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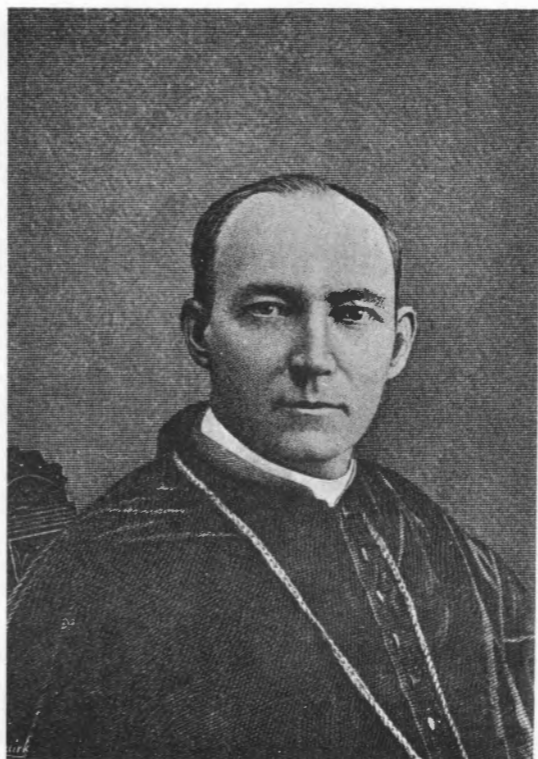
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SAINT ALOYSIUS SEMINARY

