HISTORY

of

St. Alphonsus Church

Murrinsville, -:- -:- Pennsylvania

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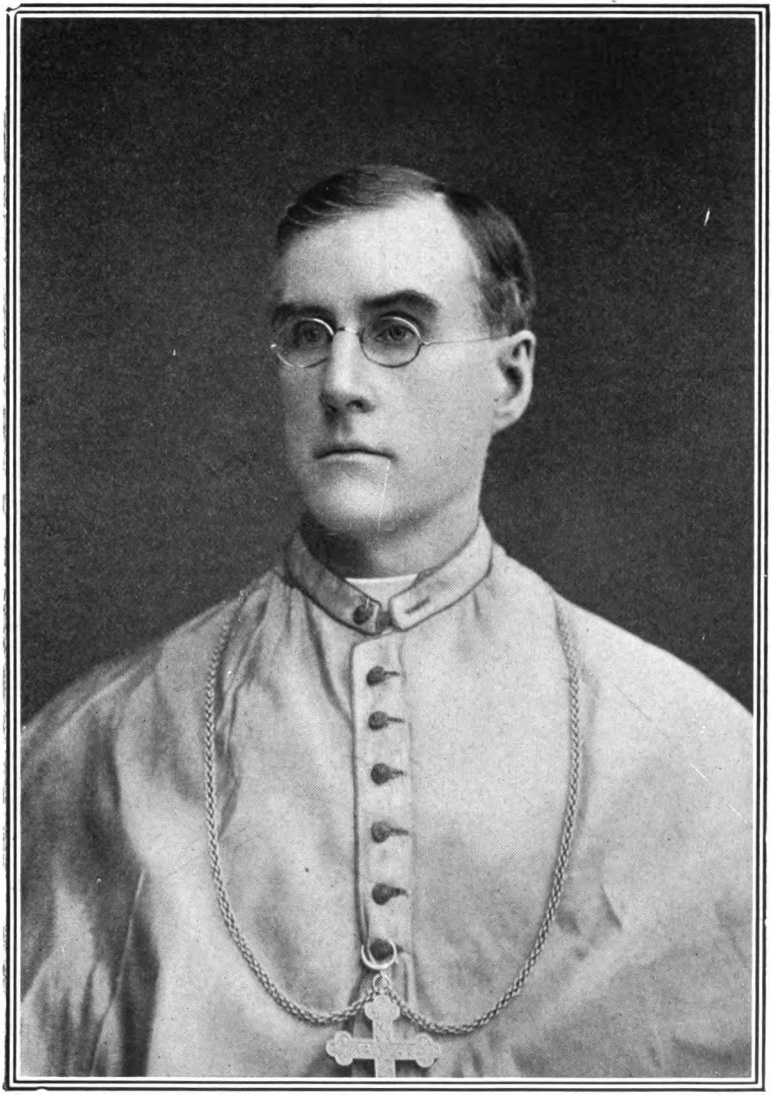
Murrinsville, ∴ ∴ ∴ Pennsylvania

Written on the Occasion of the
Diamond Jubilee of the Church

∴ ∴ 1842-1917 ∴ ∴



RIGHT REV. REGIS CANEVIN,
Bishop of Pittsburgh.

Preface

The original territory attached to the parish of St. Alphonsus' Church, Murrinsville, Pa., of which we are endeavoring to narrate the long history, includes the whole northern part of Butler County, being bounded in the south by a line beginning at a point on the Allegheny River opposite Upper Hillville, running in a straight line to a point where the county lines of Butler, Mercer and Lawrence intersect each other.

The reconstruction of this history has indeed cost us no little labor for the documents at our disposition were not many, while the few we had were incorrect and covering the period of the last twenty-five or thirty years. We wish, therefore, to thank all those who have assisted us in this little work, in a special manner the Right Rev. Regis Canevin, the Right Rev. Monsignor A. L. Lambing, Sister Norberta, of the Charity Order, whose suggestions and help we gratefully acknowledge.

J. L. CANOVA.

REV. JOHN L. CANOVA.

Historical Proem

Champlain's first words in his "Voyages": "The salvation of a single soul is worth more than the conquest of an empire and kings must not dream to extend their domination in countries where idolatry still reigns, but for the scope of submitting them to Jesus Christ," show how profoundly sensible he was of the duty Christian powers have of extending the Gospel. An outcome of Champlain's visit to the Hurons ① in 1615 was the establishment of the Recollect and in 1625, of the Jesuit Fathers in the country of these Indians, where in concert they labored until the English in 1629 took Quebec and carried off all the missionaries. The era that followed the return of the Jesuits on the restoration of the country to France, was one of great missionary zeal and enthusiasm. The rich and noble bestowed ample funds; ② the young, left camp and court in order to enter the Jesuit order, hoping to be permitted to share in the toils of the missionaries who in the northern wilds were wrestling with paganism. Great were these holy men's trials, but they labored with devotion and sacrifice almost imparalleled in the history of this continent. Pestilence, plotting against their lives, calumnies of the medicine men did not daunt their courage. Unwearied in labor, unbroken in toil, they struggled and the missions increased and prospered. But the Providence who had given the Huron nation days of glory and renown was now to permit its destruction and dispersion. Not before, however, its total conversion to the true God, was the final blow to be struck. In July, 1648, at the hands of the Iroquois sank in blood the mission of St. Joseph, at the town of Teananstayae, where the little church became the pyre upon which the torn and rented body of Father Daniel was consumed. "The faith had now made the conquest of almost the whole country," says Father Bressani, an

① A people of Iraquoinan stock called Wyandot, but nicknamed "Huron" by the French, established in the region between the lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron.

② A manuscript in the Jesuit relations at Quebec give a curious list of benefactors to the missions. Among them Cardinal Richelieu appears offering the annual sum of 1000 lir. to the Huron mission.

eye-witness of the scene we relate, "it was everywhere publicly professed; and not merely the common people, but even its chiefs were alike its children and its protectors. The superstitious rites which at first were more frequent than the day, began to lose credit to such a degree, that a heathen of Ossossane, man of rank though he was, could find none to perform them in his illness. The persecutions raised against us had now ceased; the curses heaped on the faith were changed into blessings. We might say that they were now ripe for heaven; that naught was wanting but the reaping-hook of death to lay the harvest up in the safe garner-house of Paradise." At daybreak on the 16th of March, 1649, a thousand Iroquois burst on the town of St. Ignatious and all were soon involved in massacre. The two missionaries, Brebeuf and Lalemant, who remained to comfort the wounded and the dying, soon fell into the hands of the Iroquois. Both underwent the mockery of Baptism with boiling water, both saw their flesh devoured before their eyes, both charred and burnt from head to foot closed their martyrdom tortured in the most cruel fashion. With them fell the Huron nation; fifteen towns were destroyed or abandoned and the survivors emigrated to the Senecas or fled to the Eries and to other kindred tribes. But as Shakespeare says: "There is a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow," so the special providence in the fall of the Huron was the conversion of the Iroquois nation whom they were in part instrumental in bringing to the true faith. Already in 1642 had the pious Father Jogues suffered the most excrutiating torments the day he with a band of Hurons had fallen into the hands of the Iroquois. "God alone, he exclaims for whose love and glory it is sweet and glorious to suffer, can tell what cruelties they perpetrated on me." Twice he had sunk under their clubs and iron rods in running the gauntlet, his finger nails had been torn out, his left thumb hacked off and his body tied to the ground had writhed in pain under the hot coals thrown on it by the children. His faithful Gompil had already fallen, the name of Jesus on his dying lips, under the tomahawk of the Mohawks, yet he in daily expectation of death, still ministered to the captive Christians. Miraculously spared in the frequent attempt to destroy him and saved through the charity and manliness of the Dutch, fearless had he returned among them in 1646 when they had asked for a

missionary. On October again had he entered Gandawague, the place of former captivity, and the treacherous Indians had began his torture. On the 18th a perfidious blow stretched him lifeless to the ground. "I shall be too happy," he had said, "if the Lord deign to complete the sacrifice where He has begun it." The sacrifice was complete and the rising sun beheld his head fixed on the palisade and his body floating down the Canaghwaga. But his sacrifice was not in vain, for "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." [8] Peace was restored and the toils of Le Moyne, Chaumonot and Daublon began to bear fruit. The nation applied for missionaries; even the distant Senecas longed for the "black gown." Prisoners and slaves brought in from no less than seventeen different nations first entered the fold; then natives and chiefs and captains specially moved by the example of the Huron whose virtues and patience proved the power of religion.

Thus in the latter part of 1656 Father Chaumonot baptized the great chief of the Senecas and ministered in a village composed of the survivors of the Huron towns which in the fatal war had submitted to the Iroquois. But, in the year 1668, the last Seneca missionary arrived. Like Father Fremin, whom he succeeded, he built chapels and labored patiently, probably as late as 1702, in hope to discontinue idolatry. The French occupation of Niagara under La Salle in 1678 excited among the Indians distrust of the French, weakened the influence of the missionaries and later, when the war of 1687 and 1707 broke out between France and England, though no material change took place in America and the boundaries between the French possessions and the English colonies were left unsettled as ever, yet the missionaries were sacrificed.

We do not doubt that thus it came to happen that the Gospel was preached to the people who inhabitated this part of the country and that prayers had ascended to the true God before the first white man set foot in the primitive forests of Butler County. For within the limits of this territory, as outlined in the preface, the Senecas, the most numerous, warlike and powerful tribe of the Iroquois nation, had villages where the remanent of the Huron (Wyandots) dwelt one with the previously conquered Delawares. Cushcushking was a large

[8] Tertulian. Apologeticus c. 50.

town on the stream now known as Wolf Creek, in Slippery Rock township; another town occupied a large area near Jacksville, in Worth township; Indian cornfields were cultivated on the site of the present town of Harrisville and another village was above Bruin, which was tenanted years after 1796, when the pioneers came to occupy the land. It is true that "the mission records and statistics that have come down to us, as Right Rev. Bishop Canevin says, [4] are so meager that it is impossible to estimate the number of converts among the natives or to follow their history ecxept along very broad and indefinite lines," as we also believe that "before the year 1750 the work of the missionaries was in great part destroyed," yet we can with security point to at least few cases which prove that down to the incoming of the Indian traders, Catholic Indians were found scattered among the heathens that peopled this part of the country. Of this later, however. Another man appeared now: the last indeed on this scene until another generation had passed. In 1676, two years before the occupation of Niagara under La Salle, a Recollect, Father Louis Henneping, was sent to the Indian mission of Frontenac, whence he started on a tour among the Six Nations. During his visit among the Iroquois he traveled extensively among the different tribes, both to obtain their favor and gain information of the unknown country. He traveled over portions of the headwaters of the "la Belle Riviere" as the French called the Allegheny and the Ohio, and stopped at several Indian villages in this valley. [5] He is perhaps the first white man who ever penetrated into these wilds and set foot upon the soil of Butler County.

Meanwhile, great events were taking place. The Dutch, in 1654, deprived the Swedes of the land which they never rightfully held and ten years after they were in turn deprived of it by the English. The eastern Indian was looking with apprehension at this fighting of the white intruders, yet in 1683 extended the hand of friendship to Penn, entering into a treaty remarkable for the spirit of conciliation and justice which it taught. This spirit of justice that moved Penn to repurchase from the Red Men the same land which he had already bought

[4] Loss and gain in the Catholic Church in the U. S. The Catholic Historical Review, v. II, n. 4.
[5] History of Venango Co.

of and paid for the Crown of England, and the broad spirit of philanthrophy that caused him to secure religious toleration were the principal causes of his success and troubles also, as we see from his letter in 1708 to James Lorgan, the Irishman who in 1695 had accompanied him to America and after Penn's death governed the colony for two years: "There is complaint against your government, that you suffer public mass in a scandalous manner. Pray send the matter of fact, for ill use is made of it against us here." We wonder not at this, for, to persecute the Church was the spirit of the day, and the English colonies planted as they were in the noon-day of the reformation, inherited all its virulence against all things Catholic.

The Irishmen, who with Lord Baltimore, founded the colony of Maryland and first in history drafted and obtained a charter securing freedom of conscience had by the Protestant revolution of 1688 already been disfranchised and were for nearly a hundred years to be deprived of it. Nor could Penn be "a great corrector of enormous times" [6] and he, too, in 1708 suppressed the Catholic Church in his Sylvania. All this, however, did not discourage Ireland's stalwart sons. The many emigrants of 1688 and 1699 were followed by many others, and in 1730 a proportion of ten Irish emigrants to one of all the other nations of Europe was attained and as early as this date we find twonships in the interior of the state called Derry, Donegal, Tyrone, and Colerain. Truly they were despised, their religious rites were proscribed, their priests were murdered and as late as 1756 were by law assessed to support the pastors of the Protestant denominations, and not until the war of Independence did Protestant prejudice begin to abate. It was during this time of persecution when this spirit of intolerance which dominated all minds, had broken out into open persecution of the Church, that while the sacrifice of the Mass, as an act of public worship, was forbidden in the colonies, this territory was in a particular way blessed; for the first Mass ever said in this Diocese was offered within the limit of this parish.

Three-fourths of a century had passed since Hennepin's visit and the silence of the primitive forests of Butler County had remained undisturbed. A bold English trader at rare in-

[6] Beaumont and Fletcher in "The Two Noble Kinsmen," Act 5, Sc. 1.

tervals would with his rout of Irish servants, arrive at the villages, exchange his merchandise for furs and ginseng, load his horses and depart. Some time a brave French voyager or explorer would venture down the "Beautiful River" as far as Attiquè. As early as 1719 the French had began actively to erect a line of forts for the purpose of connecting Canada with the Mississippi, at both extremities of which they had extensive settlements. Agents were sent out to conciliate the Shawnees and Delawares and secure the neutrality of some of the Indians [7] to establish trading houses on the Ohio; and their great military road from Detroit to the Allegheny was constructed in 1739. It became unsafe then for English traders to venture into this part of the country. Pierre Chartierre depredation occurred on April 18, 1743, when two provincial traders were waylaid and seized on the Allegheny with goods valued at 1600 pounds. Then the war which had broken out between France and England in 1744 began to be felt. Though the signs of dissafection to the English shown by the Shawnees on the Ohio had assumed an hostile character, yet the Six Nations listened to the contending parties who were making efforts to enlist their services, accepted their presents and came to no conclusion. The treaty that terminated the war in 1748 did not establish the boundaries of the colonies and on this account the two nations were very soon plunged into another bloody war. The English extended their claims to the River St. Lawrence, while the French on their part contended for all the country to the westward of the Appalachian Mountains.

The Ohio Company with a grant of 500,000 acres of land on the Ohio from the Monongahela to the great Kanawha was chartered by the English in order to prevent the French from occupying the Ohio; and other companies were formed for similar purposes. [8] The French on their side were neither blind nor idle. They did all in their power to counteract the influence of the Ohio Co. among the Indians by extending their trade among them, by entering upon actual exploration and taking possession of the region about the Allegheny and the Ohio. In order to claim this territory the Marquis De La Gallissoniere, Governor General of the New France, organized an extensive expedition

[7] Conference of the Six Nations at Philadelphia in 1732.
[8] Weiser at Logstown in conference with the Wyandots.

numbering about 300 men; French soldiers, Canadians and friendly Indians, which under the command of Captain Louis Céloron de Bienville, started from Canada in July, 1749, and proceeded from the south shore of Lake Erie to the headwaters of the Allegheny. This expedition took formal possession of the land descending the Allegheny and Ohio rivers and burying, according to their peculiar custom, leaden plates inscribed with the date in which the land was in the name of the King of France taken possession of. Rev. Joseph Peter Bonnecamps, S. J., accompanied this expedition, not only as chaplain, but as man of science, and made observations of the region, drawing an almost accurate map of the route. To this priest belongs the honor of having offered the first Sacrifice of the Mass within the limits of the present Pittsburgh diocese.

"It is well known," Monsignor Lambing tells us, [©] "to have been the invariable custom of the French, when accompanied by a chaplain, as they always were when in considerable number, to have the Holy Sacrifice offered every morning, with the rarest exceptions, before setting out on their journey." Here Mgr. Lambing continues: "We have seen that Céloron's expedition stopped for the nights of August 5th and 6th, at a point a few leagues above the Indian village of Kittanning, or Attiquè. The spot cannot be fixed with absolute certainty, but having been born on the banks of the Allegheny River, and having gone over that part of the valley times without number, I am convinced that it was on the east side of the river, a little below the mouth of Red Bank Creek, nearly 64 miles above Pittsburgh." We wish not to take issue with the Venerable historian of the Pittsburgh diocese in regard to his statement that the first Mass was celebrated on a spot a little below the mouth of Red Bank Creek, for he expresses it as a matter of personal opinion. Mass may have been said there; not the first Mass, however. We have, after accurate calculation, come to the conclusion that the first Mass was offered within the limits of this parish; and, again, while the spot cannot be fixed with absolute certainty, it must have been a little below the present Parker's Landing.

Céloron's expedition, after passing the Riviere aux Boeufs (French Creek) reached on the same day, August 3rd, a bend in

© Foundation stones of a great diocese, p. 27.

the river about nine miles below, on the left or eastern bank of which lay a large boulder, nearly twenty-two feet in length by fourteen in breadth, on the inclined face of which were rude inscriptions, evidently of Indian workmanship, representing by various symbols the triumphs of the race in war and in chase. It was regarded by the natives attached to the expedition as an "Indian God" and held in superstitious reverence. It was a well-known landmark, and did not fail to arrest the attention of the French. Céloron deemed it a favorable point at which to bury another leaden plate, his second. Céloron's record is as follows: "Aout 3me, 1749. Enterrè une plaque de plomp sur lo rive meridionale de la Riviere Oyo, a 4 lieues, au dessous de la Riviere aux Boeufs, vis-a-vis une montagne pelle, et aupres d'une grosse pierre, sure la quelle on voit plusieurs figures assez grossierment graves." "Buried a leaden plate on the south bank of the Ohio River four leagues below the River aux Boeufs, opposite a bold mountain and near a large stone, on which there are many figures rudely engraved." The distance of 4 leagues from French Creek to the rocks as given by Céloron is a little exaggerated; the actual distance by the winding of the river being of about nine miles. The bald mountain is the mountain on the other side of the river which rises almost perpendicularly a little over 500 feet above the level of the river. As this rock still can be seen we can take it as our starting point in following Céloron's daily journey. "On the 4th," he writes in his Journal, [10] "I put myself en route. We finished almost fifteen leagues this day." Bonnecamps in his Journal [11] adds: We continued our route, always surrounded by mountains, some time, so high that they did not permit us to see the sun before 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning or after 2 or 3 in the afternoon. The Jesuit describes faithfully the territory they passed, surrounded by high mountains covered with secular trees which would in places, like the mouths of what are now called Whann and Scrubgrass Runs, allow the waters of the narrow river see the sunlight only a few hours in the day, until past Emlenton when the valley widens again.

They traveled almost fifteen leagues that day. Estimating the league as used by Céloron to be about two miles and a half, according to the accurate measurement we made, they encamped

[10] Fort Pitt and letters from the frontier by Mary C. Darlington.
[11] Les Relations Des Jesuits, v. 69, p. 296.

a little over a mile below what is now Parker's Landing. The 5th of August was then the eventful day in which the first Mass was said within the limit of this parish and diocese, for as usual, before starting their journey Mass was celebrated for the expedition. "I departed at an early hour," Céloron says, and on his way down he encountered a village of the Loups [12] and Iroquois of the five nations. "I encamped early to give time to Mons. De Joncaire to arrive at the village Attickè." During this day, to our opinion, the expedition traveled about ten league. They did not cover as much ground as on the previous day, even though they had started early in the day, for they also encamped early, reaching a place distant about five miles from Attickè, as Céloron writes again on the 6th: "I departed at 7 o'clock; after having made nearly five leagues I arrived at the village of Attickè." If, therefore Attickè, (Attiquè, Attiguè, Atiguè) as Parkman [13] says, was on the site of Kittanning, which view is strongly supported by Lambing, [14] our calculations are right and our claim that the first Mass offered in the Pittsburgh Diocese was celebrated within the limits of this parish is a just one. This yet we wish to record in these pages which have some relation to our history. They are words of Bonnechamps. "Leaving Attiguè, some time afterward we encountered five Englishmen who appeared to us to be 'engagés.' They were ordered to quit that region and they responded that they were ready to obey. They had some 45 packets of peltries." [15] Engagés means "employed." These, as it was customary, were employed by some English trader and were visiting for him the different Indian villages along the river and the Indian towns in Butler County. We have no doubt that these men were Irish, as we shall see again. Arriving at Chiningue, two leagues below the forks [16] Céloron found other traders established there whom he compelled to leave. [17] The village consisted of 50 cabins of Iroquois, Shawnees and Loups, also Iroquois from the Salt St. Louis and Lake of the Two Mountains. These two places were

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[12] A branch of the Delawares. The Delawares and Shawnees had settled on the Ohio prior to 1730.
[13] Montcalm and Wolfe, v. 1, p. 4.
[14] Cath. Hist. Researches Jan., 1886, pp. 105-107, note 6. Les Relat. Des Jesuits, v. 69, p. 297.
[15] Cèloron says they had 50 horses and nearly 150 packs of peltry.
[16] Logstown.
[17] Weiser found about 20 traders in this town in 1758.

