
Vol. 1

March 1975

No. 3

Rev. Msgr. H. E. Mattingly
Editor

197 East Gay Street
Columbus, Ohio

Early Catholic Immigration into
South Eastern Ohio
By Kathy Elizabeth Kreppner
(continued)

In the meanwhile, Jacob Dittoe's two younger brothers, Joseph and Anthony, joined the Middleton/Somerset settlement. With the dream of a church and priory for the settlement, Jacob purchased 320 acres of land, which he deeded over to Father Fenwick. The construction of the church was finished by the fall of 1818 and Father secured permission from his Kentucky superior, Father Wilson, to reside at Jacob Dittoe's home until a priory could be built for his headquarters. Arriving on December 1, 1818, with him from Kentucky, was his newly ordained nephew, Nicholas Dominic Young, who in the following year established the first church in Cincinnati. (19) On December 6, Father Fenwick, as Father Young and the small community attended, blessed the church, "...the first of its kind in the state of Ohio..." (20) The church was named Saint Joseph's after the patron saint of Father Pius Joseph Gaddi, the Master General at the time of the erection of the first American province. Saint Joseph was also the patron saint of the province. This small church, which was twenty-two feet long and eighteen feet wide, was already too small at the time of its completion, as Rev. Young explained in a letter to his father: "...the influx of those of the faith, especially from around Conewago, Pennsylvania, had so increased the congregation that the church was too small." (21) Until a second church could be built, this humble dwelling house of God was to serve as the center from which the two Dominican priests could fare to the scattered Catholics: south to the Ohio River, east to Pennsylvania, north to Lake Erie, and northwest into Michigan.

During the early 1820's more than fifty full-sized families were attending the ~~too~~-small church in Middletown/Somerset. (22) Along with his parishioners, Father Young drew up plans for remodeling the first Saint Joseph's. The log portion would be rebuilt with brick, thus adding greater space to that part. It is doubtless that Jacob Dittoe felt some regret as plans were being drawn to alter the log

chapel which had been the birthplace of Catholic worship in central Ohio. He did not live to see the second Saint Joseph's for he died three years before its completion in 1829.

The parish had to seek outside assistance in order to secure funds for the construction. Bishop Fenwick (23) donated 250 dollars. The money collected, along with hard work, construction was started. In the presence of his parishioners Father Young blessed and laid the new cornerstone on May 26, 1825. In less than four years, January 11, 1829, Father Young dedicated the second Saint Joseph's, which was "...actually eight times as large as the first log cabin church," (24) with its steeple and cross rising above the surrounding forests. (25)

The growth and firm plantation of the Church in Perry County was reflected positively elsewhere. With continuing support from his uncle, Father Young ministered to central and eastern Ohio from the priory at Somerset.

In 1819 Father Dominic Young traveled to the then small village of Zanesville where he found nineteen Catholics (26), apparently composed of an extended family: that of John Dugan, his children, and the nine children of his widowed sister, Mrs. Hawkins. It was John Simon Dugan who was "chiefly responsible for St. Thomas Aquinas Parish..." (27)

In 1815 Dugan desired to relocate in Ohio, but could not do so until he sold his stock of hats in Brownsville, Pennsylvania. Unable to do so, he and his brother, Peter, traveled by boat down the Monongahela to the Ohio River. After selling his goods in Louisville and St. Louis, they started back on foot, following the old Zane Trace. While spending the night in a Zanesville tavern, the "Western Star", the Dugan brothers bought the tavern from Daniel Turner. After returning to Brownsville to settle affairs, the Dugan families took possession of the Zanesville tavern on April 1, 1817. The "Green Tree Tavern" did increasing business, and thus expansion was necessary (28). It was here at the noted tavern that Father Young stopped in 1819 and said Mass with ".no doubt of its being the first Mass in Zanesville" (29). In that same year Father Young held Catholic services in the Burnham Hotel in nearby Putnam.

