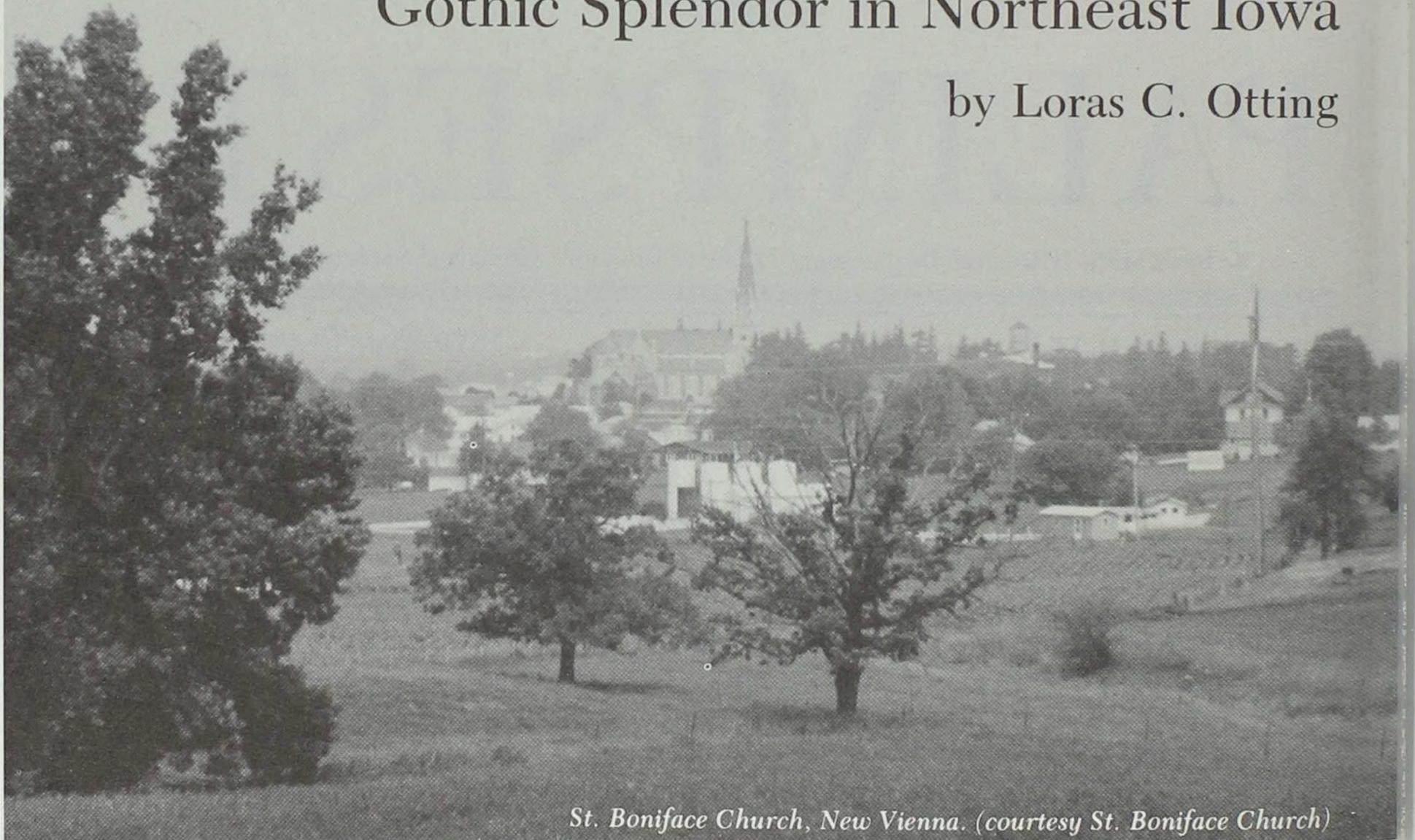


# Gothic Splendor in Northeast Iowa

by Loras C. Otting



*St. Boniface Church, New Vienna. (courtesy St. Boniface Church)*

Whether situated on a hill or in a valley, they dominate the skyline. Sometimes the spires can be seen from miles away and draw the eye like irresistible visual magnets. Sometimes three are discernible at the same time on the distant horizon, or, after a turn on a street in a small town, suddenly one stands before you and draws your eyes straight up to the heavens.

To catch the eye was what the builders of these churches intended — to catch the eye, and then the mind of the viewer, and elevate both beyond the mundane to a more perfect, more beautiful world. Expressions of this hope can be found throughout Iowa. Many of its finest examples, however, are clustered in northeast Iowa where German, Irish, and Bohemian Catholics constructed edifices that

have become timeless tributes to their devotion, hard work, and sacrifice.

In western Dubuque County and eastern Delaware County is a cluster of truly outstanding Gothic churches. Perhaps the best known because of its easy accessibility, size, and its designation as a basilica is St. Francis Xavier of Dyersville. Unfortunately situated on the lowest plain in the city, its magnificence cannot be appreciated from a distance. But when one stands before its massive twin towers, each 212 feet high, it is awe-inspiring.

Although Dyersville was first settled by the English, German Catholics soon arrived and purchased much of the rich surrounding farmland. Gradually the Germans predominated and English influence disappeared. The only remaining traces of it are to be found in the name of the town and the surnames of a few of its citizens. At first the Germans held services

above stores or in private homes. They began to build a small brick church in 1858, just south of the present church, but soon ran out of money. The four church trustees, Joseph Stoeckl, Theodore Goerdts, George Schindler, and Franz Schultz, mortgaged their farms to raise funds so work could continue. In 1869 the church was enlarged. By the mid-1880s, however, in-migration had increased to a point where plans were made to build a new and much larger structure — a structure that might seat 1,000 to 1,500 people. As construction began in September 1887, the pastor, Reverend Anton Kortenkamp, became seriously ill and had to be confined to his room. His assistant, the Reverend Joseph Brinkmann, was forced to scurry back and forth between the sickroom and the workers, relaying Father Kortenkamp's plans and wishes for the building. The cornerstone was laid on June 3, 1888, and on December 3, 1889, the new church was dedicated by Bishop John J. Hennessy of Dubuque. Dyersville's beloved pastor and church builder had died on September 14, 1889. Thus Father Kortenkamp did not live to see the church completed and his funeral was the last held in the old church.

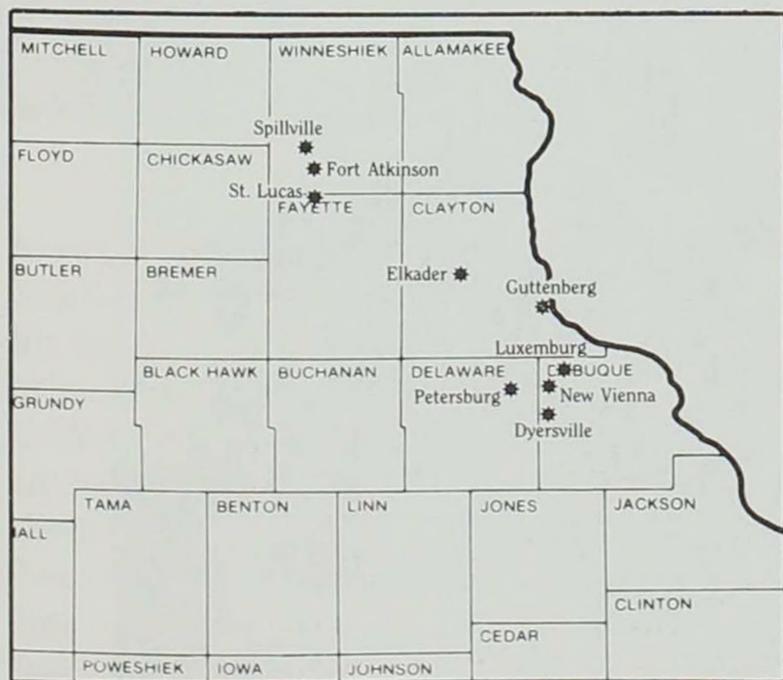
Of Gothic design, the red brick structure measures 70 × 175 feet and seats 1,200 worshippers. Upon entry, the eye is drawn imme-

diately upward to the huge vaulted ceiling, at a height of over 70 feet, and then forward to the main altar. The altar is unusual. Instead of being constructed of one material, the altar is of Italian marble and Mexican onyx and rests beneath a 52-foot high baldachino (canopy) of butternut wood. On the sanctuary ceiling over the main altar is a painting of special interest. The central figure represents the radiant Lamb of God and is surrounded by celestial angels. To the right of the figure are saints of the Old Testament and to the left are saints of the New Testament. In a painting in the south corner can be seen the face of the Reverend George W. Heer, who succeeded Kortenkamp as pastor of the Dyersville congregation and supervised the finishing and furnishing of the church's interior.

Even the windows of this midwestern Gothic showpiece are unique. The church contains sixty-four cathedral glass windows and transoms in burnt colors. A rose window was installed above the organ in 1959. The Indian design selected for the rose window recognized the habitation of northeast Iowa by Indians one hundred and fifty years earlier. Two side altars of Gothic design and made of butternut wood were added to the church in 1897. A large pipe organ was installed in 1913, although it was replaced in 1971 by a new organ designed to fit the size of the church and take full advantage of the building's acoustical qualities.

St. Francis Xavier was raised to the rank of a minor basilica in May 1956 by a papal proclamation. This honor was bestowed in recognition of the "architectural attributes of the church and the fervent faith of the congregation." A coat of arms, allowed only in those churches which are basilicas, hangs over the pulpit. Also, the pavilion (umbrella) and the small bell are authorized insignia for a basilica and are placed in open view in the sanctuary.

Five miles north of Dyersville is New Vienna. Topping the hill from the south, one gets the impression of entering a central Euro-





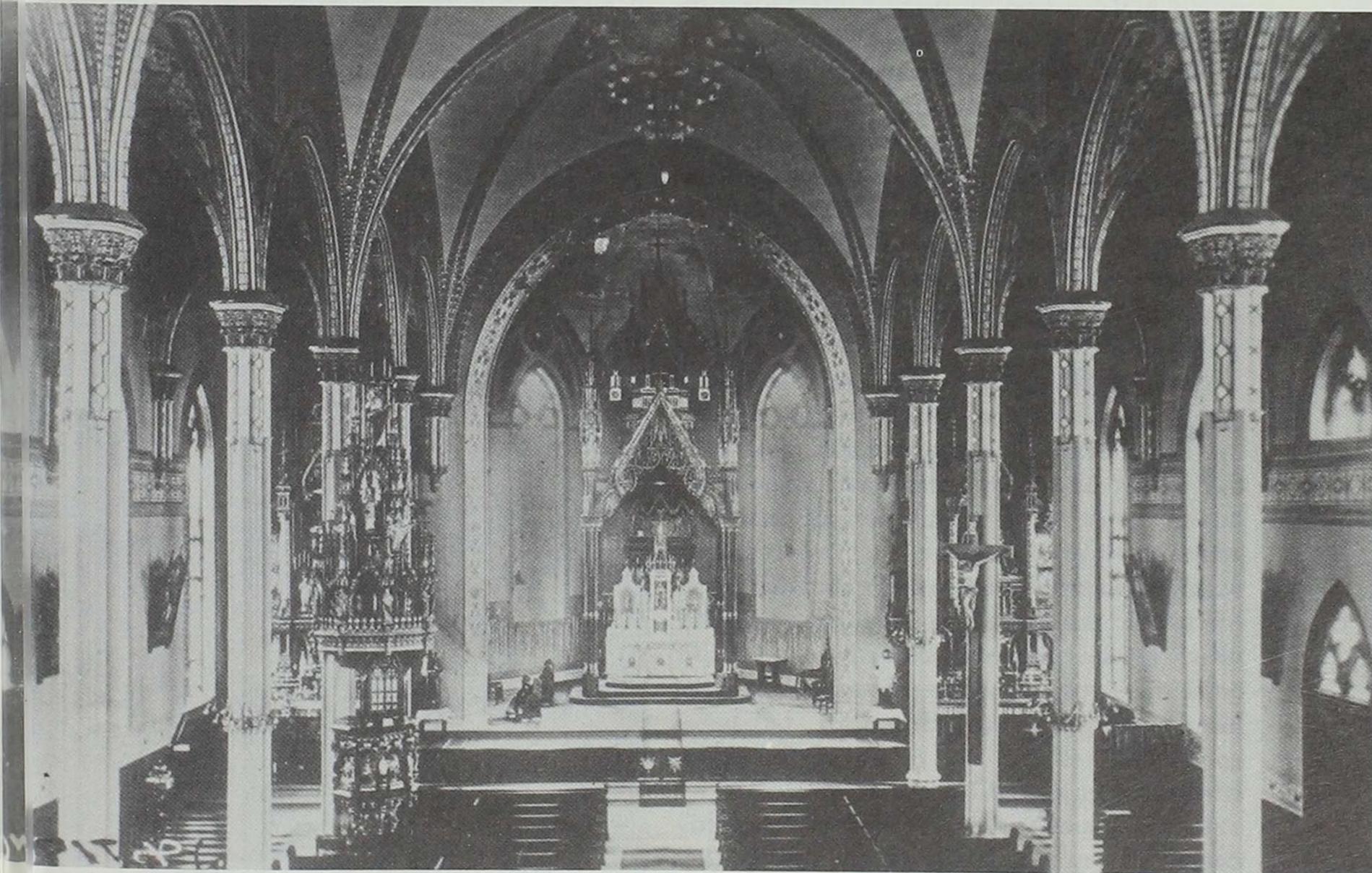
*St. Francis Xavier, Dyersville, c. 1910. (SHSI)*

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pean village. Completely dominating the little town is another magnificent, but more simple, Gothic masterpiece. In 1843 five families came to the area from Germany after a short sojourn in Ohio. They had wanted relatives in Germany to join them but there were no places for them in well-settled Ohio. After arriving in

gifts to and support of the American Catholic missions through the Leopoldine Association, a society founded in 1829 to help American missions.) With land available, soon numbers of immigrants came from Germany to join them.

These hardy immigrants built their first



*A pre-1910 view of the pulpit and interior of St. Francis Xavier, Dyersville. (SHSI)*

Iowa City, they headed northeast because they heard of Bishop Mathias Loras in Dubuque and his friendliness toward Catholic immigrants. When they arrived in Cascade, they sent two of their number to Dubuque to seek the bishop's advice as to their future location. He advised them to move to what was then called Wilson's Grove. (Bishop Loras later changed the village's name to New Vienna in honor and gratitude to Emperor Francis I of Austria for his

church in 1848 and dedicated it to St. Boniface, the apostle of the Germans. Each member of the parish was requested to furnish six logs and two hundred split shingles, and other building materials as needed. The log church soon proved to be too small, however, even after an addition, and in 1852 construction began on a new stone church. The community of New Vienna grew so rapidly that within thirty years yet another new church was needed.

