

Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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Aug. 15: Assumption of Mary Most Holy

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St. Mary (St. Ann) Mission, Linton Township, Coshocton County 1841-1887

Over the years there has been much speculation, but no hard evidence, as to whether Jesuit missionaries ever visited the Delawares in their village at the forks of the Muskingum, on the present site of Coshocton. Be that as it may, it is known that the first Catholic church in the county was not in Coshocton but in hilly and rural Linton Township, some eighteen miles to the southeast. Irish, German, and French Catholics settled in the area and were visited by Dominican priests from Zanesville. In 1841 they bought an old house, south of today's Plainfield, to serve as a church. A few years later they moved to a log church in the hills two miles to the west. And then in 1887, under the leadership of the pastor of Coshocton, in order to make the service of all of the Catholics of this rural vicinity more convenient and more frequent, the church moved another two miles to the west, almost to the township line, to be combined with the mission church of Franklin Township. This is the first of a series of articles that will explore the history of all of these missions and churches.

Frame Church in Old Plainfield

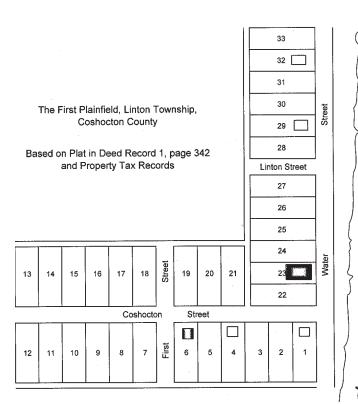
On May 13, 1841 lot number 6 and 30 feet off the west side of lot 5 in Plainfield were purchased by Bishop Purcell from Joseph D. Workman and wife. This was "in Trust for the Roman Catholic Congregation of Plainfield, for the Exclusive use and the purpose of a Roman

Catholic Church according to the tenets rules and Discipline of the Roman Catholic Church". ¹

This lot was not in today's Plainfield but in the first town of that name, located in the northwest of section 11 and in the southwest of section 10, at the right-angle turn of present County Road 410, one half mile south of its intersection with County Road 149 and just southwest of the present town of Plainfield. It was laid out in 1816 on what then was the main road from Zanesville to New Philadelphia, on the west bank of Wills Creek. "At no time did it contain more than half a dozen houses." Buildings in Plainfield were:

- a hewed log building of two stories, built by Thomas Johnson for a tavern in 1816, which was still standing in 1881
- a store opened in 1817 by Dwight Hutchinson.
- a tannery started in 1817 by Benjamin Chambers
- a distillery started in 1817 by Mr. Johnson on lot 23 on Water Street
- a house built by John Vernon in 1817 on lot 6 on Coshocton Street, the first frame house in the township.²

In the 1840 census Plainfield consisted of five households, those of Thomas Brownfield, Joseph D. Workman, Lewis Skinning, Moses Thomas, and Joseph Derr. It was the frame house built in 1817 that was purchased from Joseph Workman



in 1841 and thus became the first Catholic church in Coshocton County.

The Catholic Telegraph of January 13, 1844, among the statistics of diocesan parishes, mentioned that there were 44 Baptisms, 6 marriages, 7 deaths, and 200 Easter communicants among the congregation of the German St. Nicholas parish in Zanesville, together with Jacobsport. The note continues, "We know not the name of the Patron Saint of the church of Jacobsport." Jacobsport was the next town established in the vicinity of Plainfield, laid out in 1836. It was the eastern portion of the present town of Plainfield, within the bow of Wills Creek.³ (In the 20th century this portion of the town was abandoned and some of the buildings were moved uphill.) Jacobsport soon outstripped old Plainfield. Whereas Plainfield in the 1840 census consisted of five households, Jacobsport already contained 21 households. This same year, 1840, witnessed the platting of more lots adjacent to Jacobsport, on the west. Jacobsport thus was much better known than old Plainfield and the pastor no doubt referred to the old frame house on Coshocton Street in Plainfield

as the "church of Jacobsport."

