

St. Joseph Catholic Church Owensboro, KY

By Jerry Long
c.2024



St. Joseph Catholic Church, Fourth & Clay Sts. shortly before it was razed in 1989.



**75 years of the diocese of Owensboro Kentucky, Sarah L. Patterson,
Owensboro, KY, Diocese of Owensboro, 2012, p.149:**

Sts. Joseph & Paul Parish, Owensboro

ST. JOSEPH PARISH was organized through the efforts of the German Catholics in the community. The first German church was destroyed by lightning and was relocated on the corner of Fourth and Clay Streets. Father Haesley began saying Mass in the church in 1880. On December 5, 1886 it was announced that St. Paul would be established. St. Paul's first appointed pastor was Father Thomas Gambon. A temporary church was built on a lot at 4th & Pearl Streets, where members worshipped for the first time on Passion Sunday, March 26, 1887. The ground was broken on July 6, 1887 for the current place of worship at 4th & Bolivar Streets. St. Paul was dedicated on Jan. 13, 1889, by Bishop William George McCloskey of Louisville.

In 1948 St. Paul Parish and St. Joseph Parish combined their history and their families of faith under the direction of Monsignor Braun, In 1983, Bishop McRaith announced that only Masses for special occasions would be celebrated at St. Joseph Church. On Christmas 1984, St. Paul Church suffered a fire, After the fire, St. Joseph Church was again used for Mass until the rededication of St. Paul's on January 19, 1986, St. Joseph Church was razed in 1989.



The Roman Catholic Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky
Paducah, KY, Turner Publishing Company, 1995, p.145:

St. Joseph Parish, Owensboro

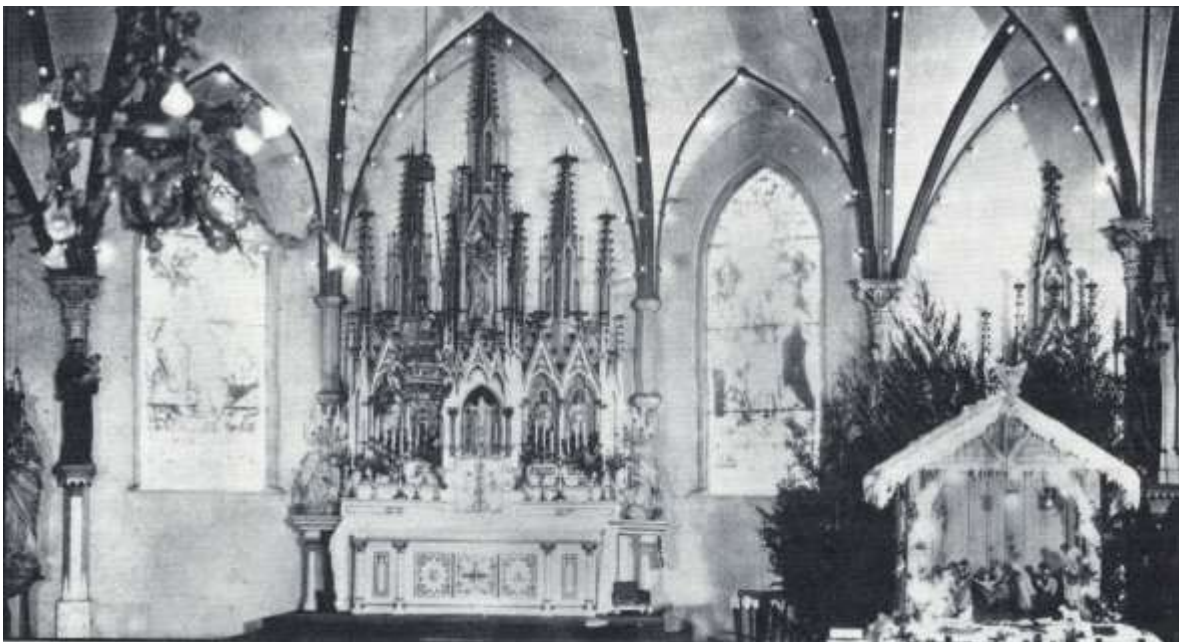
St. Joseph Church in Owensboro was born out of the unrest that swept Germany about 1830. A young missionary priest by the name of Joseph Kundek, ordained in 1833, heard of the need for missionaries in America. In the fall of 1838 he arrived as rector of the mission of Jasper, Indiana. He created a "little Germany" in the hills of Southern Indiana. By 1850 more than 150,000 Germans had come to the United States and some of these settlers drifted south of the Ohio River to live in Owensboro. Because of the diversity of the cultures in the area, clashes resulted. Since St. Stephen was the only Catholic Church, the German Catholics had to attend it in order to celebrate Mass. However, they were allowed to worship only from the back pews of the church. Prejudice against the Germans continued for years.

In 1870 Father Paul Joseph Volk came to St. Alphonsus Parish in Daviess County. Being from Germany himself, he was called upon to minister the German Catholics in Owensboro. Under his guidance they established their own school at the corner of West Third and Cedar Streets. Intent on "preserving the faith and their German customs," the founders of the school insisted that only German children be allowed to attend. Ursuline Sisters from the Sacred Heart Community in Louisville were the teachers. In 1871 they built their first church on Triplett Street at McFarland. This was the first site for St. Joseph Church which was dedicated by Father Ivo Schacht, Pastor of St. Stephen Church who also held the first services at St. Joseph. The German people began the St. Hubertus Society when a man, Mr. Rose, was bitten by a rabid dog. Sure to die, he promised St. Hubertus, who was once a German king, that he would start a society in the saint's honor if he were spared. The St. Hubertus Society was comparable to the present day Knights of Columbus, bringing material and spiritual aid to widows and orphans in need.

Father E. M. Bachmann became the first resident pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Owensboro, in June 1872. A position he held until 1878 when Father P .J. Haeseley assumed the pastoral duties.

On May 12, 1878, St. Joseph Church was struck by lightning and destroyed by fire. Bishop McCloskey ordered that a temporary church he built on the site. The parishioners erected a twenty

feet by thirty feet building. However, the resulting strife within the parish was caused by more than the lightning. The trustees of the church wanted to move the church nearer the city. After much turmoil it finally came to be built at Fourth and Clay Streets. Since the parish was not allotted money from the diocese of Louisville to build the church, the people paid for it themselves. They borrowed on their own personal notes and donated money to the parish for the construction of the church. A Mr. Kamuf traveled to several states soliciting funds for the church from other German Catholics. Still not having enough money to hire an architect to design the new church, a priest whose name is unknown, gave them building plans used by another church. The approximate cost of the building and the lot was \$10,000. On March 7, 1880 the church was blessed and the first services were held by Father Haeseley although work on the church was not completed. Bishop McCloskey having wanted the church to be built at Seventh and Frederica Streets, ordered the church to be closed. However the parish continued to hold services in the new church which was not officially dedicated until 1883.



With the resignation in 1886 of Father Haeseley, Father Louis Conrad Ohle was appointed pastor. A requisite for a pastor in these early years was that he be able to speak the German language. Although the Mass was in Latin, prayers, sermons and confessions were spoken in German. During World War I, the German language was discontinued because its use was forbidden by the government. Father Ohle remained pastor until 1891. During his pastorship Father Ohle built the rectory, which in the early 1980's became the home for Birthright. In 1891 Father Henry Joseph Carmens became pastor until his health failed and he returned to his native land.

Father Edward Fehrenback was pastor from November 1901 until late 1904. Then the parish was temporarily placed in the charge of Father Edward Fitzgerald, pastor of St. Paul Church. Father Thomas McGuire who had been ordained for the Cleveland Diocese, but who made frequent trips to Kentucky was asked to go to St. Paul Church and care for St. Joseph Church as well. After two years, Father McGuire's health failed and he left Owensboro.

On January 6, 1906 Father Eugene Spiess arrived at St. Joseph's. He found things in disrepair with even the widows falling out in the church. Some of the men and women helped him fix up his rectory and to make much needed improvements in the church. They also constructed

streets to make the church and rectory accessible. In 1921 Father Spiess was sent to the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas. When he left St. Joseph's, the parish debt was paid off with \$5,000 over for Father Philip Bauer, his successor. Father Bauer was pastor from 1921 to 1926. It was during his pastorship that St. Joseph Academy was built. There were six spacious classrooms, four for grade school and two for the high school along with a large auditorium. This school was dedicated by Bishop John A. Floresh in September 1924. Enrollment grew and remained large until 1948 when the high school students were sent to St. Francis Academy.

Father Martin Frankenburger was pastor of St. Joseph parish from 1926 to 1935. During his tenure the school debt was reduced from \$65,000 to \$28,000. Father Robert J. Gipperich succeeded Father Frankenburger as pastor from 1935 to 1939. He was given the job of paying off the school debt before he could return to Holy Family Church in Louisville which he had recently organized. However in 1937 the Owensboro Diocese was formed and Father Gipperich was never able to return to Holy Family. When the debt was paid at the end of 1937, Father Pius Edelen was assigned as St. Joseph's first assistant pastor. Father Peter Braun came to St. Joseph as pastor from July 1939 to 1948.

On April 3, 1948 the announcement was made that St. Paul Church and St. Joseph Church would merge to become Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish. St. Joseph High School was to be disbanded and the students transferred to St. Frances Academy which would be the Central Catholic High School for Owensboro and surrounding parishes. Father Braun sought to achieve a smooth transition. He maintained one parish with two churches until the winter of 1977. At that time, in order to cut fuel costs for the two buildings, St. Joseph Church was closed. Much effort was made subsequently to save St. Joseph Church building. Due to the deteriorated condition and cost of structural repairs however, the decision was made in the summer of 1989 to demolish the church. The beautiful stained glass windows were removed and given to Owensboro Museum of Fine Arts to be placed in its new addition. A monument, made from some of the brick and the cross from the church, was constructed on the site of the old Church at the corner of Fourth and Clay Streets as a reminder of "Times gone but not to be forgotten."



**That All May Be One: A History of Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish on the Centenary
Celebration of Saint Paul's Church, 1887-1987, Gerald M. Wilkerson,
McDowell Publications, Utica, KY, 1987, pp.59-63, 67-68, 71-72:**

Part II: Chapter 1 Humble Beginnings

St. Joseph's parish has an odd yet colorful and inspiring history. Father Eugene Spiess gathered an account of the history of St. Joseph's prior to his arrival in 1906. His sources include Father Paul Volk, Father Bachman, Bishop McCloskey, Mr. Kamuf, Mr. Gilles, and a few others such as George Mischel and his brother, who were both young boys at the time.

Before St. Joseph's parish was begun, a group of German Catholic farmers and other families migrated from Fulda, Tell City, Mariah Hill, Ferdinand, and other locales in Southern Indiana to Daviess County, Kentucky, where most of them settled in rural areas near Owensboro. Mr. Mike Dittman, Mr. Messinschlaeger, Mr. Paul Tennis, Mr. Rose, and a few others worked to open a school for the German Catholic citizens of Owensboro. Intent on "preserving the faith and their German customs," the founders of the school insisted that only German children be allowed

to attend. They then hired a male teacher, Nem Hamesser, to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, and anything else the teacher could offer. Father Volk was in charge of religious instruction. Thus, the Germans had a school a year before the Owensboro public school opened.

The early German settlers were permitted to attend St. Stephen's Church (located at Second and Cedar Streets) but were only allowed to sit in the back of the church away from the rest of the congregation. It is believed that the Germans met with Father Paul Volk of West Louisville as early as 1869 for religious instruction and benediction. They met in the old building which stood across the street from the Armory at Third and Cedar Streets. The building belonged to civic societies who held their meetings there. Not only did they hold their first classes there, but the building was also the site where St. Joseph's parish was later begun. (Many stories have been told of the dedication of the pioneers of the parish, such as the widow who made 75 cents a week ironing and gave 25 cents to the church.)

