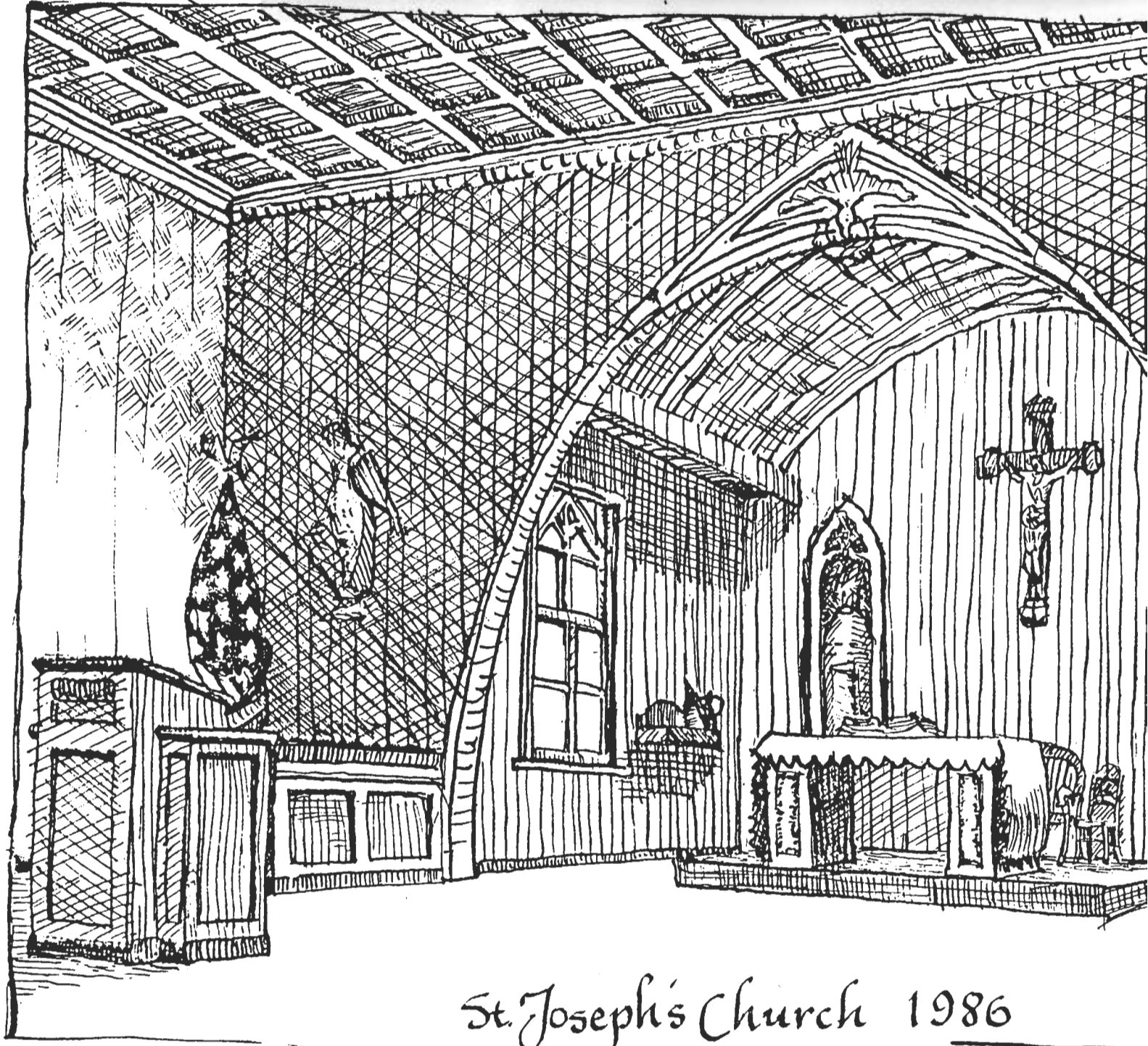


**St. Joseph's Church:**  
The people who settled Old Palm Bay and the surrounding areas raised this Church in 1914 of honest woods which grew in the native Florida soils, and behind the Church they placed their burial ground. The parish of the little wooden Church grew, and from it sprang the newer - larger Parishes in the South Brevard County Area.

