# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

**BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society - Diocese of Columbus**

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## St. Mary's of the River, Little Hocking, Washington County 1878-1929

The town of Little Hockhocking was established in 1824, on the west bank of the Hockhocking River, at its convergence with the Ohio. The name was changed to Little Hocking P.O. in 1879. It is seven miles downriver from Belpre in Ohio and Parkersburg in West Virginia, in Section 30, Township 1, Range10, Belpre Township.

Little Hocking was a railroad town as well as a river town. The Marietta & Cincinnati Railroad was completed about 1857. It came east from Cincinnati via Chillicothe, Zaleski, and Athens. But from Athens it initially ran almost due east, reaching the Ohio River just southwest of Marietta. It was not until about 1874 that the railroad was rebuilt, as the B. & O. Short Line Railroad, to loop southeast from Canaanville in Athens County, reach the Ohio River at Little Hocking, and then proceed through Belpre to Marietta and points east.

Father Francis Campbell as pastor of Athens in the mid-1870s reported a long list of missions and

stations he attended, including Little Hocking once a month.[1]

### The Church

Under the leadership of Father M. M. A. Hartnedy of Athens, it was decided in the winter of 1877/1878 to build a Catholic church at Little Hocking. A lot containing one-half acre, more or less, at the mouth of the Little Hocking River was purchased for $150 on January 14, 1878. Witnesses to the deed were Father Hartnedy and Thomas Rowland, a local Catholic.[2] The western corner of the property was about 150 feet from the Ohio and perhaps 180 feet from the Little Hocking.

Ground was broken for the church in February. The building was of frame construction, about 30 by 45 feet, facing southeast towards the Ohio River. It also faced what had been the road along the Ohio River, which early on crossed the Little Hocking and continued northwestward towards Belpre. By the 1880s this was a dead-end and the roadway was included in the church property. The railroad right-of-way paralleled the Ohio River, on the northwest side of the property behind the church.

On Pentecost Sunday, June 9, 1878 the church was opened with High Mass and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament by the pastor, Father Hartnedy of Athens. He brought his choir along from Athens, together with a supply of very rich vestments, and nothing was omitted which could add solemnity to the occasion. Many, even of the local Catholics, witnessed the solemn rites for the first time that day. "The young ladies of the choir draped the high altar beautifully in red with gold trimming, drawing heavily on the sacristy of Athens for supplies. The choir did extra well, the high arched roof giving the sopranos a better chence to let themselves out.

"The church was crowded by a mixed congregation and everything passed off finely. After Mass it would do you good to hear some of the old settlers—twenty-five and thirty years in the woods—congratulating themselves that they lived to see the day they had their own church at Hocking.

"The church is a neat building, gothic style, with steep roof and arched ceiling. The tower with its cross rises head and shoulders above everything else in the village, and from its high location [on] the edge of the river commands a beautiful view for miles up and down, and also of the low bottom land of Virginia beyond the river. The choir had a beautiful trip on river in the afternoon, and leaving Ohio passed into West Virginia, where they had a big snake adventure, and returned safe and well with the memory of a day well spent."[3]

### The Congregation

Very few Catholics settled in Little Hocking before the Short Line Railroad was built through, about 1874. But quite a number of Catholics had purchased farms in Decatur and over towards Vincent and Cutler on the old M. & C. Line. In 1881 it was noted that the people came to the church from miles around and it was thought about 250 attended.[4] In 1885 the pastor reported 34 families at St. Mary's.[5]

### Fund Raising at Little Hocking

Little Hocking, March 20, 1880

*Editor Catholic Columbian:*

We had a supper here on St. Patrick's evening for the benefit of St. Mary's church, and it was a grand success. The voting for the lantern was lively between the friends of Mr. Thos. Rowland, of this place, and Mr. Thos. Flaherty of Frost's Station. Mr. Flaherty was victorious receiving 573 votes and Mr. Rowland 438, over one hundred dollars was cleared on the lantern. For the gold chain and cross Miss Collins received 375 1/2 votes, Miss Gallagher 108 1/2.

