



Barquilla de la Santa Maria

BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society-
Diocese of Columbus

Volume XIX, No. 5

May: Month of Our Lady

May, 1994



ST. MARY'S, GROVEPORT
by Mabelle M. Sheridan

[Mabelle (Mrs. James) Sheridan, a member of St. Mary's Parish, wrote this sketch about 1977. She died in 1986. The above photograph of the second St. Mary Church was provided by Msgr. George Schlegel.]

Through the years, in the parish, it has always been said that a group of Irish workers on the Ohio Canal was the start of St. Mary's. So let us go back and start at the beginning.

In 1832, laborers working with plow, pick, and shovel for 33 3/4 cents and two jiggers of whiskey a day, were completing the "Big Ditch" that went through

what was then Rarey's Port and Wert's Grove (Groveport in 1847). On September 16, 1832 the first three canal boats, the Cincinnati, the Red Rover, and the Lady Jane, were towed through the locks.

James Fagan and his brother, Tom, were among those early Irish immigrants who came to settle here in building the canal. Among other settlers were John Cavinee, the Slauzers, the Browns, and Michael Corbett and his family, Patrick and William Corbett.

About 1868, a tavern called the "Corbett House" was built by Michael Corbett. It is still standing at 110 Front Street. Mike Corbett was a wealthy land-owner at the time and donated land for the right-of-way for the C&O Railroad through his property. He built the 15-room house primarily to accommodate the railroad men. On July 15, 1868 the first train went through Groveport.

In 1870, the Catholic families, numbering about fifteen, under the leadership of Michael Corbett and the Fagan brothers, petitioned Bishop Sylvester H. Rosecrans, of Columbus, to establish a mission in Groveport. Rev. Nicholas Gallagher, who later became Bishop of Galveston, was appointed to organize and collect the necessary funds to purchase church property. The following year in 1871, he purchased a small brick church, built in 1856 by the United Brethren and used by them until they disbanded in 1869.

Many activities were undertaken to raise the money to pay for the church. Soon after the town hall had been built on the northwest corner of Front and Main Streets, Mike Corbett gave a large party in the new Hall for the benefit of the Church. Since Mr. Corbett had given the right-of-way to the railroad, he was able to arrange for a special train to bring a large number of guests from Columbus. Mr. Ed Gares, whose dry goods store was on the opposite corner from the town hall, cooperated by opening his store to allow the counters to be used for the serving of refreshments.

In the summer of 1871, the church was blessed by Bishop Rosecrans under the title of "St. Mary's." It was cared for by priests from St. Patrick's and the Cathedral. Among the priests who came down from Columbus were Fathers Gallagher, Kiernan, Campbell, Anderson, Lane, Kuhn, Clarke, Matte, and Hanna. The priests would come down from Columbus, every fourth Sunday, on the traction line that ran down Blacklick Street, have Confessions, Mass, Baptisms, etc. They would go to Corbett's, eat breakfast and await the next interurban going back to Columbus.

For many years the daughters of Mike Corbett, Nora and Katherine, who never married, lived in the old house on Front Street until their deaths in the 1950s.

The house of the first James Fagan is still standing on Hopewell Road. His grandson, James Fagan, was born, raised, married, and lived there until his recent death in August, 1977. As was his great-grandson, William Fagan, who is still a parishioner of St. Mary's.

The facilities of the parish were greatly augmented with the opening of St. Vincent's Mission House in 1933. In the spring of 1932 an invitation had been extended by Bishop James J. Hartley to the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian Fathers) whose headquarters is in Germantown, Pennsylvania, to

establish a Mission House in Groveport and to take over the care of St. Mary's Parish.

Father Jeremiah Tracy, a Vincentian priest, came to Groveport in 1932 to supervise the building of the Mission House and the laying out of the grounds. In late June of 1932, ground was broken and on February 15, 1933, the contractors announced the completion of the building and handed over the keys to Father Tracy.

Father Tracy immediately took over the pastorate of St. Mary's. The century-old church with a seating capacity of 90, seldom drew more than a dozen worshippers to its services. Under the influence of Father Tracy it was filled to overflowing. On 28th of March, 1938, Father Tracy, who had won the hearts of the entire Groveport community by his piety and simplicity, passed away in Mt. Carmel Hospital after several months of illness.

