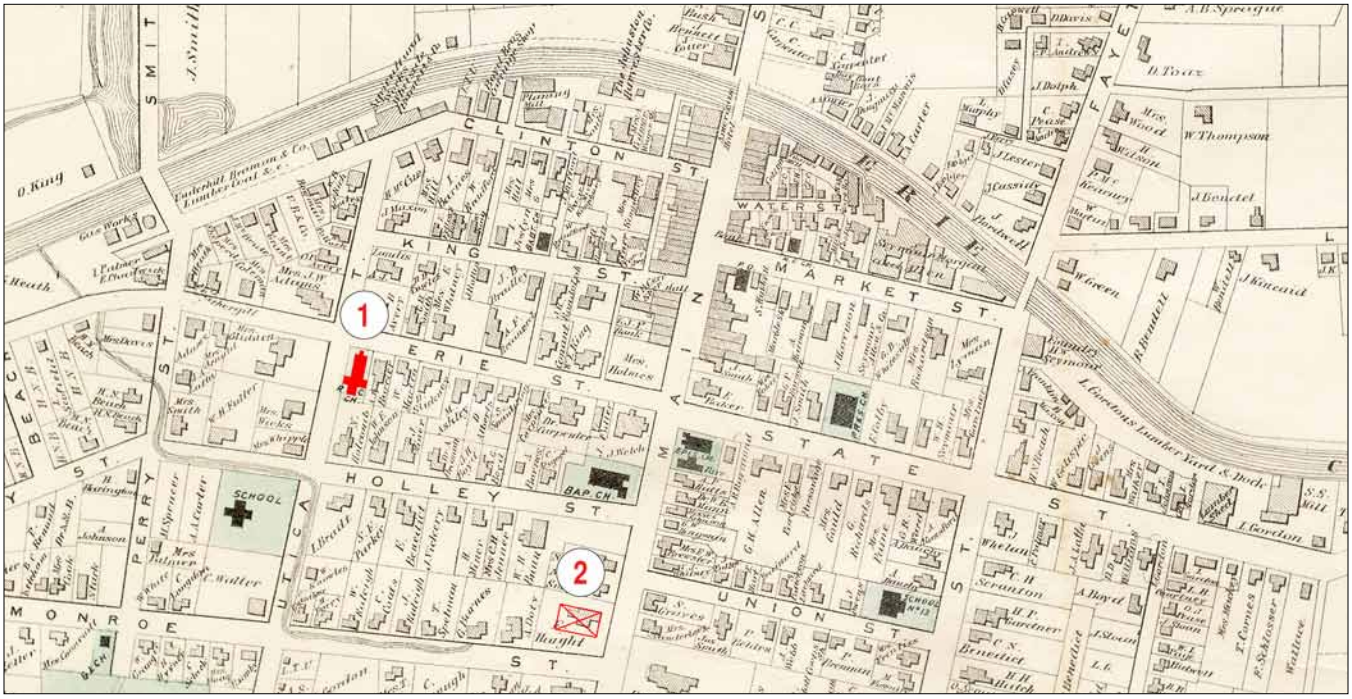
Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Roman Catholic) — Brockport



Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at Erie and Utica Streets, Brockport. Photo by George Guelph [?]. Courtesy of Emily L. Knapp Museum.

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, OF BROCKPORT (ROMAN CATHOLIC).

