

# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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### THE STORY OF ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA PARISH

by Michael Curtin

[This story of St. Margaret of Cortona Parish, Columbus, up until the construction of the present church in the 1960s, is taken from a 1991 history of the parish. Thanks to the the author and to the present pastor, Rev. Anthony Borrelli, for giving permission for its use.]

#### Coming to America

The story of the founding of St. Margaret of Cortona is a chapter of Italian immigration and settlement in a new land.

The period from 1880 to 1920 was a time of massive immigration to the United States, with more than 20 million Europeans coming to pursue what they had heard about freedom, jobs, and opportunities for success. Of all the European immigrants, only the Germans were more numerous than the Italians, who numbered up to 4 million during the peak immigration influx. For many years before the Great Depression hit the United States, Italy had been suffering from economic strife and political repression. Supporting a family had become more and more difficult, while tales of plentiful jobs in the United States had become more and more enticing.

Ohio, with many booming young industries, attracted the attention of many of these immigrant job-seekers. In Columbus, one of those growing industries was the stone quarry business. The quarry lands along the Scioto River were in need of men who were willing to work hard, with sledgehammers and chisels and dynamite, to extract limestone rock that was formed 350 million years before, when this area was a shallow sea. The new Italian-Americans were ready to go to work.

#### The Quarry

The quarry brought the workers, the workers brought and raised their families, and the families needed a church. That is why the story of St. Margaret of Cortona Parish must begin with some words about the quarry works.

From the earliest days of Columbus, it was known that valuable limestone rock could be quarried from places along both sides of the Scioto River, from near downtown upstream. The quality of the stone was widely known, sot hat it was used to build the Ohio Statehouse, completed in 1861. Some stone is believed to have been removed by hand prior to 1850, and records show that

some quarrying activity was taking place by 1851 from the area that later would become Marble Cliff Quarries. It was about the same time that railroad track was laid in this area. In 1889, quarrying operations were being conducted by Phelps & Taylor. Around the turn of the century, several companies were working the pits, including Scioto Stone Co., Woodruff & Pausch Stone Co., Columbus Stone Co., Keever Stone Co., and Casparis Stone Co.

It was the entrepreneurship of an Italian immigrant, Sylvio A. Casparis, that led to more extensive quarrying and the demand for more workers, which resulted in the settling of Italian families in the area that would become San Margherita. Born in northern Italy in 1849, Casparis had come to the United States in 1875 and moved to Columbus in 1892. He had worked in railroads and banking. But in 1899, Casparis bought quarry lands north and south of what is now Trabue Road, then known as Robinson Road. He formed Casparis Stone Co., which in 1913 would merge with three other companies to form Marble Cliff Quarries.

After forming his stone company, Casparis by 1902 was employing more than 100 Italian men in the quarries. As the company prospered and work expanded, more of their fellow countrymen came over to work in the quarries. Employment in the decades to come would top 500, according to some recollections. Many of the founders of St. Margaret of Cortona Parish came from the vicinity of Pettorano sul Gizio, a town in the Abruzzi region of central Italy. The predominant work there was coal mining and charcoal making. "They made charcoal there. They would cut trees, pile them up and set fire to them to make charcoal," said Angelo Dallas, who was born here in 1915, after his parents emigrated from Pettorano sul Gizio. "There was nothing there, so the men left for economic opportunity, for jobs. Some of the fathers came first; then they sent for the sons."

The stone from Marble Cliff Quarries was among the best available anywhere. It would be used in the manufacture of concrete to build Ohio Stadium, Hoover Dam, and many other notable structures in central Ohio. The quarry provided building stone for countless homes, thousands of tons of lime to treat the land, flux for the processing of iron, and crushed stone for highway roadbed and railroad ballast.

Many of the quarry workers and their families first lived in company housing -- "quarry houses" -- on the east side of McKinley Avenue along the railroad tracks, south of Trabue Road underneath the bridge, and along old Dublin Road. Tony Castorano, born in 1919, remembers living in a quarry house along McKinley Avenue while his father, Thomas Castorano, worked in the quarry with sledgehammer and chisel to put huge rocks on horse-drawn carts so the rock could be hauled to the crusher. Like other sons, Tony followed his father into a quarry job, beginning work there in 1939 and remaining for 44 1/2 years.

