On Sunday May 31, 1987, Monsignor James Kulp, moderator of the Catholic Record Society, presided at a ceremony of blessing of the marker raised by the Society to mark the first Catholic Cemetery in Columbus, which now is part of the Columbus State Community College campus. The Society designed and paid for the marker, the College provided the site, and the Catholic Cemeteries of Columbus handled the ordering and installation of the marker. The granite marker contains a bronze plate, on which are a cross and this inscription: "This stone marks the northwest corner of the former Columbus Catholic Cemetery. About 4,000 interments were made here between 1846 and 1874. Requiescant in Pace. Erected by the Catholic Record Society - Diocese of Columbus 1986". Following the blessing, Donald M. Schlegel of the Society gave a talk on the history of the cemetery. Since the history contains some information not available when the history of the cemetery was published in the Bulletin of December, 1977, the talk will be printed here.

HISTORY OF THE COLUMBUS CATHOLIC CEMETERY

"I believe in...the resurrection of the body." This article of the Christian Faith, handed down to us from the Apostles, is the reason we are here today. We believe that when the Lord returns, the physical remains of our bodies will, through God's power, be restored and re-united with our souls. From this belief has flowed the respect which followers of Christ have always shown to the remains of their ancestors in the Faith. This belief is shared even by non-Christians to some extent, though in many cases only as an unexplained fear of the mortal remains of humans and their resting places, a fear always exceeding that of simple animal remains. As we are taught by St. Thomas Aquinas, for whom the hall in which we are meeting was named, the body and soul cannot be permanently separated or even conceived of as essentially separate.

Agreement on an article of faith, however, does not necessarily lead to agreement on the details of how that faith should be applied in everyday situations. The disagreements over this cemetery, sometimes vehement, are what make its history of one hundred forty-one years interesting.

Our predecessors in the Faith in Columbus in the Year of Our Lord 1846 were in a sense coming of age when they purchased this property. There was only one Catholic that we know of in the county in 1830. By 1832 there were a handfull of households and in 1833 a lot was conditionally donated for a church. By 1838 the little stone church was completed. In 1843 the first resident pastor arrived. By 1846 the present Holy Cross church was

essentially complete and the community was beginning to move on to other needs.

Until that time, deceased Catholics were buried with their fellow-citizens in the public graveyards and the priest, whenever one was present, would bless the grave. The Franklinton graveyard was opened in 1799, the North graveyard in 1812, and the East graveyard in 1839.(1) The Catholics formed a committee with Peter Ury, an immigrant German shoemaker, as chairman.(2) On October 6, 1846 they purchased the cemetery property from Samuel Brush, an attorney and real estate dealer. The land was placed in Mr. Ury's name. It measured 519.75 feet east along the center line of the later Mt. Vernon Avenue and 260 feet south along the center line of the later Washington Avenue and contained about three and one quarter acres. The front of the cemetery was on the west side and an east-west road bisected it. Family lots were laid out in the front; in the rear on the north were single graves for children and in the rear on the south of the road were single graves for adults.(3) The committee sold lots and single graves, collected additional money, and applied all of it to payment of the notes signed for purchase of the property. It was deeded to Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati in 1848.

Irish vs. German

In 1852 the Catholic congregation was split when St. Patrick parish was formed for the English-speaking members. Father Meagher, the pastor of the new parish, demanded half of the cemetery for his people and Bishop Purcell agreed that they should have it. However, no actual division of the property was made and, since the Irish were dying at a rate three times that of the Germans, the Germans began complaining that although they had substantially paid for the ground they were being driven out of it. Irish and Germans were buried throughout the grounds indiscriminately at this period. By 1854 the fences were in need of repair and neither parish would pay for it. Father Borgess, pastor at Holy Cross parish, asked Bishop Purcell to decide, sight unseen, which half of the ground should be for each parish. From subsequent correspondence we know that he did make such a division, but we do not know which half he designated for each parish.

Not long after the division had been made, the German gravedigger informed Father Borgess that Father Meagher personally had measured off and sold a lot in the German half of the cemetery.(4) The issue was resolved, but we do not know how. The solution might have been facilitated by the departure of Father Meagher, who was soon replaced by Father Edward Fitzgerald. In 1862 the cemetery was listed twice in the City Directory, as an Irish Catholic Cemetery, under charge of the pastor of St. Patrick's, James Fleming Sexton, and as a German Catholic Cemetery, George Bauman treasurer, Christian Wittmann secretary, Georg Schmidt sexton, and Henry Theado, Charles Baehr, George Eiermann, and Martin Hinterschitt, trustees.

