



Barquilla de la Santa Maria

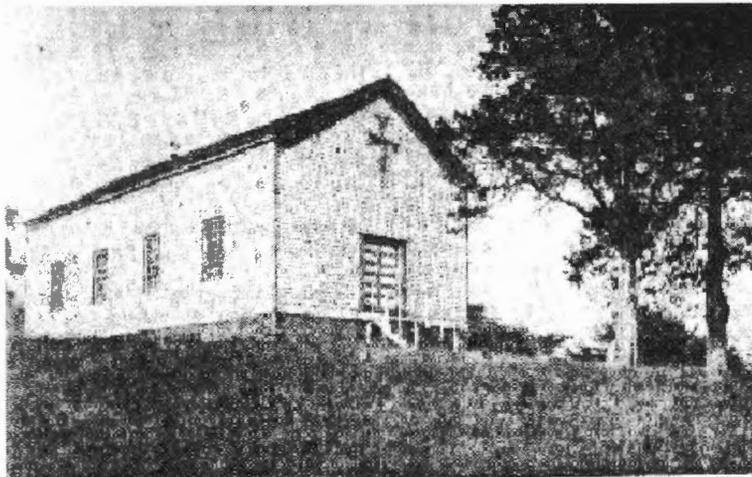
BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society -
Diocese of Columbus

Vol. XXVII, No. 7

July 25: St. James the Greater

July, A.D. 2002

**St. James the Greater Mission, Meigs Creek (Sherlock's Settlement)
St. Margaret Mary Mission, Hackney
Center Township, Morgan County, 1840-1943**



*St. Margaret Mary Church, about 1930
(courtesy of Thomas Tague, Gaylord, Mich.)*

The Catholic mission at Meigs Creek, or Sherlock's Settlement, or Hackney, now almost forgotten, was the second in Morgan County. The founding of the first, St. Barnabas mission at Deavertown in the northwest of the county, can be dated to Aug. 31, 1820. On that date Bartholomew Longstreth and wife Margaret sold to Dominican Father Nicholas D. Young of Perry County two acres in Section 24, where the old Catholic cemetery is still located, two miles north of Deavertown.¹ The mission at Meigs Creek, in the opposite, eastern end of the county, was not placed on a firm footing until twenty years later when land was transferred to Bishop Purcell. The two mainstays of this mission were the Duffy and Sherlock families.

John Duffy came to Baltimore from County Tipperary, Ireland about 1811 at the age of 28. He was working in Baltimore in 1817 but came to Unionville on Meigs Creek in 1819.² In 1824 he received a patent for the east half of the southwest quarter of Section 12, embracing 98 acres, lying on the banks of Little Meigs Creek exactly a mile north of Unionville.³ It was there that a Catholic priest, no doubt one of the early Dominicans, found the Duffys and other families and offered Mass for them. According to a 1930s history, "We find the first service held by the Catholic church folk in the neighborhood, was held in the old log house at the Duffey, later known as the Wm. Nelson farm, now owned by Miss Dora Nelson, on little Meigs creek, north of

Unionville; then in the homes around in the neighborhood until the church building was completed."⁴ Duffy sold this farm to John Nelson in 1837.⁵ He then farmed other land in the vicinity of Unionville, which he sold to Thomas Crane and John O'Neil, the latter being his son-in-law, in 1845.

In historical reminiscences written by Judge Gaylord⁶, John Duffy is described in this passage:

John was by birth an Irishman, and possessing all the ready wit and shrewdness of that people, he was conspicuous at all the gatherings of the people and never backward in taking a prominent part in the broils and fights that would sometimes spring up among the best of the inhabitants of Meigsville. At that time John was an attentive visitor to our early courts, either as a witness, suitor or spectator. On one occasion he was called to the stand, and after he had been thoroughly examined as to what he knew of the case, was handed over to General Goddard, then a young attorney of considerable practice in our courts. He took Duffy in charge and plied him with questions to elicit something favorable to his client, or have John cross himself in his testimony in chief. In this undertaking he seemed to have failed and was about to give him up, when it occurred to him to ask Duffy another question, 'Well, Mr. Duffy, you have told us all about what he said about Taylor, Lupardis and others, will you please tell us what he said about me?' 'Phat's it yez are axin'? Does yez want to know what he said about yez, Mr. Goddard? Well, sir, he said that yez were the ---dest rascal he had ever anything to do with, and I think he was about half right, do ye know.' 'Take your seat, Mr. Duffy,' was the gruff order of the General. The audience was convulsed with laughter, while a grim smile might have been seen upon the visages of the bench of dignified judges.

