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THE FIRST CHURCH IN COSHOCOTON COUNTY

By Herman E. Mattingly

There is every reason to believe that Catholic missionaries were the first to bring Christianity to the State of Ohio. French priests from Canada are reliably reported to have visited the Catholic tribes of Indians who had settled at the confluence of the Tuscarawas and Walhonding rivers, where they unite to form the Muskingum river in the present county of Coshocton. The city now located at that point, and the county in which it is located, receive their name from the word the Indians used to designate their settlement, "Goshackgunk", or "Indian Bear Town."

Documentary evidence is difficult to produce; however, it is known that there were Catholic tribes settled in the area, and priests from French Canada hunted them up for spiritual care. This was during the years 1730 and 1760. Conflict between the English and the French over the Northwest Territory eventually led to the departure of the Christian Indians from the Coshocton County area.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, Catholic immigrants began to settle in the County. Many of these were drawn to the area seeking work on the construction of the Ohio Canal. The immigrants came not only from Ireland, but also from Germany and France. Thus there were German and French settlements in the southern part of Coshocton County as early as 1840.

Early in the century the Dominican Fathers were the missionaries in the State of Ohio. They established a parish at Somerset in Perry County, and this became the center of their apostolic activity. Later a parish was started in Zanesville, Muskingum County, and this became the center for missionaries taking care of Catholics scattered throughout that and Coshocton counties. A little brick church was built in Zanesville in 1820.

The Dominican Fathers endeavored to take care of the English as well as the German speaking Catholics. This often meant visitation of the same station or mission at different times by a priest who could speak English and by one who could speak German. With the establishment of the Diocese of Cincinnati in 1821, the Bishop made every effort to supply other German priests for the German missions.

Gradually the settlements became of such importance as to warrant the purchase of property for the erection of a church. The first recorded purchase of such property in Coshocton County was in the little town of Plainfield, in Linton Township, in the southeastern corner of the County. In 1841 Joseph D. Workman and Catharine, his wife, sold to Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati "Lot number six (6) and also thirty (30) feet of Lot number five (5), taken off the west side of Lot number five (5) in the town of Plainfield" (1). The Deed was dated May 13, 1841. It was recorded June 18, 1841. The tract was deeded to Bishop Purcell "for the Roman Catholic Congregation of Plainfield for the exclusive use and the purpose of a Roman Catholic Church according to the tenets, rules and Discipline

of the Roman Catholic Church....." The "sum of fifty dollars" was the price paid by Bishop Purcell. Settled in the little town was a group of German Catholics.

A few years later, in 1844, property was bought by the same Bishop a few miles west of Plainfield to provide a church for a settlement of French immigrants (2). Later, in 1856, a tract containing 45 rods was bought in Franklin Township, next west of Linton Township, to accomodate a settlement of Germans in that area (3). The following year, in 1857, property was purchased northwest of the present city of Coshocton, in Monroe Township (4), to satisfy the needs of the Catholics thereabouts. This mission came to be known as St. Elizabeth's, Killbuck Creek. It was during this same year (1857) that property was bought in the present city of Coshocton for the erection of a church. It was dedicated to St. George and was the first Catholic church in Coshocton.

However, to Plainfield belongs the honor of having the first Catholic church in the County. That there was a church on the property is evident from early entries made in volume one of the Register of Baptisms, St. Nicholas' Church, Zanesville, Muskingum County. It was from this church that the German pastor took care of the German Catholics in nearby counties.

In 1842 there was written on the first page of the St. Nicholas' Register of Baptisms the following: "On December 26, 1842, the missionary priest Joseph Gallinger from the Archdiocese of Munich-Freising, arrived in Zanesville, sent there by Most Reverend John Baptist Purcell, Bishop of Cincinnati." Father Gallinger also wrote in the front of the book: "Baptismal register of the German Catholic Mission Area, Zanesville."