In the winter of 1938 Father Francis McDonnell, C.M. came to the Mission House as procurator. It was while Father Tracy lay dangerously ill in Mt. Carmel Hospital. On March 28, 1938, upon the death of Father Tracy, Father McDonnell succeeded as pastor of St. Mary's Parish. He was made Superior and Pastor in 1950.

With the growth of St. Mary's, Father McDonnell added a second Mass, making the Masses at 7:00 and 9:00. It became evident that a larger church was needed. It was under his direction the new church became a reality. The ground-breaking took place on August 15, 1949, the Feast of the Assumption. Father McDonnell officiated at the ceremony, which was attended by many parishioners and friends. Following the singing of the National Anthem, Father recited the prayers dedicating the work to Our Lady of the Assumption and the Miraculous Medal. At the close, the names were inscribed on the handle of the spade. Among these were Father McDonnell, Clarence Trapp, the contractor, and Miss Katherine Corbett, the oldest living member of the parish.

The cornerstone laying took place on October 9, 1949, Bishop Michael J. Ready officiating. The new church was designed by Ramsey & Groce of Columbus with a seating capacity of 225. On June 11, 1950, the dedication took place, officiated over by Bishop Ready and Father McDonnell at a Pontifical Mass at 10:00 a.m.

The first class to make their First Holy Communion in the new church on June 18, 1950 consisted of eight children. They were Mary and Virginia Runkle, Michael Stoltz, Robert Black, Barbara Vasichko, Elwood and Frederick Morgan, and Judith Degenhart.

Shortly after the new church was completed, in September, 1950, Father McDonnell was transferred to a new post at Emmitsburg, Maryland. Father McDonnell died at the age of 71 on January 30, 1954, in Philadelphia.

In September of 1950, Father Joseph S. Lawler, C.M. succeeded Father McDonnell. When he saw the long driveways around the Mission House he asked how they kept the snow shoveled in the winter. Reply: "What snow? We never have any snow around here." Then on Thanksgiving, 1950, the "Big Snow" hit. Father's car as marooned on High Street in Columbus for a week. John Meagher shoveled a path from his house on Madison Street to the Mission House and then

to the church for Father Lawler to walk in. John and Father were the only ones at Mass that Sunday.

Father Lawler directed the remodeling of the old church building into a parish hall. This was done entirely by volunteer labor as all the men applied their trades. Father Lawler had to get permission from Bishop Ready to do the work. The Bishop strongly advised against volunteer labor because he thought it never finished a job. Nevertheless, he allowed Father to go ahead. Under the direction of Jim Sheridan the work progressed. Herman Schick brought his entire crew of stone masons one Saturday and for a keg of beer and the lunch the women provided, the men laid up all the concrete blocks across the back of the hall, making two restrooms and a kitchen.

On June 25, 1952 Bishop Ready was attending a golf tournament at the Groveport Golf Course. He was invited to a luncheon prepared by the ladies in our "New Hall". He was very greatly surprised and praised the work very highly.

In 1951 our Smorgasbord was born. As the hall was not yet remodeled, it was held in the town hall. Since the street floor had been rented to a hardware store, all activities took place on the second floor. Everything that was used had to be taken up all those stairs and then brought back down after the affair (no mean task). It was the first parish affair, so we had nothing to start with. Jim Creeden, a retired detective (quite famous), lived on Front Street. Through his affiliations he was able to get about five barrels of discarded dishes from the Deshler Hotel. Smorgasbord was something new to the community. One lady with a child was passing one of our posters. The child asked, "What is a Smorgasbord?" The mother replied, "Some kind of fish, I guess." Marcella Baum was appointed the first chairman, but in September there was a tragic hunting accident in her family and Mabelle Sheridan took over. It was a huge success. Everyone in Groveport must have come -- out of curiosity if nothing else. We ran out of food!! Many people climbed all those steps for nothing!

During those early days of Latin Masses, the altar boys, who all attended the public schools, had no knowledge of Latin. Two wonderful men, to whom the parish owes a debt of gratitude, were James Byrne and George Gamache. They gave up all their Saturdays to instruct the boys in serving Mass and the Latin responses.