Columbus, Ohio

1871 - 1876



Very Rev. N. A. Gallagher
President



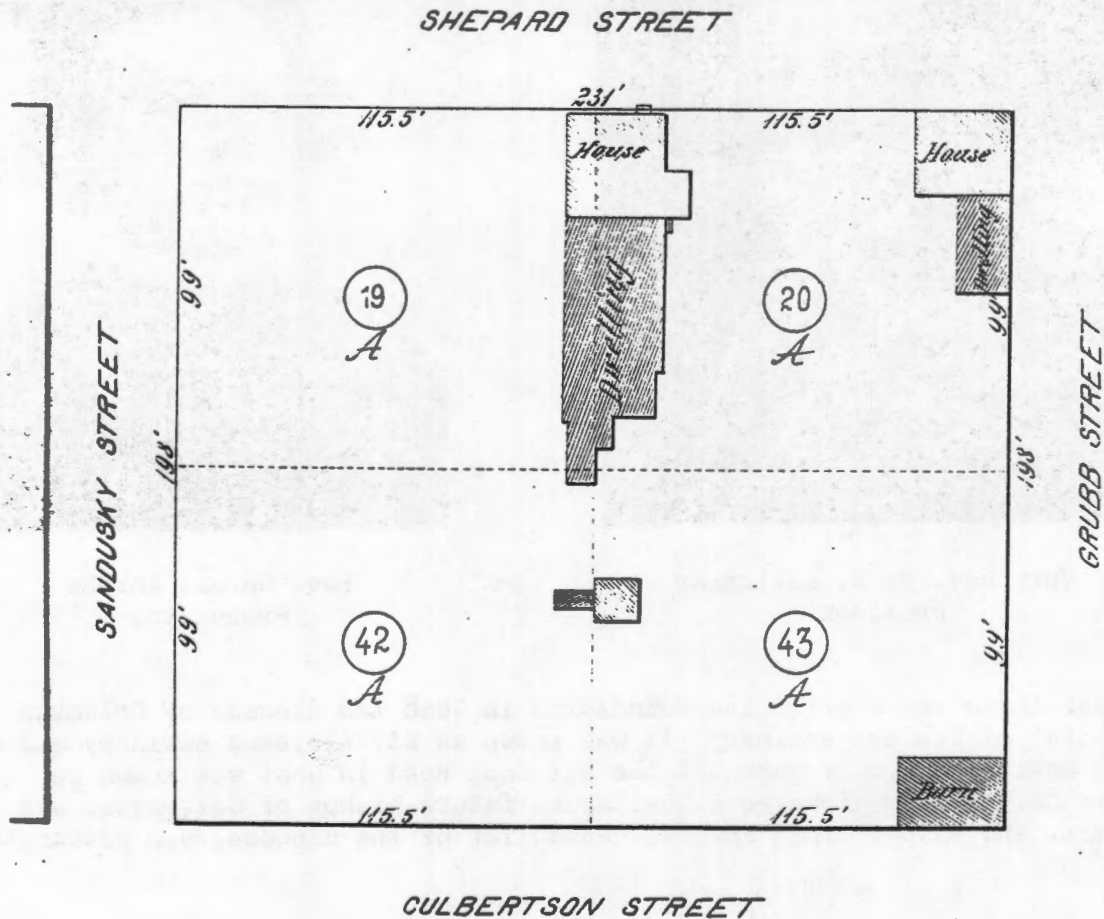
Rev. Gerard Ahrens
Procurator

Just three years after its foundation in 1868 the diocese of Columbus could boast of its own seminary. It was known as St. Aloysius seminary and was located west of the city just off the National Road in what was known as Franklinton. Father Nicholas A. Gallagher, future bishop of Galveston, was president, and Father Gerad Ahrens, chancellor of the diocese, was procurator.

Previous to 1871, seminarians of the Columbus diocese attended Mt. St. Mary's-of-the-West in Cincinnati, where Bishop Rosecrans had been professor of dogmatic theology for some years. However, in 1870 there were some differences with Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati about the Columbus students at Mt. St. Mary's. Bishop Rosecrans wrote that he would not be sending anyone to the Cincinnati seminary as soon as he could arrange otherwise (1). But he was restrained by lack of means. Until he could take care of his seminarians in some other manner, he wrote to the archbishop "I ask your indulgence for my poverty."

It was in May, 1871, that Bishop Rosecrans bought a piece of Property in what was known as Franklinton, across the Scioto river, west of Columbus. The deed (2) was dated May 3, 1871. The property was located on the south side of Fifth street between High and Washington streets (West Columbus) (3). Washington was later changed to Sandusky street and is now the expressway. Fifth street became Sheppard and High became Grubb street. The location was directly east of Good Shepherd convent (now gone), located on the west side of Sandusky street. The property was sold to Holy Family parish in 1902, and the Holy Family school building is now on the site.

On the property when purchased was a brick dwelling. It seems to have been added to in order to accommodate the number of students. The drawing below is from an old Plat Book in the diocesan archives. It seems most likely that the "house-dwelling" on the south side of Shepard street (originally fifth street) was the seminary building.



Further data on St. Aloysius seminary is contained in an item in Columbus, Ohio, Its History, Resources and Progress, written in 1873 by Jacob H. Studer, member of one of the pioneer Catholic families of the city. Since it was written during the days of the seminary, the information is of importance. He wrote: "St. Aloysius Seminary. Location, a short distance south of West Broad street. Instructors — Rev. N. A. Gallagher, principal; Rev. Chancellor G. H. Ahrens, procurator; Rev. Francis Campbell, professor of theology, assisted by the bishop and clergy of Columbus. Terms - Board, washing, and tuition, per session of ten months, one hundred and fifty dollars.

"This seminary, like many other Catholic institutions in the city, owes its origin to the zeal of Bishop Sylvester H. Rosecrans, D.D. In 1871 he purchased of N. Merion an acre and a quarter of ground, on which were two brick buildings, for seven thousand dollars. After having made some alterations and improvements, he founded on this site, September 1, 1871, the institution now called 'The Seminary'.

"The course of study embraces theology, philosophy, mathematics, History, and the Latin, Greek, German and English languages, and occupies eight years of close application. The object of the seminary is the education of Catholic youth for the priesthood. It derives its chief support from the Catholics of the diocese of Columbus.