Mr. Duffy died on Feb. 22, 1852. His grave is in the tiny cemetery at Unionville, marked by a barely legible tombstone and by a small cannon placed there by the O'Neills.

Honora Duffy, John's daughter, was born in

Baltimore in 1818. Her husband, John O'Neill, born in County Cork in 1811, "came over with Alexander Campbell. On the way over Mr. Campbell told Mr. O'Neal of his plans to organize a new sect. They were great friends, and many letters passed between the two after they separated, and after he founded his church."⁷ This was the famous Baptist founder of the Campbellites, who debated Bishop Purcell in Cincinnati in January, 1837.

Patrick Sherlock was born in County Tipperary in 1785 and married Ann Clary, a native of County Laois. Four of their children were born in Ireland before they migrated to America. In 1816 they crossed the Atlantic, landed at Baltimore, and came overland as far as eastern Guernsey County. There Patrick bought 160 acres from the federal government; he entered the land on February 22, 1817.⁸ This was not very many miles north of St. Dominic Church at Beaver and the Sherlocks probably should be counted among its founders.

It was not until 1831 that Patrick "went out from there to seek a location. It happened he came down the Muskingum valley. At this time there were no dams in the river, and on the low bottom land were pools of water, causing much sickness. And at this time there was an epidemic of ague, so Patrick decided to seek a home on higher ground. He came up on what is now Hackney ridge, and bought from the government 160 acres at \$1.25 per acre."⁹ The land he bought from the government was 80 acres, the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 17, which includes the site of St. James/St. Margaret church. His entry for this land is dated August 17, 1831.¹⁰ The next month he purchased the 80 acres to the south from private individuals.¹¹ On this farm the Sherlocks raised their twelve children.

A little history written in the 1930s by C. B. Ray mentions other early names that were still

remembered then: James Kannady and Martin Kennedy who arrived in 1825; Michael Kelly and Patrick Waters who arrived in 1826; and Thomas Cahill, James Magers, and Patrick Callaghan who arrived in 1827.

Dominican priests from St. John the Evangelist Church in Zanesville visited Meigs Creek and recorded the names of some of the community in their baptismal register, which begins in 1828. (See the *Bulletin*, beginning January, 1999. These visits were not usually noted as such, but can be identified from the family names.) Father Richard Miles visited on August 30, 1829 and baptized a child of Michael and Ann McHugh. On June 10, 1830 he baptized two children of Patrick and Ann Sherlock. On May 29, 1831 he baptized a child of Martin and Ann (Blansfield) Powers, for whom Patrick Kearnes was a sponsor, and on June 2 he witnessed the marriage of John Powers to Catherine Sherlock. On January 9, 1832 he witnessed the marriage of Martin Sherlock and Nancy Geary. (Nancy came from County Tipperary with her uncle, Thomas Geary, when she was fifteen years old. They lived near Churchtown in Washington County.¹²) Patrick Sherlock's home "was at all times and seasons made comfortable and happy for the reception of the wearied missionary, who has ever been received under his hospitable roof with the true marks of generous welcome and affection."¹³

Dominican Father Charles P. Montgomery visited in October, 1833. On the 6th he baptized a child of Martin and Ann (Geary) Sherlock and on the 8th a child of Daniel and Catherine (Panny) McDonald, as well as witnessing the marriage of John Sherlock to Mary Ann McDonald. On November 15 or 16, Martin Kannady and Ally Owens of this community were married, apparently in the church in Zanesville, but a week later, on November 22, Father Montgomery was at Meigs Creek, where he baptized children of the Kannady, Ryan,

Pilkington, and McCarty families. Roland Pilkington and his wife Catherine, born Simpson, were both natives of England who arrived about this time. On September 26, 1835 Father Montgomery baptized children of the Pilkington, Sherlock, and John Canning families.

