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REV. AUGUSTIN JOSEPH ROLLINET, S. M.



A true missionary priest lies buried at the spot marked by the above illustrated tombstone. One of Ohio's earliest Catholic missionaries, he was Father Augustine Rollinet, of the Society of Mary, a native of France, who died January 1, 1859, and lies in the cemetery at St. Genevieve's, Calmoutier, Holmes County, Ohio. He had been pastor there for about ten years. The above tombstone replaced an earlier one which had fallen over, was broken and the lettering damaged. The inscription on it was: Augustine Rollinet, Decede 1 Janvier 1859. Age de 64 ans. Requiescat in pace.

REV. AUGUSTIN JOSEPH ROLLINET, 1796-1859  
 FIRST PASTOR OF ST. GENEVIEVE'S, CALMOUTIER

Carrying on his back all the items needed for the celebration of Mass, Father Augustin Joseph Rollinet, S.M., the first resident pastor of St. Genevieve's, Calmoutier, Holmes County, Ohio, was on his way from celebrating Mass at one Mission to do the same at another. Already not well for several days, he became so weak that he was forced to seek help at a farm house. While he was being relieved of his outer garments he collapsed. Placed on a bed, he uttered the words, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph," and died. The day was January 1, 1859.

Thus ended the life of a zealous priest fired with missionary fervor, a life that began November 15, 1796, at Sancey-le-Long, Doubs, France, in the diocese of Besancon. Not much is known of his early life and family. He studied at Aix-la-Chapelle (1), in Provence, and was ordained about 1820 (2). He served in his own diocese, and about 1825 became parish priest at d'Ormoy (3), not far from St. Remy.

St. Remy has significance in the life of Father Rollinet since the Society of Mary, which he entered later in life, established itself there in 1823. A younger brother, Charles Rollinet (1804-1863), entered the Society at St. Remy in 1824. A few years later, in 1832, Father Rollinet himself applied for admission as a novice. However, he remained only a few months (4).

Father Rollinet harbored a desire to enter the foreign mission field. The longing became so strong that he finally arranged to leave his diocese and sail for America in 1848. He arrived in Canada and, according to one of his letters, labored among the Indians, particularly among the Iroquois and Algonquins. Not many months passed until he appeared in the diocese of Cleveland, and obtained work there.

It was during this time that the Society of Mary sent its first members to the United States. The pioneer community arrived in 1849, and by March, 1850, had bought property where they now have the University of Dayton. The little establishment was called Nazareth, and was known as such for many years.

The Bishop of Cleveland, Rt. Rev. Amadeus Rappe, also a native of France, sent Father Rollinet to St. Genevieve's, Calmoutier, Holmes county, Ohio, where he found a congregation made up mostly of French immigrants. An early entry in the sacramental register of the parish states: "In 1849, November 1, on the feast of All Saints, there was baptised the first bell for the new church of St. Genevieve's under the name of Jeanne Claude Hubertine.....[Father Rollinet] the first pastor residing in this parish, one of the oldest congregations of the missions of Ohio almost entirely composed at this time of Catholics coming from the Diocese of Besancon, Haute Saone, France. This missionary, a priest of the same country, had been delegated for this blessing by Bishop Amadeus Rappe, first Bishop of Cleveland; and there were present some witnesses, trustees, who have signed with us below....."

Some doubt about the time of Father Rollinet's arrival in Ohio (and, indeed, in America), may be found in his writing on the title page of the register of sacraments for the mission of St. Joseph's, Greer, Holmes county, a now long defunct mission. At the top of the fly-leaf he wrote as follows: "Aug. Jos. Rollinet, Missionary of the Society of Mary. Records of Baptisms, Marriages, burials. 1845, 46. Congregation of St. Joseph." However, though records are signed by other priests, Father Rollinet did not sign any until 1858 when he

baptised three infants at Greer on March 19. It would seem that having the book for the first time, he decided to give it a title and wrote the information with his own name on the front page.

