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What Bill Utter forgot to tell us: Early 19th century Roman Catholicism but a stone's throw from Granville

by ANTHONY J.
LISSKA

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Probably the most noted historian from Granville in the twentieth century was William T. Utter, long-time Professor of History at Denison University, author of *Granville: The Story of an Ohio Village* (1956) together with many historical essays for state and local historical societies.

Professor Utter was commissioned to write the second volume of the monumental six-volume *A History of the State of Ohio*, which was published originally in 1941 under the auspices of the Ohio Historical Society.

This second volume, *The Frontier State: 1803-1825*, covers the time period from 1803 — when Ohio became a state — until the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Utter demonstrates his wide-ranging historical knowledge of Ohio during the formative

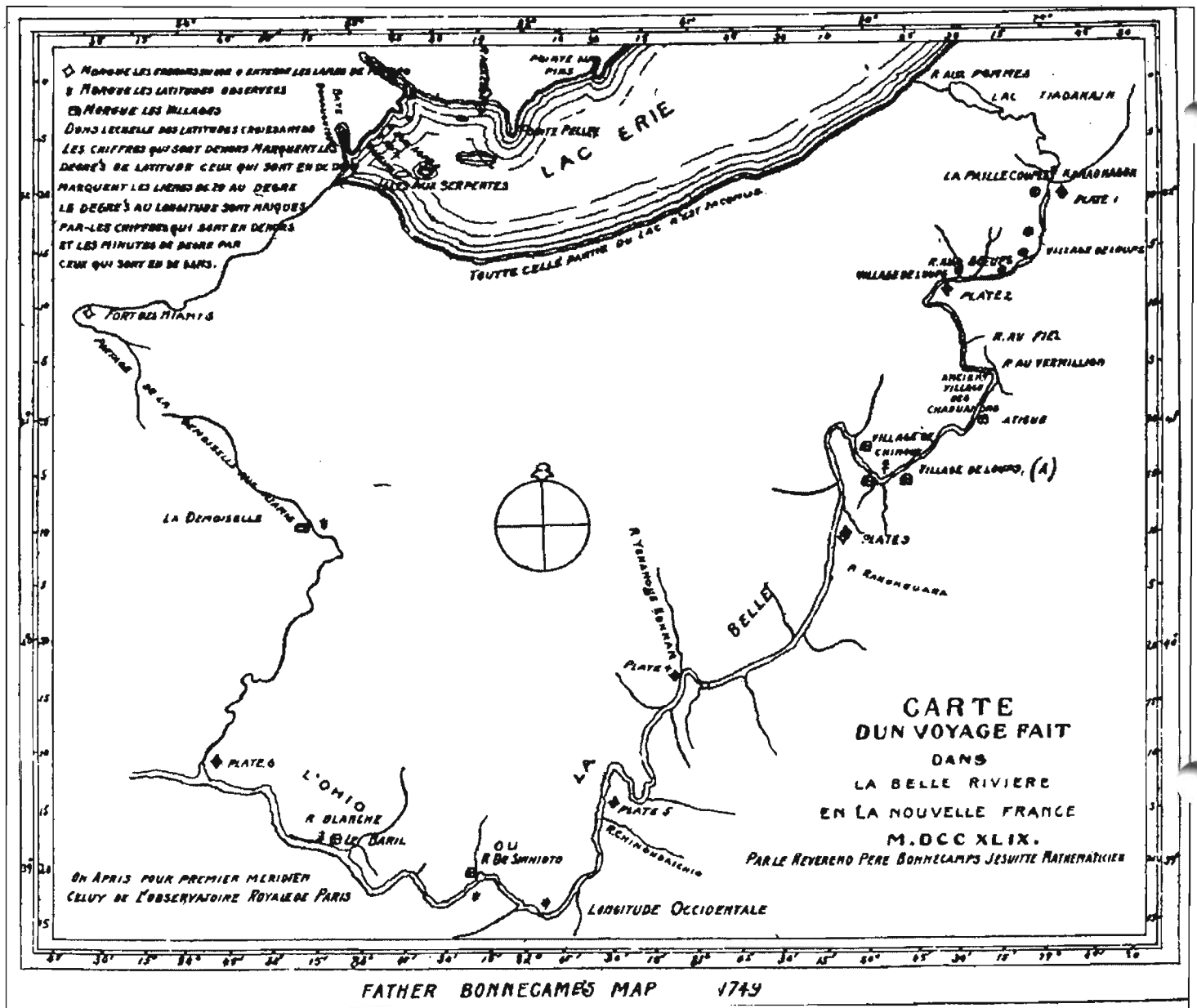


This is the famous artist's rendition of Edward Fenwick's meeting Jacob Dittoe, following the "sound of an ax felling a tree," in Somerset in 1808.

period of this first state in the Northwest Territory.

Utter, moreover, was well connected with the Ohio Historical Society and served on the Publication Committee for this important historical series.

