

*The Sheldon Historical Society
Schoolhouse Museum Newsletter
Presents
A Special Edition - In Honor of
St. Cecilia's 175th Anniversary*



1848

2023

On Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023, members and friends of the St. John Neumann Parish will gather at St. Cecilia's Site to celebrate its 175th Anniversary. Bishop Michael Fisher will say the mass, following the dedication of a new historic roadside marker provided by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation.

In recognition of St. Cecilia's role in the history of the Town of Sheldon, we dedicate this special edition of our newsletter to St. Cecilia's and its people, past and present.

Author's note

The Sheldon Historical Society gets email inquiries and visitors from far and wide, many wanting to learn where their Catholic ancestors lived, worshipped, and are buried.

In writing the articles for this issue, I wanted to give visitors an overview of what they will find and present the parish history in terms of how the church properties evolved over time. I also wanted to use as many primary records as possible, many of which are shown.

Questions and corrections are welcome; please contact the Sheldon Historical Society.
Scott Barvian, September 2023

EARLY CATHOLIC HISTORY IN SHELDON

THE MISSION CHURCH

Although 2023 marks the 175th anniversary of the establishment of the Catholic parish in Sheldon in 1848 under control of the Diocese of Buffalo, Catholic history in Sheldon actually goes back to the 1830's, when Western New York was mission territory of the Diocese of New York.

Before 1848, small informal Catholic communities across Western New York were served by missionary priests. When German-speaking Catholics arrived in Sheldon in the 1830's, the few German-speaking missionaries in the region (including John Neumann from 1838 until his departure from WNY in 1840) visited and encouraged them to build chapels, suggesting that when more priests arrived, those that had a church building would be first in line to get a resident priest.

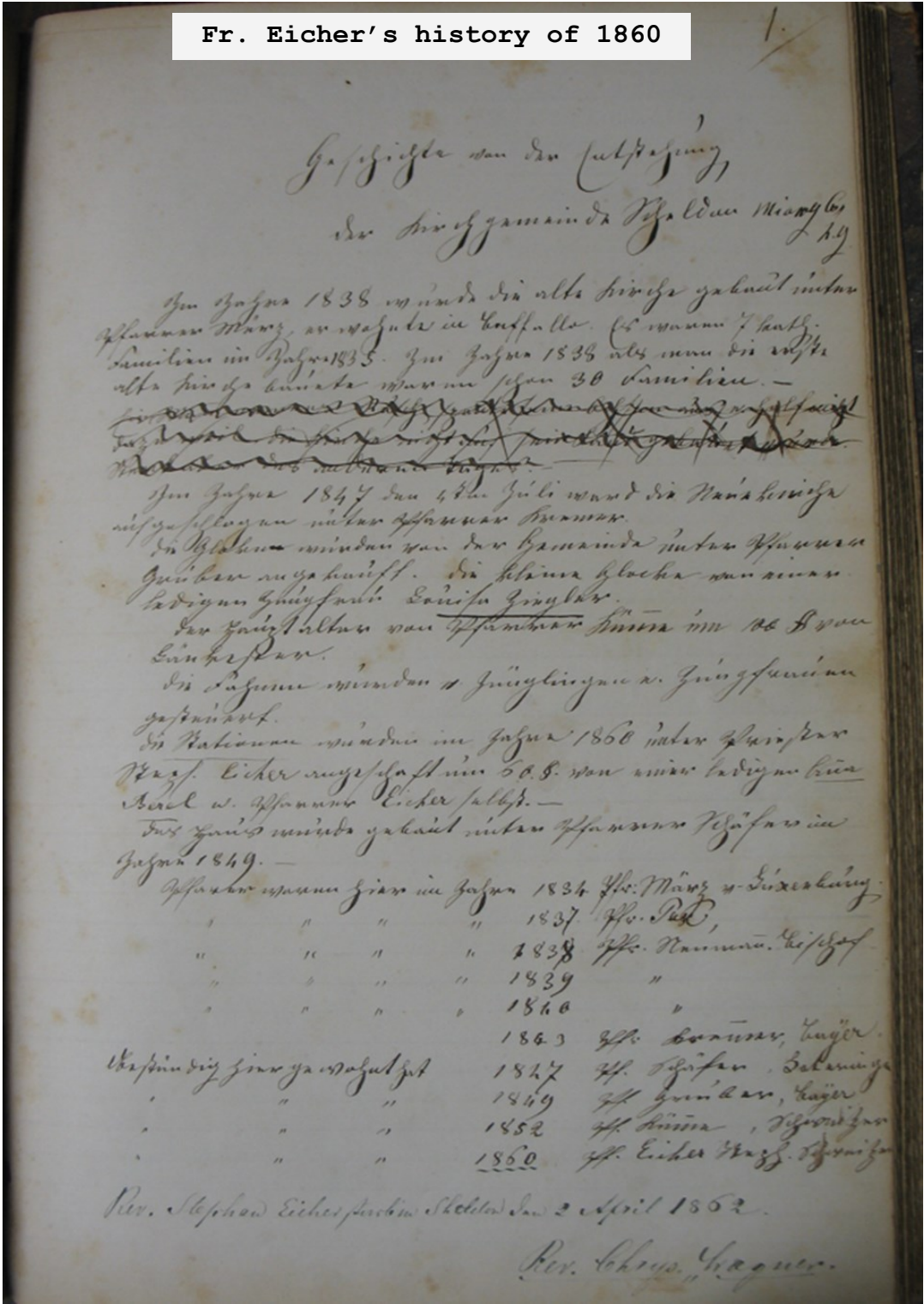
A mission chapel was built in Sheldon on a small lot on Bartz Rd. about 1/4 mile south of the present St. Cecilia's. Pastors A. George Koch (1943-1971) and Donald Weber (1971-2003) are now buried there, with a stone cross salvaged from the 1976 demolition of St. Joseph's New Cathedral in Buffalo.



