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June 29: St. Peter

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St. Peter 1896 Church and School Building (Courtesy of Rev. Kevin Lutz)

St. Peter Parish, Columbus, 1896-1969

St. Peter Parish, on the near northeast side of Columbus, existed for just under three-quarters of a century. It never had a population rich in worldly goods, but it was a wonderful spiritual home to several major waves of fervent Catholics, beginning with French Canadians, then German and Irish families, and lastly the Italians, as well as people of many other origins. As in many urban areas in the 20th century, the people moved into the parish where housing was not expensive and the men could find jobs—as brickmakers, railroad workers, and factory laborers. As they would prosper, the next generation tended to move away to “better” areas.

During this long period the parish had only two pastors, Father Hugh Ewing and Msgr. Anthony Schlermitzauer, both good leaders and holy men who were beloved of the people.

St. Peter perhaps was unique in this diocese for the extent of damage done it by federal programs, namely the construction of the highway system in the late 1950s and the anti-poverty programs of the 1960s, as will be described.

Background

Beginning with its establishment in 1875, Sacred Heart Parish, with its church and school building on

Hamlet Street, included the entire area of Columbus and Franklin County north of Union Station (now the convention center). The northwest area soon developed and in 1892 that part of Sacred Heart Parish was designated to be the the new St. Francis of Assisi Parish. The portion of Sacred Heart Parish east of the C.C.C. & I. Railroad (east of Fourth St.) was still rural, but scattered plots for residences were being laid out and small industries were being established there

By 1870 there were several brickyards up and down Harbor Road (Cleveland Avenue) from about Seventh Avenue north, where bricks were molded, baked, stacked, and then delivered. These supplied the materials from which Columbus was built. Some of the yards were owned and most were manned by French-Canadian immigrants, among whom were some Catholics. The earliest person in the movement from Canada to the Columbus brickyards was the well-known Theodore Leonard who immigrated in 1840. Three years later he entered into a partnership in brick making with Windsor Atcheson and Christopher Shoemaker, which survived until about 1860. Atcheson owned large tracts of land in Clinton Township, particularly east of Harbor Road. When the partnership dissolved, its property was divided and Leonard's share took him a little to the east, to the area that in time became St. Thomas the Apostle Parish.

Among the French-Canadian brickmakers who later were members of St. Peter Parish were families named Isabel, Bro, Mulbay (Malboeuf), LaPlante, Gale (Yelle), Finneuffe, Raymond, Dupius, Monnette, and Campbell. Constant Isabel claimed to have immigrated in 1853; the first notice found of him in Franklin County was his purchase of land in Clinton Township in 1863. (His brickyard supplied 184,000 bricks for construction at the Ohio Penitentiary in July and August, 1877.) The others mostly arrived during or shortly after the Civil War, but new immigrants arrived as late as the 1890s.

Although the area along Harbor Road was not annexed to the City of Columbus until 1910, its character was changing rapidly by the 1890s, with new subdivisions abuilding, and the brickmakers

were joined by workers at the Panhandle railroad shops that lay between Joyce and St. Clair Avenues, north of Leonard, along with shopkeepers and others who supported the basic industries and workers and their families. The two villages in the area were called Milo and Grogan.

Milo was originally laid out as the Highland Addition, lying east of Harbor Road from Reynolds to Gibbard and including Second and Third avenues. A post office named Milo was opened in the center of this stretch, at Cleveland and Starr, in 1892. Milo was not incorporated and had no official boundaries. When St. Peter Church was established just north of Fifth Ave., the headline in the *Catholic Columbian* read "St. Peter's Church at Milo."

Grogan became a post office in 1894 and was in the new storeroom of John P. Grogan, on the west side of Cleveland Avenue between Bonham and Dow, not far south of Eleventh Avenue. (This area a short time before had been the brickyard of Abraham Dow, another Canadian immigrant.) Grogan also was not incorporated and is said to have stretched northwest to the fairgrounds. Mr. Grogan was active in Catholic organizations and a member of St. Peter Parish from its founding until his death in 1937.