At Calmoutier when Father Rollinet blessed the new bell on Nov. 1, 1849, two baptisms by Bishop Rappe on Dec. 17, 1848, are written into the register by Father Rollinet. The following March the Bishop himself entered one of his baptisms. Father Rollinet signed his first recorded baptisms on Oct. 14, 1849. It would seem that he was appointed to the pastorate about that time, but had visited there before that date.

During Father Rollinet's stay at St. Genevieve's it may be noted that the Bishop returned for Confirmation on Dec. 19, 1854. Father Rollinet signed recorded baptisms until June 20, 1852.

It should be stated here that the early missionary priests of Ohio, with true zeal, made every effort to take care of the immigrants who could not speak English. German speaking priests would seek German Catholics and care for their spiritual wants, while English speaking priests would care for their own in the same area. So also, the French missionary sought out settlements of French Catholics, whether few or many, and administered to them.

It is to be expected, then, that Father Rollinet, filled with zeal was he was, would not hesitate to search for and visit French Catholics whose location he learned. In a letter (5), to Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati, he wrote from St. Genevieve's, Calmoutier, in February, 1852: "Your Grace, in the two little French Missions of Bolivar and Milscreek (6), near Coshocton, in your diocese (7), the two chapels were built. They did not know about turning over to the Bishop the title to the land given for worship, cemetery, etc. That is hwy I beg Your Grace in your reply to impose the duty on me to rectify the title of these two small parishes and assure that way a greater stability for the future."

Father Rollinet's mention of the "French Missions of Bolivar and Milscreek" needs clarification. The Bolivar he names was a French group near "Old St. Peter's" in Tuscarawas county which was not far from the present Bolivar. True he had baptised at Old St. Peter's on September 15 and 28, 1849, and again on April 15 and June 9, 1850. But there were two groups of Catholics in the area, one German and one French. The Germans were far more numerous. Both groups went to Old St. Peter's. Although the German priests who cared for the parish could speak French, most of the French Catholics had their children baptised by French speaking priests. The first of these seems to have been Father Louis de Goesdriand (8) who came from Louisville in Stark county. Next was Father Peter Peudeprat who succeeded Father de Goesbriand at Louisville. And then came Father Rollinet who was serving Louisville and Calmoutier at the time. Old St. Peter's is now a long defunct mission.

In his history (9) of St. Peter's, Father John Lenhart wrote: "On Sunday, June 5, 1850, Father Rollinet of Calmoutier baptised in Old St. Peter's Mary Henrica Bosseau, the thirteenth French child christened in the venerable sanctuary on the Hessian Hill. Soon after a group of French settlers withdrew and from 1850 to 1853 attended the Church of the Assumption, or the French Chapel as it was called, situated about two miles west of the town of Bolivar (10), or as Mr. Labbe states, three miles north-west of Bolivar....The new

French chapel was placed in charge of Father Rollinet of Calmoutier, Holmes county. The Metropolitan Almanacs of 1851 and 1852 carry this notice: "Mount Eaton (11) (now Calmoutier), St. Genevieve, Rev. Augustin Rollinet who visits the French settlement near Bolivar'."

Father Lenhart further wrote that the French chapel did not last long. "The Metropolitan Almanacs," he stated, "for 1853 and 1854 list vacancies at Mount Eaton, and the French settlement near Bolivar is not more mentioned. A priest was stationed at Mount Eaton in 1855 but he had charge only of the missions of Holmes county. Therefore, the French chapel became deserted in 1853, when Father Rollinet who perhaps had inspired the whole movement, had left Calmoutier....."

In his letter of 1852 Father Rollinet also mentioned Wills Creek (Mils Creek) "near Coshocton." The earliest Catholic mission south of Coshocton was at Plainfield (12), started in 1841. Property was bought in 1844 for another mission in Linton township. For some years French immigrants had been coming into the hills of Franklin township west of the Linton township group. Here property was bought in 1856 for the church of St. Nicholas, Wills Creek. It Father Rollinet could mention this settlement and this church as early as 1852, then the property could have been that of one of the French Catholic settlers offered for the Church. There is no longer any church, but the cemetery is fairly well cared for.

