The first Catholic church in Morrow county, Ohio, was erected shortly after the end of the Civil War. It is known to have been built by 1868, and was situated in the town of Cardington. It was dedicated to God under the patronage of St. Joseph.

On October 30, 1868, Father Henry Fehlings (1), pastor at St. Mary's, Delaware, purchased three-fourths of an acre from Frederick Conrad and his wife, Ellen, for $115. The lot had 28 feet frontage on the east side of North Marion street in Cardington. The Deed (2) states that the parcel "is the lot on which the Catholic church stands. This would seem to indicate that the property had been donated for the church some time before 1868, and that the building was erected early in 1868 or before.

In November, 1870, another Deed (3) was recorded in which Father Fehlings sold the church property to Bishop Rosecrans of Columbus for $300. Another peculiar
Deed (4) of October 29, 1874, shows that John Hunt and his wife, Ellen, sold this same property to Bishop Rosecrans for $263. This deed also stated that it "is that ground on which the Catholic church now stands."

The History of Morrow County (5) in its chapter on Cardington, states that "The Catholic Church formed an organization here about 1870. They have a small brick edifice, 24 x 30 feet. They have no regular service, but are supplied by Father Pilgrim (6), of Delaware, at irregular periods. Their congregation and denomination is composed of sixteen families, and about 80 persons."

Tradition seems to indicate that the parish had its beginning about 1860, due to Irish families who came from New York state between 1845 and 1850 to help build the New York Central railroad. There is no separate book of sacramental records for the early years of St. Joseph's, Cardington. Hence it is difficult to document the names of early parishioners. It was a small mission, and baptisms may have been few. What there were are included, without designation, among the baptisms of St. Mary's, Delaware. The pastor there was in charge of the Cardington mission from its beginning until 1848 when it came under the care of the Sacred Hearts Fathers who at that time established a parish in the county seat, Mt. Gilead.

Nevertheless, it can be presumed that among the early Catholics were Frederick Conrad and family, as well as John Hunt and his family. These are among the names of the early members of the mission as given by tradition. Other names are the Donovans, the Sullivans, the Peppards and the Burkes. Although the deed record does not indicate it, it is also said that the Donovans and Conrads owned adjoining property and each donated a parcel for the church. Undoubtedly the church was built by the man of the parish, the brick being made locally.

Following Father Ehlings, the pastors at St. Mary's, Delaware, who took care of the Cardington mission were: Rev. John McSweeney, 1869; Rev. Joseph McPhillips, 1869-1874; Revs. A.O. Walker, J. C. Goldschmidt and J. B. Schmitt for varying periods in 1874; Rev. N. E. Pilger from 1874 to 1884, except for a few months in 1878 when Fathers John Meara and M. M. Meara visited Delaware. Father Steyle (7) came in 1884 and remained until 1915. Rev. William C. O'Brien, who came next, spent 36 years as pastor at Delaware and at the Cardington mission. During this time he engaged the help of the Capuchin Fathers who were at Westerville. They took care of St. Joseph's for Father O'Brien. Rev. Charles Hepler, O.F.M. Cap., usually had the assignment of the mission.

In 1881 Father Pilger reported to Bishop Rosecrans of Columbus that he attended Cardington on week days. He gave it as a mission of 13 families. In 1891 Father Steyle reported to the bishop that there were only eight families at St. Joseph's, and the next year he said there were only six. But the little mission did not decrease further. There were seven families in 1894 and ten in 1897.

In the History of the Diocese of Columbus (8) written in 1918, Bishop Hartley wrote: "Cardington is a small mission with a church and about ten or fifteen families." In his second volume on the diocese in 1943 the bishop wrote that St. Joseph's, Cardington, had about twenty families.

There was an increase in the number of families in the 1930's so that the parishioners were able to paint and redecorate their church. During all these years the instruction of the children in their religion was not neglected. The time came for a catechetical program to be organized. It was arranged for catechism to be taught regularly in one or the other home of members in each township.
In 1948 when the Sacred Hearts Fathers established a parish in Mt. Gilead, they were also given charge of St. Joseph's in Cardington. This relieved the priests at St. Mary's, Delaware, of a work they had carried on for 80 years.

