



St. Patrick Church, McCullough Settlement

An Irish and a French settlement was made in western Scioto county, Ohio, shortly after the middle of the last century. The first to come were French migrants who settled in the Pond creek area in Rush township in the early 1850's. That they came to the area may have been an aftermath of the unfortunate French Catholic colony at Gallipolis. Dissatisfied, many of them left there. In 1795 after the Indian wars congress passed an act "giving a tract of land to the French on the Ohio, the French Grant. There were found just 84 persons over 18 years of age to claim a share of the grant. A few of these moved off the grant, in Scioto county." (1)

The French settlement at Pond creek resulted in the establishment of the present Holy Trinity parish in 1861.

A few years after the French came to the area of the county west of the Scioto river, some Irish Catholic families settled in the hills around McCullough creek in Union township, just a few miles west of the Pond creek settlement.

They must have come to the area in the late 1850's since Father James J. O'Donohue, pastor of Holy Redeemer church, Portsmouth, recorded that he baptized at "McCulloch Creek" on March 30, 1860. It was apparently already one of his many mission stations. He continued to record baptisms at "McCulloch" until 1864 when he was succeeded by Father Michael Mary Ahern, who did the same until 1867. The next year the diocese of Columbus was established, dividing Scioto county between the new and old dioceses. The area west of the Scioto river remained in the archdiocese of Cincinnati, thus relieving the pastor of Holy Redeemer of the missions of western Scioto county.

It is interesting to note that during these years the pastor of Holy Redeemer took care of many missions and mission stations. Some were Wilkseville and Latrobe and Eagle Furnaces in Vinton county; Jackson in the county of the same name; Athens in that county; a number of Furnaces in Scioto and Lawrence counties; Union Mills and Lick Run in Scioto county, as well as Buena Vista. Pond Creek and McCullough west of the river.

That the McCullough station was so named was due to the fact that it was located in the area of a stream known as McCullough Creek, which received its name from an early pioneer resident of the name. The eventual church property was described in a deed of 1860 (2) as being on the waters of "McCullick Creek."

Among the early Catholic families of McCullough settlement were those of Edward Walsh, James Galvin, Owen Dudy, Augustine Crow, John Finn, Patrick Joyce, Michael McMenamy, William Donohue, John Geghan, Denis and Jeremiah Collins, Anthony and Patrick Kelly, James Conolly, Patrick Gavin and Martin Byrne. There were others.

On December 15, 1860, Owen Dudy and his wife, Johanna, deeded (3) to James Galvin for \$200 forty-six acres which was part of a parcel of 146 acres "on the waters of McCullick Creek." On Nov. 4, 1873, in a mortgage bond (4) Joseph Kelly, trustee for St. Patrick's church, signed for \$150 to be paid to James Galvin for the property. On the same day in a warranty deed (5) James and Mary Galvin received \$350 for the property from Joseph Kelly in trust for the church. For \$1.00 Kelly returned the property to Galvin in trust for the congregation on Aug. 31, 1875 (6). The following year, June 28, 1876, (7) Galvin released the property to Patrick Henry Doody who paid \$1.00 and received the parcel in trust for St. Patrick's.

It was not until September 24, 1881, that the property was turned over to the archbishop of Cincinnati. On that date, for \$1.00 received, Patrick Henry Doody, in trust for the congregation of McCulloch, Scioto county, deeded the property containing 46 acres, more or less, to Right Rev. William Henry Elder, archbishop of Cincinnati. (8)

Beginning with the establishment of the diocese of Columbus in 1868, the three missions west of the Scioto river, Immaculate Conception, Buena Vista; Holy Trinity, Pond Creek, and St. Patrick's, McCullough, were cared for by the pastor of St. Michael's, Ripley, in Brown county. Fathers Bartholomew Schmitz and P. Geyer were at Ripley in those days. They had to travel more than fifty miles to get to Pond Creek. Naturally, the frequency of their visits was limited. Archbishop Purcell was aware of the situation and was anxious to provide relief to the priests at Ripley.

