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---University of Louisville---

Early Catholicity in Kentucky

And the See of Bardstown

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

Of the Graduate School of the College of Liberal Arts

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Of Master of Arts

Department of History

By

Wickliffe Lockett

1929

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While Catholicism in Kentucky is centered so closely about Harrodsburg, that to think of it at all in its early stages, is to think of Harrodsburg. Within the limits of this small little old town are many places of historic interest but in connection with this subject, we are concerned only with those which relate to early Catholicity in Kentucky. Perhaps the most interesting of these is St. Joseph's Catholic Church, now the Cathedral of the West and a monument to the Pioneer Catholics of Kentucky. The history of this beautiful old building will be given later under a separate heading.

THE PIONEER CATHOLICS OF KENTUCKY

The Catholic population of Kentucky emigrated almost entirely from Maryland, chiefly from St. Mary's, Charles' and Prince George's Counties.¹

Dr. Hart and William Cooke are the first Catholics who are known to have come to Kentucky. They both came in the Spring of 1776 and settled at Harrod's Station, among the first settlers of the State. Dr. Hart, so far as can be ascertained, was Kentucky's first physician. He practiced medicine in and around Harrod's Station, and subsequently, for a number of years. He was an Irish Catholic member of the Early Catholic Missions of Kentucky. Dr. William D. J. Spalding, 1848, p. 28. History of Catholicity in Kentucky, by Rev. J. W. Wynn, 1894, p. 77.

Early Catholicity in Kentucky is centered so closely around Bardstown, that to think of it at all in its early stages, is to think of Bardstown. Within the limits of this quaint little old town are many places of historic interest but in connection with this subject, we are concerned only with those which relate to early Catholicity in Kentucky. Perhaps the most interesting of these is St. Joseph's Catholic Church, once the Cathedral of the West and a monument to the pioneer Catholics of Kentucky. The history of this beautiful old building will be given later under a separate heading.

Of the early Catholics in Kentucky, Spalding states, "The Catholic population of Kentucky emigrated almost entirely from Maryland; chiefly from St. Mary's, Charles' and Prince George's Counties."¹

Dr. Hart and William Coomes are the first Catholics who are known to have come to Kentucky. They both came in the Spring of 1775 and settled at Harrod's Station, among the very first settlers of the State. Dr. Hart, so far as can be ascertained, was Kentucky's first physician. He practiced medicine in and around Harrod's Station, now Harrodsburg, for a number of years. He was an Irish Catholic,

¹ Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions of Kentucky, by Father M. J. Spalding, 1844, p. 23.
Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky, by Ben J. Webb, 1884, p. 27.

decidedly loyal to his religion and when Bardstown became the chief Catholic center of the State, removed there, in order to be with those of his chosen faith. He bought a farm, which at the time, was just about a mile out of Bardstown and which is now the site of the Catholic Cemetery. It was donated by him to the Church in 1802. Not only did he give this piece of land to the Church but made other substantial gifts from time to time. William Coomes was originally from Charles County, Maryland and came to Kentucky in the company of Abraham and Isaac Hite.² A little later, at the solicitation of the settlers, his wife opened a school for the neighboring children at Harrod's Station, which in all probability was the first elementary school in Kentucky.³ Mr. Coomes and family removed to Bardstown the same year as did Dr. Hart and he too purchased a farm three miles north-east of the town, consisting of a thousand acres and including within its bounds a large cave. The fact that the farm contained the cave, is said to have largely influenced him in selecting this particular tract of land, as the cave afforded a refuge in time of Indian hostilities.⁴

2 William Coomes did not come to Kentucky directly from Maryland but went to Virginia and thence to Kentucky.

3. I have been unable to find any records or accounts of an earlier school in Kentucky.

4 A son of William Coomes fought in the Battle of Blue Licks.

* Information on this page is based on Webb, pp. 56-58 and Spalding, pp. 25-26

The next Catholic colony to emigrate to Kentucky was that which accompanied the Haydons and Lancasters. They arrived sometime during the year of 1785 and settled on Pottinger's Creek, about fifteen miles from Bardstown, though a few settled in the immediate vicinity of Bardstown.

In the Spring of 1786, a much larger colony of Catholics came to Kentucky with Captain James Rapier and settled on land a few miles south-east of Bardstown in the neighborhood of the colony that had preceded them the year before. With Captain Rapier, were his two sons, Charles and William.⁶

In 1787, another colony under Philip Miles and Thomas Hill arrived; and in 1788 Robert Abell and several of his⁷ followers came with a view to settling in the new country. In 1790, a colony came with Benedict Spalding from St. Mary's County and in 1791, still another band of emigrants came with Leonard Hamilton. This gives a brief summary of the chief Catholic colonies emigrating to Kentucky through the year of 1791. At this point we will go back to the settlement at Pottinger's Creek.

