



# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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Diocese of Columbus

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## Dominican Trail Blazers in Northeastern Ohio

by Sister Loretta Petit, O.P.

*In celebration of the sesquicentennial of the Diocese of Cleveland, Sister Loretta, a key player in Project OPUS (which is assembling the history of the Dominican Order in the United States), wrote an article about the efforts of the early Dominicans in that area. The stories are told of Rt. Rev. Edward D. Fenwick and Fathers Nicholas D. Young, John A. Hill, John B. deRaymaecker, and Thomas Martin. Since our readers should be very familiar with Fenwick and Young, we take up her story with Rev. John A. Hill.*

The labors of John Augustine Hill, O.P., the colorful first pastor of St. John's in Canton, differed greatly from the styles of Fenwick and Young but equaled them in meeting changes and challenges. Hill was born in England in 1779 of affluent Anglican parents who sent him to a military school of nobles for his education. Though only of medium stature, his erect carriage, dark hair and eyes commanded attention. His whole demeanor exuded confidence. At an early age, he enjoyed the privilege of obtaining a commission in the Horse Guard of the Queen's Army.

When in 1800 he converted to Catholicism he was forced to resign his commission and return to civilian life. Sometime after he married and moved to Belgium where he resided adjacent to the Dominican College at Bornhem. Here he

became acquainted with the Dominican friars and in particular the Dean, Samuel Thomas Wilson.

While Hill and his wife lived in Bornhem four Dominican friars led by Fenwick left Europe in 1804 to establish a new Dominican province in the United States. Around 1818, Hill with his usual flair for the unusual, announced his intention to become a Dominican priest. He received a dispensation to live apart from his wife and made provision for her maintenance in Belgium. He then left for Rome to enter the novitiate of the Order. Because of his strong academic background, his studies were shortened to fewer than two years. He made his profession of vows in 1819 and celebrated his first Mass in December of 1820.

Hill was a restless sort who loved to manage his own life. His dreams sometimes exceeded his ability to carry them out; practicality was not an asset he possessed. He enjoyed the dramatic approach to life that resulted in his becoming a powerful and influential speaker. After ordination he lost no time in volunteering his services for the budding American province of Dominicans. Specifically he wanted to go to Cincinnati with the newly-appointed bishop, Edward Fenwick. He did not come empty-handed; he brought with him three prospective members for the province. They arrived in Kentucky in September, 1821. Within six



*Rev. John A. Hill, O.P.*

months, he was on his way to Cincinnati with the Bishop Fenwick entourage.

His penchant for taking charge proved to be both asset and liability to the new bishop. While Fenwick was in Rome in 1823 and 1824 begging for funds to build a cathedral and support his household, Hill thought the bishop's residence unfit for such a prelate. In truth it was only a set of basement rooms below the frame church that served as cathedral. Hill borrowed money to build a handsome three-story brick structure for the bishop and his staff. When Fenwick returned he was chagrined to find such imposing living quarters in contrast to the poor wood building that was his cathedral. Besides, Fenwick was still responsible for repaying the loan.

In 1824 St. John's Church in Canton was blessed and John Hill became the first resident pastor. He was delighted with the assignment as were others because he seemed to function better when he alone was in charge. He was a tireless preacher contacting many mission stations in the environs of Canton and Northern Ohio. He truly was a great preacher, recognized by Catholics and Protestants alike. He spoke in any church when invited, of whatever denomination. His

own experience of conversion, no doubt, added to his effectiveness. He took great pride in his many converts.

Hill made extensive visits into northern Ohio preaching wherever he found a suitable facility. The summer of 1828 was a particularly exhausting one for him. Fenwick wrote of a letter he had received from Hill that summer:

He assured me in a letter that he wrote on August 17, that God had given him many consolations in the midst of all his work .... His journeys took him to the shores of Lake Erie during the great heats of July and August. He made many conversions, baptized twenty-two adults, among them two Indians, reconciled four marriages and heard many confessions. Most of the Catholics had not seen any missionary in three or four years.<sup>1</sup>

John deRaymaecker, assistant at St. John's, wrote that Hill returned to Canton after a "difficult and laborious mission in the month of August through marshy countryside among poor immigrants, recently settled on virgin lands."<sup>2</sup> He had a violent fever. "He could procure only doctors who had little education, or medical knowledge from books that were called *Domestic Medicines*, books of medicine for families .... He was very ill for two weeks before his death."<sup>3</sup> Before Hill lost consciousness, deRaymaecker had administered the sacrament of Extreme Unction and satisfied all of Hill's needs. He succumbed to the fever on September 3, 1828.