Sheldon Catholic Mission site, 2019 Google Street View

The parish records contain a history compiled by Fr. Stephan Eicher in 1860. A native of Switzerland, he was the fourth resident priest of the 1848 diocesan parish. He died in Sheldon in 1862 (which was noted by his successor Fr. Chrysostum Wagner, the pastor from 1862-1865). Note that the name St. Cecilia's was not mentioned.

Fr. Eicher's history of 1860



Fr. Eicher's history was translated for us as follows:

History of the Origins of the Parish of Sheldon, Wyoming Co., N.Y.

In the year 1838 the old church was built under Father März who lived in Buffalo. There were 7 Catholic families in the year 1835. In the year 1838, when the first old church was built, there were already 30 families.

[crossed out: A man named Rusch contributed his oxen but not his help to it because the church was not built on his land ...]

In the year 1847, the 4th of July, the new church was [pitched?] by Father Kremer.

The bell was bought by the parish under Father Gruber. The little bell from an unmarried young woman Louisa Ziegler.

The high altar by Father Kümme for 100 ff from Lancaster ["Länkester"]

The banners were under the control of the youths and young ladies.

The Stations were purchased in the year 1860 for 60 ff from a single lady Anna Berel and Father Eicher himself.

The house [rectory] was built under Father Schäfer in the year 1849.

Pastors who were here in the year	1834	Fr. März of Luxembourg	[Mertz]
	1837	Fr. Pax	
	1838	Fr. Neumann	Bishop
	1839	"	
	1840	"	
	1843	Fr. Kremmer[sic] a Bavarian	[Krämer]
consistently living here	1847	Fr. Schäfer,	a Lorrainer
	1849	Fr. Gruber,	a Bavarian
	1852	Fr. Kümme,	a Swiss
	1860	Fr. Eicher,	Steph., a Swiss

Rev. Stephan Eicher died in Sheldon on 2 April 1862.

Rev. Chrys. Wagner.

F.W. Beers' "History of Wyoming County, N.Y." (1880) has the first published facts about the mission. The source of the information is unknown, and it differs slightly from Fr. Eicher's history as to when the mission was built.

In January, 1840, the first Roman Catholic church was built, about a quarter of a mile south of Straub's Corners, by about twenty families, who were mostly Germans. The Rev. Father Neuman (who became bishop of Philadelphia in March, 1852), then stationed at Lancaster, N. Y., attended the little congregation once during the first year. From this time until 1847 this mission was visited by the Redemptorist Father Noethan, of Williamsville, once in three months.

St. Cæciliæ Catholic Cemetery was opened about 1836. The first interment was that of Margaret Pope. After the new Catholic church was built at Straub's Corners a new ground was opened, containing about an acre of land, a little north of the church. It was opened in 1848.

History of Wyoming County, N.Y., page 265

A deed recorded in Genesee County* on April 18, 1839, transferred a plot from "Edward Laroux and Catherine his wife" to the "First Roman Catholic Society in the Town of Sheldon in the County of Genesee and State of New York". The plot measured 18 by 6 rods, and the fee paid was "one dollar and the erection of a chappel upon the land herein described, the Receipt and performance is hereby confessed and acknowledged". Perhaps the chapel was already built at that time? Or was it built later?

This Indenture, Made this eighteenth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty nine Between Edward Laroux and Catherine his wife of in the County of Genesee and State of New York, of the first part, and the First Roman Catholic Society in the Town of Sheldon in the County of Genesee and State of New York, of the second part, Witnesseth, That the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar and the erection of a chapel upon the land herein described to be thereunto fully satisfied, consented and paid, the Receipt and performance is hereby confessed, and

Deed Transcription, Genesee County Liber of Deeds Volume 57, Page 63

The 1949 parish history says the land was "donated by the Poschl or Poschal family". That would be my gr-gr-gr-grandparents Edward Pochel and his wife Catherine Loreaux.

But the 1839 deed clearly said "Edward Laroux and Catherine his wife". Why?

* Wyoming County was created in 1841.

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This Indenture, Made this *Sixteenth* day of *February* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty six Between *James Arnold and Hannah his wife* of the town of Sheldon in the county of Genesee and state of New-York, of the first part, and *Cathrine Loraux* of the County and State aforesaid
 Witnesseth: that the said part 1st of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of

Deed Transcription, Genesee County Liber of Deeds Volume 38, Page 198

Edward and Catherine purchased the land in 1836 in her name, and also using her maiden name "Cathrine Loraux" even though they were married in France before 1830. The reason is unknown.