The following year Dugan purchased "...a brick warehouse, 20 by 50 feet in size, occupying the northeast corner of Fifth and Locust Alley....for \$2,000..." (30). After renovation of the structure, it was used as a Catholic church -- Holy Trinity or "Brick Chapel" -- the first in Zanesville. Father Young offered the first public celebration of the Mass, with Lewis Henry Dugan and John S. Dugan being the first altar boys in Zanesville (31). He then returned twice a month to celebrate Mass.

With the increase of Catholic settlers in Zanesville, the topic of interest was the establishment of a larger church. Once again John S. Dugan (32) donated a lot, upon which St. Thomas Aquinas is now located. Catholics "... as well as their Protestant friends, gave sufficient cash to build the foundation..."(33) of the cross-shaped church. The sacristies annexing the 80 foot long church formed the arms of the cross. On March 4, 1823, the first resident pastor, Father Stephen Hyacinth Montgomery, O.P., laid the cornerstone for the church of Saint John the Baptist. The plans for the brick and stone church to be erected were "...offered as a gift by a New York architect" (34). While the construction was being completed, Father Montgomery traveled East to secure a bell, vestments, and other necessities for the church. While Father Montgomery was procuring equipment, an Irish secular priest, Father Haines, took care of the parish. However, he left before Father Montgomery returned, due to failing health, and his dissatisfaction with the country. On July 2, 1827, Bishop Fenwick dedicated the Church of Saint John the Baptist and opened it for divine service. During the first year of the rental of pews, for which one paid \$5.00 per quarter of a year for the choice location, "...a considerable number of Protestants rented and paid for pews..."(35). All Catholic pew-holders were required to pay an additional 75¢ per quarter to furnish candles, wine, and other church supplies. One Protestant pew-holder was George Wilson, who became a Catholic March 25, 1827 (36). He later became a priest and offered Mass in the church of Saint John the Baptist. The following year, Father Richard Pius Miles, O.P., was assigned to Zanesville to aid Father Montgomery in his work. Father Miles succeeded Father Montgomery as pastor.

While in Zanesville Father Miles did exceptional work. On February 17, 1829, Father Cliteur, the Bishop's secretary, paid Father Miles a tribute for his work in Zanesville and the surrounding area: "Indeed, this parish had grown to such an extent that it became necessary to call Father Samuel Montgomery from Kentucky...Father Miles had begun to equal the Bishop....in making converts"(37). It seems Father Miles and Bishop Fenwick made it common practice to preach sermons in court-houses, non-Catholic churches, or wherever an audience or place could be secured while on tour. The sermons were usually followed by conversions. Bishop Fenwick even died while touring. "He fell victim to a fever at Sault Sainte Marie on Lake Superior. But he carried on with the visitation he was making, and managed to reach Wooster, Ohio...." (38), where a Catholic settlement existed. He died September 26, 1832, at sixty-four years of age.

In the careers of these zealous priests, the Church was firmly secured in Zanesville.

It is a recurring fact that in this early period -- prior to the Know Nothing epidemic -- uncommonly good relations marked Protestant-Roman Catholic interchanges. Despite the penal laws in the recent temporal and physical past, frequently Protestants contributed money to build churches (Old Washington, early 1840's), to rebuild churches (Mount Vernon, 1844), and offered space for worship (Judge Banning, Mount Vernon, 1829). Before converting, some non-Catholics were "...anxious for the erection of Catholic churches in various places in Ohio, and thus were offering land for that purpose" (39).

Perhaps the pew purchase in Zanesville was attributed to spellbinding Dominican preachers, in an entertainment shy frontier; or to the rugged individualist pioneer reaching out for notice; or to the basic commonness of the ethnic root of the pioneers (certainly it disappeared with the influx of the Irish-Irish, and never appeared with the German immigrant.) In any case, it is a cultural phenomena born of the frontier.