Bishop John B. Purcell visited the little community in the summer of 1836. Beginning at Wheeling, the bishop and Father Joseph Stahlschmidt visited Beaver St. Dominic on Sunday, July 17. On Tuesday he blessed St. Joseph church at Malaga, Monroe County; thence they went on to Archer's Settlement in the present Noble County. "Next day, the Bishop, piloted through the intricate windings of the hills and vales, by the good Mr. Archer, rode thirty-one miles on horseback to Mr. Sherlock's near Meigs creek -- where he was cordially welcomed by a considerable number of Catholics, of all ages, assembled for his reception. The holy sacrifice was offered on the subsequent day, in the barn, fitted up as well as might be for the sacred occasion, nineteen persons, some of whom had walked seventeen miles to enjoy so great a favor, received the blessed Eucharist and the sacrament of confirmation. The Bishop explained the ceremony to an attentive crowd, to whom he also preached after Mass. This congregation is very edifying and desirous of the erection of a church. They are under the pastoral care of the Rev. C. P. Montgomery, who visits them as frequently as convenient, for Zanesville is thirty-six miles distant." The Bishop went on to Zanesville, where he visited on the 24th.¹⁴ According to the Bishop's schedule published on June 23, he was to have been at Meigs Creek on Thursday, July 21.

The barn used on the occasion of this episcopal visitation was on what became in the next generation the James F. Sherlock farm. It was still standing in the 1930s, in possession of siblings Francis, Agnes, and Celia Sherlock.¹⁵ It stood some 3/4 of a mile southwest of Hackney.

In 1836 Ohio's canal commissioners let contracts for the improvement of the Muskingum River for 75 miles, from Marietta up to Dresden. The work took five years to complete and brought boom times to the valley, in which Catholic laymen were deeply involved both as contractors and as laborers. Prior to this era, James Taylor had a dam and a mill at Taylorsville, now Philo in Muskingum County, where a sawmill and a woolen factory were located. Taylor married Barbara, widow of John Dugan, owner of the Zanesville warehouse that had been used as Holy Trinity Church, and became a Catholic. In the development project, Catholic contractors were Arthur Taggart for the lock and dam at Rokeby or Eaglesport, the lock at Beverly, and the lock and dam at Devola; and John McCune for the canal and dam at Beverly. Villages were laid out or expanded at Taylorsville, Eaglesport, Windsor, where Mr. Taggart lived, and Beverly, where the McCunes settled. The church soon under construction at Meigs Creek, and its graveyards, served the contractors and their laborers. It was only three miles from the church south to the river at the Washington County line.

Father Wilson of Zanesville visited Meigs Creek on April 26, 1838 and baptized two children of Arthur Taggart, as well as Sherlock and Callahan children. That June, Rev. James McCaffrey was appointed the first resident pastor of Marietta and took over the care of the Catholics at Meigs Creek. He also attended a station at Windsor or Stockport from 1843 until 1849.

No doubt with Father McCaffrey's encouragement, on February 24, 1840 Patrick and Ann Sherlock sold to Bishop Purcell, for \$385, about 32 acres of land in the west side and north end of Section 17 in Center Township, lying to the northwest of the present village of Hackney and stretching 2,013 feet along the north side of the state road. The southeastern portion of this land is now represented by the graveyard.¹⁶

The original site selected for the church and graveyard was on a hilltop about one-quarter mile northwest of the present village, not far from the highway. Burials were made and a small, fenced graveyard with a few tombstones still exists there. Within a few years, it was decided to build the church in the southeast portion of the tract, near the village, and later burials were made there.

The church of St. James was well under way on this site by October of 1841, when Bishop Purcell visited again. The *Catholic Telegraph* of September 30, 1847 gave credit for its construction to Patrick Sherlock and remarked that in this, "he met opposition and encountered difficulties, but conquered all by his firm and persevering spirit..." John Duffy is remembered as the carpenter for its construction.

Bishop Purcell and V. Rev. John M. Henni visited Deavertown on Sunday, October 17, 1841 and Sunday Creek St. Francis on the next day. They then traveled seven miles to the Morgan County seat at McConnellsville, where "there has been at all times a very liberal land even kind spirit evinced towards the Roman Catholic faith, although its professors in the vicinity are few." The bishop preached there and on the next morning, with Fathers McCaffery and Henni, was conveyed to Stockport by Arthur Taggart, where he visited the small but increasing Catholic settlement. They arrived at Meigs Creek on Wednesday the 20th. "The church is a very handsome frame building, 50 by 25 feet. It was crowded notwithstanding the severity of the weather, chiefly by persons of different Protestant denominations, who subscribed generously and promptly paid the amount of their subscriptions towards its erection. With the divine blessing we hope to have here a large and pious congregation."¹⁷ According to the schedule published in the *Telegraph* on October 9, the church at Meigs Creek was to have been dedicated during this

visit. It is not clear why the dedication was delayed.

