

Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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May 4: St. Florian

May, 2013



The Great Fire: The Burning of St. Patrick's Church, 1935 by J. Michael Finn

Shortly after 4:00 PM on Tuesday, May 28, 1935, Roland Noe and another worker were working on the roof of St. Patrick's Church in Columbus. Noe was a tinner who worked for John J. Shilling. Noe said, "I was working on the southeast corner of the roof, putting copper tubing in the rain trough. A spark blew from the charcoal pot I was using and caught the building on fire." It is believed that the spark set fire to a bird's nest. "When I saw the fire, I called down to the boss (John J. Shilling) and he turned in the alarm," said Noe.

That small spark resulted in one of the most disastrous and serious church fires in the history of

the Diocese of Columbus. Fortunately, no lives were lost. The first alarm was tuned in at 4:26 p.m., followed by two other alarms at 4:29 and 4:33, and followed by a call for additional equipment at 4:45.

The acting pastor of St. Patrick's was Father Aloysius Alfred Sibila, O.P. He was upstairs in the parish house at the time of the fire with Father Richard Raymond King, O.P. Father Sibila spotted the smoke seeping through a corner of the roof. He and Father King went immediately into the church and removed the Blessed Sacrament which they devoutly but quickly carried to the priests' residence.

The two priests then heroically returned to the church where they were able to save the sacred

vessels and vestments as the fire spread along the ceiling of the church. Assisted in this effort by volunteers, the two priests succeeded in carrying out nearly everything movable before the flames prevented them from reentering the church. "A good many people helped us," said Father Sibila, "Their help enabled us to save almost all the altar objects and I want to thank them." Many persons who assisted were students from nearby Aquinas High School.

From small beginnings the blaze quickly became an inferno. Fanned by a very strong west wind, the flames spread rapidly through the top rafters of the church. Firefighters struggled for over two hours to both extinguish the fire and protect the nearby rectory and school building.

Seventeen pieces of fire-fighting apparatus and over 120 firefighters were soon assembled around the church. Columbus Fire Chief Edward P. Welch was in charge of the scene. The firefighters poured heavy streams of water on the roof from 13 hoses in order to check the progress of the flames. In less than 15 minutes sections of the roof caved in sending burning timbers into the church below.

About the time of the roof collapse, the cross on the front gable of the church crashed to the ground. Spectators reported seeing the eerie sight of a rainbow halo caused by the sun on the streams of water when the heavy cross hit the pavement in front of the burning church.

About an hour after the fire began, a group of firefighters were moving an aerial ladder in front of the church when it hit and short-circuited two high tension electric lines. The two 6900-volt lines burned in two and fell to the ground. The wires electrified water gushing from the front steps of the church. Chief Welch was just coming out of the church and he stepped into the high voltage water and was knocked unconscious.

Firefighters rushed to his aid along with the Chief's two young sons, Robert and Charles who had been watching the fire (Robert was a student at Aquinas High School). Chief Welch was not badly injured, but was transported to Grant Hospital where he was kept overnight before being released. Captain

Virgil O'Rourke and five other firefighters were also injured in the blaze, mostly due to smoke inhalation. Due to the absence of Chief Welch, Assistant Fire Chief Clarence Ogborn assumed charge of the fire.

Six of the large stained glass windows, scarred or cracked by the heat and virtually ruined, were said to have been valued at \$600 apiece. The organ in the church was also destroyed. It had been purchased second-hand and installed in 1895. The exterior walls of the church and many of the stained glass windows were preserved. The statues of Mary and Joseph on the side altars were also unscathed by the fire.

The pastor of St. Patrick's, Father Hyacinth Lawrence Martin, O.P., was in Mt. Carmel Hospital at the time of the fire recovering from eye surgery. Attempts were made to keep the news of the disaster from him; however, he heard the news broadcast on the radio in his hospital room. "He wanted to leave the hospital and help us," reported Father Sibila, "Hospital attendants had to restrain him, because of his illness."

An unofficial estimate of loss on the building, made by E. J. McNulty, the agent who wrote the insurance policy on the church, was \$115,000. McNulty reported that the church was insured by a blanket policy for \$164,000. In 2012 dollars the damage would amount to approximately \$1.9 Million.

