Submission Guidelines

The Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania solicits and welcomes items for *Gathered Fragments* addressing the culture and history of Catholicism in western Pennsylvania.

*Gathered Fragments* publishes articles and primary sources relating to the parochial, religious, diocesan, and laical history of the Catholic Church in western Pennsylvania. In addition, book and exhibit reviews, news, and other items relating to Catholic history in western Pennsylvania. Genealogical items are also accepted providing they relate to the broader scope of Catholic history in western Pennsylvania. Articles previously published elsewhere will be considered for reprint with appropriate permission of the original publication.

Research articles of 1000 words or greater are accepted, provided notation of sources accompanies the article. Submitters are urged to consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* or the most current edition of Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, for guidelines on proper formatting. Book reviews are requested to be between 750 to 1000 words. Submissions should be sent to: whitet@duq.edu. To send submissions by mail, please submit articles and reviews to P.O. Box 194, Pittsburgh, PA 15230-0194.

News items or other relevant articles of note of any size will also be accepted. Submissions are requested to pertain in some way to the broader theme of Catholicism in western Pennsylvania. These items may also be sent to the above addresses.

Membership Information

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Gathered Fragments

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Just minutes from downtown Pittsburgh, St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Parish reminds visitors of a time when the “men of steel” did not play football at Heinz Field on Sunday afternoons. They labored, instead, in the mills along the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers that together form the Ohio, as well as in the region’s coal mines.

As Pittsburgh celebrates its 250th anniversary this year, St. Nicholas witnesses to the contributions of the tens of thousands of Croatians who left their homeland at the turn of the 20th century to come to the city. The Croatian immigrants brought with them their reputation as strong, hard workers, their commitment to the family, and above all, their faith.

The first church built on the site in the Millvale section was erected in 1900 and destroyed by fire in 1921. One year later, the second and current church was dedicated.

Today, the Romanesque yellow brick church is surrounded by houses in a working-class neighborhood.

In 1937, pastor Franciscan Father Albert Zagar commissioned artist Maxo Vanka (1890-1963) to bring the white walls of the church to life. Vanka, like Father Zagar, hailed from Zagreb, Croatia.

Working day and night, Vanka created 11 tempera murals in just eight weeks. Father Zagar blessed the paintings on June 11, 1937. Vanka’s keystone mural rises above the white altarpiece that houses the tabernacle and, above that, a statue of St. Nicholas. The crowned Mother and Child gaze outward. The Mother of God wears the traditional Croatian colors of red, blue and white. She is not the slender Mary so often depicted on Christmas cards.

She is large and strong. Her hands firmly anchor and support her son. The Child Jesus grasps in one hand a sheaf of wheat and in the other a cluster of grapes. Written on the arch above are Croatian words which translate as “Mary, Queen of Croatians, pray for us.”

Directly below this mural, and on either side of the altarpiece, visitors see Vanka’s paintings depicting the Croatian faith in the homeland and in America. In the mural on the left, a peasant family prays the Angelus in the fields of the old country. To the right, Father Zagar kneels, and behind him stand the weary men of the parish. No longer farmers, they dress in industrial work clothes, carry lunch pails and hold the picks and shovels needed in the mills seen in the far background. One of the men cradles in his hands a miniature St. Nicholas church, which he offers to Our Lady. Four separate murals herald the evangelists.

The image of the Sorrowful Mother links the remaining four paintings. In “The Crucifixion,” the mural above the left side altar, a weeping Mary stands in the foreground as her son hangs on the cross. “The Pietà,” above the right side altar, shows Mary holding her lifeless son. Seven daggers surround her, representing the sorrows foretold by Simeon. The opposite walls in the back of the church echo the sorrow of the grieving mother, but in contemporary settings. In “The Croatian Mother Raises Her Son for War,” women weep over the coffin of a young soldier. In “The Immigrant Mother Raises Her Sons for Industry,” Vanka re-creates a tragic coal mining accident in western Pennsylvania. Bereft mothers bend over the body of a young man; he and his three brothers were among the miners killed.
Vanka returned in 1941 to paint 11 more murals. Reaching high to the ceiling on the north and south walls, images from the Old and New Testaments unfold. The ceiling crowns the church. Against starry skies, Vanka painted Jesus descending into hell and ascending into heaven.

A number of the newer murals reflect Vanka’s heightened sense of injustice and his sadness about war. The Nazis had slaughtered many in his homeland. His native country was splintered. He increasingly saw the hardships that many of the Croatian immigrants faced on the job and in establishing their new way of life.

The ceiling under the choir loft, for example, expresses the futility of war. These murals show Jesus and the Blessed Mother, in separate scenes, placing themselves between armed soldiers.

The contrast between two other murals found on the lower south wall, “Justice” and “Injustice,” startles visitors. While the first figure depicts divine justice, the second personifies justice corrupted. Wearing a gas mask, and holding a bloodied sword, “Injustice” of the 20th century carries scales in which gold outweighs bread.

In “The Capitalist,” located on the side panel under the choir, Vanka appears to recast the story of the rich man and Lazarus. A business executive reads a 1941 stock report, while a sumptuous meal sits before him. Waited on by a servant, the “capitalist” ignores the extended hand of a beggar in the foreground. Vanka contrasts this extreme with “Croatian Family.” In that painting, an immigrant family gives thanks for soup and bread in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Upon completion of the murals, Vanka, who had become a U.S. citizen, said they were his “gift to America” — a gift which has culminated in the church being registered as a National Historic Landmark. This present to his new country and, in particular, to the people of St. Nicholas captures a historic moment in time. More than that, the murals express faith amid struggle.

The church also ministers to the immigrant community who arrived as refugees from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina following the regions’ wars in the 1990s. However, all are welcome, according to the parish’s website, to “come see our murals, and then stay with us for Mass.”
HELPFUL INFORMATION:
St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Parish
24 Maryland Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15209
Visitor Information:
(412) 821-3438
www.stnicholascroatian.com

The Society to Preserve the Millvale Murals of Maxo Vanka
Guided tour information:
(724) 845-2907
www.vankamurals.org

Planning Your Visit:
St. Nicholas is minutes from downtown Pittsburgh, just off the Millvale exit of Route 28.

