

Beginnings of the Catholic Church of Wilmington, Delaware

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PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS of the early history of Catholicism in northern Delaware have perpetuated a number of inaccuracies in names, dates, and locations, particularly about the mass station, church, and cemetery in Mill Creek Hundred that came to be called Coffee Run. The oft-repeated errors arose from early misinterpretations of an incomplete and contradictory documentary record. This article attempts to reconcile the sometimes conflicting primary sources where possible and identifies issues still to be resolved.

A few works have been relatively free of these errors. In *Laws of the State of Delaware Concerning Church Property*, the Reverend Paul J. Schierse summarized the secondary material published up to that time, and in the process filtered out a number of errors in the earlier accounts that reflected conflicting sources. Also generally reliable is the commemorative book, *Coffee Run 1772-1960*, published by the Catholic parish at Hockessin, with essays by both named and anonymous contributors who drew on primary sources; it is notable for identifying some of the unresolved issues. When the book appeared, the Hockessin parish, established in 1882, was known by the name of its original church, Saint John the Evangelist. In 1965 a new church was dedicated in honor of Saint Mary of the Assumption, named for the historic church that had been at Coffee Run within the present parish boundaries, and the parish has since been known by that name.¹

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¹ Rev. Paul J. Schierse, *Laws of the State of Delaware Concerning Church Property* (Washington, 1963), pp. 35-61; *Coffee Run 1772-1960* (Hockessin, Del., 1960). Two authors of later unpublished works who have made good use of primary sources are Rev. Leonard J. Kempfski, "A History of Catholicism in Delaware, 1704-1868" (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1965), and Susan M. Prendergast, "Early Influences on the Development of Catholicism in Delaware, 1704-1850" (1976), a 204-page typescript in the Wilmington Diocesan Archives, originally prepared for a University of Delaware-Winterthur Museum Seminar program. Prendergast developed a theme, suggested by Professor John A. Munroe in a 1976 Bicentennial lecture, of two successive phases in the development of the Catholic Church in Delaware. The first, the Maryland model, was based on missionary clergy supported by their own self-

One of the most readily available accounts, "The Catholic Church in Delaware" by the Reverend Eugene J. Kraemer, which appears as Chapter 39 in H. Clay Reed's *Delaware: A History of the First State*, is unfortunately not reliable for the period prior to the establishment of the Diocese of Wilmington in 1868. Its shortcomings have been perpetuated in many later newspaper and magazine articles and parish histories apparently based upon it.²

The Catholic community known as the Church of Wilmington—either the early group of worshipers that continues today as the Cathedral Parish of Saint Peter, or the later Diocese of Wilmington—has always included people from a much more extensive area than the name implies. The diocese, which now comprises all of Delaware and the Eastern Shore counties of Maryland, once included also the two Virginia counties on the Delmarva Peninsula. The parish, which at one point included parts of five counties, had its roots in a mass station, or in modern terminology a pastoral center, in Mill Creek Hundred at Cuba Rock, the farm and home of Irish-born Con Hollahan on Red Clay Creek.³

Catholics in colonial Delaware enjoyed religious liberty under the Penn proprietorship and could worship freely, in stark contrast with adjoining Maryland. That province, although founded on principles of religious liberty by a Catholic proprietary, was soon dominated by an increasingly intolerant Protestant majority. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 this majority demonstrated its loyalty to the new regime by accepting the Church of England as the legally recognized established church and suppressing all dissent, whether of Protestant or Catholic persuasion. The anti-Catholic restrictions were particularly onerous and were not formally repealed until after American independence. Catholics were forbidden to

sufficient plantations, serving dispersed, mostly native-born rural communities. It gave way to the urban model, which was built primarily upon urban communities comprised largely of recent immigrants who undertook, often through lay leaders, the responsibility of building their churches and supporting the clergy. Earlier, Professor Munroe presented the idea in "Catholicism's Start in Delaware," in *Coffee Run 1772–1960*, p. 15, noting the role of the Coffee Run church as a link between the two eras. I am grateful to Professor Munroe and to the late Rev. Edward B. Carley for their constructive suggestions after reading an earlier version of this paper.

² Rev. Eugene J. Kraemer, "The Catholic Church in Delaware," in H. Clay Reed, ed., *Delaware: A History of the First State* (New York, 1947), 2:681–90.

³ In the Roman Catholic tradition, the word "church" can be applied broadly to concepts as diverse as individual parishes or worship-places and the entire worldwide communion of believers. All of these, however, represent groupings or parts of what is essentially a local church as portrayed in the New Testament: a worshipping community of the faithful in a particular locality, presided over by a bishop who is assisted in his ministry by priests and deacons. Today, Catholics identify a church in that basic sense as a diocese or particular church. Both dioceses and the individual parishes into which they are divided have traditionally been named for their localities, except in urbanized areas where parishes are usually distinguished by their patron saint or the title under which they were dedicated.

vote, bear arms, hold public office, teach school, or conduct worship, and their churches were closed. The measures were only slightly moderated by an order in council of Queen Anne in the early eighteenth century that permitted Catholics to be undisturbed at private worship in their homes.

The Jesuit priests who served the Catholics of Maryland, perhaps seeking to avoid attention in more populous areas, turned to the Eastern Shore. In 1704 they established Saint Francis Xavier church and a supporting plantation, often called Bohemia for their location on a branch of the Bohemia River near present Warwick, Maryland. The church, attached to the priests' house like others of the period in Maryland, qualified as a private house chapel, as permitted under Queen Anne's concession.⁴ Saint Francis Xavier, now often called Old Bohemia, was the first permanent church in the present Diocese of Wilmington. It was a base for early ministries to Catholics of Pennsylvania and New Jersey as well as in Delaware and on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Jesuit priests associated with Bohemia also founded missions in Pennsylvania at Ivy Mills (Concord, 1729), Conewago (Hanover, 1730), Philadelphia (1733), and Lancaster (1742), which in turn gave rise to other mission churches throughout Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey.⁵

Soon after Con Hollahan married in 1747 and settled at Cuba Rock, his home became a regular stop for Jesuit priests from Bohemia or Philadelphia.⁶ The first record of the Mill Creek mass station appears in the Bo-

⁴ Thomas Joseph Peterman, *Catholics in Colonial Delmarva* (Devon, Pa., 1996), passim.

⁵ Rev. James F. Connelly, *History of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1976), pp. 12–15.

⁶ Charles H. A. Esling, "Catholicity in the Three Lower Counties; or, The Planting of the Church in Delaware," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* (hereafter *RACHS*) 1 (1884–86): 122–24. The date of Con's marriage and settlement at Cuba Rock is based on the birthdate of his first son in August or September 1748. Esling was a great-great-grandson of Con Hollahan. Illustrating a common difficulty in rendering Celtic names, Esling consistently calls him Cornelius, a name that has no relationship to Con except in the orthography of its initial letters, but notes "He himself always signed his Christian name 'Con.' His son John was the first of the family to spell the name with one 'l,' being, according to family tradition, 'too lazy to write the other one'" (Esling, *Catholicity*, 1:123). Con (or Conn) is a pre-Christian Gaelic name; Cornelius sometimes appears in its place in baptismal registers to provide a "proper" Latin saint's name. Hollahan has frequently been described as a "wealthy Irish gentleman" and Cuba Rock as "an estate," but it was in fact a 148-acre working farm, valued at £18 on the 1782 assessment roll, and sold at sheriff's sale at his death to discharge a debt to the Loan Office. His will, signed with a mark, and inventory evidence a similarly modest status (Ralph D. Nelson, Jr., et al., *Delaware—1782 Tax Assessment and Census Lists* [Wilmington, 1994], N.C. 16; New Castle County Will Book M-1: 355, New Castle County Register of Wills, Wilmington; New Castle County Deed Record M-2: 463, New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Wilmington).

