

HISTORY OF ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, KEMMERER,

1898 - 1933.

HISTORY OF ST. PATRICK'S PARISH,  
KEMMERER, WYO.

As far as can be learned, the first Mass in Kemmerer was said by Father Peter Casey in 1898, in Keenan's Hall. He attended Kemmerer as a mission from Evanston for about two years, occasionally also holding services in the boarding house at Frontier, Wyoming, where a coal mine was opened in the year 1900. About ten families attended the services at that time.

The Kemmerer Coal Company, which operated in this section of Wyoming, donated a lot for the erection of a church building in Kemmerer in the year 1899, and it was in the year following that Father Casey commenced the building of a neat stone church upon that site. The cost of the building amounted to \$7,500.00. Half of this amount was collected locally, for the other half a debt was contracted.

The pioneer Catholic laymen included: P.J. Quealy (first Secretary), Larry Quealy (first Treasurer), Michael Blake, John Sloan and Joe Pelligreni. Mr P.J. Quealy was the vice-president of the Kemmerer Coal Company, which is largely responsible for the development of the local coal resources.

In all probability the Rev. H. Golden was the first resident priest of St. Patrick's Parish (1901). Following his administration Kemmerer was attended successively by Father R.F. Blanik, O.S.B. (about three months), and by Father G. Woldene (about six months). Rev. Father L.E. Duchesneau took charge in 1903, and was pastor until 1904. He was followed by Father M.A. Kennedy (1904-1905), who successfully paid off a large amount of the debt. His successor was Rev. T. J. Barrett (1905-1906), who was pastor of Evanston and attended Kemmerer as a mission.

It was especially during this period that several mines were opened in the vicinity of Kemmerer to which especially Catholics of Slavish nationality grouped. We may mention the names of the following camps which were attended from Kemmerer: The Kemmerer Church is attended by people from Frontier and Diamondville, the others are: Sublet (No. 5 and 6), Elkol, Glencoe and Cumberland No. 1 and 2.

Father George Lavallee (1906-1910), took charge of St. Patrick's Parish in 1906. During his administration the following improvements were made: a church was erected at Cumberland, (Immaculate Conception) at a cost of \$1400.00; \$1150.00 was paid on the church debt. A steam heating plant was installed in St. Patrick's Church at a cost of \$230.00; also a new high altar (\$340.00); the inside of the church was painted (\$240.00). St. Patrick's Rectory was built at a cost of about \$4000.00, indebtedness \$2500.00.

In 1910, Father J. A. Duffy, was appointed pastor and stayed almost one year, when he was called back to St. Mary's Cathedral at Cheyenne, Wyo. He succeeded in paying off the balance of the debt on the church (\$280.00)

Rev. T. D. Lynch took charge in 1911-1919. Improvements in St. Patrick's Church: installment of bell, liquidation of debt on house by generosity of Mr Joe Kinney. Father Lynch erected a mission church at Sublet, (Assumption of the Blessed Virgin), at a cost of \$1000.00 in 1912. He also secured a grant of five acres of land from the City of Kemmerer for a Catholic burying ground (St. Patrick's Cemetery) in 1912; and erected St. Dominic's Church in Cokeville in the year 1919, at a cost of nearly \$5000.00. A good deal of credit must be given the ladies of the Altar Society under the able leadership of Mrs P.J. Quealy, whose financial assistance enabled the pastor to make many improvements. In 1912 Bishop McGovern confirmed thirty-one children and one adult; in 1916 fifty-one children and five adults; in May, 1920, one hundred and three children; in October, 1926, fifty-five children; May, 1931, sixty-six children.

On December, 15, 1919, Rev. Gerard Schellinger took charge of the parish. During his pastorate a choir loft was built at a cost of \$380.00, and new windows installed in church. There was a debt of about \$1000.00 on the parish when Father Schellinger took charge. The ladies of the Altar Society held a bazaar which realized \$900.00. In August, 1920, the Note of \$1000.00 in favor of the Diocese of Cheyenne was paid in full. In January, 1921, Father Schellinger was transferred to the charge of St. Joseph's parish, Rawlins, and was succeeded by Rev. William J. Short.