A silk hat for the most popular farmer was won by Mr. J. McDonough receiving 151 and Mr. J. Gallagher 150 votes, a very close contest, Mr. McDonough being victorious by one vote; after receiving the hat he presented it to the Rev. Rector. Miss Gahagan carried off the gold ring having 107 votes and Miss M. Gallagher 77 1/2.

Miss J. Moran won the prayer book receiving 81 votes and Miss B. Daugherty 56.

The supper was a grand success...

-*The Catholic Columbian*, Mar. 25, 1880

The following names of members are based on the tombstones in St. Mary's Cemetery. There are about 130 stones dated before 1940 and 136 later ones. The majority of the people were from Ireland or of Irish extraction.

Decatur Township, next west of Belpre:
- Michael and Ann (Murphy) Davitt, farmers. The family moved to Athens in the 1910s.
- James and Bridget (Davitt) Rowan, farmers
- David and Mary (Quinn) Irvine, farmers; they later lived in Dunham Twp.
- Thomas and Catherine Lavelle and Anthony and Margaret Lavelle, farmers.
- Michael J. Flaherty married Alice Lavelle at Little Hocking before Father Tuohy in 1893.
- John and Mary (Menahan) McGinnis moved from Athens County in the 1870s. He was a watchman on the railroad.
- Timothy and Margaret Murphy; he was a railroad section boss.

Dunham Township, next north of Belpre:
- Patrick and Isabel (Lynch) Doudle. He was a farmer, born in Virginia of Irish parents.
- Michael Welsh, a farmer, migrated from Ireland in 1863; he and his wife Bridget lived in Harmar (on the west bank of the Muskingum at Marietta) but moved to Dunham Township in the 1870s.

Fairfield Township, next north of Decatur and northwest of Dunham:
- Thomas and Jane Barrett, farmers, moved from Fairfield Township to Belpre Twp. in the 1870s.
- Patrick and Ann Gaughan
- Edward and Mary Welch, farmers, who had lived in West Virginia before 1860.

Belpre Township:
- David and Elizabeth (Schoonover) Gallagher were living near Little Hocking by 1860; farmer.
- John R. and Nancy J. (Archer) Warfield were married in Noble County before Father John Brummer in 1859; by 1870 they had moved to Lawrence Twp., Washington Co., and by 1880 to Belpre Twp. (Nancy was a daugher of Elijah Archer.) John was a farmer.
- James and Ellen Dunlavy lived in Athens County but came to Little Hocking with the railroad in the 1870s, on which he was a laborer.
- Thomas and Bridget (Murphy) Rowland had been married by Father M.J.D. Ryan of Marietta in 1866; he was a railroader.
- Michael and Bridget Gahagan lived in Belpre Twp in 1880, railroad laborer.
- Patrick and Hannah (Welch) Joyce had come from West Virginia by 1881.
- Michael and Isabel (Belle) (Maley) Moore had lived in Virginia for some years until about 1867; he was a cooper.

**Other Property**

There was a parish house or rectory, but it is not shown on the church premises in the property book of 1885 and no deed for any other property has ever been found. "The house is a neat frame structure, and was built in the same year that the church was organized."[6] It was still standing in 1900.[7]

The cemetery, called St. Mary's, is south of the present County Road 507 and northwest of County Road 508; this is just off of U.S. 50, about 4,500 feet northeast of the Little Hocking River. (in S 25 T2 R10) It is also known as J. A. Watterson Cemetery. It was purchased for $170 on April 4, 1883, and contains 1 acre, 2 roods, and 33 perches.[8] Nine tombstones bear dates earlier than this purchase date. Some no doubt were moved there from family graveyards. On his census report dated September 1, 1887, Father Weissenberger noted that St. Mary's Cemetery "is consecrated." The cemetery still is well maintained today by members of the successor parish.