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In 1873 Father Joseph Mertian, of Alsace, France, came to the archdiocese of Cincinnati. After a short stay at Dayton, the archbishop asked him to take charge of the French settlement at Pond Creek, and the two neighboring missions at Buena Vista and McCullough. He took up his residence in the McCullough settlement. It was not until 1876 that a small church was erected and dedicated to God under the patronage of St. Patrick. The church was located about four miles north of Henley.

When Father Mertian arrived to take over the McCullough mission it had about 160 members. Its first trustees were James Galvin, Joseph Kelly and James Donohue. (9)

Father Mertian, often called "Father Joseph," soon won the love and veneration of his people. Faithful in caring for his charges, he is said always to have walked over the hills from one mission to another. It was about 20 miles from McCullough to Buena Vista, and about half that to Pond Creek. His faithful companion, a fellow-countryman, was Gregory Weppel, locally known as "Brother Godfrey."

In 1902, at a cost of \$800 the first St. Patrick's church was replaced with a new frame structure to accomodate a growing congregation (10).

Father Mertian reached the age of 85 in 1914, and was experiencing the burdens of his years. The archbishop gave him permission to retire, and sent Father Henry J. Richter to take over the work. Father Mertian continued to live in the McCullough rectory, while Father Richter took up residence in Henley in a house donated by Ignatius Reitz of Portsmouth. He fixed one room in the house for a chapel.

During the pastorate of Father Richter it was decided to permanently establish the parish at Otway, a few miles west by direct line, but farther by road. In 1916 the present brick church in Otway was dedicated and placed under the patronage of Our Lady of Lourdes. The McCullough church remained for some years, and Father Mertian, as long as he was able, continued to celebrate Mass in it. He died April 11, 1917.

Sometime later St. Patrick's, McCullough, was razed and parts of it used to erect a small chapel in the parish cemetery located a few miles away on U.S. Route 73. The chapel is close to Father Mertian's grave. Carved wood pieces of St. Patrick's may be seen in the cemetery chapel.

- 1) "The Gallipolis Colony," by Rev. Lawrence J. Kenny, S.J., "Catholic Historical Review," January, 1919, Vol. IV, No. 4, pp. 415-451.
- 2) Scioto County Deed Books, Vol.4, p. 66.
- 3) Ibid.
- 4) Scioto County Deed Books, Vol. 14, p. 307.
- 5) Scioto County Deed Books, Vol. 20, p. 441.
- 6) Scioto County Deed Books, Vol. 24, p. 108.
- 7) Ibid.
- 8) Scioto County Deed Books, Vol. 33, p. 251.
- 9) History of the Lower Scioto Valley, Interstate Publishing Co., 1884, p. 423.
- 10) History of Scioto County, by Nelson W. Evans, Portsmouth, 1903, p. 404.

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THE REV. MARY JOSEPH MERTIAN
1829-1917

Mary Joseph Mertian was born December 26, 1829, at Ill, Alsace, France, once a ruling place in the days of the Roman Empire. He received his education and preparation for the priesthood in his native land, and was ordained there May 21, 1853. It was twenty years later that he realized his desire to serve in the mission areas of America. He came to the United States in 1873, and was received into the archdiocese of Cincinnati. Archbishop Purcell was glad to have a priest who could take care of the French settlement at Pond Creek, and its two missions, in western Scioto county.

Father Mertian took up residence in the Irish settlement at McCullough and took care of the Buena Vista and Pond Creek missions from there. He served all three missions for almost 42 years, and was revered by his people for his personal mortification and holiness. To the present day his name is held in veneration by Catholics of the area.

At the time of his retirement the Portsmouth newspaper hailed him as the oldest active priest in the State. "Father Mertian," the paper stated, "was one of the pioneer priests of Southern Ohio serving the spiritual wants of Catholics in the western part of the county for the past 42 years. He willingly suffered all sorts of discomforts and untold hardships for those for whom he labored with a zeal that stamped him as one of God's noblemen. He was born of noble parentage at Ill, Alsace....When he emigrate to this country he was persuaded by a friend to locate at Dayton, Ohio. Archbishop Purcell at that time was anxious to supply a priest for the French settlement at Pond Creek. Father Mertian volunteered to go. He never traveled any other way save on foot, oftentimes wading swollen creeks and braving the worst of weather in his cross country trips from McCullough to Buena Vista."