Church names in this article will generally follow the current style used in the *Official Catholic Directory* (New Providence, N.J., 1998), without adding the once-common possessive apostrophe and "s" to the name of the saint the church honors. This is consistent with the usage always followed with churches with an event or title in the name, like "Resurrection,"

hemia daybook for September 1, 1753, noting the trip of the Reverend John Lewis, S.J., to "White Clay Creek," the Jesuits' usual name for their New Castle County site. It may also have been among unnamed locations to which he made earlier trips, beginning in 1750, or a stop on trips to Philadelphia that were recorded for the Reverend Henry Neale, S.J., in 1748 and the Reverend Joseph Greateon, S.J., between 1750 and 1752. Travel was not recorded before 1748.⁷

A permanent foundation of the Church of Wilmington was made in 1772 when the Reverend Matthias Sittensperger, known as Mr. Manners, then the superior at Bohemia, arranged for the purchase of a 208-acre plantation in Mill Creek Hundred. Probably because Manners as an alien could not own land, the deed was to the Reverend John Lewis, superior of all the Maryland Jesuits and also Manners's predecessor and successor at Bohemia.⁸ Although the property was located in Mill Creek Hundred near Red Clay Creek, the clergy usually called it the White Clay Creek Plantation, perhaps to avoid undue attention to its actual location. It was intended to support a permanent mission to people in New Castle County, Delaware, and the present Chester and Delaware counties, Pennsylvania. The farm was at the southeast corner of Stenning Manor, the 15,500-acre tract that William Penn had granted to his daughter Letitia Penn Aubrey, popularly called Letitia Manor. The "manor line" that bounded her grant on the east, frequently mentioned in area deeds, also formed the farm's eastern boundary.⁹

The property was located on both sides of the present Lancaster Pike (Route 48), which runs from northwest to southeast diagonally through what came to be known as the priests' farm. The manor line, its eastern boundary, crosses Lancaster Pike at the point where Old Wilmington Road

"Mother of Mercy," or "St. John the Baptist." As an exception to the current practice, two historic Philadelphia churches are officially listed in the directory as they were traditionally known, "Old St. Joseph's" and "Old St. Mary's."

⁷ Ledger and Day-Book, Bohemia Plantation, 1735-1761, in Archives of the Maryland-New York Province, Society of Jesus, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., hereafter Bohemia Ledger, abstracted in Joseph C. Cann, comp., *History of St. Francis Xavier Church and Bohemia Plantation, Now Known as Old Bohemia* (Warwick, Md., 1976), pp. 171-81. Greateon, who in 1733 founded Saint Joseph in Philadelphia, was superior at Bohemia 1750-1753. When St. Francis Xavier was built, it was the only Catholic church in the English colonies east of the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay.

⁸ Deed, Samuel Lyle to Rev. Mr. John Lewis, Jan. 17, 1772, New Castle County Deed Record Z-1:484, New Castle County Recorder of Deeds. The spelling "Lysle" in some accounts is incorrect. The boundaries are also given in an undated memorandum of Rev. Robert Molyneux transcribed in Esling, "Catholicity," *RACHS* 1:133.

⁹ Patent, William Penn to Letitia Penn Aubrey, Oct. 23, 1701, Patent Book 2:404, Pennsylvania Bureau of Land Records, Harrisburg; Thomas J. Scharf, *History of Delaware 1609-1888* (Philadelphia, 1888), 2:916.

- 1 Con Hollahan - "Cuba Rock," 148 acres settled after 1747, sold 1791.
- 2 John Holahan - 100 acres purchased 1784
31 3/4 acres sold 1796, 69 1/4 acres sold 1808.
- 3 John Holahan - 24 1/4 acres called 16 at purchase in 1784, sold 1801.
- 4 Priests' Farm - 208 acres, purchased 1772.

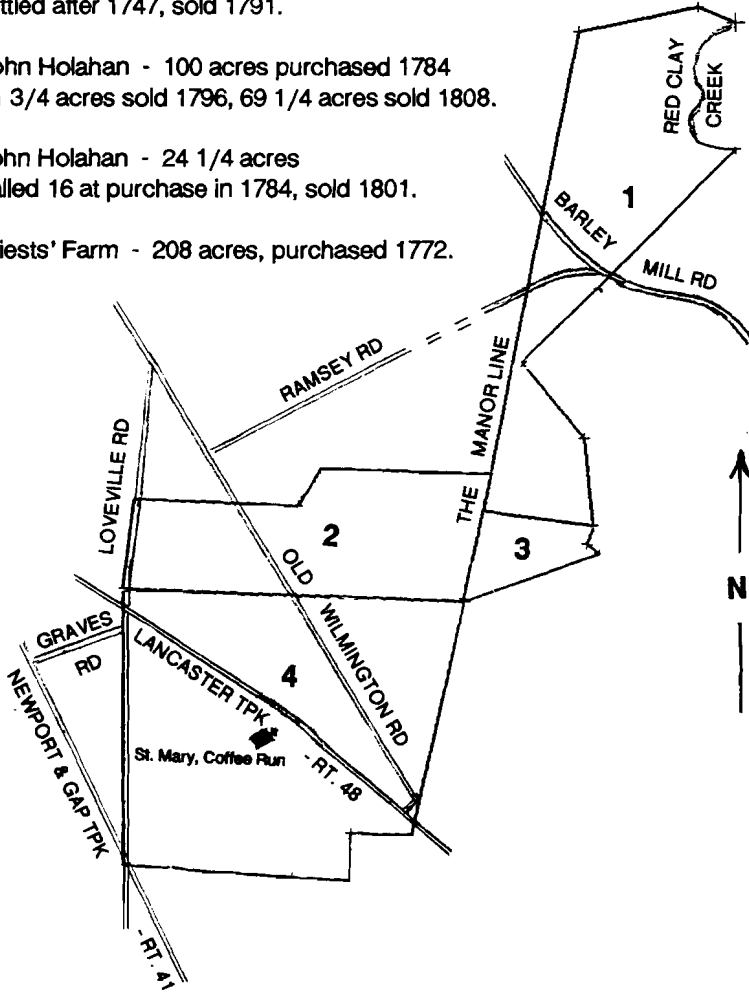


FIGURE 23. Map showing the locations of Catholic church and Hollahan family lands, Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. (Prepared by Donn Devine.)

turns off from it. When the Jesuits bought the property, only Old Wilmington Road ran through it; the turnpike (which followed the line of the old road east of the manor line) was not opened until almost a half century later. Loveville Road now follows the line of the small run that was the farm's western boundary. Today Cokesbury Village, the Coffee Run Condominiums, the Episcopal Church Home, and houses in the developments of Autumn Hills, Westgate Farms, Fox Hollow, and part of West Riding cover most of the 208 acres. The old church is long gone, but the cemetery,

still in church ownership, remains, as does the adjoining stone priest's house built in 1812 by the Reverend Patrick Kenny, now privately owned.¹⁰

