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Columbus Scrapes the Sky: Daniel W. McGrath (1854-1937)

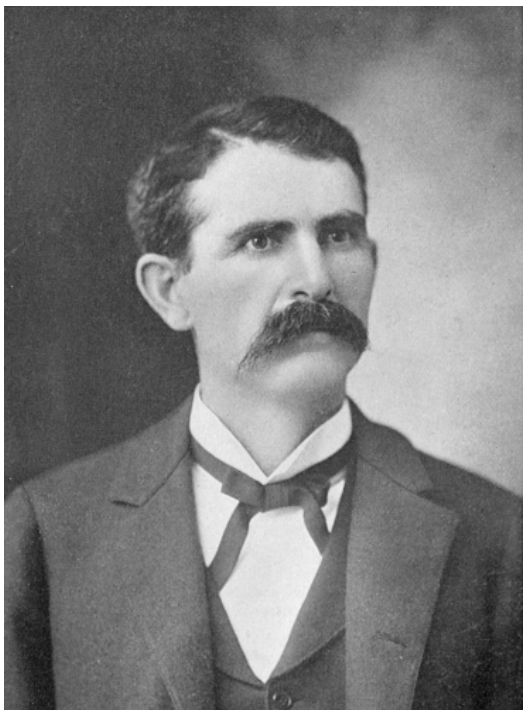
Daniel McGrath was a type of man not often dealt with in our pages—he was not a cleric and, as far as we know, did no writing with pen and ink. He was a builder in brick and concrete and steel. He built many industrial structures and school buildings and, more famously, the first sky-scrapers in Columbus, most of them still standing.

He was born in western New York State[1] on Sept. 15, 1854. His parents were natives of Ireland named Patrick McGrath and Mary Julia Meagher. Mary was from Tipperary. After a short time in New York, where Daniel and a sister were born, they settled on a farm in Madison County, Ohio and became members of St. Patrick Parish.

After completing the education provided by the local schools, Daniel took up the mason's trade and worked for a time as a journeyman. He moved to Columbus in 1874 and continued that employment.

In 1883 he married Mary Jane Hunter, like him a child of Irish immigrants, before Father Francis Quatman of Holy Angels Church in Sidney. They would have three sons and then three daughters.

It was about that same time that Daniel set up his own contracting business. Over the next sixteen years he erected a great many school buildings in Columbus as well as the Madison County jail. Late in the century he began erecting industrial buildings and prominent buildings that still stand, including, among the first skyscrapers in the city, the Wyandotte Building at 21 W. Broad St. and the New First National Bank building at 33 N. High St. In building these and other high-rise buildings, McGrath was the first contractor to use a steam-powered elevator to raise materials to the construction levels. He also patented a portable machine to mix mortar on site. He adopted the use of concrete mixers and hanging scaffolds.



Daniel W. McGrath, c. 1900

An advertisement in the 1897-1898 Columbus Directory listed "Daniel W. McGrath, Masonry Contractor and Builder. Brick work a specialty. Dealer in pressed and fire brick, terra cotta, flue linings, lime, cement, lake and Zanesville sand.

CS&H Yard. (This was the Columbus Sandusky & Hocking Railroad, with freight depot at Mt. Vernon Ave. and Neil--now Neilston--St.) His office was in the family home at 1079 Summit St. McGrath became one of the most prominent builders in central Ohio, owing to his thorough understanding of the work, his close application to business, his fidelity to the terms of a contract, and his honorable effort. His three sons, Edward, Frank, and John, attended Sacred Heart School and all three as adults joined him in the business; but sadly they predeceased him.

In the early 1900s Daniel and Mary Jane and the family moved to 1575 Neil Avenue. In later years their daughter Lillian, wife of Dr. Roy Krigbaum, and their children lived with them. The oldest daughter, Marie, died unmarried in 1916. The youngest, Anna, married William H. Mooney of Indianapolis.

