ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, LILLY P. O.
HARRISON TOWNSHIP, SCIOTO COUNTY, OHIO
1860 - 1924

Plat of the property of St. John's, Lilly, Harrison township, Scioto county, Ohio, from the Parish Plat Book of the 1880's, Columbus Diocese Archives.

At a time when tension over the slavery question was at such a pitch that it would soon erupt into Civil War; and when the young Father Sylvester Rosecrans, back from Rome with a doctorate in theology, was writing in the Catholic Telegraph of Cincinnati in favor of freedom for the slaves, John Baptist Purcell, archbishop of Cincinnati, bought a three-acre tract on the eastern border of Harrison township in Scioto county, Ohio. The property was to be the site of a church to serve the Catholic farmers and clay mine workers of the area. It would not be many years later (1869) that young Doctor Rosecrans, now first bishop of the diocese of Columbus, would be confirming members of the congregation being formed in the Harrison township area.

Bishop Hartley wrote in his history (1) of the diocese of Columbus: "On account of the many Catholic men employed in the clay mines near Gephart Station (2),
three acres of land were donated in 1858 by Mr. Dill of Lilly, for the purpose of erecting a Catholic church, and was named by the Rt. Rev. Bishop, St. John." It was later listed as St. John's, Lilly P.O. Evans, in his history (3) of Scioto county, gives the title of the church as St. John the Baptist.

The property was actually transferred by a Deed under date of Dec. 17, 1860 (4). The document states that Philip Dill and his wife Mary Anna Dill, of Harrison township, for the sum of forty dollars paid by the Most Rev. John B. Purcell, archbishop of the archdiocese of Cincinnati, transferred to him three acres described as lying in Harrison township having its eastern boundary the western border line of Bloom township.

The property was located in the area through which flows what is known as the Little Scioto river. Hence, the parish was sometimes referred to as St. John's, Little Scioto. It was also referred to as the church on "Tick Ridge", which is still the name of the road which serves the property.

St. John's was about ten miles northeast of the city of Portsmouth where the first parish was organized in 1842 by Father J. O'Mealy. The next year he recorded a baptism at Little Scioto. Under date of July 3, 1843, he wrote that he baptised Henry, son of Joseph Nagle and Mary Eide at Little Scioto. The sponsors were Xavier Sheppard and Mary Legler. The name of the first church in Portsmouth was Nativity Church. A few years later it was replaced by the present St. Mary's. It was doubtless that from this parish priests took care of the Catholics at Lilly until they became strong enough to have their own pastor.

In 1846 Father Emmanuel Thiempont registered at St. Mary's the following baptisms of Little Scioto:

1846, Feb. 10: Conrad, son of Joseph Rubreght and Magdalene Omenan. Sponsors:
Andrew Rubreght and Barbara Rubreght.

Same Day: Mary, daughter of Anthony Falter and Anna Maline. Sponsors:
Charles West and Mary Bender.

1846, March 29: Henry, son of Louis Birkendale and Frances Black. Sponsors:
Peter Joseph Genkler and Christina Genkler.

1846, May 21: John, son of Xavier Sheppard and Mary Josephine Swind. Sponsors:
George Legler and Mary Anna Seidler.

1846, Aug. 1: Mary, daughter of Wolforde Ritter and Barbara Backmeyne. Sponsors:
Gabriel and Mary Krausser.

On July 7, 1861, Father James J. O'Donohoe, of Holy Redeemer church, Portsmouth, recorded the baptism at Little Scioto of James, b. in January 1861, son of Robert Alexander and Helen Henan.

The Catholic people of Little Scioto became a parish with the erection of a church in 1861. "The Catholic people who lived at Harrison, Scioto and Bloom Furnaces, with Father Karge (5) of Portsmouth as pastor, in 1861, built a frame church costing $800.00. It was located on Tick Ridge on the farm of Mr. Philip Dill. Ten years after, a parsonage was built beside the church. The members of the building committee were Xavier Sheppard, Benedict Seidel, Lawrence Cordell and Joseph Spitznagel" (6).

