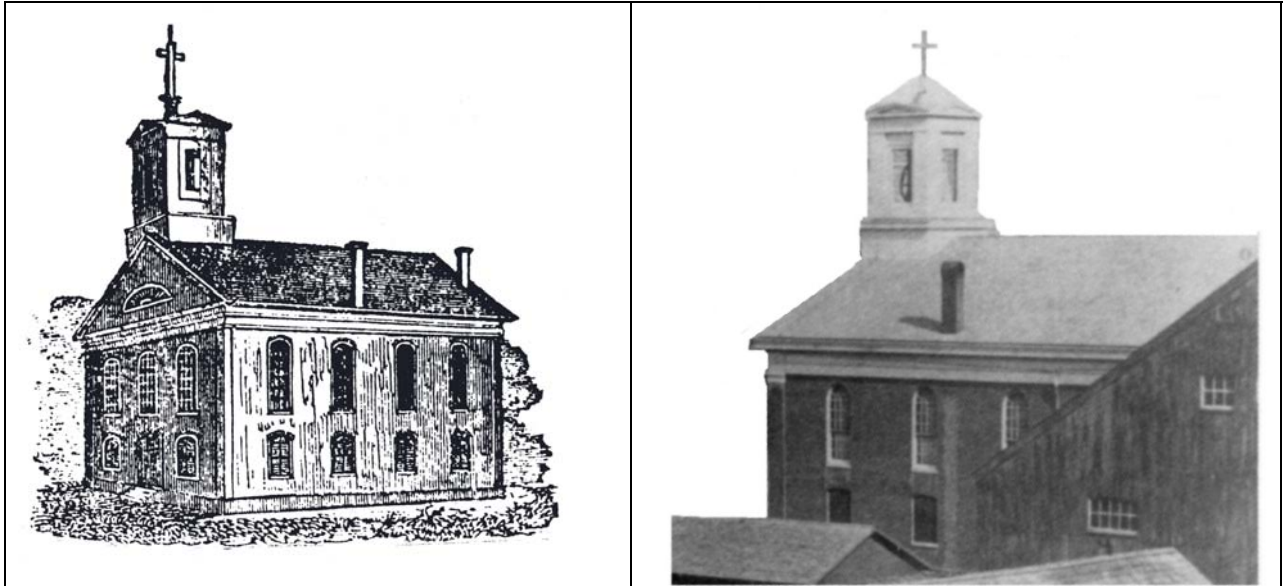


First Vermont Catholic Church Baptisms Published

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The Vermont French-Canadian Genealogical Society (VT-FCGS) has completed a 607 page book of the early Baptisms of St Mary Church in Burlington; which eventually became the Cathedral in 1853 when Bishop Louis de Goesbriand became the first Bishop of the Vermont Diocese. On 27 January 2004 the VT-FCGS received sole permission from the Presbyteral Council of the Vermont Catholic Diocese to copy and publish the sacramental records of the oldest churches in the Diocese.



The Second St Mary Catholic Church in Burlington

Built in 1841 by Father O'Callaghan, and used until the new Cathedral was completed in 1867.
The building faced toward the West on the south-east corner of St Paul and Cherry Streets.

The first Baptism Register at St Mary Church is commonly referred to as Father Jeremiah O'Callaghan's Register. The first baptism was celebrated on the 11th of July in 1830 and by the 10th of October in 1858, more than 8,943 baptisms were performed, although over the past 176 years, four pages were lost, representing about 140 baptisms. Father O'Callaghan was at St Mary Catholic Church from 1830 until Dec. 16 1853 when Bishop de Goesbriand took over the Pastorate of St Mary and Father O'Callaghan departed for Northampton, Massachusetts. For the last few years, and until 1858, Father Thomas Lynch was the pastor. The original baptism register is kept at the Diocesan Archives in Burlington. Other priests who performed baptisms and signed the register, mostly after 1854, were Fathers Conlan, Quinn, Lionnet, Cam, Goulet, Duglue, Campion, Clavier and Drapeau.

Unfortunately, Father O'Callaghan entered only the very basic baptism info; the given name, the parents and godparents and the date; but not the place of baptism or the residence of the parents. This brevity in recording the sacramental records created some concern for the French Canadian Catholics, because the priests in Quebec would almost fill a page of their registers with handwritten script for each marriage, baptism and burial, along with signatures of

people in attendance; if they knew how to sign their names. Father O'Callaghan traveled throughout the state of Vermont performing baptisms and marriages; sometimes celebrating 20 baptisms in one day. The genealogical society published the St Mary Cathedral book of marriages from 1830 to 1930 containing 792 pages in 2005. In the 1830's there was an average of about 200 baptisms per year; increasing throughout the 1840's to almost 700 baptisms per year. However, when St Joseph Church was built in 1850 the average baptisms per year returned to about 200 - 250.

Father O'Callaghan's spelling of the French Canadian "given names and surnames" does create a problem for the readers or genealogists reading this book. Coming from Ireland, he was not accustomed to hearing and writing the French names. So, for thousands of the baptisms of French Canadian infants, there are many hundreds of unrecognizable names. Some are absolutely hopeless and we will never know the real family names. However, by comparing these 8,943 baptisms with the 25,409 baptisms at St Joseph Church in Burlington, we have identified almost two thousand of the correct French names. This also enabled us to add much more additional and valuable information.

Included in the book is list of 503 gravestones of the 1830 to 1870 timeframe for the St Joseph Cemetery, which is the oldest cemetery, and was owned by the St Mary Cathedral Parish and used by the numerous French and Irish parishioners. This cemetery is north of Archibald Street. This is not to be confused with the cemeteries that are south of Archibald Street and owned by St Joseph parish, which are named the Old Mount Calvary, and the Mount Calvary Annex; and the New Mount Calvary on Plattsburg Avenue. This list was made by David Blow of the Diocesan Archives and is printed with his permission.

This book is the 19th book of sacramental records that has been published by the Vermont French-Canadian Genealogical Society beginning in January of 2004, and they represent sacramental records from more than 25 of the oldest parishes in the Diocese of Vermont. Using these new books will save much 'wear and tear' of the original church registers, which are up to 176 years old. Members of the genealogical society have donated many hours of effort in entering, proofing and editing tens of thousands of records which were written in Latin, French and English and sometimes barely legible, and in some cases, not legible at all.

Copies may be purchased from VT-FCGS, P. O. Box 65128, Burlington, VT, 05406-5128. See their website at http://www.vt-fcgs.org/publications_for_sale.html for more information on the Parish books completed and their costs. They are also available for genealogical research at the VT-FCGS library at Dupont Hall, owned by St Michael's College, in Fort Ethan Allen. See the Website for directions. The Vermont French-Canadian Genealogical Society library also has the Vermont Vital Record microfilms of births, marriages and deaths for the state of Vermont from 1760 to 1908 and is currently purchasing the next series from 1908 to 1941. The library is open every Tuesday from 7pm to 9:30pm and every Saturday from 10am until 4pm except for holidays.