

Tabor St. Wenceslaus



In 1898 and 1910 respectively, the parish constructed a new church and rectory, both of which were listed on the National Register in 1985. Also in 1910, the old parish house was sold to Vencil (or Vaclav) (1) Mach, who lived in retirement there until his death in 1923. Mach and two brothers came to America from Bohemia in 1853. In 1870, they settled on a homestead northeast of Tabor.

The Old St. Wenceslaus Parish House remains relatively unaltered, except for a few changes to the interior. It continues to serve as a private residence in Tabor. Along with church, cemetery, and present rectory, it is a reminder of the pioneer spirit of the community's early Czechs, their perseverance, and the growth of the parish. Its period of significance extends from its construction in 1878 to 1910, when it ceased to be used as a parish house.

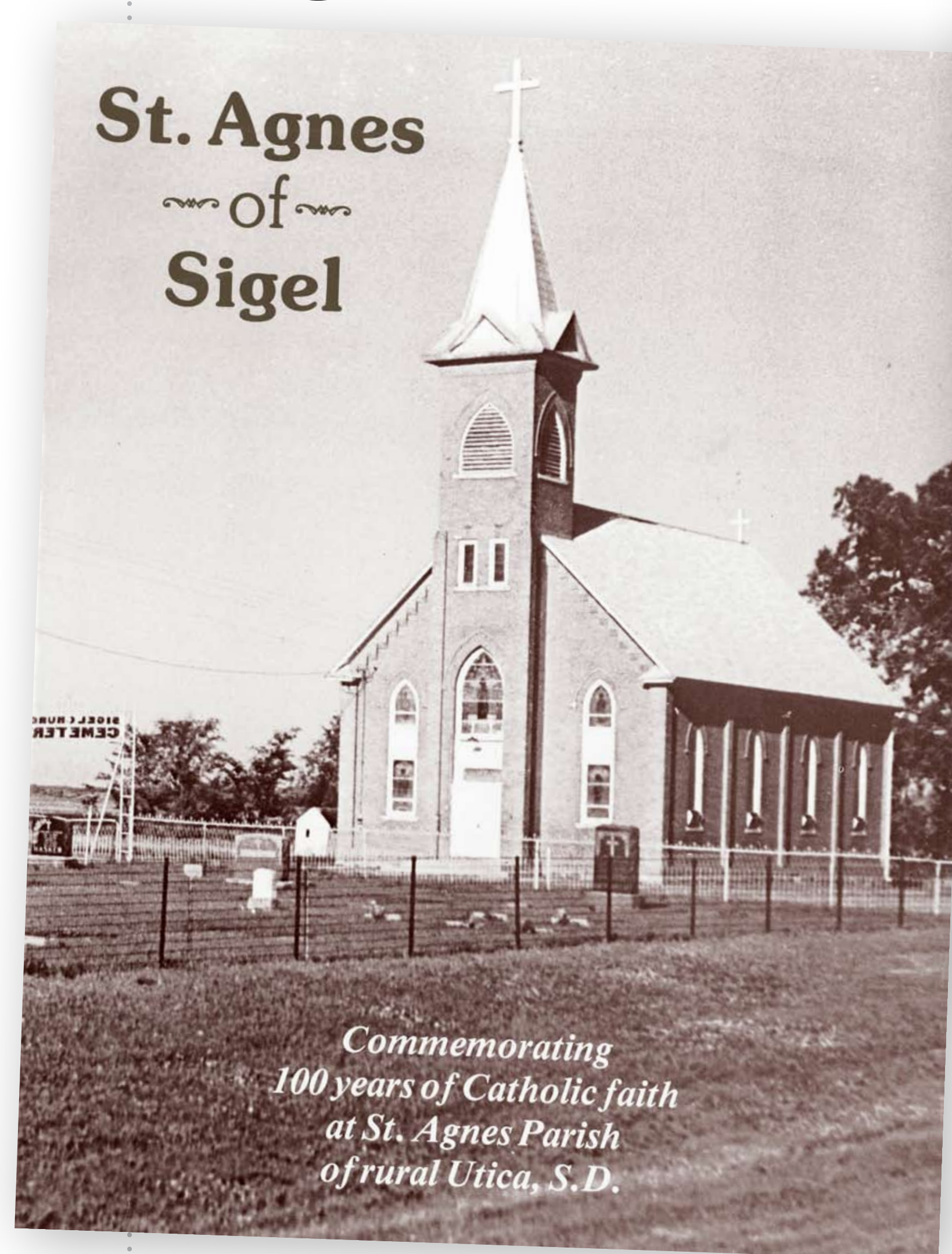
Under Criterion A of the National Register Criteria, the Old St. Wenceslaus Catholic Parish House is significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/European and Exploration/Settlement for its association with the migration of pioneer Czechs to the region. Built of local materials in 1878, the house is the first and oldest brick structure in Tabor, South Dakota. It served the parish until 1910, when it was replaced by a larger brick building and sold to a local resident. Under the South Dakota Historical Preservation Plan, the property relates the historic context and subcontexts labeled: IV. Permanent Rural and Urban Pioneer Settlement, B. Ethnic Enclaves, I. Czechs; and H. Religion.