Mr. McGrath was a member of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, the Knights of Columbus, the Knights of St. John, the Catholic Order of Foresters, the Elks, the Chamber of Commerce, the Builders' Exchange, the Ohio Club, the Columbus Board of Trade, and the Colony Club of New York. He did not align with any political party.

Daniel retired and dissolved his firm in 1933, at the age of 76. He and Mary Jane then lived in the Krigbaum home at 911 Kendall Place in Holy Rosary parish. Mary Jane died there on February 3, 1937. Six weeks later, on March 19, Daniel followed her, survived by two daughters and sixteen grandchildren. Services were at Holy Rosary Church and burial was in St. Joseph Cemetery.

Daniel McGrath worked with brick and morter, steel and concrete, to erect buildings where the people of Columbus have lived and worked now for over thirteen decades. We honor his memory by appending a list of the best-known of them.

List of Construction Projects

This is a summary of known construction projects in Central Ohio carried out by D. W. McGrath and his company. It was said that he also erected large buildings in other parts of the state.

Dispatch Building 1889

The Columbus Dispatch Building at 68 North High St., northeast corner at Gay St.

Madison County Jail 1890

Located at Main and High streets in London, on the southeast corner of the courthouse square, this building still is used as the sheriff's office.

M. C. Lilley Company Building 1891

This industrial building at 87 N. Sixth St., designed by George W. Bellows Sr., was razed in 1973.

Buckeye Malleable Iron Works c. 1891

Buckeye Malleable was on the north side of downtown Columbus, at the east end of Russell Street. It is not clear just what McGrath built there or when. A prior firm on the site was Munson Hayden & Co. In 1902 the works moved to Parsons Avenue and became Buckeye Steel.

Chittenden Hotel 1895

This hotel, on the northwest corner of Spring and High, stood until the 1970s.

National Steel Plant 1895-1897

Sometimes called King, Gilbert, & Warner, this blast furnace on S. High St. south of the B&O, just west of Buckeye Steel, was completed in 1895 and a second furnace, eighty feet tall, in 1897. McGrath did all the masonry for this plant.

Wyandotte Building 1896-1898

Still standing at 21 W. Broad Street, this twelve-story building was designed by Daniel H. Burnham for the Deshlers. Mr. McGrath built it.

Spahr Building 1897

This office building at 50 E. Broad also was designed by Daniel Burnham. It was razed to make room for the Rhodes Office Tower.

Columbus Iron & Steel Co. 1899-1901

This was sometimes called the Marting Blast Furnace. The plant was on a site south of Buckeye Steel,



Postcard depiction of the Wyandotte Building, c. 1905.

running from Parsons Avenue west to a line extended from Fifth Street. Construction of a 75-foot tall blast furnace for pig iron production began late in 1899 and was completed in October, 1900. A second furnace opened in April, 1901. Production was moved to Middletown in 1928.

The Glass Works 1900
McGrath built the first two phases of the Federal Glass factory, located on the north side of Marion Road east of Parsons Avenue.

New Hayden Building 1901
This is the 13-story office building at 16 E. Broad St., designed by Frank L. Packard, still in use.

Outlook Building 1901
Originally called the Olentangy Building, at 44 E. Broad Street, this was another Daniel Burnham design, of ten stories. It was razed to make way for the Rhodes Tower.

Ohio Statehouse Addition 1901
McGrath carried out the fire-proofing and mason work on the addition to the Ohio Statehouse.

Schultz Building
This office building, at 234 N. High St., was razed in 1948.

New First National Bank 1904
This ten-story office building at 33 N. High St. is still in use.

American Savings Bank Bulding 1905
Located at 152 S. High St, later known as the Citizens Trust and Savings building, it was razed in 1983.

Brunson Building - 1905
Another office building, at 145 N. High St., this one,



New First National Bank Building

of twelve stories, was renovated in 2005.

Holy Rosary Church and School Building 1905
D.W. McGrath built this original building of Holy Rosary Parish with J. W. Sweeney. It was on Seymour Avenue. See the *Bulletin* of September, 2013 for a photograph. It was used until 1966 and razed in 1973.

