



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**STONE CUTTERS:** Pictured from left are Michael Belmonte (1869-1919), John Melfi, Tom Vincelli, Joe Melfi (1868-1962), James C. Vincelli, the boy (1885-1942), and Pasquale DeMarco (1871-1918).

## Quarrying brought growth to Murray

BY C.W. LATTIN  
Orleans County historian

Located in front of the Town of Murray highway-office building on Route 31 is a historic marker. It notes "Quarry Region" and states the following: "Medina sandstone area, where English, Irish and Italian immigrants brought growth to Murray by their expert artistic trade of quarrying."

Surely Brockville, Hulberton, Fancher and Holley all increased in size because of the sandstone industry in the latter half of the 19th century.

Although the marker is correct, I might list the various groups in this order: Irish, English, Polish and Italian.

In Albion, the Polish immigrants were a definite factor, as expressed by the establishment of St. Mary's Assumption Church.

By listing the groups in the above order, it helps denote which one came first and which came last.

In the mid-19th century, the first group of any great influence to the quarries was the Irish. This immigration coincided with the Irish potato famine. As this group improved its status it went

on to other work, and so it went with the other immigrant groups to follow.

Our photo shows some very proud Italian stone cutters and a boy. This picture was taken in 1898 by a professional photographer. Obviously, the suits of clothes and the chairs unmistakably date this picture.

However, looking at the faces and hairstyles, these handsome gentlemen could easily fit in today. The boy even has a contemporary buzz cut, which goes to show what goes around comes around.