It is evident that Father Gallinger believed that he was to take care of all German Catholics in the area, principally in Muskingum and Coshocton counties. The Dominican Fathers at St. Thomas' Church, Zanesville, had for some years been taking care of the scattered Irish Catholics in several counties, including Muskingum and Coshocton. Whenever they could so arrange, a priest of their Order who could speak German came to take care of the Germans. Unfortunately, the register of Baptisms at St. Thomas' does not indicate when a Baptism occurred in a mission church. In a letter (5) to Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati, written Nov. 5, 1846, Father C. P. Montgomery, O.P., pastor, reported Baptisms for the year from November, 1845, to November, 1846. He listed 43 for Zanesville, 6 for Plainfield and 5 for Taylorsville.

According to Father Gallinger's entries of Baptisms in his years at Zanesville, he visited Dresden, Taylorsville and Jackson (east of Zanesville) in Muskingum County; Wills Creek, Rasko(Roscoe), Jacobspoint, Warsaw, Kilbuck (Killbuck Creek) and Newcomerstown in Coshocton County. He also listed a place called Liberty, not known today, though there is a Liberty Township east of Plainfield in Guernsey County. He gave another place as Louisville. This could hardly have been the present Louisville in Stark County, two counties farther north of Coshocton County.

In 1844 Father Gallinger entered in his Register of Baptisms three as "next to Jacobspoint," and three as "near Jacobspoint." This could only have been Plainfield. A small creek divided Jacobspoint and Plainfield. In 1845 the St. Nicholas' Register had only one entry as "near Jacobspoint." No more entries were made for Jacobspoint during Father Gallinger's pastorate in Zanesville.

On June 30, 1846, Father Gallinger wrote (6) to Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati, giving the number of Baptisms, marriages and burials in his missions from April 1845 to April 1846. He wrote that each second month he visited the German Catholics at Adamsville (northeast of Zanesville), in the city of Coshocton, on the Killbuck Creek, in the town of Dresden, and in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin in Coshocton County near Jacobsport. This latter must have been the new mission in Linton Township, west of Jacobsport, where property was bought for a mission church in 1844.

Father Michael Desalers, who succeeded Father Gallinger in Zanesville, was the first to give concrete evidence that there was a church in Plainfield. His first entry of a Baptism performed in the little village is dated March 17, 1851. He wrote that "in eccles. St. Mich., Saintfield," was baptised Frederick, born Feb. 16, of Henry Grassel and Theresa Hornung. It is peculiar that he wrote (quite clearly) that the town was "Saintfield". Two or three entries make it evident that the title of the church was St. Michael's.

On December 24, 1854, Father William Deiters, who succeeded Father Desalaers, wrote (7) to Archbishop Purcell in Cincinnati that during the previous week he had visited the missions in Willscreek and Coshocton. He met Father (Frederick) Bender of Newark who arrived in Stanfield(?) and stated that he had been given charge of these missions by Archbishop Purcell, and was on his way for that purpose.

The records show that Baptisms were performed at the little mission in Plainfield as late as 1854. When the mission was discontinued is not known. There is no record at the coshocton Court House of the sale of the property. No doubt the Catholics of Plainfield eventually attended the growing mission of St. Mary's about four miles west in the same township. This became known as the Linton Township mission. At the same time the mission of St. Nicholas' in Franklin Township was growing. Years later these two were combined into the present mission of Our Lady of Lourdes, now attended from Coshocton.

- (1) Coshocton County Deed Books, Vol. 15, p. 308
- (2) Coshocton County Deed Books, vol. 18, p. 294.
- (3) Coshocton County Deed Books, Vol. 32, p. 559.
- (4) Coshocton County Deed Books, Vol. 31, p. 680.
- (5) Original letter in the Archives, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.
- (6) Original letter in the Archives, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.
- (7) Original letter in the Archives, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

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PLAINFIELD BAPTISMS RECORDED
AT ST. NICHOLAS', ZANESVILLE

1844, Feb. 13: Joseph Albert, born Dec. 23, 1843, son of Gregor Wagner, next to Jacobsport, and his wife from Alsace. Sponsors: Joseph Wagner and Elizabeth Lorch.

