

H I S T O R Y O F S T. P A T R I C K ' S C H U R C H .

Faystteville, Ohio. and the associated parishes of
Vera Cruz and St. Martins.

St. Patrick's Parish, Fayetteville, Ohio, comprises the greater portion of Perry township, Brown County, and all of Green and Sterling townships, in the same county, a small portion of the western part of Highland County, the northern part of Clinton and the eastern part of Clermont.

As early as 1817, we find authentic accounts of Catholic settlers in this region - among the most prominent being the Boyle and Bamber families. Holy Mass was offered occasionally in the houses of these pioneers and in the O'Connor school-house, by visiting missionaries, among whom were Father Hill, S. J. and Father Mullen.

In the year 1830, a log church was erected at St. Martins and Rev. Martin Kuendig, enduring all the hardships of the pioneers, ministered to the rapidly increasing body of Catholics. The first child baptized by Father Kuendig was Michael, son of John O'Connell, and the second, Helen, the daughter of Richard Holden. The writer has been informed by a son of this same Richard Holden that the first for whom the banns of Matrimony were published in the old Cathedral, Cincinnati, were Richard Holden and Agnes Bamber, and they were married by Bishop Fenwick, in a private residence, the home of the bride, in the southern part of the Fayetteville parish near the present village of Chasetown.

Father Kuendig labored in this vicinity for two years and was succeeded by Rev. James Reid. About this time members of the Bamber family

gave a tract of land for Church purposes, south and west of Chasetown. A log church was erected and a cemetery consecrated.

Father Reid remained in charge till 1835 and was followed by Rev. John O'Beirne. At this period the diocesan seminary was transferred from Cincinnati to Brown County, and we find the Fathers O'Mealy as professors and missionaries.

In the middle thirties of the last century the Catholic population had so increased that it became imperative that a larger church be provided. But where should it be built? There were two churches in the community - the one at St. Martins and the other on the Bamber property.

An old pioneer informed the writer that Bishop Purcell rode on horseback to inspect the Bamber land, and determine for himself, the site of the proposed new church. After mature consideration, the Bishop decided upon Fayetteville, a village about midway between the church at St. Martins and the log church on the Bamber land. One acre of ground was purchased and the new church begun in 1840. The Church was dedicated by Bishop Purcell, assisted by ten priests and the seminarians, October 3, 1841.

From 1841 to 1845 the church was attended by the priests residing at the Seminary, chiefly by Fathers Gacon and Cheymol. In the latter year (1845), the students were transferred to Cincinnati and Bishop Purcell gave the farm and buildings at St. Martins to the Ursuline Nuns. In the same year Rev. T. R. Butler was appointed pastor of the parish and took up his residence at Fayetteville, becoming the first resident pastor. He built rooms for a pastor's residence at the rear of, and joined to the church.

It seems that at this time the church at Fayetteville became the par-

ish church for all the Catholics of the community, except the French, who were attended by Father Gacon and Cheymol. We find this statement in the history of the Ursulines, "Fifty Years in the Brown County Convent": Corpus Christi, in the year 1848 was celebrated solemnly under the direction of Father Butler. We read: Extensive preparations had been made under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Butler to celebrate the festival of the Real Presence with all possible solemnity. Besides the small banners, there were three large ones, - the Infant Savior, the Immaculate Mother, the Holy Patron of St. Patrick's Church, with appropriate mottoes admirably designed and executed by Rev. Mr. Butler, and followed by a devout and silent multitude of at least ten or twelve hundred persons. The canopy itself being carried by four worthy Catholics of as many different nations - America, Ireland, Germany and France. Meanwhile the Fayetteville choir continued to sing most delightful hymns in honor of the "Present God". In this, and other accounts of the time, the Convent is always referred to as the "Convent of the Ursulines", Fayetteville, Brown Co. The people of St. Martins, however, never came in large numbers to Fayetteville. Then, as now, the faithful desired to attend Sunday Mass at the most convenient place, and consequently we find them attending Mass in the Convent Chapel which was given over entirely to the use of the people by the sisters, and finally, in 1866, under the pastorate of Father Dutton, the present parish church was erected at St. Martins.

In 1851, Rev. Cornelius Daly succeeded Father Butler as pastor of St. Patrick's Church. He also ministered to the few Catholics then at Hills-

boro. During the early years of his Fayetteville charge, he was assisted by Rev. Wm. Barrett and Rev. John B. O'Donahoe. Father O'Donahoe became the first pastor of St. Mary's Church, Hillsboro, Ohio.

