

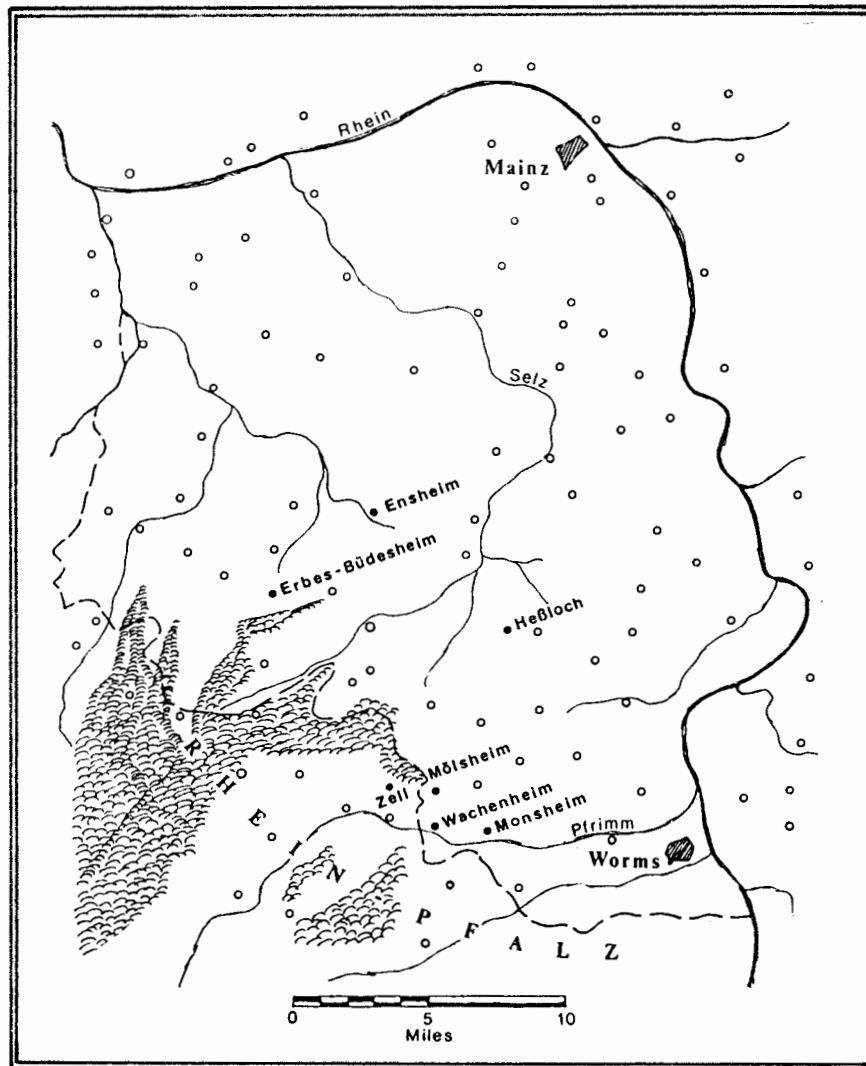


# Barquilla del Santa Maria

BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society -  
Diocese of Columbus

Volume 10, Number 1

January 1985



The valley of the Rhine River to the west of the ancient see-cities of Worms and Mainz, dotted with many small towns and villages, was a region rich in almonds, chestnuts, figs, and excellent wines. From this region came many Catholic families who settled in the Diocese of Columbus, including Langs, Röhrenbecks, Linds, Zettlers, and Kronenbergers. Among these were two sisters named Spindler whose descendants have made various important contributions to the Diocese since their first arrival here in 1832. Their story, the first installment of which is presented in this BULLETIN, was the subject of a talk presented by Donald Schlegel at the Spring 1984 meeting of the Society.