Sunday Mass is celebrated at noon, with a Mass in Croatian on the second Sunday of each month.
The 6 p.m. Saturday Mass is also offered in English.

1This article appeared originally in the August 31-September 6, 2008 issue of the National Catholic Register. Reprinted with permission. For subscriptions to the Register, call 1-800-421-3230.
Anti-Irish Prejudice ravaged 1800’s Pennsylvania. In 1852 Pennsylvania’s “Know Nothing” Party nominated Columbia County mine official Kimber Cleaver for governor. It proposed public schools have Protestant Bible readings and only Protestant teachers. Farmlands rejected Irish, forced into the worst jobs at coal mines. Bosses paid under $2 per day, banned unions, and promoted Protestants over Catholics. Miners retaliated as the Molly Maguire gang. From 1871-1875, Mollies destroyed ten mines in Locust Gap and Mount Carmel.

In 1866, Frank Gowen persuaded Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court to give the Reading Railroad a vital track system. Gowen became company president and fixed shipping prices to acquire 125,000 coal acres.

Gowen blamed Mollies’ sabotage on the Catholic Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). Miners, mostly Irish, favored the AOH which offered life insurance unlike companies. Allegheny County’s Reverend John Hickey, welcomed it to his church on March 17, 1870, giving ecclesiastical recognition. Its first state convention met in Pittsburgh then. Locust Gap and Mt. Carmel’s AOH president, miner Patrick Hester, was elected tax assessor—and taxed companies.

Gowen’s Pinkerton secret police attacked with vigilantes. In 1874, the Protestant “Chain Gang” shot into a bar to kill Centralia’s AOH president Ned Curley, but killed Michael Lenahan instead. Later it murdered Thomas Dougherty, another Molly.

In 1869, Hester and Ashland’s AOH president Tom Donahue were charged with the murder-robbery of mine boss Alexander Rea on jailed robber James Finnelly’s deathbed confession. Donahue was acquitted. Hester was detained past 2 court sessions and released untried.
In 1876, Pinkertons told Manus Kull, a homeless person jailed for countless robberies: accuse Hester of Rea’s death. Kull agreed, received $1000, and was pardoned to testify.

Next, Pinkertons arrested Hester, AOH Delegate Peter McHugh, and Patrick Tully. Although Rea’s was the only alleged Molly murder in Hester’s Division, the anti-“Papist” press screamed Hester “waded in blood for years.” Judge Elwell picked a Columbia County jury without Irish Catholics or coal towns’ residents. A minister gave jurors a special church sermon against murder.

Rea’s widow, kissing a Protestant Bible, testified Rea was killed alone one Saturday on a highway. Kull testified Hester said Rea carried $18,000 that day and lent a gun. (As tax assessor, Hester knew Rea only delivered wages Fridays.) Kull said Hester wasn’t at the murder, they did not discuss killing Rea, and Donahue wasn’t involved. McHugh, Tully, and trigger-happy Kull drank whisky, and Kull “couldn’t remember” if he or Tully shot first. That made Rea dash, and they killed him. Rea carried $60. They gave Kull an extra share and Hester none.

The Reading’s paid prosecutor Francis Hughes harangued 9 hours on Molly terrorism, telling jurors to send Hester to the “Prince of Darkness.” Judge Elwell instructed that planners of unintentionally deadly robberies are guilty of murder. Jurors convicted the prisoners in under 2 hours. Gowen remarked: “The name of Molly Maguire being attached to a man’s name is sufficient to hang him.”

On October 2, 1877, Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court reviewed Hester’s case in Pittsburgh’s coal-blackened Grant Street courthouse. The Court was in Pittsburgh because that July Pittsburgh’s militia refused to break a strike. Governor Hartranft sent in the National Guard, which shot 49 civilians. Then crowds burned trains for three miles. Allegheny County’s lawyers blamed the riot on soldiers. The New York Times reported: “Up to the time the troops arrived at Pittsburgh not... a stick of wood [was] injured...” But in Gibson’s Son & Co. v. Allegheny County the Court blamed Pittsburgh for not crushing the strike itself: “We see no evidence of any serious attempt upon the part of the local authorities to suppress it at the time of its commencement.” In total, the Court made Allegheny County pay railroads and merchants $2,772,350.
Gowan joined Hughes to argue before the Court against Hester’s appeal. Hester’s lawyers showed the 1860 “Two Term” Act required releasing prisoners not tried within two court sessions. In 1869 the prosecution released Hester three days after his second session in jail without trial. Hester’s lawyers said if the Court would not call this acquittal, theoretically “a prisoner can be re-arrested and imprisoned for the same offence” and “perpetual imprisonment could follow without trial.”

Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Warren Woodward, who was the presiding judge in Reading from 1861-1874, set legal precedent that the Two Term Act did not automatically protect prisoners. Woodward said Hester hadn’t asked to use it for his 1869 release, so the prosecution could re-charge him as easily as it released him.

Next Hester’s lawyers argued “At the time of this trial a strong prejudice existed in this community against the Ancient Order of Hibernians. The [Molly] trials in Schuylkill county had just been concluded and it was impossible to obtain an unprejudiced jury. All that seemed necessary was to find that a prisoner was a ‘Mollie Maguire’ and conviction followed.”

Woodward responded that Judge Elwell’s “instructions upon legal questions were so intelligent and so clear as to make their apprehension and application by the jury free from the chance of mistake or doubt. In relation to the general features of the case, there is nothing, therefore, that requires remark.”

By Pennsylvania Constitution Article 4: “no pardon shall be granted ... except ... after full hearing, upon due public notice and in open session.” Hester’s lawyers said the Pardon Board announced it would not meet on the regularly scheduled hearing date when Kull announced he would apply. Subpoenaed papers showed the Board did not certify any notice was given or meeting convened. Further, Kull’s pardon did not fully restate the penalty to be repealed, including returning stolen property. So they argued Kull’s pardon was void.

