



Barquilla del Santa Maria

BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society -
Diocese of Columbus

Volume X, Number 12

December 1985



IS THIS THE OLD SACRED HEART CHURCH, POMEROY ?

The above photograph of a sanctuary decked out for Christmas came to the Society from Holy Cross Church, where it had been left in the estate of Rev. Cornelius Schneider. There is no identification on the photograph but it was mounted by Fieger & Son of Pomeroy. Sacred Heart Church, built about 1850 and enlarged in 1865, was the scene of the labors of Rev. Joseph Jessing, described in the April Bulletin, and a photograph of the exterior appears on page 29. The old church was replaced in 1899. Father Schneider was appointed pastor of Pomeroy in 1914. The inscriptions behind the statues of Our Lady and St. Joseph are in German, but are only partially visible. The Society has many old, unidentified photographs which we intend to begin publishing as space permits, in hopes that readers may be able to help give names to the faces and places.

THE TOMBSTONE OF MARY McDONALD
FRONTIER PRIMITIVE OR EDUCATED CRYPTOGRAM ?

by Donald M. Schlegel

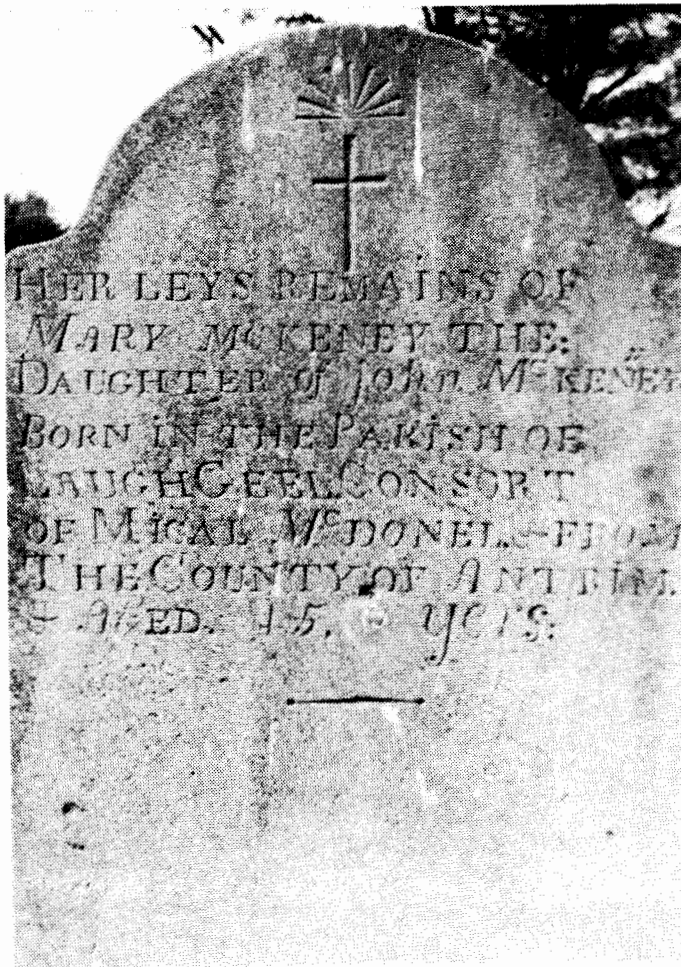
The tombstone of Mrs. Mary McDonald has the distinction of being one of the oldest, if not the very oldest, in the cemetery at St. Joseph Church near Somerset, Ohio. It stands behind the church in a row with the stones commemorating her husband Michael McDonald (ca 1766-1833), probable brother-in-law Robert McDonald (ca 1761-1835), and daughter Rosanna (ca 1796-1826). As described in an article several years ago, at least part of the family left Ireland and settled in Ohio by 1817, when Robert settled in Harrison County. (1) Michael McDonald settled in Perry County some time before September 16, 1819, on which date he purchased 320 acres in Jackson Township from the Federal government.