In the year 1785, sixty families of St. Mary's County, Maryland, all of whom were Catholics, formed a league, pledging themselves to emigrate to Kentucky within a certain

5 Spalding, p. 25

6 Spalding, p. 26

7 Robert Abell was one of the delegates to the convention that framed our first State Constitution and was the only Catholic in the Convention.

specified time. Their purpose was to settle together in the new country, in order to protect themselves against the Indians and to secure for themselves with the least delay, a pastorate and a church. All were not to necessarily emigrate at once but as circumstances permitted. Twenty-five⁸ of these families left Maryland early in 1785. It is quite natural to wonder why so many Catholics were leaving Maryland and why they were emigrating to Kentucky. The only suggestion of a probable reason is in Webb, whom I shall quote in this relation:

" In deciding to give up their ancient homes and seek others in the wilds of Kentucky, the emigrants were influenced chiefly, no doubt, by the motive of bettering their worldly prospects. Their Maryland farms exhausted by unskillful methods of cultivation, through a long series of years, had ceased to yield them remunerative crops and in the then state of public mind, in reference to the boundless fertility of the soil of Kentucky, it is not at all wonderful that they should have been stirred to just such a movement as the one that followed."⁹

This seems to be a very plausible reason for the Catholics leaving Maryland and coming to Kentucky, but the very fact of his inserting in his statement the phrase "no doubt "

⁸ Webb, pp. 27-28

⁹ Webb, p. 26

indicates that there was a doubt and that the statement was his own inference. As there is no indication of a disturbance of any kind in Maryland at the time they were leaving; as we know at this particular time that the methods of agriculture were crude and anything but scientific and that since the settlement of Maryland in 1634, the soil could have been very easily exhausted; and as we also know that people are prone to seek self-betterment in a newly opened land, Mr. Webb's theory relative to why those Catholics left Maryland for Kentucky may be accepted as possible, although somewhat of a surmise on his part. Again we wonder, if they were seeking a more fertile soil, why they ever chose Pottinger's Creek as a place of settlement. The soil in that region is anything but fertile and the location is decidedly inaccessible. With reference to this inconsistency, Webb makes the following statement:

" It is very generally believed that deception in respect to the quality of the Pottinger Creek lands, was successfully practiced upon the first Catholic emigrants, by certain speculators in wild lands, then living in Baltimore. These parties were the owners of patents from the government of Virginia, covering the surveys in question and no doubt the emigrants were induced to buy on their representation."¹⁰

Subsequent settlement in this particular locality may have been due to a natural desire to be near friends and those of a like faith, regardless of the character of soil.

In 1802, Father Urbain and twenty-four associates of the Trappist Order, arrived in America and established themselves at " Pigeon Hill ", a plantation about fifty miles from Baltimore. After remaining there for sometime, they found the location and conditions not altogether suitable and decided to come to Kentucky. Accordingly they came to Kentucky in 1805 and through the instrumentality of Father Badin, who had been in Kentucky for a number of years, the little band of " Reformed Cistercians " settled at Rohan's Knob in the Pottinger Creek vicinity. Here within about four years, they cleared sixty acres of land, built several log cabins and were just becoming well established, when their entire property was destroyed by fire. Being left practically destitute, Father Urbain accepted a plantation offered him by an old acquaintance, whom he had met in Baltimore, and he and his followers removed to this plantation, which was located at Florrisant, about thirty miles west of St. Louis.

In the Spring of 1787, one of the leading Catholic emigrants to Kentucky returned to Baltimore and put before
 11 Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, Vol. III, p. 168

Bishop Carroll, then Bishop of Baltimore, the condition of the Catholics in Kentucky, emphasizing the urgent need of the services of a priest, as until this time they were without a spiritual advisor.¹² He represented the Catholic population in Kentucky as being approximately fifty families,¹³ the greater number of whom were anxious for the services of a pastor. Bishop Carroll was deeply touched by this appeal and immediately determined to supply the much needed want. Accordingly, he selected Father Whelan, an Irish Franciscan,¹⁴ to go to Kentucky. Father Whelan received his education in France and had been chaplain on one of the French ships of war sent out to aid the American Colonies during their struggle for independence. After the war, he decided to establish himself in America and for several years prior to this time he had been employed in American Missions. He came to Kentucky in the Spring of 1787 and was received with great joy, as many of the Catholics had not even seen a priest for two years. Father Whelan gave three years of hard service to Kentucky, a service rendered under very adverse circumstances. In the Spring of 1790, he returned to Maryland, leaving the Catholics again without a pastor. This was not for long, however, as the following

12 Spalding, pp. 42-43

13 It seems that throughout the early settlements, Catholics were estimated by families rather than by individuals.

14 Bishop Carroll's jurisdiction then extended over the whole territory owned by the United States.

summer a band of settlers arrived in Kentucky from North Carolina and Tennessee and among these was Father de Rohan.¹⁵ Father de Rohan's past is not very well known but so far as can be learned he was of Irish parentage and born in France. There was some technical question as to his jurisdiction in Kentucky and for that reason his services in the new territory were somewhat limited. In 1793, Father Badin was delegated to Kentucky and Father Barrieres was assigned to come with him as a companion priest. The two left Baltimore September 6, 1793, going on foot to Pittsburg, where they took a flat-boat down the Ohio for Kentucky, on November 3, of the same year. They landed in Limestone, which is now Maysville, and walked from there to Lexington, a distance of about sixty-five miles. Father Badin's first mass in Kentucky was at Lexington. He remained in Scott County for about eighteen months, while Father Barrieres went on to Bardstown to administer to the Catholics in that vicinity.¹⁶ Father Badin was born at Orleans, France, on July 17, 1768 and was only twenty-five when sent to Kentucky. He was ordained priest by Bishop Carroll in the old Cathedral of St. Peter's, in Baltimore, on the 25th of May, 1793.¹⁷

