

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

No. 5 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years

To clear the area to be used for the combination church and school building and to provide a home for the pastor, the two-story frame Kessler house, which had faced Conkey street, was moved in



First rectory – the former Kessler house after it was moved to face Kendall street

September 1909 to a concrete foundation that had been put in on the Kendall street side of the church property by Henry Dreesman and George Schumann. After the former Kessler house had been remodeled and modernized, Father Dreis moved into it in mid-November. The house continued to be used as the parsonage, or rectory, until 1922, when the brick parsonage was built on the adjoining lot. At that time, the former Kessler house became the Sisters' home.

In October 1909 the parish building committee, comprising Father Dreis; the two trustees, William

H. Wagner and Henry Pihringer; and two other parish members, Louis Rein and Leonard Smith B advertised for proposals for building the new church and school. The advertisement said that bids, due by October 22, could be on different lines of work and on the building complete. Separate bids, due by October 18, were asked on excavating and on ground for filling.

At the request of various contractors, the time for the opening of proposals was extended to November 15 for all work except the excavating and the building of foundation walls to the grade line. The contract for the excavation and foundation was awarded to Charles E. Reed and Matthias "Matt" Rewald. The excavation, together with the installation of the sewer and water connections, was begun on October 25. Work on the concrete foundation began about a week later.

Bids on the church and school superstructure were received from both local and outside contractors. Six of the bids were on the whole structure and about a dozen on various parts of the work. After sifting through the bids, the building committee decided to ask for new proposals on separate lines of work. The proposals were to be submitted by December 15.

The building committee opened the new bids on December 15 and, after comparing them, decided that the bid of Matt Rewald, of Burlington, was the lowest, and awarded him the contract. His bid was a little over \$26,000, and included everything above the foundation except the electric wiring. Work was to commence as soon as the weather would permit in the spring.

In the meantime, Mr. Rewald planned to fashion a great deal of the woodwork for the new building at his Burlington Planing Mill, which was located in the former E. N. White wool depot on the corner of Chestnut and Dodge streets. Rewald's aim was to get as much of the work for

1910 - 2010



Proposals Wanted

Sealed bids will be received until Friday, Oct. 22, 1909, at 6 p. m., for the erection of the new St. Charles' church and school building in Burlington.

Plans and specifications can be had at the residence of Rev. Philipp Dreis, 647 Chestnut street, Burlington, Wis., and should be addressed to the building committee in care of Rev. Dreis.

Bids will be received on the different lines of the work and on the building complete.

Separate bids will be received for the excavating till Monday, Oct. 18, at 6 p. m.

Bids for ground for filling will also be received on Oct. 18

BUILDING COMMITTEE.

the new church building done in Burlington as possible.

The new building, which was to be built of brick, was to front on Conkey street and, according to preliminary plans, was to be about 76 by 144 feet in size. The front part of the building was to be devoted to school purposes, with four class rooms, each 25 by 34 feet, two downstairs and two upstairs. The auditorium of the church was to be 50 by 90 feet and have a seating capacity of 600. A balcony would seat several hundred more.

The preliminary plans also called for the building to be 85 feet in height from the basement floor to the cross on the spire (later reported as 78 feet from grade to the top of the cross). There was also to be a large assembly hall in the basement.

Fund-raising by the congregation continued over the winter. The ladies and young ladies, for example, held a basket social at the opera house on January 31. The program included both musical numbers and an oral reading. The ladies were asked to bring baskets filled with good things.

In March 1910, the congregation sponsored a program at the opera house by Rev. P. J. MacCorry, a nationally known Paulist missionary, editor, and lecturer of New York. Father MacCorry's lecture, "The Story Beautiful," which was illuminated by over a hundred facsimile reproductions of the world's greatest religious paintings, took the audience on a journey in the earthly foot-prints of our Savior. The basket social and Father MacCorry's lecture each raised nearly a hundred dollars for the building fund.



Matt Rewald's Burlington Planing Mill, where some of the wooden furnishings for St. Charles Church were crafted, was at the corner of Chestnut and Dodge streets. The building, shown about 1911, was replaced in 1929 by another building which, over the years, housed Champion Motor Company, Sears Roebuck, Clinton Lumber, and Adelita's Hispanic Foods. The latter building was destroyed by fire in April 2005.

(to be continued)