

REV. MSGR. H. E. MATTINGLY
EDITOR

197 EAST GAY STREET
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH (1)

CHAPEL HILL, PERRY COUNTY, OHIO

Monroe township, in which Chapel Hill is located, constitutes the southeast corner of Perry County. The township was organized about 1823 and named after President James Monroe. First settlements were made as early as 1814 by John McDonald and James Dew who had come out from Maryland. Names of other settlers listed (2) as living in the township at the time of its organization, or shortly afterwards, were Enos Devore, David Devore, Elisha Tinker, John Small, Samuel Morrow, Nicholas Owings, Elijah Wooley, Jacob Wooley, Stephen Rodman, John Rodman, C. Wood, David Hearing, William Ward, James M. Ward, George Juniper, William Staniford, John Acord and John Garver.

Few of the foregoing names appear in the early church records (3) of the little parish which soon came into being on what was called "Irish Ridge" in the northeast section of the township. John Dew is known to have been a Catholic. There are several tombstones in the parish cemetery bearing the name Dew. Of them, Michael Dew was buried in 1858. The family of Elisha Tinker may have been Catholic since a tombstone in the cemetery bears the name of Catherine Tinker who died in 1871 at the age of 47. Another name given among the early settlers which appears in the cemetery is that of Ward. A Joseph Ward, son of Joseph Ward, was buried in 1842 (being only a few months old at the time of his death).

Catholic families settling in the township in the 1820's and recorded in the 1830 federal census include William Ward, his wife, one son and one daughter. Other families likely members of St. Francis parish listed in the 1830 census were Mr. and Mrs. Elizha Tinker with five boys and four girls, and James Dew and wife with four sons and two daughters.

During the 1830's a number of other known Catholic families came to Monroe township (4). The 1840 census shows the Elisha Tinker and the James Dew families still there. Others were Mr. and Mrs. Peter Curren with three sons and one daughter; Daniel O'Neal (no wife) with three sons and one daughter; Michael Mitchell (no wife) with one son and one daughter; Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Feghan, with two sons and two daughters; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Curran, with three daughters; Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Masterson, with one son and two daughters; Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Masterson, with one son and three daughters; Mrs. Jane McDonough (no husband) with two sons and two daughters; Mr. and Mrs. James Ryan, with one son and one daughter; John Lynch and bride; Mr. and Mrs. John McCarty, with four sons and two daughters; Mr. and Mrs. George Thompson, with three sons, and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Welch, with three sons and one daughter.

George Thompson, who had arrived in the area during the 1830's, was apparently the outstanding leader of the Catholic community. For this reason the first name given to the "Irish Ridge" settlement was "Thompsonville". Later the name was changed to Chapel Hill.

Bishop Hartley states in his history of the Diocese of Columbus (5) that Chapel Hill was among the earliest Catholic settlements of Ohio, and that these Catholic pioneers were refugees from the Rebellion in Ireland in the latter part of the eighteenth century. "They chose the hill country," Bishop Hartley wrote, "in order to avoid the 'bogs', as they seemed to think the lowlands of this newly adopted country unfit for agriculture." Bishop Hartley further wrote that these early Catholic settlers in Monroe township first attended the church at Deavertown in nearby Morgan county. (Deavertown was about eight miles directly north of the Chapel Hill location.)

The Dominican Fathers, with headquarters at St. Joseph's, near Somerset, took care of the spiritual wants of the Catholics at Deavertown. The annual Catholic Almanac of 1833 (6) lists a St. Barnabas church at Deavertown. It was likely a mission of the Dominican Fathers for some years before that date. Indeed, there is a tombstone in the old St. Barnabas cemetery which gives the date of death of an infant daughter of J. & E. Richard as occurring July 12, 1818. A small chapel was built at Deavertown.

Although St. Francis church, Chapel Hill, does not appear listed in the annual Catholic Directory until 1840, Bishop Hartley states that a little log chapel was built there about 1825. Testimony for his statement, writes the Bishop (7), was one Thomas Duffy, first child born at Chapel Hill, who died in his 97th year in 1906. However, no land deeds are found to show purchase of property for a church until some years later.

"In 1840 the Know Nothings of this locality are said to have burnt the church to the ground. Father Olivetti, the first pastor of St. Francis parish, summoned every member of the congregation capable of work to erect a stone church which would defy the incendiarism of prejudice" (8). The new church was built in a little less than two months.

