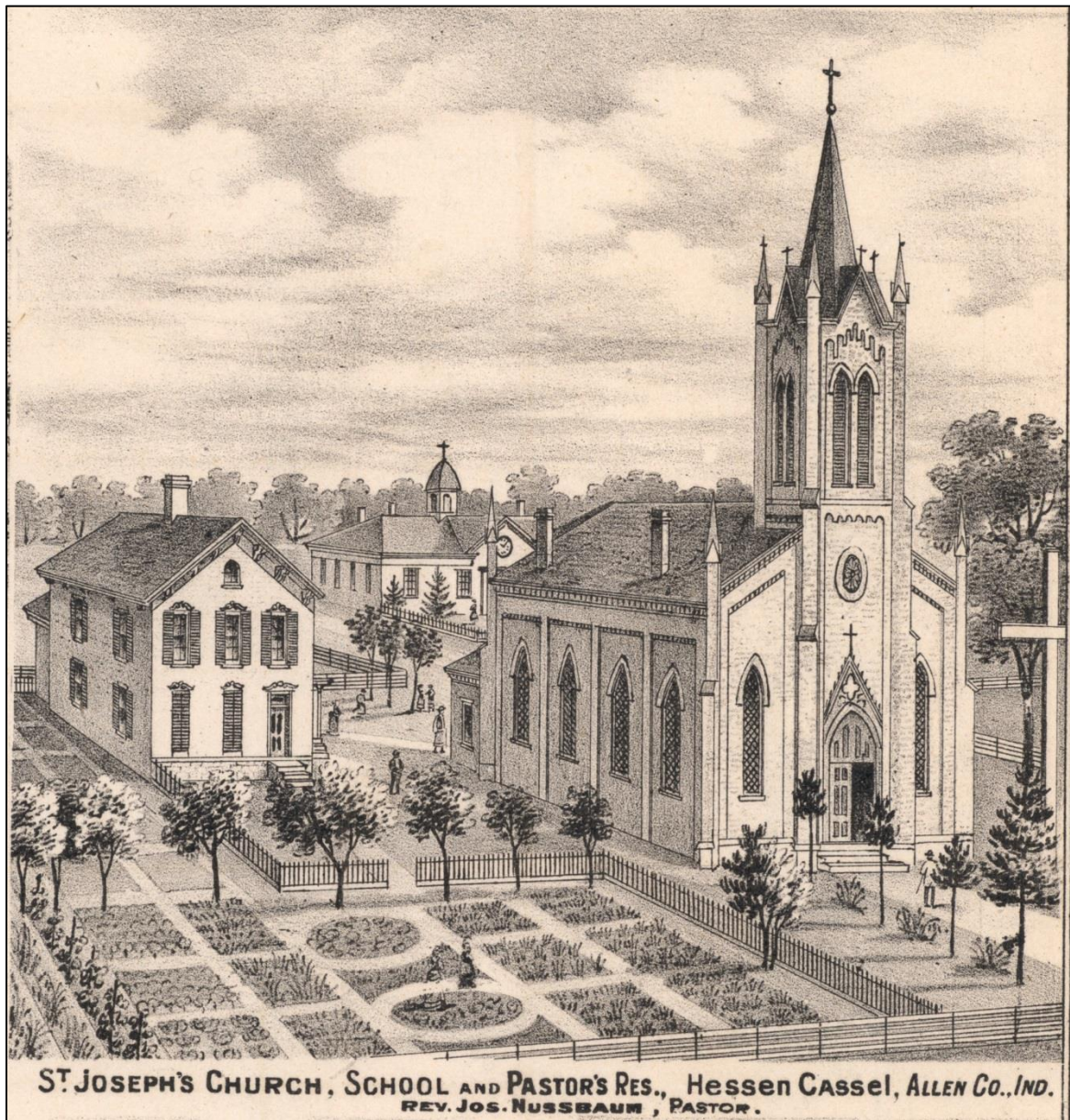


History of the St. Joseph Catholic Church Parish at Hessen Cassel, Indiana



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Introduction

On 29 September 1957, a 100-year anniversary celebration was held for the St. Joseph's Catholic Church at Hessen Cassel, Allen County, Indiana. A commemorative booklet was prepared for the occasion and documented the church's history up to that point.¹ This booklet mentions that a log church was built around 1841 and that a cemetery was affiliated with this log church.

However, the compilers of the church history booklet noted that the actual locations of both the original log church and the first cemetery were no longer known for certain. Thus, within the course of just 100 years, the location (and size) of the first log church and cemetery of the parish on the original one-acre church lot were lost in time. Furthermore, the celebration date of 29 September 1957 was not the 100th birthday of the parish, but actually the 116th anniversary of its founding on 29 September 1841. The 100-year-time point established in the 1957 parish history booklet was based on the fact that the cornerstone of the present brick church was laid in 1857, and not the year the parish was first organized. There has been some confusion over the years concerning the actual date that the parish was formed, which has apparently arisen from errors and discrepancies in published historical sources. The fact is that this small parish was actually the second Catholic parish to be established in Allen County, Indiana, shortly after the founding of the first parish, St. Augustine (now the Cathedral parish), in Fort Wayne.

There exist only a few published historical accounts regarding the founding of the St. Joseph Catholic Church parish at Hessen Cassel, which is located in Marion Township, Allen County, Indiana. For convenience, these accounts are presented below in their entirety and in chronological order of publication. These histories are secondary sources of evidence since they were created well after the events occurred. Thus, they contain some inaccuracies, discrepancies, and, in some cases, contradict each other. The purpose of this book is to present a more complete and accurate account of the establishment of the St. Joseph Catholic Church at Hessen Cassel by including primary sources of evidence which are both directly and indirectly associated with the parish. These records include immigration, land, naturalization, marriage, church (both parish and diocesan), private, Allen county government, newspapers, personal letters, photographs, interviews, and other primary records created at the time the events actually occurred. Also, by merging these independent sources of information with the historical accounts, it may be possible to pinpoint the original sites and sizes of the log church and first cemetery as well as to present a more complete account of the establishment and development of the parish and vicinity. These additional sources of information have been collected over a 30-year period while conducting genealogical research of the founding families and other early families of the parish. This work attempts to bring together all these various sources into a cohesive and more-detailed account of the parish's history.

¹ St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel (Fort Wayne, IN). *The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957.* (Fort Wayne, IN: The Church, 1957). [GC 977.202 F77ST]
<http://smartcat.acpl.lib.in.us/?itemid=|acpl-bibs|ocm13966856>

Chapter 1- Published Historical Accounts of Hessen Cassel Church

1880 History of Allen Co., IN - (Newton)

The earliest published account of the founding of the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Catholic parish is presented in the Allen County history published by Thomas B. Helm in 1880.² This account was a part of the history on Marion Township compiled by L.H. Newton, and it is not known who provided Newton with the information, but the source may have been Fr. John Hueser, the parish pastor at that time. It reads as follows:

“St. Joseph’s Church (Catholic) – In 1841, the members of the Catholic Church living near Hessen-Cassel formed an organization to which they gave the name of St. Joseph’s Congregation, and immediately erected a frame church on the Piqua road. Rev. Joseph Hamion and Rev. Julius Benoit were the first who conducted services in the church. Later, it was served in a pastoral office by Revs. Rudolf and Munschina. Rev. Joseph Mayer, the first resident priest, took charge of the Church in 1858, and remained until 1863. During his pastoral relation with the Church (in 1860), the present handsome edifice was erected, and the old building removed to the rear of the premises. Rev. Mayer was succeeded, in 1863, by Rev. Martin Kink, who remained in charge until 1866, and was then succeeded by Rev. Woeste. In 1872, Father Woeste severed his connection with the congregation, and was succeeded by Rev. Joseph Nussbaum, who continued as Pastor until 1877, and was then succeeded by Rev. J. H. Hueser, the present Pastor. The congregation organized with a membership of twenty-nine families, a number of whom subsequently withdrew to organize St. Aloysius’ congregation, on the Bluffton road. The present membership is sixty families. A parochial school has been conducted in connection with the Church since 1859, and now has a daily attendance of fifty scholars.”

1889 History of Allen Co., IN - (Lang)

Approximately 10 years later, in 1889, a second history of Allen County, IN was published. The settlement of Hessen Cassel was mentioned in the section about the Catholic Church written by Rev. John F. Lang, who was the Chancellor of the Diocese of Fort Wayne at that time.³ The section reads as follow:

² Helm, Thomas B. History of Allen County, Indiana: with illustrations and biographical sketches of some of its prominent men and pioneers: to which is appended maps of its several townships and villages. (Chicago: Kingman Brothers, 1880); see Newton, L. H. “Marion Township – St. Joseph’s Church (Catholic)”, page 159; also map on page 157. [GC 997.201 TH and GC977.274 H36]. <http://archive.org/details/historicalatlasalle00unse>

³ Robertson, Robert S. Valley of the Upper Maumee River, with historical account of Allen County and the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The story of its progress from savagery to civilization. (Madison, WI: Brant & Fuller, 1889); see Lang, Rev. John F. “The Catholic Church in Allen County. - St. Joseph’s Church”, vol. 2, pages 432-433. [GC 977.201 AL5R V.2]. <http://archive.org/details/valleyofuppermau02madi>

“St. Joseph’s Church – As early as 1834, Peter and John Schmidt, Joseph Auth, John Sorg, John and Henry Herber, J. Ziegler and Martin Klug, came with their families from Chur Hessen, Germany, and located upon their present possessions in Marion township. These were the first Catholics in the settlement. Rev. L. Mueller was the first to offer the sacrifice of mass for the settlers in this locality. His temporary chapel was in the house of John Sorg, and he usually visited these people when on his way to preach to the Catholics in Decatur. Rev. J. Benoit succeeded him, and persuaded the few Catholics to erect a little church; they built a neat and roomy log cabin which served as a church for fifteen years or more. When Rev. Mr. Schulze became pastor of Decatur he took charge also of Hesse Cassel and visited the place once a month. Revs. Messrs. Rudolf and Force were also among the attending clergy. Rev. Jacob Mayer became the first resident pastor. He began the present brick church in 1862. At this time there were probably fifty-two families. The church cost a little more than \$5,000. The log chapel then became the pastoral residence. Rev. Joseph Nussbaum was the next pastor. He built a brick residence. His successor was Rev. W. Woeste, who was succeeded by Rev. W. Geers. Rev. J. H. Hueser, D. D., was the next pastor. He built a brick school-house and sisters’ residence, costing \$3,000. In 1880 Rev. Dr. Heuser was succeeded by Rev. J. A. Mark, the present incumbent. Thus the settlement steadily grew from its quiet beginning to a congregation of sixty-three families and 471 souls, possessing beautiful church property without any incumbrance upon it. The congregation is composed of industrious and thrifty farmers and they are a united people. Rev. J. A. Mark is a native of Wuerzburg, Bavaria. He was born April 1st, 1826. He made his college studies with the Benedictine Fathers in Vienna, his theological course at All Hallows college, in Ireland, and was ordained to the priesthood, August 16th, in Nova Scotia by Most Rev. Archbishop Walsh. Father Mark served therefor six years and then joined the diocese of Alton, Ill., where he remained sixteen years. He came to the diocese of Fort Wayne in 1876 and labored in the missions of Attica and Covington. The Rev. Father was appointed pastor of St. Joseph’s church, Hesse Cassel, in 1880.”

1905 History of Allen Co., IN - (Berry)

Around 1905, another Allen County, Indiana history, consisting of 3 volumes, was prepared by Slocum and Robertson.⁴ In volume 2, an entire chapter, written by Graham N. Berry, was devoted to the history of all the Roman Catholic churches in the county. The author, Graham N. Berry (1848-1913), actually resided in Logansport his whole life, and his source for the segment about St. Joseph parish is unknown, but perhaps it was the resident priest at the time, Fr. Benzinger. The segment is present below:

“ST. JOSEPH’S CHURCH, in the village of Hesse Cassell [sic], is one of the old Catholic settlements of Allen county, services having been held at the village in the early '30s by different

⁴ Slocum, Charles E. and Robertson, Robert S. History of the Maumee River Basin. From the Earliest Account to Its Organization into Counties. (Indianapolis: Bowen & Slocum, c1905). Vol. 2, Chapter XX – “Roman Catholic Churches” by Graham N. Berry. St. Joseph’s Church, Hesse Cassell, page 431. [GC 977.201 AL5S V.2] <http://archive.org/details/historyofmaumeersloc>

priests, but it was not until 1835 that the families of the neighborhood were organized into a church, a log house of worship being erected the following year. The first resident priest was Rev. Father Mueller, whose successors for a number of years were as follows: Revs. Benoit, Hamion, Rudolph, Munschiem, Cairus Faller, Schultes, Weutz, Fora, Schneider and Meyer, the last named being in charge when the present temple of worship was erected in 1868. Rev. Martin Kink became pastor after Father Meyer, and was followed by Father Wemhoff and he in turn by Father Nusbaum, who remained until 1879, since which time the church has been ministered to by Fathers Geer, Huesser, Mark, Benziger and others.

The parish consists of about seventy-five families, mostly German, and the church is in a healthy financial condition and a power for good in the community. There is a substantial brick building for school purposes in charge of three Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart, the average attendance being about fifty pupils.”

1907 History of Fort Wayne Catholic Diocese - (Alerding)

In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Diocese of Fort Wayne (established in 1857), Rev. Herman J. Alerding compiled the first detailed history of the diocese.⁵ Per the quotation on the title page, his purpose was to “Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost.” Alerding instructed all the parish pastors at the time to prepare a history of their current parish. He sent them a list of topics and questions to address regarding the information to be included in their parish history. The pastor at Hessen Cassel church at this time was Fr. Benzinger, and it is assumed that he provided the information for the following historical account.

“HESSE CASSEL. ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH. 1851[sic]. In the archives of St. Joseph's Church is found an old book, dated September 29, 1841, in which the Catholics of that time pledged themselves to pay a certain amount for the support of their priest, Rev. Joseph de Mutzig Hamion. Similar lists are found in that book up to 1846. The first priest visiting the Catholics here was, likely, Father Hamion. The first settlers were immigrants from Hesse Cassel, diocese of Fulda.

The church grounds consist of four acres, secured at four different times. These grounds also answer for cemetery purposes. The first church, a log building, was erected in 1851 or 1852, and later on a frame addition was made. The present church begun in 1860, was finished in 1861, by Rev. Jacob Mayer. Its dimensions are 80x42 feet, and will seat 250 persons. It is a plain structure, without any pronounced style of architecture, though the altars, placed in 1892, are Gothic.

⁵ Alerding, Herman J. The Diocese of Fort Wayne. 1857 – September 22 – 1907. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Archer Printing Co., 1907), see “Hesse Cassel, St. Joseph’s Church, 1851”, pages 241-243. [GC 977.2 AL19D] <http://archive.org/details/diocesoffortway01aler>

The present school was built by Rev. J. H. Hueser, D.D., in 1879, a two-story brick building, 32x20 feet, with accommodations for 100 pupils. The cost of this building, including a dwelling for the sisters, was about \$3,690. Until 1870, the school was in charge of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ; since that time two Franciscan Sisters, of Joliet, Illinois, have taught the school, attended by sixty-six pupils. The school is a free school, all the expenses being paid by the St. Joseph's School Society.

The priest's house is a brick building. It was begun at an earlier day, but Rev. Joseph Nussbaum, the first resident pastor at Hesse Cassel, completed it, in 1875. It was Father Nussbaum also who began to keep the parish records, as they should be kept. Four girls of Hesse Cassel have become Sisters.

The following are the priests who have served the Catholics, at Hesse Cassel. The list is prepared from the church records: Rev. Joseph de Mutzig Hamion, as early as 1841; Rev. Julian Benoit; Rev. Joseph Rudolph; Rev. Alphonse Munschina, 1845; Rev. Edward M. Faller, from 1847 till 1851; Rev. B. H. Schultes, from 1851 till 1856; Rev. Joseph Weutz, 1857. The names of Fathers Schultes, Benoit and Faller appear in 1857. Rev. John Force, 1857; Rev. L. Schneider, 1858; Rev. Jacob Mayer, from 1858 till 1863; Rev. Martin Kink, from 1863 to 1866; Rev. William Woeste, from 1866 till 1872; Rev. John Wemhoff, 1868; Rev. Joseph Nussbaum, from 1873 till 1877: first resident pastor; Rev. William Geers, 1877; Rev. J. H. Hueser, D.D., from 1877 till January 1880; Rev. John Mark, from 1880 to 1897; Rev. Maximilian Benzinger, since October 17, 1897.

St. Joseph's has seventy-three families, numbering 386 souls. St. Joseph's School Society, for married men; St. Mary's Altar Society, for married women; St. Aloysius' Society, for single men, and the St. Agnes' Society, for single women, have a total membership of two hundred and twenty. The Confraternities of the Holy Rosary, of the Holy Family, and for the Poor Souls, aggregate one hundred and fifty members. The church property is out of debt.”

1941 History of Fort Wayne Catholic Diocese – (Noll)

In 1941, Bishop John F. Noll updated the diocesan history of Alerding with the addition of a second volume.⁶ There were 190 parishes in the Diocese of Fort Wayne at that time, so only a brief update was provided for each one. The portion for St. Joseph Hesse Cassel reads as follows:

“HESSEN CASSEL. St. Joseph's Church. 1851 [sic]. Just as a French colony settled at Academie and Besancon, more than a century ago, so a German colony, constituted of

⁶ Noll, John F. *The Diocese of Fort Wayne. Volume 2. Fragments of Our Diocesan History*. (Fort Wayne, IN: Diocese, 1941). See “Hesse Cassel. St. Joseph's Church. 1851”, page 194. [282.77 AL2D, V.2] <http://archive.org/details/diocesoeffortway01aler>

immigrants from Hessen in the Diocese of Fulda, Germany, settled eight miles southeast of Fort Wayne in the year 1834.

Rev. L. Mueller, the first resident priest of Fort Wayne, offered Mass in this community in the home of John Sorg. Following him Father Benoit directed the erection of a small church. This was replaced sixteen years later, in 1867 [sic], by the present brick church erected by the Rev. Jacob Mayer, the first resident pastor. Father Mayer was succeeded by Rev. Joseph Nussbaum, who built the rectory. He was succeeded in turn by the Rev. W. Woeste, Rev. John Wemhoff, Rev. W. Geers, Rev. J. H. Hueser, D. D., who erected the school and convent, Rev. J. A. Mark, Rev. M. Benzinger, Rev. F. J. Hasler, Rev. Joachim Baker, and Rev. Charles Seeberger, the present pastor. The school is in charge of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Rev. Charles Seeberger was born in Elkhart, Indiana, on September 13, 1897. He pursued his studies for the priesthood at St. Lawrence College, Mount Calvary, Wisconsin and Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Cincinnati. He was ordained by Bishop Howard on June 6, 1925. After serving as assistant in Sacred Heart parish, Whiting, All Saints', Hammond and St. Joseph's, Mishawaka, he was appointed pastor of St. Ann's Parish, Kewanna, in July, 1931. On July 8, 1939, he was appointed pastor of St. Joseph's, Hessen Cassel.”

1941 History of Allen County Towns – (Bates)

In September 1941, an article about the ghost towns of Allen County, IN was prepared by Roy Bates for the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society.⁷ Included was a brief account of the defunct town of Hessen Cassel and the nearby parish:

“HESSEN CASSEL (1863). The St. Joseph Roman Catholic Parish was organized in 1841 and a church building was erected the same year on the old Piqua Road about 5 miles south of the present limits of the city of Fort Wayne. The church building now in use was erected in 1861 and the school building in 1878. The church property is located on the east side of the highway which is now U.S. Road 27. Opposite the church property a plat was entered on June 6, 1863, containing 33 lots. Two streets were included in the plat known as St. Joseph and George Streets. The plat was located in the southwest quarter of Section 8, Marion Township. No improvements were ever made on the plat; a single residence building stands on the site today [Note: this was the retirement house of Christ and Mary (Hake) Kleber]. Many of the early settlers in the vicinity migrated from Hesse, Germany, for which the proposed town was named.”

1956 History of Allen County Towns – (Glass)

In January 1956, Wendell Glass presented a paper to the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society about the towns of Allen County.⁸ It reads as follows:

⁷ Bates, Roy M. “Paper Towns and Ghost Towns of Allen County”, *Old Fort News* Vol. 6 (no. 3): 3-12, December 1941; see page 9 “Hessen Cassel (1863)”. <http://smartcat.acpl.lib.in.us/?itemid=|acpl-bibs|ocm15560054>

“Root Township, which included Marion and a part of Adams County, was later given its present limits and the name changed to Marion Township. The Piqua State Road was the first road to be surveyed through Marion Township, the only other thoroughfare being Wayne Trace, the route followed by General Wayne’s Army. The Piqua Road, now State Routes 33 and 27, was surveyed in 1830, just a path cut through the forest from Fort Wayne to Willshire, Ohio. It was one of the principal routes leading to Fort Wayne from the south. As early as 1832, there was a grocery store established in a log building south of Hessen Cassel. In 1837, the nine-mile tavern was erected at the site where the present nine-mile grocery and tavern now stand. The Root post office was located here until removed to Middletown and the present building, built in 1850, is all that remains of the little settlement located here. In 1841, St. Joseph’s Catholic Church was organized and located at Hessen Cassel. A town was platted across the road from the church but never developed. A single residence stands on the site today.”

2005 History of Allen Co., IN – (Beatty and Robb)

A very recent two volume history of Fort Wayne and Allen County was published in 2005.^{9,10} The portion in Volume 1 regarding the settlement of Hessen Cassel and the founding of the church was more or less a conglomeration of all the previous sources and carried forward some of the errors. The portion in Volume 2, which was dedicated solely about the parish, provided more details than Volume 1 on the founding of the parish and its development over the years. Information about the recent parish history since the 1957 parish centennial booklet can be found here, along with a current photograph of the church with the 2001 additions. No new information about the log church and the old cemetery was provided.

2007 History of Fort Wayne Catholic Diocese – (White)

In 2007, an updated history of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend was published commemorating the 150th anniversary of the diocese.¹¹ This history only briefly mentions Hessen Cassel as follows:

⁸ Glass, Wendell C. “The Towns of Allen County”, *Old Fort News* Vol. 21: 3 - 11, 1956; see page 5. [GC 977.201 AL5GL] <http://smartcat.acpl.lib.in.us/?itemid=|acpl-bibs|ocm27001000>

⁹ Beatty, John D. (ed.) History of Fort Wayne & Allen County, Indiana, 1700-2005. (Evansville, Ind.: M.T. Pub. Co., c2006), Chapter 44, pages 519-527, “Marion Township & Poe”; see pages 523 and 669. [GC 977.202 F77HISF, V.1] <http://smartcat.acpl.lib.in.us/?itemid=|acpl-bibs|ocm75966245>

¹⁰ Robb, Phyllis. (ed.) History of Fort Wayne & Allen County, Indiana, 1700-2005. (Evansville, Ind.: M.T. Pub. Co., 2006), Volume 2, page 195; “St. Joseph – Hessen Cassel Church” [GC 977.202 F77HISF, V.2]

¹¹ White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ: a History of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend: Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Diocese and Catholic Life in Northern Indiana. (Fort Wayne, Ind. : The Diocese, 2007), see pages 44-47, “Julian Benoit’s Early Years”, pages 62-65, “The Parish Mission”, and Chapter 5, “Towards a New Diocese”, page 69.

“At Hessen Cassel, south of Fort Wayne, priests had visited the German farm families there through the 1840s. Parishioners erected the first log church there, named in honor of St. Joseph, in 1851 [sic].”

Historical Discrepancies

From the above published historical accounts of the founding of the St. Joseph Parish at Hessen Cassel, it is apparent that a number of discrepancies exist between these secondary sources. One of the most notable is the actual year that the parish was established, which is proven to be 1841 based on primary evidence. Newton (1880) lists 1841; Lang (1889) provides no definite founding date; Berry (1905) lists 1835; Alerding (1907) lists 1851, but mentions 1841 in the body of the text; Noll (1941) carries forward Alerding’s “official” date of 1851; Bates (1941) lists 1841, possibly from Newton’s account; Glass (1956) lists 1841, possibly from Newton’s account; and White (2007), again carries forward the diocesan’s “official” date of 1851 from Alerding.

It appears that the 1851 founding date first published in the 1907 diocesan history by Bishop Alerding was a typographical error which was carried forward in the follow-up histories of Noll and White. The 1851 date was a part of the heading for St. Joseph’s parish in Alerding’s history, but Alerding actually mentions afterwards in the text that the parish was organized in 1841. The typographical error is substantiated by the fact that, in the year 1851, no known significant event occurred at the parish – no building construction, land purchase, etc.

The typographical error regarding the date of 1851 (instead of 1841) is still having an effect. A celebration of the 150th anniversary of the parish occurred in 2001 based on the incorrect 1851 date for the founding of the parish. An article about this anniversary, published in *Today’s Catholic*, even comments on the discrepancies between (1) the “official” 1851 date, (2) the church cornerstone dated 1857, and (3) the first log church built in 1841.¹² It is interesting to note how a simple typographical error made over a century ago can impact future events.

Based on all the information to be subsequently presented in this book, the most accurate historical account appears to be that of Newton (1880), which is also the earliest history. Other discrepancies and errors will be described hereafter and rectified based on primary sources.

Another error that has often been carried forward concerns the year that the first German settlers came to the future site of Hessen Cassel, IN. In the 1957 centennial history, it states “About the year 1814, a small group of Germans, left Hessen Cassel – of the Diocese of Fulda – to seek their fortune in the New World.” The State of Indiana did not even exist in 1814, and Fort Wayne was nothing more than a military outpost. There were no German immigrants around Fort

¹² Little, Sharon. “150 Years. St. Joseph, Hessen Cassel. Strong Roots and Building Upon Them”, *Today’s Catholic*, 18 November 2001, pages 13 - 16.

Wayne at this early date. The correct date for their immigration is 1834, which suggests that the incorrectly published date of 1814 was a typographical error.

Another major discrepancy between these historical sources concerns the first resident pastor of Hessen Cassel church. The oldest account (Newton -1880) states that Rev. Jacob Mayer took charge of the parish from 1859 until 1863, and was the first resident priest, which implies that he was residing there during this entire time period. However, the diocesan history by Bishop Alerding (1907) records that Rev. Mayer was the resident pastor at St. Mary's Church in nearby Decatur, IN from July 1858 through September 1862, but also attended to both St. Joseph Church at Hessen Cassel and St. Aloysius Church at Yoder from July 1858 to November 1863. Alerding further states that Fr. Joseph Nussbaum, who served at Hessen Cassel from 1873-1877, was the first resident pastor. Conversely, the updated diocesan history by Bishop Noll credits Fr. Mayer as being the first resident priest at Hessen Cassel. From all the records, it appears that Fr. Mayer served all three parishes from July 1858 through September 1862 while residing at the rectory at St. Mary's parish in Decatur. He then became the resident pastor at Hessen Cassel from September 1862 through November 1863, during which time he also attended to St. Aloysius parish. This corresponds with the approximate time that the brick church at Hessen Cassel was completed (December 1859) and the old log church was moved and set up as the rectory (c. 1860-1862) for Fr. Mayer to reside. The St. Mary's church book (Decatur) shows that Fr. Mayer made entries from July 1858 through September 1862. The Hessen Cassel church book shows that he made entries from October 1858 through November 1863. In December 1863, following a request for a transfer, Fr. Mayer was appointed pastor of St. Peter & Paul's Church in Huntington where he served until August 1868.

There is substantial disagreement also regarding when the construction of the brick church at Hessen Cassel was both started and completed. Newton (1880) states that the church was erected in 1860, while Lang (1889) reported that construction was begun in 1862. Berry (1905) gives the erection date as 1868, while Alerding (1907) reported that the church construction was begun in 1860 and completed in 1861. Noll (1941) and Bates (1941) give the erection date as 1867 and 1861, respectively. Furthermore, the parish centennial booklet states that the church was dedicated by Bishop Luers in 1863, which implies that it was completed in this year, which is not the case. The source for the church dedication date was not provided, and no primary source in the diocesan or county records was found to document this event. [Actually, the year 1863 is when Bishop Luers went to Hessen Cassel to formally install the first nuns at the new convent on 9 August 1863. Perhaps it was the convent and not the church that he consecrated in 1863]. The known facts are that the cornerstone of the church lists the date 1857, so this must be the year when construction was started. A dated cornerstone is primary evidence. Secondly, the diary of Rev. F. X. Weninger states that he conducted a mission at Hessen Cassel in early December 1859 in the recently finished German church. This primary record indicates that the church construction was completed in late 1859 and that the church was in use at this time.

Another discrepancy concerns the actual number of founding members of the parish. Newton (1880), which is the only source to actually provide a number, reported that there were 29 founding families. However, based on the number of signatures in the parish church book for the men establishing the parish in 1841, there were only 20 charter members. Newton's account must be a typographical error.

Chapter 2 - Historical Background of Allen County, IN

In order to put the founding of the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish into historical perspective, some basic background information is necessary. Allen County is located in the northeast portion of the state of Indiana in the Midwest region of the United States of America. At the time of settlement, the geography of the area originally consisted of predominately flat land covered with dense forests with many natural waterways. Located in a temperate climate zone, all four distinct seasons occur. The temperature can vary widely between the summer and winter seasons with highs above 100 degrees F and lows dropping below 0 degrees F. At least 10,000 years before the first Europeans came to settle the area currently comprising Allen County, Indiana, there were nomadic humans who periodically lived here. With the European discovery of America in 1492, these Native Americans were mistakenly called “Indians”, which became the namesake for the subsequent State of Indiana. The first Europeans known to have come into the Allen County area were French explorers and missionaries in the late 1600’s. In 1722, the French established a military post called Fort Miami at the junction of three rivers and the future site of Fort Wayne. This was also the site of the largest Miami Indian settlement called “Kekionga”. French Catholics, mainly fur traders, settled in the area, and some French Jesuit priests would periodically stop and minister to the French Catholics and those Indians who had converted to Catholicism. However, no known church records from this time period exist to document the local history. In 1763, this area came under the control of England when the British defeated the French during the French and Indian War. The British then occupied Fort Miami, also known as Miamitown, in 1760. When the British subsequently lost the Revolutionary War to the Americans several years later, the area came under control of the United States and in 1787 it was organized as the Northwest Territory. In 1800, the Indiana Territory was formed from it, followed by Indiana becoming a State in 1816.

The Three Rivers

The founding of Fort Wayne and subsequent settlement of the surrounding area in the 19th century owes its origin to the three rivers that converge at this point in Northeastern Indiana. The St. Joseph River from the northwest and the St. Mary’s River from the southeast join to form the Maumee River, which then flows northeast through Ohio into Lake Erie (see Figure 1). Furthermore, the start of a 4th river, the Wabash River, was located only a few miles portage from Fort Wayne, which allowed river access to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Thus, the site of Fort Wayne was a strategic location both militarily and commercially since it provided a water route through the Midwest wilderness in the 18th and 19th centuries. The reason that Fort Wayne has two watersheds that flow in opposite directions is because the city is located along the St. Lawrence Continental Divide, which separates the Great Lakes Basin from the Gulf of Mexico. Although this divide is very subtle and the surrounding land is predominately flat, it was enough to earn Fort Wayne the ironic nickname of “Summit City”.

Before Fort Wayne was established, the great Miami Indian nation occupied the area and had a large village, called Kekionga. In October 1794, General “Mad Anthony” Wayne defeated the Miami Indians and erected an American fort, named Fort Wayne, for defense. In 1816, Indiana became a State, and in 1823, the Northeast Indiana area was opened for settlement by the U.S. government. A land office was opened in Fort Wayne in October 1832 to sell the surrounding virgin land to settlers. With the inauguration of the construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal in Fort Wayne in February 1832, Fort Wayne was in the national spotlight as the future gateway to the west, which attracted many German and Irish Catholic immigrants to the area.

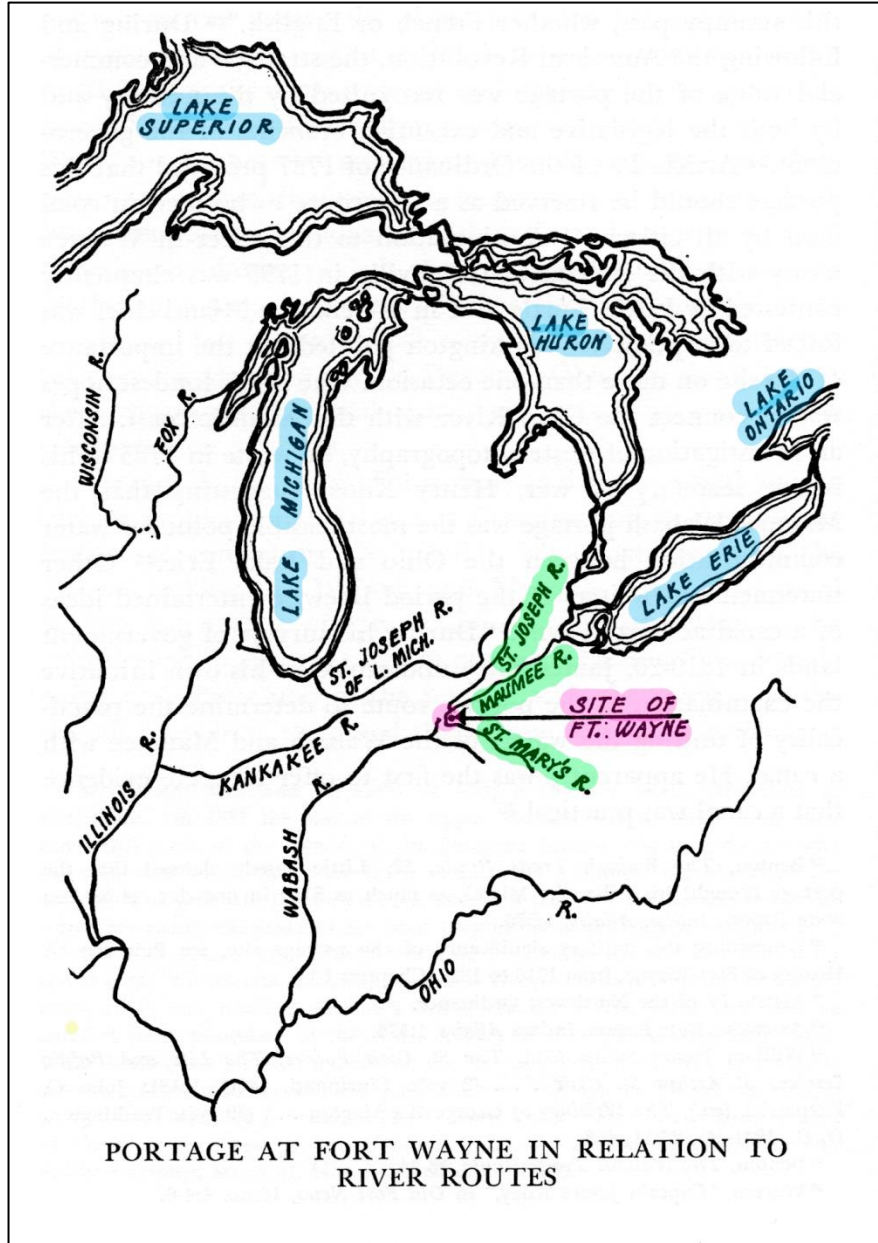


Figure 1 - Fort Wayne, IN and Surrounding Waterways

The American Catholic Church

In 1830, there was not one single Catholic Church or priest in Fort Wayne or the entire Allen County area of Indiana.¹³ Very few Catholics resided in Fort Wayne at this time and they were mostly French-Canadians fur traders and businessmen, and some Indians. The Catholic Church in America was still in its infancy. The first Catholic Diocese, which had jurisdiction over the

¹³ Mather, George R. Frontier Faith: The Story of Pioneer Congregations of Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1820-1860 (Fort Wayne, IN: The Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society, 1992), see “Catholics”, pages 67-97.

entire United States, had only recently been established in Baltimore in 1789. Then in 1808, the Diocese of Bardstown (KY) was formed to cover the new western states to the Mississippi River, which include the future State of Indiana. It wasn't until 6 May 1834 that the Diocese of Vincennes in Terra Haute, IN was created. Under Bishop Simon Brute de Remur, this new diocese encompassed the whole State of Indiana.

On 3 June 1830, the first priest on record to visit the few Catholics in Fort Wayne was Rev. Stephen Theodore Badin, who was also the first priest to be ordained in the United States. Father Baden stopped at Fort Wayne again from January to February 1831 and offered Mass in the residence of Francis Comparet. He was also in Fort Wayne during May to June 1831. The Fort Wayne Cathedral church books have records of the baptisms and marriages that he performed among the residual French descendants here during those time periods. Father Badin again stopped by the next year from February to March 1832 and conducted services at the home of John Bequette. Fr. Badin made further visits to Fort Wayne from Christmas 1832 through January 1833, again in October 1833, and from December 1833 through February 1834.

Periodic visits to this mission settlement of Fort Wayne were also made by several other itinerant priests during these early years. In 1832, Fr. Picot, pastor at Vincennes, and Fr. Boheme made brief stops to attend to the local Catholics. In 1835, mission stops were made by Fr. Simon P. Lalumiere, pastor at Terra Haute, Fr. Mathew Ruff, and Rev. J.F. Terrooren. During the first half of 1836, Fr. John Claudius Francois, stationed at Logansport, attended Fort Wayne. It was not until August 1836 that Fort Wayne received its first permanently appointed pastor, Rev. Louis Mueller, who served almost 4 years until being dismissed on 16 April 1840. Thereafter, Rev. Julian Benoit became the pastor of St. Augustine's church, the first in Allen County. Fr. Benoit also was responsible for attending the missions in the neighboring communities of Lagro, Huntington, Columbia City, Warsaw, Goshen, Avilla, New Haven, Besancon, Hessen Cassel, and Decatur.

The first Catholic church constructed in Fort Wayne and Allen County in 1837 was named St. Augustine. It was a weather-board frame building and the interior remained unfinished for a long time. It was in a very dilapidated condition by the time the Fort Wayne Diocese was established 20 years later in 1857, and was eventually replaced by the present Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. When the Fort Wayne Diocese was officially formed in 1857, it was considered a very financially poor, missionary diocese comprised mostly of Irish and German immigrants with some Indians and people of French descent. In fact, financial and other aid was routinely given by various European religious organizations to help the "missions" in Indiana.

Chapter 3 - Settlement of Marion Township, Allen County, IN

The Peter Schmidt Family (1832)

The first known Catholic family to settle in the area of Marion Township that would later become the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish was that of Peter Schmidt (1773-1848), his second wife Elisabetha (1791-1878), along with their children, Johannes (1804-1877), Anna Katharina (1806-1870), Mary Elisabetha (1813-1904), Katharina (1822-1885), and Josephine (1831-1904).¹⁴ The first three afore-named children were from Peter Schmidt's marriage with his first, unknown wife. The Peter Schmidt family originated from some presently unknown village in the German province of Hessen Cassel and arrived at the port of New York on board the ship Columbus on 13 July 1832.¹⁵ They spent a few months in Detroit, the gateway to the west in those days, before coming to the frontier town of Fort Wayne sometime in the first half of 1833. The first record of their presence in Fort Wayne occurred on 26 November 1833 when Peter Schmidt and his son, Johannes/John, purchased virgin land in Section 8 of Marion township from the United States government.¹⁶ This land was a totally unsettled area at that time, and Marion Township was not even officially organized until a year later in September 1834. John Schmidt's 80 acres of land were located next to the St. Mary's River (providing a source of water), while Peter Schmidt's 40 acres were adjacent to the east with the new Piqua Road passing diagonally through it (providing a source of transportation).

The Piqua Road (1830)

The Piqua Road had just been cut through the forest wilderness in 1830 to provide road access south from Fort Wayne to Decatur and southeast to Piqua, Ohio. Peter Schmidt's selection of land in 1833 resulted in the eventual location of the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish. A partial 1876 map of Allen County, IN showing the location of the town of Fort Wayne relative to the Hessen Cassel settlement in Section 8 of Marion Township is shown in Figure 2.¹⁷ The new Piqua State Road (in pink) is shown linking Hessen Cassel with Fort Wayne. The Old Piqua Road (now Wayne Trace) is also shown passing through Adams Township and eastern Marion

¹⁴ Herber, Clara. The Smith Family: A Genealogy of the Smith Family from About Year 1830 to Present Day. (Fort Wayne, IN: private publication, 1989). Available at the Allen County Public Library, GC 929.2 SM5HE

¹⁵ "Passenger Manifest of the Ship Columbus", 16 July 1832; in Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York 1820-1846, National Archives Microcopy M 237, Roll 17, Manifest 494.

¹⁶ Indiana Land Records, Fort Wayne District. Microfilm roll 1-A, Township 29 Range 13 East, pages 251-255. Peter Smith bought NW¼ SE¼ Sec. 8 T29R13E (40 acres) on 26 November 1833; John Smith bought N½ SW¼ Section 8 T29N R13E (80 acres) on 26 November 1833.

¹⁷ Andreas, A. T. (Alfred Theodore). Maps of Indiana Counties in 1876 : together with the plat of Indianapolis and a sampling of illustrations. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1968). GC977.2 B29IA [R1337]

Township. This was an old Indian trail that General Anthony Wayne took when he came to defeat the Miami Indians and establish Fort Wayne in 1794. The location of the brick church at Hessen Cassel is shown along with the platted town of Hessen Cassel (1863) located on the west side the road from the church. Above the cross on the church is the name of the pastor, Rev. J. Neusbaum [sic]. The Indian reservations (Hunt's, La Fountain, Beaubien, and Richardville Reserves) are also shown on the opposite (west) side of the river from Hessen Cassel.

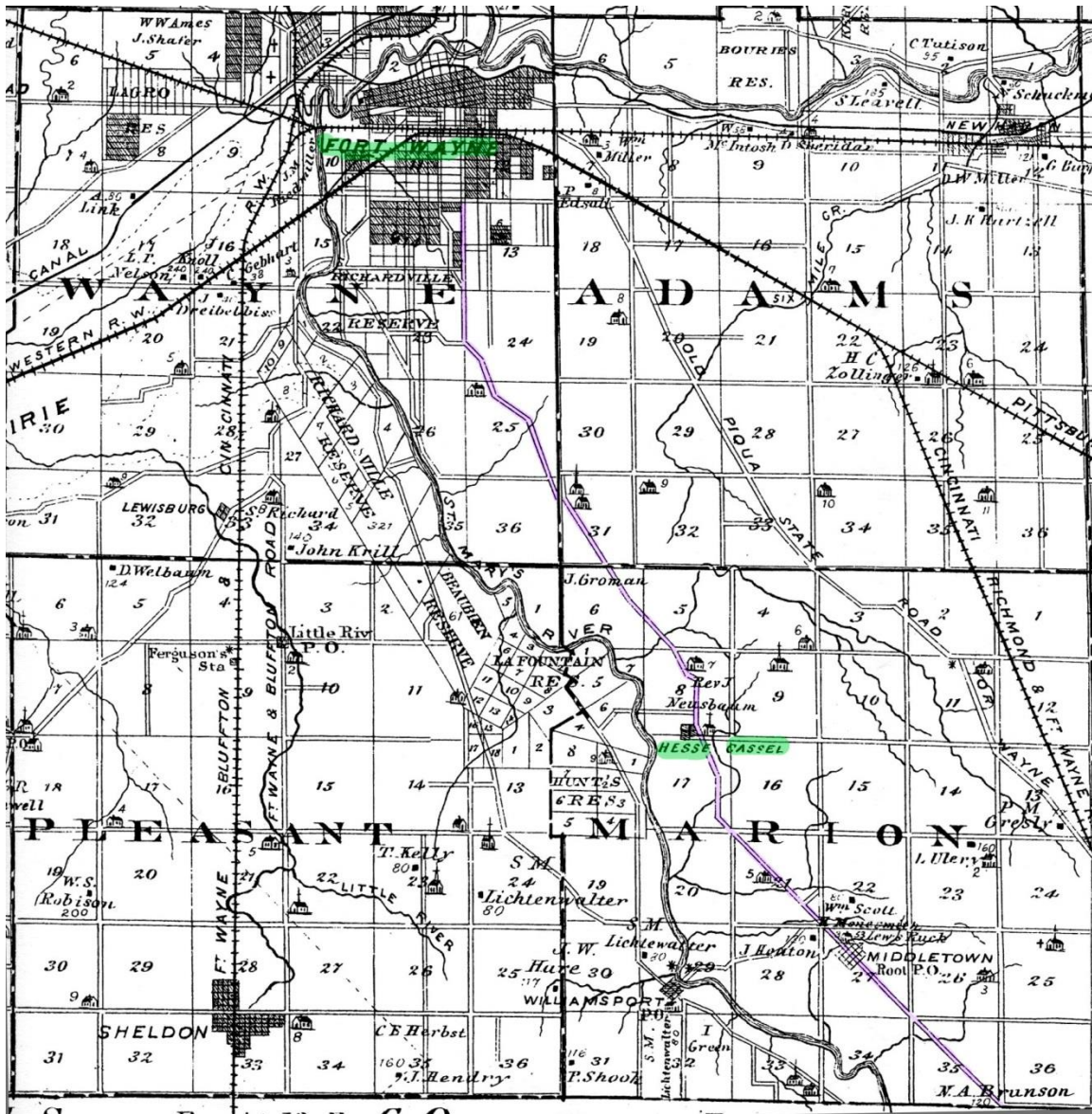


Figure 2 - 1876 Map of Fort Wayne, IN Relative to Hessen Cassel (located in Section 8, Marion Township).

The Old Fort

According to oral tradition, the Schmidt family stayed in the original old Fort Wayne stockade a few weeks until they had cleared some of their land and built a log house in the wilderness for shelter.¹⁸ The old fort had been used by the U.S. government Indian agency from 1819 until 1828, when it was abandoned.¹⁹ In 1833, the stockade of the fort, enclosing 2 or 3 acres and a number of hewn log houses, was still standing. So it makes sense that, with no other accommodations available in Fort Wayne, the Schmidt family (and other early immigrants) temporarily stayed at the abandoned old fort premises until they made other living arrangements. A sketch of the last old fort is shown in Figure 3.

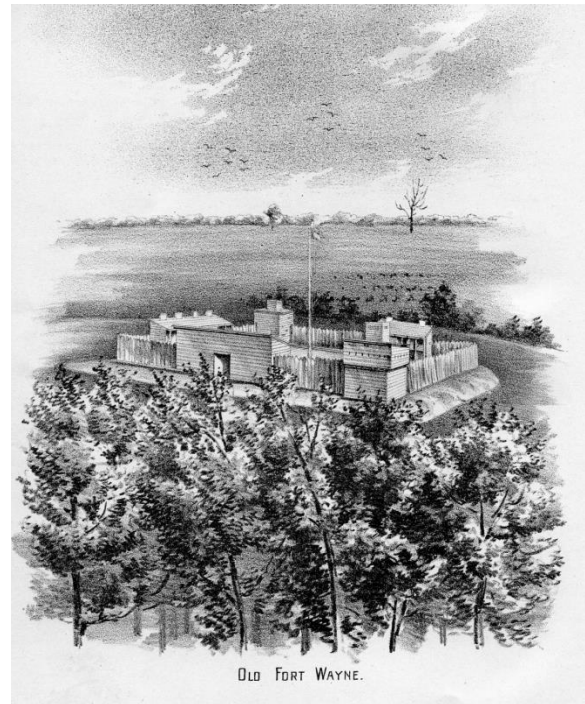


Figure 3

The First Priest (1830)

At this time in 1833, there was not one single Catholic Church in Fort Wayne or the entire Allen County area. Furthermore, there were no Catholic priests in the immediate area. The only priest that came to Fort Wayne in these early days was the missionary, Rev. Stephen Theodore Badin, who was born in France, but became the first priest ordained in the United States. Fr. Badin would make periodic stops in Fort Wayne to attend to the few Catholic residents, who were mostly of French-Canadian descent from the fur trading days. In fact, Fr. Badin (Figure 4) was the first Catholic priest on record to actually come to Fort Wayne, on 3 June 1830. Thereafter, Fr. Badin would make mission stops a couple of times each

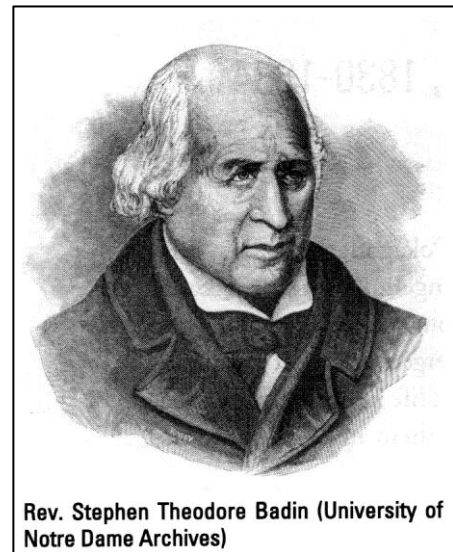


Figure 4

¹⁸ Herber, Clara (Smith). The History of "Hollander Pete" and His Descendents as Told by Clement H. Smith (Fort Wayne, IN: private publication, November 1955). Included in The Smith Family by Clara Herber. GC 929.2 SM5HE

¹⁹ Poinsette, Charles R. Fort Wayne During the Canal Era 1825-1855 (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1969), pages 2-3.

year to perform baptisms, marriages, bless the civil marriages of Catholics married at the Court House due to the absence of a priest, and offer Mass. He visited Fort Wayne in October 1833 and from December 1833 through February 1834. He passed by again in June and September 1834. It is not known if the Peter Schmidt family or the other early German Catholics were ever served by Fr. Badin, but it is likely that their paths never crossed since they lived in the wilderness and rarely traveled into Fort Wayne. All the church records for Fr. Badin in Fort Wayne from 1830-1834 are written in French and pertain only to the French Catholics in town. During their first few years living in the Allen County wilderness several miles outside of Fort Wayne, the Schmidt family probably was unable to attend Mass in Fort Wayne or have the presence of a priest for baptisms, marriages, and deaths. For example, no record of the marriage of Johannes Schmidt (1804-1877) and Martha Elisabeth Weisheit (1817-1897), which occurred in April 1834, was found in Fr. Baden's records. The Smith family tradition conveys that John and Martha eloped because their parents were initially against them getting marriage. Although Martha Weisheit was Lutheran while John Schmidt was Catholic, religion was not the prime cause of the objection, especially since both families were very good friends and neighbors. In fact, the Weisheit family came over on the same ship with the Schmidt family and purchased 80 acres of land directly north of Johannes Schmidt's farm. Actually, both sets of parents were opposed to the marriage because Martha was only 16 years old at the time, while John was 13 years older than Martha. John was probably ready to start a family, but there were very few young women available in the wilderness in 1834. Since there was also no Catholic priest or Lutheran minister available in the area, the couple eloped and obtained a civil marriage in Fort Wayne based on the marriage license found for them.²⁰

The Hessen Cassel Immigration (1834)

Although the Schmidt family was the sole German Catholic family in the wilderness of Marion Township in 1833, they were soon to have plenty of company from their old homeland. In July 1833, two young bachelors, Johannes Sorg (1813-1856) and Martin Klug (1808-1872), from the Fulda diocese in the principality of Hessen Cassel, Germany arrived at New York City. They immediately came to Fort Wayne in 1833 as scouts in search of a new homeland for many of their relatives and friends back in Germany. These two young German immigrants either knew or made contact with the Schmidt family in Allen County, because they both subsequently purchased 40-acre parcels of land in the same section 8 of Marion Township during June and July of 1834.²¹ Then on 18 June 1834, a mass migration of German families and friends from

²⁰ Marriage Record, Allen County, Indiana, August 8, 1824 – December 1, 1834. (Photocopy of original records: Allen County Public Library, 1978); Volume 1, page 106. GC977.201 AL5PEIA

²¹ Indiana Land Records, Fort Wayne District. Microfilm roll 1-A, Township 29 Range 13 East, pages 251-255. Martin Klug bought SW¼ NE¼ Sec. 8 T29R13E (40 acres) on 17 June 1834; John Sorg bought SE¼ NE¼ Section 8 T29N R13E (40 acres) on 26 July 1834.

the Hessen Cassel district of Germany arrived at New York harbor on board the ship Favorite.²² They came directly to Fort Wayne, and by late July 1834 many of them bought much of the surrounding virgin government land in the vicinity of the Peter and John Schmidt farms, thus establishing a cluster of farms owned by people of similar heritage and religious background. These new 1834 German Catholic immigrants included the families of Johann Adam Sorg (c.1775–1845), Johann Heinrich Herber (1790-1867), Johann Gerhard Herber (1793-1867), Kaspar Krack (1807-1865), Heinrich Boes, Joseph Auth (1807-1900), Johann Melchior Lauer (1807-1846), Christoph Klingenberger (1808-1888), and Johannes Ziegler (1801-1881). An account of their immigration and settlement in Hessen Cassel, Indiana has been published (in German).²³ A map showing the location and names of the people who were the first to purchase the land around Hessen Cassel, IN in Marion Township is shown in Figure 5.²⁴ The image of a house with the name Hessen Cassel (in pink) shows where the defunct town of Hessen Cassel was originally platted, not the location of the church. The church site was located northeast of this point on the Peter Schmidt/Smith land and on the east side of the Piqua Road. This map also shows the Piqua Road, the St. Mary's River, and the Hunt's Indian reservation (sections 7 and 18) in relation to Hessen Cassel.

During the next 5 years, from 1834 to 1840, more German Catholics arrived from Hessen Cassel, Germany, and purchased farms in the Marion township area. They basically established a German colony within Indiana that was similar to the life and culture which they valued back in their former villages. Two excellent books discussing the culture, customs, and life-styles which these German immigrants brought with them to America are A Social History of Hesse²⁵ and German Villages in Crisis.²⁶ Above all else, these early German Catholics at Hessen Cassel valued their religious faith. It was the core value in their life, which is the reason they went to such great effort and sacrifice to establish a Catholic parish in the middle of the Indiana wilderness.

²² "Passenger Manifest of the Bremen Bark Favorite", 18 June 1834; in Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York 1820-1846, National Archives Microcopy M 237, Roll 23, Manifest 444.

²³ Kleber, Carl J and Ginsberg, Elizabeth A: Bergwinkel-Auswanderer in Fort Wayne/Indiana/USA. *Bergwinkel-Bote* 48:48-61, 1997.

²⁴ Harter, Stuart. Original Land Entries of Allen County, Indiana. (Churubusco, IN: Stuart Harter, c.1981) GC977.201 AL5HAS

²⁵ Heinemeier, Dan C. A Social History of Hesse. Roman Times to 1900 (Arlington, VA; Heinemeier Publications, 2002).

²⁶ Theibault, John C. German Villages in Crisis. Rural Life in Hesse-Kassel and the Thirty Years' War, 1580-1720 (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1995)

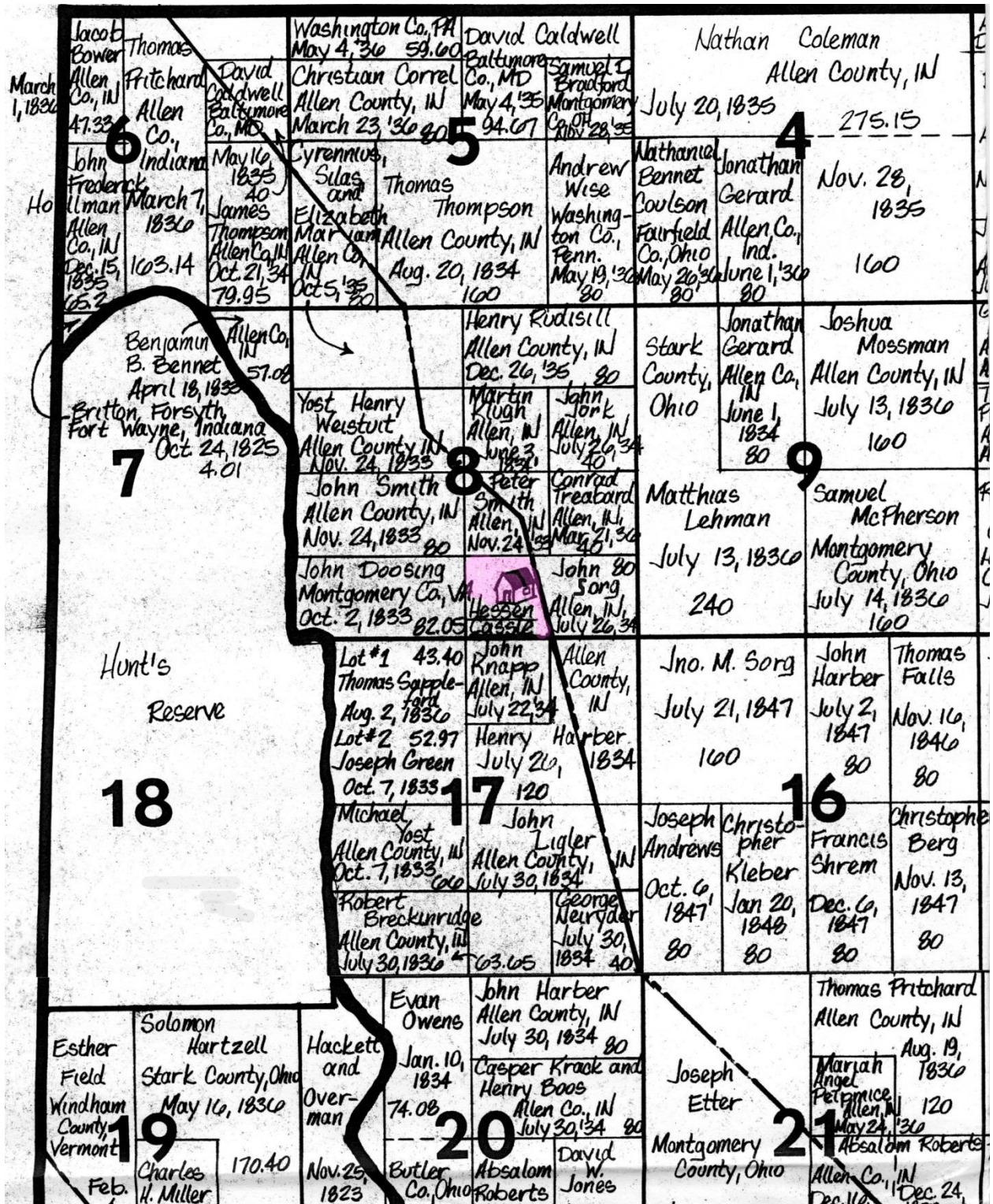


Figure 5 - First Land Owners Around Hessen Cassel, IN

The Missionary Priests

During their first two years in Marion Township, i.e. 1834-1836, these German Catholic families were isolated and without much, if any, contact, with the non-German-speaking missionary priests that stopped by Fort Wayne 2 or 3 times each year. The only recorded instance (Cathedral church records) was the baptism for the daughter of Johannes and Catharina (Hüber) Ziegler. On 1 December 1835, Rev. James Ferdinand Tervooren, a Prussian priest from the Diocese of Cincinnati, baptized Maria, daughter of “Johann Zieger and Catharina Hyber”, who was born the previous month on 3 November 1835. It is not known if the Hessen Cassel Catholics ever attended Mass offered by these early missionary priests, who typically conducted worship services in the homes of the established Fort Wayne Catholics of French descent.

In 1836, Fort Wayne was under the Diocese of Vincennes in Knox County, IN. The Bishop, Simon Brute de Remur (Figure 6), was aware of the need of a German-speaking priest to serve Fort Wayne’s increasing population of German Catholics. In August 1836, he sent Rev. Louis Müller to become the first priest to be permanently appointed pastor of Fort Wayne. However, there was still no Catholic church in Fort Wayne at this time, and Fr. Müller arranged to have the first church, named St. Augustine, erected in 1837. In addition to the Catholics residing in Fort Wayne, Fr. Müller would make trips on horseback and visit the various known clusters of Catholics in the area as well as the small towns surrounding Fort Wayne. Such locations without a church were called “stations”, where the priest offered Mass and the sacraments in private homes.²⁷ A rural site that had both an actual church building and was regularly visited by a priest was called a “mission”. Fr. Müller would periodically stop by this farming settlement (“station”) of German Catholics in Marion Township while on his way to attend to the needs of the Catholics in Decatur. The first Mass in the area was supposedly offered around 1835 using a large tree stump as the altar. Thereafter, from about 1836 to 1840, Fr. Müller (and later Fr. Benoit and Fr. Hamion, from 1840-1841), would hold Mass in the homes of Johann Adam Sorg (c.1775–1845), Johannes Schmidt/Smith, and Sebastian Klüber/Kleber, (who took over the Peter Schmidt farm). From 1837 to 1840, Fr. Müller recorded a number of baptisms and

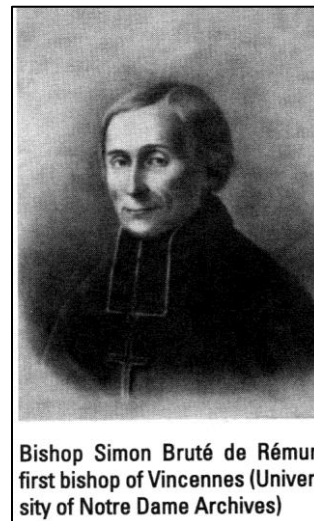


Figure 6

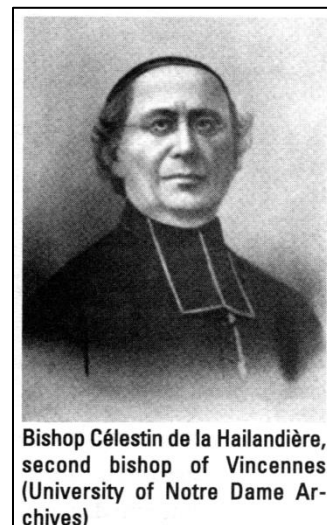


Figure 7

²⁷ Alerding, Herman J. *The Diocese of Fort Wayne. 1857 – September 22 – 1907.* (Fort Wayne, IN: The Archer Printing Co., 1907), page 6. [GC 977.2 AL19D] <http://archive.org/details/diocesoffortway01aler>

marriages for these Hessen Cassel settlers in the church book at St. Augustine. It is assumed that these events actually took place inside the church, which means that the early Hessen Cassel Catholics also travelled to the church in Fort Wayne on special occasions.

Unfortunately, the rigors and hardships of being a missionary priest took its toll on Fr. Müller and he began to drink heavily. He often was negligent in his duties, and was eventually relieved of his position by Bishop Celestine de la Hailandiere (Figure 7) in April 1840, who thereupon appointed Fr. Julian Benoit, a missionary priest from France, as the new priest at Fort Wayne.²⁸ Upon his arrival in Fort Wayne on 16 April 1840, Fr. Benoit found a crudely built frame church, 35 feet by 65 feet, with rough board benches for the pews. This description of St. Augustine, the first Catholic church in Allen County, IN, can give us some indication of the subsequent log church at Hessen Cassel. With no rectory, Fr. Benoit first stayed in the home of Francis Comparet before renting a small house. To assist Fr. Benoit with the German Catholics in Fort Wayne and surrounding area, Bishop Hailandiere also assigned a German-speaking Alsatian priest, Fr. Joseph Hamion, in September 1840.

²⁸ White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ : a History of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend : Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Diocese and Catholic Life in Northern Indiana. (Fort Wayne, Ind. : The Diocese, 2007), see pages 41-47.

Chapter 4 - Founding of St. Joseph Catholic Church at Hessen Cassel

From their headquarters at St. Augustine church in Fort Wayne, Fr. Benoit (Figure 8) and Fr. Hamion served the cluster of German Catholic farm families at the Hessen Cassel “station” starting in 1840. These two priests encouraged the settlers to form a congregation and build a church (thereby establishing a “mission parish”). Thus, on 29 September 1841, the feast of St. Michael, at least 20 families in the area organized themselves into a parish and pledged to support the German-speaking missionary priest, Fr. Hamion.^{29,30} This special day of commitment was not chosen by random, but rather was a part of their German heritage. Traditionally, the feast of St. Michael the Archangel (called “Michaelmas” in Germany) was the date set by the churches and monasteries in Germany (who owned the land) for the farmers to pay their taxes.³¹ This date fell after the harvest, when the profits and resulting tax could be most accurately assessed. Thus, it was appropriate for these German Catholics to make their pledge to establish and financially support a church at this time of the year. They had undoubtedly planned this in advance with the priest, Fr. Hamion.



Figure 8

Although one historical account (Newton, 1880) states that a total of 29 families first organized the parish, this number doesn't seem to be accurate. The actual first page of the St. Joseph parish church book, written in German, only lists the names of 20 charter members who signed the book pledging to form and support the parish. This discrepancy is probably a typographical error in the Newton's historical account. A second explanation may be that, in the original handwritten text used to prepare the typed copy by the editor, the number 20 may have been misread as 29. Sometimes a script “0” may look like a script “9”. A third explanation may have been that the number 29 resulted from the date the parish was organized – 29 September.

²⁹ Church Records of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, St. Joseph Parish, Hessen Cassel, Allen Co., IN; Microfilm Roll No. 14; Item 5 – Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths 1841-1873; Item 6 – Confirmations, First Communions 1899-1947; Item 7 – Internments 1873-1947; Item 8 – Baptisms 1873-1947; and Item 9 – Marriages 1873-1947. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1989); available at the Allen County (IN) Public Library, Genealogy Department Microtext Collection.

³⁰ Kleber, Carl J. (compiler and translator). St. Joseph Catholic Church Hessen Cassel, Marion Township, Allen County, Indiana. Church Book No. 1, Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths 1841-1873. (Fort Wayne, IN: Allen County Public Library, 1990), see page 38 for organization of parish in 1841.

³¹ Heinemeier, Dan C. A Social History of Hesse. Roman Times to 1900 (Arlington, VA; Heinemeier Publications, 2002) page 105.

The Charter Members (1841)

The 20 names of the founding members for the Hessen Cassel parish appearing on the first (oldest) page of the parish church book in the order of entry are as follows:

- 1. Johannes Schmidt, a.k.a. John Smith – (1804-1877)**
- 2. Peter Sorg – (1812-1883)**
- 3. Johannes Herber– (1793-1867)**
- 4. Georg Sorg – (1807-1879)**
- 5. Johann Melcher Sorg, a.k.a. Michael Sorg – (1809-1890)**
- 6. Martin Klug – (1804-1872)**
- 7. Joseph Auth – (1807-1900)**
- 8. Johann Melchor Lauer– (1807-1846)**
- 9. Christoph Klingenberger– (1808-1871)**
- 10. Sebastian Klüber, a.k.a. Kleber – (1813-1879)**
- 11. Henrich Sak, a.k.a. Sack – (1803-1899)**
- 12. Johannes Sorg – (1813-1856)**
- 13. Kasper Krack– (1807-1865)**
- 14. Heinrich Herber – (1790-1867)**
- 15. Johannes Ziegler– (1801-1881)**
- 16. Martin Bagus – (1806-1887)**
- 17. Mattias Lahrman, a.k.a. Lehrman – (1814-?)**
- 18. Franz Münch, a.k.a. Minnich/Minnick – (1795-1877)**
- 19. Johann Hake – (1806-1887)**
- 20. Gundrum Hofman– (1808-1886)**

The above-named 20 men are also assuredly the same individuals, who perhaps with a few others, then cleared the land and built the original log church.

A photo of this first page establishing the parish is shown in Figure 9. It is the earliest entry in the first Hessen Cassel parish church book and is torn and soiled. The right edge of the page is missing, while the bottom of the page is dark and faded from mildew and/or age. Compared to all the other pages in the first church book, it is in poor condition. Perhaps continual handling and contact with numerous fingers over the years resulted in the deterioration. It was originally the first page of the church book, but this book was rebound and the first page is now located in the middle of the book along with the other early records for the parish.

Die im unteren folgenden das Katholische Pfarramt zu
 St. Joseph 1842 von Michael 1841 zu geben
 diesen zu gewissen fest mit seinem Namen zu
 und und das Buch das Pfand der unterzeichneten
 hiesige ist zum alle falls das alle unvollständig
 einschreibt bezahlt werden soll

Namen			
Johannes Schmitt	- 2	and 3 Sol.	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	- 1	and 1 50	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
Wendelmeyer	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	2 Sol.	
John Yory	-	1 50	(cont. in Wood)
Johannes Schmitt	-	1 Sol.	(in Wood)
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	
Johannes Schmitt	-	-	
John Yory	-	-	

Figure 9 - First Page of St. Joseph Catholic Church Book, dated 29 Sept. 1841

This page contains the record of the founding of St. Joseph Catholic Church at Hessen Cassel on 29 September 1841. At the top of the page, written in very legible old German script by some unknown person (not Rev. Benoit or Rev. Hamion), is the monetary pledge made by the parishioners forming the new congregation. The entry then contains the actual German signatures of the heads of these 20 charter families and lists the amounts they pledged to support the new parish. The last signature at the bottom is not decipherable and may not even be a signature. Also some of the pledge amounts were located on the missing right-hand portion of the page. In general, the founders pledged to give from 2 to 5 dollars, which was paid off piecemeal and sometimes in the form of fire wood, oats, corn, hay, straw or parish service. A transcription of the German writing on the first page and subsequent English translation are as follows:

German Transcription

Für die unterhaltung des Katholischen Priestern H. Hamion [part missing?]
für das Jahr 1842 von Micheli 1841 so jeder sich unsern [part missing?]
Kirchen zu gehörigen, sich mit seinem Namens zu Unterzei[missing]
und nach verlauf des Jahres die unterzeichente Sume [part is missing]
hierbei ist zum vorbehalt das alle quarthal der eide Ge[missing]
unterschriefft bezahlt werden soll.

Nomen	U Plg U La	
Johannes Schmitt	2 aus 3 Dol.	[part is missing]
Peter Sorg		[part is missing]
Johannes Herber	1.50 4	[part is missing]
Gorg Sorg	1.50	[part is missing]
Johann Melcher Sorg		[part is missing]
Martin Klug		malher [part is missing]
Josepf Auth	brough oats 2 tallers	[part is missing]
Johann Melchor Lauer	10 50 cents in Wood	[part is missing]
Christopf Klingenger	1 Dollar in Wood	4.00 [part missing]
Sebastian Klüber	Paid in total	4.--
Henrich Sak	(Paid in oats.), 70 cents again(?)	4. --rest a fe.. 1 Dol.
Johannes Sorg	Halz 2 (donne deux Dollars au?)	4.00
Kaspar Krack		2.00
Heinrich Herber		3.00
Johannes Ziegler		2 [part missing]
Martin Bagus		3 [part missing]
Mattias Lahrmann		(68¢) 2 [part missing]
Franz Münch		Paid 4 [part missing]
Johann Hake	paid	3 [part missing]
Gundrum Hofman		[part missing]
Jandram H. Vor [?]	Franz Münch	[part missing]

German Translation

Translation of the above German entry is as follows. In brackets are provided assumed words in order to compensate for the missing text and tie the wording together.

**"For the support of the Catholic Priest Mr. Hamion ...
for the year 1842 from Michaelmas (Feast of St. Michael, 29 Sept) 1841 everyone
forming our [new] church, with his name [signed below?]
and during the course of the year the underwritten sum [which?]
is hereby held in reserve should be paid for quarterly by oath [and?]
signature."**

Name
(See above)

Amounts Pledged and Paid[?]
(See above)

Chapter 5 – The Parish Families

Early Parish Families (1841-1851)

Besides the 20 founding families mentioned previously, lists of the early families belonging to and financially supporting the Hessen Cassel parish from 1841 through 1851 are found in the first church book.³² These membership lists have been transcribed, translated and typed.³³ A summary of the names of the heads of the households and the years are summarized below.

<u>29 September 1841</u>	<u>26 November 1842</u>	<u>26 November 1843</u>	<u>1 January 1845</u>
Johannes Schmitt	[Joha]nnes Herber	Johannes Herber	Gorg Sorg
Peter Sorg	[Heinric]h Sack	Johannes Shmitt	Johan Melcher Sorg
Johannes Herber	[Johannes] Sorg	F. Münk (Münch)	Charles Muldoon and Brothers
Gorg Sorg	[Johann] Melcher Sorg	J. Melchior Sorg	Johannes Sorg
Johann Melcher Sorg	[Georg] Sorg	J. George Sorg	Martin Klug
Martin Klug	[F. Mün]ch	Johannes Sorg	Martin Bagus
Josepf Auth	[Josepf Au]th	Peter Sorg	Johannes Schmidt
Johann Melchor Lauer	[Sebastian] Klüber	Johannes Hoké (Hake)	Gundrum Hofmann
Christopf Klingenberger	[Christopf] Berg	Christophorus Berg	Sebastian Klüber
Sebastian Klüber	[J. Melcher] Lauer	Gondrum Hoffmann	Melchor Lauer
Henrich Sak	[Jo]annes Schmidt	Kaspar Krak	Thb. Mulvey
Johannes Sorg	Martin Bagus	Johannes Ziegler	Joseph Grün
Kaspar Krack	Gundram Hofmann	Johannes Trentmann	Franz Münch
Heinrich Herber	Johannes Zigler	Bernard Trentmann	Bernard Trentman
Johannes Zigler	Kaspar Krack	Christophorus Kliengenberger	Henrich Sak
Martin Bagus	Martin Klug	Joseph Grün	Johannes Zigler
Mattias Lahrmann	Peter Sorg	Henry Herber	Johannes Herber
Franz Münch		Sebastian Klüber	Johann Hake
Johann Hake		Martin Klug	Christopf Berg
Gundrum Hofman		Martin Bagus	Johan Trentman
		Joseph Auth	Martin Herber
		Melchior Lauer	Kaspar Krack
		George Bauer	
		Henry Sak	
		Charles Maldoon	
		Henry Maldoon	
		Bernard Maldoon	
		Hugh Maldoon	
		Patrick Hätt (Hart)	

³² Church Records of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana. St. Joseph Parish, Hessen Cassel, Allen Co., IN; Microfilm Roll No. 14; Item 5 – Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths 1841-1873 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1989); available at the Allen County (IN) Public Library, Genealogy Department Microtext Collection.

³³ Kleber, Carl J. St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Catholic Church : Marion Township, Allen County, Indiana : Church book no. 1, baptisms, marriages, deaths, 1841-1873 (Fort Wayne, Ind. : C.J. Kleber, 1990); see pages 38 – 47.

1 January 1846

Gorg Sorg
Joseph Grün
Johann Melcher Sorg
Johannes Sorg
Johannes Schmitt
Martin Klug
Peter Sorg
Henrich Sak
Franz Münch
Johannes Zigler
Adalbert Languth
Charles Muldoon

11 September 1848

Sebastian Klüber
John Herber
Melchior Sorg
John Sorg
George Sorg
Andrew Fuchs
Henry Sack
Guntrum Hoffmann
Francis Munch
Joseph Andres
Joseph Aut
Joseph Tabor
Martin Backus
John Schmidt
John Hacke
Christopher Berg
Francis Schramm
Henry Muldoon
Charles Muldoon
John Ziegler
Christopher Clingenberger
Peter Sorg
Martin Glug
Joseph Gruin
Bernard Muldoon
Patrick Hard
Adam Schrimp
Henry Herber
Albert Langert
Caspar Crack
Henry William Beckmann
William Adelsperger
Henry Herber

11 September 1849

Johann Melcher Sorg
Sebastian Klüber
Gorg Sorg
Henrich Sak
Johannes Herber
Johannes Schmitt
Johannes Lang
Franz Münch
Johann Hake
Joseph Topper
Anton Fuchs
Joseph Auth
Johann Trentman
Gund Hofman
Martin Bagus
Christopf Berg
Johannes Zigler
Joseph Andres
Johannes Becker
Johannes Herber Juniur
Martin Klug
Adelsberger
Josepf Grün
Martin Lauer
Christopf Klingenberger
Heinrich Beckman
Peter Sorg Sorg [sic]
Albert Langgut
Adam Schrimpf
Christopf Klüber
Kaspar Krack
Franz Schram
E. Farrel
Henry Muldoon
B. Muldoon
Ch. Muldoon
P. Hard
N. Zubber
Weis

11 September 1850-51

H. Beckmann
F. Munch
M. Bargas
Johann Schmidt
D. Sorg
Guntrum Hoffmann
Sebastian Klüber
Jos. Auth
Nicolaus Zuber
Joseph Grün
Joseph Klingenberger
Joseph Andres
W. Adelsperger
Jos. Uphold
Silvester Tabor
J. Tabor
H. Sack
Johann Herber, father
Hieronimus Weis
Mr. Farrel
Johann Hacke (Hake)
Guntrum Hoffmann
Christoph Berg
Peter Sorg
Adam Schremp
Mr. Fuchs
Georg Sorg
John Trentmann
Johannes Ziegler
John Herber, son
Johannes Bäcker
Jacob Münch
Alois Hauser
Charles Muldoon
Henry Muldoon
Patrick Hard (Hart)
Patrick Muldoon
Bernard Muldoon
Mr. Langut
Melchior Sorg
Mr. Vetter
Martin Klug
Frank Schramm

There may have been a few other families belonging to the parish that may not have been able to monetarily support the church, and thus their names are not on the lists. However, from the above lists it is possible to estimate the number of families in the parish over the first ten years of its existence (1841-1851). Also, some of the historical accounts provided the number of parishioners. Coupling these sources together, the following list is obtained

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Families Attending the Parish</u>	<u>Source</u>
1841	20 Families	Church book
1842	17 Families	Church book
1843	29 Families	Church book
1845	25 Families	Church book
1846	12 Families	Church book
1848	33 Families	Church book
1849	39 Families	Church book
1850	43 Families	Church book
1862	~ 52 Families	Lang
1880	60 Families	Newton
1889	63 Families (471 souls)	Lang
1905	~ 75 Families	Berry
1907	73 Families (386 souls)	Alerding
1936	233 Registered members	Parish Financial Statement
1953	134 Families (534 members)	Journal-Gazette newspaper
1957	168 Families/Households	Centennial Booklet
1999	417 Families	Today's Catholic
2001	415 Families (1,352 members)	Today's Catholic
2002	390 Families/Households	Robb

After the main immigration of German Catholics from the diocese of Fulda, Germany, in 1834, more native Germans from this area trickled into Fort Wayne and the Hessen Cassel vicinity over the ensuing years following in the footsteps of their earlier relatives and friends. This effect is called “chain migration”. Other sporadic German Catholic families, originating from various parts of Germany, also settled at Hessen Cassel, but the Fulda diocese immigrants were the majority. Besides this early first wave of German immigrants, other nationalities would also later arrive and become sustaining members of the Hessen Cassel parish.

The First Irish Parishioners (1843)

Although the Hessen Cassel parish was initially comprised solely of German immigrants, some Irish Catholic families, notably the four Muldoon brothers and their in-laws (i.e. the Patrick Hart and Maurice Cody families), were also early members of the parish. The Muldoon brothers (Charles, Henry, Bernard and Hugh) and their brother-in-law, John Hart, signed pledges in the first church book to support the fledgling parish on 26 November 1843, just two years after it

was established. Despite their cultural differences, these Irish people appear to have been readily accepted by the German Catholic parishioners, probably due to their common religious faith.

The First Swiss Parishioners (1849)

A Swiss connection was established at Hessen Cassel parish with the arrival of the Zuber and Wyss families from Gunsberg, Switzerland. On 11 September 1849, both Nicholas Zuber (1811-1865) and Heronymus Wyss (1810-1878) signed their pledge of financial support for the parish. Migration of other family and friends from Switzerland to Hessen Cassel subsequently occurred, notably the Francis J. (1826-1911) and Anna Mary (Zuber) Wyss family, who arrived in 1852, and the Pantaleon Zuber (1818-1890) family. Another early Swiss immigrant that was a parishioner at Hessen Cassel was Joseph Fuchs/Fox (1819-1881), who arrived at New York in May 1848. He is listed as Mr. Fuchs in the parish pledge list of 1850-51 and married Josephine Schmidt (1831-1904), the daughter of renowned parishioners, Peter & Elizabeth Schmidt, on 17 August 1852. Joseph Fuchs may have originated from the same area as the Zuber & Wyss families. These Swiss families, whose native language was German, blended easily into the parish community. It is unknown why these early Swiss immigrants selected Hessen Cassel for their new home, but their descendants are still strongly associated with the parish to this day.

Catholic Families from Lycoming Co., PA (c. 1857-1875)

After the brick church was completed in 1859, there occurred a major migration of Catholics from Lycoming and Berks counties in Pennsylvania that impacted the Hessen Cassel community and added many new families to the parish roster with the now familiar surnames of Renninger, Gibson, Bower (Bauer), Bubb, Schuhler, Bird, Steinbacher, Ottenweller, and others. Mention of this migration was found in the Marion Township Minute Book³⁴ and reads as follows:

“Forty families from this section of Pennsylvania [i.e. Lycoming County] came out and settled here [i.e. Marion Township, Allen Co., IN] and westward. They went from said County to Buffalo, New York, took the boat and crossed Lake Erie to Toledo. They then came down the Erie Canal to Fort Wayne and then through the acquaintance of Michael Orr the following went out to Hesse Castle: Gibsons, Schuhlers, Birds, Steinackers, Renningers, etc.”

