



HEARST UNIVERSITY
HEARST*KAPUSKASING*TIMMINS

View of the road after its renovation in 1999

Hist3276F history of north Ontario

Village (Lost Town)
Disparue

Coppell

YESTERDAY
to
TODAY

- *Parish
- *Schools
- *Store
- *And More

**Tragedy of the
Payeur Family in
1929**

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Lost but not forgotten

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE TOWN OF

COPPELL

Origin of the town name

The town name "Coppell" was written "Qu'opel" because of the many dialects present over the course of the years.

The town grew tranquilly with the arrival of different villagers around 1910.

Many nationalities have lived in Coppell since its start like Fins, Germans, English, Yugoslavians, and Canadians.



Coppell was founded by the gathering of logging families who logged along the railroad line.

The town of Coppell in the winter of 1935

Fertile land for young families

The reasons that pushed the families to establish themselves in Coppell during the 1920's varies, but the most common was the lack of land to which young people of Québec were facing and so, they hoped to obtain it in North Ontario to properly start their family. The promise of fertile land, level, and without large rocks that the government promised in the Canadian Belt was too attractive to let go by.

**57 Québec immigrants in
Coppell, Ontario**
The land is offered to them by the
Toronto government



Article in the journal *The Right* dated May 18, 1949, that testifies to the immigration of numerous families to the east of Québec towards our regions.

At its peak, Coppell and its surroundings counted between 500 and 600 people. It should be noted that at that time, families often had 10 or more children. Also, it is difficult to determine with exactitude the number of inhabitants of Coppell, because at that time, there wasn't a census in the small towns.



Sister Marie Angélique and Sister Annette Laflamme (daughter of Alfred Laflamme) near the church of Coppell.

The Statue of Saint Elizabeth of Hungry

The reason why the saint was chosen to represent the parish of Coppell was because an early resident of Hearst named Nérée Lemay truly believed in her. After having successfully insisted, a statue of this saint was installed in the church.

The Parish of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary

The first building that was the home of the church of Coppell was constructed in 1946, thanks to the help of the residents of the town and under the direction of the abbot Corriveau. It was blessed on December 8th, 1946 by Monseigneur Léon G. Landry.

On the other hand, the first mass in the parish was said on October 19, 1924 by Father Pierre Grenier of Jogues, who was a priest at that time in the neighboring town.

The building was later sold to the Episcopal corporation of the diocese of Hearst. The last celebration of the Eucharist in the church of Coppell took place in December 1970, 45 years after its opening.

During all of the active years, the parish of Coppell was home to a total of eleven priests:

1925- J. V. Legendre
 1926- Théophile Roy
 1932- Eugène Descombes
 1939- Edgar Bissonnette
 1942- Alphonse Corriveau
 1947- Albert Millette
 1952- J. M. SAuvé
 1954- Émile Lafrance
 1956- J. A. Tardif
 1956- Louis J. Boucher
 1961- Jean-Marc Pelletier

The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame of Montréal

In 1950, after receiving a request from the abbot of Millette, the sisters of the congregation of Notre Dame of Montréal decided to establish themselves in Coppel. With their arrival, there was the construction of a convent and the creation of the 11th and 12th grade classes. The nuns also occupied themselves with teaching the primary levels. Finally, the convent closed its doors ten years later because of the decline of the population of Coppel. The covenant was also sold to the episcopal corporation of the diocese of Hearst.



The first church and school of Coppel before being ravaged by flames on January 22, 1934



The presbytery and chapel of Coppel in 1934. It was a garage that was transformed into a church. It's there that René, Joseph, Marie-Paule and Marie-Laure made their first communion and their confirmation.

Coppel had two cemeteries. The first dated to 1928. It served to bury the children of the Payeur family who died in a house fire. That cemetery was later transferred to the current location, at the bottom of Charbonneau Way.

In 2001, many people decided to move members of their family that had been buried in Coppel to Hearst, so that they could be closer to them but also be in an existing parish.



The restive mare belonging to Joseph, carrying on its back Laurent Payeur, son of Uncle Ovila, as well as his little nephew, the son of Laurette Payeur-Bernatchez. They were on a visit to Coppel. The Coppel schoolhouse is in the background.



A photo taken at the very beginning of the colonization of the parish of St. Elizabeth o Coppel. In front of the school church you can see Romeo Champagne with his pupils.

The School of Coppel

The priority for the schools:
the utilization of French

The town of Coppel had two schools. The first was situated on Route 583. One of the teachers was named Rita Levesque and the other carried the name Décloué. These two women came from Québec and did not accept the usage of English in the establishment.