1914 - 1986



St. Joseph's Church 1986



CITY OF  
**PALM BAY**  
FLORIDA

2145 Palm Bay Road, NE 32905

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

September 2, 1986

Dr. Diana Primelles  
Historic Sites Specialist  
Florida Department of State  
Division of Archives  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32301-8020

Dear Dr. Primelles:

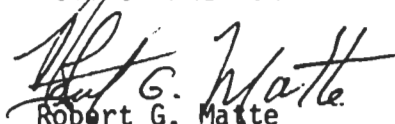
The City of Palm Bay is honored that our St. Joseph's Catholic Church will be considered for designation as a historic site by the Florida National Register Review Board.

All of us in Palm Bay have a deep and abiding affection for St. Joseph's as a living reminder of the City's historic past. Preserving tangible evidence of how the City began and what we were, is particularly important to us as our unprecedented growth over the last decade threatens to submerge memories of a quieter, some say happier time.

We are deeply grateful for your interest in Palm Bay and our past. Hopefully St. Joseph's will receive the distinction we feel it so honestly deserves.

Sincerely,

CITY OF PALM BAY

  
Robert G. Matte  
City Manager

RGM/le

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

5330 Babcock St. NE P.O. Box 507 Palm Bay, FL 32906-0507 (305) 727-1585

September 4, 1986

Dr. Diana Primelles  
Historian Site Specialist

Dear Dr. Primelles:

With the knowledge and consent of The Most Reverend Thomas J. Grady, Bishop of the Diocese of Orlando and owner of the property herein described, we are submitting this request to have St. Joseph's Church designated as an Historical Site.

The growth of the City of Palm Bay and the Catholic population in recent years has been phenomenal. It is important to preserve the history of St. Joseph's which was very much a part of the beginning of Palm Bay.

With the recognition and support this action has had in the Palm Bay Community, we look forward to a favorable decision by the Florida National Register Review Board.

Sincerely yours,



Reverend Anthony Bluett  
Pastor

Anne K. Florin  
1490 Herndon Circle, N.E.  
Palm Bay, Florida 32905

September 8, 1986

Dr. Diana Primellis  
Historic Sites Specialist  
Florida Department of State  
Division of Archives  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-8020

Re: St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
Nomination Proposal

Dear Dr. Primelles:

The submitted Nomination Proposal was compiled according to the criteria requested for presentation to the Florida National Register Review Board for St. Joseph's Church to be considered for designation as a historical site.

I personally interviewed the surviving settlers and children of early settlers, now in their late seventies, to obtain the history. The four reproduced "snap-shots" of the Slama Hotel and General Store and the John Myer's residence included in the presentation were obtained from Alexandria Myer Michels. They were taken in 1917 and so indicated on the back of the original south view of the church picture.

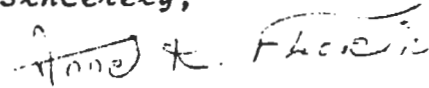
It was my pleasure to meet you when you made an on site inspection of St. Joseph's Complex. The photographs will serve to geographically recall the Church and surroundings.

St. Joseph's Church continues to be an integral part of the City of Palm Bay since 1914 and is a living reminder of the City's historical past.

Your kind interest and support in our efforts to obtain the historical designation is greatly appreciated and we pray that the Review Board will agree that St. Joseph's Catholic Church indeed merits being recognized for contributing to the history of the area.

I hope you find the presentation submitted in order, should you have any questions or need additional information please feel free to call me. Business phone: (305) 723-2323, home (305) 723-3462.

Sincerely,



Anne K. Florin

# NOMINATION PROPOSAL • FLORIDA

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

FOR INDIVIDUAL SITES

**DIVISION OF ARCHIVES, HISTORY AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT • FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL, PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE "PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING THE FLORIDA NOMINATION PROPOSAL." Complete all of the sections below. Put N/A if the information is not applicable or UK if not known.