After Hill's death mourners, both Catholic and Protestant, came to visit. "Catholics prayed day and night near his body." While deRaymaecker tended to the sick of the parish, "the Catholics prepared everything for the celebration of funeral services."<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Young rode from Somerset to officiate at the funeral and preach the eulogy. The church was filled with persons of every rank and belief and ... "our church could hold only a few, about 200 or 300 souls." He was

buried beside the outer wall of the church but later reinterred in the provincial cemetery near Somerset.

Despite all his eccentricities Hill was a zealous missionary, a priest concerned for the needs of the Catholic Church and religion in general. He was willing to put aside the privileges he had known as a person of wealth to enter an Order dedicated to poverty. He knew few comforts as he rode on horseback carrying the Gospel as far north as Cleveland and the shores of Lake Erie almost to the present site of Toledo. He had given his parishioners in Canton an example of leadership, community pride, and some recognition as members of a religious minority. The Dominican friars suffered a great loss for he was one of their most tireless workers and certainly their most successful preacher.

John Baptist deRaymaecker, born in Belgium, arrived in the United States with John Hill in 1821. As a young man he had entered the Dominican Order in his native country, but made his profession in the American province upon reaching St. Rose in Kentucky. Bishop Fenwick ordained him priest in 1822 shortly before he joined the group that accompanied the bishop to his new diocese in Cincinnati in March of that year. From his account, historians have benefit of the only description of that memorable journey. He wrote of the hardship of traveling in an open conveyance in the raw weather, of challenges of the terrain and the flooding Kentucky River.

His fluency in the German tongue delighted many settlers in Ohio who spoke no other language. As early as 1820 both in Somerset and Canton, German immigrants constituted sizable minorities in the churches. As a result many had been deprived of the full benefits of the Church because of the language barrier. In 1824, Fredric Rese answered the call of Fenwick to serve the Germans in Ohio but his work lay chiefly in the Cincinnati area.

In 1828 deRaymaecker assisted John Hill in Canton. He left a short description of their work there. "We have only two here for a district and its environs of 50 miles or more, in all directions where there are no priests but ourselves, and Catholics dispersed from 10 to 20 miles, without church, and some impassable roads for vehicles of every kind. Happily we have some good English horses."<sup>5</sup> He told how there were many cases of cholera and typhus that made it necessary for him to be continually on horseback ministering to the sick of the city and countryside. He wrote of a great number of German, French and Irish immigrants who called for him.

DeRaymaecker was the only person who attended Hill in his last illness. He administered the last rites of the Church to the dying priest who insisted that all parishioners be attended to before his assistant anointed him. After Hill's death in 1828, various Dominicans substituted in Canton for short periods. DeRaymaecker recounted that he was joined in 1829 at St. John's in Canton by John Henni, a diocesan priest who eventually became the first bishop of Milwaukee. Henni was fluent in German and French so he held services for those groups while deRaymaecker cared for the Irish and Americans. The two priests, deRaymaecker wrote, alternated with the languages on different Sundays. One week Mass was celebrated for German and Swiss; the next Sunday all services were in English. Sermons and instructions followed the same pattern with catechism, marriages, funerals and vespers in the afternoon. Marriages were performed in the language the couple preferred. Often there were discussions after vespers to which their Protestant neighbors were invited. They all ate together from "a large beef roast and good pork that the invited guests brought us."<sup>6</sup>

Other areas touched by deRaymaecker include Cuyahoga Falls in 1830, Youngstown between

1830 and 1840, and with Nicholas Young and Thomas Martin many missions in central and eastern Ohio as far north as Cleveland. As Hill's companion in Canton, he made regular visits to Sts. Philip and James parishioners in Canal Fulton, Marshallville and others stations in Wayne County.

After a short pastorate at St. John's in Canton in 1835, deRaymaecker returned to Belgium for health reasons. There he solicited funds for the Dominican missions in Ohio. He died in Belgium in 1865 and was buried there.

In Cleveland, Irish laborers on the Ohio Canal welcomed the visit of Thomas Martin in 1826. Born in Ireland in 1774, he came as a well-educated adult to the United States where he joined the Dominican Order in Kentucky in 1821. The following year Bishop Fenwick ordained him to the priesthood. Shortly after that Wilson, his provincial, sent him to Ohio to work in the mission field there.