Soon Father Eis at Sacred Heart and Bishop Watterson were considering what developments were needed by the Church in the vicinity.

Early Parish Development

Eight lots on the south side of New York Avenue, east of Harbor Road were purchased in 1896. These were lots 41 to 48 of G. W. Devore's North East Park Place, the northeastern portion of the parish property as finally developed. John W. Sweeney bought the lots from the developer on behalf of the parish and resold them to Bishop Watterson.

That September Father John B. Eis, Pastor of Sacred Heart, opened a school for first and second grades in a rented hall in Milo. The school was taught by Sisters of St. Francis from Stella Niagara, the same congregation that staffed Sacred Heart School.

Father Hugh Ewing, assistant at Sacred Heart, was appointed pastor of the new St. Peter's Parish and began at once to develop the parish plant. David

Riebel prepared plans for a building measuring 95 by 55 feet with a basement (used for a gymnasium for the boys), six classrooms on the first floor, and a large chapel on the second. The exterior was buff brick with terra cotta pilasters.

Excavation for the stone foundation began on March 11, 1896 and the cornerstone was laid on May 31, 1896 by Rt. Rev. John A. Watterson, Bishop of Columbus. The ceremony was attended by several of the city's Catholic societies, all of the pastors, the Knights of St. George Band, and a vast concourse of people. Bishop Watterson spoke from the text, "Behold, I am with you always, even unto the consummation of the world." He "preached forcibly and at length on the bond which religion establishes between the Creator and His creatures, and the importance of Christian education supplemented by sound religious training." During the ceremony of blessing, singing was provided by a choir of six voices from the Josephinum.

Father Ewing, a lover of the outdoors and hard work, did most of the planning and much mechanical labor about the parish himself. School opened in the building that September with an attendance of 155 children, which quickly climbed to 171.

The church was dedicated on October 11, 1896. Bishop Watterson was scheduled to dedicate the church but became ill and the duties were carried out by V. Rev. F. X. Specht, Vicar General. The altar was constructed by the St. Joseph Art Institute of Columbus and the pews were from Faulhaber and Company of Cleveland. The church could hold about 700 people. The first five baptisms were administered that same day, the children being Mary Gladys Ryan, Joseph Leonard Malzac, Ella Isabel McCarthy, Louis Anthony Binder, and Mary Ann Keefer. The first funeral was for infant Theresa L. Raymond on November 26, and the first marriage was that of Thomas McEvoy and Edith Chester, celebrated on February 1, 1897. Bishop Watterson visited and confirmed a class of 37 on July 1, 1897.

Not only did Father Ewing develop the physical plant, he knitted a strong and prosperous congregation. In the spring of 1903 Father Ewing proposed ten men to Bishop Moeller as "trustees"

for the church. The bishop selected the first five as "wardens," namely T. J. Benson, J. H. Schorr, J. P. Grogan, J. Clifford, and J. Griesman. The others proposed were J. Brown, Joseph Schirtzinger Senior, Aug. Kohlhepp, Laurence Hahn, and F. L. Stallo. Clearly, many families of German, English, and Irish extraction had joined the French-Canadians in the area. J. H. Schorr, J. P. Grogan, and Jacob Griesman were still trustees of the parish in 1925.

For the first three years, three Sisters walked over from Sacred Heart each morning for school. In 1897 a fourth Sister was added to the staff. Father Ewing, who had been living in the school, moved into a rented residence and the four Sisters moved into the school building. Within a few years another Sister was added to the teaching staff and 255 students were in attendance. A fifth sister arrived and a fifth classroom was opened in 1902/03. In the 1904/05 school year the school had nine grade levels: 1st and 2nd, totaling 70 children, in a room taught by Sr. Xaviera; 3rd consisted of 48 children taught by Sr. Cleopha; 4th had 54 students under Sister Anselma; 5th and 6th numbered 62 and were taught by Sr. Camilla; and 7th, 8th, and 9th or first year of high school numbered 27 and were under the care of Sr. Mathilda. This was the last year the parish school had a high school class. The boys at St. Peter's school were led in every form of fun they thought up by Father Ewing, who was particularly fond of children. "Few feast days were hailed in St. Peter's school as enthusiastically as was Father Ewing's name's day." And St. Peter's was one of the first, if not the first, school that did not charge tuition.