The cornerstone of the present church was laid in 1884 and the building was completed in 1887. Constructed of pure white magnesia limestone obtained from a nearby quarry, the church measures 62 × 172 feet, and has a seating capacity of 900. The ceiling reaches a height of 60 feet. The steeple is 200 feet high.

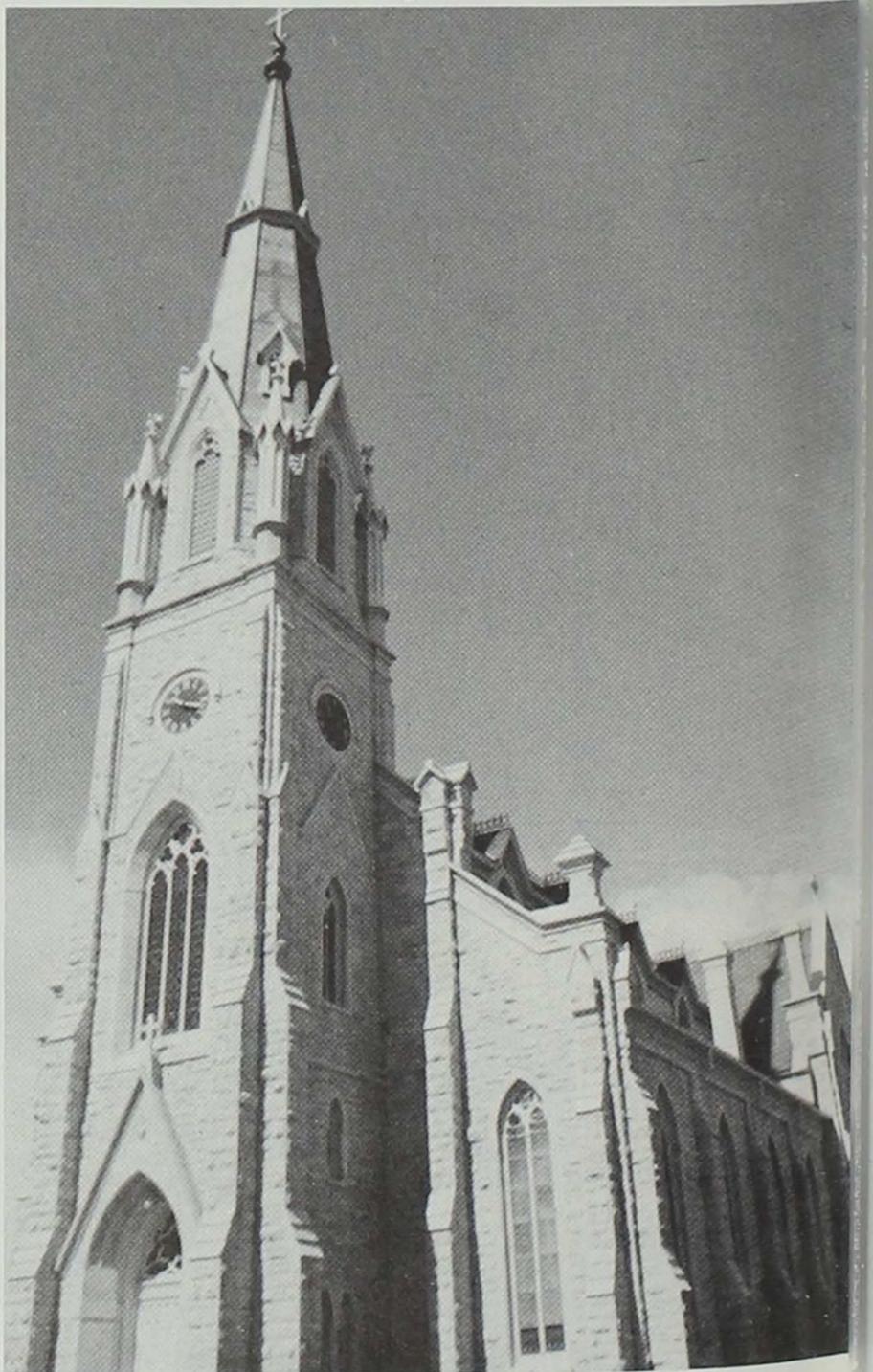
The first-time visitor may well be struck by the relative plainness of the interior. As in Gothic constructions generally, the eye is drawn up to the high ceiling, but little ornamentation is found. The interior has been painted in soft clear colors and the windows are somewhat plain. They are mostly flowered, except in the transepts where one shows St. Boniface felling the symbolic tree and the other depicts Mary being crowned Queen of Heaven.

The main altar, however, is not plain. It is a stunning piece of work which again sends the eye heavenward. It is made of soft, gold-tone mahogany, as are the small side altars. The tabernacle is truly a masterpiece of the art of wood carving. The entire altar is decorated with wood-carved vines, reeds, branches, and leaves and has sixteen angels carved in the wood. The fourteen hand-carved stations of the cross are exquisite and irreplaceable. The original pipe organ, installed in 1891, has been completely restored and is one of the oldest tracker organs in the Midwest.

Strong traces of the German origin of this community can be found in the inscription, *St. Bonifacius Kirche*, over the main door, the German inscriptions under each window, and the plaque outside the church listing in German the original settlers. A bronze plaque immediately inside the main door states: "Why such a church? The future welfare of the Church and State lies with the tillers of the soil. He that owns the land will eventually rule the country."

About five miles due west of New Vienna is the village of Petersburg. The crowning glory of this tiny village is the Church of SS. Peter

and Paul, a veritable Gothic gem. A daughter parish of St. Boniface, it was begun in 1867 when the German Catholic families who had moved west from New Vienna appointed a committee of eight men to raise funds and secure plans for a church. The village was named after Peter Domesy, one of the earliest pioneers in the area, who was chosen secretary and treasurer of the committee. With financial aid from the mother parish and the donation of two acres of land each by Domesy and Joseph Miller, a stone church was constructed in 1868 on the same site as the present church.



*St. Boniface Church, New Vienna. (courtesy St. Boniface Church)*



*Restored in 1974, St. Boniface Church's 1891 pipe organ is credited with being the "second most historical organ in the state" (the organ at St. Wenceslaus Church in Spillville was installed in 1875). The organ's 1,300-plus pipes range in size from a pipe slightly larger than the inside of a ball-point pen to a pipe that is eighteen feet tall. When played, the sound generated by the organ fills the church. (courtesy St. Boniface Church)*

The arrival of a new pastor, Reverend William Sassen, in 1902 inaugurated a period of change. The old church was found to be too small and construction was begun in 1904 on what was destined to become one of the most unique churches in all of Iowa. While small in comparison to its counterparts in Dyersville and New Vienna, its façade alone makes this church outstanding. Not one, not two, but three spires soar above the Iowa prairie. The central spire was retained from the first church and rises 150 feet, while the identical but

smaller ones attain heights of 100 feet. Under each spire are massive arches. With two at the transepts, the structure has five large portals. Stone for the 74 × 150-foot church was transported from quarries at Stone City.

The interior of the church is even more remarkable. Almost every inch is decorated with either frescoes or gold leaf and it contains over one hundred statues. Also very striking are the five large altars. The main altar is of highly polished imported Italian marble inlaid with mosaics. The reredos (altar backdrop) is of carved wood, its many exquisitely carved finger spires adding to the 40-foot height. Two large side altars, and then two large votive altars, each of hand-carved wood, flank the main altar. Hand-carved stations of the cross line the side walls with a German inscription under each one. Inscriptions under the marvelous stained-glass windows tell of their donors.

A legend that may contain a grain of truth surrounds the building of these three neighboring churches. New Vienna built its single, classic Gothic spire first to a height of 200 feet. Next, Dyersville sent up two spires 212 feet. Not able to outdo their more numerous neighbors to the southeast in terms of height, Petersburg residents simply erected three spires.

North of New Vienna the steeple of Holy Trinity Church of Luxemburg commands the countryside. At what is now the junction of Highways 3, 52, and 136, settlers, many of whom came from the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, erected this church in 1874 to replace a small frame church built in the early 1860s. The construction of the new church was difficult, as a tornado struck the town of Luxemburg and the partially-completed church building in late June 1874 and caused severe damage to the church rafters, one wall, and the steeple. Yet the Reverend Frederick William Oberbroekling and his parishioners were determined to see the building project to its

completion and a generous non-Catholic neighbor provided the loan that allowed them to repair the damage and finish the church. Holy Trinity Church's 172-foot spire can be seen for miles when approaching from any direction, although the most compelling view is from the north. Of particular note in this church are the fourteen stations of the cross, hand-carved and imported from Europe, and a statue of St. Isidore, patron of farmers, which stands just outside the main entrance.

North of Dyersville and New Vienna is the town of Guttenberg with its twin-spired St. Mary's Church. In 1851 Bishop Loras sent a missionary priest to the German Catholic settlers of the area who then formed the first congregation of any denomination in Clayton County. A small frame building served as the congregation's first church. A larger facility was needed within two years, however, as the population of the parish increased rapidly. In 1853 a brick church was built that served the congregation's needs until 1874, when a larger church of bluff stone was constructed. By 1902 the stone church was again judged to be too small and construction began on the present church, built of St. Louis pressed brick.

Although not as high as the spires of St. Francis Xavier in Dyersville, St. Mary's twin spires, covered with copper slate and reaching more than 146 feet into the sky, are still impressive. The church itself measures 74 × 152 feet and seats 800. Due to a 1960s renovation, the interior is much plainer than one might expect in a German Gothic church. Neither the walls nor side windows are ornate. The main altar, a high Gothic altar of carved wood, is very imposing. The side altars were removed during the 1960s and in 1980 an attempt was made to restore them in "grotto" style. Also of note are the rose window in the choir loft and two original paintings over the transepts, one of the Annunciation and the other of the death of St. Joseph.

Elkader, the county seat of Clayton County,

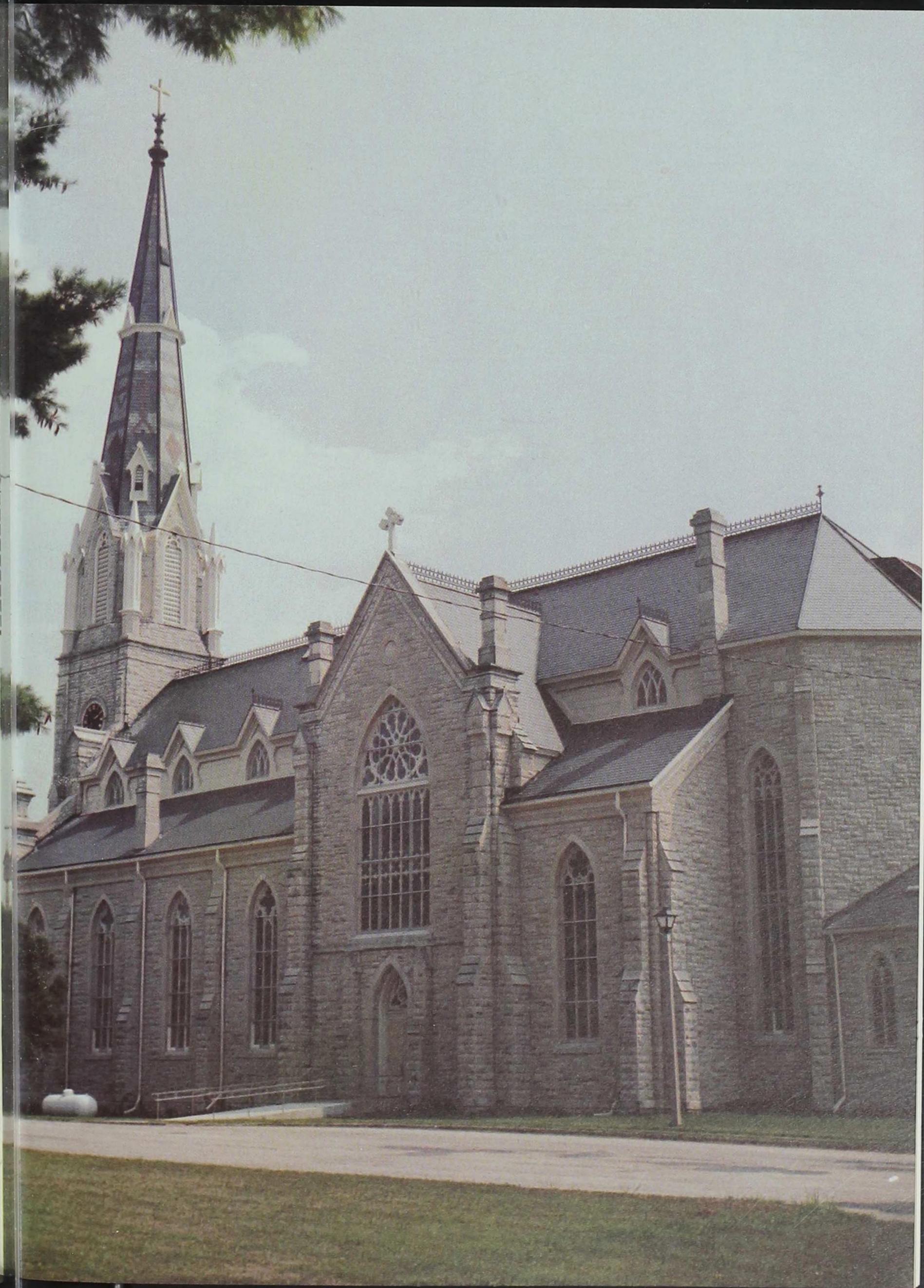
contains a true poem in stone. St. Joseph's is the result of how the Irish settlers of Elkader believed a church should look. Various Irish missionary priests were sent to serve the settlement in the 1840s and 1850s by Bishop Loras and they offered mass in a log cabin until 1856. In that year the Reverend Peter McGinnis was assigned to take charge of the parish and he directed the building of the first rock church, which is still standing. The planning and construction of the present St. Joseph's was supervised by the Reverend J.F. Reilly between 1897 and 1900, when the church was completed. Limestone for both the old and the new church was taken from a quarry on the hill directly behind the church.