1844, Feb. 13: Mary Magdalene, born Jan. 24, daughter of Michael Hauser, next to Jacobsport, and his wife, Margaret Brech from Alsace. Sponsors: Martin

Gruenruh and Mary Schmidt.

1844, Jan. 24: Michael, born Jan. 21, son of John Culba and his wife Catherine near Jacobspart. Sponsors: Hildegard Geb and John Galopi.

1844, April 17: Lawrence Peter, born Jan 22, son of Joseph Marder and his wife Margaret Bing near Jacobspart. Sponsors: Hildegard Geb and Jacob Gavil.

1844, May 29: Michael, son of Anthony Wimmert and his wife Magdalene Schuh near Jacobspart. Sponsors: Michael Punsed and Barbara Wunimann.

1844, Aug. 6: George, born June 20, son of John Anhbecher and his wife A. Bodenkochen next to Jacobspart. Sponsors: Jacob Page and Magdalene Borllmayr.

1845, Feb. 11: Sara, born Nov. 16, daughter of Michael Wangner and his wife M. A. Losch. Sponsors: Elizabeth and G. Schuh near Jacobspart.

1849, Nov. 6: "in eccles. ad St. Michael Saintfield" Frederick Louis, born Aug. 15, son of Francis Joseph Hoever and Mary Agatha Wal. Sponsors: Michael Stein and Mary Alfelisik. Desalaers.

1851, March 17: "in eccles. St. Mich., Saintfield," Frederick, born Feb. 16, son of Henry Grassel and Theresa Hornung.

1853, April 1: "Saintfield" Anne Elizabeth, born March 27, daughter of Henry Grassel and Theresa Hornung. Sponsors: John Schafer and Eva Elizabeth Schafer. Desalaers.

1854, Sept. 29: "Saintfield" Louis, born Sept. 17, son of Henry Grassel and Theresa Hornung. Sponsors: Michael Stein and Elizabeth Hornung. W. Deiters.

REGISTER OF BAPTISMS, 1845-1861

ST. JOSEPH'S, MOHICAN (GREER)

(Continued)

1852, April 10: Martin, born March 31, son of Anthony Reichle and Kunigunda Kehler. Sponsors: Martin Kehler and Katharine Ernst. Aug. Berger.

1852, May 2: Joseph, born Aug. 20, 1848, son of Joseph Sieser and Mary Ekan(?). Sponsors: Joseph and Mary Ekan(?).

1852, May 2: Mary, born Aug. 4, 1851, daughter of Joseph Sieser and Mary Ekan. Sponsors: Joseph and Mary Ekan(?). Aug. Berger.

1852, May 9: Anna, born Dec. 24, 1851, daughter of Wilhelm Kronlaghlin(?) and Theresa Bahmann. Sponsors: Thomas Gwinglin and Katherine Gwinglin.
Aug. Berger.

1852, Nov. 24: Margaret Suistenler, born --- 29, daughter of Suistenler.
Sponsors: Joseph Deiss and Margaret Deiss.
George Brennann.

1853, Oct. 23: Mary Magdalene, born Sept. 14, daughter of Anthony Smithhausler and Louisa, born Niles. Sponsors: Philip Smithhausler and Marianne Smithhausler.
P. Weber, mis.

1853, Oct. 26: Catharine Louise, born Sept. 28, daughter of Claud Francis Eugene Dete and Christina, born Helsteinder(?). Sponsors: Michael Buckler and Catharine Buckler.
Peter Weber, mis.

1853, Oct. 25: Henry, born Aug. 10, son of Michael Milles and Catharine, born Storm. Sponsors: James Miles and Louise Miles.
Peter Weber, mis.

1854, Jan. 28: Mary, born Dec. 5, 1853, daughter of Adam Schapp and Magdalene, born Schmithausler. Sponsors: Philip Schmithausler and Louise Schmithausler.
Peter Weber, mis.

1854, May 17: Louis James Ernst, born ----, son of Eva Ernst. Sponsors:
M. B. Buckler and Wilhelmina schab.
N. Thomas.