Catholic settlements and probably these Indians were Catholics. Of these we will have occasion to speak a little later.

Remarkable changes occurred after Céloron's expedition. Both the French and the English continued equally determined to possess the country north of the Ohio. The former stretched a chain of posts from Niagara to the Mississippi, as a barrier against English encroachments, and to exclude the Indians from their influence and control. To counteract these demonstrations, Gist was sent by the Ohio Company, in 1750, to survey its lands previous to their occupation and settlement. Few years after, in 1753, to obtain the same purpose and to make observation of the French forces, Washington, then a young man of 21, was by the Governor Dinwiddie dispatched to Venango and Le Boeuf, twice crossing this territory in his journey. Barney Curran and John McGuire, Indian traders; Henry Stewart and William Jenkins, servitors; Jacob Vanbraam, Christofer Gist, John Davison, Indian interpreters; the Half King Jeskakake, White Thunder and the Hunter formed the party on setting out for Venango from Logstown on November 30. The trail from Logstown to Venango intersected the Shannopin ● Venango trail, and it is reasonably certain that Washington struck this trail at or near Zelienople and proceeded northwest by the Indian town of Cushcushking, which was within the limits of this parish. The return was made with Gist, alone, among difficulties and through the wilderness. Washington's mission proved to be a fruitless one. On the 17th of February, 1754, a small force sent by the Governor of Virginia commenced the erection of a fort at the confluence of the Allegheny and Ohio rivers and this day marks the birthday of Pittsburgh. They were driven off by the French on April 16th, who completed the fort and called it after the Marquis Du Quesne. In this same year, May 27, Washington drew his maiden sword at the Great Meadows, opening hostilities between the forces of the two nations contending for the mastery of the Ohio. He defeated the French, but on the 3d of July was forced to capitulate. Thus the "Old French War" began and though at first favorable to the French, resulted in the loss of Canada. In every campaign the Catholic Indians were in the field, side by side with the Canadian and French soldiers, attended as before by the missionaries as chaplains. The dis-

● An Indian town near the Forks of the Ohio.

astrous defeat of Braddock, which followed next year, was mainly due to the Catholic Huron Anastasius, whose fervor was equal to his valor and skill. Many of the Catholic Indians, some living in the villages of Butler County, fought by his side on that day, among them Atiatonharonkiven, or Louis Cook, and Tehorakwaneken, or Thos. Williams. At this juncture the war brought many Irishmen in the French army. Celebrated is the Irish Legion which fought the campaign of 56 and 57. Some of their number later settled in the new world and were friends of the Indians.

The last attempt made by Father Louis Virot, S. J., to bring the Delawares of the Ohio to the Christian faith failed. During the month of August, 1757, he arrived at one of their villages on the Ohio near the mouth of the Beaver River. "But scarcely had he laid the foundation of his proposed work when he was forced to withdraw by Pakanke, chief of the Wolf branch of that tribe, who lived at Kiskaskunk, a short distance below New Castle. [8] The principle reason of his forced withdrawal, we believe, was a political one. The Delawares were getting tired of the war. They had heard how some of their nation in Easton [9] had already made peace with the English and they, too, were anxious to come to peace, blaming the Shawnees for bringing them the hatchet from the French. They had been told that the English and the French had contrived the war to destroy them, take their land and settle it. This we get from their speech of September 1, to Post: "It is told us that you and the French contrived the war, to waiste the Indians among you; and that you and the French intended to divide the land between you; this was told us by the chief of the Indian traders; and they said, further, brothers, this is the last time we shall come among you, for the French and the English intend to kill all the Indians, and then divide the land among themselves."

For all these reasons the missionary was not welcome among them and being suspicious of both the French and the English they were striving for a strict neutrality to be able to defend their lands. And this brings us to the visit of Christian Frederik Post to the Ohio in 1758, on a message from the Governor of

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[8] Lambing: Foundation stones of a great diocese, p. 58.
[9] The Delawares on the Susquehanna after Armstrong's expedition.

Pennsylvania to the Delaware, Shawnee and Mingo Indians in order to prevail on them to withdraw from the French interest. This Moravian preacher arrived at Cuskusking on the 12th of August and was received by King Beaver with joy. In his Journal he writes:

"Aug. 14th—The people crowded to my house; it was full. We had much talk. The French came, and would speak with me. There were then fifteen of them building houses for the Indians. The captain is gone with fifteen to another town. He can speak the Indian tongue well.

"The Indians say he is a cunning fox; that they get a great deal of goods from the French; and that the French clothe the Indians every year, men women and children, and give them as much powder and lead as they want."

On the 17th he tells us how "Kushkushking is divided into four towns each at a distance from the others; and the whole consists of about ninety houses, and two hundred able warriors." On September 1st, urging King Beaver, his captains and councellors for an answer, he as before fills their ears with many lies and posing as champion of their rights concludes his speech: "I do assure you of mine and the people's honesty. If the French had not been here, the English would not have come; and consider, brothers, whether in such a case, we can always sit still. My brothers, I know you have been wrongly persuaded by many wicked people; for you must know, that there are a great many Papists in the country, in French interest, who appear like gentlemen, and have sent many runaway Irish servants among you, who have put bad notions into your heads, and strengthened you against your brothers, the English." Then he adds a little note: "There are a great number of Irish traders now among the Indians, who have always endeavored to spirit up the Indians against the English." On the 4th of September he repeats the same tirade. In completing his first Journal this preacher of brotherly love describes the Indians as a proud, high-minded people who think themselves the wisest, prudentest people in the world and consider the white nothing at all. Calls them a people that cannot be trusted, full of jealousy, easily affronted who revenge themselves for every imagined injury; distrustful who keep rancor to their graves, and leave the seed

of it in thier children and grandchildren's minds, etc. Yet few days before leaving them, in one of his last addresses to them, he said: "My Indian brothers, I love you from the bottom of my heart."

His testimony in regard to our history stands in so far as it proves that Catholics were at that time found in this territory. The Indian traders used to buy the transported Irish, and convicts as servants to be employed in carrying up the goods among the Indians; many of these ran away from their masters, and joined the Indians. Post's assertion in this respect is highly probable, so much so that it seems to be confirmed by other authorities. Thos. D'Arcy McGee, in his History of the Irish Settlers in North America, says: "It appears that Irish peddlers, or traders, were the most successful in dealing with the Indian tribes." In Western Pennsylvania, "McKee's Place" and "Mahoney" were founded by two traders. In a dramatic piece called "Ponteach or the Savages in America," published at London in 1766, (republished at Boston, in Drake's "Tragedies of the Wilderness") we find the Irish traders introduced as the "dramatis personae." The piece opens with "Act I, Scene I. An Indian trading house; enter McDole (McDowell?) and Murphy, two Indian traders, and their servants." Dr. Parkman judges from the actual knowledge of the wilderness displayed in this piece, "that Major Rogers," the famous pioneer, "had a hand in it." Messrs. McDole and Murphy are plentifully supplied with rum, by administering a preparation of which, they make excellent bargains for furs with the intoxicated men—too true a picture of the time, we fear.

It is possible that the Irish traders being Catholics, as many of the Indians visited by the Jesuit were, a peacable intimacy was more easily established between them. There seems to have been something in the Irish education particularly suited to make Indian traders, interpreters and allies. Indian fighting seems to have come as naturally to our versatile predecessors as trading or translating. More than one Irishman of education was naturalized in the forest, like Stark and Houston, and obeyed as chiefs. Of the number was the strange character known as Tiger Roche, at one time the friend of Chesterfield, and the idol of Dublin drawing-rooms; at another the tattoed leader of an Iroquois war party. A Dublin barrister at

law, and a Fermanagh landlord, went through similar scenes and adventures."

At the beginning of the campaign of 1758, the great despondency and gloom hanging over the prospect of the colonies was making Lord Chesterfield exclaim: "I never saw so dreadful a time." Fortune, however, soon returned to the British side. The expeditions of Amherst against Ticonderoga, Wolfe against Juebec, and Bideaux against Niagara, resulted in the fall of these important fortresses. The fall of fort Frontenac (Kingston) at the northeast end of Lake Ontario, August 27, by cutting off supplies, made it impossible for the French to hold Fort Duquesne long. Already on the 21st of November, when the British were 15 miles from the fort, the French uncovered their houses, about 30 in number, and laid the roofs around the fort in order to set it on fire and made ready to go off. The Indians danced around the fire until midnight for joy of their brethren, the English, coming. On the 24th the French withdrew and the following day, while Armstrong's hand was raising the British flag over the ruins of the fort, Forbes was renaming the place Pittsburgh. With the capitulation of Montreal the English arms ended the domination of the French in Canada. Peace was assured for a while though our settlers and traders among the Indians did not remain long undisturbed. Already in 1760, when Major Rogers was sent to receive possession of the French posts, surrendered to the English, Pontiac, the Ottawa chief, meeting him at Cuyahoga, forbade his further progress. "I stand," said he, "in your path; you can march no further without my permission." The commanding intellect and qualities of this ambitious and vindicative chief, friend of the French, were shown in his great conspiracy for the simultaneous capture of the ten principle posts of the Northwest and the massacre of all the Indian traders. Truly Fort Pitt successfully withstood the most vigorous assault, and Detroit a protracted siege, but Sundusky, St. Joseph, Miami, Onatanon, Mackinaw, Presque Isle, LeBoeuf and Venango fell. Indian war raged then (1763) with savage intensity and with all its horrors along the entire frontier.

The colonies were aroused to meet the emergency and the following year we see Bouquet, not deceived as Bradstreet was, penetrating the interior of the Ohio and at the junction of the White Woman and the Tuscarawas rivers with bold and ener-

getic movements dictate a peace destinated to last until the opening of the great War of Independence. Many unprotected settlers, men, women and children, during this war were massacrated and scalped; many were borne away in dure captivity. Many Irish lost their lives and many returned to the unfriendly Colonies were intransigence was still swaying upon ignorant minds. Verily was not poor Father Virot, then chaplain of the French army, sent to the relief of Fort Niagara and put to rout by the English, permitted to be cut to pieces by the Iroquois? Could not at the very outbreak of the revolution, Carroll in his patriotic errand with Franklin as ambassador to Canada to secure the neutrality of the French Canadians hear his religion publicly insulted and called "a religion which had deluged the British Island in blood and infused impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder, and rebellion through every part of the world?" [91] Were not the Catholic missionaries, who had taken no part in the war, to experience harsh treatment from the Americans during the invasion of Canada? [92] What were Catholics doing in the meanwhile? Not only the French Canadians remained neutral, not only the Catholic Iroquois refused as a body to take up arms against the colonies, even when threatened by Sir Guy Carleton, the English Governor, but many of them actually joined the American army, and we again meet Louis Cook, who fought the English at Braddock's defeat and see him rising to the rank of captain.

The Catholics of the colonies with great ardor shouldered their arms and the whole Irish race and many other Catholics of other European races fearlessly threw their weight into the Colonial scale and from Bunker Hill to the end of the war we find them in the army and in the navy giving their lives for the principle the revolution advocated. Among the many Irish Catholic who served during the revolution we find recorded the name of Hugh Murrin, the pioneer, who later on settled in Butler County, and whose descendants built St. Alphonsus Church in Murrinsville. He had immigrated to America prior to the revolution and served in a New Jersey regiment throughout that struggle for liberty.

Bouquet's victory had not extinguished the Indian feeling of

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[91] Address of the Continental Congress to the British people.
[92] American Archives 11, 302, 244, 1002, 1048; Journal of Prov. Congress 1469.

hostility and, the settlements made on the upper Monongahela before the Indians' title to their land was extinguished aroused their hostility and the result was a series of raids on the frontier and later a new treaty in November, 1768, at Fort Stanwix, N. Y., where the Penns bought from the six nations the territory whose "northern boundary was a line extending from Canoe Point, on the west branch of the Susquehanna River, west by north to the site of the Indian town called Kittanning, on the Allegheny River, thence down along the Allegheny and the Ohio rivers, to the western limits of the province, while its western and southern lines were to be the western and southern boundaries of Pennsylvania, not yet definitely ascertained. In 1771 this region was included in the county of Bedford, but settlements grew so rapidly west of the mountains during the year 1772 that a new frontier county was soon demanded. Thus Westmoreland County was erected. The general settlement of the county west of the Allegheny mountains did not begin until the Pennsylvania land office was open for the granting of warrants in the spring of 1769. At the opening of the revolution the village of Pittsburgh was the largest center of population west of the mountains.

The Indian traders, who to this time were the largest part of its population, were no longer in the majority, though they formed the influential element. With its tavern, its hard drinking traders, and mule drivers, its fugitives from the eastern justice and its frequent Indian visitors, Pittsburgh was a rude and boisterous frontier settlement. In nearly every cabin three articles were to be found: a bible, a rifle and a whiskey jug. These settlers were so occupied in 1774 by their labor in clearing the forest, by the civil contention with Virginia that most of them heard little and thought much less of the eastern agitation against the oppression of the English Parliament. When the news of Lexington, however, reached Pittsburgh the committee of correspondence in Eastern Westmoreland called meetings of the settlers to declare their minds on the sudden crisis. The Pittsburgh meeting unanimously approved the acts of the New Englanders in resisting "the invaders of American rights and privileges to the utmost extreme."

These proceedings gave great offense to Captain Connolly, who early in the year had undertaken to organize the chief men

in Pittsburgh and vicinity in the interest of Great Britain. For two months he remained in the settlement after this meeting, persevering in his endeavor to influence his acquaintances to support the royalist cause and plotting with Indian chiefs to make war on the colonies in the event of an actual revolution. The Indians remained quiet until May, 1776, when at the great council held by Sir Guy Johnson and Colonel John Butler with the Iroquois, at Niagara they decided to fight for the King. Fruitless was Wilson's mission among them, for while he was holding a council at Detroit, Indian bands were already raiding the frontier and all the tribes, the Delawares excepted, were early the following year on the war path. The colonists were, however, successful in signing a treaty with the Delawares, a most remarkable treaty indeed, in which the States entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with this tribe of savages. It has been termed "a gold brick" presented by the white man to his red brethren. In fact, the States recognized that tribe as an independent nation, the integrity of whose territory they were guaranteeing; they were to have representatives in Congress, etc.

It was well that any treaty could be signed with them, for things were getting very serious. In March, 1778, a band of sixteen tories, led by Captain McKee, had left Pittsburgh. These, with their Indian allies, under the leadership of Simon Girty, spread death and terror throughout all the frontier villages; for sixteen years were the merciless scourgers of the border and were largely responsible for the general Indian war of 1790-94. It was against these that General Brodhead led an expedition on August 11, 1779, to strike their principle village, twenty miles above the mouth of the Conewango Creek. In this settlement, which extended for eight miles along the fertile bottom of the Allegheny River and was composed of 130 houses, the troops remained three whole days destroying the town and the cornfields. "I never saw finer corn, although it was planted much thicker than is common with our farmers. The quantity of corn and vegetables destroyed at the several towns must certainly exceed 500 acres, which is the lowest estimate, and the plunder taken is estimated at $3,000." [8] On its return to Fort Pitt the expedition came through the territory of this parish, descending by the Venango trail. Few miles below the present Murrins-

[8] Brodhead's report to Gen. Washington.

ville, in crossing the Slippery Rock Creek, at a point where the bed of the stream was composed of smooth rocks the horse of John Ward slipped and fell, severely injuring the rider. To this accident the Slippery Rock Creek is indebted for its name.

In the treaty of Paris the independence of the colonies was acknowledged and with it the depradations on the border ceased; not, however, before the intense hatred for the Indian flaming in the hearts of the Scotch settlers of Pittsburgh would by the cold-blooded slaughter at Gnadenhuetten [87] show that the policy they had adopted was one of destruction. This criminal raid stirred the savages to a fierce hostility. Hannastown was burned and the first attempt to another raid by the frontiermen costed the friend of Washington, Colonel William Crawford, his life among terrible tortures inflicted chiefly by women and children. The general expedition that was to be led by Gen. Irwing was countermanded when news came on October 23 that the war was at an end. The peace journey of Ephraim Douglas affected peace and the following year, 1784, the commissioners from Pennsylvania at the sixth and last treaty with the Six Nations held at Fort Stanwix, N. Y., purchased the remainder of the Indian lands within the boundary of the State. "Prior to that year, however, the State had set its eyes on the land, actually issuing bills of credit secured by these lands to bankers and soldiers for money advanced by the first and for money earned on the battle field by the second." [88] As a matter of fact, an act of March 12, 1783, had authorized the survey of a large track of land, for which these bills of credit could be offered in payment.

The year of the second treaty of Stanwix marks also a glorious milestone of the Church's advance and work in the States. John Carroll was made the first Bishop of the United States and "administered the Sacrament of Confirmation for the first time in free America." [89] The first Catholic congregation was assembled in Boston and this public acknowledgment was made by President Washington, who addressed the Roman Catholics of U. S.: "I hope to see America among the foremost nations in exemples of justice and liberality. And I presume that

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[87] On that day two score of men, a score of women and 34 children, all Christians and innocent of any crime, were with mallets and hatchets bitten to death.
[88] Hist. of Butler Co., p. 38.
[89] Campbell's Life of Arch. Carroll.

your fellow-citizens will not forget the patriotic part which you took in the accomplishment of their revolution, and the establishment of their government, or the important assistance which they received from a nation in which the Roman Catholic faith is professed." [8] Indeed the number of Catholics was increasing considerably and, the local statistics of the old thirteen States in 1785 show Bishop Carroll's estimate of them in the same year quite too low. Instead of 25,000, 100,000 would be nearer the mark. It is evident that among the pioneers of Western Pennsylvania there were some Catholics, though "on account of the smallness of their number and the lack of priests to minister to them and keep a watch over them, they attracted little attention, and not a few of them lost the faith. These were for the most part at Pittsburgh and on or near the Monongahela as far south as Brownsville. At length the number became so considerable that under the date of July 19, 1785, Rev. Ferdinand Farmer wrote from Philadelphia to the Very Rev. John Carroll of Baltimore: "There is a young man in town from Pittsburgh with a petition to have a visit from a missionary once a year. This is with a joint petition bearing the names of about seventy Roman Catholics living on or about the Monongahela, living in three places, Muddy Creek, Ten Mile Waters, and Shirtee Waters.

