



Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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WAVERLY IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

The building pictured above is what now remains of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Waverly, Pike County, Ohio. The church was built in 1865 but was never completely paid for; it was lost in the year 1873 and was converted into an opera house. Some time later the roof was raised on jacks, the upper eight feet of the walls were removed, and it was used as a garage. It now serves as the Armbruster & Armbruster plumbing store, with the new front added in recent years where the church's tower and steeple once stood. The building is at the corner of East and Market streets. Armbruster & Armbruster made available the inset, which depicts the building when it was still a church.

Last year Mr. George Roger Higgins with the help of the older parishioners in Waverly assembled a history of the Church there based on traditional accounts. The story presented in this Bulletin is an attempt to document that history.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF WAVERLY, OHIO
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Monday, July 31, 1865. The great War between the States had ended with the surrender of the last Confederate troops. The boys from Ohio who had become men in the army were returning home to civilian life. The town of Waverly, it was hoped, would now experience the growth which it had expected, but which had been held in abeyance by the war, since it had become the seat of Pike County in 1861. On that July day Rt. Rev. Sylvester H. Rosecrans, Auxiliary Bishop of Cincinnati, blessed the cornerstone of the first Catholic Church in Waverly, the Church of the Immaculate Conception. He was assisted by Rev. Timothy J. Tierney, pastor of Chillicothe St. Mary's, and Rev. Michael O'Brien; Mass was then offered by Rev. Louis J. Schreiber. (1)

There are varying traditions of the size of the Catholic community of Waverly when it was first organized, but we can confidently say that it consisted of no more than twenty families. The Catholics of Pike County had been under the care of the priests of Chillicothe for many years. Rev. Henry D. Juncker, first pastor of Chillicothe, is known to have visited Piketon in the years 1838 to 1842; in the latter year Rev. Amadeus Rappe also visited. Rev. Emanuel Thienpont of Chillicothe visited Waverly in 1845 and when the Jesuits took charge of Chillicothe in 1847, Rev. Tschieder was placed in charge of its missions, presumably including Pike County.

In 1851 St. Xavier mission was established at Pleasant Valley (just north of the county line in Ross County) by the priests at St. Peter's in Chillicothe, but the few Catholics of Waverly seem to have been nominally in the care of those at St. Mary's. In 1853 and 1854, Piketon was under the care of Rev. Michael Forde of Chillicothe St. Mary's. Father Thisse baptized a child from Waverly in 1859, Father Kennedy was in the area in 1861, and Father Tierney was in charge in 1864 and 1865. A spirit of friendly competition between the two Chillicothe parishes may have encouraged the establishment of the Waverly church as an alternate to the St. Xavier mission.

The site for the church in Waverly had been obtained on December 1, 1863. On that date Joseph J. Green sold to Archbishop Purcell inlot 169, at the northeast corner of East and Walnut streets for \$250.00 for church and school purposes for the use and benefit of the Roman Catholic Congregation of Waverly. (2) On the same day, James Emmitt and Louisa his wife donated to the Archbishop the adjacent lot, number 170, "for and in consideration of certain improvements Towit - the erection of a Catholic Church upon In Lot No. 170... or upon In Lot No. 169...within Two years from the 1st day of January A.D. 1864," for the use and benefit of the Catholic Congregation at Waverly for church and school purposes. The deed was to be void if the church were not erected. (3) James Emmitt, the non-Catholic donor of the lot, was a "famous Waverly banker, manufacturer, real estate owner, and capitalist." It was he who had secured the removal of the county seat from Piketon to Waverly and had erected and presented to the public the court house there. It was said that at one time about half of the population of Waverly was employed in his various works and that he paid one-third of the taxes of the town. (4) Among his many business interests was an extensive store, which he owned in partnership with Joseph Myers. Mr. Myers was without doubt the leading Catholic of Waverly in this era. (See biographical sketch below.)