**Mission of St. John's**

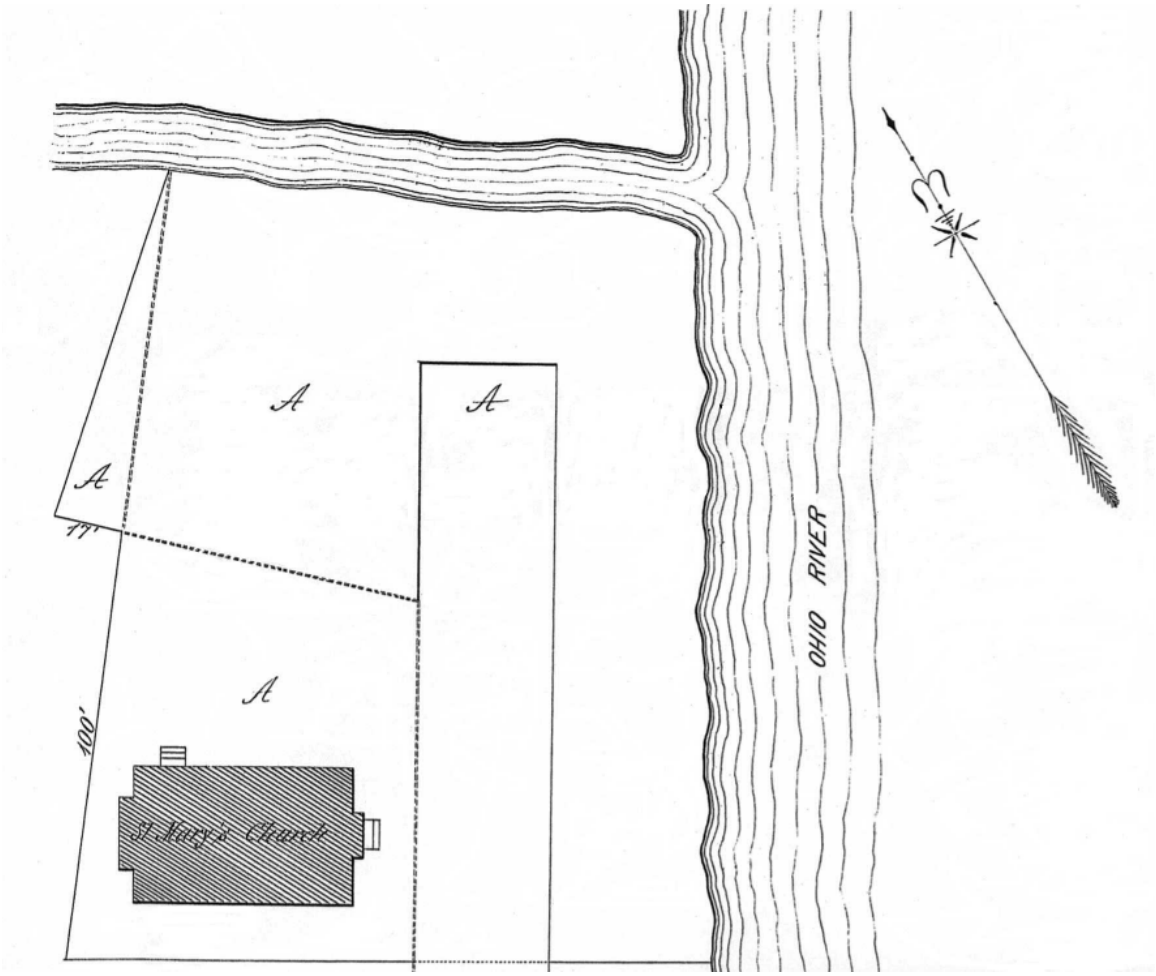
Father T. J. Lane of Athens took care of Little Hocking in 1879 and 1880. His successor was Father John C. Madden of Athens, who in 1883 was assisted by Father Walter Ross. Bishop Watterson ordered Madden to leave the diocese in

May, 1884.[9] He was replaced at once by Father John E. McGuirk and Father P. J. Weissenberger, who split the huge territory in two. Father Weisenberger took up residence at St. John's in Athens County (at Anthony on Dutch Ridge Road, Section 10, Lodi Township) and had charge of St. Mary's.