Most of the men from families that would form St. Margaret of Cortona Parish were employed at the quarry. One of the parish founders, Sam Delewese, was long-time quarry boss. To live in the area was to feel the frequent rumbling from blasting at the quarry, with dynamite charges of up to 4,000 pounds, and to see new cracks developing in a home's plaster walls.

After nearly a century of operations, the quarry lands represent an 800-

acre canyon on both sides of the Scioto River. Some of the old, quarried-out area has been redeveloped with homes, apartments, offices, and man-made lakes. The stone, now quarried by American Aggregates Corp., is expected to run out some time early in the 21st century.

### Community

Before there was a church or parish established at St. Margaret's, there was community.

By 1922, the population of Columbus was approaching a quarter of a million people. Warren G. Harding occupied the White House. Coca-Cola cost a nickel. A 1920 Oldsmobile coupe could be had for \$750, or a 1917 Ford touring car for \$150. Ohio Stadium was just nearing completion. Although just five miles from downtown, the little community that would come to be known as San Margherita was not yet on the Franklin County map. Trabue Road and McKinley Avenue were unpaved, two-lane roads, about to be surfaced with macadam for the first time. The community was still "out in the country."

The quarry workers had been putting up their own homes along both sides of Trabue Road after earning enough money from their work. The Franklin County commissioners had opened a community house at the southwest corner of Trabue and McKinley -- the building now occupied by Spiro's Restaurant and Bar. Religion classes for the children were held in the community house, taught by the Sisters of St. Francis of Stella Niagara, N.Y., who came every Sunday from St. Vincent Orphanage. Later, the children also would be taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the Sisters of Mercy from Holy Family School.

Before the community had a church of its own, "We all went to St. John the Baptist on Hamlet Street for Baptism and First Communion," remembered Anna (Oddi) Dallas, born in 1914 on Trabue Road. St. John the Baptist was and is the center of the Italian community in Columbus, in an area just north of downtown. Father Rocco Petrarca, pastor of St. John the Baptist for many years, took an interest in the people of San Margherita and worked to help meet their religious needs before the community got its own church.

Most of the children walked to school, the old Skidmore School on Hague Avenue, which now is the North Franklin School. It housed eight grades in four rooms and was heated by a coal- and wood-burning furnace.

Those first families often were the product of arranged marriages, such as that of Pasquale "Patsy" Ferrelli, who travelled here in 1909 following his father who had come four years earlier. Patsy, last of the original settlers in San Margherita, was a waterboy at the quarry, carrying water to the older workers, until he moved up and eventually became a millwright. At the age of 24, Patsy sent travel money back to Italy so that Anna Tecca, the girl of his memories from Pettorano, could come to the United States to be his bride. "He had sent \$500 to have her sent over, but when she arrived she didn't want to marry him," said Christina (Ferrelli) Little, daughter of the eventual marriage. "He wanted his money back since she didn't want to get married. But her dad said, 'we don't have \$500. You'll marry him.'" So she did, and the marriage lasted 65 years until Patsy's death in 1984 at the age of 89.

The small Italian community "was considered out in the country then," remembers Anna (Capuano) Castorano, who was born on Trabue Road in 1924. The backyards along Trabue Road resembled small farms with their hogs and chickens and ducks, their vegetable gardens and grape vineyards. "On Sunday mornings you could hear the squeals from the hogs being slaughtered," she recalled. "Mr. (Joseph) Dallas, Angelo's dad, would stick a knife in the pig's throat and we'd collect the blood with a great big pan and they'd make blood pudding out of it," remembered Christina Little. "They would grind meat for sausages and make hot sausages and mild sausages."

All of those who were children of the 1920s in San Margherita share such memories. "We used to plant the entire backyard," said Durna (Lancia) Shaffer, who has lived in the home of her birth on Trabue Road since 1924. "Mom used to can over 500 quarts of tomatoes, peppers, and cabbage. Our entire front porch was a wine cellar. Not everybody had a cellar but most everybody made wine." At the start of the 1990s, it's still a tradition for some families of the parish.

In the 1920s, it was the Dallas family that had the cows and the Dallas children would deliver milk from their wagon to everybody in the community. "Five cents a quart in the 1920s," remembered Angelo Dallas. "We gave it to them free during the Depression."

Considering all the homemade food and drink in the community, it was no surprise, indeed it was a recurring compliment, when the seminarians from St. Charles said they looked forward to receiving assignments to teach religion in the San Margherita area.