Central Union Telephone Co Building 1905
Now the Ameritrust Building at 33 N. Third Street, it was occupied in 1907 and renovated in 1978.

Lazarus Building 1909
Located at 141 S. High Street at the corner of Town, this department store building now is used for offices.

Thompson Memorial Library 1910-1912
McGrath built the original library, the three-story portion that faces the oval on the Ohio State campus.

Athletic Club of Columbus 1915-1916
Located at 136 East Broad Street, this building is still used for its original purpose.

Camp Sherman 1917-1918
In November, 1917, the contract for the construction and completion of alterations, additions, and repairs at Camp Sherman near Chillicothe was awarded to Daniel W. McGrath. He won another contract in September, 1918, for additional barracks, mess halls, kitchens, and other buildings and structures.

Addition to the Ohio State Museum 1926
Daniel W. McGrath & Sons was contractor for the 1926 addition (the north or War Memorial Wing along Fifteenth Avenue), of what now is Sullivant Hall on the OSU campus.

The Ohio State Federal Bulding 1927
Still standing at 85 E. Gay Street, on the southwest corner of Third St., this building is now residential.

Circleville Municipal Hospital 1929
D. W. McGrath was awarded the contract to build this hospital.

Mt. Carmel Hospital
Mt. Carmel has had such a long and complex construction history, it is impossible to tell what part McGrath built, but the *Ohio State Journal* gave him this credit.

Thirty-five buildings at OSU
The same obituary credits McGrath with building thirty-five buildings at Ohio State, including the library and museum mentioned above.

SOURCES

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Ed Lentz, "As it were" column in *ThisWeek Hilliard Northwest News*, Dec. 17, 2015
Columbus Centennial program published by the Columbus Dispatch celebrating the 100th anniversary of Columbus, Ohio. [1912]:
The Catholic Columbian, April 2, 1937
Ohio State Journal, March 20, 1937
The Columbus Dispatch, Mar. 11, 1937
Architecture Columbus, Columbus: The Foundation of the Columbus Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, 1976.
"Central Ohio Buildings" database at the Columbus Metropolitan Library website

NOTE

1) Sources disagree on his birthplace: either Genessee County, Lewiston in Niagara County, or Genesseo in Livingston County.



Abstracts from the *Catholic Telegraph*

(Continued from Vol. XXXXI No. 10)

July 2, 1862
A synopsis of the Right Rev. Dr. Rosecrans' sermon at the blessing of the new church of St. Francis de Sales at Bunker Hill, Mass. is presented.

July 9, 1862
Bishop Rosecrans administered Confirmation at Wappa Koneta on Sunday, July 6; and preached from a stand in the grove during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament; and sang Vespers at 4 o'clock. He administered Confirmation at Reading on June 29th. On Wednesday he attended the College Exhibition at St. Xavier's.

For the Catholic Telegraph.

Concert in Somerset.

SOMERSET, Perry Co., July 5th, '62.

A notice given in the *Democratic Union*, (Somerset), promising a musical treat to all lovers of music who should avail themselves of the opportunity, drew a large and respectable audience to St. Mary's Academy on the evening of the 1st inst. Many had come from distant places, myself among the number. All realized their highest expectations in the enjoyment of the delightful strains elicited by skilful fingers from three rich-toned pianos, a harp, and the orchestral instruments, united with most effective efforts of a finely balanced chorus of excellent voices. The concert was given by the pupils of St. Mary's, assisted by Trinity Church choir, known as *second* best in the diocese, and by an orchestra of amateurs. The latter deserves particular notice. As amateur musicians, considering their youth (in appearance all under 20), they merited the highest praise. The arrangement of the music, some of which was very difficult, is the work of two of the boy musicians, P. Dittoe and A. Scott. Much skill is displayed in the overtures—"Fra Diavolo" and "The Caliph of Bagdad,"—and would do honor to artists of riper years.

The performance, as well as the arrangement, was in the highest degree creditable to the young musicians. The violins and the 1st cornet rang admirably. Go ahead boys! never stop until you rank *first* among competitors.

