

HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF NEWCASTLE, WYO.

1888 - 1928.

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NEWCASTLE, WYO. 1888-1928.

The town of Newcastle sprung up with the advent of the Burlington Railroad to that part of Wyoming. It dates back to the year 1888, but at that time was composed principally of tents and dugouts, with the addition of a couple of store buildings.

As early as the year 1889, a Father Brophy from Chadron, Nebraska, visited the town; said Mass in a boarding house beside the section house and baptised some children. He repeated the visits on a few other occasions, and about the same time a German priest, whose name is not known, came for some time from Ardmore, S.D.

In the year 1891, Father P. Cassidy, from Hot Springs, S.D., began to visit Newcastle and the Cambria mining camp that had just been opened. Father Cassidy came periodically from the year 1891 to 1896. During this time the catholics of Newcastle began the work of building their church. One lot for the church was donated by the Lincoln Land Company, the other bought by the parish. During the last year that Father Cassidy attended the parish he held Mass in the church building, named the church of Corpus Christi, though it was far from completed. By slow degrees, as the people were able to acquire the money, they added the necessary improvements to the building, such as plastering the walls, putting down proper flooring, providing pews and an humble altar. Part of this work was done during the two years that Father John C. Aherne visited Newcastle from S. Dakota (October, 4, 1896 to April, 24, 1898). He, like his predecessor, had no special days for Mass, but merely sent word ahead and arranged for a date when he could.

In the year 1898, Newcastle had its first resident pastor, Father John Bigouette, who lived in the Sacristy at the back of the church, and bearded wherever he could. He remained the greater part of the year, and on his departure the parish received its second resident pastor in the person of the Rev. Thomas Hayes, who made Newcastle his headquarters for general missionary activities in all North-eastern Wyoming. For three or four years Father Hayes' efforts were not confined to Newcastle and the surrounding missions, but after the example of St. Paul he made long missionary journeys, generally on foot, over the barren prairie, which often brought him as far from home as Douglas, Buffalo, or Sheridan.

During this time several other priests visited the parish, but only for special occasion, like a funeral when the pastor was absent. Father Sasse of Sheridan, a Father/

Father Quinn from some place in Nebraska, and a few other priests paid casual visits in this way.

During this time the parish was not in debt for its church building. The total sum which must have amounted to upwards of \$3500.00, was provided by the few zealous catholics who were the pioneers in this locality. At the time the church was built and paid for, the parish boasted of only twelve practical catholic families, and these have since disappeared, except, the Coyle family on Oil Creek, and the Thomson family from Beaver Creek.

During the first half of 1902, Newcastle again had a change of pastors, Father Walsh remaining from January, 1902 to June, 1902. He was succeeded by Father Lynch, who was pastor of the parish until January, 1910. During his time the commodious parochial house was built, costing \$3500.00, a debt of \$780.00, which had accumulated under his predecessors was paid off, and the Cambria church built.

Newcastle has had as many as nine different pastors since Father Lynch's time, and during that period, with the exception of a new high altar, donated by Michael J. Coyle, in 1915, when Father John Mullin was pastor, belfrey built by the parish, and a bell donated by Mrs Dixon in the same year, there has not been much improvement done to the property.

The parish has not grown in the thirty years of its existence as well as might have been expected, because the town was what is known as "dead" during the last fifteen years of that time. Newcastle was originally a second class division point on the Burlington Railroad, but this division was moved to Edgemont, S.D. This action of the railroad officials hurt the town and especially the catholic parish, as many of the railroaders were catholics, and these moved to Edgemont.

At the present time (1918) Newcastle has about thirty catholic families, or one hundred twenty souls. Some of these are not very practical catholics, and some of them are so far from church that it is only occasionally in the summer time that they can attend Mass. The parish has Mass every Sunday, except the third Sunday of each month, on which day the pastor is in Moorcroft.

In June, 1917, Bishop McGovern visited the parish for confirmation. A class of forty was confirmed, nine of whom were recent converts to the church.

The following were resident pastors of
Newcastle and Missions:

In 1898, Rev. Julius Bigouette.
1898 to 1902, Rev. Thomas Hayes.
January, 1902 to June, 1902, Rev. P. J. Walsh.
June, 1902 to January, 1910, Rev. Patrick Lynch.
January, 1910 to April, 1910, Rev. Alphonsus B. Parker.
April, 1910 to November, 1910, Rev. John O'Brien.
November, 1910 to May, 1911, Rev. Joseph DeRep, S. J.,
May, 1911 to April, 1914, Rev. Joseph H. DeNicola.
April, 1914 to April, 1915, Rev. Casimir Tomiak.
April, 1915 to December, 1915, Rev. John H. Mullin.
December, 1915 to January, 1916, Rev. James A. Boland.
January, 1916 to October, 1917, Rev. John T. Nicholson.
October, 1917 to November, 1918, Rev. John O'Loughlin.
March, 1919 to January, 1924, Rev. John Brady.
January, 1924 to present date, 1928, Rev. B. Schneiders.

NEWCASTLE MISSIONS.

