

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

1910 - 2010

No. 1 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years

Before getting to the establishment of St. Charles Borromeo Parish and the history of its first 100 years, a short history of Catholicism in the Burlington area might not only be of interest, but also provide a look at the "fertile ground" in which St. Charles was "planted".



The first Catholic settler in the Burlington area - which was then known as Foxville - was John James Krome, who arrived with his wife, Rosina, a Lutheran, about 1837. That was about a year after Moses and Lemuel Smith, William Whiting, and Benjamin Perce made the first claims in the area. Anton and Margaret Noblet - the first Catholic couple - arrived in 1838, settling in nearby Spring Prairie. Their son, Anton, was the area's first Catholic child to be baptized, with the baptism taking place in Milwaukee in 1840.

The first Burlington baby to be baptized, also in Milwaukee, was Jacob Host in October 1842. His parents, Joseph and Anna Maria Host, had come to the area in 1841, along with Sebastian and Margaret Amend, Joseph and Catherine Wackerman, and Leonard and Catherine Schmit. The first baptisms in the Burlington area took place the week before Christmas in 1842, when seven children were baptized by Father Martin Kundig at the Spring Prairie home of Louis and Theresa Kern.

Other early Catholics included John and Johanna Dahlmann, Nic and Magdalen Mueller, Joseph and Barbara Daigler, Christopher (Protestant) and Teresa Winkler, Henry and Christina Kerkmann, Patrick and Bridget O'Neil, Michael and Ellen Cunningham, Timothy and Margaret Foley, Christopher and Maria Haman, Anton Bohner, Richard and Eleonora Nagel, Anton and Margaret Koch, Herman and Mary Catherine Rombeck, John and Anna O'Neil, John and Catherine Wagner, William and Ellen McCarthy, Philip and Barbara Prasch, David and Jane Powdelly, Bernard and Agnes Hess, Henry and Barbara Beck, Patrick and Ellen Callaghan, Martin and Elizabeth Eisenbart, Mathew and Maria Klingele, Francis Meinhardt, Elizabeth Kresken (widow), Louis and Christina Thiele, Catherine (widow) and Carl Klunkefort, Lawrence and Elizabeth Gies, Aloysius and Elizabeth Boschert, Bernard and Josephine Buschmann, Adolph and Mary Agnes Plate, and Mathias and Anna Maria Leber.

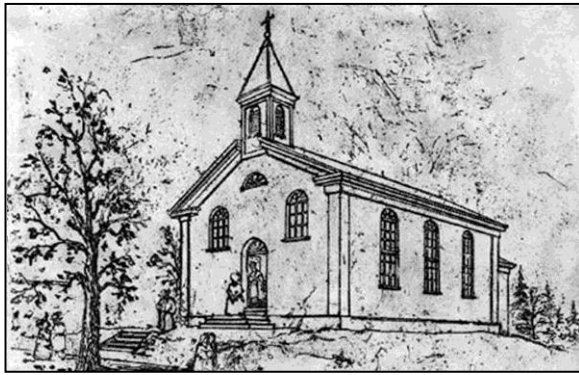
The first Catholic Mass in Burlington was celebrated in 1838 by Father Thomas Morrissey, who traveled on horseback throughout southeastern Wisconsin ministering to the Catholic settlers. Father Morrissey, who died while on a mission trip in the Spring Prairie area in 1850, is said to be buried in St. Mary's Cemetery. Father Morrissey celebrated that first Mass in the "inn" of Ruel Nims, a Protestant, on the east side of the Fox river. (Father Morrissey is also credited with celebrating the first Masses in Brighton, Geneva, Oak Creek, and Racine.)

Thereafter, Mass - usually a High Mass - was celebrated in homes or business places on those occasions when the missionary priests visited this area. In late 1842, for example, John Dahlmann went to Milwaukee to bring Father Martin Kundig back to say Mass, which was held in Mr. Kendall's new carpenter shop on Chestnut street, with the joiner's bench serving as the altar. The collection of sixty dollars, which was taken up that day, was used to purchase a horse for Father Kundig, who promised to visit Burlington once a month after that.

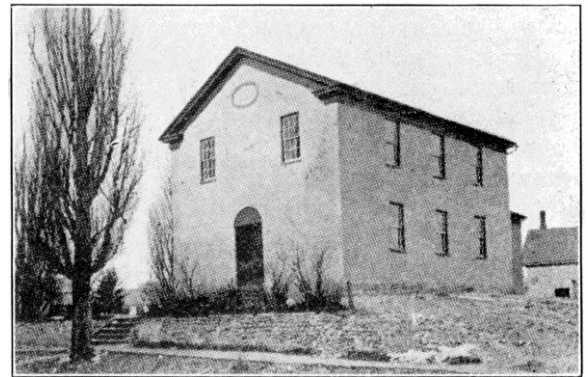


Rev. Martin Kundig

In January 1843 a meeting was held at Klingele's building (on the Chestnut street bend) to consider building a Catholic Church. The proposal fell through because times were hard financially. In 1844, however, the



Artist's rendition of what St. Sebastian Church may have looked like in 1840s and 1850s.



Former St. Sebastian building about 1920

Catholic population banded together under the leadership of Father Kundig to erect a small stone building on a rise of ground that stood on the corner of State and McHenry streets, where a St. Mary's parking lot is now located. The Church, named St. Sebastian's, was built over a 3-year period. It was dedicated on November 9, 1847, after which eighty persons received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Along with Father Kundig, other priests who cared for the parish until 1847, when the first permanent pastor, Father Michael Wisbauer, was appointed, were Fathers Francis Kendeler, Charles Schraudenbach, and Michael Heiss, who was later Archbishop of Milwaukee.

A parish roster, started by Father Kendeler in 1846 and extending to 1850, shows about 590 names, including men, women, and children. Family surnames on the roster, many of which are still common in the Burlington area, were:

Albers	Disselbrede	Kerkman	Pieper	Spangemacher
Alfs	Eisenbart	Kern	Pittmann	Spetzmann
Aman / Amann	Emser	Klinge	Plate	Spraner
Amend	Essman	Klunkenfoot	Poetter	Terwey
Arndt	Fay	Koch	Powdelly	Tettler
Balster	Fishmann	Kords	Prasch	Thiele
Beck	Foley	Kresken	Pregger	Underberg
Becker	Gass	Krome	Ranker	Voss / Vos
Bienemann	Gies	Leber	Rauenhorst /	Wackermann
Bohle	Goecke	Lenz	Roanhouse	Wagner
Bonescamp	Goets / Goetz	Luke	Rehorst	Wehmhoff
Borgert	Grass	May	Richter	Widerker
Boschert	Hamann	McCarthy	Rittmann	Wilmer
Bovenkamp	Hanses	Meinhardt	Rombeck	Wimber
Brueggemann	Held	Meirick	Rueter	Winkler
Bultmoeller	Henningfield	Melcher	Rumphorst	Witte
Bushmann	Herzog	Mollmann	Rupiper	Wolters /
Callaghan	Hess	Mueller / Miller	Rusthaus	Walter
Cunningham	Hettermann	Murphy	Sander	Yanny
Dahlmann	Hildebrand	Nagel	Schemmer	
Daigler	Hoeffler	Neiheisle	Scherrer	
Dalrup	Hoernemann	Noblet	Scheuermann	
David	Holthaus	Overkamp	Schmitt / Smith	(to be continued)
Diederich /	Host	O'Neil	Schumacher	
Dietrich	Kaiser	Pferdesteller	Schwer	