

The History of Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church – Medina, MN

A.D. 1857, on August 21, I baptized in this place of Medina an infant born on February 1, 1857 of Leo Stumpf and Regina Stumpf, a wedded couple of this place. The name given the infant was Francis. The Godfather and Godmother are George and Mary Ann Reiser.

This record of the baptism of Frank Stumpf is the first official record of Holy Name parish. The signature is illegible but believed to be that of Father George Keller

The History of Holy Name Parish in Medina Township
Hennepin County, Wayzata, Minnesota
Written by Joseph A. Merz about 1912

These records begin long before the turn of the century, and are to be a record of finances, baptisms and weddings of this parish. May the next generation find it interesting, by reading “The Wanderer” under what trying circumstances these early German settlers had to find courage to struggle on and not weaken in their faith, which they brought with them when they settled in the New Country.

One of the first goals was to want to build a house of worship, so as not to leave the upbringing of the children to the general public. A wish was expressed that all German parishes keep record, which would be of interest to all German Catholics regarding the furthering of God’s word. We German Catholics must be willing to make greater sacrifices for church, school and Verein (society). Then we will be thought of differently in other circles. It is not too late, in all our parishes are men who will

assume such responsibilities. If all of us cooperate it would make a book interesting for others to read.

With this in mind, to the best of my ability and knowledge I will put in writing about the present day immigrants a long-serving priest. (From here on the name of our parish will be Holy Name). The exact dates will be hard to come by but I will do my best to be correct with the given occurrences.

It was early in the period 1854-55 that a group of immigrants from Coblenz, Trier, Cologne and Karlsruhe (province of Baden) Germany left by sailing vessel for the "Promised Land". They were tossed about on stormy seas and after many months landed in Boston and New York, and soon set out for the wooded areas of the Midwest. A few known to this writer stayed in Boston, Mass till into 1855. Their first destination was St Paul. Minneapolis did not exist yet, just a start up village of St Anthony, East Minneapolis. In this undeveloped land how our parents needed foresight to build for the future. Homes were 20 to 30 miles apart. These were the days of some dangers and Indians, too. They eked out an existence by planting ginseng, went cranberry picking; often lived on cornbread or Johnny Cake. This writer marvels at how they made do. Many of course had experience from back in Germany to put up wood or to prepare it for building purposes. Therefore they chose a homestead here, where wood was available to them. They did not become discouraged, it would have been no help. No plow, no roads, no wagons, no money. They worked together helping one another build a log house and to clear one acre of land, upon which corn, potatoes and barley were first to be grown.

These provided food for the body, but the soul needs nourishment also. Many yearned for, but had to forget the soul-satisfying worship services and lovely edifices left behind in the Mother Country. God gave them strength to seek a way and where to turn. Certain newcomers knew there was a German priest available in St. Paul by the name of P. Keller. Word was sent to him, he came, walking the 30 miles to be in our midst, celebrated the first Holy Mass in George Reiser, Sr's log house. Confessions were heard, communion was celebrated and two or three children were baptized. These were never-to-be forgotten moments for the newcomers, who had not experienced a worship service in so long a time. This took place in the year 1858 or 1859. Now "the ice was broken". Fr. Keller came a few more times.

Then a well known priest named P. Eberhart Gahr OSB, who was in his prime years, took P. Keller's place. He provided for our souls and was a very able missionary also serving St Walburga (Rogers), Loretto and St Michael's where he led the flock. The good he did only God has record of. We later knew of him when he was nearing 80 years of age, and was serving in a small parish at Carntown, Kentucky. He was in his 60s when he left our parish. He visited the writer of this on two occasions.

During Fr. P. Eberhart's administration plans began to formulate how and when to begin building a church. The parish charter members consisted of these families: Hansmann, Jordan, Reiser, Merz, Kohler, Winnen, Scherer, Stumpf, Striebel, Thies, Miller, Lenzen, Engel and young single men named Butz, Bryer, Melchior and Wiltjins, all German. Then there were these families from Ireland: Mooney, Luby and Crowe, a total of 20 families.

Also in the homes of Andrew Jordan Sr. and Joseph Lenzen they alternated reading the Holy Mass. Later it narrowed down to the home of Mathias Hansmann who had a larger house and for some time this is where Holy Mass was celebrated. Even after the church was built, the priests appreciated the friendly atmosphere and hospitality of this home.

After several planning sessions, it was decided to build a church. The task was accepted at once. Those in charge of the work were to be Butz and Winnen, who were also in charge of preparing the lumber for the project. The church was to be six-sided and total size 30x50 feet including the

sacristy, which in later years was redone. Because everyone cooperated in every way, with volunteer labor the church was completed in less time than predicted. Mr. Striebel did the volunteer plastering project.

In the early 60's the church was finished and dedicated by Bishop Thomas L. Grace. When P. Eberhart OSB left us he was followed by P. Hilmer, then by P. Damasavitch. Our parish was served till 1873 approximately by priests of the St. Bonifacius order in East Minneapolis. In the year 1866 we had our first Mission by Fr. Sutter. Mr. Andrew Jordan, who by now owned a span of horses, went to get the missionary from Chaska. It took several days for the round trip with the lumber wagon. There were practically no passable roads and to get around Lake Minnetonka to reach Chaska took some doing. Today it is all like a boulevard.

Fr. Sutter instituted the first Mission, a cross was erected on a tall steeple. It was 20 feet from the ground and 10 feet above the rafters. It withstood weather and all, the first 10 years on the old church. In 1876 it was redone on the newly built church, where it served its purpose for many more years. The date on it, 1866, was still legible till in later years. Thus it was an ever-to-be remembered reminder of our first Mission. In the year 1868, our young single Franz Melchior passed away and his survivors, in his memory, gave the bell which came to \$300. The bell was set in a primitive tower, 30 feet high, made of hand-hewn wood. Its clang could be heard from the old church into the year 1876. It was then erected on the new church where it served until Pentecost 1911, when a destructive fire ruined it. All those early settlers mourned its loss, saw it to its grave as it intoned its own funeral dirge. A Miss Striebel, grand-daughter of the first family, was bell ringer to its end. The heat of the fire partly melted the metal and it fell from its tower to the ground.

In the year 1878, a Dominican Priest named P. Metzger conducted a Holy Mission and in the year 1896 a Franciscan from the east held a repeat thereof. Fr. Damasavitch was followed by P. Maures and P. Rösung. Then it was P. Anton Holzor for a longer period of time. Your writer and his wife celebrated their first Holy Communion April 23, 1871 as did many others.