At the time that Father Carroll received the application for a periodical visit of a priest to the Catholics of this section, the number at his disposal was too small for him to be able to make any definite promise; and they were left without a shepperd for a few years longer. But about this time missionaries to Kentucky and other western parts were accustomed to come to Brownsville or Pittsburgh to take boat for their destination; and while awaiting the building of boats or a rise in the rivers, would frequently be obliged to spend considerable time, which they would devote to ministering to such Catholic families as they found. The first of these was Rev. Peter Huet de la Vilmiere; next came the Carmelite Father Paul, followed by Rev. Charles Whelan, an Irish Franciscan, who it may be held with a fair degree of certainty was the first priest who celebrated Mass in the diocese after the expulsion of the French." [9]

At the close of the revolution the garrison of Fort Pitt was

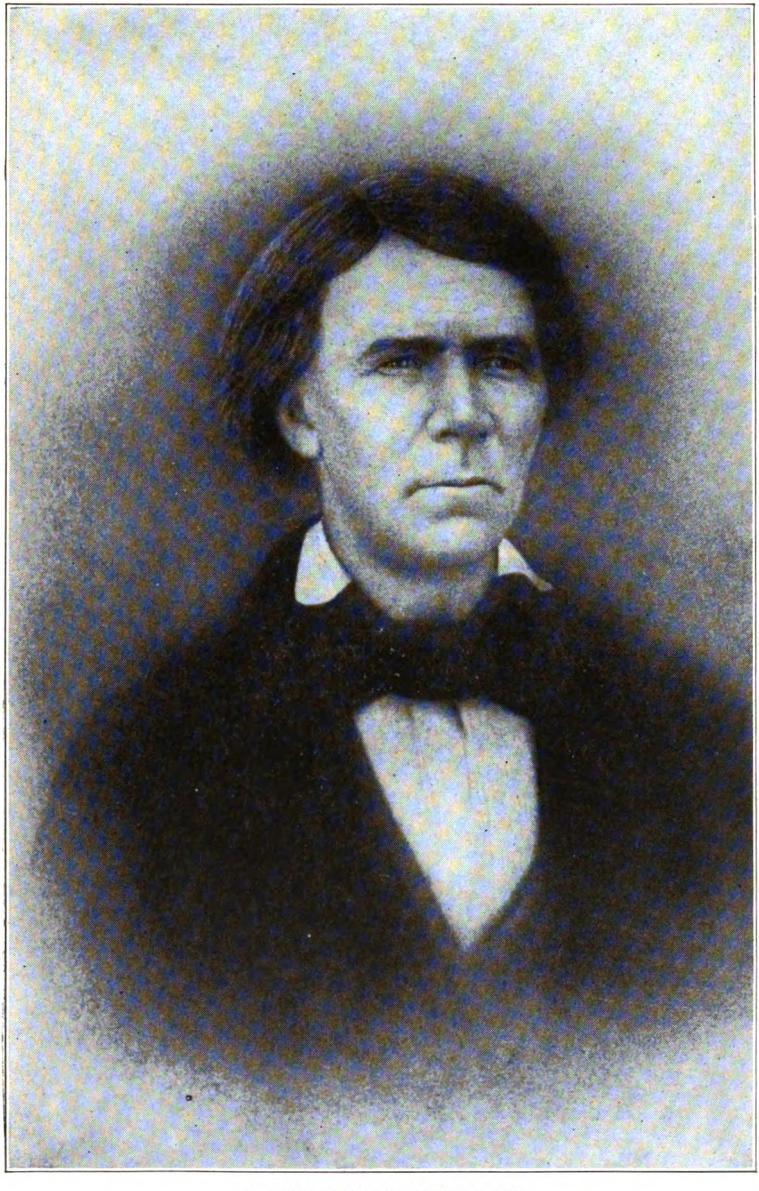
[8] Answer to the Roman Catholics of U. S. of America.
[9] Lambing: Foundation Stones, pp. 59, 61, 62.

reduced to a handful of men. This defenseless state emboldened the Indians who were reluctant to withdraw from the ground they had given up at the last purchase. Their attitude became in 1787 threatening and in the following year the necessity of a new expedition was felt. On this occasion we read how Hugh Murrin was called to arms in the Pennsylvania Archives: "Return of persons names made subject to malitia duty in Huntingdon County, 1788; Capt. James Igoes' Company 144." The names follow and among them there is Hugh Murrin, whom we know was at the time living in Huntingdon County. Whether Hugh Murrin served in this last Indian war we were not able to find out. In the fall of 1790, Gen. Josiah Harmar set out against the Miami Indians, but was defeated. Though the situation was serious and Fort Lafayette had to be built on the east bank of the Allegheny, a half mile above Fort Pitt, which had been permitted to fall into ruin; yet it did not prevent some of the bold pioneers from adventuring into the new land. "The first men who came into Butler County with the purpose of becoming permanent settlers were David Studebaker and Abraham Snyder of Westmoreland County. They crossed the Allegheny River at Logan's Ferry in the autumn of 1709; camped for a night on the site of Butler Borough, and then proceeded to an Indian village, on the Slippery Rock, about two miles of the present site of Jacksville. Here they were entertained by the Indians, with whom they remained about three months, spending the time in hunting and fishing, and exploring the country. They returned to their home, and reported what they had seen and experienced during their absence."[8] Catholics would soon join in this march into the new land. Not only were they growing numerous, but in 1789 the Church had already acquired its first real estate in this part of the State, when six families who had settled in Unity township, Westmoreland County, had purchased an acre and 20 perches of ground in Greensburg and had been visited in June by the Very Rev. Theo. Browers, O. F. M., who in April, 1790, bought the track of land on which the present Archabbey of St. Vincent stands. The year 1791 closed with St. Clair's defeat. Things were growing worse at the frontier, yet the State kept on passing land laws (1792) with homestead and improvement sections, which, on account of the impossibility of effecting a settle-

[8] Hist. of Butler Co.

ment, were for this county null. The above mentioned Studebaker came again in 1792 and, with his sister, settled permanently, taking possession of the little cabin he had previously built. Another who ventured into the wilderness of this territory was a certain Daniel, who came later in 1794, built a cabin near what is now Annandale station, living of the product of the chase and of a little garden to this present time called Daniel's garden; but was soon scared away by some drunken Indian. Alexander McDowell, who was sent as deputy surveyor in this part of the country, found the Indians quite hostile. Two white men had been murdered about twenty miles south of Franklin, within this territory. The same summer Cornplanter notified all surveyors to leave the woods as after September 13th they might be attacked. Thus all settlement was as yet impossible. At length Gen. Anthony Wayne, commander in chief of the United States Army, took up his quarters at Fort Lafayette in 1792, drilling his army with great care and rigor in the Indian warfare. Then after offering peace to the Indians several times, which was always rejected, Wayne marched against them, utterly crushing their power and giving peace and security forever to the frontier.

When the exodus of the Indians began, compelled as they were to leave their hunting grounds forever, the settlers and the land speculators pushed forward, invading the land from every accessible way. Soon the abandoned Indian trails were crowded with pioneers and the forests resounded with the noise of the clearing ax.



LATE JOHN MURRIN

Early Days of Catholicity in Murrinsville

The pioneer Catholics, says Right Rev. Mongr. Lambing in his "History of the Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Allegheny," appeared to have penetrated the western wilds by four different routes. The first of these led through Huntingdon County to Hollidaysburg, where it crossed the main ridge of the Allegheny mountains and entered Westmoreland County. The second led from Conewago, and, entering Huntingdon County in the southeast to Shade Gap, united at the former route, near Hollidaysburg. The third led from Maryland and by it came the settlers of Bellefonte and Loretto, from which the greater part of the congregation of Cambria was formed. The fourth was opened by Gen. Braddock, in his unfortunate expedition against Fort Duquesne in 1755; this route crossed the mountain from Cumberland by way of Uniontown and Youghiogheny, to Pittsburgh. This is known in history as Nenacolin path, so called from an Indian of that name. By this route came the important Irish colony that settled at Donegal township, Butler County, in 1796. But leaving the route at Steward's crossing, now Connellsville, they bore north past Westmoreland County settlement, and from thence, to the Allegheny River, which they crossed at Freeport, and proceeded from that point directly to their destination." By this same route at the very same time, or, perhaps a little later, Hugh Murrin and his sixteen-year-old son James came from the vicinity of Tyrone and Bellefonte. A couple of miles southeast of the present site of Murrinsville they staked their lines, built a cabin, cleared a couple of acres of ground and returned home for the winter. Hugh Murrin was a native of Derry, Ireland, and in his young days came to this country. We have already remarked that he served as a soldier in a New Jersey regiment throughout the struggle for independence. Toward the closing of the revolution he married in New Jersey, Catherine Shaw, who was from the Isle of Jersey, off the coast of England. From this union eight sons were born—James in 1780, Joseph in 1782,

then William, John, Hugh, Fillip, George, and lastly Peter, who was born in Butler County in 1800. The land upon which Hugh Murrin settled belonged to Robert Morris. This man, who was a most active spirit in revolutionary days, had not long before carried on a wholesale system of land purchase in this and other counties. In this county alone he had purchased 311 warrants or orders for surveys, which had been of the men who had served in the Pennsylvania line of the Continental Army, and the area covered by these warrants embraced almost 90,000 acres of ground. Loaded down with real estate, this unfortunate patriot lost all and from 1796 to 1802 was in a debtor's prison. All the Murrin land deeds bear his name. Other Catholic families arrived with the Murrins, prominent among them the families of James Simpson, Patrick McAnallen, Charles McCafferty. Patrick McAnnallen, a native of Ireland, came to the States in 1788. Arriving in Butler County, he purchased 400 acres of ground in Slippery Rock township and reared a family of several children, among whom was Charles, a prominent member of this congregation. Charles McCafferty was born in Donegal County, Ireland, about 1756. He came to this country at an early date and married Miss Williams of Hollidaysburg, Pa. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, he settled on a track of 119 acres in what is now Parker township. These families came, perhaps, with the colony that settled at Donegal. This settlement extended over the northern part of Armstrong County west of the river, and the whole northern part of Butler, and spread itself as time went on.

The daring men and brave women who sought a new field for their industry and came to claim a new home among these hills and valleys found but unbroken forests. The log cabins and churches, the early mills, have long crumbled into ruin and given place to more modern buildings. It was, however, this generation of men and women who lived in log cabins and worshipped in log churches who laid the foundation of the present prosperity in the forest of 200 years ago. They were the sons and daughters of many lands "and not a few were from the older and settled portions of this and other States. These latter who belonged to a class that has constantly grown larger instead of less, were afflicted with earth hunger. They wanted more room and more land than they could secure in their old

homes. They felt too crowded, even in sparsely settled districts, and preferred forest solitude and pioneer perils to the comfort and security of organized society.

It was thus from over the ocean and from the eastern States and older counties of the State itself, that Butler County was first settled. Sturdy men with strong arms and stout hearts felled the forests. Brave women, faithful to every duty of wife and mother, endured the lonliness of the wilderness and met many perils and dangers of every day life, with a fortitude and heroism deserving of immortal remembrance. The sons and daughters reared amid the hard conditions that surrounded them have proven worthy of an ancestry so noted for manly independence, sturdy self-reliance, unremitting industry and incorruptible integrity."[1] By the Indian trail the pioneers penetrated the wilderness. The Indian trail, a "thread of soil" as Holland calls it, a pathway winding across the forest, a "pathway just in front very plain, but twenty feet beyond as absolutely hidden from your eyes as though it were a thousand miles away"[2] kept, unlike our modern roads to the high ground. Extremely crooked and without exception so narrow was the trail that in rainy weather or after a rain the traveler was exposed to the drenching water from the bushes on either side. The packhorse era brought by the need of greater quantities of provisions and merchandise in the west marked the first phase in the building of roads. The bulkier the freight on the sides of the packhorse the more were bushes worn away and by use, wider the blind trail grew.

The wagons had come as far as Pittsburgh, but the days of our pioneers in this part were still the days of trails with long strings of jingling ponies, slowly and patiently traveling through hill and dale, bringing supplies of provisions, powder and tools to the scattered clearings; bringing back furs and peltries to the traders in large settlements. Over the Indian trail through dark, glooming and overheated forests, through which no gust of wind could blow in the hot summer days came our pioneers, their horses packed with whatever they possessed. Little indeed had they to carry into the wilderness, for the migrating element was poor and the period of unsettled business and hard

[1] History of Butler County, page 32 and 43.
[2] Hulbert: Historic Highways V. 11, page 16.

times which for years followed the closing of the revolution had drawn them towards the "West." The entire capital of these pioneers was a little more than the expense of their removal, and high indeed was the price asked by the wagoners going "West" and things could not be carried any further than Pittsburgh by wagon.[3] Perhaps some of the pioneers had teams of their own which dragged sleds or served as pack-horses, but many, on foot traveled the whole distance. In making a settlement in this part of the country no little trouble arose, for the provisions of the act of 1792 gave occasion to much misunderstanding between land speculators and actual settlers. "Some had previously made partial settlements, and had been driven off by the Indians; others were old soldiers, now for the first time able to make their location; and others had purchased for trifle from the generous old soldiers, their titles to numerous tracts; and others came in on their own account, under the general impression that, as no one had been able to complete the five years residence required by the law, they were at liberty to select such tracts as they found untenanted, although some previous settler not yet returned, had made or attempted to make some improvement upon them. In consequence, trouble arose between the companies and the individuals who had previously attempted to make improvements, and the newcomers seeking a home, or speculation in this region. The question was mooted as to whether the former parties had failed to complete their titles to their lands. On the other hand it was claimed "that the conditions of settlements were rendered impossible by the enemies of the United States, and, therefore, it was not necessary to do anything more in order to perfect the titles to all lands on which warrants were actually laid."[4] Thus the first settlers had many difficulties to encounter, but now these vexed questions are at rest and quiet titles to lands can be obtained. The task of making a settlement was a difficult one; the building of a cabin for the family, the "furniturring" of it, the clearing of the land, speak of the labor and the hardships to which the pioneers were subjected and which form a striking contrast with the comforts and luxuries of present

[3] In 1794, during the Whiskey Insurrection in Western Pennsylvania the cost of shipping goods to Pittsburgh by wagon ranged from $5 to $10 per hundred pounds. Salt sold for $5 a bushel, and iron and steel from fifteen to twenty cents per pound in Pittsburgh.

[4] History of Venango County, page 103.

days. Rev. Dr. J. Doddridge furnishes us with the homely narrative of the rude accommodations the first adventurers into this country furnished themselves at the beginning of their establishment. "Trees of uniform size, as nearly as may be, are selected, cut into pieces of the desired length, and carried or hauled to the site of the proposed building. There is, at each corner, an expert hand with an ax to saddle and notch the log. The saddling is done by so hewing the end of the log as to give the upper half the shape of the roof of a building. The notch is then cut into the next log to fit the saddle, and of such depth as to bring the logs together. The usual height was one story. The gable was laid up with logs gradually shortened up to the top or peak, giving the shape or pitch of the roof. On the logs which formed these gables were laid stout poles reaching from one gable to the other, at suitable distances to hold the covering, which consisted of bark pealed from elm or basswood trees. The strips of bark were about four feet long. and about two or three feet wide, and laid in tiers, each lapping on the preceding one, after the manner of shingling. The bark was kept down by a heavy pole laid across each tier and fastened at the ends. Some times, instead of bark a kind of shingle was used, split from straight rifted trees and resembling undressed staves of flour or liquor barrels. These were by some called 'shakes.'

"These were laid about two feet to the weather. They were then fastened down by heavy poles called weight poles, as in the case of bark roofs. At one end of the building a space about eight feet in length and five or six feet in height was cut out, and the space filled with a stone wall, laid in clay or mortar, for a fire place. The chimney resting on props made in various ways was commenced at a proper height above the hearth, very wide, to correspond with the broad fireplace beneath it. It was built with split sticks of timber, resembling a common strip lath, but being much larger. They were laid up in the manner of a cob-house, the chimney being gradually narrowed upward to the top, where its size was about the same as was that of any ordinary brick chimney of a farm house fifty years ago. The inside was plastered with clay or mud and chopped straw, the latter answering the same purpose as hair used in the mortar in plastering the inside walls of the house." This stick chimney or "stick and clay chimney" was far from being fire proof. Fire would sometimes

be communicated to the sticks from soot and alarm the family. A speedy application of water thrown up plentifully inside soon allayed all fear. A doorway was cut through one side of the house and split pieces for doorposts called "door cheeks" were pinned to the end of the logs with wooden pins. For the want of boards to make doors a blanket was used to close the door entrance until boards could be obtained. The hinges and the latch were both made of wood. The latch was raised from the outside by a string passing through the door and fastened to the latch outside. The safety of the family during the night was effected by drawing in the latch string. Floors were made by split slabs, hewed on one side, and were some time called puncheons. For a window a hole was cut in the wall large enough to admit a sash of four or six panes of seven by nine glass. When glass could not be had, the hole was some times closed with greased paper pasted over it. The interstices or cracks between the logs were filled with mud or clay. The larger cracks or chinks, were partly closed with split pieces of wood before the mortar was applied. Immigrants, as a rule, brought no bedsteads. A substitute was made by boring holes in the walls in the corner of the house into which the ends of the poles were fitted. Three corners of the bedstead being thus fastened to the walls, it required but a single post. It now wanted only a cord, which was sometimes made of elm or basswood bark. A view of the internal arrangements of one of these primitive dwellings would be interesting to those who are unacquainted with pioneer life. On entering (supposing it be meal time) the smaller children are seen standing or sitting around a large chest in which some of the more valuable articles had been brought, and which now serves as a table; the parents and older children setting at a table made, perhaps, of a wide puncheon plank, partaking of their plain meal, cooked by a log heap fire. In one corner of the room are one or two small shelves on wooden pins, displaying the table ware, when not in use, consisting a few tea cups and saucers, a few blue edged plates, with a goodly number of pewter plates, perhaps, standing single on their edges leaning against the wall to render the display of table furniture more conspicuous. Underneath the cupboard are seen a few pots, a spider, and perhaps a bake kettle. Nor a sufficient number of chairs—perhaps none — having been brought, the deficiency has been sup-

plied with thre-legged stools, made of puncheon boards. Over the doorway lays the indispensible rifle on two wooden hooks, nailed to a log of the cabin. On the walls hang diverse garments of female attire made of cotton and woolen fabrics, some of which have done long service before their removal hither. Log cabins were lighted in the night time in different ways. In the absence of candles and lamps light was, through the winter season, emitted from the fireplace, where huge logs were kept burning. A kind of substitute for candles were some time prepared by taking a wooden rod ten or twelve inches in length, wrapping around it a strip of cotton or linen cloth, and covering it with tallow pressed on with the hand. These "sluts," as they were sometimes called, afforded light for several nights. Lamps were prepared by dividing a large turnip in the middle, scraping out the inside quite down to the rind, and then inserting a stick about three inches in length in the center so as to stand upright. A strip of linen or cotton cloth was then wrapped around it, and melted lard, or deer's tallow, was poured in until the turnip rind was full, when the lamp was full—lamps of this kind were only occasionally used, more often a dish of refuse grease was used—a rag being inserted and the latter being set on fire, and fed with the melted fat, would afford a sort of dismal light, and yet a more disagreeable odor. By the light of these and other rudely constructed lamps, the women spun and sewed, and men read when books could be obtained, or worked at some implement for household or field use.

When neither lard nor tallow was on hand the large blazing fire supplied the needed light. By these great fireplaces many skeins of thread have been spun, many a yard of linen woven and many a frock and pantaloons made. Living in houses like those described was attended with serious discomfort. A single room served the purposes of kitchen, dining-room, sitting-room, bedroom and parlor. In many families were six, eight or ten children, who were, with their parents, crowded into one room. In one corner was the father and mother's bed, and under it the trundle bed for the smaller children. The larger ones lodged in the chamber which they entered by a ladder in another corner, and some times made tracks to and from their beds in the snow driven through the crevices by the wind. Nor did the roofs, made of bark or shakes, protect them from rain in the summer.

How visitors, who came to spend the night, were disposed of, the reader may easily conceive. Some, as their family increased, added to their houses an additional room of the same size and manner of construction as the former. Such were some of the dwellings and conditions of many of the pioneers of this portion of the State. Many were in a condition, which, for comfort and appearance, were far beneath that described in the foregoing. Immagine the state of those who on foot and with packs on their back, forced their way through the wilderness and tried to improve a piece of land."

The land in this section was covered with a dense and heavy forest. To clear the soil of its timber, required an amount of hard labor, of which many of its present occupants have no adequate conception. Many now living on the hard-earned fortunes of their pioneer fathers and grandfathers could not be induced to enter upon a similar course of labor. The early axes were rude and clumsy affairs of twice or thrice the size, and double to quadruple the weight, of those in use now. The first part of the clearing process was "under-brushing." The bushes and smallest sapplings were cut down nearer the ground and piled in heaps. The trees were then felled, their bodies cut into lengths of twelve to fifteen feet, and the brush and small limbs of the trees were thrown into heaps. After the brush had become thoroughly dry they were burned. As a "good burn" was desirable, a dry time was chosen. The old leaves being dry and covering the ground, the whole field would burn over, and an abundant crop assured.

The next part of the process was "logging or log rolling." This required the associated labor of a number of men, who would in turn, assist each other. The neighbors, on invitation, would attend with their hand-spikes. These were strong poles, about six feet in length, and flattened at the larger end, in order to their being more easily forced under or between the logs. Logs too heavy to be carried, were drawn to the pile by a team (generally oxen) and rolled up on the pole with skidds, one end lying on the ground and the other on the heap. The heaps were then burned and the soil was ready for seed. Most of the logging was done by "bees." A number of the neighbors would come with their teams, attended by a sufficient number of extra hands, and a whole field of several acres would be logged in an

afternoon. At these logging bees, as at a house and barn raising, was generally a two-gallon bottle, perhaps two, filled with whiskey. The virgin soil, as has been observed, was ready for the seed when cleared of its timber. The principal instrument of tillage for several years, was the triangular harrow, usually called drag. This consisted of pieces of timber, hewed before there were mills for sawing about four inches square and six feet long, put together in the form of the letter A. The drag was some times made of a crotched treee, and needed no framing. The teeth made of wood were double and even treble the size of those now used, in order to stand the severe trials they were to undergo. The drag bounded along over stubs and roots and stones, up and down the hillsides, drawn generally by oxen often driven by boys. Before the decay and removal of stumps permitted the use of the graincradle, wheat was cut with the sickel, now a rare instrument. It was then a staple article of merchants, could be found under the names of scores of customers the charge "to one sickle," followed, in many cases, by that other charge "to one gallon whiskey," an article deemed by some as necessary in the harvesting operation as the instrument itself. Trade was greatly restricted by the scarcity of the usual circulating medium.