Joseph Myers is given credit as superintendent of construction of Immaculate Conception Church, which measured eighty by forty feet and with its imposing tower and spire was at that time the finest church edifice in Waverly. (5) After the blessing of the cornerstone, construction continued through the summer and fall of 1865. Reading the account of the congregation with R. B. Toops & Co., one can virtually see the church going up (6):

Aug 31		
Pointing walls & setting coping		\$50.00
Carpenters work & Scaffolding on Roof		25.00
15 set Jamb casings	@\$3.00	45.00
6 " " "	@ 5.00	30.00
Changing Altar		15.00
Building Stairs		60.00
Plugging Walls		10.00
C.F. Smith Bill "Tinning Roof"		35.00
1 Door frame for 13 in. Wall		6.60
1 Pr. Double Doors & Hanging same		15.50
130 feet Y[ellow] P[in]e Flooring	@4 1/2	5.85
77 " do do for Gallery & Tower	"	3.46
Cutting out Walls & Walling up same		6.50
2 Hands 1 Day Bridging Joist	@ 2 1/2	5.00
Lacony 1/2 " laying floor in tower	"	1.25
Downing 3/4 " " " " "	"	1.70
7 lbs nails, Bridging Joist & Laying floor	@ 6¢	.42
Lacony 1 1/2 day fixing Girder	@ 2 1/2	3.75
Smith 1 1/2 day " "	@ 1 1/2	2.25
250 feet Bridging	@ 75¢	1.88
12 Corner strips & setting same		4.50
30 feet White Pine for facing Gallery	@ 8¢	2.40
Lacony 1 days work facing Gallery		2.50
Sept 28		
90 feet 1 1/2 in. Poplar for Joist	@ 2 1/2	2.25
50 feet Poplar Flooring	@ 3 1/2	1.75
Sept 30		
14 feet Poplar faced 1 side	@ 3	.42
Oct 6		
4 days work by Lacony	@ 2 1/2	10.00
15 feet Poplar flooring	@ 3 1/2	.52
36 feet Poplar faced 1 side	@ 3	1.08
2 Barrels of Mortar from J Spencer		2.00
Nov 21		
Building Stairs for attic		12.00
30 feet Cornice on Gallery	@ 15	4.50
12 Sheets of extra tin for side of Cupola		4.20
28 feet Conductors	@ 20¢	5.60
Painting Gutters		2.50
		\$380.38

Father Tierney died in September, 1865, before the church was completed. Rev. John B. Murray, his successor at Chillicothe St. Mary's, seems to have taken charge at Waverly for a time, but by 1869 it was under the care of Rev. Arnold Feldhaus, who was assistant at Chillicothe St. Peter's. (7) He remained in charge of Waverly for only about three years.

The church building project, it turned out, had been too ambitious; the combination of the large church with a small membership and the hard times following the war overwhelmed the congregation. Though the real estate had not been burdened with a mortgage, the cost of construction of the church was never paid. Three different suits were filed in Common Pleas Court to recover the costs, in each of which James Emmitt was plaintiff. (8) In 1871, "Robert B. Toops and James Emmitt Partners doing business under the style and name of R. B. Toops & Co." filed against Archbishop Purcell a petition on a mechanic's lien, seeking to recover costs of \$380.38 (listed above) and interest. In 1872 James Emmitt filed a second petition against "The Catholic Congregation of Waverly...composed of Joseph Myers, William Corcoran* & other defendants," claiming \$1,523.35 with interest on \$969.69 from August 15, 1872. In 1873 Mr. Emmitt filed the third suit against "John B. Purcell, Emmitt, Myers & Co. and the Catholic Congregation of Waverly." Upon hearing in November, 1871, the first suit resulted in a judgement against the Archbishop for \$403.20, in satisfaction of which a public sale of lot 169 and the church was held on March 15, 1873. Emmitt himself purchased the church for \$1,800.00 (9) and two years later converted it into an opera house. One local tradition states that Emmitt "then gave the Catholic community permission to use the facilities for their occasional mission services." According to another story, after the loss of Immaculate Conception Church, "all the vestments, the chalice, and the church accouterments disappeared and nobody remembers seeing them again although there were all kinds of rumors as to what happened to them." (10) At about the time the church was lost, Father Feldhaus left Chillicothe and Rev. John B. Murray resumed his care of the mission.

