

HISTORY OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN'S PARISH,

EVANSTON, WYO. 1873 to 1933.



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PARISH, EVANSTON, WYO.

In the year 1873, the Rev. Father Cusan, who was then in charge of Laramie, visited Evanston, and found about twelve catholic families. Mass was celebrated in the school building until 1877, when Father Cusan purchased the present church building from the Baptist Home Mission Society, for the sum of \$1100.00. This amount was raised by the people in one month through the efforts of a basaar, and the church was free from debt from the very beginning.

In 1883, a plot of ground measuring 5.46 acres was purchased by Father Fitzgerald, for a catholic cemetery.

In 1897, the coal fields in the north eastern part of Uinta County began to be developed, and attracted quite a number of catholics. In 1898, Father Peter Casey, who was then in charge of Evanston, attended the new coal camp which was named Kemmerer, and in 1899 was instrumental in the erection of a neat church building to serve the needs of the growing catholic population of that section. In July, 1902, Father Casey was transferred to the charge of Rawlins, where he died in February, 1903.

The property, house and lot, adjoining the church on the east side was acquired by purchase from Mrs Fiero, February, 1920. The house was the first school building in Evanston, and Mass was celebrated in it previous to the purchase of the present church from the Baptist Home Mission Society.

Parish conditions continued normal for a few years, though a disturbing rumor existed to the effect that Evanston would soon be abandoned as a railroad Terminal. Rumor shortly became fact. On March, 11th., 1926, the Home Terminal for Freight Conductors and Brakemen was changed to Ogden. On August, 31st., of the same year the Roundhouse and Shops were closed and Evanston as a railroad division was no more. The Locomotive Engineers and Firemen were all that remained. The effect on the parish was serious. Several catholic families, many old time residents, were transferred elsewhere. On November, 8th., 1926, the Citizen's Committee was successful in having the shops re-opened, but this was only temporary, and on January, 23rd., 1927, the Railroad Reclamation Plant was begun with a minimum of 100 men. Some/

Some of the families transferred back to Evanston, and at present (year, 1928) about 225 men employed. The number of catholics is unusually small and far below the regular average; and considering the low rate of wages conditions are not the best. The parish in 1928, numbered 35 families.

To the East, 36 miles from Evanston, is historic Fort Bridger, an agricultural and ranching district. There are about 16 catholic families scattered far and wide. Mass is celebrated in a Hall twice a month, when roads are passable. On September 1st., 1928, a class of eleven children made their First Communion. This was the first regular class in the History of the place.

The following pastors had charge of Evanston:-

Rev. Father Ousan (attended from Laramie) 1873-1880.
Rev. M. F. Cassidy, 1880 - 1884.
Rev. Christopher Fitzgerald, 1884-1895.
Rev. Peter Casey, 1895-1901.
Rev. Thomas Hayes, 1902-1903.
Rev. Patrick Walsh, 1903-1904.
Rev. Thomas Barrett, 1903-1907.
Rev. D. M. Tully, 1907-1908.
Rev. M. A. Kennedy, 1908-1910.
Rev. P. J. Lynch, 1910-1911.
Rev. R. B. Greener, 1912-1914.
Rev. Michael Stagno, (Nov. to Dec. 1914).
Rev. John F. Morston, 1915-1923.
Rev. John J. O'Connor, 1923-1932.
Rev. Edward Cassidy, 1932 -

In January, 1932, the Rev. John J. O'Connor, was transferred to the charge of Torrington, and was succeeded by the Rev. Edward Cassidy, the present pastor.