



# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society -  
Diocese of Columbus

Vol. XXXIII, No. 8

Aug. 28: St. Augustine of Hippo

August, 2008

## St. Augustine Parish, New Straitsville, Coal Township, Perry County 1871-1990

The town of New Straitsville was laid out in 1870 by the New Straitsville Mining Company. A branch line from the Hocking Valley Railroad at Logan connected the new town to the markets for its coal. The first coal mines opened in January of 1872 and within the year five were operating and two more were being developed.<sup>1</sup> The area's coal mines attracted many laborers from around the country as well as natives of the British Isles, causing a rapid increase in the area's population. The majority of the miners were said to have been Irish Catholics. Unlike many mining towns, in New Straitsville many of the miners owned their own houses. The new town's exclusive dependence on coal meant that the demise of mining would spell the economic downfall of the town.

### Early days of the Parish

In 1871 Rev. Emmanuel Thienpont of Logan was sent by Bishop Rosecrans to organize a mission in New Straitsville and attend it once a month. Prior to that the Catholics in Coal Township had received the ministrations of the Dominican Fathers from near Somerset. According to the 1918 diocesan history, ground was broken for the church in 1871 and the church was dedicated by Bishop Rosecrans the next year, prior to the recording of the property deeds.

The church lots, numbers 216 and 215 of the plat of New Straitsville, were transferred by

the Straitsville Mining Company to Bishop Rosecrans.<sup>2</sup> The first deed was not dated but was notarized March 19, 1873. The second was dated Dec. 16, 1873. They state that the bishop paid \$200 for each lot. However, it was said that Judge Philemon Ewing of Lancaster donated the lots. He may have donated the money for the lots, or he may have donated them through the mining company, of which he was a principal officer. The lots are on the north side of Ewing Street, between



Martin and Newark streets.

Logan's *Hocking Sentinel* of September 26, 1872 reported on a fair at New Straitsville. The purpose and sponsor of the fair were not mentioned, but it may well have been intended to raise funds to complete St. Augustine's Church, based on some of the participants and the prizes listed in the article. Rev. Louis DeCailly of Lancaster won the Grand Lottery, the prize being — a baby crib! Among the other drawings, Pat Stewart won a large picture of Bishop Rosecrans, Pat Fahy won a picture of Father DeCailly, and Father Thienpont won a large crucifix.

The brick church still was not quite complete on December 23, 1872. A letter of that date sent from New Straitsville to the Boston *Pilot* noted that the church had been started in 1871 and was "now about completed." It measured 40 by 60 feet and was "in the handsomest spot and highest elevation in the town—the Cross above us all."<sup>3</sup>

If, as the 1918 history states, the church was dedicated in 1872, it would have been as part of Bishop Rosecrans' visit to Logan, where he administered confirmation at St. John Church on Sunday, October 13.<sup>4</sup>

In September, 1873 the first resident pastor arrived, Rev. Joseph Laffan. He had a frame rectory built in 1874 on the west side of the property. It later was used as the convent. Father Laffan cared for the congregation of St. Peter's, the Old Stone Church northwest of Shawnee, as a mission, as did his successors down to 1880 when Shawnee received its own pastor.

### **Parish Development**

During its existence as a parish, for 82 years, St. Augustine had only six resident pastors:

- Rev. Joseph Laffan, Sept. 1873-April, 1875
- Rev. Bernard M. O'Boylan, 1875-Nov. 1877
- Rev. John Meara, Nov. 1877-early 1878
- Rev. Simon P. Weisinger, Feb. 27, 1878-Jan. 13, 1898
- Rev. J. J. Cahalan, Jan. 1898-July 1906
- Msgr. Henry J. Kellerman, July 1906-Jan. 1955

In 1882 the church was lengthened to about 100 feet and then would seat some 200 adults. At the same time a new brick rectory was built in front of the first one, to the west of and slightly forward from the church.

A parish school was opened in September, 1879, taught by the pastor, Father Weisinger. From 1880 to 1893 it was under the charge of Sisters of St. Joseph. A school building was erected in 1885, attached to the rear of the convent, that is, the original frame rectory. It was of frame construction. Sisters of Charity of Nazareth taught from 1893 until about 1903 when the school was closed. It later was reopened with lay teachers. In 1909 Sisters of St. Francis of Clinton, Iowa, took charge. In 1915 they were replaced by Ursulines from Louisville, who formed the staff until the closing of the school. By the 1920s a two-year high school course was offered by the Sisters.

