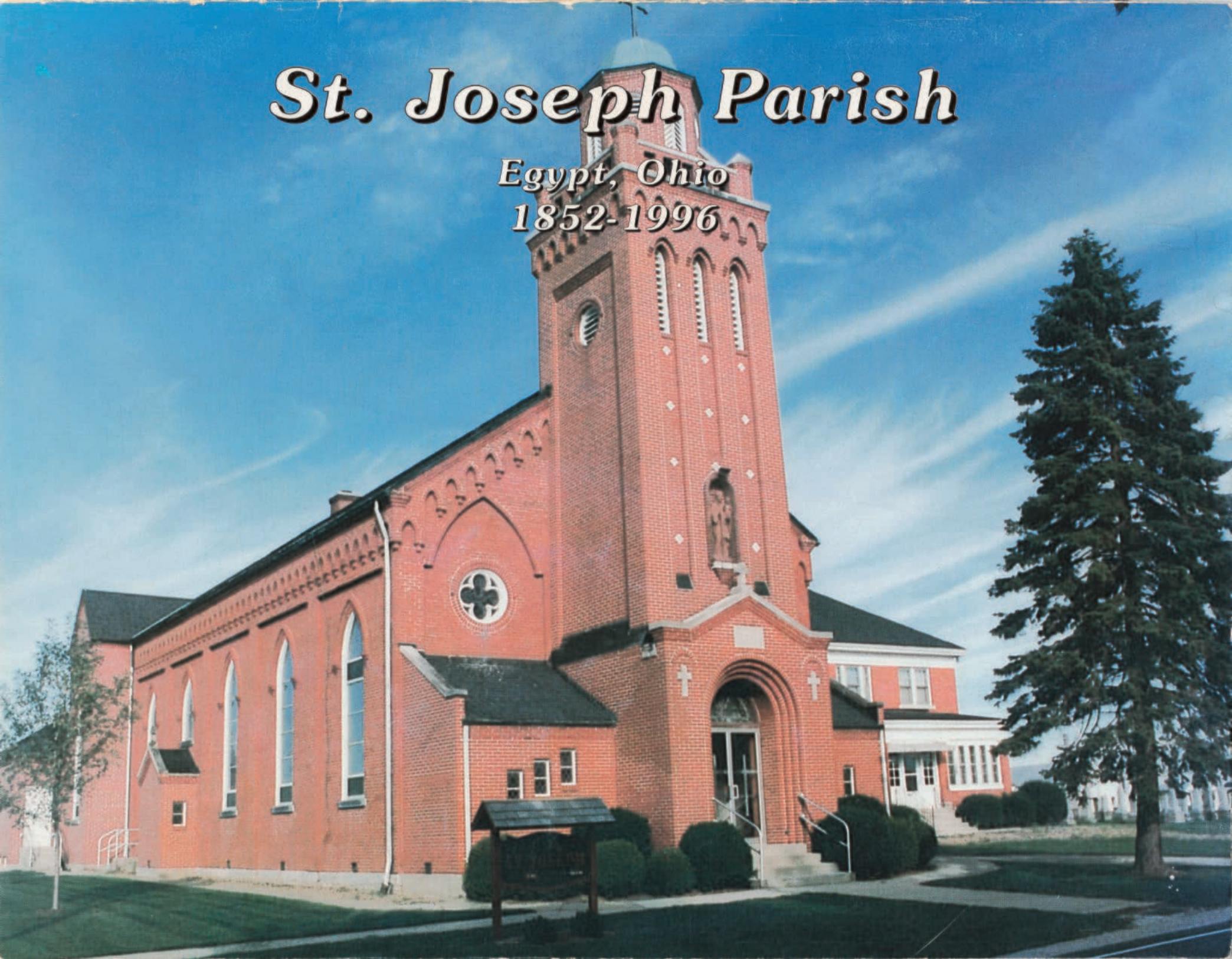
# St. Joseph Parish

Egypt, Ohio
1852-1996





MRS VIRGINIA BOERGER
163 N HANOVER
MINSTER OH 45865

www.andyniekamp.com

Dear People of St. Joseph Parish,

As we read over the long and faith-filled history of our Parish and as we survey the family portraits, let us thank the committee that was responsible for writing, organizing and publishing this directory. They lovingly gave many hours of their time to make this endeavor such a success.

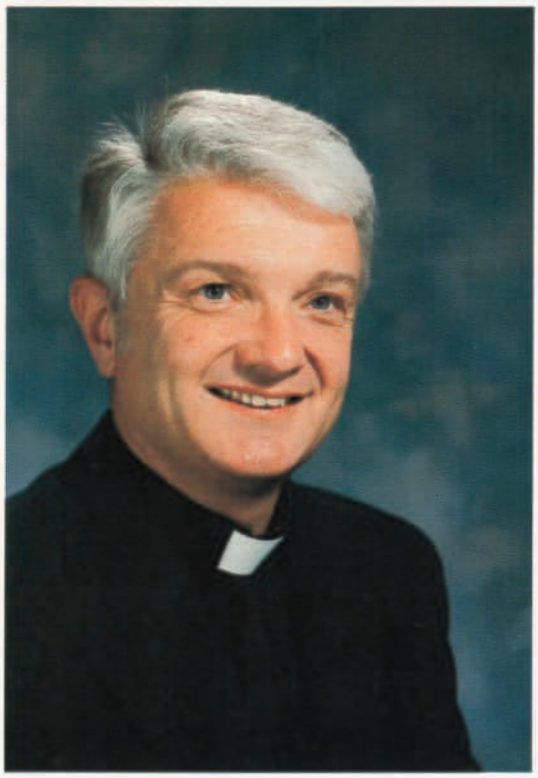
In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul speaks about a local church: "Now you are Christ's Body, and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the Church to be, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance and administration."

Some years ago, when the future of small parishes looked dim and small congregations were challenged to prove themselves "ministerially complete", St. Joseph Parish rose up to the task at hand and became a model for others to follow. Practically every parishioner has served (or will serve) on one committee or another, sharing his or her talents for the "upbuilding of the Body of Christ." We may feel a rightful sense of pride in this accomplishment. We may be small, but we are mighty!

May the Lord continue to bless all of us.

Fr. Tom

Father Tom Brenberger, C.PP.S.
Pastor



Father Tom Brenberger

Born October 24, 1939

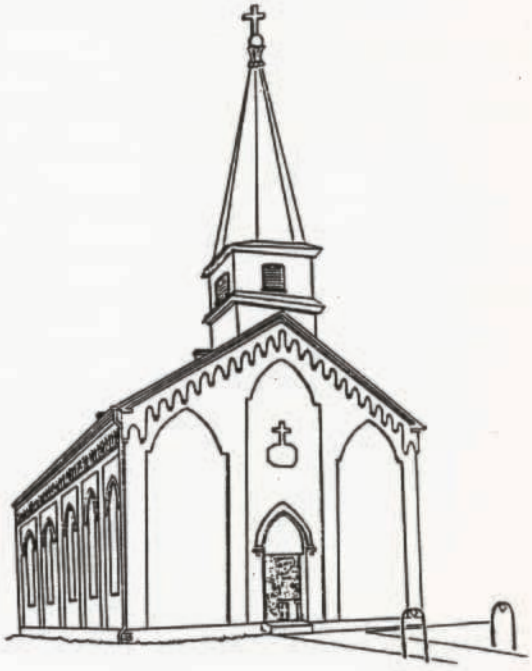
Entered the Order of the
Society of the Precious
Blood - August 15, 1960

Ordination - June 4, 1966

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*First Church*
*1852-1878*



*First Brick Church*
*1878-1927*



*Remodeled Church*
*1927-1996*

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Fr. John Jadgchew



**PARISH COUNCIL:** Martha Albers-Secretary, Juanita Brandewie, Bill Bornhorst, Don Prenger-Parish Administrator, Tom Dircksen-President, Chris Dahlinghaus, and Fr. Tom Brenberger.



**LAY PRESIDERS**
Mike Albers, Clete Prenger, George Kuether and Willard Dahlinghaus



**PARISH ADMINISTRATORS**
Don and Jane Prenger



**LAY MINISTER**
George Kuether

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**CYO ADVISOR**
Kathy Bihn and Deb Bornhorst



**SACRISTAN**
Jeannette Schmiesing



**DECORATION COMMITTEE**
Ernie Bergman

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**MASS SERVERS**

Front Row — Andy Dahlinghaus, Marie Bornhorst, Theresa Dahlinghaus, Amy Kemper, Maria Steinemann, Nikki Schmiesing.

Back Row — Katie Kemper, Julie Dahlinghaus, Michelle Steinemann, Jeff Tobe, Michelle Kremer, George Kuether, Todd Bruns, Tony Bruns, Keith Prenger, Brad Prenger, Greg Bornhorst, Mitch Bihn, Tony Kremer, Lynn Kemper, Jared Bihn and Philip Bruns.



**MUSIC DIRECTOR, ORGANIST AND CHOIR**

Front Row — Robin Hoying, Theresa Dahlinghaus, Julie Bornhorst, Barb Albers, Kathy Albers, Maria Steinemann, Amy Kremer, Nikki Schmiesing.

Back Row — Lynn Kemper, Michelle Kremer, Marie Bornhorst, Michelle Steinemann, Julie Dahlinghaus, Nikki Bihn, Becky Dahlinghaus, Katie Kemper, Katie Bornhorst, Pat Dahlinghaus, Laura Bruns, Martha Albers, Jeannette Schmiesing, Mary Ann Kuether and Norma Mertz.



**BIBLE SCHOOL, 1996 - STARTING AT THE BOTTOM**

Row One (l-r) — Maria Bruns, Lauren Kauffman, Jessica Albers, Adam Will, Amber Brandewie, Father Tom Brenberger.

Row Two — Katie Dahlinghaus, Stephanie Albers, Trent Bihn, Kelly Dahlinghaus, David Bornhorst, Sara Tobe, Natalie Muhlenkamp, Adam Bruns.

Row Three — Jon Schmiesing, Julie Bornhorst, Nikki Schmiesing, Alex Schmiesing, Michael Kemper, Janessa Dahlinghaus, Maria Muhlenkamp.

Row Four — Douglas Bruns, Sara Albers, Ben Wendeln, Tony Dahlinghaus, Maria Steinemann, Jon Steinemann, Amy Kremer, Daniel Albers.

Row Five — Jared Bihn, Andy Dahlinghaus, Theresa Dahlinghaus, Marie Bornhorst, Robin Hoying

Row Six — Tony Kremer, Philip Bruns.

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**HOME BOUND HOSPITAL VISITATION COMMITTEES:** Rita Schmiesing, Mary Bruns, Margaret Albers, Mary Ann Kuether and Margie Kitzmiller.



**LAY DISTRIBUTORS:** (l-r)-Mike Albers, Cletus Prenger, Steve Kemper, Tony Albers, Eunice Dahlinghaus, Juanita Brandewie, Willard Dahlinghaus, Phyllis Poeppelman, Rose Wendeln, Betsy Dahlinghaus, Ted Brandewie.



**ST. ANN'S SODALITY LITURGY COMMITTEE:** St. Ann's Sodality Officers (l-r)-Kathy Kemper, first vice-president; Deb Bornhorst, second vice-president; Kathy Bihn, secretary; Jane Steinemann; treasurer, Martha Albers, president.



**LECTORS:** (l-r) Front Row - Joe Dahlinghaus, Martha Albers, Bill Bornhorst, George Kuether, Sue Wehrman, Chris Dahlinghaus. Row Two - Phyllis Kremer, Mike Albers, Ted Brandewie, Norma Kuether.



**BEREAVEMENT COMMITTEE:** Maurice Schmiesing, Jeannette Schmiesing, Mary Bruns and Mike Bruns.



**MEN'S SODALITY:** Ralph Bihn, Tom Dircksen, Rollie Schmiesing.

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**MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES**



**MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE:** Mike Albers, Steve Kemper, Harold Meyer, Dave Dahlinghaus and Luke Dahlinghaus.



**PAINTING STATUES:** Women of the church restore color to the "Way of the Cross" statues. Caught in action are (l-r) Irene Prenger, Jeanette Schmiesing, Margie Kitzmiller, Eunice Dahlinghaus, Carol Heitbrink.



**MAY CROWNING:** (l-r) Lynn Kemper, Becky Dahlinghaus, Teresa Albers, Nikki Bihn, Kathy Albers, Laura Bruns, Katie Bornhorst.



**HISTORY COMMITTEE:** (l-r) Tony Albers, Willard Dahlinghaus, Barb Osterloh, Mike Albers, John Beyke.




**SUNDAY IN EGYPT**

www.andyniekamp.com

**Sunday Mass at Egypt's St. Joseph**





# *Priests Who Served The Parish*



Peter Wilhelmi
1852-1853



John Wittmer
1856-1873

NO PHOTO

John B. Birnbaum
1873-1876



Engelbert Ruf
1876-1877



John Van den Broeck
1877-1892



Ignatius Selb
1892-1907



Erhard Fritz
1907-1909



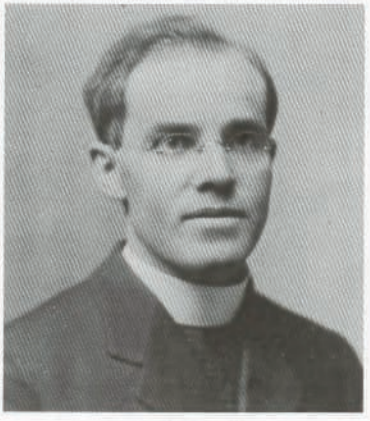
Thomas Meyer
1909-1931



Matthew Helmig
1931-1935



Leander Linz
1909-1909, 1935-1939



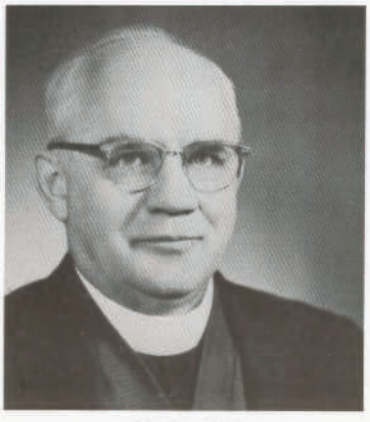
Ernest Hefele
1939-1946



Henry Friedel
1946-1952



Martin Rosengarten
1952-1961



Robert Stock
1961-1971



Fred Falce
1971-1972



Joseph Hoying
1972-1989

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Father Larry Wyen
1989-1992

## Sons and Daughters of the Parish



Father Joseph B. Kenkel-1894-1978
son of Bernard & Anna Marie Catherine
(Meiering) Kenkel



Brother Vincent Osterloh, C.PP.S.
1916-1985



Mother Emma Nunlist, C.PP.S.
1857-1935



Sister Regina Albers, C.PP.S.
(Dorothy Albers) 1935-



Sister Marcia Dahlinghaus, S.F.P.
1945-



Sister Carolyn Hoying, C.PP.S.
1943-



Sister Mary Justiniana, C.PP.S.
(Mary Clara Hoying) 1899-1959



Sister M. Alicia Meiering, C.PP.S.
(Charlotte Meiering) 1912-



Sister Lucietta Osterloh, C.PP.S.
(Eleanor Osterloh) 1911-



Sister Norma Osterloh, C.PP.S.
(Martha Osterloh) 1914-



Sister Dorothy Schmiesing, C.PP.S.
(Sr. Mary Ivo) 1918-



Sister Serena Schmiesing, C.PP.S.
(Henrietta Schmiesing) 1914-1976

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# *Former St. Joseph Parishioners*



Anton Albers 1865-1924
Josephina (Berning) Albers 1871-1902



Theresa (Kottman) Rosengarden
Albers 1868-1955



Henry Albers 1901-1988
Marcella (Pohlman) Albers 1907-1991



Bernard Albers 1873-1937
Catherene (Harting) Albers 1875-1941



Frank Albers 1902-1946
Mathilda (Schmitmeyer) Albers 1908-



Herman Albers 1900-1969
Gertrude (Kniefner) Albers 1907-1995



Ben Bergman 1882-1954
Anna (Prenger) Bergman 1882-1960



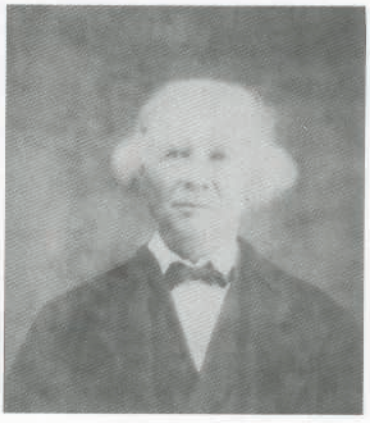
Herman Bergman 1909-1993
Luretta (Puthoff) Bergman 1921-