In 1773 Pope Clement XIV suppressed (disbanded) the Society of Jesus, and its former members continued their ministry as diocesan or secular priests responsible to local bishops. The Reverend John Lewis, until then the Jesuit superior, remained in charge, serving from 1773 to 1783 as vicar general for the American colonies by appointment of Bishop Richard Challoner, the Vicar Apostolic of London, under whose jurisdiction the colonies remained until the end of the Revolutionary War. In 1775 Lewis again took up residence at Bohemia, and his journal shows frequent visits to the station he called Letitia Manor. There on April 22, 1776, he settled for the £58.14.4 cost of completing a tenant house on the farm, undoubtedly with a mass-room or chapel as was the Jesuit custom. He also noted that he christened two children there on the day before.¹¹

Con Hollahan's son John bought two parcels of land in 1784, one on either side of the manor line, between his father's land and the priests' farm. The western parcel adjoined the northern edge of the priests' farm; the eastern parcel, across the manor line, adjoined the southern edge of Con Hollahan's Cuba Rock, which extended northward to Red Clay Creek near present Mount Cuba.¹² At some point Con Hollahan moved to the

¹⁰ Mill Creek Hundred Assessment Map 08-020, 1994, New Castle County Board of Assessment Review. Rev. Patrick Kenny, who by then had bought the farm from its former Jesuit owners, built the stone house in 1812 and blessed it on December 24 (Martin I. G. Griffin, ed., "Extracts from the Diary of Rev. Patrick Kenny," 1805-1813, *RACHS* 7 [June 1896]: 114-27. Kenny's 1805 diaries and other parts of the diaries that were serialized non-sequentially by *RACHS* as Griffin, 1816-1819; Joseph Willcox, ed., 1821-1825, 1828-1833; and Willcox, "Further Selections from the Diary of the Same Missionary," 1826-1828, will all be cited as *Kenny Diaries*).

¹¹ Rev. John Lewis journal, 1775-1776, in Archives, Maryland-New York Province, Society of Jesus; photocopy in Archives, Diocese of Wilmington, transcribed in Cann, *Old Bohemia*, p. 225.

¹² The instrument conveying Cuba Rock to Con Hollahan is not of record; its bounds are known from its disposition after his death by sheriff's deed of Daniel Jenifer Adams, Esquire, to John Holahan, agent for Evan Phillips, for lands of John Holahan, Margaret Craig, and Francis Ailcock, taken in execution on behalf of John Stockton, Esquire, trustee of the Loan Office, Jan. 12, 1793, 148 acres 140 perches (New Castle Co. Deed Record M-2:463, New Castle County Recorder of Deeds). The possible relationship of the name Mount Cuba to Cuba Rock is speculative, although Harvey C. Bounds, *A Postal History of Delaware* (Newark, 1938) attributed it to association with the name of the Hollahan tract. John Holahan's two parcels were bought March 24, 1784, from Isaac Dixon and wife (New Castle County Deed Record P-2:474, New Castle County Recorder of Deeds). "Survey of Lands of John Holahan," 1788 (facsimile in Esling, "Catholicity," *RACHS* 1:155), shows the two parcels touching only at a corner and separated by a small wedge, but they actually adjoined along the manor line, which had been described with variations in compass bearings for the two parcels. In the 1784 deed, the smaller parcel east of the manor line, said to contain 19 acres more or less, was described only by names of its surrounding owners; an earlier deed was cited for a detailed description in New Castle County Deed Record I-Z:395, New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, but the volume and page references were left blank, suggesting it was never recorded. When John

priests' farm as the tenant and caretaker for the priest-owners, and died there in 1788, confusing some later writers as to which lands the priests and the Hollahans, father and son, owned.¹³

John Carroll was consecrated Bishop of Baltimore in 1790. He had already been in charge of the American missions since 1784 when the Holy See appointed him prefect apostolic for the United States. The new diocese, like the earlier prefecture, included all of the new United States from Maine to Georgia and west to the Mississippi River.

Philadelphians had complained to Carroll while he was still prefect apostolic that the two priests who served the growing congregations at Saint Joseph's and Saint Mary's were often absent attending small outlying mission stations, leaving the larger Philadelphia churches without Sunday mass. Carroll sought for several years to find a priest to live at the Mill Creek plantation (which appears as "Conholloran's" and "Conhollarn" in his published letters) and to care for the scattered missions in Chester and Delaware counties, Pennsylvania, as well as northern Delaware. As early as 1788, he had offered the assignment to an elderly former Jesuit, who apparently declined.¹⁴

Most published accounts give 1790 as the date for the first church on the property, but Carroll's earlier efforts to place a priest there suggest it was already completed, and there is other evidence that the log church dedicated to Saint Mary of the Assumption was built before Con Hollahan died in 1788. His great-great-grandson Charles Esling wrote of hearing from Martha Charlton, Con's granddaughter, her mother's account that after the church was built, Con was asked to assume the care of it, and moved there from his earlier home, Cuba Rock. Esling also told of being taken to

Holahan and wife Phebe sold the smaller parcel to John Valentine Webber on April 14, 1801, the deed described the parcel by metes and bounds, confirming that the manor line formed a common boundary with John's other parcel, and recalculating its area to be 24¼ acres (New Castle County Deed Record Z-2:247, New Castle County Recorder of Deeds).

¹³ Rev. John Lewis will dated March 12, 1788, proved April 7, 1788, Cecil Co., Md., listing "A plantation in New Castle county, State of Delaware, now in the tenure of Con Hollahan," transcribed in Esling, "Catholicity," *RACHS* 1:158-59. The 1788 survey in Esling, "Catholicity," *RACHS* 1:155, shows the Jesuit property as "Con Holahan's [sic] Land," further evidence that he was by then a tenant in possession, but Esling misinterpreted the survey to mean the land was owned by Con, although he was actually a tenant. Con was residing on the priests' farm at his death, because his estate inventory mentions "hay at the old place on the stable loft" (Esling, "Catholicity," *RACHS* 1:123).

Esling cites approvingly the opinion of Amos Brinton of Wilmington that the church was built on John Holahan's land after he bought it in 1784, but Brinton's theory is untenable ("Catholicity," *RACHS* 1:154-7). Deeds for the surrounding parcels, copied and plotted by the late Mary J. Gowan of Wilmington ca. 1985, show there is no missing 69-acre parcel which might have been conveyed later to the priests with a church upon it. The theory also ignores the actual location of the cemetery, already in use on the 208-acre plantation soon after the Jesuit purchase in 1772.

¹⁴ John Carroll to Bernard Diderick, July 17, 1788, and July 25, 1788, in Thomas O'Brien Hanley, ed., *The John Carroll Papers* (Notre Dame, Ind., n.d.), 1:320-24.

the church by his own grandfather, Jacob Hollahan, another of Con's grandchildren, so that Jacob "would then have seen five generations of his family worship in that church," a span that would have included Con Hollahan.¹⁵

The supposed 1790 construction date appears in an 1824 memorandum of the Reverend Patrick Kenny, pastor from 1805 until his death in 1840, which also credited Father John Rosseter, an Augustinian, with building the church. Rosseter, however, did not arrive in the United States or in Delaware until 1794, some years after Bishop Carroll's first efforts to put a priest at the site.¹⁶

Given the time lapse from 1790 to Kenny's 1824 memo and the inconsistency of the 1790 date with Rosseter's 1794 arrival, construction by 1788

¹⁵ Esling, "Catholicity," *RACHS* 1:127-28, 130. In referring to Con Hollahan's original 148-acre farm, which was located just east of the manor line, Esling consistently but inaccurately calls it Mount Cuba after acknowledging that it was formerly called Cuba Rock (Esling, "Catholicity," *RACHS* 1:123). By Esling's time, Mount Cuba was the name of a post office, hamlet, and station on the Wilmington and Western Railroad, on Red Clay Creek a little to the southeast of Cuba Rock.

