



# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society -  
Diocese of Columbus

Vol. XVII, No. 12

December, 1992

BISHOP FENWICK'S APOSTOLATE TO THE NATIVE AMERICANS  
by Anthony J. Lisska, Denison University

(Concluded, from Vol. XVII, No. 10)

## Attempt to Secure Government Funding

Always a priest and prelate concerned with education, Fenwick, as we have seen, established schools for the Native American Indians in parts of the northwest. Since there were government monies available for services to the aboriginal Indians, Fenwick sought educational funding from the agencies in charge of Indian affairs. In Washington, Fenwick met with Lewis Cass, the Secretary of War. Congress had assigned funding for Native American Indian projects through Cass's office. Cass himself was a former governor of Michigan, so he knew firsthand about the Indian communities in that area. On November 30, 1831, Fenwick wrote formally to Cass seeking aid for the following schools:

- a) Arbre Croche--with a large student body; Fenwick writes that he has already spent \$1200 there for clothing and maintenance.
- b) St. Joseph's River--with a smaller student body than Arbre Croche.
- c) Green Bay--the school recently reestablished.
- d) Cincinnati--where Fenwick is providing the trade-school education for the several Indian young people.

Fenwick requested three thousand dollars to assist in these educational services his diocese had and was providing for the aboriginal Indians in the northwest. On December 9, 1831, Fenwick received a letter from the Office of Indian Affairs. Samuel S. Hamilton, the person assigned to handle his request, notified the Cincinnati prelate that he would be given one thousand dollars a year, the sum allocated for the three Indian schools. Fenwick responded, thanking Hamilton for the assigned funding, but noting that this was not sufficient for the educational services he provided, especially for the Arbre Croche school.

In addition to providing schooling at the three locations indicated above, Fenwick had undertaken to cover the expenses for twelve Indian youths himself:

- a) The four young persons studying the trades in Cincinnati.
- b) Four additional students working in the trades on Mackinac Island.

- c) Two seminarians studying in Cincinnati.
- d) Two novices in the Dominican Novitiate at St. Rose Priory in Kentucky.

Hence, Fenwick was personally involved in covering the expenses of twelve Indian young persons in different kinds of educational and religious settings. This was at a time, moreover, when Fenwick was extremely hard pressed for funds to cover adequately the many necessary items in his expansive diocese. That Fenwick's commitment to the Native American Indians in his diocese was without reservation is obvious.

In 1832, the Propaganda College in Rome admitted the two Indian seminarians, Maccatebinessi and Hamelin, brought earlier to Cincinnati by Fenwick. Fenwick's office in Cincinnati received a letter from Pope Gregory XVI dated April 14, 1832, announcing the admission of the two aboriginal Indians to the Rome seminary. This letter was published in The Catholic Telegraph, July 7, 1832. Sadly, Fenwick may not have known about this wonderful event. The letter appears to have arrived in Cincinnati after he had left for another trip to the Northwest, a trip from which he would not return alive to Cincinnati.

#### Fenwick's Last Missionary Journey

Fenwick left Cincinnati on June 14, 1832 on another pastoral visit to the northwest. This trip would be his last. He realized that he was not well. On May 25, 1832, Fenwick wrote to a friend the following account of the state of his health and his wishes for the pastoral visit: "I had a severe spell of chills and fever which reduced me much. I am now, I hope, better, having missed...the last three days.... If health will permit me after Pentecost, I shall visit my Indian missions...." [p. 409]

Sailing from Cleveland for Detroit in early July, Fenwick arrived in Michigan and found himself caught in a severe cholera epidemic. Dealing with this disease weakened Fenwick's already frail state of health.

From Detroit, Fenwick sailed once again on Lake Huron for Sault Ste. Marie. However, cholera was discovered on board the ship, which prevented the ship from landing at Sault Ste.



Christian Savages" in Wisconsin  
from Mazzuchelli's 1844 Memoirs

Marie. At this time, Fenwick himself contracted the disease. Retracing his steps, Fenwick did land at Mackinac Island. While not fully recovered from the cholera attack, Fenwick, apostolic warrior that he was, journeyed to Sault St. Marie, Green Bay and Arbre Croche.

At Arbre Croche, the following welcoming ceremony greeted the aged bishop of Cincinnati:

At Arbre Croche, they swarmed down to the lake shore to meet his boat, and formed into two lines, the women on one side and the men on the other. As he landed, the braves fired three salvos with their flintlocks. [p. 415]

Here, Fenwick administered confirmation and preached to the assembled Indians before returning to Mackinac with Mazzuchelli. Mazzuchelli was about to depart from Mackinac Island to work with the Winnebago Indians near Prairie du Chien in the Wisconsin Territory.