Woodward: “Upon irregularities and omissions of form such as these, it was proposed that County judges... should... annul the deliberate action of the governor taken in the execution of a constitutional power expressly conferred. There was no allegation that the pardon was obtained by fraud.” i.e., the Constitution let the governor pardon Kull, so County judges could not void this unconstitutionally enacted pardon. Although the Court upheld Hester’s conviction, his wife and a priest gathered 2,500 signatures for a pardon. Denied.
On March 25, 1878, Hester comforted his wife and 4 shrieking daughters. Tully’s wife whispered, “I have nothing left now but me broken heart.” For hours the prisoners, knelt, prayed, celebrated High Mass and the Eucharist. McHugh, Hester, and Tully, entered the jail yard carrying large wood, ivory, and bronze crucifixes, followed by Fathers Koch, McGovern, and Schluter. Three thousand drunken, festive farmers watched. Mrs. Kahler remembered: “no sympathy for Hester amongst the Protestant people in the town because he took that man’s life.”

The prisoners prayed five minutes at the scaffold. Each held a cross in front of his eyes, kissed it, forgave his enemies, and asked forgiveness of all his sins. Hester said “I forgive all my enemies and hope God will do the same,” then declared: “I did not plot the murder of Rea.”

Gowen’s police strapped their legs. The drop was too short to break necks. Hester breathed heavily, convulsed. Three hearts took nine to twelve minutes to stop. Crowds stole Hester’s ring and prayer book when the corpses were released. After High Mass at St. Joseph church, Locust Gap, 2500 miners attended Hester’s burial in St. Mary’s Cemetery. 500 attended Tully’s funeral by a candlelit alter in his squalid shanty. Wilkesbarre’s Catholic cemetery interred him and McHugh.

From the Society Archives: "Daugherty's Cemetery: An Interesting Historical Sketch of a Region in Beaver County"

FRANK T. COVERT

The following selection is taken from the Archives of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pa. Complied by Beaver County attorney Frank T. Covert, this selection provides a short history of the first Catholic cemetery in Beaver County, Daugherty's Cemetery near Beaver, Pa. For the complete account, please see Folder 21, Box 13, Series 12 of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania Collection at the University Archives at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pa.

The graveyard, more familiarly known as Daugherty's Cemetery, located at the junction of the Three Degree and Harmony roads in Daugherty township two miles from New Brighton and about the same distance from Rochester, Beaver Co., Pa., was one of the earliest grounds laid out in this part of the state.

It was the first Catholic graveyard within the limits of Beaver County, and probably the earliest to be located in Pennsylvania, west of the Ohio and Allegheny Rivers.

For a period of over sixty years it was the only place of internment for Catholics in the county, with the exception of the small burial plot or churchyard adjoining the lately burned church at Beaver where in but few were interred. These bodies have since been removed. The Beaver church yard was not used for a burial ground until long after the dedication of the Beaver Church in June 29, 1837.

Daugherty's Cemetery is kept in good condition and is still used as a burial place by the congregations of St. Cecilia, of Rochester, and Ss. Peter and Paul, of Beaver; or as the latter is commonly and reverently termed "the Beaver Church."
When Edward Daugherty, who was the grandfather of Mrs. P.H. Coyle of New Brighton and the late Edward B. Daugherty, Esq., of Beaver, crossed the mountains and came to this then sparsely settled region, he located upon a large farm or tract as it was then called, lying southwest of the present New Brighton which he later purchased, part of which is still in possession of his descendants and the present Daugherty's Cemetery constituted another portion. He immediately erected his log cabin home upon the farm now belonging to the aforesaid Mrs. Coyle upon the Rochester and Harmony road. This was in the year 1800 or 1801 and his was the fourth Catholic family to settle in Beaver County. James McGuire, a grandfather of Hugh McGuire, of Oak Hill, and the late James McGuire, of Daugherty township, who fled from Ireland during the turbulent period at the close of the eighteenth century, had previously in 1795, settled upon a 4000 acre tract lying immediately north of New Brighton, the greater portion of which is yet owned and resided upon by his descendants. He was the first Catholic in this region, stood near where now stands the old brick Schofield house, on the New Castle road, below New Brighton reservoir.

The second was John Daugherty, a brother of Edward, who, a couple of years ago or so after Mr. McGuire's arrival, settled upon a tract on Bennett's Run, and buildded his house just within the angle formed by the meeting of the present two roads at what is known as the forks of the run. About this time also, Daniel McGuire, the third Catholic settler, located his home at Vicary, now a part of Freedom, but some years afterward settled upon the Big Sewickley creek near what is now Well Rose post office, where several of his descendants still reside. He was a cousin of the former James, and was the grandfather of Michael McGuire of Economy township.

Shortly after Mr. Daugherty was comfortably settled he was joined by his brother, Manasseh and family, who resided with him. About the same time came John Black, a Protestant, whose family, or part of them afterwards became Catholics. He settled upon a neighboring tract to Mr. Daugherty and at once buildded thereupon his log cabin, the site of which was lately and for many years occupied by the family of the late Patrick H. Coyle.
When his house was completed Mr. Black made arrangements for erecting a log barn a short distance north of his home. At their barn raisings, as in later times, it was customary for all the neighboring settlers to collect and give assistance in lifting the heavy logs in position, or as the wells of the building grew higher, in sliding them up from their resemblance to the horns of a bull, which forked ends were placed at the ends of the log to be lifted. Each of these bull heads was pushed by a different set of men and good natured “races” were often run to see which set could first slide its end up the skids. This was a dangerous and sometimes fatal practice; the men were frequently badly injured or maimed by the falling of the log when a bull head slipped off by reason frontend being pushed up too rapidly. This happened the construction of Mr. Black’s barn. The building was nearing completion when a “race” began in lifting a heavy roof piece called a weight pole. A bull head slipped off an end, and before Manasseh Daugherty, who was helping could get away from beneath the big, heavy timber it fell upon him, crushing his body so badly that he died two days later. This was the first death of a Catholic resident, and there being no Catholic graveyard, his brother Edward had him interred in a plot of about half an acre of his (Edward’s) farm, which he thereupon set aside and donated to the Catholics forever as a burying ground, and which as ever since been demonstrated in honor of the donator, Daugherty’s Cemetery. These events happened about the year 1801, and this half acre is the eastern part of the present cemetery, which now comprises between two and three acres.