The first resident pastor was Father Louis Schreiber (7). He probably came to his post in 1872. A book of records of baptisms was started in 1873. Priests in charge of St. John's during the following years were Father Albert (8), 1873; Father L. Neumayer (9), 1874; Father P. J. Weisenberger (10), 1876; Father Philip Kuemmert (11), 1878, and Father P. F. Thurheimer (12), 1879.
Sometime during these years the pastor moved over to St. Peter's on the Sugar camp road, and served both churches from there. The clay mines had become exhausted and the number of parishioners became less and less. As Bishop Hartley wrote (13): "This congregation, mostly clay miners and farmers, was formerly a large one, and supported a resident pastor, but as the clay mines became exhausted and the miners moved away, this once large congregation dwindled down to only five families, and the spiritual wants of these few remaining people were looked after by the pastor of St. Peter's Church, Wheelersburg."

Father John B. Ritter (14) became pastor of St. Peter's in March, 1880, and St. John's was served as a mission, with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass being celebrated every second Sunday. In 1899 Father Joseph M. Wehrle (15) came to St. Peter's, and he also served St. John's.

During the time that Father Goebel (16) served both parishes, 1894 to 1901, the interior of the church was frescoed and new altars installed. From 1901 to 1903 Father James T. Banahan (17) was pastor. Later Father Carey (18) became pastor and he made the trip to St. John's by horse drawn buggy, with Lou Miller doing the driving.

The church was twice struck by lightning and during the summer of 1907 was burned to the ground. Not to give up, the people built another frame church, but it was not as well constructed as the first and had to be torn down in 1924 because it was not able to withstand the force of the wind storms. It gradually began to lean so much that it became a threat to anyone using it, and for the sake of protection, it was torn down. Since that time there has been no church at Lilly near Gephart Station. The people were now all attending St. Peter's, Wheelersburg.

Three young girls of St. John's entered the convent. Wilhemena Feist entered the convent of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sick Poor in 1884. Elisabeth Feist went to the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity in 1885. Wilhemena Seidel became Sister Clementine of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth in Kentucky.

(1) Diocese of Columbus, the History of Fifty Years, 1868-1918 by Bishop James J. Hartley, Columbus, Ohio, 1918, p. 323.
(2) Gephart Station lies in Bloom township, east and south of the church property.
(5) Rev. Francis Karge, 1810-1875, pastor at St. Mary's, Portsmouth, until 1871.
(6) Evans, op. cit., p. 409.
(7) Father Louis Schreiber died in Cincinnati in 1868.
(8) Father Fred P. Albert. No data.
(9) Father L. J. Newmayr served at Harrietsville until 1881.
(10) Father Peter Januarius Weisenberger, 1822-1890, died at Dover, Ohio.
(11) Father Philip Kuehmert, no data.
(12) Father P. F. Thurheimer served at Pomeroy and Jackson; died March 12, 1923.
(13) Hartley, op. cit., p. 323.
(15) Father Joseph Wehrle, died as pastor of St. Mary's, Columbus, April 24, 1924.
(16) Father T. A. Goebel died at St. Mary's, Portsmouth, Feb. 23, 1953.
(18) Father Thomas Carey died Nov. 26, 1939.
Tombstone Inscriptions