THE SPINDLER DESCENDANTS  
AND THE CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS

The Spindlers of Mölsheim

In the summer of 1776, the territory which now comprises the Diocese of Columbus was under the civil jurisdiction of the British government of Canada. In practical terms, however, the real government was in the hands of the native Indian councils. The Indian tribes in possession of the land at that time were the Shawnee in the valley of the Scioto and its tributaries and the Delaware in the lower Tuscarawas and upper Muskingum valleys. (1) It was the intention of the British government at that time to keep this area west of the Allegheny Mountains as a semi-wilderness, inhabited by the Indians and devoted to the fur trade, and to keep the American colonists east of the mountains.

In the administration of the Roman Catholic Church, at that time the territory was under the jurisdiction of Jean Olivier Briand, Bishop of Quebec.(2) Monsignor Briand's influence in the area was even more limited than that of his civil counterparts, for the only Christians in the area were a band of Delaware Indians who resided in the present Tuscarawas County with their teachers, Moravian missionaries of the church of the United Brethren.

It hardly needs to be recited that it was in the summer of 1776 in far-off Philadelphia that a band of men passed and affixed their signatures to a document which was destined to dramatically change the future of the area northwest of the Ohio, a document and event which have ever since been celebrated with fireworks, speeches, and re-dedication to the continuing effort to maintain a hard-won freedom from tyranny.

In that same summer an event took place at an even greater distance from the future See of Columbus, an event which went unheralded in its day and today is remembered only through a few Latin phrases in a register preserved in the archives of the Diocese of Mainz in Germany. Yet it is this latter event which, on a smaller scale, has had the greater impact on the Diocese of Columbus. On the twenty-seventh day of August in the year of Our Lord 1776 in the Catholic church of Saint Aegidius in the village of Mölsheim was solemnized the marriage of one Johann Spindler and his bride Maria Helena, born Battberg. (3) It is the intention of this work to describe the blessings which have flowed from God to His Church in Columbus and the Diocese of Columbus through this couple's early descendants.

The village of Mölsheim is situated in the valley of the Rhein River, about eight miles west of the ancient city of Worms, in the valley of the Pfrimm Bach. In this region a great variety of fruit is grown, including figs, almonds, and chestnuts, and the area is especially noted for the excellent quality of its wines. In the late eighteenth century the area was a portion of Kurpfalz or the Palatinate, within the Holy Roman Empire. The first Catholic church in the village was erected in 1743; it was first named St. Nicholas but not many years later it was placed under the patronage of Saint Aegidius, an abbot who had died in the year 700. The congregation consisted of only a few families, perhaps a dozen in the early years.

Johann Spindler was the son of Johann Spindler senior and his first wife, Anna Elisabetha. About all that is known of the father is contained in his

burial record from the parish church:

1790, the eleventh of the month of January, died in Moelsheim the honorable man Johann Spindler senior, baker, miller, and citizen of this village, aged 67 years and 10 months, fortified by the sacraments of penance, eucharist, and extreme unction and also the rite of general absolution, and was buried on the 13th of the said month by me the pastor in the cemetery above-named. J. Von der Löhre

Johann junior was a resident of Mölsheim, though apparently not born there, and was a miller by trade. In 1807 he served as temporary mayor of the village. His bride Maria Helena was a daughter of Johann Peter and Margaretha Battberg, who lived with their other children in Hessloch, about six miles north of Mölsheim.

To this marriage of Johann and Maria Helena ten children were born: Johann (1777-1783), Johann Peter (1779-1780), Maria Barbara (born July 4, 1781), Maria Magdalena (1784-1812), Anna Elisabetha (1786-1790), Maria Sybilla (1789-1790), Maria Franciska (1791-1793), Maria Anna (1793-1796), Maria Cornelia (baptized on Sept. 3, 1796), and Johann Peter (born 1800). Of these children, only three are known to have lived to adulthood. Magdalena and her family lived in Mölsheim; Barbara and Cornelia, after marrying and beginning to raise families, emigrated from the valley of the Rhein and settled in Columbus in the 1830's.