It is a thesis of this writer that such phenomena occurred because of the basic sameness of the frontier settler, Protestant and Catholic alike -- these immigrant groups were old Americans, their roots planted long ago.

Chart I

Settlement:

Somerset
Berne
Zanesville
Taylorsville
Mattingly
Danville

Origin of Settlers:

Somerset and Conewago, Pennsylvania
Virginia (English)
Dugans: hatters from Pennsylvania
Taylor: dam/gristmill, German descent
Old Irish Catholics from Maryland
Anglo-Catholics from Maryland

Further examples of this are the two "mission" settlements of Zanesville -- Taylorsville and Mattingly Settlement.

Nine miles south of Zanesville, situated on the west bank of the Muskingum, was a small village named Taylorsville, which is presently called Philo or Duncan Falls. Upon completion of the Zanesville and Ohio River railroad, Taylorsville was an important trade center in the heart of rich farming land.

(to be continued)

A FAMILY REGISTER
from Somerset, Ohio

Anne Ledwidge was born September 26, 1775.
William Ledwidge was born July 1, 1777.
Christina Ledwidge was born December 18, 1785.
James Ledwidge was born June 18, 1788.
James Ledwidge was born April 3, 1790.

Patrick Lynch was born on the first Sunday in August, 1771.
Patrick Lynch and Christina Ledwidge were married April 21, 1805,
on Low Sunday.
Bescey was born Monday, May 4, 1806.
Jane was born Sunday, May 29, 1808.
Mary was born Friday, October 26, 1810.
Patrick was born Thursday, October 8, 1812.
Ann was born Sunday, Nativity of B.V.M., September 8, 1816.
John was born Sunday, February 28, 1819.
John died February 26, 1820.
Christina was born Sunday, December 10, 1820.
Christina died January 22, 1821, aged 44 days.
Margaret was born Tuesday, January 26, 1823.
John was born June 22, 1825.

Events

Jane Lynch was received into St. Mary's convent on the 9th of February, A.D. 1832, and on the feast of St. Catharine, April 30, of the same year she took the holy habit of St. Dominic, and received the name of Sister Rose and made her religious vows on the 6th of June, being the feast of Corpus Christi, A.D. 1833.

Elizabeth Lynch entered the same convent October 15th, A.D. 1832; received the religious habit on the octave day of the Epiphany January 13th, A.D. 1833, and took the name of Sister Teresa. She made her religious vows on the feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady A.D. 1834.

Mary Lynch was received into the same convent of St. Mary's, July 1st, A.D. 1833.

William fell from a building in Cincinnati, August 31st, and died September 2nd, 1835, in the 21st year of his age.

Mary (Sister Josepha) died of consumption in St. Mary's convent, Somerset, January 31st, 1847, in the 37th year of her age.

Margaret (Sister Angela) died of consumption in St. Mary's convent, Somerset, August 12th, 1847, in the 25th year of her age.

Mr. Patrick Lynch, Father of the family, died November 8th, 1847, in the 77th year of his age.

Elizabeth (Sister Mary Teresa) died of cholera at St. Catherine of Siena, Springfield, Kentucky, July 4th, 1854, aged 48 years and 2 months.

Sister Monica (Mrs. Christina Lynch) Mother of the family, died at St. Mary's, Somerset, Ohio, February 27th, 1867, in her 83rd year.

Jane (Sister Rose) died at Holy Rosary, Galveston, Texas, July 13th, 1893, in her 86th year.

Sister Angela (Ann Lynch) died at St. Catherine of Siena, Springfield, Kentucky, November 8th, 1901, in her 86th year.

A Library of Diocesan Authors

The Catholic Record Society is anxious to preserve copies of books written by priests, religious and laymen of the Diocese of Columbus. Donations of any such books will be gratefully received. The Society is also desirous of receiving the titles of such books, lest they be overlooked.

The Society is convinced that there are sufficient books by authors who lived in the Diocese to form what could be called a Diocesan Library. Biographical sketches of the authors will be a part of such a library.
