

# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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April 29: St. Catherine of Siena

April, 1994



Amanda T. Lawe, Catherine Meade Lawe, George W. Lawe and John D. Lawe

The above copies of Daguerreotypes of Catherine Meade Lawe and her family were made available by the Neville Public Museum of Brown County, Wisconsin. Mrs. Lawe was sent to live with an aunt in Zanesville after the death of her mother and with her sister was educated by the Dominican Sisters at St. Mary's Academy in Somerset. Shortly after her graduation, she was taken by Rt. Rev. Frederick Rese, first Bishop of Detroit, to Green Bay, Wisconsin as a catechist. This sketch of the life of an early graduate of St. Mary's ought to be of interest to our readers. This is a slightly abridged edition of Dr. Tanner's 1926 work, taken from the full edition published by the Grignon Mansion in Kaukauna, Wisconsin in 1987. It was brought to our attention by Della G. Rucker of Green Bay, who also located the photographs for us.

CATHERINE ANN MEADE LAWE  
A BIOGRAPHY  
by Dr. H. B. Tanner

The pages of history are replete with the record of the deeds of the brave men who broke the paths as pioneers in the ever westward push of our forefathers. But seldom do we see mentioned the faithful and courageous wives and mothers who bore an equal part in this great drama. It is of one of these women, whose life was the embodiment to a remarkable degree of that courage and fortitude so necessary in Wisconsin's early day, that I write of. One who was capable and efficient and proved by her Christian cordiality, a worthy counselor and guide to her husband and children, as well as a friend to the needy and suffering.

David P. Meade and Lydia (Wilde) Meade came to this country from Dublin, Ireland, very early in the nineteenth century. They were married in Philadelphia. He enlisted in the United States Navy during the War of 1812 and served as purser on the man of war Susquehanna, which vessel was under the command of his brother Edward Meade. He was also a cousin of General George G. Meade the distinguished Civil War officer and the hero of Gettysburg.

In Philadelphia on February 19th, 1816 was born to them a daughter, their first born and the subject of this sketch, Catherine Ann Meade. Her parents moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania shortly after her birth, at which place on September 8th, 1818 was born their second daughter, Mary Elizabeth, and later their son John F. Meade, on September 20th, 1819.

Another move took the family to Shippenburg, Pennsylvania where their youngest son Mathew J. Meade was born on December 7th, 1823. It was while living there that the first great sorrow came into the life of this family through the death of the wife and mother in 1829.

For a time the family ties were broken; the two girls going to their mother's sister, Mrs. Catherine Durang of Zanesville, Ohio, who placed them in St. Mary's Seminary at Somerset, Ohio, from which institution Miss Catherine A. Meade graduated in 1834. Miss Ellen Ewing of Lancaster, Ohio, who afterward married General William T. Sherman, was a pupil at this seminary.

The Rev. T. J. Van den Broek at this time was serving the Catholic community at Somerset, and acted as father confessor for the students of St. Mary's Seminary. It was there he first met the two young ladies, Catherine and Mary Meade. Little did he think that in later years, in far off Wisconsin, he would receive valuable and timely assistance in establishing his church at Little Chute at the hands of these young ladies.

By way of digression, I might say that education was ever a subject near to the heart of Judge John Lawe of Green Bay. In all of the early schools started there he was always either a subscriber or a trustee. Judge Lawe was an Englishman, and an active member of the Episcopal church at Green Bay, while his wife was of the Catholic faith, nevertheless, he contributed liberally in an equal manner to both sects. So that in 1831 when Bishop Fenwick of Cincinnati, who was in ecclesiastical charge of this North West Territory desired to start a Catholic school at Green Bay, we find Judge John

Lawe and Louis Grignon named as trustees. The objects set forth in the regulations of this school to be started, were, to "inculcate industry, morality and Christian piety, and to teach the art of spelling, reading and writing".

Starting with but two teachers, this school soon grew in importance, so that in 1834 when a separate jurisdiction was established for Green Bay (then in Michigan Territory) with Bishop Frederick Rese in charge, he took with him to his new field additional teachers for this school.