There is one area in his study of early Ohio history,



however, where Utter is not only mistaken but also apparently unaware of the significance for the religious history of Ohio of a particular location within 25 miles of Granville. In Volume Two, when considering the growth of religious groups and sects in early Ohio, Utter writes: "...the early Catholic center near Somerset...did not affect the great body of Ohio's population." (p. 381) This essay will demonstrate that from the small village of Somerset in central Perry County developed a vibrant Roman Catholic community from which by mid-nineteenth century emerged connections and influences with the American Roman Catholic Church nation-wide. Yet Utter appears oblivious regarding the singular importance of the foundation of St. Joseph's Church, Priory, Seminary and

College in Somerset. For the most part, the importance of the early foundation in Somerset by the Dominican Friars has been overlooked in general histories of Ohio. This essay is an attempt at remediation addressing the neglect Utter and others demonstrate for what developed from Somerset into an important center of Roman Catholicism in Ohio and beyond.

Catholicism in Ohio Prior to 1803

The roots of several singular events in Roman Catholicism in Ohio go back into the eighteenth century when the French ruled over what became the state of Ohio. Roman Catholic dioceses normally follow upon national boundaries. In the early days of the area that became Ohio, the ecclesiastical jurisdiction was



An engraving of the first St. Joseph College building in Somerset, which appears to be behind and west of the old cemetery by the church, Circa 1855.

Courtesy of Donald Schlegel

under the auspices of the Archbishop of Montreal. In 1749, an expedition of French-speaking explorers and military personnel under the leadership of a French military officer, Celeron, set out from Montreal to discover the nature and geography of this then newly acquired yet unknown large parcel of land. In addition, Celeron's mission was to reinforce the French claims to the Ohio valley in opposition to the English traders who were beginning to infiltrate the area and to become friendly with the Native Americans indigenous to Ohio. Eventually traveling down the Ohio River, this expedition team placed lead tablets at the mouth of each major river that met the Ohio. Hence, these tablets were placed, among other places, where the Kanawha, the Muskingum, and the Scioto Rivers meld into the Ohio River. Two of these lead tablets have been found, and one is part of the collection housed at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond. Accompanying Celeron's expedition was a French-speaking Jesuit missionary priest, Joseph Pierre de Bonnacamps, who in addition to his ecclesiastical duties was a well-trained and competent mathematician and cartographer. Bonnacamps's excellent map of the journey is significant historically. This

traveling expedition party, even though it was accompanied by the Jesuit missionary priest, appears to have had little if any lasting secular or religious effect on Ohio.

There is some evidence that in the middle part of the eighteenth century, another French speaking Jesuit, Pere de la Richardie, constructed a small chapel and held religious services for the Huron Indians near the present city of Sandusky. Little information is available about this set of events. The Jesuits were very instrumental in working with the Native Americans in this area, from Mackinac Island on the north, Green Bay, Wisconsin to the West, and northwest Ohio to the south. There is no evidence that this religious settlement had any long lasting duration or effect. This Jesuit influence ceased in 1773, when this Religious Society of Jesus was formally suppressed by papal authority.

At the beginning of the last decade of the eighteenth century, French middle class citizens escaping the Revolution immigrated to southeastern Ohio and settled in Gallipolis — "the city of the Gauls." A Benedictine monk accompanied this group of French men and woman. This was a situation doomed to failure since these middle class people were not used to the



As the graphic indicates, the original Saint Mary's of the Springs home in Columbus, 1868.

rough and tumble life needed to survive in the hard-scrabble days of early eighteenth century frontier Ohio. Even though there were some successes at Gallipolis, nonetheless one historian refers to this area as "the pathetic settlement at Gallipolis." (Bond, p. 273)

Edward Fenwick Comes to Somerset

The story of what might be called the first permanent Roman Catholic Institution in Ohio is closely associated with the name of Father — later Bishop — Edward Dominic Fenwick. Fenwick, a native Marylander whose family roots went back to the first Roman Catholic immigrants from mostly England to Maryland in the mid-seventeenth century, was a member of the Dominican Order, that group of Friars founded by St. Dominic in 1216. Fenwick's life is an interesting and exciting tale itself. Sent by his parents to be educated in Europe — which was the practice at the time for influential Roman Catholic Families liv-

ing in Maryland — Fenwick studied at the Dominican College of the Holy Cross at Bornhem in Belgium; this was the home of the English Dominicans in exile from the United Kingdom since the time of the Reformation. While studying with the Dominicans, the young Fenwick decided to embrace the religious life of a Dominican Friar with the aspiration of founding a branch of his order in his native country. In 1804, along with three fellow Dominicans, Fenwick journeyed home to Maryland with the intention of establishing the Dominican Order on his Native American soil.

Fenwick, upon arriving in Maryland, met with Bishop John Carroll, whose diocese of Baltimore encompassed the entire area of the Continental United States. When Fenwick expressed to Carroll his intention to found both a branch of his Dominican Order in Maryland and also to establish there a college similar to his English alma mater, Holy Cross College in Bornhem, Carroll had another idea. At this time, many

Roman Catholic Marylanders, because of serious farm and crop problems with the native Maryland soil and the unpleasantness then being experienced by Catholics in the once mostly Catholic territory, were emigrating to the new western country of Kentucky, settling principally around the Bardstown/Springfield area that is central Kentucky more or less south of Louisville. In Springfield, Fenwick and his loyal cohort of three Dominicans established the church and priory of St. Rose of Lima and began preparations for building the College of St. Thomas Aquinas, which opened in March 1806. The most illustrious alumnus of this Dominican college in Springfield was one Jefferson Davis. Had this college survived, it would have been the third oldest Roman Catholic institution of higher education in the United States, preceded only by Georgetown University and Mount Saint Mary's College in Maryland.