Threat from City Government

On August 22, 1854 an officer of the City of Columbus came out to the Catholic Cemetery to investigate a complaint made by the neighbors. (The cemetery had come into the corporate boundaries of the city in the annexation of Dec. 28, 1847.) One grave was found to be only seventeen inches below the

surface; it held a mother and two children. Regulation depth was said to be five feet for adults and four feet for children. A German who had built a house adjoining the cemetery threatened to lodge a formal complaint about the depth of the graves there.(5) This was one of what was probably a series of incidents which lead to a threat of closing the cemetery by the city government.

On July 14, 1856 two petitions were presented to City Council, one by Jesse Hibbs and others and the other by Samuel Brush and others. This was the same Samuel Brush who had sold the property to the Catholic committee ten years earlier. The petitions sought "the prevention of interments in the Graveyard situated in the Northeast part of the City," claiming that the decomposition of bodies affected the water in the area and that the grounds were an obstacle to the settlement or improvement of the area. The Catholic Cemetery in this instance was protected by the city's own North Graveyard. In 1853 City Council had requested a report on the possibility of closing the North Graveyard, but no action was taken at that time. Now this former request was added to the petition regarding the Catholic Cemetery and the whole question was turned over to a committee. The committee reported out a bill which would outlaw any burials within the city limits or in the North Graveyard (which was still beyond the city limits). Rules requiring subsequent readings of the bill were suspended and the bill was passed on July 21, 1856. Even Jacob Reinhard, the only Catholic on City Council, voted in favor of it.

Reaction to the new law was swift and convincing, mainly due to the closing of the North Graveyard. A letter to the Ohio State Journal from Phineas B. Wilcox, father of the City Solicitor and himself one of the foremost attorneys in the state, declared the ordinance unconstitutional, at least as regarded the city's own graveyard. The ordinance was repealed on August 18, 1856.(6)

The cemetery remained in use until 1874. About the time that Mt. Calvary Cemetery was consecrated (Nov. 2, 1874), Bishop Rosecrans forbad any further burials in the old cemetery. There apparently were no objections to the closing at that time.

It has not been possible to determine with any confidence the number of interments made here in the twenty-eight years that the cemetery was open. When the history of the cemetery was first written, several years ago, I determined from available records, which are very scanty for the Irish, that a minimum of about 2,400 interments were made. As a maximum, the square footage available would hold about 6,000 graves. For the few years that data were available there seemed to be many more interments of Irish than of Germans, and on that basis an estimate of the total number would be close to the maximum figure of 6,000. In addition, one of the reasons for opening Mt. Calvary was said to have been that the old cemetery was about full. These facts were so uncertain, however, that a mid-range figure of about 4,000 interments was put on the marker. It now appears that the higher figure would have been more correct. The letters to Archbishop Purcell indicate that the Irish were indeed dying and being interred at a much higher rate than the Germans, and other studies have indicated that Irish immigrants to America did have higher mortality rates than the Germans.

Bishop Watterson vs. the Urys

About 1887, it seems, Bishop Watterson advised families of those whose remains rested here to have them moved to Mt. Calvary Cemetery. The widow and children of Peter Ury objected to the bishop's apparent intent to do away with the cemetery. They refused to move Peter's remains and they tried to tie up the land legally. Bishop Watterson took them to court in January of 1888. In their first petition, the Urys asked that the land be returned to them, since the deed transferring the property from Peter Ury to Bishop Purcell had stated that the land was to be held by him in trust as a burial ground. This tactic quickly failed, because the deed contained no clause whereby the land would revert to Ury's heirs if the trust failed. The family then asked that the land be maintained as a cemetery. The property at that time had no fence, had no income, and had no maintenance fund; it was subject to liens for improvement of the adjacent streets.

The case went all the way to the Ohio Supreme Court, which in 1894 ruled that Bishop Watterson had clear title and was free to dispose of the land. It was not sold at that time, however, and in 1898 it was being used as a playground. Bishop Watterson died in 1899.

A Promise Forgotten ?

