Catholic families, many of them of German and French origin, began settling in lower Fairfield and northern Hocking counties in the 1840's and early 1850's. This gave rise to the mission churches of Our Lady of Good Hope, Pine Hill (in northern Hocking county); Sacred Heart, Geneva (in southeastern Fairfield county), and St. Joseph's, "near" Sugar Grove (in southern Fairfield county). Among the early members of these missions were families of the same names as had come to Logan in the mid-1830's. John Schorr, from Alsace, France, had brought more than twenty families there in 1837. Family names found among the pioneers of old St. Joseph's, "near" Sugar Grove, which were also among the early Logan settlers, were Schorr, Kessler, Fox, Judy, Eberst, Fischer, Myers and Schmeltzer. Many of these same names are found in first sacramental records of St. Mary's, Lancaster, county seat of Fairfield county.

Several years before John Schorr brought his Alsatians to Logan, Joseph Philips had come from France with his wife, Mary, and a daughter, Mary, to the area north of the present Sugar Grove. He bought 80 acres along Rush creek in Berne township from Jacob Mittheney and wife on November 4, 1831 (1). In 1837 he bought another tract a mile east of Sugar Grove.

By 1850 a number of other Catholic families had moved into Berne township. Among them were Conrad Winter and his wife, Agatha, both from France and their five children; William Cogan and wife, Catharine, and brother, Thomas, from Ireland; John Cogan and wife, Elizabeth, from Ireland, and their son, John; Cornelius Sullivan and wife, Hannah, and son Jeremiah, all from Ireland, and four other children, born in Ohio; also, Ellen Sullivan, probably a sister of Cornelius; Francis Wolfscheit and wife, Gertrude, both from Germany, and seven children, two of whom were born in Germany, and Lentlen Mesberger and wife, both from Germany, with seven children.

In 1850 Joseph Philips, 56, and his wife, Mary, 57, now had four children: Mary, 21; Able, 18; Jacob, 16, and Catharine, 15. There was a second Philips family in the township, Joseph Philips, 36, born in France, and his wife, Mary, 26, born in Pennsylvania. They had two children, Mary, 4, and John, 2, both born in Ohio. This Joseph Philips was probably Joseph, Jr., son of the pioneer. The record of the marriage of this Joseph to Mary Dunn is found at St. Mary's, Lancaster; under date of March 25, 1845.
Living with Joseph Philips, Jr., in 1850 were Leobold Philips, 34, and his wife, Mary, 29, both from France. The record of their marriages is also found at St. Mary's, Lancaster, under date of April 8, 1850.

Evidently the number of Catholic families in Berne township warranted the attention of the missionary priests. St. Mary's, Lancaster, was the nearest Catholic church. The priests from there visited the Catholics "near" Sugar Grove, as well as those at Logan and in other missions. This is clear from a survey of the records of St. Mary's, Lancaster. Some of the names appearing therein, though not so designated, are evidently those of people who lived in the area of St. Joseph's.

On February 21, 1853, Father Josue M. Young (2), pastor at St. Mary's, Lancaster, wrote to Archbishop John B. Purcell, Cincinnati: "halfway between Lancaster and Logan, and about ten miles from the former, some fifteen or twenty families wish the convenience of catechising their children, the erection of a suitable frame church, on an acre donated for the purpose. I solicit your blessing and approbation for this enterprise also" (3).

A few months later, on May 16, 1853, Joseph Philips, Sr., and wife, Mary, sold to the archbishop one acre of their farm on Rush creek in Berne township, Fairfield county in consideration "of the sum of one dollar to us paid by John Baptist Purcell" (4). Later when the little church was built it became known as the "Philips Church." It was also designated as "St. Joseph's, Rush Creek".

On August 16 of that year Father Young again wrote to the archbishop stating that "The church in Berne township will be completed this fall" (5). Not many days later, on August 19, he again wrote: "We have a new chapel 10 to 11 miles from Lancaster, but the children will probably be all at Lancaster (6). You could, if you have time, gratify the good people by a visit to their church. The same might be said of a new church building, which may be finished by that time, 10 miles in another direction" (7). This other "new church" must have been Our Lady of Good Hope, Pine Hill, in northern Hocking county, where property had been donated in 1852 (8).