Very respectfully yours,
Julius

July 16, 1862
On Monday and Tuesday Bishop Rosecrans conferred minor orders and the diaconate. He also recently administered Confirmation at St. Martin's, Brown County. Last Sunday he offered Mass at Holy Angels', Fulton, and addressed the congregation, presided at dinner, and was entertained by the school children.

July 23, 1862
On the 16th a subdeacon and priests were ordained in St. John's Chapel, Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, apparently by Bishop Rosecrans. Rosecrans administered Confirmation in Zanesville on July 21 [?], that is 81 at "St. Joseph's" [i.e. St. Thomas] and about 39 at St. Nicholas.

St. Mary's Academy, Somerset, Perry County, Ohio.

The Report of the "Thirtieth Annual Distribution of Premiums and Order of Exercises" at this institution, we acknowledged before. Instead of printing the long catalogue of names, for which we have not room just now, it may be as much, if not more to the purpose, to give the following respecting the general establishment.

This Institution, incorporated by an act of the Legislature of Ohio, was established in 1830. A new and commodious building, recently erected, and warmed by furnaces, affords every desirable comfort to pupils. The location is healthy, and the recreation-grounds spacious.

The Academy is conducted by Sisters of the Order of St. Dominic, and is well prvided with competent and experienced teachers, who will spare no efforts

to render the Academy worthy of extensive patronage.

The course of studies is divided into four Departments—each Department having its own distinctive course of studies assigned to it.

The discipline of the school is firm and uniform, but mild and parental. Unremitting attention will be given to the comfort and health of the pupils.

The Academic year consists of Two Sessions, of five months each—the first commencing on the first Monday of September; the second on the first Monday of February. The Two Sessions will be closed each year, with the public distributions of premiums and honors, in the early part of July.

Students mentioned in the list of the distribution of premiums at the Ursuline Academy, Brown County: Mary Anderson, Circleville; Maggie Miller and Cecilia Miller, Columbus; Julia Worthington, Chillicothe.

July 30, 1862

On August 2 Bishop Rosecrans will give the habit of the Order of the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis to new postulants, at the convent in Cincinnati.

Episcopal Visitation.

LANCASTER, O., July 27th, 1862.

VERY REV. EDITOR:—In accordance with the wish, expressed in your excellent paper some weeks ago, to have recorded such religious items as might be deemed of more than passing or local interest, I pen these few lines to inform you of some of the doings of Catholics in our little, old, quaint, out-of-the-way town of Lancaster.

To-day, (Sunday,) the Right Rev. Dr. Rosecrans paid us a visit and gave to such as were prepared the saving sacrament of confirmation. What constituted quite an event here, was the celebration of solemn High Mass. Father Borgess officiated as celebrant in his usual felicitiousness, assisted by our Rev. Pastor, Father Lange, as Deacon, Wm. T. Bigelow as Sub-deacon and Nicholas Pilger as Master of Ceremonies. It would have done your heart good to have seen the exquisite arrangement of the Throne, the High Altar, and the Altar of the Blessed Virgin, especially the latter, which was perfect in its kind and could not have been surpassed in delicacy.

After the Gospel, the Right Rev. Bishop preached a solid and instructive discourse on "the right of the Church to command our obedience to her laws," It was a sermon worth listening to, calm, logical and eloquent, proving that the Church's decisions can in no possible way take away man's true liberty, and also that true liberty consists in obeying truth and submitting reason to God.

At the end of Mass the Holy Sacrament of Confirmation was administered to 128 persons, 79 males and 49 females. Several were adults and four were converts. He preceeded the administration of the Holy Sacrament, by a short, earnest exhortation to those to be confirmed, telling them what to do to preserve the great grace they were about to receive. He delighted the hearts of the little ones by distributing among them medals as a memorial of his visit.

