

## ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, LITTLE FALLS

MARTIN, CHARLES D.

This tape covers the personal background of Charles D. Martin, a long-time congregation member. He talks about life in Little Falls and reminisces about his college days at St. Cloud State. The church history is covered, including splits and larger mergers.

INTERVIEWERS: John Le Doux and Al Nielsen

DATE: August 8, 1979

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 1 Side 1

015 PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

- 016 His parents came to Randa~~l~~ in 1897. They were married in Wisconsin, lived a year and a half in South Dakota, then one year and a half in Wisconsin, then to Randal.
- 026 His father is Irish, and his mother is French.
- 028 They bought an 80-acre farm in Parker Township and spent the rest of their lives there.
- 031 Mr. Martin is an only child; he was born on June 28, 1909.
- 033 Later the farm was enlarged to 120 acres.
- 034 His mother died in May 1922.
- 037 His father remarried after about 12 years.
- 040 Charles graduated from Little Falls High School in 1927.
- 042 He then went to the St. Cloud Teacher's College.
- 046 He graduated from the 2 year Jr. High course in 1931; he stayed on and received his Bachelor of Education Degree in June 1932.
- 058 In 1933, he taught English, coached dramatics and speech activities at the Sauk Rapids High School; he stayed for 4 years.
- 061 In the fall of 1937, he came back to Little Falls.
- 064 On December 29, 1937 he got married; they have lived in Little Falls all their married life.
- 066 They have 3 children: Dennis, director of the Public School of Education at the Brainerd State Hospital; Sharon, a full-time housewife; and Tom, a elementary teacher in Circle Pines.
- 080 Both of the boys went to St. Cloud State University.
- 086 Charles and his wife have 10 grandchildren.
- 091 He retired in 1974.
- 093 They have been members of St. Mary's Parish since its beginning in 1945.
- 096 The consolidation of two parishes: St. Francis Xavier (French), and the Church of the Sacred Heart (German), form the St. Mary's Parish.
- 101 Charles' wife's maiden name is Duane Marie Heltemes.
- 108 The farm was in rural Morrison about 5 miles S.W. of Randal.
- 121 In 1927 the University had 400 girls and 100 boys.
- 127 Hardly any students had cars and bicycles.
- 191 He has spent all of his life within a 45 mile radius from where he was born.

200 CHURCH HISTORY:

- 200 St. Mary's originated in 1945 from two parishes.
- 211 The old settlers made up the two parishes; Bishop Busch desired they be consolidated.
- 224 Father LaMount, Reverend of St. Francis Xavier, came in 1892 and stayed until 1944 when he died.
- 246 A fire in February, 1946 rendered the Sacred Heart Church unusable and, to accomodate the double congregation, four masses were offered each Sunday at St. Francis Xavier.
- 260 Father Preusser was a German priest performing in a French parish.
- 269 Monsignor T. Leo Keaveney was Irish, and he became the priest.
- 281 St. Mary's Church was planned and would not be tied in with any nationality.
- 287 Father Keaveney said that there had to be a school for Parochial education.
- 296 St. Mary's School was built with classrooms and an auditorium.
- 310 St. Mary's Church was dedicated on June 12, 1957; it was built of red brick.
- 318 In April 1948 construction of the new unit of St. Mary's Parish began with the school according to the plans directed by Monsignor Keaveney, pastor of St. Mary's.
- 322 By April 1949, the school was ready for use and classes opened in the new St. Mary's School.
- 326 On August 15, 1949, Bishop Bartholome presided at the laying of the cornerstone and on September 11 the school was dedicated.
- 331 Built at a cost of \$330,000, it has room for a capacity of 450 pupils.
- 335 There are 10 classrooms and a combination gymnasium-auditorium that will seat 600 people; there is a library, and shower and locker rooms.
- 341 The entire building is fireproof, acoustically treated and air conditioned.
- 342 It has a public address system connected with every classroom and is equipped with germicidal lighting.
- 345 Provision has also been made for television.
- 350 The architectural style is colonial.
- 351 The school has two and one-half city blocks available for playground purposes.
- 354 The Franciscan Sisters were the teachers; they were Irish.
- 371 On April 16, 1956, the ground breaking rites of the new church and rectory were held under the direction of Monsignor Keaveney.
- 377 Also taking part in the rites were two of the parish's senior members, Ernest Belanger, 82, and the former Judge Phil Randall, 92.
- 397 On August 12, 1956, Bishop Bartholome blessed the cornerstone amidst a heavy downpour of rain; part of the cornerstone was sent from the St. Mary's Major Basicila in Rome by Monsignor Luigi Ziliani, who also sent a brick of the Holy Year Door of 1950 from the same Basilica.

- 409 The First Mass was offered on the First Friday of the month, April 5, 1957, and the Stations of the Cross were solemnly erected on Passion Sunday, April 7, 1957.
- 414 On June 12, 1957, the dedication of St. Mary's Church.
- 417 Leading the procession was the color guard of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, followed by the honor guard of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus.
- 421 Among the laity were the officers of the Third Degree of Knights of Columbus, the Diocesan Councils of Men and Women, the Advisory Board, the Christian Mothers, and St. Mary's Sodality.
- 426 The clergymen and Our Sisters followed in line, then our Bishop who blessed the new church.
- 429 The chaplains were Reverend Fathers Robert Voigt and A.J. Preusser.
- 432 The chantors were the Reverend Fathers Robert Smith and Harold Kost.
- 439 The ministers were Celebrant Father Edward Ramacher; deacon, Father Victor Kinzer; subdeacon, Rev. John Miller; and master of ceremonies, Father Jerome Reisinger.
- 454 St. Francis Xavier was formerly called San Salvador and was founded in 1867 by Rev. Tomasin, who was a missionary.
- 463 Trappers, traders, and woodsmen that came from Canada in the 1860's started their own parishes.
- 468 Little Falls began in 1848.
- 515 In 1886, the German members broke away to form the Sacred Heart Church.
- 556 He went to Mass at St. Francis Xavier with Father LeMount in the 1920's.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 1 Side 2

003 CHURCH HISTORY:

- 003 St. Adalbert's Parish was formed by the Polish people who wanted a church.
- 016 About ten years ago, St. Adalbert consolidated with St. Mary's.
- 018 St. Adalbert and St. Francis Xavier have been taken down.
- 020 The Catholic population, which extends halfway to Belle Prairie on the north; halfway to Pierz on the east; and halfway to Royalton on the south, is consolidated into St. Mary's Parish.
- 034 The town has been an united town even with the Mississippi River dividing the town into the eastside and the westside.
- 050 The Parish of Our Lady of Lords is on the westside.
- 056 Our Lady of Lords Parish was known as the Westside Polish Church.
- 068 Our Lady of the Lords bought the Antler's Inn and used it for a school.
- 072 This church was built in 1924.
- 093 Our Lady of Lords and St. Adalbert churches are not Polish National churches.
- 130 The language switched over to English in the 1920's.

- 144 The growth has been steady through the years.
- 159 The changes in regard to religious community programs through the church have grown.
- 170 The parish council was the responsibility of the trustees and the pastor of the church.
- 185 The parish council takes care of some of the duties of the pastor.
- 199 Electors take part in the services.
- 235 Mr. Martin was saddened when they changed over from Latin to English masses.
- 248 He sang in the parish choir.
- 292 With the new liturgy, the congregation can sing along with the choir; the choir was only allowed to sing before.
- 382 Mr. Martin became a layminister and a distributor of Holy Communion.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 2 Side 1

003 PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

- 003 Mr. Martin was an altar boy, also.
- 009 Back in his day, the church was more strict.
- 011 In Randall they did not have a parish priest until 1919.
- 013 In 1916 the congregation built a parish house.
- 019 He thought of himself as the "worst little Christian in the world."
- 030 They had mass once every two weeks because the priest traveled around to other towns.
- 050 In 1920 he became an altar boy.
- 068 He served mass for four years, and he enjoyed it.
- 082 His two sons were also altar boys.

094 CHURCH HISTORY:

- 094 He feels that priests have become more friendly than fearful in this day and age.
- 152 St. Mary's has a stable congregation with little turnover.
- 166 Pastor Laky just left St. Mary's and went to Rice.
- 193 The participation in the activities of the church are more involved and interested in religion.
- 202 St. Mary's has a parochial school, a school board and a council.
- 229 More people are going to church on Saturday evening instead of on Sunday to get their obligation out of the way.
- 255 There are fewer locations for sisterhoods, which cuts down on the amount of sisters teaching in schools.
- 288 Many nuns are leaving the convent.
- 367 Mr. Martin thinks there will be no drastic changes in the church in the foreseeable future.
- 405 The church emerges when we feel that there is no reason to go on living.
- 475 In 1897 the Randall church was made out of lumber that was donated to the church.

- 509 The pews in Randall were homemade and were painted.  
544 They had church picnics back then, but the church is  
gone now.  
552 Father Reader built the new church in Randall.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 2 Side 2

002 PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

- 002 A Winter Wonderland was started in 1948 about five miles  
southeast of Little Falls on a farm.  
048 Charles Martin wrote a book of poetry entitled, "Voices  
of Yesterday With Memories of Morrison County and the  
USA."  
075 He writes for his family and friends for weddings,  
anniversaries, birthdays, baptisms, etc.  
079 The Morrison County Record prints them in the paper every  
once in awhile.  
088 He gave his poems to the Morrison County Historical Center  
to publish.  
094 In December, 1977, the book came off the press.