- (1) **NAME OF SITE OR PROPERTY PROPOSED FOR LISTING; HISTORIC NAME;** the name by which the property was known originally or during the period of its historic significance (often the name of the person who originally developed the property:

St. Joseph's Catholic Church

**OTHER NAMES;** common names by which it has been or is currently known.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church

- (2) **LOCATION;** if in a rural area, indicate state or county road number and distance from nearest highway junction, town, or prominent landmark.

street and number Miller Street N.E.

city, town, vicinity Palm Bay 32905

county, Brevard state Florida

Legislative District: House 33 Senate 16 Congressional District 11

- (3) **CLASSIFICATION:** What is the type of property being nominated:

building X structure      object      site     

- (4) **OWNER OF PROPERTY;** Name and address. Diocese of Orlando

Telephone Number: P.O. Box 1800

(305) 425-3556 Orlando, Florida 32802

- (5) **USE OF PROPERTY;** historic use: Church - House of Worship

present use: Church - House of Worship

Is the property presently occupied? Yes X No     .

- (6) **ACCESSIBILITY;** is the exterior visible from public rights of way?

Yes X No     .

Is the interior accessible to public visitation? Regularly YES

By owner permission      Not accessible     .

(7) CONDITION OF PROPERTY; excellent \_\_\_\_\_ good V.X fair \_\_\_\_\_ poor \_\_\_\_\_  
 ruins NA unexposed (archaeology) NA

Has the property been moved? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no X date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: if yes to altered/moved, describe alterations and circumstances under Item 13.

(8) PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: during what period(s) did property achieve historic significance. (cite specific dates where possible) \_\_\_\_\_

Built in 1914 Used continually as a House of Worship to present 1986.

(9) AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE; in which of the following general categories was the property significant:

archaeology \_\_\_\_\_ architecture/engineering \_\_\_\_\_ agriculture \_\_\_\_\_ arts \_\_\_\_\_

commerce \_\_\_\_\_ industry \_\_\_\_\_ military \_\_\_\_\_ politics/government \_\_\_\_\_

science/invention \_\_\_\_\_ social/religious X other Oldest church actively in use since 1914 on the east coast of Florida south of St. Augustin

(10) BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION; describe boundary line encompassing all man-made and natural resources to be included in N.R. listing (legal description or survey as recorded on property rolls in county courthouse)

Township 28, Range 37, Section 24

Local description (as recorded on property rolls in County Courthouse):

Lots 1 thru 10 Block 15  
Plat of Tillman

(11) RESOURCE TYPES: list all man-made features encompassed by the boundaries by number and type, including prehistoric features where known: aboriginal mounds or middens, building, outbuildings, landscaping, etc. Indicate with an asterisk (\*) those that contribute to the historic character of the property.

\*St. Joseph's Church



STATE OF Florida

COUNTY OF Brevard

I HEREBY CERTIFY that, before me, an officer duly authorized to administer oaths and to take and certify the acknowledgment of Deeds, upon this day personally appeared C. W. Elliott and L. A. Wippreman each of whom is to me personally well known and known to me to be the President and Secretary, respectively, of **FLORIDA INDIAN RIVER CATHOLIC COLONY**, a Corporation, and that they each and severally acknowledged before me that they executed the foregoing and annexed Deed of Conveyance for and in the name and upon behalf of the said Corporation.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 22nd day of July A. D. 1914

Notary Public in and for State of Florida  
at large  
My commission expires March 25, 1917



3332 Wm. Gabriel  
Fort Pierce  
Warranty Deed Fla

FLORIDA INDIAN RIVER CATHOLIC COLONY  
To

STATE OF FLORIDA,  
County of Brevard.

On this 22 day  
of July A. D. 1914  
at 5 o'clock P. M., this  
instrument was filed for record and I  
have recorded the same in Deed Book  
66 page 137 of

the public records of said County  
W. T. Mitchell  
By W. J. Tilley Clerk  
Deputy Clerk.