The Germans of Owensboro not only had a school before they had a church but also had a St. Hubertus Society. The society began when a Mr. Rose was bitten by a rabid dog. Sure to die, he promised St. Hubertus, who was once a German king, that he would start a society in the saint's honor if he were spared. After Mr. Rose was cured, he started the society in thanksgiving for the miracle. (Later St. Hubertus was depicted in one of the stained glass windows in St. Joseph's Church.) The St. Hubertus Society was comparable to the present day Knights of Columbus, bringing material and spiritual aid to widows and orphans in need of such service. Wearing purple sashes as stoles, the men stood as guards of honor for the First Communicants and at funerals. The society also received Communion as a body once a month. A picture taken in 1924 shows a group of about 200 men on the occasion of the society's fiftieth anniversary.

The majority of the Germans lived "on the hill" where Sweeney Street intersects with East Ninth Street. Between this place and the city proper lay a cemetery and pools of water. (Remnants of the cemetery can now be found on East Fifth Street.) Opposite the site of the present St. Paul's Church stood an old mill known as Blandford's [sic, Bransford] Mill. The mill stood where there was once an entrance to the cemetery. The other entrance to the cemetery was on Clay Street where Sixth Street would have intersected Clay if the cemetery had not been in the way. It is important to have an idea of the location of the cemetery in order to understand many of the troubles of the past, particularly the dispute between Bishop McCloskey and some of the men of the parish concerning the building site of the church.

In 1871, the German Catholics built their first church, an eighty feet by thirty feet frame building, in the old Triplett and Sweeney precinct near McFarland Street (now approximately Ninth Street). The church was dedicated by Father Ivo Schacht, Pastor of St. Stephen's, who also held the first services at St. Joseph's.

Born in Bruges, Belgium in 1821, Fr. Schacht was well advanced in his studies when he came to Tennessee, heeding the appeal of Bishop Richard P. Miles, who was traveling in Europe, in 1840. He took his theological course in the seminary at Nashville, where he was ordained by Bishop Miles, December 24, 1843. He held several pastorates in Tennessee, culminating as pastor of the Cathedral in Nashville. Due to difficulties with the Bishop, he left the diocese in 1858 for the missions in Kansas, where he labored for three years.

In September 1861, he affiliated with the Diocese of Louisville, and was appointed first resident pastor of St. Alphonsus Parish in Daviess County. He enlarged the church and erected a school, the fore-runner of Mt. St. Joseph Academy, in 1863. The school was run by the Sisters of Loretto until the school burned in 1870. His next appointment was at St. Augustine's, Lebanon, Ky., in 1864. He began the construction of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Danville, but before it was

completed, was given charge of the congregation of Paducah, in February 1869. In the following year, he built the second church of St. Francis de Sales.

The Carmelite Fathers took over all the parishes (with the exception of St. John the Evangelist, in McCracken County), in the Jackson Purchase, in January 1871. Father Schacht was appointed Pastor of St. Stephan Church, Owensboro, in the following March. He immediately erected a small church for the German Catholics in his parish. It was dedicated under the title of St. Joseph, April 23, of that year. Grissom's Landing, near Stanley, in Daviess County, and Rome were missions under his care. He built St. Peter of Alcantra, Stanley, in 1872, and St. Martin of Tours, 1873.

Fr. Schacht was stricken on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1874 while addressing a Temperance Convention. He died the following Tuesday.

Some of the members of the first church were Paul Tennis, Michael Cronns, Victor Strehl, Henry Diliman, Jacob Meiss, George Shaffer, Joseph Rose, Henry Rose, John Gilles, Frank Cammuf (Kamuf), and Andy Eger. The first resident pastor of St. Joseph's was Reverend E. M. Bachman.

Engelbert Bachman was born October 31, 1838, at Wellingdingen. near Bonndorf, in the Grand Duchy of Baden, Germany. He came to Louisville in 1851, and began his studies for the priesthood, at St. Thomas Seminary, in Nelson County in 1852. In 1859, he entered Mount St. Mary Seminary, Cincinnati, for his theological course. Bishop John Martin Spalding ordained him in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville, August 15, 1862.

For nearly three years, Father Bachman was assistant at the Church of the Immaculate Conception (St. Mary's 8th St.), Louisville, and in May 1865, he was appointed pastor of St. Andrew Church, in the Weisertown district, of Pleasure Ridge Park.

On August 6, 1866, he was seriously injured, while traveling on the Ohio River, when the boilers of the General Lytle. exploded near Madisonville, Indiana. The accident made him a partial invalid for life. Six months later he was able to return to St. Andrew's, where he remained until October 1871, when he was sent to St. Thomas, Nelson County, for four months, and then to St. Augustine, Lebanon to assist the respective pastors.

Father Bachman became the first resident pastor of St. Joseph, Owensboro, in June 1872. He was on a leave of absence in his native land from the summer of 1876 to May 1877. A Father Westerman took his place at this time. His next assignment was to organize Holy Trinity Parish, St. Mathews, in February 1878. He became ill a short time later, and upon his recovery in the summer of that year, took on lighter duties as assistant at St. Patrick's church, and was chaplain to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd on Bank Street, Louisville. Two years later, he became their resident chaplain, and held that office until 1902, when he was appointed chaplain to the newly opened St. Anthony's Hospital, and on October 1, 1906, he was transferred to St. Joseph Orphan's Home. He was taken ill in January 1917, and was taken to St. Anthony's Hospital, where he died on February 4th. His funeral was held at St. Boniface Church where he made his first Holy Communion, and was interred at St. Michael Cemetery, Louisville.

Father Bachman was author of several small books, under the title of Uriel, Uriel, Stetin Prayers, Uriel in Prayer and Praise, Uriel, Jesus and Mary in Sorrow and Suffering, and Ad Pium Lectorem.

When Father Bachman was transferred by Bishop McCloskey to St. Louis, Father P. J. Haeseley assumed the pastoral duties February 18, 1878.

Father Peter Joseph Haeseley was born July 1, 1830, at Gipf, near Frick, Switzerland. He was an uncle of Rev. Charles Haeseley and great uncle of our present pastor, Rev. Henry Willett.

Having learned the baker's trade, he came to America in May, 1856. In the following year he was employed in his trade, at St. Thomas Seminary, in Nelson County, where he expressed a desire to study for the priesthood, and was accepted as a student at the Seminary. He was transferred to the Provincial Seminary of Mt. St. Mary, Cincinnati, in 1865, to complete his Theology. His ordination, at the hands of Bishop J. L. Luers, of Fort Wayne, took place in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville, December 22, 1867.

Father Haeseley's first assignment was as pastor of St. John the Evangelist parish in McCracken County, where he erected the second St. John's church in 1869.

His next appointment, in February 1878, he was given charge of St. Joseph Church, Owensboro. He resigned his pastorate in 1886, to take up lighter duties at St. Joseph Orphan Home, Louisville. From October 1887 to January 1888, he was chaplain of Sacred heart Academy on Lexington Road. He then returned to the Orphanage where he remained until late 1894. In ill health, he resigned from active duty, and a few months later, in July 1895, went back to the village of his birth, where he died November 27, of that year.

Chapter 2 Destruction and Strife

On May 12, 1878, St. Joseph's was struck by lightning and destroyed by the resulting fire. Bishop McCloskey then ordered that a temporary church be built on the site of the old church. So the parishioners erected a twenty feet by thirty feet building. However, the resulting strife within the parish was caused by more than the lightning. By this time, two factions had developed in the parish. Those who lived in Owensboro proper wanted a new location for the church because they had to travel through mud and water to get to that church. Those who lived "on the hill" wanted the church rebuilt on the same location. Thus, a dispute arose.

The trustees of the church wanted to move the church nearer to the city. They compromised, however, with those living "on the hill" and were willing to build the church on East Fourth Street where it now stands. In 1878, the site was just north of Sweeney Street and on the eastern outskirts of the city. Throughout the dispute, Father Haeseley remained passive. A group of men then went to Louisville to talk with Bishop McCloskey. Bishop McCloskey once said to Father Spiess, "I had not decided, but I was not in favor of going back 'on the hill.' I preferred to go to the vacant lots that were on the corner of Seventh and Frederica Streets." Those who lived in the west end liked this suggestion. Yet, one of this number suggested that the church be built at Fourth and Clay Streets. It seems that this person was afraid that those living "on the hill" might rebuild against the Bishop's wishes. In addition, he may have believed that those living "on the hill" would not contribute to the new church if it were built on Frederica Street. Therefore, the parish settled on Fourth and Clay Streets as the site for their church.

Since the parish was not allotted money from the Diocese of Louisville to build their church, the people paid for it themselves. Going to their banks in Owensboro, the Germans of St. Joseph's parish borrowed money on their own personal notes and donated the money to the parish for the construction of the church. Mr. Cammuf (or Kamuf) then traveled to several states going to places such as Peoria, Illinois, soliciting funds for the church from other German Catholics. However, the congregation still did not have enough money to hire an architect to design the new church. A priest (name unknown), hearing of their plight, gave them the building plans used by another church.

In late 1878, work was begun on the 86 feet by 43 feet brick church; the approximate cost of the building and the lot was \$10,000. Father Spiess has written that he saw the letter in which Bishop McCloskey directed Father Haeseley to begin saying Mass in the present church in 1880.

March 7, 1880, the church was blessed and services were held by Father Haeseley although work on the church was not completed. The parish then sent a letter to Bishop McCloskey informing him of the completion of the new church. Having wanted the church to be built at Seventh and Frederica Streets, the bishop was perturbed by the news and sent a letter ordering the church to be closed. However, the parish continued to hold services in the new church. Therefore, the church was not officially dedicated until 1883.

Chapter 3 Improvements

With the resignation of Father Haeseley, Father Louis Conrad Ohle was appointed pastor in September 1886. He was to remain until December 1891.

Father Ohle was born September 16, 1852, in Helmern, Province of Westphalia, Germany. He came to America at the age of 19 in 1871.

He studied at Capuchin College of St. Lawrence, Calvary, Wisconsin from 1872; St. Joseph College, Bardstown from 1874; Preston Park Seminary (site of Bellarmine College), Louisville, from 1876.

He was ordained June 29, 1879, with Revs. Henry Joseph Civell and John F. Kelleher, by Bishop William George McCloskey at St. Joseph's Church, Bardstown.

His first appointment was as professor at St. Joseph College, from June 1879 to July 1880. He was then assistant at the cathedral and secretary to the Bishop in 1881. He purchased a church in Jeffersontown, and attended this mission about 1881.

Father established the parish of the Holy Trinity, near Gilman's Point, St. Matthews, in 1882 and erected the first church which was blessed December 17 of that year. He continued his care of the Jeffersontown Mission and is considered its first pastor. He then came to St. Joseph's in 1886.

He subsequently held pastorates at St. Francis of Assisi, Louisville (1891-1900), St. Vincent de Paul, Louisville (1900-1905), St. Martin of Tours, 1905 until his death in 1917.

He died April 10, 1917, in his rectory. Funeral services were from his church with burial in St. Michael Cemetery.

The rectory was built between 1886 and 1892 by Father Louis C. Ohle. It was about half the size of the present building, and Father Spiess later added several rooms and a porch to the old rectory.

In the early years of St. Joseph's history, a requisite for a pastor was that he be able to speak the German language. Although the Mass was given in the vernacular Latin, prayers, sermons, and confessions were spoken in German. During World War I, the use of German was discontinued because its use was forbidden by the government. However, the use of German in the confessionals was not discontinued until approximately 1942 or 1943, while the practice of the pastor delivering his sermon in German had been gradually phased out prior to that time.

As previously noted, Father Louis C. Ohle built the parish house which is now occupied by Birthright, an anti-abortion group. Otherwise, he made no changes to the church or its grounds. When Father Joseph Carmens became pastor, he spent his spare time reading classical philosophical works. Like his predecessors, he was a fine priest, seeing no need to change anything, pitying the people, he cared little about his salary.