"Edward Loreaux" is listed in the 1840 US census. Only the heads of household were listed, with the demographics of the other family members. The listing for this Edward's family (1 male and 1 female between age 30-40, 2 males and 1 female between 5-10, and 1 male under 5) matches what Edward Pochel's family was at the time. Why was he using his wife's maiden name during this period? We will never know. And in the 1850 census, Edward Pochel used his own last name.

1840 census, Town of Sheldon, Genesee County, NY

Edward Paschal	50	M
Catharine Paschal	42	F
Edward Paschal	20	M
Joseph Paschal	18	M
Unity Paschal	16	F
Friedrich Paschal	14	M
Gregory Paschal	8	M
Julia Paschal	6	F

1850 census, Town of Sheldon, Wyoming County, NY

Finally, in 1856 "Edward Pochel and Catherine his wife" sold the same land that was described in the 1836 deed but "Excepting and reserving a certain piece of the above described land in the north west corner, where the old catholic church now stands, supposed to contain one half of an acre."

This Indenture, Made this 14th day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty six **BETWEEN** Edward Pabel & Catharine his wife of the of the Town of Sheldon in the County of Wyoming and State of New York, of the first part, and John Reuter of the same place of the second part, Witnesseth, That the said party of the first part, in consideration of the sum of Three thousand three hundred and eighty Dollars, to them duly paid, have sold, and By these Presents, doth grant and convey to the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, **All that Tract or parcel of Land**, situate in the Town of Sheldon in the County of Wyoming and State of New York, **and is distinguished by being a part of Lot number twelve in the ninth township's fourth Range of townships in said town and bounded as follows.** South by a line parallel to the south bounds of said Lot eight chains forty links north therefrom fifty nine chains sixty five links west by Lot number twenty, twenty one chains fifty four links north by a line parallel to the north bounds of said Lot number twelve fifty nine chains sixty nine links and East by Lot number four twenty one chains thirty five links containing one hundred and twenty eight acres and two hundredths of an acre both same or less. Excepting and reserving a certain piece of the above described land in the north west corner, where the old Catholic Church now stands. Supposed to contain one half of an acre.

Deed Transcription, Wyoming County Liber of Deeds Volume 32, Page 315

That the old mission church was still standing in 1856, almost 10 years after the diocesan church was built at Straub's Corners in 1847-48, is a hint of problems in the Diocese of Buffalo in its early years. The old mission societies owned their buildings and land and resisted the desire of the diocese and bishop to take ownership. Apparently some Catholics continued to use the old missions instead of the diocesan churches. It was recorded that on behalf of the bishop, in 1848 a Jesuit priest "travelled to Sheldon in order to resolve a dispute with the trustees; being unable to do so, he pronounced an interdict over the old chapel and cemetery," which prohibited any services from being held there. This statement also tells us that there was a cemetery at the mission site, as the Beers history also claimed, but I know of no record of who was buried there or whether they still are. There are no pictures to help us understand what may have existed at the mission site.

Any dispute was apparently resolved by 1864 when parish bylaws giving full authority to the bishop were agreed to by Bishop Timon, another diocesan official, the Sheldon pastor Fr. Wagner, and two lay trustees. The bishop was declared President of the board of trustees, and the parish was obliged to accept any priests that he appointed. This is also the first time that the name St. Cecilia's is seen.

At a Meeting of the Trustees of St Cecilia's Church
held at Sheldon in Wyoming County
on the Eleventh day of December in the year
of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty four the following
By-Laws were unanimously adopted:

A HISTORICAL TOUR OF ST. CECILIA'S

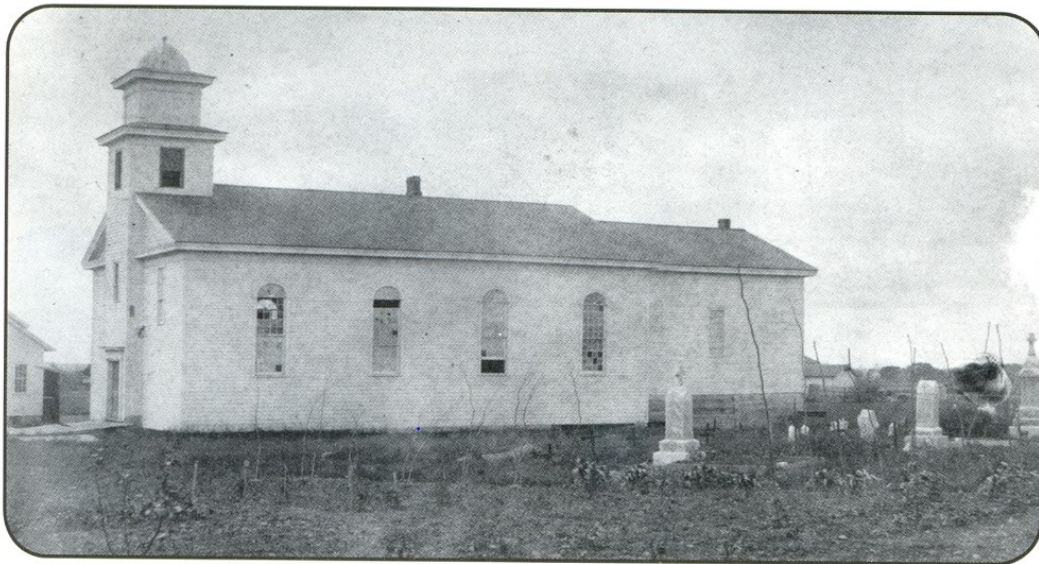
Let's now turn our attention to the history of the parish buildings, grounds, and cemeteries. For this we rely on original records as well as published histories such as Rev. Thomas Donohue's "History of the Catholic Church in Western New York" (1904) and the 1949 St. Cecilia's parish centennial program (by an unknown author) which documented many facts for the first time.

