



Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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Dec. 6: St. Nicholas

December, 2007



The rebuilt Royer Chapel in Franklin Township, Coshocton County

St. Nicholas Mission Franklin Township, Coshocton County, 1856-1886

This is the second of a series of three articles on the mission churches of Wills Creek. The story of St. Mary in Linton Township appeared in the Bulletin of August, 2007 and the story of Our Lady of Lourdes is expected to appear in the issue of February, 2008.

As mentioned in the history of St. Mary mission in Linton Township, several Catholic families had settled in Franklin Township by 1840, including the Wimmers, Wagners, Kraethers, and Schuhs. Several more families arrived in the 1840s. These included Mathias and Margaret Factor, from Stundweiler, France, who arrived in New York City in 1840 and were in Coshocton County by 1842.¹ Nicholas and

Ann Royer, from Moselle in France, emigrated with their children about 1844 and settled near Sonora in Muskingum County for a few years before moving north to Franklin Township. Stephen and Rosalia Cognion, from Lorraine, landed in New Orleans in 1846, then came to Sonora in Muskingum County, and settled in Franklin Township in 1848.² The Dolls and Limbargers also arrived in this decade.

More French families arrived in the 1850s. The Salrins came in 1852 and 1853. Andrew and Barbara Salrin were married in Lorraine and were living near Metz in 1848. Joseph and Madeline were from Vittoncourt, Canton Folquemont, Department of Moselle; they settled in Adamsville in Muskingum County about 1846

and moved north to Franklin Township in 1852. John Nicholas Salrin and Francis and Mary Salrin were here by 1853. The Davieds also were from Vittoncourt; J. Nicholas Davied and his wife Ann (possibly a relative of Mrs. Cognion) were in the area by 1852. After his death, the widowed Ann married John Davied, who came to the U.S. in 1847, stopped in Muskingum County, then went on to Indiana, and came back to settle permanently in Franklin Township. Stephen Berton was born in Lorraine and came here with his wife Ann in 1853. Francis and Ann Berton, also from Lorraine, followed him to Franklin in 1875. Bernhard and Katherine Brecht, from Baden, came to America in 1854 and settled first in Adamsville, Muskingum County, before moving north, as so many others had done, to Franklin Township, to be near St. Nicholas mission.³

The Church

There is a letter from Father Rollinet at Calmoutier to Archbishop Purcell, dated February, 1852, that seems to mention these French settlers. "Your Grace," he wrote, "in the two little French missions of Bolivar and Mils creek, near Coshocton, in your diocese the two chapels were built. They did not know about turning over to the Bishop the title to the land given for worship, cemetery, etc. That is why I beg Your Grace in your reply to impose the duty on me to rectify the title of these two small parishes and assure that way a greater stability for the future."⁴ In the 1850 census there is not a single native of France in Mill Creek Township, Coshocton County, so this must refer to the French Catholics of Wills Creek. But other than this letter of Father Rollinet there is no notice of any church property or building prior to that of 1857.

If there had been a Catholic chapel in Franklin Township by 1852, it was not remembered thirty years later. The surviving tradition, recorded in the 1881 county history, is

that the French Catholics of Franklin Township were organized into a separate mission by Father Damian M. Frederick Bender of Newark in 1856. Father Bender at this time ministered to the English and French members of the congregations of Dresden, Coshocton, and Wills Creek. The first meetings of the congregation were held in Mrs. Margaret Factor's house.⁵

By a deed dated December 19, 1856, for \$1 Nicholas Royer and Ann his wife sold to Archbishop Purcell 0.28 acre in the southeast corner of the west half of the southeast quarter of section 12. By a second deed to Archbishop Purcell dated four days later, another, adjoining 0.28 acre lot was given by the heirs of Mathias Factor, namely Margaret Fachter, Mathias and Barbary Fachter, Wendal and Magdelene Strauser, Benjamin and Catherine Factor or Fachter, and Joseph and Magdalene Fachter.⁶ The site measures 165 feet wide and 148.5 feet deep, overall, and is one mile northeast of the village of Wills Creek on Ohio Route 83.