It was, of course, an Italian-speaking community at first. But that changed quickly as the children rapidly learned their English, then helped their parents adapt to the new language. "He always wanted us to talk English to him so he could learn," Anna Castorano said of her father, Diego Capuano.

Hardly anyone owned a car then, so most of the recreation was in the neighborhood. There were games, magic shows, and puppet shows at the community house. The older boys could engage in boxing matches. The girls were given instruction in cooking and sewing. Some of the boys spent their free time caddying at Scioto Country Club to earn money. Occasionally, some children would catch the trolley at Fifth Avenue and Cambridge Boulevard to go downtown or to Olentangy Park.

It was not until the mid-1930s, remembered Angelo Dallas, that "a guy from the county engineer's office came out and said, 'You're not on the map. Pick a name.' The church was St. Margaret, so we thought we'd have that. He said we couldn't do that, so we said, 'Let's have San Margherita.'" And so they did.

Over the years, the families would earn enough money to expand their homes and buy automobiles, but the rural atmosphere of the community would persist for many years. Before the interstate highways were built, Trabue Road became an important east-west thoroughfare, especially on Ohio State football Saturdays. In 1952, Trabue Road was widened from two to four lanes, largely because easier access was needed to the Westinghouse plant being built near Broad Street and Phillipi Road. It was the same year that Trabue Road

got sidewalks and the community got access to city water.

The coming years would see accelerating growth and development of both the parish and the surrounding area, but the community known as San Margherita would retain a distinctive identity, a proud Italian heritage, hard workers, close-knit families, and dedication to the Catholic Faith.

(To be concluded)

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HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, SOMERSET, OHIO  
REGISTER OF BAPTISMS AND MARRIAGES, 1827-1851  
(Continued from Vol. XVI, No. 5)

Rev. Adrian L. Dionne, O.P., pastor of St. Joseph and Holy Trinity parishes, was kind enough to help with three baptismal records which could not be easily read. They are as follows:

(page 64) 1841, May 12 Francis Hister, adult, 25 years of age, baptized conditionally; spons. Dom. Dean. N. D. Young, O.P.

(page 68) 1841, Dec. 25 William Wathen, adult, age 25 years. NDY

(page 70) 1842, March 27 Samuel Fisher, age 25. NDY

Father Dionne points out that, even though pages 73 to 114 of the old register are missing, the names of those baptized in that period, from October of 1842 until about the end of 1846, are listed in an old index at the parish.

A few baptismal records were inadvertently written in the marriage register at Holy Trinity and were later crossed out and copied into the baptismal register. One of these is much clearer in the marriage register and should read as follows (compare to page 301 of the Bulletin):

(page 56) 1839, Dec. 12 James Guiton, son of William Guiton and Jane Gordon; spons. William Gordon and Mary Gordon. NDY

Another of them occurred during the period covered by the missing pages:

1842, Dec. 12 Elizabeth M., born 12 July, 1841, daughter of Henry Whitcraft and Elizabeth Bradley; spons. Victor Wiest and Rosanna McC----. A. D. Brine

+ + +

(page 115)

1846

Nov. 15 Joseph Francis, born on the 8th, son of John Hull and Mary Ann Burshue; spons. Joseph Burshue and Barbara Ann Burshue his wife. A. P. Anderson

--- 11 conditionally, Mary Ann, born the 7th, daughter of Minrod Burshue and Rachal Musselman; spons. Morand Burshue and Mary Ann Burshue, his wife. APA

--- James Nathaniel, born the 17th, son of Joseph Elder and Caroline Elder; spons. Charles Elder and Elizabeth Elder his wife. APA

--- Catherine, born Oct. 30, daughter of David Crumlof and Susan Koontz; spons. Anthony Clouse and Cecilia Meyer. APA

Dec. 28 Elizabeth, in danger of death, born the 28th, daughter of Edward Drogge and Cecilia Fink; spons. William Fink and Sarah Elizabeth McFadden. APA

Dec. 29 Edward, born Oct. 25, son of Philip Kennedy and Elizabeth Fulton; spons. Patrick McDonald and Rachel Dennis. APA

#### 1847

Jan.(?) 1 Matilda Jane, born Dec. 27, daughter of Stephen Ryan and Barbara Mitchell; spons. John Gloom(?) and Rachel Dennis(?). APA