On January 15, 1956, our first parish bulletin was handed out. It was typed on an 8 1/2 by 11 inch sheet of paper. The bottom paragraph read:

"The people responsible for this bulletin:

Messrs: John Stout and George Gamache

Mesdames: Martha Morczek, Pauline Gamache, Rose Stout

Misses: Gertrude Heurich, Dorothy Heurich, Claire Baum, Roberta Baum,
Rosalee Pettibone, Mary Murray

In September, 1956, Father Lawler was transferred to his new post in Springfield, Mass. He was succeeded by Father Paul Mottey, C.M. Father Mottey suffered a heart attack and for health reasons had to leave in 1958. During his short regime he made lasting contributions to St. Mary's. In 1957, for the first time in the parish, all the sacred liturgies of Holy Week were held. It was said some parishioners were seeing them for the first time. Father Mottey asked for donations to buy the necessary articles for Holy Week.

Mr. & Mrs. Homer Beard donated the Repository Urn and white Mass vestments. Many other donations were received. The choir was busy practicing the music. It was a huge success with the church filled to over-flowing every night. Father Mottey discontinued the annual lawn-fetes held every June, as the weather did not always cooperate. Every one was to donate what they would ordinarily have spent. Father Mottey left in September, 1958.

Father Mottey was succeeded by Father Francis Hinton, C.M. He witnessed the "Big Snow" as Father Lawler had done eight years previously. In January, 1959, we had the "Big Water". Groveport was completely isolated by flood waters.

On February 4, 1962 a third Mass was added, making the schedule 7:00, 9:00, and 11:00. A Vincentian priest, Father Paul Huisiking, was the chaplain of the Ben Franklin complex of Alum Crest Hospital, the Infirmary and Sanitarium. He offered to say the first Mass, making the three Masses possible.

On April 5, 1964 Bishop Clarence Issenman gave permission to add a 46 by 52 foot addition to the present hall. On April 26, a ground-breaking blessing took place after the 9:00 Mass. They used the autographed shovel that was originally used for the ground-breaking in 1949 for the church.

Father Hinton left in September, 1964 and was succeeded by Father William Glavin, C.M. Father Glavin immediately put to good use the newly finished hall. On October 4, he added a children's Mass in the hall at 9:00. On September 26, 1965 the children's Mass was changed to 11:00. On October 21, 1967, Father Glavin died very suddenly of a heart attack.

Father Patrick Flaherty, C.M. acted as administrator until Father Walter Menig, C.M. was sent to take Father Glavin's place. On December 19, 1967 the Altar-Rosary Society welcomed the new pastor at their Christmas party. With the continued growth of the parish, the Sunday Masses were now at 7:00, 8:15, 9:30, 10:45, and 12:00. On September 1, 1968 it became necessary to add another priest. Father James Hussey, C.M. was named our first assistant pastor. February 21, 1970 at 8:00 p.m. was the first Saturday night Mass permitted by the bishop. In September, 1970 Father James Wholey, C.M. replaced Father Hussey as assistant pastor.

In 1971 the parish observed its centennial. It was started on May 16, 1971 with an outdoor Mass on the Mission House grounds, celebrated by Bishop Clarence Elwell. the Mass followed a May crowning at the grotto on the Mission grounds. Monday, May 17 was Vincentian Day. The three living former pastors, Fathers Lawler, Mottey, and Hinton, were present. Mass was concelebrated at 7:30 p.m. followed by a reception in the parish hall. Tuesday, May 18 was Altar-Rosary Society Day with all the former presidents attending. Wednesday, May 19 was Men's Day with a round of golf and evening activities. Thursday, May 20 was Ascension Day. Friday, May 21 was Ecumenical Day with area ministers and city officials taking part. On Saturday, May 22 a carnival on the Mission grounds and square dance in the parish hall topped off the week's festivities.

In September, 1973 Father Menig was transferred to his new post at Alexander City, Alabama and was succeeded by Father John B. Fitzgerald, C.M. Father Paul Mottey, C.M., former pastor, replaced Father Wholey as assistant pastor.

On September 7, 1974 Father Thomas M. Finley, C.M. replaced Father Mottey as associate pastor.

God has blessed the parish with vocations. Father Francis Christopher Lehner, O.P., son of William Lehner, was ordained in 1947. Father Frank Meagher, son of John and Eleanor Meagher, was ordained in 1960. The nuns are Sister David Ann, O.S.F., nee Rosemary Hoy, daughter of Thomas and Alice Hoy; Sister Carol Jander, S.F.M.I., daughter of Paul and Anna Jander; Sister Paulette, nee Bertha Meagher, daughter of John and Eleanor Meagher; and Sister Mary Riley, O.P., daughter of Alfred and Alberta Riley.