The earliest records of baptisms and marriages of the Catholics at Chapel Hill were doubtlessly included among those kept by the Dominican Fathers at St. Joseph's, Somerset, and later among those of St. Barnabas church, Deavertown. The first volume of sacramental records for Chapel Hill begins with 1840, the year during which the little parish received its first pastor in the person of Father Aegidius Olivetti.

Clement Marzolf in his History of Perry County (9) states that the Chapel Hill Catholic parish was not organized until about 1850. Records disprove this. However, the first record of land bought for the parish is dated September 9, 1847 (10). The deed reads: "Be it known that James Lavin and Jane Lavin formerly Jane McDonough, his wife, in consideration of two hundred dollars to them paid by the Literary Society of St. Mary's, Somerset, Ohio, do hereby bargain, sell and convey to the said Literary Society of St. Mary's and their successors and assigns forever the following real estate, viz: The South East quarter of the North West quarter of Section Twelve (12) township twelve (12) and Range

fourteen (14) in the Zanesville land district being the same tract of land conveyed by A. Buckingham and wife to Jane McDonough one of the present grantors. Together with all the privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging."

The Chapel Hill parish first appears in the Catholic Almanac of 1841 as Sunday Creek church, and was attended from Marietta. In 1842 Father E. Olivetti is listed as in charge of St. Barnabas, Deavertown, and of Sunday Creek and Monday Creek.

The vigor of the Chapel Hill parish at the time of Father Olivetti's arrival is indicated by the number of baptisms and marriages recorded in 1841: 89 were baptized and 23 couples were married. Late that year the parish was visited by Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati (11). He was apparently accompanied by Very Rev. John Henmi (12), pastor of Holy Trinity (German) church, Cincinnati. The Chapel Hill register of baptisms shows that "Mr. Henmi" baptized one Elizabeth Clegar on October 14, 1841. On the same day is recorded the baptism by Bishop Purcell of James Bergoun, a convict, aged 35 years. The Bishop was in the area for some days since he again administered baptism on October 22.

Father Olivetti remained in charge of Chapel Hill until 1845 when Father Timothy O'Farrell became pastor. Four years later Father Albert Bokel, Sr., O.P., took care of the parish for a few weeks. In February, 1849, Father C. (Cornelius?) Daly came to stay more than two years. For the next few years, beginning in September, 1851, several priests looked after the spiritual needs of the people of Chapel Hill. Among them were Rev. J. V. Daly, O.P., Rev. S. A. Clarkson, Rev. J. V. Edelen, O.P., and Rev. James Magee, O.P.

Late in 1855 Father Thomas Monahan became pastor and remained for four years. Father William Phew, who took over in August, 1855, remained less than two years. The longest pastorate, 15 years, was that of Father J.N. Brogard who took over the parish in June, 1861, and remained until his retirement in May, 1876. He was succeeded by Father John Rooney, beloved by the people until his death in 1884. He lies buried in the parish cemetery.

After Father Rooney's death Chapel Hill was under the care of the pastor at St. Bernard's, Corning, Rev. B. M. O'Boylan. By this time most of the people had moved away so that it was no longer necessary to maintain the parish. The last baptism recorded for Chapel Hill by Father O'Boylan was August 11, 1889. The church on "Irish Ridge" was closed and the people attended the church in Corning. The glory that was had ended.

(1) The name of the church was incorrectly given as St. Francis Xavier in the January issue of the "Bulletin".

(2) The History of Perry County by E. S. Colborn, Columbus, 1883, p. 220.

(3) Register of Baptisms, St. Francis Church, Chapel Hill, Vol. I.

(4) No doubt members of the Chapel Hill parish included people living in other townships of Perry County, and some from nearby Morgan County. The nearest other parish at the time was St. Louis Bertrand, Rehoboth, Clayton township, excepting, of course, St. Barnabas, Deavertown, Morgan County.

(5) Diocese of Columbus, The History of Fifty Years, 1868-1918. Columbus, 1918, p. 474.

(6) Although Catholic almanacs were published in 1817 and again in 1822,

they were quite small. The year 1833 marks the beginning of continuous publication of this important work now known as The Official Catholic Directory.

