



*St. Antoine/
St. Mary Parish*

The Cross Leads Generations On

THE CROSS LEADS GENERATIONS ON



A BICENTENNIAL RETROSPECT

*St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception
formerly known as St. Antoine at the
River Raisin
Monroe, Michigan*

1788-1988

*Compiled By
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and
Lynn Waybright Reaume*

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ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT
1234 WASHINGTON BLVD
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226

October 1, 1987

Dear Father Chabala,

I am pleased to learn that St. Mary's Parish in Monroe will be celebrating its 200th anniversary during 1988.

What is being planned for the anniversary of St. Mary's Parish is very much worthwhile. I know that it will be primarily an action of thanksgiving for abundant blessings received.

I welcome this opportunity to express to you and to the entire parish community my cordial good wishes and my personal congratulations on this memorable occasion.

St. Mary's Parish has much to be proud of. It has a tradition of strong faith, a vibrant parish spirit and evident joy in the things that lead us to God. May the blessings that have come to so many during this parish's service in the past be equally abundant in the years ahead.

I assure you and the parish community of a remembrance in all my Masses and prayers. Please pray for me.

With all best wishes, I am

Praternally yours in Christ,

+ Edmund C. Foka
Archbishop of Detroit

Reverend Brian J. Chabala
St. Mary's Parish
117 N. Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

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Dear Parishioners of Saint Mary's:

I am most happy to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the occasion of our parish's 200th anniversary. We are indeed fortunate to celebrate an anniversary like this - a moment in history which only a few other parish's have been able to commemorate to date.

The bi-centennial of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish is an occasion of singular importance. As we look back over our rich history, we can see God's Divine Spirit at work directing the labors of good people from the early pioneer days of the late eighteenth century right up to our current post-Vatican II era. I find it humbling, as you no doubt do as well, to realize that the mysteries of faith which we as a parish celebrate today, are the same that the first people of Saint Antoine a la Riviere aux Raisins chose to so dearly. Their efforts and sacrifices have given to us untold blessings!

As you travel back in time reading about our history in this commemorative book, you will become even more familiar with the generations of dedicated men, women and children who were truly the cornerstones of faith for all of us today. I do thank wholeheartedly all those who were involved in the monumental task of compiling this book. Through their love and interest in the history of Saint Mary's, the people of the Historical Committee of the Parish have made available to us a work of paramount importance and lasting significance.

During this year of jubilee, may our Blessed Lady under whose patronage we securely rest intercede through her Son for us. Confident in His love and guidance over the past 200 years, may we look bravely to the future. May 1968 truly be a year for our parish that will be marked by a renewed spirit of charity and a fervent faith. May the good Lord bless you and your family always. With every best wish, I am

Cordially yours in Christ Jesus,

(Rev.) Brian J. Chabala
Pastor

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Special Thanks:

To my faithful committee, which met for the first time in 1980 to plan St. Mary's Bicentennial History; especially to Lynn Waybright Reaume, who is our latest member and not only did all the genealogical research and contributed in many ways to the writing of this book, but also contributed her artistic talents, and was always available to listen and discuss;

To Al Gallan for his invaluable assistance in handling details; to Joyce Fleuelling, Marian Duvall and Bernice Liedel. My thanks, also to Terrence Bronson for advice on legal documents. I, also, want to recognize consultants, Dr. John J. Laboe, John Raymond, Ken Burkey, and Jeanne Micka;

To Everette Payette, who reproduced most of the pictures and shared the pictures he had in his fine collection; to Tom Gerweck, who took many pictures including the ones of the stained-glass windows;

To Fr. Gentner and Fr. Chabala for their encouragement and support and to the parishioners who loaned us pictures;

To my family, for their patience and particularly to my husband, Tony, for providing me with my new friend and enemy, the computer;

To my Belgian parents, who instilled in me a love of God and my Catholic faith, and to Sr. Rosalita, my teacher at Marygrove College, who taught me a love of history, research and writing.

Our gratitude to Custombook, Inc., of Tappan, N. Y. for helping us with the intricate mysteries of publishing.

Ghislaine M. Bartolo

This book contains several references to the genealogy of various families of the Monroe area. The references are based upon a thorough and exhaustive genealogical research.

The individuals mentioned were real. The information in the book is based upon any and all genealogical sources available to the author and contributing authors.

Any error or misstatement of fact is unintentional.

INTRODUCTION

Only one parish in our Archdiocese, St. Anne of Detroit, can claim to be older than our parish, St. Mary's of Monroe.

Ours is a many faceted history which begins in 1788 in a primitive land inhabited by Indians, and settled by a small group of French-Canadians to whom their Catholic religion meant a lot. They wanted a priest to witness the major events (baptism, marriage and death) in their otherwise simple lives.

The struggles encountered by the pioneer priests were unbelievable. Not only did they have to fight for survival, they also attempted in vain to build a more adequate place of worship. It was not until 1828 that this goal was accomplished. In 1845 the church of St. Antoine was rededicated to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception. Our parish reached stability and became prosperous around the turn of the century.

Documenting the early years of our history was fairly easy, because the minutes of the parish meetings during the trustee system have been preserved in our files. We also have complete baptism, wedding, and burial records dating back to 1794, and letters from the early Pastors.

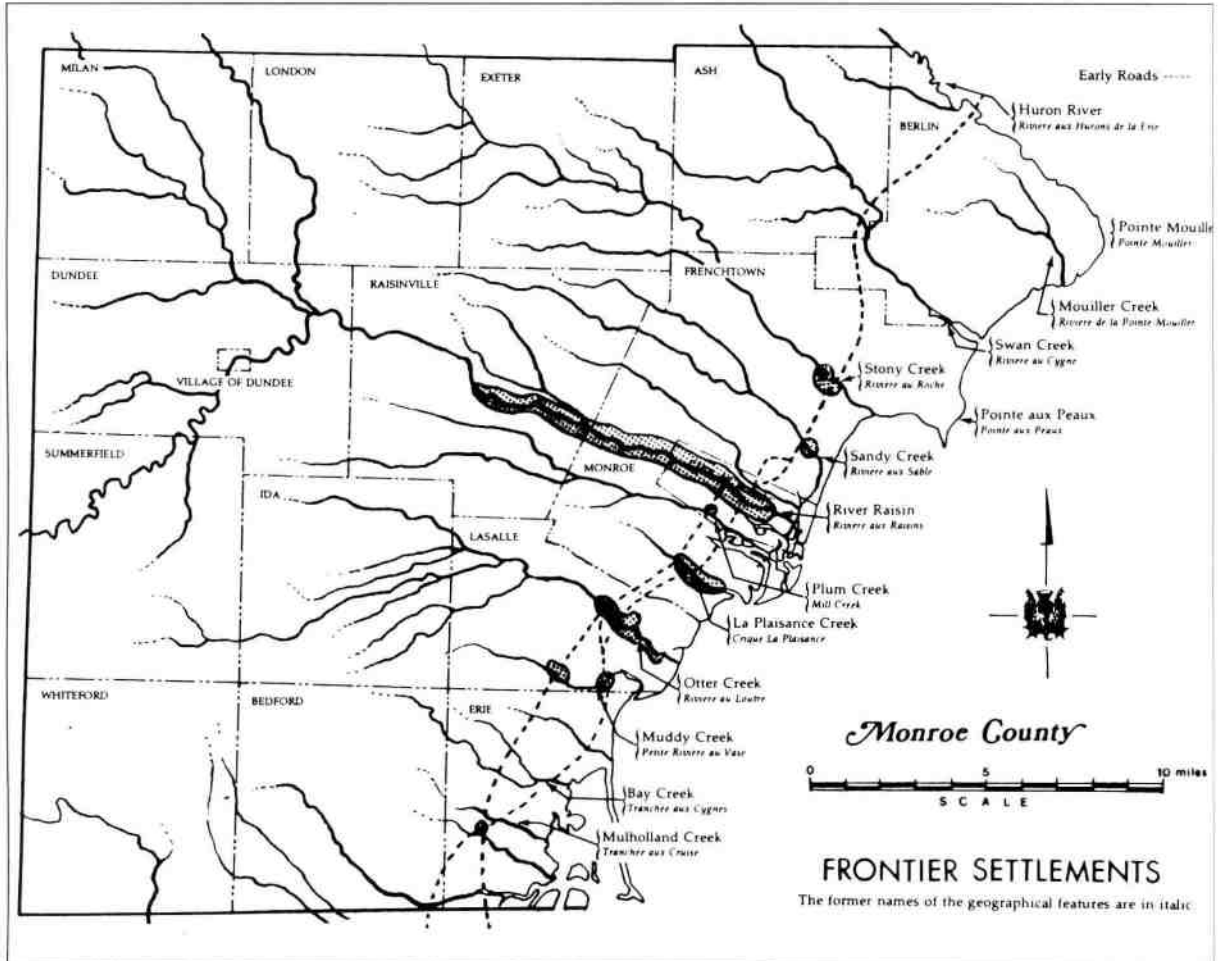
Fr. Camillus Maes wrote an article in 1888 about the Catholic Church in Monroe City and County. Professor Russell Bidlack in the 1960s wrote an extensive article on St. Antoine in an unpublished book about Monroe. Our own Father Gentner wrote a series of articles about our early parish in the 1972 Chronicles. Our local newspapers have also provided us with excellent, informative articles throughout the years. We especially want to recognize Karl Zeisler, who wrote an excellent series of articles in 1953.

This book, however, is the FIRST complete history of St. Mary's. It is condensed and incomplete: condensed because we had too much material about the early years to include it all, incomplete because there was not enough information available about our last 50 years.

We have attempted to select human interest stories, and what we felt were the most significant and most historically accurate events in the history of our parish.

The small parish which started in a humble cabin has had an immeasurable influence not only on the white settlers and on the Indians, but also on generations to come. It was the only place of worship in Monroe County for several years and has touched our entire community in many ways.

Two hundred years after its founding, St. Mary's is proud to say that "THE CROSS LEADS GENERATIONS ON" and will continue to follow this tradition.



Map of Frontier Settlement taken from Legacy of River Raisin.

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Settlement at the River Raisin

THE EARLY SETTLERS

As we celebrate St. Mary's 200th anniversary, we can be proud of its long and interesting history. It is a wonder how it survived the many trials and tribulations it experienced. The parish is the second oldest in continuous existence in the Northwest Territory, St. Anne of Detroit being the first. It is also the oldest church of any denomination in Monroe County.

It was organized on the 15th of October 1788 by Father Pierre Frechette, pastor of St. Anne, who called a meeting of all the "habitants" of the River Raisin. St. Anthony of Padua was unanimously selected as patron of the church on November 16, 1794 and the parish was called St. Antoine a la Riviere aux Raisins. It was not until 1845 that the church was rededicated to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception.

Before the French Canadian Catholics came to settle along the banks of the River Raisin in 1784, it had been a favorite camping ground of the aborigines, who called it Numma Sepe (Sturgeon River). The Ottawas camped on the southern banks while the gentle Pottawatomies occupied the Northern side. The settlement had been referred to as "La Riviere aux Raisins" as early as 1679 by Father Louis Hennepin, a Belgian priest who accompanied La Salle on the famous ship built by La Salle, the "Griffin" and who described the region as follows:

"We here behold one of the finest perspective views in the world...the whole region along and between the two lakes (Erie and Huron) is beautifully situated and is very productive. The banks of the River are extensive prairies, and are set off with hillocks and crowned with wild grape vines, fruit trees, and shrubbery."

Another description of the River Raisin Valley in 1701 by Father Hennepin tells us that the banks of the river abounded with wild life: deer, squirrels,

turkeys, pheasants, quail, partridge, woodcock and swan. "The geese, duck and pigeon were so abundant that to give an idea of their numbers I must use the expression of a savage, who I asked before arriving, if there is much game there: 'So much,' he replied, that they draw up in lines to let boats pass through.' "

Who were the early pioneers who were brave enough to settle in the wilderness among the Indian tribes? With few exceptions they were third or fourth generation French Canadians who had lived in or near Detroit. As hunters and traders (known as *coureurs de bois* and *voyageurs*) they had been familiar with the Raisin River country and with its wealth of furs, good fishing and rich soil. They had also gotten along well with the Indians, who seemed to appreciate their happy, carefree outlook on life. The French leader in Frenchtown, Francois (Francis) Navarre had been given a tract of land in 1785 by the Pottawatomi Indians and his friends and relatives obtained similar grants. They raised wheat, corn and potatoes, more than sufficient for their own consumption.

To quote Professor Bidlack: "The habitants of the River Raisin were a carefree lot, concerned with today rather than tomorrow or yesterday. Largely illiterate, and superstitious and clannish, they were poor in worldly goods and as lacking in ambition as their Indian neighbors. Their farms, measured in arpents (the Yankees called them French acres) were ribbon-shaped with narrow frontage on the river and extending two or three miles into the woods." (Actually they sometimes extended eight or nine miles). The river provided them plenty of fish and the woods abounded with wildlife. The river was their highway in all seasons and they loved to race their shaggy ponies on the ice during the winter months.

These early settlers were all Roman Catholic and although they were not always particularly devout, having a priest in their midst to minister to their needs was a matter of great concern to them.

RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF THE FRENCH
SETTLERS

We are indebted to Mr. John Austerberry, of the Monroe Evening News for the fine article entitled "Christmas on the River Raisin, 200 years ago" (December 24, 1984 issue):

"Founded earlier in the year by rugged French Canadian traders, the River Raisin settlement was a sparsely populated outpost at Christmas-time, 1784...

The fledgling community, which eventually became Monroe, consisted of about 20 persons—the voyageurs, the "coureurs du bois," overland traders whose French name translates to "woods rovers"—traded goods with the local Indians for furs and then transported the pelts to Montreal.

According to Dennis Au, assistant director of the Monroe County Historical Museum, those first few who chose to spend the winter here probably lived in post houses, crude dwellings built of four corner posts sunk in the ground with boards nailed to the posts to form walls.

How these "hiverants," or winterers, spent their first Christmas season along the River Raisin is not known for certain. No record of that holiday here is known to Mr. Au.

But based on the traditions of the French Canadians, he is able to draw a picture of how the hiverants may have observed Christmas.

As devout Catholics, the French Canadian settlers probably would have traveled to Detroit, to attend midnight Mass at St. Anne's church. Still an active parish in Detroit, St. Anne's was the only Catholic church there in 1784, Mr. Au said.

Christmas, which was not observed by the colonial English Protestants, was an important religious holiday for the French Canadian Catholics. And the midnight Mass was its central focus. The holiday meal and what few gifts were exchanged were quite modest by today's standards.

The trek to Detroit, however, was a rather festive affair. The settlers, bundled against the cold, would

clamber into horse-drawn sleighs and travel on frozen Lake Erie, following the shoreline. And along the way the trip undoubtedly would turn into a good-natured, but spirited race.

The men and women would wear their finest clothes for the trip to Detroit and their attendance at church. The men probably would be dressed in linen knee-length pants, high wool socks held up with garters, and waistcoats over shirts and vests. Over this they would wear heavy, hooded wool blanket coats in gray or red tied at the waist with sashes. Their feet would be clad in European-style leather boots, probably made in Montreal.

The women would wear full-length, high-collared dresses of red or indigo blue. They, too, would wear European-style leather boots. Their outer garments probably were heavy capes in red or gray.

They would bring along bonnets to wear during the church service, but probably would wear warm fur hats for the sleigh ride. The men might wear stocking caps and both probably wore bearskin gloves.

Arriving in Detroit, the settlers would gather at St. Anne's with friends and perhaps some family members.

The Christmas Mass would begin with the "procession of the infant Jesus." In this ceremony the priest would appear at the rear of the nave holding a doll representing the infant Jesus. He then would proceed up the center aisle and lay the doll in a creche set up on the altar.

After the service, the River Raisin settlers probably would go to the Detroit home of family or friends and have a holiday meal called the Reveillon.

The main course would be a tourtiere, a meat pie made with pork, potatoes and onions; a dish still served during the holidays in the Monroe homes of some French descendants, Mr. Au said.

For dessert, the settlers would have a log-shaped cake called a "buche de Noel," which means, simply, Christmas log.

At the end of the meal, a large log, called a Yule log, would be placed on the fire by the head of the

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house. This act would be accompanied by a prayer that translates roughly; "If you can't give us more happiness than you have in the past year, please don't give us any less."

The Yule log would not be allowed to burn completely, however. The remaining portion would be pulled from the fire and saved in case of danger in the coming year. The tradition held that if danger approached and the rest of the Yule log were burned, it would give protection.

During the evening, those gathered might sing Christmas carols like "D'ou viens-tu, bergere?" or, "Whence, O, Shepherd Maiden?" In this song a shepherd girl is asked what she saw in the stable the night Jesus was born.

While centering on the religious aspects of the holiday, Christmas for the settlers was not without some sweet mystery for the children.

The youngsters were told that if they left their wooden shoes out when they went to bed, the infant Jesus would fill them with treats. The French Canadians, like many Europeans of the day, wore wooden shoes for working.

The children also were told that at midnight on Christmas the stable animals could speak. And if the children could hear them, they were told, the animals would be talking about the birth of Jesus.

To the French Canadian settlers, the New Year's holiday was closer to the modern celebration of Christmas.

New Year's Eve would set off a round of weekly parties that would continue until Mardi Gras, which marks the beginning of Lent. Even in the tiny River Raisin settlement, each week would bring a party at a different home during this period.

New Year's Eve the young men of the community would dress in outlandish costumes and go from house to house collecting food for the poor. On entering the house the band would sing a lively carol entitled "La Guillannee."

In the song the band would ask the master and mistress of the house for a bit of food. But should

they have nothing to give, the young men would settle for their daughter.

But it was New Year's Day that was the most festive holiday of the year. Then, if at all possible, grown children would gather at their parents' house to share the day and a holiday meal.

Despite the rugged conditions and relative isolation of the River Raisin area in 1784, the settlers-like most French Canadians-were probably a warm and gregarious lot for whom the winter holidays meant much."

In addition to this excellent description of some of the religious customs of the early French settlers, we came across several other traditions. On New Year's morning every child knelt to receive its parents' blessing, and even when married would hasten with their spouse and little ones to receive this coveted blessing. The children on this day visited all their relations.

Another tradition was a gathering on Mardi Gras, or Shrove Tuesday called "Vive les Crepes," or "Long Live the Pancakes." (St. Charles Parish—An Historical Review, p.13.) Merry crowds would gather at someone's home and repair to the kitchen, where each would try his hand at turning pancakes. It was done in this way: each in turn would be given the long-handled skillet, with enough pancake-batter in it to cover the bottom. The trick was to flip the pancake high into the air when it was done on one side, catching it as it fell into the skillet in such a way as not to spoil the original shape before the pancake was tossed in the air. There was much merriment at the expense of those who failed to perform their part successfully, and each one enjoyed himself immensely. All the pancakes made were piled high on a dish with maple-sugar and butter placed between each one, and formed the principal dish at the supper which followed. Dancing followed the supper, with all the guests departing at the stroke of twelve, since the holy season of Lent had just begun.

The festivities of a wedding lasted for several days (Wing: History of Monroe County p.44). The marriage bans were published for three successive Sundays in church and formed the all-absorbing topic of conversation. Marriage was then a serious

undertaking. Divorces were unknown. At the betrothal the marriage contract was signed by both parties, their relations and friends... As soon as the marriage ceremony was over each one got into his cariote, calash or cart, according to the season, and headed by the newly wedded pair, formed a procession, and passed along the principal streets, then racing, if roads were suitable. Dancing and the great supper took place at the home of the bride. The bride opened the ball with the most distinguished guest.

A religious tradition being revived in French Canada is the distribution of "Pains Benis" or small pieces of blessed bread. The bread was supplied by each family of the parish in turns, the "cousins" (a kind of small cake) being added on feast days; five loaves of bread and twenty-five "cousins" was the number used on great occasions, like Corpus Christi, Easter, or Christmas. The bread was distributed by one of the ladies of the congregation and she was followed by the beadle bearing in a basket the small pieces of the cut bread. His dress consisted of a long blue coat, edged in red, three little capes, something like the coachman's cape... each little ruffle bound in gold. The lady thus honored was expected to take up the collection and was called the "queteuse," acknowledging each offering by a sweeping curtsy.

This custom of blessing the bread and eating it in church commemorated the "agapes" (love feasts) of the early Christians, and was also a symbol of the peace and unity that should reign among people that were members of the same family.

Last but not least we must mention our early French settlers' dependence on the muskrat for their diet. As Catholics they were expected to eat fish at least once a week on Fridays, and much more often during Lent. Since the muskrat spent most of its time in the water, it was argued whether it was fish or flesh! During the war of 1812 our area had been devastated, food supplies were scarce, even fish was sometimes unavailable because of frozen rivers and lakes.

Even though there is no record of a formal Church dispensation, folk belief, according to Dennis Au, of the Monroe Historical Museum, maintains that at one time the "habitants" were permitted to eat

muskrat on Fridays. Up to recent times, it was a matter of conscience whether one could eat muskrat on Fridays, depending on whether one believed it was fish or flesh!

COPY OF THE VERBAL PROCESS OF THE PARISH ASSEMBLY OF THE SETTLEMENT OF THE RIVER RAISIN, October 15, 1788 *

We, before Porlier Benac, circuit justice of the peace, and in the presence of Fr. Frechette, priest and Curé of the parish of St. Anne of Detroit, assembled today to fulfill the wishes of Milord the Bishop who desires the new settlement of the River Raisin to reach an agreement and chose a place where, in due time and at his pleasure, he may assign a Curé in accordance with the desire of the residents; that is why, by common agreement we have chosen from the land of Mr. Mommini Sr. the most suitable location, and have purchased one arpent and two perches of land of the aforesaid Mr. Mommini for a price of 400 francs, and also a half-arpent which Mr. Joseph Hyvon freely donated to provide a truly imposing monument, which all amounts to two and a half arpents plus two perches, which will furnish room for the church, rectory, etc., and this land will belong in perpetuity to the Curé and his successors, but without power of mortgaging or diminishing it in any way. And we flatter ourselves that the Bishop will take under consideration this new establishment which has no other idea than to remain in a religion which should bring us happiness. As a group, and also as individuals, we are all bound to exert our efforts to fulfill such longed-for desires. That is why we are going to work with all our power to begin with a rectory which, with the help of the Lord, will serve as a chapel awaiting the time when our resources will be sufficient to build a church at the orders of the Curé who will be sent to us, and begging that from time to time, as the seasons permit, Father Frechette will visit us and honor us with the Sacraments, of which we shall try to be worthy, and we promise to forward the tithe to him at whatever station he pleases, to be at his disposal, and we hope that the Bishop will approve our dispositions by helping us to know and share in the graces and indulgences which he has the right to extend to true servants of the Lord. For that reason we place this document in the hands of Fr. Frechette who encourages us by the zeal which has lead him to come and visit us.

We have all signed or made our marks today, October 15, 1788.

The following signed with their own hand: Jacques Gagnier, Charles Reaume, Porlier Benac, Louis Gaillard, Joseph Bourdeaux, the chevalier of Chabert, Joseph L'enfant Sr., Joseph L'enfant Jr., Joseph Pouget, Cicot.

Signed with their mark: Amable Belair, Jean Dubreuil, Baptiste Tailland, Louis LeDuc, Louis Devaux, Benjamin Mavar, Gabriel Godefroy, Baptiste Drouyard, Jean Louis LaJeunesse, Louis Susor, Francois Soudriet, Baptiste Couture Sr., Pierre Tessier, Antoine Campeau, Joseph Mommini, Baptiste Couture Jr., Joseph Drouyard, Francois Thibault, Francois Gendron, Nicolas Drouyard, Baptiste Montbain, Joseph Bien, Baptiste Lapointe, Jacques Prudhomme, Jean Baptiste Bissonnet, Joseph Bissonnet, Chrisostome St. Louis Villers, Pierre Fournier, Jean Francois Dussault, Basile Couzinault, Gabriel Bissonnet, Alexandre Fovel, Etienne Jacob, Francois Labau, Amable Maloux Jr., Joseph Hyvon.

This conforms with the signed original. Dilhet, Curé

(Signatures:) Etienne Dubois, J.O. Hiraque, Hyacinthe Lajoie, Francois Deloeuil, Antoine Roberre.

* Copy of first application for a priest.

We have all signed or placed our marks. October 15, 1788

The following have signed with their own hand...

JACQUES GAGNIER (Gaynier, Gonyea, Gagne) Son of Jacques (also known as "James") b. 04 Sep 1748 St. Thomas, Province Quebec (P.Q.); married Marie Josephine Larcheveque (1748-1816), came to River Raisin about 1786 from Detroit. He died 11 Jan 1803, aged 60 years here.

CHARLES REAUME (Rheume) Son of Hyacinthe, b. 04 Feb 1743 Detroit, marr Angelique Beauchamp, resided at Assumption parish (Windsor) where he was an interpreter among the Indian tribes. His brother Jean Baptiste Reaume came to the River Raisin a few years later and settled.

PORLIER BENAC (Joseph Etienne Porlier dit Banalque) Son of Claude Cyprien, was a justice of the peace and fur trapper, b. 09 Feb 1730 Montreal, P.Q. Married first Louise Michelle Gamelin (1734-ca 1769) and secondly "an Indian woman." He was buried here 21 Nov 1810.

LOUIS GAILLARD Son of Louis, b. 25 Aug 1782 Assumption (Windsor) and buried here 09 Mar 1822.

JOSEPH BOURDEAUX (Joseph-Bourdeaux dit L'Isle Ronde) Son of Joseph, b. 22 Mar 1763 South Coast of Detroit (Sandwich). Marr 1792 Detroit Agatha Reaume (1774-1826) and died here 24 May 1813.

LE CHEVALIER DE CHABERT (Francois de Joncaire de Chabert) Son of Danil b. 1757 Canada, marr 1780 Detroit to Marie Josephine Chene (1762-). He resided in Detroit for his lifetime, buried there 24 Nov 1813.

JOSEPH L'ENFANT, PERE (Joseph L'Enfant dit St. Joseph) Son of George, b. Champagne, France. Served in the military there and was transferred to Canada where he marr Francois (Frances) Tessier (1736-1812) in 1757. A wigmaker by trade; he was buried 24 Apr 1810 here, 96 years old.

JOSEPH L'ENFANT, FILS Son of Joseph, marr 1807 Detroit to Louise Reaume (1769-).

JOSEPH POUGET (Poujet) Son of Joseph Gabriel, b. 29 Jan 1760 Detroit, marr 1786 Assumption (Windsor) Josette Bissonnet (1768-1830). He died before 1830.

CICOT (Jean Baptiste Cicotte) Son of Zacharias, b. 20 Jun 1749 Detroit and marr there 1770 Angelique Poupard (1753-1812). He resided in Detroit, buried there 15 Nov 1822. His son Jean Baptiste settled at the River Raisin.

AMABLE BELAIR (Bellair, Amable Chulle dit Bellair) Son of Jean Pierre, b. 1759 and marr 1796 here to Marie Louise Audet dit Lapointe (1780-). He was buried 14 Nov 1821 at Detroit.

JEAN DUBREUIL (Dubry, Dube, Dubay) Son of Joseph, b. 1726 and marr 1758 Detroit to Catherine Drouillard (1737-1771). He was buried 31 May 1807 at 92 years, here.

BAPTISTE TAILLAND Born 1743, marr 1800 here to Agatha Amable Prudhomme (1752-), widow of Louis Jean Montmeny (Mominie). They resided at Otter Creek in Monroe county; he died 24 Jan 1810 here.

LOUIS LeDUC (LaDuke) Son of Rene, b. Montreal, P.Q. and marr 1802 Detroit to Cecelia Descompts dit Labadie (1778-).

Also Louis Leduc dit Persil b. 1759 son of Francois who marr 1788 Cecilia Huyet dit Champagne (1770-) has ties to Monroe county. His line often used the "Percil" (Percy) dit name.

JOSEPH LeDUC (LaDuke) Son of Francois, b.1763 Detroit.

LOUIS DEVAUX Born 1741, marr Marguerite Gravel, and was buried 08 Dec 1804 at age 69 years, here.

"BENJAMIN MAVAR" probably Col. Francois "Ceyamani" NAVARRE, Son of Robert b. 12 Oct 1763 at Assumption (Windsor) and marr 1790 Detroit to Marie Suzor (1772-1826). He was the first white settler along the banks of the River Raisin; buried 03 Sep 1826 here. Also present at the River Raisin a few years later were his uncles Francois Marie Navarre dit Utreau and Jean Marie Alexis Navarre, and brothers Robert, Jacques (James), Isidore, Pierre (Peter).

GABRIEL GODEFROY (Godfroy) Son of Jacques (James), b. 10 Nov 1758 Detroit and marr Marie Catherine Couture (1766-1794) 1781 in Detroit. In 1795 he married Marie Therese Bondy (1774-1814), and marr a third time in 1817 to Monique Campeau (1798-). He was buried 02 Sep 1833 in Detroit and his son Gabriel helped ransom prisoners during the War of 1812 at the River Raisin.

BAPTISTE DROUYARD (Jean Baptiste Drouillard, Druyard, Drevior) Son of Jean Baptiste (who died in January 1788 at the River Raisin and had to be transported to Detroit for his burial), b. 1755 Cote demisere (near Sandwich), marr 1780 Assumption Marie Charlotte Drouin (1762-before 1809). He married in 1809 here by magistrate Israel Rutland Elisabeth Gagnier (1783-1812) which was ratified by the Church in 1810. They resided at Otter Creek.

JEAN LOUIS LaJEUNESSE (Lajiness, Laginess, Lizyness; Jean Louis Revau dit Lajeunesse) Son of Claude, from Dauphine, France, marr 1750 Detroit to Marie Josephine Guignard dit St. Etienne (1731-1792). He was buried here in 12 Dec 1800, aged 80 years.

LOUIS SUSOR (Suzor) Son of Francois b. 06 Jul 1738 St. Thomas Province Quebec, married 1766 at Assumption Marie Josephine Le Beau (1753-). He was buried 12 May 1806.

FRANCOIS SOUDRIET (Sordelier, Sordillet) Son of Joseph, b. circa 1724 and marr 1769 Lachine, P.Q. to Marie Jeanne (Jane) Gendron (1744-1785) and was buried 06 Dec 1820, about 96 years, here.

BAPTISTE COUTURE, PERE (Jean Baptiste; Coutcher, Cutcher) Son of Jean Baptiste, b. 18 Nov 1735 Beaumont, P.Q. and marr Catherine Campeau 1762 Detroit (1742-1807). He was buried 22 Apr 1799, 60 years old.

PIERRE TESSIER (Peter, Texier) Son of Pierre, b. 11 Dec 1747 at St. Michel d'Yamaska, P.Q. and marr 1790 Detroit to Barbe (Barbara) Magdeleine McDonald. He was buried here 15 Oct 1801.

ANTOINE CAMPEAU (Anthony, Compeau, Campau) Son of Antoine, b. 14 Aug 1754 and marr 1785 Detroit to Angelique L'Enfant (). He was buried here 05 June 1824.

JOSEPH MOMINI (Joseph Louis; Montmeny, Maumeni, Momeny) Son of Louis Jean, b. 31 Dec 1768 Assumption (Windsor), marr here 1798 Marguerite (Margaret) Gagnier (1780-). His father was also present early on the River Raisin.

BAPTISTE COUTURE, FILS (Jean Baptiste; Coutcher, Cutcher) Son of Jean Baptiste Senior, b. 31 Jan 1764 Southwest Coast of Detroit, marr 1786 Detroit to Catherine L'Enfant (). He

died 22 Jan 1813 with "the body removed 25 Aug 1823 to St. Antoine of the River Raisin."

JOSEPH DROUYARD (Drouillard, Drewior) Son of Jean Baptiste, b. 08 Mar. 1762 South Coast of Detroit. (Sandwich) and marr 1789 Detroit to Agatha Montmeny (Mominie) (1770—).

FRANCOIS THIBAUT

FRANCOIS GENDRON (Jendron, Jondro) Son of Jean Francois, marr Marie Therese Lepage dit St. Amant (1756-1796) at Assumption (Windsor).

NICOLAS DROUYARD (Drouillard, Drewior) Son of Jean Baptiste, b. 21 Dec 1759 South Coast of Detroit (Sandwich) marr 1794 Detroit to Marie Louise Montmeny (Momenie) (1778—). He was buried here 10 Aug 1805.

BAPTISTE MONTBAIN

JOSEPH BIEN (Jobin, Jobain) Son of Louis Francois, b. 1763 and marr 1784 Detroit to Marguerite (Margaret) Levry dit Martin (1767—). He died 28 Sep 1829 and was an early trustee at St. Antoine.

BAPTISTE LAPOINTE (Jean Baptiste Audet dit LaPointe) Son of Joseph, b. 31 Aug 1738 Isle Orleans, Province Quebec, marr 1773 Assumption (Windsor) to Marie Catherine Gouyou (Gouin) (1757—). He died 06 Nov 1812, buried here.

JACQUES PRUDHOMME (James; Prudum) Son of Francois Xavier, b. 1759 and marr 1787 Assumption (Windsor) to Marie Gouyou (Gouin) (1769-1848). He was buried 30 May 1813 at Assumption.

JEAN BAPTISTE BISSONNET Possibly Son of Etienne (Stephen) b. Sep 1758 Soulanges.

JOSEPH BISSONNET (Bissonnette) Son of Etienne (Stephen) b. 01 Jun 1764 Montreal, P.Q. and marr 1793 Detroit Agnes Robert (1778-).

CHYSOSTOME ST. LOUIS VILLERS (Villair; Jean Chrysostome Villers dit St. Louis) Son of Louis, b. 05 Jun 1762 Assumption (Windsor), marr there in 1785 to Josette Suzor (1770-1815). He died here 01 June 1822.

PIERRE FOURER (Peter; Fournier) Son of Charles, b. 01 Sep 1734 St. Thomas P.Q., marr there 1754 Francoise (Frances) Robin (1734-).

or Pierre FOUCRAU Son of Andre, b. 21 Mar 1753 Chambly P.Q. marr 1782 Assumption (Windsor) Elisabeth Revau dit Lajeunesse (-1802), marr secondly 1812 here Angelique Berthiaume (-1814) widow of Francois Valiquet. He was buried here 11 Oct 1819.

JEAN FRANCOIS DUSSAULT (John Francis, Dusseau, Dussaut; Toupin dit Dussault) Son of Louis Joseph, b. South Coast of Detroit (Sandwich) 11 Aug 1762. Marr Marie Jeanne Rau (1769-1804) in 1783 at Assumption. Married secondly here 1805 to Marie Francoise (Frances) D'Avignon dit Beaugard, widow of Louis Basile Cousineau. He died in Detroit while on business and was buried there 02 Dec 1811.

BASILE COUSINAULT (Louis Basile; Cousineau, Cousino) Son of Jacques (James) Marie, b. 1744 Isle Jesus P.Q. and marr 1780 Detroit to Marie Francoise (Frances) D'Avignon dit Beaugard. He was a wagonmaker; was buried 10 Sep 1804.

GABRIEL BISSONNET (Bissonnette) Son of Etienne (Stephen), b. Assumption (Windsor) 04 Apr 1773, a twin. Marr 1793 Detroit to Julie Bourdeaux (1774-1834) and was a brother to other petitioners Jean (John) and Joseph. Gabriel was buried 20 May 1795 here.

ALEXANDRE FAVEL (Alexis; Fauvel, Fovel, Bigras dit Fauvel) Son of Joseph Amable b. 06 Feb 1758 South Coast of Detroit (Sandwich) and marr 1786 Assumption (Windsor) Marie Josette Cloutier (1763-). He resided and was buried at Assumption.

ETIENNE JACOB (Stephen, Jacobs) Son of Joseph, b. 13 Dec 1736 L'Ange Gardien, P.Q. and marr 1769 Assumption (Windsor) to Magdeleine Godet dit Marentette (1753-1821). He was buried 08 Oct 1801 here.

FRANCOIS LABAU (Francis; LaBeau, LaBoe, Lebeau) Possibly Rene LaBau, son of Francois b 20 Sep 1754 South Coast of Detroit (Sandwich), marr 1789 Detroit Elisabeth Drouillard (1759-1804). He was buried 21 Jan 1813 here.

AMABLE MALOUX, FILS (Malloux, Maillou) Resided Detroit.

JOSEPH HYVON (Ivon, Hivon, Yvon, Evoc) Son of Joseph, b. 10 Apr 1754 Ste. Anne de la Perade, Lower Canada (P.Q.). He marr 1783 Assumption (Windsor) to Marguerite (Margaret) Sordelier (1766-1838). He donated land for the first church; resided for a time at Sandusky OH, and died 29 Apr 1843, age 91 years.

Signatures on Dilhet copy:

ETIENNE DUBOIS (Pere or Fils) Son of Alexis 1745- , marr to Marie Charlotte Lacelle (1741-1819). Or son Etienne d. 1830 Detroit, marr to Marguerite Descompts dit Labadie (1773-1820), secondly to Susanne Facer (1784-).

J.O. HIRAQUE

HYACINTHE LAJOIE (Bernard dit Lajoie) Son of Louis, 1773- , marr Marie Amable Sanscrainte (1784-1804) and Marie Archange Villers dit St. Louis (1787-).

FRANCOIS DELOEVIL

ANTOINE ROBERRE (Anthony, Robert) Son of Antoine 1747-1829, marr Therese Drouillard (1758-1796).

The above signatures were witnesses to the Dilhet copy. (Reference: Fr. Christian Denissen.)

Many of the original signers of the petition did not reside at the River Raisin, but within a few years their brothers or sons did. Perhaps at that time they were considering settling here. Many of these surnames are visible in Monroe County today, though in different parts of the county, for both before and after the War of 1812 the French branched out to the north and south of the county. Some went to Swan Creek (Riviere aux Cygnes) in now Berlin township, as with the LeDuc (LaDuke) and the LaBau (Labeau/Laboe) families. Others settled along Otter Creek (Riviere aux Loutres) and to Erie (La Baie, the bay) such as Gasnier (Gagnier, Gaynier), Drouyard (Drouillard), Montmeny/Maumenie, (Mominie, Mominy), Lapointe

(LaPointe), Dussault (Dusseau), Cousineau (Cousino) and Jacob (Jacobs). Other Monroe (French Town) names include Navarre, Bourdeau, Reaume. The list of the petitioners fails however to recognize the many other early French-Canadian families who came to join their friends and families along the River Raisin for several generations to come.

THE EARLY PARISH REGISTERS 1794-1908

Our parish has in its possession sets of baptism, marriage and burial registers that would be worthy of a detailed history in themselves. They have been an invaluable source of information for us. Before the arrival of Fr. Burke, our first Pastor, records were kept at St. Anne in Detroit. The early records were kept in French and some were translated (actually extracted) by one of our assistants, Fr. Ralph Vigneau. Fr. Samuel Smith made the first entry in English and records were kept in Latin during the Redemptorist era up to more recent times.

The second book of baptisms was also used to keep detailed minutes of parish meetings and business transactions held between January 1799 to 1833.

The registers were an excellent way of accounting for the early priests who came and went out of our parish. The preliminary remarks made by Fr. Dilhet give us so much information on the extent of the parish and on the early settlers, including the Indian tribes, that I feel it is worth quoting almost in its entirety:

"The parish of St. Antoine a la Riviere aux Raisins includes the settlements on the River Raisin, on Otter River (riviere aux loutres), on Sandy River (riviere au sable), on South Huron River, on the little Sandusky Lake, the settlements of both the small and the large village of Sandusky (Ohio), at Aux Glaises (creek near Clay Junction, Wood County, Ohio), at Fort Wayne (Indiana), Miami (Maumee, Ohio), North Huron River (New Boston), at the village of the Hurons, at Grosse Roche (Flat Rock), at Monguagon (Trenton), at the Ecorse River, at St. Joseph (Mi.), etc.

In a word, it extends on the north to the Ecorse River exclusively, on the south to the Illinois,

Kaokias, at the post of Vincennes, on the east to Lake Erie, and to the west it has no limits at all.

It embraces inhabitants of several nations, civilized and savage. The citizens of the United States are either French, Canadians, Americans, English, Irish, or Scotch; the savages are Hurons, Ottawas, Pottawatomis, Sauteux, Chouanous, Wolves, Foxes, etc.

Among all these nationalities, many have received baptism, especially those who are of a civilized nation by birth or origin, and the Hurons among the savages. But they are not all catholics; they belong to the Church by baptism, but by their belief they belong to different heretical sects, such as Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Quakers. Because they have no ministers of their sect in this country, they mostly live in the greatest kind of indifference in matters of religion; and if they are attached to any kind of principles, it is to tolerance, deism, more rarely to incredulity, impiety, and atheism.

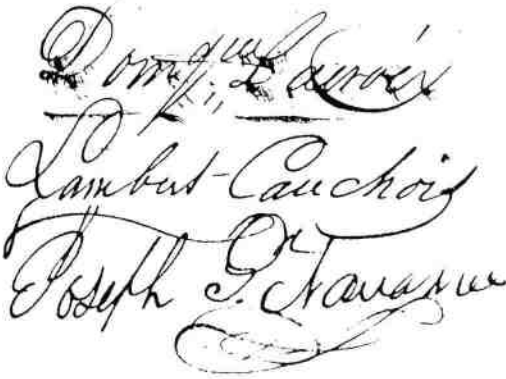
The Hurons, many of whom have received Baptism and been raised in the Catholic religion by the old Jesuit missionaries, fall into three classes. Some, even among the chiefs, want to have the missionaries and to practice the Catholic religion. Others, especially the youth, are indifferent in this regard. But some have been prejudiced against the Catholic missionaries by the foolish ideas of the Anglicans and other sects. The other savage nations are less well disposed towards the Gospel. The Pottawatomis, Ottawas, and Chouanous have retained from the old missionaries some idea of Baptism and a great respect for the priests whom they call Fathers. But their addiction to the most intoxicating and foul liquors places a great, perhaps insurmountable obstacle to the progress of the Gospel among them. Their association with civilized nations has made them lose all love for work and hunting; particularly because gifts are distributed to them, they no longer have the same independence, the same love of country; but they do keep the same attachment to their superstitions, and although they do believe in the Master of Life, they pray for the necessities of life and at the time of death only to the Manitous of the lower order, in accordance with the exhortations and practices of their jugglers and magicians whom they regard as their doctors. . ."

mil. Les vingt-six avril mil huit cent vingt-cinq, toutes formalités
— civiles et canoniques dûment observées, nous soussigné avons donné
à la Bénédiction nuptiale à Antoine St Cosme, fils majeur de feu
— glais, amable St Cosme et de Geneviève Bourdeau, et à Marie Langlois,
— fille majeure d'Ambroise Langlois et de Susanne Soudriet, toutes
deux originaires et domiciliés de notre paroisse; et ce en présence de
— Jouis La Selle, Étienne Robert, Ambroise Langlois, père et plusieurs
— autres.



Collection of signatures
from early registers.

Document signed by J. Bellamy Curé on April 26, 1825.



Sept. Theod. Badin
V. G. de Bardstown &c



Top Left: Dominique Lacroix, Lambert Cauchois and Joseph Navarre
Top Right: Steph. Theod. Badin, V.G. De Bardstown.
Bottom Right: Gabriel Richard Ptre (Priest).

J'ai vu & approuvé l'acte cy
joint ce seize Novembre mil
sept cent quatre vingt quatorze
Edmund Burke Vicar
General du Haut Canada

Document signed by Edmund Burke, Vicar General of Canada on Nov. 16, 1794.

Fr. Bella
Zoe Nav
Navarre
Lorange
ber 22
Peltier;g
was pres



Double W
9, 1795 a
Reaume,
the late J
Campeau
Without f
blessing
B. Lassel



Fr. Bellamy's beautiful penmanship.

Zoe Navarre, born March 25, 1824, of the valid marriage of Robert Navarre and Monica Duchene, conditionally baptized by Alexis Loranger, received the additional ceremonies of Baptism on November 22 of the same year. Witnessed by us, Godfather Ezechiel Peltier; godmother Monique Navarre did not sign. The child's mother was present. E. A. Peltier; J. Bellamy, Pastor.

le vingt-cinq Mars mil huit cent vingt quatre
 en la paroisse de St. Antoine de la ville de Montreal
 a été célébré le mariage de Robert Navarre et de Monique Duchene
 avec la supplémentation des cérémonies
 de Baptême le vingt deux Novembre mil huit cent vingt quatre
 Ezechiel Peltier sousigné; marraine Monique
 Navarre. La mère de l'enfant étoit présente.
 E. A. Peltier
 J. Bellamy

le neuvième février mil sept cent quatre vingt
 quinze après la publication de trois bans
 faite aux prières de la messe paroissiale
 par trois dimanches consécutifs entre Joseph
 Reaume fils de Jean Baptiste Reaume
 Agathe Barrois d'une part, et Genevieve
 Susor fille de Louis Susor et de Defunte
 Joseph LeBeau d'autre part et en vertu
 de Medard Couture fils de Jean Baptiste Couture
 et de Catherine Campeau d'une part
 et de Marie Magdeleine Susor fille de
 Louis Susor et de Defunte Joseph LeBeau
 d'autre part, sans qu'il soit trouvé d'obstacle
 je sousigné ai obtenu leur consentement mutuel
 de mariage, et leur ai donné la Bénédiction
 nuptiale en présence de Jean Baptiste Reaume
 Jean Baptiste Couture, Jean Baptiste Lasselle
 et plusieurs autres.
 Signés J. B. Lasselle
 F. Baby, Edmund Burke

1794
 13^{me}
 1794
 13^{me}
 Extrait
 Le six Décembre mil sept cent quatre
 vingt quatre je sousigné ai baptisé en
 Jean Baptiste fils légitime de Francois Valliquet
 et d'Angelique Bertiaume née le treize
 Septembre mil sept cent trente deux
 cette cérémonie a été célébrée en la
 paroisse de St. Antoine de la ville de
 Montreal en vertu de son consentement
 de son père et de sa mère.
 Signés Edmund Burke, V. G.