Father Weissenberger had about the same number of families at St. John's and St. Mary's of the River. There were 37 families at Little Hocking, comprising 171 souls, and 159 souls at St. John's. He attended Little Hocking only one Sunday each month, offering Mass and teaching catechism to the children. Only three children attended catechism regularly, but he assured the bishop that the others were instructed on Sundays in different parts of the congregation.[10]

Under his direction, St. Mary's congregation at Little Hocking ordered a new altar for their church from the Josephinum Church Furniture Company in Columbus, at a cost of $100. It was received late in the witner of 1886.[11] Other improvements also were made in the church over the following months.[12]

By the summer of 1887 Father Weissenberger had reached the conclusion that it would suit the people of both places better if the priest would reside at Little Hocking. He should be of Irish descent and should be replaced from time to time, and this should continue until the "old rebels from Germany" at St John's had passed away. The young people of St. John's were all being educated in the public schools and preferred English, not German, at all times. St. Mary's congregation was the stronger, and Little Hocking was a better place for the priest, for St. John's was in the "wilderness," isolated from all the civilized world.[13]




*Sketch of the Little Hocking property from the Diocesan Property Book of 1885.*

Father Weissenberger resigned and care of his parish reverted to the priest at Athens.

**Resident Pator has the Church Dedicated**

It was not until the fall of 1889 that a new pastor was appointed. In keeping with Father Weissenberger's warnings, the priest was Irish and was sent to live at Little Hocking. Thus St. Mary's was raised to the status of a parish. Rev. Joseph Tuohy, the new pastor, also was assigned for a time the care of Long Bottom (16 miles down the Ohio River in Meigs County) and later St. John's in Athens County.

Father Tuohy had been born in Ireland in 1843 and ordained by Bishop Rosecrans in 1876. He had been pastor at Martin's Ferry, Ohio, when he and Bishop Watterson could not agree on the amount of money due the diocese and on the census of the congregation. It is apparent that Father Tuohy was no accountant. In 1889 he had just returned from Rome, where he had appealed and apparently lost his case against the bishop.

It was soon after his arrival in Little Hocking that St. Mary's of the River was formally dedicated.

> ...Friday night [November 1] he [Bishop Watterson] spent in Columbus and on Saturday he proceeded to Little Hocking. In the afternoon he examined the class which had been prepared for Confirmation—of whom several were adults—and the next day [Sunday, November 3] he dedicated the church and confirmed 43 persons. There was a large congregation present, a number of whom were non-Catholics. The bishop preached. His discourse removed the prejudices and misconceptions from the minds of the Protestants present and confirmed in the faith the Catholics who were in attendance. During his stay at Little Hocking, he was the guest of Mr. Thomas Rowland. On Monday morning the bishop and Father Tuohy went together to St. John's in Athens County where they found Father Boden busy hearing confessions. ...[14]

Father Tuohy was no bookkeeper, but from his reports it is clear that, even with four small congregations together, including a station at Belpre, he did not always receive his salary, which should have been $800 per year. By late 1900 Father Tuohy's health was broken and Bishop Moeller recalled him to Columbus to stay at St. Anthony's Hospital. Father Tuohy left the keys of Little Hocking in the hands of James Gallagher of Red Bush and Miss Sarah Sutton of Little Hocking.

Father J. J. Schneider of Pomeroy then attended Little Hocking for a short time.[15]

**A Mission Again**

In December, 1900, St. Mary's reverted to the status of mission, as Bishop Moeller assigned Father J. B. Rooney to take care of Little Hocking, Zaleski, and Gallipolis. St. John's in Athens County was given back to the pastor at Athens.[16] Because the rectory at Little Hocking was in "deplorable" condition, the Bishop told Father Rooney to reside at Zaleski "for the present." Zaleski, in Vinton County, is some forty miles and two counties west of Little Hocking and the two strong congregations in Athens and Marietta were much closer. But at that time there was a direct conection between Zaleski and Little Hocking via the old Marietta & Cincinnati Railroad and the combination of several small congregations, it no doubt was hoped, would allow one pastor to collect his full salary while not burdening the pastors of the larger congregations.