After 64 years in the priesthood he died April 11, 1917, after a week's illness of pneumonia and infirmities. At the time of his death he was 87, but had been active in his work up to a short time before his death. He had three brothers who were priests, all of whom preceded him in death. Father Richter, who succeeded him, said of him, "He will be missed. He was a faithful servant and the years of sunshine he scattered in the homes he visited shall never be forgotten. He is gone to the Heavenly reward he so justly earned."

Father Mertian's body was taken to St. Mary's church, Portsmouth, the day after his death, and where it remained until the time of the funeral. Archbishop Henry Moeller of Cincinnati was celebrant of the Pontifical Requiem Mass, assisted by more than twenty priests. The body was taken back to St. Patrick's cemetery for burial. His faithful companion, "Brother" Godfrey Weppel, survived him only until the following October 11. They are buried side by side in the parish cemetery.

Mrs. Joseph Lovey, who still lives in the Pond Creek mission area, writes today: "Father Mertian always had Saturday evening's supper with us. He would spend the evening with us, and then my dad would light the lantern and take him back to the church, where he spent the night in the sacristy. I was five years old when Haley's Comet appeared in the sky. I wanted to see it. Father Mertian placed me on his shoulders and told me to look beyond his pointed singer. I saw the star with the tail. He also chewed charcoal tablets. Once he gave me one. It tasted like ashes and I spit for half an hour." Mrs. Lovey's

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husband, Joseph, now 87, was one of those who made up the guard of honor around Father Mertian's body in St. Mary's church, Portsmouth, where it lay before the funeral.

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TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTIONS
ST. PATRICK'S CEMETERY
McCULLOUGH, SCIOTO COUNTY, OHIO

[Note: St. Patrick's cemetery was started in 1860. It is located on the Henley-Comstock road about two miles east of the location of the former church. It is still being used. Given here are some of the early burials.]

1. Rev. Joseph MERTIAN, born Dec. 26, 1829; died April 11, 1917; ordained May 2, 1853; was pastor in McCullough from June 1873 to April 1917.
2. "Brother" Godfrey WEPPEL, born in France, Nov. 9, 1841; died Oct. 11, 1917. Rest in peace. Amen.
3. Andrew CROWE, died Nov. 26, 1874, aged 59 years. A native of County Clare, Ireland.
Maggie, daughter of A. and E. F. CROWE, born Oct. 24, 1892. died Oct. 2, 1899.
4. Dan Earl son of Simon GROVE, died June 10, 1890, aged 2 months, 13 days.
5. Thomas KELLY, died Sept. 20, 1895, aged 38 years, 8 months and 5 days.
6. Margaret, wife of Thomas GAVEN, departed this life Aug. 6, 1863; aged about 33 years; also, Maggie, her little daughter departed this life Sept. 2, 1863.
7. Annie, wife of P.J. GUTHRIE, died Spril 26, 1883; aged 28 years, 8 months.
8. Thomas HALEY, died June 18, 1881, in his 68th year; a native of County Galway. May his soul rest in peace, Amen.
9. Edward WALSH, native of Ireland, born 1812, died Feb. 3, 1876.
Margaret, wife of Edward WALSH, born 1825, died June 2, 1903.
10. Ann, wife of John LORDIER, died May 9, 1881, aged 28 years and 28 days. Also her infant child, aged 6 days.
11. John CROWE, died 1871, aged three years, one month.
12. Mary, wife of John GINNAN, died May 26, 1870, aged 31 years, 5 months.