A rebuilding fund was immediately begun. Columbus Mayor Henry W. Worley contributed the first \$100 toward the fund. The announcement of the mayor's donation was made by John M. Casserly, Deputy Service Director for the city. Mr. Casserly was named chairman of the rebuilding fund.

Bishop James Hartley announced that Mass would be held the following Thursday, the Feast of the Ascension, and on Sunday and weekdays at their usual hours, in the parish school next to the church. Masses continued to be held in the school until the church was repaired.

The day after the fire, Father Sibila commended the work of Chief Welch and the Columbus firefighters for the manner in which they fought the fire. He particularly noted their work for succeeding

The Fireman's Prayer

by Reverend Lawrence J. O'Connor Chaplain, Division of Fire, Columbus, Ohio (Imprimatur: Most Rev. Clarence G. Issenmann, Bishop of Columbus)

St. Florian, Heaven's patron of firemen, who once was dedicated to the service of your firemen as an official in the Army of Rome, look with kindly and professional eye upon your earthly force, desirous of preserving our fellowmen from dangers to life and property.

Give us cool heads, stout hearts, strong muscles, an instinct for prudent investigation and wise judgment.

Make us the terror of arsonists, the friends of children and law-abiding citizens, kind to the frightened, polite to bores, strict with law breakers, and obstinate to temptations.

In troubles give us strength to be efficient; in times of danger, give us the ability to be calm and enable us to impart assurance to those who verge on panic.

You know, beloved St. Florian, from the sacrifice of your own life for the sake of your Faith, that the fireman's lot on earth is not always a pleasant one; but your sense of duty that so pleased God, your courageous strength that so overwhelmed the devil, and your saintly self-control, give us inspiration.

Make us as fearless in practicing the laws of God as we are brave in protecting the lives and property of our fellowmen.

And when we answer the final alarm, enroll us in your heavenly force, where we will be as proud to protect the throne of God as we have been to protect the city of man.

AMEN.

in checking the spread of the fire to the adjoining parish school and rectory, despite the fact that the firefighters' efforts were handicapped by a high wind.

The rebuilding fund grew and construction on the church began almost immediately after the fire. The church was completely rebuilt and

redecorated in less than a year. The successful effort was credited to the "boundless energy" of the pastor, Father Martin.

On February 16, 1936 the parishioners of St. Patrick's returned to their rebuilt church. A new organ was added to the church, along with Stations of the Cross, a ceiling mural of the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and new pew heads bearing a shamrock. Also added to the church was a new Shrine of Blessed Margaret of Costello, O.P. that was constructed in the vestibule.

The "Miracle" of the Windows

Several years ago the author of this article was working with Columbus Battalion Chief Sean Moore on a project to recognize the work of Irish firefighters in Columbus. One of the fires featured on the display was the 1935 St. Patrick's Fire. I noted that the St. Patrick's Parish history stated that the church windows "miraculously came through unharmed" in the fire. Battalion Chief More laughed when he heard that statement. It seems when he was taking his fire training, a retired Columbus firefighter was instructing the new recruits on the particular dangers of church fires. Battalion Chief Moore recalled that the trainer told them, "Remember not to break any of the stained glass windows-they cost a lot of money and the church members get real angry when they are broken." So whether the windows that survived the Great Fire were spared by a miracle or by the efforts of Columbus firefighters remains a mystery.

Sources

Columbus Dispatch, Columbus, Ohio, May 29, 1935

Columbus Citizen, Columbus, Ohio, May 29, 1935 Ohio State Journal, Columbus, Ohio, May 29, 1935

Centennial of the Dominican Fathers 1885-1985 St. Patrick Church, Columbus Ohio, parish history, 1985.

Columbus Fire Chief Edward P. Welch

by J. Michael Finn



ChiefWelch (Courtesy of the Central Ohio Fire Museum)

Fire Chief Edward P. Welch, who was injured in the St. Patrick's Fire, had a long record of service to the City of Columbus. A devout Catholic and eventual veteran of two wars, Chief Welch joined the Columbus Fire Department in 1913. He was chief of the department when he died in 1947.

