

PASCOE, Vinnie

Slightly ahead of his time



Vinnie Pascoe and his '29 Chevrolet in Melrose, 1939.

Stell
Remember when
Sunday Sept. 13, 1992

dren who stayed in the area. houses on his farm and just be- rose is a second sign added by
As a result, Pascoe has four low the sign that reads Mel- himself. It reads Pascoeville.

Pick your own idea really caught on big at Vinnie's berry patch

When Vinnie Pascoe pulled up to the Melrose Cheese Factory in his 1929 Chevrolet truck, the other farmers taking milk to the plant stopped in their tracks.

The truck was nearly 10 years old but it was better than the horses and wagons the rest of them were still using.

It wasn't the only time Pascoe was first and, like using the truck, his other idea caught on.



Pascoe took milk to the cheese factory and vegetables to the Shannonville Canning Co. in the late 1930s before becoming a full-time farmer in the early '40s.

Part of his crop included one-half acre of strawberries and one-half acre of raspberries.

John Weese, who owned the Shannonville Canning Co., drove his pick-up truck to Pascoe's field and loaded it with berries. He often had to wait for Pascoe's hired help to finish picking them.

When Pascoe planted three acres of raspberries in the early 1950s he wasn't able to hire enough help to pick them. Unable to keep the up-and-coming Weese waiting around

all day, he had to devise some method of getting his crop picked faster.

"I was just lying in bed one night and I got this brainwave, 'I'm gonna advertise in the Belleville paper, Come and Pick You're Own,'" he says.

The next day he did just that and the response was overwhelming. The day after the advertisement ran, Pascoe had 75-to 100 people at his door. People came from Prince Edward County, Napanee and even Marmora.

Pascoe says that in the early '50s almost nobody in Prince Edward County grew strawberries or raspberries. "Everybody grew tomatoes," he says. Pascoe grew 10 acres of tomatoes. Strawberries and raspberries, "weren't here to get."

Before long he had to turn people away because the patches were being picked clean. The health of the crop might have aided in its depletion. Pascoe took his neighbor, Reg Fox, through the field that year and says the berries were

"as big as quarters." He sold them for 25 cents a box.

Obviously Pascoe's idea caught on quickly, although he can't remember who was next to advertise 'pick your own.'

Pascoe took a job with Corby Distilleries Ltd. in 1956 but continued to work a small farm. Today he lives on that farm and has given an acre of land to three of his five chil-