

Barquilla del Santa Maria

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ST. PATRICK'S DAY AT JUNCTION CITY, 1855

The following letter appeared in Vol. 2, No. 4 (April 1855) of The Collegian, "A monthly periodical devoted to religion, literature and the advancement of youth." This little paper was published at St. Joseph's College in Perry County, Ohio. (Courtesy of the Archives, Motherhouse of St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus.)

Mr. Editor. -- Wishing to communicate to our friends through the columns of your estimable paper the celebration of Ireland's illustrious Patron; at St. Patrick's church, Jackson township; please pardon my presumption in soliciting the insertion of the following lines into your little journal.

On the morning of the 17th, the first thought that engaged me, was to make all possible haste for the start to St. Patrick's, in order to arrive in due time for the celebration, and my sanguine hopes were buoyed up with the anticipations of a joyous anniversary. From the inclemency of the weather for several days previous, many sturdy pedestrians were debarred from a participation in the ceremonies, in consequence of the creeks being unusually swollen. It grieved us, who were fortunately better equipped for the joyful trip, to meet those zealous children of the church return with disappointed anticipations. Among them we recognized many sons of the Emerald Isle, repairing thither, no doubt, to receive the Bread of Life from the hands of the minister of God. This I had strong reasons to believe, from the piety and unusual number I witnessed to approach the table of our Lord. I was subsequently confirmed in my conjecture by the worthy and zealous pastor, the Rev. J. V. Edelen.

After many windings and meanderings incident to the traveller in this beautiful and romantic region, we arrived fortuitously at the tolling of the first bell; it was precisely 9 o'clock. How delighted we were to behold the pious and faithful christians of this extensive community pouring in from all quarters. Straightway they proceed to the resting place of their departed friends in order to comply with the divine admonition of the sacred volume, which says that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins."

Having discharged this pious tribute to the memory of the dead, they hasten their pace towards that chaste and beautiful chapel which adorns the classic scenery of this locality; the situation of this edifice on a beautiful and romantic eminence, amid the gigantic oak of the forest, and the tasteful

architecture render ample satisfaction to the distant visitor. But while engaged in this agreeable survey we were not at the same time indifferent to what was passing in a contiguous circle of youths vieing with each other in eulogy of the great Saint, whose festival they assembled to commemorate. They dwelt particularly on the unerring faith of the Greek church since the days of its founder notwithstanding the bloody persecutions and vile machinations that have been continually resorted to for the past three centruries by a continual succession of merciless tyrants, who sought to despoil them of that primitive faith which was implanted in the bosoms of their ancestors.

Our attention was suddenly diverted to a different object by the second tolling of the bell, at which all repared in silence to the house of God. It is needless to say with what pious fervor all assisted at the celebration of the divine mysteries. Profound attention and devotion are the distinguishing traits in the character of the Catholic worshiper. Through the zealous labors of the respected pastor, the church has been furnished with a splendid organ; how charming it must have been for the congregation th have heard for the first time its solemn peals in concert with hymns in parise of God. The Choir of the Somerset Church was present on the occasion and added not a little to the harmony and magnificence of the sacred chant. A most eloquent and impressive discourse, on the subject of the day, was delivered by the Rev. J. V. Daly; we think a sermon better calculated, to convince persons of all denominations of the nature and true extent of the veneration rendered by Catholics to the Saints of God; and also the best means of giving them appropriate honor, could not be delivered.

We congratulate the zealous Catholics of Jackson on the happy issue of that celebration. We praise them for their zeal, not only in raising their beautiful edifice, but also for decorating it in a most becoming manner, and we hope that by the sincerity of their faith and the intercession of their illustrious Patron, while sojourning in this Vale of sorrows; that they may in a more glorious region participate with him in the joys of his and their God.

CIVIS.