- (7) Diocese of Columbus, The History of Fifty Years, 1868-1918, p. 474.
- (8) Ibid., p. 474.
- (9) The History of Perry County by Clement Marzolf, 1902, p. 107.
- (10) Perry County Deed Books, Vol. R, p. 321.
- (11) This was not the first visit of Bishop Purcell to the area. He had visited St. Barnabas, Deavertown in May, 1834. Catholic Telegraph, Cincinnati, Vol. III, No. 26, p. 105.
- (12) Rev. John Henni was consecrated first Bishop of Milwaukee, March 19, 1844. He died September 7, 1881.

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CHAPEL HILL'S PRIEST-SON

One of the joys experienced by the people of St. Francis parish, Chapel Hill, was the ordination of a young man of the parish. He was Father James McGovern, O.P., who was ordained at St. Joseph's, Somerset, (1) by Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati, on May 2, 1863.

Father McGovern was born in Ireland Dec. 3, 1836. His parents, Charles and Margaret (Walpole) (2) McGovern, died when he was quite young. At the age of five some relatives brought him to this country. After some time in Athens County, Ohio, they settled near Chapel Hill. Young James studied at St. Joseph's, Somerset, and at Sinsinawa, Wisconsin. He made his religious profession as a Dominican July 22, 1853. His first assignment was to St. Peter's, London, Ontario, Canada. Later he was transferred to St. Vincent Ferrer's, New York City. However, most of his saintly life was spent in California. His first appointment there was to St. Dominic's, San Francisco. Among his later places of labor were St. Vincent's, Vallejo, Calif., St. Dominic's, Benicia, California, and Holy Rosary church, Portland, Oregon. He died in St. Joseph's hospital, Stockton, Calif., Sept. 21, 1918, and was buried in the parish cemetery at Benicia.

Father O'Daniel says of him that "he was a superior man both spiritually and intellectually.....He was certainly exemplary in everything -- an edification to everybody. He left a name out on the Pacific coast of being all that is good and holy" (3). Father Coffey (4) says of him, "One almost feels like praying to him."

(1) The Dominican Province of Saint Joseph by the Very Rev. Victor Francis O'Daniel, O.P., New York, 1942, p. 255-257.

(2) The family name, Walpole, occurs a number of times in the early sacramental records of Chapel Hill.

(3) Op. Cit., p. 256-257.

(4) Pictorial History of the Dominican Province of Saint Joseph, U.S.A., by Rev. James R. Coffey, O.P., New York, 1946, p. 51.

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HOME COMING AT CHAPEL HILL

(From the "New Lexington Herald," August 24, 1904)

Chapel Hill, an old historic village situated three miles from Corning, was the scene of the greatest event of the kind which ever occurred in this valley Thursday. Two thousand made the pilgrimage to that place to celebrate the homecoming of former residents.

It is the oldest settlement of this section and in its former days was the business center for not only southern Perry County, but neighboring counties as well. It is now almost a deserted village, and the ruins of the old stone church, St. Francis Catholic church, shows the traveler the ancient metropolis.

About the year 1840 the old log church was burned, supposed to be the work of incendiaries. In 1841 the magnificent stone church was erected as a better protection against a like occurrence from its enemies. Among the pioneer and older settlers were the names of the Currans, Monahans, Duffys, Donahues, Corbitts, Nashes, Souders and O'Farrels.

Among the older families represented there were Judge M. H. Donahue and C. A. Donahue of New Lexington; A. H. Perand and Peter Curran of Zanesville; William Corbitt, F. L. Fagan, James Sweeney, John O'Neil, Peter Duffy and Peter Curran of Columbus; William Curran of McConnellsville; Mrs. Kate Nelson of West Virginia; Charles Nash of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Mary J. Skinyon of Kansas.

In 1879 and 1880 when the railroad was constructed through this section and the valuable coal fields commenced to be developed the town of Corning was started and then began the decline of Chapel Hill. John Monahan who had been a merchant at the country village moved his store to Corning and many others followed.

Mr. Monahan is still in business in Corning and among its best and most enterprising business men. It was he who conceived the idea of that pilgrimage to their old home which resulted in such a complete success Thursday.

A part of the afternoon was devoted to speech making at which the Rev. Fr. B. M. O'Boylan of Newark presided. Father O'Boylan was for years and up to the time of his going to Newark pastor of St. Bernard's church of Corning and also of St. Francis church of Chapel Hill. He delivered a most eloquent and instructive speech. Judge M. H. Donahue of New Lexington made a splendid address dealing with reminiscences.

