

COURIER-JOURNAL

SOUTHERN TIER-AUBURN GENEVA

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St. Patrick's Two Churches Existed at Same Time and Place

By Martin Toombs
 Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — As unusual as it would be for a parish to have two churches at once, it would be totally unexpected for both churches to be on the same spot.

As unlikely as that may seem, St. Patrick's Parish in Elmira once had a second church on the site of its current building.

Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, the mother church of Elmira, had existed for 22 years in 1870, and it was becoming overcrowded. To solve the problem, the Buffalo diocese decided to add a parish to the city's northside, and Father Patrick Hopkins, at the time the only priest in Elmira, purchased the lot at Clinton and Main streets for \$4,000 to construct a second Catholic church in the city.

Father Hopkins started the work on the new parish, but died soon after, leaving Father James J. Bloomer to be the parish's first pastor, a position he held until his death in 1931, not long after being named a monsignor.

The overcrowding at Ss. Peter and Paul meant that the new parish had to get started as quickly as possible. On May 1, 1870, ground was broken for a wooden church, built at a cost of \$1,600. It was dedicated July 23, 1871.

The Elmira Advertiser of the following day outlined the unusual plan of which the wooden church was part:

"The structure as it stands now, is a temporary wooden one, around which the permanent walls are to be built, but it serves well at present the purposes for which it was erected, being so commodious as to accommodate at least one thousand worshippers, and will relieve the heretofore crowded church on High street (Ss. Peter and Paul's) very much."

The construction of the brick church around the wooden one started immediately; local custom holds that parishioners bought bricks on their paydays and dropped them off at the construction site.

Then on June 30, 1872, the cornerstone was laid in the permanent structure. The account the following day in the

Elmira Advertiser stated that:

"Yesterday took place the ceremonies of the laying of the corner stone of this to be beautiful church edifice, near the junction of Park Place and Main street. It is on one of the most prominent and sightly spots in the whole city, on a rise of ground looking down Main street, one of the finest of our avenues, to the river.

"Much credit is due to Rev. J.J. Bloomer, the pastor of the church, for his persistent energy and drive in hastening along the parish that has been under his charge to the work of building such an edifice for their worship."

Bishop Stephen Ryan of Buffalo laid the stone; also in attendance were the pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul, Father Clark, and Father McManus, pastor of St. Mary's, the newest city parish, founded that year.

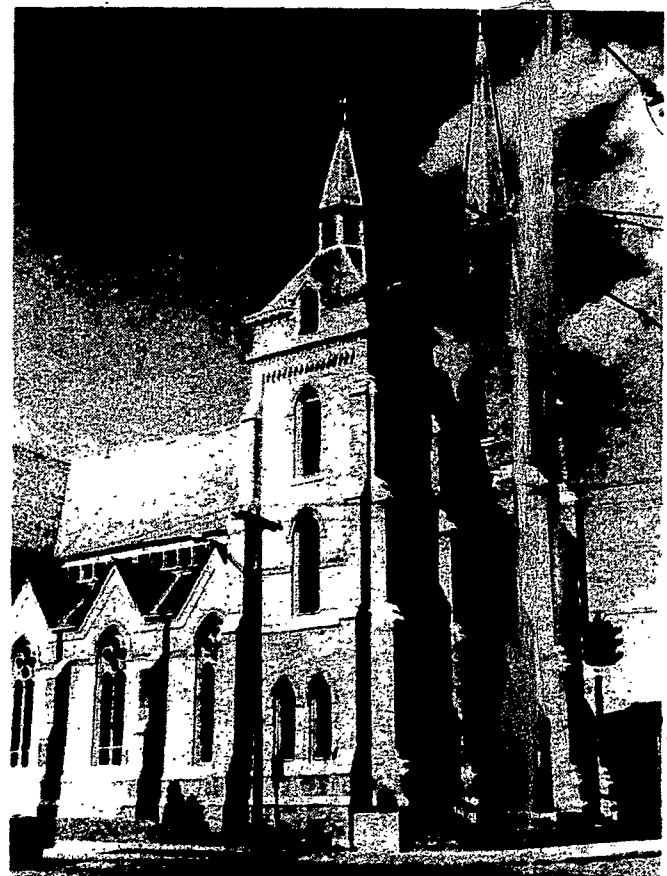
As the brick church was completed, the building which the parish still uses, the wooden church inside it was disassembled and removed.

Bishop Ryan returned more than two years later to dedicate the brick church, on Dec. 13, 1874. The Elmira Advertiser's account the following day stated:

"The new and beautiful St. Patrick's Catholic Church, corner of Clinton street and Park Place, was dedicated yesterday with all of those magnificent services prescribed for such occasions by the Church, in the presence of a very large congregation.

"St. Patrick's is indeed a beautiful church, equal to any in our city for the excellence of its architectural design and the execution of the work laid out. It has been a number of years in the process of erection, and Father Bloomer, the pastor of the church, and his parish, must feel gratified that they have come so near and so successfully to the conclusion of their labors."