Donohue wrote:

Bishop Timon visited this little mission in December, 1847, and confirmed sixty persons in the church, which was not then completed.

suggesting that construction of a larger church to replace the mission was already underway at "Straub's Corners" before the diocesan parish was created. However the bishop did not get control of the property until a deed dated April 14, 1848, purchasing eight acres of land for \$200 from "Nicholas Straub and Dorothea his wife". (Perhaps causing the hard feelings mentioned in the previous article.)

The only known picture of this church was probably taken during construction of the current church in about 1890. I believe that the 1847 church originally sat in the same spot that the current church sits today, but this picture appears to show it moved back next to the cemetery (and turned at an angle, because there was another building behind the church to avoid). Anyone alive in 1890 easily knew these things: they were basic facts, so minor and obvious that no one ever thought to write them down. Leaving us to guess at these things now, over 130 years later.



Church building used from 1848 to January 1892

From the 1949 history: "The church building was a wooden structure about 40 x 90 ft. The sanctuary was narrower than the body of the church by about 3 feet on each side, and higher by about 7 steps. It was on these steps the children sat when the church became overcrowded. The church trustees had regular places in the sanctuary."

The construction of the stone church in the early 1890's was an impressive accomplishment. The 1949 parish history gives us information about its construction.

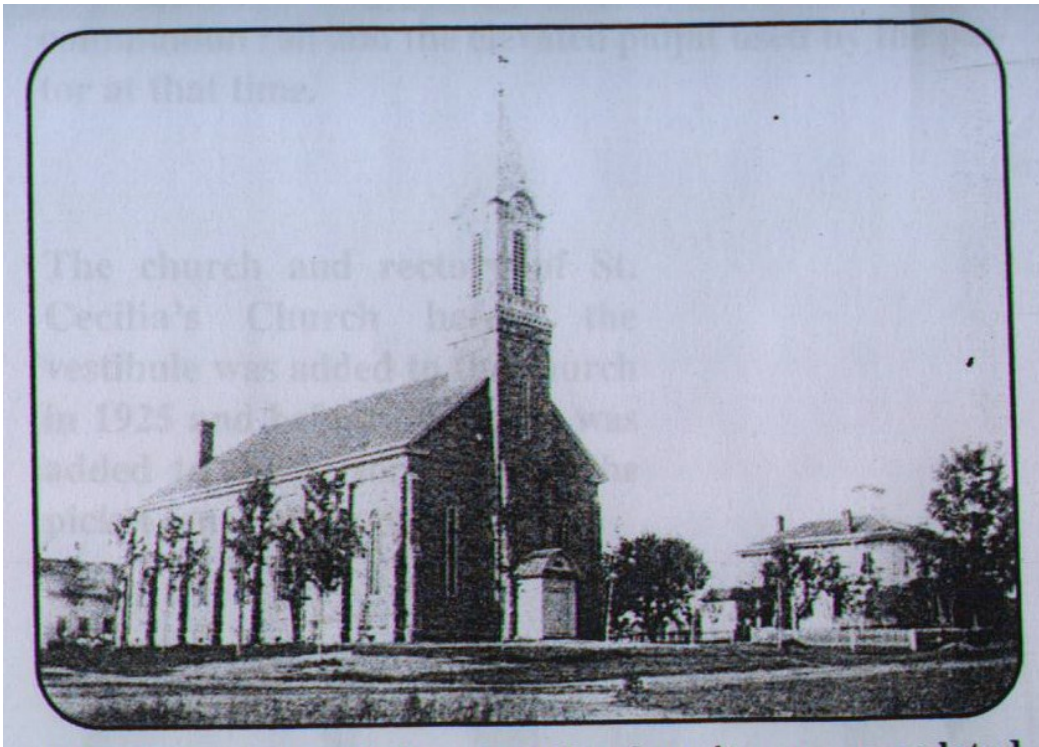
In 1886, Rev. Theodore Voss held a meeting to build a new church. The foundation and cornerstone was laid in 1889. Stone for the foundation was secured from the farms of Nicholas George, Hensie George and Peter Kehl. The stone for the walls, however, came from the farm of John F. Almeter. The contractor was Frank Felton of Sheldon. The Sheldon parishioners donated a great part of the material and labor, and the cost was about \$13,000. Voluntary subscription took care of the greater part of this. On Sunday, January 31, 1892, the first service was held in the new church. The Rt. Rev. Stephen V. Ryan dedicated the completed structure September 6, 1892.

Except for this summary, no notes or records from the construction were preserved. A few pictures were taken which give us clues about other buildings on the grounds at that time.



Early construction, c. 1890, showing a) the roofline of a building behind the church, and b) the steeple of the old church off the back corner of the new. Suggesting again that the old church was moved back and turned at an angle.