2. Baby.
3. Andy Sommer d. July 5, 1890. Aged 69 Y.
   Christina Sommer, b. Sept. 2, 1822; d. Feb. 18, 1892. Aged 69 Y.
4. George Sommer b. April 1, 1860; d. Nov. 11, 1884.
6. Frederick Sommer, d. June 7, 1888. Aged 30 Y 5 M 15 D.
   In honor of Co. F., 29th Inf.
    Born in Montbeliard, France.
    Priv. Co. D, 1st Regt. O.H.A.
13. Martin, son of George and Mary Rupert. d. Aug. 9, 1890. Aged 17 Y 6 M 20 D.
15. Father Mother
    Patrick Sweeney native of County Donegal, Ireland [No data].
    Catharine Sweeney, wife of Patrick Sweeney, native of County Donegal, Ireland.
    d. Oct. 5, 1884. Aged 76 Y.
    Aged 10 Y 11 M 15 D.
22. John Emmett 1866-1901
    Minna E. Hudson 1881-1906.
    Mary Ann, his wife, b. July 15, 1809; d. July 10, 1893. Aged 84 Y 11 M 15 D.
    George A. Emmett 1839-1895.
27. Mary, wife of E. Steubel d. June 21, 1884. Aged 64 Y.
28. L.K.
    Thomas Murphy b. [no inscription].
34. Lawrence Karl d. June 21, 1880. Aged 65 Y 10 M 21 D.
36. Hier ruht in Frieden P. Strobel geboren den 15 May 1812; gestorben den
    26 Juni 1880.
37. Hier ruht in Frieden J. Orlett geboren den 12 November 1821; gestorben den
    2- Juli 1880.
38. eneva Peach b. May --, 1817; d. Feb. 1(4), 1888(8). Aged 63 Y 9 M 3 D.
40. Mary A., wife of Peter Rider d. Oct. 15, 1883. Aged 43 Y 29 D.

-172-
42. Benedict Seidel d. Aug. 20, 1888. Aged 72 Y 6 M 8 D.
44. Frank Seidel March 11, 1879 - April 16, 1900.
45. John Feist June 24, 1830 - Sept. 19, 1914.
48. Father Mother
   Anna Dill b. Feb. 23, 1851 [no death date].
   Martin Dill, b. June 21, 1840; d. Sept. 8, 1890. Aged 50 Y 2 M 17 D.
50. Henry, son of H. & C. Bloss, d. April 23, 1875. Aged 5 Y 8 M.
52. Elizabeth, dau. of M. & B. Davis, d. Jan. 8, 1877. Aged 3 Y 11 M.
54. Frank, son of H. & C. Bloss, d. Feb. 8, 1882. Aged 1 Y 4 M.
56. George, infant son of D. & C. Fisher, d. Sept. 18, 1880. Aged 6 M 17 D.
58. ...Johan Jacob.... J. & C. Hock(?) gestorben den 21 Nov. 1863, Alt i Jahre (?) 2 M 21 D.
59. John, son of Martin & Mary Kolb, d. July 1, 1885. Aged 4 Y 2 M.
60. Margaret, dau. of G. & M. Handel, b. 25 Sept. 1858; d. 17 Feb. 1863.
62. Annie Aged 8 M
   William Aged 4 M.
   Children of M. & S. Dill.
63. Peter Lefler, Co. 1(?), 140th Ohio Inf.
64. Francisca, wife of Peter Hoffman, d. Sept. 27, 1864. Aged 28 Y 6 M 6 D.
65. Valentin Emmett, b. 20 May 1849; d. 9 Dec. 1865.
   Eva, wife of Conrad Emmett, b. Aug. 27, 1809; d. Jan. 18, 1891. Aged 81 Y 4 M 21 D.
71. Conrad Henning, d. May 10, 1866. Aged 4(9) Y.
73. Zapher Sherbert, d. May 24, 1870. Aged 70 Y.
74. Gresen--s Deniler, d. June 1, 1821. Aged 67 Y 1 M 29 D.
75. Jacob, son of M. & M.A. Kolb, d. June 20, 1873. Aged 12 Y 3 M 16 D.
76. George Wirth, d. 8 July 1838. Aged 3 M 29 D.
77. Andrew Kolb, d. Oct. 26, 1878. Aged 23 Y 20 D.
78. Catharine Daniel, d. May 19, 1876. Aged 85 Y.
80. Nicholas Huber, b. 19 March 1804 (date of death not legible).
82. Peter Wolf, d. Nov. 17, 1870. Aged 60 Y 4 M 3 D.
84. Francis Wolf, d. -- 1873. Aged 78 Y.
86. M. A. B.
87. John Shephard, d. April 1, 1891. Aged 44 Y 11 M 15 D.
88. Lizzie, dau. of J. & Mary Shephard, d. April 16, 1892. Aged 20 Y 10 M 11 D.
Baptisms, St. John's, Lilly, 1873–