Linus Bergman 1918-
Rita (Selhorst) Bergman 1920-



Joe Bohman 1897-1975
Mary (Osterloh) Bohman 1906-1992



Joseph Bornhorst
1821-1900



John Bornhorst 1867-1935
Kathryn (Westerhedie) Bornhorst 1866-1948



Paul Bornhorst 1902-1983
Margaret (Stelizer) Bornhorst 1906-1994



Vince Bornhorst 1900-1989
Sally (Link) Bornhorst 1910-1993



Maurice Bornhorst 1929
Viola (Meyer) Bornhorst 1929



Carl Brandewie 1904-1970
Odelia (Cron) Brandewie 1907-1995

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Fred Bruns 1879-1951
Catherine (Poeppelman) Bruns 1878-1957



Clarence Bruns 1912-1959
Margaret (Rutshilling) Bruns 1917-



Fred Brunswick 1899-1962
Frances (Heitbrink) Brunswick 1902-1995



Joseph Buening 1909-1976
Dorothy (Lefeld) Buening 1913-



Joseph Dahlinghaus 1857-1947
Mary (Heitkamp) Dahlinghaus 1863-1947



Henry Dahlinghaus 1896-1986
Elizabeth (Hoying) Dahlinghaus 1903-



Frank Dahlinghaus 1899-
Clementine (Selhorst) Dahlinghaus
1908-1992



Edward Dahlinghaus 1902-1971
Norma (Kramer) Dahlinghaus 1913-



Henry Fortman 1903-1996
Dora (Siegel) Fortman 1909-1986



Fred Grieshop 1901-
Catherine (Bergman) Grieshop 1907-1995



John Heitbrink
1866-1943



Josephine (Albers) Heitbrink
1868-1938



Ben Heitbrink 1892-1988
Alma (Dorsten) Heitbrink 1906-1992



Henry Heitbrink
1894-1976

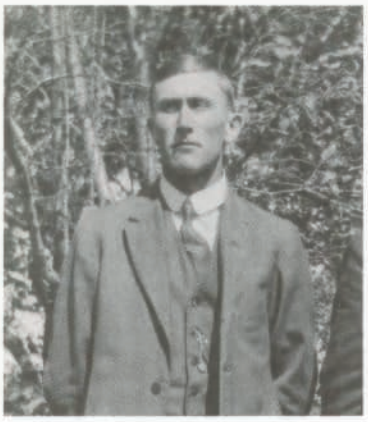


Lawrence John Hoying 1909-1986
Agnes Catherine (Mescher) Hoying 1913-



Charles Kuess 1863-1947
Anna (Heitkamp) Kuess 1868-1946

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Herman Kuess
1887-1957



Anton Kuether 1876-1958
Anna (Riethman) Kuether 1883-1952



Leo Kuether 1912-1973
Verona (Albers) Kuether 1920-



Ben Liening
1885-1966



Mary (Meyer) Liening
1885-1959



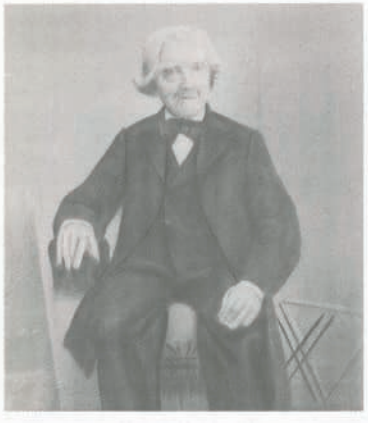
Frank Meiring 1854-1911
Louise (Westgerdes) Meiring 1842-1895



Bernard Meyer 1843-1923
Carolyn (Rolfes) Meyer 1850-1938



Joseph Meyer 1872-1939
Katherine (Hoehne) Meyer 1881-1942



Bernard Meyer
1805-1900



Anton Meyer 1884-1963
Catherine (Schmiesing) Meyer 1888-1979



Edward Meyer
1908-1972



Rose Meyer
1903-1991



Lawrence Meyer 1904-1982
Elsie (Bensman) Meyer 1913-



Norbert J. Meyer 1918-1977
Wilma K. (Brandewie) Meyer 1921-



Sister Clementina 1842-1916, Johann
Albert Osterloh 1814-1901, Josephine
(Wuerdann) Osterloh 1820-1894



Henry Osterloh
Catherine (Brandewie) Osterloh

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Harry Osterloh 1891-1984
Florence (Schmiesing) Osterloh 1895-1970



Anton J. Osterloh 1854-1944
Elizabeth (Bornhorst) Osterloh 1864-1938



Aloys Osterloh 1896-1952
Blanche (Meier) Osterloh 1901-1984



Andrew Osterloh 1888-1955
Regina (Albers) Osterloh 1896-1981



Victor Osterloh 1920-1994
Rosemary (Eiting) Osterloh 1921-1994



Bernadine Poeppelman
1856-1939



Clem Poeppelman 1898-1983
Ida (Bruns) Poeppelman 1902-1949



Joseph Prenger
1887-1971



Cecelia (Wehrman) Prenger
1889-1927



Herman Prenger
1839-1904



Katherine (Bergman) Prenger
1846-1879



Henry Prenger 1890-1966
Clara (Schlarman) Prenger 1896-1980



William Prenger 1897-1969
Clara (Wehrman) Prenger 1902-1966



John Bernard Schmiesing 1805-1900
Anna Marie (Mullenkamp) Schmiesing
1822-1902



Bernard J. Schmiesing 1852-1938
Barbara (Schwartz) Schmiesing 1863-1936



Agens (Heckman) Schmiesing
2nd Wife of B.J. Schmiesing 1862-1890

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Herbert Schmiesing 1910-1984
Hilda (Prenger) Schmiesing 1912-



Louis Schmiesing 1883-
Elizabeth (Timmerman) Schmiesing
1892-1977



Anthony Schmiesing 1893-1966
Mathilda (Hoying) Schmiesing 1894-1992



Harry Schwieterman 1900-1974
Annie (Kemper) Schwieterman 1905-1993



Joseph Sommer 1907-1993
Hilda (Zumberge) Sommer 1916-



Bernard Wehrman 1886-1952
Ursrula (Rutschilling) Wehrman 1896-1978



Bernard Wehrman Sn.
1858-1935



Elizabeth (Heitbrink) Wehrman
1862-1918



Fred Wehrman 1894-1957
Clara (Rosengarden) Wehrman 1896-1980



Joe Wendeln 1929-
Marie (Chilcoat) Wendeln 1934-



Anton Westerhide 1899-1962
Mathilda (Stueve) Westerheide 1902-1983



Johann Bernard Anton Winner 1833-1919
Carolina Rebecca (Hoyng) Winner 1838-1909



Lawrence Winner 1909-1981
Sophie (Fortkamp) Winner 1909-1987



Al F. Winner 1903-1981
Hilda (Albers) Winner 1908-1982

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# St. Joseph, Egypt - Preserving Our Past

by Barb Osterloh

## Journey to America

Of the hundreds of thousands of people who immigrated to Ohio from Germany in the early 1800's, nearly all did so out of economic necessity. This was especially true of the section of Germany then referred to as Hannover, Oldenburg, Westphalia, from which those who settled the Minster/Egypt area of Mercer County came, beginning in 1832. The majority of the immigrants to this area had called Oldenburg their homeland.

In Oldenburg remnants of the feudal system, a tradition since the middle ages, was still place. With this system farmers fell into definite class distinctions. A poor class of *Heuerleute* (tenant farmers) worked for a *Zeller*, or large land owner, in exchange for a few acres on which to grow crops of their own. (A *Colon*, or small land owner, made a living from relatively few acres.) However, only the first-born male inherited the right of ownership of the family estate. This left subsequent sons with the obligation of finding life-supporting work elsewhere. Some became craftsmen or tradesmen. Still others entered the religious life.

Many of Oldenburg's troubles were rooted in the 30 Years War (1618-1648) which devastated most of Europe. Although Oldenburg suffered through the warring factions, it escaped the worst effects because it lay outside the major battlegrounds. In fact, because marriage laws and restrictions could not be enforced during the chaos of war, Oldenburg experienced a marriage spurt and a population growth. Under the old rules, only a land owner would be free to marry. Other family members were expected to remain single and live as uncles and aunts and provide labor on the farm. As this arrangement did not find favor with the other family members the zeller compensated by renting a portion of the farm to his brother (s) in exchange for the labor he and his family provided. This helped the farmer with needed manpower and the other family members kept their self-esteem. As time went on however, fewer and fewer Heuerleute were closely related to the Zeller and family allegiances waned.

Since by the mid 1700's there was not enough work for these Heuerleute locally, large numbers of young men walked to Holland to find seasonal work. These migrant workers (Hollandgangers) found work in the peat bogs on the moors, on dikes, mowing grass, or as sailors in the herring fishing fleets. Some even worked as sailors on the North Sea and eventually came to own their own ships. At home in the winter, these families spent their time spinning and weaving flax into fine linen cloth known around the world for its quality.

As Oldenburg was recovering from the effects of Thirty Years War, a minor setback came with the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and once again waves of foreign troops washed over the land, causing turmoil and devastation. It was during this time that the potato was introduced into Oldenburg. For these people potatoes would later become the only difference between living and starving to death.

The effects of the Seven Years War were slight when compared to the Napoleonic Era (1796-1813) which resulted in a decree abolishing the feudal system. For a time the people of Oldenburg (which was annexed to France at the time) enjoyed an economical boom. However Napoleon's reign was short lived. Following his defeat at Leipzig, the decree was abolished and the territory was restored to the Duchy of Oldenburg and the feudal system was restored.

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The introduction of power driven machinery in the late 1700's and early 1800's, brought on an era historically referred to as the "industrial revolution." Beginning in England, it quickly spread to America. Now, for the first time, clothing, furniture and tools were being made in "factories" and not from raw materials in individual's homes and workshops.

Due to a long-standing dispute with his archenemy, Great Britain, Napoleon barred British wares from the continent. Following Napoleon's exile the "Continental Blockade" was lifted. Inexpensive cotton material and garments flooded the continent as Europe quickly entered the 19th century.

In 1832 the Dutch government forbid foreigners to work in government enterprises. Oldenburgers could no longer find work in Holland. Some walked to Poland or Russia for work but the pay was very poor there. To compound their woes the "cottage" weaving industry went totally flat. The quality and price of hand-woven cloth could no longer compete with the finer textured machine-woven fabrics. The plight of the already poor class of people had become desperate.

In 1831, a disaffected Damme citizen, Franz Joseph Stallo, emigrated to Cincinnati. A teacher and bookbinder by trade, he found work with McGuffy, a Cincinnati educator and author of the McGuffy readers, as a book binder. With his access to a printing press it was easy for him to inundate his former homeland with stories of the "New World" encouraging people to come to America. As a result Stallo's father and brother formed a company to promote settlement in the Ohio territory. Word of America as a land of opportunity spread rapidly among the local people of his former homeland.

Soon large numbers of Germans, farmers, carpenters, and artisans, (usually family groups) began arriving in Cincinnati daily. The frontiersmen, however, became resentful of the large number of new arrivals and refused to hire them. Since finding work was difficult, the immigrants soon became restless and disappointed. According to the Hoying history, Pilgrims All, "Catholic immigrants were particularly frowned upon because of the suspicion that they were part of a plot by the Pope to take over the Mississippi River Valley and create a Papal domain in America."

The immigrants cornered Stallo with questions about where else they could go. Stallo proposed finding a location in which to establish a colony. Some historians speculate Stallo may have had the intention of establishing a colony in the back of his mind all along.

Accordingly, a group of 97 young Germans met in Cincinnati and designated Stallo and a Mr. Beckman to find a suitable location for the establishment of such a colony. On September 1, 1832, a stock company was formed to purchase land in Mercer County. Stallo reportedly also investigated areas of Indiana and Illinois, but because of Indian troubles associated with the Black Hawk War in Illinois, he was advised against locating on a frontier that far west. It was decided, then, to locate in the newly opened "Indian Lands" approximately 100 miles to the north of Cincinnati. The land had recently become available for settlement following an 1831 treaty in which the U.S. Government had purchased the last Indian Reservation in Ohio, sending all the remaining natives to a reservation in Kansas. This treaty ended, forever, the Indian disturbance in the land that had once been home to noble Miami, Shawnee, Wyandot and Ottawa Indian nations.

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Stallo, accompanied by six men, of which only four names have been recorded - Johann Bernard Feldmann, Johann Herman Surman, Heinrich Joseph Cordesmann and Johann Friederich Rohenkohl immediately set out on foot to the U.S. Government Land Office in Piqua where they purchased 1,200 acres of Congress land in southeast Mercer County and adjoining northwest Shelby County for $1.25 an acre. (Auglaize County and Jackson Township did not exist until 1848.) The original Stallostown purchases were made September 28, October 3, and October 15, 1832. The purchased land had been a part of the six-mile tract ceded to the United States at the "Treaty of Greenville" in 1795 and lay within the Indian Lands above Fort Loramie. It was situated on an old Indian Trail known as the "Wilderness Trail" or the "Big Thunder." A post road dubbed the Indian Trail to carry mail between Troy, Piqua, St. Mary's, Fort Wayne, Fort Defiance and Fort Meigs, was authorized by an Act of Congress in 1819. Today it is known as State Route 66A.

According to early plat maps, most of the land in the Egypt area was purchased and settled from 1832 through 1835. Notable among these early settlers were a group of 17 who sailed from the port of Bremerhaven (Bremen) Germany, aboard the passenger ship *Everhard* on June 23, 1833 arriving in Baltimore, Maryland on September 16, 1833. Of the group, C.H. and Margaret Grieshop, Gottfried Hoing (Hoying) H.A. and J.B. Wehrman, J.C. and Franz Schillmoeller, J.H. Osterloh, Joseph Meyer, J. Bussing, and J.H. Rolfes settled at Egypt.

For the immigrants, the journey to America was long and difficult. Many of those who started out didn't complete the trip, but died enroute. The trip averaged five to 13 weeks on the ocean under the severest of circumstances. Cramped quarters, and lack of privacy for even the most basic bodily functions, lack of proper food and medical attention for those who were dreadfully seasick were just a few of the inconveniences. They often had to put up with badgering from the ship's crew, especially if they were women. The best line of defense for a woman traveler involved carrying a long needle with which to ward off the unwanted attention of the sailors. The immigrants' trials didn't end, however, once their ships reached American soil. Plenty of charlatans waited on the docks (especially in Baltimore) where Plattdeutsch-speaking turncoats directed newly arrived immigrants to bars, dives and gambling dens where they were soon relieved of their money. Immigrants were advised in their homeland that once in Baltimore, they should get on a wagon for the west as quickly as possible.

Drivers transporting the immigrants westward over the very dangerous terrain of the Allegheny Mountains by large Conestoga freighters were the nation's first teamsters. They were adept at handling the teams of oxen used to pull the freighters and obviously obtained their name from their profession.

Women and children, trunks and baggage were loaded onto the wagons. Men and boys usually walked the 14 to 16 days it took to reach the Pittsburgh-Wheeling area and the headwaters of the Ohio river. From there they traveled by flatboats down the Ohio to Cincinnati, where they rested before completing the trip. They then proceeded north to Dayton by way of the Miami-Erie Canal. From there they could finish the trip by hiring a wagon or paddle on to Piqua by way of the Miami River before beginning their overland trek. Some who traveled light even walked from Dayton to Stallostown.

The canal, begun in 1825, had reached Dayton by 1833.

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In 1843, it opened to Minster and was completed from Toledo to Cincinnati in 1845.

## Home in the Forest

Imagine how the immigrants must have felt as they tramped through vast stretches of the towering oak, maple, beech and other hardwoods. Giant 60 to 80 foot tall trees and deep dark shadowy tangle of undergrowth in the vast stretches of forest through which they traveled was, at the very least, intimidating. According to one account, the forest undergrowth was knee deep and it stank. The colonists faced a variety of dangers, including an often fatal fever associated with the gaseous clouds rising from decaying vegetation on the dark forest floor. Swamps, stagnant pools, and a foggy condition prevailed. Malaria was common. The purest water they could find, which was rain water, was caught in barrels and used for drinking, cooking and bathing.

Wild animals abounded and the swamps served as breeding grounds for snakes. Often nests of snakes had to be cleared away before settlers could get down to the business of felling the trees and draining the swamps. For years many "wild" snake stories, such as those concerning "whopper snakes" and "hoop snakes" were swapped when people gathered socially. Many years later, when Father Brunner's Precious Blood Order built the convent at Egypt, even Father Wittmer's skill was engaged in helping kill snakes before Brothers could clear the land for farming. It would take years of toilsome labor to clear the land and drain the swamps. They would be plagued by strange illnesses and mosquitoes.

The Minster colonists experienced a crop failure in 1835. If it hadn't been for Quakers from Piqua who brought them a wagon load of flour and provisions they would have faced starvation. At times, those first settlers must have wondered if by leaving their homeland to come to Ohio, they hadn't leapt from the frying pan into the fire.