From the History of Fairfield County (9) we learn that "St. Joseph's Catholic church, located three miles up Rush Creek, was built in 1853. It is a frame structure, and its dimensions are thirty by sixty feet."

In 1855 Father Henry Lange succeeded Father Young at Lancaster. He also had charge of the missions of St. John's, near Logan; Our Lady of Good Hope, Pine Hill, and St. Joseph's, Berne township (10). In 1861 Father Charles Francis F. Hone (11) assumed charge of the Logan church, and from there visited St. Joseph's, Rush creek. He started the book of sacramental records for the mission in 1863. He wrote at the top of the page, "Schmelzer's Mission, at the...." Thebrittel pages are torn so the some records are now incomplete.) The first entry was for the baptism of Rosanna Schmelzer, born in October, 1863. She was the daughter of Leopold Schmelzer and ----- Spire. The day of the birth and of the baptism are torn away.

In March of 1864 Father J. W. Brummer (12) began recording the baptisms for St. Joseph's. He started the section for marriages in May of 1865. At the top of the page for this section he wrote: "Register of Marriages in [Fairfield county at] Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's and [Good Hope]." The first entry was for the wedding of ----- Messberger and Josephine Morgan on May 21 of that year. Father Brummer was clearly in charge of the three missions, Sacred Heart, Geneva; St. Joseph's, Rush Creek, and Our Lady of Good Hope, Pine Hill. It is not known at which he resided.
Father Brummer continued to sign the sacramental register until July, 1871. Father J. C. Goldschmidt (13) then became pastor. He resided at St. Joseph's. Meanwhile, in 1868, the diocese of Columbus was established. The first report of Father Goldschmidt about his parishes found in the archives of the diocese is dated January 6, 1873, and covers the previous year. It was made out for Father A. H. Ahrens, chancellor.

The report showed that there were 443 souls at St. Joseph's. There were 21 baptisms and one marriage in 1872. Father Goldschmidt's salary was $500. "St. Joseph's Building Residence etc." was insured for $1500. The debt was $720, of which $600 was covered by subscriptions. Father Goldschmidt wrote, "St. Joseph's near Sugar Grove is my residence. Missions are St. Mary's, Our Lady of Good Hope, and Sacred Heart, Bremen, attended at least once a month." Each parish had a cemetery, adjoining the church property. The one at St. Mary's was blessed.

Apparently an inventory was also required for the report. For the church the pastor listed: "Five chasubles, two albs, one Benediction veil, a few amices, a few surplices, a few flower vases, two cassocks for Boys, one dozen candlesticks, one mission chalice, one missal with stand, a kneeling bench, a holy water pot with sprinkle, one epistle and gospel book, a press for vestments, a stove with utensils, censer, one chair, a few altar cloths, a few corporals, a few purificators, an organ with stool, music books, three memorariums, four harmonists, three harps, one ciborium, an Easter candlestick and a side table." A similar report was made of household goods in the rectory.

The next year, 1874, according to Columbus diocesan archives, the report was made by Father N. Gallweiler (14) as pastor. His report for "Sugar Grove, St. Joseph's, near Sugar Grove; Sacred Heart, near Geneva, and for Good Hope, Pine Hill." He was at each one of the three every third Sunday. His pastoral residence was "at St. Joseph's, near Sugar Grove." He also gave an inventory for the three parishes.

Father Gallweiler must have been at Sugar Grove one year only. There seems to be a gap for most of 1874. In August of that year Father B. Hillebrand (15) signed two baptism entries. Father Louis Grimmer came in that month and remained until the middle of 1875. Father Gabriel Volkert came in September of that year, but remained only until late April, 1876. Father Mayrose (16), who was to have the longest stay, was the next pastor, coming in December, 1876, and remaining until the end of 1887.

On September 1, 1881, Father Mayrose reported to the Bishop that there were 19 families at St. Joseph's, 15 at Sacred Heart, and 17 at Good Hope. He wrote that "there is a parochial residence at St. Joseph's also." It would seem from this that he now resided at Sacred Heart. The next year, 1882, he also reported the two residences, with 17 families at St. Joseph's, 14 at Sacred Heart, and 16 at Good Hope, and with a total of 267 souls. Receipts at St. Joseph's were $39.56, with expenses being $100.50. There was a debt of $243.10. The next year, 1883, receipts at St. Joseph's were $82.25, and expenses the same amount, with no debt.

