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ST. GENEVIEVE'S PARISH, CALMOUTIER
HOLMES COUNTY, OHIO, 1836 - 1981
(Continued)



Shown above is the St. Genevieve church which was struck by lightning and destroyed in 1940. It was preceded by a log chapel built in the late 1830's, and in 1869 it replaced the first church erected in 1849. The present brick church was built in 1940.

During the pastorate of Father Rollinet (1849-1859) the little parish was flourishing. Something of its activity is gathered from the number enrolled in the "Associates with the Very Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary for the Conversion of sinners." Started by Father DeGoesbriand in 1844 when 69 were enrolled, the Association continued through Father Rollinet's time when 151 more were added to the membership. Also, the number of baptisms showed a steady increase during the same period.

Bishop Rappe of Cleveland visited the parish twice during these years. He

was there April 1, 1856, when he baptised two infants. Although he was not there for the funeral of Father Rollinet in January, 1859, he was back on November 22 of that year when he again baptised two infants.

After Father Rollinet's death Father A. H. Mauclerc (1) came to serve the parish. He stayed only a short time and was succeeded by Father Nicholas Roupp (2) who served through 1859. Other missionaries who followed were Father Louis Hoffer (3) in the early months of 1860; Father Joseph Anthony Heimo (4) who stayed for about a year beginning in June, 1860; Father V. Arnould (5) until mid-1862; Father J.M. Guy (6) from September, 1862, until September, 1863, and Father F. Berthaud (7) who visited St. Genevieve's in 1864 and 1865.

It was evident that the French Catholics of Holmes county felt the loss of Father Rollinet, their first resident pastor, who was with them for almost ten years. The next priest to stay for any length of time was Father Joseph Anthony Heimo (8) who came in September, 1863. He had been there before in 1860. His pastorate lasted for six years. It was during this time that Bishop Rappe of Cleveland returned the administration of Holmes county back to Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati. St. Genevieve's was again under Purcell's direction.

A few years later, in 1868, the Diocese of Columbus was established and Holmes county was in the new diocese. Bishop Sylvester H. Rosecrans was now responsible for St. Genevieve's. Father Heimo in his first diocesan report (9) revealed that there were 300 souls in his parish. According to the report for the year there were 40 school children; 15-18 births; 3-4 marriages and 3-4 deaths. Confraternities in the parish were those of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph and of St. Aloysius. Father Heimo also listed a mission, Sts. Peter and Paul, which was evidently at Napoleon (now Glenmont). He gave no information about this mission.

And so the parish was growing. The number of baptisms reached 24 in 1869. There is little wonder that the old church, built in 1849, was no longer adequate. Accordingly, Father Heimo and the congregation began preparations for a new one. The work was begun in 1868. Since the diocese of Columbus was established on March 3 of that year, it was Bishop Rosecrans who, on May 7, bought 48 perches (about $\frac{1}{4}$ acre) from John B. Roussel. It was adjoining the church property, and was probably purchased because of the erection of the new church.

Although construction of the church began in 1868, it was not completed until 1869. It was a frame building. The 8-foot wood cross which topped its spire was made by Jean Baptiste Cabot who took care of the cemetery for many years.

Bishop Rosecrans was on his first visitation to the northern part of his diocese in October, 1868. He was at Marges and Malvern in Carroll county on Monday, October 25. The next day a carriage came from Calmoutier and took the Bishop and Father Wisman (10) to St. Genevieve's in time for High Mass. The celebrant of the Mass, Father Kalop (11), spoke briefly in French, after which the Bishop preached in English. Then the Bishop confirmed 59.

The Bishop reported that the new church was under roof and quite respectable. He also noted that the congregation was resolved to finish it well and to have a schoolhouse and a priest's house besides (12).

Father Heimo was not to be there for the dedication of the church. His place was taken in March of 1869 by Father James McGourty (13). Bishop Rosecrans returned in July for the dedication. The event was recorded in the following entry in the

register of baptisms:

"On the 25th of July, 1869, the Right Reverend Bishop Rosecrans dedicated the new church, an immense number of people witnessing the Solemn ceremony. After High Mass, His Lordship blessed the bell, the sponsors being Mr. John Baptist Bardin and Mrs. Lydia Jeanvoine. Both church and bell received the name of the patroness of the parish - St. Genevieve. Rev. Mr. Walsh (14) of Louisville, and Rev. Mr. Ankley (15) of Wooster, assisted the Rt. Rev. Bishop in the ceremonies of the day. The sponsors of the bell generously donated \$70 to the Church, one, \$50, the other, \$20."