1873
Aug. 3: Francis Joseph, b. 19 Feb., son of Joseph New and Barbara Werner.
July 17: John Joseph, b. 5 July, son of John Gehagan and Catharine Hahar.
Aug. '0: Anna Mary, b. 28 Sept. 1849, dau. of Anthony Chamberlin and Amalia Weever.
Sept. 8: Susanna Catharine, dau. of Patrick Flannigan and Susanna Call.
Sept. 28: Peter William, b. 23 Aug., son of Peter Fischer and Barbara Wills.
Oct. 1: Michael, b. 29 Sept., son of Michael Connor and Catharine Tully.
Nov. 2: Mary Gunigunda, b. 29 Oct., dau. of John Shephard and Anna Mary Redel.
Nov. 23: Eberhard William, b. 16 Oct., son of Henry Frische and Elisabeth Tewes.
Dec. 7: Mary Elisabeth, b. 31 Oct., dau. of Eberhard Lipker and Maryann Cox.

1874
Jan. 4: Sara Alice, b. 11 Dec. 1873, dau. of Andrew Highland and Mary Adams.
Jan. 12: Joseph Lawrence, b. 1 Jan., son of Joseph Wolf and Catharine Karl.
Jan. 22: Edward, b. 6 Jan., son of Thomas Timmon and Bridget Shehan.
Jan. 26: Frederick, b. 11 Dec. 1873, son of John Werner and Mina Reiter.
Feb. 13: Margaret, b. 12 Jan., dau. of Magnus Forreay and Margaret Martin.
Feb. 12: Anna Elisabeth, b. 15 July 1873, dau. of James Gormann and Mary Nash.
Feb. 23: Mary Margaret, b. 1 Feb., dau. of George Loeffler and Mary Weldner.
March 2: Wilhelmina Christina, b. 28 Jan., dau. of John Assmann and Margaret Horn.
April 5: Elisabeth, b. 7 March, dau. of G. Kock and Elisabeth B-------.
April 26: Joseph Andrew, b. 27 Feb., son of Nicholas Hanrahan and Mary E. Daniel.
April 26: Mary Catharine, b. 12 April, dau. of William Kampelmann and Catharine Niemer.
May 20: William, b. 20 March, son of Martin Elsaesser and Walburga Will.
May 31: Clara, b. 5 April, dau. of Thomas Burk and Mary Burk (wife).
June 14: Anna, b. 4 May, dau. of Thomas Bail and Mary Assmann.
June 21: Elisabeth Mary, b. 20 June, dau. of Joseph Frisch and Catharine Huber.
Aug. 2: Catharine, b. 11 July, dau. of John Feist and Rosa Schlaechter.
Aug. 9: John Nicholas, b. 7 July, son of Peter Ebert and Catharine Dunsbach.
Aug. 19: Clara, b. 11 Aug., dau. of James Doyle and Rosa McGaherty.
Sept. 26: Francis, b. 5 June, son of Francis Heflerich and Mary Elsaesser (Jackson).
Oct. 4: John Peter, b. 20 Sept., son of James Assmann and Teresa Bieki.
Oct. 12: Caroline Margaret, b. 27 Sept., dau of John Schoanberger and Philomena Herbst.
Oct. 18: Elisabeth, b. 25 Aug., dau. of Michael Ealey and Mary Hynes.
Oct. 29: Francis, b. 15 June, son of Christian and Mary Eberts.
Nov. 20: Mary Anna, b. 30 June 1873, dau. of Ambrose Brugger and Mary Reiter.
Dec. 1: Mary Catharine, b. 12 Sept., dau. of Joseph New and Mary Werner.
Dec. 15: Margaret Christina, b. 3 Dec., dau. of Patrick Flannigan and Hannah Dold.
Dec. 15: Christina Sophia, b. 25 Nov., dau. of Francis Fuller and Mary Dold.
Dec. 26: John Philip, b. 20 Oct., son of Bartholomew Dill and Barbara Emmet.