"The present number of students in the institution is thirty. As this is as large a number as can be accommodated, many applications for admission have been rejected. It is in contemplation to build, at no distant day, a much larger seminary for this, as yet, infant diocese of Columbus."

The Catholic Directory of 1872 noted that there were 35 students attending classes at St. Aloysius: "St. Aloysius Seminary, near Columbus, just opened. Rev. N. A. Gallagher, President, Rev. J. J. Slevin, Rev. G. H. Ahrens, Procurator. 35 students." The following years 20 students were given as the enrollment.

Father Gallagher seems to have been helping at St. Patrick's while directing the seminary. Father Ahrens was at Holy Cross church. The Directory listed Father Ahrens as chancellor in 1873, and Father Gallagher was caring for the Cathedral. In 1876 the chapel at Good Shepherd convent was attended from the seminary.

The Faculty

The faculty at the little seminary included Bishop Rosecrans, Father Nicholas A. Gallagher, Father Gerard H. Ahrens, Father James J. Slevin and Father Francis J. Campbell. A memorial booklet (4) on Father M.M. Meara, one time well known pastor at the Cathedral, relates that the faculty included Rev. Constantini, Rev. Hagan, Rev. O'Reilly and Mr. Jerry Sullivan.

Bishop Rosecrans had received a doctorate in theology during his studies in Rome. After ordination he taught dogmatic theology at Mt. St. Mary-of-the-West seminary in Cincinnati. He was a capable professor and active in the affairs of the seminary.

That Bishop Rosecrans was intensely interested in St. Aloysius is evident

from the tribute paid him after his death by the authors of the history of Mt. St. Mary-of-the-West seminary (5): "With all his labors as Bishop and Pastor he still found time to devote to the theological instruction of his Seminarists. No trouble, no inconvenience, no suffering, no illness that could be overcome, was ever allowed to interfere with this labor of love, and nothing pained him more than the closing of St. Aloysius Seminary in 1876."

Father Nicholas A. Gallagher was the president of St. Aloysius seminary during the few years of its existence. He was the first priest ordained for the diocese of Columbus by Bishop Rosecrans, and he was the first priest of the diocese to be named a bishop.

Nicholas A. Gallagher was born Feb. 19, 1846, in Temperanceville, Ohio, of Irish parents who had emigrated from County Meath to Chester county, Pa., and thence to Ohio. At the age of ten he was placed under the care of Father John M. Jaquet who started his training for the priesthood. A few years later, when he was 16, he entered Mt. St. Mary's, Cincinnati. He must have been a capable student and much admired. His classmates referred to him as the "future bishop." He was ordained in Holy Cross church, Columbus, on Christmas Day, 1868, by Bishop Rosecrans. He was only 22 years of age.

As a young priest Father Gallagher attended the needs of Catholics in the Groveport area, where he organized a parish. He was assistant at St. Patrick's, Columbus, from 1869 to 1871. He was appointed president of St. Aloysius seminary when it opened in September, 1871, but continued at St. Patrick's. When Father Rotchford (6) left the Cathedral, Father Gallagher was put in charge of that congregation which met in the "Cathedral Chapel" (Naughten Hall?), until the Cathedral was sufficiently complete for Mass to be celebrated in it. He was named administrator of the diocese after the death of Bishop Rosecrans in 1878. After the consecration of Bishop Watterson in 1880 Father Gallagher returned to take charge of St. Patrick's. In 1881 he was named vicar general of the diocese.

Father Gallagher's administrative and leadership talents were recognized when in 1882 he was named administrator bishop of Galveston, Texas. He was consecrated bishop April 30, 1882, by Bishop Edward Fitzgerald of Little Rock who had been one of his predecessors as pastor of St. Patrick's, Columbus. Affectionately called the "good bishop", he labored for 36 years as head of Galveston diocese. He died January 21, 1918, aged 72.

