

Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory

ID: 243

Name: *SENECA CONGREGATION (from records of St. John's Church, Forest Glen)*  
Alternate name: *MIDDLEBROOK CONGREGATION*

Address:

Town:

ADC Map Page \_\_\_\_\_ Grid \_\_\_\_\_

Type *ROMAN CATHOLIC*  
 Religious  
 Family  
 Private  
 Other

Association  
 Free black  
 Enslaved  
 Ethnic  
 Prehistoric

Setting  Rural  Urban  Suburban  Forested  Other

Condition  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

Negative Impacts (vandalism, dumping, neglect, encroachment, etc) \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate no. of burials \_\_\_\_\_ Date range of burials \_\_\_\_\_

Description (markers, materials, arrangement, landscaping, fence, paths and roads, etc.)

*Graves moved to Baltimore  
see attached*

Surveyor(s) *J. Manuel* Survey date *4/23/2004*  
Photographer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Photo no. \_\_\_\_\_

Current owner \_\_\_\_\_  
Address/Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Status  Locational Atlas ID \_\_\_\_\_  National Register  
 Master Plan ID \_\_\_\_\_  Other \_\_\_\_\_

UTM \_\_\_\_\_

Additional sources of information:

243  
SENECA CONGREGATION  
MIDDLEBROOK VIC.  
(RELOCATED)

## St. Rose of Lima Community— A Brief History

This is a brief history of the St. Rose faith community from its beginnings until the parish was established in 1972. Although we tend to identify a parish by its church buildings, the buildings really have importance as an enduring sign of the commitment of the community.

On May 25, 1972, the Chancery Office of the Archdiocese of Washington issued a decree forming Saint Rose of Lima Parish. The decree, signed by Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle, defined the bounds of the parish and declared that the parish would be established on June 1. The article in the May 25th "Catholic Standard" listing new pastoral assignments in the archdiocese announced that Father Joseph Byron would be the first pastor. Although June 1, 1972 can be identified as the beginning of Saint Rose of Lima Parish, it was but a culmination of the years of commitment in the Saint Rose faith community.

At the beginning of the 19th century, there were a string of mission communities between Georgetown and Frederick, MD, two local Catholic centers. In his 1817 report to Archbishop Ambrose Marcial of Baltimore, Father John Redmond described these communities in Montgomery County. The first was in the east end of the county near the mansion of Eliza Carroll, the sister of the late Archbishop Carroll. That community is now Saint John's Church in Forest Glen (Silver Spring), the oldest established parish in the county. The letter goes on to describe the newly constructed church and community in Rockville, and then proceeds to say...

"The 3rd place of worship is a very small brick house built some years ago by the very pious Henry Waring on his own land within one mile of Lingans Mill on the road from Geo Town to Frederick — 8 miles N.W. of Rockville. This is the smallest congregation: there are about 50 communicants, about 25 monthly and many slaves and other non-communicants."

The fourth Catholic community in the county was at Barnesville, the largest of the four.

The third place was, of course, what was to become St. Rose's. The building Fr. Redmond described no longer exists; it stood in the middle of present-day Rt. 270 just north of Seneca Creek. The few graves in the small cemetery near the building's site were moved to

a state cemetery in Baltimore for displaced graves when Rt. 270 was built. Even in 1820, Fr. Pierre DeVos wrote that the building was in no state to serve as a place of worship; he asked if the Archbishop might help to pay for repairs. No funds were sent and the community soon began to meet regularly at a new location, "The Woodlands", the home of Francis Cassatt Clopper and his wife, Ann Jayne (Jane) Byrne, which stood on the site of the present park headquarters in Seneca State Park.

Francis Cassatt Clopper and his new wife, Ann, a member of a prominent Philadelphia Catholic family, had moved from Philadelphia to Montgomery County in 1811. Clopper, who had been in the hardware and import business had found it impossible to maintain a proper inventory due to the Embargo Act and decided to take up farming. He had discovered the farm some years before while travelling to New Orleans. Francis and Ann are representative of the American predicament for the Catholic Church; she was Catholic, he was not. In a poignant letter she wrote just before her death in 1865 to her daughter, Mary Augusta, Ann said that she felt here greatest failing was that Francis had never become a Catholic. His baptism is noted in the church records in October, 1865, six months after her death. The community flourished under the guidance of Ann Clopper, her sister Ellen Maria Maher, and Francis, who supported her efforts. In 1823, she wrote to a nephew of feeding over 200 people made destitute because of drought. She also noted in an aside that the powers at the county court house had not been very cooperative.

Fr. DeVos, whom we have already met, was one of the early "characters" in the community. He had been born in Belgium and came to Maryland first to serve the old parishes in Southern Maryland. He found life in the New World chaotic and beyond his control to the point that his health was affected; his correspondence is filled with complaints about the irregularity of life here and his continual feeling of malaise. Tradition has it that while visiting the Cloppers, he noted novels and other "irreligious" reading material about the house. When the Cloppers' first child was born, he refused to baptise it because he wasn't sure that a home where such literature was left about the house could ever be a place where a child could be raised a Catholic. The Cloppers went to Baltimore, where the child was baptised by the bishop. Fr. DeVos condition failed with time until he was unable to say mass before a large assembly. He retired and lived out his days with the Pettibones, a local Catholic family.

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