The Catholics of Waverly must have sorely felt the need for a church, for within a few years their second edifice was under construction. Michael Flanigan is given the credit for approaching James Emmitt in search of a building site for the church in 1878. (11) Mr. Flanigan had not lived through the hopes for and loss of the earlier church, for he and his wife and eight children had settled in Pee Pee Township outside of Waverly no earlier than 1876, having lived in Ireland, New York, and Pennsylvania until then. (12) On September 3, 1878 James Emmitt and wife Louisa sold to Archbishop Purcell a 50 by 177 foot lot on the east side of what was then a projected extension of south Market Street for \$500. (13) Local tradition credits Mr. Emmitt with a "gracious donation" of the Market Street site. Perhaps his "generosity," whatever its nature, had a little to do with the fact that in 1878 he was in a heated campaign for the district's seat in the U. S. Congress. (14)

On August 31, Rev. John B. Murray of Chillicothe St. Mary's solicited bids for construction of the new church in the Ross County Register (15) and a contract was signed on October 10. (16) Plans were drawn by Frank P. Richey; Joseph Myers was again the superintendent of construction. The new red brick St. Mary's Church was more modest than Immaculate Conception had been, but it did have a tower; it measured twenty-seven by fifty feet and seated about 100. There was a small room in the rear where the priests performed baptisms and sometimes stayed over night. Until the 1930's it was heated by a large, pot-bellied stove in the center aisle, with a tin stack going out a window. The building, completed in July, 1880, cost not quite \$2,300 and by 1884 was "fully paid for by the congregation." In addition to the smaller size of the

* William Corcoran was an Irish-born farmer who had migrated to Ohio by 1851. He was born about 1803 and so was a generation older than Mr. Myers.

church, two other factors worked in favor of the new church: the economy had improved and the St. Xavier mission church was destroyed by a fire, apparently about this time, so that those who had formerly attended that mission would now increase the size of the Waverly congregation.

The brother-priests John B. Murray of Chillicothe and Jeremiah A. Murray of Washington Court House were responsible for the new church, offering Mass there on the fourth Sunday of each month. In 1883 Rev. Ernst Windthorst of Chillicothe St. Peter's took over in Waverly for the Fathers Murray. (17) From 1885 until about 1890 Waverly was attended with Frankfort and New Vienna by Rev. Thomas Boulger, who lived at Chillicothe and travelled to his three missions by railroad. Local tradition mentions a Father Michael Hickey as attending Waverly; this may have been Rev. John F. Hickey, who was assistant at Chillicothe St. Mary's from 1887 to 1889 and would probably have helped Father Boulger, who was getting on in years. Rev. Patrick J. Shea was pastor of Waverly and New Vienna in 1891, but it is not clear whether he made his residence at Chillicothe or at Waverly. In 1892 Waverly was attended from Chillicothe. In 1893 and 1894 Father Boulger was again in charge and again there is some question as to whether the pastor was living at Waverly or at Chillicothe. (18) From 1895 until 1899 Rev. Alfred D. Dexter, pastor of Chillicothe St. Mary's, personally took responsibility for Waverly, according to traditional accounts. He had performed some baptisms there as early as 1890. From 1900 until 1922 the mission was attended from Greenfield and then from Chillicothe St. Peter's. Waverly has had resident pastors since 1953.

The history of the church and congregation from about 1900 to the present is brought to life in George Roger Higgins' recent booklet, which draws extensively upon the memories of older members of the congregation.