Before turning away from the records of the church of Mölsheim, one further item of importance must be noted, a clue which, taken with the rest of this story, may resolve to the satisfaction of many the long-pondered mystery of the origin of the name of the first Catholic church in Columbus. In 1798 the pastor at Mölsheim began a new volume of the sacramental register; on the title page of this book he called his chapel "the parish church of St. Aegidius the Abbot in Moelsheim and Little Daughter to St. Remigius in Wachenheim." The parish church of Wachenheim, the next village south of Mölsheim and only a mile away, was a much older institution than Mölsheim's, dating to the early years of the eighteenth century. In light of the Spindler descendants' early and important involvement in establishing the Church in Columbus, it appears possible that Columbus St. Remigius might have been named, in part, in remembrance of this mother church in Wachenheim.

#### Erbes-Büdesheim

Barbara Spindler's life was not an easy one. Twice married and twice widowed, she survived the ravages of warfare on the Rhein and later endured the difficult passage to America which was the rule of the 1830's, only to die in Columbus a few years later at the age of fifty-seven years. She was born on July 4, 1781 in Mölsheim and was baptized on the following day at the parish church by Rev. J. Hess, the pastor. Her god-mother and namesake was her father's step-mother, Mrs. Maria Barbara Spindler. At the age of about twenty she married Joseph Anton Jacobs, a man seven years her senior and a native of Ensheim, a village located ten miles north of Mölsheim. They made their home in Erbes-Büdesheim, ten miles northwest of her birthplace, where Joseph was a merchant and inn-keeper. Joseph died in 1815 or 1816 at the age of 42, leaving Barbara with a family of five small children to care for.

These were Johann, Cornelius, Margaretha, Cornelia, and Elisabetha, the youngest of whom was only about one year old. Joseph apparently left her in possession of the inn, through which she supported the family for a few years until her second marriage.

Barbara's second husband was Georg Franz Cronenberger, who was a well-to-do land owner in the area. Three children were born to the Cronenbergers: Andreas, Susanna, and Jacob. The earliest records of the family which are preserved in Columbus (in the Diocesan Archives) are concerned with the settlement of Georg Cronenberger's estate in the spring of 1834. At that time the family owned twenty-two separate pieces of land, scattered in the vicinity of Erbes-Büdesheim, including fields, meadows, wooded lands, mountain lands, and a forty-acre vinyard. They also owned the house, barn, stables, shed, cellar and yard on the straight street or Mannheim street in the village, which was known as the Gasthaus zum Trauben, or the Grape Inn. In total, the properties were worth 8,100 guilders or about 3,200 U.S. dollars of that era.(4) (This would have been enough money to purchase over 250 hilly acres in southeastern Ohio, or thirteen, unimproved, quarter-acre lots in Columbus, or the labor of ten carpenters for a year.)

The people of this vicinity had lived under several different rulers during Barbara's lifetime and had experienced the havoc wreaked by armies contending for control of the Rhein valley. The nearby city of Mainz was captured by a French Republican army in 1792 and was re-taken by the Prussians in 1793. The French laid siege to the city again in 1795 but were driven off by the Austrians. By a treaty of 1797, the Rhein was recognized as the eastern frontier of France; this area of the Pfalz was therefore surrendered to the French government that December and its Germanic populace came to be ruled by Paris. This, however, should not be understood as necessarily unwelcome to them. The idea of nationality, of a single state composed of a single race, was not yet generally well-developed at that time; many Central Europeans were familiar with the rule of a state centered in a distant capital where a different race, language, religion, and culture predominated. In addition, though freedom suffered somewhat as Napoleon became more powerful, France had long been one of the most advanced European countries in recognizing personal liberties, which generally led to prosperity for the middle class to which the Jacobs/Cronenberger family belonged.(5)

