

Brief History of St. Bridgits (Brigits) Catholic Church Building Garnavillo, Iowa

In 1843 twenty families, who had been worshipping in homes, organized themselves to erect a small chapel to meet their religious needs. This small chapel was to be St Brigits (or Bridgits in some documents). Bishop Mathias Loras, on July 5, 1848, purchased two lots in the center of Jacksonville (now called Garnavillo). The location was lots 4 and 5, block 10 on the northwest corner of Main and Mechanic street. It was the first catholic church building in Clayton County.

The building served the congregation until 1860. Priests from New Vienna, Holy Cross, Elkader and Dubuque served the parish.

Sometime after Rev J. J. Quigley of Elkader sold the church building to B. F. Schroeder of Garnavillo in 1860, it was moved to the southeast corner of Main and Maple (now Chestnut) streets. Part of the Mobile Station & Grocery owned by Jack & Norma Eulberg in the mid 1960's to 1990's, is the original structure of the chapel. The structure still stands to this day.

The lot on which St. Brigit stood, was transferred to John Nichols in 1872.

After Rev. Quigley sold St. Brigits, the parish began collecting funds for a new and larger church which became known as St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Compiled Feb 2017 by Jane Thein Garnavillo Historical Society

Sources:

1977 St. Joseph's Centennial Celebration book

Garnavillo Tribune 1927 article announcing Jubilee celebration (50 years)

1882 History of Clayton County.

Garnavillo Gem of the Prairie by Arnold Roggman pages 167-168