First Baptism - December 6, 1794 - I the undersigned have baptized Jean Baptiste, legitimate son of Francois Valliquet and of Angelique Bertiaume, born September 13. The godfather was Baptiste Reaume and the godmother Catherine Lamot who have declared not being able to sign the register. Signed Edmund Burke, V. G. (Vicar General).

Double Wedding. First recorded wedding happens to be a double wedding of the daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Susor. February 9, 1795 after the publication of three banns made during the parochial Mass for three consecutive Sundays, between Joseph Reaume, son of Jean Baptiste Reaume and Agatha Barrois on the one hand, and Genevieve Susor, daughter of Louis Susor and the late Josephe LeBeau on the other hand, and also between Medard Couture, son of Jean Baptiste Couture, and Catherine Campeau on the one hand, and Marie Magdeleine Susor, daughter of Louis Susor and the late Josephe LeBeau on the other hand. Without finding any obstacle I, the undersigned, have received their mutual consent of marriage, and have given them the nuptial blessing in the presence of Jean Baptiste Reaume, Jean Baptiste Couture, Jean Baptiste Lasselle and several others. Signed J. B. Lasselle, F. Baby, Edmund Burke, V. G.

1829
 12
 Mary Kate the lawful daughter of Henry Libbey
 and Angeline Lafont born the 23rd of Nov
 1829 has been at twenty nine months ceremonies
 of baptism with the usual ceremonies
 performed in the Church of St. Antoine the same
 day being performed by baptism on 21st
 Dec 1829. Signed J. B. Lasselle, V. G.

Pictures in registers taken by Connie Bailey

First English entry, July 31, 1829.

Fr. Dilhet next describes the visit at the River Raisin on June 18, 1801 of Bishop Pierre Denaut of Quebec, who came in a canoe escorted by two Indians to administer confirmation.

Then begins the record of baptisms. Included is one of the initial baptisms performed by our first pastor Fr. Burke. There are no entries for 1808 or 1809. During the time of the war in 1813 and 1814, the records were kept at St. Anne, Detroit.

Special mention must be made of Alexis Laurenger (Loranger) who, in the absence of a resident pastor, performed many baptisms and burials. Many of the witnesses could not sign their own names and substituted their signature with a mark.

On Easter Sunday 1829 Doctor Ephraim Adams, chief judge of the county court, was received into the Catholic Church before the High Mass, and made a profession of faith in presence of the parish, and especially of Baptist Cicot and Felix Mettez, trustees, and Joseph Navarre, magistrate.

Several Indian children of Indian converts and French-Indian marriages are registered in the early years of Baptism Vol. 1. Some entries are lengthy, giving names of parents, parish of birth, age, and several witnesses. Some only give the spouses and the bare minimum of information. Many of the burials were of infants. Many marriages required dispensation because of problems of consanguinity. Since the settlement was so small, it is natural that everybody was somehow related!

In studying the registers, one becomes aware of the continuance of life — these people long dead were once gurgling babies at their baptism, blushing brides, and later young parents. They witnessed the arrival and often departure of many children, parents and neighbors. The registers reflect their lives and are perhaps all that is left to remind us that they once were as we are today.

THE BOOK OF MINUTES 1798-1843

As you will read in a later chapter, our second pastor Fr. Dilhet, was an orderly and well organized person. On September 16, 1798 it had been decreed in a general assembly of the parish that the

rules for parishes printed in the Ritual of the Diocese of Quebec should be unanimously adopted. Father Dilhet proceeded to explain the trustee system in detail:

1. Concerning the temporal revenue of the parish — the Bishop has in his power the care of the goods of the church.
2. Inventories must be kept. A strong-box to keep all important papers will have two keys, one for the pastor, the other for the chief trustee.
3. Trustees (marguilliers) shall be elected every year, for no longer than three years. As one trustee departs each year, another will replace him and the one fulfilling his third year will be the chief trustee.
4. Rents of the church property, collections, maintenance are then discussed.

A chapter is devoted on the election of trustees, their duties and privileges.

Revenues of the parish come from 1) rental of pews 2) collections taken up every Sunday and Holy Day 3) the "Infant Jesus" collection which is taken up at the beginning of the year. There follows a list of the pastor's honorarium for different services.

The rights of the cure (pastor) are discussed (with a comment on the side by Fr. Richard: "Folly of Follies!") The LAND TITHE was to be levied on all fruits and produce of the land and amounted to four percent or 1/25th of one's produce, paid in wheat, fruit, beans, cider, etc. The TITHE OF INDUSTRY involved manual work. One cord of wood was also to be delivered by each family to the pastor, usually in February. This system seemed to rely a lot on the parishioner's own conscience and self-discipline and it was not dutifully followed nor effectively enforced.

The rights and duties of the organist and the beadle (bedeau) were also discussed in detail.

This trustee system of governing the parish affairs would be the cause of much unhappiness for the priests ministering at the River Raisin because it gave too much power to the trustees and greatly limited the initiative of the pastor.

The book of minutes then contains the following documents:

1) Copy of the verbal process of the parish assembly founding a parish at the River Raisin October 15, 1788 signed or marked with a cross by 52 members present, and by Fr. Pierre Frechette, Pastor of St. Anne, Detroit.

2) List of syndics and trustees between 1794 and 1825.

3) Donation of land by Mr. Hirague accepted November 16, 1794. St. Anthony St. Antoine of Padua is chosen as patron of the parish. Witnessed by Fr. Edmund Burke, Vicar-General of Upper Canada and our first Pastor, and J. B. Laselle, Et. Rivard, Jacques Gagnier, J. Porlier Benac, J.O. Hirague, Jacques Prudent, Antoine Campau, Charles Reaume, Joseph Barille.

4) August 31, 1796 Fr. Michel Levadoux, Vicar General of the Bishop of Baltimore, proposed the following to the parishioners of St. Antoine (who had been left without a pastor): if they wanted a pastor, they should be willing to support him by contributing 1/25th of their products. It was decided to have each trustee in turn give the Blessed Bread on Sundays, with parishioners volunteering on feast days. Three trustees were elected and the document duly witnessed.

The actual minutes of assemblies then begins with the first entry being made by Fr. Burke on January 4, 1795. The minutes discuss trivial issues such as settling of accounts by former trustees, the matter of a lost canoe, an excessive bill for Fr. Levadoux's wine and rum, a matter of 20 lbs of nails unaccounted for, the auctioning and rental of pews, an accounting of the "bancs volants" or flying pews (I assume these were the movable pews opposed to the stationary ones).

A subject that came up again and again was the need to build an adequate church and the removal of the cemetery to a dryer location. After Fr. Dilhet's departure in 1806 Fr. Richard regularly came from Detroit to take care of the spiritual needs of the St. Antoine parishioners. In 1811 he was promised the sum of 200 dollars in grain payable

before Easter in return for four visits of from 8 to 15 days, four times a year.

May 31, 1821 - the parishioners assembled to organize a Sunday school. Alexis Loranger was named head teacher.

The remainder of the minutes is taken up with attempts by the various priests to build a more suitable church. There is disagreement about the location. Should it be at the present site or should it be closer to the rapidly growing town of Monroe? Fr. Richard, in his capacity as Vicar General of the Bishop of Cincinnati, sent several letters of advice as to the site.

The last minutes are recorded on September 1, 1843 by Fr. Toussaint Santelli, newly elected pastor. The book ends then because the trustee system has finally come to a close. Fr. Santelli makes these final remarks: "The aforesaid Cure (Santelli) found this parish in very bad condition, and in the greatest indifference towards the practice of religion. The pastor who directed it for 13 years, Father Carabin, blames it all on the bad disposition of the parishioners in general; and the parishioners in turn blame it all on the hard and severe conduct of the pastor. I think that both pastor and flock have reason to humble themselves and repent before God."

OTHER FRENCH-CANADIAN SURNAMES PRESENT AT ST. ANTOINE 1794-1830

AMEL
ANTAYA (Anteau)
BAUDIN
BARON
BEAUBIEN
BEAUXHOMMES
BERNARD (Benore)
BERTHIAUME
BOIMIER (Bomia, Bomyea)
BONNEAU
BOURBONNE
BRANCHEAU
CHARLAND
CHAMBERLAND
CHATELLERAUT (Shettleroe)
CHAUVIN (Shovar)
COURNOYER
COULE (Cooley)
COURVILLON
CHATILLON
CLOUTIER
CARRIER
CORROLLAY

D'AVIGNON (Beauregard)
 DeCHATELET (Chatelais, De Shettler)
 DELOEUIL
 DEMARS
 DUBOIS
 DUCHENE (Dushane)
 DUROCHER
 FEVRE (Lefevre)
 FONTAINE (La Fontaine)
 GRENON
 GIGNAC
 GOUIN (Guire)
 GUY (Gee)
 JOURDAIN (Jordan)
 LaCIZERAIS
 LaCROIX
 LAJOIE (LaJoye)
 LAREBELLE
 LA TOUR
 LaSELLE (LaSalle)
 LAURENGER (Loranger)
 LAUSON (Loson, Lozon)
 LAVIGNE
 LaVIOLETTE
 LaMYRANDE (LaMirande, Lemerand)
 LEMERY
 L'ENFANT
 LEONARD (Lienard)
 LAPAGE
 LAPLANTE (Plante, Leriger)
 LANGLOIS (Traversy)
 LABADIE (Labbadie)
 Le SMIT (Smith)
 MENANCON (Manaussa)
 MENARD (Manore, Menart)
 MARTIN
 METTE (Mettay)
 MORASSE (Moras, Ross)
 MORICEAU
 MASSICOT (Mexico)
 MORT
 NADAU (Nadeau)
 OUELETTE (Ouclet, Willets)
 PETIT
 PELTIER
 POIRIER
 POULAIN (Paulin, Poland)
 POUPART (Poupard)
 PROU (Prouhe)
 RAU (Reau, Roë, Raoult)
 RENAULT (Reneau, Reno)
 ROUBIDOUX (Robedou, Robidoux)
 RIMBAULT
 RIVARD
 ROBERT
 ROULEAU
 RYOPEL
 SOLO (Soleau, Solau)
 ST. BERNARD
 ST. COSME
 SANS CRAINTE (Sancrante)
 TAYOU
 THOUT (Duval)
 VALADE
 VALLIQUET (Valiquet)
 VERMETTE

1820 BURIALS

(One signed by Fr. Gabriel Richard, the other by Alexis Loranger)
 Alexis Guy, deceased the day before yesterday, about 55 years old, interred in the cemetery of this parish by us undersigned priest, pastor of St. Anne of Detroit today, the first day of March of the year 1820 in the presence of Joseph Nadeau and Alexis Laurenger, singer, who signed with us.
 Gabriel Richard, priest
 Pastor of St. Anne
 The 18th day of the month of April 1820, we undersigned singer and catechister in the presence of the pastor have interred in the cemetery of this parish the body of Pierre, son of Pierre Gagnils and of Monique Martin, deceased yesterday at the age of two weeks. In presence of Joseph Hivon who declared being unable to sign this document. - Alex Loranger



Taken at random from the old registers which are full of interesting entries such as this one:

"An old savage of the Poux (lice) tribe, conditionally baptized (ondoyee) during her illness, died the eighth of May 1826, was interred the next day in the cemetery of this parish by us undersigned in the presence of Louis Yvon, Alexis Loranger and others.

F. Bellamy, Pastor (curé)

Chapter Two

Our Struggling Pioneer Priests

WHY THE STRUGGLE?

The following chapters on the early priests will show you the many conflicts and problems faced by the early St. Antoine parish. Our interpretation of the reasons for these conflicts are as follows: The French settlers were a happy-go-lucky group who were perfectly willing to live from day to day. They were mostly illiterate and had little in common with the priest. The early missionaries in Canada had been supported by benevolent societies in Europe, hence the pioneers were not used to helping their priest materially. The early settlers were very independent and resented any kind of authority.

The early priests, on the other hand, were severe and strict. They were all very well educated and scholarly, extremely opposed to alcohol which had caused terrible harm especially to the Indians. The priests also had to rely on the parishioners for their material needs. Because of the trustee system, every request had to be examined by the trustees, who often bent the rules to suit themselves. Too much power was bestowed on the trustees and this stifled the authority of the priest.

In later years there was also the problem of nationalism. Until 1812 St. Antoine had been almost exclusively French. After the war the area became safer for habitation with the Indians practically gone. Land was expensive on the East coast and the pioneers started moving West. The Irish came from Canada and from Ireland, the Germans immigrated from Germany. The ONLY church in Monroe was French-speaking and one can imagine how frustrating it must have been for the pioneers to attend church, which in those days was probably their main social function, and find themselves unable to understand. We all know that the problem was finally resolved by building St. John for the English-speaking, St. Michael for the German-speaking, and much later St. Joseph for the Italians.

FROM THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC TO BALTIMORE, TO BARDSTOWN, TO CINCINNATI, THEN FINALLY TO DETROIT

For the sake of clarification, we would like to explain why our parish was under four ecclesiastical jurisdictions before the Diocese of Detroit was erected on March 8, 1833 with Fr. Frederic Rese as its first Bishop.

We were first under the tutelage of the diocese of QUEBEC. Bishop Denaut of Quebec came at the request of the Bishop of Baltimore in a canoe paddled by two Indians to administer Confirmation here at the River Raisin in 1801.

In early 1796 a treaty between the United States and Great Britain assigned the missions of Upper Canada to the BALTIMORE diocese. Bishop Carroll was the first Bishop of Baltimore and of the entire U.S. and Fr. Michael Levadoux was his vicar-general in the Detroit area. A letter written by Bishop Carroll to the trustees of St. Antoine on October 19, 1796 is the only extant piece of correspondence linking the church in Michigan with the first bishop in the U.S. (Pare p. 273). In it the Bishop promised to send a priest.

Bishop Benedict Flaget of BARDSTOWN, Kentucky, inherited Michigan in 1818 and spent three days at the River Raisin settlement. At the time he published a set of regulations (Am. Cath. Hist. Researches XV, 103) which stated "The church of St. Anthony of Padua, situated on the banks of the Riviere aux Raisins will include, until new ones are built, all the Catholic Establishments from 15 to 18 miles around."

On May 21, 1821 the Diocese of CINCINNATI was organized. Fr. Edward Fenwick was its first Bishop and was entrusted with the administration of the Michigan territory.

We have included a listing of the Bishops in office during the Bi-Centennial History period.

BISHOPS OF THE BI-CENTENNIAL PERIOD

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1788-1797 | Jean Francois Hubert | Diocese of Quebec |
| 1789-1815 | John Carroll | Diocese of Baltimore, Ohio |
| 1808-1821 | Benedict Joseph Flaget | Diocese of Bardstown, Kentucky |
| 1821-1832 | Edward Dominic Fenwick | Diocese of Cincinnati, Ohio |
| 1832-1871 | Frederick Rese | Diocese of Detroit |
| 1840-1870 | Peter Paul Lefevere | Diocese of Detroit |
| 1870-1887 | Caspar Henry Borgess | Diocese of Detroit |
| 1888-1918 | John Samuel Foley | Diocese of Detroit |
| 1918-1937 | Michael Joseph Gallagher | Diocese of Detroit |
| 1937-1958 | Edward Cardinal Mooney | Diocese of Detroit |
| 1958-1981 | John Francis Dearden | Diocese of Detroit |
| 1981- | Edmund J. Szoka | Diocese of Detroit |

n.b. Early dates reflect the years the Bishops were directly involved with St. Antoine/St. Mary Parish.

FRANCOIS XAVIER DUFAUX 1788

They Will Need a Pastor Soon

First mention was made of the settlement on the River Raisin by Father Dufaux, a Sulpician from Montreal, who had been assigned to Assumption Parish in Sandwich (now known as Windsor).

Dufaux wrote a letter to his Superior Monseigneur Dalmire dated January 18, 1788 (the original of this letter is in the archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec and was provided to Karl F. Zeisler, who wrote a series of very interesting articles in the Monroe Evening News column "THE OBSERVER" in 1953). The following is an excerpt of this letter:

"The River Raisin is inhabited by people who don't know where to turn their heads. There are 32 people living in cabins on this river, and

more intend to join them in the Spring; there are now 100 homesteads and more claims in this section. I really believe that they will need a pastor soon; this Spring I intend to designate a place to be used as a cemetery, but will not bless it until there is a chapel there, or a home for the missionary who will go there as soon as it can be arranged. Will it be the pastor of Assumption or of St. Anne who will take charge of this mission? I would like to know the wishes of your Highness in this matter."

"The poor fellow Jean Baptiste Drouillard who first settled here is dead. The men who brought his body to the fort almost died on the way. I conducted a service for him today, and was glad to think that I had gotten him to make his Easter duty last Autumn when he came down from Sandusky."

Father Dufaux remained at Assumption for ten years and died there at the young age of 34.

Although Father Dufaux brings up the subject of having a priest on the Raisin River only in 1788, someone else was advocating the building of a church there at least two years earlier. The Pottawatomie Chief Eshkeebie whose totem appears on most of the Indian grants, deeded a parcel of Indian land for religious purposes on September 14, 1786. He reserved a plot of ground 3 arpents wide throughout its length for the building of a house of prayer. This concession was granted in perpetuity and should be occupied only by "the ministers of the ~~Master~~ of Life." He even added a curse against those who might settle on the tract, which was located on the rising ground on the north side of the river. Wayne Stockade would eventually be built on this tract and would be destroyed by fire!

COPY OF OLD POTTAWATOMI DEED

I, Eskiby, Pottawatomi Chief of the River Raisin region, in my name as well as in the name of my nation and the families of my tribe living there declare that I have reserved a piece of land three arpents in width and in all its depth in order to build a house of prayer there, the said land being located on the mound to the right of the river adjoining the property of Francois Navarre Hutrau. This area destined to be made a place of prayer in perpetuity

can never be used for any other purpose except a place of prayer by the ministers of the Master of Life. Therefore, it is expressly forbidden all persons, of whatever nation they may be, to touch said land, to cultivate or settle thereupon under pain of losing their labors and of seeing their works destroyed. For this reason, I have affixed my signature so that no one may doubt my resolution which is and will be irrevocable. At Detroit, September 14, 1786.

And the concessions of lands we have given to the brothers and children of Robiche as also to those of Marie, widow of Alexis Campau, will likewise remain in perpetuity to them and to their children, so that no one can trouble them for any reason whatsoever.

The Bishop of Quebec assigned Father Frechette, Pastor of St. Anne, Detroit, to establish a parish at the settlement on the River Raisin.

PIERRE FRECHETTE
Founder of Our Parish

Father Frechette can be considered as the founder of the first outgrowth of St. Anne's parish in Michigan soil. The beauty and fertility of the country watered by the Raisin River could not long remain unnoticed. Francois Navarre is said to have been the first settler in what is now Monroe, and to have taken up land along the river in 1780. In the next few years he was joined by a number of other colonists, all of French ancestry.

On October 15, 1788 Father Frechette drew up a document signed by 46 "habitants" making plans to establish a parish and to build a suitable rectory for a resident priest. A copy of this document is found in chapter I. Frechette found strong opposition to the parcel of land donated by the Indian Chief ESKIBY; a majority of the settlers favored a site some two and a half miles upstream. The farm of Mr. Mommini was chosen: one acre and two perches were purchased for 400 francs and an additional half an acre was donated by Joseph Hyvon.

The settlers were too poor to support a resident pastor but were prepared to erect a structure to house the occasional visiting priest and to serve as

a chapel. According to Father Pare in his "History of the Catholic Church in Detroit 1701-1888" all available records seem to indicate that no building exclusively devoted to divine worship was erected until about 1797, although a letter dated August 28, 1795 in the Quebec archives states "the priest's house is NOW finished."

Father Dilhet, our second Pastor, wrote a book on the Beginnings of the Catholic Church in the U.S. This book was translated by Father Patrick Browne, who comments on our first log church as follows: "as a two-story structure, with living quarters for the priest below and a chapel above, it must have been, next to Navarre's own two story log house, and possibly the Lasselle dwelling, the largest and most pretentious building in the settlement."

Father Frechette was described by one of his contemporaries as being "of small stature, a zealous and pious priest, but a man of superlative tranquility." He was pastor of St. Anne for 10 years and occasionally made visits to the River Raisin. He was recalled by the Bishop of Quebec in 1796 when the Americans took over and the area became the responsibility of the Bishop of Baltimore.

EDMUND BURKE 1794-1796
*"He might suit the settlement,
but will it suit him?"*

At the time of the signing of a petition to the Bishop of Quebec in October of 1788 to establish a parish at the River Raisin, the future first pastor of St. Antoine was teaching at the Seminary in Quebec. He was Fr. Edmund Burke, born in 1753 in County Kildare Ireland. As the child of a Roman Catholic family, education was forbidden him; as a candidate for priesthood, he was sent to study at the University of Paris, where he impressed his teachers with his fluent grasp of French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. After serving in the Diocese of Kildare for several years, he became interested in travelling Canada's frontier, which at this time included the settlement at the River Raisin.

The Catholic settlers along the River Raisin were far from the nearest church, St. Anne's in Detroit, and wanted their own pastor. Among them was Father Jean Antoine LeDru, a Dominican viewed



Fr. Edmund Burke, First Pastor of St. Antoine.
(Taken from Every Popish Person
by J. Brian Hanington.)

as a renegade; the Catholic Hierarchy considered his republican principles as dangerous, as "stirring up" their constituents. LeDru was banned from the Diocese, and when the settlement people asked for a pastor, hoping it would be LeDru, Bishop Hubert of Quebec assigned Edmund Burke not only as Vicar-General of Canada in charge of the Detroit River frontier, but also as first resident pastor of the River Raisin settlement. This assignment was undoubtedly a political move since Burke was loyal to the British rule in Canada.

On November 16, 1794 the parishioners unanimously chose St. Antoine de Padoue (St. Anthony of Padua) as their patron saint (this would prove most fitting since St. Anthony is the patron saint of the poor.) They also accepted an additional parcel of land from Mr. Joseph Hirague. On his arrival, Fr. Burke found a two-story building for his residence. The main floor was used as the presbytery, while the second floor served for all church functions.

Donation of land by Mr. Hirague accepted.
Election of Patron.

Nov 16, 1794

On November 16, 1794, the parishioners of the River Raisin unanimously chose St. Anthony of Padua as their patron, and consequently, Mr. Joseph Irac donated to the parish a piece of land

measuring three arpents less 1 1/2 perches long by eighty arpents deep, bounded by the land of Mr. Irac on one side, the land of Joseph Belleaire on another side, and the land of the abovementioned donor Mr. Joseph Irac on the other side; which donation of three arpents less 1 1/2 perches by 80 arpents deep, the chief trustee Joseph Jobin and the two other trustees Jacques Prudent and Antoine Campeau accepted in the name of the parish with the consent of all parishioners present.

Witnesses:

J.B. Laselle, J.O. Hirague, Et. Rivard, Joseph Jobin, Jacques Gagnier, Jacques Prudent, Antoine Campeau, Porlier Benac, Charles Reaume, Joseph Barille.

I have read and approved the document herewith attached, Nov. 16, 1794.

Edmund Burke
Vicar General of Upper Canada

Burke's mission covered all of Monroe County, to include families at Swan Creek (Newport), Stoney Creek (Carleton), and Sandy Creek to the north of Frenchtown; and Muddy Creek, Otter Creek (Lassalle), LaPlaisance, and the Bay Settlement (Erie) to the south.

Burke was a capable and ambitious man. But his greatest flaw was his undiplomatic nature. He was a staunch loyalist and felt that the welfare of Catholics in British North America would best be served by having ~~cordial~~ relations with the government of the day. This did not sit well with the independent French. Burke set out to establish order in the parish, following the guidelines of the Church. Trustees and syndics were elected and held the actual power within the parish. The priest was answerable to them for finances and disputes.

Burke was a tall and stalwart man, strong and energetic, well-suited to the duties of an itinerant in a territory renowned for its thick forests and fierce winters. He was also a man of strong opinions and one of the first vices he sought to correct was the liquor traffic among the settlers and the Indians. His aggressive attitude only alienated his flock rather than making them see their own need for temperance and restraint. The trade in alcohol

provided commerce for the area, and these people were not too receptive to their pastor interfering from the pulpit. Burke was pointing his religious finger at their lifestyles and practices which included a love of amusement and less modesty than Burke condoned.

It did not take long for Burke to completely antagonize his stubborn flock, with neither side held in respect by the other. Burke did not present a favorable image of his parish. In a letter written February 2, 1795 he gave more credit to Frenchtown's scenery than he did to its inhabitants:

"This is the last and most distant parish inhabited by Catholics on this earth. In it is neither law, justice, nor subjection; you never meet a man, either Indian or Canadian, without his gun in his hand and his knife at his breast. My house is on the banks of a river which falls in the lake, full of fish and fowl of all sorts. The finest climate in the world and the most fertile lands, but no industry. The Indian lives on hunting, the Canadian resembles him nearly. At night the howling of the wolves in pursuit of deer, the growling of the bear, the hissing of the rattlesnake, the war-whoop of the Indian and the sound of his rifle are rather disagreeable sounds, but not at all uncommon."

Burke sent a second letter on this date to Bishop Hubert whose tone was worse than the first. It is memorable since he blatantly calls his parishioners a "gang of brigands." It is as if this were "the home of murder, theft, rape, living in sin, drunkenness, and impiety." He wrote that these scoundrels were "a thousand times worse than the savages (Indians) themselves." These words were not about to win Burke support. He failed to understand and work with the settler's French-Canadian ways. He saw himself as a lonely man among rebels and black-hearts, barely keeping himself alive, seeing very few positive notes among them.

As Vicar-General of Upper Canada he also alienated himself among the Catholics of the Detroit River Frontier. He ran into disputes with Father Frechette at St. Anne in Detroit and also with Father Dufaux at Assumption Church in Sandwich (now Windsor). To add to all of this, the Diocese of Quebec was in conflict with the Diocese of Baltimore over governing this area. Burke's actions

antagonized everyone, the religious as well as the political powers of the region.

Perhaps Burke himself was in a no-win situation, not only due to his own arrogance but also due to the stubbornness of the French who seemed to oppose most authority.

When, in 1796, this area came under the authority of the Diocese of Baltimore, Burke finally decided to leave. Shortly after his departure, the British surrendered and the Northwest Territories became American. Father Dufaux wrote to the Bishop that Burke "is regretted neither at River Raisin, nor at St. Anne's, nor at Assumption; and he is regretted by no one save myself who did everything I could to retain him. He is gone; God be praised."

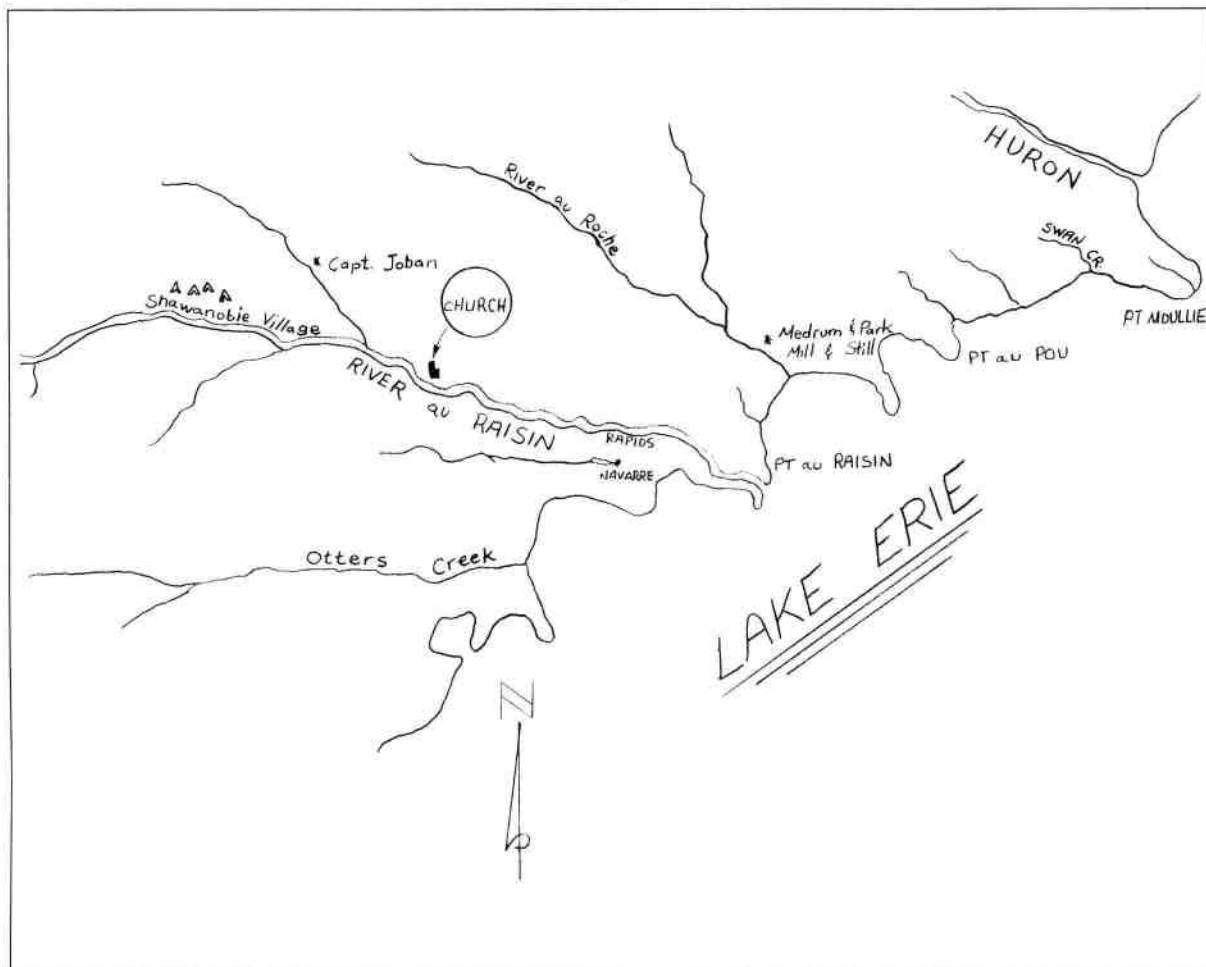
It is unfortunate that so much remains of Burke's conflicts and not much is made of the positive. After leaving the Detroit River Frontier, he eventually served in Halifax where his religious and political leanings were more welcome. He went on to become the first Bishop of Nova Scotia in 1818, and died November 29, 1820. Burke's obituary enumerates his qualities, seemingly not appreciated by the River Raisin settlers: "it would appear superfluous to enlarge on the merits of this truly good and pious man, in this province, where his charity, disinterestedness, and loyalty are so generally known and acknowledged by all classes of the community. . ."

MICHAEL LEVADOUX 1796-1798

An Occasional Visitor

Fr. Michael Levadoux was born in Clermont, France on April 1, 1746, and became a Sulpician priest in Paris, where he was director of a Seminary before leaving for the New World. He was chosen as one of the first priests to minister under the first American Bishop, John Carroll. He was to teach at the American Seminary in Baltimore, but when that project failed to take root, Bishop Carroll assigned Levadoux to Illinois in 1792. It is there he first met and befriended Gabriel Richard, who was to become so important to the future State of Michigan.

In June 1796 Levadoux was asked to take over in Detroit for the retreating Edmund Burke, and though he preferred not to leave his good friend,



Map of 1790 courtesy of Monroe County Historical Museum.

upon arriving at Detroit for a visit and an evaluation of the situation there, he clearly saw that he was sorely needed. He was vigorously welcomed by the settlers along the Detroit River region and took over as Vicar-General of the Bishop of Baltimore. The Frenchman Levadoux was supportive of the American Government, unlike his predecessor, and understood more about his Canadian kinsmen than the Irish priest. Where Burke was tactless, Levadoux was dignified. Where Burke's successor Fr. Dilhet would be strict and perhaps too rigid, Levadoux was understanding and willing to compromise. Besides his responsibilities at St. Anne in Detroit and Assumption in Sandwich, he regularly came to minister at the Raisin River. He questioned the congregation as to their intent: would they still want a pastor, and would they abide by their decision to support him with crops and wood? He organized the existing syndic and trustee system to help run the parish while there was no resident priest and wrote on their behalf to the Bishop to state they were of good intent.

His letter to Bishop Carroll reads as follows: "The River Raisin is a new establishment on both sides of the river of this name, which empties into Lake Erie. The nearest of its settlers are at least 14 miles from Detroit. There are about 110 families, (we question this number, unless he included the settlers along the Detroit river frontier) nearly all farmers. They came to me there, and gave me a very kind reception. A plot of 120 acres has been set aside for the use of the priest on which they have built a pretty rectory whose upper story serves as a church. They have already written you concerning their ardent desire to have a priest sent them."

Fr. Levadoux was not without controversy and petty battles however, but being sympathetic to the Americans helped him avoid the hostility that had surrounded Father Burke. Desperately needing assistance along the Detroit River settlements, he begged his superiors in Baltimore for help and his prayers were answered when in June 1798 Fr.

Gabri
Dilhet

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Gabriel Richard arrived from the West and Fr. Jean Dilhet from Baltimore.

By 1802 Levadoux's health was failing and he left the region to go back to Baltimore and eventually to France where he died January 13, 1815.

JEAN DILHET 1798-1804
The Orderly Organizer

The second man to serve at St. Antoine was Sulpician Father Jean (John) Dilhet, who had arrived in Baltimore in January 1798. He was born in France November 11, 1753 and educated there. He was sent to the River Raisin shortly after his arrival in the States and was immediately installed as resident pastor on July 1, 1798 by Father Levadoux, Pastor of St. Anne, Detroit and Vicar-General of the Bishop of Baltimore.

The settlement had been without a permanent priest for two years since the departure of the unpopular Fr. Burke. There was plenty of work to do. We owe much to Fr. Dilhet for his detailed accounting of the parish organization. As you may recall from the chapter on the early registers, Fr. Dilhet also gave us a description of his widespread parish and of the variety of national heritage, culture and language among his flock.

Dilhet noticed that the land on which St. Antoine was situated had never been formally and legally transferred to the Church and it could anytime, therefore, revert back to the donors, or the Indians. Titles needed to be secured, quit claim deeds acknowledged and registered at the civil office.

The church land was known as Claim 648, eventually including 99.98 acres called St. Antoine Church Farm. It was of a French "ribbon farm" design: each farm had some frontage on the river (which at that time was the pioneers' primary means of transportation) and extended for miles in a narrow strip of land. This gave the map of such farms the look of long ribbons originating at the river.

Father Dilhet also recorded and described the guidelines of the Catholic parish's organization. These guidelines outlined the authority of parish assemblies, including the election, duties and

privileges of wardens, the role of the Syndics, and other leaders of the parish government. Tithes paid to the pastor (or cure), consisted of two types: the land tithe and the tithe of industry, as mentioned before.

Parishioners had to pay for the various services the pastor provided, such as low or high Masses, weddings, funerals, and baptisms. The basic articles for Mass were often the priest's own chalice and vestment, though the parish was supposed to supply the holy bread, wine and candles.

Dilhet's descriptive recordings in the parish minutes are of interest, revealing his orderly nature and his desire to enforce canonical rules set forth in 1791 for the new American Church. He wanted to lead his flock to greater understanding of their faith and obligations. He saw the great need for reform, especially when it concerned the responsibilities of the congregation to provide for the needs of their pastor.

Dilhet repeatedly asked the trustees for improvements on the chapel building which served as his home and rectory as well. His requests were noted as "maturely considered" and voted down, or nothing was done at all. At one time, Dilhet had requested that an additional storage room be added to his church/rectory. This reasonable request was avoided by the wardens, and instead a partition was constructed within the building, making small rooms even smaller. The pursestrings of the parish were held tight but not so tight that the trustees could not borrow money themselves, leaving notes for the sum owed. In fact, several trustees were in debt to the church for years beyond the expiration of their office.

During his pastorate, Dilhet did construct a fence around the residence and a new row of pews was installed on the side of the singing desk. "Flying benches" (banes volants) were also purchased. A large cross was erected outside the church, and two contribution boxes were placed at the back of the church (which, by the way, was the second floor of the rectory), one box for the poor, the other for the souls in purgatory.

Dilhet also began the long, fruitless attempts to motivate his parishioners to build a new church, a

church suitable for the growing congregation. Subscriptions would be taken, added to and ignored, given up, and then started again as the inadequate building groaned and fell apart, having never been a "proper" church in the first place.

During this time petty grievances and disputes occupied Dilhet's time. There were "disrespectful clamorings," claims and disagreements. For example, one Joseph Menard demanded that the church pay him for the disappearance of his canoe from the church. Ten dollars were paid and the wayward canoe was found. The syndics decided that the money should be reimbursed to the church, which Menard refused to do. The assembly then decided to keep the canoe at the rectory to be used by the parishioners who needed passage across the river. The disagreements were not always focused on the pastor, but also between neighbors.

During Dilhet's administration, the River Raisin settlement was visited for the first time by a Bishop, Msgr. Pierre Denaut, Bishop of Quebec, who had travelled by canoe from Quebec and come from Detroit to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Reverend Dilhet records that solemn occasion in the following words: "On the 18th of June 1801, Msgr. Peter Denaut, Catholic Bishop of Quebec, arrived towards 3 P.M. at the River Raisin, and disembarked in front of J. B. (Jean Baptiste) Reaume's house, where Mr. J. Dilhet, pastor of the parish, received him without any solemnity, the Bishop having refused the offer of being received in due form. He was introduced into the said house by the Pastor, and entered it with Mr. Michael Levadoux, Vicar-General of the Bishop of Baltimore, Mr. Marchand, pastor of the Assumption of Sandwich, and Mr. Payet, his secretary. Mr. Hubert Lacroix welcomed the Bishop in the name of all the parishioners, after which the many people present fell on their knees to receive the Bishop's blessing. Having entered the carriages which were in readiness for the party, they started for the church, escorted by nearly 50 men on horseback, and by a great crowd on foot. Along the road people left their houses to ask His Lordship's blessing. After a light collation, the Bishop entered the church to give solemn benediction, before the bestowal of which Mr. Levadoux preached, announced that the

Right Rev. Bishop of Baltimore, John Carroll, had requested the Bishop of Quebec to administer Confirmation in the parish, and gave out the order of services for the following days. The next day being Sunday, the Bishop of Quebec, after a discourse on Confirmation, administered that sacrament to those who presented themselves at the communion railing. He did the same the two next days. One hundred and ninety persons were confirmed on that occasion, among them an Indian woman named Marie Matchibicin."

There is no doubt that Dilhet tried hard to minister to his flock at the River Raisin. For some reason his parishioners resented him. Perhaps he was too strict; perhaps it was the nature of the people, as frontiersmen, to oppose any discipline. Gabriel Richard, pastor at St. Anne in Detroit, referred to Dilhet as a "great reformer" and expressed the belief that he was too scholarly to suit the taste of the simple River Raisin folk. Dilhet stood it as long as he could and suggested to his flock that they raise enough money to pay the traveling expenses of a new priest. In fact, a special collection of the "Infant Jesus" was taken every Sunday to help with the purchase of altar linens and ornaments, and to help bring a new priest.

Finally, Father Dilhet sent his resignation to Bishop Carroll of Baltimore on January 15, 1804. He went to live with Richard in Detroit but occasionally came to minister to the people at St. Antoine's, where he had done so much unappreciated hard work. He showed his concern and kindness by leaving instructions on how to run the parish without a priest: "newborn children will be privately baptized; people shall assist at public prayers every Sunday and holyday and come to Detroit to fetch a priest for sick calls; Mr. Alexis Loranger (spelled Laurenger til 1820) singer and catechist, shall regularly say the prayers in church and teach catechism on Sundays and holydays; will record the burials celebrated in the absence of the missionary priest, to whom he shall deliver a copy of the same at his next visit, and will publish the banns of marriage only after receipt of an order from the priest signed by himself."

Dilhet left Detroit for Baltimore in 1805 and returned to his native France in 1807 where he died October 31, 1811 at the age of 56.

The poor church at the River Raisin settlement remained without permanent pastoral services until 1822, to be ministered occasionally by a visiting priest.

One of these priests was Bishop Benoit Joseph Flaget, of Bardstown who visited the River Raisin in May of 1818, but found the church there in such a wretched condition that he could not offer the holy sacrifice within it.

Confirmation List - 1801

WOMEN

Marie Barbe
Marie Beauregard
Josephe Bissonnet
Marguerite Boson
Marie Boson
Isabelle Boson
Angelique Bourdeaux
Genevieve Bourdeaux
Julie Bourdeaux
Marie Bourdeaux
Marguerite Boron
Marie Carrie
Catherine Campeau
Catherine Cloutier
Marie Cloutier
Archange Couzineau
Archange Demars
Marie Demars
Archange Dussaut
Genevieve Dussaut
Marie Dussaut
Marie Duval
Josephe Fontaine
Susana Fontaine
Josephe Gagnier
Marguerite Gagnier
Catherine Gaillard
Elizabeth Gaillard
Archange Gaudet
Magdecine Gaudet
Marie Goyo
Therese Guyo
Angelique Jacob
Marie Jacob
Francoise Labbady
Marie Le Beau
Catherine Lafontaine
Susanne Lafontain
Marguerite Lajoy

Basile Lapointe
Marie Langlois
Marguerite Lapointe
Marie Lapointe
Josephe Laviolette
Marguerite Martin
Marie Matchiobi'cin
Marie Michau
Archange Mini
Marie Mini
Marie Mommini
Marthe Pouget
Agathe Prudhomme
Catherine Rau
Marguerite Rau
Marie Rau
Agathe Reaume
Marie Revau
Catherine Revau
Angelique Rivard
Catherine Rivard
Agnes Robert
Cecile Robert
Catherine Roubidoux
Elizabeth Roubidoux
Louise Roubidoux
Ursule Roubidoux
Genevieve Sordillet
Marguerite Sordillet
Ursule Sordillet
Genevieve Souie
Marie St. Aubin
Archange St. Bernard
Genevieve St. Bernard
Marie St. Remi
Angelique Susor
Catherine Susor
Genevieve Susor
Marie Vermet

MEN

Augustin Aimel
Joseph Aubin
Pierre Baron
Louis Baudin
Jean Louis Belair
Joseph Belair
Joseph Bisson
Joseph Bissonnet
Paschal Bissonnet
Jean Baptiste Boson
Joseph Boson
Antoine Boulard
Alexis Bourdeaux
Louis Bristoc
Antoine Campeau
Charles Campeau
Francois Campeau
Paul Campeau
Joseph Cloutier
Pierre Cloutier
Thomas Cloutier
Zacharie Cloutier
Pierre Comeau
Medard Couture
Claude Couture
Etienne Couture
J.B. Couture fils
Basile Couzineau fils
Basile Couzineau
Tousaint Couzineau
Joseph Druyard
Nicolas Druyard
Etienne Dupre
Jean Dussault
Joseph Dussaut
Ignace Duval fils
Joseph Duval
Louis Fontaine
Pierre Fomeau

Confirmation List - 1801

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Louis Gaillard | Francois Leonard | Joseph Poujet | |
| Guillaume Goyo | Joseph L'enfant | Jacques Prudhomme | |
| Etienne Jacob | Louis L'enfant | Jean Baptiste Rau | AGNEW (Egne |
| Jean Jacob | Antoine Le Maitre | Joseph Raujard | ANDERSON |
| Jacques Jacob | Leon Martin | Jean Baptiste Rau | ASKIN |
| Joseph Jacob | Joseph Menard | Jean Baptiste Reaume fils | AUBIN |
| Louis Jacob | Antoine Mercure | Joseph Reaume | AUSTIN |
| Pierre Jacob | Cajetan Mini | Louis Reaume | ADGER |
| Simon Jacob | Francois Mommini | Joseph Richard | ALDWIN |
| Francois Labbaddy | Jean Mommini | Francois Robert | ARNES |
| Medard Labbaddy | Jean Baptiste Mommini | Isidore Robert | ARILE |
| Andre Lafleur pere | Joseph Mommini | Joseph Robert | ARON |
| Toussaint Lafleur | Louis Mommini | Bonaventure Roubidoux | EAUBIEN |
| Charles Lajoie | Antoine Nadau | Charles Roubidoux | EAUCHAMP |
| Hyacinthe Lajoie | Francois Utrau Navarre | Joseph Roubidoux | EAUGRAND |
| Louis Lajoie | Francois Navarre fils | Louis Roubidoux | EAUXHOMM |
| Joseph Landri | Francois Navarre | Antoine Ryopel | EAUREGAR |
| Antoine Lapointe | Isidore Navarre | Joseph St. Bernard | ELLAIR |
| Jean Baptiste LaSelle | Jean Marie Navarre | Amable St Come | ELANGER |
| Benjamin Laviolette | Jacques Navarre | Jean Baptist Solau | ELLECOUR |
| Etienne Laviolette | Robert Navarre | Pierre Solau | ENAC (Porli |
| Francois La violette | Augustin Noel | Francois Sordillet | ERARD (Dit |
| Toussaint Lafleur | Louis Patenode | J. B. Susor | ERNARD (B |
| Etienne Le Beau | Guillaume Pitre | Louis Susor | ERTHELOT |
| Jean Baptiste Leduc | Jean Baptiste Pouget | Chrysotome Villers | ERTHIAUM |
| | | | EZEAU |
| | | | ILLET |
| | | | ISSONNETT |

ANTOINE GANILH
"Kentucky, why did I leave thee?"
 April-July 1822

Father Antoine Ganilh, a seminarian from France who was ordained in Bardstown, Kentucky, was assigned as St. Antoine's third resident Pastor by Msgr. Edward Fenwick, Bishop of Cincinnati.