This became the permanent status for the rest of the existence of St. Mary's of the River. The following were the pastors stationed at Zaleski during this period, who had charge of Little Hocking:

- 1902-1913 Rev. James B. Rooney
- 1913-1918 Rev. John W. Byrne
- 1918-1922 Rev. Anthony Schlernitzauer
- 1923-1925 Rev. William Moran
- 1926-1929 Rev. Maurice Donovan

St. Ambrose, Vincent, founded

In 1891 Little Hocking had a population of only 200, with two churches, one public school, and two stores. Vincent, on the other hand, in Barlow Township about nine miles north of Little Hocking, had two blacksmiths, four stores, a hotel, and a resident physician.[17]

St. Ambrose Church at Vincent was developed under the guidance of Father Woesman at Marietta. Land in the village was purchased on November 23, 1893.[18] A decision to build was made in May, 1894, and the church was dedicted on September 15, 1895 by Bishop Watterson. It was attached to Holy Cross Parish in Glouster in 1897. This development could only have weakened the congregation at Little Hocking.

St. Ambros, Belpre, founded

Catholics at Belpre for years had divided themselves between the congregations at Little Hocking and at Parkersburg, right across the Ohio River. In 1901 a Mrs. Connor donated to the diocese a lot on upper Main Street in Belpre, near the Ohio River, with a 15 by 24 foot house. Bishop Moeller gave Father Rooney permission to spend up to $200 to make it a suitable place of worship. This, though obviously a great benefit to the Catholics in Belpre, caused a serious decline in the congregation at Little Hocking. The little chapel served the congregation until it was replaced in 1939.

**Decline of St. Mary's**

St. Mary's as a mission of Zaleski presents a story of gradual decline in both population and services offered.

As early as November, 1902, Bishop Moeller advised Father Rooney to say Mass at Little Hocking on weekdays in a private house in the winter, because the church on its bluff overlooking the rivers was "so much exposed to the winter's blast and...it cannot be heated efficiently..."[19] Father Rooney found it difficult to attend Little Hocking and asked to be relieved of that duty. Bishop Moeller told him to consider with the people the advisability of closing the church and getting them to attend neighboring congregations; and on the other hand to ascertain what they would do to fix up the church.[20] No conclusion seems to have been reached at this time, except to continue the status quo. But the pattern of services became one Mass per month on a Sunday in the summer and one Mass per month on a weekday in the winter.

Income from the congregation barely covered its small portion of the pastor's salary in these years, but small amounts were spent on repairs to the church in 1904 and 1905. Bishop Hartley's visit for Confirmation in 1904 no doubt encouraged the people in this regard.[21]

The congregation gradually declined from 71 in 1906 to 42 in 1921; 20 in 1928; and only 12 in 1929. Usually one-third to one-half of the congregation was school-aged children, who attended the public school, whom the pastor would teach catechism on his monthly visits.

By 1915 Little Hocking was the smallest of the pastor's congregations, having 44 souls while Zaleski had 115 and Belpre 55. It retained that status after Vincent and St. John's in Athens County, which also were shrinking, were added to the pastor's charges. The population declines were typical of the entire nation in that era, as people moved from rural areas to the large cities.

St. Mary's of the River was permanently closed in the second half of 1929. Father Maurice Donovan's census report that July was a standard report. His financial report, dated the end of the year, noted, "Church closed. Remaining parishioners attend Belpre St. Ambrose Church." The Bishop's secretary continued to send out the census forms. For 1930 and 1931 Father Joseph Hynes of Zaleski reported that the people were attending the churches at Belpre or Vincent. In 1935 he reported thirteen Catholic souls at Little Hocking, with four children in the public school. However, "Parish has been discontinued. People attend at Belpre. Church has been razed."