Father Ewing purchased additional land to expand the parish facilities. Lots 37 through 40, lying west of the original lots and facing New York Avenue, were purchased in 1899 and turned over to Bishop Watterson in 1900. In the spring of 1900 an eight room rectory was built on the northwest corner of this new property, facing New York Avenue. West of these lots was a plot of one-third acre that was purchased with them, where Father Ewing tended a garden and kept bees. Father Ewing gave credit to Mr. R. G. Berry and Mr. Bernard

Smith as special benefactors during these early developments of the parish. Father Ewing noted that as of January, 1903 the parish owed R. G. Berry \$11,200, J. H. Lagemann \$625, Miss Ella Kane \$100, and Thom. G. W. Ewing \$75.

Boundaries

Sacred Heart Parish had been established in 1875 with a southern boundary defined as the railroad tracks running east and west through Union Station, that is, on the East side, the present Conrail

and N&W tracks that parallel Interstate 670. This line no doubt was the southern boundary of St. Peter Parish when it was erected. The natural boundary between Sacred Heart and St. Peter's was the railroad and adjoining industrial area that runs north and south, east of Grant Avenue, since it divided the residential areas.

The eastern boundary of St. Peter Parish was undefined at first, but St. Thomas the Apostle Parish was founded on that side in 1900. The boundary between them was defined by Bishop Moeller in



Father Ewing

Father Hugh Ewing was born in Washington, D.C. in 1862, a son of General Hugh Boyle Ewing and his wife Henrietta. Father Ewing's grandfather was the famous Senator Thomas Ewing of Lancaster, Ohio, who was baptized a Catholic about 1870. His uncles were Philemon Ewing of Lancaster, General Thomas Ewing, and, by marriage, General William T. Sherman. Henrietta was a daughter of George W. Young of Washington, D.C. Through her, Father Ewing was a grandnephew of Father Nicholas D. Young and a great-grandnephew of Bishop Edward Fenwick. Unlike his goodly sized father, Hugh was remembered as a little and not very robust man.

Hugh's early education was obtained in Europe while his father was U.S. Minister to Holland. After the family's return to Lancaster he continued his studies at St. Vincent's, Latrobe, Pa., Mt. St. Mary's at Emmitsburg, Mt. St. Mary's of the West, and the Jesuit seminary in Montreal. He was ordained by Bishop Watterson on December 18, 1889. He was sent at once to assist Father Eis at Sacred Heart and from that post was appointed to start the new St. Peter Parish. As the parish developed, he loved to see flocking to the church the people dear to his heart—the home-lovers and the home-makers. "His sermons on domestic relations and the family life were a genuine treat." He also was a prime mover in having Milo annexed to Columbus in 1910, so as to gain all the improvements that came with annexation.

In 1922 Father Ewing was incapacitated by a stroke and went to live with his mother in Newark, O. He died there on Holy Saturday, April 11, 1925. Burial was at St. Mary's Cemetery in Lancaster. It was said that his life was given to affording comfort to others and in that he succeeded wonderfully. His was such a peaceful and gentle soul that, in later years, older parishioners looked back and said, "He was a saint."

(Randall and Ryan, *History of Ohio: The Rise and Progress of an American State*; Century History Co., 1912, Vol. 6, pp 1 ff. Obituaries in the Newark daily newspaper (typescript copy in Diocesan Archives) and the *Catholic Columbian*. He died on April 11, not April 12 as shown in the Ordo and the diocesan necrology. *Citizen-Journal*, June 7, 1967.)