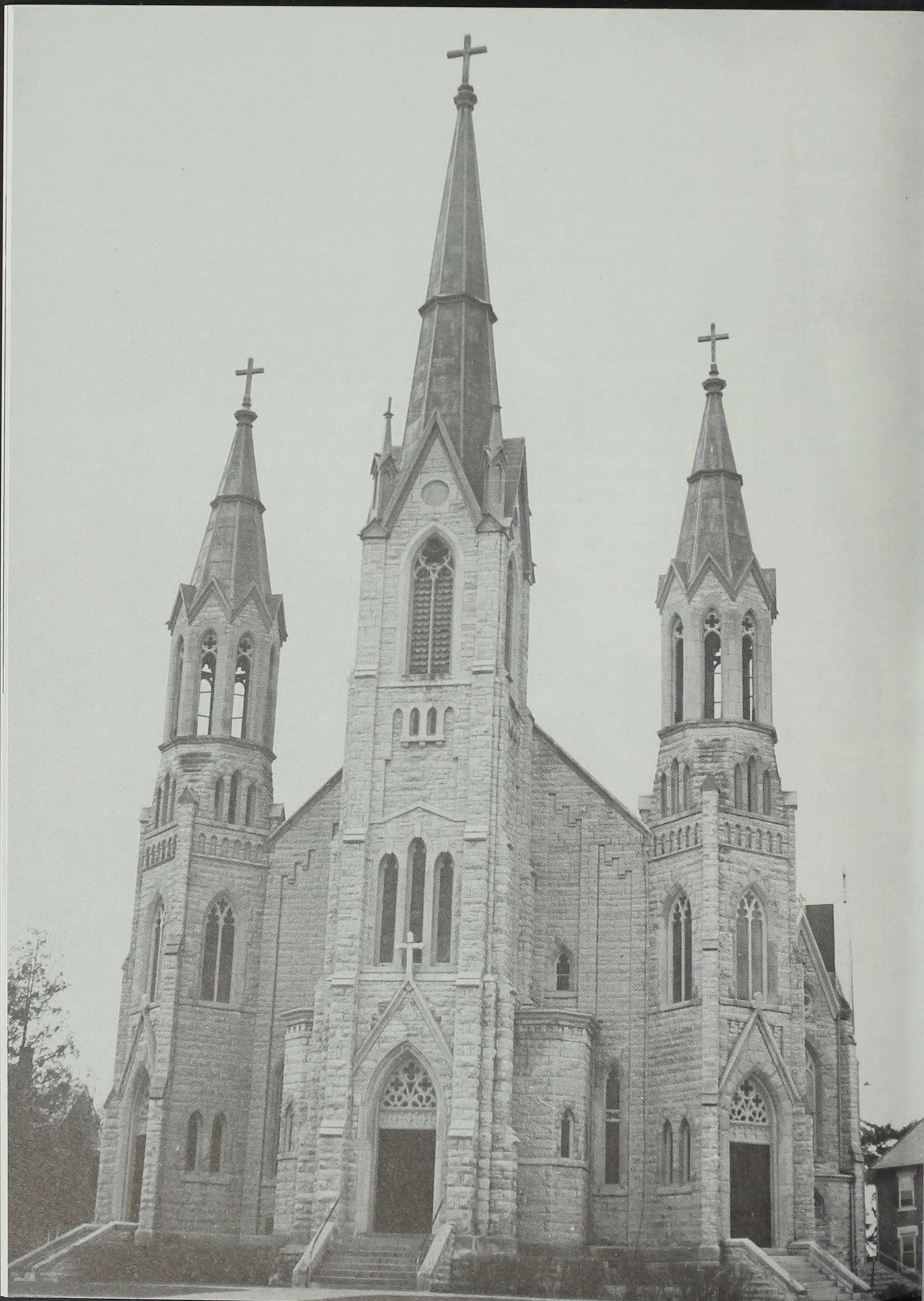
Although smaller than other churches built during this period, its simple, pure Gothic lines and its picturesque setting make it extremely attractive. Its size is 50 × 85 feet and it was designed to seat 500, although a 1960s renovation reduced the seating capacity to 350. Standing before the single front entrance, one automatically follows the thin spire up to its height of 142 feet. High up on the spire is a statue of St. Joseph gazing protectively over the town. The interior of the church is bright with very little ornamentation and, in keeping with the Irish tradition, the windows are of cathedral stained glass but without human figures. The names of the donors are found under each. Unfortunately, much of the pleasing Gothic effect of the interior of this church has been diminished by a renovation which was undertaken in the 1960s. The main altar was cut down and painted white and the side altars were removed.

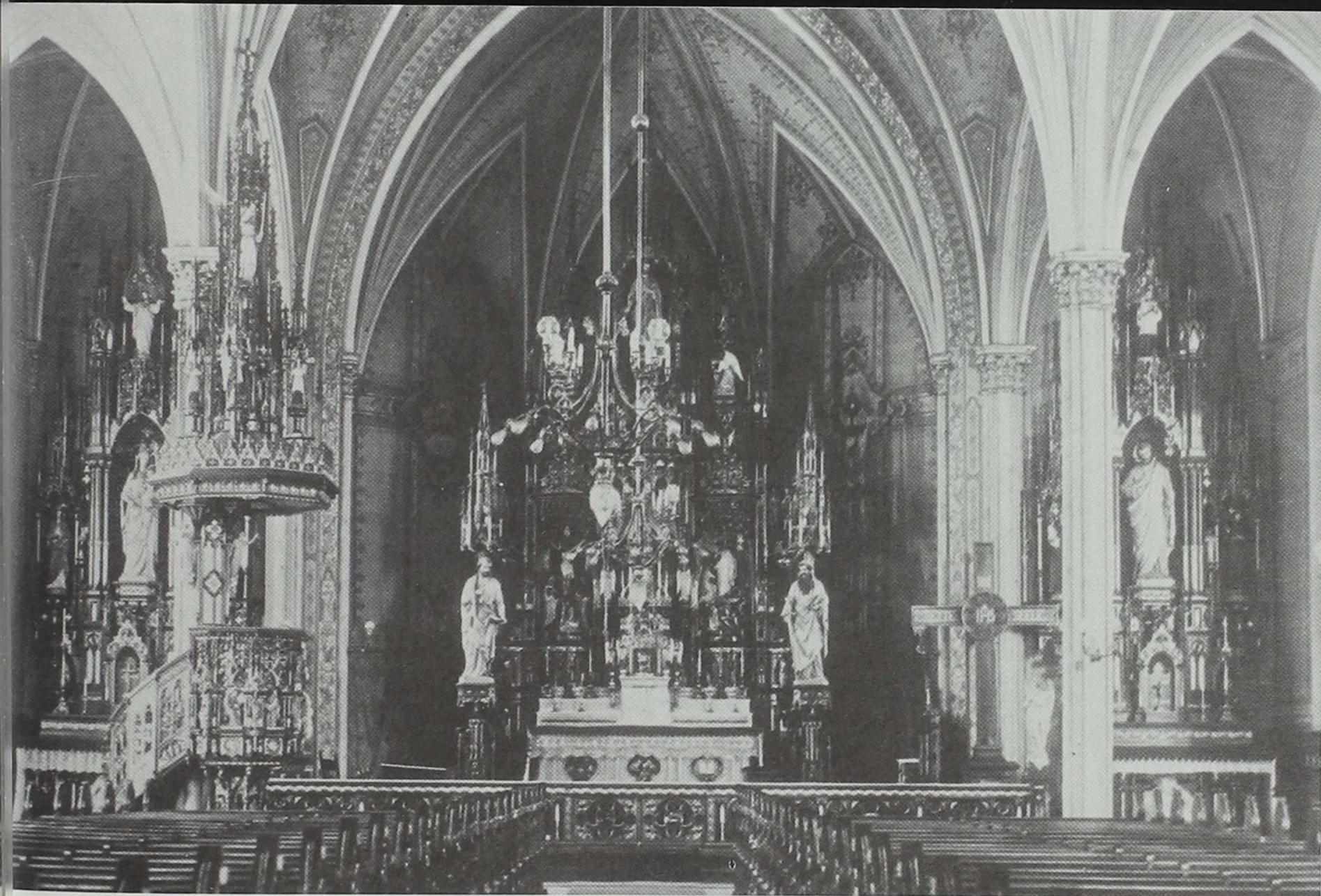
West of Elkader, in the hills of northwest Fayette County, lies the isolated village of St. Lucas. St. Luke's Parish traces its origin to the "Old Mission Church," a log church built for the Winnebago Indians on the famous Neu-

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*Opposite: St. Boniface Church, New Vienna. (photograph by Ivan E. Wolf, Dubuque)*







*Opposite: Not one, not two, but three spires define the exterior of the Church of SS. Peter and Paul, Petersburg. (courtesy Church of SS. Peter and Paul) Above: An interior view of the church, c. 1910, shows the arrangement of the intricately-carved main altar and the two large side altars. Note also the design and placement of the pulpit. (SHSI)*

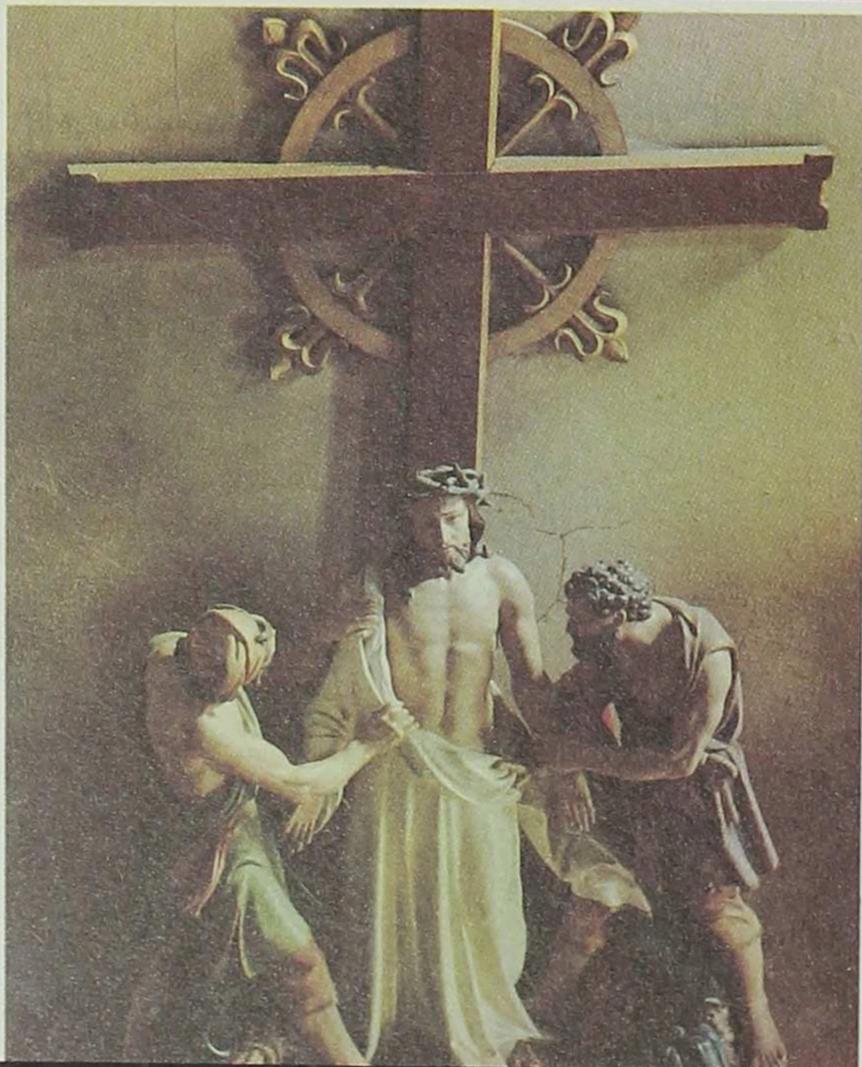
tral Gound. In 1848 the Indians were forcibly removed to Minnesota and the next spring immigrant families began to move in and buy the land from the government. Missionary priests visited the area occasionally and worship services were held in an old log church to which people came from miles around.

A fire destroyed the "Old Mission Church" in 1853 and precipitated a minor crisis. By that time four tiny settlements had sprung up with Germans at Festina and St. Lucas, Czechs at Spillville, and Irish at Waucoma. Each group wanted the new church to be located at their site. The final result was a new parish at each of the four locations.

The St. Lucas Germans built their own log church in the spring and summer of 1855 with land, logs, and labor all donated. In fifteen years it was too small and a new church of brick

was constructed. An addition to the church built in 1883 only temporarily solved the overcrowded situation and in 1914 the present Gothic house of worship was built by the Reverend Francis X. Boeding, pastor of the parish for forty-six years. It is a twin-towered church of red brick, measuring 68 × 140 feet and seating 700, and its commanding location on a hill above the village makes it visible for many miles. The interior is blessed with exceptionally beautiful Bavarian stained-glass windows. In fourteen different scenes they portray the life of Christ as told in St. Luke's Gospel. The original Gothic main and side altars are still in place, as well as the original organ with 640 pipes. In the left transept is a large statue of the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and at the far right is a copy of the Pietà.