This migration was again referred to on page 397 of the Marion Township Minute Book. “Michael Orr came from Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, as did the Gibsons, Schulers, Steinbackers, Renningers, Bubbs and Birds. These people seemed to have followed Michael Orr.”

The actual date that this mass migration of Catholics from Pennsylvania took place is not provided in the reference, but the information indicates that perhaps Michael Orr was the front-

³⁴ Somers, Harley. Marion Township Minute Book : Containing Histories & Scrapbook Pages, Allen County, Indiana. (Allen County, IN: author compilation/publication, Sandra Houlihan, record custodian, c.1945), see “The Immigration of Catholics From Lycoming County, PA.”, page 35; also pages 221, 397, and 398.

runner that promoted the migration. However, historical records show that the Francis and Mary A. (Riffle) Gibson family from Lycoming Co. PA, was living in Marion Township in 1857 before Michael Orr resided there in 1859. In fact, on page 221 of the aforesaid Marion Township Minute Book it is recorded: “Francis Gibson First Gibson Settler. December 11, 1857 Francis and Mary Gibson came to the Township [i.e. Marion Township, Allen Co., IN] from Lycoming County, PA. They bought much land in Section 20 from John Connett and Absolm Roberts.” The Francis Gibson family was actually here even before that date, because the baptism of their son, Charles, born 5 July 1857, is recorded in the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel church book 5 months earlier. This indicates that Francis Gibson came to Marion Township probably during the first half of 1857 when the brick church at Hessen Cassel was still under construction. The Allen Co., IN deed records show that on 11 December 1857 Francis and Mary Gibson bought for \$1,400 the 2.51 acres of ground on which was situated the tavern/road house that was eventually known as the “Nine Mile House” or “Nine Mile Place” [named as such because it was a stage-stop/road house located on the Piqua Road a distance of exactly 9 miles from the Court House in Fort Wayne (i.e. the center of town).] The story of the Nine Mile House is provided on page 398 of the Marion Township Minute Book and states “Francis Gibson ran the tavern until May 23, 1859 when he transferred it to Michael Orr, unmarried, a native of Lycoming County, Pennsylvania...” Later that year, Michael Orr married Catherine Gibson, one the daughters of Francis and Mary Gibson.

Regardless of which man was the first settler, Francis Gibson and Michael Orr are probably the two men mainly responsible for the subsequent migration of many Catholic families from Lycoming County, PA to the Hessen Cassel area over the ensuing years from about 1860 to 1870. The Renninger family history book³⁵ notes that “Frederick and Anna Renninger, along with several other families from Bastress Immaculate Conception Church [i.e. the Catholic parish in Bastress, Lycoming Co. PA], in 1869 moved west to Allen County, Indiana. Most of them settled just southeast of Fort Wayne, Indiana in the farm community of Hessen Cassel, Indiana.” This may have been a part of the mass migration that apparently occurred over a period of years. Based on the St. Joseph Church records, there were other Lycoming Co. PA migrants in the parish before 1869. The John and Barbara (Steinbacher) Schuhler family was here by May 1865; David Gibson family by 12 April 1866; Peter and Mary (Gibson) Bauer/Bowers family by March 1867; and the Levi and Theresa (Gibson) Bird family by September 1867. The Bubb and Ottenweller families probably came with the Renninger family in 1869.

The main reason that the above-mentioned Pennsylvania families probably left Lycoming Co. and re-settled in Hessen Cassel, IN was to find better farmland in conjunction with a strong Catholic community. The land in Bastress Township of Lycoming Co., where they lived, was

³⁵ Reniger, Jerilyn Jacklin (compiler) Friederich Renninger/Reninger in the United States and Canada. (Lansing? Mich. : J.J. Reniger], 1984.), see page 587. [GC 929.2 R2938RA]

described in 1876 as follows: “The surface is mountainous and poorly adapted to farming. The Germans, being eminently an agricultural people, have accomplished wonders here, where the native American would have become disheartened and abandoned the country.”³⁶

List of Parishioners (1936, 1957)

Although a comprehensive list of supporting parishioners was made during the first 10 years of the parish’s history (1841-1851), the St. Joseph church records do not have family registers or rosters of parishioners for subsequent years. A rare financial statement for St. Joseph’s Church exists for the year 1936.³⁷ It lists each name of the 233 registered parishioners along with the annual pew rent that they paid, as well as the Sunday, monthly, and fuel collections that they donated for the 1936 year. The main family surnames at this time in history were Beckman, Berg, Bobay, Boyle, Bubb, Fox, Frederick, Gibson, Hake, Hartman, Herber, Hoffman, Howard, Kleber, Kleinrichert, Klingenberger, Loew, Maldeney, Minnick, Muldoon, Ottenweller, Rauner, Rorick, Schiffli, Smith/Schmidt, Sorg, Trabel, Wyss, and Zuber. The annual pew rent was apparently \$10 for families and \$5 for single individuals. Because this interesting 8-page document lists the parishioners by name and summarizes the parish’s financial expenses and income, it is presented in its entirety below. The receipts and expenses on the last page provide a snapshot of the activities of the parish. Special collections were held throughout year for various charitable causes. Also, the amount of revenue generated from the annual pew rent (\$2230.00), Sunday collection (\$500.79), monthly collection (\$401.60), fuel collection (\$291.30), annual parish picnic (\$1150.30), school play (\$72.90), parish society dues (\$387.30), etc. are itemized. Likewise, the annual expenses paid for the pastor’s allowance (\$1500.00), teachers’ salaries (\$865.00), organist & choir (\$61.20), janitor (\$180.00), etc. are shown in the opposite column.

Besides the above-mentioned comprehensive listing of parishioners, the Hessen Cassel parish’s 1957 centennial history booklet summarizes the names and addresses of the households (families and individuals) belonging to the parish at that time. This list is shown below as well, following the 1936 roster.

³⁶ Stewart, D. J. History of Lycoming County. (Philadelphia, D. J. Stewart, 1876) [GC 974.801 L98H]

³⁷ Financial Statement. St. Joseph’s Church, Hessen Cassel, Indiana. Rev. J. Baker, Pastor. Clem Wyss, Frank Beckman, & Oscar Hoffman, Committee. 1936. (Original in the possession of John Schreiber, parishioner, 2015)

Frank M. Berg

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

St. Joseph's Church
Hessen Cassel, Indiana

Rev. J. Baker
Pastor

**** 1936 ****

Committee

CLEM WYSS FRANK BECKMAN
OSCAR HOFFMAN

	Arrears Paid.	Pew Rent 1936	Sun. Coll.	Month. Coll.	Fuel Coll.
Ake, Mrs. Cecilia	5.00		1.00	.50	
Beckman, Frank		10.00	1.75	1.10	2.00
Beckman, Mrs. Wilh.		10.00	2.00	1.25	1.00
Beckman, Jos. S.		10.00	2.60	1.25	3.00
Beckman, Mrs. Alma M.		10.00	1.70	1.15	
Beckman, Mrs. Margaret		10.00	2.30	2.75	1.00
Beckman, Rudolph		10.00	3.55	2.75	2.00
Beckman, Philip		10.00			
Beckman, Regina		10.00	1.40	.50	1.00
Beckman, William		10.00	1.60	2.70	5.00
Beckman, Mrs. Margaret		10.00	2.80	2.10	1.00
Beckman, Aloysius		10.00	2.00	1.20	
Beckman, Ludwina		10.00	1.60	1.45	
Berg, Anthony		10.00	1.90	1.05	5.00
Berg, Mrs. Loretta		10.00	1.80	1.05	1.00
Berg, Ruth	5.00				
Berg, Clem		10.00	1.60	.50	5.00
Berg, Mrs. Agnes		10.00	1.55	.50	1.00
Berg, Frank		10.00	2.80	1.65	5.00
Berg, Mrs. Carrie		10.00	1.95	1.35	1.00
Berg, Joseph	5.00				
Berg, Dolores		10.00	1.75	2.25	1.00
Berg, William		10.00			
Berg, Rose Mary		10.00	1.60	.75	1.00
Bobay, Arthur		10.00	3.45	5.50	5.00
Bobay, Mrs. Esther		10.00	3.45	3.50	1.00
Bobay, George	7.50		2.10	.70	1.00
Bobay, Mrs. Augusta	7.50		1.20	.65	
Bobay, Lawrence		10.00	1.30	.50	1.00
Bobay, Mrs. Armella		10.00	1.20	.45	1.00
Bobay, Paul		10.00	2.45	1.95	5.00
Bobay, Mrs. Clara		10.00	1.35	1.35	1.00
Boyle, Edward B.	5.00			1.00	
Boyle, Mrs. Mary		5.00	1.45	2.00	1.00
Boyle, Eugene					
Boyle, Robert Pat.	5.00	7.50	1.90	1.10	2.00
Boyle, Mrs. Bertha	5.00	7.50	1.80	.60	1.00
Bubb, Andrew	5.00	10.00	1.75	1.70	1.00
Bubb, Mrs. Agnes	5.00	10.00	1.70	1.35	1.00
Bubb, Jennings	10.00		4.70	2.35	1.00
Bubb, Kermit . . . . .			.45	.30	

	Arrears Paid	Pew Rent 1936	Sun. Coll.	Month. Coll.	Fuel Coll.
Bubb, Aurelia	5.00	10.00	.95	1.45	. .
Doffin, Anna	. .	10.00	3.30	3.00	1.00
Fox, Alexander, Sr.	. .	10.00	2.00	2.20	1.00
Fox, Mrs. Mary	. .	10.00	1.90	2.10	1.00
Fox, Raymond	. .	10.00	1.65	2.10	1.00
Fox, Andrew	. .	10.00	1.70	.65	1.00
Fox, Mrs. Bernice	. .	10.00	1.75	.65	1.00
Fox, Mrs. Henry	. .	10.00	1.60	1.10	1.00
Fox, Joseph	. .	8.00	. .	. .	. .
Frederic, Edwin	. .	5.00	2.00	4.95	. .
Frederic, Violet	. .	5.00	1.85	4.55	. .
Gibson, Ambrose	. .	10.00	2.70	1.15	1.00
Gibson, Mrs. Irene	. .	10.00	. .	. .	. .
Gibson, Leo	. .	10.00	2.40	6.00	1.00
Gibson, Walter	. .	10.00	1.50	.90	. .
Gibson, Mrs. Grace	. .	10.00	1.05	.45	. .
Gibson, Emmett	5.00	. .	3.50	1.20	. .
Gibson, Mrs. Ida	5.00	. .	. .	. .	. .
Hake, Bernard	. .	10.00	1.55	.95	5.00
Hake, Mrs. Agnes	. .	10.00	1.45	.55	1.00
Hake, Clarence	. .	10.00	1.45	.70	. .
Hake, Irene	. .	10.00	1.00	.50	1.00
Hake, John	. .	10.00	1.85	3.25	5.00
Hake, Regina Mrs.	. .	10.00	2.85	4.05	1.00
Hake, Otto, Sr.	10.00	10.00	. .	. .	. .
Hake, Otto, Jr.
Hartman, John G.	. .	10.00	1.75	2.90	1.00
Hartman, Mrs. Elis.	. .	10.00	1.45	1.00	. .
Hartman, Edward	. .	5.00	2.40	1.30	. .
Hartman, John Jr.	. .	10.00	1.70	.85	. .
Hartman, Cecilia	. .	10.00	1.00	.75	. .
Herber, Anthony	. .	10.00	1.90	5.50	5.00
Herber, Ambrose	. .	10.00	.40	.75	. .
Herber, Blanche	. .	10.00	. .	3.10	1.00
Herber, Marie	. .	10.00	. .	2.40	1.00
Herber, Frank	. .	10.00	2.35	6.00	5.00
Herber, Fred	. .	10.00	2.00	6.00	5.00
Herber, Mrs. Mary	. .	10.00	2.35	6.00	1.00
Herber, George	1.85	2.85	. .
Herber, Mrs. Loretta	1.45	1.05	. .
Herber, Alcysius	. .	10.00	.20	.10	. .

	Arrears Paid	Pew Rent 1936	Sun. Coll.	Month. Coll.	Fuel Coll.
Herber, Emil		5.00	1.85	1.60	. . .
Herber, Marcelline . . . . .			.30		. . .
Herber, Philip		10.00	1.80	.95	. . .
Herber, Mrs. Genevieve		10.00	1.70	.70	. . .
Herber, Reinhart	10.00	5.00	1.85	1.50	. . .
Herber, Mrs. Claudine	10.00	5.00	2.15	1.60	. . .
Herber, Walter		10.00	3.60	6.00	1.00
Herber, Mrs. Adele		10.00	3.60	6.00	1.00
Hoffman, Frank P.		10.00	3.10	2.80	5.00
Hoffman, Mrs. Gertrude		10.00	1.85	1.20	. . .
Hoffman, Oscar		10.00	1.65	4.25	1.00
Hoffman, Lawrence		10.00	1.55	1.25	1.00
Hoffman, George			1.80	2.45	5.00
Hoffman, Mrs. Anna			2.05	1.15	1.00
Hoffman, Simon		10.00	2.00	6.50	5.00
Howard, Mrs. Margaret		10.00	19.00	14.00	5.00
Howard, Mary Agnes		10.00	3.65	3.50	1.00
Kenark, Nora		10.00	1.65	4.20	1.00
Kleber, Mrs. Mary		5.00	.60	.85	. . .
Kleber, William	10.00		1.15	1.25	1.00
Kleber, Mrs. Barbara	10.00		1.55	.90	1.00
Kleber, Cornelius	10.00		1.75	.85	1.00
Kleber, Bernada	5.00		1.45	.80	. . .
Kleber, Vera	5.00	10.00	1.80	.30	. . .
Kleinrichert, Alphonse		10.00	1.85	2.65	5.00
Kleinrichert, Mrs. Ber.		10.00	1.80	2.80	1.00
Kleinrichert, Arnold		10.00	1.75	2.50	5.00
Kleinrichert, Mrs. Evel		10.00	1.75	1.15	1.00
Kleinrichert, John		5.00	.45	.75	. . .
Klingenberger, John A.		10.00			1.00
Klingenberger, Mrs. Vel.		10.00			. . .
Loew, John A.		10.00	2.90	2.50	3.00
Loew, Mrs. Emma		10.00	2.85	2.45	1.00
Loew, Carl		10.00	1.55	1.50	. . .
Maldeney, Louis		10.00	3.00	2.55	5.00
Maldeney, Mrs. Jose		10.00	1.95	2.35	1.00
Maldeney, Elmer		10.00	.30	.80	. . .
Maldeney, Stephan		10.00	.30	.75	. . .
Maldeney, Frances		10.00	2.95	3.60	1.00
Maldeney, Lawrence		10.00	1.90	1.10	. . .
Martin, Frank		10.00	1.90	.75	5.00

	Arrears Paid.	Per Rent 1936	Sun. Coll.	Month. Coll.	Fuel Coll.
Minnick, Bernard	9.00		.80	.30	1.00
Minnick, Mrs. Collette	9.00		1.25	.45	.
Minnick, Chester		10.00	1.70	1.95	5.00
Minnick, Mrs. Carolina		10.00	1.75	1.00	1.00
Minnick, Earl	10.00	10.00			
Minnick, Mrs. Edith	10.00	10.00	1.25	.65	1.00
Minnick, Mrs. Henry		10.00	1.45	2.75	
Minnick, Fred		10.00	2.70	5.25	1.00
Minnick, Clem		10.00	1.60	2.55	1.00
Minnick, Joseph		10.00	.65	.65	
Minnick, Mrs. Cath.		10.00	1.80	.55	
Minnick, Elmer					
Minnick, Andrew		10.00			
Minnick, Joseph Jr.		10.00			
Minnick, Agnes		10.00	.50	.30	
Minnick, Esther		10.00	.70	.65	
Minnick, Mrs. Louis		10.00	.95	1.00	1.00
Minnick, Elva		Sings			
Minnick, Herold		10.00	.65	.40	
Minnick, Orville	5.00		1.35	1.25	
Minnick, Mrs. Anna	5.00		1.30	.70	
Muench, Julian		10.00		.25	5.00
Mesach, Mrs. Barbara		10.00	2.05	1.90	1.00
Muldoon, Frank					1.00
Muldoon, Mrs. Dorothy			.55	.25	
Muldoon, Delbert		10.00			1.00
Muldoon, Walter	50.00	10.00	5.10	2.60	
Muldoon, Mrs. Ellen	50.00	10.00	2.15	1.25	
Ottenweller, Frank	10.00		3.30	1.05	
Ottenweller, Mrs. Rose	10.00		2.35	.95	1.00
Ottenweller, Carl	10.00		1.20	.60	
Ottenweller, Donald	10.00				
Rauner, Charles			2.75	2.15	2.00
Rauner, Mrs. Mary			2.85	1.15	1.00
Rauner, Myrtle		10.00	3.90	1.90	1.00
Rauner, Herold		5.00	1.60	.50	1.00
Renninger, Mrs. Cath.		10.00	1.70	1.05	1.00
Renninger, Henry		10.00	1.75	3.00	5.00
Renninger, Mrs. Cecil		10.00	1.70	1.35	1.00
Rorick, Nathan J.					5.00
Rorick, Marie			.05		1.00
Rorick, William	30.00				

	Arrears Paid.	Pay Rent 1936	Sun. Cell.	Month. Cell.	Fuel Cell.
Robert Herick					
Schiffli, Lorenz		10.00	1.75	.65	1.00
Schiffli, Mrs. Frances		10.00	1.65	.60	1.00
Smith, Alice A.		10.00	3.80	4.50	1.00
Smith, Mrs. Dr. R.		10.00	1.85	2.45	1.00
Smith, Henry		10.00	1.55	1.00	1.00
Smith, Mrs. Cath.		10.00	1.65	1.00	
Smith, Henry, Jr.		10.00			
Smith, Norman . . . . .			.20	.75	5.00
Smith, Mrs. Ella . . . . .			.20	.75	1.00
Schmidt, Mrs. Lena . . . . .			.20	.30	
Schmidt, Roman.			1.00		
Schmidt, Otto					
Schmidt, Frances			1.15	.70	
Serg, Alphons		10.00	1.60	1.45	1.00
Serg, Mrs. Virginia		10.00	1.60	1.05	
Serg, Aloysius.		10.00	.05	.25	2.50
Serg, Mrs. Clara		10.00	.75	.25	1.00
Anthony B. Serg		10.00	2.45	1.70	2.00
Serg, Mrs. Catharine		10.00	2.05	2.20	1.00
Serg, Arthur F.		10.00	2.20	4.20	1.00
Serg, Mrs. Silva		5.00	1.00	1.80	1.00
Serg, Charles		10.00	3.95	6.00	5.00
Serg, Henry B.		10.00	2.40	2.00	5.00
Serg, Mrs. Pauline		10.00	1.65	1.00	
Serg, Raymond		10.00			
Serg, Delbert		10.00			
Serg, Agnes		10.00			
Serg, Rosella		10.00	4.15	2.60	
Serg, Herman	10.00	10.00	3.00	2.00	
Serg, Mrs. Alice	10.00	10.00			
Serg, George			1.50	1.20	
Serg, Mrs. Mary F.			1.55	1.15	
Serg, Jos. A.			1.50	1.90	
Serg, Mrs. Louise.			1.50	1.80	
Serg, Leo	15.00				
Serg, Mrs. Mary	15.00		1.50	1.70	
Serg, Earl		10.00			
Serg, Louis.		10.00	1.90	1.30	3.00
Serg, Jos. L.		10.00	1.90	5.50	3.00
Serg, Regina		10.00	1.80	.60	1.00

	Arrears Paid	Pew Rent 1936	Sun. Coll.	Month. Coll.	Fuel Coll.
Stephan Sorg	5.00	1.70	2.40	. .
Sorg, Mrs. Florence	. .	5.00	1.60	2.00	1.00
Sorg, Urban . .	10.00	. .	3.25	1.55	4.00
Sorg, Mrs. Loretta.	10.00	. .	1.35	1.40	1.00
Sorg, Wilbert80	.20	. .
Trabel, Christian.	. .	10.00	1.75	.95	2.00
Trabel, Mrs. Anna .	. .	10.00	4.80	6.00	1.00
Trabel, Clarence .	. .	10.00	2.90	2.75	1.00
Trabel, Marie	Sings	.75	. .	1.00
Wyss, Andrew	10.00	1.40	1.50	2.00
Wyss, Mrs. Louise .	. .	10.00	1.45	1.25	1.00
Wyss, Jerome	10.00	1.00	.55	. .
Wyss, Celestine	8.00	2.10	1.05	1.00
Wyss, Mrs. Cecilia .	. .	8.00	1.45	1.30	. .
Wyss, Clem	10.00	1.80	2.75	5.00
Wyss, Mrs. Eva	10.00	3.50	3.00	1.00
Wyss, Arthur	10.00	.90	.90	1.00
Wyss, John B.	5.00	3.05	6.25	5.00
Wyss, Mrs. Margaret.	. .	5.00	5.40	2.75	3.00
Wyss, Marie	Sings	2.80	1.95	1.00
Wyss, Walter	10.00	2.00	1.15	1.00
Wyss, Joseph	10.00	1.85	1.30	3.00
Wyss, Mrs. Marie	10.00	2.00	1.15	1.00
Wyss, Nicolas	10.00	3.65	6.00	5.00
Wyss, Velma	Sings	.85	. .	1.00
Zuber, Reinhart	10.00	5.05	2.65	. .
Zuber, Mrs. Emily .	. .	10.00	3.90	2.50	1.00

Financial Report

January 1, 1936 to December 31, 1936

Receipts

Expenses

Balance on hand	398.37	Missionary 40 hours	30.00
Pew Rent	2230.00	Organist & Choir	61.20
Sunday Collections	500.79	Pastor's Allowance	1500.00
Monthly Collections	401.60	Furnishings Church	40.25
Picnic	1150.30	Repairs & Improv.	200.64
Societies	387.30	Storm Windows	336.82
Votive Stand & Candles	104.30	Altar Bread & Wine	40.00
Sunday Visitor	52.00	Church Wash & Mend.	50.00
Propagation of Faith.	82.00	Candles & Incense	106.25
Commercial Dues.	68.00	Teachers Salary	865.00
School Play.	72.90	School Furnishings	592.88
Fuel Collection.	291.30	Rectorry and Convent	
Indian & Negro Missions	24.57	Repairs & Improv.	247.74
Holy Land	17.50	Janitor Services	180.00
Seminary Collection.	58.20	Light & Fuel	847.30
Infirm Priests	25.50	Office Expense	162.88
Mexican Seminary	57.75	Cemetery Work	23.20
Gibault Home & Univers.	10.00	Ditching & Tiles	37.70
Orphans Collection	130.40	Telephone & Tolls	5.00
Mission Sunday	13.60	Federal Taxes	1.55
Miscellaneous	20.35	Society Masses	48.00
Holy Father	28.05	Quota for Diocese	531.25
Total Cash Receipts	6125.75	Sunday Visitor	52.00
By Deficit	39.41	Propagation of Faith	82.00
	6165.19	Mexican Seminary	57.75
Savings Account		N.C.W.C. Men	5.00
\$1056.19		Total Expenses	6165.19
To Bal 39.41			
\$1016.78 Savings Acct.			

PARISH MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

1957

Mrs. Celia Ake, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Donato Apruzzese, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Royal Arnett, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Henry K. Arnold, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Neil Barclay, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Julian Barrand, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Robert Beard, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Luis E. Becker, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Gerald Beckman, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Joseph Beckman, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Robert Beckman, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Rudolph Beckman, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Walter Beckman, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Anthony Berg, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Clem Berg, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Frank Berg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Maurice Berg, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. William Berg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Arthur A. Bobay, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Arthur J. Bobay, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Carl Boese, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Ralph Bowlby, R.R. 1, Hoagland
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 Mr. George Braaten, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Lester Bradfield, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Norman Bradmueller, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Joseph Brinker, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Donald Bubb, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Robert Bubb, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Albert Christman, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Paul Christman, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Albert Conn, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Anthony Contadeluci, R.R. 1, Decatur
 Mr. Harry L. Davies, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Donald Degitz, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Albert Deininger, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Eugene Deininger, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Frank DeKoninck, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Joseph DeKoninck, R.R. 1, Ossian
 Mr. Charles Dickmeyer, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mrs. Ruth Eme, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Howard Everhart, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Joseph Feiertag, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Robert Firestine, Box 5, Hoagland
 Mr. Richard Freistoffer, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Harold Fryback, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Robert Gevers, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Ambrose Gibson, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Emmet Gibson, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mrs. Velma Gibson, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Earl Girardot, Box 34, Hoagland
 Mr. Edwin Girardot, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Bernard Hake, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Clarence Hake, Box 43, Hoagland
 Mr. John Hake, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Norbert Hake, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. John Hartman, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Frank Helmsing, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Emil Herber, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Irvin A. Herber, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Jerome Herber, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Phillip Herber, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Walter Herber, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. James Herndon, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Oscar Hoffman, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Harry Horne, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Francis Kelly, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Cornelius Kennerk, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Ralph Kleber, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. William Kleber, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Aphonse Kleinrichert, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Arnold Kleinrichert, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Dale Klengenberger, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Eugene Klengenberger, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. John Klengenberger, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Albert Knight, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. James Kohne, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Robert Kortokrax, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Raymond Landin, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Marvin Landin, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Leo Mack, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Elmer Maldeney, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Edward Maldeney, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne
 Mrs. Josephine Maldeney, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Frank C. Martin, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. James Mattes, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Lawrence Mattingly, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Edward Meinzen, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Ernest Meyers, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Robert Meyers, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Paul Miller, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Chester Minnick, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Max Minnick, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Orville Minnick, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. William Minnick, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mrs. Coletta Minnick, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Earl Minnick, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Kenneth Minnick, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Charles Momper, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Miss Rosella Momper, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Walter Momper, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Walter Muldoon, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Frank Oswald, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Frank Ottenweller, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Jerome Packer, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Charles Patten, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Robert Pray, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. John Proegler, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Richard Pyle, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Charles Rauch, R.R. 1, Decatur
 Mr. Charles Rauner, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Harold Rauner, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Henry Renninger, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Henry J. Renninger, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Roy Ridenour, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Aldon Roussel, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Walter Rudny, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Enos Ruhl, Box 73, Hoagland
 Mr. Fredrick Sallot, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Stephen Sallot, Jr., 6811, So. Anthony
 Mr. Robert Sauer, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Walter Savieo, Box 99, Hoagland
 Mr. Norman Schmidt, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Sylvester Schmidt, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Donald Schuhler, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Leon Shelburne, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Jerome Sires, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Joseph Smith, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Romer J. Smith, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Robert Smith, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Dr. W. O. Smith, Box 35, Hoagland
 Mr. Aloysius Sorg, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Alphonse Sorg, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Arthur Sorg, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Devon Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Donald F. Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Earl Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Herman Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Joseph Sorg, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Leo Sorg, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mrs. Loretta Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Louis Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Joseph Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Miss Mary Regina Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Raymond Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Stephen Sorg, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Vincent Sorg, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Cletus Spieth, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Joseph Steenman, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Robert Stevens, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Godfrey Strack, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. John Sullivan, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. King Sullivan, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Miss Cornelia Sullivan, R.R. 7, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Frank Thieme, Box 91, Hoagland
 Mr. Eugene Vachon, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Carl Voors, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Herbert Wagener, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. William Ward, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Melvin Weaver, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Wayne Woodruff, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Andrew Wyss, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Arthur Wyss, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Clemence Wyss, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Eugene Wyss, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Gerald Wyss, R.R. 10, Fort Wayne
 Mr. Joseph Wyss, R.R. 1, Hoagland
 Mr. Paul Youse, R.R. 1, Hoagland

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Chapter 6 - The Log Church (1841 - 1859)

This chapter presents a more detailed analysis of the information recorded about the first church built at Hessen Cassel and discusses its possible location. According to the previously-presented historical accounts, the Hessen Cassel parishioners constructed a “neat and roomy” log building to serve as the church immediately after forming their congregation on 29 September 1841. Thus, the construction of the first church was completed probably in late 1841. The best evidence to support this date is the fact that the first baptism recorded in the parish church book occurred on 22 November 1841, just two months after the formation of the parish. Thus, this was most likely the first baptism conducted within the new log church. Up to this point in time, the baptisms and other sacramental records for the Hessen Cassel residents were recorded in the church book of St. Augustine (now with the Cathedral records) in Fort Wayne.

Building Site

Based on all evidence, the building site for the log church was located along the south border of the northwest quarter (NW¼) of the southeast quarter (SE¼) of Section 8 in Marion Township, at the point where this south border intersects with the Piqua Road. At this intersection, the log church was located on the east side of the Piqua road and a little north of the south borderline of a 40-acre tract of land originally owned by Peter Schmidt. An 1880 map of Marion Township shows the location of the current brick church, which is close to where the original log church was built (see Figures 10 and 11, close-up view.) The Hessen Cassel founders selected this building site for practical reasons. First of all, this plot of land was situated along the main thoroughfare in the area (i.e. the Piqua Road), and thus was readily accessible by both the surrounding parishioners and the missionary priests traveling from Fort Wayne. Secondly, this site was centrally located for most of the Catholic farm families in the area, thus providing a focal point of worship in the community. This was important because, as in Germany, the sound of the parish church bell needed to be heard by the surrounding parishioners as a means to notify them to come to services whenever the priest was present, or to signal emergencies in the community. Thirdly, despite the general flatness of the land in Allen County, this particular parcel of land was at some of the highest ground elevation in Marion Township. This site has an elevation of 806 feet above sea level, and all the surrounding land slopes downward, especially to the west where the land by the St. Mary’s River has a much lower elevation of 760 feet. A high elevation helped both to increase the visibility of the church and to provide some protection from flooding when the St. Mary’s River overflowed its banks. Fourthly, the east side of the road was selected for a very important reason. For centuries, the most important consideration in the construction of a Catholic church was its orientation along an east-west axis with the altar located at the east end. In order to have the main entrance to the church facing the Piqua Road (i.e. west) the east side of the road was required. Finally, the church was situated along the perimeter of this plot of land in order to cause minimum disruption for farming the rest of the 40 acres.

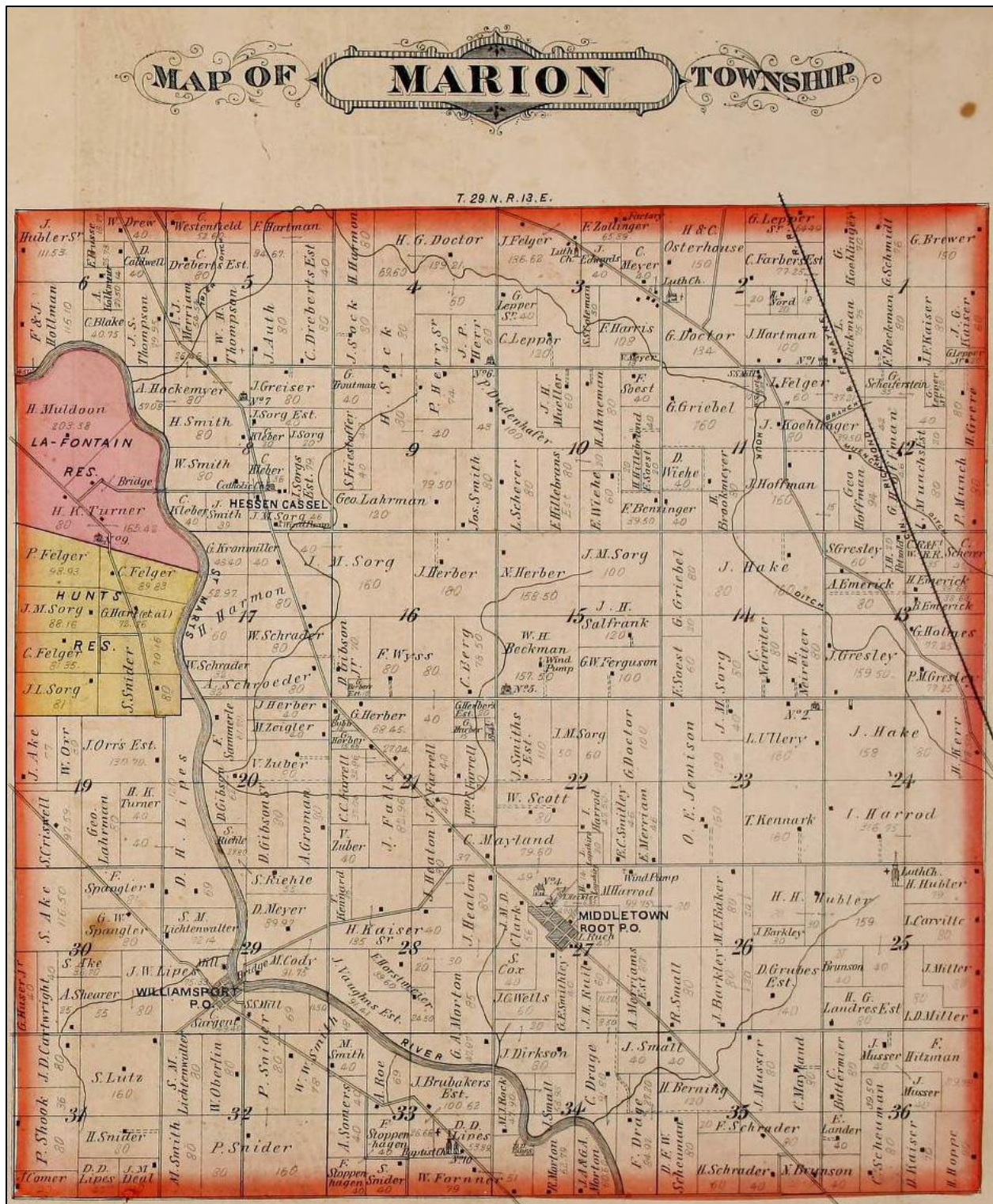


Figure 10 - 1880 Map of Marion Township, Allen Co., IN. Hessen Cassel is in Section 8.

The parcel of land upon which the log church was built was a part of the original 40 acres of virgin land purchased from the government by Peter Schmidt in 1833. However, it appears by the time that the log church was erected in late 1841, the land was then owned by his son-in-law,

Sebastian Klüber/Kleber. Sebastian had recently married Peter Schmidt's daughter, Katharina, on 20 August 1841, was residing on the Peter Schmidt farm, and had taken over running the farming operations upon his marriage. Peter Schmidt was 68 years old at this time and had apparently retired. Based on the deed records, it appears that Peter Schmidt likely sold his 40-acre farm to Sebastian on a one-year contract shortly before Sebastian married his daughter. It is surmised that Sebastian eventually paid off the one-year \$200 note and took full ownership one year later on 18 August 1842 as recorded in the Allen County Deed Records.³⁸ Peter and his wife, Elisabeth, sold their entire 40 acres of land, including the one-acre subsequently used for the church site, solely to "Sebastian Klueber" (his wife, Katharina/Catherine, is not mentioned in the deed), which indicates that the original transaction occurred before Sebastian married Peter Schmidt's daughter on 20 August 1841. And the fact that the subsequent final deed was dated 18 August 1842 indicates that Sebastian purchased it based on a one-year note of credit to Peter Schmidt. Thus, although oral tradition conveys that Peter Schmidt donated the land for the erection of the first church³⁹, it appears that the land was actually owned at the time by Sebastian Klüber, who agreed to provide the 1-acre site on his land. This is further substantiated by the fact that Sebastian Klüber, and not Peter Schmidt, was one of the 20 men signing the pledge on 29 September 1841 to form the parish. All the founding members were land owners in the area, so Sebastian was recognized as the land owner at that time. This was also the case for old Johann Adam Sorg, an original settler who had retired and passed all his land over to his sons. For this same reason, his 4 sons were the signers forming the parish in 1841, and Johann Adam Sorg was not listed.



Figure 11 - Hessen Cassel Church, Section 8, Marion Twp, Allen Co., IN, 1880

Although Sebastian Klüber/Kleber agreed to provide the construction site around 29 September 1841, the land was not officially conveyed to the Catholic Church until 5 April 1845, almost four years after the log church was built. On this date, Sebastian Kleber and his wife, Catharine (she is now included on the deed as a result of her marriage to Sebastian), sold one acre of land (undoubtedly containing the log church) to the Bishop of Vincennes, Celestine Gaymmar de la Hailandiere, for 10 dollars.⁴⁰ All of Indiana belonged to the Diocese of Vincennes at this time.

³⁸ "Deed of Sale from Peter and Elizabeth Smith to Sebastian Kluber" Allen County, IN, Deed Book E, page 443, 18 August 1842 (recorded 10 June 1844).

³⁹ St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel (Fort Wayne, IN). The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Church, 1957), page 8.

⁴⁰ "Deed of Sale from Sebastian and Catharine Kleber to Celestine Gaymmar de la Hailandiere, Bishop of Vincennes, Knox, Co. IN" Allen County, IN Deed Book M, page 501, 5 April 1845 (recorded 16 November 1852).

It is not known if Sebastian actually accepted the \$10, but this price was a fair market value for an acre of improved land at the time. Sebastian had only paid \$5 per acre for the 40-acre farm in 1841. Regardless of whether or not this one acre was actually “donated” to the Catholic Church diocese, it was the first parcel of land belonging to the St. Joseph parish. However, the parish church records at Hessen Cassel seem to have no record of this original deed, which was probably kept with Bishop Hailandiere’s records at the Vincennes Diocese (now the Diocese of Indianapolis). Furthermore, this 1845 deed was not even officially recorded in the Allen County deed books until over 7 years later on 16 November 1852, which may help explain the difficulty in locating this deed. It appears that the Dioceses of Vincennes chose this time to officially record this and other church property deeds because on the same day (i.e. 16 November 1852) the deed recorded immediately after that for the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel land was that for the church property at St. Louis Besancon. This deed, dated 14 January 1851, states that Gideon and Eliza Dickenson sold to the Bishop of Vincennes (at that time, Maurice St. Palais) four acres of land for \$10 and with the stipulation that the Bishop have a German [sic] Catholic chapel built on the land within 2 years.⁴¹ [Note: Besancon was actually a French parish settlement].

As a side note, another contradiction between the land records (primary evidence) and the historical accounts (secondary evidence) in Allen County histories concerns the founding of St. Aloysius Catholic church at Yoder. According to Helm (1880) and Alerding (1907), Christian Miller/Müller donated 3 acres of land, on the east side of the Bluffton Road in Pleasant Township, in 1859, for the St. Aloysius church property. The same year a frame church, 29 x 36 feet, was erected on the site. However, the land records show that it was actually John Herber/Harber who sold the 3 acres of land for the church property to Bishop John Henry Luers on 24 December 1859 for \$50 [the church was located on his land in Section 22 on the east side of Bluffton Road].⁴² Then a week later, on 3 January 1860, Christian and Magdalena Miller subsequently sold 3 acres of their land in Section 21 (west side of the Bluffton Road) to John Harber for the same amount of money (\$50), apparently to compensate him for the land he sold to the Bishop.⁴³ This amount of money again was fair market value at the time, and it appears on record that the land was not actually donated, not unless John Harber or Christian Miller subsequently donated the actual money changing hands back to Bishop Luers.

Two early sketches of the church property at Hessen Cassel were found in the parish records (see Figures 12 and 13). The first sketch depicts the layout of the brick church, rectory, cemetery, and school house on a rectangular piece of land with north, south, east, and west sides noted in

⁴¹ “Deed of Sale from Gideon and Eliza Dickenson to Maurice de St. Palais, Bishop of Vincennes, Knox, Co. IN” Allen County, IN Deed Book M, page 502, 14 January 1851 (recorded 16 November 1852).

⁴² “Deed of Sale from John Harber to John Henry Luers” Allen County, IN Deed Book Y, page 506, 24 December 1859 (recorded 19 July 1860).

⁴³ “Deed of Sale from Christian and Magdalena Miller to John Harber” Allen County, IN Deed Book Y, page 27, 3 January 1860 (recorded 3 January 1860).

the margins. On the right is a marginal notation “The property here marked lies in Marion Township, section 8, Allen County, State of Indiana”. The date and person responsible for the sketch are unknown. The fact that the school house is depicted indicates that the sketch was made around 1880 or later, perhaps by the pastor at the time. Also on the sketch, the dimensions of the church are shown as 42 feet wide by 78 feet long, with the center line (SE ¼) of Section 8 passing directly through the middle of the church. The sources of the three parcels of land comprising the rectangular plot are listed in the margins next to the parcels. The portion containing the north half of the church and the rectory was noted as being purchased from Peter Schmidt in the year 1845. The portion comprising the cemetery was bought from Sebastian Klueber in 1863, while the lower half containing the south half of the church and the school house was purchased from George Sorg in 1860. Thus, based on this document, the log church and first cemetery were located on the first parcel of land supposedly sold by Peter Schmidt in 1845, although no reference deed is given. This may be the reason for the assumption that the original land was donated by Peter Schmidt. Later, someone else (different handwriting) entered the grantees who obtained the parcels, namely Bishop Hailandiere for the Peter Schmidt land and Bishop Luers for the land acquired from Sebastian Klueber and George Sorg.

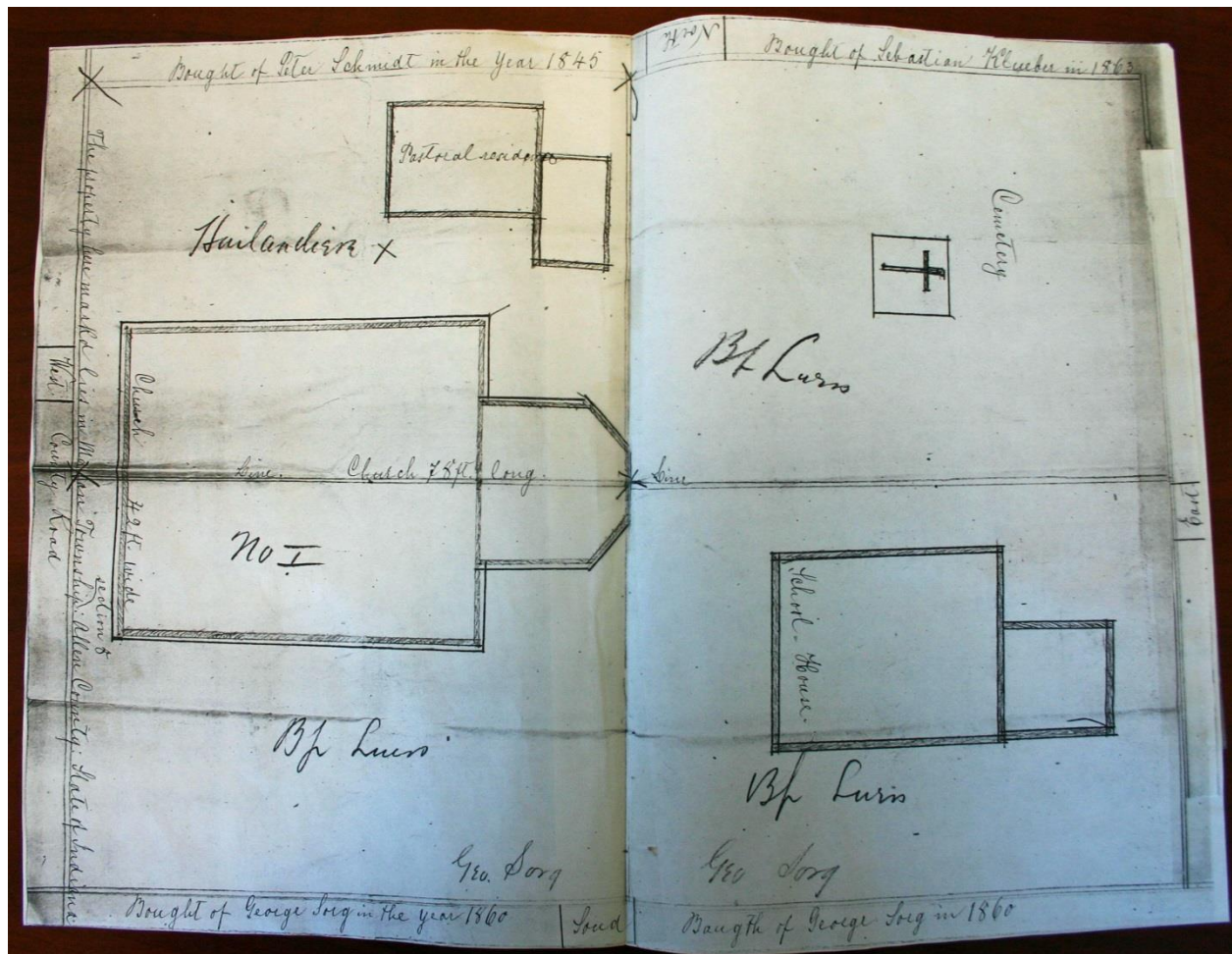
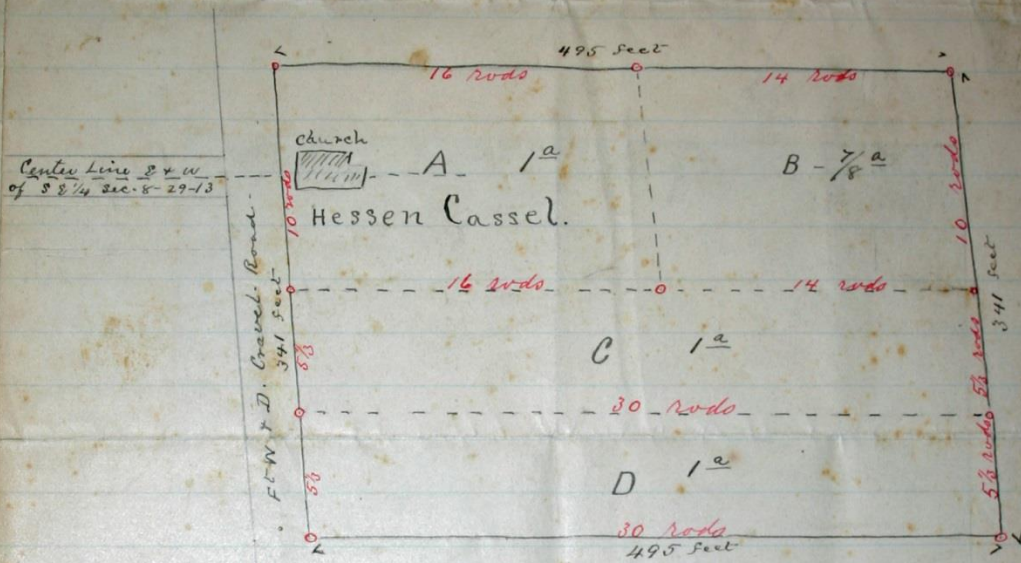


Figure 12 - Sketch of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church Property & Buildings, c. 1880

Hessen Cassel Church Property
in
South East gr. of Section 8 Marion Sp.



Records in Recorder's Office

- A - Original Church Lot 1 Acre
- B - Kleber to Bishop, Sures. - Book No 28 Page 324 - 1859 - $\frac{7}{8}$ "
- C - Sorg to Bishop, Sures. - " " 91 - 1862 - 1 "
- D - Sorg - to Bishop, Sures. - " " 43 " 464 - 1863 - 1 "

W. H. Isoschorn

Figure 13 - Sketch of St. Joseph Catholic Church Property, Hessen Cassel, IN, c. 1890.

The second sketch (Figure 13) is titled “Hessen Cassel Church Property in South East Quarter of Section 8 of Marion Township.” It shows the dimensions of the first 4 parcels of land belonging to the parish and presents a reference to the deed records in the Recorder’s Office for each parcel, except for the first parcel A. This sketch was prepared by William H. Goshorn, who was the Allen county surveyor from 1870 to 1882. Afterwards, Goshorn was the county bridge engineer responsible for the construction and repair of all bridges within Allen County until his death in 1900.⁴⁴ Goshorn supposedly prepared this sketch based on the deed records and may have actually surveyed this property because it shows surveyor pin locations along with the dimensions of the various plats. However, he did not prepare this diagram while he was the County surveyor (1870-1882), because he recorded the name of the road in front of the church as the “Fort Wayne and Decatur Gravel Road”. From 1850 to 1886, this road was called the Piqua plank road. Then on 21 April 1886, the Fort Wayne and Decatur Gravel Road Company was formed to gravel the Piqua Road, and thus the name was changed.⁴⁵ By the end of 1886, the Fort Wayne and Decatur gravel road was finished and toll gates established. This road was subsequently purchased 10 years later by the Allen County Board of Commissioners on 12 November 1896 and made into a “free” road again.⁴⁶ Thus, based on the dates of existence for the Fort Wayne and Decatur gravel road, this sketch was drawn by Goshorn sometime between 1887 and 1897, with 1890 being an approximate date. On his sketch, parcel A, comprised of one acre, is noted as the “Original Church Lot”. However, unlike the other 3 parcels of land, Goshorn does not provide a deed record reference for parcel A. Obviously he was unable to find the deed for this acre of land in the recorder’s office. This was most likely due to the fact that he was looking for a deed dated and recorded in 1845, when in fact, as previously mentioned, it was not officially recorded until 1852. Furthermore, based on the earlier sketch of the church property, Goshorn may have been looking in error for a deed between Peter Schmidt, as grantor, and Bishop Hailandiere, as grantee, when in fact the grantor was actually Sebastian Klüber/Kleber.

It must be noted that, despite the fact that Goshorn was a professional surveyor, there are some errors within his sketch. First of all, for lot A, he shows the church being located in the middle of the lot with the east-west centerline of the southeast quarter (SE¹/₄) passing through the middle of the church. However, this mislabeled center line is really located at the middle of the sketch, and the church building should be positioned with half of it located in lot A and half in lot C. Secondly, in his deed reference for lot B, Goshorn lists Kleber to Bishop Lures [sic], Book no. 28, page 324, year 1859. The deed is really located on pages 325-326, was signed on 16 December 1861 and recorded 11 February 1862 (not 1859). Then for lot C, the deed reference is correct except again for the year, which is listed as 1862, instead of 1859. This deed was signed

⁴⁴ “William Goshorn. Death of County Bridge Superintendant.”, Fort Wayne News, 9 June 1900, page 4.

⁴⁵ “New Tool Road”, Fort Wayne Sentinel. 21 April 1886, page 4.

⁴⁶ “The Court News”, Fort Wayne Weekly Journal, 12 November 1896, page 4.

by George Sorg on 28 December 1859 (not 1862) and recorded on 25 January 1860. Goshorn mistakenly switched the years between these two aforesaid deeds when preparing the sketch.

The largest error concerns lot D. Although the deed reference provided by Goshorn is correct, the portion of land described in the actual deed does not represent the land designated on his sketch. The 1-acre segment of land described in the deed is located to the east and adjacent to lot C, not south of lot C. The portion of land comprising lot D in the sketch was not a part of the church lot until 1912 when it was deeded to Bishop Alerding by Christopher Kleber.⁴⁷ However, it is very likely that the location of lot D as shown in Goshorn's sketch was the 1-acre of land that George Sorg actually intended on selling to the Bishop, but the description for the location was recorded in error. In fact, the church may have utilized the land depicted as lot D on Goshorn's map for many years before the deed error was realized. It makes more sense that lot D would be south and adjacent to lot C in order to form a solid rectangular boundary of land for the church property. There is further evidence showing that the legal deed description was in error. On 16 August 1871, George Sorg sold his remaining land in this section to Christoph Kleber.⁴⁸ In this deed, the entire section of land is legally and properly identified with the disclaimer "except 2 acres conveyed by deed to the Catholic Church known as St. Joseph Church at Hessen Cassel leaving a balance of 38 acres". The location of these two excluded acres within the entire portion of land is not described, as is usually done in legal deeds, which strongly indicates that at this point in time they discovered the discrepancy between the legal deed description for the lot D acre and the acre that the church was actually occupying. As mentioned previously, this error was rectified 40 years later when Christ Kleber sold all the land in question to Bishop Alerding in 1912.

Construction and Appearance

Unfortunately, neither of these two early maps of the church property shows the exact location of the log church or first cemetery on the original one-acre lot. It is likely that the site selected for the log church on this lot in 1841 was still virgin land covered with trees and underbrush that had to be cleared before the log church could be built. The 20 founders are also assuredly the same men, who, perhaps with a few others, cleared the land and built the log church. The trees felled at the site were likely used to make the logs for the construction of the church on a small cleared plot fairly close to the Piqua Road. The remaining portion of the one-acre lot was available for future development and formation of a cemetery. This first church was described as "neat and roomy", although the actual size is unknown. In order to accommodate 20 families, it must have initially been large enough to seat about 100 people, which suggests an edifice at least around 25 x 40 feet. Other log churches in the diocese at this time (e.g. Huntington – 25x40 feet, and Notre

⁴⁷ "Deed of Sale from Christopher and Mary Kleber to Bishop Herman J. Alerding", Allen County, IN, Deed Book 222, page 190, 6 July 1912 (recorded 9 July 1912).

⁴⁸ "Deed of Sale from John George Sorg and wife, Margaret Sorg, to Christopher Kleber", Allen County, IN, Deed Book 53, page 453, 16 August 1871.

Dame – 24x40 feet) were around this general size, so it can be assumed that this was an average size that could be built using large hewn logs for construction without supporting pillars. Instead of pews, the church seating almost certainly consisted of crude wooden benches. A wood frame addition was made to this log church about 10 years later (c. 1851), but the size and location of this attached structure is totally unknown. In accordance with Catholic tradition, the log church was undoubtedly erected with the altar and sanctuary located at the east end and the main entrance at the west end (facing the Piqua Road). For centuries, all Catholic churches were built along an east-west axis. The rising of the sun each day was seen as a symbol of Christ's resurrection, so Mass was always celebrated with the priest and congregation facing east. This east-west orientation was likewise the case for the Cathedral, old St. Mary's Church, St. Peter's Church, and the current brick church at Hessen Cassel. Each one has their main entrances on the west end and the altar and sanctuary on the east end of the church. This architectural tradition is no longer relevant today, since the priest now faces the congregation during Mass as a result of changes implemented by the Vatican II Council in 1966.

A replica of the log church (24 feet by 40 feet) built by Fr. Badin in 1831 at the University of Notre Dame still stands on the campus. Figures 14 and 15 present photos this structure. Inside are benches and chairs for seating about 100 people. The 1841 log church at Hessen Cassel was probably similar in size and appearance.



Figure 14 - Front View of Fr. Badin's Log Church (Replica), Notre Dame, IN



Figure 15 - Side View of Fr. Badin's Log Church (Replica), Notre Dame, IN.

The exact location of the Hessen Cassel log church on the original one-acre parcel of church property is not positively known, but it was probably situated a little north and west of the current brick church (built 1857-1859), very close to the south boundary of the section line but not extending over it like the current brick church does. This location is substantiated by the early Allen County Commissioners records which actually make reference to the Hessen Cassel log church in 1845. It was cited as a landmark regarding the proposed construction of the Bostick Road, which ends at the Piqua road directly across from the front doors of the 1857 (current) brick church⁴⁹. On 12 June 1845, a petition was filed by Charles Muldoon to construct the Bostick road. It reads in part, “Now comes Charley Muldoon and prays for a road to commence at the **Catholic Church on the Piqua Road** in Marion Township thence westerly across the St. Mary’s River via Charley Muldoon’s to the State Road near Martin Grider’s.” Thus, this primary record verifies that the original log church was very close to the point where the Bostick and Piqua roads intersect in order for the new road to “commence at the Catholic Church.” The Bostick road was subsequently surveyed on 3 September 1845 and the damages it would cause to the lands of Sebastian Kleber and John Smith were assessed.⁵⁰ This road was not officially approved by the Commissioners until almost 10 years later 6 June 1854, when Sebastian Kleber and John Smith were each paid 5 dollars for “damages assessed in consequence of a road running through their land from the **Catholic Church** in Marion Township to Grider’s viz. Charles Muldoon’s assessed in 1846.”⁵¹ Smith and Kleber undoubtedly already had a country lane along this part of their land in order for John Smith to gain access from his farm house to the Piqua Road, but it was subsequently widened and extended across the St. Mary’s River by the Commissioners.

Although the earliest Allen County historical account states that the first log church at Hessen Cassel was erected in 1841, and two others indicate that this was also the probable date of construction, the official history of the Fort Wayne Catholic Diocese written by Rev. H. J. Alerding in 1907 states that “The first church, a log building, was erected in 1851 or 1852, and later a frame addition was made.” This date is incorrect and the error is sometimes carried forward in other historical publications, most recently in the 2007 book “Worthy of the Gospel of Christ”, which commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.⁵² Indeed, in a subsequent sentence, Alerding correctly states, “In the archives of St. Joseph’s Church is found an old book, dated September 29, 1841, in which the Catholics of the

⁴⁹ Allen County Commissioners’ Records, Book B, page 324, 12 June 1845; Court House, Allen County, IN.

⁵⁰ Allen County Commissioners’ Records, Book B, page 336-337, 3 September 1845; Court House, Allen County, IN.

⁵¹ Allen County Commissioners’ Records, Book C, page 368, 6 June 1854; Allen County Public Library [GC977.201 AL5ALC 1848-1856]

⁵² White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2007) page 69; states incorrectly that the first log church at Hessen Cassel was built in 1851.

time pledged themselves to pay a certain amount for the support of their priest, Rev. Joseph de Mutzig Hamion.” Thus, the 1851–1852 date of construction must be a typographical error (instead of 1841-1842), or perhaps this is the time period that the “frame addition” was made. Other records (e.g. the first St. Joseph parish sacramental church book; the aforesaid County Commissioners’ records; and the existing 1843 church bell) authenticate that the log church at Hessen Cassel was in existence at the end of 1841, and therefore not first built until 1851 as per Alerding’s account.

Although Fr. Julian Benoit was the head missionary priest that encouraged the Hessen Cassel settlers to establish a new parish in 1841, Rev. Joseph Hamion was assuredly the first priest to conduct services in the newly-constructed log church. Indeed, Rev. Benoit was on a visit back home in France from the Fall of 1841 until July 1842, the time period that the log church at Hessen Cassel was built and put into use.⁵³ Proof that services were being held in the log church at this time (1841-1842) is provided by the first entries in the parish church book records. After the page establishing the parish dated 29 September 1841, the next earliest entry in the first church book is that for the baptism of Christoph Lauer, the son of “Mechior” (Johann Melchior) Lauer and Maria Barbara Sorg. Christoph was born on 13 November 1841 and baptized at the log church on 22 November 1841 by Rev. Jos. Hamion. This was apparently the first baptism conducted in the new log church. Rev. Hamion baptized two more infants (Bernard Trentmann and Martin Klug) at the log church during March 1842. Unfortunately, Fr. Hamion died at the young age of 28 years old from pulmonary consumption less than 2 months later on 7 May 1842 during a mission visit to Logansport.⁵⁴ Thus, the next baptismal entry in the Hessen Cassel church book does not occur until several months later, on 17 October 1842, and it was recorded by Rev. Julian Benoit, who had returned from France by this time and now solely assumed the duties for this mission parish.

Relocation (c. 1860)

The original log church at Hessen Cassel served the parish for almost 20 years from 1841 to around 1860. At some point, possibly around 1850, a frame addition was made to the church to accommodate the growing parish. The physical dimensions of this frame addition are not known. When the new brick church was completed in late 1859, the old log church with the frame addition was moved to the south and rear of the new church and served for about 15 more years as the pastoral residence until a new brick rectory was built in 1875. Based upon the recollection of old parishioners circa 1957, the old log church was located south and a little east of the present church.⁵⁵ However, this must have been the spot where the log church was

⁵³ White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2007), page 45.

⁵⁴ Fort Wayne Sentinel newspaper, 14 May 1842, page 3, column 1 [R669].

⁵⁵ St. Joseph’s Church, Hessen Cassel (Fort Wayne, IN). The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Church, 1957), page 8. [GC 977.202 F77ST]

relocated to serve as the rectory, since this location is not on the one-acre land of the original church property. It makes sense that the old log church was moved to this new locality, because it would have been in close proximity to the convent built in 1859 and along the central corridor between the new church and the entrance to the new cemetery. It appears that this corridor between the new church, the re-located log church (now rectory), the convent, and the entrance to the new cemetery was established in order to conveniently connect these places and avoid the old cemetery (see later section). In fact, the 1880 map of Marion Township (see Figure 16) provides evidence to support this premise. Located on this map to the right or east of the sketched church building at Hessen Cassel are two small black squares, which represent buildings. These two squares probably designate the location of (1) the old log church, moved here to serve as the rectory, and (2) the old convent/school house in relation to the brick church in 1880.



Figure 16 - Hessen Cassel Church, Section 8, Marion Twp, Allen Co., IN, 1880; the 2 black squares to the right of the church are possibly the relocated log church and the old convent.

Happenings at the Log Church

A humorous story regarding the old log church has been passed down through the years and recorded.⁵⁶ This story, provided by John M. Sorg (1873-1924), son of the story's main character, J. Joseph Sorg (1823-1882), is titled "Episode in Hessen Castle Mission Church." It reads as follows: "This story is told by Joseph Sorg who lived across the river from the church. At one of the services of the mission church, when he was a young man, in the aisle of the church was noticed a snake. Sorg quietly got up and put his heel on it and apparently killed it. He carried it outside the church and services were resumed. After services the snake could not be found." The implication is that the snake was still alive in the vicinity, or that perhaps this unkillable serpent in the church was Satan. This story was also published in the recent 2006 history of Allen County, IN by Beatty.⁵⁷ It illustrates the rustic conditions under which religious services were held at the log church attended by the early parishioners.

⁵⁶ Somers, Harley. Marion Township Minute Book : Containing Histories & Scrapbook Pages, Allen County, Indiana. (Allen County, IN: author compilation/publication, Sandra Houlihan, record custodian, c.1945), see "Episode in Hessen Castle Mission Church", page 247.

⁵⁷ Beatty, John D. (ed.) History of Fort Wayne & Allen County, Indiana, 1700-2005. (Evansville, Ind.: M.T. Pub. Co., c2006), Chapter 44, "Marion Township & Poe"; see page 523. [GC 977.202 F77HISF, V.1]

A second story, regarding a remarkable event that occurred at the log church, has also been recorded.⁵⁸ It reads as follows. “We still relive the memories of the old settlers, of their deep faith and devotion. During the Rogation Days, one of the visiting priests stopped at Hessen Cassel sometime during the day, and rang the bell. All put their work to the side and gathered in the little log chapel to pray for rain. Being very hot and exceedingly dry, the crops were sorely in need of moisture. Their prayers were answered for they all arrived home wet.”

The significance of this event occurring on a Rogation Day needs further explanation. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Rogation Days are the three week days, Monday through Wednesday, before Ascension Thursday, which usually occurs in May. They are special days of prayer to appease God’s anger at man’s transgressions, to ask protection from calamities, and to obtain a good and bountiful harvest. Thus, it was an appropriate time for the beleaguered Hessen Cassel farmers to ask for God’s intercession to save their crops. Since this event occurred in May, the story makes sense in stating that the weather had been unseasonably hot and dry.

An edited version of this story was also found in the 100-year anniversary booklet of the parish.⁵⁹ However, it doesn’t specifically state that the incident occurred at the log church. It reads as follows: “Another incident eloquently testifying to the deep faith of these early settlers, concerns a time when the weather was unseasonably hot and the crops sorely in need of rain. Perchance, a visiting priest arrived here one afternoon. Being a Rogation Day, he summoned them to church to pray. Hearing the bell the parishioners immediately responded in goodly numbers. Their prayers were answered shortly. After services such a downpour occurred that they all arrived home drenched to the skin.”

These two versions illustrate how oral traditions and stories can vary over the years.

⁵⁸ Herber, Clara & Emil; Bobay, Esther & Arthur; Stemen, Mildred & Joseph; and Landin, Betty. A Century in Review. Unpublished notes compiled for the preparation of centenary celebration booklet titled The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. Notes retyped with comments and additional information by Carl J. Kleber, 29 September 2013; copy located in the parish office archives.

⁵⁹ St. Joseph’s Church, Hessen Cassel (Fort Wayne, IN). The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Church, 1957); page 8.

Chapter 7 – The First Church Book (1841 - 1873)

The establishment of the Hessen Cassel parish on 29 September 1841 was documented in a book containing unnumbered, blank, unlined pages, and this book then served to document the birth/baptisms, marriages, and deaths/burials of the parish members up through 1873. The book also recorded the yearly monetary pledges made by the various members in support of the parish from 1841 through 1851 with actual signatures. This first sacramental record book for the St. Joseph parish at Hessen Cassel is still in existence and is securely stored in a safe at the current parish office. During the early years of the parish, it was surely kept and maintained at the log church, and not at St. Augustine in Fort Wayne, where the missionary priests making the entries were headquartered.

As is evident from its current, new appearance (see Figure 17), this first record book of the parish has been rebound at some point. The binding and cover of the book are new and are not contemporary with the old pages within. The paper in the book is of good quality and has endured well; except for the original first page, which is missing portions of the right edge (see Figure 9 in Chapter 4). The binding of this book deteriorated over the years, and at some point the book began to fall apart. When Msgr. Robert Contant was pastor (1964-1997), he was reluctant for anyone other than himself to handle this first church book because it was in such bad condition. At some time around 1970, this old, dilapidated church book was sent to a bindery to be rebound. It appears that this book came apart into at least 3 main pieces, and, since the pages were not numbered, these pieces were mistakenly rebound out of order. Thus, sections of the pages in the re-bound book are no longer in chronological order. In fact, the first page of the re-bound book now consists of baptisms for the year 1853, which has caused the official microfilmed record of this church book to be dated as starting in 1853 instead of 1841. Indeed, the first and thus oldest pages of the original church book are now located in the middle of the re-bound book starting on unnumbered page 48.

Besides now having the pages out of order, this first church book has no index for the entries, which makes finding records for specific individuals very difficult. Adding to the complexity, the entries are written, often in poor handwriting, in German, Latin, and English. However, a compilation, translation, and index of these records in the order that they occur in the re-bound

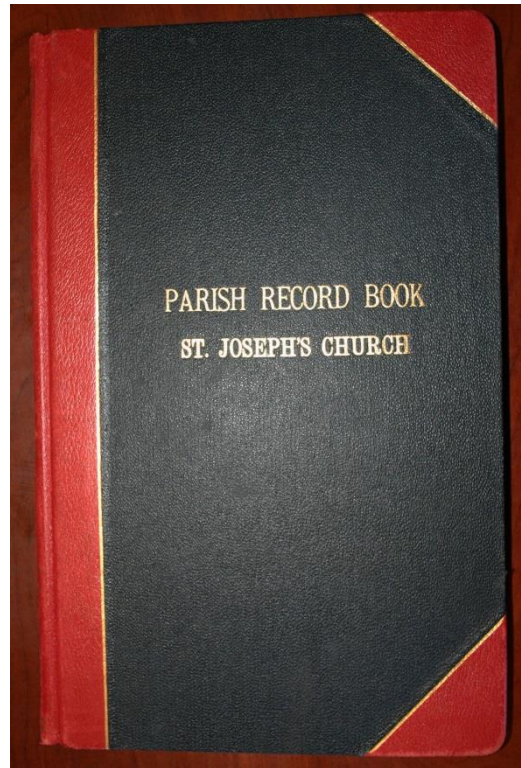


Figure 17 – First Church Book, 1841-1873

book has been published.⁶⁰ A copy of this compiled, summary book is located in the Allen County Public Library, the St. Joseph parish office, and the parish's web-site at <http://stjoehc.org/>. This compilation also documents the names of the priests making entries into the record book and the time periods. As previously mentioned, this first church book was used to record the baptisms, marriages, and burials in the parish up through the year 1873. Thereupon separate sacramental church books for these events were started by Fr. Joseph Nussbaum and cover the years 1873-1947. All the above-mentioned Hessen Cassel church books have been microfilmed for the diocesan archives and are available at the Allen County Public Library.⁶¹

First Baptism (1841)

As stated earlier, the page in the first church book with the oldest date is that for establishing the parish dated 29 September 1841 (see Chapter 4, Figure 9). The next earliest entry is that for the baptism of Christoph Lauer, the son of "Mechior" (Johann Melchior) Lauer and Maria Barbara Sorg. Christoph was born on 13 November 1841 and baptized at the log church on 22 November 1841 by Rev. Jos. Hamion with Christoph Lauer and Christina Herber serving as the godparents. This was the first recorded baptism conducted in the new log church. Rev. Hamion baptized two more infants (Bernard Trentmann and Martin Klug) at the log church during March 1842. Unfortunately, Fr. Hamion died at the young age of 28 years old from pulmonary consumption less than 2 months later on 7 May 1842 during a mission visit to Logansport.⁶² In fact, the next baptismal entry in the church book does not occur until several months later, on 17 October 1842, and it was recorded by Rev. Julian Benoit. He baptized Peter Sack, born to Henry Sack and Catharina Smith on 9 October 1842. The godparents were the elderly first settlers of Hessen Cassel, Peter and Elisabeth Smith/Schmidt.

First Marriage (1854)

Before the parish was founded in 1841, the early settlers at Hessen Cassel would get married at St. Augustine's Catholic Church Fort Wayne, and their marriage records are found in the church books for this parish. The actual first marriage recorded in the Hessen Cassel parish church book is that between Nicholas Herber, son of John Herber and Elisabetha Stein, and Margaret Hoffmann, daughter of Gundrum and Margaretha (Kleinmann) Hoffmann, which occurred on 10 January 1854. The fact that no marriage records are found over the first 12-year time period of 1841-1853 suggests that (1) some pages may be missing, (2) no marriages occurred during this

⁶⁰ Kleber, Carl J. St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Catholic Church : Marion Township, Allen County, Indiana : Church book no. 1, baptisms, marriages, deaths, 1841-1873 (Fort Wayne, Ind. : C.J. Kleber, 1990).

⁶¹ Church Records of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana. St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Parish, Microfilm Roll No. 14, Items 5 to 9, 1841-1947. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1989); available at the Allen County (IN) Public Library, Genealogy Department Microtext Collection.

⁶² Fort Wayne Sentinel newspaper, 14 May 1842, page 3, column 1 [R669].

period, or (3) the marriages were not recorded. However, it appears from the civil records in the Allen County Marriage Books in conjunction with the church records of St. Augustine and St. Mary's parishes in Fort Wayne, that the few marriages for couples from Hessen Cassel parish during this time period continued to take place at St. Augustine Church from 1842 – 1849, then at the new St. Mary's German-Catholic Church from 1850 to around 1855. It was probably more convenient for the missionary priests at the time to perform the marriage ceremony at a church within Fort Wayne (they came to Hessen Cassel to offer Mass only about once a month). Besides, the engaged couples had to travel to Fort Wayne anyhow in order to first obtain a marriage license at the court house. Furthermore, the accommodations at St. Augustine Church, and especially the beautiful St. Mary's Church, were much better than the log church at Hessen Cassel.

Examples of known marriages during the time period 1841-1853 that support the above premise are as follows. The marriage of the Hessen Cassel parishioners Joseph Auth (1807-1900) and M. Barbara Sorg (1816-1893) occurred on 1 June 1846 at St. Augustine. This was likewise the case for Martin Klug (1804-1872) and Mary Ann Jostwert, who were married at St. Augustine's on 18 September 1849 by Rev. Ed Faller, the priest who was also in charge of Hessen Cassel parish at the time. Then following the opening of St. Mary's Church in late 1849, John Henry Herber (1820-1890) and Anna Maria Wolf (1827-1875) were married there on 26 January 1850 by Fr. Faller. Then on 5 September 1850, Hessen Cassel parishioners Jakob Münch (1826-1869) and Elizabeth Hauser (1832-1903) were also married at St. Mary's. It doesn't appear that marriage ceremonies were actually performed at the Hessen Cassel log church until Rev. B. H. Schultes served the parish as a satellite from his headquarters at St. Mary's church in Decatur (1852-1856).

First Burial (1845)

The first recorded burial was that for Joseph Klug, a 6-month-old child, on 1 March 1845. His mother, Barbara (Sorg) Klug, wife of Martin Klug, died a few days later on 6 March 1845 and was buried 2 days later on 8 March 1845. However, as discussed in Chapter 8 dealing with the first church cemetery, the burial records appear to be very incomplete for various reasons.

Chapter 8 - The Church Bells

In Germany, the church bell was of central importance in a German village as a means of communication.⁶³ Not only did it serve to call the faithful to worship, but it was also used as a signal for many activities within the community neighborhood. The church bell sent various messages to the parishioners that could be deciphered by the way that it was rung. Being within the sound of the bell and understanding its message fostered a sense of community among the parishioners. Besides religious services, the bell served to notify people working in the fields regarding the time of day; to call people together for secular purposes as meetings; to signal a death in the parish (death knoll); and as an alarm for emergencies such as fires, accidents, etc.

Some type of bell was almost certainly a part of the 1841 log church at Hessen Cassel, especially as a way to notify parishioners when the missionary priest, who had no set schedule per se, had arrived for church services. Due to the space and construction limitations of a typical log structure (i.e. no steeple), the bell was likely not hung in a loft, but mounted on a post outside the church. Since a large church bell was a rather expensive item, the size of the first bell affiliated with the log church was probably of small scale, perhaps similar to a large farm or dinner bell. The size and location of this proposed bell is based on speculation. Perhaps a farm bell located at a nearby home was initially used to call the faithful to church until a dedicated church bell was obtained. Evidence to support that the log church actually had a bell is found in the previously-mentioned story about the parishioners' praying for rain.⁶⁴ "During the Rogation Days, one of the visiting priests stopped at Hessen Cassel sometime during the day, and rang the bell. All put their work to the side and gathered in the little log chapel to pray for rain."

There are currently, in 2015, two bells mounted in the steeple of the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church (1857) – a smaller bell dated 1843 and a larger bell dated 1906. The smaller 1843 bell was undoubtedly purchased by the first parishioners and mounted in some manner on top or beside the 1841 log church. The importance of a church bell to the parish community is exemplified by the fact that they went to great effort and expense to obtain a high-quality bell less than 2 years after the log church was erected.

⁶³ Theibault, John C. German Villages in Crisis. Rural Life in Hesse-Kassel and the Thirty Years' War, 1580-1720 (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1995), pages 50-52.

⁶⁴ Herber, Clara & Emil; Bobay, Esther & Arthur; Stemen, Mildred & Joseph; and Landin, Betty. A Century in Review. Unpublished notes compiled for the preparation of centenary celebration booklet titled The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. Notes retyped with comments and additional information by Carl J. Kleber, 29 September 2013; copy located in the parish office archives.

The Buckeye Foundry Bell (1843)

The smaller, older bell in the St. Joseph Hessen Church steeple weighs approximately 350 pounds and measures 4 feet high with a diameter of 3 feet at the base. It was cast from bronze (80% copper and 20% tin) with the markings “BUCKEYE BELL FOUNDRY. CAST BY G.W. COFFIN. CINCINNATI, OHIO 1843.” There is a symbol of a cross cast on the side of the bell and the top and rim of the bell are intricately decorated. Circling the top of the bell is an ornate motif of cherubs (called putti) in various poses with both floral and leaf bands underneath. Another decorative floral-type band was cast around the rim. The iron yoke and mounting hardware are also elaborately designed and unique. Current photographs⁶⁵ of this 1843 bronze church bell, which has a lot of “patina” from ageing and pigeons, are presented in Figures 18 - 22.



Figure 18 – Buckeye Foundry Church Bell (1843), St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Catholic Church Bell Tower, 2014



Figure 19 – Buckeye Foundry Church Bell (1843) showing casting information and cross on the side of the bell, 2014.

The Buckeye Bell Foundry in Cincinnati, OH was probably the closest place to Hessen Cassel that a church bell could be obtained in 1843. It was likewise no small task to haul this heavy bell all the way from Cincinnati through the Indiana wilderness to Hessen Cassel, IN. The Buckeye Bell Foundry was well known for producing the most ornately decorated bells in America. It was established by

⁶⁵ Photographs of the two church bells at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish; courtesy of Darrel Will, parishioner, 2015.



Figure 22 – Buckeye Bell (1843), casting information.

George Washington Coffin in Cincinnati, OH in 1837.⁶⁶ Around 1856, his son, C.A. Coffin took over the foundry and specialized in making bells for the Ohio River boats. However, the Buckeye Foundry bells were primarily supplied to churches. In 1865, the foundry was purchased by E. W. Vanduzen and C.T. Tift. The Buckeye Bell Foundry remained in operation until all American bell foundries were forced to close because of World War II. It never re-opened and officially closed in 1950.

A historical account of the Buckeye Bell Foundry exists specifically for the year 1843, when the bell for Hessen Cassel church was made.⁶⁷ The business of G.W. Coffin, at the Buckeye Foundry on Columbia Street, was selected as the best foundry in Cincinnati for 1843-1844. The account states: “In 1843, Mr. Coffin made, all to order, 36 steamboat bells, 8 plantation bells, 3 foundry bells, 11 school house bells, 1 court house bell, 1 fire engine house bell, and 38 church bells.” Thus, one of these 38 commissioned church bells was made specifically for the Hessen Cassel parish. Based on the average prices for the church bells sold by Mr. Coffin in 1843, the cost for the Hessen Cassel church bell was likely between \$100 and \$200. Considering a farmer could purchase a 40-acre farm for \$200 in



Figure 21 – Buckeye Bell (1843), casting information.

1843, paying this amount of money was a considerable expense for the fledgling parish. This further shows the high priority the parishioners placed on having a high-quality church bell for the community.



Figure 20 – Decorative cherub motif on Buckeye Bell (1843)

⁶⁶ E.W. Vanduzen Co. Buckeye Bell Foundry, Established 1837: Vanduzen & Tift, Manufacturers of Bells, Church, Academy, Plantation, Factory, Steamboat, School-house, Chime, Fire-alarm, Tower-clock, Court-house, and Other Bells. (Vanduzen & Tift, 18??).

⁶⁷ Cist, Charles. The Cincinnati Miscellany. Vol. 1 (Cincinnati, OH: Caleb Clark, Printer, 1845), pages 123-124.

A photograph of a refurbished Buckeye Bell Foundry bronze church bell made in 1845 is shown in Figure 23. Although it was manufactured 2 years later than the bell at Hessen Cassel, it appears to be identical, except for the date. It better portrays the beauty of the bell and what the 1843 Hessen Cassel church bell originally looked like 172 years ago.

When the current brick church was built from 1857-1859, this 1843 Buckeye bell was undoubtedly taken from the old log church and mounted above the church entrance in a “low steeple”. Reference was made a couple of times to this church bell in the annals of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, who served at Hessen Cassel from 1863 to 1866.⁶⁸

In describing their religious hardships at Hessen Cassel, the Sisters’ annals record; “But their deprivation of Mass at least on one Sunday in every month and for most of the following week, when the pastor attended a mission church, was a sore trial.

Bravely, however, the Sisters tried to make the best of it by holding some service in the church. They even rang the bell to summon the people; when a group had assembled, a Sister would read aloud some Mass prayers by which they could unite themselves in spirit with the Holy Sacrifice being offered elsewhere.”

The bell was again mentioned regarding the fire that occurred at the newly-built brick church in 1864. The following is recorded:

“The Sisters had not been at Hessen Cassel a full year when on June 12, 1864, tragedy struck the village church....About one o’clock that Sunday afternoon, a postulate at the convent noticed smoke issuing from the church windows. Hastily, she notified the superior. The pastor [Rev. Martin Kink] had not yet returned from a neighboring mission, to which he had gone after offering an early Mass. One Sister ran to a neighboring farm house for help, but could find no one. In the meantime, Sister Hildegard had ventured into the church and rang the tower bell. Her hands were blistered from the heat of the rope, but the sound of the bell brought a man to give aid.” Thus, this church bell played a critical role in saving the church itself from total destruction.

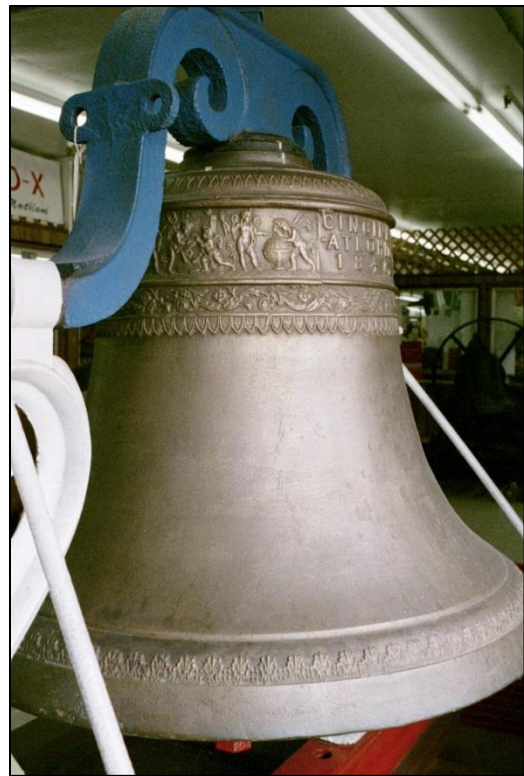


Figure 23 – Refurbished 1845 Buckeye Foundry church bell.