Addresses were also delivered by C. A. Donahue of New Lexington and George T. Drake of Corning.

Later in the day a monument erected to the memory of Father Rooney (1) a former pastor was unveiled. Rev. Powers (2) of Logan delivered the address.

(1) Father Rooney died in 1884.

(2) Rev. Thomas A. Powers, later for many years pastor of St. Peter's, in Steubenville, Ohio.

THE CHAPEL HILL DOCTOR

By Dr. James E. Rodgers (1)

It was in the early 1800's that William Goulding completed his medical training and began his practice in a small town in his native state of Virginia. He had recently taken as his bride Lydia Winn, daughter of the illustrious general. As time wore on his practice flourished and the Goulding children eventually numbered four. And then a dramatic change took place in the lives of Dr. Goulding, his wife, and their children; parents and children alike embraced the Catholic faith and all received the sacrament of baptism at the same time.

In an area where Catholics were looked upon with disdain and suspicion, the change in attitude on the part of the community toward the family was immediate and the end result was the complete and total disintegration of Dr. Goulding's practice.

Finally, heeding the counsel of a few remaining friends the Doctor decided to move his little family to a locale where Catholics were more readily accepted and his new-found faith would no longer be a deterrent to his medical practice. And so it was that Chapel Hill, nestled deeply in the hills of southeastern Perry County, Ohio, was chosen as the site of the new home of the Gouldings. In a community which was almost totally Catholic, the Doctor's medical practice once again flourished. The family were faithful members of St. Francis Church. Two sections of the walls of this ancient structure are still standing. (2)

Dr. Goulding died in 1876 at the age of 71 years and lies buried(3) beside his wife at the entrance to the little cemetery in Chapel Hill. Surrounding them repose the mortal remains of those Catholics who received the Gouldings with open arms after their native community had rejected them because of their religion. May their rest be eternal.

(1) Dr. Rodgers, professor at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, is a great-grandson of William Goulding.

(2) Since the writing of this article, little of the original walls of the ancient structure remains.

(3) Tombstone inscriptions at the Chapel Hill Cemetery give this information about Dr. Goulding and his wife: William Goulding, died Sept. 19, 1876, aged 71 years, 3 months, 15 days. G.A.R. marker; Lydia Goulding wife of William Goulding, died Oct. 18, 1883, aged 71 years, 2 months, 4 days.

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CHAPEL HILL RECORDS

Tombstone inscriptions, funeral records, and registers of baptisms and marriages reveal the names of most of the early pioneers of St. Francis of Assisi church, Chapel Hill, Perry County, Ohio. The information from these sources pertaining to the 1840's is of greatest interest to the multitude of descendants of the little parish.

Tombstone Inscriptions of the 1840's, Chapel Hill cemetery.

Peter Curran, died Feb. 20, 1845. Aged 33 years.
Peter Curnen, a native of Ireland, died Oct. 27, 1844. Aged 33 years.
William Haughran, died Dec. 18, 1845. Aged 32 years, 2 months.
Catherine Kernan, wife of B. Kernan, died Jan. 15, 1849. Aged 49 years.
Nancy Martin, wife of James Martin. 1845.
Michael Mitchell, a native of County Longford, Ireland, died 1845. Aged 74 years.
Edward Mooney, son of E. & B. Mooney, died Aug. 10, 1849. Aged 7 years, 8 months, 10 days.
Ann Mulligan, wife of Bartholomew, died March 18, 1844.
Mary Murtaugh, wife of Brazen Murtaugh, died July 22, 1846. Aged 56 years.
Jane O'Leary, wife of Morgan O'Leary, native of Ireland, Belingray County, Carlow, died Nov. 18, 1843. The 57th year of her life.
Daniel O'Neill, died Sept. 14, 1845. Aged 61 years, 1 month, 4 days.
John Strong, died Aug. 4, 1844. Aged 90 years.
Susan Thompson, daughter of George and Catherine Thompson, died Aug. 2, 1842. Aged 6 years.
Mary Thompson, daughter of George and Catherine Thompson, died June 21, 1845. Aged 4 years, 3 months.
Patrick Traner, died March 27, 1845.
Joseph Ward, son of Joseph Ward, died 1842.
Martin Walpole, died May 24, 1847. Aged 71 years.
Matthew Walpole, died July 12, 1845. Aged 90 years.
Michael Walpole, died Aug. 22, 1846.
Isabella Welsh, wife of Daniel Welsh, died Feb. 8, 1849.

