

A History of St. John The Baptist Maronite Catholic Church  
New Castle, Pennsylvania

and

Families of St John The Baptist Maronite Catholic Church  
New Castle, Pennsylvania

By

Judy J. Bishara



St. John The Baptist Maronite Catholic Church  
Two West Reynolds Street  
New Castle, Pennsylvania

2001

## Preface

This publication is being issued now to bring information about the parish and its families to public attention before the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 24, 2001. Hopefully, readers can scan some of the material contained herein and gain some sense of the history and the people who made that history before attending the events planned for June 24. If any errors of fact are discovered, by all means inform the author as these histories **will be reprinted** (and corrected, if necessary) in the final commemorative book which will be published shortly after the 75<sup>th</sup> celebration.

Judy J. Bishara  
Poland, Ohio  
June 5, 2001

# A History of St. John The Baptist Maronite Catholic Church New Castle, Pennsylvania<sup>a</sup>

by Judy J. Bishara

## The First Immigrants

That small, ancient area in the Middle East, identified today as Lebanon, was formerly a part of Syria ruled by the Turkish Ottoman Empire until its dismantlement at the end of World War I. The area was home to the first Syrian (later called "Lebanese") immigrants who began coming to the United States in the 1870's. Impelled by personal, political, economic and religious reasons they began emigrating out of Syria beginning shortly after a civil war there in 1860. What was at first a trickle of immigrants, most of whom were Christian, reached a small but steady stream up until World War I.<sup>1</sup>

A tenuous settlement began in New Castle, Pennsylvania around the turn of the last century when the first immigrants from Aamar and Karm el Mohr, Lebanon chose it as their final destination. As early as 1906, two brothers from Karm el Mohr, Assad and Joseph Bashara, both with wives named Latifa from Aamar, were living on Scioto Street.<sup>2</sup> However, the brothers, finding life here difficult, stayed only a couple of years and returned to Lebanon. Assad never left Lebanon again while his

brother Joseph returned to America in 1910.<sup>3</sup>

It was not until the decade before World War I that a number of Lebanese pioneers migrated to New Castle up the Beaver Valley from Pittsburgh where they had first settled in the United States. Motive for their move was undoubtedly economic, not only for jobs in the mills, but as a natural evolution of colony life. Pittsburgh was an example of how "congeries of Syrians . . . are breaking off in little branches, like swarming bees, to establish themselves in neighboring or more distant towns . . . Syrians are beginning to see the social, as well as the financial, value of scattering. Such groups are now found in . . . a very large number of small towns in Western Pennsylvania."<sup>4</sup>

In New Castle then, they settled on the South Side living near each other along Moravia Street, Scioto Street, Reynolds Street and East Long Avenue. On the South Side, the Lebanese found themselves neighbors with many other immigrants from Greece, Italy, Poland, Russia, Wales and other parts of Europe, as well as African Americans. All of them

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keeping store in the front half." The report went on to say that, "There is an interesting though quite shocking 'House of All Nations' in Pittsburgh, a huge tenement inhabited mainly, but not exclusively, by Armenians and Syrians. The men (not the women) go out peddling all the week, sleeping out in the bush, as travelling Syrians often do at home, and returning on Saturday night."<sup>12</sup>

A further example illustrates conditions for immigrant men in New Castle. In 1917, Ameen Gabriel's household at 1120 Moravia Street in New Castle was home to William George, Budway Gabriel, Aisac John, and Albert Jim, in addition to Ameen's family.<sup>13</sup> Renters far outnumbered owners in 1920 among "Syrians." Of forty five heads of households sampled on the South Side of New Castle who were "Syrian," only seven owned their properties, the other thirty eight rented.<sup>14</sup> It could be seen as an unsettled life with people shifting residences as new immigrants arrived.