[Ed. Note by Jerry Long – The preceding pages from Gerald M. Wilkerson's book traces the history of the St. Joseph Church to circa 1900. Subsequent chapters continue with a detailed history of the church down to the razing of the church in 1989. A copy of Mr. Wilkerson's book

can be found in the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library, Owensboro, KY, call #KR 282 Wilk]



**Postcard History Series: Owensboro, Terry Blake & David Edds, Jr.,
Charleston, SC, et al, Arcadia Publishing, 2007, p.40:**



St. Joseph Catholic Church was completed in 1883 on the southeastern corner of Fourth and Clay Streets for a German-speaking congregation. The church measured approximately 40 feet in width by 100 feet in length and was the city's best example of Victorian Gothic architecture. The postcard below, dated 1914, is a rare real-photo postcard of the church's interior. When the building was razed in 1989, the 16 beautiful stained-glass windows were donated to the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art. Originally crafted by internationally recognized German American glassmaker Emil Frei (1867-1941), these treasures were carefully restored and mounted in special 25-foot light towers to create a unique Stained Glass Gallery for the museum.



Brief History of St. Joseph's Parish
As told by Father Eugene Spiess, O.S.B.
Pastor of St. Joseph Parish – Jan. 1906 to Sept. 1921.
Published in the St. Joseph Parish Bulletin

Prior to 1871.

My informants were chiefly Father Volk, Father Bachmann, Bishop McCloskey Mr. Kamuf, Mr. Gilles and a few others as George Mische1 and his brother, the latter two wore young boys in those days.

Through the exertions of a Mr. Mike Dittman, Mr. Mossingschlaeger, Mr. Paul Tennes (Cathcrine's father), a Mr. Rose and others, a school was begun by the German Catholic citizens of Owensboro. They engaged a male teacher. It was for the children of the Germans only it seems. The parents attended St. Stephen's church. This was prior to the establishment of St. Joseph Parish. Father Volk heard of this zeal of the German Catholics in Owensboro. With the permission of the pastor of St. Stephen's he gave them a sermon and Benediction of the Bl. Sacrament at the old building which stands opposite the armory (W.3rd and Cedar). (Picture of this building appeared in the Christmas number 1933). The building belonged to civil societies, who had their meetings there. It was in this building that St. Joseph Parish was begun at a later date.

Not only did these Germans have a parish school before they had a parish, but St. Hubertus Society was begun, if I be not mistaken, before the parish existed. Mr. Rose was bitten by a vicious dog that had hydrophobia in a developed state. Mr. Rose was sure to die. He promised St. Hubertus that he would start a society in his honor, if he were spared. He was and the society was begun by him.

The majority of the Germans lived "on the hill". This was out where Sweeney Street now intersects with E.9th. Between this place and the city proper, lay a cemetery and pools of water. You will find remnants of the north-east end of this cemetery over on E.5th St. Opposite St. Paul's Parish house stood and old mill, called Brandfords [sic – Bransford] mill. I saw it there myself.

This mill stood where one time there was an entrance to the rather large cemetery I speak of. Another entrance to this cemetery was on Clay St., about half-way between the present St. Joseph school and where 6th St. would intersect with Clay, had the City continued this street through. It could not because the cemetery was in the way. The Todd family informed me, when I bought their estate that they found coffins and remains of the dead in their cellar etc.

This gives you an idea as to where this cemetery was. This is of importance, in order to understand much of the troubles of the Parish in the past, chiefly the dispute between Bishop McCloskey and some of the men of the Parish.

Father Volk is not the founder of the Parish, but the pastor of St. Stephen's holds this honor. It is he who told Father Volk to keep up this good work until a new parish would or could be opened "on the hill", Whoever was pastor in St. Stephen's in 1871 started St. Joseph Parish and built or supervised the building of the church on the hill. I have forgotten his name. (Father Schacht was the pastor's name. Ed.)

The canonical pastors in charge of St. Joseph were: Father Bachman, Fathor Haesele (uncle of the Father Haesele who was stationed at Fancy Farm. The younger Father Haesele said his first mass on the hill). After Father Haesele came Father Ohle, Father Carmanns, Father Fehrenbach and myself (16 years). I omitted Father Westermann purposely. He was never pastor of the Parish. Mrs. Mike Scherm told me on one occasion: "Father Westermann was never our pastor. He was merely taking the place of Father Bachmann, who had permission to go to Europe and be absent indefinitely. I was a young girl and sang in the choir at the time. My recollections are that he (Fa. Westermann) was not pastor". - I also omitted Father Philip O.S.B. He was takin my place according to my Abbot.... Wishes. So I was pastor until 1926. I had an indefinite leave per mission both from Bishop O'Donaghue and my Abbot. All priests who took care of St. Joseph Parish after Father Fehrenbach left, were there temporarily by the wishes of Bishop McCloskey.

From the appointment of Father Bachmann up to 1880, when the Bishop permitted Father Haesele to say Mass in the present church.

Father Bachmann came to see me often before 1908. He told me that he continued the school started bout 1868 with the male teacher. Little happened in his time, but he never, ceased telling me of the zeal of the pioneers of that Parish. Father Haesele followed Father Bachmann. On an Easter morning (I think in 1878) lightning destroyed the church. B this time two factions had developed. They who lived in Owensboro proper had far to go beyond the cemetery and through mud and water to get to that church. But the German Catholic settlement "on the hill" wanted the church rebuilt on the same location. A dispute arose. The trustees at the time wished to come nearer to the town. But they compromised with those living on the hill and were willing to put the church where it is now on East 4th Street. This was at that time just north of Sweeney St. and on the eastern outskirts of the city in those days. The dispute continued. Father Haesele remained passive. He took no part in the dispute. Some of the men went to Louisville and talked it over with Bishop McCloskey. The bishop once said to me: "I had not decided, but I did not favor going back on the hill. I preferred to go to the vacant lots that were at the corner of Frederica and 7th St." This was much to the liking of those who lived in the west end. Yet one of this number started the church at 4th and Clay Sts. I explain this by thinking that this person was afraid those living on the hill might rebuild against the Bishop's wishes. Certainly, I surmise, that this man had no hopes, that they would contribute, if the church would be built on Frederica St. Hence we find the church where it is now. I have seen the letter in which Bishop McCloskey directed Father Haesele to begin saying Mass in 1880 in the present church.

In 1878 Father Haesele gave the school in charge of the Ursulines of Louisville. They were there until the autumn of 1919 when Bishop Donaghue sent the pastor of Stanley to me with a note, directing me to take the sisters of Mt. St. Joseph.

From 1880 to Jan.6, 1906, the date on which I took charge.

Father Louis C. Ohle built the present Parish House. It was about half of the present building (I added several rooms and porch etc.) A little school house (frame) was erected in the back of the church by Father Haesele. The Sisters lived in rented homes, the one now occupied by Mrs. Mike Fendel, or the other cottage next to it. Nothing else was necessary, so Father Ohle left things about as he found them when Father Haesele left. Rather Carmanns now came. He busied himself with reading philosophical works of antiquity. He was quite a student. A very fine priest as his predecessors all were. He saw no need of changing anything, pitied the people and bothered little about his salary. When he wished to retire to Europe where he died, he asked the trustees Mr. George Mischel and two others to take up a collection. These men thought it would be best to borrow the money, for they had paid him little salary (he asked for very little). So they borrowed the money and signed the notes as "trustees of St. Joseph Parish". Father Carmanns now left for Europe. Father Fehrenbach succeeded him. I was told that the Bishop suggested to Father Fehrenbach to report to the bishop whether or not St. Joseph Church could be closed. I have no certainty of this. (Personally I doubt it, for the bishop begged me to take it and make something out of it. I have nothing to report about Father Fehrenbach's short administration.

The parish was in charge of Father Fitzgerald from the time Father Fehrenbach left until the day I came. Various priests were there temporarily, among them Father Zoeller and Father McGuire. The latter spook German fluently. While Father Fitzgerald looked after St. Joseph's the Sisters lived in the present Parish house. Father Zoeller and Father McGuire lived with Father Fitzgerald. At least I know Father McGuire did. Father Fitzgerald ordered some of the men of S., Joseph Parish to take all the books and to collect all the monies. He wanted to keep hands off as much as possible. The property now became very delapidated in this period of the parish' history I found windows falling in and out at the church. The large wooden porch occupying the space where I later on built the dining room etc. was about to fall away from the building. All furniture was gone. What was there belonged to the Ursuline nuns. When I arrived I permitted the nuns to remain until June 1906. I went to Mrs. Bell's hotel. I know her. She as from Mariah Hill near this St. Meinrad Abbey.

When I entered the home, I found an old table up stairs, an old wooden bed and a few carpets. Nothing more that I can recall. No stoves, not even in the kitchen. Some of the men and ladies began to help me immediately. I was soon in a position to call for a housekeeper. No streets were made around the place. Two large old stoves standing in the church with pipes running up to near where the side altars stood before I enlarged the church. A sad spectacle and the debts, of which I spoke above.

St. Paul's Church was built across the way in 1888. The that it was built there purposely in order to destroy St. Joseph's parish or that a certain lady was instrumental in putting that church where it is, all this I never believed. I knew Bishop McCloskey, I knew the pastor that built St. Paul's, I knew this certain lady . All fine people, who would not have contemplated such a thing for one moment. My opinion is, that it was done without even suspicioning that they were doing, something wrong. If you look into the records of St. Joseph's church you seldom find a name that is not German. All non-Germans living east of St. Ann St. went to St. Stephen's in those days. It is just possible that the German pastors at St. Joseph's in those days, did as their confreres did

everywhere in the United States years ago, look to the Germans only. One of the chief causes underlying the persecutions in Mexico,(the Spanish patricidi looked down on the Astec priest and his people) and one of the chief causes why we here in the United States found that they of English descent thought the Catholic Church to be a foreign institution. Hence our A.P.A. and K.K.K. diversions. What I wish to say it - I think the pastors of St. Joseph did not oppose the move, and all concerned saw no reason why an English speaking church could not stand next door to a German speaking one. "This generation shall not pass away etc." The Europeans who came to America, whether they were French, German or of another nationality thought the words of Christ applied to their individual nationality.

It must be evident to you, that the Parish is yet suffering from things done in the past and mentioned in this sketch. Those errors and much good of the past formed the background for all my personal joys, sorrows and trials during my 16 years at your church. The past was reflected in every one of my acts of administration. In fact, I never crossed a bridge, until some error of the past forced me to cross.

Jan.6, 1906 to Oct. 3, 1921.

During this period St. Joseph's church was in my charge. It is true, I remained pastor of this Parish by both the Bishop's and my Abbot's wishes during Father Philip's time, but Father Philip did not know this. He at times suspicioned it strongly, but I assured him that I would in all probability never again return to the parish.

Late in the fall of 1905 I took sick while teaching Moral Theology to the deacons at St. Meinrad Seminary. They took me to my room. Abbot Athanasius sent me to the hospital at Louisville. He was told to allow me at least three years in the open, on horseback etc. Abbot Athansius complied with the doctor's wishes--he wrote to Bishop Matz of Denver. Bishop McCloskey hoard of this. He sent a note to me at the hospital to see him before I left town. Bishop McCloskey's people and my mother's parents were neighbors in Brooklyn, so the old bishop felt attached to me. Ho told me that if I would take St. Joseph's parish he would allow it to be attached to St. Meinrad Abbey during my life time, provided I would be in charge. Rather than go to Denver I accepted. Bishop McCloskey wrote to Abbot Athanasius, so I went to Owensboro from the hospital in Louisville.

Arriving there I found conditions as I described them above and the nuns in my house. I told the good Sisters to stay until June, that I would lodge at Bell's hotel in the meantime. --I always detested that word 'policy'. I always had enough of obligations hailing from Mt. Sion and the canons of the Church etc. So I began to ask myself when I arrived--beside my priestly duties towards God and His sheep, what are my duties relative to the material side of this parish?

First German School.

We have learned that the school of which Father Eugene wrote, which was established by German citizens before this parish was established, occupied the building which is now the home of our Mr. Marion Smith family....

... Let Us Know at once if Father Eugene's history recalls any other incidents to your mind. Let us preserve as much of our Parish history as possible....

