

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED JUN 25 1980
DATE ENTERED AUG 11 1980

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church

AND/OR COMMON
Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
641 Licking Pike

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
Wilders

VICINITY OF

6

STATE
Kentucky

CODE
021

COUNTY
Campbell

CODE
037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington

STREET & NUMBER
9 East Twelfth Street

CITY, TOWN
Covington

VICINITY OF

STATE
Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Kenton County Courthouse - Covington Municipal Building

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Covington

STATE
Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE
1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN
Frankfort

STATE
Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT

DETERIORATED

UNALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE

GOOD

RUINS

ALTERED

MOVED DATE _____

FAIR

UNEXPOSED

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church is located in the tiny community of Johns Hill, in Campbell County, Kentucky. Constructed in 1858, this nave plan church is two stories in height and seven bays deep. Coursed rubblestone is the construction material, and the structure is elevated on a basement. The central entrance is set within a slightly projecting pavillion which is capped by a central frame bell tower. A relieving arch gives the entrance emphasis and calls attention to the stained glass window centered above with similar arch treatment. Flared eaves accentuate the cornice and give the roof line an interesting modification. The seven bay side elevation boast wooden lintels above stained glass windows on the second story. The window openings below contain no stained glass. A box cornice graces the roof edge.

To the rear of the stone structure is a two-story, 20th century, brick addition.

St. Johns sanctuary was modernized in 1941 and the original wooden alter and kneeling rail were removed. The present railing is of wrought iron and the original wooden pews are extant.

The boundaries are drawn to include the church structure only.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1858

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Unlike most of predominately Anglo-American Kentucky, Campbell County has a distinctly heterogenous cultural background, as a result of its settlement in the mid 19th century by large numbers of German immigrants. Primarily of Roman Catholic affiliation, the German people established small farms and built an impressive group of churches in the county prior to 1900. Of the few first-generation churches to survive, St. Johns is the best preserved and least altered. In scale and materials, it is related to the stone and log dwellings built on nearby farms. Later county churches were built in a scale and with a level of ornamentation that defined a greater division between the domestic and religious realms of life.

The story of the St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church is one that is typical of many of the immigrant groups which came to the United States during the nineteenth century. As one result of the revolutions and petty bickerings which inflicted the more than forty separate independent states of the German Confederation during the 1840s, many Germans left their native land and sought asylum and new citizenship in the United States of America. Many of them went to the north and the mid-west. One notable example of one who later became an important American political leader was Carl Schurz of Missouri who served as United States Senator as well as a member of the president's cabinet. Several of these immigrants came to the greater Cincinnati area and some of these developed the church which is being proposed in this nomination.

A few of these pioneers from Bavaria relocated to Campbell County, Kentucky, where huge tracts of land lay peacefully and invitingly untilled. These immigrants named the area "John's Hill," for some unknown reason. Almost immediately they purchased property on which to construct a church building for the nominal sum of one dollar from a Mr. Jones, son-in-law of John Taylor, one-time owner of nearly the whole of Campbell County.

A loghouse soon became the first church on John's Hill, and it was to serve as such for ten years. The names of the nine original families who formed the nucleus of the first congregation have retained their prominence. They were Seibert, Ruschman, Burkhardt, Koss, Lahner, Reibel, Weingartner, Sendelback, and Steffney. These families attended Mass in the loghouse on the fourth Sunday of the month when Father John Voll, pastor of Corpus Christi Church, in Newport, travelled up John's Hill Road. Their children were taught in the same building by a Mr. Onhouse and a Mr. Weigend. Unfortunately, in the midst of a parish picnic on the feast of St. John the Baptist in 1857, lightning struck the loghouse. It caught fire and burned to the ground.

After much deliberation, the decision was made to erect a more substantial building

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chappell, Edward "Campbell: A Northern County", Kentucky Heritage Commission Heritage News, March-April, 1980.
 Sister Mary Cecil, S.N.D. and Sister Mary Philip, S.N.D., St. John the Baptist Church, 1858-1958. Newport, Kentucky: Otto Printing Co., 1958 (Centennial Souvenir).