Father Gerard H. Ahrens had been ordained two years when he was appointed to the faculty of St. Aloysius seminary and named its procurator. He was at the same time assistant at Holy Cross church, Columbus.

Gerard Ahrens was born in Cincinnati July 16, 1841. He studied for the priesthood at Mt. St. Mary's, Cincinnati, where he was under the tutelage of Dr. Sylvester H. Rosecrans, his future bishop. Dr. Rosecrans became auxiliary bishop of Cincinnati and officiated when Father Ahrens was ordained subdeacon and deacon in March, 1866. Archbishop Purcell was the ordaining prelate when Ahrens was raised to the priesthood September 22, 1866.

After the close of the seminary Father Ahrens was transferred to the Cathedral, continuing as chancellor. After the death of Father Hemsteger he became pastor of Holy Cross church where he remained until his death, March 25, 1884,

aged 42 years. He had been a priest less than 18 years.

Father Clement Rhode, the next pastor at Holy Cross, wrote in the parish record books the following tribute to Father Ahrens:

"1884, March 28: Buried Rev. Gerard H. Ahrens, rector of this parish; died March 25, aged 42 years, 8 months. He was the son of George Ahrens; born in Cincinnati, Ohio. Studied at Mt. St. Mary's, Cincinnati. Ordained Sept. 23, 1866. Pastor at Ironton for one year. Vicar of St. Patrick's; chancellor of the Diocese, "lector philosophiae" in Seminary of St. Aloysius, and successor of Rev. J.B. Hemsteger and rector of this parish which he directed prudently and faithfully for five years. Requiescat in pace. Cl. R. Rhode."

Another member of the seminary faculty was Father James J. Slevin. He seems not to have taught there more than one or two years.

James Joseph Slevin was born at Moxahala, Perry county, Ohio, in 1839. He received his education for the priesthood at St. Mary's college, Kentucky, and at Mt. St. Mary's, Cincinnati, Ohio. He was ordained in Columbus by Bishop Rosecrans, July 2, 1870. His first two years as a priest were spent in Columbus, with appointment to the seminary faculty when it was opened in 1871.

Father Slevin was pastor at Zaleski, 1872-1874, with missions at Madison, Byers, New England, McArthur and Latrobe Mineral. He also visited Athens and Jackson during these years. In 1875 and 1876 he had charge of Jackson and Zaleski. He was the first priest to visit Wellston, where he was pastor later, 1888-1900. He also served at Portsmouth and at Cambridge. He retired about 1901 and lived with a sister in Columbus, where he died Jun 7, 1909.

Bishop Hartley wrote (7) of him: "Rev. James Slevin was a most excellent priest - modest and unassuming, - a little peculiar in his ways - but always a true priest. After serving in many missions of the diocese - he received permission to retire and lived in a humble home near St. Dominic's Church where he died June 7, 1909. He gave five thousand dollars to Bishop Watterson to establish a maternity home. He saw it completed before his death. Requiescat in pace. +James J. Hartley, Bishop of Columbus."

Another member of the seminary faculty was Father Francis Campbell. Born in Columbus, Jan. 29, 1850, his parents were among the pioneer Catholic families of the city. He attended St. Patrick's school, then went to old St. Thomas college, Bardstown, Ky. There he was regarded as the brightest in his class.

Some relatives financed his education in Europe. He first studied the classics in Paris, and then spent five years in Rome. He became fluent in Italian, German and French. Upon his return to Columbus he taught at the seminary. He was ordained by Bishop Rosecrans, Dec. 20, 1873.

Father Campbell labored first at the Cathedral and then had a short stay in Newark. He was next assistant at Lancaster. By the beginning of 1875 he was pastor at Athens. From there he reported Jan. 26: "At Athens twice a month; Gallipolis, Hockingport, Long Bottom, Little Hocking, Cooleyville, Canaansville, Chauncey, Pilcher, New England, Big Run, etc. etc.....It is almost impossible for me either to enumerate the number of souls or the missions, as the great

number are a floating population moving from one place to another. By the first of April I will have perhaps seven or eight other missions which are not enumerated above."