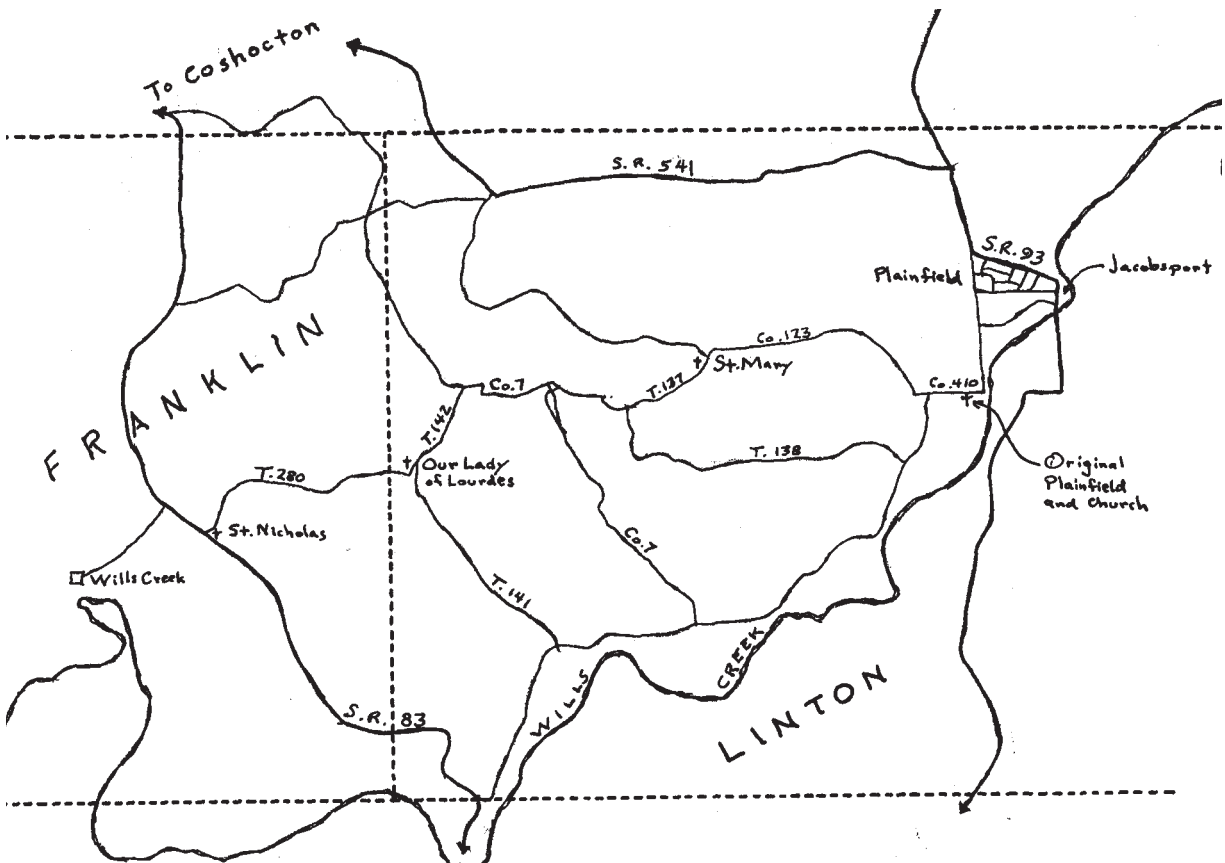
In 1857 the church, a log frame with weather-board siding, was erected. The labor was performed and the material furnished by the members, each contributing three logs for the structure.⁷ A pencil sketch-map in the diocesan property book of 1886 shows the church some 45 feet from the road and ten feet from the west property line, about where the present Royer Chapel sits. It measured 25 by 35 feet. The church was four miles, by hilly roads, to the west of the site of St. Mary's in Linton Township and its organization and establishment, though a burden on the pastor, was a great encouragement and convenience to the people in attending to their religious duties. The name St. Nicholas was given to it as early as December 9, 1858, when Archbishop Purcell visited and confirmed eleven there. He did not bless the church at that time. Mrs. Factor provided hospitality for the visiting clergymen.⁸ The Archbishop visited the area again in November of 1861, but did not visit the country missions, except Mattingly Settlement, where he blessed its new church.