--- 24 Isabel Agnes, born the 20th, daughter of John Bennet and Mary Maher; spons. Henry Collins and Ellen Maher. APA  
(page 116)

Jan. 27 At Logan, Michael D., born Nov. 27, 1846, son of Laurence K---- and Bridget Bobkins; spons. Maxelius Aid and Grace Braddock or Keenan. APA

Jan. 31 Catherine, daughter of Joseph Kynem(?) and Rosa; spons. Joseph Smith and ----- . APA

same William Ambrose, born on the 27th, son of Louis ----- and Elizabeth Deen; spons. John Lambing and Anna Lambing or Higgins. APA

Feb. 7 Samuel Farncis, born Jan. 15, son of Samuel ----- and Catherine Lang; spons. Hugh McDivitt and Jane Fisher. APA

Feb. 17 George W., born the 15th, son of Joseph [Smith] and Christina Clouse; spons. George Smith and Car--- Clouse. APA

Feb. 20 Emily, born ----- 1846, daughter of James Gallin and Catherine Baldusor; spons. ----- Slevin and Jane Fisher or [Slevin]. APA

Mar. [blank], Thomas, born the 8th, son of Francis Trunnell and Elizabeth Allwine; spons. Henry McDonald and Mary Ann McDonald. APA

Mar. 23 Elizabeth Helen, born the 15th, daughter of Jacob Dittoe and Elizabeth Wade; spons. Hugh McDivitt and Helen Collins. APA  
(page 117)

----- Louis Henry, son of Martin Scott and Ellen Dittoe, born 2 July, 1847; spons. Henry Louis Dittoe and Elizabeth E. V. Elder. NDY [not his signature]

The first baptismal register of the parish ends here; the second begins in 1851. One baptism from the intervening years was written in the marriage register and crossed out, apparently when it was copied into a register which is now missing:

1848, (Sept. or Oct.) 3, Louis, born the 11th, son of Henry Dennis and Lydia Musselman; spons. Louis Dittoe and Sara Finck. NDY

+ + +

#### Register of Marriages

The majority of the earliest marriage records in the Holy Trinity register specifically state that they were performed in Holy Trinity Church. These are indicated below by the letters "HT". As time went on, the priests only noted the place if it were not Holy Trinity, but the names of some of the parties and the lack of a Perry County civil record of some of the marriages seem to indicate that marriages performed elsewhere were not always so noted. Records which were difficult to read in the Holy Trinity marriage register were sought in a transcript of the Perry County marriage records at the State Library of

Ohio. Data taken from that transcription rather than the Holy Trinity record are indicated by brackets: {}. {X} indicates that the marriage was sought but not found in the county records; this could indicate either that the marriage took place elsewhere or that it simply was not recorded in the civil records.

1827

Nov. 25 HT John Talbert to Catherine Case. N. D. Young, O.P. {X}

1828

Jan. 1 James Friel to Hannah Roney. NDY  
Jan. 22 HT Patrick Damhour to Catherine Grunewalt. R. T. Martin  
Jan. 22 Michael Scully to Anna McDonnell. RTM  
Apr. 10 Hugh Friel to Kitty Friel. NDY {X}  
Nov. 2 James McDonald to Mary Ann Stine. NDY

1829

Jan. 1 Isaac Flowers to Sara McKeown. NDY  
Apr. 29 HT Joseph Snyder to Catherine Smith. NDY  
June 25 HT Nathaniel Shockley to {Mrs.} Mary Kiggen. NDY  
Aug. 23 HT John J. Jackson to Mary Grate. NDY

1830

Apr. 12 HT John McIllarney to Mary Cull. NDY  
Apr. 23 HT John Noon to Lydia Delong. NDY  
Apr. 15 HT Abraham Bennet to Elizabeth {Giles}. NDY  
June 22 HT James Huit to Frances Finck. NDY  
Sept. 7 HT Hanson {Henry Clements} to Ruth Margaret Bell. NDY

1831

Apr. 11 HT Joseph Durbin to Elizabeth Lyburger. C. D. Bowling  
Apr. 15 HT Charles Noon to Anna Fealte. CDB  
May 29 HT Salem McCoy to Margaret Musselman. NDY  
July 17 HT John Roby to Margaret Sharkey NDY  
July 22 HT {Daniel} Smothers to Elizabeth Hartman {Betsy Wortman} from the Lancaster congregation. NDY [Fairfield Co. record]  
Aug. 25 HT Louis Snyder to Anna Deen. NDY {X}  
Sept. 26 HT David Porter to Lydia Sapp. CDB

