



Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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November 2: All Souls

November, 1997

The Columbus Catholic Cemetery: Testimony from the 1890s

The Columbus Catholic Cemetery was the original Catholic cemetery of Columbus, located on the southeast corner of Washington and Mt. Vernon Avenues. It later was the campus of Aquinas College High School and now is the center of Columbus State Community College. The property measured 260 feet on the Washington Avenue side and 495.5 feet on Mt. Vernon Avenue and contained about 3 1/4 acres. It was opened about 1846 and was the only Catholic Cemetery for Columbus until Mt. Calvary was opened in 1867. The history and records of this burial place have been published at various times through the years in the *Bulletin* (December, 1977; November, 1987; and November 1990) and in *The Columbus Catholic Cemetery: History and Records, 1846-1874* by Donald M. Schlegel (1983).

Recently, a new source of data on this graveyard was noticed in the diocesan archives that presents a much more complete picture of the cemetery than we had heretofore. Two archive boxes are full of materials relating to a legal suit engaged in by bishops Watterson, Moeller, and Hartley against Franklin County regarding the taxation of Church property. In 1896, Franklin County Auditor William H. Halliday, without warning, levied large real estate taxes and penalties for the years 1891 through 1896 against the Church's rectories, offices, school lots, and the old cemetery. Bishop Watterson filed the suit in Common Pleas Court against Halliday and

Ossian E. D. Barron, Franklin County Treasurer, stating that "said defendants intend and threaten to enforce the collection of said amounts so unlawfully assessed on said real estate as aforesaid, and to sell said real estate at tax sale or otherwise to cause to be distrained said property therefor, to the great and irreparable injury to the plaintiff", Bishop Watterson. The court case eventually was won by the Diocese, but our present interest is in the old graveyard.

When the case came to trial in the summer of 1898, to prove that the properties were used for religious, educational, and charitable purposes, the witnesses called in favor of Bishop Watterson, in addition to himself, were the pastors of the city parishes (Fathers Alphonse Leyden, Thomas J. O'Reilly, Dennis A. Clarke, John B. Eis, Francis A. Gaffney, Clement Rudolph Rhode, and Francis X. Specht) along with the following laymen:

- ♦ Martin Hinterscheid;
- ♦ Daniel McAllister, age 62 in July, living on E. Main Street near the Blind Asylum, who had lived in Columbus since early in the spring of 1862;
- ♦ Michael Lacy, 215 Lexington Avenue, age 76, living in Columbus since 1853;
- ♦ Thomas Cullen, age 46 on the 29th of next June [1899], residing at 255 S. Scioto Street, born in Ireland and left there when he was two years old;
- ♦ Michael Fahey, aged 69, residence 553 Boone

Street, living in Columbus since May of 1850;

- ♦ Patrick M. Kelly, age 72, arrived in Columbus in the spring of 1848;
- ♦ Joseph M. Howard, age 28, residence 227 Lexington Ave., an attorney and associate of Luke Byrne, Bishop Watterson's legal counsel, who had lived in Columbus most of his life; and
- ♦ Daniel Sullivan, age about 71 years, residence 1213 Hunter Street, who came to Columbus in the fall of 1850 or 1851.

One witness for the defense, who testified regarding the graveyard, was John J. Pugh, age 35, city librarian, who lived near the graveyard at 208 N. Washington Ave.

The following summary has been prepared from the testimonies, with the name of witness and page of transcript in parentheses.

Physical Arrangement

Fence, Road, and Lots

In front of the graveyard on Washington Avenue was a picket fence about five feet or six feet high, and on the north side, on Mt. Vernon Avenue, there was a simple post and board fence. The entrance was on Washington Avenue and had a large gate. (McAllister, 398; Pugh, 497) From the gate, a road ran through the center, "a kind of a road way where there were no graves." About the center part of the lot, there was a large cross. (Hinterschied, 377, 387; Lacy, 408; McAllister, 394)

The lot was divided along the road, the Germans having the south side and the English the north (Hinterschied, 387; Sullivan, 455), similar to the later division of Mt. Calvary Cemetery.