During Father Short's pastorate many improvements were carried out, especially the repair of the mission church at Cumberland. The Catholic Church Extension Society, Chicago, donated the sum of \$500.00, for the church at Cumberland. This was used for much needed repairs to the building, and the Union Pacific Coal Company had the outside of the church painted, without any extra cost to the congregation. It was during Father Short's pastorate that the sum of \$2272.82, was paid to Mr Dominic Etcheverry, Cokeville, who had assumed that debt for the new church at Cokeville.

On February, 6, 1923, Father Short was transferred to the charge of St. Margaret's Church, Riverton, with missions at Hudson and Shoshone. He was succeeded in the pastorate at Kemmerer by Rev. F.P. Szymanski. During Father Szymanski's pastorate he had a retaining wall built on the south-side of the church to prevent water getting into the basement. He had the outside of the Rectory painted. In February, 1924, the Board of Trustees had under consideration the improvement of the church property, and the erection of a parish hall for the needs of the parish. For want of sufficient interest/

interest in the matter by the members of the parish, it was decided to take no further action.

On July, 9, 1924, Father Szymanski was transferred to the charge of Kleenburn and missions, near Sheridan, and was again succeeded by the Rev. William J. Short, who had been in charge of St. Margaret's parish, Riverton.

On again assuming charge Father Short commenced to carry out much needed improvements on the church and property. In August, 1924, a new Ideal Boiler was purchased at a cost of \$623.00, to take care of the heating of church and rectory. Mr J. Thomas Hall, Master Mechanic with the Kemmerer Coal Co., donated his time in fitting up the boiler. In October, 1924, a new sewer, lavatory and toilet, was constructed in the church basement at a cost of \$319.00.

In February, 1925, Mr D. B. Spani, Architect, Rock Springs, was consulted with regard to the condition of the church building. A meeting of the parishioners was held and it was decided to proceed with the necessary repairs. The church tower was strengthened, and all stone work pointed. A new roof was put on church, and the interior decorated. The cost of these improvements amounted to \$1200.00. A new Communion Rail was purchased from the Daprato Statuary Co., Chicago. Mrs Mary Byers donated \$200.00 toward the purchase. In 1926, channel and curbing on the north and east side of property was installed.

In the Spring of 1927, many improvements were carried out in St. Patrick's Cemetery. The water supply to the cemetery was furnished through wooden pipes, which caused considerable waste. To remedy this condition several hundred feet of new galvanized iron ~~xxx~~ pipe was laid at a cost of \$200.00. A building for tools and equipment, including two toilets, was erected at a cost of \$170.00. The driveways in cemetery were improved, and the grounds planted with trees and shrubs. Since the introduction of the improved water system, the general appearance of the cemetery has improved, and many beautiful lawns are to be seen. A caretaker is in charge of the cemetery during the summer months.

In April, 1929, Mr Patrick J. Quealy donated the sum of \$1000.00, to be applied on the purchase of two vacant lots Nos. 1 and 2, in Block, 43, located at the corner of Sapphire Street and Sage Avenue in the Town of Kemmerer. On the 18th of May, 1929, these lots were purchased by St. Patrick's Church Corporation, for the sum of \$2000.00. The Deed and Abstract were recorded in the Office of the County Clerk of Lincoln County, Kemmerer, and forwarded to the Most Rev. Patrick A. McGovern, D.D., Cheyenne, for safe keeping in the Diocesan Vault.

On the 24th of June, 1929, Mr Michael Maley, of Sublet, passed to his eternal reward. He was an "old timer" and Veteran of the Indian Wars. Mr Maley was born in Ireland in 1845, and had reached the grand old age of 84 years. A Requiem High Mass was celebrated for the repose of his soul on June, 27th, and his mortal remains interred in the Knights of Columbus Plot, St. Patrick's Cemetery. Mr Maley left all his worldly possessions to St. Patrick's Church, Kemmerer, which amounted to about \$1700.00. The administrator of the estate presented a beautiful chalice to the church in memory of Mr Maley. This chalice bears a suitable inscription.

In December, 1929, the church property was further improved by the building of a retaining wall on the south boundary of the property. The cost of this improvement was borne jointly by the School Board of District No. 1, and the church.