Historian Josephine Almeter (1908-1976) gave us the anecdote "Father Voss used to buy a keg of beer every day for the workers who used assembly line methods and when the structure was completed, a pig was bought, dressed, and made all into sausage for a picnic to celebrate the event. Peter Kehl, John Jungers, Frank Armbrust and Joseph Becker were trustees at this time."



New church, c. 1890's - 1900's. The current stone vestibule was added to the front of the church in 1926-27. Note the small building behind the church (where the Weber Hall "sheds" would be built in 1919-1920). This is probably the same building whose roofline was seen during the church construction. What is it? The answer later.

Father Voss had another problem during the construction era. The cemetery behind the church was almost full. He decided to open another cemetery about 1/4 mile south on Bartz Rd. But why not expand the cemetery west into what future generations would use as a baseball field?

A letter found among the church records answers our questions about the cemetery and also about the building behind the church where the sheds now stand. In 1891, Fr. Voss wrote to the office of Bishop Ryan in Buffalo, asking permission to sell some of the church property, and to use proceeds to buy the Bartz Rd. cemetery land. (That the Bishop's permission was required is proof of the 1865 parish bylaws that gave the bishop final say over such matters.)

After approval, a deed dated June 26, 1891 shows the purchase of 4 acres on Bartz Rd. for \$360 from Elizabeth (Armbrust) Straub.

Sheldon, Wyoming Co. N.Y.
 April 1891.
 Ans. 72-91

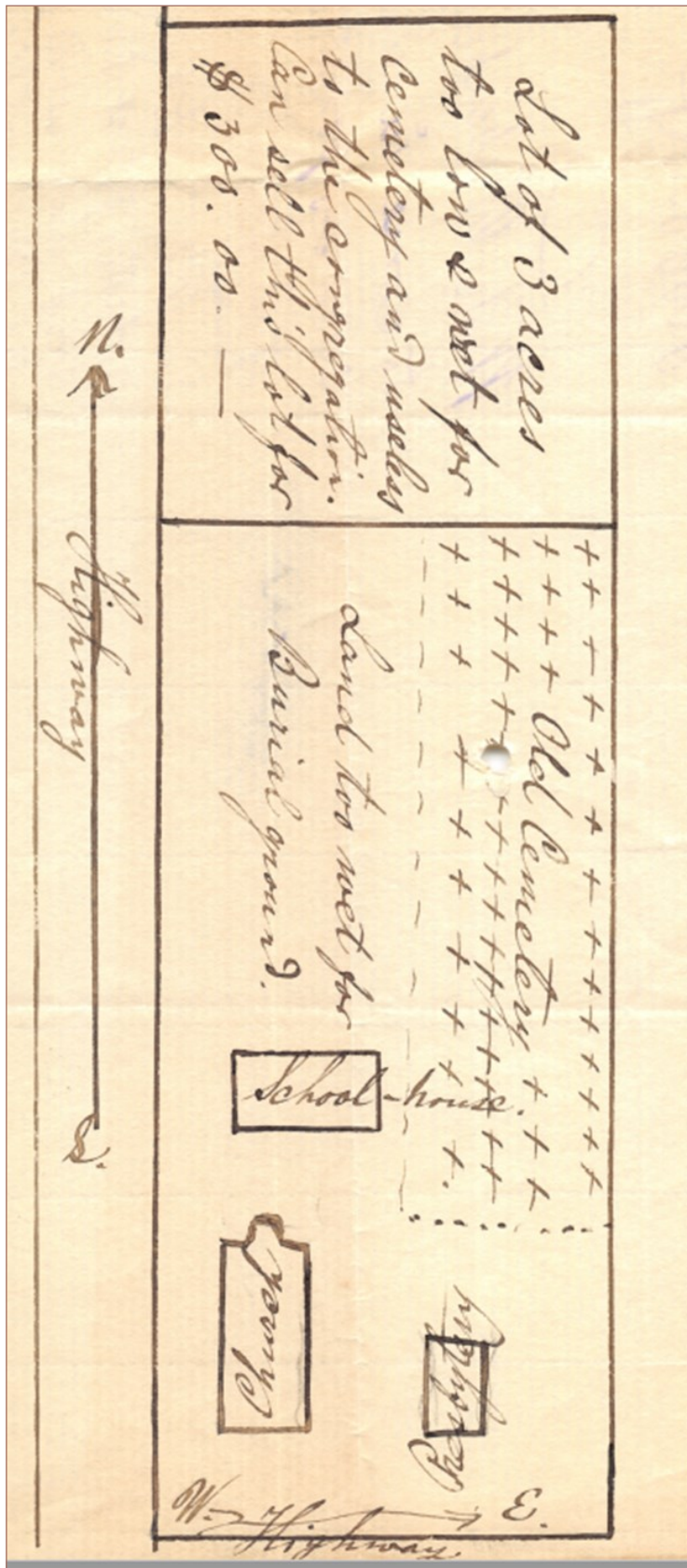
Rev. J. J. Sheahan.

Rev. dear Sir!