... I was born and reared in New York and saw the churches where I was baptized, the one where I received my First Communion, and others, as old St. Andrew's, the one down on Chamber St. and many more since, all become shrines or close their doors. I took in the entire situation in

Owensboro in a glance. I decided that we were too close to the river. Hence I labored there with a view to build nothing, unless it had a purpose for at least the next 50 years or so. However, since real estate is always a good asset for any parish anywhere, I never objected to buy near St. Joseph Parish. Churches, religious institutions etc. have no market value. If St. Meinrad Abbey were in a large city and we wished to sell, it would bring very little, for you cannot even make a good brewery out of such buildings. I wished to get the old Todd estate. I asked Bishop McCloskey to permit me to build the school. Th Bishop came to Owensboro and said to me: "Hitch up your horse and let us go out "on the hill". There he told me: "Start at once and build a large school here in course of time. Begin with what is necessary now and add later." My people objected, but I told them that we would build for the needs of the next 5 years. I did not think that the Bishop would live more than a year or two. He was very feeble. We erected a building on the hill, but with the plan to sell all in a few years. So I built a large double house for a dwelling. The old priest-house was still standing from the early 70ties. About \$1000 put this in shape for the sisters.

I now had a new school but out on Sweeney St., six blocks from the church. To help the Nuns who Always came to the 8 o'clock Mass on weekdays, I asked the Bishop for permission to bring Hl. Communion to them at 6 o'clock in the morning. At times I rose from my bed with fever as high as 103, yet I had to go out there, rather than see those women come thru the high snows etc.

The Bishop died. His successor knew me and I him. I told Bishop Donaghue that I would write to Rome for permission to sell the old property on the hill. He told me to go ahead. I wrote and was told to sell by the Holy See. But I Got no buyers. If I did, I cared not for the price they offered. I let matters hang. Todd, the lawyer now died. He was owner of the property on the corner of 5th and Clay Sts. in the rear of the church. Mr. Todd's widow moved to Virginia. We obtained the Todd property for \$8000. We bought this property in 1915. In 1920 I begged Mrs. Todd to present her notes (the balance) at a 1oal bank for payment, as I intended to leave for a time. She did, and the Parish owned the property, one. Half of the city block. I brought the children and the Nuns down from the hill made the school a free-school etc. When I arrived I had 90 families. When I left in 1921, I had 142. All were German with the exception of Will Daugherty. The above explains why I put that school out on Sweeney Street....

... I also put in the steam plant and bought the storm-windows intending at a later date to have the Munich artists to put in the art windows. The city burdened me heavily. Twice the streets had to be looked after, and we bordered on three streets. In 1912 I enlarged the church. We had a fire over the sacristy and the Bl. Virgin altar. I had to tear all out. Rather, than throw away money by putting the thrashy structures back, I enlarged the church by adding the cruciform sanctuary. I now got the art windows, 15 large ones and a small one over the sanctuary entrance. All these improvements were ordered and paid for. I left no debts when I departed for Texas. I gave Father Philip nearly \$5000 for which he gave me a receipt which I yet have. Sheriff Bales bought part of the Sweeney St. property. He gave me his notes. With these there were about \$5000 on hand when I left Owensboro.

I have been blamed by some for making a change of Sisters. That I never intended to do. The present pastor of St. Stephen's can tell any one who made that change. I blame myself only in so far that I could have avoided it, at least in part, but I never sacrifice a principle. It was the wish of the Bishop. To protect the Nuns and the Bishop I thought best to make no explanations. I took the blame, as if I had made the change. This I never asked for.

As to Father Philip's status in the parish - the letters from the Bishop and Abbot Athanasius to me were to the effect that I had leave of absence for one year. I was taken away from the

jurisdiction of my Abbot and Abbey by the appointment I received from Bishop Ledvina, subsequently affirmed by the holy See. This was only temporarily until I had placed the Chancery and diocese in South Texas on perfect canonical lines and workings. It was new territory and Bishop Ledvina had Rome's permission to be absent at various times during the year to make collections for his diocese during my presence in Texas. I find no basis in Canon Law why this appointment in Texas should have operated so as to have been equivalent to my resignation from the benefice offered me by Bishop McCloskey. But, when Abbot Athansius informed me that Father Philip would leave Owensboro, and when Abbot Athansius failed to say that I should return to Owensboro, I decided to let all go by default, rather than call attention to the papers Father Cronin and Father Schuhmann knew of, relative to my status in Owensboro. St. Joseph Parish was never attached to St. Meinrad Abbey directly, but only to me directly. It belonged to the Louisville diocesan clergy and I felt that it ought to be returned to them. However, Father Philip knew nothing of all that. He suspected, but I sidestepped all his inquiries. He came to Owensboro by permission of Bishop and Abbot to take my place during my absence....

... In 1915 I enlarged the priest house and added the porch of concrete blocks. The parish had two missions in my time, the last as a preparation for the 50 year anniversary since the foundation of the Parish. Bishop O'Donoghue permitted Abbot Athansius to pontificate on that occasion in St. Joseph Church. This was in 1920.-- There are two priests from St. Joseph Parish: Rev. Bonaventure Oberst C.P, and Rev. Lambert Graf O.M.C. The latter I instructed while he was an altar boy. The nuns from St. Joseph Parish are Sister Eugenia, Mt. St. Joseph. Two Krampe girls - I do not know their names in religion. Before entering they were Helen and Frances Krampe. Pauline Frey, also entered Mt. St. Joseph, Anna and Elizabeth Graf entered at Louisville. Catherine Oberst joined the Sisters of Mercy in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. A Kamuf girl is also among the Ursulines at Louisville and Miss Argast is a Poor Clare in Philadelphia. Emma Bryan (her mother was German) joined the Poor Clares at Evansville and went over to the new foundation in Memphis.

I found the young people, both boys and girls most exemplary. When I came to Owensboro in 1906 the priests told me: "Your young people are models of virtue and recognized as such by all Owensboro." I know of no explanation why they are devoted to me after an absence of 12 years except that I was with them so long. The members of the Parish are fine Catholic people. I never found any Catholic people better than those of St. Joseph.

The stained glass windows in the church were made by the Muenich men who spent two years with Frey at St. Louis. They made those windows during the time they were with Frey. They omitted to put names to the two windows under the choir loft. On the gospel side is Blessed Richard, last Abbot of Glastonbury, Pope Eugene is on the Epistle side. Mr. Hugh Herr, a non-Catholic, paid for Blessed Richard's window.

Father Fitzgerald approached me on one occasion saying: "I am looking towards the Seven Hills Section. I feel like going out there and let you in control where the two churches are". I soon left Owensboro and nothing came of it.

A certain lady of St. Joseph's, years before I came there, left a designated bequest to the city for "Poor Children of St. Joseph's Parish". I was not able to trace this fund. I fought many battles down there with the so-called "300". Mr. Albert Oberst, Mr. Fred Arnold and Mr. August Graf ought to be able to give you the details of this. I did not care to fight more, after my health became impaired. It takes a fight, as you are aware, especially if one wishes to do his duty before God.

The End.

Eugene Spiess O.S.B.

Letter from Rev. Eugene Spiess to Rev. Martin Frankenburger

April 21, 1935.
Belmont Abbey
Belmont, North Carolina,
My dear Father:

Through the kindness of some of your parishoners I have been enabled to read your Christmas Bulletin as well as the Bulletins that followed. I had actually forgotten that I at one time gave you that sketch, I was as surprised as your parishoners, but just for a few seconds. I immediately recalled when I wrote it for you. Congratulations! That was a "swell" number. I mailed it to Brooklyn, N.Y... to my sister Mary, who had been with me one summer while at Owensboro. Mary wrote in reply: "You did not look that way in 1916 when I was down there with you." So, in Mary's estimation, I must have looked the other way.

May I not call to your attention two men dead long ago, who, with many others of honorable mention loved St .Joseph Parish to such an extent, that a history of that pariah would be quite incomplete unless their activities relative to this parish back in the 70ties dwelt upon at length. I refer to Mr. Kamuf, the father of Miss Agnes, and to Mr. Mike Dittman. Mr .Mike Scherm, Mr. Sebastian Weikel and their youthful chums in their day, ought to be able to give more information about these two staunchly Catholic men than I can. It met the blind Mr. Kamuf, He chanted an actual "Nunc Dimittis", asked for the last sacraments, and not so very long thereafter I buried this saintly Kamuf, Both these gentlmen, Kamuf and Dittman, were revered in the parish ac very saintly men. .

They took me to the blind Mr, Kamuf upon my arrival in Owensboro in January 1906. He sat in bed, a pretty picture that in every way resembled the representations of the Patriarch Isaac, who too was blind. I here give you what he said to me tremblin: "I have prayed and prayed I have labored and labored that this parish so dear ,to my heart would again receive a pastor. I worked so hard for it. I ran over several states begging for funds to build our church. I felt sad before you came. Now I die happy. I cannot see you. I am blind, but the clasp of your hands and knowing you to be a son of St. Benedict, assures me that the parish I so loved will not again be without a future and a pastor.

Mr. Kamuf was a pillar of faith. I knew him but for a short time. I then buried the saintly blind Apostle of St. Joseph Church. I have never forgotten my meeting him and, he left an everlasting impression upon me, that every beat of his heart was for his family and the parish of which you now are pastor.

A man resembling. Kamuf in vividness of faith was Mike Dittman, Both men were in business. They took good care of their, family's interests, but you could see there was something nearer to their hearts than their business. To make a young man of Dittman, to bring life and holy enthuiasm into his eyes, all you had to do was mention St. Hubertus Society or St. Joseph Parish, or anything in connection with these institutions. There were others, as Rose and. Tennes. These I never met.

Mr. Andrew Oberst, Mr. George Mischel, Mr. Laub, (Albert's father) and Mrs. Laub were of the older people in my time, but all of the "younger set" in the days that I refer to. Yet, Mrs. Laub will be able to give you many a detail of the early parishoners. Mr.Mike Scherm,all the Wink brothers, Mr. Sebastian Weikel etc., as well as some of the ladies. Like Mrs. Edw. Ams, came into the parish in the 80ties. Yet they ought to be able to give you many an incident relative to the early 80ties, and what men and women of the 70ties had to say. Of the older generations you will also

find Mr. and Mrs. Deaterle, also Mrs. Mike Fendel and all of their years, able to furnish you with this or that incident.

I thought it well to call your attention to some of the older folks, especially Mr. Kamuf and Mr. Dittman, men that wore unique in staunchness of faith. The Sisters who have taught there might likewise be mentioned, and, for this I refer you to Miss Katie Tennes and Miss Agnes Kamuf and several others. Nor must Miss Catherine's endeavors and faithful years (she has been sitting at that organ since she was 16) be forgotten. Any history of that parish that does not full justice to some of my former "old maids" in that parish, stands only on one leg. What would I have done in my 16 years without their untiring faithful help?

I am real well. I am feeling real young here in North Carolina. I feel better than I used to when I was in the 30ties. I am here to substitute for the professor of Dogma in this seminary. You know, they prefer, in Rome, that a former Roman student handle Dogma. So, when I thought I was leading a retired gentleman's life at St. Meinrad Abbey, they got me out once more with such tracts as Holy Trinity, God the Creator, and the Incarnation. I was to be here for six months only. It looks as if I will remain until June, as the Father who teaches Dogma is yet ill in Florida,

God only knows what they intend to use me for yet. They had me over here at Charlotte the other night to talk to men and women's clubs. I intend to return by way of New York city next June. I have still two unmarried sisters living there. These intend to spend some time here with me in North Carolina. I will accompany them back home. Such are now my plans. My brothers are all up in Now England, but my mother's youngest sister still lives in Brooklyn. She was 14 when she carried me to church to have me baptized. So I must see her again to ask her just as to how I behaved when all that happened.

Wishing you all success, I am,
Cordially
Fr. Eugene O.S.B.

The above letter was written by Father Eugene on Feb.2nd, but, as we had too many other things to print in the Bulletin at that time and for several weeks thereafter, we decided to save it for this Easter number. Father's letter should serve as an addition to the Brief History of the Parish which was published, around Christmas time.