After P. Holger came P. Ignatius Schaller who stayed till 1876. The first singers in the old church were families: Merz, Kohler and Miller. In those days it was all in German and generally all sang together.

Among the first hardships in the early 60s occurred when the Civil War took place and also Indian uprisings, such as the one in New Ulm. These came to an end in the course of time.

Soon more new settlers came from Illinois, New York, Michigan and especially from Wisconsin. The total number of members in our parish had doubled which brought new life into our midst. It became evident that our church was too small. More times of worship were scheduled under P. Schaller of St. Michael and a motion was made to build a roomier church in 1875.

The land on which the previous ones were built (by now three) was a gift from Mathias Hansmann and Joseph Lenzen. Each gave 12.5 acres, total 25, near the east border of Medina Township, by a beautiful little lake. Later we were to receive 5 acres from our Irish newcomers, Luby, Mooney and O'Brien, adding the five to what our parish owns it made a total of 40 acres.

We now continue with our Second Installment or Chapter

Second Installment

Fr. Schaller came out once a month, later more often. The parish members voluntarily agreed to allow an experienced contractor from Trier, Mulwendy, Germany to build a new church for the sum of \$3,600. Wages and building material (lumber) were not costly at the time. By the time the church was finished in 1876, the total cost was \$4,500. It left us with \$750 debts for which amount the following stood liable: Ernst, Scherer, Merz, Reiser, Mangen, Lenzen, Hansmann, Bantle, Ditter and Roehl. Other worthwhile donations were made by individual members such as items used during Mass, last but not least an organ (harmonium) costing \$240 was given. Til the year 1878 the parish was debt free and remained so to this day.

In the year 1877 we were allowed our first resident priest, namely Rev. Jannarius Czarnowski who had served many years in Berlin, Wisconsin, a very devout man. Under strange circumstances, he did his best to get the parish there out of debt; the members there cared not at all till the law had to take over. Some of our members can recall his efforts on the part of the Missions.

We had no rectory yet but there was space in the old church for needed living quarters. It also provided temporary quarters for school.

Now that all was in good order, Jannarius left us for a parish in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. We then got Fr. Magnus Morin OSB who stayed till 1882. Next he went to St Walburga (Rogers) and Loretto where he died and is buried. P. Magnus also was a pioneer priest as was P. Eberhart. While he served here your writer took the step to be married on May 17, 1881. All praise in his memory.

Omitted by original writer was the dedication of the church which was built in 1875.

Though without a priest for a while, we were a united parish. It seemed now was time to build a rectory, which was completed by the fall of 1882. The first one to occupy the new house and be successor to P. Magnus Rev. John Swartz. He came here from New Mexico and served us for about 3 years. After that our parish was served by a Franciscan from Chaska. He came to us because of Rev. Marianus Gluhn OFM concern. Then came Rev. Jacobs followed by Rev. Pius Schmid who stayed in our midst for seven years. From here he went to Watkins. Later and till now, the parishes at Crystal Lake and Medicine Lake were served from here. After Fr. Schmid came Rev Theo Venn, he too was a pioneer type priest and was from Minnesota. After Fr. Venn, for a short time we had Rev. Jansen. Then followed Rev. Nicholas Honsiesch, who stayed a longer period of time. After Fr. Honsiesch, without delay we got Fr. Andrew Baczyk. He was concerned for the well being of the church and school and encouraged all to “not forget the language of your parents”, speak it with all that lies within you and he being of Polish descent.



Rev John Henry Keil

Rev. Baczyk was followed by Rev. J. H. Keil, beloved by all. He stayed until his tragic death on Apr 21, 1908. Two other priests, namely P. Laventure of Minneapolis and P.

McCarren of Corcoran and he were on an outing on the little lake next to the church. The lake was very choppy, the waves soon filled the little boat. Fr. Keil jumped over the side of the boat into the ice cold water attempting to swim to shore but he drowned before he reached his goal. The other two clung to the boat and were rescued by workers at the rectory, namely Anton Ditter, Carl Pohlker and

John Jordan. Much was written about this tragedy in "The Wanderer". Fr. Keil also his sister, Mathilda, are buried in the church cemetery. May they rest in peace.

Fr. Keil was followed in June by Fr. Doning who was beloved by the entire parish and who stayed until the middle of 1911. It was while he served us that the rectory caught on fire during Mass on Feb. 3, 1911. Most of the contents were saved because many of the youth were partaking of communion just then and could act quickly.

Then another loss on June 4, 1911, Pentecost Sunday at 2 A.M. lightning struck the church steeple and the church burned to the ground. Again most of the contents were saved. Insurance on the rectory was \$750 and on the church \$3,500. The rebuilding of the rectory was begun at once at a cost of \$2,250, there still remain several hundred dollars debts on the rectory.

When the new rectory was finished, the church burned again, and was a worse fire than the first.

On Sept 8th, Rev. Doning went to Rogers or more correctly St Walburga. Our parish again was orphaned.

Third Chapter or Installment

Even though we were without a priest just then we received permission from the Bishop to build our church. Our parish, with new zeal, determined to build a larger and lovelier building (our third one) than before; even in less time. By Jan 1, 1912 it was finished, all but the altar, and all paid for. It had stained glass windows, a furnace, just to name a few things. The contract was given to W. Wandersee for \$6,000 and he furnished quality work to the finish. Every member of the parish was expected to give voluntarily in an amount he felt was his duty. \$4,385 was pledged at once with a followup of \$3,500 more bringing the total sum to \$7,885 to build the church. How good to be able to say all but \$500 are paid to date. The church built in 1875-76 had a main structure 36x72 feet with sanctuary and small sacristy, having a 110 foot steeple. The new church is 42x72 feet with a large sanctuary and a larger sacristy. Close by is the larger, lovely rectory.

It was on January 7, 1912, on a 38 below zero morning that Fr. George came out from St. Paul and held a congratulatory High Mass, a first in our new church. He continued to serve here and also St Joseph parish near Medicine Lake. The first funeral from the new church took place on January 23, 1912 for a member in good standing, Carl Leuer Sr. who was also a member of St Pius Society.



