



~ *Part 23* ~
Reflections on a Common Theme
Churches

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CLOUD COUNTY
Glasco Church History
by JoAnn Cool Alban

[JoAnn has provided this section about Glasco Churches from the Research Essay about Glasco History that she wrote in High School in 1956. All the church buildings that were current in 1956 are still standing, with more recent additions of a building at the Methodist Church and a Parish Hall at the Catholic Church.]

The first sermon in the Solomon Valley was delivered by a Methodist minister, who called at Captain Potts's dugout. Captain Potts discovered that he was a minister and asked him to preach a sermon. The settlers were few and all were notified by a messenger on horseback. This was before the founding of Glasco and the meeting was held under a cottonwood tree. The audience numbered less than a dozen.

Reverend Chilson was the first man sent to minister to the people and later Reverend Jeffrey was sent by the Methodist Episcopal Conference to establish a church on May, 1870. He started an organization with six members.

The first Methodist Episcopal church building was constructed in 1884. Before the building of this house they held their meetings in the old stone school house. The Methodist Episcopal Church was erected at a cost of twenty-five hundred dollars. It was burned on April 11, 1890. On May 17, 1890, the trustees called a meeting to promote the building of a new church. They had nine-hundred and sixty dollars, and adding this to the contributions made by the congregation and the people of the town and vicinity they built a church valued at two thousand dollars. In 1903 the church had a membership of eighty-five. The main body of the old church was added onto and redecorated in 1914-1915. The basement was remodeled after the flood of 1951.

Reverend Higgen preached the first sermon delivered by a minister of the Presbyterian denomination in Glasco, in the old log schoolhouse in the summer of 1871. Reverend Bracken held services in the village school house in the early winter of 1871, but the congregation was not organized until June of 1872. There were twelve members. On May 8, 1879, the first ground was broken by R. M. Gray. On the 10th and 11th of August 1879, lumber was placed on the grounds and work was started. The church was finished at a total cost of twenty-two hundred dollars. The church was dedicated early in June of 1880. In 1903 there were seventy-two members. The Presbyterian Church was discontinued in about 1930.

The Lutheran Church was established in 1883 by Reverend Seidel. The Lutherans worshipped in various homes and in the old stone school house until the erection of the Presbyterian Church, where they met for several years. In 1893 they erected a frame church on Main Street at the cost of three thousand dollars. In 1897 the Crumerine property was purchased and converted into a parsonage. The services were conducted alternately each Sunday in German and English. In 1901 the confirmation class reached the number of twenty-three. A new modern church was built in 1950.

For three years the Catholics held services at various homes of Catholic families. In 1878 a church was erected by general contributions at a cost of about eight hundred dollars. Much of the work was done by members. The parish was a part of Delphos with one priest doing the work for both parishes. The first priest was Father Fredrick, who came to Glasco from Beloit. The

congregation consisted of twenty families. The church seated nearly one hundred. The Catholic cemetery consists of three acres of ground adjoining the Protestant cemetery on the east.

On June 23, 1878, a congregation of people met at the old stone school house. After a sermon by Elder G. J. Root, an invitation to Christian Fellowship was given. Fourteen responded, thus starting the first Christian Church. In 1879 preparations were started for the building of a church. A frame building was erected and was rented for school purposes. The original church still stands.

ROOKS COUNTY

St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Damar

by Roger Hrabe

St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Damar was a finalist for the 8 Wonders of Kansas Architecture because it is one of the best examples of a Romanesque Revival style church in Kansas and has a stunning interior.

It has several unique construction features, including cast concrete pillars and arches on the exterior and interior columns decorated with Scagliola to look like polished marble (a process used in the Kansas State Capitol Building and other public structures in the state, of which St. Joseph's is the only church in the state with such extensive Scagliola interior decoration). The building is 128-foot long, 55-foot wide at the transept, and 90 feet to the top of the cross on the bell towers. The twin symmetrical square bell towers are a notable feature and can be seen for miles.

The building construction utilized twenty train car loads of Lucas limestone quarried near Waldo for the outside walls, one hundred and thirty cords of native rock from a quarry eight miles west of Damar for the inside walls, four thousand concrete blocks for the basement and foundation, plus, twenty four hundred sacks of concrete and two thousand loads of sand.

Construction of the present church, designed by architect Henry Brinkman of Emporia, began in 1912 under direction of Father S. F. Guillaume, with F. A. Rothenberger as head stonemason and Sidney Browne as head carpenter. Most of the labor was donated by parishioners. It was completed in stages at a cost of nearly \$30,000, and the first mass was celebrated here in 1917. Improvements, including the beautiful stained-glass windows, interior decorating, and copper roof were added in later years.

Restoration work on the church was completed in 2007, and today the structure is in immaculate condition. The double-spires draw many visitors to view this magnificent architecture.

Damar is a French-Canadian settlement established in the 1880s.

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Open during daylight hours

Visitors welcome

GRAHAM COUNTY

First Presbyterian Church of Hill City

On March 13, 1887, a group of families, living in sod houses and dugouts west of Hill City, organized the first church of Gettysburg in the newly-organized Graham County. When the members from Morland and Gettysburg members joined forces the "Hill City Presbyterian Church" was formed. Until the members had a church building of their own, services were held in a small stone church on the west edge of Hill City and shared with the Methodists. In 1888, Rev. John S. Atkinson became the pastor and during the next two years the present stone church was built and chartered on May 6, 1890.

Nearby, a stone manse was erected in 1896 by some of the same stone masons who built the church. Because of its deteriorating condition it was torn down in 1983 after 87 years of use.

In 1909 an organ was purchased for the church for \$100 and later replaced in 1961 by a Wurlitzer organ for \$1500. A bell was hung in the bell tower in 1919. Because of deterioration to the tower, the bell was removed in the 1950s. The bell was located on a farm south of Hill City and restored back to its original location in 1976.

A Guild Hall was added in 1930. In 1999 the hall was extensively remodeled, adding a new kitchen, restrooms, and an office. It is a welcome place for gatherings, meetings, reunions, and dinners. The Guild Hall opens its doors to the community for the church's annual Bazaar/Soup Luncheon in the fall and the Fat Tuesday Pancake Feed. Located behind the Guild Hall, a memorial

garden with rose bushes, a fountain, and benches offers a quiet place to sit, reflect, and remember. A preschool has used the hall basement for a number of years.

As it neared 100 years old, the stained glass windows (a planting scene, a harvesting of wheat scene, and a "Come Unto Me" scene) were replaced. In recent years the wood shingle roof has been replaced, the joints around the stone block walls re-mortared, the stone window sills repaired, and the interior wall re-plastered. During the 125th anniversary celebration a granite memory stone engraved with the names of pastors who have served at the church was dedicated. The memory stone is surrounded by bricks donated in memory of past and present church members. The church currently shares a pastor with another community. This small picturesque stone church two blocks north of the intersection of Hwy 24 and Hwy 283 in Hill City has served the community for 125 years and is ready for another 125 years.