Edward Welch was born in December 26, 1891 in Columbus. Contrary to tradition, he did not want to be a firefighter as a boy. He did "hang around" fire engine houses. Following on his father's occupation, as a young man he was employed by the Hocking Valley Railroad. By 1913 had worked his way up to the position of machinist. It was in 1913 he heard the Columbus Fire Department was hiring and he signed on as a substitute firefighter, a position that was made permanent in 1917.

At that time only four of the city's sixteen fire companies had motorized equipment. The other companies were horse-drawn. Welch would always say that he loved horses. At his first fire on Hamlet Street, four horses died. It is speculated that this may have accounted for the continuous battle Chief Welch fought to end fire hazards in Columbus.

From 1914 to 1923 Welch assisted the Fire Department in its mechanization efforts. His machinist's training helped him advance in the department. Gradually, the horse-drawn fire units were retired and replaced by motorized units.

Welch was promoted to lieutenant in 1923 and became a captain in 1926. He was appointed chief of the department on June 22, 1933 by Mayor Henry Worley, becoming the only firefighter to be promoted from captain directly to chief.

Welch entered the army in 1917, taking a leave of absence from the department to join the 324th Field Artillery. During his service he rose to the rank of lieutenant. He was commanding officer of the fire department at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. At the war's end he returned to the department and served continuously until 1942 when he again took a leave of absence to enter the armed forces. He was in charge of fire prevention activities for the Army's Fifth Service Command until 1944. He was discharged with the rank captain.

For Welch, being the fire chief was a 24-hour a day job. He always attended the 11:00 a.m. daily Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral, where it was said he prayed for the safety of his men. While traveling to and from the office a two-way radio kept him in constant contact. At his home, a direct telephone line connected his room with fire headquarters. If a second alarm was sounded, regardless of the time of day or night, he was called. The ringing phone sent Welch on his way to the fire. He was known as a "fireman's chief" generally to be found in the thickest part of the toughest blaze. He was on the scene in February, 1936, when a collapsing wall killed five Columbus firefighters at the burning Odd Fellows Temple.

Under the leadership of Chief Welch the Columbus Fire Department entered the modern age, utilizing more modern equipment and taking advantage of technological advances in communications to assist the firefighters in their assigned duties. He was a constant advocate for fire safety and improved fire safety laws and building codes.

On February 27, 1947, at the age of 55, Chief Welch was taken to Mt. Carmel Hospital due to a heart ailment. He died shortly after arriving. He was given the last rites of the Church by Mt. Carmel chaplain Fr. Edmond C. McEniry, O.P.

He was survived by his wife, Helen (Cody) Welch; two sons, Charles and Robert; three daughters, Kathleen and Mary and Sister Mary Veronica, O.P.; two sisters, Mrs. Mary Stowell and Miss Nelle Welch, both of Columbus; and two grandchildren.

Active in both church and civic affairs, Chief Welch was a member the Knights of Columbus, the Holy Name Society, the Eagles, the Elks, the American Legion, and Charity Newsies. He was a member of Immaculate Conception Parish in Clintonville.

His funeral services were held on March 1, 1947 at Immaculate Conception. The funeral service was crowded with prominent city leaders, state officials, and firefighters. In addition, there were delegations of firefighters from cities throughout Ohio. Assisting the Rt. Rev. John J. Fagan, pastor, at the Solemn Requiem Mass was the Rev. John Donahie of Holy Name Church as deacon and the Rev. M. G Metzger

of Holy Rosary Church as subdeacon.

Monsignor Fagan extolled the virtues of the dead fire chief. "He realized that man does not live by bread alone," Monsignor Fagan said. "The chief adopted the role of helping others in their daily lives." Chief Welch was buried in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

The *Columbus Dispatch* said in an editorial regarding Chief Welch, "Fire Chief Welch was not only a highly respected public official. He was a solid citizen, devoted to his family and the church, who stood forthright in support of the common virtues. His way was neither devious nor mysterious, but open and simple as befits a man who believes that life is an obligation as well as a privilege. His death removes a familiar and trusted figure from the city's official family."