In 1954, during the pastorate of Father James T. Keefe, SS.CC., at Mt. Gilead, the interior of the church at Cardington was decorated. However, since the church was by this time too small, thought was given to a new church. Accordingly, on June 28, 1957, Auxiliary Bishop Edward Hettinger of Columbus, bought (9) the small Lutheran church in Cardington for $4,150. It was a frame building. Its interior was rearranged and painted by student volunteers of Columbus under the direction of Monsignor James Kulp, director of the diocesan mission office.

On March 15, 1959, Bishop Issenmann of Columbus came for the blessing and dedication of the new church. He was assisted by Rev. George Weisenborn, SS.CC., pastor; Rev. Msgr. James Carroll, chancellor; Rev. Leo King, SS.CC., Rev. Msgr. James Kulp, Rev. Msgr. William C. O'Brien, pastor at Delaware, and Rev. Norman Goodwin, SS.CC. During the Mass which followed the dedication ceremonies, Bishop Issenmann confirmed a class of sixteen. Two years later the pastor could report that there were 21 families with 62 souls in the parish.

The new church, like the old, was placed under the patronage of St. Joseph. A few years later, on September 18, 1962, the original little brick church was sold to Louis Levering (10) and later made into a residence. It still stands.

But changes for the little Cardington mission were not over. Thought was given to combining the two small parishes, that of St. Matthew's, Mt. Gilead, and St. Joseph's. The two towns were only five miles apart. In June 1971 property was bought midway between the two towns, and plans for a new parish were completed. At that time the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts left Mt. Gilead and the new parish was placed under the direction of a diocesan priest. The new church was dedicated to God under the title of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The two former parishes were no more.

And thus ended the long history of St. Joseph's, Cardington, Its first home, the little brick church remains as testimony to the sacrifices of the pioneers, even though it is now a residence. Its second home, the former Lutheran church, was sold September 8, 1972, to the trustees of Faith Chapel in Cardington. St. Joseph's was no more.

(1) Father Henry Fehlings (1823-1888) was pastor at Delaware from 1863 to 1869.
(3) Ibid., Vol. 23, p. 420.
(4) Ibid., Vol. 27, p. 438.
(6) Father Pilgrim should be Father N. E. Pilger (1842-1905).
(7) Father Philip Steyle (1848-1915).
(8) Diocese of Columbus, the History of Fifty Years, 1868-1918, by Bishop James J. Hartley, Columbus, 1918, p. 501.
(10) Ibid., Vol. 151, p. 162.
The ink sketch of old St. Joseph's, Cardington, was done by Wally Toscano, of Karlsberger & Associates, Architects, Columbus, Ohio.
Pierre Louis Dominique Senez was born June 29, 1815, in the village of Beauvois-en-Cambresis in northwest France. He was baptised July 2, 1815, in the parish church. His parents were Jean Baptiste Senez, a farmer, and Louise Leveque. His father was a prominent citizen of Beauvois where he had been mayor for a time.

In 1836, while attending services in the church of Saint Sulpice in Paris, Senez was deeply moved by the eloquence of a priest and decided to enter the seminary to study for the priesthood. He entered the Petite Seminaire of the Society of Saint Sulpice at Issy where he received tonsure May 30, 1837. His superiors described him as a diligent student, although not a remarkably intelligent one. He had a pleasant disposition. He continued his studies in the Grand Seminaire of the Sulpicians and received minor orders December 22, 1838; the subdiaconate, May 29, 1839, and the diaconate, December 21, 1839. He was ordained priest December 15, 1840. His first assignment was as vicar of historic Chaillot on the outskirts of Paris.

In 1843 Bishop John B. Purcell, of Cincinnati, Ohio, visited France seeking priests for his diocese. Father Senez applied for acceptance August 3, 1843, along with Father Joseph P. Machebeuf, his close friend. These two priests accompanied Bishop Purcell on the voyage back to America and arrived in Cincinnati in the summer of 1844.

Father Senez was appointed to St. Francis de Sales parish, Newark, Ohio, where he was the first resident priest. He signed the first baptismal records of the parish. He seems to have been in Newark from August 10, 1844, to May 4, 1845. It is not known why he left Newark.