Ganilh arrived April 28, 1822 and was probably quite unaware of the reality of the situation awaiting him. As Dilhet before him, Ganilh requested his due tithing of wood and a little kitchen separate from the rectory. It was decided that the wood should be paid to him provided "he did not sell it, and that the parishioners could warm themselves at the fire before and after every service."

His request for a new alb was tabled, since the trustees felt he already had one! Father Pare's characterization that "he was not of the stock out of which pioneer priests are made" was no understatement. Ganilh lasted at the settlement for only three months and it was with happiness and relief that he

signed the parish minutes for the third and last time on July 17, 1822, writing:

"I, Antoine Ganilh, who had been nominal Pastor of this parish, happily got rid of it after having suffered hunger, thirst, sorrow, and abandonment for three or four months, and every kind of misery. . . Farewell, poor church and still poorer presbytery; may I never lay my eyes on you again. . . Poor Kentucky, why did I leave thee?"

With this not-so-fond address, Ganilh departed into Ohio, Virginia, New Orleans and Texas. In 1842 he had left the Church and wrote thrillingly about the confessional to delight his non-Catholic readers. He eventually died in his native land.

In a marginal note, Fr. Richard later wrote: "Poor Ganilh! You have suffered, so have I."

Again St. Antoine was left without a pastor until two years later when Father Bellamy appeared on the scene.

**FAMILIES REPRESENTED WITHIN PRESENT MONROE COUNTY
BEFORE THE WAR OF 1812**

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| AGNEW (Egnew) | COMPARET | HYVON (Ivon, Yvon) |
| ANDERSON | CONSTANT | JACOB |
| ASKIN | COSME (St. Cosme) | JOBIN |
| AUBIN | COULEY (Cooley) | JOURDAIN (Jordan) |
| AUSTIN | COUSINEAU (Cousino) | KNAGGS |
| BADGER | COUTURE | LABADIE (Descompts dit) |
| BALDWIN | DAZETTE | LaBRECHE |
| BARNES | DEBREUIL (Dubreuil) | LaCHAMBRE |
| BARILE | DE GRAVIER | LaBONTE (Labontee) |
| BARON | DELOEIL | LaCOURCIERE |
| BEAUBIEN | DELORIER | LaFOREST |
| BEAUCHAMP | DEMARS | LaFRAMBOISE |
| BEAUGRAND | DENEU | LaJEUNESSE |
| BEAUXHOMME (Bouson) | DESCHATELETS (DeShettler) | LaJOIE |
| BEAUREGARD (D'Avignon) | DESPLATS | LaMARRE |
| BELLAIR | DE VEAU | LANGLOIS (Traversy) |
| BELANGER | DOUCHET | LaPLANTE |
| BELLECOUR | DOWNING | LARABEL |
| BENAC (Porlier dit) | DORMOND | LaSELLE (LaSalle) |
| BERARD (Dit Lepine) | DROUILARD | LaVIGNE |
| BERNARD (Benore) | DUBOIS | LaVIOLETTE |
| BERTHELOTE | DUCHENE (Dushane) | LEACH |
| BERTHIAUME | DEMAY | LeBEAU (Labeau, Labow) |
| BEZEAU | DUPRAY | LeBLANC |
| BILLET | DUQUET | LeDUC (LeDuke) |
| BISSONNETTE | DUROCHER | LEE |
| BODIN (Baudin) | DUSSAULT (Dusseau) | LeFEBVRE (Lafever) |
| BOEMIER (Bomia) | DUVAL (Thuot dit) | LeCISERAIS |
| BOND | EWING | L'ENFANT |
| BONNEAU | FAVERO | LEONARD (Lienard) |
| BON VOULOIR | FAUVEL (Bigras dit) | LIVERNOIS |
| BOUCHARD | FONTAINE (Lafountain) | LORANGER (Laurenger) |
| BOURDEAUX (Bordeau) | FOUCROU | LOSON (Lauson, Lozon) |
| BOULARD | FORSYTH | McDOUGALL |
| BOURDON | FOURNIER | McGILL |
| BOURG | GAGNIER (Gaynier) | MAHEU |
| BOUVRE | GAILLARD | MAILLOU |
| BRANCHEAU | GASTINON | MARRES |
| BRISTOLE (Bristol) | GENDRON (Jondro) | MARTEN (Martin) |
| CALHOUN | GILES | MAXWELL |
| CAMPEAU | GIRARDIN | MELDRUM |
| CARR | GLASS | MENARD (dit Montour) |
| CARRIER | GODET (dit Marentette) | METAY (Mettey, Metty) |
| CHABERT | GODFROY | MINI (Meni) |
| CHAMPAGNE | GODIN | MIRON |
| CHARET | GOUSBOUT | MONTNEMY (Mominie) |
| CHARLAND | GRAVEL | MONTREUIL (Montri) |
| CHATELLEREAU (Shettleroe) | GRENON | MORAS (Moross, Ross) |
| CHAUVIN (Shovar) | GRIFFITH | MORE (Moore) |
| CHENE | GUY (Gee) | MORSE |
| CICOTTE | HIRAQUE | MOULIN |
| CLOUTIER | HUNT | MOUTON |

FAMILIES REPRESENTED WITHIN PRESENT MONROE COUNTY
BEFORE THE WAR OF 1812 (Cont.)

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| MULHOLLAND | PROU (Prouhe) | ST. BERNARD |
| NADEAU | PRUDHOMME (Proudhomme) | ST. LOUIS (Villers dit) |
| NAVARRÉ | RACINE | SANS CRAINTE (Sancrant, Soncrant) |
| NEVEAU | RAIBAUT | SIMON |
| OAKES | RAOUL (Rau, Reau, Roe) | SMITH |
| ODET (Audet) | REAUME (Rheume) | SOLEAU (Solo) |
| OUELLET (Willetts) | REED (Reid) | SORDELIER |
| PARK | RENEAU (Renaud) | SOUDRIET |
| PARKER | RHODE (Rodes) | SUSOR (Suzore) |
| PATTINSON | RICHARDSON | TAILLON |
| PAUL | RIOPEL | TESSIER |
| PEPIN | RIVARD | THIBAULT |
| PERNIER | ROBB | THUOT |
| POLLARD | ROBERT | TUTTLE |
| POUGET (Poujet) | ROBIDOU (Robedoux) | VALIQUET |
| POULIN (Paulin, Poland) | ROULEAU | VILLAIR |
| POUPARD (dit LaFleur) | RULAND | WILLIAMS |
| | ST. AMOUR | |

A few prominent "dit" names in the county are included for some surnames. Also an alternate spelling of the name is given.

Sources: Dr. Chester Anteau's list of Families Present in Monroe County Michigan Census 1710-1830 (1796 Census) 1810 French Claims Map in Monroe Co. Historical Museum. Some surnames who owned land in the county but who lived out of Monroe County have been deleted.

JEAN (JOHN) BELLAMY 1824-1827
A Premature Exclamation of Relief

Jean (John) Bellamy, born about 1783 in France, decided to go to America after having discovered the desperate need for priests there. He arrived in New York on September 1, 1824, and was given instructions to go to Detroit. Fr. Richard assigned him to the River Raisin where he installed himself on October 10, 1824. Here he met the situation which reduced Ganilh to his fond and hasty farewells. Within a year he wrote in the "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi II," p. 108-109:

"My little church is certainly the poorest, and the most wretched of all churches. It has no chalice, no ostensorium, no ciborium, no vestments, no altar linens, no missal. Everything that I have I have borrowed. For an altar I use a sacristy table on which I place an altar-stone... This table is little

more than half-covered by an old and patched altar cloth. This is my altar on which the Spotless Lamb is offered every day..."

On Good Friday of this same year, 1825, Mr. (Gabriel) Richard, returning from Congress, of which he is a member, stopped here to preach the Passion sermon. Such crowds came to hear him that, according to Fr. Bellamy: "it is a miracle that the floor of my church did not collapse under the weight. My little church is upstairs over the room that serves as my rectory... In trying to enter my chamber after the ceremony, I could open the door only with great difficulty. The ceiling had sunk so far that whereas it was ordinarily two inches above the door, it was now touching it."

Bellamy had immediately reminded his new flock about their promise in October of 1806 to provide wood, stones, and man-power for the new church. Again that December, the parishioners seemed willing to build the urgently needed church, and again they agreed a few months later in February 1825 to the same thing. By September, 1825, Bellamy addressed his people on another issue, the bothersome problem of where to construct the new church, on the land acquired near the growing city of Monroe, or on the land "up above" at the original site. This disagreement added another plague of indecision, for those living closer to the town

wanted the convenience of a closer church. As an added incentive for action, Father Bellamy had promised that those who subscribed to the majority church would have their choice of pews in that building. And underlying all the negotiations remained the fact that Father Richard would ultimately have the final word on the site.

Then, on September 4, 1825, it seemed that the parish's prayers had finally been answered: subscriptions for the original site totalled \$1,859, for the Monroe site, \$736. "Blessed be God!" was Bellamy's exclamation in the parish minutes. (His joy however, was premature).

Father Bellamy's grief must have been substantial, when nothing came of this latest "decision." The conflict continued between parishioners, while the erosion and collapse of the old building continued. The floor was barely able to withstand the Sunday gatherings, and the word "ruin" was hardly an exaggeration. But during this time Father Richard was purchasing land nearer to Monroe, land that once belonged to pioneer Pierre (Peter) Soleau. He was seeing an end, possibly, to the years of indecision. For two years, Bellamy made no further entry in the book of minutes.

The passing of 1826 made the dream of a substantial church seem even more elusive to Father Bellamy. On August 23, 1827, he signed the baptismal record for the last time and left the River Raisin, sailing from New York for Macao and Tongking in Indo-China. One can only speculate on his thoughts when leaving the Raisin.

There is a high point for Father Bellamy while he was in Monroe County. Records show he was very active in the Bay Settlement (now Erie). The settlers there had been ministered to by missionaries of Ste. Anne and St. Antoine. Bellamy was instrumental in the development of the fledgling St. Joseph parish at the Bay, where he signed their baptismal register for the first time 4 March 1825. A frame church was built in 1826 and it seems that Bellamy encountered none of the opposition which paralyzed his and other priests' actions at St. Antoine's.

ETIENNE (STEPHEN) BADIN 1828-1829

The Experienced Missionary

In August of 1828, after being without a pastor for six months, to the surprise of everyone in the village, an elderly priest known throughout America was assigned as resident pastor at St. Antoine's. Called the "proto-priest of the U.S." Stephen Badin had come to Detroit to visit his younger brother Francis. Father Richard had prevailed upon the aging priest to go and attempt to restore peace at the Raisin River. I am sure he also hoped the parishioners would finally decide to build a proper church.

Badin was born in Orleans, France in 1768, and received his training in Paris and at the Sulpician Seminary in Orleans. Fleeing the Revolution in 1792 he emigrated to the U.S. and was the FIRST priest ordained here by Bishop Carroll of Baltimore. After studying English at Georgetown College, he was appointed to do missionary work in Kentucky and estimated to have travelled over 100,000 miles on horseback during his ministry there. He spent nine years in Europe collecting funds for the American missions before coming to the River Raisin.

Despite his advanced age, he was still a man of strength and vigor. During his year he made great progress in reuniting the two factions (the ones who wanted the old site for the new church versus the ones who preferred the site suggested by Richard close to town). He relentlessly tried to bring back to the fold those who had lost their faith and also made several conversions, the most famous being Dr. Ephraim Adams, Chief Justice of the County, formerly a Methodist, who was received in the Church on Easter Sunday 1829.

In a letter to Bishop Fenwyck, Badin referred to the building of the new church: "Instructed by experience, and seeing the poverty and miserableness of the Catholics here, I have last week reduced to one half the plan of a church for this place, the foundations of which have already cost \$700. The former dimensions had been 90 feet x 50 feet." Father Clicteur, writing from Cincinnati on July 3, 1829, reported that Badin had "induced the habitants to rebuild in brick their church which is of wood, and which is falling into ruins. The work has already commenced." In August 1829, when Samuel

Smith had replaced Badin, Edward Ellis noted in the SENTINEL: "The Catholics from this county have commenced building a magnificent Brick Church on an eligible situation in the northern part of this village. It will probably be completed before winter, and will make a splendid appearance, and do honor to the enterprise of the French inhabitants." After a year at St. Antoine, Badin returned briefly to Kentucky then ministered among the Potawatomi Indians on St. Joseph's River in Indiana. While on this mission, Father Badin obtained the land upon which the University of Notre Dame was later built. He died in 1853, loved and respected by all.

GABRIEL RICHARD 1802-1827
*A Guiding Light at St. Antoine's During 25
Turbulent Years*

For 25 years Fr. Gabriel Richard played an essential role in the history of our parish. Father Dilhet had left in 1802, Fr. Anthony Ganilh had served as Pastor for only three short, frustrating months in 1822. St. Antoine was practically without spiritual leadership until the arrival of Fr. Jean Bellamy from October 1824 to August 1827. During this 25 year period, Father Richard or his friend Father Levadoux or his assistants Fr. Philip Janvier and Fr. Francis Badin regularly made the difficult trip from Detroit to minister to the Catholics at the River Raisin settlement. Fr. Richard came about four times a year to perform weddings, baptisms or render any services necessary.

Richard performed his first marriage at St. Antoine October 15, 1805 between Joseph Jacob and Marguerite Bernard, his first baptism in 1806. From 1805 to 1818 he performed 77 marriages and 22 more from 1820 to 1824. He also made regular appearances between 1827 and 1831.

"There is no life comparable to his in the annals of the American Priesthood. The impress that his person and his work made upon his contemporaries and his community may be gauged from this: the facades of the City Hall in Detroit are adorned with the figures of four great men deemed inseparable from the History of Michigan: Marquette, La Salle, Cadillac, and Richard." quoted from Fr. George Pare's Book The Catholic Church in Detroit.

(The above city hall was torn down and the statues

now have a place of honor on the campus of Wayne State University).

Born in France in 1767 and ordained in 1791, Gabriel Richard joined the Sulpician order and was a teacher of mathematics until the anti-clericalism and violence of the French Revolution forced him to leave for the missions in America. He arrived in Baltimore in 1792 and was sent West to work with the French and the Indians. He became pastor of St. Anne in Detroit in 1798.

These are just a few of his undertakings. While in Detroit he helped establish schools, set up the Territory's first printing press, published Michigan's first newspaper and its first books. In 1817 he helped organize the Catholepistemiad or University of Michigan and was appointed vice-president at a salary of \$18.75 a year. (From Michigan in Four Centuries.) He was eager to improve the condition of the Indians and established missions for them; his enlightened attitude became the basis of American Indian policy. He promoted religious tolerance, and strongly influenced the Americanization of the early French settlers.

During the war of 1812 Fr. Richard was imprisoned by the British for his strong pro-American stand. After the war he was entrusted by Governor Cass to distribute to the distressed inhabitants on the River Raisin the amount of 1,500 dollars. (Mich. Hist. Colls. XXXVI, 383). In 1823 he was elected as Michigan's territorial delegate to the United States



Fr. Gabriel Richard.
(Taken from Frank Woolford's Book.)

House of Representatives and thus became the only Catholic priest to claim this honor. After serving a term in Congress, he sought re-election and lost to Austin E. Wing, of Monroe, by six votes. Some of Monroe's French Catholics would not support him, as they thought a priest had no business in politics!

In 1821 Fr. Richard had excommunicated a church member of St. Anne's for remarrying after divorce, in violation of church law. That member, Francois Labadie, sued for slander and won. Richard, then serving as a delegate in Congress for the Northwest territories, refused to pay the \$1,116 fine, was jailed for three weeks, and was confined to the County of Wayne. Therefore, after 1824, he was unable to make his regular visits to Monroe, although he was granted immunity to attend the congressional sessions.

Wing, in his History of Monroe refers to Gabriel Richard as the most prominent and influential citizen in the County of Monroe from 1805 to 1827. He was described as austere in his habits and friendly with everyone who met him and was highly respected by both Catholics and Protestants. He was a good speaker, a profound theologian, a good mathematician and was terribly opposed to intemperance and smoking.

The following is a quote from Bulkley's History of Monroe: "He was always a welcome visitor to Monroe, where he won by his kind and gentle manner, as well as by his religious character, the love and respect of the people. He was a man not only of great and elegant learning, but of excellent common sense and withal a most public spirited citizen. His quaint humor and shrewd sense, in no way weakened by his imperfect pronunciation of English, is even yet a pleasant memory..."

When Daniel Webster was in Detroit in 1836 he paid Richard the high compliment of saying: "Fr. Richard was the smartest foreigner he had ever known!"

The baptismal records show no entries between 1812 and 1815, which indicates that most of the inhabitants had fled at the time of the Battle of the River Raisin and taken refuge elsewhere. On June 1, 1818 Bishop Flaget assigned a Father Janvier to

assist Richard. His signature appears in the registers and his first baptism was performed here Sept. 7, 1818.

Fr. Richard is greatly responsible for the location of our church at its present site. When French Claim 353, the 400 acre farm belonging to Pierre Soleau became available, Richard had acquired first one half, and in 1828 the third quarter. Martin Nadeau, trustee of St. Antoine, had acquired one fourth in 1823. Many of the parishioners would have preferred to remain at the old location two and a half miles to the West of town, but Martin Nadeau gave Bishop Fenwick and his successors a quit claim to the quarter he held and Father Richard gave the remainder. The 400 acre tract then became known as the "Church Farm."

In the year 1832 there was an epidemic of Asiatic cholera in Detroit. Father Richard worked ceaselessly administering the consolations of religion to the sick and dying. He himself died of cholera on September 13, 1832 at the age of 67.

We, at St. Mary's, are proud of our close association with one of Michigan's outstanding personalities.

FRANCOIS (FRANCIS) VINCENT BADIN
Fr. Richard's Assistant

After the departure of Fr. Bellamy in August 1827, St. Antoine was left without a pastor. Fr. Francis Badin, assistant to Fr. Richard at St. Anne, Detroit regularly visited St. Antoine's while Fr. Richard was attending Congress.

Fr. Francis was born in France in 1784, was ordained in Cincinnati in 1822, and was the brother of Fr. Stephen Badin, who would take the leadership at St. Antoine's from 1828 to 1829. As you may recall, Fr. Bellamy had thought he had settled the dissension over the location of the new church but then all plans were abandoned once again. During his first visit in December 1827 Fr. Francis Badin had read a letter from Fr. Richard demanding that the parishioners build a new church and approving the old site. Actually Fr. Richard had bought 3/4 of a 400 acre parcel extending from the Raisin River, right in the hub of all the new activity in Frenchtown, north almost to Stony Creek. The

other share was owned by St. Antoine, with Martin Nadeau acting as trustee. Fr. Richard wanted the trustees to transfer their rights over this piece of land to the Diocesan Bishop for it was his plan to do so with his 300 acres. In making this demand, he struck at the very root of the discord at St. Antoine's: the old trustee system of property ownership.

To get back to Fr. Francis Badin, he announced on May 25, 1828 that a church built of wood, 60 ft. long, 40 ft. wide, 20 ft. high, plastered on the outside with good cement would be built on the old site. He himself drove the first stake.

Without his knowledge, Martin Nadeau had gone to Detroit on May 22 where he quietly signed a quit claim deed conveying St. Anthony's portion of the 400 acre parcel to Bishop Fenwick. Fr. Richard in turn conveyed his portion and this action brought an end to the old trustee system.

The book of minutes in which the proceedings of the trustee meetings had been recorded for some 40 years was now closed and the much needed church built the next year at the urging of the Bishop and in the location Fr. Richard had wanted all along.

Fr. Francis Badin was present at Gabriel Richard's death in 1832 and was Vicar-General of this area until 1842. He died in France in 1851.

SAMUEL M. SMITH 1829-1831

"If I were not a priest, I should not be subjected to trials such as these."

Fr. Samuel Smith was born in Pennsylvania and was well educated by a prosperous Quaker father. He was converted to Catholicism, was ordained in 1826 at Bardstown, Kentucky and was sent to Detroit to help minister among the growing population of English-speaking Catholics in the area. He assisted Father Stephen Badin for two months at St. Antoine and then took over as Pastor. He is the first one to sign the registry in English, speaking French with difficulty.

By Easter, April 11, 1830 Fr. Smith was requesting a French-speaking assistant in a letter to Bishop Fenwick and announced that the long-awaited church had been started, though it would not be

ready by his goal of July 4. He wondered why his parishioners were so content with maintaining their low-income status quo, but he also noted that there were some "excellent people" among them, one of the few compliments given by any pastor so far. He saw a great need for a school, and thought that this would "be of more advantage to religion than anything else that could be done in this place." A school could remove much of the ignorance which binds the people to their vices and problems.

In June 1830, local Monroe publisher Edward D. Ellis printed an "apology" written anonymously by Smith, called "Affectionate Address to Every Sincere Inquirer After Truth." It was an outline of the Catholic Faith and exposed a man defending and trying to clarify his own faith, or lack of it, or search for it. It is significant because it hints that he may already then have had doubts about his faith. Also, the booklet was the first one published outside of Detroit.

Father Smith repaired the old church of St. Antoine and made a monastery of it with the idea of founding a religious order of teaching nuns. However, he started prematurely, without the approval of his superiors and was chastised in December 1830 after running an advertisement for the female boarding school in the local MICHIGAN SENTINEL dated September 17, 1830.

On the same day, the first celebration of the Mass was held in the new St. Antoine Church. There must have been much relief, even among those who opposed the new site, for at least it was a safer structure. Smith noted the move "is not very pleasing to some of the old heads above." This new church, so long in becoming a reality, was to be known as the "Fairgrounds Church" because of its location at the Northwest corner of W. Noble and N. Monroe (then known as Anderson Street) and near the future site of the fairgrounds and race track. The new church was constructed of brick by local mason Edward Loranger, but was noted by an eyewitness to leak and let the snow in through the roof.

Reverend Frederick Rese called it "large and neatly finished" following a visit to Monroe in September 1830. Fr. Carabin later recalled that the church "had nothing but four walls and a roof which

protected nothing." In 1834 Frederic Rese, now Bishop of the Michigan Diocese, ordered the parish to build a new church, the original portion of the present St. Mary's. In 1845, only 15 years after its completion, the Fairgrounds Church was torn down and the materials used to enlarge St. Mary's.

In October 1830 Smith wrote another letter to the Bishop, noting a law passed at Detroit which was designed to give more power to the laity in purchasing and disposing of church property. It was a threat to the lands already held by the Bishop and Church, a law that "comes from hell itself," and Smith vowed "never to allow my Parishioners to rule me," and acknowledged that the changes he had made in abolishing the trustee system in the parish had been fruitful; the people are "all now united under their pastor." The shift of more power to the pastor was long overdue, but it did not mean a new onset of respect for the position. The "habitants" had hated Smith from the start and they thought of him as an outsider - a Yankee who preferred the company of Americans to their own. In fact, Smith confessed that "some of them even threatened to pull down my house." He, in turn made no effort to hide his scorn for their carefree life and want of godliness. "It was afflicting, indeed, to see the manner in which they profaned the Holy Sabbath. Horse-racing, fishing, or hunting was, on that sacred day, their favourite diversion; fiddling and singing was the pastime of the evening. In the winter, the nights were passed in dancing and carousing, in drinking and card-playing. Some exceptions, of course, there must have been to all these abominations; but they were few."

Smith had been complaining of the amount of work he had; he had always had health problems and he really needed a French-speaking assistant. Father Pierre Carabin arrived in December 1830 and immediately gained favor among the French Canadians, while bitterness and resentment grew towards Smith.

Smith complained in a letter dated March 28, 1831 of Carabin's insubordination and imprudence. Perhaps he was jealous of Carabin's swift acceptance by the French. From the beginning he was doomed by the inevitable friction that authority brings to an almost self-governing people, not highly educated like their pastor, nor prone to his

ideas of high morals and piety. Carabin further usurped his authority by giving the people a choice in paying for the priest's support, noting that Carabin ministered even to those who did not pay. Carabin in turn complained of Smith's dictatorial manner and constant demand for money. In 1843 he wrote: "Samuel Smith was the cure of the parish; he was extremely discontented with the parish and the parish with him too, and I with him, and he with me."

In July 1831, Bishop Fenwick stopped at St. Antoine's and withdrew not Carabin but Smith, perhaps feeling that Smith had outworn his welcome. Whatever his shortcomings, Samuel Smith did break down the old trustee system that had paralyzed the parish for so many years. His action was necessary but was carried out without tact and left deep bitterness. He can also be credited with attempting to start the first school in Monroe and converting many people to the Catholic faith. He was brilliant and his intentions were probably good, but even as a youth he showed emotional instability.

Smith did not leave Monroe until April 1832 and shortly thereafter renounced his faith, becoming a bitter opponent of the Church. He published an anti-Catholic newspaper called "The Downfall of Babylon, the Triumph of Truth over Popery," calling himself Samuel "B" Smith, Late a Popish Priest. He appears vengeful, blaming the Church perhaps for his own inadequacies. A sad parting note for one who finally made change come to the River Raisin.

EARLIEST ENGLISH-SPEAKING FAMILIES AT ST. MARY'S 1818-1840

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Askin (from Detroit) | Corcoran |
| Adams | Corrigan |
| Bond | Cunningham |
| Brown | Curran |
| Burns | Daily |
| Caldwell | Deven |
| Campbell | Diver |
| Carey/Corey | Donahue |
| Christiancy | Donnelly |
| Close | Doyle |
| Collins | Dunn |
| Conlen | Ellis |
| Conlisk | Finnigan |
| Cooney | Golden |

EARLIEST ENGLISH-SPEAKING FAMILIES AT ST. MARY'S 1818-1840 (Cont.)

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Gregory | McGuire |
| Hennessey | McManus |
| Hopkins | McQuillan |
| Hubble | Molloy |
| Hughes | Murphy |
| Johnston | O'Neil |
| Jones | O'Rorke |
| Keegan | Paxton |
| Kelly | Queenan (Creenan) |
| Kelley | Quinn |
| Kiley | Rabbit |
| Knaggs (from Detroit) | Rafferty |
| Lamb | Rhodes |
| Lynch | Riley (Reilly) |
| Lyons | Rooney |
| Maynes | Simmons |
| McBride | Sullivan |
| McBrian | Tobin |
| McCarty | Trainor |
| McCloskey | Webster |
| McCormick | Whelan |
| McDonnel | Whipple |
| McFarland | York |
| McGovern | |

These names represent the earliest English-speaking Catholic families at St. Antoine/St. Mary's. Some families came from the Detroit area, some from Canada, some from Ireland & Scotland, some from New England states. They arrived a few years after the War of 1812, and were a solid number in their presence at St. Antoine/St. Mary, illustrating the need for English services in the Church. Their presence here predates the famous Irish potato famine of the 1840's. Many of the descendants of these families became parishioners of St. John the Baptist when it was finally organized in 1872.

PIERRE (PETER) CARABIN 1832-1843
He had a Greater Capacity for Hardship

Fr. Pierre Carabin was born in France in 1807 and, came to the United States with his family, settling in Norwalk, Ohio. Pierre had been prepared for the priesthood in France and his father had written to Bishop Fenwick, telling him of his son's hope to enter the ministry. When Bishop Fenwick met the young man, he was impressed with his intelligence

and his knowledge of the Indian languages and took Pierre with him to Cincinnati. Carabin finished his studies at Bardstown, Kentucky, was ordained September 5, 1830, and was sent to the River Raisin in response to Samuel Smith's pleas. Problems developed between the two, Smith feeling threatened by Carabin, faulting his youth and lack of respect for Smith's position or person. The conflict was resolved in 1831 with Smith's departure.

Father Michael Cummins made a brief appearance in the area in July of 1831. He was an Irish priest sent to replace Fr. Smith and to minister to the English-speaking. He lasted only a few weeks. Carabin took over the pastor's position in 1832.

In 1834 Bishop Frederick Rese visited the River Raisin and a new church was discussed, with the Bishop promising his support. Somehow the second St. Antoine "Fairgrounds Church" was not suitable, perhaps because of its size or its poor quality. Whatever the reason, with the Bishop's encouragement, wood was cut and squared in the winter months, and bricks burned and molded in the summer of 1835. The local stone foundation was put into place during the fall and the brick walls erected. The shingled roof was laid in 1836.

Bishop Rese, true to his promise, arrived back from Rome in 1838 and gave Carabin \$2,400 towards the total cost of \$6,572. The third St. Antoine Church, on Anderson Street (now North Monroe Street) and Water Street (now Elm Avenue), faced the Raisin River and the town of Monroe. It was rectangular, long and tall, and accessible by several main routes. In May 1839 the church was dedicated by Rev. Martin Kundig, Delegate for Bishop Rese, who had already left the area. After 40 years of dissension, this finally was the suitable church the labors of which remain with us today.

A Father Ferdinand McCosker appeared in Monroe in 1834 to organize a separate congregation for the English-speaking. He gathered them (they were mostly Irish) in the little brick church at the Fairgrounds. Beyond his name nothing more is known of him than is recorded by Father Carabin: "...an Irish priest who remained here as pastor of the Irish until 1836, when he was suspended. He left in 1837."

Even though Carabin somehow carried through a project that had balked all his predecessors, he himself was no better off than the priests who had given up the parish before him; he had merely a greater capacity for hardships. This can be inferred from the following account of him based on the recollections of an eye witness, a Mr. Philip Francis Scanlan:

"... The pastor was a Frenchman speaking very imperfect English. The English-speaking members of his congregation were in the minority; they attended Mass on Sundays at eight o'clock, at which hour the pastor always preached. At half-past ten he offered the Holy Sacrifice for the French families, who came swarming in from the prairies in little springless carts drawn by lively ponies, small but strong. The mother, holding the baby, sat in a chair, which occupied the middle of the cart. The children stood around her holding on to a railing which enabled them to keep an upright position and also kept them from falling out.

The half-past ten o'clock Mass was always served by a venerable Frenchman, who sang the Gloria, Credo and Sanctus in the old Gregorian chant and finally made the collection. The rain came through the roof and the snows of winter fell on the fingers of the officiating priest (this refers to the Fairgrounds Church) the cold never shortened his sermons, he preached usually one hour... One gloomy afternoon when it was too cold to snow, Father Carabin called at Mr. Scanlan's comfortable home, he was returning from a sick call eight miles out on the prairie, he had walked there and back, his patched boots were very thin and his flimsy coat was drawn together here and there with black thread by his own unskillful fingers; one of these "darns" had given way. This coat was buttoned up to his chin and Mrs. Scanlan could see no wristbands; evidently he wore no shirt; he wore no overcoat. He was smiling cordially, but Mrs. Scanlan saw that he looked ready to faint. She brought her husband's wrapper and asked the exhausted priest to put it on while she repaired the rent in his coat... When Mr. Scanlan came home in the evening he was informed that the pastor was starving and freezing. Without waiting for his supper Mr. Scanlan, taking with him a parcel

containing all sorts of necessities, including bed-clothing, which his wife had ready for him, drove quickly in his double sleigh across the river. Father Carabin sat in his desolate room, without fire, or food; wrapped in his one poor blanket, he was reading his office, by the light of a short bit of candle..."

It is always emphasized that Carabin succeeded where others had failed. The time must have been right, if not overdue, for change and thought of the future. He was able to endure what others could not, and perhaps some of the dissension in the parish was channeled into action. His accomplishments were an end result of his endurance and perseverance.

Besides his many responsibilities at St. Antoine's, Carabin also tended to the needs of the faithful in a log church to the north of Monroe at Riviere Aux Cygnes (Swan Creek Newport). By the year 1843 this group of French-Canadians and Alsatians established the parish of St. Charles Borromeo. Carabin also went on calls into Wayne County in the Huron area and sometimes into Lenawee County. The southern county parish at Erie, St. Joseph of the Bay, had its own priest, Father Peter Warlop.

In the baptismal records, Fr. Carabin recorded baptisms in French or in English, depending on the nationality of the person baptized. In August 1843 Fr. Carabin was transferred to Green Bay, Wisconsin. However, ill health and palsy in his legs forced him to be treated in Cleveland, Ohio. He was an invalid for the remainder of his life and died on August 1, 1873.

LIST OF IRISH HEADS OF FAMILY AT
MUDDY CREEK (LASALLE)
as compiled by Fr. Carabin ca. 1838

Peter Cooney
John Cooney - his son
Owen Cooney
John Cooney, brothers
John Cooney, widower cousin
Michael Conlisk
Peter Conlisk
Patrick Guilday
William Guilday

LIST OF IRISH HEADS OF FAMILY AT
MUDDY CREEK (LASALLE) (Cont.)

James Lyons
Michael Lyons
William Webb
Thomas Langon
Bridget Reily, widow
John McCarty
Peter Partlen
John Rhin
Anne Thiernak, widow
Bridget Conlan, widow

TOUSSAINT SANTELLI 1843-1844
The Reluctant Michiganian

Fr. Toussaint Santelli was born in Italy, was ordained into the priesthood in Milan, and served as Rector of the Imperial College of Lodi. He was then "dragged," to use his own words, "into the missions of Michigan by Bishop Rese" as quoted in Fr. Pare's book, and ministered to the needs of the Catholics in Mackinac from August 1838 to August 1843.

After three years in Michigan, Santelli asked Bishop Blanc of New Orleans, Louisiana to be transferred to that much warmer climate, since it became all too apparent that the Michigan weather did not agree with him. His request was tabled but eventually Santelli did go further "south" to Monroe. His first entry as Pastor was in October of 1843 and ended in May 1844 when he requested to return to his native Italy.

During his tenure at St. Antoine's, Santelli installed Thomas Digue as a Sunday schoolteacher, and chose female teachers to assist with the girls. The school ended up meeting during the week and became a normal school, having as many as 100 pupils.

EARLIEST GERMAN NAMES AT
ST. MARY'S 1829-1850

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Althoefer | Lehr |
| Angelbrandt | Lohner |
| Belkofer | Ludman |
| Bergmoser | Muckenthaler |
| (Betzel) Hammer | Mueller |
| Billmayer | Nufer |
| Brillman | Riedel |
| Engelhardt | Rupp |
| Fix | Schaub |
| Frey | Scheich |
| Geisler | Schnepf |
| Gentner | Schnorberger |
| Heisler | Smit |
| Hoffman | Stein |
| Jung | Steiner |
| Kemmelspacher | Straub |
| Kimling | Streicher |
| Kirschner | Swope |
| KlappenBerger | Waldorf |
| Klotz | Weiss |
| Knauf | Westerman |
| Kraus | Wurzchmitt |
| Kuhlman | Yax |
| Kuhn | Yaeger |
| Langendorfer | Zang |
| Lauer | Zimmerman |

These names represent the earliest Catholic German Families. The Yax family came from the Detroit area; however the others are German immigrants. The earliest records are about 1829, and since St. Michael's was organized for the Germans in 1853, the pioneer Germans had their services at St. Antoine/St. Mary's. The bulk of Catholic Germans came to Monroe County after 1850.

Chapter Three

The Redemptorist Era

TEN FRUITFUL YEARS 1845-1855

*St. Antoine Parish rededicated to St. Mary**"God has sent us to clear this part of your land, now the work is done. Others must come to cultivate it."*

St. Antoine was under the pastorate of Fr. Santelli when two Redemptorist priests, Father Louis Gillet and Father Francis Poilvache came to give a mission in March of 1844. At the time, Father Gillet boarded with Mayor James Godfroy and Father Poilvache stayed with the Pelletier family. Santelli left shortly thereafter and the trustees, or "marguilliers" assumed the responsibilities of the parish.

The Redemptorists had been looking for a suitable location for a convent and found Monroe to their liking. They also felt that the parish with its many outlying missions would really be suitable for them. On June 16, 1844 Reverend Peter Paul Lefevre, Coadjutor Administrator of Detroit, and four trustees of St. Antoine Parish relinquished their rights over the Church and the land and signed a 300-year contract, empowering the Redemptorists to take charge; Father Gillet, Superior of the Order, also signed the contract. The property was deeded for the consideration of one dollar and the promise to take charge of all French Catholics in the surrounding district (this included nine missions within a 60 mile radius). The Redemptorists also promised to preach at least one sermon in French every Sunday and Holy day until the expiration of the contract.

A copy of this interesting document was found at the Monroe County Register of Deeds and we also have a copy handwritten by Venerable John Nepomucene Neumann, Vice provincial of the Redemptorists in Baltimore, who copied the document on May 29, 1848.

COPY OF CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER (BETTER KNOWN AS THE REDEMPTORISTS) AND THE TRUSTEES OF ST. ANTHONY PARISH.

The inhabitants of the French Rom. Cath. Church of St. Anthony at Monroe in the County of Monroe & State of Michigan being united in a general meeting on the 16th of June 1844, after hearing the propositions made by the Revd. Father Louis Gillet, in the name of the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer, & from the Rt. Revd. Lefevre, Bishop Administrator of Detroit, to the end of establishing a house of said Order at Monroe, they have named as trustees those whose names are subscribed to take in the name of said congregation the following obligations, to wit: the said Gentlemen whose names are subscribed as aforesaid, with the Rt. Revd. Bishop of Detroit acting in the name of the Parish of St. Anthony in receiving the Revd. Fathers Redemptorists as Pastors, engage themselves for the space of three hundred years to give them in the name of the Revd. F. Louis Gillet present Superior, and for all his successors at the disposi-

*Catholic Church) Lease
 Recd. for Record this 12th May 1848 at 30
 The Inhabitants of the French Roman Catholic Church
 in the County of Monroe and State of Michigan being
 united in a general meeting on the 16th day of June 1844 after hearing the propositions
 made by the Revd. Father Louis Gillet in the name of the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer
 at Monroe they have named as trustees those
 Gentlemen whose names are subscribed as aforesaid
 with the Rt. Revd. Bishop of Detroit acting in the name of the Parish of St. Anthony
 in receiving the Revd. Fathers Redemptorists as Pastors engage themselves for the
 space of three hundred years to give them in the name of the Revd. F. Louis Gillet present
 Superior, and for all his successors at the disposal of the Superior of the Order of the
 Most Holy Redeemer at the Parish of St. Anthony Church, the State of the Diocese of Detroit a
 lease for the term of three hundred years of all their con-
 trivance to the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer, Sundays and fast days
 of the Order and the house of address of the said Order
 the profits and use of the land belonging to the
 Order, the building of Pews and the revenues of said church
 and all buildings which the said Order shall
 wish to erect on the ground remains the property of
 the Church, and all other things which are or shall be*

Portion of document found at Register of Deeds giving Redemptorists a 300-year lease on church property.

tion of the Superior of the said Order according to the Canons of the Roman Catholic Church, the Statutes of the Diocese of Detroit & Privileges of said Order-

First: The free use of St. Anthony's Church all therein contained, to the exclusion of all persons, strangers to the Order.

Second: The Sunday and Feastday's collection, with the entire produce of the pews and the power of adding other pews, when said Order thinks it proper.

Third: The profits & free Use of the land belonging to said Church of St. Anthony.

OBSERVATIONS

First: The renting of pews & the revenues of said Church belong exclusively to the said Order.

Second: All buildings etc., which the said Order shall erect on the land of the Church of the Bishoprick, with the exception of the ground, remains the property of said Order, as also all the furniture of the Church, ornaments, etc. excepting what is actually there now, a schedule of which is recorded in the parish records.

Said Order through the Revd. F. Louis Gillet, present Superior of the Order aforesaid.

First: To provide that the aforesaid French Congregation shall be administered to in the French language & served in a sufficient manner according to the rites of said Church, & that there shall always be a resident priest as Pastor.

Second: To defray all the ordinary expenses for the maintaining & decoration of said Church, but the said Parish of St. Anthony shall not have the power of compelling the said Order to make or pay for expenses incurred or made in such Church, such as for additions, bells, organs, or similar objects, or to make good losses that may be accidental. And if the said Order make of their own accord such changes, or incur such expenses, said Parish shall not be liable for any part of them, except with its own consent.

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of J.J. Godfroy; M. Couture.

Peter PP. Lefevre, +BP. Zel. Admin. Coadj. Detroit.

F. Louis Gillet, Sup. of the Redemptorist at Monroe.

Trustees of the French Congregation of St. Anthony: An. Lafontaine; E.A. Peltier; Michael Duvall; M. Bissonet

Temoins du P. Louis: A.F. Robert; J.B. Cicott.

Copy No. 4-Act of Agreement between the French R.C. Parish of St. Anthony in Monroe, Mich. and the Order of Redemptorists-

Registers Office-S.-Recd for Record, this 12th day of May A.D. 1845 at 3 o'clock P.M. and Recorded in Lib. KK fol 175 & 176-J.E. Skinner, Regr. Affidavit of Trustees, made December 25, 1844 before M. Couture, Justice of Peace; and Bishop Lefevre January 25, 1845, before Tho. P. Watson, Notary Public.

(Copied in Monroe May 29, 1848) P. Neumann, C.S.S.R.

When the Redemptorists first arrived in Monroe, they lived in two small houses (one a log cabin) located near the church. Father Gillet found it necessary to enlarge the church; he added a 28 ft. deep sanctuary, a house to serve as a novitiate, and a preparatory college for Redemptorist students. The College was dedicated to St. Joseph.

When the sanctuary and house were blessed December 8, 1845 by Bishop Lefevre, the patronage of the church was changed from St. Antoine to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception (the actual proclamation of the dogma was made by Pope Pius IX in 1854).

Father Gillet had a house of studies for the boys, but was anxious to start a girls school. He was able to attract three women to Monroe and he helped them start an educational program for girls and set up a simple rule of religious life. The school was started

in January of 1846 and a year later construction of a convent for the Sisters was also started. August 2 of that year, Bishop Lefevre came for Confirmation. The awarding of honors and closing exercises took place in the church. Father Gillet was relieved of his duties as Superior of the Redemptorists a few days later and was replaced by Father Smulders.

By 1845 the number of Germans had been steadily increasing and Father Simon Saenderl came to live with Gillet and Poilvache. The second floor of the newly built rectory was used as a chapel and Father Saenderl gathered his German-speaking congregation there. In 1852 a German parish was organized and dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel on West Front Street. Three years later the first IHM parochial school was opened at St. Michael's.

In 1853 the Head of the American Redemptorist Order decided to close all communities incapable of growth. Unfortunately the House in Monroe had never been off the Provincial's dole. The priests were so busy ministering to the needs of not only the parishioners of St. Mary's but also of the outlying missions, that they had no time for the functions of a religious order. On May 1, 1855 10 years after their arrival, the Redemptorists left Monroe. Their departure was like a public calamity. The church was left without a Pastor and the fledgling order of Sisters left without spiritual guidance for seven months. The Bishop protested the closing on the grounds that the Redemptorists were breaking a 300-year contract. He took his case to Rome, but Rome upheld the Redemptorists.

During their relatively short stay in Monroe, these remarkable missionaries had been instrumental in providing a church for the German-speaking in 1852, and had dedicated a log cabin church to St. Patrick for the Irish and German settlers of Stony Creek in 1847. They also built a convent for the Sisters, two schools, and a large rectory. Their outstanding achievements in the nine mission-stations they attended may be summed up as follows: in 1846 Father Gillet started a church at Huron River (Mt. Clemens). He also built a chapel for the French and Irish at Blissfield. In 1850 a chapel was started at Riviere aux Sables (Sandy River). The Fathers also found time to preach missions to the French, Germans and Irish in many other places in Michigan.

The following chapters will give you a better insight into the lives of some of these interesting priests.

LOUIS FLORENT GILLET 1844-1847
"The Tiny Acorn developed into a Mighty Oak"
Founder of the IHM Order

Father Louis Florent Gillet was born in Antwerp, Belgium, January 12, 1813. He was professed as a Redemptorist in 1833, was ordained in 1838 and came to the missions in America in 1843. At the invitation of his friend Bishop Lefevre of Detroit, he came West shortly after his arrival and preached several missions in French in the Detroit Area. Shortly after giving a mission in Monroe, it was decided that Monroe would be the most suitable location for a Redemptorist House. On July 16, 1844 a 300-year lease was signed between them and the Parish of St. Antoine. Father Gillet was assigned as Pastor of the parish and Superior of the Order.

Father Gillet describes his pioneer work in the following letter (to Rev. Fr. De Held, Provincial of the Belgian Redemptorists in America, written April 13, 1845):

"We have been more than a year at Monroe. My companions at present are Father Poilvache, two candidate lay brothers, and an Irish student of theology. Our church, which is Gothic, is 100 feet long and 50 feet wide, with a tower 100 feet high;



Fr. Florent Louis Gillet, founder of the IHM Order.

but as it is too small to accommodate the faithful, we have commenced the work of adding a sanctuary of twenty-eight feet. At the back of the church I have laid the foundation of a brick convent, which will be thirty-five feet wide and seventy long...Our parish at Monroe is composed of French Canadians, Irish and Germans. Besides the parish, properly so called, nine stations, constituting part of the parish, are attended by us, seven of which are composed entirely of Irish. Judge by this whether I stand in want of a fast horse. Being forced to speak English, I have succeeded pretty well, so that now I frequently preach in that language. Father Poilvache usually attends the parish and the French missions...My further station from here is about SIXTY MILES...The Catholic religion has spread particularly in Monroe; many Protestants have already made their abjuration, and I have about a dozen more who are under instruction!