The first mass celebrated in Brockport was in the year 1848, by Rev. William O'Reilley, in the village hall. The first mass celebrated in this vicinity was by Rev. Bernard O'Reilley, at the house of William Skidmore, on which occasion Mr. Skidmore was baptized and received into the Catholic communion; he then lived at Sweden Centre. The Rev. Bernard O'Reilley had charge of Saint Patrick's church, Rochester. The Rev. William O'Reilley was appointed pastor of several villages, among them Brockport. The first committee were Casper Walter, William Skidmore, and James O'Niel. On July 19, 1851, a lot for a church building was purchased for three hundred and seventy-five dollars. Shortly after, the foundation was laid, under the direction of Rev. Michael Walsh, who lived at Scottsville, and had charge of Brockport, where he came once a month to celebrate mass. The Rev. Thomas Walsh took charge of this place in the latter part of 1851, and the surrounding country, embracing Bergen, Holley and Spencerport. In 1852 he married twelve couples and baptized twenty-five persons. The first recorded marriage was made on January 24, 1852, when Henry Kane was united to Mary Walsh and the first baptism was solemnized June 20, 1852, when Mary, daughter of John McKeon, was baptized. In August of 1854, Rev. John Donnelly took charge of the mission. During his pastorate he collected funds, and caused the walls of the church to be built and the building inclosed. In December, 1855, Rev. M. Laughlin was appointed, who remained only till June, 1856. At that time Rev. Edward McGonan was sent by Bishop Lemon to take charge of Brockport, Holley, Bergen, and Spencerport. Under the supervision of this able and zealous clergyman, the church was completed and consecrated. In several months after Father McGonan's pastorate, the church was solemnly dedicated by Bishop Lemon, of Buffalo. In



Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at Erie and Utica Streets (1), then at Main and Holley Streets (2), Brockport. Map (cropped): Beers, F. W., "1872 Plat map of Brockport"

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the afternoon of the same day, the same Right Rev. gentleman consecrated the cemetery purchased by Rev. McGonan a few weeks previously. On March 17, 1861, Rev. McGonan performed his last baptism here, and the Rev. Terence Keenan, of Hornellsville, was transferred to Brockport., March 28, 1861. About the 15th of March, 1863, he was transferred to Waterloo, a considerable station on the *old road*. On the 22d of March, 1863, Rev. Michael Creeden, of Auburn, New York, took possession of the mission, who remained only until October 1, 1863. On October 8, following, Rev. Richard J. Story, the present incumbent, was appointed, being transferred from Hornellsville to this place. His appointment was but temporary, yet his pastorate has proved to be one of the longest not only of any Catholic pastor, but of any clergyman that has preached at Brockport. On May 9, 1864, Rev. Father Story was reappointed to Hornellsville, which for special reasons he declined. On July 16, 1866, he was appointed to the church of the Immaculate Conception, at Rochester, which for special reasons he also declined. In 1870 the church and pastoral residence were enlarged, at an expense of some six thousand dollars. In the month of September, 1873, a large house and spacious grounds were purchased for a convent and parochial school. On January 10, 1876, the school was opened in a large schoolhouse erected during the years 1874-75, under the supervision of Sisters Ursu1a, Louise, and Agatha. The school attendance averages one hundred and forty. There are about one thousand souls in the parish of the N. B. V. church, and an average Sunday attendance of five hundred. The present trustees are the Right Rev. B. J. McQuaid, J. M. McManus, Rev. Richard J. Story, Casper Walter, and John Welch.

TilE YOUNG MEN'S CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION

Was organized in December, 1874, with about forty-five members. Its first officers were Rev. R. J. Story, president; E. Harrison, first vice-president; C. J. Lester, second vice-president; J. C. Collins, corresponding secretary; J. Egan, financial secretary; James Cotter, treasurer; James Larkin, warden; and F. Hilinbrandt assistant warden. Its present officers are E. Harrison, president; C. J. Lester, vice-president; J. C. Collins, secretary; James Larkin, financial secretary; James Cotter, treasurer; D. Alberts, warden; and Philip Hoffman, assistant warden. In January, 1876, at the time of the 1ast election of officers, it was changed from a Catholic to a regular literary association. It now has fifty members.