Mt. Calvary Cemetery was purchased on July 26, 1883 from the Columbus & Hocking Coal & Iron Company.<sup>5</sup> It lies on east side of Dumold Street, about 0.4 miles north of Main St. and originally contained about 3 acres. On Saturday, July 11, 1891, Bishop Watterson arrived at the railroad depot and was met by the local Hibernian Knights, candidates for confirmation, and almost the entire parish. A procession accompanied him to the church, where he examined the children. They and five adults were confirmed after Mass the next morning. On Sunday afternoon the whole congregation assembled at the church and processed to the cemetery, where Bishop Watterson gave an address. He then blessed the grounds and the central monument, the large crucifix marking the grave of Father John Weisinger, brother of the pastor.<sup>6</sup> By 1922 all of the lots in this cemetery had been sold and adjoining land was sought for expansion. The Hocking Block Coal Company would not sell land, but did lease about an acre to the diocese for 99 years, effective on May 10, 1922. This extended the cemetery to the east by some 150 feet.<sup>7</sup>

In explanation of his long tenure, it was said that Father Kellerman had been “exiled” to New Straitsville by Bishop Hartley after a disagreement.<sup>8</sup> On October 2, 1946 the entire community honored Father Kellerman, when he was invested as a Domestic Prelate by Bishop Hettinger. Sixty-five priests and monsignori, with as many of the laity as could fit, filled the church for the happy occasion.<sup>9</sup> He celebrated the golden jubilee of his ordination in 1953. He died on January 25, 1955. No new resident pastor was assigned.

The church was improved in 1949 when the belfry was repaired and painted and the sanctuary was redecorated and the statues repainted. In 1950 interior renovations were undertaken and the side altars were changed to harmonize with the main altar. In 1966 the church interior was remodeled and repainted and a new heating system was installed.

### **Economic problems**

In New Straitsville’s early years the relationship among mine owners, operators, and laborers was “smooth,” presenting only minor problems. Labor organizations were formed only when the men and boys began to feel that the operators were taking advantage of them. In October, 1884 a breakdown in relations occurred, when the New Straitsville Coal Company declared that workers would be paid only 40 cents per ton instead of the former 60 cents. The laborers formed a single organization and decided to strike against the company. “Bitter feelings mounted; rumors, most of them untrue, naturally followed; shots were fired.” A group of men, said not to have belonged to any of the labor organizations, began a fire in the mine farthest from the town, and later four more. Attempts were immediately made to put the fires out, but they were not successful and the fires spread, ruining the mining industry in the area. At the height of the burning, smoke could be seen rising from hundreds of openings.

The ups and downs of the local economy are reflected in a report dated January 1, 1898, in

which Father Weisinger listed the parish receipts for the last twenty years:

1878	\$3,221	1888	\$3,838
1879	4,348	1889	4,280
1880	3,457	1890	2,440
1881	3,421	1891	2,229
1882	5,263	1892	2,605
1883	4,398	1893	1,894
1884	2,814	1894	1,218
1885	2,493	1895	2,198
1886	2,867	1896	2,395
1887	2,255	1897	1,850

A letter from Father Cahalan to Msgr. Francis X. Specht, then Administrator of the Diocese, lays out a few of the problems. Dated June 5, 1903, the letter was in answer to a diocesan circular concerning the schools and was the pastor’s attempt to show why it was “beyond the reach of all argument to attempt the opening of a Catholic school at New Straitsville.” Through the 1890s the town was declining but Bishop Watterson had said he would rather the church close than the parish school, and Father Weisinger managed to keep them both going. Father Weisinger left with back salary of \$2,000 due to him, besides spending some of his own money to keep the school alive. When Father Cahalan arrived in the middle of the Winter of 1898, the economy in the area was at a complete standstill and the men were out of work. Within a year, sixteen Catholic families had left the parish and their little frame cottages. It was questionable whether a pastor could even be supported. With Msgr. Specht’s consent, the school was suspended. “We have here 2 mines on fire, closed forever. An explosion in a 3rd one, renders it unsafe. A 4th mine, half flooded with water, which mine is the main stay of the town. This mine averaged 2 hours[?] a week all last Winter; it halves the labor since all are employed.” But he described the people as generous, and “largely generous in prosperity, and sacrificing even in pinching times.”





