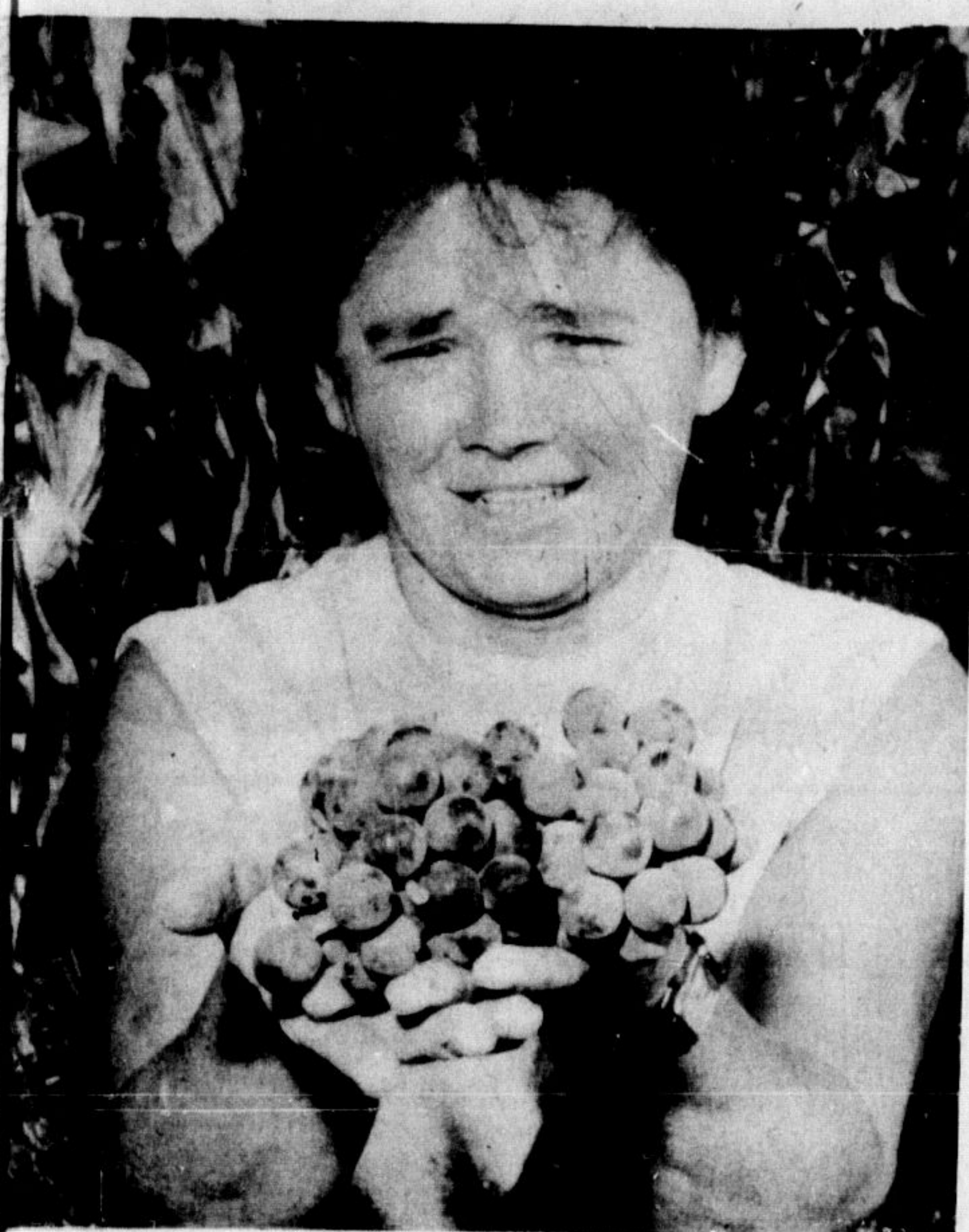


Abandoned vineyard revived

Pick-your-own grape operation

Story and photos
By Janet Braida



PERFECT CLUSTER OF GRAPES to be shipped to market held by Mrs. Stroz. The family has worked together to store an "abandoned" vineyard behind their farm home.

From abandoned vineyard to abundant harvest is the story behind the pick-your-own-grape farm operated by Mr. and Mrs. J. Stroz and family at 7126 Guelph Line in north Burlington. Relatively new residents to country life and this area, the Stroz are "city folk working on a do-it-yourself, learn-as-you-go basis."