The Rev George Scheffold O.S.B.
Oversaw the building of the school, hall and convent

The Fourth Installment – The Catholic School

At the same time as the new immigrants were thinking about a new church, they also concerned themselves regarding a school. The first Catholic school was held with Adam Handel as teacher, an older man, and took place in a log building, previously a public school and now is used by District No. 7. It stood a mile west of the church, this was in the later 1860s. The short term consisted of only 3 months with an attendance of 10-15 children; the writer of this being one of them. In the year 1868 school was conducted by an Italian, Johannes Julius Augustus Visconti who spoke very fluent German. Classes were also held in the Mathias Hansmann home, attended by children of these families: Ernst, Merz, Striebel, Roth and Hansmann.

Anton Froelich held classes in the sacristy of the old church in the year 1870. Classes were also taught by Mathias Tautges of St Paul in 1871, also in the old church. Later in the years 1876-77 Carl Mayer taught school and was also the first organist of our parish. He was the father of Lee Mayer who later taught school in St Michael and for a short time was business manager of the little publication "The Wanderer". Mayer Sr. moved to Dayton, Minnesota where he passed away.

Next a certain John Goergen taught school several terms. In the year 1878, the writer of this took the job of organist and he held it uninterrupted for 34 years, including to date of this writing. Also he taught 5 or 6 terms through 1893. From that date till 1911, teachers varied, both male and female.

In the year 1896, a new well-arranged school was built with a basement for organizational meetings. At no time did the school term consist of more than 3-4 months. It also happened that one or two terms were missed all together. For example, your writer had no more than a total of 10 months of German Catholic school; likewise all the other earlier grade school students. Up to and including 1888-90 everything in school and church was in the German language. From then on it became we were expected to use English or the American language. Your writer is not sure how necessary it really was for our parish so to do. Those that are trying to make this a rule, what can they prove? It makes me want to set aside and continue at another time. The question is asked in "The Wanderer", who carries the guilt? By reading that little publication, one may find items that fit our parish too. That closes this chapter.

Fifth Chapter or Installment - Vereine or Societies

Prior to the year 1893 our parish had no Vereine or Societies. In the same year our neighboring parish also saw the beginnings of their first lodge. Those who read "The Wanderer" realized the urge for the beginnings. Herr (Mr.) J. Q. Juenemann who at the time was travelling for (or representing) D.R.R.U.G of M. was invited, resulting in the organizing of the St Pius Society in May 1893 with 27 members. This came about under the leadership of Fr. Schmid thus ground work was laid for our parish. This young society struggled with difficulties, such as incorporating the English language into its constitution and using it at meetings against members wishes. As a parish they wished not to go along with the idea, either in church or school. It could be said of them, they were "too Catholic" or "too Dutch". But God be praised, this period in time passed by too without becoming too much of an issue.

About in 1896 our Society went on record to build a sizable school with basement for purposes of holding meetings. The recently deceased Carl Leuer Sr. left a good deal of lumber, all sawed for our use. His brother (now also deceased) gave the desks and benches. Fidel Streibel Sr. did the cement work and the plastering. The Mich brothers and Peter Schommer did the carpenter work, all with no recompense. May God reward them. Our society never went down in numbers, but rather increased till at present we have 50 in good standing members. It could be even more. The St. Pius Society donated the bell for the new church in January of 1912, which cost \$237.20. The St. Pius Society tried to organize a youth group but it fell by the wayside. Also a Young Ladies Society under the leadership of Fr. Baczyk seemed to blossom forth to overtake the men but it too fell apart. Under Fr. Keil, a Ladies Altar Society was begun, it is threatening to likewise not make a go of it. What remains of the D.R.K.U.G of M. which a few years earlier was started by Mr. Georg Selzel? Who cares to blame? Several years back an article in the "Ohio Orphans Friend" read something like this: we may give speeches and make motions to do this or that but if our spirit isn't in it, then it is all for naught.

The first marriage in our parish was when (Herr) Mr. F.X. Morin, a Frenchman, and Miss Alice O'Hern were married in February 1863. They both were from the Hamel area, now there is St Anne's parish there. The first death was a baby daughter of the Theis. The first lady to pass away was Mrs. Schneider, mother-in-law of Nicholas Roehl. The first man passed away was Mr Winnen. Other than our own members were buried in the cemetery. The first marriage in the second church was Leo Stumpf to a Miss Haeg from Richfield, Minn.

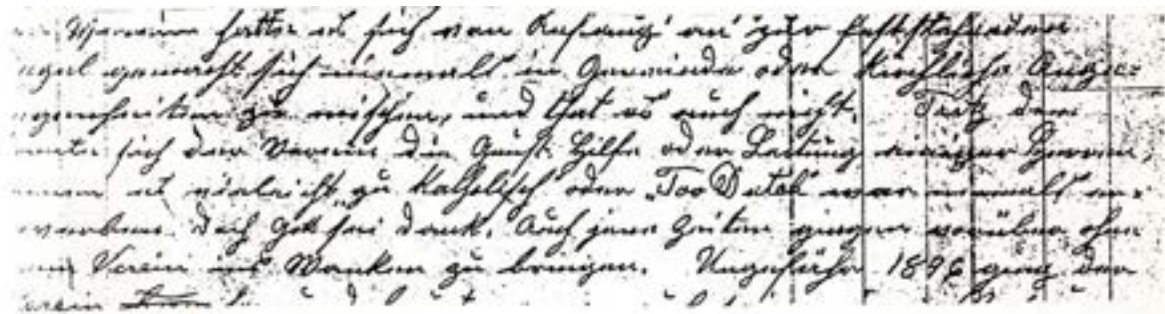
So now I come to the end of this history. Some will ask, were there no dark sides? I will answer; to the living you tell the best to the dead you tell the rest. The shadowy episodes are the exception rather than the rule. Let him who is without sin cast the first stone. Here we have a small parish of about 50 members who made great sacrifices from the earliest times till this day. They are the ones who made it possible through their concern and courage to have a German Catholic school; likewise to keep up the language of their forebears. Who carries the blame?

Who subscribes to a regular German newspaper? To the best of my knowledge all but three families take the German Catholic publications, which means 70 such circulate in our parish. "The Wanderer" ranks first, then the "Ohio Orphan's Friend" followed by St Joseph's paper. There also is the Catholic Tribune of Dubuque, Iowa, Catholic Bulletin, Landmann and others. One other thing of interest, German is spoken now as much as 40 years ago. If there are "gray areas" should I quote more? No, enough. The blessing of God has been over our parish from the beginning, these early settlers knelt in tearful prayer asking God to bless children and children's children. May this parish do likewise in the future to honor our patron saint, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Written by Joseph A. Merz (1856-1930) in old German script about 1912

Translated by Edna H Gabriel of Maple Plain at the age of 80

Mr. Merz (son of Johannes and Katherine Merz) was born in Medina the year after his family settled there. He lived in Medina all his life.