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McCULLOUGH SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

At Holy Redeemer Church, Portsmouth

Baptisms

- 1860 -- March 30: [Conditionally] Michael, son of Fergus Finn and Anna Walsh.
b. Feb. 28, Sponsors: John Finn and Margaret O'Brien.
JAMES J. O'DONOHUE
- March 30: Isaac, b. 30 Jan., son of Barth Neville and Emilina Cox.
Spr: John Ahern. JAS. J. O'DONOHUE
- March 30: [Conditionally] Mary, b. 24 March, dau. of John Finn and Bridgit Connolly. Sprs: Fergus Finn and Anna Walsh JAS. J. O'DONOHUE
- Nov. 16: Simon, b. 19 Aug. son of Augustine Crow and Bridgit Hedderman.
Sprs: Patrick McMenamy and Elizabeth Collins. JAS. J. O'DONOHUE
- Nov. 16: John, b. 1 Oct., son of Patrick Joice and Catharine Joice.
Sprs: Martin Conelly and Honora Conolly. JAS. J. O'DONOHUE

McCullough Baptisms (Continued)

- 1861 -- April 18: Thomas , b. 25 March, son of Michael McMenamy and Mary Frehiser.
Sprs: James Galvin and Margaret Guthrie. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- Aug. 28: Agnes, b. 11 Feb. 1859, dau. of William Donohoe and Mary
Smith. Sprs: Martin Smith and Mrs. Smith. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- Aug. 28: Anna, b. 24 May 1857, dau. of William Donohoe and Mary Smith.
Sprs: William Smith and Helen Smith. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- Aug. 28: Daniel, b. December, 1860, son of William Donohoe and Mary
Smith. Sprs: ----- and Sara Geoghan. J. J. O'DONOHUE.
- Oct. 20: Andrew Francis Augustine, b. 19 Oct. 1861, son of Joseph Jangenot
and Teresa Henri. Sprs: Francis Jangenot and Mary Henri.
J. J. O'DONOHUE
- Oct. 20: Thomas, b. 3 Oct. 1861, son of Martin Joice and Anna McMenamy.
Sprs: Michael Joice and Margaret Guthrie. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- Oct. 21: Margaret, b. Oct., dau. John Finn and Bridgit Connelly. Sprs:
Patrick Sheehan and Margaret Connelly. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- 1862 -- Sept. 16: Michael, b. 11 Sept., son of Edward Stanton and Mary Connor.
Sprs: Patrick McMenamy and Mary Kelly. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- Sept. 16: Michael, b. Sept. 15, son of Bartholomew Neville and Emilia
Cox. Sprs: August Crow and Mary Gerraghty. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- Nov. 1: Matthew, b. Oct. 18, son of John Lardner and Bridgit Henegan.
Spr: Celestina Bijet. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- Dec. 23: Jane, b. 31 Oct., dau. of Patrick Joyce and Catharine Joyce.
Sprs: James Guthrie and Brigid Crow. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- Jan. 1: Patrick, b. 28 Dec. 1861, son of John Geghan and Catharine
Hare. Sprs: Michael Geghan and Michael Gerraghty.
J. J. O'DONOHUE
- March 20: Mary Anna, b. 23 Jan., dau. of Dennis Collins and Joan Doody.
Sprs: ----- Doody and Kate Collins. J.J. O'DONOHUE
- May 18: Honora, b. May 10, of Owen Doody and C---- Ahearn. Sprs: James
Galvin and Joan Collins. J.J. O'DONOHUE
- May 19: Thomas, b. April 28, son of Fergus Finn and Anna Walsh. Sprs:
John and Bridgit Finn. J.J. O'DONOHUE
- May 19: Michael, b. 12 May, son of Augustine Crow and Bridgit Hedderman.
Sprs: Martin and Anna Conolly. J.J. O'DONOHUE
- May 19: Mary, b. 29 March, dau. of James Galvin and Mary Collins. Sprs:
Michael and Mary McMenamy. J.J. O'DONOHUE
- May 19: Margaret, b. 2 April, dau. of Jeremiah Collins and Elizabeth
Doody. Sprs: Patrick Conelly and Hanna Joice. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- July 16: John, b. 26 June, son of Fergus Geghan and Anna Smith. Sprs:
Edward Geghan and Bridgut Guthrie. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- July 16: Patrick, b. 5 June, son of Anthony Kelly and Marge Mealy. Sprs:
Edward ----- and Margaret Burns. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- 1863 -- March 26: Bridgit Anna, b. 27 Jan., dau. of John Finn and Bridgit Connolly.
Sprs: John Conolly and Catharine Sheehan. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- April 23: James, b. 17 April, son of James Conolly and Margaret Finn.
Spr; Winifred Finn. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- May 20: Patrick, b. 12 April son of Patrick Gavan and Margaret Kelly.
Sprs: Philip McMenamy and Mary McMenamy. J.J. O'DONOHUE
- May 3: Thomas, b. 28 Jan. son of Augustine Crow and Bridgit Hedderman.
Sprs: Edward Walsh and Mary Nugetn. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- May 3: Edward, b. 4 April, son of Edward Walsh and Margaret O'Brien.
Sprs: John Finn and Anna Conolly. J. J. O'DONOHUE

