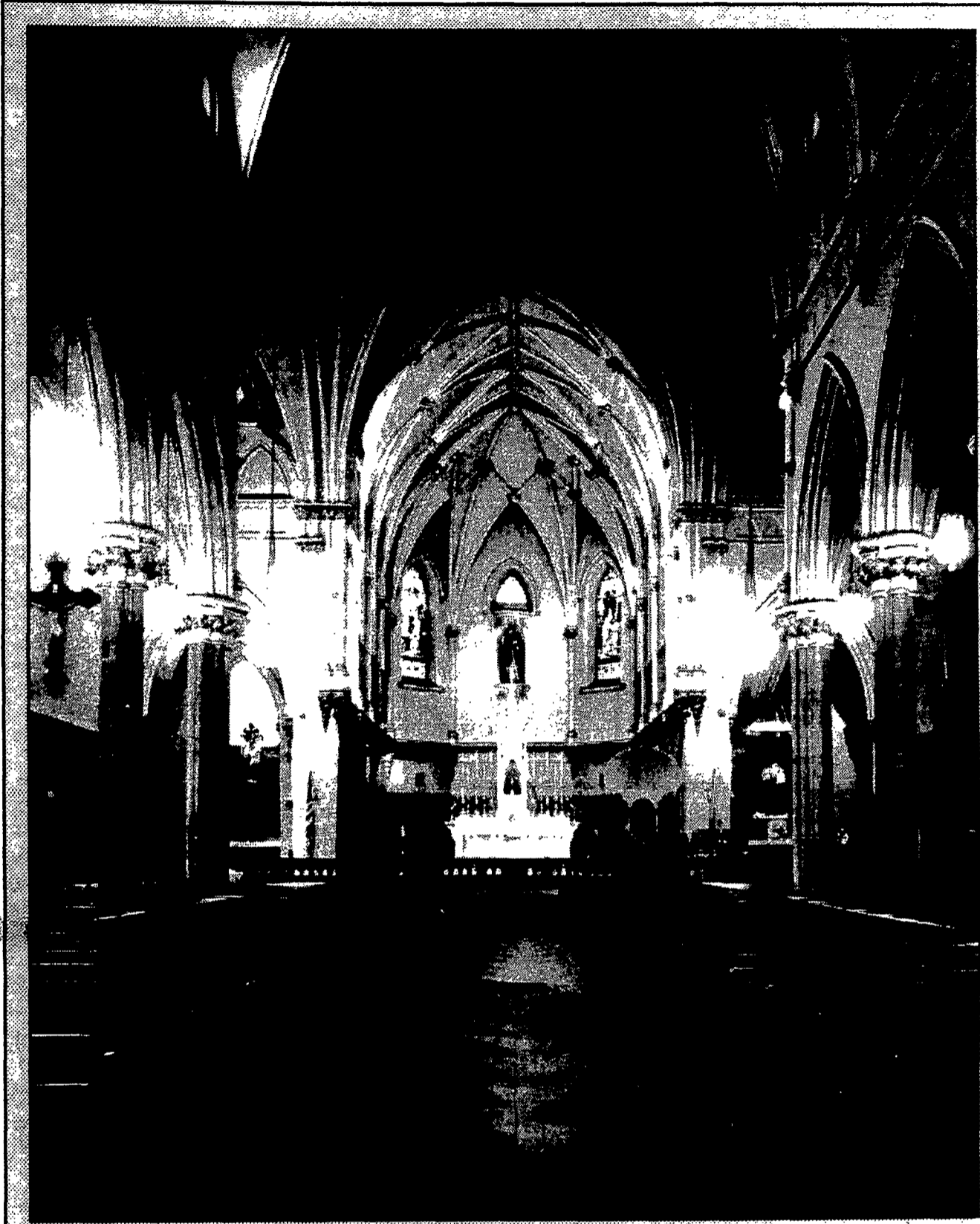




Catholic Courier

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Provided photo

This photo of St. Patrick Cathedral's interior was taken just before the edifice was razed in 1937.