It appears that the diligence and proficiency displayed by Miss Catherine Meade in her studies as well as her pleasing and engaging manners attracted the attention of her teachers to such a degree that when the call came she was recommended to the bishop as a capable teacher.

Having been Vicar General for the Diocese of Cincinnati, Bishop Rese was familiar with the various schools in that state including that of Somerset, so when the recommendation came he accepted the report and engaged Miss Catherine Meade.

She bid her relatives and friends in Zanesville, Ohio, goodbye and set out by stage accompanying Bishop Rese and two Franciscan sisters for Pittsburgh and Erie, Pennsylvania, where on July 6th, 1834, the party went on board the steam boat Michigan for what proved to be the great adventure of her life.

This abrupt transition from the sheltered life in a Catholic seminary, located in a quiet country village, to the hustle and bustle of the great outside world must have made a deep and lasting impression on her mind. What a wonderful experience this was for this eighteen year old girl, her first sight of a large body of water as they journeyed through the Great Lakes, stopping at Detroit, Mackinac Island and landing at Green Bay after twelve days experience on ship board.

How her eyes must have sparkled with excitement as the steamboat, with flags flying and band playing, entered the harbor of Mackinac. The sight ashore was novel and interesting; the village near the water, the tents of the voyageurs, the lodges of the Chippewa and Ottawa Indians, the fort half way up the hill, the wharf crowded with Indians in full dress, Voyageurs shouting in French to one another, while soldiers off duty looked eagerly at the officers as they disembarked. Surely it was a sight to stir her emotions.

Landing at Green Bay a few days later, their party was taken in charge by the Catholic priest then at the Bay, the Rev. Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, and soon after the school work began.

Among her scholars were two of the younger daughters of Judge John Lawe. Very likely this led to her meeting Judge Lawe's son George W. Lawe. In any event their acquaintance soon led to marriage, which took place on the 26th of March, 1835. This ceremony was performed by her old friend and former pastor, the Rev. T. J. Van den Broek, who had lately come west to spread the Gospel to the Indians.

By this happy event her school teaching was limited to a few short months, and this young lady, just barely nineteen years of age started her married life.

Two years previous to this her husband had returned from finishing his education at the Lowville Academy in New York State, and was at this time assisting his father in the Indian trade, which, as agent for the Astor Company, known as the American Fur Company, was very extensive. As the elder son of the leading merchant and citizen of Green Bay, he had everything in abundance to start his family life with. But what a difference with what is thought necessary today.

Society in Green Bay that first year of her married life was both gay and brilliant, the opening of the public lands for settlement brought many prominent men and their families to the city. The balls and parties were enlivened and made impressive by the showy regalia of the full dress uniforms of the officers of the 5th Infantry stationed then at Fort Howard. As one looks back to the early history of Green Bay, it seems pervaded by a sunny cheeriness which neither stern deprivation nor grim toil had power to shadow or depress.

Having become settled for life, Mrs. Lawe's thoughts naturally drifted back to her father and the family in Ohio. In the course of a few years she had them all in Wisconsin.

Her sister Mary Elizabeth, soon after the family's arrival married Charles A. Grignon and came to Kaukauna to live in 1837, where she raised a large family.

John F. Meade, her brother soon after his arrival became a man of wealth and prominence, holding the important position of U. S. Register of the land office, and finally married Mary Frances Lawe, a sister of Catherine's husband George.

The younger brother Mathew J. Meade, likewise occupied many elective offices in Brown County and the city of Green Bay. He married a Miss Pelton. He finally came to make his permanent home at Kaukauna in 1884.

David P. Meade, her father, was one of the early post masters at Kaukauna and held the office of Justice of the Peace for many years. He died at Kaukauna April 16th, 1857.

Mrs. Lawe by bringing the whole family to this new country exhibited executive ability and diplomacy of a high order.