In 1815, at the end of the Napoleonic era, the Congress of Vienna reorganized Germany and much of Europe. The former Electorate of Mainz and the adjacent areas, which had become the French Department of Donnersberg, were taken from France and given to the grand-duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt; it was also given the new name of Rhein-Hessen.(6) The reactionary rulers of the post-Napoleonic era composed Europe to their own advantage at this Congress with little regard for the wishes or well-being of the common people in the lands parcelled out. This attitude carried forward into the 1820's and 1830's, with the result that recently-experienced liberties were crushed and the economic well-being of the populace declined. Small farmers found it impossible to profit and soon became impoverished. Revolutions, uprisings, and popular movements in France and Belgium and in Brunswick, Hesse-Cassel, Saxony, Hanover, and Rhein-Pfalz in Germany (7) gave some hope to the hard-pressed people in the early 1830's, but by that time Barbara Cronenberger and her children had already decided to join the human wave which was then washing down the Rhein toward America.

## Early Columbus

The first of the Spindler descendants to come to America was Barbara's son, Cornelius Jacobs. From the date of his naturalization, October, 1836,(8) and from the five-year residency requirement for citizenship, we know that he left Germany in 1831 or earlier. He probably spent a year or two visiting various sections of the United States, as many young, unmarried German men did then, searching for a good location to settle. He arrived in Columbus in 1832 (9) and it is likely that he made the town his permanent residence at that time.

In some respects, Cornelius had little in common with the majority of the citizens of Columbus when he settled here. In 1830 Columbus contained only about sixteen householders with German surnames, out of a total of 320 households and 2,437 persons. Some of these sixteen families had undoubtedly been in this country long enough to have lost their German language. By 1832 the number of German households had probably increased to about thirty-five. Cornelius was also part of a small religious minority. At this early period there were only about eight Catholic households in the town, including his own, half of these being German and half English-speaking.(10) The entire state of Ohio constituted the Diocese of Cincinnati, containing fewer than 30,000 Catholics (less than 3% of the state's population) served by fourteen priests. The priests' residence nearest to Columbus was the Dominican Priory at St. Joseph's, near Somerset in Perry County, over forty miles away.(11) Services were held in private residences of Catholic families whenever, at long intervals, "a clergyman of their faith happened to visit the town, and the news was always joyfully received, as a gracious relief from the religious isolation in which they lived."(12)

Cornelius returned for a visit to Erbes-Büdesheim, probably late in 1832. This visit gave him time to tell in person of his experiences and to explain to his mother, brothers, and sisters their prospects if they would emigrate. He was in Erbes-Büdesheim, but apparently preparing to return to America, on March 13, 1833, when he gave his brother John power of attorney to act for him in the settlement of their late step-father's estate. He returned to this country to take up again his residence here and to prepare for the arrival of the rest of his family. Barbara and her other children arrived in Columbus on December 16, 1834. (Cf. n. 4)

Mrs. Cronenberger did not lose touch with her relatives in Germany and thus hers was not the only family to emigrate from Rhein-Hessen to Columbus. Others who later followed were Nicholas and Sophia (Kronenberger) Lang from Erbes-Büdesheim; Cornelius Lang (son of Peter and Maria Anna (Kronenberger) Lang) from the same village, Ludwig Keller from Hessloch, and Christoph Lind from nearby Weinheim. From the village of Zell, across the border of Rhein-Pfalz or Rhein-Baiern from Mölsheim, came Barbara's sister Cornelia Zettler and family and Jacob and Johann Röhrenbeck.(13)

Barbara and her family quickly settled into the life of Columbus. In April of 1835, just four months after her arrival, she secured a permanent residence by purchasing for \$300 a house and lot (inlot 383) on the south side of Mound street, half way from High to Third. The grantors of the lot were Otis and Samuel Crosby.(14) Across the alley to the south from Barbara's new home were the house and Washington Brewery of Bernhard Burck, a Catholic

immigrant from Baden. Burck had arrived in Columbus by 1833 and had made a contract to purchase his lots on South street from the same Crosbys in January of 1834.(15) The Crosbys owned many lots in Columbus, the value of which they hoped to increase indirectly by creating demand for them by promoting immigration. They had sold the lots to Burck at a discount upon his agreement to begin a brewery, which would attract German immigrants. Apparently for the same reason, as well as "a desire to promote religion and toleration," they had donated a lot at Rich and Fifth streets in May of 1833 to the Dominicans of St. Joseph's, on condition that a church be built and furnished within five years.