Mrs. McDonald's tombstone is unique in that it states her age at time of death (45 years) but does not give a date. Her oldest (or perhaps second oldest) child was Rosanna, born around 1796; her youngest was Ellen, born around 1814. Assuming that Mrs. McDonald's child-bearing years would have been from about eighteen to forty-five years, then her birth would have taken place between 1769 and 1778. The Federal census of 1820 includes Michael and his family in Jackson Township, but does not list for his household a female in the correct age category to have been Mary. It is likely, then, that she had died before the official census date of August 7, 1820.

The lettering of Mrs. McDonald's tombstone is neatly cut, but the primitive spelling of some of the words indicates an early date. There are five mistakes in the inscription: HER LEYS instead of the normal HERE LIE THE; MCKENEY in the second and third lines, corrected only in the third line by the addition of another N above the line; the misspelled MICAL; the reverse "4" in her age; YERS for YEARS in the last line. There is also the glaring omission of the date. Are these only the errors of a frontier stone-cutter, or could more be involved?

In a fascinating book entitled Riddles in History, published in 1974, Professor Cyrus H. Gordon of New York University, a trained cryptanalyst and philologist, traced the historical use of cryptographic inscriptions. (2) From the earliest ages, he explained, the educated elite not only understood the obvious meaning of the written word but also were the masters of riddles and cryptograms and were able to grasp the scribe's concealed, deeper meaning. Using examples, even from the Bible, he traced the transmission of this literary tradition from Mesopotamia to Canaan, to the Greeks and Romans, and through them to Christian Europe via the Church. His latest example was its use by a fourteenth-century Scandinavian Catholic priest.

Indications of hidden messages often included misspelled words, erratic line indentations, and the like. Some of the methods used to encode messages were anagrams (rearrangement of the letters), acrostics (use of the first or some other indicated letter of each line to spell out the message), substitution of letters (A for Z, B for Y, etc., for example), and use of letters to represent their ordinal number in the alphabet (A for 1, B for 2, etc.). The messages most often hidden within the plain text were the date,



the author's name, and a formula of his religious devotion. The enciphered dates were often repeated and were also confirmed by the encipherment, at other places within the inscriptions, of the arithmetic total of the numbers representing the date. Professor Gordon's work has been discredited by some but accepted by others.

Having read Professor Gordon's book and turning again to Mrs. McDonald's tombstone, one immediately begins to wonder: could the inscription be more than the simple effort of a frontier stone cutter? One interesting feature of the inscription is that most of the letters are block capitals, but a few are lower case and these, with two others, have a more flowing form. These are "of john" and "yers," in addition to the two upper-case A's of Antrim and Aged. The word which stands out in the inscription, because of its isolation, its spelling, its script, and the following colon, is "yers." Could these

letters, translated into the numbers 25-5-18-19, represent the date, 25 May, 1819? Intriguingly, these numbers add to 67, while a similar substitution of numbers for letters in the flowing, lower-case "of john" (15-6-10-15-8-14) totals 68, just one more. One of the three "one" symbols near "yers" could be intended to make up this difference; these are the two initial A's of Antrim and Aged and the difference between the five and the reversed four in the age. Perhaps the date should be 26 May or 25 June, 1819. The letters YSRE appear again in the first line, to the left of the point where the letters become smaller to fit under the cross.

Another intriguing facet is the two colons, which are entirely out of place; one is at the end of line 2, between "the" and "daughter" and the other is at the end of the inscription. If these were inserted to say "look here," they would most likely be indicating the letters KEN(N)EY in line 3 and RIM in line 7. These letters form an anagram for NERI MEY K(N). Now K plus N plus another 1 for the superscript totals 26; MEY could mean May; and May 26 since the year 1622 has been the feast of St. Philip Neri. Coincidence? Improbable? Or did Mary McDonald actually die on Wednesday May 26, 1819, the feast of St. Philip Neri?