SOURCES

Columbus Dispatch, Columbus, Ohio, February 27, 1947

Columbus Citizen, Columbus, Ohio, February 27, 1947

Ohio State Journal, Columbus, Ohio, February 27, 1947

Columbus Register, Columbus, Ohio, March 7, 1947

Columbus Fire Department Historical Committee, Columbus, Ohio Division of Fire: 1822-1976, Walsworth Publishing Co., 1976

Abstracts from the *Catholic Telegraph*

(Continued, from Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4)

Subscriptions the first quarter (name, post office, date of issue)

George Arnold, Lancaster Jan. 21 George Barman, Chillicothe Jan. 21 F. Barmann, Chillicothe Jan. 28 Michael Boyle, Mt. Vernon Jan. 7 William Brophy, Mt. Vernon Feb. 18 Morand Bushua, Somerset Jan. 7 L. H. Dugan, Duncan's Falls Mar. 17 W. M. Edwards, Chauncey Feb. 18
Phil. B. Ewing, Lancaster Feb. 4
Mrs. Thomas Ewing, Lancaster Feb. 11
John Gallagher, Temperanceville Jan. 14
R. J. J. Harkins, Somerset Feb. 18
Rev. J. B. Hemsteger, Columbus Jan. 14
Francis Howard, Columbus Jan. 21
John J. Jackson, Somerset Feb. 11
Robert M'Anany, Steubenville Feb. 18
J. & J. M'Connell, Chillicothe Feb. 4
James M'Ginness, Steubenville Jan. 21
Patrick Mallon, McLunys Jan. 7
B. Mathews, Kenton Jan. 28

Francis Mattingly, West Zanesville Feb. 11 John Mattingly, West Zanesville Jan. 21 Joseph Mattingly, West Zanesville Feb. 4 Nathan Mattingly Jan. 21 Miss Sarah Mills, Lancaster Jan. 28 Luke O'Brien, Taylorsville Feb. 11 Wm. O'Driscoll, Columbus Feb. 4 William Poland, Chillicothe Mar. 24 Sisters of Notre Dame, Chillicothe Jan. 21 Jac. Snider, Rehoboth Feb. 18 Simon Snider, Somerset Feb. 11 Andrew Stanton, Wilksville Jan. 28 Theodore Tong, Lancaster Mar. 17 Rev. A. O. Walker, Marietta Jan. 21 Robert Warden, Columbus Jan. 28 Rev. D. M. Winands, Carrollton Jan. 28

April 21, 1860

SISTER MARGARET, in behalf of the St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Orphans, gratefully acknowledges the receipt of one hundred and eighty dollars from the Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald, Pastor of St. Patrick's, Columbus. A collection of two hundred and five dollars had been taken up in that generous congregation on Easter Sunday for the Orphans. Twenty-five were applied to the relief of orphans in Columbus. Several orphans from Columbus are in our asylum.

May 5, 1860

Confirmation Schedule:

St. Patrick's and Holy Cross, Columbus, 17th June

May 12, 1860

Areport of St. Peter's Benevolent Society, May 6,was signed by W. S. Rosecrans, Assistant Secretary pro tem.

May 19, 1860

Confirmation Schedule:

Marietta, 24th June

St. Francis, Sunday Creek, 28th June [not listed in later editions]

COLUMBUS, O., May 14, 1860

At the regular monthly meeting of the St. Joseph's Beneficial and Library Society, belonging to St. Patrick's Parish, Columbus, held May 14, 1860, the following resolutions were offered and adopted:

Whereas, it has pleased Almighty God in the dispensation of His Divine Providence to take from amongst us in the vigor of manhood, a worth member of this Society;

Resolved, That while we submit in all things with true Christian humility to the will of our Heavenly Father, we feel and deplore in the death of Mr. JAMES BERRY, the loss of a brother, whose many good qualities we have admited, and whose memory it is our duty most respectfully and religiously to cherish.

Resolved, That we tender through our worthy President the heartfelt expression of our sympathy and condolence to the family of our deceased brother, and the assurance that in our meetings we will remember to petition the throne of Mercy for the happy repose of his immortal soul.

Resolved, That the foregoing resolutions be recorded on the books of the Society, and also published in the *Catholic Telegraph*.

EDWARD M. FITZGERALD, *President*. JOHN CONAHAN, *Secretary*.