Few goods were sold for cash. Business was done on the credit and barter system, not only by and with merchants, but between the people. Notes were made payable in grain, lumber, cattle, furs, etc., and sometimes contained the stipulation "at cash price." Almost everything had a cash or a barter, or a credit price. It was, however, not always easy to ascertain the cash price. Merchants often suffered great loss by this system of trade. Among the many hardships of pioneer's life, not the least was the difficulty in procuring bread. For at least two years the settler in the woods must obtain his family supplies chiefly from other sources than his own land. This difficulty is enhanced by the remotedness of his residence from other settlements, where his supplies are to be obtained. Hence, those who settled in this section within the first few years had a severer experience than those who came after a surplus of grain was produced and mills for grinding it were erected at accessible points. An old veteran who came here at the beginning of the century, thus relates his experience: "Me and the woman came out

on foot, driving one little cow, and carrying all our effects on our back.

back. The first year we ate potatoes and slept on good, clean leaves gathered up in the woods. The first wheat I raised, I took a bushel on my back, walked to Pittsburgh, got it ground and carried back the flour." And this was not an uncommon experience. Sometimes they pounded their corn in mortars cut out of stumps. Upon fish and game, the pioneers relied for substance until they could raise vegetables and grains. Whole families for many weeks, even months, tasted not a particle of bread, subsisting upon game and other products of the forest." Ramps or leeks, with which the woods abounded, furnished to some extent food for man and beast. The leaves, which were in some regions, far advanced before the disappearance of the winter's snows, furnished for cattle a valuable pasture ground, and the bulbs, later in the season, were, in time of scarcity, used by the settlers as a substitute for common articles of food. There are probably still living in this county, persons who had eaten many a meal consisting in great part, of cooked leeks. Families, too, lived for weeks on hulled wheat and on meal from corn pounded out at home.

Nearly all the clothing of the early settlers was made from cloths of home manufacture. Long after the country had past its pioneer state, the women carded, spun, wove, colored and fulled the fabrics, and when this was done they made the clothing without the aid of tailors or fashion plates. When more spinning was to be done than the wife could do in addition to her ordinary house work, or where the daughters were too young to help, spinsters were employed to come into families to spin flax in the winter season, and wool in the summer. The price, usually paid these itinerant spinsters was a shilling a day, the day's work ending at nearly bed time. Much dyeing was done in the family. Butter nuts were used to make brown, peach leaves for yellow, and myrtle for the red shade. Nearly all the coats, "warmuses," pants, etc., were made of home spunned goods. When a young man appeared in a suit of "boughten cloth" he was the object of envy to his associates. For many years few, except merchants, lawyers, doctors and some village mechanics wore cloth that had not passed through the hand of the country cloth-dresser. Hence, the early merchants kept small stocks of broadcloths. There

were also itinerant tayloresses who came into families to make up men's and boys' winter clothing. The cutting was done by the village taylor, if a village was near. For a while the pioneers wore moccassins, and then boots and shoes were made of tanned leather. Farmers subsequently got the hides of their slaughtered cattle tanned "on shares," or, if their share was judged insufficient to shoe a whole family, for the tanning and dressing, other means of payment were provided.

Then there was in the neighborhood a circulating shoemaker, who made his early autumnal circuit with its "kit." The children had a happy time during his sojourn, which lasted one, two or more weeks, according to the number of feet to be shoed. The boys who had doffed their old shoes when the winter snows had scarcely disappeared, to enjoy the luxury of going bare-foot, were now no less joyful in the anticipation of new ones to protect their feet from the frosts and early snows. Large boys and girls, when leather was scarce and dear, have been known to go bare-foot the greater part of the year. It was not a rare thing to see girls, as well as boys, not of the poorer families, at Sunday meetings, with feet unshoed. Some made shoes for themselves and their families." As to our pioneers' morals, Dr. Doddridge says: "They had no civil, military or ecclesiastical laws, at least none that were enforced, and yet they were a law unto themselves' as to the leading obligations of our nature in all the relations in which they stood to each other. The turpitude of vice and the majesty of moral virtue were then as apparent as they are now, and they were then regarded with the same sentiments of aversion or respect which they inspire at the present time. Industry, in working and hunting, bravery in war, candor, hospitality and steadiness of deportment, received their full reward of public honor, and public confidence among our rude forefathers as well as among their better instructed and polished descendants. "The punishment which they inflicted upon offenders by the impartial court of public opinion, were well adapted for the reformation of the culprit, or his expulsion from the community. The punishment for idleness, lying, dishonesty, ill fame, generally was that of 'hating the offender out,' as they expressed it. This mode of chastisement was like the 'Atimea' of the Greeks. It was a public expression, in various ways, of a general sentiment of indignation against such as trangressed the moral

maxims of the community to which they belonged. This commonly resulted either in the reformation or banishment of the person against whom it was directed. At house raisings, log rollings and harvest parties every one was expected to do his duty faithfully. A person who did not perform his share of labor on these occasions was designated by the epiteth of 'Lawrence' or some other title still more opprobrious; and when it came to his term to require the like aid from his neighbors the idler soon felt his punishment in their refusal to attend to his calls."

Other Catholic settlements were formed besides Murrinsville, Sugar Creek, Pittsburgh, Sportsman's Hall: Loretto and Waynesburg. Since Capt. Michael McGuire, a hero of the revolution, had come with his family from Maryland and settled on the spot near the present site of Loretto, other pioneers had joined him and formed in a short time quite a Catholic colony. Priests had visited the place every two or three years before an illustrious missionary who spent his life there made his appearance among them. The desire of a Protestant sick woman to see a Catholic priest brought the Rev. Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, the only son of one of the oldest houses of the Russian empire. It was the summer of 1795 when he arrived at Loretto, having been ordained the previous March, renouncing by his elevation to the priesthood the princely inheritance of his father. Ten years after his first visit to Loretto he returned and for forty years labored among them. We shall see how his influence was felt among our early Catholic settlers.

At Sportmann's Hall Father Brouwers on his dying bed had left all his goods to his lawful successor. But when Rev. Lawrence Sylvester Phelan was appointed by Bishop Carroll to take possession of the property found that intruders had preceded him, who, besides appropriating Father Brouwers' effects, had led some of the flock astray. Besides these troubles, some of his congregation left him, being induced to join the settlement, which Father Patrick Lonergan had established in 1796 in Waynesburg, Greene County. We can see how limited, at that time, were the facilities for our pioneers of receiving the consolations of religion. But as the Protestant settlers who had already established a religious center in, and built a church at Harmony in 1800, so also our Catholics established one at what is now St. Patrick Church, Sugar Creek. The pioneers who

established themselves around what is now Murrinsville were actually visited by the first priest who crossed the Allegheny River, the Father Lonergan, spoken of above, who, in 1801, made a tour of this section. Things were gradually improving and we see how in this same year Hugh Murrin established a mill, while William Adams, who had also erected a log grist mill on the Murrin land, the following year added a sawmill, Thos. Coulter also established a sawmill and James Coulter a tannery. James Logue arrived and cleared a large track of land.

By an act of the Legislature of Pennsylvania approved March 12, 1800, Butler County was erected and named after Gen. Richard Butler. The county was divided into four townships—Connoquennessing, Middlesex, Slippery Rock and Buffalo—but remained attached to Allegheny County until 1803. Middlesex and Buffalo were respectively south of Slippery Rock and Connoquennessing. In 1802 the first road in Butler County was authorized and many petitions were soon filled for a sufficient number of roads to open up the county to immigrants and to connect the principal settlements. The next priest to visit the settlement was Father Peter Helbron. He arrived at Sportmann's Hall in November, 1799; "and with his coming begins the real organization of a permanent parish at that place and the establishment of regular missions at Pittsburgh, Brownsville, Sugar Creek, Jacob's Creek and other places.[6] On October 14, 1787, there arrived in Philadelphia from Rotterdam two brothers, members of the Capuchin Order, Rev. John Baptist and Rev. Peter Helbron. These two Fathers, with several others, had been moved to come to America by a letter sent by Paul Miller of Conewago. This letter contained a fervent appeal for missionaries and was published in 1785 in the 'Mainzer Monatsschrift von Geistlichen Sachen.

"Rev. James Pellents followed this appeal by a letter to a friend in Germany, in which he enclosed $300 to defray the expenses of any priest who would come to aid the American missions. Father Peter Helbron is described by Rev. H. G. Ganss in his history of St. Patrick's, Carlyle, Pa., as a man of culture and refinement, particularly neat and precise in his priestly attire and duties; sitting on his horse with a military grace and repose

[6] Foot prints of Catholic Pioneers in Western Pennsylvania by Bishop Regis Canevin.

that formed an unfailing source of admiration to his folk. This accomplishment is easily accounted for by the fact that Father Helbron had done military duty in Prussia before his elevation to the priesthood. A man of that character was sure to write his name and trace his sacerdotal labors in the pages of the history of the Church wherever his ministry was exercised. From his humble log dwelling where St. Vincent Archabbey now stands, about forty miles east of Pittsburgh, Rev. Father Helbron began the missionary career that extended over nearly all of the territory now comprised within the limits of the Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Erie, besides making occasional missionary journeys into those portions of the States of New York, Ohio and Virginia bordering on Western Pennsylvania. In the petition written May 24, 1903, by Conrad Rogers to Right Rev. Bishop Carroll, the Catholics of Butler and Armstrong counties asked that a priest be sent to reside among them. He states that there are two Catholic settlements about eighteen miles apart, and gives the number of heads of families that would help support a priest as follows

Thomas Dugan, John Forquer, John Dugan, John Gillespie, Charles Duffy, Robert Harkins, Neal Dugan, Patrick McLoughlin, Michael Dugan, Dennis Donnel, Patrick Doyle, Owen Quinn, Michael Read, Neal Sweeney, Michael Price, Hugh McElroy, Bernard Kelly, Archibald Black, Patrick Haggerty, Patrick Farren, Patrick Lafferty, Dennis McFadden, John Bonce, Daniel Reed, Neal Daugherty, Andrew Dugan, John Magee, Dennis Dugan, Arthur Donnell, Peter Gallagher, Patrick McBride, Sr., Edward Ferry, Daniel McCue. Matthias Syphers, Charles Sweeney, Bernard Higgins, Neal McClafferty Joseph Henderson, John Durning, John Duffy, Sr., James Daugherty, John Duffy, Jr., James Sheridan, Jacob McGinnlly, Michael Kerivan, Encar McBride, Gasper Easly, Andrew Easly, Patrick McCue, Columbus McGinnlly, William Shields, John Coyle, John Gallagher, John McGinnley, A. Christy, Patrick McBride, Jr., George Dogherty, Francis Duff, Edward McFadden, Major John Welsh, Michael Lynch, John Smith, Edward Cole, Patrick McNulty, Patrick Bahen, Hugh Moran, Michael Kelly, Andrew Haggins, Pater Truxler, Hugh Sharkey, Wm. McLaughlin, Charles McCoy, John Gillespie, Jr., Joseph Bleakley, Peter Cole, Edward McFadden, Jr., Joseph Green, Phillip McKray, John Rogers,

Phillip Hartman, John Griffin, Hugh Gillespie, John McLaughlin, John Collins, John McCafferty, Neal McFadden, Marty O'Bryan, James Benson, Nicholas Walhey, Thos. Conner, Peter Walhey, Charles McCue, Connell Rogers.

To these may be added the following: John Enipich, Neal Murphy, Germiah Callihan, Michael Carven, Hugh Dugan, Robert Hanlin, Daniel Boyle, Eleanor Coyle, Mary Ann Cypher, Peter Croosiks, Charles Hunter, Patrick McElroy." Of these Peter Traxler, a young man, arrived in 1797; Michael Read, Patrick Farren, his son William, born in 1807; Daniel Reed, William Shields, Michael Kelly, Patrick McBride, Peter Cole, Hugh Sharkey, Patrick Bahen, John Rogers, Edward Cole, John Smith, Wm. McLaughlin and Chas. McCoy, lived only a few miles from what is now Murrinsville. This little Catholic community in 1903 held considerable property. Thus we find:

	Acres	Cows	Horses or oxen	Valuation	Taxes
John Conley	300	1	1	$102 00	$ 92
Edward Cole	200	1	1	72 00	63
William Holland	400	1	.	84 00	76
Michael Kelly	400	2	.	88 00	80
John Logue	260	.	1	48 00	43
Patrick McAnnallen	400	3	3	....	....
Charles McCoy (Distillery)	400	4	1	147 00	1 30
William McCullough	....	.	.	132 00	1 18
Hugh Murrin (Distillery)	400	3	1	106 00	95
James Murrin (S. M.)	400	.	.	80 00	1 47
Wm. McLaughlin	400	.	.	120 00	1 08
Robert Reed (Tannery)	200	2	1	194 00	1 75
James Simpson	200	3	1	140 00	1 26
John Smith	100	2	2	64 00	58

Conrad Rogers' letter to Bishop Carroll had the effect that Father Helbron was sent to attend the settlements. The V. R., J. A. Stillinger, thus writes: "In 1803 Father Helbron made his first visit beyond the Allegheny. At Slippery Rock he baptized 18 in one day, and at Buffalo Creek (Sugar Creek) 38." His visit took place in October. The following are the names baptized during his first visit to Slippery Rock as they are extant in the baptismal record preserved in St. Vincent Archabbey:

McKellway, Anna, of Patrick and Anna McKellway, born August 17, baptized October 11. Sponsors, John and Margaret Schmidt (Smith).

Dagourthy, (Dougherty) Sara, of Patrick and Ann

Dagourthy (date of birth is not given) baptized October 11. Sponsors, Patrick McKellway and his daughter, Margaret.

Meckderrly, Anna, of Cornelius and Mary Meckderrly, one year old, baptized October 12. Sponsors, Patrick Ferry and Bridget Mackbraid (McBride).

Meckbraid (McBride) Bridget, of Patrick and Bridget Meckbraid, born April 13, baptized October 16. Sponsors, Cornelius and Mary Meckferry (McCafferty).

Kohl, (Cole) Jacob, of Peter and Catherine Kohl, born February 27, baptized October 16. Sponsors, Juy and Elisabeth Schorthy (Hugh Sharkey).

Lill, (Little) Frank, of James and Elizabeth Lill, born March 25, baptized October 16. Sponsors, Peter and Catherine Kchl (Cole).

Begen, (Bahen) John, of Patrick and Margaret Begen, born June 30, baptized October 16. Sponsors, James and Elisabeth Lill (Little).

Meckelly, (McCullough) Bridget, of William and Catherine Meckelly, born December 8, baptized October 16. Sponsors, Gelaspy (Gillespie) and his wife.

Roger, Peter, of Jonas and Cecilia Roger, born February 5, baptized October 16. Sponsors, John and Catherine Morren (Murrin).

Carry, (Carey) Joseph, of Michael and Margaret Carry, born December 29, baptized October 16. Sponsors, Joseph Morren (Morrin) and Judith Kelly.

Meckennolly (McAnally) Julius, of Patrick and Mary Meckennolly, born December 20, baptized October 16. Sponsors, James Morren (Murrin) and Catherine Meckennolly (McAnally).

Schorthy, (Sharkey) Mary, of Anthony and Bridget Schorthy, born March 28, baptized October 16. Sponsors, John and Anna Wellrock.

Kreen, (Green) Catharine, of James and Genevieve Kreen, born March 22, baptized October 16. Sponsore, Bridget and Antony Schorthy (Sharkey).

Meckuy, (McCoy) Rose, of Joseph and Mary Meckuy, born September 27, baptized October 16. Sponsors, Edward and Judith Kohl (Cole).

Meckenelly, (McAnally) George, of ——— and Mary Meckennelly, born ..... 27, baptized October 16. Sponsors, John and Margaret Schmidt (Smith).

Schmidt, (Smith) Catherine, of John and Margaret Schmid, born June 14, baptized October 16. Sponsors, Michael and Mary Welsch (Walsh).

Grahm, (Graham) Sara, of James and Genevieve Grahm, born May 14, baptized October 16. Sponsors, Edward and Margaret Meckferrly (McCafferty).

From the above lists we can see how a considerable number of Catholic families had already at this early date settled here. "While it seems certain," continues Bishop Canevin,[6] "that Rev. Peter Helbron made in 1803 his first entries of baptisms performed by him at Slippery Rock and Buffalo Creek, there is no doubt that there are names from the Butler and Armstrong counties settlement recorded at Sportmann's Hall, if not in 1801 at least in 1802. It may have been that before a mission was established at Buffalo Creek some of these good people would some times travel forty or fifty miles to be present at the Holy Sacrifice or receive sacraments in the log chapel at Sportmann's Hall."

In 1804 a new subdivision of the county took place, the county being subdivided into thirteen townships. The following year Father Helbron made another visit to this county and his baptismal record contains 84 baptisms from Buffalo and Slippery Rock districts, which he registered indiscriminately. "From a letter of the same missionary to Bishop Carroll, dated Pittsburgh, November 1, 1805," cites Rev. P. Felix, Fellmer O. S. B., "it is evident that St. Patrick's Church, Sugar Creek, Armstrong County, owes its foundation to Father Helbron." He writes: "Concerning Mr. Flinn, 'est vir nullius resolutionis'; he left me at Boufflo, where the congregation bought a place on purpose for the priest, which is not prepared yet and will not so soon be ready to receive the priest. I did all possibility to encourage the people to prepare it at least in one year. Therefore I would be very glad if your Lordship would send Mr. Mahony. . . Mr. Flinn went down the river Ohio perhaps to the monks of La Trappe. . . . He was about five weeks with me without celebrating

[6] Op. Cit.

and preaching but once. I promised to the faithful in this wilderness to come back again in the year hereafter."

"Again on October 22, 1806, he wrote to the same ordinary in Baltimore: "I baptized in one journey 120 children . . . there is in Boufflo a place bought by the Catholics ready to receive a priest. The people promised me to assist him. Mr. Flinn is gone down the river to the Trappists."[7] These are the exact words of Father Helbron, who was not familiar with the English language. In 1805 Father Helbron began a log chapel in Sugar Creek, which was completed in 1806. "The building," Father Lambing says, [8] "was dedicated to St. Patrick, but the date of the dedication and the person who performed the ceremony, if there was such a ceremony at all, have not been placed on record. It was 22 feet long and 35 feet wide, with a little gallery over the entrance; a vestibule was a later addition. There were three little windows on each side and one at each end of the gallery. The little altar stood at the farther end opposite the entrance. The interior was without ceiling, open to the roof and there were no pews. It was standing until a few years ago, when it crumbled into ruins, although the people were frequently urged to take measures to preserve it, but it was put off until it was too late, and its loss is a reproach to the congregation. . . . To this humble house of God came people from ten and fifteen miles from the surrounding country, and not infrequently from a far greater distance. The devotion of the people was truly edifying and was eloquent of the genuine Irish faith, at least in those days of simplicity and fervor, knew how to make sacrifices in the practice of religion. In Lent, whether there was a priest stationed there or not, the people would come from long distances, especially on Good Friday, and leaving their shoes at the door, would make the stations bare-foot, the stations being nothing more than cross marked on the wall with charcoal."

A tradition among the oldest families in this congregation relates that about this time Hugh Murrin erected on his farm, now known as Gormley's farm, a small log church, and it is said that Peter Trexler, one of the workmen, had his leg broken during the process of building. This statement is, however, con-

[7] Records of the American Historical Society of Philadelphia V. 26: n. 4.
[8] Op. cit.

tradicted and even denied by some of the pioneers' descendants. Above the place where this little church is supposed to have been built there still stands a small cemetery which had been used until the time of the erection of the present church. From the considerable number of people who have been buried there we are convinced that the cemetery was used as a burial ground for the little Catholic settlement of 1800 and later. Whether this log church was erected near it or not we are positive that Mass was celebrated by the visiting missionaries in the home of Hugh Murrin, as it was in later years celebrated in the homes of his sons, Joseph and John. In a letter dated June 16, 1807, Father Heibron writes:

"The Rev. Mr. Phelin (Father Lawrence Sylv. Phelan) is gone to Boufflo to take possession of the place for the priest; he was with me and I gave him the best directions and instruction for that country."

It was then in the early part of the year of 1807, that Rev. Father Phelan became the first resident pastor of St. Patrick's, Sugar Creek. Though a missionary center, Murrinsville was visited at this time at distant intervals from Sugar Creek.

Farming, the manufacturing of lumber, was long the occupation of the first settlers. Necessity, which compelled every lumberman in these early days to cultivate the soil, developed the fact that soil which produced valuable crops of timber would, when subdued, produce other crops equally luxuriant. The soil was found to be well adapted to grazing, grain and root raising. The lumbering business, which exhibited its infancy and primitive character for many years, in water mills and single upright saws, began to flourish. Floating lumber to market in rafts was commenced by many of the pioneers in 1801. In 1805, a new trade sprung up, in the boating of seasoned lumber from this district to New Orleans. Joseph Murrin did not relish either of these occupations, so took to working in iron. Cambria County had early in the century a furnace near Loretto. Here Joseph betook himself, and Sundays were happy days when he could go to Father Smith's church. For fourteen years after his ordination Father Galitzin was known to the general public as Father Smith.