Catholics by becoming temperate have at the same time become fervent...During the past year and a half I have given the pledge-that is to say, received the promise of temperance to four thousand Canadians, who are divided into seven societies. That of Monroe numbers 1200 members. This society is established in the manner of a confraternity, having monthly meetings and a rule approved by Mgr. Lefevre, Bishop of Detroit."

In 1845 Gillet began the erection of a rectory adjoining the church. On December 8, 1845 the enlarged church was blessed by Bishop Lefevre, at which time the church was dedicated to St. Mary. Fr. Gillet described the ceremony as follows: "A banner twenty feet long on which was the monogram of Mary surrounded by twelve stars was waving at the top of the tower; the roar of cannon was reverberated through the city the whole afternoon until eight o'clock mingling with the sound of the bell announced the eve of the great day when our church was consecrated to Mary Immaculate. The crowd was immense." He went on to say that the dedication lasted from seven in the morning until two in the afternoon. As part of the ceremony, the Bishop went around the church six times.

Father Gillet's greatest achievement during his short stay in Monroe was the establishment of the teaching order of Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1846 he proudly announced

the opening of the Young Ladies Academy. In 1847 his integrity as a priest was questioned. Even though he was proven completely innocent of the charges, he was recalled to Baltimore. Fr. Smulders, who replaced him September 13, 1847 within six weeks had completely cleared his reputation and reinstated him in the esteem of his parishioners as a model of the holiness, zeal and spotless purity of an ideal Redemptorist.

Fr. Gillet had previously requested to be relieved as Superior of the Order, as he felt unfit by temperament for the office. There was the strain of trying to administer the House and to meet the needs of an extended parish on insufficient funds, and also his inexperience as a young priest. He left the Redemptorist order and returned to Europe, coming back to preach missions to the French people in the North Central States. In ill health, he returned to France, and eventually joined a Cistercian monastery, and took the name of Marie Celestin. He lived in reclusion for 34 years, having no news of the little community he had founded in Monroe. Three years before his death he had the enormous satisfaction of hearing that the small community of four Sisters he had started had grown and expanded and was doing great work for the education of children in America.

Father Gillet died in Hautecombe, France Nov. 14, 1892 at the age of 79. On May 30, 1929 Feast of Corpus Christi, the cornerstone of the father Gillet Memorial Chapel was blessed. The prayers for the blessing were sung in the new IHM cemetery by their chaplain, Rev. Walter Marron, in the presence of the Professed Sisters, novices, postulants and orphans. 82 years after his death, on August 2, 1929, the sacred relics of Rev. Louis Florent Gillet, founder of the IHM order, were carried to their final resting place in the IHM cemetery in Monroe.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IHM ORDER

Our parish history would be incomplete without dedicating a chapter to the Sisters, Immaculate Heart of Mary. The order was founded by Father Louis Florent Gillet to meet a need for Catholic education in our parish. The Sisters had close spiritual connections with our church as well; it served as their place of worship and devotion for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the daily visit to

the Blessed Sacrament that were the mainstay of their spiritual exercises. The log cabin in which they lived had no space for a chapel, and even the frame convent begun by Father Smulders in 1951 had only an oratory until the Sisters received permission in 1869 to have the Blessed Sacrament in the convent. Therefore, for almost 15 years, our Church was the site of all the most important activities in the spiritual life of the Sisters, including the Diamond Jubilee of 1920.

The education of the children of the parish was the foremost priority, and it was badly needed, for in 1845, the population of Monroe was estimated at 2,500. Three mills, two furnaces (factories), some 30 or more stores were indicative of prosperity. Her prestige as the county seat, the improvements in transportation effected by the completion of the ship canal in 1842 and the excellent railroad extending 78 miles to Hillsdale were important assets. Yet the educational facilities of the River Raisin area at this time were meager and there was no Catholic school.

No wonder then that Father Gillet was looking for religious sisters such as he had known in his native Belgium. He tried to encourage the Bishop of Detroit to look with favor on his ideas by praising Monroe. Bishop Lefevere attested to this when he wrote in 1844: "Father Louis (Gillet) speaks to me of Monroe as the most important place after Detroit." When Father Gillet expressed the need for Catholic schools in Monroe he had a definite plan in mind. Following the Redemptorist practice of preaching missions, he had come in contact with two experienced religious who were willing to leave their congregation and go with him to Monroe to begin a new teaching order: they were Marie Therese Maxis and Charlotte Ann Schaaf. There was also a young woman in Grosse Pointe who wanted to become a religious, Therese Renaud, whom Father Gillet had left after a mission with the promise that she would ring the Angelus bell three times a day at St. Paul's church as a test of her vocation until his return!

Marie Therese Maxis, having been interviewed by Bishop Lefevere in Detroit, arrived in Monroe before the Redemptorists had moved into their new rectory. Mr. and Mrs. Roderick O'Connor took her into their home near the church and from Septem-



Fr. Gillet Chapel - 1987.



IHM Sisters in habit.

From left: a novice, postulant and professed Sister.

ber 19, 1845 until October 14, she waited there for her companion from Baltimore to join her. On Sunday November 9, the third member, Therese Renaud, joined them. The first informal meeting of this beginning group of educators was held in the O'Connor home.

The next morning, November 10, the three women met in St. Antoine Church for Mass. After offering it, Father Gillet returned to the sanctuary in surplice and stole. After reciting a prayer over the three women, he rested his stole for a moment on each, to signify the cooperation in the work of the church they were pioneering. The Sisters settled into the houses on the banks of the River Raisin which the Redemptorists had vacated. Here was the first motherhouse for the Sisters, the first Catholic School of permanence in Monroe. Here were put into action all Father Gillet's dreams for Catholic education and the women's dreams of service in the Church.

Rules were adapted from the Redemptorist rule of St. Alphonsus Liguori and Father Gillet sent them to Bishop Lefevre for approbation. The two former Sisters of Providence renewed their vows on December 14, 1845. On this day also the two newly-professed sisters began wearing the "blessed dress" as the habit was called. It was also conferred that day on the first postulant, Therese Renaud, who became Sister Celestine. Mother Theresa Maxis retained her baptismal name in its English form, and Charlotte Schaaf became Sister Ann. The habit then was black like that of the Redemptorists, and like it in cut, except for the scapular and the flowing sleeves. Unlike the Redemptorist biretta, the Sisters wore a small bonnet and veil, with a white guimpe. They had procured the patterns for these from the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur who were stationed in Toledo.

Thus they began living a truly religious life and began preparing for the opening of school. The Christmas Day issue of the *Monroe Advocate* carried an advertisement for the "Young Ladies Academy under the direction of the Sisters of Providence." (the present name of Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was not adopted until December 8, 1847). On January 14, 1846 Father Gillet celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit for the new school. On the next day, 40 day students

(the first St. Mary's school) and four boarders took up their studies. There were a few boys at first, but Father Gillet dismissed them after a few weeks.

As the school began on that cold January day, the Sisters were living in the two small houses and teaching school there. Mother Theresa lived in one house with the four boarders, and Sisters Ann and Celestine in the other. Many trips were made every day back and forth in all kinds of weather. The Redemptorist Brothers broke ice on the river so the Sisters could get the water needed for daily life. Drinking water came from a well near the church. The living quarters were so crowded that a cook-stove and cupboard were set up in an attached little shed, and on rainy days the Sisters had to use an umbrella to get dishes out of the cupboard.

In April 1846, the first member from Monroe came to live with the Sisters. Six weeks later, she received the habit and the name Sister Alphonsine. Josette Godfroy-Smyth must have been a financial blessing to the congregation, for she brought with her a position of status in the city of Monroe, the furniture from her home and a substantial dowry. In a group whose only income was the tuition paid by the students (paltry by today's standards, ranging by age of pupil from \$2 to \$6 a quarter). She must have been welcome on more than her own personal commitment.

The priests who made this little group a force for education were all pastors of St. Mary Parish up to and including Father Edward Joos. Fr. Gillet who planted the seed in Alphonsian spirituality was replaced by another Redemptorist, Father Egidius Smulders, assisted by Fathers Francis Poilvache and James Poirier, until the Redemptorists were recalled by their superiors in May of 1855.

St. Mary's was left without a pastor until Father John Van Gennip, assisted by Father Henry Rievers, took over in November. He was given charge of the Sisters, but he had not had much experience with religious life. Although fervent and sincere, the charge was onerous to both him and the sisters, who did not complain. Even after he left in 1857, he remained a loyal, true friend. The month of November, 1857 was an important one in the congregation, for it was then that the Bishop sent another young Belgian priest, Father Edward Joos, to be

pastor of St. Mary's and Director of the congregation, a post he was to hold until his death in May 1901, although he relinquished the pastorate in July, 1871.

His long period of directorship in the congregation and the reverence with which the Sisters treated him is legendary in the community. If he understood from Fr. Van Gennip's remarks that the government and discipline in the community was imperfect, he had high goals in mind, for he told the Bishop that his aim was strict observance of the entire rule. He undoubtedly influenced many of the regulations and customs of the community, yet the rule was not his work alone, and the time spent on it by the members of the congregation extended to 1918 before it was submitted to Rome for approval.

November 10, 1920 marked the 75th anniversary of the founding of the congregation. The jubilee was commemorated on May 31st in historic St. Mary's, the church wherein the ceremonies of reception and profession of the foundress, Mother M. Theresa, and her devoted co-workers, Sister M. Ann and Sister M. Celestine were held. A solemn pontifical Mass was celebrated by the Right Reverend Michael J. Gallagher, Bishop of Detroit. Most Reverend Henry Moeller, Archbishop of Cincinnati, presided. The sermon was preached by Right Reverend Joseph Schrembs, Bishop-Elect of Cleveland, Ohio. Bishop Schrembs emphasized the fact that the congregation...is today the most potent individual force in education and in moulding character in the State of Michigan.

"St. Mary's, Yesterday and Today" was the title of a brilliant pageant given in the auditorium of St. Mary's Academy. The pageant, a charming, colorful representation, vividly portrayed the principal events in the history of the order - the early settlements in Michigan; the coming of the Redemptorists; the foundation of the congregation by Father Gillet, and the advent of the saintly Father Joos.

Monroe and its Catholic community can be proud of its close ties through the years with the IHM Sisters. Their area of influence has been felt not only locally, but all over Michigan and beyond. Known primarily as teachers, they now minister in other areas.

Ministries include formal and religious education, adult education, campus ministry, parish and pastoral ministry, ministry to the sick and elderly, prayer ministry, extension programs, social services, services to the poor and to the less fortunate. The IHM Sisters are represented in 15 archdioceses and 35 dioceses in the United States, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Africa, Japan, England and Canada.

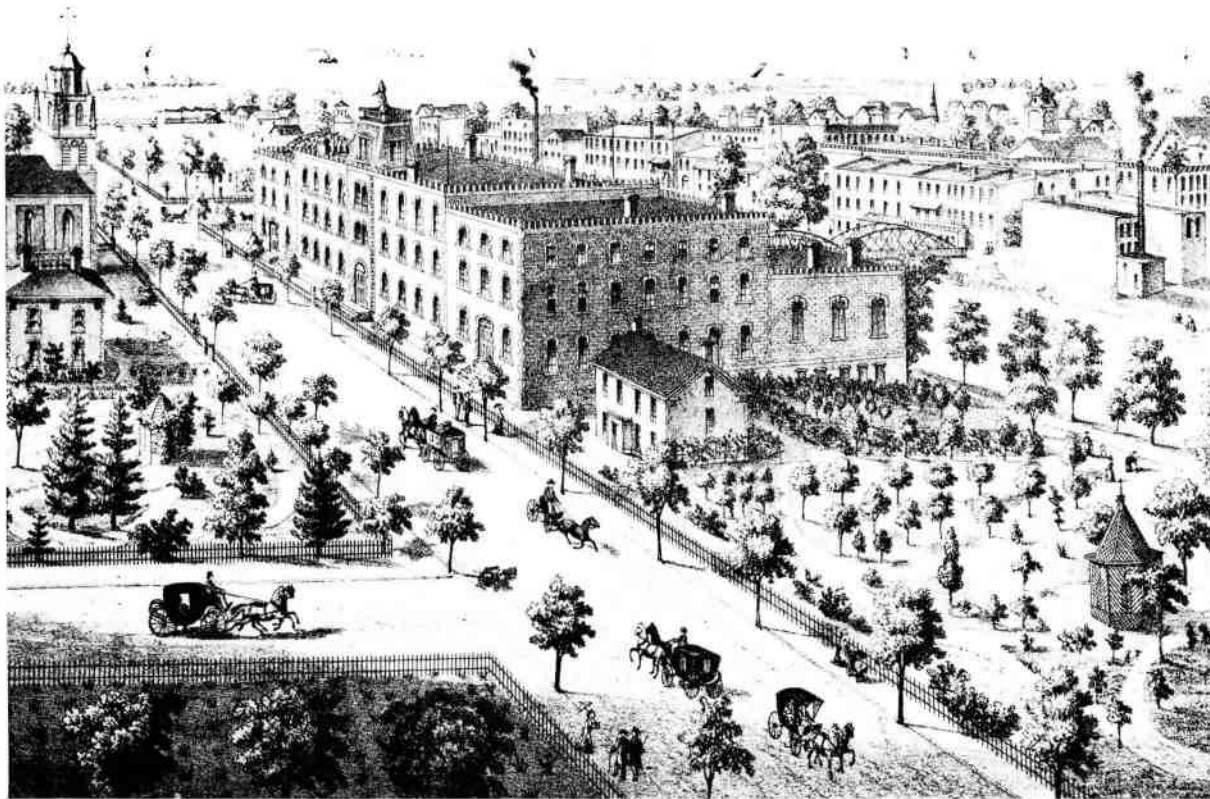
From the 1850 Federal Census,
Monroe City, Ward 3.

household #42 (Motherhouse and school)

| | AGE | BORN |
|------------------------|-----|------|
| Josette SMYTH | 48 | MI |
| Mary Therese DACHEMAIN | 37 | MD |
| Charlotte SHAAF | 41 | MD |
| Therese RENERD | 27 | MI |
| Sophia WHIPPLE | 19 | MI |
| Mary SOLEAU | 18 | MI |
| Elizabeth GILDAY | 16 | IRE |
| Catharine TOBIN | 13 | MI |
| Ann COONEY | 13 | MI |
| Ann DOYLE | 12 | MI |
| Mary CUNNINGHAM | 15 | MI |
| Elizabeth RABBITT | 14 | MI |
| Eliza DOYLE | 16 | IRE |
| Bridget DOYLE | 11 | IRE |
| Mary QUENNAN | 8 | IRE |
| Mary McGOVIN | 16 | MI |
| Cecelia STEINER | 18 | MI |
| Ann DOYLE | 13 | MI |
| Mary Ann FARRELL | 12 | MI |
| Ella SHERWOOD | 14 | MI |
| Sarah J. LYONS | 14 | MI |
| Elizabeth RYLEY | 17 | IRE |
| Elizabeth COUVIGNON | 10 | MI |
| Issabella SHIERAN | 7 | PA |
| Mary DUQUETTE | 17 | CAN |
| Mary O'CONNOR | 8 | PA |
| Mary BEAUMONT | 9 | NY |
| Lucretia FINNEY | 9 | MI |
| Mary A. FINNEY | 4 | MI |
| Josephine LAPOINT | 9 | MI |
| Loucette COUSINO | 15 | MI |
| Susan COUSENO | 14 | MI |

household #43 (Priests' house)

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|--|
| Reverend Father SMULDERS | 33 | |
| Catholic Priest b. Holland F. | | |
| Reverend Father POIRIER | 35 | |
| Catholic Priest b. France | | |
| Reverend Father TCHENCHENS | 45 | |
| Catholic Priest b. Germany | | |
| Brother Jacques LEBLANC | 47 | |
| Catholic Brother b. Belgium | | |
| Brother Joseph SOLEAU | 28 | |
| Catholic Brother b. MI | | |
| Brother - LAMBERT | 32 | |
| Catholic Brother b. Holland F. | | |



Architect's drawing between 1871-1890 shows St. Mary Church, Fr. Joos' house, first St. Mary's School, and St. Mary Academy.

FRANCOIS (FRANCIS) POILVACHE

1844-1848

A Saint Among Us

Fr. Francois (Francis) Matthew Poilvache was born in Eben-Emael, Belgium in 1812. His student days were troubled with recurring bouts of sickness and "nerves" but miraculously after his ordination, his health improved noticeably. He joined the Redemptorist congregation and requested an assignment to the foreign missions in America. After a 30-day crossing, he came to Rochester NY but being unable to learn German, he was sent to predominantly French-speaking Monroe to assist Father Gillet.

Remarkably gentle of soul, he sought out in a special way the poorest and most destitute of the flock. He suffered from the lack of regular order in the Redemptorist House. Father Gillet was so caught up in his activities (as pastor and founder of a new religious order) that he found little time for the spiritual exercises of the rule, and this bothered "Pere Francois," as the people called him. The

pangs of poverty were felt in the House at Monroe and he bore more than his share. Sometimes it was food that he needed, or clothes, or a fire to warm himself by, but he was never downhearted and always ready to help. Despite his poor health, the heat of summer, the icy blasts of winter, the great



Fr. Francis Poilvache.

distances to travel on sick calls, he was always ready to minister to the many scattered French missions around Monroe, some 60 miles away.

A small book, Life of F. Francis Poilvache, Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, written in 1890, reveals to us several instances of supernatural events, miracles which the scientific mind cannot explain: Mr. Frangeville Robert relates an incident where a field of wheat had been completely destroyed by the heat of the sun. Fr. Francis came to see him, walked along the field, prayed and made the sign of the cross three times. When Robert examined the wheat, it was again entirely sound!

A Mrs. Victoria Paquette relates that a lady lay very sick with sores covering her legs from her feet to her knees. After Fr. Francis saw her, she was completely cured.

A little girl dying from the contagious disease called "Black Tongue" could neither see, hear nor speak. Fr. Francis took his crucifix and told her to look at it, which she did. He also asked her to identify him, which she was able to do. He heard her confession, gave her the Last Sacraments, then bade her to rise. She was completely cured.

In a case of diphtheria, declared hopeless by the physicians, his power again obtained an instant cure. His faith was mighty and could move mountains.

Father Francis also possessed the gift of prophecy. Being called one day to the supposed death-bed of Mrs. Frangeville Robert, he told her husband: "She will not die. Place this cross about her neck. Tomorrow she will be sitting up telling us anecdotes." The next morning, Father's prophecy had come true.

During a mission at Swan Creek (Newport), he denounced dancing and foretold that God would punish the dancers, especially those in the houses where dancing was practiced. No fewer than 15 persons from the three houses mentioned died during a terrible epidemic.

At Rockwood a man didn't come to the mission because he had no time. "Tomorrow, indeed, he

will have no time" said Fr. Francis. The man died the following day.

An 18-month-old child suffered from convulsions which caused her to cry continually. Father Francis looked upon her and said: "She will not cry after this." Her torments ceased.

Mrs. Menancon, a lady of Rockwood at whose house Father stayed, relates that while he was in the confessional, the church bell rang for no visible reason. Father exclaimed: "It is ringing for me" — he died soon after.

During the last months of his life, Father Francis talked about his approaching death to Father Gillet, Father Smulders, Mother Theresa, the people of Ecorse and Swan Creek.

The Thursday before his death, he was summoned to Hemlock River to minister to victims of the spotted fever. He contracted the disease himself and was in terrible pain for several hours, loosing his speech. Fifteen minutes before his death, he became quite calm. The goodness of God so beautifully reflected in his bearing towards fellow-men, occupied his last thoughts: "Mon Dieu, que vous etes bon!" (My God, how good Thou Art!) He died January 27, 1848 at the age of 36. A petition was sent to Rome for his beatification.

When Pere Francois died of spotted fever in January 1848 he was mourned by all, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. On the day of his funeral, business was suspended in Monroe and civil magistrates, soldiers and a vast throng of people attended the funeral. Thus the humble priest was highly honored after his death. He was buried under the church, in an area he himself had selected. Even in death he had no rest. When the Redeemtorists left Monroe, he was moved to the cemetery. In the presence of many onlookers, his coffin was opened and his body found intact, the cross still in his hands, his shoes shining as if polished but a moment before...wonderful indeed, after seven years.

Among the pallbearers were Mr. Hubert Metey, Jean Baptiste Lamerande, and Frangeville Robert. When the signal was given to put the coffin in the vault, the casket, which had been very light to

carry, was so heavy it would not budge. Father Smulders gave a public address and then bid farewell to Father Francis and ordered him twice to enter into his resting place. Only then were the pallbearers able to pick up the casket. Eventually the remains of Fr. Francis were transferred to Annapolis, where he was buried in three different locations and is still today venerated in the Redemptorist cemetery.

The MONROE ADVOCATE of February 3, 1848 speaks thus: "As a spiritual guide he was all things to all men; he was ever ready to attend the bedside of the sick, to administer the consolations of religion to the distressed, indifferent as to whether his services were required in a palace or a hovel; scorning exposure or danger to himself, when he could serve his fellow-beings, more happy the greater the need; he was prompt and faithful to warn the erring, to turn their eyes upon their merciful Saviour, the source of every blessing, the author of every good and perfect gift; he was all this to others, while he himself refrained from every luxury, practicing the most rigid self-denial." Numberless instances are remembered, which show his simplicity, his piety, his humility, his obedience, and above all his patience. Subject to chills and fever, constant headache, he was always cheerful.

EGIDIUS SMULDERS 1847-1851
The Preacher of Missions

Born in Holland September 1, 1815, Fr. Smulders was ordained in 1843 and volunteered for the missions in the new world. He arrived in Baltimore in 1845 to serve with the Redemptorist Missionary order. Two years later, he was sent to the little foundation of Monroe to succeed Father Gillet as Superior. He managed to straighten out the existing problems with his cool, calm judgment, his prudence, his kindness, his Christ-like tolerance of human frailty.

The responsibilities at Monroe not only included St. Mary's parish, but also taking care of the newly formed religious order and serving nine mission stations within a 60 mile radius. In 1851 he relinquished his post as Superior of the Redemptorist order to devote his time to the care of the IHM community. With his companion Rev. Francis



Fr. Egidius Smulders.

Poilvache, he made sick calls often necessitating a ride of 60 miles over bad roads through the forest.

As Director of the Sisters, Fr. Smulders, also called Fr. Giles, worked diligently to relieve their material distress and advance their spiritual welfare. The school was his special concern. He visited it daily and took charge of the classes in Christian Doctrine. Through the children, he succeeded in introducing in Monroe the practice of attending daily Mass.

During visits to different stations, he was saddened that so many young people were growing up without religious education. He suggested that the Sisters take in these children for summer school from May to August so they could learn French and study catechism in their own language. Since the convent was so small, the Sisters would instruct them during the day and the good-hearted people of Monroe gave them shelter at night. The first class numbered 30 girls.

During this time, the native-born Americans showed prejudice against the Canadian Catholics. Fr. Smulders organized a Catholic celebration of the national holidays, especially the 4th of July. The whole congregation took part. It began with a Mass, then a procession from Church to the grove where the festivities would be held. The Declaration of Independence was read and an oration delivered by a guest speaker. Impromptu speeches

in French or English were encouraged. Dinner was served for all by the ladies of the congregation. The remainder of the day was spent in various amusements and Benediction followed a display of fireworks. In this way, the Catholics demonstrated their loyalty to their country.

After the Redemptorists left Monroe, Fr. Smulders went on to serve as a Chaplain in the army of the South. He served in missions in St. Louis and New Orleans and eventually established a mission center in Detroit, (today's Holy Redeemer Parish). His last years were spent in St. Louis where he died in 1900 at age 85, revered by all who had come within his influence.

JAMES POIRIER 1848-1855
An Early Librarian

Father James Poirier was born in Alsace, France on November 25, 1813. He was a member of the Redemptorist order and came to Monroe in 1848. He seems to have been a lovable, humble, as well as a holy priest. In 1851, at the request of Fr. Smulders, he was appointed Pastor of St. Mary's, as well as Superior and Director of the small group of IHM Sisters.

He was especially interested in schools, teachers, and education in general. In 1849 he presented to his Superiors two schemes which directly concerned education. One provided for a lending library. This was a grave need in the face of the vile anti-Catholic Native American and Know-Nothing Period. He interested the Catholic laity of Monroe in a library association which was inaugurated in mid-May 1849. One of the parlors at the rectory was used as a library. The second suggestion embodied a six-point educational program, but unfortunately it never became reality.

In 1854 when the Head of the American Redemptorist Order recommended the closing of all those

houses that had proved themselves incapable of growth, Monroe was one of them. Despite the enormous accomplishments of the Redemptorists during their 10 years here, Monroe had never been off the provincial's dole. On March 29, 1855 Father Poirier informed Bishop Lefevere of the order he had received: "The Lord has made known His Holy Will; we have the order to leave Monroe the first of May. Our mission in that part of your diocese is accomplished. God has sent us to clear this part of your land; now the work is done. Others must come to cultivate it."

To the consternation of all involved, including Bishop Lefevere, Fathers Poirier and Smulders closed the Monroe House on May 1, 1855 and returned to Baltimore. Father Poirier died March 18, 1857 at the age of 44.

**EARLIEST FLEMISH/BELGIAN NAMES
AT ST. MARY'S 1856-1872**

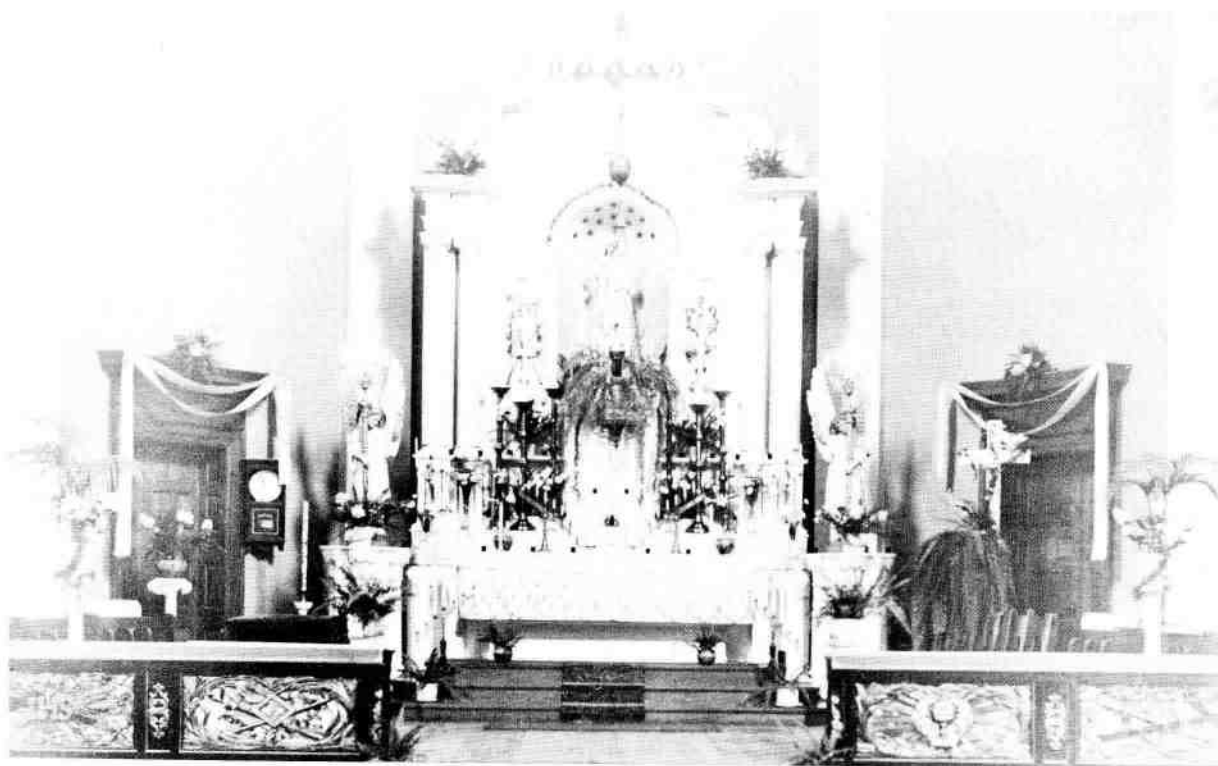
Brevoort (from Detroit), Van Dael, Vander heyden, Van Giesen, Van Wassenhove (Washenova), Verhoeven.

These names represent the earliest Flemish or Belgian Catholic families at St. Mary's. Though arriving in Monroe later than the French, English-speaking or German, they nonetheless established themselves as active parishioners, with many other families adding to this list after 1872.

Several Belgian priests played a major role in our parish: Fr. Louis Gillet, founder of the IHM order; saintly Fr. Francis Poilvache, Monsignor Edward Joos and his nephew Fr. Joseph Joos; Fr. Camillus Maes, founder of St. John's Parish later to become Bishop of Covington; Fr. Francis DeBroux, beloved assistant to Fr. Soffers; and last but not least Fr. Henry de Gryse, who is still remembered by some.



St. Antoine, renamed St. Mary and enlarged in 1845, with Redemptorist college at the back.



1845 Sanctuary, circa 1845, with carved altar railing.
(Photo courtesy Ed Poupard)

Chapter Four

Period of Stability

JOHN VAN GENNIP 1855-1857

"Claimed his Share of Potatoes and Cabbages"

Little is known of Fr. Van Gennip's early years. We do know that he was born in 1818 and that he was referred to as a Hollander (Dutch). He was ordained in Detroit on March 27, 1853 by Bishop Lefevere and was the first Resident Pastor at St. Charles, Newport. In that capacity, he undoubtedly often came to St. Mary's during the months immediately following the departure of the Redemptorists.

In November of 1855 Fr. Van Gennip was appointed Pastor of St. Mary's and also Director of the small IHM community. As Director of the Sisters, his interpretation of his rights and duties seemed extreme but no one ever questioned his good intentions. Wherever he served, his people admired him for his zeal and penitential life.

In 1857 Fr. Edward Joos was assigned to St. Mary's and Fr. Van Gennip served St. Michael's Church, where he amused the congregation with his earnest attempts to speak German. He nevertheless won their affection. Fr. Van Gennip lived with Fr. Joos

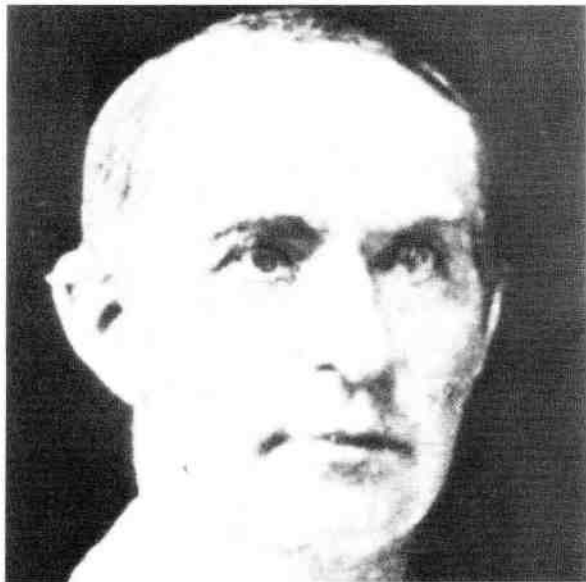
and a letter to the Bishop (dated Nov. 3, 1858- p. 274 Sr. Rosalita) is a sidelight on very real but very human saints: Fr. Joos' problems included the church debts, and the claims of Fr. Van Gennip to "his part of the potatoes and the cabbages" from the farm, which might cause one to say that these cabbages were very dear. Moreover, good Fr. Van Gennip thought that the price of the meals from which he was absent should be deducted from the weekly board he paid Fr. Joos!

After leaving Monroe, Fr. Van Gennip served in several parishes throughout Michigan, including Dexter, Alpena, Harrisville, Cheboygan, Ecorse and Trenton. He died September 3, 1889.

MONSIGNOR EDWARD JOOS 1857-1872

The Caring Overseer

Fr. Edward Joos was born in East Flanders, Belgium April 9, 1825. He received a thorough education in Belgium and was ordained in June, 1848. He came to America in 1856, and was assigned to Detroit's St. Anne Parish, where he learned English and the American ways of life. Bishop of Detroit Pierre Lefevere sent him to Monroe in



Fr. John Van Gennip.



Rev. Msgr. Edward Joos.

November, 1857 to be Pastor of St. Mary's and Director and Superior of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM).

On his coming, he found a large, sadly demoralized and disunited parish, a brick church with hardly any sanctuary furniture, a great ramshackle building for a residence, and an addition to the church, built for a monastery but abandoned and without any furniture.

Suspicion greeted him upon his appearance in the parish, from both the French and the English-speaking members but Bishop Lefevere had seen in Joos the character needed to unite the parish, still divided by national feelings. At his first Mass, he was quickly judged as inadequate in either language: he displeased the English at early Mass, and also the French at 10:30 Mass. His scholarly Parisian French was not appreciated by the French Canadians, whose language had incorporated many Indian and English words. His appearance as a little man, with a long head and large nose encouraged many to think him ineffectual. But his manners, determination, piety and perseverance changed all these opinions and he became one of the most-loved and respected of pastors, defying the lines once drawn by the separate nationalities.

With his black Canadian pony and typical cart he visited his flock at their homes, being both visible and accessible. He did things according to his convictions, disregarding differences of color, religion, or national beliefs. He was patriotic, pious and positive "almost to stubbornness" as Fr. Frank O'Brien, his biographer, stated. He made sick calls to Dundee, Milan and elsewhere throughout Monroe County.

During the Civil War, Fr. Joos allowed a camp to be erected on part of the Church farm for the 7th Regiment, and later, for the 15th Regiment. He visited the hospital there, ministering and comforting the patriots. He wrote letters for those who were illiterate, and by the end of the War he found his congregation proud of their pastor, his work, and his efforts to help everyone in the community.

Edward Joos disliked waste, especially of property, and encouraged gardening; he also leased part of the Church farm, one leasee being Israel Ilgen-



Probably the oldest photograph of St. Mary taken between 1867 and 1900.
Notice horses and buggies on bridge.
(From postcard owned by 'Frenchie' Beneteau.)

fritz who started his huge nursery business on this church land. Joos also disliked waste of human talent and he encouraged productivity; cast-off clothing was recycled by sewing circles, new ideas were promoted in education and business. Thus, he enriched his parishioners' lives. He also established a night school during winter for grown boys and working men.

In an 1870 diocesan questionnaire on church matters, Fr. Joos reveals some interesting data regarding the parish: "the Irish at Muddy Creek in LaSalle intend to erect a church there, another concerned Easter obligations: the Irish have made theirs but for "one or two," but in the French congregation "a great number are neglectful," some among the male population, only appear every four years! Catechism is on Sunday morning for the French-speaking, in the afternoon for the English. In school there is catechism every day, and the confraternities active at this time include: Blessed Sacrament (69 members), Ladies' Altar Society (42 members), Sacred Heart (386 members), Holy Rosary (450 members), Sodality for Young Men (35 members), Sodality for Young Ladies (46 members), Ladies of the Sanctuary (35 members), Temperance Society (55 members), Holy Childhood (120 members). Five adults were admitted into St. Mary's and there were 25 marriages, 56 deaths. Joos also noted that the Bishop allowed the



Portion of Church Plat in 1872.
(Courtesy Monroe County Registrar of Deeds.)

Pastor's salary to be \$600 and \$400 for his assistant, with additional money to be divided. On the question of his parishioners' support "very few positively refuse-quite a number neglect (to pay) and many are too poor to pay."

Besides his pastoral duties, Fr. Joos was a strong supporter and gentle guide for the IHM Sisters, serving them for 43 years and enduring the early years of opposition and hardships. Many objected to the financial burden the teaching Sisters were to the parish on whose generosity they relied; Fr. Joos remained their staunch advocate, providing further growth for the order, educational advancements and material expansion. When he took charge there were 14 Sisters and 4 postulants-15 years later there were 106 Sisters. Edward Joos recognized the need for their skills and offered firm direction for their future. He was a moderate but committed man in his actions on behalf of the IHM Order and his parish.

In 1870, the Bishop sent Fr. Camillus Maes to be Joos' assistant. In 1871, Edward Joos retired from his pastoral duties to devote his time to the IHM Order. In April 1877, he was appointed Vicar-

General of the diocese of Detroit when Bishop Borgess went to Rome. He served three times as administrator of the Diocese. In 1889, Pope Leo XIII raised him to Domestic Prelate to His Holiness, with the title of Monsignor (the highest honor next to Bishop ever held in this diocese). As an administrator, he was most capable, seldom unprepared, always "taking precautions" as he himself admitted. He was patient, kind, and just to all. Fr. Soffers nicknamed him "Father Cash" from his habit of waiting for cash in hand before entering upon a new venture.

In June of 1898, Fr. Joos celebrated his Golden Jubilee with an impressive number of religious and lay persons giving thanks and congratulations to this priest, who had won their great respect and loyalty.

Father Joos had been in poor health for several years. He contracted pneumonia and died in Monroe on May 18, 1901 in the presence of his two nephews Rev. Joseph Joos and Dr. Jules Joseph Siffer, a prominent physician in this city. The pontifical High Mass was celebrated by Bishop Foley and his good friend Bishop Maes gave the homily. All the members of the Diocese of Detroit with one exception were present, as were all the IHM Sisters in the state and many persons of distinction and prominence.

CAMILLUS P. MAES 1871-1873
Organizer of St. John's

Fr. Camillus Maes was born March 13, 1846, in Belgium, and Studied at the American College, Louvain. On arriving in America, May 1869, he was assigned to the parish of St. Peter's in Mount Clemens, Michigan. He was sent to St. Mary's, Monroe in April of 1871 to help Msgr. Edward Joos "shepherd the most important parish of the diocese at the time" (Am. Cath. Hist. Soc., the Right Rev. Camillus P. Maes, p. 106). In a letter dated, September of 1872, he reported to Quebec that Monroe, "the old mission of St. Anthony of the River Raisin," numbered 300 families, with poverty even more extreme than St. Anne's. "The Bay- (Vienna, Erie) had 100 families, "reasonably well off," and Swan Creek, Newport had 300 poor families as well. Also in 1872 his annual report of accounts included expenditures for insurance



Fr. Camillus P. Maes.

(\$30.50), the gas bill (\$39.86), and a new horse railing (\$28). In the following year when he was finalizing accounts, the Sunday collection was \$20.79 and the pews and dues came to \$154.50 in revenues!

Fr. Maes not only served as pastor for St. Mary's, but also founded an English-speaking parish, the establishment of which had so far eluded his predecessors. In September, 1872 he called a meeting of the English-speaking parishioners and submitted his ideas for the new church. Probably these men and women met with Fr. Maes with skepticism, for such a task must have seemed a lost cause, but whatever their feelings, action was taken with the subsequent purchase of a suitable site. The new church's cornerstone was laid in April of 1873. The brick building was completed by September 1874, and Bishop Borgess dedicated it to St. John the Baptist. Soon after that Fr. Maes left St. Mary's to become pastor at St. John's.

This popular accomplishment was just the beginning of Fr. Maes' career. In 1880 he became secretary to Bishop Borgess in Detroit, and he would eventually become Bishop of Covington, Kentucky.

His ideals and leadership qualities brought out the positive in others. After his ordination as Bishop, he often visited his friend, Fr. Joos with "Old Monroe" homecomings. With all his work for the

Irish and English-speaking Catholics, he also was concerned with the French-Canadians. In a letter to Quebec he states: "Religiously, with some exceptions, the Canadians are very ignorant: they know only one thing, which is that they are Catholics and that they should have the priest before they die. They may be negligent, but they never renounce their faith. Nevertheless, I believe that there is some progress in regards to religion. The truth is that they have for many years been left entirely to themselves."

As a scholar he made himself felt not only in his diocese, but also in the wider Catholic educational circles of his country. He was a noted historian. The U.S. Catholic Historical Magazine of April 1888 published an excellent article by him entitled "History of the Catholic Church in Monroe City and County, Michigan." He described the beginning of St. Antoine Parish, but unfortunately never completed the history, ending the chapter with Fr. Bellamy in 1827.

He also wrote very descriptive letters about Michigan in his native Flemish dialect and was instrumental in compiling the Catholic Encyclopedia.

Camillus Maes died May 11, 1915 after serving as Bishop of Kentucky for 30 years.

BERNARD SOFFERS 1873-1899

The Energetic Dutchman

Fr. Bernard Soffers was born on March 16, 1826 in Ginneken, Holland. He studied in Belgium, was ordained May 25, 1850 and served after ordination in the diocese of Breda in Holland.

Fr. Soffers came to America in October of 1853 and he was sent to Detroit's Ste. Anne parish to serve as the pastor for 19 years. Because of poor health, he returned to Europe in 1872 and the next year, July 5, 1873, he reported to St. Mary's as pastor. In 1883, Fr. Henry DeBroux came as his assistant.

Fr. Soffers had a new rectory built to the north of St. Joseph College, done with extensive wooden Victorian decoration. During his tenure, in 1879, several church property lots were sold.

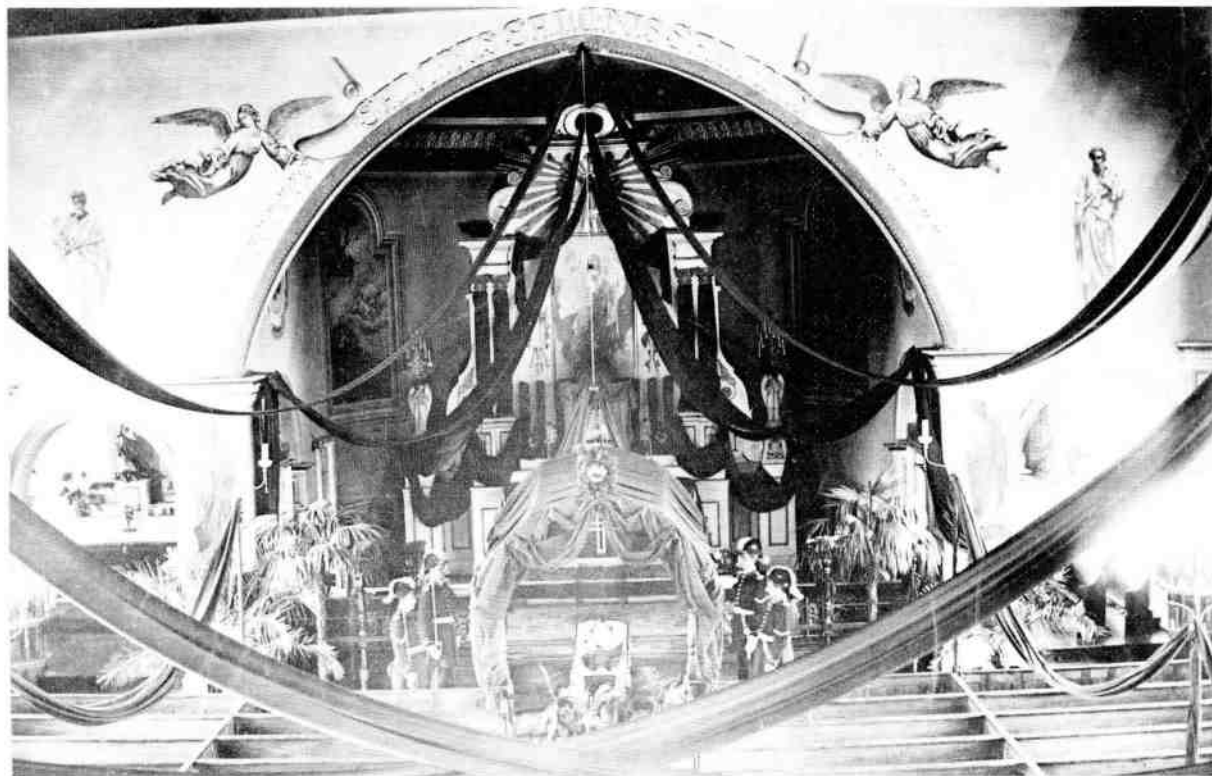
After 26 years of work in Monroe, Fr. Soffers died



Fr. Bernard Soffers (Courtesy Monroe Democrat).



Old rectory in 1873 with Fr. Soffers and Fr. Joos on porch. (From the Payette Collection.)



Funeral of Fr. Soffers from IHM archives.

October 27, 1899. He was 73 years old, and was mourned by many, since he was held in high esteem throughout Monroe. The following day he was borne to the church escorted by the Knights of St. John and different parish groups to lie in state until 10 a.m. Tuesday morning, the time of the funeral services. The Knights served as honor guards during these 44 hours. At the funeral were Bishop Foley with many clergy and laity, including many prominent non-Catholic residents, who wished to remember him and his work.

Fr. Carl Gentner writes of him: "From all evidence Fr. Soffers was a very kindly, zealous priest. Always idealistic, it is said that he never asked for money. And of course, he never received much in the way of material support." This lack of support from the parishioners had been one of the major problems encountered by the preceding pastors. The early missionaries had all been supported by benevolent societies in Europe and the parishioners were not used to the idea of having to provide support for their pastor!

Report of Jan. 13, 1887

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| St. Mary's (Catholic) - Rev. B. G. Soffers, Pastor, Rev. J. F. DeBroux, Assistant | | | |
| Families, about | 300 | Burials | 34 |
| Baptisms | 78 | Children attending school | 110 |
| First communions | 60 | Catechism attendance | 100 |
| Confirmations | 100 | Society of Blessed Sacrament | 30 |
| Marriages | 15 | Ladies Altar Society | 25 |
| Burials | 34 | Young Ladies Sodality | 50 |

The church is out of debt and in a good financial condition.