The new bell weighed 1800 pounds and was blessed in the center aisle of the church.

Work on the church being completed, the little congregation did not stop until the priest's house was finished. The project was directed by Father James McGourty, and completed the following year, 1870. Sorrow again came to the parish when the pastor died on September 21, 1870. He was buried in the cemetery of the parish. He was only 29 years of age.

St. Genevieve School

It is now hard to realize that St. Genevieve's at one time had a small school. After the new church was completed in 1870, it was decided to use the old church for a school. It was a bold undertaking, and survived for some years.

Teachers in the school were men, all of them immigrants from France. Children were taught to the age of 12 when they were sent to the public school. All textbooks were in French and that was the language used in the school. The fundamental three R's were taught, as well as religion. The priests gave religious instruction each day in the rectory.

While the priests and the teachers spoke French, the people used a patois of the language. The result was that the children could understand the patois but could not speak it, speaking to their parents in the French they learned at school.

Discipline must have been rather strict according to one description. "Pupils sat on long benches with their backs to the side walls, boys on one side and girls on the other. In front of each row was a long table with the top sloping toward the line of children. The teacher sat at the end of the room with a thick short pointed stick in his hand. If a pupil didn't tend to business, whiz went the stick aimed at the culprit. When the whole class was delinquent, such as the time on a skating excursion and were late returning, they had to kneel for twenty minutes or so with their knees on sticks of stove wood." (16)

The school was discontinued in 1882. Thereafter the children went to the nearby public school, known as the Boontown school.

Late in 1870 Father W. T. Hawe (17) was in charge of the parish. He remained through most of 1872. Father Serge de Stchoulepnikoff (18) became pastor in 1873. In his report to the Bishop of Columbus he gave his residence as at Calmoutier "at present." He had 23 children attending catechism classes. He gave an inventory of church items: "One chalice, a very poor ciborium, a small missal, an old missal, six vestments, a cope, a vellum, two old censers and a sufficient quantity of church linen." Father Serge, as he was called, later resided at Millersburg.

Father Joseph Goegel (19) took care of St. Genevieve's from the spring of 1873 to February, 1874. The next year the parish was visited by Father Hugh McDevitt (20) and by Father Michael Ahern (21). During several months of 1876 Father P. A. Petrarra (22) visited Calmoutier.

The people of St. Genevieve's had their next pastor for about twelve years. He was Father Peter Bishop (23) who came from Millersburg from 1876 to 1888. In a report made to Bishop Watterson of Columbus on Sept. 1, 1884, about his parish at Millersburg and his two missions, Napoleon and Calmoutier, he stated that there were 58 families at St. Genevieve's where 30 children attended catechism classes. Three years later his report was almost the same, 54 families and 35 children.

Father Bishop was succeeded by Father P. J. Weisenberger (24) in August, 1888, and his place was taken early in 1889 by Father A. L. Leininger (25).

Bardin states that Father Joseph Pollmann (26) was made rector of Glenmont on July 14, 1893, with Millersburg and Calmoutier as missions. In his first report to the Bishop of Columbus, Father Pollmann gave his residence as Pictoria (formerly Napoleon, and later Glenmont). There were 62 families at Calmoutier according to his report. It was during his pastorate that the church at Calmoutier was renovated. During these years, according to Bardin, the rectory at Calmoutier was rented to small families.

In the summer of 1899 Father Pollmann resigned because of poor health. Monsignor Specht, administrator of the Diocese of Columbus at the time, appointed Father Bede Hansen (27) pastor at Millersburg, with Glenmont and Calmoutier as missions. In 1902 Father J. J. Wagner (28) was appointed to succeed Father Hansen.

Father Francis Seeber (29) came to Millersburg as pastor in 1903. He also had charge of the two Holmes county missions. On January 1, 1904, he reported that there were 300 souls in the parish at Calmoutier, where he went every second and fourth Sunday. During the year covered by his report 22 children made their First Communion. There were four marriages that year. Two societies, St. Aloysius and Children of Mary, had been established in the parish.

Bishop Hartley visited St. Genevieve's in May, 1906. The import of his visit is found in an account written by Father Seeber in the parish financial book.