There was one portion, towards the west end, perhaps two thirds of the lot, that appeared to be sold off in lots and indicated that that was where the better classes, or the classes more able to pay,

were buried and had purchased their lots. And on the eastern end of the ground, perhaps one third of the ground as nearly as Mr. McAllister could recollect, seemed to be for the poorer classes and that is where the little tombstones and the wooden crosses were erected, and many graves without any crosses at all or without any tombstones at all. (McAllister, 394; supported by Hinterschied, 387; and Lacy, 409) This also is similar to the layout of Mt. Calvary Cemetery, where the single graves are behind (west of) the family lots.

North of the lots on the Irish side, there apparently were additional single grave spaces. At the time of the cholera epidemic in 1852, at least some of the victims were buried on the north side, along Mt. Vernon Avenue. (Kelly, 442)

Martin Hinterschied's lot was a little east of the center, on the south side, right on the road that ran through the center. (Hinterschied, 377, 387) Mr. Hinterschied owned lot 109. This proves that the "probable" layout of the graveyard presented in the November, 1990 *Bulletin* is not correct. The block of lots numbered 109 through 158, shown in that *Bulletin* in the southwest corner of the graveyard, in reality stretched back, eastward, from lot 103 along the central road, as shown in the diagram presented here. The lots must have been very small, measuring only ten feet or less from east to west.

Daniel McAllister's brother was buried in the northern part about 30 feet from the fence and about midway from east to west, pretty close to the cross in the center. Michael Lacy's two children were buried in the second row of lots from Mt. Vernon Ave., in the middle from east to west.

The Vault

The old vault, for the reception of bodies before burial... is situated a little in the northeast corner I

think, or about the center of the northwest quarter of the grave yard. (Howard, 451-452)

The small house

There was a small frame building on the south western part of the premises. Bishop Rosecrans had Michael Fahey build the house built in order to place a man in it to take care of the graveyard. For many years it was occupied by poor families. Sometimes it was given to them to occupy with the promise on their part that they would keep the weeds on the grave yard out and at other times small rental was paid, though nothing was ever exacted from any of them. It was not occupied all the time; often times it was vacant for a year or more at a time. By the 1890s it was not very good repair. (Fahey, 435; Watterson, 84)

The house measured sixteen feet, four inches front, and 32 feet, three inches deep, with a little shanty kitchen at the back about 12 feet deep. The area around the house originally was enclosed by a fence. By 1898 the fence had been torn down and burned up, but it had been recently replaced by the current occupant. About 32 1/2 by 65 feet and four inches was originally enclosed by this fence. (Watterson, 87,88)