AN IRISH PRIEST VISITS CHILLICOTHE

by Donald M. Schlegel

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Catholic Church in Ireland, though of ancient foundation, was in the early years of recovery from three centuries of varying degrees of repression. This period witnessed the renewal of the Church's public life and the building up of organizations and institutions for her work in Ireland, at the same time that such work was being carried out for the first time in Ohio; here, from the European perspective, the Church was in its infancy. In this same period in which priests were travelling from Ohio to Europe (many to Germany) seeking funds for the erection of churches, schools, orphanages, etc. and seeking priests and nuns to staff them, the Catholic bishops of Ireland sent one of their trusted priests to this country to collect money for their proposed Catholic University in Dublin. This was Rev. James Donnelly of the diocese of Clogher, who had been born in 1823,

educated at Maynooth, and in 1848 had been appointed professor on the first faculty of St. Macartan's Seminary in Monaghan in his home diocese.

The Diary

Father Donnelly spent four years in this country, from 1851 to June 1855, during which time he kept a diary containing brief notes of events and encounters, impressions, observations, and reflections. Part of these diaries, which are in custody of the present Bishop of Clogher, were published by the Clogher Historical Society in 1975.(1) The published portions begin in early May 1853 when Father Donnelly was in Milwaukee. Within the next thirty days he travelled an astounding distance and visited, among other places, Galena, Ill.; Dubuque, Iowa; Sinsinawa and Stillwater, Wisconsin; St. Paul; Peoria and Alton, Ill.; and St. Louis, Missouri.

On Tuesday, June 7, he passed through Cincinnati on his way to Detroit and returned late on the evening of the eighth. He remarked, "Farmers and waggons then arranged in streets for market. Sleep in these all night." The next day he was up at 4:30, "Celebrated at Cathedral, a glorious structure," and boarded a riverboat for Louisville. On the tenth he returned again to Cincinnati. "On Jacob Shader at 11 am for Cincinnati, grandest boat I saw out of the Hudson. Fine view of the Ohio today, la belle riviere of the French. 3 hours talk with an infidel, despaired of peace or conviction, once had it, envied me. All educated Protestants so, says he. Fair man, good-hearted, kind and well-tempered."

On Saturday June 11 he reached Cincinnati at 4 a.m. That day he "drove round city churches, convents, seminary (built by Slevins at 22,000 dls), dined at Cathedral." At 2:30 that afternoon he and his travelling companion, Father Mullen, boarded the east-bound train. Father Mullen got off at Westboro for a side trip to Fayetteville in Brown County, where Rev. C. Daly had charge of St. Patrick church and missions in the vicinity. Father Donnelly remained on the train to Hillsboro. "Staged from Hillsborough to Chillicothe, 27 miles, arrived at 2 am. All arose to greet me, trouble finding house. Met Indian Missioner Baraga." His notes of interest for his brief stay in Chillicothe on Sunday June 12: "Felt in tune today. Fine men Rud, Boulger and Ford. McGirr sexton, Clogher parish, concursus at Seminary with Carny, etc, fine man." He left Chillicothe and "Slept poorly in the stage," arriving in Hillsboro at 5 a.m. and boarding the railroad back toward Cincinnati. "Mullen met me in cars. He got only 130 [dollars] in Fayetteville after all. Bad manners to him." At Loveland he "bathed in Little Miami River. Water snake pursued 20 minutes. Mullen frightened, wouldn't go into water." There he boarded another train bound for New York.

The remaining two years of Father Donnelly's visit to America were spent in the seaboard states, centered in Providence, New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. He visited the centers of Catholicism so familiar to students of the history of Catholic families of Ohio, near Gettysburg, Emmitsburg, and Loretto, the last of which he especially praised.

Chillicothe

Father Donnelly's decision to visit Chillicothe demonstrates its relative importance in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati at that time. In 1853,

Chillicothe was one of only four cities in the Archdiocese, other than Cincinnati, which had more than one congregation, the others being Hamilton, Dayton, and Columbus. Each of these four had a German and an Irish congregation, each with its own church: St. Stephen and St. Mary in Hamilton, the Church of Emmanuel and St. Joseph church in Dayton, Holy Cross and St. Patrick in Columbus, and St. Peter and St. Mary in Chillicothe. Though not mentioned in the diary, Father Donnelly could have made brief stops at Hamilton and Dayton while on the railroad from Cincinnati to Detroit on June 7. A trip to Columbus may have been considered too long and the prospects for a large collection too remote, since St. Patrick's congregation was just then building its own church. Catholics were also more numerous in Chillicothe; in the mid-1840's Chillicothe claimed 1,500 while Columbus had only 700.