Writing from Mackinac on August 12, 1832, Fenwick describes his duties as bishop ministering to his people in Michigan and Wisconsin:

My health is much deteriorated, and my strength decreases perceptibly. I have just visited the good Indians of Arbre Croche, where I have located an excellent missionary, Father Baraga, a priest from Dalmatia...who accomplishes wonders--[he] has extended his missions to the Castor [or Beaver] Islands, and even beyond Lake Michigan. He has baptized two hundred and sixty-six Indians since he commenced work there, May, 1831. I confirmed one hundred and thirty-seven of that tribe, and was much consoled by their great fervor and piety. In the parish of Saint Peter, Arbre Croche, there are now seven hundred Christian Indians, of whom the greater number have been confirmed, and two schools for grown Indians.... There is also a school, under the surveillance of Father Badin, on the Saint Joseph's River which flows into Lake Michigan; and still another at Green Bay, with a church almost completed.

Fenwick continues with a brief description of his apostolic activities in Ohio:

In Ohio, there are three schools conducted by pious women who do much good. My college is in operation. The seminary, now in course of construction, is of brick with a stone foundation. It will be surmounted by a splendid tower which will correspond with that of the cathedral on one side, and with that of the college on the other.... [p. 418]

Mid-August found Fenwick returning to Detroit. Here he found that the schools had prospered, both the new and the old educational institutions. The Government aid was forthcoming for the schools. In addition, funding from French and Austrian sources were assisting in these educational efforts. Energetic Fr. Badin had requested and obtained from Congress the setting aside of four sections of land for the education of the Indians under his charge.

On August 22, 1832, Fenwick wrote to his metropolitan, Archbishop Whitfield, in Baltimore. This important letter indicates Fenwick's labors and his aspirations as well as his ill health.

I have returned thus far from the distant and laborious missions of the Rapids of St. Mary [Sault Ste. Marie], Mackinac, Arbre Croche and Green Bay; at each of which places much good has been done, and there remains yet much to be done. All these are Indian missions,

extending to the head of Lake Superior, which I could not reach, being stopped in my progress by sickness. I was sick at Sault Ste. Marie and at Mackinac. Am yet feeble and languid. My strength and health have failed much. I am evidently sinking gradually to the grave, being now sixty-four years old. I was consoled with the progress of religion, and prosperity of my Indian schools at Mackinac, Arbre Croche, Green Bay, and St. Joseph's River in Michigan. The amount of my good Indians baptized...at all of these missions is about fourteen or fifteen hundred. At Green Bay the Indian school contains between eighty and ninety pupils; at Arbre Croche upwards of one hundred; at St. Joseph's about sixty. This is an interesting portion of our flock and diocese. Indeed, I think it the most interesting and important. At all events, it is the most simple, innocent and humble and docile part.

In Ohio our prospects are also consoling. Religion and piety are on the increase in most parts of the State; conversions frequent. My business and labours increase, whilst my health and all of my faculties seem to fail me.... [pp. 420-421]

Stronger commitment and zeal joined with successful endeavors are seldom found so forcefully expressed in the writings of the frontier bishops.

#### The Last Days of Bishop Fenwick

Fenwick was exhausted and sickly from the endeavors of his visit to the northwest. He was never to reach his home in Cincinnati. Fenwick left Detroit, probably in late August, 1832. He travelled to Canton, going by way of Tiffin and Norwalk. O'Daniel writes that Fenwick arrived in Canton "...so feeble and exhausted that fear was entertained for his life." [p. 423] Yet earlier he had promised to dedicate the new brick church in Steubenville. He travelled to Steubenville from Canton with Father J.M. Henni, the Canton pastor. From the Steubenville area, he travelled to Pittsburgh, seeking to complete the arrangements for a settlement of Colettine religious women for the mission work in Arbre Croche. One can see that the work for the Native American Indian missions in the then northwest was never far from Fenwick's mind.

Fenwick returned to Ohio by way of Canton, where he administered the sacrament of confirmation. Proceeding to St. Paul's in Columbiana County, he also confirmed the Catholics there. O'Daniel suggests that this was probably September 23, 1832. The Canton confirmation exercise was Edward Dominic Fenwick's last episcopal function.