Hill's history of Coshocton County states that the founding pastor of this mission was Father Gallaher, which no doubt was an error for the German Father Joseph Gallinger of Zanesville. However, in reality this honor must go to the Dominican, Father George A. J. Wilson of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Zanesville. Although he badly mangled the family names in making his records, and he did not record the places (at least they do not survive in the extant transcription), Father Wilson clearly names several Wills Creek families in the baptismal records of the Zanesville parish, from 1837 to 1842. His first visit appears to have been on September 20, 1837. He visited again in November, 1838, September and November in 1840,

May and August in 1841, and February, 1842. On June 29, 1842 Dominican Father Joseph Alemany visited and on October 30, 1842 Father Francis Cubero, O.P. arrived to minister to the little congregation.

The records of the baptisms will be presented below. They show that a handful of Irish were the first Catholics in the area, including the Crowleys, Collopys, and Halliseys. The Germanic names Heiser, Gab, Jäger, Weisenburgh, Bordenkircher, Schuh, and Klein first appear in 1840 along with the Irish Trenor. These records also mention several families that did not remain long in the vicinity. In 1841 the first records of the Mortine, Schmidt, Scherrer, Wimmer, and Wagoner families appear. Fathers Alemany and Cubero in 1840 noted, in addition, Aschbaker, Heinrich, Lahna, Factor, and Kraether (Crater). These are the families that, we can deduce, worshipped in the former house in Plainfield. The little church drew worshipers from a distance, for we know the Lahnas, who appear in the 1842 records, at that time still lived in Adams Township, across the line in Muskingum County.

No deed for the sale of this frame church seems to have been recorded. The next deed for this property was written among members of the Wiggins family, who had owned the quarter section containing this lot since 1812 and were, with the Johnsons, the proprietors of the original Plainfield. On March 17, 1846 Benjamin and Jonathan Wiggins and their wives quit-claimed to Thomas Wiggins 55 acres in this quarter-section, including "four acres which had formerly been laid out in town lots sold by Edward Wiggins dec'd," that is, lots 1 through 12 of Plainfield.⁴ Clearly by that date the congregation was worshipping God in the log church, 2 1/2 miles to the west.

The Immigrant Members of the Mission

It is not quite clear whether the first Catholic settlers in eastern Coshocton County were Irish or German. Both groups arrived in the mid-1830s. The Irish settled in Linton and Lafayette Townships. Thomas and Margaret Collopy came from Ireland and settled in northwestern Linton Township in 1835.5 They eventually moved north to Lafayette Township, but they chose to be buried at Mattingly Settlement in Muskingum County. The Crowleys, Michael and Ann and Patrick and Mary, appear in the church records in 1837 and were living in Linton Township in 1840. Morris and Catherine Trainor came from County Kildare to the United States in 1836 and settled near Canal Lewisville, northeast of Coshocton, in 1838; they later made their home south of West Lafayette.⁶ The Hallisseys, James and Mary and John and Catherine, were in Ohio by 1836 and appear in the church records in 1838. They lived in Lafayette Township.

The earliest Germanic Catholics, who far outnumbered the Irish, arrived at about the same time and settled, for the most part, in Franklin Township. Many of them seem to have been related by marriage to the Loesch family. Anthony Wimmer, a native of Fort Louis, Alsace, married Magdalena Schuh in France in 1827; they

came to the United States in 1830 and settled in Lewis County, New York, where they lived for five years before coming to Franklin Township.⁷ Mrs. Wimmer, it would seem, was related to George Schuh, a native of France, who was living in Franklin Township by 1847; his wife was Elizabeth Loesch. The Wagners were also from Alsace and some of them came to Ohio about 1836 and were in Franklin Township by 1840. Gregor Wagner's wife was Ann Agatha Loesch and Michael Wagner's wife was Maria Anna Loesch. (All of these families settled on farms in the hills generally east and northeast of the village of Wills Creek.) A third Wagner couple, Joseph and Amalia, also lived in Franklin township. Another Loesch, Madaline, was the wife of Jacob Kraether or Crater. And Catherine, the wife of J. Adam Mortine, a native of France, probably was a Kraether. The Mortines were in Ohio by 1835 and were living in Linton Township by 1840. Philip Krumeneker and his wife (Claudina or Regina or Lorena or Laura Dupré), natives of France, came to Ohio before 1833 and were living in Franklin Township by 1840.