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ST. MARY'S CENTENNIAL - 1888
A Wet Day But a Large Crowd

In the year 1888, while Fr. Bernard Soffers was pastor of St. Mary's, the parish observed its 100th Anniversary. It was decided that this special celebration should mirror the accomplishments of the past 100 years. Monday, October 15, was set aside for the festivities. This was, as the newspaper Monroe Democrat put it, "the largest demonstration of a religious nature ever held in this county," one of which the Catholic population "may well be proud." (Monroe Democrat, Thursday 18 October 1888.)

The day began with High Masses said at St. Mary's, St. Michael's and St. John the Baptist Churches in Monroe, St. Mary's bedecked with evergreen boughs, American flags, and the papal colors of orange and white. A large national flag was hung across the street and red, white and blue bunting swung from the church, rectory, and St. Mary Academy buildings.

A grand parade had been organized, starting with parade marshals on horseback, the Monroe Cornet Band and the Monroe Knights of St. John. A replica of St. Antoine's Church, about 5 feet tall, with a small bell ringing in its belfry, was on a cart driven by an Indian, surrounded by mementoes such as bows, arrows, snow-shoes and other pioneer articles. The oldest member of the church, Oliver Metty, walked alongside the yoke of oxen in a period costume with flintlock rifle, knife, pistol and tomahawk. School children followed Metty and the cart, and next came the representative chariots drawn by four horses each. St. Mary's contained 20 young ladies in white, the vehicle adorned with flags, flowers and more bunting. St. Michael's, St. John's and the St. Mary Young Ladies Academy chariots "contained a like number of young ladies, and all most tastefully decorated." The St. Francis Seminary chariot contained some of its young men, and large paintings of each church or school were displayed.

St. Joseph's in Erie had a "large, canopied vehicle" with 60 girls, attracted "much attention and was the subject of much admiration." St. Patrick's of Stoney Creek (Carleton) also had flowers, colored foliage, bright bunting and young women. St.

Charles Borromeo of Newport and St. Mary's of Rockwood had similar embellishments.

Music was provided by the Monroe Cornet Band, and the Ida and Newport bands. The common council and Board of Supervisors followed in procession, then about 400 cavalymen displayed their finest dress and horses. However, during the spectacle it began to rain, and when at the conclusion of the parade, the horsedrawn wagons and coaches made their appearance, they were muddy and dirt-strewn. The weather failed to dampen the celebrants' spirits, and "every kind and species of known wagon" was used to bring them, nearly 200 strong, stretching almost two miles and involving 2,500 people.

Even the civic portion of Monroe joined the religious for the celebration, businesses downtown being closed, public and parochial schools closed, and decorations used profusely along the city streets. North of the church, at the Fairgrounds, booths attempted to refresh the crowd. Some people returned to the city to seek relief but they missed an address given by Rev. Fr. Cooke, C.S.S.P. of Detroit, part of which said:

"Each individual stands not only as representative of the present, but as the maker of the future. You will have struggles, but hundreds of years hence, when your children's children gather, the work of God will have been perpetuated through you. Not only will you then have perfected the work of God on earth, but you will have attained eternal reward."

... "What would even the fathers of the Catholic faith in Monroe say, could they look down upon the hundreds who gather here as the result of their labors? Your magnificent presence is a testimony of the magnificence, virility and indestructibility of the Catholic Church."

Fr. Soffers also spoke, and the St. Francis Seminary quartet sang, the Cornet Band closing the proceedings. Attending clergy included Bishop Borgess, Administrator Fr. Edward Joos, Frs. Leavy and Schmittiel of St. Michael's, McLaughlin and De Broux of Monroe; priests from Toledo, Wyandotte and Ireland; Frs. Brancheau of Newport, Thomas of Erie, Ronayne of Stoney Creek, Van Gennip of

Ecorse (formerly of St. Mike's and St. Mary's), past pastor Smulders and clergy of Detroit.

A commemorative statue of the Recording Angel was supposed to be dedicated on the day of the Bicentennial celebration. Even in those days, plans went awry and the marble statue was not dedicated until Thanksgiving Day, November 10, 1889, one year and one month later than anticipated.

FRANCIS J. DEBROUX 1882-1899
An Able Assistant and a Generous Heart

Father Francis J. DeBroux was born in Belgium Dec. 6, 1817. He was ordained in 1844 and came to the U.S. in 1856 with Rev. Edward Joos. He served as Pastor in Grosse Pointe for 26 years and came to Monroe in 1882 as assistant to Fr. Soffers.

On Sept. 27, 1894, Fr. DeBroux celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his ordination. It was the subject of great rejoicing by the whole community. The Michigan Catholic of that day quotes: "The sacred edifice was profusely decorated with bunting and the Papal colors. A memorial arch was erected at the main entrance. Surmounting it was a fine picture of the venerable jubilarian and over and above all, floated the emblem of our country, the ever glorius Stars and Stripes. The interior of the church was handsomely adorned. The sanctuary has been recently refurnished and the high altar finished in white and gold.



Fr. Francis J. DeBroux.
(Courtesy of Sara Leonard.)

A vast congregation attended the celebration of Solemn High Mass. Right Rev. Bishop Foley of Detroit was celebrant; Mozart's 12th Mass was finely rendered by a picked choir from Toledo and Detroit under the direction of Prof. Racicot, of Detroit. The jubilee sermon was preached by the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Covington (Camillus Maes). At the conclusion of the services a procession was formed, composed of the visiting clergy and a large troop of cavalry, preceded by the Monroe Cornet Band, St. Michael's Commandery, Knights of St. John's.

DeBroux is best remembered in Monroe and the diocese for his numerous and liberal donations. While in Monroe he helped finance a preparatory seminary for priests, which in 1889 was changed to St. Francis Orphan's Home. He died in Belgium Dec. 31, 1899.

JOSEPH JOOS 1899-1913
The Well-Beloved Educator

Father Joseph Joos was born in Belgium in 1868 and was a nephew of the acclaimed Monsignor Edward Joos. He came to St. Mary's November 16, 1899, finding the church not in the best of condition, not because of neglect, but because of the inability of his predecessor, Fr. Soffers, who was well along in years, to properly care for all the wants of the parish. At the close of his first year the congregation was thoroughly re-organized and



Fr. Joseph Joos.

MONROE, MICHIGAN, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1904.

THE CHURCH IS DEDICATED.

Addition to St. Mary's Church Building Was Blessed Sunday
With Imposing Ceremonies.

Sunday was a day of deep rejoicing for the pastors and members of St. Mary's congregation, for on that day was consecrated to God the new addition to the stately old structure. The day proved almost ideal, save that it was a little chilly in the building, as the heating equipment had not yet been put in working order. The dedicatory ceremonies were held in the morning, with Vesper services in the evening. On both occasions nearly 1,000 people were present. The church was blessed by Rt. Rev. John S. Foley, D. D., bishop of Detroit diocese, assisted by a large number of clergy. The ceremonies commenced at 10:30 o'clock sharp. After the blessing, the bishops and clergy repaired to the home of the late Rt. Rev. Mr. Joes to vest for the pontifical mass. The local commandery of the Knights of St. John, about 125 Knights and bugle corps from Detroit, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the C. M. B. A. formed the guard. The scene was beautiful and inspiring, as the procession wound its way around the church. The nodding plumes of the Knights, their glittering swords, the large number of men, the immense throng that came to witness the ceremony made a scene long to be remembered. Following the guard of honor came Rev. Fr. James Downey bearing the cross, with Rev. Fr. Michael Crowley and a theological student as candle bearers; next the acolytical society, Rt. Rev. Bishop Meerschauer, D. D., of Guthrie, Oklahoma, assisted by Rev. Fr. DePrete, his nephew, and Rev. Fr. H. Syoen, of Newport, as deacons of honor; Rt. Rev. Camillus Paul Maes, D. D., bishop of Covington, Ky., the celebrant of the pontifical mass, assisted by Rev. J. O'Connell, of Toledo, as assistant priest, Rev. Fr. Frank Van Antwerp, of Detroit, as deacon, and Rev. John Schreiber, of Detroit, as sub deacon; Rev. M. Mullane, C. S. S. R., of Detroit, and Rev. Fr. Charles Boite, as deacons of honor; Rt. Rev. John S. Foley, assisted by Rev. Fr. John O'Rafferty, of Grosse Pointe, and Rev. Emil Wolfstyn, of Erie, as deacons of honor. Very Rev. Dean O'Brien, of Kalamazoo, acted as first master of ceremonies and Rev. Joseph Joes as second master of ceremonies. Rev. Fr. E. Heidenreich, of Carleton, was censor bearer. Present in the sanctuary were Revs. J. McCloskey, of Toledo, Fr. Berthele, of Ida; Very Rev. R. McBrady, C. S. B., president of Assumption college, Sandwich, Ont; Very Rev. Fr. Baumgartner, of Detroit.

The sermon was preached by Bishop Foley, who spoke on the love of God manifested in the incarnation and the institution of His mystical body, the church.

At 7:30 o'clock in the evening pontifical vespers were sung by Rt. Rev. Bishop Meerschauer, D. D., assisted by Rev. Fr. DePrete as deacon and Rev. Fr. Henry Syoen as sub deacon. A very able sermon was preached by Very Rev. McBrady on the Mass, to show the value of the mass and the benefits to be derived from assisting at mass.

At the morning services St. Mary's choir rendered most excellent music under the direction of Miss Hortense Bezeau, organist, and William J. Hubble, violin obligato. In the evening a male choir furnished the music, the choir being composed of members of the three local parishes.

The interior of the new portion, in itself of exceptional artistic beauty of design and finish, was further enhanced by the tasteful disposition of a wealth of palms, chrysanthemums, carnations and other cut flowers, especially about the altars and side altars. Additional splendor was provided by the turning on of hundreds of incandescent lights, which stud the imposing dome and alcoves, marking their outlines and arches in lines of brilliance. The old altar had been much improved by being repainted and redecorated and the handsome candelabra and other sacred utensils had been regilded, so that they glistened and sparkled as if new.

The addition makes the structure cross shaped, the old portion forming the foot, the sanctuary the head and the transepts the arms, the head being semi-circular in form. The new part is 53 feet long, 73 feet wide at the transepts and 56 feet high at the side walls. The foundation is of stone and the balance of brick. Underneath there is a basement with a seating capacity of about 800, while the church itself will now seat about 900. In the rear of the sanctuary, on the first floor, are the reception and society rooms; on the second, the vestries and sacristies; on the third, conservatories and store rooms. A useful feature of the interior portion is the wide cornice, which has been made of sufficient strength to carry the weight of several men, so that work of repairing may be done without the use of ladders and scaffolding.

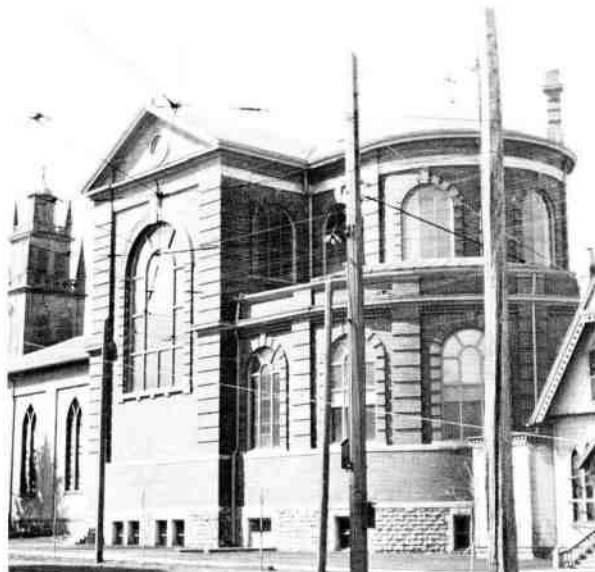
The interior woodwork had not all been finished, but only a little was left in an incomplete state, thanks to most strenuous day and night work for a week or so preceding the dedication. The windows for the present are plain, with the exception of two that have been donated by Fr. Frank O'Brien, of Kalamazoo, and Mrs. Grady, of Rochester, N. Y. That of Fr. O'Brien represents the immaculate conception of Mary and is placed behind the altar. That of Mrs. Grady, who, by the way, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Bordeau, depicts St. Anne and the Virgin Mary when a child. It is placed to the east of the altar.

The two handsome side altars were also donated, one by Miss Matilda Fountain, the other by Mrs. Josephine Delye. All in all, the addition is a most attractive example of architecture, design and decoration, although it will of course not appear to its best advantage until the rather distant day when the old portion, which forms the greater part of the church, will be replaced by a new one to match that which was dedicated on Sunday.

Romanesque addition was dedicated on November 6, 1904 with imposing ceremonies.

improvements to the extent of \$3,000 had been made on the church and rectory. The following year an additional \$3,000 was spent for new windows, sanctuary lamp and carpet, statuary and exterior and interior painting and decorating. Father Joos brought financial prosperity to the parish of 450 families.

Father Joos was a zealous and energetic pastor. In 1903 he added the beautiful red brick Romanesque sanctuary to the north end of the church. The cornerstone of the addition was laid in August 1903 according to the impressive ceremonies of the church. Bishop John Foley of Detroit conducted them with Mgr. M.J. Dempsey of Detroit as Deacon...Bernard Verhoeven, Antoine Boismier, Andrew Guyor, and James Menore acted as bearers of the canopy, and Frank Willets as bearer of the box which was sealed in the cornerstone. The copper box contained the history of the church, history of the old building torn down, list of names of the reigning pope, bishop, president of the United States, governor, city officials, and pastors of St. Mary Church; names of the teachers of the school, the contractor, superintendent, architect, church committee, as well as the names of those who donated their service and tore down the old building without cost to the congregation; copies of the Monroe Democrat, Record and Commercial, the Detroit Free Press, Michigan Catholic and Kalamazoo Augustinian; some coins, and cards of a number of businessmen.



Romanesque addition to Church and Rectory taken in 1905.

After the ceremony was concluded, the congregation "repaired to the spacious shaded churchyard in the rear of confraternity hall...With the addition there will be seating capacity for about 900 worshipers; which will at a not far distant date be considerably increased, as it is intended to replace the remaining portion-the old church building proper-with a new edifice."(Monroe Democrat November 11, 1904)

The church was dedicated Nov. 6, 1904. Father Joos ordered from Europe the artistic stained glass windows which would be progressively installed between 1903 and 1914 as funds and donors became available.

One of Father Joos' special interests was education. In recognition of his unflagging interest and support of education, the four room red brick school north of the rectory was constructed in 1903 and dedicated as the Sacred Heart Institute.

During Fr. Joos' pastorate, a traditional international banquet was held, the description of which appeared in a local newspaper in 1913 (article not dated):

"Practically every man and woman in St. Mary's Parish has been busy the last week perfecting plans for their Fourth Bi-ennial banquet which will be held about the 28th of this month. The other three banquets, held by St. Mary's Church, were noted for the dainty viands (delicacies) served, and for the noted guests who responded to the different toasts. This banquet promises to be even better than the preceding ones."

"The following ladies are in charge of the five tables:

THE AMERICAN TABLE - Misses Lola Godfroy, Emily Bissonette, Saidee Roberts, Charlotte Godfroy and Carrie Roberts.

THE FRENCH TABLE - Mesdames Justin Sanglier, Moses D. Duvall, Josephine Abbott, Frank Poupard and Joseph Soleau.

THE GERMAN TABLE - Mesdames Rose Abbott, Sulia Shembe, Chas Kibbie, Joseph R. Anteau and Eli P. Duvall.



1913 funeral procession of Fr. Joseph Joos from Rectory to Church.

THE YOUNG LADIES' TABLE - Misses Hortense Bezeau, Eliza Dusseau, Mac Nadeau, Gertrude Gee and Theresa Nadeau.

"The banquet was the most successful banquet ever held in this city. It is estimated that about 1,200 were in attendance. The proceeds will amount to over \$1,200 and will be applied on the church fund."

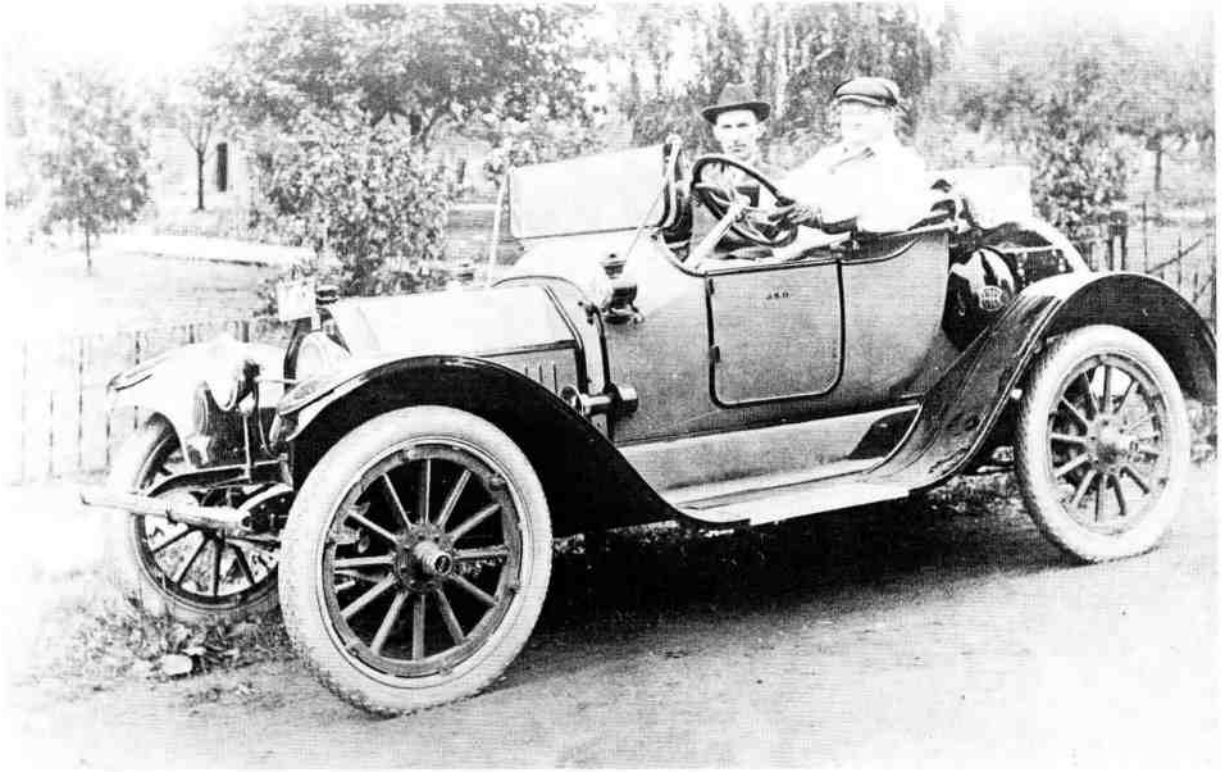
Fr. Joseph Joos left St. Mary's in 1913, after 14 years of dedicated service. He went back to his native Belgium where he died of tuberculosis on April 28, 1913. His body was shipped to Toledo, Ohio and met there by Father Downey, the trustees, ushers and marshalls. "As the car passed the bridge at Monroe, the bell of old St. Mary rang out its sad welcome of the pastor who had presided over it for nearly 14 years. The whole city of Monroe was mourning this humble and zealous priest of God, for during his pastorate he became universally known to its citizens irrespective of creed; and all respected and esteemed and loved the kindly young priest..."(quoted from an undated newspaper article). Hundreds of people were at his funeral. Edward Kelly, Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit, was the High Mass' celebrant, with Bishop Foley giving the sermon. Fr. Joos' remains were buried in St. Joseph Cemetery and reinterred in 1954 in a special section reserved for the priests.

JAMES S. DOWNEY 1901-1913
The Busy Assistant

Fr. James S. Downey was born near Dowagiac, Cass County, Mich., Jan. 23, 1873, the son of Irish immigrants. He attended Notre Dame University and Assumption College at Sandwich, Ontario. James was ordained in July, 1901 by Bishop Foley and came to Monroe on Sept. 7 as assistant to Fr. Joseph Joos. The two men complemented each other in temperament and actions. Downey was well-liked as was Joos, and he actively supported the building and activities of the church and of the school. He carried on Fr. Joos's duties during his illness. He stayed at St. Mary's Church until Fr. Joos's death in 1913, at which time he went to St. Mary's Church in Anchorville, Mich. as pastor, trading places with Fr. Henry DeGryse.

Fr. Downey was known for his kindness. Everyone was his friend and as many Protestants as Catholics dropped in for a visit with him. Bulkley, in his History of Monroe County, describes Downey as such: "He enjoys unalloyed popularity in his home, city and county and is broad-minded and public-spirited as a citizen."

The 13 years of his residence in Monroe include what is probably the most prosperous and active decade which the church had experienced during its life of nearly a century and a quarter. The congregation which numbered about 400 families



The car was a farewell gift to Fr. Downey.



Church decorated for Christmas during Fr. Downey's time. (Courtesy Ed Poupard.)

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when he came grew to between 700 and 800. Fr. Downey married more than 300 couples, baptized 1,000 babies and buried 450 persons. The building of the new sanctuary costing about \$30,000 was pushed through and all debts paid.

When Fr. Downey was appointed to the parish of the Immaculate Conception in Anchorville, the announcement was heard by a sorrowing congregation. A reception was held where 1,500 came to bid him farewell. Addresses were given by ex-Mayor Boyez Dansard, Mr. A. B. Bragdon, Mr. Thomas Keegan from the board of trustees, Rev. Charles O'Meara of the Episcopal Church, and Justice V. J. Berthelote, who made the presentation speech for the congregation, presenting Fr. Downey a handsome Oakland car as a parting gift.

Father Downey was found dead of a heart attack in his home on September 18, 1935 and was buried in Anchorville.

HENRY DEGRYSE 1913-1942

A Remarkable Capacity for Hard Work

Fr. Henry DeGryse was born in Belgium June 4, 1858 and was ordained into the priesthood in 1887. He attended the American College at Louvain, where he perfected his English. Two years later he came to the Diocese of Detroit at Bishop Foley's request, and in the following years served in Kalamazoo, Lexington, Detroit, and Anchorville, Michigan until 1913 when he came to St. Mary's.



Fr. Henry DeGryse.

He immediately set out to improve the appearance of the interior of the church: he obtained new statues, stations of the cross, a new main altar and a new electric organ costing \$20,000. A 1916 financial statement lists some of the donors: donating towards the stations of the cross were the Joseph Poupard, Frank E. Boudinet, Isadore Navarre, Joseph G. Fix, John Beaudry, Peter Tatroe, Moses J. Nadeau, Isadore Brancheau, Joseph Laprad, Moses Poupard, Joseph Pfefferle families, also Mr. and Mrs. James A. Vizard, and Simon and Rose Navarre. A statue of the Immaculate Conception and pedestal was donated by Mrs. Nelson Fix and family, an Angel Holy Water Font and Pedestal donated by altar boys, a statue of the Blessed Virgin and Child given in memory of Mrs. Clarence Anteau, and new vestments donated by the Altar Society.

Father DeGryse also constructed the current, large, modern rectory at a cost of \$28,000, built two additions to the Sacred Heart Institute (which was the name of the older school building), and built a house for the superintendent of St. Joseph Cemetery on North Monroe street and for the church custodian on Willow street. The cemetery also underwent a number of improvements as a result of his efforts.

Fr. DeGryse was a well-educated man, fluent in many languages including French, English, Flemish, German and Latin even learning some Italian to better relate to parishioners of that nationality.

In June of 1937 DeGryse at age 79 the oldest active priest in the diocese, celebrated his Golden Jubilee, having served for 24 years at St. Mary's. He performed his own Solemn High Mass and the festivities were observed by the parishioners, several monsignors, an estimated 150 religious of the diocese, friends, and by the school children he was so fond of. A male choir composed of members of the four Monroe parishes sang the Mass, under the direction of William F. Schoell, choir director of St. Mary's.

On June 4, 1937 a reception was held in honor of Fr. DeGryse's 79th birthday. He was presented with a gift of \$1600 by Urban Hoffman on behalf of the congregation. The Young Ladies Sodality also presented him with a gift of money.



Acolytic Society circa 1914.

Back row from left: Ben Poupard, Arthur Brancheau, Ed Poupard, Father Downey, Elmer Brancheau, William Heck, Andrew Soleau, Clem Duvall.
Front row: Cletus Gaynier, William Soleau, Ben Soleau, Hillary Petee, Doras Soleau, Elton Dushane, Merrill Anteau, Roy Dushane.

The reception was opened with a piano selection by Miss Virginia Mead. The "Bells of St. Mary" was sung by Benjamin Poupard. The speaker for the evening was Oliver J. Golden, a member of the parish. The program closed with the singing of "America" by the audience. Before the reception the Veterans of Foreign Wars band played in front of the hall and more than 300 people attended the reception.

His energy was well-known, as was his attention to the sick and the poor. In the half century of his priesthood it was estimated that he officiated at 5000 baptisms and 2000 weddings. The parish membership grew from 150 to 350 families during his tenure. As this book goes to press, many parishioners still remember him for his kindness, attention to detail, and capacity for hard work.

Father DeGryse died January 6, 1942 and his funeral was attended by two hundred priests, including Archbishop Edward Mooney of Detroit. Active pallbearers were: John Verhoeven, Oliver J. Golden, Vallie W. Dussia, Bernard J. Heil, William Schoell, Edmund L. Poupard, Lafayette Beaubien, and Benjamin Poupard. Honorary pallbearers were members of the Church Committee, Usher's Club, and Holy Name Society. Father DeGryse was 84 years old at the time of his death,

having retired from active duty two years earlier, with Father Perrin serving as administrator. He was buried in St. Joseph Cemetery, Monroe.

CANONICAL VISITATION BY
WARREN G. PEEK JULY 2, 1940
FR. DEGRYSE PASTOR

Committee men: John J. Verhoeven, Ezra Gagnier, Charles E. Van Slambrouck, Lafayette Beaubien, Moses J. Nadeau, met once a month.

Families: About 300.

Assistant: Rev. Joseph Lawton.

Seating capacity of church: 850.

Organ value: \$18,000, made by the Toledo Pipe Organ Co.

Stations of the cross erected by a Capuchin.

Sanctuary rail: Wood, highly decorated.

Statues on main altar: Calvary group, St. Peter and Paul, Angels, Sacred Heart, Our Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, St. Blase, St. John the Evangelist, St. Agnes, St. Anne, St. Anthony, "Little Flower," St. Vincent de Paul.

Tabernacle: Steel - key gold-plated metal - beautifully gilded.

Organizations:

National Council of Catholic Women: 50.

Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary: 60.

Altar Society: 200.

Holy Name Society: 200.

Catholic Youth Organization Boy Scouts: 25.

Confraternities: Mother of Perpetual Help, Society of the Blessed Sacrament, Christian Doctrine.

"How many of your parishioners do not make their Easter Duty?" Very few and we know them well in Monroe.

Confessions: Every Saturday and first Thursdays and Vigils, and every day if necessary.

Altar boys: 20.

School: 8 grades, 201 boys and 199 girls - 9 teachers, all religious, salary \$400, no tuition charged unless outside the parish, 56 children attend public school including 45 from county or outskirts.

Financial condition of parish: value \$210,000-no debt - annual income \$16,000

D. EDMUND PERRIN 1942-1954

The Former Pharmacist

Fr. Edmund Perrin was born December 7, 1878 at Tecumseh, Ontario, Canada. He attended college at Windsor and at the Detroit College of Medicine, where he received a degree in Pharmacy in 1912. He went into business for himself, and several years later, when he became a widower, began his seminary preparation in Rome, where he was ordained in 1926.

In 1927 he came back to the U.S. and was assigned to St. David's in Detroit where he stayed until 1934, then to St. Joseph Church in Monroe, where he built a rectory. In 1938, he was transferred to St. Joseph's in Erie, Mi., where he remodeled and repaired the brick church and associated buildings.

Named Administrator for St. Mary's in July 1941, he came to Monroe to take over most duties for the ailing pastor Henry DeGryse, and became Pastor himself, following DeGryse's death in 1942.

Fr. Perrin continued some of DeGryse's projects, strengthening and redecorating the church buildings. He was especially interested in the further growth of the school. He was Third Degree member of the Monroe Council, Knights of Columbus,



Fr. Edmund Perrin.

where he had the duties of chaplain. He was Director of the Holy Name Society, and established the con-fraternity of the Third Order of St. Francis in 1949. He was also chaplain for the First Friday Club of which he was a member.

He was interested in the continuance of Catholic education and its principles and helped with the construction of Monroe Catholic Central High School, serving as a treasurer for that committee.

Fr. Perrin celebrated his Silver Jubilee in 1951 with his parishioners and with members of the other Monroe County parishes he had served. He died February 20, 1954, at the age of 75 years at St. John's Hospital in Detroit. He was buried from St. Mary's and interred in St. Joseph's Cemetery in Monroe.

R. FRANCIS PAQUETTE 1954-1968

The Modern Organizer

Fr. Francis Paquette was born in Bay City, Mi. August 31, 1902. He studied at the seminary in Delaware Gap, Pa. going on to study at the Pontifical University (Collegio Angelica) in Rome, Italy. In 1927 he received his doctorate in sacred theology from that university and also graduated from Fordham University in New York. Fr. Paquette was ordained November 1, 1927 at the Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, the first Michigan native to become a member of the Catholic Home Apostolate community.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH
MONROE, MICHIGAN

Pastor—REV. D. EDMUND PERRIN

Assistant Pastor— REV. LAWRENCE N. ROCHON

Assistant Pastor—REV. FREDERICK McNAMARA

ORDER OF SERVICES

Sundays — Masses at 5:30, 7:00, 8:30, 10:00 and 11:30.

Baptisms at 2:00 p.m.

Rosary and Benediction at 3:00 p.m., except during Lent.

Week-day—Masses at 6:30, 7:15 and 8:00.

Mass at 12 Noon every week-day during Lent.

Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.—Perpetual Novena Devotions in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Thursday, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.—Holy Hour of Reparation.

Lenten Devotions—Beginning Ash Wednesday, March 6th.

Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.—Rosary, Sermon and Benediction.

Fridays, 2:45 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.—Stations of the Cross and Benediction.

Sundays, 7:30 p.m.—Stations of the Cross and Benediction.

CONFESSIONS

Saturdays, Thursdays before First Friday, and on Vigils of Feasts of Obligation —3:00 to 5:30 in afternoon, in evening beginning at 7:00.

Confessions are heard during Holy Hour on Thursdays, after Tuesday devotions.

One priest will hear Confessions before and during the 8 o'clock Mass on Sunday morning—for accomodation of some who cannot come on Saturday.

Children's Confessions—Children should come to Confession Saturday afternoon if possible so as to leave the evening free for adults. The fourth Sunday of every month is COMMUNION SUNDAY FOR CHILDREN OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Confessions will be heard at other times on request; a priest is always on call at the Rectory.

Confessions are heard in French and Italian as well as in English by Father Perrin and Father Rochon.

Portion of 1945 annual report.

Assigned first to St. Anthony's in Temperance, Mi. he was then assistant pastor in St. Joseph's Erie, followed by St. Mary's in Marshall, Mi., where he served as Administrator. In 1934 he assisted at St. Mary's here and also served as Chaplain at the Mercywood Sanitarium in Ann Arbor. A year later in October 1944, Fr. Paquette was assigned as pastor to St. Charles parish in Newport.

After having ministered energetically in Newport for 10 years, Fr. Paquette moved to St. Mary's, Monroe as pastor in March of 1954. He continued his role as organizer of groups and events, helping to found the Monroe County Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), serving on their Board of Directors. In 1964 he was recognized for his outstanding achievement to the cause of youth and was presented with a plaque. Father took an active part in helping on the shared-time educational program with the Monroe Public Schools of Hollywood and Cantrick for the 7th and 8th grade students. He also took over and organized catechism (CCD) programs for several of the parishes he served in Monroe County.

The St. Mary School Board of parish members, at the suggestion of the Diocese, was established by Fr. Paquette, which was another first for the parish. His interest and dedication to education extended itself even to the high school level; he was a member of the Catholic Central High School Board of Directors for 14 years. His example of involvement and action inspired members to do the same.

Fr. Paquette was instrumental in adding the "all-activities building" (part of the new school portion) and in September 1954 added further classrooms to the older school. In April of 1955 he requested that a larger tabernacle be installed in the church, at a cost of \$2,500.

His 40 years in the priesthood were celebrated with a surprise reception in the St. Mary gymnasium in November of 1967. More than 1,500 parishioners from the many churches he had served, and his many friends were present. This surprise was organized by the St. Mary Altar Society women.

Fr. Paquette died unexpectedly at the age of 65 years on May 11, 1968. Concelebrants at his Mass of the Resurrection were Most Rev. Walter J.



Fr. Francis Paquette.

Schoenherr, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Msgr. William L. Shaw, pastor of St. John; Fr. Hugo Noetzel, pastor of St. Michael's; Fr. Walter Schwehofer, pastor of St. Joseph's; Fr. Joseph R. Rettig, assistant pastor at St. Mary's, and others. The seminarians from the Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit were present, as were seminarians from St. John's in Plymouth and the Verona Fathers Novitiate from Monroe. Pallbearers were: Francis T. Ready, Russell Egan, Julian Zochowski, Thurman Liedel, Edmund Poupard, William J. Braunlich Jr. Bearers for the funeral procession to the church were: Dr. Eugene Kennedy, Leo Boudinet, James Godfroy, Edward Knapp, Joseph Siterlet and Bernard Hammer. Fr. Paquette is buried in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Detroit.

CARL G. GENTNER 1968-1987
A Great Administrator

Father Gentner was born in Detroit in 1918, attended Sacred Heart Seminary in Plymouth and Mt. St. Mary Seminary in Norwood, Ohio. He was ordained in 1945 and served as assistant at Sacred Heart Church in Grosse Ile, Nativity of Our Lord, Detroit, St. Michael in Pontiac, St. Francis de Sales in Detroit, St. Clement in Center Line, and St. Bernard in Detroit.

Monroe County was fortunate to have Father Gentner serve as Pastor first at St. Joseph in May-



Fr. Carl Gentner.

bee from 1965 to 1968, then at St. Mary's. He was appointed at the same time as administrator of St. Joseph's and St. John's, this arrangement being the first of its kind in the Detroit Archdiocese. An article in the Evening News (Nov. 11, 1968) quoted Father Gentner as saying that this arrangement could provide better coordination of parish activities.

On February 23, 1970 Father was honored in observance of his 25 years as a priest. After a concelebrated noon mass, a reception was held in the school gymnasium and attended by about 400 parishioners and friends. He was also honored by his parishioners for his 40 years in the priesthood. A wonderful retirement party was held for him in Sept. 1987 at St. Mary's Academy auditorium, where Masses had been held during the process of renovation. The "standing room only" attendance testified to the respect and caring he so justly deserved from the people of St. Mary's.

During his tenure, Father Gentner proved to be a thrifty, prudent administrator. He faced the difficult years and many changes following Vatican II. He was also deeply involved in the much needed and controversial renovation of the church. Thanks to his capable leadership and thrift, our parish had \$950,000 at its disposal to cover the major costs of the extensive renovation.

Elmer Favor, who worked with Father Gentner as his accountant since 1965 described him as a "quiet, very nice, charitable man, very devoted as a priest, an avid reader, broadminded and good with people."

Father Gentner served St. Mary's for 19 years and was granted Senior priest status by the Archdiocese on August 15, 1987; he is now living with his sister in Monroe.

We wish to thank Father Gentner for his interest in the history of St. Mary's, his inspiration, and never failing support and encouragement. As many will remember, he wrote an interesting series of articles in the Chronicle in 1972 about the early days of our parish.

BRIAN CHABALA 1987-
Accepting the Challenge

Father Brian Chabala came to St. Mary's in April of 1987 and served as administrator during Father Gentner's sick leave. He was appointed officially as Pastor of our 1250 family parish on Oct. 15, 1987, the 199th birthday of the parish and was installed by Bishop Walter Schoenherr on October 17. The beautiful ceremony was celebrated at the IHM Motherhouse Chapel, since our church was undergoing major renovation. Several other priests concelebrated the mass with Bishop Schoenherr and Father Brian. After mass Father was honored



Fr. Brian Chabala.

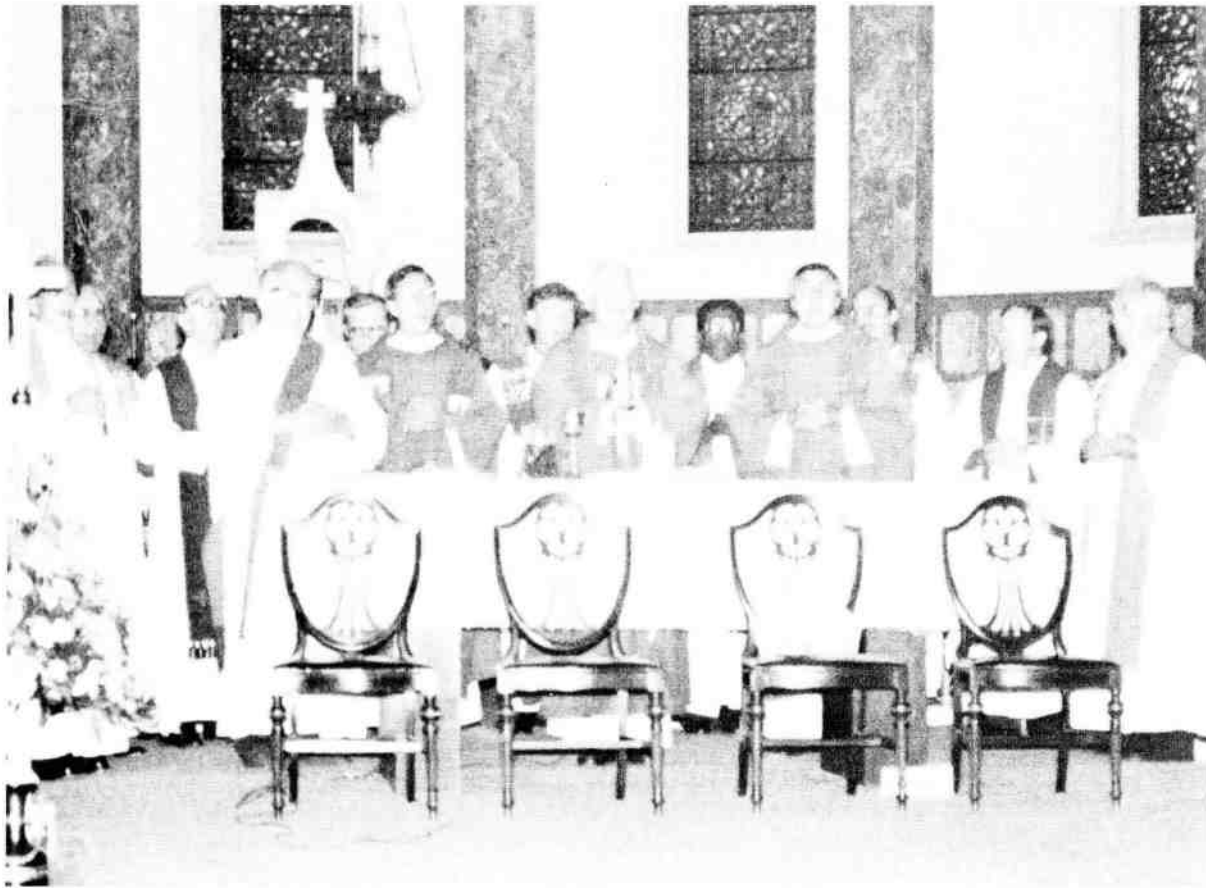
with a reception held in the school gymnasium. He was pleasantly surprised by a whirlwind visit from the reigning Miss America, Kaye Lani Rae Rasko, an active member of St. Mary's and one of its eucharistic ministers.

Father is a native of Detroit, where he attended St. Agatha parish schools in Redford, Sacred Heart Seminary College, and St. John's Seminary. Ordained in June 1977, Father Brian served at St. Basil in East Detroit, St. Frances Cabrini in Allen Park and St. Mary in Wayne.

This is the first pastorate for Father Brian, who was appointed for a six-year term by Archbishop Edmund Szoka of Detroit. In the few months he has

been among us, he has endeared himself to young and old and has taken in stride the challenge of dealing with the many problems faced by a large parish such as ours.

Upon arriving at St. Mary's, Fr. Brian was faced with overseeing the renovation of the Church - a task which had been discussed for some 14 years. The church renovation that had begun was a necessary task not only to bring the building up to Liturgical standards set by the church, but also to make it structurally sound. Set at the cost of over \$1,000,000, the church was scheduled to re-open for public worship in the spring of 1988 in plenty of time for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of our parish.



Installation of Fr. Brian Chabala on Oct. 17, 1987.

A TRIBUTE TO OUR ASSISTANTS

In mentioning the Pastors who served St. Mary's, we would be remiss in failing to recognize many of the priests who served as Associate Pastors at our Church. Their talents and abilities coupled with the Pastors, faithfully guided our parishioners and instructed them in the ways of faith. Their many efforts have not gone unnoticed - nor was their work in vain. We are thankful for their priestly zeal.

Of the early assistants, dates are of the first/last time their name appeared in the Baptismal/Matrimonial Registers.

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Joseph S. Downey | 15 Sept 1901 | 9 Aug 1913 |
| Nugent | 16 Apr 1933 | 18 Mar 1934 |
| Joseph Lawton | 2 Feb 1935 | 28 Jul 1943 |
| John C. Kiernan | 11 Jan 1942 | 15 Jul 1942 |
| " | 27 Jun 1948 | 11 Jul 1953 |
| Leo P. Theisen | 27 Jun 1943 | 18 Mar 1945 |
| Frederick A. McNamara | 7 Mar 1943 | 30 May 1948 |
| Lawrence Rochon | 25 Mar 1945 | 4 June 1950 |
| Ralph J. Vigneau | 8 June 1950 | 22 June 1952 |
| Daniel V. McGrath | 21 Sep 1952 | 8 Aug 1953 |
| John J. Hardy | 28 Jun 1953 | 15 Sept 1957 |
| Michael J. O'Hara | 22 Sep 1957 | 26 June 1958 |
| John G. Burke | 29 June 1958 | 16 June 1963 |
| Joseph R. Rettig | 23 June 1963 | 2 Feb 1969 |
| Alfred J. Miller | 15 Feb 1970 | 14 June 1972 |

We are grateful to the many priests who have assisted on a temporary basis for weekend liturgy. We especially want to thank the Verona Fathers (now known as the Comboni Missionary Fathers) and the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales from Toledo, who have been part of our church family for so many years.

Chapter Five

Architecture

... And onto land a House of Worship was built

How land was obtained by the early settlers along the River Raisin is quite interesting. From the first French settlements in the mid-1700s, and over a period of the next 20 years or so, the French made private treaties with the Indians, whereby they acquired long narrow strips of land along the river. Each homestead bordered the river in order to allow the owner access to the river for commerce, travel and trading.

In 1773, what is now the Michigan Territory was ceded to Great Britain through the "Treaty of Paris". This treaty ended the French and Indian War and the British troops proceeded to occupy the various forts along the Great Lakes, including Fort Detroit. Under this treaty and the "Quebec Act of 1763" individuals were not allowed to make treaties with the Indians. However, the British tacitly allowed this to continue.

The second "Treaty of Paris" in 1783 ended the American Revolution. The Territory of Michigan was given to the new Republic of the United States of America. A provision of this treaty allowed the subject of "His Britannic Majesty" to be secured from loss or damage in person, liberty, or property. Later in 1794, the "Treaty of London" more particularly confirmed that the inhabitants of this territory could keep their property of "every kind, land, houses or effects."

The American Constitution, adopted 200 years ago, forbade treaties with the Indians. However, the United States agreed to allow citizens to keep their lands if they had proof that they had either cultivated or built on the land or had some evidence of title to the property. The local inhabitants of what is now Monroe were justifiably afraid that their claims would not be honored.

In 1805, the "Land Claims Board" met in Detroit. In a letter from the Governor of the Territory of

Michigan, William Hull, and from the presiding Judge of the Territory, A.B. Woodward, Congress was informed of the history of land acquisition in this area and was urged by these individuals to honor the claims of the French. They recommended a liberal and merciful disposition of the people of this country, meaning Michigan.

Specifically in his letter, Governor Hull mentioned the claims of the inhabitants from "La Riviere aux Raisins." He made reference to two treaties honoring these claims; one made at a Fort McIntosh in 1785 and another treaty made in Fort Harmar in 1789. These claims were subsequently confirmed by the treaty with Lord Greenville in 1795.

On June 12, 1809, the "Board of Commissioners" of Detroit met and considered the claim of the "Wardens of the Church of the Parish of St. Antoine." We will now talk about this claim in more detail.

CLAIM NO. 648 - SITE OF ORIGINAL ST. ANTOINE CHURCH

The first site is located two and one half miles west of the present church. The small historic park with the St. Antoine monument designates the original location.

On October 15, 1788, Louis Mommini, father and Louis Mommini, son, sold to Fr. Frechette, pastor of St. Anne, Detroit, a parcel of land measuring one "arpent" (the arpent is a measure of area, one side of this square unit equals 192.50 feet) and two perches wide along the River Raisin and forty arpents deep, for the sum of 400 pounds. This land was to be used to build a church, presbytery and cemetery. Payments were to be made in farm products.

October 20, 1788, Joseph Hivon donated half an arpent of land facing the river and extending forty arpents deep. This land adjoined Mommini's property and was to be used for church purposes.