Seeing the only line indentation as a clue, could the H of the first line followed by the indented Mary of the second line indicate "Hail Mary," the

expression of religious devotion of the inscriber ? The remaining spelling errors in the inscription might be explained as necessary for the encipherment of an acrostic. Some interesting possibilities have been noticed, but nothing clear enough to convince even this amateur. So it seems best to leave the question open: Is this inscription an illustration of the primitive work of a frontiersman, or is it a cryptogram, legacy of an ancient tradition ?

NOTES

- (1) Bulletin, Vol. III No. 5, pp 223-225; also V No. 11, pp 464-465.
- (2) Gordon, Cyrus H., Riddles in History; New York, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1974.

ST. JOSEPH OLD CEMETERY NEAR SOMERSET, PERRY COUNTY TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTIONS

Transcribed by the late Rev. H. E. Mattingly

(Continued from Vol. X, Number 11)

John son of J. & M. STALTER died Feb. 13, 1869 aged 22 yrs. 2 ms. & 29 ds.

In memory of John son of John & Mary STALTER who died Jan. 1, 1841, aged 5 mo. & 19 days.

Caroline L. wife of Arthur TAGGART died Feb. 16, 1851. aged 26 years. Also her infant son Albert aged 6 weeks. Requiescat in pace.

Francis, son of ---- STALTER, died -- 23, 1836 aged 8 yrs 3 M & 16 days.

In memory of David son of Henry & Nancy BROOKHART who died Aug. 20, 1828 aged 3 yrs 7ms 5ds.

John SUITER, died Nov. --, 1847 aged 49 yrs & 7 mo & 18 ds. May he rest in peace.

Mary wife of Jacob KINTZ died May 27, 1848 aged 60 yrs 7 mo 26 ds.

In memory of Jacob KINTZ who departed this life Sept. 21, 1833 aged 44 yrs & 21 ds.

In memory of Jacob son of Jacob & Mary KINTZ who departed this life Oct. 17, 1837 aged 21 yrs. 10 ms 13 ds.

In memory of Mary Magdalene consort of Brice WELCH who departed this life Aug. 3, 1841 aged 29 yrs 11 mos 3 ds.

Mary Ann wife of N. BURGOON, died Aug. 16, 1856 aged 30 y 8 m 9 d.

Owen MARTIN departed this life Aug. 7, 1848 aged 82 yrs. He was a native of County Tyrone, Ireland.

In memory of James MARTIN who departed this life Oct. 11, 1836. Aged 35 yrs. May his soul rest in peace. Amen.

In memory of Adam GORDON who departed this life Dec. 11, 1836 Aged 26 yrs. 3 mos & 14 days.

Elizabeth wife of Charles M. KINTZ died Feb. 8, 1857 aged 38 yrs 8 mo & 14 d.

Noah BURGOON died Nov. 22, 1865 aged 28 yrs.

In memory of Magrgaret daughter of Daniel & Eleanor CLARK. Who departed this life Jan. 6, 1837 Aged 2 yrs 2 mo & 17 ds.

In memory of James GORDON who departed this life July 15, 1840 Aged 46 yrs 3 ms 25 ds.

Maria consort of Basil GORDON died Oct. 25, 1846 aged 26 yrs & 2 ds.

Hariet wife of Henry BOHRER died Dec. 2, 1873 aged 21 yrs. 11 mo 2 ds.

James McANALLY died Sept. 21, 1852 Aged 59 yrs & 9 mo.

Catharine wife of Matthew CASSELLY born in the parish of Ballemachorch (?) Townland of Dindrum died Sept. 22, 1857.

Catharine, daughter of --- ---- died Mar. 29, 1876 aged 9 m & 2 d.

Catharine daughter of J. & M. Metzger, died Oct. 18, 1871 aged 21 Y 5 M 18 D.

Sarah J. daughter of Henry & Mary McNALLY, died April 7, 1861 aged 18 yrs.

Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Ann McNALLY born in County Tyrone, Ireland Oct. 21, 1802, died Apr. 21, 1876.

[Henry McNALLY], died Nov. 29, 1852 aged 62 yrs. A native of Juglayallen (?), County Antrim, Ireland.