Pastors and Congregation

The pastors of St. Nicholas, following Father Bender, were stationed at Coshocton. The Russian Father Serge de Stchoulepnikoff, called by the boys of the parish "Father Sneeze-your-nose-off," served from early 1859 until 1862. Father Serge's service was not continuous, and Father Bender returned in 1860 and Father John Joseph Rauch was there in 1862.⁹ Newly ordained Father Francis Maria Andres, from Muenster in Westphalia, followed them, from 1863 to 1864. The *Catholic Directory* for 1865 notes that the mission was attended from Canal Dover, but the sacramental registers of St. Joseph Parish there do not contain any Wills Creek names. This listing was probably caused by Father Andres' appointment to Canal Dover in 1864, a few months before he left to serve in the Diocese of Vincennes.¹⁰ Father Johan Gerhard Nordmeier was the next resident pastor at Coshocton, until 1869.

In February of 1869, the French priest Fr.

John Mary Jacquet became pastor of Coshocton and its missions. He soon had "the country churches" under his care repaired and improved.¹¹ The church of St. Nicholas, though built in 1857, had not yet been dedicated and Father Jacquet soon had that rectified also. On the morning of November 7, 1870 Bishop Sylvester Rosecrans visited and dedicated the church. At the same time he conferred the sacrament of Confirmation on these twenty-nine young people of the mission: Ferdinand Davier, Justin Berton, Stephan Cognon, Nicholas Cognon, Joseph Salrin, George Collet, Julian Salrin, Nicholas Davier, Augustine Salrin, Christopher Royer, Andrew Salrin, John Nicolas, Mary Nicolas, Mary Magdalen Sweitzer, Helen Martine, Barbara Asbaker, Mary Ann Schue, Margaret Davier, Susan Dole, Ann Royer, Ann Salrin, Rachael Asbaker, Mary Davier, Mary Elizabeth Schmisser, Adelaid Wimmer, Charles Schmisser, Catherine Schmisser, Mary Magdalen Schue, Catherine Cognon. (Surnames as spelled by Father Jacquet.)



The mission never was very large. In 1859 Father Serge reported 88 Easter Communions. By 1876 it was noted that this congregation and the congregation at Killbuck Creek “have both been greatly depleted by emigration to the Far West” and were mainly supplied with weekday services by the resident pastor of Coshocton. That observation is borne out by Father Jacquet’s lists of Easter Communions, which in the 1870s declined to between 57 and 75. In the 1880s the count was slightly higher. The total size of the congregation in 1874 was 95 souls in 19 families and about 25 families in 1880.¹²

By 1880 the farm properties in the hills of Franklin Township had been developed and the second generation was working some of the land. Typically, one in five acres of the hilly land was still wooded. Two-fifths of the land was in grass to feed cattle and sheep, while swine and poultry also were common. The other two-fifths of the land was cultivated. The crops primarily were corn, wheat, and oats; almost all of the farms included a small potato patch. Small orchards provided apples and peaches, while a few of the older French farmers (notably Stephen Berton and Martin Royer) grew grapes and made their own wine.

Closing

In 1887, only thirty years after the founding of St. Nicholas, the two Wills Creek missions of St. Mary and St. Nicholas were combined into the new, centrally located Our Lady of Lourdes, just across the line in Linton Township. The last act in the Church of St. Nicholas was the funeral of the aged widow of Nicholas Erman on July 30, 1887. The last two baptisms had been administered on May 19.