A bricks and mortar cleric, Fenwick had the amazing ability of getting things done quickly and efficiently. That he was what today we would call a "multi-tasker" is obvious! Fenwick once wrote about his working habits in Kentucky:

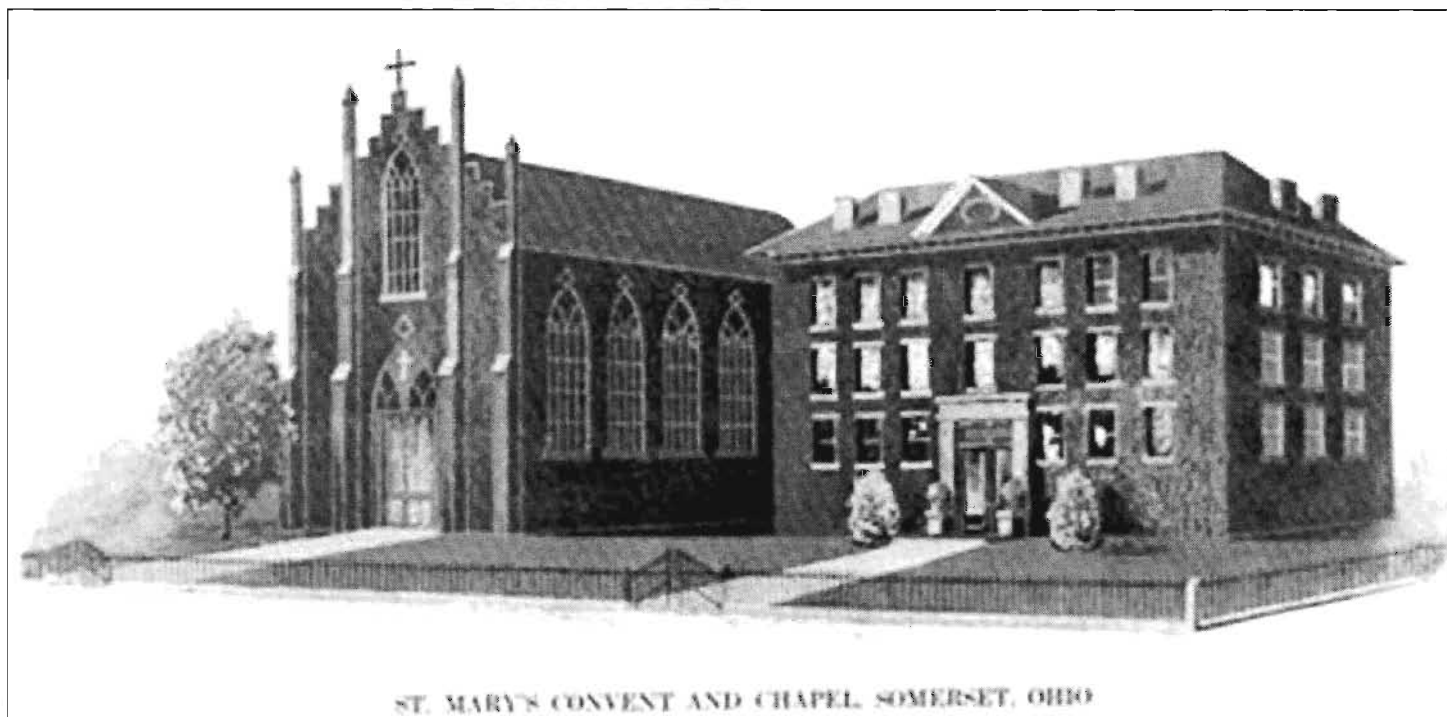
With the cooperation of the people in our congregation, both Catholic and Protestant, we made and burnt last year 360,000 bricks for the purpose of building a Church to honor St. Rose...and the college when built

under the patronage of St. Thomas Aquinas. (Coffey, p. 43)

The Catholics in Somerset

In the early part of the nineteenth century, residents of central Pennsylvania near Somerset settled in Ohio about halfway between Zanesville and Lancaster near Zane's Trace. Several of these settlers new to Ohio were German Roman Catholics; the most prominent was Jacob Dittoe. Dittoe knew that many of his Catholic family members and friends had not been in contact with a priest since leaving Pennsylvania. Hence Dittoe pestered Bishop John Carroll in Baltimore about the need to send a priest to regularize marriages, baptize infants, offer Mass and hear confessions, along with other sacramental duties appropriate for Roman Catholics.