Chillicothe, the seat of justice for Ross County and the former capital of the State, was described in 1846 as "the center of trade in the Scioto valley" and the center of a large and rich agricultural region. For many years, since receiving its first pastor in 1837, it had been the center of the Church's activities in the entire Scioto valley, from Portsmouth to Delaware and beyond, a distance of over 110 miles. In 1853 St. Mary still had missions at Circleville, Pleasant Valley, Frankfort, Williamsport, New Holland, and Piketon. By 1853 the German Catholics were worshipping at St. Peter church; the Irish had purchased a former Methodist church and had dedicated it to our Lady; and the Sisters of Notre Dame, from Cincinnati, were conducting an academy for girls. Chillicothe's Catholic community showed signs of prosperity which attracted Father Donnelly in his quest for funds for the Catholic University.

The Names Mentioned

First, it must be stated with regard to the persons mentioned by Father Donnelly that the simple statement "Fine men" was quite a compliment. In Louisville he had found only a "Poor set of priests" and he made similar candid remarks about others.

The "Indian Missioner Baraga" was Rev. Frederick Baraga, D.D., the well-known missionary to the Indians of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He was born in Dobernic, Illyria in 1797, ordained in 1823, and came to Cincinnati, where he lived in the seminary for a time, in January 1831. Between the years 1832 and 1855 in conjunction with his missionary activities he published several books in the Ottawa and Chippewa languages. He was appointed vicar-apostolic of Upper Michigan by Pope Pius IX on July 29, 1853 and was consecrated in Cincinnati the following November 1. When erected, his vicariate contained just six churches, five schools, and five priests. He travelled to Rome in 1854, where he secured presents from the Pope and five priests for his work. Upper Michigan became the diocese of Sault Ste. Marie in 1857. Bishop Baraga died in Marquette in 1868. Why he was in Chillicothe just before his appointment as vicar-apostolic is not known, but it can be surmised that he, like Father Donnelly, was seeking donations for the work of the Church.

"Rud" is something of a mystery. The name, as it stands, is not recognizable as that of any priest who served in this area. Rev. James Reid, born in Ireland June 11, 1794, was ordained for the Cincinnati archdiocese in 1832, but his last assignment in Ohio appears to have ended when he left St.

Dominic church in Guernsey County around 1839. (He died in Beaver, Pa. in 1868.) The most likely explanation is that the name is an error, in writing or in transcription, for "Leib." Rev. Edward Lieb, O.S.F., a Capuchin from Austria, was pastor of Chillicothe St. Peter parish from September 1851 until his retirement in November 1881. Father Lieb was born in 1802 and ordained in 1830. He was stationed at Linz, Austria and later at Path, Hungary. For several years he lived in the royal court at Vienna as tutor to Maximilian, later Emperor of Mexico. He was an accomplished linguist and a noted authority on canon law. When Archbishop Purcell was in Europe in 1851 he met Father Lieb and induced him to accompany him to America. Chillicothe St. Peter was his only pastorate here. He was a familiar figure on the streets of the city, clad in conventional black, with military cape in season, his snow-white hair covered with a high silk hat, and carrying a gold-headed cane. He died in Chillicothe on April 3, 1889. (2)

Boulger was "the genial Father Boulger," Rev. Thomas Joseph Boulger, pastor of St. Mary's. His early life was thus described in his own words:

I was born in Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland October 31st, 1824. I commenced my classical course at a private school in that town, and, after the opening of St. Patrick's College in that town, there continued my studies and read one year's philosophy under the Rev. P. Leahy, afterward Archbishop of Cashel. In the year 1842, my widowed mother, with four daughters and two brothers, came to America. After a few months in New York, they moved to Cincinnati where Archbishop Purcell told my mother to send for me. I, accordingly, came out in the summer of 1843, entered the Seminary of St. Martin's, Brown County, Ohio, and remained there for two years, until the arrival of the Ursuline Community from France, when the Seminary was moved to Cincinnati, under charge of the Jesuits, where I continued my studies for two years longer, in the meantime living at the Archbishop's and attending the lectures at St. Xavier's, under Father Nota, S.J.

