

January 5, 1805 Jacob Dittoe wrote John Carroll, Bishop of Baltimore, asking for a priest to minister to the folks living in their tiny Ohio settlement.

February 1, 1808 another letter was sent in which Jacob speaks of their state as critical. There were babies to be baptized and marriages to be performed.

Late September of the same year Father Edward Dominic Fenwick received word from Bishop Carroll about the needs of the Catholics in Ohio. He thus set out from Kentucky riding north in search of the Dittoe and Finck families of Perry County.

Their prayers were heard, as we now know, when Father FENwick caught the sound of an axe echoing through the woods in the crisp September air.

THE FIRST CHURCH

On December 6, 1818, a little log church measuring only 22 feet in length and 18 feet wide was blessed, named after St. Joseph and opened for public service. Father Fenwick was assisted in the ceremonies by his nephew, Father Nicholas Dominic Young, who had come up from Kentucky to help his hard-working uncle.

In a short period of about 3 years the little flock of Christians increased tenfold, outgrowing the little log church. A wall was broken out at one end of the building, and a stone structure was added to the part made of logs. *The work was completed in 1822.

THE SECOND CHURCH

January 11, 1829. Its length was 82 feet with a steeple and cross that could be seen for miles around.

THE THIRD CHURCH

During the time of Father Pius Montgomery, provincial in residence at St. Joseph's, the cornerstone was placed for the present Church. The date of this event was July 4, 1839. On August 4, 1843, the Church was officially blest and opened for worship. The new Church had a steeple that rose to a height of 160 feet above the ground.

In January, 1864, a raging fire broke out in the Church, probably caused by an overheated stove. The spire toppled down and with it, the bell, but the sturdy brick walls survived the fury of the burning.

By August 6, 1866, the repairs were completed and once again the Church was ready for services. The beautiful steeple was gone forever, as Brother Joseph Huggins, with his architectural knowledge, felt the walls would no longer

support it. Therefore he rebuilt the belfry to its present height.

During the period of 1949 to 1956, Father James McLarney planned and executed a program of improvements on the interior of the Church.

The novices' choir was moved from the wing of the sanctuary (now the museum) to the front of the Church.

The main altar reaching from floor to ceiling was removed, and a new central altar was built. Stalls were set up on the north and south walls of the Church, and the organ to accompany the chant of the community was stationed at the back of the altar.

The window of St. Joseph was moved to its present position in the west wall of the apse, so worshippers could see it at once on entering the Church.

INTERIOR -- THE WINDOWS

In the summer of 1910, in preparation for the 100th year celebration, many changes and improvements were made to the interior of the Church. The stained-glass windows were installed during this time. Although the age of the windows is unknown, we do know they are of German glass, made in Munich. They were brought from the old Saint Vincent Ferrer Church in New York City. The windows are considered to be one of the Church's greatest treasures.

STATUES

On the south side is the rosary group: Our Lady, her baby Son, Saint Dominic and one of the pet Irish Setters who camped on the grounds of St. Joseph.

On the north side is Saint Joseph, our patron, holding a small replica of the Church and the convent. Each statue was hewn out of a single block of linden wood.

THE CRUCIFIX

In 1841, Father Sadoc Alemany, a Spanish friar who had come to Saint Joseph's, went down to Cuba on a mission of begging for fixtures to brighten the Church's interior. He was able to procure the large Crucifix that now hangs over the main altar. During the fire of 1864, men, determined to save the highly prized object from the flames, lowered it by ladders and carried it away from certain destruction.

THE PIPE ORGAN

It is said to have been made by a Dittoe in the early 1800's. In the diary of Bishop Flaget of Kentucky, there is reference to the musical endowments of the Dittoes.

The entry was written in 1812, when the bishop was a guest in Jacob's cabin.

The organ in our choir loft has grown so fragile with age that it is no longer used. What remains will always be prized for its workmanship and mellow antiquity. Some go so far as to say that it was the first instrument of its kind in the state.

INTEREST

The Collegian - June, 1856, a paper put out by the college students of St. Joseph's.

A few of the students may be mentioned who made their mark in the world:

Charles Ewing, of the Lancaster Ewings, who rose to the rank of general and became a knight of St. Gregory.

John Creighton, whose fortune was poured into Creighton University, which his brother Edward had founded.

John Sheridan, a brother of General Phil Sheridan, who studied at the bar and won high praise as a lawyer, and another brother, Michael, who, like Phil, became a soldier and retired as a general.

Lyman Jackson, who enlisted in the Union Army as Somerset's first volunteer and was pensioned off finally with the title of Colonel.

William Magruder, Lewis Green and Patrick Noon, who became owners of newspapers.

Charles Magruder, who gained considerable renown in his chosen field of medicine.