January, 1903 when, after receiving input from the pastors, he issued boundaries for all the Franklin County parishes. St. Peter's boundary on the west was the railroad east of Grant Avenue, from First Avenue north to the county line. On the north, the boundary was the county line from the railroad tracks east to Big Walnut Creek. The boundary then ran south with the creek to the Mifflin Township line and then west along that line, now Morse Road, to Alum Creek. It ran south with Alum Creek to the rear line of property abutting the north side of the North Columbus Pike, apparently Mock Road. Excluding those properties, it ran west along the pike to Woodland Avenue and south on Woodland to the railroad line at what is now Interstate 670. The boundary followed these tracks west as far as the north-south railroad west of Joyce Avenue and followed these tracks south and then west to the intersection of St. Clair and First avenues. First Avenue was the southern boundary from that point west to the beginning of the description. This was an area of about 50 square miles and included Westerville and Central College. Father Ewing first went to Westerville to offer Mass on May 22, 1913. He organized the mission that in time became St. Paul Parish, the largest in the diocese.

Further Development

In November of 1913 a convent was completed in the northeast corner of the property, facing New York Avenue. It measured about 35 by 50 feet and was three stories tall, in part. Its construction was said to have been delayed by the 1913 flood. "It is a handsome and commodious building; the exterior being of buff and terra cotta brick, to match the school building; and cost \$6,000."

Lots 67 through 77 and part of lot 66, all south of the original parish property and fronting on Fifth Avenue, were purchased at various times between 1905 and 1914. (The remainder of lot 66 was purchased in 1928.) By 1917 the church property was enclosed by an osage orange hedge on New York, an iron fence on Fifth, and cement walls along the alleys. There were about 250 Catholic families in the extensive territory of the parish.

Father Ewing was assisted by priests from the Josephinum, then located on East Main Street. Notably, Father Andrew Biebl regularly helped beginning in 1907 and Father Conrad Conrardy assisted with the mission in Westerville. In April of 1922 Father Ewing was incapacitated by a stroke and Father Joseph Kloss was appointed administrator of the parish. Father Joseph J. Fagan served in this position from September, 1922 until July, 1923 and was succeeded by Father William Robben until September of 1925. Father Anthony Schlernitzauer was appointed pastor that month. His German name being unpronounceable by them, the many Irish, Italian, and others in the parish addressed him as Father Anthony.

The school grew along with the parish. By 1911 the school had 124 graduates and graduating classes in that era numbered about 14 pupils. A sixth Sister arrived and opened a sixth classroom in 1916/17 and in 1917 the school population was 280. By 1924 the classroom space was insufficient and a temporary, one-story frame building of 30 by 60 feet was built behind the school on the lots facing Fifth Avenue. Since it was intended only for temporary use it was without plumbing and remained so for its over forty years of existence. It was heated by stoves and was called "the bungalow."

SOURCES for PART 1

- Catholic Columbian* Oct. 17, 1896, Feb. 4, 1905, April 17, 1925
- Hartley, James J., *A History of Fifty Years*; Columbus: 1918, pp 214-216
- Parish history form submitted by Father Ewing—see the *Bulletin*, Jan., 2005
- Typescript history of the parish by Rev. Hugh Ewing, Oct. 11, 1917
- Parish statistics kept by Father Ewing, 1897-1925.
- Franklin County Deed Records 280/220, 280/222, 322/227, 334/228, 292/566, 436/353, 489/427, 489/531, 518/477, 523/595, 506/544, 551/573, and 895/121
- Ewing note on proposed trustees, May 5, 1903 (Diocesan Archives)

Mt. Calvary Cemetery, New Straitsville
Lot Owners (to 1971) and Tombstones

(Continued, from Vol. XXXIV, No. 5)

Section 14, continued

Lot 46 - Hatem & Maroon

Anne Hatem Mar. 7, 1905-Mar. 24, 1905

Laid to rest in Buchtel, Ohio

Lillie E. Beachman 1914-1990

Lot 47 - Leo Fox (no stones)

Lot 48 - Edward Sweeney

James P. Hunter 1932-1953

Margaret E. Hunter 1890-1960

John Richard Hunter 1911-1911

SWEENEY: Edward 1845-1908

Anna 1852-[blank]