Another small group were the Bordenkirchers and Aschbakers, from the Rhine valley, who settled in Linton Township. David and Maria (Vogel) Bordenkircher were the elder generation. The second generation, also immigrants, were John and Catherine (Aschbaker) Bordenkircher, who came from Germany to Ohio about 1838 and were living in Linton Township by 1840; John and Mary Ann (Bordenkircher) Aschbaker, who seem to have been in Ohio by 1834 and certainly were in this country by 1839 and in Linton Township by 1840; and Wendel and Mary Ann Bordenkircher, who also were in the township by 1840.

Other German families who were in Linton Township by 1840 were Francis and Charlotte Amore and Michael and Margaret Heuser (Hiser). Also there was a group related through the Klein family. The "old folks" of this group were John Tebolt Klein and his wife M. A. Weiss and the next generation comprised Jacob and

Catherine Klein, Daniel and Katherine (Klein) Winter, and, possibly, Lorenz Jaeger whose wife Barbara may have been a Klein.

Germanic settlers who arrived after 1840 included Baltasar and Maria Anna Schmitt, Jacob and Katharina Scherrer, John and Anna Maria Heinrich, and George Bayer. Jacob and Rosina Lahna (pronounced Lay-nee) came from Alsace to Adams Township, Muskingum County in 1840 and moved to Linton Township in 1847. The Germans in Linton settled in the hills in the west-central part of the township.

French settlers of Franklin Township in the 1840s included the Factors, Royers, and Cognions. Many more French settlers came to Franklin Township after 1850, but their enumeration will appear in the story of St. Nicholas mission in that township.

Father William Deiters of the German St. Nicholas Parish in Zanesville had some problems with the people of Wills Creek. In a letter to Archbishop Purcell dated February 17, 1853, he contrasted them with the "strong and devout Catholics" of Dresden. Those of the more remote Wills Creek he described with the words "Too many causes for sorrow! They are ill-mannered, and not very eager for the good things..."8 But he continued to work with them until the end of 1854. That December 24 he wrote to Archbishop Purcell that he had been about to visit Wills Creek and Coshocton when Father Bender from Newark arrived (in Saintfield?) and said that Purcell had given charge of those missions to him. However, the Archbishop apparently did not mean this to be a transfer of the Germanspeaking people among the congregation. The Catholic Telegraph of January 6, 1855, in a list of corrections of errors and other changes to information listed in the recently issued Catholic Almanac for 1855, noted that Rev. Mr. Bender, of Newark, attended the English and French portion of the Dresden, Coshocton, and Wills Creek congregations. "When called on, in the absence of Rev. Mr. Deiters, he also affords the consolations of his ministry to the German

Catholics of the same districts." Nevertheless, no records of baptisms at Wills Creek are found in the St. Nicholas records after 1854.

In 1857 the French members of the mission who lived to the west in Franklin Township were formed into St. Nicholas mission, with their own church, but served by the same pastors.

The Log Church and Its Names

According to Hill's History of Coshocton County, "Saint Mary's Catholic Church was organized during or near the year 1840 by Father Gallaher. Quite a number of persons holding allegiance to this Church had moved into this neighborhood previously. Among those who assisted in establishing the church were Michael Hiser, Adam Mortine, David and John [and] Wendel [Bordenkircher], Martin Henricks, Jacob Cline, Jacob Shearer, John H. Baker [John Aschbacher], and David Bo[r]denkircher. The organization was effected and first services held at the residence of David Bodenkircher."9 This statement clearly was based on the memories of the German community and, although the year 1840 is approximately correct for the original organization of the mission, the statement primarily refers to the second site and second church, the log church of St. Mary that was founded under the German pastor of St. Nicholas Parish in Zanesville, Father Joseph Gallinger. It implies that in some way the original building in old Plainfield had been lost and services were held in the Bordenkircher house until the log church was erected.

Father Gallinger visited Wills Creek early in 1843 and provided the sacraments to some who had not received them for three for four years due to the lack of a German priest. At this time he asked Bishop Purcell for permission to bless their cemetery.¹⁰ This cemetery no doubt was the future church lot on the Bordenkircher land.

On April 13, 1844 David Bordenkircher and wife Rachel signed a deed for a lot in Linton Township, selling it to Bishop Purcell.¹¹ The lot

contains about an acre running up the side of a hill. It lies on the south edge of the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 8, 2 1/2 miles west of Plainfield, on the west side of County Road 137, just south of County Road 123.

