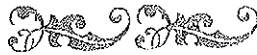
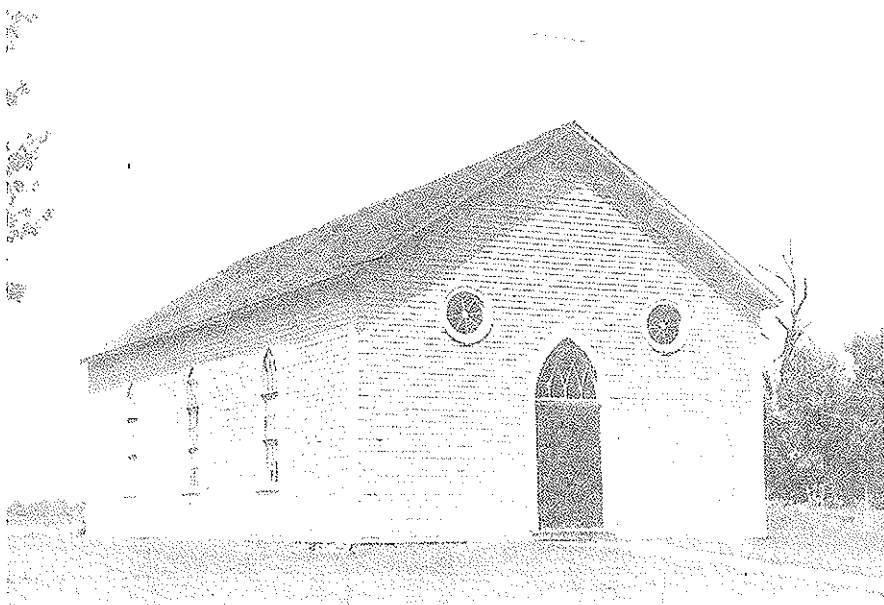




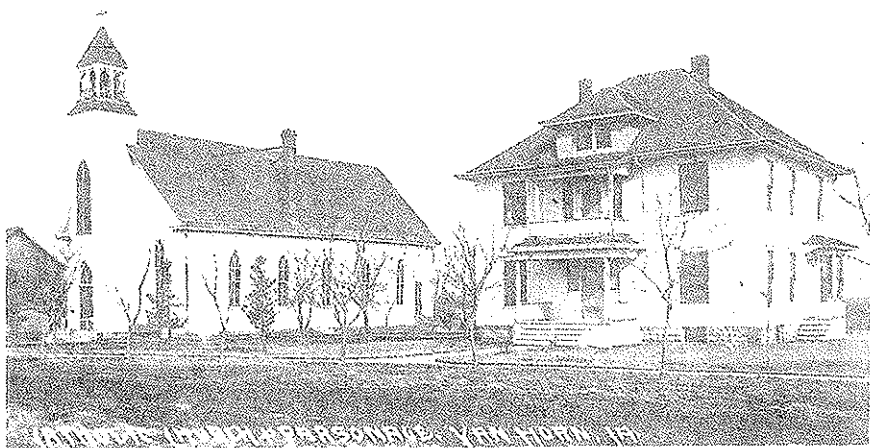
CHURCHES



Immaculate Conception Catholic Church



Holy Cross Church near Keystone, 1869



Catholic Church 1895.

In January, 1863, a Benton County pioneer, Francis Murphy deeded two sections of prairieland, near what is now Keystone to the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, to pay for the education of his two sons. In the spring of 1866, the provincial of Holy Cross Fathers sent the Rev. Paul E. Gillin, the first priest, together with Brothers Matthew, Cessaire and Aloysius to take possession of the recently acquired tract of land and to care for the spiritual needs of settlers of the then prairie Benton County, and eventually, if found advisable, to open a college there. Land records in the Court house in Vinton show the land Murphy deeded was 1,280 acres.

Father Paul Gillin came from Indiana with his mass kit and began missionary work in the surrounding areas. Parish records show Father Paul conferred the sacrament of Baptism July 1866. Father Paul is considered the first resident pastor in the county as he lived there before Holy Cross church was built.

Father Paul persuaded many Catholics to settle in the area, even going "back East" to persuade some to come to Benton County. He soon disposed of 1270 acres reserving 10 acres for the church and cemetery. Much of this land was sold at low prices to encourage pioneer settlers of the Catholic faith to move into this area. Many Irish Catholic names in the region between Keystone and Van Horne owe their presence to this missionary priest.

At Holy Cross mission, the first building was a combination church and house. The first person to be baptized at the mission in September 15, 1867 was Bridget Cantwell, daughter of Paul Cantwell. The first recorded marriage officiated at by Rev. Paul was that of Michael Kelly and Bridget Ryan on February 9, 1868. This building was destroyed by fire.