⁶⁸ Hill, Sister M. Pauline, S.F.P. *In Love with Christ’s Poor, The Story of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, 1858-1958*. (Compiled from the Annals of the Congregation, Provincial House of St. Clare, Cincinnati, Ohio), 1959. See pages 179-180.

Another reference to the church bell in the brick church was made in the records of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, who came to Hessen Cassel in 1868.⁶⁹ “Having arrived in Hesse Cassel late in the afternoon they were conducted to the little one-story convent building. While the luggage was being unloaded an evening meal was being prepared at a farmer’s house in the vicinity...After dinner the sexton rang the bells, of which there was but one, to call the faithful to Vespers.”

For the first 15 years of its existence, the brick church at Hessen Cassel had a low steeple, which contained the original 1843 church bell. However, around 1875, Fr. Joseph Nussbaum replaced the low steeple with the present lofty bell tower and steeple.⁷⁰ The 1843 Buckeye Foundry bell was remounted in the new steeple and is still in operation today, after more than 170 years.

The McShane Foundry Bell (1906)

In addition to the first church bell, a second, larger bell was purchased by the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish in 1906 and mounted in the belfry next to the original bell. This larger bell, cast from bronze (80% copper and 20% tin), weighs approximately 1200 pounds, about 3½ times more than the smaller 1843 bell. On the front it has the markings “MC SHANE BELL FOUNDRY CO. BALTIMORE, MD. 1906.”, while the reverse side has “MARIA - AGNES - ALOYSIUS. ST. JOSEPH’S CHURCH. MARION TOWNSHIP, INDIANA.” This bell is not nearly as ornate as the smaller 1843 bell, and is only decorated with 4 lines at the top, 3 lines in the middle, and 2 lines at the bottom rim. This traditional 4-3-2 line pattern marks all McShane bells (Fig. 24).

It is obvious from the casting marks (Fig. 25) that this bell was custom made by the McShane Bell Foundry in 1906 for the St. Joseph’s Catholic Church at Hessen Cassel (i.e. Marion Township).



Figure 24 - McShane Foundry Church Bell (1906), in the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church Bell Tower, 2014.

⁶⁹ Herber, Clara & Emil; Bobay, Esther & Arthur; Stemen, Mildred & Joseph; and Landin, Betty. “A Century in Review”. Unpublished notes compiled for the preparation of centenary celebration booklet titled The First Hundred, St. Joseph’s Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. Notes retyped with comments and additional information by Carl J. Kleber, 29 September 2013; copy located in the parish archives.

⁷⁰ St. Joseph’s Church, Hessen Cassel (Fort Wayne, IN). The First Hundred, St. Joseph’s Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Church, 1957), pages 8 & 19.

What is less obvious concerns the names “Maria – Agnes – Aloysius” cast on the side of the bell, which suggests some type of dedication or memorial (Fig. 26). The most reasonable explanation for these names is as follows. At this time in history, the Hessen Cassel parish had 4 societies or sodalities. The St. Aloysius Society was for the young, single men of the parish; the St. Agnes Society was for the single women; the Mary’s Altar Society was for the married women; and the St. Joseph’s Society was for

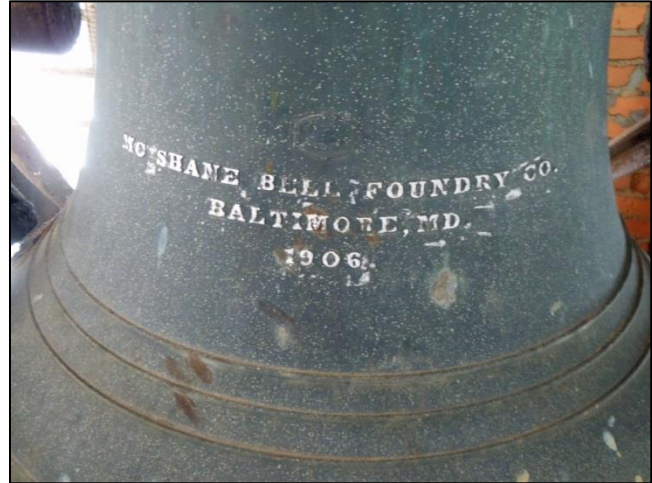


Figure 25 – McShane Bell (1906), casting information.

the married men. In all likelihood, these four religious societies pooled their resources and purchased the new bell for the parish, and the names of Mary, Agnes, Aloysius (and Joseph) were included on the bell in recognition of their parish groups. It is likely that the money to purchase the bell was generated by their joint efforts in sponsoring the annual parish picnic. Perhaps the proceeds from the 1905 or 1906 picnic were dedicated to purchase a new, larger, and louder bell for the growing parish (see mention of these 4 societies in the 1907 history by Alerding in Chapter 1 and the 1916 parish picnic article in Chapter 24 of his book).

The McShane Bell Foundry, which made the 1906 Hessen Cassel church bell, was founded by Henry McShane in 1856 in Baltimore, MD. It is still in operation to this day and has manufactured over 300,000 church bells which ring out from all four corners of the world. The success of the McShane Bell Foundry lies in the beautiful sound that their bells generate. A sketch of a typical McShane church bell is shown in Figure 27 and shows how the bell could be rung by pulling a rope to swing the yoke, causing the bell clapper to strike the inside of the bell; or pulling a rope attached to an external clapper that struck the stationary bell.



Figure 26 – McShane Bell (1906), casting information.

Bell Renovations

Beginning in 1906, the Hessen Cassel church had two nice bells in its bell tower to ring out the various occasions and notifications to the surrounding parish community. It is not known if only

one person was responsible for ringing the bells at the appropriate times, but at some point an electric timer was installed to ring the bells automatically.⁷¹

After the two church bells were in service together for over 100 years, they were in need of some maintenance and repair. An inspection in 2014 found that the larger McShane Bell had developed a crack in its support frame, which, if it broke, would result in this heavy 1,200 pound bell falling through the wooden scaffolding floor of the bell tower and crashing onto the church floor below. In addition, the electronic timer for the bells had started to malfunction during the past two years, and the parts required to repair the timer were no longer available.

In order to keep the church bells at Hessen Cassel ringing safely, one of the parishioners, Darrell Will, spearheaded the project to repair the bells. He personally contacted the current owners of both bell companies, both being descendants of the founding owners, and arranged for an on-site inspection and recommendations for repairs. The Verdin Bell Company was chosen to do the repairs. A special brace was made by the company in their foundry in order to repair the crack in the supporting A-frame of the big bell. Also, both bells were then made stationary on their respective frames so that they can no longer swing from their yokes. Instead, an electronic striker was installed on each bell in order to hit the stationary bells and thereby create the same ringing sound as if they were swinging.

In addition, Mr. Will obtained a new digital timer for the bells, which allowed for many different ringing patterns such as the call to worship, the Angelus, the funeral toll, and the hourly chime. This new system also allowed the priest to carry a remote control device, so that the bells could be played at will. The new digital timer, controller and wiring were installed around mid-2014 by Troy Girod, a fellow parishioner. Thus, the two old church bells at Hessen Cassel have been made fully operational once again to serve for many future generations.

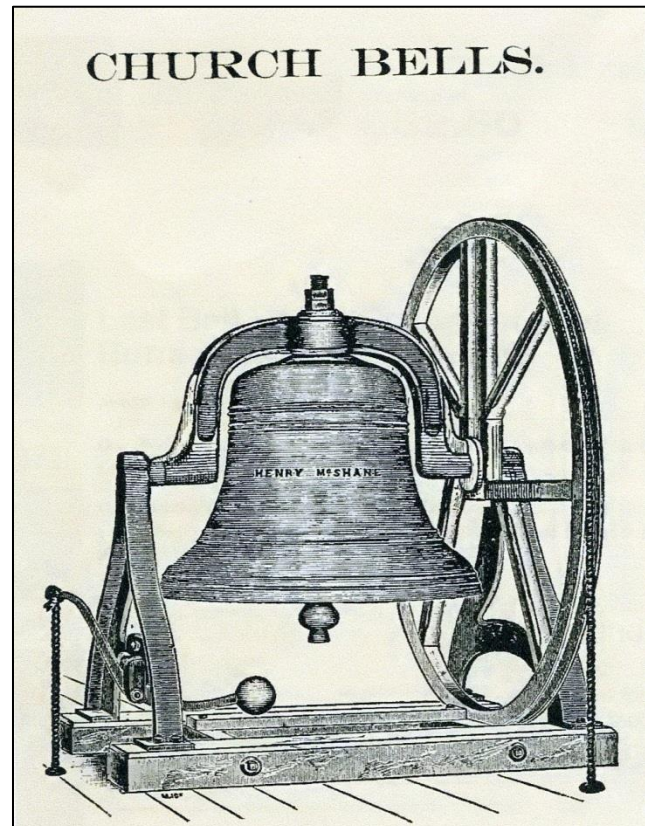


Figure 27- Sketch of a typical McShane church bell, yoke, and striker.

⁷¹ “Interview with Eileen (Minnich) Schuler, lifetime parishioner at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel church”; 24 October 2014.

Chapter 9 - The Name of Hessen Cassel

The St. Joseph church parish and vicinity became known as “Hessen Cassel” because the majority of the first settlers in the area had originated from various villages in the former German principality of Hessen Cassel, which is now a part of the large German State of Hesse. Alternate spellings of the name found in the records over the years include various combinations of “Hessen” or “Hesse” coupled with “Cassel”, “Cassell”, “Kassel” or “Castle”. At times in Germany the province was also called Kurhessen, which is often found spelled “Chur Hessen” in American census records.

Although not specifically referred to as “Hessen Cassel”, the earliest known mention of this German settlement was provided by Andrew Metzger, who made a journey on foot in May of 1836 from Shelby County, OH via the Piqua Road to Fort Wayne, IN in order to purchase land.^{72,73} He wrote that “From Shanesville to Willshire [Ohio] was almost an unbroken forest, and from there towards Fort Wayne until Marion township was reached the pioneer cabins were ‘few and far between’. **The heaviest settlement between St. Mary’s [Ohio] and Fort Wayne, then, was in Marion township, this county, where a number of Germans had located a year or two previous and had each made small improvements.**” Thus, as early as May 1836, the Hessen Cassel German settlers, most of who arrived in 1834, had carved out a noticeable niche in the wilderness several miles southeast of Fort Wayne. Mr. Metzger’s description of Fort Wayne is also of interest because it portrays exactly the scene that these first German settlers encountered. He wrote “...nothing was visible to indicate the near approach to the town [i.e. Fort Wayne] until we arrived in the vicinity of where the Cathedral now stands. The town itself was a mere hamlet or village, consisting of a few scattered houses along Columbia street, from Calhoun to Barr, and on Calhoun street south from Columbia for a square or two... Patches of hazel thickets and ponds of stagnant water, with here and there an Indian hut with the usual complement of dogs and other accompaniments, was about all that met the eye. The same may be said of the West End, except that here and there a cultivated field was to be seen. The public business was...confined exclusively to Columbia street...Dry goods, groceries, pork, lard, flour, tobacco, whiskey, furs and peltries, and in fact every conceivable commodity were to be found in the same storeroom...Two unpretentious hotels then afforded accommodations for the traveling public...one by Zenas Henderson...and the old Washington Hall...kept by Samuel Sowers. ...The block house [of the old fort] was still standing and in a good state of preservation and traces of the old fort were visible in many places. [Note: the abandoned old fort is where the Hessen Cassel German’s stayed until they were able to build cabins on their newly-purchased land southeast of Fort Wayne.]

⁷² “Personal Recollections of Fort Wayne and Some of the Pioneer Settlers of Allen County in 1836.” Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel, 16 September 1874, page 4.

⁷³ Jackson, John. “Early Recollections of Allen County”. *Allen County Lines* 39(no. 3): 64-69, 2015.

A second mention of the early Hessen Cassel settlement was made by John Dawson, who came from Ohio to Fort Wayne via the Piqua Road about 2 years later on 6 March 1838.^{74,75} “A few miles outside of Fort Wayne, Dawson passed a **small settlement of German Catholics ‘at or near where Hesse Cassel is now’**, and an occasional settler’s cabin. His first glimpse of Fort Wayne was... the spire of the old court house, and that of the old Catholic Church [St. Augustine] which stood where the Cathedral is now located.” Thus, as early as 1838, this rural site southeast of Fort Wayne is recognized specifically as a German Catholic settlement.

It is not known exactly when this German settlement in Marion Township was first being referred to by the name “Hessen Cassel”, but in the early baptismal records at St. Augustine Catholic Church (now the Fort Wayne Cathedral), Rev. Joseph Hamion included the identifier “Hessen Cassel” in the 19 April 1841 baptismal record for Catharina Hoffmann, daughter of Gundrum Hoffmann and Margaretha Kleinmann.⁷⁶ This reference predates the official establishment of the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish on 29 September 1841 and proves that the name “Hessen Cassel” had been established for the community even prior to the building of the log church. It is likely that the missionary priests in Fort Wayne coined the term to refer to this missionary “station”, or perhaps the German farm families themselves selected this name as an identifier. There is also a third possibility. Some of the Hessen Cassel Germans from the 1834 mass migration, instead of becoming farmers, settled in Fort Wayne and worked as canal laborers, shop owners, and skilled tradesmen. These fellow immigrant countrymen, perhaps even in a joking manner, may have likened the difficult trek from Fort Wayne to visit their friends and relatives in the wilderness as making the arduous trip back to their homeland in Hessen Cassel, Germany. Furthermore, visiting a rural place in Indiana with the same culture, language, customs, and lifestyle that they left behind was almost like being back in their old homeland, and thus they called it “Hessen Cassel”.

No matter how the name was first coined, the Catholic Church records verify that this rural farming community was called “Hessen Cassel” within a few years after the majority of German settlers from Hessen Cassel came there during the time period of 1832 -1834. Also, in the first church book of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish, on the pledge page dated 1 January 1845, Rev. Julian Benoit (native Frenchman) refers to the parish as the “Hesse Cassel Settlement”. Then one year later on 1 January 1846, Rev. Benoit again refers to it as the “Hesse Cassel Settlement”

⁷⁴ Poinsatte, Charles R. Fort Wayne During the Canal Era 1825-1855 (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1969), pages 114-115.

⁷⁵ Dawson, John W. “Charcoal Sketches of Old Times in Fort Wayne. Number III.” Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel, 14 March 1872, page 3, columns 5-6.

⁷⁶ Church Records of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana. Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Microfilm Roll No. 10, Item 4, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1831-1857; see Baptisms 1841, entry no. 82, Catharina Hoffmann, 19 April 1841. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1989); available at the Allen County (IN) Public Library, Genealogy Department Microtext Collection.

in the church book. On the church pledge pages dated 11 September 1848 and 11 September 1849, it is listed as “Hessen Cassel” by Rev. Edward Faller (German).

Town of Hessen Cassel (1863)

Over the years attempts were made to organize an actual incorporated town named “Hessen Cassel”. Although the area is still referred to as Hessen Cassel to this day, it is officially a part of the city of Fort Wayne, IN. The name is mainly associated with the parish, and also denotes the neighborhood or residential housing addition adjacent to the church.

On 6 June 1863, an actual plat was entered by Joseph Lang for a town by the name of Hessen Cassel which was located on the opposite (west) side of the Piqua plank road from the church property.^{77,78} It consisted of 33 lots situated on 3 streets named St. Joseph, St. Mary, and George Streets. Most of the lots were 56.8 feet by 191.4 feet. However, this town never came into existence, and the lots were all subsequently acquired by and added to the Christoph “Christ” Kleber farm. A sketch of the town plat (Helm - 1880) is shown below (Figure 28). The Piqua Plank Road parallels the diagonal line of the right side of this sketch.

Although this first attempt at forming a town failed, a residential neighborhood with the name of Hessen Cassel was established in 1947. The pastor at that time, Rev. Lawrence Gollner, arranged for the purchase of 27 acres of land, located just east of the church property, for establishing a residential area next to the church. On 10 March 1949, this land was joined with the church property, officially platted, and subdivided into 36 lots.⁷⁹ The lots and homes built on these lots were quickly purchased, mainly by Catholic families in the area, and has resulted in the continued growth of the parish. A plat map of this area is shown in Figure 29.

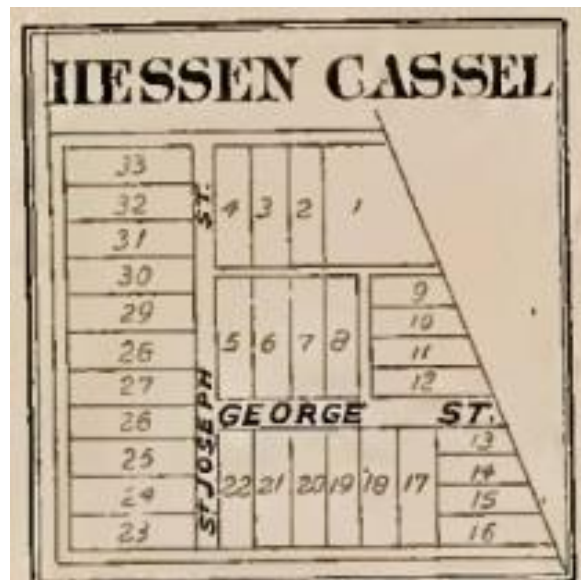


Figure 28 – Plat of Town of Hessen Cassel, IN, 1863

⁷⁷ “Plat of Hesse Cassel”, Allen County Indiana Deed Book 31, page 86, 6 June 1863. [R438]

⁷⁸ Bates, Roy M. “Paper Towns and Ghost Towns of Allen County”, *Old Fort News* Vol. 6 (no. 3): 3-12, December 1941; see page 9 “Hessen Cassel (1863)”. <http://smartcat.acpl.lib.in.us/?itemid=|acpl-bibs|ocm15560054>

⁷⁹ Noll, John F., Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne. “Plat of Hessen Cassel”, Allen County Indiana Plat Book 18, page 92, 10 March 1949.

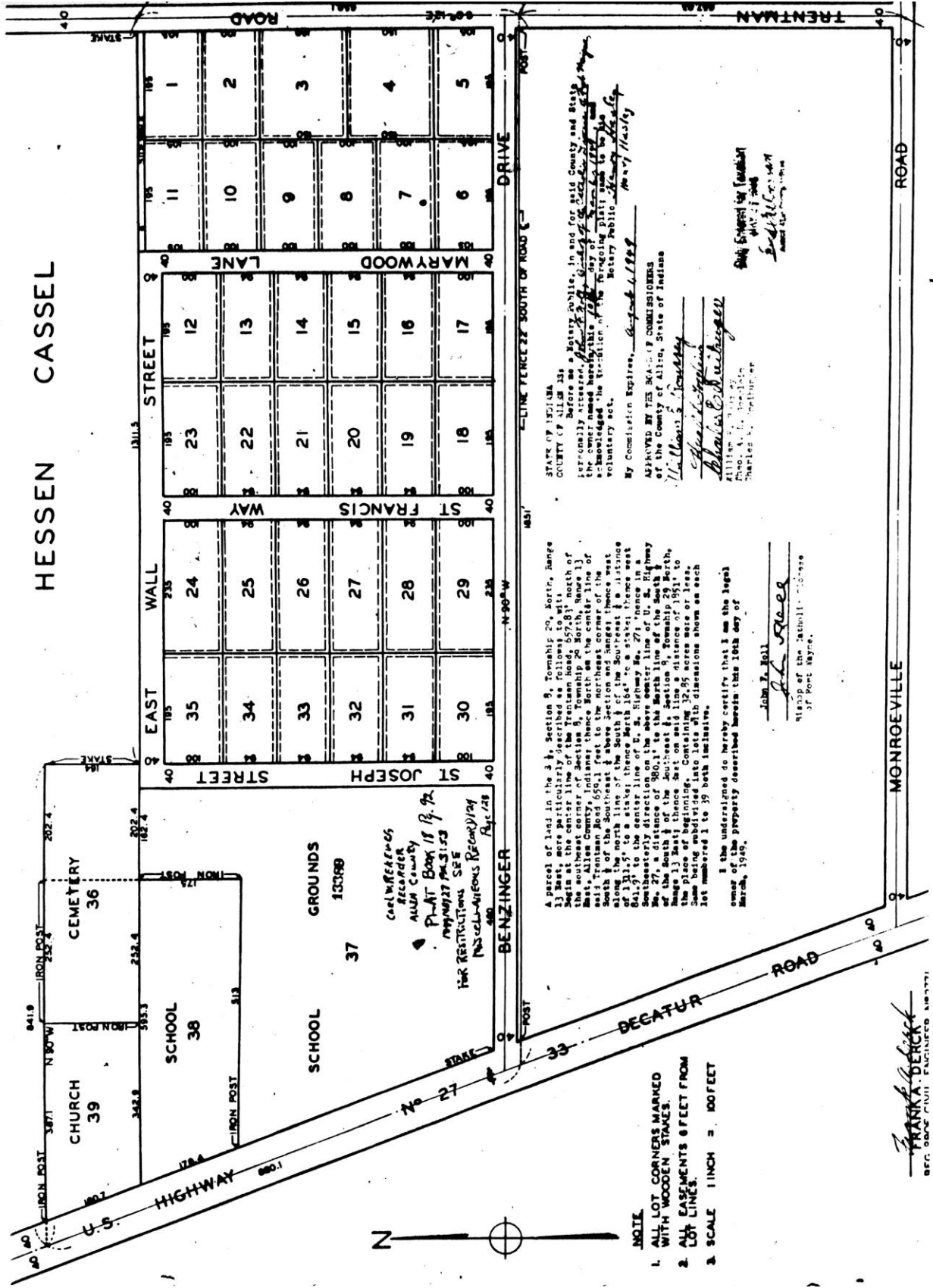


Figure 29- Plat of Hessen Cassel Church and Residential Addition, 1949.

Chapter 10 - The Old Cemetery (c. 1844 - 1860)

An early cemetery was established on the church grounds shortly after the log church was built in 1841. However, before burials could begin, the trees, stumps, and rocks had to be removed from this virgin land. The exact size and location of this first cemetery on the original one-acre tract is unknown, and it probably was expanded with use. It was most likely located to the rear (east) of the log church, although there was also open land available on the north side of the church. No county or sexton records regarding this first cemetery apparently survive.

There are two unpublished accounts regarding the first cemetery. The original notes for preparation of the 1957 centennial parish history contained the following mention of the cemetery: “When the present (brick) church was built, the old cemetery was moved to its present location. Some of the bodies were moved, but undoubtedly not all of them”.⁸⁰ Also, Clement H. Smith provided the following comment about the cemetery during a written interview conducted for the 1957 centennial: “The (first) cemetery was located in the rear where the present church now stands. Many of the graves were moved to the present cemetery”.⁸¹ Clement Smith was born in 1884, long after the fact, so his testimony is based on oral tradition. His words seem to indicate that the brick church was actually built upon part of the old cemetery, but this is most likely not the case. The bodies were not removed to the new cemetery until after the brick church was built, and all evidence indicates that the building site for the new church was specifically selected to avoid the old log church and the first cemetery, both of which were still in use at the time the new church was under construction.

Burial Records and Grave Markers

The first recorded burial in the old cemetery found in the first parish church book is dated 1 March 1845, for Joseph Klug, a 6 month-old child.⁸² Then on 8 March 1845, Barbara Sorg, about 34 years old, wife of Martin Klug (and mother of the above-deceased child), was buried. Thus, land for the old cemetery had been cleared and established for burials by this time point (1845), if not earlier. Unfortunately, the burial records in the first parish book are incomplete and sporadic. There are early tombstones from the old cemetery now in the current cemetery for burials that were not recorded in the first church book. Conversely, there are burials recorded in

⁸⁰ Herber, Clara & Emil; Bobay, Esther & Arthur; Stemen, Mildred & Joseph; and Landin, Betty. A Century in Review. Unpublished notes compiled for the preparation of centenary celebration booklet titled The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. Notes retyped with comments and additional information by Carl J. Kleber, 29 September 2013; copy located in the parish archives.

⁸¹ Smith, Clement H. “Interview conducted for the preparation of the centenary celebration booklet titled The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957.” c.1957; copy located in the parish archives.

⁸² Kleber, Carl J. St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Catholic Church : Marion Township, Allen County, Indiana : Church book no. 1, baptisms, marriages, deaths, 1841-1873 (Fort Wayne, Ind. : C.J. Kleber, 1990), page 60.

the church book for people that no longer have (or never had) a grave marker in the old or new cemetery.

It is not known for certain where the early Hessen Cassel settlers buried those in their community that died from 1832 until the parish cemetery was established around 1844, but those Catholics dying during this time period were probably either buried at St. Augustine parish cemetery in Fort Wayne, or perhaps on the family farms. The burial records for St. Augustine (now the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception) are also very sparse and assuredly incomplete. For example, the first burial recorded at St. Augustine was in 1834 and it was the only one for the entire year. There were no burial records for the years 1835 and 1836. The burial records then begin in 1837 and run through 1849, with no records again for the years 1850 to 1852. Only a few residents of Hessen Cassel were found mentioned in these early St. Augustine burial records (1837-1845). The earliest record was for the burial of an infant child of Johann Sorg on 3 April 1837 at St. Augustine, Fort Wayne. The next year, on 17 November 1838, Theresa Lahrmann, infant daughter of Matthias and Maria (Bauer) Lahrmann, was buried at St. Augustine. Then on 10 September 1839, Caspar Henry Bargas, son of Martin and Elisabeth (Dahmann) Bargas was buried. In 1840, three known Hessen Cassel residents were found in the burial records – 20 May 1840, Catharina Grün, first wife of Joseph Grün; 2 September 1840, Mary Trentman, daughter of Bernard and Mary Trentman; and 30 October 1840, Caspar Lewis Beckmann, son of Henry William and Nina Beckmann. No Hessen Cassel residents were listed in the St. Augustine burial records for the years 1841 to 1850 and thereafter, except for one person. On 30 September 1844, Anna Margareth Sorg, age 29, wife of Joseph Auth was buried “in Hesse Cassel”, age 29, by Fr. Rudolf. Thus, this last record helps pinpoint when the first cemetery at Hessen Cassel was established, as this is the earliest recorded burial in the cemetery. In summary, it appears that the land for the first cemetery at Hessen Cassel was cleared of trees and opened for burials almost 3 years to the date after the parish was established on 29 September 1841.

Location and Size

At St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish, from about 30 September 1844 up to 1861, the burials occurred in the first (old) cemetery. Based on the parish church burial records during this time frame, 21 burials were made in the first cemetery by the visiting missionary priests. However, this number is certainly much higher due to the incomplete burial records. Since a burial (unlike a baptism or marriage) was an event that could not be scheduled or arranged in advance with an itinerant priest (who visited about once a month), many deceased were buried in those days without an attending minister. Indeed, there exist today in the “new” church cemetery 9 tombstones for people that died during the period 1844-1861 for which there are no burial records in the church book (and these people were obviously removed from the old to the new cemetery). Furthermore, there are at least 11 other known parishioners that died during this period for which no burial record or tombstone currently exists. These additional people were most likely buried in the old church cemetery as well, which means that there were at least 41

people, and probably more, buried in the old cemetery before the new cemetery was opened. Thus, a conservative estimate is that approximately 50 people were buried in the old cemetery over the 17-year period from 1844 to 1861. And based on a standard-sized 19th century grave site of 3 feet by 8 feet, calculations show that the old cemetery would require a minimum of 1,200 square feet for the burial of 50 people, and this is assuming that all the burials were adjacent to each other with no space between any graves. Arranging the layout of the graves in the most organized manner (a rectangle), the minimum dimensions of the old cemetery was likely at least 32 feet by 39 feet (1,248 sq. ft.). In fact, assuming that each family had their own plot (as is customary), then the burials were likely scattered over an even larger area than calculated since not all the graves in each plot would necessarily have been filled. An actual minimum size of 40 x 50 feet for the old cemetery is probably more realistic. Although this pioneer cemetery did not take up a sizable amount of space on the original 1-acre church lot, its presence and location nevertheless appears to have been a significant factor regarding the future building site for the new, brick church. Furthermore, the burials in the first cemetery probably occurred by happenstance and were not very well organized. And with the construction of the nearby new church, the amount of space available for future burials was likely limited and restricted. These factors were probably the prime reason that the old cemetery was closed and a new, well-organized cemetery was created.

Although the actual site and dimensions of the old cemetery are unknown, the actions taken by the parishioners upon building the new brick church provide some indication of its location. In 1857, the site of the new brick church was shifted to the south of the original one-acre church property and necessitated the purchase of more land. This suggests that the old cemetery was behind the old log church and perhaps along the north side of the new church. It is unlikely that the new church was built over any portion of the old graveyard, especially since it appears that the new cemetery was not opened until after the brick church was completed.

Relocation of the Graves

One major unanswered question pertains to whether or not all the bodies were removed from the old to the new cemetery around 1861. Oral tradition indicates that not all the bodies were moved, which means that some of the early deceased members of the parish are still located in the original one-acre church plot. With regard to German culture, these Hessen Cassel immigrants may not have been deeply concerned about relocating the grave sites of their deceased members. In Germany, with land at a premium, grave sites were never considered something “permanent” and they were re-used after so many years, as is the case even today. Thus, it may not have been a high priority for the surviving relatives, if still in the vicinity, to try to move their deceased to new family plots. However, during the mid-1800’s in the United States, a rural cemetery was no longer considered just a place to bury the dead, but also a permanent place to memorialize them. Land was plentiful. Thus, tombstones became more permanent and decorative, and Catholic cemeteries were often laid out with most of the graves

arranged so that the deceased people faced either a main crucifix or the church in preparation for the Resurrection. Furthermore, the Catholic Church would consecrate the ground of the cemetery for this sole and eternal purpose. This may explain the extraordinary effort made by the Heinrich Sack family to have all their family members buried together in a single family plot of the new Hessen Cassel cemetery despite the early deaths of several children long before even the log church and first cemetery were ever established. Indeed, the German immigrants at Hessen Cassel were always well-organized, and it is unlikely that they would open a new cemetery and just haphazardly relocate the old graves. Most likely, they made a concerted effort to conduct the job properly and thoroughly.

There is some concern that the condition of the removed bodies may have impacted the re-location procedure. Without modern embalming of the bodies, along with the use of wooden coffins, the decomposition of the bodies may have resulted in few or no identifiable human remains available for re-burial in some cases. On the other hand, most of the bodies would only have been interred for a period ranging from 1 to 17 years at the maximum, and the heavy clay soil in the region would minimize the decomposition process. Therefore, the task may not have been difficult, although it was surely not pleasant. Typically, each family was responsible for removing their deceased members, but sometimes a hired group performed the task. However, based on the strong organized and self-reliant nature of these German settlers, it was probably done respectfully en masse by the men of the congregation. Taking all factors into consideration, it can be assumed that all of the bodies were relocated to the new cemetery, thereby opening the area of the former cemetery within the original 1-acre site for future use.

It is not known if those early Hessen Cassel parishioners buried at St. Augustine's in Fort Wayne were removed and buried in the new Hessen Cassel cemetery. It has been written that when the bodies of those buried at St. Augustine (at the current Cathedral Square) were re-located in order to build the Cathedral, wagon loads of bones were hauled away to the newly opened (now Old) Catholic Cemetery near Broadway and only the grave of Chief Richardville was left behind.⁸³ It is possible that the unclaimed and unknown bodies (there were many unknown Irish workers that died while building the canal) at Cathedral Square cemetery were buried in a single mass grave at the Old Catholic cemetery. In those days it was the responsibility of the family to have the bodies of relatives re-interred when a cemetery was abandoned. This was the case when the current (New) Catholic Cemetery in Fort Wayne was opened in 1874, and the bodies of all the early Catholics in Fort Wayne were required to be moved here from the Old Catholic cemetery. Thus, some bodies were actually re-interred twice.

One person known to have been buried in the old cemetery at Hessen Cassel and later removed to the new cemetery was Anton Fuchs, whose tombstone is now located on lot 71 of Section A.

⁸³ Robertson, Robert S. Valley of the Upper Maumee River, with historical account of Allen County and the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The story of its progress from savagery to civilization. (Madison, WI: Brant & Fuller, 1889); see Lang, Rev. John F. "The Catholic Church in Allen County", vol. 2, page 413.

A story about his funeral exists in an unpublished family history of the Anton Fuchs/Fox family as told by Clement H. Smith.⁸⁴ It relates the following: “In 1852, Anthony Fox died of the cholera – my mother [Mary Ann Fuchs, born 1845] seven years old then. Sophia, Elizabeth and my mother [the children of Anton Fuchs] sat on the coffin when they took him to the church for the funeral.”

⁸⁴ Smith, Clement H. Anton Fuchs/Fox Family History (Typed, unpublished manuscript: Allen Co., IN, c1950); copy in possession of Carl J. Kleber.

Chapter 11 - The Brick Church (1857 - Present)

In 1857, the parishioners of Hessen Cassel, consisting of approximately 52 families, initiated the building of a new, brick church in order to replace the old log church and to obtain a full-time, resident priest (this was Rev. Jacob Mayer, who took up residence circa September 1862). In order to build this church, additional land to the south was acquired, probably out of necessity (1) to circumvent the old log church and the first cemetery, both of which were still in use at the time, and (2) in order to have the new church face directly across from the end of the Bostick Road. It appears that an acre of land along the south border of the original church lot was obtained, at least verbally, from Johann Georg Sorg (1807-1879) in 1857. However, the official deed of conveyance from George and Maria Barbara Sorg to Bishop John H. Luers was not formalized until 28 December 1859, which is 2 years after the 1857 date of the “cornerstone” plaque.⁸⁵ The Bishop paid them \$20 for this acre (fair market value), but again, it is not known if the money was actually accepted or donated back to the church. It was not unusual in those days for the official transfer of land to occur only after the project for its intended use (e.g. a church, cemetery, etc.) was completed. This provided the seller (or donator) of the land to the church with some leverage to insure that his land was used for the intended purpose and that it was completed as promised. So, in this case, the date for the deed, 28 December 1859, actually indicates that construction of the brick church was completed around this time. This date is further supported by Fr. Weninger, who wrote in his memoirs, “I then went to Fort Wayne, the new bishopric, and **conducted a mission in the recently finished German church**; then hastened to Cincinnati to be present and preach at the dedication of St. Francis’ Church (which was consecrated on 18 December 1859).”⁸⁶ Thus, this mission held in the newly constructed “German church” at Hessen Cassel occurred during the first part of December 1859. Furthermore in 1859, the erection of the convent/school building was also completed on Georg Sorg’s new acre of land. It is interesting to note that the new brick church was built directly over the section line with the north half of the church located on the former Schmidt-Kleber land and the other south half on the new Sorg property. This may have been done not only so that the front door of the church faced directly across from the end of the Bostick road, but also to perhaps appease both land donators regarding the new church’s location.

⁸⁵ “Deed of Sale from George and Maria Barbara Sorg to John H. Lures[sic], Bishop of Fort Wayne, Allen Co. IN” Allen County, IN Deed Book Y, pages 91-92, 28 December 1859 (recorded 30 January 1860).

⁸⁶ Blakely, Susan X. (translator). Memoirs of My Life in Europe and America through 80 years – 1805 to 1885, by Francis Xavier Weninger, Missionary of the Society of Jesus. (Columbus, OH: unpublished German manuscript, 1886). This handwritten translation was subsequently transcribed and typed, but never published. The original German title is Erinnerungen aus Meiner Leben in Europa und Amerika durch achtzig Jahre, 1805 bis 1885. These documents are currently located at the Midwest Jesuit Archives, St. Louis, MO. See page 185.

Construction

Although there are conflicting dates about the building of the brick church, a stone plaque on the exterior of the church is dated 1857, and thus apparently confirms that this was the year that construction was at least started. There was an economic recession in the United States in 1857, so this may have delayed the construction of the church. It is not known who built the church or where the construction materials were obtained, but the total cost was a little more than \$5,000.⁸⁷ The church's stained glass windows, comprised of 10 tall ones and one circular rose window with a small central cross, were obtained from a Protestant church in Germany and shipped to Hessen Cassel, IN.^{88,89} Figure 30 shows the 4 main windows on the north side and one of the front windows, respectively. The other 5 large windows are symmetrically identical.

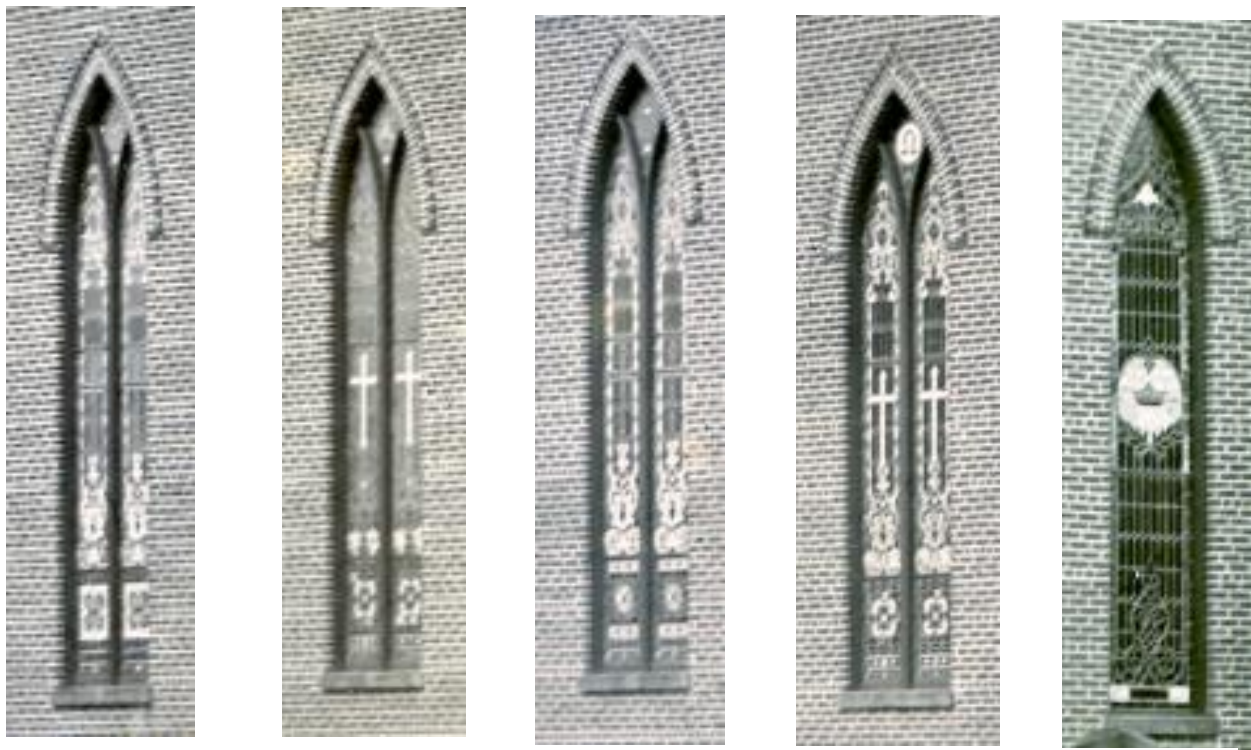


Figure 30 – Stained Glass Windows at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, IN; the first four are on the north side of the church wall, the last one is on the left front by the main entrance (1892)

⁸⁷ Robertson, Robert S. Valley of the Upper Maumee River, with historical account of Allen County and the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The story of its progress from savagery to civilization. (Madison, WI: Brant & Fuller, 1889); see Lang, Rev. John F. “The Catholic Church in Allen County. - St. Joseph’s Church”, vol. 2, page 432.

⁸⁸ Vendrely, Nancy. “Historic Hessen Cassel Church Has Stood Test of Time.” Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette. People Southeast, 17 February 1998, page 7.

⁸⁹ Little, Sharon. “150 Years Celebrated at St. Joseph, Hessen Cassel.” Today’s Catholic, 25 November 2001, pages 1, 12 - 13.

The physical dimension of the new brick church was 80 feet by 42 feet and it could accommodate 250 people.⁹⁰ The previous sketch of the church property in Figure 12 shows the dimensions of the church as 78 feet by 42 feet.

Although the church construction was apparently started in 1857, there are many contradictions in historical records regarding its completion. Various sources state the erection of the brick church was completed in 1860 (Newton), 1862 (Lang), 1868 (Berry), 1861 (Alerding), and 1867 (Noll). However, based on the dates for the aforementioned land deed record and the mission conducted by Fr. Weninger, the construction of the church was completed by December 1859. Furthermore, in the 16 December 1861 deed of sale between Sebastian Kleber and Bishop John H. Luers pertaining to the land for the new cemetery, its location is described as: “One acre of land surveyed as follows, beginning at the south east corner of the lot where **the Catholic Church (brick) of Hesse Cassel has been erected**, thence...”⁹¹ This deed confirms that the new brick church was in existence by the end of 1861.

According to the parish’s centennial history booklet, the new brick church was not officially dedicated by Bishop Luers until 1863, at which time it was placed under the patronage of St. Joseph. However, no historical records of any type, including those at the diocesan archives, were able to confirm that this event ever occurred. The parishioners probably selected St. Joseph because he is the patron saint of travelers and immigrants. It is not known for certain if the 1841 log church was also called St. Joseph Church, but it is very likely. Evidence supporting this assumption is found in Helm’s 1880 History of Allen Co., IN which states: “In 1841, the members of the Catholic Church living near Hessen-Cassel formed an organization to which they gave the name of St. Joseph’s Congregation, and immediately erected a frame church on the Piqua road.”⁹² Although a secondary source, this early historical work seems to be fairly reliable and accurate.

⁹⁰ Alerding, Herman J. The Diocese of Fort Wayne. 1857 – September 22 – 1907. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Archer Printing Co., 1907), see “Hesse Cassel, St. Joseph’s Church, 1851”, page 242.

⁹¹ “Deed of Sale from Sebastian and Catharine Kleber to John H. Luers, Bishop of Fort Wayne, Allen Co. IN”, Allen County, IN, Deed Book 28, pages 325-326, 16 December 1861 (recorded 17 February 1862).

⁹² Helm, Thomas B. History of Allen County, Indiana: with illustrations and biographical sketches of some of its prominent men and pioneers: to which is appended maps of its several townships and villages. (Chicago: Kingman Brothers, 1880); see Newton, L. H. “Marion Township – St. Joseph’s Church (Catholic)”, page 159.

The 1857 “Cornerstone” Marker

There may be some question about the time that the 1857 “cornerstone” plaque, marking the date of construction, was first placed in the side of the church. The plaque is currently mounted under the stained glass window located to the left of the main church entrance (Figure 31). Under the stained glass window on the opposite side of the main entrance is a similar stone plaque with the date 1927, which marks when a major remodeling project was conducted (Figure 32). However, in the 1892 and c. 1910 photographs of the Hessen Cassel church, there are no such stone plaques under either window. In fact, the 1857 stone plaque is not visible on either side of the church in these two old photos. This suggests two scenarios. Firstly, the 1857 stone marker was mounted during the original construction of the church in a different location that was not readily observable and then moved to its current visible location at the time of the 1927 remodeling project, in conjunction with a similar 1927 stone marker being mounted for symmetry. Alternatively, the 1857 and 1927 stone markers were both made at the same time in 1927 and mounted under the church windows to commemorate the original construction date and the remodeling date.



**Figure 31 – St. Joseph’s Church,
1857 stone marker.**

The first scenario is probably more plausible. During the 1927 remodeling, only the interior of the church was affected and no exterior addition was made, which brings into question the necessity of having a new date marker placed on the exterior. The interior walls of the church were repaired and painted, the choir stairs replaced, the confessional box moved to the front, right side of the church, and the rear room behind the altar was made into a chapel. It is likely that the original 1857 stone marker was located somewhere inside the church, and needed to be moved due to all the remodeling. It was probably decided to mount this stone on the outside of the church under one of the main front windows, and to include a second stone for the 1927 remodeling project under the opposite window both for symmetry and in commemoration of the interior improvements. It seems unlikely that an exterior date marker specifically to commemorate the 1927 project would have been made unless one already existed for the 1857 construction date. Another exterior stone marker dated 2001 was subsequently placed on the outside wall of the church to commemorate the recent major expansion of the church exterior that year.



**Figure 32 – St. Joseph’s Church,
1927 Stone Marker**

Presently, it is not known for certain if the 1857 stone maker is contemporary with the actual brick church. Until the source of the 1857 stone marker is confirmed, the actual date the brick church was built (or construction started) will remain open to question.

Interior Furnishings

Besides the building itself, many special accoutrements are typically needed for a Catholic Church, such as an altar, tabernacle, statues, organ, bell, candle holders, pews, Stations of the Cross, etc. Based on information published about the 1864 church fire at Hessen Cassel, it is known that the church had some beautiful Munich statues, a sanctuary lamp hanging from a rope, a bell in the tower pulled with rope, an altar, and a tabernacle, which contained a gold ostensorium for exhibition of the Eucharistic host and ciborium for storing the sacred hosts. It is very likely that these specialty items were also obtained from religious groups in Germany, who often contributed to the Missions in America. Indeed, the Stations of the Cross, which had inscriptions written in German, may have also been procured from Germany. The German wording on these Stations of the Cross was painted over around the time of the First World War. During the last major renovation (2001), an attempt was made to uncover and restore the original wording, but it was not feasible. A photograph of one of the restored stained glass windows along with a Station of the Cross is shown below in Figure 33.

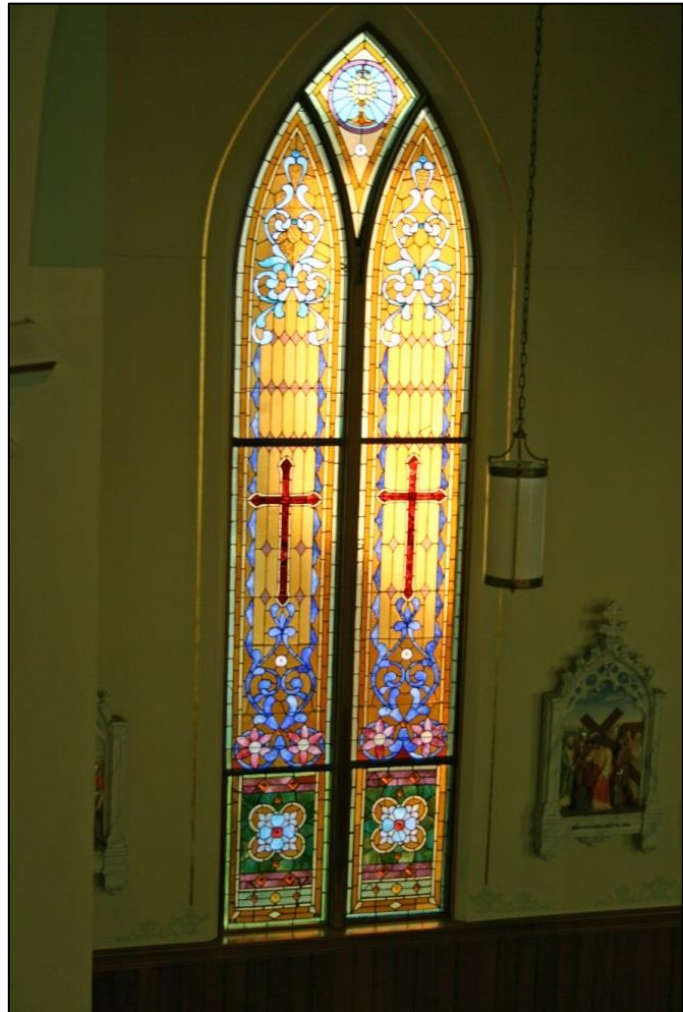


Figure 33 - Stained Glass Window (from a German Protestant Church c. 1857) & Station of the Cross, St. Joseph Church, Hessen Cassel, IN - 2014

All the original stained glass windows are still in the church except for the smaller round window comprised of 10 rose petals surrounding a small cross in the center. It was located above the main entrance to the church just below the bell tower and can be seen in the 1892 photograph of the church with Fr. John Mark (see Figure 35). However, at some time between 1910 and 1953 something must have happened to this circular piece of stained glass. Perhaps it was broken by hail or some other severe weather. Regardless, it was replaced by the current round window

comprised of a simple block cross with a square in the center (Figure 34). This replacement piece of stained glass is also visible in the 1957 photograph of the church on the cover of the parish centennial commemoration booklet.

Also around the time (c. 1860) the brick church was completed, a white barn/stable was constructed on the Hessen Cassel church grounds behind the former brick rectory (current parish office).^{93,94} It was used to shelter the horses of the pastor and those of the school children when they came to school.



Figure 35 – Original circular stained glass window (1857)



Figure 34 –Circular stained glass window replacement.

Later, there was also a garage that was used to store horse buggies and surreys before automobiles became the main mode of transportation. Currently, there is also a small, 1-story barn/shed with old wooden beams and plank floor that still stands near the cemetery. It is used as a storage building for maintenance of the church grounds and cemetery. It is unlikely that it was ever used to stable horses because its floor is wooden and not dirt or concrete.

Photographs of the Church (1892 - 2014)

Actual photographs of the exterior and interior of the church taken in 1892 with Rev. John Mark standing in front are shown below in Figures 36 and 37.⁹⁵ Smaller copies of these photos were also published in the 1957 parish centennial booklet. Fr. Mark is standing approximately where the log church was probably located.

⁹³ Sieminski, Barbara J. “Parish Profile. St. Joseph Hessen Cassel.” *Today’s Catholic*, No. 22:11-14, May 29, 1994.

⁹⁴ St. Joseph Catholic Church Hessen Cassel website www.stjosephhc.com/historystjoseph.htm. This history article by Nancy Vendrely reprinted with permission from the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, 17 February 1998.

⁹⁵ “Photographs of St. Joseph Hessen Church Exterior and Interior with Rev. John Mark, 1892”, Originals obtained from Emil Herber (1915-1997), Hessen Cassel, IN; now in possession of Carl J. Kleber.



Figure 36 - Rev. John Mark standing in front of St. Joseph Catholic Church and Rectory, Hessen Cassel, IN - 1892.



Figure 37 - Rev. John Mark standing in front of the main altar, St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, IN - 1892

A photograph taken around 1910 which shows the church from another angle is shown in Figure 39. From this vantage point it appears that the mission cross is no longer standing on the south side of the church as depicted in the 1876 sketch.

Another older photograph of the church from a rear angle was taken in 1914 using a glass slide technique (see Figure 38). An image was obtained from the glass slide by means of a modern scanner.⁹⁶ This is the rear south side of the church. Note the decorative pattern of the shingles on the roof. Again, no sign of the mission cross is present. Two girls can be seen walking along the main corridor of the church campus.

Figure 39 - St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, IN (c. 1910)

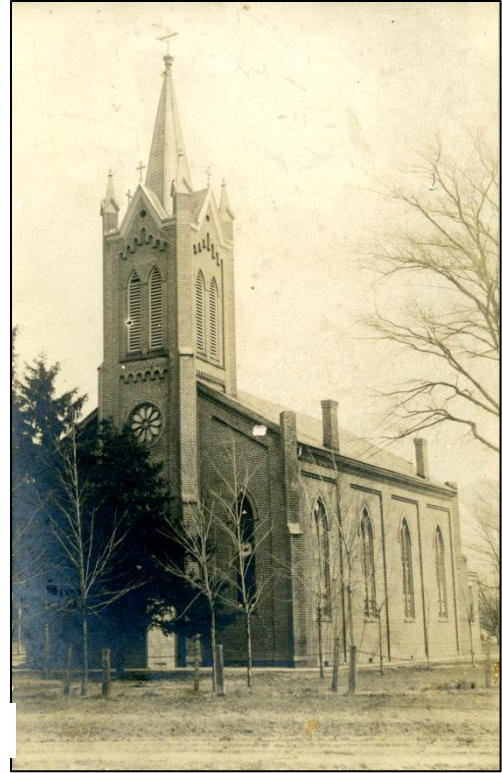


Figure 38– St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church (c. 1914)



⁹⁶ “Glass Slide Image of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church, 1914.” Original slide owned by Albert J. Minnick (1892-1979) and then Myrtle (Minnick) Wilson (1924-2000); now in possession of Donald Wilson, Elkhart, IN.

In 1953, a local artist, Rozella Z. Hinton, drew a sketch of St. Joseph's Church at Hessen Cassel as part of a special newspaper series on the churches of Fort Wayne, which has often been noted as the "City of Churches".⁹⁷ An image of the sketch as it appeared in the newspaper is shown in Figure 40. From this sketch it is evident that the original circular stain glass window (with the flower-petal design) above the main entrance has been replaced. Since it faced west, the original window was probably broken beyond repair due to a severe storm. It is known that the halo on the cemetery crucifix statue was destroyed during a hail storm around 1920. Of course vandalism may be another reason, but it was unlikely changed during one of the renovation projects.

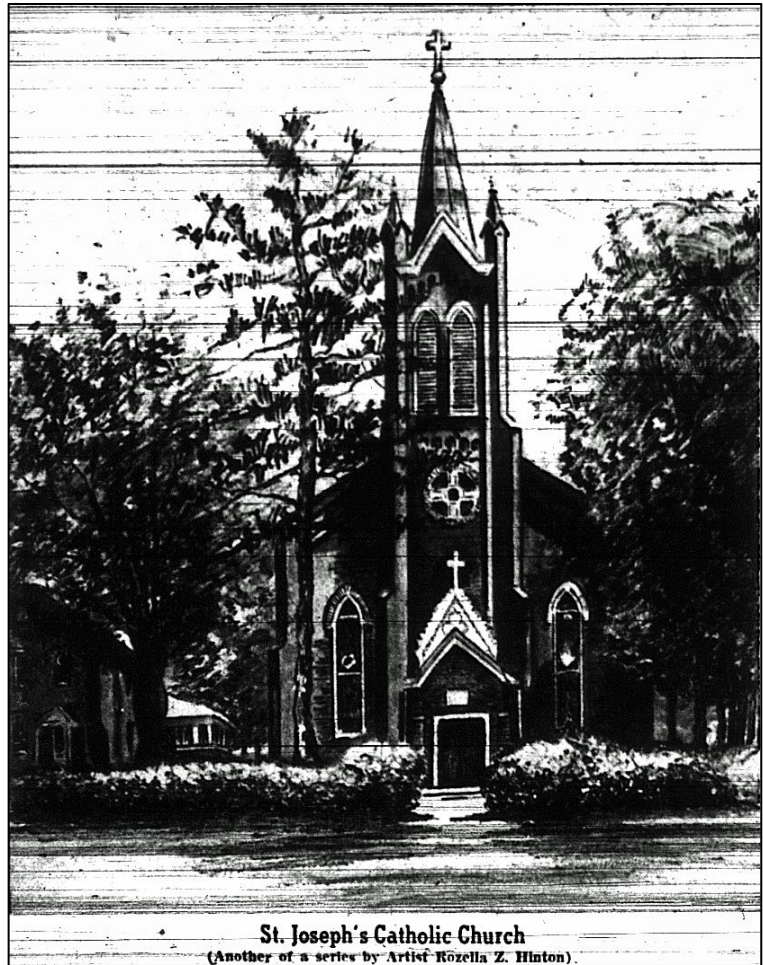


Figure 40 – Sketch of Hessen Cassel Church (1953)

It is unknown exactly when or why this circular window was replaced, but the interior brickwork within the steeple provides evidence that it was replaced professionally. Based on existing photographs, the window must have been changed sometime between 1910 to 1950. And since the current senior parishioners have no knowledge of the cause, it must have happened circa 1920.

The replaced circular glass window, which is still present in the church today (2015), is also evident in the 1957 photograph of the church (see Figure 42) appearing on the cover of the centennial history booklet,⁹⁸ and in 1981 and 2012 color photos of the church (Figures 41 & 43). A color version of the 1876 sketch of the church on the front page of this book, painted by a local artist, Cindi Rosswurm, is shown in Figure 44.

⁹⁷ Hinton, Rozella Z.. "St. Joseph's Catholic Church." *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, 12 July 1953.

⁹⁸ St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel (Fort Wayne, IN). *The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957*. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Church, 1957).



Figure 42 – St. Joseph Church (1957)



Figure 41- St. Joseph Church (1981)



Figure 43 –Remodeled St. Joseph Church (2014)

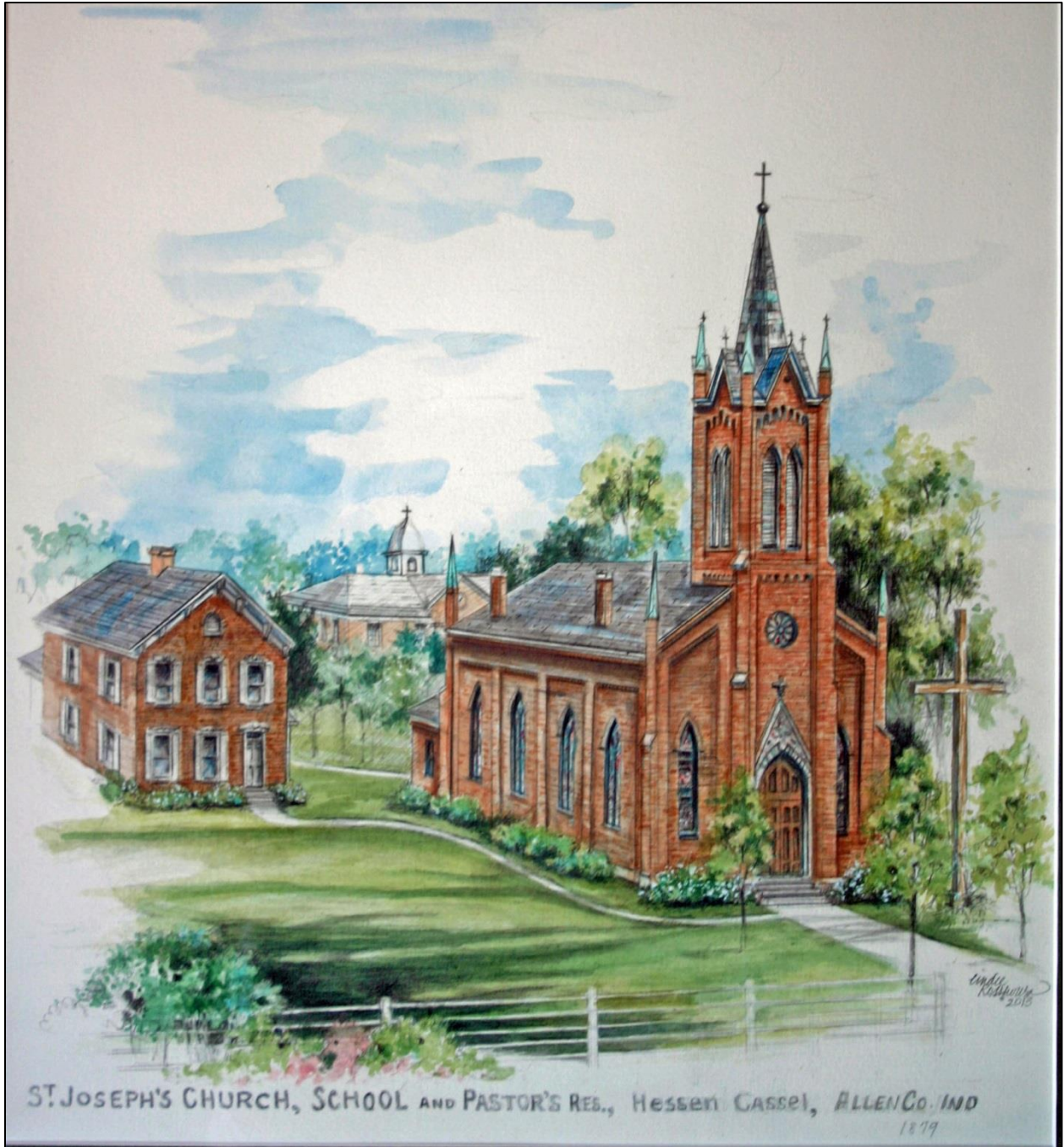


Figure 44 – Color Rendition of the 1876 Sketch of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Parish Grounds, by Cindie Rosswurm, 2013. Original in possession of Carl Kleber.

Chapter 12 - The Mission Cross (1859)

The Hessen Cassel centennial parish history booklet (1957) makes mention of a large mission cross that was an integral part of the parish's history. It relates that: "The first mission preached here was conducted by the Rev. F. X. Weninger, S. J. To commemorate this event, a huge mission cross was erected. Hewn out of heavy timbers, it measured fifteen feet high and stood a short distance south of the present church edifice. Catherine Schmidt, who witnessed these happenings, tells an interesting anecdote in connection with the erection of this memorial. It seems that the only stone-mason available for the construction of the cross's foundation was so completely crippled with arthritis that he could not walk. Accordingly, he was carried to the spot to supervise the work. This man of deep faith, who had been unable to take a step for a long time arose, piously kissed the cross, and to the amazement of all, walked away, apparently cured of his ailment." This mission cross can be seen standing to the far right of the church in the 1876 sketch of the Hessen Cassel parish grounds presented on the cover page, and also in Figure 44.

With much research, it has been possible to determine (1) the approximate date of the mission given by Fr. Weninger, (2) the source of the story by the eyewitness, Catherine Schmidt, and (3) the identity of the crippled mason. First of all, some background information must be provided regarding the missionary, Rev. Francis X. Weninger (Figure 45). A good summary of the life and accomplishments of Fr. Weninger is presented in the 150-year history of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese by White.⁹⁹ During the 19th century, parish missions were a very common and important practice for developing the Catholic faith and educating the many Catholic immigrants in America. During the mission, a missionary priest specializing in this work would visit a parish for a week of intense preaching and instruction along with hearing confessions and offering Holy Communion. Many new parish churches were formed in the Fort Wayne Diocese during the 1850's and were visited by the Jesuit priest, Francis X. Weninger, who was nationally renowned on the parish mission circuit. His parish missions were carefully planned religious events with the principal aim of motivating the parishioners to confess their sins, receive Holy Communion, and maintain fervent religious practices in their daily lives. Often he conducted mission renewals in the same parish as a means of re-enforcing their religious commitment. To help promote religious understanding among the parishioners, Fr. Weninger would provide a

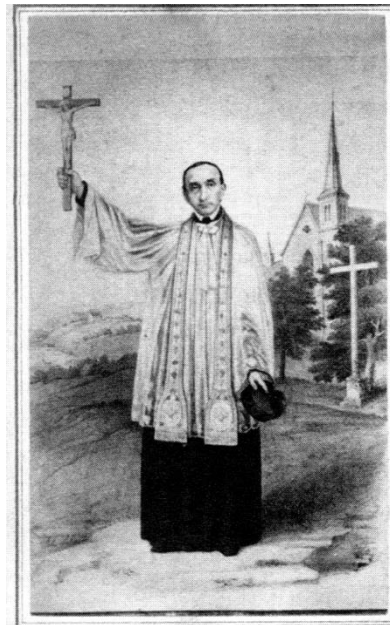


Figure 45 – Fr. Francis X. Weninger & a mission cross shown on the right.

⁹⁹ White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ : a History of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend : Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Diocese and Catholic Life in Northern Indiana. (Fort Wayne, Ind. : The Diocese, 2007), see pages 62-65, "The Parish Mission".

mission book with prayers and other instructional material to be used during his visit. A mission typically lasted about one week. The Weninger mission would conclude with an elaborate procession culminating with the erection of a large wooden mission cross, which was at least thirty feet high, next to the parish church. The purpose of this massive cross was to remind the congregation of their repentance and commitment to the sacramental life provided by the mission. In most cases, Jesus and Mary's names and the mission's date were engraved on the cross along with the words: "Whoever perseveres to the end will be saved."

Mission at St. Mary's Church, Fort Wayne (1849)

Fr. Weninger came to America from Austria in 1848 and during his 37-years career conducted approximately 800 parish missions across the United States. One of his earliest parish missions was conducted at the newly-built St. Mary's Catholic Church in Fort Wayne upon its opening in late 1849.¹⁰⁰ The reference states that: "In 1848 the thirty German families of Fort Wayne, who hitherto had attended St. Augustine's church, manifested a strong desire to build a house of worship wherein they could have the gospel preached in their own language... In August of the same year, the cholera interrupted the progress of the work, but the church was finally brought to completion in November [1849], and on the 29th of the month these thirty families moved in procession from St. Augustine's church to take possession of the new building. Rev. F. X. Weninger, the zealous missionary, who has since gone to his reward, who had been preaching a mission for the German Catholics for a week previous, conducted the solemn entry into the church and dedicated it to the services under the tutelage of Mary, and named the edifice "the Mother of God Church."

The new German pastor at St. Mary's church, Rev. Edward Faller, actually wrote a letter to a newspaper editor providing a detailed description of the mission given by Fr. Weninger. The name of the newspaper that printed the editorial is unknown, but it was likely a local German-language newspaper for which copies no longer exist. Fr. Weninger included this newspaper article in his unpublished memoirs, and its translation is included here in its entirety since no other source probably exists.¹⁰¹ Although it is not directly relevant to Hessen Cassel, many of the St. Joseph parishioners probably attended this mission in Fort Wayne, and it does provide some idea of what likely occurred at the mission conducted in Hessen Cassel ten years later.

¹⁰⁰ Robertson, Robert S. Valley of the Upper Maumee River, with historical account of Allen County and the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The story of its progress from savagery to civilization. (Madison, WI: Brant & Fuller, 1889); see Lang, Rev. John F. "The Catholic Church in Allen County. - St. Mary's Church", vol. 2, page 416.

¹⁰¹ Blakely, Susan X. (translator). Memoirs of My Life in Europe and America through 80 years – 1805 to 1885, by Francis Xavier Weninger, Missionary of the Society of Jesus. (Columbus, OH: unpublished German manuscript, 1886). This handwritten translation was subsequently transcribed and typed, but never published. The original German title is Erinnerungen aus Meiner Leben in Europa und Amerika durch achtzig Jahre, 1805 bis 1885. These documents are currently located at the Midwest Jesuit Archives, St. Louis, MO. See pages 49-50 for the translation of Weninger's 1849 mission at the new St. Mary's Catholic Church in Fort Wayne, IN.

Letter to the editor by Rev. Edward Faller: “Fort Wayne, Indiana – November 21, 1849. The worthy Catholics of Fort Wayne have recently enjoyed the blessing of a complete mission given by Rev. F.X. Weninger. It has already been announced in the columns of your paper, but it took place a week earlier than had been intended. Only those who have participated in the exercises of such a mission can form the faintest conception of the superabundant graces which flow therefrom, but even they would find it an impossibility to give an adequate description thereof. When I read of the mission at Oldenburg (IN), I thought what a source of consolation it must have been, and what a thorough renewal of spirit, after its close, must have prevailed amongst the people of Oldenburg. What goodness, what fervent piety, now marks that congregation! It is almost unbelievable. And now, even greater things have been accomplished in my own. Who could have believed that persons living miles from the Church would set out at midnight to assist at the five o’clock mass, and be present at the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament? It was a sight which might well edify all who beheld it, when at earliest dawn the road was thronged with devout Christians who had come ten and fifteen miles, regardless of the toils on the way, the clouds of dust which arose with every passing vehicle, and the many inconveniences of their mutual pilgrimage. There were some indeed who came twenty five miles to the Church! Who could behold unmoved, the tears of contrition which, during the sermons of the most celebrated missionary of the age, suffused the eyes of all who listened to his words! Many, who for years had neglected the duties of their religion, became reconciled with God, and how deeply affecting it was to see them draw near to the sacred tribunal, and seal their return to Him by the reception of the sacrament of His love. It was only when the members of the different states in life were summoned, and exhorted, for their special benefit, that one realized how many Catholics there were in Fort Wayne. The exercises terminated on Monday. The ceremonies attendants on the close of the mission were such as will not be easily forgotten, and were witnessed with the deepest and most earnest devotion. The large congregation went in procession from the old Church (St. Augustine), formerly occupied by the Germans and English, but now belonging to the later, to the new brick building, recently erected by the former. At the head of the procession was borne the Cross, and amid the fervent recitation of the rosary and the solemn peal of the Church bells, the people of both nationalities pursued their way to the appointed place. How many tears, not all of sorrow, but mingled with consolation in the consciousness of a true renewal of the spirit were shed at the newly-planted mission Cross, during the indescribably impressive sermon delivered there, beneath the deep blue vault of heaven. God grant that the Catholics of Fort Wayne may never forget the day, when in fervent and unanimous renewal of the spirit, they knelt before that Cross! May they remain faithful to their resolutions. But they will! They must – for they will renew them whenever they pass it, or kneel in fervor at the holy shrine! This is the ardent wish of their devoted pastor. Edward Faller.”

Date of Mission Held at Hessen Cassel

Based on the above account, it is apparent that Fr. Weninger was well-known to the Allen County Catholic community as early as 1849. The exact date that Fr. Weninger conducted his

mission at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel was not recorded in the parish, diocesan or Allen County historical records. Fortunately, Fr. Weninger maintained a diary of his various missions, travels, and works, and at the end of his career, he wrote his memoirs. This document, hand-written in German, was subsequently translated and typed, but never published. Both the original and the translation are stored at the Midwest Jesuit Archives in St. Louis, MO.¹⁰² In his memoirs, Fr. Weninger often gave detailed accounts of the various missions that he conducted. From this document, it was possible to pinpoint the approximate date that he conducted his mission at Hessen Cassel. Based on his memoirs, there were only two possible times, both in the year 1859, that Fr. Weninger could have held a mission at St. Joseph Church in Hessen Cassel, IN.

For the start of the year 1859, Fr. Weninger wrote: “After the close of my spiritual exercises at St. Xavier College, I went to Lewisburg, diocese of Covington (KY), gave a mission and immediately left for the diocese of Fort Wayne, where I repeated the same duty in four congregations and then started for Texas.” Based on the date that he went to Texas, Fr. Weninger was in the Fort Wayne diocese giving four separate missions (each normally a week long) around mid-February through mid-March 1859. Since there were only 2 congregations in Fort Wayne (St. Augustine’s and St. Mary’s), and only a few others within the entire diocese, it is possible that St. Joseph Hessen Cassel was one of the parishes where a mission was held. Further evidence to support that Fr. Weninger conducted his four missions during this period of February-March 1859 is found in the Alerding’s historical account of St. Mary’s Church in Decatur, whose resident pastor, Fr. Jacob Mayer/Meyer, also served remotely as Hessen Cassel’s pastor at the same time.¹⁰³ It reads as follows: “Rev. Jacob Mayer was pastor (at St. Mary’s in Decatur) from July 1858 to September 1862. During his pastorate a mission was held, in 1857, by Rev. Andrew Kunkler, C. PP. S. and the second, **in 1859, by Rev. F. X. Weninger, S. J.**” Thus, since Fr. Mayer was also the assigned pastor for Hessen Cassel at this time, it is possible that he persuaded Fr. Weninger to also conduct a mission at the Hessen Cassel parish during this same time frame (i.e. March – February 1859). However, it is more likely that the Hessen Cassel parishioners just went down the road to Decatur to attend the mission being held there.

Another possible time that Fr. Weninger may have conducted his mission at Hessen Cassel was in early December of the same year, i.e. 1859. Fr. Weninger wrote in his memoirs, “I then went to Fort Wayne, the new bishopric [established in 1857], and **conducted a mission in the**

¹⁰² Blakely, Susan X. (translator). Memoirs of My Life in Europe and America through 80 years – 1805 to 1885, by Francis Xavier Weninger, Missionary of the Society of Jesus. (Columbus, OH: unpublished German manuscript, 1886). This handwritten translation was subsequently transcribed and typed, but never published. The original German title is Erinnerungen aus Meiner Leben in Europa und Amerika durch achtzig Jahre, 1805 bis 1885. These documents are currently located at the Midwest Jesuit Archives, St. Louis, MO. A digital copy was obtained from Dr. David P. Miros in 2013, at www.jesuitarchives.org. See page 168 of the translation for Weninger’s mission to four congregations at the Fort Wayne Diocese and page 185 for his mission to the recently finished German church in the Fort Wayne Diocese.

¹⁰³ Alerding, Herman J. The Diocese of Fort Wayne. 1857 – September 22 – 1907. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Archer Printing Co., 1907), see “Decatur, St. Mary’s Church, 1846”, pages 222-223.

recently finished German church; then hastened to Cincinnati to be present and preach at the dedication of St. Francis' Church [which was consecrated on 18 December 1859].” Although Fr. Weninger did not mention the name of the new German church or provide any details of the mission held there, it was very likely that this church was the new brick church of St. Joseph's at Hessen Cassel. This information also proves that the brick church, started in 1857, was completed in late 1859. However, there is a second less likely possibility. The historical accounts for St. Aloysius Church at Yoder by both Newton (1880) and Alerding (1907) state that this nearby parish comprised of about 16 families was founded in 1859 and a small frame church 29 x 36 feet was constructed the same year. If this is true, then the Weninger mission held in early December 1859 may have taken place at St. Aloysius and not Hessen Cassel. However, the land records show that John Herber/Harber sold the 3 acres for the St. Aloysius church property to Bishop John Henry Luers on 24 December 1859, (after the mission in question was held).¹⁰⁴ Then a week later, on 3 January 1860, Christian and Magdalena Miller subsequently sold 3 acres of their land in Section 21 (West side of the Bluffton Road) to John Harber for the same amount of money (\$50), apparently to compensate him for the land he sold to the Bishop.¹⁰⁵ This suggests that the St. Aloysius church was not built until 1860, but it was not unusual for the official transfer of the land to the church to occur only after the project for its intended use was complete. Furthermore, the first church book for St. Aloysius parish likewise indicates that the church may have been completed by the time the land was deeded to the Bishop on 24 December 1859.¹⁰⁶ Although this book is dated as starting in 1860, the first official entry in the parish book is for the baptism of Louis Christmann (born 22 November 1859), who was apparently baptized on 16 December 1859 in the new church. Thus, it may be remotely possible that Fr. Weninger returned to the Fort Wayne area just to hold a mission for this new little parish, but St. Aloysius was not known specifically as a German parish since many of the founding families (e.g. Christmann, Kinder, Miller) were from France. Furthermore, no record that Fr. Weninger ever held a mission at Yoder has been found. Thus, the German parish in question here was most assuredly Hessen Cassel.

Thus, based on all the available evidence, the mission conducted by Fr. Weninger at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel church was very likely held from Sunday, December 4 through Monday, December 12, 1859. This is based on the fact that his typical mission started on a Sunday morning and concluded 8 days later on a Monday afternoon with the erection of a large mission

¹⁰⁴ “Deed of Sale from John Harber to John Henry Luers” Allen County, IN Deed Book Y, page 506, 24 December 1859 (recorded 19 July 1860).

¹⁰⁵ “Deed of Sale from Christian and Magdalena Miller to John Harber” Allen County, IN Deed Book Y, page 27, 3 January 1860 (recorded 3 January 1860).

¹⁰⁶ Church Records of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, St. Aloysius Church, Yoder, Allen Co., IN; Microfilm Roll No. 10; Item 3 – Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths 1860-1958. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1989); available at the Allen County (IN) Public Library, Genealogy Department Microtext Collection.

cross. Immediately after this mission, Fr. Weninger left for Cincinnati in order to attend the dedication of a church held there on Sunday, 18 December 1859.

Source of the Hessen Cassel Mission Cross Story

The 1957 centennial parish history booklet for Hessen Cassel states that the eyewitness to the curing of the stone mason at the mission cross was Catherine Schmidt. There was a Catherine Schmidt (1822-1885), daughter of Peter Schmidt, and wife of Sebastian Klüber/Kleber, who was undoubtedly present at the 1859 parish mission. However, from other primary sources, it was possible to confirm that the eyewitness was actually Catherine (Münch) Schmidt (1838-1916), daughter of Franz Münch and wife of Henry C. Schmidt (1837-1884).¹⁰⁷

Around 1902, in her old age, Catherine (Münch) Schmidt/Smith (1838-1916) moved into the home of her youngest daughter, Catherine (Schmidt) Herber (1877-1961), wife of Frank Herber, at 1423 E. Lewis Street in Fort Wayne, IN. Catherine (Schmidt) Herber took care of her elderly mother for about 12 years. During this time, Mrs. Catherine Herber (1877-1961) heard many family stories of the old days from her mother, and subsequently related these stories during an interview conducted in 1935 by Laura (Kirkhoff) Corll¹⁰⁸ and another interview conducted in 1957 by the parish committee members who prepared the 100 year history booklet for the St. Joseph Catholic Church at Hessen Cassel, IN.¹⁰⁹ Catherine (Münch) Schmidt, as an eyewitness, related to her daughter the following story about the mission cross erected at the St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, IN, to commemorate the mission held there by Rev. Francis X. Weninger (1808-1888). Her story was recorded as follows:

“A mission cross was hewed out of heavy timbers and stood fifteen to twenty feet high, just a short distance south of where the present church now stands. Many wonderful happenings are told of the mission cross and the saintly old missionary. When time came to lay foundation for the cross, a mason was needed. Since a mason, who was lame and crippled from arthritis and hadn't walked or worked for some time, was staying at Klebers, it was through the request of the missionary, he be brought over in a wheelchair to help supervise if not able to do the work. After foundation was finished and cross erected, the good missionary bid the mason get up and

¹⁰⁷ Kleber, Carl J. The Genealogy of the Münch Family from Lampertheim, Germany to Allen County, Indiana. (Fort Wayne, IN: private printing, December 2012), See page 73. [Available at Allen Co., IN Public Library; GC 929.2 M91983KC]

¹⁰⁸ Herber, Catherine (nee Schmidt). “Interview about the family stories and history of the Franz Münch family conducted by Laura (Kirkhoff) Corll”, 17 February 1935, Fort Wayne, IN. Original notes in possession of Linda Kirkhoff, 1721 Meridian, Fort Wayne, IN, 1994; copy owned by Carl J. Kleber [R1175].

¹⁰⁹ Herber, Clara & Emil; Bobay, Esther & Arthur; Stemen, Mildred & Joseph; and Landin, Betty. “A Century in Review”. Unpublished notes compiled for the preparation of centenary celebration booklet titled The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. Notes retyped with comments and additional information by Carl J. Kleber, 29 September 2013; copy located in the parish archives.

walk to the cross and touch it. It is evident he had a deep faith, for he walked away on his own strength and remained in good health for a long time. Catherine (Münch) Schmidt witnessed this.”

Identity of the Crippled Mason

This above, unedited version of the story provided a few more details, and specifically noted that the crippled mason resided with the Kleber family, which had to be the Sebastian and Catherine (Schmidt) Klüber/Kleber family, since this was the only such Kleber family in the area in 1859. In the 1860 U.S. Population Census record for the Sebastian Kleber family, there is listed living with them on their farm a Jacob Kleber, age 80, male, from “Hessia”.¹¹⁰ This is Jakob Klüber/Kleber (c.1779-1862), the father of Sebastian, who came to America from Germany in 1851 at the age of 72 years in order to live with Sebastian. A copy of Sebastian’s birth certificate from Germany as well as other records from their parish church in Romsthal, Germany, record the occupation of Jakob Klüber as being a “Mauer” = stone mason. This further substantiates that the old crippled mason mentioned in the 1859 Hessen Cassel mission cross story was undoubtedly Jakob Klüber/Kleber, who died around 3 years later in 1862.

Summary

In conclusion, it has been possible to authenticate and expand upon the story about the mission cross at Hessen Cassel as follows. During a week-long parish mission conducted at St. Joseph’s church by Fr. Francis X. Weninger sometime in the first 2 weeks of December 1859, a wooden cross made of large hewn timbers was erected outdoors on the south side of the brick church to commemorate the event. The only experienced stone mason in the vicinity available to build the foundation for holding this huge cross was Jacob Klüber/Kleber, who was living nearby at the family farm of his son, Sebastian Klüber/Kleber. However, Jacob was about 80 years old at this time, lame and crippled from arthritis, and unable to walk or work. Therefore, Fr. Weninger requested that Jacob be carried to the construction site in order to supervise the laying of the foundation for the cross by other less experienced workers. On the last day of the mission, during closing ceremonies conducted at the foot of the newly-erected mission cross, Fr. Weninger bade the old mason to stand up, walk to the cross, and touch it. To the amazement of all in attendance, Jacob, who had not been able to walk in a long time, arose on his own two feet without assistance, walked forward and kissed the cross. Then he walked away under his own strength, apparently cured of his affliction, and remained in good health for a long time. This event was witnessed by Catherine (Münch) Schmidt (1838-1916), the youngest daughter of Franz and Elisabetha (Albrecht) Münch. She was 20 years old at the time (1859) and had just recently married Henry C. Schmidt/Smith (1837-1884) at the Hessen Cassel church. As an

¹¹⁰ 1860 U.S. Population Census, Allen County, Indiana; Marion Township, page 124 (546), line 26; 6 July 1860.

eyewitness, Catherine (Münch) Schmidt passed down this story to her daughter, Catherine (Schmidt) Herber, who conveyed it to others for recording the history of the parish.