On Tuesday, September 25, he would offer his last Mass. Following the celebration of the Mass, Fenwick started for Wooster, where he wanted to visit on his way to St. Luke's in Danville and then on to St. Joseph's in Somerset. Fenwick never got beyond Wooster. He died there at the noon hour on September 26, 1832, attended by another stagecoach passenger, Miss Eliza Powell. This diligent missionary bishop died alone and separated from the customary prayer exercises characteristic of the Dominican rites for dying religious. Fenwick died as he had lived--almost literally in the saddle--returning from his episcopal and apostolic duties among the Native American Indians entrusted to him as members of his vast diocese.

#### Observations

The following observations concerning the last years of Fenwick's life as a Dominican, a priest, a bishop and a missionary to the aboriginal Indians of

the Northwest indicate his commitment and zeal for this apostolic work in his diocese.

a) During Fenwick's last two years, this prelate of more than sixty years travelled nearly six thousand miles, on horseback, by stage coach, or by boat--canoe, sailboat, paddlewheel.

b) From June 14 to September 26, 1832, Fenwick, while quite sick and probably in dire need of bedrest, travelled more than two thousand miles.

c) About the time of Fenwick's death, word was received from Rome announcing that the two aboriginal Indian youths had reached Rome and were in the Propaganda College. This letter from Rome was dated July 28, 1832. It is unclear if Fenwick knew of this wonderful event for which he had worked so diligently.

d) The fate of the four Native American Indian seminarians was not propitious:

--Maccatebinessi died in Rome, June 25, 1833.

--Hamelin gave up his studies and returned to Michigan. No record of what happened to him upon his return has been unearthed during the research for this paper.

--The two Native American Indians who received the Dominican habit and joined the community at St. Rose Priory in Kentucky also returned home to the northwest. Again, nothing was found indicating their later work in Michigan.

This ends the narrative describing the marvelous role Edward Dominic Fenwick played in the Roman Church's aspirations to meet the spiritual and temporal needs of the Native American Indians. The Jesuit missionary activities are well known and part of the canon of religious studies central to American Catholicism. Fenwick's fruitful apostolate and striking success is less well known in that important story. Yet it is a part of the narrative rich in aspiration and strong in achievement. It needs to be remembered.

---

#### Note on Sources

V.F. O'Daniel's biography of Fenwick [The Right Rev. Edward Dominic Fenwick: New York, 1920] is the classic source for much information on Edward Fenwick. Much of this essay is heavily dependent on O'Daniel's work. Footnote references, except where noted, are to O'Daniel's scholarly biography. O'Daniel was a tireless historian who ferreted out historical materials central to understanding Fenwick's dramatic life from both American and European archives. O'Daniel's footnotes are a gold mine of historical reference material. Reginald Coffey's American Dominicans [New York, 1970], while usually informative on Dominican activity in the United States, says virtually nothing about Fenwick's labors with the aboriginal Indians. Coffey does give an account of Mazzuchelli's labors, especially during Mazzuchelli's Wisconsin days. One would think that Coffey would at least have covered the vestition ceremony of the Indian novices at St. Rose's in 1830, assuming

O'Daniel is correct in suggesting that this is the first recorded reception of Native American Indians into a major religious order in the United States. The microfilm copies of The American Catholic Miscellany from Charleston are important sources for information about Fenwick's commitment to and journeys into the missionary area then known as the northwest. Samuel Mazzuchelli's Memoirs published in Italy in 1844 is an important source of information about the missionary activities of the Dominicans in the Northwest. John Gilmary Shea's work on the Native American missionary activities is a useful collection of information, usually confirming what O'Daniel had written. Cf. Shea's History of the Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1529-1854 [New York: 1855]. Shea, however, says precious little about the role Fenwick played in this major Roman Catholic missionary project in the then "new world." Shea is not alone in this omission, however, as most histories of American Catholicism barely mention Fenwick's important contribution in the development of the historical narrative about religious life in the United States.

The author express his grateful appreciation to several people who provided gracious assistance in this research project on Bishop Fenwick. Pat Mooney and Don Schlegel provided valuable historical materials necessary to complete this project. Sister Loretta Petit, O.P., from Project OPUS [the official history agency for the Dominicans in the United States] kindly read an earlier draft of this manuscript. An acknowledged expert on Fenwick, Sr. Loretta's thoughtful comments and sense of accuracy contributed immensely to the final written form of this narrative. The author's Denison colleague, Professor of History G. Wallace Chessman, also thoughtfully read an early draft; his suggestions regarding historical style continue to aid the author's attempts at writing church history.