As has been noted, Father Rollinet also helped at St. Louis church, Louisville, Stark county, the next county north of Tuscarawas county. Calmoutier is located close to the northeast border of Holmes county which is next west of Tuscarawas county. Father Rollinet was to return to this parish some years later.

The period during which Father Rollinet did not sign recorded baptisms at Calmoutier, from June, 1852, to 1856, must now be accounted for. He had heard of the establishment of the Society of Mary at Nazareth, Ohio. It was not long before he found opportunity to visit his friends there. This he did in 1851. Although he had failed in his desire to enter the Society in his homeland, he still wished to become a member. Accordingly, he wrote of his desire to Archbishop Purcell in a letter (13) of February, 1852.

The letter in part: "I come to inform you of the efficacious measures taken recently with the Bishop of Cleveland, by which he allows me to enter your diocese. The kindness you shared me when I passed through led me to the determination; but for a long time I was cultivating the desire to enter a religious order in order to prepare for death. I hope to be able soon to realize this pious project which I had already in France. For there I thought of joining the Institute of the Brothers of Mary, where I have a brother for thirty years. But my taste for the foreign missions carried me away. At present I can have the happiness of combining my new vocation with the former, by continuing to give myself up to the work of the Missions (among the French), through the favorable auspices of Your Grace. And I hope to cast myself at your feet toward the month of June next, after finishing the work of First Communion in my present Mission. It is at Nazareth, near Dayton, that I desire to withdraw in solitude, so that I may not be left to myself in the wandering life of a missionary, and do on my own will, but solely that of my Superiors, in conforming myself by blind obedience, to all the prescriptions of the Religious rule...."

Father Rollinet officiated at baptisms at Calmoutier on June 20, 1852. He signed no more entries for the next four years. On August 15, 1852, he started his novitiate as a candidate for admission to the Society of Mary. This was at Nazareth [Dayton], Ohio. Father Leo Meyer, superior at Nazareth, wrote (14) to his superior in France on January 25, 1853, that 'there has been no increase in the Novitiate, where there are only two novices, Father Rollinet and Mr. Springer."

During these years Father Rollinet "spent little of his time at Nazareth; the need was too great elsewhere" (15). With Father Mauclerc he became a missionary-at-large for the Archbishop under the direction of Father Meyer. There was no hardship too rough for this gallant soul. His first Marianist mission was at Russia, Ohio, St. Remy's, where he tramped through the forest in snow and mud and water with a piece of dry bread in his pocket for breakfast after Mass." He was not a good administrator, but "continued to serve the neglected French throughout Ohio" (16). Some of the missions he attended while at Nazareth were St. Remy's, Greenville, Frenchtown, Jacksonville (now Versailles), Piqua and Newport. "Archbishop Purcell was particularly pleased with his work at Frenchtown where he labored to prepare a class of seventy-four children for First Holy Communion" (17).

During his time at Nazareth Father Rollinet thought of his brother, Charles, who was a Brother in the Society of Mary back in his native France. With the approval of his superior he invited Charles to come to Nazareth. He arrived in December, 1853. The two brothers then worked together for the welfare of the French missions.

In 1855 the Brothers of Mary opened a school at Louisville in Stark county in the diocese of Cleveland. Father Rollinet was appointed director. With his brother he tried to make the school a success. But it failed about 1858. But the church authorities in Cleveland had been pleased with the effort and invited the Brothers to open a school in Cleveland. This they did. Brother Charles went there while Father Rollinet remained at the mission of Calmoutier.

While in Louisville Father Rollinet took the place of the pastor, Father D'Arcy who was away for a year because of sickness. In a history (18) of the parish it is stated that Father Rollinet signed the parish records from June, 1857, to June 1858.