Centennial Mission Cross

One detail of the story about the mission cross at Hessen Cassel that may not be totally accurate is the actual size of the mission cross, which was stated to have stood 15 to 20 feet high. As mentioned earlier, the mission crosses erected by Fr. Weninger were traditionally at least 30 feet high. And the mission cross depicted in the 1876 sketch of the Hessen Cassel church (on cover page) shows that the top of the cross reached almost to the central peak of the church roof, and was thus well over 30 feet tall. Of course, the cross depicted in this sketch may have been a replacement for the original wooden cross, which would have been over 15 years old by this time. It is not known how long the original mission cross stood next to the church. Oral tradition conveys that at some point this large wooden cross was struck by lightning and badly damaged. It was subsequently taken down and was not replaced for many years.

Nevertheless, the mission cross remained an important part of the parish history and lore. In fact, to commemorate the 100-year parish anniversary in 1957, Anthony “Tony” Berg (1882-1975) built and erected a replica of the mission cross near the original site (south side of the church). A photo of Tony Berg standing beside this mission cross is shown in Figure 46. The weekly Catholic newspaper, *Our Sunday Visitor*, printed an article about this cross as follows:



Figure 46 – Tony Berg with replica of the mission cross that he built at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Catholic Church (1957).

“Feature of the centennial celebration of St. Joseph parish, Hessen Cassel, last month (September 1957) was the erection of the pictured replica of the original mission cross of the parish. Of solid walnut varnish finish set in concrete, the replica was constructed by Anthony Berg. Included in the celebration were a Mass offered by Bishop Leo A. Pursley and a parish dinner and reunion.”¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Our Sunday Visitor, Fort Wayne Edition, 13 October 1957, page 3A.

Based on the above photograph, the replica mission cross appears to be only about 15 feet high, which is about one-half the height of the original mission cross depicted in the church sketch shown on the cover page. This 1957 replica of the mission cross remained standing on the south side of the church for more than 30 years. A photo of it still standing in September 1981 is shown below in Figure 47. However, it was subsequently damaged in a storm and/or by the school children playing around it, and taken down around 1985. It was replaced in 1988 with the current Blessed Virgin shrine, which is shown in Figure 48. The plaque on this shrine states “In Memory of Joseph R. and Marie F. Wyss and Family 1988.” A mission cross is no longer present on the church grounds.



Figure 47 – Replica Mission Cross At Hessen Cassel, IN (1981).



Figure 48 - Blessed Virgin Shrine, Hessen Cassel Church Property (1988).

Other Mission Cross Stories

The rather “miraculous” curing of the old stone mason at the mission cross at Hessen Cassel was not the only instance where very unusual phenomena were observed in relation to the erection of a mission cross by Fr. Weninger. Several other stories about wondrous happenings that occurred pertaining to the Weninger mission crosses have been documented and independently investigated for authenticity.^{112,113} The later reference summarizes as follows: “Several appearances of what was reputed to be a miraculous cross took place in connection with Father Weninger’s missions, two of them at Guttenburg, Iowa, 1853 and 1856, and one at Alpena, Michigan, 1858.” In these locations, as the moment the mission cross was erected, a large, white, well-defined cross appeared in the clear blue sky. These crosses in the sky were witnessed by many people in the area, both the parishioners in attendance and others, including Protestants and atheists. The first appearance of the celestial cross at Guttenberg on 7 October 1853 has been of great interest to historians because it was well verified and documented. Fr. Weninger described it himself as follows: “On Friday afternoon about three o’clock a large cross 25 feet in height was raised in the open near the church... As the cross was elevated a bright cross appeared in the sky. It did not move, but stood still for about 15 minutes, then gradually disappeared. It seemed about 100 feet long, with cross beams of nearly 25 feet. A lady noticed it at first and she drew the attention of others to the same. Several persons made a sworn statement before a notary as to the truth of the vision.” These witnesses included Catholics, Protestants, and even atheistic German revolutionists in the area. As one scholar pointed out, “Of course, its appearance can be ingeniously explained and correctly, too, as due to natural causes, to the refraction of the sun’s rays and their action on the clouds. But the extraordinary coincidence of its occurrence at the very moment of the open air mission ceremony and the erection of the great wooden cross on the high bank of the Mississippi seems to add to the event, to say the least, a special, profound significance.” Father Weninger himself prepared an account of seven such apparitions that occurred during his career.

No mention was made in Father Weninger’s memoirs about the incident with the crippled mason that occurred in connection with the mission cross at Hessen Cassel, IN, in 1859. In fact, he fails to give any details whatsoever about any of the 5 missions that he conducted in the Fort Wayne Diocese that year. Perhaps this one of the 800 missions that he gave in his career was not of great significance to him, or didn’t seem unusual to him. Nevertheless, Fr. Weninger made a large impression upon the Hessen Cassel parishioners. Further notes about him that were obtained for the 1957 centennial booklet read as follows: “Also, in La Cross, Wis., during the mission when the cross was being erected, three Protestant women saw the cross in the sky. Still

¹¹² Hoffman, Mathias M. “A Miracle in Mid-America?” *Mid-America, Journal of the Illinois Catholic Historical Society*, Vol. 14:57-63, July 1931.

¹¹³ Midwest Jesuit Archives. [The Jesuits of the Middle United States](#), Chapter 20, “Francis Xavier Weninger”; available on-line at www.jesuitsmissouri.org/files/arch/chap20.pdf

another incident is told regarding a mission held in Ft. Wayne at the present site of the Cathedral. A mission was also conducted by Missionary Weninger. Services were held outside in the cemetery which was between the Cathedral and Clinton St., back of the church, and during his sermon, the missionary was quite annoyed by a few non-believers, making ridicule. As he was standing at the foot of a grave, he said “If you should want, that I raise this person from the dead?” If he wished to raise the dead or not is not known, but he scared the duce out of the hecklers, who were still going for days after.”

As mentioned earlier, Fr. Weninger would often provide religious materials that he wrote for the mission participants to purchase and read. One of his earliest publications, a prayer book titled “Der Monat Maria” (The Month of Mary), published in German by Hermann Lehmann in Cincinnati in 1850, was owned by Sophia Fuchs (1843-1873), daughter of Anton Fuchs.¹¹⁴ This book, with 256 pages, contains specific prayers and readings for each particular day in the month of May. It was likely obtained by Sophia during the 1859 mission conducted by Fr. Weninger at Hessen Cassel, at which time she was about 16 years old. The cover page is shown in Figure 49.

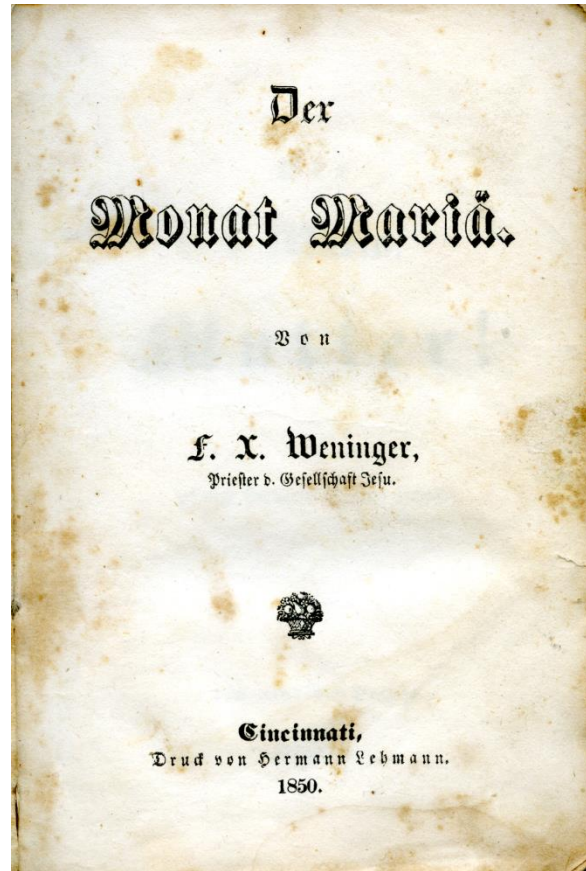


Figure 49 – “The Month of Mary” prayer book by Fr. Weninger (1850).

¹¹⁴ Weninger, F.X. Der Monat Maria (Hermann Lehmann: Cincinnati, Ohio, 1850), Original owned by Clara (Smith) Herber (1917-1997), Hessen Cassel, IN; now in possession of Carl J. Kleber. [R1114]

Chapter 13 - The Convents (1859 – Present)

First Convent (1859)

While the new brick church was being built (1857 to 1859), a convent was also erected a short distance southeast of the church on the new 1-acre parcel of land obtained in 1859 from Johann Georg Sorg (1807-1879) and his wife, Maria Barbara. According to the 100-year parish history, Rev. Jacob Mayer, the first resident priest at Hessen Cassel parish, “also built the first convent in 1859. It was located at the south entrance of our present cemetery.” Further information about the first convent was found in the recorded notes of an interview with Clement H. Smith probably conducted for the 1957 centennial publication.¹¹⁵ He stated that “Father Mayer became the first pastor who built the church. He also built a convent for the order of the Poor Handmaids of Christ [Note: actually the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor] who came from Germany at the request of Father Mayer. The convent was erected in 1859 on the place which is now the main entrance to the cemetery. Bernard Smith, son of John and Martha Weisheit Smith, was six years old and killed when erecting convent in 1859. A heavy timber fell on him.” The church records have no entry for the death/burial of little Bernard Smith, but there is a tombstone for him in Section A, lot 83 of the church cemetery. It reads in German, “Hier ruhen Bernard, geboren 5 Feb. 1853, gestorben 15 Nov. 1859, Kinder von J. and M.E. Smith.” This confirms that the convent was under construction on 15 November 1859, the date of the fatal accident. Also, it is interesting to note that the convent was being built before the land on which it stood was officially sold to Bishop Luers on 28 December 1859. Furthermore, no nuns occupied this convent for a few years until a group was found willing to come to Hessen Cassel.

A further detailed description of this first convent was found in the Annals of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, who were the first nuns to occupy this convent in 1863.¹¹⁶ The pertinent portion of the text reads as follows:

“Sister Felicitas met the Mother Foundress and the two Sisters in Fort Wayne and procured a conveyance to take them to Hessen Cassel. As they jogged along the eight miles through the forest over a rough road of stumps and stones, doubts began to assail their minds whether the location was suitable for their convent. The site had been represented so favorably that neither Mother Frances nor Sister Felicitas had any conception of the region as it now lay before them. Hessen Cassel was a farming district with scattered houses. The one-story frame dwelling intended for the Sisters lay close to the church and the cemetery. But it stood opposite a primeval forest, and the nearest house was half a mile away. Apparently, the little community

¹¹⁵ Smith, Clement H. “Recollections of the First Church, Cemetery, and Convent at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, Indiana”, Interview conducted by Clara (Smith) Herber. c.1957; copy in parish office archives.

¹¹⁶ Hill, Sister M. Pauline, S.F.P. In Love with Christ’s Poor, The Story of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, 1858-1958 (compiled from the Annals of the Congregation, Provincial House of St. Clare, Cincinnati, Ohio), 1959. See pages 133, 140-142, and 179-182 for complete story of the foundation at Hessen Cassel, Indiana, by Bl. Frances Schervier.

would have sufficient solitude here, and poverty also. But now there was no time for reconsideration. They could only make a trial of the situation, with reliance on God's providence. The house [convent] was large enough for the present, with seven rooms. In other respects, however, provisions were very poor. Seeing that there was only one bedstead for the six of them, Mother Schervier recalled with Franciscan joy their primitive dwelling at Aachen [Germany]. Very soon she was busy sewing mattress ticks, then down on her knees filling them with straw or corn shucks. That five of the Sisters had to sleep on the floor would not have been so much a penance had it not been for the swarm of ugly black beetles crawling about. Other furniture was also lacking in the house, which was largely unfinished inside; for there were not even doors between the rooms. The kitchen was a little better provided; there was a barrel of flour, a basket of eggs, and a small crock of butter. Outside in the hennery were a few chickens." Thus, based on the testimony of these first religious Sisters, the first convent, as well as the rural area, was very rustic.

It appears that this first convent was built in advance of actually obtaining the commitment of a religious congregation of nuns to come to the parish. If this convent was completed in 1859, it stood empty for a few years before the first congregation of Sisters took up residence in 1863. Perhaps it served as a school house in the interim.

New Convents

In 1879, a 2-story brick building was constructed to serve as both a school and residence for the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who were teaching Sisters at Hessen Cassel. It was used for many years with the Sisters living in modest quarters at the rear of the school. In 1923, a new brick convent was built and furnished for the Sisters. It had 8 rooms, a basement, and a large attic. A photo of this convent in 1957 is shown below in Figure 50. When the last Sisters left Hessen Cassel parish around 1968, this convent became the pastor's rectory and the old rectory was dedicated solely as the Parish Office.

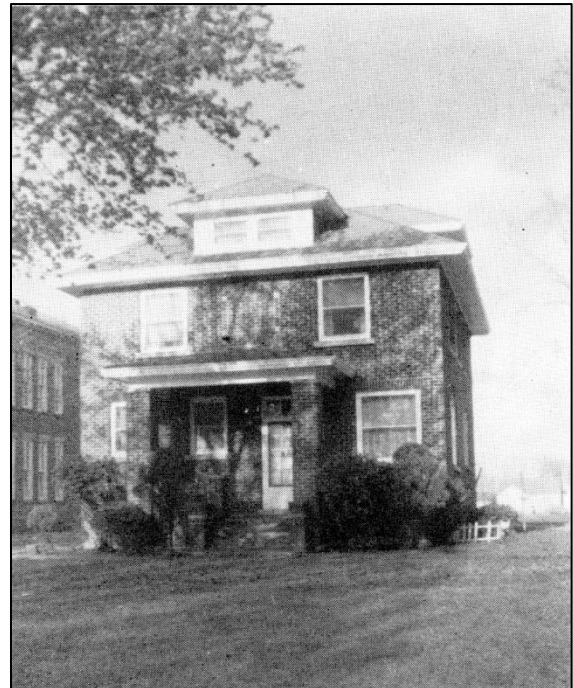


Figure 50 - Hessen Cassel Convent (1957)

Chapter 14 – The Nuns at Hessen Cassel (1863 - 1968)

As mentioned previously, the first convent at Hessen Cassel was built in 1859 before any religious congregation of sisters had even committed to come to the parish. Both Bishop Luers and the parish priest at the time, Fr. Jacob Mayer, were trying to persuade various congregations of sisters and brothers to come to Fort Wayne in order to serve as teachers, nurses, etc. Both priests thought that having a “home” waiting for occupancy would serve as an inducement for attracting an order of nuns, particularly German-speaking ones, to come to the Fort Wayne diocese. They were eventually successful in obtaining some of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor to reside in the available convent at Hessen Cassel in 1863.

Franciscan Sisters of the Poor (1863 - 1866)

Even before the Poor Handmaids of Christ came to Hessen Cassel in 1868, the first order of nuns to live in the new convent were the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, founded by Blessed Frances Schervier (Figure 51). This order of sisters is not even mentioned in Bishop Alerding’s history of the Fort Wayne Diocese (1907), or White’s 150-year history of the diocese (2007), or any of the Allen County histories. The 100-year parish history booklet for Hessen Cassel contains one sentence about this order of nuns: “The little convent had previously been occupied by the Gray Sisters, a cloistered community, but had been vacant now for more than two years.” This indicates that these “Gray Sisters” had left the Hessen Cassel convent in 1866. These Sisters, who wore a gray veil, were not officially called “Gray Sisters” and were not the only Sisters from the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor that stayed in the convent. Their full story and involvement at



Figure 51 - Blessed M. Frances Schervier

Hessen Cassel is found in Habig’s book about the Saints of America¹¹⁷, which he condensed from the actual Annals of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Habig, Rev. Marion A., O.F.M. *Saints of the Americas*, (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1974), Chapter 5, “Bl. Frances Schervier (1819-1876). Founder of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor”, pages 56-72. [R1199]

Because the story of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor at Hessen Cassel has been difficult to uncover, portions extracted from the above-mentioned references are presented below. These sources actually describe the physical structure of the first convent and parish life at Hessen Cassel, IN over the 3-year period 1863 to 1866.

From Habig: “Two religious sisters, wearing black veils, long brown dresses, and scapulars on which were sewn conspicuous red crosses with the instruments of the passion of our Lord, got off the train at Fort Wayne, Indiana, on July 2, 1863. One of them was Mother Frances Schervier, small in stature but big of heart, the founder of the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis who had their motherhouse in Aachen, Germany. The other was Sister Felicitas, one of the first five sisters who had come to Cincinnati in 1859 and was now the superior of the American branch of the sisterhood. They had come to see Bishop John Henry Luers of Fort Wayne to make arrangements for the founding of a convent in the country town of Hessen Cassel, about eight miles south of the city. The bishop was desirous of having the sisters in his diocese, and it seemed he had a place to offer which would enable Mother Frances to carry out a project dear to her heart. As an eleven-year-old girl she had wanted to become a Trappistine nun, but later she found that her life’s work and that of the congregation she founded lay in the active work of the care of the sick and poor. Nonetheless she always recognized the great spiritual advantages of the contemplative life, and she introduced into some of her communities in Europe and the United States small groups of so-called Recluses. And now she planned to found at Hessen Cassel a convent in which some of the sisters, wearing an ashen-gray habit and called ‘Sisters of St. Margaret of Cortona’, would lead a semi-cloistered life of prayer, penance, household duties, and the making of church vestments ‘for the relief of the souls in purgatory.’ Other sisters in the same convent, wearing the brown habit, would teach the children of the farming community and nurse the sick in the area. Both groups would take their meals and recreation in common. Later perhaps the sisters would be able to establish a hospital in Fort Wayne. The pastor of St. Joseph Church at Hessen Cassel, Father Jacob Meyer [sic - Mayer], then took the two sisters to see the one-story, seven room frame house near his church, which was to serve as their convent. ‘That meant,’ wrote Mother Frances, ‘two hours in a country wagon on roads so bad that we continually invoked our guardian angel. The pious missionary, a German doctor of divinity, acted as driver, and brought us back to Fort Wayne the next day, where we were most kindly received by the Sisters of Providence. These good sisters overwhelmed us with kindness, and with our hearts full of affection and gratitude we left them.’ The convent at Hessen Cassel was opened on August 9 (1863), and Mother Frances was there again for the occasion. However, during these pioneer days it was not the ideal spot for the double convent that she had been led to think. The sisters encountered various difficulties and reverses. A fire destroyed all but the brick structure of the church in 1864; there were no more candidates for the “Sisters of St.

¹¹⁸ Hill, Sister M. Pauline, S.F.P. In Love with Christ’s Poor, The Story of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, 1858-1958, (compiled from the Annals of the Congregation, Provincial House of St. Clare, Cincinnati, Ohio), 1959. See pages 133, 140-142, and 179-182 for complete story of the foundation at Hessen Cassel, Indiana, by Bl. Frances Schervier.

Margaret” after the first three were received, and one of these had to be dismissed. The convent (at Hessen Cassel) was closed in April 1866, and the sisters went back to St. Clare’s Convent in Cincinnati.”

From the actual Annals of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor are extracted the followings portions dealing even in more detail with the first convent at Hessen Cassel: “Toward the end of July (1863), Mother Frances returned to St. Clara’s Convent. Assembling the professed Sisters for a conference, she informed them of a long-cherished project, which she now hoped to see realized, and requested their prayers for its speedy accomplishment. This was the establishment of another department within the Congregation, a small group of Sisters who would lead a semi-cloistered life and who would offer themselves, their austerities and prayers, for relief of the souls in purgatory. Mother Frances intended to place these Sisters under the patronage of St. Margaret of Cortona, the great penitent of the Franciscan Order. It was for the accomplishment of this plan that she had made the trip to Fort Wayne, for she intended to establish this department in connection with the foundation at Hessen Cassel. August 9 (1863) had been set as the date for opening the branch house; and on this date Bishop Luers had promised to officiate at the investment there of the first two candidates for the new life. These Oblates would wear an ashen-gray habit and their life would be one of retirement with more penitential practices and more exercises of prayer, adding to the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary that of the Immaculate Conception and the Office of the Dead; they were to rise also at night for recitation of the Office. During the day they would perform household duties or make church vestments, and they would join the regular community for meals and recreation. On August 6 (1863) Sister Felicitas, along with Sister Magdalena, went to Hessen Cassel to prepare the house for occupancy. Mother Frances followed on the 8th, taking with her Sister Hildegard, who would be the superior, and Sister Norberta, who was to supervise the making of church vestments and altar linens. It was in view of this prospect that Mother Schervier, while both were still in Europe, had sent Sister Norberta to learn under the Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus at their convent in Simpelveld, Holland, the art of embroidery and vestment-making. This was a work in which also Sisters of frail health could be occupied; the products beyond the needs of their communities would be sent to poor churches and missions. The two postulantes began at St. Clara’s Convent their retreat in preparation for receiving the habit. Then one of them, Anna Ulrich, became so critically ill of typhoid fever that her death was expected. Teresa, however, was willing to begin the new life alone. And when Mother Frances stopped at Fort Wayne to visit the Bishop, His Lordship promised to come on the morrow and bestow the habit, even though there was only one candidate. Sister Felicitas met the Mother Foundress and the two Sisters in Fort Wayne and procured a conveyance to take them to Hessen Cassel. As they jogged along the eight miles through the forest over a rough road of stumps and stones, doubts began to assail their minds whether the location was suitable for their convent. The site had been represented so favorably that neither Mother Frances nor Sister Felicitas had any conception of the region as it now lay before them. Hessen Cassel was a farming district with scattered houses. The one-story frame dwelling intended for the Sisters lay close to the church and the cemetery.

But it stood opposite a primeval forest, and the nearest house was half a mile away. Apparently, the little community would have sufficient solitude here, and poverty also. But now there was no time for reconsideration. They could only make a trial of the situation, with reliance on God's providence."

"The house [convent] was large enough for the present, with seven rooms. In other respects, however, provisions were very poor. Seeing that there was only one bedstead for the six of them, Mother Schervier recalled with Franciscan joy their primitive dwelling at Aachen [Germany]. Very soon she was busy sewing mattress ticks, then down on her knees filling them with straw or corn shucks. That five of the Sisters had to sleep on the floor would not have been so much a penance' had it not been for the swarm of ugly black beetles crawling about. Other furniture was also lacking in the house, which was largely unfinished inside; for there were not even doors between the rooms. The kitchen was a little better provided; there was a barrel of flour, a basket of eggs, and a small crock of butter. Outside in the hennery were a few chickens. The immediate concern was to provide dinner for the Bishop and the pastor, Father Jacob Meyer [Mayer], after the morrow's ceremony. Accustomed to missionary life, His Lordship found everything very fine. But then, why should it not be so? Mother Frances herself prepared the meal, for the Sister cook was still inexperienced. The blessing of the convent and then the investment of the postulate were carried out with pleasing solemnity by Bishop Luers; but it required much persuasion on the part of the Foundress to induce His Lordship to grant permission for having the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the little oratory. The novice, Sister Maria Josepha, was left under the guidance of Sister Hildegard to begin her penitential life. But she was not long alone. Anna Ulrich made a surprisingly rapid recovery from her serious illness. On October 19 (1863) Father Meyer [Mayer] invested her and a companion with the gray habit of the Oblates of St. Margaret of Cotona. Anna received the name Sister Margaretha, honoring their special patroness. Sister Alcantara Brandenburg was named for the Franciscan whose feast was celebrated that day, the penitential St. Peter of Alcantara. On August 11 (1863) Mother Frances and Sister Felicitas returned to St. Clara's Convent [Cincinnati]..."

Further details of the Sisters' lives in the Hessen Cassel convent included, "There was only a cistern to furnish their entire supply of water, even for drinking purposes; great economy had, therefore, to be observed by the Sisters lest they suffer want in time of drought. As for the work on the farm, it had been the intention of the Foundress that the postulates could do it. But since there were very few vocations for the austere life of the Oblates, the Sisters did the planting when spring came. At harvest time the farmers customarily helped one another and willingly aided the Sisters too. Still, this service had to be remunerated each time by a generous midday meal for the dozen or more men and women. And yet, these material difficulties could have been borne until time provided a remedy, had not spiritual aid been woefully lacking. The annals note significantly: "Sacrifice and sacrifice again was their daily motto." But their deprivation of Mass at least on one Sunday in every month and for most of the following week, when the pastor attended a mission church, was a sore trial. Bravely, however, the Sisters tried to make the best

of it by holding some service in the church. They even rang the bell to summon the people; when a group had assembled, a Sister would read aloud some Mass prayers by which they could unite themselves in spirit with the Holy Sacrifice being offered elsewhere. The Sisters' only opportunity for confession was to Fr. Meyer [Mayer]. When he at his own request was transferred to another parish, and a sickly priest was appointed [Fr. Martin Kink, 1864-1865] – one whose mental health also failed after some months – things were in a bad state indeed. Father Meyer [Mayer] evidently thought that the Sisters were willing to help in any way needed. One Sunday morning he made to his parishioners the startling announcement: 'I am going to send a petition to the Government at Washington to have a post office established here at Hessen Cassel; then you will not have to go eight miles for your mail. I'll have a small wooden structure put up about twenty feet down the road here from the church. The Sisters can take charge of the post office.' Everyone, of course, heartily agreed – except for the Sisters. No sooner was Mass ended than Sister Hildegard was at the rectory to tell Father Meyer [Mayer] that, if the Sisters were expected to serve as mail clerks, there would be no post office...

...In contrast to this event [i.e. the church fire – see Chapter 22], there were a few occasions which afforded true joy to the Sisters. In 1865 they obtained permission to gain the Portinucula Indulgence on August 2 in the parish church. The favor was timely announced in the Cathedral at Ft. Wayne and, as a result, people came even from distant towns to visit the church. Some who arrived on the eve wished to remain overnight. The Sisters allowed them to lodge in the school house; they also provided refreshments during the heat of the day, happy to see so many devout worshipers. That same year [1865], on the day preceding the children's First Communion, two very respectable young men about eighteen years of age came to the Sisters with the request that they also be allowed to receive their First Communion on the morrow. The Superior directed them to the pastor [Fr. Martin Kink], who was so much pleased that he offered to instruct them at once. He kept them until two in the morning, assuring himself that they had studied their catechism well and were sufficiently prepared. When the two men knelt that morning at the Communion rail, they were exceedingly happy to attain the grace of which family circumstances had long deprived them.

Otherwise, the establishment gave little encouragement to the Sisters. In their proper activity of tending the sick and poor, there was scarcely any opportunity. The one physician of the district served also as a veterinarian, in order to gain a livelihood. Bishop Luers much desired to retain the Sisters in his diocese and in the summer of 1865 offered them a former hotel in Fort Wayne, containing over a hundred rooms, which they might use as a hospital. Although the outlook was not auspicious, Mother Schervier consented to a trial. But there was another point to be considered. There were no candidates for the life of the Gray Sisters, beyond the first three; and before long, Sister Maria Josepha had to be dismissed for faulty conduct. Many of the regular community volunteered to transfer to the Oblates, but as there were never enough Sisters for the various activities, such a request could not be granted. Mother Schervier's solicitude for the penitential branch was expressed in several letters. On May 2, 1864, she wrote to Sister

Dominica: ‘Regarding the Sisters of St. Margaret, I tell you frankly that I am not without worry; still let us hope and pray... We must hold firm to the idea that these Sisters stand in the same relation to us as do the Magdalens to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. There is even a closer, more intimate connection between them and us, since we are all children of the same Order of St. Francis. Something very good may develop from this little branch, but it must be tended with great care. Above all, it must be kept pure in its proper spirit; and for this end there seems to be nothing more necessary than to remove from the division those who do not strive with all their heart for humility.’ Referring to the first novice, of whose unedifying conduct Sister Dominica had informed her, the Foundress stated: ‘We must be firm in our decision that Sister Maria Josepha is to be removed from the division. If she will not go humbly as a postulate to one of our houses for a while, let her return to Europe. But if she should be willing to humble herself in that way, we shall see what is to be done later. With her, it is the demon of pride that must be combatted... However, I should wish that, when Sister Maria Josepha is removed, a third member should be added to the other two. For the rest, dear Sister, it seems best to me to allow you *plein pouvoir* in regard to this department. You know my views regarding this division. Perhaps the Lord wished to humiliate me by not letting this project prosper, because I have reserved to myself far too much of its direction. But that cannot be done well at a distance, in the manner that I wished. Do not hesitate to inform me freely and frankly of your opinion. I think that thereby we shall get the right idea. But do not hesitate either to act after you have learned my views about it. If you should tell me that you wished to give Sister Maria Josepha another trial under Sister Eusebia (now the superior), I would consent; but only if you absolutely think she should be given another trial, and then as last of the three.’

But Sister Maria Josepha did not correspond to the hopes of Sister Dominica. When in the summer of 1865 Sister Dominica was summoned to the Mother House for consultation on the affairs of the Congregation, she laid the matter before the Foundress. Mother Schevier decided that the Sisters should leave Hessen Cassel and in the following April 1866 all returned to St. Clara’s Convent in Cincinnati. This decision did not cancel the previous permission for a hospital at Fort Wayne; nevertheless, it seems to have been made to yield to several other requests having greater advantages. In her humility, Mother Schervier had attributed the early difficulties and lack of candidates for the Sisters of St. Margaret of Cortona as some evidence of the displeasure of God, on account of her sins: such is the attitude of saints. Her daughters of that period regarded the foundation as something willed by God, but only temporarily. But what person can pierce the Divine intentions and designs?”

After the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor left the Hessen Cassel convent in April 1866, it remained unoccupied for 2 years as Bishop Luers sought to find another religious congregation of sisters to replace them. He was eventually successful in obtaining the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (1868 - 1877)

As a result of their many significant contributions to the Catholic Church and humanity, the history of the religious community of women forming the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ has been well documented. Both the diocesan histories by Alerding in 1907 and by White in 2007 provide summaries of this community's origin and accomplishments relative to the diocese of Fort Wayne.^{119,120} However, Alerding records that these Sisters began their work in Allen County, IN in August of 1863, when in fact it was 1868. This is another instance in Alerding's "official" church diocesan history that an incorrect year was published, most likely the result of misreading the handwritten text when preparing the typeset (i.e. the handwritten year 1868 was seen as 1863, similar to the year for the founding of St. Joseph parish being published as 1851 instead of 1841, as previously noted). Also, entire books and theses have been written documenting the history of this religious order of Sisters.^{121,122,123}



Figure 52 – The First Eight Poor Handmaids in America

It can be said that the birth of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ in the United States occurred at the little convent at Hessen Cassel, Indiana. When the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor abandoned the Hessen Cassel convent in April 1866 and returned to their motherhouse in Cincinnati, an effort was made by Bishops Luers to find another religious community of nuns in Germany willing to come to Allen County, IN. After a few years, he was able to convince the Motherhouse of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ in Dernberg, Germany to send eight Sisters

¹¹⁹ Alerding, Herman J. The Diocese of Fort Wayne. 1857 – September 22 – 1907. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Archer Printing Co., 1907), see "Chapter XIX. The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ", pages 456-459.

¹²⁰ White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ : a History of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend : Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Diocese and Catholic Life in Northern Indiana. (Fort Wayne, Ind. : The Diocese, 2007), see "Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ", pages 112-113.

¹²¹ Miller, Sister Mary Symphoria, PHJC. Sixty-Two Years: A Story of the American Province of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, 1868-1930. (M.A. Thesis, University of Notre Dame, 1930).

¹²² Meagher, George T. With Attentive Ear and Courageous Heart: A Biography of Mother Mary Kaspar, Foundress of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1957).

¹²³ Spect, Anita L. Community and Care: The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ and Their Hospitals, 1868-1930. (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Notre Dame, 2001).

to his diocese in Indiana (see Figure 52). Their first place of residence in the United States was at the abandoned convent in Hessen Cassel, IN. Being accustomed to living in poor conditions, these Sisters relished the opportunity to begin their work in America.

The work of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ relative to the Hessen Cassel parish has been documented in the 1957 centennial parish history booklet. It appears that the sources for these notes were from the previously-mentioned references and also perhaps from the actual chronicle records of this religious community. The original, unedited version prepared for the centennial booklet is presented below:¹²⁴

“The sisters, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, owe their beginnings in this country in a large measure to the people of Hesse Cassel. Here they received their first taste of American hospitality and the kindness for which our people have ever been noted in accepting within their midst the many groups of immigrants who came to her shores looking for new opportunities whether they were for personal gain or for furthering the work of the Divine Master in His vineyard of souls.

Within the years of the 1860’s the Rt. Rev. John Henry Luers, Bishop of Ft. Wayne, who seeking Sisters of some community that would work in his diocese and take care of the schools and the sick in a hospital which he hoped soon to establish in Ft. Wayne. He had asked several times for recruits from the Motherhouse of these Sisters in Dernbach and was soon gratified to receive their acceptance of his plea. Five sisters arrived here after eleven calm days at sea on August 28th, 1868. On the 29th they paid their respects to his Lordship. The following day, the feast of St. Rose, who was the first American saint in the Church, they were on their way to Hesse Cassel. They were accompanied by Rev. E. Koenig, pastor of St. Paul’s Church in Ft. Wayne, who had been to Dernbach and asked the Mother General for sisters, and Rev. Wm. Woeste who had the church in Hesse Cassel as his charge among other missions and which he serviced from his home in Roanoke.

It was a Sunday afternoon and they rode the eight miles in a large farm wagon, the Sisters sitting on their trunks. It was the first mission house of the community in America. The Community Chronicle relates that the beautiful region, the rich fields, woods and meadows, the beautiful sky overhead charmed them and filled their hearts with joy and the desire to praise the benign Creator.

Having arrived in Hesse Cassel late in the afternoon they were conducted to the little one-story convent building. While the luggage was being unloaded an evening meal was being prepared at a farmer’s house in the vicinity. Pleasant conversation lent charm to the charitable meal. One thing especially interested the group of new arrivals as was revealed in a letter to the Motherhouse in Germany from which these details were taken.

The oldest daughter of the host stood at the table waving a huge branch of a tree over the table thereby preventing those little black six-footed creatures, which are rather plentiful at this time of the year in America, from settling down on our food for a peaceful meal. For us Europeans this performance was indeed comical. After dinner the sexton rang the bells, of

¹²⁴ Herber, Clara & Emil; Bobay, Esther & Arthur; Stemen, Mildred & Joseph; and Landin, Betty. “A Century in Review”. Unpublished notes compiled for the preparation of centenary celebration booklet titled The First Hundred, St. Joseph’s Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. Notes retyped with comments and additional information by Carl J. Kleber, 29 September 2013; copy located in the parish archives.

which there was but one, to call the faithful to Vespers. And so, the account goes on to say, “we went to church. The good people, great and small, old and young, had ranged themselves before the church door and were closely examined from head to toe. The church was beautifully decorated. A large number of candles shed their radiance over the little sanctuary. The good people began to sing and the signing was pious, inspiring and beautiful. The theme of the sermon was obviously about the Sisters and their work.”

After the services the Sisters returned to their little convent for their first night’s rest, a night memorable as the first in the cradle mission and of the many nights and days of future work in America of the many Sisters that would follow in their footsteps in homes for the aged, hospitals, schools, and orphanages.

The little convent had been occupied previously by the Gray Sisters, a cloistered community, but had been vacant now for two years. Here the Sisters settled themselves in their work, which began at first in taking care of the church and its altar linens and playing the organ for services. Later, in September, they took charge of the elementary school. The nurses among them immediately began their work as private duty nurses in the homes of the vicinity.

Among this group of pioneers the following names have been recorded:

Sister M. Rosa, Provincial Superior
Sister M. Eudoxia, Vicarress
Sister M. Hyacintha, Novice Mistress
Sister M. Facunda, Housekeeper
Sister M. Matrona, Fourth Assistant
Sister M. Bella, Nurse
Sister M. Henrica, Nurse
Sister M. Corona, Nurse

In 1869, the hopes of the community was fulfilled when the Rt. Rev. Bishop Luers was able to purchase the old Rockhill House in Ft. Wayne, and on May 4th, Mother Rosa, Sister M. Matrona and Sister M. Henrica bade farewell to the group and took possession of the house which was later to grow into St. Joseph’s Hospital in Ft. Wayne.

In Hesse Cassel the Sisters remained until August 20, 1877 when they were called by Mother Prudentia to Ft. Wayne and the Convent and school were given to the charge of Franciscan Sisters who had lately come from Germany and were in their turn looking for a shelter and a new field of activity.”

Although the Poor Handmaid Sisters stayed only about 9 years at the Hessen Cassel convent, they never forgot the place where they first got their start in America. On 25 August 1968, an open-air Mass and celebration was held at St. Joseph’s Church Hessen Cassel, the site of the order’s first settlement, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Poor Handmaids’s service in the United States. Bishop Leo Pursley was the main celebrant of the service, which was attended by hundreds of the Poor Handmaid Sisters and Catholics in the parish and vicinity. This event is documented in two lengthy articles appearing in the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* newspaper, which also provided an in-depth history of the Poor Handmaids.^{125,126}

¹²⁵ Yaggy, Jack. “Hessen Cassel Heritage. Poor Handmaids Reach a Century of Devotion.” *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, 18 August 1968, pages 1E-2E.

These newspaper articles present the following narration about the first days of the Poor Handmaids in Hessen Cassel. “On Sunday, Aug. 30 (1868), the eight sisters made the last part of their journey on a large hay wagon eight miles from the center of Fort Wayne to Hessen Cassel. There, they were to teach in the elementary school, tend the sick of the neighborhood, take care of the altar linens for St. Joseph’s Church, and play the church organ. The excitement, confusion, amusement and uncertainty of the pioneer sisters on their first day at Hessen Cassel is described in the words of one of the original sisters...: ‘Having arrived at Hessen Cassel late in the afternoon, we were conducted to our convent, a small one-story building. While our luggage was unloaded, an evening meal was being prepared at a farmer’s house in the vicinity. Accepting the gracious invitation of the parishioner, we accompanied him thither. Pleasant conversation lent spice to the charitable feast. One thing especially interested us immensely. The oldest daughter of the house stood at the table waving a huge branch of a tree over the table thereby preventing those little black six-footed creatures, which are rather plentiful in America at this time of year, from sitting down to a peaceful meal. For us Europeans, this performance was comedy, indeed. After dinner, the sexton rang the bells to call the faithful to Vespers, and so we went to church. The good people, great and small, old and young, had arranged themselves before the church door and we were closely examined from head to toe. The church was decorated beautifully. A large number of candles shed their radiance over the little sanctuary. The good people began to sing. The singing was pious, inspiring and beautiful. The theme of the sermon was, obviously, the sisters and their work. It embarrassed us. After benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, we returned to our little house. The convent had been occupied previously by the Franciscan sisters, but had been vacant for two years. The greatest poverty manifested itself and one can truly say the order in America was erected upon the foundation of holy poverty.’”

The newspaper articles relate another story about the Poor Handmaids during their stay at the Hessen Cassel convent. “The little community relished this life of poverty, all the while retaining their cheerfulness. One morning, when Sister Rose had gone to Fort Wayne, presumably to procure provisions, one of the sisters decided to try and entertain her companions with a little speech. The incident is described in the book...by Meagher...: “An overturned flour barrel suggested itself as a suitable platform for the speech. Within a matter of seconds the orator was on her pedestal. With energetic and flamboyant gestures she launched forth on a mock appeal. ‘O Mother Rose, we have no bread! We have no butter. O Mother Rose, we have no flour! We have no potatoes. O Mother Rose, we have...’ – and with an accompaniment of splintering and crackling wood, she disappeared into the barrel. It is related that the audience had pains in their stomachs that day, but they were not caused by the pangs of hunger.”

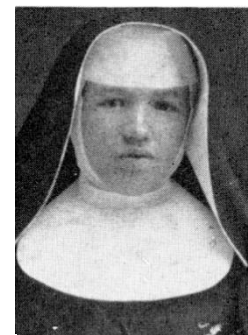
¹²⁶ Yaggy, Jack. “Brave Adventure. Poor Handmaids Found New Areas for Service.” Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, 15 August 1968, pages 1E and 4E.

The newspaper article also provided a description of the convent at Hessen Cassel as follows: “The convent occupied at Hessen Cassel by the Poor Handmaids has long since disappeared and in its place is now a cornfield. It was a one-story house like the motherhouse at Dernbach [Germany], according to Sister M. Eulogia [Eudoxia?], who wrote this description in 1929 at the age of 90. ‘The convent had four wings and its chapel even had a little tower. There was a reception room, a guest room, bedrooms for the sisters, and dormitories for the school children who often had to stay with the sisters in the cold of winter because of the distances to their homes. Our neighbors were the dead in the churchyard. At the end of the cemetery was the church and priest’s house. Here and there one could see a dwelling house. After their day’s work, the sisters could enjoy viewing God’s wonderful nature. Fields, brushwood, and forests offered them these opportunities.’” The above description of the convent does not coincide with that given by the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, as a plain building with seven rooms. However, it does match the school building shown in the 1876 sketch of the Hessen Cassel parish grounds. At some point from 1866 to 1877, it appears that the original convent was remodeled or replaced.

The Poor Handmaids also founded the St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Wayne and established a new motherhouse there. After spending 9 years at their first American “motherhouse” at Hessen Cassel, all of the sisters remaining at Hessen Cassel convent were moved to their new motherhouse on 20 August 1877. They were immediately replaced by another order of nuns from Germany, the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

The Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart (1877 - 1968)

The Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart were founded in 1866 in Seelbach, Baden province, Germany. Due to the political turmoil of the Kulturkampf in Germany, this religious order of sisters subsequently came to America in 1876 to escape religious persecution and to continue their work. They re-established themselves in a new motherhouse in Avilla, Indiana. Both the diocesan histories by Alerding in 1907 and by White in 2007 provide summaries of this community’s origin and accomplishments relative to the diocese of Fort Wayne.^{127,128}



Sister Irima
Figure 53

Some of these Sisters subsequently moved into the open convent available at Hessen Cassel and took over teaching at the school on 16 August 1877. According to the parish’s 100th anniversary booklet, the first sisters sent to teach at Hessen Cassel were Sisters Kunigunde, Luitgard, and Philomena. Sister M. Hermina also came

¹²⁷ Alerding, Herman J. The Diocese of Fort Wayne. 1857 – September 22 – 1907. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Archer Printing Co., 1907), see “Chapter XIX. The Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart”, page 472.

¹²⁸ White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ : a History of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend : Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Diocese and Catholic Life in Northern Indiana. (Fort Wayne, Ind. : The Diocese, 2007), pages 153

as a nurse to help care for the sick of the parish. The 1880 U.S. Census taken just 3 years later lists four sisters at the Hessen Cassel convent, but they were apparently enumerated with their actual, non-religious names – Magdalen Bichele, housekeeper; Theresa Borsmer, teacher; Mary Himmelsbach, sacristan; and Rose Spinner, teacher. Other Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred heart known to have served at Hessen Cassel over the years based on census records are: 1900 – Sisters Armella, Scholastica, and Irmina; 1910 – Sisters Josephine, Irmina, and Honoria; 1920 - Sisters Pacifica, Irmina, and Silveria. Sister Irmina was a nurse and cook at Hessen Cassel convent for over 20 years, and her photo from the parish centennial booklet is shown in Figure 53. Based on various photos of the school classes, other known teaching sisters were: c. 1883 – Sister Yustinea; c.1895 – Sister Regina; 1907 – Sisters Josephine, Armella, Irmina, and Fidella; 1930 – Sisters Rosemary, Fredricka, and Hildegard. Their photos can be seen in the section about the Hessen Cassel school. A 1908 German prayer book belonging to and signed by a Sr. Perpetua, who reportedly was also at Hessen Cassel, still exists.¹²⁹ This book was titled “Unter Jesu Fahne” [Under Jesus’s Banner] and contained prayers by old German Jesuit missionaries.

The Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart who were serving at Hessen Cassel in 1957 are shown below in Figure 54.

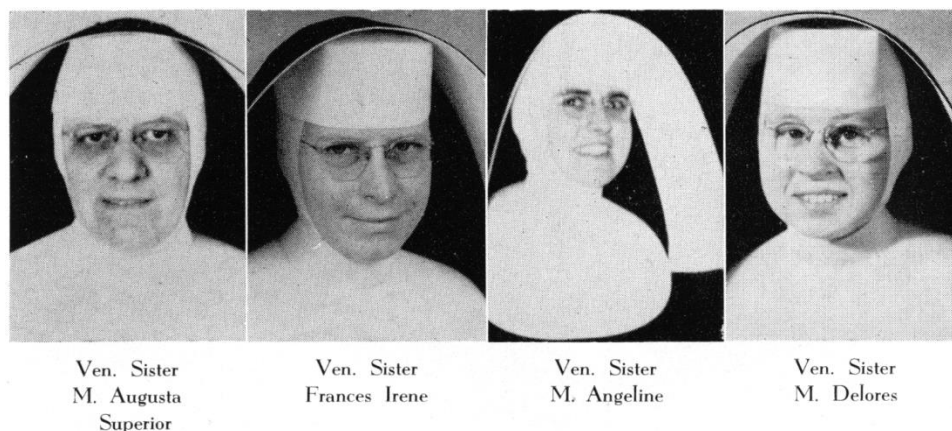


Figure 54 - Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart at Hessen Cassel Parish (1957)

After serving the Hessen Cassel parish for more than 110 years, the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart stopped teaching at the school in 1968.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Brokamp, Heinrich, S.J. *Unter Jesu Fahne zum Zeitlichen und Ewigen Glück. Lehr- und Gebetbuch nach alten deutschen Jesuiten=Missionären.* (Klangenfurt, Germany: St. Josef-Bücherbinderschaft, 1908). Given by Clara (Smith) Herber to Carl J. Kleber, 6 June 1992 (R1114).

¹³⁰ Robb, Phyllis. (ed.) *History of Fort Wayne & Allen County, Indiana, 1700-2005.* (Evansville, Ind.: M.T. Pub. Co., 2006), Volume 2, page 195; “St. Joseph – Hessen Cassel Church”

Chicken Thieves (1911)

Over the years, the Sacred Heart Sisters at the convent relied on the generosity of the parishioners for much of their food and other living needs. However, the nuns also maintained gardens and a hennery to help support themselves. During the night of 22 March 1911, some desperate or despicable thieves broke into the Sisters' new chicken coop and stole a bunch of their chickens. This crime was reported in the local newspaper article shown below.¹³¹



¹³¹ "Stole Lot Of Chickens. Hen Roost at Sisters' School in Hesse Cassel Raided." Fort Wayne Sentinel, 23 March 1911, page 2.

Chapter 15 – The New Cemetery (c. 1861- Present)

A new cemetery, now Section A of the present cemetery, was apparently planned by the parish around the time that the brick church was built (1857-1859). On 18 December 1861, Sebastian and Catharine Kleber sold to Bishop Luers for \$20 a 7/8-acre plot of land located directly east and adjacent to the original 1-acre church lot.¹³² This was the site for the new cemetery. However, it appears that Sebastian Kleber was compensated for the loss of his land needed for this new cemetery by his brother-in-law, Johannes Schmidt (John Smith). The deed records show that, two days earlier on 16 December 1861, John Schmidt sold to Sebastian Kleber for \$20 a narrow one-acre strip (33 feet by 1320 feet) of his farm land in the southwest quarter of Section 8.¹³³ The two brothers-in-law had adjacent farms in this location and John Schmidt shifted the one-acre strip of his land over to Sebastian's bordering land. Thus, it appears that the John Schmidt family indirectly provided the land for the new cemetery.

The date of the deed for the new cemetery, 18 December 1861, most likely represents the time that the construction of the cemetery was completed and the work begun to move the old graves to the new ground. However, the plans and layout for the new cemetery were surely established before 1861. This is supported by the fact that the land located south and exactly the same distance along the border of the new cemetery was previously sold to the church by George Sorg 2 years earlier in 1859. Thus, prior to 1859, some verbal agreement must have been in effect for this land located parallel to the Sorg plot in order for Sorg to extend his contribution of land over this far to the east. As mentioned previously, it was not unusual for the seller or donator of land to the church to formalize the land transaction only after the project for its intended use was completed. This provided the seller some leverage and the buyer (i.e. the Catholic Church Bishop) incentive to complete the project in a timely manner and for the purpose which the seller intended.

Design and Construction

Most assuredly, it required a substantial amount of time and effort to prepare the new ground for burials. After clearing the land of trees and removing the stumps, brush, and rocks, it was also necessary to survey the land into measured burial plots. When the new cemetery was opened at the end of 1861, the graves from the old cemetery were subsequently moved to the new cemetery. This is apparent from the many older tombstones in the new cemetery which pre-date 1861 and were thus definitely moved. Of course, some of the older grave markers, for instance those made of wood, have disappeared. This is the case for Franz and Elisabetha Münch. There are other unmarked graves in the new cemetery.

¹³² "Deed of Sale from Sebastian and Catharine Kleber to John H. Lüers, Bishop of Fort Wayne, Allen Co. IN", Allen County, IN, Deed Book 28, pages 325-326, 16 December 1861 (recorded 17 February 1862).

¹³³ "Deed of Sale from Johannes and Elizabeth Smith to Sebastian Kleber", Allen County, IN, Deed Book 28, pages 324-325, 16 December 1861 (recorded 11 February 1862). (R438)

Although the burials in the old cemetery were probably somewhat disorganized and made by happenstance, much advance thought and planning went into establishing the new church cemetery (Section A). The land was surveyed and partitioned into 110 lots with most of the lots having a dimension of 12 feet by 16 feet = 8 possible grave sites/lot; each allotted grave being 3 feet by 8 feet. However, lots 45 through 66, located on the west border of the cemetery (closest to the church), were partitioned as half-lots with a dimension of 6 feet by 8 feet = 4 possible grave sites. Pathways between sets of plots were provided for easy access. A sketch drawn to scale showing the location and original owners of the various lots in Sections A and B was prepared in 2001 by Charles Beckman, the former sexton.¹³⁴ This framed map is stored in the parish office, and a close-up photo showing just Section A is provided in Figure 56.

As the map shows, the new cemetery grounds (i.e. Section A) were arranged with 2 main central lanes (north-south and east-west) intersecting in the middle to form the general shape of a cross (although there is an extra set of lots along the south side, so the cross arrangement is not truly symmetrical). The shorter north-south lane formed the arm of the cross while the longer east-west lane formed the upright beam of the cross. The top of the cross-shaped lanes was at the east end, while the foot of the cross was at the west end nearest the church. The arms of the cross formed a pathway between the north and south ends of the cemetery, with the south end serving as the main entrance. In the center of the cemetery, where the two main corridors intersect, a life-sized stone crucifix was erected as the focal point of the cemetery. This large crucifix was



Figure 55 – St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Cemetery (c. 1910)

¹³⁴ “Map of St. Joseph Catholic Church Cemetery, Hessen Cassel, IN; Sections A and B”. Prepared by Charles F. Beckman, Sexton, 2001; located in the parish office.

donated by Henry William Beckmann (1805-1888), presumably at the time the cemetery was established around 1861. A photo of the cemetery and crucifix taken around 1910 is shown in Figure 55. A kneeler for prayer is in front of the crucifix and it is apparent that some of the lots are overgrown with grass and weeds.

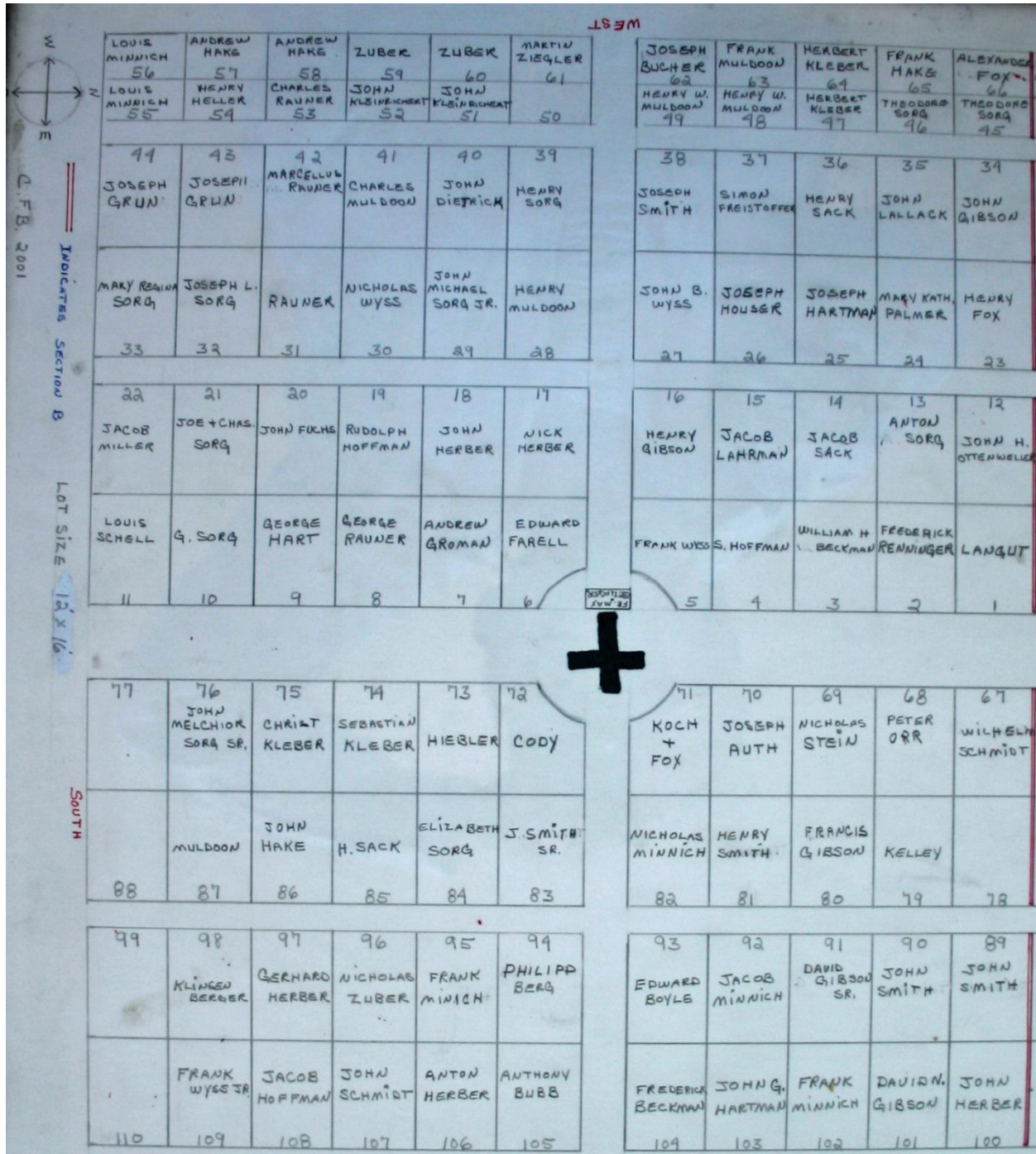


Figure 56 – Map by Charles Beckman showing location of lots in Section A, St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Cemetery.

The Central Crucifix (c. 1861)

The life-size stone crucifix in the cemetery was refurbished during 1993-1994 by Charles “Charlie” Beckman (1937-2008), the former cemetery sexton and a great-grandson of the original donor, the previously-mentioned Henry W. Beckmann.¹³⁵ Charlie wanted the crucifix restored to its original colors, which the restorers determined by carefully removing all the old coats of paint. They then repainted the crucifix to its original color scheme. The INRI plaque is wood-colored and the body of Christ is white with brown hair, a green crown of thorns, a gold loin cloth, and red blood at the nail holes and sword piercing. A photo of the statue after the renovation is shown in Figure 58. A close-up of the re-painted crucifix is shown in Figure 57.



Figure 58 –Restored crucifix, Hessen Cassel cemetery, 1994.

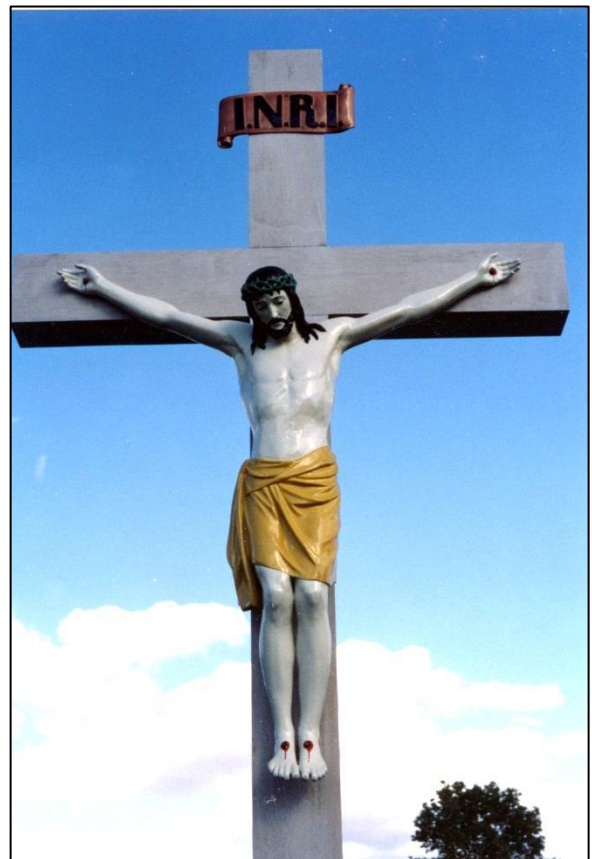


Figure 57 – Close-up of restored crucifix, 1994

This crucifix originally had a German inscription at the foot of the cross along with a large Latin inscription on the base. Both inscriptions were translated into English by Carl Kleber and re-engraved as part of the 1994 restoration. In order to do this properly, the restorers abraded away the old surface stone and inscriptions with a sand grinder. Unlike normal sandblasting, this

¹³⁵ “Interview and Meeting with Charles Beckman by Carl J. Kleber”, St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Cemetery, 26 June 1993. [R1151, R1182]

technique doesn't open the old stone to weathering. The new engraving of the English translations was then performed. The original German inscription was "Liebesgabe zum Wohle der Lebenden und Abgestorbene. H.W. Beckmann", which translates as: "Charitable gift for the benefit of the living and the dead. H.W. Beckmann".



Figure 59 - Original German inscription on base of Hessen Cassel cemetery crucifix (1992)

The original Latin inscription on the lower base was "MIHI AUTEM OPORTET GLORIARI IN CRUCE DOMINI NOSTRI JESU CHRISTI PER QUEM EST SALUS. VITA ET. RESURRECTIO. 1 COR." This was translated as: "To me, however, it is right to boast about the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ through Whom is salvation, life and resurrection. 1 Cor." A photograph of the original German inscription at the foot of the cross before the 1994 restoration is shown in Figure 59 while the corresponding new translations after the restoration are shown in Figure 60.

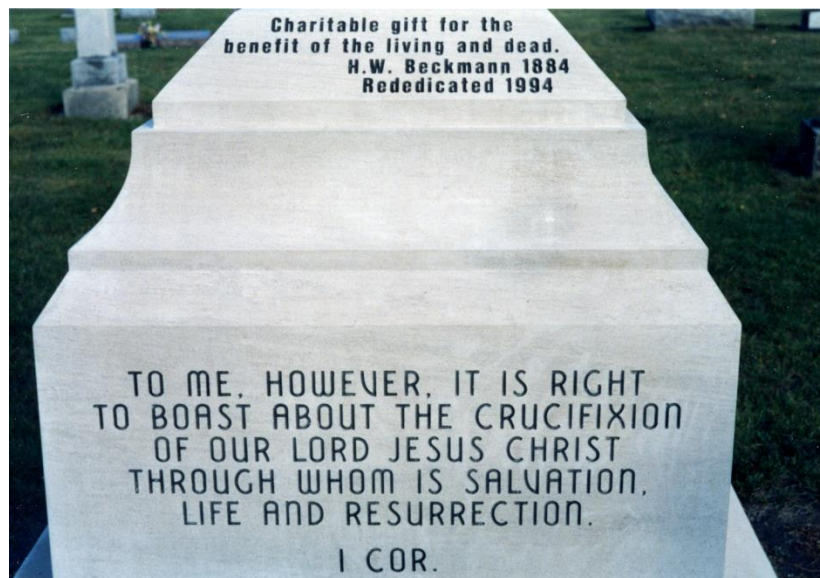


Figure 60 - Translated inscriptions on restored stone base of Hessen Cassel cemetery crucifix (1994).

Charlie Beckman did not know when the stone crucifix was originally donated by H. W. Beckmann, who died on 28 March 1884. Since the monument must have been erected previous to this date, Charlie selected the year 1884 as the minimum date for its age and had it engraved on the stone base. Unfortunately, most people will interpret this to mean that it was donated and erected in 1884. In reality, this crucifix, which is the focal point of the cemetery, was most likely erected at the time the new cemetery was opened around 1861. Charlie reported that the statue of the crucified Christ at one time had a halo above the head, but this was severely damaged and destroyed beyond repair during a hailstorm. This halo is visible in the c. 1910 photo of the cemetery. Thus, the final, restored crucifix supposedly looks the same as it originally did, except for the missing halo.

First Burial Lots & Owners

After the burial lots were surveyed (c.1861), they were numbered from 1 to 110. Concrete markers, each 4 (width) x 6 (length) x 18 (depth) inches, with the lot number on top, were set in the ground directly in front of the corresponding numbered lot. Remnants of these concrete lot markers are still present in the ground at the front of some lots (Figures 61-63). For example lots 1 through 6 are still marked along with lots 36, 39. Recently lot marker 66 was found buried



Figure 62 – Close-up view Lot No. 4 concrete marker



Figure 61 – Buried Lot No. 2 concrete marker

several inches below the ground. Many of these numbered concrete markers have either sunken below ground level or were removed over the years. It appears that at some point the cemetery was tiled to remove ground water. Those rows in Section A of the cemetery with underground tile running through them (north-south) appear to have had all the concrete lot markers removed during the tiling process. The 1936 parish financial report states that \$37.50 was spent just that year alone for ditching and tiles, which proves that such work was common practice.

The lot numbers were assigned from left to right starting with lot number 1 being located on the west side of the end of the north lane (see Beckman sketch). Why this lot was selected as no. 1 is unknown, except that it is the first lot on the left when standing in front of the central crucifix. From this point, all the lots are numbered consecutively from left to right all the way down to the west end, ending with lot 66. Then the numbering resumes all the way back at the beginning

with those lots above the north-south lane (i.e. behind the crucifix) with lot 67 located opposite (east) of lot 1. The numbering then continues left to right (as you stand in front of the crucifix) until the last lot, no. 110, is reached at the far right (southeast) corner of the cemetery. It would have been more logical to assign lot numbers starting from an outside corner of the cemetery rather than at an interior point, but it seems like the central crucifix was selected as the basis for the numbering system. Determining the lot numbers is not intuitive and the parish cemetery map is absolutely essential to find a specific lot. Furthermore, the lot numbers do not reflect a chronological burial process. The oldest tombstones are located along the north-south lane, i.e. closest to the crucifix, and appear to spread east and west for later burials. This is consistent with the fact that the original entrance to the cemetery was located at the south end.

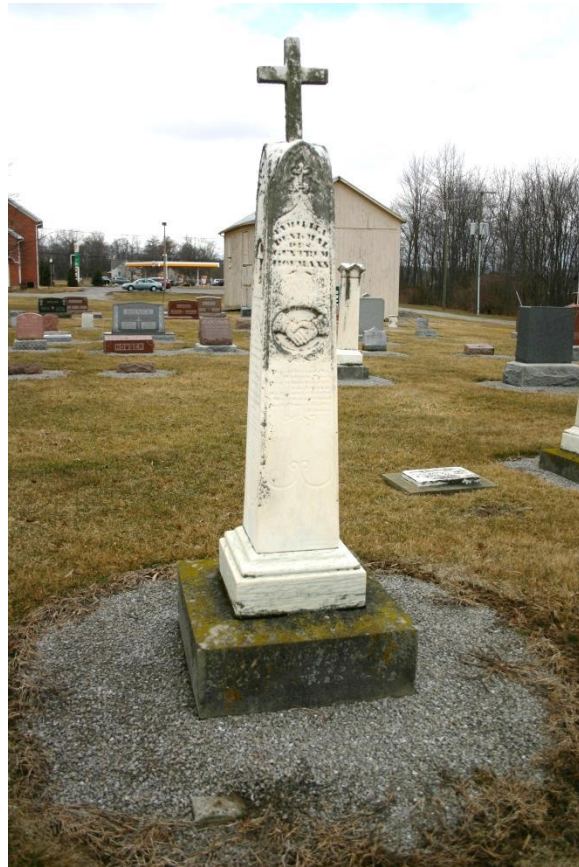


Figure 63 – Lot No. 4 with concrete marker visible in left-front of the tombstone.

A list of the original purchasers of the 110 lots in Section A is recorded in the parish's Record of Internments (1873-1947). This information was officially entered into the church book on 23 November 1913 by Rev. Max Benzinger at the same time that Section B was being added to the cemetery. This list was apparently made from some other primary record(s) of purchasers which has now been lost or destroyed and is no longer at the church. Based on the names of the original purchasers, who presumably were alive at the time that the plots were purchased, the earliest lot owner who subsequently died and was buried was Nikolaus Stein, who died on 27 April 1861. The lots of all other people buried before this date were purchased for them by their living relatives. Thus, it appears that the cemetery lots were being sold and burials conducted prior to the land officially being conveyed by deed to the church by Sebastian Kleber on 18 December 1861. Interestingly, there are 4 adjacent lots (no.'s 77, 88, 99, and 110), located along the southeast border and near the south entrance to the cemetery, which were never sold. Since the convent built in 1859 was located to the south of the cemetery entrance and in front of these four prime lots, it is speculated that they were held in reserve and intended for the future burial of the nuns serving the parish. However, no Sisters are known to be buried there, and no tombstones are located on these apparently empty lots. Another less-likely possibility is that these 4 lots were used for a mass burial of the bodies removed from the first cemetery. However, probing indicates that no graves are present in these 4 adjacent lots.

Grave Markers

The grave marker in the new cemetery with the earliest death dates, and therefore likely the oldest tombstone, was that for the Heinrich and Anna Katharina (Schmidt) Sack family located in Section A, lot 85. This obelisk-shaped stone has the names of the various family members on the four different sides. The north side of the stone contains the cemetery's earliest death dates, which are for two of the Sack children - Elisabetha Sack, who died on 15 September 1834 (1 week old) and Ludwig Sack, who died 16 February 1836 (3 months old). Obviously, these death years pre-date by several years even the founding of the parish in 1841, and thus these two children could not even have been buried in the first cemetery. Perhaps the bodies of these early Sack children were originally interred on the family farm and then relocated to either the new or old cemetery. Also, perhaps the Sack parents just had the names of these children recorded on the tombstone in their memory despite not really being buried in this plot. Two more children are memorialized on the south side of the marker - Heinrich, who died on 11 January 1850 (11 years old), and Peter, who died on 4 March 1848 (5 years old). It is likely that these two children were originally buried in the old church cemetery and were re-interred in this lot around 1861. On the west side of the stone is engraved the name of another child, Sebastian Sack, who died 20 December 1863 (16 years old), and thus was directly buried in the new cemetery. The parents, Heinrich Sack (1803-1888) and Anna Katharina Sack (1806-1870) are located on the east side of the marker and were buried well after the new cemetery was opened.

There are many other tombstones in the new cemetery with pre-1860 death dates, which further supports the theory that most, if not all, of the graves in the old cemetery were moved to the new cemetery. All the existing tombstones in the current cemetery up to 2010 can be viewed at the St. Joseph Church website, (<http://stjoehc.org/>).

The Church Sexton

For many years, until a permanent cemetery caretaker was established by the parish, each individual family was responsible for the care and upkeep of the burial lot of their deceased family members. But as families relocated or died off, many lots were left unattended (see c.1910 photo of cemetery, Figure 55). On 29 December 1913, Fr. Max Benzinger recorded in the parish burial book that "A committee of 3 members were elected to attend to the cemetery, to keep it in a becoming condition, with the understanding that they could do the necessary work themselves or hire hands to do the work. For 1914 and 1915, the following members were elected. Mr. Anton Herber, Mr. George Sorg, and Mr. Simon Hoffman." It is not known if there were any other caretakers or sextons appointed before this date, but the Beckman family has been closely involved with the upkeep and development of the cemetery grounds over the years. As previously mentioned, the large cemetery crucifix was donated by Henry William Beckmann (1805-1888) when the cemetery was first established around 1861. His grandson, Joseph Beckman (1891-1968) served as the sexton for the parish cemetery for many years. The duties

of sexton were then assumed by Joe's son, Charles "Charlie" Beckman (1937-2008), until his untimely death in 2008. Thereupon, Thomas Rauner was appointed as the current sexton.

Expansions (1914 - Present)

Over the years more land was obtained by the church and the cemetery was expanded. On 22 November 1914, Section B was officially added and the ground consecrated. Fr. Maximilian Benzinger recorded the event as follows: "Sunday, November 22, 1914, the new addition to the cemetery, as a diagram will show, was blessed by Rev. Thomas Jos. Eisenring C.P.P.S., chaplain of St. Joseph's Hospital, Fort Wayne, Ind., being sub-delegated by the Pastor of the Congregation, Maximilian Benzinger. The weather was not exactly favorable, so the Rev. Eisenring gave an instructional essay in the Church before the blessing."

A photo of the complete map prepared by Charles Beckman showing the location and names of the lots owners in both Sections A and B is provided in Figure 64. The boundaries of the two sections are drawn in red. As shown, Section B wraps around the north side of Section A, which adds further to the difficulty in finding the location of a specific lot without the aid of the map. When Section A of the cemetery was deeded to the Diocese in 1861, the north edge of Section A was also the north edge of the church property. Prior to the establishment of Section B in 1913, the north edge of the property was extended further north on 6 July 1912 when Christopher Kleber sold more land to expand the church property.¹³⁶ This is the reason that the north side of Section B "wraps around" the north side of Section A in addition to extending to the east of Section A (see map).

In 1910, when the cemetery consisted of only section A, a large wooden fence with four boards between the posts ran along the south side of the cemetery with an opening where the original entrance was located. It is partially visible in the c. 1910 photo of the cemetery (Figure 55). It appears that sometime after Section B was added in 1914, an expensive wrought iron fence was erected around the perimeter of the expanded cemetery. This iron fence remained for many years, but was taken down and sold by the sexton, Joseph Beckman (1891-1968), possibly around the time that Section C was added to the grounds in 1964.

¹³⁶ "Deed of Sale from Christopher and Mary Kleber to Bishop Herman J. Alerding", Allen County, IN, Deed Book 222, page 190, 6 July 1912 (recorded 9 July 1912).



Figure 64 – Map of Lot Owners in Sections A and B, St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Cemetery

The cemetery was further expanded in 1964 with the addition of Section C. Very Rev. Msgr. Robert W. Contant recorded the following in the parish interment book. “Sunday, November 1, 1964, Section “C” (lying east and north [sic] of Section “B”) of St. Joseph Cemetery, Hessen Cassel, was blessed by the undersigned with simple blessing having been delegated by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Thomas Durken, Vicar-General. [signed] Very Rev. Msgr. Robert W. Contant”.

Since 1964, additional Sections D, E, and F have been added. An overhead photo of the current cemetery with the various sections labeled is shown below (Figure 65). Sections E and F are to the right of Sections C and D and are currently being used for new burials. In 2013, the parish

purchased for \$30,000 two additional acres located along the north side of the cemetery for future expansion.



Figure 65 – Aerial View of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Cemetery with the various sections designated.

Although cemeteries are sometimes considered haunted and a place to avoid, the Catholic Church has always considered a cemetery to be a holy place. When establishing a cemetery, the Catholic Church blesses it and dedicates it to God as a place of worship, prayer, and reflection upon divine truth and the purpose of life. It is considered as a resting place of the dead until the day of resurrection for the bodies of the faithful departed, once temples of the Holy Spirit, whose souls are now with God. It is viewed as a final and continuing profession of faith in God and of membership in the church by those who have chosen to be buried with fellow believers.

Chapter 16 – The Rectory (c. 1862 - Present)

When the first log church at Hessen Cassel parish was built in 1841, there was no need for a rectory to house a priest because the first missionary priests resided in Fort Wayne and only made periodic stops at the various mission parishes in the surrounding area. If necessary, accommodations for the traveling priests were arranged in the homes of local parishioners. During the first 20 years of the parish, the congregation was served by visiting priests. In 1852, the St. Mary's Catholic Church parish in nearby Decatur, Indiana built a rectory for Rev. B. H. Schultes, who then also served as pastor of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel from this location. In July 1858, Fr. Jacob Mayer was appointed pastor of St. Mary's in Decatur, and likewise served as the remote pastor of Hessen Cassel parish.¹³⁷ Although Fr. Mayer was responsible for building the brick church at Hessen Cassel (c. 1857–1860), he resided during this time at the rectory in Decatur until September 1862, when he was assigned directly to Hessen Cassel. At this time, Fr. Mayer officially became the first resident priest of Hessen Cassel parish with his rectory being the former log church, which had been relocated to the rear and south of the new church for this purpose sometime between 1860 to 1862. Fr. Mayer is mentioned as the resident pastor when he transported the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor to the convent at Hessen Cassel on 9 August 1863, and again when he invested two women at the convent with the gray habit of the Oblates of St. Margaret of Cortona on 19 October 1863. However, Fr. Mayer only served as the resident pastor and lived in the old log rectory at Hessen Cassel for barely one year. By his own request for a transfer, Fr. Mayer was appointed the pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Huntington, IN in December 1863.

The establishment of the first rectory at Hessen Cassel parish was touched upon in the various Allen County histories presented in Chapter 1. The following portions relative to the rectory have been excerpted from these histories and are presented below in chronological order.

(Newton, 1880). - “Rev. Joseph [sic] Mayer, the first resident priest, took charge of the Church in 1858, and remained until 1863. During his pastoral relation with the Church (in 1860), the present handsome edifice was erected, and the old building (i.e. log church) removed to the rear of the premises.’ [Note: this passage is misleading in that it suggests that Rev. Mayer began as the resident priest in 1858, when in fact he served Hessen Cassel from July 1858 to September 1862 while simultaneously being the resident pastor at St. Mary's Church in Decatur, IN. He was the resident priest at Hessen Cassel only from about September 1862 to December 1863.]

(Lang, 1889). - “Rev. Jacob Mayer became the first resident pastor. He began the present brick church in 1862... The log chapel then became the pastoral residence. Rev. Joseph Nussbaum was the next pastor. He built a brick residence.”

(Berry, 1905). - No mention is made of the rectory.

¹³⁷ Alerding, Herman J. The Diocese of Fort Wayne. 1857 – September 22 – 1907. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Archer Printing Co., 1907), see pages 220-223 for the various ministerial appointments of Rev. Jacob Mayer.

(Alerding, 1907) - “The priest's house is a brick building. It was begun at an earlier day, but Rev. Joseph Nussbaum, the first resident pastor at Hesse Cassel, completed it, in 1875. [Note: Rev. Nussbaum was not the first resident priest at Hessen Cassel. This is another error in Alerding’s diocesan history.]

(Hessen Cassel parish centennial booklet, 1957). – “The log chapel served the parish until 1857 when the present edifice was erected. Thereafter it became the pastoral residence.”

Taking all these accounts into consideration, the first rectory was really the original log church building, which was moved to the rear of the premises for this purpose when the new brick church was completed around 1860. Being very practical, economical, and resourceful, it makes sense that the Hessen Cassel parishioners decided to convert the log church into a rectory for the priest. Furthermore, the parishioners may not have had the funds to construct a rectory after the financial burden of building the new church. Although it was about 20 years old at the time, the log church was roomy and probably still in suitable condition to serve as the priest’s residence until funds were available to build a more modern rectory. In order to relocate this log building, it was surely first dismantled and the pieces moved and reassembled. It is unlikely that it would have been possible to move such a heavy log building intact even with many teams of horses. It also makes sense that the parishioners would move the old log church (which was located along the Piqua Road adjacent to and probably partially in front of the new church) to the rear, so as not to distract from the new church and also to provide some privacy for the priest. Its exact location is unknown, but it was likely removed to a site a little south and east of the brick church, somewhere between the new church and the newly-constructed (1859) convent.

The converted old log church apparently served as the priest’s rectory for around 15 years (1860-1875), until Fr. Joseph Nussbaum completed a new brick rectory in 1875 located on the opposite (north) side of the church from the old rectory. The log church/rectory was then apparently torn down at this time. A sketch of the new brick rectory in 1876 (Figure 67) and an 1892 photo (Figure 66) are presented below.

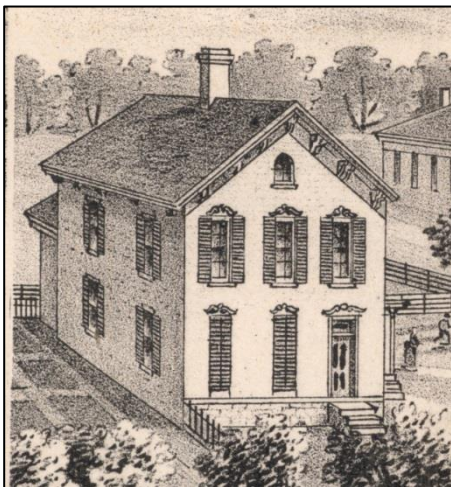


Figure 67 – Rectory (Sketch, 1875)



Figure 66 – Rectory (Photo, 1892)

Various additions and improvements were made to this rectory over the years. At one time there was an adjacent barn for stabling the horses of the pastor and school children, and later a garage. The building is currently used as the parish office with the old convent serving as the current rectory. Photos of the rectory building in 1957 (Figure 69) and currently (Figure 68) are shown below:

Figure 68 – Rectory, 1957



Figure 69 – Parish Office (former Rectory), 2014

Robbery at the Rectory (1886)

On the first day of March 1886, the new brick rectory at Hesse Cassel was robbed of \$575.¹³⁸ A copy of the article appearing in the newspaper is shown below.

A PRIEST ROBBED.

**Rev. Father John Mark, of Hesse
Cassel, Called On.**

Rev. John Mark, the Catholic clergyman at Hesse Cassel, hurried to the city this morning to say that he had been robbed by a burglar on Monday night. The officers are silent until they get the thief.

From a friend of Father Mark, it is learned that some time on Monday night a sneak-thief entered the pastoral residence and stole \$575. The cash was in the clergyman's desk, and for a day or two he thought it best to say nothing about it. He was urged to take action, however, and as Sheriff Nelson and his clever deputies have a clue it is probable they will bag the gentlemen who stole the snug boodle.

Hesse Cassel is four miles from Fort Wayne.

The next day the same newspaper contained another blurb about the robbery.¹³⁹ "Rev. John Mark, of Hesse Cassel, lost \$575 by the robbery last Monday night. The city papers have it \$275, but our "scoop" startled them."

Daily Bread

Much of the food and other items needed by the parish priests were provided gratis by the local parishioners. However, the pastor also maintained a garden on the grounds for fresh produce. The 1876 sketch of the parish grounds (Figure 70) shows a large arrangement of gardens spread out in front and along the side of the rectory.

¹³⁸ "A Priest Robbed." Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel, Friday, 5 March 1886, page 4.

¹³⁹ "The City." Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel, Saturday, 6 March 1886, page 8.

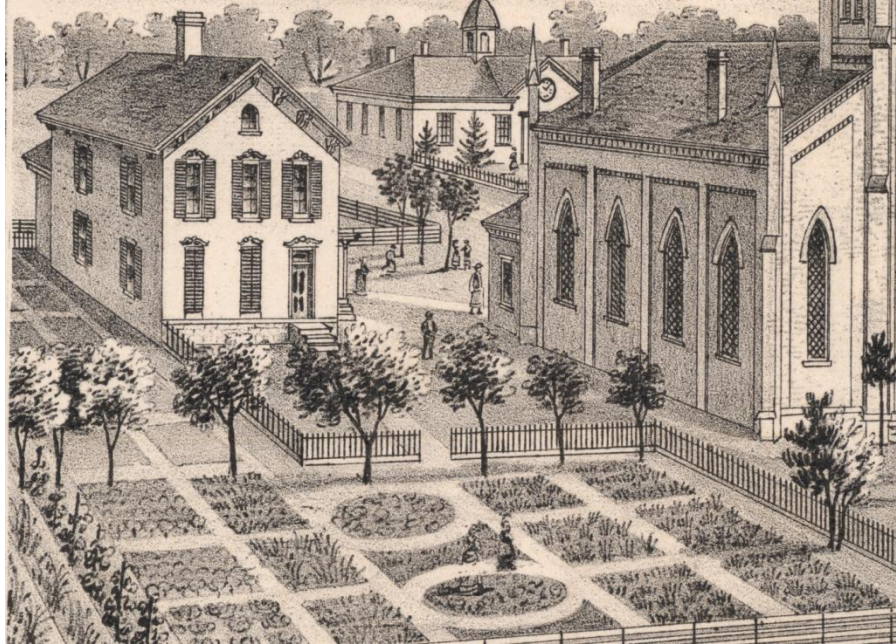


Figure 70 – Sketch of Gardens at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church, 1875

Wine for Father

Besides meat, milk, butter, bread, fresh vegetables and other food items supplied to the priest by the parishioners, the wine for Mass was also produced locally and donated for this cause. One of the people that made church wine for the priest was Mary (Hake) Kleber (1852-1940), who lived in a small house directly across the Decatur Road from the church. She had a grape arbor and would make some of the church wine. One day around 1940, after bottling up a fresh batch of wine for the priest, her son, William Kleber along with his son-in-law, Robert Offerle, stopped by to visit her. William was anxious to taste some of the new wine, but his mother pointed to the church and said that this wine was for father. Not giving up, William pointed at himself and then Robert and replied, “Well, what about the son and Holy Ghost?” Bringing the Trinity into the matter still didn’t get him any wine.