¹⁶ "Memorandum of Coffee Run Church," 1824, *Kenny Diaries*, *RACHS* 9:457, and noted as copied from Kenny's book of "Memorandums"; Carroll to Bernard Diderick, July 17, 1788, July 25, 1788 and Carroll to John Troy (Archbishop of Dublin), June 22, 1795, *Carroll Papers*, 1:320-24; 2:143-44. The memorandum was also partially transcribed in *Coffee Run 1772-1960*, p. 17. It reads as follows, with bracketed inserts in italics as they were printed in the *RACHS* transcription:

Mem[orandum] of Coffee Run Church—

Jn Walker my carpenter work'd at its raising when 15 years old under his Father.

Put up in 1790—Carpenters James & David Walker (brothers). Levi Springer Arthur McDough [McGough, A Coffee Run family named in the Saint Joseph registers; corrected in the transcription in *Coffee Run 1772-1960*] haul'd the logs. John Walker son of the above James re-roofed it under the direction of Patk Kenny, finished the work on the 29 of October, 1822, with new O [*probably Oak*] laths—best cedar shingles, windows, shutters, doors painted, & the shutter irons presented by Peter Johnson, B. Smith [*blacksmith*] Wilm.

In 1790 the church was built under the direction of the late Rev. Jn Rosseter.[O.S.A.]

The church yard was laid out for interments & many of the thinly scatter'd catholics departed, laid therein, ten or more years before the log church was raised—

The new fence & gates were finished on 2d Novemr 1824 from the turnpike road to the North East corner of the church—

The church is dedicated to Lord God under the intercession of the Blessed Mary d'Assumpn

Unfortunately there is no information on young Walker's age at the reroofing, nor on how he recalled his age when the church was originally constructed, the two items on which Father Kenny apparently based his estimate of the original construction date. He probably attributed construction to Father Rosseter, knowing that he was the first resident pastor, but was unaware that he didn't arrive in America until 1794.

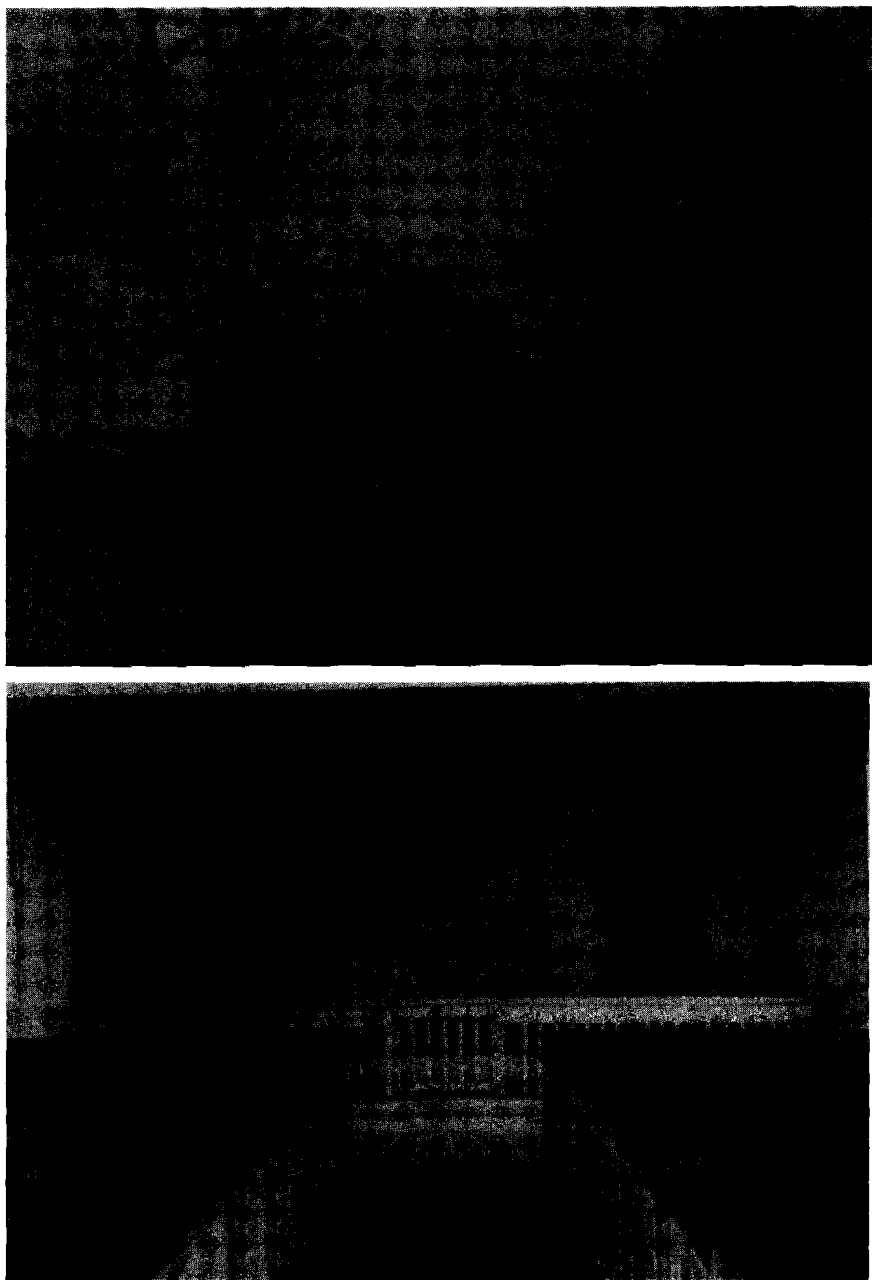


FIGURE 24. Top: exterior view of St. Mary's Catholic Church, Coffee Run. Bottom: interior view of St. Mary's, both photographed late 1800s. This building replaced the early log church. (Collections of the Historical Society of Delaware.)

seems more likely, probably by the Reverend John Lewis, who built the original log house on the property in 1776 and was pastor at Bohemia from 1775 until his death in 1788.

The sacramental registers of Saint Joseph's Church, Philadelphia, resume in 1791 after a four-year gap. From 1791 to 1793 they record baptisms at White Clay Creek or Wilmington and show that the church in Delaware was being attended from Philadelphia by two Dominican priests—regularly by Father Christopher V. Keating, and occasionally by Father Francis A. Fleming, whose ministry was principally in southern New Jersey.¹⁷

In 1794 Father John Rosseter, O.S.A., from the Irish Augustinian Priory in New Ross, County Wexford, became the first resident pastor of the Church of Wilmington, living at the plantation in Mill Creek Hundred. He came to the United States earlier that year with the Reverend Michael Ennis, a secular priest who was close to the Augustinians, with the intention of starting an Augustinian foundation in the United States. Ennis was assigned by Bishop Carroll to Saint Mary's in Philadelphia. In the summer of 1795 people in Wilmington—probably members of the French emigré community there—offered them a site in Wilmington and means for erecting a church, but nothing came of it. By April of the following year, Father Matthew Carr, O.S.A., had arrived as the order's vicar general for the United States. He focused on Philadelphia as the Augustinian center, and on July 11 he bought the site for the future Saint Augustine Church, on Fourth Street below Vine, although Bishop Carroll had tried to encourage the Augustinians to locate their new center in the west, on the Ohio River.¹⁸

In Philadelphia Carr joined Ennis and the former Jesuit Leonard Neale

¹⁷ Francis X. Reuss, ed. "The Sacramental Registers of St. Joseph's Church, Philadelphia" (1758–1836), hereafter cited as Reuss, "Registers," *RACHS* 14 (1903): 37–76, 125–93 (1785–1786), 15 (1904): 139–63 (1791), 15:289–310 (1792), 455–70 (1793). The 1787–1790 gap in the St. Joseph's registers is covered by a 1787–1790 register once at St. Mary's. The same priests served both churches, and at St. Mary's, opened in 1767, there were no registers separate from those of St. Joseph's until 1838. S.P. Conner, in "The Early Registers of the Catholic Church in Pennsylvania" (*RACHS* 2 [1886–88]: 25), thought the 1787–1790 register belonged to St. Mary's and that others from 1791 to 1837 had been lost, but it was later realized that the volume, which the pastor would not allow to be copied, was the missing one in the St. Joseph's register set covering both churches (Reuss, "Registers," *RACHS* 20 [Jan. 1909]: 23, quoting letter from Joseph Willcox to Rev. Thomas C. Middleton, June 8, 1905). It has since been lost. It was not found when the Archdiocese of Philadelphia microfilmed sacramental registers in the 1950s and has not surfaced since, although the present pastor, Msgr. John A. Sharkey, conducted an intensive search for it.