May 26, 1860

Rev. Mr. Jarboe has passed a few days with us, this week. This esteemed member of the Order of St. Dominic is on his way to Zanesville to fill the place left vacant by the lamented death of Rev. Charles P. Montgomery.

June 16, 1860

Any person knowing the address of Bridget Keon, native of Ireland, who left Lancaster, Ohio, in the month of March, 1860, for Cincinnati, will please inform her sister, Catharine Woods, now stopping with the Sisters of Mercy, Fourth street, between Western Row and John.

(To be continued)

St. Joseph Parish near Somerset Baptisms, 1834-1850

(Continued, from Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2)

1841, continued

- Apr. 7, conditionally, Thomas Spare, adult. J. H. Clarkson
- Apr. 7, conditinally, Margaret Schlem, age 52. JHC
- Apr. 19, Thomas Jefferson, born Apr. 1 (or 7?), son of Brice Welch and Mary Mag. Kintz, spouses; spons. Jacob Fink and Sarah Fink. JHC
- Apr. 25, Margaret, born Apr. 18, daughter of James Friel and Mary Meenin, spouses; spons. Michael Fealty and Catherine Fealty. JHC page 90
- May 2, Mary, born April 27, daughter of [no name given] McEntire and Catherine Leary, spouses; spons. Peter Taggart and Mary McShane. J. H. Clarkson
- May 2, Sarah, born Apr. 24, daughter of Simeon Flowers and Mary Gordon, spouses; spons. George Flowers and Elizabeth Gordon. J. H. Clarkson
- May 20, Henry, born May 16, son of Joshua Green and Sara McFadgion; spons. Margaret Saum. C. P. Montgomery
- May 30, Joseph Henry born 29 May, son of James Cane and Mary Deckoe, spouses; spons. Francis Deckoe and Magdalen Steckly. A. P. Anderson
- June 28, Sarah Jane, one year old, daughter of Eleazer Edington and Mary Oshel, spouses; spons. Cecilia Cahoe. J. H. Clarkson
- July 4, Catherine Ann, born 26 June, daughter of Richard McGonigle and Jane Duffee, spouses; spons. Richard McGonigle Junior and Rose McGonigle. A. P. Andreson
- July 18, Mary Rosanna, born July 14, daughter of Nicholas Dumolt and Margaret Tsong?, spouses; spons. —stinius [Augustine?] Dumolt and Mary Steghlie. A. P. Anderson page 91
- July 18, Mary Jane, daughter of Thomas Halleran

- and Jane Shearon, born July 14; spons. James Shearon and wife. C. P. Montgomery
- July 27, Francis Joseph, born July 23, son of Morant Bushu and Mary Miller, spouses; spons. Meinroth Bushu and Margaret Marrah. A. P. Anderson
- July 24, Helen, daughter of James McChristian and [blank]; spons. Sarah Rosenbery. JHC
- Aug. 1, Harriet, born June 7, daughter of John Fonkannon and Mary Fonkannon (or Fisher), spouses; spons. Charles Kintz and Elizabeth Kintz his wife. APA
- Aug. 10, Jefferson, born Jan. 31, son of Tillman Fonkannon and Sarah May, spouses; spons. Charles Kintz and Mary Fonkannon (or Fisher). APA
- Aug. 13, Barbara Jane, born Aug. 2, daughter of Hugh Dean and Teresa Sharkey, spouses; spons. Barbara Sharkey (or Wilson). JHC
- Aug. 17, in Jack Town, James Alex, born June 20, son of John Boon and Jane McGraw, spouses; spons. Charles Doulen and Bridget Craten [Creighton]. APA

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- Aug. 17, in Jack Town, James Alexander, born Aug. 10, son of Jonathan Crow and Mary Ann McGraw, spouses; spons. Thomas Ivory and Mary McGraw. APA
- Sept. 4, John, born June 12, son of Nathaniel Dicken and Judith Donohoo; spons. Ruth Lynch. CPM
- Sept. 17, Cecilia Catherine Eakman, age 17 (or 77?); spons. Mary Ann Dunn. JHC
- Sept. 12, Simon, born Aug. 25, son of Thomas Flowers and Mary Dohatey?, spouses; spons. John Flowers and Elizabeth Ambroa. Fr. Joseph S. Alemany
- Sept. 20, John Keon, son of Laurence Hayes and Mary Hayes; spons. Catherine Fogarty. JHC
- Sept. 27, Ceremonies for Elias, born July 22, 1838, son of Elias Padgett and Elizabeth