NOTES

- 1) Columbus Register, July 7, 1950.
- 2) Pike County Recorder, Deed Record 17/371
- 3) same, 17/372
- 4) History of the Lower Scioto Valley, Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co., 1884; pp 871-873.
- 5) same, page 744
- 6) Pike County Recorder, Lien Book 1/40-41
- 7) Catholic Telegraph, Aug. 25, 1869
- 8) Pike Co. Common Pleas Court, Civil Appearance Docket 3, pp 58, 198, and 258
- 9) Pike Co. Recorder, Deed Record 23/194
- 10) Higgins, Geo. Roger, History of the Catholic Community, Pike County & Vicinity; Waverly: St. Mary Queen of the Missions, 1986.
- 11) same
- 12) Federal Census of 1880, Ohio, Vol. 52, E.D. 129, Sheet 41.
- 13) Pike County Recorder, Deed Record 26/22
- 14) Lower Scioto Valley, page 873
- 15) Noted by John R. Grabb, St. Mary's Parish - 150 Years in Chillicothe, Ohio, 1837-1987; Chillicothe: 1986, page 17
- 16) Columbus Register, July 7, 1950,
- 17) Murray, Rev. J. A., Financial Report; Chillicothe, 1881; cited by David L. Corcoran in The History of the Catholic Church in Ross County, thesis, College of St. Charles Borromeo; Columbus: 1956, p. 44. Also, Lower Scioto Valley, p. 744.
- 18) Annual Catholic Directory

JOSEPH MYERS

Sketch in the History of the Lower Scioto Valley, page 768:

"Joseph Myers was born in Wurtemberg, Germany, Oct. 15, 1830, son of Antony and Mary Ann (Lintzmiar) Myers. His mother died in Germany in 1831, and he came with his father to Ohio when two years old. They settled in Portsmouth, Scioto County, there being only two German families living there at that time. His father died Feb. 28, 1842. Joseph Myers was educated in Portsmouth, and Aug. 5, 1843, came to Waverly, where he was employed by James Emmitt in the mercantile business till 1853. This year he became a partner with James Emmitt and James Davis, under the firm name of Emmitt, Davis & Co. The following spring Mr. Davis died and the firm name was changed to Emmitt & Myers. He was with Mr. Emmitt nearly thirty-eight years being a partner for thirty years. April 1, 1881, he opened his present business with Henry Stahler, the firm name being Myers & Stahler. They have one of the largest mercantile houses in Waverly, and are carrying on a successful business. He was married in 1857 [Feb. 16] to Cynthia Faker, a native of Portsmouth. They had seven children, four of whom are living... His wife died June 2, 1871, and April 8, 1883, he was married to Elizabeth Lorbach, a native of this county. In religious faith Mr. Myers is a Catholic."

The family bible was a translation from the Latin Vulgate with annotations by the Rev. Dr. Challoner; New York, D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 1859. The family data written in this bible was published some years ago in a Pike County genealogical miscellany. This data has been combined with information from the above sketch and that on tombstones in the Waverly cemetery, to form the following list of the Myers children:

- 1) George J. Myers, born Jan. 25, 1858; married Bird Wily and was living on a farm in Clinton County, Ohio in 1884; died Oct. 23, 1910.
- 2) Emma Amelia Myers, born May 19, 1859, wife of Henry Stahler; died Aug. 1, 1880. Their son Francis Joseph Stahler was born July 26, 1878 and died Aug. 14, 1880.
- 3) Mary Margaret Myers, born Sept. 8, 1860, died July 25, 1861.
- 4) John Myers, born and died on Aug. 20, 1862.
- 5) Anna Louisa Myers, born Sept. 19, 1864.
- 6) Joseph James Myers, born Jan. 4, 1866.
- 7) Francis Edward Myers, born Sept. 5, 1869.
- 8) Leonora M. Myers, born July 12, 1884, married Walter Ellis on Oct. 25, 1905.
- 9) Cletus Clemens Myers, born Nov. 17, 1887, died Aug. 2, 1892.