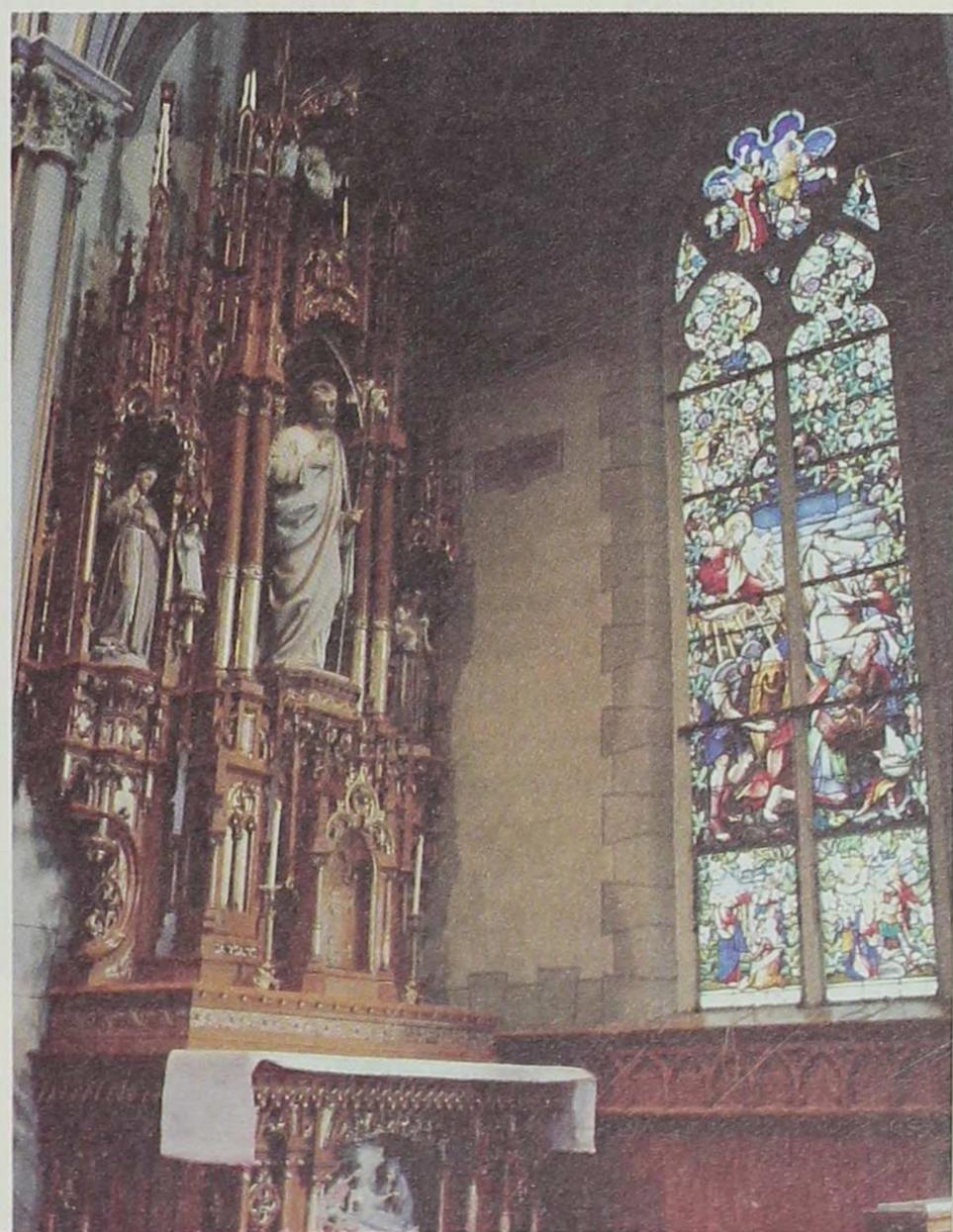
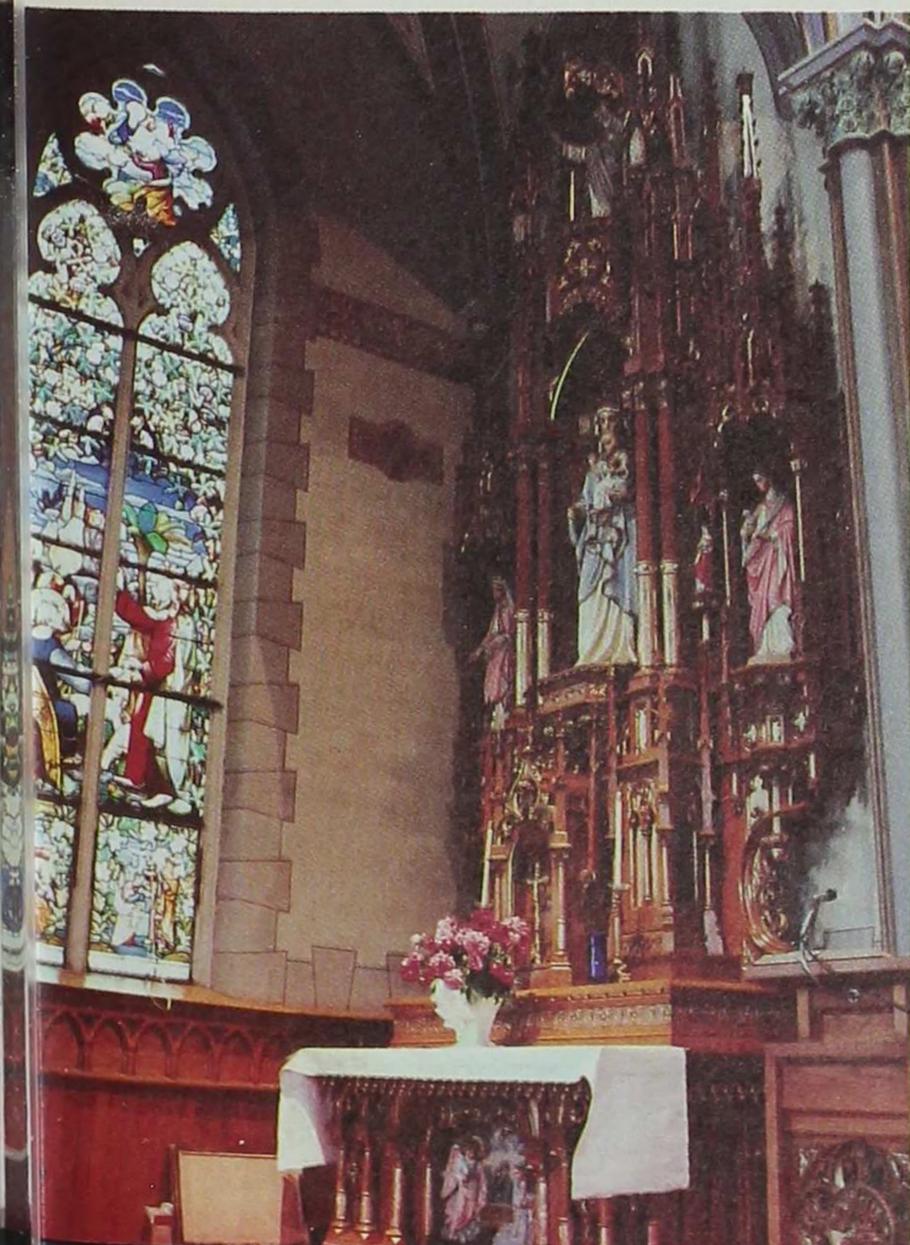
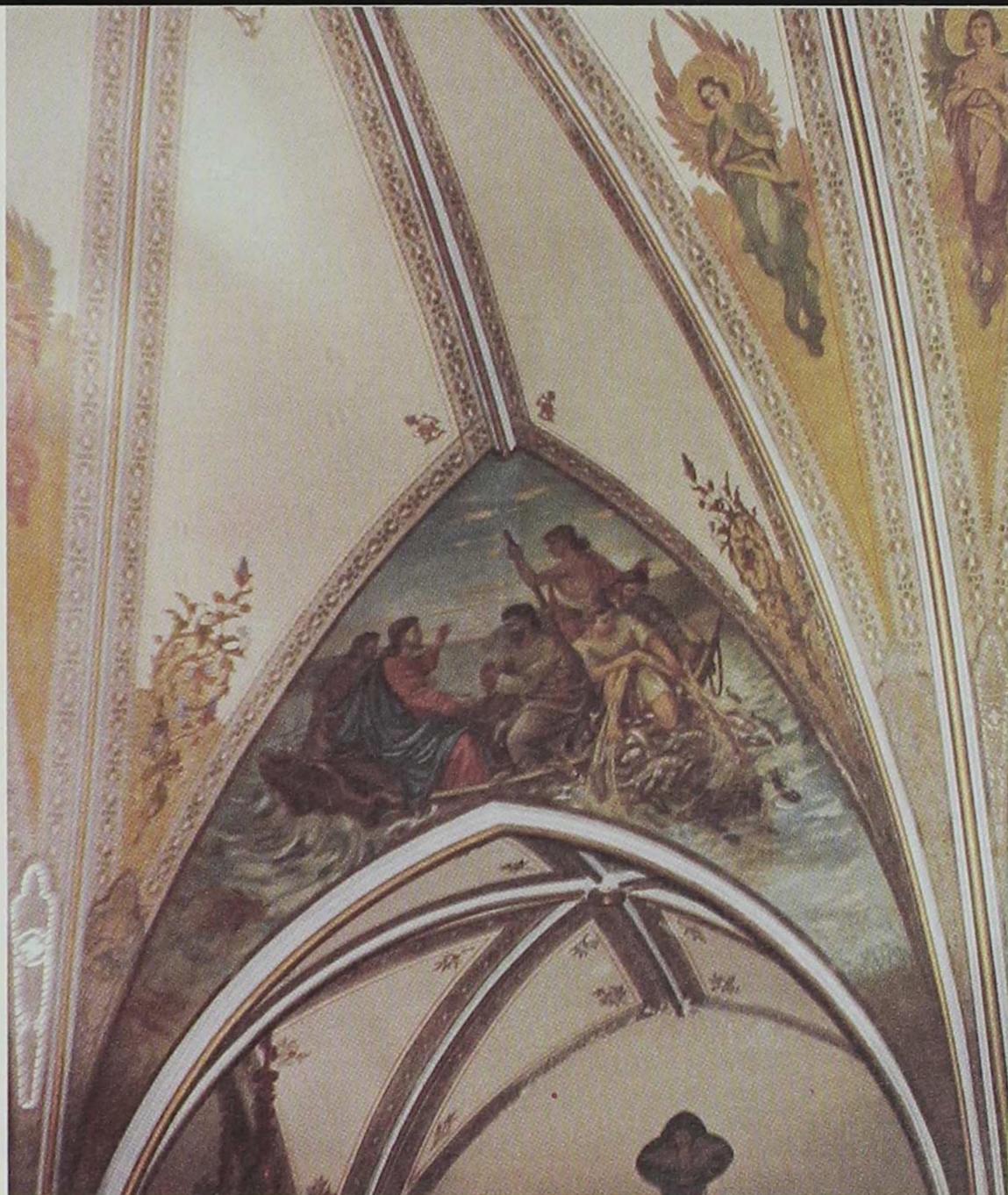
Directly north of St. Lucas are two Bohe-

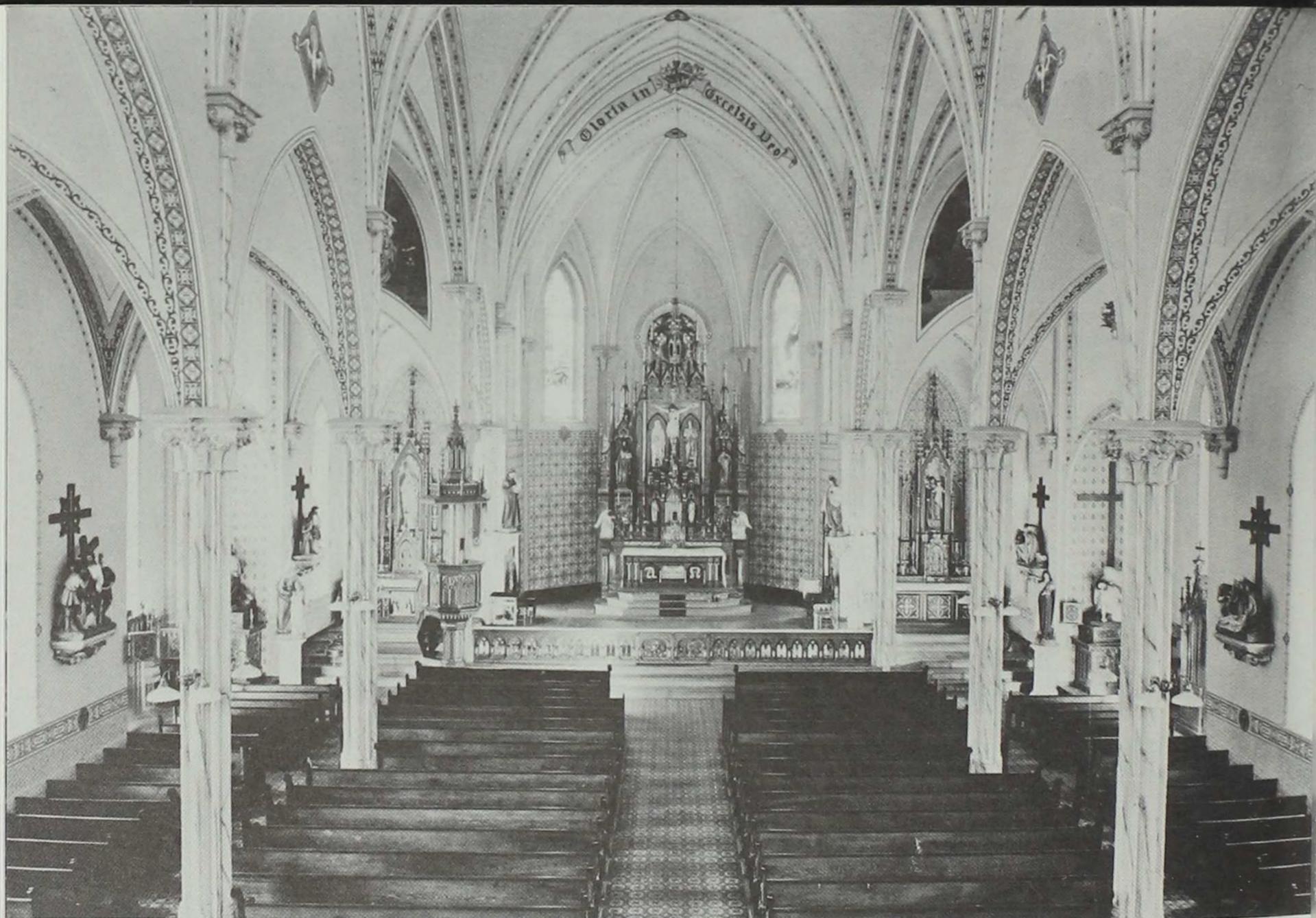


mian churches of note located in southern Winnebago County. St. John Nepomucene of Fort Atkinson is a daughter parish of St. Wenceslaus of Spillville. After the abandonment of Fort Atkinson and the removal of the Winnebago in 1848, settlers gradually moved in to fill the vacuum. The settlers included Bohemians and Germans but the Czechs, moving south from Spillville, predominated. Having no church building of their own, they attended services either in Spillville or Festina.

At a meeting on November 15, 1873, they determined to end that inconvenience and bring about the erection of a church. That original church, designed and constructed by the people themselves, is still in use today. That meeting of early settlers was presided over by

*Intricate wood carvings and frescoes mark the interior of the Church of SS. Peter and Paul. Clockwise from top left: The main altar and backdrop (the scenes to the right and left of the tabernacle, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, can be swiveled 180° to reveal the figures of angels); the miraculous draught of fishes, one of eight paintings along the grand arch (photograph by Ivan E. Wolf); the St. Joseph and Blessed Virgin Mary side altars; and one of the fourteen hand-carved stations of the cross which line the side walls. (courtesy Church of SS. Peter and Paul)*





*A dated view of the remarkable interior of St. Mary's Church, Guttentberg, long before its 1960s renovation removed the side altars and much of the remarkable detail work. (courtesy St. Mary's Church)*

John Votava who donated the land on which to build the church. No architect was employed by the people of Fort Atkinson; they simply designed it themselves and began to build it the following May. The stone structure, 48 x 70 feet, with walls 24 feet high, was completed in 1875.

But their money ran out before the roof was put on. There stood the four walls with no roof. Joseph Sluka then mortgaged his farm, borrowing the money to put a roof on the church. Then came crop failure in the Fort Atkinson area. The insurance company which had loaned the money to Sluka was going to foreclose the loan and there was serious danger that he would lose his farm and the congregation would lose its church. At this critical moment, Father Francis X. Boeding came over from St. Lucas and traveled from farm to farm collecting money to pay the interest on the loan. In some

instances he received as little as fifty cents, but the Sluka farm and the new church were saved.

Over the years, several additions have been made to this original structure. In 1886 the pastor, Reverend Bohumil Kramolis, found it necessary to enlarge the church by adding the sanctuary and two sacristies. Reverend Francis Vrba arrived as pastor in 1895 and four years later extended the church to the front and added a belfry. A left wing of native stone was added in 1948 and a side entrance in 1949. The enlarged church now measures 48 x 90 feet and although each addition is discernible, they blend together excellently and the result is most pleasing.