A log church was erected there, "very soon after the 1840 organization of the church," according to Hill's history. On August 28, 1844, Father Gallinger first recorded a baptism at St. Mary's, which probably was the church on this new site. In a letter to Bishop Purcell dated June 30, 1846, Father Gallinger refers to this church as the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin.¹²

The baptismal records of Father Gallinger and later those of Father Deiters continue to call the Wills Creek church St. Mary, through June 24, 1851. On Sept. 1 and 30, 1851 Father Deiters mentions "the church at Wills Creek," with no name. From that date through 1854 Father Deiters' records only specify "in Wills Creek", without the name of a church. The mission is listed in directories from 1843 to 1855 as Plainfield, attended from Zanesville, with no patron listed.

The mission is listed in directories as St. Ann's, Wills Creek, from 1853 to 1869. This change of name is unexplained. The Archbishop visited these remote missions in August, 1856, as reported in the *Catholic Telegraph* of August 23. "On Tuesday, 12th, Church was held at St. Ann's, Will's Creek. There were twenty-seven confirmed. ...There are very many most excellent Catholics at Dresden, Coshocton, Wills Creek, and Kilbuck, but they have no pastor, receiving only monthly, or less frequent, hurried visits from Zanesville and Newark which need all the time and care of their respective pastors."

In 1858 the Russian priest Rev. Serge de Stchoulepnikoff was sent to Coshocton as its first resident pastor and remained for three years. In one of his letters to Archbishop Purcell he mentions Linton Township, St. Ann's church, and Father Bender mentioned "St. Anna (German)" church which Father Serge attended.¹³ Father Serge reported 108 Easter Communions among

the Linton Township congregation in 1859.

From early 1863 to 1866 Wills Creek was attended by Father Francis Maria Andres of Coshocton, a newly ordained native of Münster, Westphalia. In 1863 Mr. Baier (or Bayer), of St. Ann's congregation offered Father Andres a house and garden near that church, free of charge. Father Andres also noted that the congregation of St. Ann was willing to enlarge their church. He hoped at that time to get a school and teacher for both Coshocton and Wills Creek. These plans came to nothing and the priest remained in residence at Coshocton.

Father Andres was succeeded by Father Rauck and then Father Johan Gerhard Nordmeier. The latter, in the first report to the bishop of the new Diocese of Columbus in 1868, noted the mission's name as "St. Annas Willscreek."

Frame Church of Mary Most Holy

The log church of St. Ann was replaced by a "neat little frame church," in 1867 according to Hill's history¹⁵ or about 1873 according to Hunt.¹⁶ A sketch-map in the diocesan property book of the 1880s shows this church high up the hill, within about thirty feet of the west end of the property, with the door facing east or downhill toward the road. The semi-leveled mound of earth half way up the hill may indicate the location of the earlier log church.

With the construction of this frame church, our Lady again became the patroness of the mission, in place of her mother. In January of 1869 Rev. John M. Jacquet was appointed pastor and the extant Coshocton sacramental registers begin. Earlier ones, if kept, have been lost for at least several decades. Father Jacquet kept one record book of baptisms, which is a remarkable history of the heroic work he performed. He kept another meticulous record book of marriages, burials, communions, and other notes. In these sacramental registers, Father Jacquet always called this church *Ecclesia Sanctissimae Mariae*, the Church of Mary Most Holy. Father Jacquet

first noted the church under the patronage of Mary in the Coshocton baptismal register on May 23, 1869 and again in his first report to the bishop later that year. (Hardly coincidentally, this also was the first year the church in Dresden was called St. Ann, instead of St. Matthew.)

On November 7, 1870 Rt. Rev. Sylvester H. Rosecrans, first Bishop of Columbus, came to Wills Creek. He visited St. Nicholas Church in the morning and St. Mary Church in the afternoon, dedicating both to Almighty God, according to a note in Father Jacquet's record book. On that same happy day the Bishop confirmed twenty-one young people of St. Mary. Their family names were those of the pioneers: Sherrer, Crater, Dolick, Dole, Cline, Henricks, Ashbaker, and Bordenkircher.

