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Leatherwood St. Patrick's, as it appeared in the Spring of 1992

ST. PATRICK'S MISSION
OLD WASHINGTON AND LEATHERWOOD, GUERNSEY COUNTY
1846-1930

(Concluded, from Vol. XIX, No. 3)

The first part of this article told the history of St. Patrick Church in Old Washington, which was the work of a community of Irish immigrants. These were largely from the county of Donegal, including the Lawn, Gallagher, Carr, Gildea, Harkins (27), and Timmony families. Within fifteen years of its construction, the church was in sorry physical condition and its removal was ordered by Archbishop Purcell. It was moved to "Leatherwood" and, in contrast with its first incarnation, its reincarnation and maintenance for another seventy years was the work of one family, that of James or "Long Jimmy" Gallagher.

James or Long Jimmy Gallagher and his wife Ann (Carr) were living in Wills Township, Guernsey County, as early as 1820. The couple's children, all born in Ohio, were Susan; Margaret (1822-1855), wife of Dr. George W. Gildea; Ann, who married Dr. Gildea some time after Margaret's death; James F.; John B.; Catherine; and Mary Jane (1830-1849).

It was in 1843 that James and his family moved south to the Leatherwood Valley. On June 3 of that year, James Gallagher and Hance Weaver purchased from the heirs of the late Reason Hammon 250 acres on the south side of the Leatherwood creek. (28) This is one mile west of the northeast corner of Richland Township and adjoined on the north to the village of New Gottengen. It is traversed today by Raven Road (T-473) and Gildea Road (T-741) and can be reached by turning south from State Route 265, 3.5 miles east of Lore City. Gallagher and Weaver (who, despite his German name, was born in Ireland) divided the land in 1854, with Gallagher taking the eastern 117 acres. (29)

No better descriptions of Long Jimmy Gallagher survive than those written at the time of his death in 1859. On October 4, 1859 Father John Brummer, at Miltonsburg, wrote to the Archbishop that Father Jacquet had told him "of the death of dear Mr. Gallagher of Leatherwood, the old man James, with whom you stopped in your visits. One saint less on earth & in those poor missions for which he has done more than all the priests that have been there. He faithfully served in spite of everything. I wish I was in his place now or may be one day near him." (30) In the Cincinnati Telegraph of October 8, 1859 appeared the following, written by Father Jacquet. "You will learn with sorrow that Mr. James Gallagher, sen., of Leatherwood, died this day a week, and was buried here, last Sunday. He died from the effects of a cut made by accident on his left leg. He was a very worthy man, and a true Christian. He frequently spent two, or three, hours a day in prayer, attended Mass regularly at Washington, five miles distant, on Sundays, and received Holy Communion every month. His house was the home of the priest, and was like a church, where the Catholics of the neighborhood attended to their Christian duties. It was also open to the orphan, the poor, and the afflicted free from all charges. Many will miss him, I the most. Although he settled here early, when there was no church, he raised an exemplary family, in the profession and practice of the true Catholic faith. He received the last Sacraments and answered the prayers with great devotion, two days before his death." "We [this is Archbishop Purcell, editorializing] had occasion for many years, and especially last December, to see with our own eyes the truth of what the Rev. Pastor relates of the piety and charity of our deceased friend." The Archbishop then offered condolences to the family and asked prayers for the deceased.

At the time of James Gallagher's death, St. Patrick's church still stood on the hill in Old Washington. However, it was rapidly decaying. In a letter of March, 1861, a resident of Washington informed her son that Father Jacquet would be there for the last time on Low Sunday and the Archbishop had ordered the church to be taken down and rebuilt on Leatherwood Creek, near the railroad. A letter written shortly after that said that the plaster was falling down and the roof would probably fall in by summer if it were not pulled down. How the building, only about fifteen years old, came to be in such sad condition apparently was not reported. (31)

The last record of any sacrament conferred at St. Patrick's in Washington was dated April 7, 1861, which indeed was Low Sunday that year. Father Jacquet baptized three infants that day. The church was closed, but nothing was done with it for some years, possibly because of the distractions of the war then being waged.