## A Place Called Egypt

Legend has it that on a rainy day sometime after his 1835 arrival in Egypt, Herman Henry Kruse of Damme, upon observing the submerged state of his land remarked, "This place was formed by a dab of mud that fell from the wheelbarrow of God when He made the world. It should, therefore, be called Egypt." Obviously neighboring land owners agreed with him and the name stuck. Kruse owned 40 acres of land in McLean Township in Shelby County. Today that land lies in the northeast corner of the intersection of S.R. 364 and Dirksen Road.

For years the early families of the community of Egypt struggled to keep up their church attendance at Minster, which, until November 1, 1836, was known as the Stallostown Mission. It was the center of Catholic worship in the territory. Minster's first church was a 40 x 60 foot log building which stood in the north end of the north park near the curve in the present day Lincoln Drive. On November 1, 1836, when a constitution for the people was drawn up by Father Horstmann and signed by himself established the church as St. Augustine's. However, with the increasing number of Catholics coming into the area, the Minster church was becoming too small. Often after an arduous journey, country residents arrived only to find the church filled, forcing worshippers to stand outside in all kinds of weather. Also, at one point the church was closed for a six week period due to a school dispute.

Many times during the year inclement weather made

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country trails impassable. Rain-filled gullies and bogs could not be crossed. This made the trip to Minster impossible even for a person on horseback. Needless to say, women and children didn't get to church very often. Egypt families needed and wanted their own church.

**On a winter day early in 1852,** Anton Wehrman, with the help of Henry Rolfes, was in the Wehrman woods, splitting clapboard for his new log cabin. When the men ceased their work for the noon hour and were warming themselves around a campfire, a near neighbor, Johann Albert Osterloh, walked over to visit with them. In the course of their visit, one of them remarked what a great blessing it would be if they had a little chapel in the neighborhood so their wives and children could go to Mass occasionally, even if only once or twice a month. The idea was enthusiastically received by the other two. After talking it over with others in the neighborhood, they found all to be in agreement. A meeting was held in Wehrman's new house even before the floor had been laid. The three men (Wehrman, Rolfes and Osterloh) whose idea it had been, were elected to approach Archbishop Purcell, who was to visit St. John in a few days. The settlement of St. John, formerly Leistenschneider, would come to be known as Maria Stein.

On the 14th of August, 1852, they received His Grace's permission to establish the parish of St. Joseph at Egypt. A subscription drive was held and soon $800 was pledged. A meeting with contractors was held at the Wehrman house to let a contract for the new church, which would measure 52 x 28 feet. Several contractors, noting the sum pledged, all agreed to do the job for $800. Henry Rolfes finally spoke up and said, "I will build a church for $300 for which I will furnish the rough lumber if the rest of the congregation furnishes the flooring and siding." Of course he got the job.

When the little church was completed, enough money was left over to pay a priest's salary for one year, approximately $300. A small bell was donated at this time by Henry Knapke. The church was built due east of the present day St. Joseph's Cemetery, in the southeast corner of Egypt Pike and S.R. 364, on land belonging to John Heitman. Today, it is the Heitbrink farm. On September 11, 1852, Johann Albert Osterloh deeded land for the purpose of a cemetery for the newly formed St. Joseph Catholic Church to Archbishop Purcell.

**First events** include John Bernard Schmiesing as the first child to be baptized in the new church. J.H. Stricker and Mary Brandewie were the first couple married there. The first funeral was held for Anna Mary Knapke, a child of two years.

**The pioneer members of St. Joseph's Parish were:** Bernard Albers, Frank Bergman, Joseph Bornhorst, Anton Brandewie, Henry Brandewie, Joseph Brandewie, Henry Dahlinghaus, Herman Henry Dorman, Henry Grieshop, Henry Heitkamp, Johann Heitman, Carl Hoying, Fred Hoying, Bernard Knapke, Henry Kuether, Joseph Meiering, Bernard Meyer, Joseph Meyer, Johann Albert Osterloh, Henry Poeppelman, Henry Rolfes, Johann Schillmoeller, Bernard Schmiesing, Gerhard Severing, Henry Siemer, Bernard Sprock, Henry Stuckenborg, Bernard Vaske, Anton Wehrman.

Names of others who helped settle and shape Egypt but were no longer living there at the time St. Joseph's Church was established include: Herman Heinrich Kruse, who according to tradition named the place *Aegypten* (Egypt). Kruse died circa 1840. His widow, the former Helena Sprock married Herman Heinrich Helmsing; Johann Franz

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Christian Winner purchased land near Egypt in 1834. He was killed when a tree fell on him in 1835. His widow married Henry Rolfes, builder of Egypt's first church; Heinrich Tangeman and family who died in the cholera epidemic of 1849.

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**From 1852 to 1856** the Egypt congregation of St. Joseph had no resident priest. Precious Blood Fathers came from Minster and Maria Stein every Sunday and twice during the week to administer to the spiritual needs of the congregation. Parish records show these priests to be the Reverends: Willibal Willi, Peter Wilhelmi, Nicholas Gales, Mathias Kreusch, Max Homburger, Rochus Schule, Patrick Henneberry, John (of the Cross) Wittmer, Amadeis Dambauch and Stephan Falk.

From May 1856 until October 1873, Father John Wittmer was resident pastor of St. Joseph's. Father J.B. Birnbaum succeeded Wittmer until September 1876. He was followed by Father Englebert Ruff until the spring of 1877. Father John van den Brock was appointed pastor in 1877 and served until his death on September 24, 1892. He is buried at St. Joseph's Cemetery in the shadow of the large cross which marks his grave.

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St. Joseph's claims partial credit for two **"Sons of the Parish."** The Very Reverend **Joseph B. Kenkel**, C.PP.S. Ph.D was born at Newport, Ohio in 1894. His father, Bernard Kenkel died in 1894, and his mother, Anna Mary Catherine (Meiering) died in 1895. Both are buried at St. Peter and Paul Cemetery. A brother and sister also died during those years. As an infant Joseph came to Egypt to live with his Uncle Frank and Aunt Louisa Meiering, who later adopted him. The only claim to Reverend **Aloys Dirksen**, C.PP.S. stems from the fact that he was baptized at Egypt. **Brother Vincent Osterloh**, C.PP.S., son of John and Rose Knoth Osterloh, entered the order in 1932. He died in 1985 and is buried in the community cemetery at St. Charles Seminary.

**"Daughters of the Parish"** include **Mother Emma Nunlist**. Maria Nunlist was the daughter of Victor and Catherina Meier Nunlist. Born June 5, 1857 in Erlinsbach, Switzerland, she came with her parents to America at a young age. She lost her last parent (her father) when she was only nine years old. As an orphan she came to live with the Sisters at Mary's Flight Into Egypt Convent. She became a member of the Order at the age of 13, and rose to prominence within the C.PP.S. On October 29, 1935, at the age of 65, Mother Emma died at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Dayton, as the result of an automobile accident. She was buried at Salem Heights.

Ten additional women from Egypt entered the Religious life as a Precious Blood Sister. **Sister M. Veronica** (Elizabeth Heitkamp), daughter of John and Mary Catherine Trimpe Heitkamp. She died in 1912 and is buried at Maria Stein Convent.

**Sister M. Clementina** (Catherine Osterloh), daughter of Johann Albert and Josephine (Wehrman) Osterloh. She died in 1916 and is buried at New Riegel; **Sisters M. Norma** (Martha Osterloh) and **M. Lucietta** (Eleanora Osterloh), daughters of John and Rose Knoth Osterloh; **Sister M. Alicia** (Charlotte Meiering), daughter of Joseph and Anna Kremer Meiering; **Sisters M. Serena** (Henrietta Schmiesing) and **M. Ivo** (Dorothy Schmiesing), daughters of Henry and Bernadine Meiering Schmiesing. Sister Serena died in 1976 and is buried at Salem Heights; **Sister M. Justiniana** (Mary Clara Hoying), the daughter of

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Clemens Herman and Theresa Albers Hoying, she died in 1959 and buried at Salem Heights; **Sister Regina** (Dorothy Albers), daughter of Henry and Marcella Pohlman Albers; **Sister Carolyn Hoying**, daughter of Lawrence and Agnes Mescher Hoying.

**Sister Marcia Dahlinghaus, S.F.P.**, (Franciscan Sisters of the Poor), the twelfth daughter of the parish to become a nun, is the daughter of Henry and Elizabeth Hoying Dahlinghaus.

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By the end of 1996, 999 souls had received the sacrament of Baptism at St. Joseph's, 343 marriages took place at its altar, and 391 funerals were held there.

The largest number of funerals (12) in a single year occurred in 1879. Of those who died, one was a three month old infant, two were three years old, one was four, three were six, two were 14, one was 19, one 33 and one 62. One explanation as to the cause of so many children's deaths probably stems from the fact that in 1879 a Diphtheria epidemic was raging in the area.

## *The Priest Missionaries*

Immigrants poured into Ohio faster than the religious community could grow to care for their needs. Archbishop of Cincinnati, John Baptist Purcell, made at least three trips to Europe to recruit help. Missionaries came to the area and were forced to cover large distances in order to reach all the settlements at least once a month. They stayed in one place only long enough to hear confessions, celebrate Mass, perform baptisms, marriages and funerals, before moving on to the next settlement.

Vivid accounts of the kinds of hardships endured by these rugged missionaries are recorded in letters written by a French priest, Father Louis Navarron, who served as Purcell's delegate in this area between the years of 1838 and 1848. One of five French priests recruited by Purcell to come to Ohio, Navarron's primary mission was to minister to the French speaking immigrants. However he often served German and Irish speaking Catholics, as well.

While Navarron built the little log church dedicated to St. Valbert near Jacksonville (Versailles) and made his home base there, his spiritual family actually extended from Greenville to Lima. It has been noted that Father Navarron, as well as other priests, periodically visited St. Augustine's parish in Minster. Therefore, the Egypt settlers no doubt had contact with the good priest. During the early days of the settlements, there were no roads or bridges, only footpaths or trails on which to travel from one settlement to the next.

**In letters to his superiors**, Father Navarron wrote of a typical trip: "I fastened the Holy Vessels and Mass Vestments with a leather strap and tied them on my back. In this manner I walked to Champaign (Frenchtown), next to Russia (St. Remy's), then on further to Wynant (Newport), then to Berlin (Loramie) where I celebrated Mass and rested for a few days. From Berlin I went to Stallowstown (Minster), then to St. John (Maria Stein), then to Philothea and Celina in Mercer County, then on to St. Mary's, where most of the German and Irish workers on the canal received Holy Communion. From St. Mary's I went to Lima where I remained several days and by way of Loramie, returned to my dear St. Valberts."

Another time, he tells of wanting to get home to St. Valberts so badly that he refused to stay with a friend in Berlin, but started out in the late afternoon. Sure that he knew the homeward footpath through the forest, he even refused a companion.

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Most immigrants had a deep respect for the gloom of the thick forests. Occasionally, a settler would stray off the main path only to find himself hopelessly lost in the heavy vegetation. Only seasoned woodsmen felt safe in the forest. Father Navarron was a seasoned traveler. But even for an experienced woodsmen, safety could never be taken for granted. After walking several miles through the dense forest, he noticed that it grew darker and darker. Soon he could no longer see the footpath. Suddenly he found himself in water. In the darkness, he found that each cautious step forward put him deeper in the water.

Finally, after studying the dangerous situation for a while, he managed to find a thick branch that he felt would support his body. He took a six foot strap from his pack, lay down lengthwise on the branch, wrapped the strap around his body and tied it securely to the branch. He relates that he was so tired he soon fell asleep. When he awoke the next morning, the sun was shinning in his face. It was then he saw he was surrounded on all sides by the swollen Loramie Creek. Had he kept going in the previous night's darkness, he probably would have drowned. "With a thank you to the dear Lord, for my good night's sleep," he wrote. "I was soon on my way to St. Valbert's where I arrived in the afternoon."

After ten years of the hard life - walking great distances, sleeping on the ground, often with sparse nourishment, Father Navarron suffered a slight brain hemorrhage. In 1848, as a reminder of Navarron's home in Clermont, France, Archbishop Purcell put him in charge of Clermont County, where he later built a church and priest house at Stone Lick.

## *Brunner comes to Ohio*

During one of Archbishop Purcell's trips to Europe, a zealous Swiss priest by the name of Father Francis DeSales Brunner, desirous of work in the missionary field, heard him speak of the desperate need for priests in Ohio. Feeling that an American mission was his calling, Father Brunner, along with seven priests and seven seminarians, answered the call.

The Precious Blood Missionaries arrived in the archdiocese on the last day of 1843. After conferring with the vicar general and recently appointed first bishop of Milwaukee, Father John Martin Henni, (also a native of Switzerland) who served as the liaison between Purcell and Brunner, they learned the general regulations of the Council of Baltimore and the special ordinances of Cincinnati which were to be observed in parishes and missions throughout the Ohio territory. Purcell also expressed the wish that Brunner's priests learn the English language.

In the first week of January 1844, Purcell gave Brunner complete jurisdiction over German-speaking Catholics in the northern diocese. Brunner's band went first to St. Alphonse at Peru near Norwalk in Huron County, a former Redemptorist mission which had been deserted. This mission was followed by Thompson (Maria Steig), also referred to as Marywood or Franks. It is the site of the Sorrowful Mother Shrine, Bellevue. The order was established at Wolfscreek (New Riegel) which resulted in a cloister being built there in April of 1844. He named this convent, "Mary of the Crib." Next came Sandusky City, Tiffin, Avon, Cleveland and Randolph. By June of 1845, the Society of the Precious Blood in America numbered nearly 50 members, six of whom were priests. That year, Father Brunner established the Society farther

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south to Maria Camp at Glandorf (Putnam County), and in the fall of 1845, the order reached St. Augustine in Minster.

St. Augustine Church records show that Father Frederic Rese celebrated the first Mass in Stallostown in the late fall of 1832, and the Stallostown mission began on Christmas day in 1833 by Reverend Professor J.W. Horstmann. Rev. Prof. Horstmann was an untiring priest, physician, and teacher from Osnabruck (Hannover) who served on foot as a missionary to the Catholic people of northwest Ohio during this early period. He was later founder and first pastor of St. John's, Glandorf. A number of priests, including a Father Francis Bartels served both as associates and successors to Horstmann. A letter to St. Augustine parishioners from Bartels asking them to make a clearing around their settlement so that he could find them, indicates the area was still a forest wilderness.

According to Precious Blood history, in 1845, a lone Precious Blood priest, Father Henry Herzog, was serving in our area. He was in charge of not only Minster, but also St. John, St. Rose, St. Henry and St. Joseph (Victoria). Regretfully, Father Herzog had the uncanny ability for stirring up trouble and antagonizing people. Central to a great deal of the trouble with Herzog in Minster relates to his attempt to set up a school there. Although he had some backers, not everyone fell for his scheme and Herzog threatened to build his own church if the entire community did not go along with his idea. As a result of the turmoil, Purcell forbid Herzog to say Mass at Minster and the church was closed for a short period of time. Herzog's next station was Fort Jennings.

The renowned French missionary Father Louis Navarron was called upon to step in temporarily to quiet the troubled waters. For the better part of a year Navarron worked to carry out his impossible task, caring for the French settlers of Darke and Shelby counties and the German colonists of Mercer County. All the while, he begged Purcell to appoint a German-speaking priest or priests to the area. At the request of Purcell, Brunner and Wittmer made a survey of the area in the fall of 1845. As a result, Purcell and Navarron were informed that Brunner would send one of his priests to Mercer County once every two months for eight to fourteen days. Navarron was bitterly disappointed with Brunner's decision. He felt Brunner should either take over completely or not bother at all. "A resident priest is absolutely necessary!" he wrote Purcell. Navarron's plea must have been taken seriously because in a short while at least one and usually two priests were in residence at Minster. Brunner's first item of business was to purchase land five to six miles west of Minster, near St. John's (Maria Stein) on which to construct a convent.

## *Precious Blood Missionary Priests*

The Egypt community and St. Joseph's parish continued to grow in faith under careful guidance of the Precious Blood missionary priests. The C.PP.S. however, suffered many hardships and growing pains in this land of towering forests and headstrong immigrants.

The trials and tribulations of one missionary priest, Father Patrick Henneberry, were gleaned from his letters to the archbishop dating from May of 1856 through May 1858. Henneberry, the first Irishman to join the Society, came from Wisconsin, where his parents had migrated from Ireland.

Father Henneberry found himself overseeing and administering the sacraments to more than 5,000 Catholics

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scattered from as far south as St. Remy (Russia), St. Valberts (near Jacksonville-renamed Versailles), and Holy Family (Champaign-renamed Frenchtown), as far north as St. Mary's, Wapakoneta, St. Patrick's in Acadia (Spencerville-Allen County) and Lima, as far west as the Mercer County churches - Philothea, Celina and Shanesville. By this time, travel was somewhat easier for Henneberry than it had been for Navarron. Some of the larger trails were becoming roads (of a sort) which could accommodate a horse and buggy. At the very least settlements could at least be reached by horseback. On smaller trails, trees stumps were cut short enough that wagons could pass over the top of them. Settlements were becoming a great deal easier to find than they had been in the first years when Father Franz Bartels (Father Horstmann's assistant who later formally established St. Augustine's Parish on 1 November 1836), admonished parish members to "make a clearing so that I can find you."