1875
Jan. 6: Mary, b. 23 Oct. 1874, dau. of Ignatius Charles Friedrich and Isabell Ulrich.
Feb. 5: Francis, b. 16 Jan., son of Leonard Franz and Mary -------.
March 25: Francis, b. 2 March, son of William Kiloz and Anna Mary Highland

-174-
April 18: Ortha Bonissa, b. 27 March, dau. Henry and Anna Elisabeth Barney.
May 13: Simon, b. 19 March, son of Simon and Catharine Crammer.
May 23: Charles Frederick, b. 18 April, son of Charles Biehl and Christina Gummer.
May 23: Elisabeth, b. 21 Aug. 1874, dau. of Henry Spitznagel and M. Anna ----.
July 4: Barbara, b. 15 May, dau. of George and Margaret Neuner.
July 25: Anna Margaret, b. 17 June, dau. of Henry Friske and Elisabeth Davis.
Aug. 8: Mary Louise; b. 22 July, dau. of James Hammerstein and Elisabeth Dunsbach.
Aug. 15: Margaret, b. 29 July, dau. of John Shephard and Mary Reidel.
Aug. 22: Theresa, b. 16 Aug., dau. of M. Garvey and Anna Burke.
Aug. 29: Peter, b. 7 Aug., son of Joseph Wolf and Catharine Karl.
Sept. 5: Fr. Joseph, b. ----, of Leonard Gaubner and Catherine Horn.
Sept. 8: Catharine, b. 25 July, dau. of Patrick Gabenor and Elisabeth Queen.
Sept. 8: Catharine, b. 6 Sept., dau. of Michael Connor and Catharine Turley.
Sept. 13: Elisabeth, b. 10 Aug., dau. of George Emmet and Elisabeth Spitznagel.
-----: Laurence, b. 26 June, son of ---- Davis and Barbara Will.
-----: John, b. 4 Oct., son of William Seidl and Elisabeth Will.
Oct. 24: John William, b. 16 Oct., son of Peter Will and Anna Maria Gummer.
Oct. 31: Anna Elisabeth, b. 8 Aug., dau. of John Stephen Hensgen and Mary Caroline Morsmann.

Nov. 1: John, b. 28 Sept., son of Bicholas Steppe and Mary Huber.
Nov. 4: Helen, b. 3 Sept., dau. of John Geaghan and Catharine Shern.
Nov. 4: Helen, b. 22 Oct., dau. of Martin Elsaesser and Walburga Elsaesser.
Nov. 8: John George, b. 23 Oct., son of George Loeffler and Mary Weidner.
Nov. 14: William, b. 18 Oct., son of Eberhard Lipker and Mary Kox.
Nov. 14: Charles, b. 23 Oct., son of John Werner and Mary Reuter.
Nov. 21: Anna Catharine, b. 5 Nov., dau. of Peter Reuter and Mary Fisher.
Dec. 6: Anna Maria Rosalia, b. 16 Oct., dau. of Joseph Friske and Catharine Miller.
Dec. 19: Joseph Philip, b. 6 Dec., son of Martin Dill and Anna Ross.

1876
Feb. 19: Leonard, b. 27 Dec. 1875, son of John Assmann and M. Anna Margaret Horn.
June 25: Anna Mary, b. 9 April, dau. of Henry Spitznagel and Tita Chalagan.
Oct. 8: Anna Maria, b. 19 Sept., dau. of Laurence Diehl and Mary ----.
Nov. 26: Charles, b. 22 Oct., son of John Feist and Rosa Schlugetter.

1877
March 4: Anna Mary, b. 2 Feb., dau. of Wilhelm Seidel and Elisabeth Will.
April 16: Mary Odilia, b. 31 Dec. 1876, dau. Bartholomew Dill and Barbara Emmet.
May 13: Rosa, b. 30 April, dau. Martin Dill and Anna Russ.
July 22: Mary, b. 15 July, dau. George Emmet and Elisabeth Spitznagel.
July 22: Anna Mary, b. 30 June, dau. George Loeffler and Mary Weitner.
Aug. 5: George, b. 1 July, son Joseph Wolf and Catharine Carl.
Nov. 25: Magdalene Catharine, b. 6 Nov., dau. John Adam Keller and Eva M. Claus.
Dec. 30: James, b. 28 Nov., son of Peter Will and Mary Sommers.