In 1898 Ann Salrin Royer, known as “Aunt Ann” to all her neighbors, built a tiny chapel with a log frame and wooden siding in memory of her husband, Martin. It was just 12 by 18 feet and contained seven pews for three persons each. It was said to have been built from the “wreckage” of St. Nicholas Church and was on

the site of that structure. Ann’s family maintained it for many years and it was called Royer Chapel. This chapel was not used for services after the 1960s. On Sunday, Dec. 8, 2002, it was destroyed by fire, thought to have been arson.¹³ However, the chapel has been rebuilt by the efforts of the same family and stands today on the edge of the little graveyard, a monument to God and St. Nicholas and to the faithful French Catholic pioneers of Wills Creek.

NOTES

- 1) Information provided by Society member Ben Factor.
- 2) Hill, N. N. Jr., *History of Coshocton County, Ohio: Its Past and Present, 1740-1881*; Newark, Ohio: A. A. Graham & Co., 1881; pp 781 and 655; for the Cognions, see the *Coshocton Democrat*, Feb. 9, 1897.
- 3) Hill, op. cit., 636, 639-640, 666, and 781; for the Bertons, see the *Coshocton Democrat* Mar. 18, 1889 and Jan. 12, 1892.
- 4) See the *Bulletin*, VI/485; courtesy of the Marianist Archives.
- 5) Hill, 496. Hunt, William E., *Historical Collections of Coshocton County 1764-1876*; Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1876; p. 202
- 6) Deed Records 32/558 and 32/559. This Factor deed is defective; it omits the phrase “of the east half” of the quarter section, but clearly places the lot to the east of Nicholas Royer’s land.
- 7) Hill, 496
- 8) *Catholic Telegraph*, Dec. 18, 1858
- 9) *Supplement to Historical Collections of Coshocton County... Originally Published in the Democrat and Standard*; Coshocton: Coshocton Public Library, 1964; p. 22. *Catholic Telegraph*, Feb. 12, 1859 and Feb. 4, 1863. Letters of D.M.F. Bender to Purcell, Sept. 20, 1860, and J. J. Rauch to Purcell, Sept. 4, 1862, Archives of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati
- 10) *Catholic Telegraph*, Aug. 24, 1864
- 11) Hunt, 202. See the *Bulletin* of April, 1983

(IX/217ff) for a biographical sketch of remarkable Father Jacquet.

12) Fr. Serge de Stchoulepnikoff to Purcell, June 21, 1859, Archives, Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Parish census and communion

records of Father Jacquet, in the Coshocton St. George sacramental registers. Hunt, 202.

13) *Bulletin*, XXVIII/10. *Zanesville Times Recorder*, Dec. 10, 2002. *Coshocton Tribune*, Dec. 10, 2002.

Tombstones at the Site of St. Nicholas Church, Franklin Township, Coshocton Co.

Msgr. Herman E. Mattingly read the stones at St. Nicholas or Royer Chapel on December 19, 1977. This reading was never published but has been kept in the files of the Catholic Record Society. In 1988 the Coshocton County Chapter, Ohio Genealogical Society published a reading, under the name of V. F. Mencer, "chairperson." Donald Schlegel visited the site to verify the above readings and record the stone locations on September 19, 2006.

Rows are numbered beginning nearest the chapel; stones are listed beginning nearest the front or parking area. The order of Monsignor Mattingly's reading is noted, since it helped to identify a couple of stones that were not legible in 2006.

Row 1

Pearlie O. dau of Adam & Susan Royer Feb. 19, 1887 - May 14, 1890 [HEM 7]

Row 2

Infant of C. & J. Royer died Oct. 27, 1900 [HEM 1]

Bertha B., dau of A. & C. Royer born Jan. 10, 1898 died Feb. 6, 1898 [HEM 2]

Clara Royer died Jan. 22, 1895 aged 22 yrs 3 mo 26 ds [HEM 3] Asleep in Jesus she will meet her mother.