Language continued to be a problem in non-German speaking communities, and Henneberry once wrote, "This is an English country and our Society, destined to do good and to promote the salvation of souls in it, should be as least partly English, too." Henneberry often ministered to the Irish working on the Miami Erie Canal between St. Mary's and Glandorf. At one point he requests His Grace's advice concerning how to get those laboring on the canal to abstain from servile work on Sundays and Holy Days. This included boat captains and overseers who would not allow their laborers time off for the practice of their faith.

At one point, Henneberry advised the archbishop that a canal boat, laden with a large "heap" of provisions, collected to aid the orphans were being sent to him. He listed the Egypt congregation, under the care of Father Wittmer, as being one of the contributors.

At Philothea many converts were made, including 24 colored people from six months to 16 years of age, who were baptized at one time by Father Van den Broeck. As early as 1858, Henneberry recognized that Lima in Allen County would soon need at least two churches to accommodate the large number of Catholics living there. He predicted the community would be at least the size of Piqua.

He asked permission of the archbishop to allow seven families to build their own church at Shanesville, where he found they had not seen a priest but once in 20 years and were in danger of losing their faith altogether if they didn't have their own church. Henneberry explained that these people were 16 miles from both St. Henry and St. Mary's, and that a plank road, which extended from St. Mary's to Fort Wayne was in the process of being laid through the settlement known today as Rockford. He also mentions the formation of the parish of St. Sebastian and asks permission of behalf of the 20 Irish families in Van Buren Township, Shelby County to establish their own church - Sacred Heart Parish, McCartyville.

On several occasions Henneberry consulted the archbishop about the dilemma he faced in the mission field caused by not having a "proper" confessional in which to hear confessions. Because of the great inconvenience imposed by ecclesiastical law, he several times appealed for a dispensation from the use of a grating in hearing women's confessions.

His letters speak of the building of churches at Wapakoneta and St. Marys. Language continued to be a factor in the entire area. "As there is no Catholic school teacher in Wapakoneta, we should feel most grateful if your Grace would endeavor to provide us with one that shall know

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both the English and German languages, be able to teach singing, and be contented with $250 per annum," Henneberry wrote Purcell in May of 1856.

Mixed marriages also presented problems in those days as was evident when he asked Purcell's advice concerning a woman who had "given public scandal" by marrying a Protestant man over the admonitions of Father Andrew Kunkler.

"Henneberry," writes Father Paul Knapke in his history of the Precious Blood Order in America, "was one of the few missionary priests, besides Brunner, who could speak and write English," (as well as German). Because he worked in French parishes, he studied that language with some success also. However, the French Catholics of the Holy Family parish in Frenchtown, who were without a priest for a length of time, were skeptical about Henneberry's appointment. "Especially," he said in a letter to Purcell, "since I had mislaid your Grace's 'letter of authority' regarding this mission."

With the shortage of priests, Henneberry found he could not do the American, English and French speaking missions justice even if he worked "day and night." Noting that these parishes needed priests of their own culture to serve them, Henneberry asked to be relieved of the obligation of attending the French congregations. He pleaded with Purcell to send two French priests to serve the area of Frenchtown, Versailles and Russia.

Not all Priests were happy doing frontier missionary work. Some preferred the classroom to the wilderness. During Brunner's last trip to Europe in 1858, Father Wittmer was in command of the American branch of the C.PP.S. Brunner advised Wittmer to surrender all unfaithful members to the Diocese of Cleveland. Brunner wished to keep only the priests who observed the practice of poverty, chastity, and obedience; and those who did not object to being dependent on the Sisters in temporal affairs (food and clothing). "Those who have expressed a wish to be free should be cut loose to relocate," he wrote. As a result, several who had not taken vows of obedience to Brunner did leave to join other orders. One priest, Father Francis Xavier Obermueller later became a noted Jesuit historian.

A number of years following Brunner's death, Father Joseph Albrecht, who had been instrumental in the acquisition of land for the Egypt convent, led a group of 15, priests, brothers and sisters, in what has been referred to in Precious Blood history as a schism, to Minnesota, where he built his own church.

## *Sisters of the Precious Blood*

The Sisters of the Precious Blood answered the missionary call to Ohio in 1844. The Society, founded in 1833 in Loewenberg, Switzerland, by Maria Anna Brunner, the widowed mother of Father Francis DeSales Brunner, was dedicated to the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Father Brunner left his mark on the community by the many convents he built. Instead of using banks, funds accrued from dowries or inheritances, as well as from practices of economy were immediately used for the purpose of expansion. He felt convents were necessary in order to encourage vocations to the religious life. As places of aspirancy for candidates and students arriving from Europe, it was a place where they could adapt to life in America and to community living. Seriousness of vocations could be observed and tested in these serene surroundings.

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It was in this setting that a young student from Baden, in Germany, Ildephonse Rapp wrote home during his stay in Egypt, to tell his parents about helping a local farmer unload his wagon load of goods for the sisters. He told them that from the farmer he had heard his first English and discerned that it would not be so difficult to learn. What he failed at the time to realize was that what he heard was not English but low-German.

Mary Help of Christians at Maria Stein was the first convent to be built in this area. Convents that followed: Our Lady of the Visitation - Minster; Gruenenwald - Cassella; Himmelgarten - St. Henry; Mary's Home - Jay County, Indiana. The last to be built was Mary's Flight Into Egypt - at Egypt.



Sketch of Mary's Flight into Egypt

## *Egypt's Convent*

In 1856, the Precious Blood Community took advantage of the opportunity to acquire land in a secluded spot midway between the villages of Minster and Maria Stein on which to construct the last of Father Brunner's convents. The fact that the convent was built at all was a miracle. Brunner, in failing health, went back to Europe to look after the affairs of the branch of the Precious Blood still located there, and to find backing for his mission in America. His assistants, all much younger than he, did not believe convents should be secluded places of prayer and reflection, but instead should be located in more populated areas where their influence could be felt by more people.

Egypt's original Convent farm, consisting of 120 acres was purchased in three 40 acre parcels, all lying along the north side of Egypt Pike between the present day S.R. 364 and the Auglaize/Mercer County Line. Deeds of transfer indicate that on February 12, 1856, Johann Albert Osterloh sold to Father DeSales Brunner, John Wittmer, and Joseph Albrecht, trustees of the Society of the Precious Blood, the first 40 acres for the sum of $1,000. The convent farm and orchards were established on this land. Jackson Twp. No. 2 school building presently stands at the east end of the property. On April 9, 1856, Herman H. Dorman sold his 40 acres tract to the Society for $880. This became the western boundary of the farm. The final purchase of land for the original Convent Farm was made on June 24, 1856, when Johann Osterloh sold them a second 40 acre parcel for $950. This acreage was situated to the west of the buildings, between the first 40 acres purchased from Osterloh and the Dorman land. The prices paid for the land reflects the degree to which the land was cleared for farming.

Another 40 acre farm was willed to the Sisters by Elizabeth Sprock, an elderly lady, who upon the death of her husband, made the gift to the sisters in exchange for her care. That land was located on the southwest corner of S.R. 364 and Minster Fort-Recovery Road. The Sprocks (Bernard d. 1864 and Elizabeth d. 1890) are buried at different locations on St. Joseph's Cemetery. On their grave stones, they are referred to as Sister Elizabeth and Brother Bernard

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(Sprucke). In 1861, Precious Blood Fathers purchased another 100 acres for $3,000 from John M. Drees. Originally the Schillmoeller farm, it was located south of the convent between Egypt and Osterloh Roads.

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**According to historical accounts** (*Not With Silver or Gold*) by Sisters of the Precious Blood, Religious Brothers were expert builders by the time they started the Egypt convent, due to the fact they had just completed the convent at Gruenenwald (Greenwood), Cappella, which meant chapel. The way in which the German language writes the double "p" was misconstructed as "s" in English and Cappella became known as Cassella. Work progressed slowly as the Brothers toiled long hours during the day molding the large number of bricks needed for the building. Equally long hours during the night were spent firing them.

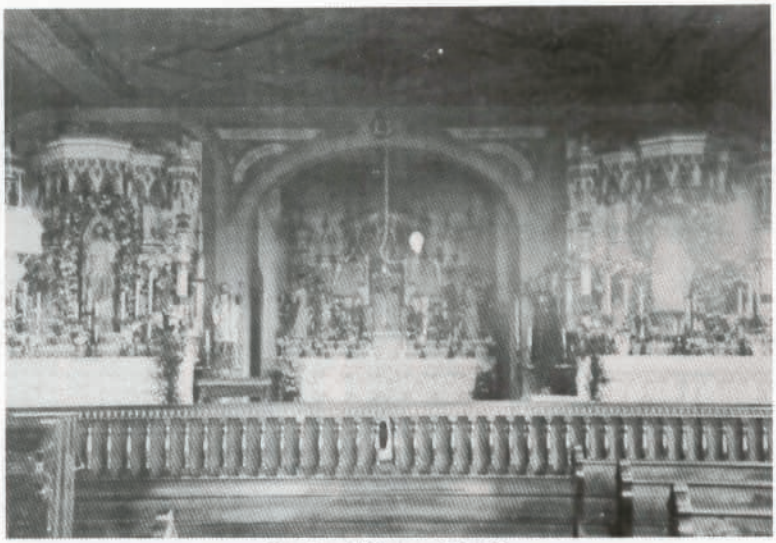
A small, two-room log farmhouse, which stood on a slight elevation some distance from the road, was chosen as a Sisters' home (in anticipation) of the new convent. The location, hidden by majestic trees and sprawling underbrush, served as a pleasant haven for their cloistered lives. Newly appointed Superior General, Mother Mary Johanna Gruenfelder and several Sisters from Maria Stein traveled to Egypt to prepare the dwelling for habitation. One of the rooms was arranged for a chapel and the other was made to serve as a combination kitchen, dining room, and community room. When Sister Ursula Hegg and three other Sisters arrived in Egypt on August 30, 1856, they found their dormitory quarters located in a loft reached only from the outside by a crude ladder. It contained no furniture. Large ticks filled with fresh, clean corn husks served as their mattresses. These were covered with home-spun linen sheets and feather bedding. As long as the nights were clear, all went well. With the fall, however, came another story. The autumn rains poured in on them and on wintry mornings, the Sisters often awakened to find themselves under frosty drifts of snow.

From the time of their arrival in Egypt, Johann Albert Osterloh provided lodging for the Brothers who were engaged in building the new convent. Osterloh also provided many of the vegetables and other farm products to the Sisters. During this time, Father John 'of the Cross' Wittmer, Vice Superior (Provincial) of the Precious Blood Missionaries in America and overseer for the project, (and St. Joseph's parish priest) was living in a small rectory which stood on Osterloh's land, directly across the road from the convent driveway. All the Religious were fed from the Sisters' community kitchen. In order for the Brothers to stay with the building work, the Sisters offered to help with the farm chores, such as milking the cows and feeding the livestock. This work was very tedious as the cattle sheds were located on another farm, some distance away. The Sisters walked to and from their chores, which proved difficult when it meant going over snow drifts.

All fall the Sisters attended daily Mass at St. Joseph's little frame church in Egypt. **At midnight on Christmas Eve, 1856**, Father Wittmer dedicated the new chapel and convent to Mary's Flight Into Egypt. That first Christmas was a memorable one because of the bitter cold and the inconvenience of living in a new building without interior walls, steps, or permanent floors. There were only bare rafters and open doorways. Cloths were hung to separate the chapel from the sacristy and living rooms, but nothing could keep out the cold biting wind that swept through every crack and crevice. Despite the cold, Sisters of the Precious Blood began their Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which was not interrupted as long as the Sisters inhabited the convent.

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As soon as the frozen ground began to thaw in the spring of 1857, excavations for the convent cellars were begun. As the structure began to grow, Egypt neighbors were thrilled to have such an impressive building in their settlement. Sunday after Sunday they visited the site, looked over the plans, and discussed the problem of finding enough sisters to fill such an immense convent and the wherewithal to furnish it.



Interior of Convent Chapel

Johann Albert Osterloh, who had already provided much for the Religious Community, suggested that his neighbors follow his example in contributing toward the project. He challenged their good will by donating a fine piece of garden land, tools and farm implements, as well as good seeds and provisions. The idea struck home, and a wholesome rivalry began. Soon the Sisters, whose confidence in Divine Providence had never wavered, found themselves in a well furnished convent. The grateful sisters never forgot the kindness shown them by their benefactors. No one seeking alms or food was ever turned away from their door. They also arranged their convent chapel so the neighbors could attend services there which many did on a daily basis.

According to the late Anna Dahlinghaus, other convent buildings included a wash house and a bakery containing four large rooms. "The convent's living quarters were located on the second floor which could be reached from the outside by steps," Dahlinghaus said, "There were two sacristies which could also be reached from the outside. The Sisters entered the chapel from the south and occupied the first five pews. Around the gray walls stood statues of Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Benedict, Infant of Prague, and Blessed Gasper. The chapel was almost like St. Joseph's Church, but with a "lower ceiling."

As an eight year old boy, Frank Dahlinghaus remembers serving Mass at the convent. The Sunday routine of his youth often began with an early "low" Mass held at 7 a.m. in the convent chapel. Later, at 10 a.m., a High Mass was celebrated at St. Joseph's. Following that Mass, there were "instructions" in the faith, taught by the parish priest. In the afternoon, parishioners would return to church for Vespers. Sunday was truly a "day of prayer" for these early Catholics.

The Sisters and the convent were a source of consolation to the people of Egypt. Primarily a house of prayer, it was reassuring to local residents to hear the hour bell as it called each successive group of Sisters to adoration. Many were the times that neighboring farmers at Egypt were witness to the chorus of prayers wafting on the air from the Sisters and Brothers as they worked together in the fields. For more than a half a century, peace and serenity reigned over Egypt.

"There is no noise, no turmoil. Far and wide reigns a stillness as in the depths of the forest. The land of Egypt became in time, an earthly paradise. Flowers bloomed in profusion not only in the luxuriant gardens outside in the warm spring sunshine, but the flowers of peace,

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contentment, and joy in the Lord blossomed the year around in the heart of the Sisters." (*Not With Silver or Gold, P. 140*).

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The Cholera epidemic of 1849 and 1850 struck down rural residents as well as villagers. Among Egypt people taken by the plaque in 1849, were members of the Bernard and Maria Anna Angela (Dahlinghaus) Tangeman family, including their son Bernard Henry; John Henry and Margaretha (Tombroegel) Dahlinghaus; Carl and Maria (Heusmann) Wissman; Clemens Schillmoeller; Elizabeth Rothweg; Herman Heinrich and Bernard Holtvogt.

Death was usually sudden. *According to the late Anna Dahlinghaus*, "My grandfather, Heinrich Dahlinghaus came to America with one brother, Bernard who lived at St. Rose; and one sister - Mrs. Tangeman. Heinrich Dahlinghaus lived south of Egypt near where Kuethers and Wehrmans now live. Tangemans lived southwest of Egypt, close to Osterlohs. Heinrich Dahlinghaus's first wife and two children died of the Cholera in 1849. One child, Heinrich survived and he later lived at Carthagena. Mrs. Tangeman was sick with the cholera and her brother, Heinrich Dahlinghaus went to take care of her. She told her brother to lay his head on the bed so he could rest. In those years they had only tallow candles and a short one was burning. When he woke up, the candle was out and his sister was dead. None of the Heitkamp family died in the cholera. During the epidemic, they would communicate by yelling at a distance. They never went out among the public, lest they contract the disease. They cracked their own corn with stones for making bread, as they did not go the mill." The early settlers had never experienced anything as devastating as the cholera. The typhoid epidemics which swept the settlements from time to time, did not cause nearly as much panic, possibly because typhoid was a common enough plague in Europe.

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In 1859, Sister Hedwig Flamm opened a school for dependent girls at the Egypt convent, and operated it for 15 years. In their history, the Sisters acknowledge that while Sister Flamm was a strict disciplinarian, the girls learned well under her guidance and became fine responsible adults. The building stood near the road to the south of the convent's grape arbor. Part of the vineyard served as a playground for Sister Flamm's students. Another row of grapes stood on the east side of the lane leading to the road. Farther to the east stood a large orchard filled with fruit trees.

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The training Maria Nunlist received in Sister Flamm's school marked the beginning of her career as Sister Mary Emma. She rose to the rank of Superior General of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, 1899-1905, earning the title of Mother Emma. During her term in office, Kneipp Springs in Rome City, was founded; construction of a new convent at Maria Stein was started; and missionary work in Arizona begun. After leaving office, Nunlist served as Superioress at Kneipp Springs and directoress of the Phoenix, Arizona, mission. She was re-elected as Mother General in 1911-1924. During this term, the convents at Egypt, Glandorf, Mary's Home and Gruenenwald were sold.