Father Campbell spent two years at Marietta before becoming pastor at Immaculate Conception church, Dennison. He died there Feb. 7, 1896. He was greatly mourned; he was highly regarded by his people and by his fellow priests for his learning and his noble character.

Very little is available about Fathers William O'Reilly, Constantini and Hagan. The Catholic Directory informs us that Father William O'Reilly was at Jackson in 1879 and 1871. He served Zaleski from Jackson in 1871. The history of the diocese by Bishop Hartley gives him at Zaleski in 1869 to 1871; at St. Lawrence's, Ironton, for three years, 1872-1875. After that he was at Athens and took care of Chauncey.

Bishop Hartley's history places Father Constantine (or Constantini) at St. Lawrence's, Ironton, for part of 1871. No further data has been found. Father Hagan (or J. Hagan) was at Zaleski in 1871, 1872 and 1873. The Directory makes no further mention of him, although there is a Rev. J. P. Hagan at Old Point Comfort, Va., in 1875.

The other member of the faculty, Mr. Jerry Sullivan, could have been a student helping, since there was a Jeremiah Sullivan listed among the students.

The Students

Records of the students attending St. Aloysius seminary give an incomplete list. The names given here are from several sources. Bishop Hartley in his history of the diocese (8) gives the names of 34 who were enrolled in the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the first year of the seminary. From an old ledger found among the records books of Holy Cross church (9) it has been possible to add a number of names. The memorial booklet on Father Meara adds another name.

The students were: Andrew Bethge, Anthony Bergin, Pat. Brady (Ironton), B. Burns, James Butler (Ashley, near Delaware), J. H. Comber, Walter Cooney, Wm. Cunningham, Austin Cush, Henry B. Dues, Frederic T. Dinan, Joseph Falkenbach, Lawrence Fletcher, William A. Goebels (Marietta), William Hart, James J. Hartley, John S. Hannon (Steubenville), Patrick M. Heery, John Heenan, Thomas Heenan, J. Howard, Thomas Kelly and Thomas Lane;

Augustine A. McGinnis, John McCarthy (Ironton), Michael McGirr, Thomas McGirr, John McGuirk, Thomas McGrath (Urbana), John McNamee, James Mahoney, James H. Maloney, John T. Maloney (Ashley, Delaware county), Charles Meara, John Meara, M. Meara, George Montag (Tuscarawas county), Michael Murphy, William Murphy (Ironton), Pius Mutter, William Mulhane (Marietta), Martin Nolan, Robert Orf, Joseph Ruhly, Theobald Spangler (R.I.P.), William Edward Shea, Jeremiah Sullivan, Joseph Tuohy and H. Wilkemeyer.

Theobald Spangler died as a student. Three students were from Ironton, two from Ashley in Delaware county, two from Marietta, and one each from Steubenville, Urbana and Tuscarawas county. Those who continued there studies and were ordained were: Henry B. Dues, James J. Hartley, John S. Hannon, Patrick M. Heery, John McGuirk, Thomas Lane, M. Meara, John Meara, George

Montag, William Mulhane and Austin Cush. The William A. Goebels listed as from Marietta was probably an older brother of Father T. A. Goebels (from Marietta) who was ordained in 1893.

The Catholic Columbian, diocesan newspaper, reported on Jan. 30, 1875, that "examinations at St. Aloysius Seminary were closed on Tuesday, the 26th inst. The notes of the Classical and Scientific Classes will appear in our columns next week. The examinations of the theologians occupied Tuesday afternoon." Also reported was the fact that "Rev. B.M. O'Boylan, of St. Aloysius Seminary was ordained priest on Saturday last in St. Joseph's Cathedral, having the previous days received minor orders. Mr. M. Hartnedy received minor orders at the same time." It is not likely that Father O'Boylan was a student at St. Aloysius. He completed his studies before his arrival in Columbus.