15 Spalding, p. 48

16 Spalding, p. 59

17 Spalding, p. 62

When Father Badin first came to Kentucky, he estimated the number of Catholic families at three hundred.¹⁸ By far the greater number of these people were poor; practically none had even the suggestion of wealth. The struggle in this vast wilderness for a mere existence, together with the absence (during the greater part of the time) of a religious advisor to administer to their spiritual welfare, had caused laxity and carelessness in many instances. Saturday night dances, extending well into the small hours of the night, had become rather prevalent in certain communities. Such conditions required great labor and patience on the part of Father Badin, to bring about the proper discipline but through indomitable courage and ceaseless efforts, he was finally rewarded by the result of his labor. Soon after coming to Kentucky he took up his residence three miles from Holy Cross and there erected a temporary chapel, which he called St. Stephen's¹⁹ in honor of his patron saint. In the meantime, Father Barrieres, the companion priest of Father Badin, because of his rather advanced years, could not easily adapt himself to the ways of the wilderness, so after remaining in Kentucky for only a few months, he left in April, 1794, for New Orleans. From there he went to Attakapas, where he

¹⁸ Spalding, p. 65

¹⁹ Spalding, p. 67

labored in the missions for twenty years. In 1814, he sailed for his native France and died at Bordeaux eight days after his arrival.²⁰ In the beginning and even throughout his stay in Kentucky, Father Badin had to endure many hardships. He often had to grind his own meal and there were even times when he had none to grind. After the departure of Father Barrieres, he was the only Catholic priest in Kentucky for²¹ about three years. In 1797, much to his joy, he was sent aid in the person of Father Fournier, who took up his abode with Father Badin at St. Stephen's, where he remained until he established himself in a residence of his own, sometime later, on Rolling Fork. Father Fournier, a native of Blois, in France, when the French Revolution broke out, was forced to take refuge in England, where he taught French for four years. He then sailed for America and on arriving, offered²² his services to Bishop Carroll and was sent to Kentucky. At the time of his arrival in Kentucky, Father Badin was taxed to the utmost because of the number of stations he had to make and the great distance that had to be covered in going from station to station. He was greatly relieved by Father Fournier taking over several of these stations, namely, the congregations of Rolling Fork, Hardin's Creek, Rough Creek, Cartwright's Creek, Danville and Madison County.

²⁰ Spalding, p. 63

²¹ Report of Kentucky Missions, Father Badin, 1822, p. 43

²² Report of Kentucky Missions, p. 45

Several of the pioneer priests of Kentucky have already been mentioned but perhaps at this particular point it would be fitting to give the names of the first twelve, who so unselfishly dedicated their services to the welfare of the new Commonwealth in its crude beginning. Father Whelan, the first, blazed the path in 1787; Father de Rohan, came in 1790; Father Badin and Father Barrieres in 1793; Father Fournier, to whom we have just referred, in 1797; Fathers Salmon and Thayer, in 1799; Fathers Nerinckx, Fenwick and Guillet, in 1805; and Fathers Flaget, David and Cabrat, in 1811. After this there were others who came from time to time, rendering valuable service, but the ones mentioned are usually regarded as the pioneer priests of Kentucky. It must be borne in mind, that these priests were never all laboring in Kentucky at the same time but several were taken by death, while others were called to distant fields of labor. Even during the period between 1803 and 1805, Father Badin, then Vicar General of Kentucky, was the only priest left within its bounds. Father Salmon died in 1799, Father Micheal Fournier in 1803, and Father Thayer had left the State within this period. As Vicar General, Father Badin had the authority to assign but much to his distress and discouragement, he had no one to whom he could make assignments.

²³ Webb, pp. 26-27

²⁴ Spalding, p. 112

In referring to the good works of the several priests, it is but just to give to Father de Rohan the credit of being instrumental in building the first Catholic church in Kentucky. Though indeed, it was a most humble structure; crude in every sense of the word, it rendered valuable service and served the purpose for which it was erected.

" This temporary hut was covered with clapboards and was unprovided with glass in the windows. A slab of wood, roughly hewed, served for an altar. Such was the first Catholic church of Kentucky." This church or chapel was located near the center of the Holy Cross neighborhood and must have been built between 1790 and 1793, as Father de Rohan came to Kentucky in 1790, and Father Badin found the Holy Cross Church had been built, when he came in 1793. A little later the first board of trustees, ever organized in the State, for the secure tenure of Catholic church property, had for its first official business the transaction of the deed that conveyed the grounds of the Holy Cross Church. This transaction, however, refers to the Holy Cross Church, which was built later, on the ground occupied by the little old chapel.²⁵

The first Catholic settlements of any importance, made between 1785 and 1795 were Pottinger's Creek, Hardin's Creek,
²⁵ Webb, p. 29. (Those comprising the board were: Wm Bald, Bernard Cissell, Charles Payne and William Brewer.)

