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Archdiocese of Baltimore
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THE OLD GERMAN CATHOLIC PARISHES OF BALTIMORE

St. John's German Catholic Church, 1799-1841
St. James, 1841 -
St. Alphonsus, 1845 -

In 1799, St. John's German Catholic Church was established on the corner of Park Avenue and Saratoga Street. By 1840 this national parish had outgrown the church building which also was badly in need of repairs. The congregation petitioned Archbishop Eccleston for a new church; permission was granted. To accommodate the St. John's congregation, the Archbishop gave them St. James Church. At the same time, Archbishop Eccleston called in the Redemptorist Fathers and assigned to them all German congregations in the diocese. To care for the displaced St. James congregation, mainly Irish, the Archbishop assigned them to the newly built St. Vincent's.

In 1841, St. John's was torn down and a new and larger edifice was begun on the site of the former church. The new church, completed in 1845, was named St. Alphonsus. It was the Mother House of the Redemptorist Order in North America until 1913. St. Alphonsus itself served the German community on the west side of Jones Falls until 1917 when, through various transactions, it came into possession of the Lithuanian Catholics.

St. James was established and built by private funds of Archbishop James Whitfield in 1833 for the Irish Catholics in the neighborhood of Aisquith and Eager Streets. But the Irish moved toward Front Street and the Germans on the east side of Jones Falls crowded into the St. James Area. A Redemptorist Seminary was located at St. James in 1842 and a new church was constructed in 1865.

In 1853 a territorial parish, called St. John the Evangelist, the original name given to the German parish in 1799, was established at Valley and Eager Streets. It was this parish which, because of declining numbers and changing population, was merged into St. James in 1966. For practical purposes this means the records of St. John's, 1853-1966, are at St. James parish. Photostat copies of St. John's German Catholic Church can be found at St. Alphonsus and St. James. As a German parish, St. Alphonsus records cover 1845-1917.

Extant records of the original St. John the German Catholic Church, records of St. James and St. John the Evangelist (closed 1966) are found in the former parish. In 1940 when the Historical Records Survey was made the records of St. Alphonsus were still in that church; the Lithuanian congregation continued to use books begun