With the closing of the school in 1874, dependent girls were sent to the flourishing convent school in Minster. Local girls were sent to the district (public) schools, where all the local children were taught by Catholic lay teachers. The Brothers and hired hands later lived in the school building.

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*Members of St. Josep*
*Father Henry Friedel (cent*
*"Silver Anniversar*
*He was ordain*



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***h's Parish pictured with***
***er) upon the occasion of his***
***y" in the priesthood.***
***ed June 1, 1924.***



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**Oil Boom.** In the 1890's oil and natural gas wells began to dot the area. At one time the Convent owned two oil wells and a gas well. Many farms had wells that pumped numerous barrels of oil a day. School children of Jackson Twp. #2 School who were left to their studies as the teacher moved on to his next class were often distracted by the pumping oil rigs they saw as they gazed out the school room window.

## *Egypt gets a new brick church*



First Brick Church

For twenty-six years Egypt's little wooden church withstood the rigors of the weather. Gradually, however, it began to show signs of wear.

As early as 1857, Father Wittmer reported that the Egypt parish numbered 40 families. Yearly the congregation increased to the point that a new and larger church was needed.

In the spring of 1877, Father John Van den Brock was appointed pastor of St. Joseph's Parish. He consulted the trustees of the congregation regarding the building of a newer, larger church. Since all were in agreement, the subscription paper was again passed around. This time the sum of $5,000 was raised for a brick structure and a large bell.

The people of Egypt set about at once to build their new church on ground donated by Johann Albert Osterloh. This time, however, they hired contractor Anton Goehr of Minster to construct the 84 x 36 foot building. George Van Oss did the brick work. Jake Donauer of Minster was the plasterer, and a Mr. Hefele of Piqua did the painting.

Anton Albers, who had just finished building a large barn on his farm, took the gin pole he had used to Egypt so that workman could lift the rafters onto the new church. On the way home with his horses and wagon, he was caught in a thunderstorm. From the chill he received as a result of the drenching, he caught pneumonia and a few days later, on June 8, 1878, he died. Today, his great-grandson and namesake, Anthony Albers, owns the farm on which stands the big barn that Anton built but never got to use.

Work steadily progressed and the church was finished in a timely fashion. Dedication was held on the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas in 1878, presided over by the Very Reverend Bernard Austermann, Provincial of the Precious Blood. The Mass was celebrated by Father Boniface Russ.

Henry Brandewie had the distinction of being the server for the last Mass in the old church and the first Mass in the new church. As an adult Brandewie moved to Osgood. Sixty-five years after the dedication of the new church, his granddaughter Wilma (Brandewie) Meyer moved to Egypt with her husband, Norbert.

Shortly after the new church was built, the old frame church was moved to Minster, where the actual fate of the building is unclear. Some speculate that Anton Goehr used it

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for a workshop while another source writes that shortly after being moved to Minster, the building burned to the ground.

A cupola which stood on the roof of the new church housed the bells. On top of the steeple stood a ball and cross. Gas carbide lights hung from the ceiling illuminating the interior of the building. The Sisters made paper flowers and embroidered the cloths that adorned the altars. In later years, Henry and Catherine (Brandewie) Osterloh's granddaughter, Alvina Hopkins, would recall the times she watched her grandmother make beeswax candles for the altars of St. Joseph's. An accomplished needle worker, Catherine also embroidered many of the cloths which adorned the altars.



Interior of first brick church - built 1878.

The church was warmed in winter by two wood-burning heating stoves which stood in the center aisle; one near the front and the other, toward the back. The stove pipes led directly into the two chimneys which stood on the roof of the church corresponding to the location of the stoves. One was located on the east end of the church to the west of the bell spire, the other toward the west end. Parishioners donated wood, cut to prescribed lengths to fit the doors of the stoves, and they were fired up an hour or more prior to Mass by nearby neighbors.

To counteract wintertime drafts, the pews sat on a raised floor with doors at each end which were fastened with a hook on the inside. Former parishioner, the late Marie (Kuether) Fleckenstein, once recalled that if a parishioner didn't want a person to sit in the pew with them, they would refuse to unlatch the door to let them in. Parish membership in those days was paid in the form of "pew rent". Parishioners often bid a good price for the right to sit in a certain pew for a year. It was no wonder, then, that someone who had not paid to sit there would be denied entry by those who had.

Bidding for pews began in 1852 when the top per year bid was $4.75. By 1866-69 the bids had risen to the $5.50-$6 range. A rear pew brought $1.50 more than one that was closer to the front. From 1882 until 1927, a general fee beginning at $4.50 and ending at $15 was charged. In 1928, bidding was reinstated with seats ranging from the $12 to $21. The term "pew rent" is no longer used at St. Joseph's, Egypt. Parishioners presently support their church by paying a "membership fee" of $20 per year for everyone high school age and over.

A pulpit which stood in the north side of the sanctuary also provided a spot from which the priest could deliver his sermon. Before the days of microphones, a priest, by addressing a congregation from a height, could be heard by everyone.

When the church was completed in 1878, only the main altar had been installed. The side altars were simply table

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Inside of St. Joseph's after side altars were installed circa 1900

affairs over which hung six foot tall paintings of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

During Father Van den Brock's last illness Father Richard Fuller served as pastor, pro-tem. Following Van den Broeck's death in 1892, Father Selb was installed as pastor. Under his guidance the parish received new side altars which replaced the tables, complete with the statues which replaced the large framed pictures. Because St. Joseph is the church's patron saint, that statue was placed on the left (south) side and the Blessed Virgin Mary was placed on the right (north). Years later, a visiting bishop told parishioners the statues stood on the wrong side. After that they were switched to their present positions, where they've stood ever since. During this time frame, the church also added a large bell in the tower.

In Egypt's early years, John and Elizabeth Van Erp, people of Dutch descent, lived in a log house which stood between the present day home of Marc and Irene Prenger and the Prenger Implement Store. The Van Erp settlement became the community's unofficial post office. Each week someone would carry the mail to the Minster post office and bring Egypt residents' mail back. Periodically, locals would stop in at Van Erp's to collect or drop off their mail.

The late Anna Dahlinghaus recalled, "They would get the Minster Post, Sidney Anzeiger, and a Celina newspaper. There was a comic story called Philip Sauerampfer in the Celina paper and Dad would read it to us after he was done with the work. We could hardly wait for it." Hitching posts were located on the east side of the road across from the church and during mass parishioners kept their horses tied there or in a barn that was located where Prenger's Implement store now stands.

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When Father Ignatius Selb, who in his youth came to America from Nenzing, Austria, became feebled by old age, he was replaced by Father Erhard Fritz, a Beuhlerthal Baden, Germany native, in May of 1907. Father Fritz served as St. Joseph's pastor until September of 1909.

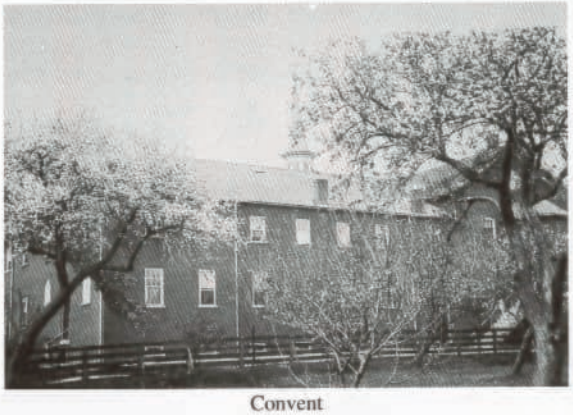
Father Leander Linz, originally from Altschweier, Baden was appointed pro-tem until Father Thomas Meyer, Egypt's first American born priest, arrived in late 1909 and stayed for 22 years. Meyer, a Minster native and son of Christian and Elizabeth (Enneking) Meyer, provided a home for his mother at Egypt as well. Egypt native Anna Dahlinghaus kept house for them. During this tenure at St. Joseph's the present rectory was built.

In the beginning, all property belonging to C.PP.S. was held in the name of the priests. When the Fathers of the Society of the Most Precious Blood separated from the Sisters in 1886-1889, all the property at Egypt, including the priest house, which still stood across the road from the convent drive, passed into the hands of the Sisters. In 1911, when Archbishop Moeller urged the Sisters to sell the convent lands, the news was met with shock and sorrow. The

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decision was really one of economics. Many costly measures would be required to bring the Egypt convent physically into the twentieth century. The Society felt the days of usefulness of the small convent were over.

On the 16th of July, 1912, William Meiering purchased the original convent farm for $12,600. This included the land originally sold to the trustees of the Precious Blood by Johann Albert Osterloh and 30 of the 40 acres acquired from Herman Henry Dorman. Ten acres of the original Dorman land had been sold to Frank Meyering in 1890. The remainder of the convent holdings went to J.B. Schmiesing who purchased the Sprock land and Joseph Dahlinghaus who purchased the remaining (north) 60 acres of the Drees addition. Ten years earlier, in 1902, J. Anton Osterloh purchased 40 acres of convent land (originally acquired from Drees) bordering Osterloh Road.



Convent

A farewell Mass was celebrated on Thursday, November 21, 1912, by the Very Reverend Provincial, Father Boniface Russ, C.PP.S. Twenty priests attended the emotional farewell. The Reverend Pastor of Minster, Father Eugene Grimm, presented an emotional farewell homily. The Sister's choir sang at the High Mass. When the ceremony was finished, The Provincial Father Russ himself put out the candles and extinguished the sanctuary light which had burned for the last time.

Residents of the Egypt Convent were relocated to other convents in Maria Stein and Minster which were equipped with labor-saving devices and modern conveniences. The Sisters left behind their dead. Still buried on the Egypt cemetery, the Brothers and Sisters of that long-ago era give silent testimony to the prayerful community that once stood in our midst.

## *A New Rectory is Sought*

With news of the impending sale of convent property, St. Joseph's parishioners realized they would lose a priest house. The old rectory, in poor physical shape, was not deemed worthy of purchasing. As subscription paper was again circulated throughout the parish and $6,000 was raised with which to build a new parish rectory.

However, Father Thomas Meyer was in a quandary as to where to build the house. Henry Osterloh, Johann Albert's oldest son, who was by this time owner of the adjoining land, was approached about giving up additional land on the south side of the church for the rectory. Osterloh, however, was not interested in parting with any more of his land, saying he felt the Osterlohs had given enough to the church.

One day when the society's provincial, Father Russ, visited Egypt, Father Meyer asked him where to build. "Bau dahin" (build it here), he said, pointing to the spot between the church and the cemetery. With the parishioners volunteering and hauling materials, the rectory, a handsome two-story brick house, was built there.

According to an article which appeared in the March 19, 1926, Minster Post, alert school children discovered a fire on the roof of the new rectory around 11 a.m. on the Monday preceding the publication of the Post. A colorful

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description of the commotion which followed the discovery of the fire was related in the following article: "After the first cry was given, the few people who live in the neighborhood acted in the most practical manner possible. The housekeeper at the residence was immediately alerted and she called the lady operator at the Minster telephone exchange and appealed to her for assistance in the emergency. From the center of the telephone circuit individuals were summoned who live nearest to the Egypt settlement and thus no time was lost in arousing local residents who might be the most concerned about the fire."

No mention was made of a fire department. It does say, however, that a Mr. F.M. Oldiges, with other men who were associated with The Minster Telephone Company, motored to the scene only to find the blaze had been extinguished. Egypt residents had, in fact, quickly smothered the fire which was burning around the chimney of the 14 year-old rectory. The article goes on to comment that thanks to the quick thinking and cool actions of the local residents, they accomplished a feat that was rather rare as far as country fires were concerned. The blaze, which was thought to have been caused by chimney sparks igniting accumulated dry roof dust, resulted in only a small hole being burned in the roof.

According to the Post article, "The Egypt parish house is a two story brick structure and its appearance bids the traveler to look it over while searching for evidence of pride and thrift among the farmer folk. It was erected only a few years ago at a heavy expense to the men and women who worship at St. Joseph's altar." Rev. Thomas Meyer was pastor of St. Joseph's and living in the rectory at the time. The roof was later covered with a slate shingles which ruled out any further roof burning episodes.

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Egypt's one room school - The original German Twp. #5

## *One Room School*

Education of their children has always been a high priority for the people of Egypt. Since 1843, when a 99 year lease was taken on a small plot of land belonging to the farm of Francis Clemens Rolfes (northwest corner of S.R. 364 and Minster-Fort Recovery Road), by the school directors of District #5, German Township, Mercer County, education in Egypt has been documented. The farm later became the property of J.B. Schmiesing and is still in the Schmiesing family today.

In 1848, German Township, Mercer County, became German Township, Auglaize County. Because township residents felt the area was too large for one voting precinct, a movement got underway in 1851 to divide it into two voting precincts - A and B (New Bremen and Minster). By 1852, the division was official. It was not until 1858 that German Township was officially divided and Precinct B became Jackson Township. From that time onward, the School at Egypt was known as Jackson Township #2. District #1 school in Jackson Township was located in Minster at the approximate location of the present day primary school building. The Heitkamp School, formed at a

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later date, was always referred to in school board minutes as the "Special School District".

Evidence of an even earlier school has been eluded to in the daily business journal of Charles Henry Dickman I, a proprietor of an early Minster general store (1835-1841). Dickman, a woodworker, made coffins which his wife lined with cloth. His records indicate that he made the altars for the first log churches in Minster, St. Henry and St. John.

An entry made on December 2, 1839, states that a Mr. (?) Heitman, Jr. purchased 3 lbs. of putty and a half gallon of whiskey for School District #5, for a total cost of 62 and a-half cents. At that time, Heitman lived in Egypt, on the future site of Egypt's first church.

Official school board minutes began in December, 1903. At that time Frank Meyering and John Heitkamp were serving as directors and Joseph Laufersweiler was clerk. The teacher Frank Dirksen, earned a salary of $55 per month. In November of the next year, a Board of Education election was held in which J.H. Heitkamp and Anton Albers were elected. Joe Dahlinghaus and Frank Meyering received tie votes in the election. The winner was decided by having the two candidates cut into a book from A to Z, with the highest letter being the winner. Frank Meyering won the cut and the remaining two-year term on the board.

By the time the first meeting minutes were recorded, the school was more than 60 years old. Early teachers were required to be bilingual. Morning classes were conducted in High German. In the afternoon, classes were held in English. This practice was discontinued with the advent of World War I, when it became "unpatriotic" to flaunt one's German heritage. Only English was taught from then on.

Egypt native Frank Dahlinghaus, born in 1899, recalls walking to school in all kinds of weather. Although it was sometimes zero in the dead of winter, he didn't mind the cold because he, as most youth did, often walked through the woods where heavy stands of trees shielded him from the harsh cold and winds.

Notations in school board minutes were often directed toward repairs - to the school, desks, fence, pump, and privy. Each year the school board took bids from coal dealers in Minster and contracted with school district families for kindling wood to start the fires in the pot-bellied stove, the school's only source of heat.

In the March 9, 1905, school board minutes, a notation was made stating that Westgerdes Brothers were notified to haul the old stove away. One can only wonder if the stove died a natural death or if it was a victim of a "shelling" incident inflicted on it by an older, bored student. At least one former student of that one-room school delighted in telling young family members how, as a student, he had hidden a rifle shell in pieces of fire wood which blew the stove apart when the teacher, being unaware of the prank, threw the piece of "loaded" wood into the fire. While luckily no one was hurt, the explosion caused the stove to fly apart. With the stove "out of order," school had to be dismissed for the remainder of the day.

Repairs to desks and problems with the privies needed to be attended to in the summer of 1905. The teacher was ordered to instruct the girls to enter the new privy from the south and the boys to enter from the north. Keeping boards on the school yard fence proved to be a difficult proposition. School board minutes mention repairs needing to be made to the fence that bordered the school yard on the east. Former student, Frank Dahlinghaus recalls that as soon as school kids could get a board loose, it was invariably removed, slid through the fence and used for a seesaw. If a student's

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attention wandered from time to time it could focus on the pumping oil wells standing in he field to the east of the school (on the present day Sommer farm). According to Dahlinghaus, "One was about 150 feet down the field, while the second one was located about 1,000 feet farther to the northeast."

As early as 1908, parishioners petitioned school board members to move the school nearer the church. Although county officials told them they could move the school wherever they wanted, for economic reasons they decided to leave the school where it stood. School board officials did, however, after several requests from parents and teachers, put a porch on the south side of the building to shelter the door.



School Group: Front row (l-r) - Anne Sommer, ? Timmerman, Ben Dahlinghaus, John Sommer, Carl Brandewie, Lawrence Meyer, Hilda Thobe, Christine Albers, Mary Bornhorst. Second row - Vince Bornhorst, Henry Albers, Edward Dahlinghaus, Paul Bornhorst, Henry Westerheide, ? Timmerman, Victoria Thobe. Third row - Clara Brandewie, Clara Wehrman, Albert Brandewie, Ed Osterloh, Frank Dahlinghaus, ?, Clem Dahlinghaus, Tony Westerheide, Frances Rosengarten, Clara Rosengarten. Top row - Anna Heitbrink, Frances Brandewie, ?, Ed Wehrman, ?, John Albers, Elizabeth Heitbrink, ?, Teacher Louis Gerdes.