Another and, perhaps, more powerful reason was attracting him to Loretto on Sunday. Besides sawmills, grist mills, tan-

neries and other industries which the good Father Smith had at his own expense established for the material benefit of his flock, he was sheltering many orphans, whom, with many other needy among his people, he abundantly supplied with the produce of his intelligently cultivated farm. Among these orphans there was a girl of marriagible age with three younger sisters and one brother. Her name was Catherine Keating; her sisters', Peggy, Elisabeth and Sarah; her brother's, John. Catherine had another suitor; besides, she did not want to part from her sisters and brother. Joseph said the farm was big enough for all of them and gained the approval of Father Galitzin and her consent. Father Galittzin married them and all started for Butler County. John Keating, the brother of Catherine, later left the farm, received part of his education in Emlenton, Pa., and is known now as the late Judge John Keating of Clarion County.

To 1808 Right Rev. John Carroll had been the only Bishop in the United States, residing in Baltimore, the city chosen as the best for the Episcopal see. On April 8, 1808, Baltimore was raised to the dignity of an Archepiscopal see and four new sees were erected, one of which was Philadelphia, embracing the States of Pennsylvania, Delaware and that part of New Jersey at that time known as West Jersey. The first Bishop of Philadelphia was the Right Rev. Michael Egan. He was born and educated in Ireland, joined the Franciscan order and was at one time guardian of the Franciscan convent of St. Isidor in Rome. He came to the United States in 1802, and was stationed in Philadelphia when he was made Bishop. Although appointed in 1808, his Bulls did not arrive until 1810, and he was consecrated October 28 of that year. One of the first acts of Bishop Egan was a pastoral visitation through his extensive diocese. In August, 1811, he visited this part of Pennsylvania, visited Sugar Creek, and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is likely that Bishop Egan was accompanied on his visit to Sugar Creek by Father Wm. O'Brien or Father Helbron, as both are mentioned in his report of this first visit to Western Pennsylvania. Father Phelan was not present, for he had left Sugar Creek at the end of 1810, or about the beginning of 1811.

It fell to the lot of poor Father Helbron, who was advancing in years, to take care of the settlements of Butler County. In this he was coadjuvated by Rev. Wm. Francis Xavier O'Brien,

who had on November 5, 1808, arrived in Pittsburgh and had finished St. Patrick's Church, which Bishop Egan had blessed in the same month of his visitation to Sugar Creek. Father O'Brien had been ordained at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, Md., on June 11, 1808. Father O'Brien, who was of an unassuming character, had a rather delicate constitution and we believe that his visits to this part of the country were not frequent. "It is to be regretted that neither the baptismal nor the marriage register which he kept state where the persons to whom he ministered resided."[9]

It was in order to be able to take the field in the event of war that the military spirit was kept alive after the close of the revolution. Regular muster days were appointed where the citizen soldiery of each district was put through the exercises of active service. In the war of 1812 the Butler County pioneers were well represented. After the proclamation of President Madison a call was issued for all able bodied men to go to Erie, where an attack was anticipated. Settlers ceased their labors and made preparation to leave. At the appeal for reinforcements sent by Commodore Perry to Gen. Mead of Meadville—then commander of the Sixteenth military district—Butler County answered with her full quota of men contributing to the naval victory that followed. This promptness of succor, Perry acknowledged in his letter to Gen Mead. Among those who fought at Erie was George Murrin, the seventh son of Hugh Murrin, who himself was a veteran of the revolution.

On July 22, 1814, Bishop Egan died, and the diocese was until 1820 governed by the Very Rev. Louis De Barth.

The year of 1816 was an eventful one. It was an extremely cold year. During the winter of 1815-16 the snow was unusually deep; for nearly three months the river was closed by ice and the flood of the spring had equalled in destruction that of 1806. There were frosts in every month of the year, the corn was destroyed at each planting, the crops of wheat and potatoes were a failure and farmers had to wear overcoats in the harvest fields. This decidedly cool weather perhaps, caused John Murrin, the fourth son of Hugh, to fall victim to Cupid's fiery darts. The girl was the third of the Keatings to enter the Murrin family.

[9] Lambing, Op. cit.

William had already married Peggy and George, returning from the war, fell later for Sarah. John, as has already been stated, was born in Huntington County and came with his father to Butler County in 1797. He grew to manhood on the farm and obtained such an education as the schools of that period afforded.

In deed prior to 1809 little provision was made by the State for the education of its children. The poorest people had to pay wholly for the tuition of their children, or keep them out of school. And what kind of a school had John Murrin to attend! The first school houses were built of logs and covered with clap boards, which were held to their places by weight poles. Benches were made of split slabs, weighed, and the peg legs raised so high as to keep the scholars feet swinging several inches above the floor. After sawmills were established benches were made of sawed slabs. The writing desk was a slab or board extending along the whole length of one or more of the walls, fastened on long wooden pins driven into auger holes in the logs and slanting downward from the wall. The floor was laid with puncheons, and the cracks between these would furnish ample room for the wind to whistle chilly blasts over the pupils' feet. Above the desk, holes for windows were cut through the walls. or, a log on each side of the room was cut or sawed out; in either case the opening in the winter was covered with greased paper.

Schools were then not regulated by law. Persons could not be compelled to pay for building of school houses and for the service of teachers. These were done voluntarily by the persons interested. They mutually agreed to contribute labor or money interested. They mutually agreed to contribute labor or money money was needed to build a log house. Teachers were paid by those only who sent children to school. A subscription paper, stating the price of tuition per scholar for the term proposed, was circulated and each person affixed to his name the number of children he would send. If a sufficient number were obtained the school would commence. Teachers were sometimes wholly or in part, paid in produce, many of their employers being unable to pay in money. In a letter to the "Independent Press," March 15, 1876, James Mason says: "When we settled in the county the Indians were plenty everywhere, especially in the hunting season. Game of all kind was abundant. The first

school I attended was taught by an old gentleman from over the mountain, and crazy at that. The kind of teachers of those times were generally old worn out coggers, considered fit for nothing else and generally drunkards at that; for I believe I never went to school where the teacher wasn't a hard drinker, but that was the custom of the age.

Our elementary school books were of the original kind for the abecederian a paddle with the letter of the alphabet pasted on it. Next in course "the New England Primer." English grammar was very little attended to, for I suppose few of our teachers could have parsed a sentence; and for women teaching it was little thought of. The course of instruction embraced the primary branches; spelling, reading, writing and common arithmetic, constituted for several years the entire course. The manner of teaching and conducting a school was also defective. Writing, in most of the schools was not requested to be done in any fixed hour, nor by all at the same time. Children could not make their pens, none but goose quills being used, nor indeed were teachers generally competent to do it properly. These pens needed frequently to be mended. To make and mend the pens, and "set copies" for ten or twenty pupils took no small time of the teacher's time, and it was often done during reading and other exercises in which the worst mistakes escaped the teachers observation. Two essential articles of school furniture in the opinion of most teachers were the dunce block, "a pine log about two feet in diameter and a foot high" and a pair of leather spectacles. The scholar who failed to get his lesson perfectly, was pretty sure to mount the block with the spectacles across his nose and as odd and droll as he looked with his eyes through the leather belt, no one would dare to laugh for fear of taking the same place, with perhaps an additional switching about the back, by those ominous looking beechen whips carefully stored in a crack in the floor over head. Young men and women frequently mounted this dreadful block who were too tall to stand erect, because their heads would come in contact with the ceiling above.

This would occasionally bring a suppressed titter from the other scholars, but a blow with a great whip in the hand of the teacher would restore gravity, and make all feel thankful that it was the table and not our backs that received the beating." John Murrin, as the most intelligent citizens and business man of

Butler County were, had graduated from one of these institutions. Through keen observation and reading, however, he succeeded in acquiring knowledge of men and things and arose to be one of the most prominent men in this part of the State. To this man are the Catholics of this section indebted for the construction of the present church. Some may ask the name of the priest who married John Murrin. Tradition does not give his name. Our opinion is that Father Galitzin blessed the wedding. Father Helbron was probably away on account of sickness. Father O'Brien and Father Galitzin remained. Father O'Brien was known to them and perhaps ministered to them, yet, Father Galitzin was dearer to the heart of the Keating girl.

At the end of this same year, 1716, Father O'Brien at Pittsburgh and Galitzin of Loretto were left alone in the vast field of labor lying west of the mountains. Father Helbron, the pathetic figure of pioneer priest, who first had administered to the settlers on the other side of the Allegheny, had passed away. "A tumor appeared," Father Lambing says, "on the side of his neck from which he suffered for a long time, and from which the local physicians could afford him no relief, and he went to Philadelphia hoping that better medical skill might effect a cure; but the doctors informed him that his case was hopeless, and he determined to return and labor until such time as should please God to call him to his rest. It was not to be so; and he died at Carlyle on his way home near the close of the year 1816, at what age has not been ascertained."[18] About two years later Father Charles McGuire, O. S. F., arrived at Sportmann's Hall and remained but a short time. Father O'Brien of St. Patrick's Church, Pittsburgh, being no longer able to continue his labor toward the spring of 1820, retired to Mt. St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg. On November 1, 1832, he died of dropsy at about the age of 50, in St. Mary's College, Baltimore, where he had retired after resigning his place as chaplain of the Carmelite nuns at Port Tobacco, to which office he had been appointed in 1828. Rev. Thomas Heyde of Bedford wrote of Father McGuire: "Moved by the wants of the Catholics of Pittsburgh, he was transferred, or transferred himself thither, for there was no great order in those days—he made the church at Pittsburgh what it is." He must have taken charge of Pittsburgh some time

[18] Op. cit.

during the middle of May, 1820, as his first entry on the church record is dated May 21. Whether Father McGuire administered to this settlement has not been ascertained. The settlement was growing; few new families had settled, among them Jacob Kellerman, who, with his family, came from Huntingdon County in 1818, and James Dugan, who landed from Ireland in 1816, and founded a home here in 1820. In the same year John Murrin was appointed by Governor Wolf justice of the peace, and he retained this office through re-election for over forty years.

Finally a Bishop was found to fill the vacant see of Philadelphia, Henry Conwell, already 73 years of age, and who had to that time been the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Armagh, Ireland, was consecrated in London, England, August 24, 1820, and arrived in Philadelphia November 25. One of his first acts was to appoint the V. R., D. A. Gallitzin of Loretto, Vicar General of Western Pennsyalvania. Later he also named in 1822, Father Ch. McGuire of Pittsburgh Vicar General. He, however, never visited this part of the diocese and few years afterwards on account of his infirmities was relieved of the administration of the diocese, which was then placed in the hands of Very Rev. Wm. Matthews as Vicar-General Apostolic. Bishop Conwell died April 22, 1842, at the age of 94. Father McGuire was succeeded at Sportmann's Hall by Father Terence McGirr, D. D., and this missionary may have attended to the Butler settlements until 1821, when Rev. Charles Ferry took up residence at Sugar Creek. The exact date he came, where he came from, or how long he remained there cannot be ascertained. The only thing we know and that, through Father Lambing, is that "he came to be known as the cross priest, and was blessed with a heavy growth of curly red hair." He must have ministered to our Catholic people here for he was now the nearest priest.

When Father O'Neil arrived at Sugar Creek Father Ferry had already left. Father Patrick O'Neil was appointed to Sugar Creek and its missions about the year 1826. He was born in Ireland in 1795, studied at the College of Picpus in Paris, and was ordained in 1821. Though Sugar Creek was the center of his field of labor he transferred himself for a time at Freeport. The ways of communication were improving and while the ancient mode of traveling to Pittsburgh on horse back or by skiff or flat or raft on the Alegheny was discarded when the first

steamboat, "the Duncan," came up the river in 1826, and afterwards steamboating was a very important and remunerative business, yet another system of travel and transportation was almost at the same time inaugurated which forced the abandonment of the primitive method of transit by the natural ways of the river. This system marks the dividing line between the old and the new order of things, and was the crude beginning of what led up to the present modes of life and habits of thought. What took Father O'Neill to Freeport was the construction of the western division of the Pennsylvania canal, which from Johnstown down the Connemaugh and the Kiskiminetas rivers crossed the Allegheny at about one mile above Freeport and down the western bank of the river it crossed at Allegheny and entered in its basin just beside St. Patrick's Church, Pittsburgh. Many Irish people worked at the construction of the canal and Father O'Neil began visiting the laborers along it to secure the necessary funds for a little church he deemed well to build for their benefit. At the same time he attended to the other missions and to our settlement at regular intervals.

The traveling improvements were not all by water. By land coaches and hacks had supplanted the horseback travel. The McGill Co., which started the operation of a line of mail stages between Pittsburgh and Erie in 1827, was advertising in "the Butler Repository," that their "teams are of the best kind, the accommodation excellent, the coaches easy and substantial and the last not least, careful, attentive and obliging drivers." No one could fully appreciate the stated comfort of the mail coaches and the obliging attention of the drivers as the person who in those days had to go through the trying experiences of a long journey. Roads were also improving and in May, 1828, the post route from Lawrenceburgh to Mercer which still crosses the village of Murrinsville was established. John Murrin on the occasion of the establishment of this road, which crossed its property in all its length, conceived the idea of building a village at the intersection of this road with the other, which was leading from Butler to Franklin. Surveyors, surveying the Lawrenceburg-Mercer road were at hand and he had the place surveyed. Thus Murrinsville was named for him and was located to be on the western slope of the Allegheny-Beaver divide at a point 1440 feet above sea level. On December 19 of the same year a sale of lots was ad-

vertised, which took place in January, 1829. To encourage the people to settle at this point, John Murrin built a house at the crossing of the roads which was used as a hotel for travelers, and later in 1830 in partnership with John Keating ran a store on the north end of the house consisting of a one room building about sixteen feet square.

On February 25, 1830, the Right Rev. Patrick Kenrick was designated coadjutor to Bishop Conwell. He was born December 3, 1796, was ordained at Rome, April 7, 1821, and to the day of his consecration had been superior of the seminary at Bardstown, Ky. He was consecrated Bishop of Arath, coadjutor and administrator of the diocese with right of succession June 6, 1830, arrived in Philadelphia July 7, and started on his first pastoral visitation to this part of the diocese on September 1. The same month of the following year he reached Butler, where, however, he did not officiate. The interior of St. Peter's Church was not finished nor blessed and Father O'Neil visited the place at rare intervals. On the 4th and the 5th of the same month he administered the Sacrament of Confirmation in St. Patrick's Church, Buffalo Creek, to about 300 persons. The following day he writes: "I gave confirmation to 83 persons in the house of Michael McCullock, a very good man, in the town of Lawrenceburgh, in the same county (Butler) 16 miles from the church (Sugar Creek). No Bishop had ever visited this place before, and few Catholics live there; but on this occasion the faithful came (to Lawrenceburgh) from a place called Slippery Rock, and other places 26 miles away." Lawrenceburgh was surveyed and divided into town lots in 1815 for John Parker, who owned the land, and it is now a part of Parker City, or Parker's Landing. Lawrenceburgh proper was on the hill and at that time had no more than three or four houses. The "landing" down in the flat bottom had about as many. Besides Michael McCullock at the time of Bishop Kenrick's visit the families of Charles McCafferty and John , his son, who had married Mary, a daughter of Joseph Murrin, were known to have been there.

The year 1832 spelt famine to the inhabitants of this district. Locusts ravaged the country and destroyed all the crops.

Bishop Kenrick's second vistation to this district and the first to Murrinsville, took place in 1834. He wrote on May 5 to John Murrin in answer, perhaps, to a petition sent to him for a priest

to say Mass regularly at this place. This he could not do for his priests were too few and overworked; thus he remarked the previous year in a letter to the Leopoldine Association, under date of May 7, which we insert in part: "The entire Catholic population of the diocese is about 100,000, and of this number over 25,000 are in Philadelphia. The number of churches already built is 50, and of priests in the entire diocese 38. Both are unfortunately too few for the spiritual need of the Catholic population, which increases daily, a large percentage of which is German descent. The 38 priests are the following: Six Jesuits, two Germans (Kohlmann and Betschter); one Pole (Corvin); one Flamish (Lekeu); two Irish (Carhly and Dougherty); one Franciscan (Father Bonaventure McGuire); two Augustinians (M. Hurley and N. O. Donnell); 29 seculars, namely one Russian (?) (the Prince Gallitzin, who during 30 years has labored most fruitfully in Cambria County for the spread of Catholic doctrine; his mother was German and he received his entire education in Germany); one Hollander (J. C. van den Braak); two Frenchmen (Herard and Foulhouze); one Portuguese (Tolentine de Silva); two Americans (J. Stillinger and A. Cornell), and finally 22 Irish Hughes, Kelly, Donahue, Rafferty, O'Neil, Girr, O'Reily, Curtin, Heyden, Curren, Leavy, Fitzpatrick, Keenon, Owen, Cosker, Kenny, Clency, Commiskey, Bradley, Gegan, Kindelon and Whelan. Many of these missionaries have charge of all counties and some of them, owing to the scarcity of priests have to attend to the spiritual interests of several counties."

Unfortunately, the Father O'Neil here mentioned, was no longer at Sugar Creek. He had never taken kindly to Bishop Kenrick on account of his strong attachment to Bishop Conwell. Bishop Kenrick having rebuked him several times for his passionate language and for other reasons he had retired from the mission, though as late as May 11 was by Bishop Kenrick seen in Freeport. Father O'Neil, we are told, was a man of little less than medium height and well proportioned. He retained the fire of youth to the end of his days. He was well educated and very aggressive by nature as the sermon preached and published in reply to Rev. Isaac Niblock, who had preached against Transubstantiation, well demonstrates. So caustic were some

parts of his analyses that more than one-fourth was cut out by order of Bishop Kenrick and still more by Father McGuire.

From here he went to Illinois, where when advanced in years became the chaplain of the Mercy Hospital, and died on June 15, 1879, in his 84th year. Writing to John Murrin, Bishop Kenrick had, however, promised to visit Murrinsville. After spending five days of visitation in Butler, on May 26 he wrote: "I set out for the town of Murrinsville, going twenty miles through the woods on horseback. My guide on the way was a Mr. Keating, who keeps there a tavern and a general store. I celebrated Mass in the home of Mr. Morrin (Murrin) near the town (which contains only four houses). Mr. Morrin's house is recently built and not yet finished. Thirty-five persons received Holy Communion; thirty were confirmed. A large number of the faithful expected to receive Holy Communion, but they had broken the fast, thinking that they would have the opportunity of receiving the following day. But we had that same afternoon to take the stage on the way to the town of Centreville." Rev. Father Lambing does not speak of the Bishop's visit to Parker, of which we have already spoken and in giving the date of this visitation sets it for May 27. The proper date is the one given above. An account of the Bishop's visit is found in the Catholic Herald of that year. The writer says: "The number of Catholics found here, and the other stations of this direction, far exceeded the Bishop's anticipation and general impression. Although Murrinsville has only four houses, 35 persons received communion and 30 were confirmed. The number of communions would have been doubled had the second day been given to the Catholics of this neighborhood." The description of the village, writes Father Lambing, is almost as true today as it was at that time." The remark may be true though this place is, perhaps, the only one in the diocese that Father Lmbing has never seen. It is probable that during the few hours that Bishop Kenrick was in Murrinsville, the possibility of building a church in this place was discussed by him with some of the members of this little congregation. They could point to the necessity of having a pastor, who would attend to them regularly and instruct the growing generation. The danger of their losing their faith, though it might have been remote, yet instruction was needed for the young and the old. Again were not Protestant communities

growing and building churches all around? As far back as 1807 the Presbyterians in Harrisville had organized, and in this year (1834) the Methodist Episcopal Church was erected. The United Presbyterians had built a church in 1829 in Annandale. Talk was going on that the Presbyterians of Clintonville were to separate from the Church of Scrubbgrass and build one of their own. Why could not the Catholics do so and have a church and a pastor of their own? There was a sufficient number of them and more settlers were coming to this part of the country. Bishop Kenrick must have approved the good idea of building a church though he must have given little encouragement as to the possibility of giving them a priest; Sugar Creek with its two other missions, Butler and Freeport, was also without a pastor.

