NOTES ON THE LIFE OF FRANK A. LUDEWIG
THE ARCHITECT OF THE JOSEPHINUM COLLEGE

By Frank M. Ludewig and Donald M. Schlegel

Frank A. Ludewig was born October 22, 1863, in the town of Beverwijk, Holland. His father was the owner and the operator of a bowling alley and cafe in Beverwijk.

After completing his elementary education, he pursued the carpenter's trade for a short time. He later attended the Polytechnic Institute at Delft, where he studied architecture. There he became acquainted with Jacques Van Gils
of Rotterdam (ca. 1869-1919), who also became a successful architect. Mr. Ludewig was married to Van Gils' sister, Dorothy Van Gils, in July of 1869. Two children were born to this marriage, James W. Ludewig, who for a number of years assisted his father in the architectural business, and Frank M. Ludewig.

Frank A. Ludewig was first employed by P.J.H. Cuypers, a leading architect in Holland, who spearheaded the development of modern architecture in Holland. While in the employ of Cuypers, Mr. Ludewig helped supervise the construction of the Beurs (a stock exchange building) which is still standing and in use in the heart of Amsterdam. Later Mr. Ludewig was involved in helping construct some residences for his father, for his brother-in-law, Fred Nelis, and in remodelling St. Agatha's Church in his native Beverwijk.

About 1902, he went into business for himself. He moved to Arnheim, where he designed St. Adrian's Church, a rectory, a cemetery entrance, and other structures in the neighboring area.

Two years later he moved to Nijmegen, where he designed a number of residences and apartments. At this time he became interested in the restoration of buildings. He began by restoring a burned-out castle, of late mediaeval period, in Wychen. The restored castle was acclaimed as one of his best projects and received wide publicity in Holland. However, his first love was the design of new churches. At this time there was a decline in such construction in Holland, and he began to consider emigrating to America. In the year 1912 he made the final decision to follow his sister and move to America, where he believed his interest in the erection of new church buildings would be more readily fulfilled.

Mr. Ludewig's sister, Mrs. Fred Nelis, with a family of twelve children, had been attracted by a newspaper advertisement announcing a new Dutch settlement at Wilhelmina, Missouri, under the leadership of Father Vincent Tessleraar, O.S.M. Wilhelmina is about seven miles from Campbell, Missouri, near the Arkansas border. After a long journey by steamship, railroad and farm wagon, the Ludewig family arrived in Wilhelmina. The town consisted of only about two dozen houses, one general store and hotel, a one-room school, and the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. The settlement was a disappointment to many of the Dutch arrivals, many of whom soon left for Chicago, St. Louis, the state of Michigan and other areas. After a short stay in Wilhelmina, Mr. Ludewig moved to St. Louis and set up his architectural business in that city.

Mr. Ludewig's first architectural work for a church in the United States was to re-design the burned-out Church of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Westwoods, Illinois, in 1914. His skill at church design soon became well known. Among the seventeen other churches he designed in the next decade were St. Raymond's, in Raymond, Illinois; St. John the Evangelist, in Covington, Kentucky; St. Joseph's, in Conway, Arkansas, and St. Aloysius and Holy Family churches, in St. Louis.

As an artist he strove constantly to achieve in his designs a spirit which was in conformity with the liturgical requirements of the Church. Although a strong proponent of tradition, he did not disdain new trends and modern conditions and he, therefore, attempted to incorporate these in his architectural design. His works may be characterized by a sincerity of expression, by a due regard for the significance of the beautiful and by a deep spiritual insight into the
purpose and function of Christian art.

He was not content to confine his interest to the architectural construction of buildings; he also devoted much thought and attention to designing the most minute details and appurtenances of the church as well. Thus he was an expert in designing stained glass, altars, vestments, and even fresco decorations. Many of these designs show a remarkable freshness and are imbued with a deep regard for the life of the liturgy of the church.

In the autumn of 1926 Mr. Ludewig took a long-needed rest from his labors by taking a tour of Europe. He visited the shrines, cathedrals, basilicas, and other architectural masterpieces at Caen, Chartres, Paris, Lourdes, Pisa, Rome, Florence, Venice, Cologne, London and many other cities. He also spent a month in his native Holland visiting his mother who was still living at that time.

Upon his return to St. Louis he was awarded the job of designing St. Aloysius Church in Columbus, Ohio. The design was completed under the direction of the pastor, Rev. Rudolph E. Schwartz, aided by Father Schwartz's close friend, Rev. Adalbert W. Centner, who was a professor at the Josephinum College on Main Street, Columbus. The cornerstone for St. Aloysius was laid in 1927 and the church was dedicated on April 22, 1928;

Possibly because of his association with Father Centner in the design of St. Aloysius, Mr. Ludewig was approached by an official of the Josephinum and was asked to prepare preliminary sketches for the design of the new Josephinum building which was to be erected on 330 acres in the rural area north of Worthington. His sketches won the approval of Msgr. Joseph Ooh and he was hired as architect. He moved to Columbus in the summer of 1929 to supervise the work and to make additional drawings as needed.

The Josephinum, the finest building Mr. Ludewig ever designed, contained two chapels, professors' quarters, a major and a minor seminary, sisters' and orphans' accommodations, refectories and kitchen and other facilities. Its dimensions are approximately 600 feet long by 350 feet wide. An outstanding feature is the 140 foot high Flemish tower. Ludewig worked in an old farm house on the grounds, drawing up the architectural details which were lacking in the original plans.

The Josephinum was completed in November of 1931. Mr. Ludewig was then 69 years old and the country was in the middle of the great depression. His finest architectural design was also his last major work. He retired from business and eventually moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan. There, after suffering from a heart ailment for 18 months, he died on Sept. 16, 1940. His burial was from St. Francis de Sales Church in Holland, Michigan, where his sister lived and where he was laid to rest in Pilgrim Cemetery.

During his remarkable career of only nineteen active years in this country, Mr. Ludewig designed a total of 21 Catholic churches and chapels, 11 schools, 10 rectories, decoratively painted the interiors of 7 churches, all located throughout the American heartland, and the Pontifical College Josephinum. The Diocese of Columbus is blessed with the presence of two of his finest works within its boundaries.
A HISTORY OF ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH
JERSEY TOWNSHIP, LICKING COUNTY, OHIO

(Continued)

Baptisms (St. Joseph's Church, Jersey)

1885

1886

1887

1888

1889


1890


THORP, Elmer James, b. Dec. 21, 1889, of George Thorp & Mary Gory. Sprs: James Gory and Ethel Gory.


1891


1892


1893


1894


1895

1896

1897
FOWLER, Oliver, b. Sept. 13, 1896, of Benjamin Fowler & Martha Jakeway (Cresk). Mr. & Mrs. Fowlers are Protestant. The child was very sick when baptized. Bapt. July 10, 1897.

1898

1899


1900


1901


1902


Burke, Mary Pauline, b. May 7, of Thomas Burke & Rose Molloy. Sprs: John N. Schilling & Mary Burns. Bapt. June 1 (Shepard).


(To be continued)

Acquisitions and Gifts


Four large scrap books containing newspaper clippings of games, tournaments and other sports activities of the Diocese of Columbus, 1928-1932 and 1939-1940. Gift of Monsignor William A. Kappes.

Xeroxed copy of booklet giving the history of St. Patrick's, Buchtel, and the mission church at Modoc. 1956. Gift of Mrs. Robert E. Main, Athens, Ohio.


A Pair of Chinese Vases by Elizabeth McCann, 1936. Gift of Miss Marion Swickard, Columbus. Diocesan Authors Collection.

A box of old pictures, some of value. Anonymous gift.