Czechs began emigrating to Dakota Territory in 1869 settling in western Yankton County. As their population grew, they moved steadily westward. In 1872, a group of these pioneers established the town of Tabor to serve as a nucleus for Czech settlers entering the region. Situated in extreme eastern Bon Homme County, this community rapidly became and remains today the major Czech settlement in South Dakota. Unlike Pischelville, Nebraska, its nearby "Free Thinker" contemporary, the Tabor area was settled by Catholics and a few Presbyterians. Since the founding of their settlement, the citizens of Tabor have actively retained the traditions of their Old World heritage including language, music, dance, folk building, and religion.

In 1872, the Catholics of Tabor founded a new parish, and, in 1874, they built their first church, a rectangular building constructed of dressed chalkrock masonry. Shortly thereafter, in 1878, the parishioners built a residence for their priest. The building was constructed of bricks manufactured at Yankton. Its first occupant was Father Joseph Krizek. A long string of short-term priests followed, until 1893 when the Reverend Monsignor Emanuel Anton Bouska assumed leadership of the parish. Bouska directed St. Wenceslaus until his death in 1941. All priests domiciled in the house emigrated from Bohemia to serve the growing Czech Catholic community in Tabor.



Siegel St. Agnes



There is no record of the priest who said the first Mass. It was believed to be Rt. Rev. Msgr. George Sheehan who later supervised the building of the first church in 1885. Later Father Heidegar was convinced to come to the parish one Sunday of each month for Mass. The parishioners met each Sunday for prayers and were led by George Sigel who was assigned this duty by Father Heidegar.

No parish church was in existence at the time a wedding took place between Magdalena Bartsch of Sigel and Frank Schweitzer of Idylwilde on Feb. 14, 1884. The ceremony was performed at the home of the bride in the farm now occupied by Wilbert Braunschweiger. The first church building was dedicated by Bishop Martin Marty Aug. 15, 1885. There is a record of Bishop Marty holding confirmation for 37 persons at Jameville in 1886.

The parish of Sigel was also referred to as Jamesville. However, a record of the Sigel Parish Altar Society of 1886 had 19 members. The parish became known as the Sigel Parish after 1886. The spellings of names were changed or Americanized about the year 1896. Sigel became Sigel, Klimisches became Klimisch, Schioamm became Schramm and Lohring was changed to Learing as it sounded in English and in 1896 we see Sigel Church referred to as Sigel Church according to an Altar Society book discovered at the Church Hall.

The original church building, a wooden structure, was destroyed by a violent wind storm June 26, 1906. The families of Huber, Wagner, Heying, Hunhoff, Schramm, Drotzman and Sigel and others immediately began collecting money to start rebuilding the church. There were 17 families in the parish at that time.

Lesterville St. John the Baptist

THE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LESTERVILLE, S. D.