During his time at Louisville Father Rollinet again took charge of the French mission at Calmoutier. He began signing parish records there on December 26, 1856, and continued doing so until his death.

His missionary zeal led to Father Rollinet's death. One account states that "On Christmas Eve 1858 he tramped twelve miles with heavy altar stone and vestments to celebrate Midnight Mass, probably at St. Genevieve's, Calmoutier. This was too much for him. He contracted pneumonia and was dead in a few days" (19). He was on the road going to a mission for Mass on New Year's. He became so weak that he sought help in a farm house where he collapsed. Placed on a bed he uttered, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph," and died.

It would seem most likely that he was staying at St. Genevieve's at this time. But what other mission would he be visiting? He had been to St. Joseph's, Greer the previous March. He could have been helping there again, it being the only other mission in Holmes county.

Until his death Father Rollinet remained a devoted member of the Society of Mary. In a letter (20) to Archbishop Purcell from Mount Eaton on September 5, 1858, he signed himself, "August Jos. Rollinet, Priest Missionary, Society of Mary." His last entry in the baptism register of Calmoutier on December 26, 1858, just a few days before his death, is signed, "Aug. Jos. Rollinet, Sac. M.S.M."

The first pastor of St. Genevieve's, Calmoutier, lies buried in the old part of the parish cemetery. As Father Sauer wrote (21) in 1936, the word, "Missionaire," on his tombstone "is really the epitome of his life."

- (1) The Church in Northern Ohio, by Rev. George F. Houck, 3rd Edition, 1889, p. 174.
- (2) "August Joseph Rollinet, S.M.," by George N. Sauer, S.M., in "The Apostle of Mary," November, 1936, p. 206.
- (3) Ibidem.
- (4) The author is indebted to the courtesy of Father Robert E. Brown, S.M., Archivist, Marianist Archives, Dayton, Ohio, for much of the information used in this article.
- (5) Courtesy of the Marianist Archives.
- (6) This should be Wills Creek.
- (7) Coshocton and Tuscarawas counties were in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. So also was Holmes county. However, at the request of Archbishop Purcell, Bishop Rappe of Cleveland agreed to administer Holmes county, in which Calmoutier is located.
- (8) Father Louis de Goesbriand (1816-1899) became Bishop of Burlington, Vermont.
- (9) The History of Old Saint Peter's, by Very Rev. John M. Lenhart, O.F.M.Cap., privately published, 135 pages. See pages 49-53.
- (10) The History of Fifty Years, 1868-1918 [A history of the Diocese of Columbus], by Bishop James J. Hartley, p. 453.
- (11) Mount Eaton is located a few miles northwest of St. Genevieve's, but in Wayne county, diocese of Cleveland. There seems never to have been a mission at the village. The name apparently was applied to Calmoutier at various times.
- (12) For the history of the mission at Plainfield, see BULLETIN, October, 1978.
- (13) Courtesy of the Marianist Archives., Dayton, Ohio.
- (14) Ibidem.
- (15) "The Marianist Educator," March, 1950, p. 36.
- (16) Ibidem.
- (17) Ibidem.
- (18) "A Sketch of St. Louis Church, 1838-1938." Courtesy of the Marianist Archives.
- (19) "Marianist Educator," March, 1950, p. 36.
- (20) Marianist Archives.
- (21) "The Apostle of Mary," November, 1936, p. 209.