Owensboro Monitor, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 24 March 1875, p.3:

The celebrated missionary J. Pottgeisser, L. I., will arrive here this week and open a Mission as it is called, in St Joseph's (German Catholic) church, corner Ninth and Sweeney streets, on next Sunday (Easter Sunday,) and continue for the space of one week. Church service every morning and evening. German members of the church in particular are incited to attend

E. M. Bachman, Pastor.



Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 15 May 1878, p.5:

Destruction of St. Joseph's Church by Fire.

St. Joseph's Church, (German Catholic,) located in the southern suburbs of the city, was destroyed by fire between 1 and 2 o'clock on Sunday morning last. The flames were first discovered by Officer Debo while patrolling his beat, who hastened at once to the Fourth street engine-house and gave the alarm. The fire department responded with its usual promptness, and galloped out to the scene, or as near to it as the cistern at the intersection of Crittenden and Seventh streets, when it was discovered that the location of the fire was beyond the reach of the hose, and that the building was doomed to destruction.

The building was a substantial frame, comparatively new, and cost originally between two and three thousand dollars. Upon the building there was an insurance of \$700, and upon the fixtures \$300. The origin of the fire is somewhat of a mystery, and looks toward incendiarism. There had been no fire in the building on the day or evening of its destruction, nor, for that matter, for several days previously.

The congregation will very materially feel the loss of their church-house; but, with that enterprise characteristic of the German people, will proceed at once to rebuild, locating the new edifice, this time, if a suitable site can be procured, nearer to the center of the city. The congregation is a worthy one, and will doubtless receive substantial aid from our people in the construction of their new temple.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 30 October 1878, p.3:

The New German Catholic Church.

The German Catholic church, which was located in the suburbs of the city, was destroyed by fire last spring. But the members were not content to be without a house of worship, and with their accustomed enterprise commenced at once to raise money to rebuild on a more extensive plan. The good work has steadily progressed until they have collected enough to start the new building, and they hope to complete it early in the winter. Those who have subscribed are expected of course to come forward, and pay up their subscription to avoid delay.

The new church will be located on the corner of 4th and Clay streets, and an admirable location it is too. Dirt was broken last week, and the mechanics were busy at work laying the foundation yesterday. The plans and specifications were drafted by a St. Louis architect, and is a beautiful representation of the Gothic style of architecture. The edifice will front forty-three and a half feet on 4th street, running back a depth of eighty-six feet. A spire one hundred and fifteen feet high will mark the site, while the ceiling will be twenty-six feet from the floor. The building will be built of brick, with galvanized iron trimmings. The cost can not be estimated, as a great deal will be donated by outside parties in the way of brick, hauling, &c. It will be a handsome church, and an ornament to the city.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 25 November 1879, p.4:

The new church of .St. Joseph's is progressing steadily. The glass has just been received and will be speedily put in.



Messenger and Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 10 March 1880, p.3:

Services were held at the new church of St. Joseph's on Sunday morning and evening, which were very impressive and attracted a large attendance. The music also was fine.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 19 February 1888, p.4:

A Handsome Church.

With the exception of the altars. which are being made to order in Cincinnati, the improvements to St Joseph's German church, at the corner of Fourth and Clay streets have been completed. Beginning with last summer, a new metal roof was put on the building. Later a handsome corrugated iron ceiling was put in. The arrangement and coloring of the ceiling is perfect, and the effect is strikingly beautiful. The walls are finished in imitation of stone of a light gray shade. Two splendid chandeliers provide for the lighting of the church. These are genuine works of art and cost \$200 each. Three splendid altars spoken of above will be put in at a cost of \$1,200. They will be ma.de of white walnut, finished in natural wood and mounted with gold. All the decorations, etc., of the church are in keeping with those named, and when it is finished will be one of the handsomest churches in the city – Father Ohle, who is justly proud of it, says the prettiest. The improvements were put in at a cost of \$3,000.

[Note: Three new altars and fixtures arrived on 9 May 1888. Statues of St. Joseph & St. Mary installed were on 19 May 1888. New pews were installed in March 1889.]



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 5 June 1910, p.1B:

MUNICH ART GLASS

DR. A. C. GAEBELELEIN TO BE AT CHURCH.

Will Cost \$2,800 But Will Probably Not Arrive Until the Last of the Year.

The Munich art glass windows to be placed in St. Joseph's church have recently been ordered by the pastor of that church. These windows will in all probability not arrive until the first of December. The storm glass windows, which serve a two-fold purpose, namely, to protect the art glass from dust and rain and to distribute the light of the sun equally over the entire surface of the art windows, have arrived. A representative of the Frei Art studio in St. Louis will arrive within

a week or so to put the storm glass in position. There will be twelve art glass windows installed in the church, eight of which will represent the eight beatitudes. The images of the following saints will appear upon these art windows: St. Ann. with her immaculate daughter; St. Francis of Assisi; St. Elizabeth, the Princess of Thuringen; St. Benedict. Pope St. Gregory, I.; St. Hubertus; St. Henry, the emperor; Pope St. Leo, I; St. Sebastian and St. Caecilia.

The art glass windows will be the work of European artists of the Bavarian school, and the glass used is what is known to artists as le'antique. With the exception of a few specimens in some of the churches in Louisville and Evansville and the windows in the abbey church at St. Meinrad, Ind., the windows to be installed in St. Joseph's church will be the only Munich art glass windows in this territory. The value of the windows, including the storm glass, when completed, will reach the sum of \$2,800.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 12 February 1911, p.1B:

**COSTLY WINDOWS
HAVE BEEN INSTALLED IN ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH.**

Finest in any Catholic Church in Kentucky – Bought in .Munich.

The eight Munich art glass windows that have been placed in St. Joseph's Catholic church, at the corner of Fourth and Clay streets, at a cost of something like \$2,000, are the finest, that have ever been installed in a Catholic church in Kentucky. The windows were given to the church by members of the congregation and lodges and societies of the church. Because of the ex-pensiveness of the windows, large storm windows have been placed in position to protect them from storms or accidents.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 24 February 1911, p.8:

**SPECIAL SERVICES
WILL BE HELD AT ST. JOSEPH'S NEXT SUNDAY.**

Eight New Stations Will Be Blessed Sermon – By Father Hildebrand, of Evansville.

A beautiful and impressive ceremony will take place at St. Joseph's Catholic, church, next Sunday at 7:30 in the evening, when the new Stations also called the "Way of the Cross," will be blessed by Father Killian Schott," pastor of St. Anthony's church, in Evansville. These new stations, the gift of the Young Ladies' Sodality of St. Joseph's church, are gothic in style and very monumental in effect. They were made by the Da Prato Statuary Co., of Chicago, whose artistic statuary, of stone composition is unexcelled.

At the canonical erection of the stations at St Joseph's church next Sunday, Father Hildebrand pastor St. Boniface church in Evansville, will deliver the sermon English.

The Rev. pastor of St. Joseph's and several of the local clergy will assist Father Schott in the blessing of the stations.

The fourteen new stations together with eight Munich art window of antique glass recently installed in St. Joseph's church are works of art of a high character. The classical windows especially, are well worth seeing. The windows are the work of three, European artists, Hofmeister, Scheirer and Hoffmann. Hoffmann's Pope Leo I, the second last window to the eight of the church deserves particular mention as being the most elaborate of all.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 7 March 1912, p.1:

WORK TO BEGIN

At An Early Date on New Addition to St. Joseph's Church

As soon as the weather permits work will be begun on the new addition which is to be built to St. Joseph's church building, corner Fourth and Clay streets.

A new sanctuary 52 by 22 feet will be added to the south of the present building and a sacristy 20 by 18 feet will adjoin the new sanctuary. The sanctuary will be erected in cruciform and the dome over the high altar will rest on octagon shaped walls, which form a recess to receive the main altar. The floor in the new sanctuary will be mosaic. Two Munich art windows, one on each side of the main altar will be features that will help to enhance the appearance of the new sanctuary very materially. The subjects for the two windows on each side of the altar will be, S. Joseph to the right and "Our Lady of Victory" to the left. The entire church building both new and old parts will be plastered. Contracts for five additional Munich art windows have been awarded to the Emil Frei Art Glass company, of St. Louis. With the five new windows the church will have 13 Munich art windows, representing an outlay of \$4,000, which money has all been donated by various members of St. Joseph's church.

When completed towards the end of this coming summer St. Joseph's church will represent a beautiful art gallery and will no doubt be one of the most elegant churches in the state.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 12 April 1925, p.3A:

**High Altar, Surmounting Statuary
St. Joseph Church Very Artistic, Beautiful
Designed By Pastor, and Built By Local Man**

St. Joseph's Catholic church this morning will exhibit its new high altar with one of the most elaborate crucifixion scenes in the Central West portion of the country. The Rev. Philip Bauer, pastor has designed the altar, with its surmounting crucifix and statuary and the altar has been constructed by John W. Busam, of this city. The work of Mr. Busam is remarkably handsome, as he has devoted a great, deal of care and attention to detail.

The dais on which the high altar, is placed is being arranged for a mosaic of hardwood, but this could not be completed for Easter. It will be finished in a short time. Subsequently it is intended to construct a handsome Communion rail, with marble top, and a pulpit on the east side of the church, with reflector that will cast the voice of a speaker over the entire church.

Surmounting the high altar has been placed a crucifix of natural wood color, with a corpus remarkably expressive of the sadness felt by the Saviour. To the right of the crucifix there is standing, almost full life size the figure of the soldier who had just pierced the side of the Crucified Christ, and with an expression, on his face, which truly reflects his remark shortly thereafter made "Truly was this the Son of God." St. Longinus, who was this soldier, holds an expression of face that is very human and tells the world the thoughts he is entertaining.

Statutory Remarkable

Attesting by his attitude and speech the divinity of the dying Saviour, while standing at the foot of the Cross, this soldier subsequently embraced the teachings of this same man, whom he had sent quickly to death by his spear stab in the side, and suffered at the hands of his fellows such torture as was frequently meted out to the early Christians.

To the left of the crucifix an angel stands, holding a chalice that not a single drop of the most precious blood of the God-man shall escape but flow into his receptable. Again in the features of this angel the artist has caught the expression of sorrow, drawn out by the magnitude of the sacrifice made by God's own son, on the cross, and of the establishment of the Eucharist in atonement throughout the ages.

Gazing on the countenance of the angel, as he looks up to the crucified Christ, one sees the faith expressed there. The face is one of great beauty and refinement and the garments are of an angelic character and so blended with the whole as to at once to attract attention.

Congregation Provides

In spite of the fact the congregation of St. Joseph's has but lately constructed a handsome school building, after completing the interior decoration of the church, when their pastor, Father Bauer expressed the desire to further beautify the interior with the magnificent high altar and statuary, which will later be augmented by two other statutes of angels for niches on the altar, below the surmounting scene, members of the congregation immediately signified their desire to cooperate with him in this ambition.

One of the bishops to whom the entire plan was submitted for criticism merely as to its artistic effect, remarked he had not seen anything like it on this continent; that it was in itself an inspiration to devotion, and a faithful replica of several beautiful pieces of statuary of Europe skillfully and artistically combined.

Father Bauer expects to have the dais, Communion rail and pulpit completed by midsummer. Great pains are being taken in the designing and work of these additions, as they will be of a permanent character, and will probably never be changed during the life of the building.



St. Joseph's Parish Bulletin, 25 December 1932, Souvenir edition:

Christmas Number

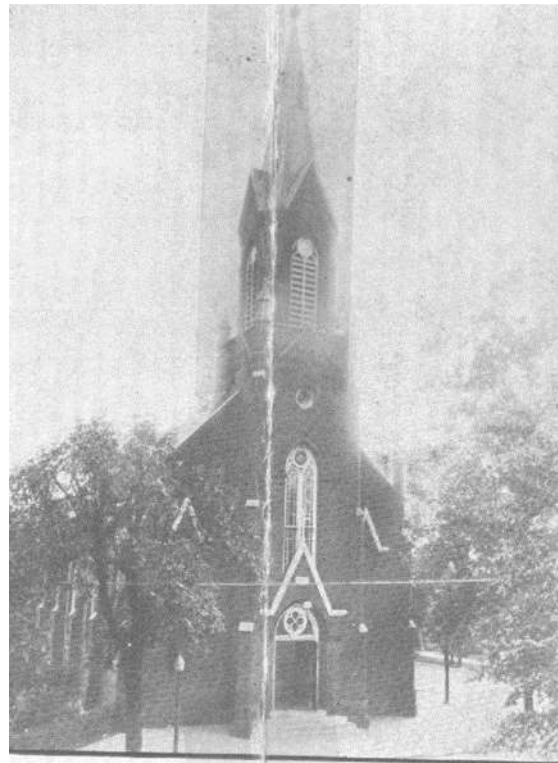


"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace to men of good will."