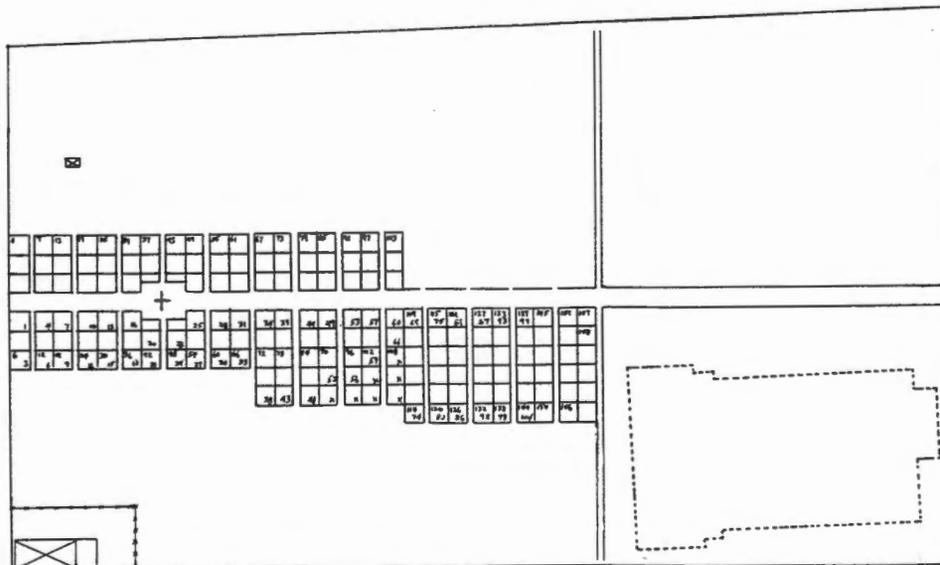
Cholera graves

At the time of the cholera epidemic of 1852 Mr. Kelly was working for the contractor building the B & O railroad at Taylortown (Taylor's station) and helped haul twenty bodies into town in wagons to be buried in the graveyard. A man named Gillespie helped him. They were buried on the north side, all along wherever the grave digger dug the graves, on the Johnstown road from Washington Avenue to whatever length it was along the Johnstown road.

There were 100 to 200 working on the railroad there, most of them Irish but some German Catholics. After about two months, they all became scared and quit, scattered and went away. (Kelly, 440-442)

Number of Graves

In the 1850s and 1860s, The expensive grave stones were few. I would suppose that of the more respectable tombstones there must have been a couple of hundred I should say and then a very great many small wooden crosses put in the ground that would only last for a few years. Of these there were not less than 300. (McAllister, 393-394) Michael Fahey thought there must have been 600 to 700 tombstones there at one



time. (Fahey, 437) There were "May be seven or eight hundred" tombstones and little wooden crosses, that Mr. Hinterschied saw there during his last visit. (Hinterschied, 377)

As of 1867 it was pretty well filled on the northern side and probably two thirds of the way to the southern side, "and then in the eastern portion, that portion that was set apart for the individual graves and the poorer classes, when I used to go through there in 1854, 55 and 56, 57 and on up to 1860 I noticed that there were a great many graves there and I remember in my thoughts and feeling in reference to the cemetery it looked very much like a potato patch to me in the eastern portion where the poorer graves were. I should say that there were 150 graves there without even a single cross or anything to mark them." When you say it looked like a potato patch, you say that because of the ridges made by the graves? "Yes sir." (McAllister, 397)

As time went on, the number of surviving markers declined. The number of tombstones and crosses would perhaps be 250 or along there, when it ceased to be used as a burial place...200 or 250 tombstones, perhaps 100 or 150 little crosses. (Lacy, 409)

There never was any offer or intention on Bishop Watterson's part to sell any lots there for burial purposes and to the best of his knowledge there were no interments made since he had become bishop in 1880. (Watterson, 87)

During the hearing, Daniel McAllister visited and counted 73 tombstones standing or "laying" down and a good many others in pieces. (McAllister, 397)

Mr. Howard also visited the graveyard and counted 144 bases of monuments in their original positions, both with or without the monuments still in place. There were but eight monumental stones still standing in their original positions,

though some were chipped or cracked; five of these were a little east of the center and three on the north side near the vault. There were upwards of 200 remains of monuments. There were 30 or 35 graves where there was dirt thrown up on the sides, evidence of removals. (Howard, 448-451)

Condition of the Property

...Indeed the condition of the fences became such that we made complaints to the city authorities, because there was a large gate on Washington Avenue which used to swing on a half hinge and not infrequently people would be struck in passing along there. There were no electric lights at that time. Then after the gate was taken down the fence would break down in sections and sag down over the sidewalk and weeds and brush growing very thickly at the fence and at the curb line, making it a dangerous place for traffic. The cemetery itself became the rendezvous for all manner of toughs and tramps.

I can recollect the removal of bodies from the cemetery along between ten and fifteen years ago and some few since then when, in order to get near the enclosure and through human curiosity see what was going on, it was almost impossible to get near where the workmen were engaged on account of the tangled undergrowth and shrubbery which had been put out in former years and which had grown into a thick tangled undergrowth.