"Really we live a rather dull, day to day routine," Mrs. Stroz explained. "Yet it's new and exciting to us. We were city folk interested in nature and conservation, two everyday happenings that just couldn't be found in Etobicoke. We tried to get our children interested in nature as well and we find home much more satisfying here," she added.

Surprise find
So the Stroz family moved to the north Burlington area "and looked all over" before they finally settled at their Guelph Line home. "It was really a new venture to us, taking over a farm," she continued. "We rent the land from local people and by chance one day found an abandoned vineyard at the back of our property."

And thus the operation began from the humblest of starts. The vineyard, after gentle care through the fall, winter and early

spring, has developed into one of the most productive vineyards in the surrounding area. "And the new venture is really working out well," she added.

A printer by trade, Jim Stroz travels back and forth from his part-time job in Toronto, and when he's not at work he helps his wife with the regular chores on the farm. The vineyard had been established years ago by residents of the farm but since the Stroz had taken over, had not been developed to produce a crop. The Stroz rent the vineyard as well as the farm.

Careful preparation
The care of the vineyard is the most important factor towards producing an abundant crop, she explained. "I tied thousands of knots to bind the vines to the wire fencing this spring."

In winter the vines have to be pruned to perfection and come early spring, all the vines have to be tied with cord to prevent drooping. "Then comes the discing and spraying for bugs and mildew," she said. "And if it's not the bugs and mildew we have to worry about, it's the pesky birds."

Several superb clusters of grapes along the vines have been mutilated by birds, she explained. "The birds are our worst problem and do the most damage."

At harvest time the Stroz family has to push hard as "there is never enough harvest time. It reminds me of picking grapes in the old country," Mrs. Stroz added, starry eyed. "We used to have real stamping bees. The youngsters would pick the grapes and people would come for miles around to help with the harvest," she recalled.

Family chore
At harvest time the entire family gets together to pick as many baskets of grapes as possible to sell to area markets. "We try to pick fast to prevent spoilage," she noted.

Several varieties of grapes are grown on the Stroz farm, including the ever popular varieties of fredonia, Niagara white, patricia, roger's red and concord. The grape season is September to mid-October or until the first frost spoils the crop.

Many European people visiting relatives in Canada visit the Stroz farm for an ideal look at the ever-popular grape harvest. "Several come from the city just to enjoy an afternoon's outing," she explained.

Takes 20 minutes
The pick-your-own concept applies to the price and grade of the grapes at the farm. First grade grapes are 75 cents for a six quart basket, picked by the client himself. These same top quality grapes (pick your own) are \$3 per bushel. Any grapes remaining are sold for \$2 per bushel, pick your own. "It takes

almost 20 minutes to pick a bushel of grapes," Mrs. Stroz explained. "Those more expert could pick a bushel in 12 to 15 minutes."

Grapes are plentiful during the first prime picking, but the seconds are sparse among the vines. The grape harvest is brought in from the field on the back of a flat wagon pulled by the tractor, she explained.

"I'm terribly rushed during harvest time and don't have much time to spare," she noted. "I supply a friend of mine with the grapes and she makes grape jelly for me. Many people visit the farm to pick grapes for either preserving or for making wine".

Lots of visitors
How has the operation worked out for the family to date? "We got a slow start but were really pleased with the success. We like people to come in and visit and this summer there's barely been a quiet weekend. Everything has worked out quite well," she concluded.