St. Joseph's Parish
Bulletin

Owensboro, Kentucky

December 25th, 1932



EXTERIOR OF ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH
4th and Clay Sts.



Interior—Showing Crib at Christmas and High Altar as it was in the olden days.



Interior Today—Showing remodeled High Altar and new seating arrangement for altar boys.



MUSIC CLASS—ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL—1885.
 Standing—left to right: Fred Arnold, Katie Eger, Jake Arnold, Julia Payne and Ed Arnold.
 Seated: Ida Guenther, Sister Petra, Frances Tennes.
 Kneeling: Clara Payne, Louise Breidenbach.



VEN. SISTERS WHO TAUGHT IN OUR SCHOOL IN 1885.
 Standing—left to right: Sister Maximilian, Sr. Petra, Sr. Pacifica.
 Seated: Sr. Bonaventura.



CLASS OF SR. BONAVENTURA—ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL
1885-1886.

Top Row—left to right: Frank Kamuf, Fred Arnold, Fred Schaefer, Father Haeseley, Mike Wagner, George Schaefer, Howard Blandford, Henry Froele.
 Second Row—Mary Dillman, Lena Young, Katie Eger, Lulie Meis, Emma Young, Lizzie Eger (Mrs. Geo. Ebelhar), Mary Dittmann (Mrs. A. Gropp), Emma Herr (Mrs. M. Frank).
 Third Row—Katie Herr, Frances Tennes (Mrs. F. W. Arnold), Lulie Reidhar, Sister Bonaventura, Rosa Holland, Mary Mischel (Mrs. Geo. Schaefer), Minnie Poulin (Mrs. A. Graf), Mamie Laub (Mrs. J. Tennes).
 Bottom Row—Lee Schneider, Ed. Arnold, Jake Arnold, Albert Meis, Willie Stengel, Will Graetzer, Albert Neubauer.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 6 April 1948, pp.1 & 4:

New Catholic Parish Erected,
St. Joseph and St. Paul United

A decree of Bishop Francis R. Cotton, of the Diocese of Owensboro, which was read Sunday in the Catholic churches of Owensboro, provides for the consolidation of two local parishes and erects a new Blessed Mother Parish whose religious and scholastic activities will be

centered in the new buildings under construction on Twenty-Third Street between Lewis Street and the Veach Road.

The decree also provides for the discontinuance of St. Joseph High School at the close of the present scholastic year. Thereafter, Saint Frances Academy will become one central Catholic high school. The Blessed Mother School will become the Cathedral grade school.

The decree unites the St. Joseph and St. Paul Parishes into the Saints Joseph and Paul Parish. The Rev. Peter Braun, pastor of St. Joseph's church, will be the pastor of the Saints Joseph and Paul Parish. The Rev. Joseph McAleer and the Rev. Thomas A. Murphy will be assistants to Father Braun. The Rev. William Jarboe, pastor of St. Paul's, will be the pastor of the new Blessed Mother Parish.

The decree of Bishop Cotton in full is as follows:

"Some years ago a very thorough survey and study of all the Catholic school facilities in Owensboro and Daviess County was made by experts brought into the diocese for that purpose. One of the many recommendations resulting from that survey was that there should be one central high school in Owensboro for Catholic children and that each of the Owensboro parishes should have its own separate grade school.

"Later on when it was a question of providing much needed additional classroom space for many of our Catholic children who were not attending the Catholic school here in our city there were a number of conferences not only with the priests but also some with Catholic laymen from various parishes. I remember well that it was the judgement and decision of these conferences over which I presided as bishop, that, with three churches and two Catholic schools all grouped rather closely together in the central northern part of the city, and with the expansion of the city being decidedly in a southernly direction, the Knights of Columbus building at Seventh and Frederica Streets should be converted into a school building and that, for the future, any new school buildings, if and when they were to be erected, should be located in other sections of the city rather than in that part of it where already there would be three churches and three school buildings.

"Hence when some months ago we began to realize that the time had come when we must provide additional class rooms for the rapidly increasing number of our Catholic school children, we made very carefully a survey showing the exact location of all Catholic homes in and near Owensboro and we clearly discovered that the logical site, in the City of Owensboro, for a new church and school would be in the southeastern part of the city. Property was then soon acquired on Twenty-Third Street between Lewis Street and Veach Road, and plans were formulated for the opening up of a new parish. All whom we consulted regarding this project agreed that the new parish was necessary and that its proposed location was proper. The parish buildings for this new parish are now well along in construction and this letter and decree formally announces the erection of the said new parish, which is to be known as the "Blessed Mother Parish" and is to have as its titular feast that of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which falls each year on October 11. The parish boundaries (or dividing lines) of this newly erected Blessed Mother Parish are herewith decreed to be as follows:

"Beginning in the City of Owensboro at Leitchfield Road and North Avenue and thence westwardly on North Avenue and continuing west of Fifteenth Street to Triplett Street thence southwardly on Triplett Street to Seventeenth Street to Daviess Street to continuation of Seventeenth Street, thence westwardly on Seventeenth Street to Frederica Street, thence southwardly on Frederica Street to Ford Avenue to Junction Avenue thence southwardly on Junction Avenue to Booth Avenue and thence southeastwardly in a straight line to the intersection of the Livermore Road (Ky 75) and the Scherm Road thence westwardly on the Scherm Road to

Carter Road thence on southwardly to a roadway running eastwardly (which road is approximately three fourths of a mile more or less north of Panther Creek) and following said road eastwardly to the Moseley Road or Todd Bridge Road thence southwardly on the said Todd Bridge Road to Panther Creek near Tuck thence eastwardly up stream of Panther Creek passing the town of Pettit and the junction of the North and South Forks of Panther Creek and following up stream the North Fork of Panther Creek to its intersection with the new Hartford Road (Ky 71) thence northwardly on Hartford Road approximately a mile and a half more or less to the Newbolt Road thence northeastwardly on the Newbolt Road to the Illinois Central Railroad tracks near Dermont thence northwestwardly following the said Illinois Central Railroad tracks to the intersection with the junction of Prince Avenue with Twenty-Second Street thence eastwardly along Twenty-Second Street to Oak Avenue thence northwardly on Oak Avenue to Eighteenth Street thence northwestwardly on Eighteenth Street to the Leitchfield Road (Ky 54) thence northwestwardly on the Leitchfield Road to its junction with North Avenue, the point of beginning.

"By way of passing, we might mention here that the survey we recently made would seem to indicate that, in the not too far distant future, there will be need for the erection of another new parish somewhere in the southwestern part of Owensboro. Naturally, final decision in this regard will depend on the development of the city during the next few years. But, when deciding the parish boundaries of the new Blessed Mother Parish, we have to a great extent kept in mind the present trend of city development.

"Another project, which, to us and to those we have consulted, has seemed imperative for some time, and has now been in the making for many months and to which much thought and study has been given, is the setting up of definite parish boundaries for all parishes of the diocese. The lines for all of the parishes of the Owensboro Deanery, now after a period of much thought and discussion, are agreed upon and decided. It is hoped that, before too long, we will be able to make an announcement definitely establishing the exact division lines of these many parishes. And naturally, with this great project in the making, when deciding the boundary lines for the new parish in the City of Owensboro, we had also to give consideration to the boundary lines of the other parishes of the City of Owensboro.

"Hence at this time keeping in mind all of the above and having only at heart the construction of the good of souls, the welfare of religion and the best interest of the education and training of our Catholic children, after all due consultation with pastors, diocesan consultors, etc., and having also submitted the whole matter to the Holy See at Rome, and secured its formal approval and consent, we deem it advisable and even necessary to unite into one single parish the two churches or parishes of the City of Owensboro now known as St. Joseph's Parish and St. Paul's Parish. And we are hereby making it known and decreeing that we have executed the rescript of the Sacred Congregation of the Council at Rome, Number 2195-45, empowering us to unite these two parishes and that they are now united into one parish which is to be known as 'Saints Joseph and Paul Parish.'

"In effect, this will for the present constitute three parishes with their respective parish properties in the City of Owensboro, namely, St. Stephen's Catholic Parish, St. Joseph and Paul Parish, and the Blessed Mother Parish. The division line, between the St. Stephen's Cathedral parish and the Saints Joseph and Paul parish, will be Daviess Street extending in a southernly direction from the Ohio River to the intersection of the said Daviess Street with Seventeenth Street where it reaches the east and west running line of the Blessed Mother parish. The other boundary or division lines of these two parishes are the boundaries of the Blessed Mother parish as set forth above and the boundaries between all other neighboring parishes as they have heretofore been

known to be and as we hope in the near future, as explained above, to be able to declare more definitely.

"Also in effect, this arrangement will also mean that all Catholics, living within the whole of the territory described above as constituting the three parishes, will henceforth belong to the respective parish in the territory of which they reside. Hence all Catholics living within the territory of Saints Joseph and Paul parish, though for the present they may go to either of the two churches in the one parish, as they please, they will be under the one parish priest and are to send their grade school children to the one parish school. This union will also effect that all the properties heretofore belonging to the two said St. Joseph and St. Paul parishes will be the property of the one parish, as also will all surplus funds of both accrue to the one. In the case of the former St. Paul's parish, these surplus funds amount to over one hundred thousand dollars and thus well compensate for the benefit of the school building, which the former St. Joseph's parish contributes to the union of the two parishes.

"And it is to be noted that all Catholics living within the boundaries of the other two parishes, namely St. Stephen's Cathedral parish and the Blessed Mother parish, will henceforth belong to the one or other of these two parishes according as they live or reside in the territory of the one or the other. They too are to be under their respective parish priests and are to send all their grade school children to their respective parish schools.

"A further part of this whole plan and project, which is hereby being decreed and announced is that, at the end of the present scholastic school year, St. Joseph's High School of the City of Owensboro will be discontinued, as also will the grade school of St. Frances Academy (except perhaps in the latter it may be necessary, at least temporarily, that it take not only senior but maybe also some junior high-school pupils) and St. Frances Academy will thus become our one Central Catholic high school, not only for the City of Owensboro but also for some other parishes of Daviess County.

"Undoubtedly, Dearly Beloved, this united of our high schools will prove far more satisfactory and more beneficial for our children. It will enable us to assign priests to work with our children in a manner we could never do with two schools. It will also enable us, with a much lesser cost to our Catholic people to have our high school accredited and conducted in a manner that never could be accomplished with our efforts divided as they have been.

"This arrangement will further mean that the heretofore Blessed Mother school will become the Cathedral Grade School. As many of you will recall the present property of the Blessed Mother school building became diocesan property (i.e. belonging to the whole diocese and to no parish or parishes) principally by the generous consent of the Knights of Columbus and the surrender to the Diocese (not to any parish) of bonds on the building by good Catholics not only of the Cathedral parish but of all the parishes of Daviess County. The Cathedral parish now has ample surplus funds at hand to pay the diocese for this school property, which will now be transferred to the Cathedral Parish corporation. It is no more than just to the other parishes of the city and county that such payment should be made.

"And since we are here speaking of justice, we beg to remark that the law of the church provides that when a parish is divided, and that parish has surplus funds at hand, an equitable division of these funds be made between the mother and daughter parishes. Naturally due provision of this kind will be made in connection with the erection of the new Blessed Mother parish. This, we hope, will enable the new parish to get along without an insufferable debt from the beginning. And it is no more than just that the people of the new parish, who have helped build up this surplus

funds in the old parishes, should have their proportionate share of same now that they need It even more.

