



Monk's Walk: A quick stroll down memory lane with De La Salle college

By Jacqueline Stuart

In May of 1916 De La Salle College opened near the north-west corner of Yonge Street and Bloomington Road.

It was operated by the Christian Brothers of De La Salle, an order with a commitment to serving the world through education.

At the Aurora college, boys and young men could complete high school and then receive the necessary training to go on to become provincially qualified teachers, and members of the brotherhood.

The main building provided the classrooms and other requirements of a residential educational institution. A separate structure included the manual training room, a laundry, and served as the power house.

De La Salle stood on 115 acres (over 46 hectares) of land. Much of the sizeable space not occupied by the main buildings served as farm land; as well as supplying food for the school, there were often advertisements of livestock for sale in the local papers.

Attractive gardens were visible from Yonge Street. There was a small burial ground: the remains of the Brothers buried there were later removed to other cemeteries.

And there was space for recreational or meditative walking.

Many years later the archivist for the Christian Brothers in Toronto spoke to some older colleagues who had been at De La Salle in Aurora. They told him ? and he told the writer of this note ? that the path which we now know as the Monks' Walk was known to them as ?the lane.?

In 1949, it was announced that the Christian Brothers were going to leave Aurora and move to an estate which had been left to them in Toronto.

The Aurora site was purchased by the provincial government for use as an ?Ontario hospital? which would care for boys with mental health or developmental issues. In later years only those with developmental issues were served, and in 1974 the name ?Pine Ridge? was adopted for the institution.

Pine Ridge was closed in 1984 and the main building was adapted for use by several provincial government departments, a purpose which it still serves today.

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