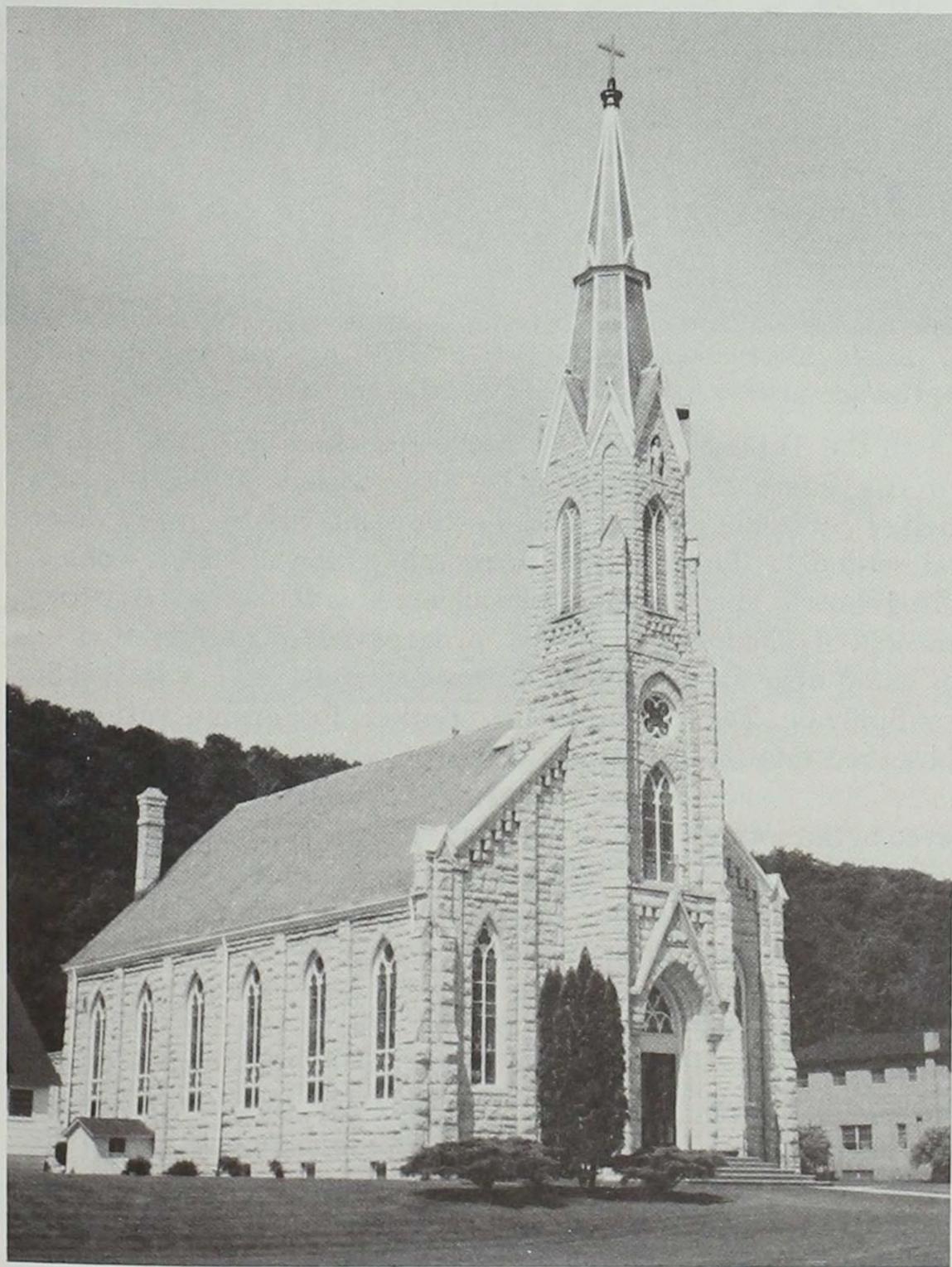
A rounded ceiling, with no pillars or vaulted arches, gives the interior of this Gothic church a different appearance. The three original Gothic altars are still in place. An oil painting of St. John Nepomucene, one of the patron saints

of Bohemia, on the high altar, shows him holding a finger to his lips to express the sanctity of the seal of confession. He was murdered in 1393 protecting this sacred trust. Two paintings above the side altars depict Mary with the Christ Child and the marriage of Mary and Joseph. Along each wall are the stations of the cross, painted on copper. The pipe organ was installed in 1921.

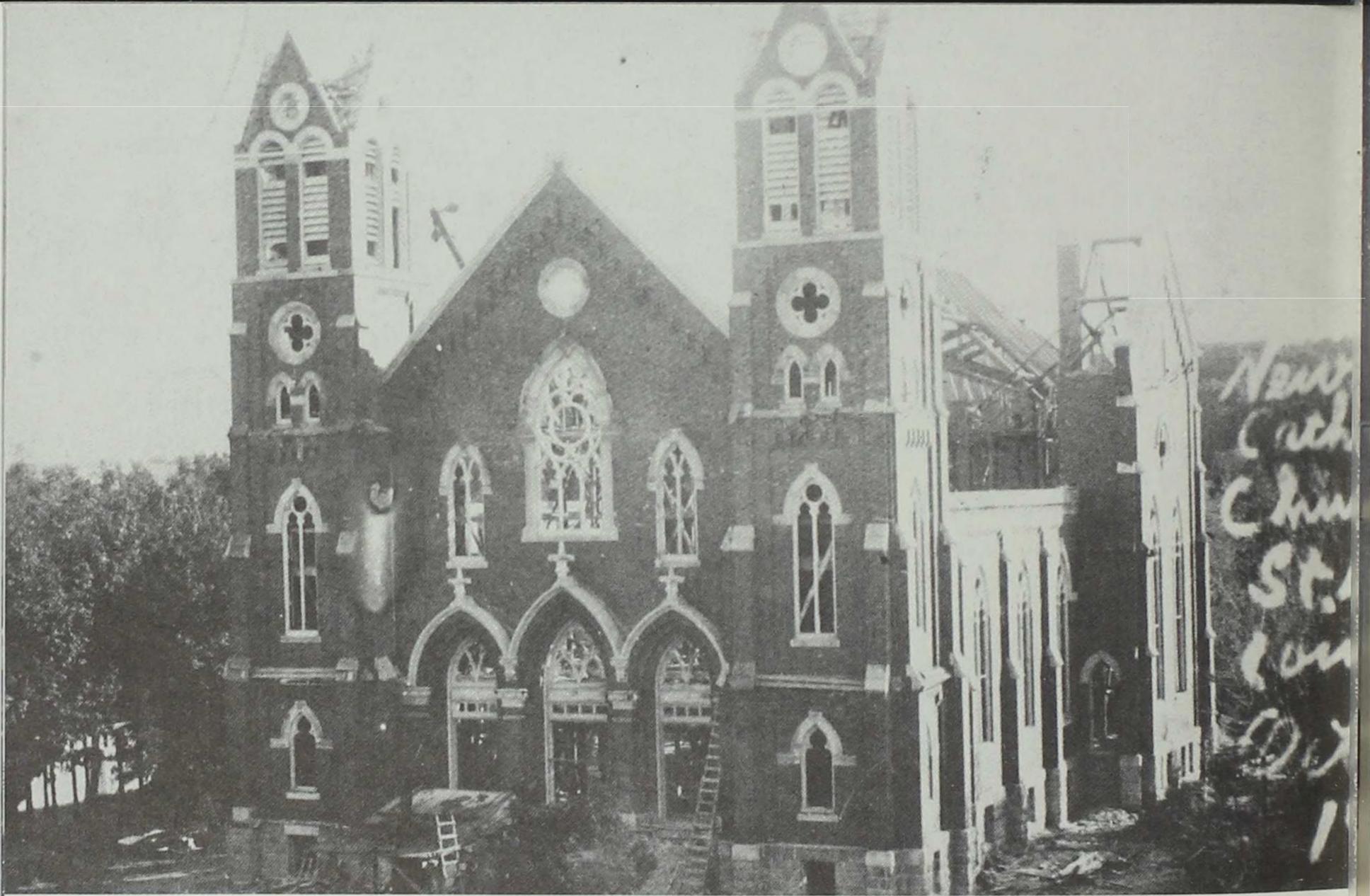
Justly famous for its Bily clocks, tiny Spillville, only five miles north of Fort Atkinson, has another priceless treasure. St.

Wenceslaus Church is one of the outstanding churches of the rural Midwest. The wrought-iron arch, set up in 1910 for the church's golden jubilee; the Bohemian letters proudly proclaiming the name of this church; the long stairway; the oblique approach; the eastern European decorative cupolas; — everything seems to suggest the unique qualities of St. Wenceslaus.

The Germans were the first to arrive, settling in the area as early as 1849. The next year Joseph Spielman arrived and erected a mill on



*St. Joseph's Church is the result of how the Irish settlers of Elkader believed a church should look. (courtesy the author)*



*St. Luke's Church, in St. Lucas, under construction in early October 1914. Few photographs of the building process of these massive Gothic churches have survived. (courtesy St. Luke's Church)*

a creek near its confluence with the Turkey River. The spot acquired the name of "Spielville," later to be spelled Spillville. Other Germans followed and settled to the south, where they built a small log church. This was replaced in 1856 by the present St. Clement Church which still stands guard over the little cemetery a mile south of Spillville. The parish has long since been absorbed into St. Wenceslaus.

The first Czech settlers arrived in the spring of 1854. Others followed, taking up land in the recently abandoned Indian lands, and soon some fifty Czech families were living in the area and beginning to feel the need of a church of their own. The Germans of St. Clement made them feel less than welcome. After considering sites east and west of town, the Czechs decided to build their church on the hill overlooking the town itself. As yet they had no pastor to direct the construction, so the people did the work themselves. On May 16, 1860,

Reverend Henry Federman of Festina came to bless and lay the cornerstone of the new church. Limestone and lumber were taken from the surrounding hills and men, women, and children all joined in the work of construction. Work progressed so rapidly that on September 28 of the same year, the feast of St. Wenceslaus, Father Federman returned, together with his German choir, to celebrate the first mass in the new church and to dedicate it to St. Wenceslaus, king and martyr, patron of the land which these pioneers had left.

But as yet they had no pastor of their own. Bishop Loras of Dubuque was finding it difficult to secure Czech priests to send to his ever-increasing Bohemian flock. Reverend Anthony Urban was appointed in 1865 and remained two years. In 1867 the Reverend Francis Mikota arrived and remained as pastor for more than thirteen years. (The American Catholic Church was already coming of age; Father Mikota's parents had been among the first set-

Office of the State Historical Society

## Banquet in Cedar Falls: Leland L. Sage's Distinguished Career Recognized



The annual banquet of the State Historical Society of Iowa was held at the Broom Factory Restaurant in Cedar Falls on 22 June 1985. Margaret N. Keyes, a member of the board of trustees from Iowa City, acted as emcee for the evening and introduced the members of the Board of Trustees and the Iowa State Historical Board who were present. She also presented the 1985 awards for achievement in state and local history and announced the winner of the 1985 Trustees' Award. Joseph W. Walt, chairman of the Iowa State Historical Board, then presented Dr. Leland L. Sage (left) with a special lifetime achievement award recognizing Sage's fifty-three years of distinguished service to history and to the history of the state of Iowa, a career that included thirty-five years as a member of the faculty at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls. Dr. Sage's award took the form of a special citation issued by Governor Terry Branstad. Lastly, in place of the more traditional banquet address, ISHD staff members described the department's various services, programs, and ongoing special projects. Representing the department were: Carol L. Ulch, deputy director; Christie Dailey, director of publications; Lowell J. Soike, director/deputy state historic preservation officer; and Nancy L. Kraft, head of the ISHD's Iowa City library. The chairman of the state historical board, Dr. Joseph W. Walt, concluded the evening's program with a description of the new state historical museum. The staff of the ISHD should like to thank the banquet arrangements committee and members of the Cedar Falls Historical Society for their time and hard work toward a successful banquet for State Historical Society of Iowa members. The cooperative support provided by the University of Northern Iowa was also very much appreciated. And to one and all: Join us again next year — in Iowa City.

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## New Executive Director for the Iowa State Historical Department

David E. Crosson assumed his new duties as executive director of the ISHD on 9 August 1985. An Iowa native, Crosson received his B.S. from Drake University, taught for one year at Franklin Junior High School in Des Moines, and then returned to school for graduate training. He received his M.A. in history from the University of Texas. Crosson's return to Iowa follows three years' service as director of the Pittsburgh Children's Museum, 1982 to 1985. Prior to 1982 he served as director of the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society in Indiana. In both places he headed successful fund-raising drives and moves to new and larger facilities. One challenge facing Crosson as director of the ISHD is the completion and opening of the state's new historical museum, scheduled for late summer 1987. The experience, energy, and enthusiasm brought by Crosson to his new position should serve him well

toward meeting that challenge and more. Watch the upcoming issues of *News for Members* for more information.

### The Annual Achievement Awards

Trustee Margaret N. Keyes presented five awards for achievement in state and local history at the Society's annual banquet in Cedar Falls on 22 June 1985. Certificates of Merit were awarded to: Leland L. Sage, for Overall Achievement; and the Research Center for Dubuque Area History, for Publications. Certificates of Recognition were presented to: Luther Burket, Dora Gersonde, and Mary Sweet, for Publications (*Stoneware in Cedar Falls*); the Nishna Heritage Museum, for Overall Achievement; and the Sheldon County Historical Society, for Newsletters.

### Results of Trustees Election

In the recent election to fill four positions on the State Historical Society of Iowa's Board of Trustees, Margaret N. Keyes, Iowa City, was reelected as an at large member, Debby J. Ziegrowsky, Iowa City, was elected as an at large member, and William L. Talbot, Keokuk, was elected to represent the First Congressional District. The board position representing the Sixth Congressional District remains vacant.

### Iowa Libraries Preserve Local History

A recent Iowa State Historical Department survey of local history collections, policies, and practices in Iowa public libraries revealed a high level of activity around the state and suggested that a good starting point for local history research may often be the local public library.

The survey was based on data from questionnaires returned by 337 out of the 515 public libraries in Iowa to which they were mailed; the percentages in this report have been calculated on the number of responses to the individual questions. Additional information about the survey and statistical detail may be found in an article in the summer 1985 issue of the *Iowa Library Quarterly*.

An encouraging 63.0% of the responding libraries reported "actively" collecting local history materials and they collect in a variety of formats. The median number of book volumes estimated in the local history collections was 12 and 93.6% of the respondents reported holding at least one published history of their county. The median number of rolls of microfilmed newspapers was 15 and sizable holdings of loose and bound issues of newspapers were also frequently reported.

Local history vertical files are maintained by 71.4% of responding libraries, while 66.7% reported holdings of photographs, 61.9% of maps, 40.0% of manuscripts, 36.3% of paintings, 29.7% of artifacts, 25.5% of oral history tapes, and 18.5% of prints. Several libraries indicated local history holdings in other formats as well.