Scott County, Bardstown, Cartwright Creek, Rolling Fork Breckenridge County and Cox's Creek. With the exception of that in Scott County, all of these settlements were in the County of Nelson, as then laid out.²⁶ These settlements were rather widely scattered; the greater number of the people were poor and as traveling was dangerous under the best conditions, but few of the settlers were acquainted with the State outside of the immediate settlement in which they lived. Much of the country was wilderness infested by both Indians and wolves. Often the priests were not safe in going from station to station and on at least one occasion, Father Nerinckx narrowly escaped being devoured by wolves. For the most part, the settlers were engaged in farming and though the process of clearing the lands was usually long and laborious, they were in time often rewarded because of the fertility of the soil. Those who were more adventurous followed the pursuit of trapping and practically all were afforded an abundance of wild meat from the forests. In the beginning the settlers often suffered for want of salt but the salt licks were soon discovered by trailing wild animals. A few of the settlers who were inclined toward business, developed a new and very profitable industry by sinking wells at these licks and making salt, which very often sold for several dollars a bushel.

After fourteen years of strenuous labor in Kentucky, Father Magin went to Baltimore in the Spring of 1867, his chief purpose being to lay before Bishop Carroll the urgent need of a bishop in Kentucky and to recommend Father Magin for the place. Bishop Carroll had for sometime felt the necessity of dividing the episcopal authority in the United States and wrote the Holy See suggesting four new sees, namely, Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Bardstown. All of Bishop Carroll's recommendations were adopted by Rome, the additional sees were created and those proposed as bishops were sent trials for their consecration; Father Magin's being dated April 3, 1868. In recommending Father Magin, Bishop Carroll in a letter to Rome said:

BARDSTOWN AS A CATHOLIC CENTER

"For several years he was stationed at a place called Fort Vincennes, lying between the rivers of the Ohio and the Lakes of Canada; where with the greatest industry and the most hearty good will, of all, he labored in promoting piety, until to my regret he was recalled to fill some office in this seminary. He is at least forty years of age; of a tender piety toward God, of most kind manners and of yet profoundly, at least sufficiently imbued with theological knowledge." In addition to these good qualities recommended by Bishop Carroll, Father Magin it said to have possessed a robust constitution, a rather fortunate attribute for the Bishop of Kentucky, at that particular time.

27 Feb., p. 213

After fourteen years of strenuous labor in Kentucky, Father Badin went to Baltimore in the Spring of 1807, his chief purpose being to lay before Bishop Carroll the urgent need of a bishop in Kentucky and to recommend Father Flaget for the place. Bishop Carroll had for sometime felt the necessity of dividing the episcopal authority in the United States and wrote the Holy See suggesting four new sees, namely, Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Bardstown. All of Bishop Carroll's recommendations were adopted by Rome, the additional sees were created and those proposed as bishops were sent bulls for their consecration; Father Flaget's being dated April 8, 1808. In recommending Father Flaget, Bishop Carroll in a letter to Rome said:

" For several years he was stationed at a place called Post Vincennes, lying between the waters of the Ohio and the Lakes of Canada; where with the greatest industry and the most hearty good will, of all, he laboured in promoting piety, until to my regret he was recalled to fill some office in this seminary. He is at least forty years of age; of a tender piety toward God; of most bland manners and if not profoundly, at least sufficiently imbued with theological knowledge. " In addition to these good qualities represented by Bishop Carroll, Father Flaget is said to have possessed a robust constitution, a rather fortunate attribute for the Bishop of Kentucky, at that particular time.

The four additional sees were erected in 1808 and Father Flaget became Bishop of Bardstown. His see embraced the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Iowa and about half of Arkansas. At that time the See of Bardstown bore nearly the same relation to the West as did Baltimore to the whole of the
 28
 United States.

Bishop Flaget visited his family in France, sailed from Bordeaux for America, April 10, 1810 and arrived in Baltimore sometime during the month of July. He was consecrated by Archbishop Carroll in the Cathedral of Baltimore on November 4. Bishop Flaget was anxious to reach his new field of labor but was delayed for sometime, chiefly because of insufficient funds to make the trip. Father Badin hearing of his predicament, made an effort to raise funds in Kentucky to help defray the expense of the trip, but was unable to carry out his plan on account of the poverty that prevailed at that time in Kentucky. Finally through subscription on the part of the people in Baltimore, the bishop was en-
 29
 abled to start on his journey.

The following extract from a letter written by Father Flaget is indicative of his financial condition at the time he contemplated making the trip to Bardstown:

28 Spalding, p. 183

29 Spalding, p. 188

" Nevertheless, my consecration took place on the 4th of November, 1810; but for want of money to defray the expenses of the journey, I could not undertake it. It was only six months afterwards, that through a subscription made through friends in Baltimore, I was enabled to reach Bardstown, my episcopal See.³⁰" Father Flaget with his little company, consisting of Father David, Father Savine, a Canadian priest, Subdeacon Chabrat and two young laics; left Baltimore May 11, 1811, for Kentucky. They went over the mountains by foot to Pittsburg and from there by flatboat down the Ohio to Louisville, arriving in Louisville on the 4th of June, where they were met by Father Nerinckx, who escorted them to Bardstown and then to St. Stephen's, the home of Father Badin. They must have remained in Louisville a day or so, as they reached Bardstown on June 9, and St. Stephen's on June 11. After remaining at St. Stephen's for a year, the Bishop with Father David and the seminarians removed to St. Thomas, where he stayed for eight years and then just about a year before the dedication of the new Cathedral at Bardstown, he removed his residence there.³¹