Charles R. 1885-1914

Mary 1888-1911

Lot 49 - Wm. Auker

AUKER: William

Bridget

Nellie

Lot 50 - Dolan & McDonough

McDONOUGH: Michael F. died 1935

Bridget A. died 1927

Catherine C. died 1932

Lot 51 - Maroon & Kessel

MAROON: Rose M. 1908-1997

Mother of William, Joseph, Donald,

Gemma

Joseph D. Son 1937-[blank]

HATEM: Paul E. 1916-2006

Peter J. 1918-2001

footstone: Paul E Hatem PFC US ARMY AIR

FORCE SSGT US AIR FORCE

WORLD WAR II KOREA July 1 1916

Nov 3 2006

Section 15

Lot 52 - G. Goodwin

Michael Goodwin born Mar. 21, 1878 died

Oct. 17, 1905

John Goodwin born Dec. 11, 1884 died Oct.

29, 1905

Lot 53 - Thomas Murday (no stones)

Lot 54 - Peter O'Reilly

Bernard F. O'Reilly OHIO TEC 5 CO A 46

ARMED MED BN WORLD WAR II Mar

22 1919 Jan 23 1972

Lot 55 - John O'Reilly (no stones)

Lot 56 -

SPIRES: J. Walter 1902 - 1970

Faye H. 1909 - 2002

Betty Joann Spires 1932 + 1938

Lot 57 - (no stones)

Lot 58 - J. Leonard

LEONARD: John Leonard 1826 - 1909

Bridget his wife 1837 - 1912

William their son 1868 - 1904

Mary 1856 - 1921

Richard 1870 - 1949

Johana 1866 - 1953

Bea 1877 - 1962

Thomas 1879 - 1968

Lot 59 - H. Campbell

CAMPBELL: (Father) Henry 1854 - 1916

(Son) Harry F. 1889 - 1922

Lot 60 - John Daugherty

{Joseph P. Daugherty Mar 3, 1883 - July 3,
1905

{James V. B. Daugherty Nov. 3, 1898 - Aug.
13, 1899

{John and Bridget May their souls rest in
peace.

Lot 61 - William Donoghue

+ James V. Donoghue OHIO PVT US ARMY
March 20, 1937

+ Grace R. Donoghue Feb. 8, 1964

+ Fred M. Kinneer OHIO PFC CO D 350
REP UNIT MTC WORLD WAR I June

11 1897 Mar 31 1960

Catherine E. Kinneer 1897-1972

Lot 62 - Vollmer

VOLLMER: Bernard 1875-1938

Bridget E. 1884-1973

Leo A. Vollmer Jan. 3, 1903 + July 6, 1937

James V. Vollmer 1918 - 1983
Lot 63 - (no stones)

Section 16

Lot 64 - Albert Groff

Nettie M. wife of Albert Groff born Oct. 4,
1877 + died Oct. 30, 1908
[Richard Wahl March 17, 72]
[Theodore Groff 1942]

Lot 65 - Vincent Bowe

BOWE: Vincent 1876 - 1953
Catherine 1873 - 1963
DONALDSON: Mary E. 1912 - 1912
Kathleen 1909 - 1910

Lot 66 - C. McDermott (no stones)

Lot 67 - M. Mahley

+ MAHLEY: Mary C. Jan. 26, 1893 - Aug.
17, 1994
John L. Sept. 18, 1893 - Dec. 4, 1944
John L. Mahley OHIO PVT 1 CL 308
ENGRS 83 DIV December 6, 1943
MAHLEY: Michael 1855 - 1923
Dora A. 1855 - 1935
Eunice Sanborn 1888 - 1967

Lot 68 - Mitchell

MITCHELL: Bernard 1879 - 1937
Ellen 1882 - 1965
Teresa E. Mitchell 1910 + 1950
MITCHELL: Paul F. Dec. 14, 1907 - May 21,
1979
Dorothy P. Sept. 23, 1910 - Mar. 24,
1994
Emma Anna Mitchell 1915 - 1982
MITCHELL: George A. Dec. 27, 1913 - Mar.
12, 1981
Emma A. (Stoncel) Aug. 9, 1915 - Apr.
29, 1982
footstone: George A. Mitchell TEC 5 US
ARMY WORLD WAR II Dec 27 1913 +
Mar 12 1981

