

Father Hass'

Father Hass' runway is located a couple of hundred yards from the river; it's the last watch before the river on the Moriarty's Field chase. The story is that he was on this watch one day but was reading his breviary. When he looked up, a buck was standing a few yards away looking at him. He grabbed his gun and shot the buck. At that time he had a 4-wheel drive Land Rover, one that his lawyer-brother, Lornie had bought for him. James P. and Johnnie Sullivan took up the task of cleaning the deer and Fr Hass walked out and brought his Land Rover in over this old logging road. After they had the deer loaded, he reached behind the seat and pulled out a bottle of rye whiskey to toast the occasion with the lads.

Father Michael Hass served as the parish priest of St Francis de Sales Parish in Latchford Bridge for two periods of time, from 1947 – 1954, and again from 1957 – 1969. Like many of the parish priests from those days he hunted with the gang and even, on occasion, stayed overnight with them in the hunt camp. It was on May 7, 1947 when he saw his new residence that was to be his home, the corner of the sacristy, portioned off to contain a bed and a few coat hooks. The following year he organized the volunteer labour force of the parish and began constructing a new rectory. With only about 35 families in the parish, mostly from farms, there was little money to spare for a contractor. A retired carpenter and a long time friend of his, William Rousselle, came from Renfrew and helped for almost a month. Ed Marquardt of Combermere volunteered a lot of his time too. The annual summer picnic and autumn chicken supper helped to pay for the rectory, to repair the leaking church roof and even to purchase a used Delco plant that provided electricity until Ontario Hydro arrived in the early 50's. Parishioners held a warm place for Fr. Hass in their hearts as the new rectory and many improvements in the parish would not have been possible without his skills in carpentry, plumbing, electrical work and community building.

Father Hass once recollected that "a personal cherished memory is of the annual hunting season holiday on the banks of the Madawaska River with members of the parish."¹

¹ Information for this article was taken from "*The 100th Anniversary Booklet*" produced by The Centennial Committee of St Francis de Sales Parish, 2003.