RECORD VERIFIED.

Glen-Garrett P. Co., Wakulla, N. D.

*(Palm Beach)*  
~~(Pt. PIERCE) ROCKY MOUNTAIN~~

St. LUCIE  
Brevard

Warranty Deed  
Florida Ind. River Cath. Colony to Bishop Curley

Lots 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10 in Block 15 also  
outer lot "C". Tillman. *(Palm Beach)*

Recorded: Brevard County  
Sept. 5, 1914  
Deed Book 66 page 137.

Book for <sup>Book 5</sup> lots in  
Tillman. Church stands  
on lots 9 and 10.

Whole block comprises  
10 lots. I attach option  
on remaining 4 blocks.

"Outer lot C" in deed refers  
to 3 acre plot which I secured  
for cemetery.

J. G. Sabie, R.B.

This Indenture, Made this 21st day of September, A. D. 1925,  
 BETWEEN THE REAL ESTATE EXCHANGE, a corporation  
 existing under the laws of the State of Florida, having its principal place of  
 business in the County of BREVARD and State of Florida,  
 party of the first part, and Rt. Rev. Patrick Barry, R. Catholic Bishop of  
St. Augustine, and his successors in office  
 of the County of St. Johns and State of Florida,  
 part 2 of the second part, WITNESSETH, that the said party of the first part, for and in con-  
 sideration of the sum of ONE DOLLAR and Other Valuable Consideration,  
 to it in hand paid the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, has granted, bargained, sold, aliened,  
 remised, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents doth grant, bargain, sell, alien,  
 remise, release, convey and confirm unto the said part 2 of the second part, and his successors  
in office  
~~forever~~ forever, all that certain parcel of land lying and being in the County of  
Brevard and State of Florida, more particularly de-  
 scribed as follows: LOTS FOUR (4), FIVE (5), SIX (6) and SEVEN (7), in  
Block Fifteen (15), Map of Tillman, Florida, according to plat  
thereof filed and recorded in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit  
Court in and for Brevard County.



TOGETHER with all the covenants, hereditaments and appurtenances, with every privilege, right,  
 title, interest and estate, reversion, remainder and easement thereto belonging or in anywise apper-  
 taining; FO HAVE AND TO HOLD the same in fee simple forever.

And the said party of the first part doth covenant with the said part 2 of the second part  
 that it is lawfully seized of the said premises; that they are free of all incumbrances, and that it  
 has good right and lawful authority to sell the same; and the said party of the first part does hereby  
 fully warrant the title to said land, and will defend the same against the lawful claims of all  
 persons whomsoever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said party of the first part has caused  
 these presents to be signed in its name by its President, and its cor-  
 porate seal to be affixed, attested by its Secretary  
 the day and year above written.

(Corporate Seal)  
 Attest: M. G. Tubbs  
 Secretary

THE REAL ESTATE EXCHANGE  
 By J. C. Powell  
 President.

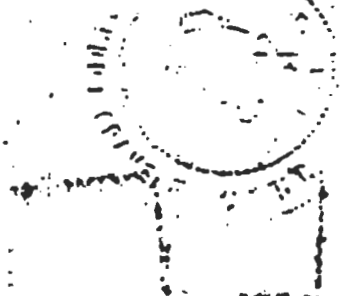
Signed, Sealed and Delivered in our Presence:  
J. M. Denny  
Walter H. Ford

State of FLORIDA  
County of BREVARD

I HEREBY CERTIFY, That on this 21st day of September, A. D. 1925,  
before me personally appeared F. O. Powell  
and W. G. Tubbs, respectively President and Secretary  
of The Real Estate Exchange, a corporation under the laws  
of the State of Florida, to me known to be the persons described in and who ex-  
ecuted the foregoing conveyance to St. Rev. Patrick Barry  
and severally acknowledged the execution thereof to be their free act and deed as such officers, for  
the uses and purposes therein mentioned; and that they affixed thereto the official seal of said cor-  
poration, and the said instrument is the act and deed of said corporation.

