

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Holy Cross Catholic School had its humble beginnings on the corner of Mortimer and McCurdy (now known as Inwood Avenue). In the archives, there is a 1925 document issued by the Township of East York for property taxes due on five acres at 371 Mortimer Avenue in the amount of \$291.60. This property, assessed at \$6000.00 was owned by Margaret Smith. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1926, Mr. A. E. Stocking of Todmorden signed an agreement to rent this parcel of property "to be used as a market garden at the sum of Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars per season." The last payment was to be made on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, 1926. The condition was made that if the property were to be sold, Mr. Stocking would be allowed proper time to remove any crop that was in the ground at the time of the termination of the lease.

In July of 1926, the Smiths, who owned the land, sold it to the Board of Trustees of the Roman Catholic Separate Schools for the City of Toronto for the sum of \$28,000 to be paid in \$7000 installments on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July in 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1930. Mr. Stocking's agreement with the Smiths was honoured and given an additional year (1927) in the amount of \$225.00 per year with the same proviso regarding the removal of his crops.



It is here that Holy Cross first opened its doors in September, 1928 as a one-class portable with 46 pupils. The actual street address was 380 Mortimer Avenue. The schoolhouse was run by two teachers, Miss Mary Murphy who was the first principal, and her fellow teacher, Miss Mary King. The first Mass of Holy Cross Parish was celebrated in that schoolhouse by Father Robert Miller on September 13, 1928.

In 1929, the Bell Telephone Company of Canada requested permission to allow the "erection of a pole and the placing of an anchor on the westerly limits of vacant land known as the Holy Cross Separate School Property." Well, it wasn't quite vacant!

By the end of the 1920's, it was becoming apparent that Holy Cross was a school in need of a building. However, not everyone was enthusiastic about the possible site for the future school. Father Miller arranged a meeting with the Board's Property Committee and according to the minutes of that meeting (April 20, 1931), Father Miller

"desired that the Board would sell its present property and purchase property on the north side of Cosburn Avenue, directly north of the present property. The property at the south end of the block in which the church is located seemed to the Committee to be very desirable, but Father Miller expressed a wish that the school would not be placed in the same block as his house."

While the little red schoolhouse was becoming filled, on May 13, 1932, the Smiths sold another piece of property to Mr. Alfred J. Cresswell

"having a frontage on the south side of Cosburn Avenue of 200 feet by a depth of 650 feet on the East side of St. Hubert Avenue, and 200 feet frontage on the North side of McCosh Avenue (now known as Memorial Park Avenue), forming a block of land of about 3 acres for the sum of \$16,500.00."

In 1936, the Sisters of the Dame came as teachers St. Ermelinda was the Sister St. Mary Alexander in 1939. Sister St. annals, that "Because of school did not re-open in Thanksgiving, October

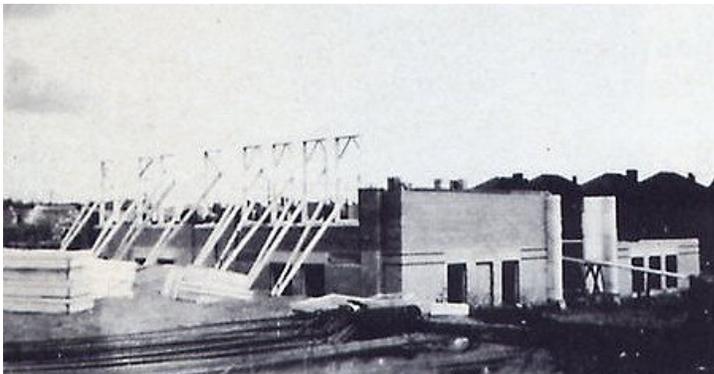


Congregation of Notre to Holy Cross School. Sister principal, and her assistant succeeded her as principal Ermelinda noted in her an epidemic of Poliomyelitis, 1937 until the day after 12."

The Board of Trustees of the Roman Catholic Separate Schools for the City of Toronto purchased a piece of property from the Township of East York in June of 1940. This particular piece of property had

"450 ft. frontage on Donlands Avenue to 100 ft. depth and a 450 ft. frontage on Lesmount Avenue to 115 ft. depth. The property extends from McCosh Ave to the boundary of the Church property."

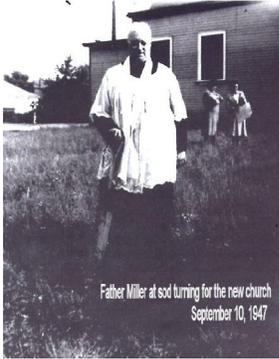
It would seem that Father Miller's wish regarding the site for the new building couldn't compete with the purchase price of the property.



In a copy of a letter to the Controller of Construction in Ottawa written by the Holy Cross Taxpayers' Association in June of 1943, it was already evident that a four-room schoolhouse wasn't going to be large enough for the growing population and the Association stated their concern. Ottawa did not change its restrictions.

The original one-storey brick schoolhouse, which used an estimated 55,000 bricks and 6,200 floor tiles, had its official opening on April 12, 1944. The building consisted of four classrooms, office and two cloakrooms; an auditorium and two teachers' lunch rooms were on the basement level.





It was also on September 10<sup>th</sup> of that year that the first sod was turned for the new Church and the corner stone was laid on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. On December 12<sup>th</sup> the newly built church was blessed and formally opened by His Eminence James Charles Cardinal McGuigan.

In 1947, the auditorium was converted into two classes to overcome crowding. A mere four years after the opening of the school, a letter dated May 28, 1948, was sent to Mr. John Walsh, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education for Ontario for an application for final approval for Legislative Grant purposes for a 4-room school addition as a second storey. The final approved tender designated the costs as follows:

General construction:	\$38,200.00
Plumbing and Heating	2,020.00
Electrical	750.00
Tile Floors and Dado	2,440.00
Hardware	850.00
Architect fees	2,625.00
Escalator clause	3,000.00
Furnishings & Fixtures	3,000.00

A bill issued by the Brantford Roofing Company charged the Toronto & Suburban Separate School Board \$260.00 for the cost of the roof on the new addition. The date of completion was expected to be September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1948.



The second-storey consisted of four classrooms, a lunchroom for the lay teachers, a nurse's office, a sewing room, and a sitting room. The two classes that had been in the auditorium were moved upstairs.

In 1949, a Kindergarten-primary class was begun. In February of 1950, a "modern" public address system replaced the "intercommunication radio and record player combination" at a cost of \$462.00

By 1954, enrolment had increased dramatically, and according to the Annals kept by the Sisters, "School re-opened with a great increase, especially in Grade 3. Sixty-five pupils are too many for one classroom. The question is where shall we put them.