The records at Holy Cross church, Columbus, show that Father Senez baptised a child there on March 22, 1845, and several members of a Patton family in Delaware, on May 20, 1845. He also baptised three children in St. Mary’s church, Chillicothe, Ohio, in June, 1845. Father Lamy described Senez as a good, pious, talented priest, but he also mentioned that it would be beneficial to both of them if they did not live together.

Father Senez left the diocese of Cincinnati and became affiliated with the diocese of New York, where he was assigned to St. Vincent parish, Madison, New Jersey. He seems to have applied for re-entry into the diocese of Cincinnati in 1847, at which time Father Lamy wrote the above mentioned description of him. In 1848 Father Senez visited his home in France and on his return became pastor of St. Patrick’s church, Newark, New Jersey.

In the years that followed, until his death, Feb. 11, 1900, he was pastor of a number of parishes in the state of New Jersey, including St. Mary’s, Jersey City, where he was pastor from April 3, 1859, until his death, except for a short break as administrator of Our Lady of Grace church, Hoboken, in 1876.

The Catholic Directories show that he was on the Bishop's Council for many of those years. He established a hospital in Paterson, New Jersey, and an orphanage there also. On his death he was buried in the orphanage grounds. He was a much respected and admired priest.
THE PHILIPS CHURCH  
OLD ST. JOSEPH'S, NEAR SUGAR GROVE  
1853 - 1890

Baptisms (Continued)

1875 (cont.)
May 23: Mary Anna, ca. 14 years.
June 7: William Albert, b. 7 May. P: Joseph and Anna Messberger.
June 10: John Sylvester, b. 24 May. P: Jacob and Elisabeth Messberger.
Sept. 29: George, b. 26 Sept. P: William Messberger and Mary Schorr.
Nov. 9: Catharine Sallia, b. 26 Oct. P: Jacob Schorr and Julia Schmeltzer.

1876
Feb. 27: Thomas, b. 4 Feb. P: Cornelius Sullivan and Mary Kelly.
April 23: John Joseph, b. 28 March. P: Thomas Hennestoffel and Christina Aed.

1877
Feb. 4: Barbara, b. 21 Jan. P: Anthony Smeltzer and Margaret Bash.
April 6: Thomas Claude, b. 30 March. P: Alphonse Smeltzer and Mary Bash.
May 20: Rosa Hel., b. 10 May. P: Leonard and Teresa Boch.
June 5: Jacob, b. 22 April. P: Thomas Henestoffel and Christina Aid.
July 6: Rosetta, b. 5 Jan. P: Samuel Tible and Mary Spielman.
July 14: George ----.
July 14: Mary Margaret ----.
Aug. 11: Jacob H., b. 12 July. P: John Schneider and Magdalen Beiter.
Nov. 12: Margaret Augusta, b. 21 Oct. P: Jerome Potts and Elisabeth Owens.
Nov. 25: Mary Magd., b. 11 Nov. P: John Bash and Mary Welty.

1878
Jan. 6: Philip, b. 30 Dec. P: Jacob Schorr and Juliana Smeltzer.
--- 2: Francis Edward, b. 8 Feb. P: Joseph Schineberger and Helen Wolsheide.
Dec. 8: Clement Sylvester, b. 30 Nov. P: Adam Boch and Josephine Smeltzer.
Baptism (Continued)

1879
Jan. 1: George I., b. 5 Dec. 1878. P: Joseph Rosencrans and Mary Messberger.
Feb. 4: Clara Alice, b. 31 Jan. P: Earon Shonk and Katharine Wolshire.
March 6: Leroy Jacob, b. 29 Dec. 1878. P: Joseph Messberger and Anastasia Hammond.
March 21: Mary Bertha, b. 4 March. P: John Bash and Mary Welty.
May 11: Clara Magd., b. 9 April. P: Joseph Shoneberger and Helen Wolsheide.
June 8: Anna, b. 18 May. P: Cornelius Sullivan and Mary Kelly.
July 27: George, b. 27 July. P: Anthony Smeltzer and Margaret Bash.
Aug. 3: Jacob, b. 2 July. P: Benedict Kunkler and Mary Hellenstine.
Nov. 5: Charles, b. 6 Aug. P: Jerome Potts and Elisabeth Owns.
Dec. 8: Henry I., b. 5 Nov. P: William Messberger and Margaret Shorr.