¹⁸ Carroll to John Troy (Archbishop of Dublin), June 22, 1795, to John Rossiter [sic] at Wilmington, July 16, 1795, to Troy, May 25, 1796, in *Carroll Papers*, 2:142–45, 179–81; Rev. Michael Ennis to Philip Crane, Prior of San Mateo in Rome, Sept. 4 and Dec. 8, 1795. The originals of the Ennis letters, cited by John Gilmary Shea in his *History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (New York, 1886–1892), 3:425, regarding the Wilmington offer, have been lost, but extracts in Italian are preserved in the Propaganda Fide archives, Vatican City (*Udienze del 1797*, no. 36, fol. 237 and 238); a translation back to English appears in an

as one of the three priests of Saint Mary's (and of the old Jesuit chapel of Saint Joseph's, still owned by the former Jesuits) and became pastor there in 1799; the priests (and the bishops of Philadelphia after 1808) lived at the former Jesuit residence in Willings Alley until after 1820. Rosseter, however, remained at Mill Creek, probably until after November 1798. His move to Philadelphia followed Ennis's death there in the yellow fever epidemic of 1796, and preceded Neale's departure early in 1799 to take up the presidency of Georgetown University. After the death in 1799 of another Philadelphia priest, the Reverend John Burke, in that year's epidemic, Rosseter was the most frequent minister of baptism there.¹⁹

Meanwhile, French refugees from the slave uprising and British invasion of Saint Domingue (the French name for present Haiti, the western half of the island of Hispaniola or Santo Domingo) were settling in Wilmington, with loyal slaves and their own priest, the Reverend Etienne Faure. Many located along French Street, said to have been renamed for them.²⁰ In

appendix to Reverend Arthur J. Ennis, "The Founding of the Augustinians in the United States (1796)" in *Analecta Augustiniana* 41 (Rome, 1978): 303–5.

Father Arthur Ennis is also the author of *No Easy Road: The Early Years of the Augustinians in the United States, 1796–1874* (New York, 1994), which contains a definitive chapter on Rosseter, and lays to rest, at pp. 53–54, a tradition that he had been an officer in Rochambeau's army during the American Revolution, repeated by counsel at an 1847 trial and cited by Thompson Westcott in "A Memoir of the Reverend Michael Hurley . . . With A Sketch of the History of St. Augustine's Church" (*RACHS* 1 [1884–86]: 165 [note]). There may have been confusion with an unrelated Captain John Rosseter, also from Wexford, who served with Father Rosseter on the Saint Mary's board of trustees in 1809.

Rosseter appears as one of the grantees, with Matthew Carr, on the 1796 deed for the new Philadelphia church site, in which he is described as of Mill Creek Hundred, Delaware (extract in *RACHS* 5 [March 1894]: 24). "Rosseter" is the original spelling of his name and is used generally in this article, but "Rossiter" appears in *Carroll* and some other works and is used in citations to them.

¹⁹ John Rosseter to Carroll, March 27, 1799, in Baltimore Cathedral Archives, Box 7 Folder F, Item 1, explaining that he gave up the plantation the previous November because he felt ill-used by the clergy-owners, who expected him to invest in improvements although he had not been able to operate the farm at a profit. See also Ennis, *No Easy Road*, p. 79. Until 1799 Rosseter appears as a baptismal minister in the St. Joseph registers only once, on February 2, 1797, and the editor calls him a visitor, citing his description in the July 11, 1796, title deed for the St. Augustine church site as "of New Castle county of Delaware" (Reuss, "Registers," *RACHS* 16 [1905]: 362, 365). Rosseter next appears in the baptismal register on August 30, 1799, but most baptisms through September 10 are by Reverend John Burke, who died on September 17 of yellow fever. Rosseter is the principal minister of baptism for the rest of the year. At the February 11, 1800, meeting of the Trustees of St. Mary's Church, he and Carr were the only clergy trustees, the former pastor Leonard Neale having left early in 1799 for Georgetown (Lawrence F. Fleck, ed., "Minute Book of St. Mary's Church," *RACHS* 4 [1893]: 311–13; Connelly, *Philadelphia*, p. 63).

²⁰ Willing Street was renamed for the new settlers according to Anna T. Lincoln, *Wilmington, Delaware: Three Centuries Under Four Flags* ([Rutland, Vt., 1937], p. 130), but this seems unlikely since the street was already called French Street in a borough ordinance to prevent encroachments, passed May 9, 1780, *Ordinances of the City of Wilmington* ([Wilmington, 1845], pp. 4–5). Professor John A. Munroe in a personal communication (Oct. 16, 1996) said

1796 Faure started the first sacramental register of what is now the Cathedral Parish of Saint Peter, titled in French "Register of the Catholic Church of the City of Wilmington, State of Delaware, America," and describing himself, also in French, as "French priest, authorized by the Catholic Bishop of Baltimore to perform the functions of pastor of Wilmington." His last signed entry was dated April 15, 1798. There is a later entry in his handwriting, a baptism on April 26, 1798, but with no priest's signature, although eleven other witnesses signed it. Faure died August 21, 1798, and was buried at Bohemia.

Faure was succeeded by the Reverend Adrian Cibot, who in his first register entry on November 10, 1799, described himself in French "vice-prefect apostolic and superior-general of the missions of the northern part of Saint Domingue, placed in charge by Msgr. John Carroll, Bishop of Baltimore, of the refugees [déportés] of the Catholic Church of Wilmington in the State of Delaware," and similarly for a baptism on February 3, 1800. Two marriage entries in June 1800 are signed as "priest witness" (*prêtre dépositant*), but at a November 1800 baptism he signed as "Cibot curé" (pastor). In his last register entry, a burial on January 19, 1801, he signed as vice prefect, but still described himself as placed in charge of the refugees of the Church of Wilmington by the Bishop of Baltimore.²¹

The French priests' responsibilities, as their register descriptions suggest, appear to have been limited to the Wilmington French community. Rosseter attended to the outlying missions at West Chester and Ivy Mills, as well as Coffee Run and the non-French Catholics of Wilmington, even after his removal to Philadelphia in 1798.

