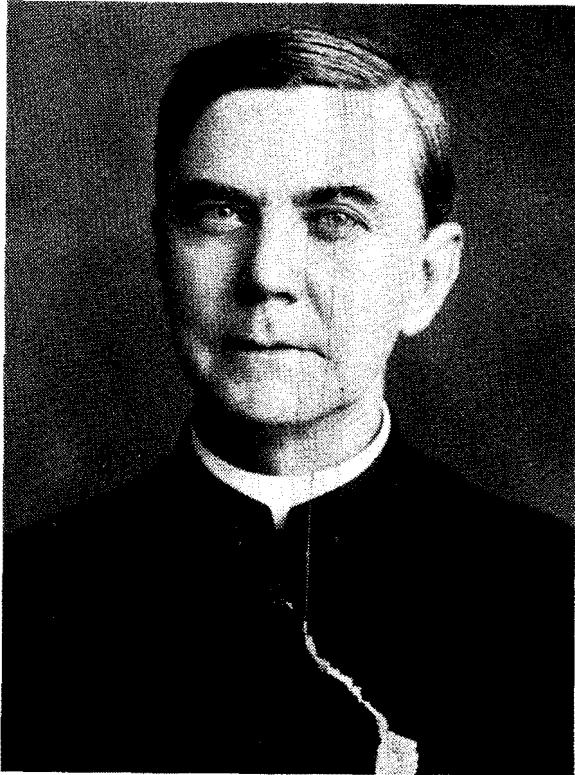


Barquilla del Santa Maria

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REV. L. W. MULHANE

Lawrence W. Mulhane was born on Feb. 21, 1856 in Berlin, Mass. and moved to Marietta with his parents at an early age. He studied at St. Aloysius Seminary in Columbus and was ordained on Nov. 7, 1869. He served at the Cathedral and as secretary to the bishop from 1880 to 1885. He then became pastor of Mt. Vernon St. Vincent de Paul parish, where he remained until his death on May 22, 1925. For some years he wrote "The Catholic Viewpoint," a column in the Catholic Columbian, which was nationally known.



REV. VICTOR F. O'DANIEL, O.P.

Born in Cecilville, Kentucky on Feb. 15, 1868, Father O'Daniel was educated at St. Rose's near Springfield, Kentucky, at St. Joseph's near Somerset, and at Louvain, Belgium. He was ordained in Columbus on June 16, 1891 by Bishop Watterson. He taught at St. Rose's, St. Joseph's, Benicia, Cal., and Washington, D.C. In 1907 he was appointed archivist and historian of the Dominican St. Joseph's Province. He was an internationally known philosopher, theologian, and historian. He died on June 12, 1960.

O'DANIEL AND MULHANE ON THE SECOND OLDEST CHURCH IN OHIO

Anthony J. Lisska
Denison University

(Concluded from Vol. XI, No. 9)

The July 30, 1920 issue of the Catholic Columbian contains a front page article on the upcoming centennial celebrations in Danville. The article joins the historical debate with the following passage: "According to most reliable history and records, St. Luke's Parish, Danville, is the second oldest parish in Ohio." While the editor, Mr. Carroll, was not an historian, nonetheless he did take an interest in historical matters pertaining to the Diocese of Columbus. Carroll's assertion, however, does not stand the test of historical scrutiny.

The study of the printed material undertaken for this essay clearly indicts the insupportability of Father Mulhane's claim that St. Luke's in Danville is the second oldest Catholic church in Ohio. This theme of Mulhane's was based on hearsay and parish tradition. Textual evidence provided in O'Daniel's and Lamott's works clearly indicates otherwise.

Two letters from Bishop Fenwick and an item in Bishop Flaget's Memorie provide evidence that the church in Lancaster and the first church constructed outside the city limits of Cincinnati were built before St. Luke's. In addition, it is clear that as early as 1820 a warehouse of some sort was used in Zanesville as a church.