You would greatly oblige me by laying the matter concerning a new cemetery for my congregation before the Rt Rev. Bishop. The cemetery in use at present is almost taken up by graves and reserved lots. Hence the necessity of providing for another burial place. The congregation own a lot of 3 acres of land adjoining our present cemetery but it lies too low and is too wet to be used as a cemetery. The nature of the soil excludes even the possibility of drainage. As to any other purposes the land is useless for us. We have however a chance to sell this 3 acre lot for \$300.00, and buy a suitable site a few minutes walk from the church. This latter lot consists of a dry and gravelly soil well adapted for a cemetery. We can get of this land 4 acres at the price of \$90.00 per acre. I would therefore beg leave to ask the Rt Rev. Bishop to give to me and my two lay trustees the permission of selling our 3 acre lot and acquiring instead 4 acres of suitable land for burial purposes. I enclose a rough sketch of the land belonging to the congregation.

Yours sincerely

Theod. Voss.



He included a drawing of the church property which answers our questions:

- The future baseball field was deemed "too wet" for cemetery expansion.
- The small building behind the church was the "Schoolhouse". It was likely described in Beers History as built during the pastorate of Rev. Martin Winands (1871-1876):

"The old school-house was sold, and a new one built which cost about \$1,400."

- The land proposed to be sold was north of the present church property.
- The parish did not yet own the land east of the current cemetery driveway where the 1903 school building would be built, and additional cemetery would be opened.

The "Presbytery" or rectory is also shown, about which the 1949 history tells us

In 1884, Rev. F.X. Fromholzer built the present rectory and the old rectory was moved to the rear of the church property where it was occupied for some years by Dr. Fromholzer, M.D.

Starting in 1891, funeral records would identify burials as being either in the “Old” cemetery behind the church, or in the “New” Bartz Rd. cemetery (where Rev. Voss was buried after his death in 1894).

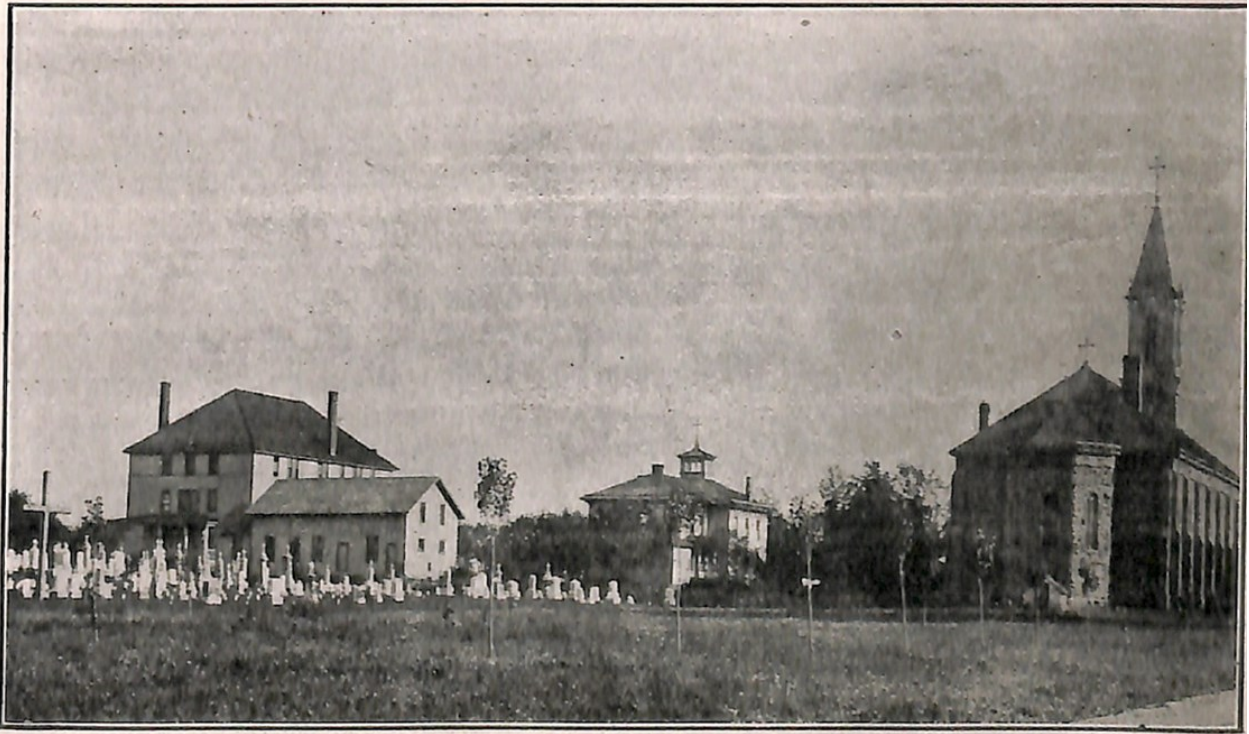
When additional land was purchased in 1903 for the construction of the school and convent, still more cemetery ground was opened behind the church which the records continued to describe as the “Old” Cemetery. Starting in the 1940’s, Fr. Koch labeled burials in the 1847 side as “Old Cemetery A”, and in the 1903 side as “Old Cemetery B” or “C”. It is not clear whether “B” and “C” were two separate additions of land. Fr. Koch would later drop the word “old” altogether, and would refer to the Bartz Rd. cemetery as the “South” cemetery. But the confusion over “old” vs. “new” remains.