1832

Feb. 13 HT Isidore Frye to Francisca Dull. NDY [They lived near Columbus.]  
Apr. 29 HT Bernard Cull to Mary Harrigan. NDY  
May 6 HT Adam Finck to Alice Dugan. NDY  
June 12 HT William Jackkson [sic] to Mary Hodge. NDY  
July 1 HT Patrick Slaven to Mary Ann McCune. NDY  
Nov. 20 Ht George Borer to Margaret Meyer, witnesses Michael Meyer and Julia Borer. T. J. VanDenBrock {X}  
Nov. 28 James Laun (Laien?) to Magdalen Smits; witnesses John Kee--- and Susan Smith. TJVDB {X}  
Nov. 29 HT Richard McAuliff to Mary Mullin. NDY

1833

Feb. 2 In the church at Lancaster, George Hurd to Rosalia Fisher. [This is the first of several records in this register to which are appended

the words, "in facie ecclesiae." This phrase appears to mean, "in the presence of the assembly" or the congregation, as witnesses.]

June 3? HT Frederick Konie(?) to Catherine Stickley, in facie ecclesiae. TJVDB {X}

July 16 At St. Joseph Church, Henry Blair to Harriet Burrick from the Lancaster congregation. NDY [Civil record in Fairfield County]

July -- At St. Joseph Church, George Stuter to Regina Wiest, without banns; they come from and live in Columbus. TJVDB [Not recorded in Perry or Franklin counties.]

Aug. -- At St. Mary's Church, Lancaster, Benedict Funk to Catherine Nauinger, in facie ecclesiae. {Not recorded in Fairfield Co.}

Aug. 11 HT David {Perong} to Sarah Musselman. NDY

Aug. 15 HT John Elder to Maryann Snider. D. J. O'Leary

Aug. 17 Xavier Hiefler(?) to Martha Walt, at St. Joseph Church; they come from Lancaster; witnesses Elizabeth Walt and John Heiffer(?). A. H. Pozzo

Aug. 31 James Kar to Margaret McCormick. NDY

Sept. 5 Louis Moeller to Elenor Dittoe. NDY

Sept. -- Ignatius Charles Schurhammer(?) to Elizabeth Wild and George Wild to Elizabeth Odemier, in facie ecclesiae, at Lancaster. TJVDB

Nov. 26 HT Jacob Perong to Sarah Ann Ryan. DJO

1834

Jan. 9 Joseph Haman to Catherine German. NDY {X}

Apr. 6 Bernard -----d to Mary McGonnigle. NDY {X}

May 6 In Columbus, Rohel(?) King to Rosalia Anglina; witnesses John McCartney and Mary McCartney. [TJVDB]

same day Sebastian Scherpsmesser to Helen House; same witnesses. [TJVDB]  
[Neither of the above were recorded in Franklin County.]

[undated] At St. Joseph, Anthony Visher to Elizabeth Bronsgartner, in facie ecclesiae. TJVDB {X}

July 28 {Dr. Philip} Harvey to Elizabeth {Hodge}. NDY

Aug. 15 Hugh Cumnisk[y] to Ann Minor. DJO

Sept. 8 HT Philip Fry to Elizabeth Brausmer. DJO [They lived near Columbus.]

Sept. 23 David Finck to Elizabeth Gan[g]loff. NDY

Oct. 21 William Footman to Margaret McIllire. NDY

Oct. 28 John Studer, son of Lawrence [Studer] and Margaret Springer, to Mary Ann, daughter of Joseph Hamann and Mary Ann Schuf; witnesses Joseph Studer and Magdalene Stine. J. V. B. DeRaymacker, O.P.

1835

Feb. 1 George Hoy to Elsey Gordon. NDY

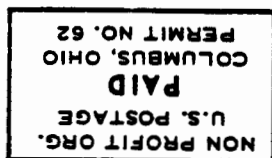
Feb. 16 Benjamin Harden to Anna Trunnell. NDY

Mar. 3 Patrick Daly to Rose Ru(therford?). TJVDB {X}

(To be continued)

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