{A. Royer wife of M. Royer born Aug. 26, 1833 died Oct. 31, 1911

{Martin Royer born Nov. 8, 1821 died Mar. 15, 1888 [HEM 4]

Joseph Royer died July 25, 1874 aged 35 yrs 2 mos 13 ds [HEM 5]

Charley Edward son of Joseph & M. Royer

died July 18, 1874 aged 9 mos 20 ds [HEM 6]

Catherine dau of J. & M. Royer died May 1, 1866 aged 16 d [Mencer]

[Maggie dau of Prosper & M. Royer died Nov. 25, 1874 aged 3 yrs 4 mo & 5 ds [HEM 8]

[Farewell Maggie, our band is broken
[You and two brothers have gone before
[Mencer]

Rosa A. dau of W. & M. Krominaker died Sept. 3, 1863 aged 14 mo & 1 dy [HEM 9]

Row 3

Martin N. son of M. & A. Royer died Aug. 30, 1867 aged 8 days [HEM 15]

Annie M. Shrigley dau of S. & M. Shrigley born July 6, 1871 died Sep. 4, 1872 [HEM 14]

{Nicholas Royer died Feb. 13, 1874 aged 74 yrs & 12 ds [HEM 13]

{Ann wife of Nicholas Royer died Nov. 1, 1864 aged 62 ys 10 m & 6 ds [HEM 12]

(There is a separate headstone for Ann Royer, containing the same information.)

[Morris E. died Aug. 18, 1864 aged 11 mos & 22 ds

[Prosper N. died Aug. 21, 1864 aged 11 mos 25 ds

[Children of Prosper and Mary Royer [HEM 11]

Infant son of S. & G. Sallars born Apr. 3, 1866 [HEM 10]

Row 4

{John Davied died Feb. 24, 1888 aged 74 years
{Anna wife of J. Davied died Dec. 28, 1900

aged 75 y 11 m 3 d [HEM 27]

[Nicholas Erman died March 1, 1881, aged 76 yrs 10 mo & 4 ds
 [Catharine wife of Nicholas Erman died July 29, 1887 aged 87 yrs 7 mo & 17 ds [HEM 26]
 Margaret wife of Mathice Factor died May 14, 1864 aged 67 yrs & 2 ms [HEM 25]
 Lany dau of Joseph & Lany Factor died Apl. 25, 1862 age 10 m 2 d [HEM 24]
 Mary M. dau of F. & M. Strasser died Oct. 21, 1860 aged 1 year 11 mo & 3 d's [HEM 23]
 Augusta S. d/o Lewis & Susannah Beiber died Feb. 10, 1861 aged 6————— [Mencer reading; barely legible in 2006]
 Samuel B. son of George & Anna Factor died Aug. 30, 18(67?) aged 11 m 21 d [HEM 16; Mencer has 1863; illegible in 2006]
 Martin son of Lewis and C. Factor died May 27, 1857 aged 14 days [HEM 17]
 Samuel E. son of L. & C. Factor died Sept. 6, 1858 aged 5 mo 23 d [HEM 18]

Row 5

LAUVRAY: Francis 1849 - 1917
 Mary Frances 1864 - 1938 [HEM 29]
 Jacob Dole 1830 - 1916 [HEM 28 and Mencer; not found in 2006]
 Catherine Dole 1830 - 1885 [2006 reading only]
 Magdalene Nicolas wife of Joseph Salrin died Feb. 29, 1876 in the 63 year of her age [HEM 30]
 Francoise Humber wife of Peter Ferry died Feb. 1, 1865 aged 93 yrs [HEM 22]
 John son of Henry & Felcsu Gordary died Mar. 18, 1864 aged 11 mo & 8 ds [HEM 21]
 Peter Ferry died Feb. 10, 1864 aged 92 y [HEM 20]
 Joseph Charret died June 11, 1859 in the 46 yr of his age [HEM 19]

Row 6

[Melanie wife of Francis Lauvray died Dec. 18, 1882 aged 35 y 4 m 15 d
 [Francis son of M. & F. Lauvray died Sept. 8,

