

Historical Marker - L1325C - Westphalia Settlement / St. Mary's Parish (Marker ID#:L1325C)



Front - Title/Description

Westphalia Settlement

In October 1836 the Reverend Anton Kopp and five other men from Westphalia, Germany, arrived in New York. They traveled to Detroit by way of the Erie Canal. Advised to settle in the Grand River Valley, the Reverend Kopp and Eberhard Platte went to the Ionia land office and on November 10, 1836, purchased 560 acres of Clinton County farmland. The original land owners were Anton Cordes, Joseph Platte, John Hanses, William Tillman, and John Salter. Leaving Detroit, these men walked along the Dexter Trail to Lyons. There they hired William Hunt, a trapper and fur trader, to guide them to their land holdings. They named their settlement Westphalia in honor of their homeland. It was the first German-Catholic settlement in central Michigan.

Significant Date:

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

Registry Year: 1986 **Erected Date:** 1986

Marker Location

Address: 201 North Westphalia Street

City: Westphalia

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Clinton

Township: Westphalia

Lat: 42.93088000 / **Long:** -84.79912000

Web URL:

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St. Mary's Parish

In 1836 Bishop Rese of the Detroit Diocese appointed a German emigrant priest, Anton Kopp, to head the Westphalia Mission. Mass was being celebrated in the homes of the new community's founding settlers by 1837. These early worshippers, members of the first parish for German-speaking Roman Catholics in central Michigan, completed their first permanent structure, a modest log church, in 1838. It was followed by a larger frame structure in 1847. Known as St. Peter's Church, that structure was replaced in 1869 with a church constructed of brick from Westphalia's brickyard and black walnut from its forests. The new church, dedicated as St. Mary's Church, served the parish until it was destroyed by fire in 1959. The present church, erected on the site of the original log church, was dedicated on May 28, 1962.