In February 1800 Rosseter and Carr began a separate marriage section in the parish register originally kept by the French priests in Wilmington. The new section was in Latin for Irish and English parishioners, but Carr's April 19, 1800, entry for a French marriage was a lengthy certificate in French, which he signed as "pastor and vicar general." In the body of the entry he described himself as "pastor [curé] of the parish of Saint Mary of Philadelphia and Vicar General of Msgr. the Bishop of Baltimore." This was the last entry in the marriage section until 1804, although Cibot officiated at one Irish-English wedding in June 1800, which he recorded in French

the late Judge Richard S. Rodney told him French Street honors an individual of that name, but the prominent Delawareans named French seem to have had no association with Wilmington. The renamed street may have honored the 1778 French alliance with the new American republic, considering there was little earlier admiration for France in the English colonies.

²¹ Cathedral of St. Peter, Wilmington, Delaware, Register I, 6-12 (hereafter Cathedral Register). The name was probably an alias; letters apparently from him in the Propaganda Fide archives, Vatican City, identify him as Giuliano de Bourgogna, an Italian Capuchin priest (Rev. John O. Barres to Rev. Thomas J. Peterman, April 24, 1997, copy in Archives, Diocese of Wilmington).

among his combined baptism, marriage, and burial entries, rather than in the separate marriage section that Rosseter and Carr had begun in February.²²

Rosseter's successor in New Castle County was Father Charles M. Whelan, an Irish Capuchin, who lived at the Mill Creek plantation from 1799 until 1805. The site was first called "Coffee Run" during his tenure. In 1805 he moved to the mission at Bohemia because of failing health, and died there March 21, 1806. He had served as a French Navy chaplain during the American Revolution, and was taken prisoner by the British in the West Indies when his ship was captured.²³

Whelan came to the United States in 1784 as personal chaplain to the Portuguese ambassador in New York City, the temporary national capital, but he soon began to minister to the estimated 1,500 Catholics in the otherwise priestless city. Relying perhaps on his diplomatic sponsorship, he initially ignored the Reverend John Carroll's jurisdiction as prefect apostolic over the American missions, even though ministering to the community at large. After Whelan acknowledged Carroll's authority, Carroll duly appointed him first pastor of New York and of Saint Peter's in Barclay Street, the first Catholic church in the city. Whelan, however, feuded with the lay trustees to the point that Carroll tactfully arranged a new assignment for him in upstate New York. Later Whelan served on the Kentucky frontier before returning to the East Coast and his eventual assignment to Wilmington, his personality still sparking discord.²⁴

Considering Bishop Carroll's earlier difficulties with Whelan, and Carr's April 1800 register signature as pastor, Whelan may have initially been an assistant under Carr, rather than pastor in his own right, although these distinctions were not always clearly evident during the formative years of

²² Cathedral Register I, p. 9, and first two unnumbered marriage section pages; for the marriage section the book was inverted and entries start on the second leaf; on the first leaf, in an unidentified hand, is this note: "N.B. Some Marriages are found recorded with the Baptisms at the end of this Register."

²³ Father Stanislaus, O.F.M.Cap., "Maurice Charles Whelan, O.F.M.Cap., An Apostle in New York, U.S.A.," *The Capuchin Annual* (Dublin), 26 (1959): 140, citing "a letter to the Bishop from White Clay Creek, Pa. [sic]" on January 7, 1805, and quoting "very meager details" of his final years, apparently from Capuchin records, but all referring to the Wilmington parish: "In 1799 he was stationed in Wilmington, Del. He attended the Catholics at Ivy Mills, Pa., and in January, 1800, we find him at Mill Creek, Del. In February, 1803, he was at Coffee Run, Del." This is the earliest known date for use of the name "Coffee Run." Kenny to Carroll, Feb. 16, 1805, Feb. 3, 1806, cited in Joseph Willcox, "Biography of Reverend Patrick Kenny AD 1763-1840," *RACHS* 7 (1896): 50-53, 54-55; Cann, *Old Bohemia*, 132. See also Daniel Henry affidavit, Aug. 8, 1802, mentioning Whelan's presence there prior to December 1801, cited in Esling, "Catholicity," *RACHS* 1:120.

²⁴ *Carroll Papers*, 1:182 (note); letters, Carroll to [Cardinal] Leonardo Antonelli, March 1, 1785, Carroll to Charles M. Whelan, April 16, 1785, Carroll to Andrew Nugent, July 18, 1786, *ibid.*, 1:179, 188, 214.

the Catholic Church in the United States. Whelan's name does not appear in the Wilmington sacramental register, but there is no doubt that Whelan did visit the growing Irish Catholic community there, because his services resulted in complaints to Bishop Carroll. Investigation showed the problem arose from personality clashes rather than censurable conduct, but it was characteristic of the difficulties that plagued him through all his various assignments. Whatever may have been Whelan's status when he started at Coffee Run, the Bohemia burial register clearly identifies him as "lately rector of White Clay Creek."²⁵

His successor, the Irish-born Reverend Patrick Kenny, began his duties as pastor of Wilmington in August 1804, only weeks after his arrival in the United States, living at Goshen, near West Chester, one of the parish's missions. He took possession of the Coffee Run farm from the tenant in March 1805, after Father Whelan had moved to Bohemia, but continued to live at Goshen until 1808. Fathers Rosseter and Whelan presumably kept a sacramental register at Coffee Run, as required by the 1791 Synod of Baltimore, but it apparently was lost before Kenny moved there, so he recorded his baptisms and marriages in the French register begun in Wilmington.²⁶ This legendary priest, pastor for over thirty-five years of the

²⁵ Cathedral Register I, second unnumbered marriage page; letter, Kenny and Rev. Wm. Pasquet to Carroll, Feb. 16, 1805, transcribed in Willcox, "Kenny Biography," *RACHS* 7 (1896): 51-52. Cathedral Register I contains no entries by Whelan (or by Rosseter when he was at Coffee Run), probably because it was kept in the Borough of Wilmington until the time of his successor, Father Kenny, perhaps in the custody of the Noel family, with whom Kenny sometimes lodged on visits to Wilmington; see, e.g., "Kenny Diaries," *RACHS* 7 (1896): 128. The Bohemia burial register is quoted in a correction to a biographical note on Whelan (Reuss, "Registers," *RACHS* 16 [1906]: 363).

²⁶ Second Session, 7-8 November 1791, Decree 2, *Carroll Papers* 2:527 (English translation), 2:536 (Latin). Father Edward B. Carley has suggested that Wilmington events between 1801 and 1804 may have been recorded at Rosseter or Carr's churches in Philadelphia in a note on his photocopy of the Wilmington register, copy in possession of author. Entries for Philadelphia's outlying missions, including Delaware, appear in St. Joseph's registers for 1791-93, published in Reuss, "Registers," *RACHS* 15 (1904): 139-63, 289-313, 454-71 *passim*, but not in later years. The presumption that Rosseter maintained a separate register which has not survived arises from the fact that during his time at Mill Creek, 1794-1798, there is only a single 1797 baptismal entry by him in the St. Joseph's register, most likely as a visiting priest here, and during Whelan's tenure from 1799 to 1804 there are no entries by him, or any identifiable Delaware entries in either the St. Joseph's register, or that for St. Augustine, which was started in 1801. Carr was pastor and Rosseter, after 1798, his assistant at St. Mary's on Fourth Street below Spruce in Philadelphia, where Rosseter remained until his death in 1812. Carr became pastor of the newly completed St. Augustine at Fourth and Vine streets and took up residence there in 1801.

The Franciscan Father Michael Egan succeeded Carr at St. Mary's and remained as pastor after being appointed first bishop of Philadelphia in 1808. He and the other St. Mary's clergy continued to live at the old Jesuit residence in Willings Alley, as did his successor, Bishop Conwell, until after 1820: "The Bishop's house as full as it can hold. I lodge at Trinity with Reverend Mr. Roloff—" (Connelly, *Philadelphia*, pp. 34, 39, 55, 66, 68-69, and "Kenny Diaries," Feb. 27, 1824, *RACHS* 9 [1898]: 441).