The bible contains the notation "Our Father Joseph Myers died Feby 12th 2 p.m." but does not give the year of death of this builder of the first two Catholic churches in Waverly.

BAPTISMS IN PIKE AND SOUTHERN ROSS COUNTIES, OHIO
1838-1900

These baptismal records of persons living in Pike County and the southern portion of Ross County were made in the registers of St. Mary's and St. Peter's churches in Chillicothe. Some were specifically stated to have been in Piketon, Waverly, or at Pleasant Valley St. Xavier mission. Others have been copied because the family names are of members of those missions. The mission at Pleasant Valley had a separate register of baptisms which was kept at St. Peter's from the year 1851 to 1883. This was published in the March, 1983 Bulletin (Vol. 9, No. 3). Records from the original St. Mary's, now kept at St. Peter's, are marked MP; those from St. Peter's are marked P and those now at St. Mary's are marked M.

1838, 22 Aug. Piketon, Joseph, born 4 July 1837, son of Michael Hammerstein and Margaret Brill; spons. Michael Adam and Maria Eva Adam. H. D. Juncker (MP)

Same. Ludwig, born 1 Jan. 1837, son of Michael Adam and Eva Gise(?); spons. Michael Hammerstein & Margaret Brill. H. D. Juncker (MP)

Same. Barbara, born 4 July 1837, daughter of George Laufer and Anna Maria Nagel; spons. Michael Adam and Barbara Adam. H. D. Juncker (MP)

Same. Elizabeth, born 15 June 1835, and Mary, born 1 Dec. 1837, daughters of Joseph Niff and Frances Omes; sponsors of the first, George Laufer and Margaret Adam; of the second, the same George Laufer and Barbara Ganselman. H. D. Juncker (MP)

Same. Elizabeth, born 16 June 1837, daughter of Lawrence Ganzelman and Margaret Hart; sponsors John Adam and Elizabeth Hammerstein.

H. D. Juncker (MP)

All baptized 22 August were baptized in said city, and Pike County, Ohio.

1842, July 15 Piketown, John Francis, born 13 April, son of Thomas Kerron and Mary Jane Daugherty; sponsors Francis Krauss and Anna Maria his wife.

Same day, Elizabeth, born 4 Nov. 1839, daughter of George Laufer and Anna Maria Nagel; sponsors John Adam and Elizabeth Hammerstein.

Same day. John Joseph, born 17 April, son of Joseph Nippe and Francisca Omes; sponsors John Adam and Barbara Adam.

Same day. James, born 7 April, 1840, son of Lawrence Gunzelman and Margaret Hart; sponsors Joel Nessler and Catharine Nessler. H. D. Juncker (MP)

1843, 24 June, near Waverly, Wilhelmina three months 8 days old, of Georg Geng and Catherine Willmann; sponsors John Geng and Wilhelmina Neu.

Same. Mary Frances, age 14 months, daughter of James Ohirn and Mary Hammon; sponsors William Vendel and his mother. H. D. Juncker (MP)

1847, 1 July, John Adolph son of Adam Streitenberger & Margaret Schaeffer, b. 22 June; spons. Adolph Schaeffer. P. Fran. Xav. Kalcher, S.J. (P)

1847, 11 Aug. Francis son of Francis Bäcker and Christina Sattler, in Bieber Township Pike County Ohio, born 3 April 1846. F.X. Kalcher (P)

1847, 11 Aug. Catharina daughter of George Laufer & Anna Maria Nagel, born 10 Dec., 1846; sponsors Margaret Sutor and Laurence Hess. F. X. Kalcher (P)

1847, 13 Aug. William, son of Matthew Mager in Chocksen Twp., Pike County, and Agatha Gäng, born 18 May; sponsor John Gäng. F. X. Kalcher (P)