Bishop Ryan performed the dedication; the homilist was Bishop Bernard McQuaid, bishop of Rochester, who, in



The exterior of St. Patrick's Church today.

1896, would become bishop of the area when it was transferred to his diocese.

St. Patrick's Parish would have many building programs during the following century, including rectory, convent and school. But probably none provided a more unusual sight than that of workers disassembling and removing the wooden church which had been entirely encased by the new brick church built around it.



Readying the St. Patrick's presentation are Evelyn Gaun, Claude Lester, Carol Jaeger, Diana Pannucci, Fran Fiorelli and Peter Seracino.

Folk Group Plans Musical

Seneca Falls — In what has become an annual tradition at St. Patrick's here, some 20 parishioners, "The Good News Singers," will be presenting "Jesus," a tapestry of the life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ through Scriptural passages, songs and slides.

About 25 musical selections, from Mozart's "Alleluia" to numbers from "Godspell" and songs written by the Weston Priory monks, will be featured.

The singers include students, Religious, secretaries, teachers, nurses. This year's participants include Jeannette Berretta, Julie Desarro, Judy Desarro, Claude Lester (musical and artistic director), Sister Dolores Monahan, Sister

Chris Wagner, Sister Chris Lloyd, Joyce Dragone, Fran Clark, Peter Saracino, John Clark, Kathy Cole, Karen Nugent, Evelyn Gaun, Janice Scarrott, Fran Fiorelli, Diana Pannucci, Carol Jaeger, Mary Stowell, Joan Reardon, Maureen Rogers and Dan Henninger.

The group has already

Retreat Announced

Elmira — The Women's Retreat League weekend at the Villa of Our Lady, Mt. Pocono, Pa., will be Friday, May 29, through Sunday, May 31, according to an announcement by Marguerite Backes of Elmira.

Retreatmaster will be Father Julian Phelan, OFM Cap.

The cost is \$50. The retreat

performed "Jesus" in Horsheds and is scheduled at 7 p.m., Thursday, April 9, at the SSJ Motherhouse on East Avenue in Rochester and at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, April 12 in its home parish, 97 W. Bayard St.

Designed for Christians of every age, there is no charge

league is assisting with car pooling arrangements. Reservations are requested by May 15.

Applications, registration and further information is available from Mrs. Backes, 312 Webber Place, Elmira, 14901, 734-8308; or from Mary or Margaret Crane, 222 Dodge Ave., Corning, 14830, 936-4095 or 936-4688.

Nurses Pioneering Independent Practice

By Martin Toombs
 Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — Although the concept of nurses opening an independent practice is an unfamiliar one to most, Edith Reidy and Jean Sweeney-Dunn, who have done that, believe that they will be less of an exception in years to come.

Both Family Nurse Practitioners, they opened their Community Nursing Services for the Elderly May 7, 1980. Most of their nursing care is provided in the person's home, where they do physical assessment, and family and client counseling. They can monitor blood pressure, do blood sugar tests, and look for problems with medication. In addition to their value as educated observers, they are able to provide psychological support to the patient and family, and teach the family methods of caring for the patient.

They also provide services, such as physicals, in their office at 351 College Ave.

Mrs. Sweeney-Dunn explained that they are not in competition with doctors: "We're not practicing medicine, we're practicing nursing."

She also noted that their emphasis on the elderly comes from an interest in helping those with chronic illnesses. Their aim, they said, is to concentrate on the needs of the patient, while the doctor treats the disease.

Now operating as a partnership, they are looking into forming a not-for-profit corporation. Mrs. Sweeney-Dunn stated their hope that some day they will be able to draw salaries; currently they are struggling to make expenses.

They don't see themselves as duplicating other services. Mrs. Sweeney-Dunn explained that their patients generally are those not eligible for visits by a public health nurse, and do not qualify for Medicaid, which limits home care availability.

Medication is a "big area" of their concern, Mrs. Sweeney-Dunn said, and she and Mrs. Reidy told of several situations where patients, especially those seeing more than one doctor, were taking too much medication, and, at times, even taking the same drug under prescription by two doctors.

Mrs. Reidy explained that elderly people, whose kidneys and liver are not as active as a younger person's, can't get drugs out of their systems as fast, and side effects can develop quickly. Visiting the patient at home, they can see

what medications the patient is taking, and the patient's condition. "If they see a problem, they notify the patient's doctor."

They report little reaction from local doctors, while a couple have made referrals to them. They offer to speak before the local medical society was not taken up, they said, but they have had no hostile reactions either. They expressed the hope that other health professionals will see their services as filling a need, and not as competition.

Their work currently is not covered by Medicare or most other health insurance. But such coverage is being considered at the federal and state level as a way to save money by keeping the elderly out of nursing homes. Such changes, Mrs. Sweeney-Dunn and Mrs. Reidy surmise, would result in many other nurses opening nursing practices, and would help keep many persons out of institutions.

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