He was ordained by Archbishop Purcell on June 3, 1847. (3) His first assignment was at Danville in Knox County, where he spent four years. The 1881 History of Clark County mentions that he was one of the priests who "came transiently and officiated" in Springfield in 1850. (4) In September 1851 he moved to Chillicothe as pastor of St. Mary church. It was during his pastorate, in 1852, that the congregation moved out of the former Episcopal church building, first used by the Catholics in 1837, into the larger building purchased from the Methodists. In 1854 Father Boulger left Chillicothe for an assignment at St. Augustine church in Cincinnati; his next assignments were at Dayton St. Joseph, which he left in 1856 or 1857, and Middletown Holy Trinity. The Catholic Columbian (5) at the time of his death listed his subsequent assignments as London, St. Martin's (Brown County), St. Paris (Champaign County), and New Vienna, with a second, short stay at Danville St. Luke in 1874. However, there is some question as to the accuracy of this notice. The history of London St. Patrick parish does not mention him. The annual Catholic Directory in the late 1880's shows him returned to Ross County as pastor at Frankfort and in 1893 lists him as pastor at Waverly.

In the 1890's Father Boulger was assigned to the Church of the Atonement in Cincinnati, "but spent much time at Good Samaritan Hospital, where he was



Rt. Rev. James Donnelly, Bishop
of Clogher (1823-1893)



Rev. Thomas J. Boulger
(1824-1896)

able to devote much time to the patients while under treatment himself." He was reassigned to Holy Angels' church in Cincinnati but was there only a short time when he was killed in a railroad accident on July 12, 1896. "As was his custom, Father Boulger started out for an evening walk and stopped at the railroad crossing to talk to the switch-tender, who is one of his parishoners. As they were about to part a switch engine came down the track and Father Boulger attempted to cross in front of it, not heeding the switchman's warning." He was struck by the locomotive and died of head injuries at his rectory about midnight. His remains were carried to Chillicothe to rest beside his mother. (6) He was remembered as a scholarly priest who was revered by his parishoners and esteemed by all who knew him. He was of noble impulses, generous disposition, and a forgiving spirit. (7)

Ford was Rev. Michael Forde, A.M., who in 1853 was living at Chillicothe St. Mary and had charge of its many missions (listed above). He was born in Ireland and educated at Trinity College, Dublin; he studied at the seminary in Cincinnati and was ordained on November 21, 1851. After Father Boulger was called to Cincinnati in 1854, Father Forde served as pastor at St. Mary's until he was relieved of that duty in September 1855 to found nearby St. Peter's College. He was president and professor of Greek literature at the short-lived college, which was in many respects an Irish institution. Despite Father Donnelly's remark that these were all "fine men," Father Forde does not seem to have gotten along well with Archbishop Purcell, perhaps because of a difference of style more than anything else. Father Forde's successor at St. Mary's, Rev. J. N. Thisse, stated that his predecessor had left no record of

baptisms (or any other sacramental register, apparently); Father Forde complained that the new pastor had no sympathy for the struggling college. Father Forde seems not to have obtained the Archbishop's backing or approval for the college but began the undertaking on his own. He wrote to Purcell that he believed "that when the Brown County College did not succeed, you would be pleased to have one in another part of the diocese." At the opening of the college, Purcell permitted his name to be used among the references "only because he would not place obstacles in the way of the originators... whose intentions were as pure as could have been wished for..." (8)

After the college closed in 1856, "a dismal financial failure," Father Forde was assigned to teach at Mt. St. Mary's of the West Seminary in Cincinnati. This seminary had been built, as Father Donnelly remarked, at a cost of \$22,116.05 by "John and James Slevin, two brothers who were successful dry goods merchants 'with a generous, Celtic liberality.'" (9) By that October Father Forde was preparing to leave Mt. St. Mary's and nothing further is known of him. The St. Peter's College project appears to have been Father Forde's own idea; could the germ of this idea have been planted in his mind by Father Donnelly's visit on behalf of the proposed Irish University?