A group of Polish immigrants, looking for land, left Milwaukee and in 1871 found their way to the area about 20 miles northwest of Yankton. Among them were Joseph and Jacob Toczek, Joseph Borsnich, Michael Ugofsky, August Block, and Vince Zdenek. They were religious people and organized themselves as a parish. A church was built in 1873 with timber obtained from a school section on the Missouri River. The logs were hauled by oxen to the building site on ten acres donated by Joseph Walloch. This site, The Church Of The Immaculate Conception Of Mary, was visited by Father Shulak on one of his tours to elavie speaking settlers in Dakota. Father Sommersen of Yankton also offered them the opportunity of receiving the sacraments during this time.

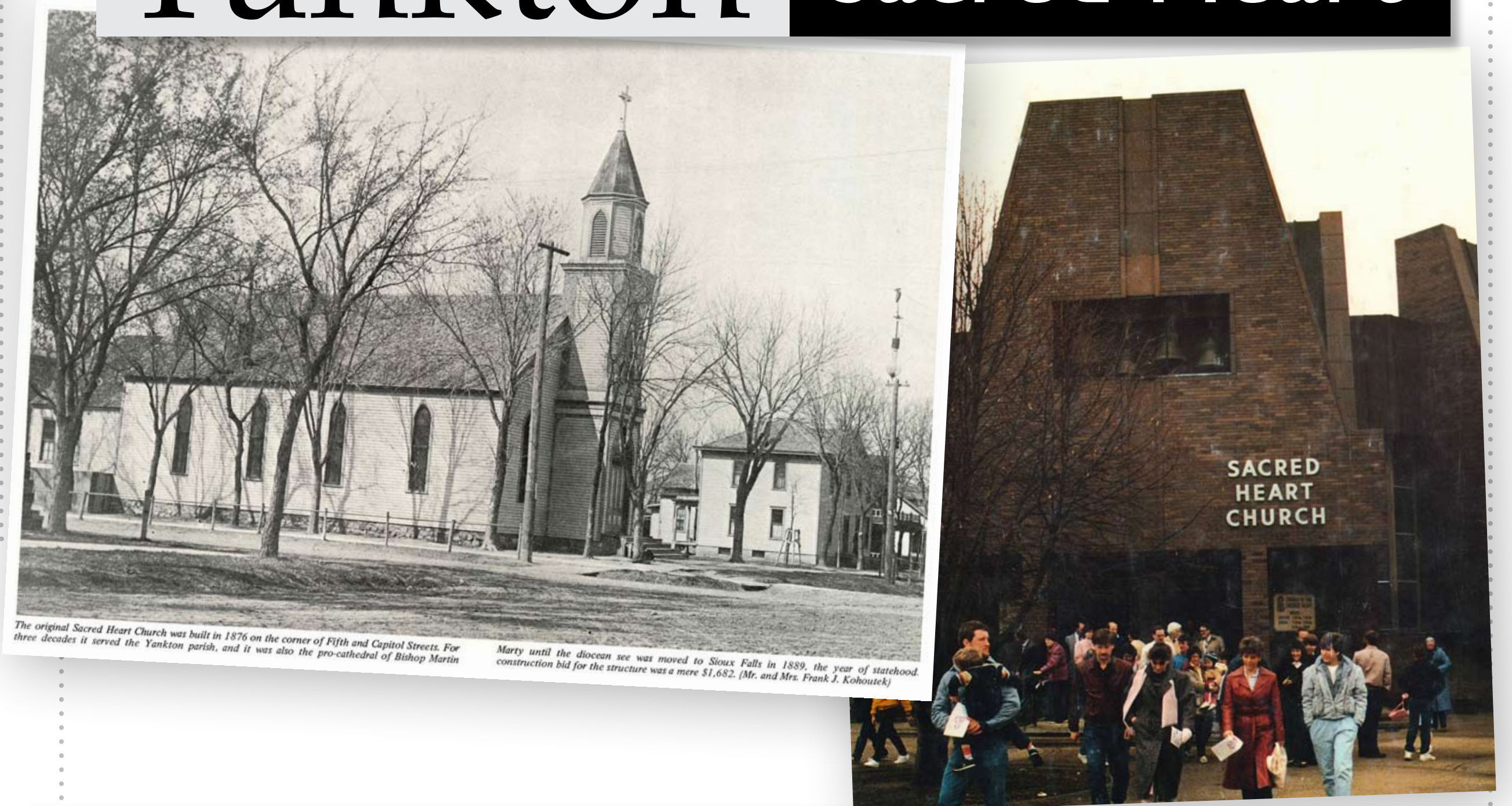
A town might have grown up around the church but when the railroad came thru three miles to the north, the town of Lesterville grew up along the Milwaukee line.