This is a sample of the handwritten history of Holy Name by Joseph A. Merz

History of Holy Name of Jesus

By Kathleen Hansmann

Holy Name of Jesus began with mass in the home of George Reiser in 1856. Rev. George Keller journeyed on foot from St. Paul to celebrate with the founding community. For several years thereafter, the Rev. Eberhart Jahr, O.S.B. a missionary in St. Anthony, said mass at the homes of Mathias Hansmann and Andrew Jordon.

In 1864, the Most Rev. Thomas L. Grace, Bishop of Minnesota, incorporated Holy Name of Jesus Parish. One of the requirements for incorporation was 40 acres of land, free and clear. The land was donated by the Lenzen, Hansmann, Luby, Mooney, and O'Brien families. That same year, a log church was erected on the shores of Holy Name Lake, at that time called Hansmann Lake. The Rev. Ignatius Schaller began a frame church in 1874, undergoing great difficulty, due to many in the community dodging the costs and withdrawing. The new church was completed, however, and dedicated on September 5, 1875. The old log church by the lake was then used as a school, teaching German Catholics for three months of the year. The first teacher, Mr. Carl Meyer, was hired in 1876. In 1879, the log church was remodeled to serve as a residence for the priest of the parish,

When Fr. Schaller was transferred, the parish was without a priest and was visited only occasionally by priests of neighboring parishes. In 1877 Holy Name of Jesus Parish received a permanent priest, the Rev. Janarius Czarnowski, a Franciscan from Poland. He also attended to the parishes at Medicine Lake as well as Crystal Lake. He served for one and half a years.

On May 23, 1879, The Rev. Magnus M. Mayr, O.S.B., was appointed to Holy Name of Jesus. He had instructions from Bishop Grace to build a new parish house and care for another parish. From a journal kept by Father Magnus: In July 1881 the new parish house did get built, not in Medina but in Feltes' Settlement (now Loretto) at the church of Sts. Peter and Paul, and Holy Name of Jesus was taken care of from there.

For the next twenty years, Holy Name of Jesus was quiet due to the frequent change of pastors. Father Pius Schmid arrived in March of 1889 and remained at Holy Name of Jesus for over seven years. The records show: "On the 25th day of September, 1891, the church of The Holy Name of Jesus of Medina became incorporated." The old log church (turned parish house) was torn down in 1893, and in its place a new frame school was built next to the lake. It had a full basement under it, known as the "Society Hall", where all the meetings, card parties, receptions and entertainment took place.

Many Priests came and left Holy Name of Jesus until 1905. The minutes from the records of one of the meetings, translated from German script, documents some of the challenges of the day. Below are some of the resolutions dated February 19, 1904:

1. Resolved. That the pastor is to receive as his salary the sum of five Hundred Dollars per year.
2. Resolved. That the sexton is to receive \$50. 00 per year for sexton work except building fires in the church stoves.
3. Resolved: That the congregation allows fifty cents (\$0.50) per month for oil used in the church and pastors house for starting fires. Furthermore that if that is not sufficient, the pastor has to pay the rest out of his own salary
4. Resolved: That the pastor shall, beginning in English, preach in English at the first High Mass and at the following High Mass he will preach in German and so on throughout the

year and when the pastor preaches in German when it should be in English, we will deem it necessary to withhold five dollars (\$5. 00) for each and every sermon so violated.

5. Resolved. That when no sermon is preached, we will withhold five dollars (\$5.00).for each time no sermon is preached.

The Rev. Andrew Baczyk became pastor in May 1904. He did not like some of the above resolutions and scratched them out in the meeting record book by writing boldly "absurdity" across the pages several times and then signing it.

The Rev. John Henry Keil, O.S.B., took up his residence at Holy Name of Jesus in June of 1905 and remained until he drowned in Hansmann's Lake on April 21, 1908 while out rowing with friends. He is buried in the parish cemetery.

The Rev. Fedore During, O.S.B., was pastor January 7, 1909 - September 1911. On March 4, 1911, the rectory burned to the ground, started by a fire in the kitchen stove. Immediately, a new rectory was built. It was barely completed when the church was struck by lightning at the base of the cross on the steeple June 3, 1911, the Eve of Pentecost. Leonthine and Stella Striebel, young girls who lived nearby, rang the bell to call for help until it would no longer ring. Parishioners rushed to the church to try to save it, forming a bucket brigade from the lake. Despite all the efforts the church burned to the ground. Some of the pews and stained glass windows were saved. The sanctuary bell and lamp were saved by Grandpa Pohlker. The new rectory was saved as well.

Once again, the parishioners of Holy Name of Jesus were to build. Henry Scherer, Sr., and George Reiser became the "general contractors." The new church was built on the old corner stone. That summer, Mass was said outdoors under the willow trees. It has been told that it did not rain once on Sunday morning throughout the construction.

The parish made an appeal to St. John's Abbey in Collegeville for a resident priest, as there was a shortage of secular priests at the time. The Rev. George Scheffold, O.S.B., a priest of whom people still speak with love, was sent. He took charge of Holy Name of Jesus parish and ministered to the members for thirteen years.

Father George finished the building project already in progress by arranging for the interior decorations and the sanctuary paintings. The Most Rev. John G. Ireland, Bishop of Minnesota, dedicated the new church on October 13, 1913.

Fr. George also began the mission parishes of St. George's in Long, Lake and St. Bartholomew's in Wayzata. He administered the construction of both churches. During his



Holy Name Choir – 1911
Back from left: Father George Scheffold, Tony Merz, John Eckes & Leo Adams
Second: Mae Merz, Lana Merz, Elizabeth Ditter, Kate Merz, & Athia Ditter.
Third: Pauline Merz, Kate Hansmann, Clara Merz, & Ann Merz
Seated in front is unknown

stay he also conducted missions in many parishes.

Since the parish community was growing, Fr. George saw the necessity of a hall where dinners could be held and larger crowds could be accommodated. Plans were soon underway and a building committee was organized for the "Amusement Hall."