Although by 1920 the Lebanese immigrants in New Castle had a well-established enclave and family connections, the group of Lebanese people distinguished as Maronite Catholics lacked a Maronite church to attend. When they could "borrow" a Maronite priest, they would meet informally to attend mass in the rented store rooms of Helena Joseph, Joseph and Latifa Bashara or a storeroom owned by Labiba John. The storerooms were

located on West Reynolds Street and Moravia Street all within walking distance of Long Avenue, Scioto Street and Moravia Street where the Lebanese neighborhood had developed.<sup>15</sup> They even met at a pool hall owned by George Ameen Gabriel on Moravia Street in the late 1920's.<sup>16</sup>

Reverend Gabriel Nader apparently functioned as one of the earliest visiting priests. He was pastor of St. Ann Maronite Church in Pittsburgh from October 8, 1910 to March 4, 1921.<sup>17</sup> During that period, he performed the marriage for George Joseph (then age 30), a resident of New Castle and Mary Moses (age 20), a resident of Pittsburgh, in New Castle at St. Mary Church on April 22, 1914.<sup>18</sup> On January 18, 1915, he married Moowid Joseph and Ciltonno Bashoro [sic] at the "Catholic Church" in Rochester, Pennsylvania.<sup>19</sup> Since he performed marriages for the New Castle Maronites, it would seem logical to assume he also visited occasionally and celebrated mass for them.

During 1925-1926, priests from the neighboring Maronite parish in Youngstown, Ohio, Fathers Paul Rizk, and Joseph [Anthony?] Yazbeck - each colloquially known as *khoury b' jimaa* (priest of the week) - would serve mass to about thirty families in New Castle.

There were, of course, other Catholic churches in New Castle and the Lebanese Maronites attended these when visiting Maronite priests were not

Habib Hage. She died December 16, 1930 and was buried on December 18, 1930 in St. Joseph Cemetery. Reverend Paul Rizk performed the mass. The first First Communion class was June 23, 1935, under pastor Reverend Elias Nader. The first confirmation class was held on November 6, 1939 under Bishop Boyle.<sup>24</sup>

### First Permanent Church

Sometime in 1928, the St. George Greek Orthodox Church sold its building at 1210 Howard Way in New Castle to the "Syrian Roman Catholic" congregation. It was dedicated by Reverend Herman Seidel, Dean of St. Mary's in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, in 1928. The total purchase price of the building was \$800<sup>25</sup> which Moowid Joseph loaned the parish. In May of 1930 he made the last payment of \$450.<sup>26</sup> Initially, the structure lacked amenities. For example, the pastor had only one room which served as kitchen, dining and sleeping quarters.<sup>27</sup> With improvements, this building would serve the parish for over thirty years.

A major improvement in the church building was the excavating of a basement under the standing structure. Sometime in the spring of 1932 or 1933, many recognized the need for a hall to accommodate church functions such as baptisms, weddings, and mercy meals. And it would provide a place for the young people to hold dances. Accordingly, on their own initiative, the older men from Aamar and Karm el

Mohr, including William John, Albert Gabriel, Charlie Beshero, Joseph Bashara, Azor Joseph, George Saad, Moowid Joseph, John Saad and others, literally raised the church structure from its foundation. Using nothing but hand shovels, they excavated the basement, scooped the dirt onto trucks and hauled it away. Their foresight and hard labor resulted in a church hall that functioned as a social center for many years.

From the foundation of the parish in 1926 to the appointment of a permanent pastor in 1935, St. John's was served by the following priests: Nehmetallah Hayek, 1926-28; Paul Rizk, 1930-31 and Joseph Yazbeck, 1931-32, the last two from Youngstown, Ohio as mentioned above. During the period between 1933 and 1935, not even a visiting priest was available, and the church was closed. The Maronite Catholics again attended mass and received sacraments at other Catholic churches in New Castle.

Even though representatives from St. John's parish had been for some time petitioning the bishop in Pittsburgh to appoint a permanent priest to serve them, it was not until 1935 that he assigned Father Elias Nader to St. John's. The bishop transferred him from the Maronite parish in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Father Nader, having been ordained in middle age, arrived in New Castle sometime in 1935 and served St. John's parish until about 1950.

people would of course take the bread and make a donation of \$5 or \$10, although her minimum donation required \$1.<sup>32</sup>

Another fund raiser that had its roots in the building of the new church was the breakfast after Sunday mass. Sadie Bishara introduced this in the early 1950's from an idea borrowed from the Maronite church in St. Paul Minnesota. The first breakfast buffet featured ham sandwiches, sweet rolls, coffee and juice, served 50-70 people and earned \$35 for the church. It soon became a popular fundraiser and menu offerings expanded to include *kibbee*, *fatoyer*, homemade bread, and other home baked goods. The after-mass breakfast continues to the present, serves a hundred people or more and each one earns at least \$1000 for the church.