The sexton, McGirr, who was from Clogher parish in County Tyrone, apparently was Thomas McGirr, the only man of that surname who appears in the early sacramental registers of St. Mary's. The "concursum at Seminary with Carny" was described in Rev. J. E. McKenna's monumental Diocese of Clogher, Parochial Records, published in 1920, under the history of St. Macarten's Seminary:

The front portion, and the wings connecting it with the Chapel and Refectory, were roofed, but the windows were not glazed in August, 1846, when a public Concursum was held, in the present Museum, to select candidates for two free places in Maynooth College. There were one hundred candidates. The examination, oral and written, continued for three days. Sixteen were selected from the one hundred and brought to MacPhillip's Hotel, Monaghan, for a further examination. Here the number was further reduced to eight. Of the remaining ninety-two, some afterwards became students of the Seminary, and many became zealous priests in America and elsewhere. Immediately after the Concursum the first two on the list of selected candidates, James Garvey and Michael Carney, a school-master, were sent to Maynooth. (10)

On June 16, 1853, Mr. McGirr and Julia Poland were married in the presence of Father Boulger. (11) (The Poland family had been present at the first formation of the parish in 1837.) This couple's daughter Mary Frances and son Nicholas were baptized at St. Mary's in 1856. They appear to have left Ohio by 1860; nothing further is known of them.

Father Donnelly returned to Ireland and then spent some time in France before returning permanently to his home diocese. He became coadjutor of the Diocese of Clogher in 1863 and Bishop in 1864. His greatest achievement was the completion of the magnificent Cathedral of St. Macartan for his own diocese, which was consecrated in 1892. He died in 1893. The money which he had collected from America's Irish, poor and rich alike in their generosity, was used by the Irish hierarchy to establish in 1854 the Catholic University

of Ireland, with John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman as its first rector. The Catholic University was not a success as such, but it ultimately became University College, Dublin.

NOTES

- (1) Duffy, Joseph, ed., Clogher Record Album, A Diocesan History; Eniskillen, Cumann Seanchais Chlochair, 1975, ppl09-152.
- (2) Seventy-five Years of St. Peters (1846-1921); Chillicothe: Scholl Printing Co., 1922, p 3. Cited by David Lawrence Corcoran, The History of the Catholic Church in Ross County, Thesis, College of St. Charles Borromeo, Columbus, Sept. 11, 1956, pp 58-59.
- (3) Father Boulger wrote this in a letter to Rev. L. W. Mulhane for publication in his history of St. Vincent de Paul parish, Mt. Vernon.
- (4) History of Clark County, Ohio; Chicago: W. H. Beers & Co., 1881, p. 520.
- (5) Catholic Columbian, July 18, 1896, p 8.
- (6) *ibid.*
- (7) Souvenir of St. Mary's Church, Chillicothe, Ohio; Christmas 1898. Cited by Corcoran, cf note 2.
- (8) See "St. Peter's College, Chillicothe, Ohio, 1855" in the Bulletin, Vol. VII No. 7 (July 1981), pp 49-55.
- (9) First report of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, 1848-1852, published in the Catholic Telegraph Jan. 31, 1852. Cited by M. Edmund Hussey, A History of the Seminaries of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1829-1979; Norwood: Mt. St. Mary's Seminary of the West, 1979, p 15.
- (10) M'Kenna, Revd. J. E., P.P., M.R.I.A., Diocese of Clogher: Parochial Records; Eniskillen: Fermanagh Herald, 1920, Vol. I p 52.
- (11) Ross County Marriage Records, DAR transcription, Vol. 3, p 229.

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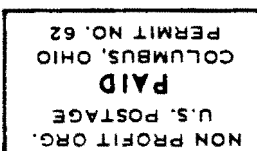
The following are some of the books purchased by the Society for its collection during the year 1985:

Delany, John J., Dictionary of American Catholic Biography; Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1984.

Hill, N.N., History of Knox County, Ohio; Mt. Vernon: A. A. Graham & Co., 1881 (Reproduction by Unigraphics, Inc.)

Catholic Baptisms in Western Pennsylvania, 1799-1828: Father Peter Helbron's Greensburg Register; Baltimore: reprinted by Genealogical Publishing Co., 1985.

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