McCullough Baptisms (Continued)

- 1863 -- May 3: James, b. 26 April, son of Michael Kirk and Mary English. Sprs:
Fergus Geghan and Helen Smith. J. J. O'DONOHUE
Dec. 7: Thomas, b. 17 Oct., son of Martin Byrne and Margaret Gavin.
Sprs: Patrick Smyth and Mary Kelly. J. J. O'DONOHUE
Dec. 7: Michael, b. 4 Dec., son of Martin Joyce and Honora McMenemy.
Sprs: Michael McMenemy and Margaret Smyth. J. J. O'DONOHUE
- 1864 -- Aug. 18: John, b. 31 May, son of James Conolly and Margaret Finn
Conolly. Sprs: William Smith and Anna Walsh. Mass was celebrated
in the home of Fergus Gagan. MICHAEL MARY AHERN
Oct. 30: Josephine R., b. 12 Aug., dau. of Stephen Mazzoni and Anastasia
Beloquo Mazzoni (in Brush Creek township). Sprs: Xavier Cheon
and Josephine Cheon. M. M. AHERN
Nov. 23: Michael, b. 9 Oct., son of John Finn and Bridgit Connolly.
Sprs: Patrick Sheehan and Margaret O'Brien. M. M. AHERN
Nov. 23: Mary Anna, b. 10 Oct., dau. of Edward Stanton and Mary Connor
Stanton. Sprs: Patrick Joyce and Bridgit Hanagan Lardner.
M.M. AHERN
Dec. 29: Julia, b. 16 Dec. , dau. of Patrick Joyce and Katharine Joyce.
Sprs: Anthony Kelly and Bridgit Crow. M. M. AHERN
Dec. 29: Helen, b. 1 Dec., dau. of Patrick Gagan and Anna Smith Gagan.
Sprs: Martin Smith and Margaret Smith. M. M. AHERN
- 1865 -- Feb. 9: Honora, b. 4 Feb. dau. of James Galvin and Mary Collins Galvin.
Sprs: Dennis Collins and Joanna Dooley. M. M. AHERN
Feb. 9: Katharine, b. 1 Jan., dau. of Dennis Collins and Joanna Dooley
Collins. Sprs: Martin Byrnes and Mary Connor. M. M. AHERN
Feb. 9: Elizabeth, b. 29 Jan., dau. of Bartholomew Nevil and Emilia Cox
Nevil. Sprs: Edward Stanton and Katharine Sheehan.
M. M. AHERN
April 27: Matthew, b. 18 Feb., son of Anthony Kelly and Mary Mealy Kelly.
Sprs: Patrick Kelly and Katharine Joyce. M. M. AHERN
June 3: (Brush Creek township) Mary Sosalia, b. 24 March, 1864, dau. of
Alexander Robert and Sophia Barnaby Robert. Sprs: Alphonsus
Robert and Mary Krause Jeugennat. M. M. AHERN
Aug. 21: William, b. 7 Aug. son of Michael Quirk and Mary English Quirk.
Sprs: Patrick Connolly and Honora Connolly. M. M. AHERN
Nov. 20: James, b. 25 Oct., son of ----- Byrne and Margaret Gavin Byrne.
Sprs: ----- and Mary McMenemy. M. M. AHERN
Nov. 20: Elizabeth Anna, b. 13 Oct., dau. of Patrick Kelly and Sara
Richards Kelly. Sprs: John Kelly and Elizabeth Doody.
M. M. AHERN
- 1866 -- May 17: Mary Helen, b. 17 March, dau. of Martin Joyce and Anna McManamon
Joyce. Sprs: James Guthrie and Bridgit Guthrie. M. M. AHERN
May 17: Helen, b. 18 April, dau. of Patrick Joyce and Katharine Joyce.
Sprs: James Galvin and Mary Healy. M. M. AHERN
Dec. 26: Martin, b. 5 Dec., son of August Crow and Bridgit Hedderman.
Sprs: Patrick Gagan and Bridgit Walsh. M. M. AHERN
July 10: Winifred, b. 7 July, dau. of John Finn and Bridgit Connolly
Finn. Sprs: Patrick Finn and Anna Finn. M. M. AHERN
Dec. 26: Anna Elizabeth, b. 23 Dec., dau. of Edward Stanton and Mary
Connell Stanton. Sprs: Martin Joyce and Margaret Gavin.
M. M. AHERN