Chapter 17 – The Priests at Hessen Cassel (c. 1835 - Present)

The early missionary priests involved with the initial founding and settlement of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish have already been discussed, and Fr. Julian Benoit (Figure 71) can be given the main credit. Perhaps his obituary in the 27 January 1885 newspaper best describes his accomplishments and impact on the lives of so many people.¹⁴⁰

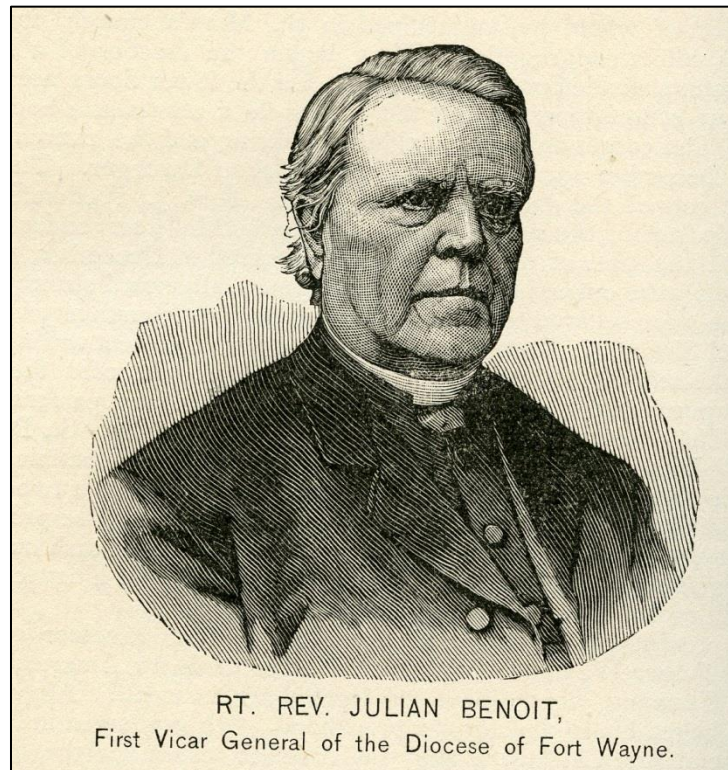


Figure 71



¹⁴⁰ "Good and Great. The Venerable Monsignor Julian Benoit Passes Away to His Heavenly Home." The Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel, 27 January 1885, page 3

GOOD AND GREAT

The Venerable Monsignor Julian Benoit Passes Away to His Heavenly Home.

The Distinguished Prelate Closes His Earthly Career Calmly and at Peace With God.

A Review of His Noble Life, Together With an Article From His Own Pen.

Monsignor Benoit died last night at 8:15 at the Episcopal residence.

This simple announcement will moisten the eyes of thousands and grieve a legion of hearts attached to the venerable prelate by all the ties that are good, noble, holy and true.

Coming here when Fort Wayne was in its infancy, the people grew up with and about the holy priest to love him and worship at his shrine.

To the poor Indians he was priest, counsellor and friend. He taught them the way of the righteous, guarded them against the wily "traders," and watched over them with a fatherly care. It is not to be wondered at that he softened their savage hearts and enjoyed their devotion for he knew not deceit.

The Protestants esteemed Father Julian for his rare virtues, christian fortitude and princely characteristics. So ardently was their admiration that his every effort met with their warmest approval and received their most substantial assistance, for they knew his energies and every moment of his life would be devoted to the glory of God and the best interests of mankind.

In his own church he was adored, honored and renowned. No pen can describe the degree of affection between him and his flock, neither can time efface it, for it will go down from generation to generation as a rare jewel that brightens and beautifies with age.

Among the clergy and ecclesiastics of the church of Rome, Father Benoit was venerated for his saintly virtues, extolled for his grand work and elevated for his great learning. Wherever the gospel of Christ is sounded in America by Catholic tongue, there is Monsignor Benoit known; there beloved and there his loss sorrowed. In the pulpit he was earnest, sensible and brilliant. In the councils of the church he was eloquent, masterly and inspired. At the Vatican he was listened to with profound respect and honored for his manly conduct.

He had not an enemy in the world, and his face always beamed with that holy grace that commended him as a member of the papal household and an adviser at the head of the Roman Cath-

In his death, Fort Wayne loses one of its founders, as well as one of its greatest and grandest citizens. When this city had no inviting prospects Father Benoit was the nucleus about which the pioneers and substantial people gathered. He encouraged every one to build up the city and led the work himself by erecting the most magnificent church edifice in the west.

The whole life of the saintly priest was one of marvelous purity and perfection. In all the trials and tribulations of missionary life he never neglected a duty, never avoided a task. He traveled this territory when it was a wilderness, and in sunshine and storm the gospel of Christ was preached by his lips, the afflicted comforted by his holy presence, and the feeble strengthened by his voice.

His charity knew no bounds and thousands can testify to his liberality. His purse was a fountain from which poured comfort to the needy and his right hand knew not what his left hand did. He utilized his fortune to conceal poverty and relieve distress. In this way went the greater part of his wealth while the cause of christianity and education received the rest.

The last time Monsignor Benoit addressed a public assemblage was on the occasion of his third return from Europe. From a carriage in front of the Episcopal residence he spoke with emotion and in a trembling voice told his beloved hearers how glad he was to again see their familiar faces and be at his old home—a home and people he loved so dear. At the close of his remarks not a dry eye looked at the priest, who himself was overcome.

All through his life Monsignor Benoit enjoyed the best of health and Almighty God seemed to especially bless him for the holy work of his long clerical career. A few months ago symptoms of cancer manifested themselves and the disease increased in severity until pyæmia added its deathly fangs to its fatal predecessor. During his illness the venerable prelate was as cheerful and buoyant as of old and he seemed to accept his ailments and pain as blessings from his Maker. Up to within the past few days his mind was clear and his faculties retained their vigor, but as the blood poison permeated his system his reason flitted on its throne. Only one endowed with indomitable will power and almost superhuman nerve could have battled

so long against disease in so malignant a form. But endurance has a limit and the aged prelate passed away peacefully at 8:15 last night.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

The following accurate sketch of Monsignor Benoit's life is gleaned from a pamphlet prepared by a member of the Episcopal household, for publication:

Julian Benoit was born at Septmoncel, France, October 17, 1808, of humble French parents. He was the tenth of eleven children and lived to see them all buried. His father and mother both died in 1852, aged eighty seven and eighty-five years, respectively.

When eight years of age young Benoit went to school, where he remained eight years. Then he went to the seminary of Orgelet and graduated from the seminary of Lous-de-Saunier.

When he concluded his theological studies he was too young for ordination and accepted a professorship in the seminary of Arethod, where he taught for one year. Then he went to the seminary at Lyons, where for four years he held a professor's chair. Here he met Rt. Rev. Bishop Brute, of Vincennes, Ind., who was then in France searching for theologians willing to serve God as missionaries in America. Deacon Benoit agreed to leave his native land and set sail for America from Havre de Grace, June 1, 1836.

He landed in New York July 22, 1836, after a voyage of fifty-two days, and proceeded at once to Baltimore, with the Sulpician fathers, where he remained a few months and was ordained a priest on St. Mark's day, 1837, by Rt. Rev. Bishop Brute.

Soon after he came towards Indiana and was stationed near Evansville, on the Ohio River. He served in several other missions later, but on the 16th day of April, 1840, he came to Fort Wayne. This was a primitive village then. The old fort stood near the Maumee river and the council house was on East Main street. Father Benoit found here a frame church, 35x65, and of rude construction. He made his home for a time with Hon. Francis Compaet, but soon built a house for himself. His mission at first included Avilla, French settlement, Columbia City, Blue River, Huntington, Decatur, New Haven and Hesse Castle, at which places he built temples in which to serve the Lord.

The construction of the Wabash and Erie canal began in 1840, and as the work progressed Father Benoit's mission was extended to Defiance, Ohio. Over all this territory, then inhabited by the Miami Indians, and a few white settlers and canal laborers, the missionary father traveled on horseback. He said mass at every place, administered the sacraments of baptism, communion, and marriage, and the sacrament of extreme unction when it was possible to reach the sick person alive.

When Father Benoit came here a debt of \$5,000 hung over the little Catholic church and half of the present cathedral square on which it stood. He paid this money and later purchased the other half of what is now the handsomest block in the city.

In 1848, after the death of Godfrey, then war chief of the Miamis, and Richardville, their peace chief, the government ordered the Indians to move to the territory of Kansas. Without Father Benoit, their counsellor and best friend, the Indians would not go. At the urgent request of the commander of the United States troops, and in order to prevent bloodshed, Father Benoit did go to Kansas with the Indians, following en route there, the Wabash and Erie canal and the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to Evansville and St. Louis. Then a stage was taken to the present site of Kansas City, where he remained about two weeks.

After his return here Father Benoit traveled extensively until 1857, when the diocese of Fort Wayne was organized, with Rt. Rev. John A. Luers as its first bishop.

Father Benoit then had an opportunity to go to Vincennes or Toledo but preferred to remain here, where he was appointed vicar general by Rt. Rev. Bishop Luers.

In 1860, with just \$1,000 on hand, the vicar general began the construction of the magnificent cathedral. Money came to the beloved priest from Catholics and Protestants alike, and in the autumn of 1861, he witnessed the dedication of one of the finest church buildings in the nation.

Father Benoit thrice visited Europe. The first time was in 1841, when he remained abroad until the summer of 1842. In the autumn of 1865 he visited Europe a second time to remain thirteen months, and the third time in 1874, on the occasion of the American pilgrimage to Rome. On each occasion Father Benoit had audience with the pope.

He was theologian to Rt. Rev. Bishop Luers at the second plenary council of Baltimore, in 1866. At the death of Bishop Luers in 1871, Father Benoit became administrator of the diocese of Fort Wayne, and in 1872, when Rev. Joseph Dwenger was created bishop of Fort Wayne, he was again named as vicar general, and when Rt. Rev. Bishop Dwenger visited Rome in 1883, he made the distinguished prelate administrator.

Pope Leo XIII., on the 12th day of June, 1883, made Father Benoit a prelate of the papal household, privileged him

to wear the purple and conferred on him the title of monsignor.

On the occasion of the third plenary council of Baltimore, Monsignor Benoit was invited by Rt. Rev. Bishop Dwenger and Arch Bishop Gibbons to attend and be assigned a prominent place in the conclave.

Thus ran the life of a nature nobleman and one of the grandest prelates of the Roman Catholic church. His memory will always be cherished and he "wraps the drapery of his couch about him to lie down to pleasant dreams."

FROM MONSIGNOR BENOIT'S PEN.

The only thing historical ever written by Monsignor Benoit, is the following early history of the Cathedral and it will be of interest:

The Jesuit missionaries that may have visited Fort Wayne when it was a mere trading post have left here no record of their labors. The few Catholics that resided here were visited, for the first time on record, on the 3d of June, 1830, by Very Reverend Stephen Theodore Badin, the first ordained priest in the United States. He was then vicar general of the diocese of Bardstown, Ky., and Cincinnati, Ohio. At that time (1830,) the state of Indiana was within the limits of the diocese of Bardstown, the bishop of which was the Rt. Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget, consecrated November 4, 1810. His first coadjutor was Rt. Rev. John E. David, consecrated bishop of Maurocastro August 15, 1819; and his second coadjutor was Rt. Rev. Guy Ignatius Chabert, consecrated bishop of Bolivia, July 20, 1834, whilst his third coadjutor was Rt. Rev. Martin John Spalding, consecrated September 10, 1848, bishop of Langone, after the see of Bardstown had been transferred to the city of Louisville, in the same state of Kentucky.

The same Very Rev. Steven Theodore Badin repeated his visits to Fort Wayne in 1831, offered the holy sacrifice of the mass and preached in the residence of Francis Comparet, esq., and, in 1832, when he performed the functions of his ministry in the residence of John B. Bequette, esq., whose wife is still living in Fort Wayne at the present day.

The next priest who visited this city was Reverend Picot, then pastor of the Catholics of Vincennes, Knox county, Ind., September 25, 1832. Then Very Reverend Steven Theodore Badin was again in Fort Wayne, December 25, 1832. Rev. — Boheme, also, in 1832. Very Reverend Stephen Theodore Badin in 1833 and 1834. Rev. Simon P. Lalumiere, who died when pastor of the Catholics of Terre Haute, visited this place in 1835. Rev. Felix Matthew Ruff, in 1835. Rev. I. F. Terooren, in 1835. Rev. Father Francis, stationed at Logansport, visited the Catholics of Fort Wayne in January, February, May, June, July and August.

The first priest permanently appointed pastor of the Catholic congregation of Fort Wayne was Rev. Louis Muller, who took possession in August, 1836, and remained until the 16th of April, 1840.

In 1838, Fort Wayne was visited by the Rt. Rev. Sainly Simon Gabriel Brute, first bishop of Vincennes. In the beginning of 1840, Bishop Guynemerede la Hailandiere, second bishop of Vincennes, appointed Rev. Julien Benoit pastor of St. Augustine's church, Fort Wayne, having to attend LaGro, Huntington, Columbia City, Warsaw, Goshen, Avilla, New France, New Haven, Besancon, Hesse Castle and Decatur. His first assistant was Rev. Joseph Hamison, a saintly young priest, who died at Logansport in the early part of 1842. His second assistant was Rev. Joseph Rudolf, who died in Oldenburg, Franklin county, after many years of hard missionary labors. His third assistant was A. Carius, who remained but a short time, and is now pastor of Junction City, Kan. The fourth was Alphonse Munsch, who is pastor of Lanesville, Vincennes diocese. The fifth was Rev. Edward Faller, who is now in Tell City, Vincennes diocese. Under Father Faller the German speaking part of St.

Augustine's congregation built a church and a schoolhouse, and that formed the first German-speaking congregation in Fort Wayne. Rev. Edward Faller was the first pastor of the new church, placed under the patronage of the Mother of God and called St. Mary's. The division took place in 1849.

THE FUNERAL.

The funeral of Monsignor Benoit will be held at the cathedral Friday morning. At 9 o'clock the clergy will begin to chant the office of the dead, and Rt. Rev. Bishop D. Rademacher will sing pontifical mass of requiem. Rt. Rev. Bishop Dwenger will pronounce the funeral oration, and the remains of the prince of the church will be laid away in the vault beneath the cathedral altar.

To morrow the cathedral will be appropriately draped in mourning for the approaching funeral ceremonies of Monsignor Benoit. Thursday morning at 7 o'clock the remains will be placed in the church where they can be reviewed all the day.

The hour for the funeral Friday morning will be given to-morrow.

Primary evidence for the various priests that served the parish over the years 1841-1873 can be found in the dated entries that they made in the first church book. A summary list of the priests' names and the dates was presented in the compilation and translation of the first church book records, and is reproduced here for convenience.¹⁴¹

<u>PRIEST NAME</u>	<u>DATES OF SIGNATURES IN CHURCH BOOK</u>
Joseph Hamion (died on 7 May 1842)	22 November 1841 - 2 April 1842 [No further entries were made for 6 months until 17 October 1842]
Julian Benoit	17 October 1842; 14 September 1846; 12 November 1848; 27 October 1856; 16 August 1858
Joseph Rudolf	18 December 1842 - 24 October 1844 [No entries were made for 6 months from March to September 1844]
Alphonse Munschina	14 December 1844 - 10 November 1845 [No entries occur over the 4 month periods of June to September 1845 and December 1845 to March 1846]
A. Carin	23 April - 4 May 1846 [No further entries for 5 months until 14 September 1846]
Edward M. Faller	26 October 1846 - 12 April 1852; 5 August 1855; 18 February 1856; 10 November 1856 - 23 February 1857 [No entries were made for 6 month periods from May to October 1848 and April to September 1851. Entries on page 74 were not in chronological order]
B. H. Schultes (served from Decatur parish)	14 June 1852 - 31 August 1856 [No breaks occur in entries, but several records were not in chronological order from June 1853 to December 1854 indicating entry at later dates]
Joseph Weutz	22 March 1857 - 1 January 1858
John Force	19 March 1858 - 5 April 1858
L. Schneider	10 May 1858 - 24 May 1858

¹⁴¹ Kleber, Carl J. (compiler and translator). St. Joseph Catholic Church Hessen Cassel, Marion Township, Allen County, Indiana. Church Book No. 1, Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths 1841-1873. (Fort Wayne, IN: Allen County Public Library, 1990), pages 5 - 6.

Jacob Mayer
(The first resident priest from
c. Sept. 1862 to Dec. 1863)

10 October 1858 - 15 November 1863

[Most entries were not in chronological order; see entries 13-3 to 18-6. No entries were found over the 8 month period of April to November 1861]

Martin Kink

15 December 1863 - 1 January 1866

William Woeste

9 January 1866 - 7 April 1872

[Many entries were not in chronological order; Fr. Benzinger made entry 31-4 for him]

As mentioned earlier, the reason for some of the entries not being in chronological order is most likely due to the fact that the book was rebound and a number of pages were out of place.

U.S. Census Records

Another primary source for identifying the priests and nuns serving at Hessen Cassel parish at specific times is the U.S. Population Census. The censuses taken from 1850 onward enumerated every person in every household/residence. For the church at Hessen Cassel in 1850, no record was found since there was no resident priest or sisters at that time. This was also the case for the 1860 census, although Rev. Jacob Mayer, based on some historical accounts, was supposedly the resident priest at Hessen Cassel at this time (i.e. since 1858). Although Fr. Mayer was appointed the pastor of Hessen Cassel parish in 1858, he actually resided at the rectory of St. Mary's Church in Decatur, IN (where he was also the pastor), until moving to Hessen Cassel around September 1862. Furthermore, no religious sisters resided at the Hessen Cassel convent (built in 1859) until 1863. It is not until the 1870 census that the priest and sisters residing at Hessen Cassel parish were present and enumerated.¹⁴² The following was recorded:

Dwelling 173 (rectory) – 5 July 1870

Waiste (Woeste), Wm. age 36, male, white, Priest, \$150 personal property, born in Huldenberg (Oldenburg), parents of foreign birth, he is eligible to vote.

Dwelling 174 (convent)

Adoxia (Eudoxia), M. B. S. age 32, female, white, Sister of Charity, born in Prussia
Lefler, Mariah S. age 30, female, white, Sister of Charity, born in Prussia
January, Catherine age 37, female, white, Sister of Charity, born in Prussia
Oswald, Mary age 13, female, white, no occupation, born in Bavaria
Farber, Elvira age 32, female, white, Sister of Charity, born in Prussia

¹⁴² 1870 U.S. Population Census, Allen County, Indiana; Marion Township, page 547 (24), lines 32-38; 5 July 1870.

In the 1880 Census, the following people were enumerated at the Hessen Cassel rectory and convent:¹⁴³

Dwelling 16 (rectory) - 8 June 1880

Mark, John age 53, male, white, single, Preacher, born in Holland (or Hollein)
Otto, Franklin age 15, male, white, single, Servant, born in Indiana

Dwelling 17 (convent)

Delany, Mary age 18, female, white, single, Servant, born in Indiana
Bichele, Magdele age 37, female, white, single, Keeping House, born in Hollein
Borsmer, Therese age 31, female, white, single, Teacher, born in Hollein
Himmelsbach, Mary age 24, female, white, single, Sacristan, born in Hollein
Spinner, Rose age 23, female, white, single, Teacher, born in Indiana

Note: Hollein was the term used by the census taker for Hessen Cassel, Germany.

The 1890 Census was destroyed in a fire. The 1900 Census enumerated the following religious and laity at the Hessen Cassel parish:¹⁴⁴

Dwelling 166 (rectory) - 19 June 1900

Benzinger, Max Age 52, male, white, single, born October 1848 in Germany, came to U.S. in 1867; Priest
Miller, Magdalena Age 38, female, white, single, born April 1862 in Germany, came to U.S. in 1885; Servant

Dwelling 165 (convent) - 19 June 1900

Armella, Sister Age 50, female, white, single, born November 1849 in Germany, came to U.S. in 1876; Head Catholic Sister
Scholastica, Sister Age 35, female, white, single, born October 1864 in Germany, came to U.S. in 1876; Catholic Sister
Irmina, Sister Age 21, female, white, single, born November 1878 in Germany, came to U.S. in 1898; Catholic Sister

The 1910 Census enumerated the following religious and laity at the Hessen Cassel parish.¹⁴⁵

Dwelling 75 (rectory) – 22 April 1910

Benzinger, Rev. Max Age 62, male, white, single, born in Germany, came to U.S. in 1867; Priest
Miller, Miss Lena Age 48, female, white, single, born in Germany, came to U.S. in 1885; Servant in a private house

¹⁴³ 1880 U.S. Population Census, Allen County, Indiana; Marion Township, ED 114, page 7, lines 7-13; 8 June 1880.

¹⁴⁴ 1900 U.S. Population Census, Allen County, Indiana; Marion Township, ED 11, page 9-B, lines ; 19 June 1900.

¹⁴⁵ 1910 U.S. Population Census, Allen County, Indiana; Marion Township, SD 12, ED 13, page 5A, lines 16-20; 22 April 1910.

Dwelling 76 (convent) – 22 April 1910

Josephine, Sister Age 36, female, white, single, born in Illinois; Head, Sister of Charity
Irmina, Sister Age 31, female, white, single, born in Germany, came to U.S. in 1898;
Sister of Charity
Honorina, Sister Age 23, female, white, single, born in Illinois, Sister of Charity

The 1920 Census enumerated the following religious and laity at the Hessen Cassel parish.¹⁴⁶

Dwelling 116 (rectory) – 14 January 1920

Benzinger, Max Age 72, male, white, single, born in Wittenburg, Germany, came to U.S.
in 1870; Minister
Miller, Lena Age 57, female, white, single, born in Bavaria, Germany, came to U.S. in
1887; Domestic House Keeper

Dwelling 117 (convent) – 14 January 1920

Pacifica, Sister Age 47, female, white, single, born in Tleves, Germany; came to U.S. in
1891, Head Sister
Irmina, Sister Age 41, female, white, single, born in Tleves, Germany; came to U.S. in
1891, Sister
Silveria, Sister Age 28, female, white, single, born in Indiana, parents were Polish, Sister

The 1930 Census enumerated the following religious and laity at the Hessen Cassel parish.¹⁴⁷

Dwelling 137 (rectory) – 3 May 1930

Hasler, Rev. Fridlin Age 62, male, white, single, born in Switzerland, came to U.S. in 1892;
Secular Catholic Priest
Deck, Julia Age 74, female, white, single, born in Baden, Germany, came to U.S. in
1881; Catholic Parish House Keeper

(No Sisters enumerated at the convent)

No record was found for a priest at Hessen Cassel in the 1940 census, which should have been Fr. Charles Seeberger. At the point in the census where the rectory was expected to be enumerated, the census taker wrote “missing information”, so he may have skipped the rectory and never returned to complete the enumeration.

Biographies of Former Pastors

The parish’s 1957 centennial booklet presents photographs and short biographies of all the resident priests at Hessen Cassel from 1857 through 1957. This was well done and is shown below for the reader’s convenience.

¹⁴⁶ 1920 U.S. Population Census, Allen County, Indiana; Marion Township, SD 12, ED 14, page 7A, lines 17-21; 14 January 1920.

¹⁴⁷ 1930 U.S. Population Census, Allen County, Indiana; Marion Township, SD 3, ED 2-61, page 8A, lines 7-8; 3 May 1930.

FORMER PASTORS

Fourteen pastors carried the burdens of St. Joseph's parish during the course of its hundred years' existence. While time has dimmed their memory, the fruits of their early labors linger on. Were it not for their untiring zeal and zealous efforts, St. Joseph's would not be the well established parish we find it today. The very hardships they endured as pioneers makes the work of their successors easier now. In fact, had it not been for their persevering toil we could not look down the vista of a hundred years, as we do on our centenary observance, with justifiable pride, at the splendid spiritual record of which our parish can boast.

While neither all their pictures nor their complete records are available we append the following data—fragmentary as it is—in the hope that the nostalgic memories it evokes, will prompt all of us to breath a silent prayer for those who have gone to their eternal reward, as also to beg God's continual blessings on those who still labor in His Vineyard.

REV. JACOB MAYER, S.J.

Although not much can be found on the life of Father Mayer, the people of Hessen Cassel will always remember him as a quiet, steady-going, zealous priest, who built the present church. He was regarded as a church-builder in his own right. He built the first big churches without the pillars we see in all other churches today. Rev. Mayer served Hessen Cassel from 1857 to 1863. He also built the first convent in 1859. It was located at the south entrance of our present cemetery.



REV. MARTIN KINK

Father Kink's stay with us was brief. He was pastor at SS. Peter and Paul's Church before coming here. He was a native of Bavaria, to which country he returned and where he also died.

REV. W. WOESTE

Was born at Loeningen, Oldenburg, diocese of Munster, Germany, in 1836. He came to America in October 1863 and was ordained July 22, 1864. Hessen Cassel and Sheldon shared his ministrations from 1866 to 1870.

REV. JOHN WEMHOFF

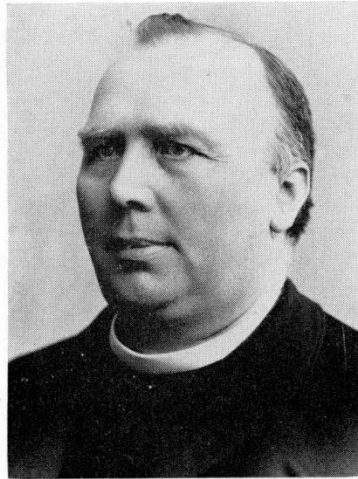
Father Wemhoff was born in Munster, Germany, October 11, 1837. Came to America in 1858 and made his home with his uncle, Bernard Wemhoff. Ordained by Bishop Luers, March 23, 1862. Celebrated his first Mass in St. Boniface Church, Lafayette, Ind. On Dec. 1, 1865 he became pastor of St. Mary's Church, Decatur, having charge also of Hessen Cassel in 1868.

REV. JOSEPH NUSSBAUM

Rev. Joseph Nussbaum was a straightforward and very outspoken man. Born at Rimbach Saxony. Diocese of Paderborn, Sept. 30, 1832. Ordained at Paderborn April 5, 1859. Came to America, January 23, 1869 and was pastor of Hessen Cassel from 1870 to 1877, caring also for Sheldon, as a mission. Father Nussbaum erected the present priest's residence in 1875. Our church originally had merely a low bell tower. Father Nussbaum rebuilt it with its present high steeple.

REV. JOHN HERMAN HUESER, D.D.

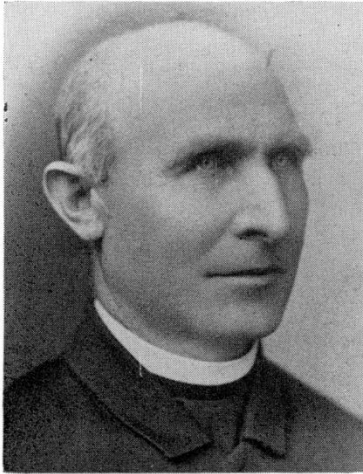
Father Hueser first saw the light of day in Steinhausen, Wesphalia, Nov. 8, 1839. Was ordained Sept. 21, 1863 in Brixen, Tyrol. In 1876, he came to the diocese of Fort Wayne, and from August, 1877, until January, 1880, he was pastor of Hessen Cassel. Thereafter he was appointed pastor and later, irremovable rector of St. Peter and Paul's Church, Huntington, Indiana. His health necessitated a change of climate, and on August 24, 1906 Fr. Hueser tendered his resignation, and in September of the same year left for Carlsbad, New Mexico. Much of his time was spent in literary work. Besides his contributions to current journals, he wrote four volumes of sermon sketches, the Catechism of the Pulpit, First Instructions in the Catholic Catechism, for the use of teachers and pupils, and a prayer and meditation book for the use of the sick, and for priests attending the sick, bearing the title, "Lord, Behold, Whom Thou Lovest, Is Sick."



REV. JOHN MARK

1880 — 1897

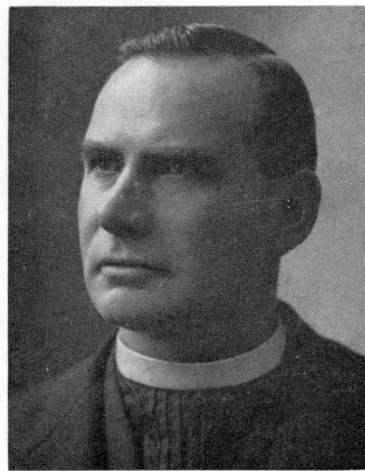
Was born at Acholshausen, near Wuerzburg, Bavaria, Germany, on April 1, 1820. He studied the classics in his native place, philosophy at the University of Wuerzburg, theology in the same University and also in All Hallow's College, Archdiocese of Dublin, and in the Diocesan Seminary of Halifax. He was ordained on August 6, 1852 by Archbishop Walsh, of Halifax, where he labored until the year 1860, when Bishop Yuncker received him into the diocese of Alton. Bishop Dwenger accepted him for the diocese of Fort Wayne in 1876. He was pastor of Hessen Cassel from 1880 until 1897 when he resigned on account of his advanced age and accepted the position of chaplain in St. Joseph's Hospital, at Logansport. Here he died November 20, 1904.

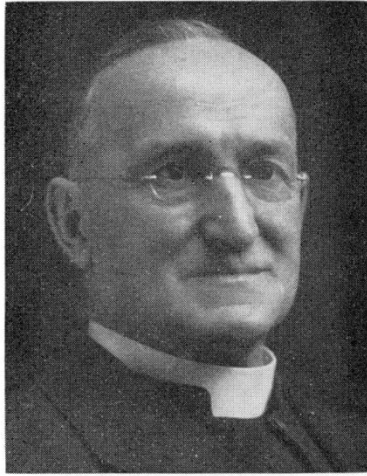


REV. MAXIMILIAN BENZINGER

1897 — 1926

Our beloved Father Benzinger was born in Wuerttemberg, Germany, October 7, 1848, son of Michael and Elizabeth (Mueller) Benzinger. He studied at St. John's Minnesota, and Calvary College, Wisconsin, and finished his theology at St. Francis' Seminary, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He was ordained by Bishop Dwenger, in the Cathedral at Fort Wayne, on June 11, 1884. He was with us for a long time and during his stay here our present sisters' convent was erected.





REV. FRIDOLIN J. HASLER
1927 — 1934

Father Hasler was born at Tobel, Ct. Thurgan, Switzerland, on February 5, 1868. He pursued his classics at St. Bernard's College, Mehreron, Switzerland, and his major seminary course at Subiaco, Arkansas. He was ordained by Bishop Morris of Little Rock on June 8, 1916.

He served as chaplain at St. Vincent's Orphanage, Fort Wayne from 1916 until 1922 when he was appointed pastor of Sheldon. He was then transferred to Hessen Cassel, where he remained until June, 1934. Father Hasler did a great deal of work on the parish properties at both Sheldon and Hessen Cassel. Because of injuries sustained in an automobile accident, he asked for a chaplaincy and was placed at Sacred Heart Hospital, Garrett, for one year.

He then was re-appointed to Sheldon where he remained from July, 1935 until February, 1936, when he was again assigned as chaplain at Holy Family Hospital, LaPorte. It was while he was at LaPorte he asked permission to return to his native country, Switzerland.

REV. JOACHIM BAKER

The sixth of a family of nine children, was born on March 7, 1863 to Jacob and Agatha (Meyer) Baker, at Fort Wayne. His parents were natives of Hesse Darmstadt and Baden, Germany, but were married at Fort Wayne. Father Baker attended St. Mary's parochial school and also the Cathedral school. In 1879 he entered St. Lawrence's College at Mount Calvary, Wisconsin. Having completed his classical studies, he was received into St. Francis' Seminary, where he studied philosophy and theology. Archbishop Heiss ordained him deacon on March 19, 1888, and he was ordained priest by Bishop Dwenger on June 29, of the same year. His first appointment was that of pastor at Portland, in Jay County.



REV. CHARLES SEEBERGER

Born in Elkhart, Indiana, on September 13, 1897, he studied at St. Lawrence College, Mounty Calvary, Wisconsin and Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Cincinnati. He was ordained by Bishop Howard on June 6, 1925. After serving as assistant in Sacred Heart parish, Whiting, All Saints' Hammond, and St. Joseph's, Mishawaka, he was appointed pastor of St. Ann's Parish, Kewanna, in July, 1931. On July 8, 1939, he was appointed pastor of St. Joseph's, Hessen Cassel where he remained until November, 1946.

REV. FREDERICK J. WESTENDORF

Was born in Terre Haute, Indiana on May 9, 1907. He pursued his studies for the priesthood at St. Joseph's, Collegeville, and at St. Gregory's, Cincinnati. Ordained June 10, 1933 by Bishop Noll.

In January, 1941, Father Westendorf, who had, for several years, been chaplain of the National Guard, was mustered into service and sent to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, where more than 50,000 young men were stationed. After service in the army he was sent to Hessen Cassel in Nov., 1946. He stayed until July, 1947.



REV. LAWRENCE GOLLNER

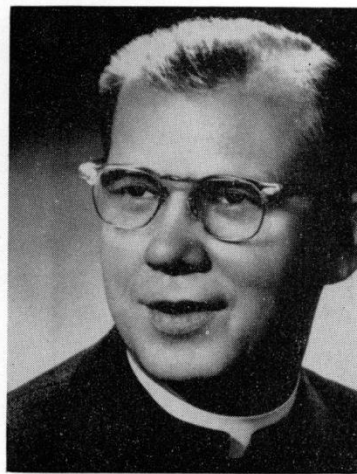
Father Gollner was born at Kokomo, Indiana, on February 26, 1913. He prepared for the priesthood at St. Joseph's College, Collegeville, and at St. Meinrad's Seminary, and was ordained on June 11, 1938 by Bishop Noll.

He served as assistant for one year at Sacred Heart, South Bend, while attending school at Notre Dame in preparation for teaching. In September, 1939, he was given residence at Cathedral, Fort Wayne, while serving as professor at Central Catholic High School. He was assistant at St. John the Baptist Church, Fort Wayne, from 1944 to 1946, then served as assistant at St. John's Church, New Haven for one year. He was appointed pastor of Hessen Cassel on July 7, 1947 and remained until June 8, 1956.



REV. MATHIAS J. BODINGER

Our present pastor was ushered into the world in Radzesdorf, Hungary, Aug. 27, 1901. He pursued his primary education in the parochial schools of Gary, Indiana; attended the preparatory Seminary at St. Lawrence College, Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin; completed his studies for the priesthood in Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, Norwood Heights, Cincinnati, Ohio. Bishop John F. Noll ordained him on June 11, 1927. After serving three years in his first assignment in Holy Trinity Church, East Chicago, he spent the next five years as assistant and acting pastor at St. Paul's in Fort Wayne. The next tour of duty as assistant at St. Mary's Church, Michigan City, Indiana lasted only seven months. From here he went to St. Bavo's



Church, Mishawaka, Indiana where he served as assistant from September, 1935 until the Summer of 1940. From a brief stay in Plymouth, out of which he served the Catholics at Culver, he went for two years in Portland, Indiana from which he also served the parish at Winchester, Indiana. Next in turn came a four years' chaplaincy at Mercy Hospital, Gary, Indiana and a two year stretch of the same work in Mt. Mercy Sanitorium, Dyer, Indiana. Back in parochial work again, he spent six years shepherding the scattered flock of St. Joseph Church, Roanoke, Indiana and St. Catherine's Church, Nix Settlement, Indiana. On June 6, 1956, he assumed his duties as pastor of Hessen Cassel, where he has learned to love the good people and God willing he hopes to remain a long while.

Msgr. Robert Contant (1920-2007) served as Pastor at Hessen Cassel from 1964 until his retirement in 1997. During his 33 years at the parish, Msgr. Contant was well-liked by the parishioners, and did much to preserve the local heritage. Thereupon, Rev. Robert Van Kempen became the pastor and was responsible for the major renovation of the church from 1999-2001. Fr. Van Kempen was followed by Rev. Edward Erpelding in 2002. The current pastor, Father Thomas Lombardi, was appointed by the Bishop to head the parish on 15 July 2006.

Fr. Max Benzinger (1897-1926), who served at Hessen Cassel for almost 30 years, was greatly admired by the parishioners and was buried at the foot of the main crucifix in the center of the church cemetery. The only other priest buried in the Hessen Cassel cemetery is Fr. Contant, who lies in peace near the Blessed Virgin feature at the east end of the cemetery. A newspaper article describing Fr. Benzinger's 25-Year Jubilee celebration at Hessen Cassel in 1922 is presented below.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ "Pastor 25 Years of Hesse Cassel Parish. Rev. Max Benzinger to Celebrate Anniversary at St. Joseph Church Today." Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, 18 October 1922, page 18.

PASTOR 25 YEARS OF HESSE CASSEL PARISH

Rev. Max Benzinger to Celebrate Anniversary at St. Joseph's Church Today

St. Joseph's Catholic church, Hesse Cassel, will be the center of most impressive services this morning in observance of the silver jubilee or twenty-fifth anniversary of the pastoral appointment of Rev. Max Benzinger. Preparations for the event were quietly made to surprise the devoted priest. He was invited to Fort Wayne yesterday and during his absence from home, the church was artistically decorated for the services today. Solemn high mass at 9:30 o'clock this morning will be celebrated by Father Benzinger, visiting priests assisting at the services. Rev. Michael J. Alchinger, pastor of St. John's church, New Haven, will deliver the sermon for the occasion.

Among the clergy expected to attend are: Rev. H. F. Joseph Kroll, pastor of St. Paul's; Rev. John A. Dapp, first assistant at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception; Rev. Nicholas Huemmer and Rev. Arnold J. Wibber, of St. Peter's; Rev. Fridolin J. Hasle, pastor St. Aloysius church, Sheldon; Rev. Charles Marr, pastor St. Rose church, Monroeville; Rev. Nicholas Allgeler, pastor St. Louis church, Besancon. There will also be a large attendance of the parishioners by whom the venerable pastor is held in high regard. Although over 74 years of age Father Benzinger is remarkably active in the performance of his duties.

Father Benzinger was born in Wuertemberg, Germany, October 7, 1848, the son of Michael and Elizabeth (Mueller) Benzinger. His studies for the priesthood were pursued at St. John's, Minnesota, and Calvary College, Wisconsin, and he completed his theological course at St. Francis' seminary, St. Francis, Wis. He was ordained priest by Rt. Rev. Bishop Dwenger at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, June 11, 1884, and accordingly has labored over 38 years in the diocese of Fort Wayne. He was pastor of St. Michael's church, Summit, from July 4, 1884, to October 17, 1897, when appointed pastor of St. Joseph's church at Hesse Cassel. He is well known in this city and throughout the diocese. Scores of friends among the clergy and laity will unite today in tendering congratulations to the jubilarian. Following the morning's services a special dinner will be served in his honor.

Chapter 18 - The Church Organs

The brick church, completed in late 1859, may have also been equipped with a pipe organ at this time, but this cannot be fully verified. In an article about the 125th anniversary of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, the following statement was made: “Following three years of negotiations, five sisters were received on Sunday, August 30, 1868, in Hessen Cassel, a small German community located immediately south east of Fort Wayne. Their duties were, at first, largely ceremonial, consisting mostly of caring for St. Joseph’s Church and its altar linens and playing the organ.”¹⁴⁹ This statement indicates that an organ was present in the church as early as 1868.

The Hand-Pump Pipe Organ (c. 1875)

Although it was probably not really the first organ, the parish’s centennial history booklet (1957) states that “The first organ was donated by Joseph Langut during Fr. Nussbaum’s pastorate.” Thus, this organ was installed around 1875 at the same time that the new brick rectory was built and the church steeple extended higher. The organ’s benefactor, Joseph Langut (1814-1877), was an old member of the parish who reportedly donated this organ in memory of his brother, Aldabert Landgut (1796-1875), who died without any offspring on 2 August 1875. Both brothers are buried in Lot No. 1 of Section A, but no tombstones currently exist on this grave site.

This organ was a manually-pumped pipe organ that required two people to play it.¹⁵⁰ According to an expert on old organs, this pump organ was most likely comprised of approximately 90% round-shaped metal pipes and 10% square-shaped wooden pipes. Both types are flue pipes in which musical notes are made by blowing air through them. In large organs, the wooden pipes are typically mounted behind the more eye-appealing metal pipes.¹⁵¹ To operate the pipe organ at Hessen Cassel, one person manually pumped up the bellows full of air while a second person sat at the organ and played the music. The air-pump system consisted of a big wooden handle that was pumped up and down by hand from about head high to knee high and required a lot of physical endurance to keep the bellows full of air for the organ. High Masses were especially tiring for the pumper because of all the extra songs played by the organist. The bellows had to be kept full of air for the organ to sound good with no off-notes. Only a few designated people in the parish were assigned the task to pump the organ. William “Willy” Kleber (1889-1957), who lived nearby, often did the pumping. From around 1920-1925 Louise Trabel (1901-1982), the daughter of parishioners Christian and Mary Trabel, was one of the people who played this pump organ at the Masses, while Willy Kleber performed the pumping. This organ was hand-

¹⁴⁹ St. Joseph Medical Center, “The Poor Handmaids”, Neighborly Care, Summer, 1993.

¹⁵⁰ “Interview with Emil Heber”, 4 June 1992; notes in possession of Carl J. Kleber [R1114]

¹⁵¹ “Interview with Robert Nickerson, organist at Trinity Lutheran Church, former head of the Embassy Organ Restoration Committee”, 11 February 2014; notes in possession of Carl J. Kleber.

pumped until about 1927 when electricity was installed at the church. Thereafter an electric motor was used to pump the air into the bellows for the organ.

Mention of the hand-pump pipe organ at Hessen Cassel church was made in an 1876 newspaper article.¹⁵² A special service was held at the church on, Sunday, 1 October 1876, in which a well-renowned organist from Fort Wayne, Mr. John Mohr Jr., played the new pump organ. Perhaps this was actually the dedication ceremony for the new organ. The article reads as follows:

“A very large number of our citizens attended services at Hesse Cassel yesterday. Mr. John Mohr presided at the organ, in a very artistic manner, high mass was celebrated, and a most pleasant Sabbath was spent by all who were present. Fort Wayne parties furnished the singing. The St. Mary’s Band was also present. Mr. Melcher Sorg entertained in a most hospital manner those of our citizens who were at Hesse Cassel yesterday.”

The aforementioned John Mohr Jr. was a superb organist as shown by this excerpt from his 1906 obituary.¹⁵³ “Mr. Mohr was a man of many parts; versatile, talented and accomplished. Early in life he developed a talent for music and he was regarded as one of the most accomplished organists and pianists in Fort Wayne. In fact, judges of musical execution say that, as an organist, he had few equals in the country.” Interestingly, he was the son of Johann Mohr Sr., who came to America with Sebastian Klüber/Kleber from the same German village of Eckardtoth, where the Sorg family also originated.

Although the manufacturer, model, and composition of the pipe organ donated by the Langut family has not been determined, a general description of it was mentioned in a recent book about the various church organs in Allen County, IN.¹⁵⁴ Based on interviews with three long-time Hessen Cassel parishioners in 2001, the old church organ was a very large instrument that fit between the pillars in the choir loft. It was so tall that the pipes nearly touched the ceiling (which supports the theory that the low bell tower was raised in 1875 to accommodate this organ).

Since no one in the parish possessed the musical skills required to play this intricate organ, the first organist at the church (c.1875) was a female teacher from Fort Wayne who was hired to play at the Masses. However, the congregation felt that she charged too much money for her services. So the parish decided to no longer pay a professional organist, and instead tried to get along without one. During church services, someone from the congregation would start out by playing

¹⁵² Fort Wayne News, Monday, 2 October 1876, page 4.

¹⁵³ “John Mohr Is Dead.” Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, 28 July 1906, page 1 (photo).

¹⁵⁴ Arthur, Patricia Sagester. Making Joyful Noises : a History of the Pipe Organs of Fort Wayne and Allen County, Indiana. (Fort Wayne, IN: Fort Wayne Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, 2001); see “Organs at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, 1870-2000”, pages 30-32. Call no. GC977.202 F77ARTH <http://smartcat.acpl.lib.in.us/?itemid=|acpl-bibs|ocm47030932>

the first few notes of a hymn on the organ in order to get the rest of the people started in tune, and then they would continue to sing a cappella. When the nuns came to teach at the Hessen Cassel school (apparently the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart, on 16 August 1877), one of them was able to play the organ, and the whole congregation was thrilled to have music again for Mass.

A photograph of an old Hook & Hastings hand-pumped pipe organ is shown below as an example of what the organ at Hessen Cassel may have resembled. Note the man at the side of the organ operating the pump handle.



Figure 72- A hand-pumped pipe organ similar to the 1875 organ at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church

The Langut pipe organ served the church for about 75 years until it was replaced in 1949. The last Mass played on the old pipe organ was on the first anniversary of Leo Gibson's death, 18 August 1949. Since the congregation didn't know what to do with the old 1875 pump organ, it was demolished. Some of the pipes from the organ were taken home as souvenirs by several members of the parish. Amazingly, a set of 6 wooden pipes from the original pump organ still exists and is shown in Figure 73.¹⁵⁵ These pipes are technically called a "gedected" or "stopped" flute pipe because they have a wooden stop or plug inserted into the end and adjusted to

provide the desired musical note. Gedected is German for "capped" or "covered". A cross-section of a wooden gedected pipe is shown in Figure 75. A picture of the stop found in the end of one of the pipes is shown in Figure 74.

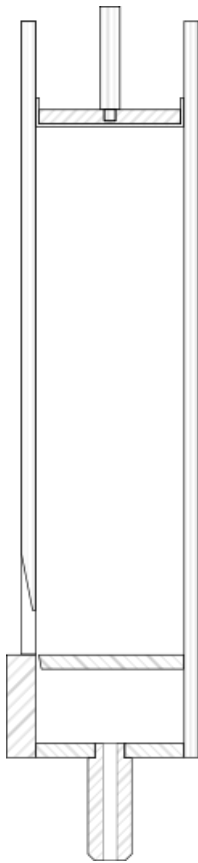


Figure 75 – Gedect pipe sketch



Figure 73 – Square, wooden pipes from the Langut pump organ (c.1875)



Figure 74 – The stop inside the wooden pipe.

¹⁵⁵ Six square wooden pipes from the c. 1875 Hessen Cassel pump organ; in possession of John Schreiber, parishioner, 2014; obtained from estate sale at former farm house of Andrew J. and Louise (Hake) Wyss, 10822 Winchester Road, Fort Wayne, IN. Andrew Wyss (1888-1962) was the son of Nicholas & Adelaide (Münch) Wyss.

Each of the 6 square wooden pipes was labeled in pencil on one side identifying the particular musical note that the pipe made. The physical dimensions and identifying label of each pipe are:

<u>Pipe</u>	<u>Sound</u>	<u>Length of Main Body (in.)</u>	<u>Side Dimensions (in.)</u>
1.	Sw. Open Diapason CC	53 ¼	4 ¼ x 4 ¼
2.	Sw. Open Diapason CC#	50 ½	4 x 4 1/8
3.	Sw. Open Diapason D	47 ¾	4 x 4
4.	Sw. Open Diapason D#	45	3 7/8 x 3 7/8
5.	Sw. Open Diapason E	41 ¼	3 ¾ x 3 ¾
6.	Sw. Open Diapason F	40	3 ½ x 3 ½

The tapered ends of the pipes, which serve to connect the pipes to the organ and into which the air is blown, were not factored into the pipe measurements since they varied greatly and are not relevant regarding the sound of the note produced. As is evident from the above table, the differences in sound are achieved by varying the length and square dimensions of the pipes, as well as fine tuning them via the end stops. Also, pipes 1, 3, and 5 had written on them in pencil the numbers 1, 2, and 3, respectively, which may designate their location of placement on the main body of the organ. The term “Sw.” is an abbreviation for the organ term “Swell”. These 6 pipes form a standard musical scale of C, C#, D, D#, E, and F.

Wurlitzer Electric Reed Organ (1949)

The Langut pipe organ was replaced in 1949 by a state-of-the-art, electric Wurlitzer reed organ. The first Mass played on the new electric organ was for the wedding of William Forbing and Phyllis Herber, 24 August 1949.

When the decision was made to replace the old Langut pipe organ, the following announcement was written by the pastor, Fr. Lawrence A. Gollner, in the 21 August 1949 Hessen Cassel church bulletin. “The rumor that we are getting a new organ, I am delighted to say, is true. The heirs of the late Nicholas J. Wyss are presenting it to the parish as a family memorial to the memory of their departed ones. The organ will be installed tomorrow and will be played for the first time at Wednesday’s wedding. Professor Magnam of St. Peter’s in Fort Wayne will be at the console and later on at a date to be announced will present his men’s choir for the formal dedication ceremony. We are extremely indebted to the Wyss family for this noteworthy contribution to our church, and I know that the parish joins me in these expressions of appreciation and gratitude.”

The dedication ceremony for the new electric organ was held at the Hessen Cassel church on the evening of 4 September 1949. A dedication program used for the ceremony is kept in the parish archives.¹⁵⁶ It contains both a sketch and detailed description of the organ, which are presented below.



DEDICATION
OF THE
NEW CHURCH ORGAN

given in memory of
NICHOLAS J. AND ADELAIDE WYSS
By Their Children
and in memory of
LEO GIBSON
By his Wife



Sunday, September 4, 1949, 7:30 P. M.
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH
HESSEN CASSEL
Father Lawrence A. Gollner, *Pastor*

The Wurlitzer Organ Series 50

Here is a two manual organ whose classic beauty is matched by its balanced tonal design – an instrument with an incomparable wealth of voices marvelously true to their organ and orchestral counterparts. It employs a natural source of tone production that has characterized fine organ music for centuries... wind-blown reeds... not as a direct source of tone, but to produce electrical impulses which are selected, modified and translated into a variety of perfectly proportioned organ voices. It is wholly free of the explosive attack that is objectionable in many electronic organs. Its tonal response is soft and natural. Any organist will be immediately at home at its console. All playing dimensions conform rigidly to the recommendations of the American Guild of Organists. The names on the stop tablets are conventional. In fine, the Wurlitzer Organ Series 50 Two Manual is marked throughout by superb beauty, by rich, natural and inspiring tone and by quality of manufacturing that has been associated with the name Wurlitzer for over 200 years. It was installed by the H. O. Ware Piano Co., 301 W. Jefferson St., Fort Wayne, Indiana—exclusive distributors of the Wurlitzer Organ in this locality.



A memorial placard appended to the new Wurlitzer organ read as follows: “Gift of Velma Gibson, in memory of Nicholas and Adelaide Wyss and Leo Gibson.” Nicholas Wyss (1860-1948) and his wife, Adelaide “Addie” Münch (1862-1934) were the parents of Velma (Wyss)

¹⁵⁶ Gollner, Father Lawrence A. “Dedication of the New Church Organ”, St. Joseph’s Church Hessen Cassel, 4 September 1949.

Gibson (1901-1986) and Leo Gibson (1892-1948) was her husband. They both were married late in life, on 7 June 1947 – Leo at 55 years of age and Velma at 45 years old. Unfortunately, after being married slightly over one year, Leo was killed in a farming accident on 18 August 1948 when his tractor fell over while driving it in one of his fields and crushed him. Velma, who had also just lost her father a few months earlier on 10 January 1948, purchased the organ in memory of her parents and deceased husband.

Wicks Forward 4 Pipe Organ (1980)

The Wurlitzer electric organ served the parish for over 30 years (1949-1980). In 1980, the congregation and pastor, Msgr. Robert Contant, decided it was time to replace it.¹⁵⁷ A special parish committee was formed to investigate whether to purchase an electric organ or a pipe organ. The committee determined that the cost of a new electric or new pipe organ was about equal. Initially the committee was considering buying another electric organ, but they decided to compare the sound of the two types of organs. Fortunately, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Fort Wayne had both types of organs in their church, and the director of music and organist at St. John's, Mr. Adrian Mann, agreed to play both of them for the Hessen Cassel committee. After hearing both types of organs, the committee voted in favor of purchasing a traditional pipe organ and the congregation accepted their recommendation.

Subsequently, Msgr. Contant purchased a Wicks Forward 4 pipe organ for the church.¹⁵⁸ This organ has four ranks with a total of 328 pipes and two manuals unified with mixtures. It is all enclosed except for the 16-foot long pipes. The organ was installed in the rear balcony (choir loft) of the church. It was dedicated on 1 June 1980 in a special ceremony with Mr. David Weingartner serving as the guest organist. A plaque was placed on this new pipe organ acknowledging that it also was a gift from Velma Gibson in honor of her husband and parents. In conjunction with the excellent acoustics of the church, the voicing of the new pipe organ provides a bright, baroque sound.

¹⁵⁷ Robb, Phyllis. (ed.) History of Fort Wayne & Allen County, Indiana, 1700-2005. (Evansville, Ind.: M.T. Pub. Co., 2006), Volume 2, page 195; "St. Joseph – Hessen Cassel Church".

¹⁵⁸ Arthur, Patricia Sagester. Making Joyful Noises : a History of the Pipe Organs of Fort Wayne and Allen County, Indiana. (Fort Wayne, IN: Fort Wayne Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, 2001).

A photo of this Wicks pipe organ located in the choir loft is shown below. The memorial plaque is on the front of the organ.



Figure 76 - Wicks Forward 4 pipe organ, St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church, installed 1980.

A description and list of the various pipes comprising this Wicks Organ was published in a book about the various pipe organs of Allen County, IN, and is shown below.

St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel

11337 Old Highway 27 South

Fort Wayne, IN 46816

Wicks Organ – 4 ranks, 2 manual unified instrument 328 pipes

Great	Swell	Pedal
8' Principal	8' Gemshorn	16' Subbass
8' Rohrgedeckt	8' Rohrflute	8' Principal
8' Gemshorn	4' Flute	8' Rohrgedeckt
4' Principl	4' Gemshorn	4' Choralbass
4' Copula	2-2/3' Quint	2' Flute
2' Octave	2' Blockflöte	8' Fagot
2' Gemshorn	1-1/3' Larigot	4' Fagot
III Mixture	1' Gemshorn	
8' Fagot	8' Fagot	
4' Clairon	Tremolo	

Resources

16' Rohr Gedeckt	97 pipes
8' Principal	85 pipes
4' Gemshorn	73 pipes
8' Fagot	73 pipes

The Church Choir

It is unknown when the first official choir was organized to sing at the Hessen Cassel church services. However, a photo of the women's choir group, taken around 1922, is shown below (Figure 77). The members are, left to right, Velma Wyss, Genevieve Smith, Blanch Herber, Elva Wyss, Elizabeth Herber, Caroline Beckman, & Olivia Sorg. Organist and choir member, Louise Trabel, took the photo and is not shown.



Figure 77 – Women's Choir, St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church, c. 1922

Also, in the 1936 church financial statement, the adult-aged women who sang in the church choir were exempt from paying pew rent.¹⁵⁹ These 1936 choir members were Marie Trabel (1911-2006), Marie Wyss (1906-1983), and Velma Wyss (1901-1986). Next to their names under the column for pew rent was written “sings”.

¹⁵⁹ Financial Statement. St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Indiana. Rev. J. Baker, Pastor. Clem Wyss, Frank Beckman, & Oscar Hoffman, Committee. 1936.; see page 6. (Original in the possession of John Schreiber, parishioner, 2015)

Chapter 19 - The Parish Grade School (c. 1841 - Present)

The establishment of the parochial school at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel has not been very well documented. In Newton's 1880 history of Allen County, the following passage is found concerning the parish school at Hessen Cassel, IN.¹⁶⁰ "A parochial school has been conducted in connection with the Church since 1859, and now [in 1880] has a daily attendance of fifty scholars." However, there is evidence that some type of organized religious and academic schooling was taking place at St. Joseph parish well before 1859. In the first sacramental book of the parish, a reference to a school house is found on the list of pledges made by the parishioners on 26 November 1842.¹⁶¹ One of the four Sorg brothers pledged \$4.00 to support the parish during the upcoming year, and it was written that this pledge was "Paid by work at the school house". This Sorg (first name is unknown due to a missing portion of the page), was most likely J. Georg Sorg, based on the handwriting of the signature. It is also possible that it was Johannes Sorg, the oldest Sorg brother, who was very interested in education and may have been instrumental in later getting a teaching Brother assigned to Hessen Cassel parish around 1852. It was definitely not J. Melchior Sorg, whose name appears elsewhere on the list. This Sorg brother in question either worked in the construction of a school house or more likely served as a parish school "lay teacher". This passage in the church book strongly indicates that there was an actual "school house" present on the Hessen Cassel church property in 1842. However, classes may have been held at the log church, which was only used whenever the missionary priest made his infrequent stops. It makes sense that these practical Germans would use the building for both purposes. Regardless, this entry proves that schooling of some sort was occurring at the Hessen Cassel parish in 1842, shortly after the parish was founded the previous year. This is remarkable in light of the fact that the first Catholic parochial school was not established in Fort Wayne until 1845.

It is obvious that the education of their children was of utmost importance to these German immigrants, and this effort was strongly supported by the Catholic Church. They considered education as essential to maintain their culture and religious faith, and the academic aspects were secondary. The early Catholic hierarchy in Fort Wayne made great efforts in an attempt to find religious orders of Brothers and Sisters to come and teach the Catholic boys and girls. The Sisters of Providence were the first religious teachers in Fort Wayne, who, invited by Fr. Benoit, opened St. Augustine's school in 1845. Likewise, the parishioners of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel made a conscientious effort to provide a parochial school education from the start of the parish in

¹⁶⁰ Helm, Thomas B. History of Allen County, Indiana: with illustrations and biographical sketches of some of its prominent men and pioneers: to which is appended maps of its several townships and villages. (Chicago: Kingman Brothers, 1880); see Newton, L. H. "Marion Township – St. Joseph's Church (Catholic)", page 159

¹⁶¹ Kleber, Carl J. (compiler and translator). St. Joseph Catholic Church Hessen Cassel, Marion Township, Allen County, Indiana. Church Book No. 1, Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths 1841-1873. (Fort Wayne, IN: Allen County Public Library, 1990), see page 40.

1841. Obviously, in these early days of settlement from 1835 to 1850, the parents were the first and most important teachers, followed by the missionary priests.

Brother Matthias, The First Teacher

Although the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, who occupied the Hessen Cassel convent from 1863 through 1866, probably provided some schooling to the local children, the person credited with being the first official teacher at Hessen Cassel was Johann Leopold Koch (1820-1880), who went by the religious name of Brother Matthias. In the unpublished history of the Anton Fuchs/Fox family provided by Anton's grandson, Clement H. Smith, the following information is provided about John Koch.¹⁶² "In 1852, Anton Fox, my grandfather, died from cholera...My grandmother, Elisabeth [Nicholas] Fuchs/Fox, [age 44 years] being left with three small children later married [on 8 June 1854] John Koch, a dropped-out Brother, on the advice of Father Schultes [the parish priest]. John Koch had studied in the seminary to be a brother, and was **the first teacher at Hessen Cassel**. He taught school the same time my mother [Mary Ann Fuchs, 1845-1909] attended at Hessen Cassel [c.1855]. He would send her home before school closed to start the chores..."

There is other evidence to support the fact that John L. Koch was the first official teacher at Hessen Cassel. A private family history prepared by Dr. Walter J. Rissing contained the passport and several personal German letters belonging to Johann Leopold Koch.¹⁶³ The passport, dated 20 April 1841, discloses that John Leopold Koch was born in Hünfeld, Hessen-Cassel, Germany, on 20 February 1820, and was 5 feet 2 inches in height with brown eyes, black hair and a beard. Around 1846, he became a teaching Brother for the Holy Cross Congregation at Notre Dame, IN, founded by Rev. Edward A. Sorin. John Koch is found living there in the 1850 Census and was enumerated along with Fr. Sorin and all the other members of the college.¹⁶⁴ He is listed in the census as "Brother Matthias, age 32, male, Teacher, born in Germany." Sometime around 1851 to 1852, he was assigned as a teaching brother at Hessen Cassel, IN, but was subsequently sent a short time later to the St. Aloysius Orphan Asylum in Cincinnati, Ohio, in early 1853. A German letter from two families of the Hessen Cassel parish expressed their deep sorrow and disappointment over his re-assignment. This letter also provides some insight into the parish life at Hessen Cassel in 1853, and is translated as follows.

Letter addressed to: Mr. Matthias, Brother [religious name taken by John L. Koch]; St. Aloysius Orphan Asylum, Cincinnati, Ohio; postmarked Fort Wayne, Ind., April 16, 1853.

¹⁶² Smith, Clement H. Anton Fuchs/Fox Family History (Typed, unpublished manuscript: Allen Co., IN, c1950); copy in possession of Carl J. Kleber. [R1223].

¹⁶³ Rissing, Dr. Walter J. The Rissing Story (unpublished family history: Fort Wayne, IN, c.1983); partial copy in possession of Carl J. Kleber.

¹⁶⁴ 1850 U.S. Population Census, St. Joseph County, Indiana; Clay Township, page 88, line 1; 14 October 1850.

“Dearest Friend and Brother! Dear Friend and Children [written by a different person; the children apparently refer to the orphans]. After waiting for so long we finally received your letter on March 26 [1853]. We are happy to hear that you are well in your new home and also with God’s help underwent the arduous trip very well. Thank God we are all still well, and we hope that this humble writing likewise finds you healthy. Dear Brother! I must really let you know that ever since you left we have no real order in church anymore among our children. Also the learning, as you can easily imagine, is going badly because the words of the parents don’t make as big an impression as the words of the teacher. It is sad, and one is not able to write without tears in the eyes, that you, good shepherd, were taken away so unexpectedly from your poor flock, but it was the will of God. All the children earnestly wish to have their Teacher Brother again if it were possible. However, if we may come to believe or hope for a reunion, we do not know. Please write to us whether you can come again next year to our children, or if this is not the case, whether you can perhaps spare us another good teacher. It is over for this year, for nobody is concerned about it. Our pastor [Fr. Schultes, then stationed in Decatur, IN] also does nothing because he, as you yourself know, has had too much trouble with the stubborn ones that we have among us. So for this year then we must be content, and do for our children what we can, and leave it up to dear God. I must let you know that we had a beautiful procession on St. Joseph’s Day [March 19, 1853] with our new banner. Everything was fine, except you were missing and were not with the poor children to keep them in order. There is yet more disorder in our parish. We only have a mere two more Mass servers, also still only two who want to pray the rosary, namely Johann Sorg and Johann Andres [= Andrews]. All the rest have excluded themselves from it and none afterwards become trained in return. When you were still with us, the prayer service then lasted too long for many. Now when the poor little ones pray, they make it too short. Also they are not allowed to pray more than the rosary and the litany to the Blessed Mother. After that they are not allowed to pray further unless it is sung, because then comes old Herber and teaches his old prayers again, which we likewise must not look down upon. However, the little ones by no means let themselves be driven away from their rosary, because you have left them the memory. We have lost still more dear Brother! Since you have left us, the evening devotions during Lent were the first and the May devotions will be the second, and still much more which I cannot fully express. In news I can write you that Karoline got married last March with Christopf Völker [= Felger], and that there is, as we surmise, yet another marriage soon, namely the teacher in Dieketer [= Decatur] with Maria Forl [= Voroil?], because I saw on Easter when we were in Dieketer (= Decatur) that he drove her home, although Joseph Sorg was there to fetch her. I will end my letter. A splendid greeting from the whole family. We remain your loyal dear friends! Johann and Elisabetha Sorg. [This is Johannes Sorg (1813-1856) and his wife, M. Elisabetha Schmidt (1813-1904), married 27 April 1835.] Also, a splendid greeting from Katharina Hippler [= Hubler], and all your good friends who think of you daily.”

[A second couple also added the following to the end of the letter:] “Dear Brother and Friend! I cannot refrain from also writing you a few lines. I feel it is my duty. Our children were all glad

that they again heard something from you. And for Eduart it is indeed often his wish to be with you. We had to take little Johann to Dieketer [= Decatur] in order to make his first Holy Communion because it is too troublesome for our pastor to do it in Hessenkassel [= Hessen Cassel] solely for this one. Yet a greeting from us and all our children. We remain your dear friends and acquaintances. Josepf and M. Dorothea Andres [= Andrews]. We hope for a speedy reply. Farewell, don't forget us, and pray for us all. Likewise, we will not forget you and will regularly pray for you. May God keep you healthy.”

It is rather amazing that the above 1853 letter has survived for over 160 years. It is evident from the letter that these parents were deeply concerned about the religious and academic education of their children.

Shortly afterwards, John L. Koch withdrew as a brother from the Holy Cross Congregation, (perhaps due to his strong attachment to the Hessen Cassel people), and returned from Cincinnati to Hessen Cassel, where he subsequently married the Fuchs/Fox widow on 8 June 1854 at the request of the parish priest, and continued to teach the parish children. However, this arranged marriage did not work out well, and his wife and three step-daughters came to resent him both as a husband and father. They never fully accepted him, perhaps because he was apparently a strong disciplinarian. In the Fox family history, some of the family discord is disclosed. “He [John Koch] taught school the same time my mother [Mary Ann Fuchs, 1845-1909] attended at Hessen Cassel [c.1855]. He would send her home before school closed to start the chores. Many times she found deers [sic] grazing with the cows when she went to get them from the pasture. During vacation time Koch would walk around with an umbrella and tell my mother what sticks, roots and brushes to pick up and carry to the stumps. John Koch also wanted my grandmother to deed the property to him after their marriage, and when she would not, he would get rough. One time attacked my grandmother with the butcher knife and my mother ran between them to protect her mother. Grandmother died of pneumonia in February 1864...Mr. Koch then left.” It is interesting to note that John Koch was appointed as the guardian of Anton Fuch's three minor-aged daughters on 28 April 1854, shortly before marrying the widow.¹⁶⁵ However, after her death in 1864, John Koch was no longer their guardian, but instead, George Fuchs, their great-uncle, was then assigned as their guardian on 22 April 1864. Although John Koch, a former religious brother and teacher, was surely a man of high morals and deeply religious, he should not have assumed responsibility for the family of Anton Fuchs, who never truly accepted him for whatever reason. Obviously mistrust existed between them since his wife would not even allow him to be a partner in her financial affairs. This illustrates that there were real life problems in those days no different than today.

After his arranged marriage, John Koch apparently taught for about 10 years at Hessen Cassel from about 1854 until the death of his wife in 1864. All his wife's estate and property went to

¹⁶⁵ Allen County, IN, Guardianship Book No. 1, page 32; Allen County, IN Court House. [R385]

his step-children, so he then left Hessen Cassel and went to Nix Settlement in adjacent Whitley County, IN. On 28 September 1864, John Koch was granted a teacher's license to teach in the public schools in Whitley County. He subsequently was re-married to Maria Crescentia Ferber around 1870 and died at Nix Settlement 10 years later in 1880.

It is not known exactly where John Koch held classes at Hessen Cassel, but they were possibly conducted in the old log church/rectory, and then perhaps in the first convent built in 1859 (and which remained unoccupied until the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor came in 1863). Thereafter, these Sisters may have taken over the teaching duties upon Koch's departure from Hessen Cassel in 1864, but they left the parish in 1866. During the two-year period of 1866 to 1868, it is unknown who taught school at the parish. When the Poor Handmaids took over the convent at Hessen Cassel on 28 August 1868, they also took charge of the elementary school the following September. They served as the parochial school teachers from 1868 through 1876, but then moved to their new main convent in Fort Wayne. The Hessen Cassel convent and school were then taken over by the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who began teaching at the school on 16 August 1877, and remained teaching at the parish until 1968.

The First School House

Exactly when the first totally-dedicated school house was built at Hessen Cassel is unknown. Apparently, an actual separate building for the school was built at some point from 1860 to 1865. This is confirmed by the following extract from the annals of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor. "In 1865 they obtained permission to gain the Portinucula Indulgence on August 2 in the parish church. The favor was timely announced in the Cathedral at Ft. Wayne and, as a result, people came even from distant towns to visit the church. Some who arrived on the eve wished to remain overnight. The Sisters allowed them to lodge **in the school house**; they also provided refreshments during the heat of the day, happy to see so many devout worshipers."

Furthermore, the 1876 sketch of the parish grounds, when Fr. Nussbaum was pastor, actually shows what is claimed to be a one-story school building located behind the church. (See Figure 78). When this school may have been erected is unverified. However, it may be that the convent and schoolhouse were essentially the same building. One of the Poor Handmaids who lived at the Hessen Cassel convent, Sister M. Eulogia (Eudoxia?), wrote this description in 1929 at the age of 90. "The convent (which was a one-story house like the motherhouse at Dernbach, Germany), had four wings and its chapel even had a little tower. There was a reception room, a guest room, bedrooms for the sisters, and dormitories for the school children who often had to stay with the sisters in the cold of winter because of the distances to their homes." This actually matches the description of what is identified as the schoolhouse shown in the 1876 sketch of

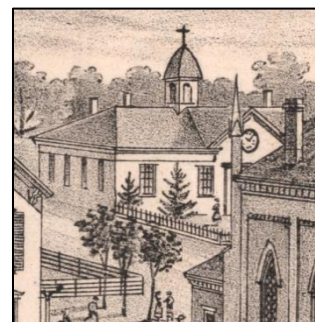


Figure 78 – Hessen Cassel School (sketch, 1875)

Hessen Cassel parish grounds. It is interesting to note that this schoolhouse also appears to have a large clock atop the entrance to the building.

Per two historical accounts, Rev. Hueser built a new two-story brick school house/convent a few years later in 1879. Fr. Lang, in 1889, wrote the following about the new school.¹⁶⁶ “Rev. J. H. Hueser, D.D., was the next pastor. He built a brick school-house and sisters’ residence, costing \$3,000.” Also, Berry noted in a 1905 county history the following.¹⁶⁷ “There is a substantial brick building for school purposes in charge of three Franciscan Sisters of Sacred Heart, the average attendance being fifty pupils.” Then in Alerding’s 1907 history of the diocese, more complete information is provided.¹⁶⁸

“The present school was built by Rev. J. H. Hueser, D.D., in 1879, a two-story brick building, 32x20 [sic] feet, with accommodations for 100 pupils. The cost of this building, including a dwelling for the sisters, was about \$3,690. Until 1870 (really 1877), the school was in charge of the Poor



Figure 79 – School House, St. Joseph Hessen Cassel, c. 1910

Handmaids of Jesus Christ; since that time two Franciscan Sisters, of Joliet, Illinois, have taught the school, attended by sixty-six pupils. The school is a free school, all the expenses being paid by the St. Joseph’s School Society.” A photograph of this brick school house taken around 1910 is shown in Figure 79.

¹⁶⁶ Robertson, Robert S. Valley of the Upper Maumee River, with historical account of Allen County and the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The story of its progress from savagery to civilization. (Madison, WI: Brant & Fuller, 1889); see Lang, Rev. John F. “The Catholic Church in Allen County. - St. Joseph’s Church”, vol. 2, pages 432-433.

¹⁶⁷ Slocum, Charles E. and Robertson, Robert S. History of the Maumee River Basin. From the Earliest Account to Its Organization into Counties. (Indianapolis: Bowen & Slocum, c1905). Vol. 2, Chapter XX – Roman Catholic Churches. St. Joseph’s Church, Hesse Cassell, page 431.

¹⁶⁸ Alerding, Herman J. The Diocese of Fort Wayne. 1857 – September 22 – 1907. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Archer Printing Co., 1907), see “Hesse Cassel, St. Joseph’s Church, 1851”, pages 241-243.

Additional photographs showing this combined school/convent brick building in 1907 (Figure 80) and 50 years later in 1957 (Figure 81) are presented below. The school was used for many years with the Sisters living in modest quarters at the rear of the school until a separate convent was built in 1923.

Around 1960, the present school, a one-story building constructed from concrete blocks, was erected and opened. At that time there were approximately 190 students. The school continued to grow and in 1992 three new classrooms were added and a baseball diamond and soccer field constructed in 1994.¹⁶⁹

A short time after the new school was in operation, the old brick school was torn down (c. 1960). A playground for the school children was eventually built over the old school site, and high quality playground equipment donated by the Dennis and Joan Girardot family was installed.¹⁷⁰ The backhoes used to dig the base for the playground equipment hit remnants of the old school foundation.

German School Education

From the inception of the Hessen Cassel parochial school up until World War I, the students were taught their “reading, writing and arithmetic” in German by German-born clergy. German was the main language used in the home and at church, although the students also learned to speak English as their second language. Some Irish Catholic families were also early members of the parish, so they must have learned the German language in order to attend classes.

Even as late as 1912, German was the main language being used to teach the students at the Hessen Cassel School. A Fort Wayne newspaper reported on 4 September 1912, that an estimated 6,000 students were being taught in German within the city and county area.¹⁷¹ It reads in part as follows: “The German alliance of Fort Wayne has a membership of 650...Five thousand Fort Wayne children are enjoying the privilege of a German school education as follows: ... One thousand four hundred and thirteen in five Catholic parochial schools, thirty-three school sisters... There is also in the county ... a large German Catholic congregation with its own parochial school at Hessen Cassel. This school has an enrollment of 104 German pupils. A compilation of these figures brings out the fact that there are 6,000 German pupils in Allen county, a larger number than in any other county in the state of Indiana.”

¹⁶⁹ Robb, Phyllis. (ed.) History of Fort Wayne & Allen County, Indiana, 1700-2005. (Evansville, Ind.: M.T. Pub. Co., 2006), Volume 2, page 195; “St. Joseph – Hessen Cassel Church”.

¹⁷⁰ “Interview with Patrick Minnick Regarding the Old Hessen Cassel School”, 18 February 2014.

¹⁷¹ “Six Thousand Pupils Being Taught German in City and County.” Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, 4 September 1912, page 2.

However, due to the intense anti-German sentiment that arose in America during World War I, all German was discontinued for the most part in all the Fort Wayne and Allen County schools and churches by 1920.



Figure 80 – Hessen Cassel School House, 1907



Figure 81 – Hessen Cassel School House, 1957

Chapter 20 - Students at Hessen Cassel School

School Photographs (1882 - 1930)

The Hessen Cassel grade school was comprised of students in grades 1 through 8. Supposedly, the 1879 brick school could accommodate 100 pupils. Based on the aforementioned historical accounts, the number of students who attended the school has been estimated at 50 in 1880, an average of 50 in 1905, and 66 pupils in 1907. Based on class photographs, the number of students was: 38 students in 1882-1883; 38 students in 1895; 51 students in 1907; 62 students in 1908; 81 students in 1914; 75 students in 1921-1922, and 80 students in 1930. Several photos of the children attending St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School over the years still exist. In fact, from 1907 through 1930 it appears that a group photo of all 8 grades was taken every 8 years, perhaps to have an image of every student attending the school while in at least one of the grades.

Class of 1882/1883

The oldest known photo, which was taken along the outside of the school around 1882-1883, is shown below (Figure 82).¹⁷²



Figure 82 – St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School Children, c. 1882-1883.

¹⁷² “Photograph of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School Children, c. 1882-1883”; Original in possession of Janet Johnson, 12 January 1983; obtained from Mrs. Clarence (Celina) Harber with some students identified on back. [R554].

There are 38 students present in this photo, along with the pastor, Rev. John Mark, and the teacher, identified as Sister Yustinea. Eleven of the 38 students, with numbers written above their heads, were identified on the back of the photo as follows (birth data added by author):

1. Rev. John Mark - (pastor from 1880 - 1897)
2. Bill Smith - (born 3 April 1871, son of Henry C. Schmidt/Smith & Catharine Münch)
3. Mary Berg - (born 12 April 1872, daughter of Phillip Berg & Josephine Boes)
4. Gerdy Wyss - (born 8 September 1875, daughter of Frank Wyss & Anna Mary Zuber)
5. Mary Smith - (born 27 September 1871, daughter of William Smith & Elizabeth Fuchs)
6. Alice Smith - (born 26 December 1873, daughter of Joseph Smith & Magdalene Herber)
7. Suzen Bubb - (born 28 February 1873, daughter of Anthony Bubb & Susanna Renninger)
8. Theresa Gibson - (born 23 October 1873, daughter of Henry Gibson & Mary C. Hiebler)
9. Lena Berg - (born 4 April 1874, daughter of Phillip Berg & Josephine Boes)
10. S. Yustinea - (teacher)
11. Catherine Berg - (born 11 August 1869, daughter of Phillip Berg & Josephine Boes)
12. Henry Smith - (born 16 August 1873, son of Henry C. Schmidt/Smith & Catharine Münch)
13. Mary Margaret Beckman, wife of John Wyss - (born December 1867, daughter of Frederick Beckmann & Catherine Hake)

A checkmark was also made on students 11 and 12, Bill Smith and Catherine Berg, who later were married. Since the numbers on the photo are hard to read, the location of the identified students on the photo in relation to the other students is as follows:

Row 1 (front), seated, left to right: 7-Susan Bubb, 8-Theresa Gibson, boy, girl, 9-Lena Berg.

Row 2, seated, left to right: girl, girl, girl, girl, 6-Alice Smith, girl, girl, 5-Mary Smith, 11-Catherine Berg, girl.

Row 3, seated, left to right: boy, boy, boy, boy, girl, girl, girl, 4-Gertrude Wyss, 13-Mary M. Beckman, 3-Mary Berg.

Row 4, left to right, seated : boy, boy, boy; standing: boy, boy, 2-Bill Smith

Row 5 (back), standing, left to right: 10-Sister Justina, boy, boy, boy, boy, 12-Henry Smith, boy, boy, 1-Rev. John Mark.

Class of 1895

Another early photograph of the school children at Hessen Cassel taken around 1895 is shown below (Figure 83). In this photo there are 38 students along with Rev. John Mark and the teacher, identified as Sister Regina.



Figure 83 - St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School Children, 1895.

Some of the students in the above photo have been identified as follows:

Row 1 (front), seated, left to right - girl, girl, girl, Regina Sorg, girl, girl, boy, Henry Zuber with striped pants, Otto Smith, Ervin Herber, boy, Barney Hake, boy.

Row 2 left to right – girl, girl, girl, boy, girl, boy, boy, Tony Zuber, Rudy Beckman (standing)

Row 3 left to right – girl, girl, boy, boy, Bill Herber, Tony Berg (polka dot ascot), boy, boy, Joe Sorg (sitting)

Row 4 left to right – Sr. Regina, Kennerk girl, Maggie Bubb, girl, girl, Rev. John Mark, Bird boy, John Herber, and Bird boy.

Based on the author’s genealogy database and the parish sacramental books, the above-named children were most likely:

Regina Sorg – born 1 May 1883, daughter of John B. Sorg & Catherine Berg

J. Henry Zuber – born 23 October 1884, son of Henry S. Zuber & Anna Mary Bubb

Otto Smith – born 10 December 1889, son of Joseph Smith & Magdalena Herber

Irvin Herber – born 27 January 1885, son of J. Frederick Herber & Louisa Kahlmeyer

Bernard “Barney” Hake – born 14 July 1883, son of Jacob Hake & Catherine Kahlmeyer

Anthony “Tony” Zuber – born 16 August 1887, son of Henry S. Zuber & Anna Mary Bubb

Rudolph “Rudy” Beckmann – born 3 January 1887, son of Nicholas Francis Beckmann & Margaret Hoffmann

William “Bill” Herber – born 4 December 1882, son of J. Frederick Herber & Louisa Kahlmeyer
Anthony “Tony” Berg – born 13 August 1882, son of Anthony F. Berg & Josephine Boes
Joseph Sorg – 18 August 1883, son of Joseph L. Sorg and Mary Hoevel

The unnamed Kennerk girl is most likely

(Helen) Kennerk – born 16 March 1882, daughter of Timothy Kennerk & Mary Harrigan
Margaret “Maggie” Bubb - unknown

John G. Herber – born 17 August 1882, son of Gerhard Herber & Veronica F. Herber

The unnamed Bird boys are most likely the brothers

(Francis) Bird – born 16 September 1880, son of Levi Bird & Margaretha Krack

(Isaac) Bird – born 1 December 1881, son of Levi Bird & Margaretha Krack

Class of 1907

The 1957 Hessen Cassel parish centennial booklet contains the photographs of the school classes for the years 1907, 1908, 1914, and 1930. However, none of the students are identified. The originals of these photos are presented below, along with that for the 1922 class, and all known students are named accordingly.

In the 1907 school photograph (Figure 84), a total of 51 students are present along with the pastor, Rev. Max Benzinger, and 4 nuns, Sisters Josephine, Armilla, Irmina, and Fadella/Fidela.



Figure 84 - St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School Children, 1907.

These students were identified by Frances (Zuber) Smith (1895-1987), who is one of the students in the photo. She wrote the names on a piece of paper at two different times, and her handwriting was difficult to read. As best as the names were able to be deciphered, the subjects are, left to right:

Row 1 (front) – 5 people: Eddie Flemion (down on one knee), Marie Gibson, a daughter of Henry Sorg, Loretta Bobay, and Sister Fadella/Fidela (standing far right).