Lot 69 -

+ Rhea Daugherty Spurlock 1896 - 1969
CROWE: Andrew 1867 - 1950
Marie 1877 - 1966

Lot 70 - Patrick O'Reilly

O'REILLY (surname monument)
(Father) Patrick 1845 - 1916
(Mother) Elizabeth his wife 1854 - 1917
Geraldine 1895 - 1909

Lot 71 - Mrs. Nutter

+ Robert Nutter OHIO PVT CO D 729 MIL
POLICE BN WORLD WAR II Sept 25
1900 Apr 22 1949

Lot 72 - William O'Donnell

O'DONNELL: Wm. J. O'Donnell 1870 -
1949
Mary Ann his wife 1872 - 1915
Margaret 1872 + 1937

Lot 73 - John Archibald

ARCHIBALD: John 1886 - 1959
Mary T. 1888 - blank
footstone: John Archibald OHIO PFC CO E
305 ENGINEERS WORLD WAR I Sep 2
1886 Feb 23 1959

Lot 74 - John Blaney

BLANEY: John 1845 + 1924
Mary Ann 1857 + 1936
Son John 1894 + 1970

Lot 75 - (no stones)

Section 17

Lot 76 - Jonas Hatem

HATEM: Joseph H. 1883 - 1940
Fadoah J. 1896 - blank
HATEM: Arthur 1913 - 1930
Kathrina 1858 - 1937
Habeb son of Youness & Mary Hatem 1903 -
1909
Abraham J. son of Joseph & Fadouh Hatem
1914 - 1920
Hatem (Mother) Mary 1875 - 1967 Mother of
Christ pray for her.
Jonas Hatem Sept. 16, 1880 - Sept. 10, 1922
Jennifer Ann Couden Dec. 14, 1963 - Dec. 26,
1969

Lot 77 - Mike Coury

COURY: Mike C. 1880 - 1935
Anna 1882 - 1920
Guy, Mose, Charles

PFC Albert Coury 1910 - 1942
 William J. Coury 1900 - 1946
 Lot 78 - Mike Bowe
 BOWE: Michael 1890 + 1968
 Esther 1891 + 1952
 Edward R. 1920 + 1921
 Lot 79 - Callahan
 Callahan Catherine E. 1896 - 1976 "Doll"
 (Mother)
 Callahan John F. 1892 - 1924
 Lot 80 - Charles Waldie
 WALDIE: Charles E. 1912 - 1983
 A. Marie 1920 - 2005
 Lot 81 -
 William Paul Callahan MOMM3 US NAVY
 WORLD WAR II 1919 + 1987
 Lot 82 - Richard Crowe
 CROWE: Richard 1866 - 1946
 Ellen 1869 - 1954
 John R. Crowe 1895 + 1911
 Lot 83 - Mrs. Conkle
 James U. Conkle 1860 - 1912
 Margaret E. His Wife 1865 - 1945
 Mary Mae Conkle 1892 + 1968

Lot 84 - John McLean
 David V. Murphy 1881 + 1945
 Lot 85 - Joseph Hatem
 HATEM: Faduah L. March 19, 1896 - May 9,
 1988
 George J. Dec. 1, 1917 - Oct. 27, 1977
 Abe, Unk, Elsie, John, Kathy, Ju,
 Sr. Jovita
 footstone: George James Hatem S 1 US
 NAVY WORLD WAR II 1917 + 1977
 Charles Hatem Sept. 5, 1886 - Dec. 23, 1971
 Juliet C. Hatem Jan. 10, 1913 - Apr. 2, 2003
 Lot 86 - William Waldie
 WALDIE: Rosseleen (Dee) June 23, 1923 -
 blank
 Mar 18, 1959 [marriage]
 William Thomas Aug. 31, 1922 - May
 27, 1996
 Lot 87 -
 LITMAN: Virgil A. Aug. 30, 1914 - June 24,
 2002
 Edna L. May 15, 1912 - June 6, 2005
 Parents of Robert - Ruth - Richard
 (To be concluded)