In the afternoon, at 3 o'clock, we had pontifical Vespers and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Father Borgess acted as assistant priest; the other officers were the same as in the morning. Altogether it was a sight that ought oftener to be witnessed in our Catholic Churches. the solemn functions of the church should, if possible, be gone through, every great festival.—They might be means of greater good for souls than we could imagine; even if not so, it would add to the dignity of divine worship.

FAIRFIELD

August 6, 1862

Sunday last Bishop Rosecrans blessed the new church of St. Vincent de Paul at Sedamsville, two miles west of Cincinnati, and preached at the Mass.

(to be continued)

St. Dominic Parish, Beaver, Noble County
Baptisms 1832-1852
(Continued, from Vol. XXXXI No. 11)

1845, continued

Sept. 25 Valentine Henry son of John Bress and Mary Effy; spons. Elizabeth and Leonard Choppner. Philip Foley

Sept. 25 Mary Ann daughter of Leonard Choppner and Elizabeth Miller; spons. Adam Shafer and Mary Ann Choppner. PF

Sept. 25 John Michael son of Sebastian Hohman and Matilda Archer; spons. John Hohman and Margaret Wacoer [? perhaps Wacner for Wagner] PF

Nov. 5 Rebecca Jane daughter of Hugh McManamin and Susan Harron; spons. Rebecca and Martin Harran. PF

Nov. 6 Margaret daughter of Thomas Harran and Catherine Daugherty; spons. John Harran and Rebecca Lyons. PF

Nov. — Mark son of Adam Riesbeck and Magdalen Younkos; spons. Mark and Mary Younkos. PF

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Nov. 11 Rosina Angelica daughter of A Becker and Mary Elizabeth Röth; spons. Joseph Ritterbeck and Rosina Lutz. PF

Nov. 12 Barbara daughter of Peter Horn and Gertrude Wiesend; spons. Adam Krobls and Barbara Wiesend. PF

Nov. 18 Mary Cecilia daughter of Nicholas Shött and Mary Selling; spons. Michael Shott and Mar—.

Nov. 12 Terrence son of Faust Lori and Margaret Lowri; spons. Elizabeth Lori. PF

Nov. 19 Rhoda Mary daughter of Henry Kerrigan and Hannah Archer; spons. William Kerrigan and Catherine Carr. PF

Nov. 19 [blank] son of Joseph Miller and [blank]

Dec. 28 Rebecca daughter of Samuel Parr and Ann Judge; spons. William Judge. PF

Dec. 4 Own Diam son of John Delong and Juliana Turner; spons. Thomas Delong and Mary Will. PF

Dec. 4 James C. Kearny son of Michael Kearney and Bridget Hillis; spons. Patrick Cawfield. PF

Nov. 24 Eleanor Hupp about 30 years old; spons. Michael Archer. PF

1846

Oct. 17 Ruth Ann daugher of Geroge Gildea and Margaret Gallagher; spons. James and Susan Gallagher; born Sept. 18. PF

Oct. 17 Eleanor daughter of Edward Lawn and his wife; spons. Daniel Cantwell and Sarah Donoghue; born Sept. 18. PF

Oct. 24 Edward son of Daniel McConahy and Emily Moran; spons. Hugh McConahy and Jane Maxville. PF

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— 24 Gustaff Carl son of Francis Bidenhorn and Lizzeta Beninghouse; spons. Harmon Beninghouse and Bridget Galagher. PF

— 24 Sarah Jane daughter of Edward Gallagher and Ann Hughs; spons. John Gallagher and V. Brentin. PF

1847

— 10 Deborah daughter of Robert Gallagher and Elizabeth Jefferis; spons. Francis Rogers and Lucy McClary[?]. PF

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1849

Feb. 14 William son of John Earley and Bridget; spons. Charles Gallagher and Priscilla Gallagher. P. Foley

Mar. 2 Margaret daughter of Patrick & Ellen Caulfield; spons. John Geffers & Ann Gallagher. P. Foley

Mar. 1 William son of Nathan & Isabel deLong; spons. John deLong and Juliana Turner. [PF]

Mar. 5 Ambrose son of Ambrose and Margaret [no surname is given, but it no doubt is Jefferis]; spons. John Jeffers & Mary Laup[?].

same day John son of John and Julian DeLong;

spons. Christ. Gallagher and Ann Miller.