Same day, Emily, daughter of George Richway and wife Joanna; sponsor John Streitenberger, adult, aged 18 years, born 15 Oct. 1828, same place as the above. F. X. Kalcher (P)

1847, Sept. [no day given], Waverly, William, born 20 March 1843; George, born 29 Jan., 1845, and John, born 1 Oct., 1846; sons of Thomas Wendell; sponsor Nathan Wendell. F. Xav. D'Hope, S.J. (P)

1848, 30 Jan., James, son of Thomas Splane and Jane Smith, born 11 Dec.
1847 at the boundary of Pike and Ross County; spons. Edward Carville and Sarah Sullaivan. F. X. Kalcher (P)

1848, 5 March, Waverly, Jane, Helen, and Anna, daughters of James O'Hearn and Mary Hammond, born 1 Sept. 1845, 6 Jan. 1844, and 19 Aug. 1847; spons. John Streitenberger and his mother. F. X. D'Hope (P)

Same day, Waverly, (ceremonies for) John, son of Alfred Ridgeway and Monica Streitenberger, born December 1847. F. X. D'Hope (P)

1848, 9 Aug., Piketon County - Beaver Township
-Frederick, son of Francis Bäcker and Christina Sattler, born 1 June this year; spons. Frederick Sattler and Barbara Klemm.
-Catherine, daughter of Valentine Alberty and Maria Elisabetha Jungmann, born 29 Jan.; spons. Francis Krauss and his wife, in Piketon, Ohio.
-Anna Maria, daughter of Michael Davis and Anna Maria Haase, born in Union Twp., Pike Co., 28 Nov. 1847; spons. Fr. Krauss and his wife Maria.
-11 Aug., Lawrence, son of Lawrence Henne and Maria Antonia Stollen, born 24 May; spons. Michael and Margaret Hammerstein.
F. X. Kalcher (P)

1848, 17 Sept., Agatha, daughter of Michael Laubesheimer and Eva Weber, born on the boundary of Ross and Pike Counties on 7 Aug.; spons. Matthew Rily and Agatha Braun. F. X. Kalcher [probably baptized in Chillicothe] (P)

1859, Mar. 27, at Pleasant Valley in the Church of St. Francis Xavier:
-Michael, son of Alfred Ridgway and Monica Streitenberger; spons. Michael Streitenberger.
-Daniel James, age about 2 yrs. & 7 mos., sponsor Elizabeth Warren.
[No parente listed; perhaps same Ridgeways as above ?]
-Mary Elizabeth, of Patrick and Margaret Gallagher; spons. William and Catharine Delong.
-Daniel Frederick, son of John and Margaret Dusland (?); spons. Andrew Corcoran and Margaret Kearney.
-George Frederick, son of Peter & Josephine Hirsch; spons. Blasius and Maria Rutter.
J. N. Thisse (M)

1859, June 14, in Waverly, Emma Amelia, daughter of Joseph and Cynthia ("Hyacintha") Myers; spons. John Reilly and Theresa Miller. J. N. Thisse (M)

1859, July 2, at Pleasant Valley, William Henry, son of George Delong and Mary Annre (?); spons. Thomas and Elizabeth Lenox. J. N. Thisse (M)

1859, Oct. 10, at St. Xavier, Pleasant Valley, Catharine, about 5 years, ----, about 2 years, and Sophia, about -- months, daughters of John William Welton (?) and Ephre his wife; spons. Peter and Mary Kesler. J. N. Thisse (M)

Same day & place, Barbara Ann, daughter of Peter and Elizabeth Kesler; spons. Francis Flu (?) and Maria Ruller. J. N. Thisse (M)

1860, March 13, Margaret, of John and Margaret Streitenberger; spons. Margaret Shrob (?).

Same day, Frances Regina, of Adam and Margaret Streitenberger; spons Regina Shrob (?).

Same day, Margaret, of John and Mary Ann Meng (?); spons. Margaret Streitenberger.
J. N. Thisse (M)

(To be continued)

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