The story has been printed in later times that St. Patrick's was damaged during the raid of the famous Confederate General John Hunt Morgan. Morgan's men came into Washington from the south on Friday, July 24, 1863. According to the account of St. Patrick's published in the Cambridge Daily Jeffersonian (32), "Lore City historian, Paul Black, says he was told by his father that Rebel soldiers hid in the church during Morgan's Raid in July 1863. According to his account, the Union general, James Shackelford, dug in on the hill at the site of Old Washington Cemetery and shelled the church with 'four pounders.'" The cemetery is on the hill on the south edge of the town, south-east of the hill on which the church sat and some one thousand feet distant.

It has not been possible to verify this account and contemporary descriptions of the raid seem to make such a shelling doubtful. None of the accounts mention such a shelling. The official Record says that the Third Kentucky Cavalry drove in Morgan's pickets and by a flanking movement drove Morgan's force out of the town, killing and wounding several. (33) Another account states that the Union forces that faced Morgan at Washington numbered 1,000 cavalry and that after leaving Washington, near Winchester Colonel Wallace and a few troops and one piece of artillery finally joined General Shackelford in the pursuit. (34) It would seem that no claim by Father Jacquet or Bishop Purcell or anyone else for compensation for any damage to the church building. (35)

St. Patrick's member Thomas Ragan, who lived at Campbell's Station, is mentioned in one history, in connection with the raid: "Thomas Regan, section foreman of the Central Ohio (Baltimore and Ohio) Railroad, sent his son east through the woods to flag a westbound passenger train that was carrying \$50,000 in specie. The elder Regan ran west along the railroad until he found a handcar by means of which he reached Cambridge with the news." (36)

At the end of the war, the church was still there and Father Jacquet was trying to sell it, hoping to realize \$1,000 from the property. (37) It was sold, and for that price, to William M. McCurdy on Feb. 20, 1866. (38) What happened next is clear, although the financial arrangements are not. The church building was obtained from the new owner by Long Jimmy Gallagher's family and was moved to his former farm on Leatherwood Creek.

The church building is said to have been purchased by Doctor Gildea, Long Jimmy's son-in-law, for \$1,000 and the timbers taken to its second site and rebuilt. Three local carpenters, aided by Father Jacquet, built the new St. Patrick's in 1867. Father Jacquet was said to have been as adept with a broad axe as the carpenters. The Irish railroaders helped after work. The original altars from the Old Washington church were placed in the new building. (39) The three altars, confessional, and pews were of native walnut, things of beauty even in 1963.

Dr. Gildea in most accounts is given credit for donating the new site for the church, but it was Long Jimmy's son, James Gallagher, who donated the

property, which was part of the late Long Jimmy's farm. The deed to Archbishop Purcell from James F. and Lydia Gallagher was dated April 6, 1868 and the price was the legal minimum of \$1. (40) The lot was six rods deep on the south side of the Central Ohio Railroad and eleven rods south along the county road and contained about a half acre. By that time, the church had already been reconstructed. The first Mass was offered in the rebuilt church on Sunday, September 29, 1867 and on that day a son of James and Lydia Gallagher was baptized. (41)

St. Patrick's continued to prosper in its new location. In 1868 Fr. Jacquet reported 100 Catholics at the mission.(42) He and his immediate successors visited Leatherwood on the second Sunday of each month. (43)

The Diocese's new bishop, John A. Watterson, visited St. Patrick's on 1880, Saturday, December 11,1880, through the earnest desire of the people of the mission. "On that morning and for some time previously children from most of the out-missions of Fr. Heery, had assembled in preparation and anxiously awaited the coming of the Bishop, together with many of their parents from a distance and a respectable representation of the people of the congregation... In due time the train came and the Bishop was escorted to the church in a carriage which was in waiting for him at the station. High Mass was sung, at the close of which an appropriate address was made to the children and to all present by the Bishop explaining the nature and effects of the Sacraments as well as their institution..." Thirty children and two women were then confirmed, and the Bishop addressed the children again. "The glad expression of welcome which was manifest in the countenances of every one present, was reciprocated by the Bishop who not only expressed it in his looks, but also in acts and words complimenting the people on their neat little church and feeling satisfied at all he saw." (44)

That event, perhaps, was the high-water mark of the mission. In 1887, Father Montag, the pastor at Batesville (formerly old Beaver) reported 10 families at St. Patrick's, Gibson's, 22 at Cambridge, and 12 at Trail Run. The average family size for his entire mission was just over five persons, so the population at St. Patrick's was only about half of that reported in 1868.