"All of which, Dearly Beloved, is being declared, decreed, and made effective by us on this third day of April 1948 when these letters ad decrees are being signed by us. At the same time we herewith transfer the Rev. William Jarboe from his present pastorate to that of the new Blessed Mother parish, and Father Peter Braun is herewith designated and appointed by us to be the pastor of Saints Joseph and Paul parish. And for the present at least and until further notice Fathers Joseph McAleer and Thomas A. Murphy are canonically appointed assistant priests in the said parish.

"Since the former St. Joseph's Rectory will now be too small to house all the priests of the parish, at a later date in the due course of time Father Braun and his assistant will move into the rectory of the former St. Paul's church. In the meantime Fathers Jarboe and Murphy will remain at St. Paul's rectory to attend to all needs, etc., of those attending St. Paul's church. And of course all schools will continue just as they are and have been until the end of the present scholastic year.

"I am happy to be able to announce that the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph have consented to be the teachers in the new Blessed Mother parish school.

"Concluding, may I express the hope that each of you now well understands to which parish you will belong. You will belong now to the parish in the territory of which, as described above, you live. We beseech, each of you, to become interested in and to support your respective churches and schools as you will be expected to do by your respective parish priests. I can assure you that all of the above is being done by us only in accordance with the due provisions of the law of the church, after much prayer and due consultation and only with the one thought and motive, namely that we are convinced that all the above is not only conducive but necessary to properly care for the interests of religion and the Christian education of our children not only for the present but especially for the future. We are confident that you will accept the same in alike spirit, and we feel sure that you will cooperate with us wholeheartedly and thus prove yourselves again to be the splendid type of Catholic, which we have observed you to be since our coming, about ten years ago, into your midst as your bishop.

"Given at Owensboro on this third day of Our Lord Nineteen hundred and forty eight.

"Francis R. Cotton,
"Bishop of Owensboro
"Gilbert Henninger,"
Chancellor.



In 1948, the parish of St. Joseph was combined with the nearby Irish-American parish of St. Paul to form Sts. Joseph and Paul parish by Bishop Francis Cotton. St. Paul church was larger and newer so it was used as the main church. Regular services at St. Joseph ended in 1978. The church was only used for mass on special occasions until 1984 when a fire damaged the St. Paul church. St. Joseph was then used for regular mass until St. Paul's rededication in 1986.

Added to the National Register of Historic Places in September 1983. It was deemed "significant as the best example of the Gothic Revival style of architecture in Owensboro and as the focal institution in the history of the German Roman Catholic community of Owensboro and Daviess County" (Robert M. Polsgrove, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory / Nomination: St. Joseph Catholic Church". National Park Service.)

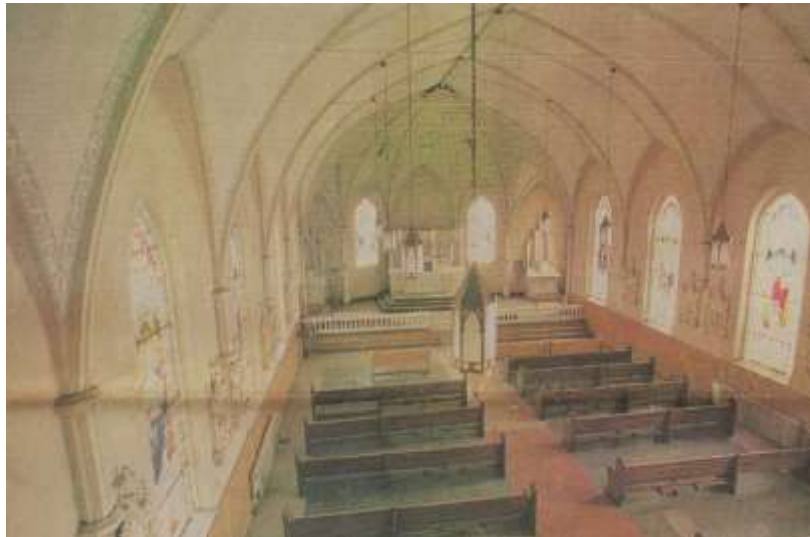
The sixteen stained-glass windows of the church were gifted by the Diocese of Owensboro to the Owensboro Museum of Fine Arts in 1989 before the church was razed. The windows were created and painted by Emil Frei in the guild tradition and installed in the church between 1900 and 1910. The twelve largest windows are sixteen feet tall by four feet wide. The Frei family helped to restore the windows after the move (Don Wilkins, "Glass of Grace: Former St. Joseph Church windows combine art, history and faith". Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer, 7 August 2021.)



St. Paul's Catholic Church, corner of East 4th & Bolivar Streets.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 11 August 1988, p.1C



The future of St. Joseph Catholic Church on Fourth Street is uncertain as civic groups and religious leaders try to decide what to do with the structure that was built in 1878.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 9 March 1989, p.1A:

**Museum to get church windows:
St Joseph building to be demolished**

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer



This is one of 18 stained-glass windows, valued at more than \$400,000, at St. Joseph Church. The windows, bought for the church in 1912, were donated by the Diocese of Owensboro to the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art Wednesday. The 111-year-old building will be demolished.



The windows at St. Joseph Church feature paintings of Catholic saints or other religious figures.

Owensboro's historic St. Joseph Catholic Church, one of the few remaining landmarks associated with the city's early German settlers, will be demolished this spring.

But the 111-year-old church's 18 stained-glass windows, valued at more than \$400,000, will become the cornerstone of a religious art wing planned as part of an Owensboro Museum of Fine Art facility to be built within the next five years, museum officials announced Wednesday.

Charles Kamuf, an Owensboro lawyer whose ancestors were among the church's founders in 1878, spearheaded a drive to save the building at Fourth and Clay streets from the wrecking ball after it closed in 1978.

Brescia College considered establishing an art center there and Theatre Workshop of Owensboro studied the idea of turning old Kirche Heilige Joseph - the church's German name - into a theater, Kamuf said Wednesday.

But he said the building was just too deteriorated. "It would have cost more than \$200,000 to save it," Kamuf said.

St. Joseph Parish and St. Paul Parish merged in 1948, although both churches continued to operate until 1978. Then, in an austerity move, the two congregations combined at St. Paul, one block to the east.

The Most Rev. John J. McRaith, bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Owensboro, said St. Joseph had become unsafe and will be demolished as soon as the historic windows can be removed.

Kamuf said Catholics of German descent are happy with the decision to donate the windows to the art museum. "The old Germans will be dancing on the golden streets of heaven tonight," he said.

Museum officials said the diocese's donation is the largest in the art facility's 12-year history.

Mary Bryan Hood, director of the museum, said the stained-glass windows, crafted in Munich, Germany, before 1912, are rare. Many similar windows in European cathedrals, she said, were destroyed during the two world wars.

"They are excellent examples of the mid-19th century revival of stained-glassmaking, an art form that waned for several centuries," she said.

The windows, which were bought by individual families and societies in St. Joseph Church in 1912 and then donated to the church, cost \$200 each when they were new.

Mrs. Hood said the windows are painted in the trace and matte method, which dates back more than 1,000 years. Each section of painted glass is subjected to a high-temperature firing to bond the blackish pigment onto colored glass, she said.

The 12 largest windows are 16 feet high by 4 feet wide with a Gothic arch at the top. Most windows feature a realistic painting of a Catholic saint or other religious figures. Names of the donors are painted into the lower panels of the windows.

McRaith said the diocese has been lucky that nothing happened to the windows in the decade the church has sat empty.

Dean Stanley, chairman of the museum's building committee, said there is no room in the facility at Ninth and Frederica streets to display the windows. That's one of the reasons his committee is working on plans for a new facility, he said.

McRaith said the diocese decided to "share these historic and extraordinary windows with the Owensboro community. They will be assured a good safe home where many people will be able to continue to enjoy them.

Kamuf said one window was donated by his ancestors and another by his wife's ancestors. "We didn't want the windows back," he said. "We wanted them someplace where they could be enjoyed. And this will give them a home forever."

German Catholics encountered prejudice when they arrived in Owensboro in the 19th century. Kamuf said they were forced to sit in the rear of the old St. Stephen Church, predecessor to the Cathedral.

"They didn't like that," he said.

So they went to the bishop, who then lived in Louisville, and asked to be allowed to build their own church. The bishop wanted it at Seventh and Frederica streets, but the members wanted it in the East End.

They built it where they wanted to, Kamuf said, and it was four years before the bishop would dedicate it. "This was the only church in the diocese paid for by the members of the parish," he said. "The diocese gave no money for its construction."

Stanley said the museum will preserve the religious history and German heritage with its display of the collection.

Kamuf said it would be nice for Owensboro's German-American families to have a last service in the church. But, he said, "I don't think it's in that good of a condition. It's time to tear it down."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 10 March 1989, p.7A, Editorial:

saving stained glass keeps history alive

Owensboro's historic St. Joseph Catholic Church will be lost to the wrecking ball, but the church's treasure - 18 stained-glass windows - will be saved for posterity, thanks to the generosity of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Owensboro. The windows, valued at more than \$400,000, are the largest donation received by the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art in its 12-year history.

The windows from the church are more than rare art treasures. They are an important part of the city's history. The old church was built by German settlers in 1878 and served as a place of worship for the next century.

The building and its windows hold special meaning for the people who worshiped there and for their descendants. Names of family donors, such as Michael Scherm, are painted into the lower panels of the windows.

A number of groups attempted, during the past decade, to preserve the entire church. The diocese recognized the importance of historic preservation, and put its demolition plans on hold in order to give some interested organization an opportunity to buy and restore the building.

But no group had the means or will to invest the hundreds of thousands of dollars restoration would have required. Sad to say, a monument to the fortitude and piety of Owensboro's early German settlers will be lost.

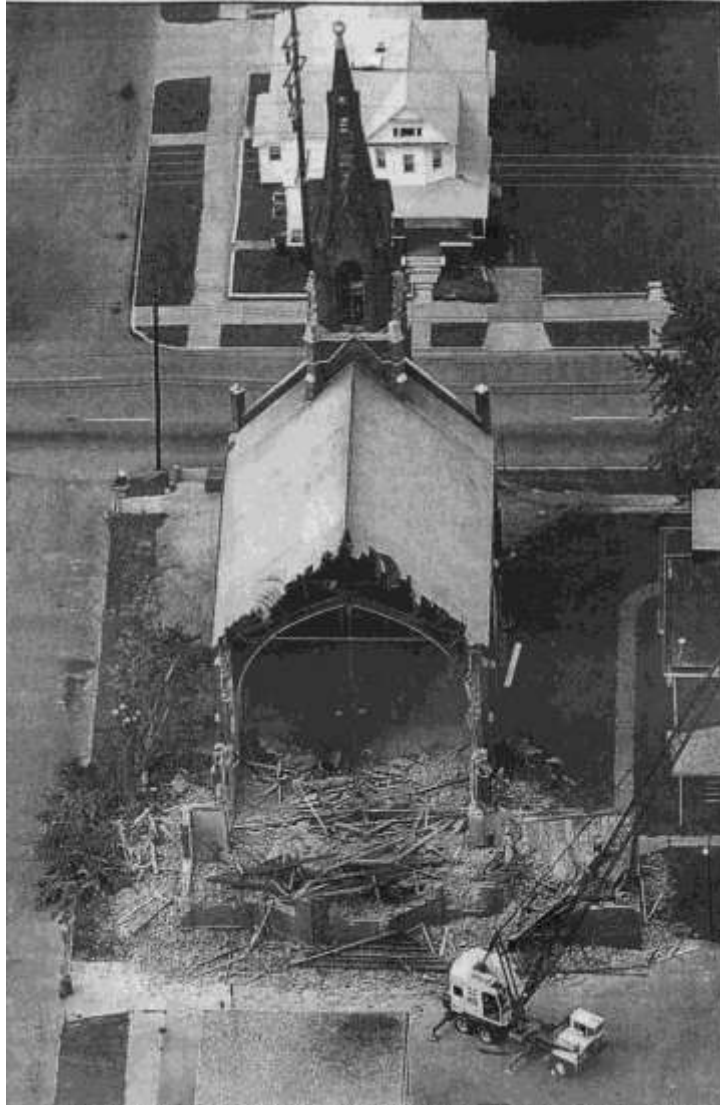
Happily, the church's gorgeous stained-glass windows will stay in the community forever, to be displayed in the religious art wing of a new building planned by the museum.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 31 August 1989, pp.1C & 2C:

Demolition of 111-year old church begins

By Karen Owen, Messenger-Inquirer



Billy Gaddis and Sons Excavating Contractors knock down the rear wall of St. Joseph Church Wednesday in the process of bringing the structure to the ground. SS Joseph and Paul plans to place a monument and maybe plant a garden on the site, said the Rev. Henry Willett, the parish's pastor.