Thus the fifty year history of St. Mary's of the River ended with a whisper. The church property continued to be owned by the Diocese of Columbus and was transferred to the new Diocese of Steubenville when it was erected. Bishop Mussio sold the property on December 5, 1955.[22]

**St. Ambrose Church, Little Hocking**

In 1988 Bishop Albert Ottenweller of Steubenville reversed the decisions that had been made around the turn of the twentieth century. He decided the

churches of St. Ambrose at Belpre and St. Ambrose at Vincent should be combined into one congregation. Fr. David Huffman was appointed pastor in March, 1991. By 1995 it was decided to build a new facility and in June, 1997 Bishop Gilbert Sheldon led nearly 450 worshipers in a groundbreaking ceremony at 5080 School House Road. A 23,000 square-foot, crescent-shaped facility was built, with a 75 foot spire at one end supporting a 40 foot aluminum cross. The building provides worship space with seating for about four hundred, an education center, and a social center. The first Mass in the new worship space was offered on October 3, 1998. Bishop Sheldon presided at the dedication ceremony on November 29, 1998.[23]

At first the new church was designated "Porterfield," but now is called St. Ambrose, Little Hocking. It is just 2 1/2 miles upriver from the old site of St. Mary's of the River. In 2014 its October count (average weekend attendance) was 318.

**Sacramental Records**

In his 1930 census report, Father Joseph Hynes noted that the Little Hocking books of baptisms, confirmations, and marriages were at Zaleski. They were not there in 1962 when the first microfilming of parish registers was carried out by the Diocese of Columbus. There was a fire in the Zaleski rectory in 1938 in which the parish's own baptismal register was destroyed, but its other books, apparently in the church, survived. It is not known whether Little Hocking's books were destroyed at that time or perhaps were sent to some parish in the Diocese of Steubenville between 1944 and 1962. They were not at St. Ambrose at Vincent nor at St. Ambrose in Belpre in the early 1950s.

NOTES

1) Catholic Record Society *Bulletin* IV/259 from a January 1875 report to Bishop Rosecrans
2) Washington Co. Deed Record 88/287
3) Letter signed "One That Was There," *The Catholic Columbian*, June 27, 1878
4) *History of Washington County, Ohio: With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches* (H. Z. Williams & Bros., 1881) p. 521
5) Archives, Diocese of Columbus (ADC), July 1, 1885, St. John's, Anthony P.O., [Rev.] P. J. Weisenberger to (bishop's secretary)
6) *History of Washington County, Ohio, op. cit.*
7) ADC, Dec. 20, 1900, Moeller to Rev. J. Rooney, Bellaire
8) Washington County Deed Record 93/608
9) Steiner, Catherine McQuaide and Bruce E. Steiner, *Faith and Family: St. Paul's Catholic Church, Athens, Ohio, The Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Athens County Historical Society, 1995) p. 51
10) ADC, census report, Sept. 1, 1887
11) ADC, Mar. 4, 1886, Anthony P.O., Athens Co., [Rev.] P. J. Weissenberger to Watterson
12) ADC. June 6, 1887, St. John's, Anthony P.O., P. J. Weissenberger to Fr. T. J. O'Reily
13) ADC, Aug, 22, 1887, note on ceusus report
14) *The Catholic Columbian*, Nov. 9, 1889
15) ADC, Nov. 16, 1900, Bishop Henry Moeller to Rev. Joseph Tuohy, Little Hocking; and Dec. 4, 1900, HM to Rev. J. J. Schneider, Pomeroy; and Dec. 12, 1900, HM to Rev. John J. Schneider, Pomeroy
16) ADC, Dec. 20, 1900, HM to Rev. J. Rooney, Bellaire; Dec. 20, 1900, HM to Rev. J. Rooney, Bellaire; Dec. 20, 1900, HM to Rev. J. B. Mattingly, Athens
17) Austin, L. G., *Illustrated historical and business review of Washington County, Ohio...* (Coshoction: Union Publishing, 1891)
18) Washington Co. Deed Record 115/238
19) ADC, Nov. 13, 1902, HM to Rev. J. B. Rooney, Zaleski
20) ADC, Feb. 20, 1903, HM to Rev. J. B. Rooney, Zaleski
21) ADC, 1904 and 1905 Financial Reports
22) Washington Co. Deed Record 278/273
23) Parish website, http://www.stambroseohio.org/parish.php