Further records of St. Patrick's are sadly lacking. The pastor at Batesville made no annual reports to Bishop Watterson, or at least none are extant, for the 1890s. In 1905, Father J. H. Wagner, pastor of the new parish at Cambridge, reported Gibson Station and Pleasant City as missions, but gave no details about them. Similar reports were sent in for the next years, into the mid-1920s. The reports of the Cambridge pastor from the years 1926 to 1928 made no mention of the mission. These were the years, described in Dr. Lorle Porter's article on the Slavic Catholics of Guernsey County, the era of the coal mines and immigrant laborers, the many controversies their presence and ethnic and language differences brought, and the devastation brought to them by the great strikes of the 1920s. (45) The original Irish families of St. Patrick's moved away, one by one, until in 1929 Father Crock at Cambridge reported to Bishop Hartley, "only one family remains at Gibson. They go 4 miles to Lore City every Sunday." The family consisted of five persons, including one girl in public school. Lore City's report, submitted by Rev. S. Z. Szadzinski reported only four English-speaking members -- apparently the family from Leatherwood or Gibsons. The rest of Lore City's Catholics were mostly Slavic, with a few Poles and Hungarians.

A similar report was filed in 1930 and this was the last mention of the mission. According to the article published in 1963, the last Mass was offered at St. Patrick's in 1930. After the church closed, the walnut altars were loaned to the Ursuline Convent at Old Washington. When the convent closed, sometime after 1963, they were moved to Sts. Peter and Paul church in Lore City, where they were still in use in 1982. (46) The old walnut pews also were moved to the convent. (47)

The last family of St. Patrick's was probably that of Ernest Gildea, son of John F., son of Doctor and Margaret (Gallagher) Gildea. In 1920 the Doctor's children George, Ruth, and John were still farming there; John had a large family. Ernest continued to farm there as the old families left, buying up the lots of New Gottengen as they were sold and consolidating them into a farm. Some of his family still live in Cambridge.

The Gildeas cared for the church after it was closed. The late Marie Gildea even had extensive repair done on it after a beam broke and collapse of the whole building threatened. (48) In 1963 efforts were being made to restore the church and maintain it as a memorial to the pioneers of the faith in Guernsey County. Little was accomplished, however, and by 1992 the church was only a battered shell, as shown in the photograph. It is scheduled to be razed this summer, exactly 150 years after its cornerstone was first laid on the hill in Old Washington. It served its purpose, a house of God where the eternal sacrifice of His Son was made present to the small community of Catholics, His love was preached, His morality taught. It is passing away, as must all things of this world, but the living Church it helped to preserve and perpetuate carries on, in many vital parishes in the dioceses of Columbus and Steubenville.

NOTES

- 27) Barney Harkins has been added to the list of immigrants from County Donegal, thanks to the efforts of Katie and Lydia Schlegel in helping to locate his tombstone in Old Washington cemetery: "Barney Harkins, born in the County Donegal, Ireland in the year 1793 [or 5?] died Aug. 9, 1870".
- 28) Guernsey County Deed Record Q/415
- 29) Guernsey County Deed Record 2/474
- 30) University of Notre Dame Archives. The Telegraph notice of James's death was taken by the author of the History of Mt. St. Mary's of the West and erroneously applied to John Gallagher of the Beaver parish, father of Rt. Rev. Nicholas Gallagher. It does not appear that the two Gallagher families were connected, except in remote Irish history.
- 31) This letter and another are mentioned in Marlllys Victor's story of St. Patrick's that appeared in The Daily Jeffersonian, Dec. 2, 1982 and in Elizabeth Keppner's article in the Bulletin, Vol. I/32 and 49. These apparently were in possession of Marie Gildea. Her niece, Marguerite Gildea Ruff of Newark, believes that they were destroyed when Marie's house was gutted by fire some years ago.
- 32) Cambridge Daily Jeffersonian, Dec. 22, 1982, page 5
- 33) The War of the Rebellion...Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. 23, part 1, page 642
- 34) The Guernsey Times 1863, quoted in Morgan, Morgan, the Raider, and Morgan's Terrible Men, by F. A. Morgan, Home Towner Printing, Quaker City, 1984
- 35) Report of the Commissioners of Morgan Raid Claims...Columbus, Richard Nevins, 1865. Edward Lawn claimed \$43.61 for 3 kip skins, 13 calf skins, and 3 bushels of corn taken by the raiders.