In October of 1954, the old church building on West Reynolds was razed and construction was begun on the same site.<sup>33</sup> Groundbreaking took place on March 6, 1955.<sup>34</sup> A little more than three months later, despite an overcast sky threatening rain, three hundred people turned out on June 26 to witness the laying of the cornerstone. Members of the parish who participated in the event were Joseph Gabriel, Thomas A. Joseph, Alex Beshero, Theresa (Mrs. John) Moses, Jane (Mrs. Alex) Beshero, Anne (Mrs. Thomas) Joseph, Elizabeth (Mrs. Joseph) Hadgkiss, Mrs. Mary Isaac and Mrs. Sara Demko.<sup>35</sup>

Dedication of the new St. John's The Baptist Roman Catholic Church occurred on November 6, 1955 beginning with a mass at the new church and culminating with a banquet for five hundred at the Scottish Rite Cathedral. The mass was appropriately celebrated by Reverend Elias G. Nader, St. John's former pastor and now pastor of St. George's Church in Uniontown. Many other clergy and dignitaries attended including: Most Reverend John F. Dearden Bishop of Pittsburgh, Mayor Edward A. DeCarbo, Judge W. Walter Braham. Many parishioners, young and old, took part in this significant event. Committees and chairpersons were: Father Schwartz, chairman; Elizabeth Hadgkiss, secretary; Donna Mae Gabriel, co-secretary; Anna Mae Budway, Anne Gabriel, treasurers; George J. Gabriel, book chairman; Jane Beshero, tickets; Thomas A. Joseph, publicity; Alexander Beshero, banquet; George J. Joseph, reception. Mrs. James Gabriel, Mrs. Francis Acquaviva, Mrs. Anthony Gabriel, Mrs. Thomas A. Joseph, Josephine John, Jennie Jimm, Jacob Elias, Joseph A. Gabriel, Michael Gabriel and George Beshero were solicitors. The building fund committee consisted of Thomas A. George, Joseph A. Gabriel, Lucy Budway, Josephine J. Jacobs, Thomas A. Joseph, John Moses, Michael M. Joseph and Albert Gabriel. Servers at the dedication mass were John Bishara, Kenneth Gabriel, Edward Isaac, Ronald Joseph, Robert Moses and Thomas Piccione.<sup>36</sup>

broken in the spring of 1967. The dedication took place on November 26, 1967 with Bishop Francis M. Zayek officiating at a Pontifical Mass at the church. Then the ceremony concluded at the new recreation center where Bishop Zayek blessed the cornerstone. A dinner and entertainment rounded out the event. Parishioners who took an active part were: Patricia Gabriel and Paula Ann Joseph presented flowers; George Gabriel and Charles Joseph were Toastmasters; Helen Joseph and Dorothy Gabriel, guest book; Mary (Moora) Gabriel, Julia Piccione, Helen Gabriel and Donna Mae Joseph, scroll table; refreshments were served by the Altar and Rosary Society headed by Ann Joseph, President; Tom Abraham, Alex Beshero, Jimmy Beshero, Jimmy Gabriel, Joseph Gabriel, Joe Joseph, Tony Joseph and Jimmy Moses, ushers and receptionists. Other dignitaries who attended and took part were: Reverend Johad Michael of St. Elias Syrian Orthodox Church, Reverend Peter Eid of St. Maron Church in Youngstown, Reverend Joseph Abi Nader, Vice Chancellor of the Maronite Diocese, U.S.A.; Mayor Robert E. Jamison and Mayor-elect Carl Cialella, Rt. Reverend Msgr. Joseph F. Fabbri, Dean of county priests; and Reverend Canon Ralph E. Hovencamp of Trinity Episcopal Church.<sup>40</sup>

The parish was able to accelerate payment on the new recreation center and a celebration banquet took place at Troggio's Restaurant for the burning of

the mortgage on October 29, 1972. His Excellency Bishop Francis M. Zayek performed the burning ceremony.<sup>41</sup> In the last 34 years, the recreation center has been the site of many wedding and baptism receptions, mercy meals, graduation parties, wedding and baby showers, *haftis*, special events like the Cadillac Dinner, as well as weekly bingo and many basketball games featuring St. John's team.