In response to Dittoe's continued calls for clerical visits, Bishop Carroll contacted Edward Fenwick in Springfield and asked that he might, on his way from Kentucky to Maryland on one of his visits to the ancestral home, visit the Roman Catholics in the Somerset region. Fenwick agreed to Carroll's request, and in 1808 Fenwick visited Somerset and met with the Dittoe family. The story goes that Fenwick, traveling along Zane's Trace, heard the sound of an axe felling a tree, and following that sound led him to Jacob



ST. MARY'S CONVENT AND CHAPEL, SOMERSET, OHIO

The church and convent in Somerset for St. Mary's Female Literary Academy. Circa 1850.

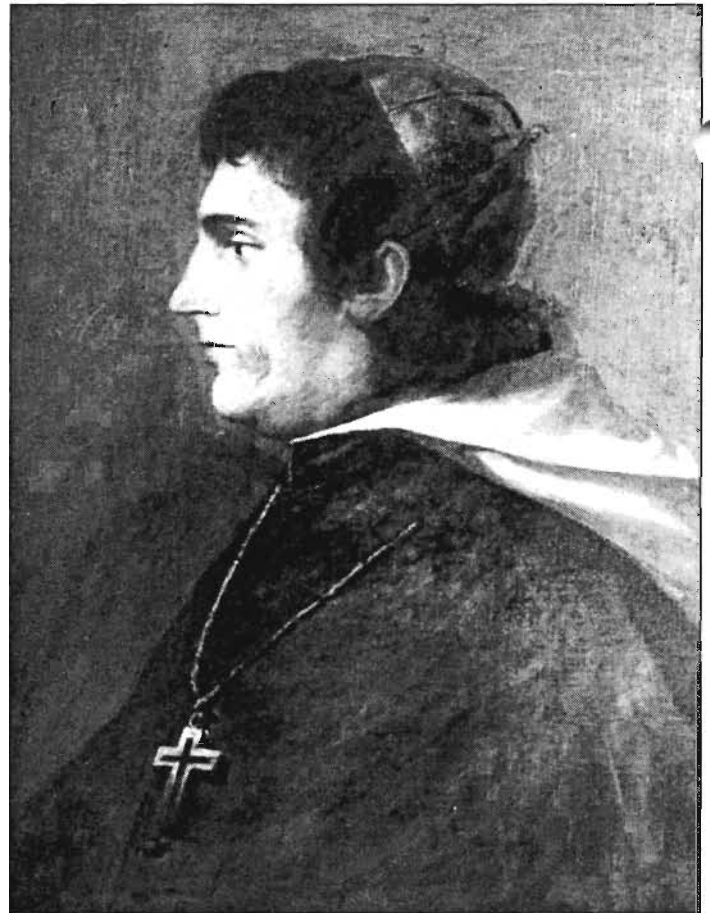
Dittoe. Dittoe, a generous person of faith, gave Fenwick the deed for over three hundred acres of farmland if Fenwick would establish and build a church on the site. This Fenwick proceeded to do, and on December 6, 1818, the Church of St. Joseph was dedicated, becoming the first permanent Roman Catholic Church in Ohio. This was a log building that was enlarged within a few years. In 1840, a magnificent country church was designed and built that became known as one of the most beautiful Roman Catholic churches in mid-nineteenth century America. This church still stands on a farm road about two miles southeast of the center of Somerset. With enthusiasm and drive, Fenwick thrived in working in the backwoods trails of Ohio looking for the Roman Catholics spread widely over the entire state. He once described the travails of his missionary duties:

It often happens that I am compelled to traverse vast and inhospitable forests wherein not a trace of road is to be seen. Not infrequently, overtaken by night in the midst of these, I am obliged to hitch my horse to a tree and, making a pillow of my saddle, recommend myself to God and go to sleep with bears on all sides. (O'Daniel, p. 215)

Fenwick, the biographers write, had an immense ability to meet and work with people. He was a "down to earth" person, which explains some of his success as a circuit rider through the backwoods of Ohio. His humanness comes through in several extant letters, where in writing to relatives still in Maryland, he requests that they "fill up the wagon with dried smoked herrings if possible...and a few twists of good James River tobacco." (Coffey, p. 43)

Fenwick Named First Bishop of Cincinnati

Edward Fenwick demonstrated remarkable leadership skills. Hence, it was not a surprise that he was soon selected to be a Bishop. In 1821, the ecclesiastical offices in Rome nominated Fenwick to become the first Bishop of the newly established Diocese of Cincinnati, which then extended from the state boundaries of Ohio up through all of Michigan and north-eastern Wisconsin. In reality, his diocese covered most of the area between the Allegheny Mountains on the East and the Mississippi River to the west north of the Ohio River. A vast territory indeed, but one with few priests and even less financial means to carry on the work of the gospel. Fenwick assumed his new duties



Bishop Edward Fenwick

as bishop with all the zeal and energy that he had shown in his earlier endeavors in Ohio and Kentucky. A significant number of members of his new diocese in northern Michigan were associated with several Native American Tribes. These Native Americans had met the Jesuit Fathers — the so-called "black robes" — in the middle part of the eighteenth century. With the suppression of the Jesuits in 1873, these Native Americans who were Roman Catholics were in a situation similar to Jacob Dittoe in Somerset two decades earlier — lacking priests to provide spiritual care and nourishment for them. Fenwick approached his apostolic work with them with his customary zeal and alacrity; in fact, he once wrote: "I would gladly exchange my residence in populous Cincinnati...for a hut and the happy lot of a missionary among these good Indians." (O'Daniel, p. 389)