Manasseh Daugherty who was the grandfather of Manasseh Yoho, of Mt. Washington, Beaver Falls, was therefore the first burial therein. The second was that of his wife, who a few years later followed him to the grave.

Up to the 1845 therein there was but few burials, as few Catholics were in the community. The few internments made were principally members of the families of McGuire, Daughertys and Backs.

Some of the more prominent persons in local affairs of the time, who were buried therein during this period, were the aforesaid James McGuire, who died about 1830 and his two sons, Hugh, who died in 1842, in his sixtieth year, and James, who died in 1848, aged sixty-three years, and John Daugherty, who lived to be 108 years of age. Edward Daugherty lived until July 31, 1830, and died aged eight-four years. His wife, Alice survived him 15 years. Their graves are now marked appropriately. However, but a few tombstones graced the cemetery prior to 1865, and until about 1845 no fence surrounded it.
In most cases during the 4 years the plot lay open, when an internment was made a kind of rude fence or simple enclosure of short rails or small tree boughs was built up around the new grave, which served the dual purpose of a mark and a protection, for several years after the plot had been fenced and the enclosures about the graves removed, simple boards were generally used as markers.

In 1844, a deed was made and entered of record by the heirs of Edward Daugherty, of the half acre to Michael O'Connor, Bishop of Pittsburgh, there having been hitherto no formal conveyance, and Daniel Daugherty, a son, is whose portion of his father's estate the cemetery plot lay, Catholic church in the county up to about 1855, that he would donate much more land as the congregation could afford to build a fence. A subscription was taken up and about the year 1845 some of the Catholics went out and with the assistance and under the direction of James Black, a son of the former, builded the first stout fence about the cemetery, but such was the state of their finances that they were unable to enclose but little more, if any, than the original half acre. From this time monuments and gravestones were generally placed on the graves or on such graves that could be definitely located after the lapse of so many years, for during the long time it had been used prior to 1845 and for several years thereafter the cemetery was more or less neglected. A definite plan of graves in the original half acre does not appear to have existed. Different graves were dug up by different sextons and other persons, who trusted solely to memory the determine a location, the result therefore being similar to the conditions existing in most other old graveyards, that is, that while in general most graves can be and are located definitely, there are many others whose position it is impossible to determine. About 1884 or 1885 this old half-acre had been pretty well filled up and realizing this, some members of the Rochester and Beaver congregations started a movement to desert this cemetery and purchase a new graveyard much nearer Rochester. This set with vigorous opposition from EB. Daugherty, Esq., who in order to induce the retention of the old place donated from his land adjoining, he having acquired the same from his deceased father, Daniel, the western portion now known as the new part of the cemetery. This was adopted by the two congregations. A deed was delivered for it, and the whole, including the new part, was in 1885 enclosed by another substantial fence. It was Mr. Daugherty's intention to include in his donation the presence unfenced small wood lying next the Harmony road, but the congregations mistakenly believed that without enclosing this small wooded tract they had taken in enough land suffice for all internments for scores of years.
This new part is laid out with regularity and an accurate record of internments kept. In fact, for several years past the entire cemetery has been fairly well cared for. It is a beautiful situated spot. The whole plot fronts the Three Degree road and gently drops back an easy slope toward a sluggish run. Hidden from the beaten tracts of travel by a small wood it is else far enough removed from town to be protected from vandals and flower thieves, and realizing this many of the older Catholic families still continue to bury their dead therein, notwithstanding the other Catholic cemeteries now in use. This graveyard is the last resting place of two priests, Father James Reid, the first resident priest in the county, and for twenty-two years pastor of Beaver; died February 14, 1865, and was first interred in the Beaver Churchyard, but after the burning of the Beaver church, in April 1898, his remains were removed to Daugherty’s.

The other was Father F.A. Steffen, a young priest who died of small pox at Rochester, December 30, 1881, as pastor of St. Cecilia’s, which was his first charge after being ordained to the priesthood. Both these graves are marked by fences enclosing them.

At one time Father Reid wished to desert Daugherty’s, which had not been consecrated and have deceased Catholics buried in the small Beaver churchyard, which idea was strongly opposed by James Black and other s of the older families, but it ended with the consecration of the original half-acre by Father Reid upon the orders of the bishop. The new part was dedicated about 1885 by Father Joseph Fleckinger, then pastor at Beaver and Rochester, who also erected the large rec cross therein.

So far as known no soldiers of the Revolution are buried in this cemetery, but the following are the names of some of those who served their country in the war of 1812-1814, who rest there:

James McGuire and William Vankirk, respectively a son and son-in-law of the first James McGuire, and Daniel Daugherty, son of the above named Edward Daugherty.
The early funerals were conducted with great inconvenience. The bodies of the deceased for many years were carried long distances upon the shoulders of pall bearers and other men, who relieved one another in turn, whilst the mourners and friends walked behind over the primitive, and during many months of the impassable roads. Later the corpses were hauled in a light, rude vehicle, with wooden springs culled from a dearborn wagon, though rough farm wagons were frequently used. Such of the friends and relatives as could do so rode on horseback or in conveyances.

When horses and carriages had come into use, it remained customary for many years for the pall bearers to ride on horses.

As there was no resident priest in the county until the advent of Father Reid in 1846, priests came from Pittsburgh on horseback to attend the dying or to hold funeral services for years before this date, but in still earlier years the services of a priest could not be had at all.

T. Frank Covert
Beaver Falls, Pa.
Aug. 1, 1901

1Covert's transcript of Daugherty's Cemetery is prefaced as follows: "Extracts from "the History was a series of newspaper articles which I had clipped and pasted in a scrap book" and the following are extracts from a newspaper article which had been formerly received by Matt. L Blake at New Brighton, Pa., and which is referred to in Mr. Covert's letter of February 15, 1959."
As the Church celebrates the 150th anniversary of Our Lady appearing to a fourteen-year-old French girl, Bernadette Soubirous, there is no better time than today to shorten the distance between Lourdes and our corner of the world.