- Mitchell; spons. Thomas Ivory. APA
- Sept. 28, Patrick, born July 5, son of William Haughran and Margaret Walpool, spouses; spons. Michael Riley and Bridget Haughran. JHC
- same day, Sarah Jane, born Aug. 1, daughter of Martin Cantwell and Margaret Haughran; spons. Mary McAlmse. JHC
- page 93
- Oct. 3, John, born Sept. 28, son of James McDonnel and Mary Stine, spouses; spons. John Ward and Catherine Ward. J. H. Clarkson
- same day, Louis Henry, born 20 Sept., son of Jonathan Sharp and Elizabeth Sterner, spouses; spons. Henry Sterner and Mary Sterner. J. H. Clarkson
- Oct. 11, [at Rehoboth,] Jane, age 9 years, daughter of James McCormic and Mary Ann Savage, spouses; spons. Thomas McGlaughlin and Catherine McGlauchlin. J. H. Clarkson
- Oct. 11, at Rehoboth, Isaiah, age 6 years, son of James McCormic and Mary Savage, spouses; spons. Thomas McGlauchlin and Mary McGlauchlin or McCormic.
- Same time, Hezechia, age 14, son of the same; spons. Eliza McGlauchlin.
- Same time, Ebenezer, born 4 April 1840, son of the same; spons. Thomas McGlauchlin and Mary McGlauchlin or McCormic. J. H. Clarkson
- Oct. 17, [incorrectly included in the marginal marking for Rehoboth] John, born Oct. 16, 1841, son of John Beck and Julianna Biber; spons. William Stine and Anna Maria Decot or Bauman. Eug. Hyacinth Pozzo, O.S.D.
- Oct. 18, at Linnville, Mary Angela, born 24 July, 1824, daughter of Michael Boyle and Mary Devett; spons. Eaneas McGary and Bridget Craython [Creighton]. A. P. Anderson page 94
- Oct. 21, Pius Clarkson, born Oct. 4, son of Charles Kintz and Elizabeth Foncannan, spouses; spons. Mary Kintz. JHC

- Oct. 24, Stephen Henry, born Oct. 9, son of Martin Brengardner and Louise Ann Green; spons. George Green and Mary Ann Brengardner. CPM
- Oct. 25, at Rehoboth, John, born Oct. 4, son of James Elder and Mary Lynch, spouses; spons. Hugh McGinnis and Mary McGinnis. JHC
- Nov. 1, Lucy Agnes, born Nov. 1, daughter of Edward Dittoe and Margaret Johnson; spons. Henry Dittoe and Lucinda Dittoe or Cluny. JHC
- Nov. 17, at Monday Creek, John, born July 27, 1841, son of John Gordon and Elizabeth Cease [Seese], spouses; spons. John Hoy and Margaret Hoy or Gordon. APA
- Dec. 25, Ann Mary, born Nov. 6, daughter of Martin Dumolt and Ann Mary Coble; spons. Sebastian Dumolt and Teresa Coble.
- same day, Mary Magdalene, born Dec. 23, daughter of Peter Kungler and Jane King; spons. Conrad Litzic and Mary Magdalene Staley. CPM

1842

Jan. 18, Carol Louise, born Jan. 17, daughter ofWilliam Stine and Anna Kintz Stine; spons. JohnEckenrode and Elizabeth Eckenrode. Fr.Francis Cubero

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- Jan. 20, at South Fork, Catherine, born 7th of this month, daughter of Owen Slevin and Ellen Lynch; spons. John O'Conor and Susan Riley. C. P. Montgomery
- Jan. 30, William Ozbourn, born 21 Jan., son of George Kintz and Margaret Kintz or Fonkannon, spouses; spons. Anthony Kintz and Sarah Kintz or Sterner, spouses. A. P. Anderson

(To be continued)

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