Encouraged by Bishop Purcell when he visited Columbus in June of 1836, subscription lists were circulated among the growing Catholic population of the city for the purpose of building a small stone church on the donated lot. The names of Cornelius and John Jacobs appear on the list dated August, 1836, and Mrs. B. Kronenberger and Miss Elizabeth Jacobs on that of August, 1837. A building committee was formed, with Cornelius Jacobs as treasurer (and, eventually, construction supervisor). "Mr. Jacobs had been from the beginning the prime mover and treasurer of the small community, encouraging and helping and either collecting funds or receiving contributions necessary for defraying current expenses as well as those of the missionaries."(16)

Barbara did not live to see the little church completed. She died on March 17, 1837, at the age of fifty-seven years. She was buried on the lot of "Mr. Cronenberger" in the old City Graveyard on North High street. When her remains were moved to Mt. Calvary in 1872 it was found that she had been buried with "emblems of the Catholic faith, being a charm suspended from the neck by a ribbon, and consisting of a silver token to which was attached a four pointed star or cross."(17) The uncompleted church was given the name of St. Remigius by June of that year, when the sacramental register was begun. No tradition exists as to the reason this apostle of the Franks was chosen as patron of the church, though it has been assumed that the name was chosen by the first pastor, Rev. H. D. Junker, a native of France. It now appears possible that the name may have been chosen in part in remembrance of St. Remigius church in Wachenheim, the mother church of the village parish of St. Aegidius where Barbara was baptised and spent her early years. The church was under roof in December of 1837 and was dedicated the following spring.

(To be continued)

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#### NOTES

(1) Morehead, Warren K., "The Indian Tribes of Ohio," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society Publications, VII, 18ff.

(2) Mattingly, H. E., "The Diocese of Columbus, Jurisdiction and Boundaries," Bulletin of the Catholic Record Society, Diocese of Columbus, V, No. 7 (July 1979), 428-431.

(3) All information on the Spindlers is from the sacramental register of the parish church of St. Aegidius the Abbot in M<sup>u</sup>lsheim, preserved in the Archives of the Diocese of Mainz (microfilmed by the LDS Church's Salt Lake City library in 1974).

(4) Estate papers preserved in the Wehrle file, Archives of the Diocese of Columbus.

- (5) Stephens, H. Morse, M.A., Revolutionary Europe 1789-1815; London: Rivingtons, 1911; pp39, 118, 130, 172, 192-193, and others.
- (6) Articles "Hesse-Darmstadt" and "Mainz" in Chambers's Encyclopaedia; London: W. and R. Chambers, 1868; V, 353 and VI, 274-275.
- (7) Steinberg, S. H., A Short History of Germany; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945; 173-175 and 194-195.
- (8) Franklin County Common Pleas Court, Order Book 8, p. 121.
- (9) Lee, Alfred E., History of the City of Columbus; New York and Chicago: Munsell & Co., 1892; I, 279.
- (10) Studer, Jacob H., Columbus, Ohio: Its History, Resources and Progress; Columbus: Jacob H. Studer, 1873; page 163.
- (11) The United States Catholic Almanac or Laity's Directory for the Year 1833, pp 50-51 (see the Bulletin, I, 21-22).
- (12) Studer, op. cit., p. 162.
- (13) Manuscript census of Holy Cross parish, ca 1878, in the collection of the Catholic Record Society, Diocese of Columbus.
- (14) Franklin County Recorder's Office, Deed Book 15, page 405.
- (15) Schlegel, Donald M., "The First German Brewer in Columbus," CRS Bulletin, VI (1980), 555-560. See also Schlegel, Donald M., Lager and Liberty: German Brewers of Nineteenth Century Columbus; Columbus: Columbus History Service, 1982; pp 6-10.
- (16) Hartley, Rt. Rev. James J., Diocese of Columbus: The History of Fifty Years, 1868-1918; Columbus: 1918; pp 162, 163, 168.
- (17) Columbus Dispatch, April 25, 1872.