Between February 11 and July 16, 1858, a “beautiful lady,” visible only to the slight and undernourished Bernadette, appeared eighteen times in a grotto in the foothills of the Pyrenees. She called for penance. She asked that a church be built and for people to come there in procession. And, ultimately, she revealed herself saying, “I am the Immaculate Conception.” Our Lady directed Bernadette to wash and drink in the water. In following her instructions, Bernadette uncovered a hidden spring in the grotto. That spring, according to John Paul II who made five Lourdes pilgrimages, remains today a living source where faith is renewed, where body and soul are healed, and where the sense of the Church is strengthened.

Four years after the apparitions ended and a church inquiry had concluded, Bishop Bertrand Laurence, the bishop of Tarbes, declared the visitations of Mary Immaculate, the Mother of God, as true. He further described the many physical and spiritual healings already realized at Lourdes as wonders of grace which could only have God as their author. This proclamation increased greatly the numbers of European pilgrims who journeyed to the small mountain town. By the early 1880s, Americans had made their way to the grotto.

Father James R. Cox, known to many as Pittsburgh’s pastor to the poor, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving at the grotto when he was stationed in France as a member of the American Expeditionary Forces (1917-1918). He credited his being a priest to a healing received through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes. “My interest in Lourdes is personal,” the priest would later explain. “As a boy it was decided by the doctors that due to bad eyes my vocation to the priesthood was impossible of fulfillment.” While his doctors at Mercy Hospital gave up hope, young Cox did not. Two hours after Lourdes water was placed on his eyes, the bandages were removed. “My eyes were cured,” Father Cox reported. With his vision strengthened, Father Cox vowed to spread devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes. It was a promise he would keep until his death.

Named pastor of Old Saint Patrick’s in 1923, Father Cox not only preached the Beatitudes, he modeled them for his parishioners. As the Depression tightened its grip on the nation in the 1930s, Father Cox presided as “honorary mayor” of Shantytown, an encampment he established for unemployed men next to the church. The parish, at his direction, served meals to the hungry and provided clothing, coal, and medical care. In 1932, the activist priest led 25,000 unemployed men on the March of the Jobless to Washington, D.C. and later threw his hat into the ring for president. Running on the Jobless Party ticket, he campaigned around the country until stepping down to support Franklin D. Roosevelt.
As devoted as Father Cox was to Old Saint Patrick’s and to the working man, he was equally — if not more — devoted to Our Lady of Lourdes. In his tenure at the parish, he established Lourdes devotions, founded the Lourdes Society open to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, distributed Lourdes water, and began and ended every activity with a prayer to his adopted patroness.

Father Cox shepherded twenty pilgrimages to Lourdes. For this extraordinary effort, the Sanctuaries of Lourdes named him a chaplain of honor. In 1947, Father Cox promoted on WJAS radio what, according to him, was the first pilgrimage by air from the United States to Lourdes. “If we go by plane, it will center attention upon devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes here at Old St. Patrick’s, at the Shrine itself, and in every place where mention is made of it,” he wrote Bishop Hugh C. Boyle. Pilgrims occupied all 32 seats of the TWA plane which departed Pittsburgh and stopped at New York, Newfoundland, and Ireland before arriving in Paris.

Father Cox died in 1951 at the age of 65. He did not live long enough to celebrate the centenary of the Lourdes apparitions. Pittsburgh would, however, be well represented.

The February 13, 1958 issue of the Pittsburgh Catholic announced “Diocese Leads Nation in Lourdes Pilgrims.” Along with the Archdioceses of New York and Chicago, the Diocese of Pittsburgh had booked the most reservations for a pilgrimage to Lourdes later that summer. The itinerary called for all pilgrims to visit Lourdes and 13 other European cities during a 30-day tour. Those choosing so could opt for the “extended” plan and add another week to their adventure.

On August 22, 1958, several thousand passengers — including nearly 100 from Pittsburgh accompanied by Monsignors William G. Connare and Jacob D. Shinar, set sail on the S.S. United States from Pier 86 on Manhattan’s North River bound for France. After a five-day crossing, the steamship docked at LeHavre not far from the beaches of Normandy. They then traveled to Paris by train, enjoyed a short stay there, and continued their pilgrimage to Lourdes. At 8 a.m. on September 1, the contingent joined Pittsburgh Bishop John F. Dearden for Mass at the Grotto.

While in Lourdes, the Pittsburgh delegation no doubt prayed for those not there. An earlier newswire article carried by the Pittsburgh Catholic on February 13, 1958 (“Lourdes Prayers ‘Go’ to the Church of Silence”) recounted how French Bishop Pierre-Marie Theas of Tarbes and Lourdes pledged the prayers of the millions of pilgrims to “Catholics from captive countries in central and East Europe who live under communist domination and cannot come to this holy shrine.” In his address given at Lourdes and later broadcast behind the Iron Curtain, the bishop recognized in a special way those suffering in Poland. That should, in retrospect, give us pause. Karol Wojtla, a son of the Church of Silence in Poland, was raised to Auxiliary Bishop of Krakow that very same year. Twenty years later he was elected pope — the first Polish pope and first non-Italian pope in more than 400 years. It would be this Polish pope who would be credited by many with the collapse of communism in his beloved homeland. Having as his motto, “Totus Tuus” (“I am all yours, Mary”), John Paul II was also the first reigning pope to visit Lourdes — once in 1983 and again in 2004. The latter pilgrimage would be his 104th and final foreign trip during his papacy.

The Pittsburgh pilgrims of 1958 also gathered at Lourdes for the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessing of the Sick. The monstrance used for the blessing had been earlier donated to the shrine by the people of Pittsburgh through the late Father James R. Cox.

More than eight million pilgrims are expected to journey to Lourdes this year for the 150th jubilee. For those of us who cannot go, perhaps a visit to the Monastery Garden of Old Saint Patrick’s in Pittsburgh’s Strip District is in order. There, we can sit quietly and gaze on the Lourdes Grotto which Father Cox had erected. We can remember the spirit of the parish priest and, later, the Pittsburgh centenary pilgrims whose devotion compelled them to go to a distant cave where heaven once touched earth.
An Interview
with Troy Hill Resident Mary Wholeber

KATHLEEN M. WASHY

A photo of Fr. Sibert Mollinger sits in Mary Wohleber’s bookcase, a remnant of the past lifestyle of Troy Hill. Fr. Mollinger was the first pastor of Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Troy Hill during the late 1800s and founder of St. Anthony’s Chapel. According to Mary, at one time, every Catholic household on Troy Hill had a photo of Fr. Mollinger gracing their home. Mary very willingly provided me with an oral history interview focusing on the Catholic community during her life.