- 36) Wolfe's Stories of Guernsey County; Cambridge, 1943; page 306
- 37) 1865, May 5, Jacquet to Purcell, courtesy of University of Notre Dame Archives
- 38) Guernsey County Deed Record 12/169
- 39) Victor, The Daily Jeffersonian, Dec. 2, 1982
- 40) Guernsey County Deed Record 13/588
- 41) Baptismal register of Temperanceville St. Mary, courtesy of Rev. Charles Mascolino
- 42) Archives, Diocese of Columbus
- 43) Archives, Diocese of Columbus, 1872 report; in 1874 Fr. Heery of Beaver listed Leatherwood and Cambridge as missions, but gave no statistics.
- 44) Catholic Columbian, Dec. 23, 1880, courtesy of the Catholic Times
- 45) "The Slavic Catholics of Guernsey and Noble Counties" by Lorle Porter, Ph.D., in the Bulletin, Vol. XVII (1992)
- 46) The Daily Jeffersonian, Dec. 2, 1982
- 47) "First Mass Celebrated in Guernsey County in 1827; Old Washington Site of Initial Catholic Church Structure" by Rev. Fr. Donal O'Carroll and Paul R. Black, clipping from unidentified Cambridge newspaper dated June 18, 1963.
- 48) Marillys Victor, The Daily Jeffersonian, Dec. 2, 1982; the information was obtained from Marguerite Gildea Ruff or her aunt, Marie Gildea.

TOMBSTONES AT LEATHERWOOD ST. PATRICK'S

(Read in 1992, with thanks to Msgr. George Schlegel for his assistance.)

Rows are read from south to north, beginning in the front of the lot.

Row 1:

GILDEA (Mother) Mary Gildea, born [blank], died Jan. 28, 1899

James Gildea, 1861-1941

NOLAN (father) John, 1838-1898

(son) Emmitt L., 1892-1902

Regina Nolan, 1887-1890

(mother) + Catharine Laughman, 1820-1906

Dennis Laughman, died Jan. 1, 1898, aged 32Ys, 3ms. Eternal rest grant to him

0 Lord, and let perpetual light shine on him. May his soul rest in peace.

Row 2:

William Brislen, born Oct. 19, 1841, died July 22, 1902

Mary wife of William Brislen, born Jan. 1, 1846, died Aug. 11, 1908

Mary, daughter of William and Mary Brislen, died Aug. 8, 1895, aged 16y 7m 27d

Our good boy John, son of William and Mary Brislen, died Mar. 25, 1891, aged 20y 11m.

John Laughman, born in County Tipperary [sic], Ireland, June 24, 1808, died

July 20, 1894, aged 87 years.

Timothy, son of J & R O'Conner died Sept. 11, 1890 aged 20y 8m 2d

James O'Conner died June 28, 1895, aged 60 years

Roena O'Conner died Jan. 22, 1892, aged 47 years

Rose, wife of Patrick Kennedy, died May 4, 1898, aged 58 years

Winifred daughter of Nicholas and Brilby?? Monaghan, born Dec. 27, 1889, died Mar. 12, 1894. May her soul rest in peace.

Row 3:

Anna, daughter of [Daniel] and Mary Gildea, died April 4, 1890, aged 30y 10m

(Mother) Mary G., wife of J. Delong, born Feb. 8, 1854, died Feb. 24, 1892

Row 4 (north end):

John Quinn, died May 2, 1876, aged 55(?) years.

Row 5:

Ellen Kerrigan, 1836-1892 (mother) May her soul rest in peace.

Roger Kerrigan, 1819-1884 (father) May his soul rest in peace.

Dennis, son of Patrick and Mary Finton, died Oct. 28, 1884, aged 11y 10m 15d

Mary Cooley Flynn, 1860-1884

Patrick?? Gallagher, died [1874], aged 9 years

Susanna + wife of Patrick Kennedy, died Aug. 7, 1872, aged 34y

Rows 6-8, south of the mausoleum:

Rose Klingenberg, wife of E. A. Gildea, 1901+1954

Ernest A. Gildea, 1901+1972

Ruthmary James 1913-1941 Mary Virginia

Mary Kennedy, wife of John Nolan, 1850-1939

Mary Pie', wife of John Gildea, 1866-1925

Helen Regina, daughter of John and Mary Pie' Gildea, 1891-1971

CREAMER (wife) Margaret G., 1898-1978

D.D.S. Dr. David G., 1890-1974 (World War marker)