*St. Augustine Church during the investing of Father Kellerman as Domestic Prelate, 1946.*

In 1910 an economic boomlet began for the town when oil was discovered in the area, but the good times lasted less than a decade. From 1919 until 1933 many in the area prospered by making illegal whiskey in the wooded hills.<sup>10</sup>

The population decline is reflected in statistics in the two diocesan histories: in 1918 the parish had 530 English-speaking members and 30 Syrians. In 1943 there were only 250 members. School enrollment, including the high school, stood at 99 in 1927/28, dropped to 75 in 1935/36, and 53 in 1941/42.

### **Consolidations and Closings**

In 1942 the two-year high school course at St. Augustine School closed. In 1945 the school at St. Mary Parish in Shawnee closed and the children came to St. Augustine's. Even with the addition of Shawnee's Catholic children, however, enrollment at St. Augustine's only reached 75 in the early 1950s.

In February, 1955, the Mother Superior of the Ursuline Sisters informed Bishop Ready that her order would have to withdraw from St. Augustine's school. She had considered such a decision for some years, but it came to a head when she had no housekeeping sister to live with the two teaching sisters. She noted that it was a difficult decision and "The Sisters themselves feel it keenly, yet they are convinced that it was not possible to continue." Bishop Ready asked the Franciscan Sisters at Stella Niagara if they could send three teachers for a regional Catholic school at Shawnee, but they had no teachers available to send. The school closed in June, 1955 and that fall the children began attending the school at St. Bernard in Corning. The school building was razed in August, 1965.

Rev. Joseph Switalski was appointed assistant pastor at Shawnee, effective Feb. 5, 1955, with residence there; but his duty was to be administrator of St. Augustine Parish under the direction of Father Wellnitz.

Succeeding pastors were:

- Rev. James P. Hanley, from June of 1963, of Shawnee.
- Rev. Clarence Durbin, from June 16, 1966, of Shawnee.
- Rev. George J. Marzluf, June 10, 1969 to Aug. 1970. Father Marzluf was the last resident pastor at Shawnee for some years.
- Rev. Brice A. Metzger, 1971-1972 and
- Rev. William D. Huber, 1972-1973 both of New Lexington
- Revs. Mario Serraglio and Homer Blubaugh, 1974-1977; Father Serraglio was pastor at New Lexington and Father Blubaugh was assistant there.
- Rev. Richard H. Hoch was named pastor of Shawnee and New Straitsville effective June 23, 1977. He lived at Shawnee until his retirement in July, 1984.
- Rev. Richard F. Dodd of Junction City, was delegated to administer the New Straitsville and Shawnee parishes Sept. 5, 1984.

In 1986 St. Augustine Parish and St. Mary Parish in Shawnee were named part of the Perry County Consortium of Parishes, with priests living at New Lexington and Corning. The first pastor under this arrangement was Rev. Frank P. Lane, 1986-1988. Rev. Mark Ghiloni was associate pastor of the consortium beginning in 1987. In September of 1988 he was appointed Administrator Pro Tem of the consortium and continued through March, 1989. In 1990 he was appointed pastor at Crooksville and continued as associate in the consortium. Rev. John J. Dreese of New Lexington was pastor from 1989 until the closing of St. Augustine.

In August of 1988 it was announced that the parishes of New Straitsville and Shawnee would be merged and this was canonically effective on October 22. The new parish was called the Parish of the Community of St. Peter, in honor of the Old Stone Church of Monday Creek. Mass was offered in St. Augustine Church on Saturday evenings in October and November, but in December and January services were moved to Shawnee to avoid the problem of getting up the hill

in New Straitsville in the snow. It had been decided that the church that was in better condition should be used as the place of worship.

In 1989 a meeting was held by the parish community, including Fathers Ghiloni and Dodd and Sistes Mary Ann Creely, O.S.F., and Mary Margaret Fischer, S.N.D. de N. It was noted that the income of the two churches together barely met ordinary operating expenses of about \$20,000 and that to bring either one of the churches to a state of "good repair" would cost between \$75,000 and \$110,000. In November, 1989 Bishop James A. Griffin met with members of the Community, which at that time comprised only 188 members, to hear their concerns and discuss the future. Further discussions were held with the priests of the parish and with the Priests' Senate. It was noted that the front wall of St. Augustine Church was pulling away from the rest of the building.