McCullough Baptisms (Continued)

- 1867 -- Feb. 26: Thomas, b. 17 Jan. son of Patrick Kelly and Sara Richards Kelly. Sprs: Martin Byrne and Mary Mealy. M. M. AHERN
Feb. 26: Jane, b. 28 Dec. 1866, dau. of Dennis Collins and Jane O'Dowd Collins. Sprs: Patrick Doody and Jane Ahern Doody.
M. M. AHERN
Feb. 26: Margaret, b. 3 Feb., dau. of Patrick Gagan (Fergus) and Anna Smith Gagan. Sprs: William Smith and Katharine Smith.
M. M. AHERN
Feb. 26: Julia Anna, b. 22 Feb., dau. of James Galvin and Mary Collins Galvin. Sprs: Edmund Walsh and Margaret O'Brien Walsh.
M.M.AHERN
Feb. 27: (In Union township) Charles Amelius, b. 20 Dec. 1866, son of Victor Lavernier and Victoria Jonley. Sprs: Charles Lavernier and Augustina Lavernier.
M. M. AHERN
April 18: (In Brush Creek) Mary Laura Frances, b. 10 Feb., dau. of James Bernadin and ----- R. Bernadin. Sprs: Frances Jonley and Mary Bernadin.
M. M. AHERN.

McCullough Baptism at Nativity Church, Portsmouth

- 1868 -- Oct. 4: Daniel, b. 29 Aug., son of Michael Quick (Quirk?) and Mary English Quick. Sprs: Martin Guthrie and Bridgit Walsh.
AL KIRNER, S.M.

McCullough Marriage at Holy Redeemer Church, Portsmouth

- 1862 -- Jan. 15: Daniel Mooney and Margaret Guthrie. Witnesses: John Finn and Bridgit Sheehan. JAS. J. O'DONOHUE

Note: After 1868 and the establishment of the diocese of Columbus, the western part of Scioto county was under the archdiocese of Cincinnati, while the eastern part was in the new diocese. Therefore the missions of Pond Creek, McCullough and Buena Vista were taken care of by the pastor of St. Michael's, Ripley. Records from that time until 1873 when Father Mertian became resident pastor at McCullough, may be found at Ripley. After 1873, Father Mertian kept a separate book of sacramental records for his missions. The McCullough records, after 1873, are now at Our Lady of Lourdes, Otway, the church which took the place of St. Patrick's, McCullough.

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NOTICE

During 1984 the "Bulletin" of the Catholic Record Society will be issued quarterly instead of monthly. Members of the society will receive it as part of their membership. The society will continue to hold quarterly meetings, the next one being scheduled for 2 p.m., Sunday, February 26, at the Catholic Center, 197 East Gay Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

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