The report of the examinations given in the Columbian (Feb. 6, 1875) does not include the theologians. The grades given are to be considered in reference 3, the perfect or maximum note. A. Bethge: Rhetoric, $2 \frac{3}{8}$, Geometry, $2 \frac{1}{2}$, Natural Philosophy, $2 \frac{3}{4}$, Latin, 2, German, $2 \frac{1}{2}$. J. Hannan: Rhetoric, $1 \frac{2}{3}$. Astronomy, $1 \frac{3}{4}$, German, $1 \frac{1}{2}$, Greek, $1 \frac{1}{2}$, Latin $1 \frac{1}{3}$. W. Hart; Rhetoric, $1 \frac{1}{2}$, Latin, $2 \frac{1}{2}$, Greek, $1 \frac{4}{5}$, Natural Philosophy, $2 \frac{2}{3}$, German, 2, Astronomy, $1 \frac{1}{12}$. J. McNamee: Rhetoric, $2 \frac{3}{4}$, Astronomy, $2 \frac{3}{4}$, German, $2 \frac{1}{3}$, Natural Philosophy, $2 \frac{5}{6}$, Greek, $2 \frac{1}{12}$, Latin, $2 \frac{1}{2}$. J. McGurik, Rhetoric, $2 \frac{1}{2}$;

M. Nolan, Rhetoric, $2 \frac{1}{5}$, Latin, 2, German, 2, Astronomy, $1 \frac{2}{3}$. W. Cooney: Algebra, $2 \frac{3}{4}$, English Grammar, $2 \frac{5}{6}$, German, $2 \frac{1}{2}$, Latin, $2 \frac{7}{9}$, Ancient History, $2 \frac{2}{3}$. J. Howard: Algebra, $2 \frac{3}{4}$, English Grammar, 3, German, $2 \frac{2}{3}$, Latin, $2 \frac{5}{6}$, Ancient History, $2 \frac{5}{6}$. Mahoney: Algebra, $2 \frac{3}{4}$, English Grammar, 3, German, $2 \frac{1}{4}$, Latin, $2 \frac{31}{36}$, Ancient History, $2 \frac{1}{2}$. Goebels: Geometry, $2 \frac{1}{2}$, Latin, $2 \frac{1}{2}$, Greek, $2 \frac{1}{4}$, German, $2 \frac{1}{8}$, English Grammar, $2 \frac{5}{6}$, Ancient History, $2 \frac{2}{3}$.

The report gave the standing of each student for the term. The first number is the maximum note for the class. First Latin: Max. 213. Hannan, 145; Hart, 175; McNamee, 187, Nolan, 163. Second Latin: Max. 213. Bethge, 185, Goebels, 192. Third Latin: Max. 240. Cooney, 213; Howard, 223; Mahoney, 229. First German: Max. 123. Bethge, 114; Goebels, 101; Mahoney, 106. Second German: Max. 135. Hannan, 90; Hart, 120; McNamee, 128; Nolan, 143. Third German: Max. 141. Cooney, 130; Howard, 130. First Greek: Max. 96. Goebels, 83; Hannan, 62; Hart, 77; McNamee, 84. Second Greek: Max. 21. Bethge, 13.

English Grammar: Max. 138. Cooney, Goebels and Mahoney, 124; Howard, 128. Rhetoric: Max. 114. Bethge, Hannan and Nolan, 91; Hart, 98; McNamee, 102. Algebra: Max. 90. Cooney and Howard, 74; Mahoney, 68. Natural Philosophy: Max. 81. Bethge, 69; Hart, 68; McNamee, 73. Ancient History: Max. 87. Cooney, 80; Goebels, 75; Howard, 79; Mahoney, 77. First Christian Doctrine: Max. 27. Bethge, Hannan, Hart, McNamee and Nolan, 24. Second Christian Doctrine: Max. 42. Cooney, Goebels, Howard and Mahoney, 39.