Always interested in education, Fenwick established the Athenaeum in Cincinnati, which later evolved into today's Xavier University, and a seminary for the education of priests for his diocese who were not Dominicans. This set of buildings was dedicated and opened on October 17, 1831, two months before the



St. Joseph's Priory and Church in Somerset, circa 1900. The priory was built during the 1870s and the church in 1840.

opening classes in Granville of what became Denison University. He was also instrumental in bringing the Sisters of St. Dominic from their original foundation in Springfield to serve in his diocese, with a second home and academy established in Somerset. In his see city, Fenwick established a newspaper, *The Catholic Telegraph*, which is still published today, some one hundred and eighty years after its first issue appeared. The historical evidence suggests that Fenwick was a genuine "workaholic" totally engrossed in the duties necessary for the person in charge of this vast diocese and its corresponding administration.

During a visit to Europe in order to raise funds and secure clerical personnel for his poor diocese, Fenwick secured an audience with Pope Leo XII, during which time Fenwick asked to be relieved of his Episcopal duties so that he could once again become a circuit rider and itinerant missionary priest, especially for his dear friends, the Native Americans in northern

Michigan and northeastern Wisconsin. The Pope duly rejected this plea from Fenwick, but he did provide the poor bishop of an even poorer diocese with some means of financial assistance.

Fenwick died of cholera in Wooster, Ohio in 1832 returning home from an Episcopal visit to the Native American tribes in northern Michigan. Probably overwork and the constant worry over the lack of sufficient financial resources for his extensive diocese all contributed to his somewhat early death. For nearly twenty-years of the period about which Utter was writing his historical narrative of the Buckeye State, Edward Fenwick was either close at hand in nearby Somerset or ensconced as Bishop of Cincinnati.

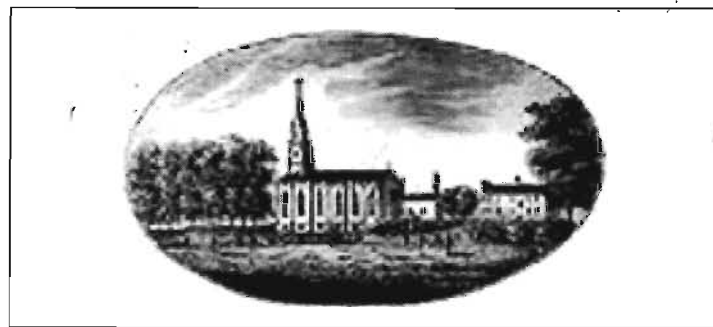
The Legacy of Fenwick in Somerset

Were Edward Fenwick a solitary figure in Somerset who eventually journeyed to Cincinnati as bishop not to return to Somerset, one might excuse Utter's neglect

of the Roman Catholic heritage emanating from Somerset. But Fenwick built a strong foundation from which developed a source almost singularly influential in the history of American Catholicism. Dominican circuit riders traversed the highways and byways of Ohio, founding most of the first Roman Catholic churches in Ohio: St. Mary of the Assumption in Lancaster and St. Patrick's in Cincinnati in 1819, St. John the Evangelist — later St. Thomas Aquinas — in Zanesville in 1820, St. Barnabas in Morgan County in 1822, St. Luke's in Danville in 1824, and Holy Trinity in the Village of Somerset in 1827-28. In fact, under Fenwick's leadership, eleven churches were established in Ohio, and all of these were rooted in the zealous work of the Dominican Friars from Somerset. The effect on the rapid spread of Roman Catholicism in Ohio is due in many ways to the apostolic work of this zealous band of American Dominicans housed in Somerset. These Dominican Friars were the ones who ministered to the Irish canal workers and those immigrant laborers working on the construction of the National Road. These are the same marginalized workers held in some disdain by Granville's famous preacher of the time, the Reverend Jacob Little.

Somerset became the national headquarters for many of the activities undertaken by the Dominican Friars for the first hundred years of their American existence. This was the Religious Order founded in 1216 by St. Dominic de Guzman and whose members established their priories adjacent to the major European universities—Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Cologne, Bologna and Rome, among other major European university cities. Wishing to have a proper and suitable site in order to educate and train their clerical students, the American Dominicans established in Somerset a *studium generale*, which is a major seminary for priestly education. This was the first such Dominican foundation in North America. It received official Roman and Papal authorization in 1834 and again in 1839. Its library was well recognized for the quality of its holdings. Most of the American Dominican priests ordained from 1820 until 1970 would have spent part of their educational time in Somerset.

Yet it was not clerical education exclusively that interested this small band of Dominican Friars. Their college in Springfield, Kentucky, was closed in 1828 by a Spanish Dominican who thought that secular college work was foreign to the Dominican apostolate.



The third St. Joseph's Church during the 1840s, with a steeple.