Funeral Records, St. Francis Church, Chapel Hill.

1840: Dec. 27. Mary Ann Masterson. Two years.
1841: July 15. Abigail Cunningham. Ten months.
Sept. 10. Mary Feaghan. Eight months.
Nov. 5. N. N. McConnell. Few days.
1842: Jan. 2. James and Elisa Coil. About five years.
Jan. 5. Helen Skennan. 35 years.
July 20. James Curren. 2 Years.
July 30. Catherine Skreevner(?). 16 years.
Aug. 3. Elizabeth Thompson. 5 months.
Aug. 30. John Strong. 80 years.
1843: March --. Infant Flower.
Dec. 10. Infant -----.
----- Mr. Skreevner.
1844: Feb. 11. N.N. 9 years.
March 17. N. Medonah(?). 8 years.
March 24. Brigitta Kelen. 35 years.
July 23. Christina Flower. 38 years.
Aug. 19. Anna Mulligan. 23 years.
Aug. 25. Brigitta Cunningham. 43 years.

1841 Marriage Records, St. Francis Church, Chapel Hill.

- Jan. 24. Daniel Dekes and Mary Biron. Witnesses: James Longstreth and John Pearl.
Feb. 1. James McNamarra and Aloysia Woodward. Witness: Peter Coil.
Feb. 22. Cornelius Clagar and Agatha Young. Witnesses: M. Golman and James Longstreth.
March 6. Thomas Fitzpatrick and Fenici(?) Sweney.
May 4. Jesse Charpenter and M ry Charpenter.
May 6. John Duffy and Catherine Mahley.
May 18. Michael Forker and Rebecca Beckruth. Witnesses: George Bennett and Ann Walpol.
May 25. Patrick and Ann Burns.
June 1. Michael McCunnis---- and Mary James.
June 3. William Turner and Elizabeth McGloklin.
June 5. Bernard Lee and Mary Rooney.
July 15. John Ryan and Mstry Dwir. Witnesses: John Brockier(?) and Alex Dwir.
July 27. James Cullen and Rosa Anna Hafer. Witnesses: Patrick Hays and Elizabeth Burk.
Aug. 4. Michael Mulligan and Elizabeth Walpol. Witnesses John Grimes and Anna Smith.
Aug. 11. Nicolas Sower and Christina Johnson. Witnesses: James Coran and Elizabeth Little.
Aug. 13. Joseph Pearl and Anna Riley. Witnesses: Leats(?) Morgan and Catherine Thompson.
Oct. 17. John Cahill and Mary West. Witnesses: John ----- and Mary Nola.
Oct. 20. Michael Collins and Sally McCroly. Witnesses: John and Elizabeth Sareth(?).
Oct. 20. Hely Wise and Anna Metser. Witnesses: John Metser and Marry Anna Gorer.
Oct. 21. Bartholomew Mulligan and Anna Smith. Witnesses: Bernard McCabe and Mary Smith.
Nov. 28. Henry Hofer and Margaret Freel. Witnesses: Patrick Freel and Barnabas Freel.
Dec. 2. James Lavin and Genna McDonahoe. Witnesses: John Cassidi and Anna Masterson.

Baptism Records, St. Francis Church, Chapel Hill.

- 1840: ----- George Thompson, Sponsor: Patrick Masterson.
----- John, son of Timothy and Ann Wright. Sponsors: James and Ann McCarty.
Dec. 28. Thomas, son of Michael and Mary Cunningham. Sponsors: Margaret Cunningham and Ml. Olivetti.
- 1841: Jan. 3. Andrew, son of Joseph and Agathy Ricardy. Sponsors: Mary and Solomon Feney.
Jan. 15. Michael, son of John and Helen Mitchel. Sponsors: John Mallan and Mary Sheanna(?).
Jan. 23. Joseph Philip, son of Paul and Catherine Georg. Sponsors: Ml. Olivetti and Abigel Longstreth.
Jan. 21 (Ceremonies supplied) Daniel Dekes, convert, aged 27 years. Sponsors: Ml. Olivetti and Abigail Longstreth.
Jan. 24. William, son of Patrick and Brigitta Keelen. Sponsors: Andrew Leady and Fybia Curnean.
Jan. 31. Catherine, daughter of John and Mary Cunlan(?). Sponsors: John Swift and Jenie McDearman.

(To be continued)