On the arrival of Bishop Flaget in Kentucky in 1811, there were more than one thousand Catholic families, including many, who had been received into the church by the

³⁰ Webb, p. 224

³¹ Webb, pp. 225-227

early Catholic missionaries. The Catholic population at the time was probably not six thousand. There were six priests in addition to the Vicar General, Father Badin, who administered the Sacraments to more than thirty congregations or stations, only about ten of which had churches or chapels. Those having churches were: Holy Cross, St. Stephen's, Holy Mary's, St. Charles, St. Ann, St. Rose, St. Patrick's, St. Francis, St. Christopher and St. Joseph. Other churches, however, were in the process of being built. There was also a Dominican house at St. Rose, established by Father Fenwick and three of his associates, in 1806.³² At those stations not having churches, services were held in private homes or in improvised shelters, just as circumstances would permit.³³

The year after Bishop Flaget's arrival in Kentucky, the first Catholic publication printed in the State was published. It was "Instructions on the Sacraments of Confirmation." The imprint is: "Thomas Smith, Lexington, Kentucky, 1812."³⁴

The exact date on which Bardstown was settled cannot be ascertained but there is no question as to its establishment in 1788 by act of the Virginia Legislature.³⁵ It is pretty well established also, that it was named

³² Spalding, p. 192

³³ Spalding, p. 153

³⁴ Webb, p. 560

³⁵ Battle-Perrin-Kniffin, History of Kentucky, 1888, p. 630

in honor of David Baird, one of the proprietors of the land on which the town was laid out. It was at first called Bairdstown but either through accident, or a desire to abbreviate, the "i" was dropped and the town has since been known as Bardstown.³⁶

Nelson County, in which Bardstown is located, was formed by an act of the Virginia Legislature in 1784, about eight years before Kentucky was admitted to statehood. It was the fourth county created in the State (then called district) and was the first created after the original three; Jefferson, Fayette and Lincoln. It was named in honor of Governor Nelson of Virginia. Since it was created, eighteen counties have been formed in whole or in part from its original territory.³⁷

Bardstown was the third largest town in the State according to the first United States census. It had a population of 216, and exceeded both Louisville and Danville.³⁸ The following bit of information relative to its size, is found also in the "Catholic Guide": "In 1786, Bardstown consisted of some fifty or sixty log houses, regularly laid out and well built."³⁹ A brief but interesting description of Bardstown is also given in the Note-Book of Dr. Saugranis, a

36 Battle-Perrin-Kniffin, p. 630

37 Collins, p. 650

38 Collins, p. 262

39 The Catholic Guide, 1887, p. 15

diary of his trip from Louisville to Philadelphia, in May, 1788.

" May 12, I arrived at Bardstown a little fatigued in consequence of having made thirty miles to-day. I can see nothing of the town. It is night and I put off until tomorrow, speaking to you about it. "

" May 13, The town of Bardstown is not very large, there are, however, two or three stone houses and a court-house now building, which will be handsome and large and must cost very dear. I judge from this, that the people of the place like law suits. We set out from Bardstown at ten o'clock and arrived at Danville at seven in the evening." 40

The Catholic institutions in and near Bardstown, which are of special interest are: St. Joseph's College, Bethlehem, Gethsemane, Nazareth and St. Joseph's Church. Just at this point a brief description will be given of each of these institutions, with the exception of St. Joseph's Church, which because of its historical significance, will be treated more fully under a separate head. Within the town limits are two Catholic schools, St. Joseph's College for boys and Bethlehem for girls. St. Joseph's College was organized in connection with the Cathedral in about 1819, though it was not until the close of 1820 that what is known as the

40 This part of the diary was published in the Kentucky Historical Records, written by Eugene Bliss.

south wing of the college was completed and occupied. The first president of St. Joseph's was Father Elder, a man particularly suited to the charge. The college is for boys⁴⁴ solely and accommodates both day and boarding students.

Bethlehem, the school for girls, had a rather interesting beginning as evidenced by the following quotation:

" On September 8, 1819, three Sisters of Charity; Harriet Gardiner, Polly Beavin and Nancy Lynch, left the mother house to establish a day school in Bardstown. The new establishment was called Bethlehem. " In the beginning, this school was decidedly elementary, as were the majority of pioneer schools of Kentucky. However, by wise supervision and good management, the school soon grew and is to-day a large institution with a high school department.⁴⁵

Gethsemane is located about fourteen miles from Bardstown and is a Monastery of the Trappists or "Reformed Cistercians". It was founded in 1848 by the Abbey of Malleray in France. The site was purchased from the Sisters of Loretta and at the time, consisted of fourteen hundred acres of ground and about ten log houses that had been used by the sisters as an orphanage. On December 20, 1848, forty Trappists from Malleray took possession, Dom Eutropius being the first abbot. This colony, like all others of the order, live by the labor of

* Notes 41, 42, and 43 referred to some material that was eliminated from this thesis.