Former cathedral provided tribute to Ireland's patron

By Father Robert F. McNamara
Guest contributor

When Rochester-area Catholics first organized in 1820, they were mostly of Irish background. By 1823 they had managed to erect a small stone church at the corner of Platt and Frank streets (now Plymouth Avenue North). For some time this remained the only Catholic parish church in western New York.

And whom did its builders choose as its patron saint? As members of St. Patrick's special people, they picked the great Apostle of Ireland, of course.

The congregation's rapid growth made it necessary, as early as 1831, to replace St. Patrick's former edifice with the second building. Then in 1864 a third St. Patrick's was undertaken. All three stood on the same site.

By 1864 there was a good chance that a new diocese would be established with Rochester as its see city. If so, St. Patrick's was the obvious choice as the cathedral parish. The new church should therefore be large and imposing.

The drafting of plans was entrusted to the Irish-born Brooklyn architect Patrick C. Keely, a prolific designer of churches. More than 500 church build-

ings were designed on his drawing board, for clients from Nova Scotia down to South Carolina. Twenty of them were cathedral churches, including the current cathedrals of Boston, Providence, Albany, Buffalo and Chicago.

Supervision of the Rochester project was assigned to Rochester architect, Andrew Jackson Warner (1833-1910). The construction moved ahead so slowly, however, that when the Rochester diocese was founded in 1868, its founding bishop, Bernard J. McQuaid, had to be installed in a "shanty-church" alongside the incomplete St. Patrick's No. 3.

The first cathedral was opened in 1870. It was formally consecrated only in 1898, after the sanctuary had been extended, the Lady Chapel added, and the spire completed, again under A.J. Warner's eagle eye.

If Keeley did not match in skill James Renwick, the designer of St. Patrick's, N.Y., his neo-Gothic churches did have impressive dignity. (See St. Mary's in Auburn, 1879, for example, the only other Keely church in this diocese.)

Patrick Keely's Rochester cathedral became the liturgical center of the Rochester Church. Bishop

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ERIN GO BRAGH

Newsletter shares scoop on the Irish

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

Every year around St. Patrick's Day, Irish bars fill up, varied venues schedule Irish performers, and many people add O's to their last names and wear green clothes.

But Irish culture thrives in western New York not only on or around March 17. One way to learn about this culture is through the *Irish Insider*.

A monthly newsletter, the *Irish Insider* is published by Jack and Melissa Rosenberry out of the couple's Rochester home.

Each eight- to 10-page issue of the newsletter includes a calendar of events from Rochester, Buffalo and Syracuse; such columns as "Family Ties" (to help people trace genealogies) and "Kith 'n' Kin," in which people can report family accomplishments; as well as news and feature articles.

The Rosenberrys, who moved to Rochester in 1986, began producing the *Irish Insider* in July of 1992.

"I was listening to Ted (McGraw, who hosts "The Irish Party House," broadcasted every Saturday morning in Rochester on WGMC-FM 90.1) one day and he was reading off the calendar," Jack recalled.

Jack began inquiring whether any local publication compiled a calendar of Irish events and regularly printed articles about Irish culture. He found no such publication — aside from a newsletter produced by the Ancient Order of Hibernians focusing on Hibernian news and activities. He also received many positive responses from people when he told them of his plans to publish an Irish publication.

"People said we really could use something like that," he said.

At the time, the Rosenberrys, parishioners of Rochester's St. Ambrose Church, already ran a small publishing business out of their home. Melissa started the business after the birth of their first child, Sara, in 1987.

"The two things just came together," Jack said. "My ongoing interest in my Irish heritage, and we had a self-publishing business."

For the first issue, the couple asked friends for names of people who might be interested in such a publication. In a relatively short period of time, they had a list of 500 potential subscribers.

"Just the fact that we could get 500 names like that shows there's a strong core community," Jack said.

The couple cover Irish events and compile items for the calendar. Melissa is the publication's chief photographer. She also covers dance schools, writes features, and handles the operation's business duties.

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