Few weeks after this visitation Father Patrick Rafferty was appointed pastor at Sugar Creek. He was an energetic man and a "very worthy priest of blameless life" (Kenrick). Bishop Gillmour thus says of him: "Patrick Rafferty was for long a resident of New York; sang in St. Peter's choir; went from there to Mount St. Mary's Emmitsburg, where his brother was studying; there finished his classics and went to St. Mary's, Baltimore, where he was a classmate of Archbishops Hughes and Eccleston." He was ordained October, 1822, being then 31 years of age. After helping Father McGuire in Pittsburgh, he was sent, in 1823, to Brownsville, where he built contemporaneously a church in Brownsville, West Alexandria and Waynesburgh. After working at the different missions attached to Sugar Creek and extending his labors as far as the upper Beaver Valley and Erie, was in March, 1837, transferred to Christ Church, Chambersburgh, Pa. Again he was at St. Patrick's Church, New York, in 1838, and at St. Francis, Philadelphia, in 1841, there he died March 16, 1863, at the age of 73. We do not know who took charge of the church between the first part of March, when Father Lafferty left and the coming of Father Cody.

The fact is that on July 8, 1837, Bishop Kenrick with Father Michael Gallagher, a newly ordained priest, who had traveled with him from Philadelphia, arrived at Buffalo Creek and began to administer the sacraments to the people. On the tenth Father Joseph Cody arrived at the place. He was now to take care of the place, though the Bishop had not as yet made the appointment.

"July, the 12th day," Bishop Kenrick writes, "we were taken through the woods in a heavy wagon; we had dinner with a Mr. Collins, an old man who is living here now 40 years. Towards evening we arrived at the town commonly called Morrinsville (Murrinsville) and we found lodging at the house of Mr. John Murrin. July the 13th and 14th days we celebrated Mass in this (Mr. Murrin's) house. Fifty persons received Holy Communion; twenty-four were confirmed."

He left on the 15th for Butler and on the 16th, he appointed Father Cody to St. Patrick's Church, Buffalo Creek. "I gave him charge also of St. Mary's, in Freeport, and St. Peter's, in the town of Butler, and the care of all the faithful throughout the counties of Mercer and Butler, and in Armstrong County, excepting the congregation at Red Bank" (Kenrick). Father Cody was born in Ireland in the county and town of Kilkenny, some time about 1801. In 1836, he came to this country, entered St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia, and was on May 25, 1837, ordained by Bishop Kenrick. On reaching his destination, this zealous priest set himself to the hard task of building a new church in Sugar Creek to replace the little hewed-log one built long years before, and of attending to the vast territory assigned to him. A good idea of this missionary's laborious work can be had from Father Lambing's writings: "Much of a priest's life in those days, it may well be imagined, was spent on horseback, attending sick calls or visiting missions. It is true that sick calls were not very generally very frequent on account of the limited Catholic population, the simple and healthy habits of the people, and their practical good sense in not running for the priest for every trifling ailment; but, should an epidemic break out his time would be well taken up, and when a call did come it might be from a distance anywhere from five to fifty miles. I remember hearing an old missionary of that section remark that he was in Murrinsville a year and a half and had only one sick call and it was to see an old man who should have died long before.

But Father Cody, like the missionaries of his time, and indeed, the priests of all times, did not stop to consider distances or risks of any kind; he simply went to the field, brought in his horse, if there was no other person to do it for him, saddled him and started. As an instance of his zeal and simplicity, he was called

to see a sick person across the Allegheny River in Clarion County before the days of bridges, and when he came to Waterson's Ferry at the mouth of Red Bank Creek, the bigoted ferryman refused to carry him across, because he was a Romish priest. Urged by the call of duty he determined to overcome the difficulty in a manner that might have cost a person of his inexperience his life. Folding his saddle bags over the saddle, he perched himself upon them and started his horse into the water; and, wading or swimming, or in some way, he succeeded in reaching the other side, and proceeded on his way, letting the sun dry him out as best it could. It was a call of duty and that was with him a point not open to discussion. With the by-paths they had to travel in those early days it was not unusual for the priest and people of his time to lose their way in the dense forests, and remain in the woods, some time during a rainy or stormy night for hours, not only bearing with the inclemency of the weather, but, it might be in no imaginary fear of wild animals. Wild cats were not at all scarce when I lived there in the early 50s, with an occasional bear in winter to vary the monotony . . . The round of the missions was a species of perpetual motion and at first was performed, on horseback with the saddle bags, containing the vestments, wardrobe, perhaps, some catechisms and prayer books and other religious articles, and it may be a few simple medicines for the sick in the back woods. These saddle bags were of leather, formed into two boxes, each perhaps 18 inches long by a foot deep and 8 inches wide, connected over the saddle by a leather band six or eight inches broad. No traveling man's outfit was complete without the saddle bags; but now they are gone and forgotten, like those who made use of them. Mass was, as far as possible, said in the house, or it might be in the barn, or under a tree or in the country school house. . . . Here he was periodically expected and was always welcome; one of the larger boys would look after his horse, and when the roads had been sufficiently improved for a buggy or sleigh, see to it also; the good housewife and her daughters would set his room in order and place the best that could be procured on the table; while the sturdy head of the family would entertain the priest or more correctly, be entertained by him with the latest news. When the evening work was done, and the family came together, duly arrayed

in their best, the priest would dispense general and special information as circumstances might require or curiosity demand; for, like Solomon of old, he was expected to be able to "treat about trees from the cedar of Libanus, unto the hissop that cometh out of the wall, and to discourse of beasts and of fowls, and of creeping things and of fishes." But, mindful of his sacred coming and purpose of his visit he would adroitly manage to mingle wholesome remarks with his general conversations and quietly take notes for future use. In this way the evening would pass away pleasantly and profitably; and the little group never tired, but listened eagerly to the good man's words of wisdom.

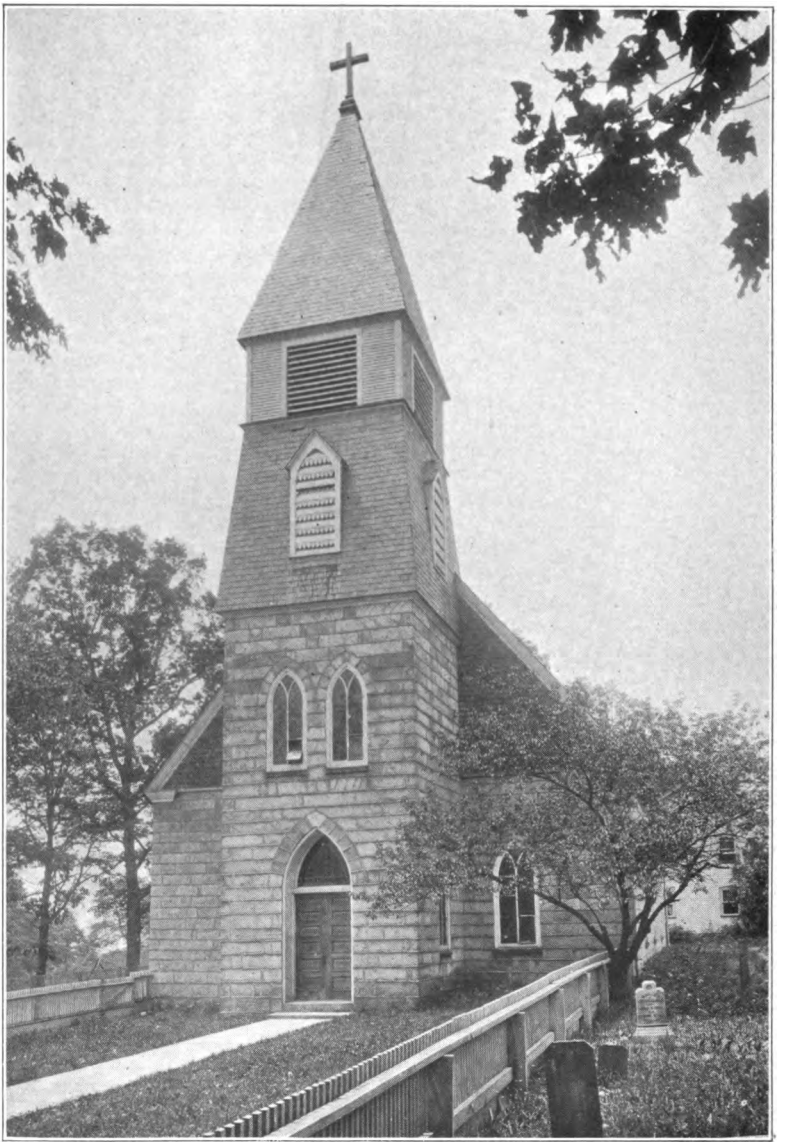
"And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew."

Later the priest would probably be called upon to lead in the recitation of the rosary, before the family retired; for family prayer was then, as it should be always, a leading feature of daily family life. During his whole priestly life Father Cody was a very zealous promoter of this most excellent devotion, although he entertained extreme views on certain points regarding its practice, looking upon it, for example, as a serious fault for a person to lay forward upon the chair at which he knelt or crouch back upon his hills while reciting it. It might be that the priest had still a part of his office to say; the fire in his room must, therefore, be carefully looked after to make it comfortable, a new tallow deep must be set in the carefully polished tin, or it might be brass candlestick, with the snuffers laid conveniently by; and then all was still. In the morning the good man must not be disturbed till he had finished his rest and, perhaps, said a part of his office; for the people lived scattered around and would not be on hand till the forenoon was well advanced. When he appeared the temporary altar would be carefully arranged, confessions would be heard and Mass would begin at any time from eleven to one o'clock. Then came baptisms, the catechising of the children, a variety of extras—for all had to be gone through before the people dispersed, and finally breakfast, which was seldom before two o'clock.

Next a visit might have to be made to some sick or careless person, or a family jar might have to be composed; and,

whether the round of missions lasted for one or for three weeks, the priest at length reached home only to set out in due time to go over the same ground. . . . As a preacher, Father Cody had no ability; it was seldom that he attempted to preach at all, and when he did it was in the simplest language with a wholesome disregard of the rules of grammar or the dictates of Noah Webster; and he always showed that he was conscious of his weakness. But in whatever he said there was an earnestness that made up to no little extent for his lack of eloquence; and besides it was his custom to substitute for the sermon the reading of passages from some pious book, which, as a rule, were judiciously chosen. His strong point was his intense earnestness, which never could be doubted. . . . Father Cody was of medium height, and fairly well proportioned, was not highly gifted by nature, but was very earnest and devoted to his work; was of a temper that was easily ruffled but soon returned to its wanted composure, and he had a high idea of the true dignity of his sacred calling. Though not destined to figure before the world, he did good work in the wide field and his fruits remain." [88] Bishop Kenrick speaks of him as of "a sincere God fearing man of an unassuming, straightforward integrity deserving the highest esteem in which he is held."

[88] Op. cit.



ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH, MURRINSVILLE, PA.

Saint Alphonsus Church, Murrinsville, Pa.

It was Father Cody, who, with John Murrin, designed the means of building the long desired church in Murrinsville. It was also Father Cody who regarding no person put John Murrin through a public penance to which John submitted in Christian spirit. A young couple had come to the conclusion that they had to be married within a day. Either because the priest could not be reached or for some other reason, they went to John, who was justice of the peace, and asked him to marry them. John would not listen to the proposition and used all his influence to induce them to go to the pastor and be married in conformity to the church's laws. They would not listen and threatened to be married by a Protestant preacher. In order to prevent this John married them. The first time Father Cody came to Murrinsville John told him of the function he had performed. Justly indignant the good priest scolded John and would not absolve him in confession until the scandal should be repaired. Mass was said in John's house the next day and John was chased out of his own home and kept outside, some say, on his knees, during the whole service in sign of public penance. John obediently submitted, never speaking a word of comment or excuse. Father Cody was building a new church in Sugar Creek and we suppose that during his visit to Murrinsville he had amply discussed the subject of building a church. He certainly must have given the project all the weight of his authority and encouragement for John Murrin to second and give impulse to the work gave one acre of ground on an elevation located north of the village fronting the Butler-Franklin road.

The ground was given to be used also for cemetery purpose. Indeed a church was needed for the number of families was considerable. There was Hugh Murrin and his wife, the first pioneers, still living, though very old; he 93 and she 86. James, his first son had married Polly Kimes, but had left, having gone down the Ohio to Hanging Rock, Ill. Joseph Murrin, the second

son, had married Catherine Keating, as we have seen, and almost all of his sons, Hugh K., Joseph and John, had married, and the girls, Margaret, Mary and Catherine, had married respectively into the Peoples, McCafferty and Forquer families; Susan remained unmarried. There was William, John and George who had married the Keating girls, and Philip, who had married Nancy Forquer, and all had large families. John had eleven children, George, ten, and Philip, six. Hugh and Peter, who had remained single, were well provided with the goods of this world. Then there were the McCaffertys and the McCulloughs, from Parker; John McNamee and his family of six had arrived in 1836; Cornelius Gormley from Ireland had settled in 1840 in Marion township with his ten children. About the same year, 1840, others had also moved into the community—D. Doyle, Zacharia Fielding, John Forquer, a pioneer of Donegal township; W. Forquer, David Kelly, Thos. McDermott, Hugh and John Kellerman, James Higgins, a pioneer of the place known as Three Points; Andrew and Michael Higgins, Patrick Dudly, Frank Carr, James and Wm. McDevitt, Hugh, Peter, Thomas, William, Patrick and George McLaughlin, John Peoples, Hugh O'Donnel, John Gallagher, James Kane, Patrick Thornberry, John McGinnley, Chas. McGarvey, Wm. and Chas. McGuirk, Wm. McCoy, James Holland, James and Wm. Logue, Patrick O'Conner, Chas. Kenahan, Chas. Haggerty and Chas. Shay. All of these were willing and promised to help to build the church. Yet in spite of their good will, money being scarce, it seemed impossible to finance the undertaking. Things were rather discouraging, but John Murrin again came to the rescue. God had blessed him with health, a good family and had prospered all his enterprises. He was the possessor of a large grist mill a saw mill which had brought him good money, a distillery which besides being a very good paying proposition was furnishing him some real good whiskey.

Land he had; more than he with his numerous teams of horses and oxen could manage. The store and the hotel were accumulating riches for him. His position in the community as justice of the peace, his good judgment, the sound knowledge he had acquired of men and things made him the most trusted man in the community; many left their money with him for safe keeping, and everybody came to John for advice in their troubles

and business transactions. It was right that John should return a little of this wealth to the Lord and use it in giving thanks for the prosperity he was enjoying. So he set to work; it might take years to collect from the congregation the money he was advancing; it matter little. There was some satisfaction in the thought that he, and he alone could then do it. Father Lambing says in the work often cited: "Although the church was contracted for August 23, 1841, work was not commenced until the following April, but the date of its completion and dedication has not been ascertained." We believe that Father Lambing is well founded in citing the date of August 23 as the date in which the work was contracted for. Miss Loretta Murrin, in a sketch of the Murrin family, read at a family reunion in Murrinsville October 21, 1916, thus tells us how John provided for the building of the church. "The stones of which the church is constructed was quarried on his farm. The timber was hewed from the trees of his forests. Other necessary supplies were hauled by his teams from Scrubgrass, the nearest river point, a distance of nine miles. One of these trips is worthy of note. It was in the month of June when he with his son William arrived with some of the pillars which supported the church roof, found that a storm had made sad havoc of his property. A new timber barn was leveled to the ground. The grist mill and the still house were in ruins and the roof was blown off his dwelling house. When they drove down opposite the church building they could see the sights of devastation. The workmen had left the church and were gathered in front of the deroofed house. He called to them: "anybody hurt?" When told that no one was hurt he removed his hat and stood for some moments in prayer. When urged to withdraw the workmen from the church building to repair the damaged property he said: "May be this is to try my faith," and not for a day was the work on the church halted. There were other sacrifices to be made. The workmen were the Shiras from near Washington, the Connors, from the glades, and others from like distances, so it was necessary to give them shelter. In order to do this the family, which consisted of eleven children, was divided. Margaret, the oldest daughter, took several of the small children and went to live in the brick house in the valley, thus making room for the men in the town house." Some of the old people here remember many other things con-

nected with the erection of the church. For instance, how in the absence of men laborers John Murrin set his young folks to work and even the girls had to carry sand and water to the stone masons; how the heavy stones were worked in the cemetery, and from there by means of inclined planes and creepers were carried up and placed on the wall; how again, and this in contradiction to Miss Murrin's ascertion the Mill brothers were the only stone masons working on it. Father Lambing's assertion that the work was not started until the following year is a mistake. Not in those days a solid stone church even of the unassuming architecture and size as the building was could be completed and be ready for the ritual blessing in four months. When the church was rebuilt after the fire of 1893, an opening was made in the front wall in order to annex the vestibule and tower of the present building. Either above or on the side of the old entrance stood a stone with the date November 21, 1841, sculptured on in a rude way. This stone was then removed and placed where it now stands, on the north wall of the tower. This cannot represent the date of the laying of the cornerstone, for it would hardly be located in the side of the church entrance and much less on the top of it as some say was located. To our best knowledge it represents the date in which the stone structure of the building was completed. Whether it does or does not, it signifies, however, that the stone work was either begun or completed on that day. It could hardly be that this kind of work would have begun at a date so late in the season when snow had started to fall; so we believe that the stone work had been completed on November 21, 1841. The work of roofing the building and the finishing of the interior was perhaps resumed the following spring and continued through the early summer of 1842, until the church was blessed; which concords with the time of the accident narrated by Miss Murrin.

On October 27, a month before the completion of the stone structure, Hugh Murrin, Sr., in the good old age of 94, was dying, happy to see his dreams realized and his efforts crowned with the erection of the stone church, which would soon make Murrinsville an independent parish with a resident priest. He, the first of the Catholic settlers in Murrinsville, rests with his wife in the old cemetery on the hill overlooking the ruins that were his homestead.

Good Father Cody was overjoyed when he was notified that within a few days two churches which he had been instrumental in building would be blessed by the Bishop. Bishop Kenrick—who on April 22, 1842, at the death of Bishop Conwell, had become Bishop of Philadelphia—had arrived at Butler on the 28th of July, 1842. Father Cody was no longer attending to Butler, which had become independent in 1840, nor was he attending to Murrinsville. Some time in the early part of 1842 Father Hugh P. Gallagher had been appointed pastor of Butler, Clearfield (Herman) and Murrinsville. July 22 he blessed the cornerstone at Herman. The Bishop and Vicar General O'Connor (the future first Bishop of Pittsburgh) were at Sugar Creek on the 30th. On the 31st the Vicar General blessed Father Cody's new church in solemn fashion, and the Bishop confirmed 136 persons and preached a powerful sermon on "Total Abstinence," which caused 115 persons promise to abstain from intoxicating drinks.

"August the 2d, 1842," writes Bishop Kenrick, "the Vicar General blessed a new church under the invocation of St. Alphonsus in the town of Murrinsville, in Butler County. This church was built at the expense of John Murrins, who had bound himself in writing to transfer to me, to be held in trust, the deed to the property, as soon as the congregation pays him the money which he expended. Fifty-six persons were confirmed." The blessing of the church in Murrinsville took place on the exact date, August 2, as had ben announced in the Catholic Herald of Philadelphia, under date of June 30, 1842. Though no word is mentioned by the Bishop as to the priests who were present at this blessing, we may reasonably infer that both Fathers Cody and Gallagher were present on that day. It was a well known custom of Bishop Kenrick to dedicate churches to the Saint whose feast day occurred at the time of the blessing. This church being blessed August 2, was dedicated to St. Alphonsus Maria De Liguori. There is no doubt that John Murrin had paid practically all the expenses connected with the building of the church. It took him more than seven years to get his money and not until the church had ben paid for was a resident pastor assigned. How often Father Gallagher attended to this place is not known.

Of him we know that he was born in Killigordon, County Donegal, Ireland, on Easter Sunday, March 26, 1815. Shortly after his ordination he was appointed on October 9, 1840, assist-

ant to Father McGinnis of St. Patrick's Church, Pottsville, Pa. He came to Butler in 1842 and remained until August, 1844, when he was made pastor of Loretto, succeeding Father Lemke. He then went to St. Francisco, Cal., in 1852, when, after long years of labor as missionary, organized and built St. Joseph's Church, and on March 10, 1852, died in St. Mary's Hospital, where he retired on account of failing health. As early as July 25, 1835, Bishop Kenrick had from Brownsville written to Rome suggesting to have the diocese of Philadelphia divided and the establishment of a see at Pittsburgh with a Bishop having jurisdiction over the then commonly called "The Western District of Pennsylvania," but it was not until the earnest request of the Bishops of the fifth Provincial Council of Baltimore that Pope Gregory XVI erected the diocese Aug. 8, 1843, as a suffragan of Baltimore. The Right Rev. Michael O'Connor at that time Vicar General of the diocese, and residing at St. Paul, Pittsburgh was chosen as the first Bishop of Pittsburgh. He was born in County Cork, Ireland, September 27, 1810. Entering the Propaganda College he was ordained in Rome, June 1, 1833. After spending some years as vice rector of the Irish College and as professor of Sacred Scripture in the Propaganda, he returned to Ireland, where he was appointed curate of Fermoy and later chaplain of the convent of the Presentation in Doneraile. In 1839, he accepted the rectorship of the Seminary of St. Charles Borromeo, offered to him by Bishop Kenrick, where he remained until he came to Pittsburgh as Vicar General. He was consecrated in Rome August 15, 1843, and arrived in Pittsburgh December 3 of the same year. Describing the diocese at the time of his coming, Bishop O'Connor gives the names of the churches then existing. In the Diocesan Register he thus gives the names of the existing churches in Butler County:

"Butler County, Butler, St. Peter's, stone; Donegal, now North Oakland, St. Joseph's, 1300; Murrinsville, St. Alphonsus, stone, and Clearfield township, now Herman, 500. Rev. H. P. Gallagher."

