

HISTORIES OF CATHOLIC CONGREGATIONS IN NORTH DAKOTA

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The St. Aloysius Church in Emmons County*

by Father Andreas Kolbeck

Translation by Armand and Elaine Bauer

This is one of the oldest missions, and has existed as a church since 1897. The settlers came to the area in 1884 from the Crimean Peninsula of South Russia. These immigrants were farmers and they pursued this activity with great energy here also.

Among the first settlers were: Martin Bosch, Michael Senger, Ludwig Erich, Ferdinand Fischer, Joseph Schmalz, Jacob Fischer, Karl Fischer, Jacob Kraft, Martin Fischer, Sebastian Sahli, Mathias Weiszbeck, Mathias Richter, John Goldade, Adam Gefre, George Schmidt, Moritz Wald, Fred Kelsch, Adam Bosch, Peter Hörner, Joseph Bosch, Anton Hörner, and others. They homesteaded and developed nice farms.

The first church was built in 1897, north of the present church. A priest from Strasburg supervised the construction with help from an experienced carpenter. Members of the congregation contributed the labor. In October 1905 the building was destroyed by fire, and for six months the parishioners were

without a place of worship. Eventually they assembled in the home of Joseph Gefre for services. Alois Schmalz presently resides on the Gefre farm.

In the spring of 1906 the congregation consisted of 80 families, covering the territory presently included in St. Michaels and St. Joseph's churches. A church building was constructed for about \$1800 under the guidance of Rev. Justus Schweitzer O.S.B. of Strasburg. A carpenter supervised the construction, and the congregation members provided the labor. The building was enlarged in 1928 at a cost of about \$3500. Seating capacity was then about 300.

Among the seven young ladies ordained in religious orders were: Sister Florella Weber, O.S.B., daughter of Louis Weber; Sister Jane Francis, O.S.B., daughter of Joseph Fischer; and Sister Leopoldine Schwan, O.S.B.

* A history of nearby St. John's Church in McIntosh County was published in *Heritage Review* Vol. 10, no. 4, 1980.

