it does northerners should be ready to staff this industry.

To ease the natives of the north through a difficult transition period in their history, he would like to see other satellite communities like Colville started up in remote areas, a pressure release for overcrowding in the mainline ports.

In the meantime, the all-log constructed "trapping" village continues to grow and prosper in spite of the fact that it is practically as primitive as was Fort Edmonton over a century ago.



"JUST OFF THE DOCK" says Father Bernard Brown of this mess of fish taken at his Colville Lake mission in the North West Territory. He's offering lodge space for fishermen there during July and August.



THIS IS A TROUT? They're not all as big as this 32-pounder being examined by two Indian youngsters at Colville Lake, but Father Bernard Brown says the fishing is remarkable.

Maryknoller, Fr. DeRitis Home from Peru Mission

On the outskirts of Arequipa, Peru, South America, some 8,000 feet above sea level in an arid-desert land you come upon a rise known as Cerro Colorado, the "Red Hill". There you will find Father Gilbert J. DeRitis, Maryknoll Missioner from St. Augustine's Parish, Rochester, busy working in his parish of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Twelve years ago, the Archbishop of Arequipa entrusted to Maryknoll a new district just outside the city. Father Albert Koenigsnecht, a veteran missioner was assigned to the new area which was a parish in name only. When Father arrived, he found a little abode house of three rooms, no water, no electricity, no plumbing. Rolling up his sleeves, Father Al moved in. Having no church, Father Al celebrated Mass in the public school patio next door.

The people, although traditionally Catholic, looked on this "foreigner" with suspicion. "We didn't ask you to come here," they told him. "When we want a priest, we will ask for one."

Despite the hostility and suspicion shown this "Gringo" Father Al worked hard and soon began a parochial school, the first in the history of the 425 year old Archdiocese.

Soon the people realized this "Gringo" had only their interests at heart and soon, one by one, they accepted him. With help from friends in the States, Father Al built the first parochial school. His friendly smile won over the people who told him he wasn't welcome. When he left for another assignment, the people wept. His planting of the seed made it easier for

those who followed to reap the harvest.

Upon arriving in Arequipa in January of 1964, Father DeRitis saw the need of continuing the parochial school system with the addition of a parochial high school. Borrowing money from friends, he started to build the high school—classroom by classroom. With a school debt of \$14,000, Father DeRitis is, nevertheless, planning to continue building more classrooms in January of 1967. When the school is completed, he plans to build a church to replace the existing basement church.

The people of the parish are poor but cooperate by working hard for the annual Parish Bazaar to help in the building of the parochial grade and high schools realizing that, some day, their children and their children's children will have a better opportunity because of the Catholic education they have received.

Father Al planted, Father Gil nourishes, and Father X, of the future will reap the harvest.

Father Gil has been on leave for the past few months visiting his mother, Mrs. Vincent DeRitis at 201 Rugby Avenue, and will soon return to Arequipa.

A benefit car party will be held for him on June 6 at 8 p.m. in St. Augustine's School Hall. Donation is \$1.00 Phone ID 63083.

25 Years Ago

(From Catholic Courier files, May 29, 1941)

Sacred Congregation of Rites directed that Feast of St. John Fisher, martyred Bishop of Rochester, be celebrated in this Diocese of Rochester in response to petition of Bishop Kearney. June 22 was designated by the Bishop for the observance.

Ground for the new St. Mary's Hospital building was broken by Bishop Kearney. Joseph P. Flynn, architect was to announce plans for the structure.

Nazareth Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes erected on Nazareth Academy grounds was blessed by Bishop Kearney in memory of Sister M. Marcella, former principal.

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LOOKING OVER a translation (English to German) of a brochure on Rochester, visiting mayor of Wurzburg, Germany, Dr. Helmuth Zimmerer at right, John Ortolani, president of Aquinas' German Club, left, and Father Robert Klem, moderator of the club, which did the translation as a project.