WITNESS my signature and official seal at Melbourne  
in the County of BREVARD and State of Florida  
the day and year last aforesaid.

*W. G. Tubbs* (Seal)  
Notary Public.  
State of Florida at Large.  
My commission expires Aug 7, 1928.



16885 *Rev. Father Gabriel*

*145* *William F. Powell & Co.*  
DEW'S FORM N. E. 33 *11111-1304*

Warranty Deed  
FROM CORPORATION

*The Real Estate Exchange*

*70*

*Rev. Father Patrick Barry*

Date RECEIVED

ABSTRACT OF DESCRIPTION  
DOT 151825

*Q. E. L.*

STATE OF FLORIDA  
County of Brevard

Filed for Record in the Office of the Clerk of the Court  
County of Brevard and State of Florida

SEP 22 1925

*W. G. Tubbs*

*M. D. Stoddard*

*S. P. Mast*

THE STATE DEPARTMENT

This Quit-Claim Deed, Executed this 18th day of June A. D. 19 68, by PAUL TANNER as Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine,

first party, to WILLIAM D. BORDERS, as Bishop of the Diocese of Orlando, his successors in office, a Corporation sole,

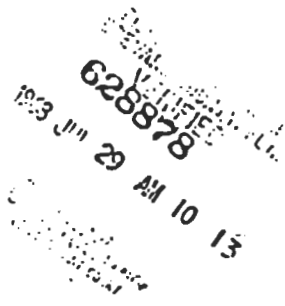
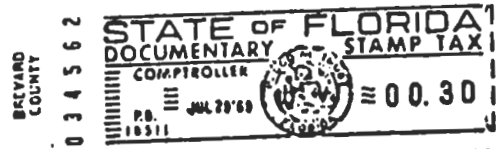
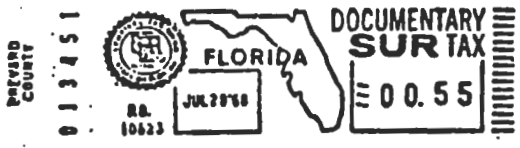
whose postoffice address is Post Office Box 3069, Orlando, Florida 32802

second party:

(Wherever used herein the terms "first party" and "second party" shall include singular and plural, heirs, legal representatives, and assigns of individuals, and the successors and assigns of corporations, wherever the context so admits or requires.)

Witnesseth, That the said first party, for and in consideration of the sum of \$ 10.00 in hand paid by the said second party, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, does hereby remise, release and quit-claim unto the said second party forever, all the right, title, interest, claim and demand which the said first party has in and to the following described lot, piece or parcel of land, situate, lying and being in the County of Brevard State of Florida, to-wit:

Lots 1 through 10 inclusive, in Block 15, and also outer lot "C", Townsite of Tillman, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 2, page 4, Public Records of Brevard County, Florida.



To Have and to Hold the same together with all and singular the appurtenances thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and all the estate, right, title, interest, lien, equity and claim whatsoever of the said first party, either in law or equity, to the only proper use, benefit and behoof of the said second party forever.

In Witness Whereof, The said first party has signed and sealed these presents the day and year first above written. Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of:

Handwritten signatures of George E. ... and Bernard D. ...

Paul Tanner as Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine

STATE OF FLORIDA, COUNTY OF ST. JOHNS

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this day, before me, an officer duly authorized in the State aforesaid and in the County aforesaid to take acknowledgments, personally appeared PAUL TANNER as Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine,

to me known to be the person described in and who executed the foregoing instrument and he acknowledged before me that he executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and official seal in the County and State last aforesaid this 18th day of June A. D. 1968.

Notary Public My Commission Expires:

THIS INSTRUMENT PREPARED BY: Robert J. Pleus, Jr. Attorney at Law 369 North Orange Ave. Orlando, Florida 32801

NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF FLORIDA AT LARGE MY COMMISSION EXPIRES, JUNE 17, 1972

Return to

2.25

30  
345

## Warranty Deed

Real Estate Exchange to Bishop Barry,  
Lot 4,5,6,7 Block 16, Map of Tillman, Fla. according  
to plat thereof filed and recorded in office of  
Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for Brevard Co.