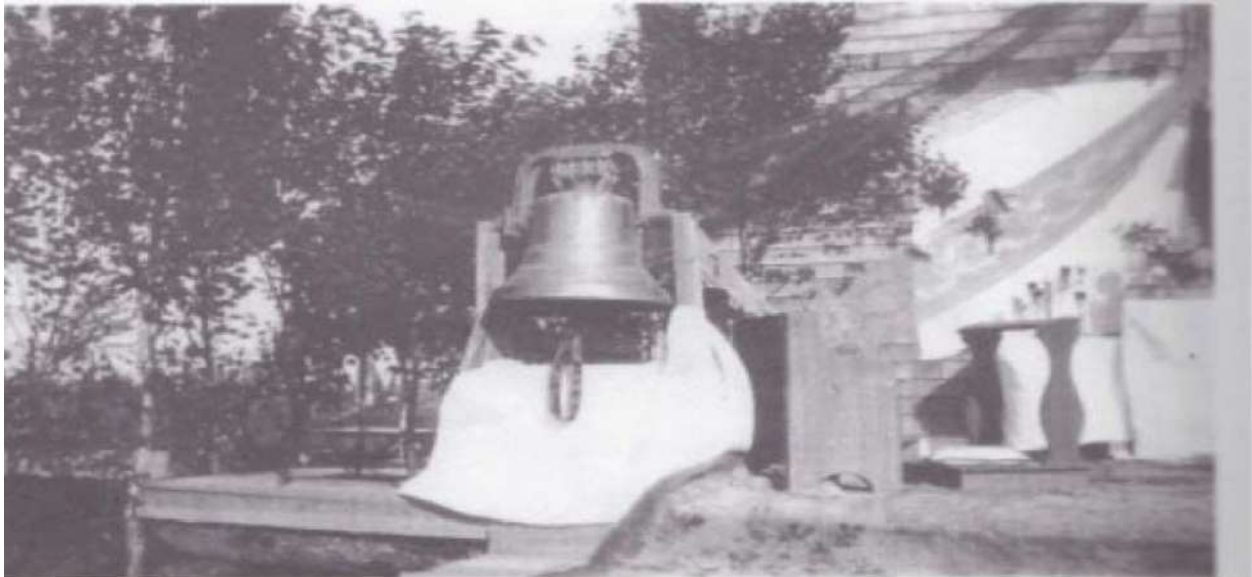
The building that housed that school still exists. After its closure, the lessons were given in the church, and that continued a few years, before proceeding to new construction.



The abbot Albert Millet and Monseigneur Landry at the school Marguerite-Bourgeois at the town of Coppel.

The construction of the second school of Coppel started July 26th, 1923, thanks to Monseigneur J. Hallé. It was completed August 10th, 1923, in time for the new school year. The first instructor was named Marguerite Laflamme and the second, Émilienne Girard. The church and school of Coppel were constructed at the same site and were connected.

Unfortunately, the two burned on January 22nd, 1934, as it often happened with (wood) buildings of that time. The following spring, again with the help of the inhabitants of Coppel, a new church and another school saw a new day, separately. The school, however, closed its doors during the 1960's.



La cloche le jour de la cérémonie.



Debuted in the 1920s. This picture and the other two following on the next page are those of the blessing of the Coppell bell.

The bell during the day of the ceremony.

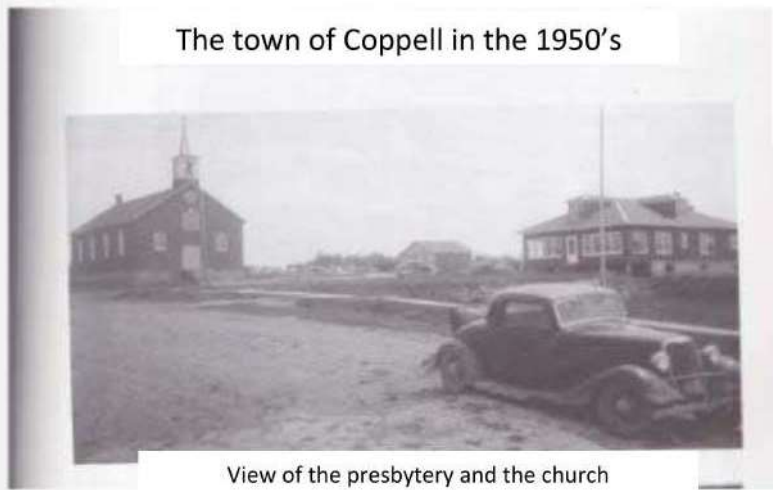


La grotte à l'arrière du couvent.

