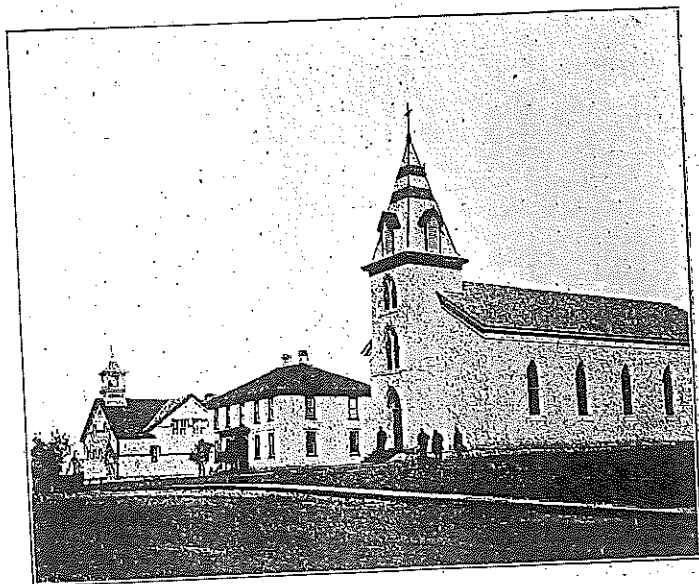


**St. Patrick's Church, Mauston, Wis.**

THE country tributary to the City of Mauston was but sparsely settled when, in 1857, the congregation of St. Patrick's was first organized. What few Catholic settlers there were, however, in that vicinity, were zealous as well as earnest, and so a small church 45x25 feet was at once erected on the banks of the Lemonweir River. Prior to this time the Catholics of Juneau County had been visited at intervals, or as necessity demanded, by Father Gertland, a missionary priest who was stationed at Sauk City on the Wisconsin River, some forty miles distant. Later, or to be more specific, in 1854, monthly visits were made to Mauston by Father Stepley, at that time also a resident of Sauk County. When, however, the first little church was built in 1857, Father Montague, then of Lyndon parish, visited the congregation regularly twice every month. Thus matters took their course until 1862, when Father Roach was appointed resident

priest. He remained but a year, the straightened circumstances of the congregation making it impossible for them to meet the necessary expenses. Another attempt was made in 1864, the aged Father Corrigan assuming the duties of pastor, but his untimely death a short time after arriving,—he was killed by a fall from a moving train,—again created a vacancy, which was filled by the appointment of Father Casey in 1865. This devoted priest did much to benefit and strengthen the



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congregation during his stay. Noticeable among his achievements was the purchase of a larger and more desirable site to which the church was soon after moved. He left in 1867, respected and regretted by all, and was succeeded by Father Laven, formerly pastor at New Lisbon. He was followed in 1871 by Father White, who

was also placed in charge of the congregations at New Lisbon and Necedah. Father Math. White accomplished considerable in the way of improvements to the church property at Mauston, and being extremely zealous in his pastoral labors became much endeared to the people placed under his charge. The duties involved in the management of three parishes, however, proved too much of a physical strain, so that after six years of unremitting toil, he finally succumbed to an attack of hemorrhage while still attending to his duties. In 1877 Father Gilbert took up his residence in Mauston, having been appointed to the charges made vacant by the death of his predecessor. He also effected many desirable improvements in the parish. It was during his pastorate that the church at Mauston was so badly damaged by fire that it became necessary to build an entirely new one and also a parsonage. For eight years following the removal of Father Gilbert, in 1885, the Rev. von

Droste maintained the pastorate of St. Patrick's as well as that of the mission of Lindina. He was succeeded in 1894 by the Rev. Father Becker, who, since his advent, has added greatly to the appearance and value of the property. A much needed addition to the church was built giving a total area of 40x100 feet, a new furnace was placed in the building and three handsome new altars erected. On the same site with the church and parsonage stands a fine new school-house, which, like the others, is substantially constructed of stone and brick. The value of these properties combined is estimated at \$18,000. Since Father Becker's appointment the size of the congregation has noticeably increased, the membership at present amounting to one



Rev. P. Becker.

hundred and seventy-five families. The school, which numbers an attendance of eighty-five scholars, is under the management of three Sisters of St. Dominic, of whom Sister Méchtildes is superior. There are but four Catholic societies in the parish, the largest being the Sacred Heart League, which has a membership of four hundred. Next come the Holy Rosary Society with a hundred members, the Young Ladies' Sodality with seventy-five and the Catholic Knights of Wisconsin with forty-three members. Of this latter organization Patrick Hyde is president, Philip Coleman, vice-president, James Timbers, secretary, and Frank Flynn, treasurer.

The mission of St. Michael's at Mariontown, Juneau County, consists at the present time of about twenty-five families, among whom are people of German, Irish,

Bohemian and Polish nationality. Services are held at St. Michael's on the first Monday of every month, in a neat little frame church which is located about eight miles northeast of the mother parish at Mauston.

The Rev. P. Becker was born at Nettesheim near Cologne, Prussia, in 1858. His earlier education was obtained in the schools of his native country, but on the emigration of his parents to America, in 1871, he entered the Seminary of St. Francis, at Milwaukee. Here he virtually completed his classical and philosophical course, although he afterwards returned to Europe, finishing his theological studies at the Grand Seminary of Liege, Belgium, and was there ordained to the priesthood by the Most Rev. Archbishop Victor Joseph Doutreloux, June 4, 1887. On returning to the United States he was placed in charge of St. Mary's congregation, at Cumberland, Wis., where he remained for two years. His next pastorate was at St. Joseph's Church, Rice Lake, where, during his stay, he built the school and parsonage. He was from there transferred in 1894 to Mauston.