44 Webb, p. 276

45 Spalding, p. 234

their own hands and chiefly according to the rules of St. Benedict. At Gethsemane, the labors of the colony are directed chiefly toward farming. The particular phases emphasized are ; cattle raising , cheese making, including other phases of dairying, and also poultry raising to some extent. Within the walls of Gethsemane, there is much of historic interest. This is especially true of the fine old library, consisting of sixty thousand volumes.⁴⁶

" On the 1st day of December, 1812, the Society of Sisters of Charity of Nazareth had its beginning. On that day two young women, Teresa Carico and Elizabeth Wells, took possession of a small log cabin, on the seminary farm of St. Thomas, which had been previously prepared for their reception by Father David and his seminarians.⁴⁷ " These sisters were soon joined by others and lost no time in establishing a small school for girls. As the school grew, the original site, with its unpretentious buildings, became inadequate and in 1822 was removed to its present site, just two and a half miles out of Bardstown. The present site embraces nine hundred acres of very fine land. with buildings and equipment valued at more than a million dollars. It is the oldest and richest school of its kind in America.

⁴⁶ Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. III, p. 788. (Also information from the Abbey of Gethsemane, January, 1929.)

⁴⁷ Webb, pp. 245-250

The old church of St. Joseph, as far as can be ascertained, was built between 1795 and 1796. The cost of construction is estimated at \$10,000, of the lot upon which the old church stood, was signed by Dr. George Hart and dated July 12, 1803. The deed states that the church building was the entire property of the parish of St. Joseph, and that the building is known to have been used several years prior to the date of the deed. Of this old building which stood on the lot now occupied by the present church, the following is a description: It was a structure of logs, fairly substantial, and stood in the middle of the graveyard, in which

THE HISTORY OF ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

was buried the first priest of the parish, the late Rev. Father John J. O'Connell, who died in 1812. It was a simple structure, built of logs, and was used for some years as a place of worship. The church was destroyed by fire in 1812, and the present church was built on the same site in 1813. The church was built of stone, and was a simple structure, with a steeple. The church was used for some years as a place of worship, and was destroyed by fire in 1812. The present church was built on the same site in 1813.

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St. Joseph, N. J.

The old Church of St. Joseph, so far as can be ascertained, was built between 1795 and 1798. The deed of conveyance to Father Badin, of the lot upon which the old church stood, was signed by Dr. George Hart and dated July 12, 1802. The deed states that the church building was the chief appendage of the parcel of ground deeded, and this building is known to have been used several years prior to the date of the deed. Of this old building Webb says: " Old St. Joseph was a structure of logs, fairly commodious, and stood in the middle of the graveyard, in which most of the early Catholic settlers in and near Bardstown lie interred. All that I remember of it comprised a few decaying logs and a pile of stones, where once arose the sacristy chimney." Mr. Webb is of the opinion that the old church was used but little after 1812, except as a mortuary chapel. In referring to it he says:

" After 1812, up to the year 1814 or 1815, mass was celebrated in the town on Sundays and holidays, either in the house of Benedict Smith or that of Anthony Sanders. From the latter date to the consecration of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in 1819, the church station of the congregation was the house of my father, Nehemiah Webb."

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Soon after his arrival in Kentucky, Bishop Flaget had conceived the idea of erecting a Cathedral, but he was seriously hampered by poverty. For five or six years he labored and planned, until on July 16, 1816, relying chiefly on his faith in divine assistance, he laid the corner stone of the first cathedral west of the Allegheny Mountains. On this occasion Father David delivered an impressive sermon. Early in the year of 1817, subscriptions were taken and when the work on the St. Joseph's Church was actually begun, the subscriptions aggregated \$14,000.⁴⁹ a letter written by Father David throws considerable light on this:

" That which has occupied us most is the building of a Cathedral at Bardstown. Though the Bishop had conceived this design, immediately on his arrival, he had not, however, yet ventured on its execution: but Providence has at length removed all obstacles in a wonderful manner. A good Catholic carpenter from Baltimore has offered his services for this purpose; and the amount of the first subscription was found to be from twelve to fourteen thousand dollars.⁵⁰" The best account of the carpenter or architect may be had as follows from Webb:

" The architect and builder of the Cathedral of St. Joseph was Mr. John Rogers, who on his removal from Baltimore

49 Webb, pp. 269-271

50 Spalding, p. 243

to Bardstown in 1815, had brought with him the perfected plans of the building. He was a pious Catholic and a man of high repute in his profession. The only survivors of his children, Charles A. Rogers, Catholic bookseller and publisher and Mrs. Mary O'Brien, are residents of

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Louisville."

The general plan of the church is described in an interesting letter from Father Flaget to the Bishop of Quebec.

" Loretta Monastery (Kentucky) 1816.

To the Bishop of Quebec.

Monseigneur:

Poor though I be, my aspirations are very high; for in a few weeks I am going to Bardstown, with all the ecclesiastics I can gather, to lay the corner stone of my new cathedral. This cathedral is to be one hundred and twenty feet long, that is, thirty for the sanctuary, ninety for the nave and sixty feet in width. The foundations are to be of stone resting upon rock; the remainder of the building to be of brick. The style is to be Gothic throughout. The builder, who is a very good Catholic, believes that it will cost from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars to finish the interior, a prodigious sum, which assuredly will never be found in

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the treasury of the Bishop of Kentucky."