Cemeteries behind church, 2023. Facing north.



Bartz Rd. “South” cemetery. Opened 1891 and still in use.



This picture first published in the St. Cecilia's 1913 annual report shows that the 1870's schoolhouse had been removed by then. Later annual reports show that the "sheds" behind the church were built in 1919-1920.



The 1949 parish history said "Stone for the foundation was secured from the farms of Nicholas George, Hensie George and Peter Kehl. The stone for the walls, however, came from the farm of John F. Almeter."

ST. CECILIA'S SCHOOLS

The 1949 history gives information on several schools that the parish used.

Under Father Eicher (1860-1862) a John Schneider from Lancaster was engaged to teach school in the room under the church sanctuary and later Anthony Deheck. Shortly after a separate building was acquired. During the pastorate of Father Winands the old school house was sold, and a new one built for about \$1,400.00 Father William Riszewski, the next pastor, raised the money by a house to house subscription.

The first organist was Joseph Rengel, the father of Msgr. Edward Rengel, who was employed likewise to teach school, receiving \$300 a year and later \$400. Following Joseph Rengel as teacher were E. Breitung, Zacharias Hangauer, Albert Rengel, John T. Metzger, Mary Ess, Charles Raab, John T. Metzger, again and Sylvester Metzger. Later Mary Kimm acted as organist.

During the pastorate of Rev. John F. Pfluger, the Sisters of St. Francis of Williamsville came to Sheldon to take charge of the school on the feast of St. Louis, August 25, 1902. Sister M. Borromeo, Superior, Sister M. Agatha, Sister M. Evangelista and Sister M. Pacifica were the sisters who came at this time. On September 8, 1902, school opened and by the end of the month 96 children were in attendance.

In 1903, Father Pfluger engaged Joseph Spiess to build the present school and convent which was completed in 1904 and blessed by Bishop Colton September 27th. The cost of the school was about \$8,000.00 Carpenter work was done by Joseph Franz, mason work by Frank Felton, painting by Michael Hamm and plumbing and heating by Dellinger and Barber.



THE PRESENT ST. CECILIA SCHOOL

The 1903 school and convent were closed after the 1970-71 school year.

OTHER BUILDING PROJECTS

The 1949 history included information about the construction of the sheds which are now known as Weber Hall.

Under Rev. Ferdinand Bank, two large sheds were constructed (48 ft. by 115 ft.) to give shelter to the many horses which were stabled around the church every Sunday morning. Nicholas J. Almeter was engaged to make plans for the carpenter work, and the men of the parish were to offer their services to haul materials and to excavate the foundation. The final cost when completed, in 1920, was about \$6,875.00.

Dear Parishioners:

As you see from this Report, the ordinary Plate Collections show an increase over those of preceding years; 1919 breaks our record for Pew Rent; the Coal Collection nearly covers total expense for coal and there were 40 cords of wood contributed besides. Let us hope that the generous donors of amounts for Church purposes may find followers. Your Orphan Collection places you in the front rank of country parishes. Our Banner Collection, however, is the Christmas Collection for the new parish sheds.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your splendid help towards building our much needed sheds. You hauled all the material free of charge; that means, 150,000 shingles, over 800 sacks of cement and lime, nearly 6,000 cement blocks, over 33,000 ft. of lumber, some odd loads of drain tile, hundreds of team loads of gravel and sand; all loads had to be brought from places 5 to 7 miles far, over hilly and muddy roads. You made the excavations for the foundation, both sheds being 48 by 115 ft.; many loads of stone and gravel had to be hauled to build the concrete foundations 3 to 4 ft deep and 1 to 5 ft. above ground; in addition, stones, ground and gravel had to be hauled for filling and grading; besides you placed the drainage and sewerage tiles—and all was done gratis, and that in the fall, when you had your own work to do on your farms and in the fields. You can figure out for yourselves how much money the parish saved on labor, considering its present cost.

To speak boldly, the work aroused amongst you new interest in your parish affairs; under the management of the Building Committee all the men of our families had their appointed shifts day after day. The work was a testimonial of your good will and of your well known strong faith, whose practical test are the sacrifices you make for it. You realize that the sheds are a necessity for our parish with its scattered farms at a great distance from your Church which you also erected over 30 years ago with the same spirit of appreciation of God's holy cause. The sheds will give you fine accommodations; liberal space is provided for 86 teams and vehicles, hence no need any more of unhitching and getting ready again, and of leaving everything exposed to the cold blasts of the winds in the long winter months up here. The accommodations will bring many more people to Church in severe winter weather;

hence, more souls will be benefited and, incidentally, our collections will grow larger. Compare for instance, our Diocesan Collections in winter months with those we take up during summer and fall and you see that I am right. Hence, the sheds present a gain for Religion and our parish in many ways.

Besides your labor you gave a big contribution, \$2035.00. What pleases me most is the fact, that it was made, so to speak, with one stroke, during the Christmas season, and all families contributed, which means more, to my mind, than if a few would have given large amounts and the rest nothing or only a trifle. The collection as well as the labor given free of charge I consider a strong endorsement of our work. Moreover, to make that amount we did not have to hold any kind of socials, picnic, etc.; it was a Christmas gift. And, why should I not say it, every dollar of these \$2035.00 came from our 139 families; no outsiders had to be called upon for help.

