

POGLESE, Joseph. Mackinac County. October 9, 1982. Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. #89-A.

[This interview has been transcribed in edited form because Mr. Poglese tended to ramble through the interview and the various parts had to be placed in order. Although Joseph Poglese lives in Sault Ste. Marie he was relating his story in Mackinac County where his father had settled].

Michael Poglese (b- February, 1855) came to the United States in 1885 and arrived at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. In Italy he had problems with his brother and the two could not get along. His brother had him carry manure from the barn on his head for 12¢ per day. At the Soo he heard from an Italian that there was land to be homesteaded to the south of the Lock City. He proceeded to walk directly south stopping midway and staying with some people on the road.

Once in arrived in the Hessel-Cedarville area he obtained the farm which consisted of 160 acres well wooded. At the time he was a single man. There were two or three Italian families already settled in the area. Poglese proceeded to constructed a rude shack He worked hard to clear the land and establish the farm. He got two calves and built a brush shelter for them. Once when he left for supplies someone burned him out [it is not clear in the interview if he was burned out by the other Italians or Americans]. In response to this act of arson he said "I was given the property and I am going to keep it if I live or die." Poglese was obviously a tenacious individual and stayed. He planted some gardens and sold the vegetables to people in Cedarville-Hessel. At the time there were only trails leading into the towns. As he prospered he built he built a more substantial log structure as his home, additional shanties for his animals and a larger storage barn for hay and grain.

Poglese married Carmela (b- July, 1871) in 1893 and then he sent for her to join him in Mackinac County. [This aspect of the story is bnot clear]. Their first son was born in 1893 and Joseph was born in 1896.

On the farm additional money was made by cutting wood, they grew potatoes and had apple trees. Poglese would carry 100 lbs of flour to his farm from Pickford on his back. Itlains in the area included: Romeo, Peter Sauri. Marchello Bouglese was his motgher's uncle. or brother. The plow was made of wood and horses were used to pull it. They bought a pregnant mare and during a old winter the animal died but the colt lied which they kept for 17 years until it died in 1909. They also had a cow. The obtaiend milk from the neighbors in order to eed the little colt. There were Italians living in the area but they were scatttered as they were living on farms. North of Hessel there is the Italian Cemetery which is still in use and some of the stones are carved in Italian.

Joseph Poglese got into farming. He had the first mechanical thresher in Mackinac County and he would go from farm to farm threshing. He also made money by pitching hay. However he eventually went to Sault Ste. Marie and worked at the Union Carbide Plant at 45¢ per hour. He also found employment working on sewer and water lines and by the 1920's he had his own excavating company. During World War II he had two trucks working on the MacArthur Lock that was ruished to completion. In 1946

he purchased a mechanical shovel. Prior to this time all of the digging was done by hand with shovels.

On the farm they made sausage and kept the animals for their own use. They developed a wood business. They would contract to provide the Cedarville schools with wood. Usually they laid in a year's supply of wood.

Michael Poglese died in 1932/1933 and is buried in Sault Ste. Marie.

[Poglese who was in ill health when this tape was made died along with his wife within a year or so of the interview]