Mary, age 91, is a fourth generation resident of Troy Hill. When she talks about her early years, she paints a picture of a community where “religion was their life.” According to Mary, Troy Hill is a ridge, 600 yards wide and a tad over one mile long, with no through streets, and by virtue of these geographical constraints, the community was very clannish. Mary is considered to be the historian of Troy Hill, full of information about the past, even history from before her time. When asked about her early years within the Catholic community, Mary naturally began with a history of Most Holy Name School, providing extensive details on the establishment of the school by Fr. Mollinger’s act of giving up one room of his two rooms in the back of the church for the purpose of the school, which started in 1868. He oversaw the building of the rectory and St. Anthony’s Chapel with his own money in 1875. The public school was built in the 1880s.

Mary’s father worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad at the 28th Street yards over the 30th street bridge (a wooden bridge) during the night so that he could go to baseball games during the day. When her father went to school, the students went to 6th grade and the age was 12 years old to get a work permit. Her mother was a real estate agent, notary public, and insurance agent; she worked in the heart of the community. Mary would hang around while her mother worked, and learned about every aspect of Troy Hill life and the office.

Mary attended Most Holy Name of Jesus grade school and then went on to attend the Divine Providence Academy, which was a boarding school established by the Sisters of Divine Providence. She characterizes her high school education as unusual for the period. She was the only one at the Academy in 1930 from the North Side. As soon as she was 16, she learned how to drive. According to Mary, the norm was that upon completion of 8th grade, the girls joined the Young Ladies Sodality and the boys joined the Most Holy Name Society. Mary did join the Sodality but she also lived a somewhat different life, stemming from her mother’s career in real estate, so her life encompassed a greater geographical area than that of Troy Hill.

Church was a prominent part of life in Troy Hill and Catholicism was a constant factor in Mary’s life. Mary grew up across the street from the Home of the Good Shepherd; often, she would lay in her bed, listening to the nun’s singing and chanting. The Catholic church permeated her life. She relates how Troy Hill was sectionalized on the basis of a family’s religion, to the extent that each religious group was isolated from the others. To her, this was merely a fact of life. Troy Hill was made up of Catholics, Protestants, and Bohemians Presbyterians. The business section goes through the middle, carving up Troy Hill.

Looking back on her life, Mary views her role both within the Catholic church and the community as being a voice for what she feels is right, whether that is saving St. Anthony’s chapel or challenging the Northside Carnegie Library’s move. When she speaks up, she is doing so not only for herself but for others who do not vocalize publicly their views. With her lively spirit, she gains friends and is integral to the community. “Nobody does anything alone. Every time I put out my hand, someone was there to take it.” Mary Wohleber embodies the spirit of Troy Hill.

The tape has been placed in the Archives of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
Msgr. Francis A. Glenn
KATHLEEN M. WASHY

If Msgr. Francis Glenn were alive today, he would be celebrating his 70th anniversary as a priest. He was a living history of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, active from his earliest years. Msgr. Glenn identified himself as an altar boy in a photo that was used in a 1992 Catholic Historical Society speech by Dr. Tim Kelly from St. Vincent’s College, titled “Pageants and Parades, Popular Public Catholic Rituals.” His early beginnings in the church led him on to priesthood. After studying at Duquesne University and St. Vincent Seminary, Msgr. Glenn was ordained by Bishop Hugh Boyle on June 12, 1938. Msgr. Francis Glenn celebrated his first Mass at All Saints Church in his hometown of Masontown. From 1938 through his death in 1998, Msgr. Glenn was dedicated to the Diocese of Pittsburgh and he became known for his historical knowledge. He always had a warm smile for those around him and had tremendous insight into local church history.

Msgr. Glenn’s early career was serving as parochial vicar at several different parishes: Assumption, Bellevue (1938-1947); St. Mary, Beaver Falls (1947-1949); Epiphany, Uptown (1949-1953); and Resurrection, Pittsburgh (1953-1955). During his service to Epiphany, Msgr. Glenn also served as the assistant chaplain at Mercy Hospital. He went on to work in the Diocesan Purchasing Office from 1955 through 1957. While working for the Purchasing Office, he served consecutively as chaplain for the Sisters of St. Joseph, Baden and the Little Sisters of the Poor, Brighton Heights.

By 1957, Msgr. Glenn was named the founding pastor at St. Bonaventure Church in Glenshaw, where he served until 1965. His last position was that of pastor at St. Paul, Butler, where he served from 1965 until his retirement in 1989. During this last assignment, Msgr. Glenn was instrumental in the White Ribbon Against Pornography Campaign. In 1987, he delivered a sermon that inspired Norma Morris to establish the White Ribbon Campaign and he worked together with Norma and others in the early years of WRAP.

Along with all of these positions, Msgr. Glenn held the job for which he became well known – Diocesan Archivist, a role in which he served from 1949 to 1969. He had an infinite interest in the history of the Catholic Church in the region, so much so that he was a charter member and former president of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. He was the author of Shepherds of the Faith 1843-1993: A Brief History of the Bishops of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, which was published by the Diocese of Pittsburgh in 1993. Msgr. Glenn remains a part of the history of the Diocese of Pittsburgh in spirit and through his legacy of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

The greatest crisis that has ever confronted the Roman Catholic Church in the United States is the clergy sexual abuse scandal that erupted publicly in 2002 in the Archdiocese of Boston. There were antecedent crises elsewhere in Massachusetts and in other parts of the country which the media focused on between 1984 and 1994, but publicity dried up after the retraction of a false accusation against Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago. Media avoided the issue until the Boston Globe and a court proceeding in Boston again surfaced the issue early in the new millennium. The massively negative publicity in 2002 forced the American bishops to address the issue head-on at their meeting in Dallas that year.