It was the beginning of the end Wednesday for St. Joseph Catholic Church.

After days of delay, demolition began on the 111-year-old Owensboro landmark.

A 3,000-pound, solid-steel wrecking ball swung from the end of a crane into the rear wall of the church at East Fourth and Clay streets.

The bricks began to crumble and tumble. Within two hours, a gaping hole in the back revealed the church's interior arches and vaulted ceiling.

St. Joseph's days as a monument to Owensboro's German-American community were over. The church was built in 1878 by German immigrants who were tired of being discriminated against in the predominantly Irish Catholic churches in town.

Without the support of their bishop they raised \$10,000 for the construction by riding on horseback through the German communities in the area.

They adorned their church with stained-glass windows now considered rare works of art.

The windows were removed from the church earlier this year. They are in storage, awaiting construction of a religious art wing planned for the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art.

But the now-drab building was still beautiful this week to the people who remembered its glory days.

"It's sad," said Mary Ann King, who brought her 4-year-old son to watch workers remove the 7-foot-tall cross from the top of the steeple Tuesday. "It's like part of your family."

Mrs. King attended grade school there, and her son was baptized in the church when services were moved from SS Joseph and Paul Catholic Church across the street for several months after a fire in 1984.

St. Joseph and St. Paul combined in 1948, and regular services stopped at St. Joseph in 1978.

Church officials said they didn't need two churches so close together, and the cost of repairing St. Joseph was prohibitive.

When plans to convert the building into a theater didn't pan out last year, they decided to go ahead with demolition.

"If it has to go down, I want to watch it go," King said as she and her son watched the work.

"It's just been here so long," said Kathleen Clark, a member of SS Joseph and Paul who cooks at the rectory. She was watching the removal of the cross Tuesday with her small granddaughter.

She never actually attended St. Joseph except during the repairs to St. Paul, but she hated to see the building torn down, Clark said. "It has just been there so long, it's a landmark."

Dester Ward, another SS Joseph and Paul member, was watching the demolition Wednesday through binoculars.

He came more out of curiosity than sentiment, but "I don't think there are very many in town who are not a little sad about it," he said.

However, "you can't stop progress," Ward said.

Several of the spectators watching the demolition or waiting for it to start this week were fascinated by the church's 120-foot-tall steeple.

"I was looking at that yesterday," King said. "I wondered how they built it 111 years ago. The scaffolding must have been something."

Clark said, "I can't figure out how they are going to raze it and keep it from falling all over the place."

Buddy Gaddis, the crane operator with Billy Gaddis and Sons Excavating Contractors, said he plans to knock down the church first, then tackle the steeple, probably Friday.

City officials have agreed to block off East Fourth Street during the work, but he thinks he can get the structure to fall back toward the church site without any problems, Gaddis said.

Gaddis used to attend St. Joseph too, but he wasn't feeling sentimental Wednesday.

"It's just an old building that has been used. It doesn't bother me. We all have to go sometime," Gaddis said.

But he could understand the feelings of the people who stood around watching him and his crew work, he said. "People really do get attached to a church."

SS Joseph and Paul plans to place a monument and maybe plant a little garden on the church site, said the Rev. Henry Willett, the parish's pastor.

The parish doesn't need the space for parking, and he can't foresee anyone wanting to buy the lot, Willett said. "We certainly wouldn't want to have a commercial building on that corner."



See also articles:

- St. Joseph Catholic Church destroyed by fire, 17 May 1878, p.5, Owensboro Examiner, see also 12 July 1878, p.5 & 26 July 1878, p.5
- St. Joseph's Catholic Church burns, Owensboro Weekly Examiner, 15 May 1878, p.5
- St. Joseph Catholic Church has acquired lot for new church, Owensboro Examiner, 11 October 1878, p. 5 & 15 November 1878 p.5
- New St. Joseph Catholic Church to be at 4th & Clay, Owensboro Weekly Examiner, 30 October 1878, p.3 & 13 November 1878, p.3
- Cornerstone of St. Joseph Catholic Church to be laid, Owensboro Weekly Messenger, 9 April 1879, p.3 & 26 November 1879, p.3
- New St. Joseph Catholic Church to be blessed on March 7, Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger & Examiner, 5 March 1880, p.3
- First services at St. Joseph Catholic Church held last Sunday, Owensboro Weekly Messenger & Examiner, 10 March 1880 p.3
- St. Joseph Catholic Church granted permit build a house on Fourth Street, Owensboro Tri-Weekly Messenger, 2 November 1886, p.4
- Altars for St. Joseph's Church, Owensboro Messenger, 1 February 1888, p.4
- Improvements at St. Joseph's Church, Owensboro Messenger, 8 February 1888, p.4 and 19 February 1888, p.4
- New altar installed, Owensboro Messenger, 9 May 1888, p.4
- Statues installed, Owensboro Messenger, 19 May 1888, p.4
- "Accuse Their Priest: Parishioners of the Rev. E. W. Fehrenbach Want A Better German", Owensboro Messenger, & 12 August 1901, p.1
- New parochial school to be built at St. Joseph's Church, Owensboro Messenger, 16 March 1902, p.9
- St. Joseph to erect a school at McFarland & Sweeney, Owensboro Messenger, 5 June 1906, p.4 & 13 June 1906, p.2
- Site for St. Joseph's School selected, Owensboro Messenger, 28 August 1906, p. 1
- New St. Joseph's School completed, Owensboro Messenger, 5 February 1907, p.2, 10 February 1907, p.5 & 21 April 1907, p.5
- St. Joseph Catholic Church, Special edition: "Greater Owensboro", Owensboro Messenger, 22 September 1907, p.9B
- Munich art glass to be placed in St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Owensboro Messenger, 5 June 1910, p.1B School to be built in rear of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Owensboro Messenger, 16 September 1910, p.1

- Eight Munich stain glass windows installed at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Owensboro Messenger, 12 February 1911, p.1B
- New stations of the cross installed at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Owensboro Messenger, 24 February 1911, p.8
- New addition to be added to St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Owensboro Messenger, 7 March 1912, p.3
- Remodeling of St. Joseph’s Church (Munich art windows referred to), Owensboro Messenger, 30 May 1912, p.2 St. Joseph’s parish considering buying Todd property for a new school, Owensboro Messenger, 28 August 1915, p.2 & 31 August 1915, p.2
- “St. Joseph’s Church”, Owensboro Messenger, Wednesday, 10 October 1917, p.6
- “Golden Jubilee To Be Celebrated By Local Church”, Owensboro Inquirer, 8 February 1920, p.2A
- “St. Joseph’s New Parochial and High School At Fifth and Clay Streets”, Owensboro Inquirer, 24 August 1924, p.1B
- “Rebirth: St. Joseph’s traditions revived for German”, Messenger-Inquirer, 19 July 1981, p.1E
- “German Mass greets Friendship Force visitors”, Messenger-Inquirer, 16 June 1983, p.1B
- “Church named historic place”, Messenger-Inquirer, 1 December 1983, p.3C, St. Joseph Church placed on National Register of Historic Places Wednesday
- “TWO drops conversion of St. Joseph”, Messenger-Inquirer, 11 August 1988, p.1C
- “Church survives to commemorate 100th birthday, Messenger-Inquirer, 31 March 1989, p.1C
- “Glass restoration kept in family”, Messenger-Inquirer, 25 March 2004, p.1B
- “Glass of Grace”, Messenger-Inquirer, 7 August 2021, p.1D



Pastors of St. Joseph Catholic Church

1871-1872 Ivo Schacht

(1821 – 15 April 1874)



Rev. Ivo Schacht

1872-1878 Engelbert Maria Bachman

(31 October 1838 – 4 February 1917)



Rev. Engelbert Bachman

1878-1886 Peter Joseph Haeseley (1 July 1830 – 27 November 1895)



Rev. P. J. Haeseley

1886-1891 Louis Conrad Ohle (16 September 1852 – 10 April 1917)

1891-1901 Henry Joseph Carmens (23 June 1845 – 6 November 1901)

1901-1904 Edward W. Fehrenbach (1853 – 25 June 1924)

1906-1921 Eugene Spiess (14 December 1871 – 29 January 1946)



Rev. Eugene Spiess

1921-1926 Philip Bauer (15 February 1878 – 20 March 1930)



Rev. Philip Bauer

1922-1935 Martin J. Frankenburger (14 October 1887 – 25 February 1977)



Rev. Martin Frankenburger

1935-1939 Robert J. Gipperich (24 November 1895 – 14 May 1979)



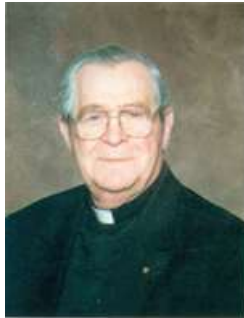
Rev. Robert Gipperich

1939-1969 Peter John Braun (30 May 1901 – 13 November 1986)



Rev. Peter J. Braun

1969-1975 Aloysius Francis Powers (4 January 1921 – 4 September 2019)



Rev. Aloysius Powers

1975-1982 Maurice Jerome Tiell (3 April 1923 – 15 October 2011)



Rev. Maurice Tiell

1982-1987 Henry Louis Willett (19 August 1916 – 17 July 1999)



Rev. Henry L. Willett



Daviess County, Kentucky Celebrating Our Heritage, 1815-2015,
Daviess County Bicentennial Committee, M. T. Publishing
Company, Inc., Evansville, IN, 2015, pp.147 & 150:

The fine art museum expanded in 1994 with the opening of a post-modern Atrium and Exhibition Wing and the pre-Civil War era John Hampden Smith Decorative Arts Wing. The expansion included a gallery built to house stained glass windows crafted in the late 19th century in Munich, Germany by Emil Frei Studios. They were commissioned by the parishioners of the former St. Joseph Catholic Church, who were some of the earliest German settlers to Owensboro.



Art Museum – The stain glass gallery contains windows from the old St. Joseph Church. These windows were made in Germany before WWI and restored by the great-grandson of the maker.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 7 August 2021, p.1D:



The stained-glass windows of Saint Joseph Catholic Church that once stood at East Fourth and Clay streets are on full display at the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art for everyone to enjoy.



St. Francis of Assisi depicted in the stained-glass of a Saint Joseph Catholic Church window at the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art



Owensboro Museum of Fine Art, 901 Frederica St., Owensboro, KY:

“The Mildred Stout Field Stained Glass Gallery presents a magnificent collection of sixteen late 19th c. German stained glass windows by the internationally recognized glass maker Emil Frei (1869-1942), installed in 20’ towers.” [From St. Joseph Catholic Church]:





Memorial to the demolished St. Joseph's Catholic Church, located at the site of the church on the southeastern corner of the junction of Fourth and Clay Streets in Owensboro, Kentucky. Built in 1878, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 and was razed in 1989.



The parish of Sts. Joseph & Paul Catholic Church was formed in 1948 when the parishes of St. Joseph and St. Paul were merged by Bishop Francis R. Cotton. The congregations were merged due to their close physical proximity to each other, as they were both on the same block of East 4th Street. St. Joseph's Church served the German speaking parishioners of Owensboro, while St. Paul's was built by the wealthy distillers with Irish roots. The building used today for services was the former St. Paul Church. St. Joseph's has been torn down, though the iconic stained glass windows survived. They can be seen at the Owensboro Museum of Fine Arts.