Some time in the next decade or so after Bishop Watterson's demise, a promise appears to have been made to the Catholics of Columbus who still had not moved their relatives' remains from the old cemetery. This was told to me in 1965 by a cousin and by a second cousin of my mother, who were getting on in years. They told me independently; they but who did not know each other until they became acquainted through my research efforts. Both of them told me that they had always been told that a promise had been made that the cemetery property would never be sold outside the Catholic Church. Who would have made such a promise ? Certainly, one would not think that Bishop Watterson would have. Bishop Moeller, who was here only a short time, might have, given his logical and disciplined methods; and we know that he got along well with the members of the diocese. Bishop Hartley may well have, for as we will see shortly he had a great concern for the remains here. Unfortunately, no documentation has ever been found and this remains just a tradition in one old local family.

I mention this tradition not to complain of a promise not kept but to explain the attitude or reason why no complete and formal removal of all remains in the cemetery was ever made, as was done at the city's graveyards. The land was always to remain within the Church and so the remains would always receive the respect due to them. There was no need to spend the money, of which the diocese has never had an over-abundant supply, to dig up every square foot of the ground.

In 1905 St. Patrick High School was started here. As soon as digging began for the first building here, graves were found when a horse's hoof fell through the top of a casket. All of the remains found at that time were moved to Mt. Calvary. In 1912 the property was sold to the Dominican order, in the form of the Aquinas Literary Society, and additional buildings were erected. In 1925 this present "Aquinas Hall" was built. Those who have been members of the Society for some years no doubt heard the late Bill Faller tell his story.

He was a student here when the basement was dug for this building in 1925. He told of the workmen finding many graves, many bones, some skulls with the red hair still attached. Bishop Hartley was agast when he heard what was happening and had all of the remains moved to the new cemeteries. The earth taken up from the basement of this building was used as fill at St. Charles, which was also being built at that time, so that any relics which Aquinas had were shared with St. Charles. After that time, the old cemetery had forty years of undisturbed peace.

The Property Sold

In 1965 when Aquinas closed, the property was sold by the Dominicans to the Columbus Board of Education, the promise that it would remain in the Church long forgotten except by a few. During construction in 1968, graves were found. More were probably found when Eibling Hall was built, but if so, nothing reached the newspapers. In September 1977 two partial skeletons were found during excavation for a utility tunnel. They had lain just outside the student chapel of the 1912 Aquinas building for all of those years. Doctor Adrion, county coronor, and Dr. Raymond Baby of the Ohio State University Anthropology Department, who had been called in, decided to "let them rest in peace" and have the concrete for the tunnel poured over them. Objections were raised, however, by a certain Catholic man who was familiar with the cemetery, and Father Trenor, who at that time was Assistant Chancellor of the Diocese, reached an agreement with the school that these remains, and any more found in the future, would be removed and re-interred by the Catholic Cemeteries of Columbus. In December of 1982, six sets of bones were uncovered when a base for a new lathe was being dug in the building just south of Aquinas Hall. The County Health Department and Catholic Cemeteries were called, and these were moved to St. Joseph Cemetery.

We probably could not come to a better arrangement, given the circumstances, but something seemed to be missing. Even though the cross of our Savior and the symbol of His name are still raised high over the old holy ground, the Society saw the need for a monument of some kind to mark the resting place of those remains which are still here. So we, as the Catholic Record Society, with the help and cooperation of the Catholic Cemeteries of Columbus and the Columbus Technical Institute [now Columbus State Community College], have erected the marker on the corner of the old God's Acre and have gathered here today for its blessing. It is not because we have any claim on the property, but rather because those whose remains still lie here have a claim on our respect. For with them we believe in the sanctity of human life; with them we regard the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit; with them we believe in the resurrection of the body.

NOTES
1) Schlegel, Donald M., The Columbus City Graveyards, 1985.
2) Details of the history of the cemetery were previously published in the Bulletin of December 1977 and in The Columbus Catholic Cemetery: History and Records, 1846-1874 (Schlegel, Donald M., 1983)
3) Caspar H. Borgess to Purcell, Aug. 4, 1854 (Archives, Archdiocese of Cincinnati)
4) Borgess to Purcell, May 30 and Aug. 1, 1854
5) Same, Aug. 22, 1854 and Aug. --, 1854
6) For details of sources, see reference 1.

MT. CALVARY CEMETERY, COLUMBUS
CATHEDRAL DIVISION LOT RECORDS, 1867-1926?

Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Columbus was opened in 1867 and was consecrated in 1874. Like the Columbus Catholic Cemetery which it replaced, this cemetery was divided into two halves, one for the parishes where German was spoken (Holy Cross and the new St. Mary's) and one for those where English was spoken (St. Patrick's and the new St. Joseph's). The Germans chose the northern half of the property and the Irish and others who spoke English had the southern half. From the locations of the cemetery offices at the Holy Cross and Cathedral rectories, the two divisions have always been known as the Holy Cross Division and the Cathedral Division. The interment record of the Holy Cross or German division is extant, beginning with the first interment in April of 1867 and continuing to the present. The first book, that of sexton Anton Witzigmann, was written in German; lists of interments from that original book, which ended with 1894, were translated by Monsignor Joseph Hakel and others and printed in the Bulletin from June of 1979 through November of 1980.

The records of the Cathedral Division before 1919 are missing. Some are said to have been lost in the 1913 flood (but one would think that the existing records might begin in 1913 or 1914 if that were true). The only early record remaining for this division is the lot ledger, which lists the charges incurred and payments made by the lot owners. Although few names of deceased or other particulars are given in this book, for careful researchers it can provide valuable clues and leads. The book lists dates at which charges were incurred for the digging of graves. This information alone is valuable, for from this one can turn to newspapers and other sources to find the name and other data on the deceased; without the date as a starting point, the search in other sources is virtually impossible. This method has been used in several cases and has proved very important when no other starting point can be found. In some cases, it will be noted, there are stones with dates which precede the opening of Mt. Calvary. These represent removals, mostly from the old cemetery, and some of the dates in the lot ledger undoubtedly refer to these.

Society member Mark Gideon has transcribed the information from the lot ledger which will appear in this series. The data included here will be: page of ledger, lot owner, address as given in the ledger, lot number and date of purchase, and dates on which graves were dug or charges for use of vault were incurred. Information from tombstone inscriptions now on the lots will be presented at the start of the series and it is hoped that this can be continued for its duration. (Collected by the editor.) It is also hoped that at some time maps can be published showing the locations of lots in each section of the Cathedral Division.

---

page 1, Martin Kelly, West Maple St., (later 711 Neil Ave.), lot 1-B, purchased Jan., 1867; graves: Jul. 3, 1877; May 1, 1882 (Mrs. Cath. Havard); Mar. 20, 1899; Apr. 2, 1913; June 25, 1925; Dec. 19, 1928.

(Father) Martin J. Kelly, June 6, 1831-Mar. 20, 1899
(Mother) Maria Kelly, 1830-1913
(Brother) Martin Kelly Jr., 1861-1876

John M., son of Martin and Maria Kelly, died June 7, 1869(?), 8 y & 6 mo.
(Sister) Margaret Kelly, Nov. 11, 1870-Oct. 8, 1918
(Sister) Delia J. Kelly, wife of Harry P. Horton, Oct. 1, 1863-June 25,1925
(Sister) Katharine K. Kelly, wife of W. L. Abbott, Sept. 27, 1857-Dec. 18,
    1928
William L. Abbott, died Apr. 30, 1929, age 72 years.

page 1, Michael Riley, lot 2-B, purchased Jan., 1870; graves: Jan. 7, 1890;
Feb. 21, 1902; Feb. 2, 1925.

John J. Riley, born Apr. 2, 1855, died July 9, 1872
Michael Riley, born Sept. 29, 1822, died Dec. 3, 1875, May his soul rest in
    peace
Bridget M., wife of M. Riley, born Sept. 8, 1818, died Jan. 6, 1891
Thomas F. McDonald, 1847-1902
Annie T. McDonald, 1853-1925

page 1, Joseph E. Hartman, lots 3 and 22-B, purchased Jan. 3, 1870; graves:
July 27, 1877; Apr. 23, 1878 (use of vault); June 28, 1899; Feb. 16, 1920;
Feb. 9, 1926.