In your charity pray for the soul of Rose Ann consort of Patrick McALEER (?), a native of thr parish of Longfield, County Tyrone, Ireland, who died July 15, 1859 aged 28 yrs. R.I.P.

James McNALLY died July 11, 1880 aged 48 yrs 6 mos 9 dys.

In memory of Elias son of James & Sarah GORDON who departed this life Nov. 21, 1841 aged 1 yr 10 m 1 d.

In memory of Mary daughter of James & Sarah GORDON who departed this life Dec. 3, 1840 aged 18 yrs 8 m 15 d.

In memory of Jarms son of John & Catharine O'DONNAL who departed this life Nov. 9, 1839 aged 11 yrs.

---- son of James L. & C. FINK, died Sept. 2, 1853 aged 2 y. 5 M. 25 D.

Ann wife of James HASKETT died Oct. 3, 1847 aged ----.

Nancy Ann consort of John FLOWERS departed this life Dec. 10, 184- aged 31 yrs 11 m 25 d.

Isaac J. son of Joshua & Regina REYNOLDS, died Oct. 31, 1848 aged 21 mos.

In memory of Lenferth FISCHER died Sept. 24, 1843 aged 67 yrs 11 m 5 d.

In memory of Michael METZGER who departed this life Oct. 23, 1843 aged 60 Y 4 M 23 D. May he rest in peace.

Appalonia consort of Michael METZGER died Oct. 10, 1844 aged 53 yr 9 mo. 14 d. May she rest in peace.

In memory of Francis BURGOON who departed this life Sept. 20, 1845 aged 80 yrs 10 m 20 d.

Mary Anne daughter of Basil & Mary GORDON died Apr. 8 AD 1845, aged 2 yrs 4 m 18 d.

James son of Basil & Mary GORDON died May 19, 1845 aged 2 days.

Eleanor wife of Thomas BREEN died May 15, 1850 in the 23rd year of her age.

To the memory of James O'KAIN son of A. J. & Mary O'KAIN died 1830.

Elizabeth C. daughter of John & Rachel FLANEGON died Nov. 7, 1848 aged 11 m. 24 d.

----- CASSELY, died May 29, 1852 aged 58 y.

Levi BURGOON died Nov. 16, 1856 in the 70th year of his age.

Ann E. wife of Levi BURGOON died Mar. 26, 1871 aged 76 y. 7 m. 1 d.

Vincent son of Levi & Ann E. BURGOON died Oct. 10, 1841 aged 13 yrs 7 m & 10 d.

----- who departed this life Oct. 14, 1849 in the 69th year of his age. He was a native of Ireland born in the County of Armagh.

Bridget, wife of S.M. DIKE, died Nov. 19, 1852 aged 60 yrs.

Simon FLOWERS died Jan. 17, 1867 aged 96 yrs 9 mos.

Mary wife of Thomas HORAHAN died Jan. 15, 1868 aged 61 years.

Fanny daughter of Thomas & Mary HORAHAN died Apr. 8, 1868 aged 21 y 6 m 22 d.

In memory of James son of ---- & Catharine McKOWN He departed this life Jan. --, 1840 aged 25 years. - m & 11 d. A native of County Armaugh parish of Forkhill, Ireland.

Her leys remains of Mary McKenney the daughter of John McKenney born in the parish of Laughgeel, Consort of Mical McDONEL & from the County of Antrim & Aged 45 yrs.

Beneath this silent bed lieth the body of Michael McDONALD departed this life Dec. 14, 1833 aged 67 years. May he rest in peace Amen

Gloria in Coeolicis De. Here lies the body of Rosanna McDONNELL who departed this life in the year of Our Lord 1826: daughter of Michal McDonnell native of Ireland born in the parish of Loughgeel, the County of Antrim & aged 30 years.

Robert McDONALD, died Mar. 31, 1835 aged 73 years, a native of County Antrim, Ireland. R.I.P.

Margaret A. PIRRONG wife of N. DUMOLD, died Aug. 5, 1848 aged 28 yr. 10 mo. 8 d. D. J. Pirrong, Canton.