Church of Wilmington, as a diocesan or secular priest was addressed during his lifetime as "Mr." and referred to formally as "the Reverend Mr." "Father" will be used here, however, following the example of Joseph Willcox, his late-nineteenth-century biographer, and the almost universal practice since then.²⁷

Father Kenny recorded his baptisms and marriages some years later, using the register begun by the French priests in Wilmington, from memorandum notes, and on September 17, 1817, he wrote in his diary: "I finish'd this day registering all the baptisms & Marriages that I perform'd since my settling in this country August 5, 1804 to this date," but there are occasional baptisms noted by number and place in the diary for which there are no corresponding register entries. The first register entry, a baptism on August 5, 1804, at West Chester, is on the first full page after the section of combined French entries. Kenny's earliest marriage entry, on October 3, 1804, also at West Chester, continues the separate marriage section started by Rosseter and Carr. However, Kenny inserted on the final page of the French entries, in English, a record of the marriage on September 12, 1812, of Amelia Elizabeth, daughter of Victor and Gabrielle de Pelleport du Pont, to Nathaniel H. Clifford Perkins; it followed Cibot's last burial entry, ahead of the 1804 start of Kenny's own baptismal entries. This mar-

²⁷ Willcox, "Kenny Biography," *RACHS* 7 (1896): 27-79; "Father" in Donald Atwater, ed., *A Catholic Dictionary* (London and N.Y., 1931):

Father is by right the title of a mendicant friar, but in speech is extended to all priests of the *regular* (*q.v.*) clergy [priests belonging to religious orders having solemn vows, in contrast to diocesan or *secular* clergy]. In English-speaking countries and Portugal it is used in address and reference to all Catholic priests (in England this custom is hardly 70 years old; secular priests were "Mr." and "sir," as they still are at Ushaw) [seminary at Durham for northern England, successor to the English College at Douai in Belgium].

Fathers Rosseter and Whelan, as members of religious orders, would probably have been addressed as "Father," but are called "Mr." in surviving records, even by other priests, as was customary in the U.S. at the time. Unlike the custom today, the title "Mr." was not accorded all adult males, but was reserved for persons of some standing in the community. The title "Father" was popularized in the mid-nineteenth century, when "Mr." began to lose its significance as a term of special respect. Jesuit priests, although under solemn vows, in the American colonies had always gone by "Mr." and continued to do so as secular priests after their order's suppression. Their earlier usage was an attempt to avoid attracting notice in the face of anti-Catholic laws in all the colonies except Pennsylvania and Delaware. Their frequent use of one or several aliases, particularly if they had "foreign" surnames, was similarly motivated.

See also "Father," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. (New York, 1910) 10:199, and "Manning, Cardinal" (Archbishop of Westminster, 1865-1892), 17:590: "He also worked for the recognition of the dignity of the secular or pastoral clergy, whose position seemed to be threatened by the growing ascendancy of the regulars . . ." He was a leader in promoting use of the title "Father," previously limited to the regulars, for his diocesan priests, and was joined in the U.S. by Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore.

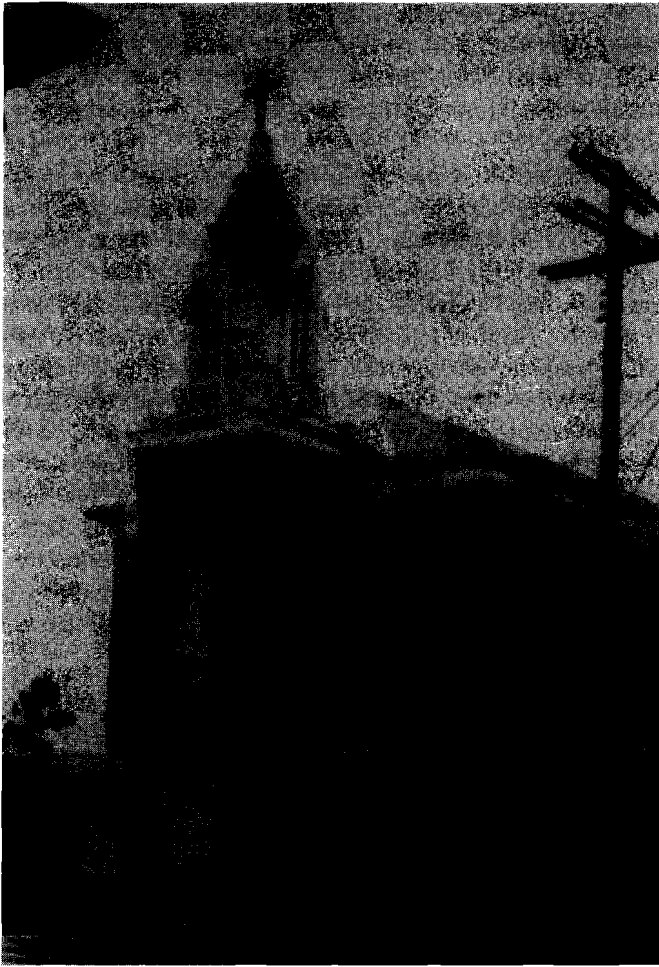


FIGURE 25. Exterior view of St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Wilmington, 1930s. (Collections of the Historical Society of Delaware.)

riage was also entered in its proper chronological order in the marriage section.²⁸

Church property that had been acquired by the Jesuits before their order was suppressed in 1773 continued to be held in the names of individual priests for the benefit of their fellow clergymen, but it was not subject to a legal trust. At death, the priests left it by will to their religious successors, except in Maryland. There, after the Revolution, the former

²⁸ Willcox, "Kenny Biography" *RACHS* 7 (1896): 28-30; Cathedral Register I, pp. 12-13 and unnumbered 3rd page of marriage section.

Jesuits were incorporated as the Roman Catholic Clergy of Maryland, and the Maryland church properties were transferred to the corporation. In other states, property remained in the names of individual priests, but the corporation administered it, arranging for leases and sales, even after the reestablishment of the Society of Jesus in 1804.²⁹

After Kenny's assignment to Wilmington, it was with the corporation that he made arrangements regarding the Coffee Run property, first to take possession of it in 1805, and then in 1810 to purchase it with a \$1,600 mortgage from his friend Anthony Hearn, at whose home in Goshen he had lived until he moved to Coffee Run in 1808. The land was conveyed to him by the Reverend Francis Neale, last in the line of priests who had held title to the property since Lewis's purchase thirty-six years earlier.³⁰

In 1808, the Diocese of Philadelphia was established and jurisdiction over the churches of the Delmarva Peninsula was divided. The two Maryland Eastern Shore Jesuit parishes—Bohemia, in Cecil County, and Tuckahoe, in Talbot County—remained under Baltimore, which was raised to the dignity of an archdiocese. The Wilmington parish, expanded to include all of the state of Delaware, became part of the new diocese. Those three parishes covered the entire area of the present Diocese of Wilmington.

