THE FIRST MASS IN SOUTHERN OHIO

By Herman E. Mattingly

The Ohio River served as an important means of travel in pioneer days. It is not surprising, then, that along the "beautiful river", as the Indians called it, Mass was celebrated for the first time in Southern Ohio.

The French were the early explorers of the area. It is debated by historians whether or not Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle, passed down the Ohio in the winter of 1669-70. There is no indication that a priest accompanied him. Missionaries, however, were among the first white people to see the areas of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley. It was not long before New France (Canada) claimed not only the St. Lawrence Valley, but also the territory west of the Appalachian mountains, the Great Lakes area and the Mississippi Valley. That some hardy explorer from Canada would have left the Great Lakes area and followed the Allegheny River from its source down to the Ohio could be expected. At any rate, when, in 1749, Captain Peter Joseph Céloron de Blainville made his expedition down the Allegheny and Ohio rivers he posted plaques at various locations for the purpose of "renewing of possession" of the Ohio watershed for France. It was this expedition of Céloron that undoubtedly brought about the celebration of Mass for the first time in Southern Ohio.

While the French were exploring and claiming the valleys of the St. Lawrence, Ohio and Mississippi rivers, the English were taking a strong hold on most of the Atlantic seaboard. The rapid growth of the English colonies as compared to the French made them much stronger population wise. That pioneers from the colonies would cross over the Appalachian mountains to explore the west and to trade with the Indians was only natural. By the middle of the eighteenth century this movement was of such proportions that the French were deeply concerned. Accordingly, the Governor-General of New France, the Marquis de la Galissoniere, sent Céloron with a considerable number of men down the Allegheny and Ohio rivers to reassert the claim of France for the territory.

When Joseph Céloron de Blainville left la Chine above Montreal on the St. Lawrence River on June 15, 1749, he had with him approximately 220 Canadians and about thirty Indians. Also on the expedition was the Rev. Joseph Peter Bonnecamps, a Jesuit priest, who was a mathematician and scientist. Records or journals of the trip were kept by Céloron and Father Bonnecamps. These have provided for history an account of the events of the expedition which began in June and ended in November of 1749.

Following the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes area, it was a month before Céloron and his men reached the mouth of the Chautauqua Creek on the
southern shore of Lake Erie. Going up the creek to Lake Chautauqua, they went on to Conewango Creek and followed it to its mouth on the Allegheny River, 186 miles above Pittsburgh, site of the present city of Warren, Pa.

Having reached the Allegheny, Celoron now buried the first of a number of leaden plates on which was inscribed an official proclamation claiming the territory for the king of France. He also fastened a metal plate bearing the royal arms on a nearby tree. This was done with some ceremony to impress the Indians of the area. All along his route Celoron endeavored to win over the Indians to loyalty to the French. This was not an easy task due to the ever-increasing fur trade with the English pioneers.

Celoron buried six leaden plates on his journey. Besides the first one at Warren, Pa., plates were deposited in the earth at the mouth of French Creek where it empties into the Allegheny River; at or near the junction of Wheeling Creek and the Ohio River; at the mouths of the Great Kanawha, Muskingum and Great Miami rivers. That six plates were buried is evident from Celoron's journal. One of the first two was found and is now preserved in London. A second was found on the west bank of the Muskingum, and a third at the mouth of the Great Kanawha River in West Virginia.

The text of the one buried at the junction of the Great Kanawha and Ohio rivers is as follows: "The year 1749 in the reign of Louis XV, King of France, we, Celoron, commanding a detachment sent by Monsieur the Marquis de la Gallisoniere, Governor-General of New France, to re-establish peace among several savage villages of the provinces, have buried this plaque at the mouth of the Chino-
dahichetha (Kanawha) River the 18th of August near the Ohio (Oyo) River, otherwise called the Beautiful River, for a monument of the renewal or possession which we have taken of said Ohio River, and of all those which drain into it, and of all the lands on both banks as far as the sources of said rivers, as the preceding Kings of France have or should possess them and as they are maintained by arms and by treaties, particularly those of Riswick, Utrecht, and Aix la Chapelle."