The work we could not complete owing to the early and severe winter will be taken up with renewed zeal and enthusiasm, as soon as circumstances permit. The men of our Building Committee, whom we cannot thank and appreciate too much, will be ready, together with their neighbors. Regarding the collection, quite a few have promised to increase their contributions towards end of spring. Thus, the financial side is taken care of.

Let me add that the spiritual standing of St. Cecilia's Parish is most vigorous. The attendance at the Holy Masses on Sundays, the steadily increasing number of those who frequent the Sacraments testify to that. Then the unusually many requests for Masses, especially for your dead, your efforts to send your children to our school in spite of distance; your generosity towards our local Sisters as well as towards any work of charity your attention is called to; lastly, the fact that most every family in the parish keeps one or the other good Catholic paper or religious magazine is worthy of comment.

May God give you His choicest blessings for your families, farms and fields and may He reward you a hundred-fold.

YOUR PASTOR.

From the 1919 parish year-end report (Rev. Ferdinand Bank, 1913-1920)

In May 1926, Rev. Francis Wanenmacher (1920 - Sept. 1926) asked to build the vestibule entrance.

Rt. Rev. William Turner, D.D.,
Bishop of Buffalo,
Buffalo N.Y.,

Right Reverend and my dear Bishop;

St. Cecelia Church is of stone but was not provided by the builder with a vestibule. Some years ago a wooden stormshed was erected against the entrance, but it is ungainly, inadequate and in bad repair.

I propose to erect a stone vestibule in the same material as the church is built of, and herewith ask your permission to come to an agreement on plans with the Diocesan Building Commission and to go ahead with the erection of the approved vestibule.

The cost will run to about three thousand dollars, which amount we already have on hand for that purpose, and our debts have been reduced to the now merely nominal sum of twelve hundred dollars.

The project was completed by the next pastor Rev. Joseph Weisbecker (Sept. 1926 - 1931) who also requested to install electricity in the parish buildings.

Rt. Rev. William Turner, D.D.,
Bishop of Buffalo.

Dear Bishop;

May I have your permission to install an electric lighting plant at Sheldon, since the various buildings are still lighted by the obsolete method of oil-lamps, giving poor light and causing much inconvenience in many ways?

According to Mr. Tremaine, whom I consulted and who is president of the Lancaster Light and Power Co., which has the franchise for Wyoming Co., the high power line will not reach this territory for another five years or more.

The cost, including everything: plant (to be bought of Father Callery at Java Center), wiring, fixtures, etc., will run to about one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00), which amount is on hand, besides more than sufficient funds to pay for the erection of the vestibule to the church, now nearing completion.

ST. CECILIA'S BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS 1847-2023



← 1847 property → ← 1903 → ← 19?? →

References

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US Census, ancestry.com.

F.W. Beers & Co., "History of Wyoming County, N.Y.", 1880.

Rev. Thomas Donohue, "History of the Catholic Church in Western New York", 1904.

Brief History of St. Cecilia Parish, Parish Centennial Program, 1949.

Josephine Almeter, unpublished notes, c. 1976.

G. Atwell and R. Batt, "The Chapel", Town of Cheektowaga, 1979.

With gratitude to Clarence Conrad for photographing many of the parish records that were used in this special issue.

Author's note

At least 45 of my direct ancestors are buried in the St. Cecilia's cemeteries, in the family lines of Barvian, Conrad, Armbrust, Bartz, Smith, Logel, Metzger, Bauer, Pochel, Loreaux, George (John F. from France), George (Elizabeth from Belgium), and others. Some attended the mission church in John Neumann's days, and my gr-gr-grandfather John Barvian is said to have been the lead carpenter of the stone church. This parish was important to them, and researching its history has been important to me.

- Scott Barvian, September 2023

Much appreciation goes out to Scott Barvian for contributing this article. He has been researching his Sheldon ancestors for over 20 years. Scott grew up in Sheldon, and when his work took him to Arizona, he continued to follow local history. Many people contact Scott for genealogy assistance. He has contributed an incredible amount of historical information to the Sheldon Historical Society and continues to assist us as a consultant and editor of the Sheldon Historical Society Newsletter.

It is our hope that this newsletter will be a tribute to the ancestors who built this church, as well as a special resource of the History of St. Cecilia's, along with several books, photos and records which are all available in the archives of the Sheldon Historical Society Schoolhouse Museum.

*~~ Jeanne Mest, Town Historian/Archival Curator
Sheldon Historical Society Schoolhouse Museum*

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Sheldon Historical Society Membership

Being a member of the Sheldon Historical Society means being part of preserving history. Dues and donations support the maintenance of our museum and historical artifacts. As a member you have voting privileges, and newsletters are sent to you at no cost.

The membership year is from July 1 through the following June 30. Current membership status is shown on your mailing label. Please remember to renew yearly, and let us know of any address changes. If you are currently a member, thank you for your support!

2023-2024 Membership Application or Renewal

Please send a check payable to the Sheldon Historical Society
To: PO Box 122, Strykersville, NY 14145

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

____ New Member ____ Membership Renewal

____ \$12 Annual Membership July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

____ \$75 Lifetime Membership

____ Would like to make a Donation In Memory/Honor of _____

____ Complimentary - Current Members Only 80+