Mar. 13 [or 18] William son of Edward McGennis & Bridget McGennis; spons. Ed Gallagher and Lidia Gallagher.

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Apr. 8 Michael son of Farrell Malone and Jane Tench[?]; spons. James Gallagher and Rosanna Gallagher. PF

May 10 William son of Robert and Elizabeth Gallagher, born May 10 the same day conditionally baptized; spons. George Gildey and Elizabeth Armbruster. J. F. Kramer

1850

Aug 4 Ceremonies supplied for Wilhelmina, daughter of Leander Mahoney and Sara Windell, born Sept. 3, 1849; spons. John DeLong and Isabel DeLong. Jas. F. Kramer

same day Alice daughter of Thomas Jeffries and Sarah Reinhart, born June 14; spons. John and Elizabeth Turner. James F. Kramer

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Aug. 11 In the church of St. Dominic, Michael son of John Butler and Elizabeth N—, born July 20; spons John and Elizabeth Sa—. JFK

Aug. 11 Andrew son of Michael Byrnep[?] and Bridget Hughs, born April 8; spons. John and Elizabeth Armbruster. JFK

Aug. 11 Alice, born Aug. 7, daughter of Ambrose Jeffries and Margaret Reinhart; spons. John Butler and Alice Rienhart. JFK

Aug. 12 Thomas Henry, born 21 April, son of James Carr and Sarah Donohoe; spons. David Hannon and Martha his wife. JFK

Aug. 12 Mary Ann daughter of Edward Gallagher and Martha Windell, born Juy 17; spons. John and Susan Gallagher. JFK

1852

Mar. 6 Mary Louise Gallagher, born yesterday, daughter of Nicholas Gallagher and Ann Sleven; spons. Michael Slaven and Mary Slaven. B. Hengehold

Mar. 7 Mary Louise born Dec. 27, 1851, daughter of H. Jeffers and Mary Lohn; spons. Bernard M'cort and Ann Kron—. B. Hengehold

Mar.11 Edward, born Dec. 2, son of John[?] and Emma Lek; spons. James Buttler and Margaret Buttler. BH

Mar. 12 Arthur Aloysius, born July 6, 1851, son of James Tite[?] and Jane M'connehe; spons. John Armbrust and Elizabeth Armbrust. BH

Mar. 14 Mathilda, born Feb. 3, daughter of James Fendle and Mathilda Brabe; spons. Thomas Fendle and Ann Fendle. BH

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Mar. 14 Joseph, born Oct. 19, 1844; Mary, born May 11, 1846; Martin, born Feb. 4, 1848; and Eugene born Apr. 4, 1850, children of David Hickenbothen and Jane Pierce; spons. John Butler and Peter Guise and Mary Pierce. B. Hengehold

Mar. — Joseph Pierce about 55 years old; spons. Patrick Cornor. BH

Mar. — David Hickenbothen, about 30 years old; spons. Patrick Conor. BH

Mar. — Mary Flanningen (wife) about 30 years old; spons. Sarah Comisge. BH

Mar. — Mary Sara Miler, 20 years old, daughter of Francis Miller and Rebecca Miller; spons. Patrick Cornor and Ann Hickenbothen. BH

Apr. — Mary Rachael, wife of Michael Kreten, 49 years old, conditionally; spons. Edward Gallagher and Rosanna Sleven. BH

Apr. — Mary, wife of Henry Gree, 19 years old; same sponsors. BH

Apr. — Mary Elizabeth, 7 months and 14 days old, daughter of Pius Jeffers and V. Ginkens; spons. Michael Creten and Rosanna Sleven. BH

Apr. — Sara Barbara, three years old, daughter of the same; sponsors the same. BH

Apr. — Richard Törner, 64 years old; spons. Bern. M'cord and Rosanna Shleven. BH

(to be concluded)

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