Evidently there was only an overnight stop on the west bank of the Muskingum River. Father Bonnecamps' journal gives little information. He wrote: "From Chinigue to Sinhiote (Scioto), my journal provides me with nothing curious or new, there are only readings of the Compass, taken every quarter of an hour, the list of which would be as tedious for the reader as for the copyist. I will only tell you that we buried three plates of lead at the mouths of three different rivers, the 1st of which was called Kanonouara (at Wheeling), the second, Jenanguekona (Muskingum), and the 3rd, Chinodaichta (Kanawha)."

Since the expedition only stopped overnight at the Muskingum, it is doubtful that Father Bonnecamps had the opportunity to arrange for Mass. Yet it was August 15, the Feast of the Assumption. He may have done so. There is no indication in his own record of the trip.

The expedition arrived at the mouth of the Great Kanawha on August 18th. After two days there, Celoron embarked again. Arrival at the mouth of the Scioto was on August 22nd. Father Bonnecamps' account of the four-day stay as recorded in Jesuit Relations (Vol. 69, All Missions, 1710-1756, p. 150 sq.) follows:

76.
"When we arrived near Sinihoto, Monsieur de Celoron, by the advice of the officers and of the savages, despatched Messieurs de Joncaire and Niverville to announce our approaching arrival to the Chaouanons (Shawnees). Their reception was not gracious. Hardy had the savages perceived them, when they fired on them, and their colors were pierced in three places. In spite of this hail of musketry, they advanced as far as the bank, and disembarked without receiving any wound. They were conducted to the council-cabin; but scarcely had Monsieur de Joncaire commenced his harangue, when a miserable Panis (Pawnees), to all appearances influenced by the English, suddenly arose crying out that they were deceived, and that the French came to them only to destroy them. This denunciation was like a war-cry. The savages ran to arms, and arrested our envoys; they talked of binding them to the stake; and perhaps they would have executed this threat if an Iroquois, who was by chance present, had not appeased the furious savages by assuring them that we had no evil designs. He even promised to go with Monsieur Joncaire to meet us, which he did.

"We encountered them on the 22nd, about a league from the village. Monsieur de Celoron thanked the Iroquois for the zeal which he had displayed on this occasion, and made him some small presents.

"We finally embarked, in order to go to Sinihoto. We camped opposite the village, where we worked hard in order to complete the fort which had been begun the evening before.

"On the 23rd, a council was held; but the savages raised some difficulties about the place where they were to assemble. They desired that we should address them in the cabin appointed for Council. Monsieur de Celoron declared, on the contrary, that it was for the children to come to hear the words of their father in the place where he had lighted his fire. Briefly, after many disputes, the savages gave way and presented themselves in our camp. During the Council, two couriers arrived to announce that canoes bearing the French colors had been seen descending the river Sinihoto. This news somewhat disconcerted our grave senators, who imagined that it was a party of warriors sent against them from Detroit, and that it was our design to enclose them between two fires. Monsieur the commandant had great difficulty to reassure them. Finally, however, their fears were dissipated, and they continued the Council.

"The 24th. The savages responded, but in vague and general terms, which signified nothing at all.

"On the 25th, 4 outaouas arrived with letters from Monsieur (de) Sabrvois which notified Monsieur de Celoron that he had not been able to persuade the savages of his government to come to join us on the Beautiful River, as had been projected. In the evening there was a bonfire to celebrate the Feast of St. Louis. All the detachment was under arms; they fired three volleys of musketry, preceded by several cries of Vive le Roy!

"The 26th. The Chaouanons gave a 2nd response which was somewhat more satisfactory than the 1st. After which, we continued our journey to riviere a la Roche (Great Miami).

"The situation of the village of the Chaouanons is quite pleasant, at least it is not masked by the mountains like all the other villages through which we passed. The Sinihoto River, which bounds it on the west, has given it its name. It is composed of about sixty cabins. The Englishmen there numbered five. They
were ordered to withdraw, and promised to do so. The latitude of our camp was 39° 11′.

It is debated by historians whether or not the Scioto encampment was on the south shore of the Ohio River or on the east bank of the Scioto. The terrain on the south shore provided little level ground before it rose sharply in a steep hill. This, it would seem, would not have been a good location in case of attack. Further, in 1749, the mouth of the Scioto River was one mile west of its present location. This would mean that Celoron's camp was located on the level land west of the present city of Portsmouth, Ohio, and the Indian village in the area just south of the present town of West Portsmouth, and on the west bank of the Scioto. Henry T. Bannon (Scioto Sketches, 1930, p. 7) gives this description:

"The French expedition landed on the east bank of the Scioto, opposite the village, and returned the salute. Some historians are in doubt as to whether Celoron landed on the east bank of the Scioto or the south shore of the Ohio. The journal is not clear on that point. A consideration of the happenings leads to the conclusion that the expedition pitched camp on the east bank of the Scioto. Here the French remained until August 26th."