Genealogical materials are actively collected by only 33.5% of the libraries responding, a somewhat lower figure than might have been expected given the widespread interest in this subject. The median number of book volumes on genealogy estimated to be in collections was 8.

Only 19.9% actively collect local government publications and only 17.0% reported holdings of unpublished local government records. That only 16.7% of respondents indicated status as official depositories for a local unit of government helps explain the low level of collecting activity in this area of potentially high historical interest.

The 54.9% who reported active historical or genealogical organizations in their communities indicated that the libraries cooperate with such groups in a variety of ways. Forty-three provide a regular meeting place for such organizations and 48 provide shelf space for their libraries. Twenty have received financial gifts from these organizations, 62 have received gifts of books or other materials, 21 have benefited from volunteer help provided by organization members, and 22 reported some other cooperative arrangement. Most of the responding libraries (87.3%) refer local history and genealogical questions to authorities on the subject in their communities.

Librarians who are interested in establishing or expanding local history collections may benefit from two Society publications. "The Public Library and Local History," *Technical Sheet No. 15*, and "Genealogical Research Information for the Local Public Library," may be obtained free of charge from the State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240. — William M. Cochran, Patron Services Librarian, Public Library of Des Moines

## Iowa History Symposium on November 2

The Iowa State Historical Department and the State Historical Society of Iowa will sponsor a symposium in Iowa history to be held in Iowa City on Saturday, 2 November 1985. The subject of the symposium will be "The Watershed Years: 1912-1926." The meeting is intended to appeal to local historians, public historians, academic historians, and teachers of history in Iowa's schools. Four speakers will offer topical analyses of the period based on their research: Nancy Derr will look at political issues and the election of 1916; Richard Kirkendall will look at agricultural journalism and the farm depression of the 1920s; Christie Dailey will look at rural life and rural communities, 1910-1930; and George McDaniel will look at the Republican party in Iowa and the election of 1926. James Morton Smith will serve as the symposium's keynote speaker. In his address, Smith will explore the need for greater cooperation among academic, public, and local historians and stress the areas of common interest among these groups as a charge for future work.

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS, 1985-1986

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| October           | Iowa History Month  |
| October 24-26     | Plains Anthropological Conference, Iowa City  |
| October 26-27     | Iowa Genealogical Society, Des Moines   |
| October 26        | Iowa Local Historical and Museum Association, Des Moines                              |
| October 27-29     | Iowa Museum Association, Iowa City/West Branch  |
| Oct. 28-Nov. 1    | Society of American Archivists, Austin, Texas   |
| Oct. 31-Nov. 3    | Oral History Association, Pensacola, Florida  |
| <b>November 2</b> | <b>Iowa History Symposium &amp; Iowa College Teachers of History, Iowa City</b>       |
| Nov. 12-15        | Southern Historical Association Annual Meeting, Houston, Texas                        |
| Nov. 29-30        | Illinois History Symposium, Springfield, Illinois                                     |
| December 10       | National Archives and Record Administration Preservation Conference, Washington, D.C. |
| Dec. 27-30        | American Historical Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY                          |
| March 13-15       | Missouri Valley History Conference, Omaha, Nebraska                                   |

## New Look for the *Goldfinch*: Send it to Your Favorite Young Iowan

This September, subscribers of the *Goldfinch* found a bird of a different feather in their mailboxes. The *Goldfinch*, the magazine of Iowa history for children published by the Iowa State Historical Department, began its seventh volume this fall with a new look.

"The new *Goldfinch* looks more like a children's magazine — which is what it is," explained Ginalie Swaim, *Goldfinch* editor since August 1984. "What hasn't changed is the high-quality presentation of Iowa history of the first five volumes under the editorship of Margaret Bonney."

The *Goldfinch* now has a twenty-four-page, glossy format. Printing the magazine on a white, coated paper enhances photographs and artwork. Changing the magazine's page size allows for more design possibilities.

Several short articles about a particular aspect of Iowa history continue to be the core of each issue. But the articles are accompanied by word games, maps, crafts, and other activities. The four issues each school year follow the chronology of American history. For example, the first issue this year was about prehistoric Iowa. The last issue, next April, will be about Iowa in the Great Depression. For upper elementary and junior high school teachers, the *Goldfinch* can be used for Iowa history units or to accompany American history units. Emphasis on reading and writing also links the magazine to language arts classes.

New to the magazine are several departments that will appear each issue. These include "History Mystery" (in which readers try to guess the purpose or story behind the photograph of an artifact or event) and "The People of Iowa" (which features an ethnic group in Iowa). "Good Times" presents information about holidays, games, or foods from Iowa's past. "Pass It On" lists further sources and places to visit, useful to teachers or to other adults who enjoy sharing history with youngsters.

The *Goldfinch* brings the materials of the Iowa State Historical Department's collections (and other collections in the state) to the children of Iowa. Historical illustrations, updated research, photographs of artifacts, and primary source material appear in each issue. *Goldfinch* readers are also encouraged to submit letters, artwork, or writing for possible publication in the "History-Makers" section. "We want the children of Iowa to realize that they, too, can be involved in preservation and in the creation of the historic record of Iowa," Ginalie explained. "I'm eager to publish from our archives the primary

sources that were written by children. But the 'History-Makers' section is for today's children. This section is for the history projects in which they have a hand — projects in their schools, communities, or homes."

A gift subscription to the *Goldfinch* is one way to pass on to young people an interest in history and appreciation of one's heritage. As holidays or birthdays approach, consider a gift subscription for your favorite young Iowans — the children in your family, the ten-year-old next door, or your newspaper carrier, for example. Or consider a gift subscription to your town's public or school library, the pediatric wing of the local hospital, or youth clubs.

"Learning about history and about Iowa can happen outside the classroom, too, because essentially it means learning about oneself and how one fits into the world. The *Goldfinch* presents history in terms that children can understand. Sometimes that's through the written word, sometimes it's through hands-on activities involving skills and interests other than reading. And sometimes it's through just plain fun," Ginalie said.

Since 1984 the *Goldfinch* has been available in single-copy subscriptions as well as in classroom quantities. A single-copy subscription (four issues per school year) is \$5.00. Those with Family Memberships in the State Historical Society of Iowa receive the *Goldfinch* as well as the *Palimpsest* and *News for Members* for \$17.50 per year. Those with Benefiting Memberships also receive the *Annals of Iowa*. (The *Goldfinch* classroom subscription rate is \$25.00 for 30 copies of all four issues.) An order bank is provided here for your convenience.

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## IOWA STATE HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT

Please check which subscription or State Historical Society of Iowa membership you would like:

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Membership Clerk  
Iowa State Historical Department  
402 Iowa Avenue  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

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## The Third Annual Trustees' Award Received by Dean Gabbert



The winner of the 1985 Trustees' Award was announced at the State Historical Society of Iowa's annual banquet, held in Cedar Falls on 22 June 1985. The SHSI members' choice for the best article published in the *Palimpsest* during calendar year 1984 was Dean Gabbert's "The Death of an American College: A Retrospective Look," which appeared in the November/December issue. The trustees would like to thank the members who voted this year, and hope that the interest in this award continues to grow.

### A Call for Papers for the MVHC

The Twenty-ninth Annual Missouri Valley History Conference will meet in Omaha, Nebraska, March 13-15, 1986. Conference sessions will include topics in American, European, and other fields of history, as well as interdisciplinary and methodological studies. Proposals for panels and papers should be submitted as soon as possible (by November 1985) to Professor Marian P. Nelson, Program Coordinator, 1986 MVHC, Department of History, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska 68182. Proposals should include the paper abstracts and brief curriculum vitae of session participants. Persons interested in serving as moderators or commentators are also invited to write to the program coordinator and indicate their areas of expertise.

### A Call for Papers for the Dakota History Conference

The Eighteenth Annual Dakota History Conference will be held on the campus of Dakota State College, Madison, South Dakota, on 11 and 12 April 1986. The director of the conference is requesting papers on the history of South Dakota, Dakota Territory, or the Upper Great Plains Region. Awards will be presented for the best papers received in each of two categories: professional and amateur. There will also be awards presented for the best papers in two topic areas: military and institutional history. The deadline for submitting papers is 31 January 1986. For more information about submitting papers, contact: Herb Blakely, Director, Dakota History Conference, Dakota State College, Madison, South Dakota 57042-1799.

### Selected Recent Manuscript Acquisitions

Christensen, Opal J. Writings, 1967-1982. Sherrill, Iowa. 15 pamphlets. typescript. Miscellaneous essays on farm, family, and religious life by a farm woman and mother of nine children who lived near Sherrill, Iowa. Essays concern nature, seasons, farm work, domestic work, children, holidays and celebrations, church and religious activities, travels and family, and local history. Donor: Opal J. Christensen.

Fredericksen, Carl L. "The Proposed Japanese-American Relocation Center at Scattergood Hostel: an Idea and its Rejection, West Branch, Iowa, January-March, 1943." Seminar paper, 1984. 70p. typescript. Research paper written in 1984 for a University of Iowa seminar traces the history of the plan to convert the Scattergood Refugee Hostel at West Branch, Iowa, into a relocation center for Japanese-Americans in 1943. Includes origins of idea, leading proponents and opponents, roles of local Society of Friends, Methodist Church, American Friends Service Committee, American Legion, War Relocation Authority, and local public opinion. Account for the plan and its failure is based on detailed analysis of primary documents and tape-recorded interviews. Includes bibliography and footnotes. Donor: Carl L. Fredericksen.

Dailey, Christie. "The Family On The Farm: A Case Study of Rural Exchange Networks." University of Iowa seminar paper, 1984. 33p. photocopy of typescript. Paper based largely on the manuscript diaries of Emily Hawley Gillespie for the years 1858 to 1888 is a case study of the life of one midwestern farm family near Manchester, Iowa, and the networks within which the family lived. The family is considered as a paradigmatic example of the interlocking spheres of exchange that took place throughout the region. Donor: Christie Dailey.

Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative). Minutes, 1983. One volume. Typescript. Minutes of the 106th

- annual session of the Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative) held at Hickory Grove Meetinghouse on the campus of Scattergood School, near West Branch, Iowa, from the 3rd to the 7th of August, 1983. Includes also Report of Quaker United Nations Correspondent, Report On The Associated Committee Of Friends On Indian Affairs, Friends World Committee Report, Treasurer's Report, Auditing Committee Report, Trustees' Report, Scattergood Friends School Report, Scattergood School Farm Report, William Penn House Report, Yearly Meeting Statistics, Directory of Members and State of Meeting Reports from Ames, Bear Creek, Coal Creek, Des Moines Valley, Iowa City, Lincoln, Pasadena, Paullina, Penn Valley, West Branch, and Whittier. Donor: Robert Berquist.
- Baker, Benjamin F. Letters, 1861-1862. 26p. photocopies of typescript. Thirteen letters written by Benjamin F. Baker, a private in the Fourteenth Iowa Volunteer Infantry to Minnie Fox of Kingston, Des Moines County, Iowa, between 20 November 1861 and 27 March 1862. Baker was a resident of Kossuth, Iowa. He enlisted 26 October 1861 and was mustered 6 November 1861. He served at Fort Benton, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, and Pittsburg Landing. Just before the Battle of Shiloh he became ill and was sent to Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, where he died in hospital 20 April 1862. Baker's letters are mostly concerned with camp life and conditions, diet, health, duties and recreations of soldiers, encounters with the enemy, and descriptions of camps, forts, and battlefields. There is also one letter to Minnie Fox from a government undertaker informing her of the facts of the death of Benjamin Baker. Donor: Dr. Larry R. Brown.
- Birdsall, Benjamin. 1858-1916. Speech. 14p. typescript. Memorial Day address at Arlington National Cemetery, 30 May 1906, by Congressman Benjamin Birdsall of Iowa. Birdsall served in the 58th, 59th, and 60th Congresses as a Republican representing Iowa's third congressional district. He practiced law in Clarion for many years and served as judge of the 11th judicial district for seven years, 1894-1901. Donor: Mrs. June Birdsall Sanders.
- Simpson, H.E. "A Christian Teacher." 2p. photocopy of typescript. Two-page biographical sketch of Professor Charles G. Simpson by Professor H.E. Simpson. Professor Charles G. Simpson taught mathematics and religion at the University of Iowa, Missouri Wesleyan College, Hodding College, Michigan College of Mines, Iowa State University, Pennsylvania State College, and Milwaukee College of Engineering. He died at Milwaukee in 1932. Donor: Paul D. Simpson.
- Williamson, S.H. Teachers' Certificates, 1886-1893. Wright County, Iowa. 1 folder. Five first class teachers' certificates issued by the Office of County Superintendent, Wright County, Iowa, to S. Howard Williamson in the years 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1890. Three similar certificates issued to Miss Ruth A. Cooler, wife of S. Howard Williamson, in 1892 and 1893 at Wright County, Iowa. Also a 1916 poem by S. Howard Williamson praising his wife and a Williamson family genealogical chart. Donor: Raymond Williamson.
- Booker, Col. Brooks. Addition to collection. Scrapbook, 1967. Iowa City, Iowa. 1 vol. and 3 folders. Scrapbook concerns Col. Booker's retirement from the Air Force and his position as professor and head of aerospace studies at the University of Iowa, his new position as associate director of conferences and institutes at the University of Iowa, his candidacy for election to the Iowa City City Council, and his civic activities. Other additions to the Booker collection include materials relating to Johnson County Republican Women's Club, National League of American Pen Women, Goodwill Industries, and the University Club. Donor: Mrs. Edna Booker.
- Iowa Medical Society Oral History Project. Addition to collection. 2 folders. Tape recording and typescript transcription of John Colloton, director of University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, interviewed by Dr. A.L. Sahs at Dr. Sahs' office, 10 January 1985. Tape recording and typescript transcription of Dr. James Corbett interviewed by Dr. A.L. Sahs at Dr. Sahs' office, 7 January 1985. Donor: Dr. A.L. Sahs.
- Krob, Joseph T. Letters, 1898-1899. 17p. photocopies of typescript transcriptions of letters from an Iowa soldier in the Spanish-American War that were printed in the *Solon Economy*. Joseph T. Krob, a resident of Solon, Iowa, was a bass player in the band of the 49th Regiment of Iowa Infantry. Letters are from Camp McKinley at Des Moines, Iowa, Camp Cuba Libre at Jacksonville, Florida, Camp Columbia at Havana, Cuba, and Savannah, Georgia. Letters concern camp life, movements of regiment, health of soldiers and climate. Donor: SHSI Library.
- Nichols, Townsend Burt, 1874-1942. Records, 1911-1918. 5 vols. holograph. Four account books, 1911-1914, of Nichols Auto Company, Nichols, Iowa, which was operated by Townsend Burt Nichols and sold autos, auto supplies, gasoline and oil, and offered repairs and service. Also one account book, kept by T.B. Nichols as treasurer of the Liberty Campaign Club, Nichols, Iowa, a local branch of the national War Work Campaign. Donor: Charlene Hixon.
- Thompson, James Monroe, 1833-1906. Papers, 1862-1867. 1 folder. Eleven documents concerning the Civil War career of James Monroe Thompson, a resident of Dahlonga, Iowa. He enlisted in the Union Army on 7 August 1862 as a First Sergeant and was assigned to Company H, 36th Iowa Volunteer Infantry. On 3 June 1863 he was promoted to Second Lieutenant. He was taken prisoner at Mark's Mills, Arkansas, on 25 April 1864 and imprisoned for ten months at Tyler, Texas. He was freed in a prisoner exchange and promoted to First Lieutenant on 8 January 1865. Documents include Thompson's mustering in and mustering out papers, his appointment as First Lieutenant, records of clothing and equipment issued by Thompson to soldiers in his work as quartermaster of Company H and several written orders that he

received. Donor: Carrolle Thompson.