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Gifts and Acquisitions

Presented by St. Mary of the Springs, courtesy of Sister Thomas Aquin, O.P.:

- 1) Shaving mug of Bishop Hartley.
- 2) Clothes brush with Bishop Hartley's name imprinted on it.
- 3) Episcopal slippers of Bishop Watterson.
- 4) Picture of Bishop Hartley as an infant with his mother.
- 5) Biretta of Bishop Watterson.
- 6) Breviaries used by Bishop Rsecrans.
- 7) Seal of Bishop Moeller.
- 8) Zuchetto of Bishop Gilmour of Cleveland.
- 9) Breviaries of Bishop Watterson.
- 10) Breviaries of Father W. F. Hayes, pastor of St. Francis de Sales, Newark,
- 11) Memorial Calendar, 1868, St. Patrick's Church, Columbus, Ohio.
- 12) Leaves from Bishop Watterson's coffin.
- 13) Invitation from the Bishops of Mexico to Bishop Watterson, for a special ceremony honoring Our Lady of Guadeloupe. [Spanish]

"Good Counsel," monthly leaflet of Holy Rosary Parish, Columbus, two bound Volumes, 1905-1910 and 1915-1920. Gifts of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Holzemer.

The Birds of North America (1977 Reprint) by Jacob H. Studer (Original, 1881).  
Harrison House, N.Y. Gift of Monsignor Joseph A. Hakel.

Centennial History of Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio, by William Alexander Taylor. (2 vols.) 1909. Gift of Monsignor Joseph A. Hakel.

History of Franklin County, Ohio, (3 vols.) by Opha Moore. Historical Publishing Co., Indianapolis. 1930. Gift of Monsignor Joseph A. Hakel.

History of the City of Columbus, Capital of Ohio, by Alfred E. Lee (2 vols.).  
Munsell & Co., New York. 1892. Gift of Monsignor Joseph A. Hakel.

America's Thousand Bishops by Rev. Clarence A. Liederbach, M.A., Cleveland. 1874.  
Gift of Bishop Herrmann.

Ohio Cemeteries, published by the Ohio Genealogical Society, Mansfield, Ohio, 1978.  
Gift of Leo Buckholz, Wooster, Ohio.

Atlas of Holmes Co., Ohio, 1875 & 1907 (combined). (Reprints). Gift of Leo Buckholz, Wooster, Ohio.

Dictionary of the American Hierarchy by Joseph Bernard Code. Joseph F. Wagner, New York. 1964. Gift of Monsignor Joseph A. Hakel.

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THE HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S PARISH  
MINERTON, VINTON COUNTY, OHIO  
(Continued)

Tombstone Inscriptions (Continued)

LAWLER, John, b. 19 March 1816;  
d. 22 Feb. 1882.  
Grace, his wife, b. -- June 1819;  
d. 25 March 1882.  
David, son of J. & G. Lawler, 3M.  
LEECH, Andrew, a native of County Donegal, Ireland, d. 16 May 1868.  
Aged 58Y.

LEECH, Mary A., d. 10 Oct. 1886.  
LEECH, Rosanna, 1826-1898. "Mother".  
LEECH, Rosie, 1856-1900. "Sister".  
LUCAS, Ellen, wife of G.W., d. 7 Nov. 1886.  
George W. Lucas, d. 18 July 1888.  
Aged 31 Y 2M 25D  
LUCAS, James, 1824-1906.

LUCAS, Sarah, 1839-1911.  
 Andrew, 1867-1904.

LUCAS, Jane M., d. 8 May 1890.  
 Aged 22Y 11M 7D.  
 William H. Lucas, d. 22 Oct.  
 1884. Aged 31Y 3M 26D.  
 Hannah M. Lucas, d. 7 April 1890.  
 Aged 17Y 6M 28D.

LUCAS, Joseph, 1875-1912.

LUCAS, Sarah E., 1891- .  
 Thomas, 1901-1902.  
 Son and Dau. of Thomas and  
 Julia Lucas.

LUNDY, William, d. 30 Oct. 1887.  
 Aged 75Y.

McCALLISTER. In Memory of Mary, a  
 native of County Down, Ireland.  
 Aged 72Y.

McCARTNEY, Ellen, dau. of Henry & Ann,  
 d. 10 — 1858 (1868?0. Aged  
 10M 13D.

McCARTNEY, John d. 1 Oct. 1888.  
 Aged 88Y.

