

# St. Columban Catholic Church

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Location: 44084 Line 34, St. Columban, Ontario  
Year built: 1910

THE FIRST CHURCH and school built in McKillop Township were those at Irishtown between Seaforth and Dublin on the north side of the Huron Road. Rev. J.L. Wiriath was the first missionary priest in the area in 1833. From 1837 to 1842, Rev. Thomas Gibney of Guelph visited the mission periodically and preached in settler's homes.

The first church was a log building erected in about 1858. An imposing white brick structure was built in 1879 on the same site. It was described as being in the French Renaissance style of architecture with a 75' spire. It was considered one of the handsomest church edifices in the province, but, unfortunately, was destroyed in 1909 by a fire caused by lightning.



The Church and Presbytery as shown in Belden's 1879  
*Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Huron.*

A third church was built here, the present red brick church, in 1910-11. James S. Russell of Stratford was the architect. The new church was dedicated on May 25, 1911. When this church was built, the village was no longer called Irishtown. The name was changed to St. Columban some time in the 1880s, when a post office was established.

The parish of St. Columban Roman Catholic Church has struggled for the past eight years to keep its church open. The cost of repairs to the church is prohibitive. The church is slated for closure in June 2005.

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