### World War II Era

During the Second World War, many young men from St. John's parish served their country in the armed forces. As a way to keep in touch with the service men some of the young women in the parish under the supervision of Sister Mary Edna, began publication of a news sheet they called "The Queens Herald." The first edition, published in January, 1943, worked under the staff of Emmalene Joseph as editor; Mary Joseph, Cecilia Joseph and James Elias as reporters; and Nancy Bashara as artist. Other staff that helped: Tony Joseph, Norma Jimm, and Joseph Bashara. The staff of Emmalene Joseph, Rose Beshero and Nancy Beshero, produced a hand-typed, spirit-duplicated newsletter that contained news about parish members and news about the service men. The newsletter was mailed to every service man and it was a treasured piece of mail. It was gossipy, full of good natured teasing and very up-beat. It ran summaries of St. John's basketball team and so hungry for news from home, one service man complained when he didn't

wounds but those two had severe wounds. But, we thanked God when the war was over. The ladies made the prayer walk at least three times."<sup>43</sup>

The church figured prominently in the parish's observance of the end of the war. Nancy Beshero Coury remembered the day well. "It was at dawn when Annie Jimm Betters honked the horn outside our bedroom window and was so happy and yelled out 'Get up everybody, the War is over!' We were so excited, we got out of bed in our pajamas, and nightgowns, scrambled to the cars, not knowing where we were going. Its was all spontaneous. Everybody was so happy. First thing we did was drive around town, everybody in town was honking the horns, church bells ringing all over town; the Square was filled with cars honking, people yelling and expressing so much happiness. The next impulse we had was to go to the church. It seemed that everybody else had the same idea because everybody from our parish had gathered at the old church hall, and they opened it up. Some brought doughnuts and others brought other goodies. At the hall, we had a P.A. system hooked up because we used to have Wednesday night dances, so they turned on the music playing Arabic music and started doing the *dubkee*. They were so happy! I remember Jennie Jimm on the lead of the *dubkee*; she had a fifth of whiskey in her hand waving it as though it were her handkerchief. George (Orgie) Joseph, laughing, saying 'Now I know what you girls look like in the morning, with no

makeup and your hair not combed right.' The celebrating went on for some time and then news came on that, no, it wasn't true. Our bubble was burst. The news said there were still some talks to get through for an agreement for peace. By then everybody was tired, but we did go to church, that was the common bond with our people to give thanks and we said prayers each in our own way. Some of our men had already come home, but we prayed for the rest of them to come home. Afterwards everybody went home to rest. Then again the news came in the evening that it was official, the war was over and the celebrating started again with driving around in cars and honking. So much hoopla! So much happiness and love shown at that time and a common bond with our people. They were so happy, but sad because we had lost one serviceman, Ike Isaac."<sup>44</sup>

### Parish Fund Raisers

The parish has always been hard at work raising money for the support of the church. A popular fund raiser was the spaghetti dinner which in 1955 served 600 people.<sup>45</sup> It first began in 1954 and continued through the 1970's as a major fund raiser for the church. Joseph's Supermarket (Moowid, George and Tony Joseph families), A&M Supermarket (John Moses family) and Mary (Mrs. Tim) Gabriel who owned a small grocery store on Hamilton Street, solicited donations from their wholesalers. Since groceries were free and all work was donated, the event always



Entertainment was Lebanese music and dancing. At the early picnics, music was provided by friends who had instruments like the *dirumbukee* (drum), *aniya* (flute) and *aoud* (stringed instrument). Al Nader's group would play from the back of a flat bed truck. Other times Joe Budway from Pittsburgh and his group played. The young women danced and the money thrown on them, as was the custom, would be donated to the church. For the children there might be swimming, or roller skating on the dance floor. The picnics were discontinued around 1966-67.<sup>47</sup>

Years ago Raya Joseph began making *zlebia* (fried dough – similar to donuts), a traditional food served on the Epiphany, to raise money for the church. Several years ago, Mary Saad Gabriel took up custom and in recent years has earned as much as \$900 – \$1000.<sup>48</sup>