Margaret Hartman, died July 28, 1877
Joseph Hartman, died Jan. 4, 1870
Frank A. Hartman, 1868-1950
Mary B. Hartman, 1870-1948
Thomas Hartman, 1848-1931
(Father) Joseph E. Hartman, June 13, 1842-June 26, 1899
(Mother) Ellen Hartman, Aug. 15, 1842-Feb. 14, 1925
Joseph B. Hartman, dearly beloved husband of Carita Hartman, called to
    heavenly rest Mar. 22, 1953
Twin sons Walter & Francis Burke, 1926
Our baby son Francis Joseph Murphy, 1931
(Joe) Jos. Men. Hartman, Sept. 16, 1879-Dec. 22, 1895
Annie, daughter of J.E. & E. Hartman, died Apr. 2, 1872, 2 mos 19 ds
Nellie, daughter of J.E. & E. Hartman, died Apr. 21, 1878, aged 12y 2m 11d

page 2, Michael Sheridan, W. Maple St. (later St. Clair Ave.), half of lot 4-
B, purchased Jan. 3, 1870; graves: Apr. 16, 1887; Nov. 9, 1894; Dec. 22,
1913; Mar. 22, 1915.

page 2, Mrs. Mary Sheridan, half of the same lot, purchased same date; graves:
Jan. 23, 1886; Sept. 29, 1897; Mar. 9, 1905.

(Father) William Sheridan, died Jan. 2, 1870, age 30 years
(Mother) Mary Sheridan, died Oct. 3, 1916, age 74 years
(Mother) Bridget Sheridan, Oct. 11, 1869-Sept. 23, 1935
(Brother) James Sheridan, Sept. 3, 1867-Sept. 28, 1897
(Father) Michael Sheridan, Aug. 17, 1865-Mar. 8, 1905
(Brother) James Sheridan, Sept. 23, 1893-Mar. 21, 1915

page 2, John McCabe, Randolph St., lot 5-B, purchased Aug. 13, 1871; graves:
Dec. 10, 1877; Dec. 11, 1877; Aug. 29, 1889; Feb. 19, 1894 (child); Dec. 2,
1907; Aug. 1, 1913; Mar. 6, 1923.

Flora M. 1877 + 1923 Rest in Peace [no family name]
Our Mamy, daughter of B. & D. M'Cabe, born Feb. 6, 1860: died July 22, 1861
Mary Luella, daughter of J. & A. McCabe, died May 14, 1867, aged 10 mos.

page 3, Mrs. Peter Murphy, lot 6-B, purchased Sept. 6, 1871; graves: Apr. 13, 1907; Oct 10, ----; Feb. 27, 1909; Sept. 17, 1929.

   [monument] Catharine wife of Peter Murphy, born in County Galway Ireland
      July 5, 1828 died Apr. 14, 1907
   Peter Murphy native of County Louth, Ireland, died Feb. 10, 1875, aged 53
      ys. May his soul rest in peace.
   Ellen, died May 5, 1854, aged 1 yr. & 11 mos.
   James, died Sep. 5, 1859, aged 2 ys 3 ms & 4 ds
   Children of P. & C. Murphy
   [individual stones:]
   Katherine Murphy 1865-1946
   Margaret Murphy 1855-1942
   Peter J. Murphy jr. 1862-1909
   Edward S. Murphy 1869-1929

page 3, James King, south half of lot 7-B, purchased Feb. 11, 1870; graves: Sept. 14, 1909.

   Mrs. Martin, died Oct. 22, 1866, aged 78 years.
   Mrs. King, died Jan. 13, 1870, aged 55 years - - - Erected by James Martin
      in memory of his mother's sister.

page 3, Mrs. Ann Gartland, 462 Montgomery St., Columbus, north half of lot 7-B, purchased Apr. 13, 1878; graves: Mar. 10, 1888; May 10, 1889; July 31, 1891; Dec. 8, 1891; June 8, 1914. The remaining grave reserved for Mrs. John M. Fleming. [no stones]

page 4, Owen Doyle, 392 Montgomery, east half of lot 10-B, purchased Nov. 18, 1873; graves: Feb 19, 1887; July 30, 1892; Mar. 12, 1897; Nov. 11, 1907.

   Elizabeth Duffy, Born County Meath, Ireland; died July 12, 1871, aged 71
      y'rs
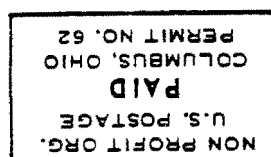   James Duffy, Born County Meath, Ireland, June 29, 1821, died May 29, 1895
   Margaret Duffy

page 4, Andrew Green, 102 E. Fourth Ave., lot 9-B, purchased May 4, 1871; graves: Feb. 4, 1881; Feb. 23, 1907. [no stones]

page 5, Mrs. Ann Carroll, Hamlet St., west half of lot 13-B, purchased Sept. 16, 1871; graves: Aug. 7, 1881 (for B. Harvey); Apr. 14, 1888; Nov. 1, 1894. [no stones]

[To be continued.]
- -
- -