Recorded: Sept. 25, 1925. Book 119, p. 476

(12) DESCRIPTION OF ORIGINAL OR HISTORIC APPEARANCE: describe the historic appearance of the property and its setting during the period of historic significance, in the following order:

(a) Original Setting: describe the surrounding area, neighborhood, rural or urban environment as it existed during the period of historic significance.

#### ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the year of 1912, a group of families, mostly German and Slovanic ancestry, arrived by Florida East Coast Railway, from Indiana, Wisconsin, Kansas, Oklahoma, to the sleepy hamlet of "Tillman", situated on the banks of the Indian River and Turkey Creek. Now known as Palm Bay, Brevard County, Florida.

They brought furniture, personal belongings and bags of seeds with them. By 1914, a total of one hundred families from the Midwest arrived in much the same way.

A land company, called "Indian River Catholic Colony", traveled to the Midwest promising the farmers prosperity in the sunny south by farming two seasons a year, with no freezing or snow. They purchased the land at \$30.00 to \$40.00 per acre and soon learned that strange and hardy plants grew wild, but, the land did not respond to cultivation because of the poorly drained sandy soil and the unexpected freezes. The only thing they found in abundance were mosquitoes and insects.

The principal crops were potatoes, peppers and eggplant. The potatoes were shipped in barrels by railroad to Plant City, Florida. Peppers and eggplant were shipped in boxes.

Horse and buggy and mule drawn carts were the principal means of transportation. They traveled in the "ruts" created by them since there were no roads. Supplies were brought to the area by boat on the Indian River and also by the Florida East Coast Railway.

During this period of time, Brevard County did not have a resident Catholic priest. The spiritual needs of the isolated Catholics were administered by the priest and missionaries who would come from great distances on horseback or boat.

Mr. Joseph Slama, the first business man, opened a Hotel and a General Store, located immediately west of the railroad depot. (Now known as the N. W. corner of Pollak Avenue and Main Street.) It served as a meeting place where early settlers could make purchases, exchange views and woes.

In 1913, Mass was celebrated in the Slam's Hotel by Father Gabriel Ruppert O.S.B., affectionately remembered as Father Gabriel. He would come to the area from Fort Pierce. Later that year the John Myer residence was built and Mass was then celebrated in the "front room" of the Myer residence. Confessions were heard upstairs before Mass. The residence has been continuously occupied by family members until early 1986. (The house is located on the S. E. corner of Pollak Avenue and Miller Street.)

In 1914, under Father Gabriel's leadership, the parishioners built the church, known as St. Joseph's. Frank Minehardt designed the rectangular structure. He was assisted by Mr. Missario who helped to supervise the construction.

Labor was volunteered by members of the parish. The names recalled by surviving families include, Frank Bohaty, J. Barthelmea, Leo Knecht, William Knecht, Joseph Koten, George Koutnik, John Kuenchenberg, Mathew Michels, Matt Miskovsky and Louis Scmitt.

The native building material was obtained from the Union Saw Mill located in Hophins. (Now known as South Melbourne.)

St. Joseph's Church, completed, was dedicated by Bishop Micheal J. Curley in October 1914. Following the dedication, seventy eight youngsters received the Sacrament of Confirmation by Bishop Curley. Subsequently, Bishop Curley became Archbishop Micheal J. Curley of Baltimore.

Only four families resided within close proximity to the church during this period of time.

In 1923, the parishioners built a Rectory, as a residence for the priest, on the N.W. corner of of Miller Street and Hickory Avenue. In 1924, Father Patrick Bresnahan was appointed as the first resident priest of St. Joseph's.