McCARTNEY, Thomas M., son of J. & E.  
 d. 14 Jan. 1868. Ageu 1Y 7M 10D.

McCLORY, Edward H., son of M. & E.,  
 d. 30 Jan. 1878. Aged 19Y 10M 14D.

McCLORY, John P., 1861-1949.  
 Margaret, 1859-1935.

McCLORY, Michael, d. 29 Oct. 1896.  
 Aged 80Y, a native of County Down,  
 Ireland. [Footstones: E.H. & E.]

McCLORY, Michael, 1867-1948.

McCLORY, Michael, d. 13 Aug. 1892.  
 Aged 80Y.  
 Alice H., his wife, d. 22 Aug.  
 1877. Aged 65Y.

Patrick, son of M. & A. McClory,  
 d. 4 Nov. 1885. Aged 36Y.

Peter McClory, d. 16 Oct. 1858.  
 Aged 65Y.

J. Herman, son of M. & A. McClory,  
 d. 16 May 1858. Aged 3Y 1M.

McCLOURY, John, son of M. & A.,  
 d. 16 May 1858. Aged 3Y 1M.

McCLOURY, Peter, a native of County  
 Down, Ireland, d. 16 Oct. 1858.  
 Aged 65Y.

McCORMICK, Anna M., 1889-1953.

McCORMICK, Edward, 1886-1918.

MCCORMICK Henry, 1884-1959.

MCCORMICK, James, d. 14 Aug. 1892.  
 Aged 82Y.  
 Ann, d. 27 March 1896. Aged 80Y.  
 Bernard, d. 3 March 1869. Aged 18Y.

MCCORMICK, Mary, 1856-1922.  
 John, 1847-1921.

McDERMIT, William, d. 4 Aug. 1853.  
 Aged 55Y 5M 19D.

MCDONNEL [Marker broken off]

MCELROY, Sacred to the memory of  
 Catharine, d. 23 Feb. 1906. Aged 87Y.  
 [No tombstone but known to be buried at  
 St. Mary's, Minerton:]

McGOVERN, John, b. 1882; d. 10 Aug.  
 1907.

Catharine (Keck) McGovern, b. 10 Jan.  
 1841; d. 24 Jan. 1902.

MCKENZIE, children of J.G. & L.A.  
 Anne, d. 30 Oct. 1890. Aged 15D.  
 Mary, d. 26 Oct. 1890. Aged 11D.

McMAHON, Catharine, wife of Thomas,  
 d. 11 Aug. 1862. Aged 34Y.  
 James, son of T. & C., d. 14 Sept.  
 1864. Aged 16Y 4M.

McMAHON, Mary and Catharine, daus. of T.  
 & C., d. 13 April and 11 May, 1860.  
 Aged 4Y 9M 13D and 1Y 8M 16D.

MCNAMEE, Mary, wife of Patrick, d. 27  
 April 1868. Aged 69Y.

MAHAFFEY, Anna, wife of Jas. Jr.,  
 1866-1893.

MAHAFFEY, children of James and Jane.  
 Thomas, d. 29 June 1892. Aged 22Y  
 4M 2D.

Catharine, d. 19 June 1893. Aged  
 14Y 4M 8D.

MAHAFFEY, Elizabeth, wife of John, d.  
 14 Sept. 1869. Aged 22Y 7M 19D.

MAHAFFEY, Eloaches (ok), 1876-1899.

MAHAFFEY, James, 4 July 1836. [Veteran's  
 Flag]  
 Jane, his wife, 20 Nov. 1844-  
 12 July 1898.

MAHAFFEY, Lawrence, son of J.E. & Nora,  
 14 July - 11 Aug. 1902. At rest.

MAHAFFEY, Louisa, mother of John, wife  
 of James, d. 26 Feb. 1904. Aged 23Y 27D.

MAHAFFEY, Louisa, dau. of James & Louisa,  
 d. 2 March 1864. Aged 18D.

(To be concluded)