School Group: Front row (l-r) - ?, Joe Sommer, Ben Dahlinghaus, Carl Brandewie, Lawrence Meyer, Henry Westerheide, Paul Bornhorst, Christine Albers, Mary Bornhorst, Hilda Thobe, Ann Sommer, Victoria Thobe, ? Brunswick, ? Brunswick. Second row - ? Brunswick, Clem Dahlinghaus, Tony Westerheide, Frances Heitbrink, Clara Wehrman, ? Thobe, ? Timmerman, ? Timmerman, Henry Albers, Vince Bornhorst, ?. Third row - Frances Rosengarten, Clara Rosengarten, Elizabeth Heitbrink, Frances Brandewie, Anna Heitbrink, Teacher John Bernard, John Albers, Edward Osterloh, Albert Brandewie, ? Brunswick, Henry Thobe.

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In February, 1918, school board members, consisting of Joe Prenger, Anton Schmiesing, Anton Heitbrink, Joe Meiering, and Anton Meyer, with Charles Bornhorst as clerk treasurer, decided to sell the dwelling house and old barn which stood on school property. These buildings stood along the road to the south of the school, and served as living quarters for the school teacher and shelter for his horse and buggy. The dwelling house, barn and school desks were sold for a total of $218.45. Farmers who bought the buildings dismantled them and reused the lumber for building projects on their farms.

In April the school board met to discuss the purchases of a site nearer St. Joseph's Church on which to build a two-room school, at an estimated cost of at least $6,000. On June 10, 1918, a special school bond election was held, resulting in its passage by a vote of 37 to 7. The next day, three-quarters of an acres of land was purchased from Louisa Meiering (widow of William Meiering) for the sum of $200. The land had formerly been the east end of the convent orchard and was still covered with fruit trees. A sale of bonds took place on July 13, 1918. Twelve bonds worth $500 each were posted, with the first one due on September 1, 1921. One bond was to be paid off each year thereafter. The debt was retired on September 1, 1932.

N.J. Hogenkamp of Minster won the contract for building the school with a bid of $9,465. He began work immediately. True to the "waste not, want not" tradition of our ancestors, the old school was dismantled for the bricks and anything else of value which could be used in the construction of the new building. As a result, when it came

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time to start school in the fall of 1918, the old school was gone and the new school was not yet finished. Students were out of a school building. In short order, space was rented in the "Heitbrink" house where school desks and supplies had been stored and school began on schedule. The Heitbrink house is the present-day home of Larry and Jeanie Bergman.

In the school's early history, teachers were traditionally male. August Stukenborg taught prior to recorded school board minutes. Frank Dirksen taught through May, 1906. L.B. Gerdes taught from the fall of 1906 through May, 1912. He was followed by John Bernard from September, 1912, through May, 1916. Bernard did not live in the dwelling house but came from Maria Stein by horse and buggy each morning. From 1916, until March 18, 1918, R.C. Spornhauer taught at Jackson Township #2. He was followed by Arlington Rawers who drove from Minster to Egypt each day to finish out the year.

In the fall of 1918, Egypt children got their first woman teacher when Marie Wilke (sister to the late Dr. Edgar Wilke of Maria Stein) was hired. She taught through May of 1922. While he attended high school at Minster, Edgar would drop Maria off at Egypt on his way to school, then pick her up on his return home.

By mid-season (January 1919), the students were moved into the completed two-room school. With four grades to a room, the first four grades had the room to the north and the last four in the room on the south side of the building. From her perspective in the middle of the two rooms, Miss Wilke taught all eight grades. In 1920 a second teacher, Elfreda Manier, was hired on a one-year contract. Since most children spoke Plattdeutsch a great deal better than English, Miss Manier of Versailles, with no background in the Low-German dialect, had a difficult time at Egypt and quit after one year. The language problem was remedied with the hiring of Louisa Puthoff in 1921.

In 1922, the school board signed a contract with the Sisters of the Precious Blood which lasted from that date until the school closed at the end of the 1960-1961 school year. The Sisters who staffed the school at Egypt included Sisters Mary - Dula Nutto, 1922-1931; Cecelia Paluszak, 1922-1938; Symphorosa Baer, 1931-1932; Sophia Buettle, 1932-1935; Maurice Diegelman, 1935-1938; Angela Post, 1938-1943; Olympia Ley, 1938-46; Yvonne Voisard, 1943-1947; Liliosa (Laurene) Hemmelgarn, 1946-1947; Stella Armbruster, 1947-1948; Firmina (Frances) Barlage, 1947-1961; Samuela (Magdalen) Schuster, 1948-1949; Leonarda (Clara) Knippen, 1949-1960; Dulcina (Catherine) Bonifas, 1960-1961.

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Egypt School was orginally planned to include a library, which would have been built above the existing coal room to the west of the classrooms. However, funds did not stretch that far and the library never materialized. The original plans also allowed for an accordion wall to separate the rooms. At the suggestion of Hogenkamp, a double partition interlined with sound deadening felt was built instead. The method of heating was also changed from the original plans which called for a heater (stove). A hot-air furnace was purchased instead from Theodore Kempker and Son for $365.

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First School Bus

## The School Bus Arrives in Egypt

In 1937, the district's first school bus (Chevrolet) was purchased from Ed Busse for $1,385. Lawrence Meyer was hired to drive it, a post he alone held throughout all the years, at a salary which began at $1.24 a day. Although he was paid only $1.10 per day the following year (because of a bidding war), his pay gradually rose to the grand total of $3 per day by 1944. Ben Heitbrink served as the school janitor for $2 per day or $18 per month. He also served as substitue bus drive when Meyer needed time off. In 1948, a new school bus was purchased from Kuenning at Advance (Chevrolet) for $3,000. The district's third new bus was a Ford purchased in 1959 from Westerheide Motor Sales for $4,516.

During the summer of 1946, the school board considered building indoor toilets in the school. After advertising for bids and learning the cost of the project, they decided to table the project. However, in June 1947, the Nuns refused to sign a teaching contract until modern toilets were installed. Bids were again taken. Louis Seger of Fort Loramie made the best offer of $10,019. Other bids came from Paterson Company, Wapakoneta for $12,130.44 and Joe Uhlenhake for $12,300. Architect Fred Freytag was paid $356 for the design work. Seger completed building the toilets and upstairs additions by November, 1948.

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## School Reunion

Students received a good education at Egypt. Teachers as well as students have many fond memories associated with attending school there. Many of those memories were shared during an Egypt school renuion held on April 17, 1994. Former teachers Sister Liliosa, Sister Leonarda and Sister Yvonne attended the celebration. Members of each of the beginning classes from 1918 to 1960 came to reminiscence about their school experiences. Memories included a 1945 Thanksgiving pet parade, the Plattdeutsch which students spoke (often better than English), and their love of the game of baseball. Egypt kids and Sister Yvonne recalled the baseball games played with kids from other schools, including Minster grade school.

The daily routine of students of Egypt School began with catechism class. This was followed by math, English, reading, writing, history, science, geography, etc. Craft classes, school plays, and turns at ringing the school bell were additional highlights to the learning that went on in the class rooms.

At one point the basement, which was used for recreation, was redecorated by the teachers and students to make it more desirable as a lunchroom. A stage was located at the north end of the room from which many plays were staged for parents and family members. With the

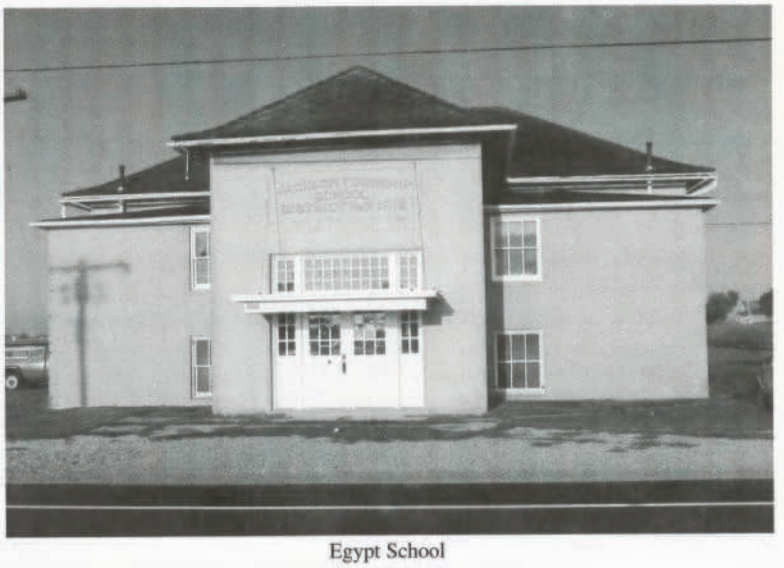
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advent of the school bus in 1937, students no longer had to walk to and from school. There was only one bus, so the district was divided into a north and south route, alternating each week between the early and the late runs. Those who were left behind were put to work sweeping floors, cleaning the blackboards, and once a week, scrubbing the basement floor.

Beginning in the mid to late 1940's, Marc and Irene Prenger ran an ice cream store from the front porch of their home. Every school kid in the possession of pocket money looked forward to going to Prenger's to buy an ice cream treat during lunch hour. In those days an ice cream bar sold for five cents, and a drum stick cost 10 cents. A pint went for 25 cents and a quart sold for 50 cents. Often people would stop by after Sunday Mass to buy ice cream for dessert with Sunday dinner. Few people had freezers in those days, so they would hurry home with their ice cream so it could be eaten before it melted.

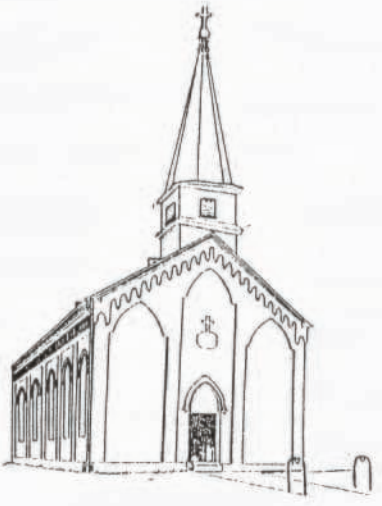
In 1958 Egypt school inherited a sum of $7,115.60, which was a share of the estate of Thomas Schoonover of Lima. He had died leaving the bulk of his estate to all the grade schools of Auglaize and Allen Counties. Egypt's share was spent on reference books and science equipment, lights and stage equipment, recreational facilities, radio, films, and other educational materials.

The last meeting of the Jackson Township #2 School Board took place on September 1, 1959. Board members were - Joe Buening, Lawrence Hoying, Lawrence Winner, Carl Brandewie and Henry Albers. Joe Sommer served as clerk treasurer. An Ohio ruling that schools may not have more than two grades in a classroom, and must have their own high school, hastened the demise of small schools such as Egypt's. The last class to be held at Egypt began in the fall of 1960. In the fall of 1961, all Egypt students went to school at Minster. The building was purchased by St. Joseph's parish in 1963, and is presently used Egypt's Community Center.



Egypt School

All of the 17 teachers who taught at the (new) two-room school in Egypt were women. Three were lay teachers, 14 were nuns. Of the 334 students to pass through its portals, 165 were boys and 169 were girls. The basic education received at the school served as the foundation for those entering all walks of life, including farmers, housewives, doctors, nurses, lawyers, captains of industry, factory laborers, sisters and brothers.



1878 Church

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## *Picnics and Remodeling*

On Monday, April 30, 1920, Egypt's pastor, Father Thomas Meyer celebrated his Silver Jubilee at the church with a Solemn High Mass at 9 a.m., attended by many other priests of the area. He was honored with a reception held throughout the day.

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By 1922, parish officials realized it was becoming necessary to make repairs to the 44 year-old brick church. The floor, which had been laid on stringers over sand, was beginning to rot through in places. Sometimes the heels of women's shoes would get caught in one of the soft spots or holes in the floor. Besides that, the sacristies were nothing more than a hallway, leaving the need for more room, and the parishioners wished for a better bell-tower. After much deliberation on the part of Father Meyer and his trustees, the parishioners were polled and they agreed to raise money for the needed repairs, which were estimated at $33,000.

To help raise funds, St. Joseph's Parish held a festival on the school grounds each summer from 1923 through 1927. Church picnics, always a social event looked forward to in those years, were a good way for the entire community to work together to attain a common goal. People of the surrounding area happily supported Egypt by attending the event in large numbers. With games of chance, food and fun, parishioners were able to raise the money needed to go ahead with the renovation.

Especially popular with picnic goers was the many gallons of mock turtle soup cooked up each year by Cecelia (Mrs. Joe) Prenger. Years later when the parish celebrated its centennial, people remembered this great dish and again requested Cecelia's recipe. However the cooks soon discovered it to be unusable in its orignal form. Instead of ingredients being listed by volume, they were listed by price. In the 25 years that had elapsed since the last large parish affair, prices had changed considerably. To compensate, the recipe was rewritten as closely as could be remembered.

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In the summer of 1926, the inside of St. Joseph's Church was stripped of all its furnishings and remodeling work began in earnest. The first project to be completed was the digging of a basement and pouring the foundation on the west end of the church which was completed in 1926.

The old floor was taken up and parish farmers began the work of excavating the soil for a crawl space under the church. Teams of horses were brought into the church to pull the plows with which to loosen the soil. Other teams hitched to dirt scoops removed the loosened sand and soil and took it out by way of the north end basement ramp. From there it was moved across the road where it was temporarily piled between the house and barn. After construction was completed, the soil was brought back and used for fill.

Because the original plans called for the new interior to have a theater style floor, gently sloping downward toward the altar, the dirt was scooped out on a slant. Theater style floors, which gave those seated toward the back of the church a better view of the altar, were being included in church designs during that era and appeared in other churches in the area (such as St. Francis, Cranberry). However, enough people were concerned that older parishioners would have trouble maneuvering up and down the aisle that the idea was scrapped. A testimony to the original plan still remains, however. From the church basement, one can see

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the ground slanting upward toward the vestibule, even though the church floor is level.

A new foundation was poured inside the original limestone, which is still visible from the outside of the church. On this foundation floor joists were laid, bringing the floor up off the ground. With the basement in place, a coal furnace with a hot water heating system was installed. No longer would the center aisle be clogged with heating stoves during the winter months.

With the remodeling came spacious sacristies, a larger sanctuary, a vestibule at the base of a domed bell tower, a baptistery, a larger landing to the choir loft stairs, a built-in confessional box on the south side of the church, and doors to the outside on the south and north side. Thirty-eight new pews, wich are still in use, were purchased.

No painting could be done at the time of remodeling. Because the church had stood without heat throughout the winter of 1926-27, the inside walls developed dark splotches where frost and moisture had been retained in the plaster. Painting had to be postponed until a later date when the plaster had completely dried out. The parish was able to stay within their remodeling budget. The $500 which was left over was put into a social fund where it was saved toward the purchase of stained glass windows.



**Early St. Joseph Organist and Choir** - (l-r) Men standing - Joseph Meyer, Herman Brandewie, Tony Wehrman and Joseph Dahlinghaus. Ladies seated - Anna Prenger Bergman, Josephine Brandewie Inderrieden, Frilling twin sisters, Anna Poeppelman Olding.

Following the remodeling, a handsome new organ graced the choir loft. For many years, Herman Brandewie and his daughters, Frances and Matilda (Kremer) served as choir director and organists. Besides being musically inclined, Brandewie was also involved in politics. He was an Auglaize County Commissioner from 1917 to 1921. He served two terms as a Democrat in the Ohio House of Representatives as a member of the 89th General Assembly, 1931-1932; and the 90th General Assembly, 1933-1934.

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In September 1926, an agreement was struck between the trustees of St. Joseph's and Henry Osterloh in which Henry leased to the church, a 1x12 rod strip of his land located on the south side of the church for the purpose of a driveway and walk. The terms of the ten-year lease included annual payments of $6 with the parish agreeing to make all the fence changes and maintain the same. "Also (the church) has to put up my old gate again and keep all weeds properly cleaned up," the handwritten document reads. Trustees (Clem Hoying, Ben Bergman, Henry Schmiesing and Harry Osterloh) signed the agreement. In 1939, a 10x198 foot strip of land (roughly the same area) was deeded to the church by the Schmitz family (Henry's daughter, Josephine and her husband, Fred), then owners of the Osterloh farm.

Throughout the remodeling, Mass and parish rites such as First Communion and funerals, were held in the school basement. In February 1927, Cecelia (Mrs. Joe) Prenger's funeral Mass was held in the school basement, even though the funeral director felt it should have been held in Minster.

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Father Meyer insisted that because she had served on the remodeling committee and had worked so diligently for the community, the Mass should be held in Egypt.