The church services at St. Joseph's Church were also attended by catholic residents from Melbourne and Eau Gallie who arrived by horse and buggy or by boat. The residents who resided south of "Tillman", as per early settler Philamena Myers Weber, she relates that due to the lack of roads they were unable to attend church services regularly; they looked forward to their only annual celebration of Mass on Christmas Day. (Weber residence location now known as Valkaria.)

In 1931, Father John F. Walsh supervised the building of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Melbourne. It was designated as a Mission of St. Joseph's.

St. Joseph's Church of Palm Bay has served the Catholic Community of South Brevard for the past seventy two years. It is the oldest religious building, in continuous, active use, as a house of worship, on the east coast of Florida, south of St. Augustine.

(12) DESCRIPTION OF ORIGINAL OR HISTORIC APPEARANCE:

- (b) Exterior appearance of the major contributing resource  
Describe the design/style, materials, construction method  
Start with the "front" and work around resource.

St. Joseph's Church was built in the American Gothic Style; this structure uniquely shows the architectural adaptation of the Gothic Style to Florida's materials and the physical and social environment.

It is a rectangular frame structure, over a crawl space, of post and beam construction, utilizing native cypress and pine. The exterior structure is covered with a gable roof. The bell tower houses the original bell which to date tolls for services. The bell was donated by John Fidler at a cost of sixty dollars; a monumental sum in those days. The cross atop of the bell tower is of wood construction.

- (c) Interior Appearance: start with the lowest level and work up. Describe each level from front to rear.

The basic interior structure, 2300 square feet in area, specifies the interior walls, pine floor and architectural metal ceiling to retain its original physical appearance.

The installation of air conditioning was made without significantly altering the interior character of the structure. To comply with code requirements fire exit signs have not altered the simplicity of the interior of the nave.

The Chancel area was modified to accommodate liturgical changes and to redecorate said area. This change is not an irreversible character, however, and the structure may be returned to its original condition.

The choir loft has an exterior fire escape exit to comply with code requirements.

(13) ALTERATIONS AND PRESENT APPEARANCE:

The exterior of the structure has not been altered. The original metal roof was replaced due to deterioration and prevent structural damage to the building.

The fire escape, exit signs and handicap ramp were constructed to comply with city code requirements.

To accomodate the Vatican Two liturgical changes, in 1976 the Chancel area was modified so that continuous use of the church for liturgical services would not be interrupted. The Chancel area was paneled and carpeted. At the same time the aisle was carpeted, the air conditioning was installed and the sagging, splintered pine benches (pews) were replaced. The original floor, walls and architectural metal ceiling remain. The changes were made without significantly altering the interior character of the structure.

In spite of the phenominal growth of the City of Palm Bay, the neighborhood has retained a "village-rural" atmosphere. The majority of the homes were built prior to 1950. They are well maintained and reflect pride of ownership.

(14) STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: describe the historic significance of the property:

- (a) The one hundred five families that settled in "Tillman" came from established Midwest catholic communities. As devout catholics they missed the spiritual environment and the fellowship that the churches provided.
- (b) Under Father Gabriel's leadership St. Joseph's Church was built in 1914. All the labor and funding was provide by the early settlers.
- (c) General information, as to the early settlers as a group they arrived from the Midwest, industrious farmers, simp. and genteel in nature, seeking to improve their quality of life by farming in a sunny climate.
- (d) St. Joseph's Church, used as a House of Worship, attract catholics from the entire South Brevard area.

The City of Palm Bay, formaly known as "Tillman", is six: five square miles in area; the fastest growing city in Brevard County. The present population is 43,860.

St. Joseph's Parish, from its very humble beginning, now has a new church complex on Babcock Street; a Mission church in Barefoot Bay and an eight grade elementary scho and kindergarten.

From one hundred five catholic families who settled "Till man", the parish family of St. Joseph's today is comprise of 2400 families

From the date of the dedication in October of 1914, St. Joseph's Church has actively, continously without interr tion served and continues to serve the catholic community spanning a period of 72 years.

St. Joseph's Church is located one half mile west of heav traveled Highway U. S. #1; easily accessable for visitati