For awhile the towns people drove the three miles to the church now served by the priest from Tabor. Among them were Father Joseph Krizek 1880-1882, and Father Thomas Billy 1886-1888. When Father Bouska received Father Ignace Kruzynski as his assistant in Tabor in 1902, he commissioned him to establish a parish in Lesterville.

Father Kruzynski bought an entire city block from J. J. Wagner, built a church and rectory and the Church of The Immaculate Conception Of Mary was closed.



Yankton Sacred Heart



The original Sacred Heart Church was built in 1876 on the corner of Fifth and Capitol Streets. For three decades it served the Yankton parish, and it was also the pro-cathedral of Bishop Marty. Marty until the diocese was moved to Sioux Falls in 1898, the year of national confirmation had for the structure was a more \$1,000. (Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Koloski)

Yankton St. Benedict

DIocese of Sioux Falls

AUGUST, 1995

Parish groundbreaking is August 3 in Yankton

By BERNIE HUNHOFF
For the Bulletin

YANKTON—The site is chosen, the money is pledged and ground-breaking for the newest parish in the Diocese of Sioux Falls will be held August 3.

Bishop Robert Carlson will officiate at a 7 p.m. prayer service and short ceremony to mark the beginning construction of a church and parish center for St. Benedict Parish. St. Benedict was created in October of 1993 when diocesan officials and Yankton residents agreed that Yankton's lone parish, Sacred Heart, had grown too large for a single parish family. It was the largest parish in the diocese and Yankton was the largest city in the diocese to have just one parish.

Father Rod Farke, the founding pastor, has been celebrating parish liturgies in a school auditorium. He hopes the new church will be ready for Christmas services in 1996.

Located on a 43-acre plot on the northwest edge of Yankton, the new church will include a large chapel, daily chapel, parish offices, religious education classrooms, kitchen, conference room and nursery.

Doug Ekeren, who chairs the parish building committee, said a lot of people have offered ideas. "We could have just gone out and hired an architect and told him to design a church but we wanted to get input from the parish and we received some excellent suggestions."

Ekeren said meetings were held to get



Pictured at the site of what will be the newest Catholic church in the diocese are (from left) Darold Loecker, parish council president; Father Rod Farke, pastor; and Doug Ekeren, chairman of the building committee.

input and focus groups were formed to plan specific areas. Many of the 1,800 parishioners became involved.

Darold Loecker, St. Benedict's first parish council president, finds it exciting to be on the ground floor of a new parish. "We've probably had people working on committees who have never been on a

committee before in their parish life. The concept of work and prayer has certainly taken hold in St. Benedict's. This is a parish designed by the people."



SACRED HEART PARISH

Catholic life begins at Baptism, and the Catholic life that was to become Sacred Heart Parish, Yankton, began on June 3, 1840 when the Jesuit priest, Christopher Hoecken, baptized some Sioux Indian children somewhere in or near the present site of Yankton. The record of this birthing act is the first, official record of a Catholic sacrament administered - the beginning of a Community of Faith that today (1987) numbers more than 3500 members in over 2000 households in Yankton County, South Dakota.

From Father Christopher Hoecken's baptizing to today's activity at Fifth and Capitol Streets there is a long record of generous men and women who believed and gave witness to their belief to establish a parish, erect three churches, conduct a private school, provide young men and women to serve as priests and religious and to establish family life to continue that Catholic traditions that are aroused to life with the sacraments of Baptism, Communion, Penance, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony and Holy Orders.

In the early days of Catholicism in Yankton the names and dates are sporadic... Father Pierre Jean DeSmet, another Jesuit, ministered to the Indians in the Yankton area as did Augustine Ravoux, a French priest from the Diocese of St. Paul, Minnesota. Both Father Hoecken and Father DeSmet came from the Jesuit House at St. Louis, Missouri. Their native origin was Belgium.