Colbert, Thomas B. "1878: James Baird Weaver and the Democrats." Seminar paper, University of Iowa, January 1970. 37p. mimeographed. Carefully documented research paper traces the rise of the Greenback party in Iowa centering on the career of Greenback leader James Baird Weaver. Paper includes background on Weaver, post-Civil War Iowa politics and monetary controversies. Approximately one-half of the paper is a detailed analysis of the issues and personalities involved in Weaver's successful 1878 campaign for election to Congress from Iowa's sixth congressional district. Donor: Dr. Loren N. Horton.

Williams, Joshua, 1879-1964. Newspaper clippings, 1958-1964. Photocopies. Addition to collection. Seven biographical newspaper clippings concerning Joshua Williams, Iowa diarist and teacher, including tributes and an obituary. Also a photograph of Williams and a sheet of his letterhead stationery. Donor: Alice Bancroft.

### Recent Additions to the Photograph Collection

Iowa views. 4 postcards of West Bend Grotto, Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, and Union Park Aviary in Des Moines, Iowa. Donor: John E. Carter, curator of photographs, Nebraska Historical Society.

First Christian Reformed Church, Wellsburg, Iowa. 15 original photos loaned for copying, including views of church, pastors, and church members, c. 1910-1950s. Donor: First Christian Reformed Church, Wellsburg, Iowa, through Harold Eiten.

Lord Family. 135 glass plate negatives, 20 glass lantern slides, and a collection of antique photographic equipment relating to the Lord family, rural Johnson County residents, c. 1900-1915. Donor: Ruth Hunter Lord.

World War I. 5 original photographs including panoramic views of Camp Cody, Deming, New Mexico, 1917, and Camp Donipahan and Fort Sill, Oklahoma, c. 1917. Also 1 family tree for Sunderlin family, 1 bundle of literature relating to Red Cross work and knitting, c. 1917-1918, and 1 newspaper section about Fred Kent, photographer, *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, July 1, 1976. One photo of football game between Iowa and Iowa State loaned for copying. Donor: Mrs. Warren Burger.

Ransom Family. Miscellaneous photos including one postcard souvenir folder containing 24 color views of Des Moines, one photo of procession or parade, one unidentified portrait of a woman taken by Monfort and Hill of Burlington, and one group of negatives of liquor still and finger prints (1922). Donor: Mrs. Donald E. Ullrich.

Wylie, Robert B. 47 contact prints of original glass plate negatives from Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, 1909-1927. Courtesy Iowa Lakeside Laboratory.

Williams, Joshua. 1 original photograph of Joshua Williams, c. 1940s for portrait file and miscellaneous manuscript material for diary collection. Donor: Mrs. Alice Bancroft.

St. Donatus and Jackson County, Iowa. 5 original postcard photos and 2 postcard views of St. Donatus; 1986 historical calendar published by Jackson County Historical Society; St. Donatus Historical Calendar, 1986; pamphlet on "Bellevue's Historical Places and Sites" by John Gibbs; and "The Luxembourg Language of Historic St. Donatus, Iowa." Donor: Nancy E. Kraft.

Burlington, Iowa. 48 color photographs of original watercolor paintings depicting the history of Burlington, 1920-1940, by Dick Beckman. Also a pamphlet explaining the paintings by Beckman, "Burlington, the City I Have Known and Loved," 1983. Donor: Dick Beckman.

Farming. 27 photographs of cattle, cattle breeders, hogs, swine breeders, dairy cows and farms in Iowa, and the Iowa State Agricultural College at Ames, undated (c. 1920). Donor: Minnesota Historical Society.

Jayne Family. 5 reproductions of Jayne and Fosbury family photos, c. 1900, of Iowa City, Iowa, and Kearney, Nebraska. Also 9p. photocopies of genealogy materials prepared by donor. Donor: Charlotte Sturm.

Automobiles. 1 5 x 7 photo of Maralee Sarasio of Des Moines and Darlene Neighbor of Ankeny with their antique cars, June 14, 1985. Donor: Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Camp Dodge. 2 postcard photos of Camp Dodge and a well-drilling crew, 1910 and 1918. Donor: Frederick Crane.

Pohler, Joseph F. 36 original photos including 4 panoramic views of Camp Dodge and 350th Infantry at Camp Dodge, c. 1917; 8 photos of World War I soldiers attached to album page; and 24 photos relating to World War II and Iowa City, Iowa, businesses. Also 8 miscellaneous manuscript items including discharge papers and miscellaneous news clippings relating to Johnson County soldiers, c. 1917-1930. Donor: Myrtle A. Morgan

Stoessel Family. 22 original photos relating to Stoessel family, Ottumwa, Iowa, c. 1890s-1975, including 16 family portraits, 1 photo of Ottumwa Coal Palace, 3 photos of Irving School class groups, 1 photo of family home, and 1 photo of Stoessel Oil Works. Also memorial honor roll for Co. G, 50th Iowa, from Spanish-American War, 1898. Donor: Mary Marth Stoessel Wahl.

Mesquakie Indians. 14 original negatives relating to Mesquakie Indians at Settlement, c. 1960s (10 35mm. and 4 2 x 2), taken by Al Ehrhardt. Donor: Al Ehrhardt.

Clinton, Iowa. 1 souvenir album of Clinton and Lyons, Iowa, Hubinger Brothers, Davenport, 1891. Donor: Hank Louis, Henry Louis, Inc.

Cedar County, Iowa. 90 original photos loaned for copying by Cedar County Historical Society, c. 1860s-1920. Includes views of Tipton, Mechanicsville, Lowden, Rochester, etc. Donor: Cedar County Historical Society, via Mr. and Mrs. J. Curtis Frymoyer.

## Some New Books in the ISHD's Iowa City Library

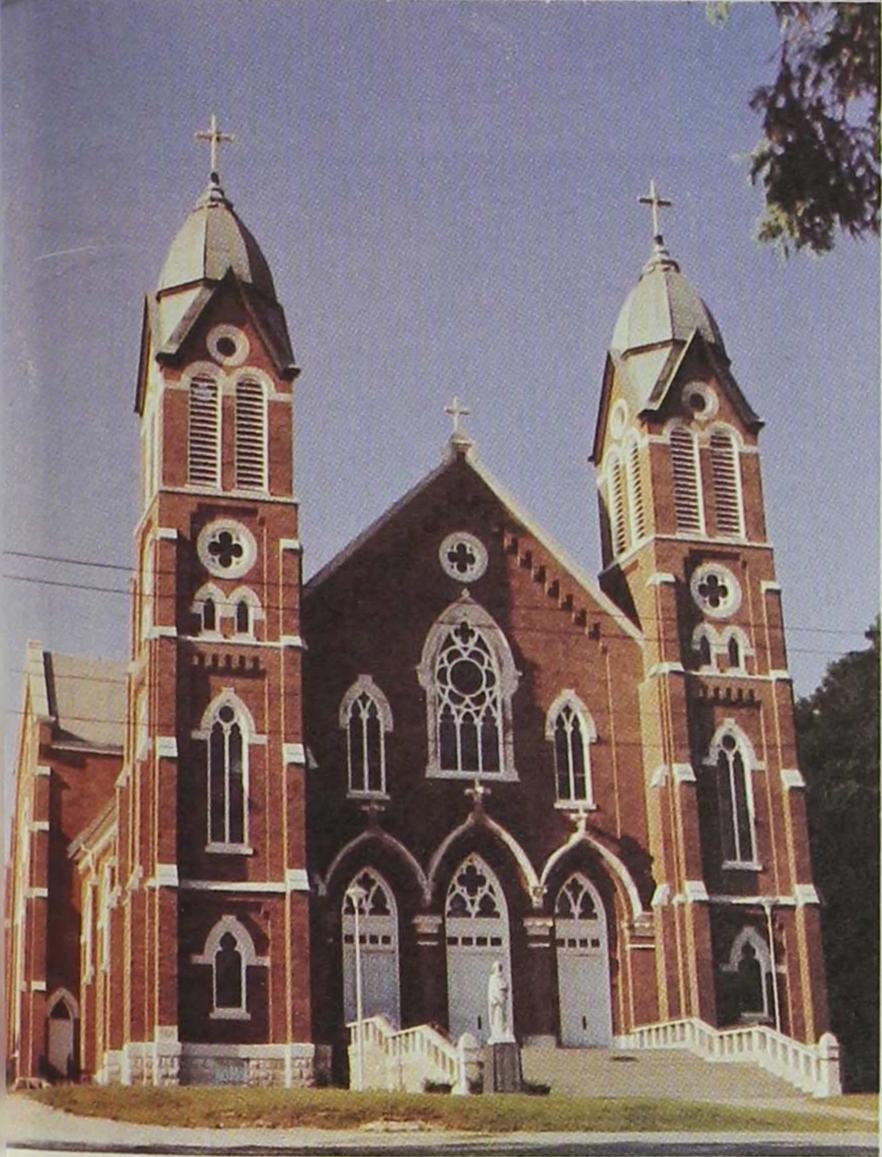
- Arpy, Jim. *The Magnificent Mississippi*. Grinnell, IA: Iowa Heritage Gallery/Publications, 1983.
- Baker, William R. *Villages and Towns of Yesteryear in Jefferson County, Iowa*. Fairfield, IA: Fairfield Ledger, 1982.
- Bowers, Martha H. *Davenport Architecture: Tradition and Transition*. Davenport, IA: City of Davenport, 1984.
- Buena Vista County History, 1858-1983*. Storm Lake, IA: Buena Vista County Historical Society, 1984.
- Burlington on the Mississippi, 1833-1983*. Burlington, IA: Doran & Ward Lith. Co., 1983.
- A Century of Memories: Kingsley, 1884-1984*. Odebolt, IA: Miller Printing and Publishing, 1984.
- A Century of Memories, 1884-1984: Cumberland, Iowa*. Cumberland, IA: History Book Committee, 1984.
- Childs, Chandler C. *Dubuque, Frontier River City: Thirty-five Historical Sketches*. Dubuque, IA: Research Center for Dubuque Area History, Loras College, 1984.
- Corwin, Margaret, and Helen Hoy. *Waterloo, a Pictorial History*. Rock Island, IL: Quest Publishing, 1983.
- Curlew, Iowa through the Years, 1884-1984*. Newell, IA: Bireline Publishing Co., 1984.
- DeFazio, Frank A. *Bondurant, a Centennial Celebration, 1884-1984*. Bondurant, IA: City of Bondurant, 1984.
- Dietrich, Rob. *Railroad Town*. Creston, IA: Petznicks, 1980.
- Grant, H. Roger. *The Corn Belt Route: A History of the Chicago Great Western Railroad Company*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1984.
- Guernsey Centennial, 1884-1984*. Guernsey, IA: Centennial Book Committee, 1984.
- History for Owasa Centennial, 1984*. Ackley, IA: Ackley Publishing Co., 1983.
- The History of Woodbury County, Iowa*. Dallas, TX: National ShareGraphics, 1984.
- Inwood's First 100 Years, 1884-1984*. Dallas, TX: National ShareGraphics, 1984.
- Klimesh, Cyril M. *They Came to this Place: A History of Spillville, Iowa, and its Czech Settlers*. Sebastopol, CA: Methodius Press, 1983.
- Kraus, George. *The Story of an Amana Winemaker*. Iowa City, IA: Penfield Press, 1984.
- Kruse, Arlys L. *Little Rock, Iowa, 1869-1984, Those By-Gone Years: The Prairie, the Furrow, the Town*. Sibley, IA: Keith M. Merrick Co., 1984.
- Larson, Carl H. *Main Street Iowa, 1920-1950*. Humboldt, IA: Educational and Creative Graphics, 1983.
- Litzel, Jerry. *The History of Ontario, Iowa*. By the author, 1984.
- Long, Katherine. *Clinton, a Pictorial History*. Rock Island, IL: Quest Publishing, 1983.
- Mingo, Iowa: 1884-1894*. Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1984.
- Nichols: A History of the Town and People in Pike Township, 1884-1984*. Nichols, IA: Nichols Centennial Book Committee, 1984.
- Nieuwenhuis, G. Nelson. *Siouxland: A History of Sioux County, Iowa*. Orange City, IA: Sioux County Historical Society, 1983.
- Northwood Pictorial Postcard History*. Northwood, IA: Anchor Pub. Co., 1983.
- Our Past Remembered: A History of Spring Rock and Liberty Townships*. Wheatland, IA: Curtis Library Guild, 1983.
- Panama, Pages of Time*. Panama, IA: Panama Centennial Book Committee, 1984.
- Pilmer, Louise. *Railroads and Depots of Warren County, Iowa*. Indianola, IA: Warren County Historical Society, 1983.
- Profiles in Leadership*. Rock Island, IL: Quest Publishing, 1981. (biographies of Quad Cities area people)
- Quad-City Sports Greats*. Rock Island, IL: Quest Publishing, 1982.
- Sloat, Ted. *Madisonia, Reviewing Our Heritage*. Fort Madison, IA: Fort Madison Evening Democrat, 1978.
- Smetana, Frank W. *A History of Lake Manawa, 1881-1981*. Council Bluffs, IA: Lake Manawa Centennial Committee, Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce, 1981.
- Tigges, John. *They Came from Dubuque*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1983.
- Tonkinson, Mabel H. *History of Oakland Mills, Iowa*. Privately published, 1976.
- Truro Centennial, 1884-1984*. Truro, IA: Truro Centennial Book Committee, 1984.
- Ute History, One Hundred Years: 1884-1984*. Odebolt, IA: Miller Printing and Publishing, 1984.
- Weldon Centennial, 1880-1980*. Weldon, IA: Book Committee, 1980.

## Another Conference, Another Call for Papers

The Society for Historians of the Early American Republic will hold its eighth conference on the early republic July 24-26, 1986, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Proposals for papers or entire sessions on any aspect of American history from about 1789 to 1850 should be sent to Dr. Barbara Oberg, Box 348-A, Baruch College, 17 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10010, before January 15, 1986.