The building was completed in December 1914 and plans were made for a grand opening to be held on New Year's Eve. The gala was a success, the first of many. All the kerosene lights were lit, the wood and water hauled. A chicken dinner was prepared. Entertainment included a fortune wheel, raffles, and music by the Merz Orchestra. Many wedding receptions and dances were held in the hall.

World War I intervened, and the boys were called to service. Farewell parties in the hall were sad. Armistice Day on Nov. 11, 1918, ended the conflict. The Hall was used for many welcome home parties.

With the increase in enrollment, the need for a larger school became apparent so an addition to the school and convent was built. Father George applied to the St. Scholastica Priory at Duluth for sisters to teach. Holy Name of Jesus School opened its doors in September of 1919 for the full school year with four nuns and 52 students in all eight elementary grades and one year of high school, which was dropped after the first year.

In 1925, Father George was transferred to St. Bartholomew's in Wayzata. Many priests came to Holy Name of Jesus and served for a short term. Things continued in much the same pattern. There was the Harvest Festival in August each year. There were card parties drawing large crowds and an occasional bingo party. School picnics, graduation exercises, wood cutting bees and everything that would be a help to the community both socially and financially were held in the Amusement Hall,

Holy Name of Jesus had the privilege of serving the dinners in the Hall for the Ordination and First Masses for the Rev. Bernard Mengelkoch, O.S.B., The Rev. Bernard Reiser, and the Rev. Mathias Faue O.S.B., parishioners who gave their life to God's service in the priesthood. How proud the community was to serve them. The Most Rev. John Gregory Murry, Archbishop of St. Paul & Minneapolis, and the Most Rev. Leo Byrne, Bishop of St. Paul, were honored guests.



Confirmation class in the 1930s
Father Adalbert Unruhe is the priest in the back row. Cletus Scherer is in the second row at the left.

During the depression events slowed down. The Rev. Adalbert Unruhe, O.S.B., came in August of 1931 and guided the parish through those hard times.

In September 1936, The Rev. Hyacinth Cismowski, O.S.B., was appointed to the parish. He remained ten years and is fondly remembered, especially for his counsel during World War II. At Holy Name

of Jesus School, each student prayed for the safety of one soldier. This tradition of prayers and support for those serving our country continues into the present day.

On July 4, 1946, the Rev. Edward Botzet, O.S.B., was appointed to Holy Name of Jesus. He was to serve the parish for 18 years. The community was changing. The men were returning from the war and the parish was growing; school enrollment reached ever-higher numbers. On Easter Monday, April 12, 1955, ground was broken for the new school.

On June 21, 1964, The Rev. Emmanuel Kelsch, O.S.B., was appointed. He arrived at a time when the Archbishop was changing the parish boundaries and at the same time parish growth was projected to double or even triple by the mid 1970s. It was determined that an addition to the school would be necessary to accommodate the growing enrollment. The addition was opened during the first week of January 1967.

On July 18, 1967, early in the morning, two young boys were seen leaving the old school premises. Shortly thereafter, the building was blazing. It quickly spread to the roof of the old hall. Three fire departments tried to fight the inferno, but both buildings burned to the ground.

That fire not only ended an era in buildings (no longer was the social hall and school across County Road 24), but it also destroyed the equipment used to set up for the annual harvest festival - all the tents and booth material. It was never replaced, and the Harvest Festival was discontinued at that time.

Due to health reasons, Fr. Emmanuel retired and The Rev. Alto Butkowski, O.S.B., was appointed in September 1969. A "handy man," Fr. Alto repaired and restored many things at Holy Name of Jesus, including the parish spirit.

The Rev. Arnold Weber, O.S.B., came to Holy Name of Jesus for the first time, July 1, 1972. He brought his gifts as a retreat master, marriage counselor, and a gifted public speaker to the community. Fr. Arnold began the renovation of the church sanctuary to comply with the norms of the church after Vatican II. He left in June 1973 to administer Benilde St. Margaret High School. The Rev. Mathias Spier, O.S.B., the next pastor, completed renovations.

The Rev. Arnold Weber, O.S.B. returned to Holy Name of Jesus in December 1980, while simultaneously retaining his position at Benilde-St. Margaret's until June 1981, when he became full time pastor at Holy Name of Jesus for twenty-three years. When he arrived, there were approximately 300 families registered in the parish. By the time he left in 2003, there were 2700 families registered. Rapid growth in the community called for numerous building campaigns.

- September 1982: gymnasium, new temporary Worship Center (now the Good Samaritan Center), library and additional classroom wing.
- April 1984. A new church with seating for 1,100, a large narthex for gathering, converting the temporary Worship Center into a parish center, the Good Samaritan Center, remodeling of offices from the former dining hall, remodeling of school and some other minor changes along with a new rectory.
- Archbishop John Roach, concelebrating with Abbot Jerome Theisen, O.S.B, dedicated the Church of the Holy Name of Jesus on November 22, 1987, along with Father Arnold Weber, O.S.B., with the Rev. Mr. Joe Wierschem assisting as deacon.
- 1991-1992: additional wing with four more classrooms on the upper level, two on the lower level, new school offices, additional meeting rooms, and a nursery.

- 1998-2000: gathering space wall removed, adding 500 additional seats to the church, a new gathering space, wing for parish offices, additional education rooms, and the church library.

Once again, Holy Name of Jesus was proud to host the First Mass and dinner of newly ordained parishioners, Al Backman and David Blume. Also during this time, several parishioners were ordained to the permanent diaconate: The Rev. Mr. Jim McDonald, The Rev. Mr. Virgil Rollings, The Rev. Mr. Joseph Wiershem, The Rev. Mr. Howie Backman, The Rev. Mr. Nels Hickman, The Rev. Mr. Mike Winn, The Rev. Mr. Terry Schnieder, The Rev. Mr. Dennis Hanson, The Rev. Mr. Sam Catapano, and The Rev. Mr. Kevin O'Connor. The parish community is proud and honored to be blessed with so many vocations.

Fr. Jonathan Licari, O.S.B., came to Holy Name of Jesus in June 2001 to assist Fr. Arnold. He worked as associate pastor for three months and then assumed the role of pastor, with Father Arnold as associate. In 2003, Father Arnold retired to St. John's Abbey.