It was not until September 21, 1871, that a priest was assigned to develop the Catholic community of Yankton into a parish. His name was Valentine Sommersen, an Austrian by birth, assigned by the Bishop of St. Paul to the small family of Catholics who were organizing a city on the banks of the Missouri River in Dakota Territory. His first recorded act was, again, a Baptism - the Baptism of Francis, son of Garvey and Mary Donahoe, on September 21, 1871.

Father Sommersen constructed a church-house at Ninth and Capitol for his fledgling congregation of settlers, traders, boatmen, government officials but, to his dismay, no Indians. In search of the Native American he often left his square stone headquarters to travel the prairies, and in time his forays created much tension among the Yankton Catholics who wanted a priest of their own, not a peripatetic, occasional pastor who would ring his church-house bell to alert them to his seldom-at-home Masses.

In October of 1876 he left Yankton in a fit of pique and the Catholics were given over to the pastoral care of a Frenchman, Pierre Bedard who served them only a few months. Others followed, none of them very permanent, until George L. Willard arrived in 1881 -- about the same time another priest came to Dakota Territory, a Benedictine Abbot Martin Marty who, too, came in search of an Indian mission career.

Abbot Marty came to Yankton as the Vicar Apostolic, Missionary Bishop, of the Dakotas. He located his Cathedral Church at Sacred Heart which by then was a simple frame structure at Fifth and Capitol, built to replace the Sommersen house-church with the bell that rang too seldom for the Catholic people.

During Father Willard's five year tenure as Pastor of Sacred Heart he also served as Vicar General to Bishop Marty and Sacred Heart was indeed, the Mother Church of the Catholics in Dakota. This happy honor was enjoyed by the Yankton community until 1889 when Bishop Marty moved his residence to Sioux Falls to establish the Diocese of Sioux Falls...the days as missionary diocese were over.

After several short-term appointments, the Yankton Catholics finally entered into a stable era when on January 25, 1895, Bishop Marty assigned Lawrence Link, newly ordained, to be pastor of Sacred Heart and assume charge in the once-pro Cathedral that was already too small for its growing congregation.

Father (later the Right Reverend Monsignor) Lawrence Link served as Pastor of Sacred Heart for over fifty years, until his death on August 8, 1946. During that time he constructed an imposing brick church, established a parish school, presided at the inauguration of a Court of the Catholic Daughters of America and a Council of the Knights of Columbus and saw Yankton grow from a dusty, river-served pioneer town to become a promising urban community nestled at the tailwaters of one of the largest earthen dams in the world and surrounded by some of the richest farm land in the mid-west.

During these developing years the people of Sacred Heart Parish welcomed the Sisters of Mercy who established a private school for girls in 1880, then the Sisters of St. Ann of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and, in 1877, the Sisters of St. Benedict who have been partners to parish life and have served as teachers, administrators, choir directors and organists, sacristans and catechists ever since.

When Monsignor Lawrence Link died in August 1946 the pioneer link of Sacred Heart Parish died with him. The little community that met Father Valentine Sommersen had become a parish family numbering in the thousands with a private school and all the parochial activities that were part of Catholic life at that time.

Father James A. Reilly (also to be named a Monsignor later on) followed the Link pastorate in October 1946 and moved into the frame parish house at 509 Capitol with his library of books and an ample supply of ash trays. His pastorate was to last about 21 years during which time he organized the Legion of Mary to serve as evangelists to the lapsed Catholics and welcomed to those who moved into Yankton. His voluminous reading prompted rather dry and scholarly sermons but his leadership prompted the Catholics to build a gymnasium-auditorium to enhance their school programs and to memorialize Monsignor Link, a spacious parish house and office building and, in 1967, a new church to replace the brick church constructed by his predecessor in 1905 but which was no longer adequate for the size of the parish nor adaptable to the needs of the new liturgy - the first fruits of Vatican Council II.

Monsignor Reilly did not see the new church finished, but died in November of 1967 and passed the reins of the parish on to one of his former associates, the Rev. Andrew E. Foley, who oversaw the construction of the new church.