Row 2 – 13 children sitting: Art Bobay, Esther Wyss, Alma Sorg, Malinda ____ [Zuber, her sister], Edna Herber, Anny Blee, Monica Sorg, Laurence Sorg, Aloys “Hi” Sorg, Maxi(?) Muldoon, Bob Herber, Mori(?) Herber, & Arnie Kleinrichert.

Row 3 – 14 people standing: Rev. Max Benzinger, Gertie Sorg, Carolyn Beckman, Edna Bobay, Isabelle Muldoon, Mary Ottenweller, Lillian Dodane, Sister Josephine, Sister Armilla, Sister Ermina/Irmina, Marie Muldoon, Bertie Sorg (married Leo Fox, Berneta is her sister), Rosella Wyss, & Albert Sorg.

Row 4 – 14 children standing: Agnes Blee, Edith “Edie” Kleber, Esther Herber, Blanche ____ [most likely Herber], “Me” - Frances Zuber, Bernita Sorg, Mary Beckman, Julia Flemion, Gerhard/Garret Wyss, Steve Sorg, Fred Fry, R. Herber, Ambrose Gibson, John Lallack (by tree).

Row 5 – 10 older children standing: John Wyss, Alphonse Sorg, Step. Barva, Fr. Wyss, Henry Wyss, Alma Herber, Tille Sorg (daughter of John Sorg), Hugo Zuber, Herm Muldoon (son of Ellet/Elliot Muldoon), & Ollie Muldoon (son of Henry Muldoon).

It was possible to confirm the identity of most of the students based on the parish sacramental records supplemented by the 1900 U.S. Census records. A more complete identification of the students in the 1907 photograph is as follows:

Row 1

1. "Eddie" Edward Flemion - born circa 1900 to Edward C. Flemion & Josephine Poisson
2. Marie Gibson - born 12 January 1897 to Henry W. Gibson & Mary Catherine Hiebler
3. Augusta(?) Sorg - born 23 October 1895 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox
4. Loretta Bobay - born 23 March 1895 to Paul G. Bobay & Clara Mary White
5. Sister Fadella/Fidela - Mother Superior(?)

Row 2

6. "Art" Athur Bobay - born 30 June 1898 to Paul G. Bobay & Clara Mary White
7. Esther Wyss - born 14 March 1899 to Nicholas J. Wyss & Adelaide K. Münch
8. Alma Sorg - born 13 January 1899 to John Michael Sorg & Susanna Bubb
9. Malinda Zuber(?) - born 12 November 1897 to Henry S. Zuber & Anna M. Bubb
10. Edna Herber - born 12 December 1897 to John Frederick Herber & Louisa Kahlmeyer
11. Anny Blee - born 1899 to John H. Ottenweller & Mary E. Blee
12. Monica Sorg - born 7 January 1898 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox
13. Laurence Sorg - born 17 July 1896 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox
14. Aloys “Hi” Sorg - born 9 March 1896 to John Sorg & Barbara Gaul
15. Maxi(?) Muldoon - Can't confirm identity

16. "Bob" Robert Herber - born 1 October 1898 to Anthony Herber & Martha Smith
17. Mori/Maxi(?) Herber - Can't confirm identity
18. "Arnie" Arnold Kleinrichert - born 17 May 1895 to John B. Kleinrichert & Josephine Zuber

Row 3

19. Rev. Max Benzinger - (Pastor, 1897-1926)
20. Gertie Sorg - Can't confirm identity
21. Carolyn Beckman - born 24 September 1896 to Nicholas F. Beckman & Margaret Hoffman
22. Edna Bobay - born 10 April 1897 to Paul G. Bobay & Clara Mary White
23. Isabelle Muldoon - born 26 July 1896 to Daniel E. Muldoon & Mary A. Delaney
24. Mary Ottenweller - born 23 May 1899 to John H. Ottenweller & Mary Zurbach
25. Lillian Dodane - born circa 1895 to Peter F. & Mary Dodane
26. Sister Josephine - Teacher
27. Sister Armilla - Teacher
28. Sister Ermina/Irmina - Teacher
29. Marie Muldoon - born 20 April 1896 to Henry W. Muldoon & Gertrude Herber
30. "Bertie" Bertha Sorg - born 22 February 1897 to John Michael Sorg & Susanna Bubb
31. Rosella Wyss - born 6 November 1896 to John B. Wyss & Mary Margaret Beckman
32. Albert Sorg - born 28 May 1896 to John Sorg & Barbara Gaul

Row 4

33. Agnes Blee - born circa 1898 to John H. Ottenweller & Mary E. Blee
34. Edith "Edie" Kleber - born 18 October 1893 to Christoph Kleber & Mary Hake
35. Esther Herber - born June 1894 to John Frederick Herber & Louisa Kahlmeyer
36. Blanche Herber(?) - born 10 November 1895 to Anthony Herber & Martha Smith
37. Frances Zuber - born 20 May 1895 to Henry S. Zuber & Anna M. Bubb
38. "Berneta" Bernadette Sorg - born 24 February 1895 to John Michael Sorg & Susanna Bubb
39. Mary Beckman - born 6 January 1895 to Nicholas F. Beckman & Margaret Hoffman
40. Julia Flemion - born circa 1894 to Edward C. Flemion & Josephine Poisson
41. Gerhard Wyss - born 6 June 1896 to Nicholas J. Wyss & Adelaide K. Münch
42. Steve Sorg - born 17 February 1897 to Charles Sorg & Mary Fox
43. Fred Fry - born circa 1896 to Unknown parents
44. "R." (Rheinhardt?) Herber - born 27 June 1895 to Frederick I. Herber & Mary B. Wyss
45. Ambrose Gibson - born 18 November 1894 to Henry W. Gibson & Mary Catherine Hiebler
46. John Lallak - born 17 September 1894 to John H. & Elizabeth Lallak

Row 5

47. John Wyss - born 16 January 1895 to John B. Wyss & Mary Margaret Beckman
48. Alphonse Sorg - born 7 January 1895 to Anton D. Sorg & Elizabeth Schmidt
49. Stephen Barva - born September 1893 to Edward & Josephine Barva
50. Francis Wyss - born 1 March 1894 to Frank J. Wyss & Agnes J. Gibson
51. Henry Wyss - born 26 February 1893 to Nicholas J. Wyss & Adelaide K. Münch
52. Alma Herber - born 29 November 1892 to Frederick I. Herber & Mary B. Wyss
53. "Tille" Matilda Sorg - born 5 March 1894 to John Sorg & Barbara Gaul
54. Hugo Zuber - born 15 July 1893 to John M. Zuber & Josephine Wetzel
55. "Herm" Herman Muldoon - born 21 March 1894 to Daniel E. Muldoon & Mary A. Delaney
56. "Ollie" Oliver Muldoon - born 23 March 1894 to Henry W. Muldoon & Gertrude Herber

Class of 1908

Another St. Joseph Hessen Cassel school class photograph was apparently taken one year later in 1908. This photo (Figure 85) is found in both the 1957 parish centennial booklet and also in the Zuber family history compiled by Clara Herber.¹⁷³ However, none of the 62 students are identified except that both Malinda Zuber (1897-1974) and her brother, George Zuber (1900 – 1940) are students somewhere in the photo. Malinda was in the previous 1907 class photo and many of the other students from the 1907 photo are probably present in this 1908 photo shown below:



Figure 85 - St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School Children, 1908.

Rev. Max Benzinger, the pastor, is sitting in the middle of the children, while Sister Josephine is standing on the far left. The other nun with eyeglasses standing on the far right is unknown.

¹⁷³ Herber, Clara (compiler). The Zuber Family : a Genealogy of the Zuber Family from about 1675 to Present Day. (Fort Wayne, IN: Allen County Public Library, 1983); see Vol. 2, page 350.

Class of 1914

The parish centennial booklet shows a class photo for students at the school in 1914, but there were actually two photographs for that year – one with the upper grades and one with the lower grades. Both photographs have printed on them toward the bottom the notation “St. Joseph School, Nov. 4, 14”. The identities of the students in these 1914 class photographs were found in the Clara (Smith) Herber collection on separate pieces of paper handwritten by two different people. Based on the handwriting, one of the documents was written by Clara’s mother, Frances (Zuber) Smith. The other person was probably Marie (Trabel) Hoffman. There are 38 younger students in the first photo and 43 older students in the second photo for a total of 81 students attending the school in 1914. Two separate photos were probably taken because of the large number of students. The first photo (Figure 86), which comprised the younger students, possibly Grades 1 through 4, is shown below:



Figure 86 - St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School Children, Grades 1 to 4, (4 November 1914)

This set of 38 students was identified left to right as follows:

Row 1 (front) – 11 students sitting: Frances Maldeney, Emma Maldeney, Genevieve Schiffli, Armella Herber, Verba Wyss, Marie Wyss, Bertha Maldeney, Henrietta Wyss, Marie Hoffman, Anna Marie Herber, & Olive Schiffli.

Row 2 (middle) – 14 students standing: Clarence Trabel, Frank Zuber, Laurence Bobay, Arnold Minnich, Velma Schmidt, Rose Beckman, Moralley? Minnich, Cecilia Hoffman, Agnes Minnich, Frances Scherschel, Andrew Gibson, Art Sorg, Henry Schmidt, & Wilbur Sorg.

Row 3 (back) – 13 students standing: Pat Boyle, H. Sorg, Wm. Miller, Herm Hoffman, Walt Herber, Ray Wyss, Walt Fox, Frank Hartman, Joe Wyss, Roger Gibson, Louis Schmidt, Wm. Kruse, & Pat Muldoon.

The second 1914 class photo (Figure 87), which consisted of the older students, possibly Grades 5 through 8, is shown below:



Figure 87 - St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School Children, Grades 5 to 8, (4 November 1914)

This set of 43 students was identified left to right as follows:

Row 1 (front) – 14 students sitting: Max Herber, Urban Sorg, Cecilia Minnich, Grace Bobay, Eliz Herber, Louise Trabel, Ellen Fox, Florence Wyss, Edith Fox, Phillip Herber, Leo Minnich, Frank Minnich, Joe Maldeney, & Leander Trabel.

Row 2 (middle) – 15 students standing: Francis Lallack, Art Miller, Norman Schmidt, Sy Wyss, Laurence Hoffman, Emmet Gibson, Albert Wyss, Phillip Wyss, Walter Gibson, Russel Gibson, Ivo Herber, Walt Sorg, Bern Sorg, Phil Beckman, & Carl/Charles Sorg

Row 3 (back) – 14 students standing: Mary Zuber, Florence Hake, Elva Wyss, Viola Wyss, Claudine Sorg, Irene Gibson, Velma Wyss, Alice Sorg, Velma Minnick, Irene Minnick, Bertha Hoffman, Cecilia(Celia) Hartman, Genevieve Schmidt, & Florence Flemion.

It was possible to confirm the identity of most of the 1914 students based on the parish sacramental records supplemented by the 1910 U.S. Census records. A more complete identification of the students in the two sets of 1914 Class photographs is as follows:

Photograph 1 – Class of 1914 , Grades 1 through 4 (38 students)

Row 1 – (front , sitting)

1. Frances Maldeney - born 27 July 1907 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy
2. Emma Maldeney - born 1904 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy
3. Genevieve Schiffli - born 8 January 1908 to Lorenz Schiffli & Frances Reinig
4. Armella Herber - born 5 April 1907 to Fred I. Herber & Mary B. Wyss
5. Verba Wyss - born 23 May 1906 to Frank J. Wyss & Agnes J. Gibson
6. Marie Wyss - born 23 May 1906 to John B. Wyss & Mary M. Beckman
7. Bertha Maldeney - born 1905 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy
8. Henrietta Wyss - born 26 September 1906 to William P. Wyss & Veronica H. Hoffman
9. Marie Hoffman - born 10 April 1907 to Frank P. Hoffman & Gertrude K. Wyss
10. Anna Marie Herber - born 17 September 1905 to Anthony N. Herber & Martha E. Smith
11. "Olive" Olivia Schiffli - born 10 April 1906 to Lorenz Schiffli & Frances Reinig

Row 2 – (middle , standing)

12. Clarence Trabel - born 24 March 1908 to Christian Trabel & Mary A. Hartman
13. "Frank" Francis Zuber - born 6 June 1907 to Henry S. Zuber & Anna M. Bubb
14. Laurence Bobay - born 18 May 1905 to Paul G. Bobay & Clara M. White
15. Arnold Minnich - born 6 October 1905 to William P. Minnich & Josephine Smith
16. Velma Schmidt - born 24 April 1905 to Henry J. Schmidt & Catherine J. Berg
17. Rose Beckman - born 4 June 1905 to Nicholas F. Beckman & Margaret Hoffman
18. Moralley? Minnich - born circa 1905 (Unconfirmed girl)
19. Cecilia Hoffman - born 30 July 1905 to Frank P. Hoffman & Gertrude K. Wyss
20. Agnes Minich - born 21 January 1905 to Joseph Münch/Minich & Katherine Bird
21. Frances Scherschel - born 15 October 1905 to John Scherschel & Magdalena Sack
22. Andrew Gibson - born 11 November 1905 to Edward A. Gibson & Clara Münch
23. "Art" Arthur Sorg - born 18 January 1905 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox
24. Henry Schmidt - born 24 May 1907 to Henry J. Schmidt & Catherine J. Berg
25. Wilbur Sorg - born 22 December 1907 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox

Row 3 – (back, standing)

26. "Pat" Patrick Boyle - born 24 September 1905 to Edward Boyle & Mary Schmidt
27. "H." Herman Sorg - born 8 June 1905 to George G. Sorg & Mary F. Sack
28. William Miller - born 18 August 1904 to Jacob J. Miller & Mary M. Münch
29. "Herm" Herman Hoffman - born 19 December 1904 to George G. Hoffman & Anna M. Minnich
30. "Walt" Walter Herber - born 22 November 1905 to Fred I. Herber & Mary Wyss
31. "Ray" Raymond Wyss - born 11 January 1905 to William P. Wyss & Veronica H. Hoffman
32. "Walt" Walter Fox - born 1 March 1905 to Alexander Fox & Mary Berg
33. "Frank" Francis Hartman - born 23 October 1904 to John G. Hartman & Louisa J. Beckman
34. "Joe" Joseph Wyss - born 19 January 1906 to Nicholas J. Wyss & Adelaide Münch
35. Rodger Gibson - born 14 November 1905 to Henry D. Gibson & Alice M. Smith
36. Louis Schmidt - born circa 1907 to John Schmidt & Bernadine Pohl
37. William Kruse - born 21 March 1906 to Bernard Kruse & Elizabeth Gick
38. Pat. Muldoon - born circa 1905 (Unconfirmed boy)

Photograph 2 – Class of 1914, Grades 5 through 8 (43 students)

Row 1 – (front , sitting)

1. "Max" Maximillian Herber - born 7 August 1902 to Fred I. Herber & Mary B. Wyss
2. Urban Sorg - born 26 November 1902 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox
3. Cecilia Minnich - born 24 August 1903 to William P. Minnich & Josephine M. Smith
4. Grace Bobay - born 18 February 1903 to Paul G. Bobay & Clara M. White
5. Elizabeth Herber - born 8 July 1903 to Anthony N. Herber & Martha E. Smith
6. Louise Trabel - born 18 October 1901 to Christian Trabel & Mary A. Hartman
7. Ellen Fox - born 4 October 1902 to Henry Fox & Adeline Bohrer
8. Florence Wyss - born 27 December 1903 to John B. Wyss & Mary M. Beckman
9. Edith Fox - born 7 May 1904 to Henry Fox & Adeline Bohrer
10. Phillip Herber - born 5 August 1904 to Fred I. Herber & Mary B. Wyss
11. Leo Minick - born 16 May 1902 to Henry J. Münch/Minick & Mary C. Stier
12. "Frank" Francis Minich - born 13 October 1903 to Joseph Münch/Minich & Katherine Bird
13. "Joe" Joseph Maldeney - born 25 September 1902 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy
14. Leander Trabel - born 5 June 1904 to Christian Trabel & Mary A. Hartman

Row 2 – (middle , standing)

15. Francis Lallack - born 2 November 1902 to John H. & Elizabeth Lallak
16. "Art" Arthur Miller - born 10 December 1901 to Jacob J. Miller & Mary M. Münch
17. Norman Schmidt - born 1 December 1901 to John Schmidt & Bernadine Pohl
18. "Sy" Sylvester Wyss - born 27 March 1903 to William P. Wyss & Veronica H. Hoffman
19. Laurence Hoffman - born 16 September 1903 to Frank P. Hoffman & Gertrude K. Wyss
20. Emmet Gibson - born 18 September 1903 to Henry W. Gibson & Mary C. Hiebler
21. Albert Wyss - born 30 May 1902 to John B. Wyss & Mary M. Beckman
22. Phillip Wyss - born 26 November 1901 to William P. Wyss & Veronica H. Hoffman
23. Walter Gibson - born 6 November 1901 to Edward A. Gibson & Clara C. Münch

24. Russel Gibson - born 23 September 1903 to Henry D. Gibson & Alice M. Smith
25. Ivo Herber - born 2 March 1903 to John F. Herber & Louisa Kahlmeyer
26. "Walt" Walter Sorg - born 10 June 1903 to George G. Sorg & Mary F. Sack
27. "Bern" Bernard Sorg - born 27 July 1904 to Henry B. Sorg & Pauline E. Kintz
28. "Phil" Phillip Beckman - born 25 September 1902 to Nicholas F. Beckman & Margaret Hoffman
29. Charles Sorg - born 28 October 1904 to John Sorg & Barbara Gaul

Row 3 – (back, standing)

30. Mary Zuber - born 10 February 1902 to Henry S. Zuber & Anna M. Bubb
31. Florence Hake - born 3 August 1901 to Henry Hake & Gertrude Kleber
32. Elva Wyss - born 26 February 1903 to Nicholas J. Wyss & Adelaide K. Münch
33. Viola Wyss - born 19 May 1902 to Frank J. Wyss & Agnes J. Gibson
34. Claudine Sorg - born 7 September 1901 to Anton D. Sorg & Elizabeth D. Schmidt
35. Irene Gibson - born 21 August 1901 to Henry D. Gibson & Alice M. Smith
36. Velma Wyss - born 9 July 1901 to Nicholas J. Wyss & Adelaide K. Münch
37. Alice Sorg - born 11 November 1901 to George G. Sorg & Mary F. Sack
38. Velma Minnick (twin) - born 20 June 1902 to Julian Minnick & Barbara Houser
39. Irene Minnick (twin) - born 20 June 1902 to Julian Minnick & Barbara Houser
40. Bertha Hoffman - born 24 August 1901 to George G. Hoffman & Anna M. Minnick
41. Cecilia Hartman - born 25 March 1902 to John G. Hartman & Louisa J. Beckman
42. Genevieve Schmidt - born 25 September 1902 to Henry J. Schmidt & Catherine J. Berg
43. Florence Flemion - born 1902 to Edward C. Flemion & Josephine J. Poisson

Class of 1921-1922

The next known student photograph is that for the Class of 1921-1922, which is not included in the parish centennial history booklet. In this photo (Figure 88), taken outside of the Hessen Cassel school, there is a child in the front holding a chalkboard sign with the words “St. Joseph School 1921-22”. There are 75 students in the photograph, and most of them were able to be identified by Marie (Trabel) Hoffman (1911-2006), who was in this class, as follows:



Figure 88 - St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School Children, 1921-1922

Row 1 (front) – 13 students sitting on blanket: Alois Herber, Arthur Westrick, Minerva Gibson, Florence Hoffman, Gertrude Hoffman, Myrtle Rauner, LaVern Berg, Andrew Minick, Raymond Sorg, James Rorick, Elmer Maldeney, Marie Maldeney, and Irene Westrick.

Row 2 – 13 students kneeling on ground: Edward Maldeney, Marcellus Gibson, Harold Sorg, James Freehill, Oscar Gibson, Alois Beckman, Alexander Fox, Robert Rorick, Marie Trabel, Rosemary Berg, Eva Westrick, Mary Agnes Howard, and Margaret Freehill.

Row 3 – 13 students sitting on bench: Walter Wyss, Walter Freehill, Kermit Bubb, Catherine Rorick, Josephine Herber, Ludwina Beckman, Winifred Sweeney, Ena Kleber, Mary Rorick, Bernadine Herber, Francis Sweeney, Walter Scherschel, and Arthur Hoffman.

Row 4 – 12 students standing: Mary (Irene?) Sweeney, Agnes Sorg, Josephine Flemion, Florence Scherschel, Catherine Herber, Bernard Freehill, Jennings Bubb, Raymond Fox, Josephine Hoffman, Dolores Berg, Mary Minick, and Angeline Smith.

Row 5 – 12 students standing: Fayma Kleber, Mable Wyss, Evelyn Bubb, Frances Maldeney, Genevieve Schiffli, Marcelline Herber, Arthur Sorg, Vincent Sorg, Harold Harkenrider, Joseph Hoffman, Clarence Freehill, and Clayton Howard.

Row 6 (back) – 12 students standing: Wilbert Sorg, Clarence Trabel, Frank Zuber, Henry Smith, Alva Harkenrider, Louis Schmidt, Eugene Boyle, Joseph Berg, Clara Fox, Esther Minick, Catherine Schiffli, and Irene Freehill.

Based on the parish sacramental records and supplemented by the 1910 U.S. Census and other records at Ancestry.com, it was possible to confirm the identity of these 75 students in the Class of 1922 as well as determine the first names of the two Westrick students not remembered by Marie (Trabel) Hoffman. A more complete identification of the students in the 1922 Class photograph is as follows:

Row 1 (front)

1. "Alois" Aloysius Herber - born 8 August 1913 to George J. Herber & Loretta C. Sorg
2. J. Arthur Westrick - born 8 February 1913 to Joseph Westrick & Elizabeth Nicholson
3. Minerva Gibson - born 20 April 1913 to William F. Gibson & Celeste M. Heiser
4. Florence Hoffman - born 11 February 1912 to George C. Hoffman & Anna M. Minnich
5. Gertrude Hoffman - born 22 March 1913 to Francis P. Hoffman & Gertrude K. Wyss
6. Myrtle Rauner - born 21 July 1914 to Charles A. Rauner & Mary M. Wyss
7. LaVern Berg - born 13 January 1914 to Anthony F. Berg & Loretta E. Wyss
8. Andrew Minich - born 12 October 1913 to Joseph Münch/Minich & Katherine Bird
9. Raymond Sorg - born 20 March 1915 to Henry B. Sorg & Pauline E. Kintz
10. James Rorick - born 6 October 1913 to Nathan J. Rorick & Lilliosa M. Sorg
11. Elmer Maldeney - born 1 August 1914 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy
12. Marie Maldeney - born 18 May 1913 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy
13. C. Irene Westrick - born 26 December 1915 to Joseph Westrick & Elizabeth Nicholson

Row 2

14. Edward Maldeney - born 8 May 1911 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy
15. Marcellus Gibson - born 28 December 1913 to Edward A. Gibson & Clara C. Münch
16. Harold Sorg - born 8 January 1913 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox
17. James Freehill - born 25 September 1912 to Michael B. Freehill & Mary A. Pursley
18. Oscar Gibson - born 12 July 1911 to William F. Gibson & Celeste M. Heiser
19. "Alois" Aloysius Beckman - born 2 February 1912 to William H. Beckman & Margaret M. Brames
20. Alexander Fox - born 4 March 1912 to Alexander Fox & Mary Berg
21. Robert Rorick - born 10 November 1911 to Nathan J. Rorick & Lilliosa M. Sorg
22. Marie Trabel - born 26 June 1911 to Christian Trabel & Mary A. Hartman
23. Rosemary Berg - born 25 June 1912 to Frank M. Berg & Caroline C. Schmidt
24. C. Eva Westrick - born circa 1912 to Joseph Westrick & Elizabeth Nicholson
25. Mary Agnes Howard - born 24 December 1912 to James F. Howard & Margaret C. Smith
26. Margaret Freehill - born 6 April 1910 to Michael B. Freehill & Mary A. Pursley

Row 3

27. Walter Wyss - born 21 May 1910 to John B. Wyss & Mary M. Beckman
28. Walter Freehill - born 6 April 1910 to Michael B. Freehill & Mary A. Pursley
29. Kermit Bubb - born 5 September 1911 to Andrew Bubb & Agnes C. Schmidt
30. Catherine Rorick - born 11 October 1908 to Nathan J. Rorick & Lilliosa M. Sorg
31. Josephine Herber - born 27 September 1911 to Fred I. Herber & Mary B. Wyss
32. Ludwina Beckman - born 16 May 1910 to William H. Beckman & Margaret M. Brames
33. Winifred Sweeney - born 1912 to Martin & Winifred Sweeney (moved to Chicago)
34. Ena Kleber - born 1 July 1910 to Hubert J. Kleber & Elva J. Muldoon
35. Mary Rorick - born 31 October 1909 to Nathan J. Rorick & Lilliosa M. Sorg
36. Bernadine Herber - born 22 October 1911 to George J. Herber & Loretta C. Sorg
37. Francis Sweeney - born circa 1910 to Martin & Winifred Sweeney (moved to Chicago)
38. Walter Scherschel - born 4 April 1916 to John J. Scherschel & Magdalena Sack
39. Arthur Hoffman - born 10 February 1911 to Francis P. Hoffman & Gertrude K. Wyss

Row 4

40. Mary (Irene?) Sweeney - born circa 1916 to Martin & Winifred Sweeney (moved to Chicago)
41. Agnes Sorg - born 13 January 1911 to Henry B. Sorg & Pauline E. Kintz
42. Josephine Flemion - born 6 August 1909 to Edward C. Flemion & Josephine J. Poisson
43. Florence Scherschel - born 21 July 1909 to John J. Scherschel & Magdalena Sack
44. Catherine Herber - born 1 February 1910 to George J. Herber & Loretta C. Sorg
45. M. Bernard Freehill - born 16 January 1908 to Michael B. Freehill & Mary A. Pursley
46. Jennings Bubb - born 18 February 1910 to Andrew Bubb & Agnes C. Schmidt
47. Raymond Fox - born 27 April 1910 to Alexander Fox & Mary Berg
48. Josephine Hoffman - born 13 January 1910 to George C. Hoffman & Anna M. Minnich
49. Dolores Berg - born 6 June 1910 to Frank M. Berg & Caroline C. Schmidt
50. Mary Minich - born 9 July 1910 to Joseph Münch/Minich & Katherine Bird
51. Angeline Smith - born 31 January 1911 to Henry J. Schmidt/Smith & Catherine J. Berg

Row 5

52. Fayma Kleber - born 19 February 1909 to Hubert J. Kleber & Elva J. Muldoon
53. Mable Wyss - born 6 May 1908 to John B. Wyss & Mary M. Beckman
54. Evelyn Bubb - born 30 December 1908 to Andrew Bubb & Agnes C. Schmidt
55. Frances Maldeney - born 27 July 1907 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy
56. Genevieve Schiffli - born 8 January 1908 to Lorenz Schiffli & Frances C. Reinig
57. Marcelline Herber - born 3 November 1908 to George J. Herber & Loretta C. Sorg
58. Arthur Sorg - born 18 January 1905 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox
59. Vincent Sorg - born 25 March 1908 to Henry B. Sorg & Pauline E. Kintz
60. Harold Harkenrider - born 3 November 1908 to William J. Harkenrider & Barbara F. Andorfer
61. Joseph Hoffman - born 18 March 1909 to Francis P. Hoffman & Gertrude K. Wyss
62. Clarence Freehill - born 8 January 1906 to Michael B. Freehill & Mary A. Pursley
63. Clayton Howard - born 22 March 1909 to James F. Howard & Margaret C. Smith
64. Wilbert Sorg - born 22 December 1907 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox
65. Clarence Trabel - born 24 May 1908 to Christian Trabel & Mary A. Hartman

- 66. "Frank" Francis Zuber - born 6 June 1907 to Henry S. Zuber & Anna M. Bubb
- 67. Henry Smith - born 24 May 1907 to Henry J. Schmidt/Smith & Catherine J. Berg
- 68. Alva Harkenrider - born 19 January 1906 to William J. Harkenrider & Barbara F. Andorfer
- 69. Louis Schmidt - born circa 1907 to John Schmidt & Bernadine Pohl
- 70. Eugene Boyle - born 27 March 1909 to Edward B. Boyle & Mary M. Schmidt
- 71. Joseph Berg - born 29 October 1908 to Frank M. Berg & Caroline C. Schmidt
- 72. Clara Fox - born 10 April 1908 to Alexander Fox & Mary Berg
- 73. Esther Minich - born 30 September 1908 to Joseph Münch/Minich & Katherine Bird
- 74. Catherine Schiffli - born 8 January 1908 to Lorenz Schiffli & Frances C. Reinig
- 75. M. Irene Freehill - born 29 December 1906 to Michael B. Freehill & Mary A. Pursley

Class of 1930

The last whole-school group photograph included in the parish centennial history booklet is that for the Class of 1930, grades 1 through 8. This photo (Figure 89) was taken in front of the convent. There are 80 students in the photograph along with 3 teaching Sisters and the pastor, Fr. Fridolin J. Hasler. Most of the people were able to be identified by Marie (Trabel) Hoffman (1911-2006), Rita (Trabel) Buescher (1921-1997), and Alvin J. Kleber (1920-1992). This 1930 photo is shown below along with the identities of the students provided by the above-mentioned sources.



Figure 89 - St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School Children, 1930

Subjects are named from left to right by rows, front to back.

Row 1: (14 students, front, sitting on the ground) - Luella Kleber, John E. Wyss, Steve Maldeney, Josephine Bubb, Gertie Sorg, Deloris Seiler, Carl Sorg, Donald Wyss, Daniel Muldoon, Joe Seiler, John Rorick, Joe Ottenweller, Claude Maldeney, & Lawrence Maldeney.

Row 2: (19 students, sitting on benches) - Mary Agnes Wyss, Dolly Sorg, Kathleen Sorg, Maryann Martin, Gertie Hake, Evelyn Sorg, Eileen Wyss, Vera Wyss, Esther Hake, Rita Trabel, Della Rauner, Marcella Berg, Rita Mae Kleinrichert, Duane Muldoon, Mary Ann Martin, Marge Wyss, Evelyn Rorick, Muriel Berg, & Lucille Berg.

Row 3: (12 students, sitting on benches) - Jerome Wyss, Norb Hake, _____ (Woodrow?) Martin, Harry Rauner, Ray Minnick (twin to Willard), Carl Ottenweller, Art Wyss, Emil Herber, Bill Rorick, Harold Minnick (brother to Florence), Bill Berg, & Delbert Sorg.

Row 4: (15 students, standing) - Paul Sorg, Earl Sorg, Devon Sorg, Herb Berg, Norb Herber, Dave Rorick, Walter Beckman, Alvin "Jonesy" Kleber, Delbert Muldoon, Walter Schershel, Herman Sorg, Aloysius Sorg, John Wyss, Cornelius "Jim" Kleber, & Bud Hake.

Row 5: (20 students, standing) - Mildred Wyss, Ruth Berg, Sally Sorg, Vera Kleber, Irene Hake, Auriella Bubb, Muriel Martin, Florence Minnick, Myrtle Rauner, Berneda Kleber, Dick Ottenweller, Jim Rorick, Norbert Fox, Louis Martin, Raymond Sorg, Clarence Hake, Joe Minnick, Willard Minnick, Norbert Martin, & Elmer Wyss.

Row 6: (4 adults, standing) - Sr. Rosemary, Sr. Fredricka, Sr. Hildegarde, & Fr. Fridolin J. Hasler.

It was possible to confirm and provide additional information about the above-mentioned students based on the parish sacramental book records, census records, and other county records as follows:

Row 1

1. Luella Kleber - born 1 February 1918 to William F. Kleber & Barbara J. Sorg
2. John E. Wyss - born 14 June 1919 to George H. Wyss & Isabella M. Sordelet
3. "Steve" Stephan Maldeney - born 4 March 1916 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy
4. Josephine Bubb - born 26 April 1922 to Andrew Bubb & Agnes C. Schmidt
5. "Gertie" Gertrude Sorg - born 22 July 1922 to Stephen R. Sorg & Florence C. Hake
6. Deloris Seiler - born circa 1922 to Joseph M. Seiler & Marie C. Deck
7. Carl/Karl Sorg - born 27 August 1923 to Leo A. Sorg & Mary S. Landstoffer
8. Donald Wyss - born 29 January 1922 to Andrew J. Wyss & Louise J. Hake
9. Daniel Muldoon - born 24 November 1922 to Walter H. Muldoon & Martha E. Fox
10. "Joe" Joseph Seiler - born 6 May 1923 to Joseph M. Seiler & Marie C. Deck
11. John Rorick - born 9 March 1922 to Nathan J. Rorick & Lilliosa M. Sorg
12. "Joe" Joseph Ottenweller - born 10 September 1922 to Frank H. Ottenweller & Rosa S. Sorg
13. Claude Maldeney - born 29 June 1920 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy

14. Lawrence Maldeney - born 5 August 1918 to Louis E. Maldeney & Josephine Bardy

Row 2

15. Mary Agnes Wyss - born 27 July 1921 to Celestine H. Wyss & Cecilia Suelzer
16. Dolly Sorg - born 13 November 1921 to Anthony G. Sorg & Catherine Harkenrider
17. Kathleen Sorg - born 4 April 1924 to Joseph A. Sorg & Louise Hergenroether
18. Maryann Martin - born circa 1923 to (Unverified)
19. "Gertie" Gertrude Hake - born 6 July 1923 to Bernard H. Hake & Agnes S. Hoevel
20. Evelyn Sorg - born 22 February 1924 to Laurence A. Sorg & Flora L. Till
21. Eileen Wyss - born 16 November 1923 to Andrew J. Wyss & Louise J. Hake
22. Vera Wyss - born 26 July 1919 to Clement F. Wyss & Clara G. Hake
23. Esther Hake - born 23 February 1920 to Bernard H. Hake & Agnes S. Hoevel
24. Rita Trabel - born 21 August 1921 to Christian Trabel & Mary A. Hartman
25. Della Rauner - born 31 March 1921 to Charles A. Rauner & Mary M. Wyss
26. Marcella Berg - born 25 July 1920 to Anthony F. Berg & Loretta E. Wyss
27. Rita Mae Kleinrichert - born 9 April 1921 to Alphonse Kleinrichert & Bernadette Fenker
28. Dewayne J. (girl) Muldoon - born 5 February 1919 to Frank W. Muldoon & Dora C. Fox
29. Mary Ann Martin - born 20 October 1919 to Louis C. Martin & Lucy J. Klein
30. "Marge" Marjorie Wyss - born 6 January 1920 to Andrew J. Wyss & Louise J. Hake
31. Evelyn Rorick - born 4 November 1919 to Nathan J. Rorick & Lilliosa M. Sorg
32. Muriel Berg - born 1 March 1919 to Anthony F. Berg & Loretta E. Wyss
33. Lucille Berg - born 21 October 1917 to Anthony F. Berg & Loretta E. Wyss

Row 3

34. Jerome Wyss - born 31 March 1918 to Andrew J. Wyss & Louise J. Hake
35. "Norb" Norbert Hake - born 20 May 1918 to Bernard H. Hake & Agnes S. Hoevel
36. Woodrow(?) Martin - born circa 1918 to Louis C. Martin & Lucy J. Klein
37. "Harry" Harold Rauner - born 28 December 1916 to Charles A. Rauner & Mary M. Wyss
38. Ray Minnick - born 19 November 1915 to William P. Münch/Minnick & Josephine M. Smith
39. Carl Ottenweller - born 8 May 1917 to Frank H. Ottenweller & Rosa S. Sorg
40. "Art" Arthur Wyss - born 3 March 1917 to Clement F. Wyss & Clara G. Hake
41. Emil Herber - born 14 September 1915 to George J. Herber & Loretta C. Sorg
42. "Bill" William Rorick - born 20 September 1915 to Nathan J. Rorick & Lilliosa M. Sorg
43. Harold Minnich - born 13 April 1917 to Louis A. Münch/Minnich & Carolyn J. Hoffman
44. "Bill" William Berg - born 1 March 1917 to Frank M. Berg & Caroline C. Schmidt
45. Delbert Sorg - born 10 April 1919 to Henry B. Sorg & Pauline E. Kintz

Row 4

46. Paul Sorg - born 17 February 1921 to Leo A. Sorg & Mary S. Landstoffer
47. Earl Sorg - born 16 February 1918 to Leo A. Sorg & Mary S. Landstoffer
48. Devon Sorg - born 8 July 1919 to Leo A. Sorg & Mary S. Landstoffer
49. "Herb" Herbert Berg - born 13 June 1920 to Frank M. Berg & Caroline C. Schmidt
50. "Norb" Norbert Herber - born 29 January 1921 to George J. Herber & Loretta C. Sorg
51. "Dave" David Rorick - born 10 September 1917 to Nathan J. Rorick & Lilliosa M. Sorg
52. Walter Beckman - born 11 January 1921 to Joseph B. Beckman & Alma M. Sorg
53. Alvin "Jonesy" Kleber - born 25 March 1920 to William F. Kleber & Barbara J. Sorg

54. Delbert Muldoon - born 10 June 1917 to Frank W. Muldoon & Dora C. Fox
55. Walter Scherschel - born 4 April 1916 to John J. Scherschall & Magdalena Sack
56. Herman Sorg - born circa 1920 to Andrew J. Sorg & Caroline C. Johnson
57. Aloysius V. Sorg - born 1921 to Andrew J. Sorg & Caroline C. Johnson
58. John F. Wyss - born 14 June 1920 to Celestine H. Wyss & Cecilia Suelzer
59. Cornelius "Jim" Kleber - born 16 October 1916 to William F. Kleber & Barbara J. Sorg
60. "Bud" Otto Hake - born 12 September 1916 to Otto G. Hake & Lucille M. Flemion

Row 5

61. Mildred Wyss - born 20 June 1918 to Clement F. Wyss & Clara G. Hake
62. Ruth Berg - born 24 February 1916 to Anthony F. Berg & Loretta E. Wyss
63. "Sally" Rosella Sorg - born 14 January 1916 to Henry Sorg & Frances Fox
64. Vera Kleber - born 20 June 1915 to William F. Kleber & Barbara J. Sorg
65. Irene Hake - born 24 January 1916 to Bernard H. Hake & Agnes S. Hoevel
66. Auriella Bubb - born 18 August 1916 to Andrew Bubb & Agnes C. Schmidt
67. Muriel Martin - born circa 1915 to (Unverified)
68. Florence Minnich - born 21 November 1915 to Louis A. Münch/Minnich & Carolyn J. Hoffman
69. Myrtle Rauner - born 21 July 1914 to Charles A. Rauner & Mary M. Wyss
70. Berneda Kleber - born 12 December 1913 to William F. Kleber & Barbara J. Sorg
71. "Dick" Richard Ottenweller - born 29 October 1914 to Frank H. Ottenweller & Rosa S. Sorg
72. "Jim" James Rorick - born 6 October 1913 to Nathan J. Rorick & Lilliosa M. Sorg
73. Norbert Fox - born 17 July 1914 to Alexander Fox & Mary Berg
74. Louis Martin - born circa 1914 to (Unverified)
75. Raymond Sorg - born 20 March 1915 to Henry B. Sorg & Pauline E. Kintz
76. Clarence Hake - born 3 December 1913 to Bernard H. Hake & Agnes S. Hoevel
77. "Joe" Joseph Minich - born 15 October 1915 to Joseph Münch/Minich & Katherine Berg
78. Willard Minnick - born 19 November 1915 to William P. Münch/Minnick & Josephine M. Smith
79. Norbert Martin - born 23 November 1922 to Peter H. Martin & Mayme M. Minnick
80. Elmer Wyss - born 13 August 1916 to Andrew J. Wyss & Louise J. Hake

Row 6

81. Sister Rosemary - Franciscan Sister of the Sacred Heart
82. Sister Fredricka - Franciscan Sister of the Sacred Heart
83. Sister Hildegard - Franciscan Sister of the Sacred Heart
84. Rev. Fridolin J. Hasler - Pastor, 1927-1934

Graduation Ceremonies

Besides the various whole-school photographs that show the students attending the Hessen Cassel school over the years, a few newspaper articles were found that listed the graduates for certain years. In the 27 June 1915 Fort Wayne newspaper, the following article appeared about the two graduates from Hessen Cassel school that year, namely Claudine Sorg and Irene Gibson, who entered the convent but died in 1918.¹⁷⁴



¹⁷⁴ "Graduates of St. Joseph's School, Hesse Cassel." Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, Sunday, 27 June 1915, page 2.

Also, the names of the seven students graduating from Hessen Cassel grade school in 1917 were published in the local newspapers.^{175,176} One of the articles reads as follows: “Seven senior students of the parochial school of the St. Joseph’s Catholic church, Hesse Cassel, who have just completed the grammar school course, will receive their diplomas at special graduating exercises to be held at St. Joseph’s Catholic church next Sunday, June 24. The Rev. Max Benzinger, pastor of the congregation, will confer the honors and distribute the diplomas. The members of the 1917 graduating class are Ivo Herber, Lawrence Hoffman, Russel Gibson, Elizabeth Herber, Elvie Wyss, Grace Bobay and Cecilia Minnick. Certificates for regular attendance during the past semester of nine and one-half months will be awarded to the following fifteen students of St. Joseph’s school: Ivo Herber and Elvie Wyss, eighth grade; Leander Trabel, Bernard Sorg, Philip Herber and Florence Wyss, of the seventh grade; Herman Sorg, of the sixth grade; Walter Herber, Marie Wyss and Henrietta Wyss, of the fifth grade; Clarence Trabel and Mable Wyss, of the third grade; Vincent Sorg and Arthur Sorg, of the second grade.” Most of the above-named students are present in the 1914 Class photo previously shown.

Another newspaper article was found for the 1919 graduating class of Hessen Cassel elementary school.¹⁷⁷ The following is extracted: “The graduation exercises of the Hesse Cassel school were held Sunday afternoon at 2:30 o’clock in the St. Joseph’s church. The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion with Rev. Max Benzinger [sic], pastor of the church, delivering the class address. The services closed with the benediction of the blessed sacrament. The members of the class were, Rose Beckman, Cecilia Hoffman, Marie Herber, Arthur Sorg, Walter Fox and Robert Boyle.”

The 1920 account of the Hessen Cassel school graduation ceremony is as follows.¹⁷⁸ “Conferring of diplomas on a class of eleven graduates was attended by impressive services Sunday afternoon at St. Joseph’s Catholic church, Hesse Cassel. Certificates of award for regular attendance during the scholastic year were also conferred on eighteen boys and girls. The children in procession were escorted from the school to the church by a group of little boys and girls dressed in white and carrying flowers. Rev. Max Benzinger, the zealous pastor, presented the honors and closed the services with benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. A large congregation was in attendance. Members of the class of 1920 receiving diocesan diplomas for the successful completion of the grammar school course are as follows: Boys – Walter Herber, Andrew Gibson, Roger Gibson. Girls – Marie Wyss, Armella Herber, Verba Wyss, Marie Hoffman, Bertha Maldeney, Olivia Schiffli, Henrietta Wyss and Josephine Fox. Eighteen students honored for regular attendance – Marie and Joseph Hoffman, Armella and Josephine Herber, Clarence and Marie Trabel, Henrietta and Bernice Wyss, Joseph, Dolores and

¹⁷⁵ “Hesse Cassel Graduation. Honors Will Be Conferred on Seven Graduates Sunday Afternoon.” Fort Wayne Sentinel, Wednesday, 20 Jun 1917, page 10.

¹⁷⁶ “Seven To Graduate. Will Receive Diplomas At St. Joseph’s Church, Hesse Cassel, Sunday.” Fort Wayne News, Wednesday, 20 June 1917, page 5.

¹⁷⁷ “Hesse Cassel School Graduates Six. Rev. Max Benzinger[sic] Delivers Appropriate Class Address.” Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, Tuesday, 1 July 1919.

¹⁷⁸ “Eleven Graduates Presented Diplomas. Rev. M. Benzinger Confers Honors on Sunday at Hesse Cassel.” Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, Tuesday, 29 June 1920, page 14.

Rosemary Berg, Vincent and Agnes Sorg, Marie, Mabel and Walter Wyss, Eugene Boyle and Angeline Smith. The Franciscan Sisters are engaged as teachers in St. Joseph's parish, Hesse Cassel."

Other yearly newspaper accounts of the graduating students at Hessen Cassel school after 1920 can probably be found, but are not included here.

Personal Accounts

John Ottenweller (1931-1990) wrote a detailed description of his experiences while attending the Hessen Cassel parochial grade school as a boy between the years of approximately 1940 to 1950.¹⁷⁹ "SCHOOL - One of the things I remember about my early years was the school bus. About 8 families organized and bought an old school bus. The dads would take their turn and drive it to pick up the children and go to Hessen Cassel grade school. Each family would drive it a week at a time then pass it on to the next family for their turn. It seemed to work out ok. I remember the school being 4 rooms. One room (the upstairs) for the 1-2-3 grades with Sister Doris as teacher. On the 1st floor was the 4-5-6 grades with Sister Rose Anna and the 7 & 8 teacher and principle was Sister Charlotte. They would teach one grade at a time and give the other two grades assignments to work on. We were allowed to lay our heads down on our desk and take a nap in the first grade. The other upstairs room was used for school meetings, bingo, and entertainment. Once we had a boxing match. I boxed Hank Sorg. That room was also where Santa (Herb Berg) would visit us. The playground was large with the boys and girls outhouses on it. We had a baseball field and another area beside the grave yard that someone put up 2 poles with crooked baskets on them. The ground was not very smooth for dribbling but we had fun. We did not have coaches or TV, so we would learn bad athletic habits. None of us were very good in high school. Our school day went something like this: Mass every morning, 20 minute recess about 10 a.m. then noon hour, and then dismissed about 3:20. We were very regimented when walking to and from church. We had 8 kids in class. The sisters had a cook sister named Sister Berth [sic] Marie and every day she would give a couple buckets like the karo pails to kids to bring them fresh milk. It seems she would give us a little candy when we brought her milk. For punishment, the sisters would give us sentences to write about 50 times. The sentence would usually be about the punishable thing we did. I remember Sister Doris hitting me across my fingers with a round stick made just for that, for something I did. I don't remember what, but I can still feel the sting, wow. I guess it was a pointer stick."

Another story about the school children of Hessen Cassel involves one of the former old parishioner, Christ Kleber (1849-1928).^{180,181} Many of the children in the area walked to school each day. Christ lived near the Hessen Cassel school, and liked to tease the children as they walked by his house. Sometimes Christ would stand along his fence holding a burlap bag and pocket knife, and he would threaten to cut off their ears and put them in his sack. He would also

¹⁷⁹ Ottenweller, John R. Memoirs of John R. Ottenweller (Fort Wayne, IN: typed, unpublished manuscript), May 1987. Copy retyped and in possession of Carl J. Kleber [R1034].

¹⁸⁰ Robert and Luella (Kleber) Offerle, Interview, 28 February 1982 (R486)

¹⁸¹ Carl J. Sorg, Interview, Story of run-away horses as told to him by Albert Wyss, 31 December 1994, (R1186)

tell the boys on their way to school that, if they didn't behave in school, he was going to put them in his wagon and ship them off to Buffalo. Many of the local Hessen Cassel school children were very afraid of old Christ Kleber, and they would walk on the opposite side of the road as they passed his house. However, one day some of the older school boys played a prank on Christ as he drove a team of horses pulling a mudslide loaded with firewood. Christ stopped his horses to tease the boys on their way home from school. One of the school boys, Herman Sorg (1905-1994), cracked the horses on the butt and they took off running with the load of wood. The boys all laughed as they watched Christ chase after his runaway team of horses. However, Christ did not think that it was a funny matter at all. So, the next day he cornered and spanked each one of them as they left school to go home.

The Hessen Cassel School Bus

Before the advent of automobiles, the children of the parish attending the St. Joseph grade school either walked to school, rode a horse, or were taken in a horse and buggy by their parents. In fact, there were emergency dormitory rooms at the convent for students to spend the night if they were unable to get back home from school due to inclement weather. Around 1940, a number of parish families who resided on farms that were not within walking distance to the school, pooled their resources and purchased an old school bus or truck that they converted into a makeshift bus. The father of each family took turns driving the school bus for one week at a time. Families were assessed for gas and maintenance according to the number of children riding the bus. The bus would begin picking up the children along the route at around 7 a.m. in order to get all the students to school in time for 8 a.m. Mass every morning. This bus had a "stop" arm that could be swung out to stop traffic while picking up students. It also had a horn. A wire inside the bus was pulled in order to sound the horn, which sounded like a chicken. For this reason, the school kids called the bus the "Chickie Hack". In many ways, the bus did resemble a chicken coop on wheels. Some photographs of this Hessen Cassel school bus taken around 1945 are shown in Figures 90 - 93.¹⁸² Alphonse "Alex" Sorg (1895-1973) is the bus driver in the photos with his children in back seats. Besides the Alphonse "Alex" & Virginia Sorg family, the Chester & Caroline (Beckman) Minnich family and likely Frank & Rose (Sorg) Ottenweller family, and others, utilized the "Chickie Hack" to transport their many little chicks back and forth to Hessen Cassel School.

¹⁸² Photographs and information courtesy of Jean (Lewis) Roy, 2014.



Figure 91 – The Hessen Cassel family school bus, called the “Chickie Hack”, c. 1945



Figure 90 – Alphonse “Alex” Sorg servicing the “Chickie Hack” family school bus, c. 1945



Figure 92 – Hessen Cassel family school bus; driver – Alphonse Sorg & children Helene, Russell, and Ron Sorg.



Figure 93 – Alphonse “Alex” Sorg, family driver for the Hessen Cassel school bus, c. 1945

Commercial High School

In 1913, the State of Indiana enacted a law requiring compulsory school attendance until the age of 16 years old. In many Catholic parishes, the existing grade school was expanded to include some or all high school grades.¹⁸³ A two-year commercial high school, which offered business training in typing, short-hand, filing, etc., was started at Hessen Cassel in the 1920's in order to educate students until they turned 16. Otherwise, they would need to attend high school in Fort Wayne, which was both expensive and inconvenient.

The Hessen Cassel commercial high school was located upstairs in the old school house where the nuns had resided before moving to their new convent in 1923.¹⁸⁴ The exact years that it was in operation is not definitely established. However, an existing report card originally belonging to Dolores E. Berg (1910-2001) for the 1925-1926 school year discloses the courses that were being taught in the commercial high school class at Hessen Cassel.¹⁸⁵ They included Christian doctrine, commercial arithmetic, commercial law, business English, business spelling, bookkeeping, shorthand, and typewriting. The commercial high school teacher at Hessen Cassel was Sister M. Huberta. Dolores was an excellent student and graduated with a 98.8% average for all courses. In addition to her commercial school graduation diploma, she received award diplomas for Palmer, bookkeeping, and attendance, as well as certificates for Gregg shorthand, theory, artistic and proficient typewriting. She also earned bronze and silver medals for typewriting, being able to type accurately 60 words per minute.

A letter dated 8 March 1927 from Josephine Herber, a commercial high school student, provides some description of the school program at Hessen Cassel.¹⁸⁶ Relevant portions are: ... Today I'll bet I took down about 150 letters and stories more or less at 100 and more words a minute. Sometimes and more than once we, Bernie and I, went 125. Gee! that just about cracks our brains and strains our muscles in our right arm. Smitty and Ed tried their eighty words, but didn't make it. Art & Kermit made their "hundred word" yesterday. Bernie & I made ours in February... Sister Huberta just had the best darn humors yesterday and today. I'll type this letter, but we have to type in free time in order to catch up with the boys. They bought in English tablet of 100 Exercises and we girls type them instead of buying them at 60 cents. Smitty's clear behind in typing them and she gets just so mad. I'm getting pretty dog-goned tired, so I believe

¹⁸³ White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2007); Central High Schools, pages 230-231.

¹⁸⁴ Hoffman, Ervin. "Interview Regarding the Commercial High School at Hessen Cassel", 6 January 2015; notes in possession of Carl Kleber. [R1434]

¹⁸⁵ Berg, Dolores E. "Report of Work Completed in Commercial Class, St. Joseph School, Hessen Cassel, Indiana, 1925-1926; Original document in possession of John Schreiber, 2015.

¹⁸⁶ Herber, Josephine. "Letter to Miss Marie Trabel, R. 12, Fort Wayne, Ind.", dated 8 March 1927; original document in possession of Ervin Hoffman, parishioner, 2015. [R1434]

I'll sign off... Well! it's just like this: I'm just so sleepy I can't hold myself. I have to learn my Catechism. We moved benches again yesterday, and now I have to recite first. That's pretty aggravating. We've always got 2 pages...

The letter writer, Josephine Herber (born 1911; daughter of Fred Herber & Mary Wyss), would have been 16 years old at this time in 1927, which confirms she is attending the commercial school program at Hessen Cassel. Some of her classmates mentioned in the letter are most likely Arthur Hoffman (born 1911) and Gertrude Hoffman (born 1913), children of Frank & Gertrude (Wyss) Hoffman; Kermit Bubb (born 1911); Donald Ottenweller (born 1913); girl Smitty (Smith); girl Bernie (possibly Bernadine Herber, born 1911, daughter of George Herber & Loretta Sorg); and boy Ed. Thus, at least 8 students are enrolled in the program and their teacher is Sr. Huberta. Other students known to have attended the commercial high school at St. Joseph parish school in Hessen Cassel, IN are the aforementioned Dolores Berg (born 1910), and Clarence (born 1908) and Marie (born 1911) Trabel, children of Christ & Mary (Hartman) Trabel.

It is not known when the commercial high school at Hessen Cassel was discontinued, but it was probably around the time that the new Central Catholic High School opened in 1939. The 1936 financial report for St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish lists income of \$68 for "Commercial Dues", which may have been tuition paid by the pupils.

Chapter 21 – Early Church Worship Practices

The most important act of Catholic worship has always been the celebration of Mass by a priest. And the basic obligation of all Catholics was to attend Mass each Sunday and on designated Holy Days. However, due to the scarcity of priests and churches in Northeast Indiana during the 1830's and 1840's, it was impossible for most Catholics at that time to faithfully fulfill their religious obligation. And this was the case with the Catholic families residing in the Hessen Cassel community. It appears that the missionary priests were lucky to visit them once a month from about 1840 through 1860. As noted earlier, the first Masses held at the Hessen Cassel community were reportedly conducted outdoors by the Fort Wayne missionary priests with a tree stump serving as the altar. Thereafter, Mass was held periodically in the local homes of John Sorg, John Smith and Sebastian Klüber/Kleber until the parish was officially organized and a log church built in 1841.

A brief glimpse into some of the early religious activities (c.1850-1853) at the Hessen Cassel church was provided in the previously-mentioned letter from Johannes Sorg (1813-1856) and his wife, M. Elisabetha Schmidt (1813-1904) to the first Brother-Teacher at Hessen Cassel, Brother Matthias (John L. Koch), on 16 April 1853.¹⁸⁷ Pertinent excerpts include the following:

“Dear Brother! I must really let you know that ever since you left we have no real order in church anymore among our children. Also the learning, as you can easily imagine, is going badly because the words of the parents don't make as big an impression as the words of the teacher...It is over for this year, for nobody is concerned about it. Our pastor (Fr. Schultes, then stationed in Decatur, IN) also does nothing because he, as you yourself know, has had too much trouble with the stubborn ones that we have among us. So for this year then we must be content, and do for our children what we can, and leave it up to dear God. I must let you know that we had a beautiful procession on St. Joseph's Day (March 19, 1853) with our new banner. Everything was fine, except you were missing and were not with the poor children to keep them in order. There is yet more disorder in our parish. We only have a mere two more Mass servers, also still only two who want to pray the rosary, namely Johann Sorg and Johann Andres (= Andrews). All the rest have excluded themselves from it and none afterwards become trained in return. When you were still with us, the prayer service then lasted too long for many. Now when the poor little ones pray, they make it too short. Also they are not allowed to pray more than the rosary and the litany to the Blessed Mother. After that they are not allowed to pray further unless it is sung, because then comes old Herber and teaches his old prayers again, which we likewise must not look down upon. However, the little ones by no means let themselves be driven away from their rosary, because you have left them the memory. We have lost still more

¹⁸⁷ Letter addressed to: Mr. Matthias, Brother (religious name taken by John L. Koch); St. Aloysius Orphan Asylum, Cincinnati, Ohio; postmarked Fort Wayne, Ind., April 16, 1853. (Original in possession of Dr. Walter J. Rissing family; copy in possession of Carl J. Kleber).

dear Brother! Since you have left us, the evening devotions during Lent were the first and the May devotions will be the second, and still much more which I cannot fully express...

And for Eduart it is indeed often his wish to be with you. We had to take little Johann to Dieketer (=Decatur) in order to make his first Holy Communion because it is too troublesome for our pastor to do it in Hessenkassel (=Hessen Cassel) solely for this one.”

German and English

The Catholic Mass in the 19th and most of the 20th century was conducted in Latin, the “universal language”, using the same standard rituals followed in all Catholic churches throughout the world. However, the sermons and religious instructions were typically given in the native language of the parishioners, which in the case of Hessen Cassel was German. Although the Hessen Cassel parish was initially comprised solely of German immigrants, some Irish Catholic families, notably the four Muldoon brothers and their two sisters (i.e. the Hart and Cody families), were also early members of the parish. The Muldoon brothers and John Hart signed pledges in the first church book to support the fledgling parish on 26 November 1843, just two years after it was established. These Irish people were readily accepted by the German Catholic parishioners, which demonstrates that their common religious faith was more important than any cultural differences. The fact that the Mass and many other religious services were commonly held in Latin made all cultures feel somewhat “at home” in any Catholic Church throughout the world. Although the sermons at the Hessen Cassel parish were in most cases given in the German language, sermons in English were also given. Evidence of dual language sermons can be found mentioned in the newspapers of the time. For example, in the 9 September 1887 issue of the Fort Wayne *Daily Gazette* the following was printed: “At the Catholic church, at Hesse Cassel, Marion township, Bishop Dwenger preached yesterday in the English and German languages and administered the rite of confirmation to forty-six persons.”¹⁸⁸

Even as late as 1909, dual-language sermons were occurring at Hessen Cassel, as noted in a local newspaper article.¹⁸⁹ “In observance of the feast of St. Joseph, high mass was celebrated this morning in all the Catholic churches. In the parochial schools short programs appropriate to the feast were given by the students. The day being the patronal feast of St. Joseph’s church at Hesse Cassel the morning service was particularly impressive. Solemn high mass was celebrated at 10 o’clock, the pastor, Rev. Max Benzinger, being assisted by the visiting clergy. Rev. Ignace Zircher, of Goodland, Ind., **delivered the German sermon** for the occasion and Rev. M. P. Louen, pastor at Besancon, **spoke in English**. At noon Father Benzinger entertained his clerical guests at dinner. Among those present were Rev. Charles Thiele, Rev. Michael Aichinger, Rev. James Durham, of this city; Rev. M.P. Louen, of Besancon; Rev. Ignace Zircher, of Goodland;

¹⁸⁸ “City News”. *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, Friday, 9 September 1887, page 4.

¹⁸⁹ “Feast Day Observance. Special Services Held This Morning in Catholic Churches”. *Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel*, 19 March 1909, page 5.

Rev. John Beiderman, of Nix Settlement; Rev. Theo. Wilken and Rev. George Angermeier, of Decatur.”

The Irish Catholic and German Catholic families of Hessen Cassel socialized and inter-married quite early, and they undoubtedly learned to speak each other’s language. The dual German and Irish heritages at Hessen Cassel were celebrated by placing statues of the patron saints of each nation in the Hessen Cassel church on 21 May 1903. An article about this event appeared in the local newspaper.¹⁹⁰ It reads as follows:

“Two handsome statues of St. Patrick and St. Boniface were dedicated at St. Aloysius [sic – really St. Joseph] Catholic church in Hesse Cassel yesterday, and the ceremonies were attended by a large number of people, a number being from this city. The services were conducted by the pastor, Rev. Max Benzinger, assisted by visiting clergy. The members of Father Benzinger’s flock are of Irish and German birth and descent and the placing of the statues of the first saint of Ireland and Germany was highly pleasing to the members of the congregation. Rev. H. J.F. Kroll, of St. Paul’s church, and Rev. Thomas Eisenring, C. P.P. S., of St. Joseph’s chapel, this city, attended the ceremonies.”

With the outbreak of World War I (1914-1918), the strong anti-German sentiment in America lead to the discontinuance of the German language in the Hessen Cassel church and school. No longer is there any mention of sermons given in both German and English. For example, the following mention of the 40 hours devotion at Hessen Cassel in a 13 September 1923 newspaper reads as follows.¹⁹¹ “Solemn closing of the devotion of 40 hours at St. Joseph’s Catholic church, Hessen Cassel, of which Rev. Max Benzinger is pastor, took place Tuesday evening. Nine priests participated in the services, which were attended by a congregation that exceeded the seating capacity. Rev. Matthew Helmig, C. PP. S., a well-known Precious Blood missionary, with headquarters in this city, conducted the devotion. “The Holy Eucharist” was the topic of his sermon.”

Over the years, the Fort Wayne newspapers reported sporadically on various religious activities occurring at the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish. One of the earliest articles was on 18 December 1875, in which the *Sentinel* reported the amount of money actually given by each Catholic Church in the diocese for the annual papal collection.¹⁹² Hesse Cassel parish collected \$32.63 for the “Peter’s Pence”, compared to \$166 at the Cathedral, \$80 at St. Mary’s, \$42 at St. Paul’s, and \$21 at St. Peter’s in Fort Wayne.

¹⁹⁰ “Statues Dedicated” *Fort Wayne Sentinel*, 22 May 1903, page 2.

¹⁹¹ “Solemnity in Hessen Cassel Parish Closed” *Fort Wayne Gazette*, 13 September 1923, page 2.

¹⁹² “Papal Collections” *Fort Wayne Sentinel*, 18 December 1875.

The celebration of a child's First Holy Communion was always a major event at the parish. The Communicants all dressed up in their finest clothes and would process into the church. Photos of the 1912 First Communion ceremony are shown in Figures 94 to 96.



Figure 94 – First Communion at Hessen Cassel, 1912.



Figure 96 - First Communion at Hessen Cassel, 1912.



Figure 95 - First Communion at Hessen Cassel, 1912.

First Holy Communions (1899 - 1947)

A record of the children at St. Joseph Church Hessen Cassel making their First Holy Communion each year was not started in the church books until 1899. For centuries, Catholic children did not typically receive their First Holy Communion until they were 12 or 13 years old, and only after first receiving the sacrament of Confirmation by the Bishop. However, in 1910, by the decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments, Pope Pius X lowered the age for receiving Holy Communion to six or seven in order to promote more frequent reception of Holy Communion by Catholics.¹⁹³ Thereafter, children received the sacrament of Holy Communion first, followed by the sacrament of Confirmation by the Bishop some time afterwards.

This change in church policy is reflected in the lists of first communicants recorded in the Hessen Cassel church book. For each year from 1899 through 1910, the Holy Communion lists, prepared by Fr. Maximilan Benzinger, the pastor, contain the names of parish children within the 12- to 14-year-old age range. Then in 1911, all the school children of the parish made their First Holy Communion. A special “Easter Communion for the little ones” [38 of them] was held on 14 May 1911, followed 2 weeks later on 28 May 1911 by an Easter Communion for 20 middle-aged children. Then 2 weeks later, on 11 June 1911, the 10 older children that would have normally made their first communion did so. It appears that this traditional time for the older students to make their First Communion coincided with their graduation from the parish grade school. In fact, despite the change in church policy, the traditional celebration of Holy Communion at graduation time was maintained by the parish, but it was now referred to as “Solemn Holy Communion”. Thus, students progressing through the parish school would make their “First Holy Communion”, which was held every other year (when they were in Grades 1 to 3), and then also make their “Solemn Holy Communion”, which was held yearly at the time of graduation from grade school. This custom took place up until 1928, when Fr. F. J. Hasler became the pastor. He put a stop to this practice and noted “The first holy Communion shall also be solemn Communion, because it is the first holy Communion, why then again after 3 – 4 years with solemn Communion and have twist [sic - twice] the Expenses for the Parents. The Holy Father does not speak of solemn, but of first holy Communion!” With this change in policy, only the second grade students made their first Communion each year and the Solemn Communion was discontinued.

Figure 97 shows the “First Holy Communion” certificate of Luise Catharina Trabel dated 30 May 1915 and signed by Max Benzinger, Pastor of St. Joseph’s Church Hessen Cassel. On the document, Fr. Benzinger inserted the word “Solemn” in front of the typed words “First Holy Communion” in order to designate that this was not her actual First Communion. Louise Trabel was 13 years old at this time. The church records show that she had actually made her First

¹⁹³ White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ : a History of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend : Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Diocese and Catholic Life in Northern Indiana. (Fort Wayne, Ind. : The Diocese, 2007), see pages 220-224.

Holy Communion on 14 May 1911 after the change in church policy was implemented with regard to lowering the age to 6 or 7. Louise was 8 years old at the time and was brought in under the new rules.

The first Communion lists for the years 1899 to 1947 are provided below, and supplement the names of the grade school children previously shown in the Class photographs. In fact, they probably represent a more complete listing of all the parish children, since not all of them attended the parish school due to distance and travel difficulties. Some of the lists also provide the name of the child's father in order to distinguish among students with the same surnames. Some fathers had the notation "+ river", which indicates that they resided across the river from the parish. In some cases the child's age is provided. The spellings of all names in the lists are as they appear in the original church records. Fr. Maximilian Benzinger recorded the First Communions for the years 1899 through 1927.

Beginning in 1911, he maintained separate lists for the "Little Children" actually receiving their First Holy Communion and the older students making their traditional Solemn Communion. Fr. Hasler became Pastor in 1928 and recorded the list of communicantes from then through 1935. There were no first communion classes for the years 1929 and 1934. From 1936 through 1939 Rev. J. Baker was the recording pastor, followed by Fr. Charles Seeberger from 1940 through 1947.

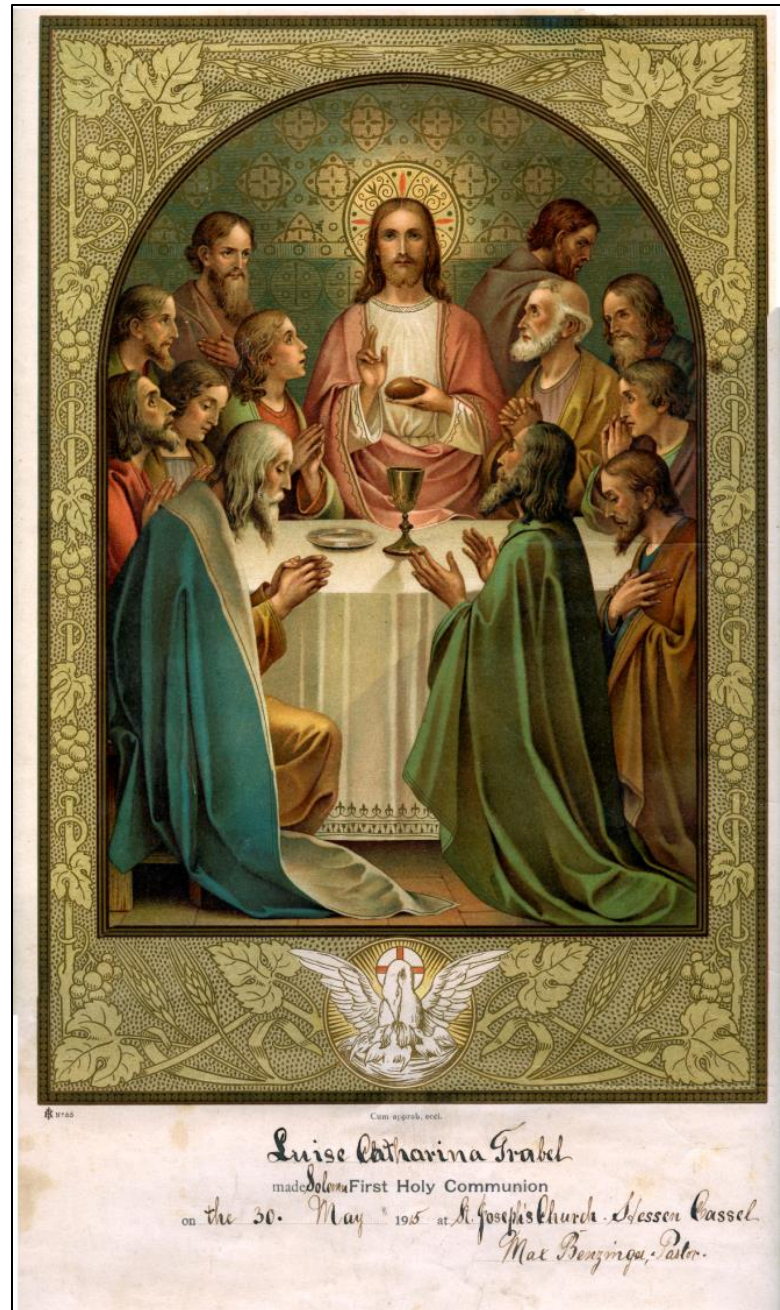


Figure 97 – "Solemn" First Holy Communion Certificate for Louise Trabel, 30 May 1915, St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church.

11 June 1899	21 June 1903	10 June 1906	19 June 1910
Rosa Berg	Clemence (Anton) Berg	Clemence Philip Fuchs	Mary Agnes Josephine Blee
Coelestina Josepha Bubb	Bertha Mary Dodane	Louise Jane Hake	Edna Felicia Bobay
Franziscus Gibson	Katharina Frances Gerlein	Barney Frank Herber	Dorothea Catharina Fuchs (Alex)
Georgius Hacke	Clemence Andrew Gibson	Ambrose John Herber	Mary Gibson
Otto Hacke	Frank (Isadore) Herber	Alma Elisabetha Herber	Andrew Johnnie Hartmann
Elisabetha Hoffmann	William Frederick Kleber	Clemence Frank Münch	Leo John Herber
Franziscus Kleiver	Martha Frances Landstroffer	Lillian Ethel Münch	Anna Isabella Muldoon
Carolus Gregor Muldoon	Bertha Barbara Miller	Beatrice Elenora Ottenweller	Edward Adam Münch
Archibaldus Marcellus Rauner	Edward Henry Minnick	Charles Sack	Henry Simon Renninger
Mary Rauner	Frank Walter Muldoon	Roman Joseph Schmidt	Lawrence Sorg
Antonius Sack	Edith Scholastica Münch	Leo Anton Sorg	Stephen Sorg
Elisabetha Sack	Jacob John Sack	Henry Nickolaus Wyss	Bertha Josephine Sorg
Clara Sack	Otto Anton Schmidt	Barney Frank Wyss	Joseph Chester Wies
Gertrudis Veronica Schmidt	Johanna Barbara Sorg	Helena Mary Zuber	Rosalia Gertrude Wyss
Caecilia Sorg	Barbara Josephina Sorg		
Carolina Sorg	Theodora Katharina Sorg	16 June 1907	14 May 1911
Regina Maria Sorg	Georg (Henry) Wyss		(For Little Ones)
Liliosa M. M. Sorg	Loretta (Elisabetha) Wyss	Stephan Emanuel Barva	
Barbara Sorg	Albert M. Zuber	Lillian Josephine Dodane	Philip Beckmann
Clemens Wyss		Julia Ludvina Flemion	Grace Bobay
Antonius Zuber	19 June 1904	Edith Gertrude Kleber	Mary Fuchs (Alex)
		Hermann Mark Muldoon	Clarence Fuchs (Henry)
24 June 1900	Joseph Bernard Beckmann	Ollie John Muldoon	Ellen Fuchs (Henry)
	Aloysius Jacob Hake	Bertha Elisabetha Münch	Walter Gibson (Ed. G)
Friedericus Rudolph Beckmann	Friedrick Michael Herber	Reinold John Sorg	Russel Gibson (Henry jr.)
Rosa Agnes Gibson	Maria Bernadette Herber	Mathilda Maria Sorg	Emmet Gibson (Henry W)
Gertrude Clara Hake	Cora Viola Catharina Miller	Francis Sylvester Wyss	Florence Hake (Henry)
Gertrude Caecilia Herber	John Frank Münch (John)	Hugo Nickolaus Zuber	Max Herber
Rosa Margaretha Hoffmann	Bernadette Agatha Ottenweller		Elisabeth Herber (Ant.)
Johann Jacob Münch	Charles Anton Rauner	21 June 1908	Oscar Hoffmann
Helena Dorothea Schmidt (John's)	Maria Mathilda Wyss		Ursula Hoffmann (Georg)
David Anton Sorg	Rosa Agnes Wyss	Mary Beckmann	Bertha Hoffmann (Georg)
Clara Katharina Wyss		Loretta Florence Bobay	Robert Hoy
	18 June 1905	Fred Joseph Fuchs (Alexander)	Francis Lallack
30 June 1901		Ambrose Michael Gibson	Walter Miller
	John (age 16) Barva	Reinhard Anton Herber (Fred)	Walter Muldoon
Mary Landstroffer	Mathilda Barva	Esther Johanna Herber (John)	Clarence Münch
Alfred Münch	Loretta Lucia Bubb	Arnold Benedict Kleinrichert	Clemence Münch
Mathilda Sack	Lena Loretta Dodane	Silvester Henry Münch (Frank)	Elmer Münch
Loretta Sorg	Henry Anton Fuchs (Alexander)	Alphonse Henry Sorg (Anton)	Chester Münch
Andrew Wyss	Elenora Gerlein	Augusta Maria Sorg (Henry)	Earl Münch
	Leo Aloysius Gibson (Henry Senior)	Bernadetta Maria Sorg (Melchior)	Clara Münch (Frank)
15 June 1902	Andrew Jacob Hake	Johann Fred Wyss (John)	Virginia Münch (Wm.)
	Alphons Henry Kleinrichart	Franzisca Zuber	Genofeva Schmidt
Frank Wilhelm Beckmann	Andrew Francis Muldoon (Elliot)		Urban Sorg
Alma Stella Dodane	Albert Joseph Münch (Julian)	6 June 1909	Walter Sorg (Georg)
Clara Maria Hake	Fred Julian Münch (son of Henry)		Alice Sorg (Georg)
Johann Benjamin Herber	Franzisca Katharina Sorg (Anton)	Francis Catherine Hake	Louisa Trabel
Frank Hermann Ottenweller	Rosa Sophia Sorg (Charles)	Blancha Josephine Herber	Elisabeth Westrick
Joseph Anton Sorg	Anna Henrietta Sorg (John)	William Hoy	Viola Wyss (Frank)
Coelestine Henry Wyss	Leona Sorg (Theodor)	Mary Magdalena Miller	Albert Wyss (John)
Reinhard Frank Zuber	Stella Gertrude Wyss (Frank junior)	Mary Bertha Muldoon	Velma Wyss (Nick)
Karl John Zuber		Clarence Münch (Henry)	Philip Wyss (Wm.)
		Aloysius Michael Sorg (John +Riv.)	Silvester Wyss (Wm.)
		Maria Elisabeth Sorg (Theodore)	Georg Zuber
		Joseph Sylvester Westrick	Mary Zuber
		Gerhard Julian Wyss (Nicklaus)	

28 May 1911 (For Class II)	1 June 1912 (Little Children)	22 June 1913 (Solemn Communion)	30 May 1915 (Solemn Communion)
Clementina Barva	Andrew Fuchs	Regina Margaretha Beckmann	Walter Gibson
Regina Beckmann	Andrew Gibson	Edward Flemion	Irena Gibson
Anna Blee	Ivo Herber	Margaretha Freiburger	Florence Hake
Elsie Bobay	Philip Herber	Maria Fuchs (Alexander)	Caecilia Gertrude Hartmann
Edward Flemion	Lawrence Hoffmann	Andrew Fuchs (Henry's)	Bertha Hoffmann
Florence Flemion	Arthur Miller	Aloysius Jacob Hoffmann (Frank's)	Anton Miller
Margaretha Freiburger	Joseph Mouldeny	Clemence Joseph Münch (Henry's)	Velma Minnick (Julian)
Hubert Fuchs	Charles Muldoon	Elmer Levy Münch (Joseph's)	Irena Minnick (Julian)
Irena Gibson	Leo Münch	Chester Albert Münch (Wms.)	Leo Münch
Sebastian Hake	Frank Münch	Salina Schmidt	Bernard Henry Norman Schmidt
Clarence Hartmann	Cecilia Münch	Maria Magdalena Sorg (Anton's)	Claudina Dorothea Sorg (Anton)
Benjamin Hartmann	Norman Schmidt	Andrew Sorg (Georg's)	Alice Sorg (Georg)
Robert Herber	Arthur Sorg	Clarence Ignatius Wyss (Frank's)	Louise Trabel
Karl Herber	Charles Sorg	Emma Maria Wyss (Wm's)	Viola Wyss (Frank)
Aloysius Hoffmann	Frank Sorg	Georg Zuber	Albert Wyss (John B)
Mary Ottenweller	Leander Trabel		Velma Wyss (Nickl.)
Salina Schmidt	Elfa Wyss	21 June 1914 (Solemn Communion)	Philip Raymond Wyss (Wm)
Magdalena Sorg	Marcella Zuber		Mary Suzanna Zuber
Claudina Sorg (Ant.)			
Andrew Sorg (Georg)	23 June 1912	Elsie Bobay	11 June 1916 (Solemn Communion)
Coletta Sorg (Henry)		Florence Flemion	
Leonard Sorg (John)	Clementine Barva	Clarence Fuchs (Henry)	
Alma Sorg (Melchior)	Anna Blee	Bernard (Benj.) Hartmann	Grace Bobay
Olivia Sorg (Melchior)	Hubert Fuchs	Oscar Francis Hoffmann	Ellen Fox
Hildegard Sorg (Theod)	Sebastian Hake	Walter Henry Muldoon (Eliott)	Max Herber
Henry Wyss	Clarence Hartmann	Clara Münch (Frank +)	Ivo Herber
Clarence Wyss	Karl Joseph Herber	Virginia Magdalena Münch (Wm)	Ursula Hoffmann
Bertha Wyss	Robert Herber	Coletta Anna Sorg (Henry)	Francis Lallack
Esther Wyss (Nic.)	Walter C. Miller	Leonard Sorg (John's)	Edna Minnick
Alice Wyss (Wm.)	Clarence Frank Münch	Olivia Sorg (Melchior)	Joseph Mouldeny
Emma Wyss (Wm.)	Earl Münch	Henry Wyss (John B.)	Geneveva Schmidt
	Mary Ottenweller		Walter Sorg
11 June 1911	Earl Schick	13 May 1915 (Little Children)	Urban Sorg (Henry's)
	Alma Sorg (Melchior)		Sylvester Wyss
Carolina Katharina Beckmann	Hildegard Sorg (Theodort)		Elfe Wyss
Arthur Aloysius Bobay	Bertha Wyss (John)	Robert Boyle	
Joseph Alexander Fuchs (Henry)	Esther Wyss (Nicklaus)	Walter Fox	
Josephina Edna Herber (John)	Alice M. Wyss (Wm.)	Frank Hartmann	
Earl Elmer Münch (Henry)		Walter Herber	
Clara Maria Münch (Julian)	18 May 1913 (Little Children)	Armella Herber	
Monica Carolina Sorg (Henry)		Hermann Hoffmann	
Albert Daniel Sorg (John +Rive)		Maria Hoffmann	
Aloysius John Wyss (Frank)	Rosa Beckmann	William Miller	
Melinda Anna Zuber	Lawrence Joseph Bobay	Agnes Minnick	
	Ida Fuchs (Henry)	Bertha Mouldeny	
	Rodger Coelestine Gibson (Henry jr.)	Olivia Schiffl	
	Marie Herber (Anton)	Joseph Wyss	
	Caecilia Hoffmann (Frank)	Maria Wyss	
	Emma Mouldeny	Verba Wyss	
	Arnold Otto Joseph Münch (Wm.)	Henrietta Wyss	
	Velma Schmidt (Henry)		
	Silvester Schmidt (John jr.)		
	Raymond Henry Joseph Sorg (Georg)		
	Bernard Sorg (Henry B +River)		
	Florence Wyss (John)		
	Raymond Wyss (Wm.)		