So many have volunteered their time over the last seventy five years for the benefit of St. John's parish. Some of the women workers of the oldest generation should be noted: Latifa Bashara and her daughters Deeba Gabriel and Saida Bashara, Anna Beshero, Elizabeth (Zahia) Isaac, Raya Joseph, Mary Jacobs, Sultona Joseph, Mary (Mrs. Anthony) Joseph, Labiba John, Raffo Moses, Barbara Gabriel, Budro Gabriel, Rosie Saad, Maurina Saad, Lucy Budway and Maroon Saad. Some in the following generation were: Lucy Saad, Anne Joseph, Helen Joseph, Dorothy Gabriel, Rose Thomas, Emma Beshero, Sadie

Bishara, Mary Gabriel (Gebo's wife), Mary Gabriel (Tansa's wife), Mary Gabriel (George's wife), to name a few.

The officers of the Altar and Rosary Society for 2001 are Rose Byers, President; Rita George, Vice-President; Ruth Beshero, Secretary; Mary Lou Acquaviva, Treasurer. The organization has no dues or formal membership. Some of the current members who are volunteers include: Rosemary George, Genevieve Gabriel, Annie Rubis, Lorraine Gabriel, Joanne Beshero, Marie Hasson, Theresa Alexander, Veronica (Salema) Gabriel, Sadie Stone, Marion Abraham, Rosemary Elias, Nawf Bashara, Donna Mae Gabriel, Rita Gabriel, Marion Keith, and Sally Kahrer.

#### St. John's Basketball Team

As mentioned earlier, St. John's sponsored a basketball team beginning in the 1940's. Some former coaches were Tom George and his son Jason George, assisting Tom George was Dr. Ron Joseph, Gee Gabriel and his son Ricky Gabriel, Chuck Beshero and Tracy Rubis. The current coach, Joseph Gabriel, Jr. who has been coaching since 1994 and assistant coach, Joseph Farah, led the team to the finals in the Lawrence County CYO league in the 1999-2000 season with a record of 12 wins and 2 losses. It was a hotly contested game played in the New Castle Field House against the St. Vincent De Paul team from Mahoningtown. It was a narrow loss for St. John's, but excitement ran high and tremendous support came

with a solemn parade from the church hall on Howard Way to the church. People - and not just parishioners - would line the street to see the procession. One year during World War II, boys from Camp Reynolds participated in the parade, carrying a statue of the Blessed Mother. For the crowning in 2001, the procession started from the spot where the old church stood on Howard Way. Volunteers from the Blue Army carried the statue of the Blessed Mother. Father Kevin Beaton led the procession. During the procession, the queen, Lana Shaftic and her attendants, were accompanied by thirty two of the former queens including Hasna Bashara and Marian Budway, the first two from 1942 and 1943 respectively.<sup>51</sup>

### National Shrine

In August of 1960 the Maronite parishes of Youngstown, Akron and New Castle joined together in the planning for the construction of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon on Lipkey Road in North Jackson, Ohio. Several from St. John's worked on the founding committee under the leadership of Tony Joseph. By August 15, 1965, the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, only the fifty foot stone tower crowned by the statue of the Virgin Mary had been completed; it represented the first phase of the shrine project. The statue has particular significance to Lebanese Maronites as it is a smaller version of the gigantic, thirteen ton, white statue of the Virgin of Lebanon. The original statue

was built in France at the end of the Nineteenth Century and brought to Harissa where it stands high above the bay at Jounie, Lebanon.<sup>52</sup>

Five thousand attended the dedication of the Shrine on August 15, 1965. The Maronite mass in Aramaic was concelebrated outdoors by the Reverend Elias Ab-Nader, Right Reverend Monsignor Maroun Eid, Reverend Maroun Abi-Nader, Reverend Louis Lahoud (a Lebanese Jesuit), and Reverend George Eid (a Lebanese monk). Auxiliary Bishop James W. Malone (Youngstown Diocese) blessed the shrine and presided at the mass. After a procession, a blessing was bestowed on invalids and the sick.<sup>53</sup>