The American Dominicans thought otherwise, and they continued to seek out the possibilities for another college. Such a possibility arose in Somerset in 1849 with the establishment of St. Joseph's College, a layman's college dedicated to the liberal arts. This college functioned until the advent of the War Between the States when it was forced to close its doors, never to reopen. Yet the seminary program continued with vigor. Historical sources shed no light of any communication between this Roman Catholic college in Somerset and its neighboring Baptist college in Granville, but a stone's throw away.

Ecclesiastical Leadership Emerging from Somerset

Another important historical datum illustrating the importance of the Somerset Foundation of the American Dominicans is the large number of Bishops who were either educated there or who served there in some manner or other. Fenwick as the first Bishop of Cincinnati has already been mentioned. The first and second Bishops of Nashville, Tennessee, had ecclesiastical roots in Somerset. Richard Pius Piles was succeeded in the Tennessee capital by James Whelan, who also had served as an early President of St. Joseph's College. A noted linguist and theologian, several historical sources remark that Whelan may have been one of the brightest American clerics of his day. Also serving in Somerset was Joseph Alemany, who became the first Archbishop of San Francisco and served in the Pacific coast area for nearly forty years. A fifth bishop with Somerset connections was Langdon Thomas Grace, who just prior to the War Between the States was appointed the second Bishop of St. Paul in Minnesota. Grace was the ecclesiastical mentor of Archbishop John Ireland, who became one of the leading American Roman Catholic prelates at the turn of the twentieth century. In the early twentieth century,

another Dominican, John McNicholas, was named the Archbishop of Cincinnati following a successful stint as Bishop of Duluth, Minnesota. McNicholas and Ireland were more than likely colleagues at heart in Minnesota.

These sketches, albeit brief, nonetheless indicate the importance of the nurturing grounds of St. Joseph Church and Priory in Somerset in terms of the development of leadership persons in Roman Catholicism in nineteenth century America. These facts certainly belie what Utter appeared to have thought that “nothing important happened in Somerset.”

The Dominican Sisters of St. Mary’s

Not only was Somerset the home of the Dominican Friars, but it also was the site of the initial foundation in Ohio of the Dominican Sisters. Established as a group of teaching religious women in Springfield in 1822, at the invitation of Bishop Fenwick, a spin-off group of these sisters journeyed to Somerset and immediately established the Academy of St. Mary’s in the village across the street from Holy Trinity Church. Both the Church and the Academy were located on what was called “Piety Hill,” situated on one of the principal streets of Somerset, whereas St. Joseph’s was about two miles to the southeast of the village center. The school opened in April 1830 and was housed in temporary buildings with forty students enrolled when the classes began. This early enrollment indicated the hunger for education demonstrated throughout Ohio in the early days of statehood. This academy was destined within two years to become principally a boarding school for young women, more than several of whom were not Roman Catholic. To put this founding date in perspective, the Granville Female Academy — often referred to as the first such institution for women west of the Allegheny Mountains — was founded two years earlier in the basement of the Congregational Church and its first permanent building — now known as the Old Academy Building at Main and Elm Streets in the village — was not constructed until 1833.

The first permanent building for St. Mary’s — officially known as “Saint Mary’s Female Literary Academy” — was opened and ready for students in the spring of 1832. It was large enough to house fifty boarding students and as many day students. The Dominican sisters were so admired, even in that day of sometimes fiercely held anti-Catholicism, that they were requested to conduct classes in the district school

for some sixty students from Somerset. These dates suggest that St. Mary’s in Somerset was indeed one of the earliest educational institutions for women in the area west of the Allegheny Mountains. Given his interest in educational history in Ohio, it would seem that this is a significant historical datum that Utter should have known.

The curse of institutions throughout most of the nineteenth century was, of course, fire. A flaming conflagration destroyed the Academy building of St. Mary’s in 1865. The Dominican sisters were desperate, and they sought advice on how to proceed: rebuild in Somerset, move to another smaller village, or move to the capital city of Ohio, Columbus and begin anew. Their decision was rendered easier when a modestly wealthy Roman Catholic gentleman in Columbus, Theodore Leonard, offered the sisters thirty-three acres of land in the village of Shepard, if they would move their institution to that site and build an academy for young women. This the sisters did in 1868, and the institution there became known as the Academy of St. Mary of the Springs, a name derived from the many springs found on the property situated on the west bank of Alum Creek. The sisters moved from Somerset to Shepard in July 1868 and the academy opened in the autumn of that year enrolling Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish young women. A college by the same name emerged in 1911, and this institution of higher education evolved into today’s Ohio Dominican University.

The motherhouse for the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs served as the source for teaching sisters who populated parochial schools from New Haven to Madison, Wisconsin to Cincinnati and many places in between. Scores of young persons received their primary and secondary education from members of this religious order. Locally, the sisters from St. Mary of the Springs staffed originally the parochial school at St. Francis de Sales parish in Newark as well as Newark Catholic High School. The vastness of the educational influence of this group of religious women with historical roots in Somerset is large indeed. It is difficult to imagine how Utter neglected the source of all these historically significant events gleaned from a small village less than twenty-five miles from Granville.

Why Utter’s Benign Neglect?