Father Jacquet's would visit the Wills Creek missions once each month, on weekdays. A census taken by him in April, 1874 showed twenty-two families and 101 persons in this mission, out of a total of 889 souls under his care.

By 1880 the frontier era was long past, farm properties had been developed, and the second generation, now grown, was either working some of the land or moving away to the cities or to the far West. Typically, three in ten acres of the hilly land owned by the Catholics was still wooded. One-fifth of the land was in grass to feed cattle and sheep, while swine and poultry also were common. The other half of the land was cultivated. The crops primarily were corn, wheat, and oats. Small orchards provided apples and peaches, while a few of the older French farmers (notably Stephen Salrin and Stephen Cognion) grew grapes and made their own wine—perhaps having the honor of providing wine for the Mass.

In 1886 and 1887 Father Jacquet combined the two congregations of St. Mary and St. Nicholas into the new Our Lady of Lourdes. In a private letter he called the two older sites "the two old mud holes," and though it is hard to imagine the old St. Mary's, high on its hill, as a mud hole, it certainly would have been inconvenient.¹⁷ The last four baptisms were

administered at St. Mary on June 21, 1887.

Somewhat an oddity, in the 1896 burial record of Charlotte Amor the name of the old cemetery was entered as "St. Ann, Linton Township," the name last used in 1868. The last known burials at St. Mary's were Seth Mortine in 1903, infant Dorothy Davidson in 1916, and Michael Mortine in 1917.

SOURCES AND NOTES

The two souces most frequently cited are:
- Hill, N. N. Jr., *History of Coshocton County, Ohio: Its Past and Present, 1740-1881*;
Newark, Ohio: A. A. Graham & Co., 1881
- Hunt, William E., *Historical Collections of Coshocton County (Ohio) 1764-1876*;
Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1876

- 1) Coshocton County Deed Record 15/308
- 2) Hill, 550; and tax records
- 3) Hill, 550
- 4) Coshocton County Deed Record 20/468
- 5) Hill, 655
- 6) Coshocton *Democratic Standard*, May 1, 1891
- 7) Hill, 817. Coshocton *Democrat*, June 13, 1893
- 8) University of Notre Dame Archives, II-4-1-A.L.S., translation by Msgr. Geo. Schlegel
- 9) Hill pp 549-550
- 10) Fr. Joseph Gallinger to Purcell, Feb. 15, 1843 UNDA II-4-h A.L.S.
- 11) Coshocton County Deed Record 18/294 The description was defective and a second deed (18/345), dated May 3, was written to replace it.
- 12) CRS Bulletin 1978 p. 357
- 13) Stchoulepnikoff to Purcell, June 21, 1859 and Bender to same, Feb. 11, 1859; Archives, Archdiocese of Cincinnati.
- 14) Fr. Francis Maria Andres to Purcell, July 27, 1863, UNDA II-5-b A.L.S.
- 15) Hill p. 550
- 16) Hunt p. 201
- 17) CRS Bulletin XV/211-212

BAPTISMS AT WILLS CREEK, COSHOCTON COUNTY, 1837-1900

Recorded at St. John the Evangelist and St. Thomas churches, Zanesville, 1837-1854

The early baptismal records of St. John the Evangelist and St. Thomas Aquinas survive as a transcript at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. The transcript contains no reference to location, so the following records have been identified as belonging to Wills Creek only by the names of those involved. The parish baptismal records through 1842 were presented in the Bulletin in 2000 and 2001. The names of the Wills Creek Catholics were so badly recorded or transcribed that one would never be able to find or recognize many of them in our index. Therefore we are reproducing them here, using what in time became the standard forms of the surnames, where known. The reader is referred to our 2000 and 2001 issues for the spellings as they appear in the transcription.

1837

- Sept. 20 Hugh Joseph, son of Charles Murphy and wife Ann; spons. John Hanlay and Helen Moris. Fr. A. J. Wilson, O.S.D.
- same day Helen, daughter of John and Margaret Carray; spons. Patrick Crowley and Mary Barrett.
- same day Margaret, daughter of Thomas Collopy and Margaret Bullman; spons. Margaret Barrett.