51 Webb, p. 269

52 The month and day of the month are not given.

53 Life of Bishop Flaget, M. J. Spalding, 1842, p. 63.

The plan of the church, however, in so far as dimensions are concerned, must have been changed from that which was set forth in Bishop Flaget's letter, for as it now stands, it is seventy-four feet wide and must be at least one hundred and twenty feet long. Unfortunately, the entire cost of the church cannot be ascertained but before completion, it had already cost \$22,000. At that time material and labor were much less costly, in addition to which, practically all material placed in the structure was procured from the near-by forests, while abundant stone and rock were taken from quarries but a short distance from the scene of building and all of the brick used was made right
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on the ground.

The Cathedral was completed in 1819 and the finished product, in the main, of Corinthian type, presented a very impressive sight. The portico, completed several years later, is supported by six massive columns of the Ionic order and extends entirely across the front of the church, lending dignity and massiveness. From the base of the church to the summit of the cross, which is mounted on a tapering and well proportioned steeple, it is nearly one-
55
hundred and fifty feet.

54 Catholic Guide, p. 117

55 The architectural design of the church must have also been changed, as Father Flaget in his letter refers to it as being Gothic.

The interior of the Church is equally imposing. The center aisle is arched and flanked on each side with a row of four beautiful columns besides the pilasters of the sanctuary. It is interesting to know that these beautiful and massive columns were made of huge forest trees, cut at the very door of the Church, during its process of construction and hewed by hand to the proper proportions.⁵⁶

The Cathedral was dedicated August 8, 1819. Priests, Catholics and Protestants, all came from far and near to take part in or to witness the dedication of St. Joseph's, the first Cathedral west of the Allegheny Mountains. Father Robert Abell⁵⁷ was chosen to deliver the dedication sermon, which is reputed to have been a most masterful discourse. Father Abell was the last of four priests, who were taken under consideration for delivering the sermon on this very unusual occasion. He was younger than the other three but had displayed much power in preaching. On this particular occasion he did not fall short of the reputation that he had already gained. "The sermon preached by Father Abell at the consecration of the Cathedral Church of St. Joseph, Bardstown, created more favorable criticism than any other that had previously been delivered in the State."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The writer saw the body of one of these columns, while it was being partially re-cemented in 1919.

⁵⁷ A member of the State Senate, in 1792.

⁵⁸ Webb, p. 273

The partial lists of church members contain the names of men, who with their families must have made a congregation of nearly three hundred. Of the members referred to, Mr. Webb makes the following statement: "As late as the year 1836, more than one half of the names enumerated, were those of living men to whom I was indebted for helpful acts in establishing the Catholic Advocate." The mem-
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bers given by Webb and referred to above, are as follows:

Harry Wathen, Thomas Beavin, Roger Smith, Charles Drury, Ambrose Aud, Lewis Hayden, Elisha Gates, ----Cooper, Charles Jarbo, James Warren, ----Deavers, Bennett Smith, John Mer-
riman, Alexius Adams, Walter Osborne, John McArdle, James McArdle, Daniel Harkins, John Stewart, Patrick Blacklock, John Stephens, Thomas Aud, Robert Livers, Henry Livers, George Ross,---- Blanford, William Osborne, William McAtee, Charles Coomes, ----Higdon, John Rogers, Alexander Moore, Bernard Wheatley, William Westscott, Robert Warden, Peter Wickham, James McGill, F. X. McAtee, James Green, George McAtee, John R. McAtee, Thomas Price, E. Baker Smith, Joseph Price, Thomas Glasgow, ----Merrimee, Ignatius Mattingly,
60
Benedict Smith, Charles Warren, Wm. Daugherty and P. Donohoo.

59 Webb, p. 63

60 Practically the same list-- given by Spalding, in his Life of Bishop Flaget, p. 64

The pastors of St. Joseph's Church from 1810 to 1848 were: Right Rev. Benedict Flaget, Rev. John David, Rev. Francis P. Kendrick, 1827-1830; Rev. Ignatius A. Reynolds, 1830-1835; Rev. Martin J. Spalding, 1835-1838; Rev. James M. Lancaster, 1838-1840; Rev. Charles H. De-Luynes, 1840-1841; Rev. Charles Spalding, 1841-1845, and
 61
 Rev. Benedict J. Spalding, from 1845-1848. From 1848 to 1868, the parish was placed under the care of the Jesuits. The pastors after 1868 to the present time were; Rev. Peter Defraine, 1868-1872; Rev. John F. Reed, 1872-1879; Rev. C. J. O'Connell, 1879-1920, and Rev. W. D. Pike from 1920
 61
 to the present day. In referring to the Pastors of St. Joseph's Church, it is nothing more than duty to pay tribute to Rev. O'Connell, who served the Church so faithfully for more than forty years.

The Church has been the recipient of a number of beautiful paintings, all done by old masters. Several of the most highly prized were given to the Church by Father Nerinckx, a pioneer priest of Kentucky and a friend of both Bishop Flaget and Father John David. Of the ones contributed by Father Nerinckx, " The Crucifixion " by Van Bree, is probably the most beautiful and the most costly.
 61 Webb, p. 275

* Several of the paintings given by Father Nerinckx, were purchased in Belgium.