7 June 1917 (Little Children)	16 June 1918 (Solemn Communion)	3 May 1920 (Little Children)	11 June 1922 (Solemn Communion)
Joseph Berg	Rose Josephine Beckmann	Kermit Henry Bubb 8	Joseph Frank Berg
Eugene Boyle	Lawrence Bobay	Raymond Fox (Alex) 10	Eugene Charles Boyle
Evelyna Bubb	Walter Rudolph Fox (Alex)	Josephina Herber (Fred) 8	Eveline Magdalena Bubb
Josephina Flemion	Frank Jacob Hartmann	Bernardine Herber (G.) 8	Wilma Clara Hak 14 years old
Josephina Fox (Alex)	Philip J. Herber	Josephina Hoffmann (G.) 10	Joseph Franklin Hak 16 years old
Marcellina Herber (Georg)	Hermann Hoffmann	Arthur Hoffmann 9	Marcellina Catharina Herber (George)
Joseph Hoffmann	Wm. Joseph Miller	Edward Moldeney 9	Joseph John Hoffmann
Fayma Kleber	Agnes Catherine Minnich (Joe)		Fayma Gertrude Kleber
Lucile Miller	Clara Gertrude Minnick (Henry)	20 June 1920 (Solemn Communion)	Esther Mary Münch
Frances Mouldeney	Joseph Ant. Sylvester Schmidt		Catherine Mary Rohrick
Clementina Münch (Frank +)	Velma Mary Schmidt		Elmer George Scherschel
Clara Münch (Henry's)	Hermann Joseph Sorg (George's)	Josephina Fox (Alex)	Arthur John Sorg
Esther Münch (Joe)	Bernard J. Sorg (H.B. Sorg)	Edward Arthur Hartmann	
Catharina Schiffli	Arthur Frank Sorg (Henry's)	Armella Georgiana Herber (Fred)	31 May 1923 (Little Children)
Genevefa Schiffli	Frank W. Sorg (John's)	Mary Hoffmann (Fr.)	
Louis Schmidt	Charles Sorg (John's)	Clementina M. Minnich	
Henry Schmidt (Henry)	Raymond Philip Wyss	Louis Schmidt	Lavon Berg
Frances Serschel		Henry Schmidt	Alexander Fox
Arthur Sorg (G.)	29 May 1919 (Little Children)	Henrietta Agnes Wyss (Wm.)	Norbert Fox
Wilbert Sorg (H.)		Frank Robert Zuber	Marcellus Gibson
Vincent Sorg (Henry B.)			Clarence Hake
Clarence Trabel	Dolores Berg 8	19 June 1921 (Solemn Communion)	John Hartmann
Bernice Wyss (H.)	Jennings Bubb 9		Aloysius Herber (G.)
Mabel Wyss (John B.)	Clara Fox (Alex) 11		Berneda Kleber (Wm's)
Frank Zuber	Anna Fox (Henry's) 11	Clara Fox (Alex)	Andrew Minnick
	Catharina Herber (Georg's) 9	Anna Fox (H.)	Elmer Moldeney
17 June 1917 (Solemn Communion)	Ena Kleber 8	Lucile Miller	Marie Moldeney
Philip Henry Beckmann	Loretta Münch (Henry's) 11	Frances Mouldeney	Richard Ottenweller
Edith Mary Fox (Henry)	Mary Münch (Joseph's) 8	Loretta Münch (H.)	Donald Ottenweller
Emmet Gibson (H senior)	Catharina Rohrick 10	Catharina Schiffli	Myrtle Rauner
Lawrence Guy Gibson (Hd.)	Mary Rohrick 9	Geneveve Schiffli	James Rohrick
Elisabetha Herber (Anton)	Angelina Schmidt (Henry) 8	Wilbert Sorg	Raymond Sorg
Wilhelm John Kruse	Agnes Sorg (Henry B.) 8	Vincent H. Sorg (Henry B. Sorg's)	Harold Sorg (H.)
Caecilia B. Minnick (Wm.)	Mary Trabel 7	Clarence Trabel	Thomas Sweeny
Emma Mary Moldeney	Walter Wyss (John B.) 9	Mabel Wyss	
Charles Isidor Muldoon (Eliot)			24 June 1923 (Solemn Communion)
Leander Jacob Trabel			Dolores Berg
Florence Helena Wyss (John B.)	Robert Patrick Wm. Boyle	Ludwina Henrica Beckmann	Jennings Bubb
Marcella Zuber	Andrew Nickolas Gibson (Ed)	Aloysius Beckmann (Wm.)	Josephine Flemion
	Roger Coelestine Gibson (H.D.)	Rosemary Berg (Frank)	Raymond Fox
	Maria Anna Herber (Ant.)	Oscar Gibson (Frank's)	Catherina Herber (Georg's)
	Walter Frank Herber (Fred)	Henry Hake (Otto's)	Josephina Hoffmann (G.)
	Caecilia Elisabeth Hoffmann	Gertrude Hoffmann (Fr.P.)	Ena Kleber
	Arnold Minnich (Wm)	Florence Elisabeth Hoffmann (George)	Mary Minnich
	Bertha Agnes Moldeney (Louis)	Bernice Kleber (Wm.)	Mary Rohrick
	Frances Mary Scherschel	Robert Wm. Rohrick	Francis Sweeny
	Olivia Anna Schiffli	Elmer Scherschel	Marie Trabel
	Verba Veronica Wyss (Frank)	Florence Mathilda Marie Scherschel	Walter Wyss
	Marie Gertrude Wyss (John B.)	Winfrieda Sweeny	
	Joseph Romer Wyss (Nick)		

11 May 1924 (Little Children)	13 May 1926 (Little Children)	3 June 1928 Children (Grade 2)	1 June 1930 First (Grade 2)
Ruth Berg 8	Lucile Berg (Anton) 8	Herbert Berg	Walter Beckman
Armelia Bubb 8	Norbert Hake (Barney) 7	Marcella Berg	Esther Hake
Irena Hake (B.) 8	Luella Kleber (Wm) 8	Alvin Kleber	Norbert Herber
Otto Hake (Otto) 8	Harold Minnich (Louis) 9	Claud Maldeney	Rita May Kleinrichart
Emil Herber (G.) 9	David Rohrick 8	Marianne Martin	Della Rauner
Violet Kleber (H) 8	Walter Scherschel 10	Delbert Muldoon	Lawella Smith
Vera Kleber (Wm) 9	Jerome Wyss (Andrew) 8	Devain Muldoon	Paul Sorg
Joseph Minnich (Fr) 9	Mildred Wyss (Clemence) 7	Evelyn Rorick	Aloysius Sorg
Florence Minnich (L.) 8		John Wyss	Rita Trabel
Elvy Minnich (L.) 9	6 June 1926	Marjore Wyss	
Willard Minnich (Wm)	(Solemn Communion)	John Wyss (Dehoid)	31 May 1931
Raymond Minnich (Wm)			First (Grade 2)
Wm. Rohrick 9	John Hartmann	3 June 1928	
Rosella Sorg (H) 8	Gertrude Hoffman	Solemn (Grades 3-8)	Josephine Bubb
Mary Sweeny 8	Marie Maldeney		Joseph Ottenweller
	Donald Ottenweller	William Berg	John Rorick
15 June 1924	Harold Sorg	Lucille Berg	Dolores Seilor
(Solemn Communion)		Murrel Berg	Gertrude Sorg
	6 May 1927	Ruth Berg	Dolly Margret Sorg
Ludwina (Mary) Beckmann	(Little Children)	Aurelia Bubb	Donald Wyss
Kermit (Joseph) Bubb		Norbert Fox	Mary Agnes Wyss
Margaretha Freehill	Muriel Berg (Anton)	Otto Hacke	
Josephine (Theresia) Herber (Fred's)	Ruth Gibson (Frank)	Norbert Hacke	8 May 1932
Bernardine (Brigitta) Herber (Georg's)	May Gibson (Frank)	Irene Hacke	First (Grade 2 & 3)
Arthur (Stephan) Hoffmann	Lawrence Maldeney	Emil Herber	
Eddie (Lawrence) Maldeney	Beulah Maria Muldoon	Cornelius Kleber	Jane Berg
Angelina (Elisabeth) Schmidt	Carl Ottenweller	Luella Kleber	Helen Bobay
Agnes (Irinis?) Sorg	Delbert Sorg (H.B.)	Violet Kleber	Gertude Hake
	Earl Sorg (Leo)	Vera Kleber	Vanita Herber
21 May 1925	Devon Sorg (Leo)	Stephan Maldeney	Ralph Kleber
(Little Children)	Vera Wyss	Elmer Maldeney	Justin Kleinrichert
		Lawrence Maldeney	Marcian Martin
Wm. Berg	12 June 1927	Norbert Martin	Geraldin Martin
Fred Herber (Ben)	(Solemn Communion)	Louis Martin	Marylyn Martin
Cornelius Kleber (Wm's)		Joseph Minich	William Minich
Stephen Maldeney	Verna Berg (Ant)	Willard Minich	Max Minich
Harold Rauner	Oscar Gibson (Frank)	Raymund Minich	Melvin Minich
Elmer Wyss	Minerva Gibson (Frank)	Harold Minich	Ruth Minich
Arthur Wyss	Clarence Hake	Florence Minich	Daniel Muldoon
	Aloysius Heber (Georg)	Carl Ottenweller	Patricia Muldoon
14 June 1925	Pauline Hoffman (Georg)	Harold Rauner	Edna Rorick
(Solemn Communion)	Berneda Kleber (Wm)	William Rorick	Joseph Seiler
	Andrew Minnich (Joe)	David Rorick	Carl Sorg
Aloysius Joseph Beckmann	Elva Minnich (Louis)	Walter Scherschel	Kathleen Sorg
Rosemary Theresia Berg (Franks)	Richard Ottenweller	Raymund Sorg	Evelyn Sorg
Alexander Fred Fox	Myrtle Rauner	Earl Sorg	Joan Sorg
Florence Bernice Hoffmann (G.)	James Rohrick	Devon Sorg	Eileen Wyss
Bernice Mary Margareth Kleber (Wm)		Delbert Sorg	
Norbert Williard Minnich (Theo)		Rosella Sorg	
Robert Michael Rohrick		Arthur Wyss	
Winfrieda Loretta Sweeny		Elmer Wyss	
		Jerome Wyss	
		Mildred Wyss	
		Vera Wyss	

14 May 1933	22 May 1938	22 May 1941	8 April 1945
First Communion	First Communion	First Communion	First Communion
Robert Beckman	Theresa Bobay	Daniel Boyle	Charles Beckman
Wilbert J. Beckman	Virginia Gibson	Bernadette Herber	Eugenia Boyle
Richard J. Herber	Joseph Herber	Theresa Minnick	Rita Donahue
Theodore J. Minick	Denis Kleinrichert	David Muldoon	Lawrence Herber
Nelson R. Minick	Bonita Martin	Henry Sorg	Gertrude Herber
Eileen Minick	Kenneth Minnick	John Sorg	Ladonna Klingenberg
Alberta M. Rauner	Theresa Ottenweller	Carol Sorg	Richard Maldeney
Frances E. Seiler	Eugene Renninger	Dorothy Sorg	Helene Sorg
Joseph B. Smith	Alberta Rorick	Josephine Wyss	
Irene F. Sorg	Donald Sorg		28 April 1946
Rose L. Sorg	Raymond Sorg	19 April 1942	First Communion
Helen R. Wyss	Marguerite Sorg	First Communion	
	Eugene Wyss		Janet Donahue
4 June 1935	Mark Wyss	Ralph Gibson	Patricia Eilers
First Communion		Jerome Herber	Jon Minnick
	21 May 1939	Patricia Minnick	Paul Minnick
Maurice Berg	First Communion	Germaine Ottenweller	Gertrude Renninger
Doris Berg		Marilyn Renninger	Yvonne Schmidt
Luella Bobay	Gerald Beckman	Mildred Smith	Ruth Schmidt
Edward Muldoon	Delbert Gibson	Clara Sorg	Maurice Sorg
Virginia Rorick	Phyllis Herber	Constance Sorg	Monica Sorg
Robert Smith	Vivian Herber	Bernadette Sorg	Shirley Woodruff
Hubert Sorg	Dale Klingenberg		Charles Wyss
James Sorg	Charlotte Minnick	11 April 1943	Shirley Wyss
	Rosemary Minnick	First Communion	
No 1934 class	Thomas Muldoon		25 May 1947
	Joan Muldoon	Violet Bobay	First Communion
24 May 1936	John Ottenweller	Kenneth Herber	
First Communion	Henry Renninger	Theresa Herber	John Herber
	John Smith	Carolyn Herber	Hubert Herber
Robert Berg	Marie Smith	Jule Kleinrichert	Donald Minnick
Donald Bubb	Carl A. Sorg	Margaret Minnick	Leroy Minnick
Dolores Frederick	Carl Joseph Sorg	Evelyn Minnick	Dennis Minnick
Geraldine Gibson	Jeanette Sorg	Jerome Muldoon	Clara Minnick
Betty Jean Herber	Marie Sorg	George Schmidt	Ruth Ann Renninger
Willard Kleber		Marie Sorg	Kenneth Sorg
Rosemary Kleinrichert	18 May 1940	Shirley Ann Sorg	Ronald Sorg
Patricia Minnick	First Communion	Luella Sorg	
Rose Mary Ottenweller		Donald Trowdly	
Gerald Sorg	Arthur Bobay		
Richard Sorg	Dolores Gibson	16 April 1944	
	Maxine Herber	First Communion	
16 May 1937	Ervin Kleber		
First Communion	Theresa Renninger	Patrick Boyle	
	Alfred Smith	Evelyn Gibson	
Rita Marie Beckman	Donald Sorg	Anthony Herber	
Patricia Gibson	Victoria Sorg	Bernard Minnick	
John Klingenberg		Joseph Minnick	
Lillian Muldoon		Barbara Muldoon	
Viola Sorg		Robert Ottenweller	
		Robert Renninger	
		Ruthanne Sorg	
		Russel Sorg	
		Gerald Sorg	
		Joseph Wyss	

Confirmations (1902 - 1947)

The sacrament of Confirmation, which confers the special gifts of the Holy Spirit to the recipient, was traditionally administered in the Catholic Church by the Bishop upon the children of his diocese that had reached adolescence. Confirmation was the “sacrament of maturity” to help prepare the recipients to go forth and live active, responsible Christian lives. During Confirmation, the Bishop laid his hands on each adolescent, anointed them with oil, and gave them a gentle slap on the face to indicate readiness for life's battles. Furthermore, each confirmand had an adult sponsor, who placed their hand upon his/her right shoulder as a sign of support. It was the duty of the sponsor to pray for the candidate, provide a good Christian example, and assist them during their lifetime to live a good Christian life.

Unlike Holy Communion, Confirmation was not an annual event, but was only conducted by the Bishop every few years. In 1902, the pastor began recording the names of the children at Hessen Cassel church being confirmed by the Bishop, which occurred about every 3 or 4 years. The lists covering the years 1902, 1904, 1907, 1910, 1913, 1917, 1920, 1924, 1927, 1932, 1937, 1941, & 1946 are presented below. They complement the previous Holy Communion lists.

As mentioned earlier, in the year 1910 Pope Pius X moved First Communion from after Confirmation to around age seven in hopes of instilling the habit of regular Communion from an early age.¹⁹⁴ Thereupon, the Bishops began to administer Confirmation to all the children who had received First Communion, no matter what age. Thus, at this point in time, First Communion now preceded Confirmation, and this was reflected in the Hessen Cassel church records. Specifically, the 1913 list of confirmand, which contains twice the normal number of children, was due to the implementation of these new church rules. Regarding the Confirmation sponsors, the church records show that a long-time, well-respected married couple belonging to the Hessen Cassel parish was traditionally selected to represent all the confirmand for a particular year – the man sponsoring the young boys and the woman sponsoring the young girls. Frederick & Maria Brigitta Herber (1902), Charles & Helena Muldoon (1904), Jacob & Katharina Renninger (1907), Jacob & Margaret Münch (1910), Charles-Karl & Mary Sorg (1913), Christoph & Mary Kleber (1917), Frank & Wilhelmina Beckmann (1920), and Edward B. & Mary Boyle (1924) served as sponsors for the years indicated in parentheses. However, beginning in 1927, the new Bishop, John Francis Noll, required that each confirmand have his/her own individual sponsor. Rev. F. J. Hasler, the Hessen Cassel pastor at the time, recorded: “The Rt. Rev. Bishop requested a Sponsor for each one to be confirmed as it is the Law! Deo gratias!” Thus, for the Confirmation list from 1927 onward, the name of each sponsor was recorded for each confirmand. Also, the saint’s name selected by the confirmand as their Confirmation name was written in parentheses after their name.

¹⁹⁴ White, Joseph M. Worthy of the Gospel of Christ : a History of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend : Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Diocese and Catholic Life in Northern Indiana. (Fort Wayne, Ind. : The Diocese, 2007), see pages 220-224.

10 November 1902

Laurentius Joseph Auth
 Rudolph Joseph Beckmann
 Rosa Caecilia Berg
 Coelestina Amalia Bubb
 Rosa Bertha Gerlein
 Franziskus Bernard Gibson
 Henry Ludwig Gibson
 Rosa Bertha Gibson
 Bernard Henry Hake
 Clara Gertrude Hake
 George Edward Hake
 Maria Scholastica Hake
 Otto George Hake
 Gertrude Caecilia Herber
 Irwine Albert Herber
 Elisabetha Amalia Hoffmann
 Jacob George Hoffmann
 Rosa Marie Hoffmann
 Franziskus Irwin Kleber
 Hubert Jacob Kleber
 Maria Landstoffer
 Elva Johanna Muldoon
 Grover Charles Muldoon
 Alfred Moritz Münch
 Johann Jacob Münch
 Martha Matilda Münch
 Anton Silvester Sack
 Clara Caecilia Sack
 Elisabetha Catharina Sack
 Mathilda Magdalena Sack
 Agnes Maria Schmidt
 Clemens Henry Schmidt
 Gertrude Caecilia Schmidt
 Helena Dorothea Agnes Schmidt
 Anton Sorg
 Barbara Maria Sorg
 Caecilia Maria Dorothea Sorg
 Carolina Agnes Sorg
 David Andreas Sorg
 Edmond Joseph Sorg
 Joseph Ludwig Sorg
 Lilliosa Maria Sorg
 Loretta Catharina Sorg
 Maria Regina Thekla Sorg
 Andreas Joseph Wyss
 Charlotte Geneveva Wyss
 Clara Katharina Wyss
 Clemens Frank Wyss
 Antonius Nickolaus Zuber
 Henry Joseph Zuber

(Pastor) Max Benzinger
 (Sponsor) Friedericus Herber
 (Sponsor) Maria Brigitta Herber

20 November 1904

Frank William Beckmann
 Joseph Bernard Beckmann
 Clemence Anton Berg
 Alma Stella Dodane
 Betha Maria Dodane
 Katharina Franziska Gerlein
 Clemence Andrew Gibson
 Aloysius Jacob Hake
 Clara Maria Hake
 Johann Benjamin Herber
 Frank Isador Joseph Herber
 Friedrich Michael Herber
 Bernardette Maria Herber
 Wilhelm Friedrich Kleber
 Frank Walter Muldoon
 Bertha Barbara Müller
 Katharina Viola Müller
 Edward Henry Münch
 John Frank Münch
 Edith Scholastica Münch
 Frank Hermann Ottenweller
 Bernardette Agatha Ottenweller
 Charles Anthony Rauner
 Jacob Johann Sack
 Otto Anthony Schmidt
 Joseph Anton Sorg
 Barbara Josephina Sorg
 Johanna Barbara Sorg
 Theodora Katharina Sorg
 Coelestine Henry Wyss
 Georg Henry Wyss
 Loretta Elisabetha Wyss
 Maria Mathilda Wyss
 Rosa Agnes Wyss
 Reinhard Frank Zuber
 Karl Johann Zuber
 Albert Medardus Zuber

(Pastor) Maximilian Benzinger
 (Sponsor) Mr. Charles Muldoon
 (Sponsor) Mrs. Helena Muldoon

3 November 1907

Josephus Eduard Barva
 Stephan Emanuel Barva
 Mathilda Viola Barva
 Loretta Lucia Josephina Bubb
 Lilliana Rosa Dodane
 Lena Loretta Dodane
 Julia Geneveva Flemion
 Henricus Bernardus Fuchs
 Clemence Philip Fuchs
 Elenora Paulina Gerlein
 Leo Arnold Gibson
 Andreas Jacobus Hake
 Louisa Agnes Hake
 Alma Elisabetha Barbara Herber
 Ambrosius Joannis Herber (Anton)
 Bernardus Franciscus Herber (John)
 Edith Gertrude Armella Kleber
 Alphonsus Ligouri Kleinrichert
 Herman Franciscus Muldoon
 Andreas Richard Muldoon
 Joannis (Oliver) Henricus Muldoon (Henry)
 Aloysius Henry Müller
 Friedericus Julianus Münch
 Albertus Nickolaus Münch
 Bertha Beatrix Münch
 Clemence Franciscus Münch (Frank)
 Lilliana (Ethel) Barbara Münch (Henry)
 Beatrix Margaretha Ottenweller
 Carolus Gulielmus Sack
 Romanus Josephus Schmidt
 Francisca Katharina Sorg (Anton)
 Theresia Sorg (John)
 Mathilda Maria Caecilia Sorg (John)
 Rosa Sophia Sorg (Karl)
 Leo Antonius Sorg (Melchior)
 Reinold Joannis Sorg (Theodore)
 Leona Elenora Sorg (Theodore)
 Louisa Margaretha Maria Westrich
 Franciscus Paniratus Silvester Wyss (Frank)
 Gertrude Stella Caecilia Wyss (Frank)
 Bernardus Franciscus Wyss (John)
 Henricus Nickolaus Wyss (Nickl.)
 Hugo Nickolaus Zuber
 Helena Clara Zuber

(Pastor) Maximilian Benzinger
 (Sponsor) Mr. Jacobus Renninger
 (Sponsor) Mrs. Katharina Renninger
 Rt. Rev. Bishop Hermann J. Alerding

13 November 1910

Maria Margretha Beckmann
 Mary Agnes Josephina Blee
 Loretta Florence Bobay
 Edna Felicia Bobay
 Friederich Joseph Fuchs
 Dorothea Katharina Fuchs
 Ambrose Michael Gibson
 Maria Gertrude Gibson
 Frances Katharina Hake
 Andrew John Hartmann
 Reinhard Anton Herber
 Leo John Lawrence Herber
 Esther Joanna Herber
 Blanka Josephina Herber
 William Hoy
 Alfred Hoy
 Arnold Benedict Kleinrichert
 Mary Magdalena Miller
 Anna Isabella Muldoon
 Maria Bertha Muldoon
 Edward Adam Münch
 Clarence Münch
 Sylvester Henry Münch
 Henry Simon Renninger
 Stephan Sorg
 Lawrence Anton Sorg
 Aloysius Michael Sorg
 Alphonse Henry Sorg
 Augusta Maria Sorg
 Monica Elisabeth Sorg
 Bernardetta Maria Sorg
 Bertha Josephina Sorg
 Joseph Silvester Westrick
 Joseph Charles Wies
 John Friederich Wyss
 Gerhard Julian Wyss
 Rosalia Gertrude Wyss
 Franzisca Maria Josephina Zuber

(Pastor) Max Benzinger
 (Sponsor) Mr. Jacob Münch
 (Sponsor) Mrs. Margaret Münch
 Bishop Hermann Joseph Alerding

9 November 1913 (Boys)

Philip Beckmann
 Arthur August Bobay
 Lawrence Joseph Bobay
 Eduard Charles Flemion
 Joseph Fuchs
 Hubert John Fuchs (Alex's)
 Andrew Fuchs (Henry's)
 Clarence Fuchs (Henry's)
 Andreas Gibson
 Walter Aloysius Gibson (Ed's)
 Russel Henry Gibson (Henry D.'s)
 Roger Aloys Gibson (Henry D.'s)
 Emmet Aloys Gibson (Henry senior's)
 Sebastian John Hake (Henry's)
 Benjamin Wilhelm Hartmann
 Clarence Joseph Hartmann
 Robert Michael Herber (Anton's)
 Karl Joseph Aloysius Herber (Fred's)
 Maximilian Herber (Fred's)
 Philip Herber (Fred's)
 Ivo John Herber (John's)
 Joseph Aloysius Jacobus Hoffmann (Frank's)
 Oscar Andrew Hoffmann (Frank's)
 Lawrence Peter Hoffmann (Frank's)
 Wilhelm Kruse
 Franciscus Lallack
 Walter Charles Miller
 Arthur Miller
 Joseph Henry Mouldeney
 Charles Peter Muldoon
 Walter Aloysius Muldoon
 Leo Münch
 Frank Münch
 Arnold Benedict Münch
 Clarence Joseph Münch (Frank's)
 Clemence Joseph Münch (Henry's)
 Earl Elmer Aloysius Münch (Henry's)
 Elmer Levy Münch (Joseph's)
 Earl Emmet Münch (Julian)
 Chester Albert Münch (Wm.'s)
 Earl Julian Schick
 Aloysius John Schick(?)
 Norbert Schmidt (John's)
 Herman Albert Sorg
 Frank Wilhelm Sorg
 Walter Aloysius Joseph Sorg (Georg's)
 Bernard Sorg (Henry B.'s)
 Andrew Joseph Sorg (Henry's)
 Urban William Sorg (Henry's)
 Arthur Frank Sorg (Henry's)
 Albert David Sorg (John's)
 Leonard John Sorg (John's)
 Karl August Sorg (John's)
 Leander Christian Trabel
 Clarence Ignatius Maximilian Wyss (Frank's)
 Henry Joseph Wyss (John B.'s)
 Albert Aloysius Wyss (John's)
 Philip Wyss (Wm.'s)
 Sylvester Wyss (Wm.'s)
 Raymond Philip Wyss (Wm.'s)
 Georg Jacob Zuber

9 November 1913 (Girls)

Clementina Maria Barva
 Carolina Katharina Beckmann
 Regina Margaretha Paulina Beckmann
 Rosa Josephina Beckmann
 Elsie Margaretha Bobay
 Grace Mary Magdalene Bobay
 Florence Dorothea Flemion
 Margaretha Dorothea Freiburger
 Maria Irena Fuchs (Alex's)
 Helena Martha Gertrude Fuchs (Henry's)
 Edith M. Anna Fuchs (Henry's)
 Mrs. Leste Ruth Gibson (Frank Gibson)
 Irena Theresia Gibson (Henry D.'s)
 Florence Gertrude Hake (Henry's)
 Maria Anna Herber (Anton's)
 Elisabetha Johanna Herber (Anton's)
 Josephina Edna Herber (John's)
 Caecilia Germaine Hoffmann (Frank's)
 Ursula Katharina Hoffmann (Georg)
 Bertha Rosa Hoffmann (Georg's)
 Emma Maria Anna Mouldeney
 Clara Maria Magdalena Münch (Frank's)
 Clara Margaretha Münch (Julian)
 Caecilia Clara Münch (Wm.'s)
 Virginia Katharina Münch (Wm.'s)
 Salina Josephina Schmidt (Henry's)
 Genofeva Katharina Schmidt (Henry's)
 Velma Maria Schmidt (Henry's)
 Claudina Gertrude Bertha Sorg (Anton)
 Maria Magdalena Mathilda Sorg (Anton)
 Alice Helena Sorg (Georg's)
 Maria Carolina Sorg (Henry's)
 Coletta Anna Dorothea Sorg (Henry's)
 Alma Margaretha Caecilia Sorg (Melch.)
 Olivia Catharina Barbara Sorg (Melch.)
 Hildegard Bernadette Sorg (Theodore's)
 Louisa M. Anna Trabel
 Viola Josephine Wyss (Frank's)
 Bertha Elisabetha Wyss (John B.)
 Florence Helena Wyss (John B.'s)
 Elfa Clara Lillian Wyss (Nickl.)
 Esther Bertha Wyss (Nicklaus's)
 Velma Odelia Mary Wyss (Nicklaus's)
 Alice Mary Wyss (Wm.'s)
 Emma Maria Wyss (Wm.'s)
 Malinda Anna Josephina Zuber
 Marcella Clara Francisca Zuber
 Maria Susanna Barbary Zuber

 (Pastor) Maximilian Benzinger
 (Sponsor) Mr. Karl Sorg
 (Sponsor) Mrs. Mary Sorg
 Rt. Rev. Hermann Joseph Alerding

19 April 1917

Robert Patrick Boyle
 Walter Rudolph Fox
 Franciscus Jacobus Hartmann
 Caecilia Gertrude Hartmann
 Walter Petrus Herber
 Armella Caecilia Herber (Fr.)
 Maria Magdalena Hoffmann (Frank)
 Hermann Aloysius Hoffmann (Geo.)
 Wm. Joseph Miller
 Agnus Catharina Minnich (Joe)
 Irena Irita Minnich (Jul.)
 Velma Bernadetta Minnich (Jul.)
 Edna Agnita Minnich (Louis)
 Bertha Elisabetha Muldeney
 Arnold Münch (Wm.)
 Olivia Helena Schiffl
 Sylvester Aloysius Schmidt
 Henrietta Margaretha Wyss
 Maria Gertrude Wyss
 Verba Agnes Wyss
 Joseph Nicklaus Wyss (Nickl.)

 (Pastor) Maximilian Benzinger
 (Sponsor) Christoph Kleber
 (Sponsor) Mrs. Mary Kleber
 Rt. Rev. Hermann Joseph Alerding

21 May 1920

Joseph Frank Anthony Berg
 Dolores Silveria Berg
 Eugene Charles Anthony Boyle
 Jennings Frank Aloys Bubb
 Evelina Magdalena Agnes Bubb
 Josephina Silveria Pacifica Flemion
 Josephine Rosa Maria Fox
 Anna Josephina Adeline Fox
 Clara Adelina Bernadette Fox (H.)
 Mrs. Faith Gertrude Hake
 Marcellina Catharina Germana Hake (G.)
 Edward Eugene Hartmann
 Catharina Magdalena Margaretha Herber (G.)
 Joseph John Gerhard Leo Hoffmann
 Fayma Gertrude Rita Kleber
 Ena Maria Anastasia Kleber
 Frances Louisa Veronica Maldeney
 Lucia Florence Catherine Miller
 Esther Maria Viola Minnich
 Maria Emma Caecilia Minnich
 Clara Gertrude Elenora Minnich
 Clementina Maria Clara Minnick
 Loretta Maria Theresia Beatrix Minnick
 Catharina Margaretha Maria Rohrick
 Maria Martha Elisabetha Rohrick
 Frances Maria Dorothea Scherschel
 Catharina Theresia Caecilia Schiffl
 Genevieve Maria Rita Schiffl
 John Francis Louis Schmidt
 Henry Aloys Schmidt
 Angelina Elisabeth Schmidt
 Arthur John Joseph Sorg (G.)
 Wilbert Anthony Sorg (H.)
 Vincent Henry Joseph Sorg (H.B.)
 Agnes Dolores Sorg (H.B.)
 Clarence Eugene Trabel
 Maria Anna Margaretha Trabel
 Walter Wilhelm Aloys Wyss (J.B.)
 Mabel Magdalena Gertrude Wyss (J.B.)
 Bernice Veronica Wyss (Wm.)
 Frank Anthony Zuber

 (Pastor) Maximilian Benzinger
 (Sponsor) Mr. Frank Beckmann
 (Sponsor) Mrs. Wilhelmina Beckmann
 Rt. Rev. Bishop Hermann Joseph Alerding

29 May 1924

Aloys Joseph Beckmann
 Ludwina Mary Beckmann
 Rosemary Josephine Berg
 Laveria Magdalena Berg (A.)
 Ruth Mary Berg (Ant.)
 Kermit Joseph Bubb
 Aurelia Rita Bubb
 Raymond Joseph Fox
 Alexander Francis Fox
 Norbert Aloys Fox
 James Vincent Freehill
 Margareth Louise Freehill
 Marsel Joseph Gibson
 Clarence Joseph Hak
 Irena Catharina Hake (B.)
 Clarence William Hake (Barney)
 Otto John Hake (Otto)
 Harold Joseph Harkenrider
 Alvin Paulus Harkenrider
 John Frederick Hartmann
 Aloys Michael Herber
 Josephine Theresia Herber (F.)
 Emil Nickolaus Herber (G.)
 Bernadine Brigitta Herber (G.)
 Arthur Stephan Hoffmann
 Florence Theresia Hoffmann
 Gertrude Rita Hoffmann
 Josephine Gertrude Hoffmann (G)
 Violet Gertrude Kleber (Hubert's)
 Bernice Josephine Kleber (W.)
 Berneda Barbara Kleber (W.)
 Vera Theresia Kleber (W.)
 Edward Lawrence Maldeney
 John Joseph McGaffery
 Andrew Aloys Minnich
 Joseph Anton Minnich (Joe)
 Elvy Mary Minnich (Louis)
 Florence Caroline Minnich (Louis)
 Raymond Andrew Minnich (W.)
 Willard Peter Minnich (W.)
 Elmer John Moldeney
 Mary Agnes Moldeney
 Donald Aloys Ottenweller
 Richard Joseph Ottenweller
 Myrtle May Rauner
 Robert Aloys Rohrick
 James John Rohrick
 William Nathaniel Rohrick
 Elmer Joseph Scherschel
 Florence Magdalena Scherschel
 Raymond Anton Sorg
 Harold Henry Sorg
 Rosella Elisabeth Sorg (Henry)
 Thomas Valentine Sweeny
 Winfrieda Veronica Sweeny
 Mary Theresia Sweeny

(Pastor) Maximilian Benzinger
 (Sponsor) Mr. Edward B. Boyle
 (Sponsor) Mrs. Mary Boyle
 Rt. Rev. Bishop Hermann J. Alerding

4 December 1927

William (Francis) Berg -Ed. B. Boyle
 Lucilla (Elizabeth) Berg -Clara Fox
 Murell (Antonette) Berg -Dolores Berg
 Norbert (Bernard) Hacke -John Hacke
 Pauline (Engratia) Hoffman -Regina Beckman
 Cornelius (Stephan) Kleber -Stephen Sorg
 Luella (Hildegard) Kleber -Mary Sorg
 Stephen (Joseph) Maldeney -Joseph Maldeney
 Lawrence (Francis) Maldeney -Eliot Muldoon
 Norbert (Francis) Martin -John Sorglet
 Louis (Joseph) Martin -Henry Klein
 Herold (Joseph) Minich -Leo Herber
 Carl (Fridolin) Ottenweller -Charles Sorg
 Herold (Francis) Rauner -Gerhard Wyss
 David (Joseph) Rorick -Justin Rorick
 Earl (Rudolph) Sorg -Mickey Sorg
 Delbert (Paul) Sorg -Bernard Sorg
 Devon (John) Sorg -George Landsdorffer
 Elmer (Anthony) Wyss -Charles Rauner
 Arthur (Clement) Wyss -Arthur Bobay
 Jerome (Andrew) Wyss -Walter Muldoon
 Mildred (Teresa) Wyss -Velma Wyss
 Vera (Rita) Wyss -Elvy Wyss
 -
 (Pastor) Rev. F. J. Hasler
 (Bishop) John Frances Noll

30 October 1932

Walter (John) Beckman -Leo Sorg
 Robert (Joseph) Berg -Eugene Boyle
 Marcella (Clara) Berg -Mrs. Alphonse Kleinrichart
 Jane (Mathilda) Berg -Rose Mary Berg
 Helena (Rosella) Bobay -Rosella Sorg
 Josephine (Theresa) Bubb -Mrs. Alphonse Sorg
 Esther (Therisa) Hake -Mrs. Jacob Mattis
 Gertrude (Agnes) Hake -Mrs. Clem Wyss
 Norbert (Anthony) Herber -Anton Herber
 Vanita (Therisa) Herber -Mary Rorik
 Ralph (Francis) Kleber -Charles Sorg
 Alvin (Anthony) Kleber -Frank Ottenweller
 Justin (Joseph) Kleinrichard -John Kleinrichart
 Rita May (Theresa) Kleinrichard -Mrs. John Kleinrichart
 Cloude (Anthony) Maldeney -Robert Boyle
 Marcian (Aloysius) Martin -Simon Hoffman
 Marilyn (Therisa) Martin -Mrs. Caciilia Reninger
 Melvin (Charles) Minich -Charles Hake
 Max (Paul) Minich -Willard Minich
 William (Joseph) Minich -Raymond Minick
 Ruth (Rita) Minich -Mrs. Frances Smith
 Daniel (Paul) Muldoon -Earl Minich
 Dewan (Elizabeth) Muldoon -Mrs. Alex Fox
 Bulah (Theresa) Muldoon -Mrs. Walter Fox
 Patricia (Cathrina) Muldoon -Ena Muldoon Kleber
 Delbert (Anthony) Muldoon -Norbert Fox
 Joseph (Edward) Ottenweller -Wm. Kleber
 Della (Frances) Rauner -Mrs. Andrew Wyss
 John (Laurence) Rorick -Frank Hartman
 Evelin (Rose) Rorick -Catherine Herber
 Etna (Mary) Rorick -Marceline Herber
 Joseph (Aloysius) Seiler -John Seiler
 Dolores (Mary) Seiler -Mrs. Eva Deck
 Lavella (Patricia) Smith -Mrs. Emet Gibson
 Paul (Joseph) Sorg -Joseph Beckman
 Carl (Anthony) Sorg -Mickey Sorg
 Gertrude (Hildegard) Sorg -Mrs. Wm. Kleber
 Dolly Marg. (Agnes) Sorg -Agnes Sorg
 Joan (Therisa) Sorg -Mrs. Rose Ottenweller
 Evelyn (Agnes) Sorg -Mrs. Augusta Bobay
 Kathleen (Mary) Sorg -Frances Sorg
 Rita (Patricia) Trabel -Eva Trabel
 John (Joseph) Wyss -Kenneth Betts
 Donald (Urban) Wyss -Joseph Wyss
 Margery (Theresa) Wyss -Mrs. Charles Rauner
 Mary Agnes (Geneviva) Wyss -Mrs. Kenneth Betts
 Eileen (Margreth) Wyss -Mrs. Agnes Hake
 -
 (Pastor) Rev. F. J. Hasler
 (Bishop) John Francis Noll

18 May 1937

Robert (Joseph) Beckman -Joseph Sorg
 Wilbert (John) Beckman -John Sorg
 Rita Maria (Susanna) Beckman -Minnie Beckman
 Maurice (Francis) Berg -Francis Eme
 Robert (Arthur) Berg -Frank Berg
 Doris (Frances) Berg -Agnes Berg
 Luella (Caecilia) Bobay -Mary Rauner
 Donald (Joseph) Bubb -Arnold Kleinrichert
 Dolores (Mary) Frederick -Ada Eichman
 Geraldine (Theresa) Gibson -Clara Bobay
 Patricia (Anna) Gibson -Florence Smith
 Richard (Phillip) Herber -Phillip Herber
 Betty Jean (Adele) Herber -Adele Herber
 David (John Joseph) Howard -Alice Smith
 Willard (Anthony) Kleber -Andrew Fox
 Rosemary (Bernadette) Kleinrichert -Evelyn Kleinrichert
 John (Joseph) Klingenberger -Ambrose Gibson
 Nelson (Henry) Minnick -Lawrence Sorg
 Eileen (Josephine) Minnick -Cecilia Renninger
 Patricia (Cecilia) Minnick -Regina Beckman
 Edward (Joseph) Muldoon -Joseph Fox
 Lillian (Louise) Muldoon -Ada Minnick
 Rosemary (Anna) Ottenweller -Florence Sorg
 Charles (Charles) Patten -Joseph Kintz
 Alberta (Theresa) Rauner -Velma Wyss
 Virginia (Agnes) Rorick -Agnes Patten
 Joseph (James) Smith -Devon Sorg
 Robert (Anthony) Smith -Norbert Herber
 James (Frank) Sorg -Frank Beckman
 Richard (Joseph) Sorg -Bernard Minnick
 Hubert (Henry) Sorg -Charles Sorg
 Gerald (Alphonse) Sorg -Alphonse Sorg
 Irene (Charlotte) Sorg -Olivia Minnick
 Rose (Sylvia) Sorg -Sylvia Sorg
 Viola (Flora) Sorg -Flora Sorg
 Alvin (Joseph) Wade -John Koch
 Richard (Norbert) Wyss -Norbert Hake
 Helen (Ann) Wyss -Agnes Wyss

(Pastor) Rev. Joachim Baker
 Most Rev. John F. Noll

8 October 1941

Gerald (Frank) Beckman -Frank Beckman
 Arthur (Carl) Bobay -Clem Wyss
 Therese (Rosemary) Bobay -Velma Wyss
 Daniel (Anthony) Boyle -Herbert Berg
 Edwin (Laurence) Frederick -Rheinart Herber
 Delbert (Paul) Gibson -Paul Bobay
 Dolores (Clara) Gibson -Clara Bobay
 Virginia (Barbara) Gibson -Mrs. V. Klingenberger
 Joseph (Robert) Herber -Walter Herber
 Bernadette (Genevieve) Herber -Genevieve Herber
 Maxine (Catherine) Herber -Mrs. Catherine Minnick
 Phyllis (Rose) Herber -Oliva Herber
 Vivian (Mary) Herber -Louise Sorg
 Ervin (Michael) Kleber -Willard Kleber
 Denis (Paul) Kleinrichert -Arnold Kleinrichert
 Dale (Stephen) Klingenberger -Aloysius Sorg
 Bonita (Ann) Martin -Clara Sorg
 Kenneth (Charles) Minnick -Melvin Minnick
 Theresa (Caroline) Minnick -Rosemary Berg
 Charlotte (Adeline) Minnick -Mrs. Esther Schmidt
 Rosemary (Ann) Minnick -Ludwina Beckman
 David (Andrew) Muldoon -Daniel Muldoon
 Thomas (Carl) Muldoon -Andrew Fox
 Joan (Bridgette) Muldoon -Mrs. Bernice Fox
 John (Anthony) Ottenweller -Donald Ottenweller
 Theresa (Ann) Ottenweller -Mrs. C. Ottenweller
 Henry (Jerome) Renninger -Oscar Hoffman
 Eugene (Joseph) Renninger -Dr. Arthur Hoffman
 Theresa (Gertrude) Renninger -Mrs. M. Colligan
 Alberta (Mary) Rorick -Mary Rorick
 Alfred (Carl) Schmidt -Paul Coin
 John (Richard) Schmidt -Sylvester Schmidt
 Marie (Clara) Schmidt -Mrs. Clara Franklin
 Henry (Patrick) Sorg -Patrick Boyle
 John (Paul) Sorg -Carl Sorg
 Donald (Carl) Sorg -Ernest Meyers
 Carl (Stephen) Sorg -Henry Hake
 Carl (Stephen) Sorg -Stephen Sorg
 Raymond (Joseph) Sorg -Charles Sorg
 Donald (Joseph) Sorg -Joseph Beckman
 Carol (Mary) Sorg -Dolly Sorg
 Dorothy (Florence) Sorg -Joan Sorg
 Marie (Sylvia) Sorg -Mrs. Sylvia Sorg
 Victoria (Elizabeth) Sorg -Kathleen Sorg
 Jeanette (Julia) Sorg -Mrs. F. Beckman
 Marguerite (Rita) Sorg -Eileen Minnick
 Mrs. Wilma (Mary) Sorg -Regina Sorg
 Mark (Francis) Wyss -John Wyss
 Eugene (Charles) Wyss -Jerome Wyss
 Josephine (Ann) Wyss -Mary A. Wyss

(Pastor) Chas. J. Seeberger
 Most Rev. John F. Noll

5 April 1946

Charles F. (Anthony) Beckman -Walter F. Beckman
 Violet Ann (Mary) Bobay -Louella Bobay
 Patrick L. (Stephen) Boyle -Stephen Maldeney
 Eugenia F. (Elizabeth) Boyle -Marie Wyss
 William (Joseph) Coleman -Fred Minnick
 Helen (Mary) Donohue -Esther Bobay
 Rita (Margaret) Donohue -Teresa Bobay
 Ralph J. (Paul) Gibson -Delbert Gibson
 Evelyn (Clara) Gibson -Mrs. Clarence Minnick
 Anthony J. (Richard) Herber -Reinhart Herber
 Laurence J. (Eugene) Herber -Eugene Herber
 Jerome A. (Richard) Herber -Leo Herber
 Kenneth A. (Richard) Herber -Marvin Landin
 Teresa (Cecilia) Herber -Betty Jane Herber
 Carolyn (Edna) Herber -Edna Herber
 Gertrude (Clara) Herber -Claudine Herber
 Mrs. Dorothy (Luella) Kleber -Luella Kleber
 Jule F. (Michael) Kleinrichert -Justin Kleinrichert
 LaDonna (Clara) Klingenberger -Clara Sorg
 Hilda (Agnes) Landin -Agnes Landin
 Richard E. (Joseph) Maldeney -Russel Stensin Jr.
 Betty Jane (Cecelia) Maldeney -Frances Schuhler
 Bernard W. (Joseph) Minnick -Joseph Smith
 Joseph R. (Aloysius) Minnick -Donald Schuler
 Patricia (Mary) Minnick -Rita Rohre
 Margaret (Mary) Minnick -Alvina Vachon
 Evelyn (Barbara) Minnick -Lillian Muldoon
 Jerome P. (Walter) Muldoon -Orvil Minnick
 Barbara (Bernice) Muldoon -Mrs. Orvil Minnick
 Robert D. (Joseph) Ottenweller -Carl Ottenweller
 Germaine (Mary) Ottenweller -Mary Ottenweller
 Robert J. (Anthony) Renninger -Joseph Hoffman
 Marilyn (Cecelia) Renninger -Ruth Hoffman
 George H. (Joseph) Schmidt -Nelson Minnick
 Mildred (Mary) Schmidt -Esther Schmidt
 Gerald J. (Robert) Sorg -Robert Meyers
 Russell J. (Joseph) Sorg -William Minnick
 Helene (Veronica) Sorg -Marguerite Sorg
 Clara (Florence) Sorg -Florence Sorg
 Ruthanne (Mary) Sorg -Joan Smith
 Luella (Rosella) Sorg -Rosella Sorg
 Marie (Rita) Sorg -Rita Beckman
 Bernadette (Ann) Sorg -Ann Schmidt
 Constance (Genevieve) Sorg -Kathleen Beckman
 Shirley (Mary) Sorg -Mrs. Ernest Meyers
 Joseph N. (Anthony) Wyss -Claude Maldeney

(Pastor) Chas. J. Seeberger
 Most Rev. John F. Noll

Pew Rent

Historically, it was a common practice in Germany for the villagers to pay for family pews in the local church.¹⁹⁵ In essence, the pews defined who belonged to the village and church by reserving a space for them in the most sacred and visible structure within the village. Until the mid-twentieth century, it was also common practice in the United States in Catholic and other churches to rent pews to families or individuals as a principal means of raising money to operate the parish. A sort of social status arose in church seating within a parish. As explained by Alvin J. Kleber (1920-1992), who attended Hessen Cassel church as a boy, the pews at church were auctioned off each year to the highest bidders.¹⁹⁶ The best seats towards the front of church cost the most. His parents, William and Barbara (Sorg) Kleber could only afford to sit in the second to last set of pews on the right side of the church. However, the children did not sit with their parents in church. All the children of the Hessen Cassel parish sat together in the front pews reserved for them located right in front of the nuns, who kept a watchful eye on them at all times.

This concept of the best pews going to the highest bidders was also touched upon in a biography of Archbishop John Noll, who, as a young priest, was stationed at St. Louis Besancon in 1902.¹⁹⁷ It was noted that in those days (1902) each family of the Besancon parish selected and occupied a designated pew, for which they paid a pew rent each Fall. In an effort to get more parishioners to sit up in the front pews of the church, Fr. Noll went against tradition and started charging the highest rates for the pews located in the back of the church, since these seemed to be the ones most preferred.

Even as late as 1936, the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel church still collected pew rent as the main source of income for the parish.¹⁹⁸ However, at this point the charges were the same no matter what pew was selected. Families paid \$10 for the yearly rent, while single adults were charged \$5. Based on the church's financial report, the pew rent collected for the year 1936 totaled \$2230, which accounted for a little more than one-third of the income for the parish's budget. In addition, a Sunday and a monthly collection were taken, and there was also a separate collection to cover the cost of fuel (probably for heating).

¹⁹⁵ Theibault, John C. German Villages in Crisis. Rural Life in Hesse-Kassel and the Thirty Years' War, 1580-1720 (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1995).

¹⁹⁶ "Interview with Alvin J. Kleber", 28 July 1984; notes in possession of Carl J. Kleber [R687].

¹⁹⁷ Ball, Ann. Champion of the Church. The Extraordinary Life & Legacy of Archbishop Noll. (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2006), pages 50-51.

¹⁹⁸ Financial Statement. St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Indiana. Rev. J. Baker, Pastor. Clem Wyss, Frank Beckman, & Oscar Hoffman, Committee. 1936.; see last page. (Original in the possession of John Schreiber, parishioner, 2015).

The parishioners at Hessen Cassel church continued to pay pew rent at least into the 1950's.¹⁹⁹ However, by this time a specific pew was no longer assigned or reserved for a person upon payment. A person late for Mass was not guaranteed a designated pew to sit in. Not too many years after this, all Catholic churches in general stopped charging pew rent, which was no longer relevant, and switched to Sunday collections as the main source of funds to operate the parish. The concept of pew rent is now foreign to most people.

Old Versus New Rituals (1966)

Great changes within the Catholic Church were brought about by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Some of these changes include (1) the physical re-arrangement of the altar with the priest facing the people, (2) the absence of a tabernacle, (3) no communion rail, (4) the Mass no longer being held in Latin, (5) girls acting as Mass servers, (6) women without their heads covered and being allowed in the sanctuary during Mass, (7) lay people administering Holy Communion, (8) lay people allowed to touch the Sacred Host in their hands and drink the Sacred Wine from the chalice, (9) fasting from midnight onward before receiving Holy Communion was reduced to 1 hour, etc. So great were these changes that the founding families of Hessen Cassel parish would be hard pressed to believe that they were inside a Catholic church if they attended a service today. Indeed, these great changes were not accepted by all deeply-religious Catholics. For example, some of the Catholics at Hessen Cassel left to join St. John the Fisher congregation, which was organized to preserve and follow the old Catholic rituals. This parish is still viable in Allen Co., IN, although it is not recognized by the Diocese.

¹⁹⁹ "Interview with Carl and Ervin Hoffman", 26 March 2015; notes in possession of Carl J. Kleber [R1441].

Chapter 22 - The Church Fire (1864)

The brick church at Hessen Cassel, completed in late 1859, was only a few years old when, on the Sunday afternoon of 12 June 1864, a fire caused extensive damage to the interior. The 100-year parish history booklet states that this fire was of unknown origin and destroyed the main altar, the Blessed Virgin's altar, and the communion rail. A more detailed account of the fire, which also conveys that some of the parishioners blamed one of the nuns at the time, was found in the annals of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor.²⁰⁰ The following is recorded:

“The Sisters had not been at Hessen Cassel a full year when on June 12, 1864, tragedy struck the village church. (One day during the preceding week a Sister had noticed, on entering the church, that a bouquet of artificial flowers on the altar was burning. Fortunately, her prompt action prevented further damage. How the flowers ignited was a mystery, and no one else was around to give a clue.) About one o'clock that Sunday afternoon, a postulate at the convent noticed smoke issuing from the church windows. Hastily, she notified the superior. The pastor [Rev. Martin Kink] had not yet returned from a neighboring mission, to which he had gone after offering an early Mass. One Sister ran to a neighboring farm house for help, but could find no one. In the meantime, Sister Hildegard had ventured into the church and rang the tower bell. Her hands were blistered from the heat of the rope, but the sound of the bell brought a man to give aid. Frantically they worked to shut out any draft and to extinguish the flames. The only source of water was a nearby well, from which the water had to be drawn and conveyed in bucketfulls. But by the time more men arrived from the other families in the vicinity, the blaze was under control, though the Sisters were nigh exhausted. One of the men had the happy thought of investigating the loft and found the rope of the sanctuary lamp still smoldering at its attachment in the vault. Except for this timely discovery, fire might have broken out anew and more disastrous during the night. Even now, only the outer brick structures of the sanctuary of the church was saved. The altar was burned to the ground; the tabernacle, which contained the ostensorium and a ciborium with Sacred Hosts, was totally destroyed. Two beautiful Munich statues were blackened and ruined. The sanctuary lamp had dashed to the floor in pieces when the fire burned the rope which suspended it. The origin of the fire remained a complete mystery. ...In a letter to Sister Dominica, the Foundress commented: ‘It grieved me very much that the blame fell on one of the Sisters. Nevertheless, let us accept it more as a humiliation and an incentive to honor the most Blessed Sacrament, than as a chastisement... Still, we have the duty of assisting as far as possible to cover the damages. I see from your letter that you attend to do so.’”

The church at that time had four wood-burning stoves, one in each corner of the church, that were used to heat the church, but they apparently were not the cause of the fire. In the middle of

²⁰⁰ Hill, Sister M. Pauline, S.F.P. *In Love with Christ's Poor, The Story of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, 1858-1958*. (Compiled from the Annals of the Congregation, Provincial House of St. Clare, Cincinnati, Ohio), 1959. See pages 179-180.

June when the fire broke out, these stoves were probably not even in use. Exactly why the parishioners blamed one of the Sisters for the fire is unknown. With no apparent cause for the fire, there may have been some suspicion that it was set intentionally, especially since a similar fire (some artificial flowers on the altar caught fire) occurred in the church just the week before. There was some dissention at the time among one of the Sisters, namely Sister Maria Josepha, and her superior, and perhaps she was the one that came under suspicion.

After the fire, the 100-year parish history noted that “By means of the parishioners’ generosity in immediately subscribing the necessary funds, the church was soon restored to its former usefulness and beauty.” In the Anton Fuchs family history, the following mention of the fire was made: “Sometime after 1864 Hessen Cassel Church had a fire which done a great amount of damage and my mother [Mary (Fuchs) Smith] along with others went out to solicit funds from families of different parishes.”²⁰¹ In the unedited notes compiled for the 1957 centennial booklet, the wording was as follows: “St. Joseph’s experienced a fire of some unknown reason that caused extensive damage to the interior of the church sometime between 1864 to 1870. Main altar, Blessed Virgin’s altar and part of the Communion railing burned. After the fire, some of the parishioners went around to families and parishes soliciting funds to replace the damage.”²⁰² Fortunately, the parish’s first sacramental record book was not burned in the blaze that destroyed the sacristy area, which indicates that it was probably kept by the priest in the rectory.

²⁰¹ Smith, Clement H. Anton Fuchs/Fox Family History (Typed, unpublished manuscript: Allen Co., IN, c1950); copy in possession of Carl J. Kleber.

²⁰² Herber, Clara & Emil; Bobay, Esther & Arthur; Stemen, Mildred & Joseph; and Landin, Betty. “A Century in Review”. Unpublished notes compiled for the preparation of centenary celebration booklet titled The First Hundred, St. Joseph’s Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. Notes retyped with comments and additional information by Carl J. Kleber, 29 September 2013; copy located in the parish office archives.

Chapter 23 - The Church Renovation Projects (1875 - Present)

Since its original construction (1857-1859), the brick church at Hessen Cassel, which was a plain structure without any specific architectural style, underwent remodeling and renovation a number of different times over the years. Unfortunately, the first one was the result of a fire in 1864 that destroyed the main altar, the Blessed Virgin side altar, and part of the communion railing. All this was replaced after a fund drive was conducted for repairing the damage.

1875

For about the first 15 years the Hessen Cassel brick church originally had a low bell tower, probably located slightly above the circular rose-colored stained glass window at the front of the church. However, around 1875, Fr. Joseph Nussbaum replaced it with the present lofty bell tower and steeple, which reaches about 75 feet into the sky, topped with a shiny gold cross.²⁰³ The new, extended steeple not only increased the visibility of the church, but it may also have been added in order to provide a loft to accommodate the new hand-pump pipe organ donated in 1875 by one of the parishioners, Joseph Landgut (c. 1814-1877), in memory of his brother, Aldabert Landgut (1796-1875). This church remodeling project occurred during the same time that the new brick rectory (currently the parish office building) was built in 1875 by Fr. Nussbaum. It was probably also around this time that the original old log church (1841), which had been used as the priest's rectory, was torn down. An 1876 sketch of the church with its new steeple, the new brick rectory, and the school is shown in Figure 98.²⁰⁴

1892

In 1892 the 33-year-old interior of the church was completely renovated while Rev. John Mark was the pastor. All the walls and ceiling were redecorated, and the main and two side altars were replaced with beautiful Gothic-style altars. A statue of the Sacred Heart was placed above the new main altar along with statues of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph above the right and left side altars, respectively. A photograph of Rev. John Mark standing in front of the new altars is shown in the 1957 centennial parish booklet, and also in Figure 37 of this book.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel (Fort Wayne, IN). The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Church, 1957), pages 8 & 19.

²⁰⁴ Andreas, A. T. (Alfred Theodore). Maps of Indiana Counties in 1876 : Together with the Plat of Indianapolis and a Sampling of Illustrations. (Chicago: Baskin, Forster & Co., 1876), see sketch of St. Joseph's Church, School, and Rectory, page 161.

²⁰⁵ "Photographs of St. Joseph Hessen Church Exterior and Interior with Rev. John Mark, 1892". Originals obtained from Emil Herber in 1997; now in possession of Carl J. Kleber.

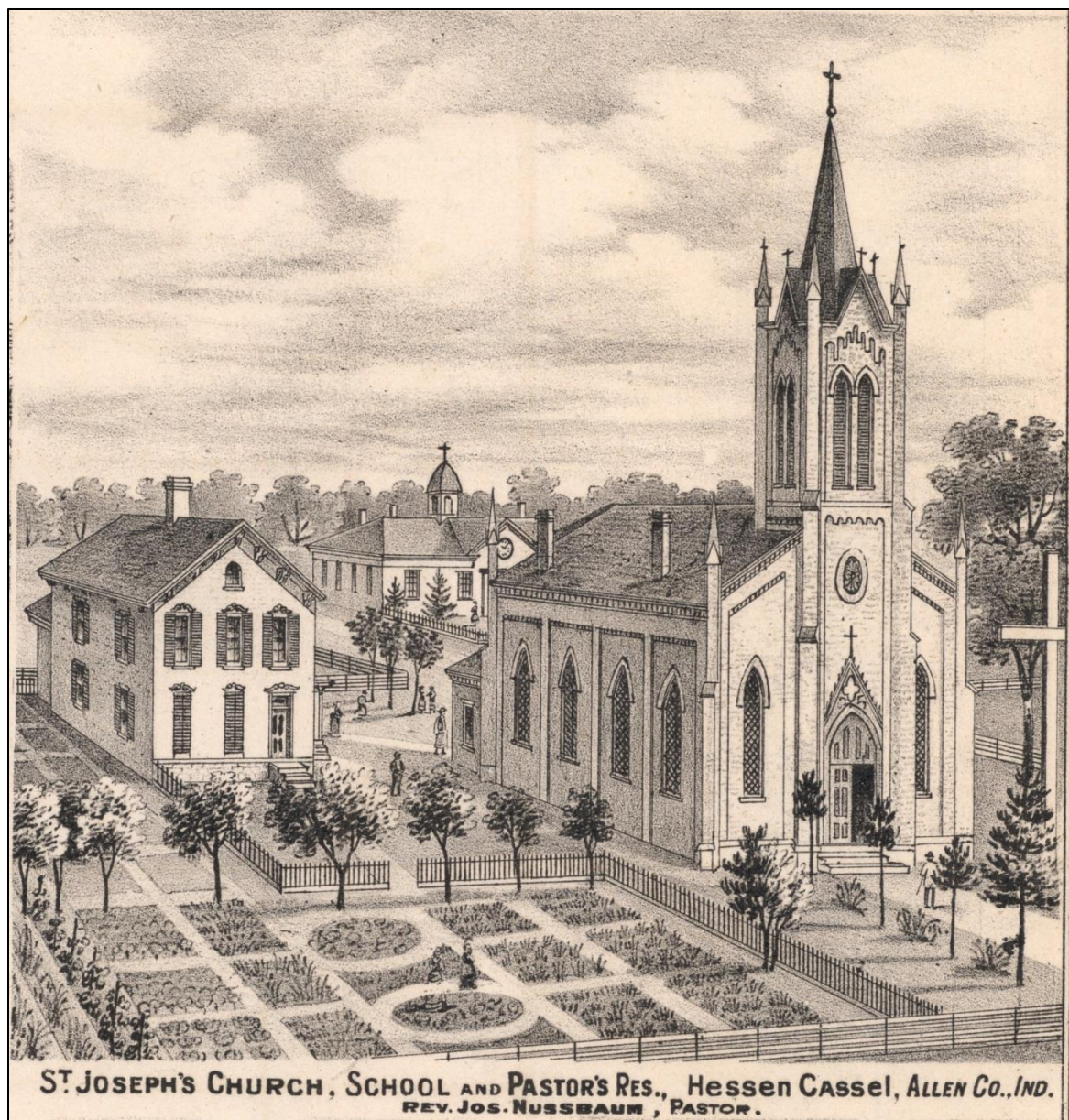


Figure 98 - Sketch of St. Joseph's Church, School, and Rectory (1876).

1916

The original church was heated by means of four stoves, one located in each corner of the church. The brick chimneys for these stoves are visible protruding from the church roof in photographs of the church and in the above-sketch. Since these 4 stoves were no longer practical for heating purposes, they were replaced by a modern steam heating system in 1916. A basement was dug at the rear (east side) of the church in order to house the boiler unit. A large multi-functional room attached to the church was built above this basement.

1927

Basic utility services, such as electricity, plumbing, water, sewage, and natural gas, which are taken for granted in modern times, were unavailable for about the first 80 years of the parish's history. Lighting was done with candles and oil lamps, while toilet facilities consisted of outhouses. Water was hand pumped from wells or cisterns, and heating was achieved by burning firewood or coal in stoves or fireplaces.

An article in the 19 July 1920 Fort Wayne newspaper discussed the first steps taken to provide electricity to the Hessen Cassel area.²⁰⁶ It reads in part: "The Indiana Service company this afternoon filed a formal petition for a franchise providing for its furnishing light and power for a large area, south and east of the city limits. The proposed franchise would provide electric current for many rural residents in the southern portion of the county and is enthusiastically welcomed by the hundreds who would be afforded the convenience of electric current... The county commissioners are today looking over the proposed franchise and every indication points to it being accepted."

In 1927, after electric service became available in Marion Township, the pastor at Hessen Cassel, Rev. Fridolin Hasler, arranged for electricity to be installed in the church (and all the other parish buildings). Besides lighting, the electricity was used to operate the pump organ, which had a motor added to it for that purpose. Fr. Hasler also made several other major changes to the church at that time. The interior walls of the church were repaired and freshly painted, the choir stairs replaced, the confessional box moved to the front, right side of the church, and the rear room of the church above the boiler was made into a chapel.

Rev. Hasler, a native of Switzerland, made a note of these improvements in the parish records.²⁰⁷ It reads, with the original misspelled English words of this Swiss priest, as follows: "This church whas remodelet, frescoed with new Stations during Vacation time 1927. On the first of July 1927 I took charge of St. Joseph Church Hessen Cassel, coming from Sheldon, Ind. where I whas Pastor 5 years and remodelled that Church. In Hessen Cassel I blessed also, autorised by the Rt. Rev. Bishop John Francis Noll, the Stations of the Cross. Electric Lights whas put in Church, Priest House, Sisters House and School House, and the Priest House whas remodeld, papered an 2 Bath rooms fixt. All in all \$15,000 where spent that same year, after I took charge of the

²⁰⁶ "Traction Company Seeking New Lighting Franchise. Provides for Furnishing Current for Large Area South of the City Limits. Formally Filed Today." Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, 19 July 1920, page 14.

²⁰⁷ Church Records of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana. St. Joseph Parish, Hessen Cassel, Allen Co., IN; Microfilm Roll No. 14; Item 7 – Internments 1873-1947. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1989); available at the Allen County (IN) Public Library, Genealogy Department Microtext Collection.

Congregation and all was paid ridaway! Also a Sumer Kitchen was built on. Hessen Cassel, 4 of Decbr. 1927 (Signed) Rev. F. J. Hasler, Pastor.”

Fr. Hasler also wrote after this note the following. “St. Therasas (Little Flower) Chapel was frescoed 1930 and by permission of Rt. Rev. Bishop the old Stations were reblessed by the Pastor. (Signed) Rev. F. J. Hasler.”

To generate the funds required for the extensive 1927 church renovations, the parishioners were required to pledge money. A promissory note to Fr. Hasler in the amount of \$100 from parishioner, Christ Trabel, dated 27 July 1927, is shown below.

\$ 100.00

St. Joseph's Rectory
Fort Wayne, Ind.,
Fort Wayne, R. 10

Hessen Cassel
July 27/1927

Christ Trabel after date I we, or either of us, promise

to pay to Rev. F. J. Hasler, Pastor of St. Joseph's Church Hessen Cassel or order
for the Repair of the Church One hundred — DOLLARS

and Attorney's Fees, without any relief whatever from Valuation and Appraisement Laws. The Drawers and Endorsers severally waive presentment for payment, protest, notice of protest, and non-payment of this note.

Negotiable and payable at the office of THE PEOPLES TRUST AND SAVINGS COMPANY of Fort Wayne, Ind., with _____

per cent interest per annum payable _____ annually, and eight per cent interest after maturity.

No. 72

Christ Trabel

Paid in full Dec. 20/27

Rev. F. J. Hasler

P. O.

Due after 3 Months

CLARY & SONS, PRINTERS

1954

Another major remodeling of the church interior was conducted in 1954 by Rev. Lawrence Gollner at a cost of \$22,000.²⁰⁸ The ceiling of the church was covered with acoustical tile, the walls were re-frescoed, and marbled wainscoting applied to them. New lights, pews, pulpit, wrought iron Communion railing, confessional box, and base-board heating radiators were installed.

Photographs of the church interior after both the 1927 and 1954 remodeling projects are shown in the 1957 parish centennial booklet, and are presented below for comparison.

²⁰⁸ St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel (Fort Wayne, IN). The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. (Fort Wayne, IN: The Church, 1957), page 9.



Interior Church 1927 – Rev. Maximillian Benzinger, Pastor



Interior Church 1955 – After Redecoration

Page Ten

On 23 August 1998, the pastor at that time, Rev. Robert Van Kempen, held a parish-wide meeting to formally present and discuss a major renovation and expansion project for the old 1857 brick church. Victor Martin, head of the Martin Riley Mock Architects/Consultants, presented plans and a scale model of the proposed renovation. An article about the proposed changes to the church was published in the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette and is shown below.²⁰⁹

Changes considered for church

Hessen Cassel St. Joseph may get facelift, addition

By Kimberly Pupillo
The Journal Gazette

HESSEN CASSEL – Historic St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, is badly in need of repairs and additional space to keep up with its growing congregation, parishioners said Sunday night.

Parishioners gathered Sunday evening for a parish planning meeting to discuss a \$750,000 renovation and addition to the 150-year-old south Allen County church.

Members of the parish council addressed the audience, and architect Victor Martin of Martin Riley Mock Architects/Consultants, of Fort Wayne, described the plans to the audience of about 200.

“I’ve been through a lot of prayer on my part, a lot of worry . . .” said the Rev. Bob VanKempen, the pastor. “I think we’ve come to the decision that I feel we need to do.”

The church is in need of restoration and repairs, as well as additional space for a growing congregation.

In 1988-89, there were 317 households in the church. In 1998-99 there are 400, said Gina Bodette, who gave the report.

The cost of the project is estimated at \$750,000, to be paid by pledges made by parishioners.

Growth ahead

Lois Widner, principal of St. Joseph Catholic School, said enrollment in the school is estimated to grow by 12, to 218 students, based on baptismal records, by the 2001-02 school year.

Likewise, the parish is expected to continue growing, Bodette said.

Bodette also said the church has paid all of its bills and has no debt.

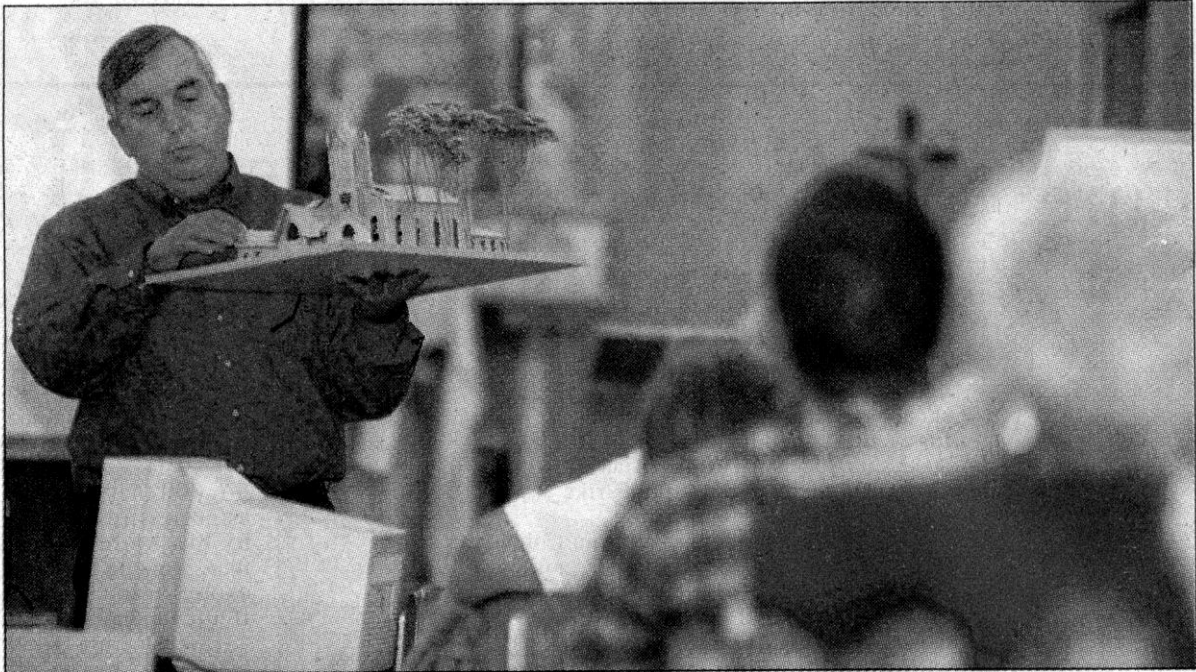
“We’re looking at a very rosy financial picture for our parish,” she said.

Church member Joyce Bernes said the church windows need to be replaced and the church floor is slanted from rotted support beams. The roof also needs to be redone, she said.

VanKempen said he wants to add

► See **Church** /Back of section

²⁰⁹ Pupillo, Kimberly. “Changes Considered for Church. Hessen Cassel St. Joseph May Get Facelift, Addition”, *The Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, 24 August 1998, pages 1A and 12A.



Clint Keller/The Journal Gazette

Victor Martin of the architecture firm Martin Riley Mock presents a scale model Sunday of the renovation plans for St. Joseph Catholic Church Hessen Cassel.

Church

► From Page 1A

100 additional seats in the church and add a gathering area on the west end.

"It's time for us to put our cards on the table and pray to our God to lead us in the years and months ahead," he said.

Martin showed a model of the site plan for the church. The steeple will remain dominant to the west, and the addition's roof on the north side of the building will be lower than the original structure.

"I tried to keep the major elements to the west, the major architectural elements intact," Martin said.

Members of the congregation voiced their concern about the cost of the project.

Bob Hartestein said he thinks the church and school should be air-conditioned before an addition is built. Other said they agreed with the addition and said the church had to move forward instead of staying behind.

Before the meeting, parishioner Bob Sorg said the congregation was in the process of restoring the church when VanKempen came to

the parish about a year ago.

"All of a sudden, we're adding on to the front of the church, and they want to knock out the north wall," Sorg said. The church does not need an addition, he said, though it does need to be restored.

Sorg, who said he regularly attends Mass at three different times, said Masses are never crowded, except for Easter, Christmas and children's Masses.

Sorg said many parishioners have met with VanKempen to ask him to reconsider.

They don't want the addition, he said, because it will change the look of the historic building.

When the final design was settled upon, the church was significantly enlarged with the proposed addition of a gathering room at the church entrance as well large additions to both the north and south sides of the church building. Other major improvements were also planned for the interior. Then on 8 August 1999, special ground-breaking ceremonies were held at Hessen Cassel church with the Bishop, John M. D'Arcy, officiating. A report of the event along with all the proposed improvements to the church was published in the 15 August 1999 issue of the Diocesan newspaper.²¹⁰

Hessen Cassel moves forward



Bishop D'Arcy poses for a photo with children outside St. Joseph Church, Hessen Cassel, following a Mass and ground-breaking ceremonies Sunday, Aug. 8, at the rural Fort Wayne parish. The faith community is planning an extensive restoration/renovation project. See story and photo, page 3. (Photo by Sharon Little)

²¹⁰ Little, Sharon. "Hessen Cassel Parish Opens New Chapter in Long History", *Today's Catholic*, 15 August 1999, page 1 and 3.

By Sharon Little

FORT WAYNE — St. Joseph parish, Hessen Cassel, is a living, breathing book of history. And much to the delight of lifelong parishioners such as Jerome Herber, 65, yet another chapter is about to be written.

Sunday, Aug. 8, Bishop John M. D'Arcy joined very young and young-at-heart parishioners, Father Bob VanKempen, current pastor, Msgr. Robert Contant, who was pastor at St. Joseph's for 34 years, and Msgr. Owen Campion of *Our Sunday Visitor* to celebrate the planned restoration/renovation of the historic church originally built in 1857.

Noting the earliest parishioners in the 1840s and 1850s were farmers, Bishop D'Arcy said their "greatest inheritance" to the generations following them was not their farmland but rather, "this church."

In his homily, the bishop said Sunday's Gospel was "about faith, trust and emphasized "the parish community is a sign of faith." Restoration and renovation of the church, he emphasized, is symbolic of the parish's faith and is undertaken not just for current members but particularly "for those who come after us."

As described Sunday by Vic Martin of Martin Riley & Mock, a Fort Wayne architectural firm, the project carries a "grand total"

cost of \$985,000 and would include the following:

- Two extensions of 15 feet each on the north and south sides of the nave to seat an additional 100 people.
- A new main entry to the west of about 3,700 square feet.
- Replacement of existing flooring with new concrete flooring.
- Air conditioning for the entire building.
- Replacement and enhancement of interior/exterior lighting.
- Restoration of stained-glass windows, originally from France, and refurbishment of stations of the cross and pews.
- Addition of new furniture in the sanctuary to match the existing high altar which came from Germany.

If plans proposed Sunday are approved, the new main entry area, designed to avoid obstructing a view of the steeple, will include a baptismal area, area for an office, conference room, pastor's study, a bride's room and handicap-accessible restrooms.

VanKempen, commending parishioners on their "spiritual vitality" during discussions of the building project for the past three to four years, explained the proposal remains to be brought before various committees, including Diocesan Buildings and Grounds, before any final decisions are made. Bishop D'Arcy's formal approval would be re-

quired before any work would be undertaken. Nevertheless, Bishop D'Arcy dug a groundbreaking shovel into drought-hardened ground Sunday and said he was looking forward to being back for the dedication ceremonies.

The parish, VanKempen said, "might have to dig deeper, might have to extend its pledge for another year or two" to cover costs. To date, the parish of about 417 families has raised more than \$550,000.

Jerome Herber, enthusiastically calling the endeavor "all for the betterment of the community," is among several parishioners whose entire lives have been spent as members of the church. He said his mother, Genevieve Herber, 92, has been a part of the church since infancy. The oldest parishioner is believed to be Edith Minnich, 96.

Herber and his wife, Pat, also

a lifelong member, said they raised their family of 12 at St. Joseph Church. Among those attending Sunday were son Joe, 32, his wife, Tina, and their three children, Megan, 1½, Adam, 3, and Jared, 6, all active members.

It is for these and other parishioners' children that the work is being undertaken, architect Martin noted. "A lot of the things are set up for another 100 years so you won't have the problems you have now," he said.

Barbara and Gerald Sorg are co-chairs of the Restoration/Renovation Committee. Sorg's great-great-grandfather, John Sorg, was one of the parish's founders.

Martin commended the committee for its faithfulness and cooperation in the planning stages. He said four contracting firms had been invited to bid on the project, and bids had been opened

Thursday, Aug. 5. Five alternative facets to the project, including exterior masonry work, had boosted the base bid of \$490,000 to \$985,000. Martin said he was pleased with the bids.

Cornerstones embedded in the brick church structure are dated 1857 and 1927. Sorg said the church as it now stands was built in 1857 for \$5,000; in 1927, a community room was added.

The parish, according to writings by the late historian B.J. Griswold, actually was "organized in 1841 with a membership of 29 families and first ministered to by the Rev. Joseph Hamion and the Rev. Julian Benoit."

As of his writing in 1917, Griswold noted, "a large church and parochial school are maintained." The parish today continues to support a school for preschool through eighth grade.



BREAKS GROUND — Bishop John M. D'Arcy took part in ground-breaking activities on Sunday at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish in rural Fort Wayne. Father Bob VanKempen is shown at left. The parish is making improvements and an addition to the church. (Photo by Sharon Little)

After more than two years following the groundbreaking, all the renovations were completed. A detailed description of these renovations was published in the 18 November 2001 *Today's Catholic*.²¹¹ Portions are presented below.

Time-honored church ready for celebration

By Sharon Little

FORT WAYNE — A new look definitely is in store for parishioners of St. Joseph (Hessen Cassel) Parish when they gather this weekend to celebrate a major renovation of their beloved church building constructed in 1857.

The most obvious from the outside of the church is the addition of a new entryway that will serve as a “gathering space” before parishioners step into the church proper.

There will be a statue of Our Lady with children around her, according to Father Robert Van Kempen, pastor, and the area also will allow needed space for activities related to weddings and funerals, he said.

The renovation project, estimated to cost about \$1 million, also incorporates the addition of restrooms in the entry area. Until now, Father Van Kempen said, to reach restroom facilities one had to go outside and around to the back of the church building. The brick exterior also has been repointed.

The original Gothic-style entrance to the church has been retained and will be visible as

one enters; there will be two new doors into the church itself.

Installation of a speaker in the new entryway will allow those gathered in that area to hear what is happening inside the church.

A new terrazzo tile floor will enhance the church, and granite flooring has been installed in the sanctuary where other new additions include an altar, ambo and presider's chair. The reconciliation area will be to the left of the sanctuary and the baptismal font to the right.

The church also has acquired pews from the former St. Hyacinth Church, to be installed in the transepts to accommodate an additional 80 to 100 persons, increasing total capacity to about 320, according to Father Van Kempen. All of the pews have been refinished, he said.

The stained-glass windows, originally from a Protestant church in Germany, have been removed, cleaned, repaired if needed and replaced.

The design of the beautiful “old” high altar has been incorporated in the new wood and granite altar, baptismal font and ambo. Red oak wainscoting will enhance walls throughout the church.

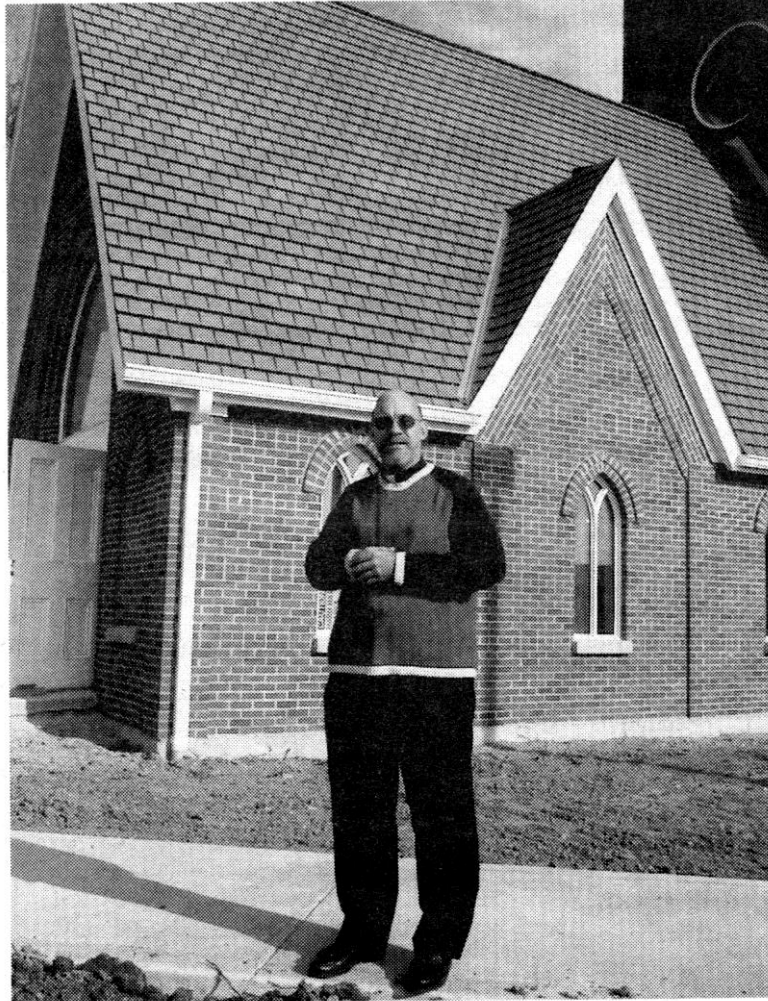
A room added many years ago to the rear of the church also is being renovated with new flooring, plumbing and paint. To more comfortably serve as a community room, it will be furnished with a television, tables and chairs, and refurbished cabinetry. From different sides, there will be access to a servers' area and the sacristy.