The congregation at Fayetteville continued to increase. The church was over crowded, the necessity for a larger building was apparent. On June 15, 1857, the leading members of the congregation met in the hall of the pastor's house, "For the purpose of forming a church building society". This society continued in existence several years. The minutes of its meetings form a very interesting reading for any one acquainted with the parish. The members paid monthly dues of from ten to twenty five cents. The money thus raised was used almost as soon as received for pressing incidental expenses, chiefly repairs on the church property and nothing was laid away for the much talked of new church.

The crowded condition continued. The people needed more room. A movement was set on foot to build a new church at Vera Cruz. To this Father Daly objected, ~~and~~ Archbishop Purcell did not sustain the objection, but decided in favor of those who wanted the new church at Vera Cruz, and appointed Dr. Stehle, later famous as pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Cincinnati, to take charge of the building of the new church. This temporarily relieved the congestion at St. Patrick's, Fayetteville.

Father Daly realized the need of a Catholic School for his parish. Then, as now, it covered a large territory. Obviously, it was impossible to have children living miles from church attend a central parish school. To overcome this difficulty, Father Daly conceived the idea of establishing a boarding school. Michael Dillmore, a member of the parish, gave a build-

ing near the church for school purposes. Father Daly secured the Sisters of Charity, to take charge of the school, and in 1859 this property was deeded to them, and the following year the school opened. There are many elderly persons living in the parish at the present time who boarded at the school. The village children attended as day scholars.

Father Daly labored in the parish till his death in 1876. Father Mallon, at the time pastor of Vera Cruz was transferred to Fayetteville, March, 1876. He remained in charge till May, 1877, when he was compelled on account of ill health to relinquish the parish.

Father Bowe succeeded Father Mallon as pastor and remained at Fayetteville till death claimed him, over thirty one years later.

When Father Bowe took charge of the parish, both girls and boys boarded at the sisters' school. He did not approve of ~~the~~ their arrangement, and caused the school to be changed to a boarding school for boys only, stating that if girls wished to attend a boarding school they could go to the Ursuline Convent at St. Martins. Thus originated the boys boarding school at Fayetteville. The village children, both boys and girls, continued to attend the school as the regular parish school. In 1881 ten acres of ground were purchased, and a large building erected. The property was given to the Sisters as a boarding school with the stipulation that they teach the parish children. In 1907 the Sisters of Charity built a large addition to the school, made it in all respects a first class institution and called the school, St. Aloysius' Academy, and have at Fayetteville one of the best boarding schools for small boys to be found in any part of the country. There are now fifty boys at the school.

The first care of Father Bowe, after the new school was completed, was to provide more room for the constantly growing congregation. He visited the parish and took subscriptions for enlarging the old church, or the building of a new one. The amount collected not being sufficient to build a new church, Father Bowe enlarged the old building by adding to the front and erecting the tower and gallery. - This improvement was made in 1885-6.

The work of the parish was too much for Father Bowe's failing health in his old age and the parishners urged him to obtain an assistant. The residence was not large enough to accommodate two priests, so Father Bowe began the building of a new parochial residence. The house was completed in 1906, at a cost of over \$7000.00, and when finished the debt was but \$2100.00. Father Bowe moved into the new residence in October, 1906, but the infirmities of age were growing on him. On account of failing eyesight he resigned the parish in December, 1906.

The following month, January, 1907, the present pastor was appointed to take charge of Fayetteville. In the summer of the same year, Rev. Wm. A. Casey was appointed assistant pastor.

The small debt remaining on the house was paid in a few months. In the following year (1908) the church was enlarged by removing the wall separating it from the old residence, and throwing the residence into the church. This addition increased the seating capacity one hundred. The improvement cost \$5000.00. The church at present seats four hundred, not including the gallery, which is reserved for the choir and children.

The parish has been prolific in religious vocations, many daughters of the congregation are useful and honored members of different sisterhoods,

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the Sisters of Charity having received the greater number. The parish has given two good and pious priests to the diocese. Father Nicholas Kelley, deceased, was born in the parish and spent his boyhood years there. Rev. Adolph Sourd, the present pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Bellefountain, is also from this parish.

God has blessed this parish in the past
may he continue to bless in the future -
John F. Cogan