The condition became so bad along about eight or nine years ago that complaints were made. I recollect distinctly when Mr. Pagels was chief of police [1893 to 1895], there was a house in the graveyard which was occupied by a scavenger, and it was the scene of nightly carousals, of the beer-keg order, and it was a stench in the nostrils of the people along Washington Avenue, especially ever since the barracks have been located out there, one of the principal reasons

why we thought Washington Avenue would make a good residence street, was on that account. The number of people going to and from the Garrison, especially in the summer time and in nice weather was hundreds every evening. But very frequently there were disturbances in the graveyard, shootings and several times arrests were made from the graveyard.

And finally it became so bad that I went to Mr. Pagels myself. ...and he asked me what I thought would be a solution of the trouble and I said that I thought at the next disturbance, the best thing would be to load up a couple of the patrol wagons and surround the place and catch the hoard that was in there. It grew so bad that the women were afraid to go to that corner to take the car down town. Afterwards the place was surrounded and from 15 to 20 people, including beer kegs and other paraphernalia were captured there. The disturbance seemed to originate very largely in the frame house, or at least a good portion of the time it did. After that -- I do not know whether Mr. Pagels brought it about or whether they consulted with the Bishop or not but at any rate he gave orders that the graveyard should be cleared of underbrush. ...and the underbrush was cleared out of the graveyard effectively and the trees were trimmed something like eight or ten feet from the ground so that the lights on Mt. Vernon Avenue and on Washington Avenue and the small gas lights on the extension of east Naghten Street would shine through or at least give people a chance to see through to ascertain whether it was safe to go in and at the same time it stopped all the carousels of these boys and men who were in the habit of congregating there.

There are some tombstones standing there now. I do not know of any of them but what are broken more or less and it is not an infrequent sight to see the boys having target practice there at the few remaining tombstones. Apparently no one stops them... (Pugh, 497-499)

Removals

Many of those who had bodies of relatives interred in the old grave yard bought lots in Calvary Cemetery and transferred their dead at their own expense; and many of the removals have been done at the expense of the Calvary Cemetery. That is graves in the Calvary cemetery may have been given in lieu of the old graves in the old grave yard. (Watterson, 135)

Since 1877, Father Rhode knew of only about one dozen bodies or fewer that had been removed. (Rhode, 321) When Daniel McAllister removed his brother, he saw about 25 graves in the central and western parts of the grave yard that had been dug up for removals. Some were removed ten to fifteen years ago, and a few since then; the last body that was removed which Mr. Pugh knew anything about was something like two years ago, in the north-west corner. (Pugh, 497,499)

The additional lots

Several city lots adjoining the graveyard on the south were purchased by Bishop Watterson in the 1880s. Not an inch of these ever was leased or used with a view to profit. These lots were bought in order to prevent nuisances from being built on the edge of the old grave yard property. "The old grave yard may perhaps one of these days, from what I know, be abandoned as a grave yard, and in that contingency in the dim and uncertain future the possession of these lots might enable the Bishop to better handle the old grave yard tract." (Watterson, 88,89-90)

Proposals to sell the grave yard

Bishop Watterson stated, "I have no power or right to sell the premises while they continue to be used as a grave yard." He also said that there was no present or definite intention to abandon the grave yard property for its uses as a grave

yard. At another point, asked whether, if he could sell it at an advantageous price would he not sell it, he replied that he would dispose of it and be very glad to do it, at any time. "I could not do it however, without first removing all the bodies from the grounds and thus cause the premises to cease to be used as a grave yard or burying ground." A little later, he reiterated, "I have been willing [to sell the land]; I am not only willing but I am quite anxious to sell it; but I know that I can not sell it as long as it is used as a grave yard and it is so used now." (Watterson, 87, 90, 134, 140)