It can be concluded that Father Bonnechamps celebrated the first Mass in Southern Ohio at Portsmouth between August 22 and 26, 1746.

The expedition continued down the Ohio and arrived on August 30 at the mouth of the riviere a la Roche (Great Miami). This is the location of the present city of Cincinnati. Two days were spent here, and surely Father Bonnechamps celebrated Mass during this time. The sixth of the leaden plates was buried here. On September 1 they proceeded up the Great Miami to the site of the present Fort Loramie. After a week there the expedition portaged to the site of the present city of Fort Wayne. Some went from there by land to Detroit, while others descended the Maumee River. They came together at Detroit and from there went to Montreal by way of Lake Erie.

It remains to give some information about the priest who celebrated Mass for the first time in southern Ohio. Father A.A. Leaming, to whom much is owed for bringing to light the journals of Celoron and of Father Bonnechamps, wrote in his history of the Diocese of Pittsburgh (Foundation Stones of a Great Diocese) that Father Bonnechamps was born at Vannes, France, Sept. 5, 1707, and baptized Joseph Peter. He was 20 years of age when he entered the Society of Jesus, November 3, 1727. Some years later he was assigned to the Canadian mission and arrived in Quebec in 1742. He was professor of mathematics and hydrography in the Jesuit college in that city. He does not appear to have spent any time in missionary travels. When he left to return to France in 1759, "he left behind him the reputation of a distinguished mathematician and astronomer" (Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society Publications, Vol. 29, p. 386). Father Bonnechamps died at the Chateau of Tronjoly, parish of Gouron, May 28, 1790.

Since Father Bonnechamps took "readings of the compass...every quarter of an hour," he was able to draw up a pretty good map of the route of his journey. Indeed, "Ohio owes the first map of her boundaries or outlines yet discovered" to him (Rufus King: Ohio: First Fruits of the Ordinance of 1787, Boston, 1888, p. 63). Father Bonnechamps' map is on page 13 of King's volume.
ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO  
(Continued)

(Note: The following are excerpts from the daily journal of Joseph F. Mattingly written in 1875.)

May


14. Friday. Kate and I went to six o'clock Church in Zanesville. Got home about noon. Finished planting large field about 3 p.m. Hauled in last of our corn after supper and went fishing. Weather cloudy and cool in evening.


27. Thursday. Home all day. Boys and girls went to Zanesville to Church. Weather warm and dry.

30. Sunday. Went to Church horseback. Tom came home with me and stayed until after supper. Weather pleasant.

June


8. Thinning corn in forenoon; went after mineys (sic!) in afternoon over to Bartley's run; more fishing, Tom and I; not get any. Weather fine. Hired Leighton $18.00 per month. Commenced work in afternoon.

11. Friday. Went to town with two loads of corn, Emmet and I. Sold at 70 & 75 ct. Went over home in afternoon; took the gun and walked across. Weather very warm. Went after Doctor for Kate in night about one o'clock. Was caught in rain. Did not find Dr. Reamy at home & brought out Dr. Holden.


13. Sunday. Went up the country to Church (2). One of the babies died. Went to town after coffin, Emmet and I. Weather cool.


July


8. Thursday. Went to town in morning; had baby christened. Cut some wheat in afternoon and went fishing. Weather fine.

9. Friday. Harvesting in field back of orchard; finished after supper, and commenced in bottom. Weather fine. Sold cattle; 10 head to W. Magruder at $5.50 per hundred in September.


17. Went to Newark. Came home about 10 p.m.; found all right and my Father here. Hardest rain and windstorm of season in morning. Weather hot and raining at night.

18. Sunday. Went to Church on horseback; rented a pew. Mike Maher and Jane Brennan were here and spent the afternoon. Also Tom Egan and Cinda. Weather showry.


25. Sunday. Went to Church in Zanesville, and went out home with Tom after dinner. Pap and I went over to Anthony Burkey's. Got home about dark.