The changes and challenges he faced differed greatly from his native Ireland, but he faced issues competently. His residence at Somerset became the local point for reaching many parts of northern Ohio. After the historic ground breaking in Cleveland, he tended to the spiritual needs of Irish laborers in the Cleveland-Akron area as often as possible. He spent most of his young priesthood serving central and northern Ohio. Included in his travels were Canal Fulton, Louisville, Columbiana and Mahoning Counties. He typified a description of the ordinary Dominican friar in Ohio who accepted the challenges of the elements to answer a sick call. An observer noted, "...At nine o'clock on a pitch-black night, while a torrential rain was falling, a man knocked at the door asking for a priest to carry viaticum to a gravely-ill person ninety miles distant." The friar "not in the least disconcerted by the storm and darkness ... mounted his horse, and as if the sky were clear and sunny set out

cheerfully..."<sup>17</sup>

About 1839, Martin asked leave from his provincial to volunteer for the New York Diocese so that he could help his two sisters who were in need. He was granted the necessary permissions to be loaned to that diocese. Bishop John Hughes praised Martin for his dedicated service there in different parishes. He died on May 10, 1859 in New York, but his body was brought to Somerset for burial in the provincial cemetery.

For eighteen years the Dominican friars alone led by Fenwick met the changes and challenges of frontier lands to nourish the faith in the area covering Ohio and the original boundaries of the Diocese of Cleveland. Wherever possible they invited and welcomed diocesan priests to assist them. Fenwick himself brought Fredric Rese from Europe in 1824 as the first non-Dominican to serve in Ohio. In northern Ohio, the Dominican presence was felt chiefly in villages, towns, and crossroads of these counties: Columbiana, Stark, Wayne, Mahoning, Summit, and Portage.<sup>8</sup> Many of the homes where the original Masses were celebrated no longer exist but the memories of the early friars live on in the traditions of those early parishes.

#### NOTES

- 1) Fenwick to the Society for the Propaganda of the Faith, *Annales*, III, p. 298.
- 2) John deRaymaecker, "Creation of the First Episcopal Seat of the City of Cincinnati" ms. c. 1848, St. Joseph Province Archives.
- 3) *Ibid.*
- 4) *Ibid.*
- 5) DeRaymaecker ms.
- 6) *Ibid.*
- 7) Samuel Mazzuchelli, *Memoirs* (Chicago, Illinois: The Priory Press, 1967) 19. [Reprint]
- 8) *Diario di Roma*, January 23, 1819, St. Joseph Province Archives.



**Abstracts from  
*The Catholic Telegraph***

(Continued, from Vol. XXIII, No. 7)

July 24, 1845

SOMERSET, OHIO

*To the Editor of the Catholic Telegraph.*

Our town was cheered by the interesting ceremony witnessed here on Sunday, the 29th of June. That day, sacred to the Princes of the Catholic faith, SS. Peter and Paul, was rendered more auspicious to the propagation of our holy religion in the erection of another Temple for the distribution of her august Sacraments, and diffusion of her sublime truths. The worthy sisters of St. Mary's merit every commendation for their tireless exertions to raise this building adjoining their Academy; and the people of Somerset, animated by their zeal for the decorum of Divine worship, and encouraged by the generous endeavors for the promotion and increase of piety exhibited in every city throughout our Union, have attested their sense of gratitude for the blessings they enjoy, by the most liberal and magnificent contributions. Under the patronage of the Blessed Mother of God, the corner stone of the Edifice was laid, with the usual rites prescribed in our liturgy, by the Very Rev. J. T. Jarboe, Superior of the Dominicans in Ohio, assisted by the fathers of his order, (our much loved and esteemed Bishop not having it in his power to gladden us with his presence.) A numerous concourse was in attendance, and all seemed highly pleased with the propriety and regularity observed. After the solemn service of vespers and benediction, a procession moved from the Church of Holy Trinity, the people following in respectful silence to the place where the foundations were opened. Though the military bands of our country were not seen to decorate the train and the sweet tunes of music did not echo through the surrounding air; though our national eagle did not fan his pinions o'er this hallowed spot, and the peals of

our cannon were not heard, the sublime majesty of religion was yet visibly felt and the eye of the spectator could trace the glow of pious sentiment that beamed from every countenance. Propitious day for Somerset! may posterity be blessed in the virtuous deeds of their ancestors! A discourse was delivered on the occasion by Rev. Father N. R. Young, showing the antiquity and authority of Catholic ceremonies, and a happy effect has been produced on our dissenting community.

The feelings of joy excited in the breasts of the faithful, accompanied them to their homes, and the only motive to dampen this pleasing was I repeat the absence of our amiable and worthy prelate. The following lines were deposited beneath the stone as a record to future generations.