The grotto behind Coppell church



The presbytery of Coppell and the convent of the sisters of the congregation of Notre Dame.



View of the presbytery and the church



The first presbytery of Coppell that was moved to George Road in Hearst.



Services Offered In The Community

The town of Coppell around 1945

Although the shops that served the village of Coppell no longer exist, their services will forever be appreciated by the former inhabitants.

1 Laflamme General Store

This store belonged to the Laflamme family. It was in service the longest of all of Coppell's stores. The villagers bought food, linen and merchandise to work the land as well as products used by farmers of the region. There was a loyalty program where after the purchase of a number of products, the next was free.

The store was located in the middle of town. The building is still standing but it has become a residence.

The reason for its closure was the falling population and access to the town of Hearst.



The Laflamme Inn for the people who were disembarking from the train. The general store and the post office were in the same building in the years 1930 – 1940.

2

Gosselin Hardware Store

This store was owned by the Gosselin family and construction products were found there like hammers, screws and nails. It was located very close to the Laflamme General Store.

3

Cement Block Factory

Due to the distance between Coppell and Hearst, it was not always easy to procure heavy products, thus a cement block factory was opened in Coppell named "Brisebois."

4

Second General Store

Very little information is available on this store and even the name remains a mystery.

It sold products very similar to the two other stores in the town, like linen, food and construction materials.

The opening and closing dates are both unknown as well as its name.



La station de chemin de fer du village de Coppell.

The Coppell Train Station

The Payeur Family Tragedy



The morning of September 13th, 1928, the town of Coppel was the victim of a terrible fire where six children of Mr. Trefflé Payeur died. By grasping courage, Mr. Payeur repeatedly attempted to brave the flames to rescue his children trapped in the house that was doomed. Irène Payeur was 11 years and 4 months old; Rolland was 9 years and 3 months; Paul was 7 years and 4 months; Lucille was 5 years and 10 months; René was 4 years and 4 months and Philbert was 2 years and 8 months old.

Facts About Coppell

The little town of Coppell never had a mayor, but at one time there was a group of citizens named the "Statue of Labor" that consisted of citizens of Coppell, notably Edmond Groleau and Mr. Laflamme, who took care of public maintenance and all the little details concerning the town. One of the efforts realized by the group was construction of the route to go to Lake Coppell. It was completed in 1968 with the help of the tractors of Mr. Dillon of the town of Jogues.

The group met with the Minister of Natural Resources, who at that time was Renée Brunelle. He refused to allow any cottages on Lake Coppell. Only hunting camps could be set up there, and the government would not spend money on the road. He even prohibited the committee from opening one. Despite everything, a first chalet was built. It belonged to the Payeurs. They weren't discouraged, and to avoid going against the orders of Renée Brunelle, they organized festivals among friends. Also, they needed wood for their fires and after several of these festivals, they figured out that they had returned to Lake Coppell. Subsequently, a committee of citizens took up the matter and raised funds to support the needs of the town.

The committee is responsible for the organization of the Coppell Carnival, which was held at Lake Coppell. During this event, ski mobile courses were organized and maple taffy was offered to all the citizens. The people of Hearst participated often in the carnival that took place each winter between 1969 and 1975.



Near the fire tower, part of the Northern Paper Mill and a few houses where the owners of the company lived.

An astonishing rumor that often comes up with research concerns Highway 11. According to the original plan, it went to Coppell, behind Newago (lumber mill), but after the Gerladton mines were discovered, it was built further north.



Left to right: Trefflé, Aunt Emma, Marie-Anna, Uncle Alyre St-Hilaire and in front, Aunt Yvonne. In front of the road side cross in 1944 – 1945.



A beautiful harvest of hay in Coppell in the 1930's.



The Coppell fire tower.

With the advancement of technology and the ability to clear the woods, the town of Coppell obtained its first road in 1910, but the roadway remained gravel until the 1960s. Of course, there was a wooden (plank) road to get there, but it was difficult to access. It was repaired several times to reduce the accidents like the tragedy of April 23, 1949.

Electricity arrived in Coppell in 1951 – 1952, and a little later, the telephone lines were next. Before that, the only way to communicate was by private lines of the Algoma Central Railroad.

Other interesting facts - Due to the intensive logging that took place in Coppell during the 1950's, the rocks surrounding the village became veritable land of blueberries. During the years 1955 - 1965, it was even named "the Klondike of the blueberry." People came from as far away as Kapuskasing to pick them!

The town of Copell was recognized as having a very strong sense of volunteer work and each year, for several years, this group of people met and raised a farm for a family such as the Groleaus, Camirés, and Deroschers.