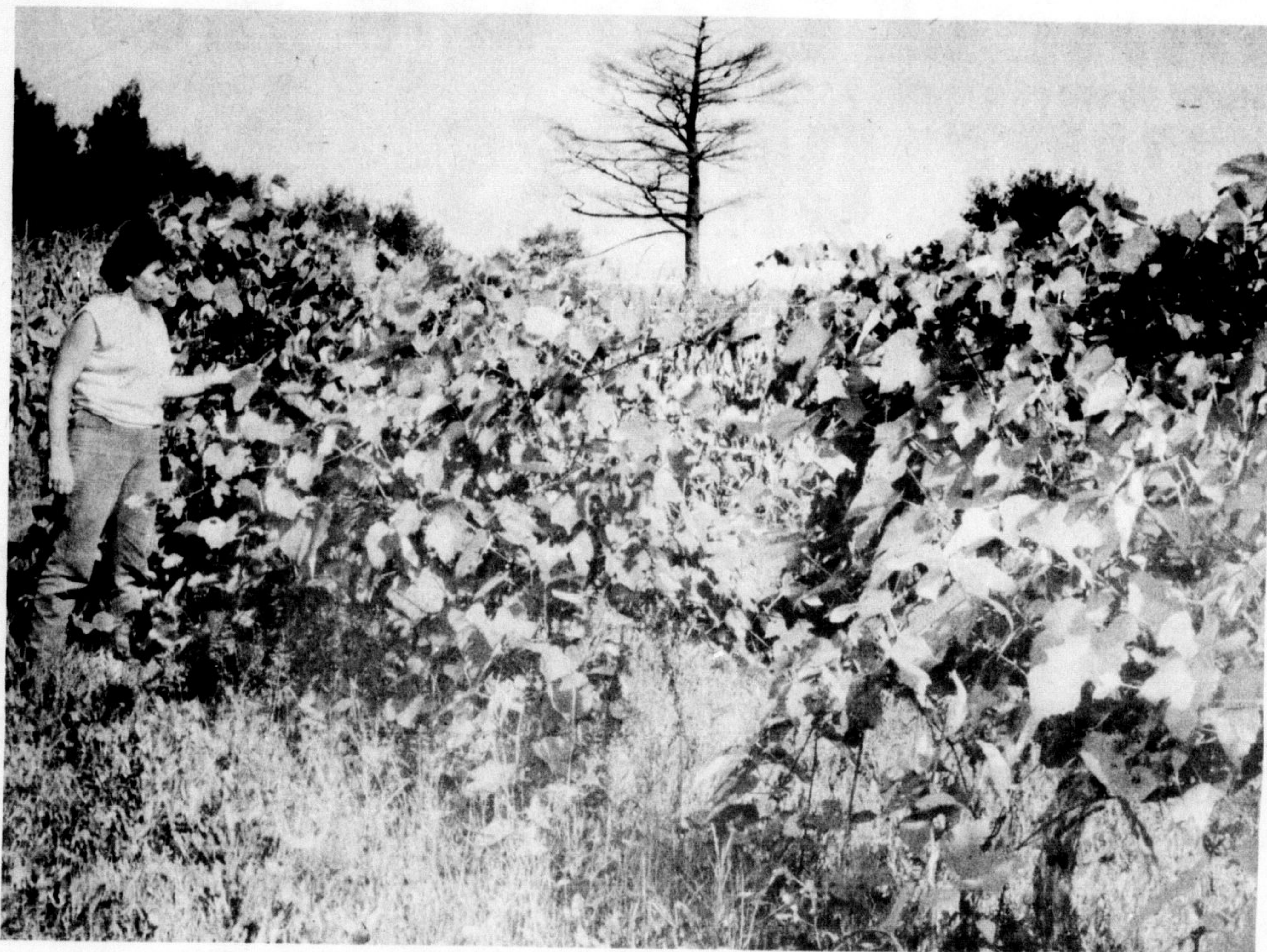
The Stroz also operate a fruit and vegetable farm with a stand on their property throughout the summer. Their preference is "definitely grapes over vegetables. It's more like home," she recalled.



PICKING GRAPES for market, Mrs. Stroz is careful to pick only the ripest and finest choice for selling purposes. New residents to farming and the area just five years ago, the Stroz are now operating a pick-your-own grape farm.



WAGONLOAD OF GRAPES ready for your-own farm is located on Guelph Line. Market is inspected by Mrs. Stroz. The pick-



AN ABANDONED VINEYARD has been restored by Mr. and Mrs. Jim Stroz and family on Guelph Line and the once-dormant area has been developed into a successful pick-your-own operation.

Light permits Gonna crack big whip?

for Esquesing

Light building permits were issued during the month of September by building inspector McLean, bringing the value of construction for the month to a total of \$105,428.

Permits issued included two residential dwellings, two

"Who knows, some day we may crack the big whip," Reeve Mrs. A. MacArthur said after her deputy, Don McMillan noted Nassagaweya Township's growth over the past year was at the

combined residential dwellings and garages, two garages, one renovation and one agricultural storage shed.

same rate as Burlington's. Building permits issued during September represented construction valued at \$106,380 and brought the value of construction to date for the year to \$1,168,000. The figure for the same period of time last year was \$750,095. Three residential permits and three residential additions accounted for \$58,000.

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