

WELCOME TO PHILMONT NEW YORK

The Catholic Church

By Charles R. Nichols

The Sacred Heart Church of Philmont started much the same as the other churches I've written about - without a formal Church. From about 1852 the faithful met in private homes, and about every three months a pastor would come from Hudson. By 1881 the Sacred Heart Parish was formed, and shortly after - in 1882 - the first Church was constructed by its first pastor, Rev. James J. Moriarty. It was a wooden structure, and is shown in the first photo.



In 1884 the Rectory was built, next to the Church, on donated land.

The wooden Church served until 1902, when the present brick structure was built. Inspection of the basement of this Church seems to indicate that the new structure was built either on, or just outside, the older building's foundation.



The new Church was one of two masonry Churches in the Village, and is a very imposing building. I've shown two exterior photos, both by a village photographer, probably in the 1930's.

Also shown are several interior views including one of the memorial stained glass windows - there were several.



Another photo shows the Rectory and the Church, the automobile indicating a 1920's photo.



In 1920 the Church was offered a fire bell for \$85.00. I assume it was the fire bell from the old Village Hall and Fire House – that building did have a bell tower shown in older photographs.



I couldn't resist adding this photo of the steeple. If you look carefully, you will see a workman at the top, just under the cross !!

In 1923, newspapers record the Philmont Catholic Club's second annual Minstrel and Dance (well before political correctness) at the Crusader Hall. There is some indication that the prior year's event was held at the 'Empire Theatre'.

The write up of the event is quite comprehensive. It lists all the acts and songs. Two are particularly interesting.

"Oh, Gee! I'm in love" sung by William E.J. Connor – well known, respected, and liked by several generations of Philmont people and known as Judge Connor, Columbia County Judge. The other act had a gentleman from Hudson giving a (comic) political speech "He doesn't know what he is talking about". Some things never change !!

In the 1938 flood in Philmont, the water first came over the Reservoir side and traveled down Ark Street, right along the side of the Church. The two photos show what a narrow escape the Church had ! The left photo was taken looking up Ark Street toward the Reservoir. The large building on the Church (left) side, above the Church, was called 'The Ark' (for reasons best left alone), and was how the street got its name. The right photo is looking down Ark Street, Church on the right.



The Church purchased the 'Ark', demolished it, and used the land to construct a hall, to use for religious instruction, and for Church events, and to rent out on occasion. 1969 is shown as the date of the first function at the hall, November 1973 as the dedication date.

In 2005 the Church property was put up for sale. The congregation was to be combined with another and utilize a new Church away from Philmont. The action is a sad realization of facts that almost all religious, fraternal, or civic volunteer organizations are facing. Dramatic increase in cost coupled with decreasing participants. The loss to Philmont is unfortunate.

One minor glitch appeared when partitioning the property for sale. The Hall had part of the building on Village owned property. This accident of construction was corrected by a 'swap' of this minor slice of land to the Church in return for a piece next to the former Band Street to the Village. Truly a benefit for all !.

The final photos show the Church Hall and present day Church and Rectory.



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