Father Joseph Feders, O.S.B., arrived in July of 2003, to serve as associate pastor with Father Jonathan. Under their leadership, pastoral restructuring was initiated. An in-depth survey of the parish was generated. All parishioners were invited to share in the ministerial life of the community by participating in the newly formed Ministry Area Commissions. All the various ministries of Holy Name of Jesus were grouped under seven commission heads: Liturgy, Stewardship, Social Justice, Finance & Administration, Faith Formation, Pastoral Care, and School. The commission leaders meet monthly to help foster all areas of ministry.

In June 2006, St. John's Abbey, announced they could no longer supply priests for Holy Name of Jesus and the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, due to their shortage of priests. After over 150 years of Benedictine tradition, Holy Name of Jesus will become an Archdiocesan Parish as of June 30, 2007. Father Joseph was appointed pastor of St. Joseph Parish in St. Joseph, MN, in June of 2006. Father Jonathan will continue serving as pastor until June 2007.

This parish family looks back at more than 150 years of history with pride; and looks into the future with confidence in God's grace. Holy Name of Jesus is a generous, active, profoundly spiritual congregation with strong Liturgies and Social Justice affinities. The Archdiocesan future administration will be received with St. Benedict's philosophy: Welcome all as we would welcome Christ.

Information Compiled by
Kathleen Hansmann
Parish Historian



Holy Name Cemetery in
the 1930s

List of Priests Serving Holy Name Parish		
Priest	Dates	Notes
Eberhard Gahr	1862	Visited from St. Anthony. Log church was built in 1862.
Joseph N. Tomazevic	1867	
Januarius Czarnowski	1877 - 1879	First resident priest in 1877.
Magnus Mayr	1879 - 1882	
F.O. Kohler	1883	Diocesan priests served the parish after 1883 from St. Michael's, Maple Grove.
J. Schwartz	1884 - 1889	Diocesan and Franciscans served the parish in this period.
Pius Schmid	1889 - 1896	Parish reincorporated 25 Sep 1891.
Theodore Venn	1896 - 1899	
B.G. Jansen	1899 - 1900	
C.M. Hampesch	1901 - 1904	
Andrew Baczyk	1904 - 1905	
John Henry Keil	1905 - 1908	
Fedore Doring	1909 - 1911	
George Scheffold	1912 - 1925	
Philip Bahner	1917	
Xavier Kapsner	1918 - 1922	
Leo Hoppe	1922 - 1923	
Benedict Schmit	1925 - 1929	
Leo Hoppe	1929	Administrator of the parish.
Eugene Woerdehoff	1929 - 1931	
Adalbert Unruhe	1931 - 1936	
Hyacinth Cismowski	1936 - 1946	
Edgar Kees	1941	June to August while Father Hyacinth was on silver jubilee vacation
Edward Botzet	1946 - 1964	
James Studer	1964	Administrator while Father Edward was sick in April and May
Emmanuel Kelsch	1964 - 1968	
Alto Butkowski	1969 - 1972	Appointed temporary administrator in New Munich (Immaculate Conception)
Arnold Weber	1972 - 1973	
Mathias Spier	1973 - 1979	
John Anderl	1979 - 1981	
Henry Anderl	1979 - 1981	Brother John Anderl was assistant
Arnold Weber	1981 - 2003	Retained presidency of Benilde-St. Margaret HS until June, 1981. Then pastor. Assistant 9/1/2001
Jonathan Licari	2001 - 2007	Assistant until 1 Sep 2001 then pastor
Joseph Feders	2003 - 2006	September to June only
Archdiocese	2007 - Present	Benedictines withdrew

Additional Notes about Holy Name Church

The first log church was built near the shore of Holy Name Lake across what is now County Road 24 from the current site of the church. The first bell and chalice for the church were reportedly donated by George Reiser.



The 1874 church

The picture above shows a large group at some special event.

This building burned down on 3 Jun 1911.
It was located on the south side of CR 24 on the same site
as the 1911 building which still stands



These early buildings were heated by wood stoves and the parishioners volunteered trees for firewood and their time and labor to cut it. While the third church and the 1919 school had coal stoker (and later oil burning) furnaces and no longer needed wood, the church hall was always heated with wood. Each fall through about 1955, men would gather in a parishioner's woods to cut firewood for the following winter. In the last few years, this happened at the Merz farm. Some men would bring power saws and others would bring trucks to haul the wood to the hall. Boys had to carry the wood into the hall and stack it.

For some time, the heat in the church would be turned off after last Sunday Mass. This practice was later dropped because it took so long to get it warmed back up and the church was kept heated through the winter. The hall was only heated for scheduled parish events. Parishioners would sometimes use the hall for social events like card parties. The committee sponsoring the event had to provide wood. They would have to start the fire on Saturday morning to have enough time to get the building heated by Sunday evening.

Through World War I, sermons were given in both English and German making the Masses last two to two and a half hours long.



The 1911 church

The picture at upper is the oldest - note the wooded stairs and the ornate crosses on the steeple and the front corners of the roof. The picture above was taken later. The extra crosses have been removed from the steeple but remain on the roof.



At left (taken in the early 1980s) all the extra crosses have been removed. This building still remains and is attached to the new structure built a few years later

Building the "Amusement Hall", School and Convent:

In the summer of 1915, Father George celebrated his 25th jubilee of his ordination. Any social events were held in the basement of the old schoolhouse, which indeed was too small for much of a crowd. Father George saw the necessity of a hall where dinners could be held, and larger crowds could be taken care of.

A meeting was called, plans soon were underway and a building committee was organized. The "Amusement Hall" as it was known, was in progress. Labor was donated and the carpenters in charge were Anthony Adams, Mike Adams, Henry Scherer, John Reiser, George Reimer, August Striebel, Simon Scherer and many more. Lumber was inexpensive and the building materials cost approximately \$700.

The building was completed in December and plans were made for a grand opening to be held on New Years Eve. This indeed was a gala event. And a lot of preparation. The lamps alone were a big job. Who can remember all the kerosene lights that had to be lit and the wood and water that had to be hauled?

The day arrived and what a huge success. A chicken dinner, fortune wheel, raffles. The Merz Orchestra furnished the music. There was dancing in the evening and when it was over everyone felt the Amusement Hall was well worth the time and effort.

Card parties were held that winter and for many winters to follow. The Merz Orchestra usually played a few numbers and after the card parties there was dancing. People came with horses from miles around and everyone enjoyed the parties immensely.