Down through the years as the parish grew, so did the organizations. The Holy Name Men became the Men's Club; the Altar Society increased to the Altar-Rosary Society; the Sunday School developed into C.C.D.; Vatican Council II gave birth to the Parish Council; the Youth Group succeeded the C.Y.C.; the men of the parish organized a Boy Scout troop; and the Forever Young Club made its debut in 1976.

It had long been the desire of the parish to obtain the North house, adjacent to the church property. Fr. Fitzgerald purchased it in 1974. It was to provide a rectory for the priests when the Mission House was sold. Due to the relocation of the church, this plan was discarded. Up to the present time it has served the needs of C.C.D. and various parish activities. It has recently been re-sold.

In the Spring of 1975, Bishop Hermann cut the Gordian Knot and with "no other motivation than his concern for us at present and in the future" asked the people of the parish to relocate in the area and build a facility that would provide a place of worship and satisfy the needs of the Christian Education of our youth. The present church and multi-purpose basement on Groveport Road are the result of this request.

The ground-breaking ceremony took place on March 13, 1977, with Father Fitzgerald officiating. Father McDonnell had broken ground for the new St. Mary's at Front and Blacklick streets on the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption, 1950. It was fitting that the dedication of the new church and basement facility on Groveport Road take place on another of Our Lady's feasts, the Immaculate Conception.

Irish Catholics were very instrumental in starting St. Mary's parish. It is most fitting that Father John B. Fitzgerald, C.M., a true son of Eire, should break ground for the new church to carry on, in a larger way, the work they started.

1871 DEDICATION OF GROVEPORT ST. MARY'S
(From the Columbus Dispatch, Saturday, July 1, 1871)

A new Catholic Church was dedicated at Groveport, on last Sunday, by Right Rev. Bishop Rosecrans, assisted by Fathers Rotchford and Gallagher. An excursion train of fourteen cars, filled to overflowing, left this city to witness the ceremonies, which were very impressive and interesting. After the dedication, Bishop Rosecrans delivered an interesting and instructive sermon to one of the largest gatherings ever assembled in Groveport.

CHILLICOTHE ST. MARY'S CHURCH
BAPTISMAL REGISTER, 1835-1846
(Continued from Vol. XIX, No. 4)

1842, continued

page 46

In Circleville:

- Dec. 13 James, born July 4, 1842, son of Patrick Birne and Allen Duran;
spons. Patrick Morne and Lucy Reilly.
and Elizabeth, born Dec. 7, daughter of Hue Breslan and Allen Guirlaub?;
spons. John McConly and Catherine Armstrong. H. D. Juncker
- Dec. 18 Mary, born Nov. 27, daughter of Anton Frischt and Felicity Locks;
spons. Maximian Eid and Elizabeth Frischt. HDJ
- Dec. 20 James, born the preceding night, son of Peter Kaisy and Margaret
Henschy [Casey and Hennessy?]; spons. Mary Murphy and her husband
James; Philip Hartlaub responded in place of the latter. HDJ

1843

- Jan. 29 Fridolin, born Jan. 26, son of Fidelis Bucheler and Bernardina
Vunderle; spons. Fridolin Vunderle and Gertrude Vunderle.
- same day Christian, born Jan. 18, son of Valentin Bruder and Clara Hall;
spons. Stephen Zind and Mary Hoffman.
- same day John, born Jan. 25, son of Casimir Hess and Margaret Schlerret;
spons. Isidor Kessler and Catherine Schlerret.
- same day Louisa, born Jan. 19, daughter of Fredinand Martzloff and Elizabeth
Armbroster; spons. Peter End and Bridget Martzloff. HDJ

page 47

- Jan. 29 Francis Anthony, born the same day, son of Sylvester Stiegler and
Victoria Burgad; spons. Erhard Boggenschitz and Mary Ann Stiegler.
- same day Charles, born Jan. 21, son of Joseph Kinsler and Theresa Strup;
spons. Erhard Strebel and Mary Merckly. HDJ
- Feb. 5 John, age 16 months, son of John Dougherty and Mary Ann Passmor;
spons. James Scully and Margaret Cull. HDJ
- Feb. 23 Mary Catherine, born Feb. 13, daughter of Mathias Meyer and
Catherine Diederich; spons. Anton Hechinger and Anna Maria
Schwetzler.
- same day Joseph, born Feb. 16, son of Leopold Allmann and Francisca Lang;
spons. Rosman Gerver and Rosina Gerver.
- same day Alexander, born Feb. 18, son of John Schmitt and Magdalena Stempfel;
spons. Peter Schmitt and Catherine Siebault. HDJ
- Feb. 24 Louisa Maria, born Jan. 16, daughter of Bernard Brügelman and
Theresa Wamelinck; spons. Herman Bernard Wamelinck and Bernardina
Wamelinck. HDJ
- Feb. 26 Mathias George Washington [Berman], born Feb. 22, son of Mathias
Berman and Louisa Keller; spons. Fredinand Bader and Sophia Müller.
HDJ

