

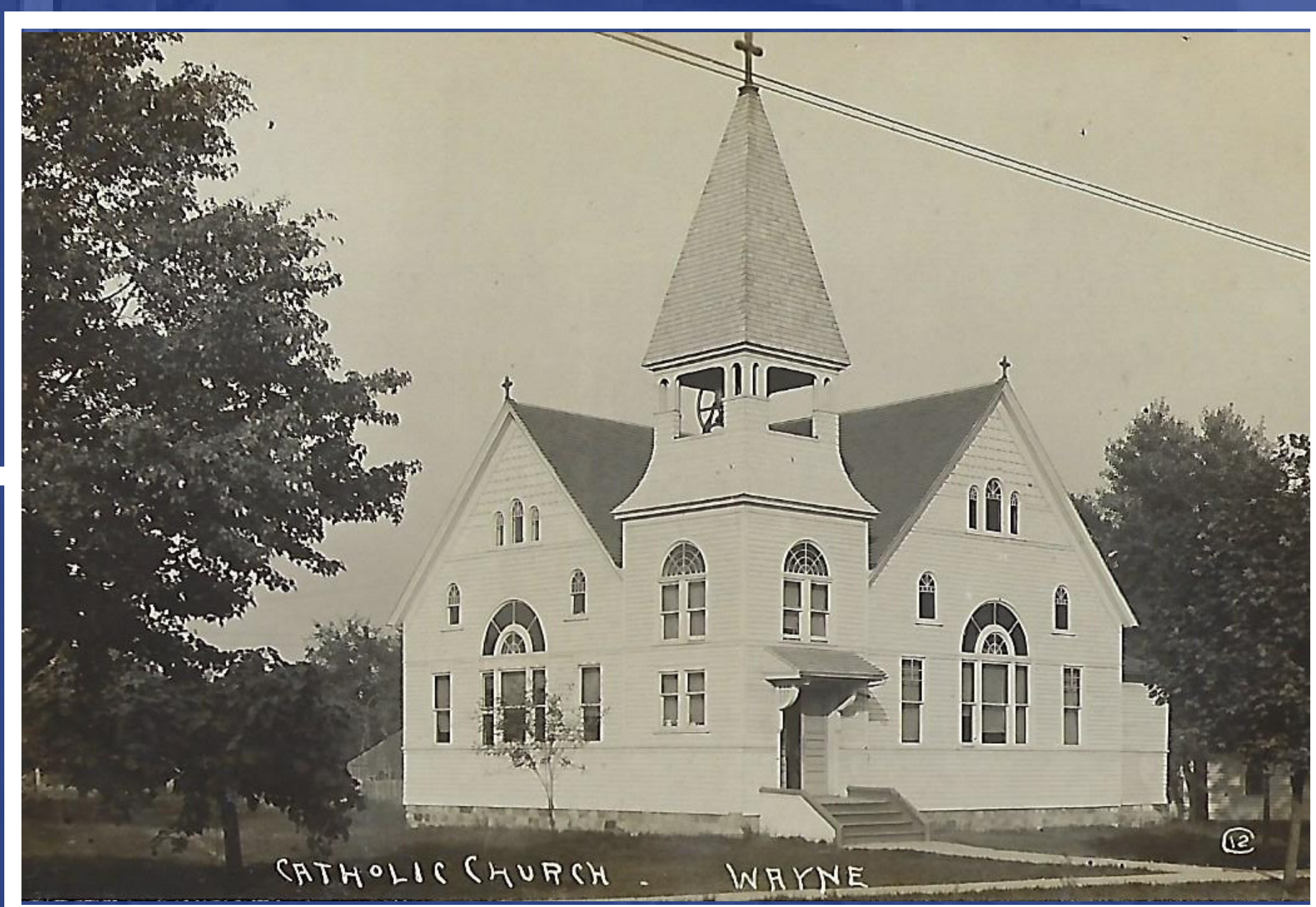
# St. Mary's Catholic Church



Catholic settlers in Wayne usually held small private masses in their homes, as there wasn't a parish nearby. In 1862, a mission named St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception was established to support the now 45 catholic families in Wayne. The hall over Jeremiah O'Connor's store was turned into a chapel once a month for mass, and a priest came out from Ypsilanti.



In 1865, the cornerstone was laid for a new brick church that took eight years to build. By 1890, the congregation was 225 people, with two masses a month.



In 1892, the old brick church was torn down, and a new bright white church was built next to the site. The church also began doing weekly masses, and in 1912 was elevated to a full parish status.

August 26, 1923 – Cornerstone for new church being laid.



The new church was finished within a year, and in 1924 a parochial school opened with 125 students. The old white frame church served as part of the school until the 1960s. St. Mary's by 1940 had a congregation of over 1,200 people.



With Wayne's booming population in the 1950s and 60s, it was also booming times at the church. Additions were made to the church and school, a new rectory and convent were built, and the school had swelled to a massive 1,100 students. They had eight masses on Sundays to accommodate the over 5,000-member congregation.



Changing family lifestyles saw membership in the church and school began to wane in the 1970s. Declining enrollment saw the St. Mary's school close its doors in 2018, but the congregation still has over 2,000 members and plays an active role in Wayne's community.

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