There were many wedding receptions and dances held in the hall. Then there were the home talent plays. The first big success was "Prairie Rose", in which Dorothy Heid, who taught school, played the leading role. This was a grand play and very well done. There were many "Deacon" plays in which John Eckes played the part of Deacon. No one could do the part as well as he. Every year putting on a play was a must. Father George coached them every year new talent was found.

World War I intervened, and the boys were called to service. Farewell parties in the hall were sad and good-byes were said with tear filled eyes. Of the 32 young men who went to the war, only one did not return. Armistice Day on Nov. 11, 1918 brought an end to the conflict. And the boys came home. Again, there were welcome parties in the hall and soon news came that the body of John Pohlker was being returned for burial at Holy Name. The casket lay in state in the hall. His comrades stood guard all night and never was there so great a crowd at a funeral here.

The need for a larger school became apparent and another building program was begun. An addition to the old building was built, doubling the size. At the same time a new convent was begun. Father George applied to the St. Scholastica Priory for sisters to teach.

Holy Name School opened its door in the fall of 1919 for the full school year with four nuns and 52 pupils in all eight elementary grades and one year of high school. Father George vacated the rectory so the sisters could live there until the convent was finished. At thanksgiving they moved into their new home. The school enrollment increased rapidly, reaching 90 students by 1930. After the first few years of operation the first year of high school was dropped.

Kathleen Hansmann
Parish Historian

Holy Name Convent.

The sisters that taught at Holy Name lived in this building located just southwest of the 1911 church. It was completed in the fall of 1919.



The painting at left is of the 1914 "Amusement Hall" (at left) and the 1919 two-room school. Holy Name Lake is to the rear in this view.

Below is a news photo of the fire that destroyed the two buildings on 18 Jul 1967.



8

1899 *St. Pius - Detroit*

Cash. Received from Dec 02		
Dec 3	Mona. Money	\$8 05
Jan 7 1899	of p. Scherer	\$12 30
Feb 4	" "	4 75
Apr 1	" "	6 45
Apr 1	" "	17 50
1, 1	" "	5 00
May 19	rede Scherer	3 00
Total in-cash on hand		
3. Exp. on Dec 1899 - till 5 Mai 1900.		62 05
Uebertragen aus 5. Mai		289 34
		351 39
Uebertragen vom 5. Mai 1899		
till 5. Mai 1900		155 64
Uebertragen aus fundus		195 75
mai 1900		65 50
Uebertragen aus		25 62 5
5 Mai 1900		
Henry Scherer		
Frank Ditter		

At left is a ledger page from the St Pius Society in 1899. The Society was founded in May, 1893. It was one of the vereine referred to by Joseph Merz.

They took in monthly dues and paid out assistance to members who were sick or as a death benefit to members who had died. This page was signed by Henry Scherer and Frank Ditter.

Note that most of it is written in German.

The society was closed out in Oct 1986 with the remaining money turned over to the parish. The last death benefit paid was \$20 to Lucille Scherer on the death of her husband Harvey in 1982.

The ribbon at right belonged to Charlie Scherer as a member of the St. Pius Society of Holy Name parish.

The meaning of letters D. R. K. U. G. v. M. is not entirely clear, but they are most likely a German acronym.

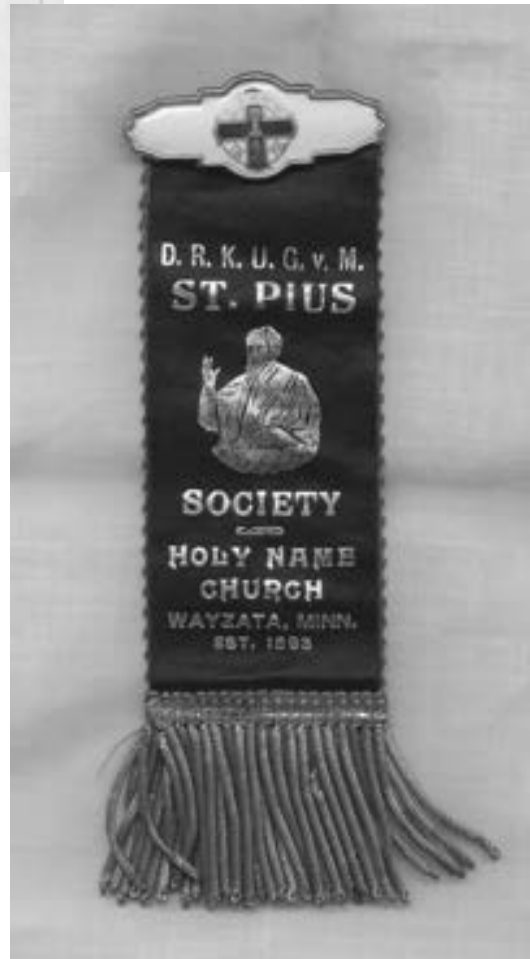
The "D" probably means Deutsche (or German).

The "K" probably means Katolische (or Catholic).

The "G" probably means Gersellschaft (or society/club).

The "v. M." probably means "from or of Minnesota or Medina."

In addition, there is another acronym on the clasp at the top. The gold letters on the white background are hard to see in this image. The letters are "C. A. A. of M." with the year 1878 below. Again, the meaning of this inscription is not clear.



Additional Notes about Holy Name School

The history of Holy Name School was very sporadic until the two-room school was built near the shore of the lake on the north side of County Road 24 in 1919. Prior to that time, school was held in a variety of locations and most of the Medina members of the congregation sent their children to the District 7 School instead of Holy Name. The history of these two schools is intertwined. Children sometimes attended one school and then the other. It appears that at one point, the building that Holy Name used was turned over to District 7. After 1919, Holy Name became the major school in the neighborhood and most of the Scherer children went there for their education.

For most of the time from 1919 until 1955, grades one through four were in the “little room” and grades five through eight were in the “big” room. During the latter part of this period, grades seven and eight were taught in the church hall because there was not enough room in the school. The grades were arranged by rows. The teacher would instruction one grade while the others were expected to study. She rotated from row to row and grade to grade throughout the day.



Students in front of Holy Name School about 1920

This picture belonged to Meinrod “Munn” Scherer and he is presumably one of the students. He would have been in sixth grade when the school opened in 1919. He would have completed eighth grade by 1922 so this picture was taken in the very early years of the school.

Munn’s younger brother Rupert is probably also in the picture. His youngest brother Harvey was born in 1915 and may have been included too.