1883 aged 8 mo & 27 d [HEM 42]
 {Three infants died July 31, 1882 aged 1 day
 {Bertha A. died Dec. 16, 1881 aged 11 yrs 5 mo 19 ds
 {daus of John and M. J. Berton [HEM 41]
 Hamilton J. son of John and M. J. Berton died Feb. 8, 1872 aged 1 m [HEM 40]
 {Stephen Berton died Jan. 1, 1892 aged 87 yrs 2 mo [HEM 35]
 {Anne Vexo wife of Stephen Berton died Nov. 20, 1871 aged 69 yrs 8 mo 11 ds
 [See slightly different age given on her separate headstone in row 7.]
 J. Edmon fils de F. Beugueke(?) et de M. Berton mort le 15 Sept. agee de 5 mois et 12 gours 1868 [HEM 39; the earlier readings have Beugucho and Beugueho, which may well be closer to correct; the baptismal records at 1871 have what looks like Beuguste]

L'Enfant de E. Beugrebo et de M. Berton ne et mort le 20 Avril 1865 [HEM 38; the earlier readings have Beugucho and Beugueho]
 John E. Bieber born Mar. 8, 1865 died Apr. 17, 1865 [HEM 37]
 Celestine son of John & Barbara Nicolas died Sept. 14, 1864 aged 5 y 9 d [HEM 36]
 Ann Guiot wife of John Davied died Jan. 12, 1877 aged 90 ys 10 mo & 25 ds [HEM 34]
 Anne Davied Aug 16, 1820 - Feb. 11, 1861 Femme de C. Hennequin [HEM 33]
 Margaret dau of Michael & Mary Wagner died May 6, 1862 aged 10 y 9 m 11 d [HEM 32]
 Katherina ehe frau von Bernhard Bright gestorben den 20ten December, 1867 in 66ten Jahre ihres Alters [HEM 31]
 Bernhart Brecht died Mar. 12, 1861 in 68th year [Mencer; found broken in 2006]

Row 7

{Sons of John and M. J. Berton:
 {Jesse O. died Dec. 1, 1889 aged 16 y 10 m 1 day
 {Charles G. died March 28, 1886 aged 1 yr 1 mo 10 ds [HEM 43]

Ann Vexo epouse d Etienne Berton morte le 20
 Nov 1 ans 1871 agee de 69 ans 3 mo 11
 gours. Priet Dieu pour son ame.
 [John son of John & M. Guenther died June
 28, 1868 aged 1 m 28 d
 [Magdalene wife of John Guenther died June
 5, 1868 aged 27 y 4 m 18 d [HEM 45]
 Mary Jane wife of Matthew Duprey died Dec.
 20, 1867 aged 95 y [HEM 46]
 {Mary E. dau of John & M. Guenther Mar. 20,
 1864 - Apr. 29, 1864
 {Mary A. dau of John & M. Guenther born
 April 28, 1866 died Aug. 1, 1866 [HEM 47]
 Mary C. dau of H. & C. Bogue died Mar. 24,
 1861 aged 6 y 5 m 11 d [HEM 48] or 5 m
 14 d [Mencer] [not found in 2006]
 Rinehart son of Joseph and Veronika Collet
 died March 29, 1861 aged 12 d [HEM 49]
 or Mar. 28 [Mencer] [not found in 2006]

Row 8

Catharine dau of John and E. Phillips died Oct.

10, 1863 aged 1 y 5 m [HEM 50]

Row 9

[In loving memory of
 [Peter Russell Bonenberger 1976
 [Thomas Charles Bonenberger 1978
 [Deborah Helen Bonenberger 1978
 [Emily Frances Bonenberger 1981
 [Alice Marie Spang 1978
 [Thomas Patrick Spang 1979
 {George Shue died Jan. 23, 1883 aged 76 yrs 4
 mo
 {Elizabeth wife of George Shue died Jan. 15,
 1883 aged 66 yrs 9 mo & 5 days [HEM 53]
 Thehace wife of Anthony Wimmer died Jan.
 11, 1870 aged 68 y 1 m 1 d [HEM 52] or
 Theresa, age 68 y 4 m 1 d [Mencer] [Illeg-
 ible in 2006]
 Barbara wife of Wendle Henerick died Jan. 20,
 1863 aged 22 y 7 m [HEM 51] or 23 y
 [Mencer] [found but difficult to read in
 2006]

Burials at Wills Creek St. Nicholas Cemetery

Recorded at St. George Church, Coshocton and St. Ann Church, Dresden

All of the following were recorded at St. George
 Church, except that of Basil Salrin in 1916, which
 was recorded at St. Ann.