LEGAL DOCUMENT TESTIFYING TO GIFT

Before Porlier Benac in presence of the undersigned witnesses, I, J. Hivon acknowledge having from this day and forever given over to the Pastor and or parish of the River Raisin one half acre of land near said river, upon 40 depth bordering south, south east to the property which Mr. Monmini and son have sold to said parishioners and West-North West to the property I occupy, said 1/2 acre being a part of my said property. The pastor or his substitute may use said land for the benefit or need of the parish, for such building as he deems proper. In which consideration I make this gift without any remuneration whatever and hold myself having preference in case of a meeting of syndic if the property were to be sold.

*Signed at the River Raisin the 20th October 1788 and said Hivon declared not being able to affix his signature has made the ordinary mark.
(Taken from Liber 1 of deed, page 290 in Detroit)...Recorded August 23, 1798.*

On May 25, 1790 the Monminis appeared before Porlier Benac, Justice of the Peace, to declare that the above land had been paid in full.

November 16, 1794 Mr. Joseph Hirc (Hirague) donated to the parish a piece of land measuring three arpents less one and a half perches long by eighty arpents deep.

December 28, 1808 Francois Navarre filed in the name of the wardens of St. Antoine Parish and before the land office in Detroit a claim to above mentioned property, which was to be referred to as Claim #648. A Mr. Joseph Robert was brought in as a witness and claimed that before July 1, 1796 the wardens were indeed in possession of the premises. He also claimed that there was a church, a dwelling house, and out-houses erected on the premises and that about 15 arpents were enclosed and cultivated. As mentioned previously the Board of Commissioners at Detroit reviewed the claim and concluded:

"And thereupon it doth appear to the Commissioner that the claimants are entitled to the above described tract of land, and that they have a certificate thereof, which certificate shall be number 648; and that they caused the same to be surveyed..."

Congress approved this claim and St. Antoine was allowed to keep the church, until, at least, the Wardens of the parish decided to sell it.

December 17, 1838 when it was finally decided to build a proper brick church closer to town, Fr. Samuel Smith used the building for a school, but the building was eventually abandoned. The land (56 and five tenths of an acre) was quit claim deeded to Frederick Rese, Bishop of Detroit for the sum of \$7,500 to be used to help pay for the new church.

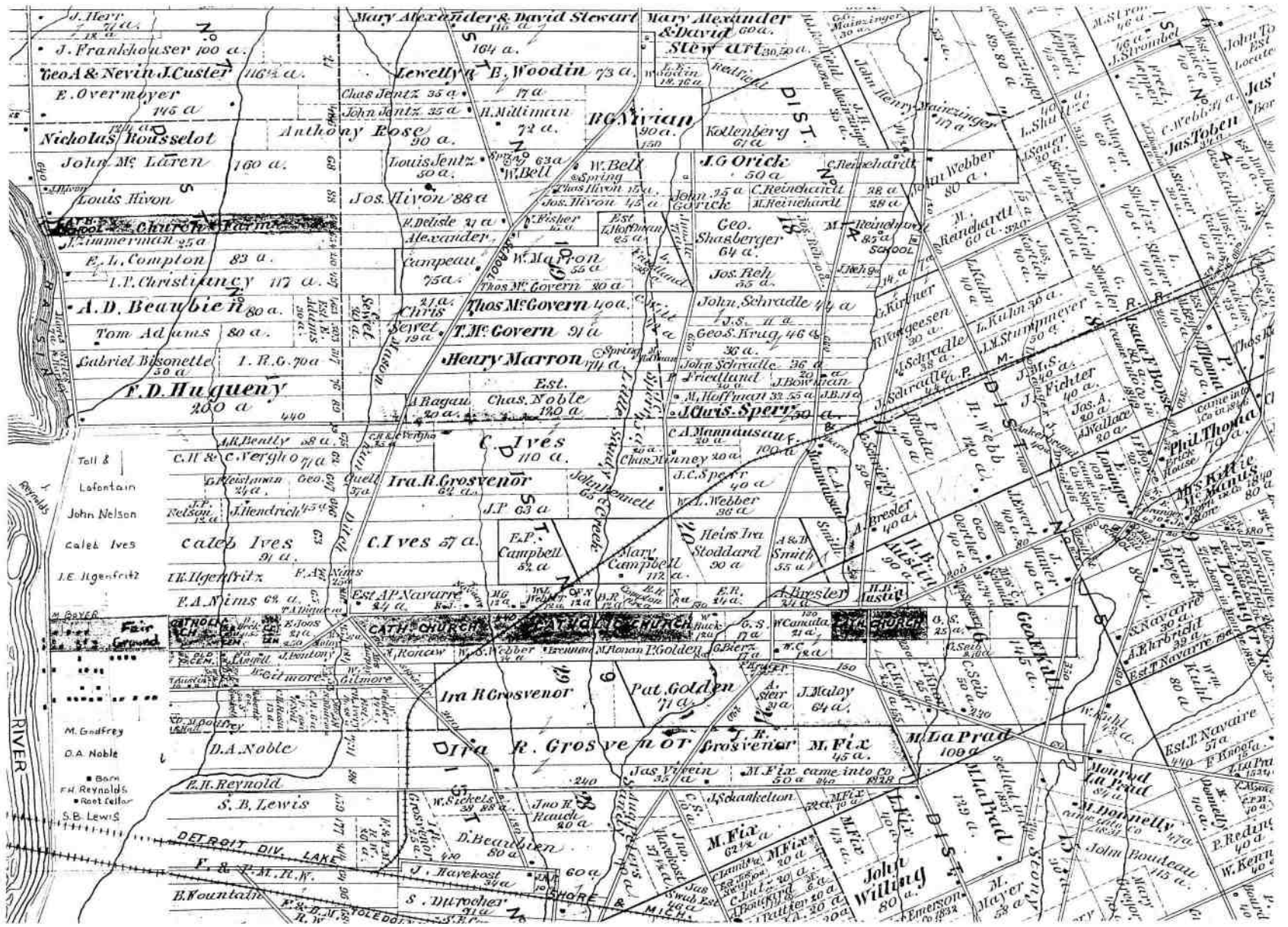
Bishop Borgess of Detroit sold some of the land to the newly formed Monroe School District in 1874 for the sum of \$100. This parcel was occupied for many years by the "Little Custer" schoolhouse, a white frame one room building which is now used as a storage area by the present owners, the Van Dacles.

The Monroe Board of Education deeded the parcel to the Monroe County Historical Society in the 1950s as a future site for a historic park.

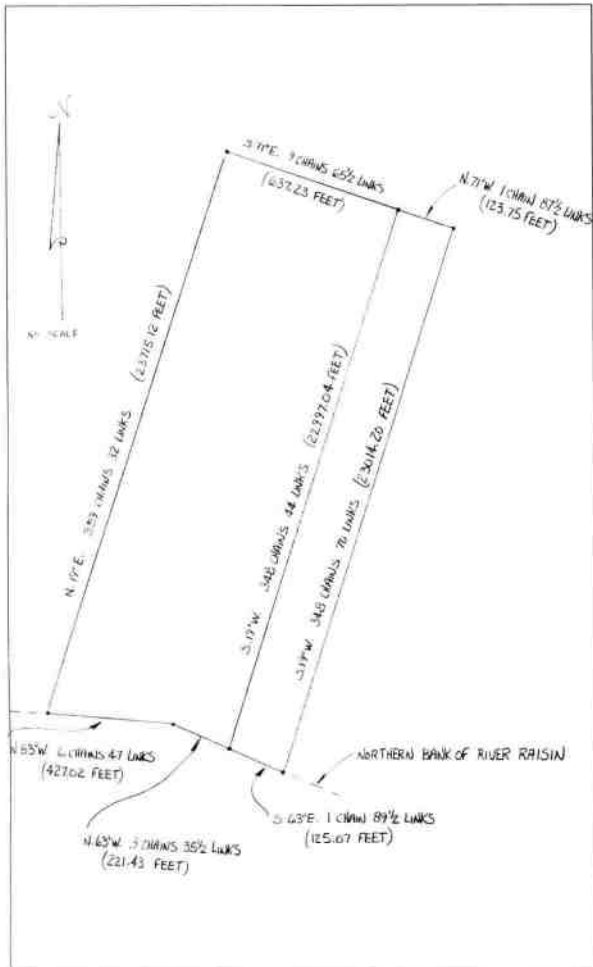
CLAIM 353 - OUR PRESENT LOCATION

It is interesting to note that the original description of the 401.23 acre parcel owned by Pierre Solo (Soleau) was referred to as French Claim 353. This claim was officially acknowledged by the United States Government October 28, 1913, and recorded December 20, 1913 with the Monroe County Register of Deeds. The description is exactly the same as the one made in 1819. The land was granted by the United States to the heirs of Pierre Solo. On the deed are the names of the President, Woodrow Wilson, and John O'Connell, acting recorder of the general land office.

The property owned by Pierre Solo was sold in part in 1819 to Charles Lanman to pay debts of the estate per court order of the County of Monroe, Territory of Michigan. Another portion of the land



Page from an Atlas of Monroe (1876) by F. W. Beers.



Church farm (401 acres) from legal description.
Approximate survey by Michael Bartolo.



1876 Map of Monroe.
(From the Payette Collection.)

(one fourth or 166 1/2 acres) was acquired in 1823 by Martin Nadeau, church warden for the parish of St. Antoine. In 1824 Fr. Gabriel Richard acquired one fourth of the land from Jabez Curring, another portion in 1826 from Deborah Chickering, eventually owning 3/4 of the property. Fr. Richard, who felt that the location of this land was ideal for the new church, ended up giving his share to the Bishop.

In 1828 Martin Nadeau transferred the 1/4 portion owned by St. Antoine church by quit claim deed to Bishop Fenwick of Cincinnati. It was on this land that the Fairgrounds church was built. In fact Nadeau deeded the property unbeknown to poor Fr. Badin, who was performing a groundbreaking ceremony at the old site.

The property was eventually reassigned by the Bishop of Cincinnati to the Bishop of Detroit in

1872 by way of a quit-claim deed. The portion of land which now includes the church, the school, St. Mary's park, and the school parking lots was dedicated in 1838 for the use of the French Catholic church to Bishop Rese, of Detroit. This portion of land was described as being bounded on the east by Charles Noble's farm, on the south by the river, on the west by Bishop Rese's farm, and on the north by United States Government land. The church at the time owned other lands north of the present day site of the Catholic Church. The enclosed 1870 map shows that the "church farm" extended almost to Stoney Creck.

Again in 1838 the French Catholic Church gave to Bishop Rese land north of what is now Noble Avenue. The description reads that the property is bounded on the east by Anderson Street (now Monroe Street) and the Charles Noble farm, on the south by Noble Avenue, on the west by Bishop

Rese's farm, and on the north by land owned by the United States. This dedication reserved two basic tracts of land, one of which was the "Irish cemetery," the second being the "French cemetery" (the old burial ground). In 1875, lands which now constitute St. Mary's Avenue, Borgess, and Godfroy were deeded away by the Catholic Church, and later became known as the "Verhoeven Plat".

In May 1872 Casper H. Borgess registered a "Church Plat" bounded by W. Elm, Borgess, Noble and Anderson (now Monroe) streets. The so-called Church Farm, part of Claim No. 353 was little by little sold off. (p. 55)

ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT

From Humble Log Chapel to Imposing Structure

The first St. Antoine church building was one which served as the pastor's home, as a parish meeting place, and as a house of worship. It could well have been an erected or soon to be completed home for Mr. Mommini, or a new building. By 1794 the structure was ready to meet the basic requirements put forth by the Bishop of Quebec, its lower floor being a presbytery for the pastor, the upper floor being used as a place of worship where pews and vestments were kept. Atop the wooden shingled roof the small bell rang from a humble belltower with the French-Canadian rooster, symbol of the Bible and the Word of God. A cross of wood was placed outside near the entrance, on a log hammered into the ground.

This first building was set on River Raisin stone, piled high enough to keep the structure above the average snowfall. It was probably clapboarded, rectangular in shape with the traditional Quebec sloping roof. Set in the roof were dormer windows which allowed light and air into the upstairs. Windows were casement type, made of many small square panes of glass which were covered in bad weather and during attacks by solid, tightly fastened wood shutters.

A fireplace was kept burning within, and parishioners warmed themselves before and after Sunday services, a right they claimed from supplying the

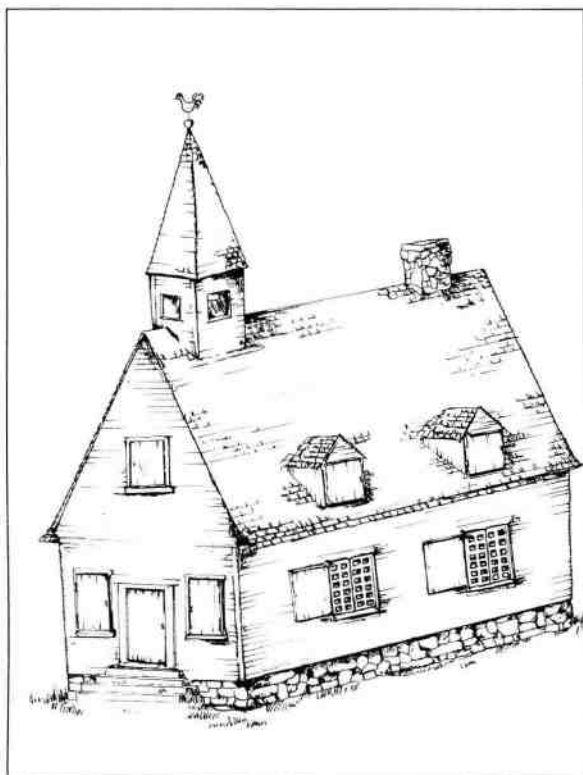
kindling. Pews were rented to that family who made the highest bid, and trustees had their own pews. As the parish grew, the building unfortunately did not, and the floor above sagged and touched the door below. The building was inadequate in every way and after fruitless attempts by all the early Pastors to build a worthy house of worship, a move was finally made in 1829. An 1840 map shows that the building was used as a school. It was torn down in 1842.

The second St. Antoine Church was the short-lived "Fairgrounds Church," located at the northwest corner of Noble and Anderson (N. Monroe) Streets, on church land which would eventually be sold and used as a fairground. Little documentation is available on this church, which was of brick, tall and barnlike. It was poorly built, as witnesses tell us that rain and snow came through the roof. It was larger than its predecessor, of similar rectangular shape, with wood shingles, glass windows, and a bell tower. The Fairgrounds Church was torn down in 1844 and the brick used to construct an addition to the next church building.

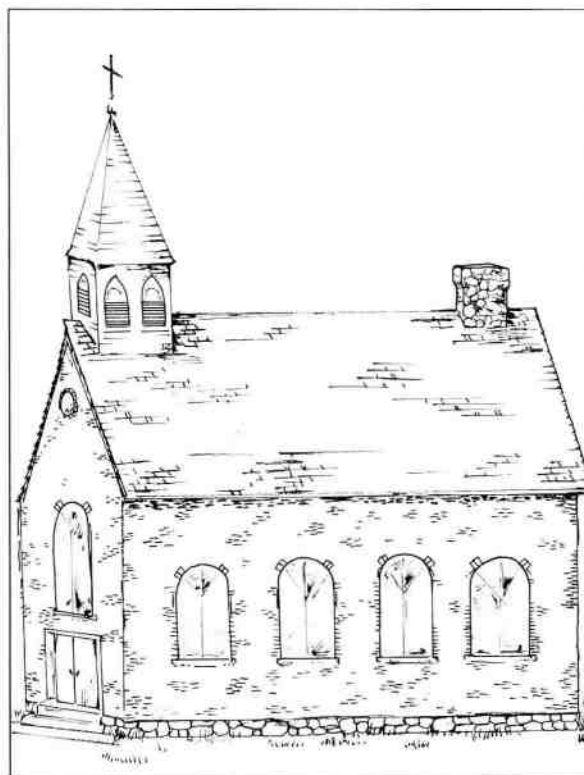
Since we have no accurate descriptions or illustrations of these two initial buildings, a member of our committee, Mrs. John (Lynn) Reaume, after consultation with Mr. Dennis Au, Assistant Director of the Monroe County Historical Museum, has drawn the artist's concepts found in this chapter, based on sketchy information and norms of that period.

The third church building was erected between 1834-1839 at the present location. It is the nave of our newly renovated church and is believed to be the OLDEST surviving church structure of any denomination in Michigan. The foundation consisted of river stone, the red bricks were locally formed and fired. The building was 100 ft. long, 50 ft. wide, with a three tiered bell tower, rising 100 ft. high. The tiers were ornamented with corner spires and louvered permanent shutters. Atop the tower was placed an iron cross. Four tall Gothic windows were installed along the nave. Dentel work edged the pediment and cornices. Niches for small statuary (which we believe were never used) were on each side of the entrance, grapevines and fleur-de-lys forming part of the ornamentation.

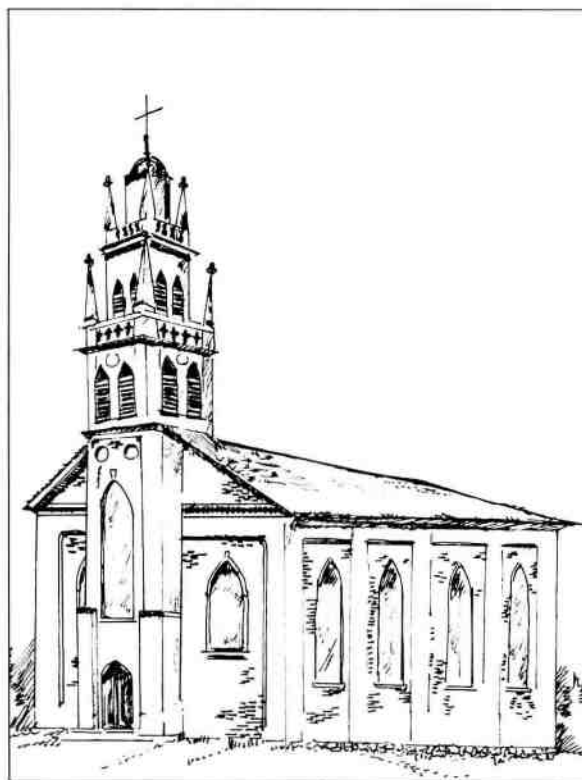
Drawings by Lynn Reaume



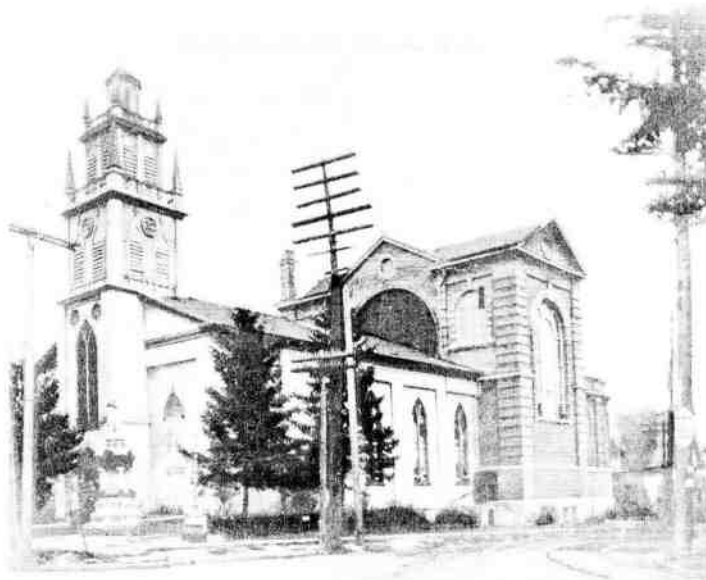
Our first St. Antoine Church.



The Fairgrounds Church built in 1828.

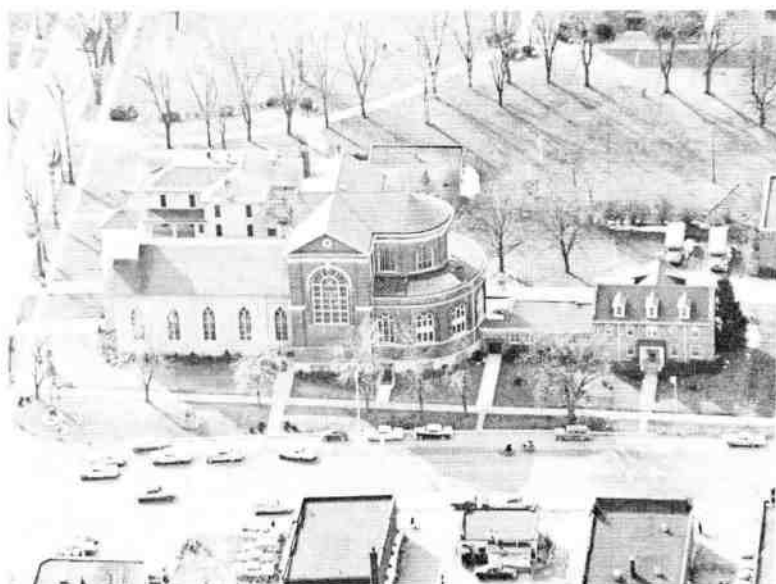


St. Antoine built in 1838 and dedicated in 1839.



Top left: Interior of St. Mary 1898.
(Courtesy James Godfroy Family.)

Top right: Early 1900s.
Sign on post reads: "Monroe C.A.T.
Mouse Track." (From E.J. Payette
Collection.)

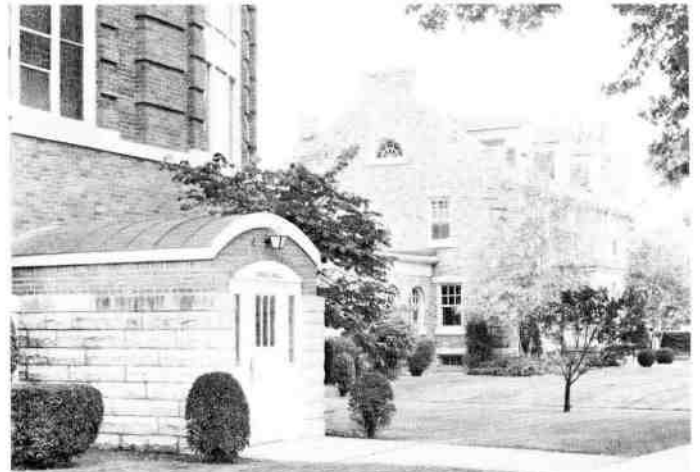


Center: 1965 aerial view of St. Mary.
Bottom: Looking southeast at Church
complex. Second Academy building to
right (burned in 1929), old school
building, city power house, car barns.
(Photos from the Payette collection.)





Top: Church Interior before Vatican II.
July 12, 1960 —Payette collection.
Center left: Our beautiful Byzantine Dome.
(Photo taken by Penny Minton.)
Center right: Church interior after Vatican II.
(Photo Courtesy Denise Bartolo-Shelle.)
Bottom: Entrance to Social Hall and view of
Rectory. (Photo taken by Tom Gerweck.)





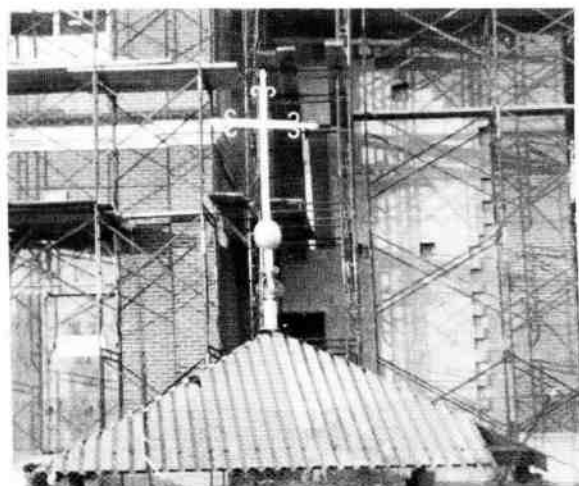
Groundbreaking for renovation, May 10, 1987 - Scott Rauch (Project Manager), John Reaume, Fr. Brian, Frank Gianino (Vice-Pres. Field Operations from Rudolph-Libbe), Jay Jondro, Ray Martell, Sr. Margaret Cutcher, Lois Yaeger, John Raymond, Pat Applin, and Bill Phelan.



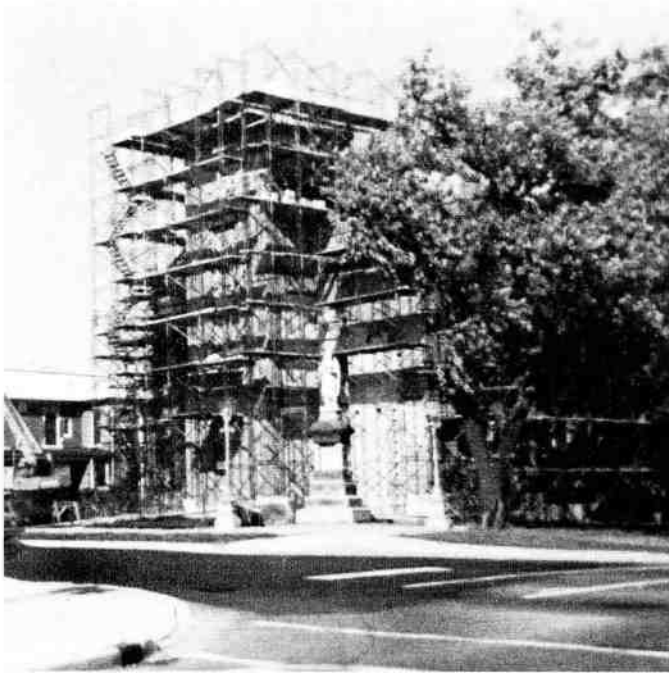
Removal of old tower (Photo taken by Lynn Reaume.)



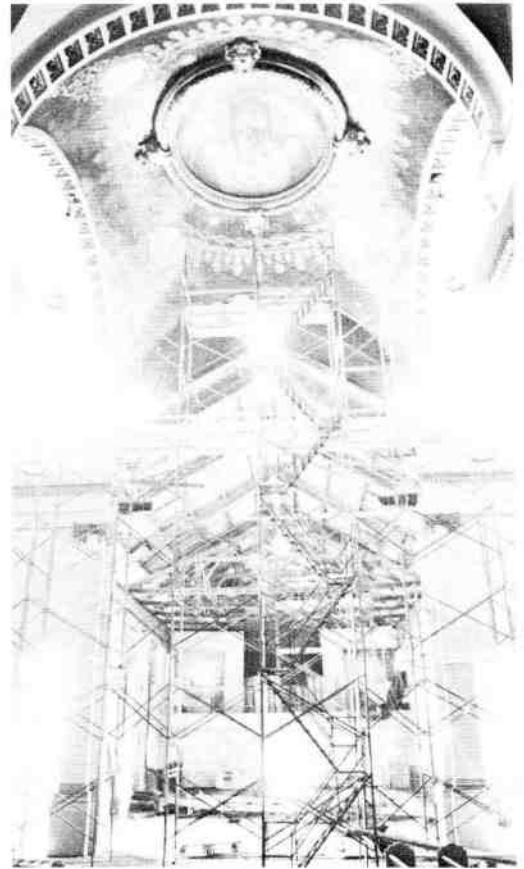
Original black walnut structural beams. July 30, 1987.
(Courtesy Monroe Evening News.)



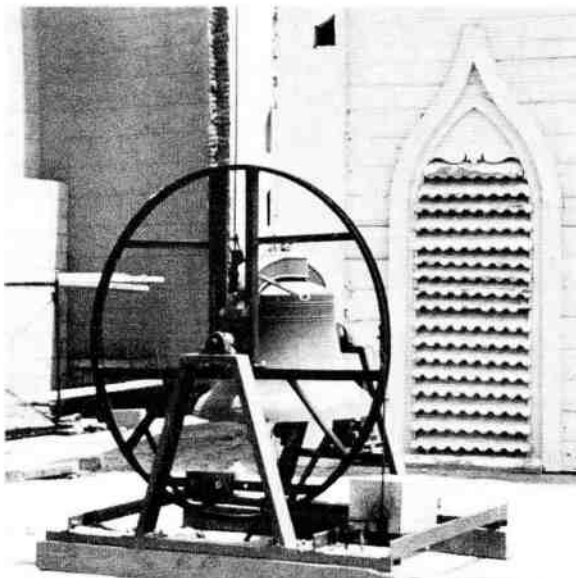
New Bell Tower ready to be hoisted. Cross dates to circa 1828. (Photo taken by Fr. Brian Chabala.)



A maze of scaffolding. (Photo taken by Bernice Liedel.)



Interior renovation on July 30, 1987.
(Courtesy Monroe Evening News.)



A close-up of the bell and the old tower
with original louvers.
(Photo taken by Father Brian Chabala.)



What an uplift!
(Photo taken by Bernice Liedel.)



Top: After renovation
(Photo by Lynn Reaume.)
Bottom: Before renovation
(Courtesy Monroe Evening News.)

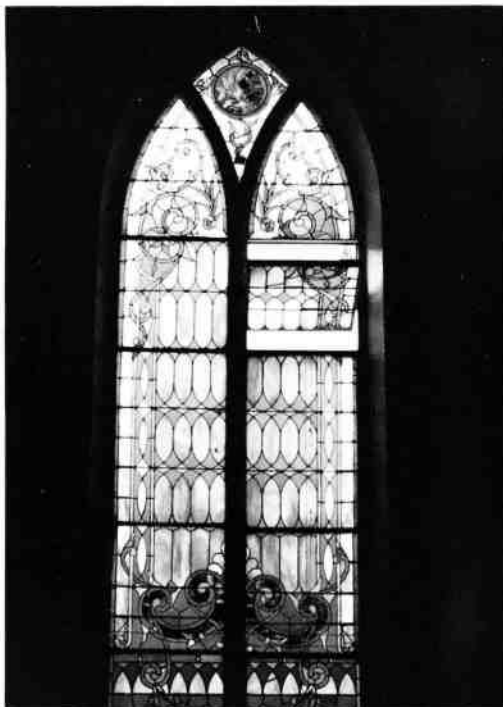




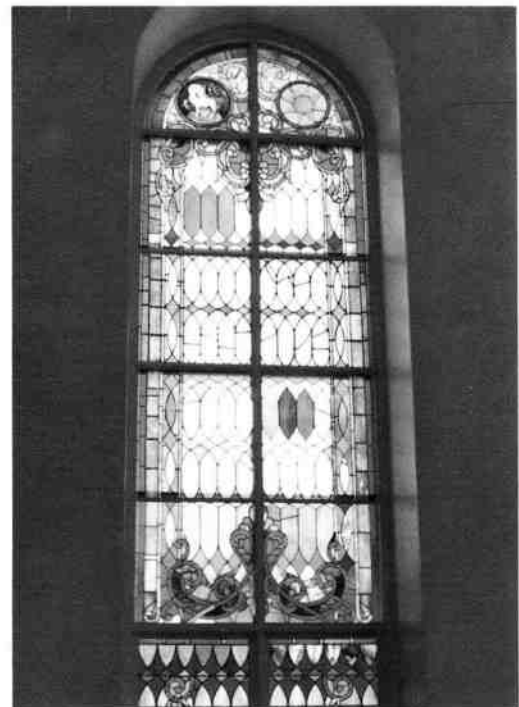
Assumption. (15 by 28 feet.)



Blessed Sacrament. (15 by 18 feet.)



Gothic window before renovaton.



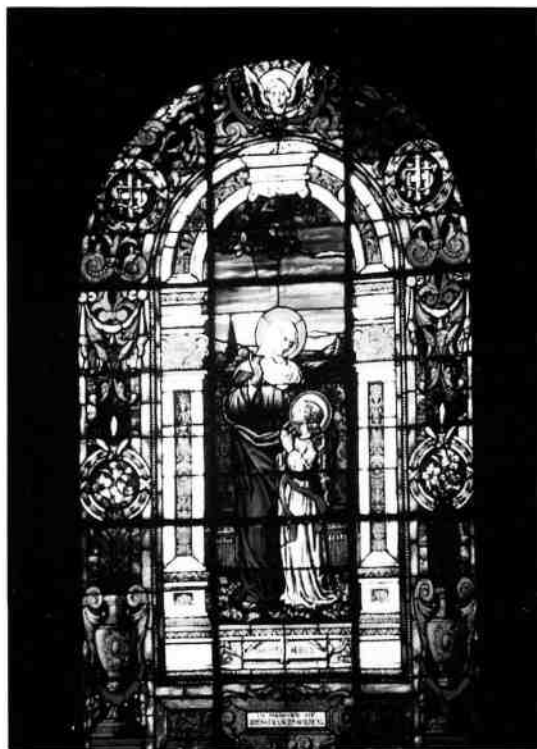
Romanesque window after renovation.



St. John the Baptist.



The Immaculate Conception.



St. Ann, Mother of Mary.



Coronation of Mary.

(Stained-glass window photos by Tom Gerweck.)

In 1845, an additional pair of Gothic windows, a 28 ft. sanctuary and a preparatory college for Redemptorist students, which also served as a novitiate, was added on by the Redemptorist priests who had come to serve the area. The college was dedicated to St. Joseph. It was considered rather pretentious for the time, being 20 ft. long and 50 ft. wide with three stories. The garret formed the fourth story. It was all brick and the materials were obtained on credit. It was at the time of the blessing of this addition, December 8, 1845, that the patronage of the church was changed from St. Antoine to St. Mary Of The Immaculate Conception.

The old altar of the mid-1800s-1903 had a "sunburst" pattern with pillars, angel candle holders, statuary, paintings of Mary and the Risen Christ. The communion rails were made of heavily embossed metal, looking like shields across the sanctuary. At the southern end of the nave were two graceful stairways leading to the upstairs choir loft.

In 1863 (Monroe Monitor March 25, 1863 pg. 3) the inside of the church was painted in fresco. Gas was also introduced, and beautiful chandeliers were suspended from the ceiling, while new windows were soon to be introduced into the building. (They were actually not installed until 1900). Paintings of saints and angels graced the ceilings and walls. In 1883 the bricks on the facade were so badly deteriorated that they were covered by a cement-like stucco.

In the spring of 1895, the inside of the church was again redecorated by a Mr. Edwards of Detroit and his six pupils (article in the Monroe Democrat April 18, 1895). The oil paintings on canvas were fastened to the ceiling. In front at the left was a picture of Isaiah, under which were the prophet's words "Behold a virgin shall conceive." On the opposite side was the figure of the royal prophet under which it read "from the seed of David." Next came the Annunciation leading to the central figure, the Immaculate Conception. At the right was a picture of the Visitation and on the left one of St. Anne with the Blessed Child. Close to the gallery was a picture of St. Cecilia with an angel, a most beautiful reproduction of one of Rubens' pieces. Around the large central figure are clustered four smaller bustos representing St. Dionysius, St. Remigius, St. Clotilda, and St. Genevieve. The

panels on the ceiling are rich in gold and silver damask with designs of fleur-de-lys and the letters A.M. (Ave Maria) in monogram. On the walls between the windows appeared paintings of the apostles in imitation of statuary. The gallery, organ and windows were all handsomely decorated in gold and silver on a light colored background. Over the main arch in front was a picture of two angels meeting, holding out a scroll with the words "Holy, Holy, Holy" in gold letters. Eighteen new patent gas burners were also installed.

In 1889 the statue of the Recording Angel was installed on the church grounds in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the parish.

A major architectural change to St. Mary's appearance took place in 1903. The sanctuary and St. Joseph College were taken down and replaced by the rounded, Romanesque red brick sanctuary which was almost twice the height of the nave. The new addition was 83 feet long, 73 feet wide at the transept, and 56 feet high at the side walls. The dome is of byzantine style with the Madonna and Child in a center medallion with the four evangelists in four surrounding medallions. The golden rosettes around the dome and sanctuary all had lights, and it must have been a spectacular sight when the lights were all turned on for special occasions. Side entrances were built, a new altar installed with statues of Christ on the Cross, and of Sts. Peter and Paul. Side altars were also installed and the artistic stained glass windows were ordered and placed between 1903 and 1914 as funds and donors became available.

In the spring of 1914, repairs and renovation costing \$5,000 were done to the interior of the church in anticipation of the 125th anniversary of the parish. Handsome donations were made such as a pair of adoring angels, and six bronze candle sticks.

In the 1940s the two top tiers of the church tower were dismantled not only because of deterioration but also because of damage caused by a 1913 fire. A peak of ornamentation and statuary was reached in the post World War II decades. At one point, the paintings on the ceiling were covered by large tiles, not to be seen again until briefly viewed by construction crews during the renovation of 1987. In the 1960s another redecoration took place, one of simplification, as suggested by Vatican II. Many

statues were removed and/or sold, along with iron-work, side altars and confessionals. The large main altar was removed and a smaller altar was placed in the middle of the sanctuary, so that the celebrant could face the congregation. A loudspeaker system was also installed.

Renovation of St. Mary 1987 - After 14 years of careful studies and because the parish had most of the funds available to either replace or restore the 1839 nave, a major renovation was started in early 1987 by the firm of Rudolf/Libbe Inc. of Walbridge, Ohio. The groundbreaking ceremony took place on May 10, 1987. A new roof was built, reinforced with steel girders for stability; the new vaulted ceiling makes the 1903 Romanesque sanctuary more visible. The nave's stained glass windows were removed, cleaned, repaired and reshaped to match the rounded Romanesque style. The bell tower was rebuilt entirely and is more proportional to the rest of the building. The original hand-hammered iron cross was placed on top of the tower. This cross is adorned with fleur-de-lys as a reminder of the French ancestry this parish is grounded in. Two rooms were added to the South of the church, one with restrooms, the other as a vesting place for processions. Entrance was made barrier-free for handicapped parishioners.

Inside St. Mary's new pews were purchased, the organ cleaned and updated, the choir loft area enlarged, the interior repainted. The altar area was moved forward and placed on a platform under the dome of the sanctuary, in a more centrally located area, according to present liturgical standards. The floor was reinforced and repaired and was covered with a rubber tile flooring material. Seating was rearranged, and the tabernacle and baptismal font placed into their own areas. The rectory and parish office also underwent repairs and redecoration.

OUR STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS AND THE LIGHT SHINETH THROUGH!

One of the most beautiful features of St. Mary's Church are the stained glass windows. We are dealing with two entirely different types of windows. The windows in the nave (the 1839 portion) of the church were installed sometime around 1900 shortly after the church interior underwent a complete redecoration. It is said that the windows were

designed by some of the best artists in Europe. The opalescent glass made so popular by Tiffany at the turn of the century has dominant shades of brown and bluish green. The windows are all basically alike except for the rosettes at the top which depict symbols used extensively by the early Church as a teaching tool.

The windows were originally gothic shaped but during the 1987 renovation, the windows were resoldered, cleaned and reshaped to match the Romanesque windows in the sanctuary. Listed below are some of the main symbols used:

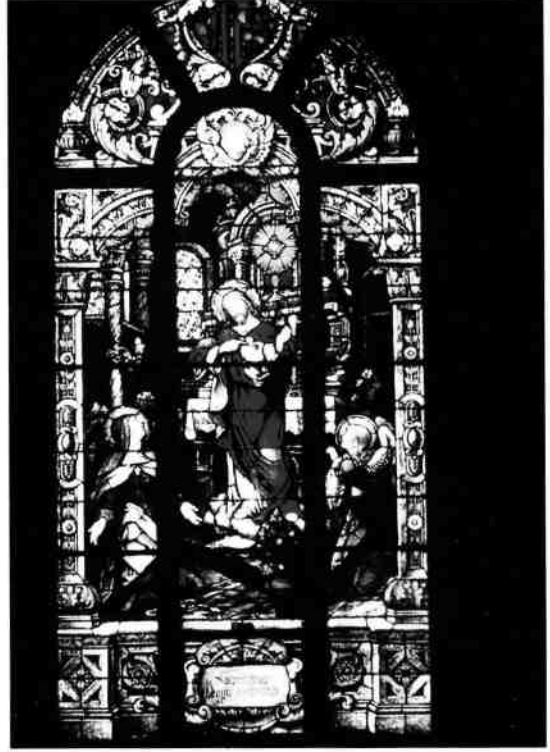
1. The Monstrance, symbol of the Holy Eucharist.
2. A chalice surrounded by wheat and grapes, symbol of the Lord's Last Supper, wheat symbolizing bread, the Body of Christ, grapes representing wine, the Blood of Christ.
3. A heart surrounded by a crown of thorns, engulfed in flames, surmounted by a cross. This is the symbol of the Sacred Heart, or the love of Christ.
4. Heart pierced by a dagger, is a symbol of the Sacred Heart of Mary.
5. Roses are a symbol of the Blessed Virgin (hence the name rosary).
6. The cross is a symbol of Christ and universal sign of Christianity. The anchor is one of the most ancient Christian signs and is actually a symbolic cross.
7. A pelican feeding its young by tearing open its breast is a symbol of Christ on the cross from whose wounded side blood and water flowed.
8. The dove is the widely used symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Some of the windows are memorials to beloved Pastors Monsignor Edward Joos, Fr. Bernard Soffers, and Fr. Joseph Joos. Others were donated by the following individuals: Mr. and Mrs. Philip W. Godfroid, Mr. and Mrs. G.L.C. Godfroid, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Golden, G. DeKeyser, Ed Van der Heyden, Mrs. A. Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Fix, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fix, Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Hubble, Mr. and Mrs. Jas Nadeau, and Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Verhoeven.

In 1903 the North part of the Church was demolished and replaced by a much larger Romanesque sanctuary. The windows in that section were pur-



Assumption (Detail).



The Sacred Heart.



Agony in the Garden.



Annunciation.



Resurrection.



Nativity.



Blessed Sacrament (Detail).

chased between 1903 and 1914, as funds became available. It took two men three weeks to install the windows. The freight was composed of eight boxes and weighed two tons. The designs, taken from paintings of the old world masters, were elaborate in the extreme. Some windows came in as many as twenty sections; piecing the glass together was like working a Chinese puzzle. (Monroe Democrat, March 13, 1914).

The windows are hand painted in three layers, the outer one being the protector. In three sizes, the largest of these windows measures 15 X 28 ft. It cost \$1,100 and depicts the Assumption. This window replaced one that was destroyed in 1913 by a violent windstorm. (One of our parishioners, Ed Poupard, was in church when this happened). The same size window facing East might be called the Blessed Sacrament window. The Sacred Heart and Nativity windows over each sacristy are medium-sized and cost \$500 a piece. Of the seven smaller windows, one is installed over each sacristy, the other five encircling the dome over the chancel. They cost \$275 each and depict from left to right the Agony in the Garden, Annunciation, St. John the Baptist, the Immaculate Conception, St Ann, mother of Mary, the Coronation of Mary and the Resurrection. Two windows facing South are similar to the earlier opalescent ones.

These windows represent significant events in the life of Jesus and Mary. The borders are rich with symbolic designs. Listed are some of the symbolic meanings:

An open book - refers to the Bible.

A crown with the cross - symbol of honor, sovereignty, victory.

Anchor in the sea with star shining above - symbol of Mary.

Winged lion holding a book - Mark the Evangelist.

Halo or nimbus over the heads - sign of divinity or sanctity.

IHS stands for the three first letters of Jesus in Greek and means "Jesus Savior of men."

Alpha and Omega - the first and last letter of the Greek Alphabet. Christ himself said: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come."

Lilies - symbol of Mary's purity.

Moon crescent - Mary's crown is surrounded by 12 stars (the twelve tribes of Israel) as described in St. John's Revelation: "he sees a woman clad in glory, crowned by twelve stars, with the moon at her feet, about to give birth to a child destined to rule the whole earth."

AM - Ave Maria or Hail Mary.

Fleur-de-lys - commonly accepted as derived from the lily, a French symbol.

XP (in Greek Chi Rho) is a monogram incorporating the first two letters of the name of Christ.

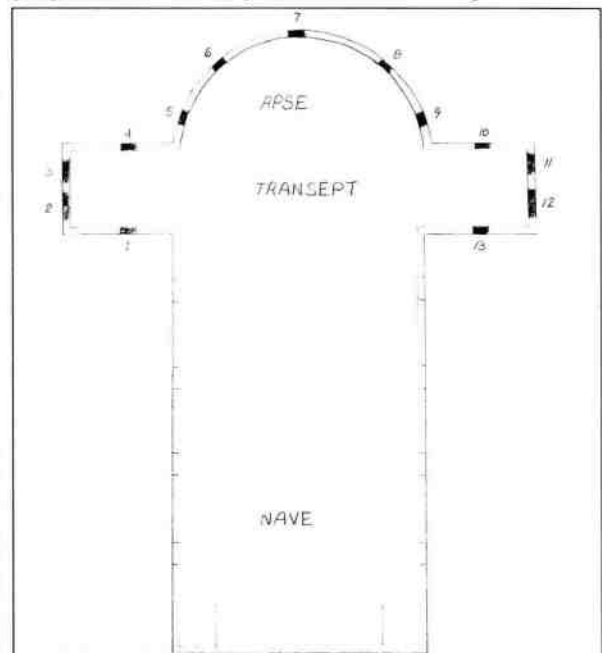
Instruments of the Passion of Christ are the ladder, pincers, hammer, pillar, crown of thorns and scourges.

JMJ - Jesus, Mary, Joseph.

The Apocalyptic Lamb - referred to 28 times in the Book of Revelations alone, is the symbol of Christ as the judge at the end of the world.

Other illustrations, too numerous to mention give us pictorial information about the times.

The windows were donated by the following Church organizations: the Sacred Heart League and Institute, Young Ladies Sodality, Holy Name Society, Senior, Junior and Chancel Choirs, Married Ladies Altar Society and Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. Two windows were donated in memory of John and Frances Bordeau, and of Michael and Margaret O'Brien. Other windows were donated by individuals A.J., Adelaide, and Adeline Dubois, Mr. and Mrs. James Manor, Mr. John Dusseau and family, and Father De Gryse. The Assumption window was donated by the congregation in memory of Reverend Joseph Joos.



- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Ornamental | 8. St. Ann, Mother of Mary |
| 2. Assumption | 9. Coronation of Mary |
| 3. Sacred Heart | 10. Resurrection |
| 4. Agony in the Garden | 11. Nativity |
| 5. Annunciation | 12. Blessed Sacrament |
| 6. St. John the Baptist | 13. Ornamental |
| 7. The Immaculate Conception | |

(Transept diagram by Michael Bartolo.)

Chapter Six

Historic St. Mary's Complex

MONUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH OUR HISTORY

St. Mary's as it stands today is not only a memorial to a struggling and now prosperous and influential parish, it also stands as a significant historical monument in the community. In fact on May 6, 1982 the St. Mary's Church complex Historic District was formally accepted for registration in the National Register of Historic places.

The following are brief descriptions of the monuments associated with our history:

On May 21, 1959, Michigan Week's Heritage Day, a monument was unveiled at the site of Monroe county's first church, St. Antoine a la Riviere aux Raisins. The monument is a single shaft of pink South Carolina marble through which a cross has been cut. The shaft is 8 ft. high and stands on 2 ft. tall base. The cross is 4'10" tall. Above the cross is inscribed "St. Antoine" with a bunch of grapes at the left and a fleur-de-lys at the right. The line "Riviere aux Raisins" appears above the date 1788.

Below the cross appear the words "THE CROSS LEADS GENERATIONS ON," the title of our book.

An historic marker placed along the park (which is located on North Custer about 2 and a half miles West of the present church) reads as follows: "

Pioneer French families of the River Raisin community of 1788 petitioned for the establishment of a Roman Catholic Church on this site. A chapel was built and it was dedicated in October of that year by a bishop who came by canoe from Montreal. St. Anthony Chapel thus became a landmark upon the early maps of that frontier period of Michigan history. Father Gabriel Richard, famed missionary-printer-priest of Detroit was minister of the parish 1803-27, Father Stephen Badin, the first Roman Catholic priest ordained in the U.S.A. also served the parish."

Another landmark is the Statue of the Recording Angel, believed to be the first commemorative statue in Monroe. It was unveiled on Thanksgiving Day, November 10, 1889. It had been ordered to commemorate the Centennial of the Founding of



St. Antoine's Monument. (Photo by Tom Gerweck.)



Statue of the Recording Angel.

the parish in 1888, which celebration is described in detail in another chapter. Even in those days, orders came in late and she arrived one year later.

The statue is cut from Italian Carrara marble and stands 6 ft. high. The overall height of the monument is 20 ft. It took 101 days to arrive from Italy and weighed 1200 lbs. It was procured through "Mssr. Moore (sic) and Son" of Monroe.

Just below the angel is the seal of the County of Monroe. On the second base is inscribed Oct. 15, 1788 Centennial October 15, 1888. On the third base the following is inscribed: "May the members of your society in America, animated alone by the pure spirit of Christianity, and still conducting themselves as the faithful subjects of our free government, enjoy every temporal and spiritual felicity." Signed George Washington. This quotation was taken from Washington's reply to a letter of congratulations received from the Catholics of America on March 15, 1790.

On a sandstone plinth are inscribed the names of the participants, including the Bishop of Detroit, Reverend Foley, Honorable Cyrus Luce, Governor of Michigan, Honorable Charles Golden, Mayor of Monroe, and many clergymen. Also inscribed is a list of names of people we would assume contributed to the statue. This list not only includes established St. Mary parish names, but also members of other parishes and possibly citizens at large. We are

sure genealogists will enjoy seeing the more detailed list of these contributors.

Our angel has been a landmark in Monroe for almost one hundred years, overlooking the river, Raisin the statue of its most famous citizen, General George Armstrong Custer, and today one of the busiest corners of our fair city.

Unfortunately, she will not last long. The marble statue itself has been badly damaged by exposure to natural elements and to pollution. The inscriptions on the base are nearly illegible. She, also, will need restoration soon.

INSCRIPTION ON RECORDING ANGEL STATUE

Side 1

F.X. Soleau
T. Soleau
Ja's Nadeau
N.A.P. Nadeau
M.T. Duval
Meinr. Laprade
J. O'Reilly
Dennis Kelly
A.R. Robert & Sons
Geo Fix
Mich. Laprade Sr.
Jos. Fix
Hillery Duval & Sons
E.A. Peltier
R.B. Peltier
Mrs. M.T. Navarre
Bernard Verhoeven & Sons
F. Hugueney
Dav. Reaume
Moses Poupard
Peter Micheaux
Joseph Vigneux
John Lamirande
Frank Lamirande

Side 2

Meinrad Fix
Alex R.T. Navarre
Wm. Steiner
C.A. Golden
J.L.C. Godfroy
Walter Hackett
John Davis
Mrs. Anton Daiber
Mrs. John Wahl
Ant. Weier
E. Yaeger & Sons
B. Sturm
G. Martin & Sons
S. Lauer
H.D. Hoffman
Ant. Rose
Andr. Baier
J. & C. Schrauder
Louis Dubois
John Bapt. Fix
Conrad Schrauder

Side 3

Rt. Rev. J.S. Foley, Bp. of Detroit
Hon. Cyrus G. Luce, Gov. of Mich.
Hon. C.A. Golden, Mayor of Monroe

Side 4

This monument is erected by

Rt. Rev. C.P. Maes, Bp. of Covington, Ky.
Rt. Rev. Mgr. Ed Joos, VG
Rev. M.J.P. Dempsey, Sec.
Rev. B.G. Soffers of St. Mary's
Rev. F. J. De Broux of St. Mary's
Rev. E.D. Kelly of St. John's
Rev. B. Schmittiel of St. Michael
Rev. P. Leavy
Rev. Chas Thomas
Rev. James Rorayne
Rev. L.I. Brancheau
Rev. Dan McLaughlin
Rev. W. Herwig
Rev. Tho. S. Rafter
Rev. John Van Gennip
Rev. L.J. Wigart
Rev. John M. Schreiber
Rev. Bern. J. Werners
Miss Helena R. Steiner
Charles P. Rabaut
Mrs. M.D. Loranger
F.X. Tetreau
Jos. C. Nadeau
J. Kischner
E. Van der Eyden
Rev. P. Loughran
The "Knights of St. John"
C.M. & Son, Builders

On the day of the dedication of the statue, two large platforms were erected on each side of the church entry walk with Bishop Foley and clergy on one, the assembled musical band on the other, both platforms being heavily festooned with ornamentation. In front of one hung a pastel copy of a portrait of the first pastor, Edmund Burke. Morning services were held at the church, the band escorting the company to noon dinner, after which the procession returned to the church where the draped monument's dedication took place at 2:30 p.m. The Knights of St. John attended, and songs were sung as part of the ceremony.

In the evening, the crowd gathered at the Monroe Armory (the "rink") at 6 p.m. for beginning refreshments, with a small admission of 10 cents

charged at the door. Bishop Foley gave an oration at 7:30 and with its conclusion this observance itself became part of history.

ABOUT OUR RECORDING ANGEL DONORS

The following is a brief sketch of the lay people who donated towards the Centennial statue of the Recording Angel in 1889. Many surnames are derived from some of the original French pioneer families of St. Antoine/St. Mary. The English-speaking Catholics of the city are also represented, as are the mid 1800s German immigrants. Three Belgian names also appear on the statue. Many Catholics in Monroe had roots at St. Mary's since it was the only Catholic Church in the city until 1852 when St. Michael's was built for the Germans, and 1872 when St. John the Baptist Church was built for the English-speaking.

This cross-section of French, Irish, German and Belgian donors were either farmers, grocers, hardware dealers, businessmen some of whom today pride themselves in having been in business in our city for over a hundred years. The efforts of this multi-national, multi-parish group to erect the symbolic statue in front of St. Mary's is a wonderful sign of cooperative action among the Catholics of the Monroe community.

The information for these sketches came from John M. Bulkley's History of Monroe County, the St. Mary Parish records, Fr. Christian Dennisen's Genealogy of the French Families of the Detroit River Region, 1701-1911 tombstone inscriptions, Monroe City Directories (1874-1896) and some family records. The author apologizes for any error, but this description is not meant to be exhaustive or final. The family member who best fit the time period of the statue was included. More on these family lines can be found for further research.

RECORDING ANGEL DONORS

F.X. SOLEAU (Francis Xavier) Son of Toussaint and Genevieve Bourg Soleau 1835-1910, marr 1868 Josephine Kibbee, dau of Leander and Catherine Fix. Seller of groceries and produce.

- T. SOLEAU (Toussaint) Son of Toussaint and Genevieve Bourg Soleau 1819-1891, marr 1846 Euphemia (Phoebe) Baudin 1821-1918 dau of Jean (John). Bookkeeper.
- JAS. NADEAU (James/Jacques) 1833-1908, marr 1853 Rose Deloche 1834-1902 Or: J.A. Junior, 1856-1903. Grocer.
- NAP. NADEAU (Napoleon/Apolonaire) Son of Antoine and Archange Couture 1827-1896, marr 1851 Francesca (Esther) Menard 1831-1910.
- M.T. DUVAL (Michael T.) Son of Michael and Agatha Nadeau Duval, 1826-1904, marr 1858 Carolina Bond, marr second 1862 Marrie Almyra Deloche b.c. 1845-1937. f: Charles.
- MEINR. LAPRADE (probably Gregory M.) Son of Michael and Anna Fix 1862-1925, marr 1890 Maria Guy.
- J. O'REILLY (John) Born County West Meath, Ireland 1807-1893, marr 1836 Anna Maynes. Wagonmaker, also first maker of coffins in city and made caskets for the IHM Sisters until 1891.
- DENNIS KELLY Born c. 1816-1890, marr 1842 Mary McBrien b.c. 1817-1879.
- A.R. ROBERT & SONS There are many "A." Robert men, and it is not possible to determine which may be "A.R." since many second initials are not known. There were also "A.F." Robert men prominent in Monroe.
- GEO. FIX (George) Son of Joseph and Anna Sueter Fix b.c. 1826-1898, marr 1853 Frances Adeline Nadeau, daughter of Jean Baptiste; marr second 1860 Julie Dequindre, daughter of Pierre; marr third 1872, 1885 Julie Helen Robert, daughter of Anton F.
- MICH. LAPRADE SR. (Michael, Senior) Son of Pierre (Peter) d. 1909, marr. 1839 Anne Fix. Or: Michael 1842-1920, wife Mary F. 1852-1901.
- JOS. FIX (Joseph) Son of George and Adeline Nadeau Fix 1858-1930, marr Exeline Grodi 1856-1938.
- HILLERY DUVAL & SONS (Hilaire/Hillary) Son of Etienne (Stephen) and Marguerite Berthiaume Duval 1824- marr 1849 Catherine Gasner (Gaynier), daughter of Pierre. Or: Son of Hyacinthe and Agnes Couley 1830- marr 1849 Caroline Suzor, daughter of Louis.
- E.A. PELTIER (Ezeckiel A.) 1852-1936. Son of Ezechiel A. Senior and Sara Andrews.
- R.B. PELTIER (probably Jean Baptiste) Son of Jean Baptiste & Catherine Williams 1828-1908, marr 1851 Eulalie Deloeil 1830-1885, daughter of Jean (John).
- MRS. M.T. NAVARRE (Mary T.) Wife of Toussaint Navarre 1810-1873, marr 1863 Mary Gaffney 1843-1911, widow of Samuel.
- BERNARD VERHOEVEN & SONS (Bernard Joseph) 1834-1920, marr Rosalie Vanaerten 1841-1922. Barber in city.
- F. HUGUENEY (Francis D.) 1819-1902, wife Josephine Ligier 1831-1905.
- DAV. REAUME (probably Frank V.) Son of Etienne (Stephen) and Maria Navarre Reaume 1856-1900, marr 1879 Marie Louise Hugucney 1855-1937 daughter of Francis.
- MOSES POUPARD (Junior) Son of Moses and Zoe Duval 1856-1938, marr 1879 Anna Hugucney, 1856-1921, daughter of Francis.
- PETER MICHEAUX (Michaud) 1835-1901, marr 1854 Marie (Mary) Aloyse 1837-1920. Grocer in Monroe.
- JOSEPH VIGNEUX (Venier) Son of Eli and Sophronia Chenevere 1838-1918, marr 1864 Marie C. Willets 1848-1937, daughter of Joseph.
- JOHN LAMIRANDE (Lemerand) Son of Jean Baptiste and Susanna (La) Fontaine 1841-1930, marr 1865 Marie Anne Cicotte 1830-1903, daughter of Jean Baptiste.
- FRANK LAMIRANDE (Lemerand) Son of Jean Baptiste and Susanna (La) Fontaine 1848-1913, marr 1872 Rosalie Navarre 1852-1926 daughter of Francois (Francis).
- MEINRAD FIX Son of Joseph and Catherine (Hannah) Sueter Fix, 1818-1897, marr 1843 Marie Ursula Heisler 1820-1893, daughter of Sebastian.
- ALEX R.T. NAVARRE (Alexis/Alexander Robert) Son of Julien and Catherine Loranger 1846-1893, marr 1869 Elisabeth Durocher 1847-1935, daughter of Laurent (Lawrence).
- Wm. STEINER (William) Son of George and Helen Biegler 1835-1917, marr 1864 Marie Louise Fix 1844-1900, daughter of Meinrad. Seller of hardware, founded village of Steiner ca. 1873.
- C.A. GOLDEN (Charles Augustus) Son of Patrick and Mary McDonough Golden 1854-1914, marr 1880 Frances Louise Soleau 1852-1929, daughter of Toussaint. He was an attorney and Judge of the 38th Judicial Court.
- J.L.C. GODFROY (Jean Louis Columbus) Son of Jacques/James and Victoire (Victoria) Navarre 1824-1896, marr Sara Dequindre. Monroe County politician.
- WALTER HACKETT 1845-1908, wife Theresia 1857-1910.
- JOHN DAVIS Son of David and Elisabeth Bodville Davis 1828-1907, marr 1851 Elisabeth Nichols b.c. 1832-1889. He was a teacher at the first St. Mary School, Justice of the Peace, and an Insurance Agent.
- MRS. ANTON DAIBER (Catherine) Wife of Anton 1824-1887, marr 1856 Catherine Lauer 1840-1914. He was a merchandise dealer.

MRS. JOHN WAHL (Margaretha) Wife of Johann (John) 1819-1886, marr Margaretha 1820-1905. Owners of Wahl Brewery.

ANT. WEIER (Anton W., Senior) 1829-1907, marr 1854 Barbara (Babetta) Schupman 1831-1915. Baker, also founder of grape-growing industry in county.

E. YEAGER & SONS (Emanuel) 1823-1900, marr 1848 Lucia Lauer 1830-1906. Proprietors of the shoe and boot business.

B. STURM (Bernard Sturm) Son of Paul and Marie Anne Gerweck Sturm 1845-1927, marr 1872 Mathilda Hoffman, 1850-1928, daughter of J. Leopold. Grocer, restaurateur, member of G.A.R.

G. MARTIN & SONS (George) 1819-1896, wife Otilia (Adelia) Gerweck 1821-1904. Shoemaker and businessman in city.

S. LAUER (Sebastian, Senior) Son of Michael and Eva Degan of Lancaster, PA, 1842-1912, marr 1868 Seraphine Hoffman, 1848-1935, daughter of J. Leopold. Grocer and saloon keeper.

H.D. HOFFMAN (Henry Daniel) Son of J. Leopold and Stephanie Lemley Hoffman 1867-1953, marr 1886 St. John's Maria Lulu Knauf 1851-1913. Seller of dry goods and millinery.

ANT. ROSE (Anton) 1828-1910, wife Louise Hess 1832-1918.

AND. BAIER (Andreas/Andrew) Son of Peter and Margareta Kiesel Baier, marr 1875 Francesca Steiner, daughter of Joseph. She died 1925. He was a hardware seller.

J. & C. SCHRAUDER (John, Conrad) Sons of Erhard & Julianne Enders John 1841-1913, marr 1867 Elizabeth Kirschner 1844-1895. Conrad (see below) Meat packer & butcher.

LOUIS DUBOIS (Louis Gignon Dubois) 1843-1917, marr Julie J. St. Aubin 1848-1891; marr second Elisabeth A. Robert 1893, daughter of Anton F.

JOHN BAPT. FIX (Jean/John Baptist) 1846-1918, wife Anna 1858-1950.

CONRAD SCHRAUDER 1848-1943, marr 1873 Maria Magdalena Bitz 1851-1943 daughter of J. George Bitz. Meat packer & butcher.

MISS HELENA R. STEINER

CHARLES P. RABAUT Born 1830 West Flanders, Belgium, to U.S. 1848. Wife Palmyra Prengiers; good friend of Pastor Joos and resided Detroit, MI.

MRS. M.D. LORANGER (Matilda Dorothea) Wife of Philip J. Loranger, 1821-1871, marr 1845 Matilda D. Peltier 1826-1897, daughter of Ezeckiel. He was a banker.

F.X. TETREAU (Francis Xavier Tatroe) Son of Joseph and Susanna Ouelette 1852-1911, marr 1875 Cornelia Vandale 1854-1916, daughter of Honore. Standard Oil Company employee.

JOS. C. NADEAU (Joseph C.) 1854-1914, marr 1877 Emma Jones b.c. 1856-1903. Grocer in the city.

J. KIRSCHNER (Joseph) 1846-1910, wife Elizabeth Wahl 1857-1924. In the Wahl Brewery business.

E. VAN DER EYDEN (Edmund Van Der Heyden) Son of August and Rosalia Joos Van Der Heyden 1843-1909, marr 1872 Rose Beque. In dry goods and grocery business.

C.M. & SON, BUILDERS Conrad Mohr b.c. 1823, wife Josephine F. b.c. 1822 Owner of marble and stone cutting company which handled the statue order and delivery.

THE BELLS OF ST. ANTOINE AND ST. MARY

"In the days before radio, telephone, and instant communication, the church bell served as the ever ready messenger, pealing out tidings of joy and sorrow, warning of imminent danger, and calling the faithful to God's service. Its tolling could be heard for miles in the newly tamed wilderness where the distracting noises of civilization did not drown nature's silence. The bell of the parish church was undoubtedly a central focus in 18th century French Town...A bell was most likely purchased shortly after the church was built. For over three decades, the church bell hung over St. Antoine as a sentinel on watch during that period of political upheaval, war, and internal dissension."

This paragraph was written by Donna McKay in July 1978, for or during our first Frenchtown Days Festival. During that Festival, Fr. Lambert M. LaVoy, a descendant of Monroe's early French settlers, performed a baptism of the bell, or a special blessing, using the original St. Antoine bell.

In christening the bell - the bell is washed and dried, while psalms are sung. Specially selected "god-parents" then come forward to suggest a name for the bell. They are usually dressed in the finest attire, the godmother's dress matching the silk draping the bell. Then, while oil is applied to the



Original St. Antoine bell, circa 1792, now in IHM museum.



The present church bell. (From the Payette Collection.)

bell in seven places, the bell is consecrated. Finally during closing prayers, incense is burned beneath the bell, the smoke filling its cavity. At the conclusion of the ceremony during the Frenchtown Days Festival, the small cast bronze bell which stands only a foot and a half high, was rung, its peals travelling for the first time over the old French settlement in over a century.

This small bell was probably replaced by a much larger one when the original St. Antoine parish moved to a brick structure closer to town. Apparently the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary were given the bell shortly after their order had been founded in 1845. A small building with a little bell tower, stood on the side of the original convent on what is now St. Mary's park. This building was later moved behind St. Mary's Church and used as the first schoolhouse. It is quite possible that the bell convoked the children to school. Later the bell found a loving home at the Motherhouse museum.

The present bells of St. Mary's are probably the oldest in the county. On the bells are the words "Eglise (church) Ste. Marie, Monroe, Mi. 1839. Loues soient Jesus Et Marie." (Blessed be Jesus and Mary). The bells were made by the Meneely Bell Foundry, Meneely Co. West Troy, New York, 1877. We cannot explain the discrepancy in dates. Might the 1839 bells have been recast in 1877?

OUR CEMETERIES

Donnez-Leurs Le Repos Eternel!
(Give them Eternal Rest!)

St. Antoine Cemetery

The Burial Register for the parish of St. Antoine at the River Raisin began in 1795 with the arrival of the first resident pastor, Fr. Edmund Burke. There were eight burials that year, one additional entry being added later. It was the death of a River Raisin resident a few years earlier that had prompted the Bishop of Quebec to put into motion the acquisition of land that would serve as a site for a church, rectory, and cemetery. The unfortunate man, Jean Baptiste Drouillard, had been taken on the often perilous journey to Ste. Anne's in Detroit for a proper burial. Residents on the Raisin needed a

burial place of their own, and their pleas were eventually answered.

The site for a place of worship was chosen on October 15, 1788 on land given by Mr. Mommini and Mr. Hyvon. The cemetery was placed to the north of the church building and was surrounded by a stone fence. By 1799 the cure was already suggesting a new site, since there definitely was a water problem due to natural springs and river seepage. The alternative of raising the existing ground was also offered. At the March 10, 1800 meeting of the pastor and the parishioners, Jacques Martin and Chrysostome Villers were chosen to repair the stone fence, making it five feet wide and eight feet high, with a "band attached to the stones by nails and a ditch around the whole cemetery two feet wide and one foot deep." It seems that the two men made good their offer, and the fence was repaired and earthwork done.

The cemetery is not mentioned again in the parish minutes until 1821, when gravel and sand were hauled to the site to allow further burials to be placed on top of the older ones, to a depth of four feet. Burials continued at the site until around 1829 when new land was used.

This oldest burial ground in Monroe County has long since vanished from view, including the simple wooden and stone markers. The site of St. Antoine's is now marked with a bronze historical marker and a marble cross which sits among a backdrop of pines and shrubs two and a half miles west of St. Mary's present location.

St. Mary Cemetery

During the 1820s the struggle for building a new church continued. The church trustees and Fr. Gabriel Richard had acquired 401.23 acres of land, originally belonging to pioneer Pierre Soleau (Solo) and known as French claim #353. The parish's next cemetery was called the new church cemetery, or the "French cemetery." When the church was rededicated to St. Mary in 1845, it was referred to as St. Mary Cemetery. Today's location places it in the 700 block of North Monroe Street, once known as "Monroe and Flat Rock Plank Road," and "Anderson Street."



Old burial ground marker on Monroe Street.
(Photo by Mark Sullivan.)

The Fairgrounds Church had been completed by September of 1830, with burials already taking place in the nearby French cemetery by 1829. In the parish register of burials, Fr. Samuel Smith noted several burial places for his parishioners: the "new burying ground (the 1829 ground), the "St. Antoine cemetery" (at the old church site at North Custer), and the "monastery cemetery" (currently the St. Joseph cemetery).

Perhaps one of the earliest burials was that of Colonel Francois (Francis) Navarre, the River Raisin's first white settler. He was buried in September of 1826 but no stone remains at any cemetery site for the colonel and the location of his burial remains unknown.

Belying the many burials on the one-acre site, there are only over a dozen markers remaining. This burial ground was used from at least 1829 until the first decade of the 1900s. Throughout the years many children have played among the broken and weakened stones, helping the natural deterioration caused by the elements. In 1870, Fr. Edward Joos remarked that the cemetery was "divided into two parts," and was "simply enclosed" by a medium

height fence. Its condition was regarded as "middling well," like the similar Catholic cemetery at Muddy Creek (Lasalle) now called Cooney cemetery and maintained by St. John Church. In earlier days the Irish had gone to St. Antoine/St. Mary and used a common cemetery.

Wild grape vines indicative of the River Raisin are still in evidence along the cemetery's perimeter, along with flowers gone wild which were once planted to honor the dead. A bronze historical marker designates this tract as the "Old Burying Ground" and civil records also mentioned this as the "Old Catholic Cemetery."

A list in alphabetical order follows showing the readable remaining tombstones.

REMAINING TOMBSTONES IN OLD ST. ANTOINE/ST. MARY BURIAL GROUND ON NORTH MONROE STREET

BERTHELOTE, Marie. Wife of Louis, daughter of Joseph Gayard. Aged 32 years, 7 mos. d. 09 Aug 1854

BURNS, Thomas. Aged 67 years. d. 30 Jan 1859

DUVAL, Carolina. Wife of M., aged 20 years. d. 13 Dec 1858

DUVALL, Michael. Aged 58 years, 6 mos. d. 05 Dec 1854

HECK, Joseph. b. Nov 1818 d. 22 Sep 1852

HECK, Margaret. b. 19 Nov 1821 d. 17 Jul 1868

JORDAN, John. Son of R. & H. Aged 4 or 7 years, 1 mo. d. 18 Aug 1840

JORDAN, Redmund. Aged 44 or 77 years d. 23 Dec 1859 ?

LABADY, Medard. Aged 70 years. He was distinguished for his bravery at the siege of Fort Miags and bore Col. R.V. Johnson from the field of the Thames. d. 23 Apr 1846

LAMB, Patrick. Aged 67 years. d. 27 Feb 1874

LAMB, Richard. d. 05 Aug 1868

LANG, Johannes. Aged 22 years. d. 29 Mar 1872

LANG, Joseph. Aged 54 years. d. 20 May 1861

LANG, Mary. Wife of Joseph, Aged 28 years. d. 12 May 185-?

LANG, Theresia. Aged 40 years. d. 22 Mar 1868

LASELLE, John B. Aged 45 years, 9 mos, 15 days 28 Apr 1873

LAUER, Michael. (German quote) d. 02 Aug 1852

LAUER, Sebastian. d. 19 Jul 1860

McCLUSKEY, Francesca. Aged 19 years. d. 21 Jun 1860

McCLUSKEY, Paul, Senior. Aged 74 years. d. 09 Jul 1873

NAVARRRE, Caroline. Wife of David, aged 47 years. d. 14 Aug 1951

NAVARRRE, Francoise Labbadie. Wife of Isidore, aged 65 years. d. 15 Nov. 1836

NAVARRRE, Gilbert. Co. B, 15th Mich. Inf. no dates

NAVARRRE, Isidore. In memory of Isidore, aged 68 years. d. 20 Aug 1835

NAVARRRE, Joseph J. Aged 65 years, 9 mos, 22 days d.30 Oct 1872

NAVARRRE, Paul. Aged 59 years. d. 01 Feb 1857

PAXTON, Theotiste Laselle. Wife of John, 53 years d. 18 Sep 1846

QUINN, Edward J. Aged 75 years. d. 26 Mar 1850

RAFFERTY, Dennis. Native of the parish of McLaren, County of Louth, Ireland, aged 26 years. d. 30 Jun 1840 ?

RAFFERTY, Margaret. Daughter of D. & A.b. 31 May 1840 d. 31 May 1840

ROBERTS, Antoine. b. 1811 d. 1873

SCHNENP, Barbara. b. 02 Jun 1815 d. 26 Aug 1858

SCHNENP, Joseph. b. 07 Mar 1807 d. 22 Jan 1875

VALRANCE, David. Aged 6- years, 2 mos, 13 days d. 30 Apr 1879

WIPPLE, Jacob. b. 10 Mar 1802 d. 25 Apr 1861

WIPPLE, Sophia. Wife of J.B., aged 36 years. d.

WURZSCHMITT, Franz J. b. 12 Oct 1808 d. 25 Jan 1856

WURZSCHMITT, Philippus Franz. Son of J. & Adele, aged 16 years d. 2- Sep 1855

Many of these stones are heavily marked by time and the elements, and several foundations are without stones. On Memorial Day 1987, a new tombstone was placed at the grave of Medard Labady, a War of 1812 veteran. The original stone was donated to the Monroe County Historical Museum by the family, organized by Mrs. Judy Swinkey of Newport, MI. The new marker bears the same wording as the original.

St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery

The third location for Frenchtown/Monroe Catholic burials begins with Fr. Smith's reference to the "monastery cemetery." No cemetery records exist to verify the earliest burials, only sunken depressions and evidence of wood below attest to interments. One section contains many Irish pioneer burials, which explains why the cemetery was sometimes referred to as the "Irish Cemetery." Its known size in 1870 was about three acres. F. Baumeister gave Fr. Soffers a land estimate of \$75 per acre, plus "the cost of improvements." At the time two vaults were in existence, one for the priests and the other the "people's vault." There was also a mortuary chapel, the entire value for the property being set at \$1,500.

Under Fr. Soffers' care the cemetery was repaired and restored. On Tuesday, November 1, 1881, All Saints Day, a gathering of religious including Bishop Borgess and Fr. Soffers, rededicated the cemetery to St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, patron of the common working man, and patron saint of a peaceful death. Fr. Leavy from St. John's, Fr. Schmittiel from St. Michael's, and Fr. Maes were also present for the consecration of the grounds. One year later, a new chapel was also built in the cemetery. At one time a small pond had been on the premises. Early interments include people of French, Irish, and German origin.

Although the IHM Sisters have their own cemetery, called St. Mary's (not to be confused with the second French cemetery), some of their early burials are found at St. Joseph's and are indicated by small, humble white stones.

The several priests who were buried in St. Joseph's were re-interred July 1, 1954 in a special priests

section. Fr. Paquette, at the request of Cardinal Edward Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit, made necessary arrangements.

Today the cemetery is located north of the old St. Mary's cemetery on North Monroe Street. Once incorporated in Frenchtown Township, it is now within the Monroe city limits. Its present size is 35 acres. The majority of the family plots are in the older areas. Some evidence of fencing, benches, urns, and concrete work remain, and the cemetery is surrounded by a fence.

In 1980 there were 7,000 readable tombstone names, but there are an estimated 3,000 unmarked graves, indicated by various records or sunken sites. Until the early 1900s the only reliable and consistent burial records were held in the parish registers where the funeral took place. The oldest cemetery records are the books of dues paid by the lot owners starting in 1900, and by modern burial permits. Cemetery manager James Boudrie attaches available obituaries to the mandatory permits to be used for future reference. Many people do not realize how inadequate and sometimes non-existent records or grave markers hamper relative or ancestor identification.

Markers of the past have not braved the elements well, and many have fallen due to neglect and weather conditions. Because the often numerous deaths within large families made costly monuments impossible, some deceased never had more than wooden markers, if any at all. Today it is often futile to extract a reading from eroded stones.

A mausoleum was erected in the southern portion of the cemetery in 1984-1985, and the small 1882 chapel was taken down. The St. Joseph Cemetery Association was formed in 1954 and the cemetery is managed by a Board of Directors. The Board represents the different Monroe parishes who currently use the cemetery. Support comes from burials and monument sales, not from any parish contributions. The house originally built for the cemetery caretaker is no longer associated with the cemetery, having been sold years ago. The cemetery office is located along the center entrance drive.



Oldest section of St. Joseph's Cemetery.



Priests' section at St. Joseph's Cemetery.



Aerial view of St. Joseph's Cemetery.
(Photo by Tom Gerweck.)



In Memoriam

MEMBERS OF ST. MARY'S PARISH WHO IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

"May They Rest In Peace"

- OLLIS M. DUVAL
WALTER ENGEL
OSWALD J. GAYNEIR
FRANKLIN B. GEBNER
JOSEPH W. HOFFMAN
LESTER KNAB
WILLIAM J. READY
ARTHUR W. VAN SLAMBRUCK



Honor Roll MEMBERS OF SAINT MARY'S PARISH IN THE ARMED FORCES OF OUR COUNTRY. A large list of names in columns, including John, James, Robert, and many others, all serving in various military capacities.

To all the members of St. Mary who have given up their lives in defense of our country, we salute and thank you.

In obedience to the expressed wishes of His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit, I have this day, July 1st, 1954, translated from the old burial vault in St. Joseph Cemetery to the newly platted priests' plot in the same cemetery the mortal remains of the following priests: Rev. Benjamin Schmittziel, formerly pastor of St. Michael's Church, Monroe; Rev. Peter Leavy, one-time pastor of St. John's Church, Monroe; Rev. Bernard G. Soffers and Rev. Joseph J. Joos, both former pastors of St. Mary's Church, Monroe.

Present were : Russell Egen, sexton of the cemetery; Harold McClain, Eli Allors, Earl Holcomb, Raymond Titus, Carl Hauser. The graves were blessed by Rev. John Kiernan, in the presence of Rev. R. Francis Paquette and Rev. John Hardy, Assistant Pastor of St. Mary's Church, Monroe.

Handwritten signature of R. Francis Paquette. (Rev.) R. Francis Paquette
Pastor
St. Mary's Church
Monroe, Mich.

Letter by Rev. Paquette concerning reinterment.



St. Mary's School graduating class, circa 1920 (unidentified). (From Charles Verhoeven Collection.)

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Chapter Seven

Our Parish School

LET THE SCHOOL BELL RING!

The first diocesan school organized outside of Detroit was the school affiliated with the newly dedicated Church of St. Mary. It was begun January 15, 1846 with a small group of Sisters under the guidance of Fr. Louis Gillet, the pastor. The Sisters would soon be known as Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM). The nuns taught their young female charges within their own house until the following year when a two-story wooden frame school was built. The old church bell of St. Antoine found a new home atop this building and remains in the IHM Museum today.

The end of the first school year was August 2, when the "distribution of premiums by the Bishop" took place. The young boy pupils met in a brick building opposite St. Mary Church, and were instructed by a Mr. Thomas Digue. The schools remained under the guidance of the Redemptorist Fathers, until their departure from Monroe in 1855. The Redemptorists had helped maintain the schools by their mission work. That and the Sisters' dowries had been used for improvements. Tuition was minimal and was the only steady source of income. Records indicate few boarders and about two hundred day students, although probably not at one time.

Several parishioners had complained that the Sisters were a financial burden and the Sisters wrote back from Pennsylvania that the attitude was different there. No salaries were paid to the Sisters for many years, and the parish, unlike those outside Monroe, did not have the added expense of housing and utilities.

In 1857, there were two free schools for boys, one English-speaking, one French, both associated with St. Mary's Church. St. Michael's German parish also had a school with catechism. Fr. Edward Joos became Pastor of St. Mary's, filling the vacancy left by Fr. Van Gennip, which meant

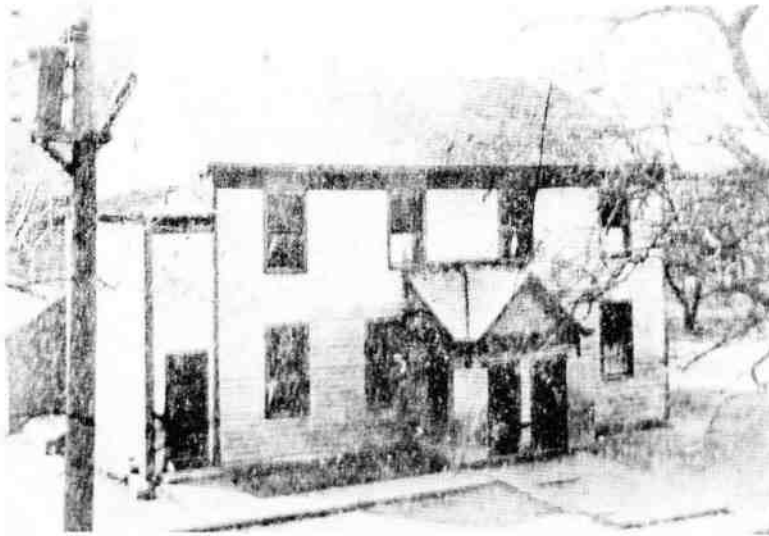
assuming authority over the parish, the school, and the Sisters.

St. Mary's Boys School, taught now by the Sisters, was held in the basement of the Church in September 1873, and soon after the girls were moved to similar classrooms from their day enrollment at the Academy. This move was the actual beginning of the St. Mary Parish School of today.

It is interesting to note that when St. John's parish was formed in 1874, the cost of erecting the church prohibited Fr. Camillus Maes from also building a school. The children of St. John's and St. Mary's were taught in the same classrooms; each pastor assumed one half of the expenses of maintenance and of the teachers' salaries until 1901.

As early as 1885, three parishes in Monroe, including St. Mary's, united to finance a central Catholic high school, under the sponsorship of Fr. Francis De Broux. Bishop Borgess laid these plans aside in favor of his idea to sponsor a seminary. This was St. Francis Seminary, opened in September 1886 with 35 students. Unfortunately it closed in June 1889. The building then became an orphanage - St. Francis Male Orphan Asylum - until 1908 when the institution was moved to Detroit. There was another orphanage in Monroe, run by the Sisters in 1860 in a part of their convent, called St. Mary's Home, known later as St. Joseph's Cottage for female orphans. This institution was in the frame structure West of the convent. Later this building was donated to St. Mary's to be used as the first school building. It was moved to the Northwest corner of the Church. Enrollment in the St. Mary Parish School continued to gain as reported in a school report from 1896 which states there were 2 teachers, 52 boys, and 50 girls attending. Fr. Soffers remained as Pastor until his death in 1899.

Reverend Joseph Joos became Pastor in November 1899. This man was also devoted to education, his labors resulting in a four room brick school build-



Old IHM Convent was transferred to north side of church and used as Parochial School from 1895 to 1910. (From IHM Archives.)



St. Mary School. Older building, also called Sacred Heart Institute, was built in 1910.



The newer school building and gymnasium. (Photo by Tom Gerweck.)



Statue above gymnasium. (Photo courtesy by Tom Gerweck.)



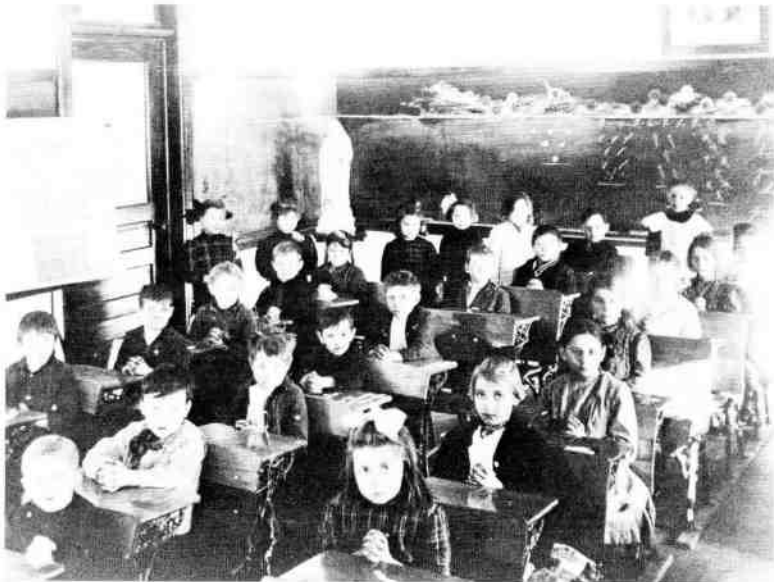
Adult play performed at St. Mary School circa 1916. (Courtesy Ed Poupard.)

From left, standing: Ed Poupard, Viola Navarre, Julian Lamour, Doras Soleau, Helen O'Connor, Eva Lapointe, Francis Stoddard, Ben Poupard; seated: Loretta Ahrend, Clara Sanglier, Dorothy Navarre; front: John Ahrend.



1917 graduation time. (Courtesy Monroe Evening News.)

Seated from left: Adelaide DuBois, Loretta Noeckel, Madeline Antieau, the Rev. Henry DeGryse, Olive Doettell, Velda St. Peter, Isabel Dansby. Standing from left: Kramer Verhoeven, Lawrence (Pat) Reaume, Harold LaPrad, Adeline Evoe, Hilda VanAcker, Lilas Bomia, Edward Flory and Joseph Liedel.



1912 Third Grade — Outside Row: Enos Nadeau, Norman Payment, Edward Van Slambrouck, Bertran Nickels, Elton Brancheau; Second Row: Wm. Sharkey, Leo Perrini, Elton Nadeau, Elmer Johnson, Leo Padot, Joseph Nadeau, Leo Poland, Ralph Dushane; Third Row: Georgia Delisle, Dorothy Nadeau, Madeline Nagel, Mabel Wehner, Myrtle Reaume?, Clara Zimmerman, Ethel Brancheau; Rear: Louise Roberts, Patricia Navarre, Esther Perrini, Jennie Dushane, Margie Brancheau, Thelma Verhoeven.
(Photo courtesy Lee Perrini.)

St. Mary School 8th Grade Graduation Class of 1921 — Back Row: Esther Nadeau, Celestine Perrini, Olga Neilson, Bertha Evoe, Johnny Dushane, Gertrude Liedel, Freddy Lemerand, Evelyn Navarre, Lawrence Lazette, Luella LaVigne, Madeline Miller, Nola Sancrant; Middle Row: Ethel Vizard, Edna Verhoeven, Violet Roberts, Fr. Henry DeGryse, Dorothy Livernois, Louise Miloche, Josephine Liedel; Front Row: Howard Maurer, Vincent Hack, Jim Brancheau, William S. D. Dansby, Herman Dusseau, Alfred Livernois, Harold Bushroe.

(Photo courtesy Edna Barron.)



St. Mary School 8th Grade Graduation Class of 1927 — Back Row from left: Alvin Anteau, Marvin Strauss, Joseph Pefferly, Carl Steckmeier, Angela Perrini, Margarite Poupard, Margaret Englert, Mary Hoffman, Pearl Wheeler, Marvel St. Bernard, Florence Quell, Howard Duval?; Second Row: Robert Verhoven, Norbert Thiesen, Charles Diekman, Margarite Nadeau, Marie Strimbel, Patricia Beaudry, Fr. DeGryse, Eileen Steckmeier, Gladys Soncrant, Virginia Johnson, Agnes Johnson, Edwin Shovar, Floyd Johnson; Front Row: Warren Bleyaert, Maurice Veshmont, Clifford Bushroe, Doris Runyon (flower girl), Charles Burns, Michael Champagne, Rolland Kraus.

(Photo courtesy Hilde Petrovich.)





First Communion Class, 1930.
(Photo courtesy
Eileen Overmyer Benson.)



St. Mary School 8th Grade Graduation Class of 1933 — Front Row from left: Barbara Handler, Priscilla Wess, Rita LaVigne, Mary Auita, Margaret Lietaert, Rosanne Heil, Anna Marie Eckert, Gertrude Bourbina; Second Row: Donald St. Bernard, James Kansier, Gerald Shelley, Mary Steiner, Margaret Hoffman, Violet Strimbel, Helen Strimbel, Geraldine Gardner, Ada Marie Reau, Irene Anteau, Jim Fisk (?), Charles Morrin; Third Row: Sam Joseph, Lucille Duprez(?), Ethel Livernois, Eleanor Brancheau(?), James Nadeau; Fourth Row: Thomas Nadeau, Margaret Navarre (?) Bellestri, Joseph Sitterlet (?), Harry O'Connor. Last Row: James Haggerty, Erwin Duvall, Hilary Petee, Patrick O'Sullivan, Charles Steiner. (Photo courtesy Hilde Petrovich.)

St. Mary School 8th Grade Graduation Class of 1937 — Front Row from left: Joe Hoffman, George Baron, Elmer Renner, Louis Sanglier, Emil Joseph, Hilary Dussia, Russell Reaume, Billy Fishger, Richard Kronsberger, Warren Duvall; Second Row: Betty Johnson, Lucille Jondro, Geraldine Leonard, Mary Ellen Nolan, Eileen Overmeyer, Fr. DeGryse, Fr. Lawton, Marguerite Baum, Rita Eby, Beth Schweibold, Bernice Dunham, Geraldine Gardner; Third Row: Russell Schmitz, Betty Peltier, Consuella Petee, Geraldine Goellmer, Mary Ready, Dorothy Kansier, Ida Fisher, Rosemary Theisen, Simon VanDaele, Alice Lankouf, June Polland, Mary Ferrari, Helen Groch, Mary Jane Kauffman, Rita Kull, Betty DeGroff, Mary Polk; Back Row: Frank Riehle, Howard Burns, James Dillon, Russell Belkoefer, Don Rottenbacher, Warren Shavlia, Leslie Navarre, Bob Gessner, Julius Miller, Ray Martell, Robert Lavalley, Alton Frank, George Siterlet, John Dewey, Walter VanSlambrouck. (Photo courtesy Mary Ready.)





St. Mary School 8th Grade Graduation Class of 1955 — (Girls) Front Row from left: Mary Lou La Beau (Sisco), Diane Kohler (Wallet), Jane Verhoeven (Cusumano), Judy Segorski (Neely), Margaret Gray (Poupard), Janet Vandevelde, Joanne Sisung (Benson), Marilyn Doe (Vallette), Sharon Schmeltz, Susan Durocher (Playwin); Second Row: Elizabeth Rousselo, Frances Willaert, Karen Zink, JoAnn Clark, Dolores Costello, Janice Assenmacher (Lipford), Barbara LaHood, Jan Payne, Monone Maveal (Hindbaugh), Elaine Brancheau (Boudrie), Winifred Steinman, Janet Van Daele (Thoma), Judy Roggelin. (Boys) 1. Paul Liedel 2. Lamont Bleyaert 3. Philip Schaub 4. Ronald Drake 5. Dennis McNally 6. George Stoll 7. Thomas Calkins 8. Peter Navarre 9. Edward Weiss 10. Richard Mushing 11. Jerry Scholl 12. John Reaume 13. Joachim Domeier 14. Walter Brancheau 15. Larry Duvall 16. William Jennings; Row 3: John Vandevelde, Marvin Rudd, Arthur LaPrad, James Townsend, Daniel Bairley; Row 4: Paul Wilkinson, Thomas Micka, Jerome Gosla, Paul Williams; Row 5: Thomas West, Richard Mommerency, James Ney.