1854, June --: Janum(?) Schmithausler. Sponsors: James Miller (?) and Margaret Holler.
N. Thomas

1854, June 18: Francis Louis, born ----, son of Francis Schaffer. Sponsors:
J--- Deiss and Margaret Frandell.
N. Thomas.

1854, July 20: George Christopher Vogel, born ---- 22, son of ----- and Magdalene Ernst.
N. Thomas.

1854, Aug. 20: Mary Rachel, born July 27, daughter of ---- Reichel. Sponsors:
James Ernst and -----.
N. Thomas.

1854, ----: ----Koeler, born June 16, daughter of John Kocler(?). Sponsor:
Martin Vesler.
N. Thomas.

1854, -----: Michael Kllein, born July 16, son of Kllein. Sponsor: --- Herner.
N. Thomas

1854, ----: Mary Homann, born Sept. 24, daughter of Michael Homann. Sponsor;
Louis Hemler.

N. Thomas
Priest of Mt. Eaton.

1855, Feb. 13: Catharine, born Dec. 12 1854, daughter of Martin Wesler and
Margaret Kehler. Sponsors: Michael Miller and Catharine Ernst.
L. Malon.

1855, March 25: Charlotte Hemler, born Nov. 13. Sponsor: Michael Bucher.
N. Thomas

Priest of Mt. Eaton.

1855, May 20: James Phillip, born Feb. 25, son of Christina buckler. Sponsors:
-----Buckler and Mary Schmidt.

N. Thomas
Priest of Mt. Eaton.

1855, July 15: Philip Koegefer(?), born May 18. Sponsor: Francis Kaefefer.
N. Thomas

Priest of Mt. Eaton.

1855, Aug. 20: Mary Scaletzer(?), born Sept. 17, 1849.
N. Thomas.

1855, -----: Catharine Kaletzer, born Aug. 23, 1853.
N. Thomas.

1855, ---- 25: Michael, born Sept. 26, son of Anthony Schmitthausler and Louise Miles
Miles. Sponsors: Michael Schmitthausler and Mary Anna Schmitthausler.
F. M. Boffet(?).

1855, July 15: Philip Koegeler, born May 11. Sponsor: Pius -----.
N. Thomas.

1855, Aug. 20: Mary Kaletzer(?), born Sept. 13, 1849.
N. Thomas.

1855, ----: Catharine Kaletzer, Aug. 23, 1853.
N. Thomas.

1855, ----: Michael, born Sept. 26, son of Anthony Schmittheisler and Louise
Miles. Sponsors: Michael Schmittheisler and Mary Anne Schmittheisler.
F. M. Boffet.

1856, May 15: Catharine, born March 29, daughter of Michael Bugder(?) and
Catharine Fredman. Sponsors: George Fogle and Eve Rohr.
E.W.J. Lindesmith.

1856, -----: Catharine, born March 17, daughter of Michael Smit and Mary Anne
Melas. Sponsors: Michael Bechler and Catharine Bechler.
E. W. J. Lindesmith.

1856, ----: Michael, born April 4, son of Andrew Schab and Savena Natz.
Sponsors: Michael Homan and Elizabeth Noedh(!).

E.W.J. Lindesmith.

1856, Sept. 16: Catharine Louise, born June 5, daughter of George Fogel and
Catharine Fogel. Sponsors: James Ernst and Catharine Bukler.
Morenle(?)

1856, Sept. 16: Mary Keler, born May 24, daughter of John Keler and ----
Keler. Sponsors: Adam Vetter and Mary Bugler.
Morenle(?)

1856, Sept. 16: Mary, born July 2, daughter of Henry (Starner) and Catharine
Fesler. Sponsors: Andrew Kemler and Sabina Fesler.
Morenlo(?)

1856, Sept. 16: ----, born ---- 12, son of Laurence Blazer(?) and Margaret
Cupler(?). Sponsors: -----
M -----

1856, Sept. 16: Francis B-----, born Sept. 30, son of Henry Buja(?) and Mary
Pruisa.

1856, Dec 11: Infant, born Nov. 12, son of Michael Homen and Elizabeth Let.,
of St. Joseph's. Sponsors: Louis Stemler and Eve Resh(?).
L. D.