Dozens of books, hundreds of journal features, and thousands of newspaper articles have attempted to explain what happened and why, often based on pre-existing views or biases; those typically lack a true historical perspective. The present work’s title correctly suggests that this author offers that missing historical perspective “Before Dallas” and the events of 2002.

Authored by Nicholas P. Cafardi—a former seminarian of the Diocese of Pittsburgh who trained in Rome, recipient of both civil and canon law degrees, Dean of the Duquesne University School of Law 1993-2005, an original member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee for the Protection of Children and Youth (the National Review Board), and appointee in 2002 to oversee the USCCB’s child abuse prevention policies (the so-called “Dallas Norms”)—the work provides a ground-breaking analysis of the Church’s response to the abuse crisis and concludes that the Church failed in light of its own canon law.

Cafardi begins with a summary of the history of clerical sexual abuse from the New Testament era to modern times. He proceeds next to a description of the major American cases that brought the problem to public attention. He explains why most bishops decided to take the “therapeutic option” when dealing with abusive priests, rather than subjecting them to canonical punishments that would have brought the cases to light and resulted in greater attention to the victims.

Cases of clerical sexual abuse were documented for centuries. The 1917 Code of Canon Law gave bishops authority to remove such priests without a church trial. But the 1983 Code, in an effort to curb the arbitrary power of bishops, took away that authority. Thus Pope John Paul II inadvertently tied the bishops’ hands. Trials had not been held within living memory, canon lawyers didn’t know how to conduct them, and lawyers also believed that they couldn’t win — due to a short statute of limitations and a “catch 22” that forbade disciplining priests who offended due to mental illness. Further complicating the legal picture was a change that Pope John Paul II had made in 1979, when — in trying to stem a tide
of priests who were leaving to marry — he made it impossible to laicize a priest against his will.

Yet, Cafardi believes that bishops could have removed abusive priests, based on a 1962 confidential Latin document which, in part, addressed “the worst crime” of sexual abuse of children. Bishops and canonists who faced the crisis decades later were functionally unaware of the document’s existence. Bishops instead opted to treat sexual abuse as a spiritual problem, sent the offender on retreat and accepted promises to sin no more. Later, when sexual abuse was understood to be a psychological illness, they sent priests for therapy and too readily accepted treating physician’s claims of cures.

But there were episcopal exceptions to the general pattern, and former Pittsburgh bishop Donald Wuerl was that exception! Cafardi recounts the bishop’s 1993 battle with the Vatican’s highest court, which the bishop ultimately convinced to reverse a ruling that had initially ordered a return to ministry of an accused Pittsburgh priest whom the bishop had determined was unfit for ministry. The case unfortunately sent the message to other bishops to not try to remove abusive priests, given the difficulty of convincing Rome to support them.

Cafardi recommends that the U.S. bishops’ “zero tolerance” policy — under which a priest who has committed even one substantiated act of abuse of a minor (even if not adjudicated in a court of law) would be removed from active ministry and never again serve as a cleric in the Church — be made universal, and believes it would be strengthened if the Code of Canon Law were revised to declare that sexual abuse of a minor was an “automatic impediment” to ministry, so that offenders could be removed permanently from ministry without a church trial. The author is rightly concerned that as time passes, complacency among the bishops will set in. A Roman view that the issue is “an American problem”, despite similar problems in other nations, contributes to the concern. While educational efforts and ongoing audits of the American dioceses will help, a change in the Code of Canon Law is still the author’s preferred remedy.

The work, while written in scholarly legal fashion, is quite readable by a non-lawyer. For those desirous of understanding history, and hoping to avoid repeating it in this instance, the book is highly recommended. Pittsburgh readers will be particularly appreciative of the historic role of our former bishop and other locals such as Cafardi in contributing to a solution of this grievous matter.

— John C. Bates
Thomas W. Hoag, *Nothing but the Best: The Story of DePaul School for Hearing and Speech 1908-2008.* (Pittsburgh: DePaul School for Hearing and Speech, 2007), 101 pp., illus., addenda, bibliography, with DVD [available at DePaul School for Hearing and Research, 6202 Alder Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206 — $33 hardcover/$18 softcover]

As the City of Pittsburgh prepares to celebrate the 250th anniversary of its establishment, the community also prepares to recognize 100 years of service of an institution unique to the city and the Diocese of Pittsburgh — DePaul School for Hearing and Research. The rich history of DePaul has been recounted in this newly published book by one of its long-time teachers, Thomas Hoag. Two years of research and writing resulted in a fact-packed, picture-filled history of an undertaking begun in 1908 by the then-bishop of Pittsburgh, legendary J.F. Regis Canevin, to “preserve the Catholic faith for the deaf in the coming generations.” Given the increasing number of diagnosed deaf children, the bishop recognized the need to meet both their educational and religious needs.

Operating initially in a leased mansion in the Troy Hill section of the city’s North Side, the Sisters of Charity from Greensburg, Pennsylvania — who trace their origin to the first American congregation of women religious founded by St. Elizabeth Seton in 1809 — greeted the sole student who entered the newly-opened school on September 7, 1908.

Hoag provides context, avoiding the standard recital of dry institutional history. The educational challenges confronting the teachers in that early time period are candidly presented, while the long-standing social stigma confronting children perceived as “different” is not ignored. The Sisters adopted the “oral approach” (now denominated as “auditory/oral”) in which students learn to use whatever hearing they have in combination with lip and speech reading in order to understand and use spoken language. The goal: development of language skills that permit mainstreaming of the child. This approach would utilize small classes, coupled with individualized instruction.

The author explains both the “why” and the “how” for such an educational venture: filthy living and working conditions that attended the city’s steel-making and heavy manufacturing resulted in diseases that caused deafness, and the Sisters concluded that the objective of functional independence in the adult world — rather than life-long institutionalization — was achievable through the “oral” method.