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On Sunday, August 14, 1927, St. Joseph parishioners celebrated their 75th anniversary. The August 19th Minster Post headlines announed that one thousand people were served chicken dinners during the celebration, beginning at 6 p.m. The picnic obviously served as a homecoming for former St. Joseph parishioners and people of neighboring communities who wanted a chance to see for themselves the process being made on the church remodeling.

"St. Joseph's diamond jubilee was appropriately celebrated by the large crowd which attended," the headlines said. The article goes on to state that the church, which was organized 75 years previously, "has a special place in the affairs of that rural community which embraces a farmer class of people. Not even a blacksmith shop or gasoline station is present to suggest any form of commercialism."

The newly remodeled church was rededicated on October 9, 1927. Henry Bills and Lauretta Winner were the first couple married in the newly remodeled church. The first funeral was held for John Bergman. Father Meyer continued as pastor until July 21, 1931.

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In the meantime, from 1920 until its repeal in 1933, the 18th amendment to the Constitution of the United States held sway and prohibition was the law of the land, ushering in an era historians refer to as the "roaring twenties". During this time it was illegal to sell, barter, transport, import, export, deliver, furnish or possess any intoxicating liquor. No law of the land was ever more violated. Many years after the repeal of the prohibition, tales of the adventures of bootlegging and booze running would spark the imagination of many a wide-eyed youngster. Secluded barns, culverts and graveyards offered a safe haven from impending raids by the "dry dicks". Nighttime runs to various drop-off and rendezvous points was both hard work and dangerous. But there was a demand for the "value-added product" in the "speakeasies" of large cities such as Chicago. The money made in bootlegging helped more than one farmer pay his bills during economic downturns, provided he wasn't caught at it. Very few ever were.

Before prohibition ended, the Great Depression began, lasting for more than ten years, (1929-30 into the 1940's) and hung like a pall over the land. The Egypt community struggled to weather this economic disaster along with the rest of the nation. No new improvements were made to the church until near the end of that period.

Father Matthew Helmig succeeded Father Meyer from 1931 to 1935. He was followed by Father Leander Linz, 1935 to 1939. It was Linz's second time at Egypt, as he had spent several weeks at St. Joseph's in 1909 as administrator between Father Fritz and Father Meyer.

The church and cemetery were surrounded by a fence in the early years. In the 1930's, this enabled John Osterloh (Henry Osterloh's son who at that time lived on the Osterloh homestead) to run his sheep on the church property during the summer months as a method of keeping the grass and weeds down. According to St. Joseph's Society minutes, Father Linz mowed the cemetery, house and church lawn using a scythe the whole time he was in Egypt (1935 through 1938). He was paid $25 a year for his pains and locals still remark that even though he was no longer a young man he was so good at it the lawn was as "smooth as a carpet" when

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he finished.

An article in the May 7, 1937 *Minster Post* states that "Egypt Road Is Smooth As New Billiard Table". Egypt Road, that stretch of S.R. 364 between S.R. 705 and Steinemann Road (Minster-Fort Recovery Rd.) became a state highway a few years earlier. St. Joseph's Parish granted an easement to the state of Ohio in 1936, which allowed the state to widen the road at that location. Although only graded at the time of the article, plans were being made for its paving. The road was important because it offered a direct route from S.R. 705 to the "outer banks" of Grand Lake.

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Father Ernest Hefele, a native of Bruggen, Bavaria, arrived at Egypt from a previous assignment at St. Sebastian, in February, 1939. The parish took fondly to Father Ernest (as he was most often called) and once again improvements were made to the church building. In September 1939, the long awaited stained glass windows were made and installed by the Associated Art Glass Studios of Columbus, at a cost of $2,792.87. The company is still in business today. That same year, electric chimes used during offertory were installed in the steps of the high altar.

In 1940, the church which had remained unpainted since remodeling, received a beautiful facelift. The plaster was repaired and a light gray color applied to the walls. A flag-stone design was painted around the windows in shades of brown, tan and gray, reminiscent of castle stones. The sanctuary was beautified with paintings of angels, the lamb of God, and a pelican feeding three of her young with her own blood (an ancient symbol of Christ's mystical presence in the Eucharist) against a background of wheat. The electric organ which is still in use in the choir loft was purchased that year and Sister Olympia was in charge of playing it for every High Mass. After her departure, Sister Firmina was the organist. Following the school closing in the spring of 1961, the Sisters no longer played the organ at Egypt. The first parish member to follow in the Sister's organ playing foot-steps was Helen (Bruns) Barhorst, who had been playing for Sunday Lenten services since she was a sixth grader. Helen was full-time organist from 1961 when she graduated from high school until she was married in 1964. She was followed by many talented young ladies of the parish who have all played masterfully for Masses and special services.

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In 1940, the Fred Schmitz family donated another half-acre of land to the cemetery. Throughout the first half of the 1940's all eligible young men of Egypt's St. Joseph's Parish did their part in the effort to win World War II, in the European Theatre of Operations as well as the Pacific. Thankfully all returned home safely and no war casualties are buried at Egypt.

In 1941, a new tabernacle safe (the one still in use on the high altar) was obtained and the St. Jude statue was donated to the church. In 1943, the parish received the adoring angel statues. In 1944, new white, green, purple and red vestments were obtained and the infant Jesus was donated by Herman Kuess for the Christmas Crib. The following year, the censor and boat were received. Even though some of the parishioners felt Father Ernest had gotten too soft with them when he introduced rubberized mats for the kneelers, most were very happy for the reprieve from the hard wooden kneelers that left dents in their knees. Reportedly, Father Ernest told those who objected to the softer approach, they could lay a board over their kneeler if they didn't like the mats. That ended the objections.

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Father Ernest's housekeeper, Margaret Kelbe, was just as popular. Along with her housekeeping duties, Margaret regularly scrubbed and cleaned the church. As sacristan, Margaret trained the Mass servers and by attending all Masses in the sacristy, was able to keep the servers on their toes and the Mass moving smoothly without a hitch. The Sisters also appreciated the treats Father Ernest and Margaret put together for the school children each Christmas. Father Ernest died while serving Egypt. Margaret later married widower John O'Grady, a Dayton native who taught school at Maria Stein.

In November, 1946, St. Joseph's pastoral responsibilities were passed on to Father Henry Friedel, a native of West Park, Ohio. Although Friedel had an engaging personality, parishioners weren't exactly prepared for the tool-time fixer-upper he turned out to be. He owned his own set of tools and used them often and with abandon. School boys looked forward to being called out of class (sometimes to Sister's chagrin) to help Father Friedel wrap waterlines under the church with insulation or to help with placing insulation in the attic of the church, and a myriad of other chores. During his efforts to get the insulation into the attic through a large hole he had sawed into the middle of the church ceiling, a board fell out of the scaffolding, breaking an end out of the back of one of the pews. He repaired it the best he could and to make it less noticeable, he exchanged the broken pew with one on the north side. To fill the hole he'd made in the ceiling, he added a large spot light. This feature was covered up when the suspended ceiling was put up in 1970.

At one point, in order to make more room in the rectory kitchen, Friedel knocked a hole in the outside brick wall and shoved the body of the refrigerator out onto the back porch, leaving just enough of the appliance sticking into the kitchen to open and close the door. He also sawed the corner out of the kitchen table so it would fit snugly around the chimney. Another time he wanted all his guests to be seated at one table for a meal which followed the closing of Forty Hours.

Besides a religious celebration, it was the social event of the year for parish priests. In order to do this, Friedel sawed an arch through a load-bearing brick wall large enough to extend the dining room table and seat his guests into the next room. St. Ann Sodality members who prepared the meal recall it was served at a large oak table. "No water is to touch this table," Friedel announced to the cooks beforehand. To make certain it didn't, he had a thin piece of plywood cut to size and, using very fine nails, nailed it to the table top.

In those days, all the neighboring priests attended the solemn closing of Forty Hours. The church rang to the rafters as their powerful voices sang the Latin phrases of the Litany of the Saints, each answered with Ora Pronobis. A procession of the Blessed Sacrament around the church followed to the strains of Pange Lingua. During the singing of Tantum Ergo, the Blessed Sacrament was incensed, leaving the church filled with its fragrance. The blessing of benediction was then bestowed upon the congregation. Services always ended with "Holy God We Praise Thy Name" as the host was removed from the Monstrance and placed in the tabernacle. Today, some parishes hold Eucharistic Devotions, an abbreviated verson of Forty Hours.

One Lenten season, Father Friedel revamped the altar while it was draped in the purple cloth of penance. On Easter morning, when all the draping had been removed, parishioners were aghast to see that he had removed the top (above the tabernacle) section of the center spire from the main altar. In its place stood the large six-foot tall Sacred

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Heart statue, with outstretched arms, welcoming the faithful to Mass. The statue, donated to the parish by the Bornhorst family, had previously stood in the sanctuary. (It currently stands in the Steinemann Chapel on St. Augustine's Cemetery.) Parishioners still wonder how Friedel, a short stocky man, was able to hoist such a heavy statue to its perch - at least 10 feet off the floor. Needless to say, as soon as Friedel left St. Joseph's, most of his "improvements" were restored to their former condition.

The church roof, which had been repaired during the 1927 remodeling when the two chimneys were removed, was again repaired in the late 1940's. Also during Father Friedel's term, the parish put in the sidewalk to the cemetery and received the present "Way of the Cross" statues which replaced framed pictures of the stations. Two short pews in the back of the church were added when Father Friedel made arrangements for Elmer and Maurice Schmiesing to pick them up from St. Augustine's Church storage shed. They were intended for the use of the Church Wardens who served as ushers and passed the basket for the collection during Mass.

In 1949, Father Friedel celebrated his silver jubilee as a priest. As a part of the celebration, a parish photo was taken which is included in this book.

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Father Martin Rosengarten, a native of Carthagena, arrived at St. Joseph's in September of 1952. That year Wellman Brothers replaced the roof of the church and gold leafed the cross for $3,231. In 1954, a new oil furnace was installed in the rectory for $1,471. In 1959, much needed exterior and interior maintenance work was done to the church, costing a total of $5,394. This included waterproofing the bricks and painting of the interior in shades of dark rose, light rose, gray and ivory. Around this time, rose colored carpeting was laid in the sanctuary and a rose and ivory tile floor put down over the floor in the body of the church.

Disdainful of women's fashion trends, Father Rosengarten informed the females of the parish in a Sunday sermon that he would not serve Communion to anyone who approached the altar in a sleeveless dress or one with the necklines more than two inches from the base of the neck. If they insisted in attempting to receive Our Lord in such a sinful state of dress, he told them, he would have the Mass servers cover them up with the Communion cloth. In those days, Communion was thought to be so sacred that all who received it folded their hands beneath the Communion cloth so that if the host was accidentally dropped and missed the Mass server's paten, it wouldn't accidentally touch their hands.

Father Rosengarten suffered a light stroke in August of 1961 and retired to St. Charles Seminary where he spent his final days.

Father Robert Stock, a native of Saxton, Missouri, arrived in August of 1961 and stayed until his death in 1971. During this time, his brother, Father Frederick Stock, served as pastor of nearby St. Sebastian Parish. Their sister, Dorothy, worked as housekeeper at St. Sebastian and occasionally assisted her brother and his part-time housekeeper, Bertha Bruns of Coldwater, at Egypt. Father Robert Stock always grew a large garden and each year he canned and froze produce from it for his own use.

In 1963, St. Joseph's Parish purchased the Egypt School

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from the Minster Board of Education for $600. Men of the parish began converting the building into a meeting place for parish events. The wall separating the upstairs rooms was removed and the Egypt Baseball Club installed a trophy case on the west wall. A serving door was placed in the north teachers room wall in preparation for a kitchenette which might one day be built there. In the basement a sink, cupboards, stove and refrigerator were installed. The brick and stone walls of the basement were paneled and the ceiling painted. Tables and chairs were purchased. The hall serves as a "home" to the Egypt Community Club which was formed in 1919 to raise funds to benefit the school, such as playground equipment and maintenance needs. In its early years, the club put on plays and held socials (picnics) to earn money. It continues to hold fund raisers at the school, such as the Egypt Shooting Match which started in 1950. Membership eligibility is limited to males who are either living in or were born at Egypt.



Egypt Kid Band

## *The Egypt Kid Band*

This group of young fellows played music for weddings and social occasions in and around Egypt in the early part of the century. Although names of some of the people come to mind, most do not.

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Following Vatican II, the language of the Mass changed from Latin to English and from that time on the priest faced the people while saying Mass. Father Stock met those challenges by converting a table into an altar. The gates of the communion railing were removed around this time, in accordance with the new rulings. However, the communion cloth, while no longer used still remained. In 1966, St. Joseph received a new oak altar and two lecterns. A short while later, the wooden doors were replaced with a set of plate glass doors. The altar, lectern and doors were given courtesy of the Clara and William Prenger estate.

In 1967, a new furnace was installed at the church for $3,155. In 1968, the stained glass windows were repaired at a cost of $1,688; and the present parking lot was purchased from Maurice Heitbrink (present owner of the Osterloh farm) for $1,350.

In 1967 the first Parish Council was formed According to minutes from the January 3rd minutes of the St. Joseph's Society - "The council will consist of the wardens, presidents and vice-presidents of all societies in the parish. They are to meet four times a year for the purpose of getting laymen to continue the work of Jesus Christ." At that same meeting a Cemetery Policy was also put into writing.

One weekday morning in March 1970, Father Stock entered the church to find that during the night, a large chunk of plaster had fallen out of the ceiling midway along the south side of the church (near the confessional). After discussing the matter, parishioners decided to install a suspended acoustical tile ceiling. Men of the parish hung

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the ceiling with a minimum of outside help in the early spring of that year.

On November 8, 1971, Father Stock suffered a heart attack while driving his car. He was taken to the hospital where he died soon afterwards. After his death parishioners became aware of the frugal manner in which he lived his life and were deeply impressed by his saintliness.

With Father Stock's passing the fate of St. Joseph's Parish hung in the balance. The Precious Blood Order was beginning to experience a shortage of priests, and rumors of closing the church began floating around. After all, the school was already closed. Egypt people might just as well find another parish to join.

Father Fred Falce, a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who was stationed at St. Charles Seminary in an administrative position with C.PP.S., stepped in to manage the parish. He suggested the parish do a few necessary remodeling chores to the rectory, such as a better kitchen, and kept the parish running for a year until Father Joseph Hoying was transferred to Egypt. Fifteen years later, on January 17, 1987, Father Falce was murdered in Mexico City, while on a charitable mission.

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St. Patrick native, Father Joseph Hoying, who came to Egypt in July of 1971, had just finished an ambitious remodeling project at St. Henry. He felt his talents were being wasted at Egypt and immediately proceeded to perform a few revamping chores of his own. Besided removing the old shrubs at the entrance of the church and cedar trees from the cemetery, he had new shrubs planted at the church entrance. Hoying suggested a major remodeling project for the parish to consider which included doing away with the white wooden altars and most of the statuary, which he felt was a distraction. Egypt parishioners couldn't bring themselves to do that and his idea was vetoed. He did, however, remove the small votive candle stand, which he felt was a fire hazard, removed the communion rail, and had the plaster "Way of the Cross" statues painted a solid white. Instead of replacing the badly worn Mass servers cassocks and surplices, he did away with them altogether.

In 1974, Father Hoying disbanded the Young Ladies of the Blessed Virgin Mary Sodality, an organization for the single women of the parish since 1904. Likewise, he abolished the Young Men's Caspar Del Bufalo Society which had been organized in 1909. With the treasuries of these two organizations he purchased carpeting for the choir loft at a cost of $352. In place of these organizations, he instituted a Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), which is still in place. The parish finds support from its auxiliary groups, such as St. Ann's Sodality and the St. Joseph's Men's Society.

St. Ann's Sodality, formed September 18, 1883, was originally dedicated to the Sorrowful Mother as the St. Maria's Sodality. Its lengthy constitution (written in German) contains 17 articles. It was amended in 1912 with four more articles, one of which concerned changing its name to St. Ann's Sodality and observing the feast of St. Ann (July 26) by going to Mass in a body. They were to have three officers, chairwoman, treasurer and secretary. Among their many duties, they were to work closely with the pastor with the beautification of the altars, cleaning the church, and observe the first Sunday of the month as their Sodality Sunday when they were to attend the Mass and receive Holy Communion in a body. The custom of

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gathering to recite the rosary for a deceased member is also mentioned.

St. Joseph's Society was formed March 20, 1916. The constitution, also written in German, states they are to maintain the church and cemetery and observe the last Sunday of each month as St. Joseph's Society Sunday when they were to attend Mass and receive communion in a body. It also mentions praying for deceased members.

The Men's Society met annually on the feast of St. Joseph (March 19) and elected three officers. The first officers were: Father Thomas Meyer, president; Herman Brandewie, secretary; Anton Kuether, treasurer. These same officers were re-elected each year for 10 years. Traditionally, the parish priest held the position of president of St. Joseph's Society until 1955 when Fred Grieshop was elected president of St. Joseph's Society. The following year the office of vice-president was added. In 1957, the meetings began occurring around the 1st of January.