1878
Aug. 31: Edward Thomas, b. 30 Aug., son Patrick Flannigan and Susanna Call.
Oct. 29: Catharine, b. 29 June, dau. Andrew Hyland and Mary Adams.
Nov. 10: Charles Edward, b. 28 Sept., son E. Lipker and Mary Anna Cox.
Nov. 10: Elisabeth Pauline, b. 23 Sept., dau. Joseph Simon and Mary Christine Huber.
Nov. 18: John Henry, b. 15 Aug., son Henry Bloss and Catharine Maibaum (Jackson)
Nov. 18: John Wilhelm, b. 28 Oct., son John Niemer and Mary Catharine Korte.

-175-
1879

March 8: Louise Christine, b. 1 Jan., dau. John Schwamberger and Philomena Herbst.
March 16: Wilhelm, b. 28 Jan., son George Löffler and Mary Weithner.
April 13: Frederick, b. 6 March, son Henry Rader and Mary Henschen.
April 13: Francis, b. 11 March, son Wilhelm Seitel and Elisabeth Will.
May 8: George Anthony, b. 27 March, son George Emmett and Elisabeth Spitznagel.
May 21: Theresa, b. 5 May, dau. James Doyle and Rosa McCafferty.
Aug. 24: John, b. 26 July, son Peter Reiter and Mary Anna Fischer.
Sept. 14: John, b. 16 March, son John Niemer and Mary Davis.

1880

March 14: Philomena Agatha, b. 7 Feb. dau. Peter Will and Mary Sommers.
March 17: George Anthony, b. 18 Jan. son John McLaughlin and Mary Kneller.
March 17: Mary Anna, b. 17 Feb., dau. John Eisassner and Josephine K-——-. 
June 21: Magdalene, b. 11 June, dau. Francis Compliment and Julia Niemer.
Aug. 4: Henry, b. 4 July, son Nicholas Henschen and Mary Eva Daniel.
Aug. 29: Thomas, b. 15 Aug., son Francis Will and Catharine Murphy(?).
Sept. 19: William Stehnen, b. 4 Sept. son John Dold and Anna Assmann.

1881

Feb. 13: Peter, b. 13 Jan., son George Loeffler and Manna Mary Weitner.
April 9: Emma, b. 30 March, dau. Henry Friske and Elisabeth Davis.
April 24: William, b. 26 Feb., son Bartholomew Dill and Barbara Emmett.
May 1: John, b. 7 April, son Andrew Stephanski and Catharine E——-. 
May 1: Anna Rosina, b. 10 Feb., dau. John Schwamberger and Philomena Herbst.
May 1: Emma Christine, b. 2 April, dau. Charles Biehl and Christine Summer.
June 2: Wilhelm, b. 8 May, son George Emmett and Elisabeth Spitznagel.
Aug. 21: Elisabeth M., b. 25 July, dau. John Hieken and Anna Bulmann(?).
Oct. 10: Benedict, b. 6 Oct., son Philip Seidel and Elisabeth Will.
Nov. 21: Mary Elisabeth, b. 1 Nov., dau. Peter Reiter and Anna Fischer.
Dec. 11: Theodora, b. 1873, dau. Laurence Luther and Frances Lugmann.
Dec. 11: Rosa, b. 1876, dau. Laurence Luther and Frances Lugmann.
Dec. 20: Margaret, b. 8 Nov., dau. Francis Birkel and Cunigunda Brele.

(To be continued)

NOTE: The Catholic Record Society records with sadness the death on
September 1 of Father William A. Jurgens, 54, talented historian of Cleveland.
He was the author of the excellent volume, Diocese of Cleveland, Prehistory to
Founding in 1847, published in 1980. R.I.P.