"Calmoutier, May 20, 1906. Meeting called by Rt. Rev. Bishop of Columbus, J. J. Hartley, in behalf of the congregation. In this meeting the men of the congregation promised to support a resident pastor, and the Bishop promised to send a priest provided the people support him. The following resolutions were taken: 1) That the people of the congregation raise one thousand dollars a year in subscription. Rev. F. Seeber appointed to see every member what they were ready to do in this respect. 2) That the people of the congregation furnish horse and buggy to pay half of it the first year and the priest the other half the first year, with the understanding that in the following year the one half be paid back to the priest. All voted in favor of above stated proposition May 20, 1906. F. Seeber, pastor."

As a result of the meeting Father Seeber became resident pastor at Calmoutier July 1, 1906 (30). At the time he wrote:

"Prior to my coming to Calmoutier, a family by name of Ed. Boigregain lived in the parsonage, two rooms being reserved for the priest, who said Mass twice a month, and during his stay from Saturday till Monday occupied the two

rooms. Being appointed resident pastor July 1, 1906, the family moved out in August, 1906, to make room for the priest. I found here property of the congregation August, 1906, a complete bedroom set in the upper room; in the lower room one stove, six pictures, one looking glass, curtains, carpets for the two rooms, six chairs, one rocking chair, one lawn mower, another rocking chair, blinds for the two rooms, wash bowl, pitcher, and a few minor articles property of the house. August, 1906. Francis Seeber, Pastor."

Father Seeber proved to be a zealous pastor. Repairs were made in the church in 1904, and in the following year two new statues were added, that of the Sacred Heart and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1905 a special committee was appointed to take charge of the new cemetery. On December 14, 1906, Father Seeber proudly opened a parish library with 90 books. Among the parish societies which he organized was the Catholic Knights of Ohio which continued for some years.

In October, 1910, Father Seeber was succeeded by Father P. Cornelius Schneider. Five years later Father Walter Minder became pastor. He was there for the observance of the golden jubilee of the church. Bishop Hartley of Columbus celebrated the jubilee Mass on June 10, 1918. Hundreds of people attended, including many former parishioners. In the afternoon a class of 40 were confirmed. Assisting the Bishop were Father E. Freiburger of Lafayette, Indiana; Father Edward J. Kramer, of Wooster; Father John Fagan, of Millersburg; Father Clement Teipe, of Danville, and the pastor, Father Minder. The bishop impressed all with his instruction, stressing the patriotic duty of all. He made it clear to his hearers that it was their duty to be loyal Christians and Catholics, but that at this time of national peril we must be Americans. He discouraged the idea of religious creeds objecting to army service and declared it the duty of every man regardless of creed or nationality, to serve his government.

Father Anthony Nickel followed Father Minder as pastor in 1926, and remained until 1933 when Father C. A. LeBlanc came to St. Genevieve's.

Tragedy came to the parish August 28, 1940, when their beloved St. Genevieve church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. There were only about 25 families in the parish at the time, but the courage was sufficient to undertake the building of a new church. Work was started with the approval of Bishop Hartley. The cornerstone was laid early in 1941. By May 11 the new edifice was ready for dedication. Bishop Hartley officiated at the impressive ceremonies.

During these years St. Genevieve's had to rely upon the annual summer festivals for support. These became favorite homecoming events for all former parishioners. They were joined by hundreds of others. The festivals reached their peak during the pastorate of Father Andrew Hohman who succeeded Father LeBlanc in 1945. During Father Hohman's time it was not unusual for several thousand people to attend the summer fund-raising festival.

In 1952 Father Bernard Jones became pastor. He in turn was replaced by Father George Marzluf in 1956. Two years later the small parish rejoiced in the ordination of the first of its sons to the Priesthood.

Anthony Louis Chenevey was born July 31, 1928, the son of Cyril Francis Chenevey and Helen Mary Becker. He was baptised at St. Genevieve's the following August 5. He attended the elementary and high schools of Salt Creek township before going to Duquesne university, Pittsburgh. He next entered the Society of St. Paul seminary at Canfield, Ohio. Later he was sent to the St. Paul International seminary, Rome,

where he completed his studies for the priesthood. He was ordained in Rome, July 6, 1958.

Father Chenevey celebrated his First Solemn Mass in St. Genevieve's, Calmoutier. The sermon for the occasion was delivered by Father George Marzluf, pastor. Assisting were Father Andrew Hohman, Crooksville; Father Chester A. LeBlanc, Columbus; Father Felix Carosso and Brother Aloysius Milella, of the Society of St. Paul, Canfield, Ohio, and Father Bernard Jones, Strasburg.

Father Chenevey's mother was deceased at the time of his ordination. He is one of five children, and is now editor at Alba House, publishing company, Staten Island, N.Y.

