

# R-013

## Armstrong, Osceola Township Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin

### Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Parish Armstrong

Entered on computer by S. Connie Halbur, August, 2005

Of the following contents, only the news clipping and Mr. Reese's field notes are online. The other items must be viewed at CAHS, folder R-013.

**This folder contains:**

1. **News clipping: Old Documents Tell of Life in Early Osceola**
2. **Mr. Reese's field notes about**
  - **Osceola Township**
  - **Armstrong**
  - **Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Parish**
3. **Commemorative Booklet: HISTORY OF OUR LADY OF ANGELS PARISH, 1856-1981**
4. **Commemorative Booklet: OUR LADY OF ANGELS SCHOOL, 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, 1952-1977**

**THE NEWS CLIPPING: OLD DOCUMENTS TELL OF LIFE IN EARLY OSCEOLA (No date)**

GRANDDAUGHTER OF SETTLER NOW RESIDES ON FARM OF WILLIAM MITCHELL

-----

One of the earliest settlers of what is now the Town of Osceola was William Mitchell, grandfather of Mrs. James B. Welsh, Eden, Rt. 1.

He was born in Fifeshire, Scotland, in 1815, and traveled with his wife, Catherine Kirk Mitchell, and their daughter, Janette, from Racine to the Town of Osceola in 1846 with all of his family belongings in a wagon. Mitchell and his family came up through the southern part of the state by Indian trail because there were no roads in those early days. It was two years before Wisconsin officially became a state.

Mrs. Welsh possesses historic documents stating that her grandfather bought the 120 acres of land on which he settled at a receiver's office in Green Bay, June 7, 1847. He cleared enough of the land to build a home that was afterwards used for a granary when the permanent Mitchell homestead was erected in 1861. Still later the granary was used as a chicken house.

### **Wild Animals Menace**

The main tools Mitchell worked with in those early days were an axe, saw, grub-hoe, log chain breaking plow, hammer and nails, a cradle to cut grain, a flail to thresh it.

Pigs and other livestock had to be shut up in pens at night because of wild animals, and some of these early settlers bored holes in their doorways so that they could see whether noises outside were made by animals or travelers stopping at the pioneer homes.

During one particularly bad winter, the Mitchell family lived for three weeks on corn ground in an old-fashioned coffee mill and made corn bread or Johnny cake until roads could be traveled again.

Mitchell built the first frame barn in the Town of Osceola, and although additions have been made during the course of years the original structure is still standing.

The Mitchells had a family of five children, the oldest being Janette, 11, when Mrs. Mitchell died June 6, 1856. The youngest child was Catherine Kirk Mitchell, one day old when her father's sister, Helen Mitchell Braid, took her into her home and reared her. In 1869 a son, James, 20, died of typhoid fever, and his death brought such sorrow to his father that he continued to fail in health until he died on Christmas day, 1969, only 20 days after the death of his son.

### **Buried in Old Cemetery**

Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell and son, James, were buried in what is now the Mitchell Cemetery, a plot donated from his farm in those early days when there were no burial grounds available. Mitchell also gave another portion of his farm as a school grounds, and this site became the location of the first such building in the Town of Osceola. It was built in 1850 and the school and cemetery were both named in his memory in later years.

The Mitchell homestead has been in direct descent and occupancy from 1846 to the present time and is now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Welsh.

## **MR. REESE'S FIELD NOTES**

### **HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENT OF ARMSTRONG**

*[Mr. Reese appears to have begun this research, but was not able to complete it or to obtain specific items of information. The data was entered as Mr. Reese wrote, with the exception of obvious spelling errors.]*

Armstrong Grocery off the Triange, Trunk B, at Armstrong which the Gergen sisters are operating since early 1977 was the former Martin Gallagher Cheese factory which he started in \_\_\_\_\_ and sold in \_\_\_\_\_. The Triangle was called Carters corners in the early years.

Archer Armstrong – farmer, in Section 2 of the town of Osceola -  
*[remainder blank]*

Location of Armstrong Corners is on the northwest corner of County Trunk G and B and at the intersection of State highway 67 and was on the southeast corner of the NE ¼ of Section 2.

David Twohig purchased this farm which shows the store is still on the 1893 ATLAS OF FOND DU LAC COUNTY. Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Twohig are listed in the Fond du Lac County Illustrated history book. *[Possible reference to HISTORY OF FOND DU LAC COUNTY, WISCONSIN, published by Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1880].*

Thomas Cahill Store was established in the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 2, on land sold to Pool Bros., date of *[blank]* Frank salter operated the place of business a few years. Pool Bros took over and built dance hall and tavern operation addition. In 1940 the building was razed for the lumber that went into the church hall and kitchen at Our Lady of the Angels at Armstrong.