1856, ----: George, born Feb. 3, 1853, son of Adam Richard and Carolina Keler,
of St. Joseph's. Sponsors: James Honest(?) and ----lina Honest.
L. F. Dtrey.

1858, March 19: Michael Andrew, born ----, son of Henry Wanner and Catharine
Fesler. Sponsors: Andrew Kremer and Apollonia May.
Aug. Jos. Rollinet
Sac. M.S.M.

1858, March 19: Joseph George, born ----, son of Michael Homann and Elizabeth
Not(!). Sponsors: Enoc Belz(?) and Mary Belz(?).
Aug. Jos. Rollinet.

1858, March 19: Mary Elizabeth, bron ----, daughter of Martin Wepler (Wesler)
and Margaret Joler. Sponsors: Enoc Belz and Mary Fesler.
Aug. Jos. Rollinet
-- M. S. M.

1858, April 22: Alexander, born Feb. 9, son of Martin Klein and Magdalene
Sterner. Sponsors: Phillip Klein and Mary Anne Steiner.
E.W.J. Lindesmith.

1858, Aug. 17: Ellen, born July 18, daughter of Frank Sullivan and Mary Homan.
Sponsors: Ph. Shmithheisler and Elizabeth Garden.
E. W. J. Lindesmith.

1858, Oct. 14: Age (Agnes?), born March 1, daughter of James Garden and -----
Thuston. Sponsors: Louis Shab and Miss Ernest.

E.W.J. Lindesmith.

1858, Dec. 2-: Henry Guslaf, born -----, son of George A. Reinhart and Mary
Magdalene Boem. Sponsors: Anthony Schmitheisler and Margaret Meles.
E. W. J. Lindesmith.

1859, Feb. 22: Thomas, born Feb 15, son of Patrick Manigan and Johanna Mahanna.
Sponsors: John Kelley and Margaret Green.

E.W.J. Lindesmith.

1858, -----: Florence Victoria Johnson, born May 8, ca. 1858 or 1859, daughter
of Richard M. Johnson and Margaret Phillips. (Address Mrs. Frank M.
Snyder, Kenneth Station, Akron, Ohio.)

1860, Aug. 19: Joseph Hohmann, born July 25, son of Michael and elizabeth
Noeth. Sponsors: James Ernst and Magdalene Dais.

Jos. Anthony Heimo, M.

1860, Aug. 19; Clara schmithausler, born July 14, daughter of Anthony and
Louise Miller. Sponsors: Michael Miller and Catharine Sterner.

Jos. Anthony Heimo, M.

1860, Sept. 9: Clara Bile, born Aug. 20, daughter of John George and Catharine
Gutpellet. Sponsors: James Miller and Margaret Miller.

Jos. Anthony Heimo, M.

1860, Sept. 9: Mary Adelaide Py, born Aug. 25, daughter of Celestine and
Margaret Catier. Sponsors: Peter Droit and Mary Monot.

Jos. Anthony Heimo, M.

1860, Sept. 30: Mary Salum(?), born Aug. 28, daughter of Patrick and Mary
Chea. Sponsors: Patrick Chea and Mary -----.

Jos. Anthony Heimo, M.

1860, Nov. 2: Angelina kaely, born Oct. 22, daugher of John and Joanne Revel.
Sponsors: Michael Kaely and Margaret Carrel.

Jos. Anthony Heimo, M.

1861, Jan. 8: James Reichart, born Dec. 18, 1860, son of Adam and Cunegunda
Kaely. Sponsors: James Wablet and Cunegunda Wablet.

Jos. Anthony Keimo. M.

1861, Jan. 8: Catharine Winner (Wanner?), born Dec. 23, 1860, daughter of
Henry and Catharine Trislet (Fesslet?). Sponsors: Andrew Kaemeret and
Catharine Miller.

Jos. Anthony Heimo. M.

1861, Feb. 18: Joseph Koelet, born Jan. 11, son of John and Catharine Koehe(?).
Sponsors: Joseph Fesslet and Catharine Fesslet.

Jos. Anthony Heimo, M.