In April, 1930, another very necessary improvement was carried out in the church. A new oak floor was laid in the Sanctuary, and the wall behind altar replastered and decorated. These improvements cost \$350.00.

In the Spring of 1930, the Union Pacific Coal Company closed the Mines at Cumberland No. 1 and 2, and moved the people to Rock Springs and Superior. There being no further use for the mission church at this place, it was sold to the Lincoln Planing Mill and Lumber Company, Kemmerer, for the sum of \$100.00. The amount received for the building was donated to St. Joseph's Orphanage, Torrington, Wyo.

On the 17th November, 1930, a pall of gloom spread over the parish when the news was flashed to the world that Patrick J. Quealy had passed to his eternal reward. Mr Quealy throughout his life was a faithful member of St. Patrick's Church, and a generous contributor. He was responsible for the building of the Town of Kemmerer, being associated with the late John Kemmerer of New York. He was vice-president of the Kemmerer Coal Company; president of the First National Bank, Kemmerer, and interested in other business enterprises.

On Thursday, November, 20th., a Solemn Requiem High Mass was celebrated in St. Patrick's Church, for the repose of his soul, in presence of the Most Rev. Patrick A. McGovern, B.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne. The celebrant of the Mass was the Rev. William J. Short, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, with the Rev. Gerard Schellinger, Rawlins, former pastor of St. Patrick's Church, as Deacon, and the Rev. Henry Schellinger, Green River, Sub-Deacon. The Most Rev. Bishop preached the funeral sermon, and gave the final absolution. The mortal remains of Mr Quealy were interred in the family plot in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

In the Fall of 1931, an Automatic Stoker was installed in the church boiler. This has proved very economical in heating church and rectory, and gives satisfactory results. Owing to the unsatisfactory condition of the roof on rectory, it was decided to put on a new roof of Asbestos Shingles at a cost of \$267.00.

#### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PRESENT PASTOR -

Rev. William J. Short.

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Born in Ireland, June, 15, 1882. Received his early education in the National Schools of his native land. At the age of 15 went to Glasgow, Scotland. Studied at Skerry's Business College, Glasgow, and the Glasgow Technical College, Glasgow, Scotland. In October, 1901, appointed stenographer and charge of statistics in the office of the Public Health Department of the Dumbarton County Council, 24 George Square, Glasgow, Scotland. Received the Diploma in Public Health and Sanitary Science of the Royal Sanitary Institute, London, England, May, 4, 1907. Resigned from the Public Health Service, August, 24, 1912. In September, 1912, entered St. Anne's College, Blackburn, for a classical course. Studied at Mount Mellery Seminary, Cappoquin, Waterford, Ireland, September, 1913 - June, 1914. Entered St. Patrick's College, Carlow, Ireland, September, 1914, for the study of Sacred Science. Received Minor Orders from the Most Rev. Patrick Foley, D.D., Bishop of Kildare and Laughlin, in St. Patrick's College Chapel, Carlow, Passion Sunday, 1919. Ordained Sub-Deacon, June, 15, 1919, by the Most Rev. Patrick Finegan, D.D., Bishop of Kilmore, in the Cathedral, Cavan, Ireland. Ordained Deacon, July, 26, 1919, in the Convent Chapel of the Poor Clares, Cavan, by the Most Rev. Patrick Finegan, D.D., Bishop of Kilmore. Ordained priest for the Diocese of Cheyenne, Wyoming, by the Most Rev. Patrick Finegan, D.D., Bishop of Kilmore, in the Cathedral, Cavan, August, 10, 1919.

Appointed Administrator of St. Joseph's Church, Rawlins, December, 16, 1919. Assistant at St. Mary's Cathedral, Cheyenne, May, 1920 - November, 1920. Administrator of St. Joseph's Church, Rawlins, November, 1920 - January, 1921. Appointed to the charge of St. Patrick's Church, Kemmerer, January, 13, 1921. Appointed first resident pastor of St. Margaret's Church, Riverton, February, 6, 1923. Recalled to take charge of St. Patrick's Church, Kemmerer, July, 9, 1924. In charge of St. Patrick's Church, Kemmerer, from July, 9, 1924 to present date, January, 1933.