There were "about 100 members" of St. Joseph's according to the History of Fairfield County, published in 1883. It gave the families as 40 (19).

The little parish of St. Joseph's was apparently declining. In 1887 Father Mayrose reported only 6 families for the parish. It was his last year in charge. For the next two years St. Joseph's was visited by Father Thomas J. Cady (20), pastor of St. John's, Logan, Hocking county.

In September, 1889, Father John Ritter (21) made his first entry in the register
of baptisms. In 1891 he reported that there were 12 families at St. Joseph's. The following year there were 15, and 1893 the number had jumped to 37, but the church was now given as "St. Joseph's at Sugar Grove." It was under Father Ritter that a church was built in the town of Sugar Grove itself. The little parish of Rush Creek was no more. When its church was torn down is not known. But the little graveyard remains, and is not neglected.

(1) Fairfield County Deed Books, Vol. 4, p. 575.
(2) Father Josue M. Young, 1808-1866, became bishop of Erie, Pa., in 1854.
(3) Letter of Father Young to Archbishop Purcell, Feb. 21, 1853, University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA).
(4) Fairfield County Deed Books, Vol. 20, p. 552.
(5) Letter of Father Young to Archbishop Purcell, August 16, 1853, UNDA.
(6) This was in reference to Confirmation scheduled for St. Mary's, Lancaster.
(7) Letter of Father Young to Archbishop Purcell, August 29, 1853, UNDA.
(9) History of Fairfield County, by C.C. Miller, 1883, p. 208.
(10) Father Henry Lange, 1828-1864, died at Lancaster, Feb. 8, 1864.
(11) Father Charles Francis Hone, 1823-1876, died in Hamilton, Ohio, June 1, 1876.
(12) Father John W. Brummer, 1824-1872, died in Columbus the following June 19 after leaving St. Joseph's in 1871.
(13) Father Goldschmitt became chaplain of St. Vinçent orphanage when it was started, and died there in 1923.
(14) Little is known of Father Gallweiler other than his stay at Sugar Grove.
(15) Father B.H. Hillebrand had been at St. Francis hospital, Columbus, 1864-1874. Later he was assistant at St. Mary's, Columbus.
(16) Father Louis Grimmer, 1844-1902, died as pastor at Marge's, Ohio.
(17) Father Gabriel Volkert was assistant at St. Mary's, Lancaster, in 1876.
(18) Father Herman H. Mayrose, 1854-1898, died in Columbus, July 25, 1898.
(19) History of Fairfield County, by C.C. Miller, 1883, pp. 162, 208.
(20) Father Thomas J. Cady, 1835-1900, ordained a Dominican, became affiliated with the diocese of Columbus. Died in Columbus while pastor of St. John's, Logan.
(21) Father John Ritter, 1841-1909, died in Baltimore after a lengthy illness.

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Tombstone Inscriptions, St. Joseph's, Rush Creek, Berne Township, Fairfield County.

BLAIR, Albert, son of H. & M.B., d. Dec. 5, 1869; aged 1 Y 7D.
COGAN, Catharine, d. March 30, 1860; aged 51 Y.
COGAN, Henry, d. Oct. 1, 1860; aged 46 Y.
KELLER, Ellen, dau. of M. & E., d. Sept. 9, 1864; aged 1 Y 7 M.
KELLER, Elizabeth, wife of Jos., d. Apr. 14, 1861; aged 34 Y 8 M 16 D.
KELLER, Joseph, d. Mar. 31, 1861; aged 55 Y 3 M.
KESLER, Philomena. 1862.
KESLER, Maria. 1862.
KESLER, Fridrickus. 1862.
KIEHLBURGER, Elisabeth, dau. John & Agatha, d. Sept. 12, 1861; aged 6 Y 1 M 18 D.
KIEHLBURGER, John, son of John & Agatha, d. Sept. 28, 1861; aged 3 Y 1 M 18 D.

