St. Mary Catholic Church

The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Reedsville was built by a settlement of Catholic Bohemians. In 1862 the parishioners purchased the land where the Reedsville High School now stands, intending to erect a church there, but they abandoned the idea because the place was so swampy that they did not wish to bury their dead there. These people, consisting of twenty-five families were earnest and zealous Catholics. They bought the property on Menasha Street in 1863 and in 1865 they built a small log church 24 feet by 36 feet, where the present cemetery is located. The townspeople laughed when they saw the church under construction for they said, "It looks like a saloon."

The first records were kept at St. Patrick's Parish in Maple Grove. The first baptism recorded is that of John Tikalsky, son of Elizabeth and John Tikalsky, January 1, 1872, by the Rev. Gideon Mazanek. The first Mass was recorded when Frank Kokorek and Barbara Foreyt were married January 4, 1871, by the Rev. Joseph Maly. The first officers of the congregation were John Tikalsky, Matt Voboril, and Joseph Tikalsky.

After its organization, this congregation was attended by the Rev. Joseph Maly who, while resident pastor at Francis Creek, visited the mission. Then for one year, the Rev. G. Mazanek of Cooperstown attended to the spiritual wants, but at the end of that time Father Maly again assumed the charge, maintaining the same until 1876.

The first resident pastor at Reedsville was a Pole, who also spoke the Bohemian language, the Rev. Julius Stroelke. He built the first parsonage at this place, a small and unpretentious house, which served its purpose for some considerable time. When he left Reedsville in 1877, Father Maly, then pastor at Kellnersville, again attended the mission.

On October 6, 1878, the Rev. T. Spunar was appointed pastor of the congregation and all its out-missions. During his administration, St. Anne's Altar Society was founded with a membership of forty ladies. A new bell was also bought and blessed by the Right Rev. Bishop F. X. Krautbauer on November 12, 1878. By this time the congregation had assumed such proportions that it was deemed advisable to erect a new church. The feelings of the congregation being unanimous in regard to that matter, work was begun on the building at once. On June 9, 1881, the cornerstone of the new brick church was blessed by the bishop. Emperor Franz Josef of Austria gave a cash donation of $150 toward the construction.

The handsome main altar in this church was presented to the congregation by the St. Anne's Society. In February 1882 a new St. Anne's statue and a new pulpit were installed in the building.

Father Spunar left Reedsville March 21, 1882, and was succeeded as pastor by the Rev. John Videnka. While he was here, a St. Joseph Benevolent Society was founded, vestments, an organ, and side altar were purchased. The pastor died here on May 29, 1885, while still in charge and is buried in the church cemetery.

For two months St. Mary's was again without a pastor. Then on July 16, 1885, Rev. William Kramer was sent by the Right Rev. Bishop of the Diocese to take charge of the pastorate. He was a newly ordained priest who could speak the Czech language. He also took care of two German mission churches at Brillion and Kasson. One Sunday Reedsville had two Masses, the next Sunday Brillion had one Mass and Kasson had one Mass.

Among other improvements made by this pastor to the property in general was the erection of a Sisters' dwelling, and changing the old church into a school. The latter undertaking completed, school was opened on September 30, 1886, being placed at that time in charge of the Sisters from Silver Lake Convent.

During this same year a branch of the Catholic Knights of Wisconsin was established in the congregation. On April 10, 1889, a branch of the third order of St. Francis was also organized with forty members. Thus from time to time an increased interest was made
manifest in the church, as well as numerous improvements and additions which were occasionally put upon the property.

Four years later, the school house was torn down and replaced by a large and well arranged building. The parish was now in a satisfactory condition and although a considerable amount of money had been spent in the erection of buildings, and constant improvements made upon them for a number of years, all of this had been effected without the necessity of incurring any debt whatsoever.

At about this time, the Rev. William Kramer resigned the charge to accept the pastorate at Ahnapee (now Algoma) and he was succeeded on October 1, 1896, by the Rev. Adalbert Cipin. At this time the congregation consisted of 24 Bohemian families. Rev. Cipin was born in Bohemia, where he was ordained to the priesthood in 1873.

In 1907 the present church was built. Father Kolar left the parish in 1920 and Rev. John Landowski was the priest for one year.

In 1921 Rev. J. W. Decker came to serve the parish and was here until 1928. Then Rev. J. C. Kalishek came. The convent was replaced in 1928 and is now the present convent. In 1932, Rev. Joseph Vondrachek came and was the pastor for two years.

Rev. William Koutnik became the pastor in 1934. While he was here, the present St. Mary's School was built. In 1951 a tornado damaged the church, but it was repaired immediately. Rev. Koutnik passed away in 1965.

Father Norman Krutzik came and remained for about a year.