30. Friday. Hauling rails to build the line fence between Madden and myself. Emmet went to Jersey. Weather fine.

August

6. Friday. Went down to help Mrs. Kelly haul in wheat; it rained and we came home. Went to town; came home past my father's. The Dutchman commenced work. He and Ed hauled in wheat for Mrs. Kelly in afternoon. Emmet came home from Jersey.

7. Saturday. Cleaning a patch off for and sewing turnips in forenoon. Hauling up corn from the pen in afternoon. Weather fine.

8. Sunday. Kate and I went to Church. Came around by Ann's; stayed the evening. Weather fine.

10. Tuesday. Went to Church (3). Broke tongue out of wagon; got home about 11 p.m. Weather fine. Emmet was mowing for Bunting.

11. Wednesday. Went to Church; brought home wagon. Weather fine. Cost of smash-up: Tongue, $2.50; Hauling wagon to shop, 25 cts; ironed, 65 cts; Young's bill for stabling horses, 80 cts; $4.20.

13. Friday. Went to Church, Emmet and I, in spring wagon; got home about 1 in afternoon. Emmet and Dutchman were plowing in afternoon. I dont feel well. Sprinkled rain in evening.


21. Saturday. Went over to help Ann thresh, Julius, Emmet and I. Finished about 1 p.m. Came home and stirred our wheat. Felix and Byron Crabtree came over to buy our sheep; did not agree on price. Weather fine.


1) Ascension Thursday.
2) St. Mary's, Mattingly Settlement.
3) Church attendance on these weekdays may indicate a novena for August 15th, or a parish mission.

(To be continued)
EARLY BAPTISM RECORDS OF ST. JOSEPH'S
SOMERSET, OHIO
(Continued)

1828 (Cont.)

Apr. 16: Mary Ann McCue, of Philip McCue and Mary Carr; sponsors, Peter Patton and Catherine Gallagher. -- J. A. Hill, O.P.

Apr. 16: Mary Joanna Nealy, of George and Frances Gallagher; sponsors, Peter Gallagher and Lucy Gallagher. -- J.A. Hill, O.P.

Apr. 16: Israel Thompson, of Thomas and Margaret Smithly; sponsors, John and Mary McCadden. -- J. A. Hill, O.P.

Apr. 26: ------ Quiann, of Victor Quiann; sponsors, James Pilliot and C------ Vioctr(??). -- J.B.V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.M.

May 3: James Pilliot, b. April 27, of James Pilliot and Julia Gilliamet(?). -- J.B.V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.M.

May 27: John August Woods, of William Woods and ------, wife; sponsors, Daniel McAllister and Mary McGeeary. -- J.A. Hill.

May 27: Mary McAllister of Hectoris McAllister and Mary Brennan; sponsors, William and Mary Woods. -- J.A. Hill, O. Praedicatorum.

May 28: Mary Magdalen St. Lawrence, of Daniel Henry St. Lawrence and Mary McNulty; sponsors, Mary Marshall. -- J. A. Hill.

June 8: Daniel Kroots(?). of George Kroots and Catherine; sponsors, John Shumacker and Magdalene Kuegle. -- J. A. Hill, O. Praed.


June 27: Elizabeth Fogle, of Adam Fogle and Catherine Shorbe; Sponsors, Adam Ryder and wife. -- J. A. Hill, O. Praedicatorum.

June 25: Elizabeth Carolina Myers, of Francis Myers and Caroline Elwin; sponsors, James and Elizabeth Casmilly. -- J. A. Hill, O.P.

July 22: William Malone, of Patrick Mallone and Nancy Uninion(?); sponsor, Patrick McCalister. -- J.B.V.DeRaymaeker, O.P.

July 22: John Mallone, of Patrick and Nancy Ennion(?), wife; sponsor, John Daley. -- J.B.V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.

July 22: James Mallone, of Patrick and Nancy Ennion, wife; sponsor, John Daley. -- J.B.V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.

July 22: Catharine Mallone, of Patrick and Nancy Ennion, wife; sponsors, Patr. McCalister and Anna McCary. -- J.B.V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.

July 22: John Marphis(?), of John Morphit and Isabella Bell, wife; sponsors, Patrick Mallone and Nancy Mall. -- J.B.V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.

July 22: Mary McCalister, of Patrick and Mary McCalister, wife; sponsors (not given). -- J.B.V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.