Her love for her newly adopted home was intense, but at the same time she was loyal to her Alma Mater, so she persuaded many of the inhabitants of Green Bay to send their children for a higher education than could be given them at home, to St. Mary's Seminary at Somerset, Ohio. In this way four of Judge John Lawe's young daughters were sent there for a four-year course of study. They were Maria M. (Mrs. James M. Boyd), Mary Frances (Polly, wife of John F. Meade), Sarah Jane (Mrs. Alexander Grignon), and Appolonia (Mrs. Harry F. Brown).

In the year following their marriage a daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. George W. Lawe. February 7th, 1836 they named her Amanda Theresa, who later in life on April 15th 1862 married David J. Brothers. On September 17th, 1837 a son was added to the family and given the name John David. After his return from the Civil War he married Mary D. Chapman on October 9th, 1865.

With this young family growing up Mrs. Lawe was anxious that her husband should be at home more of the time and cease the long absences so necessary in the Indian trade, so that in the spring of 1839 they moved to Kaukauna on the property her husband had acquired from his father. This property is that upon which the north side of the city of Kaukauna is built.

This land was acquired from the Indians by purchase in 1793 by Dominick Ducharme and sold by him to his brother Paul Ducharme and by him conveyed to Mr. Lawe after the Indian title had been confirmed by the commissioners appointed by Congress to settle titles according to the Treaty of Peace with England following the War of 1812.

Following Mr. Lawe's arrival in 1839 he built a nine-room house and a store building. He opened up a farm on the hill as well as on the flats, greatly extending the farming operations, employing five men the year round. The building of the government canal caused a good deal of interest to be attracted to Kaukauna, especially in 1851 when upwards of five hundred men began work on this project there. During this period Kaukauna enjoyed her first boom. To aid this enterprise Mr. Lawe donated the land needed for navigation as far as it passed through his property.

The construction of this canal cut him off from his homestead site and in 1851 he laid out and placed on record the first plat of lots for Kaukauna. Block number one of the plat was reserved by Mr. Lawe for his homestead and it was there he moved and erected the original house with later additions that remains to this day. It was from this home that Mrs. Lawe dispensed hospitality to all alike for the remaining fifty years of her life.

About this time occurred an incident which showed the public spirit of both Mr. & Mrs. George W. Lawe. A Mr. Amos Lawrence of Boston, Mass. offered to the Methodist denomination a substantial sum of money for a college in Wisconsin in case a proper site could be obtained.

In hopes that this educational institution might be brought to the Fox River Valley, in order that better educational facilities might be obtained, not alone for their own children but for all, Mr. & Mrs. Lawe in 1848 donated thirty-one acres of land which they owned at Appleton to be used as a permanent site for Lawrence Institute, as it was then known. This was accepted and was one of the determining factors that brought this splendid college to Appleton, located as it now stands on land donated by these two far-seeing and public spirited pioneers.

Her husband held for many years positions of public trust, including that of Indian agent and being actively engaged in land deals in all parts of the state, his public duties and business frequently called him away from home for extended periods. So it fell to the lot of Mrs. Lawe to play hostess to many of the officials who called as well as travelers when passing. During this time she entertained many of the men and women of note in the early days of Wisconsin's statehood. Governor and Mrs. Doty were particularly intimate friends of the Lawes. He sunny temperament and rare social graces invariably attracted new-comers to her hearth, who left with regret and looked forward to return with pleasure.

During these earlier years when the town was rapidly filling with strangers,

her sympathetic presence was frequently called for in case of sickness and distress. None were too lowly or too poor for her kind ministrations.

In a letter to a friend about this time she says, "I have not been very well for the past week, we have some sick neighbors, whom I have visited daily for more than a week. All of which has fatigued me greatly". This was characteristic of her daily life, if any one was sick or in distress in the town, it was "send for Mrs. Lawe" or if any of the relatives or friends were ill at Green Bay, it was her custom to mount a horse and ride down, or enter a boat and row down in answer to the call.