In the territory comprised in the present diocese there were then no more than twenty churches and a Catholic population of about 20,000. On his dying bed Hugh Murrin, son of the pioneer Hugh, bequeathed a tract of 175 acres of ground to the congregation. The place which has since been in the possession of St.

Alphonsus Church, is known as the "Church Farm," and lies about four miles east of Murrinsville. It is doubtful whether this farm is of any value to the congregation. The rent must be necessarily low; taxes are high and the repairs and the care of the property absorbe the greater part of the income. The timber on it has little or no value, the coal underlying part of it is not of the best and the little oil pumped from the wells never brought much of an income. It is doubtful whether its value will in later years increase as the property is far from railroads and good highways.

The donation, however, is an example of Christian generosity as it was made that the proceeds might help to support the pastor in Murrinsville. Unfortunately this good example has not been followed by any of his descendants and much less by any other member of the congregation. May state here that William Murrin, the brother of Hugh, donated a farm of 247 acres to the diocese of Pittsburgh on condition that an orphan asylum be built on it. This property is located near Jonstown and for many years it has been in the possession of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, the place being now designated Villa Maria. In August, 1844, Father Gallagher was succeeded by Father Michael Joseph Mitchell. Father Mitchell was then a newly ordained priest. He was born in County Longford, Ireland, in March, 1820, and coming to this country in 1838, completed his studies in the Seminary of St. Charles Borromeo and was ordained by Bishop O'Connor March 3, 1844, being the second priest ordained for the Pittsburgh diocese. For three years as pastor of Butler he worked at the numerous stations attached to his parish, among which were Mercer and Murrinsville. Coming to Murrinsville be counted 74 pew renters and organized for the first time the Altar Society. In leaving at a later day he records:

"The proceeds of the Altar Society established in Murrinsville in August 1844, down to August, 1847, inclusively amount to $84.53. The amount of Sunday collections on the whole is $32.78, making the aggregate $117.31. Expenditures out of same $101.66 for different purposes, leaving in hands of treasurer $15.55."

In August Father Mitchell was transferred to Freeport; of him we shall speak later. His successor as pastor of Butler and

attached missions was Father Michael Creedon. Of this priest Father Lambing tells us "that he was a native of Kilworth, County Cork, Ireland, but the date of his birth has not been ascertained. He was an officer in the British army before he studied for the priesthood, and was ordained June 6, 1847. He was sent on the 26th of the same month to Butler to make that town the center of his missionary activity till 1850, in which year his name is not found in the directory; but the next year is met with at Oswego, N. Y., and the year after at Rochester; then he was stationed at Lockport, and again was transferred to Auburn, where he remained till 1861. The next directory, published in 1864, places him at St. Ann's Church, Hornesville, where he exercised the ministry till the time of his death, which took place May 8, 1870, when he was said to be about 50 years of age, though it is highly probable that he was much older."[1]

The church deeds were not as yet in the possession of the Bishop, as has already been stated. The congregation had grown considerably in importance and the people were asking for a resident priest. On the other hand, it seems that Bishop O'Connor had refused to give them a resident priest because the property had not yet been transferred to him, who, according to the church laws, was the only trustee of the congregation. Again, perhaps, John Murrin, who had built the church, had not during these years been able to collect the money he had advanced in building it. Probably it might have been that only then had the congregation succeeded in clearing the debt heaving upon the church. On June 17, 1849, John Murrin had Peter Murrin survey the ground on which the church and cemetery were located and on the 26th of November, 1849, deeded the church and the property to the Right Rev. Bishop O'Connor. The text of the deed follows:

"This indenture made the twenty-sixth day of November, eighteen hundred and forty-nine, between John Murrin of Mercer township, Butler County, of the first part and the Right Rev. O'Connor, D. D., Bishop of the diocese of Pittsburgh, and his successors, in office of the second part, witnessed that the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar unto them well and truly paid by the said party of the sec-

[1] Op. cit.

ond part at or before the dealing and delivering of these presents the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, has granted, bargained, sold, aliened, enforced, released, conveyed and confirmed and by these presents does grant bargain, sell, alien, enforce, release, convey and confirm unto the said party of the second part his successors in office, A. L. L., that piece of land situated in Mercer township, Butler County, on which there is a Catholic church erected beginning at the line of James Mortland's land, running east by the north line of an alley twenty feet south of the church to the graded road, thence north by said road nineteen perches to a post, thence west to the land of James Mortland, thence south by said line to the place of beginning; together with all and singular, the improvements, ways, waters, water courses, rights, liberties, privileges, hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belongs or in any wise appertaining and the reversions and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof and the estate, right, title, interest, property claim demand whatsoever of the said party of the first part in law equity or otherwise howsoever of in and to the same and every part thereof to have and to hold the said piece of land, hereditaments and premises hereby granted or mentioned and intended so to be with the appurtenances unto the said party of the second part and his successors in office to and for the only proper use and benefit of the Roman Catholic congregation of Murrinsville and the surrounding neighborhood for ever; and he, the party of the first part, his heirs, executors and administrators, does by this presents, covenant, grant and agree to and with the said parties of the second part that the said party of the first part, his heirs, all and singular, the hereditaments and premises herein above described and granted well intentioned and intended so to be with the appurtenances unto the said parties of the second part and their successors against him the said party of the first part and his heirs and against all and every other person or persons whomsoever lawfully claiming or to claim the same or any part thereof through him; the said party of the first part reserves only the right of one pew in said church designed by the present Bishop; shall and will warrant and forever defend In witness whereof the said party of the first part to these presents sets his hand and seal dated the day and year first above written.

"JOHN MURRIN.

"Sealed and delivered in presence of us,

"M. CREEDON,

"P. McBRIDE."

It was not, however until the 20th of May, 1850, that this deed was recorded, James I. McJunking being the recorder. Some relate that John Murrin traveled on horseback to Pittsburgh to deliver it to the Bishop in person. At the same time he must have again petitioned the Bishop for a resident priest, for the following month Father Mitchell, of whom we have already spoken was taken from Freeport and sent as first resident pastor to Murrinsville. Great must have been the joy of the good people in welcoming their first pastor. All strived to make him comfortable in their homes, for the congregation had not as yet a parochial residence. Joseph Murrin offered his home to him; the best room in the house was made ready for him, and it seems that everything was provided free of cost during his stay in Murrinsville. Needing a sacristy, Father Mitchell set to work, and in 1851 a little building was added to the church to answer the purpose. During his time, on April 29, 1853, twelve counties embracing the northern part of the Pittsburgh diocese were detached to form the new diocese of Erie. Crawford, Erie, Venango, Warren, McKean, Potter, Clearfield, Jefferson, Clarion, Forest, Elk and Mercer, with an area of about 9,936, leaving Pittsburgh 11,331 square miles. Murrinsville being about four miles south of the Venango County line, remained in the Pittsburgh diocese. Bishop O'Connor was transferred to the new see, but as Right Rev. J. M Young absolutely declined to accept Pittsburgh, Bishop O'Connor after an absence of five months was sent back to this diocese. Some time toward the end of April or the early part of May, 1854, Father Mitchell left Murrinsville. He afterwards labored at Ebensburg; then as pastor of St. Joseph's, New Brighton, Beaver County; then in 1866 he was sent to St. Andrew's, Allegheny, and in 1868 to Loretto, where Right Rev. Lambing, then a newly ordained priest, was sent as his assistant. Later he went to St. Thomas Church, Braddock, his last charge, for failing health compelled him to retire in 1879 to the Mercy Hospital, where on Jan. 11, 1882, he passed away in his 62d year. Father Lambing thus describes him: "Father Mitchell was in more than one respect a remarkable man. In stature he was above medium height and fairly well proportioned.

He was possessed of a very acute and penetrating mind, but strongly inclined to suspicion, criticism and sarcasm, and not disposed to let anything pass unnoticed, quietly bidding his time to make a home thrust with his fearfully incisive language; and it mattered little whether it was friend or foe, he had to suffer, and the more public the occasion the better. He was a man who would be feared and to an extent admired, but hardly loved. In the use of language he had the power of a Junius and prided himself in it and in using it for somewhat similar purposes; and this power of language, so elegant, so precise and so incisive it was dangerous to call into play. A good scholar in sacred and profane lore it is almost certain that he would have been advanced to some high position in the church had be been possessed more fully with the milk of human kindness, the spirit of Francis of Sales."[2] In leaving Murrinsville Fr. Mitchell was succeeded by Father Peter M. Doyle, a native of St. Albans, Vt., where he was born June 24, 1830. He began his studies in the Seminary of Pittsburgh, then in the Seminary of the Lazarists at Barrens, Mo., and completed them in Cincinnati, where Arch. Purcell had ordained him to the priesthood March 11, 1854. His first entry (Easter Communion) is dated April 16, 1854. During this year the final subdivision of Butler County was made into 33 townships, all except three being nearly 24 square miles in area. This subdivision caused some excitement here and a remonstrance was filed by the residents setting forth the disarrangement caused the school district with its sequel of valuable school houses made useless and increased taxes "already heavier than we are able to bear."[3] When the division was made those who opposed it never took kindly to the new order.

It is not known how long Father Doyle remained in Murrinsville. Father Lambing tells us that at about the end of 1856 he was transferred to Huntingdon, Huntingdon County. Under the date of April 8 and until the end of April, 1855 there are entries of Easter Communions in a different handwriting which we believe is not Father Doyle's. But after April there were no entries made until 1864. We were unable to ascertain whether after this date Father Doyle still remained or some one else was here. We

[2] History of Butler County.
[3] History of Venango County.

find in the sketch of St. Alphonsus Church, in the history of Butler County, that Father Thomas O'Farrel attended to Murrinsville from New Castle after Father Doyle left. Of him we know nothing more than the name. It seems to us, however, that Murrinsville was without a pastor and that it was attended as a mission from New Castle, by Father John Clement Farren, who in 1859 had arrived at St. Mary's Church, New Castle. This year is memorable for the great frost which on June 5th and 12th destroyed all the crops.

Rev. S. J. Eaton, writing about it says: "The wheat and the rye were just in blossom, and there was every prospect of a bountiful harvest. But these frosts smote the fields as with the besom of destruction. The evening before, nature smiled, like Eden with beauty and the prospect of plenty; but on Sunday morning the fields were blasted and as though the breath of the Sirocco had swept over them. A deep and heavy gloom settled over the community. The question of bread became exceedingly practical, and the fear arose that multitudes of our citizens would be obliged to leave their homes for a warmer sky and a more genial atmosphere."[4]

The Rev. Peter Hughes was in October of the same year transferred from St. Paul's Cathedral in Pittsburgh, where he had been an assistant since his ordination, and made pastor of Murrinsville. He was born in County Monaghan, Ireland, some time in 1830. Coming to the United States he studied in the Seminary of Philadelphia and was ordained for the Pittsburgh diocese August 15, 1856. He remained for about two years in Murrinsville, after which he was transferred to Huntingdon, from where in July, 1868, he was removed to Wilmore. In October of the same year went to St. Thomas' Church, Braddock, where on the evening of the 25th of November, 1879, he died of cerebro-meningitis in the 50th year of his age. Father Hughes "was above medium height and well proportioned, and was of a sociable disposition; and though a scholar of only moderate attainments, he was very zealous and energetic in the discharge of his ministeral duties. He was a person of very positive views

[4] Op. cit.

and convictions and rather aggressive, and was a strong asserter and maintainer of his rights."[5]

The burden of the administration of the diocese becoming heavy and his health declining, Bishop O'Connor asked for a coadjutor. This having been refused he resigned, and in the summer of 1860 he retired and joined the Jesuit order. Leaving, he appointed his brother James as administrator with the view of securing for him the appointment to the vacant see. The choice, however, fell upon the Rev. Michael Domenec, a Lazarist, born in Spain, December 27, 1816. His consecration took place December 9th, 1860. It is rather puzzling to determine who succeeded Father Hughes in Murrinsville. Father Lambing tells us that Father Hughes came to Murinsville in 1859 and that at the end of about two years he was transferred, his successor being Father Stephen Wall. In the History of Butler County we find Father Thomas Walsh mentioned as his successor. Again Father Lambing tells us that Rev. Thomas Walsh was in September, 1861, transferred from Wilmore to Brady's Bend. "But Father Walsh had also to attend other places, one of which was a chapel at Fairview, some six miles to the north, which he visited at intervals for a time. He also visited Homewood furnace in the Beaver Valley near Wampum, below New Castle, some forty miles distant, riding on horseback and enduring great fatigue. For a time he also paid visits to St. Joseph's Church, Donegal, now North Oakland, about eight miles distant."[6]

Here Murrinsville is not mentioned. Yet we believe that September, 1861, represents the date on which Father Hughes left Murrinsville for Wilmore, succeeding Father Walsh there, who was taking charge of Brady's Bend and other places, among which was Murrinsville. This place we believe was for a time left without a pastor. Father Walsh was born in County Waterford, Ireland, December 22, 1829. He completed his studies in Cincinnati, where on December 23, 1854, was ordained by Arch. Purcell. His first permanent appointment was Willmore, September 1855, then Brady's Bend, where he labored with great

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[5] The well Clarion No. 1, drilled in 1865, became at this date a 25-barrel producer. In July there were 25 producing wells yielding 310 barrels daily. In August, 64 wells; by the middle of November 1,058.

[6] Lambing Op. cit.

industry until he was transferred to Carnegie in April, 1875. Was pastor of Hollidaysburg, then of Ebensburg. In 1888 was at St. John's, Clearfield, Butler County, and at Lilly in 1891. Newry was his last place, for advancing age compelled him to retire. He died January 6, 1898, in the 70th year, in Altoona, where he had made his home with relatives. Bishop Domenec on October 15th, 1861, visited Murrinsville and confirmed a class of 66.

How long long Father Walsh attended this place is uncertain as is also the date in which Father William Ambrose Nolan came as pastor of the place. He was born in Ireland, County Wexford, or Waterford, in 1834; completed his studies at Cincinnati and was ordained by Bishop Purcell July 8, 1859. After assisting at the Cathedral for some time, he was made pastor of the Washington Missions, and was later appointed as pastor to Murrinsville. In 1863 he was transferred to Sharpsburg; in 1866 to Braddock; in 1867 to Dudley and Broad Top; in 1871 to Carnegie, then to Freeport in 1873, finally to St. Paul's Church, Butler, in 1876, where on the 27th of March, 1891, he died of grippe, in his 58th year. "Father Nolan was a little above medium height, slightly heavy in later years, of a puntillious and rather punctious and domineering manner, though in a quiet way, which made his relations with his people at times, specially in his early years, inharmonious. But he was a learned and zealous priest and always ready at the call of duty."[1]

In February, 1863, Rev. John C. Bigham, who had been ordained on the 7th of the month, took charge of this congregation. He was born in Newry, Pa., January 26, 1831, was ordained by Bishop Domenec in Pittsburgh. During his stay in Murrinsville he attended monthly to a little mission at the mouth of Bear Creek, and occasionally at Fairview.

On July 19 of the same year (1863) Squire John Murrin died and was buried with imposing funeral services. He was widely known throughout Western Pennsylvania, and was one of the most prominent men in the State; an ardent democrat, was a candidate of his party for the Legislature, associate judge, etc., and an active member in public affairs. He was the founder of the village of Murrinsville and being a practical Catholic was at the head of the movement that made Murrinsville a parish,

[1] Lambing, Op. cit.

giving liberally of his means towards the erection of the church. Of him we have spoken repeatedly in the course of this history. One more thing we wish to add to show the straightforwardness of his character. It is the tribute paid to him by a man who later in years became prominent in the oil business and openly acknowledged how some of his fortune was made through the honesty of John Murrin. These are the exact words of Samuel P. Irvin of Franklin, Pa., who was negotiating with John Murrin for the sale of a farm which was to have cost him $2,000:

"How was it possible for a man (Irvin) who had but ten dollars to pay the sum of $2,000 for a farm? Just here I desire to pay attribute of respect to the memory of the dead. I refer to John Murrin, Esq., late of Marion township, Butler County, Pa., the only man whom I ever met, and the only one in all my experience in the oil business, whose word was as good as his 'bond.' When I had returned home from the oil region, I carried with me a sealed proposal by another party to pay him (John Murrin) $2,500 for the property which I was to have for $2,000. His remark to me was 'My word is as good as my bond; and since you have been so kind as to carry this letter, you shall have your time to pay for the property.' Peace to his slumbering ashes! May he have his reward and may those who come after him be actuated by the same spirit."

John Murrin and his wife, who had passed away August 31, 1848, sleep side by side in the new cemetery. A common place slab marks his grave where a granite monument should stand to remind the future generation of the generosity of the man who gave Murrinsville its church, a sign of appreciation and gratitude from his fellow Catholics.

On August 18, 1863, Bishop Domenec visited the place again. On this occasion a splendid cavalcade of 70 members of the Men's Sodality met the Bishop at Emlenton and accompanied him as body guard for twelve miles to Murrinsville, where he confirmed a class of twenty-nine.

Father Bigham's last entry dates August 14, 1865, though he must have remained until toward the end of September or the beginning of October. He died while pastor of St. Bridget's Church, Pittsburgh, May 27, 1897. His successor here was Father Patrick Kerr, who was born in County Donegal, Ireland,

about 1831; was ordained in Pittsburgh September 5, 1865, and made his first entry October 12 of the same year. Father Kerr left the last part of June, 1866, and after attending to some other church, he died in retreat at Loretto, September 23, 1872, while he was pastor of St. Agnes's Church, Pittsburgh. Father Chas. Vincent Neeson succeeded Father Kerr and his first entry, a baptism, dates July 1, 1866. He was born in Allegheny, January 15, 1840, and was ordained on the same day with Father Bigham, February 7, 1863. All extant records of this church date back to his coming. Previous to it, no doubt, church records have been kept, yet they were not handed down to us and must have been lost. Bishop Domenic visited Murrinsville on October 1, 1868, and confirmed 65 persons.

We have seen how Bishop Kenrick administered the Sacrament of Confirmation in Lawrenceburg. From 1820 to 1840 a blast furnace built on Bear Creek immediately south of Parker was the principle source of revenue to this little village; but after the blowing out of the furnace the village was again reduced to few houses. Father Bigham, as already stated, and perhaps his predecessor, attended to this place, then commonly called Bear Creek. From the number of communions administered there the number of Catholics as late as the end of 1865 was not more than 18. About this time (October 25) oil was first discovered there, though it did not appear in sufficient quantity until 1869, when the rush to that point became of an immense character.[®] As noted before the "Landing" prior to the first strike, had only half a dozen houses, while Lawrenceburg on the hill, had probably as many more. "As usual on such occasions most of the throng that hastened to the place almost lost their senses in speculation and adventure, and their consciences often went along. The Allegheny Valley Railroad passed up the eastern shore of the river, and a ferry, and in a little time a bridge spanned the stream and facilitated communications. On the narrow bottom and the hill behind it a town of from 2,000 to 3,000 inhabitants sprung up in an incredibly short space of time, and was chartered as Parker City in the fall of 1873."[®]

Splendid houses were reared upon the great bluff that overlooked the city, while public improvement were seen on all sides.

® Lambing, Op. cit.
® Sketch of St. Joseph's Church, South Side, Pittsburgh, Pa.