Anno Domini, MDCCCXLV,  
Gregorio XVI. P.M.  
Jacobo K. Polk,  
Foederatorum Americae Statuum Praeside,  
Mardocheo Bartly,  
Ohio Statum Gubernante,  
R. R. D. D. Joanne Baptista Purcell,  
Cincinnatiensi Episcopo,  
Annunte  
A. R. P. Thomas Jarboe, O.P.P.  
Conventus S. Josephi Prior  
Ac,  
A.R.P. Josephi Wilson ejusdem ordinis,  
Provinciae S. Joseph Prioris Provincialis,  
Generalis Vicarius,  
Candida Divi Dominici Familia Assistente,  
II. Kal. Julii,  
Die SS. App. Petro and Pauls Sacra,  
D. O. M.  
Dive Virginis Maræ Titulo,  
Dicandæ Feclesiae. [sic]  
Angulorem Hunc Lapidem,  
Ritu Solemni Benedictum,  
II. P.

A SPECTATOR

(To be continued)

**Pine Grove  
St. Mary's  
at the Furnaces  
Tombstone Inscriptions**  
(Concluded, from  
Vol. XXIII, No. 7)

HANNAH  
wife of  
JAS. BOYCE  
Born  
Dec. 25, 1852  
Died  
May 12, 1881  
Native of Tully  
cornell Donegal  
Co. Ireland  
[partial]

DANIEL CARR  
Native of Ireland  
Coladerey  
Donegall Parish Fannett  
[partial]

Hier ruht  
Rosalia  
Tochter von  
John. Ferdinand  
u. Maria Gerdrut  
Goldkamp  
geb. 22 S--- 1861  
gest. 16 Aug. 1862  
Alt 11 Monat 24 Tag.  
[birth year & given name]

Hier ruht  
Catharine  
Ehefrau von  
Martin Gulu---man?  
geb. 1 --- 1835  
gest. 9? Feb. 1861?  
[not found]

Hier ruhet  
Maria Anna  
Katharina  
Ehefrau von  
Joseph Abele  
Geborene  
Mangold  
geb. 7? Nov 1811  
gest. 27 Juni 18 (broken)  
[partial, under Ubole]

Elisabeth A.  
Tochter von  
J.F. und M. G. Goldkamp  
Geboren  
den 21, Aug. 1842,  
Gestorben  
den 3, Aug. 1880  
(poem)  
[several differences]

Maria Magdalena  
Ehefrau von  
Christ. Dirker  
Geboren  
den 15 Juli 1857 (37?)  
Gestorben  
den 9 Juli 1880  
(poem)  
[Listed as Dirter, Christ. and  
again as Magdalena, Maria.]

THOMAS  
Son of  
P. & U. GALLAGHER  
Was born in Vernon T.P. Scioto Co. O.  
MAR. 25, 1867  
DIED  
MAR. 20, 1884  
[missing birth place]

Joseph Holch  
geb. 23 Juli 1810  
gest. 5 Aug. 1879  
[Listed as Sokh.]

MARIA  
Tochter von  
J. u. M. E. Nieman  
Geboren  
den 1 Januar 1858  
Gestorben  
den 19 Feb. 1882  
[not found]

Hier ruht  
MARIA Adelheit MEYER  
Geb. Unger  
Geb. den 8<sup>ten</sup> Sept, 1812  
Gestorben  
den 14<sup>ten</sup> Marz 1884  
Alter 71 Jahre  
6 Monat u. 7 Tage  
[partial]

Erected  
In memory of  
PATRICK GALLAVAN  
A Native of Carrick  
Beg Waterford Co.  
Ireland  
BORN  
March 17, 1804  
DIED  
Dec. 5, 1878  
[partial, under Callavan]

Father  
Martin Weber  
von Wertenburg?  
Geb. den 8 Sept 1809  
Gest. den 11 Mai 1884  
im Alter von 74 Jahren  
8 Monaten und 3 Tagen  
(poem)  
[partial]

Mother  
Walburgis Weber  
Geb. Jorger  
Geb. in Satzenweier

den. 1 Mai 1812  
Gest. den 21. Februar 1889  
im Alter von 76 Jahren  
9 Monaten und 21 Tagen.  
(poem)  
[partial]

Hier ruht  
Anna Maria Juliana  
geb. Kroger  
Ehefrau des  
Friedrich Dirker  
geb. den 16 April 1825,  
gest. den 2 Oct. 1868  
Alter 43 Jahr. 5 M. 16 T.  
[partial]