This essay demonstrates the in-depth and wide-spread

influence of the religious activities that emanated from Fenwick's foundation in Somerset following the sound of the axe felling the tree. How much more could one expect from a frontier mission church in its beginning but one which flowered probably beyond even the modest hopes of its founder. It would appear that Utter's claim that Somerset lacked any significant religious effects is without historical merit. Several of the many historical works on Ohio Catholicism by Victor O'Daniel were published during this period; Utter, however, appears not to have known them, even though several monographs discuss issues in early Ohio, especially O'Daniel's excellent biography of Fenwick published in 1920. For whatever reason, Utter gives no evidence of knowing any of this important religious history in Ohio. This lacuna in Utter's historical research suggests that too often even an accomplished historian like Utter might look at historical facts through certain fixed lenses. The suggestion put forward at the end of this essay is that ultimately Utter, like many of his contemporaries, was not interested in Roman Catholic history in Ohio.

Fenwick's contributions to both Ohio and American Catholicism together with the exploits of his energetic band of followers are mostly neglected, not only in Utter's monograph but also in both religious and secular accounts of the history of Catholicism in the United States. Edward Fenwick played a significant role in the Roman Catholic Church's aspirations to meet the spiritual and temporal needs of its native-born, its immigrant and its Native-American religious members. The Jesuit missionary activities in the northern United States and Canada are widely known and part of the canon of religious studies central to American Catholicism; this is due partly to the multi volume *Jesuit Relations* (1896-1901), an extended narrative of the work undertaken by Jesuits in the eighteenth century in the then new world. Fenwick's fruitful apostolic work and striking successes are less well known in that important story of American religious history.

Louis Middleman now in Washington

After several years of superb editorial assistance, Louis Middleman has moved from Granville and taken a position with a firm on the outskirts of Washington, D.C.

Louis has been an invaluable aid in the preparation of manuscripts for *The Historical Times*. In addition, he served as

Yet it is part of a narrative rich in aspiration and strong in achievement.

Editor's Note: This essay is based on an address given before the Granville Historical Society in September 1996. It has been essentially re-worked and expanded for this publication. The author expresses his gratitude to former Society President, Lance Clarke, who encouraged the author to prepare his earlier spoken remarks for publication. As always, the author depends on the deft proofreading eye of Marianne Lisska in order to render his writing style more direct and perspicuous.

Note on Sources

The author has published two items on Edward Fenwick, with one appearing in the English Dominican journal, *New Blackfriars* (September 1993), published at Oxford. Historical narratives of the Dominican Friars used in this essay are found in Victor F. O'Daniel's *The Right Rev. Edward Dominic Fenwick, O.P.: Founder of the Dominicans in the United States* (Washington, DC: 1920), and R. M. Coffey's *American Dominicans* (New York: 1970). In addition, O'Daniel wrote several historical monographs during the first half of the twentieth century on Dominican activity in the United States with special reference to Ohio and Kentucky. Two histories of the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs are Sisters Camilla Mullay and Ruth Caspar's *A Place of Springs: A History of the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs: 1830-1970* (Columbus, OH: 2005) and an earlier readable but less scholarly work by Katherine Burton, *Make the Way Known* (New York, 1959). The early eighteenth century account of the Ohio lands is told well by Beverley W. Bond in *A History of the State of Ohio, Volume One: The Foundations of Ohio* (Columbus, OH: 1941). Donald Schlegel's *Illustrated History of the Diocese of Columbus* (Strasbourg, France: 2001) is a readable and thorough account of the historical development of the Columbus Roman Catholic Diocese.

co-editor of the first volume of the 2005 *Bicentennial History of Granville*. His sharp editorial eye has assisted in producing manuscripts that are more reader friendly and cogently argued.

We wish Louis well in his new position adjacent to the nation's capital.

Land grant gives Canadian refugees new home

by ANTHONY J. LISSKA

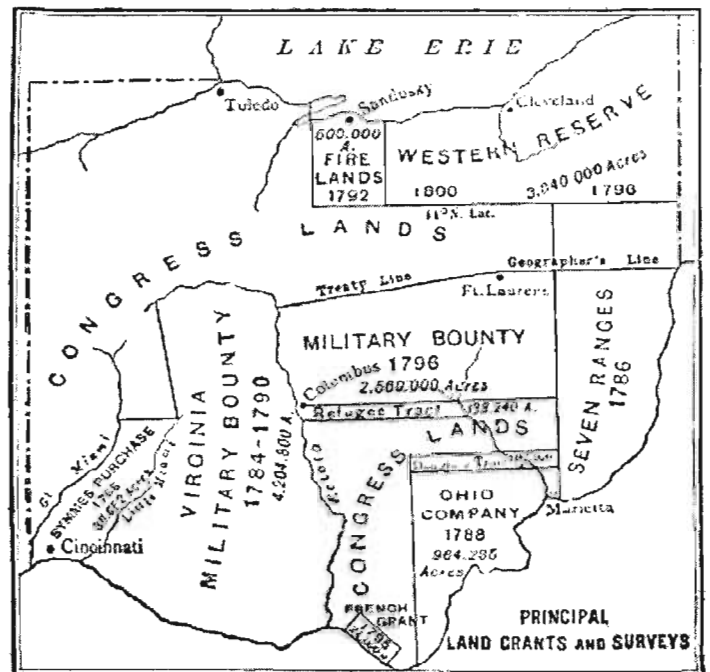
An interesting early land grant unique in the development of the Northwest Territory lies just south of Granville. What is known as the Refugee Tract dates from the early eighteenth century. During the Revolutionary War, there were pockets of Canadian citizens who supported the colonies in the revolt against England. When the war was over and Canada remained aligned with the British government, many of these Canadians who supported the American Revolution were required to leave Canada. Their removal forced these people into real and significant homelessness, concerning both country and residence.