The Church of St. James at Meigs Creek was dedicated on August 24, 1842. The pastor, Rev. James McCaffrey, of Marietta, announced that the Bishop could not come to carry out the ceremony and had delegated the power to him. Father McCaffrey delivered an address explaining the dedication. The Mass then commenced, with the dedication sermon preached by Rev. Charles McCallion, pastor of St. Dominic's at Beaver. Many of the "dissenting brethren" of the neighborhood had aided the few Catholic families in the work, and over 1,200 persons were in attendance. The patron was "the first Apostolic Martyr to their faith", i.e. St. James the Greater.¹⁸ This patron is confirmed by one other record, the annual report of the pastor of the McConnellsville parish for 1915-1916, which calls the church at Hackney "St. James' (Major)."

The writer for the *Telegraph*, a non-Catholic, continued, "Their Church is a beautiful frame building of 50 by 25 feet, surmounted by a very handsome Cross of 7 feet in height. To the building is attached a neat Sacristy of 15 feet by 12. The Altar, the Sanctuary, the whole interior, presents a most imposing view. As the traveller rests by the way side to gaze upon it and the burying ground that tops the neighboring hill, viewing the gigantic Cross and its shadow on every tomb, he cannot but think of his God, of his Redeemer and of the dust to which he must return; and say in his heart that house is a house of prayer."

Patrick Sherlock died on September 18, 1847, of pulmonary consumption, or tuberculosis, at the age of 62 years, according to the *Catholic Telegraph*. "For the last 28 [16] years he lived at his late residence on Meigs-creek, where by his zeal and genuine Catholic piety a new and beautiful frame church sprang up in the midst of

the forest, surmounted by the emblem of the true Faith and sign of man's salvation. ...He has left a numerous and excellent family to mourn his loss, consisting of a fond and affectionate wife and twelve children, all walking humbly in his footsteps... and a large circle of friends and acquaintances..." His will, signed on September 10, 1847, mentioned his wife Ann and children Edward, James, Mary, Elizabeth, Hannah, Joanha, Martin, John, Catherine Powers, Mary, Ann Kennedy, and Patrick. Executors were Mrs. Sherlock, the son Edward, and Arthur Taggart. (There is a discrepancy on the date of probate of the will; one record says September 11, the other October 11. If the former be correct, then the *Telegraph* post-dated Patrick's death by one week.)

The size of the church property at Sherlock's was reduced to "the church and graveyard lots as now fenced in, two acres more or less" by a deed of the remainder of the property to Ann Sherlock from Bishop Purcell, dated March 8, 1849.¹⁹ This left for the church both the small graveyard on the knoll and the church and large graveyard at the village. A triangle of about one-third acre between the south line of the church lot and the highway was deeded to Bishop Rosecrans by William Baker and wife in 1871.²⁰ As represented in the 1880s diocesan plat book, the church and graveyard property measured about 310 feet on the west, 202 feet on the north, 425 feet on the east, and 272 feet along the highway. The church, measuring 50 by 25 feet on the diagram, facing south toward the highway, with the sacristy projecting on the east half of the rear, was centered in the plat.

Bishop Purcell visited the mission once again in August, 1848. According to the *Catholic Telegraph* of that August 3, he was to visit Pomeroy on August 13 and Marietta and Meigs Creek during that week. The September 14 *Telegraph* reported, "There were fifteen persons confirmed at St. James' Church Meigs' Creek, of

whom five were converts. The grand-mother, the daughter, and three grand-children, were here, all at once, presented, or offered for the Sacraments." An even shorter report of one sentence appeared after a visit in 1850. Bishop Purcell was scheduled to visit Marietta on September 8 and Meigs Creek on the 10th. "There were five persons confirmed at Saint James's, Meig's Creek".²¹

Bishop Purcell visited Marietta on December 12, 1852, but seems not to have gone to Meigs Creek in the winter weather. He visited Marietta again in 1853 but the scanty *Telegraph* account does not mention the many missions of the interior.