Adolph Blackmore – operated cheese factory on the southeast corner of County Trunk B and Vista Drive.

## **OUR LADY OF ANGELS CHURCH AT ARMSTRONG**

The parcel of land was deeded sometime in 1854 and by the 1862 Atlas the land was owned by Henry Graham.

Location: The Atlas reading gave the NW ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 2. The parcel of land was on the NE corner of this ¼. The Rev. Father Matthews served as the first priest and his name was used for the church. The church was a log edifice built in the spring of 1855.

The first burial in the church cemetery was John Greavy, age 30, in 1851. This record was taken from the Fond du Lac County Genealogical Society. The rest of the attending priests were from 1854 to 1869

Rev. Father Smith from Byron  
Rev. Father Colton from Fond du Lac  
Rev. Father Dole from Fond du Lac  
Rev. Father Willard from Fond du Lac  
Rev. Father Hannon from the Town of Forest [*“Dotyville” was written above “Forest”.*]

When the residing pastor came the name of the church was changed to Our Lady of Angels.

#### Listing of Priests

Rev. W. a. Croak – Dec. 1869 to April 24, 1870  
Rev. Frank Spath – May, 1871 to August, 1871  
Rev. G. J. Quin [*Guin?*] - Dec., 1871 to August, 1872  
Rev. H. Jacobs – Oct., 1872 to July, 1873  
Rev. Francis Bariffi – July, 1873 to October, 1877  
Father Bariffi established the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church at Dundee.  
Rev. E. D. Goss – Sept., 1877 to 1881  
Rev. C. H. Horan – June, 1881 to May, 1883  
Father Horan had the brick church built at a cost of \$7,000.  
Rev. Thomas F. O’Neil – May, 1883 to Dec., 1885  
Rev. Peter Bonifasies [*Bonifacius?*] – March, 1885 to April, 1885  
Rev. M. B. Morton – August, 1885 to August, 1889  
Rev. J. T. O’Leary – August, 1889 to June, 1893  
Rev. Charles Dreis – Nov., 1893 to March, 1894  
Rev. Edward J. Meyer – March, 1894 to July, 1894  
Rev. D. O. Donovan – July, 1894 to March, 1896  
The rectory burned to the ground during his stay.  
Rev. Edward J. Meyer – March, 1896 to August, 1896  
Rev. M.E. Downs – Aug., 1896 to Feb., 1903  
Rev. F. J. Webber – Feb., 1903 to July, 1903  
Rev. George Haeusler – July, 1903 to Nov., 1912  
Rev. Alois Kraus – Nov., 1912 to Oct., 1915  
Rev. John Gruenwald – Oct., 1915 to May, 1917  
Rev. Lew [*Leo*] J. Scheurell – May, 1917 to May, 1921  
Rev. John S. Haeusler – May, 1921 to April, 1923  
Rev. James J. Conway – April, 1923 to March, 1925  
Rev. C.C.H. Schmitz – March 25, 1925 to March, 1927

Rev. Charles Strahberger - March, 1927 to July, 1927  
Rev. Robert Overmohle – July, 1927 to February, 1928  
Rev. F.A. Finnegan – Feb., 1928 to March, 1931  
Rev. N. J. Fetko – March, 1931 to 1932  
Rev. Joseph Pierron – Sept, 1941 to Nov., 1948

*[Note: From here on, Mr. Reese writes the dates as 09-41-11-48. I have interpreted this as Sept., 1941 to Nov., 1948.]*

Rev. Thomas Trahey  
Rev. Gerald Brielmaier – July, 1953 to Sept., 1956  
Rev. Valery Schuster – Sept., 1956 to Jan., 1961  
Rev. Clarence Nickolai – Jan., 1961 to June, 1967  
Rev. Joseph Fischer – June, 1967 to July, 1980  
Rev. James Barta – July, 1980 - *[Here ends Mr. Reese's list.*

## **THE POOL BROS. STORE, TAVERN, AND DANCE HALL**

The land was purchased from James O'Connor and the brothers operated it until 1930. After that a few people operated it that lived in the area. The Church purchased the property in 1940 and hired two carpenters and with the help of the parishioners razed the building and built the present hall in 1941 and at the time Rev. Father Schuster came in 1957 the kitchen was built on the east end in 1958. In the fall of 1951 the school was completed and opened during the time of Father Trahey. The first two sisters were Fiaces [??? *Franciscans?*] Claire and Sister Morita. In 1952 the church burned out and was rebuilt in the present site. In 1980 the hall burned out and was rebuilt after many fund raising programs by the parish people.

I have not finished this area report because of the lack of cooperation of the people of this area.

Roderick J. Reese