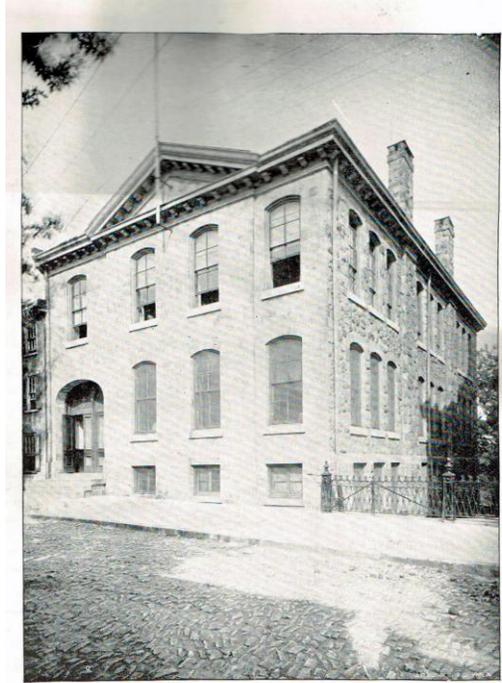


East Falls Past - History of Saint Bridget School

The Fallser, April 2012, by Ellen Sheehan

St. Bridget School was in the planning stages from the time the parish was formed in 1853. In that year, the parish purchased a house and lot that was situated next to a lot already in possession of the parish. In 1884, Rev. William Walsh Procured additional land on Stanton Street for the school. Instead of the usual wooden or brick structure, stone was quarried from the neighborhood, probably from Plush Hill. (Site of Schuylkill View Homes on Indian Queen Lane)

The cornerstone for the school was laid on October 15, 1887 and the school dedicated by Archbishop Patrick Ryan on September 8, 1888. The school had a seating capacity of 350 students. On opening day, the faculty consisted of eight Sisters of St. Joseph. In August 1924, the houses on Stanton St. adjoining the school were purchased by the parish. They were tone down in 1925 to provide a school yard.



SAINT BRIDGET'S SCHOOL
1888-1949

On December 18, 1928, the parish purchased a plot of ground extending from Stanton St. to Midvale Avenue for \$6,500.00.

By September, 1946, the original school was outgrown. With no money available, the only solution was “swing shift” part-time schedule. The third grade classes were held in the convent. On December 30, 1947, Cardinal Dougherty gave his permission for plans to be drawn up for a new school. The 60th and last class of 80 students, 36 boys and 44 girls, graduated from the “old” school on June 13, 1949. Enrollment was 779.

The new school, designed by Gleeson and Mulrooney, was to cost an astronomical \$414,000.00! There was only \$75,000.00 in the parish treasure and it was considered unthinkable to saddle the parish with this debt. The people of St. Bridget’s and East Falls wanted the new school and they pitched in to raise the money. With block parties and socials, carnivals and pledges, they began to pile up money. Charles and Benny Goldfine donated use of the Alden Theater along with the Lautenbach VFW Post for fund raisers. With two months to go in the campaign, the people of this community had raised \$111,174.01! To continue the support of the school the “School Debt Association” collected money by selling chances every Monday night door to door on every street in East Falls, well into the late 1950’s.

Tuesday, September 6, 1949, was opening day for St. Bridget's 800 students that year. The faculty had 15 members. There were six classrooms on each floor, an auditorium/gymnasium, library and offices. Every modern convenience was built into the building including a public address system, green boards, oak woodwork and no ink wells!