As early as 1889 a discovery of coal was made some seven miles to the North of Newcastle. A mine was opened by the Kilpatrick and Collins Company, and the camp was called Cambria. This is the most important mission of Newcastle, and has been attended by every priest who came to Newcastle, since Father Cassidy first came across from Hot Springs. At first Mass was said in the Hall, which served as pool hall, dance and concert hall and general meeting place. Sometimes it was held in a private house. This state of affairs continued until 1903, when the miners decided to have a church. The coal company gave a lease on a Lot for 99 years, and St. James' Church was erected on the Lot in the end of 1903 and the beginning of 1904. The mine workers, aided by some liberal donations from the Kilpatrick Brothers, built the church at a cost of \$2000.00, and left it entirely free from debt. The church has undergone no change since that time, except in 1916, the interior was papered by the Rev. John Nicholson, the parishioners providing the \$100.00 necessary for the work. The mission of Cambria, besides building its own church, aided very materially in providing the parochial house for Newcastle.

The congregation in Cambria has always been composed of people of different nationalities, Irish, Italians, Poles, and Austrians predominating. At the present time (1928) there are about five Irish American families, four practical Italian families, three Austrians, three Poles, and a few casuals amongst the Macedonians. Many of the other families, though not practical wish to have the services of a priest for baptisms, marriages, and funerals. Some of these people are more zealous to have their children baptised than many apparently practical catholics.

The other Newcastle Missions, Upton, Moorcroft, and Rozet, are attended once a month. Every pastor since Father Luch's time has visited these places. Father Nicholson, with the aid of a donation from Church Extension built a church first at Moorcroft, St. Patrick's church, for which the Lincoln Land Company donated the lot. The church cost about \$800.00 and was dedicated on the third Sunday of April, 1917, by Father Nicholson, the building on that day being free from debt. Without the \$500.00 donation from Church Extension, the church could not have been built. The first catholic family in Moorcroft was the Noonan family, which is now composed of some eight or nine branches. The head of the family still resides there. This mission has about 15 catholic families.

St. Anthony's Church of Upton was built in the same way, the Church Extension Society donating \$500.00, but here the parish had to buy the lot. The building cost \$900.00, and is free from debt. It was dedicated by Father Nicholson, on Saturday 22nd December, 1917. The city of Upton does not boast of any but one catholic family, the congregation is scattered over an extended territory and is composed in all of about twelve families

Rozet has no church as yet, but work is about to commence on their church, which is to be built in the same fashion as the church at Moorcroft, except that it will cost some \$400.00 more to build. There are about 10 catholic families in this mission. The Shaughnessy family being the pioneer family of the locality.

In October, 1917, the Rev. John O'Loughlin, was appointed pastor to succeed the Rev. John Nicholson. Father O'Loughlin had charge of the parish until his death, which occurred in the Antlers Hotel, Newcastle, Nov. 1918, where he had gone to reside while the rectory was being repaired. He was buried in the Newcastle Cemetery. The parish was without a resident pastor until March, 1919, when the Rev. John Brady was appointed. Father Brady had charge of the parish until January, 1924, when he was succeeded by Father Bernard Schneiders.

In June, 1925, the church at Four Corners was re-opened and established as a Corporation under the name of "Church of St. Albert."

The coal camp at Cambria, which was once a flourishing mission, was closed on March, 15, 1928.

The Mission of Rozet was taken over in September, 1926, by the newly established parish of Gillette.

Newcastle

Catholic family at the ^{time} ~~service~~. The other members of the mission, about twelve families, were scattered over the territory.

~~The Mission of Rozet had no church intended to follow the example of the other missions and build soon. Plans were made for a church similar in style to the church at Woodcroft only it was to cost \$100 more.~~ ^{Shortly after, a similar church was built at Rozet.} There were approximately ten Catholic families in the ^{the} Rozet mission. The Sheughnessy family was the ^{the} pioneer family of the locality. *

In October, 1919, Rev. John O'Loughlin was appointed pastor to succeed Rev. John Nicholson. Pether ^{O'Loughlin} remained in charge of the parish until his death ^{in 1925} at the Antlers hotel in Newcastle, ~~November, 1919~~. ^{He} was staying ^{at the hotel} while the factory was being repaired. He was buried in the Newcastle cemetery. The parish was without a pastor until March, 1919.

In June, 1925, the church at Four Corners was opened and established as a corporation under the name of "Church of St. Albert."

* The mission of Rozet was taken over in September, 1926, by the newly established parish of Willette.

The ^{regime} of Rev. Bernard Schneiders was uneventful. He returned to Holland in July, 1933, and was succeeded by Rev. Nicholas Andres, who served from July, 1933, to September, 1935, when he resigned.

Rev. James McBride served from September, 1935, to October, 1938, when ^{Rev. J. J. Mullins}, the present pastor, assumed charge.

Since 1925, the following improvements were made in the parish: The foundation of the church of Corpus Christi was repaired and rebuilt in places; furnaces were installed in the church and rectory; a cement floor was placed in the cellar of the house.

Confirmations were as follows: May 6, 1931, 22; May 15, 1934, 20; May 20, 1937, 12; June 17, 1938, 25.

There were nineteen baptisms and eight marriages in the year, 1938.

The Church of Corpus Christi and its missions are free from debt and there is one thousand dollars in the treasury.