In memory of Elcy consort of Patrick HAUGHRAN who departed this life Dec. 4, 1836 aged 25 yrs. 2 mos.

In memory of Patrick SHEERAN who departed this life Nov. 22, AD 1846 aged 65 yrs. A native of County Louth, Ireland.

Mary wife of Patrick SHEARN Died Jan. 30, 1852 aged 80 years.

Father & Mother.

Edward SLEVIN died Mar. 14, 1870 aged 85 years.

Bridget wife of E. SLEVIN d. Nov. 26, 1852 aged 58 years.

Bridget A. daughter of Edward T. & Ellen SLEVIN died June 12, 1873 aged 13 years.

In memory of Michael CODY who died Feb. --, 1812 [1842? A daughter was born in 1825.] aged 4- years. A native of Co. Kilkenny, Ireland.

In memory of Mary consort of Michael CODY who departed this life -- -- 1839, aged 58 years. A native of the County of Kilkenny, Ireland.

Martin son of J.W. & Catharine CORDELL died Dec. 17, 1847 aged 3y 1m 23d.

In memory of James MARTIN who departed this life -- -- 1840 aged 59 years -- -- A native of Co. Armaugh, Ireland.

Ellen SHEARON born FLYNN, died Oct. 4, 1859, aged --

Elizabeth wife of Nicholas DUMOLT, died Jan. 28, 1851 aged 28 yrs. 2 m.

Patrick MURRAY died Aug. 1830 aged 53 yrs.

Mary wife of Patrick MURRAY died Feb. 1827 aged 49 yrs.

In memory of John C. son of Anthony & Catharine SUTTER who died Aug. 13, 1842 aged 1 yr 4 M 7 D.

Catherine wife of John CAIN born Dec. 4, 1808 in Tyrone County Ireland, died June 3, 1880.

John CAIN died Mar. 18, 1872 aged 74 yrs 1 M 9 D.

In memory of Anastasia daughter of Sylvester H. & Margaret WALKER who died Sept. 18, 1843 aged 2 yrs 9 M 17 D.

Apelles H. son of Sylvester H. & Margaret WALKER who died Sept. 17, 1843 aged 10 M 16 D.

Elcy Gertrude daughter of S. H. & Margared WALKER died Sept. 18, 1847 aged 1 yr. 2 M. 18 D.

Pius G. son of S. H. & Margaret WALKER, died Mar. 28, 1850 aged 2 Yr. 1 M. & 2 D.

In memory of little Mary L. daughter of John & Susan CROSSING, died Oct. 10, 1853 aged 3 Y 9 M.

In memory of Sarah consort of Thomas McKEOWN departed this life Jan. 20, 1835 Aged 56 yrs 10 M 3 D.

In memory of Mary Ann consort of Patrick SLEVIN who departed this life Feb. 6, 1849 aged. 56 yrs. 7 M 22 D.

GREEN

Elizabeth wife of Joshua Green, died Jan. 11, 1836 aged 38 Y 6 M 23 D.

Joshua Green died Sept. 15, 1871 aged. 76 Y 2 M.

In memory of Elizabeth consort of Joshua GREEN who departed this life Jan. 11, 1863 aged 38 yrs 6 M & 23 D.

Sacred to the memory of Thomas H. son of Joshua & Elizabeth GREEN who died Apr. 18, 1835 aged 18 years 8 M 16 D.

Sarah wife of Hugh GARVEY died Aug. 2, 1851 aged 32 Yrs. A native of Ireland, Co. Armaugh.

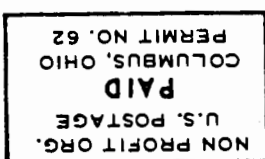
Elizabeth consort of Anthony LETCHICK died Sept. 1, AD 1845 aged 60 yrs.

James HANLON died Oct. 23, 1851 aged 76 years.

Margaret wife of Frederick KINTZ died Sept. 16, 1862 aged 30 Y, 3 M, 11 D.

[To be concluded]

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