Of these beautiful paintings donated to the Church by different sources, the following still adorn its walls:

" The Crucifixion " by Von Bree; " The Crowning of the Blessed Virgin " by Murillo; " The Winged Saint Mark " by Van Dyck; " St. John the Baptist " by Van Dyck; " Descent of the Holy Ghost " by Van Eyck; " The Annunciation " by Van Eyck; " The Flaying of Saint Bartholomew " by Reubens; " St. Peter in Chains " by Van Dyck; " The Immaculate Conception " by Jacob Hast, and " Saint Aloysius Teaching the Youths " by an unknown artist. In addition to the paintings, the Church was presented with a very fine bell and other valuable gifts. Bishop Spalding in his Life of Father Flaget ⁶² says: " M. Cabrat returned to Bardstown from Europe, July 18, 1821, bringing the bell, weighing about 1300 pounds, destined for the Cathedral. " In further reference to the gifts of the Church, Spalding writes in his sketches:

" The Cathedral was also provided with rich suits of vestments, golden candlesticks, a golden tabernacle and other splendid ornaments presented to the Bishop by the present King and Queen of the French. " ⁶³

* Later, the bell was cracked and had to be re-moulded.

62 Spalding, p. 245

63 Spalding, p. 247

There has been some discussion and dispute as to the authenticity of the general belief that certain gifts to the Church were made by Louis Phillippe of France but certain records, including those of the United States Congress, indicate that the King of France, a friend of Bishop Flaget, did actually make gifts to the Church.⁶⁴ This, from Spalding, is indicative as to the friendship between the King and the Bishop:

" This act (Flaget's act of kindness) was remembered a long time afterwards, when Louis Phillippe was King of the French, and he, Bishop of Bardstown."⁶⁵

In the Journal of the House of Representatives, December 30, 1824; Bishop of the Roman Apostolical Church, of the Diocese of Bardstown, in the State of Kentucky, praying that the duties chargeable by law on some rich vestments and other articles of church furniture, presented to the petitioner by his Grace, the Duke of Orleans at Lyons, France, for the sole use of the church in which he exercises religious functions may be remitted.⁶⁵

64 Spalding, Life of Bishop Flaget, p. 62

65 Mr. Moore was a Representative from the Bardstown District in 1824.

Congressional records show that certain duties were returned to Bishop Flaget, which he had paid out on paintings and gifts to the church, brought to this country on the ship, " Union " from Marseilles, France by way of New Orleans. The following extract will also throw considerable light on the source of some of the gifts that were made to St. Joseph's Cathedral:

" The bill for the relief of Benedict Joseph Flaget was read for the third time. The bill authorized the remission of duties on certain paintings and church furniture, presented by the King of the French to the Catholic Bishop of Bardstown, Kentucky. "

66 Ben Johnson's Photostatic Copies of Congressional Records, Statute I, May 31, 1832, Louisville Public Library. (Mr. Johnson, Representative from Kentucky for a number of years, obtained permission from Congress to make photostatic copies of that part of the records, which concerned the duties on the gifts to St. Joseph's Church at Bardstown.)

66 From Gales and Seaton's Register of Debates in Congress, May 19, 1832.

Great credit is due to the Catholics for the work which they did when Kentucky was in its infancy. The priests never hesitated to go into the depths of the wilderness to disseminate the word of God, nor did they shrink from enduring the utmost hardships in giving aid to the people in every conceivable way. Many ignorant people regarded the early priests with suspicion and it followed that these good men often had to labor under very adverse circumstances. In many instances these missionaries were

CONCLUSION

...and began the organization of a system of ... established themselves ... the priests, and later the ... great factors in promoting the ... in stamping out ignorance, and the ... a hand in the ... of their own faith, but were instrumental in relieving poverty wherever found and in administering to the sick, in both body and spirit, regardless of denomination. Through their gracious deeds, they soon made friends among the Protestants, as was demonstrated in the financial aid of the ... toward the erection of St. Joseph's Cathedral.

St. Joseph's, p. 234

The contribution of the Protestants toward St. Joseph's Cathedral has already been referred to under the head of St. Joseph's Church.

Great credit is due to the Catholics for the work which they did when Kentucky was in its infancy. The priests never hesitated to go into the depths of the wilderness to disseminate the word of God, nor did they shrink from enduring the utmost hardships in giving aid to the people in every conceivable way. Many ignorant people regarded the early priests with suspicion and it followed that these good men often had to labor under very adverse circumstances. In many instances these missionaries were highly educated and began the organization of a system of schools, almost as soon as they had established themselves in the new country.⁶⁸ By so doing the priests, and later the Sisters of Charity, became great factors in promoting education in the State and in stamping out ignorance, the enemy of progress. Not only did they lend a helping hand to those of their own faith, but were instrumental in relieving poverty wherever found and in administering to the sick, in both body and spirit, regardless of denomination. Because of their gracious deeds, they soon made friends among the Protestants, as was demonstrated in the financial aid of the Protestants, toward the erection of St. Joseph's Cathedral.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Spalding, p. 234

⁶⁹ The contribution of the Protestants toward St. Joseph's Cathedral has already been referred to under the head of St. Joseph's Church.

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