1880
April 8: Andrew, b. 6 April. P: Jacob Schorr and Juliana Smeltzer.
April 8: Zera J. McLain, aged 26 years.
April 8: Margaret, b. 6 April. P: Leonard and Teresa Boch.
May 2: George Leo, b. 29 March. P: Christian Kunkler and Katharine Noll.
May 17: Clare E., b. 17 April. P: Joseph Spies and Johanna Runter.
June 20: Teresa, b. 2 June. P: John Cooney and Katharine Younk.
Sept. 25: Margaret E., b. 7 Sept. P: Nicholas Kunkler and Mary M. Kost.
Sept. 25: Katharine Christ, b. 21 Oct. [!] P: Joseph Schoneberger and Helen Wolsheide.
________: Francis Edward, b. 11 June 1879. P: Samuel Cox and Lee Linzie.

1881
________: Agnes C., b. 30 Jan. P: William Meier and Maryanna Phillinger.
Feb. 20: John William, b. ca. 9 years.
March 2: Robert, b. 30 Nov. 1880. P: Thomas Hanestofel and Christina Aide.
May 22: John Fr., b. 10 May. P: Joseph Rosencrans and Mary Messberger.
July 3: Mary Magd., b. 21 May. P: Jerome Potts and Elisabeth Keller.
July 11: Anthony, b. 11 July. P: Anthony Smeltzer and Margaret Bash.
Dec. 4: Mary Helen, b. 1 Dec. P: Leonard and Teresa Boch.
Baptisme (Continued)

1882
March 5: Rosanna Mary, b. 29 Jan. P: Joseph Shoneberger and Helen Wolsheide.
March 5: Emma Sidella, b. 1 Dec. 1881. P: Edmund Thomas and Susanna Wolsheide.
March 12: Moris Vincent, b. 21 Feb. P: John Kessler and Mary Mulligan.
April 2: John Frederick, b. 11 March. P: John Cooney and Katharine Younk.
April 2: John Edward, b. 30 March. P: William Messberger and Margaret Shorr.
Aug. 13: Lucy Ellen, b. 2 Aug. P: Jacob Shorr and Juliana Smeltzer.
Oct. 8: Frances Cecilia, b. 6 Oct. P: John Messberger and Sarah Ellen Meier.
Nov. 10: Rosanna, b. 6 Nov. P: Adam Boch and Sophia Smeltzer.

1883
March 2: Mary M., b. 6 Feb. P: S. Ross and Susanna Shonk.
April 8: Fredelin H., b. 6 March. P: Christian Kunkler and Katharine Nolen.
April 29: Simeon P., b. 4 March 1878. P: George Eberhard and Rosanna Feitly.
July 22: Mary Grat, b. 20 April. P: Paul Huber and Harriet Melissa.
--- 26: C. Elisabeth, b. 6 August. P: John Cooney and Katharine Yonk.
------: Blanche Cecilia, b. 8 Oct. P: Nicholas Kessler and Rosanna Boley.
--- 28: Oliver, b. 15 September. P: Oliver Noll and Elisabeth Kunkler.
Nov. 11: Florence E., b. 9 O t. P: Jerome Potts and Elisabeth Keller.

1884
---: Agnes, b. 6 Dec. 1884 [?]. P: Joseph Messberger and Anastasia Hammond.
March 23: Katharine, b. 21 May 1859. P: Noah Stiemen and Mary Keller.
March 24: Marietta, b. 8 April 1878. P: Jacob Meier and Katharine Stiemen.

March 24: [March 24]: George, b. 13 Sept. 1879. P: Jacob Meier and Katharine Stiemen.
March 24: [March 24]: Anna, b. 17 Feb. 1880. P: Jacob Meier and Katharine Stiemen.
March 24: [March 24]: Dorothy, b. 13 June 1882. P: Jacob Meier and Katharine Stiemen.
April 6: Anna, b. April 8. P: Anthony Smeltzer and Margaret Bash.
April 27: Jacob H., b. 18 March. P: Jacob Messberger and Elisabeth Philip.
[Sept.] 7: Elisabeth, b. ------. P: Noah Stiemen and Marianna Keller.
Dec. 31: William, b. 12 April, 1875. P: John Funk and Lidia Steaman.