Hier ruhet  
Johann Papl---  
Strobel  
geb. den 13 Juni 1824  
gest. den 23 Nov. 1864  
(He left behind a sorrowful  
wife and five children.)  
[partial]

Maria Magdalena  
Geborene Han  
Ehefrau von  
Johann Kentner  
Geb. 27 Okt 1821  
Gest. 22 Juli 1884  
im Alter von 62 Jahren  
8 Monate u. 25 Tagen.  
(poem)  
[not found]

Maria Juliana  
Müller  
Geb. d. 29, März  
1853  
Gest. d. 13, Juli  
1874  
[partial]

Hier ruht  
Johann Heinrich  
Beunier (Baumer?)  
geb. zu Glandorf  
den 14 März 1816  
gest. 23 Aug. 1869  
Alt. 53 Jahr. 5 Monat.  
(husband and father)  
[not found]

David Mei-----er  
Geboren  
den 9 April 1809  
Gestorben  
den 15 Aug. 1865  
[not found]

Maria Anna  
Frau von  
Michael Foit  
Gestorben  
den 18 Juli 1882  
Alter 67 Jahre  
[Listed as Fou.]

Maggie Frau von  
Jacob Henneman  
gestorben  
Am. 16 November 1882  
Alter  
24 Jahre 10 Monate  
und 16 Tage  
[Listed as Sennaman.]

JOHAN G. MAUER  
Geboren  
den 15. Januar 1821  
Gestorben  
den 3. Juni 1885  
(poem)  
[death year]

Hier ruht  
Maria Eng(broken)  
Frau von  
Johan Meyer  
Gestorben  
den 18<sup>ten</sup> Dezember (broken)  
[Says died 1882.]

EUNICE  
wife of DENIS M<sup>c</sup>MAKIN  
A native of -----  
Co. Do(negal?)  
-----  
March 1875  
Aged 50 Years  
[not found]

Catharine  
Frau von  
H. Kampelmann  
Gestorben  
den 20 April 1883  
Alter  
72 Jahre  
[Listed as Rampermann.]

Ursula  
Ehefrau von  
D?. Armbruster  
Geboren Kramer  
(broken off here)  
gest. den 27 Mai 1866  
[Listed under Strinbrofter.]

Hier ruhet  
Peter Klas  
Gestorben  
den 2<sup>ten</sup> Sep. 1866  
Alter von 45 Jahren  
und 2 Monat.  
[partial, as Klas, Helen]

Elisabetha  
Müller  
Geb. d. 2. Feb.  
1857  
Gest. d. 4. Aug.  
1864  
[Listed as Miller, Glitubrlhya]

Hier ruht  
Anna Maria  
Ehefrau von  
August Kos(ick?)  
geborene Hacter  
geb. 1815  
gest. (broken)  
[Listed with unknown  
surname]

Johan Utrzerosti  
Geboren  
den 23 ---ver 1831  
Gestorben  
den 8 April 1886  
[Listed correctly and again as  
Afrgerruffi.]

+ + +

Next section (1877), northeast  
of the stone circle.

Hier ruhet  
Sophia Mickey  
Tochter von  
Barnhard und Anna  
Maria Mickey  
Geb. 29 Dez. 1867  
Gest. 4. Juni 1887  
in Alter von 19 J.  
5 M. 6 T.  
[not found]

Hier ruhet im Herrn  
Frau Katherina Kröger  
geb'e Dirford  
Geb. 27. Sep. 1848.  
in Pine Grove  
Gest. 19. Juni 1888  
R.I.P.  
(poem)  
[several differences]

PATRICK DUGAN  
SON OF  
P. & E. DUGAN  
Born  
May 12, 1862  
Died  
May 6, 1894  
[not found]

Anton Zahner  
Geboren den 20<sup>ten</sup>  
Oct. 1824 in  
Oesterreich  
Gest. den  
1<sup>ten</sup> Merz 1903  
[listed as Bahgner]

JOHN NOCKENGHAUST  
1852-1904  
RACHEL HIS WIFE  
1865-19  
AT REST  
[spelling of surname]

JOSEPH  
NIEMAN  
JUNE 26, 1825  
Mar. 9, 1913  
[birth year]

George  
D---miller  
Gest.  
13 Aug. 1874  
Alter  
62 Jahre  
[listed as Olgemiller]

The editor acknowledges the  
kind assistance of Msgr.  
George Schlegel on visits to  
Pine Grove.

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Donald M. Schlegel, editor

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