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### Gifts and Acquisitions

The Society wishes to thank all who have contributed to its library over the past ten years. The presence of this library in the Society's office greatly facilitates the research carried on by the Society in response to various requests, for articles to be published in this Bulletin, and for the personal research needs of the members. The collection includes works concerning the history of the Church at all levels, secular histories of the areas currently or formerly a part of the diocese, family histories, biographies, and works on any subject authored by members of the diocese.

The following donations and acquisitions were made in 1984:

Howe, Henry, Historical Collections of Ohio, Vols. I & II; Norwalk: Laning Printing Co., 1896. Gift of Patrick Mooney, Columbus.

Concilia Provincialia Baltimorensia, 1829-1840; Baltimore: 1842. Gift of Patrick Mooney, Columbus.

Videocassette of the Dedication of Aquinas Hall, Columbus Technical Institute, May 21, 1972. Gift of Mr. Ralph Bieber, Columbus.

Collection of Catholic Youth Council records, Diocese of Columbus. Gift of Al Roehrenbeck, Columbus.

Quinter, Edward H., Most Blessed Sacrament Church, Bally, Pa.; 1976. Gift of Mrs. W. L. Berry, Jr., Midland, Michigan.

Fink, Leo Gregory, From Bally to Valley Forge; 1953. Gift of Mrs. W. L. Berry, Jr., Midland, Michigan.

Diamond Jubilee, 1908-1983, St. Louis Church, Gallipolis, Ohio. Gift of Mrs. Harriet A. Davison, Gallipolis, Ohio.

Healey, Edward F., Which Way to Heaven; London [Ohio]: Owl Press, 1976. Gift of Rev. Anthony Cheveney, S.S.P.

Quinn, A. James and James A. Griffin, Thoughts for Our Times; New York: Alba House, 1969. Gift of Rev. Anthony Cheveney, S.S.P.

Quinn, A. James and James A. Griffin, Thoughts for Sowing; New York: Alba House, 1970. Gift of Rev. Anthony Cheveney, S.S.P.

Quinn, A. James and James A. Griffin, Ashes from the Cathedral; New York: Alba House, 1974. Gift of Rev. Anthony Cheveney, S.S.P.

Griffin, James A., Sackcloth and Ashes; New York: Alba House, 1976.

Cooney, James F., Thomas P. Duffy, and James E. Kraus, Together at Mass: O Give Thanks to the Lord; Toledo: Gregorian Institute of America, 1959.

Jessing, Joseph, ed., A Catechism of Christian Doctrine (English and German text); Columbus: St. Joseph's Orphanage, 1885. Gift of John Lageman, Columbus.

Fedorchak, Catharine Foreaker, "More Cemetery Inscriptions from Somerset, O." Gift of John D. Rugg, Granville.

The following four booklets were donated by Rev. Msgr. William Kappes:

"St. Vincent Orphanage," dedication, 1958.

"The Blessing of St. Christopher Church" (Columbus) 1961.

"Fifteen Years of Charity, 1945-1960" (Diocesan Catholic Welfare Bureau).

"The Heart of Charity in the Community for Twenty Years, 1945-1965" (Diocesan Catholic Welfare Bureau).

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In Spanish, the word barquilla (bar-key-la) indicates a ship's log or record book. The Santa Maria, which carried Christopher Columbus on the voyage, commissioned by the Catholic King and Queen of Spain, on which the New World was discovered, has long been a symbol of the Diocese of Columbus. Hence the new title of this BULLETIN, in which is presented the historical record of the diocese.

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Donald M. Schlegel, Editor

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