In her own home she was one of the most devoted of mothers, so that in 1850 when she sent her only daughter away to school to have the finishing touches added to their education, it almost broke her heart. During the three years that Amanda spent at the Academy of the Visitation in Georgetown, D.C., Mrs. Lawe could only visit her once. But she made it a practice to write weekly letters, filled with good advice such as only a loving mother could give, and at the same time mentioned in detail all those little intimate family matters she knew were so interesting. She was continually sending little presents by passing friends who were on their way to Washington, D.C. In maple sugar time in the spring it was a Mocok (birch bark receptacle filled with maple sugar). In the winter it was a fur Capote, &c.

The same procedure took place when her only son left home to make his way in the world, weekly letters followed, and when the absence was prolonged she urged his return for a visit. "I have deferred writing from day to day in hopes of seeing you. The whistle of every afternoon's boat takes me to the window to see if my dear boy does not stand ready on deck to wave to me. But as often return disappointed, like the old woman who ran after the stage coach and never gave up."

Mrs. Lawe's orthography was perfect and her powers of description surprisingly accurate and interesting. One notable mark of her early training was, that she always placed the date of the month and year on all of her letters. She had a pleasing voice and spoke English correctly and French readily, as well as several Indian dialects fairly well.

The trying days of the Civil War placed a great strain on her sympathy, for in the service of her country she had her only son, her only son-in-law, and her only brother, but through it all she kept them cheered by frequent letters from home.

I first met her in the summer of 1880 coming as I did to Kaukauna just barely 21 years of age. During the holidays of that year she displayed an example of her usual kindness of heart, by inviting this lonely young man to her table for the Christmas dinner, the first I ever ate away from my home.

As I pen these simple annals of olden times, the bright memory of this dear lady comes back in all its youthful charm, and gives me a happy heart-throb as I recall that Christmas dinner 45 years ago. Mrs. Lawe was like a second mother to me, for it was in her home I courted my wife, and from her house we were married September 1st, 1881. For 27 years till the day of her death she was always the most kind and considerate friend.

On her 90th birthday a large number of her old friends called to pay their respects. Her lively imagination again recalled the old days and scenes and she lived over again with enthusiasm that thrilled her soul while recounting old experiences.

The same Christian fortitude that carried her through the crisis of her mother's death when but 13 years of age, continued and sustained her for all of the 91 years. She outlived all of her family save her son and grandson.

In October, 1907 she fell and broke her hip, an accident her advanced age was unable to withstand, and on November 4th at 3 p.m., 1907 she passed to the great beyond, respected and honored by the entire community. Her remains were conveyed to Green Bay and interred in the cemetery there.

Never till the books are made up at the end of time will we know of all the good she did during her long and eventful life.

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CHILLICOTHE ST. MARY'S CHURCH  
BAPTISMAL REGISTER, 1835-1846  
(Continued from Vol. XIX, No. 2)

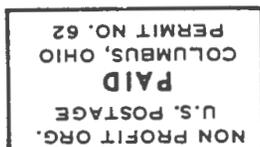
1842, continued

- Aug. 14 Anna Maria, born August 5, daughter of Caspar Grafe and Catherine Frey; spon. Rudolph Siegfried and Barbara Korb. H. D. Juncker
- Aug. 15 Anna Maria, born July 11, daughter of Andreas Bear and Magdalen Letterman; spon. Franz Xav. Lang and Theresia Muller. HDJ
- Aug. 18 Margaret, born July 4, daughter of Edward Kelly and Margaret Vu(?); spon. John Nangle and Anna Rappe. HDJ
- Aug. 21 Francis, born the same day, son of Francis Anton Eid and Anna Maria Lind; spon. Maximus Eid and Elizabeth Lind. HDJ
- Sept. 4 Louis, born Aug. 17, son of Xavier Thoman and Catherine Meyer; spon. Conrad Bohn and Elizabeth Long.
- same day Mary Elizabeth, born Aug. 15, daughter of Adam Kesler and Catherine Saxon; spon. Engelhard and Elizabeth Jacob. HDJ
- marginal notation:
- Aug. 11 Elizabeth, born Aug. 10, daughter of Erhard Strebel and Rosa Stiegler; spon. Sylvester Bauman and Theresia Stiegler. HDJ
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- Sept. 6 Rosanna, born Sept. 4, daughter of Michael Spitzer and Mary Marr; spon. Conrad Spitzer and Anna Maria Eid. HDJ
- Sept. 11 Mary Ann, 12 months old, daughter of Samuel Feeber and Anna Norris; spon. Zachary Norris and Rebecca Norris. HDJ
- Sept. 15 Michael, born Sept. 11, son of Michael Flood and Mary Canafree; spon. Michael Rigny and Margaret Cull. HDJ
- Sept. 17 Mary Elizabeth, eleven months old, daughter of Samuel Morris and Sara Lauglin; spon. Mary Daugherty. HDJ
- Sept. 18 Mary Ann, born Sept. 16, daughter of Conrad Bohn and Elizabeth Leme; spon. Maryann Eid and Bernardine Beecheler. HDJ
- Sept. 19 John, born Sept. 14, son of Peter Schmitt and Dorothea Durster; spon. Martin Rubel and Elizabeth Schmitt. HDJ
- Oct. 16 Mary, born Aug. 1, daughter of Celestine Hermann and Gertrude Hermerle; spon. Vendelin Seile and Magdalena Bear. HDJ