In order to recognize the contribution these former Canadian citizens had made to the American Revolution, Congress set aside a somewhat narrow tract of land forty-two miles in length running from the Muskingum River in Zanesville to the Scioto River in what today is central Columbus. An Act of Congress, entitled "An Act Regulating the Grants of Land appropriated for the refugees from the British Provinces of Canada and Nova Scotia," approved on February 18, 1801, directed the Office of the Surveyor General to survey these lands for the Refugees from Canada. Elnathan Scofield, who also discovered the swamp that became Buckeye Lake, undertook this project. This Act of Congress noted that "the said lands be and they are hereby set apart and reserved for the purpose of satisfying the claims of persons entitled to land under" a previous act of Congress entitled "An Act for the Relief of Refugees, which was approved April 7, 1798."

The Refugee Tract itself was divided into two principal sections; one section nearer to Zanesville was three miles wide, and the other section, for thirty miles east of the Scioto River, reached a width of four and one half miles. Over one hundred thousand acres were contained in this tract of land.

The tract itself was divided into sections of 640 acres each, and then these were subsequently divided into half-sections. Richard Shiels once noted that sections of 640 acres, divided into halves, were common throughout the Northwest Territory.

Each Canadian refugee was to be given a tract of land in multiples of 320 acres. In principle, there was



The Refugee Tract, in the center of the state just south of Granville, was set aside for Canadians who were loyalists to the colonies during the Revolutionary War.

sufficient land in the tract so that each escaping Canadian could have at least 320 acres. Nonetheless, it appears that less than one half of the allocated acreage was taken up by the emigrating Canadians.

When all of the claims had been satisfied, sixty-seven persons exercised their claims and acquired about sixty thousand acres. In 1816, the remainder of the land in the tract was sold through the Land Office in Chillicothe. This practice of selling off unclaimed parcels of land was common with all public land in the early days of the Ohio country. It is unclear if any Canadians were given tracts in the area that is directly south of Granville.

Today, the northern border of this tract is marked in parts of Licking County by what is called Refugee Road. The same holds for the southern border, which is marked by another Refugee Road running through southern Columbus and Franklin County. In the area that became East Columbus, the land south of Fifth Avenue from Port Columbus to the Scioto River was in the Refugee Tract, and the land north of Fifth Avenue was part of the United States Military Lands.

(Continued on P. 12)

Publication of Jacob Little's history coming this fall

Under the stewardship of Publications Chair, Lance Clarke, a cohort of Granville Historical Society members worked this summer in producing for publication the original history of the village authored by Jacob Little in the 1840s.

Originally published seriatim in a Congregational journal in Hudson, Ohio, this significant historical narrative of Granville has never been reissued. Laura Evans undertook the tedious task of digitizing the original copies of the articles. Once this was finished, several persons met to figure out how best to publish this mid-nineteenth century account of Granville.

Since the original text is a tad turgid, the Publications Committee decided on several items to render the text more accessible to the contemporary reader. It was divided into various segments, photographs were found to illustrate the text, "content boxes" have been written to help spell out various items and concepts to which Jacob Little refers, but often in a sketchy manner.

Ohio State University-Newark historian Richard Shiels has written a marvelous Introduction to the historical manuscript helping the reader understand better the various New England Protestant forebears considered by Little as essential to understanding the village of Granville. In addition, several extended appendices will help give readers a deeper knowledge of Granville, its mid-nineteenth century citizens, and the environs.

The Publications Committee has once again used Fishergate Publishing under the expertise of Susan Vianna to provide the book's layout and format. Historical Society members will recall that Ms. Vianna undertook the outstanding editorial work for the three-volume Bicentennial History of Granville.

The new edition is expected to arrive by early December.

Land grant (cont'd)

What developed later in the nineteenth century as the City of Columbus was situated in the western portion of this Refugee Tract. What is now Fifth Avenue was the northern boundary line of the tract, and what is now Refugee Road in Franklin County comprised the southern boundary. The whole contained between 136,000 and 138,000 acres. The Refugee Tract, accordingly, ran through most of what today is downtown Columbus, Bexley, Grandview Heights, and the southern sections of Upper Arlington; the Ohio Statehouse and many of the state office buildings as well as most of the business and commercial buildings are found within the original Refugee Tract lands.

Editor's Note: This smallish piece is adapted from a larger study on East Columbus, Ohio, that the author is completing.



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