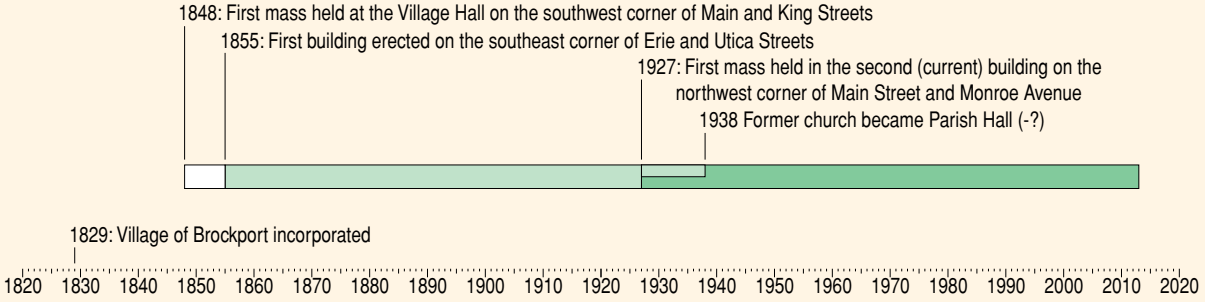
[McIntosh; 1877; p.163]

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Although all of our present churches have been improved or enlarged the only denomination to build a new edifice in recent years was the Catholic Church, whose present building is on Main St. at Monroe Ave. This church, without question, is the finest place of worship in our village, both in architectural design and material of construction. The rectory and church building proper are very appropriately attached and add, at the same time, to the attractiveness of the whole setting. The old church building at the corner of Erie St. and Utica is now used for social affairs of the church.

[Elwell; July 15, 1954; p.32]

J. R. Storey held the pastorate of the Catholic Church on Erie



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St. close to 50 years. He took charge of the parish in 1865. He was known and respected by all and ready at all times to give a word of advice. He won a place in the hearts of all, regardless of religion or calling. Father Storey's church had a membership of 1200 at this time.

[Elwell; undated; p.43,44]

The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Roman Catholic) celebrated its first mass in the year of 1848, by the Rev. William O'Reilley, in the village hall. He was appointed pastor of several villages, among them Brockport. On July 19th, 1857, a lot for a church building was purchased at the corner of Erie and Utica Sts for $375. Shortly after, the foundation was laid under the direction of the Rev. Michael Walsh, who lived in Scottsville. He came once a month to Brockport to celebrate mass. The Rev. Thomas Walsh took charge in the latter part of 1851. He also served Bergen, Holley, and Spencerport. In 1854, the Rev. John Donnelly took charge and it was during his pastorate that funds were collected which caused the walls to be built and the building enclosed.

In 1856, the Rev. Edward McGowan became pastor and under his supervision the church building was completed and consecrated; also the cemetery was purchased by the Rev. McGowan a few weeks previously.

On October 8th, 1863, the Rev. Richard J. Story was appointed, being transferred from Hornellville to this place. His pastorate has proven to be one of the longest, not only of any Catholic pastor, but of any clergyman who has preached in Brockport. In 1870 the church and pastoral residence was enlarged at an expense of $6,000. In 1873, a large house and spacious grounds were purchased for a convent and parochial school. The school attendance during that time averaged 140, and there was $1,000 persons in the parish of the church. The trustees in 1877 were the Rt. Rev. B. J. McQuaid, J. M. McMannus, the Rev. Richard J. Story, Casper Walter, and John Welch.

[Elwell; August 25, 1955; p.171]

CITATION:

Text Source:
Elwell, A.B., "History of Brockport With Vicinity Happenings, 1826 - 1956: Also Biographies of Prominent Men of the Past" (1956).
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Original document at: SUNY Brockport Archives
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Text Source:
McIntosh, William H.; "History of Monroe County NY: Town of Sweden & Village of Brockport" Published by Everts, Ensign & Everts (1877); 716 Filbert Street; Press of J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia.
Provenance:
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Map Source:
Atlas: "Monroe County 1872" Published by: Beers, F.W.
Provenance:
Original document at: SUNY Brockport Archives
http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/local_maps/11/

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