McCAUGHEY, Children of Thomas and Hannah
    Michael, d. Aug. 29, 1860; aged 15 Y 10 M 7 D.
    Rufus, d. Aug. 26, 1860; aged 4 Y 11 M 10 D.
    Theresa, d. Aug. 28, 1860; aged 3 Y 6 M 18 D.
    Sarah E., d. Aug. 31, 1860; aged 2 Y 5 M 19 D.
    Patrick, d. Oct. 9, 1861; aged 16 Y 11 M.
MCCORMICK, Owne, d. Dec. 19, 1863; aged 40 Y 10 D.
MOITANES, Bridget, d. Aug. 2, 1877; aged about 45 years.

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MESSBARGER, Charles, son of M. & W., d. Sept. 10, 1873; aged 2d.
MESSBARGER, Josephine, wife of George, d. Sept. 8, 1879; aged 36Y 2M 21D.
MIRGON, Nicholas, d. June 23, 1859; aged 62Y.
MYERS, Jane, wife of Wn., d. Feb. 27, 1875; aged 40Y 27D.
O’KEEFE, Catharine, dau. of Patrick and Mary, d. Jan. 21, 1867; aged 25Y.
Also our dau. Ann, d. Oct. 13, 1867; aged 10Y 10M.
OWENS, James, d. Mar. 15, 1874; aged 70Y 2M 7D.
OWENS, William H., d. Dec. 22, 1866; aged 28Y 6M 7D.
PAULIN, Anna Maria, wife of Xavier, b. Jan. 6, 1808; d. Nov. 7, 1853, in her 45th year.
P[HILLIP]J, John, d. Nov. 6, 1861; aged 13Y 1M 6D.
PHILLIP, Joseph, son of Joseph and Mary, d. June 29, 1856; aged 4Y 2M 2D.
PHILLIP, Mary, dau. of J. & M., b. Apr. 7, 1846; d. Dec. 8, 1884.
PHILLIP, Joseph, son of R.J. & S.A., d. July 14, 1879; aged 6M 11D.
PHILLIPS, Joseph, son of J. & M., d. Oct. 6, 1861; aged 8Y 2M 25D.
SAUM, Caty Cecilia, b. Dec. 9, 1866; d. Sept. 29, 1885.
SCHMELZER, Helen, dau. of J. & M., d. Oct. 28, 1853; aged 1Y 11M 28D.
SCHMELZER, Margaretha, wife of John, d. Nov. 17, 1873; aged 42Y 2M 17D.

Register of Marriages, St. Joseph's, Rush Creek, Fairfield County, Ohio.

(Note: Father J. W. Brummer began this register and wrote at the top of the page that the marriages were for the three missions, Sacred Heart, Geneva; St. Joseph's, Rush Creek and Good Hope, Pine Hill.)

1865, May 21: ----- Messberger and Josepine Morgan [Mangan?]. Witnesses: M----- Messberger and M----- Morgan(?).
J. W. Brummer
J. W. Brummer
Aug. 22: Meinrad Mil----- and Mary Weiland. Wns. Jacob McElr---- and Mary Schorr.
J. W. Brummer
Dec. 30: ----- ----- and Ellen Cogan. Wns. Mrs. McCon----- J. W. Brummer

J. W. Brummer
J. W. Brummer

J. W. Brummer
Nov. 2: ----- Flood(?) and Margaret Buittty(?)
Nov. 8: Frank G. Miller and Nancy Blosser. Wns. Anthony Spire and Regina Boch.
J. W. Brummer

1868, Jan. 8: Anthony Spire and Mary Schorr. Wns. Daniel Spire and Miss Schorr.
J. W. Brummer
Sept. 1: John Bash and Mary Welty(?). Wns. Anthony Schmelzer and his wife.
J. W. Brummer
------: Adam Boch and Catharine[We]lty. Wns. Theresa and Regina Boch, Anthony Schmelzer and his wife, etc.
J. W. Brummer
J. W. Brummer

J. W. Brummer
Sept. ---: Joseph Sch[melzer] and Mary Schmelzer. Wns. Louis Sch[melzer] and Jacob Schorr.
J. W. Brummer


1875, Jan. 4: David W. Crowe and Margaret m. Mires. Wns. Joseph and Mary Schorr. hands

May 17: Adam Boch and Josephine Schmelzer. Wns. Francis Schmelzer and Margaret Boch.