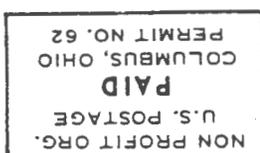
page 48

- Feb. 28 Joseph Sauvinet Lewis, born July 22, 1842, son of Theodore Lewis and
Camilla Sauvinet; spons. William M. Anderson, John Baptist Sauvinet,
and Elizabeth Anderson. HDJ
- March 11 Ann, born March 10, daughter of William B. Hanley and Mary
Gallagher; spons. John Nelson? and Mary Philippan. HDJ
- March 19 Catherina Josepha, born March 7, daughter of George Berman and
Josepha Gerdeisser; spons. Martin and Mary Bauman. HDJ

- March 25 Joseph, born March 21, son of Bernard Hanks and Mary Friedman; spons. Martin Leising and wife. HDJ
- March 30 Philomena, born March 28, daughter of Philip Hardlaup and Anna Maria Seikel; spons. George Gruber and wife. HDJ
- April 2 John, born the same day, son of Peter Peter and Egidia Swerger; spons. Mary Bauman. HDJ
- April 22 Conditionally, abjuring the errors of the Lutheran faith, Magdalena Strohocker, thirty years old; spons. Eva Eichenlaub. Wife of John Schum. She made her first communion. HDJ
- April 23 Thomas Parker, 23 years old; spons. W. M. Anderson. HDJ
- May 19 Mathew Charles, born July 22, 1842, son of Francis Becker and Christina Saddler; spons. Mathew Hammerstein and Barbara Adam. HDJ
- page 49
- May 21 James William, born March 28, son of Samuel Mathews and Sara Ann Bell; spons. mother of the woman.
- same day Louisa, born May 5, daughter of Michael Rollmann and Walburga Meyer; spons. Alexander Speeth and Josephina Rieder. HDJ
- May 25 John, born May 21, son of Landelin Heddiy and Mary Disch; spons. Louis Lang and Emily Linder. HDJ
- May 28 Caroline, born May 13, daughter of Peter Scheer and Elizabeth Weissbecker; spons. Augustine Hummel and Caroline Musschler. HDJ
- May 29 Mary Ann, born May 21, daughter of Martin Leising and Ursula Hanks; spons. Bernard Hanks and Elizabeth Schurhammer. HDJ
- May 7 (A list of first communions)
- June 10 Richard Ellet, convert from the errors of Wesley [Methodism], age 34 years; received his first communion. HDJ
- June 15 (Another list of First Communions)
- page 50
- June 18 Joseph, born June 16, son of John Hirn and Theresa Müller; spons. Martin and Mary Bauman. HDJ
- June 22 in Circleville:
Bridget, born June 17, daughter of James McKlocklin and Sara Sweeny; spons. Michael Reily and Sara Linch.
and Mary Jane, born April 8, daughter of William Forkesson and Marcellina Burns; spons. Bernard Reily and Margaret Rollay. HDJ
- June 24 near Wewearly [Waverly?]:
Wilhelmina, three months & 8 days old, daughter of George Geng and Catherine Willmann; spons. John Geng and Wilhelmina Neu.
and Mary Frances, 14 months old, daughter of James Ohirn and Mary Hammon; spons. William Vendel and his mother. HDJ
- June 25 John Michael, born Jan. 20, son of Richard Divine and Ellen McNally; spons. Frenlin McCaboy and Catherine Hirn. HDJ
- July 16 Mary, born July 13, daughter of Alexander Santo and and Sophia Ringwald; spons. Carl Boggenschitz and Theresa Santo. HDJ
- July 23 John, born July 9, son of Anton Fritz and Walburga End; spons. Ferdinand Martzloff and Kunigunda Bintz. HDJ

(To be continued)

Catholic Record Society - Diocese of Columbus
197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor



CHANCERY OFFICE
DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS
198 EAST BROAD STREET
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215