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ST. LEO'S CATHOLIC CHURCH: HISTORY'S END TO A PIONEER PARISH, 1856-1919
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This St. Leo's Catholic Church history became (for me) an enchanting short story of the heyday of this vanished parish (humble as that heyday was), fit within the larger contexts of French priests traveling the dark Indiana wood, pioneers settling throughout Northern Indiana, and the Congregation of Holy Cross attempting to preserve this and similar church communities in the tiniest of places. Following the precedent of previous Catholic historians, I introduce my subject from the widest possible lens; however, in the end, the focus becomes the stunningly overqualified South Bend priests destined to battle their own personal loneliness and maintain order in a rural outpost where infant mortality is a common occurrence, the people are "very slow as well as poor," but for the shortest of time, or at the simplest pleasure, hope springs eternal. In highlighting carefully archived letters emanating from little Leo, the reader will hopefully become "Hoosierfied" and gain a deeper appreciation of the pioneer heritage of this place.