As far as the possibility of further removals, such was discounted by a couple of the witnesses. Mr. Hinterschied stated that he could not remove his family because he was not certain whether he could get the right bodies. He could not identify them because they were there too long already and the marker stones were all destroyed and so he was not sure exactly where they lay. (Hinterschied, 390) Likewise, Mr. Sullivan denied the possibility; his and other's people were never removed because he knew there was not a man, woman or child that was able or willing to do it; they were not able. (Sullivan, 458)

This hearing apparently is the source of the story, told to the editor about 1965, that a promise had been made that the property never would be sold outside the Church. Those who relayed this story were Mrs. Catherine Besch, a granddaughter of Michael Lacy, and Ray and Mary Sheridan, grand-nephew and -niece of Mrs. Lacy. Mr. Lacy apparently had taken Bishop Watterson's statements that he could not sell the property while graves remained there, together with the impossibility of locating and removing all the graves, as indicating that it never would be sold, and passed this along to his family.

Interments

The testimony mentions a "register" for the

cemetery, though none is known to have existed except for a sexton's register of the early 1860s that was copied into the records at St. Patrick parish. "Does your register of burials show their [the Urys'] interment there? It does. Does the register show the removal of these bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Ury? It does not." (Watterson, 144-145)

Records from other sources have been published with the previous historical sketches of this cemetery, as attempts to replace the missing register. As a supplement to those records, we publish here the names of those buried in the cemetery as remembered by Bishop Watterson's witnesses.

per Bishop Watterson:

- Peter Ury and Johanna Ury

per Martin Hinterschied (pp377, 383):

- his father, on his lot a little east of the center, January 24, 1848
- his father-in-law in 1863 or 1864
- his own two children in 1854 and 1856
- his father's brother-in-law about 1851 (none of the above were ever removed)
- Mrs. Theado, Martin Hinterschied's brother-in-law's mother, who was removed.

per Daniel McAllister (pp 392,395):

- Daniel McAllister's brother, 1854. Daniel removed him about ten years ago

per Mr. Lacy (pp 107, 410, 411, 414):

- Nicholas Gorman, 1854 or 1855
- Mrs. Burns
- Peter Ury
- John Merkle, on the south side
- James Sheridan, on the north side
- two children of Michael Lacy, still remaining there, close to Mt. Vernon Ave., one in 1858 and the other in 1862 or 1863
- Michael Lacy's brother-in-law and his wife, who were removed, about 10 or 12 years ago

(These probably were Patrick and Mary Ann (Cantwell) Burns; see the *Bulletin*, February, 1992, page 106.)

- Michael Lacy's brother-in-law Henry Burns's child, buried in the same lot as Lacy's children, about 35 years ago, and never removed

per Thomas Cullen (pp 416, 417):

- Thomas Cullen's four or five siblings, the last one 26 or 27 years ago, in the southeastern part. The oldest of them was aged about 1 yr 8 mos. None of them ever were removed.

per Michael Fahey (pp 422, 431):

- Michael Fahey's four children (died February 8, 1852; August 7, 1863; a still-birth, no date recorded; August 12, 1866)
- Michael Fahey's two sisters; one of the sisters died here March, 1850, aged 17 or 18; the other was an infant. One sister was buried a little north of the center; one child almost to the front of the graveyard near Washington Ave.

Funerals there attended by Michael Fahey:

- one of the Handiboe family
- a brother of Daniel McAllister
- Mr. Burgess [Borgess], brother of Father Burgess, while Father Burgess was here.

per Mr. Kelly (p 442):

- Thomas Colgan, brother-in-law of Patrick M. Kelly, removed more than 15 years ago.
- Dennis Daly, brother-in-law of Patrick M. Kelly, buried about 30 years ago, not removed. He was father of Jack Daly; has a son and two daughters living.

Funerals attended by Daniel Sullivan:

- Dennis O'Brien and a man named Moran, who were killed on the Piqua Railroad; Dennis was buried in the southeast part.
- two or three children of Michael Keating,
- Mrs. Murphy
- Two wives of Patrick Keating

- Mr. Shay, for whom Sullivan paid the funeral expenses, buried about the middle of the graveyard.