Writing to Father J. A. Hill in Rome from Georgetown, D.C. on June 1, 1820, Father Fenwick provides a wonderful account of the progress of the Church in Ohio at that time as well as a vivid description of the ecclesiastical poverty of the Church in Ohio:

The church and house where we live are dedicated to Saint Joseph. Here we have a goodly estate -- a farm of three hundred and twenty acres. We have another church or chapel, called Saint Mary's, twenty miles distant from these (a reference to Lancaster); and a third at Cincinnati, one hundred fifty miles away, which is under the patronage of Saint Patrick. But we have not enough vestments, chalices and furnishings for one place. At St. Joseph's, we barely manage to make out with one chalice and a few old vestments belonging to Saint Rose's. These three churches have been erected within the last fifteen months. [Here O'Daniel says Fenwick had to have meant eighteen or nineteen months, based on the evidence that St. Joseph's was blessed on December 6, 1818.] Since coming to this state, we could have built four or five more chapels in different places, if we had had the means of constructing them. We are offered lands and lots in cities for this purpose; but such is the scarcity of money, the indifference of the times, and the want of charity in this regard, that we are not able to collect the funds necessary to build. In a word, we are totally without pecuniary resources, and have to depend solely on Divine Providence and the liberality of certain ones who have, up to the present, aided us in every way.... [O'Daniel, pp. 223-224.]

Fenwick's letter clearly indicates the first three churches established in Ohio: St. Joseph's near Somerset, St. Mary's in Lancaster, and St. Patrick's in Cincinnati. Quite probably, the "four or five more chapels" Fenwick mentions would include a church a Sapp's Settlement. In this letter, however, Fenwick explicitly mentions three churches, none of which is St. Luke's, existing in 1820.

Furthermore, there is additional textual reference to St. Mary's as built close behind St. Joseph's. Again writing from Georgetown, to a friend in London on November 8, 1818, Fenwick gives an account of his work in both Somerset and Lancaster. It should be noted that this letter was written almost a full month before St. Joseph's was blessed on December 6, 1818. He writes as follows:

I am at present in charge of the mission of Saint Joseph's with a young confrere. I built that new church, and hope before long to establish a convent there. Besides, I am building another church and convent at Lancaster, Fairfield County.... I have been obliged, to my great sorrow, to refuse other similar offers for want of missionaries. [O'Daniel, p. 216]

In a footnote, O'Daniel suggests that "this shows that Saint Mary's, Lancaster, dates back to 1819, instead of 1820, the date usually found in print." [page 217, footnote 4]

Both Lamott and O'Daniel write that the Christ Church congregation in Cincinnati dedicated a church on Easter Sunday, April 11, 1819. Lamott writes as follows on the first churches in Ohio:

Whilst this church was being built [St. Joseph's near Somerset], Father Fenwick began the erection of a second log church at Lancaster. The first church had been dedicated to St. Joseph. The second was placed under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary. About the same time a third chapel was begun in the state at Cincinnati.... [p. 30]

As evidence, Lamott also cites the letter of Fenwick to a friend in London dated November 8, 1818. Portions of this historically important letter were quoted above. This letter was translated and printed in Diario di Roma, January 23, 1819. [Cf. footnote 57 in Lamott, page 30]

In addition to Fenwick's letter, Lamott cites a passage in the Memorie of Bishop Flaget of Bardstown, published in 1836, in which Flaget wrote to Cardinal Franzoni, the Prefect of the Propaganda Office in Rome. Flaget recalls visiting Cincinnati in the spring of 1818 and at that time urging the congregation to build a church. This, Flaget suggested to them, was the best way to attract a resident pastor to Cincinnati. Flaget wrote the following about his church-building proposal to the Cincinnati group: "They gave the most solemn promise that they would do so, and they kept their word; for a year later it was under roof." [Lamott, pp. 30-31] Of course, the "year later" refers to the spring of 1819. Bishop Flaget returned to Cincinnati on June 21, 1819 and found that the church had already been used for liturgical services. [Lamott refers to Spalding's Life of Flaget, p. 201]

Furthermore, Father S. T. Wilson, the Dominican Provincial residing at St. Rose Priory in Springfield, Kentucky, wrote to a fellow Dominican, Father J. A. Hill, in Rome on March 16, 1820. Wilson, like Fenwick, was urging the Propaganda Office to consider making Cincinnati an episcopal see. Wilson wrote as follows: "Cincinnati, one of the most flourishing cities of the Western States, would be preferred to every other city, as there is there a good church." [Lamott, p. 36] Hill was the frequent recipient of letters from Fenwick and Wilson. Hill came to Ohio and admirably served as Fenwick's Vicar General for the new diocese.