Aug. 24: Joseph Monnier, of John A. Monnier and Mary Ann Frant------, wife; sponsors, Jon. B. Menga and Marger Fran-- --J.B.V. DeRaymaeker.

Sept.14: John B. Cheke, of John Peter and Frances Craimpet, wife; sponsors, J. B. Jacat and E. Etienne. -- J. B. V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.

Sept.19: Theresa Louisa, of Ignatius Pierot and Magd. Riggert, wife; sponsors, Adam Socrine and Eva. -- J.B.V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.

Sept.21: Mary, of Henry and Bridgit O'Brien; sponsor, Catherine Anderson. -- N. D. Young.

Oct. 9: John, b. August 22, of John Wenny(??) and Elizabeth Rice, wife; sponsor, James Ramsey. -- F. Thoma. Martin, O.P.

Oct. 12: Francis, of James Tillyars and Mary Anne Shoemaker, wife; sponsors, John Shoemaker and Catherine Bowers. -- P. Tace. Martin, O.P.

Oct. 12: John Off, of Marinhiti(??) Off and Mary Dunsay; sponsors, John Walding and Magdalena Off. -- J.B.V. DeRaymaeker, O.P.
1828 (Cont.)

Oct. 12: Eleonora, of Patrick McManus and Margaret McIise, wife; sponsors, Barnabas Murphy and Mary McIise. -- J. B. V. DeRamaeker, O.P.

Oct. 12: Sarah McCoy, of Conrady McCoy and Anna Boyle, wife; sponsors, James Rodgers and Mary Shroclin(?). -- J. B. V. DeRamaeker, O.P.

Oct. 15: Francis Augustine, of Anthony Saunders and -----, wife; sponsor, Martha Grimes.

Oct. 19: Julia, of John Whipple and Catherine Carroll, wife; sponsor, Margaret Gillen.


Oct. 28: Sarah Ann Dittoe, of James Dittoe and Sara Kean; sponsors, John Flowers and Ann Filtuy(?).

Nov. 1: Susanna, of James Whitman and Elizabeth Case, wife; sponsors, Christian Whitman and Elisa Saunders.

Nov. 3: Joseph Paul, b. Oct. 21, of Paul Rider and Sarah Thorb; sponsor, Mary Thorb.

Nov. 7: John P., b. Aug. 9, of William Berry and Mary Edger, wife; sponsors, James Patton and Rachel Davis.

Nov. 9: Susanna, b. Nov. 21, 1827, of Jesse McKinsey and Mary Dugan, wife; sponsor, Margaret Beall.

Nov. 16: Ann Mary Moulin; sponsors, John Peter Moulin and Marianna Moulin.

Nov. 20: Barbara, of Joseph Zint(?) and Catharine Layman, wife; sponsors, Michael Smith and Elizabeth Rider.

Nov. 23: Felix Aloysius McDonnel, b. Nov. 10, of Felix and ----; sponsors, Henry Dittoe and Elizabeth Dougen.

Nov. 30: Mary Ann Scullrey(?), b. Nov. 15, of Michael and Nancy; sponsors, Mathias Rang and Helen McDonnel.

Nov. 30: Mary Ann Hoogelan, b. Nov. 3, of Thomas and Mary; sponsors, John Kelly and Helen Benet.

Dec. 2: John Chrysostom, of Henry Dwinnee(?) and Elizabeth Plott, wife; sponsor, Catherine Plott.


Dec. 8: John, b. Nov. 30, of John Adams and Elizabeth Finck; sponsor, Eliza Adams.

Dec. 10: Bridget, of Thomas Sepple and Margaret McLeary, wife; sponsors, John Cassilly and wife.

Dec. 11: Anthony, of Joseph Arnold and Susanna Heckinger, wife; sponsors, William Jones and Elizabeth Arnold.

Dec. 11: Daniel, of John Greenwalt and Sarah Plum, wife; sponsors, Daniel Arnold and Christina Plum.

Dec. 25: Joseph, b. June 3, 1828, of George Hartman and Mary Harrison; sponsors, Joseph Hartman and Mary Patterson.

Dec. 27: Mariet Joanna, b. Dec. 13, 1828, of James Boyle and Rachel Campbell; sponsor, Susanna Erin(?).


(The to be continued)

The Catholic Record Society will be most grateful for donations of books written by persons of the Diocese of Columbus. Needed is volume one of Bishop Elwell's four-volume series, Our Quest for Happiness.

82.