Father Van Kempen said the renovation project has been six years in the planning, fund-raising and construction stages. The congregation has not celebrated Mass in the church since January 2001; daily Mass has been celebrated in a small chapel in the original rectory, which dates to 1876, and Sunday and other larger Masses have been in the parish activity center.

The 150th anniversary celebration will include a vigil Mass at 5 p.m. Saturday; participants will process to the cemetery to the east of the church. On Sunday, Bishop John M. D'Arcy will celebrate the rededication Mass at 11:30 a.m.

Earlier Sunday, observances honoring the parish history will be at 7:30 a.m., and rejoicing in the present with the children's choir at 9:30 a.m.

²¹¹ Little, Sharon. “150 Years. St. Joseph, Hessen Cassel. Strong Roots and Building Upon Them”, *Today's Catholic*, 18 November 2001, pages 13 - 16.



SOMETHING NEW — Father Robert Van Kempen, pastor, stands in front of the new gathering space area at the entry to St. Joseph Church, Hessen Cassel. A photo from 1892, above right, shows the rectory and church and pastor Father John Mark.

St. Joe Hessen Cassel ma

By Sharon Little

FORT WAYNE — The cornerstone says, simply, 1857. It was another century, a time in history that is nearly foreign in landscape and lifestyle to the perception of today's 21st century parishioners. Yet this weekend there will be a joyful celebration of St. Joseph (Hessen Cassel) Parish's 150th anniversary in the church built so long ago.

While it is in 1851 that Bishop John F. Noll dated the founding of the parish, it was many years before that when immigrants found their way to the rich farmland of the area — from Hessen Cassel in the Diocese of Fulda, Germany. Many of their names are engraved in the parish history. Sorg, Herber, Klug, Ziegler, Auth and Schmidt were the recorded names of the foresighted immigrants who, as early as the 1830s, bought land from the government near the old Piqua Trail (now U.S. 27) and the St. Mary's River.

It was in this area where, according to stories passed down to parish historians, that the first Mass was celebrated in 1835. And Father L. Mueller, first resident priest in Fort Wayne, also is credited with celebrating Mass in the homes of farm families such as John Sorg and Sebastian Kleber.

Parish historical accounts also indicate that it was in 1841,

on land donated by Peter Schmidt, that a log chapel was built, believed to be near the present church site, and the 29 Catholic families in the area became the founding members of the parish with Father Joseph de Mutzig Hamion as the first pastor. When the present church was built in 1857, the log building became the pastor's home.

Father Jacob Meyer was pastor when, at a cost of \$5,000, the existing brick church was built. Although that was a significant sum in that era, the parish history notes that the church "is a plain structure without any pronounced architectural style." The 80-by-40-foot church could accommodate 250 people.

It had been just a few years prior, in 1850, when a company graded and planked Piqua Road; and in 1904 the Decatur Interurban established lines that presumably carried people to and from the church. Old photographs show tracks in front of the church.

It wasn't until 1863 that Bishop John H. Luers dedicated the church and, historians note, the building was "officially placed under the patronage of St. Joseph."

Just a year later, in 1864, a fire destroyed much of the original Communion railing, the high altar and the Blessed Virgin's altar. In the renovation following, the low bell tower was replaced by the high tower seen today.

In 1892, in a significant ren-

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

St. Joseph — 150 Years / 15

arks 150 years of passing on the faith

ovation project, three Gothic altars were installed — a main altar which encompassed a statue

of the Sacred Heart and two side altars with statues of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. The walls

and ceiling also were redecorated.

(Continued on page 16)

ANNIVERSARY

from page 15

In 1916, the old heating stoves were replaced with a steam heating system housed in a basement built to the rear of the church. Above the basement was built the existing large room that originally served as a classroom, temporary chapel and meeting room.

Improvements continued to be made. In 1923, a convent was built to serve the sisters who taught in the school; the convent today serves as the parish rectory. And, in 1927, the church interior was redecorated and other improvements were made, including installation of electricity and enlargement of the school.

The two-story school building constructed in 1879 could accommodate about 100 students, and its cost of \$6,390 was a significant amount in those days; current parishioner Carole Sorg says the structure also included

quarters behind the school for the sisters' residence.

Through the efforts of Bishop Luers, eight Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ came from Germany to the Hessen Cassel area in 1868 and established what the parish history records as their first mission house in America. That fall, they began teaching students and nursing in parish homes.

The next year, Bishop Luers purchased the former Rockhill home in Fort Wayne, and three of the eight Poor Handmaids moved into the city to establish what ultimately became St. Joseph Hospital. Five of the sisters remained in rural Hessen Cassel until 1877 when they, too, went to Fort Wayne. The convent and school were then directed by the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who served the parish school until 1991.

Improvements were made to the school in the late 1940s and a large hall was built to serve as a recreational center under the

leadership of Father Lawrence Gollner. The church again was modernized in 1954.

The parish has had a positive history in the numbers of men and women drawn from parish families to religious life. In a history from 1957, the parish recorded 22 nuns, five priests, three seminarians and four candidates.

Many priests have served the parish in its 150 years, and among them is Msgr. Robert Contant, for whom the parish activity center is named and who may, if health permits, be involved in the 150th anniversary celebrations this weekend.

Today, the former rectory, built in the late 1800s, serves multiple functions, including parish office and as a food bank. The current school building, built in the early 1960s, was expanded with an addition in 1992 and serves 214 students in preschool through grade eight.

The parish serves 415 families, or 1,352 members, and Father Robert Van Kempen is pastor.



BEFORE RENOVATION — This Christmastime photo of the sanctuary of St. Joseph Church, Hessen Cassel, was taken in the late 1990s. There will be a different view this weekend as Bishop John M. D'Arcy joins the pastor and parish to celebrate the rededication of the renovated 144-year-old church and the parish's 150th anniversary.

A 2001 photograph of the south side of the newly renovated church at Hessen Cassel is shown below (Figure 99). The new community gathering room added to the old church entrance is on the left. The new addition to the south side of the church is shown protruding out from the center of the old church. An identical extension on the north side of the church was also added.



Figure 99 – Renovated St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, IN (2001).

A stone marker dated 2001 was placed on the exterior of the new addition to commemorate the massive church renovation (Figure 100).

A 2014 photograph showing the new interior of the church is shown below (Figure 101).



Figure 100 – St. Joseph Church 2001 Stone Marker



Figure 101- Interior of St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, IN (2014).

A formal re-dedication of the renovated church was conducted by Bishop John M. D'Arcy on 18 November 2001 in conjunction with a celebration of the supposed 150th anniversary of the parish. However, as mention previously, this anniversary was based on the mistaken year of 1851 (instead of 1841) as the date for the establishment of the parish which was published in Alerding's history of the Fort Wayne Diocese. Therefore, this was actually the 160th anniversary of the parish.

Special coverage of the re-dedication ceremonies was published in the 25 November 2001 issue of *Today's Catholic*.²¹² Portions describing the celebration and the specific renovations are presented below.

²¹² Little, Sharon. "150 Years Celebrated at St. Joseph, Hessen Cassel", *Today's Catholic*, 25 November 2001, pages 1, 12 - 13.



CHURCH DEDICATION MASS — Parishioners at St. Joseph Parish, Hessen Cassel, in rural Fort Wayne joined Bishop John M. D'Arcy and pastor Father Robert Van Kempen for the rededication of the renovated church. A celebration of the 150th anniversary of the parish was also part of the festivities. Photos and stories on pages 12-13. (Photo by Larry Hoffman)

ST. JOSEPH PARISH, HESSEN CASSEL

A week later, on a foggy, but slowly turning to sunny, Sunday morning, I drove the short distance to another church in honor of St. Joseph located in the Hessen Cassel area of Fort Wayne. Another restoration of exceptional beauty, and it was done as part of the sesquicentennial of the parish. It was founded by German immigrants, mostly farmers, and the people who live there hold it deeply in their hearts.

I take my hat off to Father Robert Van Kempen who, six or seven years ago shortly after being named pastor — replacing the beloved Msgr. Robert Contant — took up with his advisers and parishioners this demanding but important task. I have been to Hessen Cassel many times and the church was simply too small. For many months, Mass had been celebrated in the school and, in fact, I administered the sacrament of confirmation there one day last spring.

The church was made wider and longer. A gathering space was placed in the front of the church. This is a development in churches in recent years, but an important one. Christ wishes to gather people. The whole church is a gathering. We live in a time of increased isolation and separation. The Eucharist gathers people every Sunday to hear the word of God and to be joined to the sacrifice of Christ.

Once again, there was a beautiful new baptismal font. As I blessed it, and I spoke about this to the people later, I thought about my own baptism in the church of Our Lady of Presentation almost 70 years ago. I told the people that I would not be their bishop were it not for that moment. My mother spoke of it often. In those days, strangely, the mothers did not attend and it was my aunt, Mary Tighe, from Ireland by way of New Bedford, Mass., and a cousin, whom we always called “Big Steve” D’Arcy to distinguish him from another Steve, were my sponsors. In baptism we are transformed, made heirs of heaven and members of the church. Original sin is taken away and the Holy Trinity dwells in our souls. Baptismal fonts now are usually near the entrance to the church, which is symbolic as you can easily see.

It was especially joyful to have a number of sisters present from the Poor Handmaids, who were the original teachers in the school, and from the Franciscan Sisters of Mokena, Ill. I am told that 23 young women from this parish joined religious congregations and five men became priests.

The church gives broad and full authority to the bishop for approving these renewals. I thank both pastors for keeping in close touch with the diocese and, most especially, with Beverly Rieger, our outstanding director of the Office of Worship, and the Environment and Art Committee, made up of architects, pastors, contractors and other knowledgeable people, which gives me sound and clear advice.

THE CEREMONY ITSELF



HISTORIC MOMENTS — Parish youth, the Knights of Columbus and several nuns led the procession Sunday that included Bishop John M. D'Arcy, Father Robert Van Kempen, pastor, and Msgr. Owen Campion and some 300 members of St. Joseph Church, Hessen Cassel. The procession moved to the newly renovated 144-year-old church, shown in the background for rededication and Mass. (Photo by Sharon Little)

I cannot do justice in a few words to the magnificent ceremony of the consecration of a church. I believe our excellent reporter, Sharon Little, will cover these events. The Litany of Saints reminds us that the heavenly church is with us, not only the saints to whom we pray but the deceased saints of Garrett and Hessen Cassel, saints unknown but blessed in heaven.

I am always taken by the words "living stones." The reference is not to the bricks and mortar, but to the people. We consecrate the church so the people will be consecrated. The anointing of the altar and the various crosses in the church reminds us that we are the ones anointed by Christ. The altar is anointed because of the eucharistic sacrifice that is offered there. "The sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass are one and the same, different only in the manner of

Parish marks milestone rededication as a family.

By Sharon Little

FORT WAYNE — A “joyous, awesome” day in church history that, for many, will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. That was the rededication and 150th anniversary celebration last weekend of St. Joseph Church, Hessen Cassel.

From a Saturday evening vigil Mass where parishioners prayed and left candles burning all night in the parish cemetery to the sound of strong voices raised in song at the rededication Mass Sunday, this once all-rural parish put heart and soul into returning to their newly restored church.

Bishop John M. D’Arcy celebrated the Mass in concert with Father Bob Van Kempen, pastor; Msgr. Owen Champion of Our Sunday Visitor, who has had a longtime connection to the parish; and Msgr. Robert Contant, now retired but pastor for 37 years of the parish.

After the Mass, Msgr.

Contant said St. Joseph, Hessen Cassel, is an example of the way parishioners in smaller parishes “feel needed. Things wouldn’t go if you didn’t work. People are very dedicated to the work. In larger parishes, this gets diluted, some feel ‘they don’t need me.’”

He called the celebration a “very joyous occasion that they were able to bring the church to this state” of beauty.

An ongoing project in planning, fund-raising and construction phases for some six years, the \$1 million renovation project is not totally complete, according to Father Van Kempen. He said the pews need kneelers, and some painting and other work remains incomplete. But despite some projects yet undone, the parish also wanted to celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2001 and did so in style.

The church, built in 1857 and first dedicated in 1863 by Bishop John Luers, was filled to capacity-plus for the 11:30 a.m. Mass. It was the first time since January that parishioners have gathered in the church for Mass following installation of a new altar, ambo, granite and tile flooring, addition of red oak wainscoting, and painting of the walls and ceiling. The church also has a new main entrance gathering space where a

PRAYERFUL — Bishop John M. D’Arcy prays at the new altar which he anointed Sunday in the newly renovated St. Joseph Church, Hessen Cassel. At far right, the original Gothic-style entrance to the church was retained and is seen from the new gathering space entry to the 144-year-old church. (Photos by Larry Hoffman and Sharon Little)

statue of the Virgin Mary with children around her is yet to be installed.

Sunday, parishioners gathered in the activities center where they celebrated Sunday and major holiday Masses during the renovation. A sense of family and the parish’s deep roots in the area were obvious in a display of many old photographs and other church-related artifacts. “Did you see that man’s beard that looked like a muff?” one friend asked another after looking at a very old photo.

With musical accompaniment by parish guitarists, more than 300 men, women and children, joined by the bishop, priests and sisters, walked about three blocks to the church entrance where the bishop was presented with the plans and key from the architectural firm, Martin Riley Mock.

He immediately turned them over to Father Van Kempen, then led the procession into the church.

It had been a very foggy morning but, as if on cue, the sun broke through clouds and fog, flooding the sanctuary with a warm glow as the bishop anointed the new altar. The sun continued shining through the tall, Gothic-style stained-glass windows while parishioners sang "Christ, Be Our Light." Candles were lit and church lights came on, adding to the profusion of light as bishop and priests prepared to celebrate the Eucharist.

The November fog even tied in with some of the bishop's thoughts shared in his homily.

"This ceremony," he said, "pulls aside the veil so that we see things in a different light. We go from the invisible to visible . . . that is why there are statues and why you preserve the beautiful old parts of this church."

Noting the consecration of the altar and church rededication is "one of the most beautiful liturgies in the church," the bishop said "it gives us the opportunity to live a moment of faith together."

He noted that in the liturgy "you hear expressions about liv-



HISTORIC — A parishioner, left, views some of the old photos, clothing and other artifacts displayed in connection with the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph Church, Hessen Cassel. A stained-glass window, above, was among those originally brought from a Protestant church in Germany for installation in the church, built in 1857. At far right, Bishop D'Arcy accepts the keys and architectural drawings before leading parishioners into the church for the Mass and rededication liturgy.

(Photos by Sharon Little)

ing stones . . . with anointing and blessing and consecrating this holy place, but the real consecration is you and me, the people," he said. It is through the Mass and receiving of the Eucharist that "we're changed and made over" to ideally "go from this place" resolved to love family, the poor, others in need.

"This is a liturgy you attend once in a lifetime" and the inclusion of the Litany of the Saints, rarely included in a liturgy, is "showing us the church is the church on earth and in heaven. We're in communion with saints . . . we're praying for the saints in heaven to bless this parish and building."

The saints, the bishop said, include some known as well as unknown, the latter including "your parents and grandparents, who lived simple lives in this place," and made the church "their home and center of it all."

In his remarks to parishioners following Mass, Father Van Kempen said it would take more than an hour to thank "everyone who has been truly a great help during the (renovation) process. It's truly a great day for us to rejoice and give thanks to God."

Father Van Kempen said the church and parish are a "place to relax in the presence of God and to give God glory and honor due him," and he also expressed gratitude to Bishop D'Arcy, who in turn expressed thanks to the pas-



tor for "having the vision, courage, energy and willingness to undertake this task. You have given honor to all those who founded this parish." The bishop said "it's hard to believe this is the same church where we prayed and worshiped before."

In introducing Msgr. Campion, editor of Priest magazine, the bishop said he is one who "has been a great help to Msgr. Contant and to Father Bob" in assisting with Masses and in other ways in the parish.

The congregation gave hearty applause to both Msgr. Campion and Msgr. Contant who, despite difficulty in walking, stood briefly to acknowledge parishioners' obvious affection for him.

In the back of the church, young Billy Green, 4 1/2, had an answer when Bishop D'Arcy asked parishioners if they had enjoyed the rededication liturgy. "Yes!" Billy piped up. And, from their applause, it appeared more than 300 others agreed with Billy.

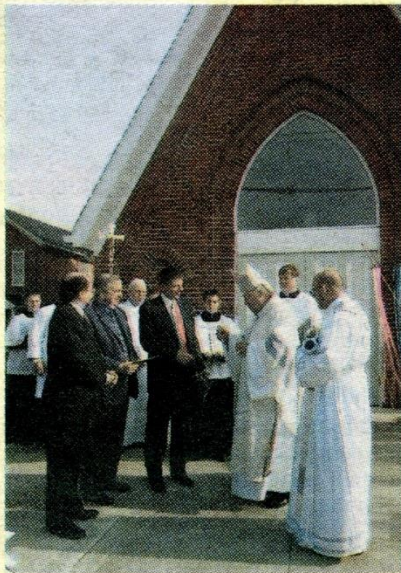
Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart when the Poor Handmaids devoted their attention to the development of St. Joseph Hospital in the late 1800s. That connection is still alive. Sister Julienne said she has been at St. Joseph Hospital for the past nine years and still visits with nieces and nephews who are a part of her home parish in Hessen Cassel.

Janet Haynes said, for her, “family ties are the strongest thing” at St. Joseph Parish where four of her seven children are currently enrolled in the school. Sons Kris, 17, and Eric, 15, were among the musicians at the Mass, she said. “My family moved away from here 42 years ago,” but there are parishioners who still remember the family, she said. Her mother, Betty Herber Landin, was baptized and celebrated her first Communion in the parish, she said, and Janet’s own husband, Mark, and their children

have been members for 10 years.

At 83, Mildred Wyss Steenman said she has always belonged to St. Joseph Parish. She was educated in the school and, after her marriage, she and her husband, Joseph, now deceased, sent their five children through the same school.

What’s special about the parish to her? “It’s home to me,” she quickly answered. About the renovations, she said, “at first, I didn’t agree with everything. I guess older people usually do have a different idea,” she said, smiling. But now, she added, “I think it’s just beautiful.”



Father Bob Van Kempen, relaxing after the first Mass celebrated in the church since January, had enthusiastic

words to sum it up: “It’s an awesome day!” He said the parish celebrations focused on past, present and future, and the visit to the old parish cemetery

behind the church was especially moving.

He said about 100 people participated Saturday evening; each had a candle and, on a path lined with luminaries, they walked to the cemetery where they visited several graves, starting with the most recent and going to the oldest, dating to the 1840s. All the names of deceased in parish records had been compiled and, with these reminders of those whose lives had impacted on the parish, they were led in prayer and a meditation from Luke. Then, Father Van Kempen said, the candles they left at various grave sites became luminous reminders throughout the night. Even in the fog, he said, “you could see them burning.”

The parish completed its celebration Sunday with a dinner following the rededication Mass.

In his acknowledgments Sunday, Bishop John M. D’Arcy expressed appreciation to Beverly Rieger for her role in planning the liturgy and who, besides being head of the diocesan Office of Worship, is, the bishop said, “a native of this parish.” Rieger and Jim Fitzpatrick, who frequently serves as master of ceremonies at the bishop’s Masses, assisted parishioners Saturday in preparing for the rededication Mass.

Aerial Photograph Hessen Cassel Parish (2014)

An aerial map showing the current campus of the parish is presented below (Figure 102). The cemetery is located in the plat area numbered with a blue 36. The current parish office is the building with blue 39 superimposed on it. The church is shown straddling the blue line between parts 38 and 39. Part 38 shows the old convent/rectory, while the school (building with dark, flat roof) is located in part blue 37. The Msgr. Robert Contant Building (gym/multipurpose) is marked with a red 452. The recreation hall is the building in section blue 37 with the white roof nearest Benzinger Drive.



Although strict accuracy standards have been employed in the compilation of this map, Allen County does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy of the information contained herein and disclaims any and all liability resulting from any error or omission in this map.
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North American Datum 1983
State Plane Coordinate System, Indiana East



Date: 3/24/2014 1" = 118'

Figure 102 – Aerial View of St. Joseph Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, IN (2014).

Chapter 24 – The Parish Picnic (c. 1875 - Present)

One event that became very popular over the years at the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel Church was the parish picnic. It became such an attraction, that many people from both Fort Wayne and Decatur would travel to Hessen Cassel in order to attend this picnic, which was open to the public. In fact, the interurban train line would run extra trips with special discount fares between Fort Wayne and Hessen Cassel just to accommodate the many people attending the picnic. In addition to home-cooked chicken dinners, various “refreshments”, home-made ice cream, and other food items, the picnic also offered entertainment and games as a main part of the fun-filled day.

1876

Exactly when the first parish picnic took place at Hessen Cassel is not known, but it was an early part of the parish life. One of the earliest references found regarding the picnic was a one-sentence notice published in a Fort Wayne newspaper on 15 June 1876.²¹³ It read: “A large picnic is in progress at Hesse Cassel.” This had to be a well-recognized event to make the newspaper at this time in history, especially since the picnic took place in a small community outside of the “big city”. Based on a follow-up article about the picnic in the newspaper the next day, it appears that politicians also attended these large social gatherings in order to take the opportunity to meet people and do some handshaking.²¹⁴ The following was reported: “The candidates were thick enough at Hesse Cassel yesterday. There was a picnic there, you know.”

1877

One year later, the parish picnic was again covered by the Fort Wayne newspaper on 30 May 1877.²¹⁵ It read: “To-morrow a Catholic picnic will be held at Hesse Cassel.” This was followed-up in the newspaper two days later on 1 June 1877 with the following.²¹⁶ “The Catholic picnic, at Hesse Cassel, was a big success. Many attended from this city.”

1899

Over the next 20 year period (1878-1898), no articles were found in the Fort Wayne newspapers about the Hessen Cassel parish picnic, but this does not mean that such picnics were not held during this time period. Then on 9 August 1899, the following article appeared in the local Fort

²¹³ “Happenings”. Fort Wayne News, Thursday, 15 June 1876, page 4, column 3.

²¹⁴ “Happenings”. Fort Wayne News, Friday, 16 June 1876, page 1, column 3. (R673)

²¹⁵ “City in General”. Fort Wayne Daily Gazette, Wednesday, 30 May 1877, page 4, column 2.

²¹⁶ “City in General”. Fort Wayne Daily Gazette, Friday, 1 June 1877, page 4, column 2

Wayne newspaper.²¹⁷ “The congregation of the Hesse Cassel Catholic church will hold a picnic in Smith’s grove near the town, next Sunday [i.e. 13 August 1899].” A follow-up story the day after the picnic was printed in the Fort Wayne newspaper on 14 August 1899.²¹⁸ It read as follows: “Fr. Benzinger, of Hesse Castle, gave a farmers’ picnic in the church grounds at the town yesterday. A crowd of several hundred attended the picnic and over a hundred went from this city. The afternoon was passed in a most pleasant manner. Refreshments were laid out in the grove of which the guests partook.”

1900

On 4 August 1900, a brief mention was made in a Fort Wayne newspaper about the parish picnic that year.²¹⁹ It stated: “The H.C.U.M. club will give a picnic at Smith’s grove, Hesse Cassel, on Sunday, August 12.” The H.C.U.M. club was probably some type of Hessen Cassel parish organization.

1915

From the Fort Wayne newspapers, it appears that the parish picnic was re-instituted or taken over by the church youth organizations around 1913. It was referred to as a “social” in the 17 July 1915 newspaper as follows.²²⁰ “The young men of St. Joseph’s church, Hesse Cassel, have completed plans for a social to be given by them, Wednesday afternoon and evening, July 28. Lunch and refreshments will be served. Bowling will be an important feature. Everybody is invited to attend.”

A follow-up article was printed 10 days later as follows.²²¹ “The young people of St. Joseph’s church, Hesse Cassel, will give a social at the church grounds, Stop 9, on the Decatur interurban line, Wednesday, starting at 4 o’clock in the afternoon. The young people have named their committees to plan the function. The St. Aloysius Young Men’s sodality has appointed the following committee: Messrs. Louis Sorg, John F. Wyss, Jr., Frank J. Kleber, Anthony Zuber, Frank Beckman, and Edward Lallack. The St. Agnes Young Ladies sodality has named the following people: Regina Sorg, Alice Kennerk, Regina Hoffman, Estella Wyss, Helen Gibson and Bernadetta Sorg. Bowling will be one of the features of the afternoon program. Refreshments are to be served.”

²¹⁷ Fort Wayne News, Wednesday, 9 August 1899, page 3, column 4.

²¹⁸ Fort Wayne Sentinel, Monday, 14 August 1899, page 3, column 1.

²¹⁹ Fort Wayne News, Saturday, 4 August 1900, page 3.

²²⁰ “Church News.” Fort Wayne Daily News, Saturday, 17 July 1915, page 3.

²²¹ “Committees Named to Arrange Social.” Fort Wayne Daily News, Tuesday, 27 July 1915.

1916

A description of the parish picnic of 1916 was found in the Fort Wayne newspapers.^{222,223} In addition to the young peoples' sodalities, the separate parish men and women sodalities also assisted in preparing the church picnic this year. Portions excerpted from the newspapers are as follows: "A chicken supper will be held at St. Joseph church, Hesse Cassel, next Sunday evening, August 20, according to arrangements made by the sodalities of the church. The grounds will be open to the public about noon, after services have been completed at the church. Refreshments of all kinds will be served, and all sorts of amusements have been staged for the afternoon and evening. Bowling in the new alleys purchased last winter by the young men's sodality will be an important feature. . . . Messrs. Ed Lallock, Joe Sorg, Joe Beckman, Fred Minnick and Lawrence Sorg have completed their soliciting parishioners and according to their report a liberal dinner is assured. . . . St. Joseph's church is located eight miles south of the city on the Decatur stone road and is in easy access both by auto and the Decatur interurban line. Special [train] car service is afforded Sunday afternoon and evening. Everything possible is being done to accommodate the people who desire to attend the event next Sunday."

1917

In 1917, the event was again termed a "social" in the newspapers.^{224,225} One of the articles reads: "Plans are rapidly progressing for the fourth annual social of the St. Joseph's Catholic church, at Hesse Cassel, which will be held on the church grounds, stop 6, Decatur interurban line, Aug. 26, under the auspices of the young people of the congregation. The annual picnic will commence immediately after dinner and will continue throughout the afternoon and evening. Refreshments will be served throughout the day and bowling and many other features of interest will be provided. The members of the church are endeavoring to make this the most successful social ever held by the parish."

1920

Another report of the Hesse Cassel parish picnic was published in the 1920 Fort Wayne newspaper.²²⁶ "Two parish picnics, annual events in the respective parishes, are schedule for

²²² "Chicken Dinner at Hesse Cassel Church." Fort Wayne News, Friday, 12 August 1916, page 3.

²²³ "Chicken Supper at St. Joseph's Church. Big Time Planned for Hesse Cassel Benefit Sunday." Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, Saturday, 13 August 1916, page 3.

²²⁴ "Church News. Plan Annual Social. St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Hesse Cassel, to Hold Yearly Outing Sunday." Fort Wayne Daily News, Saturday, 22 August 1917, page 2.

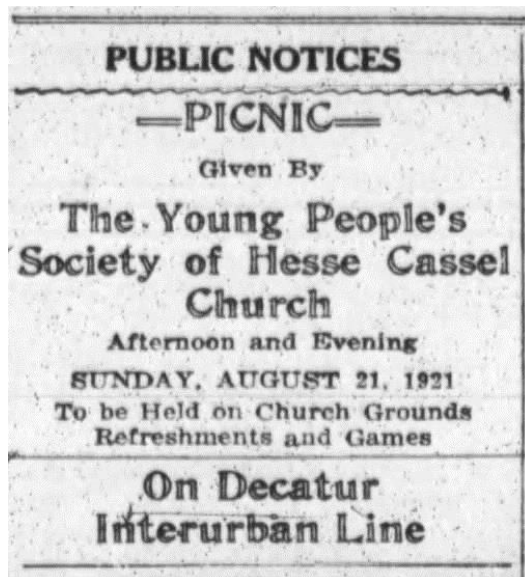
²²⁵ "In The Churches. St. Joseph Church Social Next Sunday, Annual Event Will Be Held on Grounds on Decatur Interurban Line." Fort Wayne Sentinel, Saturday, 22 August 1917, page 6.

²²⁶ "Two Parish Picnics Arranged for Sunday. Congregations at Academie and Hesse Cassel Announce Annual Events." Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, Saturday, 31 July 1920, page 2.

Sunday, August 1... The fifth annual picnic of St. Joseph's parish, Hesse Cassel, of which Rev. Max Benzinger is pastor, is announced for Sunday under the auspices of the young Men's Society of the parish. In both parishes entertainment will be provided for old and young, and the public is cordially invited to attend."

1921

In the 1921 newspaper, the following public notice was printed.²²⁷



In the 1922 Fort Wayne newspaper, this appeared under "Entertainments."²²⁸



²²⁷ "Public Notices." Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, Friday, 19 August 1921, page 16.

²²⁸ "Entertainments." Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, 3 August 1922, page 12.

In 1923, the following add was printed along with an article about the picnic.²²⁹



“Plans for the ninth annual picnic to be given Sunday, August 5 (1923), by the Young People’s society of St. Joseph’s Catholic church, at Hesse Cassel, have practically been completed. A chicken supper will be served by the ladies of the congregation and refreshments may be procured at stands on the grounds. Various games will feature the event, which will be held on the parish grounds, on the Decatur road. The Rev. Max Benzinger is pastor of the Catholic church at Hesse Cassel.”

1929

An advertising flyer for this year²³⁰ contained the following notice: “Hessen Cassel Picnic, Sunday August 4 – 1929. St. Joseph Church Hessen Cassel will hold their famous annual chicken dinner Sunday August 4 – 1929 from 12 to 3 o’clock Daylight Saving Time. In the evening a good lunch will be served. On the picnic grounds different booths will be put up for all kinds of games and refreshments. The join road between Ft. Wayne and Decatur is completed and visitors will enjoy themselves. Everybody welcome: Don’t miss the good dinner. The Rev. F. J. Hasler, Pastor of the Congugation [sic], with the following members as the picnic committee will guarantee you a very pleasant time. Andrew Bubb, Stephen Sorg, Leo Gibson, Frank Minich, Frank P. Hoffman, Frank Beckaman [sic], Frank Ottonweller [sic], Joseph Berg, Eugene [sic] Boyle, Mrs. Lawrence Schiffli, Mrs. Joseph Minich, Mrs. Frank Berg, Miss Esther Minich, Miss Marie Herber, Miss Mary Wyss.

²²⁹ “Hesse Cassel Picnic.” Fort Wayne News Sentinel, 31 July 1923, page 15; 28 July 1923, page 15.

²³⁰ “Hessen Cassel Picnic Sunday August 4 – 1929”. Original document owned by Delores Berg, now in possession of parishioner, John Schreiber, 24 January 2015.

1932

Over the years, the parish picnic continued to grow. The popularity of the annual parish picnic at this time in history is illustrated by articles in the *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* concerning the 1932 event.²³¹ On 1 July 1932 the following was published: "HESSEN CASSEL PICNIC. St. Joseph's Parish to Conduct Annual Outing August 7. Under auspices of Rev. Fridoln J. Hasler, pastor, and the congregation of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Hessen Cassel, the annual picnic is scheduled for Sunday, August 7. Starting at 11 a.m. (D.S.T.), an inviting chicken dinner will be served by the ladies of the parish. Numerous stands, concessions, and amusement centers on the grounds are announced. Preliminary plans for the festive occasion are under way. Proceeds are for the benefit of the church." On the day of the festival, the following article appeared: "Picnic and Chicken Dinner in Parish at Hessen Cassel. Featured by chicken dinner, served beginning at 11 a.m., the annual picnic sponsored by Rev. F.J. Hasler and the congregation of St. Joseph's Catholic church, Hessen Cassel, will be held today. Extensive preparations have been made to provide for a record attendance at the dinner and picnic which is open to the public. The ladies of the congregation have prepared and will serve the inviting dinner. The various stands, concessions and amusement centers will be located on the church grounds with the men in charge. Proceeds are for the benefit of the church. Attractive, entertaining features have been secured for children and adults, they include the popular bingo stand with its array of attractive awards." On the day after the picnic, the newspaper carried the following story. "SERVE OVER 800 MEALS. St. Joseph's Picnic, Hessen Cassel, Proves Popular Outing. Approximately 600 dinners and over 200 suppers were served on Sunday at the annual picnic conducted by Rev. F.J. Hasler and the congregation of St. Joseph's Catholic church, Hessen Cassel. The meals were served by the ladies of the congregation. Refreshment stands, concessions and amusement centers on the church grounds were liberally patronized. ..."

Personal Accounts

Emil Herber (1915-1997) has described in detail the manner in which the parish picnic was conducted when he was a committee member.²³² He stated that the annual church picnic was a big, popular affair with the entire parish cooperating. Each parishioner would donate 3 or 4 chickens for the dinners. On the Friday evening before the Sunday picnic, a designated person would drive around and pick up the chickens from each household. Most people gave very nice, plump chickens for the event. The next Saturday, everyone gathered at one place to kill and clean all the chickens. The chickens were killed, put into caldrons of boiling water, and then plucked of feathers by hand. On Sunday morning the chickens were taken by truck to a bakery on Rudisill Boulevard and cooked to a golden brown. The cooked chickens were brought back in

²³¹ *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, Friday, 1 July 1932, page 3, column 8; Sunday, 7 August 1932, page 3, column 1; and Monday, 8 August 1932, page 5, column 4 [R1101].

²³² "Interview with Emil Herber", 4 June 1992; notes in possession of Carl J, Kleber. [R1114]

rotisserie ovens and sold for the dinners. The chicken dinners were always very delicious and popular. There were also lots of games to play. Emil recalled specifically that there were two wooden bowling alleys someone had built for the games. Each one had gutters and the pins hung down from the top. Each player got two balls for a nickel and tried to knock the pins down (or actually up) for a prize. There was a wire attached to a handle at one end and the pin lever at the other. To reset the pins, you pulled the handle and the pins were pulled back down from the top. There was also a paddle wheel with numbers on it. A player paid a nickel for one paddle or 3 paddles for a dime. After all the paddles were sold, the wheel was spun and whose number it stopped on was the winner. Usually the lucky winner won a cigar. Sometimes for the women playing the game a nice wool blanket was awarded the winner. Also a big raffle was always held. The raffle tickets cost 10 cents each or 3 for 25 cents. The raffle prizes were always very nice and most people purchased tickets for the raffle. One year the first prize was a riding or carriage horse. There were also several other smaller prizes for second, third, etc. place. Homemade ice cream was also sold at the picnic. It was packed in 5 gallon casks and kept in ice until needed. This ice cream was always delicious. Altogether, the parish picnic usually netted 2 or 3 thousand dollars. This was a lot of money in those days and helped keep the pew rent down for the parishioners.

Alvin “Jonsey” Kleber (1920-1992) also told about the fun that he had while attending the annual parish picnic in his boyhood.²³³ He recalled that on the day of the picnic, his mother, Barbara (Sorg) Kleber, would give him and each of his numerous siblings a quarter to spend on anything they desired at the picnic. This 25 cents was added to any other money that they may have earned during the year. The children of the parish saved their money all year long just for this one day. It was always difficult for him to decide which games to play or food to buy, but he always ended up spending every last nickel. It was usually the highlight event of the summer for him and his siblings.

Some indication of the monetary importance of the annual parish picnic is evident in the aforementioned 1936 financial statement for St. Joseph Hessen Cassel church.²³⁴ In 1936, the picnic brought in \$1150, which amounted to almost 20% of the operating funds for the whole year. Thus, the picnic, in addition to its social function, was also a major fund raiser and source of income for the parish.

²³³ “Interview with Alvin J. Kleber”, 15 February 1983; notes in possession of Carl J, Kleber. [R571]

²³⁴ Financial Statement. St. Joseph’s Church, Hessen Cassel, Indiana. Rev. J. Baker, Pastor. Clem Wyss, Frank Beckman, & Oscar Hoffman, Committee. 1936.; see last page. (Original in the possession of John Schreiber, parishioner, 2015).

Chapter 25 – The Recreational Hall (1948)

Under the guidance of Fr. Gollner, the parish constructed a large, recreational hall in 1948 on the church property at the corner of Benzinger Drive and Old Decatur Road. Called the Hessen Cassel Recreational Center, it is one-story building constructed with cement blocks and has a brick facade. It originally had a flat roof, but a pitched, metal roof has recently been constructed. Most of the construction work was done by the volunteer labor of the parishioners. The hall was also equipped with a large kitchen area for preparing and serving food. It also has a small stage for holding performances, bands, speakers, etc. A multitude of parish events are held within the hall, such as meetings, funeral luncheons, plays, etc., and it has even been used as the school cafeteria. Besides serving the social needs of the parish, the hall is rented for various outside activities such as wedding receptions, family reunions, anniversaries, parties, etc. Because the hall was always in high demand, the initial cost of the building was recouped within a few years.

A 1957 photo of the hall showing the west entrance is presented below (Figure 103).

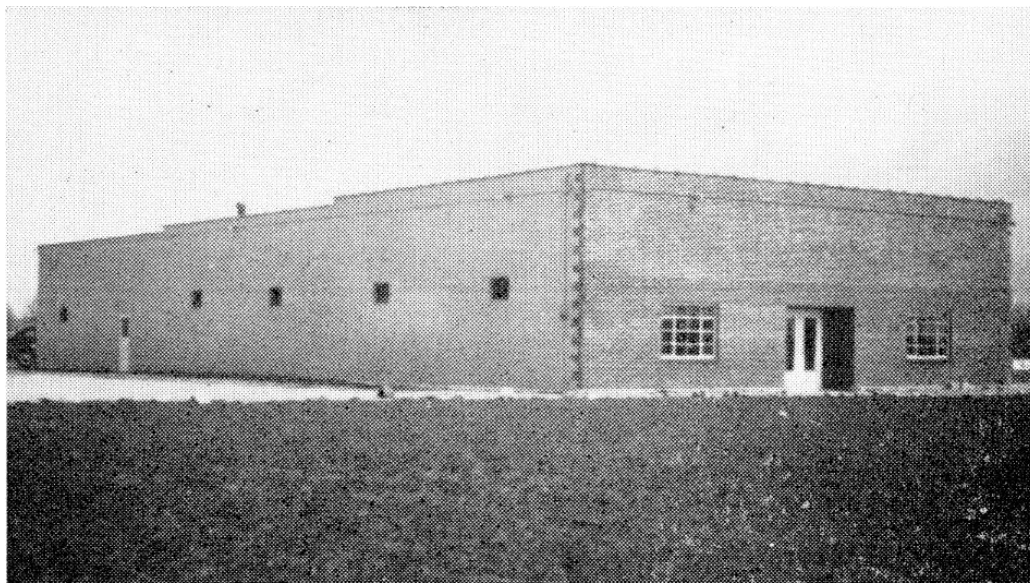


Figure 103 – Hessen Cassel recreational Hall, 1957.

Chapter 26 – The Way to Hessen Cassel

This chapter provides more or less supplemental information pertinent to the history of Hessen Cassel, IN, specifically regarding migration routes, the Piqua Road, and the interurban train. The first settlers at Hessen Cassel were German immigrants that arrived in 1833 to 1834. In those days the journey was made predominately via waterways. From the province of Hessen Cassel in Germany, these early immigrants went overland by wagon or by the interior river system to the port of Bremen, Germany. From there they embarked on sailing vessels across the Atlantic Ocean to the port of New York. Next they obtained passage on boats that went up the Hudson River to Lake Erie, then on to Detroit. At this point they made their way overland in ox-drawn wagons to Fort Wayne over very difficult trails. Once in Fort Wayne, their decision to buy farmland in the area that would later become Hessen Cassel, IN was directly influenced by the existence of the newly-constructed Piqua Road (1830) which provided access to the interior wilderness southeast of Fort Wayne. Transportation in the Hessen Cassel area evolved greatly over the years. Although the first access was probably by canoe or boat via the St. Mary's river, the Piqua Road allowed horses and wagons to reach the area. The Piqua road surface improved from bare dirt to wooden planks to stone gravel to asphalt pavement over the years. Then trains became a fast way to travel, soon followed by automobiles, which made travel with horses obsolete.

The Piqua/Decatur Road (1830 – Present)

The Piqua (pronounced “pick-way”) Road played a very important role in the settlement of Marion Township and Hessen Cassel. Therefore, some discussion of its history and development over the years is appropriate. As the name implies, the Piqua Road originally led south from Fort Wayne about 100 miles to Piqua, Ohio, via Decatur, Indiana. It led out from Calhoun Street directly south for one mile, and then went in a southeasterly direction along the east side of the St. Mary's River for seven more miles before reaching Hessen Cassel. Thus, the Piqua Road was the main thoroughfare for the early settlers of Hessen Cassel to travel north to Fort Wayne and south to Decatur, and the St. Joseph Catholic Church was built along this road.

When first surveyed in 1830, the Piqua Road went all the way into downtown Fort Wayne. Later, the downtown portion of Piqua Road was renamed Calhoun Street. In present day Fort Wayne, starting at the 2900 block of Calhoun Street and running in a southeasterly direction, is Piqua Avenue. This is the original route of the Piqua Road. When Piqua Avenue merges into Clinton Street, the Piqua Road follows Clinton Street until McKinnie Avenue, where it merges with Lafayette Street. The Piqua Road then follows Lafayette Street until just south of Pettit Avenue, where it turns off into the Decatur Road (now Old Decatur Road).

In Helm's 1880 history of Allen County, IN, the following is found regarding the first roads in Marion Township.²³⁵

“The first road was cut out by Gen. Wayne's army, on their way to Fort Wayne, and in later years it was improved and widened, and made a public highway [note: this road was called Wayne Trace, originally an old buffalo/Indian trail, and was sometimes referred to as the Old Piqua Road]. The first regularly surveyed road, however, was the Piqua State road. It was located in 1830, by Benjamin Lytle, assisted by Hugh and William Bays, and Peter Dalman. The trees were permitted to lie near where they fell, in locating the road, and thus formed a dam which prevented the water from running off. The region was marshy at best, and in wet weather the road was almost impassable. It was traveled by heavy teams [i.e. large horse drawn wagons], and it was often found necessary to leave the road and hunt a passage through the woods; and, until 1850, the lines laid out for the Piqua road were almost entirely disregarded. In that year, a stock company was formed, and the road was graded and covered with plank from Fort Wayne to a point near Wiltshire, Ohio. Toll-houses were erected along the road, and a daily line of stage-coaches was put in operation. All was prosperous, and the stockholders derived a good return for their investment, for several years. Finally, however, the road was sold to satisfy a mortgage, and fell into the hands of private parties, who failed to keep it in repair, but at the same time insisted upon collecting toll. The travelers over the road resented this injustice, and one evening the toll-house was fired and burned to the ground. After this, the planks were appropriated by citizens along the line, and the plank road ceased to exist. It is still one of the important highways leading from Fort Wayne, and is extensively traveled.”

Griswold's history of Fort Wayne, published many years later in 1917, seems to paraphrase the above account.²³⁶

“This Piqua state road was the first road to be surveyed through the region, the only other thoroughfare being Wayne Trace, the route followed by General Wayne's army in its departure from the fort in 1794, and which was improved and widened into a public highway as years passed. The Piqua road was located by Benjamin Lytle with the assistance of the Bays brothers and Peter Dalman. It traversed a marshy region where a road was at any season apt to be heavy. Added to this natural difficulty, the trees felled in course of surveying the road were not removed, thus forming dams which held the water from rains, and made travel impossible over much of the route. Heavy teams were obliged to seek pathways through the woods, and the road line was disregarded. In 1850, a stock company undertook the management of the road, graded and planked it from Fort Wayne to Willshire, installed a line of daily stages and erected toll

²³⁵ Helm, Thomas B. History of Allen County, Indiana: with illustrations and biographical sketches of some of its prominent men and pioneers: to which is appended maps of its several townships and villages. (Chicago: Kingman Brothers, 1880); see Newton, L. H. “Marion Township”, page 158.

²³⁶ Griswold, Bert. J. Pictorial History of Fort Wayne, Indiana. (Chicago: Robert O. Law, 1917); Vol. 1:618.

houses from which a goodly revenue was collected. Prosperity followed along the road for years until in the course of time it changed ownership and was neglected so seriously that the travelers rebelled against the toll, burned the toll house and carried off the planks. Officially the road ceased to exist, - but in spite of that fact, it remains a much traveled and popular thoroughfare. Like all roads in the county it has been improved to a high degree. The Decatur Interurban Electric line now follows that route (1917).”

In the most recent (2006) history of Allen County, IN by Beatty, the following account of the Piqua Road is provided.²³⁷

“Of more significance to the early settlement, however, was the opening of the Piqua Road, also in 1830, which was formally surveyed and graded by a party consisting of Benjamin Lytle, Hugh and William Bays, and Peter Dalman. This road, too, had been an Indian trail and ran diagonally through the center of the township to the east of the (St. Mary’s) river. In widening the original trail, the men had cut a number of trees that were allowed to lie where they fell. During wet weather, the trees acted as dams, preventing runoff from the road and reducing it to mud. The marshy conditions made travel difficult, and those wagons pulled by a strong team were often the ones to get through. Other travelers found it necessary to find parallel paths through the woods to avoid the mud and standing water. The opening of the road, however poor, served as a catalyst for the settlement of Marion Township.”

“The Piqua Road remained the main route of travel, despite its poor condition. In 1850, a group of investors formed a stock company for improving travel on the road. After applying for a mortgage, the group began paving it with planks as far as Willshire, Ohio. To help recoup its construction costs, the company installed a series of toll houses along the road and established a line of stage coaches. Despite early hopes for profit, the venture failed, and ownership of the turnpike fell to a different group of private investors, who neglected to keep the road in repair despite insisting on the payment of tolls. Local residents resented this move and vented their frustration by setting fire to one of the toll houses and appropriating most of the planks for personal use. The road remained open, however, even with the loss of the planks.”

The first attempt to improve the bare-earth Piqua Road was by converting it to a wooden plank road in 1850. There were a number of reasons for favoring plank roads over other types at this time in history. They were less costly to build, easier to repair, and horses could carry twice the load on plank roads versus other types. The most important factor was the plentiful supply of lumber available from the surrounding land being cleared. Regarding the construction of the Piqua plank road, Robinson provides some additional information: “In 1850, it was decided to make the Piqua road a plank road and stage route, and a saw-mill was put up on the land of Louis Lopshire for the manufacture of the needed lumber. He at once prepared for the founding of a

²³⁷ Beatty, John D. (ed.). *History of Fort Wayne & Allen County, Indiana, 1700-2005*. (Evansville, Ind.: M.T. Pub. Co., c2006), Chapter 44, pages 519-527, “Marion Township & Poe”.

town here (in Marion Township), and in April, 1851, the town of Middleton was duly platted [note: Middletown, now defunct, was located approximately 3 miles south of Hessen Cassel, near Decatur, IN; see map Figure 105].”²³⁸

A description of how plank roads were made was provided in an issue of the 1845 Fort Wayne Sentinel newspaper.²³⁹ “The road is graded uniformly thirty-five feet wide, slightly convex, and the center raised to three feet and a half above the bottom of the side ditches, which are made sufficiently large to carry off the water readily... Upon this road thus graded, the superstructure is place, by laying down longitudinally with the road, five pieces of 4x6 scantling equidistant from each other. These are firmly bedded in the earth, and the spaces between them compactly filled even with the surface. Upon these a course of three inch plank is laid edge to edge, and the ends secured by seven inch spikes. About one foot of each end of the plank is then covered with earth, to the depth of three inches and the remainder of the plank covered with sand, to the depth of two inches. The same protects the plank from wear, and is kept in place by the deeper covering of earth on each side. From the covering on the ends of the plank, the slope to the side ditches is sufficient to carry off the falling water. The water that settled beneath the plank is discharged into the side ditches by frequent cross drains. Through and in the vicinity of the principal towns, the plank are sixteen feet long, forming two roadways; but where the travel is less, the plank are twelve feet long, forming only a single track.”

From the above historical accounts, it is apparent that during the 20-year period of 1830 to 1850 traveling the 8 miles over the unimproved Piqua Road between Hessen Cassel and Fort Wayne was not easy. Some indication of the journey was provided in the Clement H. Smith story about “Bears in Hessen Cassel”.²⁴⁰ The story, which occurred circa 1845, relates: “The way to Fort Wayne from these farms [at Hessen Cassel] was covered with dense forests and swamps. About once every two or three months one in the neighborhood was elected to go to Fort Wayne to buy the provisions for the entire community, such as flour, peanuts, smoking tobacco, clothing, etc. Usually a meeting was held the evening before and all gave in their orders. Grandfather John Smith (i.e. Johannes Schmidt) was to buy on this event. Starting out at daybreak, for it took a whole day to make the trip.”

On 2 July 1863, well after the Piqua Road had been planked in 1850, a description of the ride from Fort Wayne to Hessen Cassel was recorded by Mother Frances Schervier, the Founder of

²³⁸ Robertson, Robert S. Valley of the Upper Maumee River, with historical account of Allen County and the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The story of its progress from savagery to civilization. (Madison, WI: Brant & Fuller, 1889); see “Annals of the Townships”, vol. 1, page 433.

²³⁹ Fort Wayne Sentinel, 15 February 1845.

²⁴⁰ Herber, Clara & Emil; Bobay, Esther & Arthur; Stemen, Mildred & Joseph; and Landin, Betty. A Century in Review. Unpublished notes compiled for the preparation of centenary celebration booklet titled The First Hundred, St. Joseph's Church, Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1857-1957. Notes retyped with comments and additional information by Carl J. Kleber, 29 September 2013; copy located in the parish office archives.

the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, who established the first convent at Hessen Cassel. The story relates: “The pastor of St. Joseph Church at Hessen Cassel, Father Jacob Meyer, then took the two sisters to see the one-story, seven room frame house near his church, which was to serve as their convent. ‘That meant,’ wrote Mother Frances, ‘two hours in a country wagon on roads so bad that we continually invoked our guardian angel. The pious missionary, a German doctor of divinity, acted as driver, and brought us back to Fort Wayne the next day...’” The next month, on 8 August 1863, their follow-up trip to open the convent was described as follows: “Sister Felicitas met the Mother Foundress and the two Sisters in Fort Wayne and procured a conveyance to take them to Hessen Cassel. As they jogged along the eight miles through the forest over a rough road of stumps and stones, doubts began to assail their minds whether the location was suitable for their convent.”

From the above narrative, it is apparent that even in 1863 during the dry summer weather, it required two hours by wagon to travel the eight miles between Hessen Cassel and Fort Wayne, which equals an average speed of 4 miles per hour.

From 1850 to 1886, the Piqua Road was often referred to as the Piqua Plank Road in deed records, newspaper articles, and other sources. It appears that the road was not owned or maintained by Allen County during this time. Then on 21 April 1886, the Fort Wayne and Decatur Gravel Road Company was formed to gravel the Piqua Road, and thus the name was changed to reflect the name of the company.²⁴¹ By the end of 1886, the Fort Wayne and Decatur Gravel Road was finished and toll gates established. At this point in time, the Piqua Plank Road was now commonly referred to as the Decatur Road. This road was subsequently purchased by the Allen County Board of Commissioners on 12 November 1896 and thus made into a free road again with the upkeep and re-graveling paid for by county taxes.²⁴² In 1927, it became a paved highway and part of U.S Highway 27 that now extended to Florida. With expansion and improvements in U.S 27, a portion of the former Decatur Road became like a frontage road and was called the “Old Decatur Road”, which is the current address for the church.

²⁴¹ “New Toll Road”, Fort Wayne Sentinel, 21 April 1886, page 4.

²⁴² “The Court News”, Fort Wayne Weekly Journal, 12 November 1896, page 4.

The Interurban Train (1907 – 1927)

Besides the Piqua (aka Decatur) Road, which was the main access road between Hessen Cassel and Fort Wayne to the north and Decatur, IN to the south, another main transportation development that had a profound effect on Hessen Cassel was the Fort Wayne-Decatur interurban electric train line opened in 1907. This railroad line provided regular service between Fort Wayne and Decatur with a number of stops in-between, including Hessen Cassel and Nine Mile. It made travel for the rural residents of southern Allen County much more convenient and affordable before the advent of automobiles. The interurban was a type of electric railway, particularly prevalent in the United States and Canada, in the period 1900 to 1925, specializing primarily in the conveyance of passengers between cities. It was a hybrid between a city streetcar (tram) and a railroad train. It also allowed fast and easy access to cities for people who lived in the suburban or rural areas beyond. A map showing the actual route of the interurban line from Fort Wayne to Decatur can be found on-line at <http://g.co/maps/4csv6> which is provided by the indianarailroads.org. This map is especially interesting because it shows the old route of the Piqua Road in relation to the current US 27 highway. The interurban was discontinued in 1927 with the rise of the automobile. Below (Figure 74) is a partial map of Marion Township around 1910-1920 showing the interurban rail line, highlighted in pink, running along the west side of the Decatur Road and the farms that it traversed.²⁴³ It is identified on the map as the Ft. Wayne & Decatur Electric Railway. Figure 104 shows one of the electric trains that traveled on the Fort Wayne-Decatur interurban line. Originally car 103, it was built by St Louis Car Co in 1917, but was sold and rebuilt as shown below.

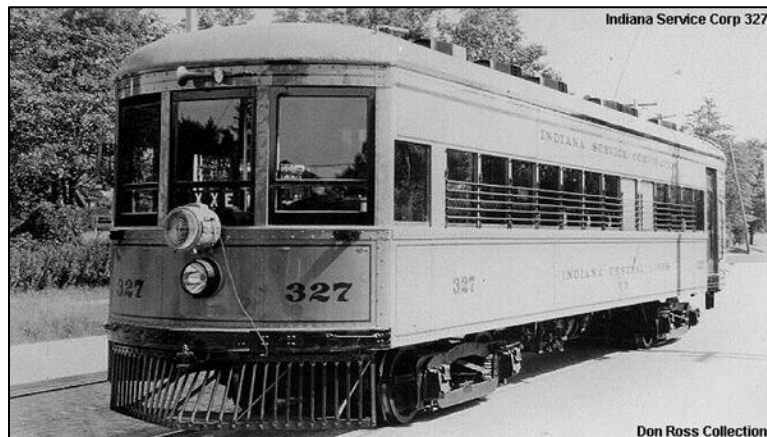


Figure 104 – Fort Wayne-Decatur Interurban Electric Train

²⁴³ Lindemuth, C. Ross. Plat book of Allen County, Indiana (Fort Wayne, IN: Allen County Public Library, c1920).



Figure 105 – Map of Fort Wayne & Decatur interurban electric train railway (dashed line highlighted in pink) running parallel to the Fort Wayne-Decatur Road, Marion Township, Allen Co., IN, c. 1910.

The Fort Wayne-Decatur interurban electric train line was built along the west side of the Decatur Road, and it was necessary for the train company to obtain from the various land owners a 15 foot strip of land along the entire distance. The land across from Hessen Cassel church was owned by Christoph Kleber, and a 15-foot right of way was obtained from him by the railroad in a deed dated 3 August 1904.²⁴⁴ The company paid him \$250 and agreed "to make and repair all necessary crossings over said Right-of-Way for the passage of teams and wagons at all gateways and driveways along said premises; to build, construct, and maintain a good fence, suitable to turn stock, between the tract herein conveyed and the residue of the land of the grantors therein, except in front of barn a distance of 7 1/2 rods which the grantors agree to build and forever maintain. . . ., and in case no interurban or street railway is constructed on said land within 5 years, then the tract is to revert back to the original grantors. Interestingly, Mr. Kleber would actually be hit by this interurban train crossing his land a few years later.

A progress report of the building of this interurban railroad was printed in a 19 July 1906 Fort Wayne newspaper.²⁴⁵ It reads: "Work Progressing. Ties to Complete Line into Fort Wayne Due Next Week. (Decatur Democrat) Work on the Fort Wayne & Springfield interurban is progressing rapidly and from now on the finishing touches will be added as the work advances. Thirty cars of steel have arrived, this being a sufficient amount to lay the track to Hesse Castle (from Decatur). The big Wabash engine is hauling the gravel train and the road is being ballasted as fast as the track is laid. Another shipment of ties is due next week to complete the line into Fort Wayne. The work of placing the machinery in the power station is going forward and about 200 men are at work along the entire line. It begins to look as though cars would be running by fair week as was promised. The track on North Second street will be laid as soon as the grade for the brick street is completed. Manager Flederjohanns and his assistants are doing everything in their power to hurry the work along and their work is certainly showing for itself."

The announcement of the completion of the Fort Wayne – Decatur Interurban Line was subsequently published in Fort Wayne newspaper on 28 December 1906.²⁴⁶ The article is shown below.

²⁴⁴ "Deed of Sale from Christian and Mary Kleber to The Fort Wayne and Springfield Railroad Company" Allen County, IN Deed Book 181, pages 168-170, 3 August 1904 (recorded 6 October 1904).

²⁴⁵ "Railroads and Factories." Fort Wayne Daily News, 19 July 1906, page 5

²⁴⁶ "First Car to Come Over New Road Next Week. Decatur Interurban Line Is Nearly Ready for Operation." Fort Wayne Sentinel, 28 December 1906, pages 1 and 2.

FIRST CAR TO COME OVER NEW ROAD NEXT WEEK

**Decatur Interurban Line Is
Nearly Ready for Op-
eration.**

The first car on the new Fort Wayne and Springfield interurban line connecting Fort Wayne and Decatur will reach Fort Wayne next week, though the regular operation of cars for passenger service cannot be installed until a short time later, owing to the fact that the Westinghouse Electrical company has not yet completed the installation of the motors and other equipment of the cars.

This was the statement of President W. H. Fledderjohann, of the Fort Wayne and Springfield company, to a representative of The Sentinel this morning. Mr. Fledderjohann came to the city this morning on business connected with the road, and he was hopeful that the express car might make its initial trip from Decatur to Fort Wayne on Monday.

Will Give Hourly Service.

It is expected that the opening of regular passenger service will not be deferred later than the middle of January, and Mr. Fledderjohann said today that hourly service would be given from the start. The company has three passenger cars and one express car already at Decatur, and the latter is ready for service. Only the motors remain to be installed in the passenger coaches.

Wiremen have practically completed

(Continued on Page Two.)

FIRST CAR TO COME OVER NEW ROAD NEXT WEEK

(Continued from Page One.)

the stringing of the overhead work over the entire length of the line, and connection will be made before the close of the present week with the trolley wires of the Fort Wayne and Wabash Valley Traction company at the southern limits of Fort Wayne, so that the cars of the Decatur road can proceed down Calhoun street to the central portions of the city. Cars of the Decatur line will run from the Adams county court house in Decatur to the Allen county building in Fort Wayne.

Eight Scheduled Stops.

The line already completed is a fraction over twenty-one miles in length, and there are eight scheduled stops, as follows: Decatur, Monmouth, Dirksen's, St. John's, Middletown, Hesse Cassel, Thompson's Corner, City Limits and Fort Wayne.

The rate of fare between Fort Wayne and Decatur will be 40 cents for one way and 75 cents for the round trip, a fraction less than 2 cents per mile.

The Fort Wayne and Springfield company has had a long fight and has encountered many difficulties of one sort and another, but it is now in excellent condition, and President Fledderjohann is looking hopefully forward to a great business for the new road. Other officials of the company include Edward Fledderjohann, superintendent of construction; John H. Koenig, vice president and general counsel, and T. W. Shelton, general superintendent. Mr. Shelton formerly held a similar position with the Northern Ohio Traction company, but he is now a stockholder in the Fort Wayne and Springfield road. The new power house at Decatur has been given a thorough test, and the machinery is in perfect working order, ready for all demands for power when the cars on the new road are started.

Will Be Merely a Test.

Naturally, the early trips of the express cars will be made over the line merely as a test of the roadbed, cars and machinery, and there will be no attempt to take care of public business until the company assures itself that everything is working smoothly.

The opening of the Decatur line will make the fifth interurban road in operation into Fort Wayne, and will be the third to begin business during the past year. Both the Bluffton and the Auburn lines have been in operation less than twelve months.

The various interurban train lines from Fort Wayne would publish their Time Tables for arrivals and departures in the local newspapers. The 1907 time table for the new Fort Wayne-Decatur interurban line is show below.²⁴⁷ As shown in the table, 11 round trips were made each day.

FT. WAYNE & SPRINGFIELD RY. CO.		Cars Leave	
Decatur		Fort Wayne	
5:50 A.M.	.....	7:00 A.M.	.....
7:00 A.M.	.....	8:30 A.M.	.....
8:30 A.M.	.....	10:00 A.M.	.....
10:00 A.M.	.....	11:30 A.M.	.....
11:30 A.M.	.....	1:00 P.M.	.....
1:00 P.M.	.....	2:30 P.M.	.....
2:30 P.M.	.....	4:00 P.M.	.....
4:00 P.M.	.....	5:30 P.M.	.....
5:30 P.M.	.....	7:00 P.M.	.....
7:00 P.M.	.....	8:30 P.M.	.....
8:30 P.M.	.....	11:00 P.M.	.....

A similar time table from 1917 is shown below, except that it shows the various stops along the way from Fort Wayne to Decatur. The train stopped at both Hessen Cassel and Nine Mile.

Although this electric train provided many benefits for the people living at Hessen Cassel and vicinity, there were accidents. Only about a year after the interurban train service was in operation, Anthony Bubb, who owned the hotel-tavern at Nine Mile near Hessen Cassel, was struck and killed by the Decatur Limited train on 10 January 1908.²⁴⁸ Then On 8 October 1910, the Fort Wayne News reported on how John B. Wyss of Hessen Cassel prevented a head-on collision of two trains at the Hessen Cassel stop.²⁴⁹ Both articles are shown below.

EASTERN TIME
Fort Wayne & Decatur Traction Co.

Between
FORT WAYNE and DECATUR
SOUTH BOUND
Fort Wayne to Decatur

LEAVING FORT WAYNE
Eastern Time

No. of Trains.....	201	203	205	207	209	211	213	215	217	219
STATIONS.....	AM	AM	AM	AM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM
Lr. Ft. Wayne.....	7 00	8 30	10 00	11 30	1 00	2 30	4 00	5 30	7 00	8 30
Philby's.....	7 20	8 50	10 20	11 50	1 20	2 50	4 20	5 50	7 20	8 50
Thompson's.....	7 35	9 05	10 35	12 05	1 35	3 05	4 35	6 05	7 35	9 05
H. Cassel.....	7 50	9 20	10 50	12 20	1 50	3 20	4 50	6 20	7 50	9 20
Nine Mile.....	8 05	9 35	11 05	12 35	2 05	3 35	5 05	6 35	8 05	9 35
MidDetrow.....	8 20	9 50	11 20	12 50	2 20	3 50	5 20	6 50	8 20	9 50
St. John.....	8 35	10 05	11 35	13 05	2 35	4 05	5 35	7 05	8 35	10 05
H. Dirksens.....	8 50	10 20	11 50	13 20	2 50	4 20	5 50	7 20	8 50	10 20
Monmouth.....	9 05	10 35	12 05	13 35	3 05	4 35	6 05	7 35	9 05	10 35
Car Barns.....	9 20	10 50	12 20	13 50	3 20	4 50	6 20	7 50	9 20	10 50
Ar. Decatur.....	9 35	11 05	12 35	14 05	3 35	5 05	6 35	8 05	9 35	11 05

²⁴⁷ "Interurban Time Tables.", Fort Wayne Sentinel, 24 February 1907, page 4.

²⁴⁸ "Killed by Limited Car on Decatur Interurban. Anthony Bubb Meets Instant Death at Nine Mile House." Fort Wayne Sentinel, 10 January 1908, page 1.

²⁴⁹ "A Head-On Collision on Decatur Traction Line Narrowly Averted." Fort Wayne News, 8 October 1910, pg. 14.

KILLED BY LIMITED CAR ON DECATUR INTERURBAN

Anthony Bubb Meets In-
stant Death at "Nine
Mile House."

Anthony Bubb, for many years proprietor of the Nine Mile house on the Decatur road south of this city, was instantly killed in front of his place of business at 7:40 o'clock this morning by a south-bound limited car on the Fort Wayne and Springfield interurban line. The unfortunate man was familiarly called "Tony" Bubb, and was widely known.

The fatal accident occurred when Bubb attempted to cross the tracks ahead of the car, and he was hurled a distance of sixty feet. The tracks of the interurban line pass within a few feet of the Nine Mile house. There is a siding there and it is a meeting point for the trolley cars operating between Fort Wayne and Decatur. North-bound car No. 2 in charge of Conductor A. C. Prover had taken the siding to await the passing of the south-bound limited car which left Fort Wayne at 7:05 o'clock.

As the limited came into view, Bubb started to carry an empty beer case upon his shoulder across the tracks to be loaded upon the express car. Conductor Prover, of the north-bound car, called to Bubb and warned him of the approach of the limited car, but the man evidently misjudged the speed at which the car was coming and thought he could get safely across the tracks before it reached him. Just as he stepped from the rail the car struck him in the left side, and the injured man was pitched to earth sixty feet away. Trainmen and bystanders rushed to his side. He was gasping feebly and expired as Frank Gibson and others were carrying him into the dining room of his home. The car which struck him was No. 1, in charge of Motorman Hunsicker and Conductor Sholacker. Coroner Kesler was notified and left for the scene to hold an inquest.

Mr. Bubb was 68 years of age and a native of Pennsylvania. He had been a resident of Allen county for thirty-eight years, and had been in business at the Nine Mile house for the greater portion of that time. He is survived by the widow and ten children.

When those who witnessed the accident reached the side of the prostrate man he was only able to murmur, "I'm pretty badly hurt," and expired a moment later. Examination of the body reveals that many bones were broken by the force of the fall, and the skull was badly fractured.

The surviving children are Mrs. H. Zuber, of Marion township; Mrs. F. Harber and Mrs. H. Schuhler, of Pleasant township; Mrs. M. Sorg, of Marion township; Mrs. J. Gibson, of Fort Wayne; Miss Edna Bubb; George and Frank Bubb, of Pleasant township, and Anthony and Andrew Bubb, residing at the family home. The deceased was a member of the Catholic church.

Funeral services Monday morning at 9:30 from the residence and at 10 o'clock from the Catholic church at Hesse Cassel.

A HEAD-ON COLLISION

ON DECATUR TRACTION LINE
NARROWLY AVERTED.

Cars Stop Within Eight Feet of One
Another—Commissioner Wyss' Cool-
ness Prevents Disaster.

A repetition of the Kingland traction horror, in which forty people lost their lives two weeks ago, was averted only by the coolness of County Commissioner John B. Wyss Saturday morning when he flagged a freight train on the Fort Wayne & Springfield Decatur traction line as it was tearing down grade near Hesse Cassel toward a crowded passenger car. The cars were stopped scarcely eight feet apart. The passengers were shaken up a bit by the sudden stopping of the car, but aside from the scare none was injured.

Mr. Wyss, who lives near Hesse Cassel, was rather loathe to talk about the incident, but finally stated that he was waiting for the north-bound passenger car to come to Fort Wayne, when he heard the whistle of another car approaching from the south. He started down the track toward the freight car, waving his arms. By staying on the track after the motorman had whistled him off he forced the driver to slow up his car, so that when the passenger car rounded a curve and came into full view he was able to stop in time to prevent the collision. The crew of the passenger train informed Mr. Wyss that they didn't know the freight car was on the line; that they had run into a siding a mile and a half south of Hesse Cassel and permitted a south-bound passenger car to pass, and thinking that was the only car between them and Fort Wayne had started out again.

In a Valley.

The spot where the two cars would have met if Mr. Wyss had not flagged the freight, is similar to the scene of the Staunton, Ill., disaster, in which thirty people lost their lives several days ago. A steep grade from each side, with a curve at the bottom, forming an ideal place for a wreck.

Then the following year, local Hessen Cassel resident, Christian (Christopher) Kleber, was hit by the interurban train on 16 November 1911, but lived to talk about it.²⁵⁰

Struck by Interurban at Decatur

DECATUR, Ind., Nov. 16.—Christian Cleaver, aged about 65, a prominent resident of Allen county, living a quarter of a mile north of Hesse Cassel, along the interurban, narrowly escaped death this morning, with only a few minor bruises, when his wagon of grain, on which he was riding, was struck by the north-bound interurban car at 7:45 o'clock. Mr. Cleaver was thrown with his grain a distance of some fifteen feet. The fact that he alighted on the bags of oats lessened the force of the fall. Mr. Cleaver's homestead lies on the west side of the track, the track being between his farm and the main wagon road, which runs parallel with the interurban track. He was preparing to drive from the barnyard with his oats, when his wife cautioned him that the car was due and that he should be careful in crossing the track to the road. He pulled his cap down over his ears, deadening the sound of the whistle of the car, and lighted his pipe and drove across. Just as he got on the track he noticed the car, which was then upon him. He was successful in getting the wagon across, all but the rear, which was struck by the car, breaking the wagon to splinters and throwing the driver and grain out. Mr. Cleaver was picked up unconscious by the passengers and carried to his home, Dr. C. S. Clark, from this city, arriving on the 8 o'clock car to attend him. Mr. Cleaver soon revived upon reaching the house, and when the doctor arrived he was able to be up and stood warming himself by the fire, though his mind had not yet cleared. A bruised left hip, a bruise on the head and weakness from the shock, with a weakened heart action, were the results of the accident, but it is thought he will recover in a very short time.

Motorman Henry Krueel and Conductor Jesse Schug were in charge of the car and it is said the accident occurred through no fault of the railroad employes. An orchard somewhat obstructed the view of the motorman and, though he reversed the brakes when he sighted the approaching danger, he could not stop the car completely in time to avoid the accident, the car, however, slowing down from about thirty miles an hour to ten miles when it struck the wagon. The horses became frightened and ran some distance down the road before they were caught, but were uninjured.

²⁵⁰ "Struck by Interurban at Decatur." Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, 17 November 1911, page 5.

Chapter 27 – Proposed Location of the Log Church and Old Cemetery

The main purpose of this book was to review all available historical sources in an attempt to ascertain the actual location and size of the original log church built at the St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish and the old cemetery associated with it. During the course of this endeavor, a number of discrepancies and errors were noted in these records and corrections were discussed. In summary, the following is proposed regarding the log church and its cemetery.

The log church at Hessen Cassel was constructed shortly after the parish was officially formed on 29 September 1841, being completed around mid-November 1841. It was a single story structure built from large hewn logs and was approximately 25 feet wide by 40 feet long. It was located along the east side of the Piqua Road (now Old Decatur Road) directly across from a farm lane that would later become the Bostick Road. It was oriented on an east-west axis with the altar at the east end and the main entrance at the west end facing the Piqua Road. In order to help visualize the proposed location, a current aerial map of the church property showing the outlines of the current parish buildings in gray is shown in Figure 106. On this map, in color, have been added the boundaries for the first three parcels of church property (red) as well as the proposed locations of the log church (blue - building D), old cemetery (black – section E), and the first convent (red – building F). The location and size (42 feet by 80 feet) of the original brick church (1857) before all the renovations is shown in a black outline (building G). All items are drawn to scale.

Around 1850, a wood frame addition was made to the log church (D), but no evidence regarding its size was found. Thus, the final size and shape of the log church was larger than that depicted on the map. The old cemetery (E), which was located to the rear of the log church, was probably at least 32 feet by 40 feet by the time it was closed in 1861 and the bodies removed to the new cemetery (B). The original brick church (G) was also built facing the Bostick Road, but was located to the east and south to avoid the log church and old cemetery, which were still being utilized at the time of construction (1857-1861). Additional land (C) had to be obtained in order to accommodate this new church building. Around 1861-1862, with the brick church completed and in use, the old log church was moved to the rear and south of the new brick church in order to serve as the rectory (H) for the first resident priest at Hessen Cassel, Rev. Jacob Mayer. The log church/rectory was tore down around 1875 following the erection of the brick rectory (I).

It should be noted that the first 3 parcels of church property (items A, B, and C) were not officially deeded to the church until after the building of the main structures and cemetery was completed.

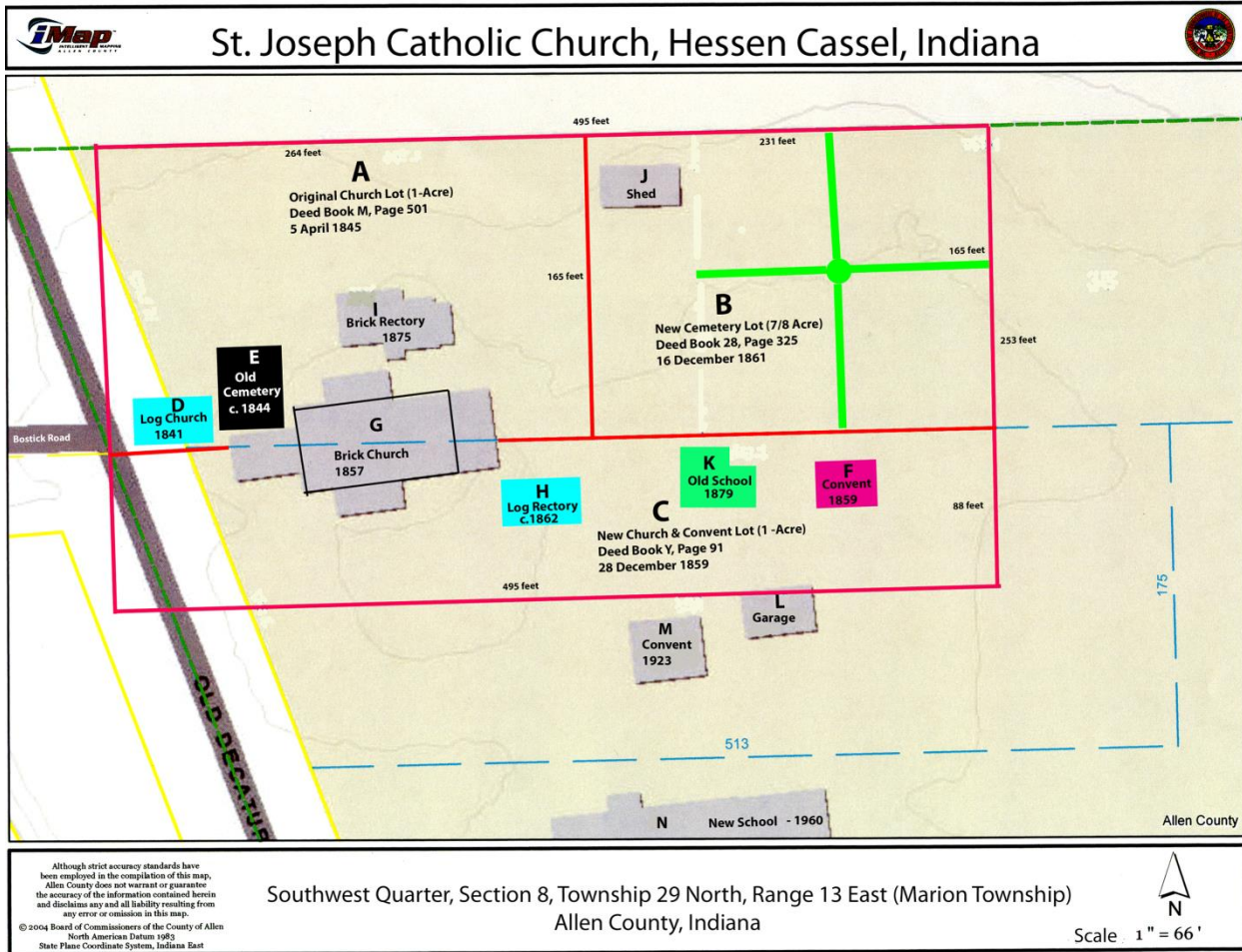


Figure 106 –Aerial map of St. Joseph Church property showing current buildings (in gray) and former buildings (in color).

The Map Legends are as follows:

- A - The first parcel of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel church property, 165 feet by 264 feet (1 acre in NW¼ SE¼ Sec.8 T29R13E). It was sold to Célestin Guynemer de la Hailandière, Bishop of the Diocese of Vincennes, Knox Co. IN on 5 April 1845 for \$10 by Sebastian Kleber and his wife, Catherine, of Allen Co., IN. Allen County, IN Deed Book M, page 501, 5 April 1845 (recorded 16 November 1852). The log church, old cemetery, and half of the brick church were built on this piece of land.
- B - The third parcel of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel church property, 165 feet by 231 feet (7/8 acre in NW¼ SE¼ Sec.8 T29R13E). It was sold to John H. Lüers, Bishop of Fort Wayne, Allen Co. IN on 16 December 1861 for \$20 by Sebastian Kleber and his wife, Catherine, of Allen Co., IN. Allen County, IN Deed Book 28, pages 325-326, 16 December 1861 (recorded 17 February 1862). This land was used for building the new church cemetery, now Section A of the current cemetery.

- C** - The second parcel of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel church property, 88 feet by 495 feet (1 acre in N½ S½ SE¼ Sec.8 T29R13E). It was sold to John H. Lüers, Bishop of Fort Wayne, Allen Co. IN on 28 December 1859 for \$20 by J. George Sorg and his wife, Maria Barbara, of Allen Co., IN. Allen County, IN Deed Book Y, pages 91-92, 28 December 1859 (recorded 30 January 1860). The south half of the brick church and the first convent were erected on this land.
- D** - The log church, approximately 25 feet by 40 feet, was built around September-November 1841 and could accommodate about 100 people. Around 1850, a wooden frame addition was made to the log church. After construction of the brick church, the log church was moved to the south and rear of the new church around 1861-1862 and served as the priest's rectory (**H**). It was tore down around 1875 after serving the parish in some capacity for about 35 years.
- E** - The old cemetery, approximately 32 feet by 40 feet, opened around 1844 and closed around 1861. The graves were relocated to the new cemetery (**B**).
- F** - The first convent, constructed by the parishioners around October-December 1859, was located across from the south entrance to the new cemetery (**B**). It had 7 rooms with no doors between the rooms. It may have served as a school house as well.
- G** - The original brick church. It was built with half of the church on land parcel **A** and half on land parcel **B**. It was 42 feet by 80 feet and could accommodate 250 people. The cornerstone was laid in 1857 and the church construction was completed by December 1859. Additions to all four sides of the brick church were made over the years.
- H** - The first rectory. It was occupied by Rev. Jacob Mayer, the first resident pastor, around September 1862. It was actually the former log church (**D**), which was moved by the parish to this location to serve as a priest's residence. It was tore down around 1875 after the new brick rectory (**I**) was built.
- I** - The brick rectory, approximately 24 feet by 44 feet, was erected in 1875. Additions and improvement were made over the years, and the building now serves as the parish office.
- J** - A large shed used for storage of equipment and supplies needed to maintain and operate the cemetery and church grounds.
- K** - The old brick school/convent. It is a 2-story building, 32 feet by 60 feet, erected in 1879, accommodated 100 students, & the nuns resided here, too. It was torn down around 1960.
- M** - The new convent. It is a two-story brick building approximately 24 feet by 34 feet and was built in 1923. It is currently used as rectory with remote garage (**L**)
- N** - The new school erected in 1960. A number of additions have been made over the years.

Acknowledgments

The purpose of this book was to present a more complete and updated history of the St. Joseph Catholic Church at Hessen Cassel, IN, a small parish within the Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend. Although the focus was narrow, the information brought together was from a wide variety of sources with the help of many people that I would like to acknowledge.

First of all, I am greatly indebted to my friend and colleague, John Schreiber, for all of his assistance and encouragement over the years. John was the person who, with the blessing of Pastor Thom Lombardi, established and organized the Hessen Cassel Historical Society on 2 July 2008 for the purpose of preserving the parish's history and artifacts. Besides John and me, other founding members included the parishioners Eilene (Minnich) Schuhler, Carole Sorg, Bernie & Maggie (Minnich) Konger, and Roger and Colleen Bubb.

Other parishioners that have helped me over the years include Emil and Clara (Smith) Herber (both deceased); Ray and Marilyn Sorg, Carl Sorg, Tom and Jean (Lewis) Roy, Pat and Gloria Minnick, Ervin Hoffman, Carl Hoffman, Darrell Will; Charles Beckman (deceased), former sexton of the cemetery; Tom Rauner, current sexton, and his wife, Susie, former manager of the parish office; and Michelle Rupright, current manager of the parish office.

Professional assistance was provided by Dr. Wm. Kevin Cawley, Senior Archivist and Curator of Manuscripts, Archives of the University of Notre Dame; Dr. David P. Miros, Archivist, Midwest Jesuit Archives, St. Louis, MO; Janice L Cantrell M.A, Archivist for the Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend; Curt B. Witcher and staff, the Genealogy Center, Allen County Public Library, IN; and the Family History Center, Salt Lake City, UT.

Finally I'm grateful for all the support and patience provided over the years by my wife, Margaret Minnick, in my endeavors to research the past (Figure 107). Our immigrant ancestors, Sebastian Klüber (Kleber) and Franz Münch (Minnick), were two of the twenty founding members of St. Joseph Hessen Cassel parish whose signatures occur on the first page of the church book. Deo gratias!



Figure 107 – Carl and Margaret (Minnick) Kleber, 8 November 2014.