1870, Jan. 13, Theresa Wimmer, age 69

1872, July 1, Frederick Prince, about 70 years
 old, died yesterday by an accident

1874, July 27, Joseph Boyer, about 30 years
 old, died on the 25th

1877, January 13, Ann Davier, age 91 years,
 died yesterday

1877, December 22, Andrew Salrin, about 70
 years old

1879, May 10, Mary Schmueser, wife of
 Joseph Salrin, about 25 years old, died
 yesterday

1879, July 29, Barbara Salrin, daughter of
 Andrew and Martha Johanna, age 4 years

1881, March 3, Nicholas Herman, born April

27, 1804, died March 1

1882, Sept. 21, Widow Schmueser, born
 February, 1819, died yesterday

1882, Nov. 9, Dominic Royer, died the 7th

1883, Jan. 17, Elizabeth Schuhe, wife of
 George, 66 years old, died the 15th

1883, Jan. 24, George Schuhe, died the 22nd,
 76 years old

1884, Sept. 9, Henry Bogue, age 78 years

1885, Oct. 22, Caroline Dole, wife of James,
 died yesterday, age 54 years

1887, July 30, the widow of Nicholas Ermam,
 died yesterday, age 85 years

1888, Feb. 24-26, John Davier, in the 64th year
 of his age

1888, Mar. 15-17, Martin Royer, age 76 years

1892, Jan. 1-4, Stephan Berton, age 88 years

1895, Jan. 20-24, Clara Royer, age 23 years

1900, Dec. 31, Mrs. Anna David, age 86,

interment Old Cemetery Wills Creek
1916, Feb. 19-22, Basil Salrin of Wills Creek
was buried at Our Lady of Lourdes, “on lot
adjoining the chapel” or “on Royer Chapel
lot *apud* Wills Creek”
1916, Nov. 25, Jacob Dole, age 76, interment
in Franklin Cemetery
1936, May 20, Mrs. Frances Hiser (Louvray),
died May 20, buried at St. Nicholas Chapel
May 23rd. Anth. J. Domm

Abstracts from the *Catholic Telegraph*

(Continued, from Vol. XXXII, No. 9)

October 6, 1855

[From the Daily Chillicothe Metropolis.]

Address

*Of the Members of the St. Mary's Congregation,
Chillicothe, O., to their late Pastor, Rev. Michael
Forde, on the occasion of presenting him with a
complete set of Philosophical Apparatus, for the
use of his College.*

...admiration of the many exalted qualities of
mind and heart that have distinguished you in
your pastoral relations with us. ...For the four
years that you have been in our midst,... We take
this occasion to testify our extreme regret that
your withdrawal from the care of St. Mary's

congregation to a sphere of usefulness more
congenial to your tastes and feelings....

Signed Michael Davis, Augustine
Worthington, James Boulger, Patrick Fay,
Samuel Allen, Bartholomew Gorham, John P.
Kilroy, “and 120 others.”

Father Forde's reply also is printed.

October 27, 1855

Died October 18, 1855, of pulmonary disease,
at St. Peter's College, Chillicothe, Ohio, James
H. O'Connor, (brother of Rev. J. O'Connor,) aged
about thirty-three years. The deceased was a
teacher by profession, and was well versed in
that difficult science. But he was more. He was
a Catholic teacher, and practised most faithfully
all he taught, so that his example was the great
lesson of his life....

DIED, October 7th, at her residence, in Pleasant
Township, Perry county, Ohio, Mrs. CECILIA
BENNETT, in the 68th year of her age, relict of
the late Robert Bennett. She was the mother of
a large family, who now mourn the loss of a
fond parent. *May her soul rest in peace.*

(To be continued)