1838

- November 12 William, son of Thomas Daurby and Catherine Reyney; spons. Thomas Collopy and Mary Hallisey.
- same day Paul, son of Patrick Crowley and Mary Mannion; spons. John Hallisey and Catherine Hallisey.
- same day Mary Ann, daughter of John Hallisey and Catherine Crowley; spons. Thomas Downly [perhaps Donnelly?] and Margaret Bowlman.

1840

- September 16 Elizabeth, on the day of her birth, daughter of Thomas Collopy and Margaret Bulman; spons. Mary Hallisey. Fr. A. J. Wilson
- November 11 John, born September 24, son of Owen FitzPatrick and Bridget Shanon; spons. Margaret O'Neil.
- same day, Bernard, born September 24, son of Owen FitzPatrick and Bridget Shanon; spons. Thomas Handley.
- same day Michael, son of Michael Heiser and Margaret; spons. Master and Hadeyot [probably Hildegard] Gab.
- same day John, age 3 years, son of Joseph Wise and Margaret Berievine; spons. Edward Host and Barbara Martyr.
- same day Margaret, daughter of Patrick Crowley and Mary Manning; spons. John Kelley and Catherine Collopy.
- same day Teresa, daughter of Laurence Jäger and Barbara Craise; spons. Michael Wesenberger and Teresa Wesenberger [recorded as Weissenbacher in 1843, below; and Weisenborgh on a tombstone].
- same day Rachael, daughter of Cegandicher and Britendicher; spons. Britendicher and Rachael Bridendicher [perhaps Regina Bordenkircher].
- same day Elizabeth, daughter of Michael Crowley and Ann [page torn]; spons. Thomas Collopy and his wife; born in September.
- same day Jacob, son of Croniceret and Barbara Schue; spons. Michael Heiser and Catheine Kline; age 4 months.
- same day Elizabeth, daughter of Maurice Trainor and Catherine Smith; spons. Sarah Lennen; age 5 months. Fr. A. J. Wilson
- same day Margaret, daughter of John Linnen and Sarah Tanney; spons. Catherine Trainor. Fr. A. J. Wilson, O.S.D.

1841

- May 28 George, born April 27, son of John Bordenkircher and Catherine Aschbaker; spons. Adam Mathews [perhaps Mortine] and Mary Ann House [perhaps Heiser].
- same day Ellen, born in February, daughter of John Hallisey and Catherine Crowley; spons. Patrick Crowley and Mary Crowley.
- same day George, born April 23, son of Adam Mortine and Catherine Creating [perhaps Kräther, later Crater?]; spons. Wendel Bordenkircher and Margaret Rausch (spouses).
- same day Michael, born April 10, son of Balthasar Schmidt and Maria Petisha; spons. Michael Heiser and Regina Scherrer.
- same day Bernard, born Dec. 28, son of Thomas D. Mullon and Mariann Stillwell; spons. William Brown and Magdalen. Fr. A. J. Wilson
- August 11 Joseph, born May 14, son of Anton Wimmer and Magdalena Schue; spons. Michael Wagner and Margaret Watter.

1842

February 2 Andrew, born Jan. 22, son of George Wagner and Ann Agatha Lösch; spons. Joseph and Emily Reneir. Fr. A. J. Wilson

- same day Elizabeth, age 15 days, daughter of Jacob Scherrer and Elizabeth Herscher; spons. John Aschbaker and Mary Petit Jaane[?]. Fr. A. J. Wilson
- same day James, born Jan. 14, son of Patrick Buther and Jane Murphy; spons. James Hallisey and Mary his wife. Fr. A. J. Wilson
- June 29 Jacob, born June 16, son of John Aschbaker and Mary Bordenkircher; spons. Jacob Scherrer and Regina Bordenkircher.
- same day Raphael, born May 5, son of Valentine Gab and Hildegard Kalb; spons. Carl Clamont and Maria Ruff.
- same day Jacob, born Feb. 12, son of Franz Joseph Gneintgh and Walburga Wagner; spons. Joseph Wagner and Magdalena Wagner.
- same day, Jacob, born April 27, son of Martin Heinrich and Barbara Wheerin?; spons. Michael Heiser and Regina Scherrer.
- same day George, born May 1, son of Wendel Bordenkircher and Mary Rausch; spons. John Bordenkircher and Magdalena Bordenkircher.

(To be continued)

Next month: Old St. Mary Cemetery, Linton Township.

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