A frame church, approximately 30 feet x 60 feet was constructed in 1869. The first Mass was celebrated there June 19, 1870. The first couple to be married in Holy Cross Church were James Powers and Catherine Malone in 1870. Collections to start the church amounted to \$69.00. Pew rents were collected 4 times a year. The price depended on the position in which the parishioners sat, either north or south, front or back. Average donation was \$2.50 per quarter. Some paid as high as \$15.00 yearly dues. Brother Aloysius is the only member of the Congregation of Holy Cross parish to be buried in Holy Cross cemetery.

Baptisms and marriages as early as 1867 in Fr. Gillins' hand indicate the presence of the names Barry, Cantwell, McCormick, Nolan, and O'Brien in the Van Horne area. Other names appeared: Kelly, Ryan, Barron, Maher, and Duncalf.

Central feature of Holy Cross Cemetery today is a stone altar

surmounted with a massive oak cross built on the location of the original Holy Cross church. Limestone used for the altar is from Stone City. Celtic style of the cross is commemorative of Irish origin of the first settlers who brought the Catholic faith to this area. This altar was dedicated and the first Mass was offered Memorial Day, 1974 by Rev. John J. Pitzen, then the pastor of Immaculate Conception in Van Horne. The historical memorial marker will remind future generations that this is an important place in local church history.

The first diocesan priest to succeed Holy Cross Fathers, the Rev. Thomas J. Reynolds was appointed pastor in 1888.

By 1895 the first Catholic church was built in Van Horne under the direction of Rev. Thomas J. Reynolds of Holy Cross. The first church was a frame building which stood on the site of the present church. This served until 1914 when it was destroyed by fire. From 1895 through 1902 Van Horne was served as a mission from Holy Cross. The Van Horne congregation increased in numbers while the Holy Cross parish declined.

In 1902, Rev. John Hogan exchanged parishes with Father Reynolds. Father Hogan decided to make Van Horne the principal church and a parish house was built in 1903 and was still in use until 1978. Holy Cross became a mission and remained such until 1928, when the church was officially closed.

Father Hogan served the parish the longest of any pastor, almost 30 years. When the frame church burned in 1914, Father Hogan decided to rebuild immediately with bricks. The next year 1915, the present \$40,000 brick building was erected.

The church is classical basilica style, 50 by 100 feet, with Munich stained glass windows, and a seating capacity of 400. Today it stands in Rev. Hogan's memory.

Sister Laurentia (Lorena) and Sister Laurentina (Loretta) Barron, twin daughters of the William Barrons entered the Sisters of Mercy, Cedar Rapids, December 6, 1921.

Rev. Conrad R. Schallau, son of the Con Schallaus, was ordained a priest December 18, 1942. He said his First Solemn Mass December 21, 1943 at his hometown parish.

Leland M. Barry, son of the Matt Barrys studied for the priesthood upon graduation from Loras College, but lost his life in a boating accident.

Priests who have served the parishioners of Immaculate Conception include Rev. John Hartigan, 1931, Rev. T. J. Norris, 1936, Rev. John L. Byrne, 1948, Rev. Francis J. Churchill, 1950, Rev. Paul J. Evans, 1969, Rev. John J. Pitzen, 1970, and presently, Rev. Duane Raftis.

Parish member, James Naso was ordained to the order of Deacon November 5, 1978.

The parish is presently composed of 130 households. The Altar and Rosary society's 1915 financial statement shows the ladies donated the Stations of the Cross still in use today, at a cost of \$500.00.



Catholic Church — 1980

Rest In Peace

When the early settlers came, they had several priorities; first, a place to live, sometimes in their covered wagon or a sod hut. Their next need was a church and cemetery.

In Union township, the first cemetery was called Kelly Cemetery, now Calvary, because Patrick Kelly offered land from his farm as a burial spot for a transient. The first marked burials were two Kirby children in 1855, and 1857, and William Schall, 1859.

The Van Metre cemetery is located three miles south of Van Horne, and three and one-half miles west, on a hill south of Highway No. 30. This is primarily a Van Metre family cemetery. The first burial was John Van Metre in 1863. Other families are Webster, Collins, Grill and Stocker.

The Salem Cemetery is located next to the rural location of the old Evangelical church, one mile south, and one and one-half miles east of Van Horne. The first burial was Mary Schmitt, wife of Phillip, no stone. The second was Mary Loehner, the wife of a Abraham Loehner, the first minister to serve the church in 1868. In 1872, Ben Bortzfield, a Civil War veteran, was buried. Others are Stiegelmeyer, Hagen, and Grote.

Bender Cemetery is located 2 miles north and three and one-half miles west of Van Horne on the J. Bender farm. First burial was Katherine Bender, 1873, Herzberger, 1874, also Steinforde.

Other Van Horne community families have been buried in La Rue, Homer-Big Grove, in Big Grove township, and Lutheran cemeteries in Eldorado and Kane townships.