Lamott writes that the edifice was "a plain frame structure, measuring about 55 feet by 30 feet, (and) was probably complete according to intention for Easter Sunday, 1819, and on that day Mass was said for the first time." [p. 38] A printed reference to Easter, 1819, as the scheduled date of completion appears in the March 13, 1819, edition of The Western Spy:

The Roman Catholics of Hamilton County are requested to forward to the treasurer...as large a portion of their subscriptions as they possibly can, as the committee will thereby be enabled to have the church ready for Divine Service by next Easter Sunday.

Given this evidence, Lamott suggests without hesitation that the Catholic Community of Christ Church built, had blessed, and used their church in 1819.

In the fall of 1822, after his consecration as bishop, Fenwick had the church building, originally constructed beyond the city limits, moved to a lot on Sycamore Street. In the moving process, the frame church fell apart and it had to be literally reconstructed on the new lot. Lamott writes that the project was completed before December 5, 1822 and notes that the new church was named St. Peter's. [p. 52, footnote 45] He does not say anything about the earlier church being named St. Patrick's. He writes that the name change went from "Christ Church" to St. Peter's. O'Daniel, on the other hand, suggests that only the original congregation was called Christ Church but the first church itself was placed under the patronage of St. Patrick. Lamott suggests that a brief schism occurred in the Cincinnati Catholic community over the moving of the church. Whether the name change to St. Peter's reflected this ecclesiastical unrest is unclear.

Lamott, strangely enough, makes no mention of St. Patrick's, although in his history he refers explicitly to O'Daniel's biography of Fenwick, which appeared a year earlier than his own history of the Cincinnati archdiocese. In addition, O'Daniel in his 1920 Catholic Columbian articles debating Father Mulhane, mentions Lamott's forthcoming book. One gets the impression both historians knew one another at least professionally. Lamott also cites references from the Archives of various Dominican institutions. Since O'Daniel was the archivist of the Dominican Province, Lamott certainly must have sought his permission to use materials.

Describing the churches in Cincinnati and Lancaster, O'Daniel writes, "Both these temples of worship have been described as plain, barn-like structures of plank. The dimensions of St. Patrick's are variously given as forty-five feet by thirty and fifty-five feet by thirty or thirty-five. Saint Mary's was somewhat smaller. Both were without ceiling and unplastered...[yet they] compared favorably with the churches of other denominations." [p. 217]

About this time, a congregation also had gathered in Zanesville. In the early nineteenth century, Zanesville was an important city on Zane's Trace, that well travelled highway through Ohio from Wheeling to Kentucky. Fenwick reports that a layman, John S. Dugan, purchased a warehouse which served as the church for the Catholic community of the Holy Trinity. In 1825, a new church was built, this time under the patronage of St. John the Evangelist.

In his biography of Fenwick, O'Daniel considers the churches which he believes were built and blessed in the middle part of the 1820's in Ohio. St. Paul's, near what Fenwick called the "present village of Dungannon, Columbiana County," was dedicated by Father Young on Rosary Sunday, October 3, 1824. It should be noted that at this time, Fenwick was in Europe on a "begging tour" finding monies and resources for his impoverished diocese. Fenwick was gone for almost two years, leaving Cincinnati on May 30, 1823 and returning to the city in April, 1825. O'Daniel wrote that St. Paul's was a brick church, which "seems to have succeeded a former log church, in the same locality, that had become too small for the congregation." [p. 295]

Referring to St. Luke's, O'Daniel wrote:

Later in the same month [October, 1824], probably the eighteenth, the feast of its patron, St. Luke's, a neat log church not far from the site of the modern town of Danville, Knox County, was blessed and opened for the faithful by the same missionary [Father Young]."
[pp. 295-296]