Students Welcome Mayor of German City

In a ceremony last week on the front lawn of Aquinas Institute the Rochester Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with Aquinas Institute and the Wurzburg-Rochester Committee, presented Dr. Helmuth Zimmerer, Mayor of Wurzburg, Germany, sister city of Rochester, a German translation of information and facts on Rochester.

Originally prepared in English by the Chamber's Public Relations Department, Aquinas students, under the direction of Father Robert J. Klem, C.S.B., translated into German general information on Rochester's history, description, industries, transportation, communications, education and culture.

Presentation of the brochure was made at Aquinas Institute by Worth D. Holder, executive vice president, Rochester Chamber of Commerce. Participating in the presentation were Father Leon G. Hart, C.S.B., principal of Aquinas; Frank T. Lamb, mayor of Rochester; and the Aquinas Institute Color Guard, which performed for Mayor Zimmerer and the Wurzburg guests.

Aquinas Institute students who translated the brochure are: Bob Albright, Jerry Duffy, Art Giacalone, Tom Heit, Ronnie Honig, Mark Killenbeck, Bob Klueber, Phil McNutt, Paul Millevich, John Ortolani, Walt Parchomienko, Joe Salipanti, Joe Sigafoos, Tom Stadumiller and Jim Vankerbave.

The brochures will be distributed to exchange students visiting the Rochester area as well as to other visitors to Rochester from Germany.

Catholic Units Set to March Memorial Day

Catholic units will march in the annual Memorial Day Parade, Monday, May 30 according to Grand Marshal Edward W. Schoenherr.

Line of march will be North-east on East Avenue from Portsmouth Terrace to East Main St. to east side Plymouth Ave. south to Broad St. to South Ave. The head of the column will move at 10:30 a.m.

The broadcasting will be by WSAY radio and WHEC-TV. Arrangements are being directed by Gordon P. Brown for WSAY and William J. Adams TV Program director for WHEC.

Veterans Memorial and Executive Council will be headed by Sam Colantoni, Catholic War Veterans.

In addition to the military, veterans and other units, the formation will include Nazareth Academy Band, Holy Cross Marching Band, Aquinas Institute prize-winning band, Catholic War Veterans and Auxiliary, Bishop Kearney High School Band, Streh-Lappan Klem Post will march with the American Legion units.

Doctrine Teachers Denver (NC)—Father Gerard S. Slayon of Catholic University, Washington, was elected president of the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine at the society's 12th annual meeting here.

Story of New York State in Drama

Eighth grade geography students at St. Monica's school recently offered a historical pageant on New York State to their parents, priests and teachers. The hour-long presentation was the climax of weeks of preparation by the members of Sister Margaret Louise class.



"WAY BACK WHEN" pageant at St. Monica's School included looking up a 1929-old Ford, as part of transportation study. In the picture are Fred Chidsey, at the wheel, David Wagner, Michael Wagner, Linda Bott, Candace Steele, Laurier Quinn and Gail Bott, all eighth-graders.

Future Nuns Invited to Motherhouse

Young women who will enter the Rochester-Sisters of Mercy in September 1966 and their parents were invited to visit the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Mercy on Sunday afternoon, May 15, so that some of the unnecessary and unreal "mystery" often surrounding entrance into religious life might be dispelled in an informative and open atmosphere.

Explanations and words of encouragement and understanding of the natural "fear of the unknown" involved, were made by Mother Mary Bride, Mother General, and Sister Norcen, Directress of Postulants, and comments were given by those responsible for the academic studies of the Postulants. All were then invited to visit those parts of the Motherhouse where the new Postulants will live, sleep, eat, study, pray and spend most of their Postulant days.

Bishop Named

Vatican City (NC)—Pope Paul VI has named Father Juan Flores Santana, rector of the minor seminary of the diocese of Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic, to be bishop of La Vega in that Caribbean island nation.

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