## Wapello County Marriage Records

Three volumes of Wapello County marriage records, covering the period between 1844 and 1855, have been made available to researchers recently. For information about the volumes, contact the Wapello County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1506, Ottumwa, Iowa 52501.

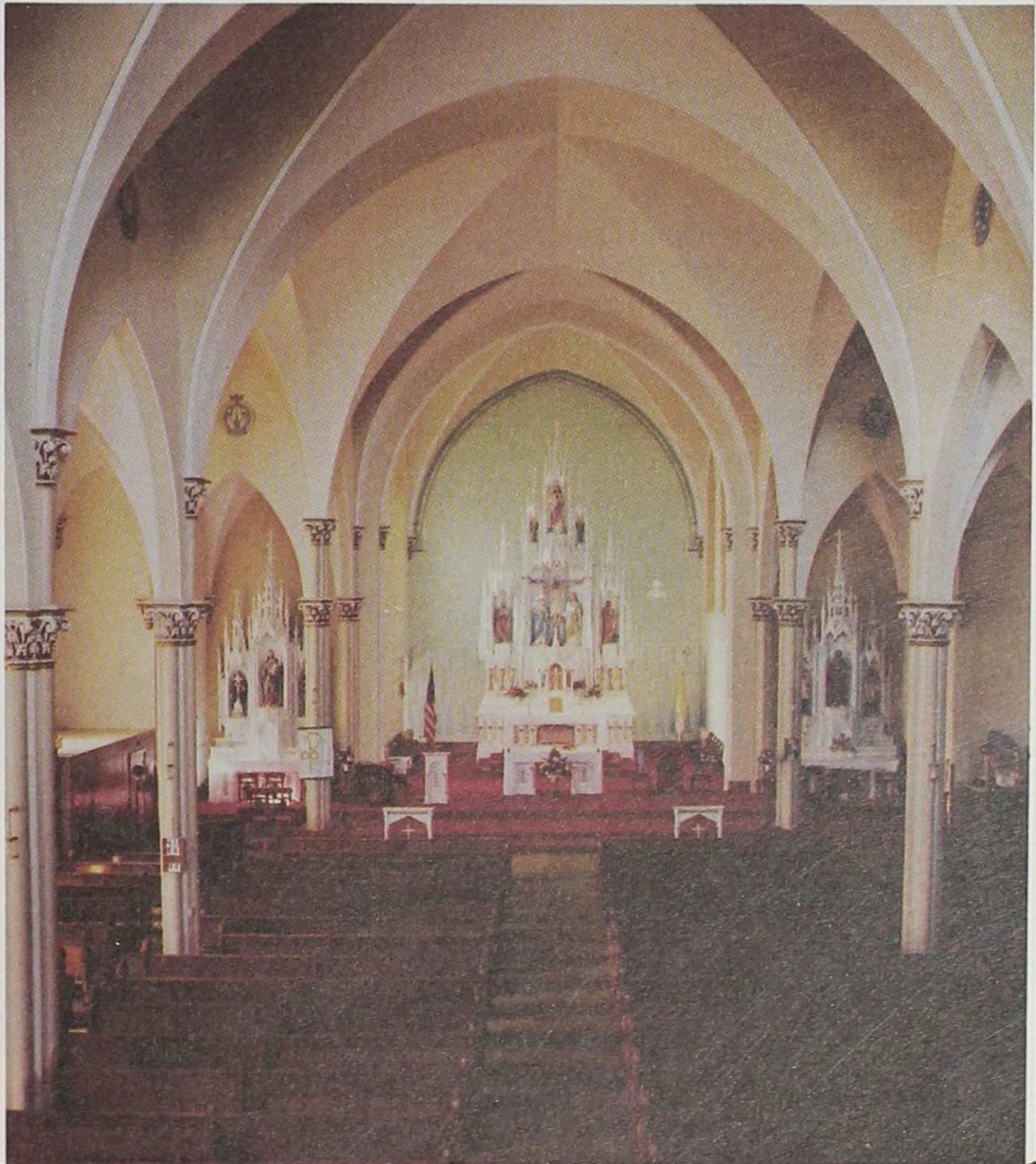


tlers of 1854.)

During Father Mikota's pastorate the church was extended to its present size. To the east, two wings and the sanctuary were added and, to the west, a church tower was built. To this modest tower Joseph Spielman donated the first bells. All the work was done by the people themselves who modeled the church after the Church of St. Barbara in Kuta Hora, Czechoslovakia, remembered by many as a place of pilgrimage. A pipe organ was installed in 1876 and is still in use today. Antonin Dvorak was a member of the parish in 1893 and played this organ during church services. While a visitor in Spillville, he composed parts of the "New World Symphony" and perhaps gained inspiration for writing "Humoresque."

In St. Wenceslaus there are no pillars and no Gothic arches or soaring vaults to give the vis-

*Above: The twin-towered St. Luke's Church sits in a commanding location on a hill above St. Lucas, visible to travelers from miles away. Right: A 1970s renovation of the interior of St. Luke's Church resulted in a very substantial redecoration, although the original Gothic main and side altars are still in place, as is the original organ. (courtesy St. Luke's Church)*



itor a sense of smallness before Infinite Majesty; the ceilings in the nave, transepts, and sanctuary are low and round. The usual balcony is present, with its famous organ, and a delightful little balcony can also be found in the left wing. The main as well as the side Gothic altars have been recently restored. A touch of the old country can be found in the Gothic windows with their Bohemian inscriptions, the statue of St. Wenceslaus in a prominent spot over the main altar, and St. John Nepomucene on a side altar. In addition to the customary American and papal flags, the sanctuary contains the flag of Czechoslovakia. The Reverend Francis Mikota is buried in the floor before the main altar. Outside, to the east, is the old Czech cemetery with its unusual markers.

\* \* \*

All of these churches serve flourishing parishes today. This would have pleased the men and women who built them. Their descendants, bearing names found on the very first rosters, still till the earth, some on the original tracts of land. More importantly, they hold dear many of the same values which motivated their ancestors to sacrifice time, money, land, and effort to construct a house fitting for their God. While it is true that at times the motives may have been a bit confusing — the desire to have a town's temple surpass that of other towns can be very strong — nevertheless, the desire to please the Creator was primary. The virtues of piety, responsibility, and loyalty to the parish, as well as devotion to hard work and a sense of morality, still characterize these people of the land. Many point with pride to their church as the one object in their community of which they can be proud. To enhance its beauty is a financial sacrifice they are still willing to make. In most cases, the town and the parish remain virtually identical.

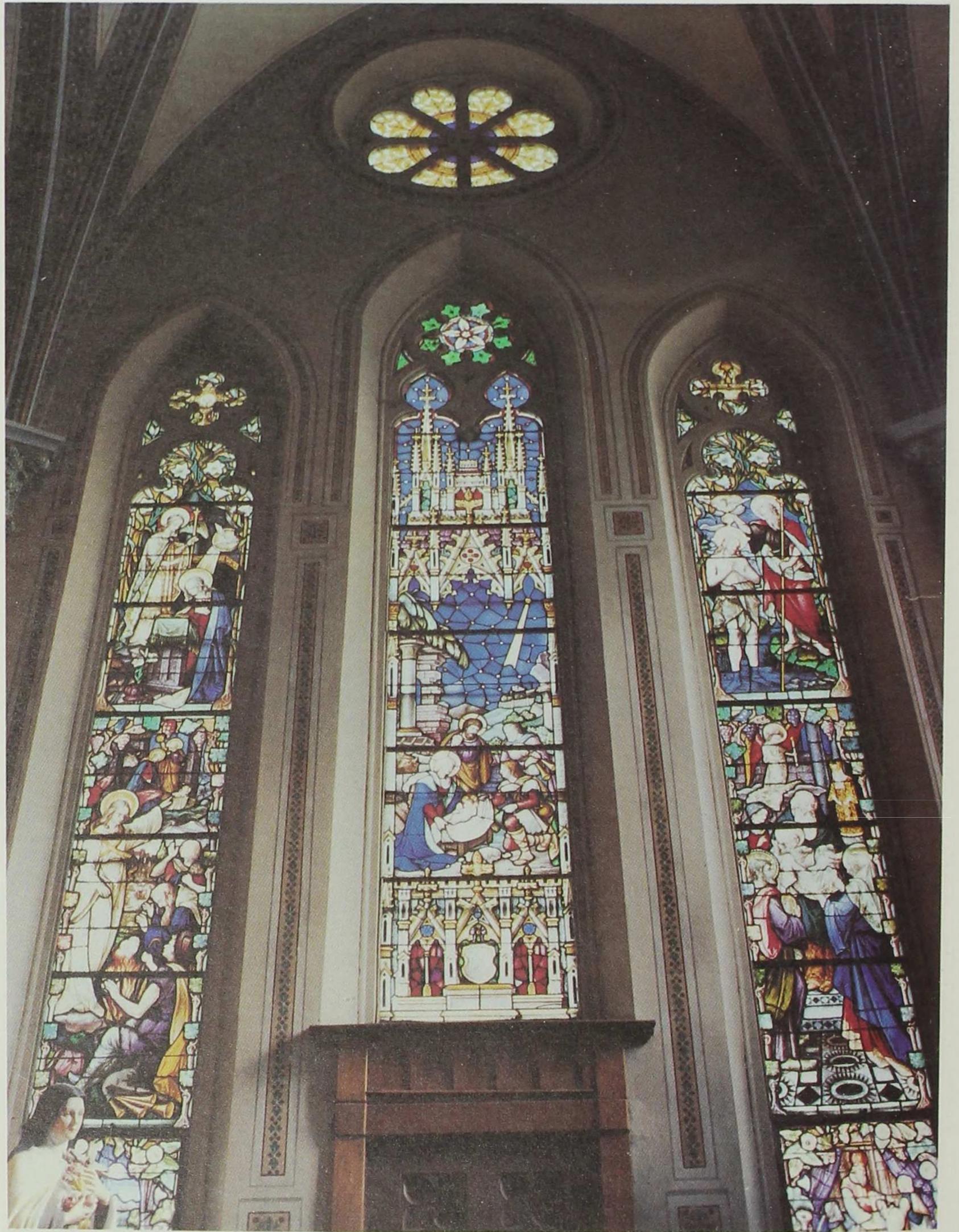
A definite pattern of building threads its way through the construction of these parish

churches. The first step was the construction of a small log church to replace the houses or other secular buildings in which services were held or the reliance upon neighboring churches. A second, or intermediary, step was the construction of a stone or brick church which all too soon proved inadequate. The third and final step was the erection of the present structure. Construction was either directed by a hired architect or the pastor of the parish although St. John Nepomucene of Fort Atkinson and St. Wenceslaus of Spillville both prove exceptions to the pattern. In both instances the first stone church was not torn down to make way for a new one, but was simply enlarged and is still in use today. Also, no professional architect or pastor designed and directed the building of these two churches. Everything was done by the people themselves.

Ethnicity has always played an important role in American history. To believe it had no impact on the building of churches would be a mistake. Naturally, while the Americanization process was incomplete, immigrants wished to have social intercourse with their own, particularly in matters of worship. When no church of their own nationality was available, they either conducted lay services or drove to a neighboring church. In that era the universal Latin mass would guarantee that a great deal would be familiar, yet somehow it would still have a "foreign" flavor. And since the sermon was in the language of the congregation a one-hour homily must have been excruciating for visitors of a different ethnic background. This fact would have been one of the chief motivators in the building of churches, since the sermon was a major means of religious instruction. One must also remember the church schools which

*Opposite: St. John Nepomucene Church in Fort Atkinson. The original structure was completed in 1875, although additions to the church have been made as indicated by the needs of the congregation. (courtesy St. John Nepomucene Church)*





in every case were built immediately after the church was finished. Instruction in all subjects, including religion, took place in the language of the old country.

The necessity of dealing with the language problem was especially important to the Bohemians. Although they were officially welcomed at nearby German parishes and there were occasional instances of cooperation, they were still made to feel the sting of ancient animosities. The Irish had an easier time with the English language and sometimes liked to lord it over the Germans and Bohemians. Use of the native tongue continued for many years and German and Bohemian can still be heard in such places as Petersburg, St. Lucas, and Spillville.

There was also a decided pattern in the style of the church each ethnic group built. All were of Gothic design, yet with definite differences. The Germans tended to use red brick as at Dyersville, Luxemburg, Guttenberg, and St. Lucas. The Irish and Bohemians tended to use stone as can be observed in the churches at Elkader, Cascade, Temple Hill, and Garryowen. The churches at New Vienna and Petersburg are exceptions to this pattern. In all cases, churches were modeled after the churches in the section of the old country from which the immigrants had come whether designed by an architect or constructed from homemade plans. The interiors also reveal differences. German and Czech churches are more ornate with greater use of stenciling and figured windows. Irish churches are plainer in appearance and the windows are often of solid colored glass with no human figures. Bohemian churches tend to be devoid of the classic pointed arch and high vaulted ceiling.

*Opposite: Fourteen intricately-designed stained-glass windows highlight the Church of SS. Peter and Paul in Petersburg. From right to left, three of the window images include: the presentation of Jesus in the temple; the birth of Christ; the Annunciation. (courtesy Church of SS. Peter and Paul)*

A series of so-called renovations of these churches has taken place in the past few years. Although no church has been left unscathed, some have fared better, or worse, than others. The worst damage was done to St. Wenceslaus of Spillville and St. Joseph's of Elkader. Magnificent Gothic interiors were either ruined or altered in most negative fashion. Credit is due to the people of Spillville, however, who, in recent days, have made great efforts to restore their church to its original form and have met with a great deal of success. In some cases, such as at Dyersville, New Vienna, and Petersburg, a priceless treasure was lost when the ornate and intricately carved Gothic pulpit was discarded. In St. Luke's of St. Lucas, an added box-like reconciliation room, to replace the old Gothic confessional, looks like an unwanted afterthought.

In countless isolated towns and villages throughout northeast Iowa, churches of all denominations were the result of an artistic vision. The care and efforts that went into the design, the masonry, the stained glass, and the wood carvings raised these churches to the level of artistic treasures. They were built to serve a living and changing community and thus should not be treated merely as museums. Nevertheless, extreme caution should be exercised in the future lest ill-conceived alterations lead to disastrous results. Great care should be taken to preserve and enhance the beauty and glory of these silent sermons in stone and brick bequeathed to us by our farsighted ancestors. □

#### Note on Sources

Published histories of the churches and communities examined in this study formed the informational base for this article. Such histories — most often published in observance of landmark dates in the churches' histories (75 years, 100 years, 125 years) — were available for each of the nine churches studied: St. Francis Xavier (Dyersville), St. Joseph's (Elkader), St. John Nepomucene (Fort Atkinson), St. Mary's (Guttenberg), Holy Trinity (Luxemburg), St. Boniface (New Vienna), SS. Peter and Paul Church (Petersburg), St. Luke's (St. Lucas), St. Wenceslaus (Spillville). The editor should like to thank the pastors of each of these churches for their enthusiastic responses to a request for illustrations to accompany this article.