Then the bishop sent Rev. Adolph Dolezel to be the pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church. While he was here, the parish hall and kitchen were completed in the school basement. Father Dolezel was here until 1971.

Rev. John Neuser came to serve the parish in 1971. The renovation program began with Father Neuser's wish to have a side entrance since there was only one exit in the church. Possibilities of other improvements were submitted to the parish at a parish meeting on January 30, 1972. The parish members voted to proceed with the whole program at once rather than do a little at a time. Work began on February 28. The entire church was cleared including altars and pews. Walls were painted a soft gold with a darker gold ceiling. Retained in the ceiling are hand-painted oils depicting events in the life of Christ.

The entire church floor and new entrances are carpeted in a dark brown and gold tweed carpeting. Simplicity is the keynote of the sanctuary. The large ornate altars having had eighteen statues have now been reduced to two statues, that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus over the Altar of the Blessed Sacrament, which is at the side and that of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of the parish. The Altar of Sacrifice is the table part of the former main altar cut down and remodeled. The sanctuary with the altar is the focal point of the church having deep red carpeting and white walls with accents of gold. A ten foot crucifix dominates the front wall. Where the former main altar stood is a reredos covered with gold vinyl and end pieces of oak. On the platform are the celebrant's and servers' chairs of distressed pecan and gold velvet.

The building was rewired and the new pews have been set at a slight angle to focus attention upon the altar. The heating plant was renovated, providing baseboard heating.

The confessional has been replaced by a confessional room which had been the altar boys' sacristy.

The front entrance encloses the steps which were previously outside. The doors are at sidewalk level.

The basement of the church has been named by the youth of the parish. "The Crypt" was painted and decorated. It is also used for coffee and rolls after Masses on Sunday in winter.

Open House for the public was held on Sunday, August 6, 1972. A Festival also was held that day.
Father Neuser left in 1974 and Rev. Karl Buresh came September 18, 1974. He is our present pastor.

In 1975 roads were made in our cemetery on Highway 32 and the statues refurbished. The parish consists of 325 units. There are 134 children in our school with two nuns from Silver Lake Convent and 3 lay teachers teaching students.

**Savages Panther Villa**

Joseph Kirch bought the land from Pabst Brewing Company in 1904 and built a tavern. At the time he operated the tavern, picnics were held in the vacant lot, south of the building, which was quite wooded. An elevated bandstand was erected and families gathered together to dance and have some drinks at the outside bar that was set up for the occasion.

It was sold to Ann Kirch in 1932, then to John J. Kirch and Joseph Pollack and Caroline, his wife, then back again to Mrs. Anna Kirch. In 1939 Anna Kirch sold it to Oliver Mott and his wife Elizabeth. In 1940 Mott sold to John B. Schmidt and his wife Sophia. Schmidt sold to Frank Glysch and his wife Viola in 1945. While there, he remodeled the tavern and made it a modern bar. He operated the business until his death in July 1947.

His widow, Viola, ran the tavern business for a short time. She married a man by the name of Tamm. In the meantime, Frank Remiker took over the mortgage. Viola Tamm, Harry Roefer, Stanley Wilson, Dave Sadoff and I. Fishelson joined as co-partners in managing the business. In 1954 Viola Tamm leased it to Stanley Wilson.

Then in 1955 Stanley Wilson leased it to George Hrabik which then reverted back to Frank Remiker estate.

It was purchased by Frank Thiel. During his ownership, it was rented by Gene Behnke and Olsen.

They were followed by Vern and Angie Hall in May 1962.

The night of July 22, 1963, the fire department was called to the Hall tavern. Extensive damage resulted to the tavern and living quarters although the structure remained standing. The Halls set up business in a tent on the vacant lot just east of the building. The Bar was completely remodeled and Angie and Vern Hall moved back into the building September 1, 1963.

Then on November 14, 1973, Jim and Judi Savage bought the property from Lester Thiel and it became known as Savage’s Panther Villa.

**Sentry Store**

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Prochnow purchased the first property that housed their meat market on December 7, 1927. It is the building just east of the present store and was built by William Boettcher in 1903. Mr. Boettcher operated a tavern and meat market in the structure. In 1921 Arno Ehner and Thomas Mumpy purchased the property but only operated a meat market.

Then after six years of operation by Ehner and Mumpy, Elmer Prochnow started in business for himself. His own business place was operated merely as a meat market until 1940, when he put in the IGA line of groceries.

In 1949 it was necessary for the Prochnows to expand. A new 36 x 80 foot store was built. The original building was renovated and the former store quarters were turned into living quarters.

In 1959 Elmer and his sons, Harland and Carlos, formed a partnership. By 1960 they enlarged the grocery store; an addition was built, now making the entire store building 71