-----  
 CHILLICOTHE ST. MARY'S CHURCH  
 BAPTISMAL REGISTER, 1835-1846  
 (Continued from Vol. XVII, No. 10)

1839, continued

page 15  
 Sept. 15 John, born Sept. 5, son of Ferdinand Martzloft and Elizabeth Armbroster; spon. Anthony Fritz and Bridget Martzloft.  
 same Henry, born Aug. 30, son of William Long and Mary Boyle; spon. Peter Boyle and Rose McCaine.  
 same Joseph Beringthon(?), born Aug. 31, son of Joseph Becker and Lucy Boys; spon. Henry D. Juncker and Margaret Becker. H. D. Juncker  
 Sept. 17 Mary Veronica, born 14 Aug., daughter of John Peter Schmitt and Dorothea Doschler; spon. Boniface Handwerker and Mary Veronica Schmitt. HDJ  
 same Anna, born Sept. 15, daughter of Edward Carwell [Carvill] and Rosanna Cull; spon. Roger Cull and Mary Bauman. HDJ  
 Oct. 6 Bridget, born 22 Sept., daughter of Peter O Mealy and Cecilia Nolan; spon. Patrick McKune and Rose McCan.  
 same day Maria Anna, born 20 Sept., daughter of Francis Xavier Long and Elizabeth Rahely; spon. John Baptist Flesch and Magdalena Peterman.  
 same day Sophia, born Oct. 3, daughter of Bernard Mathis and Catherine Scilnacht; spon. Joseph Mathis and Martha Fischer. HDJ

page 16

- Oct. 6 Helen, born 14 May, daughter of George Meyer and Catherine Hiller; spons. Mathias Mathis and Clara Meyer. HDJ
- Oct. 10 Michael, born 27 Sept., son of Michael Will and Elizabeth Engelhard; spons. Gallus Schurhammer and Rosina Mauerroth. HDJ
- Oct. 20 Simon, born 7 Oct., son of Michael Bauser and Amelia Meyer; spons. Simon Meyer and Agatha Meyer. HDJ
- Oct. 23 Joseph, born this month, son of Jacob Schlick and Magdalena Schlick; spons. Joseph and Lucy Baker. HDJ
- Oct. 28 Nicodemus, six weeks old, son of Francis I. Gratrack and Elizabeth Brodman; spons. Henry and Elizabeth Brodman. James Quilan, attested by HDJ
- Nov. 3 John, five weeks old, son of Edward Mahony and Margaret Obannon; spons. Mr. Dunne and Sara Lochlin. James Quinlan, attested by HDJ
- Nov. 20 in Logan Cty. [Logan, Hocking County; see note below.]  
William, born 9 November, son of James Dempsey and Sara Ann Schmitt; spons. John Manigan and Mary McGiver. HDJ

page 17

- Nov. 20 in Logan Cty. [Logan city, not county, where the "Zevie" family lived]  
Nicholas, four weeks old, son of Rudolph Scherbail and Barbara Sacemer; spons. Nicholas Zevie and Maria Anna Zevie. HDJ
- Nov. 24 John, born 9 Nov., son of Rudolph Siegfried and Maria Hackman; spons. Michael Brandy and Mary Ann Hirt. HDJ
- Nov. 24 Caroline, born 28 October, daughter of Alexander Santo and Sophia Ringwald; spons. Carl Boggenschitz and Judith Kreutz. HDJ
- Dec. 16 Thomas, born 3 Nov., son of Thomas Henson and Bridget Mahr; spons. Stephen Henson and Bridget Forester. HDJ
- Dec. 25 Juliana, born 17 Dec., daughter of Carl Boggenschitz and Juliana Eichmann; spons. Alexander Santo and Rose Strevel. HDJ