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Newport, Ky.-Ohio

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 718940 4230860
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A line parallel to, and twenty feet from the foundations of the building.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Calvin Jones, Historian Jayne C. Henderson, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

DATE

June 1980

STREET & NUMBER

104 Bridge Street

TELEPHONE

(502) 564-3741

CITY OR TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL ✓

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Jayna C. Hopkins

TITLE

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

6-19-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

W. Ray Price
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8/11/80

ATTEST:

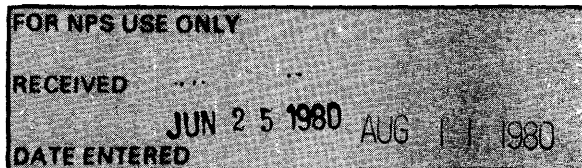
Kristen J. O'Connell

DATE

7/24/80

CREATED BY NPS/STP/STP/STP

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St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church
Campbell County

CONTINUATION SHEET

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in a more central location. In the very year of the fire, work was begun on a new two-story stone structure, thirty by fifty feet. The Most Reverend George Aloysius Carrell, S. J., first Bishop of Covington, appointed Adam Seibert, Ignatz Ruschman, and Lawrence Weingartner as members of the first church committee. By April 25, 1858, Monsignor Frederic Baraga, later the bishop of Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan, was able to officiate at the laying of the cornerstone. In seven months time, on November 25, 1858, Bishop Carrell dedicated the new St. John the Baptist Church, the same church still in use today.

For twenty years the church was a mission station served by the Benedictine Fathers of Covington. The first resident pastor was the Reverend Anthony Athmann, who was appointed in January, 1877. The Reverend William Cassander succeeded him after only a year but remained until 1880. Nine short term pastors then followed each other over a period of eleven years. The historical records as to their achievements are just as lacking as are documentary references as to the effects on the parish of the Civil War, the Reconstruction, and industrial growth. It is recorded, however, that under Father Bernard Hillebrand, pastor from 1880 to 1882, the Apostleship of Prayer was established in the parish, and the main altar was built. The statues which adorned the altar at that time were carved by Mr. Frank De Jaco of Newport, Kentucky.

In 1891, possibly because of a shortage of priests, the parish again became a mission attached to Corpus Christi Church. During this time, Father Joseph Schaefer and Father Henry B. Gellenbeck were in charge of Sunday services held twice monthly. Father Gellenbeck was appointed pastor in 1894. A year later he was succeeded by Father Bernard Baumeister who served there until 1903. Both he and his successor, the Reverend Thomas B. Ott, were able to make needed improvements at the church as did his successor, Father Charles Diemer. It was during his pastorate that the congregation celebrated its golden jubilee of the building of the little stone church on the hill in 1908. It was also before his pastorate ended in 1917 that the catechism was no longer taught in the German language as it had been before World War I, according to Father Anthony Deye, the current pastor of Corpus Christi Church in Newport. Father Deye was ordained at St. John the Baptist Church in 1938.

Father Deimer also brought in the Sisters of Notre Dame to assume charge of the school in 1909. Through the following years, they faithfully conducted their small school, in many cases being required to perform most of the custodial work themselves with the assistance of their pupils.

New vitality surged through the life of the parish with the coming of Father Walter Freiburg in 1938. The dream of a vigorous pastorate became a vibrant reality with the coming of Father Francis R. Mielech in 1931. The twenty-three years of his administration are a noble illustration of what native ability, zeal, and a long tenure in office can accomplish in a parish. Many further physical improvements were

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made at his suggestion and because of his efforts.

In 1958, St. John the Baptist Church celebrated its centennial. It continues to operate as a testimony to the interest, energy, and dedication of its original founders, German immigrants from Bavaria who came to a new nation, where they could enjoy peace, freedom, and prosperity away from the revolutions and war of Central Europe.

St. John the Baptist Church, constructed in 1858 is one of few early ethnic churches extant in Kenton County. Of those which remain, it is the best example of early German utilitarian structures. Devoid of the high ornamentation which was present in later church structures, St. Johns symbolizes the non-materialistic religious life led by early German immigrants.