The book traces the school’s history as changes in name, location, and use occurred. The Pittsburgh School for the Deaf — incorporated in 1910 as The DePaul Institute for Deaf Mutes — ultimately became known to many simply as “DePaul.” The school moved in 1911 to the Brookline section of the city, and subsequently relocated to Shady side in 2002. There was also a transformation from semi-residential facility to day school, with a variety of outreach programs. From 1949 to 1970, DePaul’s mission was enlarged to include blind and partially-sighted children.
Relying on dozens of interviews with former students and teachers, and thirty years of personal involvement as a teacher at DePaul, the author weaves a narrative that is accompanied by hundreds of photos — many in reduced size to paint a large picture of the daily life of the students and teachers, their educational instruction, their other activities, and the persons they encountered during their years at DePaul. Sports, band, dance, dramatic presentations, and the arts are depicted. Any reader with even a minimal sense of Pittsburgh history will recognize and appreciate the photographs of sports figures, clergy and others who were a part of the children’s world at DePaul.

The teacher in Hoag is best evidenced in his successful effort to depict, in the narrative, the spirit that motivated the educators, Bishop Canevin, and the school’s first superintendent, the visionary Fr. Thomas Coakley. Initiation of an annual Sunday collection in diocesan churches for DePaul’s benefit clearly increased the profile of the school and filled a financial void occasioned by the state’s pullback from funding “sectarian” institutions in the 1920s. The historian in Hoag is best evidenced in two sections of the book: (1) a candid analysis of the impact of a resumed financial relationship with the state in 1973, and the attendant secularization challenge, and (2) the reasons for the controversial “move” from the scenic Brookline campus to the former Sacred Heart High School building in Shadyside. These and other sections of the book illustrate the author’s willingness to present an unvarnished look at the society in which DePaul flourishes, which makes the achieved results even more noteworthy in light of societal and personal challenges. The irony in the controversial move to Shadyside lies in the fact that Fr. Coakley, first superintendent of and builder of the Brookline campus, left there to become builder of the massive Sacred Heart Church/School complex to which DePaul relocated. A visionary indeed!

The enormous personal investment by administrators, teachers, volunteers and supporters to enable hearing/speaking-impaired children to realize their fullest potential and transition them into a hearing and speaking world comes through clearly in this history. The community has been enriched by the thousands of graduates from this school. Pittsburgh’s history is likewise enriched by Thomas Hoag’s wonderful account of DePaul’s history. We are indebted to him and the school for bringing this work to publication.

— John C. Bates
Reflective presentations by then-ordinary Bishop Donald Wuerl and theologian Scott Hahn are followed by a series of chapters that present, in narrative and pictorial form, the history of the three successive structures that have served the diocese. Former CHS President, Rev. James Garvey, recounts the history of the first two cathedrals that stood in Downtown at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Grant Street, until the move to Oakland shortly after the turn of the 20th century. It is the centennial of the consecration of the third and current cathedral that this work celebrates. And it does so lavishly.

Rich illustrations of every aspect of the cathedral's architecture fill the pages, explaining the narrative just as the magnificent artwork of the great European cathedrals explained Christ and the church to illiterate worshippers centuries ago. From the rich hues of the fully-illustrated stained glass windows to the massive von Beckerath organ, to the marble altars and the stone statues of the saints, every aspect of St. Paul Cathedral is illustrated and explained. Narrative commentary by professionals and parishioners alike supplements the pictures.

The contributed services of the graphic designer — a cathedral parishioner with years of experience at CMU — produced a superlative visual presentation of the cathedral's interior and exterior. The researchers were thwarted by the lack of any real history of the structure, despite its 100 years of existence; the absence of the original plans and construction photographs created additional historical lacunae that the Committee ably attempted to overcome.
The recent restoration and physical expansion of the cathedral in anticipation of its centennial in 2006 are also chronicled in the work, which concludes with brief biographical vignettes on the bishops of Pittsburgh and the priests who so ably served the cathedral as rectors or pastors.

Considering that 100 years passed before the architectural history of the cathedral was committed to print, one can only hope that a similar period will not elapse before devoted parishioners address the yet-to-be-told history of the parish, its schools, the devoted Sisters of Mercy who educated the parish youth, and the various ministries that the cathedral has undertaken not just within Oakland to its constituent communities (the university communities, the St. Regis Chapel ministry to the Italians of South Oakland, the Central Catholic High School connection, and the unique relationship with the diocesan offices that have been housed in or close to the cathedral complex) but to the larger population of the diocese itself.

This book will be a collector's item — but I encourage you to obtain and read the work for its wonderful statement of the faith of those immigrants who erected this cathedral and spared no expense in decorating this magnificent structure, and the continuing love of parishioners and diocesan faithful who have worshipped within its towering walls for 100 years.

— John C. Bates

Recollections
Fifty Years Ago in The Pittsburgh Catholic

HISTORICAL SOCIETY TOUR

The Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania has announced a busy and varied schedule for 1958.

Included on the calendar of events will be a tour of St. Paul Cathedral, Oakland; the annual Msgr. Andrew Lambing Lecture and an exhibition of historical Catholic art objects.

The tour of the Cathedral is scheduled for March 2 at 2 p.m. It will be followed by a brief organ recital and a reception and buffet in the Georgian Terrace Room of the Webster Hall Hotel.

The tour is open to the public but the attendance at the luncheon will be by registration only. Non-members will be assessed $1.50 each.

February 13, 1958

Special thanks to Kerry Crawford for providing the above article.
Catholic Writers Dinner to be Held on April 25th

The Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania is proud to partner with Our Sunday Visitor and the Gumberg Library of Duquesne University to present our first Western Pennsylvania Catholic Writer’s Dinner. The event will be held on April 25, 2009 at the Power Center Ballroom at Duquesne University. Four writers will be honored at the dinner, including Robert Lockwood (General Manager of the Pittsburgh Catholic), Mike Aquilina (Vice-President of the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology), Susan Muto (Executive Director of the Epiphany Association), and Father Mark Gruber (Professor of Anthropology, St. Vincent College).

Western Pennsylvania has been blessed with many Catholic writers such as these whose books have been published and distributed nationally. Through their words, these authors have brought to life Catholic history, explained doctrine, fostered love for the Mass and the sacraments, promoted Catholic traditions, spirituality, and devotions, and shared insights about the Catholic experience. Our four honored writers will briefly discuss the impact of our region’s Catholic heritage on their writing and experiences. We hope that you can join us in April to celebrate our heritage and our writers. Invitations will be mailed to our members in March. For more information please call (412) 396-4870.