On February 3, 1990, Bishop Griffin announced at Mass that the church would be closed. The final Mass was offered by him on Saturday, March 3, 1990. The church was razed that May. The Parish of the Community of St. Peter was canonically suppressed on January 30, 1992.

### **Religious Vocations from St. Augustine**

The glory of any parish is its religious vocations and many of these developed in the little parish of St. Augustine. We are aware of five priests and twenty-six religious sisters from the parish and would welcome receiving the names of any others.

### Priests

Rev. Msgr. Thomas P. Harrington was born and baptized in the parish in 1891. He was educated in the parish school, then attended Rensselaer College in Indiana and the American College in Rome. He was ordained in St. John Lateran in 1918. After his first Mass in St. Augustine Church, he was named chaplain of St. Vincent Orphanage, chancellor of the diocese, and



*Rev. Thomas Harrington (1891-1926)*

secretary to Bishop Hartley. In 1922 he was made pastor of the new mission of St. Margaret of Cortona and in 1925 was named a Domestic Prelate. He died on March 13, 1926 at St. Francis Hospital, after an attack of appendicitis. His death was a great loss to the diocese. He is buried in Mt. Calvary Cemetery at New Straitsville.

Rev. Patrick T. Quinlan was born in Hocking County in 1894 but his parents resided in New Straitsville and he was baptized at St. Augustine Church. Orphaned in 1899, he spent time at St. Vincent Orphanage in Columbus, then in Glouster and Athens, and later in Toledo. He attended the University of Notre Dame and in 1922 was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Hartford (Connecticut). After working for that diocese for 24 years he went to South Carolina, where he served as missionary in a rural parish at Kingstree, which had a tiny Catholic population in a large geographical area. He died in 1971 and is considered material for sainthood by the Bishop of Charleston.<sup>11</sup>

Rev. Msgr. Edward F. Healy was born in Columbus in 1917, but his mother's Friel family was from New Straitsville and he was raised there and received his elementary education at St. Augustine School. Father Kellerman, the only priest he really knew until 1931, apparently was his

inspiration to become a priest. He attended St. Charles Preparatory School and College and Mt. St. Mary's of the West. He was ordained in 1943. During his priestly career he served at many parishes in the diocese, was chaplain at St. Raphael's home and director of the Shrine Center for Renewal, wrote a weekly column for the *Catholic Times* for thirty-five years, and hosted a television program. He also wrote six books, before and after his 1987 retirement. He died on Sept. 5, 2006. For insights into his personality, as well as conditions in New Straitsville of old, one might read *Bridget's Rosary*, his 1998 book that explores the personalities of his grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

On May 28, 1967 the first Mass of brothers Donald and William Maroon was celebrated at St. Augustine, on the day after their ordinations. Both served in this diocese. Msgr. Bill Maroon is retired and lives in New Straitsville. Father Don Maroon currently is pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, Wellston.

Sisters of the Good Shepherd:

Sr. Mary Sebastian (Sarah Walsh)  
Sr. Mary of St. Leo (Catherine Cummings)

Holy Cross Sisters:

Sr. Gilgus (Elizabeth McIlhatton)  
Sr. Raina (Agnes McIlhatton)

Sisters of St. Joseph:

Sr. Veronica (Margaret Callahan)  
Sr. St. Charles (Rose Callahan)  
Sr. Eulalia (Bridget McCaffrey)  
Sr. Josepine (Sarah Stewart)  
Sr. Chrysostom (Ella Tipping)  
Sr. Ambrose (Elizabeth Padden)  
Sr. Gertrude (Jane Duffy)  
Sr. Felicitas (Mary Duffy)  
Sr. M. Margaret (Alice Welsh)  
Sr. Sebastian (Elizabeth McGrath)  
Sr. Eugene (Winnifred O'Donnell)  
Sr. Antonia (Julie Harrington)  
Sr. Immaculata (Mary Stewart)  
Sr. Leonie (Mary Haley)



Ursuline Sisters:

- Sr. Mary Jane (Agnes Callahan)
- Sr. Merici (Mary Burke)
- Sr. Moira (Clara Burke)
- Sr. Andrea (Patricia Callahan)
- Sr. M. Gemma (Elizabeth Hatem)
- Sr. Henry (Cecilia Hatem)
- Sr. Jovita (Louise Hatem)
- Sr. Vianney (Mary C. Callahan)