[Grummer]


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Nov. 10: John Wolshire [Wolsheide?] and Elisabeth Matheney. Wns. Jacob Matheney and Teresa Shonk. 

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Confirmation

On October 24, 1880, Bishop Watterson of Columbus confirmed a class of thirty-three in St. Joseph's, Rush Creek. Of these 12 were from St. Joseph's parish; ten from Sacred Heart, Geneva, and eleven from Our Lady of Good Hope.

St. Joseph's: William Meier  
James Nolen  
Frank Phillimzer  
Charles Mesberger  
Leopold Smeltzer  
Anna Geneva Rosecrans  
Lucy House  
Agnes Cecilia Kesler  
Mary Emilia Kesler  
Agnes Sullivan  
Mary Sullivan  
Mary Emilia Kesler (o.k.)

Sacred Heart: Joseph Kellenberger  
Thomas Leahy  
William Smeltzer  
Gertrude Schorr  
Elisabeth Schorr  
Mary Smeltzer  
Rosanna Smeltzer  
Susanna Bash  
Anna Bash  
Salome Boch (convert)

Good Hope: Henry Wolsheide  
Albert Beiter  
Edward Shuh  
Joseph Kunkler  
Charles Kost  
Joseph Shonk  
William Thimes  
Lucy Kunkler  
Teresa Shonk  
Josephine Beiter  
Honora Walker  
H.H. Mayrose, Pastor

On Nov. 12, 1882, the Bishop confirmed in Sacred Heart, Geneva. There were eleven in the class with only two from St. Joseph's.

Sacred Heart: William Bash  
Moront Smeltzer  
Abraham Boch  
August Kellenberger  
John Shorr  
Ellen Shorr  
Katharine Meier  
Barbara Smeltzer  
Christina Smeltzer

St. Joseph's: Albert Kesler  
William Rosecrans

On September 18, 1884, the Bishop confirmed a class of twenty in the church of Our Lady of Good Hope, Pine Hill.

Joseph Beaver  
Henry Shonk  
Charles Thimes  
Peter Simon Eberhard  
Joseph Shonk  
Daniel Wolsheide  
John Shoneberger  
Jacob Meier (convert)
Confirmations (continued)

Teresa Kunkler
Rosalia Shuh
Christina Thimes
Anna Shonk
Elisabeth Shonk
Ellen Wosheide

Lucy Beiter
Helen Kunkler
Susanna Kost
Anastasia Beiter
Anna Elisabeth Shneider
Elisabeth Lidia Yunk (convert)

On November 18, 1887, the Bishop was again at the church of Our Lady of Good Hope for Confirmation. There were twelve in the class.

Frank Kunkler
Frank Sneider
Andrew Kunkler
Jacob Matheney
Ellen Smeltzer
Christina Wolshire

Henry Shue
Jacob Thimes
Edmond Shonk
Elisabeth Wolshire
Emma Shöneberger
Anna Shöneberger

The last entry for Confirmation was on Dec. 11, 1887, for a class of twenty-two. The ceremony was at Sacred Heart, Geneva.

William Funk
Christian Kunkler
John William Kunkler
John Henry Schorr
Lewis John Crin
William Casper Schorr
Nicholas Case
Sarah Funk
Maryauna (?) Smeltzer
Mary Mingen
Emma Wirzen

Klemens Meier
John Nall
Henry John Meier
Jacob Smeltzer
Joseph Casper Smeltzer
John Noll
Charles Schorr
Anna Elisabeth Schorr
Mary Magdalena Smeltzer
Margaret Funk
Susanna Smeltzer

Gifts and Acquisitions


Michael Augustus Daugherty, In Memoriam, Columbus, Ohio, 1887. Anonymous gift.

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Summer Quarter Meeting Notice. The regular quarterly meeting of the Catholic Record society will be held at 2 p.m., Sunday, August 19, at the Catholic Center, 197 East Gay street, Columbus, Ohio. Visitors are welcome.

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