The Wilmington parish had one church, Saint Mary of the Assumption at Coffee Run, and a start on another in New Castle, begun in 1807 but not destined for completion until 1830 when it was dedicated in honor of Saint Peter.³¹ Construction of a church in the borough of Wilmington had not begun; the present Cathedral of Saint Peter was started in 1816 and completed in 1818.³²

The parish at Bohemia had Saint Francis Xavier Church there and a Catholic graveyard in private ownership in the Forest of Appoquinimink, now Blackbird Hundred, in New Castle County. There is some evidence for a chapel nearby at Caldwell Corner, but if it stood, it must have been built later, because in 1812 Archbishop Carroll noted that the congregation "formerly of the forest is in Delaware out of the B[altimo]re. Diocese. It is said to consist of no more than five or six families, who have no places provided for divine services. But I was pleased to understand that the sick

²⁹ Willcox, *op. cit.*, pp. 31–32; see also Carroll to Trustees of the Clergy, Sept. 1, 1801, *Carroll Papers* 2:359.

³⁰ Willcox, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 33.

³¹ J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Delaware, 1609–1888*, 2:877; Rt. Rev. Francis Patrick Kenrick, *Diary and Visitation Record, 1830–1851* (Philadelphia: 1916), p. 48, recording blessing of the church on April 10, 1830, and noting, "Twenty years have passed since building of this church was begun."

³² *Kenny Diaries*, Sept. 12, 1818, *RACHS* 9 (1898): 72: "Blessed the church of Wilmington at six o'clock in the morning being commissioned to do so by Rev. Lewis De Barth V G—dedicated it to the Apostle St Peter under God."

of these families are attended from Bohemia, when the Clergyman is sent for, and that most of them come to church there."³³

Tuckahoe, the third of the parishes, near present Cordova in Talbot County, Maryland, had Saint Joseph Church there and two mission churches—Saint Mary Star of the Sea on Meekin's Neck, near Golden Hill in Dorchester County, and Saint Peter at Queenstown in Queen Annes County. It also had a burial ground at Kingstown, across the Chester River from Chestertown, and another at Laurel, in Sussex County. There is no record that the latter, which may have had a chapel, was owned by the Jesuits. The Tuckahoe parish gave up its two Delaware counties—Kent and Sussex—to the new Philadelphia diocese in 1808. Before that, it had comprised the southernmost eleven counties of the fourteen that in 1868 would form the original Diocese of Wilmington.³⁴

Bohemia, founded by the Jesuits in 1704, was the parent parish from which the others had been founded. In addition to a religious center, it had a 1,343-acre plantation that provided the financial support for the priests' ministry. For a short period in the mid-1700s it was the site of the first Catholic academy in the English colonies, quietly operated in defiance of Maryland law. Bishop Carroll attended it in his youth before going abroad to complete his education, and it has been credited as one of the influences that inspired him later to establish Georgetown University.³⁵

³³ Bohemia Memorandum [1812], *Carroll Papers*, 3:168–69; Clifford Pryor, *The Forest of Appoquinimink* (privately published, 1975), pp. 11–14, 27–28, 39, 87–89. Father Edward B. Carley had a chapel site at Caldwell Corner pointed out to him by Pryor as the place where his grandmother's grandmother was married, but in his book Pryor does not mention a chapel, only the Catholic graveyard on "Eleanor's Delight," near Black Stallion Ditch. At page 39 he mentions a school at the Appoquinimink Mission, which "may have been located on the Sassafras Road" (which passes through Caldwell Corner at the Delaware-Maryland state line). However, his reference to the school probably being abandoned about 1767 suggests that he had confused it with the academy at Bohemia, which closed about that time. Rev. Russell H. Perkins, *The Seed Has Come to Harvest, Centenary of Saint Rose of Lima Mission 1874–1974* ([Chesapeake City, 1974], p. 13), lists Appoquinimink among stations still being visited by the Jesuits of Bohemia 1844–1849. He cites *Litterae Annuae, 1848*, MS, Box 336 Folio W-1, Archives of the Maryland–New York Province, Society of Jesus, for both the list of missions and for statistics in the following paragraph on Reverend George King, S.J.'s ministry from 1846 to 1848, including 42 mission visits. Any mission structure on the Sassafras Road at Caldwell Corners was undoubtedly privately owned, and probably came late in the life of the mission for a tradition of its location to have persisted until Pryor's time.

³⁴ Rev. Edward B. Carley, *The Origins and History of Saint Peter's Church, Queenstown, Maryland, 1637–1976* (Queenstown. Church of Saint Peter, n.d.), pp. 29, 51, 53, 56–57. The "Catholic grave yard in Sussex County" is noted as the place of the March 24, 1811, burial of "Mr. Pierce, merch't, Laurel, Del." in the Burial Register of Saint Joseph, Cordova (Archives, Diocese of Wilmington, published with annotations by Rev. Edward B. Carley in F. Edward Wright, *Maryland Eastern Shore Vital Records 1801–1825* [Silver Spring, Md., 1986], 5:74).

³⁵ Bohemia Ledger, 1745. There is a persistent tradition that Bishop Carroll's cousin, Charles Carroll of Carrolton, Maryland, signer of the Declaration of Independence, was also a student at the Bohemia academy, but there is no documentary evidence to support it (Thomas J. Peterman, *Catholics in Colonial Delmarva* [Devon, Pa., 1996], p. 226). Nevertheless,

Wilmington, with its one priest and extensive Pennsylvania missions after 1808, was responsible for the whole state of Delaware. Fortunately, the Jesuits at Bohemia agreed to continue their care of the Catholic community in the Forest of Appoquinimink, once their largest mission, visiting it until midcentury, and the Jesuits at Tuckahoe similarly continued to serve the scattered Catholics of Sussex and Kent counties, with regular stations at Laurel and near present Petersburg, west of Dover in Kent County. These arrangements may have lasted as late as 1865 when the Kent and Sussex mission stations were first listed in the Catholic Directory, shown as visited from the parish in New Castle until 1870, when a parish in Dover was established.³⁶

Within New Castle County, the Catholic presence has grown manyfold in the two and a half centuries since its beginnings at Con Hollahan's home at Cuba Rock. From a few Irish families, it has been strengthened by continuing streams of newcomers representing all parts of Europe, Africa, and more recently the Americas and Asia. Today it comprises a community of some one hundred thousand people, worshipping in thirty-four parishes.

published accounts continue to accept it as an established fact. The parent church at Bohemia, and its daughter churches at Tuckahoe (Cordova) and Queenstown, have all been the subject of recent historical studies based on reexamination of original sources, including for Bohemia the previously cited works by Rev. Russell H. Perkins, *St. Rose*, and Joseph C. Cann et al., *Old Bohemia*, the latter unfortunately with some unsubstantiated assertions; for Queenstown, Rev. Edward B. Carley, *The Origins and History of St. Peter's Church, 1637-1976*; and for Cordova, Loleta Callahan, Rev. Edward B. Carley et al., *The History of St. Joseph's Mission, Cordova, Md., 1765-1965* ([Cordova: St. Joseph Church], n.d.). Rev. Thomas J. Peterman, *Catholics in Colonial Delmarva*, focuses on the families associated with all three churches as well as with earlier Eastern Shore missions that did not survive the upheaval following the 1688 revolution. Numerous articles and source documents relating to the Eastern Shore missions can be found in *RACHS* and in *Woodstock Letters*, historical journal of the Jesuit Maryland-New York Province. Additional documents appear in Thomas Hughes, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America* (London, 1917), Documents Vol. I Parts 1 & 2.

³⁶ Perkins, *St. Rose*; Callahan, Carley et al., *St. Joseph*, p. 15, citing for the Kent and Sussex stations Father Monnelly's references either in his sacramental registers or in letters to Bishops Carroll, Neale and Marechal in the Baltimore Archives; Sadlier's Catholic Directory, Almanac and Ordo, 1865, 1870, 1871 (New York: D. & J. Sadlier & Co.), extracts in Archives, Diocese of Wilmington.