- Hannah Mahony
- Timothy Mahony
- a child named Moore
- two children of Mrs. King
- a man named Penders
- some children of Mr. Mahony from the quarries
- Daniel Sullivan, a drayman
- John Hapston
- John Clifford
- the son of John Clifford
- Walter Welsh
- Dennis Moriarty, who was found drowned at the river, buried in the east part

[This piece will conclude next month with three readings of the tombstones remaining ca 1898.]



Abstracts from *The Catholic Telegraph*

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

September 23, 1843

For the Catholic Telegraph

Somerset, 14th Sept., 1843

OBITUARY

Mr. Connell Rogers, departed this life on the 9th inst., in Zanesville, being in the 78th year of his age. He was, during his long residence in Zanesville, highly respected by all classes, having resided there about 23 years. A man upright in his Christian and social deportment he was one of the first Catholics, with a large family, that formed with a few others the flock collected there at that period, and was always both edifying in the regular practice of his Religious duties, as well as in his zeal as an active member in the formation of a congregation, when the name of Catholic was scarcely known only to be scorned and derided by the bigot and ignorant. No none

could have a stronger faith in the truths of Religion, the maintenance of which, he was always prepared to sustain, by word and example... [He had been sick for a year.]
...May his soul rest in peace. Y.

[Advertisement for D. Weiler, optical, philosophical, mathematical, and surgical instrument maker... corner of Third & Walnut, Cincinnati. Dominic Weiler later was the teacher at the Catholic school in Columbus.]

December 9, 1843

Information Wanted

Of Mathew Cook who lived with his brother on Long Island in 1838. Any information will be thankfully received by his brother Patrick Cook, care of Rev. J. McCaffrey, Marietta, O.

January 13, 1844

In Columbus, there were within the last year, 63 Baptisms; 400 Easter Communion; 18 First Communion; 12 Marriages. The number of Catholics in the town and in the country near the town is estimated at from 750 to 800. The church, St. Remigius', is much too small to accommodate the Catholics and persons of other denominations who seem anxious to attend. Marion and Delaware, where are from one to two hundred Catholics, are attended from Columbus. Pastor is Rev. William Schonat, who occasionally exchanges with Rev. J. M. Young, Pastor of St. Mary's, Lancaster. A new school house has been lately erected on the church lot in Columbus.

In St. Nicholas', German church, Zanesville, the German portion of St. James' Zanesville, and

Jacobsport, there were 44 Baptisms; 6 marriages; 7 deaths (5 children and 2 adults) and 200 Easter communicants. The number of Catholics (German) is rated - we think, too low - at 600. The Pastor is Rev. Joseph Gallinger. We know not the name of the Patron Saint of the church of Jacobsport.

January 27, 1844

[Additional statistics:

Rev. Jas. McCaffrey has a total of 79 or 80 families; 190 communicants:

Marietta, St. Mary, 51 families.

Meigs Creek. St. James, 12 families.

Beverly, 3 families.

McConellsville, 7 families.

Mr. Taggart's Station, 6 families.

"But five years ago, and within fifteen miles of Marietta, fifteen Catholic families could not be found."

Rev. Mr. Lamy, 300 families:

Danville, St. Luke's, 90.

Mohican, St. Joseph's and Pine Run, Richland County, 75.

Mt. Vernon, St. Vincent of Paul, about 20.

Newark, St. Francis of Sales, 110.]

Died at Zanesville on the 12th inst., Mrs. Rebecca (Culbertson) Dunne, in her twenty-third year, leaving an infant daughter of three months. This estimable lady and her sister, the late Mrs. Henry Dugan, were converts to the Catholic faith. Orphans from childhood these amiable sisters found a happy home among devoted friends of the Church, on earth....

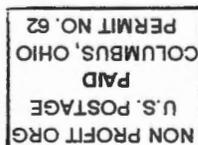
(To be continued)

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