The annual Catholic Directories from 1843 through 1874 reported Meigs Creek St. James attended from Marietta. However, the later annual reports of the pastors told a different story. In mid-1868 and mid-1869 St. James Mission was under the care of the pastor at St. John the Baptist Church, Uniontown, Washington County. In 1868 this was Rev. Magnus Eppink. In 1869 it was Rev. Lawrence Shnyder, who reported 149 families in total, with 21 of these at McConnellsville, 9 at Meigs Creek, and 7 in Windsor. He visited Meigs Creek once a month. At the end of 1873, Rev. Charles L. Grimmer of Union Township reported that he visited McConnellsville (which as yet had no church) one Sunday a month, Meigs Creek St. James' once a month, and Stockport St. James' once a month.

The annual directories list Rev. Edward Fladung as pastor of Union Township from 1875 through 1882. He attended Meigs Creek throughout this period. Stockport St. James, which he also attended, ceased to be listed as a church after 1880. St. James Church at McConnellsville was first listed in 1875. About 1882 Rev. S. S. Mattingly became the first resident pastor at the county seat, with Meigs Creek, Stockport, and Taylorsville (Philo) St. Ann under his care. Rev.

John Meade succeeded in 1888, Rev. F. Edward Clarke in 1897, and Rev. John H. Wagner in 1898.

The next extant annual report is dated Jan. 1, 1905. Rev. John F. Lang, pastor *pro tem*, reported that he visited St. James, Hackney on any fifth Sunday of a month and occasionally on weekdays. The congregation at Hackney then consisted of fifteen persons: three men married to non-Catholic wives, 5 bachelors, 2 widows, 2 maiden ladies, and 3 young people and children. (Philo was his largest charge, with 90 members, McConnellsville had 53, and Stockport 25.) On July 25 of that same year, Father Lang reported that Hackney "has a reconstructed church, out of debt, \$800 insurance."

Rev. M. D. Fagan was pastor in 1906 and 1907. He was succeeded by Rev. John W. Byrne, who in 1908 reported 18 adults and 5 children at Hackney. Mass was offered there on holydays and sometimes on weekdays. Insurance on the church building at Hackney continued to be noted through the report of mid-1916. The congregation was reported as 15 in 1909 (Mass offered on fifth Sundays in the Summer only); 15 in 1911; 21 in 1914, of whom seven were contributors and all made their Easter duty; 18 (11 adults and 7 children) in 1915; 16 (three children in public school) in 1916, when Mass still was offered on fifth Sundays and sometimes on weekdays.

The 1917 report did not mention Hackney, while that of 1918 mentioned 20 souls there; neither of these mentioned the church building. The 1919 report specifically mentions "Hackney Sta." on the McConnellsville report. This can only mean that the church no longer existed, or was no longer fit for services. There is no mention of a church there through 1929. The little congregation peaked at 39 souls in 1922, "but eight of these are Greek Catholics." Between about 20 and 30 souls were reported most years,

if Hackney was mentioned at all.

Most of the congregation of 1920 can be identified from the tombstones and that year's federal census: Jane Molyneux, age 85, and three adult children; brothers James and John O'Neill; four adult children of James F. Sherlock; Mary Sherlock (widow of John) and her adult son James; Fred and Nellie Sherlock and their toddler John; John M. and Oma Sherlock and their family of three youngsters; and Dolph and Alice Hook.

A new church apparently was erected about 1929 or 1930. In mid-1930 the McConnellsville pastor, Rev. Louis B. Preston, first mentioned "St. Margaret Alacoque, Hackney" but provided no details. The annual financial reports made by the pastors of McConnellsville in this era disclose no extraordinary expenditure for a new church. No doubt the people built the structure themselves and no funds were expended by the pastor. This church measured 32 by 50 feet and was built by John Sweesy or Sweezy.²²

It was in Father Preston's time that C. B. Ray assembled the story of the mission from oral traditions. Of Father Preston and the people of the mission and their church building, this non-Catholic author said the following:

As this writing was an idea of the scribe, we feel we must adhere to what we should say, in the way we feel we should say it. So here we go: Father Preston was educated, as all priests must be. In fact, he spent 12 years in college. Now some folks could spend 1200 years in college and then not know much. Not so Father Preston. He is, we believe, the best posted man in Morgan county on religion government. But why go on? He is so far beyond the ordinary man that we are, that we can only feel pleased, and listen in wonder when he talks. He dresses as all men of his station. But he is unlike many men of the cloth. He always has time to talk with men, and he has been a great help to the high school boys of the town, helping them

with their studies. He has done more to break down the walls of sectarianism, and let folks see that Christianity is living, not simply believing and acting. Father Preston does not know that we are saying this.

