



## House of History

During this Christmas-season the House of History will feature some of the historic houses of worship in the Deer Lodge area. This week, because the feast of the Immaculate Conception is

December 8, the subject is the old Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, now St. Mary's Hall.

This was not the first Catholic church in Deer Lodge. At least as early as

1863 Father Giorda and other missionary priests had held services at John Grant's home, now the Grant-Kohrs ranch house. Father Remegius De-Ryckere, the first regular parish priest assigned to Montana, also did this for a while after his arrival in 1866. He then built a hewn log chapel near his cabin on Main St., probably between St. Mary's and Montana Avenues. This was the first church structure in Deer Lodge, and was dedicated on December 8, 1866.

On July 1, 1875, ground was broken for the new church, pictured here. The gothic style building is 28 by 60 feet, and is stone with granite corners, arches, and openings. Thomas Rowan was the master mason, Richard Barrey was the master carpenter, and they

had four helpers. The building cost about \$4000, without interior furnishings. Mr. McGuire did the interior plaster work. Because of storms, the dedication scheduled for March 14, 1876 had to be postponed until March 19, so the other participants could arrive. A stone parsonage was built at the same time, and in May a gold cross was mounted on the steeple, which rose to 70 feet. This building was replaced by the new church in 1912, but is still used for parish functions.

(This series is prepared as a public service by the Historic Buildings Committee of the Powell County Museum and Arts Foundation. Persons with photos or information about any older building in Powell County are encouraged to share them.)