Until the “new” school was built in 1955 there was no running water in the school. The bathroom was an outhouse and the drinking fountain was an earthenware crock in the cloakroom.

The older boys in school were expected to handle a large part of the work in the daily maintenance of the school and church grounds:

- Shoveling snow from the school, church, rectory and convent
- Shoveling a path to clothes lines by the convent
- Pumping water with the hand pump and filling the drinking fountains
- Mowing the lawn around the church, rectory and convent. There were seven or eight push mowers, and the boys would sometimes engage in mower races. During the summer, the priest would make an announcement in church at Sunday Mass naming the boys who needed to come in that week to do the mowing.
- Building the fire in the three stoves in the hall for social events.
- Stacking firewood in the hall

- Putting up screens and storm windows on the convent and rectory in the spring and fall
- Putting up the flag
- Shoveling the skating area on the lake

Children also had to wash the blackboards and clap the erasers.



Holy Name School “Little Room” (grades 1-4) about 1926
 Cletus Scherer is in the first row sitting at a desk, second from the left
 Laura Hunz is in the back row – far right.

Windows are on the left facing County Road 24 and the church across the road. The door in back on the left goes to the cloak room and the door on the right leads to the vestibule and the entrance to the “Big Room” (grades 5-8)

At this point, the two-room school had only been open about seven or eight years

School almost never closed. Bertha Merz Ahlstrom remembers that she walked to school when the temperature was about 25 degrees below zero. There were only three kids there, but school was held anyway.

Rather than heat up the church during the winter, Mass was celebrated in the school basement two to three times per week. It was very hot and stuffy there.

Winter brought new entertainment for the kids during recess. Snow was shoveled off the lake to form a rink for ice skating. The school also had several sleds. The kids would make runs down the hill from the church hall to the lake. This involved hauling water from the pump to turn the entire run

into ice. Jumps were usually added. The hill was not very steep, but the icy surface was so slick that speeds were high, and the sleds flew long distances over the jumps.



Holy Name School "little room" children about 1932
Immediately to his left (first boy in the second row) is Wilfred Scherer.
Next to Wilfred is Bernard Reiser who later became a priest and
founded Epiphany Parish in Coon Rapids, MN

The priest in both of these pictures is Father Adalbert Unruhe.



Holy Name School "big room" children about 1932
Laura Hunz is second from the left in the back row. Dorothy Hunz is second from
the left in the third row while Cletus Scherer is third from the right in the same row.
Jerome Scherer is seated at front right.

The nuns would make hot cocoa on First Fridays - sometimes with marshmallows. They made it in a big kettle.

After the new school was built, there were cleaning committees appointed to maintain the building.



Holy Name School – Class of 1925

Back from left: Harvey Scherer, George Rush, Frank Leuer & Anthony Jordan
Front: Helen Mooney, Father Leo & Dorothy Mengelkoch



Holy Name School - Class of 1933

Back from left: Joseph Jordan, Wilfred Fitzer, Magdelene Reiser, Dorothy Schommer, Camile Hughes, Cletus Scherer, Jerome Begin and Anthony Ditter
Front: Marie Striebel, Father Adalbart, Lorraine Milan



Holy Name School - Class of 1936

This is the graduating class of Dorothy Hunz (who is seated at left in the front row) and Jerome Scherer (who is at right in the middle row.) Father Adalbart sits at front center. The rest of the class is unidentified



Holy Name School - Class of 1938

Back from left: John Jordan, Les Raskob, Gerald Faue & Edwin Eckes
 Middle row: Joe Raskob, Bernard Reiser, Alfred Merz, Wilfred Scherer, Bob Roehl & Roman Schommer
 Front row: Marie Doris Begin, Emily Reiser, Father Hyasinth, Rosella Faue & Jeanne Crahan



Holy Name "Little Room" children about 1944

Back row from left: Benitia Leuer, Ed Etzel, Victoria Bauer, Alice Reimer, Ed Meister, William Scherer & unknown. In the far back is Sister Carmelita.

Second row: Unknown, Monica Reiser, Gerald Theis?, unknown, Paul Leuer, David Reiser, Barbara Schommer, Delores Eckes, unknown & unknown

Front: Kenneth Leuer, Marion Merz, Mary Kay Etzel, Betty Jordan, Terry Hammes, Carmen Schmit, Elizabeth Bauer, Ramona Leuer, Mary Scherer, Roger Dayon and Leo Schommer

Kenneth Leuer and Carmen Schmit are grandchildren of Henry Scherer. David Reiser was raised by Heintz and Marie Scherer and considered to be another of the grandchildren.

William and Mary Scherer were children of Ervin Scherer – grandchildren of Henry's brother Simon. William married classmate Alice Reimer.



Holy Name School – Class of 1945

Back from left: Eugene Stumpf, John Turnham, Bob Robins, Lloyd Jobst, Thomas Reiser & Gerald Eckes

Middle: Franny Schommer, Rita Hansmann, Delores Leuer, Rosemary Reiser, Greg Reiser

Front: Gertrude Meister, Mary Agnes Leuer, Father Hyasinth, Betty Etzel & Arlene Raskob

Bob Robins and Lloyd Jobst were foster children living with Holy Name families



Holy Name Class of 1952

Back from left: Carol Schmit, Catherine Reimer, Marilyn Leuer, Mary Carol Eckes & Catherine Turnham

Front: Mary Ahlstrom, Barbara Scherer, Father Edward Botzet, Annette Faue & Sylvia Reimer



Holy Name Class of 1962

Back from left: Dennis Scherer, Bernard Mooney, Mark LaVigne, Suzie Scherer, Mike LaVigne, Joseph Theis & Rod Tauer

Front: Bonnie Koelfgen, Penny Hatcher, Steve Libby, Fr. Edward Botzet, Bill Scherer, Bonnie Roehl & Diana Hunz

This class was the last to attend the “old school” for an entire year.



Five of the thirteen members of the Class of 1962 were descendants of Andreas Scherer. This was not an uncommon occurrence in the 1950s and 60s.

They met at the funeral of Fran Scherer in 2012 for an unofficial 50th anniversary reunion.

From left: Bonnie Roehl Lambertz, Suzie Scherer Dominik, Dennis Scherer, Diana Hunz Miels & Bill Scherer



This article was originally published as a chapter in
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The book is available in the West Hennepin History Center library