Other priests to serve St. Genevieve's were Father Michael Tabit (1963-1966), Father Robert Schuer (1966-1967), Father Eugene Yoris (1967-1970) and Father John Gamba, who has remained until the present.

In his history of the parish Father Chenevey lists the following religious vocations: Sister Helen Therese (Mary M.) Semonin, IHM (1893-1968); Sister Priscilla Marthey, CSA (d. Oct. 1966); Sister Joan (Grace) Cholley, CSA (d. June 1, 1975); Sister Gertrude (Blanche) Cholley, CSA (d. June 1, 1975); Sister Eugenia (Lucille) Hosfeld, CSA; Brother Austin (Paul) Guenther, CSC; Sister Gratia (Virginia) Hosfeld, OSF, and Father Chenevey.

The parish was officially closed October 1, 1981. Membership within its actual boundaries had dwindled to a very few. Over the years the constant decrease had been noticed. At one time as many as 50 farms in the area were owned by members of the parish. Owners died, or moved away. Members of the Amish religious sect, already in the neighborhood, bought most of the farms. Today the little brick church and its cemetery stand in mute testimony of the glory that once was.

- (1) Rev. F. X. Mauclerc, Society of Mary (1817-1876). Returned to France.
- (2) Rev. Nicholas Roupp, returned to Germany.
- (3) Rev. Louis Hoffer (1824-1897), pastor at Louisville, Stark county.
- (4) Rev. Joseph A. Heimo, died at Glenmont, April 12, 1859, aged 50 years.
- (5) Rev. Victor Arnould, pastor St. Peter's, Canton.
- (6) Rev. J. M. Guy is reported to have returned to France.
- (7) Rev. F. Berthaud: no information available.
- (8) Rev. Heim, see note 4 above.
- (9) Columbus Diocese Archives, Parish Census Reports.
- (10) Rev. Bernard Wissman (1842-1891) died at Malvern, Ohio, Aug. 20, 1891.
- (11) Rev. Kalop: no information found.
- (12) "Catholic Telegraph," Cincinnati, Nov. 4, 1868. Archives of the Archdiocese.
- (13) Rev. James McGourty, died at Calmoutier.
- (14) Rev. Francis Walsh, diocese of Cleveland.
- (15) Rev. Fridolin Ankly, Wooster, Ohio.
- (16) "The Daily Record," Wooster, Ohio.
- (17) Rev. William T. Hawe (1847-1882) died at Baltimore, Jan. 18, 1882.
- (18) Rev. Serge de Stchoulepnikoff (1819-1874) later pastor at Circleville, Ohio
- (19) Rev. Joseph Goegel: no further information.
- (20) Rev. Hugh J. McDevitt, went to Oregon.
- (21) Rev. Michael Ahern (1840-1910)
- (22) Rev. P. A. Petrarra: no information.
- (23) Rev. Peter Bishop: no definite information.
- (24) Rev. Januarius Weissenberger (1822-1890), died at Dover, Ohio.
- (25) Rev. A. L. Leininger, afterwards pastor at St. Nicholas', Zanesville, Ohio.

- (26) Rev. Joseph Pollmann, served later at Minerton, Ohio, until sickness caused his death.
- (27) Rev. Bede Hansen, later pastor at Pomeroy, Ohio.
- (28) Rev. J. J. Wagner
- (29) Rev. Francis Seeber (1870-1924) died Sept. 5, 1924, and is buried at St. Luke's cemetery, Danville, Ohio.
- (30) St. Genevieve parish financial book.
- (31) Rev. P. Cornelius Schneider, died in Columbus in 1962.

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Calmoutier, St. Genevieve's, Recorded Burials, 1836-1872

Burial records given here are only those found in the register of sacraments, 1836-1872. They were written in French, while the baptisms were written in Latin. The first burial was that of Matthew Bigey, 79, a widower.