1885
Jan. 1: Mary C., b. 20 Dec. 1889 [?]. P: Lewis Bash and Rosalia Smeltzer.
Feb. 1: Sara Agnes, b. 31 Jan. P: Peter Alphonse Smeltzer and Mary M. Bash.
------: Andrew, b. 9 Feb. P: John Schneider and Magdalen Beiter.
--- 6: Sarah, b. 23 March 1873. P: John Funk and Lidia Steaman.
--- 23: George Smoke, ca. 26 years.
--- 10: Antonelle Magdalen, b. 28 March. P: Joseph Messberger and Anastasia Hammond.
--- 17: Mary Magdalen, b. 15 of this month. P: Jacob Meier and Susanna Smeltzer.
------: Mary Helen, b. b. 12 of this month. P: John Cooney and ------.
Baptisms (Continued)

1885 (cont.)

-- 24: Martin, b. 23 of this month. P: George J. Kellenberger and Elisabeth S----.
-- 15: Mary A., b. 25 Aug. P: Thomas Hantstoffel and Christina S----.

1886

March 14: Teresa, b. 31 Jan. P: Servy Eaton and Susanna Wolsheide.
April 25: Lucy Cecilia, b. 11 March. P: George Snoke and Susanna Shonk.
--: Joseph, b. 4 March. P: ---- Kesler and ----.
--: Elisabeth, b. 10 June. P: John Messberger and Sarah Ellen Meier.
--: Anna Angelica, b. 15 July. P: Joseph Boch and Susanna Kesler.
--: Mary Elisabeth, b. 2 July. P: John Beiter and Mary Smeltzer.
--: Jane Frances, b. 21 August. P: Anthony Smeltzer and Margaret Bash.
--: Lawrence, b. 8 October. P: Lewis Bash and Rosalia Smeltzer.
--: Oliver G., b. 14 April 1882. P: Francis Hect and Alice Pots.
--: Rebecca, b. 28 Oct. P: Jacob Messberger and Elisabeth Philip.
--: Joseph Augustine, b. 30 Nov. P: Joseph Shorr and Mary Smeltzer.
Dec. 12: Ellen, b. 5 Dec. P: Joseph H. Schue and Mary M. Shone[berger].
Dec. 22: Peter, b. 21 Dec. P: George J. Kellengerger and Elisabeth Lidia ----.

1887

March 5: Katharine Cecilia, b. 3 March. P: Jacob Meier and Susanna Smeltzer.
April 11: Cora Agnes, b. 4 April 1887. P: John Cooney and Katharine Yonts.
-- 28: Rosalia, b. 27 of this month. P: Peter Alphonse Smeltzer and Mary M. Bash.
--: Frances E., b. 18 May. P: Jerome Pots and Elisabeth Owens.
Oct. 23: John Fr., b. 5 October. P: Sevy Eaton and Susanna Wolsheide.
Nov. 6: Charles Adam, b. 5 of this month. P: Abraham Boch and Katharine Lahey.

1888

-- 11: Murant Leo, b. 18 ----. P: Louis Bash and Rosa Smeltzer.

1889

-- 12: Caroline Teresa, b. 12 Jan. P: Joseph Schorr and Mary Smeltzer.
--: Mary Ellen, b. 27 Feb. P: Abraham Boch and Catharine Boch.
May 2: Emmelina, b. 19 March. P: Peter A. Smeltzer and Mary M. Bash.
Sept. 5: Philip, b. 19 August. P: Nicholas Kunkler and Mary Magdalen Kost (Bremen)
Sept. 19: (Bremen) Elisabeth, b. 18 Sept. P: Joseph Kellenberger and Margaret ----.

1890

Feb. 8: (Sugar Grove) Anna Agatha, b. --- 1890. P: Henry Killberger and Louisa Rupp.
June 22: (Bremen) Teresa, b. 13 June. P: Adam Bach and Mary Smeltzer.
June 23: (Bremen) Robert Oliver, b. ca. 12 March 1864.