St. John's parishioners continue to be staunch supporters of the Shrine. Every August 15<sup>th</sup>, they volunteer their time and efforts to insure the success of the events surrounding the Feast of the Assumption. The women of the Altar and Rosary Society begin preparing food at St. John's hall kitchen several days in advance of the Feast Day. On the Feast Day, they arrive in the early morning and stay to late evening, cooking and serving food. For example, the *kibbee* is prepared in advance and cooked at the Shrine on the Feast Day. Joseph Beshero has for years taken the responsibility personally to gather donations for, buy, prepare and grill the lamb for *laham mishwee*. In addition to the *kibbee* and *laham mishwee*, the volunteers from New Castle prepare chicken, *riz is shirrea* with

Our Lady of Lebanon, North Jackson, Ohio, then as assistant to Auxiliary Bishop John Chedid at Our Lady of Lebanon parish in Los Angeles, California, next as administrator and pastor at St. John's in New Castle (1992-1996), then pastor at St. George parish in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, pastor at St. Ann parish in Scranton, Pennsylvania and since September, 1998, pastor again of St. John's in New Castle. On April 21, 1996 Father Kevin made his profession as Third order Franciscan in the St. Lawrence of Brindisi Franciscan Fraternity.<sup>56</sup>

Deacon Richard Stone spent two years in preparation for the sub-diaconate by correspondence course from the Maronite Eparchy in Brooklyn, New York. He achieved his studies successfully and was then ordained a sub-deacon on November 29, 1995 in Brooklyn, New York by Bishop Francis M. Zayek. Next he undertook study for the diaconate by attending classes under the guidance of the Youngstown Diocese at the Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Youngstown, Ohio. Upon successful completion, he was ordained a deacon on May 3, 1997 by Bishop Francis M. Zayek at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon at North Jackson, Ohio. Deacon Stone has served St. John's parish for about four years. He

also currently volunteers for the New Castle Police Department as a chaplain. Prior to this, he performed related volunteer work as a Catholic chaplain at the Ohio State Penitentiary (Supermax) in Hubbard, Ohio from 1999-2001, and as deacon at the federal penitentiary at Elkton, Ohio for six months. Deacon Stone is also a veteran of the Vietnam War.<sup>57</sup>

Anthony (Tony) Thomas has been a cantor at St. John's since Father Louis Baz came in 1982. Tony began assisting Father Baz informally as Father Baz was not yet proficient in English. Eventually Tony learned everything he needed to know to serve at mass and has been assisting on the altar for two masses every weekend since then. He also serves at wedding and funeral masses.<sup>58</sup>

The role of cantors in the church had been generally an informal matter; whoever was present at mass and knew the cantor's part, would sing it. The names of a few cantors who can be recalled are George Ameen Gabriel, Charles Abraham, Nasser Bishara and Antoon ? who was not a regular member of the parish but attended mass occasionally.<sup>59</sup>