On the issue of the dating of St. Luke's, O'Daniel refers to a letter from Father J. A. Hill to Fenwick, sent to London and dated August 23, 1824. Hill was in charge of the Diocese of Cincinnati while Fenwick was on his European tour. Hill refers explicitly to St. Barnabas Church in Morgan County. Yet he does not say anything about St. Luke's in Danville. Again it is evident that O'Daniel's concern centers on the lack of textual evidence from these early Ohio missionaries indicating the existence of St. Luke's as a church before 1824. Hill's letter to Fenwick probably accounts for O'Daniel's listing of St. Barnabas Church before St. Luke's. Lamott too, in his chronological listing of churches in what became the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, lists 1824 as the founding and dedication date for St. Luke's. Furthermore, Lamott wrote that George Sapp gave the land to Fenwick; Lamott, however, does not refer to a date. Lamott, in listing the contents of Fenwick's will, notes that there is a reference to the land in Knox County being given to Fenwick by George Sapp. If Fenwick received this land on which a church was built before 1822, it seems highly unlikely that he would have omitted reference to it in his generally chatty letters discussing the state of Catholicism in Ohio. In his 1895 historical narrative on St. Luke's, Mulhane writes that "The parish was organized by Father Edward Fenwick, the Dominican, afterward the first Bishop of Cincinnati." [p. 79] But Fenwick makes no such early reference to St. Luke's. In his Lamy of Santa Fe, Paul Horgan wrote that the Sapp's Settlement land was given to the Catholic Church in 1822. Horgan does not provide a reference for this information.

What is one to make of all this historical data? First of all, there is enough textual information to assert that even if St. Luke's were founded in 1820, the best one could suggest historically is that it is the fourth oldest church in Ohio. Three other churches are dated in 1818 and 1819. St. Luke's

follows St. Joseph's near Somerset, St. Mary's in Lancaster, and St. Patrick's in Cincinnati. Furthermore, O'Daniel could find no evidence to place St. Luke's any earlier than seventh in Ohio ecclesiastical age.

Unless there are documents presently unknown which would give St. Luke's an earlier date, it seems evident that this church in Danville cannot be called the second oldest church in Ohio. At this writing, no response by Mulhane to O'Daniel or Lamott has been found. Mulhane's historical judgement was accepted in the first official history of the diocese published by Bishop Hartley. And we have seen earlier in this essay that the editor of the Catholic Columbian too accepted the 1820 date and the designation as "second oldest church in Ohio." Hence, because the only completed history of the diocese is often quoted and referred to in historical research, Mulhane's claims about St. Luke's have been widely accepted as correct historically. The historical evidence suggested in this essay is sufficient to question the veracity of Mulhane's position.

ENDNOTES

The author discovered the Mulhane/O'Daniel debate while engaged in research on a different topic for the Catholic Record Society. Both the editor of the Bulletin and the author thought this topic worth further investigation. The results of that fascinating search make up this essay.

The librarian at Ohio Dominican College generously loaned the author a copy of O'Daniel's biography of Fenwick from the College's Rare Book Room. The Reference Librarians at Denison University kindly assisted the author through computer searches for his much needed reference materials and then helped acquire them through inter-library loan. Megan Lisska thoughtfully proofread the manuscript -- and gave her father a compliment in saying that the article made sense and was interesting.

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ST. JOSEPH CHURCH
NEAR SOMERSET, PERRY COUNTY
BURIAL REGISTER, 1815-1873

(Continued from Vol. XI, Number 8)
1850

July 24 Catharine Cluny died in her house, age 47. Fr. P. Albertus Bokel
Aug. 18 Patrick Keenan, died in his house, age 67. Albert Bokel
Nov. 12 James McGahan died in his house, age 60. Albert Bokel
Dec. 31 James Lynch died, age 40. Fr. J. Aug. Kelly

1851

Jan. 24 Elizabeth Dumold died in her house, age about 30. Albert Bokel
Feb. 5 John Cain died in his house, age 18. Albert Bokel
Feb. 14 James Clark died in his house, age 20. P. Aug. Kelly
Feb. 19 Caroline Helen Taggard died in her house, age 25. Albert Bokel
Aug. 4 Sarra Garvey died in the house of her parents, age about 28. Albert Bokel
Aug. 8 Isabella Green died in her house, age 56. Fr. J. V. Daly
Aug. 18 Joanna Largy died in her house, age 55. J. V. Daly
Aug. 22 John Maginly died in his house, age 45. J. V. Daly
Oct. 23 James Hanlin died. Fr. R. N. Young

1852

Jan. 27 Margaret Hart died in her house, age 26. Albert Bokel
Jan. 31 D. [Domina = Mrs. ?] Sheeren died in her house, age 78 [or 75 ?]
Albert Bokel
Feb. 2 D. [Mrs.?] McDonnal died. Albert Bokel
[blank] Cornelius Crossen, buried at St. Joseph. [not signed]
July 14 Joseph Flowers, one day old. F. P. Poelking
July 22 Miles Green in his house, age 60. F. P. Poelking