- Oct. 16 Anna Margaret, born Sept. 15, daughter of Adam Eck and Mary Elizabeth Becker; spons. John Eck and Margaret Eck. HDJ  
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- Oct. 8 William, son of Jane Hanly; spons. Nely. A. Rappe
- Oct. 11 John, born Sept. 24, son of John Kefol and Louise Hunt; spons. Joseph ---- and ---- Engler. A. Rappe
- same day Michael, born Sept. 29, son of Richard Muy? and Catherine Stephan; spons. Stephen Hens and Bridget Hens. AR
- Oct. 22 James, born Oct. 9, son of John Mulvy and Mary Ann Brodrick; spons. Edward Carvill and Margaret Cull. HDJ
- Oct. 23 Joseph, born Oct. 9, son of John Conley and Allen? Conly; spons. John Phelan and Hanora Phelan.
- same day Maria Eva, born Oct. 20, daughter of Christoph Eichenlaub and Elizabeth Schreden; spons. James Eichenlaub and Maria Eva Eichenlaub. HDJ
- Nov. 1 Rosina, born Oct. 30, daughter of John Baptist Flesch and Sophia Eichmann; spons. Simon Hechinger and Maria Eva Eichenlaub.
- same day Elizabeth, born Oct. 22, daughter of Anton Tisse and Barbara Diedenbeck; spons. John Stecker and Margaret Schmitt.
- same day Elizabeth, born Nov. 10, 1841, daughter of Green B. Braden and Emily Mary Flory; spons. Martin Bauman and Elizabeth Flory. HDJ  
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- Nov. 6 Mary Louise, daughter of Joseph Smith and Catherine Good; spons. John Shum and Magdalena Strohaker. J. O'Mealy
- Nov. 6 Michael, son of George Werner and Elizabeth Coon; spons. Michael Kersch and Clara Kersch. JOM
- Nov. 13 Mary Ann, daughter of Patrick Daly and Hanora Tansy?; spons. John Conly and Catherine Shea. JOM
- same day Augustine, son of Henry Broadman and Mary Eisly; spons. Augustine Eisly and Frances Eisly. JOM
- Nov. 27 Margaret, born Nov. 20, daughter of Roger Cull and Martha Hamilton; spons. James Carvill and Mary Hamilton. HDJ
- In Circleville:
- Dec. 20 George, born Oct. 1, son of Adam Dell and Barbara Kirkgesser; spons. George Meyer and Veronica Hiller.
- same day Anna, born July 25, 1842, daughter of Andrew Linch and Elizabeth Schirgle; spons. George and Catherine Meyer.
- same day Mary, born Nov. 17, daughter of Thomas Hary and Bridget Hart; spons. John McManus and Bridget Kussig.
- same day Thomas, aged 10 months, son of Thomas Fitzpatrick and Fana Sweany; spons. Hue Breslan and Elizabeth Linch. HDJ

(To be continued)

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