- 1849, Dec. 2: Matthew Bigey, aged 79, widower of Catherine Simonin, died Dec. 1, 1849, in the communion of the faithful, and his body was buried on the second of the said month by me the undersigned priest in the presence of several of his relatives. Aug. Rollinet, priest, missionary apost.
- 1850, Jan. 28: Marie Augustine Boige grain, 7 years, died 27th, buried 28th January, 1850, in the presence of her father, Joseph Boige grain, and Francis Boige grain, and the others signing. P. Boige grain, Jh. Boige grain, Etienne Marthey and Jean Baptist Bardin. Aug. Rollinet, priest, miss. apost.
- 1850, May 2: Etienne Varon, 47, husband of Jeanne Claude Moignot. Buried May 2, 1850. Present were son, Etienne, Jean Baptist Roussel, Francois Varon. Aug. Rollinet, Priest, miss. apost.
- 1850, May 15: Joseph Courtot, 53, husband of Jeanne Claude Labey, died May 14, 1850. Buried May 15, 1850. Present were Joseph Courtot, son of the deceased, and Francois Bardin. Aug. Rollinet, priest, miss. apost.
- 1850, Oct. 28: Claude Antoine Alexander Lonier, 23, died October 28, 1850; buried same day. Present were Francois Lonier, his father, and August Lonier, brother. Aug. Rollinet, priest, miss. apost.
- 1850, Nov. 5: Victor, age 3, son of Jean Pierre Bresson and Melanie Meunier; buried Nov. 5, 1850. Present were his father and Victor Mougine, godfather. Aug. Rollinet, priest, miss. apost.
- 1852, Feb. 18: Francoise Morhang, w. Pierre Etienne Lab, aged 65, died Feb. 18; buried the next day in Assumption cemetery among French people of Bolivar. Present were Auguste, Louis and Alexis Lab, sons. Aug. Rollinet, priest, miss. apost.
- 1852, March 16: Francois Joseph Athanase, 11 months, son of Auguste Echeman and Francoise Barbier; died March 16; buried March 17, 1852, St. Genevieve's. Present were his father and Francois Echeman, brother. Aug. Rollinet, priest, miss. apost.
- 1860, Jan. 12: Francois Basile Pignard, aged 55, died January 10, 1860; buried January 12 in the presence of his two sons and other relatives. Signed by Xavier Pignard, Auguste Pignard, J.L. Beucher, A. Danton(?). [No priest signed.]

- 1863, Aug. 1: Burial of Louis Charles Felix Bresson, aged 3 months 19 days.
J. M. Guy
- 1863, Aug. 22: Eugene Emile, son of Victor Stutz and Sophia Cholley. Age one year, 18 days.
J. M. Guy
- 1863, Sept. 3: Burial of Pierre Clement, son of Joseph Clement and Eugenie Roussel. Aged 16 months.
J. M. Guy
- 1863, Aug. 26: Burial of Mary Augusta Lucy, daughter of Edward Rouhier and Mary Roussel. Aged 22 months.
J. M. Guy
- 1863, Sept. 7: Burial of Rosalia Marthey, daughter of Etienne Marthey and Augustina Euphrasia Grojean. Aged 12 months.
J. M. Guy

(This concludes the burials recorded in the early period of the parish. Other sacramental records will be found in future issues of the "Bulletin".)

Gifts and Acquisitions

- 1) "Catholic Columbian," microfilm, Jan. 5, 1884, through Dec. 26, 1885, courtesy of University of Notre Dame Archives.
- 2) "Prayers, House of Representatives, 103rd General Assembly, State of Ohio," by Rev. Elmer Boyden, Chaplain, Jan. 5, 1959 to Aug. 1, 1959. Gift of Bishop Clarence G. Issenmann.
- 3) Songs at Twilight by Teresa Beatrice O'Hare, Columbus, 1897. Autographed copy. Gift of Miss Marion Swickard.
- 4) Louisville Catholicism and Its Cathedral by Clyde F. Crews, 1973. Gift of Bishop Herrmann.
- 5) Lager and Liberty, German Brewers of 19th Century Columbus, by Donald M. Schlegel, Columbus, 1982.
- 6) Biographical Sketches of General Nathaniel Massie, General Duncan McArthur, Captain William Wells and General Simon Kenton, by John McDonald, Dayton, Ohio, 1852. Reprint by Ross County Genealogical Society, 1979. Gift of Mrs. Leo Rieder.
- 7) Sonnets and Other Verses by Rev. Francis A. Gaffney, O.P., P.J. Kenedy & Sons, New York, 1916. Gift of Mrs. Genevieve Frison.
- 8) "The Crusader," Vol. I, No. 1, to Vol. I, No. 7, Dec. 1934 to June, 1935, monthly of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, St. Charles seminary unit, Columbus. Gift of Father Robert Harwick.
- 9) Sermons of Bishop Hartley, 1909-1943, 21 loose leaf binders, typed (some written). Gift of Bishop Hettinger.
- 10) "The Development of Catholic Social Doctrine from Pope Leo XIII to Pope Paul VI," by Rev. Msgr. John P. Kleinz, Columbus, Ohio. 1979. Gift of the author.
