

# 1928: Catholic School Opens

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Staff Writer

The parochial school program for Roman Catholic families in Birmingham began in 1928 with the completion of Holy Name School. Thirty years later growth of the community resulted in construction of a second Catholic parish school, St. Columban.

Making provision for a school was the first concern of the Rev. William W. Ryan, pastor of Holy Name, following dedication of the church in 1922.

The mother church places an emphasis on religious instruction in the schools as a dominant part of the educational curriculum for its Catholic youth; getting a school under way as soon as possible was vital.

At that time the parish not only included Birmingham but also Bloomfield Hills, and there were many families awaiting the reality of Holy Name School.

ARCHITECT Arthur DesRosiers drew up plans that would allow for future expansion, the building contract was let to Hazelton & Clark of Detroit and the school was finished in the fall of '28.

In the meantime a convent was being built for the teaching staff, nuns from the Order of Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, from Monroe. Their home was ready by late summer.

The school and convent were located on Harmon Ave., west of the Chapel of the Holy Name. The site of the chapel and rectory was reserved for a new church in the future.

According to a clipping from The Eclectic, which included the architect's sketch, "The school is to be a two-story structure of the modern Gothic type and it is to be constructed in such a way that additions may be made when necessary.

"IT WILL contain classrooms for the first eight grades but no auditorium is planned on for the first unit."

Four young people—Jack Hogan, Robert Pollack, Betty Brady and Lorraine Spicer—comprised the first graduating class.

Teachers that first year included Sister Ann Patricia, Sister Ann Veronica (to 1931), Sister Consuela, Sister Cor Marie, Sister Marie Elise (to 1933), Sister Rose Clement and Sister Rose Marie.

Other teachers in those early days were, in 1929, Sister Clarilla (to 1931), Sister Margaret Ellen (to 1931), Sister Marie Callistus, Sister Marie Thomas.

IN 1930, SISTER Bernadette (to 1935), Sister Jane de Chantal (to 1932); in 1931, Sister Raymunda, Sister Rose Ethel (to 1937), Sister Therese Martin (to 1933); in 1932, Sister Rose; in 1933, Sister Benigna (to 1936), Sister Marie David, Sister Sara.

In 1934, Sister Alice (to 1937); in 1935, Sister Miriam Frances (to 1937); in 1936, Sister Maxine (to 1944); in 1937, Sister Alice Marie, Sister Dorothy (to 1941), Sister Killian (to 1940), Sister Rosina (to 1942); in 1938, Sister Leona; and in 1939, Sister Berchmans (to 1941) and Sister Emeline (to 1941).

THE STOCK MARKET crash in 1929 and the depression had prevented later expansion of Holy Name parish facilities. And in 1931 the parish was divided, with the formation of St. Hugo of the Hills to serve Bloomfield, leaving behind a large debt.

Following the World War II years the parish grew to the extent that an addition, which increased the size of the school four times, was built.

School classes were to be dismissed one week early in June of 1950 allowing workmen to begin the remodeling, the Rev. David J. Duncan of Holy Name School and parish, announced.

THE ADDITION was completed in November and dedicated by Edward Cardinal Mooney. These new \$425,000 facilities housing 600 pupils were a part of a building program that marked the parish's 25th anniversary.

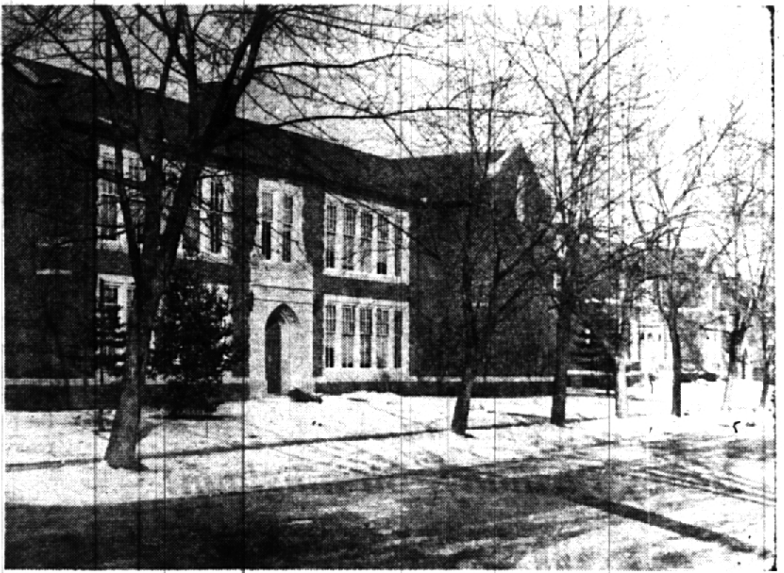
The addition included a large auditorium with a public address system, to be used for athletic contests, gym classes, some church services, dances for young people and parish affairs.

Also added were eight classrooms, a music room, library, locker rooms and showers for both boys and girls, an office for the principal, check room and an infirmary.

Expansion took other directions in the summer of 1958 when a seven-classroom elementary school for the parish of St. Columban was begun.

THE SCHOOL, located on Dunstable near 14 Mile Road, was designed to house about 175 pupils from grades one through three.