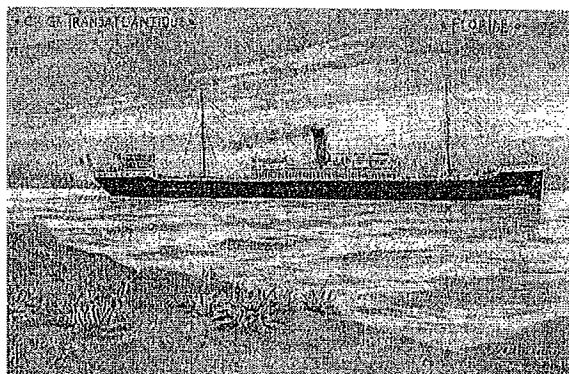
17. Letter from Burris E. Esplen, IV, Associate Archivist (Diocese of Pittsburgh, Archives and Records Center; 125 Craig Street; Pittsburgh, PA 15213) to Judy J. Bishara, 9 May 2001; held in 2001 by Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).
18. Beaver County Marriage Docket 22, #14674, Register of Wills Office, Beaver, Pennsylvania.
19. Beaver County Marriage Docket 23, #15309, Register of Wills Office, Beaver, Pennsylvania. Rev. Nader gave his address as 1018 Epiphany Street, Pittsburgh. Today, that is Epiphany Church at 1018 Centre Avenue, Pittsburgh. Epiphany was established in 1903.
20. Questionnaire, 4 pages, dated January, 1952, unsigned [Rev. Nehmetallah Hayek?] submitted to Diocese of Pittsburgh, Diocesan Historical Archives; xerox copy held in 2001 by J. Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).
21. Interview with Chor-Bishop, Msgr. Joseph F. Kaddo, Vicar-General, (Eparchy of St. Maron, Brooklyn, New York), via telephone, 5 June 2001. Msgr. Kaddo stated that St. John's remained in the Pittsburgh diocese until 1966 when the the Maronites were placed under their own bishop. A decree issued in 1971 elevated the Maronite Exarchate to the status of diocese.
22. Questionnaire, dated January, 1952, Diocese of Pittsburgh, Diocesan Historical Archives; a statement that the congregation was composed of 30 families in 1928 would appear to be the source of the traditional number 30.
23. 1) Joseph (Naklah) and Mary George were from Thoum and occasionally attended St. John's. Although Joseph would sing as cantor at St. John's and he was buried from St. John's, the family established membership in St. Mary's. Two other families from Thoum, Habib and Ferris, also established membership in St. Mary's. 2) Joseph and Sadie Abraham were from Kfar Habou. Joseph was Louis Abraham's brother. They were not active at St. John's, although they attended occasionally. 3) Paul and Amelia Joseph were from Hardine. They were not active at St. John's, although they attended occasionally. 4) George and Mary (Thelma) Joseph were married in 1914 by Reverend Gabriel Nader. Although George Joseph was credited in his obituary with being a member of St. John's, no one can remember this family being active at St. John's.
24. Interview with Reverend Kevin Beaton, via phone; (St. John's Church; 2 W. Reynolds St.; New Castle, PA 16101) 7 May 2001. Transcript held in 2001 by J. Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).
25. Questionnaire, dated January, 1952, Diocese of Pittsburgh, Diocesan Historical Archives.
26. Receipt dated 7 May 1930 from St. George Greek Orthodox Church, received from M. Joseph \$450, balance due; xerox copy held in 2001 by J. Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).
27. Questionnaire, dated January, 1952, Diocese of Pittsburgh, Diocesan Historical Archives
28. Ibid.
29. "History of St. John the Baptist Maronite Church," in St. John The Baptist Maronite Church Dedication book [1955]. And "Priests who served at St. John's" prepared by Rev. Kevin Beaton, 22 April 2001. And Questionnaire, 4 pages, dated January, 1952, unsigned [Rev. Nehmetallah Hayek?] submitted to Diocese of Pittsburgh, Diocesan Historical Archives; xerox copy held in 2001 by J. Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).
30. Questionnaire, dated January, 1952, Diocese of Pittsburgh, Diocesan Historical Archives
31. U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1956*, 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Edition, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1956), page 220, #263 Hourly and Weekly Earnings (including Overtime) in Constant and Current Prices for Selected Industries: 1939 to 1955: Retail Trade = \$58.65/wk. x 50 wks; Manufacturing = \$76.52/wk. x 50 wks.
32. Interview with Lorraine Gabriel; (728 Vogan Ave.; New Castle, PA 16101) 5 May 2001. Transcript held in 2001 by J. Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).
33. "Razing Starts On Old Church On South Side," *New Castle News*, New Castle, Pennsylvania, Monday, October 25, 1954.
34. "Break Ground For New Church at St. John's," *New Castle News*, New Castle, Pennsylvania, Monday, March 7, 1955.

56. Interview with Reverend Kevin Beaton via phone; (St. John's Church, 2 W. Reynolds; New-Castle, PA 16101) 30 March 2001 and 21 April 2001. Transcript held in 2001 by J. Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).

57. Interview with Richard Stone via phone; (807 Lathrop, New Castle, PA 16101) 6 June 2001. Transcript held in 2001 by J. Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).

58. Interview with Tony Thomas (929 Maryland Ave.; New Castle, PA 16101) 27 May 2001. Transcript held in 2001 by J. Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).

59. Interview with Sadie Bishara; (8400 Crystal Drive; Boardman, OH 44512) 25 April 2001. Transcript held in 2001 by J. Bishara (2712 Bendemeer Court; Poland, OH 44514).



*S.S. Floride*, one of the vessels which transported Syrian immigrants to the United States during early 20<sup>th</sup> century