Joseph R. Delong, died Apr. 26, 1874, aged 13? years

Sabrina Sebek, 2-19-71, stillborn daughter of Vincent R. and Rosemary Gildea
Sebek

Trisha Gene Sebek, daughter of R&D Sebek, Sept. 4, 1977-June 25, 1978

WAGGONER Kenneth Mark, son of Kenneth & Sandra, Oct. 1, 1960-Nov. 21, 1978

Mausoleum:

Dr. G. W. Gildea. In your charity pray for us. 1855. [1885?]

North from the front of the Mausoleum:

+ Infant daughter of Dr. G. W. & A. E. Gildea, born Nov. 1, 1864

Ann, wife of James Gallagher, native of County Donegal, Ireland, died Jan. 3,
1876, in the 91 year of her age. R.I.P.

Ann Gallagher, 1785-1876 [new marker for same grave]

+ John O'Donnell, 1827-1899 (father)

+ Mary O'Donnell, 1828-1898 (mother)

+ Mary E. O'Donnell, 1857-1871 (sister)

North and northeast of the mausoleum is an area containing many more recent graves, some with temporary markers and some with no markers at all, indicated only by depressions in the soil:

---- Buehler, 18-- - 1966

George Mestousis, 1886-1965

Julia Nagy, 1885-1965

Verna Woleski, 1926-1965

John McGraw, 1895-1964

William E. Lissy, May 17, 1887-May 9, 1964

Ollie Russell, 1876-1964

Anna Miller, 1897-1965

Mary Rocklage, 1899-1964

E. Margaret Connor and Nola R. Goodpaster in 1963 published Pioneer Cemeteries of Guernsey County and at that time found a series of similar markers that are no longer extant. Mrs. Connor has given permission to publish these:

Joseph Forkas, 1879-1962
Patrick Murning, 1870-1962
Daniel Blavac, 1882-1962
Anna Mezzaros, 1903-1962
John English, 1878-1962
Charles Smith, 1889-1962
Louis Unstrul, 1929-1962
Kezih D. Hayle, 1894-1962
Charles Nemes, 1882-1961
? Hammon, 1874-1961
Mary Mokran, 1880-1961

Steve Alex, 1879-1961
Gaetano Montagna, 1882-1961
Alberta Payne, 1912-1961
Jane Sheedy, 1870-1961
Julia Sabe, 1866-1961
Jennie Kasiea, 1885-1961
Mary Tomacik, 1902-1961
Anna Beneph, 1893-1961
Kanst Bathic, 1879-1962
Eliza Marshall, 1896-1962
Marie Peck, 1883-1962

Many members of St. Patrick's were buried at other locations. Those at Beaver St. Dominic date to the period before Leatherwood was established:

Susannah Carr, died July 2, 1856, in her 70th year
Mary Elizabeth Carr, died Sept. 30, 1836, aged 1y 3m 8d
Patrick Carr [died May 18, 1856, aged about 75 years]

Margaret Gallagher, wife of Dr. G. W. Gildea, 1822-1855
Mary Jane, daughter of J. & A. Gallagher, died Sept. 22, 1849, aged 19y 3m
Margaret E., daughter of James and Susanna Gallagher, died July 6, 1865, aged 11y 28d

In memory of Ann Gallagher who departed this life August 30 AD 1844, aged 47 years

James Gallagher, died ----- [October, 1859. See page 52, above.]

Michael Gildea, native of County Donegal, Ireland, born Sept. 29, 1780, died June 4, 1865

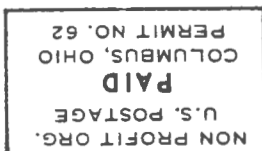
David Hannon, died May 7, 1855, aged 54 years
Martha A. wife of David Hannon, died May 25, 1862 in her 68th year

Anna Kerrigan, died July 16, 1867, aged 33 years

John W. Regan, who died in 1925, lies in the Lore City Catholic cemetery. The Heidelbachs are interred in a little cemetery on a knoll overlooking their defunct town of New Gottengen. Owen Flynn and some of his family are in the old Cambridge city cemetery. Notes on their graves can be found in Connor and Goodpaster's book, mentioned above.

(Sacramental records will be presented in future issues.)

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