Plans called for three nuns, Sisters of the Order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to staff the school, with the assistance of one lay teacher. Temporary quarters in the building itself were set aside for the nuns' residence.



HOLY NAME WAS B'HAM'S FIRST PAROCHIAL SCHOOL  
30 Years Later, St. Columban's Was Built.

## '33 Vacation Began Early

The closing of the banks in 1933 had a strong effect on the Birmingham Public Schools.

In April 1933 the school board voted unanimously to close the buildings on Friday, May 26, shortening the scheduled term by two weeks.

The action was taken after Louis M. Randall, business manager, had presented figures showing that the board owed \$14,026 in back salaries, that \$23,102 in scrip was outstanding and total expenditures from April 14, the date of the last payroll, until June 9, original date for closing, would be \$29,502.

AGAINST THIS total liability of \$66,630, the board had \$31,000 on deposit in the closed First National Bank of Birmingham, about \$15,000 in checks paid in before the banking holiday but which were not cleared, a credit of about \$250,000 in unpaid 1932 school

taxes and only about \$1,800 in actual cash on hand.

The average payroll for two weeks averaged about \$5,500 for teachers and about \$1,600 for janitors. Since January, 25 per cent of the salaries had been paid in scrip.

The early closing will reduce the school year to 8½ months, but will not jeopardize the receipt of next fall's primary money from the state nor prevent graduating seniors from receiving full university credits Superintendent Charles W. Crandell told the board.

ALL STUDENTS whose work is above passing at the time of closing would be promoted he said.

Although the board was in agreement that the schools should be closed early there was a difference

of opinion on the actual closing date.

Several board members said they had talked to teachers who said they would rather work for the additional two weeks, even for only \$10 rather than to see the schools close.

City Manager James W. Pary said he also favored the early closing, but believed recently passed legislation which waives all penalties on back taxes paid before July 1 would give a significant stimulus to tax payments during the next few months.

### A Rung Number?

Public notice in 1878: "The president of the village board wants all ladders belonging to the village to be returned immediately and save further expense and trouble to the ones having such ladders."

## School Chief Taught Classes, Too, in 1904

In the school year of 1904-05, A. E. Bellis was the superintendent of Hill School—the only public school in Birmingham.

Besides his duties of superintendent, Bellis also taught science and math.

The school boasted a "pre-press" in the person of Ethel Traphagen, who also taught Latin and German. Kate McGraw was the instructor of biology, English and history while Margaret Murphy was the high school assistant and 8th grade teacher.

THE ELEMENTARY grades were housed in the same building on the first floor. The teachers and the grades they taught were: Mable Koopitz, 6-7 grades; Ella M. Leepia, 4-5 grades and Mable Croft, 1st grade. Mary Huibert taught kindergarten, music and drawing.

J. Allen Bigelow was president of the school board that year. Other members were J. Bert Peabody, W. E. McClellan, A. S. Adams and John H. Snow.

There were three terms in the school year. Tuition for the high school was \$6 for the first term and \$5 each of the remaining two terms.

EIGHTH GRADE tuition was a dollar cheaper and for grades below the eighth, the tuition rates for three terms were \$1, \$3, and \$3 respectively.

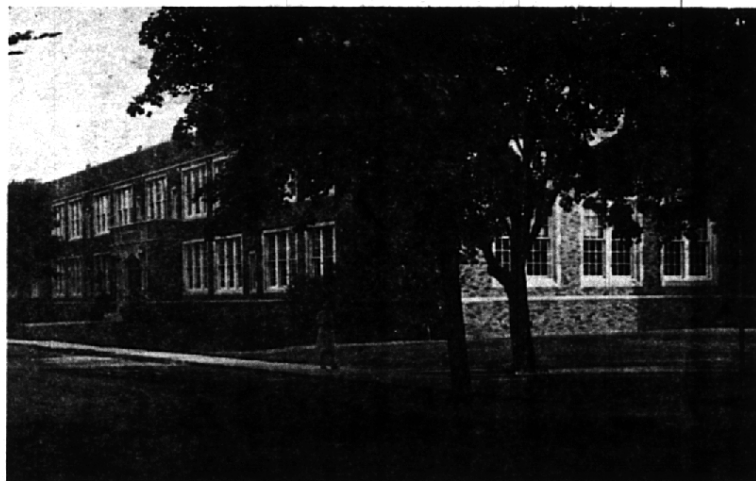
It was in this year that the west side addition was added to the Hill School.

### Local Doctors Took All Comers

Birmingham in the 1880's was a growing village but doctors were few and far between. Those that did doctor in the area had to expect anything, and their patients weren't always people. According to the Feb. 15, 1883 paper.

"John Parsons, who lives the other side of Bloomfield Center, took a load to the city recently and while his team was in the hotel barn, one of them got loose and ate a quantity of wheat from a wagon on the barn floor, and was consequently very sick.

"Dr. Pearsall was called and the consequence was Fred driving his horse last week, and avers that it would have been under the daisies if it hadn't been for Dr. Pearsall."



## B'ham's Second School

Barnum Junior High School on Frank Street was the second public school built in Birmingham. Opened with eight rooms in 1913, the school was used as an elementary building to take the pressure off over-

crowded conditions at Hill School. Additions were made in 1930 and 1954. The school was named after Horace Barnum, a civic leader and blacksmith.