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By the time Father Hoying arrived, most of St. Joseph parishioners were accustomed to the changes in the Mass brought about by Vatican II. However, Father felt there was not enough participation in the singing. Week after week he held singing practice before Mass, not quitting until voices sang out strong. He threatened to have the rear pews removed if people didn't sit closer to the front. His perseverance paid off and parishioners do take their singing participation in Mass seriously. He implemented the position of lay Communion distributors and lectors (readers). The role of the church warden was phased out during his tenure and the Parish Council took on a more active role in parish administration.

Even though parish youth no longer attended school at Egypt, through an agreement with the Minster Board of Education, they still attended daily Mass at St. Joseph's until the end of the 1984-85 school year. Route #6 bus driver Larry Prenger, who was also an elementary English teacher, stayed for Mass and afterwards drove the students to school. He was succeeded for a time by elementary math teacher, John Kemper. Students on Leo Finnen's Bus #1 (South Patterson) were also dropped off at Egypt. Later, Kemper felt he needed more class prep time and chose not to stay for Mass. From January 1, 1978 through May 30, 1985 Donna Quinlin drove to Egypt each morning to pick the students up after Mass. Parish members paid for the transportation. Since bus transportation was an "outside the church" project, Willard Dahlinghaus administered the "Bus Fund" from which Quinlin was paid $3.15 per trip.

Several factors caused this arrangement to end, the most important of which was the fact that starting with the 1985-86 school year Minster grade school classes began at 8:15 a.m. instead of 9 a.m. This marked the first school year since 1922 that Egypt school children did not attend daily Mass at St. Joseph's before morning classes.

The religious education of the parish and its youth was always of primary concern to Father Hoying. He held grade school classes each Saturday morning after Mass, alternating so that each group met at least once each month. This was in addition to the instruction the youth received in Minster. The parish continues to hold its own First Communion celebration but from the 1980's on have joined with St. Augustine's Confirmation program. Until the last

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few years of Father Hoying's tenure, high school religion was held at Egypt each Sunday morning following second Mass. He was assisted by parish member C.C.D. teachers, such as Rose Beyke, Mary Ann Kuether, Jeanie Bergman, Margie Kitzmiller and Juanita Brandewie. Numerous women of the parish also participated as teachers in the religious education program at St. Augustine.

Father Hoying lost his battle with throat cancer on October 24, 1989. His sister, Margaret Hoying spent her life looking after her brothers, Father Urban and Father Leo. After Father Leo's death, she came to Egypt to live with Father Joe. She stayed in Egypt until her death on November 6, 1991. She was 91 years old.

* * * * * *

Once again the future of St. Joseph's Church hung in the balance. Thankfully, the priests at Minster offered to take St. Joseph under their pastoral wing. Priests from St. Augustine and St. Charles Seminary have celebrated Sunday Mass for St. Joseph ever since. Minster priests have included Father Larry Wyen, who was instrumental in the smooth transition. Wyen was assisted by Father Rick Nieberding and Father Ken Schnipke. He was succeeded by Father Tom Brenberger and Father John Jadgchew.

* * * * * *

Repairing the plaster and repainting the inside of the church were the first projects undertaken by St. Joseph parishioners following Father Hoying's death. In January 1991, a committee was formed and a color scheme was worked out for the walls. Poeppelman Painting of Fort Loramie applied the off-white finish with gold accents. Jack Griswold of Celina painted the chalice/keys of heaven painting on the sanctuary ceiling. The men of the parish helped with the removal and repair of the broken plaster. Plaster repair and repainting cost the parish under $10,500.

Parish women removed the solid white enamel paint on the Way of the Cross statues. After doing research, and with the help of Betsy Stricker of the former Minster ceramic shop, Creations Unlimited, repainted and restored the statuary to its original condition. The bases were relettered by Nancy Mayo of Greenville. Parish members also repainted the other statues and trimmed the altars in gold. Thankfully a cleaner was found to remove the old wax from the floor tile, restoring them to their original condition. Parish members removed the old varnish from the base-board and vestibule doors and refinished them to coincide with the building of a combination face-to-face confession-al/cry room in the former baptistery. The baptismal font now stands before the St. Joseph altar, in accordance with a church directive.

In 1991, the church received a new roof by N.J. Hoying Construction at a cost of $11,611. Father Ken Schnipke, who grew up working in his dad's construction company, even lent a hand on the roof. Because of moisture problems, the steeple had to be repaired, at a cost of just under $6,000. In 1994, the church got its fourth new furnace since 1927, at a cost of $7,500. This past summer, the parish rectory received a new roof. Following Margaret Hoying's death, St. Joseph's Parish worked to refurbish the rectory. Old wallpaper was stripped off walls, and fresh coats of paint were applied. Since no priest has lived at Egypt since Father Hoying, the parish rented the rectory to two Precious

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Sisters, Pat Gist and Mary Lou Schmersal.

St. Joseph's Church Community continues to work together in every aspect of parish life. The pride we feel in our church is evidenced by the way in which its members participate in church functions, by the way the church and rectory is maintained, and by the support of its committees and programs. We hope our ancestors, on whose shoulders we stand, would be pleased by our efforts.

* * * * * *

*Credits:*

*Many thanks to those who assisted with the preparation of the history of St. Joseph's Parish, Egypt. Foremost among them are Mrs. Rita Hoying and Father David Hoying, C.PP.S., whose great volumes of knowledge gave us insight into events and helped locate difficult to find facts.*

*Thanks to everyone who submitted pictures and data to our committee. You were all a great help in providing a clearer picture of events with which to embellish historical facts.*

*Thanks to Mary Ray for sharing the only picture we have found of the 1878 St. Joseph's Church. It was taken from the front lawn of her great grandmother Elizabeth Raterman's home prior to the 1927 remodeling.*

*Thanks to Donna Osterloh Pohlman for proofing the final manuscript.*

*Thanks to Barbara Albers for printing the maps included with the history.*

*Thanks to Sister Regina Albers for donating historical documents and to Brother Tom Bohman for the loan of historical references.*

*Thanks to Father Joseph Hoying and Steve Heitbrink for their "early on" interest in the history of Egypt and St. Joseph.*

*Historical data was obtained from the archives of St. Charles Seminary; Sister of the Precious Blood, Dayton, courtesy Archivist Sister Noreen Jutte; Sister Cordelia Gast; "History of the Precious Blood in America" by Father Louis Knapke, C.PP.S.; "Life and Achievements of the Reverend Father Francis De Sales Brunner" by Father Dominic B. Gerlach; "Not of Silver and Gold" by the Sisters of the Precious Blood; "The Voice of Praise" by Sister Adelaide Waltz; "St. Joseph's Parish - Egypt, Ohio" by Father John P. Kraus, C.PP.S.; "In Praise of Our Ancestors - A History of the Hoyng-Hoying Family" by Father David Hoying; St. Joseph's Parish Records; Archives of the Archdiocese for the letters of Father Patrick Henneberry to Archbishop Purcell; St. Joseph's Society and St. Ann's Sodality; Documents of record obtained from Auglaize, Mercer and Shelby County Courthouses; The Minster Post; Pilgrim's All; Jackson Twp. #2 School Board Minutes; The history committee - John Beyke, for the countless rolls of film he shot for the history; and researchers, Tony Albers, Mike Albers, Willard Dahlinghaus; and to Barb Osterloh, who compiled and wrote the preceding account.*

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*St. Joseph's stained glass window depicts "Mary's Flight Into Egypt."*

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ALBERS, Anthony & Martha
Kathy



ALBERS, Barbara



ALBERS, Mike & Jill
Stephanie, Jessica, Andrew



ALBERS, Steve & Deb
Dan, Sarah, Beth, Ryan



ALBERS, Thomas & Margaret
Teresa



BERGMAN, Ernie & Lauretta



BERGMAN, Larry & Jeanne



BEYKE, John



BIHN, Ralph & Kathy
Nicole, Mitchell, Jared, Trenton



BORNHORST, Bill & Deb
Katie, Greg, Marie, Julie, David



BRANDEWIE, Gene & Juanita
Jan



BRANDEWIE, Ted & Chris
Amber, Aaron



BRUNS, Margaret



BRUNS, Michael & Mary
Family



DAHLINGHAUS, Chris & Irene
Andy, Janessa, Kelly, Eric



DAHLINGHAUS, David & Pat
Joan

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DAHLINGHAUS, Elizabeth



DAHLINGHAUS, Frank



DAHLINGHAUS, Joe & Betsy; Julie, Theresa, Tony, Katie, Maria, Sara



DAHLINGHAUS, Luke



DAHLINGHAUS, Willard & Eunice
Rebecca



DIRCKSEN, John & Anna Marie



GRISEZ, Tony & Stacy
Kyle



HEITBRINK, Maurice & Carol



HOYING, Agnes



HOYING, Roger & Mary Kay
Ryan, Renee, Roger, Robyn



KAUFFMAN, Brian & Karen
Lauren, Troy



KEMPER, Steve & Kathy
Lynn, Katie, Michael



KITZMILLER, Mike & Marge



KREMER, Chuck & Phyllis
Michelle, Tony, Amy



KUETHER, Bernard & Veronica



KUETHER, George

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KUETHER, John & Mary Ann
Joann



KUETHER, Verona



MERTZ, Thomas & Norma



MEYER, Elsie



MEYER, Harold & Hilda



MUHLENKAMP, Kevin & Patrice
Maria, Natalie, Curtis, Kyle



OSTERLOH, Ivo & Barbara



POEPPELMAN, Clem & Phyllis



PRENGER, Donald J. & Jane P.
Jodie I., Chad A., Keith M., Brad D.



PRENGER, Marcus & Irene



RAY, Mary
Joanne



SCHMIESING, Harvey & Viona



SCHMIESING, Henry



SCHMIESING, Maurice & Jeanette



SCHMIESING, Rolly & Rose
Nikki, Alex, Jonathon, Leah



SCHMIESING, Ronald J.

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Audrey



SOMMER, Hilda



STEINEMANN, Charles & Charlene



STEINEMANN, James & Jane
Michelle, Maria, John



TOBE, Lester & Kathy
Jeff, Sara



WEHRMAN, Albert & Alberta



WEHRMAN, Daniel & Susan
Adam



WEHRMAN, Gene & Marge



WEHRMAN, Ken



WENDELN, Thomas & Roseann
Benjamin, Joshua



WILL, Tim & Carol
Adam, Ryan



‡BEYKE, John & RoseAnne



‡DAHLINGHAUS, Norma



‡DIRCKSEN, Tom & Judy



‡GRIESHOP, Fred



‡OSTERLOH, Ralph & Anna Marie

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‡PRENGER, Cletus & Rose Ann



‡SCHMIESING, Urban & Rita



‡WEHRMAN, Betty



‡ Denotes Submitted Photograph

# SAINT JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH
## Egypt, Ohio
## Photographed July, 1996

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628-4176...**Albers**, Mike & Jill;
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628-2501...**Albers**, Steve & Deb;
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628-2235...**Albers**, Thomas & Margaret
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582-2273...**Bergman**, Ernie
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628-2969...**Bornhorst**, Bill & Deb;
Katie, Gregory, Marie, Julie, David
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628-2148...**Brandewie**, Eugene & Juanita;
Jan
01131 SR 364
Ft. Loramie, OH 45845

628-4448...**Brandewie**, Ted & Chris;
Amber, Aaron
01134 SR 364
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628-2147...**Bruns**, Margaret
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628-3440...**Bruns**, Mike & Mary;
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628-2146...**Dahlinghaus**, Elizabeth
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628-2421...**Dahlinghaus**, Frank
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628-2108...**Dahlinghaus**, Luke
00236 CR 26
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628-2108...**Dahlinghaus**, Norma
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Minster, OH 45865

628-2421...**Dahlinghaus**, Willard & Eunice;
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628-2030...**Grieshop**, Fred
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582-2012...**Grisez**, Tony & Stacy
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628-3204...**Hoying**, Roger & Mary Kay;
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582-2902...**Kauffman**, Brian & Karen;
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628-4075...**Kemper**, Steven & Kathleen;
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582-3354...**Kuether**, Ben & Verona
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582-3354...**Kuether**, George
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582-3284...**Kuether**, John & Mary Ann
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582-3312...**Kuether**, Norma
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582-3312...**Kuether**, Verona
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628-2277...**Meyer**, Harold & Hilda
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628-2568...**Muhlenkamp**, Kevin & Pat;
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628-2507...**Osterloh**, Ivo & Barb
00140 Osterloh Rd.
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628-2598...**Osterloh**, Ralph & Anna Marie
00480 Osterloh Rd.
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628-2407...**Poeppelman**, Clem & Phyllis
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628-2398...**Prenger**, Cletus & Rosann;
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628-4144...**Prenger**, Marcus & Irene
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925-4907...**Schmiesing**, Ron
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925-4907...**Schmiesing**, Urban & Rita
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628-2035...**Sommer**, Hilda
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628-2141...**Steinemann**, Charles & Charlene
03029 Minster-Egypt Rd.
Minster, OH 45865

628-2992...**Steinemann**, Jim & Jane;
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## -T-

628-3688...**Tobe**, Lester & Kathleen;
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582-2805...**Wehrman**, Ken
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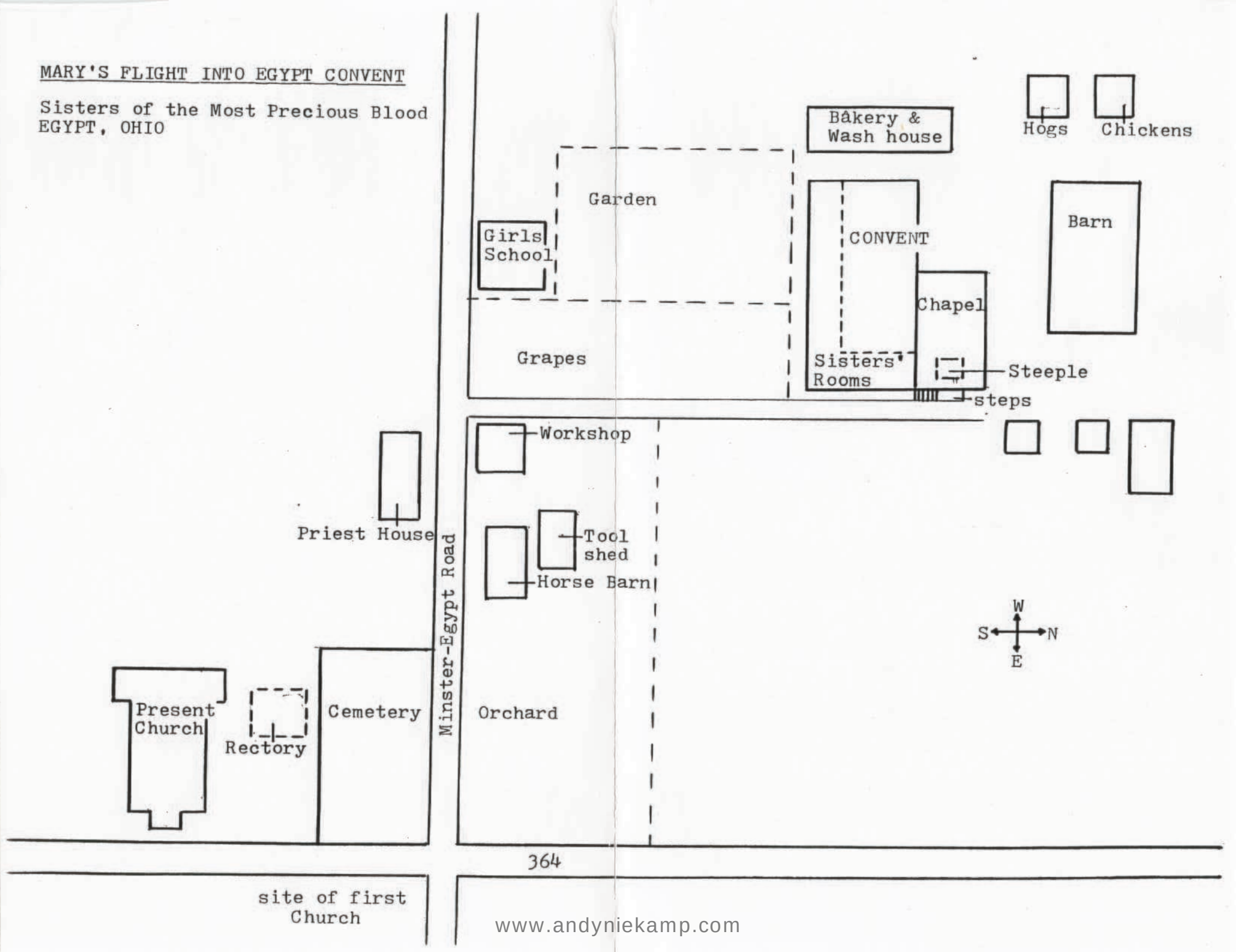
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