Twelve students at St. Aloysius seminary were ordained priests. They were: Austin A. Cush, Henry B. Dues, John Hannan, James J. Hartley, Martin A. Hartnedy, Thomas Lane, John McGuirk, John Meara, Michael Meara, George Montag, Lawrence W. Mulhane and Joseph Tuohy.

Two of St. Aloysius students, the first from there ordained, received Holy Orders May 30, 1874. They were Michael M. Meara, a native of Cincinnati,

Ohio, and Henry B. Dues.

Father Michael M. Meara was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, Oct. 23, 1850. He made his studies at Mt. St. Mary-of-the-West, Cincinnati, and at St. Aloysius, Columbus. He served first at the Cathedral, 1874-1882; then at Circleville, returning to the Cathedral in 1900. He died Jan. 26, 1925. Father Meara was one of the outstanding priests of the diocese, much indebted to for his work in lifting the diocesan debt. His younger brother John was ordained in 1877.

Also ordained in 1874 was Father Henry B. Dues, who was to be sadly mourned in Canal Dover when he died there after ten years as pastor, April 4, 1886, having been a priest just twelve years. He had been at St. Peter's, Steubenville following his ordination. Like Father Meara, he probably began his priesthood studies at Mt. St. Mary's, Cincinnati, before coming to St. Aloysius.

Father Martin Alphonse Hartnedy was a native of Ireland, born there Nov. 25, 1846. He studied at St. Rose's, Kentucky, before coming to St. Aloysius. He was ordained April 17, 1875, in Columbus by Bishop Rosecrans. He served at Athens, at the Cathedral and in Steubenville, before retiring in 1904. He died Sept. 21, 1912, and is buried in Steubenville.

Also a native of Ireland; Joseph Tuohey was born there April 20, 1843. His studies for the priesthood were made at St. Aloysius. After his ordination, June 10, 1876, by Bishop Rosecrans, he served at Martins Ferry, Little Hocking, and then became chaplain at St. Anthony hospital, Columbus, in 1901. He died Nov. 23, 1915, at Martins Ferry, Ohio.

Three alumni of St. Aloysius were ordained in 1877. Fathers John George Montag and John J. Meara were ordained May 28, and Father Thomas J. Lane on December 21. Father Montag was born in Canal Dover, Nov. 27, 1853. After his studies at St. Aloysius he was ordained by Bishop Rosecrans and served at Steubenville, Lancaster, Temperanceville, Dresden and Ironton. He died in St. Francis hospital, Columbus, Nov. 14, 1902.

Father John J. Meara, brother of Father Michael M., was born Feb. 21, 1853. Part of his studies for the priesthood were made at St. Aloysius. He was ordained May 28, 1877, and lived as a priest less than one year, dying May 20, 1878. He spent short periods at the Cathedral, New Straitsville and Delaware.

- (1) Letter to Archbishop Purcell, University of Notre Dame Archives.
- (2) Atlas of Franklin County and of the City of Columbus, J. A. Caldwell, 1872, p. 75.
- (3) Franklin County, Ohio, Deed Books, Vol. 114, p. 171.
- (4) "Father Meara, a Personal Tribute," by Rev. J. M. Kirwin.
- (5) History of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary of the West, by Michael Kelly and James Kirwin, Cincinnati, 1894, p. 238.
- (6) Rev. J. P. Rotchford, O.P.
- (7) List of Priests and Mortuary List, Vol. I. Diocesan Archives.
- (8) History of the Diocese of Columbus by Bishop Hartley, p. 48.
- (9) Since Father Ahrens, procurator, lived at Holy Cross and later became pastor there, the ledger book was fortunately preserved there.

(To be continued)

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