Finis Anni 1839

page 18

1840

- Jan. 5 Ludwig, born 28 Dec., 1839, son of Franz Xavier Binds and Kunigunda End; spons. Albert Billeiser and Walburga End.
- same day Amalia, born 21 Dec., 1839, daughter of Stephen Zind and Fridolina Dagger; spons. Anton Fritz and Genevieve End. HDJ
- Jan. 7 In Circleville, Richard, born 2 Jan., son of Peter Kenny and Margaret McKlean; spons. Robert Oflarthy and Margaret Burns. HDJ
- Jan. 12 Xavier, born 5 Jan., son of John Schester and Kunigunda (blank); spons. Fidelis Buchler and Catharina Kromer. HDJ
- Feb. 6 Sara, born 25 Jan., daughter of John Dritsch and Theresia Hermick; spons. Francis Munich and Elizabeth Munich. HDJ
- Feb. 16 Patrick, son of Edward Hevvetter? and Bridget Kangler; spons. Dominic Norden and his wife. HDJ
- March 1 John, born 22 Feb., son of Joseph Mathias [Mathis?] and Maria Merkle; spons. Mathias Mathis and Marg. Uri. J. M. Young, attested by HDJ

page 19

- March 2 Catherine, daughter of John and Elizabeth Craven; spons. Jas. Murphy and Mary Craven. J. M. Young, attested by HDJ
- March 22 Joseph, born 20 March, son of Ferdinand Rifler and Francisca Fillinger; spons. Jerry Brown and Elizabeth Hermann.
- same day Sophia, born 14 March, daughter of Philip Gerdeisser and Sophia Sparr; spons. Albert Billeisen and Sophia Flesch. HDJ

- Apr. 18 Alexander, son of Leonard Linder and Emilia Schwartz; spons. Martin Bauman and Caroline Mushler.
- Apr. 19 Alexander, son of Joseph Kinsley and Theresia Shaub; spons. Gerhard Shaub and Magdalena Leringer.
- same day Mary Ann, daughter of Jacob Kellhower and Magdalena Bisert; spons. Leopold Kellhover and Mary Ann Bauman.
- Apr. 28 Catherine Agatha, daughter of Jacob Fundenberger and Catherine Hassinger; spons. Rudolph Siegfried and Agatha Brinthley.  
J. K. Butler, to which H. D. Juncker attests
- June 20 Mary, daughter of Jacob Lyons and Eleonora Bonapart; spons. Martin Bauman and Susanna Briton.
- June 21 Anna Maria Hemmerle, daughter of Joseph Hemmerle and Rosalia Kromer; spons. Martin Bauman and Gertrude Hemmerle.
- June 28 Thomas, son of Patrick Doyle and Ann Murphy; spons. Mathew Neil and Elizabeth Rigny(?).

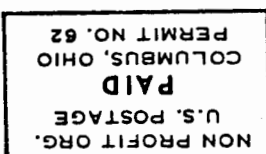
Alleman, O.P., attested by HDJ

page 20

- June 21 John Baptist, son of Peter End and Francisca Bintz; spons. Anton Fritz and Walburga End. Alleman, O.P., attested by HDJ
- July 4 Valentin, born 7 June, son of Valentin Gang and Maria Muckler; spons. Martin Bauman and Mary his wife. HDJ
- July 5 William Duncan, born 4 April, son of William Marshall Anderson and Elizabeth Ann McArthur; spons. John Baptist Purcell, Bishop of Cincinnati, and Mary W. Latham.
- same day Gave holy oils to Thomas McArthur, son of William Marshall Anderson and Elizabeth Ann McArthur; spons. J. B. Purcell, Bishop of Cincinnati, and Mary Latham. HDJ
- July 7 Sara Ann, daughter of Arthur Jones and Anna; spons. Thomas Dolan and B----- Dolan. J.B., Bishop of Cincinnati, attested by HDJ
- July 12 Joseph Fridolin, born 10 July, son of Anton Kreutz and Judith Vunderle; spons. Fridolin Vinderle and Bernardina Bucheler. HDJ
- Aug. 2 Henry, born 25 March, son of Jacob Vundele and Maria Sepha(?) Rohi(?); spons. Anton Kreutz and Gertrude Scheffer. HDJ
- page 21
- Aug. 2 Henry, born 28 July, son of Jacob Will and Mary Hobert; spons. Peter and Ann Haubert. HDJ
- Aug. 3 John, born 2 Aug., son of Erhard Boggenschitz and Magdalena Dearinger; spons. Erhard Shubel (or Strubel?) and Juliana Boggenschitz. HDJ
- Nov. 2 Mary, born 20 Aug., daughter of Tergis(?) Bauman and Josephina Gardisum [perhaps Gardiner?]; spons. William Anderson and Mary Bauman. E. Purcell

(To be continued)

-----  
 Copyright 1992, Catholic Record Society - Diocese of Columbus  
 197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor  
 -----



CHANCERY OFFICE  
 DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS  
 198 EAST BROAD STREET  
 COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215