# St. Dominic Parish, Beaver, Noble County
# Baptisms 1832-1852

(Continued, from Vol. XXXX No. 10)

**1836**, continued

Oct. 10 John; spons. James Hacket. J. Reid

same day James L. son of L. Foradyce and Sara Foradyce; spons. Hugh McConaghy and Mary Gallagher alias Delong. J. Reid

Oct. 30 Elizabeth daughter of Simon Rinehart and Alice his wife; spons. Peter Tymmony and Elizabeth Windel. J. Reid

same day Sara Jane daugher of Benjamin Lowe and Lucinda his wife; spons. James Lowe and Rosanna Brady. J. Reid

Nov. 12 Elizabeth daughter of Enoch Archer and Hanna Sweeney, spouses; spons. Abraham Archer and Hanna Archer. J. Reid

Nov. 30 Mary daughter of John Gallagher and his wife; spons. James Gallagher and Catherine McCune. J. Reid

Nov. 13 Mary Magdalen, daughter of John Horn and his wife; spons. James Wisand and Magdalen Horn. J. Ried

Nov. 12 Elizabeth daughter of Enoch Archer and his wife; spons. Abraham Archer and Hanna. J. Reid.

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Nov. 14 Mary C. H. Johnson, spouse of V. Johnson, Church of St. Joseph, convert. J. Reid

same day John and Catherine his son and daughter; spons. Simon and Mary Dorr. J. Reid

**1837**

Jan. 1 George son of Simon Schnell and his wife; spons. George Laux and his wife. J. Reid

same day John son of the same parents; spons. John Hague and his wife. J. Reid

Jan. 8 Augusta, Jane, Euphemia, Ferdinandine, daughters of Frederick Bidenhorn and Lizetta Benninghouse, spouses; spons. John Frederick Bidenharn (by James Gallagher) and Ephemia Benninghouse. J. Reid

Jan. 20 Hugh son of James Hackett and Ann McConaghy, spouses; spons. Hugh McConaghy Senior and his wife. J. Reid

Jan. 23 Jacob son of J. Kholb and his wife; spons. Jacob Hoviller. J. Reid

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Jan. 27 Anna wife of William Dogherty, convert. J. Reid

same day Sara, wife of Edward Dogherty, Mary, wife of Daniel Dogherty and Julianna wife of John Dogherty. J. Reid

Jan. 29 Alice daughter of Peter Mulrine and Anna Pollock, spouses; spons. Simon Rinehart and Alice his wife. J. Reid

Feb. 10 Daniel son of Daniel Scot and Mary Carte?; spons. Rosanna Brady. C. P. Montgomery

Mar. 12 Sara daughter of Mary McDonaghy alias Carpenter; spons. John McDaniel and Bridget Brady. J Reid

Mar. 15 Mary Jane daughter of Peter Tymmony and Elizabeth Ward, spouses; spons. Rosanna Gallagher. J. Reid

Mar. 25 James Reid son of William Grey and Anna Morgan alias Grey; spons. William Windel and Jane Morgan. J. Reid

Mar. 27 Sarah daughter of Nathaniel Delong and Isabel Ensley, spouses; spons. John Delong and his wife. J. Reid

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Apr. 3 Margaret daughter of Terence Smith and Mary Bennet, spouses; myself the sponsor. J. Reid

same day Thomas Benton son of Michael Benton and his wife; spons. Terence Smith and Mary Smith. J. Reid

(To be continued)

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