Whether it is the Catholic religion, we know not, but we do know we have never met a more hospitable people than the folks down at Hackney, and this is not only true of the present generation, but has been a trait of the forefathers bred and instilled in children and grandchildren. We saw the inside of the church only as we could see through the windows, but we could not help noticing the beauty of the altar and the statue. Folks remarked about the neat, and substantial way the seats were made. When we inquired how many members comprise the present church membership, the answer was 'only five or six families,' and this was not said with, or in a manner of, 'we are about gone.' So far as we could tell, it was uttered with the same feeling as though they had said five or six hundred families.

He concluded by saying, "Regardless of church affiliation or sectarian belief, the people of Center are proud of this old church -- proud of the hard working, honest, hospitable, honorable, God fearing folk, who have been, and are a part of the old church."

In 1935 Father Preston provided a single statistic in his annual report: 24 souls at Hackney. Rev. William L. Thomas in 1939 through 1942 mentioned St. Margaret Church each year, but provided no data. The church seems to have been shut down for the last time about 1943 when Rev. James M. McMahan became pastor at McConnellsville, but this cannot be verified by its absence from the annual directories, for the church of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, though frequently mentioned in the pastors' reports, is not once mentioned in the directories!

After the Diocese of Steubenville was erected in 1944, title to St. Anthony Church in Stockport and St. James Church in McConnellsville was legally transferred²³ from Bishop Ready of

Columbus to Bishop Mussio of the new diocese. The property at Hackney apparently never was transferred. Monsignor Donal O'Carroll, a retired priest of the Diocese of Steubenville, believes the church was still standing in 1944 when the new diocese was erected, but the pastors of the neighboring parishes did not see a need to maintain it or visit it. It apparently was razed in the next few years.

St. James Mission had been established to serve the farming and river families in eastern Morgan and northwestern Washington counties. By the twentieth century it was overshadowed by the larger and more convenient congregations at McConnellsville, Stockport, and Beverly. The few local families, probably with Father Preston's encouragement, revived it as St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, but during the later years of the Great Depression and the Second World War it was allowed to fade away. "St. Margaret's Cemetery" today is maintained by St. Bernard Parish in Beverly.

(Tombstone readings will appear in a future issue of the *Bulletin*.)

NOTES

- 1) The long-lost deed for the original church property at Deavertown was recently found by Msgr. George Schlegel in Morgan County Deed Record A/77.
- 2) Ray, C. B., *History of St. Margaret's Catholic Church, Hackney, Ohio*, p. 7. (Copy

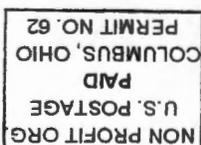
- donated to the Society in the 1980s by Thomas Tague.) Scott, Kenneth, *British Aliens in the United States During the War of 1812*; Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1979; 299. Duffy's tombstone at Unionville.
- 3) See Morgan County Deed Record G/167. Unionville, so tiny a village that it does not appear on the state highway map, is two miles west of Hackney.
- 4) Ray, 2-3
- 5) Morgan Co. Deed Record G/167
- 6) Robertson, Charles, *History of Morgan County, Ohio...*; Chicago: L. H. Watkins & Co., 1886; p. 463.
- 7) Ray, 7
- 8) Ohio Auditor, Land Office, *Congress Lands; 22 Ranges; U.S. Military Lands*, I/134 and 136
- 9) Ray, 5-6
- 10) Ohio Auditor, *op. cit.*, I/183.
- 11) Morgan County Deed Record D/309
- 12) Ray, p. 6
- 13) *Catholic Telegraph*, Sept. 30, 1847
- 14) *Catholic Telegraph*, July 28, 1836
- 15) Ray, 2
- 16) Morgan Co. Deed Record I/640
- 17) *Catholic Telegraph*, Nov. 6, 1841
- 18) *Catholic Telegraph*, Aug. 27, 1842
- 19) Morgan Co. Deed Record S/28
- 20) Morgan Co. Deed Record 23/300
- 21) *Catholic Telegraph*, June 29 and Sept. 28, 1850
- 22) Ray, 4
- 23) Morgan Co. Deed Records 89/559 and 99/367

Copyright 2002, Catholic Record Society – Diocese of Columbus

197 E. Gay Street

Columbus, Ohio 43215

Donald M. Schlegel, editor



CHANCERY OFFICE
DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS
198 E. BROAD STREET
COLUMBUS OH 43215