1853

Jan. 31 Edward McChane died in his house, age 50. C. D. Bowling
Nov. 11 Ellenora Eckenrode, age 7. P. V. Edelin

1854

Feb. 2 Sarra Creighton died in her parents' house, age 32. J. V. Daly
Feb. 17 George Redmond, age 40. J. V. Daly
Mar. 23 Maria Creighton, age 4. J. V. Daly
--- 26 male infant Donnelly. J. V. Daly
Apr. 6 Margaret McNally, age 18. J. V. Daly
June 28 Anthony Dittoe (Benefactor of St. Joseph) age 89. Albert Bokel
June 29 D. [Mrs.?] Reily, age 75.
July 29 Arthur McMahan, age 16. Fr. P. Hyacinth Lynch
Aug. 9 Nancy Bonasteele, age 70. Hyacinth Lynch
Sept. 1 Mrs. Dumold, age 79. Albert Bokel
Sept. 1 Caecilia Sanders, age 12. Albert Bokel
Sept. 1 Francis McMahan, age 21. Albert Bokel
Sept. 22 Joseph Eugene Largy, age 4 years. Hyacinth Lynch
Sept. 25 George Brandstädter, age 70. Albert Bokel
Oct. 8 Caroline C. Griffen, age 28. Albert Bokel
Oct. 30 Maria Redmond, age 4. Albert Bokel

1855

Feb. 6 William Ed. Sterner, age 2 months. J. V. Edelin
 Feb. 15 Caroline Cain, age 7. Albert Bokel
 Feb. 23 Elizabeth Higgins, age 47. J. V. Edelin
 Mar. 6 Daniel O'Brien, age 74. Albert Bokel
 Apr. 11 Thomas Dollen, age 36. J. V. Daly
 Aug. 7 Infant of Mary Eckenrode, age 8 months. Albert Bokel
 Aug. 30 Patience Lynch died in her house, age 73. Albert Bokel
 Sept. 2 Helen Downy died in the house of her son, age 69. Albert Bokel
 Sept. 8 Cecilia Bennett died in her house, age 67. Albert Bokel
 Oct. 19 Francis Decko, age 77 years. Albert Bokel
 Dec. 29 Sachary Burgoon, died in the house of his parents, age 28. Albert Bokel

1856

Jan. 1 Frances Dollen, age 70. Albert Bokel
 Jan. 16 Infant of Anton Suiter. Albert Bokel
 Jan. 28 Philomena E. Fink, age 1 year. Albert Bokel
 Feb. 11 Ellen Dittoe died in her house, age 35 years 9 months. Albert Bokel
 Feb. 19 Henry Sterner died in his house, age 69. Albert Bokel
 Mar. 4 Thomas McKewen died near his house, age 73. Albert Bokel
 Apr. 23 Bridget Fink died in her house, age 25. Albert Bokel
 [blank] [blank] Gallagher died in his house. Albert Bokel
 July 6 [blank] Fielty died in his house, age 73. Albert Bokel
 Aug. 10 John Dittoe died in his house, age 72. Albert Bokel
 Aug. 17 [blank] was buried. [bottom of page]
 Aug. 17 Arabella Agnes, daughter of Daniel & Susanna McChristie, age 1 year 5 months.
 Sept. 2 Sarra Farrel died in her house. Fr. P. D. Noon
 Sept. 2 Magdalen Stalin died in her house. Albert Bokel
 Sept. 29 Infant James Cain was buried. Albert Bokel
 Nov. 16 Levy Burgoon died in his house, age 70, Albert Bokel
 Nov. 29 Sarra Martin died in her house, age about 93. Albert Bokel
 Dec. 7 James O'Kain.

Throughout 1856, 18 died in this parish.

1857

Jan. 25 Francis Stalter died in his father's house, age 7 years. Fr. P. V. Keogh
 Jan. 28 Maria Magdalena Stein died in her house, age 75 years. J. V. Edelin
 Feb. 8 Elizabeth Kintz died in her house, age 33. Albert Bokel
 Feb. 17 Maria Sterner died in her house. Albert Bokel
 Mar. 30 Infant son of Robert & Catharine Sanders, born the same day. A. Bokel
 Apr. 5 Silvester Keahoe, age 28. Albert Bokel

[To be continued]

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 197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor

