

Chapter Twenty-Four

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH

For many years there was no Catholic Church in Linden and Catholic families in the area traveled to Stockton to attend Mass at Old St. Mary's Church on Washington Street, or to Lockeford, for worship at St. Joachim's which was the parish church for the Lockeford-Clements-Lodi area. In 1882 Linden was designated a mission of St. Joachim's by Arch-Bishop Alemany of the Arch-Diocese of San Francisco and remained under its authority until 1904. During this period, all records of important events; baptism, first-communion, confirmation, marriage, death, were recorded there.

Father Kennedy was the priest serving this area in 1882. He was succeeded by Father Cassin in 1883, under whose leadership the first Holy Cross Church was built on property purchased from the Crocketts. It was a frame building, 30'x50', built by Mike Fitzgerald of Stockton, who owned a planing mill. It is presently being used as the church hall. Father Cassin called himself the "Bad-Man from Bodie", for he had just come from Bodie, Nevada, a notorious wild mining town.

Those who remember the old Holy Cross Church as it was then with its white picket fence and red-painted hitching posts, surrounded by elm trees, also remember those who went there to Mass on Sundays. At first the majority of the names were Irish: Talbot, Welsh, Lyons, Flood, Murray, O'Brien, O'Donnell, Henry, Fanning, Benjamin, and Cady, but there were Italian and Portuguese names, too. Among the first were the Sanguinettis, soon followed by Solari, Camicia, Sola, Rossi, and Devincenci; Faurado, Silva and Pimentel. Today the majority of the parishioners are Italian.

Mr. Angelo Sanguinetti, instrumental in building the first church, often served at Mass when there was no altar boy, and more than one lady in the congregation used to say that she envied his beautiful curly grey hair. Little did he know that one day his great-great-grandchildren would attend Holy Cross Church.

Mrs. Grace Tone vividly recalled the day that Arch-Bishop Riordan came to Linden to dedicate the new edifice in September, 1884, for not only did she make her First Holy Communion in the morning and Confirmation in the afternoon, but in the interim her mother and father, Margaret and Patrick Talbot entertained His Eminence at dinner in their home on Linden Road.

At first the priests, too, were Irish; Father Leahy, Father

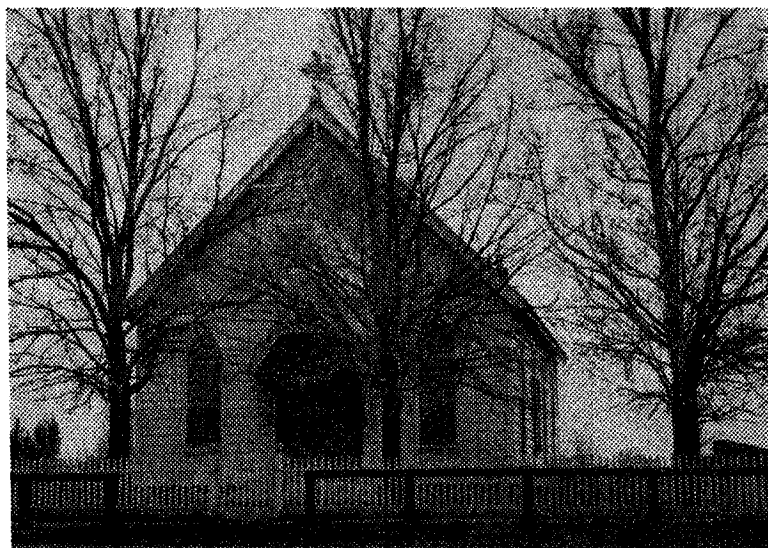
O'Mahoney, Father Quill, Father McNaaboe, and Father Lacey. Mrs. Tone can also remember Father Lacey driving from Lodi to the Tone home on Jack Tone Road, where he would receive a fresh horse and leave his own to rest until after Mass, when he would stop once more to pick up his own horse for the trip home.

In 1904 St. Anne's succeeded St. Joachim's as the parish church for the area and Holy Cross became a mission of Old St. Mary's in Stockton, where records for this period may be found. Then, in 1913, it was placed under the jurisdiction of St. Gertrude's Church, Stockton. It was not until 1921 that St. Michael's, which had also remained a mission church until this date, was designated a parish with Father A. R. Bandini as its first pastor. He was a Florentine, and a scholar who translated Dante's "Inferno". He had also studied law and passed the California State Bar examination; however, he lost a case involving Holy Cross Church. During the 1920's the church roof was resingled. Mr. E. Welsh, a parishioner passing by, noticed that the equipment the roofer was using was unsafe and warned him about it. The warning was not heeded, however, and as a result, the man fell and broke his leg. He sued the parish and Father Bandini represented the defendant. The plaintiff was awarded \$10,000; he recovered and was working many years before the church was able to pay its debt.

Father Bandini served as pastor at St. Michael's until 1927. He was followed by Fathers Francini, Savio, Galvin, Conway, Maisano and Jerome Meyer, presently pastor of the church.

Father Maisano came to St. Michael's from St. Gertrude's in 1946. He was instrumental in building the new Holy Cross Church. This church was dedicated by Bishop Guilfoyle in 1953. Upon Father Maisano's retirement in 1959, Father Jerome Meyer became pastor of both St. Michael's and Holy Cross.

In 1962, the Diocese of Stockton was established with His Eminence, Bishop Donohue appointed as its first bishop. During the same year Holy Cross Catholic Church became a parish with Msgr. Walter Doyle serving the new parish from 1962 to 1966. Father Andrew Tynan served as pastor from 1966 to 1968, Father George J. Marengo came to Linden in October 1968 and he served as pastor until 1972. Father Titian Athos (Jim) Miani came to Holy Cross Church from Lodi in 1972, and he continues as the local pastor. Father Jim has a most impressive academic record at numerous universities throughout the world, is an experienced pilot and sky-diver, a former military chaplain, and has filled administrative positions in several high schools. In his early priesthood years he did missionary work in the far flung Tierra del Fuego in Brazil and in Venezuela. During the Biafra



Holy Cross Catholic Church, built in 1882, served local Catholics until the new church was built in 1953. The old church building was moved to make room for a new church and has since been used as the Holy Cross Social Hall.

crisis he flew food cargoes in the humanitarian efforts to aid the starving in that troubled land.

Many are the memories through the years. There was once a minor scandal during the 1890's when some of the young people at the church picnic danced "round-dances" (probably the waltz) when they should have been sedately dancing the square. Once Nance O'Neill, who later became famous as an actress, was being assisted from a carriage in front of the church, when her escort, wearing white kid gloves, lost his grip and both fell flat. There are those who remember Mrs. Lynch and her daughter, Jeanette, with their elaborate white shirtwaists that, it was whispered, were "done-up" at a French Laundry, and their hats with sweeping ostrich plumes. They remember, too, Miss Mollie Welsh who for years took care of the altar, and every Sunday morning brought breakfast for the priest so he would not have to drive back to Stockton or Lodi hungry.

There was the unforgettable occasion when a visiting missionary had preached a hell-fire and brimstone sermon, the church door stuck tight and no one could leave until one of the Lyons' boys crawled out a window and opened it from the outside. A long-since grown up child who had laughed aloud in church one Sunday remembers Father Dollard admonishing in

his rich brogue, "Sure, 'tis better to be laughin' than cryin'." Since Holy Cross was a Mission there were few weddings, but one that is remembered was the marriage of Elizabeth Ann Talbot and Frank Murray on October 19, 1887.

LADIES GUILD AT HOLY CROSS CHURCH

The original purpose of organizing Holy Cross Guild in 1957 was to help reduce the debt of the church and to provide a social church club for the ladies. The guild meets once a month and has sponsored fashion shows, card parties and other fund raising activities to assist with the program of the church. They have helped with Catechism classes and many other functions at the church.

Marie Laskey was the first President in 1957; and she served until 1959 when Barbara Solari was installed as the new President. Others serving as Presidents and the years they served were Judy Solari, 1960-1961; Dolores Zolezzi, 1962; Marie DeMartini, 1963; Agnes Gogna, 1964-1965; Dorene Lagorio, 1966-1967; Lora Fearheiley, 1968-1969; Louise Ruiz, 1970-1971; Agnes Gogna, 1972-1973; Pearl Raggio, 1974-1975; and Nadine Vaccarezza, 1976.



The typical attire of early day Lindenites is shown above in this photograph taken at the Bailey residence on 8 Mile and Tully Roads in 1904. Shown, left to right, are Mrs. Tom Louttit, Maimee Bailey (later married to Fred Cox) and Mr. and Mrs. C. K. Bailey, long time Linden residents.