NOTES

- 1) *Hocking Sentinel*, Mar. 27, 1873
- 2) Perry Co. Deed Records 15/215 and 16/297
- 3) *Hocking Sentinel*, Mar. 27, 1873
- 4) Parish records of this era usually do not include confirmations. The *Hocking Sentinel* mentions this visit of Bishop Rosecrans in its issues of October 10 and 17, 1872, but does not mention a visit to New Straitsville. (The editor of the *Sentinel*, a fine newspaper for its era, with an extraordinary amount of local news, was Lewis H. Green, a Catholic and a graduate of St. Joseph's College near Somerset.) The New Lexington *Democratic Herald* of

August 9, 1872 mentions a visit of Bishop Rosecrans to Somerset and Junction City, but not New Straitsville.

- 5) The diocesan property book of the 1880s notes this deed as Record 29/541, but a diligent search of this volume and the general index produced no record.
- 6) Note in parish cemetery book; and *Catholic Columbian*, July 18, 1891
- 7) Letter Jan. 16, 1922, Chancery File, New Straitsville parish. Perry Co. Miscellaneous Lease Record 6/26.
- 8) Healey, *Bridget's Rosary*, pp 150-151
- 9) *Columbus Register*, Oct. 11, 1946
- 10) "The Underground Inferno in Ohio" *United Mine Workers Journal*, June 15, 1972, 25-26
- 11) See "Father Patrick Quinlan-the Apostle of Kingstree" by Jim McLaughlin, at [www.catholic-doc.org/miscellany/2001/1115quinlan.HTM](http://www.catholic-doc.org/miscellany/2001/1115quinlan.HTM). Mr. McLaughlin is working on a full-length biography of Father Quinlan and would like to have more information about his early years in Ohio.

**New Straitsville St. Augustine Parish Census, 1888**

This census, taken in January and February, 1888, is a convenient substitute for the missing federal census of 1890. Besides the names and ages and some relationships, the census also gives information as to whether each person had received his First Holy Communion and Confirmation. In the remarks column are names of places, apparently where the various families resided at later date, certainly before 1902 when a new census was recorded. Where legible, these have been listed at the end of each family.

- Francis George Miller 42
- Ann 43, parents
- William 18
- Jane 16

- Ann 14
- Gertrude 11
- Margaret 10
- James 7
- Elizabeth 6
- Catherine 4
- Simon 2
- Patrick Fahy 45
- Margaret 45, parents
- John 22
- Mary 20
- Bridget 18
- James 15
- Margaret 13
- Patrick 10
- Thomas 9
- Ellen 5
- Muirertach 2
- James Senell
- Mary 30, parents
- Catherine Powers 12
- David Senell 10
- Ann 7
- Edward 5
- Clara 1
- "Sand" —
- Edward Dougherty
- Mary 34, parents
- Patrick 15

Rose 13  
Maria 11  
Cecilia 8  
Catherine 4  
Edward 1 1/2

James Stewart 47, husband  
Mary Stewart 40, wife

Lawrence Short 72, husband  
Catherine Short 73, wife

John O'Brien  
Margaret 58, parents  
Margaret 27  
John

Bernard Dougherty  
Ann 26, parents  
Patrick 17  
Ellen 9 adopted  
"Shawnee"

Bernard McAloon 57  
Jane 54, parents  
John 27  
Bridget 25  
Patrick 19

Bernard 17  
Andrew 15  
Thomas 12  
Jane 9  
Mary Duffy 15

William Hughes 38, brother  
John 36, brother  
Alice 28, sister  
William Cunningham 45,  
uncle

James Hughes 34, husband  
Mary 26, wife  
"New Lexington"

Daniel Callaghan 63  
Rose 57, parents  
Daniel 21  
Catherine 25  
Rose 18  
Patrick 17

Patrick O'Connor  
Mary 43, parents  
Sylvester 19  
Emma 16  
William 14

Mary 12  
Elizabeth 10  
Ann Mary 8  
Louisa Ellen 6 mos.  
They send their children to the  
public school.  
"Chicago"

John Duffy 45  
Mary 51, parents  
Mary Ann 21  
John 20  
James 18  
Margaret 13  
Rose 11  
Ellen 10  
Peter 8

James Duffy 36  
Maria 35, parents  
James 16  
Ann 14  
Catherine 12  
Margaret 7  
Peter 4 1/2  
Francis 1

(To be continued)