The new bridge spanning the river proved a great convenience as well as a source of big revenue to the stockholders. This was followed by a narrow gauge railroad, while the great, broad river added largely to the value of the locality. It was in all respect a great town; and prosperity marked it for her own, but it had to meet misfortunes. Three different times it was swept by fire, and the thriving, pushing town was reduced to ashes. Pluck and cash came to the rescue, and after each fire it was not long until every vestige of loss had disappeared and business went on at the old gate. "From 30,000 to 40,000 barrels of oil and even more, frequently changed hands daily and this when it commanded from $3.90 to $4.50 a barrel. Such a population could only be brought together by such an excitement. Many disregarded the restrain of religion, public opinion and nearly everything else, but since men crazed with speculation, disregarded the principles of honesty, and frequent those of prudence as well, virtue was little thought of and hundreds plunged into the deepest depths of immorality, with but the slightest regard even for common decency. Persons accustomed to the ordinary walks of life can not form any adequated idea of the scenes which an oil town presents, and Parker was a little more than a typical oil town. To say all in one word, it presented the wildest excitement of Wall street, the hurry and bustle of Broadway and the immorality of Pentapolis. Such was Parker."[10]

"With the beginning of the excitement," Father Lambing continues, "Catholics came in considerable numbers and in 1869 Rev. Joseph Haney, then pastor of the church at Murrinsville, attended them for a time." The assertion that Father Haney at the beginning of the excitement was pastor at Murrinsville is not correct. Father Neeson was at the time pastor of the place and Father Haney did not come until April, 1870. Again Father Haney did not attend to Parker more than six months, when in December of the same year he was succeeded by Father James P. Tahaney as pastor of Murrinsville. At the same time a certain Father S. J. Herman was appointed pastor of Parker's Landing. Of him we know nothing more than that he organized the congregation and was successful in building a frame church, in which the present congregation still worships. He was succeeded on November 15, 1871, by Father Tahaney, who, taking charge of his new parish left Murrinsville without a pastor. The

[10] Lambing, Op. cit.

financial panic of 1873 affected business considerably, yet the oil was plentiful and the congregation kept on increasing. When Father Tahaney left Parkers November 28, 1875, Father J. Donnelly was appointed pastor, and the following August was given the help of an assistant priest in the person of Father E. Murray. "In the Fall of 1877," again Father Lambing states, "when the congregation had dwindled down considerably, Father Garvey was appointed pastor, a position which he held till May 12, 1879, when he was transferred to Freeport." This, however is incorrect. Fr. Peter Garvey arrived the second week of October, 1877. He and his assistant, Father M. W. Sheedy, reported at the end of the year, 79 baptisms and for the following year 105, thus proving that the congregation had not dwindled down, but had reached its Zenith during his stay. Father Sheedy was succeeded as assistant in Parker by Father Francis P. Ward on November 14, 1878. The following year on May 12, Father Garvey was transferred to Freeport, Father Ward remained until the end of June, and on July 6th, Father Francis McCarthy was taking charge of the place as pastor. The oil interest were growing weaker, the town had been devastated by fire several times, and the prosperity of the people was seriously affected. The exodus of the people began at the end of 1880, and the number of families belonging to the congregation was reduced to one-half. On January 2, 1881, a new pastor was appointed, Father Michael Steger. His successor D. J. Malady who arrived on December 17, 1882 could at the end of the year count only 12 baptisms, a number which was still reduced in 1883 and 1884. On June 28, 1885, J. J. Quigly the last resident pastor of the place, arrived and in July 17, 1886, he made his last entry. Parker was reduced to an insignificant number of families and was attached to Murrinsville from which it is still attended.

We have seen that when Father Tahaney was made pastor of Parker, Murrinsville was left without a pastor, however, some time toward the end of January, 1872, Father Neeson returned as the pastor of this place. He was an active man and during his first administration made many improvements in the Church. At his second coming he resolved to build a parochial residence. There was plenty of money in the country and many of the people received good wages, owing to the nearness to the Parker old fields.

On July 24, one acre of ground adjoining the Church was purchased from Elias Mortland for the consideration of $100; this money Mr. Mortland contributed to the building of the house. The house was contracted for $1,800. This nine-room house cost at its completion including furniture, etc., the sum of $2,500. Some of this money was at hand when the building was started, the best part, however was subscribed and paid within a short time. It was well that this had been done for in 1873, a financial crisis overtook the country and it would have been impossible at the time to finance its erection. Before Father Neeson left, the Shenango and Allegheny Railroad, now known as the Bessemer and Lake Erie had on January 18, 1876, finished its branch line to Hilliard. It was as yet impossible to reach Butler through this line, and not until Aug. 9, 1883, was this link in the Shenango Railroad completed. Any one wishing to go to Butler by train at that time, would have to go to Parker where the railroad was completed and opened to traffic November 15, 1876. The only way to Pittsburgh previous to this date was by taking the train at Emlenton or by crossing the river at Parker. During this year the Pittsburgh diocese was divided and a new diocese was erected at Allegheny to which Bishop Domenec was transferred. A Bishop was nominated for the Pittsburgh diocese in the person of Rev. John Tuigg. He was born in County Cork, Ireland, February 19, 1821, was ordained May 14, 1850. After teaching theology and acting as secretary to the Bishop for a time, and after having commenced in 1853 the building of a Church for the newly organized congregation at St. Bridget was transferred to Altoona where he remained until his elevation to the Episcopate on March 19, 1876.

In the beginning of the year 1876, Father Neeson left Murrinsville and after working faithfully for many years in the diocese, died in Pittsburgh while pastor of St. John the Baptist Church on April 26, 1891 in his 51st year. The first entry made by Father James Francis Tobin successor of Father Neeson is under date December 24, 1876. Father Tobin had come from Ireland where he was born in County Tipperary, some time in 1852. He had been ordained in Pittsburgh, March 4, the year previous to his coming to Murrinsville. He was a zealous man and through his efforts the Church was furnished with many needed things. Six large candlesticks were bought for the new

altar, a new organ, a baptismal font and the stations of the cross. He was the first to have substantial fences built around the cemetery and the Church property which must have involved quite a large expenditure of money.

On September 8, 1870, Bishop Tuigg confirmed a class of 103 persons. On May 4, 1880, Father Tobin left Murrinsville being transferred to St. Mary's of the Mount, Pittsburgh, where he died at the early age of 39. Very little data have been gathered about the pastors who had charge of Murrinsville since 1880.

Rev. Hildebert Patrick Connery who arrived here on May, 1880, was born near Loretto, August 24, 1844, had been ordained at Pittsburgh, December 5, 1876. He remained until the early part of 1881, his last entry dating January 18th. We record his death at the Mercy Hospital, while he was pastor of St. Agnes Church, Pittsburgh, March 2, 1896. His successor was Father Hugh Haggerty, born in County Donegal, Ireland, September 14, 1848, had been ordained at Pittsburgh, February 7, 1872, came to Murrinsville, June 4, 1881, where he labored until the middle of September, 1885. During his time a new altar was installed which remained until 1916. He died at Hollidaysburg rector of St. Mary's Church, January 25, 1887. Father Francis P. Brady succeeded him some time in October, 1885. He was a native of Pittsburgh and had been ordained the previous year at St. Vincent Seminary, Beatty, Pa.

On October 26, 1886, Right Rev. Richard Phelan made his first visitation and confirmed 88 persons. On account of Bishop Tuiggs failing health Father Phelan had been consecrated his coadjutor August 2, 1885, with the right of succession. "He was born at Tralee, near Ballyragget, County Kilkenny, Ireland, January 1, 1828, came to America and the diocese of Pittsburgh in 1849. He was ordained May 4, 1854, served in the sacred ministry for a few months at Cameron Bottom, Indiana County, then at the Cathedral, principally on the missions of the lower Monongahela valley, till he was named pastor of Freeport in September, 1858. For ten years he ministered to this congregation and its numerous out-missions till July 21, 1868, when he was appointed rector of St. Peter Church, Allegheny, to succeed Very Rev. Tobias Mullen, V.G., who was then promoted to the See of Erie. On the death of Bishop Tuigg, December 7, 1889, he succeeded to the title of Bishop of Pittsburgh."[18]

[18] Lambing, Op. cit.

By a bull of July 1, 1889, the See of Allegheny having been suppressed, when Bishop Tuigg died, Bishop Phelan became Bishop of Pittsburgh, which was declared to embrace all the territory of the two dioceses as if no division had been made. Leaving Murrinsville Father Brady writes: "As I had to pay all bills out of receipts there is a large deficit (about $500) due for salary from the Congregation. This deficit or any part of it I do not expect to be ever able to collect." This marks perhaps the beginning of the struggle which has since been going on for the pastors to obtain their salary. Father Brady later served in many places of the diocese, he died while rector of St. Joseph's Church, Sharpsburg, July 10, 1901. He was succeeded here by Father T. J. Morris after January 15, 1889.

During Father Morris' time the oil excitement took place in Murrinsville. The news that oil was struck in this part immediately brought a large crowd of drillers from all parts of Butler and Venango counties. Homes to accommodate these people sprung up within a short time. The roads became congested with traffic and the oil fever pervaded the minds of all. Derricks or "rigs" were built everywhere around the Church property; in the fields, in the woods, back of the Church; the oil fever even assailed the Church committee and a well was drilled in the little space between the church and the house. In spite of the opposition of the pastor, another well was started in the middle of the driveway obstructing all passage. Not even the sanctity of the cemetery was respected. Oil had been struck at a well drilled on the other side of the road opposite the church. Early in the morning the owner expecting to secure more money in the sale of the well, which he had expected to make that day, proceeded to have it shot. A heavy charge of nitro-glicerine was prepared and let down, a remarkable thing then happened. At the very minute the charge was let down the well began to flow with great power, it stopped the charge in its downward way and started it back to the surface. The man who was shooting the well, had just enough time to give the alarm of the approaching danger to those working with him, who fled in panic. Fast as lightning the charge came out of the well, struck the derrick, and a terrible explosion shook the surrounding country. The derrick had disappeared in a thousand fragments, the well with its flowing oil was afire, the church shook to the very

foundation and every window in it as in every house a mile around was smashed by the concussion. Thank Heaven no one had been hurt. One of the men found himself on the other side of the fence, from which he had been many yards distant at the time of the explosion, to this day he cannot tell how and when he made the jump. Another one James Murrin, found himself under a boiler unharmed but a little stunned. The owner of the well got good money for it we believe, but had to pay for the broken windows and they were many.

Father W. C. Dwyer succeeded Father Morris, July 1892. During his time a greater calamity than the breaking of the windows was to overtake the Church. Some time in December, 1892, the congregation had gathered to celebrate the golden jubilee of the church. The edifice had been decorated and a large amount of spruce trimming had been used for the purpose. The decorations had been left until after the holidays. When time came to remove them, they were burnt in the stoves which were placed in the church for heating purpose. Some believe this was the cause of the ensuing fire, though it has never been ascertained. For four or five days a smoldering fire was nursed by the old timber in the roof, when suddenly a great amount of smoke gave the first sign of the conflagration. The church bell which was standing on some kind of a wooden belfry in the back of the church gave the alarm. Men came from every direction, all working at the wells and elsewhere immediately ceased and ran to the succor. The fire could not be located, the great heat however gave sure sign of its threatening proportion. The altar was removed, all other furniture was successfully taken out of the church, the bell descended from its belfry and by that time the whole building was ablaze. The walls remained, blackened by smoke, yet unscathed by the great heat. The church carried some insurance and Bishop Phelan had no trouble collecting it. The work of reconstruction was to begin, but a little dissension had arisen between the pastor and the church committee. Father Dwyer fearing the walls to be too weak to support a roof, suggested that they should be demolished and the stone to be used to build a wall around the church and the cemetery; then a frame church could be built on the old foundation. To this the committee would not agree. Architects were brought from Butler who sustained the opinion that the walls were good

and sound. This disagreement caused a little dissension, until the matter being submitted to Bishop Phelan the restoration of the church was entered upon retaining the old stone walls. Under the superintendency of the pastor and of John Z. and C. G. Murrin the work began. A stone belfry and a vestibule were added to the front of the building, a self-supporting roof was constructed, new windows were donated and practically a new church was built. Father Stephen Wall blessed the church at its completion on December 2, 1893 and the congregation who had on Sundays gathered in a private house, returned to worship in their church.

The year 1894 was a rather calamitous year for the congregation, as it was for all in general in Butler County. The drought of that year as that of 1854 entailed heavy losses upon the farmers. Streams dried up as did all shallow wells, involving the loss of many cattle. It was, however, followed by a long series of bountiful seasons, which partly made up for the damage suffered that year.

In October, 1895, Father Michael Aloysius Frank came. Rev. B. Gerold says, "kind and charitable to a fault, was born at Hollidaysburg, Blair County, Pa., on June 26, 1865. He began his studies at St. Lawrence College at Mt. Calvary, Wis., and finished the same at St. Vincent Seminary, Pa.,. He was appointed assistant to Father Kaufman in St. Joseph's Church, Pa., and was there a little more than a year, when he exchanged position with Rev. B. Gerold in the same capacity at St. Peter's Church, South Side, Pittsburgh, Pa. A short time after the Rev. J. B. Duffner, pastor of St. Peter's Church took charge of the Most Holy Name parish, Troy Hill, Pittsburgh, Pa. Father Frank was also transferred to that parish as assistant. In 1893, he was made pastor of St. Cecilia's Church, Rochester, Pa. In 1895, he was pastor of St. Alphonsus Church, Murrinsville, Pa."[@] Here he remained until July 8, 1896, before leaving, under that date he sums up the notable events occurred during his administration. "Mission was held at Murrinsville from passion the Palm Sunday, 1896. Father Simon, C. P., was director. The mission was very successful, three hundred and fifty received Holy Communion during Easter time, the greatest number in many years. On June 1st the oil lease of Church farm

[@] History of St. Joseph's Church, N. S., Pittsburgh, Pa.

was given to John F. Murrin, for which he gave $200 as bonus. With this money a horse and buggy was bought, (the property of the congregation) and the church property repaired, painted entire hall, study-room, servant's room, parlor and dining-room papered and furnished, bought carpet for parlor and sanctuary, which was all paid by subscription and Altar Society. Started Altar Society about March 1st and it proved to be of great assistance to congregation. For members of Altar Society I offered one Holy Mass per month. All bills paid excepting a few dollars which Altar Society will pay. Left congregation and parochial residence 100 percent better than I found them." On July 11, 1896, he took charge of St. Ann's parish, Castle Shannon, Pa., which had been surrendered by the Passionist Fathers of the South Side into the hands of the Bishop of the diocese. Rev. Father Frank erected a parish house in the same year, which was completed in May, 1897. He also introduced St. Agnes Sisters as teachers of the schools, which had heretofore been conducted by lay teachers. Father Frank departed this life rather suddenly on March 8, 1904.

Father Francis McKenna succeeded him. He was born in Ireland, May 3, 1865, was ordained by Bishop Phelan on December 21, 1888, and arrived in Murrinsville, July 18, 1896, where he remained until October 16, 1898, when he was appointed to Sugar Creek. At present he belongs to the Altoona diocese.

Father Gregory M. Kelly then came. He was born in Pittsburgh, May 25, 1854 and was ordained July 5, 1878 by Bishop Fink at Atchison. He was in Murrinsville until March, 1899, when he left for Myersdale, before leaving he wrote: "Everything settled up-to-date of my departure from Murrinsville in the most satisfactory manner. All I have to say about the people of Murrisville congregation is of the highest character, they are a good religious honest people and a people that will do any thing they can for the priest, at least that is their record with me and I am very sorry to leave them, but glad I leave I am sure with their good will."

Father Charles M. Lyons succeeded him March 16, 1899. He was born in Philadelphia, April 2, 1860, and after completing his studies was ordained at St. Vincent's. In November, 1902 he left Murrinsville for Dawson and the following year died in

Cincinnati on July 11. At the time of his death he was 43 years of age.

His successor was Father Terence McCabe who was born in Ireland, December, 1868. After completing his studies at Maynooth College where on June 19, 1898 he was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Walsh came to America. On Oct. 26, 1902, was made pastor of St. Alphonsus, Murrinsville. He labored with great zeal and was the first pastor to celebrate Mass in Harrisville, Pa., for the benefit of the few English and German speaking families living there and for the colony of Italians who labor in the stone quarries near the place.

On October 8, 1903, Right Rev. Bishop Canevin confirmed a class of 147 persons in Murrinsville. The Right Rev. Bishop Canevin was born in Westmoreland County, Pa., June 5, 1853. He was ordained to the priesthood at St. Vincent's on June 4, 1879. When advancing years made Bishop Phelan feel the need of a coadjutor Rev. Father Canevin the pastor of St. Paul's Cathedral, was chosen and on December 24, 1902, was appointed titular Bishop of Sabrata and coadjutor with the right of succession. His consecration took place February 24, 1903 and he became Bishop of Pittsburgh, Pa., December 20, 1904.

On June 15, 1906, Father McCabe was sent to Freeport, Pa., from there to St. Joseph's Church, Coraopolis, where to this day he remains the beloved pastor of a large congregation. Father Magnus Schaebler succeeded him in Murrinsville. Father Schaebler was born February 14, 1875. He studied at the Gesu College, Philadelphia, and at St. Charles' Seminary, Overbrook, where he was ordained April 17, 1900. After assisting at several churches in this diocese was on June 16, 1906 made pastor of St. Alphonsus Church, Murrinsville. Being succeeded on June 29, 1907 by Father Joseph Rossman, was transferred to St. Theresa's Church, Perrysville and is at present pastor of Holy Angels Church, Hays Station, Pa.

Father Rossman is a native of Altenmettlau, Germany, where he was born in 1878. Coming to this country he completed his theological studies in St. Vincent College, where he was ordained July 7, 1904. Murrinsville was his first pastoral charge and he remained here until the end of December, 1908, when he was made pastor of St. Ursula's Church, Allison Park.

During his stay in Murrinsville, he was of material help in the building of the little church for the benefit of the Catholic families living in Harrisville. The Church was dedicated to St. Anthony by the Rev. Father Ignatius, O. M. Cap., June 13, 1908, and has since been attended by the Herman Fathers. The first pastor was Father Dominic, O. M. Cap., who was succeeded by Father Louis, O. M. Cap., Father Luke, O. M. Cap., Father Gregory, O. M. Cap., Father Bede, O. M. Cap., and at present by Father Rudolph, O. M. Cap. Father Rossman also established a mission in Argentine, attending regularly to it once a month, as did also his successors until the present Church was built.

Father Peter J. McKenna succeeded Father Rossman, December 28, 1908. He was born in Scotland, September 29, 1868. Completed his studies in St. Vincent where he was ordained by Bishop Phelan, July 7, 1900. Leaving Murrinsville, July 6, 1911 he took charge of St. John's Church, Monaca, Pa., and is now the pastor of St. Margaret's Church, New Castle, Pa.

On the second Sunday of July, 1911, Rev. John L. Canova, the present pastor took charge of the congregation. Realizing the necessity of a solid organization to be successful in his work he set about to re-organize the congregation. The Altar Society now consisting of 77 members was re-organized. The Holy Name Society with 44 members, the Young Ladies' Sodality with 16 members, the Sacred Heart League with 80 members, were established and are now prospering. Almost all the members of the congregation belong to some one of these societies and practically every member of the congregation receive the Sacraments monthly. Th Altar Society deserves special mention on account of its great help to the pastor and church. Large sums of money are yearly spent by the members for the altar and the Church. A splendid solid silver Chalice was presented; new sets of expensive green and black vestments, a white and a black cope, a complete set of silver candlesticks for the main altar and rubber matting for the whole church has been furnished by them. The ladies of the Society attend by turn to the altar and pay all the expenses connected with its upkeep. In co-operation with the pastor the several church committees succeeded in making important changes. The cemetery was set in better condition, the tombstones realigned, new fences built, and a cemetery committee appointed, whose duty it is to look after and keep the grounds

in good condition. The parochial residence was remodeled and improved, and the property was inclosed within new fences. The church, the residence and numerous buildings on the property repainted. The surrounding grounds were outlaid and planted in flowers and shrubbery. A new main altar was installed in the church for Easter Sunday, 1916, the side altars were refinished and were by the Young Ladies' Sodality furnished with new brass candlesticks. The congregation is free from debt, the outstanding debt incurred in furnishing the church with a new steam-heating plant having been cleared the first year of Father Canova's administration. Confirmation was administered on July 8, 1914, to a class of 95 persons by the Right Rev. Regis Canevin, assisted by Revs. L. Stenger, A. Leen and V. Marinaro of Butler; Rev. J. Rossman of Allison Park and Rev. Fr. Bede, O. M. Cap. of Hermann. Of the 95 members of this confirmation class, 14 were converts. The latest statistics show 33 families and 120 souls. James A. Murrin, George V. Jamison, Daniel J. Kelly are the members of the present church committee.

The mission at Parker's Landing is attended the first Sunday of the month. Here also considerable changes and improvements have been made. The church property consists of a frame residence and a frame church, with a seating capacity of 300. It is valued at $5,000, and at the present time is free of debt. The building were repaired and painted, the house re-roofed, the interior of the church painted and decorated, a new altar installed and a cement walk around the residence and church was built. The Altar Society and a good choir have been organized. To the Altar Society is principally due the success of the parties given for the benefit of the church, to them also is due the credit of furnishing the church with new sacred vessels, four new sets of vestments and to the faithful care and decoration of the Altar. The present committee consists of Messrs. A. E. Benner, C. P. McCloskey, F. A. Markley and Thomas Jackson. We must acknowledge that to the efforts of these men the splendid condition of the church and property is principally due. The statistics at present show 25 families and about 90 souls.