Communion Class of 1956 — Front Row from left: Barb LaPrad, Delores Kinne, Caroline Plovie, Patricia McMahon, Janice Gagne, Fr. Perrin, Patricia Stout, Diane Duval, Susan Gaynier, Sharon LaBeau, Barbara Kane; Second Row: Fr. Kiernan, John Davis ?, Gary Meier, Karen Curry, Margaret Bleyaert, Tom LaBeau, Pat Palmer ?, John Pipis, Fr. Rochon; Third Row: Fred Schmidt, ? Mullins, Roy Turay ?, David Cousino, Tom Calkins, Jim Durocher; Fourth Row: ?, Jim Payment, Carl Baumeister, Charles Albright, Mike Siterlet, Daniel Johnson; Fifth Row: Bob Reau, Ken Swartz, Tom Weaver, William Rousselo, Mark Laboe, Gary Konrad; Sixth Row: Tom Sharrow, Carl Germani, Daniel Bushroe, Don Seitz, Anthony Cloum, Mark Durocher; Back Row: Bernard Rowan, Ron Brancheau, Tom Ready, Jim Parker, Leo Fix.

(Photo courtesy Everette Payette.)

ing which was built in June 1910 and was named the Sacred Heart Institute. In the 1910 report, Joos states that there are 4 teachers, 100 boys, 100 girls in the new school which had cost \$11,586.65 (teachers were paid \$450 a year). Sister Mary Roch was principal. Father Joos died in 1913, with Father Downey assuming duties until relieved by the new Pastor, Father Henry DeGryse. Another teacher was added to the staff, and enrollment increased again to 150 boys, 175 girls. Sister Francis Regis Reilly was principal until 1922, followed by Sister Marianna Markey (1922-1935). From 1923 to 1935 the Sacred Heart Institute was used as a facility for practice teaching for the novice teachers from St. Mary Normal College. In 1935 the practice teaching was shifted to St. Mary Academy.

Meanwhile in April of 1921 Fr. DeGryse was given permission by Bishop Michael J. Gallagher to build an addition to the Institute for \$12,000; \$3,500 came in June from an Owen Conlan at 5% interest, and in October \$6,000 (at 5% interest) was received from St. Mary College and Academy. In 1925 Father DeGryse purchased lots for a janitor's house.

At the end of Sr. Marianna's tenure in 1935 there were about 400 students with eight religious teachers. Sr. Marie Winifred Kerwin became Principal and served until 1945. Fr. DeGryse continued to champion education and catechism, and at his Golden Jubilee in 1938 gave his school children each a metallic rosary as a remembrance. After his death in 1942, Fr. Edmund Perrin was named administrator and pastor of St. Mary's. In the school there were still 8 teachers among 393 students. 71 children received their First Communion, 128 children and 15 adults were confirmed in June, and 57 pagan babies were ransomed in the Holy Childhood Society. The following year there were 407 children at the school, with 59 in Grade 3. Highlights of the year included the blessing of a new flag, the organization of three boys choirs in grades 4 through 8. \$13,000 was turned in for war stamps and bonds!

In the year 1945-46, Sr. Marie Winifred became English Supervisor for her Community and Sr. Sophia Fox replaced her as principal. Eight teachers remained, and better bus service enabled the children living in rural areas to now attend St.

Mary's. The Holy Name and The Children of Mary Societies were re-established. Altar acolytes served not only at St. Mary's Masses but also at the Sacred Heart Chapel at the Academy and at the IHM Motherhouse Chapel. In the Holy Childhood, pagan babies were again ransomed; the Pail of Pennies campaign yielded money for the poor and homeless of the war-ravaged Europe, and parishioners supported the Red Cross efforts, March of Dimes, and sale of Holy Childhood seals. One hundred forty five were confirmed by Bishop Wocznicki in June, and former St. Mary School pupil Emil Dussia was proudly ordained into the holy priesthood.

For the year 1946-47, 436 students were enrolled; Sister Marie Sara Scanlan was Principal. Societies at work were listed as Children of Mary, Junior Holy Name Society, Knights of the Altar, and the Apostleship of Prayer, all extinct groups today. Sister remained until 1954. During the 1953-54 school year, St. Mary's hired its first lay teacher (also first in any parochial school in Monroe). Miss Margaret Harrington taught 7th grade. Fr. Perrin was ill at this time and Fr. John Hardy came from Wyandotte to assist him for the summer. Fr. Perrin died in February 1954, his many efforts to make the school successful very much appreciated by many.



Mother Deodata (Sister Elizabeth Giradot), with Sebastian Verhoeven, left, and Jack Ready.

Cardinal Mooney appointed Fr. Francis Paquette as new Pastor in March of 1954, Fr. Paquette had been at St. Charles, Newport, and was assisted by Fr. Hardy. In September he laid the cornerstone for the 4 classroom brick addition to the school, including a kitchen, lavatories and boiler room. In February 1958 Gratton Construction Co. of Monroe built the gymnasium and activities building costing about \$96,816. In 1954-55 there were two lay teachers and 8 Sisters in the school, Sister Deodata Girardot served as Principal from 1954-1961.

In May of 1955 parishioner Charles Verhoeven's 8-room residence at 117 Borgess, was purchased for a new convent to house the St. Mary School Sisters. An addition costing \$5,000 provided a chapel, kitchen, office space, and other improvements. Another \$10,000 was invested for remodeling and furnishings.

In the school in the fall of 1955, uniforms were voted on by parents (191 voting, 164 yes, 27 no), and adopted for the first time for the girl students. In 1961 double grade classrooms were used in the lower grades, and Sister Cassian Schloff took over at St. Mary's School until 1968, when Sister Angeli-que Rose became Principal. After her brief tenure, Sister Margaret Cutcher, who came from St. Charles, Newport, took over as Principal in the fall of 1969, with Sister Angeli-que as Coordinator.

With Sister Margaret's arrival St. Mary's moved into a new era of educational expansion. This year was the first year that the school had more lay teachers than religious teachers; also a new agreement that had been finalized in 1968 was put into motion. This involved "shared time" between the parochial schools of Monroe and the public schools. Public school buses took 7th and 8th Grade parochial students to Hollywood (7th) and Cantrick(8th). Classes there included math, science, physical education, music, home economics, and shop. After lunch, the students were bussed back to St. Mary's for religion, social studies, and English classes. The program was very beneficial to the students who enjoyed both sides of the educational coin, the parochial and the public. The

program only lasted two years and with governmental intervention concerning tax breaks among other reasons, this program had to be dropped.

In the fall of 1970 another first began for the students at St. Mary's. Elective courses, offered by various people on Fridays, were given to the 7th and 8th graders. This program would prove to be popular and a successful way to learn. The initial electives included journalism, math, weight lifting, drama, girls cooking, art and typing. Over the years, some other electives taught were: ceramics, crocheting, knitting, educational games, floral arranging, sewing, public speaking, Spanish, French, photography, social awareness, crafts, candy molding, mime, drawing, calligraphy, and a travelogue. For the younger grades there have also been programs added such as band (music), art classes, participation in science fairs, school newspapers. For the 1986-87 year, a school yearbook was published for the first time.

Regrettably, 1987 was the final year for Sister Margaret Cutcher as Principal of St. Mary's. She has labored long and hard to put St. Mary's students as forerunners throughout the county in educational excellence, not just in academics, which are so important, but also in meeting other goals in personality, morality, Christianity and sportsmanship. Our first lay principal Ms. Mary Anne Lapinsky took charge in September 1987.

The present school buildings are in good repair, with their interiors and classrooms altered and reorganized as necessary. The old playground area between St. Mary's and Monroe Catholic Central was blacktopped for parking, and an enclosed brick breezeway added to connect the two school buildings. A kindergarten class of morning and afternoon students was started in 1982, with enrollment averaging 31 pupils.

We, the parishioners of St. Mary's, owe a debt of gratitude to all the fine religious and lay teachers who dedicated themselves to the Christian upbringing of our children. We also thank all the people in any way connected with the successful operation of our fine school.

Kaleidoscope

Usually parish chronicles simply record events - the details are left to the priest or lector who reads them. As you will have noticed, the first 150 years of our history was well documented by the minutes of the trustee meetings, by letters, and by frequent and detailed newspaper coverage.

We found relatively little information about the last 50 years. Therefore, we decided to select AT RANDOM excerpts from chronicles and local newspaper clippings. We hope you will enjoy them and that they will bring back memories of what things used to be like. Many of these excerpts give evidence of the sacrifices and dedication of our priests and our parishioners.

Kaleidoscope....Excerpts from Church Chronicles, Newspaper Clips and Letters

The English speaking members of the congregation formed an amateur choir, Mrs. Scanlan bringing to the service her soulful soprano, trained in an English choir.

Article of 1836

The Catholics have erected a stately brick edifice on the Frenchtown side of the river, which is an ornament to the place and creditable to the congregation, which is large.

Monroe Gazette....September 23, 1837

On the night of Wednesday last, some villain or villains broke into the Catholic Church in this city, forcing the back door, entered the sacristy and stole therefrom a silver chalice, value \$40 or \$50, a silver ostensorium, value \$50 to \$60, with a variety of other valuable articles, including the clerical robes of the Priest. The total value of property stolen amounts to about \$500.

The city authorities have offered \$50, and the church a like sum, making a reward of \$100 for the detection of the robbers. We sincerely hope they may not escape detection and punishment for their ignominious crime.

Monroe Gazette.....June 11, 1839

St. Mary's French Catholic, organized about 1788, Rev. Father Joos, Pastor. Services every Sabbath at 8 and 10:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., Mass every morning in the week at 8 o'clock.

Monroe Monitor...May 28, 1862..Vol. 1

Bishop Lefevere of Detroit is expected in Monroe on Thursday next week to attend the festival of

Corpus Christi when he will administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Monroe Monitor...June 11, 1862... Wednesday

We understand that a new altar has been erected in St. Mary's Church in this city, equal to any in the state.

Monroe Monitor... June 18, 1862...Wednesday

Festival of Corpus Christi - Tomorrow at St. Mary's Church at 8 a.m. the first and second communion takes place and at 10 o'clock the confirmation. At 3 o'clock the members of the German (St. Michael) Church will unite with those at St. Mary's Church and after services there will be a grand procession accompanied by the Monroe City band.

Monroe Monitor...June 18, 1862...Wednesday

A splendid iron fence has lately been erected in front of St. Mary's Church on Elm Avenue, and other very commendable improvements are being made, by building new walks, sodding, etc.

The Monroe Commercial...June 10, 1875...

Front Page

St. Mary's painted and decorated. A large congregation attended St. Mary's Church Sunday evening to witness the blessing of the new stations. The ceremonies were conducted by Fr. Joos, assisted by Fr. Maes of Detroit and Soffers and Debruynne of St. Mary's. Rev. Maes delivered the sermon. The painting and decoration of St. Mary's Church are completed and make a very decided improvement in the interior appearance of the edifice. The new

improvement will be a new floor and new pews. With these, the church will be one of the neatest in the city.

Monroe Democrat...April 5, 1883

.....pews are still rented in December, 1855; High Mass and sermon at 5:00, Low Mass 7:30 with children's choir. Second High Mass and sermon 10:00 a.m., vespers at 7:30 p.m.....

Monroe Democrat....Dec. 1885

"At close of a mission of young ladies a sodality was formed with 84 members known as "The Children of Mary" with E. Joos as spiritual director and advisor. It is the largest society of its kind in the history of St. Mary's."

Monroe Democrat...March 19, 1885

"The stately maples which stood in front of St. Mary's Church for many years have been cut down because of decay, with evergreens which will take their place."

Monroe Democrat....April 30, 1885

Exterior of St. Mary's stuccoed. A considerable sum has been subscribed for the improvement and repairs of St. Mary's Church and parsonage. The exterior of the church will be stuccoed and the wood work painted and an additional furnace will probably be put in. The priest's house will be repainted and it is also desired to lay a flagstone walk from the house to Elm Ave. along the east side of the church.

Monroe Democrat....July 19, 1888

A moonlight excursion will be given on the steamer Josie next Wednesday evening by the young men of St. Mary's Church.

Monroe Record....August 30, 1900

Men are busy putting in the new windows at St. Mary's Church. Re-opening of church December 8th.

Monroe Record....October 31, 1901

St. Mary's re-opened. Despite the inclemency of the weather, the re-opening services at St. Mary's Church held at 10:30 Sunday morning were attended by a large number of people including Young Ladies Sodality, Ladies Altar and Blessed Sacrament Societies which attended in a body, and

a number of pupils from St. Mary's Academy. The church presented a strikingly beautiful appearance with its new sanctuary lamp, windows and statuary and today it is one of the handsomest edifices in the Detroit diocese. The celebration of the impressive pontifical high mass was conducted by Rev. Bishop Foley who congratulated the congregation and pastor on the condition of the parish, morally as well as financially. The music for the occasion, under the direction of the organist, Miss Rose Leib, who was accompanied on violins by Messrs. Hubble and Genac, was far superior to anything heard in a local church in some time. The solos sung by Misses Bezeau and Duvall and Mr. E.A. Yaeger also were very fine.

Record...December 11, 1901...p.2 col.

On Christmas day, the first Mass, a high Mass, will be held at 6:00 a.m., the second, a low Mass for the children at 8:30; the third, a high Mass, at 9:30. The sermons at the first two will be in English and the last in French.

Monroe Democrat...Christmas Issue, 1901

Rev. Fr. Joseph Joos, rector of St. Mary's Church, has been appointed president of the deanery of Michigan by Bishop Foley. The deanery includes 20 priests and the honor conferred upon Fr. Joos is a fitting compliment for the energy, zeal and faithfulness with which he has worked in the interests of the church. During the short period of time since his ordination to the priesthood Fr. Joos has built 2 churches and remodeled another.

Monroe Democrat....February 12, 1902

The services at St. Mary's Church this evening will consist of stations of the cross, sermon and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Commencing Sunday and continuing during lent, the same order of services will be observed Sunday and Friday evenings. Rev. Fr. Joos will preach Friday evening, Rev. Fr. Downey, Sunday evening.

Monroe Democrat....February 12, 1902

St. Mary's Reading Circle meets at 7:45 o'clock Friday evening.

Monroe Democrat....February 12, 1902

At 7 o'clock Monday morning, by Rev. Fr. Joos at St. Mary's Church, Edna M. Brown and James J. Campeau were united in the holy hands of wed-

lock. Miss Brown was a popular young lady of the city and Mr. Campeau is a well known Detroit businessman being connected with the Vaughn Music House of that city. They will make their home at 120 Cass St., Detroit.

Monroe Democrat....February 12, 1902

Work was begun Monday on the new addition to St. Mary's Church.

Monroe Democrat....February 6, 1903

Workmen are busily engaged this week in tearing down the old brick structure at the north end of St. Mary's Church to make room for the new addition that will be built this spring.

Monroe Democrat....February 27, 1903

The Catholic Churches of the city celebrated the Pope's twenty fifth anniversary of his elevation to the papacy with appropriate services last Friday. (Pope Leo XII)

Monroe Democrat....February 27, 1903

Music for everybody -the Merchants Association of Monroe closed their grand distribution of pianos and organs. They gave away 26 organs and 7 pianos. Among winner, St. Mary's Church won a piano and an organ.

Monroe Democrat....March 13, 1903

The work of demolishing the old brick structure in the rear of St. Mary's Church to make room for the new addition to the church is steadily progressing. The work of tearing down the walls is being done by the men of the congregation, who are donating their services in order to cut down on expenses.

Monroe Democrat....March 13, 1903

Branch No. 13 CMBA will partake of holy communion at St. Mary's Church the first Sunday in May.

Monroe Democrat....April 10, 1903

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Laprad celebrate 64 years of marriage. They came to Monroe in 1837.

Monroe Democrat....April 10, 1903

Rev. Fr. Joos is spending a few days with an old friend at Howell. He facetiously remarked that he was getting out of town to avoid house cleaning.

Monroe Democrat....May 1, 1903

The members of the CMBA held an open meeting at their hall Tuesday evening. The program consisted of addresses by Revs. Bolte, Joos, Downey, Heidenrich and Syoen, after which a spread was served and card playing indulged in by those present. The meeting was a very enjoyable and profitable one to the members of the order.

Monroe Democrat....May 22, 1904

Fr. Joos was honored by members of St. Mary's Church. Very fine musical selections were given.

Monroe Democrat....November 25, 1904

The affair, attended by about 400 people at St. Mary's Church hall on Monday evening, was the box social and entertainment given by the combined societies of the Young Ladies Sodality and the Holy Name Society. A program of musical numbers was given, 2 vocalists from out of town taking part. Something like \$150 was cleared, a sum to defray the expense of the new window given by these societies. (Fr. DeGryse, pastor)

Monroe Democrat....February 20, 1914

St. Mary's 125th anniversary event will be celebrated with imposing ceremonies next Sunday.

Monroe Democrat....November 6, 1914

The young ladies of St. Mary's Catholic Church will meet after the service Tuesday evening to make final plans for a dance which they will sponsor Friday evening, October 14th. Returns of the tickets will be handed in.

Monroe Evening News....October 8, 1938

St. Mary's Council of the National Council of Catholic Women will meet in the church hall Tuesday evening at 8:00.

Monroe Evening News....October 15, 1938

Card party and chicken noodle lunch in St. Mary's Hall sponsored by St. Mary's Altar Society.

October 25, 1938

Some 20 priests took part in the closing ceremonies of 40 hours devotion in St. Mary's. The devotions were in charge of Msgr. Dan Ryan, rector of Sacred Heart Sem. of Detroit, who preached last evening. The celebrant of the benediction was the Rev. Msgr. Walter R.A. Marron.

*Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society
Vol. XXV, Fr. Frank O'Brien, "Le Pere Juste"*

October 26, 1938

The Young Ladies Sodality is giving a dance in the K of C Hall this evening at 9 o'clock to follow the Monroe-Grosse Pointe football game. Members of both teams and all interested are invited. The hall will be decorated in red and white and refreshments will be served.

October 14, 1941

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Repairs to church roof to save church from collapsing. | \$9,007.00 |
| Ceiling | 2,076.00 |
| Heating | 1,318.74 |

*Letter to Archbishop Mooney by Fr. Perrin
October 28, 1941*

St. Mary's Chronicle made its bow on Sunday, July 27, 1941

Tuition at St. Mary's school was \$1.00 per month per family, \$10 for the school year.

The first collection at Sunday Mass was a ten cent seat offering.

Dec. 1941: The statue of "The Infant of Prague" is a gift from the ladies of the Altar Society.

Dec. 1941: The Prayer for Peace gives way to the Prayer in Time of War.

Jan. 2, 1942: Rev. John C. Kiernan is named second Assistant at St. Mary's.

Jan. 18, 1942: Donation of books for our soldiers and sailors.

May 24, 1942: Decoration of St. Mary's Church. Painting of interior side walls.

June 4, 1942: Father Perrin visited Fr. DeGryse on his 86th birthday.

Dec. 6, 1942: Death of Rev. Henry DeGryse, Pastor of St. Mary's.

Jan. 12, 1943: Fr. Perrin appointed Pastor by Edward Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit.

Feb. 22, 1943: Potluck supper in honor of Fr. Perrin, Fr. Lawton and Fr. McNamara.

June 13, 1943: Father Lawton is being transferred to St. Gertrude's, St. Clair Shores. Fr. Leo Theisen is to be the first assistant.

May 9, 1943: Fr. Perrin has ordered a new "Honor Roll of our Men in Service" a permanent memorial to the boys of St. Mary Parish in the service of our country.

Aug. 22, 1943: Two new Holy Water Fonts have been donated and are in place.

Dec. 5, 1943: A Day of Special Prayer: Pope Pius XII has designated the Feast of the Immaculate Conception a day of prayer for the speedy end of the war and for the attainment of a just peace.

Aug. 6, 1944: A report of repairs made at St. Mary's Church rectory and school: New roof on church, arch between the old and new parts of the church to be strengthened, a new ceiling of silo-tex has been installed in parish hall; the sacristy walls and ceiling have been repaired and painted and a new floor will be laid, a new roof on the school building, repairs and decorating have been done at the rectory, as well as rewiring and installation of new electric fixtures.

Aug. 13, 1944: A day of prayer for our men in service sponsored by the National Council of Catholic Women.

Aug. 15, 1945: Three o'clock devotions on Sunday will be for the repose of the soul of our late Pres. Roosevelt and for guidance for his successor, Pres. Truman.

1945 Choir: Fr. Rochon director, William Schoell, Ben Poupard, Bro. Remigius, Jerry Laboe, Donald Thornton, Bob Durocher, Jack Laboe, Norman Bell, Edward VanSlambrouck.

\$25,000 for floor and new pews, wants new communion rail to extend 53 ft. across, cost: \$3241.00. (April 15, 1947)

Wants \$40,000 to complete decoration of church. (August 6, 1948)

New boilers in school and church. Converted from coal to oil, \$13,388.15.

(November 20, 1951)

Letters of Perrin to Mooney

Feb. 18, 1951: His Eminence, Cardinal Mooney, has appointed the following gentlemen of the parish to serve on St. Mary's Parish Committee for 1951: Mr. James Doran, Mr. James I. Godfroy, Mr. Vallie W. Dussia, Mr. Victor Kane and Mr. Leo Leibold.

June 15, 1952: A scholarship to Catholic Central High School, donated by the Ushers' Club was won by Richard Micka. Another scholarship to the same donated by Fr. Perrin was won by George Wilkinson. A Scholarship to St. Mary Academy donated by the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was won by Joan Tuttle. Congratulations!

June 14, 1953: Effective July 26th, Fr. Kiernan will be transferred to St. Patrick Parish of Wyandotte and Fr. John J. Hardy will become senior assistant here at St. Mary's.

Knights of Columbus:

On October 6, 1957 the Knights of Columbus of Monroe celebrated their 50th anniversary. Leo Leibold, a member of St. Mary's was Grand Knight at the time. The 12:30 High Mass was celebrated by Father John J. Hardy. Among the notables were Bishop Charles L. Nelligan of Assumption College, Windsor, and Milton Knabush, Mayor of Monroe. It must have been a grand occasion as all the Knights, many of them our parishioners, were wearing their full regalia, capes, plug hats and paraphernalia.

Dec. 30, 1962: A THANK YOU to the Michigan Gas Utilities Co. for their generosity in restoring the gas lights in front of the church.

Dec. 30, 1962: As of January 1st you will be asked to give a quarter to the usher for your seat collection.

June 16, 1963: Fr. John G. Burke reassigned to St. Raphael's Parish in Garden City. In his honor we will have a "Farewell Open House" from 5-8 p.m. this evening in the auditorium.

Jan. 13, 1963: Congratulations to the couples who will be celebrating their 25th and 50th Wedding Anniversaries in 1963. The honored parishioners are: 50th Anniversary: Mr. and Mrs. C.R.

Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Emil Brancheau, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Blade, and Mr. and Mrs. John Fiasky. 25th Anniversary: Mr. and Mrs. Thurman Liedel, Mr. and Mrs. Alton Nadeau, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Sara, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Quell, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Larrow, Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Rousseau, and Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Collino.

In 1904 the northern part of the church edifice was torn down and a much enlarged transept built. When the steeple became dangerous in 1941 the upper part was torn down and the remainder repaired for \$3,000.

Monroe Evening News....February 30, 1963

Some of the church organizations in 1963: Church Committee, Teen Club, Holy Name Society, Men's Choir, St. Vincent dePaul Society, Ladies of the Altar Society.

Feb. 9, 1964: Bake Sale and 5 and 10 cent breakfast after all Masses in the church basement.

Feb. 1964: The Church Committee as appointed by the Archbishop is as follows: Victor Staelgraeve, John Swiderski, Vincent Gonyea, Albert Byron and Edmund Poupard.

Nov. 22, 1964: Thanksgiving clothing drive.

Feb. 26, 1967: Archbishop Dearden has appointed the following men to serve as the Church committee: Rutgerus Lommerse, Edwin Knapp, Victor Kane, James Godfroy and Vincent Matthews.

Nov. 22, 1967: Meeting of the Monroe Inter-Faith Council on Human Relations at the First Presbyterian Church at 7:00 p.m.

June 16, 1968: On Friday, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after the 8 a.m. Mass until 4:30 when there will be a procession and benediction.

June 1968: Canned goods collection for the Migrant Center (in Erie).

June 23, 1968: Father Carl Gentner has been installed Pastor of St. Mary's and temporary Administrator of St. John's.

Aug. 4, 1968: St. Mary's Altar Society invites you to come to the Food Concession at the Monroe County Fair.

Oct. 6, 1968: Scheduled Masses on Sundays: 6:00, 7:00, 8:30, 10:00, 11:45 a.m., 5:30 p.m.; Monday through Friday: 6:15, 9:00 a.m., 7:30 p.m. Saturday: 8:00 a.m., 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 7, 1970: Parish Council: Mark Laboe, Victor Kane, Mrs. Henry Borchert, Robert Burdette, Hugh Laughna, Mrs. Fred Schatte, and Leo Leibold.

July 15, 1973: The Parish Council has approved extensive roofing repairs and the complete exterior painting of the old and new schools, the rectory and the convent.

July 29, 1973: Our thanks to Alois Vandevelde, Paschal Flameygh and Herbert Thomas for their help in trimming and landscaping around the church and school. Our thanks, too, to Larry Lebar for his many hours of volunteer help in painting and a number of other things done to beautify the school and convent. A final word of appreciation to Bob Blazoff for making a portable extension to the main altar that will be used in the future.

June 10, 1979 PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Pres. Herb Thoma,
- Vice-pres. Sharon Wood (Education)
- Sec'ty. James Maurer
- Sr. Carol Favor, (Sisters Rep.)
- Mr. Clark Gallagher, (Ushers)
- Mr. William Jondro, (Administration)
- Mr. Robert Lamour, (C.C.D.)
- Mr. Gilbert Liedel, (C.C.D.)
- Mr. Norman Liedel, (Bingo)
- Mrs. Ruth Manor, (Worship)
- Mrs. Genevieve Perrini, (Sr. Citizens)
- Mr. David Steinmetz, (School Board)
- Mrs. Beata Wahl, (Christian Women)
- Mrs. Anna Westover, (Christian Service)
- Mrs. Theresa Whalen, (P.T.G.)
- Mr. Michael Yaeger, (Ecumenism)
- Miss Sara Harrigan, (Teen Club Observer).

June 14, 1981: Our Parish Council election produced the following new members: Leonora Perrini, Jay Jondro and Joann "Boots" Gray. We wish them well in their three years of service to the parish community.

Aug. 16, 1981: Fr. Simon, the genial, outgoing Oblate from South Africa, will be leaving us. Our loss is Africa's gain. Immensely popular, and justly so, Fr. Simon reminds us all of the universality of our faith. Our parish reception today should be an indication of our appreciation.

February 1980: Members of the "History of St. Mary's" Committee held their first informal meeting. Parishioners were asked for information and pictures pertaining to St. Mary's.

The 1987-1988 MISS AMERICA, Kaye Lani Rae Rasko, has been a member of St. Mary Parish most of her life. She attended St. Mary Elementary School before graduating from St. Mary Academy and St. Vincent Nursing School. She served our parish as eucharistic minister.



Historic marker.

Chapter Eight

St. Mary's Today

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

The Parish Council

The purpose of the parish council is:

1. to assist the apostolic work of the Church as it is carried out in the parish in all aspects e.g., sanctifying, charitable, social etc.
2. to serve as a permanent structure for constructive dialogue among the priests, religious and laity in the parish, so that they may work in close cooperation, as a truly Eucharistic Community, in fulfilling Christ's mandate to sanctify the world.
3. to provide decision-making leadership, direction, resources and encouragement to the apostolic and spiritual development of all parishioners, of whatever age of status.
4. to continually survey the needs, both spiritual and temporal, of the parish, the community and the diocese and to develop and implement programs aimed at fulfilling those needs.
5. to serve as a co-ordinating body for all organizations and group activities within the parish.

The parish council meets the first Thursday of the month; presently it has seven elected members in addition to one representative from each of the parish organizations. The Constitution was passed on March 6, 1975. Membership to the Council is upon recommendation of a nominating committee who in turn present the slate to the parish membership for election.

Upon directive from the Archdiocese, four committees within the council were created: worship, education, Christian service, and administration.

Christian Women

Formerly known as the St. Mary's Altar Society, the name was changed around 1970. In working for the parish, and of course, for the glory of God, these dedicated women perform many services for our

church. Their tasks include attending to the altar, laundering the linens, and cleaning the sacred vessels and the sanctuary.

During the Holy Days the members provide the beautiful decorations. In terms of Christian service, the ladies sponsor a yearly mass/breakfast for "marriage jubilarians"; entertainment at the Frenchtown Convalescent Home once a month; assistance at funeral lunches in the social hall. They provide refreshments for Confirmation students, parents and sponsors; pack Christmas gift boxes for Beach Nursing Home patients; hold an annual mother-daughter banquet; and once a year they single out a special cause to assist.

The Christian Women also award a monetary scholarship for a grade school student, a Camp Fire Scholarship, and donations are given to community projects such as Heartbeat and Frenchtown Convalescent Home. Their fund-raising is usually limited to dues, bake sales, rummage sales and card parties. Through these fundraisers, they were successful in renovating the Social Hall in 1972.

Affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Women, the Christian Women serve as hostesses once a year, and also host an annual Vicariate meeting. An annual Day of Recollection is held for the members and monthly meetings are stimulated by special speakers or entertainment.

Nursery Group

The nursery group at its inception in 1976 was comprised of volunteer mothers and grandmothers who ran the nursery for pre-schoolers in the basement of the school during the 9:00 and 10:30 Masses. They were given a small budget to start with, enhanced by donations of used toys and furniture. Later, the group moved to the church basement and are presently located in the west room where our youngest church members are left

in the capable hands of volunteer parish teens and an adult.

St. Mary Pre-School Religious Education Program

This program was started in 1965 to initiate four/five year olds to basic Catholic principles, to the story of Jesus and to simple Bible stories. The children are dropped off at school during the 10:30 Mass. There are approximately forty children and six teachers, who are assisted by parents. Initially teenagers had been teachers aids.

The children usually work on a craft to take home. Ten minutes before the end of the session, all the children gather to sing and pray together. There are three programs a year: 1) the All Saints program, when the children dress like their Patron Saint and parade on stage. 2) the Christmas play, when the children re-enact the story of Jesus' birth. 3) The Mother's Day program and May crowning.

CCD - Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (formerly known as Catechism Class)

Co-ordinators Deacon Dan Fraser and Christine Fraser believe this group was formed about 20 or more years ago. At present there are 13 teachers for grades 1 to 8 instructing 240 students who do not attend Catholic schools, so they may gain knowledge and appreciation of their religion and be prepared to receive the sacraments. Classes are held every Tuesday during the school year. Included in the instructions are the Stations of the Cross, Benediction, Para-liturgy, the Mass, Rosary, and Bible Vigil. Activities for the students and their parents include two potlucks, a Christmas program, a February open-house and an annual public pancake breakfast in the spring.

Ushers Club

The ushers of today are descended from a long line of people of God who have gone before them. Their ministry is deeply rooted in Scripture and tradition. From the Book of Chronicles, coming to us from the 3rd century before Christ, particular attention is paid to the "doorkeepers", who may have numbered in the hundreds and are the ancestors of our ushers today. They comprised the guild of gate-

keepers who had as their assigned task "guarding of the threshold of the tent" and "receiving the offerings of the faithful".

Present-day ushers are charged with many duties, which include welcoming the faithful to Mass, seating and assisting the congregation when necessary, accepting the money gifts and taking them to the altar, overseeing the communion procession and the distribution of bulletins after the service.

St. Mary's Ushers Club meets once a month and they gather for an annual social, at which time their wives are invited.

Resurrection (Funeral) Choir

St. Mary Resurrection Choir was organized through the Worship Committee in November 1986. Mary Pigott, at the request of Fr. Gentner and John Raymond, was asked to form a funeral choir. There are 23 members presently in the choir with Hugh Baker as the organist, assisted by John Raymond. The group practices the last Thursday of each month and prior to a funeral when time allows. The first funeral at which the choir sang was on November 28, 1986.

St. Mary's Choir

We are fortunate to have had for several years one of the finest choirs in the city. John Raymond has served as organist since 1972 and Mrs. Thomas (Beth) Dusseau has been the director since 1976.

Music has always been an important part of worship at St. Mary's and special musical programs have been mentioned throughout the book. Unfortunately specific information on our choirs in the past is very sketchy. We do know that the singer played an important role in the early days of St. Antoine parish. In 1804 the singer was also appointed catechist in the absence of the pastor, and was given the right to publish banns.

Nothing is known of the instruments used at St. Mary's before 1928. That year, which also was the 140th anniversary of the parish, a new organ was installed, believed to have cost \$20,000. A lengthy article in the local newspaper described it in detail: "The instrument is the largest in the city and



Choir Loft before 1937. (From the Payette Collection.)

combines many of the latest features of modern organ construction. It operates on the electro-pneumatic principle". The organ was built of quality wood and extended the entire width of the balcony, 37 1/2 feet. There were 717 pipes and it seemed larger than necessary, but Fr. DeGryse, pastor of the church commented that he was building for the future when a larger church would be built.

The elaborate musical function to dedicate the new organ combined the choirs of St. Mary's, St. John's, St. Michael's, and St. Joseph's. R.C. Bulley, organist from Chicago, played at the recital and Miss Helen Sloan, contralto, of Toledo, was soloist.

Fr. Perrin, in a January 6, 1946 letter to Msgr. Hickey of Detroit, discussed rebuilding the organ. Fr. DeGryse, according to him, had spent \$20,000 and thought he had one of the finest organs, but it was twice as much organ as necessary and the installation was a mess! Hillgren, Lane, and Co. proposed to rebuild it for \$9,245.

Mr. Ed Poupard, a life member of St. Mary's, recalls belonging to a mixed choir in the late 1920's. Fr. Paquette organized a vested men's

choir with Dr. John (Jack) Laboe as director. Robes were bought for the group.

Brother Philip Smith C.S.C. organized a 50 voice mixed choir in 1972 and directed it for three years, being replaced by Brother James Rottenbacher in 1975. There had also been a teen choir in 1970. Brother James left in 1976 and was replaced by Mrs. Dusseau.

A new console was installed in 1971, the "great organ" was rebuilt around 1977 and the "swell organ" during the restoration of 1987. The organ now has 500 new pipes. The smallest one is the size of a toothpick, the largest one is 18 ft. tall.

Since the Mass has changed from Latin to English, the congregation has become more involved in singing. There is music at all the Masses and the choir performs at the Sunday 10:30 Mass and for special occasions.

The choir has participated in the Monroe Chapter, American Guild of Organists annual concert for the the past several years. It is always held at Thanksgiving time and about nine churches, Catholic and Protestant, share in this outstanding program.

Since 1972 a special Christmas program is given before midnight mass.

Eucharistic Ministers

This is a small group of men and women who volunteer to help distribute communion at all the Masses and also carry the Holy Eucharist to the homebound and people in nursing homes. They perform a very useful function. The group has one person who coordinates the schedules and they have no regular meetings.

Lectors

The lectors, made up of a small group of men and women, do all the readings at Mass except for the Gospel, which is read by the officiating priest. Their main purpose is to proclaim the word of God, and they also make necessary announcements. One person in the group coordinates the schedules.

St. Vincent De Paul Society - St. Mary Conference

A handful of people are involved in this worthy and charitable organization. Whenever the parish receives a call from someone in great need, the Society investigates the case and endeavors to remedy the situation. Traditionally, the Thanksgiving collection is given to help support the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

In conjunction with the other parishes in Monroe, this fine program was initiated in 1987. It is basically a course of instructions about the Catholic Church and its beliefs and helps prepare adults to receive the sacraments, be it baptism, confession, first communion, and/or confirmation. It also encourages Catholics who have left the Church to join again.

The RCIA differs from the traditional classes in that it involves various parishioners to assist those interested in the Catholic belief. Parishioners act as sponsors, and assist each Sunday in helping the candidates implement the Word of God into their daily lives. This program is now very active within the Archdiocese of Detroit and each parish is required to make it available to its people.

History of St. Mary Committee

This committee was started at the request of Fr. Gentner in February of 1980. There seemed to be a definite need to put in some sort of order the wealth of information available about the early years of the parish. The committee felt it would be significant to have the book published to coincide with the parish's bicentennial anniversary, 1988.

A yearly meeting was held and material and pictures collected. In 1987 all the information was finally organized. In November of 1987 Custom-book of New York was selected as publisher of the book. This firm specializes in church histories.

The material covering the first 100 years was easier to find than material pertaining to this century. We found many errors in translation and many contradictions, and have made every effort to present you with the most logical interpretations.

OUR CHURCH, ALWAYS THE SAME YET EVER CHANGING

Our last article is a letter from Fr. Gentner, who consented to write this brief retrospect on his 19 years at St. Mary's and the changes that have taken place during his pastorate; and a closing statement from Fr. Chabala:

"I succeeded Father Paquette in June of 1968, and served as pastor until my retirement on August 15, 1987. The Church was undergoing a period of change after the Vatican Council. Historically general councils have been followed by some type of upheaval in the church. The second Vatican Council was no exception. Many priests abandoned the ministry, many sisters left their convents, religious vocations were at a new low. Although the documents of the Council were perfectly orthodox and most inspiring, there followed a period of wild speculation and bizarre liturgies.

In this atmosphere I felt the need to reassure parishioners that all was not lost, that the Council had not failed. My entire pastorate was dedicated to that end. Still, memories of past church customs and liturgy haunted many parishioners. Gone were the "latin mass," Friday abstinence, much church decorum; the eucharistic fast was ignored, even

though a very short time was involved; "40 hours devotion" was abandoned. Frequent confession disappeared. Gregorian chant was almost nonexistent. In so many churches, strumming guitars tried to replace the organ. The traditional notion of the "sacred" was gone. The "Mass," once the highpoint of worship, was now more popularly known as liturgy, even though people continued to speak of a "Mass." Claiming support in earlier traditions, the weekend liturgies now stressed "the holy meal" aspect where Christ's followers gathered around the table of the Lord to celebrate his life, passion, death and resurrection. Most people accepted the changes but there were problems. Almost every Catholic teaching was under attack, either denied or reinterpreted. Despite the clear teaching of the Council, dissenters, in so many ways aided by the media, had the religious field to themselves. In this always imperfect world, there was enough ammunition to go around. Naturally, the CHURCH is always in need of reformation. But the pace and degree is the stuff of history.

As far as the physical aspect of St. Mary's was concerned, minor changes were made in anticipation of a more complete renovation. The church was repainted, the sanctuary remodeled to fit the new liturgy, confession booths removed, the "communion rail eliminated." Extra weekend help was provided by the Oblates of St. Francis deSales (Toledo). A married deacon, Dan Fraser, handled infant baptisms on a once a month basis. Communal penance services with general absolution became quite popular. Communion was received while standing, and usually placed in the hands. Because human beings cannot live without faith, hope and ritual, the Church survived the upheaval. Through it all, St. Mary's parishioners remained loyal to the church, constant in their faith. We had succeeded in keeping things on an even keel.

Materially the parish prospered. Almost \$950,000 was available for the complete renovation which began in May 1987. Meanwhile other improvements were taking place. The parking area was doubled in size. A new heating system was installed in the school. A kindergarten was added. The entire parish plant was constantly checked for improvements. Under Sister Margaret Cutcher the education program fared well. A beautiful personality, a fine disciplinarian, a devout religious - that says it all for Sister. Margaret's time as principal.

In 1969, the parish hired John Raymond as organist and music director. It was a most fortunate decision. Under his inspired and talented direction, the people were thrilled. Parish singing was outstanding. In the same year Beth Dusseau joined us as choir director, making the parish music program complete. The renovation included many improvements and additions to the organ.

—Fr. Carl Gentner

200 YEARS AND BEYOND

As St. Mary's now celebrates 200 years of its existence, we can only look back and see how God's hand has been upon us every moment of the way. We can easily look back as well and see how the Church, the people of God have changed in many ways, but also have remained one and the same! Yes, the coming of the Vatican Council brought times of trial and turbulence to the Church, but it also brought a dawning and a new awareness of who and what the Church really is. Our parish's 200 anniversary allows us to see that there are fewer priests to serve this growing community. Our parish school which at one time was staffed solely by professed religious women, now has an entirely lay staff. Our Religious Education program, also once taught by Sisters now only has one IHM Sister as teacher. What then, are we to make of all of this as we celebrate, and is there really something to celebrate?

If people are truly wise, then it only takes some investigation into history to discover that God indeed writes straight with crooked lines. Just when people may be thinking we have reached the end of the line, God, in his mysterious ways will illustrate new pathways. In our current time with fewer priests and religious, we now witness a church where the laity have come to a renewed awareness of their responsibility in the life of the Church through their Baptism. Within the life of St. Mary's today there are countless lay people continuing the work of Jesus through their lives and dedicated services. Parishioners serving the Liturgy as Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, people taking the Sacrament of the Eucharist to the sick and the homebound; people working together and instructing those who seek membership into the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of

Adults; working with couples and rehearsing them for their marriage ceremony; a full lay teaching staff in both school and religious education program - offering to our youth our own peoples' faith and witness to Jesus Christ .

Yes, the Church we celebrate today is radically different. It is a Church that challenges us to continued growth. St. Mary's can indeed look bravely to the future since we have been loved and directed through the past by our Lord. Our make-up as Church may change, just as the physical make-up of our Church building has changed. But one thing will certainly remain constant - the presence of God's Spirit among us. Reflecting on the words of Matthew 28: 20: "Know that I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Confident in this promise, each and every parishioner of St. Mary's in Monroe may truly enter into the celebration of this bi-centennial. May God bless the work begun here in the name of His Son, and through the intercession of Mary the Mother of God and St. Anthony, may His holy will be done.

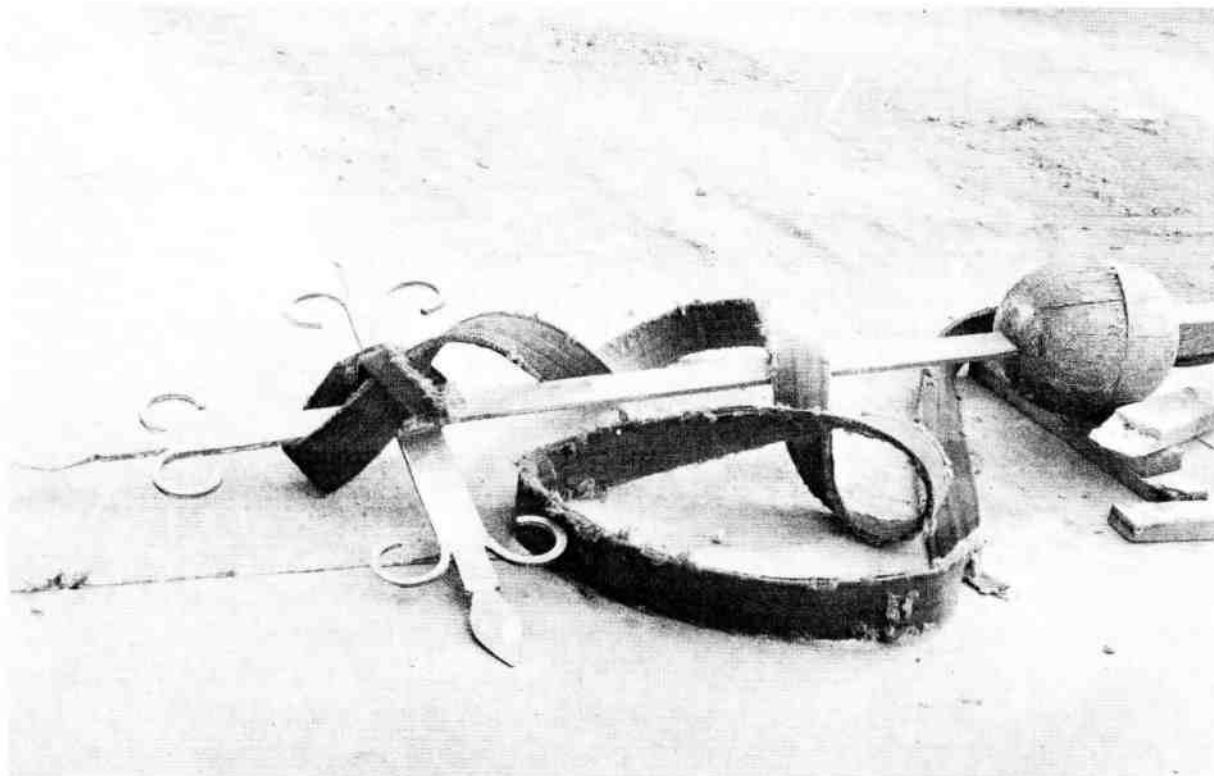
—Fr. Brian Chabala

CONCLUSION

Writing a history such as the History of St. Mary is a never-ending project. We found a wealth of information right here in our city and attempted to select the most valuable and accurate data. We also tried to show you that ours was a truly human congregation, with its mixture of triumphs and defeats.

We owe so much to so many nameless people who worked hard in the past to make our present possible. For fear of leaving out anyone, we thank ALL these people, especially the pastors, assistant pastors, the teachers, and the many organizations who selflessly have contributed to our growth.

As this book is being published, we are all feeling special joy in the celebration of our "200th anniversary" and the dedication of our newly renovated church. We look back with pride on 200 years of service and worship and look forward to facing the challenges of the next 200 years.



Taken down and painted silver, the 1838 cross today crowns the new tower.

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