

ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

According to available documents and letters from early immigrants, the nucleus of a Roman Catholic Church was in existence upon their arrival in 1832. Children were instructed and services held in private homes until completion of a log church, built in the center of Green Oak Township in 1838. Rev. Father Patrick O'Kelley for many years walked his mission area which included Oceola, Deerfield, Beneker Hill and Brighton. Eventually his means permitted him to purchase a horse and saddle offering him a much more comfortable mode of travel.

In the late 1850s Rev. Father Lambert, who lived in Deerfield, for two years held services at the homes of Thomas Kennedy and John Collins in Brighton. The Congregation increased in size and it became necessary to have more room. In 1864 one acre of ground was purchased from Ira W. Case as a site for a church (its present location on Rickett Rd.). Names of some of the subscribers to that first church were: John Long, Patrick F. McCabe, John Duane, John Laughlin, Brian Timmons, Nicholas Kennedy, J. B. Lee, Ira W. Case, W. R. Cobb, Lyman Judson, L. C. Pratt, Moore, Foot & Company and Rev. F. X. Pourett. The latter helped, tirelessly, with the actual labor, and his zeal and enthusiasm contributed greatly to the success of the undertaking. Bricks for the interior were purchased from John Hartman who had a brick kiln in Genoa Township. The date on the small corner stone of the present church records the date of 1864.

By 1876, a residence for the parish priests was completed. During the early 1880s the remodeled church acquired stained glass windows, improved landscaping and a steeple and bell. It was 1920 when the original rectory, with all existing records, was destroyed by fire.

In 1936, Father Maurice W. Kissane arrived. Church remodeling was undertaken and the old public school building across the street secured to establish the first Catholic Grade School in Brighton. A house was acquired to provide a home for the Dominican Nuns who came to staff the school. Since then a new school has replaced the original and in 1963, a new Convent was constructed near the school. By the early 1960s the present, larger church was built to accomodate the ever increasing number of worshippers, plus a new rectory.

St. Patrick's has inspired many Brighton residents to dedicate their lives to the service of God. Several organizations within the church give opportunity to assist the priests in their task of providing spiritual help and guidance. While much has changed in the world, that basic living faith still inspires to build and plan for future generations. (From history of St. Patrick's Catholic Church.)

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