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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 1927. The mother church places an emphasis on religious instruction in the educational curriculum for its Catholic youth, getting a school under an auspiciously welcome vision.

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

ARCHITECT Arthur DeRoeters drew up plans that would allow for future expansion, the building contract was let to Hamilton & Clark of Detroit and the school was finished in the fall of 1929.

In the meantime a convent was being built for the teaching staff, run by 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 corner of Holy Name. The site of the church and rectory was reserved for a new church in the future.

According to a clipping from The Eccentric which included the architect's sketch, the school is to be a two-story structure of the modern Gothic type and 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 for the first unit.

Principals chosen were Sister A. Hoppen, Robert Pollack, Betty Brady and Lorraine Spiller who comprised the first graduating class.

Teachers that first year included Sister Clara, Sister Rose, Sister Veronique (1931), Sister Consolata, Sister Cecile Marie, Sister Marie Elise (1933), Sister Rose Clement and Sister Rose Marie.

Classrooms were built in those early days were in 1929, Sister Clara (to 1931), Sister Veronique (to 1931), Sister Marie Callistus, Sister Marie Thomas.

B'ham's Second School

IN 1930, SISTER Bernardette (to 1931), Sister June de Chanois (to 1932); in 1931, Sister Raymond, Sister Rose Ethel (to 1937), Sister Thérèse Martin (to 1936); in 1932, Sister Rosy; in 1933, Sister Berthe (to 1938), Sister Marie David, Sister Sarah de Béthune (to 1939); in 1934, Sister Alice (to 1937); in 1935, Sister Miriam Frances (to 1937); in 1936, Sister Maxine (to 1941); in 1937, Sister Alice Marie, Sister Dorothy (to 1941), Sister Killian (to 1940), Sister Rosina (to 1941); in 1938, Sister Leona, and in 1939, Sister Berthema (to 1941) and Sister Emilie (to 1941).

THE STOCK MARKET crash in 1929 and the depression 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 1953 allowing workmen to begin remodeling, the Rev. David J. Danican of Holy Name School and parish, announced.

THE ADDITION was completed in November and dedicated by Cardinal Cushing.

These new $245,000 facilities housing 600 pupils were a paving of the original program that marked the parish's 25th anniversary.

The inclusion added a large auditorium with a public address system, to be used for athletic contests, gym classes, some church activities, but designed for young people and parish affairs.

Also included were eight classrooms, a music room, library, blackboards and showers for both boys and girls, an office for the principal, copy room and a cafeteria.

Despite the   stroller   directions in the summer of 1956 when a part of the elementary school for the parish of St. Columban was begun.

THE SCHOOL, located on Banceling Drive on 14 Mile Road, was designed to house about 175 pupils in three grades through from grades 1-5.

Plans called for three nuns, Sisters of the Order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to staff the first grade and to assist the nun in the presence of the one lay teacher. Temporary quarters in the building itself were set aside for the nun's residence.

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 May 20, shortening the scheduled term by two weeks.

The action was taken after Edna M. Randell, business manager, had presented figures showing that the board owed $14,300 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, the original date for closing, would be $29,652.

AGAINST THIS total liability of $66,550, the board had $13,000 in deposits in the closed First National Bank of Birmingham, with $15,000 in checks paid in before the bank closed. The teachers were not cleared, a credit of about $254,000 in unpaid 1932 school taxes and only about $1,300 in actual cash on hand.

The average payroll for two weeks averaged $4,500 for teachers and about $1,600 for non-graduating seniors from receiving cumulative 1931 salary of $20,300.

The early closing would reduce the school year to 8 1/2 months, but will not prejudice the receipt of next fall's primary money from the state nor prevent graduating seniors from receiving full university credits, Superintendents Charles W. Crawford told the board.

A NEW school building in every town in the state was one of the provisions in the state's education act which was passed in 1935. A large number of buildings already had been completed, but Birmingham was one of the few schools that had only a first grade.